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No Mere Accessory

by Paul Wasilkoff

Vehicles come with them. At times we even wear them. What are they? Accessories. Special trim can accentuate the aesthetics of a car. Jewelry, scarves or lapel pins give extra character to an outfit. Yet, a car or outfit is just as functional without accessories. But what role does God's Holy Spirit play in the life of a Christian?

It should be noted that as duly-baptized members of the church, after the laying-on of hands, we have the wonderful gift of the Holy Spirit *in* us. Our children then have the benefit of the Holy Spirit *with* them. Is it really necessary to have the Holy Spirit in us or with us? Scripture makes it clear that the Holy Spirit is essential. Let's review several ways.

First, the Holy Spirit enables us to know God. It is next to impossible to have a meaningful relationship with someone while being a stranger. Friendships only thrive when we invest quality time with one another. How do we get to know God better? As the Apostle Paul explains, the deep things of God are revealed through His Spirit (1 Corinthians 2:9–12). It is through His Spirit that we understand His truth and maintain a close relationship with Him. As the Apostle John adds, we know that God abides in us by the Spirit He has given us (1 John 3:23–24).

Second, the Holy Spirit allows us to be divinely led. God created animals

with the remarkable ability to use their instincts. Spiders know how to construct complex webs—and not because they take special classes. God provides innate capacity to guide them. What about human being? Rather than being driven by human impulses, we have the capacity to be guided by God's influence. "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God" (Romans 8:14). This requires an ongoing and daily effort to walk in the Spirit and resist the pull of the flesh (Galatians 5:16–18).

Third, the Holy Spirit produces changed thinking. We all are born with a mode of thinking. Scientists study how much impact environment vs. genetics play a role in our default mindset. Are we destined to be limited by variables of our upbringing? Christians are called to be transformed by the renewing of their minds (Romans 12:1–2). This is not a one-time event but a process of growth, learning to think as Christ thinks (Philippians 2:5–8). Over time, God reshapes our attitudes, values and perspective.

Fourth, this transformation leads to changed living. Free will is a remarkable gift. Instead of being programmed robots, we have the ability to choose. While it is difficult, and sometimes painful, we have the freedom to change our lives. Aren't we glad that we have divine help? As Christ lives in us, our actions begin to reflect His character (Galatians 2:19–20). Through the Spir-

it, we are gradually transformed into His image (2 Corinthians 3:18). This change is visible in how we live, serve and respond to others.

Finally, the Holy Spirit is a guarantee of our eternal inheritance. Promises are routinely given and too often broken or only partially fulfilled. We experience this with sub-standard products. How often have we been disappointed by items we purchase online? Clothing can be especially problematic in this vein. The Holy Spirit is described as a deposit or assurance of what is to come (Ephesians 1:13–14; 2 Corinthians 1:22). Even amid trials, this promise gives us hope and confidence in God's ultimate plan.

Let's be thankful for the gift of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Rather than being a nice add-on or a mere accessory, the Holy Spirit is central to our conversion and growth. May we continually thank God for this incredible gift and strive to yield more fully to its influence each day. May this issue of United News Canada provide us with inspiration as we approach the Feast of Pentecost. 🌍

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Fiftieth Anniversary

by Linda Wasilkoff

It was a hot, humid spring day in southern Missouri. My siblings and I had determined that we would have a surprise celebration for my parents' fiftieth wedding anniversary. Thus far, even though family members had gathered, it seemed that my parents had not gotten suspicious. There had been a close call one evening as we were comparing and combining decorations that we had purchased. We were opening a bag of confetti when it went flying out and scattered all over the floor—just as Mom walked into the room. Thankfully, as her daughters started laughing she just joined in the fun not noticing the gold “50” confetti on her kitchen floor.

A local community centre was rented, people were invited, a cake was procured and then the actual day came. But, how to get our parents there? One sister went to decorate the hall and offered to call our Dad, asking him to come help her with some car trouble. That created an “emergency” in the eyes of my Dad. It took some time to convince him that we could all go together and that he might want to change his shirt first!



Linda Wasilkoff's parents. Photo by Linda Wasilkoff

My husband and I drove my parents down to the little community centre. They first wondered why all those cars were there. Then, suddenly, my Mom said, “Hey, that’s my cousin! What’s he doing here?” We got out of the car to find lots of community members, family members and even church members there. There was a group of distant cousins sitting under a shade tree playing various musical instruments and singing.

To say that my parents were pleasantly surprised would be an under-

statement. They were overwhelmed that so many people came from miles around to honour them. It began a tradition in our family. We somehow managed to continue to surprise them with anniversary celebrations for another 22 years although on a smaller scale. It has provided our family with many wonderful memories to cherish and rehearse from time to time.

The yearly anniversary of Pentecost also has many memories for us—and not just what happened to us previously on Pentecost. It also is the anniversary of the giving of the law, the giving of the Holy Spirit and also the beginning of the New Testament church.

As meaningful as my parents' fiftieth anniversary celebration was, I'm quite sure that the Pentecost we read about in Acts 2 was even more spectacular. They knew the date was coming, but the reality of what occurred would have far surpassed their expectations. We have a wonderful annual reminder of so many things for which we must be thankful and never allow the Feast day reminder to become routine. 🍷

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Transforming Power of God's Holy Spirit

From the Introduction to Lesson 9 of the Bible Study Course

Scripture tells us that we need to undergo a transformation—a change, with God's help, from “the old man” to “the new man,” a human being “renewed in knowledge” and “created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness” (Colossians 3:9-10; Ephesians 4:22-24). In this lesson we discuss this remarkable change, made possible by the transforming power of God's Spirit.

