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Anticipating the Spring Feast – 2012

As winter draws to a close and spring begins to make its appearance, we realize that the Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread are but a short time away. Preparing for and then observing the annual festivals brings our attention back to God’s wondrous plan of salvation like nothing else does. How grateful we are for this vital review our Heavenly Father has generously made available to mankind, especially to those whom He has mercifully called.

As early as the Garden of Eden, the Lord God gave an indication of the divine purpose He had in mind for human beings. Humans were not placed on earth merely to have as pleasant an experience as possible for as long as possible. Genesis 3:15 states, “And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel.”

The “Seed” of the woman was a reference to the coming Son of God, the promised Messiah. The term

“seed” is often used in the Holy Scriptures as a reference to the coming Christ. Some authorities describe this passage in Genesis as the “first gospel” because it describes that the Lord God is going to send the Promised One to affect salvation for sinful humanity. This verse depicts Christ’s crucifixion as His heel being bruised. Although He suffered terribly and paid an enormous price, His injury was only temporary (1 Corinthians 15:20). By His death and resurrection Jesus Christ vanquished the Adversary. Since that time, Satan’s fate has been sealed and it is only a matter of time until it is implemented (Revelation 20:1-3).

Romans 6:4 tells us, “Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.” When we were baptized we embarked on a brand new spiritual journey that will eventually lead us to the very Kingdom of God. The newness of the baptism experience is inspiring to behold especially as we observe new people being baptized just prior to the Passover season each year. At the same time, the Passover observance grants us a type of regeneration tantamount to baptism whereby we renew our covenant with God the Father through Christ’s sacrifice thus renewing our covenant and recommencing our walk with refreshed commitment.

When we depart at the conclusion of the Passover Service, we should leave quietly and soberly, but with

much inner joy and a feeling of awe for God’s plan. We should also feel cleansed and encouraged by the immeasurable love God the Father and His Son have for Their children.

Soon we will be partaking of unleavened bread for seven days. Each year we must reacquaint our taste buds with the nuances of bread devoid of all leavening agents. The exercise is highly experiential and designed to remind us of the need to



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live an unleavened (sinless) life all year round. Exodus 13:8-10 states, “And you shall tell your son in that day, saying, ‘This is done because of what the Lord did for me when I came up from Egypt. It shall be as a sign to you on your hand and as a memorial between your eyes, that the Lord’s law may be in your mouth; for with a strong hand the Lord has brought you out of Egypt. You shall therefore keep this ordinance in its season from year to year.’” And so, as members of the Church of God, we will be doing this very thing this year with the very same objective in mind!

Anthony Wasilkoff

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The Ultimate Sacrifice

Astronauts returning from a space mission have often commented on the incredible beauty of our planet as viewed from a space shuttle. Yet, there was a time when our earth and the entire universe as we know it became devoid of beauty and empty darkness covered the entire earth (Genesis 1:2).

Then God, through the power of His Holy Spirit, began to recreate the planet that astronauts now admire as a beautiful sphere hanging in space. In the recreation of earth, God also created the image of His family – the human race. Man was created from the dust of the earth, woman created from man. A renewed earth was born from the chaos of Satan’s rebellion (Isaiah 14:12-14).

However, it was not long before the first couple disobeyed their Creator and fell for Satan’s subtlety. Falling prey to the wiles of the devil, they broke the very first

commandment, allowing Satan to become their god (Exodus 20:3). The human race has been under the influence of a false god ever since. Even the apostle Paul warned that Satan was, and is, the god of this world (2 Corinthians 4:4).



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God created mankind with free moral agency – the ability to choose between right and wrong, good and evil. He also instituted a plan to save His greatest creation, the human race. Eventually He called an entire nation from slavery, gave them His laws, His statutes, His commands, but He also gave them choice, “I call

heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live” (Deuteronomy 30:19). Rather than obey God, Israel chose the way of the devil. Like Adam and Eve they were more interested in forbidden fruit, and the whole world has eaten of the forbidden fruit ever since.

So God, in His forgiving love and mercy, gave the human race a solution – a plan of salvation, a plan blueprinted in seven annual Holy Days. The key to the plan was sacrifice. Sin, the transgression of God’s law (1 John 3:4), brought to mankind the penalty of death, a penalty that required payment (Romans 6:23). In order to settle the debt, and remove the death penalty, a loving merciful God gave the world a sacrifice for sin (John 3:16).

In his letter to the church of God at Rome, the apostle Paul put it this way, “Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned” (Romans 5:12). “For if by the one man’s offense death reigned through the one, (Adam) much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ” (Romans 5:17).

God’s plan to save a sin-filled world required one perfect sacrifice for all imperfection. “Now it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these sayings that He said to His disciples; ‘You know that after two days is the Passover, and the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified’” (Matthew 26:1-2). Just as it was

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Gethsemane

Very few events have been so carefully documented as those occurring in the Garden of Gethsemane almost 2,000 years ago.

There have been many belief systems and religions that claim to give divinity to humans. Some Roman emperors, some Pharaohs of Egypt and some mysterious leaders in various lands have been considered divine. At the time of Jesus, there were perhaps no people on earth as strictly monotheistic as the Jews. The mere mention of Jesus as the “Son of God” was enough for them to gather stones. Yet, in this environment, God sent His Son Jesus Christ – and the events that unfolded brought about the unthinkable.

Even the closest followers of Jesus had to climb the mountain of their skepticism before they could kneel before Christ and say, “My Lord and My God” (Matthew 28:9, 17). God did not leave any room for doubt – Jesus was the Logos and Word who was made flesh – in that He was also divine (John 1:14).

In the light of this understanding, the events at Gethsemane are astonishing. Jesus knew what was about to happen and had already sent Judas Iscariot on his way before the group descended from the temple mount area, crossed the brook Kidron and entered the Garden of Gethsemane, which lies in the valley at the western side of the Mount of Olives (John 18:2).

