

CGI Canada Newsletter

**What difference will
2025 make for you?**

**More water under
than above?**

**California Wildfires &
Our Dangerous Planet**

God's Precious Children

**Sabbath Service
info for January**



Table Of Contents

4

What difference will 2025 make for you? - Elder Horane Smith speaks to the futility of a new calendar year.

6

More water under than above? - Elder Horane Smith addresses issues that baffle scientists but not the faithful.

8

California Wildfires & Our Dangerous Planet - Elder Jim French helps us understand and deal with tragedy.

10

God's Precious Children - Infuse article by Loren M. Chamberlain discusses Godly parenting.

12

CgiCanada Vision 2030 CORNER - February 2025 Update from Elder Murray Palmatier.

18

Member Spotlight / Our Stories... / pics of CGI Toronto Youth Day Activities / pics of CGI & UCG Kitchener combined Sabbath Service.

22

February Sabbath Service Schedule / Outreach Tools & Resource info.

EDITOR'S NOTE



Welcome to the February edition.

The 2025 calendar year started off with a bang... Instability reigns as our Prime Minister stepped down from office, Mr. Trump has threatened to impose brutal tariffs while intimidating Canada could be a 51st State, then there's the possibility of another pandemic on the horizon. While all the turmoil is going on we as Christians should never lose hope. We are in the world, but we are not a part of this world. Rest assured, God is in control!

In our featured article Elder Horane Smith asks **What difference will 2025 make for you?** followed by **More Water Under Than Above** which reveals what scientists cannot explain. Elder Jim French addresses the tragedy of the **California Wildfires & Our Dangerous Planet**, An Infuse article **God's Precious Children** by Loren Chamberlain discusses Godly parenting, and be sure to read the **Vision 2030 Update** by Elder Murray Palmatier. Enjoy our **Member Spotlight** and **Our Stories**, as well as pics from **CGI Toronto's Youth Day**, and a combined **CGI Kitchener & UCG Kitchener Sabbath Service**.

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 27:14 *"Wait on the Lord; Be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart; Wait, I say, on the Lord!"*



Maria McLaughlin

Editor
CgiC Newsletter
mariamclaughlin@cgitoronto.org



What difference will



make for you?

Elder Horane Smith

Ring in the New Year with festivities ranging from large gatherings, feasting on food and drink, and wishing one another the best, dates to as early as 2000 BC in Mesopotamia. The New Year was associated with the god, Janus, the god of beginnings. The month of January is also named after him.

After the rebirth of the sun, fertility rites and agricultural abundance were important parts of religious worship. The Roman gods Saturn and Janus got much attention this time of the year. For people, too, it was an important start or “new beginnings” as their god, Janus represented. People desired to be spiritually pure before these gods and so they tried to change their old ways to embrace a new beginning. Hence, they made resolutions to do better and that’s where the practice of New Year resolutions has its roots.

Julius Ceasar moved the New Year to January 1 in 46 BC. And how did the Romans celebrate it? – drunken orgies, debauchery, and feasting, which they believed was a reenactment of a chaotic world before the gods created it.

Pope Gregory xiii abandoned the Julian calendar 500 years later and introduced the (Gregorian) calendar that has been used ever since.

There always seems to be much apprehension by many people over what lies ahead for them in a new calendar year. I use the term “calendar year” because from a biblical perspective, God’s New Year begins in the spring when everything starts growing anew, not in the winter when the land is frozen in many countries. **Exodus 12:2, *This month (Nisan) shall be for you the beginning of months. It shall be the first month of the year for you.***

Nevertheless, the calendar year governs our lives because it regulates our time. Human beings operate in a time dimension whereas God is not restricted to time. A thousand years for us is like a day for him when we measure time by human reckoning. **2 Pet. 3.8 *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.***

As far as human beings are concerned, we will get one year older this year when we measure our time on Earth. One could also apply some harsh realities regarding our sojourn on this planet; for sure, we will be one year nearer to our death if we don’t die this year. But on the positive side, we can also take comfort in the fact that we will also be one year nearer to the Kingdom of God, when we reach December 31, 2025 for those of us who have surrendered our lives to Jesus Christ.

(continued on the next page)

What difference will



make for you? cont'd

The salient question then is what difference will 2025 make for you? You could achieve many goals – whether it's to finish university, get a better job to earn more money, buy a house, car, get married, do some traveling. Those are achievable goals that depend on the individual and their plans to achieve them. However, these are temporary goals that only last for a while. They are like vapour!

On the other hand, come December 31, 2025, some may find that not a single goal would have been achieved. What does that mean? What implications would that have on your future endeavours? Will that bring more stress and hopelessness in your life or bring you to a state where you don't recognize God as your Creator and Saviour anymore?

