

THE CHRISTADELPHIAN
TIDINGS
of the Kingdom of God

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The CHRISTADELPHIAN TIDINGS of the Kingdom of God

Peter Hemingray, Editor

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Editorial Notes

The enclosed editorial and article on letters of commendation will largely complete the articles which we planned, as indicated in the editorial for September, 2012. We have presented articles on the principles of fellowship, and a consideration of the way various ecclesias view the application of these principles. We have also, in the issue, looked at the lessons we can draw from the previous divisions and re-unions. In addition, this issue concludes a pair of articles on commendation in the New Testament, again with the applications to our present day.

The efforts to help with the complex, somewhat disruptive ecclesial state in Ontario are ongoing. It is hoped that these articles have helped somewhat. We realize that not all agree with what has been written, but we hope that they have at least given some food for thought.

The letter we have published in this issue (p 124) is typical of many we have received on the above topics: God Willing, we hope to publish additional ones in the next few months, space permitting.

The Sunday School article, concerning examples of object lessons from the Baltimore ecclesia, has been deferred to the next issue (May) for reasons of space.

Letters to the editor can be sent to letters@tidings.org. Please include your name, address, e-mail, and phone. Submissions under 300 words are encouraged — the magazine reserves the right to edit all submissions for length and clarity.

Editorial

Christadelphian Divisions and Fellowship

Introduction

“Those that fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it.”¹ With that in mind, I believe it might be helpful to consider the current divisions within Christadelphia, how they arose, and why they persist. We will exclude the existing Advocate (or Unamended) fellowship, as their reasons for existence and persistence differ from that of the relatively small fellowships we will consider.

The other groups all seem to have a consistent, but different, view of fellowship from that of the larger body, and this, to a large extent, appears to be the fundamental reason for their continuing presence. They share the same statement of faith, at least to a large part, but have very little contact with the larger body. The best estimate I have of the total number involved in all the various groups, only some of which we will discuss, is around 2,000: this compares with the number in the main “Central” body of around 55,000. What contact there is, is largely family based, and there are no current attempts to heal the breaches on a community basis. There is movement within the groups, and between the Central body and some of these groups, but these almost universally involve leaving one fellowship and joining another: there is an almost total absence of members having fellowship across the group boundaries.

It is a criticism often leveled against the Christadelphians that we are constantly dividing and splintering. There was some truth to this: in 1950, “Central” Christadelphians were in the minority in both North America and Australia, and were only around 50% of the total numbers. But since then, most of the then existing divisions have been healed, and there has, in fact, been a steady, slow drift to further unity.

The Bereans

The Bereans began to form in England around the time of the first world war. In 1917, the subject was raised of whether it was lawful for a Christadelphian to be a policeman (or police constable). By vote of the Birmingham Central ecclesia, this was denied, and the last revision to the BASF made: the phrase “or as police constables” was added to Doctrines To Be Rejected #35. Two brethren demurred, A. Davis and T. E. Pearce. Others in the ecclesia objected to the continuing of fellowship of these two brethren, and a split ensued, the minority forming a new ecclesia called the “John Bright” ecclesia. By 1923, the leadership of this split had moved to London, and the *Berean*² Magazine succeeded the previous *Mutual Magazine*. Thus the Berean fellowship began.

Prior to this, around 1910, Bro. A. D. Strickler of Buffalo, NY had issued in manuscript a pamphlet called “Out of Darkness into Light”. After Bro. Smallwood published an article objecting to these views in 1913, a series of ecclesias in North

America also objected to its contents, accusing Bro. Strickler of believing in “clean flesh”³. However, he was regarded as confused, but acceptable, by most in England, including particularly CC Walker, the editor of *The Christadelphian*. This caused a split in North America, and the majority of those previously associated with the “Central” Ecclesias withdrew from it and joined with the Bereans in England. Thus by around 1924 those associated with the “Central” Ecclesias were in a minority in North America.

It is of interest to note that a previous division in Australia around the turn of the 19th century had resulted in the Birmingham Ecclesia accusing the then editor of the Australian *Shield Magazine* of promoting “Clean Flesh” also, and had withdrawn from him and the majority of the Christadelphians in Australia. Thus the Birmingham ecclesia was in fellowship with those who objected to “clean flesh” in Australia, but out of fellowship with those who did the same in North America.

Essentially, in both cases the formation of the Berean fellowship can be traced to the reluctance of the critical ecclesia (Birmingham in England, and Buffalo in the USA) to discipline or withdraw from the offending brethren. Rather than follow the *Ecclesial Guide*, which counsels ecclesia-to-ecclesia involvement and discussions, the disgruntled ecclesias withdrew not only from the offending ecclesias, but also any ecclesia that would fellowship them.

By 1940, the vast majority of the Bereans in the UK had joined with the Dawn fellowship, over the divorce question, with only a few in North America joining that group. However, the Bereans in North America were still numerous.

Reunion and after

Bereans. In the 1930-1940 period, there was considerable discussion about reunion among most of the divided community, but any progress was sidelined by WWII. By 1952, however, Bro. John Carter, the then editor of *The Christadelphian*, was able to build on the previous attempts with the Bereans in North America, and a conference was held in Jersey City, NJ. At this Bro. Carter gave an address on the atonement to general approval, and a simple three-point statement was agreed. Previously, there had been a ten-point statement proposed, but two Central Ecclesias objected, and the statement was shelved. However, a minority of the Bereans did not join the united fellowship. Partially, this was over doctrinal issues, but it was mainly over a view that the agreement allowed the persistence in fellowship of those who did not necessarily agree with all the agreement: the ecclesial votes were by majority, so a minority could disagree but still be retained in fellowship.

Suffolk Street. Although not previously mentioned in this review, the next reunion was with the “Suffolk Street”⁴ fellowship. Originally separated in 1885 by a disagreement over “partial inspiration”, this reunion was again shepherded by Bro. Carter, along with Bro. Cyril Cooper, and resulted in the joining together of the two largest groups in the UK. However, once again a minority disagreed with the reunion. This resulted in the formation of the “Old Paths”; they principally objected to the fact that the reunion was by majority vote, and those who disagreed with the reunion document were retained in fellowship. They wanted to

ensure every member was interviewed, afraid that otherwise false doctrine might be tolerated. The autonomy of each ecclesia to deal with such problems was not considered sufficient. In addition, by this reunion, the Unamended Ecclesias in North America lost their connection to the Suffolk Street ecclesias in the UK, for the two groups had fellowshipped together since 1920.

Shield. The last reunion was with the “Shield” fellowship in Australia. It was finalized in 1958, after many years of regional reunion, which caused much turmoil locally. *The Christadelphian* had for many years noted in its intelligence that “The ecclesial position in Australia is at present confused and Intelligence is published for information and without any judgment on the facts.” Together with Bro. Cyril Cooper, Bro. Carter visited Australia in 1958. He found that the Shield ecclesias with which he was out of fellowship, had in fact a set of beliefs, especially on the atonement, which was closer to his than that of the local Central ecclesias. His visit resulted in a reunion on a very satisfactory basis, as can be seen in the booklet “Christadelphian Unity in Australia”. Again, there was a dissident group, primarily from the former Central ecclesias. They joined up with the “Old Paths” fellowship, again worried about individuals with false doctrines being included in the reunion, and did not want to allow the respective ecclesias the autonomy to deal with any such individuals.

The current status

Focusing on the larger groups⁵, we currently have the Bereans⁶ in North America and the remnants of the Dawn fellowship mainly in the UK and Australia. The history of what was the Old Paths is very confusing, with the Companion and Lightstand fellowships resulting from splits within this group, but with some of these later joining with the Dawn group and some remaining separate. All refuse association with any other fellowship, and all share three main characteristics:

- They all have a view of the nature of Christ that differs from that usually associated with most Central Christadelphians (although some hold somewhat similar beliefs); i.e., that sin is a part of our physical nature which is the cause of moral transgression, disease, and death.⁷
- They claim that the Central fellowship is either apostate or willing to accept apostasy.
- They have a view of fellowship which differs from that of the Central fellowship in that they are, implicitly or explicitly, advocates of what is known as “guilt by association”. Thus if a member of an ecclesia is believed to tolerate a member with erroneous views, or allow a member with an unacceptable moral situation (usually concerning divorce) to remain a member, that ecclesia will be withdrawn from: and if other ecclesias refuse to go along with that decision, they too will be withdrawn from. This applies whether the two ecclesias are on the same continent, or not.

Dawn (and others) fellowship practice

Ecclesial responsibility for unity⁸

The official Dawn position on ecclesial fellowship is as follows:

“The ecclesia is the body responsible, through its appointed representatives, for the discharge of all these duties: for the instruction and proper baptism of new members; for the spiritual as well as physical welfare of all its members; for the repudiation of error and, where ultimately necessary, for withdrawal from disorderly or erring members. These duties are carried out by the ecclesia concerned on behalf of the whole body of believers, and therefore there must be complete agreement among all ecclesias as to the basis on which fellowship is shared. As previously stated, we believe that all ecclesias in a community should be regarded as part of a single body; the division into individual ecclesias being only a matter of geographical convenience. For this reason the concept of “ecclesial autonomy”, where individual ecclesias accept different standards in matters relating to fundamentals of belief and practice, is rejected by the Dawn community. But on non-fundamental matters there must be ecclesial independence. We firmly reject any idea of an overall controlling body.”

This sounds reasonable at first glance: but in practice the idea of all ecclesias being one body “with complete agreement among all ecclesias” results in it being a prescription for endless divisions. These groups have continued to differentiate and divide because their members either can’t resist (or don’t want to resist) the urge to police anyone and everyone in their “fellowship”. If you have this mindset, and look long enough and hard enough under every rock, you’re eventually going to find someone who makes statements with which you disagree. Then, by their philosophy, you have to set about to identify it, and then get a consensus from all your members (wherever they live) about what to do with what you’ve found.

Central fellowship practice

The Central fellowship has been using the *Ecclesial Guide*, appreciating ecclesial autonomy and ecclesia-based fellowship, as based upon the Scriptural principles encapsulated in the BASF. It has rejected those who demand the BASF only, and allowed instead for different expressions of the same saving truths, both in its different reunion documents, and in individual ecclesial statements. This has given the breakaway fragments, if they sought unity again, a way back into the larger group. And the reasonable combination of ecclesial autonomy, a common set of beliefs, and a more or less standard fellowship practice has allowed ecclesias and individuals of some diversity to remain together. It is a paradigm that works (with some glitches, of course) for a worldwide community.

Guilt by association?⁹

Some would say that to allow a decision we feel is wrong, even if it is taken by a distant ecclesia, is to partake of another man’s sin (1Tim 5:22; 2John 11). This idea of guilt by association has plagued many discussions about fellowship with members of other groups. Though the word for ‘partake’ means ‘fellowship’, the passage in Timothy is actually talking about the appointment of elders and the need to be sure of their credentials. When it is applied as a doctrine of fellowship, however, it has the effect of denying what it claims to uphold. Fellowships which practice what they call “Ecclesial Unity” — requiring universal approval of every fellowship decision — are prone to division.

But fellowship is about unity and reconciliation among brethren, not about schism! Once a split has occurred because of a difference of judgment on a non-fundamental point, or by seeking to define a principle more closely than Scripture itself does, there is a tendency for further and more rapid splintering into ever smaller fragments. As we have seen, the history of minority fellowships sadly proves this process to be true. There is probably not a single group which still exists in an undivided state following its original secession from the Central fellowship.

If the formation of a new fellowship is not the way to deal with these matters, what can be done if an ecclesia persists in upholding a decision which is considered unwise and inflammatory when it is brought to the attention of the wider ecclesial world? The answer depends on the nature of the case.

Personal behavior

If it concerns a brother's or sister's personal behavior, experience has shown that the local ecclesia is usually the best judge of the matter — they know the person, they know the circumstances, and they probably know the best way to resolve the problem. Their judgment in this matter, even if it differs from what others might do, ought to be trusted and respected.

A neighboring ecclesia could reasonably question whether the Scriptural teaching about that particular aspect of behavior is denied by the ecclesia. But it would be unwise to take the matter further. In almost every case, the principle will not be denied, even though the treatment of the offender may vary from ecclesia to ecclesia.

A Brother's (or an Ecclesia's) beliefs

A more difficult situation arises when brethren's or sisters' beliefs are called into question, perhaps by something they have said, or by something they have written. Sometimes it appears to be the belief of a whole ecclesia. Yet very rarely, if ever, do brethren (or ecclesias) set out deliberately to preach something they know to be false. If things are said or written that are not in accordance with the Truth, it is usually because of imperfect knowledge, both of the Scriptures themselves and of the general understanding current in the brotherhood. This should cause us all to be wary, for none can claim "to know even as also we are known" (1Cor 13:12). But within the extent of our understanding, the first objective if we believe that error is being taught should be to expound "the way of God more perfectly". This is what Aquila and Priscilla did when they approached Apollos (Acts 18:26).

The ecclesia or brother in question could have been teaching a partial gospel. This is the concern usually expressed when ecclesias appear not to take action if one of their members says or writes something not in accordance with the Truth. The responsibility, as we have seen, lies with a brother's own ecclesia. But ecclesias also have a responsibility to the brotherhood worldwide to ensure that they uphold our common basis of faith, and they should listen carefully to any comments brethren from surrounding ecclesias make who may feel this basis has been threatened.

The situation will not be helped if the problem is ignored or swept under the

carpet. A larger and more serious difficulty will arise if this is done. There will be inter-ecclesial friction arising from inaction or irresponsible action. The very fundamentals of our fellowship together are threatened if this happens. For such a situation to exist, the principles outlined above will have been ignored or treated as only of secondary importance.

Problems very rarely reach this stage. When they do, it has been found helpful to involve the ecclesias in the immediate area where the trouble is centered. They are more likely to be affected by the difficulty, and will be better placed by their knowledge of those involved to understand both the problem and the potential solution. They will help to reinforce the apostolic teaching we have been considering about behavior “*in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth*” (1Tim 3:15).

Unfortunately, in this era of instant communication and widespread travel, the situations in one area can have ramifications across the continent, if not around the world. It is perhaps understandable for some brethren, remote from the situation by thousands of miles, to want to “help” the situation, or express an opinion on the situation, or declare that one side or another is upholding wrong beliefs. Rarely, if ever, will the remote ecclesia be in possession of all the relevant facts: a rush to judgment is almost always unwarranted.

Conclusion

We have looked at how, since 1900, divisions have arisen within the diverse “Christadelphian” community, largely on the basis of an erroneous view of fellowship and ecclesial autonomy. The Central community itself has successfully healed many of the breaches stretching back to the 1880’s and consequently represents over 95% of the wider group. It has survived many challenges and is still undergoing problems, and we cannot claim all are totally united in all their beliefs and fellowship principles. But we have been united on a common set of beliefs and a practical outworking of these beliefs in an ecclesially based fellowship practice.

