



When The Day Had Fully Come

Prior to returning to Heaven, Jesus instructed His followers to stay in Jerusalem to wait for the Promise of the Father. Promises are important. Some people make promises but often fail to keep them. Some make promises they never intend to keep. We know a few rare individuals who, when they make a promise, do everything in their power to keep it. For this reason they make very few promises.

The Bible is replete with promises. As early as 1 Kings 8:56 we read, "Blessed be the LORD, that hath given rest unto His people Israel, according to all that He promised: there hath not failed one word of all His good promise, which He promised by the hand of Moses his servant." God issues promises to His people. He impresses upon His servants that His word can be depended on.

To wait for something we really want or need is not easy to do. Delayed gratification is a mark of maturity. Children typically abhor waiting and want the thing promised to be delivered immediately. Adults can have the same desire, but sometimes we aren't ready for something right away. A preparation pro-

cess may be needed to enable us to handle what we are hoping to receive. You may remember the promise of your very first tricycle, scooter or bicycle. You may have had to grow into it. Perhaps your dad had to attach wooden blocks to your tricycle pedals so that you would not have to wait quite so long to ride it!

Another benefit of waiting is to heighten appreciation. As we wait for the day we finally receive our first something, there are the sweet anticipatory thoughts of what it will be like to finally receive the object of our affection. Do you remember the fond thoughts you had about someday having your own

the book *The Day Christ Died* (by Jim Bishop) we read: "The Messiah was a sweet national obsession. It was ecstasy beyond happiness, joy beyond comprehension; it was balm to a weary farmer's bones as he lay with his family waiting for sleep; it was the single last hope of the aged, the thing a child looked to a mountain of snowy clouds to see; it was the hope of Judea in chains; the Messiah was always the promise of tomorrow morning. This solemn surge of singing in the heart of every good Jew was the core of Judea at the time of Jesus. This was the topmost stone in the climb toward eternity."

In Acts 2, the promised Holy Spirit is described as a very special "gift". There is nothing we can do to earn it or to obligate God to give it to us. Even so, there are conditions we must meet, such as repentance, so that we may receive it. James 1:17 assures us that "every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variable-ness, neither shadow of turning."

Not long ago we observed the Passover, the Night to Be Much Observed and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Now we are on a countdown to the Feast of Pentecost. More than ever, we appreciate the wonderful gift of the Holy Spirit and the opportunity to rehearse and review God's plan of salvation and the confidence we can have in each promise made by our Heavenly Father and His Son.



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room, your own bed or your very own bicycle? Or, you might have thought about what it would be like to have your very first pet.

The people of Israel, at the time of Christ's first coming, anticipated His arrival with growing ardour. In

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Anthony Wasilkoff

The Feast of Pentecost

To reveal His plan for mankind, God chose annual Sabbaths (Holy Days) based on the harvest seasons in Palestine (Exodus 23:14-17). The Feast of Pentecost pictures the spring harvest.

Jewish tradition connects the Feast of Pentecost with the giving of the Ten Commandments at Mt. Sinai. Then the nation of Israel was committed to keeping God's Laws, but as we know, they failed. God lamented their failure in Deuteronomy 5:29, "Oh, that they had such a heart in them that they would fear Me and always keep all my commandments that it might be well with them and with their children forever."

What was missing was the power to transform their physical nature to a divine nature. Or, the power to transform their lives to a "new creation" (2 Corinthians 5:17), which Christ prophesied while he was on earth would be given to His people (John 15:26-27; 16:12-14).

This power came in a dramatic way on the Day of Pentecost in A.D. 31 to those who were gathered together in one accord (Acts 2:1-4). Such was the power and transformation that took place, that they were viewed as turning "the world upside down" (Acts 17:6).

Upon repentance, baptism and the laying on of hands by one of His servants, that power is granted to true Christians (Acts 2:37-38) and begins the transformation. One enters a symbolic watery grave and rises to newness of life (Romans 6:1-6; Acts 22:16; Titus 3:5) as a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Once purchased with our Savior's precious blood (Acts 20:28), firstfruits are expected to be undefiled by the world and to be blameless and without fault" (Revelation 14:4-5).

Most of us know these things. Yet, our Creator saw fit for us to annually observe the feasts to be reminded, refreshed and encouraged. The Apostle Paul reminded Timothy to "stir up the gift of God which is in you" referring to His spirit, "a spirit of power and of love and a sound mind" (2 Timothy 1: 6-7).

The expectation is for firstfruits to "be Holy as He is Holy" (1 Peter 1:15), "to go on to perfection" (Hebrews 6:1-3). This power "of love and a sound mind" is what makes it possible to do what the Israelites could not do.

Love defines our Creator (1 John 4:7-9) and must ultimately define us. "No one has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwells in us, and His love is perfected in us (1 John 4:12).



Illustration by Gustav Doré/Shawn Venish

Why must love ultimately define us? It may seem simplistic considering the entirety of what we are to be or become. If God is love and God is a family, then all in the family must be defined by love. Comparing one's life to the Scriptures on "agape" love (1

Corinthians 13; John 3:16) is vital as a part of self-examination.

Let us all "consider how to provoke one another unto love and good works" (Hebrews 10:23-25) includ-

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ing “not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together even more as we see the Day approaching.” We do this not by setting our mind on “high things” (Romans 12:15-17) or thinking too “highly of ourselves” (Romans 12:3) “but soberly,” while thinking on godly things.

Let us meditate on “whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these

things” (Philippians 4:8).

As the Apostle Paul encouraged young Timothy, let us all “stir up the spirit” and strive to truly “provoke one another unto love and good works.”

