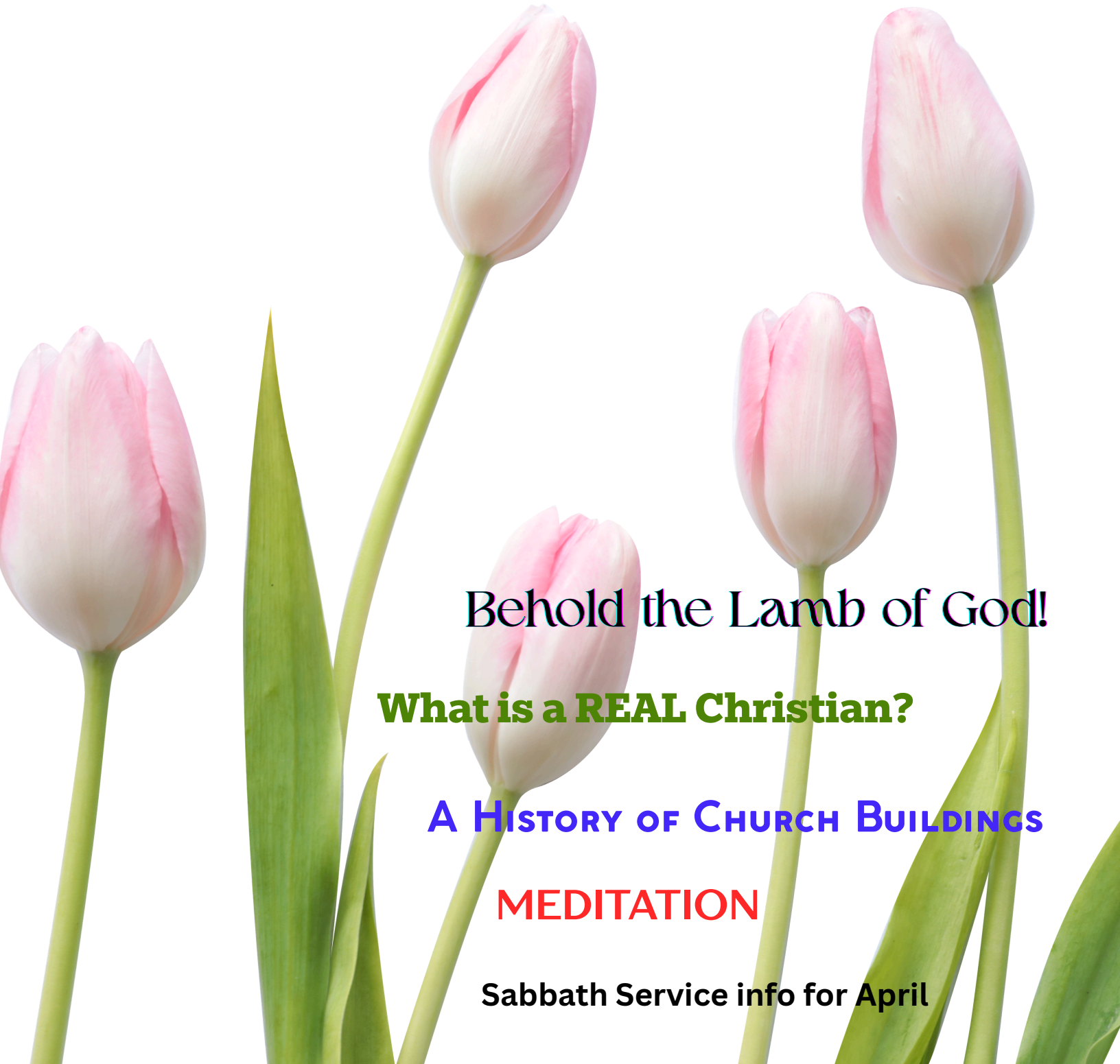




ISSUE 26-04 | APRIL 2026

# CGI Canada Newsletter



**Behold the Lamb of God!**

**What is a REAL Christian?**

**A HISTORY OF CHURCH BUILDINGS**

**MEDITATION**

**Sabbath Service info for April**



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# EDITOR'S NOTE

Welcome to the April edition.

The Spring Holy Day Season is finally upon us Brethren. By now you should have spent some time in personal reflection and as necessary, repentance. This is in preparation to renew the covenant and partake of the blessed sacrament during the New Testament Passover/Lord's Supper. The world may be in turmoil, but we can enjoy the promises and blessings of Yahweh through His Holy Spirit which guides and protects us. It is truly wonderful to walk in the Peace that surpasses all understanding!

This month's newsletter is full of interesting articles - the first is **Behold the Lamb of God**, by Elder Horane Smith, followed by **What is a REAL Christian** by Elder Jim French. Be sure to read **A History of Church Buildings**, by Waine-Anne McLaughlin, and enjoy our Infuse article on **MEDITATION** by Mike James. Then check out the **Evangelism Ministry Update** and a Report on the recent **CGI Ministerial Meeting** in Tyler, Texas. Also, don't miss **Brunner Hill Blessings**, and view our **Member Spotlight** and some congregational event pics.

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.

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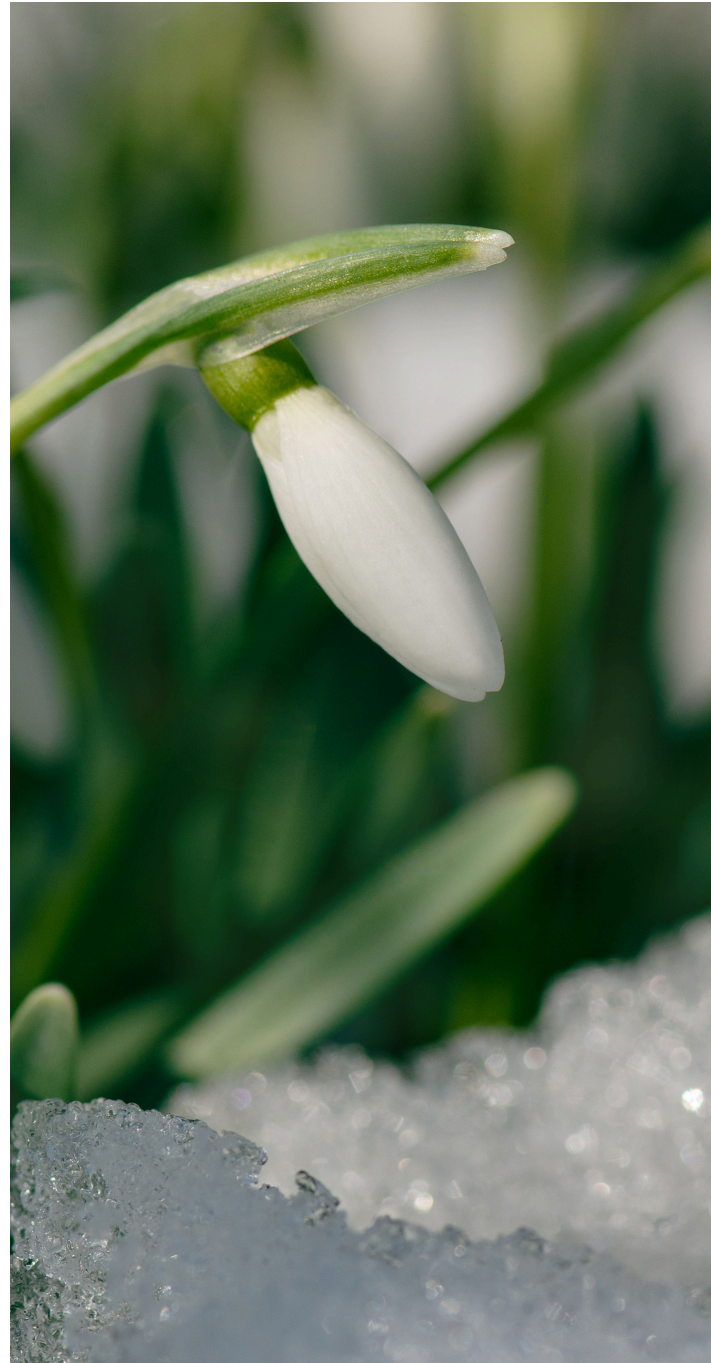
**1 Corinthians 5:7 NKJV** *"Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us."*

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Maria McLaughlin

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# Behold the Lamb of God!

