



An Anniversary to Remember

Weddings are common in the summer months, especially in the month of June it seems. Most of us receive invitations to attend a wedding and look forward to being present on such a special occasion. All brides are beautiful. All grooms are handsome. We enjoy the ceremony and the reception thereafter. An historical event is in the making and contributing to it is highly meaningful.

One of the highlights of a wedding is hearing the various speeches that are made—usually at the conclusion of the meal. Advice is often gratuitously dispensed to the bride and groom—especially the groom. For instance, he is usually told to remember their annual anniversary and to never forget it. How can the groom be sure to remember this important annual calendar date? The answer: forget it just once! In so doing, he will never forget it again!

The Feast of Pentecost is a special event that we, too, must never forget. Sadly, some have.

The Feast of Pentecost comes to

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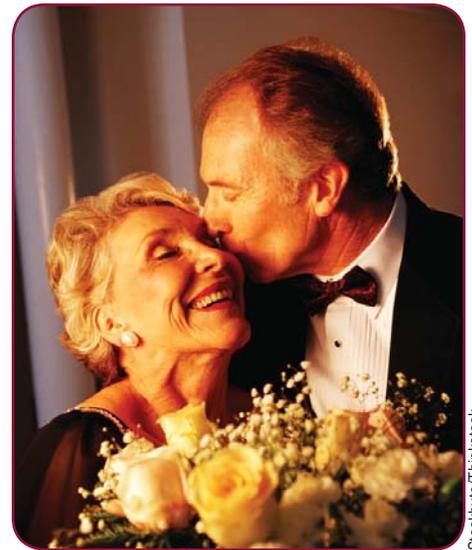
us under multiple names, unlike most other festivals. It is called the Feast of Weeks, the Feast of Firstfruits and, of course, the Feast of Pentecost. We can learn a lot about this special occasion from the various names that the Great God has ascribed to it.

It is, among other things, an annual anniversary for Christians to commemorate special events associated with the day. First of all, it is the annual commemoration of the giving of the Ten Commandments. According to Jewish tradition, the Creator God thundered the Ten Commandments in the wilderness from Mount Sinai on the very day of Pentecost. The Great God does special things on special days. The declaration of the Ten Commandments on the Feast of Pentecost helped Israel of old to remember the importance of the Ten Commandments and who gave them. It should do the same for us today.

The Feast of Pentecost is also the anniversary of the giving of the Holy Spirit. Jesus instructed His disciples to wait in Jerusalem until the dispensation of the Holy Spirit which would grant them the power that they so lacked. Zechariah 4:6 states: “Not by power or by might but by my Spirit, says the Eternal.” Servants of God through the ages came to realize that they must rely upon God’s power—not their own—in order to accomplish what they have been given to accomplish.

The Feast of Pentecost is also the anniversary of the estab-

lishment of the New Testament Church. The ancient Israelites were referred to as the church in the wilderness. The New Testament Church began on the Day of Pentecost in Jerusalem and from there expanded throughout the Holy Land and the whole Roman Empire. The church grew further and faster than anyone imagined it could or would.



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This issue contains articles about aspects of our celebrating this important annual festival that stands by itself like a sentinel between the Passover season and the autumn festivals. Our Heavenly Father has given us magnificent festivals to remind us of His wondrous plan of salvation. They are a vital means to keep us focused on what He and His Son are doing. We have so much to celebrate and cherish as we rehearse a vital aspect of the plan of salvation by observing the annual Feast of Pentecost.

Anthony Wasilkoff

Counting

“One, two, three, four . . . Here I come ready or not!” Most of us have played the childhood game of Hide and Seek and are familiar with the routine of counting to a prescribed number to give the others time to hide.



KaeAtr/istock/Thinstock

Did you ever notice how much children love to count? They love to show off their skills to any receptive adult. And, of course, we give them the praise they deserve for their accomplishment. I have vivid memories of my mother driving me to school one morning. I counted to 100 by ones, fives and tens. It must have been

driving her crazy, but she patiently listened. What I remember most about that time was the joy of knowing how to count.

As we age, counting continues to be important to us. Many games include a counting element. An expectant mother counts the weeks until her child is due to be born. When an individual dies, we count his/her years of life. In between, we count the number of years left until our schooling is done, the number of wedding anniversaries we have, the number of children we have and the number of years until retirement.

This is the time of year when we, as Christians, count—count fifty to be exact. The Holy Day calendar is carefully calculated by using a special formula. It can be complicated. I well remember learning those calculations in one Bible class at Ambassador College. It was intriguing to know that with the formula, you could calculate the precise date each Holy Day would fall on in any year—as long as you remembered to carefully check each of the potential “exceptions” to the rules.

Thankfully, calculating the day of Pentecost is relatively simple. You just count fifty days from

the day after the weekly Sabbath during the Days of Unleavened Bread. Most six-year-olds can do it.

Recently, I was wondering how the early disciples felt as they waited for the promised “Comforter” to come to them. They had gone through the traumatic death, burial and resurrection of Christ; then they were told to wait. Were they anxiously counting to fifty as they all waited in Jerusalem? Did the days fly by or drag slowly? Did they carefully mark off their “calendars” while waiting for the next Holy Day?

It is relatively easy for us. We have repeatedly read the New Testament and know what happened on the Day of Pentecost. We have our Holy Day calendars with all the days carefully provided for us. But can you imagine the children of old counting the number of “sleeps” until the big event? Of course, they didn’t really know what to expect. After all, they had yet to read chapter two from the book of Acts!

We are on the countdown to the next annual festival. Happy counting!

