



United News Canada

VOLUME 6, NUMBER 3 • MAY - JUNE 2001

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Reflections of our

It began with a small group in Cincinnati in December, 1995. Gary Antion was sent to Canada to manage the National Office out of Toronto. He had a tiny staff of one part-time employee in a very small office of about 500 square feet. Including himself, there were three employed ministers...

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New Beginnings



BY RAINER SALOMAA • SEE PAGE 3

A WHALE OF A CALL

BY ROBERT BERENDT • EDMONTON

RECENTLY MY WIFE AND I SPENT A week on the island of Maui in Hawaii. It has been over 20 years since I had enjoyed such a visit. We had time to relax and enjoy a variety of things, including whale watching.

To see an 80,000 pound whale rise out of the sea until almost all of its body is arching through the air leaves me in awe. Sometimes only the head comes up out of the water up to eye level – just as though the whale is taking a peek at us spectators on our small boats. Always there are gasps of awe and amazement as a whale performs for us. These are the humpback whales and, although not the largest whale, they are magnificent.

In Genesis 1:21 we read that God created great whales. It struck me that these enormous creatures are completely at His command – as are all other creatures. Whales do not know why they migrate for thousands of miles to calve and mate off the island of Maui. In Job 41:1, God asks, “Can you draw out leviathan with a hook?” In verse 3 He asks, “Will he speak soft words to you?”

Although theologians argue over what creature God is referring to here, it is clear that the greatest creatures on earth respond to God’s commands. God controls them. He indeed does have a spiritual hook that draws these huge whales to Maui each year. Furthermore, these huge creatures make soft sounds that we cannot understand and often cannot hear. God hears their songs and soft messages, because he made these huge creatures do just that! Whales are known to “sing” under water. (A recent program on the

Discovery Channel showed great elephants, who roar and trumpet mightily, can also communicate to their young in “soft words.”) The words of the song “How Great Thou Art” come to mind.

Man cannot program Canada geese to head north or south at prescribed times. He cannot program salmon to come back to the streams of their birth to spawn and die. Man in his limited way should observe these wonders and know that God is! Job was awestruck with what God showed him. When he took time to ponder and observe and then to really appreciate the presence of God, Job was humbled. Our responsibility within this great creation – to dress it and keep it – is much more meaningful when we appreciate the greatness of the creation and, in turn, the Creator.

Humans are able to kill and destroy, and they are able to nurture and enhance this wonderful world. Sadly, our record has been one mostly of destruction. God wants us to take full responsibility for His creation. He put humans here to learn the benefits of taking care of it. Genesis 1:28 and 2:15 tell us we have the power to subdue and control every living thing on earth, but God expects us to treat this responsibility with love and appreciation for all He has created. When we learn to love and care for creation, we will become much more like-minded with God the Creator. That is His full intention.

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REFLECTIONS OF OUR NEW BEGINNINGS

BY RAINER SALOMAA • EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

I HAVE BEEN BLESSED TO HAVE SERVED ON the Canadian National Council since its beginning. At our meetings in Winnipeg last March, I reminisced a bit on our beginnings and some suggested I write it up and share it with all of you.

It began when a small group of us were in Cincinnati in December, 1995, for the very first General Conference of Elders. By that time, Gary Antion had already been sent to Canada to manage the National Office out of Toronto. He had a tiny staff of one part-time employee in a very small office of about 500 square feet. Including himself, there were three employed ministers. Robert Berendt and I had just come into United before the meetings in Cincinnati and were not employed until early in 1996.

In Cincinnati, we as a Canadian ministry met in a restaurant and made plans to hold our very first meeting to officially launch United Church of God - Canada. It was decided to hold the meetings in Calgary from January 26-28, 1996.

The entire Canadian ministry, their wives and congregational representatives, as well as legal council from Home Office in Arcadia met for those meetings. There were 28 of us in all. Sabbath services were held at the Scandinavian Centre. It was an open-house service. My wife and I were not in attendance because I conducted Sabbath services in Edmonton, on the way through to Calgary. The council meetings were held at the Crossroads Hotel, starting that Saturday night.

Those who were in attendance will always remember the -40° temperatures and bitter wind. On Sunday, I could not get my car started even though Robert Berendt spent about an hour trying to give me a boost. I finally had to have it towed into a garage, where they thawed it out.

The meetings went well, considering the process was new to us. We had been used to simply being told what to do, without giving much input. Here, we covered topics on board responsibilities, constitution and bylaws, rules



Rainer and Claudia Salomaa.

of association, festival planning, summer camps, *New Beginnings-Canada*, stationery/business cards, office updates, sound systems, budget approval, strategies for growth, as well as setting the date for the next meeting. Tony Wasilkoff was chosen as our first chairman. His wife Linda became our secretary. A women's advisory committee was also appointed.