We pray this unity will continue until the return of our Lord.

Peter Hemingray

Notes:

1. Attributed to Winston Churchill.
2. In August of 1922 the name of the *Mutual Magazine* was changed to the *Berean Mutual Magazine*, and in January 1923 to the *Berean Magazine*. I can find no comment on the origin of the name.
3. The term “clean flesh” was not used in this sense until 1889, but it describes the views that originated with Edward Turney in 1873: he claimed that Christ was different in nature from mankind, and thus his flesh was clean of sin.
4. The “Suffolk Street” fellowship is so named from the location of their largest ecclesia: its magazine was *The Fraternal Visitor*, lastly edited by Bro. Cyril Cooper.
5. Many smaller groups have come out of these larger splits, but most are tiny.
6. The Bereans split again in the 1980’s, so there are two separate groups using the same name.
7. The Wikipedia article on the Berean Christadelphians is quite useful.
8. Cited from “The ‘Dawn’ Christadelphian: Belief, Practice and Fellowship”, a pamphlet widely circulated in 1998.
9. This section is loosely based upon an editorial in *The Christadelphian*, 1992, p 63-66.

Exhortation

Needs and Wants

Physical needs and wants

I am currently teaching 6th – 8th grades, and an early lesson in the 6th grade curriculum dealt with Science and Technology. The definition used of these terms was:

- Science = study of our natural world; deals with “what is” or “what was”
- Technology = study of our human made world; deals with “what can be” or “The process by which humans modify nature to meet their needs and wants”

This brought up the subject of needs and wants, where

- Needs = basic necessities for human survival: the four basic needs: food, water, clothing and shelter
- Wants = the extras outside the basic human needs

Examples of each:

- | | |
|-----------------|---------------------|
| • Need water | Want soda |
| • Need food | Want junk food |
| • Need clothing | Want designer jeans |
| • Need shelter | Want a mansion |

In general, all are familiar with these concepts and accept them, but one 6th grade girl said she had another need — the mall. She argued that, in going to the mall: she could get a drink at a water fountain, buy food at the food court; buy clothes at any number of clothing stores, and it's a mall so there is a roof over your head for shelter. I did not agree with her (mall = wants for sure) but liked her style/thought process. But this class got me thinking about our needs and wants on a spiritual level, for there are definite similarities.

Spiritual needs

If we turn to Scripture, I think we will find that we also have spiritual needs that include food, water, clothing and shelter. Let us start with a psalm of David

“Incline your ear, O LORD, and answer me, for I am poor and needy. Preserve my life, for I am godly; save your servant, who trusts in you — you are my God” (Psa 86:1-2 ESV¹).

This tells us two important things that are consistent throughout Scripture:

- All humans are needy; i.e., they have things they need to stay alive
- These needs can be provided by God

Food

John in his gospel (chapter 6) gives the account of Jesus feeding the 5,000. A large crowd had followed Jesus to hear him preach and to be healed of infirmities. They were hungry and there was no food available. Jesus fed them with five loaves of bread and two fishes, ending up with more left overs than they had started with

— another obvious miracle or sign for the people to see. The very next day after Jesus had passed over to the other side of the Sea of Galilee (walking on water during the night), where another crowd gathered

“When they found him on the other side of the sea, they said to him, ‘Rabbi, when did you come here?’ Jesus answered them, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, you are seeking me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. Do not labor for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you’” (John 6:25-27).

Jesus was really telling them that the only reason they were following him around was because they **wanted** him to give them food to eat, but that they really **needed** the spiritual food that he had come to offer. Jesus explained this quite clearly in the ensuing conversation

“So they said to him, ‘Then what sign do you do, that we may see and believe you? What work do you perform? Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, “He gave them bread from heaven to eat.”’ Jesus then said to them, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.’ They said to him, ‘Sir, give us this bread always.’ Jesus said to them, ‘I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst’” (John 6:30-35).

There is a direct Old Testament connection to these same thoughts

“And he said to me, ‘Son of man, eat whatever you find here. Eat this scroll, and go, speak to the house of Israel.’ So I opened my mouth, and he gave me this scroll to eat. And he said to me, ‘Son of man, feed your belly with this scroll that I give you and fill your stomach with it.’ Then I ate it, and it was in my mouth as sweet as honey. And he said to me, ‘Son of man, go to the house of Israel and speak with my words to them’” (Ezek 3:1-4).

This is really a parable acted out by Ezekiel: he eats the scroll that has the Word of God written on it and takes God’s message to Israel, who had lost their focus on God’s covenant with them and so had been carried away into captivity in Babylon. This is the same reason that Jesus has come, and the same message. So clearly our need of food on a spiritual level comes from Jesus who, in his own words, is “*The bread of life*”, who brought the Word of God to a dying world.

Water

John 4 gives the account of the woman of Samaria at the well: Jesus was traveling through Samaria and this time it was he who was tired and thirsty. He asked the Samaritan woman to draw him water from the well to drink and we are all familiar with the conversation that followed.

“Jesus said to her, ‘Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling

up to eternal life.’ The woman said to him, ‘Sir, give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water’ ” (John 4:13-15).

In this instance, Jesus wanted a drink of water because he was thirsty and he had human needs and wants just like we all do, but he also was using this situation to teach the woman that she needed a different kind of water, spiritual water that he had come to offer. Now to an Old Testament connection to the same thoughts

“With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation. And you will say in that day: ‘Give thanks to the LORD, call upon his name, make known his deeds among the peoples, proclaim that his name is exalted. Sing praises to the LORD, for he has done gloriously; let this be made known in all the earth’ ” (Isa 12:3-5).

Isaiah is warning Israel about looming disaster from the armies of Assyria but at the same time is looking forward to a day of salvation under the righteous reign of the true Branch.

The whole concept of spiritual water is summed up nicely by Peter:

“For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit, in which he went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison, because they formerly did not obey, when God’s patience waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through water. Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to him” (1Pet 3:18-22).

Put this together with Peter’s words in his 2nd letter:

“the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God, and that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished” (2Pet 3:5-6).

In essence, Peter tells us that the world was formed out of water, symbolic of the Word of God, and later was destroyed by flood waters. There was one exception (Noah and his family) who came safely through this water which symbolized baptism. So clearly our need of water on a spiritual level comes from hearing the Word of God, believing it and being baptized.

Clothing

The first clothing in Scripture is found in Genesis with Adam and Eve: *“Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths” (Gen 3:7).*

After they broke God’s law, they panicked and wanted to hide. They needed something to cover themselves and chose fig leaves as their clothing: but we all know the story. They were confronted by God and punished for their wrong doing:

“And the LORD God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them” (Gen 3:21).

Their clothing became a symbolic need to cover their sins and required that an animal must die to provide their clothing, but there is better clothing to come as foretold by Isaiah when he writes of the year of the LORD:

“I will greatly rejoice in the LORD; my soul shall exult in my God, for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation; he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself like a priest with a beautiful headdress, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels” (Isa 61: 10).

These are similar thoughts as those found in the Revelation:

“And he said to me, ‘These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb’ ” (Rev 7:14).

“Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates” (Rev 22:14).

Putting these verses together tells us the whole story of clothing in Scripture: the first clothing was needed to cover sin, and to make it required the sacrifice (blood) of an animal. This clothing and sacrifice was replaced by garments of salvation made white by the sacrifice (blood) of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. So clearly our need of clothing on a spiritual level comes from the sacrifice of Christ who gave his life to reconcile us to God, and provide forgiveness, or a covering, for our sins.

Shelter

When we think of shelter, we think of the physical need for a home, somewhere to live. This is the idea from Genesis as well: *“And Lot, who went with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents” (Gen 13:5).*

Another clear example of physical shelter occurs during the time of the plague of hail in Egypt: *“Now therefore send, get your livestock and all that you have in the field into safe shelter, for every man and beast that is in the field and is not brought home will die when the hail falls on them” (Exod 9:19).*

Shelter from the hail was definitely a need at that time; without it human and animal would die, but again there is a spiritual shelter that we are told of:

“Let me dwell in your tent forever! Let me take refuge under the shelter of your wings! For you, O God, have heard my vows; you have given me the heritage of those who fear your name” (Psa 61:4-5).

“He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say to the LORD, “My refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust” (Psa 91:1-2).

And the most famous Psalm of all:

“Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever” (Psa 23:6).

Clearly this shelter or dwelling is figurative, but at the same time it is similar to that of Israel in Egypt at the time of the plagues. Without this shelter from God, our lives are at risk. So important is this idea of God providing us with a shelter, that it occurs at the very end of Scripture:

“And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, ‘Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God’” (Rev 21:3).

So clearly our need of shelter on a spiritual level comes from believing God’s ways, and putting our trust in him to provide our final dwelling place

Summary

So in summary, we as humans have for basic physical necessities or needs for survival (food, water, clothing and shelter), but as followers of Christ we also have four basic spiritual necessities or needs for survival:

- We need spiritual food — the Word of God which makes us wise unto salvation
- We need spiritual water — hearing the Word of God, believing it and being baptized
- We need spiritual clothing — the sacrifice of Christ to cover our sins
- We need spiritual shelter — putting our trust in God to provide a place in his kingdom

So I wondered if, like my student who thought the mall provided for all her needs, was there any place in Scripture that brought all our spiritual needs together in one place.

And there is:

“Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, ‘Who are these, clothed in white robes, and from where have they come?’ I said to him, ‘Sir, you know.’ And he said to me, ‘These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will shelter them with his presence. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any scorching heat. For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.’” (Rev 7:13-17).

And finally in Jesus’ own words

“Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you” (Matt 6:31-33).

Duncan Sabean (Meriden, CT)

Notes:

1. All references are from the ESV.

Bible Study

Letters of Commendation (2)

Introduction

In Part 1, last month (*The Tidings*, February 2013), we looked at the 1st Century practice of letters of commendation, along with a Biblical study of the words used, and considered some examples of NT usage. This we continue this month.

Apollos

We are introduced to Apollos in Acts 18:24 where we learn that he is a Jew, mighty in the Scriptures and who preached the things of the Lord, but only knowing the baptism of John. It seems he was a traveler having come from Alexandria in Egypt all the way to Ephesus, and he had the intent to spread the word in other places. Once Aquila and Priscilla had instructed him more perfectly in the way of God they encouraged him to go to other areas and preach, but not before writing a letter of recommendation.

*“And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, **the brethren wrote**, exhorting the disciples to **receive (apodechomai)** him: who, when he was come, helped them much which had believed through grace” (Acts 18:27).*

One wonders how Apollos would have fared without this letter in hand? It seems an ecclesia would not receive a travelling stranger without a recommendation, even though he might confess to believe the same things. Aquila and Priscilla followed practical measures that would allow Apollos' acceptance into fellowship with open arms wherever he went among the established ecclesias.

Phoebe

A great example of a letter of commendation is where Paul commends Phoebe to the ecclesia in Rome.

*“I **commend** unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea: That ye **receive her in the Lord**, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also” (Rom 16:1-2).*

This follows the typical form and structure of the period's letters of commendation. It is fair to assume that the Apostle sent Phoebe, who personally delivered the whole epistle to the ecclesia in Rome. This sending and commendation of Phoebe may have been Paul's original task, but he decided to also write a lengthy dissertation in front of the letter of commendation.

She comes highly qualified in glowing terms, yet Paul still urges them to “*receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints*”. The qualifying phrase “*in the Lord*” (seen also in Phil 2:29 and Philemon 15-17) indicates that it had to do with welcoming somebody into fellowship.¹ This was something reserved or worthy of only for the saints.

The Jerusalem poor fund

Much of the epistles to the Corinthians involve a collection made by the Gentile ecclesias to support the poor brethren suffering through a famine in Jerusalem. In matters involving money there would have to be an extreme sensitivity that those bearing the funds would be trustworthy and beyond reproach. Paul left this decision up to the Corinthians.

*“And when I come, whomsoever ye shall **approve by your letters**, them will I **send** to bring your liberality (mg. gift) unto Jerusalem” (1Cor 16:3).*

It was not enough just to pick some nice brethren to do the job. Paul expected them to write a letter of recommendation so that he could in all good conscious “send” them for the work. Paul gives his reasoning for doing this:

“We take this course so that no one should blame us about this generous gift that is being administered by us, for we aim at what is honorable not only in the Lord’s sight but also in the sight of man” (2Cor 8:20-21 ESV).

In this context, Paul writes a highly complementary recommendation for those doing the work and is very careful to show that this was not of his initiative but was a recommendation by the ecclesias. That the ones he was “sending” (v. 18, 22) were “chosen” (v. 19) by the ecclesias and therefore were “messengers (*apostles - ones sent*) by the church” (v. 23).

Paul’s letter of commendation to Philemon

While many of the New Testament epistles have embedded letters of commendation (e.g. Timothy and Epaphroditus in Phil 2:19-30) the epistle to Philemon stands alone as a letter of commendation in whole. The story goes that Onesimus, a servant of Philemon, runs away and eventually is converted by Paul in Rome. Paul instructs Onesimus to go back to his master with this letter in hand. Onesimus as a runaway slave faces certain punishment, but Paul uses the method of writing a letter of commendation, in standard form and function for Roman society, to persuade Philemon not to do this but to receive Onesimus as a brother in the Lord.

While the word “commendation” is not used, the nature of the letter is apparent by the loving terms Paul uses for Onesimus and his use of the key words “send” and “receive”.

*“Whom I have **sent** again: thou therefore **receive** him, that is, mine own bowels” (Philemon 1:12).*

*“For perhaps he therefore departed for a season, that thou shouldst **receive** him for ever; **Not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved, specially to me, but how much more unto thee, both in the flesh, and in the Lord?** If thou count me therefore a partner, **receive him as myself**” (Philemon 1:15-17).*

Paul implored Philemon to receive him back. Not just as a servant in bonds, but much more, as a brother in Christ. The receiving had to do with fellowship in the Lord. The special nature of the case has insured its preservation in our Bibles but it makes one wonder how many other letters of recommendation were written among the ecclesias of the time? There can be no doubt that it was a standard practice.

3 John

The apostle John hints at his use of letters of commendation for travelling brethren (verse 3) that had come back to him with a report of those who were walking in the truth. With a careful reading of 3 John we can safely assume that John sent these brethren on a mission with a letter of commendation because they would be unknown to the other ecclesias. The letters would then ensure ample support and help by the local ecclesias for the work they were doing. John thanks them for their service and generosity in verses 5-6,

*“Beloved, thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to **the brethren, and to strangers**; Which have borne witness of thy charity before the church: whom if thou **bring forward** (propempo) on their journey after a godly sort, thou shalt do well: Because that for his name’s sake they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles. We therefore ought to **receive** (apolambano) such, that we might be fellowhelpers to the truth.” (3John 5-8).*

The King James translation of verse 5 reads as if there are two classes “*the brethren, and to strangers*” but it should read more like the ESV, “*for these brothers, strangers as they are...*” They might have been strangers at first but as soon as they would have read the letter of commendation, they would have quickly bounded in the truth and been welcomed.

