

CGI Canada Newsletter

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Essential Doctrine?**

**Staying True To The
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EDITOR'S NOTE



Welcome to the June edition.

Summer is almost here! Get out and enjoy the majesty of God's beautiful creation - sunny blue skies, butterflies, birds, flowers in abundance, and the promise of warmer days and balmy nights. What a wonderful country we live in. Unfortunately, many reside in countries experiencing war, violence, famine and upheaval. Today give thanks to God for all He has done for us, and get out there and enjoy every second of the life He has blessed us with.

This month's featured article is **Staying True To The Apostles' Teachings** by Elder Horane Smith followed by **Is Sola Scriptura an Essential Doctrine?** by Elder Vance Stinson. Then read **Here Come the Firstfruits of the Harvest!** by Elder Horane Smith and **TRUE Worshipers**, an Infuse Article. Next check out **Keys to Financial Success From The Bible** by Lois Keene, and our **Member Spotlight**. Enjoy some pics from **Toronto Congregation's Family & Friend's Day**, and **Brunner Hill Blessings** from Herb & Janet Jacobs.

If you have an interest in providing Content for the monthly newsletter please contact me at the email below. I'd love to hear from you!

Psalms 128:1-2 NKJV "Blessed is every one who fears the LORD, Who walks in His ways. When you eat the labor of your hands, You shall be happy, and it shall be well with you."



Maria McLaughlin

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Staying True to the Apostles' Teachings

Elder Horane Smith

The birthday of the church is approaching. This year it falls on June 1, which is the Day of Pentecost or the Feast of Firstfruits. The latter name is alien to Christendom as most Christians, especially those who are Pentecostals, don't have a clue that the Day of Pentecost is one of God's annual Sabbaths or "appointed times," given way back in Lev. 23. All God's "appointed times" are outlined in this chapter.

It's rather unfortunate that most Christians just see the Day of Pentecost as the birthday of the church or the more popular belief that was the genesis of speaking in tongues. God's annual festivals or Holy Days/annual Sabbaths, go much deeper than that.

Most of the Christian world today observes Sunday as the day of rest and worship, a holy time before God. However, there is nowhere in the entirety of the Holy Bible where Sunday is sanctified as holy time or as a day of rest. What we can find with ease is the sanctification and observance of the annual Sabbaths or Holy Days of Leviticus 23 and the seventh day Sabbath.

God calls the annual festivals and Holy Days as "the feasts of the Lord," or "my feasts," and they fall under the "appointed times" of God (Gen. 1:14. Hebrew; moe'ds), the times God gave to humanity. Notice it did not say they belonged to Israel and the Jewish people. He calls the weekly Sabbath "my holy day," (Isa. 58:13). Only God can determine which day is holy. God has never declared Sunday holy, only man.

Furthermore, there is no instruction in the entirety of the Holy Bible that God instructed that the Sabbath be changed to Sunday. What we see, instead, is the reinforcement of the Sabbath in current-day and futuristic applications (Hebrews 4: 9; the Sabbatismos; Greek, or keeping of a Sabbath) and Isa 66:23, when all nations will be required to worship him on the Sabbath when God established His kingdom on Earth.

The substitution of Sunday for Sabbath has been justified by using scriptures such as Act. 20 ; 1 Cor. 16, Rev. 1, which on closer examination show they had nothing to do with Sunday worship. "The first day of the week," reference was not in connection with a Sunday service or a command to observe it. The word "day," is in italics in every reference and meant the Feast of Weeks between Pentecost and the Days of Unleavened bread. If you notice every time the phrase "first day of the week," is mentioned it is always in connection with either Pentecost or Days of Unleavened Bread.

The claim Jesus rose on a Sunday is debatable because there is no way one can calculate "three days and three nights," between Good Friday and Sunday morning. That was the only sign Jesus gave the unbelieving Pharisees that He would remain in the grave, but that's for another article. The pertinent question is where in the scripture is the authority to change the Sabbath day? There is none.