All four gospels comment on Gethsemane, but only record the event without going into details. The evening itself was very unusual because Jesus Christ was deep in thought, showing signs of stress and acting in such a way that even His closest followers grew silent and hesitant to talk with Him (John 13:21-26). Jesus had spoken of His betrayal, His death,

their sorrow and an impending event that did not sound at all positive or hopeful. He wanted to be sure someone had a sword, and there were two swords (Luke 22:38). John records some detailed instructions from Jesus Christ as well as the puzzling words of His prayer (John 17). Those words were strong, encouraging and full of hope, but also full of troubles that seemed imminent.



With all those thoughts in their hearts and minds, the eleven slowly and soberly walked with Jesus to the Mount of Olives (Matthew 26:30). It was dark, and they likely had only the light from the moon and stars. On a trip to Jerusalem some years ago, I tried to follow what I thought might have been the path they took from the temple area. I soon realized that the sides of the hills just outside the temple were so steep that a person would not want to try walking down them at night. No doubt, this group would have followed the road around the eastern wall of the temple and across Kidron. Gethsemane was just to the right of the crossing. The whole distance is less than a kilometre.

Jesus had been speaking with the disciples throughout the evening and perhaps on the walk to Gethsemane. Once they arrived, He told His dis-

ciples to sit together while He took Peter, James and John and went a few steps away to pray (Matthew 26:36). The three disciples were utterly astonished, dismayed and seemingly dazed at Jesus’ extremely sad and depressed state of mind (Mark 14:33, 34). No doubt Peter’s mind still lingered on the words Jesus had spoken to him earlier when Jesus said that Peter would deny knowing Jesus three times before the rooster crowed (Matthew 26:33-34). No doubt, all the disciples were pondering Jesus’ earlier words and actions. He had washed their feet, which was a new experience for them.

Jesus was sorrowful “unto death” and to the disciples, He was always the One who encouraged and gave them hope. They loved Jesus deeply and were so disturbed and anxious they felt exhausted. Jesus went to pray and the disciples who were to “watch” no doubt heard some of His words and saw His anguish. Jesus was in direct conversation with His Heavenly Father – about the cup He was about to drink. The fulfillment of the purpose for His coming was in His mind. He also knew that the next few hours would be horrible and beyond words to describe as the full power of Satan would be unleashed against Him through the hands of the Jews and Romans. Jesus had inspired the writing of Psalm 22 and He knew He was about to live those words.

About three hours later – probably near midnight – Judas appeared with a group of Jewish soldiers to arrest Christ (Matthew 26:45, 46). Matthew and Mark state that Judas kissed Jesus (Matthew 26:49). Luke noted that Judas came to kiss Him, and Jesus asked Judas if he was going to betray Him with a kiss – but does not mention that Judas actually did (Luke 22:47). While John does not mention the kiss

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prophesied in the Old Testament. “He [Christ] is despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our

‘Why, what evil has He done?’ But they cried out all the more, saying, ‘Let Him be crucified!’” (Matthew 27:22-23).

We are reminded that the ultimate sacrifice of Jesus Christ was designed to forgive the world of sin, eventually allowing millions an opportunity for eternal life. “But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for every-

God’s plan to save a sin-filled world required one perfect sacrifice for all imperfection.

peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all” (Isaiah 53:3-6).

One perfect human life of the Son of God as the debt for every imperfect human being that ever lived; but at the same time God did not remove mankind’s ability to choose. Payment for sin is not automatic. We still have a choice to make, and that choice is to accept or reject the one who paid the price, the ultimate sacrifice on our behalf (John 6:51, 53).

Jesus died under the most cruel and inhumane method known at that time. A riotous mob, whipped into frenzy by the Pharisees and others, demanded He be put to death. “Pilate said to them, ‘What then shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?’ They all said to him, ‘Let Him be crucified!’ Then the governor said,

one. For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the author of their salvation perfect through sufferings” (Hebrews 2:9-10). “And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and to them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation” (Hebrews 9:27-28).

We look at the history of creation and recognize that God, at some point in time, made a decision to expand His family. When the first created human beings disobeyed, it allowed sin to enter the picture. God instituted a plan of salvation, a biblical blueprint with seven annual Holy Days depicting the fulfillment of that plan. Christ became the central figure, the focus of the plan that would allow the human race salvation; an opportunity to become members of God’s expanded family.

This world, including some who observe the Passover, may not fully comprehend that this one-time-for-all-time sacrifice, put the Holy Day plan of salvation into effect. Passover is a serious and solemn occasion – a renewal of the covenant made at baptism when we accepted Jesus Christ as our personal Saviour. As a result, each year prior to the Passover observance, we are admonished to examine ourselves -- not each other.

“Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us” (1Corinthians 5:7).

David Palmer

List of Leavening Agents

Here is a list of leavening agents to avoid during the upcoming Feast of Unleavened Bread:

Baking powder, baking soda (sodium bicarbonate), monocalcium phosphate, sodium aluminum phosphate (SALP), sodium acid pyrophosphate (SAPP), other phosphates, ammonium bicarbonate (bakers ammonia), potassium bicarbonate (potash), sourdough yeast.

The following are not leavening agents: brewer’s yeast, yeast extract (a flavoring), corn starch and cream of tartar. Cream of tartar acts as a neutralizer when used with baking soda but does not, by itself, cause dough to rise and thus is not a leavening agent.

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Feast of Unleavened Bread—Man’s Duties in God’s Plan

What is the Feast of Unleavened Bread? How do we keep these feast days? What is their significance to mankind and to God’s plan?

The Feast of Unleavened Bread is one of the feasts that God commanded His people to observe. It was instituted, together with the Passover, when the Israelites went out of Egypt from slavery. God commanded that it should be kept forever for seven days with the first and the seventh day as annual holy days.

