



## The Renewal of Spring

Do you remember the first set of plans you ever saw? Do you remember the first set of plans you ever had in your hands? For me it was for a model ship I was given as a special gift. It was plastic, not large, but it was complicated enough to be challenging and the final result was thoroughly satisfying. The directions for models, if followed precisely, will usually result in a promised final product.

Some may have similarly acquired plans for building a house or an addition to a house – an exciting project to venture into. With a lot of hard work, and following the procured plans, a lovely residence is built. However, if someone decides to ignore the plans, the desired outcome is not achieved. Sometimes quite the opposite can actually occur.

How wonderful is the plan of God, which we will begin rehearsing once again by observing the Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread. Winter is nearly over and

spring is about to begin. The testimony of spring speaks loudly to us about the plan of God. Each year, winter inevitably follows autumn. The landscape is gripped by the killing cold and enveloped by ice and snow. Virtually all outdoor life seems to vanish. Grass disappears

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and deciduous trees lose their leaves. Living off the land becomes nearly impossible. What if winter continued for longer than normal? What if winter somehow, some way became “stuck” and lasted for a whole year? There are those who postulate that with nuclear war there would likely be a nuclear winter. Thankfully, spring always follows winter and does so right on schedule every year.

There are very few people who say that winter is their favorite season. Most people say their favorite season is either spring or summer or even autumn. Each of these three seasons has something special and unique to offer. And they all seem to go by so very quickly. We wonder why winter seems to last such a long time. Winter is a harbinger of death itself, which few people look forward to. In fact, we sometimes envy bears because

they can escape winter each year through the remarkable process of hibernation.

Many of us know what it means to suffer from cabin fever. There’s also the effect of what is known as Seasonal Affective Disorder.

Those experiencing it become depressive because of the lack of adequate sunlight during the winter

months. When spring finally arrives, how jubilant most of us are. When we hear the song of the first meadowlark or robin, our hearts leap with joy.

There is a parallel between the seasons and the progression of



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each day. Some are morning people and function best until midday and begin to wane by noon. Others prefer the afternoon and say they function best then. Yet others enjoy the evening and look forward to that part of each day most of all. However, night can be a trial for some people. Most everyone suffers from occasional bouts of insomnia. It is not a pleasant experience! We toss, we turn, we fluff up the pillow, we adjust the covers and still sleep eludes us. We finally get out of bed, make a cup of tea and do some work at the computer or in the kitchen as we await the dawn. Under such circumstances, night seems interminable and the arrival of dawn a most welcome relief.

What if the night became “stuck” and the dawn failed to arrive? What if there were such a thing as a nu-

clear night? Something similar happens with volcanic eruptions when the atmosphere becomes thick with pumice and soot. If it turned dark as night for a whole week, life on this planet could come to a halt a lot quicker than we might imagine.

How grateful we should be for the arrival of dawn each morning. How grateful we should be for the arrival of spring each year. If winter or night got stuck, we humans would be totally helpless to fix the problem. No nation, scientific agency or entity would have the power or means to change



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the inclination of the earth or repair its spinning on its axis.

Even as humans are unable to save themselves physically, they are even more unable to save themselves spiritually. How increasingly grateful we should be for God’s wondrous plan of salvation. As we observe this year’s Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread let us do so with heightened joy, zeal and appreciation.

*Anthony Wasilkoff*

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## Peace and Unity in the Church

In my early years in the church, it never occurred to me that there would be divisions and splits in the church as I witnessed the unity and peace among the brethren and their families. But it happened, and many members were caught off guard and unprepared for the situation. Many were shocked, hurt and had life shattered as brethren broke apart – even within families.

History shows that divisions and conflict are challenges that have existed in every organization. Peace and unity are contrary to

*History shows that divisions and conflict are challenges that have existed in every organization – even in the church.*

human nature. That is why in the Bible we are instructed to endeavour – that means to work hard, to strive or make effort – for unity and peace.

The Bible gives us principles that will help us to prevent or minimize, if not totally eradicate, the occurrence of divisions. The principles are applicable for all seasons, all ages, and in all occasions. They are applicable to bring peace not only in the church but even at home, work, and everywhere we go.

These principles can be grouped into three categories: avoiding behaviors that threaten peace and unity; avoiding behaviours that are enemies to peace and unity; and pursuing behaviours that maintain peace and unity.

### Behaviours that threaten peace and unity

Paul identified brethren comparing themselves with each other as one cause of division. When believers classed or grouped themselves and claimed, “I am of Paul”, “I am of Apollos” or “I am Cephas” (1 Corinthians 1:12), Paul called it a carnal attitude. He stated that Christians should follow God and not any human leader.

Paul warns, “For we dare not class ourselves or compare our-

selves with those who commend themselves. But they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise” (2 Corinthians 10:12).

Commending one’s self (that is to praise, to acclaim or extol oneself above another) will threaten the peace and unity in a relationship. Paul mentioned that he himself will not boast beyond measure and he advised the members that they should not look for man’s praise but rather praise from God, “Not he who commends himself is approved, but whom the Lord commends” (2 Corinthians 10:18).

Paul further admonishes us to do things not through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of

mind esteeming others better than ourselves.

Today we see people being mistreated because of their appearance or social standing. This attitude is described by James as being a respecter of persons or partial. That means judging by appearance, which is contrary to Christ’s instruction.