Over five years have passed since those initial meetings took place in Calgary. A lot has happened since then. We have:

- a much larger office in Etobicoke.
- a capable office staff (Ed van Pelt, Kevin Ford, Wayne Lue and Linda Wasilkoff, who is part-time).
- a hard-working ministry (17 elders).
- established congregations and video groups (about 23).
- a growing subscriber list (currently over 11,000).
- a steady income (budgeted this year for about \$1.1 million, with help from a U.S. subsidy).
- incorporation.
- a constitution and bylaws.
- Rules of Association.
- three festival sites (Kelowna, Mont-Sainte Anne, and St. John's).
- a summer camp (McGillvary Creek in Alberta's Crowsnest Pass).

**“THOSE WHO WERE
IN ATTENDANCE
[IN CALGARY]
WILL ALWAYS
REMEMBER
THE -40°
TEMPERATURES
AND BITTER WIND.”**

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NATIONAL COUNCIL MEETINGS IN WINNIPEG

SUBMITTED BY THE NATIONAL COUNCIL

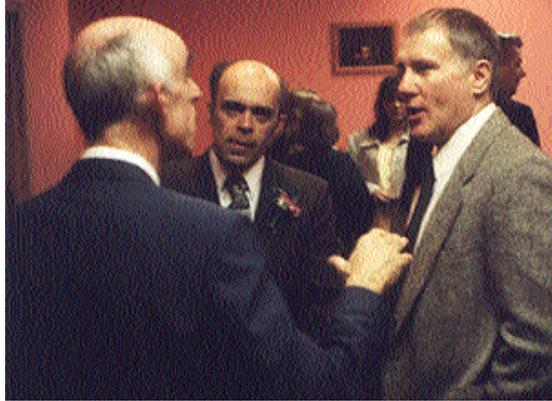


Photo by Rainer Salomaa

Sabbath Services (L-R): Kevin Ford, Larry DeLong, Ken Aime

**“CANADA HAS
TAKEN ANOTHER
STEP TOWARDS
SELF-SUFFICIENCY.”**

THE NATIONAL COUNCIL WAS FORMED IN January, 1996, in Calgary during some extremely cold weather. When the decision to meet in Winnipeg this past March was made, some expected a repeat of that first meeting! However, the warmth of the Winnipeg brethren must have had an effect on the weather because the Council arrived to moderate temperatures. Thank you, Winnipeg!

Council meetings began at 8:00 p.m. on Thursday, March 8. Visitors from the local congregation were welcomed to the meetings and invited to participate when appropriate. The first item of business was to adopt the minutes from the previous meeting. This is necessary to ensure the corporate record is accurately maintained.

As usual the Council received an update from Ed van Pelt, who was armed with charts and graphs, on what is happening in the church in Canada. It was encouraging to see the evidence of growth recorded in the number of subscribers, donors, and members.

Canada has a newly-formed Media Committee chaired by David Palmer. The members of the committee are: George Carter (ON), Ellsworth Stanley (NF), Ken Kerr, Jr. (AB), Dave Lawrence (BC), George Rands (BC). They are putting together some media strategies for the Operations Manager for possible implementation for the next year. Presently they are working to get more congregational web sites

up and running, and are working on policies and guidelines to ensure that those web sites properly represent United. Another strategy they are working on is a coupon that will be mailed via Val Pak to select households in Canada to further increase *Good News* circulation. These will give us much better exposure at a far better price than other means that have been considered. And Robert Berendt described what individual church members can do by citing the example of one couple in Saskatchewan who are distributing *Good News* magazines.

The usual brainstorming session led to the various ideas assigned to different committees for further work.

On Friday morning the committees met to tackle their respective assignments. That afternoon each committee chairman reported on their committee's progress. The Strategic Planning Committee proposed and the Council adopted a policy for the selection of Feast sites.

The Ethics/Finance Committee discussed guidelines for, and the purpose of, congregational web sites. They also suggested that the vacation time for pastors be increased.

The Governance Committee submitted a proposal to ask Barney Kerrighan to serve another term on the Amendment Committee. The Council gave its approval for this. Mr. Kerrighan will begin a three-year term on April 1, 2001. The Governance Committee discussed the ways to improve the lay member selection process.

The Pastoral Committee worked on three projects but decided each needed additional work before being presented to the Council.

Since UCG-Canada began, it has received a much appreciated subsidy from the Home Office. This year Home Office is asking if we can reduce the amount we have been receiving. After discussion, the Council unanimously agreed to a reduction in subsidy. Canada has taken another step towards self-sufficiency.

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ANNUAL NATIONAL CONFERENCE

SUBMITTED BY THE NATIONAL COUNCIL

THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE CONSISTS OF all UCG elders in Canada plus all Council members, for a present total of 18. The annual National Conference meeting was held March 11, 2001. Nine members were present in Winnipeg while another two were connected by phone. Several members of the United Church of God - Winnipeg were present. Members of another Sabbath-keeping group also observed the proceedings. Guests were invited to make comments or ask questions during the meeting. All of the balloting had been completed prior to the actual meeting.