Our keywords “send” and “receive”, used in these verses, indicates the practice of commendation. John encourages the ecclesia to “bring forward” such missionaries, which most modern translation have as the word “send”. For instance the NKJV reads, “*If you send them forward on their journey in a manner worthy of God, you will do well.*” This is paired, as we have seen now so often, with the aspect of “receiving” in verse 8, which is all centered on the aspect of proper fellowship practice so that we might be “*fellowhelpers to the truth.*”

To not “receive” someone who had been “sent” was a serious matter that spoke not only against the travelling missionaries but also against the one who had sent them in the first place. This was Diotrephes.

*“I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, **receiveth** (epidechomai) us not” (3John 9).*

John says at the beginning of verse 9 that he “*wrote unto the church.*” What letter is John referring to here? Based on the context, this was most likely the letter of commendation John had sent with the brethren, which Diotrephes had rejected. We can imply this as well when John says that Diotrophes “*receiveth us not*” (v. 9) and that “*neither doth he himself receive the brethren*” (v. 10).

John took the rejection of his commendation very personally when he says Diotrophes “*receiveth us not*” (v. 9). This follows the principle, so often in Scripture, that he who receives you, receives me and he who rejects the one sent, rejects the one who did the sending (Matt 10:40-41; 18:5; Luke 10:16; John 13:20). Therefore, Diotrephes’ rejection of John’s commendation of these travelling brethren was truly a rejection of the apostle John himself.

Practical implications for our day

The apostolic and ecclesial practice of commendation is a guide for our personal and inter-ecclesial conduct. Personally, it shows forth a spirit of humility and not wanting to boast. Secondly, it shows an ecclesial carefulness to ensure proper fellowship.

Self-commendation

Paul had a problem with the Corinthians who were questioning his motives and qualifications. It upset Paul so much that these brethren and sisters whom he knew so well were treating him as some sort of stranger. In an exasperated tone he says to them:

“Do we begin again to commend ourselves? or need we, as some others, epistles of commendation to you, or letters of commendation from you?” (2Cor 3:1).

At once, the practice of letters of commendation jumps out, but in this case, such a letter would be needless. Paul bemoaned the fact that he had to boast about his own qualifications to those who knew him. Yet throughout the epistle, he battles and succumbs to “commending” himself.

*“... by manifestation of the truth **commending** ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God” (2Cor 4:2).*

*“For we **commend** not ourselves again unto you, but give you occasion to glory on our behalf, that ye may have somewhat to answer them which glory in appearance, and not in heart.” (2Cor 5:12).*

*“But in all things **approving** ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses...” (2Cor 6:4).*

*“For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that **commend** themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise” (2Cor 10:12).*

*“But he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord. (18) For not he that **commendeth** himself is approved, but whom the Lord **commendeth**” (2Cor 10:17-18).*

*“I am become a fool in glorying; ye have compelled me: for I ought to have been **commended** of you: for in nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I be nothing” (2Cor 12:11).*

Paul had felt compelled to become foolish in defending himself to the Corinthians. Having to qualify ourselves should not be a comfortable position for any humble servant of Christ. Approval of who we are and what we stand for is best coming from others. Paul always looked for approval from the ecclesia. This is a model for us to follow, that when we travel and visit other ecclesias we should be taking with us the commendation of our ecclesia. If we do not have that, then looking to be “received” into fellowship is questionable.

Approval of men

Certain brethren and sisters may chaff at the thought of seeking approval from men. There is no doubt that a Pharisaic attitude could arise where we seek the praise of men rather than the praise of God (Matt 6:1; 23:5; John 12:43; Acts 5:29; 2Thess 2:4) but the Scriptures are also clear that it is not always a bad thing if the motives are correct. In fact, it is better for us to seek praise from others rather than ourselves as it says, *“Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth; a stranger, and not thine own lips”* (Prov 27:2).

The spontaneous approval of men that naturally arises out of the recognition of a good character is admirable. It is said of Jesus² *“he grew in favour with God and man”* (Luke 2:52). This he did by following the principles in Proverbs:

*“Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart: **So shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man**”* (Prov 3:3-4).

Therefore, if we are a brother or sister, known of others to be standing fast in the Lord, then the praise of others is what really matters. It should not and does not need to come from ourselves. The approval of men then is not something to disregard for in the right context it is desirable. Paul shows this to be the case:

“For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men” (Rom 14:18; see also 2Cor 8:21; Acts 2:47).

Inter-ecclesial fellowship

The responsibility of an ecclesia is to watch over and encourage the spiritual development of its own members. In a healthy environment, the shepherds of the ecclesia know the attitudes and standing of those in the ecclesia. They are the ones best fit to provide a true assessment of a brother or sister’s character. It would seem right then that ecclesias would still seek to affirm and encourage the practice of commendation both of those who are “sent” and “received”.

Similarly, the ecclesia must make decisions on whom to receive into fellowship. Did any first century ecclesia accept anybody without a letter of recommendation? Even if the visiting brother commended himself, would fellowship be offered and left to his conscious? We have no commandment given to the ecclesias but with so many examples given it would seem reasonable that the answer in practice is “no”.

In terms of fellowship, Bro. Thomas wrote in 1869,

*“Declare what you as a body believe to be the apostles’ doctrines. Invite fellowship upon this basis alone. If upon that declaration, any take the bread and wine, not being offered by you, they do so upon their own responsibility, not on yours.”*³

While this might seem at first to be reasonable, it does not correlate with what we have just seen as the ecclesial practice of recommendation before a person’s reception into fellowship. Leaving the decision of breaking bread and wine solely in the hands of a visitor is to abdicate a responsibility of the ecclesia.

From the earliest years of the Christadelphians, there has been recognition of the need to write letters of commendation when transferring membership from one ecclesia to another. Examples fill the intelligence section of the magazine. Sometimes the lack of such a letter created problems as is apparent in this notice from 1872,

“Brethren Removing from one place to another. — Such should always provide themselves with a letter of recommendation from the ecclesia with which they have been assembling. There have recently been several instances of awkwardness from want of the necessary introduction.”⁴

Even in terms of visitation, some ecclesias adopted a rule,

“Chicago, Ill.—Brother W A. Harris says “We have thought it necessary to adopt the rule adopted in England and elsewhere, that when a stranger visits us, he be required to produce a letter of recommendation before we receive him into our fellowship; failing which, we appoint a committee to confer with him as to the identity of his faith and practice with ours.”⁵

While these brethren state it as a rule they nevertheless are basing it off sound Scriptural principles.

This became the norm throughout the Central Christadelphian brotherhood. As the number of ecclesias grew, the practice developed into acceptance of anybody in good standing from a Central ecclesia. The article in *The Christadelphian Magazine* of 1995 puts it succinctly,

“The fact that fellowship arises from ecclesial membership allows the ecclesial world to be travelled without difficulty. By presenting himself as a member in good standing of a Christadelphian ecclesia in the central fellowship, a brother will be invited without further question to share in the fellowship of the Lord’s Table with his brethren and sisters. Any other arrangement would be unworkable, of course. It would be impossible to undertake an enquiry into every visitor’s beliefs on the door-step of the ecclesial hall, but this would prove necessary if there were no safeguard such as is provided by a brother or sister’s membership of an ecclesia. Thus it is the ecclesia, and not the individual, who is the arbiter of his or her fellowship standing, and it is their home ecclesia’s assessment which is taken into account when individual brethren and sisters visit ecclesias where they are not personally known.”⁶

Conclusion

Influenced by the culture of the times, the first century ecclesia adopted letters of commendation in its own unique way for the protection of fellowship among the ecclesias. As we have seen, the practice is woven throughout the fabric of the New Testament. As modern day ecclesias in the Lord, we would like to say that we emulate similar procedures.

This is not an absolute rule, but is a wise practice to follow. We have seen the expectation and usage of commendation among ecclesias is the best method we

have a preserving the truth in these last days. True fellowship in the Lord is a serious matter given to the ecclesias to implement.

Furthermore, we must consider ourselves humbly, lest any man should boast of himself. The practice of commendation mitigates self-commendation and establishes Godly humility. It makes one realize that acceptance into fellowship is not a right but a privilege.

If we do these things, Lord willing, before the judgment seat we will be given the greatest commendation of all, even to be presented *“faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy”* (Jude 1:24).

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Notes:

1. The word “receive” is used earlier in Rom 14:1 and 15:7 concerning fellowship.
2. And Samuel (1Sam. 2:26)
3. Reproduced in *The Christadelphian*, 1873, pg. 323
4. *The Christadelphian*: 1872, pg. 614.
5. *The Christadelphian*: 1873, pg. 47.
6. *The Christadelphian*: 1995, pg. 386.

Letters

I read with interest your January editorial and the Scriptural justifications for either inclusive or exclusive fellowship. The justification for promoting exclusive fellowship seems based on not wishing to cause “offense”.

On further reflection it seems to me that not wishing to cause “offense” can also be used to justify inclusive fellowship. It is self-evident that excluding brethren in Christ from the table of remembrance will offend them and the Lord Jesus Christ whom they serve.

In the parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15) the Father’s inclusion of his younger son into the family again “offended” the elder brother and he removed himself. In fact he was angry that his Father was rejoicing at the return of his younger son. The Father’s appeal to his elder son is based on compassion, love, forgiveness and mercy for his younger son who he thought he had lost.

The parable was directed towards the Pharisees and scribes who prided themselves on their exclusivity from the rest of the Jewish community. They said *“this people who knoweth not the law are cursed”* (1John 7:49). They were offended by Jesus’ criticism of themselves (Matt 15:12). They thought that they knew God (the Father in the parable) but sadly they didn’t. Their pride prevented them from believing Jesus and his message of compassion, love, forgiveness and mercy.

If we choose exclusive fellowship rather than unity and inclusive fellowship, then we need to remember Jesus’ warning *“Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven”* (Matt 5:20). We ignore his warning at our peril.

William Perks (Toronto Church St, ON)

Youth Speaks

Jonathan the Faithful Prince: (1) A Resilient Enemy

The story of Jonathan is different than almost any other story that can be studied. It is the story of a man with astonishing abilities — a man who charged into a garrison of Philistines with only his faith and his armorbearer, and threw off the Philistine oppressors. It is the story of a man who had the potential to have his name on the lips of Israel for many years to come, and who could have been part of the victory songs of the young women when the armies returned from battle. Yet in all of this, Jonathan's story is one which takes an unexpected turn.

In Jonathan's story, his position of glory is given up — willingly — to another man. All of his abilities and his prowess were focused toward the glory and honor of someone else. All of the fame which he could have claimed as his own, and all of the battles which he could have won in his name, he never thought to acquire. Instead, Jonathan channeled all of his energy, all of his talents, and all of his love towards another man. The story of Jonathan isn't a story about **his** fame and glory. It isn't a story about personal honor and pride. It isn't a story about riches or wealth. Rather, it is a story about humility and love. It's a story which speaks to the heart — and shows a picture of a man who could have had the entire nation attending to his every whim, but who chose instead to follow the path of humility and obedience to God. Instead of advancing his own will and his own name, Jonathan focused all of his efforts and all of his hopes on the one whom God had chosen and on lifting that man's mind to the Kingdom, when his vision had fallen short.

It is a story from which all of us can benefit, and thus his story will be told through this next series of articles. Altogether, our goal will be to bring Jonathan's story to life and make it real — so that as we read through these things we can actually picture him there in the land of Israel, scaling the cliff to the Philistine garrison, or sliding off his robe to give to the anointed of Yahweh. We will try to picture him striving to calm his father's raging emotions about David, and try to picture him reassuring David that he will be king and that one day the two of them will be together again. We will endeavor to see him on the heights of Gilboa, fighting alongside his father — the man whom he sought for so long to turn to God — and falling to the ground in his last breath. Yet we will picture him in another age to come — arrayed in glory so much greater than that which he gave away, and in robes so much whiter than those which he gave up. In all of these events, may the story of Jonathan, the son of Saul, be a story which speaks to us and which calls us to follow his way of thinking and his humble attitude.

Jonathan's introduction

Jonathan first appears in the Scripture narrative in a story about his father's early reign. Saul had reigned over Israel for two years, and he divided his army between himself and his son:

“Saul reigned one year; and when he had reigned two years over Israel, Saul chose him three thousand men of Israel; whereof two thousand were with Saul in Michmash and in mount Bethel, and a thousand were with Jonathan in Gibeah of Benjamin: and the rest of the people he sent every man to his tent” (1Sam 13:1-2).¹

This is the first reference to this Jonathan in all of Scripture. He was made one of the commanders of his father’s troops. Altogether, there were three thousand men — two thousand were with Saul in Michmash, and one thousand were with Jonathan in Gibeah of Benjamin. Interestingly enough, it doesn’t actually appear as though Saul set up this arrangement for any particular battle or war — the record is silent about a Philistine advance against Israel or any specific plans for battle that Saul might have had. It doesn’t preface the chapter by saying *“And there was war between the Philistines and Israel.”* Rather, it would seem as though Saul had simply divided his troops and desired to place them in strategic positions — likely for defense. Nevertheless, this was soon to change:

“And Jonathan smote the garrison of the Philistines that was in Geba, and the Philistines heard of it. And Saul blew the trumpet throughout all the land, saying, Let the Hebrews hear. And all Israel heard say that Saul had smitten a garrison of the Philistines, and that Israel also was had in abomination with the Philistines. And the people were called together after Saul to Gilgal” (1Sam 13:3-4).

Jonathan, with his army of one thousand troops, entered into the Philistine outpost at Geba, and destroyed it. At first, this garrison of the Philistines would seem to indicate that there in fact *had* been a battle brewing, and that Saul had placed his troops to position them for the fight. It would appear as though the Philistines had set up their troops in Geba and thus Saul brought his army in to challenge them. However, when the relationship between the Israelites and the Philistines at this time is examined in a little bit more detail, it becomes apparent that this likely wasn’t the case. In this article, we will set the stage for this battle by examining the context of the chapter. In doing so, we will see that this outpost of the Philistines wasn’t there to begin any particular battle or fight — but it was more than likely a fort which the Philistines had set up in the middle of Israel, specifically to keep the Hebrews in subjection to them. Thus had been the relationship between the Philistines and Israelites for many years.

Philistine domination

When Samuel was a young man, Israel had lost a very decisive battle against the Philistines. It was in that battle that Israel had been completely and entirely humiliated. The ark was stolen, the two sons of the high priest were killed, and even the high priest himself – Eli – died partially as a result of the battle. Israel was in a state of total shame. Eli’s daughter in law, who was about to give birth at the time of this clash, summed up the national feeling with the name which she gave to her son:

“And she named the child Ichabod, saying, The glory is departed from Israel: because the ark of God was taken, and because of her father in law and her

husband. And she said, The glory is departed from Israel: for the ark of God is taken” (1Sam 4:21-22).