Michael Erickson

What We Can Learn From Moses

The Days of Unleavened Bread are behind us for another year. They pictured putting sin out of our lives – a process that continues throughout the year. What are we doing to put sin out of our lives? Put another way, what are we doing to rid ourselves of the things that are preventing us from growing spiritually? Let’s look at one aspect – doubt.

Doubt can be a debilitating character flaw. Moses displayed this trait when God chose him to be the leader of the Israelites. In Exodus 3, God talked with Moses about the plight of the Israelites while they were in bondage to the Egyptians. In verse 10, God gave Moses his assignment. In verse 11, Moses was showing signs of doubt when he asked God, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?”

God was preparing a servant, Moses, who would help lead the Israelites out of Egypt.

Moses was very humble to the point of lacking self-confidence and did not see himself as a leader. By doubting God he showed a lack of faith. After all, God knew what He

was doing. God knew the person He was choosing had the potential to be a leader. Moses might have felt insignificant. At times we all do. But, Moses should not have thought that God was making a mistake by choosing him. There were reasons why God performed all the miracles that He did. One was to show Moses how great God was and that Moses had nothing to worry about. God could – and would – take care of him.

For every excuse that Moses came up with, God gave a response. For every doubt that Moses raised, God provided him with reassurance.

Throughout Exodus 3, Moses still expressed doubt. Yet, for every concern that Moses raised, God provided reassurance. The theme of the reassurance was, “Don’t worry, Moses. I’ll take care of you.”

Even so Moses needed more convincing that he was the right person for the job. In Exodus 4, he continued to discuss the situation with God. In spite of the reassurances from God, Moses still had doubts.

Eventually God became upset with Moses’ lack of faith and his constant excuses. Are we the same? Do we exhibit the characteristic of doubt?

Moses was reluctant to take on the task that God had in mind for him. He came up with excuses as to why he was not the right man for the job. But, for each objection Moses came up with, God had a response. Moses should have known that he could

not out-smart God. God does not think things through part way.

Moses came up with several excuses why he doubted that he was the right person for the job that God had chosen for him to do. If we’re not careful, we can do the same.

The first objection was that Moses had a lack of confidence in himself. In Exodus 3:11, Moses said to God, “Who am I?” Allaying his

doubt, God's response was that He would be with Moses as stated in Exodus 3:12.

The second objection Moses came up with was that he did not know how to respond when asked who God was (Exodus 3:13). Perhaps Moses thought he did not know God well enough to describe Him. Moses lacked faith and felt lacking in his relationship with God. God's response came in Exodus 3:14: I AM everything you need. Don't doubt.

The third objection Moses expressed is found in Exodus 4:1: What if people don't listen? Moses felt intimidated. He worried about how he would come across. God's response came in Exodus 4:2-9: They will listen.

The fourth objection Moses raised is found in Exodus 4:10: Moses worried about his speaking ability. God's response is found in Exodus 4:11-12: He asked Moses who made his mouth and thus reassured Moses.

Moses' fifth excuse is found in Exodus 4:13: Why me? Can't you find someone else? Moses felt inadequate and inferior. He was still filled with doubt. He compared himself to others, specifically his brother, Aaron, and decided that he was not good enough. God's response came in verse 14: He would allow Aaron to go with Moses.

For every excuse that Moses came up with, God gave a specific response. For every doubt that Moses raised, God provided him

with reassurance. We should not doubt what God can do. Perhaps we have wondered – as Moses did – why did God choose me? Each one of us can come up with a list of doubts that can keep us from growing spiritually. Nonetheless, we must realize that God has called us and is working with us now. Over time, Moses eventually overcame his doubts and accepted the position that God called him to. We must do the same.

What lesson can we learn from this example? God answered every doubt that Moses put forward. God can do the same for us. We can overcome our doubt if we rely on God and ask Him to help us replace doubt with faith.

Edwin van Pelt

National Conference Update

The National Conference is composed of all UCG-Canada elders plus the two laymembers on the National Council. Currently the National Conference has 20 members. Typically, there is one meeting a year, during which all business is conducted. This past year has been somewhat different due to new government legislation.

In November, the National Council proposed a resolution to cause the Annual Meeting to become compliant with new government regulations. The Annual Meeting must now be no more than 15 months after the last Annual Meeting but no more than six months after the fiscal year end

(March 30). Heretofore, the Annual Meeting has been held in early March. The resolution provided a solution so that by next year, the Annual Meeting can be held in accordance with these new requirements. It also sought to solve the difficulty of having current Council terms end prior to the Annual Meeting when new Council members are appointed by the National Conference. The National Conference ratified the proposed resolution and this year's Annual Meeting will occur on June 23.

Just prior to the fiscal year-end, the National Conference was asked to ballot on the 2013/2014 Strategic Plan, 2013/2014 Operations

Plan and 2013/2014 Budget. These business items are normally on the agenda for the Annual Meeting. Since the fiscal year will begin before the meeting this year, these business items were taken care of by an Action Without a Meeting with 100 percent participation of the National Conference, which is required.

In June, the National Conference will be asked to approve the Auditor's report, appoint an Auditor for the coming year, approve the proposed amended Bylaws and appoint three people to the National Council.

Just Call Me Denny

At the 1996 Feast of Tabernacles in Whistler, British Columbia, Dennis Luker delivered a sermon that had a powerful impact on my wife, Ghyslaine. Following church services that day, we had the opportunity to enjoy lunch with Dennis and his wife, LeeAnn. After shaking hands and an exchange of greetings, he said with a smile “just call me Denny.” And, so began a relationship that went well beyond being colleagues in the ministry. It began a friendship that continued until the day he died, and continues to this day with his beloved wife, LeeAnn.