“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect.” The apostle Paul (Romans 12:2, New Revised Standard Version).

Few creatures can rival the beauty of the monarch butterfly. Its stunning oranges and black are an astounding sight, a delight to the eye.

But the monarch doesn't start out that way. Before it reaches maturity, it must undergo a series of remarkable transformations. Starting as a half-



Photo generated by ChatGPT

millimeter egg, the butterfly-to-be grows inside the egg for several days before it reaches the larval stage, when it begins a time as a bright-yellow-green striped caterpillar. In this stage it repeatedly molts, adding a new skin and shedding the old so it can continue to grow. It is then ready for the next stage of its life as a chrysalis, or pupa.

In this stage the caterpillar hangs upside down, usually from a twig or branch, and encases itself in a protective cocoon. Here, over about 10 to 14 days, it undergoes yet another amazing transformation. At the end of

this stage its protective shell becomes transparent, and a majestic adult monarch butterfly emerges.

Its metamorphosis complete, the butterfly starts its new life. The new creature is vastly different from what we saw before. As it matured it changed in many ways. It transformed into something far different. Its end result is far different from its beginning.

Scripture tells us that we, too, need to undergo a transformation—a change, with God's help, from “the old man” to “the new man,” a human being “renewed in knowledge” and “created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness” (Colossians 3:9-10; Ephesians 4:22-24). 🌱



To see the rest of this lesson go to:

www.ucg.ca/bible-study-lessons/the-transforming-power-of-gods-holy-spirit/

Points to Ponder

What are some ways the Bible describes the Holy Spirit?

Did God inspire His prophets and other servants of the Old Testament with His Spirit? But did the people listen?

How does God propose to change the human heart?

How vital is the Holy Spirit to our relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ?

Should we ask God to guide us, through His Spirit, to rightly understand the Scriptures?

How does the Holy Spirit make us a new creation, and what responsibility does that put on those who are being transformed?

Whose heart and thoughts should we copy?

What fruit should God's Spirit be producing in us?

Does God give special gifts to those in His Church through His Spirit?

www.ucg.ca/bible-study-lessons/the-transforming-power-of-gods-holy-spirit/

The Spirit of Pentecost

by Kevin Ford

The Spirit of God, or Holy Spirit, is one of the most basic and important themes to be found throughout God's Word—from the very first chapter of Genesis to the final chapter of Revelation. The Bible also mentions an angelic spirit (Ezekiel 10:17) and a human spirit (1 Corinthians 2:11). But what is the Holy Spirit, and what is its significance in a Christian's life? Notwithstanding the contrary belief among so many professing Christians, it is never described in the Bible as a Being or Person. Whenever the God Family is mentioned in Scripture, as in the introductory verses to many of the New Testament letters (Romans 1:7, 1 Corinthians 1:3, etc.), only two Beings are mentioned, God the Father and Jesus Christ. In fact, if the Holy Spirit were a person, then Jesus prayed to the 'wrong' Father, as, according to Matthew 1:18, his mother Mary was "with child of the Holy Spirit"!

One of the clearest descriptions of the nature of the Holy Spirit is found in Luke 1:35, after Mary had asked the angel Gabriel how it was possible for her to give birth to the Son of God. She is told that "*the Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God.*" Here, God's Spirit is identified with the power and actions of God—the means by which He

accomplishes His will. This understanding is further reinforced if we examine the references to the Holy Spirit in the original Greek, many of which omit the definite article. The *Concordant Literal Translation* is one of the few to accurately observe this distinction, rendering Acts 4:8, for example, as: "*Then Peter, being filled with Holy Spirit...*".

The Spirit of God, or Holy Spirit, is one of the most basic and important themes to be found throughout God's Word—from the very first chapter of Genesis to the final chapter of Revelation...But what is the Holy Spirit, and what is its significance in a Christian's life?

How do we receive God's Holy Spirit? God's instructions, as expressed by the apostle Peter at the inauguration of the New Testament Church, are specific: "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38). It cannot be purchased for any price (Acts 8:18-20), but God offers

it to us as a free gift when we fulfill His conditions.

What are the many ways by which a Christian's life is impacted by the indwelling presence of God's Holy Spirit? Here are some of them:

1. It imparts spiritual power. In Luke 4:14, Jesus "returned in the power of the Spirit" to Galilee, following His great ordeal in the wilderness. The disciples, after being filled with the Holy Spirit, are described as speaking the Word of God "with boldness" (Acts 4:31). Paul had to remind Timothy that the Holy Spirit he had been given was not a spirit of fear (timidity) but of power, love, and a sound mind (2 Timothy 1:7).

2. It imparts understanding. Just as the human spirit present in all human beings enables us to have understanding on a physical level, the divine spirit gives us spiritual understanding. "*For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God....These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but by which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual*" (1 Corinthians 2:11-13 NKJV).

3. It inspires the gifts that are necessary in the Church. 1 Corinthians 12:8-11 provides a long list of the gifts that edify the Church and are

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available by God's Spirit—wisdom, knowledge, faith, healings, miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, tongues, and interpretation of tongues. If we would like to see more of these gifts in our local congregation, we can ask God to give a greater measure of His Spirit to all of us.