(continued on the next page)



Staying True to the Apostles' Teachings cont'd

The question of whether the apostolic church kept the Holy Days and annual Sabbaths or Holy Days is indisputable. From secular and biblical sources, the evidence is there that the men and women of apostolic period held firmly to the Hebraic roots of Christianity and followed the true teaching of their Master Jesus Christ, who kept those days, even after his resurrection. Interestingly, why didn't Jesus announce the change then?

Author Thomas J. Talley writes: "Paul writes around A.D. 55 from Ephesus in Asia Minor, a city with whose synagogue he had an extended relationship (Acts 19.8). Writing, possibly, from around the time of Passover, he tells the Corinthians that he intends to remain in Ephesus until Pentecost (1 Cor. 16.8). His references to Passover and Pentecost show that these times were significant for him, and he seems to assume that they have a definite meaning for the Corinthians to whom he writes" (Talley, Thomas J., *The Origins of the Liturgical Year*, Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1991, 4; emphasis added).

According to Encyclopaedia Britannica, "There is no trace of the celebration of Easter as a Christian festival in the New Testament or the writings of the apostolic fathers...The first Christians...continued to observe the Jewish festivals...as commemorations of events of which these had been the shadows. The Passover, ennobled by the thought of Christ the Paschal Lamb, continued to be celebrated..., and became the Christian Easter" (Ninth Edition, article "Easter").

"The primitive Christians did keep the Sabbath of the Jews; therefore the Christians for a long time together, did keep their conventions on the Sabbath." *The Whole Works of Jeremy Taylor* (R. Heber's Edition, Vol/X11 p.416).

There are numerous scriptures in the New Testament, especially the book of Acts, which show the apostles observing the Sabbath and annual festivals. Perhaps the most significant sign we can draw from apostolic adherence to the annual and weekly Sabbaths is found in **Matt. 24:20** in a prophetic remark made by Jesus when he addressed His followers: "**But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath day...**" Jesus referred to the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem in 70 A.D. during the apostolic period.

The fact is our Lord and Saviour was expecting His followers to be still observing the Sabbath, even nearly 40-years after his ascension. If Sunday should have replaced the Sabbath to commemorate His resurrection, Jesus knew nothing about it! Isn't that interesting?

For more on this subject, click here to read our FREE booklet [**Did the Apostolic Church Observe the Sabbath and Holy Days?**](#)

Is Sola Scriptura an Essential Doctrine?

By Vance Stinson

In his article “Ten Thousand Chickens for One Thousand Bibles: Some Practical Problems for Sola Scriptura” (<http://www.catholic.com/magazine/articles/ten-thousand-chickens-for-one-thousand-bibles-0>), Catholic apologist Jimmy Akin, toward the end of the piece, writes: “In summary, sola scriptura presupposes (1) the existence of the printing press, (2) the universal distribution of Bibles, (3) a cash-based economy, (4) universal literacy, (5) the universal possession of scholarly support materials, (6) the universal possession of adequate time for study, and (7) a universal education in a high level of critical thinking skills.”

Actually, sola scriptura presupposes none of these things. “Sola scriptura [or “Scripture alone”] simply means that all truth necessary for our salvation and spiritual life is taught either explicitly or implicitly in Scripture” (<http://www.ligonier.org/blog/what-doessola-scriptura-mean/>).

The truth of sola scriptura does not depend on the availability of Scripture. If there were only one Bible in the world, and that one Bible was sealed in a vault 200 feet below the floor of the deepest part of the Atlantic Ocean, sola scriptura would still be true. All truth necessary for our salvation and spiritual life would still be recorded in written form within the pages of that buried book.

Essential truth can be conveyed through different media, not just a book. Christians who embrace sola scriptura do not believe that essential truth depends on the availability—or even the existence—of a collection of inspired documents. It’s just that they reject the view that the Church or a particular institution within the Church is an infallible source or interpreter of divine revelation.