Horane Smith

*"The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. This is he of whom I said, after me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me," (John 1:29).*

This is the first passage in the New Testament to describe Jesus, the Christ, as the Lamb of God. The next one comes in **Verse 35**, *"Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples; 36 And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!"*

Throughout the New Testament, Jesus is portrayed as the Lamb of God. For example, in **I Peter 1-18-19**, *"Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."*

In **Rev. 6:15**, the portrayal is so vivid and meaningful, *"And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"* And again in **Rev. 13: 8**, *"All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."*

The very first time in the Bible we begin to see a link between Jesus and a Lamb is in the declaration for the Passover in **Exodus 12.3**. *Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying: "On the tenth of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb, according to the house of his father, a lamb for a household. Verse 5 -6, "Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats. Now you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight."*

For many years, after leaving Egypt, Israel kept the Passover and God's other appointed times or festivals, with the imagery of the Passover and the lamb significant in worship, meaning, and the future implications for God's plan for humanity.

Later, it was the prophet **Isaiah** who made this prophetic statement in **Chapter 53.6**. *"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. 7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. 8 He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. 9 And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth." (continued on the next page)*

The lamb being brought to the slaughter is an often used phrase in Leviticus when it comes to sin offering, although other animals were used as well. However, what we see in Hebrews and other N.T. books is how Christ's sacrifice for the sins of humanity replaces all animal sacrifices in the O.T., thus making him fit for title, **The Lamb of God**.

**Hebrews 9: 24**, *"For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: 25 Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; 26 For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself."*

When we see the Lamb in the New Testament, it represents Christ as both suffering and triumphant. It also symbolizes gentleness, innocence, purity, meekness, and forgiveness. When seen with the lion, the Lamb means a time yet future when His everlasting Kingdom rules the earth with Jesus as King of Kings and Lords of Lords. Indeed, He's also referred to in Rev 5 as the Conquering Lion of the Tribe of Judah.

In **1 Cor. 5:7**, we see Jesus being described as *"our Passover,"* not our Easter. Why not Easter? He is the Passover Lamb that was sacrificed *"once and for all"* for the sins of humanity. In other words, there's no need for any more animal sacrifices for sins, *"Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us,"* **Hebrews 9:12**.

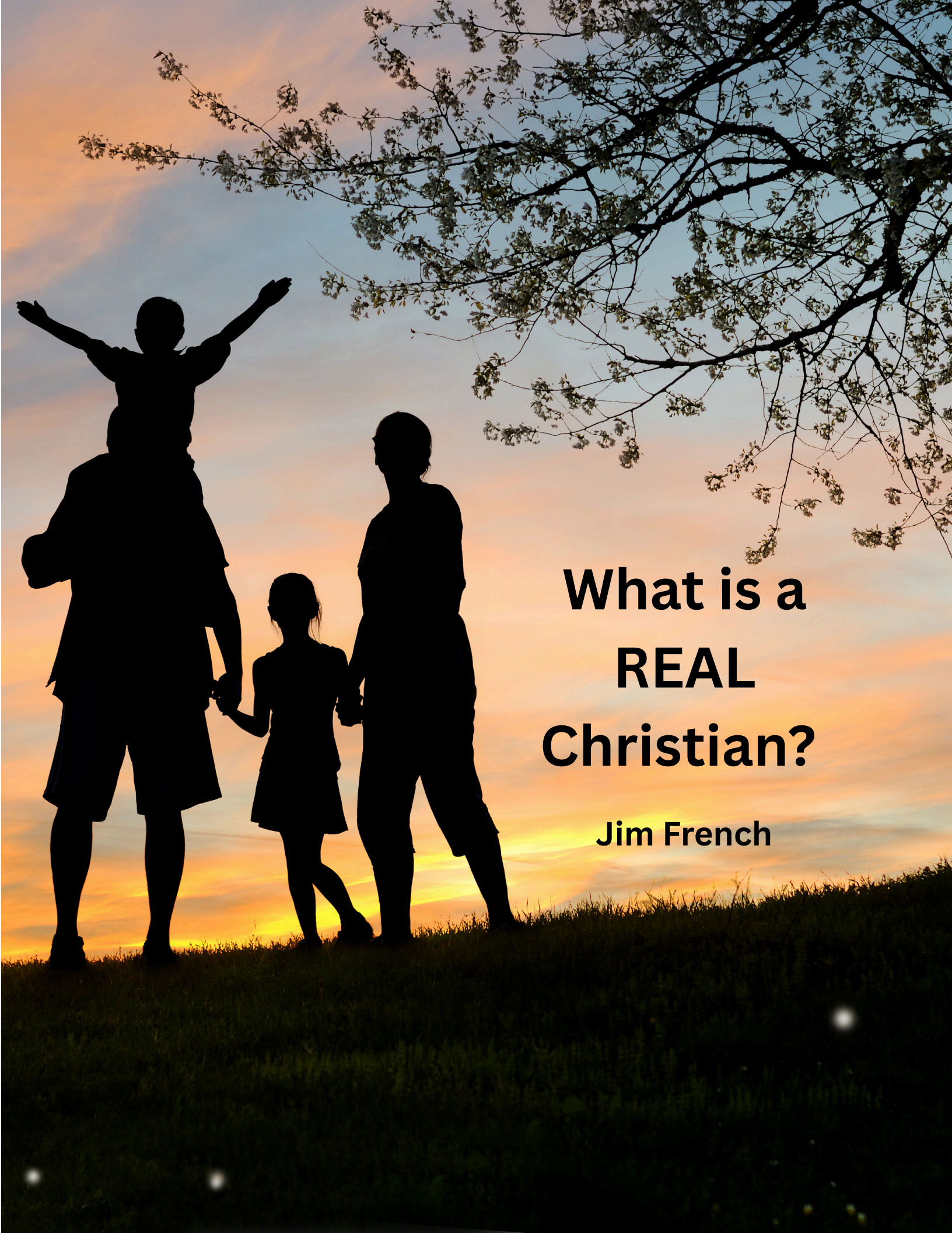
All of this begs this important question. When will the Christian church, at least some sections, throw out altogether the Easter pagan trappings associated with the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and embrace him as the (New Testament) Passover Lamb?

The Bible says clearly that Jesus Christ is our Passover. Isn't it time?

Ω

For more on this subject, click the titles: [Should Christians Observe Easter?](#) and [How was Passover Replaced by Easter?](#) to read our FREE booklets.





**What is a  
REAL  
Christian?**

**Jim French**

## What is a REAL Christian?

**2Co 13:5** **Examine** yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. **Test** yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you are disqualified.