The new calendar year is not God's New Year. Remember that. It's an invention of humans and its origins have spilled over today, leaving us a legacy of shortcomings and confusion as is the case with human endeavours. His sacred year is symbolic of new beginnings when everything starts to spring again, not the old pagan ritual dedicated to the false gods who could do nothing for them.

In this coming calendar year, there is another opportunity to get closer in our walk with God. We are going to get older, nonetheless, and we'll be nearer to our demise, so if you sense that the Great God of Heaven, YAHWEH, is calling you to ***“come all you who are heavy laden and I will give you rest,”*** then heed the call and don't be like the Israelites who “hardened their hearts,” and went whoring after other gods and their practices.

This year, God's New Year/Sacred Year will begin at sunset on March 30 (or Abib 1).

Ω



2025 HOLY DAY CALENDAR	
New Testament Passover (at Sundown)	April 11
Feast of Unleavened Bread	April 13 - 19
Feast of Pentecost	June 1
Feast of Trumpets	Sept. 23
Day of Atonement	Oct. 2
Feast of Tabernacles	Oct. 7 - 13
Last Great Day	Oct. 14



More water under than above?

Elder Horane Smith

“It feels like there have been staggering science stories emerging every other day recently, all of which have blown our tiny little minds,” says an article in a science magazine earlier this month.

The article went on to note “the discovery of a terrifying black hole... the huge hole found in the sun... and a missing continent found after going missing for 375 years.”

However, another recent find is what seems to be baffling the scientific community. For some time now, it has been looking at a huge supply of water 400 miles near the Earth’s crust stored in a rock known as “ringwoodite.” But this is no ordinary discovery scientists have been studying. “If the rock contained just 1 percent water, it would mean that there is three times more water under the surface of the Earth than there is in the oceans on the surface.” About 71 percent of the Earth’s surface is covered with water with only 2.5 % fresh water. The oceans hold about 96.5 percent of the planet’s water.

“Ocean water is constantly evaporating, increasing the temperature and humidity of the surrounding air to form rain and storms that are then carried by trade winds. In fact, almost all rain that falls on land starts off in the ocean. The tropics are particularly rainy because heat absorption, and thus ocean evaporation, is highest in this area.”

What all this water talk brings to mind is **Noah’s Story in the Bible**. The story of the great flood. The story of the great deluge on Earth millennia ago is not unique to the Bible as many cultures have a flood story, be it myth or legend, in local folklore, or in their sacred writings. Nevertheless, scientists have yet to conclude the biblical account of the Great Flood of Noah’s time did in fact occur.

The **National Center for Science Education**, in an article entitled, **Yes, Noah’s Flood May Have Happened But Not Over the Whole Earth**, observed that, “In the **Epic of Gilgamesh**, [Utnapishtim] is warned that a god plans to destroy all humanity and is told to build a ship to save himself, his family, friends, and cattle. In the **Epic of Atrahasis**, a tribal chief survived with his family by floating in a boat down to **the Persian Gulf**. After the flood subsided, the chief got out on dry land and erected an altar and sacrificed to a water god so that such a flood would not happen again (Anonymous nd-a). Noah also built an altar when he got off the Ark and offered sacrifices (**Genesis 8:20**). Because these stories all describe an ancient huge flood in **Mesopotamia**, it is extremely likely that a huge flood could have occurred.

In **Genesis 7:11-12**, speaking of the Great Flood of Noah’s days, we read, “*In the six hundredth year of Noah’s life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all **the fountains of the great deep broken up**, and the windows of heaven were opened. 12 And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights,*” (emphasis mine). (continued on the next page)



More water under than above? cont'd:

Verse 23, *“And every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground, both man, and cattle, and the creeping things, and the fowl of the heaven; and they were destroyed from the earth: and Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark.”*

Science has advanced many arguments why a worldwide deluge at any time in history would have been impossible, namely as they affect “salt deposits formed by evaporation of seawater only occur in four of the five continents on Earth; fossilized raindrops found cannot exist if the sediments were transported and deposited under water during a one-year Flood, and tiny sedimentary clay particles in shale in all the sedimentary rocks around the world had to be carried in very turbulent water by Noah’s Flood waters. Clay particles that are inter-layered with volcanic ash layers in some places could not possibly settle out of turbulent water without the clay and ash being thoroughly mixed.”

Despite this stance, the Bible tells us in no uncertain terms that the flood was worldwide as “every living substance” which was upon the face of the Earth was destroyed.” If some scientists believe the flood could not have been global, but at least it could have happened, one big possibility is left out of the picture. The God of the Bible, YAHWEH says he’s a God of the impossible, as “nothing is impossible for God.”