God is calling people from all walks of life and we need to welcome them. I remember Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong saying that every human being is a potential child of God in His Kingdom.

James instructed, “My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with partiality. For if there should come into your assembly a man with gold rings, in fine apparel, and there should also come in a poor man in filthy clothes, and you pay attention to the one wearing the fine clothes and say to him, ‘You sit here in a good place,’ and say to the poor man, ‘You stand there,’ or, ‘Sit here at my footstool,’ have you not shown partiality among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts?” (James 2:1-4).

Comparing people leads to judging. Paul’s admonition was to not judge as each of us shall give account of himself to God. “Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our brother’s way” (Romans 14:13).

Jesus instructed that a person should examine himself before

judging others. As Jesus mentioned, “He who is without sin among you let him cast the first stone at her” (John 8:7). If people will examine themselves first, then they will be less judgmental and will be more merciful in recognizing the human struggles in this life.

### Behaviours that are enemies of peace and unity

Gossiping is defined as idle talk, not always truthful, about people and their affairs. It is repeating what one knows, or idle talk that one hears, about people and their affairs.

James, in his time, concluded that the tongue was the main culprit for gossip (James 3:6). Today people can communicate and gossip through the use of different media

(e.g. text, photo messaging, internet use, use of electronic social forum, chat and more). The problem goes beyond the control of the tongue to the control of mind, attitude or character.

Gossip through technology can spread in hours if not minutes. This is dangerous and has wrecked many lives and split best friends and families – even in the church.

False doctrine and false teaching are the most dangerous. That is why the instruction was to not only avoid false doctrine or teaching but to also avoid the person carrying it. “Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them” (Romans 16:17-18).

In addition, Paul had a strong instruction given to Timothy, “... that you may charge some that they teach no other doctrine, nor give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which cause disputes rather than godly edification which is in faith” (1 Timothy 1:3-4).

Today we are living in perilous time, not only physically but also mentally and spiritually. There are so many teachings around us within our reach at

any time and at any place through modern technology. There is information that causes confusion and lead many astray even in the church. We must be careful of what we get and read through modern technologies available this time.

### Behaviours that maintain peace and unity

Just like any relationship, unity and peace, needs to be nurtured and nourished to flourish. The following are things that will help us encourage and strengthen it in the church.

Forgiveness has a reconciling and healing effect on people. God knows that, while living on this earth, it is difficult for anyone to not be offended or offend others by actions or words in or outside the church.

Jesus knew human nature and told Peter that we should forgive seventy times seven. In other words, God wanted Christians to have a forgiving attitude like Him.

In the parable of the prodigal son, the message for God’s people is that, like the Father, we also should have a forgiving attitude.

Christians are called to be a light to the world so that the world may see our good works and glorify our Father in heaven. Christians should be a source of good works and good words.

Christians are instructed to be hospitable without grumbling. Jesus stated this is the sign of His



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people, “if you have love for one another” (John 13:35).

Christians are called to, “having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation” (1Peter 2:12).

Paul’s admonition was “not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching” (Hebrews 10:25). The church provides services, good works activities and social events for church members and their families to be involved in.

As the saying goes, the family that eats together, plays together and prays together stays together. Brethren should spend time together: to help and encourage one

another and to strengthen the camaraderie or relationship of the brethren in the church.

All indications show that unity and peace are contrary to human nature. The adversary detests peace and unity. His desire is to divide God’s people so that they may be easy prey to conquer. We need to pray for one another as Paul stated, “For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God” (Colossians 1:9-10).

God will call many new and former members into the church. The challenge is to maintain peace and unity in the body. God provided

the principles as described above that each of us need to apply to attain the desired peace and unity in the church.

Paul acknowledged our human tendency to compare ourselves and gave this analogy that will help the people understand the differences in each other, “For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ” (1 Corinthians 12:12). It is God who sets the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleases.

*Sixto Yap*

## Unleavened Bread Recipes

Are you excited about the upcoming Spring Feast Season? Do you look forward to special foods served only during the Days of Unleavened Bread? Are your recipes for this time of year needing some spring cleaning?

If you answered yes to any of the questions above, we recommend you see the online library of recipes. The list of categories for the Unleavened

section include: unleavened breads and crackers, unleavened desserts, unleavened appetizers, unleavened breakfasts, unleavened entrees.

In addition, there are great recipes for potlucks and Sabbath treats. Just go to [www.ucg.org/recipes](http://www.ucg.org/recipes). We suggest you go only after you have eaten!

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### List of Leavening Agents

- 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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## Our Edmonton, AB Congregation

The Edmonton congregation began on January 13, 1996, with 14 people at the first service. Videos and taped music was the humble beginning of the United Church of God – Edmonton congregation. Attendance now averages about 70 people.

From the first service, the Edmonton church has been blessed to meet at King's University College. Brethren come to Sabbath services from far and wide, so a potluck lunch and coffee after services are a welcome opportunity to visit and fellowship with each other.

showed off the many talents of adults and children in the congregation who entertained over 90 people attending the gala. There were guests from two other church areas and, you know how wonderful it is to have guests to help celebrate any occasion.



top: Attendees at Camp Wildwood  
left: Taking turns at the bowling alley  
(photos by Evelyn Davis)



Robert Berendt is the pastor. He is married to Valerie and pastors four congregations (Edmonton, Red Deer, North Battleford and Saskatoon). The church areas are quite far apart so many kilometres are regularly recorded on the Berendt's vehicle.

