

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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Statement by the Christadelphian Magazine and Publishing Association Regarding Reunion Proposals in California

In recent weeks representatives of the C.M.P.A. have been involved in meetings in North America in connection with reunion. The first meeting was during October at Rockford, Illinois in connection with the national initiative taken by the group known as the "Christadelphians for Unity". More recently, representatives of the C.M.P.A. visited Los Angeles in connection with the local reunion initiative in California. Brethren and sisters may be aware that for some time representatives of the Central and Unamended fellowships have been exploring the possibility of reunion among their ecclesias in that State. The C.M.P.A., having been kept fully advised at all stages, became aware that these discussions had progressed to the point where the joint committee considered it appropriate to put reunion proposals to the ecclesias for their consideration by individual ballot.

At this juncture the C.M.P.A. expressed the wish to explore one or two areas of the proposals in order to assure itself on behalf of Central brethren and sisters everywhere regarding significant issues of mutual concern... The main areas of mutual concern were:

- 1) the principle of resurrectional responsibility*
- 2) matters such as "Inherited Alienation" and "Adamic Condemnation"*
- 3) the Statements of Faith*
- 4) reunion and fellowship*

Editorial

The Current Situation in Ontario

Introduction

In a previous article (*Tidings*, September 2012) we described some of the background to what was then a somewhat confused fellowship situation in Ontario. Over a year has now gone by, and some things have changed, but the situation is far from resolved. As a result, several ecclesias around the continent, and even some overseas, have developed their own reactions to the situation. Whether or not, in all cases, the ecclesias involved have knowledge of all factors and all current developments in Ontario when they make these decisions is unclear.

On the surface little has changed, but there have been many discussions and several initiatives attempting to resolve the situation. Despite these on-going attempts, there is still division in the Body of Christ (contrary to the exhortation in 1Cor 1:10) and frustration over the apparent lack of progress has caused difficulties at several Bible Schools, camps, and other gatherings. Many (but not all) such occasions, well attended in the past, have noted a considerable fall-off in their attendance, which some have attributed to the disruption being experienced in the province.

There have been some fairly recent changes, however.

- One ecclesia (Toronto Church Street) — which was one of the four original Amended ecclesias that signed the UA08 agreement, and then like all four paused the implementation — decided to resume implementation (as the Toronto East Ecclesia did several years ago).
- Two other ecclesias (Kitchener/Waterloo and Shelburne) declared their acceptance of the UA08 ecclesias.
- There continues to be movement of brethren and sisters among various ecclesias, at least some prompted by the disruption in the fellowship situation.
- Two main initiatives have been publically presented, to be discussed below.
- An all Ontario Conference has been arranged, also discussed below.

The divided province

There are essentially five groups of ecclesias among the Amended ecclesias in Ontario. All (apart from the last) have a significant number of members, so there is little doubt that all need to be included in any discussions to resolve the situation. The groups are as follows:

- Eleven Amended ecclesias who have signed on to the UA08 agreement, and hence are in fellowship with four Unamended ecclesias in Ontario, and five in Illinois, all nine of which have also signed the UA08 agreement. The Amended ecclesias have no fellowship with Unamended ecclesias apart from these nine. (The Illinois Unamended ecclesias in fact rarely travel to Ontario.) The Unamended ecclesias that have endorsed UA08 are at present welcoming other Unamended ecclesias that have not yet decided to join UA08, but have

accepted NASU as an acceptable clarification of the doctrines that need to be resolved. To be clear, the UA08 Unamended ecclesias have no fellowship with Unamended ecclesias that have declared that they reject the NASU and those ecclesias that accept it. We will refer to these as the UA08 ecclesias.

- Two Ontario ecclesias (Kitchener/Waterloo and Shelburne) have agreed to fellowship these UA08 Unamended ecclesias, but do so on the basis of their existing “BASF” statement of faith.
- Four ecclesias (Brantford, Cambridge, Mississauga West, Toronto West) are still undecided. They have arranged the all Ontario Conference. We will refer to these ecclesias as the unaffiliated ecclesias.
- Four Ontario ecclesias (Book Road, Brant County, Hamilton MacNab, and London) have been opposed to the UA08 agreement. Recently, the Book Road Ecclesia circulated a statement of their position to all ecclesias in North America. There was a brief comment on this in the September 2013 *Tidings*. The Book Road statement was subsequently endorsed by the London Ecclesia. As mentioned in the September 2012 article, these ecclesias initially referred to themselves as the PTRU ecclesias, although they now prefer not to use the term. (Two small ecclesias, Venice and Ancaster, have also recently associated themselves with this group.)
- There are also a number of small ecclesias, which have not been involved in any way. This is, I believe, either because of their small size or remoteness.

Efforts over the past year

There have been informal discussions between *Tidings* Publishing Committee representatives and each of the first four groups identified above, and also much involvement of members of the publishing committees (or associations) of the *Christadelphian* Magazine from England and the *Lampstand* Magazine from Australia. This has evolved into the situation where four areas of potential focus were expected to be part of any agreement

- 1) Basis of Fellowship: A statement essentially that the BASF is recognized as both a true expression of the First Principles of the One Faith to be found in the Bible, and that it is the customary basis for inter-ecclesial fellowship throughout the Central community world-wide.
- 2) Resurrectional Responsibility: A recognition that knowledge is a major part of one of the bases for resurrection to judgment.
- 3) The Nature of Man, including Christ: A statement denying that we inherit anything from Adam other than mortality and a tendency to sin, and also asserting that Jesus had the same sinful nature as ourselves, but of course was himself sinless.
- 4) Implementation Plan: A statement that, at least ultimately, fellowship is to be restricted to those ecclesias that accept (1) above.

Of course, there are many ways of stating agreement with the areas above, and they should not be considered in any way the recommendations of the *Tidings* Committee. They simply recognize these areas as the major areas of concern that the Amended and Unamended ecclesias have about the beliefs of each other.

Current state

As many know, the Book Road Ecclesia has declared their ecclesial position, which addresses the four areas above. This was developed largely by the Book Road Ecclesia itself, and its distribution was not endorsed by any of the magazine committees. In addition, the UA08 ecclesias have developed a Commendation Statement, which was designed to address the above areas as well. The *Tidings* Committee has considered the UA08 Commendation Statement and found that it adequately addresses the issues of concern and would be willing to publish it if it were suitably endorsed by the ecclesias in Ontario. (The CMPA and Lampstand Committees are aware of this statement, but have not declared their positions on it.) There were preliminary discussions to this end, but the unaffiliated ecclesias are leading a different approach in hopes of reaching an agreement more quickly, with a higher probability of concurrence from all local ecclesias.

The unaffiliated ecclesias have therefore decided to invite the arranging brethren from the Ontario ecclesias (only), both Amended and Unamended, to a series of meetings, the first of which is scheduled to be held by the time this article is published. They have also invited each of the three publishing committees to send an observer, and it is expected that they will do so, at least to the first meeting.

The first meeting will largely consist of three addresses, to attempt to set the framework of the effort going forward. To quote from the registration web site:

“The ultimate goal is to achieve a resolution to the current situation and have all members of the body of Christ in one worldwide fellowship. How this can be achieved and how long it might take is for all of us to determine. We are calling on every ecclesia in Ontario to join us in the pursuit of this objective, while seeking God’s blessing (Psalm 127:1).”

Comment

As can be seen, the Ontario ecclesias are urgently attempting to resolve the unsettled ecclesial situation. It is to be hoped that these efforts can quickly resolve the situation in a Scriptural manner. The Central (Amended) position on disputes of any kind is that they are best handled by the local ecclesias, which have the best knowledge of both the situation and also the personalities involved. The publishing committees in general can offer counsel and advise only as requested.

The involvement of ecclesias in areas well remote from the local areas is rarely helpful, as they are almost certainly not as knowledgeable as the local ecclesias. If a region can attain unity on an acceptable basis, as was achieved most recently on the West Coast of North America, it is up to the brotherhood to accept this with gladness and work to encourage full fellowship of all the ecclesias involved.¹

Peter Hemingray

Notes:

1. PCCARC (Pacific Coast Christadelphian Amended Reunion Committee) recently provided a brief update encouraging all West Coast ecclesias to continue giving our Ontario brethren the time necessary to resolve their difficult issues.

Exhortation

Luke's Account of Jesus' Suffering

He sought His Father's will

With careful reverence we must speak of Luke's account of the three trials, and the cross that our Lord chose to endure. In the four inspired accounts of Jesus' trials and crucifixion there is a simple relating of very meaningful facts.

Luke and the other gospel writers do not relate the physical agonies that Jesus suffered. Although the suffering of our Lord was very real, its infliction on him is related in few words. The focus of the narrative is on three things:

- The agony of his praying as he sought the strength to do his Father's will, that resulted in his yielding himself to his captors.
- His calm, resolute silence despite the many false accusations, except to affirm to the high priest that he was the son of God.
- His behavior through three trials, much physical and verbal abuse, scourging and crucifixion. That remarkable behavior caused the centurion, no doubt a hardened veteran of many crucifixions, to exclaim on Jesus' death, "*Certainly this was a righteous man*" or, as Mark records, "*Truly, this man was the son of God*".

The agony of the Lord Jesus' mental struggle beforehand is vividly described in Luke:

"And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed, Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done. And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him" (Luke 22:41-43).

It is not only the unjust trials and the drawn out brutality to be inflicted on him that Jesus must face. He must go through it all before hate filled men and unprincipled rulers in a way befitting the son of God doing his Father's will as an act of love. As we read Luke's account, the words of our hymn, "what love through all his actions ran" (Hymn 243 v 2) are much in our minds.

"And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him." The agony of His son there is felt by his Father, too. "*God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son*" (John 3:16). Two thousand years before, such is the wonder of God's ways; this is shown us in the inspired account of Abraham's offering his son, Isaac, as God commanded. "*Take now your son, your only son Isaac whom you love . . . and offer him*". Twice the record tells us of Abraham and his son, Isaac, "*they went both of them together*" (Gen 22:6, 8).

