

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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An Obscure Sect

Sunday after Sunday, a little congregation, rarely more than two hundred in number, assembles in a large upper room in one of the most desolate and depressing of our London districts. There is nothing in the appearance of these people, if you meet them in the street, to distinguish them from their fellows; they are a little more gaunt perhaps, have just a touch more fire in their eyes, as if the struggle for life had been somewhat harder for them than for others, but that is the only difference. . . . When once they have taken their places there, however, a subtle change seems to come over them; the expression of despondency, habitual to many of them, is replaced by one of exultation; they turn the leaves of their Bibles with a rapt eagerness that is almost terrible; their faces glow with fervor as they read the denunciations of the prophets, and light up with enthusiasm as they linger over the mysticism of the Apocalypse. They draw keen delight from the thought of being "the sect everywhere spoken against," and rejoice that every man's hand is against them, for their hand is against every man; they rejoice, too, that they, simple craftsmen as they are, are on the one side, while the wealth, dignity and culture of the world are on the other. They sit there waiting for the coming of the Lord.

(Macmillan's Magazine August 1890 p 286)

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The Appeal of the Gospel

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Mat 28:19).

Christadelphian occupations

Two disparate items seem to me connected

- 1) The number of Christadelphians in the “mission” areas is beginning to approach those in the basically English-speaking areas such as the UK, Australia, and North America etc. At present, of the approximately 55,000 members of the “Central” community, about 25,000 are non-English speaking.
- 2) I was looking at the occupation of the members of the early Birmingham, UK ecclesia in 1877. Of the 342 members, about 200 had listed occupations. Of these, the large majority were involved in what we would call skilled manual occupations. No teachers, few professionals, quite a few “domestics”, but the over-preponderance of skilled trades was quite noticeable.¹

No such information is currently available to me today, although both Bryan Wilson (1961)² and Charles Lippy (1989) commented on the occupations of Christadelphians. Certainly in the case of the latter, he observed of the Christadelphians in North America: “My sense is that Christadelphians in socio-economic terms are virtually indistinguishable from the bulk of the population of the United and Canada. They are essentially middle-class folk who work hard for an honest living. I have met Christadelphians who are medical specialists, social workers, college professors, corporate executives, motel owners, dentists, accountants, and homemakers.”³

So the community has transitioned from being a largely artisan community to a much more middle class one, with a preponderance of “white collar” workers, with a relatively few disadvantaged members. And with this transition, which seems to have occurred fairly early in the 20th century, the almost explosive growth of the Christadelphians, particularly in the UK, slowed dramatically. Was this change co-incidental with a the change in occupations of members, or did other factors, such as the internal disputes towards the end of the 19th century and continuing through the 1920’s also play a part? We must not forget the loss of a charismatic leader in Bro. Roberts in 1898.

Into the twentieth century

For about the first half of this period, the number of Christadelphians overall changed little. And it must be admitted that for much of this time our community was more focused on its internal disputes than in actively spreading the gospel. It largely withdrew into its own ranks, with a deep suspicion of any new dynamic activities by its young people. It was really not until 1955, with the formation of

the Christadelphian Bible Mission in the UK, that systematic preaching efforts took place outside of the English speaking world. (It is perhaps no coincidence that by the 1920's, the community had split about five groups, with the Central community in a minority outside the UK: the splits were largely healed by 1955.) The history of these mission activities is dealt with in the fascinating book by Bro. Stanley Owen⁴, but it is clear the progress was quite slow at the start. However, over the last few decades the work has born much fruit, as can be seen from my opening paragraph.

So over the last half century, the vast majority of increase in the numbers in our community has come from the mission field. Although the numbers have been growing somewhat in Australia and North America, they have been dwindling in the UK. So why is this so? Why did the Christadelphian message have such early appeal? And why does our work on the mission areas bear much more fruit than elsewhere? I believe we can draw some lessons from our history and the current work.

The early appeal

A look at the early work in preaching shows clearly that the message concerned itself with a forthcoming revolution. International politics were the field of which an understanding had to be gained if the prophetic utterances were to be understood in their modern application. The concern was with governments, wars, and power politics. The methods of conversion of the movement were by appeal to reason, by exposition of historical and contemporary politics in terms of prophecy, and by contemplation of the future world to come. There was no attempt to produce an emotional feeling in converts; no pleas for remorse and guilt; salvation could be obtained, at least in part, only through (although not by) knowledge and study. Its appeal was largely to the intelligent, but largely dis-enfranchised working-class population. The poor — and not just the working poor. To cite Bryan Wilson:⁵

‘Christadelphianism won its first recruits from among the very poorest members of the community — often laborers and manual workers. This was a fact with which the early leaders were well acquainted. Roberts spoke of the visit of Dr. Thomas to England in 1862, and said that then “the friends of the truth . . . were poor and without social influence.” *The Christadelphian* repeatedly spoke of the brethren as poor and simple people; of the “fewness and poverty of those holding the truth.” An outside report of the Christadelphians in Glasgow declared them to be “chiefly young men and men of comparatively humble position in life . . .” In 1881 Roberts wrote: “it has always been the poor who have given heed to the word of truth. ‘Not many noble are called’ — a very, very few.”’

It is also clear that these early converts were looking for answers and a future hope, with little real prospect of prosperity in this life. And the lack of any of the modern mind-numbing electronic media left a receptive audience for any with answers to their enquiries.

The current situation in the West

Despite our best efforts, and some success, it must be admitted we are not emulating the early growth. We covered this area in “Preaching in the Americas”, the August 2011 special issue, which was well received — but did not appear to stimulate many efforts. It is clear that these days few are searching for the sort of message we present, with its clear emphasis on knowledge of the Bible Truth as being an necessary precursor for baptism and salvation. We convert very few compared to the evangelical churches around us, with their almost totally emotional appeal. This approach calls forth a response in some, but not very many, of those with whom we come into contact. And its real appeal often depends on establishing trust first, and then conviction and conversion later.

Perhaps the increasing turmoil in the world will result in more interest, but it must be admitted that even the enormous turmoil of the great depression of the 1930’s, or the Second World War, did not produce any great increase in our community. However, the success in many ecclesias of the seminar approach gives us some hope we can still kindle interest in those around us, and at least some ecclesias (and areas) are growing in numbers as a result. It is important that we achieve real success, not just content ourselves with “at least we sowed the seed: God gives the increase”.

The mission area

The work in the “third World”, especially in those areas not dominated by the Roman Catholic Church, does appear to be resulting in more success than in the West. I believe this is because its population mirrors somewhat closely that of the nineteenth century in the UK, the period of our greatest success. So not only are we just spreading the seed, it is flourishing in many areas, and these areas are developing their own teachers of the gospel. I wonder whether we will see a truly inspiring leader arise in this area, who will deliver the message of “The Hope of Israel” with all the drive and verve we have seen so rarely in the past.

So as we wait with patience and certainty for the return of Christ, let us thank God for this opportunity, and support the vital work of preaching the Truth — recognizing that its appeal is not to those living in comfort, surrounded by the modern conveniences of our age. Rather “it has always been the poor who have given heed to the word of truth”. We indeed, most of us, myself included, need to step outside our comfort zone, and either preach more to the disadvantaged of our own community, or support those who do so in foreign lands.

Peter Hemingray

Notes:

1. Andrew Wilson, in his “*History of the Christadelphians*”, compared census data to the occupations of those newly baptized in the UK, and came up with somewhat similar conclusions, although with not quite such a preponderance of skilled workers. But Birmingham at the time was the center of the metalworking industry of England.
2. Bryan Wilson, *Sects and Society*.
3. Charles Lippy, *Christadelphians in North America*.
4. “*Into all the world*”: available from the Thousand Oaks Christadelphian Library.
5. Op Cit, p. 300.

Exhortation

How Strong is Our Faith

A time of troubles

We are living in a time of high anxiety. Nothing distracts us more than our personal problems, whether it is a financial, our relationship, or our health. There is nothing that is more present in our personal lives than these. How strong is our faith in our spiritual life in helping us in deal with these problems?

When we speak of our faith, we usually speak of our faith only in the context of our spiritual life as it relates to the coming Kingdom. Very rarely do we mention our faith when it comes to dealing with our personal problems. Our personal problems are sort of a personal situation we have to deal with: after all our personal problems are personal. How strong is our faith? Faith is the *“substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen”* (Heb 11:1): this is not a definition but rather a description. It is divided into two *“things hoped for”* and *“the evidence of things not seen”*. The first part, *“things hoped for”* involves the future hope of the Kingdom to come. The second part, our conviction, is the *“evidence of things not seen”* which involves our present realities, such as forgiveness of sin and the grace that we are living under through Christ. We can conclude, then, that hope is faith relating to the future, and conviction or the *“evidence of things not seen”* is faith relating to the present.

I would like to focus on the second part, our conviction. How Strong is Our Faith or, How Strong is Our Conviction? Acts 14:22 says that *“we must through much tribulation enter into the Kingdom of God”*: this will come after we have suffered for a period. It would be a mistake for us to conclude, that it is more common for us to have personal problems as a result of being servants of God, and that somehow it is a way of keeping us grounded and focused. It would also be a mistake to conclude that, if we were distracted or carefree, we would lose our focus, and therefore these personal issues are a way of keeping us on that straight and narrow path. It is quite the opposite; the most joy is to be found among those that are servants of God, and misery and a life of unhappiness is more common among those that have chosen to live a sinful life. Troubles or personal problems are a part of life.

Let us look at one of these examples. Consider the account in Matt 14:26-30. What we can draw from this, is that we are called to be servants of God through Jesus Christ, and like Peter we will be able to do many amazing things *“... Lord if it be thou, bid me to come unto thee on the water.”* Through his faith, we can see that Peter for a brief moment was able to walk on the water. But when he saw the wind boisterous he was afraid and began to sink, in other words at the first sign of trouble he began to lose faith. There is nothing wrong with turning to God for help but we should not turn to God as a last resort. Peter turned here to Jesus as his last resort: this is why Jesus remarked *“O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?”* (Matt 14:31). The question you are probably asking is how did Peter call on Jesus as a last resort, if he was the first person he called on to save him when

he began to sink? We can see (vs 26) Peter was afraid at first, and then (vs 27) he was already given the reassurance that he was going to be fine if he had faith “*Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid*”. Peter lost his faith, and then as he began to sink he gave up all hope. The same can happen to us when it comes to the Word of God. We have the hope of entering into the Kingdom, but we may be lacking when it comes to our conviction as it applies to our daily lives. Troubles such as sickness, finances, and our weariness, though they may seem overwhelming at times, are controlled by God. We may think of these personal issues as having little to do with Jesus or our faith.

The example of Job

When we think of personal problems one of the first people in the Bible that we think of is Job. He was a righteous man, but lost all the things he had in this life. The book of Job teaches us a very valuable lesson; personal problems are not directly proportional to our obedience to God. When we look at the account in Job 1:13-19, how he lost his servants, his sheep, and his camels (or his material possessions) and then to ultimately lost his children “*there came a great wind... and it fell upon the young men and they are dead*” (Job 1:19), there is no idea that Job lacked obedience.

Job despite losing all he had said, “*blessed be the name of the LORD*” (Job 1:21). Job despite of all that he had gone through remained upright. Job was stricken with an illness that is today called Job's syndrome. This is a group of immune disorders, which include skin rashes and severe lung infections that result in balloon-like lesions, hence the name ‘boils’ “*and [God] smote Job with boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown*” (Job 2:7). Job's wife's reaction was that of someone who had lost faith, “*curse God and die*” (Job 2:9); she was ready to give up all hope, after all she had been through by losing her family and all her possession, but Job recognized that God allows things to happen for good ends. “*What? Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?*” (Job 2:10).

Other men beside Job in the Bible have lost their possessions and have been stricken with illness: even Kings such as David have been driven from their throne. All these events have been done under God's control. As followers of Christ, and children of God, we may find ourselves in dire situation and even our prayers may seem to be of no avail. There will be all types of crises that can affect our spiritual life. We may have an easy flowing and prosperous life with no problems or issues to deal with; maybe the most pressing thing we may have is how warm we should dress on a particular day, or if it is going to rain or not. When we have personal problems we often think of them as personal issues that have little to do with Jesus or the household of faith. There is no greater mistake that we can make than this: each of our problems are a test of our obedience to Christ, and how closely we adhere to his teachings and his commandments.

The return of Christ

At this time we are all waiting for Christ to return, so that our sorrow would turn to joy. The waiting seems long or short depending on whom you ask.

- The time is long for those that have not been occupied with doing the things needed to prepare. It pretty much reminds us of when we were children, when a day seemed so long and a year took an eternity.
- And the time may seem short to those that are continually laboring and doing God's work. As adults when we say that time flies because of work, family and all our responsibilities; the day is still 24 hours but we have more responsibility now, and that occupies our mind and our time.

Time flies as it relates to the coming Kingdom when we are wisely using our time in daily readings, Bible studies preaching and teaching the Word of God. If we occupy ourselves by restricting our mind to what is here and now, the present problems can easily be overcome, or at least rendered of little account. When some misfortune happens to us, the first thing we tend to ask ourselves is what have we done to deserve it. Through the ages many have felt that, "we must be guilty of something and this is our punishment for it" or "I got myself into this situation because I wasn't careful about the decision I made". We spend more time trying to figure out why it happened rather than trusting that we will be delivered. Today many of us, especially in this modern society, have endured very little compared to those that have lived in the past, and the way some people are still living in other underdeveloped countries around the world. In previous times, and elsewhere in the world, with a high infant mortality, short life expectancy, and high poverty, often children had to give up going to school in order to help support their family. Today we encourage our kids to stay in school; but with all the conveniences and advancements of modern society we still have our own problems to deal with. Although it may not be as extreme as it might have been in the past it is enough to distract and overwhelm. We should not allow ourselves to be distracted with our personal problems and instead pray to God to be delivered. *"He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool: but whoso walketh wisely, shall be delivered"* (Prov 28:26).