4. It helps us to pray effectively. “Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words” (Romans 8:26 NRSV). Effective prayer does not come easily to a human being because “the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish” (Galations 5:17). God's Spirit fills that serious shortcoming in our life.

5. It identifies us as belonging to God. Professing Christians have come up with all kinds of ideas and

definitions of what constitutes a true Christian, but the only one that matters is the one found in Romans 8:9: “But you are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. *Now, if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.*”

6. It will enable us to receive eternal life at the return of Jesus Christ. Having received God's free gift of His Spirit, we are not simply promised the power to overcome Satan's temptations and the downward pull of our human nature, but something much more awe-inspiring. “If the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also *through His Spirit which dwells in you*” (Romans 8:11 RSV). For those of us who may be advanced in age, this is not describing simply a rejuvenation to the strength and health we experienced

in our youth, but a transformation into a totally new plane of existence as a member of the God Family. “So it is with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable, what is raised is imperishable. It is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a physical body, it is raised a *spiritual body* (1 Corinthians 15:42-44 RSV).

Although the Bible states that “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him” (1 Corinthians 2:9), it does not mean that it is impossible for us to have this knowledge.

The same passage continues: “But God has revealed them to us *through His Spirit....*” (verse 10). This is what the Day of Pentecost is all about—the giving of the greatest gift we physical human beings can ever receive! 🌍

What role does God's Holy Spirit have in a Christian's life?



To understand this topic, we must first understand what the Holy Spirit is and what it is not. To grasp that, we must understand what the Holy Spirit does in a Christian's life.

What does the Bible teach about the Holy Spirit?

To answer these questions and more, be sure to read our free study guide “The Power of the Holy Spirit”.

www.ucg.ca/booklets/the-power-of-the-holy-spirit/

Parakletos—the Promise

by Dan Dowd

The date was Passover evening 31 A.D. Jesus Christ had told His disciples several times before that Passover service that He would die through crucifixion, and so He encouraged them to believe in the Father and the message He sent Christ to magnify to the world.

Jesus Christ began to rehearse with the apostles the new symbols they were to use in the Passover service. He washed their feet in the service. He showed them that the bread and the wine in the Passover service represented Him—His broken body and His shed blood for the payment of mankind’s sins.

After the Passover service, Christ spent the rest of the evening teaching the apostles and mentioning a new commandment He was giving them (John 13:34-35). Why was this point on Christ’s mind, knowing that within the next 12 hours or so, He would be dying on the cross, shedding His blood for mankind? What did Christ mean by saying “A new commandment I give to you?” It wasn’t really a new commandment, but rather a new emphasis on an old commandment (Leviticus 19:18).

In a few weeks we will gather to observe God’s Feast of Pentecost. This day is special because of what happened in 31 A.D.—the giving en masse of God’s Holy Spirit to His people (Acts 2:1-4). This day continues to be special because God is still giving His Holy Spirit to His people. But what does Christ’s “new” commandment in John 13:34 have to do with God giving His Holy Spirit to His church?

To answer that question, let’s consider what it means to have God’s Holy Spirit working in each of us as Christians.

In Acts 1:4 we read of the “*Promise of the Father*.” What promise is this? We then read in verse 5 about the “*baptism with the Holy Spirit*.” The disciples were still focused on an imminent return of Christ and the Kingdom (and who wouldn’t be?), but Christ tells them it is not for them to know the timing of those things in verse 7. But—He says following up—“*you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you...*” (NKJV throughout).

The disciples had been exposed to God’s Holy Spirit through Jesus Christ, but they had not been given their own personal measure of His Holy Spirit. God’s Spirit had been *with* them but was not yet *within* them. Without having even an earnest amount of the Holy Spirit, they didn’t really know what Christ was talking about here—but He was trying to set the stage for them once they did have God’s Holy Spirit.

We can fast-forward in the story to what we have already read in Acts 2:1-4. After they received the Holy Spirit, they spoke in various languages and testified of what Jesus Christ had said, done and what was now possible through His sacrifice. Can you imagine the chills that went down their backs as they realized the reality of the power of God’s Holy Spirit working through them?

Peter went on to preach a powerful sermon. Peter, who had denied Christ three times. Peter who had tried to

cut off the High Priest’s servant’s ear. Peter who had walked on water and then had to be rescued by Christ. Peter who had admonished Christ not to talk about being crucified. This “new” Peter went on to powerfully help lead this fledgling church. What had changed? The power of the Holy Spirit.

Peter had experienced the beginning of a transformation that the whole church that day would experience. When we become baptized, we should experience the same power. Not necessarily in the same way, but we should see God working in our life, in our attitude, in our actions, in our understanding of His way of life.

Let’s pause with that thought line for now in order to develop some meaning of this power Jesus Christ spoke about. Back in John 14:16 Jesus spoke of “another helper” the Father would give His followers. In Greek, this word “helper” is *parakletos* (par-ACK-lee-tose), and it can also mean “consoler, intercessor or advocate.” By application a *parakletos* is one called to the side of another to help. The word usage in the context of the Greek of the time was that a “parakletos” was a legal adviser or an advocate in the relevant court.

The Holy Spirit indeed helps us—it bridges the gap between our natural carnal nature (Romans 8:7) and the spiritual nature God seeks for us to replace that carnal nature with. The following is a short list of what God’s Holy Spirit will help us with:

John 16:8 – the Holy Spirit will convince the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment. Are we

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not part of the world? We are to develop a sensitivity to right and wrong behaviour and to then seek to live righteously.