Akin continues: “Needless to say, this group of conditions [the above seven points] was not met in the crucial early centuries of the Church, was not met through the main course of Church history, and is not met even today. The nonexistence of the printing press alone means sola scriptura was unthinkable for almost three-quarters of Christian history.”

This is faulty logic. The availability of Scripture is unrelated to believing that “all truth necessary for our salvation and spiritual life is taught either explicitly or implicitly in Scripture.” Men bled and died to make Scripture universally available because they knew it contained the words of eternal life. Would Akin argue against papal infallibility on the basis that it was unthinkable for the first several hundred years of Christian history? No! He would argue that papal infallibility was true from the beginning but came to light through the centuries-long process of the “development of doctrine.” If that’s the way the Holy Spirit works in bringing truth to light, why is it so unthinkable that sola scriptura could be true though Bibles were not widely available for the greater part of Christian history? (continued on the next page)

Is Sola Scriptura an Essential Doctrine? cont'd

Is it possible that the present availability of Scripture is due to the Holy Spirit working in the lives of godly men?

The apostle Paul, speaking primarily of the Old Testament, says, “*All Scripture is BREATHED-OUT of God...*” (2 Timothy 3:16). The people who devoted their lives to printing and distributing the Bible believed this to the core of their being. That’s why they did it! The fact that the Bible was not widely available in previous centuries says absolutely nothing about its value.

Akin concludes: “But if God expects the average Christian to obtain and maintain the Christian faith without using sola scriptura, then sola scriptura is not God’s plan.” Who says it is? The Bible is valuable because it contains the words of eternal life. How those words are distributed is inconsequential. Whether the gospel is delivered orally or through the written word or by sign language makes no difference as long as the message is understandable and recipients can respond to it.

The “*gospel of Christ*,” says the apostle Paul, “*is the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes*” (Romans 1:16). The “gospel of Christ” is not synonymous with “Scripture.” It is contained within the pages of Scripture, but Scripture contains far more than the gospel of Christ. The saving “*gospel of Christ*” is “*the faith once for all delivered to the saints*” (Jude 3).

The faith was “delivered to the saints” before Jude wrote this short letter. In fact, it was delivered before there was a New Testament, so the gospel of Christ, which is the power of God unto salvation, does not include the New Testament canon. Neither sola scriptura nor the canon are doctrines of the gospel of Christ. Both are important, but neither are a part of the faith once for all delivered to the saints.

The gospel of Christ is not so complicated or complex that it cannot be delivered and responded to in a brief space of time. Just read the account of the Philippian jailer in Acts 16. The gospel—the good news of the Messiah and His Kingdom—was proclaimed and received in various places down through history in spite of widespread apostasy, high rates of illiteracy, and a serious shortage of Bibles.

Today, thankfully, the Bible is widely available; it’s more available than ever before. The poorest among us can acquire a copy, or even multiple copies. We even find Bibles in lobbies and hotel rooms.

We are fortunate in this regard, so let us be exceedingly thankful for this blessing—and let us make the most of it!

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Here Come the Firstfruits of the Harvest!

By Horane Smith

As another annual Sabbath approaches, the true Bible believing people who seek to worship God in Spirit and in Truth have their minds now set on the Feast of Firstfruits, better known as the Day of Pentecost, which will be on June 1st, this year. (Many of you may have already observed this feast by the time you read this.)

There are many who claim today to be a Bible-believing church; there are many who will observe Pentecost as well, but not as an annual Sabbath as it truly is, but a day when many erroneously believe was the first “Sunday service” in the New Testament Church or when speaking in tongues began.