Our Savior

The greatest example we have of learning through suffering is our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who suffered many things for our sake. *"If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you"* (John 15:18). Our Lord suffered through mocking and persecution, and ultimately gave his life for our sake. Sometimes the pressures of life seem more than we can bear, but we should then remember Job. He was a man that lost everything but never lost his faith. Instead through faith and prayer he turned to God to be delivered. We should do the same when faced with difficult situations, *"Trust in the LORD with all thine heart..."* (Prov 3:5). All we are asked to do is to have faith and lean upon His understanding. We are living in a time of high anxiety, and we can get caught up in the problems of a world that is truly hopeless. Now that we have come to the partaking of the bread and wine, we know that through the bread and wine we are members of the promise of Christ's return, which is the Hope we all share. Today our conviction should be as strong as it was when we first came out of the waters of baptism, and as we did then we must remember the promise Jesus made to his disciples: *"Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, He will give it you"* (John 16:23).

Marvin Thompson (Brooklyn, NY)

Youth Speaks

Jonathan the Faithful Prince : (2) The Attack on the Philistine Garrison — Jonathan's Assault

Israel was held in a state of disgrace by their Philistine captors. They were supposed to be the people of God, and they were supposed to show God's greatness through their actions and their faith — but such had not been shown by them. Though Saul had been king quite a while, perhaps about two years, he had still not fulfilled his charge of casting off the Philistines. Nevertheless, Jonathan was working to change that. Thus, while he stood in Gibeah with one thousand of his father's troops, Jonathan lifted up the faith of those almost unarmed warriors, and took them to battle against the Philistine garrison at Geba.

With Yahweh fighting the battle, the garrison was destroyed — but sadly, while this was a marvelous victory, many in Israel were not convinced. The news of the Philistine defeat quickly spread throughout the land until the Philistines themselves heard of it — and their reaction brought fear to the hearts of many in Israel.

“And the Philistines gathered themselves together to fight with Israel, thirty thousand chariots, and six thousand horsemen, and people as the sand which is on the sea shore in multitude: and they came up, and pitched in Michmash, eastward from Beth-aven. When the men of Israel saw that they were in a strait, (for the people were distressed,) then the people did hide themselves in caves, and in thickets, and in rocks, and in high places, and in pits [or cisterns]” (1Sam 13:5-6).

The Philistines were not pleased. The captives were rising up, seeking to overthrow the rule of their masters — and thus the Philistines would do whatever they needed to do to put this rebellion down. Thirty thousand chariots were sent out to the mountains of Israel. Six thousand horsemen were commissioned. The foot soldiers were innumerable. The Philistines were determined to smash this mutiny and ensure their supremacy over Israel — showing the Israelites that they should never again feel as though they could win a battle against them.

The Philistines fight back

When this massive army gathered together against them, the army of Israel already felt defeated. The men of the army began to flee from Saul's camp to hide in caves, in cisterns, and even behind bushes. Pure terror spread throughout the ranks of Israel — this was not the reaction of an army which simply felt fearful, but it was the reaction of an army that thought that they had no chance of winning. This was the reaction of people who *were sure* that they were going to lose! They had already retreated even before the battle began! As soon as they saw the Philistine troops, it was as though they had immediately lost all hope.

Perhaps it was the amount of warriors which the Philistines had commissioned. Yet that doesn't seem to entirely fit, considering that "all the people were called together after Saul to Gilgal." Though the Philistines had a mighty army, so did Israel. When Israel had fought against the Ammonites just a few years prior, they had amassed a force of 330,000 (1Sam 11:8). That's a fairly huge army — and if the entire country came together again to fight against the Philistines in this battle, Saul likely had a similar amount of troops. So, while the Philistine army may have been larger, Israel's was fairly large as well.

Perhaps it was the fact that the men of Israel didn't have good weaponry (1Sam 13:19-22) — but again, that didn't stop Israel when they fought against the Ammonites, and it also didn't stop Jonathan's men when they eliminated the Philistine garrison.

The reaction of the Israelite army seems almost completely unreasonable — until the context of the continual oppression of Israel by the Philistines is appreciated. For years, the Philistines had been rulers over the people of Israel — from some point during Samuel's leadership, through the time when Samuel became an old man, and now to early years of Saul. Some of the young men in Saul's army perhaps wouldn't have even known anything *but* Philistine domination. Through their oppressive rules and through their stationing of troops throughout the land, the Philistines had likely bombarded the Israelites with the idea that they would continually be in subjection to their masters. Even though Israel had defeated them at times, the Philistines had never ceased to exist — and they continually returned to oppress the Israelites. This mental state of Israel was probably exaggerated by the fact that during the time of the judges, the Philistines had subjugated Israel longer than any other power — ruling over them for 40 years (Jdgs 13:1; the next longest after that was Ammon, who ruled for 18 years; Jdgs 10:8).

In all of their physical attacks and physical rulership over the people of Israel, the Philistines had also become their mental rulers. In the mind of many in Israel, it was likely that they believed that they *wouldn't be able* to overthrow the Philistines — hence Israel's reaction when they saw the troops of the Philistines. Thus, the situation in Israel was fairly grim. The majority of the Israelite army had retreated before the battle had begun, and the people of the nation were likely not pleased at all with what Jonathan had done. He had brought the wrath of their masters upon them, and now they would be oppressed even further.

Nevertheless, Saul remained in Gilgal, and a few of the men remained with him. Yet even those troops could hardly control their fear of the Philistines:

“And some of the Hebrews went over Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead. As for Saul, he was yet in Gilgal, and all the people followed him trembling. And he tarried seven days, according to the set time that Samuel had appointed: but Samuel came not to Gilgal; and the people were scattered from him” (1Sam 13:7-8).

The Israelite army was in a sorry state. The people were trembling, others were still departing, and Saul had to wait seven days for Samuel to come. How agonizing

those seven days would have been, as Saul looked out across his scattered troops and saw the abysmal looks on the faces of his men! Then, when the end of the seven days came, he hadn't yet seen Samuel. He was certain that he needed to go into battle with God on his side — otherwise there would be no hope for him winning — but how could he keep waiting for the prophet to come? Deciding that God would accept him in whatever way he came and that it didn't actually matter how he approached Him, the king of Israel decided to offer a burnt offering himself. He broke the law, didn't wait for Samuel, and followed in the way of Cain — worshipping Yahweh in the way which he himself had devised. The result was critical for the household of Saul. As soon as he had finished offering the burnt offering, Samuel arrived:

“And Samuel said to Saul, Thou hast done foolishly: thou hast not kept the commandment of the LORD thy God, which he commanded thee: for now would the LORD have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever. But now thy kingdom shall not continue: the LORD hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the LORD hath commanded him to be captain over his people, because thou hast not kept that which the LORD commanded thee”
(1Sam 13:13-14).

Saul lost the kingdom. His attempt to approach God in whatever way he pleased resulted in complete and entire rejection — as it had for all of those, like Cain and like Korah, who had attempted to do the same thing before him. Yahweh will be worshipped in the way which He commands — not the way in which we devise. Yet Saul would never learn that.

Thus, Samuel condemned the relatively new king, and the dynasty of Saul was finished. For Jonathan, it was as though all of these difficult and trying circumstances were coalescing and falling upon him all at once. He was a leader of the army, and the troops were simply disintegrating. He had been the one who first attacked the Philistines garrison and who brought this war upon the people — many of the fearful in Israel would likely have blamed him for their current distress. Not only so, but now God had shifted the course of his entire life — he was the prince who would never become a king. The kingdom of his father was finished, and Jonathan would never see the throne. Though he had probably planned out the reforms that he would make during his kingship, and though he had been groomed to become the ruler of the land, Jonathan would never see that day. All of his expectations were shattered, and all of these things came upon him at once.

Yet Jonathan didn't lose faith.

Despite the trying circumstances which were surrounding him, and despite his broken plans, Jonathan kept his faith and did whatever he could to serve the Truth — eventually leading the Israelite army to victory against the Philistine host and overthrowing the oppression which had plagued Israel for so long.

The second garrison: in the camp of Saul

“Now it came to pass upon a day, that Jonathan the son of Saul said unto the young man that bare his armor, Come, and let us go over to the Philistines”

garrison, that is on the other side. But he told not his father. And Saul tarried in the uttermost part of Gibeah under a pomegranate tree which is in Migron: and the people that were with him were about six hundred men” (1Sam 14:1-2).

As the days passed by, Jonathan saw that there was no movement from his father. Saul didn't bring the men back together and remind them of their faith; he didn't tell the men that God would be on their side. He merely sat back — almost as if he were stunned from what Samuel had told him — and did nothing. To make matters even worse, his army — made up of men from all over the nation of Israel — had continuously dwindled, until it was now only 600 men. The mighty army from the battle against the Ammonites had essentially vanished. The men of Israel were trembling, many of them were deserting, and the king of the nation was ruminating — simply doing nothing.

Yet completely contrary to his father, and likely contrary to his father's wishes, Jonathan chose to act. Almost as if the record sought to highlight the difference in faith between these two men — it states that Jonathan turned to his armor bearer and suggested attacking another Philistine garrison, just the two of them, without telling Saul — while it simply says that Saul sat underneath a pomegranate tree. Jonathan made plans of actions — plans of faith — while his father just *sat*. It was almost as though Saul had fallen into one of his periods of depression, even before the “evil spirit” had come upon him — and just to show even further the terrible situation of the king of Israel, the record mentions the priest who was with him:

“And Ahiah, the son of Ahitub, Ichabod's brother, the son of Philnehas, the son of Eli, wearing an ephod. And the people knew not that Jonathan was gone” (1Sam 14:3).

Specifically stating his genealogy, the record mentions that Ahiah was with Saul. Ahiah, a descendent of Eli, was part of the cursed priesthood (1Sam 3:11-14) — the priesthood which was doomed to fail. It was a priesthood which God had specifically said He would remove — and such was the help which Saul had with him. No longer was Samuel with Saul's camp. No longer was the true judge of the land with this fallen monarch. Instead, the best that Saul could have was Ahiah — truly, a righteous man — but whose family had been cast from the priesthood by God.

The situation for Saul was certainly pitiful. But such is the situation when one seeks to come to God in their own method and own way of worship. They will be left to their own devices.

Thus, Saul was left with his pitiful army and his cursed priesthood. In the meantime, Jonathan and his armor bearer approached the gully from which they reach the Philistine garrison. While Saul floundered beneath Samuel's prophecy, Jonathan, standing in faith, went with his armor bearer in an attempt to work in faith for the Holy One of Israel — the only question was whether or not this attempt would be blessed by God. Would the attack be successful, or would the end result be further agitation of the Philistines, leaving Israel even deeper in distress?

Jason Hensley (Simi Hills, CA)

The Joy of Sunday Schooling

The Baltimore Kids Become Teachers!

One of the best ways to learn is to become a teacher. In the Baltimore, Maryland, Sunday School this year the kids are doing just that. In this case, the children are preparing and presenting object lessons *every week!* The lessons are presented as the opening Sunday school activity and they are giving the children some valuable learning experiences.

Jane Hewitson, who is the Sunday School Superintendent in Baltimore, shares the details of what is happening. She writes, “We have had a special Sunday school opening in Baltimore for a few years now. Each year we do things a little differently, but it always involves various members, primarily our Sunday school students giving some sort of brief presentation. This year we have focused specifically on object lessons.

“To get the children thinking about the power of object lessons, I shared an object lesson that I remember from my childhood. Then I set down a few rules. For example, an object lesson must involve an object or a demonstration and therefore requires some preparation. I suggested that they search ‘object lessons for Sunday school’ on the Internet if they couldn’t come up with an idea of their own. Then I made up a schedule for the year. Each week we announce the upcoming presenters for the next few weeks. This gives everyone lots of reminders when their turn is coming up. I try to remember to send out an email reminder each week as well. The schedule includes presentations by each of our Sunday school classes, plus all our teenagers, and each of our Sunday school families. Each family decides how they want to do their presentation. Sometimes it’s the parents doing the presentation with the kids’ help, and in other cases the kids do the whole thing. So far the kids have all come up with their own object lessons, which is really great.”

Emily’s object lesson



Emily Hernandez

Emily Hernandez is ten years old. She is in a Sunday school class that is team taught by Shelly Bilello and Julia Mutter. When it was Emily’s turn to present an object lesson, she was ready with a great idea. Here is how she describes it:

“Opened with Hymn 10 — ‘The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want.’

“Supplies needed: 1 raw egg, 1 hardboiled egg, 1 glass bowl, 1 wire whisk, 1 long sheet of paper towel, 1 damp washcloth.

“We are like an egg. The shell is our faith in God.

“If our faith is growing weak, the world can pressure us and we can crack and crumble. (I dropped a raw egg into the glass bowl — I had to drop it twice because it didn’t crack the first time.) The world can then get mixed up with us and it would be very difficult to get back our faith. (I used the wire whisk and beat up the egg and shell in the bowl to show how we can get mixed up in the world and how difficult it would be to put the egg and shell back together.)