John 16:13 – the Holy Spirit will lead us into Truth (John 14:17—the Spirit of Truth).

John 16:13 (again)—the Holy Spirit will show us things (give us discernment).

John 16:14 – the Holy Spirit will glorify Christ (show us His glory) and lead us back to Him.

Galatians 5:22 – through the Holy Spirit, we will develop fruit of the Spirit.

Going back to John 14:16 Jesus mentions “another Helper.” Considering what the Holy Spirit helps us with, what did Christ mean when He said the Father would send them “another Helper”? The word “another” here is the Greek word *allos*. According to *Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary*, *allos* expresses a numerical difference and denotes “another of the same sort.” This meaning is contrasted with the Greek word *heteros* which expresses a qualitative difference and denotes “another of a different sort.”

In John 14:19-22 Jesus then mentions that the world would not see Him after His death, but His disciples would. Judas (Alphaeus) didn’t understand. He was thinking that Christ would show Himself “to them” in such ways that others would be able to see Him. Jesus was speaking in a spiritual context, not physical as the disciples were thinking. Jesus shows this in verse 23 by saying

“If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him.” Jesus was teaching them that through the giving of the Holy Spirit, they would (and we will, by extension) have the Father and the Son live in us—that is in this physical body that is our “home”. Matthew 18:20 backs this point up. *“For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.”*

Jesus continues in John 14:17 that we would know the Holy Spirit because it will dwell in us. Christ had been a *parakletos* to the disciples while He was in the flesh, and He continues that role even to this day by living in us by means of the Holy Spirit (John 14:20). Christ is in us and continues to teach us. He is functioning in the same role today as *parakletos* as He did during His earthly ministry.

The apostle Paul spoke of this in Galatians 2:20 – *“I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.”* Because Christ lives in us through the Holy Spirit, we have help in our weakness, and Christ can make intercession for us before the Father (Romans 8:26-27). Jesus Christ is our advocate (1 John 2:1). Christ functions more directly in this Heavenly court, while God’s Holy Spirit—the “other” *parakletos*—would be with them (us) permanently. Christ is able to do far more for us by the indwelling presence of the Holy spirit than He would

be able to do if He was still flesh. This is why we need not “be troubled” (John 14:27-28).

God’s Holy Spirit dwelling in us will impact lives around us as we allow the *parakletos* to bear fruit in us. We will bear one another’s burdens (Galatians 6:2). We will love one another with a selfless, Godly love (1 Thessalonians 4:9; 1 John 3:5-14, 16, 23; 2 John 1:5). And we will lay down our life for our “friend” who is our *parakletos* (John 15:13). This type of love can only come through Jesus Christ and God’s Holy Spirit dwelling in us. As it does, it will change us and it will be reflected in how we treat one another—in and out of the church. In allowing Christ to dwell in us, and by submitting to Him as our *parakletos*, we become the “sons of God” (Romans 8:14).

We have the promise of redemption given to us upon repentance, baptism and the receiving of God’s Holy Spirit. This is the promise the apostle Peter spoke of on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:39). Through the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ our sin is covered, so that the death penalty no longer has hold over us. With the payment of our sin debt, God the Father can now give to us His Holy Spirit so that Jesus Christ can live in us.

Our calling from God, and the path that He has placed us on, is not a journey we do on our own. God has given us two Helpers in our spiritual walk—Jesus Christ and God’s Holy Spirit. As we look forward to the Feast of Pentecost, let us remember the gift of God’s Holy Spirit given to His church—the *parakletos* to help us in our calling. 🍁

Showing Respect to Others

by Michael Erickson

A dominant trend in society is that people across all social and economic levels are becoming less respectful. There are thousands of articles on this topic listing various reasons for why it is occurring, and how it is damaging our nations. I submit it is because we are not effectively being taught the importance of showing respect. Most parents quickly learn that children do not say “please” and “thank you” unless someone teaches them to do so. Respect for parents, elders, authority figures and even neighbours was traditionally taught first in the home, and then in our schools and churches. Sadly, this is no longer occurring in the way it should and, as a result, disrespect is a growing problem in our society. Does this influence us? Yes! When was the last time we acted, spoke or wrote something in a way that was not respectful? If we are not mindful, we can very easily begin to slip into an attitude of not demonstrating proper respect.

At times I hear the justification for not showing respect, “Well they haven’t earned my respect.” What is God’s response to that type of statement or thought? God reminds us that honour (respect) should be given to those who are owed respect (Romans 13:7). So, who is owed respect in God’s eyes? If you do a search of the Scriptures, you will find four categories of people to whom God says respect is owed: our elders (seniors), authority figures, Jesus Christ and mankind in general.

First, seniors are owed respect simply because of their age and ex-



Photo by Marlis Trio Akbar on Unsplash

perience gained through life. The principle for this is found in the Law which includes a mandate to honour the face of an old man (Leviticus 19:32). Nations or people who disrespect their elders are called “hard-faced” (Deuteronomy 28:50, ESV). I would hope that none of us want to be considered “hard-faced” in God’s eyes. In giving instruction to Timothy, Paul exhorts him not to rebuke older men in the same way he would rebuke young men, but to be gentle and encouraging and respectful, as

to a father (1 Timothy 5:1). Since the experience that comes with old age is a key element in wisdom, to respect one’s elders is to respect the wisdom they can give.