In Edmonton, the brethren come to Sabbath services from as far away as the Saskatchewan border, Northwest Territories and places west of Edmonton. Mr. Berendt is assisted by non-salaried elders in Edmonton and Saskatchewan. He encourages men in the congregations to serve by song leading, providing sermonettes and sermons.

The demographics are quite evenly split among seniors, middle age and young families which include about 20 children.

There were several well-attended activities over the last year including a special supper and bowling in December 2011. There were about 50 participants, who had a wonderful time. At the end of December, there was a wild game barbeque at the Davis farm. It was a beautiful winter day with many activities outside such as skating, pickup hockey and tobogganing. For those less adventurous, there were indoor activities. The barbeque was in the evening and the meat was venison, moose and elk provided by the "hunters" of the congregation. Potatoes, vegetables, salads and "must have" desserts topped the meal.

January 13, 2012, was the 16th anniversary of the Edmonton congregation. To celebrate the occasion, there was a special potluck and a variety show that

A group of ladies drove to the Spokane Women's Retreat in May. One of the ladies from the Edmonton church was asked to speak at the Retreat. It was a valuable learning experience for the women and it was an opportunity to fellowship with women from the United States and one woman from Africa.

In July, Camp Wildrose, the children's camp, was held at the Davis farm. Children came from many different church areas to attend. Bible lessons, teamwork challenges, archery, canoeing, parachute games, theatre games, crafts, campfires and an old-fashion picnic kept the children busy, happy, productive and excited! The children also experienced a magnificent thunderstorm. Maybe they prayed for rain so they could move inside to "Grandpa and Grandma Davis' dorm" and watch a movie ... no not really! The children enjoy their tents and the outdoors.

Our traditional August church picnic was held at the park after services. It was a good time for the adults to relax and enjoy part of the Sabbath outside while the children played lawn games and enjoyed being outdoors. Of course, the food is always great and somehow it just tastes better in the fresh air.

In September, the children had a wonderful surprise! Amanda Paquette arranged for them to take horseback riding lessons one day at her sister-in-

law's horse farm near Tofield. The children were thrilled. Later, Amanda and her husband, Dan, had a barbeque at their home for the children and all the adults.

In addition, the church hosted two Kingdom of God Seminars. Of course, the Feast of Tabernacles is always a special event. It's exciting when ev-

eryone gets home and can share pictures, stories and lessons learned at the Feast. The Edmonton congregation had representatives at various Feast sites all over the world – Italy, Germany, Philippines, Jamaica, Australia, Hawaii, California, Oregon, Texas and, of course, Canmore. The “blessing of little children” was postponed a week to allow the families with children to

be blessed to arrive home for the occasion. This year there were six children blessed including three babies.

We truly are a family so, whenever you're in the neighbourhood, stop by for a visit. You are always welcome and we would be happy to see you!

*Evelyn Davis*

## First Video Conference for National Council

On December 3, the National Council had its first meeting using WebEx technology. This allowed Council members to see and hear each other, which is more effective and more economical than having a teleconference.

Minutes from the preceding meeting were reviewed and adopted making them official.

The office update by Anthony Wasilkoff and Edwin van Pelt showed positive indicators for God's work here in Canada. A recent Subscriber Development Letter has received good responses and added some new donors. Our subscription list is growing slowly, but we continue to remove those not wishing to receive *The Good News* magazine. This past year our *Bonnes Nouvelles* subscription list has increased, which is most encouraging.

Five office staff members attended an all day Church and Charity Law Seminar on November 15. A summary of the seminar was sent to Council. This summary indicated several additional policies the church needs to create.

Michael Erickson gave an update on behalf of the Canada Not-for-Profit Corporations Act Compliancy Task

Force. Council input was requested on several items. One concern that must be resolved is the potential confusion between a “member of the corporation” and a “member of the church”. A member of the corporation is someone who is a member of the National Conference, which is composed of all of our elders in Canada plus the two laymembers on the National Council. While the Church is a spiritual body, for legal purposes, a member of the church is someone whose baptism has been conducted by or recognized by the church and has filled out a membership form. The Council was presented with two scenarios on how this might be resolved. They chose to more carefully define the terms. The Council also made decisions on two additional technicalities. The Task Force has almost completed its job and is appreciative of the input and help given by the Amendment Committee members.

Both the Operations Plan and Budget for the 2013-2014 fiscal year were presented and approved to be sent to the National Conference for ratification. The Council also approved sending a Resolution to the National Conference for their ratification. This resolution seeks to change the previously set date for the annual meeting of the National Conference from

March to June this year. This is to conform to new government rules.

If the Resolution is passed by the National Conference, the Strategic Plan, Operations Plan and Budget will still be sent to the National Conference to be approved prior to the fiscal year end. All other business will be done during the June meeting.

The final business matter was to schedule the next Council meeting for March 11. Plans for the June 2013 meetings are for the Media Team and Ministerial Services Team to meet on Wednesday, June 19. Council meetings will be on June 20 and June 21. There will be a Ministers' Conference on Saturday night and Sunday afternoon. The annual meeting of the National Conference will be on Sunday morning and early afternoon, June 23.