Furthermore, human beings only think in human terms, whether it’s scientific or not. We can only think and reason physically; what is divine is beyond the realm of understanding. God does godly things that are beyond our comprehension because they are way above our capacity and ability to understand because of our finiteness. The Sovereign God can do anything He pleases, and when He does, it defies any human understanding because it’s coming from the hand of the Divine and Creator of everything in the universe that was ever made. The followers of Jesus Christ accept all of this by faith, but to the scientist, he or she wants to see the proof before acceptance. That’s what separates science from the things of God. We don’t have to see to believe although the evidence of His creation is all around us (**Romans 1**).

When the Bible says the fountains of the great deep were broken up or the bowels of the Earth opened, as some translations put it, based on our faith, Christians see the hand of God working here, something that is alien to the carnal mind. When we hear of a find that hints that there could be more water near the crust of the earth than what is in the planet’s oceans, it does not surprise us.

In fact, it adds credence to our belief that the Holy Bible has always been right and correct in many of the speculations that baffle humanity, especially the scientific community. Ω



California Wildfires & Our Dangerous Planet

Elder Jim French

When we sit on a warm beach ... with a cool drink in our hand ... it's the furthest thing on our mind to consider how **dangerous & inhospitable** this world can be! (... Because this world can be a wonderful place too!)

Throughout mankind's history we know of the death & suffering brought about by nature "running wild"... in **third world** countries ... & **first world** countries too!

Each of us have read about (& often seen news clips about) the destruction & loss of life by:

- earthquakes - tsunamis - volcanic eruptions - hurricanes - tornadoes - famines - extreme heat - extreme cold - flooding - drought - disease epidemics - pollution poisoning the environment

Many of these items are labeled "Acts of God" by reporters or the insurance industry. It is **shocking** to people today to see the richest State, in the richest country in the world, to be devastated by wildfires!?!)

When these tragedies strike ... very often there are lazy ministries that blame every event on God, and blame the victims for being "so bad" that God had to punish them.

In the Church of God, we teach that **God doesn't need to intervene to cause each tragedy** in the world ... In California it was arson & bad planning (at a time of strong winds) ... BUT ... we **do teach** that when tragedies DO occur ... it is a good time to look at your life to make sure you are right with God

"Some" tragedies are caused/allowed by God (as we see in Scripture) ... others are just "chance" ... people at the wrong place at the wrong time (& God not intervening)

Jesus said ... Repent or Perish

Luk 13:1-5 *There were present at that season some who told Him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.*

Luk 13:2 *And Jesus answered and said to them, "**Do you suppose that these Galileans were worse sinners than all other Galileans, because they suffered such things?***

Luk 13:3 ***I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish.***

Luk 13:4 *Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them, do you think that they were worse sinners than all other men who dwelt in Jerusalem?*

Luk 13:5 *I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish.* (continued on the next page)

California Wildfires & Our Dangerous Planet cont'd:



This scripture is interesting too... making it seem (to some readers) like God micromanages every disaster on earth!

Amo 3:6 *If a trumpet is blown in a city, will not the people be afraid? If there is calamity in a city, will not the LORD have done it?*

As we understand from God's Holy Days ... He has a Plan ... & God is sovereign to intervene (or not) in the dangerous situations that exist around our planet. In this Age, disasters & tragedies exist as random events ... or as tools for God to use as His Plan unfolds.

As Christians we can:

- **Respond** with compassion (our example of Christian Love) to comfort those who are hurting - To be a Light!
- **Teach** the world about God the Father & His Son Jesus Christ ... & the scriptural way of life that brings true happiness & fulfillment
- **Pray** ... for others & ... that God "puts a hedge around us" to protect us from some of the random events - tragedies - that happen in this world. Sometimes these are "trials" we also need to endure ... but as His children, we ask that **God intervenes** in our lives & the situations happening around us.

As the Psalmist writes ...

God is our refuge & strength, a very present help in trouble (Psalm 46:1)

Isaiah also provides comfort & encouragement ...

Isaiah 41:10 *Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.* Ω



God's Precious Children

By Loren M. Chamberlain



I tried to teach my child with books. He only gave me puzzled looks. I tried to teach my child with words. They passed him by, often unheard. Despairingly, I turned aside, "How shall I teach this child?" I cried. "Come," said he, "Play with Me!"

CHILDREN NEED GODLY PARENTS

In all that parents do they must be godly examples by word and deed. There is a very famous passage in the Bible that provides the central theme in the book of Deuteronomy. This particular passage helps us set a pattern that will enable us to relate the Word of God in our daily life to our children, and if it takes a lot of "Playtime" with our children, it will be well worth it to get this Godly message across.