“And Moses said to the people: ‘Remember this day in which you went out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage; for by strength of hand the LORD brought you out of this place. No leavened bread shall be eaten’” (Exodus 13:3). “Unleavened bread shall be eaten seven days. And no leavened bread shall be seen among you, nor shall leaven be seen among you in all your quarters” (Exodus 13:7). “And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the Feast of Unleavened Bread to the LORD; seven days you must eat unleavened bread” (Leviticus 23:6).

At first, this seems like a strange sounding feast that is not so well known or observed by most people today. It also has unique instructions for how it should be observed. As described in Exodus, all adherents of these feast days observe the following three steps for seven days:

- 1) Removing leavening in their homes or quarters.
- 2) Not eating foods containing leavening.
- 3) Eating unleavened bread.

God did not leave humans alone to guess and judge among them-

selves what was right and what was wrong. Rather God gave them His commandments, laws and statutes as the basis for rightful living (Exodus 20). Then God instructed Moses and the priests to teach His laws and commandments to the Israelites. In addition, Moses also served as their judge when there was conflict among the Israelites, which prompted his father-in-law to advise him to appoint additional judges to help him (Exodus 18). Through this process, they also learned how to apply the laws of God in their lives.

Today Christians who obey and follow God’s instruction to keep this feast, still observe it in the same manner as described above. In the New Testament, the apostle Paul was able to explain the meaning of the symbols used during the Days of Unleavened Bread.



In the book of 1 Corinthians, Paul stated, “Your glorying is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover was sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth” (1Corinthians 5:6-8).

Paul explained that leavening agents puff up dough in bread making. By analogy, sin is likened to leaven since sin can “puff up” and permeate a person. During this season, leaven and leavened products symbolize sin to heighten our consciousness of sin, while unleavened bread symbolizes righteousness, which we need to practice daily.

Paul, unlike most of the Israelites, diligently kept the Ten Commandments of God and used them as his guide to righteousness when he stated that, “...I would not have known sin except through the law” (Romans 7:7). John stated, “...we know Him, if we keep His commandments” (1 John 2:3).

The Feast of Unleavened Bread describes the duties of man in God’s plan - repenting of sins, overcoming sins and living righteously before God by obeying His commandments and keeping this way unto the end. As Ecclesiastes concluded, “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, For this is the whole duty of man” (Ecclesiastes 12:13).

The Feast of Unleavened Bread was given by God to show us that we need to repent of our sins, overcome our sins, live rightly before God and our fellow man and to endure unto the end. Repentance and forgiveness of sins are only possible because of Christ’s sacrifice who died for us. God also gives us His Holy Spirit that lives in us to help us overcome sin and live righteously. It is only through this process that God will determine whether we will receive the gift of eternal life in His glorious Kingdom.

Food Handling Safety

As the Spring Holy Days approach, many church areas will be having church potlucks. Families will be pooling their resources to observe the Night to Be Much Observed in a private home or in a rented hall. Whenever a group of people get together and share food, it is important to take extra care to safely prepare, store, reheat and serve that food.

One outbreak of food poisoning would not only be physically dangerous to many of our dear brethren, but could also potentially have other repercussions for the church. None of us want to be responsible for that. If we all work together, we can greatly reduce the possibility of having an outbreak of food poisoning at any of our upcoming gatherings.

There are guidelines listed on various websites (such as Health Canada at <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca> and Canadian Partnership for Consumer Food Safety Education at <http://www.canfightbac.org>), which give helpful advice for preventing food borne illnesses. This article cannot cover all aspects of food safety, but will touch on the fundamentals.

At Home

Most foodborne illnesses are the result of how the food is handled at home. Bacteria can thrive in food that has been improperly handled, cooked and stored. Here are some tips:

- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and warm water before and after handling food and when you switch from one food to another.
- Be sure your kitchen countertops and utensils are clean and sanitized. Don't forget other areas that come into contact with your hands or food (dish cloths, faucet

handles, sink, refrigerator handles, appliances, etc.).

- Have separate cutting boards for raw meats and sanitize after each use.
- Wash the lids of canned foods just before opening them to prevent contamination from getting into the food.



- Air dry dishes and utensils, if possible, or dry them with clean kitchen towels.
- Thoroughly sanitize and wash anything that comes into contact with raw food *before* reusing.
- Store raw meat and poultry in containers on the bottom shelf of the refrigerator or freezer to prevent raw juices from dripping onto or touching other food.
- Remember that the danger zone that allows bacteria to grow is between 4 and 60 degrees Celcius (40 to 140 degrees Fahrenheit). Do not keep food in the danger zone for longer than two hours.
- Thaw food in the refrigerator to be sure it stays at a safe, constant temperature.
- Promptly cool and refrigerate foods to be taken to a potluck after they are cooked. Very hot items can be cooled at room temperature

until steaming stops. Then put the food into the refrigerator and leave the lid off until the food is cooled to refrigerator temperature.

At Church

Since food for potlucks is, for the most part, prepared in advance and warmed at church, specific precautions need to be taken.

- All kitchen helpers should wash their hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and warm water before and after handling food and when switching from one food to another.
- Be sure all countertops and utensils are clean.
- Keep all cold foods cold and all hot foods hot!
- Reheat food to a safe internal temperature of 74 degrees Celcius (165 degrees Fahrenheit).
- Bring all gravies, soups and sauces to a full, rolling boil stirring during the process.
- Discard uneaten leftovers that have been reheated.
- When heating food in a microwave, stop the microwave midway through reheating and stir the food so that the heat is evenly distributed. If the microwave does not have a rotating tray, rotate the container several times during cooking.

Our congregations are well known for serving delicious potlucks. Let us all be sure to diligently do our part so everyone can continue to enjoy the meals without any unwanted side effects.