Rising from his prayer in the garden, Jesus acts decisively to do his Father's will. He knows all that he must undergo, but, he knows, too, "*For the Lord GOD will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint,*

and I know that I shall not be ashamed” (Isa 50:7). His abusers seek to shame him, but he despises the shame — that meant nothing to him

“Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witness, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. (Heb 12:1-3).

Far from being in distress or a mere victim of evil men, Jesus is in control every painful step until he ends his life, committing his spirit into his Father’s hands. Some of his disciples would have fought his captors to the death, thereby allowing Jesus to escape in the darkness, but he rebukes them, heals the one struck by Peter’s sword, and yields himself unresisting to the armed crowd sent by the high priest.

False accusations

Facing his accusers in the high priest’s house, Jesus does not forget Peter in the courtyard below — despite the blows, verbal abuse, and spitting he is going through. When the cock crows a second time, the Lord turns to look at Peter, Luke tells us: *“And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice” (Luke 22:61).* For sure this was an encouraging look, not one of reproach. Angry that the testimony of the false witnesses that he employed is contradictory, the high priest demands of Jesus that he tell them if he is the Christ, the son of God. The Lord’s answer, which sounds ambiguous in the language of the K.J.V., is in fact a strong affirmation the he is, and that they will see the son of man sit on the right hand of the power of God. Then they all said, *“ ‘Are You then the Son of God?’ So He said to them, ‘You rightly say that I am ’ ” (Luke 22:20 NKJV).* See Luke 22:67-70, Mark 14:61-62. Daniel records what surely must have been on Jesus’ mind on this occasion: *“I was watching in the night visions, And behold, One like the Son of Man, Coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, And they brought Him near before Him. Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, That all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, Which shall not pass away, And His kingdom the one Which shall not be destroyed” (Dan 7:13-14 NKJV).*

Condemned by the Sanhedrin in the darkness of early morning, Jesus is brought to Pilate at daybreak. It is very unlikely that Pilate regularly sat in his judgment hall at the first light of day. It seems likely that, upon receiving information from Judas that Jesus could be taken away from the crowds, the high priest arranged for an armed force to arrest Jesus while he paid a late night visit to Pilate to arrange for a very early hearing and condemnation by Pilate. The execution could then be carried out before most in the city would hear about it. Pilate knows well the character of the men who bring Jesus to him. He knows that they are jealous of the attention and respect that Jesus commanded. These very religious, but actu-

ally very worldly men hated him, Jesus says, because he showed that their works were evil: *“The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil”* (John 7:7).

Pilate is probably surprised, amazed by the noble, calm demeanor of the firmly silent man standing before him — so unlike the criminals and revolutionaries he frequently condemned. We can be sure that Pilate knows something about Jesus. Knowing the duplicity of Jesus’ accusers, Pilate begins to doubt their unfounded charges. *“Are you the king of the Jews?”* he asks Jesus. Jesus affirms that he is, explaining, that his kingdom was not of this world; if it was, his servants would fight for him, but his kingdom is not from here.

“Then Pilate entered into the judgment hall again, and called Jesus, and said unto him, Art thou the King of the Jews? Jesus answered him, Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me? Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done? Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence. Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice” (John 18:33-37).

Pilate then announces to the chief priests and the crowd, *“I find no fault in this man”*. They react angrily and Pilate learns that Jesus is from Galilee, in Herod’s jurisdiction. So he sends him to Herod who is in Jerusalem at this time.

This is that Herod, a son of Herod the great, who was the shameless adulterer who murdered John. He has heard much about Jesus’ and his miracles and wanted to see him perform one: *“And when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceeding glad: for he was desirous to see him of a long season, because he had heard many things of him; and he hoped to have seen some miracle done by him”* (Luke 23:8). Herod questions Jesus with many words while the chief priests and scribes vehemently accuse him. Jesus does not say one word to Herod — in itself a public rebuke to this vain, wicked man. Herod, therefore, first mocks him, and then sends him back to Pilate.

Pilate calls together the chief priests, the rulers, and the people and again declares that he finds no fault in Jesus concerning their accusations, nor had Herod. Therefore he will chastise him and release him (Luke 23:14-15). Why would he chastise a man he had found to be innocent? This is not Justice, but Pilate’s futile attempt to give the chief priests some satisfaction by Jesus being brutally scourged.

The calm behavior of Jesus

Despite a third statement of Jesus’ innocence, the Jewish rulers demand with loud voices that Jesus be crucified. Pilate, knowing their many complaints about him to the Caesar in Rome, gives in. He signs the sentence that Jesus be crucified and releases the rebel and murderer they wanted instead of the “prince of life”. Thus, Gentiles and Jews together kill the LORD’s Christ. They do so, not realizing at all

that they are doing as God purposed — that by their wicked deed God is bringing about the victory of His son over sin and death, that would give hope in him to all mankind.

In Luke's account of what follows, there are three important things that Jesus says that are not recorded in the other Gospels. The first is in Luke.

“And there followed him a great company of people, and of women, which also bewailed and lamented him. But Jesus turning unto them said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children. For, behold, the days are coming, in the which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us. For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?” (Luke 23:27-31).

Time has passed in the appearances of Jesus before Pilate, then before Herod, then back to Pilate again, then the mocking and scourging by the Roman soldiers (which Luke does not record). So, it's nearing 9:00 a.m. as Jesus is led out of the city to the place called the skull. Now the narrow streets are full of people; crowds follow Jesus and women, including some we know, are lamenting.

Jesus tells these daughters of Jerusalem, that doomed city, not to weep for him but for themselves and their children because of the disaster that will come to their city as a consequence of his death. If this injustice could be done in a green tree, when healing and new life is being given by a savior to many, what would happen to a dry tree after forty years more of increasing rejection of their Messiah. The judgment foretold by Hosea on Israel would come on them, Jesus says.

The second of Jesus' words that only Luke records is saying, as they crucify him, lay him on the stake, drive in the nails, then lift the stake and fix it firmly in the ground, “Father”, Jesus says, “*forgive them: for they know now what they do*” (Luke 23:34). We might think that these remarkable words apply only to the truly ignorant Roman soldiers, not to the Jewish rulers who know exactly what they are doing. Yet, after Jesus is risen, Peter speaking to a crowd in the temple, says that they had denied the holy and just one, Jesus, desiring instead a murderer and had killed the prince of life. “*I know*”, he says, “*that through ignorance you did it, as did also your rulers*” (Acts 3:13-17 NKJV). The Apostle Paul, who knew Jesus after the flesh, says he himself had been a blasphemer and persecutor, the chief of sinners, but had obtained mercy because he himself did it ignorantly in unbelief. (1 Tim 1:12-15)

Confirming this wonderful truth that Jesus' forgiveness extends even to the most wicked of men and women is Stephen's words when a mob of enraged rulers are stoning him to death. “*Lord*”, Stephen prays, “*lay not this sin to their charge*” echoing Jesus' words at his crucifixion. (Acts 7:60) There is an important lesson for us in Jesus' prayer. Despite the awful injustice not just in what was being said of him, but in what was being brutally done to him, he prayed for these misguided and wicked people. And, so must we pray for those who may seem to hate us and speak evil of us. That's what our Lord is teaching us, not only in words (Matt 5:43-45),

but by his example here. In this his Father is with him, seeking to reconcile us to Himself by the power of His love in His son's cross.

The third thing that only Luke records is Jesus responding to words spoken to him by one of the men also being crucified on either side of him.

“And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise” (Luke 23:39-43).

One criminal demands, “If you are the Christ save yourself and us!” The chief priests, elders, and scribe smock him, saying, *“If you are the son of God, come down from the cross. He saved others, himself he cannot save.” (Matt. 27:9-4)*

Totally ignorant they were of God and of His gracious purpose in His son's dying. Because he is the Christ, the son of God, he does not come down from the cross, nor answer their malicious words. Here, lifted up before the world, he must die to do his Father's will, which is fully his will, too. He must thus conquer sin to save his people from their sins, and by his act of love draw them to himself. Even one of the unfortunate criminals who were crucified with Jesus could appreciate the sinlessness and power of Jesus.

In the three trials, scourging and crucifixion and malicious mocking of Jesus, only this dying man spoke out for him. Pilate proclaims Jesus' innocence, then just acts according to his cynical political motives, dismissing the truth that Jesus testifies to him. This criminal's words are first of all a confession of his own sin, then a simple plea and an expression of faith in Jesus, that this man dying beside him, would come again to establish his kingdom. What a remarkable faith he has in the Lord Jesus!

This is not a mere death bed repentance inspired by the fear death. He knew Jesus' words and deeds. Jesus knew his heart, the sincerity of his repentance, and his faith. It was the Father's will that this man be there and say these words. What assurance this was to Jesus that even by his being lifted up so cruelly he was drawing men and women to himself.

Jesus' cry, *“My God, My God, why have you forsaken me”* and someone putting a sponge with sour wine to Jesus' lips are not recorded by Luke. Neither does he record, as John does, the words of the Lord's last great cry, *“it is finished”*. Yet, all, absolutely everything that he must do there for his Father is done. Now as God had given him the power to do, he gave up his life, saying to his Father, *“Into your hands I commit my spirit”*. (Luke 23:46, John 10:17-18)

Living witnesses

In a lovely way, in Luke 24, Luke, as do the other Gospel writers, describes the resurrection of Jesus on the third day, his appearances to his disciples, and his giving

them a special commission to carry out, and the power to do so. They are to be living witnesses to all that they had heard and seen in him. Their future role is to be witnesses to him in all nations beginning at Jerusalem. “*You shall be witnesses to me in Jerusalem and in Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth*” (Acts 1:8) are Jesus’ words. Matthew records this same commission in slightly different words, but with the same intent,

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world” (Matt 28:19-20).

Although we are not the Lord’s chosen twelve apostles to begin the preaching of the Gospel, we Christadelphians have a similar responsibility as individuals and as his ecclesia to preach this good news that has come all the way through the centuries to us. He will be with us, too, in our generation. In our Lord’s words, we are to testify to him, to make, by his grace and help, disciples who know and choose to follow all that the Lord Jesus says and shows us in such a loving and compelling way.