Since the National Conference will be asked to approve the Bylaws that have been amended to meet new federal government standards, Michael Erickson suggested scheduling a WebEx conference call prior to the annual meeting for those who might have questions about any of the changes to the Bylaws.

*Linda Wasilkoff*

## The Northwest Weekend: A Canadian Perspective

The United Church of God's Northwest Weekend (NWW) event is always a time for praise, fellowship, fun and growing in knowledge of godly living. The annual event was held December 22-25 in Vancouver, Washington, which is near Portland, Oregon. The activity-filled gathering has been a regular occurrence since the early 1970's. The annual agenda features a special focus on teens – the future of the church. The Portland congregation has an especially large percentage of children, teens and young families. They, along with many others, gained a lot from the experience. The youth's spirit of friendship and their exemplary conduct warmed many hearts.

The downtown Vancouver Hilton was a convenient site with fine amenities. In addition, the area near the hotel featured a park and restaurants where brethren could spend time in fellowship. Parking rates were reasonable with some areas even designated as free.

Sermons on the Sabbath were given by John Cafourek and Rex Sexton. The Portland youth choir performed special music, accompanied by the music ensemble. Portland area pastor and NWW coordinator, Robert Dick, handled announcements and coordinated information requests, while providing a warm welcome.

The singles had opportunities for fellowship, including a Saturday evening potluck.

There were two dances on Saturday evening, one for teens and one for adults. On Sunday night, all members were invited to a social "mixer" featuring a variety of fun and interactive ice-breaker activities. One game

featured the topic, "What ten things would you keep if stranded on an island after being shipwrecked?" People wearing various designated numbers were called together to work out survival strategies. One member from each group presented their helpful and sometimes humorous solutions.

Green Meadows was the site for the Sunday Sports Day. Besides volleyball and basketball, the impressive facility also featured a swimming pool, squash courts, bowling alley, and spa. Over 100 attended the day's events. Some brethren, for the benefit of their children, drove a fair distance to attend the NWW's sports activities.

Seminars were held on Monday, December 24, at the Hilton Hotel. Topics included the following:

- Focus for Singles – Being single has blessings, such as being more dedicated to serving God and having extra time for study and serving. Singles were encouraged to support each other and make use of their gifts in the body of Christ.
- The Golden Years – Robert Dick offered sound advice on legal and financial planning, insurance policies, and inheritances.
- Financial Planning – Rex Sexton, a financial professional, presented guidelines on making wise investment choices, finding consistent income streams and investing for tough times ahead.
- Owning and Not Renting, Our Relationship with God – Especially for youth but applicable to

all, the theme revolved around keeping God and His Word as our permanent partner through planning life's early, middle and later stages.

- Deal Breakers – Life may see us having to handle different situations requiring wise decision making. Topics included dealing with relationships, work, and consumer purchasing. Where do we draw the line when deciding what makes a deal breaker?

All seminars were interactive, informative, and well attended. There was something for everyone, and the topics were practical for everyday living.

The NWW is a chance to escape the Christmas blitz, revisit Feast memories and enjoy fellowship, sports and educational activities. Thanks again to the Portland church and all who made it possible!

*Dale Craniford*

### Website Redesign

We have updated the look and feel of the [www.ugc.ca](http://www.ugc.ca) website.

The new design brings the Canadian site more in line with the site managed by the Home Office. The site addresses, or URLs, are more friendly for Search Engine Optimization making the site more readily searchable by the computers at Google, Bing, and elsewhere.

We invite your feedback on the new design - come by and have a look!

**UNC**



# The Winter Family Weekend: A Canadian Perspective

God will wipe tears from our eyes, dwell with us and we will be his people. This reference from Revelation was the theme of the Winter Family Weekend (WFW) in Ohio. Our incredible future was pictured gracefully and eloquently. It was, in a small measure, experienced during the weekend. I experienced the joy, warm friendships, enlightened teaching, sports and exquisite arts reminiscent of the Feast of Tabernacles and a foretaste of what we hope for in the Kingdom of God.

This year, I made the journey with my brother and two friends. We arrived at the Great Wolf Lodge, a massive timber and wood-themed waterpark and hotel. It was a joy to see familiar faces from the feast and other occasions.

Friday evening a Bible study, on how to build lasting friendships, was conducted by Frank Dunkle. He used a Star Wars anecdote as he expounded the biblical friendship of David and Jonathan. He covered Proverbs about friendships such as “The sweetness of a man’s friend gives delight by hearty counsel”, and “As iron sharpens iron, so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend”. We learned practical, biblical ways to be a better friend.

The Bible study transitioned perfectly into the desert social – a memorable occasion for more reasons than chocolate cake! At every turn and with every situation, there was a new opportunity to make a new friend or acquaintance.

Sabbath was full of unparalleled learning opportunities, friends

and joy. There were many talented speakers and presenters in one place. They had put much time and effort into well-produced and captivating seminars, sermons and Bible studies with many targeted to specific audiences, such as teens, young adults, adults and leaders. Sabbath morning, I attended two seminars—both insightful and astutely delivered.