Linda Wasilkoff

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A Vital Part of God's Master Plan

The book of Acts begins with about 120 disciples of Jesus Christ waiting during the interval between the Passover season and the Feast of Pentecost. They were following Christ's instructions found in Acts 1:4-7 where, "... He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, 'which,' He said, 'you have heard from Me; for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.' ... But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

The Passover had taken place in A.D. 31. Christ had made His triumphant entry into Jerusalem, close to the time that the Passover lamb was to be chosen (John 12:12-15; Exodus 12:2-3). He introduced bread and wine during the Passover meal and washed the disciples' feet. Later, He suffered horribly, poignantly demonstrating how our sins bring suffering. On the Sunday morning after his Wednesday crucifixion, He was approached by Mary Magdalene, but would not allow her to touch Him because He had not yet ascended to the Father (John 20:17). Why? It is because He was the wave-sheaf offering, pictured in Leviticus 23:10-11. This was a "sheaf of the firstfruits" that was offered to God. The early harvest season in Palestine began with it being waved before the Lord on the Sunday morning, following the Passover during the Days of Unleavened Bread. Before Christ could be touched, He had to be accepted of the Father. Later

that day, after appearing before His Father and then returning, He did allow certain women to touch Him (Matthew 28:9).

The disciples were told to wait. They did. They gathered together, fifty days after the Sunday appearances of Jesus Christ, to keep the next festival (Leviticus 23:9-22) – the Feast of Harvest (Exodus 23:16), also called the Feast of Weeks (Exodus 34:22), or in Greek, the Feast of Pentecost, which means "fiftieth." Acts 2:1 records that, "When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place." On that day, a remarkable event took place. God poured out His Holy Spirit on the assembled multi-cultural group and used miracles of hearing and speaking in various languages to communicate with them—many of whom later became believers.

That Pentecost in A.D. 31 marked the beginning of the early New Testament church. Thousands of years earlier, possibly on another Pentecost, God had given Israel the Ten Commandments from Mount Sinai using similar types of attention-getting methods. Now He had given mankind the ability to become Godly in thoughts, attitudes and actions through the precious gift of the Holy Spirit, given en masse to the embryo of the New Testament church.

The disciples had kept the Days of Unleavened Bread. They had kept these days without possessing the Holy Spirit, a lesson being that God expects us to make the effort to put sin out of our lives. Mankind has needed to put sin out for thousands of years, but has not generally done

so. Peter declared that anyone who has been called, repents and is baptized can receive the precious gift of God's Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38-39). Through that gift, God helps us, but only after we first begin the process of removing sin out of our lives.

The harvest of spiritual fruit began with God's calling of a small elect from the time of righteous Abel. That harvest accelerated on the day of Pentecost and continues to this day, ultimately culminating in a spiritual resurrection from the dead at Christ's second coming. Scriptures describe those called out ones as firstfruits. The implication is that other fruit will be harvested later. James wrote about converted Christians saying, "Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures" (James 1:18). Paul referred to brethren as those "who have the firstfruits of the Spirit" in Romans 8:23 and alluded to several first-century Christians as the firstfruits of God's calling (Romans 16:5; 1 Corinthians 16:15). Christ is called the "firstborn of many brethren" in Romans 8:29 and "the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep" in 1 Corinthians 15:20. He is the "firstborn over all creation" and "firstborn from the dead" (Colossians 1:15, 18). All of this is closely linked to the Feast of Firstfruits.

Jesus Christ instructed His church to go forth and harvest, preaching the gospel, baptizing and teaching believers to observe all things that He commanded (Matthew 28:19-20). The church that will be the harvest is also used to do a part of the harvesting. God will have used

seven different periods of harvesting, as represented by the seven candlesticks in Revelation 1:12-13, 20. The work of the church must be complete before Christ returns. He will marry His bride, who will have made herself ready (Revelation 19:7-8).

An Old Testament parallel is found in the book of Ruth, where Boaz and Ruth culminate a union during the early barley harvest. A

virtuous Gentile woman is grafted into an Israelite household, becoming a part of the genealogy of the Messiah. Gleaning instructions are even given in the section of scripture having to do with the Feast of Firstfruits (Leviticus 23: 22).

God is logical. He is organized. He has a plan. The blueprint of His plan can be found in the meaning of His festivals. The Feast of

Pentecost is so rich with meaning – how He is calling a small firstfruits, how He provides the gift of His precious Holy Spirit, how ultimately, He will pour out His Holy Spirit upon “all flesh” (Joel 2:28-29; Acts 2:14-17).

But that is another, larger harvest and it is for the fall festivals.

Rainer Salomaa

A Year To Remember

This past year, I was blessed to be able to live in Chiang Mai, Thailand, where I served at a school called the Legacy Institute. Legacy Institute is a Church of God-based school that provides young adults with the opportunity to learn and develop language skills such as English, as well as skills in computers, agriculture, health and the Bible. There was a full curriculum of these classes, with the addition of Jet Rye. Jet

ers to facilitate it. Literally blood, sweat and tears went into that rice, along with a lot of laughter, love and growth of spirit.

Throughout the year, we were able to take trips as teachers to different countries (such as Laos and Cambodia), and field trips with the students to the zoo, movie theatre and bowling. God also blessed us with putting together a COG Feast of Tabernacles site in Chiang Mai, Thailand, where people of like mind, from all over the world, were able to come together.

We are blessed to live in a country where we are not bombarded with physical false gods in our midst, but we still often let things like work, hobbies, and money become idols in our lives. There is great comfort in the fact that underneath different languages and cultures we are all a part of God’s family, having the same struggles.