“On the other hand, we could be like a hardboiled egg that has been tested and tried by God and made stronger. When God puts us through trials and tests us, we become stronger. When we heat up and cook an egg, the insides become stronger and more solid. Then, if the world cracks our faith (I cracked the shell of the hardboiled egg and peeled some of the shell off), we are strong enough to endure the pressure and we don’t get mixed by the world.

“I used the Bible story of ‘we are sheep and Jesus is our shepherd’. PS: I ate the hardboiled egg.”

Seth’s object lesson



Seth Thomas

Seth Thomas is a 13 years old member of Allen Laben’s Sunday school class. Seth drew on his experience as a cross country runner to prepare a good Biblical object lesson. Here is how he presented it to the Sunday school:

“Good morning, everyone. The object that I have with me today is a medal that I won because my cross country team got first place at the AAU National Championships. I am going to be talking to you about running, specifically running for a ‘prize’ or ‘the’ prize. This principle is taken literally by worldly people by just running for the victory or a medal like mine. On

the contrary the Bible tells us to run in a different way and for a different prize. The purpose is to be in the kingdom.

“Let’s turn to Heb 12:1. This verse is telling us that we need to set aside worldly distractions and sin, so we can get closer to achieving the real purpose of this life. A question that we all need to consider is what are we really running for? The next verse that we are going to look up answers this question for us, so let’s turn to Phil 3:14. This verse is saying that our real prize is the high calling of Christ that we are all called to, which is the only incorruptible prize there is. Our job as Christadelphians who believe is to prepare ourselves to run and finally receive the everlasting prize. We can run the race without being weary if we hold each other up and assist others along the way, like my cross country team helped us win the race.

“My lesson is summed up in 1Cor 9:24 that says we need to ‘run’ the race or ‘live our lives faithfully’ that we may obtain the prize that God offers for us.”

Even the little kids get involved

Wendy Schneider teaches the three and four-year-old children in the Baltimore Sunday School. Her students are Skylar Hewitson and Levi Mutter. When their turn came to be presenters, the children did their own version of a time-honored object lesson that uses toothpaste. Here's how it went:



Levi Mutter

“The lesson was that our words are like the toothpaste — easy to ‘get out’ and impossible to retrieve and ‘put back.’ The little ones enjoyed the squeezing part. We then talked about being careful what we say and that God hears our every word. Everyone enjoyed the simple lesson.”

Skylar
Hewitson



What's happening in your Sunday school?

A word of thanks is extended to Jane Hewitson and the families in Baltimore who have told us what is happening in their Sunday school. Congratulations are also extended to Emily, Seth, Skylar, Levi and the other students for their great work. *Now I would like to hear from you.* As a long time Sunday school teacher and superintendent, I know how resourceful and creative Sunday school teachers can be and how much our children can do with a bit of guidance. I also know how helpful it is to learn what others are doing and to pick up new ideas. So please tell us what is happening in your Sunday school. A quick e-mail will get the ball rolling.

Jim Harper (Meriden, CT):
sundayschool@tidings.org

Object Lesson from Isaiah 38

Hezekiah's sickness, a message of death, an object lesson for mortals of all succeeding ages. Hezekiah prayed for life, pleading his good deeds. He received fifteen years lease of life, but misused the gift. "The God of David" — He is not the God of the dead, but of the living, therefore David must be raised from the dead (Luke 20:37, 38). In addition to prolonged life, God promised protection for Jerusalem, and deliverance from Assyria. But Hezekiah asked (2Kgs 20:8), "What shall be the sign that the Lord will heal me, and that I shall go up to the house of the Lord the third day?" He rendered not again according to the benefit done to him (2Chron 32:25.) (The Christadelphian, 1896, p120)

Music in Worship

“Making Melody in your Heart”

Music in general and hymns in particular are most often thought of as something that we hear, something we sing, something we listen to.

We attend a concert, we listen to a recording, and we play an instrument. These are all musical activities that involve sounds we can hear. Music has been described as sound that is an organized collection of notes played in a defined rhythmic pattern. Well written music is generally pleasing and interesting to listen to. Why is this? What makes music pleasing and interesting? It is because the harmonic, melodic and rhythmic patterns are audibly satisfying and are produced in a way that we can learn and later recall. To simplify this, a song will have a melody line and a rhythm that we can recognize and remember. Much of popular music, folk music and religious music falls into this category. Most hymns are easy to learn and easy to later recognize and recall.

Music is appealing because melody and rhythm offer a pleasant alternative to the relative plainness of ordinary speech. The world would be a much less interesting place without benefit of music in all its varieties. Instrumentalists, symphonic orchestras, chamber groups, men's and women's choirs, mixed choirs, children's choirs and vocal soloists are some of different ways of presenting music.

Hymns are a treasure

For the disciple of Christ hymns are a treasured part of our worship. Our hymns contribute to a united form of fellowship and worship. When we sing — we participate together in making music to the Lord. As we learn new hymns we learn not only fresh music, but we combine that music with innovative and poetic ways in which to express our praise and love for God and His dear Son. In other hymns we express thanksgiving, offer prayers or confess our faith in the coming kingdom. All of these concepts are enriched when they are combined with music and thoughtful words to express our beliefs, feelings and emotions.

It comes as a surprise, however, when we read that we are to “...*make melody in your heart to the Lord*”. The full verse reads: “*Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord*” (Eph 5:19).

- ESV — “*making melody with your heart to the Lord.*”
- Holman Bible — “*making melody from your heart to the Lord.*”
- NASB — “*making melody with your heart to the Lord.*”

Here we have reference to music made in or with our heart. No melody or musical sound is produced by the heart. This is clearly a figure of speech. It is a metaphor for the seat of our emotions reflecting our deep seated love and adoration for the Lord. Hymns may be sung with skill and understanding by a congregation, small

group or by an individual. This verse however is pointing to the thoughts and meditations of our heart.

Melody from within

The melody is within our hearts. This may at first seem an impossibility, and inconsistent with all that we generally understand about music as an audible arrangement of sounds and rhythm. We are told that melody is be in our heart and is directed to the LORD. The LORD knows our inward being. He knows our thoughts and our mind. He knows our heart. *“For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether” (Psa 139:4).*

Deep within our thoughts are found our inward and most personal reflections about the Creator, thoughts of His goodness, His purpose, His Son, His love, His mercy. These thoughts move in and out of our stream of consciousness. Sometimes we are aware of a Bible verse that expresses our awareness or appreciation of God at that moment. It may be the words of a poem or some particularly helpful expression of a precious truth. Or it could be a song, a hymn, a melody that runs through our mind where music and words combine to give silent praise and petition to our Heavenly Father.

A similar sentiment is written by Paul in Col 3:16 — *“Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs with thankfulness in your hearts to God.”* What does it mean to be thankful to God in your hearts? How can we show thankfulness with our heart? Surely this concept is instructing us to be thankful with our inmost perception and genuine feeling. The Lord Jesus taught us that the first commandment is to *“Love the Lord your God with all our **heart** and with all your soul and with all your mind.” (Matt 22:37).* Each of these ways to love God spring from our inner understanding and appreciation of the great God we worship, God who is our Heavenly Father. The Psalmist writes: *“Bless the LORD, O my soul; and all that is within me bless his holy name” (Psa 103:1).* The essence of true worship is a full and complete expression of the inward heart and mind by a child of God.

Sometimes our music is silent

So our hymns become for us a medium by which we express our love and devotion to God. In unified vocal experience we sing praise to God and participate with others as we share beautiful words and music. But there are times when the only music we hear will be that which we alone can hear, inside our heart and mind as we reflect upon the God we worship and honor His name in silent praise. May that praise be never ending in the heart of all creation.

*The words which from my mouth proceed,
The thoughts sent from my heart,
Accept, O Lord, for Thou my Strength
And my Redeemer art. (Hymn 8)*

Ken Curry (Toronto East, ON)

A Beautiful Christadelphian Hymn — “Watch Over Me”

“Watch Over Me” is the title of a hymn written by two Christadelphians in the United Kingdom in 1985. Sister Sheila Bacon wrote the words of the hymn. She asked Brother Andrew Johnson if he would put the poetic words to music which he did. The result is a lovely hymn with the theme “Watch over me”. Each verse uses the theme words.

Verse 1 — The shepherd boy watches

Verse one speaks about David as a shepherd and asks the question that David must have considered in his time in the fields, as he contemplated his responsibility to watch over his flock. David prays to the Shepherd of Israel and asks “...how shall I fight the lion and bear Except Thou watch over me?” David says to Saul:

“...Your servant has been keeping his father’s sheep. When a lion or a bear came and carried off a sheep from the flock, I went after it, struck it and rescued the sheep from its mouth. When it turned on me, I seized it by its hair, struck it and killed it. Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear...The LORD who delivered me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine.” (1Sam 17:34-37).

Verse 2 — The outlaw is waking

Verse two takes us to another scene in David’s life when he was an outlaw from Saul and other enemies. Once again David appeals to God as the Shield of His people and asks the question, “...how shall I wander, kept free from alarm Except Thou watch over me?” David says: *“The LORD is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge. He is my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. I call to the LORD, who is worthy of praise, and I am saved from my enemies” (Psa 18:2-3).*

Verse 3 — The King in Jerusalem

The third verse speaks about David as King in Jerusalem and his concern to rule the kingdom of Israel with wisdom and God’s overriding guidance. In the hymn David asks God, the Sovereign of Israel: “For how shall I govern this kingdom aright, Except Thou watch over me?” David speaks about his trust in God when he is King of Israel — *“For the king trusts in the LORD; through the unfailing love of the Most High he will not be shaken” (Psa 21:7).*

Verse 4 — Like David — I wander

The fourth and last verse speaks about us today as followers of our Lord. As sheep, often struggling with issues and not sure which direction to take, we ask for God’s help. And the hymn states, “How shall (we) come safe to (our) journey’s end, Except Thou watch over me?” David expresses his belief in God’s care through our day by day issues. *“Praise be to the LORD, to God our Savior, who daily bears our burdens. Our God is a God who saves; from the Sovereign LORD comes escape from death” (Psa 68:19-20).*

WATCH OVER ME

Words - Sheila Bacon

Music - Andrew Johnson

The musical score is written for piano in 6/8 time, featuring a key signature of one flat (B-flat). It consists of four systems of music, each with a treble and bass staff. The melody is primarily in the treble clef, while the accompaniment is in the bass clef. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

1. The shepherd boy watches beneath the stars,
His flock lie around him asleep;
And he thinks of the Father whose loving care
His people from danger will keep.
O Shepherd of Israel, I pray to Thee,
Watch over me, Watch over me;
For how shall I fight with the lion and bear
Except Thou watch over me?
2. The outlaw is waking within the cave,
His enemies round him are near,
And he thinks of the Guardian whose outstretch'd arm
Alone can deliver from fear.
O Shield of Thy people, I pray to Thee,
Watch over me, Watch over me;
For how shall I wander, kept free from alarm
Except Thou watch over me?
3. The King in Jerusalem lies at ease,
His word is obeyed in the land;
And he thinks of the Ruler whose ceaseless might
The powers of the world can command.
O Sovereign of Israel, I pray to Thee,
Watch over me, Watch over me;
For how shall I govern this kingdom aright,
Except Thou watch over me?
4. Like David I wander the world today,
Like sheep from the pathway I roam;
Awaiting the Kingdom that God will send,
When a greater that David shall come.
O Shepherd of Israel, I pray to Thee,
Watch over me, Watch over me;
How shall I come safe to my long journey's end,
Except Thou watch over me?

The author of the lyrics, Sis. Sheila Bacon, fell asleep in Jesus some years ago. Bro. Andrew Johnson writes, "She was a faithful sister who worked with the Sunday School in Rochdale over many years. She wrote many plays and songs/ hymns to go with them for the Sunday School to perform. She would have been very pleased to know that 'Watch Over Me' is being put to good use in praise of our Heavenly Father."

Bro. Andrew did put the words to music and what he wrote supports the spiritual thoughts expressed in each of the four verses. He begins each verse in a minor key conveying the seriousness, dangers and concerns that David faced and we face today in our natural and spiritual lives. When the refrain of each verse is sung Andrew changes to the relative major key of B flat. The contrasting brightness of this major key (after the G minor key) helps to support and musically convey the change of outlook that accompanies the difficulties of life when God is there to watch over us. In this way there is a cohesive connection between lyrics and music.

This hymn, "Watch Over Me", was recorded in England by Christadelphians on a compact disc titled, "David The Shepherd King". The group of vocalists is led by Sis. Mary Johnson. This hymn has also been sung in North America at a number of Christadelphian functions. May the words and accompanying music be enjoyed by readers of *The Tidings Magazine* and be a source of spiritual encouragement on our journey of life. Copies of the music and words can be obtained from krcurry@sympatico.ca.

"O praise the LORD, all ye nations: praise him, all ye people. For his merciful kindness is great toward us: and the truth of the Lord endureth for ever. Praise the LORD" (Psa 117).

Joan Curry (Toronto East, ON)

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/>*

History

Jim and Lizzie Cheetham: A Love Story Part 1

Introduction

This is a continuation of the accounts of the early history of some Christadelphians in California, as covered previously in *The Tidings* (Jan 08 p 21, June 08 p 229, Oct 2008 p 441, Feb 09 p 72, May 09 p 170, Jan 10 p 22, July 10 p 283). The next few articles will focus on Jim and Lizzie Cheetham down to her death in 1952. Along the way, we will cover in some detail the circumstances surrounding the death of Bro. Roberts in San Francisco in 1898, for the accounts of this sad event are scattered among many sources.