Rick Beam presented a fascinating sermon about how God uses broken people who will need to heal the broken nations after the tribulation. He used the story of the race horse, Seabiscuit, to illustrate his point. Seabiscuit was rejected and broken before being rescued and nursed back to condition to win the highest prize in horse racing. The catch phrase from the sermon was modified from the story: “God doesn’t throw away a life just because it is a little banged up.” A corresponding verse is “God has not dealt with us according to our sins” (Psalms 103: 10-14).

After the Sabbath, board games galore were available. For the children and families, there were movies to watch. Jelly, the puppet featured in short films produced by church members, made a live appearance and introduced a new short film “Jelly Learns the Books of the Bible.” For those over 18, the feature of the evening was the adult dance. The theme was “A Night in Arabia” and had all the associated colourful decorations. There were new and familiar tunes for dancing to fast, slow and swing music. More importantly, the warmth and conversation of new and old friends made the night marvelous.

New at the WFW were visual and performing arts. The concourse outside the auditorium was adorned with magnificent paintings, sculptures, pottery, books and other art forms. Sunday evening featured a performing arts show with songs, dance and music. The arts can be highly effective to further our culture and spread the gospel. I found it brilliant to see the talent in the church being used to edify us.

One focus at the WFW is sports. The facility for volleyball and basketball is modern and well equipped. Sport events provide a great way to spend time with others. Between games, there was ample opportunity to hang out, laugh and chat with other fellow believers. I did not join a team this year but enjoyed being there hanging out with everyone.

There were seminars running every day. I attended an illuminating seminar by Darris McNeely entitled “Discovering Your Spiritual Gifts.” It was effectively done with a scoring system to help define strengths.

The weekend was an unparalleled opportunity to be with church people of all ages. The opportunity to learn biblical topics in a variety of formats was equally great. I immensely enjoyed myself, made some friends and learned a lot. There was something for everyone at WFW. If you have never been, or have not in a few years, I suggest you team up with a few buddies and make the trip. You can thank me for the suggestion later.

**“Illegal Trial” from page 16**

fore him in private, thus breaking both Roman and Jewish law.

The story of how Jesus cleared the temple of the money changers is well known. What is not so well known is that it was Annas who allowed the money changers into the temple. When Jesus threw them out, Annas was not only embarrassed, he also lost money.

The third unlawful act was regarding the Sanhedrin. Ecclesiastical law prohibited any member of the Sanhedrin from sitting in judgment of any accused if they had any personal dealings with the individual that might cause them to be impartial. Exact language of the Sanhedrin code reads, “Nor under any circumstances is a man known to be at enmity with the accused person permitted to occupy a position among the judges.” This law was to protect an accused from being tried before judges who were his enemies. According to that law, several members of the Sanhedrin should have been disqualified.

Total membership in the Sanhedrin was 71 but on the night they tried Jesus they purposely selected a bare quorum of 23. Almost all were related to Annas – five were sons, one was a son-in-law and others were said to be cousins.

The fourth law broken was related to the Passover. Their law prohibited the Sanhedrin from meeting during the Passover, but they ignored that prohibition.

The fifth error was that no one had actually charged Jesus with anything. Suddenly after about 30 minutes of a mock trial, Caiaphas, the High Priest, pronounced Him guilty as charged but, at this point, He had not been charged with anything.

The sixth error involved witnesses. Mosaic Law states, “At the mouth of two witnesses, or three witnesses, shall he that is worthy of death be put to death, but at the mouth of one witness he shall not be put to death.” They could not find even one true witness, so they willfully broke the ninth commandment, “Thou shalt not bear false witness” and found an individual willing to do just that.

The seventh error is related to jurisdiction. The Sanhedrin had no jurisdiction in the case against Jesus. Until a prisoner had been lawfully arrested and charged, they had no jurisdiction to make judgment. Jesus had not been legally charged. There was no warrant for His arrest. They had simply snuck out at night, captured Him and then took Him before an unlawful 23 member court.

The eighth error was their inability to prove His guilt. He said He was the Son of God. It was up to them, as before any court and crown council even today, to prove that He was lying about who He said He was. They could not do that so they simply accused Him of blasphemy.

There were several other infractions of law including failing to allow Christ to introduce witnesses of His own – which He would not have done, but they didn’t know

that! Another law that was ignored was regarding an individual’s confession. If it was the only evidence, the court was then prohibited from issuing a death sentence. Furthermore, according to their own law, “A criminal case, where a death sentence is to be pronounced can not be concluded before the following day.” They simply ignored that too.

Another glaring disregard of law was the decision to take Jesus before Herod. King Herod had absolutely no jurisdiction in the matter. This explains why Herod, knowing full well he could not do anything to either condemn or release Jesus, sent Him to Pontius Pilate.

Since neither the Sanhedrin under the High Priest Caiaphas nor King Herod had any jurisdiction in sentencing Jesus to death, it was unlawful for them to present Him before Pilate – the only one who had authority to order a criminal put to death. Although Jesus was of course accused of a crime, He was never actually charged.

Pilate the Roman governor of Judea broke Roman law when, after finding Jesus guilty of doing nothing wrong (not once but four times), instead of making a decision, which only he could have made, turned Jesus over to the mob to be crucified.

What happened to Jesus of Nazareth was highly illegal under the law of His day. Yet while we can look back at those religious leaders, the Roman civil authorities and the mob that screamed “Cru-

cify Him,” the Bible makes it clear that it is the collective sin of all humanity that brought Christ to the stake.