Amanda Boyer

Rye was our rice field, which we prepared, planted and harvested. It was a huge, challenging project. We only had hoes, one rototiller and five ‘farang’ (foreigner) teach-

With five teachers and 10 students, we grew into more of a family than a school. While improving their chance of succeeding in life with new skills was a great privilege, the real blessing was to be able to show and discuss God’s Word with them. In a country full of pagan confusion, it is clear that many do not know the true God. Within these students is a faith and zeal that cannot be broken by Buddhist temples and good luck charms. It was amazing and inspiring to see.



provided by Meagan Garant

I am so grateful to have had this opportunity. It was exciting, quite often challenging, but always fulfilling. Thank you for all of the prayers, letters and financial support over this past year. They were greatly appreciated!

Meagan Garant

The Little Church that Grew

As is the case with so many other church areas, the Windsor, Ontario, congregation had a modest beginning. After many years of prayerful consideration, the first Bible study in Windsor was held on the evening of Wednesday, April 10, 2013. There were eight brethren in attendance. Since then, God has blessed this small but warm congregation with much growth.

Let me provide you with a “word picture” of that journey.



Patrick Read

Joe Brdar, a member in the Windsor area, faithfully went about trying to secure a place for us to hold that first Bible study. Mr. Brdar was able to utilize some of his previous connections to secure a room at the Salvation Army in Windsor twice a month beginning in April 2013.

Since Windsor is a considerable distance from the pastor’s home, it became obvious that assistance was needed if we were to continue holding Bible studies twice a month. As always, God faithfully provided that help in the form of two very dedicated elders from across the border in Michigan.

Randy D’Alessandro and Keith Haab willingly offered their services to take up the slack. They alternated taking every other mid-week study.

That Bible study solidified the little group and, in no time, a dialogue began about when and where to begin hosting regular Sabbath services. Once again, Mr. Brdar took the reins and secured a place for us at the Comfort Inn and Suites in Windsor. The location is extremely conducive to our needs and nicely situated with easy access for the brethren.

The first service was held at 10:30 a.m. on the Sabbath of October 5. God blessed us with 13 in attendance – two of whom were new to UCG. That first sermon emphasized that mankind must follow the Word of God as the only manual that will provide an entrance to the Kingdom of God. As with every new purchase, the instruction manual is vitally important to achieve long lasting results and so it is with each one of us. God’s Word is vital in directing our path through life.

Initially, services were to be held three times a month. However, it didn’t take long before we were able to hold services every Sabbath. Once again, Mr. D’Alessandro and Mr. Haab stepped up and provided support for one Sabbath each month. A DVD is used to provide the sermon on the fourth and fifth Sabbaths.



Patrick Read

Among the many “firsts” in this warm church was the privilege to hold the Passover service and Night To Be Much Observed. Prior to Passover, two individuals were counseled and baptized with another counselled for re-baptism. As a result, there were 13 in attendance for the Passover service.

The Night To Be Much Observed was a meaningful occasion as well. The brethren met in two homes, one in Windsor and the other in Kingsville



Patrick Read

(about thirty minutes apart). What made these two venues so meaningful was evident in the comments that were made. Mary Brdar said it was the first time in 20 years that she was able to formally host the Night To Be Much Observed. Marilyn Anderson said it was the first time ever that she could host this special evening.

Another “first” was the ordination of Joe Brdar who has faithfully and diligently served the little group since its beginning. Mr. Brdar was ordained as a deacon on the First Day of Unleavened Bread. The brethren were overjoyed and many congratulations and hugs were given to him.

We look forward to celebrating many other “firsts” with the Windsor church. It truly is, the “little church that grew.”

Member Profile: Clara Wanamaker

According to Canada Post, over 1.2 million Canadian households move each year but Clara Wanamaker isn't among them. She has the distinction of living in the same house for the past 76 ½ years.

Mrs. Wanamaker, 94, moved into her current home in Nauwigewauk (which sounds like now-WIDGE-ah-walk), New Brunswick, in 1937 when she was about 18 years old. The house was built in 1913 by the father and uncle of her husband, Harold. There have been a lot of changes over the years, including the new highway that was built in 1954. Nauwigewauk is about 30 kilometres northeast of Saint John.

The Wanamakers came into God's church in the 1970s. They heard the radio program on WWVA from Wheeling, West Virginia. They were part of the Seventh Day Adventist church at the time. Both were baptized in 1982 and attended services in Saint

John, New Brunswick. Back then services were held every other week in Saint John, so the Wanamakers would drive to Fredericton or



Edwin van Pelt

Moncton on the other Sabbaths. For the Holy Days, Saint John, Fredericton and Moncton would meet centrally in the town of Sussex, about 45 kilometres northeast of Nauwigewauk.

In 1996, Mrs. Wanamaker became part of the United Church of God - Canada. She was part of the newly-formed Sussex congrega-

tion. Today, she occasionally hosts the local brethren. This year's Pass-over service was held in her home with nine members of the church, plus one observer – her cat, Missy. Actually, the cat belongs to her granddaughter, Gini, who recently moved to Alberta.

In 2006, the National Council held their June meetings in Sussex. After Sabbath services at the Amsterdam Inn, the council members and the members of the Sussex church spent an enjoyable summer day in the yard and gardens at Mrs. Wanamaker's home.

Mrs. Wanamaker's hobbies include quilting, knitting, crocheting and gardening. After a long, hard winter, she is looking forward to being outdoors in the garden once again.

She has no plans to move anytime soon.

Edwin van Pelt

A Way To Be More Involved

The United Church of God strives to listen to input from members. In fact, here in Canada we have reserved two of the seats on the Canadian National Council for laymembers. These two individuals then become "members of the corporation" – which is different from being a member of the spiritual body of the church. This gives you a chance to be actively involved in the church!

