**ISSUE 24-10 | OCTOBER 2024** 

# CGI Canada Newsletter

## HEAR WHAT NEHEMIAH SAYS TO THE CHURCHES!

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# EDITOR'S NOTE



Welcome to the October edition.

The Fall Holy Day Season has finally arrived. Feast of Tabernacles is right around the corner and by now we all should have booked, planned and prepared for this most wonderful time of the year. Many of you will stay local, while others will travel to far-off Feast Sites. Whatever the case, may this Feast be your BEST FEAST EVER, and wherever you go, MAY GOD GO WITH YOU!

Our featured article Hear What Nehemiah says to the Churches! by the late Elder Ian Boyne, reveals how important it is to have good church leadership. It Doesn't Matter What You Believe! by Elder Horane Smith, discusses how what we believe is not that important i the grand scheme of things, and this month's Infuse article - You're Going Where? - To The Feast of Tabernacles explains the importance of this Holy Day Feast. Enjoy our Member Spotlight and some pictures of CGI London's Deacon Appreciation Ceremony.

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!

John 7:37-38 "On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, 'If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him."



#### **Maria McLaughlin**

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# Hear What Nehemiah Says to the Churches!

## **By Elder Ian Boyne**

If the modern Church of God had heeded the lessons from the book of Nehemiah, the disaster that has overtaken us would have been avoided. The state of the Church of God would be radically – and refreshingly –different had we listened to this ancient prophet of God. But it is not too late for YOU to listen to this relevant prophet.

The first chapter of Nehemiah reveals a man whose heart was totally wrapped up in the work of God. There was no greater passion that Nehemiah had than for the people of God and their work on behalf of God. When he saw the parlous state of Jerusalem he wept and "mourned for days." What about us today? Does it bother us that the once great Work that used to rock the four corners of this world has been so greatly diminished and that the effective witness that the world should be getting is muted? Does it bother us that we have a message so powerful and a set of doctrines second to no other church, and yet we languish in lukewarmness and stagnant growth?

Nehemiah did not long for the glory days of Jerusalem so that he could boast against the other nations. Likewise, the truly converted child of God does not mourn the state of the church today because he envies the success of others. We mourn because we know we have the true gospel and that this is the only hope for the world. But what did Nehemiah do when he was depressed over the state of Jerusalem? He poured out his heart before God in prayer.

It seems simple, but we often don't do that first. We mourn and mourn and mourn, and then we blame and blame and afterward we complain and complain and complain.

Nehemiah did two important things. He took his cares and concerns to God, and he confessed the sins of his people before God. We in the Church of God need to do that. Rather than the blame game and attacking certain leaders for "taking the church off track" and lambasting them for being "used by Satan the Devil," we should collectively acknowledge that we as a church have sinned and that we have not been faithful to God and, therefore, the once-great work is no more. "We have acted very corruptly against thee," Nehemiah confessed. Do we have the humility to make this confession?

The problem is not just the "wicked, rumour-mongering, spiritual grave-robbing dissidents" who have published "slander" against "God's ministers." We as ministers and leaders have acted corruptly against God and His people. Full stop. The more we cover up our sins and our role in our present condition, the longer we will stay in this condition. Notice the prayers of Nehemiah in the book. They stress Israel's unfaithfulness and God's mercy (chapter 9). The Church of God will never escape its spiritual captivity today unless it confesses, repents, and forsakes the sins that led us into this condition.

Next, notice the faith of Nehemiah. We can't build the work of God without faith, for "without faith it is impossible to please [God]" (Hebrews 11:6). We must have the confidence to know that "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13), and that He who is in us is "greater than he who is in the world" (1 John 4:4). (continued on next page)



We can do it! We must firmly believe this. We must have faith that we can build strong, growing congregations of love and good works. We must have the faith that we can be effective in getting the gospel to our world. We must also expect discouragement. This is Satan's favourite tool. We must expect that there will be gainsayers who will say we can't do it; that we are too weak, too small, too ineffective to accomplish anything really important for God.

We in the CGI and the Church of God movement in general are small and insignificant to the world. One anti-Church of God source recently commented that even some of the larger Churches of God are not even a blip on the radar screen. That's true. But this work will be done not by might nor by power but by God's Spirit!