The **Bible definition of a Christian...**

**Romans 8:9** Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.

- If one does not have, possess, and follow the Holy Spirit of God, he is not a Bible-defined Christian no matter what he says, how he acts, or what he teaches.
- The Holy Spirit is the essence, power, mind, and spiritual extension of God. God begets Christians as His sons and daughters through this Spirit. It strengthens and fortifies a Christian spiritually, converts his mind, leads and guides him as necessary, and serves as an earnest or guarantee of eternal life (**Ephesians 1:13–14**).

Now that we know the Bible definition of a Christian... we must go on to ask, “**To whom does He give His Spirit?**”

**Acts 5:32** *And we are His witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Spirit, which God hath given **to them that OBEY Him.***

**Act 2:38** *Then Peter said to them, "**Repent**, & let every one of you **be baptized** in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit”*

The Christian walk is a direct calling of God. Christ tells us in a first-person quotation in **John 6:44** that “*No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.*” The Greek word translated “draw” is *helkuo* and means literally or figuratively to “drag, tug, haul, or tow.” It sometimes seems that God “drags us” kicking and screaming into His fellowship in the midst of problems, trials, and despair...or perhaps because of them. Our calling is a divine act outside our control. No one can come to God on his own terms. Our calling is something more than merely hearing the message of the Word of God. It goes much deeper than that. It is internal, and is the miraculous result of God the Father “turning on the lights” in our minds to understand the spiritual (**Acts 26:18; John 6:44**). God the Father specifically chooses and calls us, effectually drawing us to Christ, almost as though by a magnet, enlightening our minds, enabling us to receive and understand the truth (**John 6:45; Acts 16:14; Ephesians 1:17**). “*For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called*” (**1 Corinthians 1:26**). What a privilege to be called of God! For double emphasis, Christ repeats again in **John 6:65**, “*Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.*”

**We learn (through God’s Holy Days) of His Plan of Salvation for mankind. Everyone will have a fair opportunity for Salvation (“even Sunday keepers”) - But not everyone responds to God’s Call in this lifetime.**

(continued on the next page)

We know Satan has a role in deceiving the whole world ...

**2Co 4:3-4** *But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the **god of this age** has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.*

God's Plan addresses this deception by putting away Satan the deceiver (**Rev 20:1-2**)

We understand in the Kingdom of God where Jesus rules ...

**Isa 30:19-20** *For the people shall dwell in Zion at Jerusalem; You shall weep no more. He will be very gracious to you at the sound of your cry; When He hears it, He will answer you. And though the Lord gives you The bread of adversity and the water of affliction, Yet **your (true) teachers will not be moved into a corner anymore, But your eyes shall see your teachers.***

**Jer 31:34** *No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD, 'for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.'*

God's Plan addresses the majority of mankind -- that is deceived today ...

And it speaks to the rewards that are prepared for the "firstfruits" -- Real Christians who are faithful for their whole lives.

- **Resurrection**

**1 Corinthians 15:20-23** *But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep... But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming.*

**James 1:18** *Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.*



- **Promise of Crowns & Reward**

**2 Timothy 4:7-8** *...there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord... will give to me on that Day...*

**James 1:12** *Blessed is the man who endures temptation... he will receive the crown of life...*

**1 Peter 5:4** *And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.*

**Revelation 22:12** *And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me..."*

(continued on the next page)

- **An inheritance**

**John 14:2-3** *In My Father's house are many mansions... I go to prepare a place for you.*

**1 Peter 1:3-5** *...an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you.*

**Colossians 3:23-24** *...knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance...*

- **Glory after suffering** (Suffering is temporary. Glory is eternal)

**Romans 8:18** *For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*

**2 Corinthians 4:16-17** *For our light affliction... is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.*

**1 Peter 5:10** *...after you have suffered a while, [He will] perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you.*

- **Eternal Life & Reigning with Christ**

**Revelation 20:6** *Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection... they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.*

**Matthew 25:34** *Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.*

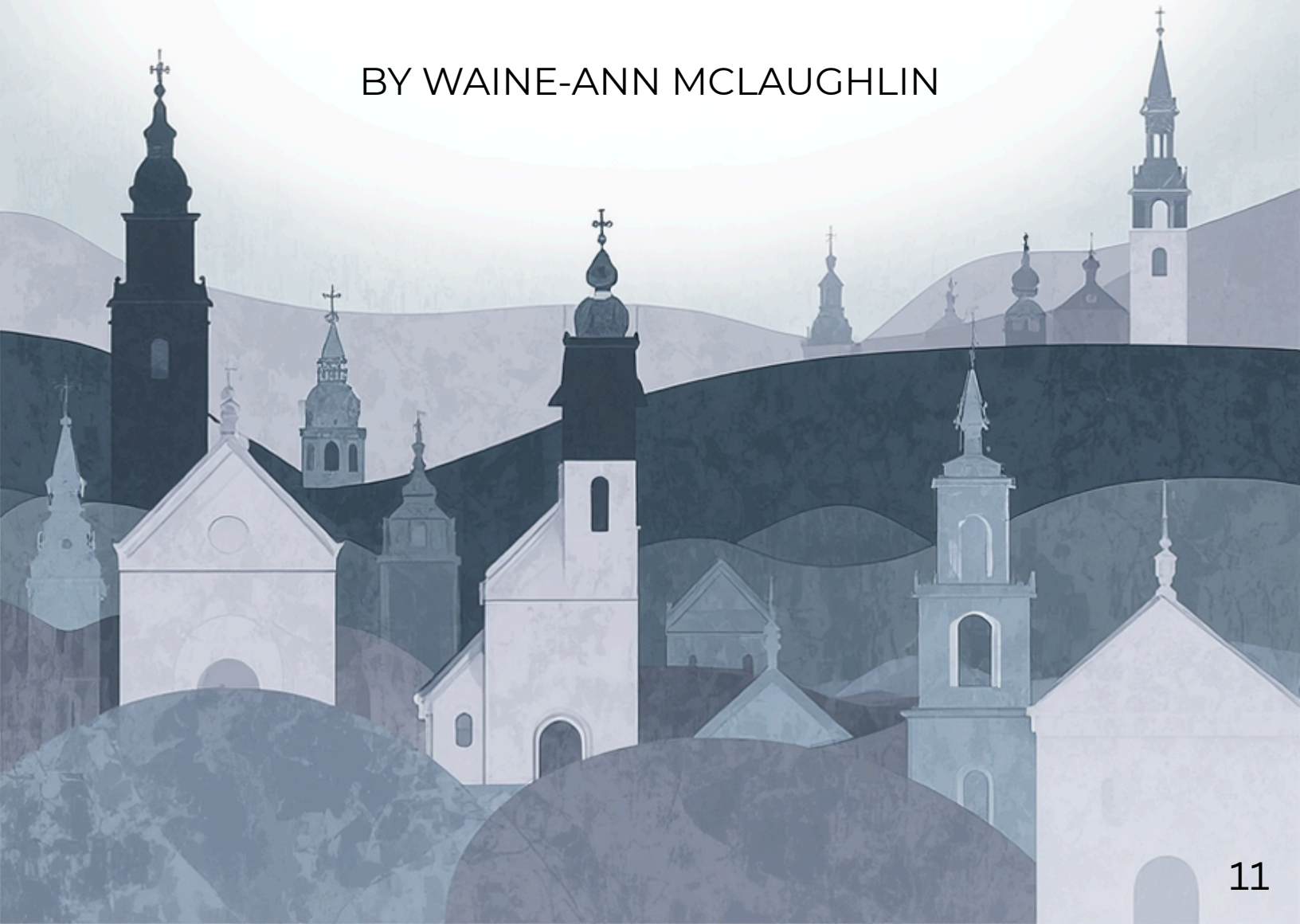
**Daniel 12:3** *Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament...*

Ω



# A History of Church Buildings

BY WAINE-ANN MCLAUGHLIN



**T**he origin and development of the Christian church building is a real story from “rags to riches.” It is especially remarkable when one considers that the original church meetings were conducted in the homes of the first Christian followers. There was nothing like the ostentatious cathedrals we have today.