This summer each official congregation will once again be asked to nominate someone from the

congregation to be considered for a position on the National Council. Who can take part in this? Because by law we operate as a corporation, we must meet legal requirements. In this case, to take part in this selection process, you must be a baptized member of UCG-Canada. We must have your completed membership form on record. If you are baptized but have not completed a form, and wish to be an official member of the spiritual body of the church, see your pastor for the Membership/Associated Information form.

If you have submitted the form, now is the time to start considering who in your congregation might be an asset on the National Council at this time. Some criteria to consider are:

- The person must be baptized and an official member of the church called United Church of God-Canada.
- The person must be able to attend a face-to-face National Council meeting each year (3 or 4 days per meeting) during his/her three-

year term. The person must also be available to take part in three web-conference meetings per year.

- The person must agree with and support the Fundamental Beliefs of the church.
- The person must agree with and support the policies of the church.
- The person must be able to communicate via computer.
- The person should be someone of integrity.

Council business is sometimes tedious and sometimes exciting. A council member needs to have the ability to read the Bylaws with un-

derstanding as well as have the ability to plan for future growth.

So, how can you know who in your congregation would be a good choice? Most congregations will have a list of those who are available to be selected. Start by looking to see who is on that list. Then pray for wisdom for your choice and especially for the collective decision of the congregation. Get to know your fellow brethren—their dedication to the church and our beliefs.

As you narrow down your choices, ask some questions of the individuals. Each year some are chosen who must decline because they would be unable to take the neces-

sary time off work to attend council meetings. In other words—do your homework and be actively involved in this important process!

Through the years, there have been some very capable laymembers chosen to serve on the National Council. Their wise input has been valued. The collective ideas and the advice received from many different regions (from Vancouver Island to Newfoundland) and backgrounds have helped the National Council to make more balanced decisions through the years.

Don't miss this opportunity to be actively involved!

UNC

Statistics At A Glance

United Church of God – Canada is one of Canada's over 85,000 registered charities. Here are some interesting statistics about UCG-Canada.

Church-wide:

- Seven pastors and ten elders serve 23 congregations.
- Average Sabbath attendance is 538.
- Average Holy Day attendance is 629.
- There are eight office employees.
- There are 426 members, 175 co-workers and 586 donors.
- Over 82,000 people have received literature from us.
- Over 24,000 are active

members, co-workers, donors, subscribers or readers.

The Good News:

- 21,081 subscribers.
- Total of 1.4 million copies have been distributed.
- 1,134 subscribers to Bonnes Nouvelles.
- 20,000 Bonnes Nouvelles have been distributed.

Beyond Today:

- Over 34,000 responses since May 2006.
- Over 17,000 new people reached.
- Almost 20 percent of those in our database comes from Beyond Today..

Internet-2013:

- Responsible for 35% of all mail received.
- Over 4,000 subscriptions and literature requests came from the Internet.

Top five most requested booklets:

- *Middle East in Bible Prophecy.*
- *The Book of Revelation Unveiled.*
- *Are We Living in the Time of the End?*
- *You Can Understand Bible Prophecy.*
- *Jesus Christ the Real Story.*

UNC



March National Council Meetings

After a few technical difficulties, all National Council members as well as the Treasurer and Secretary were able to connect to the WebEx meeting on Monday evening, March 10, 2014. The meeting began on a sad note as the death of a former National Council member, Dr. Ian Simons, was discussed. Flowers were sent to the family.

The Chairman, Rainer Salomaa, reviewed the minutes of the December 2, 2013, meeting. Following the adoption of those minutes, Anthony Wasilkoff gave the National Office report. He updated the Council on the excellent response received from the Subscriber Development letter mailed in December. In addition, he informed the Council of negotiations under way to replace the aging office photocopiers. The main unit being looked at has a saddle-stitch finisher, which allows folding and stapling of projects.

Mr. Wasilkoff reported that the monthly church reports show that there are a number of health concerns across the country. Also, new people continue to contact us and some have begun to attend church.

Dennis Horlick gave a media update. He noted that we had been concerned when we had to change the time *Beyond Today* is aired on Vision. However, we have continued to receive good response rates at the new time. Those responding are fairly evenly divided between new people and those already on file. Mr. Horlick also noted that our contract with HOPE expires in June and our contract with Vision expires in December.

Edwin van Pelt reported that our income is down about one percent from our projected budget partly because there was one less Holy Day that fell in the fiscal year. However, our expenses are sufficiently under budget to make up for that. He reminded all that proper receipts are needed for reimbursement of any expenses.

A concern for next year is that we anticipate an increase in postage of about 20%. Usually, we have about six months advance notice of increases to allow us to budget for the increase. This time, Canada Post did not give notice in time for us to include this in next year's budget. Mr. van Pelt said we will try to combine as much mail as possible to save on postage costs.

Rainer Salomaa gave a short update of the February 24-27 Council of Elders meeting.

The next item was to receive updates on what committees are working on and what might be presented for approval in June. The Strategic Planning/Finance Committee will be collecting data and will work in conjunction with other committees as they discuss potential pension plans. Most of the work will be done face-to-face in June.

The Governance Committee plans to present two policies for approval in June. The Compensation Committee added categories to the salary range document and will work on the potential of pension plans in June.

The Chairman referred to an update from a law firm that noted that

less than ten percent of non-profit corporations have registered under the Canada Not-for-profit Corporations Act. We had expected to be in the middle of the field of those who registered, but obviously were among some of the very first.

Michael Erickson reported that the Compliancy Task Force is currently working on a copyright policy. It was briefly reviewed by Larry Darden who suggested that we get input from a Canadian lawyer. This should be ready for approval in June. Additional policies may be ready by June.