Authority figures are another group to whom respect is owed. This includes political leaders (1 Peter 2:17), church elders (1 Timothy 3:2), other spiritual leaders (1 Thessalonians 5:12-13), fathers who discipline their children (Hebrews 12:9), parents in general (Exodus 20:12;

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Matthew 15:4), husbands (Ephesians 5:33), wives (1 Peter 3:7) and even the masters of servants or slaves. Interestingly, slaves are told to respect their masters not only when their masters are good and gentle, but also when they are harsh and unjust (1 Peter 2:18). That is a lesson for all of us.

Jesus Christ deserves the honour and respect of all mankind. However, He was subjected to much disrespect when He walked on this earth. This was especially true in His home region of Galilee (John 4:44). He gave us a parable about a landowner (God) who sent his beloved son (in this case Jesus) to a group of tenant vinedressers to check on the state of his vineyards. The landowner believed that his tenants would respect his son, but they did not. Instead, they showed him the ultimate disrespect, throwing him out of his own family's vineyard and putting him to death (Matthew 21:33-40; consider also Isaiah 5:1-7). Do we truly respect our Saviour and properly discern the Lord's body? Am I a good tenant who truly lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God? The warning at the end of this parable is sobering. What do you think the owner of the vineyard will do to those servants, in payment for their violence and disrespect, when he arrives? One takeaway for me every time I read this parable is: Am I too proud to be corrected?

Finally, respect is something that is owed to mankind in general, from one person to another, simply on the basis of our humanity. We each bear the image of God (Genesis 1:27) and have the opportunity to be a part of

His kingdom. Another parable is told about a wicked judge who did not fear God or respect man (Luke 18:2). The judge's disrespect for people is a feature of his wickedness in the parable. As true Christians we are not only to honour (respect) our brothers and sisters in Christ (Romans 12:10), but also to respect those who do not believe. (1 Peter 3:15). Earlier in Peter's epistle God inspired him to write, "Show proper respect to everyone..." (1 Peter 2:17).

Respect involves honouring or showing deference to another person. The word respect here is a translation of the Greek word *timēsate*, meaning "honour or value." It literally means "to place a great value or high price on something." The influence of our society can diminish the reality that God expects us to show that respect to everyone.

At times we all need to be reminded of the importance of showing respect. God commands we show respect to all. Let's consider that we read that husbands and wives are to respect their spouse; "...and the wife must respect her husband" (Ephesians 5:33). "Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect" (1 Peter 3:7 NIV). That same principle applies to all other relationships. We must learn to treat others with genuine respect, or we are not truly following God's directive to "show proper respect to everyone." "Incivility is a virus," Christine Porath, PhD, Associate Professor at the McDonough School of Business at Georgetown University and author of *Mastering Civility: A Manifesto for*

the Workplace, says. "You touch it and unfortunately we often don't realize we pass it on to others." Disrespectful behaviour breeds disrespectful behaviour. We need to realize the uncivil, rude and disrespectful attitudes in our society do indeed affect us.

A Harvard Business Review survey found that one quarter of the offenders surveyed said that they didn't recognize their behaviour as uncivil, rude or disrespectful. Incivility, rudeness and a general lack of respect can take subtle forms and are most often prompted by thoughtlessness. Let's consider honestly how we treat others; we are not to be a thoughtless people. The apostle Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 13:5 NIV that "love is not rude." The opposite of being rude is simply demonstrating genuine respect whether to another individual or an authority (consider also Romans 13:1-7; Luke 20:25). As we consider this topic and how God looks at it, remember proper respect should even be demonstrated to animals; as we find in Proverbs, "A righteous man regards the life of his animal" (Proverbs 12:10). Hopefully we as true Christians learn to practise respect and honour for all God's creation; and to teach that to our children as they will not learn it if we do not teach them. God says we owe "respect to everyone" while remembering, "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son" for each of us (John 3:16). Now that is the highest honour that He can give for all humanity. Let's be like our Heavenly Father and strive to put away uncivil or rude behaviour and to show respect and honour to others. 🍁

Toronto Soup & Sandwich Social

We are all familiar with the saying, “Boy it’s cold out there.” So coming in from the weather was just what the Toronto congregation did on January 10, 2026.

January can sometimes seem like a very long month but an easy solution was found for the Toronto congregation—just lengthen the time spent with those of like mind while enjoying a soup and sandwich meal after services.

The room was a buzz with lively conversation and replete with a wide variety of dishes, showcasing the international flavor of our congregation. Traditional soups along with some that were hot and spicy made for a delicious meal.

It all came to a close all too soon, so with lots of enthusiastic help cleaning up—tables and chairs were stacked, floors swept, empty dishes packed until our next get together. Everyone left for home—filled and rejuvenated for their week ahead when we would again “gather.”

Paula Horlick

Toronto Comfort Food Social

The long winter months, with their short days and bitterly cold temperatures, truly weighs heavily on everyone. This often leaves people feeling tired and in need of comfort.

So on March 7, 2026, the Toron-



Toronto Comfort Food Social

Photo by Amy van Zant

to congregation hosted a potluck social called “Comfort Food.” After the church service, the congregation met in the fellowship hall and partook of the scrumptious food laid before us, with everything from hearty meals to simple satisfying favourites. The spread was generous—homemade shepherd’s pie with a golden top crisped just right, delicious hamburger helpers, pots of soups, a hearty chicken stew thick with vegetables, casseroles. Of course, there were the familiar favourites: dear old mac and cheese, pizza, meatballs and chicken wings. Plates were filled quickly and everyone found there was enough food for seconds and thirds.