Throughout the Scriptures, God emphasizes the important responsibility parents have in teaching the Bible to their children. Parents cannot pass the responsibility of teaching and parenting their children off to the Church and Christian schools. Eternal truths are learned best in the loving environment of a God-fearing home.

The Hebrew people were extremely successful at making their religion the heart and soul of life. One of the most important reasons for their success was that religious education was "life oriented" not "information oriented." Within the context of daily life they taught their children about God. *"These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up"* (Deuteronomy 6:6,7).

Here in these verses lies the key to teaching our children to love God. If we want our children to follow God, we must make God the most important part of our daily experiences. We must take the time to reveal and show experiences.

We must take the time to reveal and show God to our children in each and every aspect of life, not just in our church-related experiences.

CHILDREN NEED PATIENT PARENTS

Our faith in Jesus Christ must be real, and if it is, it will usually prove itself at home in our relationship with those who know us best, our children. It is not easy to fool a child. *"Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord"* (Ephesians 6:4).

Parents should care gently for their children, even if the children are disobedient at times and unpleasant. Of course, ideally Christian parents and their children will relate and respond to one another with thoughtfulness and love. For some families it is a difficult lesson to learn, but submission to one another is a very important feature of family life. This will take place though if both parents and children learn to put the interests of each other above their own.

No doubt, parental discipline is important for the purpose of helping children grow and develop pleasing character traits, and certainly not to exasperate and provoke them to anger or discouragement. *"Fathers, do not embitter [aggravate] your children, or they will become discouraged"* (Colossians 3:21).

The command for children to obey does not give parents license for harsh treatment. Children must be handled with care. They need firm discipline administered in love. (continued on the next page)

God's Precious Children cont'd:



"Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord" (Colossians 3:20). Parenting is not always easy it takes a great deal of patience to raise children in a loving, Christ-honoring way. But frustration and anger should not be causes for discipline.

Parents should act in love, treating their children as they would want Jesus to treat them and as Jesus treats the people He loves. This becomes a very vital point in the development of children. It is also important to their understanding of what Christ is like in His relationship with children.

"He called a little child and had him stand among them. And He said: I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoever welcomes a little child like this in my name welcomes me" (Matthew 18:2-5).

CHILDREN NEED LOVING SUPPORT

Though they may not say so, children learn at a very young age that they are completely dependent upon their parents. Therefore, they need to know that their parents are unconditionally committed to caring for them for life. Children need to know they are important and loved by Mother and Dad, today, tomorrow and forever.

We as adults know this is the kind of commitment our Father in heaven has for us, therefore, we need to emulate God and express this same kind of loving commitment to our children. Everyone makes mistakes, as we well know, and that includes our children.

They need to know, just as we do, that no matter what kind of troubles come their way Mom and Dad will not abandon them, but will help them through their trials.

This does not mean parents should remove every trial, for that may not be best for them. But children do need to know they are loved and that no situation or trial can separate them from the love of their parents.

Harshness and angry lecturing is seldom effective when attempting to reach the heart of children. It usually sends the wrong signal. Whether perceived correctly or incorrectly it usually communicates to children they are of little value and in some cases worthless.

Sometimes the subconscious conclusion teens draw from this kind of lecturing is that if they meant anything to their parents their parents would not be so mean to them. Most of the time, the calming effect of loving tenderness in the home will have the most positive effect and will go a long way in helping children understand the right and wrong of their behaviour.

Jesus welcomed little children because they have the kind of faith and trust needed to enter God's Kingdom. One of the most important and loving things we can do for our children is to introduce them to Jesus as soon as possible. Parents must also approach Him with childlike attitudes of acceptance, faith and trust.

Happy will those parents be who can say, *"Here am I, and the children the Lord has given me"* (Isaiah 8:18). Ω

CgiCanada Vision 2030 **CORNER**

Our 5-year plan for leading the church

February 2025 Report - “Core Values”

Welcome back to the Vision 2030 Corner and our 4th article in this series that aims to dissect CGI Canada’s 2030 Strategy document.

We spent the first three articles laying the groundwork by walking through the **vision** and **mission** statements. Recall that a mission statement defines why our organization exists and what we are doing today. Our vision statement points us forward and answers the question, “What do we want to do in the future?”

This month, let’s continue to build on what we’ve learned so far and analyze our **Core Values**. Core values are defined as the deeply ingrained principles that guide all of an organization’s actions and serve as its cultural cornerstones.