Joseph Sheperd's term on the Amendment Committee finishes on March 31. After discussion, the Council unanimously agreed to appoint him to another three-year term.

This year the international areas will be asked to set up a booth at the General Conference of Elders. Rainer Salomaa suggested that Council members send any ideas for the Canadian booth to Patrick Read.

The Chairman asked that Paul Wasilkoff be invited to attend the June meeting. He will send a letter to Richard Kennebeck to formally ask for this. Victor Kubik and Aaron Dean will also be present.

For the June meetings, Chairman Salomaa also asked for some research regarding costs, facts and locations for leasing or buying office space so that we can begin planning for when the current office lease expires.

Linda Wasilkoff

“Pentecost” from page 16

“The first word not only forbids idolatry in thought, word and deed, but enjoins to love, fear, serve and cleave to the Lord.

“The second shows the manner in which the Lord will be served, not under any image or outward representation.

“The third forbids the profaning of the name. The fourth word implies previous knowledge of the Sabbath (Remember) and enjoins personal, domestic, and public rest from all manner of labour.

“The fifth directs honour to parents, and implies reverence, to our Heavenly Father.

“The Second Table then moves from ‘outward deeds’ through the sixth, seventh, and eighth commandments (murder, adultery, stealing), to ‘speech’ in the ninth, (false witness) and finally ‘thought’ in the tenth.

“The final command sounds the innermost depths of our hearts and forbids all wrong and inordinate desires in reference to anything that belongs to our neighbour.

“Such law was never given by man; never dreamed of in his highest conceptions. Had man only been able to observe it, happiness and joy would have come with it.

“Instead it brought us knowledge of sin which is transgression of the Law but just as the commandments were placed in the mercy seat, we have salvation through the forgiveness of transgressing the law by the grace of God, who gave his only

son to save the world” (Alfred Edersheim).

Ancient Israel’s priests were instructed to take a small sheaf of the early harvest and wave it before God. It was a ceremony that allowed God to accept the Wave Sheaf offering, the very first of the first fruits of the spring harvest. The same ceremony took place when the risen Christ, the firstborn from the dead, was presented before God the Father.

“Now the first day of the week Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb” (John 20:1).

The phrase, “first day of the week,” in the original Greek (Temiaton Sabbaton) could be rendered, “On the first of the Sabbaths.” While it was indeed the first day of the week, it was, in fact, the first day for the reckoning of seven Sabbaths to Pentecost (Dr. Bullinger’s *Companion Bible*). “Jesus said to her, ‘Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, ‘I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God’ (John 20:17). Christ our wave sheaf was presented to His Father as the first of the firstfruits, on the morning after the Sabbath during Passover season.

“For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ’s at His coming” (1 Corinthians 15:22-23).

God gave ancient Israel Ten Commandments, His perfect law. Then years later God gave His Holy Spirit to those firstfruits who were called to keep and observe the law given at Sinai. A risen Jesus told His disciples “Teach all nations to observe all things I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:20).

The power to do that came on the Day of Pentecost. The account is recorded in Acts 2. It was the day the gift of the Holy Spirit was given in full measure. “Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance” (Acts 2:3-4).

As the story goes on, we are told of a miracle both in the speaking and hearing, that people of different languages heard and understood in their own language “the wonderful works of God” (verse 11). When Jesus promised the Comforter (the Holy Spirit), that promise was fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost.

God’s wonderful plan of salvation is portrayed in the seven Holy Days of the year, and Jesus Christ is the focus of each of those Days.

In receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ lives in us. “... it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me...” (Galatians 2:20).

That is Pentecost.

General Conference of Elders—2014

This year the General Conference of Elders (GCE) was held May 4 through 5 with International meetings taking place on the Friday before (May 2). The theme for this year was “Creating an Environment for Growth.” The conference took place at the Holiday Inn Eastgate, which is very near the Home Office.

Ten Canadians were in attendance including: two elders, five pastors and three pastor’s wives. About one-half were from western Canada and the other half from the eastern Canada. Considering the fact that everyone has to pay his/her own way, this was a good-sized delegation.

The International meeting was chaired by Victor Kubik and had representatives from Australia, Canada, England, and New Zea-



Anthony Wasilkoff

land. Additionally, the Senior Pastors for the Caribbean, Philippines, India, South America and several African countries were present. There was lively discussion centering on what has been working in the various countries for leadership training, spreading the Gospel message and feeding the flock.

Following a lovely lunch buffet, the men returned to further meetings and idea sharing. The ladies had an opportunity to spend time together over tea. Terri Eddington opened her home to host this occasion. This proved to be a valuable time to learn about the work in other areas of the world, share travel lessons and hear about the blessings of serving abroad.

On Sabbath morning, there were two Sabbath-appropriate seminars available for conference members to attend. They were geared to show what some of the areas are doing to promote spiritual learning and growth within the congregation.

Many congregations were connected to the Sabbath service webcast when Tim Pebworth and Matt Fenchel gave split sermons. For anyone who missed those, they are posted on the website at: <http://www.ucg.org/sabbath-webcast/>. The special music provided by the Ambassador Bible Center choir was especially well received.

A question and answer session was scheduled for Saturday evening. Members of the GCE submitted questions either ahead of time or from the floor for the administration and/or the Council of Elders to answer. Even though it had been a long day and people were tired, there was still a sizeable turnout for this event.

Sunday morning included balloting and tributes to deceased elders and wives. There was also recognition for those who had been employed or ordained for fifty or more

years. This included Gary and Barbara Antion who faithfully served a significant portion of those years here in Canada and played a huge part in getting United Church of God – Canada started.