UCG Northwest Weekend: A Family Affair

Another Northwest Weekend and another trip down the I-5 began with keen anticipation.

The annual event brought together brethren of all ages and from various parts of the Northwest. God's children expended their energies in many ways, including seminar presentations, singing, sporting events and dancing. Three generations joined together in a spirit of unity of "one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all" (Ephesians 4:5-6, KJV throughout).

The NWW offered many tastes for the inquisitive. The ABC Bible samplers offered much spiritual food for thought. Seattle pastor, Steve Shafer, prepared a presentation based on the Hebrew alphabet and all 22 letters were covered. What does the symbol of an ox head have to say about God's way of life? Did you know that the word "eden" is derived from three Hebrew letters: ayen, dalet and noon, which mean "see the door to life"?

In another presentation entitled, "Do you want to divorce-proof your marriage (or improve any relationship)?" Salem, Oregon, pastor, John Cafourek, discussed ways to avoid the four horseman of the marriage apocalypse. Have we experienced the horseman of stonewalling? If so, communication breaks down and relationships can break apart. Successful communication builds closeness. "Therefore, shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh" (Genesis 2:24).

Each one-hour presentation whetted one's appetite for more insights.

Would you be interested in 500 years of religion in America? Portland pastor and former chairman of the Council of Elders, Robert Dick, prepared an excellent PowerPoint presentation, which covered American religion during the past five centuries. Did you know that westward expansion actually diminished the number of church goers? Would you believe that America almost became Catholic?



Portland Weekend Attendees
(photo by Dale Craniford)

Mr. Dick also asked what drift has to do with religion. It is mainly ideals and values. The more things change the more they stay the same. America is still spiritually adrift. We need Jesus Christ and His Kingdom.

What lessons were learned from being Herbert W. Armstrong's right hand man? UCGIA Treasurer and member of the Council of Elders, Aaron Dean, shared anecdotes, spiritual insights and wisdom. He offered ways to deal with human mistakes without leaving the church. Separating salvation from people is important.

The ABC samplers provided spiritual nourishment.

On the Sabbath, Mr. Shafer gave a unique message on "The Sounds of Silence", discussing the missing years in Jesus Christ's life from age 12-30. Mr. Dean spoke on our calling and if we are really "born to be kings".

The Portland area youth choir enhanced the Sabbath and performed as a complete unit for the first time (they previously had practiced in smaller groups). The ensemble was inspiring.

The NWW messages were very educational. Brethren learned and worked together. "But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly framed together and compacted by that which every joint supplies according to the measure of every part, makes increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love" (Ephesians 4:15-16).

"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" (Psalm 133:1). Sunday was youth sports day, and brethren of all ages participated in different ways, showing sportsmanship and offering encouragement and support.

God commands us to "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3:15). The NWW, a mini feast, brings a welcome needed break from a steady diet of Christmas fanfare. Brethren of all ages join together in this annual event to bring light to a dark winter season.

Member Profile: Warda Martig

One of our members from the Vancouver Island congregation, Warda Martig, was born in Egypt of Egyptian parents and notes that Egyptian is not Arabic. True Egyptians are Coptic Christians rather than Muslim.

Mrs. Martig's father owned a paper and printing factory and the family became relatively well off. After his death, Warda, along with her Mother and one sister, moved to Montreal on October 8, 1968, because of persecution of the Christians by Islamic fundamentalists. It was there that she met a young man, Paul Martig, who asked her on a date. She told him that she could not go out with him, but that he could come to her home to meet her mother. It would be her mother who would have to give permission to go out with her daughter! He must have passed the test – they were married six months later!

Between the time Warda and Paul began dating and their wedding, Warda's mother received a letter from Egypt requesting that she come back to Egypt. She was promised that the money that was taken from the family before they left the country would be returned. So she went to Egypt to discover

that she was only there to sign papers – no money was returned. Because of this, she was not able to attend Warda and Paul's wedding, though the Martigs were later able to help her return to Canada.

While living in Egypt, Warda worked in a bank. When she applied for a job at various banks in Montreal, she was not hired. She finally found a job working in manufacturing. She was sewing and discovered that she enjoyed it. Warda eventually opened up her own shop remembering the days when her mother would sew for the children.

The Martigs were at an airport, waiting for a flight, when Paul found a *Plain Truth* magazine lying around and became interested in the truth. They were both baptized in March 1979.

In 1986, the Martigs moved to Vancouver Island where it is much warmer than Montreal! Warda again opened her own dressmaking shop, which she continues to operate. She designs, sews and sells her creations. Some of her most sought-out creations are wedding and graduation gowns.

In a sidebar on this page, you will find two of Mrs. Martig's unleavened recipes from Egypt. In that country, her mother made unleavened bread for the family every week! During the Passover season, her father would kill two lambs – one for the family and one to give to the poor.

The Martigs had no children of their own. However, they have welcomed students from different countries for "home stay". Mrs. Martig says that they also welcome any church kids! Since she

speaks three languages (Egyptian, French and English), communication should not be a huge problem.

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From Mrs. Martig's Kitchen

Unleavened Bread

3 cups flour (mixture of whole wheat & unbleached)
1 ½ cup butter
1 egg with 1 cup cold water

Mix together. Roll the dough and cut into rounds. Place on a greased baking sheet.

Bake at 350 degrees F.

Coconut Shortbread Squares

Base:

1 ½ cup flour
½ cup sugar
2/3 cup cold unsalted butter (cut into squares)

Combine flour, sugar, butter until mixture resembles coarse crumbs. Press evenly into prepared baking pan. The base will be very thin. Bake in 350 degree Fahrenheit oven until crust is firm and starts to turn golden.

Filling:

6 eggs
2 cups coconut
½ cup flour
1 cup sugar
2 Tbsp. rum

Whip eggs and sugar until well combined. Stir in flour, coconut and the rum. Pour onto baked crust. Bake until filling is set and golden. Cut into squares when cool.