While Mr. Luker was the pastor of the Seattle and Sedro Woolley, Washington congregations, as well as Regional Pastor for the Pacific Northwest, Ghyslaine and I had the opportunity to spend time with him and his wife several times over the years. At the Feast in Kelowna, we both recall another sermon that left an indelible impression. He closed that powerful message using a portion of the soundtrack from the popular stage production of *Les Miserables* with the lyrics, “We will walk behind the plowshare, we will put away the sword.” His straightforward, honest and sincere way of delivering a message let you feel the passion and dedication he had for Jesus Christ and God’s word.

In March 2007, Ghyslaine and I received an invitation from LeeAnn to attend the Women’s Enrichment weekend in La Conner, Washington, a picturesque community not far from Seattle. Ghyslaine would take part in the weekend seminars and activities, and I was given the privilege and opportunity to de-

liver the Sabbath sermon. The Canadian National Council meetings were scheduled on that same weekend, which posed a dilemma. How could I be involved in the Women’s weekend and still take part in our Canadian National Council meetings?

Denny came to the rescue with the suggestion that we leave after Sabbath, return to their home in Seattle and connect to the Council meetings by teleconference, which is what I did. It also gave me the opportunity to share his company, and the evening ended with his favourite dessert: vanilla ice cream.

Then, on the Sunday morning when the National Council meeting resumed, we had to depart Seattle to meet our wives, since their weekend seminar was complete.

This posed another dilemma: staying involved in the Council session while we were driving. Denny offered the use of his cell phone and we headed for La Conner in his truck. With my briefcase and notes on my lap and the cell phone in hand, I managed to stay connected to the meeting in Toronto, which continued even after we arrived and parked the truck. This is just another example of Denny’s outpouring love and compassion for the work of the Church.

Just months prior to his selection as President in 2010, both Denny and LeeAnn were guests at the National Council meetings held in Abbotsford, British Columbia. He addressed the Council on the subject of stress in the ministry, again displaying his love and concern for fellow ministers and brethren alike.

During the Festival coordinators meetings at the Home Office in Cincinnati in February 2012, I had the privilege of sharing lunch with the Lukers, and asked Denny if he intended to let his name stand for another term as President. He replied “It’s up to the Council of Elders.” He had no idea that it would be his health that would determine the decision.



photo by Anthony Wasilkoff

I spent time with him in their home, and both he and LeeAnn shared time in our home. So it was certainly a privilege for Ghyslaine and I to attend a very moving memorial in his honour on March 30, 2013.

Dennis Luker was a humble and deeply committed Christian. He was a loving compassionate man strongly dedicated to his God, his Saviour Jesus Christ, his wife LeeAnn, his family and his Church.

He was a good friend to Canada. Like our American friends, and our friends around the world, “Denny” Luker will be greatly missed by us.

David Palmer

Using our Talents to the Maximum

As we approach Pentecost, it is a good time for us to take stock to determine how we are going to better ourselves in order to continue to do God's work.

God does not want us to be mediocre or lukewarm but focused and deliberate with goals in sight and action taken to the max.

Some may feel quite content with the past year and are eagerly looking forward to the Feast. Others may feel that they could have done better in whatever area they are reviewing such as spiritual growth, dealing with a certain negative emotion or an attitude. The desire is for self-improvement as well as to better serve others.

There needs to be recognition and application of our talents – those gifts which have been given to us by God to be used, enhanced and applied on an ongoing basis.

Each of us has talents that are as varied as we are. George Lucas, the movie-maker, remarked: “Everybody has talent; it’s just a matter of moving around until you’ve discovered what it is.” The key is not in having a particular talent or even applying it, but in applying it to the maximum.

We cannot be content with reaching the minimum needed to get the job done or complete an assignment. We need to do the best we can with what we have. It is our duty.

Woodrow Wilson, a former American president, said: “You are not here merely to make a living. You are here in order to enable the world to live more amply, with greater vision, with

a finer spirit of hope and achievement. You are here to enrich the world, and you impoverish yourself if you forget the errand.”

Matthew 5:13 states, “You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.”

God does not want us to be mediocre or lukewarm but focused and deliberate with goals in sight and action taken to the max. He does not want us to take a Laodicean attitude – lacking zeal and just coasting.



photo by Mitchell Mess

Revelation 3:15-16 says, “I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth.”

We must commit ourselves to apply what He has given us or step aside and let someone else do the job.

Jesus illustrated this principle in Luke 19. Here every servant received one mina and was instructed to increase its worth. The Master delivered praise and admonishment to those servants based on what they did with what they received. Those who had used the money (talent) to the best of their ability were rewarded accordingly. He was very displeased with the servant who wrapped his talent in a handkerchief and was too fearful to use it. The Master proclaimed to this servant, “For I say to you, that to everyone who has will be given; and from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him” (Luke 19:26).

The servant who did not accomplish anything because of fear thought that what he did was right. He was lukewarm – he took the Laodicean middle of the road attitude. He tried to make his failure seem positive, but that is not what God wants. Jesus showed that God expects us to use and improve upon what He has given us and to glorify Him in so doing.

We, too, can take the approach of saying that whatever we do is okay – good enough (for us that is). Or, we can focus on our talents and those of others – recognize them, appreciate them – use them to the maximum without limit and then realize our reward of service and fidelity to the work of the Lord. We can then know that we have done all that we could with what we had, so that we too can be pleased with the level of satisfaction which comes not from our mouth – but God's.

Dale van Zant

Miss Manners Rebooted

Etiquette is the code of behaviour that guides social interaction. The rules can vary significantly from country to country and age to age. Generally speaking, rules of etiquette are established to show respect and kindness to others around you.