Interestingly, the 5 core values of CGI Canada form an acronym that, when sounded out, encapsulates vision - **I Foresee!** Those values are **I**ntegrity, **C**ourage, **C**are, **C**ourtesy and **C**onsideration.

Ten years ago, when the CGI Canada Ministry first embarked on laying out a five-year strategy plan for the church, the world we lived in was much different than the one we find ourselves in today. Back then, our core values consisted of only three: care, courtesy and consideration. This month, let’s take a closer look at these three original core values.

Care can be described as having someone's best interests at heart and doing what you can to maintain or improve their wellbeing. This well-accepted definition by worldly standards reminds one of the Hippocratic oath doctors take which has been paraphrased to say “first, do no harm.”

As you might expect, the standards set for us by Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church, are much higher. We see **care** described for us in **Ephesians 4:32**: “*And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.*” As we consider these lofty goals of being of a kind and tender heart, the term “one another” is a reciprocal pronoun. The Greek word is *allelon* meaning mutual or reciprocal, requiring these actions to be two-way, between brethren, to be most effective.

(continued on the next page)

CgiCanada Vision 2030 **CORNER** - *cont'd*

February 2025 Report Cont'd:

Courtesy is defined as the showing of politeness in one's attitude and behavior toward others. The Apostle Paul takes this concept much further for those seeking to put on the mind of Christ. In **Galatians 5:13-14** we read: *For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: "You shall love your neighbour as yourself."*

The freedom we have in Christ is not a worldly one that seeks to promote or satisfy the self. Rather, the well-placed use of "one another" again should focus our attention on lifting others up as we strengthen our relationships within the Body of Christ. If Christ looks for us to show love to our "neighbours", how much more so are his expectations within the Church?

Consideration is careful, deliberate thought, usually over a period of time. Let's take a look at **Hebrews 10:24** for guidance: *And let us consider one another (there is that reciprocal word allelon again) in order to stir up love and good works."*

In this age of 24/7 connectivity with a myriad of social media platforms to air opinions, it is easy to allow our emotions to take hold and immediately react without thought. When those emotional reactions find their way into the Church, it can be destructive. Instead, the scriptures tell us to take our time, using the Holy Spirit for guidance, as we interact within the Body. Do we discern how our words and actions affect each other? Are our thoughts and responses guided by the sacrificial love of *agape*?

As we systematically work through this document that lays out the strategy and vision of CGI Canada, what stands out over the last four months? Have you taken the time to discuss the concepts we've covered and compare them to the expectations Christ sets out for us in His Word? Has your family or congregation uncovered areas where you can improve? Passover is less than three months away. There is no time like the present to get together and see where we can be better as we seek to serve our Lord and Master.

Next month, we'll look at the remaining two core values and then bring them together and see how they fit into our vision for CGI Canada.

Have a safe, blessed and productive month!

Ω

Elder Murray Palmatier

CGI Canada Strategy 2030

Our 5-year plan for leading the church

Our Mission, Vision and Values

Mission

To preach the good news of the Kingdom to all peoples, primarily within Canada, as a witness and a warning; and to nurture and prepare disciples to reign with Jesus Christ.

Vision

By 2030, we will have a reputation for being a healthy Church of God organization - with a ministry that is respected and easy to approach due to our servant leadership culture and our ability to effectively proclaim and teach the Word of God.

Core Values

"I foresee" (I4C)

- ❑ **Integrity** – Rom 12:9; Jos 24:14
- ❑ **Courage** – Prov 28:1
- ❑ **Care** – Eph 4:32
- ❑ **Courtesy** – Gal 5:13-14
- ❑ **Consideration** – Heb 10:24

Our First 5-Year Objective

1. To help God's people:
 - a. Walk worthy of our vocation;
 - b. Maintain humility while forbearing one another in charity;
 - c. Keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace;
 - d. Discover, develop and use their gifts towards being active members of the body of Christ

"Eph. 4.1-3 I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

Our Second 5-Year Objective

2. To have an evangelism program
 - a. That is robust and uncompromising in its Biblical content and ability to address current affairs; and
 - b. That leverages technology and word of mouth.

Matt 24.14 "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come."