Warda and Paul Martig
(photo provided by Wendy Cuff)

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plucking out eyes. It sounds very drastic, but He was using an analogy. He meant that we should take whatever measures needed in order to rid ourselves of sin.

So, how do we get rid of sin? Let us first look at the source of sin. In Matthew 15:17-20 Jesus said, “Do you not yet understand that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and is eliminated? But those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and they defile a man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies. These are the things that defile a man, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile a man.” Jeremiah

We are undergoing a process of reeducation. We change our thoughts and attitudes with God’s help.

says the heart of man is evil. Yes, believe it or not, we still have human nature, so evil thoughts have to be ruled over. We spend our Christian lives learning to control our evil thoughts, and learning to replace them with good thoughts so that our words and our actions will be good. This spiritual amputation takes constant effort and work and we need God’s help.

Solomon also speaks of the heart in Proverbs 4:23, “Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life [our thoughts].” The heart (mind) is the source of all human troubles and that is why we need to “keep” it (under control). Verse 25, “Let your eyes look straight ahead, and your eyelids look right before you.” If the eye offends pluck it

out, don’t compromise. Verse 26, “Ponder the path of your feet, and let all your ways be established.” If the foot offends cut it off. Now we do not literally reach in and pluck out the heart. We cannot cut our heads off, but our thoughts can get us into trouble if we are not careful. We eliminate the sin by spiritual amputation. We are undergoing a process of reeducation. We change our thoughts and attitudes with God’s help. Moreover, it does not happen overnight. Our lives are a continual battlefield, strewn with the land mines of sin.

When Potiphar’s wife cast her eyes upon Joseph, he did not compromise but fled the scene. We change by not compromising and

God can change our minds and hearts from evil into good. We do not give up but rely on God to help us to change.

The God of the Israelites said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you” (Hebrews 13:5). The apostle Paul said, “Being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ” (Philippians 1:6). We should also ask God to reveal any changes we need to make in our lives.

So, how far do we go in order to save ourselves spiritually? If our priorities are right, we will do whatever is necessary to go the distance – with God’s help.

Dr. Ian Simons

Upon a Hill

The Feast of Tabernacles on Prince Edward Island offered many opportunities for fun and fellowship. During the variety show, members put on a show that included music, poetry and storytelling. The poem below was shared during the variety show.

A light sits upon a hill, shining forth and burning bright, Standing tall for all to see, for ships at night a warning light.

A light brighter still, shines upon the path of straight, A light so pure and full of love, pointing toward that narrow gate.

Our light cannot be hidden, we show the way for all to walk, His life we tell, His way we point, His work we do, His path we walk.

A warning light for all to see, keep it burning, keep it bright, The spirit of God the spirit of right, shining forth in the darkest night.

The light of love the light of life, a beacon calling out to all, My harbor is safe, My waters are still.

A greater light awaits us now, as it shines from east to west, Coming first a trumpet blast, and then the world’s Sabbath Rest.

One day that light will fill the earth, no sun, no moon, no day, no night Our Father will come for all to see, and with him the only light we need.

Sherrie Giddens

National Teleconferences

The past two meetings of the National Council were conducted by teleconference. The September meeting has been held by teleconference since the inception of UCG-Canada. However, this was a first for the December meeting during which the Council must do most of the preparation for the annual general meeting of the National Conference held in March of each year.

One of the main points of interest during the September 12 teleconference was the update on the Kingdom of God seminars that had been sponsored in seven cities across Canada. There were a total of 25 new people who attended the seminars.

The Council was informed that the church's legal counsel, Arthur David, would be retiring at the end of the year. Mr. David was a boon to the church in multiple ways. He was invested in the success of the Church. The Council

asked that a small token of appreciation be given to him on behalf of the church.

The agenda included a technical amendment, which would be posted in the churches. The Council also learned that Ellsworth and Dorothy Stanley have both been diagnosed with cancer.

The teleconference on December 5 had a number of business items on the agenda. Both the proposed 2012/2013 Operations Plan and proposed 2012/2013 Budget had to be approved in order for them to be sent to the National Conference for ratification in March.

The National Office reported to Council that the government has passed the Canadian Not-for-Profit Charities Act, with which all charities must comply by October 2014. Because of this new legislation, every

charity will have to reapply for charitable status and Bylaws will have to be rewritten to comply with the new act. It is imperative that this be completed by the deadline or our charity status will be revoked.

The Council reviewed an amended employee vacation policy. It was determined that before approval, this should be scrutinized further to be sure that it complies with legal requirements.

The agenda for the March 2012 National Conference was approved and the secretary was given permission to add some questions to the questionnaire each nominee for the National Council receives.

The next meeting will be via teleconference following the National Conference teleconference in March.

Linda Wasilkoff

"Gethsemane" from page 3

(John 18:3), he notes that Jesus went toward the coming men and asked, "Who are you searching for?" When they replied, "Jesus of Nazareth", Jesus replied, "I AM!" John then states that the group of soldiers (and perhaps Judas who was standing with them) lunged backward and fell to the ground (John 18:6). There was something in those words and in Jesus' demeanor that frightened them.

Jesus authority and power were evident and may have been what the disciples hoped to see – but He surrendered that power. When Jesus asked them a second time who they were looking for (John 18:7), He indicated that He was ready to go with them. Perhaps this set of events was what momentarily emboldened Peter to strike with the sword (John

18:10-12). Jesus confused Peter by telling him to sheath the sword and then He replaced the ear of Malchus, the servant of the high priest (John 18:11). After a short conversation (Matthew 26:52-55), Jesus went with them.

We are left to wonder what went on in the mind of Malchus, of Judas, of each soldier and each disciple. Malchus is not mentioned again and Judas was in turmoil. There was something completely mind-boggling in what had happened. Each participant was affected differently. Jesus acknowledged that God had given Him over to those who planned His death and to the "power of darkness" (Luke 22:53).