Sarah Elizabeth Genders and James Cheetham meet



Sarah Genders as a young woman in England

Still in her teens, Sarah Elizabeth Genders was facing a major dilemma. Sarah, known to her friends as Lizzie, was in love with a young man in the Wesleyan church she attended in Birmingham, England in the 1880's. Her love for him had steadily grown and now she hoped to marry this man. But something had recently begun to take precedence in her life and it threatened to end her dream of marrying her boyfriend. Sarah had recently learned the truth about the Bible from her brother John, who had become a Christadelphian a few years earlier. She knew in her heart that she must join those who believe the truth about God, but was unable to convince her beau to join her on the journey. This was an extremely difficult crossroad for her. Must she lose the love of her life to follow Christ? As painful as it was for her, she

knew the answer. Sarah made the decision to choose her love for God over her love for a man by being baptized a Christadelphian in 1888.

Nineteen years before her baptism, Sarah Genders was born in Sutton Coldfield, Warwickshire, England on July 19, 1868. Her parents were John and Mary Ann (Smith) Genders. Sarah's family included three brothers: William, Frederick, and John; and three sisters: Laura, Mary, and Edith. The first family member to be baptized was her brother John in 1883 at age 18. A year later her sister Laura was baptized at 23, followed by Frederick, Edith, and Sarah. Sarah's mother died in 1887, the year before Sarah was baptized.¹

Robert Roberts was a family friend of the Genders, and he occasionally visited them for relaxation. He would later visit Sarah's home in San Francisco shortly before he died. That, however, would be many years down the road and in the meantime Sarah would begin a family of her own. A few years after sacrificing her

love for the young man from the Wesleyan Church, Sarah met the man she would eventually marry. Unlike her earlier boyfriend, there was no question about this man's devotion to the Truth. James Cheetham, baptized at age 18 in 1885, was such a dedicated believer that he would walk to the ecclesial meeting place at Halifax, a distance of 10 miles from his home in Mill Bank.² James was not the only family member to dedicate his life to Christ. His uncle, Frank Cheetham, was baptized by Robert Roberts more than 20 years before James became a Christadelphian.³ Frank's uncle, John Cheetham, who had fought for England against Napoleon at the battle of Waterloo, became a Christadelphian later in life.⁴



James Cheetham prior to coming to California

James Cheetham, whom Lizzie called Jim, was born on February 13, 1867 in Halifax, Yorkshire, England. He was the second of George and Hannah (Ackroyde) Cheetham's nine children. He had three brothers: Fred, Joe, and John; and five sisters: Ellen, Ada, Annie, Alice, and Lily. James hailed from a working class family, and like many young Britons at that time in history, he worked in a cotton mill. The 1881 English Census listed this as his occupation at age 14.⁵ James' father made his living as a monumental mason, carving monuments from marble. While George Cheetham may have been a Christadelphian, James' mother was not. This was something James desperately wanted to change but was apparently unable to accomplish.

In 1889 James wrote the first of his many letters to *The Christadelphian Magazine*. "We have commenced a Sunday school in connection with the ecclesia at Sowerby Bridge, so that the children may be taught the way of the truth. At the opening on the first Sunday of this month we had twenty scholars and eight teachers. We feel very much encouraged by such a beginning as this, and we hope that the work which we have undertaken may, with God's blessing, be the means of bringing forth fruit unto the honour and glory of Jehovah." James was the Sunday School Superintendent and Assistant Recording Brother in Sowerby Bridge.

To California

James destiny did not lie in his native England, however, but far away in California. He began his voyage to San Francisco, which he would call "home" for the rest of his life, on June 13, 1889. Unable to work in his father's business in England because he was allergic to the marble dust, James immigrated to San Francisco to work as a furniture finisher in Bro. William Clark's furniture store (Pacific Spring and Mattress).⁶

The brethren and sisters in Sowerby Bridge hated to see the young brother leave. A Bro. Briggs reported to *The Christadelphian* "the loss of brother James Cheetham by removal to San Francisco, via Quebec, for which place he sailed in the S.S. Vancouver on the 13th June. The brethren were very sorry to part with him as he was a useful and promising brother. He departs with the prayers of the brethren



**Insert from the front page of the
Seasons of Comfort book given to
James when he left England**

and some little mementoes of their love and esteem.” One of those mementoes, a copy of the book “Seasons of Comfort” by his friend Robert Roberts, survives today. James was coming to an ecclesia of eight members. There were also a handful of Christadelphians eighty miles away in Stockton, including a young Bro. Edmonston who would become James’ close friend.

James sent his first letter from California to *The Christadelphian* in 1891: “In this City of 300,000 inhabitants [San Francisco], it is said only 5 per cent attend places of worship. At present I am the only Christadelphian living in it. There are a few across the Bay in Oakland and Berkeley. I go over to Berkeley on Sunday mornings, a distance of 14 miles, to break bread at the house of brother W. A. Clark. There are eight of us altogether. We have had two immersions lately — sister

Leonard , of Stockton (Cal.), and brother Clark’s eldest daughter, sister Ellen Tibbits , from Columbia Tuolumme, Co. Cal. These are only able to get with us occasionally. We have also lost brother P. [Peter] Innes, who has gone East on a visit to Aurora, Ill., for a few months. We shall be pleased to see brother W. Green, of Lanely, Wales. I will be on the lookout for the vessel when she arrives here, and give him a hearty welcome after his long voyage.”

Romance Blossoms

Jim wrote to Lizzie at about the same time he wrote the letter to *The Christadelphian*, telling her that distance and time hadn’t dimmed his feelings for her. He wasn’t sure if she felt the same, but he was leaving the matter in God’s hands. He told Lizzie that he wanted to express his “heartfelt thanks and gratitude to you for the kind letter which you wrote me, it shows clearly to my mind a sister whose whole heart and soul is in the truth. There was a time when we were completely ignorant of God’s purpose in regard to the Earth, and man whom he has placed upon it; reared and brought up to believe in the Pagan and superstitious belief of the immortality of the soul...you know that I love you, I do not know whether that is returned or not. It rests entirely with you whether to accept or reject...”⁷

Lizzie wasn’t as certain as Jim about their relationship. After all, marrying Jim would mean great sacrifices for her. If she became Jim’s wife, she would be leaving her family and friends to start a new life in an unfamiliar country. She turned to a trusted brother, J.O. Bamford, for advice. His reply was “...I really do not know enough of Bro. Cheetham to give you a decided opinion, but so far as I know him he is a worthy brother and when in England was very active in the service of the truth. I have never heard a wrong word about him. I always found him very nice.”

Bro. Bamford continued with some very sound advice. “In choosing a partner for life, there are many things to be considered as a false step will probably mean great trouble sometime. Of course, the first thing to be considered – is – ‘Is he (or she) a worthy disciple of Jesus Christ?’ Secondly, are our dispositions or temperaments such that we shall be able to get along smoothly and lovingly?’ I am taking for granted that you love one another or I should say the foregoing questions are based upon that assumption. Money, position, etiquette, etc. are, I consider, very secondary considerations compared with a good even disposition, and even with the best mated couple there has to be giving and taking to preserve that loving concord which is so beautiful.” Brother Bamford went on to advise Lizzie to ask Jim to come to England for a visit. He cautioned Lizzie that she should only do so if she was serious about the relationship. If after Jim’s visit she still felt strongly about him, he advised, she should go to California and become Jim’s wife.⁸

Apparently Lizzie liked the advice she was given. She asked Jim to visit her in the summer of 1891 but he was unable to do so. He let her know, however, that he also liked the idea of coming back to England to see her as well as preach to his family. “Well, God willing and the Lord tarries, I hope to come home for Christmas; if not I will surely come early in the spring of ‘92 and I sincerely hope and trust that I shall be successful and win your love. I know it is a very serious matter and I do not blame you in the least for being so particular on so important a matter as this. As regards my mother I shall try my best to get her to embrace the Truth when I go home.”⁹

In the meantime Jim began to work on getting Lizzie to come to California. He told her “you should see California in the spring of the year. I love to go to Stockton then and be out among the orange trees and to smell the sweet perfume of the Almond and Pomegranates and the beautiful flowers. Then indeed you would say California is a Paradise in this respect.” He also began to tell her about his plans to visit England. “It is my intention to have a long sea voyage when I come home, take steamer here, go via Acapulco, Mexico, San Salvador, San Jose de Guatemala, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, over the Isthmus of Panama by rail, take steamer again to New York, thence to Liverpool. This is a splendid route occupying 5 weeks. I far prefer travelling on the ocean to being on the railway a week; it is far more comfortable...”¹⁰

To be Continued.....

Gordon Hensley (Simii Hills, CA)

Notes:

1. Cheetham Family Bible
2. From a note written by James’ daughter Edith Rosamond Wade at an unknown time
3. *Christadelphian Magazine*, 1900
4. *Christadelphian Magazine*, 1881
5. Ancestry.com
6. Personal letter from Dulce Bartlett to Betty Hensley, October 25, 1988
7. Personal letter from James Cheetham to Sarah Genders, February 3, 1891
8. Personal letter from J.O. Bamford to Sarah Genders, May 25, 1891
9. Personal letter from James Cheetham to Sarah Genders, June 21, 1891
10. Personal letter from James Cheetham to Sarah Genders, August 24, 1891

Reflections

The Book of Mormon: (6) Human nature and the devil

The *Book of Mormon* has two key points correct about the nature of man: mankind has free will to choose between serving God or rejecting Him, and human beings have an inborn tendency to selfishness, self-indulgence and rebellion against the commands of God. In other words, mankind is beset with a tendency to sin.

Free will

The principle is clearly stated in II Nephi 2:27 where the patriarch Lehi is represented as saying:

“Wherefore, men are free according to the flesh...And **they are free to choose liberty** and eternal life¹ through the great Mediator of all men, or to choose captivity and death, according to the captivity and power of the devil.”

We cite this passage to show the teaching of free will. The reference to “the devil” will be considered in the latter part of this article.

In Helaman 14:30-31, Samuel the Lamanite prophet is said to declare to the Nephites what the angel said to him:

“...for behold, ye are free; **ye are permitted to act for yourselves**; for behold, God hath given unto you a knowledge and he hath made you free. He hath given unto you that ye might know good from evil, and he hath given unto you **that ye might choose life or death.**”²

The Nephites addressed had received what was considered to be the word of God and had the choice to follow it or rebel.

The idea that humans have free will is basic to the entire *Book of Mormon* and is an integral assumption of all the warnings, exhortations and admonitions contained in it. In this specific issue, the book is harmonious with the Bible.

The natural bent of human nature

In expanding on the consequences of the sin of Adam and Eve, Alma is reported to have said:

“...as the soul could never die, and the fall had brought upon all mankind a spiritual death as well as a temporal...therefore, as they [all mankind] had become carnal, sensual, and devilish, **by nature**, this probationary state became a state for them to prepare [for eternal happiness or torment]” (Alma 42:10; 41:4).

The use of the word “devilish” may seem too strong, but the Bible itself uses very strong language in describing the propensity to rebel against God that dominates

human behavior. In describing the human population before the flood we're told: "*The LORD saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and **that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart** was only evil all the time*" (Gen 6:5 NIV). The word of the LORD through Jeremiah is equally strong: "*The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?*" (Jer 17:9).

And the apostle Paul expresses the anguish of all who would be servants of God without the power of Christ working in them:

*"For I know that in me (that is in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing...For the good that I would, **I do not**: but the evil which I would not, that I do...I see **a law in my members...**bringing me into captivity to **the law of sin which is in my members**. O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom 7:18-25).*

While totally wrong on the idea of humans having an immortal soul, to say we are "**by nature** carnal, sensual, devilish" the *Book of Mormon* is pretty well correct in depicting this aspect of human nature.

The theme of human sinfulness runs throughout the book.

Alma's reference is not exceptional in the *Book of Mormon*, as throughout people are condemned for hardening their own hearts (1 Nephi 22:18; Book of Mormon³ 3:3), and for "willfully" rebelling against God (3 Nephi 6:18; Book of Mormon 1:16).

In fact the Lamanite prophet Samuel virtually paraphrases a theme that runs prominently throughout scripture. He assumes that if people "do whatsoever **your heart** desireth" they will be a "wicked and perverse generation" (Hel 13:27,29). The assumption behind his statement is that the natural tendency of man's heart is toward sin, not righteousness, so if we do what comes natural we will practice iniquity. The same assumption lies behind such Scriptural passages as:

*"It shall be unto you for a fringe, that ye may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of the LORD, and do them; and that ye seek not after **your own heart** and **your own eyes**..." (Num 15:39).*

The premise, of course, is that the way of our own hearts and our own eyes will consistently be in opposition to God's ways.

*"But my people would not hearken to my voice; and Israel would none of me. So I gave them up unto their **own hearts** lust: and they walked in their **own** counsels." (Psa 81:11-12). The conflict was between what God wanted Israel to do and what they would do "by nature". Left to their own devices they would not naturally do what was right but what was wrong.*

*"Son of man, prophesy against the prophets of Israel that prophesy **out of their own hearts**...that follow their **own spirit**...which prophesy out of their **own heart**..." (Ezek 13:2,3,17). The LORD did not have to say that they prophesied lies. It was enough to say their words were coming from their **own hearts** to make the point. The assumption is clear that what originates with human thinking is bent towards sin.*

Thus, while completely wrong about man being inherently immortal, the *Book of Mormon* is basically correct when it comes to humans having free will and having a natural bent to iniquity. From our own experience, each of us knows that given our own natural tendencies, we have a very difficult struggle to follow the principles of Christ and we have a continuing need for the forgiveness of sins.

