

A NEWSLETTER OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF GOD - CANADA



United News Canada

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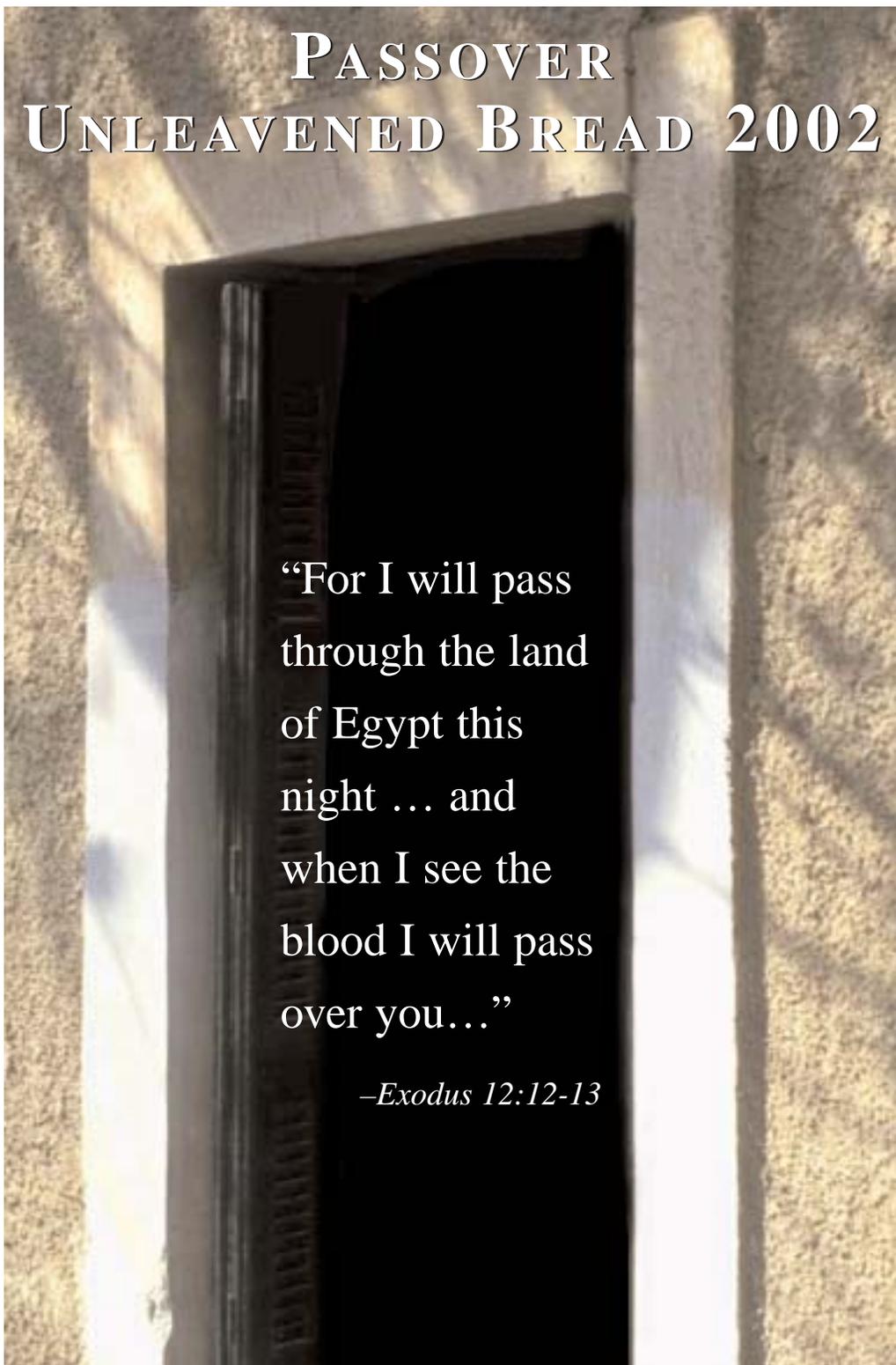
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PASSOVER UNLEAVENED BREAD 2002

“For I will pass
through the land
of Egypt this
night ... and
when I see the
blood I will pass
over you...”

—Exodus 12:12-13



FEAST PLANNING BEGINS EARLY

BY RAINER SALOMAA • EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



OUR OPERATIONS MANAGER, Anthony Wasilkoff, and I had a chance to join our American counterparts in Tampa, Florida, for a day of meetings for all of the United States Festival Coordinators. Topics covered included: The Fundamentals of Feast-Keeping; The Role of the Feast Coordinator; Housing; Tape Duplicating; Senior Citizens' Activity; Family Fun Show; Dance and Other Social Activities; Music; Youth Day Ideas; Legal Issues; Invitations to Others Keeping the Feast Nearby; Dress Codes for Social Activities; Attendance, Web Cast Locations; Housing Negotiations; Festival Surveys, and the Status of the Festival Coordinators' Manual.

It was a wonderful experience to rub shoulders with our peers and to enjoy the Florida sunshine and record-breaking temperatures. We were extended an invitation to go out into the estuary for a brief dolphin quest.

Following the Festival Coordinators' meetings, we had a chance to attend a RCMA (Religious Conference Management Association) conference for three days. This is a conference for conference planners and this year was their 30th anniversary. Last year, the meetings were conducted in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and next year they are scheduled for Charlotte, North Carolina.

There were close to 700 exhibitors and well over a thousand conference planners in attendance.

The day before the conference officially began, we had an opportunity for a behind-the-scenes tour of the *Tampa Tribune* newspaper, as well as the local NBC television affiliate and their on-line news service, all of which were located in the same complex. We heard from professionals who gave pointers on getting material out to the public via television and newspapers.