Robert Berendt presented the Strategic Plan. This plan has only minor adjustments from year to year, as it establishes the general direction for the church. The National Conference ratified the Strategic Plan 2001/2002.

Anthony Wasilkoff followed up with the next step in our plan — the Operations Plan. This goes into more specific detail as to what the church expects to accomplish during the coming fiscal year. The Operations Plan 2001/2002 was ratified.

Ed van Pelt then reviewed the budget. It is based on a projected seven per cent increase in donations. He explained that the Home Office has been sending UCG - Canada a subsidy each year. This year we have been asked to reduce that subsidy, which will leave us with less in the bank at the end of the year. All projected expenses will still be met. The budget for 2001 was ratified.

Three Council terms end March 31, 2001. The National Conference had to select people to fill these positions: one lay member, one

non-salaried elder, and one salaried elder. This year there were lay members on the ballot from 11 different congregations. They were: Dale Trenerry, Calgary; Dave Davis, Edmonton; Lee Kerrighan, Lethbridge; Beverly Hébert, Montreal; George Rands, Okanagan; Carol Livermore, Ottawa; Michael Erickson, Prince George; Sam Parsons, St. John's; Len Nymeyer, Toronto; Ken Kerr, Sr, Vancouver Island; and Lloyd Syvret, Winnipeg. There were three non-salaried elders from which to choose: Dan Berendt from Edmonton, Joseph Moulton from Ottawa, and Garry Poffenroth from Calgary.

The National Conference determined that Carol Livermore, Daniel Berendt, and Rainer Salomaa will begin three year terms on the Council beginning April 1, 2001. Daniel and Rainer have already served on the Council, but this will be Carol's first term. She has the distinction of being the first woman to serve on the Canadian National Council.

Two amendments to the Bylaws were balloted on and both were ratified. They will be included in the updated version of the Bylaws.

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**“THIS YEAR
THERE WERE LAY
MEMBERS ON
THE BALLOT FROM
11 DIFFERENT
CONGREGATIONS.”**



Photo by Rainer Salomaa

A committee meeting during the Annual National Conference.

SPECIAL SABBATH SERVICES IN WINNIPEG

BY PAUL LEUKE • WINNIPEG



Glen White, former Winnipeg pastor, speaks at Sabbath Services.

SABBATH SERVICES IN WINNIPEG ON MARCH 10th were a special occasion. Sabbath services are always a special occasion, but on this Sabbath, having as guests the UCG Canadian Council and Conference members, their wives, and other guests made it an extra special event.

This was an “Open House” service, with invitations being extended to *Good News* subscribers, as well as invitations extended by Winnipeg members to family and friends.

The banquet room in the “Oceana Restaurant” was expanded to accommodate more than 20 visitors who came to join us, in addition to the 20 council members and wives who were in attendance. Glen White, who formerly pastored in Winnipeg, gave the first message. Jolene Drewniak and Mrs. Fern Berendt sang special music solos. Bob Berendt gave the second message.

The ladies of the Winnipeg congregation prepared tasty snacks for everyone to enjoy after services. Then the majority of the group moved just across the street to continue fellowshiping together over dinner, in the same facility where the Council meetings were held. -UNC

ANNUAL NATIONAL CONFERENCE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

The Chairman and the Operations Manager were allotted 15 minutes each to address the National Conference. Chairman Rainer Salomaa reviewed the inception of United Church of God - Canada. He recognized the blessings God has granted to a small group doing a work. He acknowledged that it is gratifying to have an organization that is truly Canadian. He shared his “wish list” for the future: for the Council to continue to meet in different church areas to know the members better; for the whole National Conference to be able to meet together in person; to become financially independent; to be able to give financial assistance to other nations and to be able to own our own National Office.

Anthony Wasilkoff relayed a story about a farmer and a sparrow. It was a chilly day when the farmer saw the little sparrow laying on its back in the middle of the field. The farmer asked why it was laying like that. The bird replied, “I heard the sky is falling.”

“I suppose your spindly little legs are going to hold up the sky,” said the farmer.

“One does what one can,” the sparrow replied.

Mr. Wasilkoff then quoted Winston Churchill as saying, “It’s no use saying we are doing our best. We’ve got to succeed in doing what is necessary.” He concluded that we, though small, are determined to do what is necessary and what we are able with the resources God gives us. -UNC

A PRESIDENTIAL VISIT

BY KEVIN FORD • TORONTO



Leslie and Marion McCullough in the Toronto National Office on April 6. Photos by Wayne Lue.

THE DECISION TO MOVE THE HOME OFFICE to Cincinnati was well received in the Canadian Office. Since the U.S. operations moved to Cincinnati in 1998, the mere seven-hour drive to the Home Office has fostered increased co-operation and strengthened friendships. It is also gratifying when visits are reciprocated, so we were pleased to hear that Leslie McCullough, President of U.C.G.-I.A. and a member of the Council of Elders, would be coming to Toronto for the Passover and the first part of the Spring festival.