Our situation is bad enough but the *Book of Mormon* would make it infinitely worse by setting forth a fallen angel devil.

A fallen angel devil

The devil presented in the *Book of Mormon* is basically the same as that believed in by the majority of Christians. The patriarch Lehi is recorded as saying:

“...I must needs suppose that an angel of God, according to that which is written, had fallen from heaven;⁴ wherefore he became a devil, having sought that which was evil before God. And because he had fallen from heaven, and had become miserable forever, he sought also the misery of all mankind. Wherefore, he said unto Eve, yea, even that old serpent, who is the devil, who is the father of all lies, wherefore he said: Partake of the forbidden fruit, and ye shall not die...” (2 Nephi 2:17-18).

No attempt is made to explain why Scripture reveals it was an actual serpent which presented the temptation to Eve (Gen 3:1 confirmed by 2Cor 11:3).

The “devil” does not just appear in Eden but plays a very prominent part throughout the *Book of Mormon* as noted in the second to last book of Ether. The context is a condemnation of nations conspiring against God:

“...it [the conspiracy] is built up by the devil, who is the father of all lies; even that same liar who beguiled our first parents, yea, even that same liar who hath caused man to commit murder from the beginning; who hath hardened the hearts of men that they have murdered the prophets, and stoned them, and cast them out from the beginning” (Ether 8:25).

A god of evil having more influence than the God of truth and grace.

The view of the devil presented in the *Book of Mormon* is really quite remarkable. His influence and power is such that he is far more successful and dominate with mankind than is God. And as we note in the following quotes, at the end of human history, the kingdom of the devil is much greater than the kingdom of God.

The devil is presented as the enemy of God who fights against God continually and is never contained or destroyed by God:

“All things which are good cometh of God; and that which is evil cometh of the devil; for the devil is an enemy unto God, and fighteth against Him continually, and inviteth and enticeth to sin, and to do that which is evil continually” (Moroni 7:12; Alma 5:40).

As the enemy of God, the devil is said to have great pleasure in the sins of mankind and their ensuing punishment. “For the devil laugheth, and his angels⁵ rejoice,

because of the slain of the fair sons and daughters of my [the Nephite] people; and it is because of their iniquity and abominations that they are fallen” (3 Nephi 9:2).

It is said that everyone who does not repent and become a servant of God is under the total domination of the devil:

“Remember that he that persists in his own carnal nature, and goes on in the ways of sin and rebellion against God, remaineth in his fallen state and the devil hath all power over him. Therefore, he is as though there was no redemption made, being an enemy to God; and also is the devil an enemy to God” (Mosiah 16:5).

Considering that the vast majority of mankind walk in the imagination of their own carnal natures, the *Book of Mormon* scenario has the devil with far more influence than does God.

In his role of encouraging iniquity, the devil is said to have extraordinary powers. Consider the following:

1 Nephi 12:17 “the devil blindeth the eyes, and hardeneth the hearts of the children of men, and leadeth them away into broad roads, that they perish and are lost.”

II Nephi 4:27 “And why should I yield to sin, because of my flesh? Yea, why should I give way to temptation, that **the evil one have placed in my heart** to destroy my peace and afflict my soul?” Think of the implications of those words. Scripture says “every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed” (James 1:14). That’s bad enough, but at least, with God’s help, we can identify our own lusts and seek to counteract them. But the *Book of Mormon*, as in the above quote, would give the devil actual access to our thinking process. 3 Nephi says: “Satan had great power, unto the stirring up of the people to do all manner of iniquity, and **to the puffing them up** with pride...” (3 Nephi 6:15). The devil⁶ is given the ability to actually put thoughts into the minds of mankind.

And hear the words of Ether: “...and Satan had **full power over the hearts** of the people...” (Eth. 15:19). Helaman discourses extensively on this power of the devil: “those secret covenants did not come forth unto Gadianton⁷ from the records... but behold, **they were put in the heart** of Gadianton by that same being who did entice our first parents to partake of the forbidden fruit...and also it is that same being who **put it into the hearts**⁸ of the people to build a tower sufficiently high that they might get to heaven...And behold, it is he who is **the author** of all sin... as **he can get hold upon the hearts** of the children of men.” (Helaman 6:26-30).

Further the devil is said to appear in the guise of an angel: Korihor excuses his false prophecies because “the devil hath deceived me; for he appeared unto me in the form of an angel, and said unto me...” (Alma 30:53). What chance does a human being have if such a superhuman immortal being existed having such extraordinary power and having freedom of action as an unrestrained enemy of God?

Kingdom of devil vs. kingdom of God

The end of human kind is concisely summarized in Alma 41:3-4:

“And it is requisite with the justice of God that men should be judged according to their works; and if their works were good in this life, and the desires of their hearts were good, that they should also, at the last day, be restored unto that which is good. And if their works are evil they shall be restored unto them for evil. Therefore, all things shall be restored to their proper order...raised **to endless happiness to inherit the kingdom of God**, or to **endless misery to inherit the kingdom of the devil**”.

This is presented as the final end of the human race. Since all have an immortal soul, they will be assigned for ever to one kingdom or the other — God’s or the devil’s — and one condition or the other — happiness or torment and misery.

Note that no one actually dies. This cannot be over-emphasized. The righteous live forever in happiness and the rejected are assigned eternal life in torment and misery. And since the history of mankind has been one of rebellion against God, the kingdom of the devil with its unending torment is going to far more populous than the Kingdom of God. This ghastly concept is the trap of believing that the soul is immortal.

Why doesn’t God destroy the devil? According to the theology of the *Book of Mormon*, He can’t, because the devil is an immortal being. Why doesn’t He change the character of the devil to good instead of evil? According to the theology of the *Book of Mormon*, He can’t, because that would be a violation of His justice that all receive according to their works.

What a perverted religion is concocted by the human mind. We can be everlastingly thankful for the revelation of truth God has provided in the holy Scriptures.

Don Styles (Ann Arbor, MI)

Next, Lord willing, teachings which are Scriptural.

Notes:

1. As noted in the third article in this series, the *Book of Mormon* clearly teaches every person has an immortal soul. Thus everybody has “eternal life” in the sense that they live forever. However, in the *Book of Mormon* “eternal life” is used as a synonym for eternal happiness and “death” is a synonym for eternal torment in hell.
2. See preceding footnote.
3. One of the books within the *Book of Mormon* is called “The Book of Mormon”. This goes along with the other 14 books which make up the complete *Book of Mormon*.
4. This is in direct contradiction to the Lord’s prayer which appeals “*Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven*” (*Matt 6:10*). Christ clearly teaches that obedience to God, not rebellion against Him, is what prevails in heaven.
5. The *Book of Mormon* does not explain the origin of the “angels” or of the devil.
6. Satan, “the devil” and “the evil one” are used interchangeably throughout the *Book of Mormon* (cf. Index in 2003 edition).
7. A wicked leader followed by Nephites and Lamanites.
8. Which totally ignores Gen 11:6 which declares building the tower of Babal was what “*they have imagined to do*”. The idea originated in the mind of mankind, not in the mind of a supernatural fallen angel.

What is Sin?

When we consider atonement and what it involves, we have to keep in mind that it is part of God's ultimate plan with His creation. We recognize that atonement in the Old Testament is a covering for sin. One of our fleshly weaknesses is that we are so confident that we understand the words we are using in our discussions that we don't consider them as carefully as we should. The words "atonement" and "sin" are so simple to us that we don't take the time to carefully examine how God uses them in His Word. This can and does result in an incomplete understanding of God's message and potentially can lead to error.

We see "atonement" as a covering for sin, which it is. We also see "sin" as transgression of God's laws, again which it is. But "sin", as God uses the word in Scripture, often includes more than transgression. The Hebrew word "chattaah" is translated sin in English, and primarily is associated with both the offense and its penalty, or sacrifice, so in English we often define the Hebrew word "chattaah" as transgression. However, sin is often used as a translation for the root of "Chattaah" or "chata", and so Vine's Expository Dictionary says the basic nuance or feeling of this word, "Chattaah", is missing the road or mark. So a question we should be asking ourselves, is what is the road or mark God is speaking of when He uses the word "chattaah" in His word? Our initial response is that "the mark" is obedience to His law and commandments, and we sin when we fail to obey them and thus miss the mark. However when we consider God's plan with His creation we find that obedience to His laws is only part of the mark. The actual mark is on a much higher plane.

God's ultimate plan with His creation, the earth and all it contains, is the glorification of His name so that He may be all in all. Anything, thought, action or condition which does not glorify His name misses the mark and is "chattaah". His name is glorified in the perfection of His creation which is eternal. A condition which is not eternal, that is corruptible and decays, is not perfect and thus does not ultimately glorify His name. Thus God calls mortality, that is a dying nature, "chattaah" because it is a condition which does not glorify His name.¹

Similarly, in the New Testament the principal term is "hamartia" (and cognates), which is equivalent to "Chata" above. In classical Greek, it is used for missing a target or taking a wrong road, and is the general New Testament term for sin as concrete wrongdoing.

Christ informs us that the glorification of God's name is indeed the mark when he tells us what he has done during his ministry on the earth. Christ says *"I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the word thou gavest me to do"* (John 17:4). He doesn't say, "I have obeyed your commandments". He says, "I have glorified thee. I have hit the mark." This is what God wants all mankind to do. Glorify His name. That is the mark.

Because our dying nature, called mortality, does not glorify God, it is properly called "chattaah": this along with the propensities and desires we have to promote self, (i.e., the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life.) Christ, hav-

ing the same nature as we do in every respect, had our same temptation “chattaah”. He destroyed his “chattaah” when he offered himself up on the cross. He glorified God both by his obedience and by his destruction of his “chattaah”.

When we consider the Mosaic Law, we find God established two separate yet related principles in dealing with the need for atonement. When someone, either individually or collectively, transgressed the law then they must offer up a sin offering for atonement. This principle is established in Leviticus 4. They have transgressed God’s law, but they are not unclean and excluded from the camp. This principle teaches that God requires an atoning sacrifice for transgressions.

God also establishes another principle relative to the need for an atoning sacrifice when he deals with uncleanness. This principle is established in Leviticus 12 and 14, and Numbers 6 when He deals with child birth, leprosy, and the Nazarite. In these cases the individual has been declared unclean due to circumstances over which they had no control, and excluded from the camp. In order to be declared clean and reenter the camp they must offer a sin offering as an atoning sacrifice. There had been no transgression, but they had a condition, uncleanness, and God requires an atoning sacrifice for their uncleanness.

So we see that Christ participated in his own sacrifice in that he destroyed the corruptible body in which he had the temptation to “miss the mark”, “chattaah”. His mortal body was deserving of death because it was corruptible. Because he had done no transgression deserving of death, God, in His righteousness, raised him from the dead, gave him an incorruptible body and elevated him to sit at His right hand.

All living organisms are mortal. Man, the beast of the field, plants, bacteria, even viruses, are mortal and die, and thus do not glorify God’s name. But this will change. God has told us that the corruptible nature of the world will be changed when He establishes His kingdom on the earth with Christ as king. Paul, quoting from Isa 25:8, says that “*death is swallowed up in victory*” (1Cor 15:54), and John says, “*And God will wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be nor more death, neither sorrow or crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away*” (Rev 21:4). These words apply to all of God’s creation, that all of creation may glorify Him.

John Pursell (Rogue Valley, OR)

Note:

1. Of course, the Lord Jesus glorified His name before resurrection, as the only son of God.

What is Sin?

What is sin! The apostle John says that “Sin is the transgression of law,” and, “All unrighteousness is sin” (1John 3:4; 5:13). The sin of Adam was a transgression of the Eden law. It was an action, with a mental consent of the actor. It was therefore moral in its characteristics; but, though moral in character it had physical consequences as the effect of the sin. By the transgression, the law of sin became a law in Adam’s nature; and since sin brought forth death, the law of Adam’s nature became “the law of sin and death.” (The Christadelphian 1899 p 175)

Letters

Dear Bro. Peter,

Warmest love in the Hope we share. Thank you so much for your editorial this month.

In our work in the mission field we have witnessed the truth of your comments — learning and living the message of God’s Truth is the most effective way to take someone out of poverty. We have seen so many people, and their families, move from serious poverty into a solid “middle-class” life style just from applying the principles of godly living to their lives. The honesty, sense of responsibility, the willingness to work hard, the patience, the love and service to the fellowman, all change the character and behavior of a child of God, is noticed by others, and often rewarded with better wages, more job security, and promotions. Controlling vices because that is what our Creator wishes, and being faithful to our spouses and children, give huge benefits both to our happiness and prosperity.

As Paul says, “*godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come*” (1Tim 4:8), (as you quoted).

On the other hand, we have also seen the spiritual damage done by good intentioned welfare or the introduction of money into the preaching/teaching equation.

The Bible Missions are now severely underfunded and their work of taking the saving message of the Bible to the world is having to be cut back. The only permanent way to improve someone’s life is to give them access to God’s word and its power to change lives. We would appeal to our community to continue to support this work in whatever way possible.

Jean Hunter (Los Angeles Hispanic, CA)

Dear Editor,

Thank you for your recent editorial (*The Tidings*, Feb. 2013). **Agape in Action** is one of the organizations working closely with the CBM in Kenya and other East African and Asian countries. Working through the CBM is sound advice and has been central to the work of **Agape in Action**. They have guided us to local brethren and sisters who are able to faithfully manage projects, and to areas with mature and established ecclesias. **Agape in Action** and the CBM have worked together to regularly visit the areas supported to ensure that the help given is directly, helping the “least of these” of our brothers and sisters, and that no spiritual harm is being done.