The Philistines had defeated Israel, they had slain the two sons of the high priest, and they had stolen the ark. For the next seven months (1 Sam 6:1), the ark plagued the five major Philistine cities — prompting the lords of the Philistines to send it back to Israel. Nevertheless, though the Philistines were struck by God’s wrath during those seven months, Yahweh still allowed Israel to be oppressed by this southern invader. Samuel indicated this in the speech which he gave to the nation once the ark had returned:

“And the men of Kirjathjearim came, and fetched up the ark of the LORD, and brought it into the house of Abinadab in the hill, and sanctified Eleazar his son to keep the ark of the LORD...And Samuel spake unto all the house of Israel, saying, If ye do return unto the LORD with all your hearts, then put away the strange gods and Ashtaroth from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the LORD, and serve him only and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines” (1Sam 7:1, 3).

Seven months after the battle in which the ark was taken, this symbol of God’s presence was returned — but the nation was still under the hand of the Philistines. Yet, Samuel promised hope. If the people were to put away their false gods and turn back to Yahweh with all of their hearts, they would be rescued from their Philistine masters.

A shift of power

The people heard these words, and they chose to act according to them — putting away their gods and turning solely back to the God of Israel. Then, just as Samuel had promised, God fought for them against the Philistines:

“So the Philistines were subdued, and they came no more into the coast of Israel: and the hand of the LORD was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel. And the cities which the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to Israel, from Ekron even unto Gath; and the coasts thereof did Israel deliver out of the hands of the Philistines. And there was peace between Israel and the Amorites” (1Sam 7:13-14).

Thus, the Philistines were pushed out of Israel and even their major cities — Ekron, Gath, and likely Ashdod, Ashkelon, and Gaza — were taken. After this, the Philistines “*came no more into the coast of Israel.*” Yet there was still a bit of a problem. Though the Philistines were subdued, they were never **fully destroyed**, as they were supposed to be like the other nations in Deut 7:2-5.

This was the same issue that Israel had faced when they have first come into the land under the charge of Joshua. God had commanded that the Philistines be entirely wiped out. Even back then, Israel didn’t follow the command. They attacked the Philistines — taking over their main cities (Jdgs 1:18) — but they never fully destroyed them. Because they didn’t follow the command, God promised that the Philistines would be a continual problem for Israel — they would be a thorn in their side — until Israel finally followed heeded God’s voice and eradicated them:

“Namely, five lords of the Philistines, and all the Canaanites, and the Sidonians, and the Hivites that dwelt in mount Lebanon, from mount Baal-Hermon unto the entering in of Hamath. And they were to prove Israel by them, to know whether they would hearken unto the commandments of the LORD, which he commanded their fathers by the hand of Moses” (Jdgs 3:3-4).

Yahweh kept the nations in the land — specifically the Philistines — to see if Israel would follow His commands to destroy them. Now, even during the time of Samuel and the battle after the ark was returned, the commands were **still** not entirely followed. Israel subdued the Philistines and prevented them from entering into their coasts for a long while, but they did not annihilate these wicked people.

Thus, though the main cities of the Philistines had been taken, and though the people had more or less conquered the Philistines, these people would prove to be a resilient enemy. Just as God had said, they would be a thorn in the side of his people. The Philistines would come back and would oppress Israel once more.

Conquered once more

Such was the situation when Samuel anointed Saul as king. The Philistines had come back — and not only had they come against Israel, but they had become rulers of Israel! When Yahweh spoke to Samuel about his mission to anoint Saul, God specifically told Samuel that this new king would try to save Israel from the Philistines:

“Tomorrow about this time I will send thee a man out of the land of Benjamin, and thou shalt anoint him to be captain over my people Israel, that he may save my people out of the hand of the Philistines: for I have looked upon my people, because their cry is come unto me” (1Sam 9:16).

One of Saul’s missions was to put down the Philistines. Though they had been subdued during the early days of Samuel, they had somehow come back — and they had come back in power, putting the nation of Israel beneath their feet and ruling over them. In doing so, the Philistines had set up a fortress in the land of Israel. After anointing Saul, Samuel, in a passing comment to the new monarch, indicated the presence of this military establishment:

*“After that thou shalt come to the hill of God, **where is the garrison of the Philistines**: and it shall come to pass, when thou art come thither to the city, that thou shalt meet a company of prophets coming down from the high place with a psaltery, and a tabret, and a pipe, and a harp, before them; and they shall prophesy” (1Sam 10:5).*

Samuel, when telling Saul some of the things that would happen to him after he left the presence of the prophet, told Saul that he would come to a place near Bethel, called “the hill of God.” In giving another detail about the place, Samuel mentioned that this was a place where there was a Philistine garrison! Thus, at the time when Saul was anointed, the Philistines had actually recreated their army and had charged back into the land of Israel — setting up a garrison in the land. Yet perhaps there was even more than just this one. Consider the way in which Samuel nonchalantly mentioned the existence of a Philistine fortress in Israel! It

was as though the presence of this garrison was simply a fact of life — as though it was *normal*.

Such was the situation at Jonathan's introduction. There was no actual battle taking place and there was no ongoing war with the Philistines. Instead, the Philistines were the rulers over Israel. Israel was a subjugated nation. The Philistines had placed their outposts in strategic locations throughout the Promised Land, and forced Israel to submit to any rule that they pleased. Thus, at the time when Jonathan attacked the garrison, the Philistines had ruled that no man could own a sword — and so the only ones who had a sword were Jonathan and his father.

“Now there was no smith found throughout all the land of Israel: for the Philistines said, Lest the Hebrews make them swords or spears: but all the Israelites went down to the Philistines, to sharpen every man his share, and his coulter, and his axe, and his mattock... So it came to pass in the day of battle, that there was neither sword nor spear found in the hand of any of the people that were with Saul and Jonathan: but with Saul and with Jonathan his son was there found” (1Sam 13:19-20, 22).

How humiliating and shameful this rule by the Philistines would have been for Israel. The people only had farming tools with which to fight — only Saul and Jonathan actually had a sword or a spear (of iron?). But such was the situation. The Philistines were the masters of Israel. They had come back, they had conquered, they had passed their laws, and they had set up troops throughout the land.

Truly, Israel was in need of a deliverer. Yet from where would one arise?

Jason Hensley (Simi Hills, CA)

Notes:

1. Verse 1 is hard to translate, as the first number is missing, and Jonathan must have been of some age to be given charge of 1,000 men. The NIV, for example, has “Saul was thirty years old when he became king, and he reigned over Israel forty- two years” (1Sam 13:1). (ED).

Special Invitation

For some years, unity discussions have been taking place with Churches of God of the Abrahamic Faith. In the interest of promoting friendship and mutual understanding between our communities, we print this invitation:

*You, your family and friends are invited to the
38th Annual Abrahamic Faith Gathering
at Denison University in Granville, Ohio, July 22-28, 2013.*

Main Speakers:

Bro. Ken Curry - “Stewardship: Guiding Principle of a Godly Life”

Bro. Joe Fordham - “Judgment and Discernment”

Bro. Alan Curtis - “Forgive Us as We Forgive”

*Contact Bro. Brad Rek (330) 609-6957 or lisarek8@cs.com
or visit our website at <http://abrahamicfaithgathering.org/>*

Reflections

Marriage Proverbs: Guidelines for a Happy Relationship. (14) Guideline Number 13: *Till death do us part*

The length of a marriage

It's basically a myth that the challenge of maintaining a happy marriage gets easier the longer one is married. Neither do we necessarily get wiser as we get older. All Bible students are familiar with the multiplicity of Solomon's wives and concubines leading him spiritually astray in his old age,¹ or the adultery committed by King David with Bathsheba.² These were not the acts of young men, but rather those of elders who should have been mature God-fearing individuals. The actions of Solomon and David point out the vulnerability to the sin of infidelity even in old age. It is a startling fact that in recent years the divorce rate among older long-married couples has seen a phenomenal rate of increase. In a recent sociological study³ it was found that:

“The divorce rate among older adults has more than doubled since 1980, and 1 in 4 persons who divorces today is over age 50.”

It is deplorable to see couples that have been married 20, 30, 40 years, or more getting divorced because of the proverbial “irreconcilable differences” even in our own community. Perhaps I am incredibly naïve, but it would seem to me somewhere along the line a God-fearing couple would have learned how to deal with conflict in their marriage and made their differences *reconcilable*. However, I have learned that this simply does not always happen when a long-term marriage fails; what one finds instead is that the differences and incompatibilities have been buried for many years while the couple was occupied elsewhere raising children, developing careers, and generally trying to muddle through. Then one day they, individually, or even simultaneously, discover that the *nest is empty* and the focus falls exclusively on each other. When this happens invariably one or the other, or both don't like what they see. Unresolved issues that may have been obscured for years, even decades, come to the fore and having never learned to resolve conflict in a loving spiritual manner the marriage ends up in a divorce.

Divorce

If the divorce is a result of infidelity, because for one reason or another they no longer find themselves in love with their original partner, and the partner(s) marry someone else, they often think that this second attempt doesn't guarantee happiness. In fact the data suggests quite the opposite: we discover that the divorce rate for second marriages is even higher than for first ones. Obviously, people with unresolved issues often carry them over to new relationships, because they have never addressed the real source of their unhappiness, *which is themselves*. Often divorce rather than bringing happiness results instead in severe financial difficulty for the couple involved. This is true for the woman especially if she has never developed

any independent resources for earning a living or she has passed the age where any one would normally employ her. In the case of the man divorce in his declining years usually sees alimony wiping out pensions and/or 401K retirement plans in a way they never reckoned. With these observations in mind measures have been proposed to remedy the situation and to alleviate the economic and social pains associated with divorce. This concept has become known as a “contract marriage”.

Divorce has become so ubiquitous in certain parts of the world that recently in Mexico City a group of lawmakers were concerned with the reality that 50%, or more, of the marriages in that municipality ended in failure. They reasoned that legal complications could be avoided if instead of lifetime marriage licenses the government established renewable marriage contracts with terms as short as two years. These agreements would automatically expire unless periodically renewed, without resorting to attorneys or court proceedings. The financial aspects would all be worked out in advance and would be incorporated in the original two-year limited term contract. Thus far, on first attempt this measure failed to pass. However, others have picked up the gauntlet here in the United States suggesting that perhaps a twenty-year renewable term would be a more reasonable societal goal. The longer term would permit (*they argue*) the couple to raise children to a responsible age. Naturally, this presumes that the couple wants children in the first place and further that they have them almost immediately.⁴ Where this will end and how far these ideas may go I certainly cannot predict, but they emphasize the point that marriage is more and more regarded as a passing phase rather than a lifelong commitment. This model is in serious contradiction to the commandments of Christ.⁵

What causes someone to stray from commitment to a marriage that has lasted decades? We have seen this dramatically displayed in the tabloids when public figures are revealed as having betrayed their spouses for some newer, generally much younger, often more attractive companion. With males this phenomena is alluded to as finding the “trophy” wife (*or mistress!*). The female partner is not immune to seeking greener pastures rather than being forced to endure what they may perceive as a loveless marriage. An attractive, more successful, charming and apparently more attentive male at work may become the object of the unhappily married woman’s affections. The phenomena of abandoning a long-term marriage by being drawn away by newly directed passions might seem modern, but that is hardly the case. As Solomon has written *there is nothing new under the sun*.⁶ Consider the advice given in Proverbs:

*“Let your fountain be blessed, and **rejoice in the wife of your youth**” (Prov 5:18).⁷*

The admonition to “rejoice in the wife of your youth” is given in the context of a warning not to be led astray by temptation: and remember what you saw in her “in your youth”

“Why should you be intoxicated, my son, with a forbidden woman and embrace the bosom of an adulteress?” (Prov 5:20).

The prophet Malachi expands on this warning:

*“But you say, “Why does he not?” Because the LORD was witness between you and the **wife of your youth**, to whom you have been faithless, though she is your companion and your **wife by covenant**” (Mal 2:14).*

Here the context uses abandoning “the wife of your youth” as a metaphor for the people of Israel forsaking their covenant with the LORD God. Clearly the prophet, by the inspiration of the LORD God, regarded marriage as a sacred covenant between a man and a woman equivalent in seriousness to the covenant He made with Israel. The LORD God’s promises to Israel can never be broken,⁸ in spite of the sins of that nation that the prophets elaborated.

A lifelong commitment

The idea of marriage being a sacred lifelong covenant between a man and a woman is amplified in the New Testament which uses similes that picture Christ as the Bridegroom and the ecclesia as his bride (See Matt 9:15, Mark 2:19-20, Luke 5:34-35 for Jesus as bridegroom, 2Cor 11:2, Eph 5 for ecclesia as bride.)

“..for he (Christ) has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you” Heb 13:5

These are magnificent words — in spite of all our sins our Lord and Master Jesus Christ offers us mercy and forgiveness. We will fail from time to time, but repentance and renewal are always possible. Only if we turn our backs and walk away from Jesus, then and only then are we lost. The author of Hebrews makes this clear when he said that breaking our covenant with Christ crucifies him once again and likens our fate to that of thorns and thistles that are consumed by fire.

“For it is impossible to restore again to repentance those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, and have shared in the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come, if they then fall away, since they are crucifying once again the Son of God to their own harm and holding him up to contempt. For land that has drunk the rain that often falls on it, and produces a crop useful to those for whose sake it is cultivated, receives a blessing from God. But if it bears thorns and thistles, it is worthless and near to being cursed, and its end is to be burned” (Heb 6: 4-8).

This poses two rhetorical questions: Can we imagine our Lord Jesus Christ breaking his covenant with us? Secondly: Can we imagine breaking the covenant we made with our marriage partner that Scriptures insist should be ‘till death do us part’? A life-long commitment to marriage may be something the world has come to regard as impractical and indeed even foolish, but certainly there cannot be any doubt in the mind of a faithful believer that this has never been, and never will be the intent of the Lord God when he made man and woman. *“Because of your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, **but from the beginning it was not so**” (Matt 19:8).*

If we break a covenant with our marriage partner who we know up close and personal what makes us think we can stay faithful to God!

How do we avoid a marriage, as it were, getting stale with age? The first thing to recognize is that we need to be flexible. Being willing to modify comfortable old patterns in the light of new situations in a marriage is essential to keeping the relationship functioning happily. When I first retired eight years ago it took some adjustment for my wife to get comfortable with having me around the house, especially since I took a new part-time job that had unpredictable hours. She may have married me “for better or worse”, but not for lunch! In almost 45 years of marriage (at that time: 53+ years at this writing) she planned her day without needing to be concerned with what I was doing for lunch! This took some adjusting on the part of both of us, which pretty much has been solved — *I think!* Obviously, this situation is a minor example; much more weighty issues can arise as the years go by in a marriage including serious illness, intimacy problems, difficulties that one’s adult children may have, diminishing of income, taking care of one’s own aging parents, loss of a loved one and so on. At one point or other Mary and I have had to deal in some measure with all of these issues and several others that I omit for lack of space. What has sustained us time and again, when we felt battered by life’s challenges, were the words of our Lord Jesus Christ said to his disciples when they lacked sufficient faith to heal the epileptic boy.

