

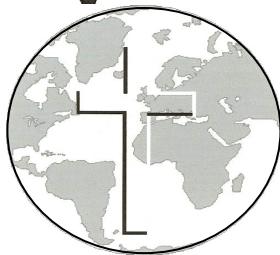
# United People in Christ, Inc.

***Business Address:***

789 Douglas Ave., Suite 137  
Altamonte Springs, FL 32714

***Mailing Address:***

P.O. Box 162601  
Altamonte Springs, FL 32716-2601



**Phone:** 407-862-0107

**FAX:** 407-862-1283

**Email:** ahabibmdpec@gmail.com

Website: unitedpeopleinchrist.org

A registered and licensed nonprofit organization

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## THE FULLNESS OF TIME

In 2009 on my way to Damascus to spend Christmas with my family, I met a doctor from Daytona Beach in Frankfort Airport in Germany. He was also flying to Damascus. He asked me what is my reason for traveling to Syria in this cold winter. I answered that I want to spend the Christmas season with my family. He stated that Christmas is not an important feast (Eid) for us in Syria and very few people celebrate the occasion. To tell you the truth, I did not know what to say to the great “educated” doctor. Then it dawned on me, so I asked him: do you have a driver’s license or passport on you? He was surprised with this question and he answered, both, I have a driver’s license and a passport on me. I asked, can I see one of them? He gave me his passport, I opened it and pointed to the day of his birthday with my finger and said “you need to remember that you were born one thousand nine hundred forty nine years after His birthday, His name is Jesus Christ. And this is the one I will be celebrating, His birthday. He was silent for awhile and then said; you know, Muslims do not celebrate Christ’s birthday and do not follow the Christian (Gregorian) calendar but rather the Muslim calendar (the Hijri calendar).

“But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his son, born of a woman, born under the law.” (Gal. 4:4).

Merry Christmas! Even in this country they don’t want to hear it anymore. We have to use Happy Holidays and Seasons Greeting. Advertising signs promote X-mas, they eliminated Christ based Christmas carols in favor of Winter Wonderland, Frosty the Snowman and Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer. The Nativity Scenes are not allowed on public property.

In a few short weeks “the most wonderful time of the year” will be upon us, so let me say it loud and clear I love the Christmas season and I believe that the Christmas spirit is inside all of us, God ordained, not the unsaved world’s version of Christmas, materialism and the like, but the knowledge that the Savior of the world was born to offer us a marvelous plan of redemption.

Few people on the other hand, disagree with my thinking claiming that the celebration of Christmas is a celebration of a pagan holiday,

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with those ancient pagan traditions. They find in the Old Testament a verse that talks of an idol of a tree and decorating it. How does the exchange of gifts celebrate the true meaning of Christmas? Santa Claus has turned Godly parents into a bunch of deceivers. Santa is actually another way to spell Satan. These anti-Christmas sentiments seems to have made some under-educated ill informed Christians to take a hostile approach toward Christmas and began to see that Christmas (and Easter ) celebrations to highlight the failures of the Church, suggesting some sort of pagan infiltration.

The truth is there are many misconceptions and half truths in the Christmas debate and in his excellent book “The War on Christmas” the author Bodie Hodge will take you places you have never been before, clearing up many popular misconceptions.

If the Angels praised God in the Heavens at Christ’s birth, likely singing and shouting for Joy, this is good enough for us. And why wouldn’t we want to join in celebrating the most important birth in the World’s history, singing Silent Night, and praising the Lord for his glorious birth. After all, history is His story, the times were divided in two, before his birth, and after his birth, and the holiday season should rightfully be called The Holy Day of Jesus Christ’s birth.

Was the Star of Bethlehem a “triple conjunction” of the planets or was it a once in a lifetime miracle from God? How about Santa Claus? Is he secretly a dyslexic Satan or was he a historical figure, St. Nicholas, Bishop of Myra, a wealthy man who made it his life mission to give to the less fortunate in the 4<sup>th</sup> Century? The biblical genealogists give us the answer why Jesus was the offspring of the Holy Spirit and Mary and not Joseph, the seed of a woman born without the seed of a man. He shares the story of “the Wise Men” and the popular misconception that they attended the Birth of Christ when the truth is that they arrived 2 years after his birth. He uses the recent Archeological discoveries to decipher the phrase “there was no room at the Inn”.

Back to the doctor who was traveling with me to Syria in the Christmas of 2009 and told me that he follows the Hijri calendar. I have for him some bad news. Come the 1<sup>st</sup> week of October 2016, I read on the “Middle East on Line” website that the Saudi Government waved goodbye to the Islamic calendar (Hijri calendar) for the public sector. The Saudi government workers will be paid according to the Gregorian calendar (The Christian calendar) instead of the Islamic (Hijri) calendar making the working month longer, a part of cost-cutting measures. The change approved by the Cabinet last week brings civil servants pay in line with the Government’s January-December fiscal year, the Arab News and the Saudi Gazette reported.

The Hijri calendar (Muslim, moon calendar) consists of 12 months of 29 or 30 days each, depending on the sighting of the moon, meaning the Islamic year is several days shorter than Gregorian calendar which is used all over the World. The Hijri calendar was instituted by the Kalif, Omar Iben Al-Khatab 16 years after the Prophet of Islam moved from Mecca to Medina.