One of the people who spoke to us was Michelle Bearden. She is a well-known religious reporter for both television and newspapers. Ms. Bearden gave us examples of the types of stories that tend to get into the media.

There were many excellent presentations and tutorials during the two days of the conference. The theme was "Currents of Change" and we heard from people like Willie Jolley who spoke on the subject, "It Only Takes a Minute... To Change," Janet Lapp, PhD on "Plant Your Feet Firmly In Mid-Air," and James F. Hennig, PhD on "Miracles, Secrets and Ragpickers."

There were excellent break-out tutorials on subjects covering negotiating, meeting planning, team-building, hotel revenue and management, the internet jungle, maintaining a healthy lifestyle while travelling, hotel contracts, meeting via the internet, using video creatively, legal issues of cyberspace, stress management, showing razzle-dazzle, working with volunteers, and using shuttle transportation.

It was a wonderful opportunity to network, to represent the Church and to hone up on meeting planning skills, especially since we are so heavily involved in this vital area in the service of the Church. Hopefully it will be possible for all of the Canadian Festival Coordinators to attend this educational event next year. -UNC

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MOSES AND PASSOVER REFLECTIONS

BY GRAEMME MARSHALL • OTTAWA



EACH PASSOVER BRINGS A CYCLE OF SELF-EXAMINATION.

No matter how spiritually mature we are, we all fall short in some ways.

Consider Moses. His wisdom of 120 years and impressive testimony as “the most humble man ever on earth” (Numbers 12:3) is incomparable. Add further his faith, “...he endured as seeing Him who is invisible” (Hebrews 11:27), and Christ’s personal endorsement, “...if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words” (John 5:46). Would a man of such stature ponder mistakes at Passover?

Moses did incur God’s painful displeasure. It cautions that no matter how enlightened we may see ourselves, we’re no better than Moses. Mr. Richard Pinelli, of UCG Ministerial Services, put it this way at the Toronto Ministers’ Conference in December. He explained our transformation from baptism as a “continuing process of surrender over the arrogant spirit in man. And the struggle never ends.” An unjustified, arrogant spirit could still provoke Moses at age 120, while his own human nature could still make him stumble. Such is the example of Numbers 20:1-13. Here’s how the story goes.

The Israelites, 38 years in nomadic wandering, had returned to a waterless area. Three decades later, many of the original adults had died. Chapter 20 begins by telling us of Miriam’s death. Perhaps her passing reopened festering feelings among other elderly yet to die – or, even among young ones contaminated by the attitude of their fathers.

Exodus 17 (with Deuteronomy 2:14-16) is the original water complaint episode, not long after their release from Egypt. God had instructed Moses to strike the rock with the rod (as done for the Red Sea deliverance) and fresh water gushed from dry rock. Now many years later, that miraculous event had become dimmed by nomadic wandering. A rehash of bad attitude resurfaces. Thirsty lips shout abusive language in an uprising against Moses. Their attitudes reflected near rebellion because Moses, in verse 10, addressed them as “rebels.”

Perhaps this display of ingratitude, their personal criticism of Moses, their failure to go to God personally in prayer, may have provoked his shirtsleeve emotions. Their failure to learn from the past along with new threats may have unnerved him. (“Everything is falling to pieces; they’re all going to quit and leave!”) Moses had endured years of

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MOSES AND PASSOVER REFLECTIONS

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**“WE DAILY
STRUGGLE WITH
OUR ‘ARROGANT
HUMAN SPIRIT’ AND
CAN BE PROVOKED
INTO RASH ACTS.”**

unjustified accusation. Perhaps unconsciously stored-up anger and frustration now spilled out into a loss of self-control. Provoked by other’s attitudes, he himself now lost sight of God’s clear instruction – to speak to the rock, not strike it as done previously. Thoughtlessly, he also claimed a power to perform the miracle.

He was wrong on two counts. First, he didn’t carefully follow instruction. Granted it may have been an easy mistake as God did say to take the rod. But there was no directive to strike the rock. That he did so twice might indicate vexation. We are not told whether it was two quick blows – or one and nothing happened, so another with some misgiving whether anything was going to happen at all. Whichever the case, it was an error to hit it. Secondly, by saying, “Must we bring you water?” may have included God, but it was a blunder, as Moses humanly had no more power than you or I to perform such a miracle. He failed to clearly establish God’s power before the Israelites. Since these examples are recorded for us (1 Corinthians 10:11-12), what can we learn for our Passover reflections?

Stockpiled hurts from years of Christian experience can still dog our steps.

We daily struggle with our “arrogant human spirit” and can be provoked into rash acts. We, too, have experienced many rich miracles, yet how easy it is to forget them when pressures threaten our survival. The stress of needs can overwhelm usual gratitude. Psalm 106:32-33 records that insolent attitudes provoked Moses into an impulsive carelessness before God. And agreed, it is difficult to remain nonchalant or calm when an ill-tempered person pricks a touchy spot.

Blessings are not Always Proof of God’s Approval

Moses was wrong in how he represented God, yet in mercy God still provided the need of water for people and animals. God upheld Moses publicly, but privately judged him for his lack of discipline. The penalty hurt. Of all

people surely Moses most deserved to enter the Promised Land. This was now denied with just a short way to go. He later pleaded to reverse the decision, but was told, “Enough of that. Speak no more to Me of this matter” (Deuteronomy 3:26). We expect he had occasional self-examination on this mistake and it would be a sobering reflection at Passover. How thankful that God kindly overlooks our human weaknesses. However, we must still confront our personal problems.