“... if you have faith like a grain of mustard seed... nothing will be impossible for you.” Matthew 17:20

With this in mind we found it helpful to pray together as the disciplines did: ... *Lord, increase our faith.*⁹

To maintain a happy marriage — *until death do us part* — I suggest that reviewing the guidelines that have been provided throughout this series may be of assistance.

- **Resolve to be faithfully committed to each other**, as we know that our Lord Jesus Christ is faithful to us. (Cp. Eph 5:22-33)
- **Develop trust** between yourself and your partner by being absolutely honest. A happy marriage at any age cannot be built on a foundation of secrets and lies. (Eph 5:21)
- **Don’t worship ‘material things’** or they will become your stumbling block. Remember the advice of the Apostle Paul: *“I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content”*¹⁰ (Phil 4:11).
- **Develop your communication skills.** Being able to discuss issues and really listen to your partner without disparaging them, or worse ignoring their concerns, is the first step in finding a solution to a disagreement. (James 1:19 and Eph 4:15)
- **Be willing to compromise.** Almost all disagreements are amenable to a solution when love dissolves away rigid positions. (Matt 5:25 and Luke 12:58)
- **Be willing to lose!** Just because you may be right doesn’t mean you have to win the argument. (Cp. Matt 5:39 and Luke 6:29)
- **Learn to “fight fair”.** Confine discussions to the issue at hand and avoid dragging up other extraneous foibles that happened in the past. (Acts 3:19 and see footnote¹¹)
- **Learn to forgive.** We will never be perfect nor should we expect it in our

marriage partner. If you truly love your spouse forgiveness will be essential to maintaining a happy relationship. (Cp. 1Cor 13:1-13 and Eph 4:32)

- **Be wise with your finances.** If you don't know how to make long-range financial plans it is probably a good idea to seek advice from a professional. (Cp. Luke 14:28-30 and Prov 24:30-34)
- **Don't use intimacy as a way of controlling your relationship.** (Cp. 1Cor. 7:2-5)
- **Resolve to make decisions jointly** so that issues don't lead to power struggles. Remember, as husband and wife you are on the same team – don't pull in opposite directions! (1Pet 3:7)
- **Control your anger.** Arguments that lead to insults, verbal or physical abuse should not be tolerated. Surprisingly long-married couples are not immune to such behavior. Sometimes it is a reversion to habits never resolved earlier in the marriage and in other cases it develops anew from frustrations that come from trying to adjust to new problems that come with age. (Cp. Prov. 15:1 and Gal 5:20,23)
- **Don't let problems linger.** The longer an issue remains unresolved usually the higher the barrier becomes to reach accommodation. The Apostle Paul's sanguine advice should be kept in mind: "...do not let the sun go down on your anger" (Eph 4:26).

"Enjoy life with the wife whom you love, all the days of your vain life that he has given you under the sun, because that is your portion in life and in your toil at which you toil under the sun" (Eccl 9:9).

(Series Concluded)

John C. Bilello (Ann Arbor, MI)

Notes:

1. 1Kgs 11:3,4. Whether or not Solomon was personally happy in his old age we cannot say, but certainly his wives made his marriages decidedly unhappy in a spiritual sense.
2. 2Sam 11.
3. Susan L. Brown and I-Fen Lin, Study on: "Divorce in Middle and Later Life: New Estimates from the 2009 American Community Survey", Department of Sociology, Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, Ohio
4. For more details on the renewable contract proposal see Reuters, News release, dated September 29, 2011, Mexico City.
5. Matt 5:31-32 and 19:7-10; Mark 10:4-9.
6. Abstracted from Eccl 1:9 .
7. All references are from the ESV.
8. See Jer 31:35-36; 33:17-21.
9. Luke 17:5.
10. Abstracted from Phil 4:11 (See also 1Tim. 6:6-8).
11. The passage indicates that God will not only forgive sins but that he will forget them (blot them out) — we should do the same.

One of the greatest problems facing ecclesias at present is the breakdown of marriages and how to handle such situations. Differences in dealing with problems which may have occurred prior to baptism have sometimes been allowed to drive ecclesias apart and to affect the fellowship of their members.

John Roberts: The Christadelphian 2000 p. 255

Book of Mormon (5): God and Jesus

From beginning to end the *Book of Mormon* teaches the doctrine of the Trinity. The characteristics of God and Jesus, the crucifixion and the resurrection are all repeated topics in the *Book of Mormon*. Explaining these issues within the framework of a Trinitarian view results in a groundwork of confusion and makes an incomprehensible backdrop in which to view God. By way of contrast, the correct Biblical revelation of God and Jesus is strikingly simple and remarkably logical.

The Trinity in the Book of Mormon

There is a brief introduction to the *Book of Mormon* written by Joseph Smith summarizing the objective of the book as: “the convincing of the Jew and Gentile that JESUS is the CHRIST, the ETERNAL GOD...” (end 2nd paragraph of foreword). In the second to last book we read: [Jesus Christ is said to be speaking, see v. 8] “I am the Father, I am the light and the life and the truth of the world” (Ether 4:12). So the theme runs from beginning to end in the *Book of Mormon*!

One of the deceptive aspects to this book is sometimes it appears to be completely correct in its teaching. For example, upon believing in God, the convert is to be immersed “in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost” (3 Nephi 11:25-26). This sounds just like Christ’s instructions (Matt 28: 19).

We might even rationalize the following words: “the Father, and the Son and the Holy Ghost are one; and I am in the Father, and the Father in me, and the Father and I are one” (3 Nephi 11:27) as correctly speaking of the oneness that the believer can share with the Lord Jesus (John 17: 20-22). But when we look earlier in this same chapter we read: “ye may thrust your hands into my side... that ye may know that **I am the God of Israel, and the God of the whole earth, and have been slain for the sins of the world**” (3 Nephi 11:14). It’s clear that the idea being expressed is not at all the Scriptural identification of Jesus as the Son of God born of the virgin Mary through the power of the Holy Spirit, but of the Lord God Himself being the Jesus that died on the cross.¹

King Benjamin’s declaration

One of the leading “prophets” in the *Book of Mormon* is a ruler called Benjamin. Dated in B.C. 124 he is presented as saying:

“For behold, the time cometh, and is not far distant, that with power, **the Lord Omnipotent who reigneth, who was, and is from all eternity to all eternity**, shall come down from heaven among the children of men, and shall dwell in a tabernacle of clay... and lo, he shall suffer temptations, and pain of body... And he shall be called Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Father of heaven and earth, the Creator of all things from the beginning; and his mother shall be called Mary... and they... shall scourge him, and shall crucify him. And he shall rise the third day from the dead...” (Mosiah 3:5-10).

This is a very clear and very striking statement. There’s no doubt what the speaker has in mind. The remarks give rise to all kinds of questions: “How can an eternal,

omnipotent God die? Who was running the world while he was in ‘clay’ and was dead?”

Later in the same book, the prophet Abinadi is reputed to have said:

“God himself shall come down among the children of men... And because he dwelleth in flesh he shall be called the Son of God, and having subjected the flesh to the will of the Father, being the Father and the Son — The Father because he was conceived by the power of God; and the Son, because of the flesh; thus becoming the Father and Son — And they are one God, yea, the very Eternal Father of heaven and of earth...” (Mosiah 15:1-4).

The extraordinary and confused thinking expressed in these words astounds the person accustomed to working in logical terms in their practical everyday lives. How could any reasonable person possibly believe an individual could be his own father and his own son at the same time? Yet this is where a belief in the Trinity takes a person. No wonder when the doctrine is challenged we are told that, “It’s a mystery of the church which we cannot understand.”

Confusion rules in the atonement

The central point of the gospel is that Christ died for our sins according to the plan and will of the Father. When one tries to combine that essential teaching with the idea of the Trinity, confusion prevails. Consider the following which to the logical mind seems like utter nonsense: “it behooveth the great Creator that he suffereth himself to become subject unto man in the flesh, and die for all men, that all men might become subject unto him” (2 Nephi 9:5).

What possible connection could there be between the death of the Creator, who cannot die, and all mankind becoming subject to Him? All mankind are subject to the Creator, not because He dies, but because He lives, because He made them, sustains their existence and requires their subjection to His will.

Comments on the atonement continue with a personification of “justice”. As a consequence of the sin of Adam and Eve, we are told:

“All mankind were fallen and they were in the grasp of justice; yea, the justice of God, which consigned them forever to be cut off from his presence. And now, the plan of mercy could not be brought about except an atonement should be made; therefore God himself atoneth for the sins of the world, to bring about the plan of mercy, to appease [i.e. God is appeasing Himself] the demands of justice, that God might be a perfect, just God and a merciful God also.” (Alma 2:14-15). And the atonement is said to be made by God’s own blood: “And his blood atoneth for the sins of those who have fallen by the transgression of Adam...” (Mosiah 3:11).

Only in religious thinking could such concepts be contemplated as if they were profound. It was God against whom sins had been committed. Was He going to “appease” Himself with his own blood by dying on the cross? In any other field of human enquiry such an idea would be immediately discarded as twisted thinking.

The net impact of such a concept is that mankind, which caused the whole problem, gets off not doing anything. What a contortion of logic and common sense the reader is being asked to accept. And for what reason?

What example? what exhortation? What emotional appeal? What representation of a sacrificial life is here? The whole point of salvation being on the basis of the obedient life and death of one of the human race is completely lost with the doctrine of the Trinity. There is here no powerful appeal by the love of the Father and the Son in providing a reasonable basis for the forgiveness of sins. All we see is a very strange legalistic concept of satisfying the demands of “justice” by means of the blood of the one who was offended and who couldn’t really die, because he was the immortal God. While trying not to be impolite, there is no way of describing this but utter confusion.

The simple, clear Biblical revelation concerning Jesus — he is a human being

The Bible makes it perfectly clear that Jesus Christ is a human being, one of the race that began with Adam and Eve. The first verse of the New Testament declares “the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham” (Matt 1:1). And his genealogy in Luke extends the list of ancestors back to Adam (Luke 3:38). The Bible leaves no doubt that he is not the omnipotent God of heaven and earth but a descendant of Adam, Abraham and David.

In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul builds his case for the resurrection of all believers on the fact that the “man” Christ Jesus was raised as the first of the human race to be raised to immortality: “*For since by **man** came death, by **man** came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every **man** in his own order: Christ the firstfruits afterward they that are Christ’s at his coming*” (1Cor 15:21-23). Earlier in the chapter he made the crucial point that if humans could not be raised from the dead “*then is not Christ raised: and if Christ be not raised your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they all which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished*” (vv. 16-18).

How much plainer could the apostle put it? Jesus is one of us, the first of our race to be immortalized and thereby an assurance that believers in him will be raised and immortalized. If he is not one of the human race, there is no such assurance and the apostle’s argument is without basis.

Perhaps the clearest statement that Jesus Christ **is** a human being is in 1Tim 2:5: “*For there is one God and one mediator between God and **men**, the **man** Christ Jesus*”. Both the words “men” and “man” come from the basic Greek word for human beings (*anthropos* which has come into English as *anthropology* — the study of human beings). Since this passage is referring to the present immortalized Jesus Christ, it is evident that Jesus **was, is and always will be** a human being.

The Lord Jesus himself declares that all the wisdom, power and status he **had and has** was given to him by God. As he says: “*The Son can **do nothing** of himself...I can of mine own self **do nothing**...I **do nothing** of myself; but as my Father hath taught me I speak these things*” (John 5:19,30; 8:28). All of the inherent power

and wisdom is with God. As we would expect in one who was human, Jesus was totally dependent on God to provide these things to him. He did not have them without God providing it.

Furthermore, when Jesus was dead, he was totally dependent on God to raise him from the dead. If God had not done so, Jesus would have seen corruption. This point is repeatedly made in the opening chapters of Acts: "*Whom **God hath raised up**, having loosed the pains of death...thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One **to see corruption**... This Jesus hath **God raised up**... Unto you [Jews] first God, having raised up his Son Jesus...*" (Acts 2:24,27,32; 3:26). When Jesus was dead, he was dead, like any other human being he was totally dependent on God raising him from the dead.

The simple, clear Biblical teaching concerning God

The Bible's opening words are: "*In **the beginning**, God created the heaven and the earth*" (Gen. 1:1). The one true God is praised by the apostle Paul as "*the King **eternal**, immortal, invisible, the only wise God...**who only** hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto...*" (1Tim 1:17; 6:16). This is obviously not the human being, Jesus Christ, who died on the cross and was raised from the dead by the God of heaven and earth.

Throughout Scripture God is praised as "*the **eternal** God*" (Deut 33:27); "*Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even **from everlasting to everlasting**, thou art God*" (Psa 90:2). While the Lord Jesus had his beginning in the womb of his mother, Mary, God is without beginning and without end.

The Bible describes God as not only having made all things but sustaining all life. Speaking of all living the Psalmist says: "*thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust. Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created*" and in another place we are assured "*He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep*" (Psa 104:29,30; 121:4).

Here is not the confusion of the Trinitarian ideas as set out in the *Book of Mormon*. Here is a clear distinction between God and the Lord Jesus. The God of the Bible does not shed his blood, die on the cross and require to be raised from the dead. All those things are done by the human being, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Some possible problems considered

In the Bible, there are a couple of concepts which need to be clarified which impact the language used in regard to the Lord Jesus. They are:

- 1) The names and titles of the one immortal God are frequently applied to those who are acting on His behalf. Some rather obvious examples are:
 - a) **The angel** (Exod 3:2) who spoke to Moses from the burning bush to whom the names LORD and God are applied (v.4) and who declared: "*I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham* (v.6)...*And the LORD said...*" (v.7)". Here is an **angelic representative** of God speaking as if he were himself the One God of heaven and earth.

- b) **The judges of Israel** who were to represent God's judgments to the nation of Israel but were rebuked for their injustice: "*God standeth in the congregation of the mighty; he judgeth among the gods...I have said, Ye are gods...*" (Psa 82:1,6).

With such precedents, it's understandable Jesus Christ should be termed "*the mighty God*" (Isa 9:6) in regard to his position as God's great ruler in the kingdom age. It's also understandable why the apostle Thomas would exclaim, "*My Lord and my God*" (John 20:28) upon realizing Jesus was the great Messiah who would rule the world.