So where did these big cathedrals and magnificent architectural feats of achievement come from? Who started the idea of the Christian church “building” becoming such spectacles of grandeur and splendour, arrayed in such vaunting architecture? How did the Christian church, the assembly, move from worshipping in homes to worshipping in a building called a church or cathedral? This article will attempt to shed some light on what influences led the Christians to move from homes to the edifices we have come to call ‘churches.’

### **THE TRIUNE OF HINDUISM**

In the religious world, there are diverse sects and each has its own belief system. One of the oldest is Hinduism. Hinduism originated in India. The tenet of this religion is that all life is sacred and God is universal and is everywhere. The name attributed to this omnipresent god is Brahman. This one god is a combination of a pantheon of other lesser gods with all aspects of one divine spirit. The structure of the Hindu god is a triune one with The Brahman, the creator of all; Vishnu is the preserver of all, and Shiva the Destroyer.

The believers of this religion built temples to enshrine the images of their gods, goddesses, or saints of the religion. Each temple is dedicated to one of the many gods they worship. They built the temples so that they looked distinct from their homes in the community in order to reflect their purpose as a spiritual centre for worship. The temples were also used for educational, cultural, and recreational functions in the community. These temples were richly designed with carved sculptures and ornaments on the interior and exterior.

### **THE TEMPLES OF BUDDHA**

Siddhara Gautama, the son of an Indian chief or prince who was raised in the Hindu religion, founded the Buddhist religion. Siddhara founded Buddhism as a result of his search for answers to the condition of human suffering. After the death of Siddhara, his followers used symbols to remember him. As Buddhism spread throughout Asia, images of Buddha were created and became an object of reverence. The Buddhists later erected mounds of stone to guard the relics of Buddha. These structures were large circular mounds of stone and called stupas, pagodas, or dagobas. Buddhist temples differ from country to country. They are usually ornate, inside and out, with fancy carvings and bright colours – mainly blue, red, and green. They also incorporate precious stones, glass set into plaster or gilded wood, and tiles. The Buddhist temples in countries like Japan are more simple and constructed of unfinished wood. (continued on the next page)



## ANCIENT SHINTOISM

Shintoism is a traditional ancient religion of Japan, which originated as nature worship. The name of the Shinto's god is Kami. The Shinto religion teaches that all natural objects and phenomena are assigned to Kami. In the eighth century, when Chinese culture influenced the Japanese people, Shintoism was overtaken by Buddhism, which spread into China from India. The influence of Buddhism on Shintoism led to a merging of the two religions into one religion called Ryobu Shinto, The Twofold Way of the Gods. Adherents believe Kami



was the incarnations of Buddha and Bodhisattvas (Bliss Body) of the Celestial realm, according to in Mahayana Buddhism. The Shinto shrines can be any natural spot. They also have constructed shrines that are generally simple in design and constructed of wood.

## JUDAISM AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE TEMPLE

Judaism dates back to 2500-2000 B.C.E. and recognizes a Hebrew man named Abram as one of the original Patriarchal fathers. Abram lived east of the Mediterranean Sea in Ur of the land of the Chaldees (**Gen. 11:31**). This area is known as the Middle East where religion and cultural norms included the worship of statues or idols. In the time of Abram, pagan and idol worship saturated his cultural environment. God called him out from his father's house, out of his surroundings, and revealed Himself to Abram as the one and only true God.

***“Get out of your country, from your family and from your father's house, to a land that I will show you” (Gen. 12:1-3).***

God instructed Abram to leave his home and go to a new land – Canaan (**Gen. 11:31**). Abram (Abraham) is known as the father of the Hebrew nation, Israel. Today, the Jews who are one of the twelve tribes of Israel are the last remaining Israelite tribe still practicing the religion called Judaism.

Before the Israelites built their first temple they congregated in tents to worship Yahweh, (the name of the eternal God). The desire to build a temple came from the second King of Israel named David. He was a man from the Tribe of Judah (**2 Sam. 7**). The Old Testament tells us that King David would not be the one to build the temple, but his son Solomon would (**1 Chron. 22:1-9**). Solomon was the third King of Israel and he built the first temple for Israel. It is interesting that the Scriptures mention that a temple could not contain God, as He does not dwell in temples. Notice:

***“But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain You” (1 Kgs. 8:27).***

However, God allowed the building of the Temple because it was the desire of King David. This idea may have been influenced by the surrounding cultures of people who worshiped their gods in temples. Clearly, we do not know the level of influence Solomon's many wives had on him that may have driven him to complete the temple. (continued on the next page)

But regardless, we absolutely know the scriptures indicate that God did indeed ordain the construction of the Temple, allowing David to collect the material and Solomon to build it according to the plans God revealed to him (**1 Kgs. 6**). The result was pleasing to God (**1 Kgs. 9:1-5**). Sadly, over time, history proves Israel failed God and the Temple Solomon built was destroyed during the Babylonian sieges in about 585 B.C.E. However, a limited number of Jewish people returned to Jerusalem under the leadership of Ezra and Nehemiah by order of Cyrus, King of Persia, and some 70 years later re-built the Temple a second time. But, unfortunately, once again an invasion occurred by Antiochus Epiphanies, a Syrian King, a Seleucid descended from Alexander the Great, ruining and defiling the Temple – but not totally destroying it. Antiochus tried to force Greek culture on the Jewish people in approximately 175-168 B.C.E.



Some years later, the Temple was re-modeled and enhanced by Herod after the Maccabees revolted and emancipated the Temple, but again, this time it was totally destroyed by the Romans in 70 C.E. The result of this destruction caused the Jews to disperse throughout the known world which in history is called the “Diaspora.” Yet, wherever they settled they built synagogues. The synagogues were sometimes small and simple and sometimes they became large and highly elaborate depending on the size and wealth of the congregation (Hiller, p. 48).

### **CHRISTIANITY: THE CHURCH THAT JESUS BUILT**

This brings us to the Christian era. Christianity began with a Jewish prophet named Jesus who claimed to be the promised Messiah. Jesus taught a simple message: love God first above all things and secondly, love your fellow man as yourself. This message, according to Jesus is the key to the Kingdom of God. Jesus’ message resonated with many people and produced many loyal followers. Jesus specifically chose 12 men from among His followers to be His disciples. After the death of Jesus, His disciples continued in His name, preaching the message of the Kingdom of God.

In the beginning of the church, Jesus being a Jew (**Heb.7:14**) gained mostly Jewish followers. He and His followers practiced Judaism and therefore the Torah was the primary Scripture they used at that time. In Christianity, the Torah and other Jewish scriptures namely the Prophets, and the Writings, (together forming the Old Testament) were fundamental to Jesus Christ’s teachings.

Later, documented letters and other writings by the Apostles (Disciples) of Jesus, (later to be called the New Testament) became accepted as Scripture along with the Old Testament. The Christians of the first century used the Old Testament as their source of reference to establish the Christian religion (**Eph. 2:19- 22**). Later, Christians used both the Old and New Testaments as their reference and foundation to Christianity.

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It would be remiss not to mention the Christians of the first century were also influenced by the cultures around them as the Jews were. Just as the Jews desired to build their Temple for worship as was originally directed by King David, so too did the Christians want their own places of worship. However, just wanting a place to worship was not the sole reason why today Christians worship in ‘churches’ or ‘cathedrals.’