“Don’t speak with your mouth full!” “Remember to say ‘please’ and ‘thank you’”. These were some of the more common rules of etiquette most of us were taught as children. They still apply. However, with recent technology, new etiquette rules have emerged.

“Netiquette” is a relatively new term and is short for network (or Internet) etiquette. It is a series of guidelines for using the Internet, email, texting, etc. We can send the wrong message without even knowing it. For instance, typing an entire message in all caps signifies that you are angry and is the equivalent of yelling at the person to whom you send the message – whether in an email, by text or other social media.

Email

Emails, even those sent privately, may accidentally or intentionally become public. Thus, it is essential to be very careful of not only what you put in any electronic message but also how you word the message. It is highly recommended that, before you send it, you re-read, edit and spell-check each message to be sure it cannot be misunderstood. If you must include something private, be sure to avoid using

names or particulars that would identify an individual in case it is accidentally sent (or forwarded) to the wrong person.

It is easy to accidentally send a message to someone not intended. Always double check the recipient line to be sure it is being sent to the correct person or persons. Generally, it is not acceptable to forward someone’s private email without his/her express permission. Resist the temptation to forward chain mail. This can lead to someone flagging your email address as spam.

Cell Phones

It is generally considered discourteous to have cell phones ring at church, in theatres, in restaurants, in classrooms and during meetings. Common courtesy says to turn off your ringer if it will bother others around you, to step away from others when making or receiving calls and to avoid talking about personal or confidential things if people might overhear.

Social Media

Social media is becoming increasingly popular for youths and even for seniors. It is a quick and convenient way to stay in touch with friends and family. Are there, or should there be, a new set of rules for this method of communicating? An important reminder for Social Media is to maintain the same standards of behaviour online that you would follow in person when you are in a public place. Ask yourself if you would share all

the little details of your life if you were in a group of not only friends but also strangers. Remember that sarcasm and some humour may be misunderstood online when people cannot see you.



photo by Paul Wasilkoff

Always respect other people’s privacy. A good rule of thumb is to never post photos of people without their permission. There are very good reasons that some people do not wish to have their photos posted and to do so may cause offense to a friend or acquaintance. Also, be aware that anything you post can be captured and reposted by others. So any photos you post may be used in ways you never intended.

It is important not to post yours or anyone else’s personal information including home address, home phone number, birth date, email address, social insurance numbers, etc. This could assist someone trying to steal an identity.

Know the difference between sending a message to someone and posting on someone’s “wall.” If

you post on someone's wall, anyone visiting the person's profile can see the message. When you send a message, only that person can see it.

Generally, it is unacceptable to be posting when you are at work. That is using your employer's time for personal pursuits. You may also be acting contrary to work policies. Likewise, it is unwise to post criticisms of your boss, the com-

pany you work for or your fellow workers. Some employers are now checking social media and employees have been fired as the result of their postings.

If you use instant messaging, remember that the person can easily copy and paste what you write. So, be cautious about writing anything that you would not want others to see. Remember to ask the person if they are busy before starting a con-

versation. Always keep your message simple and brief.

These new rules are an extension of the old rules of etiquette. They show consideration for others and allow you to put your best foot (or message) forward. They also allow you to enjoy easier methods of staying in touch with friends and family while avoiding pitfalls.

Linda Wasilkoff

National Council Meeting—March 11

The National Council once again utilized the WebEx program for a video conference on March 11. This was the first of four meetings required each calendar year. All Council members and all the officers were online. Paul Wasilkoff assisted with technology as required.

Chairman (Rainer Salomaa) reviewed the minutes of the December 2012 meeting noting that since that meeting, the Council had to adjust the approved 2013/2014 Budget and also move the June National Council meetings forward by one day. No errors or omissions were noted for the Minutes and so were approved as recorded.

Anthony Wasilkoff reported that UCG-Canada has retained a law firm to review the Church's bylaws for compliance with the Canadian Not-For-Profit Corporations Act. He also related that even though the physical location of the church's post office box has

moved, we have been able to keep the same address. The new post office location is actually a little closer to the church office.

There was a discussion regarding online donations. The Treasurer (Edwin van Pelt) reported that the staff had looked into that possibility a few years ago but did not find a feasible way to do so in Canada. Paul Wasilkoff explained that the Home Office had found very few companies in the U.S. that would provide reasonable rates. He mentioned that there is a set fee for each transaction and an additional percentage whenever a credit card is used. There will be a need for further research to see if there is now a company willing to provide this service for UCG-Canada at a reasonable rate.

Michael Erickson gave an update on behalf of the CNCA Compliance Task Force. He noted that additional policies will still be needed. The Task Force has made

some technical edits to create consistency. An example is that the Bylaws previously used two terms "chairman" and "chairperson". All references have now been changed to "Chairman" which is a more universally accepted title.

The term of one member of the Amendment Committee was ending March 31. The Council reappointed Charles Desgrosseilliers for a three-year term.

One of the yearly duties of the National Council is to approve the agenda for the Annual Meeting of the National Conference, which will occur on Sunday, June 23 this year. The Chairman proposed an agenda, which was unanimously adopted. This year the annual meeting will be held when most elders are in Toronto for a bi-annual ministerial conference and will, for the first time, take place at the National Office.

Linda Wasilkoff

Member Profile: Thelma Taylor

It was 93 years ago that the little backwater town of Fitch's Bay, Quebec, welcomed Thelma Heath into this world.

She grew up on her grandparents' farm near East Hatley. She learned all that she could from her herbalist grandmother and veterinarian grandfather, who also tended to the farm.