Anthony Wasilkoff

On Sunday afternoon, reports were delivered by the Treasurer, the Ministerial and Member Services director and the Media department manager. At the end of the day, we were provided with local website instruction from the President along with Tom Disher, the designer of the local website template. All local areas are expected to implement the template as quickly and seamlessly as possible.

One highlight of Sunday came at the end of the day when there was an “international exchange.” Each international area and some U.S. churches set up tables to highlight what is happening in their areas. The Canadian table used standard colours for Canada: red and white. We had two PowerPoint slide show presentations. One slide show featured photos and information about all the congregations. The other contained interesting facts and statistics about Canada and the work we are doing in this country. Handouts were provided for those wishing to have them.

Monday began with a plenary session about using the Deuteronomy 6 model for teaching our children about God's way of life. Following that, individuals could choose among three other seminars to attend. This continued on into the afternoon.

The ladies had their own special seminar. The first portion had three presentations of ideas for the ladies. They focused on the value of interaction and the good results that are produced when all members are encouraged to participate

and share their talents. Then, this produces growth in the church as a whole. During the afternoon, a variety of ways to assist in the creating of an environment for growth was discussed.

The conference concluded at 4:00 p.m. after summary comments from chairman, Robin Webber, and a closing hymn. A closing prayer was given by Bill Eddington from Australia.

An atmosphere of peace and goodwill were evident in the many

activities during the conference. It produced a bonding with young and old alike. There were several newly hired pastors in attendance adding to the setting.

One Canadian couple remarked, "We have to say that this was the best GCE that we have attended with the positive energy and unity and the really great workshops that were very practical for our congregations."

UNC

Leadership Weekend —2014

What has become an annual event once again occurred in the Toronto area on March 29 and 30. This year's Leadership Weekend saw attendees coming from Ontario and Québec. Very good rates had been negotiated at a local hotel, so those unable to be billeted with members were able to stay at the hotel.

The weekend began with Sabbath Services in Toronto. Two visiting ministers from Home Office were there to provide the messages. George de Campos gave the sermonette while Gary Antion gave the sermon. The Toronto ladies put on a delectable potluck meal for everyone. Then, there were two seminars open for all who wished to attend – and many chose to do so. Gary Antion started the seminars off with "Happiness is . . ." This was followed by "Wisdom & Good Judgment" by Dennis Horlick.

On Sunday, the 28 attendees, four presenters (Gary Antion,

Dennis Horlick, Patrick Read, Anthony Wasilkoff) met at the National Office. The boardroom table was removed and chairs were set up classroom style to accommodate everyone in the room. Coffee, juice and cinnamon buns were available for attendees to munch on while waiting for the 9:00 start time.

Three subjects were covered before noon: On Being a Team Player; The Heart of a Leader; and Effective Speaking. A one-hour lunch followed. Food was catered by the ladies who work at the National Office.



Anthony Wasilkoff

After lunch, Gary Antion gave a session entitled "Improving Your Marriage." At the end of the day, time was scheduled for questions and closing comments of which there were many.

All of the presentations were recorded. As soon as they go through a production process, they will be sent to pastors across the country to use in their local areas for leadership development as needed and desired.

The next Leadership Weekend has been tentatively scheduled for March 21 & 22 in 2015.

UNC



Curiosity: Good and Bad

One of the many traits humans were given at creation was the ability to be curious. Curiosity means the desire to know, to see, to touch and to feel. Every little child has this as a vital tool for their development. Their little fingers reach out to anything that is near. Often what they reach goes into their mouths as they taste, touch and feel to discover everything about them. Curiosity is a very important part of living, but it can be dangerous. We seem to have a deep need to satisfy a curiosity, but, all too often, we act hastily not gaining all the information we may need.

Adam and Eve were given clear instructions from God Himself about one tree in the beautiful Garden of Eden. They were told not to touch nor eat its fruit (Genesis 3:3).

It is amazing what instructions like that do to humans. We get curious. What is wrong with touching the tree? Why should we not eat of the fruit when it looks delicious (Genesis 3:6)?

With a whole garden filled with trees and plenty of food, one would wonder why Eve needed to eat from that tree. How did she know it was good for food? In actual fact, she was curious. Added to that, she was told that

God did not tell them the whole truth – and that in fact if she did eat of the fruit, her eyes would be opened and she would be like God (Genesis 3:5).

Curiosity is a necessary and quite wonderful gift that God

It takes character for a person to properly satisfy a curiosity without getting into danger.

has given to us. It takes character for a person to properly satisfy a curiosity without getting into danger. Children do not have the understanding or character to recognize danger or to know when to control their curiosity. Adults have the responsibility of helping them make wise choices and so that they grow in wisdom and character.

The Bible is the word of God and in it we find instructions that are inspired by God for our good. It is God's hope that we will develop His nature as we go through life (2 Peter 1:4). The path He has given us includes allowing us to make mistakes – to choose to listen to Satan. Proverbs informs us that it is a folly and shame to answer a mat-

ter before you hear or fully understand it (Proverbs 18:13). We also read that the heart of the prudent acquires or gains knowledge and the ear of the wise seeks

it – that is, we strive to get all the information before we do something stupid (Proverbs 18:15).

When we think about religion and our concerns about eternal life, we enter an arena in which we are often ill equipped. Paul wrote about his concerns for people he loved. He states that there is one church – the Body of Christ that has the responsibility to teach people to withstand the devious and dangerous situations into which our curiosity might lead us.

The church is to help us all grow in character and wisdom so that we cannot be deceived any longer. It speaks of the trickery and cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting (Ephesians 4:11-14). The church is to speak the truth in love to help its members know when to avoid and run from areas of danger to which curiosity leads them – and when it is safe to look and seek. We are to continue to grow in knowledge (1 Corinthians 1:5).