### **THE ROOTS OF CHRISTIAN CHURCH EDIFICES**

In order to understand this more clearly, some background is necessary for context. Christianity began in the time when the Greco-Roman-Hellenist Empire was in control of the land of Palestine, where Christianity originated. Christianity remained unnoticed by the Roman officials after the death of Jesus Christ. Followers of the faith carried on with some resistance from the Jewish officials, but little or no disturbance from the Roman government.

However, the climate changed when the Apostle Paul, a devout Benjamite who was converted to Christianity by a personal supernatural experience, took the Greco-Roman world by storm and turned the ‘world upside down’ by his widespread evangelistic ministry of the Gospel throughout Asia Minor, Greece, Rome, and North Africa.

Paul spread this Good News of the Kingdom of God to both Jews and Gentiles. The results of Paul’s evangelism took root in those areas and resulted in new converts from those communities, who at that point would meet and gather in any suitable place. They met in places like the Jewish temple precinct, a synagogue, or a street corner (Krautheimer, 1981); and yes, even in their homes (**Rom. 16:5, 10-11**).

Before the death of Paul, regular gatherings would take place in private homes of the brethren. Note further, in **Philemon 1:2**, Paul writes “to the beloved Apphia, Archippus our fellow soldier and to the church in your house.” After Paul’s death, the meetings continued in the homes of the brethren. The dining room was usually the place for the meeting because the meetings usually involved a meal.

The homes were not large homes because most of the converts were generally from the lower to middle class, with the occasional upper class folks. The homes would consist of one family building a house up to four storeys high. The dining room was usually the only large room and was generally situated on the top floor. The furniture would be a table with three surrounding couches. If a home didn’t have a formal dining room, the largest room in the house would serve for the gathering. (Krautheimer, 1981 3rd Ed., p. 24)

As congregations became too large for the homes, with baptisms being conducted in the courtyard of the house, in bathrooms or in small privately owned public baths, the need for larger spaces grew. Oratories above or below ground were built, from the simplest to very lavish, but on a small scale. Unfortunately, as Christians grew in number they gained attention from the State and began to attract persecutions from the Romans. When the Christians were being persecuted, they would meet secretly in the homes of members. The church went through persecutions, commencing from its inception on through the next four centuries (**Acts 8:1-4; 12:1-5; Rev. 2-3**).

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Many of these persecutions resulted from government perceptions that the Christians would not compromise the original teachings that were being changed, as the State of Rome adopted a new diluted form of Christianity. Therefore, they were viewed as criminals and religious heretics. Undeniably, many don't realize that shortly after 100 C.E., Rome began to intensely adopt the Christian movement and blend its pagan influences with Christ's teachings. Over the next few centuries this encroachment became more pronounced, forcing thousands of Christians into hiding or exile.

As Rome's *paganized* version of Christianity became the state religion, those Christians who insisted on keeping the original traditions and liturgy of Christ's teachings were branded as criminals and hunted down, persecuted, jailed, or killed. However, those who were able continued meeting and conducting services in their homes, or in and among the Jews in the synagogues.

The temples of the Greeks and Romans became the worship buildings for the state's version of the Christian religion. By 450 C.E., the persecutions had subsided and 'Christianity' had experienced a complete change in doctrine, worship, and structure. This was now the era of the great Roman Catholic (Universal) Church and its many alleged patriarchal fathers. The church had moved from small groups of lower to middle class members, meeting in each other's homes, to larger congregation under the influence of Rome in an organized structural style of Babylonian sun worship, branded now, however, as 'Christian' worship.

As time went by, the role of the Church changed with the church fathers. The congregations were more organized and their activity increased to include charity, tending to the cemeteries, and administration of property and instruction classes for proselytes.

The roles of bishop, elder, and deacon changed into a hierarchy of professionally ordained priests fashioned after the Roman government. It was the Bishop Dionysius who brought order to the organization and liturgy, which spread throughout the Roman Empire: one bishop presiding over the 'Christians' in each town.

As the role of the church changed to include all the duties and functions of the clergy, so did the structure of the Church. Space requirements grew for the larger congregations and these needs gave birth to the idea of developing more grandiose and ornate 'Christian' architectural structures. Surprisingly, the cemetery played a major role in the process of moving from home to church buildings. Krautheimer informs us, "it is suggested or believed that the early Christians acquired property by incorporating as funeral associations and held property under that title" (1981, p .26).

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In times of persecutions, the Christians would revert to meeting in private houses and in the cemeteries. Also they built small structures on their property and used them as community centres or meetinghouses. The design of the buildings was in the tradition of utilitarian domestic architecture and also subject to the regional variations of third-century buildings within the Roman Empire (Krautheimer, p. 27). The Encyclopedia Britannica states that the earliest churches were based on the plan of the Roman Basilica or Hall of Justice (Ceara Delice 031 New 1997).

In 250–313 C.E., the pre-Constantine era building styles used for meetings were community houses and catacombs. The catacombs had a two-fold purpose; to bury their dead in the underground cemetery and hold services above ground. During the Constantine era, he granted the Church official standing and it became the official religion of Rome. This occurred in 325 C.E., at the Council of Nicea. Incorporating into the Roman culture produced more changes for the church administration and with that came more structural changes also. Krautheimer informs us,

*“The new official and hieratic character of the Church required a new ground plan. The sanctuary where Mass was said and where the clergy were assembled had to be architecturally distinct from the lay part. All ecclesiastical architecture had to be differentiated from, and rose above, ordinary buildings. Finally, the official and hieratic overtones of the Church and the dignity of her Imperial patron demanded an architectural vocabulary corresponding to the highest class of public buildings, palaces and temples” (1981, p. 40).*

As all religions of old, from Hinduism to Christianity, have their distinctive temples, synagogues, cathedrals and edifices of worship, sadly, they so often become just misappropriated idols that disintegrate into the caricatures of the individuals who worship there.

Jesus noticed this and clearly warned the woman at the well of the problem with “misappropriation.” His own Jewish people had misappropriated the Temple God told David to build. Notice, talking about the unimportance of the place of worship Jesus said,

***“Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father... But the hour cometh, and now is when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth... God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth” (John 4:20-24).***

The decision for allowing the place of worship to influence our personal relationship with God for better or worse is misguided at best. As Solomon, the King of Israel once said, “all is vanity” (Eccl. 3:19).

Meeting in a nice building can be an enhancement to the Christian worship service, but when it becomes a distraction or the centre of our affection toward God, it misses its true purpose which is simply to accommodate and facilitate worship. Undoubtedly, the Roman Catholic/Eastern Orthodox Church building culture stands out because the historical record proves it is the desire of man to outdo each other. (continued on the next page)

This competitive attitude has contributed to the church “building” or “cathedral” construction of edifices that have literally taken food out of the mouths of those who contributed and supported it. Though we may agree that this event began with the Eastern Orthodox competing with the Western Orthodox— clearly and unfortunately, it is still going on far too much today within the general Christian community.

We must not forget that the church is and always has been the people, not the buildings where they meet. Ω

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# MEDITATION

... prayer is communicating to God while meditation is listening to God.

By Mike James

**M**editation is often confused with prayer, but although similar, there are differences between the two. I would say the major difference between praying and meditating is, in prayer you are actually talking to God, while in meditation you are just thinking about things.