The outpouring of love and the desire to help our family facing terrible hardships is a testament to the power of the Word and the simple fact that we are related to each other in a very meaningful way as brothers and sisters in the LORD. Kenya was the first country supported by **Agape in Action** in 2007. While we are op-

erating in several other countries, it has been important to start cautiously and grow steadily to avoid the problems commonly experienced by those working in low-income countries. We have been incredibly blessed with the most remarkable local coordinators in Kenya. They have enabled us to reach many brothers and sisters living in extreme poverty without any financial mismanagement or project failures. Happily, we can also report of no instances of spiritual or moral harm being done, which is in large part a reflection of the spiritual maturity of our brothers and sisters in Kenya.

While the investments in Kenya are significant, they are the absolute minimum required to support the long-term changes necessary to alleviate the suffering and extreme hardships faced by our family in Christ. God Willing, the level of support will be reduced in the areas we are currently working and the funds redirected as families break the cycle of poverty and find themselves in a position to support their own families, ecclesias and communities. While **Agape in Action's** primary role is to show love, care and physical support to our family living in extreme poverty, our deepest prayer and most earnest desire is for the spiritual development of all those being helped. If physical needs are met while spiritual needs ignored, we have failed to provide for the most important thing of all.

*Your brother in Christ,
James Flint (Cambridge, ON: Agape in Action, Canada)*

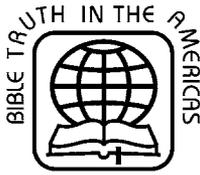
Preaching Can Change Lives and Give Hope

I was struck a few years ago by the words of a London Times columnist, writing of the value of missionary work in Africa. Its impact was greater because the writer was an unbeliever:

"Now a confirmed atheist, I've become convinced of the enormous contribution that Christian evangelism makes in Africa: sharply distinct from the work of secular NCOs, government projects and international aid efforts. These alone will not do. Education and training alone will not do. In Africa Christianity changes people's hearts. It brings a spiritual transformation. The rebirth is real. The change is good."

The rationale for the existence of the Christadelphian community as a separate body is that we have a unique understanding of the gospel message, expressed in those truths summarized in our Statement of Faith and set forth in our preaching, literature. We do not believe that conditions in this present world will get better by human endeavor, but we do believe in the gospel of the kingdom of God — in the new heavens and new earth to be established at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Michael Owen, The Bible Missionary, Sept. 2012 p 20



Bible Mission News

Sis. Iris Thompson — Balaclava, Jamaica



Sis. Iris Thompson

She is only asleep, waiting on the sound of the trumpet of God, to awake to eternal life. Those that die in Christ will be raised to immortality. What a rejoicing that will be, when death is swallowed up in victory!

She was a spiritual giantess in the Truth. Her faithfulness to the Lord was superb. She frequently spoke of how God was caring for her. She always had a word of encouragement for brethren and sisters with whom she came in contact. A smile and an air of pleasantness were always seen on her face.

Sis. Iris Thompson was born about 1920 and lived to the good old age of 92 years, falling asleep in the Lord on December 5, 2012. The Rockfort Mineral Bath in Kingston, has seen many baptisms, including that of Sis. Iris, in November, 1957. She was also a dear friend of Sis. Wilhelmina Wallace. Sis. Iris shared a wonderful lifelong constancy with her friends — most of whom have predeceased her.

She lived her ninety-odd years on the same spot of land where she was born, in the district of Balaclava in the parish of St. Elizabeth. She had two children — a daughter and a son. Sis. Iris lived in August Town for a while and visited the Kingston Ecclesia.

For many years, Sis. Iris was a loyal member at the Epping Forest Ecclesia in Manchester. She lived far from the ecclesia and could not attend every week. So she made a very special effort to be present at every Fraternal Gathering and Bible School. The last eight years of her long pilgrimage, saw her walking to a Christadelphian meeting hall, built on land, her late father supposedly willed to her. She even sold portions of this land to several Jamaican Christadelphian families.

*“When Jesus comes again, the faithful to raise.
With Him they live and reign in joy, for endless days”.*

*Submitted by Sis. Jan Berneau
CBMA/CBMC Publicity*

Preaching in Barbados, 2013

Bro. Rod Ghent, the CBMC linkman for Barbados shares this information about plans in Barbados for this year, and yet another interesting way they are able to preach the Truth.



Queen Elizabeth Hospital

The Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Bridgetown opened in 1964 and has provided quality and thoughtful care for many in its 600 bed complex. Unlike hospitals in North America, visiting hours for patients are regulated much differently. There is a large room outside the various patient wards where family and friends wait until the appointed hour when the ward doors swing open and the collected visitors enter a ward which may contain 36 or more patient beds. Since the wards

have open areas next to the ceiling, it is quite common to see birds flying back and forth through the ward. During the time before the doors open the collection of visitors provides an excellent opportunity for preaching the Truth of Scripture and teaching the only Hope of Life in this sad and evil world. Leaflet stands are in the corner of the room. Various churches have care givers in attendance to encourage those who sorrow for the illness of a loved one. In the noisy room there are animated discussions and quiet tears.

This year is the 40th Anniversary of the Bank Hall Ecclesia moving into their hall in Bridgetown. A number of activities have been planned for the year to commemorate the anniversary. As the January activity, the ecclesia as a group took quantities of Basic Bible Truth leaflets designed by brethren in the UK to the waiting room at the Hospital. They were thrilled with the results and plan to return to the hospital again soon. Not only did the leaflets quickly find their way into hands and pockets but a number of encouraging conversations took place as Bible Truth was expounded to interested listeners throughout the room.

The ecclesia in Barbados began in the 1892 and developed because of the preaching efforts of many courageous brethren and sisters who understood the command of the Lord Jesus to 'preach the gospel unto every creature'. They taught in markets, on street corners in halls and homes throughout this beautiful island. They were known in the early days as the 'no hell people.' Some were scorned for their beliefs but they continued until the end for the 'joy that was set before them.' The methods may change over time but the message is always the same, 'Fear God and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.'

*Submitted by Sis. Jan Berneau
CBMA/CBMC Publicity*

Missionaries to Guyana 1971-1975

Ted and I were married in 1970 about a year and a half after I was baptized. It was his dream inspired by Bro. Harry Whittaker to devote a few years to missionary work in Guyana. So in 1971, we set off on a journey that would forever change our lives. Ted was 23 and I was 22; he had just finished his Conscientious Objector alternate military service and I had just finished earning my teaching credentials at the university. We were young, naïve, and inexperienced but earnest. Ted had signed a four-year contract with the Guyana government to teach math in a secondary school in Berbice, the “country” part of Guyana. As we flew over miles of uninterrupted, dense, tropical forest, our first glimpse of Guyana, and our new home for the next four years, a part of us inwardly gasped, thinking, “What have we gotten into?” We reminded ourselves that this had been a matter of earnest prayer for many months and now the reality was upon us; there was no turning back from the plow. We clasped hands and offered silent prayers for our heavenly Father to overshadow us with his love and his wisdom.



Bro. Ted and Sis. Dolores (then)

I barely had Jacob and Esau straight in my mind and now we were “the missionary couple”, looked up to by many of our Guyanese brethren, that is, after they recovered from the initial shock of our youth. We grew up in Guyana both spiritually and emotionally. Our lives became entwined with the lives of our brothers and sisters. When the storms raged we looked in the boat and in the eyes of our brethren we saw our

Lord there in the boat with us. We many times were challenged to achieve things we deemed impossible and yet the angelic host was always encamped around us. When we were discouraged or frightened or lonely (there were no cell phones or computers to keep in touch, just air letters that took more than two weeks to travel to “America”), we learned a dependence on God that we would never have learned had we remained home. We learned what brotherly love was all about, we witnessed it and were challenged to live it.

We came thinking to be teachers but instead through our brethren we were taught. We came to see the world with a new set of eyes. When the four years were finished it was hard to return. This had become our home and our family, our place of belonging. Now almost 40 years later our hearts are still tied to Guyana, to the many



And now.

brothers and sisters who changed our lives. We long for the day when those many asleep in the grave will awake and we shall again be joined to them.

If volunteering in the mission field has ever crossed your mind, please give it prayerful consideration. The need in New Amsterdam 40 years later is significant. The experience of service in mission areas, ministering where needs are great and few are able to help is truly life changing. The relationships built with brethren and sisters last a lifetime.

*By Dolores Sleeper
(Ted and Dolores are still the Link Couple for Guyana)*

The “Marys” of Trinidad and Tobago

Bro. Brad Butts shares that for a recent Bible class in his home ecclesia (Denver) they considered a series on the “Marys of the Bible”. They were inspired by the service of the Marys who attended to Christ and the apostles. It was not just the ministrations of those we read the most about — Mary, the mother of Jesus, Mary Magdalene and Mary of Bethany. It included encouragement from two additional Marys, Mary the mother of John Mark and Mary, the mother of James and Joses. Mary, the mother of John Mark, is mentioned by name in only one verse of the New Testament (Acts 12:12) while Mary the mother of James and Joses is mentioned on several occasions, but neither woman is given much attention.

John Mark’s mother was probably a well off widow who hosted the ecclesia in her home during a very trying time for the brethren of the first century. It was a dangerous time for the brethren as Herod was on a mission to destroy some of those who led this new movement, yet Mary had the faith and courage to host the ecclesia in her home.

Mary was a sister, or at least a relative, to Barnabas. We remember that John Mark was the focus of a sharp disagreement between Barnabas and Paul, but was later spoken well of by Paul (Col. 4:10). No doubt Mary was a brave and willing servant who taught her son well.

Mary, the mother of James and Joses, was one of the many women who ministered to Christ and the twelve while they were in Galilee and likely beyond. This lovely sister was at the foot of the cross (Matt 27:56), was at the tomb with Joseph of Arimathea and Mary Magdalene (Mark 15:47), went to the tomb on the first day of the week to anoint her Lord’s body (Mark 16:1), was among those to whom Jesus first appeared after his resurrection (Matt 28: 8,9), and was given the task of telling the apostles the good news (Luke 24:9,10).

This brings me to the “Marys” of Trinidad and Tobago. Bro. Brad had the opportunity to share some of the thoughts above with our brothers and sisters during his recent visit to T&T. It was shortly after a sisters class (see photo) that it dawned on him that he had been among ministering “Marys” throughout his stay on this occasion as well as others. The extent to which our sisters in T&T serve their ecclesias and visiting brothers and sisters is something to behold. These sisters would check daily to see if his needs were being met — to see if he needed fellowship,



The “Marys” of Trinidad and Tobago

transportation, or a meal. In most cases these sisters do not have abundant material resources. No matter — they give what they can, as often as they can, to their ecclesias and to us. In addition they were quite willing to read and discuss Scripture whenever the opportunity presented itself. One sister’s class came together with just a couple of hours of notice. We can imagine that if our T&T sisters were alive during the time of Christ they

would have been among those who “ministered unto him of their substance” like the women we read about (Luke 8:3).

Often, Bro. Brad reflects on how much the brothers and sisters in T&T strengthen him when he visits and tries not to get stuck on the idea that he should be the one giving them support. These fellowship opportunities are truly representative of what Paul wrote in his greeting to the brethren at Rome. He longed to see them so that he and they might be “mutually encouraged by each other’s faith” (Romans 1:12 NIV). Though Bro. Brad may have provided some small support to their walks, the “Marys” of T&T strengthened this brother to an even greater degree.

*Submitted by Sis. Jan Berneau,
CBMA/CBMC Publicity*

Visits to St. Lucia

The ecclesia in St. Lucia continues to work hard in preaching and pastoral support. During 2012 approximately twenty brothers and sisters from overseas visited this beautiful scenic island in the east Caribbean. Those brethren who gave exhortations and lectures were greatly appreciated.

During 2012 two brethren, Andre George and Eddie Anthony visited Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago where they contributed to the preaching work in those locations and the youth camp.



Bro. Andre George and Bro. Eddie Anthony

The “Lunch and Learn” programme started in 2012 continues on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The Acts of the Apostles gave opportunity to discuss many first principles. Early in 2013, the Epistle to the Romans was commenced which proved to be a very stimulating series of discussions. The attendance varies from two to six visitors plus some members of the ecclesia.

Lectures have been held with between five and twelve visitors. The greatest Biblical challenge in convincing a people whose culture is strongly based on the superstition of demons and a fallen angel being, is that the devil has been destroyed in the death of Jesus Christ. Comprehending that the Bible uses figures of speech and personification to depict abstract things is a task not easily accomplished!

The work of preaching continues and brothers and sisters who are considering a holiday in a sunny place are encouraged to consider St. Lucia where a delightful stay can be enjoyed and at the same time the local ecclesia given some support. Please contact Bro. Martin Webster at mjwebster@execulink.com if you are planning a visit.

Submitted by Sis. Jan Berneau, CBMA/CBMC Publicity



St. Lucia ecclesial gathering



**Bro. Sydney and
Sis. Ruth Enebeli
and girls**

Have you read these *Tidings* books?