- 3) A second concept to note is that the great spiritual change brought about now in the believer's behavior and to be implemented more fully in the kingdom of God is spoken of as a new creation and the language of the physical creation is applied to it. Some examples are:
- a) **Baptism** where the change of status and relationship to God is spoken of as being "*born again*" (John 3:3) or is described with the words normally used of physical death and resurrection (Rom 6:4).
 - b) **Aspects of behavior** are spoken of as parts of our body which can be replaced: "*mortify [put to death] therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection...ye have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him*" (Col 3:5-10). Also note that since this spiritual change is made possible by being baptized into Christ, Christ is spoken of as the creator of this new "spiritual" creation with the words "that created him".
 - c) Because Jesus was the first human raised from the dead to immortality he is spoken of as the beginning of this creation: "*and he is the head of the body, the church: who is **the beginning**, the firstborn from the dead*" (Col 1:18). The idea is seen again in Revelation where the message is "*from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness and the **first begotten of the dead***" and later says "*these things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, **the beginning of the creation of God***" (Rev 1:5; 3:14).

At first, these concepts may take some Bible study to fully grasp. But they are fully comprehensible. They are not at all like the completely illogical and incomprehensible "mystery" of the Trinity presented in the *Book of Mormon*.

Conclusion

The *Book of Mormon's* presentation regarding God and Jesus is nothing more than that of orthodox Christianity which was adopted in 330 A.D. This regrettably leaves the casual Bible reader hopelessly confused and muddled as he tries to sort out the truth concerning the nature of God and His Son, Jesus Christ.

Don Styles (Ann Arbor, MI)

(Next: What the *Book of Mormon* says about Satan, the devil and human nature.)

Notes:

1. Considering the misuse of this passage by Trinitarians, we might rather use the baptismal formula "in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ" which is alluded to several times in Acts.



Bible Mission News

What is the Purpose of thisisyourbible.com? Who is behind it?



From its inception, thisisyourbible.com has had a clear vision. Our mission may be summarized:

- *We recognize that all things are subject to our Father's will and must be done to His glory.*
- *Our primary objective is to preach the Truth.*
- *We will provide sound Biblical teaching on first principle topics.*
- *We will connect students with tutors and so to Ecclesias.*
- *We will develop a strong tutor base.*
- *We will improve awareness and ownership of the site by Ecclesias.*
- *We will reduce outreach costs through online delivery of materials and instruction.*
- *We will provide 24 hour turnaround for personalized Bible Q&A.*

To further these aims, our primary ecclesial preaching organizations have joined together to create and fund thisisyourbible.com. The site is supported by the CBMA/CBMC, CBM, and the ACBM and is recognized by them as our pre-eminent internet preaching resource. Representatives from these organizations are in regular contact with one another and meet annually in conjunction with joint CBM meetings to discuss issues of concern in managing the website and moving its objectives forward. See below for a list of some of the statistics which bear out how well we have been blessed in meeting our primary objectives.

Over the years, team members have changed but the objectives and the determination, by our Father's good grace, to carry them out have not. The current committee is composed of brethren Robert Alderson, Chairman; Keith Pearson, ACBM; Jon Hale, CBM; Duncan Kenzie, CBMC/CBMA. Bro. Mike LeDuke is the site day-to-day Administrator; Bro. Peter Forbes assists Bro. Jon Hale and Bro. Glenn Smith (UK) assists Bro. Mike in answering many of our visitors' questions while Sis. Jan Berneau (CBMA) takes care of publicity and ensuring that our ecclesias are aware of the work being done on their behalf.

The broad scope of the work is reflected in the diversity of the locations of our team members. They come from the UK, Australia, New Zealand, British Columbia, California, and Ontario. Our tutors have joined the work from almost every country on the planet where there is an ecclesia. Those visiting the website, and

they visit in their hundreds every day, come from all nations. At any one time, there are literally thousands of students registered and actively taking our Bible courses.

These courses are targeted to specific areas of the globe. Those registering from the CBMA/CBMC's area of operations have two choices (although they may opt to do both courses simultaneously), *Learn to Read the Bible Effectively* which is a webinar — a combination of online video and questions answered and reviewed by our tutors — and *Exploring the Bible*. The ACBM offers *Exploring the Bible* while those serviced by the CBM may be offered either the *CBM 40-Lesson Course* or the *18-Lesson Course*.

As the site grows and diversifies over time, the needs of each CBM organization for online preaching will be met uniquely but under the umbrella of the **thisisyourbible.com** with different offerings which will appeal effectively to their respective audiences. The back-end student management system which is the backbone of the whole effort will remain the same across these varied domains. This again reflects the global nature of the effort and is a wonderful example of Christadelphians with somewhat differing requirements working together to the glory of God — unity in diversity!

The development of thisisyourbible.com — 2006 to 2013

www.thisisyourbible.com was the product of discussions between the CBMA/CBMC, CBM, and ACBM in 2005 to create a Christadelphian worldwide preaching website supported by our primary Bible Mission organizations. The website's URL was graciously ceded to us by the Southern California Preaching Committee who were, and continue to be, very supportive of the TIYB mission. Brethren were recruited to plan, design, build, and maintain the site and the first iteration went live in January of 2006. In the beginning, management design, implementation, and support of the project was wholly based in North America, primarily in California



TIYB Version 1 - 2006

and Ontario. The highlights of the site were literature available for reading online and downloading, personalized answers to Bible questions, a survey question leading to a specific piece of literature, a quick and easy means of locating and communicating with ecclesias around the world, and, the centerpiece, online Bible study courses.

In 2007, we decided that the site needed to be re-designed in order to keep it fresh with a new “look and feel” or in programmer-ese, a more up to date GUI (Graphical User Interface). The new design was implemented in the spring of 2008 and proved to be very popular with our visitors and students.

However, the need to grow and change is an ever-present driver of development and innovation on



TIYB Version 2

any internet project and ours is no different. While the new site met many of our objectives, we decided to begin work on another upgrade in order to improve its technical environment and allow it to keep pace with the latest in site design technology.



TIYB Version 3

In the spring of 2011, our current technical environment was established under Bro. Duncan Kenzie's leadership. The site was transferred to servers in Victoria, B.C. and work on an innovative new version of the website began in earnest. Bro. Jason Grant of the Orangeville, ON, Ecclesia, volunteered the resources of himself and his company to do the redesign. He gave us several excellent options and we chose the one we felt was the most suitable to our needs both present and future. The new site has a decidedly up to date look while maintaining the core elements of the previous systems.

A key addition to this version is its enhanced video capabilities which have added a new dimension to our visitors' experience with the site.

The video presentations are a vast improvement over our previous attempts to include this medium on the site. Currently, a visitor may view:

- "Why I Believe the Bible", a series of six short videos featuring highly qualified brethren who explain why they trust the Bible;
- "The Bible and Science: Facts and Theories" which demonstrates why the Bible and the facts of Science are not in conflict.
- "Introducing the Christadelphian Community"
- "Important Bible Teaching" which are short presentations on first principle topics.

The new video environment has also allowed us to present our first webinar (i.e. an internet seminar), "Learn to Read the Bible Effectively" in a very effective manner with the video showing smoothly and without the jerkiness experienced when we tried to use it under the previous version of the system.

In keeping with our goal of connecting our visitors with ecclesias, the "Contact" menu item allows visitors to locate virtually every ecclesia in the world and contact that ecclesia's representative via email. Many ecclesias have detailed information regarding their programs and the location of their meeting places including an interactive Google map! The site is attractive and effective and we are seeing a steady month by month increase in our visitors and number of students.

Many ecclesias and virtually all of the areas in which the CBMs are active, make use of the "Student Coordinator" function. An individual from an ecclesia may build a team to manage all of the students and more casual contacts attracted to the

website in a given geographic area. At a click of a button, the Student Coordinator may send emails to all of the TIYB contacts in their managed area to inform them of seminars and other special events. Please contact us at yourbible@gto.net if you would like to pursue this option for your ecclesia.

What does the future hold for **thisisyourbible.com**? We aren't sure yet but we are constantly thinking of ways to improve and innovate to provide the most effective tool possible to share the glorious good news of our Father's coming Kingdom with as many as possible while there is still time.

If you have any suggestions regarding enhancements to the site, please send them to Bro. Mike LeDuke, yourbible@gto.net. Thanks!

Our tutors speak

Recently, we solicited feedback from our tutors about the utility of **thisisyourbible.com**. Here are some of their comments:

Sis. Patricia Dennis of the North Houston, TX Ecclesia: The site has been instrumental to me over the last few years.... It is a great outline for studying the truth. My sister was baptized early last year and I was able to use a few of the lessons in addition to her studying with another brother...The site has been a very helpful organized plan to help me teach. I have three students and lead two classes per week.

Bro. Chuck Link of the Moorestown, NJ Ecclesia: I was a former cutting edge IT guy before they even called it IT. I'm now a total dinosaur with computers. The TIYB site has changed and each time I get a bit confused at the start. But each time the support offered has been outstanding to bring me up to speed. Anytime there has been any problem the support whether they are at home or even in another country doing missionary work has been outstanding. I feel the latest series of changes have improved the site. It is a site that can explain not only the Bible message but assure us that the Bible is the inspired Word of God. It is a professionally done site I am not ashamed to show anyone. And it is an easy site to remember and advertise. We have thisisyourbible.com decals that go on the rear side windows of cars, the site has been advertised in newspapers, and we have business cards for friends with the website on one side and the ecclesial address and meeting times on the other. At least two people I helped tutor using this site became baptised.

Bro. Jim Land, Los Angeles, CA Ecclesia: Not only does working TIYB strengthen each of the tutors and indirectly the ecclesia that they are in, it also promotes fellowship around the country. Through my attempt to "hand off" two students who were finishing the course to someone who could follow up, I used Google to locate the closest ecclesia to each and then began calling using the ALS Diary the Recording Brothers of the two ecclesias. I didn't even know that there were ecclesias in the locations until I started looking. I found further that even though there may be an ecclesia nearby, that didn't mean that there was someone living in the community. For example, I had one student living in NY on the border of PA. I found an ecclesia with an address not too far below the border; but when I

finally called the RB, it turned out that he and his wife actually lived in the same town as the student. Another brother, living in Southern Missouri, actually drove by my student's home town on his way to meeting in Northern Oklahoma. I talked quite a bit with both. ... With our being a dispersed community but with a very low density, we face a problem with providing an ecclesial environment for isolated students — that is, isolated from proximity to a meeting. This is perhaps the biggest challenge of the TIYB.com effort.

Bro. Dave Jennings, Pomona, CA Ecclesia: Here are some responses I have recently received from a student that I am working with:

“This is a remarkable course you have here. It is changing my life!!! This is very powerful stuff and life altering. Make sure I'm getting everything you're asking in the questions, please!....”

“Please instruct me to read in other parts of the Bible if you find that I'm missing the point in my answers above. This is an incredible program you have put together for the hungry souls looking to know God and His word... Thank you!”

Bro. Glenn Smith, Loughborough, UK Ecclesia: Bro. Glenn has been a very valuable resource to the site and has answered many of the questions submitted since 2008. He undertook to maintain a correspondence with a keen young man from Texas named Brady. Glenn persisted with Brady for a year, patiently and painstakingly answering his questions. Here is one of the latest messages from Brady to Glenn:

“My wife and I are having a hard time because we really want to attend church but I refuse to send my son to any church that preaches false doctrine. She still wants to go to the Baptist church down the road from our house even though she doesn't believe in the Trinity. I went for a while but now after all that I know I just can't stand it any longer. I want so badly to be able to talk to someone face to face who believes the truth but there are no Christadelphian churches in my area. I have tried rather hard to talk to people from that Baptist church but they are nearly impossible to talk to because the popular belief is exactly the opposite from what I have come to know and believe as truth. I want so badly to help advance God's kingdom and preach the truth... I only wish there was some way I could attend a church that believed the truth. I pray so much for God to direct my path. I prayed that some time ago and I found the Christadelphians.”

Brady has been put in touch with brother Stan Isbell from the North Houston, TX Ecclesia — this is a perfect example of the way the website can be the touchstone by which people like Brady, hungry for the Truth, can find a community of like precious faith!

How can you help?

Pray for us — *“the effectual fervent prayer of the righteous avails much”* (James 5:16). Nothing we plan to do will bear fruit without our Father's blessing and our ecclesias' support.

Register as a tutor — you can choose to work with either online or postal students or both. You will have as much support as you require. We have brothers and sisters of all age ranges and levels of computer literacy serving as tutors. You may make your “catchment area” as broadly or narrowly defined as you like. To sign-up as a tutor go to **thisisyourbible.com**, scroll to the bottom of the homepage and click on the “Tutor Registration” prompt.

Volunteer as a Regional Student Coordinator — manage the assignment of students to tutors in your specified area of operations. Ensure that your local contacts are followed up and invited to ecclesial events.

Support your CBM organization — In these last days, it is imperative that we be about our Father’s business. As you can see from our statistics box, **thisisyourbible.com** is reaching more individuals with the Gospel of the coming Kingdom than is possible by any other medium. We need your help financially to continue this important work.

Brothers and sisters, it is our imperative to preach. God will give the increase. You can help.

“I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, ‘Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?’ Then said I, ‘Here am I; send me.’” (Isa 6: 8)

thisisyourbible.com Statistics

Tutors: **788**

Students: **25,029**

Visits since 2006: **1.5 million**

Visitors since 2006: **800,000 +**

Top countries of origin (% of registered students):

USA: 39%

Russia: 12%

UK: 9%

Canada: 8%

Australia: 5%

Caribbean: 5%

Ukraine: 4%

Questions answered since 2006: **approximately 10,000**

Estimates for the main centers of Christadelphian populations are as follows: United Kingdom (18,000), Australia (9,987), Malawi (7,000), United States (6,500), Mozambique (7,500), Canada (3,375), New Zealand (1,785), Kenya (1,700), India (1,500) and Tanzania (1,000). This puts the figure at around 60,000.

Wikipedia, Christadelphians

Addresses for Bequests and Donations

Christadelphian Bible Mission of the Americas (CBMA) supports preaching work throughout the Americas, Truth Corps, etc. Visit www.cbma.net for current activities as well as to make US dollar donations. Donations by check should be sent c/o Jeff Gelineau, 567 Astorian Dr., Simi Valley, CA 93065-5941, or contact jeffandkellie@gelineau.org

Christadelphian Bible Mission Canada (CBMC) supports preaching work throughout the Caribbean and bequests for similar activity. Visit www.cbma.net for an update on current activities as well as to make Canadian dollar online donations.