One scripture that comes to mind is **Psalm 5:1-2**. In the first verse the writer mentions meditating and in verse two he talks about praying. This could be understood by the fact that meditation is a perfect “segue” into prayer. By thinking about the law and God’s works, we may come up with something we need to talk to God about and that would lead us seamlessly into prayer. I have also heard prayer described as someone communicating to God while meditation is someone listening to God. This would be a good understanding when we look at the scriptures on this topic.

Many of the scriptures on meditation address thinking about God’s law and His mighty works. When your mind is focused on God’s law you are in a sense listening to the will of God. Since many of us are more familiar with prayer let’s look at a number of scriptures pertaining to meditation and see what we can learn.

In Hebrew the term for meditate is “Haga.” Haga could mean “growl,” “utter,” “moan,” “meditate,” or “muse.” Another Hebrew word used for meditate is “Sihach” which means to rehearse in one’s mind, contemplate or muse. In Greek the words translated meditate include “Meletao” and “Promelatao.” These words mean “to take care of,” “revolve in one’s mind,” “imagine,” and “premeditate.” The root of both of the Greek words is “Melo,” which means “to be of interest to” or “to concern.” By looking at a number of scriptures that address this subject we can obtain a better grasp of this particular word. In doing so we will be able to determine how meditation differs from praying.

**Psalm 77:6** provides us with the idea that meditation is an inwardly focused activity. In verses 11-12 of this same Psalm we have more information that provides us the clue that meditation is thinking about God and His ways. Notice verse 11 states the Psalmist will remember the deeds and miracles of the Lord, then in verse 12 the words meditate and consider seem to be used as synonyms. Notice also Psalm 143:5. Here we read again how the Psalmist remembers and

considers things about God when mention is made of meditation. Rather than a conversation with God this seems to be a thinking process that takes place with God in mind.

Meditation can take place during the day or in the evening (**Joshua 1:8 and Psalm 1:2**) like prayer. As in **Joshua 1** and **Psalm 1** the focus of meditation would appear to be God’s law (**Psalm 119:15, 48, 99, and 148**).

Another item you need to think about before meditating is you will need to be focused and serious about what you are doing. Meditation cannot take place with a cavalier attitude. Notice **Psalm 19:14 and Psalm 49:3**. In both these scriptures meditation is something that involves your heart (feelings). Therefore there should be some passion or intensity involved in it. If God wants us to meditate, especially on His law, the question may be asked why? Well, think about it. What you think, you are. If you fill your mind with garbage you will become garbage. If instead you think about God and His law, you will be much more focused on obeying it. When I read the Bible regularly I am more attuned with God’s ways as I function throughout the day. As I meditate on God’s awesome plan the problems or issues I face pale in significance. Worries and concerns of life do not get blown out of proportion because God is with me.

One other form of meditation I’d like to address is Eastern meditation. This is very popular today but it is not the form of meditation that the Bible addresses. In Eastern religions (Buddhism, Hinduism) the focus in meditation is to clear your mind of any thoughts and then to focus on one sound or phrase. Biblical meditation has a firm focus in the God of the Bible and His law and works. It is probably best to meditate in a quiet place with few distractions. In **Genesis 24:63** Isaac went to a field at night to meditate. **Psalm 63:6** makes mention of meditating at night. In these ancient cultures night was a much more quiet time than the day. Even though night may be a good time for meditation there is nothing wrong with meditating in the day time.

Regardless of when we meditate, we need to focus on pleasing God in our actions. Along with prayer, fasting, Sabbath observance and Bible study, meditation is another activity that can lead us to a closer relationship with God. Ω

The background features a dark, ethereal scene with wisps of smoke or nebulae in shades of purple, blue, and pink. Numerous small, glowing particles are scattered throughout, creating a sense of depth and movement. The overall aesthetic is futuristic and spiritual.

# EVANGELISM 2026 UPDATE

THE CGI CANADA NATIONAL EVANGELISM TEAM INVITES YOU TO  
JOIN US FOR THESE UPCOMING CAMPAIGNS IN MAY 2026



CGI TORONTO PRESENTS

\*\*\*

# IS GOD STILL RELEVANT?

DISCOVERING GOD ANEW – A 4 WEEK SERIES

WHAT IS THE TRUE GOSPEL? - MAY 2<sup>ND</sup>

DO WE NEED TO FOLLOW THE OLD TESTAMENT? - MAY 9<sup>TH</sup>

WHY DO I NEED GOD AND THE CHURCH? - MAY 16<sup>TH</sup>

WHY DO BAD THINGS HAPPEN TO GOOD PEOPLE? - MAY 23<sup>RD</sup>

2737 Bayview Avenue - Toronto, ON | 1:30PM

REGISTER NOW  
[gospel.cgitoronto.org](http://gospel.cgitoronto.org)



THE CHURCH OF GOD INTERNATIONAL  
LONDON CONGREGATION PRESENTS

# TRUTH... OR TRADITION?

REDISCOVERING TRUTH – A 4 WEEK SERIES

THE ESSENTIAL LOVE OF GOD AND JESUS - MAY 9<sup>TH</sup>

REPENTANCE - MAY 16<sup>TH</sup>

WHY DON'T WE KEEP THE TRADITIONAL CHRISTIAN HOLIDAYS? - MAY 23<sup>RD</sup>

WHY DO WE KEEP GOD'S HOLY DAYS? - MAY 30<sup>TH</sup>

970 Oxford St. W - London, ON | 1:30PM

REGISTER NOW  
[rediscoveringtruth.cgilondon.org](http://rediscoveringtruth.cgilondon.org)

# CGIC Online Ministry Education Initiative

**CGIC has commenced the Online Ministry Education Initiative.**

**The Program consists of 4 Modules:**

- Module 1: Biblical Hermeneutics (completed in March)
- Module 2: Homiletics (Preaching and Teaching)
- Module 3: Church Administration and Leadership
- Module 4: Pastoral Counseling and Care

**Duration:** 4–8 weeks total (depending on pacing.)

**Delivery Mode:** Online (Live or Hybrid)

**Weekly Time Commitment per Module:** 4 hours

- 2 hours Lecture
- 2 hours Tutorial / Practical Application

**Target Audience:** Emerging pastors, Speakers, emerging speakers, Deacons, church leaders, ministry interns.

**Program Completion:**

- Assessment based on participation, practical exercises, short assignments.

**A Certificate of Completion will be issued upon successful participation in all modules.**

(continued on the next page)



# CGIC Online Ministry Education Initiative

**ARE YOU READY FOR THE NEXT MODULE?**

**DON'T WAIT - REGISTER TODAY!!**



***Module 2: Biblical Homiletics Will Begin soon!***

To REGISTER, please click the link and send your Name & Telephone # to this email: [training@cgicanada.org](mailto:training@cgicanada.org)  
For more information call Tel#: 226-289-2100

## **Module 2: Homiletics (Preaching and Teaching)**

**Objective:** Develop effective, biblically faithful, and pastorally relevant preaching skills.

### **Sunday May 17, 2026 - Lecture (1 ½ Hours):**

- Theology and purpose of preaching
- Types of sermons (expository, topical, textual, narrative)
- Sermon structure and outlining
- Crafting introductions and conclusions
- Application and relevance
- Delivery fundamentals (voice, clarity, presence)

### **Sunday May 24, 2026 - Tutorial / Workshop (1 ½ Hours):**

- Sermon outline development
- Peer review of sermon manuscripts
- Practice preaching segments (5–7 minutes)
- Instructor and peer feedback

**Learning Outcome:** Students will prepare and deliver clear, biblically grounded sermons with effective application.



# CGI MINISTERIAL WEEKEND CONFERENCE – TYLER TEXAS

## MARCH 6-8, 2026

by Sandee Willshaw

Approximately 70 people attended the 3 day conference in Tyler Texas (elders and their wives). This conference was the first that CGI Tyler head office has held in approximately ten years, so it was a VERY welcome event!