As we contemplate the Gospel accounts of our Lord’s sufferings, death, and resurrection, we hear the Apostle Paul’s words to the Corinthians:

“For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men”(1Cor. 1:18-25).

The exhortation is to use the power there is in the message of the cross of Christ, this precious understanding given to us of God’s grace and truth in Jesus, to testify to others about him. The goal in our testimony must be, not making mere adherents to our correct teachings, but to make disciples devoted to him — as we ourselves are learning to be. “For, we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves you bond servants for Jesus sake.” (2Cor 4:5)

“I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the son of God who loved me and gave himself for me” (Gal 2:19-21). May this making of Christ Jesus the center, the focus, the inspiration of our lives be truly so for each of us by the grace and help of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Robert Green (Cambridge ON)

Bible Study

The Way of Cain (3) Cain: The Murderer

“Now Cain said to his brother Abel, ‘Let’s go out to the field.’ And while they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him” (Gen 4:8 NIV).

The downfall

Upon rejection, Cain was very angry and his face “was downcast” (Gen 4:5) or, in the KJV, “fell.” The Hebrew word for “fell” is *naphal*, which refers to a descent from a place of height. Metaphorically, this can describe someone’s fall from pride. For example, Daniel uses this word, *naphal*, to describe the fall of the King of the North from his exalted position in the political heavens:

“After this, he will turn back toward the fortresses of his own country but will stumble and fall, to be seen no more” (Dan 11:19 NIV¹).

Might *naphal* also describe Cain’s “downfall” from an exalted position within the first family’s hierarchy?

Prior to God’s rejection, Cain held the privileged position of Adam’s firstborn. Moreover, Eve had attached the phrase “even Jehovah” to Cain’s name, which illustrates her belief that God would, via her offspring, reverse the consequences of her own and Adam’s transgression, through a “coming Lord” or a Messiah — someone who would share the *name of the LORD*. As has been shown, Eve’s faith was based on the messianic prophecy God declared in the Garden, when He cursed the serpent:

“And I will put enmity between you [the serpent] and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel” (Gen 3:15).

Without any indication on when this prophecy would occur, Eve came to believe that this prophecy could refer to her immediate children, including Cain. Growing up with this prophetic name, Cain also came to believe that he was special — a man of destiny. Assuredly, he was ignorant of what the Gen 3:15 prophecy actually meant; regardless, he was still proud of his name. This sense of ownership, and the grandiose notions he surely attached to it, puffed up his pride, blinding him to instruction from others: God, his parents, and perhaps even his brother Abel. His delusions of grandeur, along with his status as being the eldest, exalted Cain’s sense of self to a high position from which he would surely fall.

That fall occurred when God rejected him and his offering (Gen 4:5). Its effect was profound, for it not only cast him down from his status as that man of destiny, but he also lost his identity. Very quickly, Cain must have reached the conclusion that the person he thought he was little more than a chimera.

Abel: The usurper

To make matters worse, God favored Abel and his offering (Gen 4:4). Doubtless, Cain perceived this as grossly unfair. In his eyes, Abel was a usurper who had stolen his exalted status within the family.

How does one treat a usurper? We might be tempted to imagine that Cain's violent reaction — killing his brother — was extreme, but consider the examples of Jacob and Esau, and Joseph and his brothers; two situations where one brother or group of brothers became jealous of the other or others, because there arose the perception that the younger brother was usurping the role of the elder brother or brothers.

Jacob: The usurper

Consider how Esau reacted when he realized that Jacob had stolen his birthright and then his blessing:

“Esau held a grudge against Jacob because of the blessing his father had given him. He said to himself, ‘The days of mourning for my father are near; then I will kill my brother Jacob’ ” (Gen 27:41).

His initial reaction was to kill his brother.

Joseph: The usurper

Likewise, Jacob “loved” Joseph “more than any of his other sons” (Gen 37:3). If this wasn't enough to cause jealousy among his other sons, Joseph shared with them two dreams where he was “reigning” over his brothers, including the older ones (vv. 5-11). Joseph's sons' reaction was similar to Esau's:

“Here comes that dreamer!” They said to each other, “Come now, let's kill him and throw him into one of these cisterns and say that a ferocious animal devoured him. Then we'll see what comes of his dreams” (Gen 37:19-20).

As these two examples show, status in the hierarchical family structure of the ancient world, and the perceived or real theft of a blessing or birthright by a younger brother, causes feelings of jealousy, which are often intense enough to lead to fratricide. Thus, Cain's violent reaction, although extreme, is not unique. Like Esau and Joseph's brothers, Cain also felt the loss of status within the family hierarchy. Not only that, but Cain perceived that Abel had stolen his name — his identity, his sense of self. It was truly a shock to his system and, in addition to causing a sense of despondency, his state of being was complicated by powerful feelings of jealousy and anger. These feelings aroused in Cain a desire for murder, just as they had in Esau and Joseph's brothers.

Creature of instinct

As has been shown, Cain's identity was wrapped up in the idea of his unique status: he was the firstborn among humans; he was the eldest son; and he had been given a prophetic name, *even Jehovah*. But upon rejection, all that disappeared — at least that's how Cain perceived it. His fall was all that more compounded because God favored his younger brother, Abel. And the thought of this undoubtedly aroused in Cain jealous and fratricidal thoughts.

This suggests that Cain's murder of Abel was, in modern terms, a crime of passion — a violent act motivated by sudden, strong emotions. This type of crime is usually committed in the moment, however in Cain's case, some length of time likely passed between the moment when Cain was rejected and his brother was favored, and when Cain said to Abel, "*Come, let's go out into the field*" (Gen 4:8).

In spite of the apparent premeditated nature of Cain's crime, it was still a crime of passion: the savage act of an ignorant and irrational "creature of instinct" (2Pet 2:12). We might wonder, from where did such a "savage" and "brutish" nature come from? — until we realize that this was just one example — albeit an extreme one — of a man who had, on prior occasions, demonstrated an unwillingness to control or "master" his emotions:

[God speaking to Cain] "*If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it*" (Gen 4:7).

This metaphor likens sin to that of an animal, a creature that "crouches at your door." The word "crouch" suggests a state immediately preceding the act of pouncing, as if to suggest that sin, like an animal, is ready to spring and devour its prey. In this example, Cain was unprepared to defend himself from this adversary, because he was unwilling to listen to the advice of others — a trait that he demonstrated on more than one occasion. (Recall that he ignored the tutelage of his parent's spiritual instruction, which resulted in an unacceptable offering.)

Why did Cain reject the advice/wisdom of others? Because pride in his name blinded him to instruction. And without Godly wisdom, Cain was like unto an animal; a creature controlled by instinct and that reacts to stimuli without discernment. This is what turned him into that savage, brutish person, who emerged in the wake of rejection.

Love versus hate

That Cain was a savage and brute man is now clear. But we might still be asking ourselves, how could Cain murder his own brother? The short answer is: Cain hated Abel.

Now, nowhere does it say in Genesis or elsewhere in the Bible, that Cain hated Abel, but his hate of his brother can be deduced by the attitude of *indifference* which he expressed towards his brother, and which is evident in the Genesis account.

In the Bible, God presents a spiritual dichotomy concerning our co-existence with others: we can either love our neighbor or hate them, there is no middle ground. For as John writes:

"Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates his brother is still in the darkness. Whoever loves his brother lives in the light, and there is nothing in him to make him stumble. But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks around in the darkness; he does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded him" (1John 2:9-11).

John continues this theme by suggesting that if you end up in the latter camp,

(i.e. hating someone) you are the equivalent to a murderer, for: “*Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer*” (3:15). Now Gen 4:9 does not explicitly say that Cain hated his brother, but he was, at the very least, indifferent about him. For example, “[God asked] ‘Where is your brother Abel?’ He [Cain] replied: ‘I don’t know, am I my brother’s keeper?’” — a statement of indifference, if there ever was one.

Likening *indifference* to *hate* might seem like an unreasonable comparison. However in God’s eyes, *indifference* is the opposite of love. Take for example, the parable of the Good Samaritan. In that parable, several leading Jewish men pass by a wounded man on the side of the road. They ignore his plight — not out of hate, necessarily, but of indifference. In response to their acts of indifference, what does Christ say?

“Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?” (Luke 10:36).

Notice that the word Christ uses is *neighbour*. That word, *plesion* (Greek) in the New Testament, has this association:

‘One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, “Of all the commandments, which is the most important?” “The most important one,” answered Jesus, “is this: ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ The second is this: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.” (Mark 12:28-31)

This word, *neighbour*, is used in the context of the two greatest commandments. Moreover, it is used in relation to “loving” — first, loving God with “all your heart, soul, mind, and strength,” and secondly, “loving your neighbor.” In the parable of the Good Samaritan, what Christ is really asking his audience in Luke 10:36 is: “Which of these three do you think *loved* the man who fell into the hands of robbers?” Obviously, those who did nothing to help the wounded man did not *love* him. Thus, their indifference was a demonstration of their lack of love.

This demonstrates that indifference is likened to a lack of love, and therefore, in the dichotomy of love versus hate, it is equivalent to the latter, since with God, there is no middle ground — if you do not love, you therefore hate.

As such, Cain was able to murder his brother because he felt indifferent toward him. And his lack of love, was — in the spiritual dichotomy — equivalent to hate. Thus, when the situation finally arose, it did not take much on Cain’s part to murder his brother, because he did not love Abel. In the aftermath of the killing, we can imagine that when Cain looked upon Abel’s bloodied body, he, like those leading Jewish men in the parable of the Good Samaritan, felt nothing more than a feeling of indifference.