(Source: Pat Delfino)

On February 14, 1934, fourteen-year-old Thelma Heath became Thelma Taylor when she was asked for her hand in marriage by twenty-eight-year-old hired hand, Harold Taylor. The two rode off in a horse and buggy to start their new life in a home they literally built with their own hands in North Hatley. One year later the happy couple welcomed a baby boy into their home. As the years went on, the family of three grew to a family of seven – three strapping boys and two beautiful

girls. “Harold was a man of the world. I raised six children, not five” commented Mrs. Taylor in good spirit.

Mrs. Taylor remembers reading the family Bible in the evenings with her Grandmother. At age nine, her school teacher gave her a small New Testament Bible of her own. Religion was always a part of her life, but it wasn't until the early 1970s that she first heard Garner Ted Armstrong and in 1978 they first attended services in Montreal.

Without even knowing it, Mrs. Taylor has inspired those around her. Mr. and Mrs. Desco-teaux of the Montreal congregation remember pulling over in a blizzard, about to give up on attending services for the Spring Holy Days in Montreal, when Mrs. Taylor drove right past them in her little orange car. Sharon Decoteaux remembers saying, “If Mrs Taylor can make it, we can make it!”

It was also Mrs. Taylor's knowledge of natural remedies that helped to cure Beverly Hebert when she couldn't find relief with doctors' prescriptions.

Mrs. Taylor worked as a cook at different schools, while Mr. Tay-

lor was a master at all trades. “He could milk a cow, hammer a nail and put on a coat of paint.” The couple spent their free time listening to Vernon Delheart's ballads on the radio and railroad songs on the record player. “Harold didn't dance, so I didn't dance,” Mrs. Taylor says. The couple would go to the movies and “It was really something if you could make it to Douglas Fairbanks pictures,” said Mrs. Taylor.

Mrs. Taylor attributes her long and healthy life to the fact that she didn't drink, smoke and always ate healthily--although she loved her sister's home-made macaroni and cheese and her grandmother's neighbours' strawberry ice cream. They would get a block of ice and make ice cream on Sundays with a hand cranked ice-cream maker and the delicious milk of Jersey cows.

Throughout the 93 years that she's lived, she has seen a lot of change. Mrs. Taylor remembers what it was like to grow up without electricity, running water and plumbing. She walked two miles each way to attend school and drove two hours each way to attend Worldwide Church of God services. However, if you ask her, she will tell you she never has any complaints--only happy memories. Mrs Taylor has accomplished a lot and is respected by those who have been blessed enough to have met her, but she still hopes to make it to Ireland one day. “I'm not a drinker, but I'm 90 percent Irish!”

“Count Fifty” from page 16

He was the first of mankind to be made immortal, but others must soon now follow, and they are likened to the early harvest in Palestine, the firstfruit of the earth each year. Now, if Jesus Christ was born exactly on time, and

died exactly on time according to God’s pre-ordained purpose, then we may be sure that He will return exactly on time, not a day sooner or later. We do not need to know when, only to be sure that that day is fixed on God’s Calendar. When that breathtakingly marvelous day comes, the faith-

ful words of a lovely old hymn will be fulfilled; when “with the vision glorious her longing eyes are blest, and God’s true Church victorious shall be the Church at rest.”

George Carter

Beyond Today Television Update

UCG-Canada has reached another milestone. We have now been airing the Beyond Today television program for seven years. During that time we have received over 28,800 responses at an average of 79.9 per week. Here are a few encouraging statistics.

Breakdown of annual responses:

Year 1 – 1,761 (33.9 per week)
 Year 2 – 2,037 (39.2 per week)
 Year 3 – 3,496 (67.2 per week)
 Year 4 – 3,457 (66.5 per week)
 Year 5 – 5,993 (113.1 per week)
 Year 6 – 6,644 (127.8 per week)
 Year 7*- 5,444 (113.4 per week)
 (*for the first 48 weeks)

The increase in responses can be credited to a growing audience, improved air time and increased quality of the program.

Ten highest average responses per program by booklet offered:

169.7 – *Bible Study Course*
 144.5 – *What Does the Bible Teach About Clean and Unclean Meats?*

141.2 – *God’s Holy Day Plan: The Promise of Hope for All Mankind*
 119.0 – *What Does the Bible Teach About Tithing?*
 110.3 – *Managing Your Finances*
 108.9 – *The Ten Commandments*
 104.9 – *Middle East in Bible Prophecy*
 102.9 – *Heaven & Hell: What Does the Bible Really Teach?*
 102.0 – *What Happens After Death?*
 101.2 – *How to Understand the Bible*

The programs offering the above booklets account for almost one-third of all the booklet requests received.

Ten highest responses by program:

1. “Egypt in Bible Prophecy” (October 30–November 5, 2011) received 235 requests for *The Middle East in Bible Prophecy*.
2. “Change Your Life Story” (January 20–26, 2013) received 222 requests for the *Bible Study Course*.
3. “The Ten Commandments” (April 22–28, 2012) received 208 requests for *The Ten Commandments*.

4. “Egypt in Bible Prophecy” (April 2–9, 2011) received 200 requests for *The Middle East in Bible Prophecy*.
5. “Managing Your Finances” (November 14–20, 2010) received 198 requests for *Managing Your Finances*.
6. “God’s Roadmap” (November 27–December 3, 2011) received 197 requests for *God’s Holy Day Plan*.
7. “Europe on the Threshold” (October 23–29, 2011) received 187 requests for *The Book of Revelation Unveiled*.
8. “The Sabbath in History and Prophecy” (April 7–13, 2013) received 186 requests for *Sunset to Sunset: God’s Sabbath Rest*.
9. “Getting Control of Your Money” (July 11–17, 2010) received 185 requests for *Managing Your Finances*.
10. “Mid-east Family Feud” (November 11–17, 2012) received 184 requests for *The Middle East in Bible Prophecy*.