Jesus was concerned about the safety of the disciples and allowed Himself to be bound and arrested

(John 18:12). That was too much for the disciples. They panicked and ran (Mark 14:50-52). In the darkness, it may not have taken long for the disciples to realize they were not being followed as they could see the torches of the soldiers moving along with their prisoner. Peter followed them and perhaps the other disciples followed at a distance. Jesus was fulfilling His destiny, and all others who were there were affected.

Gethsemane was now deserted. The moon still shone brightly and the stars looked silently on. Peace and quiet descended on this little garden. Prophecy was being fulfilled and the rest of the story was unfolding just as it had been written to be that night.

Robert Berendt

Writers' Guidelines

The following are guidelines for those wanting to submit articles to *United News Canada*. Please review and adhere to them to make the publishing process more streamlined.

1. All articles published in *United News Canada* are assumed to be intended for publication on the internet.

2. Submissions should be no more than 800 to 1,000 words in length. Articles exceeding this length may be returned to the author to be shortened.

3. Articles should be submitted in electronic format, either on disk or by e-mail. Articles should be

spell checked. Exceptions will be made for those without access to computers.

4. All articles will be subject to review by the ministry, and will be edited for grammar, clarity and space requirements. If an article requires excessive reworking, it shall be returned to the author for a rewrite.

5. *United News Canada* uses Canadian spellings, e.g. "favour" instead of "favor," "colour" instead of "color," "metre" instead of "meter," etc.

6. Generally, writers will be limited to one article per issue, unless the "articles" are announcements.

7. All articles should be reviewed by the local pastor prior to submission. If an article is deemed inappropriate, the pastor will return it to the writer with an explanation of further changes needed.

8. *United News Canada* tries to print all submissions it receives; however, the editor reserves the right to not publish unsuitable articles (i.e. articles that are not biblically sound or are otherwise erroneous, unsuitable or do not reflect the values and mission of UCG).

We are grateful to all who contribute material for inclusion in this publication.

UNC

Online Tools

In addition to booklets and magazines, the United Church of God has many resources available for members to use. Starting with this issue, we plan to feature some of these resources in each edition of *United News Canada*.

Some people have read the Bible through many times. Some may be working their way through for the first time. While for others, this is something planned for the future.

For the past several years, there has been a daily Bible Reading Program posted at <http://www.ucg.ca/gn/resources/daily-bible-reading-schedule/>.

The program is set up so that a person following it will read through the entire Bible in a year. The program also has a feature, which will read the passage to

you. Some congregations make the schedule available for members who do not have internet. This enables numerous people to be reading the same passages during the week so that they can discuss them on the Sabbath.

Years ago, scripture cards were a staple among members as they strove to memorize various key scriptures. Recently, electronic scripture cards were added to our website at <http://www.ucg.ca/gn/resources/bible-scripture-cards/>.

With this application, you can choose whether to see either the scripture or the verse first. Then, with a click of the mouse, the card turns over to show the other side. This might make a fun family game for the Sabbath.

UNC

Top 12 Requested Booklets in 2011

Title	Qty
The Middle East in Bible Prophecy	13,170
The Book of Revelation Unveiled	11,243
Are We Living in the Time of the End?	9,928
Jesus Christ: The Real Story	9,396
You Can Understand Bible Prophecy	9,303
The Ten Commandments	9,208
Holidays or Holy Days: Does It Matter Which Days We Observe?	8,882
What Happens After Death?	8,471
The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy	8,189
Making Life Work	7,826
Managing Your Finances	7,174
The Church Jesus Built	6,593



News From Across Canada

Work in Canada Summary

With another calendar year behind, it is time to reflect on some of the highlights of the last twelve months.

For the fifth consecutive year, more than 200,000 products (including magazines, periodicals, booklets, disks, brochures and letters) were distributed across Canada. Four of the 12 most widely distributed booklets this past year related to prophecy.

Over 13,000 pieces of incoming mail were processed throughout the year making an average of 1,105 items per month.

Nearly 5,000 new people were added to our database during 2011 including over 3,700 new subscribers to *The Good News* magazine.

We distributed more French-language publications in 2011 than we did in 2010.

Throughout the year, the *Beyond Today* television program brought in close to 6,500 responses for an average of 124.6 responses per week.

The first Kingdom of God seminars began in September 2011. At the end of the year, invitation letters were sent to selected subscribers of *The Good News* magazine. Within two weeks of mailing the letters, dozens of responses came in either requesting the featured booklet or inquiring about registration for the seminars.

As we closed out one calendar year, we look forward to the

next one continuing to build on the foundation that has been laid. With God's blessing, the building will be strong and secure.

Edwin van Pelt

Klassen-McIntosh Wedding

The Lethbridge, Alberta, congregation, along with friends and family, shared in the wedding of Jim Klassen and Tasha McIntosh on September 4, 2011.



Tasha and Jim Klassen
(photo by Maureen DeLong)

Jim is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Glenn Klassen of Enterprise, Northwest Territories. The elder for the Lethbridge congregation, Larry DeLong, conducted the ceremony. Jim and Tasha make their home in Lethbridge.

Larry DeLong

Toronto Winter Social

The annual Toronto winter social took place on December 25 at the home of Gordon and Lillie Robinson who live near the picturesque town of Bethany, Ontario. Attendance for the occasion has been remarkably high, especially when one considers that it is over 100

kilometres northeast of Toronto. This year was no exception as 59 enthusiastic brethren began arriving soon after 11:00 a.m. Most were previous participants (some coming again from the United States), but for some it was their very first time to enjoy the lovely setting.

One of the first priorities was to partake of a delicious variety of hot, homemade soups, which were provided through the cooking skills of Mrs. Robinson and assisted competently by one or two others. Choosing from the irresistible array (squash, corn chowder, cream of cauliflower, chili, etc.) was difficult and prompted an excuse to go back for seconds (maybe even thirds and fourths).