External Forces acting against us

Political Winds

Government Legislation
Societal Changes
Negative Economic Factors
Political Schisms
Fake news
Influence of Socialism
Environmental Movement
Continuing growth of the conflict between Nationalism / Globalism
Identity Politics (Reverse Racism)
Global Instability & terrorism danger
Censorship of online speech
Sudden and unexpected crisis management from government (e.g. pandemic, civil unrest)

Moral Redefinition

Demonization of Christianity
Education and Indoctrination
Exaltation of Islam and Transgenderism
Normalization of sexual immorality and murder
Increasing syncretism – all religions are equal

Social Unrest

Erosion of respect through easy access to knowledge
Growing confusion
Continuing growth of violent social unrest and erosion of civility
Loss of trust and increase in suspicion over authority figures
Open borders and changing demographics
Addictions and mental disorders

Internal Challenges that may obstruct us

Division

Political schisms seeping into the Church
A divided ministry
Not understanding church is a family
Distance between scattered brethren
Little regard for the need to gather and fellowship
Holding onto our youth
Lack of understanding of the impact of social media/Internet in the lives of our youth

Disrespect

Disrespect for the ministry
Connected audiences that fact check/challenge our statements in real time
Lack of effectiveness in counselling
Lack of recognition of the ministry as a source of counselling
Lack of recognition of the importance of the sanctity of marriage
Mental illness
Maintaining privacy

Growing Weakness

Lack of closure re funerals/death
Lack of support in the operations of the congregations
Dedication & devotion of membership
Fatigue – expressed in how we can accept teachings
Aging congregations
Cycle of diminishing revival in succeeding generations
Small ministry & small budget
Economic challenges within the church
To be relevant & remain rooted

Our Six Critical Success Factors

1. Personal Health

- Personal Health Maintenance
 - Diet
 - Weight Management
 - Sleep
 - Exercise
 - Stress Management
 - Supplements

2. Healthy Congregations

- Healthy Congregations
 - Speaking to the issues of Family, Marriage, Conflict Resolution
 - Strong and Healthy families in our congregations
 - Encourage active engagement by, and mutual respect for, all members
 - Discourage gossip and disrespect of Christ's body

3. Staying Relevant

- Staying Relevant (with the Changing Times)
 - Staying above the Party Politics
 - Teaching meat in due season
 - Preaching about current topics evangelically
 - Incorporating current language into our teachings
 - Teaching against both sides of extremes

Critical Success Factors

4. Biblical Fluency

- Biblical competence and fluency in both the ministry and the brethren

5. Leading By Example

- Leading by Example
 - Personally
 - How we interact in the ministry
 - § Encouraging each other to discover, develop and use our gifts
 - § How we publicly interact with each other
 - How we interact with the congregation

6. Communication

- Improving our Communication Skills
 - Speaking skills
 - Interpersonal skills
 - Counselling skills

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



We welcome Suzanna Peters to the Member Spotlight this month! We're pleased to introduce Suzanna as our new CGI Canada Office Administrator, and she also runs the social media accounts for CGI London. Suzanna was baptized in October 2014. She became a member of the CGI London congregation in April 2023 after attending for about half a year. Suzanna likes to sing and play guitar, so occasionally she blesses the brethren with her special music talents during Sabbath services. She is both creative and an intellectual as she likes studying, research and bookkeeping, and she also loves arts and crafts. Some of her hobbies include; blogging, macrame, and more recently she has picked up photography. Most of her free time lately has been used to do DIY projects in the new house she and her husband Heinrich have been renovating. She is mommy to son Liam (who will be 2 in March and is pictured with her at left).

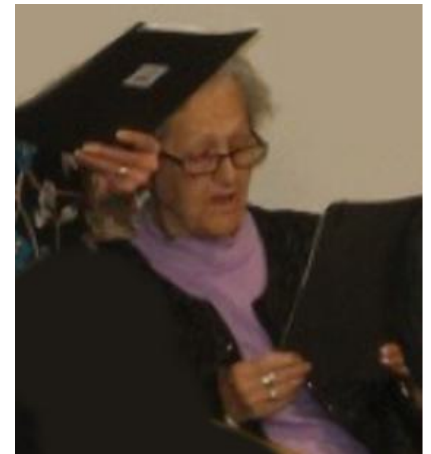
A Simple & Effective Fundraiser Idea!

Kingston resident (& CGI Ottawa church member) Barbara Leith wrote a self-published children's book in 2023 - about her observations at a summer cottage of a mother goose training her young via several lessons!

Barb was able to privately sell several copies of the book at the Collingwood Feast this year ... which raised \$80 for the Youth Fund of the CgiOttawa congregation. Well done Barbara!

It is always great when members can share their talents for the benefit of the church ...

If anyone has ideas that might work - and a heart to serve - please let us know so we can share your ideas, and they can also be published in the CgiCanada Newsletter ... perhaps to inspire others to try something!



Off to Kindergarten!



A Barb Leith Adventure

Mother goose takes her goslings to class ...
for lessons on growing up, for life ahead.

OUR STORIES...



This month, Maria Mclaughlin shares her story...

I grew up in England, spent many years living in Canada and for a short time the U.S.A. In 2002 I decided to move home to Jamaica, my land of birth.