"Now when Sandballat heard that we were building the wall he was angry and greatly enraged and he ridiculed the Jews and he said...'What are these feeble Jews doing?' Will they restore things? Will they revive the stones out of the heaps of rubbish and burned ones at that?" (Nehemiah 4:1-2). How impossible! How ridiculous! How crazy of these Jews! The same with the Church of God today: We are small. We are despised. We are often ridiculed by the big churches of the world and by those who were once a part of us. There are all kinds of negative articles on the Internet and in publications about us. Many "painful truths" are being told.

I have one article by a former member titled, "Why the Churches of God Will Not Survive." Many are predicting that in only a few years the movement will literally die out. And they say the world will be better for it!

Don't be discouraged, saints of God. These are ancient tactics. Don't attack or get depressed. Turn to God and have faith! *"Hear O God,"* Nehemiah cried, *"For we are despised; turn back their taunt upon their own heads..."* (Nehemiah 4:4). And the Scripture says, *"So we built the wall...for the people had a mind to work"* (verse 6).

Do you still have a mind to work, or are you burnt and "disillusioned"? Have you lost your zeal? Have you been discouraged once too often? Do you feel it no longer makes sense to get fired up over the work? You found it easy to be fired up in the '50s, '60s, '70s, and early '80s when the church was growing, but you are too beaten down now to put one foot forward?

Notice Nehemiah again: The more the enemies taunted and planned to sabotage him, the more he turned to God in prayer. *"And we prayed to our God..."* (Nehemiah 4:9). The Church of God has lost the art of prayer, if we ever had it in this modern era.

We have used politics instead of prayer. We have used control tactics instead of prayer. We have preached more "church government" sermons instead of prostrating before God in prayer. We have used all kinds of human responses-including fear, blame, and criticism-instead of simply praying and fasting. (continued on next page)



If we were not so afraid of looking like "the world's Protestant churches," we would have convened prayer and fasting sessions, and prayer vigils like the early disciples when they faced crises like Peter's imprisonment, instead of panicking and politicking. It is not too late. Nehemiah still speaks to the churches. He who has an ear to hear, let him hear.

Chapter 5 is very critical. If this chapter had been followed, the entire modern history of the Church of God would be totally different. The crisis of 1978 would not have happened. And 1995 (when the Worldwide Church of God rejected the Sabbath) would certainly not have happened. But the seeds of our destruction were sown in part by negligence of the issue of justice in the Church of God.

"Now there arose a great outcry of the people and of their wives against their Jewish brethren" (verse 1). The people were complaining because there was injustice, and those with authority and power were not acting in the people's welfare. Notice that Nehemiah said he was "angry when I heard their outcry" (verse 6). But, unlike in our case as pastors and church leaders, he was not angry with the people for complaining and being in the "rotten, REBELLIOUS spirit of LUCIFER!" He was angry with LEADERS who should have acted justly. "I brought charges against the nobles and the officials" (verse 7).

IF we of the Church of God had expressed the courage, dignity, and the righteousness to bring charges against our "nobles and officials," can you imagine the credibility we would have had in the eyes of the brethren and the genuine loyalty it would have engendered? Instead we allowed corruption to continue. We turned a blind eye to the sins of our leaders. We made excuses for them while every year keeping a festival that reminds us forcefully that sin must be put out!

We danced around the plain Word of God and fiddled with the righteous standards of God while the Church of God burned. And now we are wringing our hands and wondering how we have come to this?

Nehemiah, a leader if ever there were one, brought the situation under control and brought about reforms. Nehemiah led by example. "The former Governors who were before me laid heavy burdens upon the people and took from them food and wine besides forty shekels of silver. Even their servants LORDED IT OVER THE PEOPLE. But I did not do so because of the fear of God" (verse 15).

Oh for leaders like that! We as pastors ought to be that kind of leader. If we are not, then we are risking the judgment of God on our work and our ministry.