Edwin van Pelt

Bible Study Aides

From time to time, each of us may be searching for new ideas for our daily Bible Study. While we have the daily Bible Reading program online (www.ucg.ca), which gives a schedule for reading the Bible through once a year, sometimes more is needed.

Many have utilized Bible programs with good success while others still prefer using actual concordances, Bible dictionaries and Study Bibles.

For more ideas, why not search out what is on our websites! You can find study guides on exploring the Bible, Bible references to various topics, God's plan, and the Armor of God series at www.free-biblestudyguides.org.

Teen Bible study guides can be found at www.ucg.org/teen-bible-study-guides/. They offer subjects that are meaningful for youth. The guides cover various subjects including the Ten Commandments.

At www.ucg.org/bible-faq/ you can find answers to frequently asked Bible questions about God, Jesus Christ, prophecy, the end time, the second coming, the Antichrist, God's plan, the purpose for your life, salvation, grace, law, faith, creation, evolution, prayer, Bible study, relationships, Christian living and more. There are answers to questions such as "Do I Need to Be Re-Baptized?", "Can one be a Christian and still suffer depression?" and "Is the Kingdom of God 'within you?'"

Do you remember the old Bible reading program that included a commentary? These are posted at bible.ucg.org/bible-commentary/ and include commentary for the Old Testament books. Discussions are underway to determine the feasibility of extending the commentary through the New Testament.

Of course, if you have not already done so, you might also consider the twelve-lesson Bible Course. The lessons are a good review and you do not need to have internet access to have them. You can either request them from the National Office, or pick them up from your local church library.

UNC

National Office Update

Each summer all international offices are asked to submit an update to the Home Office. The standardized report compares the current year to the previous year in a number of areas. While we will not publish the report that will be sent to the Home Office, we thought readers might be interested in some of the information.

This past year seven pastors and 11 non-salaried elders served 21 congregations and five outlying Bible study/video groups. Attendance in these groups ranges from under ten to around 80. The average total weekly Sabbath service attendance is 526 while the average holy day attendance is 631.

Across Canada, we have 386 baptized members who have submitted

membership forms. There are actually more members, but we can only list those people as member who have formally declared their membership. So far this year, ten people have been baptized and added to the church membership.

There are four Feast of Tabernacles sites in Canada again this year. Last year the total attendance for the feast in Canada was 583. Many of our members transfer to sites outside Canada, and we have others who transfer to Canadian feast sites. This year we have a new site in Gros Morne, Newfoundland.

The subscription list for *The Good News* magazine has had slow but relatively steady growth from just over 11,000 in 2007 to slightly over 19,700 for the May/June issue. Four

times a year we send subscriber development letters to portions of the subscriber list and offer free booklets or the Bible Course. These ongoing letters help us to qualify our subscriber list so that *The Good News* is only sent to those who still actually to read it.

Canada has sought to be as self-sufficient as possible. While we no longer receive funds from the U.S., *The Good News* is provided and mailed free of charge to us. This year we have started to pay a surcharge for booklets we receive. We also assist some of the international areas and the U.S. by providing space on our Internet server. Last year, one staff member along with several members, assisted in French translation of booklets and other literature.

National Office Staff



Meet the Hamilton Congregation

Situated on the shores of Lake Ontario, Hamilton is a picturesque city. Within the greater Hamilton area, you can find Royal Botanical Gardens, several waterfalls and a portion of the historic Bruce Trail.

Although the Hamilton congregation is small (about 20), there is a huge age spread with the oldest member being over 100 and the youngest aged 11. As in many other areas, a number of the brethren can no longer attend services regularly and some are simply unable to attend any service due to advanced age and poor health. Our one youth is an integral part of the group and assists with picking up hymnals

after services and helping in other ways. He is greatly missed when he is away!

Since the members live so far apart, it has not been possible for any member to host the Night To Be Much Observed in their home. This year, for the first time, the group celebrated this special occasion with a pot-luck meal at the hall where services are usually held. The hall has a lovely kitchen with two gas ranges, plenty of dishes and cutlery.

Ladies, with help from some of the men, decorated the tables with linen table cloths, fresh flowers,

blue candles and blue and white napkins. The meal included fish, beef, chicken, turkey and lamb. A lack of variety was not a problem, even though even there were only 21 present.

As the meal concluded, Eric Frandsen led the group in some table topic questions with the Night To Be Much Observed as the theme. Almost everyone, from youth to seniors, took part in the lively discussion.

The congregation meets in Hamilton the first three Sabbaths of the month. The other Sabbaths they can attend either the Toronto or Kitchener congregations – both within about an hour's drive from Hamilton.

After services each week, it has become a tradition to set up two tables around which the congregation enjoys a light lunch to extend their time together. If you are in the area, please stop by. You will be warmly received!



Members in Hamilton eating together for the Night to be Much Remembered.
(photo by Anthony Wasilkoff)

Linda Wasilkoff

Information You Can Use

While the administrative functions of UCG-Canada are executed by the staff in the National Office, it is actually the National Council (board) that is responsible for establishing the direction for the work of the church here in Canada.

Do you know who the members of the National Council are? Do

you know what committees the National Council has and who are on the committees? Even more importantly, do you know where you can find this information, which can change every year?

Anytime you want to know who is on the National Council or which committee a certain member is on, you can find the

answers on our website. Go to <http://www.ucg.ca/about/national-council>. There you can always find updated information about the governing board of the United Church of God – Canada.

The next scheduled update is the end of June.

News From Across Canada

Dancing with the Stars Social

After Sabbath on January 26, the Toronto congregation held its annual dance social. But this time it was not just any dance social, it was a costume dance social!