Pentecost is rightly the birthday of the New Testament Church, no debate about that, but Pentecost is more than the church’s birthday. It’s a pity people who claim to attend a Bible-believing church, a term you often hear from the popular televangelists, don’t take up their Bibles and read it, rather than depending on others to teach them what is not in there. Let’s get some aspects of what Pentecost is from your Holy Bible and not what is uttered from pulpits—mostly based on traditions that are not biblically-based or beliefs that are not sound doctrine.

The first question I’d like to pose: If Jesus Christ and His apostles were to return to Earth today and decided to observe Pentecost, what reason would they have to do that? What was the reason Jesus Christ told them shortly before His ascension, **“And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high” (Luke 24:49)**. This was the promise of the Comforter, His Holy Spirit, and truly that Spirit came on the Day of Pentecost— another meaning and another promise fulfilled.

Jesus Christ knew His followers would be attending or gathered for the annual Sabbath or High Holy Day of Pentecost (Leviticus 23), which was only ten days away. They were going to be there because, as Jesus did while he was on Earth, His followers observed these days as well. PENTECOST WAS NOT THE FIRST SUNDAY SERVICE. It was an annual Sabbath, or Holy Day, God’s “appointed time” (**Genesis 1:14**), which are outlined in **Leviticus 23**. Pentecost, or the Feast of Firstfruits, is one of these seven annual Sabbaths or Holy Days outlined in the Old Testament. God describes them as “my feasts,” or “feasts of the LORD,” not a feast of the Jews, as many teach erroneously.

Some Christians believe Pentecost is about “speaking in tongues” and they leave it there. Unfortunately, their speaking in tongues is far from what happened at Pentecost. In fact, it bears no resemblance to what happened on that annual Sabbath. Yes, a Sabbath! Some Christians don’t like to hear the word Sabbath, because it is supposedly done away with, or it’s for the “Jews” and has no place in Christian worship? Really? (continued on the next page)

Here Come the Firstfruits of the Harvest! cont'd

That's another story. If you haven't heard this before, you will hear it now. Neither Jesus nor His followers, before and after His crucifixion, observed Sunday as a day of worship. They observed the weekly and the annual Sabbaths. **Luke 24:53** tells us they continued in the temple worshipping as they were doing before. That's for another article.

Do you notice another name for the Holy Day? Most people refer to it as the Day of Pentecost; another name is the Feast of Firstfruits. Firstfruits? In agriculture, it usually refers to the "first fruits" of the grain harvest. However, there is a deep spiritual meaning to the concept of firstfruits. Why? Jesus Christ is regarded as firstfruits. Yes, He rose from the dead to become the **FIRST OF FIRSTFRUITS** of all those who have died and will die.

Read this from **1 Corinthians 15**: ***"But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming"*** (verses 20–23).

Read it again to grasp this amazing truth! The concept of firstfruits and the meaning of this Holy Day, or annual Sabbath, is so clear. If you are a follower of Christ, "the First of Firstfruits," then why are YOU not observing this festival and the six other annual Sabbaths with all their true meaning?

It's not about speaking in tongues! This festival pictures the great harvest of human beings that is coming and how Christ, through His death, burial, and resurrection, makes it possible for those who repent and accept Him as LORD and Saviour, can become firstfruits in the first resurrection, which has been described as "the better resurrection."

Certainly, there will be more than one resurrection, but just as the "first fruit" of the harvest is usually the better, so it will be for those in the first resurrection—the first of firstfruits.

My friend, if God is calling YOU, now is the time to turn to Him and to repent and believe in the gospel of Jesus Christ and His coming Kingdom. Ω

For more information on this subject, check out our free booklet by clicking this link: [Answers to Questions about the DAY OF PENTECOST](#)

TRUE Worshipers

By Fanny Mandik

“But a time is coming, and it is already here! Even now the true worshippers are being led by the Spirit to worship the Father according to the truth. These are the ones the Father is seeking to worship Him.”
John 4:23, Contemporary English Version

What has worship got to do with character? How can character be built through worship? Worship and character seem to most of us to be two different areas of teaching. John 4:23 reveals God seeks in us the character of a true worshipper!