Bible and Science: Design vs. Chance by John C. Bilello

The concept that the Universe, and all that is in it, came about by chance is counter to Bible teaching. God is the author of both the Bible and nature. \$13.34 US (Hardcover, 254 pages, 2005)

Essays to Believers by Don Styles

A set of essays on practical Christian living and is suitable for individual meditation as well as group Bible study. \$8.00 US (208 pages, 2007)

My Journey in Faith

by Ronald P. Hicks
A brother shares his life experience in the Truth with Christadelphians around the world, and the joy of mission work. **Special price \$5.00 US** (372 pages, 2010)

The Creation Text: Studies in Early Genesis

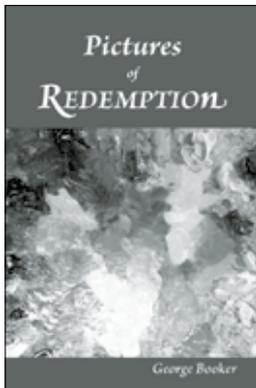
by David P. Levin
Forty-nine studies offer fresh insights into early Genesis by examining the text and structure of chapters 1 to 5. \$12.00 US (364 pages, 2011)

The Whole Armor of God by Ryan Mutter

This story takes place nearly 3,000 years ago, but the spiritual challenges are familiar to today's young people. \$6.00 US (110 pages, 2011)

Understanding the Bible

by A.D. Norris
A classic Christadelphian book useful in preaching work, and especially suitable for those who want to learn to read the Bible effectively. \$5.00 US (152 pages, 2007)



Soft Cover, 192 pages
\$6.00 US

Pictures of Redemption

by George Booker

After the First Principles have been mastered (as they must be), we must face the fact that there is something beyond. As we live out our lives day by day, the important issue is not so much how redemption has been achieved, but rather what redemption means, morally and spiritually – what it means, every day, to belong to God.

We might like to explain the atonement in simple terms, but the Bible doesn't present it that way. This book explores parables, analogies and figures of speech used in the Scriptures to illustrate the many facets of redemption.

How to Order

Online: www.tidings.org (Go to Books) or **E-mail:** tidingsbooks@tidings.org.

Mail: Tidings Books, 11659 Caves Rd., Chesterland, OH 44026.

Phone: Karen Guist 440-227-0212.

Shipping and handling costs are extra.

Make checks payable to *The Christadelphian Tidings*.

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 e-mail in text-only format are preferred.)

BEDFORD, NS

We have finished up a seminar series in February, 2013 that we began in October 2012. Although there was no continuing interest, there was interesting discussion, and it allowed the presenting brothers the opportunity to deliver sections of a new 40-week seminar series we have developed entitled, “Keys To Success: Helping You To Understand The Bible”.

Two sisters have re-worked the ecclesial website and we are using this as an important tool in our outreach activities. Please check us out at www.christadelphians.ns.ca. We would welcome comments on the blog posts and video.

In addition, Sis. Julie Snobelen has been coordinating a “Christadelphians of Atlantic Canada” newsletter. This is a monthly newsletter with information from the three Atlantic ecclesias: Sussex, NB; St. John’s, NF; and Bedford, NS.

Bro. John and Sis. Sair Ching hosted the ecclesia for a Saturday morning of hymn singing, Bible reading and fellowship, and Sis. Carol Crawford organized a bowling outing with fellowship at the Crawford’s home.

Bro. Nathan and Sis. Sarah Crawford organized a wonderful Sunday School Entertainment day in February in which a number of brothers, sisters and children presented various musical talents, a puppet show, poetry readings, skits, and of course, fellowship.

Dale Crawford

BROOKLYN, NY

We were delighted to join the two other NY Metro ecclesias in a spring workshop with Bro. John Bilello ministering on, “Guidelines for a Happy Marriage Relationship”. The workshop attracted an unusually large and warmly appreciative audience. Bro. John was accompanied by his sister wife, Mary, who added a special touch to the weekend activities. There are many young couples, and couples to be in the three ecclesia NY Metro group, and perhaps in the Tri-state and in the twice tri-continent, and the physical presence alone of Sis. Mary spoke volumes to a sound and enduring relationship. She made a significant contribution. We thank both of them for their labors on our behalf. We thank New Jersey members for their support and await the completion of the book by Bro. John.

Clive Drepaul

CAMBRIDGE, ON

It is with great joy that we announce that on December 23, 2012, CASSIDY ROBINSON, daughter of Bro. Paul and Sis. Bonnie Robinson (Brampton, ON) put on the saving name of our Lord Jesus Christ in the waters of baptism. The ecclesia rejoiced along with her parents and family on this happy occasion.

Since our last correspondence we have welcomed by transfer Bro. Craig Wilson of the Manitoulin Island, ON Ecclesia. We pray that he will be strengthened together with us as we walk toward the kingdom of God. We also commend our Sis. Verity Suntz to the Hamilton McNab, ON Ecclesia by way of transfer to join her new husband Bro. Joel Suntz.

Kurt Ruhland

ECHO LAKE, NJ

Please note that the undersigned is no longer the recording brother; please forward any request or ecclesial communications by mail to the following: Bro. David Nelson, 133 Red Bank Avenue, Bayville, NJ 08721. He may be contacted by telephone at 732-269-5822 and by email justdavenelson@gmail.com.

We thank our Bro. Mike Robinson for his recent study weekend and our Bre. Matthew Link and Tim Keating for their words of exhortation.

We have been pleased and privileged to have the company of a number of visiting brothers and sisters and we have welcomed them around the table of the Lord: Margaret Ann Packie, Virginia Packie, Carolyn Antonaccio, and Mabel Knapp (Union, NJ); Ruthann Jorgensen, (Rochester, NY); Michael Nemet (Hamilton Book Road, ON), Krista Davenport (Orlando, FL); Warren and Dot Phillips, and Vicky Tuck (Meriden, CT); Tom and Sally Davis (Pomona, CA); Matthew Link (Washington DC); Margaret Cummins, and Sue Cheetham (Moorestown, NJ); Tim and Natasha Keating (St John's, NF); Grant Penny (Brantford, ON); Seon Levius (Barbados); and Ashraf Ali (Manhattan, NY).

Stewart Marsden

HAMILTON GREENAWAY, ON

We have enjoyed the fellowship of brothers and sisters from a number of ecclesias in the past few months. We thank Bre. Ed Cabral (Mississauga West, ON), and Dan Perks (Barrie, ON) for their words of encouragement and exhortation.

We are pleased to receive Sis. Laura Vandenberg who transferred her membership to Hamilton Greenaway from London, ON. We are also pleased to welcome Bro. Hans Vandenberg back into fellowship around the table of the Lord following a satisfactory interview. Bro. Hans was a former member of London, ON. We also welcome Sis. Mary St. Onge from the Hamilton Book Road, ON Ecclesia. We look forward to sharing fellowship with our new brother and sisters as we walk together toward the kingdom in his grace.

2013 is a special year for Greenaway as we celebrate 90 years of continued service to the Master in our hall. The faithful service and diligence of many brothers and sisters over those years has provided a comfortable and loving ecclesia for all of us. We will be holding an open house in the fall and we will be sending out more information as plans are finalized.

Robert Webb

HONESDALE, PA

We deeply regret that our beloved Sis. Esther I. Garing went to sleep in the Lord on Easter Sunday, March 31, 2013. She was born on July 28, 1925, and baptized on August 26, 1963, together with her husband Benjamin. She was strong in the truth, always attended meetings, and read her Holy Bible every day. She even helped to

lay foundation stones for our chapel. Her family were devoted Christadelphians as shown by a notice in the Christadelphian Magazine in 1895 that a service was to be held in the home of her grandfather, Bro. J.F. Garing. Bro. James Harper (Meriden, CT) conducted her funeral service on April 5, 2013. Just as she fell asleep on Easter when we remember that our Lord was resurrected, we hope for her awakening in the Kingdom of God. 1John 4:17-18, "Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love."

Stephen J. DeMarco

KINGSTON, ON

We praise and thank our heavenly Father as the Kingston, ON Ecclesia continues to enjoy God's rich blessing of a strong fellowship amongst its members, and frequent visitors. There are too many visitors to list but we thank them all for coming and sharing in our fellowship around the memorial table and especially those who also encouraged our spiritual health through exhortation.

We have been richly blessed with the addition of two new babies born to the two Keene families this past year. On June 24, 2012, Abi and Justin Keene became the parents of a son, Charles William Keene, who continues to grow healthy and strong. He has a wonderfully calm demeanor and gives us all delight with his big smile. Charlie is the second child for Justin and Abi as he joins his four year old sister, Olivia, to make a happy family of four.

On November 13, 2012, Charlie's new cousin Aliya May Keene, was born to Mike and Sharon Keene. Aliya makes a nice addition to their household as she joins her five year old brother, Simon, and three year-old brother, Jacob. So with only eight baptized adults in our ecclesia, we have five wonderful children, all under six years old. It makes for lively meeting days but we are most thankful to our heavenly Father for the rich blessings they bring to our lives and the bright prospects for our ecclesial future. We have recently commenced children's Sunday school to begin establishing a solid foundation for their spiritual growth.

Though we are few in number, we are sincere of heart and would love to see other families of like precious faith, who may be considering relocation to consider the Kingston area, which offers good employment, educational and recreational opportunities as well as a welcoming spiritual community of brethren.

We are disappointed to lose the fellowship of Myriam Badger, who has recently moved from the Kingston area to take a new mid-wife job opportunity in Cambridge, ON. Our love and prayers go with her.

We are currently running some small weekly display ads, offering up sample questions that we hope will inspire those who may be searching for truth to contact us, in the local paper that goes to fifty-four thousand households in the greater Kingston area. The project has run five weeks now but so far we have had no replies. We are considering a new set of seminars for late fall 2013 or early 2014.

For those who may be travelling between Toronto, Montreal and Ottawa, please feel welcome to join us in fellowship, Bible studies or Sunday Memorial Service. Please contact Jim at ccJimBarton@gmail.com for meeting times and location as they vary.

Jim Barton

PITTSBURGH, PA

We were very grateful to our Bro. Everett Muniz (Paris Ave., OH) for his inspiring classes and exhortation on “Holy Living in Perilous Times” for our CYC study weekend in November.

We were very pleased to welcome Bro. Zachariah Kemp to our ecclesial family. He has been transferred here from the Northern Virginia, VA Ecclesia.

We have enjoyed visitors from ecclesias in Connecticut, Indiana, Maryland, Michigan, Ohio, Rhode Island, Virginia, Canada and the UK. We want to thank Bre. Peter Robinson and Richard Morgan (Hamilton Book Road, ON); Art Hibbs (Victoria, BC); Kevin Flatley (Paris Avenue, OH); Kyle Misko and Don Weingart (Paris Ave, OH); and Ken Burcaw (Ann Arbor, MI) for their encouraging words of exhortation.

Please note that our Sunday school now starts at 9:00 am.

Len Budney

PRINCE GEORGE, BC

Our recording brother’s mailing address has been changed to: 8311 Flamingo Ave, Prince George, BC, V2k 5H2.

We would like to thank our Bro. Jeremy Foster for sharing his study with us on the life of David during our spring study day on March 16-17, 2013, as well as Bro. Nathan Bartholomew for our study day in October. We would also like to thank following brethren for helping out our small ecclesia: Shaun Budden, Rick Evans, Terry Houghton, and Dan Sargent.

If anybody is traveling through Western Canada we would love to have you come for a visit. Our small ecclesia of twelve would greatly appreciate any support that can be provided.

Jonathan Lawrence

SARASOTA, FL

We welcome, by way of transfer, Bro. Larry Weiss. He comes to us from the Olympia, WA Ecclesia, where he served in a number of capacities. Our ecclesia is grateful that Bro. Weiss has moved to the area, and are confident that he will be helpful to our small ecclesia as we all await the Master’s return.

James L Wilkinson

VANCOUVER, BC

It is with sadness we report the falling asleep of Sis. Margaret Fedorski. Born in 1919 in Ontario; she moved to British Columbia and was baptized in 1950 in Vancouver. She had been in care for several years and fell asleep peacefully in December. She sleeps with her husband, Bro. Al, awaiting the return of our Lord. Our sympathies are with the family in their loss.

We gain by transfer from Victoria, Sis. Leanne Fidan and her two children. We pray for our heavenly Father’s blessing as we walk together to His kingdom. Our fraternal

gathering is set for October 12, 2013, and God willing, our speaker will be Bro. Nathan Badger.

Terry Fearn

BIBLEREADINGMARATHON.COM

How long does it take to read the Bible straight through from beginning to end without stopping?

The Simi Hills, CA Ecclesia is planning to conduct a Bible Reading Marathon beginning June 16, 2013, where a group of readers will begin in Genesis and continue non-stop until Revelation is finished. This project is modeled after similar marathons held by ecclesias in the Sydney, Aust. area. The expected outcome is to glorify our heavenly Father by the public reading of His word. Another benefit would be to promote more Bible reading in the community by inviting local residents to participate in reading at the Marathon.

The audio track is planned to be broadcast live at BibleReadingMarathon.com on the June 16, 2013, start day. The website will project still pictures of the event, and invite guests to order a Bible Reading Planner, a Bible Companion, or offer other interesting pamphlets. In addition, guests can select links to other websites such as ThisIsYourBible.com where they can sign up for Bible study courses.

Local residents will be invited to participate in the reading by signing up in advance. Advertising and promotion promises to be a key part of this event, and will be promoted at a booth at the local Simi Valley Street Fair, as well as in multiple newspaper ads, ads through Facebook, and ads placed by Google.

How can you participate? Ecclesias across the country can join in with their own local advertising and direct their guests to the website and promote a local activity. Although the Bible readers will be in California, the project still can be promoted anywhere. Interested? Send an e-mail to Bro. Doug Hawthorne at Cindy.and.Doug@juno.com and we'll send out an information sheet along with sample advertisements. You can also participate in your prayers to support this outreach activity.