The Rock as a Type of Christ

Moses temporarily lost sight of who was the real Rock. Symbolism makes the incident even more meaningful. In Exodus 17 he was instructed to strike the Rock (a type of Christ – 1 Corinthians 10:4), and God gave the needed water. Christ needs only be crushed (crucified) once, and by belief and faith we gain forgiveness for the living water of His spirit. In Numbers 20, Moses was to only “speak” to the Rock. Symbolically, they only needed to ask God and pray for His help. But poisoned attitudes and twisted emotions got in the way. Impatience, with a touch of vain self-importance, are always things to guard against. Was God a little harsh on a 120-year-old faithful man?

We must remember that God had, from the beginning, been protective of Moses’ life. He had encouraged and persisted with him despite his denying the ability to serve God’s calling; he had been defended from the unjust criticism of Aaron and Miriam and from Korah’s insurrection. God had wrought awesome miracles through him and it was only right that Moses, as leader, should honor the real power behind the miracles. His failure to do so set a dangerous precedent for the people and himself. An important lesson needed to be learnt by everyone.

God had successfully taken them out of Egypt, but it was more difficult to take the attitudes of Egypt out of the people. In this we are similar and each Passover takes us further along the path of transformation. For transform we must! -UNC

LESS THAN PERFECT

BY ROBERT BERENDT • EDMONTON



A SHORT TIME AGO I HAD A CONVERSATION with one of my sons, who is a pathologist. I expressed a concern about the stress in his work. My advice was to relax a little and not be too fussy. “We’re just humans and we all make mistakes,” I said.

He responded, “Dad, I can’t afford to make a mistake in my work. Lives depend on my decisions and thousands of dollars may be squandered if I am wrong.” The same applies to my daughter-in-law who also is a pathologist. Their comments are those of professionals. When they sign their names to an examination, their reputations are also at stake. It did not take long to understand the profound truth in their words and I was happy to know that there are people like these in responsible positions.

We are all concerned about errors and mistakes (or we certainly should be). We have many people with jobs that demand as much perfection as is humanly possible. Just think of pilots, air controllers, surgeons, truck drivers, bus drivers and others who are responsible for human lives. If the captain of the *Titanic* had been more responsible as a professional, many

hundreds of lives would have been spared. No one wants to hear an entrusted person say, “Oops, I goofed.” That “oops” could be fatal for you or someone else.

A speaker once said, “If a person is not making any mistakes, they are not breathing.” There may be some truth in this statement, but we all do know that we can do better in becoming error free. It is all too easy to slip into sloppy habits in the work place or in our lives and put a “less than perfect” effort into a task. Our society seems to be slipping towards carelessness and shoddy work. We see it in the way people dress, the crude and careless words that come from their mouths, and an attitude of bending rules. Many standards are reaching all-time lows. Finding capable and conscientious employees is a growing problem.

In Matthew 5:48 we read the astonishing instruction Jesus gave. He said, “Be perfect, therefore, as your Father in heaven is perfect.” Is the full import of these words burned into our minds leading to the constant minute-by-minute monitoring of our words and deeds?

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**“WE ARE ALL
CONCERNED
ABOUT ERRORS
AND MISTAKES...”**

LESS THAN PERFECT

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

**“WE WILL NOT
BE ABLE TO
JUST SAY ‘OOPS’
WHEN WE STAND
BEFORE GOD.”**

Jesus went on to say in Matthew 12:36, “But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgement for every careless word they have spoken.”

Now this is getting serious. We will not be able to just say “oops” when we stand before God. We can all think of words that have come out of our mouths that we wish we could take back.

The people of the Corinthian Church had become careless and allowed errors of behaviour and belief to alter their perspective. They had been so intent on tolerance that their standards of conduct plummeted. In correcting the Church, Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 7:1: “Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.” There is little room for the lack of effort towards perfection in Paul. He goes on in verse 10 and 11 to say, “Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death. See what this Godly sorrow has produced in you; what earnestness, what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what alarm, what longing, what concern, what readiness to see justice done.”

There is a period of time each year in which God commands His people to examine themselves. Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 13:5 that each person is to examine themselves to see whether they are in the faith – “test yourselves,” he wrote. The Passover is this season. It is a time to reflect and consider our past year. It is the season to focus on the tremendous price that Christ paid for our sins – and to go and sin no more. This requires understanding of what sin is.

I John 3:4-6 states: “Everyone who sins breaks the law, in fact, sin is lawlessness, but you know that He appeared so that He might take away our sins, and in Him is no sin. No one who lives in Him keeps on sinning. No one who continues to sin has either seen Him or known Him.”

Clearly God’s law defines sin and mankind comes under a death sentence for sinning. Adam and Eve learned that lesson and, in the very next generation, Cain and others also learned the heartache and problems that sin brings. In Genesis 6:5, God exclaims that there was evil present everywhere on earth. Mankind had grown careless and lawless, far from the perfection of Godly standards.

We all make errors. Hopefully they will be small ones. We can and must learn from our errors so that we will become more perfect. The first time a student gets into the cockpit of an airplane, you can be sure he or she will make some mistakes. Correction by an instructor and self-correction soon mitigates these mistakes. There are fewer and fewer errors when we seriously focus – but that is the rub – we do need to put our mind to the task at hand.

The ability to do better in all avenues of life is definitely within our capacity. Whether we determine to use that ability or not, dictates the outcome. There was a time when people took great pride in their work. They respected themselves and their reputation.

The habit of correcting errors while young instills the life-saving habit of self-correction. Self-respect is built on doing a task well and knowing that your “signature” is also your reputation. It comes when you know you do a good job.

The next time you take a flight, think about this: How “perfect” do you want the pilot to be? Is “close” good enough? If you’ve ever had surgery, how free of error do you want the surgeon to be? Is it good enough that he takes something out that is in the vicinity of the appendix when you have appendicitis? When you drive home after work, are you satisfied with people who can just manage to keep the car on the road – or are you happier when people drive courteously and carefully?