Matthew Harrison (Ottawa, Quebec)

Notes:

1. All references are from the NIV, unless noted.

Youth Speaks

Jonathan the Faithful Prince: (7) How the Mighty have Fallen

In the last article, the idea was put forth that perhaps when Saul sought for a sin in the camp and stated, *“though it be in Jonathan my son, he shall surely die,”* (1Sam 14:39) he was just a little too anxious to give up his son to death. As we continue to go through the record in the next article, we will see how the evidence piles up to suggest that Saul’s envy and desire to exalt his own reputation had brought him to the point where he fell from his faith and even wanted to slay his firstborn.

Casting lots

So it was that as Saul looked for the sin in the camp — which should have been fairly obvious to him since he had just seen all of the people eating with the blood! — Saul separated himself and Jonathan from the rest of the army and cast lots to see who had been the sinner.

The whole incident seems to be a bit rigged. Just try to picture how this would have looked. Instead of casting lots by tribe or by family, Saul and Jonathan stood on one side, and the entire rest of the army on the other. The odds of the lot falling on either Jonathan or Saul were pretty huge — and if Saul’s was chosen by the lots, then one can imagine him saying that perhaps just as God didn’t answer them when they enquired, then perhaps He had not guided the lots as well. Essentially, it would appear as though Saul created a scenario where it was highly likely that Jonathan would be chosen!

Thus, in the first casting, Saul and Jonathan were taken — it was clearly the will of God directing this. (One might assume there was a 50% chance that this would have happened, but it seems clear that casting lots was not a simple matter of “heads you win”.)¹ Then, when casting lots between the two of them, Jonathan was the one who was taken, and Saul’s suspicion was confirmed. Jonathan had sinned and Yahweh had cut off communication with them because of it. Thus, Saul urged Jonathan to admit what he had done — and so Jonathan told Saul of the incident with the honey. Yet, instead of working with his son and trying to resolve the issue in a loving, fatherly way, Saul was unmerciful. He turned to his son and condemned him to death.

“Then Saul said to Jonathan, Tell me what thou hast done. And Jonathan told him, and said, I did but taste a little honey with the end of the rod that was in mine hand, and, lo, I must die. And Saul answered, God do so and more also: for thou shalt surely die, Jonathan” (1Sam 14:43-44).

In a chilling foretaste of Saul’s brutality and bitterness towards anyone who would challenge his authority, the first king of Israel was more than willing to murder his son. Jonathan had put himself in a position in which he could possibly be the one who had been prophesied by Samuel to take over the kingdom — and now was a

moment of vulnerability. He had broken one of Saul's commands, and Saul, as his father, as the king, and as the one who put the oath upon the people, demanded that he pay for his crime through his death.

It is a disturbing picture of the ultimate result of a vain and selfish attitude. Yet even more disturbing is the fact that Jonathan shouldn't have actually had to die for this. Death was a punishment imposed by Saul, not the law. In fact, the Law of Moses specifically gave a solution to a problem like this — Jonathan's situation was such that he simply could have offered a sin offering. The sin offering was specifically for situations in which people had sinned *out of ignorance*.

“When a ruler hath sinned, and done somewhat through ignorance against any of the commandment of the LORD his God concerning things which should not be done, and is guilty; or if his sin, wherein he hath sinned, come to his knowledge; he shall bring his offering, a kid of the goats, a male without blemish...And he shall burn all his fat upon the altar, as the fat of the sacrifice of peace offerings: and the priest shall make an atonement for him as concerning his sin, and it shall be forgiven him” (Lev 4:22-23, 26).

If one of the rulers broke one of God's commands through ignorance, they could bring a male kid of the goats and offer it as a sin offering. Through that sacrifice and their repentance, they would be forgiven their sin through ignorance.

Such was the case with Jonathan. He hadn't broken one of God's commands, but he had broken something even less important — a vain oath which had been set upon the people, and he had even done it in ignorance. He was a ruler, and so the offering specified for him was a male goat without blemish. In order to be forgiven of his sin, he simply needed to repent for breaking his father's command and offer the trespass offering. It would have been an easy solution — but even more, Saul had built an altar right there, they could have sacrificed an animal from the spoil, and there even was a priest in their midst!

But either Saul didn't realize that Jonathan could have offered this sin offering, or he didn't want that option for his firstborn. The latter perhaps seems more likely. Just as Saul later tried to remove David through violent means, so would he now do to his son — the one who had shamed him before all of the people through his faith.

Yet thankfully, though Saul was the king and though he stated that Jonathan needed to die, that was not the plan in both the mind of God and the minds of the people. Thus, Jonathan was saved from the obsession and wrath of Saul.

“And the people said unto Saul, Shall Jonathan die, who hath wrought this great salvation in Israel? God forbid: as the LORD liveth, there shall not one hair of his head fall to the ground; for he hath wrought with God this day. So the people rescued Jonathan, that he died not.” (1Sam 14:45).

This time, the people were not indifferent to the ludicrous plans of their king. Instead of simply saying “Do what seemeth good unto thee,” the people stood up and proclaimed that they would not allow Saul to carry out his plans. Jonathan, working together with their God, had saved the nation that day. He had wrought a great victory — and the king, who had been a worthless leader and had only

thought about himself, would not have any chance at killing their hero. Not one hair of his head would fall to the ground.

Those would have been words which sank into Saul's mind and brought fear to him every time he thought of them. The people saw Jonathan as their deliverer and their leader — and it would have seemed clear that he was the one of whom Samuel had spoken. For the next while, it's likely that Saul would have continued to think this way. From the time that the promise of his kingdom's demise was reaffirmed after the battle of the Amalekites, to the forty days of Goliath's taunting and his eventual death at the hand of David, Saul probably kept a very close eye on his son Jonathan.

Looking for Saul's attitude in ourselves

It was a miserable life which he lived — a life in which he was suspicious of everyone, including his own son. Yet it was a life which was brought on by a desire to be praised of men and which constantly approached God with that attitude. Saul's religion was all about the motions and all about the rituals — he followed God simply when it seemed beneficial for him. He offered the burnt offering because he saw that the people were scattered from him and he thought that it would calm them down and encourage them to follow him. He wanted to enquire of God because he wanted to try to show that his decisions were right while Jonathan's were wrong. He ignored God's law about the trespass offering and instead commanded that Jonathan should die.

Over and over, Saul used religion to his own ends — often only following the ritual of the law and never understanding the spirit of it. He was a man who had become full of self-conceit, and who had been so driven by his desire to be lifted up and praised that he reached the point at which he was willing to kill his own son.

It's a scary portrait of what selfishness, pride, and the thirst for the praise of men can do to someone. Yet what is even scarier about this picture is that Saul wasn't simply a man of the world, but he was part of the house of believers. He was a man who, despite his cravings for honor and glory and despite his desire to use the worship of God for his own ends, actually did appear to have moments where he did recognize God's greatness and try to follow His commands.

At the end of his battle against the Ammonites, he had led the nation to a remarkable victory. Because of this, a number of people wanted to slay the men who had originally said that they didn't want him as their king. However, Saul told them that this was an entirely unacceptable way to think and told them that they needed to recognize that God had brought this great victory, not him. It was as though he was a totally different person — one who wasn't fixed on self-recognition.

“And the people said unto Samuel, Who is he that said, Shall Saul reign over us? bring the men, that we may put them to death. And Saul said, There shall not a man be put to death this day: for today the LORD hath wrought salvation in Israel” (1Sam 11:12-13).

Saul took the focus off of his victory and reminded the people that God had been the One who fought against the enemy. It was God's victory and God who deserved

the honor. As well, even in the incident with the battle against the Philistines, Saul had set up an altar and sought to prevent the people from transgressing against God by eating with the blood (1Sam 14:33-34). Thus, there were times when Saul had been a fairly faithful man — recognizing his dependence upon Yahweh and trying to truly serve him.

To add to this picture, Saul had also looked to the example of a faithful man as his hero. As mentioned earlier, Saul had seemed to have a passion for being like Gideon — he emulated some of Gideon's battle plans and tried to follow his lead. Saul had Gideon as his role model, which would seem to indicate that Saul wanted to be a faithful man like faithful Gideon. Yet Gideon wasn't Saul's only role model. Hidden throughout Saul's attack on the Philistines are a number of connections between his actions and the actions of another of Israel's great warriors — we don't have the opportunity to examine those connections at this point, but Lord willing, we will examine them in the next article.

Conclusion

Just putting this picture together, perhaps the most important lesson that comes from the end of this battle is a fuller picture of King Saul. He wasn't always such a wicked man. As it would appear, Saul was a man who had an immense amount of potential for good — and in the beginning of his reign, he used that potential. He was knowledgeable, and he was faithful.

Yet he fell so far.

Such is the destruction that a focus on our own reputation and our own honor can wreak upon those in the household of faith. In seeing these things, may Saul's story take on a much more personal note for us — may it be a story that shows us what can happen to *believers*. May it be a story that shows us what can happen to *us*. If the center of our lives shifts from being God's praise and God's glory, and instead becomes our own recognition and our own exaltation, then the same thing could happen to us. In so doing, may it then be our prayer that our God continues to humble us and continues to shape us, so that, in the words of the apostle Peter, instead of us seeking to exalt ourselves, our God may “*exalt [us] in due time*” (1Pet 5:6).

Jason Hensley (Simi Hills, CA)

Notes:

1. A summary of the use of casting lots, including the Urim and Thummin, can be found in *The Christadelphian*, 1979, p 175, by FE Mitchell.

We have inserted the foregoing article, as one which is calculated to be provocative of thought and earnest enquiry into this subject. The crux of the writer's argument appears to be, that the Breastplate was endowed with the Spirit of God, in order that "it" might answer those who sought Divine guidance; or, in other words, the Breastplate was endowed with, the power of giving audible utterance to true light. [Urim] and perfect understanding [Thummim] on questions asked of God

R.W Ask The Testimony 1945 p 211

The Joy of Sunday Schooling

Music

(2) How to Teach a New Song

Singing provides an engaging way to highlight the point of almost any Sunday school lesson. While singing a song about a Bible story, children can experience the emotions of the story and remember its point on many levels. Singing is also an easy way to get children to remember such things as the books of the Bible, the names of the apostles, and many important memory verses. For older students a well-chosen song may reach them when your words don't seem to do so.