Nehemiah shows how important leadership is and what disasters can occur when there is bad leadership. But there are some even more critical lessons for the Church of God in the remaining chapters of this profoundly important book.  $\Omega$ 

# It Doesn't matter what you believe!

## **By Elder Horane Smith**

There's still widespread skepticism that there's a God in heaven who reigns supreme, that Jesus, the Christ, came to Earth, died and was resurrected, or that He's even returning for a second time, as promised.

2.4 billion of Earth's 8.2 billion people claim to be believers in Christ; the vast majority of the Earth's population is certainly not bracing for the triumphant return of Christ. For believers in Christ though, it's not a matter of if, but rather when.

The reality is, that in the fullness of time, it does not matter what one believes. A minority or majority belief won't stop Jesus from returning to establish His kingdom that will last forever. He is returning for sure! Your non-belief won't stop His return. The reality of His pending return is to set up His world-ruling government for a thousand years, thereby overturning all human governments.

His coming is not about taking people to heaven as mainstream Christianity has been falsely espousing from about the second century. When one lives in an "evil time," as we do today, it doesn't take a rocket scientist to fathom that this planet cannot continue as is or sustain itself; something is going to give-way one day. Even some scientists speak of the universe imploding at some point in human history.

There's a saying that goes, "Belief kills and belief cures." While one is entitled to a belief, it goes without saying that not all beliefs are true, and if that's the case, therefore, some have to be false.

When one considers the glaring evidence that we did not create ourselves, we didn't emerge from some chemical soup or a big explosion, we must lean towards an understanding that we are finite in thought and action.

Atheists argue that the universe has always existed so then it wouldn't need a Creator. However, their error is concluding that something eternal isn't dependent on anything. The Second Law of Thermodynamics, says the universe has a limited amount of energy, which means it is therefore finite.

As the Founder of the body of called-out ones or the ekklesia, the church, Jesus gave it a commission. Matthew 28:19. "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. 20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, Io, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen."

Again, he said, Rev. 1:7-8, "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty." (continued on next page)



When His disciples asked for the sign of the Second Coming, Jesus cited, "...many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows. (Matt. 24: 5-8).

Skeptics argue these times have been around since the dawn of human history and many are asking, where are the signs of his coming. 2 Peter 3-10 answers:

3 "Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts,

4 And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.

5 For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water:

6 Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished:

7 But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

8 But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up."

Some people may think that because they don't believe in something then it cannot happen; giving no room for the possibility, but they better think again because if there's surety about one thing, it is the return of Jesus, The Christ, to establish His everlasting kingdom on a new earth.

He gives one final warning in Matt. 24:42. *"Watch, therefore, for you do not know what hour your LORD is coming.* He repeats this statement in Matt. 25:13, which means it's as urgent as it's important.  $\Omega$ 

The Second Coming is real! It will happen whether you believe it or not! For more on this subject, click on this link: <u>THINGS TO DO WHILE WAITING FOR JESUS TO RETURN.</u>

## You're Going Where? To the Feast of Tabernacles!



#### By Patricia Chamberlain

Here we are, "at that time of year," when once again we will be questioned by friends, relatives and bosses about our beliefs, actions, and where we are going. The answer we give will define us as being "very different" from the mainstream believers in Christ, and the whole world for that matter.

The questions will come, from friends and coworkers to whom we have explained our beliefs to till we are blue in the face, and still, they never remember. It is very tempting to avoid the long explanation and go for the short version. Either way, you will be asked this same question every year. People forget what is not important to them. So be prepared!

#### FEAST OF TABERNACLES: WHAT IS THAT?

The Feast of Tabernacles is one of several Holy Days established by God. You can read about all of them in Leviticus 23. It is a very special Holy Day of God, and I have decided to attend the Feast of Tabernacles in Pensacola, Florida this year. However, there are numerous other Feast sites all across the United States to choose from and many other places around the world such as Australia, England, Ireland, and Malawi, Central Africa.

#### WHAT IS IT YOU DO AT THE FEAST?

The Feast is a very special time to gather together with others of like mind who believe that God's Holy Days as established in the Bible are to be observed today.

This particular Feast reveals God's plan for those people God has called and chosen to do His work. It is a time to gather together in a place God chooses and to dwell in booths, that is, somewhere other than our own homes. It is a time God blesses us in all the work of our hands. We are given an opportunity to give God an offering according to the blessings we have received over the past year, and at the same time gain an awesome respect for the God who has supplied all our needs and who has created all things.