Donations by cheque should be sent to Box 55541, Unit 119, 15280 101 Ave., Surrey, BC, Canada, V3R 0J7

CBMA Overseas Book Service welcomes gifts of used Bibles, reference books, and Christadelphian books. Please contact Jan Berneau, 1221 N. Whitnall Hwy., Burbank, CA 91505-2110.
Phone: 818-842-2868
jberneau@earthlink.net

Christadelphian Tidings Publishing Committee publishes this magazine and other works on the Truth. P.O. Box 530696, Livonia, MI 48153-0696, www.tidings.org

Christadelphian Tape Library. Contact Reuben E. Washington, 196 E. Stearns St., Rahway, NJ 07065-4923.
Phone: 732-381-4590
Fax: 732-499-8415
christadelphiantapelibrary@verizon.net

Fairhaven Christadelphian Charitable Foundation provides assistance to Canadian ecclesias dealing with the health and welfare issues of senior members. Donations can be sent c/o Clive Daniel, 8583 Sansum Park Drive, North Saanich, BC, V8L 4V7, Canada

Agape in Action provides help for Christadelphian families and children living in extreme poverty. Donations may be sent to 39 Manor Park Crescent, Guelph, ON, Canada, N1G 1A2 or 521 Valmont Dr., Monrovia, CA 91016 or via website www.agapeinaction.com
Email: agapeinaction@rogers.com

Christadelphian Save the Children Fund provides Bible learning materials, personal items, and scholarships to needy mission areas.
www.christadelphianchildren.com

Christadelphian Heritage College c/o Brantford Ecclesia, 442 Dunsdon St., Brantford, ON, Canada, N3P 2B1

Christadelphian Indian Children's Homes (CICH) donations in US dollars can be sent to CICH, c/o David & Connie Stiles, 3 Blue Acre Rd., Middletown, CT 06457. For info email daconstiles@att.net

Karolyn Andrews Memorial Fund (KAMF) provides help in cases where brethren or families have been victims of persecution because of their faith. Checks in any currency to KAMF, c/o P.O. Box 87371, Canton, MI 48187-0371

Joy Fund, Inc., provides grants to ecclesias, individuals, and families to assist with basic needs. c/o Stan Newton, 6861 Skyview Dr., Huntington Beach, CA 92647-2938

Spanish language literature is available at P.O. Box 947, Monrovia, CA 91017-0947. 626-303-2222, email: jdhunter@gte.net

Christadelphian Care Line fully confidential help with emotional and spiritual problems as well as family issues. 866-823-1039

Alcohol Help Line fully confidential help for overcoming alcohol dependency. 866-823-1039

News & Notices

(Please send in news and notices by the 5th of the preceding month;
please include full name of ecclesia and recording brother.
Word files or email in text only are preferred.)

AVON, IN

In 2012 the Avon Ecclesia rejoiced in two births. Summer Binch, the granddaughter of Bro. Ed and Sis. Beth Binch, arrived to cheer our hearts. Also, our Bro. Jon and Sis. Katy Mumaw were excited to welcome their daughter, Claire Marie, into their lives. Our ecclesia was also strengthened by the transfer of Bro. Andrew Styles from the Simi Hills, CA Ecclesia. We have greatly benefitted from his depth of Scriptural knowledge.

Lee Livermore

BALTIMORE, MD

The Baltimore ecclesia has been richly blessed over the past months and we all are deeply grateful.

ANNA LYONS was baptized on March 12, 2011. She came in contact with the truth when she met a Christadelphian at university. She was a real truth seeker and came weekly for instruction, armed with many questions. Her parents, while not members, were deeply interested and the baptism took place at her family home in the presence of many witnesses. BRIANNA WOODWARD was baptized on May 15, 2011. Brianna was brought up knowing the Holy Scriptures from her youth. We rejoice with her parents Bro. John and Sis. Heather Woodward that she has made this early and best choice.

On February 19, 2011, Noah Jeremy was born to Bro. Allen and Sis. Tara Laben. We give thanks to our heavenly Father for Noah's safe arrival and his dear presence in our midst. We were also blessed by the arrival of Asher Michael on November 29, 2011. Asher is the son of Bro. Ryan and Sis. Julia Mutter, and little brother to David and Levi.

During 2012, our ecclesia was encouraged and greatly strengthened by the transfer of a number of brothers and sisters from other ecclesias to the Baltimore Ecclesia including: David and Paige Kerr, and their daughter, Emma, and Nicholas and Connor Kerr Pratt from the Petersburg, VA Ecclesia in June 2012; Sam Van Reuter from the Livonia, MI Ecclesia in July 2012; and Dennis and Tiffany Bevans and their daughter, Courtney, from the Reseda, CA Ecclesia also in July, 2012. We pray that each of these brothers and sisters will be happy in their new ecclesial family. We know they will be a blessing to us and we hope to be a blessing to them as we walk together toward God's kingdom.

On August 11, 2012, we had a day of rejoicing as Bro. Joshua Hewitson and Sis. Anna Lyons were united in marriage. May God bless their union and may they always honor Him in their loving partnership.

On November 13, 2012, RACHEL THOMAS and JANET LINK were baptized into Jesus' saving name. Both of these young sisters were raised in the truth, faithfully attending Sunday school and CYC. We pray that their enthusiasm will be a good example to our other young people.

On December 31st, 2012, we rejoiced as JONATHAN GODFREY, from Reseda, CA was also baptized. Bro. Jonathan moved here with the Bevans family. He had been

studying and preparing for baptism before moving here. We are blessed to have him with us and we pray God will richly bless his new life in Christ.

We were further blessed on January 20, 2013, as we witnessed two more baptisms. HAILEY BEVANS, daughter of Bro. Dennis and Sis. Tiffany Bevans, and her friend, BRIAN MOORE, who also moved from CA with the Bevans family, embraced the saving name of Jesus. Both of them had begun to prepare for baptism before moving here. We welcome them into our ecclesial family with great joy.

Our Bro. John Woodward and his son, Chase, spent several weeks in Kenya assisting the endeavors of Agape In Action. They recently returned with great enthusiasm and gratitude for what they had experienced. We are planning an occasion in the near future when they will be able to share all this with the ecclesia.

Sis. Shawn Thomas, formerly of the Washington, DC Ecclesia has transferred her membership to the Baltimore Ecclesia. We are pleased to have her and her three children in our ecclesia and look forward to our fellowship together.

On December 21, 2012, we welcomed another new baby to our ecclesial family. Elijah was born to Bro. Allen and Sis. Tara Laben and younger brother Noah.

Our ecclesia benefits from the continued support of the Washington-Adelphi and Richmond Petersburg Ecclesias in exchanging speakers.

Dorothy Link

KITCHENER WATERLOO, ON

On January 5, 2013, Bro. Fred Bouttell and Sis. Pat Kryskow were united in marriage. The day was a delightful occasion with about 90 guests including family and friends. We pray that they will find strength together in their new relationship as they wait for the coming of the Lord.

For the first three months of 2013 we have cancelled our Bible Classes to continue with the preaching seminars. Having begun last September with the basic Learn To Read the Bible Effectively seminar, then Genesis, we are continuing with the Life of Christ and Acts of the Apostles. The format is a little different in that it is more of a discussion process rather than the standard PowerPoint presentation. Those who attended the series late in 2012 are coming and some are bringing friends and relatives. We pray that the Lord will bless this work.

Martin J Webster

MERIDEN, CT

We have enjoyed the company of several brothers and sisters at the Lord's Table in the past year. A special word of thanks goes to the brethren who have exhorted us during this time: Joshua Lagasse (Norfolk, VA); Jim Barton (Kingston, ON); Jim Sullivan and Jim Boyko (Boston, MA); Eric Pride (Westerly, RI); Eric Hall (Manhattan, NY); and Len Budney (Pittsburgh, PA).

Bro. Nathan Badger (Cambridge, ON) led our Spring study weekend on the life of Jacob, "He Took His Brother by the Heel in the Womb, and in His Strength He Struggled with God." We thank Bro. Nate for his fine study and for exhorting us at the Memorial service as well.

On May 20, 2012, we rejoiced in the baptism of BRADFORD SABEAN, son of Bro. Duncan and Sis. Diane Sabean. Bro. Brad joins a group of young adult members who

are already making significant contributions to the life of our ecclesia. May God's blessing be with him in his life in the truth.

Death has claimed four of our older beloved members in the past year. Bro. Ron Sweet fell asleep in the Lord on February 15, 2012; Sis. Lois Beck on March 4, 2012; Sis. Nancy Jenkins on June 14, 2012; and Sis. Cindy Schneider on September 29, 2012. Bro. Ron was the husband of our Sis. Helen Sweet and stepfather of our Sis. Sherry Houchell. Sis. Lois was the mother of our Sis. Connie Stiles. Sis. Nancy was a member of one of the founding families of the Meriden Ecclesia and the mother of five children who grew up in our Sunday school. Sis. Cindy was the mother of our Sis. Cindy Nevers, now of the Wachusett, MA Ecclesia. Our sympathies are with all of their family members at this time.

On November 20, 2012, we broke ground for our new ecclesial hall which is being built in South Meriden, CT. We have been in the planning stages of this project for several years and are looking forward to its completion, God willing, in 2013. We also continue to actively preach the gospel. "This is Your Bible" programs are being broadcast every week on four public access channels in central Connecticut. A "Learn to Read the Bible Effectively" seminar series was held in October, and we are now conducting follow-up seminars with a small group of interested friends who have come to us through this effort.

Stephen Harper

SAN DIEGO COUNTY, CA

Following a solid confession of his faith, with great thanks and joy, we witnessed the baptism of CAMERON ELLIS on December 9, 2012. Our new brother, who is eighteen, is the son of Bro. Kent and Sis. Sharon Ellis and has been a member of our Sunday school since his birth. We pray for our Father's continued blessings on new brother.

By way of transfer from Simi Hills, CA, we welcome Bro. Robert and Sis. Aimee Devine and family. We look forward to our walk together toward the kingdom.

We're thankful for another uplifting study day this past January with Bro. John Warner (San Francisco Peninsula, CA) who led us to a greater appreciation of the faith and works of John the Baptist. Our thanks to Bro. John.

Kent Ellis

SUSSEX, NB

We are sorry to report the falling asleep of Bro. Hillis Alan Briggs on January 1, 2013 and offer our sympathies to Sis. Marlene Briggs, his daughters, Sis. Janice Baines, Susan Norman, Sherri Craft and Diana Briggs.

For our study weekend April 27-28, 2013, Bro. John Mark Ghent will lead us in a study of, "The Emblems". At the Spring Youth Camp, May 17-19, 2013, Bro. Mark Carr will lead his studies for the young people on, "Elijah".

We are very happy to welcome Sis. Linda Ikle, commended to us from the London, ON Ecclesia. Bro. Dale and Sis. Carol Crawford (Bedford, NS) visited us in January, 2013.

Cliff Baines

CHRISTADELPHIAN HOUSING RENTAL AND VISITORS' UNIT

Simon Manor is a seniors' housing development located in Victoria, BC, Canada. It provides rental accommodation for brothers and sisters 55 years and older who are able

to care for themselves, and it is situated behind the ecclesial hall. There are eleven one bedroom, unfurnished units. They do come with drapes, curtains, carpets, stove and fridge and free use of laundry facilities. Tenants must pay for electricity, which includes heat, and telephone and cable connections. We would be happy to take applications for future tenants. Rents are low. For information, please contact Bro. Bob Stodel by email at: rwstodel@gmail.com; or by phone at: 250-384-4456.

A Visitors' Unit is also available for short and long-term stays. This unit is completely furnished including all linens. The cost is \$35 a night for one or two people and then \$5 for each additional person. There are twin beds in the bedroom and a sofa bed in the living room. Plan your holiday now! Contact Sis. Pat Williamson by email at: pwilliamson369@gmail.com; or by phone at: 250-721-4938.

Pat Williamson

DO YOU EVER SHOP ONLINE?

This is a super easy way for you to help out the Heritage School in California! Here's all you have to do: go to www.boxtops4education.com, register (it's quick!) and mark the "Christadelphian Heritage School" as your benefiting school. Then, whenever you shop online, you go to boxtops4education.com first, click on the store logo that you want, and it takes you directly to the store's site. That's all!



If you do that, a portion of all of the purchases you make will be credited to CHS. Even more, this fundraiser is ongoing — so if you get the chance, spread the word to your friends and others who might be willing to help!

PS. If you feel like cutting out the physical box tops and sending them to us that would help as well. Our address is 6701 Santa Susana Pass Road, Simi Valley, CA 93063.

Jason Hensley

It is an exciting time within the North American ecclesial community as we report that the California Heritage School (CHS) began its first year of operation on September 7, 2004. The school operates out of the Simi Hills ecclesial hall. A brief opening ceremony preceded the regular daily opening exercise. Present were the students, teachers, and other volunteers, and school council members. Gratitude was expressed to all who had worked directly and behind the scenes in making the first Christadelphian school in the United States a reality.

The school council, advisory boards, and committees are comprised of ecclesial members from every walk of life, including teachers and other professionals. The CHS school council has six members, appointed by the arranging boards of the three ecclesias who have children attending the school: Simi Hills, Thousand Oaks, and Verdugo Hills. A team effort involving brethren and sisters has led to the school's formation as well as its present operation.

The governing principle and underlying educational tone of Heritage School is grounded in providing quality education within a biblical context. God's word is the measure of all things, the scale on which to weigh all life issues. His teachings and His way are the foundation of education, true knowledge and life everlasting.

The Tidings, November 2004 p. 477

Minute Meditation

What about the hereafter?

There is a story about a concerned brother visiting an elderly sister who has not been attending the meeting recently. "I am worried about you," he says. "You should be thinking more about the Hereafter." The sister answers, "Oh I do that all the time. Every time I walk into a room I am always asking myself, 'Now, what am I here after?'"

The elderly sister totally misinterpreted the brother's concern for her spiritual welfare. She was thinking of her daily problems and not about God's plan of salvation. Unfortunately, a careless attitude about God and His word is typical of many people in our world. Instead, they are fascinated by the trivial, by the entertainment industry and its stars, by sports teams and star athletes, by politicians and local gossip. Beyond these interests, most folks think only about the mundane cares of daily living rather than the great future that the Lord has planned for the faithful. Yet, every single person is going to die. Life, death and the hereafter should be matters of profound interest to every one of us.

God wants us to know about the hereafter, and has written the Bible so that we can. The message of the Bible is a message of hope, of how we must live our lives now in service to our God, of forgiveness of sins, and of the hope of resurrection from death to a life of immortality in the Kingdom of God. What a wonderful future! Imagine living forever in a delightful world with no sorrow, pain or suffering. The LORD wants us to center our minds on thinking about the wonderful future that He has planned for us, the hereafter in the Kingdom of God, instead of focusing on the cares of this life.

Jesus explains what to do and what not to do: "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you shall eat or what you shall drink, nor about your body, what you shall put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And which of you by being anxious can add one cubit to his span of life? And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin; yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O men of little faith? Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the Gentiles seek all these things; and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well. Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Let the day's own trouble be sufficient for the day."

It is surprising that most people cannot be bothered to concern themselves about the coming Kingdom. There are signs indicating that the return of Jesus is soon, but people aren't watching and don't care. There will be a time of judgment when Jesus returns to set up his Kingdom on earth. Jesus told us this would happen. We need to pay attention to the words of the Lord Jesus Christ when he warns us, "And as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: They ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. Likewise as it was also in the days of Lot: They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built; but on the day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. Even so will it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed."