Even if you can't read a note of music, it is still possible to teach Bible songs to your Sunday school children. It's not nearly as hard as you may think. Here are a few common sense steps to follow.

Consider the level of difficulty

If you are going to sing a song, start by considering its level of difficulty. If the notes of the song are too high (top half of the staff and above) or too low (below the staff), the children may not be able to sing it. Listen to a recording of the song or ask someone to play it for you if you don't read music. If you are not comfortable singing it, your students probably won't be comfortable singing it either. Also consider the vocabulary of the song. Young children may not understand long sentences, abstract concepts, and multi-syllabic words. If the song has complicated words, don't try to get preschoolers to sing it. Teenagers, on the other hand, will not appreciate lyrics that are too simple, and they may make their displeasure known.

Break it down and build it up

Thanks to modern technology, it is possible even for non-musicians to teach a new song to others. Here is a method anyone can use.

Materials:

- A CD or MP3 version of the song you wish to teach.
- A CD player, or MP3 player with external speakers.

Preparation:

- Listen to the song several times yourself until you feel you know it. When I have to learn a new piece of music, I listen to it in the car or while I am doing housework, and I keep the "repeat" button pressed on my player.
- Play the song as background music for your students while they work on crafts or when they gather at the beginning of class. Get them used to hearing the song. The "repeat" button is very useful here as well.
- Write out the words of the song in a form your students can understand. If you are working with non-readers, pictures may help.
- Usually you can find the words for songs on the Web, if you don't have printed

copies of the music. Just search “lyrics” and the song title in your favorite search engine.

- Study the words and decide how to break them into smaller units for teaching. Each unit should be no longer than a phrase or a sentence.

Teaching procedure:

- Post the words where your class can see them or give word sheets to your students.
- Play the entire song for the class and have them follow the words.
- Have the class chant the words with you. It may be helpful to repeat smaller units a few times to help them learn and remember.
- Have the class sing the song with the recording. It may take a few times for them to get it.

If you really want your students to remember the song, have them sing it with the recording for a few weeks. The real benefit will come when they finally know the song well enough to sing it – and repeat the Bible lesson it contains – entirely on their own.

Carol Linsenmeier (Cleveland, OH)



History

The Death of Robert Roberts Part 1

Introduction

This article is a continuation, to some extent, of the articles on the Cheetham family in San Francisco, which have been serialized over the last few months in *The Tidings*. As Bro. James Cheetham figured so prominently in the tragic death of Bro Roberts, it seems appropriate to discuss this event in some detail. In addition, as the accounts of the events of this period differ quite significantly in the various contemporary records, it was felt reasonable to quote these directly, in order that a full picture of those days might emerge. A somewhat different account can be found in "Diary of a Second Voyage to Australia", which is available in reprint, but we consider it helps to include some details from other witnesses to the events.

Robert Roberts arrives in San Francisco



Bro. Robert Roberts spent the last three days of his life in San Francisco.

In 1898, the same year that Sarah Cheetham returned from England, Robert Roberts passed through San Francisco while on a journey from Australia to England. The Sixty year old editor of the *Christadelphian Magazine* died in his hotel room in San Francisco a few days later. Bro. Roberts, who was born in Scotland, had moved to Australia in 1897 but had spent most of his life in James' and Sarah's native England. During his early years in England, James had known Robert Roberts and noted when Bro. Roberts visited San Francisco that he was looking much better than the last time he saw him (in 1892). Sarah and her family were very familiar with the Roberts family as well. A letter that Sarah wrote to a sister in New York the day Bro. Roberts died was the first information about his death published in *The Christadelphian Magazine*:

"You will have heard by wire before this reaches you that Brother Roberts died suddenly in the city this morning. You will know perhaps that he arrived here on Wednesday, 21st inst., in the S.S. Alameda from Australia. Brother Cheetham and Brother [R.C.] Bingley met him and took him to a hotel. Wednesday evening he spent up here with us, and some of the brethren and sisters who came to meet him. Part of yesterday he was resting and writing, and the other part going round the city, and last night he gave a splendid lecture at Brother Clarke's house across the bay. Brother Cheetham came back with him and left him at the hotel, saying he would be down in good time this morning to attend to his baggage, and see him to the steamer on which he was to leave for Victoria, B. C. At ten minutes

to nine, when Brother Cheetham went to his room, he was shocked to find him lying on the floor dead, and no one in the hotel had any idea of what had happened. They said that at 7.30 [A.M.] he had taken a bath, and had not been seen or heard after that time. You will imagine how dreadfully shocked we were to hear the news, as we waited down on the wharf expecting his coming.”¹

L. F. Cockcroft, an Agent of the American and Australian Steamship Line in San Francisco wrote to Brother Bruce, of New York (the same brother who would help set up the funeral arrangements in New York), corroborating what Sarah had written and filling in more of the details,



Bro. Roberts died at the Cosmopolitan Hotel in San Francisco in 1898.

“As you will probably have heard by this, from other sources, Mr. Roberts died at the Cosmopolitan Hotel, San Francisco, on the morning of the 23rd September, as far as can be ascertained about 8.30 in the morning. He was to have sailed by the S.S. Queen, at 10.30 a.m. The clerk at the Cosmopolitan Hotel informed me that Mr. Roberts applied to him for the key of the bath room about 7 o'clock. He obtained the key, and after he had had his bath, returned to his room. A few minutes before

9 o'clock, Mr. Cheetham, an old friend of Mr. Roberts in England, came to see him off, but was unable to get a response by knocking at the door. He returned to the office to the clerk, and explained that nobody responded. The clerk advised that he must be there, and Mr. Cheetham went back to the room, and found the door open, and went in, and to his great dismay, Mr. Roberts was lying dead upon the floor. A doctor was immediately summoned, and from the appearance of the corpse said that he had died of valvular disease of the heart. He was all dressed and ready for the steamer with the exception of putting on his coat. All his satchels were about him, and he was all ready to leave the room. Mr. Roberts had been to exchange his ticket the day before, and as I had been requested by Mr. Robert Bell, brother of Mr. John Bell, of Sydney, to look after Mr. Roberts' comfort on his way East from here, I had gone down to the steamer Queen, with my father (whom Mr. Roberts had known many years ago), and we waited at the steamer for an hour, until she was nearly ready to depart, and only learned of Mr. Roberts' death as we were leaving the wharf.”²

But it was James Cheetham who wrote the most thorough account of Bro. Roberts' stopover and death in San Francisco. Writing on October 17th, 1898, he mentioned a meeting at his home that was a result of concerns about the San Francisco ecclesia's possible leaning toward the Partial Inspiration ideas,

“I will do my best to give you a brief outline, and as accurate a description as possible, of Brother Roberts’ visit here. Brother Roberts wrote me from Auckland, N.Z., in regard to his visit here, and said he did not think he would be able to stay here more than one night on this occasion: “Please God, I may stay longer another time, unless He gather us all out of this wilderness before there is another opportunity.” He arrived here on the Oceanic Steamship Company’s steamer Alameda on Wednesday morning, September 21st, at 9 a.m., Brother R. C. Bingley³ and I being on the wharf to meet him. I thought he seemed ever so much better than when I last saw him in Birmingham about seven years ago. On the way to the Cosmopolitan Hotel, he called at the Post Office and received his mail. I left him at the hotel at 10.30, and made arrangements to call on him at 6 p.m. On arriving there, I found him busy writing. After a little conversation, we took dinner together at the hotel, Brother Roberts taking a very light repast; and after dinner, he accompanied me on the [cable] car to my home. When we arrived there, I was quite surprised to find a few brethren and sisters, and more came in afterwards.

“Brother Roberts was requested to speak. He said he was in a rather difficult position, and somewhat in the fog, as it were, not knowing our position, and he thought the best thing to do would be to try and clear the fogs away if possible, and that would make the way clear for a longer stay on his return here. The first question he asked was, Would we fellowship a Brother coming amongst us believing in a partial inspiration of the Scriptures? He said we no doubt knew there were certain questions which had arisen amongst us as a body during these last fifteen years or more, and this was one of the most important, sapping the very vitals of the truth. Someone remarked there were present brethren and sisters who had never heard this question brought up, and Brother Roberts was requested to give an explanation of what he meant by partial inspiration. He defined his position clearly; that holy men spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit, and were guided by it into all truth, and only gave utterance to what the Spirit permitted them, and gave the instance of John in the Isle of Patmos, when he was not permitted to write certain things which he had seen and heard, “Write not,” etc.

“We assented to what was said, and then Brother R. C. Bingley said he did not endorse what was on the cover of the *Christadelphian*, “The Bible wholly inspired” (after endorsing Brother Roberts’ remarks), and asked “Was Paul inspired to tell Timothy to take a little wine for his stomach’s sake? And to tell a certain brother to bring his cloak from such a place? And would Paul be inspired if he was sitting at table and asked someone to pass him the salt and pepper, etc.?” He evidently did not care what remarks he made, and said he had always been a black sheep, at least so considered by a good many. Brother Roberts soon saw where Brother Bingley stood and that it was no use talking with him. But it was no use. Brother Bingley would not stop though I requested him myself, and Brother J. A. McCarl

also. Brother Roberts remarked we should never have faithful brethren visit us so long as we had no basis; we would always be in isolation. Sister Bingley remarked, “We shall remain in isolation then.” Brother McCarl got up and said they would have to go, as they had to go over to Oakland, so that put an end to the meeting. Brother Roberts was no doubt upset a great deal by what had taken place. It was at Brother Bingley’s request that I invited Brother Roberts up to my home. In company with Brother McCarl and sister McCarl, and sister Bowden, of Stockton, and sister Chancey, of Byron, I walked along the street. Brother Roberts requested to walk a few feet ahead of us, and did so until near the Hotel, when we bid him good night. Brother McCarl arranged with Brother Roberts to come over the following afternoon and take Brother Roberts along with him to Oakland, Brother Roberts promising to speak at Brother W. A. Clark’s in the evening.”