Elders were represented from many areas of the USA, Canada and Jamaica and included not only CGI elders and wives, but also representation from independent groups.

Various presentations were given over the weekend by Charles Groce, Wynn Skelton, Mike James and Jeff Reed. Each of the presentations, while formally presented, were augmented with welcome comments and questions from the delegates.

The themes presented focused on unity, harmony, servant leadership and the gift of ministry both now and into the future. One particular theme spread through all of the presentations --- the need to be “helpers of their joy.” On the final day, Mike and Jeff presented a detailed “SWOT” Analysis whereby all attendees were encouraged to openly share ideas regarding “Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats.”

On the Sabbath we enjoyed meeting all the brethren from Tyler for Sabbath services with split sermons given by Jonathan Armstrong and Jeremiah Ridley. Both of the messages were powerful and uplifting! With approximately 120 brethren in attendance for services, all singing the hymns with exuberance, the walls almost felt like they were vibrating! Added to this were the exciting ordinations of two new elders! Tom Carrazo from Pasadena and our very own **Stephan Willshaw** from Kawartha Lakes Ontario!

Later, several of us welcomed the invitation to have a tour of the CGI Tyler “headquarters”. What an impressive facility! There were even two well-organized rooms with a printing press and binding machines whereby all of our CGI booklets are created on site!

Overall, the weekend provided not only encouraging and rewarding messages, but many opportunities for fellowship. We came away fully rejuvenated, uplifted, joyful, and with newly formed connections to brethren with whom we can stay connected.

Praise be to God for providing such a valuable and rewarding experience!

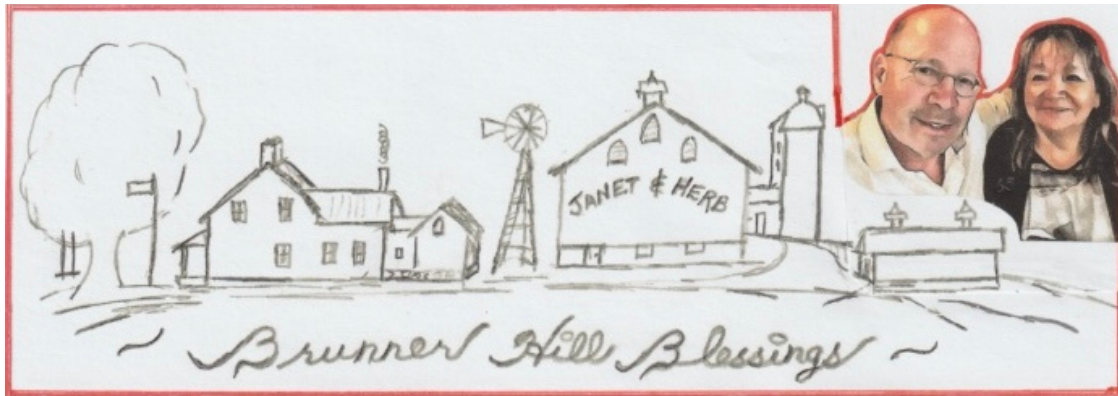
Ω

On the following page enjoy some pictures taken during this memorable event...

## Pictures from the CGI Ministerial Conference & the Ordination of Elder Stephan Willshaw

Join with us, as we Congratulate Elder Stephan Willshaw, of CGI Kawartha Lakes who was ordained in Tyler, Texas on Saturday March 7, 2026 (at the Ministerial Conference) during the Sabbath Service with the Tyler congregation. We look forward to Stephan and his wife Sandee to continue in their teamwork of serving the brethren in Kawartha Lakes.





By Janet & Herb Jacobs

## Sorry Willy, Not Yet!

On March 3, 2026, my mother-in-law, **Kaatje Wilhelmina "Willy" Van Loo** turned 104 years old and remains faithful, healthy, strong and ready! By ready, occasionally we hear her say, **"I am ready to close my eyes."**



Another birthday has easily passed. However, last fall, Willy was trying to clean her windows (which is already done by Peaceful Meadows) and decided to sit on an already "brittle, vintage, fragile" small three-legged table. Willy went to seek balance, one table leg broke off and then Willy went crashing to the floor, with a bit of a bruise only. My wife Janet keeps telling Willy it's not "your

say" of when you want to close your eyes, God does that!!!!!! All in his timing - Not Ours.

A similar falling story occurred when Willy was much younger in her 80's and was once again climbing high to reach a pot, then slipped and fell. Her favorite "Everwear" pot landed on her head. Willy

did have to make a rare trip to the hospital for a dislocated shoulder.



At 104, there are not too many that can say they have been through or very close to World War 1, the Spanish

Flu, the Roaring 20's, the Great Depression, World War 2, the space race (moon landing?), the digital revolution, 911, Iraq & Iran & Cold wars, and Covid.

Oh, we cannot forget the Winter of 47. Apparently during that winter, with already lots of snow in February, the biggest storm hit on March 3 (Willy was born March 3, 1922) and it snowed and snowed. I wanted to ask Willy, about this, but unfortunately, Willy was not in Canada until 1951. I am running out of people to ask who remembers the storm

JACOBS 26:04

or the local Brunner pictures below from our home collection.



**A Waking Up Lesson by Willy.** One day, when Janet and I were over for a visit and in the common room, I asked several of the residents, "What is the first thing you do in the morning when you wake up?". I had some answers such as sit up and stretch, do some exercises, get dressed, etc. My comical answer was the first thing I do when I wake up is "open my eyes"!

Then it was Willy's turn - Willy, what is the first thing you do in the morning when you wake up? The answer without any hesitation was "**Praise the Lord**"!!!!

How to reach 104 besides thanking God everyday? Well, my beautiful wife "Janet" keeps Willy's fridge stocked with a small jar of Kraft "Smooth" peanut butter. A spoonful of this every morning or so, is one answer according to Willy. So, maybe

we should follow our Peaceful Meadows Blue Zone Leader - pray before each meal, read the Bible, praise the Lord each morning as we wake up and occasionally indulge in a spoonful of peanut butter lol.



Willy and husband Bob (1919-2012) joined Worldwide Church of God in the 1960's and enjoyed many of the blessings and Feast of Tabernacles in North America including Mount Pocono and Niagara Falls and Ottawa.

Most important relating to this Worldwide connection are the passages from Genesis 2:2-3 and Exodus 20:8-11 that remind us to "**Keep the Sabbath Holy**". Do this - enjoy a faithful, healthy, strong life and be ready!

**Kaatje Wilhelmina "Willy" Van Loo (nee Kikkert)** is also the mother of Grace (Rick Dubler) - both from CGI Kitchener, and sons John Van Loo (Connie) and Rob Van Loo (Sherrie).

Blessings until next time,  
Janet & Herb.



# YOGURT FLATBREAD RECIPE!

Yanya Reiner of CGI Kitchener invites you to try this recipe, as it's super simple and tastes delicious. Yanya said she had to come up with something as she's not a big fan of matzo.

This Yogurt Flatbread is a game changer! With just 2 ingredients, it's high in protein and requires no yeast. You'll get soft delicious flatbread everytime. Just follow the recipe below, or click on the picture at left.