All knowledge is not good knowledge. Trial and error is not always the best answer to satisfying curiosity. Using wisdom, gathering information and controlling what we do is much safer and satisfying. That comes when character is developed so that we are able to make wise choices and follow them. God did say He had put things in this world under the control of the human race (Hebrews 2:8). That does not mean that we do not have to search, study, explore and develop our knowledge and understanding.



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It may be very hard for us to comprehend that humans have lived about 6,000 years on earth and the development of control over our environment has been minimal during that time. Part of the reason is that humans did not take the time to investigate and understand God's laws. Many were superstitious, occupied with work and family or just with the heavy work needed to survive.

The driving force for our advances in science and control over our world is our curiosity. We want to know how and why things work. But we also realize that we grow older and life on this earth will eventually end. The future lies in eternity – and though we

live now, we do need to think a thousand years ahead.

There is no greater or more important area for us to consider and



Boris Terekhov/Hemera/Thinkstock

fort. Perhaps it is that God has seen fit to keep mankind blind for His own reasons (2 Corinthians 3:14-18). He encourages us to look and wonder. He tells us to seek Him and we will find Him. This is the best pursuit we could have. Curiosity is a frame of mind that ought to be involved in all we do.

With the present conditions of the world, it is high time for us to seek our Creator and answer the questions about life. Why are we here? What is the purpose of life? How about our curiosity – do we thirst for knowledge in this vital area? If not, we will wish we had.

Robert Berendt

Report by the Secretary of the GCE

The General Conference of Elders, on May 4, 2014, made the following decisions:

Elected the following men to the Council of Elders for a three-year term:

- Aaron Dean
- Bill Bradford (International)
- Donald Ward
- Robin Webber

Ratified the following:

- 2014-2015 Strategic Plan – ballot was 220 for and 16 against
- 2014-2015 Operation Plan – ballot was 212 for and 23 against
- 2014-2015 Budget – ballot was 204 for and 30 against
- Process for submitting Doctrinal Papers – ballot was 215 for and 16 against
- Amendments to the Constitution – ballot was 211 for and 18 against

The Council of Elders, on Thursday, May 8, 2014, honored Darris McNeely and his wife, Debbie, for their six years of service on the Council.

Additionally, the newly-constituted Council of Elders reappointed Robin Webber as Chairman for the next two years and appointed John Elliott as Deputy Chairman for the next two years.

Gerald Seelig

News From Across Canada

Ottawa Tribute

On March 1, the Ottawa, Ontario, congregation hosted a surprise tribute for a very special family.



Michelle Vautour

Since beginning in the mid -1990's, the Moulton Family has looked after the small congregation that has existed in the area. Through all those years, Joseph and Mary Moulton took care of the preparations as the congregation grew to over 40 members. Assisting them in this were: their son, Richard; Richard's wife, Michelle; their daughter, Julie; Julie's husband, Dan; grandsons, William and Ben and their wives. The Moultons are the first to arrive at church. They set up chairs, the sound equipment, prepare for the food and welcome others as they arrive.

They have helped make every Sabbath and Holy Day memorable



Michelle Vautour

occasions. They have hosted winter and summer activities at their cozy cabin located on their small lake. These occasions have included sleigh rides and hockey in winter. In the summers they have included games, walks, or simply relaxing. These wonderful get-togethers have included delicious meals and unexpected visits from puppies to lambs to the delight of the children. In rain or shine, they always turned each of these events into a wonderful time.

The Ottawa Congregation was delighted to come together and create a truly memorable event for the Moulton family to honour them for their generosity of spirit, the love and the warmth they have shared with each and every one of us.

During the tribute, several members spoke on behalf of the congregation. Our pastor, Dennis Horlick, presented Joe and Mary with a beautiful scrapbook and a DVD montage of pictures of memories through the years. It was a whole church effort and we are grateful for the many talents that made the tribute a "successful surprise".

The tribute ended with a special cake that was enjoyed by all.

We look forward to many more shared memories in the years ahead.

Isabelle Nicol

Vancouver Island Baptism

A special Sabbath service was enjoyed by the Vancouver Island congregation at Victoria, Brit-

ish Columbia on March 29. After a sermon by Pastor David Palmer about our Passover covenant, the ladies' usual delectable potluck and accompanying fellowship were greatly enjoyed by all.

Afterwards, brethren travelled to a Church facility for a very special baptism service. Catharina Wilmina Johansma, "Wilma" to all of us, was baptized by Joe Sheperd followed by the laying on of hands by David Palmer and Joe Sheperd.



Peter Corrigan

Wilma had been patiently waiting for baptism for quite a long time, and was absolutely delighted to be baptized and become a begotten daughter of God, as well as a member of the United Church of God. It was a happy and exciting event for all who attended.

Joe Sheperd

Hamilton NTBMO

For the second year, the Hamilton congregation has come together to celebrate the Night to Be Much Observed together. This year was special. Not only were there ten visitors from Toronto, there were five individuals observing this occasion for the very first time! A

total of 33 individuals enjoyed the evening together.



Anthony Wasilkoff

Tables were set up for a formal meal with matching table cloths and a lovely fresh flower arrangement. The meal began with a lovely appetizer of salmon wrapped around asparagus spears. The main course was delicious with a wide variety of special dishes including fish, chicken, roast beef and lamb. That was rounded out with scalloped potatoes, deviled eggs and a several salads. Last, but not least, was the fine desserts—pies, squares and cakes.

Deacon, Eric Frandsen, conducted a table topics session at the close of the meal allowing individuals to share experiences and lessons learned by keeping the Days of Unleavened Bread. It was a wonderfully bonding experience.