The Partial Inspiration division

It shouldn’t be surprising that Bro. Roberts would be deeply upset by what transpired that night at the Cheetham’s. The Partial Inspiration controversy, while certainly not the first division in the brotherhood, was by far the most damaging up to that time, to both the Christadelphian body and to Bro. Roberts personally. While two-thirds of the brotherhood sided with Robert Roberts in the dispute⁴ (which led to a split in his own ecclesia in Birmingham), some felt that the manner in which he dealt with the issue was “High handed, despotic, and outrageous”.⁵ Brother Roberts strongly felt the sting of the criticism as exemplified by the titles of the material that he wrote following the difficulty: “To the Elect of God in a Time of Trouble” and “A letter to My Enemies.”⁶

In “A letter to My Enemies” we get a feeling for how deeply Bro. Roberts was affected by the animosity that was aimed at him because of the Partial Inspiration division. Writing at the height of the controversy in 1885, he said about his enemies,

“You are on the whole a numerous company. This fact would have distressed me at one time. When quite young I was smitten with the beauty of the popular dictum, that it was a good thing, and a thing to aim at, to have no enemies. I worked under the power of this idea for a good while. Had I been in a worldly line of things, I would, doubtless, have continued to do so – and very likely, with the success of other men. But having the Bible standard before me in all things, I came to see its futility, and to perceive the reason of the saying of Christ, ‘Woe unto you when all men speak well of you.’

“I found it impossible to avoid giving offence; and after many struggles against the inevitable, I quietly and grimly surrendered.

“I saw that I could not prevent the making of enemies without becoming a time server, and a pleaser of men. I therefore made up my mind to accept enmity, and to adopt as the only workable policy, the policy of being on God’s side in all matters, whatever the risks or the consequences. I do not mean that I gave up the idea of being friendly – far from it. I have always

had the commandment before my eyes that we are to bless, and curse not: to do good to them that hate us: to pray for them that despitefully use and afflict us.

“You are not only numerous; but you are greatly diversified in the complexion of your antagonism... The most recent addition to your number consists of those who disapprove (to use the mildest word) of the strong stand that has been made against the doctrine of the partial inspiration.

“Now I wish to say to one and all of you that I entertain none of the rancor against you such as you imagine me to feel. If I cannot stand where you stand (any more than you feel able to stand where I stand) it is not because I love contention. Contention is odious to me. Fighting is one of the mournful necessities of life. I cannot escape it, but I hate it, and it is unmixed with personal enmity to any of you.”⁷

Letter of Sidney Walker

Once again, Bro. Roberts had found himself in the middle of contention concerning the Inspiration Question. As might be expected, considering the lively discussion detailed by Bro. Cheetham, not everyone who was there recalled the events of the evening in same way. One person who disagreed with James Cheetham’s version was Bro. Sydney Walker who wrote the following to the *Fraternal Visitor* magazine (the voice of the partial-inspiration fellowship),

“As the June number of the Christadelphian contains but a partial and distorted account of what transpired at Bro. Cheetham’s house, where Bro. Roberts met quite a few brethren the first evening he landed in San Francisco, I have been urged by them to write you an impartial and more full report, which we believe will interest the brethren generally, and they can also see our position on inspiration and our determination to resist any attempt to create schism in our midst while we desire to contend for a faithful adherence to the simple elements of the truth.

“Bro. Bingley came somewhat late and found the brethren engaged in a general conversation, suggested that Bro. Roberts should treat on some subject interesting to all, and more profitable than a desultory converse. Whereupon Bro. McCarl called upon Bro. B. to open with prayer. He demurred, however, to doing so, preferring to see the meeting conducted in our usual way. Bro. R. coincided, and thought that reading some chapter preferable (which however was overlooked), as Bro. R. began by stating that “our ecclesia was under a cloud.” He had letters questioning our soundness. He would not say such was the fact, but hoped such suspicions were groundless but still he was in a painful position, and continued on in this strain, apparently addressing himself to Bro. Cheetham, who did not seem inclined to open his mouth.

“There was an awkward pause, brethren exchanging significant glances and looking at Bro. Bingley to break the ominous silence, so Bro. B. reluctantly exclaimed- ‘Plainly state Bro. Roberts what you refer to!’ He

said 'I refer to inspiration and the manuscripts.' Bro. B. Then said, 'the ecclesia here did not allow this vexed question to disturb us so long as we all agreed the Bible contained the plan of salvation, we were satisfied to let the matter rest there; besides I would not dare to dis-fellowship the hundreds of brethren in England on this subject. We are not committed to any particular theory of inspiration.

"Bro. R. — 'It is very important to accept the Bible as the word of God, not question the originals as being inspired. The writers were all moved by the Spirit, and were permitted to write only what was sanctioned by the Spirit, giving John in the isle of Patmos as an illustration and so forth. Then he referred to the dispute years ago and desired to look at the subject in the abstract and not to parties, it being very important to take a right stand.'

"Bro. B. — 'Some of the brethren here are not acquainted with the first stages of the controversy, and there is no necessity for referring to those days. No doubt extreme grounds were then taken on both sides. One could scarcely treat on the subject in the abstract without reference to parties, and your remarks tend strongly in that direction.'

"Bro. R. — 'Please don't refer to parties, I am contending for principles.'

"Bro. B. — 'Parties represent principles, and by speaking of that time you yourself referred to persons. We cannot speak about the originals, as no one has seen them, but all must admit they were written by inspired men.'

Sister Walker asked Bro. R. — 'What do you call inspiration?' He replied — 'All that's in the Bible.'

"Sister Bingley reminded Bro. R. that — 'Bro. Shuttleworth wrote some years back that we should believe every jot and tittle was inspired and that there were 10,000 more mistakes in the Bible than other writers gave.'

"Bro. R. — 'You know Sister Bingley that he is very peculiar, and that really there are very few mistakes in the Bible.'

"Bro. B. — 'You are right Bro. Roberts, we all know Bro. Shuttleworth is very peculiar and went to extremes. Now would it be just to you if we considered him and others of like opinion, representing your position, and would it be just of you to speak of some, taking extreme grounds, as representing those who occupy a different position to yourself.'

"To which he made no response.

"Bro. B. continued — 'I am considered by many a black sheep because I am not afraid to speak my mind, though I am glad all do not consider me such, and, to be candid Bro. Roberts, I do not endorse what is on the cover of the Christadelphian: 'The Bible wholly inspired,' but rather the Bible inspired as a whole. Take Paul for instance, though an inspired man it did not make him incapable of expressing his own mind on certain matters.' Bro. B. then read a portion of Philemon where 'the apostle delicately reminded him of his indebtedness and to receive Onesimus kindly, his

salutations to different brethren as seen also in other epistles, and reference to his cloak and parchments; surely such like remarks were not the result of the Spirit operating upon him.

“Bro. R. — ‘All’s inspired, all’s inspired.’

“Then Sister B. remarked, (she sat next him), ‘Do you believe those wicked kings and judges in their utterances were inspired.’

“He replied — ‘No, no, Sister Bingley.’

“Sister B. — ‘Such were spirit preserved.’

“Whereupon Bro. B. exclaimed — ‘After all you only claim the Bible inspired as a whole. I am correct; the Bible is not wholly inspired. No Bro. Roberts, suppose Paul could be here and Timothy at this table, and the latter alluded to his physical weakness, and Paul remarked ‘a little wine for his stomach’s sake’ would be no more than if he asked Timothy to pass the salt and pepper, or good for seasoning.’

“Bro. R. — ‘Oh! That is very different.’

“Bro. B — ‘Where’s the difference between penning those words and uttering them.’

“He became agitated and exclaimed — ‘Now I see exactly where Bro. Bingley stands. He does not believe the Bible is inspired.’

“Bro. B. replied — ‘I do not wish you to distort my words nor misrepresent me. I speak for myself, the brethren here can speak for themselves. I state again, briefly, my position. I regard the prophets and apostles as inspired, the genealogies and historical parts spirit as preserved’ (Bro. R- ejaculated — ‘and selected’) ‘yes, and selected.’ ‘I do not object to that. What more is there to say on the matter?’

“Sister B.— ‘It is an easy thing to misrepresent others and willfully distort one’s words. It is only a few years ago, when living in Portland (Ore.), Bro. R. Jones brought Bro. Firth, who was then on his way to England, to our house, and Bro. Jones bluntly told him in our presence that we did not believe in the inspiration of the Bible. I stated that we believed the spirit spoke through the prophets and Christ and apostles by and through the Spirit, and the rest was spirit preserved.’ Whereupon Bro. Firth remarked — ‘there is nothing else to believe. We often misunderstand one another and yet after all see alike.’ Sisters Walker and Albert declared they could see no difference between us all and himself from what had been stated.

“Bro. R., failing to discover our unsoundness on inspiration, then pressed the matter of fellowship. ‘Would we fellowship any one in sympathy with partial inspirationists?’

“Bro. B.— ‘You refer, I suppose, to a brother from British Columbia, who was here a few months. I have never seen him, not living here at the time. I hear he is an excellent man. I forget his name.’ Someone said ‘Bro.

Laverock,' and all then spoke highly of him.'

"Bro. R. — 'We must beware of a wolf in sheep's clothing.'

"Bro. B. — 'You may be mistaken. May be a sheep wearing its own clothing.'

"I (Sydney Walker) remarked 'that I never met a partial inspirationist, and it seemed incredible to me that anyone believing the things of the Kingdom and the Name can believe the Scriptures are partially inspired.'

"Bro. R.— 'We should never have faithful brethren visit us so long as we had no basis; we would always be in isolation.'

"Sister B.— 'We had better continue in isolation than be mixed up with these disputes.'

"Bro. B.— 'They have largely filled our papers for years, especially on the Inspiration Question. Brethren have the right to look into these matters if they wish. We read all that is going on among us. Some take four different periodicals, others two, and so on.'

"Bro. R. (sharply).— 'Should only take one paper. Just read them once, and then throw them aside.' This raised a smile among us.