Before moving on, let’s make things clear first. When the Father talked about ‘worshippers’, He didn’t refer to the worship leaders, singers, musicians or dancers who serve as worship ministers in the Church. Jesus uttered this verse when He had that famous conversation with the Samaritan woman, who was thirsting after the living water. She encountered Jesus and found the living water. That’s worship. So when the Father talked about ‘worshippers’, He talked about those who encountered Jesus and experienced the living water in their life. These persons could be anyone: a preacher, a worship leader, an usher, a Bible School teacher, a janitor, a sales man, a doctor, an accountant, an engineer, a beggar or a CEO.

When we talk about worship, we talk about relationship. Read John 4:23 carefully and you will see three things that make a true worshipper:

1. BEING LED BY THE SPIRIT. God is Spirit; everyone who worships Him must worship Him in Spirit and in truth.

2. WORSHIP THE FATHER. There is a question my husband always asks his worship class students. Why did God call Himself ‘Father’ in John 4:23? Why didn’t He name Himself ‘God’ or ‘Lord’ or ‘Master’ or ‘King’?

First, it revealed a relationship—a very up close and personal one. God did not design worship as a ‘duty’ or ‘task’, or something we oblige to do. If we don’t worship God, He will punish us and we will die. No! He doesn’t want us to have that image in our mind. He desires us to know Him as a loving Father who is tender, yet just and glorious. Secondly, God called Himself Father because it refers to the very basic, intimate and limitless relationship for every creature. The Father-Child relationship is the purest and the most unconditional relationship in the universe. This is the kind of relationship God intended us to have from the very beginning.

3. ACCORDING TO THE TRUTH. Who is the truth? JESUS. John 14:6 stated, “I am the Way, the Truth and the Life. No one can go to the Father without Me.” Just like the Samaritan woman, when we encounter Jesus, we find the way to the Father. We find the truth that God created us to be His own, His children. We find the real life; a life that has been redeemed on the cross. Worship is a life-changing experience. The Samaritan woman had one when she met Jesus. How come? When we worship the Father, He infuses us with His entire being. It’s more than just His blessings. It’s more than just His love. More than just His power and promises. It’s Himself! He infuses us with the fullness of Him! *“That you may be filled with all the fullness of God”* (Ephesians 3:19b). In other words, worship is letting God dominate or rule over our entire being, so that there is no more space for our self. *“He must become greater; I must become less”* (John 3:30.)

(continued on the next page)

TRUE Worshipers cont'd

This is how God builds His character in us through worship. The result? After being infused by His entire being or the fullness of Him, each area and element of our life, and even each micro cell in our body experiences a transformation. How?

You know when you worship someone, you long to be that person. It's the same when we worship our heavenly Father, the ultimate Creator of the universe and the King of kings. We will be so overwhelmed that all we are eager to do is to love Him, to adore Him, to please Him, to do what He wants us to do, and to be what He wants us to be! We are being totally, crazily, insanely, deeply in love with Him! Those of you who had been crazily in love with someone know exactly how it feels.

Basically, you will do ANYTHING for him or her. That desire comes out of love. This is what God wants. He wants to build our characters out of love. He wants us to understand this. It is so much easier to build character if it comes out of an in-love heart.

This is where the transformation starts. When we worship God, He firstly gives a new heart, spirit and pure thoughts (Ezekiel 36:26-27). God gives us the desire to be faithful, and His Spirit makes us eager to obey His laws and teachings. As we continue to worship, God then changes the way we think, so we will know how to do everything that is good and pleasing to Him (Romans 12:2). Finally our attitude and behavior will change accordingly.