This was not Mr. McCullough's first visit to Toronto, which was in November 1999, but this time we had the added pleasure of welcoming his wife, Marion, to Canada's largest city. They toured the National Office on Friday, April 6 to have discussions and share a take-away lunch with Anthony Wasilkoff and the other office staff. In addition to sharing the Passover service with Mr. Wasilkoff, Mr. McCullough also delivered two sermons – at the weekly Sabbath service on April 7 and on the First Day of Unleavened Bread. His April 7 sermon emphasized remaining in an unleavened attitude when the festival is over and learning to resist temptation until it simply

isn't there any more. On the high day, he discussed the symbolism of the festival, such as why we eat unleavened bread instead of a lamb at the Passover service.

The Toronto congregation's attendance figures, which had already experienced a surge in recent months, reached new heights with the visit of the McCulloughs. At the Sabbath service following Passover, a new record of 121 was set, and this was promptly broken the very next day by the 131 who assembled for the First Day of Unleavened Bread. The regular attendance was swelled by a number of guests from other fellowships, who took the opportunity to hear and meet with the McCulloughs.

The visits of the National Office staff to the Home Office look as if they are becoming an annual event. We hope the same will become true of their visits to us! -UNC

“THE TORONTO CONGREGATION’S ATTENDANCE FIGURES ... REACHED NEW HEIGHTS WITH THE VISIT OF THE McCULLOUGHS.”



Fellowshipping after services (L-R): Linda Wasilkoff, Marion McCullough, Judy Desgrosseilliers, Catherine Rahel.

CAROL LIVERMORE: A BRIEF INTRODUCTION

BY CAROL LIVERMORE • OTTAWA

Editor's Note: Carol Livermore is the newest laymember of the National Council, and the first woman to serve on the council. We asked Carol to put together a brief autobiography to introduce herself to the Canadian brethren.

WHEN MY HUSBAND ERIC PROPOSED TO ME in the spring of 1964, he made one stipulation; if beings from another world were to land on our balcony and offer to show him the secrets of the universe, I would have to let him go. I agreed. Little did I know then that I would be invited along too.

Officially, our journey began in June, 1968, and the Church has been the focus of our life since then. I still find it scintillating when I realize what we are a part of. Now, to think that God's spirit would lead me to be chosen as a council member at this time is one of the more humbling experiences I have ever had.

Eric and I have lived and worked in the Ottawa area for 36 years. We have tried to live a simple life. We are very close to our three children, Stacy, Steven and Jessica, who are mature adults now. Though none of our children attend anymore, they hold the Church and our beliefs in great respect. Although I have had a few successful forays into the business world my focus has been and continues to be our closely-knit family. I am a grandmother, and one of my great delights is when our granddaughter, Erika, takes out her Bible and says to me, "Nana, come on, let's do some God stuff."

Learning in an atmosphere of kind, open and frank discussion has always been a passion in our home. We all share each other's triumphs and trials. We have a close extended family and a circle of loyal, caring friends, for whom we are most thankful. One of our goals in life is to keep our friendships warm. We have learned that there truly can be friends who are "closer than a brother." If we were to have a family motto it would read, "Be Thankful."

Eric was ordained an elder in April of 1974. I don't think anyone can easily describe the opportunity this afforded both of us to share the



Carol and Eric Livermore

blessings we have been given. Whether it has been involvement with camps, socials, entertaining, counseling, comforting, consoling, sharing or rejoicing, we consider every opportunity to serve the family of God a privilege offered to us. The pursuit of our faith led us to United in the fall of 1997, where we felt we were at home again.

I am a voracious reader. When we came into the church, Eric held up the Bible and said, "There, you'll never be able to say you don't have anything to read again!" We fish (even ice fishing) and often golf together. I satisfy my creative side with tole painting and quilting.

As the first woman on the Canadian Council and being culturally at home in both French and English (I spent my formative years in northern Quebec), I look forward to bringing these added dimensions to the Council. Though I don't always take myself seriously, I do take this responsibility quite seriously. I will do what ever is necessary to be representative of all the membership of the church. I regard the Council as a sacred trust. -UNC

"WHEN WE CAME INTO THE CHURCH, ERIC HELD UP THE BIBLE AND SAID, 'THERE, YOU'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO SAY YOU DON'T HAVE ANYTHING TO READ AGAIN!'"

ANNOUNCEMENTS

NEWS OF THE CANADIAN BRETHREN

WEDDING ANNOUNCEMENT

Tuula Margit Goertz of Thunder Bay, Ontario and George Edward Rands, formerly of Seattle/Tacoma and now of Summerland, British Columbia, were united in marriage in Thunder Bay on December 10, 2000. The ceremony was performed by Toronto pastor, Mr. Anthony Wasilkoff. The bride was given in marriage by Edwin Woods, son of the bride with Shelley Kemppainen, daughter of the bride, as matron of honor and Edward Rands,

son of the groom, as the groomsman.