Bro. B.—'We allow brethren to select what paper they prefer, and if any brother came among us from the Eastern States, we do not demand he should discontinue one and subscribe for the other.'

Sister T. — 'How shall we judge in these matters of dispute if we don't read the different papers? I think many times we need to be inspired to know which is right.'

Bro. R. (leaning over to Sister B.). — 'I wish, Sister Bingley, we were inspired.'

Bro. B. — 'I count, at least, seven editorial brethren in the field, and if we were influenced by their writings, we should soon be torn in pieces.'

Bro. R. — 'Better go to pieces; better divide.'

Bro. B. — 'Though we may not all see alike, yet we exercise the spirit of forbearance among ourselves. The divisions are lamentable, and we have no wish to divide here.'

"Very little more was said. Finally, Brethren McCarl and Cheetham suggested us returning home, as it was getting late. Bro. Bingley acquiesced. It is incorrectly reported that he 'would not stop.' Bro. B. rather would not stop insisting before we dispersed that we should know definitely whether Bro. R. would attend next evening's meeting across the bay, and not see him hustled off to his hotel before that was settled. Bro. R. declined going. Bro. B. strongly urged him, as 'there would be a large gathering of brethren, some from a long distance, anxious to see him.' 'Under the circumstance. No.' Then Bro. B. made a final appeal. 'Surely, Bro. Roberts, you will not refuse to go, at least, for the Truth's sake. We know one interested person will be there; indeed, we have thought when you return from England you

will give a course of lectures to enlighten men.' He then said, 'I will come.' All were pleased that he yielded."⁸

James Cheetham's letter to *The Christadelphian*

The next day was a better one for Bro. Roberts as Bro. Cheetham wrote in his letter to the Christadelphian:

"On Thursday I went over to the Hotel at noon to have a chat with Brother Roberts, and found him busy writing letters. We had quite a houseful of brethren and sisters and a few interested strangers at Brother Clark's. Brother Roberts gave us one of the best lectures I ever heard him give, and was listened to very attentively by everyone. He was requested by Brother Clark to give us a Delineation of the Truth from the beginning to the end.

"He spoke first of the formation of worlds, and the creation of intelligent beings, of Adam and Eve in the beautiful Garden of Eden, and said what more natural than to be placed in a beautiful garden.—"What would you professors do? Would you put him on a raft in the midst of the ocean, or in the middle of a desert?" Adam was placed under law to develop a character, which can only be accomplished by perfect obedience. They had no bad motive in eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, but otherwise, for it was a tree good to make one wise, but the unchangeable law of Deity brought the threatened result—death. Their aspirations to eternal life as Adamites were set on one side forever, and a new creation adopted: Christ as the beginning of the creation of God. From this came next the calling of Abraham to go into a land which he should afterwards receive for an inheritance, and he went and sojourned in that land as a stranger, referred to by Stephen, Acts 7. And then he spoke of Abraham's seed going into Egypt, and being oppressed for 430 years, and then coming out with great substance; then of Moses, his birth and bringing up by the daughter of Pharaoh, his slaying of the Egyptian and fleeing to the land of Midian, his seeing the burning bush and drawing closer and closer to it to investigate, and the voice from the burning bush, "Take off thy shoes from off thy feet for the ground whereon thou standest is holy ground. I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, come and I will send thee unto Pharaoh that thou mayest bring forth my people." Moses said, But they will not believe me, and God said, What is that in thine hand? And he said, a rod, and he told him to cast it to the ground and it became a serpent, showing that it made no difference to God whether it was wood, rock or dust that He uses to accomplish His purpose. So finally Moses and Aaron went down into Egypt and requested Pharaoh to let the children of Israel go. Pharaoh refused to let them go and made their tasks more burdensome, so God brought certain plagues upon the Egyptians, which culminated in the slaying of the first-born of every family. Then they were glad to let them go. God could have brought the children of Israel into the land of Canaan by a short cut, but it was not His purpose, so He led them through the wilderness and did many mighty signs and wonders

amongst them, and here Brother Roberts mentioned the finding of inscriptions on the rocks the way the children of Israel travelled. He dwelt upon their history as a kingdom, from its commencement to its overthrow, the preaching of the Gospel of the kingdom by Christ and his apostles, the calling of Paul as an apostle especially to the Gentiles, chosen as he was, not from among Christ's friends, but from the very midst of his enemies, for he persecuted Christ's brethren even unto death thinking he was doing God's service, and while on the mission of persecution, was felled to the earth, and blinded. His eyesight being restored again, he laboured faithfully in the cause of his Lord and Master. Brother Roberts also referred to the signs of the times, and the near approach of Christ, and the setting up of the Kingdom of God.

"I was only too sorry when his lecture finished. He went into details in the Scripture so minutely, and so graphically described the things which had taken place, and made it so very interesting, strengthening and cheering to us in the race we are running, hoping to win that glorious prize of immortality. Thanks were returned to Brother Roberts for his very able discourse, and he returned to San Francisco with a few of the brethren and sisters. He bid good-night to the rest of them after arriving at the ferry here, Brother Roberts and I walking up to his hotel. He preferred the short walk before retiring. He spoke about his trip and hoped on his return here, everything being favourable, to stay a while with us. I bid him good-bye, not being sure of seeing him off on the steamer *Queen* for Victoria, B.C., the next morning. This was one block from his hotel. I wished to go right to the hotel with him, but he said, No, you have quite a way to go home yet, and it is late — it was about 11.15 p.m. then. After bidding him good-night I stood on the street corner and watched him walk down the block, never thinking it would be the last time I should see him alive.

Brother Walker spoke on the same theme later in his letter to the *Fraternal Visitor* magazine, "It was through Bro. Bingley that we had the pleasure of hearing him give that discourse. It was calculated to interest strangers, and all listened with marked attention. We little thought how soon his voice would be hushed in death."

Bro. Cheetham's letter continued,

"Brother Bingley said he would see him off next morning, and promised to call at his room for him. Through an accident which happened to my arm the same evening of Brother Roberts' lecture in Oakland, and which laid me up from work ten days, I was enabled to go down to the hotel Friday morning, the 23rd, to assist him with his luggage. I arrived there soon after 8.30 a.m., went up to Brother Roberts' room and knocked at the door. Receiving no response, I thought perhaps he might be at breakfast, so made my way to the dining room. He was not there and had not been to breakfast. I began to feel uneasy, and wonder what was the matter, so went back to the room again and rapped on the door again, and not hearing his customary "Come in", I thought I would try the door and see if it

was locked. Finding it was not, I opened it and walked in, and my feelings can be better imagined than described on finding Brother Roberts on the floor between the foot of the bed and the wall, laid on his back with his head resting on his bundle of rugs or one of his valises. I called, "Brother Roberts," and knelt down by his side, but soon realized that he was in the cruel embrace of death. His face was beginning to get black.

"I went after the hotel clerk and requested him to get medical assistance. It was of no avail. The coroner's office was notified, and the room locked up until the arrival of the morgue wagon about an hour afterwards. I telephoned to the s.s. Queen notifying them, and also to two of the brethren to come as quickly as possible, as I could not get away, having been requested to go along to the coroner's office. I had not the money to send a cablegram, or would have done so at the very first. Brother Bingley came into the hotel. I told him of the sad occurrence and requested him to see about his trunk, and, as quite a few of the sisters would be waiting on the wharf to see him go away to Vancouver, to see them and let them know. As it happened, Mr. Cockroft, the Agent of the Oceanic Steamship Company, was at the wharf, and he immediately came to the morgue, and said he would wire to his company's office in London by cipher dispatch, and they would wire to Birmingham. I was very careful in seeing that all Brother Roberts' effects left the hotel for the coroner's office. One of his valises was open by his side, and it seemed as if he had taken some medicine from a bottle, which the doctors said was for heart troubles. He seemed to have resigned himself calmly to the last struggle, for he was as calm and peaceful as one asleep, which indeed he is, only asleep in Christ Jesus, not dead, in the true meaning of the word, only waiting the Master's call."

"It was very unfortunate that Brother Roberts' death occurred in the hotel, with no one to assist or relieve him. I should only have been too glad to have had him stay with sister Cheetham and myself, but could not possibly accommodate him, and for that reason took him to a quiet hotel. And then he had so much correspondence to attend to, and that took up nearly all his time while here. He often spoke of the nearness of death, and said what matter if we were changing and decaying, we have a bright future before us. His body was removed from the morgue and taken to an undertaker's and embalmed, awaiting instructions from England. It was a very sad and solemn meeting we had the following Sunday. Brother W. A. Clark addressed the meeting, and spoke very highly of the work Brother Roberts accomplished, a life devoted to the interest of the truth, and its most able defender against all opponents. Brother Roberts remarked in his last discourse, that he did not like fighting, but when there was something dear to him assailed from within and without, he was obliged to maintain a fighting attitude. It was not until late on the Sunday night that I received a telegram from Mr. Cockroft saying that Brother Roberts' remains and effects be shipped to Brooklyn, N.Y. I expected they would very likely bury him alongside Dr. Thomas, which I hear was the case since I commenced

to write this letter. I must apologize for the very poor letter which I have written. I am a very poor hand at it, so please excuse the manner in which it is put together. You are at liberty to publish it in the Christadelphian, either wholly or in part. Whatever you may deem best, please do.”⁹

(To Be Continued)

Gordon Hensley (Simi Hills, CA)

Notes:

1. *Christadelphian Magazine*, 1898 p i.
2. *Christadelphian Magazine*, 1898, op. cit.
3. RC Bingley (Ralph), 1838-1917, wrote several well-known works, including *The Declaration, Index Rerum*, and several charts of John Thomas. A somewhat dissident Christadelphian, he disagreed with Roberts on several items, and was out of fellowship with most by the time of his death in San Francisco.
4. *The History of the Christadelphians*, Andrew R. Wilson, Shalom Publications, 1985, page 539.
5. *Robert Roberts* by Islip Collyer, p 115.
6. *Robert Roberts: An Autobiography*, p 250.
7. *Christadelphian Magazine*, 1899, p 248.
8. *Fraternal Visitor*, August 1899 p 232.
9. *Christadelphian Magazine*, 1898 p 227.