"But a time is coming, and it is already here!" (John 4:23). What 'time' was Jesus referring to? He was referring to the time to experience a personal encounter with our very own Creator. ***"These are the ones (worshippers) the Father is seeking to worship Him."***

Max Lucado wrote in one of his inspiring books, It's Not About Me, "We are His mirrors, you know. Tools of Heaven's heliography. Reduce the human job description down to one phrase, and this is it: Reflect God's glory.

As Paul wrote: ***"And we, with our unveiled faces reflecting like mirrors the brightness of the Lord, all grow brighter and brighter as we are turned into the image that we reflect; this is the work of the Lord who is Spirit."*** (2 Corinthians 3:18) ... Beholding leads to becoming. Becoming leads to reflecting" (pp. 82-84).

Yes, we are indeed the mirrors that reflect the Father in this world. When people see us they should see the Father. Again, as Max Lucado wrote, "may we have no higher goal than to see someone think more highly of our Father, our King.

So, trash-bin the thought that quotes 'to build characters means to have a hard time.'" Building character through worship is a wonderful and overwhelming journey of life that God grants us.

We should enjoy and cherish it. Enjoy the journey!
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Keys To Financial Success From The Bible : Part 1

By Lois Keene



How Do We Think About Money?

The scriptures have over 2000 verses that discuss the topic of money in some way. This includes verses about wealth, riches, gold, silver and possessions like land, animals etc.

For the past 10 years, I've had the privilege to work in an environment that led me to develop a better understanding of the topic of money and how to achieve financial success with God's help.

Phil:4:13 says *"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."*

As we all know, money or material possessions do not bring happiness. True happiness comes from God's holy spirit dwelling in us. God's spirit gives us peace that surpasses all understanding. Philippians 4:7. When we have God's indwelling spirit we will learn to be content regardless of whatever state we find ourselves in.

That being said, **Eccl. 10:19** states that *"A Feast is made for laughter and wine makes one merry but money answers all things."* Author Daniel Lapin in his book "Thou Shalt Prosper" mentions, "Money is simply a tool, a means to an end. It reflects our values, choices, and the effort we invest in our pursuits. Money is a tool that we use in today's world. We need to have it, to take care of basic necessities like food, clothing & shelter etc."

There is a common positive saying among wealthy people who use money as a good tool. It says that "Money does not change people, it makes a good person better and a bad person worse." This statement implies that money in the hands of the right person is a good thing. It is good to have lots of money so we can live in the overflow instead of living in lack and scarcity.

On observing nature, one can clearly see that God is a God of abundance; and He wants us to be of the same mindset. **Psalms 23** states *"The Lord is my Shepherd, I lack nothing. He makes me lie down in green pastures"* (implies lots of food to eat), *"He leads me beside still waters"* (implies lots of water to drink and the water is still so it's easier for the animal to drink lots of it if he wants to) (emphasis mine.)

In order to achieve Financial success we must first realize that there is a place for wealth among God's people. God pours rain on the just and on the unjust; wealth is also given to the just and the unjust. We are children of the most high God and He gives his children wealth and riches.

Malachi 3:10 - *Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.* (continued on the next page)



Keys To Financial Success From The Bible : Part 1 cont'd



Proverbs 13:22 says, *"The wealth of the ungodly will eventually find its way into the hands of the righteous for whom it has been laid up for."* This shows that God gives people that honour and serves Him wealth.

Think about where you are in life right now, and if you should do some reflection, perhaps you will realize that you have achieved many of the goals you set out to. However, what specific financial goals did you set out to accomplish? Did you set a definite plan towards accumulating money? At this point some might be thinking, but not everyone will be wealthy or have financial success. That is correct. However, the question to ask yourself is, Do you want to have wealth or financial success? What does Financial Success look like for you?

As we examine scriptures, we will see that God has always given His people wealth but disobedience and unbelief causes His people to miss out on the blessings of abundance from the Eternal. In Hebrews 3:19 the children of Israel did not enter the promised land because of unbelief. If we do not believe that we can have wealth and financial success then we will simply not have it.