Sharing these dishes seemed to lift our spirits with warm conversation and incredible fellowship. It was so wonderful to behold everyone having such a wonderful time. This Comfort Food social indeed

gave us a much needed boost and lifted us out of the humdrum of the long winter days.

Just beyond these final chilly days there is much anticipation of the warmth that spring will bring. Longer days and new life and growth are just a few weeks away.

Amy van Zant

NTBMO 2026 Hamilton

This night commemorates the end of Israel’s 430 years of captivity and slavery in Egypt. Although the world does not recognize the significance of these events or this observance, it is a reminder to us that the world is under Satan’s rulership. The only way to escape his grip is to respond to God’s call to salvation through Jesus who was the God who led Israel to freedom during that time of Moses.

Most of the Hamilton members were able to participate together this year on this festive occasion—the Night To Be Much Observed. After a pensive Passover observance the night before, it felt like a welcome, joyful and refreshing new start with spring on its way and the first Feast of the year.

Many hands made light work of setting up the hall for our evening. This year our congregation ordered a catered main course from a familiar restaurant that turned out to be very satisfactory as the food was of

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good quality, flavour and in abundant quantity.

The observance officially started with an introduction from our pastor, Paul Wasilkoff. This was followed by an impromptu yet successful memory refresher by one of the men of the ten plagues imposed on Egypt prior to the Exodus. A blessing on the food followed.

The tables were well decorated with tablecloths, fireproof candles, festive table runners and a banner.

We were also blessed with special juices and drinks during the meal and plenty of unleavened bread.

There was much lively chatter, as everyone seemed to enjoy the observance.

The desserts were delightful. These were not provided with the catered meal but were mostly homemade treats from members.

Thanks to all those who helped make this observance a success.

It was a blessed night and a memorable, special and joyful Feast.

Thanks be to God and to Him be the glory!

Jacques & Jean Gauvin

VANCOUVER NTBMO

The Night To Be Much Observed is a special time. We commemorate



Vancouver brethren gather for NTBMO
Photo by Ralph Cortes

Israel coming out of Egypt. As for us in the Church of God, we celebrate coming out of this world, a world under the sway of Satan. God is our deliverer. This night is a time of sober reflection but also of joy. We have been called out of darkness into God's marvelous light. We celebrate Christ's awesome sacrifice. We celebrate our deliverance from the bondage of sin, We have freedom! This freedom is only possible



Newfoundland Spring Holy Day Potluck
Photo by Mary Wells

through the awesome sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Vancouver brethren got together on April 1 at sunset. Seven of us gathered at the White Spot restaurant, in Surrey. We opened with a Scriptural reading, which spoke of two kinds of fears. Egypt had fear of losing their firstborn. Israel had a proper fear of the one true God. He was their deliverer, a Deliverer from the bondage of Egypt; Egypt being a type of sin.

Conversation then focused on God's great miracle of bringing Israel through the Red Sea on dry land. The assailing Egyptians were drowned. It was inspiring to consider! We spoke of the unity of our faith, in observing this night. We conversed about our calling into God's truth.

A delicious meal was enjoyed, and sharing food and fellowship adds so much to the enjoyment! It was a Night To Be Much Observed, a night which was much enjoyed! God is always good!

Dale Craniford

Spring Feast in Newfoundland

The Newfoundland brethren are scattered with a number of them living over four hours away from St. John's. Thus, when they can all get together for Holy Days it is like a special family reunion.

This year for Passover and the first
(Continues on page 12)

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“Newfoundland” from pg 11

Day of Unleavened Bread, their pastor (Anthony Wasilkoff) was able to be there. Passover and the holy day were held in their regular meeting hall, which gives a beautiful ocean view. Three members were unable to attend due to health.



Wasikoffs fellowship with brethren
Photo by Mary Wells

Plans were in place for a group meal at a local establishment for the Night to Be Much Remembered. Unfortunately, it snowed all day necessitating the cancellation of the occasion. Thankfully, the weather cleared

so that services could be held on the first Day of Unleavened Bread.

After the service, the chairs and tables were quickly rearranged to accommodate a delicious potluck meal consisting of a good variety of meat, salads, vegetables, desserts and, of course, unleavened bread! While the food was great, what was even better was the time to fellowship around one table.

UNC

Montreal Church Karaoke Social

The Sabbath Service on April 11 was held in East Farnham where we are not limited to a time frame for vacating the premises. So, we were able to enjoy a very special evening. After the service, 23 of us stayed for a delicious potluck meal with lots of fellowshiping. It is such a blessing to be able to get together, to encourage each other and to get caught up with the happenings in each others lives; it's a treasure to be sure.

There were 19 who stayed afterwards to participate in our



Montreal ladies singing karaoke
Photo by Chantal Leclerc

very first Karaoke Night. We had lots of fun and lots of different styles and variety of music. From the youngest to the oldest many participated in singing songs in Italian, Spanish, French and English. We are truly an international group! We had solos, duets, trios and quartets as well as families and larger groups singing together. It was a very versatile evening of musical selections. We heard love songs, children's songs, husbands singing to their wives, husbands and wives singing together and mothers and daughters singing together.

It was a beautiful evening with each person making a joyful noise and having fun doing it. It was a gathering that everyone enjoyed. Good food, good fellowship and good music are always a winning combination. Many thanks to Judy Duclos and her husband Steven King for organizing and setting up all the Karaoke equipment and running it. Thank you for a great job and your serving attitude!