As everyone arrived before services, we saw many with bags containing secret and perhaps not-so-secret costumes. An unintended guessing game ensued as to who would be what (or who). After our spiritually nourishing Sabbath service, we had our physical nourishment during a potluck and some fellowship.



The author posing as a loofah. (photo by Gary Haynes)

Once the sun slid below the horizon, the costumes came out. We had a wide range of characters, ranging from 50's girls, to a hippie, pirates, mint chocolate-chip ice cream, an ice princess, Angry Birds, and a Loofah. Even Mary Poppins and the Queen of Hearts graced us with their presence, along with other wonderful homemade costumes sported by the brethren.

Many games were played such as the oh-so-popular musical chairs,

statue dance, and the limbo. There was a treasure chest piñata for the children. The night was emceed by the lovely duo of Trish Romeo and Donna Checca (a pirate and hula girl, respectively).

Everyone danced to lively modern music, slow classics, and social dance tunes such as the YMCA and the Macarena (to which there was a quick dance lesson so everyone could join in). It seemed the night was too short and the dancing shoes were just getting warmed up!

By the end of the evening, gift cards were given out as prizes for best costumes, after which everyone reverted back to their non-costumed selves. All in all, it was an energetic and enjoyable night for everyone.

Jessica Schut

Annual Women's

Enrichment Weekend

Each year in early March, the UCG-Seattle and UCG-Sedro Woolley congregations hold a women's weekend in the picturesque Washington state community of LaConner, famous for its Tulip Festival.

The event is often attended by members from Canada. This year Jana Kmodras and Marlina Escasinas, of the Vancouver congregation, were in attendance.

The weekend's theme, "Navigating Life with Wisdom," was comprised of several seminar subjects



Enrichment Weekend attendees fellowshiping in the hall.

(photo by Michelle Cabrera)

relating to women in God's church including "Wisdom of the Ages," "The Fruit of Godly Wisdom" and "The Journey of Wisdom in Everyday Life."

UCG-Seattle pastor, Steve Shafer, delivered the Sabbath message.

Two ladies from the Vancouver Island congregation, Wendy Corrigan and Lily Leppky, attended the Women's weekend in Portland, Oregon.

David Palmer

Southern Ontario

Maple Social

The yearly announcement once again went out to all congregations in the southern Ontario region inviting brethren to take part in the annual spring sapping of maple trees. It was time for the Maple Syrup Social at the Martin family farm located in the region of Owen Sound. Car-pooling was arranged by the Toronto congregation to allow all brethren wishing to attend to have a ride.

For some, the arrival at the Martin Family farm was a novel experience with the scent of fresh country air, a dirt road along a rolling hill that led us down to the farm yard and the welcome of your typical farm dog in front of the house that was built in the 1800's. City folk aged from nine to 97 walked through the front door of the Martin's home to be greeted by big wonderful smiles from the host family.

Upon walking into the kitchen, members were greeted by other brethren who were "early arrivers." However, the more alluring greeting came from the wonderful scent of the homemade flat cakes – whole wheat pancakes made from scratch. So unique was this eye-opening experience that people were surprised that Esther uses real wood to generate the cooking heat in her very large wood burning cast iron stove.



Having fun during the hay ride. (photo by Ezra Martin)

The outdoor adventure began with a tractor-pulled wagon. The majority of visitors enjoyed a cushiony ride sitting atop bales of hay as they were transported through muddy fields and dense woods on the farm property. The

destination was to the maple syrup production cabin with its chimney billowing smoke. The adventurers came to discover that the smoke came from the burning wood used to produce heat to evaporate the water in the sap that was accumulated and funnelled through an elaborate network of tubing from trees on the property.

In the cabin, Melvin Martin described the production process. The weather conditions play an integral part in the volume of maple syrup produced. For most, this was their first experience observing maple syrup being produced. Each adventurer was able to sample the newly brewed syrup. Melvin poured some maple syrup in a bin with snow. After it cooled, everyone was treated to freshly made toffee. Prior to the return trip home, a number of members purchased commercially packaged Canadian maple syrup from the farm.

While most were on their adventure, a very small group of brethren remained in the kitchen to fellowship and keep the Toronto congregation's eldest member, Millicent James, company. After warm loving hugs all around, it was time for the sad moment of separation and the need to head back to the reality of the city life. The caravan ride back home was relaxing. Brethren were thankful to God for the nature He created, allowing us to both enjoy its scenic beauty and bountiful food sources.

Bill Dimovski & Gaetan St-Denis

Calgary Winter Social

Twenty-nine Calgary brethren attended a winter social at Lake Sundance on Sunday, January 13. The weather conditions were ideal for those who skated, played hockey and tobogganed.



The cold couldn't dampen their spirits! (photo by Mary-Anne Martens)

Rainer and Claudia Salomaa opened up their home, which is close by, for food and drink. It was a wonderful opportunity to fellowship and exercise.

Mary-Anne Martens

Summer Camp

Come and enjoy a family oriented preteen camp situated on the Davis farm near Darwell, Alberta. Darwell is a 50-minute drive west of Edmon-



Taking aim at Camp Wildrose. (photo by Wayne Ward)

ton. This year's camp dates are July 21-24.

Children (ages 5 to 13) attend as campers, but often bring their families along, making the experience one of a big, happy family! Adults and teenagers participate as camp leaders, teaching and assisting in the activities.

The camp offers a variety of activities including Christian Living classes, canoeing, archery, crafts, nature exploration, orienteering, soccer, teamwork challenges, theater games and outdoor survival skills. Christian Living classes are taught twice a day, emphasizing building our godly character traits. In the evening we enjoy a big campfire with special fireside treats, sing-alongs, and charades. On the last day of camp, we celebrate with an old fashioned picnic that is complete with fun competitions, such as sack races, pie-eating contests, and tug-of-war matches.