From sermons and Bible studies, we gain wisdom about how to live a happy and productive life on earth, and be prepared mentally and spiritually to enter the Kingdom of God when Christ returns and establishes it. Of course it is not just the study of God's word, but the living of it, by sharing food at picnics and BBQ's, playing games, swimming, bike rides, goofy golf, and in general, a whole lot of fellowshipping together.

This is made possible because through the year God has made it possible for us to lay aside the necessary funds to be able to keep the Feast. It is a great time to become re-acquainted with old friends and make hundreds of new friends. This is very important because these are the people we will be sharing Eternal Life with.

#### DO YOU HAVE TO DO THIS?

Well, no. No one has to do anything, but you can't please God by being disobedient to His commands either.

God is a wonderful Father. He wants us to take time out of our busy, hard working life, and spend some time rejoicing with Him. He gave us the Holy Days for just that purpose. These Holy Days are for all people for all time. They were not just intended for the ancient Israelites.

The prophet Zechariah said, "Then the survivors from all the nations that have attacked Jerusalem will go up year after year to worship the King, the Lord Almighty, and to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles" (Zechariah 14:16).

So let's not look for the quick easy way out by saying we are going on vacation or to attend a church conference, when in reality we are going to be enjoying God's Feast of Tabernacles. This is a perfect opportunity to witness for Christ.

Yes, people in the world understand the phrase "I am going to a Church Conference." But if we do that we have lost a precious opportunity to bring the Bible or God into the conversation, and of course, we also bypass the stigma of being labeled a religious weirdo.

We of all people must be honest with our answers. If not, we would be acting as if we are ashamed of Jesus Christ and of His way. If we are ashamed of Jesus, God will be ashamed of us.

God the Father, has given us the opportunity to come together out of the workshop of the world and rejoice before Him as one body, worshiping Him and His Son Jesus Christ, our Saviour and soon coming King! Let's do just that!  $\Omega$ 

## <u>\_\_infuse</u>

## THINGS TO MAKE SURE YOU DO AT FEAST!

- 1. Make new friends.
- 2. Visit with old friends.
- 3. Pray

4. Choose a scripture from each message to memorize.

5. Decide on something spiritually you want to work on for the next year.

6. Attend planned activities.

7. Get involved by serving.

8. Introduce yourself to someone you normally would not.

9. Take a walk and enjoy God's creation.

10. Verbally show your appreciation to the ministry and those who help make the Feast fantastic!

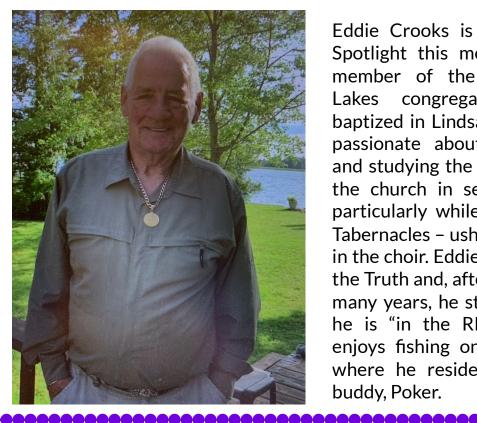
11. Stop a child and ask him/her what was learned in Sabbath School that day.



"Interesting answer, Brother Donald, but I don't think pizza is a major contender here."



## MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



Eddie Crooks is in the Member Spotlight this month. Eddie is a member of the CGI Kawartha congregation Lakes and was baptized in Lindsay in 2018. He is passionate about music, singing and studying the Word. He serves the church in several capacities, particularly while at the Feast of Tabernacles – ushering and singing in the choir. Eddie has a hunger for the Truth and, after "searching" for many years, he strongly feels that he is "in the RIGHT place." He enjoys fishing on Sturgeon Lake, where he resides with his little buddy, Poker.