Prior to the social, a light snowfall occurred, thus allying the fear among some that planned snow activities would not be available. Furthermore, the day of the social saw an additional dusting of snow thus enabling tobogganing, which many of the younger (and not so young) enjoyed. For those who were not interested in the outdoor activities, there were a variety of board games to play and movies to watch. A group of ladies spent a wonderful afternoon knitting and chatting. Some of the more active-



Brethren fellowshiping in the dining room
(photo by Gary Haynes)

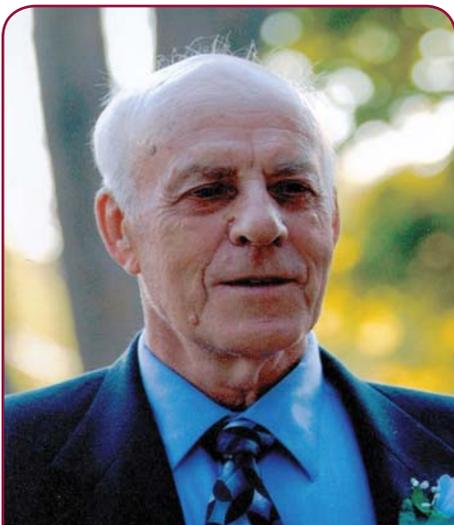
ly inclined went for a hike along an nearby abandoned railway line. If that was not enough to occupy everyone, there was also a Bible Trivia game to enjoy. Other talented people played the magnificent grand piano.

As the afternoon began to wear down, it was time to start preparing for another important highlight: the potluck dinner meal. Wafting aromas began to make everyone's mouth water anew! All received a bountiful meal with plenty available for those inclined to partake of seconds. Desserts were plentiful, as were beverages, including a delightful punch. After clean up, boots, mitts, coats, kids and dishes were rounded up to make the trip safely back home. Already all attendees are looking forward to next year. We thank the Robinsons for fearlessly hosting this fine event time and time again.

Anthony Wasilkoff

de Vlugt Obituary

George de Vlugt of Strathroy, Ontario, passed away peacefully



George de Vlugt
(photo provided by Clara de Vlugt)

at the age of 82 on the evening of October 26, 2011.

1 Timothy 3:8-10 outlines the requirements of a deacon. George faithfully fulfilled those responsibilities from the time he was ordained on April 26, 1970, (the Last Day of Unleavened Bread) in Kitchener, Ontario.

George was married to his lovely wife, Clara, for 56 years. They attended the London, Ontario, congregation. They have eight children, 18 grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. He will be fondly remembered for his warm smile, hearty laugh and as the "Gentle Giant" that he was.

His presence will be missed by all that knew him, as will his dedication to God's word and truth, which he occasionally shared with others at his local Tim Horton's. The fruits that he bore over the years were living proof that he truly fought the good fight and kept the faith. We look forward to the day when we can all spend eternity together with him at Christ's glorious return.

Patrick and Jo-Anne Read

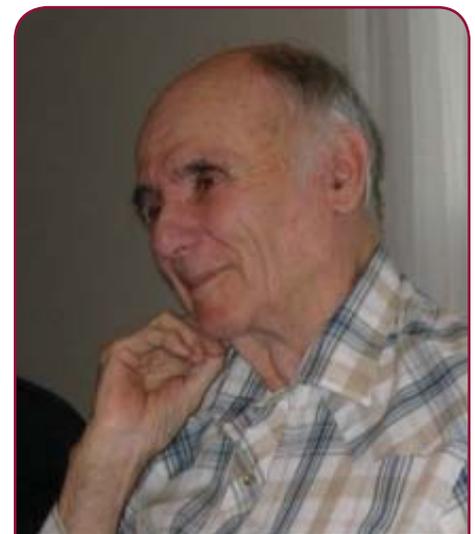
McLaren Obituary

Murray Edmund McLaren of Baldur, Manitoba, passed away on December 15, 2011, at the age of 80. Murray was born on the family farm on August 13, 1931, and was the eldest of two boys.

In October of 1961, he and Margaret Switzer were married at Manson, Manitoba. Murray is survived by his wife, and their sons, Wesley (Kelly), Greg (Carla), Cecil (Barbara), nine grandchildren

and one great-grandson.

Murray had a mixed farm of grain and cattle and farmed with his brother, his three sons and a nephew. In springtime, he derived enjoyment from watching calves frolicking or laying in the warm sunshine. He obtained a class-one drivers license. Upon semi-retiring, he enjoyed trucking long distances with his son or on his own.



Murray McClaren
(photo by Herb Teitgen)

Murray and Margaret were baptized in 1975 and attended services in Brandon, Manitoba. They began to attend the United Church of God in 2004. He attended with the video group in Killarney where his great sense of humour made him always ready with a joke.

Seven years ago, Murray had a severe stroke, was paralyzed on one side, and had difficulty with the activities of daily living. He became a resident in the personal care home in Killarney.

Herb Teitgen conducted Mr. McLaren's funeral service.

Ian & Mariana Simons

Meet the Office Staff

The purpose of the National Office in Canada is to assist in fulfilling our mission in this country. The staff works with both preaching the gospel through various media and giving support to the congregations. Occasionally, someone asks about who does what in the office. The following is an overview of each person's major duties.

Anthony Wasilkoff

Anthony is the Director of Operations for Canada. He is responsible for seeing that the directives of the National Council are carried out.



Anthony Wasilkoff

He oversees all that happens in the office trying to ensure that the workload is evenly distributed and done as efficiently as possible.

Edwin van Pelt

Ed is the Treasurer for the corporation as well as the Office Manager. He is responsible for recording donations and issuing charitable receipts.