For more information or to view a brief video of last year's Camp Wildrose, go to www.ucgedmonton.org. To obtain a registration package, please email Susan Davis at sdavis@baydrywall.com and include a list of names of all who will be attending the camp (including family members and volunteers) and the campers' ages, so the right registration package can be sent to you.

Susan Davis

Engagement

Pat and Marie-Anne Delfino of the Montreal, Québec, congregation are happy to announce the engagement of their daughter, Jessica,

to Duncan Robertson. Duncan is the son of Mark and Ilena Robertson of Brisbane, Australia.



Duncan Robertson and Jessica Delfino.
(photo by Pat Delfino)

The couple have set May 26, 2013, as their wedding date.

Marie-Anne Delfino

Ottawa Baptisms

Three baptisms took place on February 2 in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Moulton. This occasion was made extra-special for them because two of those being baptized were their grandson and his wife (William and Rosanna Moulton). The third person was Jessica Delfino of the Montreal church, who along with her family drove in for the occasion.



William and Rosanna Moulton and Jessica Delfino.
(photo by Paula Horlick)

Each of the newly baptized individuals had been brought up in the church. Needless to say, family members are most happy with their decision.

Paula Horlick

St. John's Baptisms

For most Sabbaths and many Holy Days, the St. John's brethren do not have a Pastor or elder with them. This year they rejoiced during the Passover season because their Pastor, Dennis Horlick, was able to be there for Passover and the First Day of Unleavened Bread.



Patrick Walsh, Dennis Horlick and Jenny Rickert.
(photo by Paula Horlick)

On this occasion, his wife, Paula, was able to accompany him. The Sabbath of March 23 was the date of "new beginnings" for two of the brethren! For several weeks prior to his trip, Mr. Horlick had conducted pre-baptismal counseling by Skype. Many members and family joined to celebrate the baptism of Jenny Rickert and Patrick Walsh. It was the highlight of an exciting day which saw services in the morning followed by an Open House with four new people attending.

Paula Horlick

Count Fifty Days

Mortal man faces an insurmountable obstacle in his multifarious attempts to understand who or what God is, especially as it relates to the matter of eternity. Man exists within fairly strict time limits, but God is self-existent and all embracing – beyond the bounds of space-time and the limits of the cosmos, all of which He created.

However, Jesus Christ is called the Alpha and the Omega - the beginning and the end – but is described as such only in relation to mankind, since we are created by Him and for Him (John 1:3, Colossians 1:16). We are not here by accident. Theories about evolution without intelligence, design, or purpose may safely be consigned to the wastebasket of pseudo science.

Jesus Christ was slain as the Lamb of God, precisely on time to the day and hour almost 2,000 years ago. He gave Himself in sacrifice to redeem us from the penalty of sin, which is eternal death, and gives us the opportunity of eternal life (Romans 6:23). Exactly three days and three nights after His lifeless body was placed in the tomb, our Lord was resurrected to everlasting glory as the firstfruit of those who have fallen asleep (1 Corinthians 15:20, 23).

He had been asked for a sign, but the only one He gave – disregarding all the marvelous miracles that He performed – was the sign of the prophet Jonah. “For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth” (Matthew 12:40).

We know that there cannot be three days and three nights between Friday afternoon and Sunday morning. However, the crucifixion and resurrection did not happen on those days anyway, despite popular misconceptions.

God does not act haphazardly, but proceeds with great purpose and forethought. The Sabbaths and Holy Days were in place before He created Adam (Genesis 1:14) and provide an annual review of His plan, which Christ and His disciples followed, but is lost on most people today. The Hebrew word “seasons” in that verse means “appointed times” or Holy Day seasons, three times in the year, not the four seasons as such.

So time, as we know it, applies in particular to the creation of mankind. The time is soon coming when the first humans will be made immortal to emerge into the full light of eternal life as spirit beings and children of God. This was the plan from the beginning as we see in Genesis 1:26, “Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.’” Jesus Christ became a man precisely in order to make this possible. He was the first man ever to go on into immortality (1 Timothy 6:16) and as such is the first of the firstfruits of mankind to be harvested.

In the Bible, God uses the analogy of harvests to picture stages in His great Plan of Salvation. During the Days of Unleavened Bread, a special offering called the Wavesheaf had to be made before harvesting could begin. It was made on the day following the weekly

Sabbath, a Sunday as we name days today (Leviticus 23:10, 11) and then, from the day that the wave sheaf was offered, seven weeks were to follow, counting fifty days to the Sunday after that Sabbath (verse 15). That fiftieth day would be the Feast of Pentecost, the second of the appointed times, or “seasons” to be observed by God’s people. It is also called the Day of the Firstfruits (Numbers 28:26) which adds an essential element when understood in context.

This is a Sunday, and the fiftieth day counting from the weekly Sabbath that falls during the Passover season. It is not the day following the First Day of Unleavened Bread as most Jews typically observe it – so that Pentecost is always on Sivan 6 according to their calendar following a mistaken tradition taken from what happened under Joshua in the first year that the tribes of Israel entered the Promised Land (Joshua 5). That year the First Day of Unleavened Bread fell on a weekly Sabbath (Saturday, so making it a double Sabbath) and Joshua was then quite correct in counting from the following day. It seldom works out that way, and certainly the Bible does not instruct us to count from the High Day Sabbath. If we incorrectly follow the Jewish tradition, then it is possible that we might be early or late in calculating the proper date for Pentecost!

What is most important is that Pentecost connects the Church directly to Jesus Christ and His resurrection, something that the Israelites of old knew nothing about.

See “Count Fifty” on page 10