Doug Hawthorne

ISOLATION LEAGUE SUNDAY SCHOOL

In addition to exhortations, Bible classes and lectures, the Isolation League provides Sunday school lessons through the mail for students ages three years old and up. These lessons are geared to the age of the student and are sent out by teachers who are interested in not only bringing God's message of salvation to the students but also being a friend. The lessons can also be adapted for use in ecclesias where there are not enough children for an organized Sunday school.

Since the start of the school in the United States in 1973 at least 50 students or former students have put on the saving name of Jesus and we rejoice in the knowledge that these young people have sought to glorify God in the days of their youth.

If you know of any children or young people who would benefit from receiving correspondence Sunday school lessons and contact with other Christadelphians, please contact me for further information, Mrs. Judith Nevers, 185 Boyce Street, Auburn, MA 01501; or by email at jnevers@verizon.net.

Judith Nevers

WWW.JEHOSHAPHATMUSIC.COM

A new online database of Christadelphian-composed music is now located at www.jehoshaphatmusic.com. The music (currently almost 300 songs) is offered in both audio mp3 and pdf sheet music. formats, and all music is available to Christadelphians free of charge once they have registered at the site.

Many of the songs have been featured on CDs by the BC Youth Choirs, the Manitoulin Youth Conference choir and the UK Youth Choir. Music can be searched by title, composer, theme and voicing, making planning for thematic presentations for Sunday school, Bible schools, song and praise evenings easier. The site also includes music related articles, classes and handouts, as well as helpful tips and handouts for singing, choosing and creating music.

God willing, we hope to release an “online album” of approximately 20 new songs in late spring, and further recording projects in the future. Registered users will receive emails alerting them to updates.

We sincerely hope that this site is useful in providing brothers and sisters sound spiritual music in these last days, and that the use of these “psalms, hymns and spiritual songs” might bring honour to our heavenly Father. Contact Bro. Dan Osborn at: info@jehoshaphatmusic.com or at: makrothumeo@hotmail.com for more information, music requests, or to contribute suitable music material to the site.

Dan Osborn

SAVE STAMPS FOR BIBLE MISSION

Many thanks to those who in the past have sent me stamps to be forwarded to England for resale to benefit the CBM in their preaching efforts. In 2012 almost \$5,000 was realized from the collecting and selling of stamps in the UK. Over the past 10 years almost \$46,000 has been raised through this method. Stamps should be saved on paper with a 1/4” margin surrounding the stamp where possible. Any damage to the stamps makes them worthless.

Please continue to save stamps for the Bible Mission and if you are not collecting them it is such an easy way of supporting the work of the Bible Mission. Stamps collected prior to the end of July will be hand delivered to the UK. Otherwise stamps will periodically be transmitted to the UK.

If you have any further questions please contact me and/or send stamps collected within the US by mail to Mrs. Judith Nevers, 185 Boyce Street, Auburn, MA 01501; or by email at jnevers@verizon.net.

Judith Nevers

THE SIMI HILLS PREACHING FUND

The Simi Hills Preaching Fund will be able to offer funding assistance for ecclesial Bible seminars in North America. Funding is also available for no interest loans to ecclesias for the purpose of buying a building.

Please e-mail your inquiries and requests to: sommerville@unitedagencies.com.

Ken Sommerville

Minute Meditation

Impossible?

The oft-given advice, “Don’t limit yourself, reach for your dreams, just believe in yourself and you can do it,” was expressed by the actress Audrey Hepburn when she said, “Nothing is impossible, the word itself says ‘I’m possible!’” The thinking of our day focuses on the little word “I,” considers that any goal can be achieved, and advocates “Looking out for number One” and “Just do it.” People who agree with Audrey Hepburn’s words, “I’m possible,” think that they can do anything they want to do, and they may act as if the world revolves around them. It is true that we often can do more than we first think we can, and it is important to exert ourselves to do more. However, we also need to understand that we personally are not the center of the universe, and that this world will keep right on spinning when we are not around.

The words possible and impossible truly apply only to our Heavenly Father — not to us. When discussing whether those who are rich can be saved, Jesus explains, “With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible.” Mary was told, “For with God nothing shall be impossible,” when she asked how it could be that she, a virgin, might conceive a child. We read in the gospel of Luke, “And he said, ‘The things which are impossible with men are possible with God.’”

Yet we all can do more than we are doing. Sheer grit and determination play a part, but Paul’s words, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me,” show us where to look for the power to achieve our goals. Paul could preach tirelessly, travel widely and convert many believers through the strength he was given from above —and so can we. Rather than saying, “I’m possible,” let us say with Paul that we can do all things thanks to Christ strengthening us.

Certainly Jesus himself relied upon his Heavenly Father to give him the strength to do what he did. He said, “I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.”

As long as we do as Jesus did and say, “I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father,” we also can look to God for help. The words of Jesus, “With men it is impossible,” change when a faithful response to the word of God and the power of prayer are aligned with the purpose of God. Jesus explains, “If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamore tree, ‘Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea;’ and it should obey you.” Jesus also says, “If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, ‘Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.’”

Not then, nor since, do we know of anyone moving literal mountains from place to place, or uprooting trees and planting them in the sea by the power of faith and earnest prayer. Perhaps it is because none of us have faith as a grain of mustard

seed. No wonder we read, “And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith.” All of us need more faith than we have.

We learn in Hebrews, “Now without faith it is impossible to please him, for the one who approaches God must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who diligently seek Him.” Since we do want to please God and hope to be rewarded by Him with immortality in the kingdom, we need faith and need to seek our God. It is right for us to ask the LORD in prayer to increase our faith. He will respond favorably to that prayer. James tells us that the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man is powerful.

We also need humility to accept the divine purpose for our lives. Hard work, faith in the power of God, and fervent prayer may not help us achieve a goal that is contrary to God’s will. Paul prayed repeatedly for his thorn in the flesh to be removed, and it was not. Paul earnestly desired to convert his people the Jews, but was warned against going up to Jerusalem and was told, not only that the Jews there would not hear him, but that he would be imprisoned if he went. He went and it happened. Jesus begged God to remove his cup of suffering before his death on the cross, but obediently accepted his Father’s will. We may be convinced that we want what God wants, we may pour hours of effort into our goal, we may pray to be strengthened through Christ and have faith that God can accomplish what we desire, and even yet we may not be successful.

The reason is the words “I’m possible” are simply not true. We personally cannot determine what is possible or impossible for us to do. As James advises us, we need to say, “If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that.” We must recognize that God’s thinking may be different from ours: “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.” What is possible is only possible if the Lord wills.

Let us keep praying for more faith, let us put more effort into our service to our God, and let us never give up trying to please our heavenly Father, even if our faith is not as much as a grain of mustard seed. However, let us not rely on our own strength and think “I’m possible,” but let us surrender to the LORD and ask Him to bless and guide our efforts as we do our best to serve Him. We want to do His will and accomplish His purposes while resisting the temptations that come to all of us.

May we all follow the wise advice of Solomon when he tells us: “Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.”

Robert J. Lloyd

With God Nothing shall be Impossible

Gabriel's reminder: "With God nothing shall be impossible", must be taken with certain limitations. God cannot contrive that two and two shall make five. Nor can He save sinners without faith. He cannot deny Himself, and to accept faithless sinners would be to single out for special blessing those who deny Him. (Studies in the Gospels by Harry Whittaker)

Coming Events (Lord Willing)

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

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 7:00 p.m. 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.
- 11 Avon, IN** CYC Study Day at Ecclesial hall, 7122 E. County Rd 25 S, Avon, IN. Speaker: Bro. Jonathan Bowen. Topic: "The Evidence of Things Hoped For". This is for young people 15 and above. There is no cost to attend. Please contact Sis. Sasha Plew if you are planning on attending so that we may make adequate arrangements for housing and food. Sasha Plew 1stviolin@sbcglobal.net or 317-308-0403.
- 17-19 Sussex, NB** Spring Youth Camp. Speaker Bro. Mark Carr (Toronto West, ON) on "Elijah."
- 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.
- 18-19 Calgary, AB** Rolling Hills Study Weekend: A weekend of study, fellowship, and assorted activities for children. Bro. Ron Leadbetter (Hamilton Book Road, ON) will present "Samuel: A Man Prepared," (Lessons for families and ecclesias). Sis. Cherrilyn Kohlman will coordinate accommodation, children's activities, and catering. Accommodation is available in homes and there is space for RVs and tents. Classes will be held at the Rolling Hills Community Hall. Register with dana.kohlman@grasslands.ab.ca, or 403-964-2562.
- 19 Washington, DC** is the host for the Mid-Atlantic Christadelphian Fraternal Gathering in Mount Laurel, NJ at the Westin Hotel. Speaker is Bro. Frank Abel (Hamilton Book Road, ON). Begins at 10:30 am.

JUNE 2013

- 1-2 NYC Fraternal** with Bro. Nathan Badger. Contact Bro. Gideon Drepaul at yerubbaal@yahoo.com.
- 1 Simi Hills, CA** Study Day, "Jesus — The Amazing Son of God" by Bro. Devon Walker (Milnsbridge, UK). Studies begin at 9:30 AM. For all travel and hospitality concerns, contact Bro. Levi Gelineau, Leviandjessica@gmail.com.
- 16-19 Bible Reading Marathon** at Simi Hills Ecclesia, Simi Valley, CA. Non-Stop Bible Reading from Genesis to Revelation with live broadcast on BibleReadingMarathon.com beginning 2:00 PM PDT, June 16. For further information, email Bro. Doug Hawthorne Cindy.and.Doug@Juno.com.

19-23 North Houston, TX Children's Bible Day camp. The topic will be "Keys to Unlocking Visions of the Kingdom"! Please visit <http://nhchristadelphians.org/bdc/bdc.htm> to register or volunteer to help out!

21-23 New York Metropolitan Sister's Retreat at The Homewood Suites, 2801 Papermill Road, Wyomissing, PA. Speaker: Sis. Borgette Charles (Albany, NY). Topic: "Sisters role in the Ecclesia — A new beginning". Contact: Sis. Averil Ferguson (718) 881-8705, email: averilpsm23@juno.com or Sis. Patricia Hinds (917) 864-3867. Download registration forms at: <http://manhattanchristadelphians.com/#/sisters-retreat>.

23-29 Rocky Mountain Bible School at Steamboat 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, Birmingham, UK): "The Exodus Deliverance." Contact info: www.denverchristadelphians.org.

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

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" — Isaiah 43:12. The Youth Program theme will be "The Nation of Israel – God's Witness." The speakers are Bro. Neville Clark (Tea Tree Gully, Australia) "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 <http://www.christadelphians.net/macbs/>.

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

7-14 Toronto East, ON Prepare to Preach 2013. Are you prepared to Preach? P2P (Prepare to Preach) 2013 offers a variety of activities, and presentations from experienced missionaries and representations from various Christadelphian organizations to encourage, enable and empower missionary work at home and abroad. Contact Info: www.christadelphians.ca/torontoeast/p2p.

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 County, 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 with Bro. Shannon Strickland, 9305 Nancy Ln., Tomball, TX or shannonjeh@att.net www.swcbs.com.

13-20 Manitoulin Family Bible Camp. Bro. Jim Styles (Simi Hills, CA) Adults/Teens: "Family Life Lessons from Genesis"; and Bro. Nathan Badger (Cambridge, ON) Adults: "Peter's

Epistles: Trials Within, Trials Without,"Teens: "Far Above Rubies - Women of Virtue." A discount for early registration will be available until May 31, 2013. See the web site: 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 (East Texas, TX): "Parables of the Kingdom." Registration contact Bro. Mike Livermore, 24970 Woodridge Dr., Apt. 108, Farmington Hills, MI 48335, 248-462-5740, e-mail: 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 (Wilston, Brisbane, Australia) and Bro. Joseph Palmer (San Diego County, CA). For further information, please contact Jeff Gelineau 567 Astorian Dr., Simi Valley, CA 93065. E-mail: mail@gelineau.org. Register at www.californiabibleschool.org.

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 416-284-0290.

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 St., Auburn, MA 01501 or cindynevers@verizon.net.

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 for further information, yoshidafamily@clearwire.net. For registration, contact Sis. Pat Posey, robbandpatposey@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.

17-23 Winfield Bible School, Winfield, BC. The theme will be "Be of Good Cheer, I Have Overcome the World." Speakers are Bro. Jason Hensley; 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 250-478-0343 or hjcawston@gmail.com.

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

24-30 31st Annual Vancouver Island Bible Camp. Theme: "But the just shall live by his faith" (Hab 2:4). Speakers are Bro. Jim Styles (Simi Hills, CA): adults "Training to

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Become Equal to the Angels," and teens "James: Becoming Doers of the Word"; Bro. David Green (Sussex, NB): adults "The Spirit of the Lord," and teens "How Small is Your God?"; and Bro. Jim Harper (Meriden, CT): adults "Meditations on the Ministry of Our Lord," and teens "What Would You Do?." Registration info contact Sis. Karen Grover e-mail: karengrover@shaw.ca. Website: www.vibiblecamp.com.

SEPTEMBER 2013

14-15 Paris Avenue, OH Fall Study Weekend with Bro. Stan Isbell (Houston North, 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).

12 Vancouver, BC Fraternal Gathering. The speaker will be Bro. Nathan Badger.

NOVEMBER 2013

2-3 Kouts, IN Fall Study Weekend at Woodland Park Community Center, 2100 Willowcreek Road beginning at 10:00 A.M. Bro. Garth Maier (East Texas Ecclesia), Theme: "Signs of John (Law and Grace in Miracles)". Please contact Bro. Joe Bennett at (219) 762-2704 or jkb8275@comcast.net.

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.