The answers are obvious. It’s up to all of us, as Christians, to go and do better. -UNC

UCG VANCOUVER CELEBRATES UNIQUE WEDDING

BY ERNIE MCBRATNEY • VANCOUVER

Editorial Note: One of the wonderful experiences of being in the ministry in the Church of God involves those very special events that help any minister realize the magnitude of our calling as an Elder. Whether conducting a baptism, an anointing, blessing of little children, an ordination, a rather sober event like a funeral, or the celebration of marriage, it is one of the most wonderful times to be in the service of God and His Son, Jesus Christ. I had the privilege and honour to be involved in just such an occasion on January 5, 2002, a wedding ceremony that was unlike anything I had been asked to perform before. The following article by our UCG Vancouver congregation reporter, Ernie McBratney, tells the story. —David Palmer



Photos by Natalie Bilson

Above: Exchanging rings during the ceremony, which was conducted by Vancouver Pastor David Palmer. Below: Elizabeth and Louis following the ceremony.

THE FIRST SABBATH OF 2002 IN THE Vancouver Church in Surrey, B.C. will live in the memory of some 60 people as the most unique, interesting and educational day since the United Church of God, Vancouver began back in November, 1995.

The building where regular Sabbath services are held was beautifully decorated for a special wedding ceremony for a couple from Ghana, Elizabeth Archampong and Louis Anane. Both were dressed in their traditional Ghanaian attire. Interestingly the ceremony took place the day after Louis' birthday. What a birthday gift!



Elizabeth is a lawyer called to the bar in Ghana and holds an LLM degree from Queen's University in Ontario. She is currently pursuing a doctoral program in Family Law at Osgoode Hall Law School at York University.

Louis is the founder of Planning for Life, a family and youth serving NGO (Non-Government Organization) in Ghana and holds an MPA degree in Policy Analysis of Policy Studies from Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario.

The couple met not in Ghana, but here in Canada while both were pursuing their Masters' degrees at Queen's.

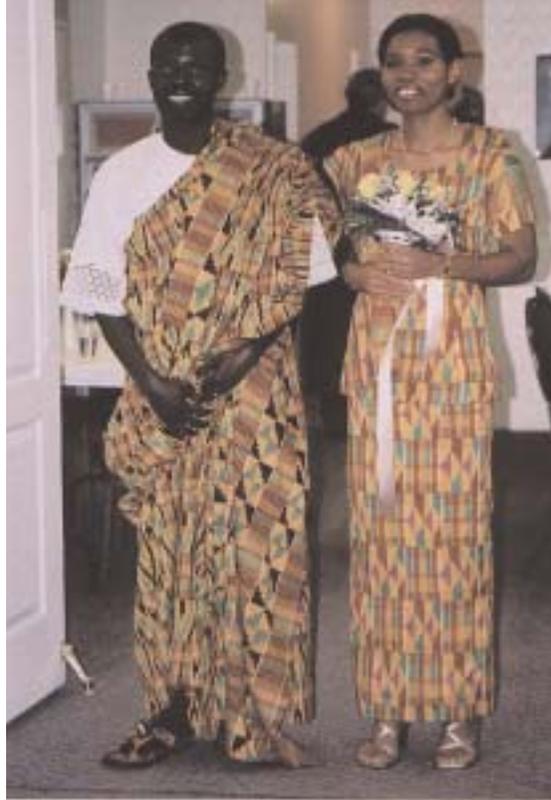
When we arrived at our regular Surrey location for the Sabbath, the only difference we immediately noticed was the increased number of cars in the parking lot. As we entered the building, we could see volunteers putting the finishing touches on the decorations. Our seating was altered to allow wedding guests, relatives and friends to occupy the first few rows. White bows were attached to the pews, and a beautiful basket of white flowers replaced the normal flower arrangement that sits in front of the pulpit.

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UCG VANCOUVER CELEBRATES UNIQUE WEDDING

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**“AS THE
TRADITIONAL
WEDDING MARCH
PLAYED, ALL
STOOD AND WATCHED
THE COLOURFUL
BRIDE WALK DOWN
THE AISLE....”**



In the dinning area, each table was covered with white table cloths, a vase of flowers and a candle. The kitchen had long tables in an “L” shaped arrangement loaded with food. A chair and a covered table sat on the stage, along with microphones and music equipment. You could feel the anticipation of something special.

Our song leader, Richard Kmodras, began services with the usual three hymns and when our pastor, David Palmer, gave the announcements he made us wait until the end before telling us what we might expect after services.

The sermon was given by Local Elder Lorne Davies, who spoke on marriage. He used examples of long and happy marriages such as the 55 years Deacon Chuck Chase and his wife, Muriel, have been married, and my own 56 years of marriage to my wife, Hazel. (Such marriages are rather rare these days). Mr. Davies spoke of the experiences and lessons

learned by such long marriages and how they help us develop a deeper lasting true love as we grow older. (Many of his stories on marriage also had a touch of humour.)

When the service ended, we fellowshipped for about half an hour as guests arrived for the wedding, at which time Louis (who had attended services) disappeared – but only to change into his special Ghanaian wedding attire, and to await the arrival of his bride.

At exactly 1:00 p.m. the great moment came. As the traditional *Wedding March* played, all stood and watched the colourful bride walk down the aisle on the arm of her uncle, Augustus Archampong. Both Louis and Elizabeth were dressed in traditional Ghanaian Adwinasa Kente Cloth, a fabric of bright yellows, greens, reds and blacks.

With the video camera rolling and cameras flashing, the wedding began as the bridal chorus by Wagner faded. Mr. Palmer gave the introduction and the solemnization ceremony. During the signing of the marriage registry, Wendy Burton sang a special piece of music, accompanied by Jana Kmodras on the piano. After the ceremony the couple retreated to the dinning area for a reception, hosted by volunteers from the local congregation of the UCG.