The couple took a short honeymoon in Minnesota and have taken up permanent residence in Summerland, in B.C.'s sunny Okanagan valley. They attend the UCG congregation in Penticton. -UNC



Tuula and George Rands



Mr. and Mrs. Hofer

FIFTIETH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

Mr. and Mrs. Jonathon Hofer, members of the Winnipeg congregation, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on October 30, 2000. The couple raised nine children, and now have 16 grandchildren. We wish them good health for many years. -UNC

ABBOTSFORD CHURCH REPORT

SUBMITTED BY THE ABBOTSFORD CONGREGATION

IF YOU EVER HAVE THE CHANCE TO visit the Abbotsford congregation, you will visit a very wonderful place, and a congregation that is very warm and loving.

We have been meeting on a weekly basis since September 6, 1997, and on November 1 of the same year, we found a permanent home in Rebecca Lodge.

We are a small congregation with a maximum attendance of only 27, but we can move mountains with those numbers. We have a piano player and a three-person band ensemble. Our speakers include our pastor, Mr. Michielsen, a deacon, Mr. Bertagnolli and Mr. Farnon.

The youth are very active in our area – they are involved in the band, in set-up for services, and – most of all – in our yearly fundraiser. Our

fundraiser is doing inventory for a SAAN store once a year. We get the youth involved, who invite their friends so we can come up with the numbers the store wants. This way we only have to raise funds once a year.

With this money we are able to do many wonderful things throughout the year. One of the most special things is to get together with the Vancouver brethren and the Sedro Wooley brethren on the Holy Days. After the services we all sit down to a great hot meal of barbequed chicken and, of course, wonderful fellowship.

On a weekly basis, after every service we enjoy a light lunch of coffee and snacks where we can fellowship and get to know each other even better.

We love having visitors and our motto is, “Hope y’all come back now!” -UNC

A MYSTERY DINNER

BY ROSALEEN FORD • TORONTO

**“BUT SOMETHING
ELSE WAS AMISS!
THESE DISHES
HAD ODD,
UNHEARD-OF
NAMES.”**



IT CAME IN THE MAIL, JUST AS ANY FLYER, bill, or ransom note might have done, and it came without warning – a grey-blue card with a question mark on the outside. It was the calling card of the Reads, calling me, I mean, inviting me to a “Mystery Dinner” at the home of our pastor and his wife, the Wasilkoffs.

At church next week, I discovered that the rest of the teens received their invitations too, but no one knew anything about the Mystery Dinner. “Is it a murder mystery game?” one naïve teen asked. “Is the food the mystery?” another ventured. “Are you going to feed us Biblical food, like locusts?” I jokingly asked. The Reads would reveal nothing although Mr. Read did smile deviously at my proposal. We waited out those next few weeks in excitement, but sometimes we had puzzled looks on our faces.

Then the day was finally upon us. We arrived at the Wasilkoffs’ house and were greeted by a row of waiters in uniform who had assumed French names for the occasion. Closer inspection revealed them to be Mr. Wasilkoff, Ryan Rahel, Judy Read and Mr. Read. They led us to the table where we were given menus with about 20 dishes. We were told to take a pencil and list them in the course order we would like.

(No one mentioned that it’s usually the waiters who do this.)

But something else was amiss! These dishes had odd, unheard-of names. And the final item on the paper was “locusts.” Nevertheless we complied and filled out our dinner orders.

Next they told us to leave the table and wait in the den, where we were entertained by a documentary on the wonders of God’s creation and a small, frisky dog. We played with the dog, and I don’t mind admitting that we went through several large bowls of snacks while we waited for our dinner. We could hear strange sounds coming from the kitchen where the volunteer cooks were hard at work. It was nerve-wracking. Then, finally, we were called in.

Soon after we were seated, our first courses were served. One teen received a bowl of rice, which she stared at blankly for a few moments. Another received carrots and a bun, two things with little obvious connection. I was further confused, although somewhat pleased, when I received a piece of pie and some ice cream.

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A MYSTERY DINNER

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

But then everyone noticed that there were no utensils. “Where are my utensils?” we asked in unison. We were directed to little stacks of toothpicks located along the middle of the table. Believe it or not, ice cream can be eaten quite well with a toothpick, but pity the poor fellow who got his corn first! He had to put it into a glass to try to drink it. He didn’t have the sticky interior of a perogie to scoop them up to like I did when my peas arrived.

But despite the increasing strangeness of our meals, we were slowly starting to understand the mystery. Reviewing our original sheets, we saw that we were getting exactly what we had ordered and in exactly the order we had ordered it. Here are some examples: “Oh Well” was water; “Rake” was a fork; “Cactus Country” was dessert; “Ear drops” was corn; “Scaredy Cat” was chicken; “Ben’s dish” was rice; “Tiny Pillows” were perogies; “Guillotine” was a knife; and the locusts turned out to be chocolate turtles. I don’t need to tell you what a relief that was!

