

The senior citizens of the United Church of God constitute a valuable resource for the Church, one which can easily be overlooked or go unappreciated. The Scriptures plainly tell us, "You shall rise before the gray headed and honor the presence of an old man" (Leviticus 19:32). This is so we can learn to demonstrate respect and appreciation so often lacking in our culture today.

Many individuals today are more strongly influenced by the practices, mores and structures of the times in which they live rather than by their heritage. The strong tendency is to act as if what is happening here and now is the sole standard of what is right, correct, proper and acceptable. Unfortunately, this vastly narrows the individual's knowledge base and his fund of available information when important decisions need to be made.

Nebuchadnezzar once said, "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for a royal dwelling by my mighty power...?" (Daniel 4:30). When he said this, he was doing just what I mentioned. He was using the present as his only standard of measurement and evaluation. He gave no thought or consideration to the effort and labor of many other people who had preceded him, many of them at the time of his statement being "senior citizens." He gave himself credit for that which the efforts of many people had made possible.

This is a commonplace occurrence with human nature. We fail to recognize the contributions of others, many of whom may be elderly or deceased, for the privileges we now enjoy.

NBC anchorman Tom Brokaw has written a splendid book entitled *The Greatest Generation*. In it he tells the stories of a number of individuals, the unknown as well as the famous, and their contributions made during World War II. Without those collective contributions, all made by people who are today "senior citizens" or deceased, this world would be a vastly different place. You and I would not enjoy today's relative peace and tranquillity had they not, in their youth, done what they did.

### An Outstanding Example

In this context, I am reminded of a truly outstanding example of a senior citizen in the Church, now deceased. She was Nina Kubik, the mother of Victor Kubik, a member of the Council of Elders in the United Church of God. During World War II she was a teenage slave laborer in Germany, taken by the Nazis when they invaded Ukraine, then part of the Soviet Union. After the war she married and lived in a displaced persons camp for four years. In 1949 she (being pregnant with son Oleh), her husband, Igor, and son Victor emigrated from Hannover, Germany, to the United States.

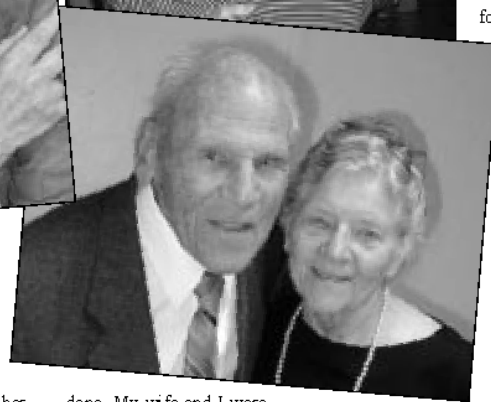
# Crowns of Glory

*The senior citizens of United have contributed so much to us for so long. They deserve our honor and appreciation.*

by John Bald

The family traveled with a group of friends and acquaintances and settled as a group in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area of Minnesota. This group of Ukrainians lived in close proximity to one another and assisted one another in adjusting to a very different way of life. In doing so they, quite naturally, formed very

*Right, chalk drawing of Nina Kubik that hangs in Council of Elders member Victor Kubik's office*



close bonds and ties.

Later, Mrs. Kubik was called into the Church and this markedly changed her lifestyle and her priorities. She had less time than previously to spend with her friends in the Ukrainian community.

As time went on this concerned her deeply as she tried to serve both the needs of the Church and of her Ukrainian friends. So great was her concern that she left instructions that a letter be read at her funeral by the presiding minister. This was

done. My wife and I were privileged to be able to attend her funeral and to hear her words, coming, as it were, from the grave.

In the letter she stated that she realized that in recent years she had not spent

as much time with her Ukrainian friends as she had previously, but she wanted them to know that it was not because she thought any less of them. She stated that she wanted them to know that the reason was that she had found the "pearl of great price" and that she felt compelled to pursue the way which was pictured in the Bible as that incomparable pearl.

That was one of the most moving experiences of my life and I was very impressed by her expressed concern for her longtime friends as well as by the need she felt to serve the God she had learned about in the Bible.

### Honoring and Appreciating Our Seniors

Such things as this constitute a part of our heritage. These are the kinds of actions which have preserved our faith in these traumatic times. We should know of and appreciate efforts and examples such as these for they have helped to make possible what we are able to enjoy in the Church today.

We should speak often with our senior citizens to learn not only about what they did as young people in a society very different from what we see today, but also to learn how they came into the truth. We can learn about the challenges they encountered in living godly principles in times so different from those in which we live today.

Many of our seniors could teach us much, not only from what they saw and did, but also from errors which, being human, they made. They can give good advice about areas and situations for us to avoid. The value of avoiding grievous errors—of learning from another's mistake and not having to live through the consequences of avoidable error—is priceless.

At the height of World War II there were approximately 15 million Americans in the armed forces. Today thousands from what Tom Brokaw called "The Greatest Generation" are dying every year. They constitute a diminishing and irreplaceable resource. The same is true of our Church seniors. We will not always have their examples before us.

It is time to both honor them for their contributions and to learn of and profit by their good examples.

Toward this end, we would like to have each congregation, as scheduling permits, set aside a special time to honor its senior citizens. After Sabbath services would be a good time for many.

Perhaps by doing this we can repay at least a small part of the debt we owe to those who have contributed so much to us for so long. *UN*