The newly-married couple were joined at the head table by Elizabeth’s Uncle Augustus, who lives with his family in Edmonton. He represented the Archampong family since it was impossible for the parents of the bride to make a trip from Ghana.

Augustus was the first speaker called by Emcee Lorne Davies, and he congratulated the couple on their special day, wishing them a long and healthy happy marriage. Second to offer congratulations was Joseph Frimpong, Louis’ uncle. (Joseph represented the groom’s side of the family, who were also unable to make the trip from Ghana.)

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EDMONTON'S SIXTH ANNIVERSARY

BY LYNNE BROSCAK • EDMONTON

THE CONGREGATION OF THE UNITED Church of God, Edmonton celebrated our sixth anniversary as a Church on January 19, 2002. The event was celebrated with a potluck dinner and a "Fun Show."

The day started with a sermonette by Dr. Rick Berendt discussing milestones and the importance of remembering events or happenings, such as our anniversary. Mr. Robert Berendt presented the congregation with a sermon entitled, "Using the Holy Spirit." Mr. Berendt emphasized the importance of not quenching the Holy Spirit and drawing on it during our spiritual journey to God's kingdom. Jesus sent the Holy Spirit as a Helper to help us learn to love our neighbour, to be merciful, and to develop the fruits of the Holy Spirit. Both the sermonette and the sermon were wonderful spiritual food.

The theme for our social was "Australia." We sampled "bikkies" and enjoyed a scrumptious meal created by the ladies – and some men. To keep with the theme, the children did a skit to *Waltzing Matilda* with the choir singing the song in the background. We had our own billabong, Coolabah tree, jumbuck (played by Max Berendt), swagman (Carl Berendt), squatter (Sydney Jongerius), and troopers 1,2,3, (Kayla Jongerius, Carolyn Berendt, and Braeden Jongerius) and our waltzer (Morgan Krischke). Chase Chrestenson was the stage manager. The children did a terrific job and everyone thoroughly enjoyed it.



Vegemite, anyone?

The theme for the Edmonton Anniversary was "Australia."

Photo by Rick Berendt.

The Fun Show included vocal solos, a piano solo, a saxophone solo, a demonstration of "poy balls," which is a New Zealand Art form, and *Tie Me Kangaroo Down, Sport* (an Australian folk song), was sung for us. We were also treated to a recitation, a poem, a skit called *Who's On First?* and an old fashioned sing-a-long, led by Mr. Laurie Nyhus and his trusty guitar. We were also entertained with some Australian humour: What do you get when you cross an elephant with a kangaroo? (Ready for this?) A lot of big holes all over Australia! Oh my!

We were all impressed with the talent in our little flock and everyone loved the sing-a-long. People sang with gusto and I'm sure we could have carried on for a few more hours.

We have some wonderful memories, reached some milestones and now are looking forward to another year of growth and service to God in the Church. -UNC

WEDDING ANNOUNCEMENT

Mrs. Denise Henderson of Bellevue, Alberta along with Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd Teetaert of Regina, Saskatchewan would like to announce the marriage of their children. Robert Teetaert and Cheena Henderson were married on July 8, 2001 at the Ramada Inn in Lethbridge, Alberta.



HOW YOUR *GOOD NEWS* MAGAZINE IS SENT

BY ED VAN PELT • TORONTO

“OUR CANADA POST PUBLICATIONS MAIL AGREEMENT ALLOWS US TO SEND THE *GOOD NEWS* FOR A FRACTION OF THE COST...”

HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED WHAT’S involved in mailing the newest issue of the *Good News* magazine? How does it arrive in your mailbox?

This article will give you a behind-the-scenes look at how the *Good News* is sent.

The underlying reason for sending the magazine the way we do is found inside the front cover of the *Good News*. Look closely near the bottom of the masthead on page 2. Easily overlooked is the following: “Canada Post Publications Mail Agreement Number 1487140.” That’s the key to the whole process.

Put simply, our Canada Post publications mail agreement allows us to send the *Good News* for a fraction of the cost of sending it by “regular” letter mail. The reason is that we do a lot of the work that Canada Post would normally do. By preparing the mail ourselves, we save the costs Canada Post would incur and they pass the savings on to us. And those savings are substantial. Our cost to mail the *Good News* is about 50 to 65 per cent of the regular letter mail rate. The savings add up on an annual basis.

So how does the magazine arrive in your mailbox?

process can take some time but is vital to the success of the mailing. (Any new names that are added to our mailing lists are checked with Canada Post in order to verify the correct address format.)

At least 95 per cent of the addresses must be correct in order to qualify for the publications mail rate. Our addresses are usually over 97 per cent correct.

After the addresses are verified, they are then sorted into a seemingly random order. The envelopes are then printed and sorted into bundles and containers. Each bundle must be no more than about 20 centimetres (about eight inches) thick after the magazine is inserted. Each container must not be more than 90 per cent full and must not weigh more than 27 kilograms (about 60 pounds). The software determines the make up of the bundles and containers.

Wayne Lue usually prints the envelopes. He also oversees the stuffing and sealing of the envelopes, being careful to maintain the order of the envelopes within each bundle and the number of bundles in each container.

Once the envelopes are stuffed and sealed, they are banded into bundles which are placed into the corresponding container (“flats tub” in Canada Post parlance). The remaining paperwork is completed and the containers are then loaded into the Church van (as well as Anthony Wasilkoff’s van, if needed) and taken to the Gateway sorting facility in Mississauga.

Once there, they are sent across the country according to destination. Quite often they will then be placed right into the letter carrier’s mailbag for final delivery.