Edwin van Pelt

He also oversees literature request fulfillment and the maintenance of office equipment.

Kevin Ford

Kevin is the Chief Accountant and in that capacity ensures that our financial books are kept in impeccable order. He maintains the Human Resource and insurance files and is our "French Department".



Kevin Ford

Kevin has been used not only by us but also the United States for editing both English and French publications.

Wayne Lue

Wayne is the Mail Fulfillment Clerk. He is the person who prepares and processes literature for mailing. This includes selecting and inserting the appropriate items in envelopes and then running them through the postage machine.



Wayne Lue

He also maintains the inventory of our literature and mailing supplies.

Paula Horlick

Paula is our Receptionist and Data Entry Clerk. Her day is filled with data entry interrupted by phone calls.



Paula Horlick

In her spare time, she tackles other miscellaneous duties as required.

Susan Wells

Susan has very kindly served as a volunteer in the office for many years.



Susan Wells

She typically comes in two days a week to work as Receptionist and Data Entry Clerk on those days and does other tasks as needed.

Linda Wasilkoff

Linda is the Secretary for the corporation. She takes and maintains the minutes and records for the National Council and National Conference.



Linda Wasilkoff

She is also the assistant to the Director of Operations and maintains the records of registration of those who perform marriages in Provinces where we are approved to officiate marriages.

Dennis Horlick

Dennis generally comes to the office two days a week (Monday and Tuesday).



Dennis Horlick

His main function in the office is working with Media, festival planning and taking and returning calls from subscribers who wish to speak to a minister.

Patrick Read

Pat usually comes to the office two days a week (Monday and Tuesday). He produces the sermon MP3s and DVDs we send out.

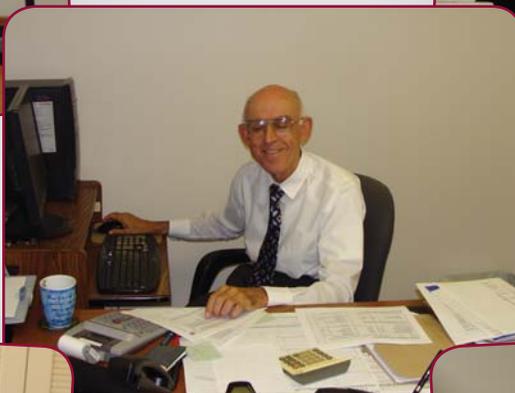


Patrick Read

This past year he has diligently been learning new skills for editing as he works with a new computer program to improve the quality of our product.

All of the National Office staff looks forward to serving the needs of church and the brethren.

UNC



Desperate Measures

I listened to a sermon once, which described how a man literally escaped from the jaws of a lion. The lion had snatched his rifle from him and he was seemingly helpless. While the lion was dragging him away by his foot, he reached over, grabbed the rough tongue of the lion with both hands, and pulled with all his might. At the same time, his companion started to rush at the lion with his Land Rover, a jeep-like vehicle. Luckily, the lion loosened her grip (yes, it was a lioness!) and the man was able to vault into the back of the open Land Rover with his good foot. Not many would have survived such an encounter. With sheer courage, the man and his companion fought back and he escaped what would otherwise have been a painful death.

Have you ever had to resort to desperate measures? It is surprising what people will do in order to survive. What would you do to escape what seems like certain death? How far would you go to save your life? Let us explore this question and learn a lesson from the answer.

Some of you may have heard of Aaron Ralston who, at the age of 27, used a pocketknife to amputate his own arm and free himself from a boulder weighing 800-1,000 pounds that fell and trapped him for five days in a remote desert canyon in eastern Utah. Pinned in a three-foot wide slot canyon, Ralston cut through his own arm below the elbow, applying a tourniquet and administering first aid before rigging anchors and fixing a rope. He rappelled down to the Blue John Canyon, and then hiked out to meet his rescuers. Ralston had been hiking alone when the boulder fell and

pinned his right arm, as he was moving through the narrow slot.

Ralston's pocketknife amputation was not the first in the region. A Colorado fisherman, Bill Jeracki, cut his leg off at the knee when two boulders fell on his leg while he was angling alone in a remote canyon stream. Trapped and yelling for hours, Jeracki made the drastic decision after the weather took a turn for the worse and he became concerned for his survival.

Then, there was Jonathan Metz who tried to cut off his arm after he trapped it in a furnace while he was alone. He started to sever the arm, but despite his immense brav-



©2012 photos.com; photo illustration by Paul Wasilkoff

ery, he became overwhelmed by the severe pain. Eventually, friends who were worried after not seeing Metz for three days finally alerted the police. He was falling unconscious when rescuers found him. The amputation had to be completed because of infection. The physician who treated him said, "The way that he did it was frightening, admirable, horrifying, brave – and just amazing to us." Nevertheless,

Mr. Metz was happy to be alive: "And trust me, whether it's cutting your arm off or finding some other way, I think people would be surprised by what they are capable of."

Occasionally in the mines of South Africa (probably in Canada as well), a physician must go underground to do an amputation of a limb to extract a worker pinned down by a rock fall. No doubt, such a worker would be grateful to have his life saved even though he may have lost a limb.

These stories demonstrate the desperate measures people take to save their lives. However, there is something more important than physical life and that is our eternal life. How far would we go in order to be saved spiritually?

In Matthew 18:8-9, Jesus Christ speaks of spiritual amputation. "If your hand or foot causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you. It is better for you to enter into life lame or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet, to be cast into the everlasting fire. And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you. It is better for you to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes, to be cast into hell fire." The hell fire that Christ was referring to is Gehenna fire or the lake of fire, which symbolizes eternal death.

If Christ were speaking of physical amputation, there would be many people inheriting eternal life who would be without limbs or eyes. Of course, here Christ is speaking of getting rid of sin, rather than actually cutting off limbs or

See "Desperate" on page 9