In the book of Isaiah, we read this prophetic statement. “He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten

of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: 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 (lawlessness) of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter . . .” (Isaiah 53:3-7 KJV).

Jesus Christ died a horrifying death in the most cruel and inhu-

mane way known to the world at that time. His trial was illegal and His death was murder. Yet it was according to predetermined divine purpose. “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved” (John 3:16-17).

*David Palmer*

## Office Volunteer Profile: Susan Wells

In 1968, Susan Wells started listening to Herbert W. Armstrong on the radio and thus began a 46-year journey of learning the truth about God’s way of life.

On hearing Mr. Armstrong’s voice through the airwaves, Susan began to request booklets, subscribed to *The Plain Truth* magazine and enrolled in the *Bible Study Course*. Over the course of time, she eventually began attending Sabbath services with the United Church of God in Toronto and in March 2001 she was baptized.

Susan began volunteering at the National Office shortly after the office moved from Etobicoke to Halton Hills in 2001. Susan is usually at the office two days a week and assists with many tasks including data entry, answering the phones, addressing envelopes and preparing them for mailing.

Susan’s interests are quite varied. She supports the Canadian Cancer Society in different ways because of a family history of cancer. Her mother and sister suffered from breast cancer and survived. Her grandfather died of throat cancer. She organized the “Caps for Chemo” idea where members of the Toronto congregations knitted

and sewed caps for those who have lost their hair through chemotherapy treatments. The idea also spread to other congregations in Ontario.

Her other interests and hobbies include her family, crocheting, painting in watercolours and spending time with her granddaughter doing various crafts. She also enjoys nature, animals and photography. More recently, she embarked on a project to discover her family roots. She was able to trace her history back to the Tudors and the royal family of France. One of the more interesting discoveries about her family included a hanging in the 1800s at an old jail in Toronto. She looks forward to the time when she can meet family members she never knew.

Her volunteer work is greatly appreciated.



(Source: United Church of God - Canada Staff)

*Edwin van Pelt*





## Lose Some Battles, But Win the War

I was born in Sheffield, England, in 1941 during the time German bombs were being dropped on the industrial cities of England – including Sheffield. Germany had already bombed its way through Western Europe. When Poland was invaded, England declared war against Hitler’s Nazi army. Poland was quickly defeated and then France succumbed to the German onslaught. England was next and the battle of Britain began.

I vaguely remember the sirens being sounded and families rushing to the air-raid shelter, one of which had been dug in our backyard. In London, people flocked to the subway stations where they could find shelter from the cascading bombs that were falling on that city.

As I grew older, I read a lot about the Second World War. At one point, it seemed inevitable that the Germans would be victorious. However, in spite of the British and Allied forces losing many battles, they still won the war. This historical fact became a valuable life lesson for me when I became a Christian.

The Bible records the history of many battles and emphasizes that Christians are in a spiritual war (Ephesians 6:11-13).

All Christians do lose spiritual battles and this can lead to discouragement, depression and despair. So how do we confront these battles? How can we win the war?

There are three important strategies that we can employ to help us in this conflict.

### Set our mind

Just like we set an alarm clock, we must set our mind with scriptures each day. Colossians 3:1-3 instructs us to “set our affections on things above, not on things on the earth.”

Jesus employed this principle when he quoted scriptures against Satan in the battle in the wilderness (Matthew 4). He did the same when He responded to the accusations of the Pharisees by stating that they “did not know the scriptures” (Matthew 22:15-23). The book of Proverbs also reminds us that “as we think in our hearts so we will act.” The same book also warns us to “guard our heart, for out of it are the issues of life” (Proverbs 4:23).

Bible study is an important spiritual discipline, and Jesus set the example of quoting scriptures when preaching about the issues of life. Scriptures deal with life issues and, by setting our mind on them, they will be a source of great encouragement for us.

### Renew our mind

Romans 12:2 states that we should “not be conformed to this world but that we should be transformed by the renewing of our mind, that we may prove what is that good, acceptable and perfect will of God.”

David spent a lot of time meditating (Psalm 77:11-12) and it was through this practice that he regularly renewed his mind. We also should exercise this discipline of renewing our mind by reflecting on how

well we have set our mind on things above. By doing this we should be able to make changes in our thinking and then make the necessary adjustments in our actions.



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Many people spend a lot of time on physical activity to keep fit. How much more important is it that we meditate and renew our minds to avoid spiritual atrophy?

### Gird up the loins of our mind

The apostle Peter uses this phrase in 1 Peter 1:13-16. Peter was probably familiar with the Greco-Roman wrestling culture where he understood that to “gird up” means to bind about.

The apostle Paul also uses this wrestling analogy when he writes, “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, powers, rulers of darkness, and against spiritual wick-

edness in high places” (Ephesians 6:11).

How do these three strategies affect our Christian life? The human mind is a wonderful component of God’s creation and gives us the capacity of memory, conscience and imagination. Satan wants to distort and cloud our thinking processes. He wants us to have er-

ror, worry, fear and anxiety. This is why we must discipline our minds against these negative trends.