The whole process, from magazines’ arrival at the office until they are delivered to Gateway, usually takes less than a week. We’ve had volunteers help out with the mailing in the past, and will continue to do so as the volume of mail increases.

And that’s how you receive your *Good News* magazine issue after issue. -UNC



First, the magazines are shipped from the printer in the United States to our office in Halton Hills. Once they arrive, an up-to-date mailing list is copied onto a 3-1/2” floppy disk. (The first list to be copied is the regular subscriber list followed by the waiting room list.) The disk with the names and addresses is run through an address verification program supplied by Pitney Bowes, where all the addresses are analyzed and corrected where necessary. This

TORONTO'S WINTER SOCIAL

BY GARY RIDI • TORONTO

Photos by Ed van Pelt



ON DECEMBER 22, 2001 THE TORONTO congregation experienced a very enjoyable social. It took place at the Franklin Horner Community Centre, our old stomping grounds for services and socials alike. We had 111 brethren in attendance that day, including three guests from the Cincinnati, Ohio area and one from Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Ed van Pelt (the Canadian Work's office manager) presented a revealing sermonette: "Jonah and the Fish According to Science." It was followed by special music entitled *King of Kings* sung by Pat Brathwaite, after which we had a message by Anthony Wasilkoff entitled, "Trapped by Tradition," a timely question/answer message oriented to the holiday season.

Before too long the meal was prepared and it was time to eat. We had a bountiful display of home-baked foods for our potluck meal. The food was terrific and in great abundance – and to top it all off, the desserts were picture perfect. This is certainly usual for any of the Churches of God. Hats off to the chefs!

The tables in the dining room were decorated with an array of multi-coloured linens and accentuated with centrepieces of rainbow-coloured helium-filled balloons. By the end of the evening, children and adults were employing creative methods to retrieve the balloons that had escaped the shackles of their ribbons. The balloons brightened up the room and put smiling faces on the young children

who had hopes of taking one home. And that they did! Everyone had a chance at the door prize of a Canadian rock maple wall shelf, but it was Ezra Martin, youngest son of Melvin and Esther Martin, who claimed the prize for the evening.

All kinds of board games provided fun and fellowship: from Scrabble to a chess game that lasted well over an hour. (I think these two gentlemen would jump at the chance to play a world champion like Gary Kasparov). For those who had a little more energy to burn, there was a volleyball game in the gym that took its toll on the young and the not-so-young. Over four gruelling hours of invigorating volleying finally ended – not by choice, but by time.

Since the Toronto brethren are so scattered, as are many of the Churches, the opportunity for fellowship in God's Church is greatly cherished, providing a time and common ground for all to give and to receive. It's always a wonderful experience to see so many involved in the preparation and execution of the necessary actions to bring a social to fruition. We have a Variety Night planned for February for our local congregation and a family dance for March. All are welcome. Please come and join us! -UNC



Top: Martin Connor and Kevin Ford in a chess match.
Above: Triple word score! Playing Scrabble.

**“SINCE THE
TORONTO
BRETHREN ARE SO
SCATTERED...
THE OPPORTUNITY
FOR FELLOWSHIP
IN GOD'S CHURCH
IS GREATLY
CHERISHED...”**

PUTTING MEDITATION TO WORK

BY JIM PETERSEN • CALGARY

“MEDITATION SHARPENS OUR UNDERSTANDING AND ARMS US AGAINST ... VAIN PHILOSOPHIES...”



WITH LIGHTNING SWIFTNESS AND A SINGLE swipe, the pail and milk stool were swept from my grasp. As I struggled to my feet, I vowed that I would milk that cow “without kickers” (restraints) just like my dad could.

The battle of wits between that cow and I led to the invention of a one-legged milk stool that increased my agility in dodging out of harm’s way. After some careful and repeated meditation on this situation, I realized I had an advantage. When old “gutter foot” Gurty shifted her weight to strike, all I had to do was put the back of my hand into the crook of her leg and she seemed to have no confidence to bring her leg forward to kick me. That feeling of having a kicker on stalled her in her tracks.

A little meditation goes a long way.

Meditation sharpens our understanding and arms us against the vain philosophies that are bound to infiltrate our Christian lives. Many people have their personal understanding of meditation and, often as not, these views differ.

Most are familiar with the traditional Indian Guru, sitting cross-legged and glassy-eyed for days on end, seemingly void of any brainwave activity. Is this the proper use of meditation?

How should a person meditate?

First of all, one needs to understand the meaning of the word *meditation*. *Strong’s Concordance* describes it as a pondering, a taking in and an outward mumbling or talking to oneself. If you look it up you will see it has the connotation of ruminating, to murmur, to ponder and to talk.

Ruminating is what a bovine does in processing her food. Animals that chew their cud first eat their fill of grass before settling down to “deal with their meal.” The cow contentedly regurgitates a previously swallowed ball of grass. She chews on it awhile, re-swallows it into one of her stomach chambers and then exchanges it for another ball to further masticate.

A cow’s stomach is divided into four parts. The cow knows which chamber to send which ball of grass, and the final result is the thorough breakdown of the rough vegetation. This vegetation, when digested and sent to the body cells, ultimately becomes part of her.

What is noteworthy is that this process is a “mulling over,” a complete turning over of material. This is what the word *meditate* means and this is its intended function. To benefit the most from meditation, we must examine how to properly use it.

There are three parts to meditation:

1. Read

All living things must eat to live. In Matthew 4:4, Christ makes it clear to any would-be sons of God that they, too, must eat. And that “eating” is reading in the word of God. John 6:35 says Christ’s words are life, and He is the Bread of life. We eat by hearing God’s word preached to us.

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2. *Ruminate*

As a cow settles down to digest her meal, so must we digest what we read. We think about it, analyze it and store it in our long-term memory. If you do not ruminate, it will go no further than one's short-term memory.