Obviously, that’s a lot of food, and only a few of the teens managed to eat all their food. (I can still hear Lora Yap’s nervous voice,

“Um, do I have to finish everything?”) The process was also a little unfair to some. Ezra Martin, for example, got all his utensils and no food for his last course.



After dinner, there was a lot of time for fellowship, and some of us started singing excerpts from musicals (much to the annoyance of others who were trying to engage in conversation).

Everyone agreed that the whole evening was a lot of fun. Other church areas could try something like this. Maybe you could try a mystery lunch or breakfast to be more original. Or perhaps hold it in a mystery location. But whatever you do, you must remember to keep it a mystery, and smile deviously whenever possible. If you remember these things, it will be a success. -UNC

Mystery Dinner
“Waiters” (L-R):
Ryan Rahel, Pat Read,
Judy Read, Tony Wasilkoff.

NEW BEGINNINGS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

- a home page (www.ucg.ca) with some local pages (like Calgary, Vancouver, Edmonton, Okanagan and Prince George).
- a tape distribution program.

With God’s blessings, all of this has come with only a tiny Gideon’s army of about 500. There are no superstars. There are no high-power evangelists. There is a team that works together, seeking Godly consensus.

We did lose the Antions to ABC. The

Wasilkoffs and Whites made personal sacrifices to move in order to cover the vacancy that was left. As an organization in Canada, we have learned to fly on our own and to manage our own affairs. It has been a learning experience for all of us.

I am so thankful that God has provided a spiritual home for brothers and sisters in Christ. The foundations have been laid. It behoves us to continue to build and go forward with God’s work. -UNC

EVOLUTION: A PUBLISHED OBITUARY

BY KEVIN FORD • TORONTO

“AS THE WORLD’S LEADING SECULAR RELIGION, EVOLUTION HAS COME UNDER INCREASING ATTACK ... FROM WITHIN THE SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY.”

THE THEORY OF EVOLUTION HAS BEEN THE fundamental basis of scientific thought for the last century and a half, but its influence extends far beyond science.

Evolution lies at the very core of atheism, for to account for the existence of the incredibly complex and awesome creation that is all around us, the atheist must somehow do away with the need for a Creator. Evolution is his essential bastion of belief, and its demise would be a prospect too appalling to contemplate. The Christian, on the other hand, can derive great comfort from the apostle Paul’s statement in Romans 1:20, “For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things which are made, even his eternal power and Godhead....” This is as true today as in the first century. Creation is truly one of the great proofs of God’s existence and power.

As the world’s leading secular religion, evolution has come under increasing attack in recent years from within the scientific community. Critics traditionally include the so-called “creation scientists,” those professing fundamentalist Christianity and a belief in divine creation, but now include an increasing number of noted scientists who have attacked the theory on purely scientific grounds. Included in this latter group is Michael A. Behe, Professor of Biochemistry at Lehigh University (Pennsylvania), who in 1996 published a book entitled *Darwin’s Black Box* (Simon & Schuster).

Although Dr. Behe seems determined to maintain a clear boundary between science and religion, he claims that the evidence presented in his book proves the impossibility of life having evolved. He does list a few examples of creationist writers getting their facts wrong, but considers that in general the response of evolutionists to the creationist arguments has been totally inadequate.

The title of the book is based on the fact that



biochemistry is a branch of science little more than 50 years old, and that to Darwin, the workings of the cell were a complete mystery – a “black box.” Evolutionists had to concede that for their theory to be credible, science had to show that life, as least at the cellular level, was relatively simple. In fact, the diametric opposite has been found. Here is a partial example of the author’s description of how the eye sees (biochemically speaking):

“When light first strikes the retina a photon interacts with a molecule called 11-cis-retinal, which rearranges within picoseconds to trans-retinal. The change in the shape of the retinal molecule forces a change in the shape of the protein, rhodopsin, to which the retinal is tightly bound....” (*Darwin’s Black Box*, pages 18-19)

This mind-numbing description continues for two and a half more paragraphs, but the explanation is not finished yet! He devotes

continued on page 13

EVOLUTION: A PUBLISHED OBITUARY

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

another two paragraphs to the cell's procedures to turn off the proteins and revert to its previous state. This, he says, is "a sketchy overview" of the biochemistry of vision. According to a footnote, readers who want a fuller version are directed to pages 938-954 of a biochemistry textbook!

Prospective readers should not be put off, however, by the foregoing. For the most part, the text is surprisingly readable and often quite entertaining. He makes liberal use of everyday analogies to explain his points, some of which are quite colourful, such as how a man's neighbour claimed to have jumped across the hundred foot chasm separating their properties! He uses the construction of a mousetrap to explain the concept of an "irreducibly complex system." And he scoffs at one evolutionist's attempt to explain a supposed evolutionary development by likening it to an attempt to explain the workings of a stereo system as "plugging a set of speakers into an amplifier, and adding a CD player, radio receiver and tape deck."