We must regularly set, renew, and gird up our minds and do each prayerfully (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

In life we will lose battles and sometimes become discouraged, Losing battles can lead to depres-

sion and despair, so we do need a spiritual battle plan. There are many scriptures of encouragement. One of my favorites is when the apostle Paul writes that with the help of Christ “we are more than conquerors” (Romans 8:37).

Stay in the battle – and win the war.

*George Merritt*

## News From Across Canada

### Annual Fondue Social

Many of the North Battleford congregation and some guests gathered at the home of Boyd and Donna Yahn for the annual fondue social on December 15. Actually, this year there was a record attendance of 51.



Donna and Bruce Bird in the food line  
(photo by Terry Connors)

A choice of beef, chicken, lamb and pike was available to fondue as well as cheese, mushrooms and onion rings. We also had a plethora of veggie trays, crackers, tacos and dips to choose from. Dessert included cakes, cookies, squares and a chocolate fountain with fresh fruit.

The weather outside was cool while the atmosphere indoors was warm with laughter and fellowship.

*Adeline Sanoy*

### Toronto Bowling Activity

This winter the Toronto congregation was given an opportunity to keep their evening rolling with some extended fellowship at the local Planet Bowl. Everyone was given an opportunity to trade in their regular shoes for a pair of bowling shoes. Young, old and everyone in between were able to enjoy a night of fun at the local bowling alley.

The cold weather outside couldn’t cool down the heated passion of the bowlers inside that night. The evening was filled with more than its fair share of strikes, spares and occasional gutter balls, but despite those gutter balls, everyone had an enjoyable night of socializing and fun. It was another special occasion for the Toronto congregation to share some time with their spiritual family.

*Mark Yap*

### Vancouver Island Outing

Seven members of the United Church of God Vancouver Island congregation recently paid a visit to the B.C. Legislature, home of the province’s government. Members enjoyed a delicious lunch in the M.L.A.’s dining room. This combined a historic setting, on Victoria’s Inner Harbour, with a warm and friendly atmosphere with white linen tablecloths and silverware.

The following day a new Lieutenant Governor was sworn in for



Deciding the best shot  
(photo by Aurelio Caldarelli)



Enjoying a nice meal in Victoria  
(photo by Wendy Corrigan)

a new term. The Lieutenant Governor is the only individual other than the Queen permitted to walk on the red carpet through the Legislature's large central doors.

The outgoing Lieutenant Governor was unique as he was the first ever First Nations royal representative.

*Wendy Corrigan*

### Birth Announcement

In the wee hours of June 15, 2012, Kevin and Lexie Spahich welcomed their new little girl into the world. Katie Renee Spahich was born in Edmonton, Alberta, at 3:00 a.m. weighing nine pounds and was 21.5 inches long. Her three brothers were eager to meet her once mom and dad returned to the farm after resting for a day in the city.



Katie Spahich  
(photo by Lexie Spahich)

Grandparents in Saskatchewan and Ontario were thrilled to have their first granddaughter, who they are already trying to spoil. On the Sabbath of September 27, a number of little girls (including little Katie) were blessed in the Edmonton congregation.

*Kevin Spahich*

### Holowach Anniversary

John and Irene Holowach of the Saskatoon congregation celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on December 20, 2012. Their family had a gathering for them that day. A four-piece live band played some of their favorite bluegrass tunes. They received congratulatory messages from the Queen, the Governor General of Canada, the Premier of Saskatchewan and their Member of Parliament from Saskatoon.



Irene and John Holowach  
(photo by Donna Bird)

After services on the Sabbath of December 22, everyone enjoyed lunch and special cakes to honour Mr. and Mrs. Holowach

on this milestone celebration in their lives.

John and Irene are long-time faithful, devoted members of God's Church. They are loved and respected by all, from the children to the seniors in our church. We are very blessed to have them in the Saskatoon congregation. We wish them many more happy years together!

*Adeline Sanoy*

### Yahn Anniversary

Boyd and Donna Yahn celebrated their 35th Wedding Anniversary on December 3, 2012. After Sabbath Services on December 8, the brethren of the North Battleford congregation presented them with a cake to celebrate the occasion.



Boyd and Donna Yahn  
(photo by Adeline Sanoy)

Boyd and Donna have three children: Kristin (married to Bob Korneluk), Drew and Karin. The Yahn's are also expecting the arrival of their first grandchild very soon.

*Adeline Sanoy*



## Ken Kerr Sr. Obituary

Ken was born November 5, 1940, in Indian Head, Saskatchewan. As a child, he lived and worked on the family's small mixed dairy/wheat farm. At the age of 16, Ken joined the Canadian Armed Forces. There he spent most of his time as a driver – first, delivering medical equipment and then, because of his outgoing personality, he was promoted to driving military and other VIPs in Canada and Germany. He drove generals, admirals and Ministers of the Crown including the Minister of Defense, which allowed him to see places and events that only higher brass and politicians experienced.



Ken Kerr  
(photo by Fiona Edwards-Hall)

In June 1962, he married his love, Margaret Ann Jackson. They had five children. After completing his military service in 1968, he drove a taxi, did carpentry work and eventually operated his own courier delivery business in Calgary, Alberta. Ken and Margaret later moved to Port Alberni on Vancouver Island.

In April 2007, Margaret died, and shortly thereafter, Ken moved to Kelowna, where he met his second wife, Irma Anton.