King David, like all the kings of Israel, was required to know the law of God. In fact, each king had to write out a copy for himself. David meditated on God's word and on His wonderful works (Psalm 119:15,27,97). He read and ruminated them.

3. *Write*

The cow eventually digests her meal and it becomes a part of her. For us, it is useful to write down what we think about what we have read and heard. Some folks find it helpful to write a position paper. You'll discover how well studied material has been committed to your long-term memory. This is one's personal understanding so it isn't for public disclosure at

this point. Try it! David did! We have his record. He wrote down his thoughts and they became part of him (Psalm 119:11). Even after reading the law and recording his thoughts in the book of Psalms, David hungered continuously for deeper understanding of the word of God (Psalm 119:33-36). This process is cyclical when used with God's spirit. Communication with God feeds on itself.

As one reads, ruminates and writes, deeper and more insightful questions and conclusions arise that cause you to go back and read again. *Read, ruminate and write.* The messages we hear at Sabbath services and what we read in Church literature are also food for us. These things compel us, like the noble Bereans, to read, ruminate and write. This process is a life-long habit because there is much to learn. The study of God's word becomes a beautiful experience, for you, for your entire life. It is a banquet of plenty. -UNC

**“[DAVID]
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VANCOUVER'S UNIQUE WEDDING

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

Joseph and his family live in Surrey, B.C. It was he and his wife, Mary, who provided Louis with accommodation while he (Louis) attended UCG prior to his marriage. (They also provided some very special Ghanaian food at the wedding reception.) In fact, Louis told me, “We couldn't have achieved our dreams without them [Joseph and Mary].”

During his thank-you speech, Louis, on behalf of the newlyweds, gratefully acknowledged everyone's contribution in making the marriage celebration a wonderful success.

After the toasting, with nonalcoholic champagne, I checked the acknowledgement wedding folder and saw that we had two guests of honour: Bismark Yaw Sarfo and Kwadwo Amo of Toronto, who are long-time friends of the bride and groom.

The photographer, who volunteered her time to take some wonderful and colorful pictures, was Natalie Bilson (Mr. and Mrs. Palmer's daughter), and the technical director/videographer was (UCG cameraman) Dave Lawrence.

The wedding cake and decorations were organized by Ghyslaine Palmer, with help from several of our Church volunteers. Special mention was given as well to Lorne Davies, Chuck Chase and to Mr. and Mrs. Wilbert Limvalencia, as well as all of the other United Church of God volunteers who contributed their time and effort in assisting to make the wedding a success.

Everyone we have talked with enjoyed their first Ghana wedding ceremony, and I'm sure all will agree – that experience will live in our memories for a long time. -UNC

GOD'S HOLY LAW

BY ALVINA MARTIN • TORONTO



My thoughts go back to the time I spent
With my friends and loved ones dear.
But how these lonely days pass slow
When none of them are near.
It seems that I'm not wanted,
By those I cherished so,
And now so many miles from home,
I have nowhere to go.
I cannot fellowship with them
And speak God's Holy word,
Because my knowledge has increased
About the Law of God.

From Sunday worship now I've ceased
To keep God's Sabbath day,
And find my faith has been increased,
Because I chose to walk this way.
Some say the Ten Commandment Law
Was only for the Jews,
And have failed to search the Scriptures
To find if it was true.
We know that Christ's atoning blood
For our sins so freely flowed.
Making void the sacrifice
Which God to Moses showed.

But God had made the Sabbath day
When He put the earth in space.
To remember until the end of time
But Israel failed at God's command,
In faith to follow through.
When wandering on to Canaan's land
The Sabbath day pursue.
But Jesus showed He had respect
For the perfect Law of God.
The fourth Commandment too He kept
While this sinful world He trod.

And after He was crucified,
And rose up from the grave.
While His disciples followed Him,
No other command He gave.
But as His custom long had been,
To teach on Sabbath days,
To Jews and Gentiles all alike
God's worthy name to praise.
And Paul of old he found delight,
Within the Law of God,
To make it void God had forbid,
It is holy, just and good.

The ceremonial law has gone,
To never more return.
But if the Law of God had ceased,
No more of sin we'd learn.
But all through the ages,
God's Law has been our guide,
To lead us safely onward,
And in God's love abide.
We shall not worship other gods,
It commands us not to kill.
Adultery we shall not commit,
Or anything to steal.

These sins today are taking place
Among some honoured men.
I cannot find a different rule,
Than God's commands of ten,
To show us clearly where we've failed
And His perfect will have not obeyed.
But God has made His teaching known,
To those who seek a better home.
The Sabbath day with Christ we'll spend,
In His righteous Kingdom without end.
His many blessings then we'll share,
The joys of earth cannot compare. -UNC

UNITED NEWS CANADA WEBSITE STATISTICS

Following are statistics for the United News Canada website (www.unitednewscanada.org).

Analysis for the Month of January, 2002

Server Activity Totals for Period:

Total sessions served:	542
Total hits made on server:	3,904
Total page view hits:	2,087
Total non page view hits:	1,817
Total time spent	
by all sessions (in minutes):	81,792
Total bandwidth (in kilobytes):	84164.97

Top referring URLs during period:

www.google.com/search?	29 referrals
www.ucg.ca/lit/unc.asp	17 referrals
www.ucg.org/RealAud/	14 referrals
www.ucgcalgary.org/whatsnew.html	5 referrals
www.unitednewscanada.org/	5 referrals
google.yahoo.com/bin/query?	4 referrals

Breakdown of American Traffic by State:

New York, USA	146 sessions (26.94%)
South Carolina, USA	47 sessions (8.67%)
California, USA	34 sessions (6.27%)
Virginia, USA	29 sessions (5.35%)
Ohio, USA	15 sessions (2.77%)
New Jersey, USA	5 sessions (0.92%)
Pennsylvania, USA	4 sessions (0.74%)
Massachusetts, USA	4 sessions (0.74%)
??, USA	4 sessions (0.74%)
Minnesota, USA	3 sessions (0.55%)
Georgia, USA	2 sessions (0.37%)
Washington DC, USA	2 sessions (0.37%)
Florida, USA	1 session (0.18%)
Colorado, USA	1 session (0.18%)
Total U.S. Traffic	297 sessions (54.8%)

Breakdown of Traffic by Continent:

North America	341 sessions (62.92%)
South America	0.00 sessions (0.00%)
Europe	2 sessions (0.37%)
Asia	22 sessions (4.06%)
Australia & Oceania	0.00 sessions (0.00%)
Africa	0.00 sessions (0.00%)

Words to Live By

COMPILED BY
ERNIE MCBRATNEY

Time and chance are a reality we all face. They are simply a part of life in this world.

Why is it that some mistakes reap much more serious consequences than others?

An unhurried sense of time is in itself a form of wealth.

A good home must be made, not bought.

Life is too complicated not to be orderly.

UNITED NEWS CANADA ON PALM

BY KEN KERR, JR. • CALGARY

KEEPING UP WITH TODAY'S DIGITAL MEDIA in terms of delivering the gospel is an awesome challenge.

Recently, the United Church of God, *an International Association* has made available the option of downloading Church literature to portable handheld computers, or personal digital assistants (PDA's).

This is an incredible way the end-time gospel can be delivered to the world using the fastest-growing area of modern computing. Using the same technology ucg.org uses to deliver the Church literature to these amazing devices, *United News Canada* will now be made available in the same way.

The program employed to read Church literature (peanutpress.com) allows the user to make and export notes, and change the size of the font. It will automatically turn the pages for you as you read and bookmark where you left off. Many consider the peanutpress reader to be the best e-book application available today.

For more information, log onto unitednewscanada.org. -UNC



BEST-SELLING BIBLE TO BE REVISED

The best-selling modern Bible in the English speaking world is being issued in a gender-neutral version. The International Bible Society’s revision will be called *Today’s New International Version*. The original has sold more than 150 million copies worldwide since 1978.

In the revised version phrases such as “sons of God” will become “children of God” and a “man is justified by faith” becomes “a person is justified by faith.”

Not everyone is pleased with the idea of revising the Scriptures. Some fear there will be word changes that could change the intent and meaning of the text. (BN-CP/AP)

CANADIAN TAXPAYERS FUND PLAY ON ADULT LOVE LIVES

OTTAWA: The Law Commission of Canada has raised the curtain and – some eyebrows – on a taxpayer-funded play about adult love lives and the law.

Through the Keyhole opened in early February in Hull, Quebec. The \$60,000 interactive play is about evolving adult relationships and how well our laws reflect them.

The Commission says the idea was to get Canadians talking about their intimate lives and how laws could better suit changing relations.

The play is a take-off on *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* but includes alternative family units. The play features, for example, a lesbian couple raising a child, a 67 year-old widow living with a new boyfriend and a divorced man in his 40’s who moves back in with his mother.

The commission gets some three million dollars a year in federal funds to advise Parliament on law reform. (BN/CP)

CANADIANS DOWN ON ROYALS

As Queen Elizabeth marks 50 years as Canada’s head of state, a new Ipsos-Reid poll found 48 per cent of Canadians are in favour of rejecting the monarchy.

Pollsters questioned 1,001 people between January 29 and 31 and found that almost half of Canadians (48 per cent) would prefer a U.S.-style republic system of government. And 65 per cent, or two-thirds of Canadians, said they are indifferent to the Royal Family’s importance, adding they should not have a formal role and should be regarded as “simply celebrities.”

But the poll also showed contradictions in Canada’s view of the monarchy. In the poll, 62 per cent of Canadians said they believe the constitutional monarchy helps to define Canada’s identity. And 79 per cent of respondents said they still support a constitutional monarchy.

A recent British opinion poll found 48 per cent of young people were more interested in the lives of TV’s *The Simpsons* than in the Royals. (Toronto Sun)

EUROPE EXPRESSES ALARM AT U.S. THREAT TO “GO IT ALONE”

Top U.S. administration officials have sharpened their criticism of Iran while defending President George W. Bush’s characterization of that country, Iraq and North Korea as an “axis of evil” that could provoke preemptive U.S. action.

“They are a clear and present threat to us and to all the responsible and civilized world,” Condoleezza Rice, the national security adviser, said of the three countries.

Political leaders in Britain, France and Russia are unhappy with the depiction of the three countries as an “axis” intent on developing weapons of mass destruction. At a conference in Munich, European security officials expressed alarm about what they saw as Mr. Bush’s aggressively unilateral stance.

As the Europeans asked for evidence to support the latest U.S. warnings, Foreign Minister Shimon Peres of Israel said that Iran had exported thousands of missiles to Hezbollah militants in Lebanon. North Korea and Iran, he further asserted, were jointly developing a missile capable of striking North America.

The “axis-of-evil” phrase has aroused deep concern in the three countries Mr. Bush referred to, and officials in all three have furiously rejected Mr. Bush’s assertions. And outsiders – including the former U.S. secretary of state, Madeleine Albright – have said that lumping the three together seems to make little sense.

The Europeans at the Munich conference were uneasy with Mr. Bush’s warning that the United States was prepared to take preemptive action against Iraq or other countries that could provide terrorists with nuclear, chemical or biological weapons.

Some European officials at the Munich conference said they feared that the United States had become so technologically advanced and militarily adept that it no longer believes it must heed the views of its European allies. (International Herald Tribune) -UNC