Submitted by Beve Hebert



Newfoundland brethren enjoying a potluck meal with Wasilkoffs
Photo provided by Mary Wells

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Mark Yap's Ordination
Photo by Adeline Sanoy

Yap Ordination

The First Day of Unleavened Bread was a joyful one for several reasons. The North Battleford and Saskatoon Brethren met together in North Battleford along with visitors from Ontario, Texas and Alberta.

The event that added much to our joy was the ordination of Mark Yap. The ordination message was given by Larry DeLong. Mr. Sixto Yap and Larry DeLong then ordained Mark.

Mark's parents, Sixto and Josie Yap and Julia's parents, Scott and Jean Stewart had traveled to Saskatchewan for the occasion.

Mark was hired for the Canadian ministry on July 1, 2025. He said he had been praying for more shepherds and he got the call to be one. He and his wife spent some time in Wisconsin last summer with Dan Dowd as his mentor.

Mark and his wife, Julia, moved into the area in September and have served the Saskatoon and North Battleford Congregations. They have been a welcome addition to our Church family.

Adeline Sanoy

Herman Schafers Obituary

Herman Joseph Schafers was born on April 30, 1937. He managed the family farm after his father died at a young age, but it gave him a passion for farming. He married his wife, Marian Theresa Keiser, on December of 1958. They had four boys named Shane, Donald, Darren and Elben.

They started in the church with the Radio Church of God and were motivated enough to drive all the way to

Ambassador College to be baptized in 1965, only to find out that there was a congregation in Edmonton!

Herman and Marian stayed faithful with God, Church and farming until his death on December 20, 2025. He is survived by his wonderful wife Marian, his sons Shane and Elben, many grand and great grandchildren. He was predeceased by his sons, Darren and Donald Schafers. He will be remembered as a loving husband, father, grandpa and a man dedicated to God.

Cody Schafers



Herman & Marian Schafers
Photo by Schafers family

Information You Can Use

While the administrative functions of UCG-Canada are executed by the staff in the National Office, the National Council establishes the direction for the work of the church.

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

Do you know what committees the National Council has and who are on the committees?

Do you know where you can find the information?

Anytime you wish to find the answers to these questions, go to: <https://www.ucg.ca/about/national-council>.

There you can always find updated information about the governing board of the United Church of God – Canada.

Women's Enrichment Weekend: Fairmont Hot Springs, British Columbia

April 17-20, 2026

The fifth annual Western Canadian Women's Enrichment Weekend was held in Fairmont Hot Springs, British Columbia, from April 17-20, 2026. There were 46 ladies from Saskatchewan, Alberta, British Columbia, Ontario, New Brunswick, Washington and Ohio who came together for a Women's Enrichment Weekend in the southern BC Rocky Mountains.

It was a wonderful time of fellowship, enrichment, fun and relaxation.

There was a snowstorm on the Wednesday and Thursday before the weekend began. Some ladies travelled two days to get to the event, but despite having to trek across in blizzard conditions, the storm did not stop them from coming! They were determined to join their sisters for this spiritually uplifting weekend.

The snow-capped mountains with a mix of sunshine made for a majestic scene of God's awesome creation.

Friday evening began with a lovely welcome reception and introduction to the weekend event. Tonya Erickson gave an inspiring opening message introducing the theme for the weekend "Remember What God has Done" (Psalm 105:5; 1 Chronicles 16:12). One comment that stood out was how "remember" is such a common word, yet such a powerful tool that can help us grow in godly char-



Group Photo
Photo by Michael Erickson

acter. Remember appears over 230 times in the Bible. God tells us to remember a lot of things.

The ladies had an opportunity to get to know one another playing "Getting to know you Bingo."

There were opportunities for extended fellowship each day in the meeting hall, as well as the hot springs pool surrounded by God's awesome creation in the mountains. On the Sabbath, we enjoyed special music pieces including a piano solo by Kim Eckert, a vocal solo by Eve Shaw and a duet by Willetta Ellington and Synnove Teetaert. Guest speaker, Aaron Dean, gave an encouraging and faith-strengthening sermon. The sermon was a great example of "remembering what God has done" by applying things we are going through with the Biblical stories God

has given us in His Word. It helps us remember that no matter what others might do, to not let anyone take your crown. Remember the challenges and obstacles that God's people have dealt with, and yet remained faithful even when facing death. Remember that when we are going through trials, God knows what He will do. He wants to know what we will do.

Michelle Dean gave a heartfelt and inspiring presentation of her personal life experiences and how looking back she could see God was preparing her for future events in her life through those experiences. Even though we may not be able to see it at the time, God works things for good. She commented how this group of ladies made her feel comfortable speaking in public.

We had several table topics dis-

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cussing the theme for the weekend and sharing inspiring stories of how God has carried us through our trials. Each lady was able to share in a smaller group at her table of six. This was a very important part of the weekend as it allowed bonding in smaller groups.

On Sunday there was a craft activity where each lady got to choose a souvenir water bottle and then apply vinyl stickers with a custom design to decorate.

A silent auction was held throughout the morning with funds raised towards sponsoring a Women's Enrichment Weekend for the ladies in Lusaka, Zambia. An overwhelming amount of over \$2,000 was raised.