Whatever Ken did, he did with all his might. His love for God was no exception. He knew his Bible and served in his local congregation delivering sermonettes and sermons. He was ordained a deacon, an office in which he served very well. While on Vancouver Island, Ken was instrumental in helping to establish a small United Church of God-Canada congregation in the Nanaimo area.

Ken had a huge smile, a hug, and a laugh to share with everyone. Neighbours and church family alike loved Ken very much and will miss him greatly. He leaves behind his wife Irma, his five children (Marjorie, Kenneth Jr., Nigel, Amanda and Fiona), four grandchildren (Angela, Brandon, Morgan and Mark) and three siblings (Shirley, Rick and Ron).

Irma and Ken's family would like to express their sincere appreciation for the many cards and letters from brethren and friends around the world. This outpouring of love brought them much needed comfort in dealing with their loss on November 10, 2012.

*Marjorie Desgrosseilliers*

## Katharine Kroeker Obituary

Katharine (Kat) Linda Kroeker of Lumby, British Columbia, died July 3, 2012, in hospital after knee replacement surgery. Mike Erickson (pastor of the Okanagan congregation) performed the funeral on July 11, 2012. Kat was born November 26, 1956, in Niagara-on-the-Lake in Southern Ontario and grew up in the small village of Virgil, just four miles from Niagara-on-the-Lake. She lived in Ontario un-

til 1989 when she and her mom, Tena, moved to Kelowna, British Columbia. Then, twelve years later, they found themselves in Lumby, a small village an hour northeast of Kelowna.



Katharine Kroeker  
(photo provided by Sue Morgan)

Kat wrote, and published, her autobiography as well as a series of children's books, which led her to start Shorthand Publishing. Through her company, she edited and published books, mostly autobiographies, for people in and around Lumby. She really enjoyed meeting people and learning about them through their stories. Despite her multiple health issues, Kat remained positive. She could always find something to laugh about no matter how bad she was feeling physically.

Kat's unwavering trust in God was an inspiration to us all. She never doubted He would take care of her and do what was best for her. I look forward to seeing her again when she is healed and no longer suffering. We shared many good times and much laughter together. Kat was a good friend and I will miss her a lot. I will miss our Bible discussions and, of course, I will also miss her delicious homemade chocolate chip cookies.

*Sue Morgan*

## The Illegal Trial of Jesus Christ

“After two thousand years a brilliant lawyer proves that Jesus of Nazareth was tried and condemned to death for treason and blasphemy in direct and specific violation of the laws of His own time, both religious and civil” (Charter Book publishers-New York).

This article reviews the writings of lawyer, Earle L. Wingo, attorney for the defense of Jesus Christ, with excerpts from his book, *The Illegal Trial of Jesus*.

Few will dispute that a man named Jesus lived 2000 years ago and that He was a great teacher who impacted the world from His time onward. But the world, in general, sees Him as a controversial figure. After all, He made an incredible claim – that He was the very Son of God, the long- prophesied Messiah!

The religious authorities in Jerusalem rejected and eventually succeeded in having Him put to death. The local Roman civil authorities saw Him as a threat and became complicit in His execution. The religions of His day, both Judaism and paganism, opposed the growth of His teachings and used unlawful and violent means to destroy those who became the Church He said he would build. The government of Rome vigorously persecuted the followers of this Jewish teacher from Galilee.

Amazingly, prophecies written long before His birth predicted that Jesus Christ would be rejected not only by His own people, but also by the world in general. In fact, Jesus Himself referred to this proph-

ecy when He told His followers, “Have you never read in the Scriptures: The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. This was the Lord’s doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes” (Matthew 21:42 NKJ). The Apostle Peter repeated it: “This is the ‘stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone. Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:11-12 NKJ).

Just how was the trial of Jesus Christ illegal?

Filled with jealousy and hatred, both the local religious hierarchy and the civil Roman government of Judea wanted to get rid of a man they perceived as a threat to their



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authority. As a result they were willing to break even their own laws. In fact, 18 specific laws related to both their religious code and civil law were violated.

The author explains that the first unlawful act was the apprehension of Jesus by a multitude led by Judas

Iscaariot, the betrayer who stood by while the soldiers “captured” Jesus. Under the law it was mandatory to inform the person being arrested what the charges were. In Jesus case, they did not charge Him with anything at that point – this was illegal.

The second unlawful act was when they bound Jesus and brought Him before Annas, father-in-law of Caiaphas and his college in the high priesthood known as the Sanhedrin. “The Sanhedrin had the power of life and death in their own hands in every thing that concerned religion; but since they did not have evidence to put Christ to death because of false doctrine, they gave credibility to their conduct by bringing in the civil power. The Jewish right to try capital cases was taken from them some forty years prior to the destruction of Jerusalem, which would mean it was approximately at the time of Jesus’ trial that the enactment of the Roman order prohibiting the Jewish court from trying such cases was effected” (*Adam Clarke’s New Testament Commentary*).

“Then Pilate said to them, ‘You take Him and judge Him according to your law.’ Therefore the Jews said to him, ‘It is not lawful for us to put anyone to death’” (John 18:31 NKJ).

So in effect Annas had no jurisdiction over Christ. The law prohibited taking a prisoner before any one individual, even a judge, for private examination. Annas went ahead and ordered Jesus be-

See “Illegal Trial” on page 10