The people of Lot's day and Noah's day were too busy with their everyday lives to think about God. In Genesis we read what God thought of their thinking: "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." When men ignore God, ignorance of His laws removes self-restraint; and we see that the world of Noah became full of violence, and the city Lot lived in was immoral. Sadly, our world has pushed God out of its thoughts, and there are far too many appalling acts of brutality as well as a disregard for the standards of morality that used to be upheld. The return of Jesus will bring judgment as a necessary part of establishing a Kingdom of peace and righteousness.

We must be different if we want to be granted a place in the Kingdom of God. We can see how the world around us is thinking, just like those in Lot's day and Noah's day who had no time for God and sunk into wickedness until God destroyed them. What should our thinking be like? We read in Psalms, "Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful; but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night."

We must fill our minds with the word of God, delight in it, and meditate on it. Then we will be transformed. Paul tells us, "Don't be like the people of this world, but let God change the way you think. Then you will know how to do everything that is good and pleasing to Him." Let us lift our minds above the mundane cares of the world and keep our thoughts centered on the LORD, delight in reading His word and thinking about His glorious promises to us. May He find us so doing when Jesus comes to call us to him.

Our hope for the hereafter is the hope of the resurrection, the hope David spoke of when he said, "I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness." May we all pray and live the prayer of David when he said, "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer."

Robert J. Lloyd

Coming Events (Lord Willing)

(Please send in notices at least two months before the date of the event.
Three months is preferable.)

MARCH 2013

- 8-10 New England CYC Study weekend** at the Barton Center. Young people ages 12 and up are invited for a weekend of classes and fellowship around God's Word. Bro Jonathan Bowen (Brantford, ON) will be speaking on "Knowing the Time — a young persons Guide to Prophecy". For Registration and information see our website at www.necyc.com or email Bro. David and Sis. Kim Conover at NECYouthCircle@gmail.com.
- 9-10 Austin Leander, TX** Spring youth weekend at T4C, Freestone, TX. Speaker Bro. Jay Mayock (Hamilton Book Road, ON): "David's Mighty Men and the secret of their book". Contact Sis. Nicole Bearden nlnevers@gmail.com for registration and info.
- 9-10 Paris Avenue, OH** Spring study weekend with Bro. Jim Cowie (Wilston Brisbane, AUS): "The Letters to the Seven Ecclesias". Contact Bro. Everett Muniz at 330-497-2811 or everettmuniz@gmail.com.
- 16-17 Echo Lake, NJ** Spring study weekend. Our speaker is Bro. Mike Robinson (Echo Lake, NJ): "Getting into the Psalms". Study will begin at 11:00am on Saturday.
- 23-24 NYC Metro** Spring study weekend with Bro. John Bilello (Ann Arbor, MI): "Guidelines for a Happy Relationship". Begins at 12 noon. Contact Bro. Gideon Drepaul at yerubbaal@yahoo.com.
- 23-24 Victoria, BC** Spring study weekend. The speaker will be Bro. Andrew Bramhill.
- 28-31 Victoria, BC** Pacific Northwest CYC Conference. Speaker will be Bro. Caleb Lawrence (Surrey, BC).
- 29-31 Wichita Falls, TX** Spring Gathering at T4C Camp, Freestone, Texas. Class leader Bro. Ryan Mutter (Baltimore, MD) his topic is "Valued of God — Study of the Life of Timothy". Please contact Bro. Larry Beutel lbeutel@alsco.com.

APRIL 2013

- 6-7 Boston, MA** Spring Study Weekend will be led by our Bro. Mark Whittaker (Crewe, UK) on the topic, "Exhortations from the Revelation".
- 12-14 Boston, MA** New England Brothers Weekend with Bro. Dev Ramcharan at Camp Joslin, Charlton, MA. Contact Bro. Jim Harper and Bro. Jim Boyko newengbros@gmail.com 508-212-7190.
- 13-14 Brant County, ON** Spring study weekend at the Belleview Community Hall. Speaker will be Bro. Jim Styles (Simi Hills, CA): "Jeremiah: Change before it is too late!". Bro. Jim is also will present the topic, "The Great Delusion — a Scriptural Analysis of Christianity's Future Antichrist" at our special public lecture on Tuesday, April 16, 2013.
- 20-21 Baltimore/Washington Gathering and Study day** at Washington, DC Ecclesia, 9240 Riggs Road, Adelphi, MD 20783. Saturday study day begins at 1pm. Speaker is Bro. Tim Lange (Norfolk, VA): "Miracle of the English Bible". Sunday gathering begins at 10:30am. Contact Bro. Bob Kling by 301-498-5245 or email: rkling@acm.org.

27 New England Little Disciples Gathering at Barton Center, North Oxford, MA. A day of Bible study and activities for children pre-K to 7th grade on the subject of “Ruth”. Students are expected to complete a workbook (available online) in advance. See our website www.nelittledisciples.com or contact Sis. Tammy Rundle nelittledisciples@hotmail.com or 781-829-4410.

27-28 Sussex, NB Study weekend. Speaker is Bro. John Mark Ghent (Toronto West, ON) and his study will be “The Emblems”.

MAY 2013

3-5 Pittsburgh, PA Study Weekend. Speaker will be Bro. Ryan Mutter (Baltimore, MD) on “Valued of God — the Life of Timothy”. Travelers’ lunch served at noon Sunday. First class to begin Friday at 7:00pm. Contact Bro. Len Budney at pghecclesia@gmail.com.

3-5 Simi Hills, CA Southern California Men’s Campout. Topic: “Recovering Lost Sheep”. Held at Cachuma Lake State Park. \$40 dollars suggested donation, all food provided. Contact: Bro. Levi Gelineau, leviandjessica@gmail.com (862)485-1059.

17-19 Sussex, NB Spring Youth Camp. Speaker Bro. Mark Carr (Toronto West, ON) on “Elijah”.

18-19 Calgary, AB Rolling Hills Study Weekend: A weekend of study, fellowship and assorted activities for children. Bro. Ron Ledbetter (ON) will present “Samuel: A man prepared”, (Lessons for families and ecclesias). Sis. Cheri-Lynn Kohlman will coordinate accommodation, children’s activities and catering. Accommodation is available in homes and there is space for RV’s and tents. Classes will be held at the Rolling Hills Community Hall. Register with dana.kohlman@grasslands.ab.ca, or 403-964-2562.

18 Moorestown, NJ Study day at ecclesial hall. Speaker is Bro. Frank Abel (Hamilton Book Road, ON): “Thou Shalt Not Covet”. Contact Bro. David Cheetham, 856-273-3654, Dnacheetham@aol.com.

19 Washington, DC is the host for the Mid-Atlantic Christadelphian Fraternal gathering in Mt. Laurel, NJ at the Westin Hotel. Speaker is Bro. Frank Abel (Hamilton Book Road, ON). Begins at 10:30am.

JUNE 2013

1-2 NYC Fraternal with Bro. Nathan Badger. Contact Bro. Gideon Drepaul at yerubbaal@yahoo.com.

23-29 Rocky Mountain Bible School at Glenwood Springs, CO. Speaker will be Bro. Dev Ramcharan (Toronto West, ON): “The God of the Fallen”, Bro. Gary Cousens (Cambridge, ON): “To Him that Overcometh —Overcoming Ourselves” and Bro. Tecwyn Morgan (Castle Bromwich, UK): “The Exodus Deliverance”. Contact Info: www.denverchristadelphians.org.

29-July 7 Mid-Atlantic Bible School at Shippensburg University in Shippensburg, PA. The theme this year is “Ye are my witnesses saith the LORD that I am GOD” — Isa 43:12. The Youth Program theme will be “The Nation of Israel – God’s Witness”. The speakers are Bro. Neville Clark (Tea Tree Gully, South Aust.) “Encounters with Christ: Minor Characters of the Gospels” adults and teens; Bro. Tecwyn Morgan (Castle Bromwich, Birmingham, UK): “Powerful Points from Prison” and “Romans: The Gospel of Salvation” to the teens. Bro. David Wisniewski (Brant County, ON): “Yahweh Will Roar from Zion” and “Elijah’s Preparation” to the teens. Contact information at www.MidAtlanticBibleSchool.com.

29-July 5 Terra Nova Bible School will be held in Terra Nova Park, Newfoundland. Speakers are: Bro. Peter Tretola (Brighton, Adelaide AUS), and Bro. Jesse Adair (Hamilton Book Road, ON). Subjects to be announced later. Please visit our website terranovabibleschool.com. Contact Bro. Gary Hynes, 32 First Street, Mount Pearl, NF, Canada A1N 1X8; telephone 709-747-2750; email info@terranovabibleschool.com.

30-July 6 California Youth Conference. An exciting week of study and fellowship for ages 17 (or baptized) and up. The theme is "Return of the Exiles". The speaker will be Bro. Jim Styles (Simi Hills, CA). Register at www.youthconferencecalifornia.com. Contact Info: Bro. Jason Hensley jason.n.ruthie@gmail.com.

JULY 2013

7-13 Southwest Bible School at Schreiner College, Kerrville, TX. Speakers Bro. Peter King (UK): "Joshua: The Servant of the Lord"; teens: "Gems in Dusty Corners"; Bro. Joseph Palmer (San Diego, CA): "Philippians"; teens: "What does Jesus Christ have to do with me?"; and Bro. Richard Morgan (Hamilton Book Road, ON): "To be Spiritually Minded is Life and Peace"; teens: "Our Spiritual Exodus". Register Bro. Shannon Strickland, 9305 Nancy Lane, Tomball, TX or Shannonjejh@att.net www.swcbs.com.

13-20 Manitoulin Family Bible Camp. Bro. Jim Styles (Simi Hills, CA) and Bro. Nathan Badger (Cambridge, ON). Registration will commence January 2013 God willing. A discount for early registration will be available until May 31, 2013. See the website www.manitoulinfamilycamp.com.

20-28 Midwest Bible School at Hanover College, Hanover, IN. Speakers are: Bro. Mark Giordano (Norfolk, VA): "Straight and Narrow Steps"; Bro. Bill Link Jr. (Baltimore, MD): "Proverbs"; Bro. Garth Maier (Tyler, TX): "Parables of the Kingdom". Registration contact Bro. Mike Livermore, 24970 Woodridge Drive, Apt. 108, Farmington Hills, MI 48335, 248-462-5740, email: mike.live@gmail.com or visit www.midwestbibleschool.com.

21-27 Pacific Coast Bible School, Idyllwild, California. Two of the speakers will be Bro. Ron Cowie (AUS) and Bro. Joseph Palmer (USA). For further information, please contact Jeff Gelineau 567 Astorian Drive, Simi Valley, CA 93065 Email: mail@gelineau.org. Register at www.californiabibleschool.org.

27-Aug 4 Eastern Bible School at Connecticut College, New London CT. Theme: "Surviving Perilous Times". Bro. John Bilello (Ann Arbor MI): "Hezekiah and Israel: The Odd Couple" (adults) and "Miracles" (teens); Bro. Jonathan Bowen (Brantford ON): "Surviving Perilous Times" (adults) and "The Wise Shall Understand" (teens); Bro. Mark O'Grady (Tawa, New Zealand): "Treasure in Earthen Vessels" (adults) and "In The Beginning: (teens). Contact Sis. Cindy Nevers at 18 Sibley Street, Auburn, MA 01501 or cindynevers@verizon.net.

27-Aug 3 Manitoulin Island Bible Camp. The speakers will be Bro. Andrew Johnson (Kings Norton, Birmingham, UK): "Travelling with Jesus" and Bro. Mark Vincent (Stirling, Scotland, UK): "Leviticus — the Heart of the Law". More details on website www.christadelphianbiblecamp.ca. For registration, contact Bro. Alex Browning at jabrowning@rogers.com or 1-416-284-0290.

28-Aug 3 Rogue River Bible School. Topics and teachers are: Bro. Jim Styles (Simi Hills, CA): "Night Visions of Zechariah" (Zechariah 1-7); Bro. Stephen Bartholomew (Vernon Okanagan, BC): "Moses, the Servant of God"; Bro. Jay Mayock (Hamilton Book Road, ON): "Two Men Went into the Temple to Pray" (Isaiah 6). Contact Bro. Randy Yoshida

The CHRISTADELPHIAN TIDINGS of the Kingdom of God (USPS 107-060)

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for further information – yoshidafamily@clearwire.net For registration, contact Sis. Pat Posey – robandpatposey@gmail.com.

AUGUST 2013

10-16 Whatshan Lake Bible School held at the Whatshan Lake Retreat near Vernon, BC. Speakers are Bro. Ken Styles: "Prophecies of the Last Days"; Bro. Stephen Whitehouse: "The Rise and Fall of King Saul"; Bro. Carl Perry: "Be Ye Perfect". Register online at <http://wlbs.okanaganchristadelphians.org/>. Contact: Bro. Skip Bartholomew 250-503-0191.

17-24 Manitoulin Youth Conference at Manitoulin Bible Camp, Manitoulin Island, ON. Speaker: Bro. Jim Cowie: "Genesis". Register online at www.youthconference.com.

17-23 Winfield Bible School, Winfield, BC. The theme will be "Be of Good Cheer, I Have Overcome the World". Speakers are Bro. Gordon Dangerfield: "The 1st Epistle of John"; Bro. Gary Cousens: "To Him That Overcometh" — Overcoming Ourselves; Bro. Dafydd Jenkins: "Both Lord and Christ" — The Gospel of Luke. Contact Bro. Don Zantingh 250-545-5988 or donzantingh@hotmail.com or Bro. Harold Cawston 250-478-5988 or hjcawston@gmail.com.

24-30 31st Annual Vancouver Island Bible Camp. Theme: "But the just shall live by his faith" (Hab 2:4b). Speakers are Bro. Jim Styles: Adults "Training to become equal to the Angels" and teens "James: Becoming Doers of the Word"; Bro. David Green: Adults "The spirit of the Lord" and teens "How small is your God?"; and Bro. Jim Harper: Adults "Meditations on the Ministry of our Lord" and teens "What would you do?" Registration info contact Sis. Karen Grover email: karengrover@shaw.ca. Website: www.vibiblecamp.com.

SEPTEMBER 2013

14-15 Paris Avenue, OH Fall study weekend with Bro. Stan Isbell (North Houston, TX). Contact Bro. Everett Muniz at 330-497-2811 or everettmuniz@gmail.com.

OCTOBER 2013

12-13 Sussex, NB Study weekend. The speaker will be Bro. Ron Hicks (Washington, DC).

NOVEMBER 2013

9 Victoria, BC Fall study weekend. The speaker will be Bro. Chris Sales and his subject will be "Pictures of Redemption". Contact Bro. Clyde Snobelen at victoria@csl.ca.