**The Recipe is by: [Ayeh Manfre](#)    Mediterranean style    Servings: 4    Calories: 144kcal**

## Ingredients:

- ¾ cup plain Greek yogurt - I've used non fat
- 1 cup all purpose flour
- Pinch of salt
- Olive oil spray for cooking

## Instructions:

1. In a large bowl, add the flour and stir through a pinch of salt.
2. Add the yogurt and stir together with a wooden spoon. Then using one hand mix together in the bowl until it forms one rough ball
3. Transfer dough to a clean lightly floured surface/table. Knead with your hands for 3-5 minutes until you achieve a smooth ball. \*If it's too sticky or wet, sprinkle lightly with flour as needed. Allow the dough to rest for 10 minutes
4. Cut the dough into 4 equal pieces and roll them into balls
5. Dust the table with flour, using a rolling pin flatten the dough to create a flat circle shape approx 16-18cms / 6-7inches. \*Remember to keep sprinkling flour on the dough and flip it upside down whilst rolling it flat
6. Continue this step with remaining dough balls
7. Heat a pan over medium-high heat and add a few sprays of olive oil spray (or lightly brush with oil). Add one dough and cook for 2-3 minutes until you start to see some bubbles appear
8. Lift one of the corners and once golden brown, gently flip using a spatula. Cook the second side for 1-2 minutes.

Transfer the flatbread to a plate and continue the above step for the remaining pieces. To keep them warm, cover with a clean kitchen towel or aluminium foil

Enjoy your deliciously soft Yogurt Flatbread for dipping into favourite dips like [hummus](#), [whipped feta](#) or make a wrap such as a [Greek wrap](#)...yum!



# SPRING HOLY DAY SEASON 2026

**NIGHT TO BE MUCH  
REMEMBERED: Wed. April 1  
@ sunset (in homes)**

**FIRST DAY OF UNLEAVENED  
BREAD: Thurs. April 2  
@ 1:30 PM  
(Puslinch Community Centre)**

**LAST DAY OF UNLEAVENED  
BREAD: Wed. April 8  
@ 1:30 PM  
(Puslinch Community Centre)**

# MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



Warren Faulkner, 87, and his wife Pat, 77, have a beautiful love story that spans many years. The couple met in 2009 at Bramalea Baptist Church in Brampton, where Warren, a Toronto native, had been attending services. Warren's spiritual journey began in the 1960s at the Worldwide Church of God, where he was baptized in 1964. Pat, on the other hand, was born in Alliston and grew up in a military family. The couple now resides in Brampton and have been active in various church communities, including the Living Church of God, where Pat was baptized in 2012. Their wonderful journey has brought them to our Kitchener congregation.

Warrens hobbies include his prized mustangs and his love for boating. Pat volunteers at a thrift store and Holland Christian Homes. Warren and Pat are both active members in the Brampton Probus seniors club. Together, they have three sons, a daughter, and four grandchildren. They have become beloved members of the Kitchener church community.

# Kawartha Lakes Congregation welcomes two new members to the Church of God!

February 28, 2026 Kawartha Lakes, ON

This was a happy day at the Kawartha Lakes Congregation. Two new members were baptized in the Days Inn and Suites Hotel swimming pool, as the rest of the Congregation looked on and applauded. Maria Celeste, de Oliveira, Chick, and Patsy Ballam were baptized by the Congregation's Pastor, Jim French, and the Congregation's Deacon, Stephan Willshaw. After being emersed in the pool, Maria Celeste and Patsy had hands laid on them and prayed for by Jim French. The Congregation then celebrated in the meeting room where Sabbath services are held, with a Potluck meal. Barb Leith from Kingston was also in attendance to witness the baptisms. Congratulations to our new members!



# CGI London's Games Night - Febraury 28, 2026

An evening of fun & fellowship was enjoyed by all during CGI London's 'Game Night' held on February 28, 2026. As the pictures below show, everyone had a great time!



# April Sabbath Service

## Toronto

April 4 - Victor Paron  
April 11 - Courtney Scarlett  
April 18 - Bernard Wilson  
April 25 - Horane Smith

## Kitchener

April 4 - Rick Dubler  
April 11 - Bernard Wilson  
April 18 - Kenroy Allen  
April 25 - Adam Dubler

## Kawartha Lakes

April 4 - Taped Sermon  
April 11 - Taped Sermon  
April 18 - Stephan Willshaw  
April 25 - Jim French

## Oshawa

April 4 - Taped Sermon  
April 11 - Jim French  
April 18 - Taped Sermon  
April 25 - Larry Arnburg

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

## Burlington

April 4 - Adrian Davis  
April 8 - Adrian Davis  
April 11 - Jan Kowalczyk  
April 18 - Adrian Davis  
April 25 - Jan Kowalczyk

## London

April 4 - Bernard Wilson  
April 11 - Rick Dubler  
April 18 - Adam Dubler  
April 25 - Bernard Wilson

## Ottawa

April 2 - 1<sup>st</sup> Day UB - Jim French  
April 4 - Taped Sermon  
April 8 - Last Day UB - David Townson  
April 11 - Taped Sermon  
April 18 - Jim French  
April 25 - Taped Sermon

## PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING DATES:

**NIGHT TO BE MUCH REMEMBERED:** Wed.  
April 1 @ sunset (in homes)

**FIRST DAY OF UNLEAVENED BREAD:** Thurs.  
April 2 @ 1:30 PM (Puslinch Community Centre)

**LAST DAY OF UNLEAVENED BREAD:** Wed.  
April 8 @ 1:30 PM (Puslinch Community Centre)

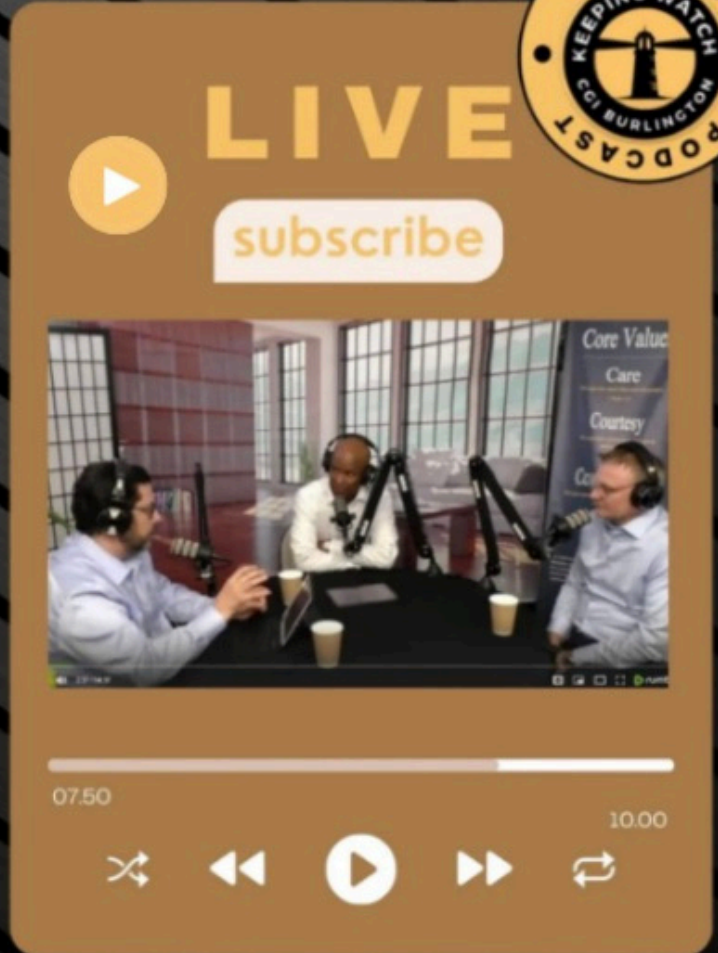


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