In the second part of the book, phenomena such as blood clotting and antibodies are discussed in detail. Part three includes a presentation of many aspects of scientific history such as the Big Bang theory. Although the author is not a creationist, he appears to offer a very even-handed evaluation of the debate between

evolution and its critics. He states, for example, that theologian William Paley's nineteenth-century work *Natural Theology* is generally considered to have been thoroughly discredited by evolutionist Richard Dawkins and others, yet in his opinion none of Paley's arguments against evolution were ever really answered!

In the concluding paragraph of his book, Dr. Behe hints at the startling conclusions of biochemical research:

"The simplicity that was once expected to be the foundation of life has proven to be a phantom; instead, systems of horrendous, irreducible complexity inhabit the cell. *The resulting realization that life was designed by an intelligence* is a shock to us in the twentieth century who have gotten used to thinking of life as the result of simple, natural laws" (ibid, page 252, emphasis mine).

Dr. Behe is one of a new breed of scientist willing to break the conspiracy of silence within the scientific community on Darwin's flawed theory. As a result of his research, we as Christians can echo more than ever the words of the Psalmist: "For it was you who formed my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; that I know very well" (Psalm 139:13-14, NRSV). -UNC

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ANOTHER ALTERNATIVE TO CREATIONISM?

WITH SCIENCE UNABLE TO ANSWER THE awkward questions evolution does not address, a new school of thought is emerging that tries to explain the origins of the universe.

"Intelligent Design" is a controversial new movement consisting largely of academics and scientists who recognize the Darwinian model of evolution is erroneous. They insist that life must have begun with an "Intelligent Designer."

However, the movement does not acknowl-

edge God as the Creator of the universe, and it tries to marry creation and evolution. It is a hybrid of truth and error.

Agape Press quotes an article in the *New York Times* that says legislators in Michigan and Pennsylvania are working on incorporating intelligent design into the school curriculum. Earlier this year, an hour-long program examining intelligent design was aired on CBC Radio. -UNC

—Ruth Kerr

A WHALE OF A CALL

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

**“RIGHT NOW THE
EARTH BELONGS
TO GOD.”**

Paul writes of God’s plan in Romans 8:16-17: “The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.” He says in verse 29 that humans are to be conformed to the image of His Son, and Hebrews 1:3 says Jesus is the express image of the Father. What an incredible future God intends for mankind. Psalm 37:9 boldly states that “those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth.”

Right now the earth belongs to God. He hears the sounds of His creatures and He rejoices in their response to His call. How can we not appreciate our calling? Animals don’t stop to think about what they are doing, they just do it

because they were programmed to be that way by the Creator. Only man is allowed to choose, to think, to ponder and to determine his way – up to a point. It is incredible that humans try to explain the marvels we observe, through the impossible path of evolution. That path obscures the purpose for our existence, and belittles the responsibility we ought to show.

Seeing an 80,000 pound creature joyfully respond to what God has called it to do helps me stand in awe of His majesty and greatness. Like Job, there are times when the best thing to do is just put your hand over your mouth and watch. God is our Father and He wants to share all He has with His children. He will first make sure those children have learned to love His creation and take care of it according to His way. -UNC

COUNCIL MEETINGS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

On Sunday afternoon, the main focus was to appoint a chairman and vice-chairman. The current chairman, Rainer Salomaa, will end his term on March 31, 2001. A chairman must be selected by secret ballot by a two-thirds majority. Rainer Salomaa was re-appointed as chairman. Robert Berendt was appointed vice-chairman. The vice-chairman, appointed by simple majority, is asked to chair meetings when the chairman is unable to do so.

Rainer Salomaa, as editor of *United News – Canada*, gave each Council member a set of guidelines for writing articles. Our publication

is striving to establish standards for all contributing writers to follow. Since all Council members are required to do a great deal of writing, it was suggested that a Writers’ Workshop be presented at the next Council meeting.

David Palmer completed his term on the Council March 31. He was asked for a few parting words. David gave the history of his becoming a member of United and expressed his appreciation for the opportunity to serve the church. He and his wife, Ghyslaine, are looking forward to having some time to take a real vacation now that he will not have to attend so many meetings. The Council deeply appreciates David’s expertise and looks forward to his input as he continues to chair the Media Committee. -UNC



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DIVINE POWER

POETRY BY ALVINA MARTIN •
TORONTO

The day is drawing to a close,
The evening shades are nigh,
The sun in setting beauty shows
The splendour of the sky.

The moon and stars are set in place,
Each one beams forth its light,
Casting down their welcomed ray
Upon the seas at night.

The sparkling waters coloured bright
With tints of red and gold,
Tells man of God's creative power
To all with truth unfold.