Once there I started searching for a church to attend. I had always attended Sunday Churches however, through a more intense study of the bible I realized that the Sabbath was Saturday not Sunday, so I began my search for a Sabbath keeping church.

An Adventist church was very close to where I lived so I went to their Sabbath service, but I felt very uncomfortable and unwelcome and decided not to return.

One morning while reading the newspaper I noticed an article titled "What is wrong with Christianity" written by Ian Boyne. I had seen him a few times on the television as he hosted two very popular television programs. I later found out that he wrote a weekly newspaper column and worked for the Jamaica Information Service (JIS), a Jamaican government agency. What caught my attention in his article was the mention that Christians were not keeping the Sabbath as the bible dictates and that we should also be keeping God's appointed Feast days, specifically Feast of Tabernacles.

During my times studying my bible I noted that not only were we supposed to keep the Sabbath holy, but it was in fact a Commandment. I also noted in Leviticus the mention of God's appointed Moeds (appointed Feast Days) and wondered why no one ever talked about these days or kept them, even though the bible states they should be kept from generation to generation.

That brief article held so many biblical truths for me, and though I had never responded to a newspaper article before, I decided to reach out to Mr. Boyne to find out more and to seek his help in finding a Sabbath keeping church, and learn more about the Feast Days.

I responded to his article via email and in his reply he invited me to attend a Sabbath Service at the Church of God International in uptown Kingston. He told me he would be speaking at the church that Sabbath. He never mentioned, and I had no idea, he was pastoring that church.

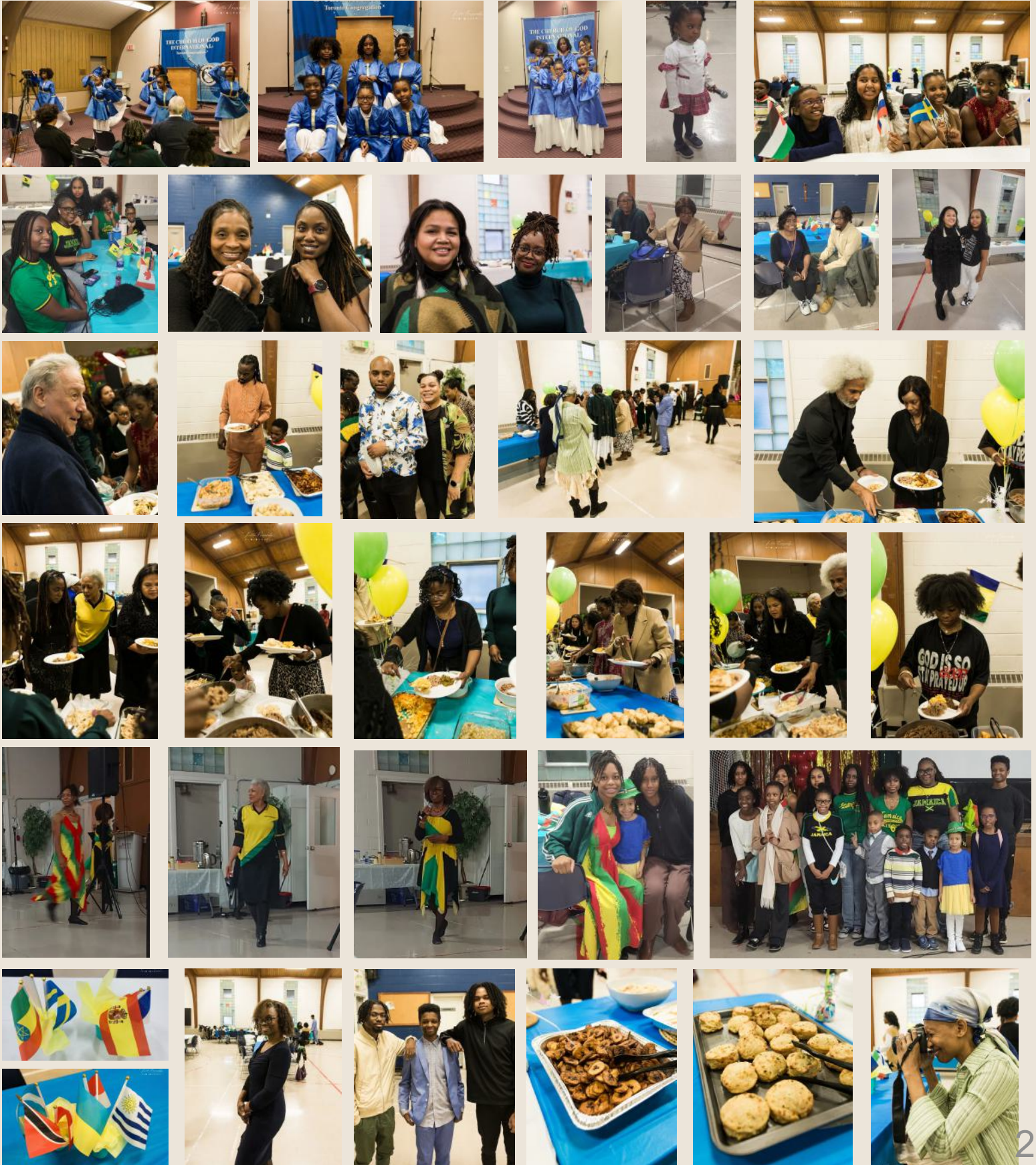
As they say the rest is history. Once I attended and began to hear the church's doctrines I knew in my heart and soul that I had finally found the true church, my home church.