Here I end with a quote by a best selling Author on Financial Success: *"As you navigate your professional life, you will be faced with all kinds of trials and tribulations for which there will appear no feasible solution. Do you sit there trying to figure out what to do? No, you get moving. Problems—all problems—are solved not just by sitting and thinking, but by moving and doing."* — Daniel Lapin, *Business Secrets from the Bible: Spiritual Success Strategies for Financial Abundance*

The first place to start when it comes to having success with anything in life including Finances, begins with having a positive mindset.

Philippians 4:8 KJV says *"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."*

What do you think about money? The next time you think about money ask yourself is this a positive thought that I am having or is it a negative thought? Ω



MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



Hi, I'm Danique Lindo. I've been attending CGI Toronto for a little over a year now, and in that time I've been blessed to learn and grow through fellowship with the members. I attend with my husband, Nathan, who first introduced me to the Sabbath and Holy Days - which I am still learning about and enjoying the journey,

Nathan and I met while we were both studying at the University of the West Indies in Jamaica. After graduating from university we got married and moved to Canada, where I completed graduate studies and am now working in my field as a social worker.

I am growing in my understanding of Christ and love being around people who radiate His joy. My favourite things to do now that the weather is nice are going to the library, playing badminton with Nathan at the park, and getting ice cream and walking by the beach on Sundays.

A man had been shipwrecked on a remote island in the Pacific, and was alone for 20 years. When a ship finally arrived, his rescuers were impressed with the three buildings he had built and asked him about them.

"Well," the man replied, "this is my house, and that building over there is my church. It's a wonderful church and I hate to leave it."

"And what is the third building yonder?" a rescuer asked. "Oh, that is the church I used to go to," the man replied.

— via Palmer Stiles, Melbourne, FL



Some pics from Toronto's Family & Friend's Day - May 3, 2025

On May 3, 2025, the CGI Toronto Congregation hosted a Family & Friend's Day. Elder Mike James flew in from California to give a sermon titled "Life After Death". His presentation delved into topics such as the concepts of heaven, hell, and the beliefs of the ancients, answering questions such as What happens after we die? and Do our loved ones go to heaven or hell? The sermon was well received and was followed by a lively Q&A session. There were approximately 107 persons in attendance and 13 online. Attendees enjoyed a sumptuous potluck and warm fellowship after the service.





By Janet & Herb Jacobs

Crocuses, Daffys and Tulips!

When I, (Herb writing this to the Church of God International Canada), was thinking about the June edition of the CGI Canada newsletter, my beautiful wife Janet suggested some short blessings on God's New Year and Spring.



The first spring flower we saw was a front lawn Crocus on March 19, 2025. Yes, I know the cold climate in Perth County gives a much later spring than the lush Niagara and Golden Horseshoe region, or the high heat units from London, only

to be bettered by the tomato weather in the Kingsville region. Ottawa, however, outdoes everyone for tulips! The Kawarthas have beautiful lakes and Timmins is mineral rich. We are a vast group and have our own times to indicate when spring or when God's year begins.

We found from The Holy Bible in Isaiah 35:1-2 "The desert and the parched land will be glad; the wilderness will rejoice and blossom. Like the crocus, 2 it will burst into bloom; it will rejoice greatly and shout for joy. The glory of Lebanon will be given to it, the splendor of Carmel and Sharon; they will see the glory of the Lord, the splendor of our God."

A short few years ago, one Sabbath in March I believe, we listened to one of our blessed pastors give a message on the "Holy" New Year. Since then, the Gregorian Calendar New Year (January 1st), along with the confusing leap year blip, does not have the same meaning. One day, this winter we will go through the gramophone records and see if there is a Guy Lombardo version of "Auld Lang Syne" - we can then play this for the Sacred Holy New Year in March 2026.

As a Presbyterian growing up, the December 25 date was never shown to me in the bible readings. A new year in the middle of winter was also strange.