He forms the clouds within the sky
To pour abundant rain,
Upon some dry and withered spot
To yield some grass again.

The tall bare trees in forest lands
Drink in refreshing rain,
Bringing forth at God's command
Their bright green leaves again.

The flowers too have felt once more,
The moisture at their roots,
While breathing in the sun's warm air
Come forth the sturdy shoots.

The earth in abundance too doth yield,
The fruits and herbs for man
That we can gather from the fields
According to God's plan.

God cares for every living thing,
Be it man or bird and beast,
Daily thanks to God we bring,
For this continual feast.



Words to Live By

COMPILED BY ERNIE MCBRATNEY

Doing what's right today means no regrets tomorrow.

To ease another's heartache is to forget one's own.

Short visits make long friends.

If you can't do great things, do small things in a great way.

The steam that blows the whistle isn't driving the wheels.

Don't let yesterday use up too much of today.

Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.

Tact is what a fellow has when he won't change his mind,
but can change the subject.

Many times you find the big apples on top of the basket, but
you must remember the little ones that are holding them.

We search for beauty in distant lands while we crush the
violet beneath our foot.

Blessed is the man who can say that the boy he was
would be proud of the man he is.

Open-mindedness is not the same as empty-mindedness.

BAR CODES NOT WORK OF ANTICHRIST, RUSSIANS SAY

Orthodox Patriarchate Resolves Dispute Over “666” Fears

MOSCOW: (ZT) - Bar codes are not a satanic sign after all, the Russian Orthodox have decided. Following three days of intense debate, the Theological Commission of the Orthodox Patriarchate of Moscow arrived at the conclusion that bar codes do not conceal the “number of the beast,” or “666,” mentioned in the book of Revelation.

The assembly, attended by metropolitans, bishops, theologians and some deputies of the Russian Parliament, was held in the Monastery of the Trinity and St. Sergius in the city of Sergijev Posad (formerly Zagorsk).

The meeting was called after many leaders of the Russian Orthodox clergy expressed doubts when they saw that electronic codes, especially bar codes, are based on a structure of three double bars, at the beginning, middle, end, which add up to six.

Observers added in the “three-ness” factor somehow and concluded that the codes could constitute the dreaded “666.” This hypothesis caused a great debate, to the point that some of the Russian Orthodox faithful threatened a schism.

Revelation 13:17-18 describes the action of the Antichrist, and states, “no one can buy or sell unless he has the mark, that is, the name of the beast or the number of its name. This calls for wisdom: let him who has understanding reckon the number of the beast, for it is a human number, its

number is six hundred and sixty-six.”

A document was written at the end of the assembly, which will be published after it is approved by Patriarch Alexis II.

“We have heard the experts and exegetes, and we have come to the conclusion that in the bar codes and other electronic codes the ‘666’ is not present,” Metropolitan Filaret explained. “According to the opinion of the Holy Fathers, the seal of the Antichrist is imprinted by the Antichrist himself after his coming and after many acknowledge him as God.” Since no one divinizes bar codes, the danger is nonexistent, he indicated.

Nevertheless, Metropolitan Filaret warned about another danger: the processes of globalization, of which electronic codes are a sign, which can really present spiritual dangers. “We must follow them closely, study them, and warn the people of God,” he said. “However, to spread panic today is unworthy of the name Christians.”

CLIMACTIC DOOM PREDICTED UNLESS CHANGES MADE

WHITEHORSE: (BN) - A climate change expert says the earth is facing an “eco-catastrophe” unless measures are taken to rein in pollution.

Rob Macintosh of Alberta’s Pembina Institute says there are only about 10 years left to make the changes. He was speaking during a panel discussion at the Circumpolar Climate Change Summit in Whitehorse. Macintosh says there is no need to study the issue any more – what’s needed now is action!

A Victoria-based expert issued an equally gloomy warning, calling on residents of the North to make sure the rest of the world is aware that the Arctic’s ice is melting.

Guy Dauncy says the width of the permanent ice sheet surrounding the Arctic is shrinking at a rate of three per cent a year. “At that rate,” he said “Arctic ice will be gone in less than a hundred years but the disastrous effect caused by the meltdown will be felt in less than 10 years.”

WORLD POPULATION CONTINUES TO GROW DESPITE DISEASE

UNITED NATIONS: (AP) - The world’s population is projected to boom by another three billion in the next half century. The new estimates from the United Nations suggest Africa and Asia will dwarf Europe, even with the staggering toll of AIDS.

Today there are six billion people in the world.

By 2050, that figure is expected to swell to 9.3 billion, with nearly nine out of every 10 people living in a developing country.

Despite the fact that AIDS is projected to kill hundreds of millions in Africa, the number of people in the world’s poorest countries, mostly in Africa, is expected to triple in the next 50 years.

The United States will grow to nearly 400 million at mid-century from 283 million today. Europe will begin to see a decline in population as early as 2003. -UNC