## Deacon Appreciation Ceremony held at CGI London

CGI London held a Deacon Appreciation Ceremony following their regular Sabbath service on September 14, to celebrate and honour the incredible dedication and service of their beloved deacon, Loretta Jasper. Serving the London congregation for over 35 Years and serving as an ordained deacon for 25 years, Loretta's unwavering faith to the Lord and commitment to her congregation, together with her tireless efforts in serving others, truly embodies the spirit of selflessness and compassion. Her guidance, support, and love has touched the lives of many in the church. Loretta and her husband, Leland, have had a profound impact on everyone's lives, and their faith, humility and dedication is an inspiration to us all. View more pictures on the next page...



# More pics of the Deacon Appreciation Ceremony at CGI London





















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<u>Church of God International Canada Evangelism Team</u> <u>Congregational Reps' - Goals for Church Members</u>

Evangelism is ... the activity of persuading people to become Christians ... the preaching of the Gospel of the Kingdom of God

- The ministry leads the efforts of "mass evangelism"
- All members of the body of Christ (the church) must tactfully share their faith with their circle of influence (family, friends, online pals & others we come into contact with)

## Evangelism Team ... Our Goals for Every Church Member

- 1. Be informed! ... You were not Called (in this Age) only to be Saved... But to be Spent!
  - What IMPORTANT MESSAGE is the Armor of God teaching this week?
  - What significant world events are being analyzed in Keeping Watch this week?
  - What topics are being covered in CGI sermons locally & in Canada & around the world?
  - The Mass Evangelism of CGI is targeting the Whole World -- ESPECIALLY the • members of the Church -- so we can be informed & equipped to reach & help people

#### 2. Be a light! Because you have put in the effort to Be Informed... ... you are better equipped to Reach Out to others

- Be an example of being a "good person" ... an example of leading a Godly life
- Be on the lookout all day long for opportunities to engage your circle of influence on topics of scripture, Christ's solutions to world events, church offerings to help people
- Personal testimonies -"your story"- Can be so inspiring, encouraging & hopeful to others
- 3. Be a magnifier! Reaching 1 person is awesome... reaching MORE than 1 is "better"
  - CgiCanada is posting short videos up to 4 times per week, to up to 14 social media sites, to promote our many CGI outreach offerings (Armor of God, Keeping Watch, Line Upon Line Bible Studies, Prove All Things, weekly sermons and the NEW weekly **TRUTH Unveiled** program)
  - Participate in boosting this outreach by "Liking", "Subscribing", "posting a comment", "sending links to people you know will benefit from a topic being covered"
  - Share great ideas (that have worked well for you) with your Evangelism rep & we can get them promoted in the CgiC Newsletter for all to see & learn.

## 4. Pray for us! (for ALL MEMBERS) to be effective in doing the Work of the Church!

- We understand that society is increasing *hating* any positive message of Jesus
- When we pray, we make sure (every day) that God is focused & WE are focused
- Every day we can review with God (in prayer) the effectiveness of our outreach today

#### Philemon 1:6 (CEV) As you share your faith with others, I pray that they may come to know all the blessings Christ has given us.

Is helping with evangelism REQUIRED of all of Jesus' followers? In Matthew 5:14-16 Jesus did not allow ANYONE to "hide their candle light under a basket" Does anyone believe they are an exception??

## **OCTOBER SABBATH SERVICES**

PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING IMPORTANT HOLY DAYS: OCT. 3 - FEAST OF TRUMPETS @ PUSLINCH COMMUNITY CENTRE OCT. 12 - DAY OF ATONEMENT @ CGI Congregational Sites OCT. 17 - 23 - FEAST OF TABERNACLES (FOT) @ Collingwood or Ottawa Feast Sites OCT. 24 - LAST GREAT DAY @ Collingwood or Ottawa Feast Sites

## <u>Toronto</u>

Oct. 5 - Kenroy Allen Oct. 12 - Victor Peron Oct. 19 - FOT Oct. 26 - Horane Smith

Burlington Oct. 5 - Jan Kowalczyk Oct. 12 - Murray Palmatier Oct. 19 - FOT Oct. 26 - N/A