Tracy Nyhus-Jongerius, a registered psychologist, presented an informative session on "Post Traumatic Growth." Ladies were divided into small groups to put into practice engaging as women characters in the Bible and learning how to be more effective and purposeful in our communications with one another. One key takeaway from the presentation

was how we need to develop a vocabulary to describe our feelings, which ultimately helps us to express how we are truly feeling when someone asks us, rather than just saying "I'm ok" or "fine thanks."

Evelyn Davis presented an inspiring wrap-up speech, and thanked everyone who was involved and reflected over the past five years of Western Canadian Women's Enrichment weekends and what God has done in the lives of the women who have been attending and the special bonding that has been happening over the years. Michelle Dean commented how wonderful it was to see how everyone worked so well together to make things happen.

A gathering outdoors with a light lunch and snacks was provided by the local brethren as a grand finale for those who had to leave early.

There were additional activities for the ladies who chose to extend their time together. Several adventurous ladies went on a 20-minute nature hike to a natural hot spring in the area, on what turned out to

be a beautiful sunny day with blue skies. In the evening, there were 29 ladies who participated in a group painting activity.

It was wonderful to come together as a group of sisters in Christ to share our personal experiences, to remember what God has done in our lives, to provide a safe space for ladies to share their personal experiences and to inspire and encourage one another.

It was truly a weekend to "remember" with opportunities to enrich each other spiritually, share our personal experiences, uplift each other, create precious bonds of support and glorify God in all we did.

It was heartwarming and inspiring to see such strong bonds among the ladies gathering together. Many commented how they look forward to attending this event every year.

We look forward to welcoming all who are interested in joining us for next year's Women's Enrichment Weekend! Stay tuned for more information.

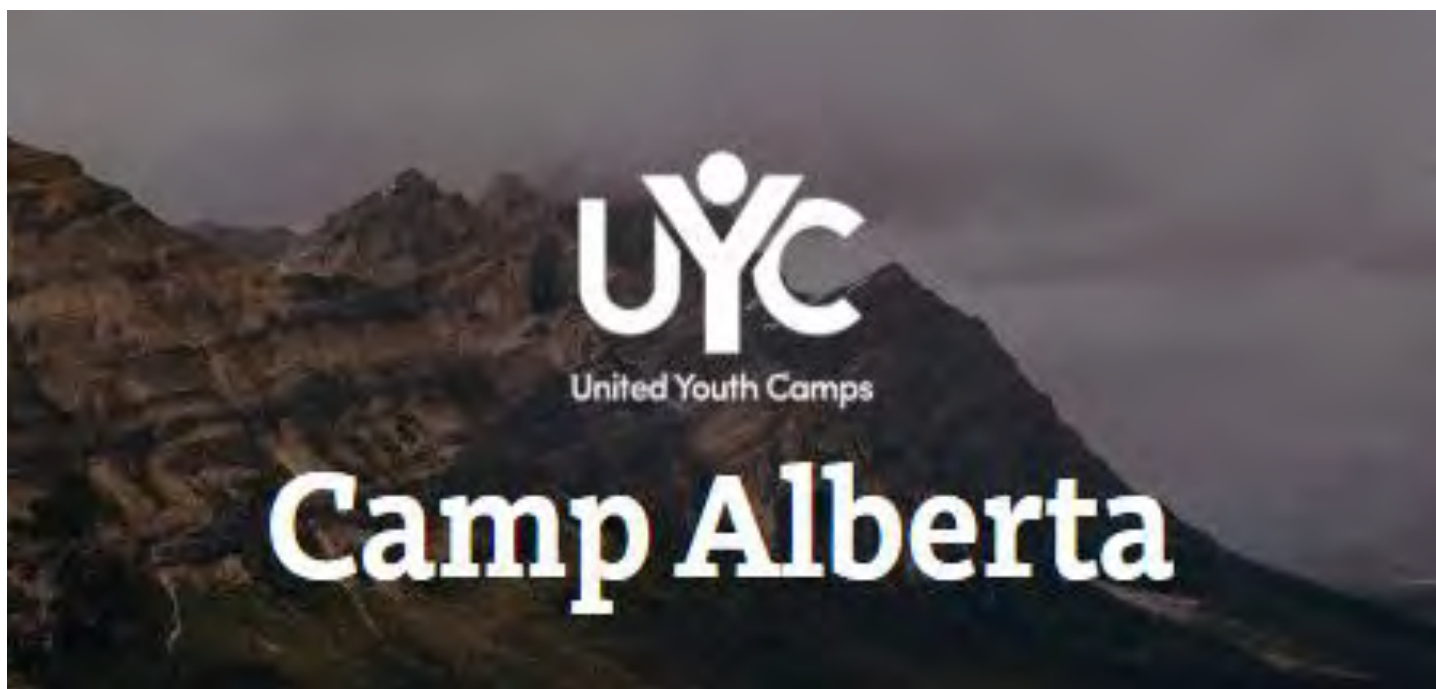
*Michelle de Campos &
Tonya Erickson*



Silent Auction
Photo by Heidi Poffenroth



Group Painting
Photo by Heidi Poffenroth



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY

Alberta Teen Camp 2026 is looking for enthusiastic volunteers that love our youth and want to enjoy an exciting week at camp! Come join us in canoeing, riflery, Christian Living lessons, swimming, sports, outdoor skills, and more!

Adult Volunteers of all ages needed to make camp a success!

Camp Dates: August 17 to 23, 2026

Hardisty, AB for Teens ages 13-18

Contact Larry DeLong at (403) 382-7525 or

Email lgdelong@shaw.ca for details