Linda Wasilkoff

Birth Announcement

Walter and McKayla Martin of the Kitchener, Ontario congregation would like to announce the birth of their second child and first daughter, Melody Fiona Martin. Melody was born on April 4 at 7:05 a.m. She weighed 8 pounds and 2

ounces and was 21.5 inches long.

Because the baby came so quickly, the Martins had an unexpected home birth with Walter having to deliver the baby without medical assistance! In spite of that, all are well.



McKayla Martin

The Martins' first born, Kenneth, is very happy to be an older brother!

McKayla Martin

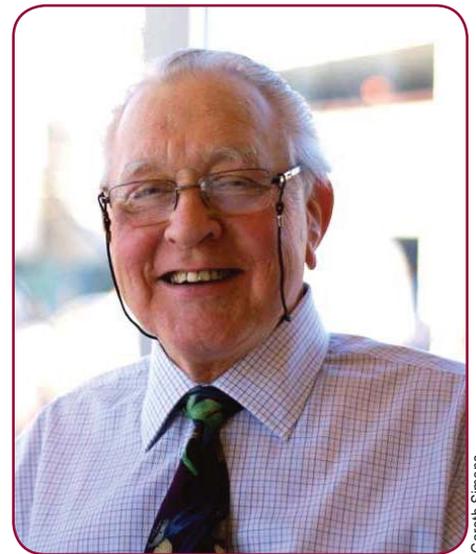
Simons Obituary

Dr. Ian Simons died on February 25, 2014, at his home in Killarney, Manitoba, after a 10-year battle with cancer. He was 71 years of age.

Born in Cape Town, South Africa, the youngest of nine children, Ian graduated from the University of Pretoria in 1965 with a degree in medicine. He married Mariana in 1973 and they had three children. At the end of 1998 Ian and Mariana immigrated to Canada from South Africa and settled in Killarney, where he worked at the local medical clinic for the past 15 years. He was known for his compassionate nature and kindness, and felt that working as a doctor gave him an opportunity to serve others and his community.

Ian was baptized in 1970 and was ordained as a deacon in 2012. He loved being able to serve in the Church, through sermonettes, song leading, and volunteering at youth camps. He was grateful for the opportunity sit on the South African and Canadian National Councils.

Ian was also passionate about health and fitness, and enjoyed being active. He was an avid endurance athlete who completed several half-marathons, marathons and ultra-marathons, as well as several ultra-canoeing races. He was also an active Olympic lifter, and even held two Canadian masters records in 2003 in the 94kg class.



Gareth Simons

Diagnosed with cancer in 2004, he continued to work in his medical practice throughout sickness, right up to the day before his death. Dr. Simons is survived by: his wife, Mariana; his children - Caroline, Gareth (Gareth's wife, Shannon) and Debbie; two brothers and a sister. He is sorely missed by so many.

Herb Teitgen

Pentecost and the Law

Pentecost. The Feast of Firstfruits. Feast of Weeks. There are many beautiful applications to this Feast. It symbolizes God's first harvest of those called in this age, as a 'kind of firstfruits.' Christ is called the first of the firstfruits.

It represents a seven-week harvest period, the early harvest, and so is sometimes also referred to as the Feast of Weeks.

But the Holy Day we call Pentecost also has a deep significance to the law of God, both in the Old Testament and in the New.

As we follow the story of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt, we see that God provides the miracle of bread from Heaven (manna) in the second month (Exodus 16) after the Israelites had observed the Passover in Egypt. In Exodus 17 we find the miracle of water that came forth from the rock.

In the New Testament analogy, we learn that Christ is that true Bread from heaven and that Rock that quenches our thirst.

Christ was, in fact, the Old Testament lawgiver and the New Testament magnification of that Law.

So, by the time the Israelites reached the wilderness of Sinai, they were in the third month, since they kept the Passover before departing from Egypt. "In the third month after the children of Israel had gone out of the land of Egypt, on the same day, they came to the Wilderness of Sinai" (Exodus 19:1).

Then God prepared the people to

receive the greatest set of laws the world has ever known. He told Moses, "Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their clothes. And let them be ready for the third day. For on the third day the Lord will come down upon Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people" (Exodus 19:10-11). "Now Mount Sinai was completely in smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire. Its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked greatly" (Exodus 19:18). This is similar to when tongues of fire descended on the apostles as recorded in Acts chapter 2.



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As the story unfolds, we come to one of the most powerful and most poignant of all biblical chapters, Exodus chapter 20, and the giving of the Ten Commandments.

Some biblical writers and scholars have speculated that the Ten Commandments were given to Israel on the same day the New Testament calls Pentecost.

These ten laws are at the very heart and core of God's revelation to mankind, the fundamental teaching of Christianity.

From Alfred Edersheim's com-

mentary, *Old Testament Bible History*, we read:

"The revelation of God's will, which Israel heard from Mount Sinai, is contained in the ten commandments, or as they are called in the Hebrew original 'The Ten Words'.

"These Ten Words were written on TWO tables of stone, which were to be kept within the ark of the covenant.

"It is not easy to say how the commandments were arranged on the two stone tables but we can conclude the first four were on one table, the second six on the other. We do know for certain that the law was written on both sides of each stone.

"Considering more closely these Ten Words of the covenant, we notice first their number ten written on two stones showing love to God and love to neighbour, but also showing the physical application, and the spiritual as magnified by Christ.

"Next we see the fifth commandment forms a transition from the first to the second table. We are to honour our parents, a duty given greater emphasis than our duty to love our fellow man.

"Indeed, this fifth command, our relationship to our earthly father symbolizes our relationship to our Father in Heaven.

"And we note almost all the commands are in negative form implying that 'transgression' not 'obedience' is natural to us."

See "Pentecost" on page 9