<u>Kawartha Lakes</u> Oct. 5 - Horane Smith Oct. 12 - Tape Oct. 19 - FOT Oct. 26 - Jim French <u>Kitchener</u> Oct. 5 - Kenroy Allen Oct. 12 - Rick Dubler/Gary Ridi Oct. 19 - FOT Oct. 26 - Kenroy Allen

### <u>London</u>

- Oct. 5 Bernard Wilson
- Oct. 12 Heinrich Peters
- Oct. 19 FOT
- Oct. 26 Bernard Wilson

#### <u>Ottawa</u>

- Oct. 3 David Townson
- Oct. 5 Ernie Marion
- Oct. 12 Jim French
- Oct. 19 FOT
- Oct. 26 Peter Wilcox

For more info - see the Congregation websites <u>@ Cgicanada.org</u> ି

ALL THINGS ARE READY, COME TO THE FEAST!

## **THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES 2024**

WILL BE CELEBRATED IN COLLINGWOOD, ONTARIO & OTTAWA ONTARIO (SATELLITE SITE)

**OCTOBER 16 (EVENING) - OCTOBER 24, 2024** 

Click on this link: <u>https://cgicanadafeast.org/#welcome1</u> for more information.

**THY KINGDOM COME...Quickly** 

"These are the feasts of the Lord, even holy convocations, which ye shall proclaim in their seasons."- Leviticus 23:4



You're invited to worship God with brethren in Ottawa meeting in the Holiday Inn Express & Suites, Ottawa East-Orleans - zooming in services every morning from 11am-1pm from CGI's main feast site in Collingwood Ontario.

We are offering a change of pace for all ages and tastes with activities and attractions across the National Capital Region! We expect about 10-25 attendees from Ottawa, other Canadian congregations and beyond...

Afternoons, cruise the famous Rideau Canal (sorry no skating in summer!), visit Nature, Civilization and History National Museums or brilliant gardens, Kids' fun places like Museum of Science & Tech and much more!

We provide brochures about interesting excursion opportunities, local restaurants and take away food places for in person, delivery or pick up.

We meet at 10:30 every morning for announcements and planning for the following day... so that participants are able to collaborate on plans but also take a slow day resting or walking across from your hotel to the Shenkman Arts Centre to visit displays of art, pottery and more. Maybe even visit a local farmers' market nearby!

## CGI Feast of Tabernacles 2024 Satellite Site in Ottawa, Canada

Evenings, you're welcome to join us in the Avalon Room right in your hotel for Bible Conversations, Prayer Groups, movies, crafts and other fun activities and best of all Great Fellowship over a hot drink, popcorn.

Music is big in CGI Ottawa. so we sing, and play (please bring your instrument if that is possible) and enjoy music.. Godly music blesses us daily!

Make this Feast a refreshing Change of Pace!

Would you like more information? Ready to register?

Special discount rate for Feast participants! \$169 per nite, free breakfast, parking... Super friendly staff

### Local Contact: David Townson at dwtownson@rogers.com or call 613 834 5091



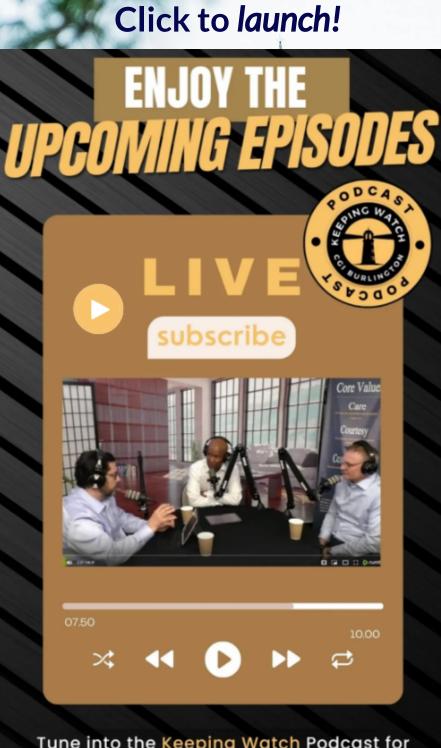
## Follow our Outreach Tools



## ARMOROF GOD







Tune into the Keeping Watch Podcast for inspiring conversations on world events, from a Biblical perspective.

New episodes released every SATURDAY