Whether Saudi Arabia, the birthplace of the Prophet of Islam, will celebrate the Birthday of Jesus Christ is doubtful, but I am glad that they finally switched from the Hijri calendar to the Christian calendar, joining the rest of the civilized World.

**Do not forget the reason for our celebration – Jesus’ Birth!**

**Wishing each and every one of you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Prosperous New Year.**

**Amid Habib, M.D., F.A.A.P., F.A.C.E.**

**Remember your brothers and sisters in Christ in Syria, Iraq and Egypt, most left their homes with only the clothes on their backs, they are hungry, thirsty, cold and sick. This Christmas season, I am asking you to help us in helping them by sending your generous tax deductible donations in the self-addressed envelope and May the Lord Bless you Always!**

## A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

This past November, United People in Christ celebrated its 18th birthday in service of our Lord, helping our needy brothers and sisters in Christ in the Middle East. The board members and myself admit that we could not have done what we did without your assistance and help.

Up to September 30, 2016 your donations have totaled \$568,221.00 of which we have distributed \$529,528.00 to our needy brothers and sisters in Christ in the Middle East. We have kept our administration costs at 10% or less per year and for the past 18 years. All of this work was done by volunteers, whose purpose is only to glorify the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ and to help the people called by his name in need in the Middle East.

I am deeply grateful to all of my friends who helped and continue to help our cause this year and all the years. If you need a copy of our financial statement please stop by our office after January 31, 2017 to pick up one or call us and we will mail it to you.

## THE GOD OF ALL COMFORT

By Dolores Devine

I have a confession to make. As I watch the world news and witness the horrendous devastation in war torn Syria and Iraq, I feel so overwhelmed that I am even at a loss to find words to pray. The needs are so great, the situations so grave. In the city of Aleppo, Syria many residents, were reduced to eating grass.

"How do they survive?" I ask. Then I realize that, like Jesus, when He was tempted in the wilderness, Christians can rely on their one true Source of sustenance--the WORD OF GOD. "Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God." Lk 4:4

Thus, like them, I turn to His word to pray and seek solace for myself and others. When God's word goes forth, it never returns empty, but always fulfills His purpose.

"Let Your mercy and loving kindness come to my rescue, oh Lord, according to Your promise. May I never forget Your words, for they are my only hope. They give me strength in all my trouble. My comfort in my affliction is that Your promises give me life." Ps 119:41

*"Lift your eyes to the heavens...My deliverance is everlasting and My saving power never wanes. I, Myself, am He that comforts you. You are My people. I have put My words in your mouth and kept you safe under the shelter of My hand."* Is 51:6, 12, 16

"Your words are what sustained me; they are food to my hungry soul. They bring joy and delight to my sorrowing heart. How proud I am to bear your Name, oh Lord (Christ)." Jer 15:16

"For all the ancient scriptures were written for our instruction that we, through the comfort of God's word, might have hope." Rom 15:4

*"There is hope for your future,' says the Lord. 'I will turn your mourning into joy and I will comfort you...for your captivity, with all its sorrows, will be behind you.'"* Jer 31:16, 13

"Thanks be to God, the all merciful Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ, **the God of all Comfort**, who consoles us in our every trouble, so that we in turn, may be able to comfort others in their affliction, by the comfort wherewith we are ourselves comforted of God. For as we have more than our share of sufferings for Christ's sake, so also, through Christ, we have more than our share of comfort." II Cor 1:3-5

"Sing, O heavens and rejoice O earth...for the Lord has comforted His people and has had pity on His own in their distress." Is 49:13

Jesus, Himself, when He came to earth, laid aside His divine nature and took on the form of man, to suffer and be tempted in every way, even as we are. Yet He overcame every satanic attack, and death itself, for our sake. When He promised His disciples, "I will never leave you comfortless," He did not mean they would never suffer, rather that He would see them through every dire circumstance and that His grace would be sufficient in the midst of their affliction.

Therefore, beloved brothers and sisters in Christ, let us agree with the Apostle Paul:

"Console one another with these words...Be of good comfort, take courage, agree together to live in peace. And then God, the source of all love and peace will be with you. And may God, the source of all fortitude and encouragement, grant that we be united in sympathy **in** Christ, and that we may, with one mind and mouth, glorify God our Father!" I Thes 4:18; II Cor 13:11; Rom 15:5-6

May Christ, the Light of the world, dwell in our hearts and shine His perfect light into the hearts of all Christians, even in the darkest, most forlorn places on this earth. For He is now, and ever shall be, **the God of all Comfort**, to all those who are willing to receive Him.



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## **The Fall UPIC Banquet**

**will take place on Saturday, October 21, 2017 at 6:30 P.M.  
Location to be announced later.**

**PLEASE MARK YOUR CALENDARS**

**You can now read this UPIC newsletter and our previous newsletters by visiting our website:**

**[unitedpeopleinchrist.org](http://unitedpeopleinchrist.org)**

**I am indebted to Janet Williamson for the preparation and editing of this newsletter.**