It would make a lot more sense to have the new year align with the Biblical Calendar and Holy New Year - the flowers coming out, thoughts of a true new beginning. Everyone gets the itch to start scratching the ground, planting and growing with the Holy Days.



Spring time - we grow with Jesus during this time - the potato sprouts can also grow - a sure sign of spring **and how that box should have been kept somewhere colder and darker!**



Soon following the early Crocus, what an amazing period with blessings for the New Testament Passover, Foot Washing, the Night To Be Much Observed, and the Days of Unleavened Bread.

Spring is a time of renewal - spiritual and physical. In **Deuteronomy 11:14 and 32:2** we can associate spring rain with prosperity and God's teachings in spiritual growth.

Following the Crocus, we look forward to the Daffys - this was Aunt Mary's (1933-2024) name for daffodils. The daffys may align with Passover and then followed by tulips aligning with The Days of Unleavened Bread.

Don't ask me what Holy Day the Dandelions align with, they are a spring flower as well. They may align in **Genesis 3:17-19** "... **Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat food from it...**"

Dandelions however - friend or foe. Our old goose pen had no dandelions - these birds love the green jagged "lion's tooth" shaped leaf. The roots, leaves and flower can all be consumed - God's Plan works for everything.



So, the next time you see a Crocus, Daffodil or Tulip (and even a dandelion), say Thank-you Lord and/or Happy Holy New Year.

Blessings until next time,
Janet & Herb.

CGI LONDON FAMILY & FRIEND'S DAY



Church of God International, London Congregation will be hosting two 'Family & Friend's Day'

- **June 21, 2025: *What is the Future of Christianity in Canada? - Elder Adrian Davis***
- **July 19, 2025: *The Last Days - Mel Rehal***

Service will begin at 1:30pm. Members are encouraged to bring family members and/or friends to enjoy these enlightening presentations. Enjoy some potluck and fellowship after the presentation!



The presentation will be held at:
Oakridge Presbyterian Church
970 Oxford Street West
London, ON N6H 1V4

JUNE SABBATH SERVICES

Toronto

June 7 - Horane Smith
June 14 - Courtney Edwards
June 21 - Dwight Chin
June 28 - Bernard Wilson

Kitchener

June 7 - Rick Dubler
June 14 - Bernard Wilson
June 21 - Kenroy Allen
June 28 - Adam Dubler

Burlington

June 7 - Adrian Davis
June 14 - Adrian Davis
June 21 - Jan Kowalczyk
June 28 - Adrian Davis

London

June 7 - Bernard Wilson
June 14 - Rick Dubler
June 21 - Mel Rahel
June 28 - Horane Smith

Kawartha Lakes

June 7 - Larry Arnburg
June 14 - Taped Sermon
June 21 - Stephan Willshaw
June 28 - Jim French

Ottawa

June 7 - Jim French
June 14 - Taped Sermon
June 21 - David Townson
June 28 - Taped Sermon

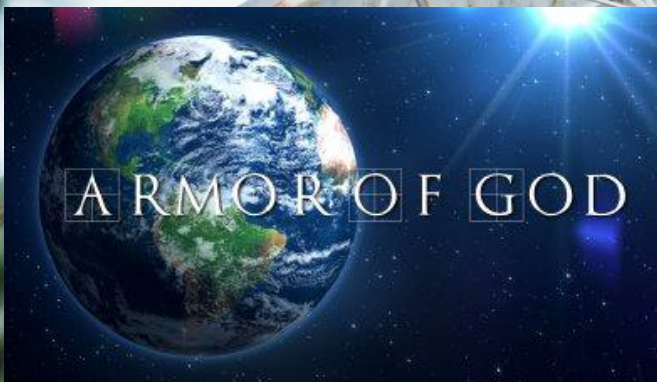
Note: *Pentecost service - Sunday June 1/25

For more info - see the Congregation websites

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