I am and will forever be eternally thankful that I responded to that article that day as I believe God called me to His church in Jamaica at that time. Even though I had been previously baptized I asked to be baptized again and this time it was in the ocean in Ocho Rios by Elders Ian Boyne and George Ramocan during a CGI Feast of Tabernacles that same year.

That was the best day of my life! I became an active member of the church serving on the Women's Ministry and the choir. After many, many joyous years as a member of the CGI Kingston congregation, I returned to live in Canada where I am currently a member of the CGI Toronto congregation.

CGI Toronto Youth Day Sabbath Service

CGI Toronto Youth Ministry hosted a Youth Day Sabbath Service on December 28, 2024 which was followed by a dance presentation by the CGI Praise & Worship dance team Movement of Praise. Evening events included a potluck consisting of cultural foods; gospel karaoke, games and Bible trivia. There was also a Culture Fashion Show and persons were invited to come dressed representing their culture. A fun time was had by all!



CGI Kitchener & UCG Kitchener combined Sabbath Service

On Saturday January 26, 2025 CGI Kitchener congregation hosted a combined Sabbath service with UCG Kitchener, followed by a potluck and games night. Ezra Martin gave the sermonette, which was followed up with special music presented by Lucile Tuuk. Adam Dubler delivered the main message. A yummy potluck was enjoyed by all the brethren after the Sabbath service, which was then followed by games. Submitted by Janet Jacobs



FEBRUARY SABBATH SERVICES

Toronto

Feb. 1 - Kenroy Allen
Feb. 8 - Bernard Wilson
Feb. 15 - Dwight Chin
Feb. 22 - Bernard Wilson

Kitchener

Feb. 1 - Rick Dubler
Feb. 8 - Bernard Wilson
Feb. 15 - Kenroy Allen
Feb. 22 - Adam Dubler

Burlington

Feb. 1 - Adrian Davis
Feb. 8 - Jan Kowalczyk
Feb. 15 - Murray Palmatier
Feb. 22 - Adrian Davis

London

Feb. 1 - Bernard Wilson
Feb. 8 - Rick Dubler
Feb. 15 - Adam Dubler
Feb. 22 - Heinrich Peters

Kawartha Lakes

Feb. 1 - Taped Sermon
Feb. 8 - Stephan Wilshaw
Feb. 15 - Taped Sermon
Feb. 22 - Jim French

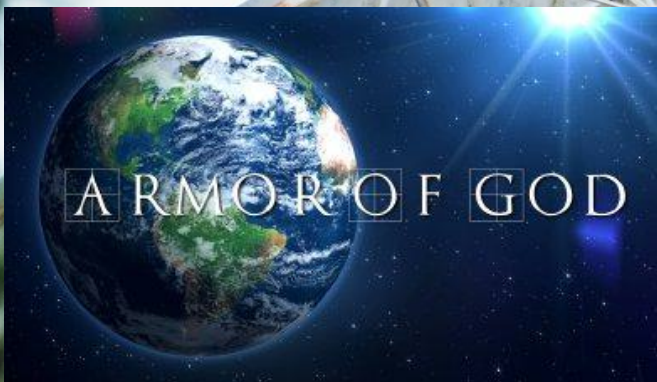
Ottawa

Feb. 1 - Jim French
Feb. 8 - David Townson
Feb. 15 - Peter Wilcox
Feb. 22 - Taped Sermon

**For more info - see the Congregation websites
[@ Cgicanada.org](http://Cgicanada.org)**

Follow our Outreach Tools

Click to launch!



ENJOY THE
UPCOMING EPISODES

LIVE

PODCAST
KEEPING WATCH
CGI BURLINGTON
PODCAST

subscribe

07:50 10:00

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

New episodes released every SATURDAY