HERE LIES ROBERT ROBERTS

Of Birmingham, England. Editor of the Christadelphian. Author of Christendom Astray and many other Works who for forty years in the front ranks of The Christadelphians, guided and continued the Work begun by Dr. THOMAS by whose side he now sleeps in Jesus.

Born 8 April 1838.

Died on 23 Sept 1898 at San Francisco

Reflections

The Parable of the Two Builders

The parable of the wise and foolish builders makes up the closing words of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus' first long public address that stretches from Matthew 5 through 7. Luke gives a condensed version of the same sermon in Luke chapter 6. Jesus was in the second year of his ministry when he gave this speech, and this was his year of popularity. It was most likely the spring season, and he was in familiar territory: the Capernaum and Galilee area where he had been preaching and teaching for almost a year, and where he would stay until the following autumn. He had just selected his 12 disciples, and his group of followers was growing. Matt 4:24-25 tells us that *"his fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatick, and those that had the palsy; and he healed them. And there followed him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judaea, and from beyond Jordan"*. Probably the last time that a crowd from all of these locations had gathered was in the days of Solomon, almost 1000 years before Christ! If we could put a finger on the peak of Jesus' popularity, it would be around this moment.

As the crowd gathered on that gently sloping mountainside on the northwest corner of the Sea of Galilee, Jesus' Sermon on the Mount began, with some of the most familiar words in the Bible: *"Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth"* (Matt 5:3-5). Ten times over, Jesus gave this encouragement of a future reward in the Kingdom; but then, Jesus began to describe what would be expected of those who wish to take part in those blessings.

The moral teachings given in the Sermon on the Mount are some of the most challenging of Jesus' ministry. It is here we learn that a lustful look is on the same moral level as adultery, anger is akin to murder, we must love those who hate us, give to those who take from us, never seek revenge, preach without compromise, never divorce, give generously in secret without expecting to receive anything in return, forgive always, set aside worry and concern for material goods, and finally, to be perfect just as God is perfect.

Jesus anticipated that there would be a natural kickback reaction to his teaching. The bar of God's expectations was high, and Jesus knew that most of his hearers would be uncomfortable with it. Plenty of people would like to hear Jesus' teaching, and many would like to call him "Lord," but few would be willing to really try to put Jesus' words into practice. Men would love to be associated with the seemingly positive aspects of Jesus' ministry, but human nature would balk at the uncompromisingly high standards set forth in his teachings. Thus, in Luke 6:46, Jesus' parable began with the question, *"And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?"*

The parable that followed was about being doers of the word, and not hearers only. The parable begins in Matt 7:24: “*Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock*”.

If we look in Luke 6:47-48, we see an additional detail: “*Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them, I will shew you to whom he is like: He is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it: for it was founded upon a rock*”.

Let’s look more closely at what Jesus says in this familiar parable about what it means to be a doer of the Word. Matthew mentions only the building of the house on a rock, but Luke says more about the process the wise builder endured to accomplish this. In Luke, the man building the house “digged deep” to lay his foundation. Luke’s details bring out three points that we might not otherwise have known:

- 1) The rock wasn’t on the surface; presumably, it was covered by sand. Have you ever tried digging a hole in the sand before? For a somewhat extreme example, imagine digging a hole on the beach — it takes twice the work of digging a hole anywhere else, because as soon as you pull some sand out, the sides cave in and refill the hole you’re trying to empty!
- 2) The wise man had to dig deep to find the rock. Though it’s difficult to be certain how deep one would have to dig in the first century, we know from the journals of British visitors to Palestine in the 1800s that it was not uncommon to have to dig 30 feet around sandy Galilee to hit rock.
- 3) Luke’s account of the parable implies hard, sweating, manual labor. There’s a reason we have large machines to dig our foundations for us today! Additionally, the parable describes this as a solo effort. Imagine the footprint of your house. Now imagine that you have to dig a hole of that size... and it has to be thirty feet deep... and you’re digging in the sand. On top of that, once your hole is finished, your work has just started — you then need to lay a foundation that will fill in that 30 foot hole! Think about how you would feel at the end of each day with your arms burning from exhaustion, your back aching from the heavy lifting, your shirt stained with sweat, and the back of your neck blistering with sunburn.

The gospel of Luke emphasizes that it is hard work to lay a foundation on a rock; just as it is hard work to put Jesus’ teaching into practice. The question for us is: do we imagine ourselves spiritually laboring for Jesus to the point of sweating? This idea of laboring for the Lord comes up elsewhere: in 1Tim 5:17, elders are mentioned as “laboring” in the Word and doctrine, and 2Tim 2:15 says that the good Bible student is a laborer that should not be ashamed of his work. Jesus was showing that real work is involved in putting his words into practice.

Now to the foolish builder; Matthew says that the foolish man built his house on the sand, while Luke’s gospel says that the house was built on the ground without a foundation. Imagine the scenario:

- 1) With no foundation to worry about, the frame of the foolish man's house would have gone up quickly. The siding would have been nailed on and windows installed not long after. While the wise man was still dragging buckets of dirt out of his hole in the ground, the foolish man would be out shopping for light fixtures for his nearly-completed home. By the time the wise man had reached the rock, the foolish man would have been reclining on the front porch of his finished house, sipping lemonade and wondering what would possess a man to dig in the dirt like that.
- 2) If both the wise and foolish builders had the same amount of money to build their homes, the foolish man's house would have looked considerably nicer. Depending where you live, a good excavation and foundation can account for twenty-five percent of your building costs; in more hazardous areas, the price is much higher. Since the foolish man didn't bother with this expense, he could have used that extra money to make his house look bigger and better.
- 3) The foolish man's house would have seemed perfectly adequate when it was built. It was the ideal good-weather house. In fact, all of the wise man's digging would seem a bit ridiculous — like Noah building an ark when there was no sign of rain.
- 4) When both houses were completed, it would be difficult to tell which house had a deep foundation. All the labor of the wise man would be hidden under his house. This is true with our lives, as well; much of our spiritual work will be done in secret — as will many of our sins. Think about the things Jesus warned against in the Sermon on the Mount: lustful thoughts, jealousy, anger, all of which can occur secretly in our minds. Two believers, standing side by side, might look like their spirituality is similar, but there's no obvious way to look at them and see what their foundation is, because it is largely hidden inside of them. However, with our words and our actions, we can invite others inside of our spiritual lives and show whether we have a firm foundation — you can, after all, tell more about a house from the inside than from the outside.

We see the result of all this building in latter half of Luke 6:48: *“And when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it: for it was founded upon a rock”*. This time, the gospel of Matthew is the account with more detail, in Matt 7:25: *“And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock”*. Matthew indicates that this was more than just the common flood that would wash through the ravines of Palestine. Rain poured onto the house from above, streams swelled and spilled over their banks, and wind pushed at the windows and doors — it sounds like a hurricane!

While this could possibly symbolize trouble that overtakes us in life, the symbolism of the rain and flood seems Scripturally tied to the judgment. God used a flood to judge and destroy the wicked in the time of Noah. Jesus says in Matt 24:37 that his coming (and subsequent judgment) would happen suddenly, like Noah's flood. 2Pet 3:5-7 also uses a flood as a symbol of judgment, and Isa 28:17 speaks of the day of judgment being like hail which *“shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place”*.

In the Day of Judgment, the work of the wise man — the digging deep and laying a foundation on Christ by putting his words into practice — will be shown to be worthwhile. The full benefit will not be apparent before then. In the Day of Judgment, a life full of hearing God’s words, but not really allowing them to break the surface of our minds, is not worth much. Jesus Christ is in the business of changing lives, and that means allowing his teachings to sink in and truly change us so that we are doers of the word, and not hearers only.

Allan Laben (Baltimore, MD)

Bible Reading Marathon

How long would it take to read the Bible from Genesis to Revelation both day and night without stopping? This last June on Father’s Day the Simi Hills Ecclesia kicked off a Bible Reading Marathon in which the goal was to finish all 66 books without stopping.

The Simi Hills Ecclesia decided to follow a pattern similar to the one used by the Shaftesbury Road Ecclesia in Sydney, Australia. Although the Simi Ecclesial hall was not initially setup with an Internet connection capable of broadcasting, the website Bible Reading Marathon.com was secured and posted with information announcing the upcoming Marathon. It also offered a new Bible to the guest who guessed the closest finish time in days, hours and minutes.

As the Marathon date drew closer invitations to other Southern California Ecclesias were sent out, reading schedules were set up, and newspaper ads were ordered. In addition, at the last minute we were able to establish an Internet connection through to our neighbor’s building, by running a cable over the fence, through the trees, and across the parking lot.

At 2:00 p.m. on Sunday, June 16, the Bible Reading Marathon was launched. The readers sat in a circle of 10 chairs and waited for their turn to read into the microphone. Within the first few minutes, there were 5 people listening and following along on the website.



Bro. Vaughn Smith recording the start time for the book of Ezra.

On this particular day the community celebrates Father’s Day, and we chose to advertise that we were celebrating our Heavenly Father’s day by reading together His Word and honoring Him. After a few pictures were posted on Facebook, the number of people listening in began to grow.

At first there were many empty slots in the reading schedule, but then something

amazing began to happen. More volunteers appeared to join in reading. It was especially exciting that 8 guests participated in reading all 66 books of the Bible. The whole Bible took 3 days, 9 hours and 17 minutes to finish, and the benefit to the ecclesial members was indescribable. On the white board was recorded the start times for each book and it then became a challenge to the Scripture readers to complete the project.

Though the activity seemed to have a slow start, enthusiasm kept building until the Marathon reached Wednesday morning and 125 to 150 listeners at a time from as many as 72 countries were following along on the website. All 10 of the reading chairs were full, and at one point as many as 15 were waiting in the lobby to enter the reading area.



**Sis. Patty Chelius helps Cameryn Briley
with reading the Bible**

While the readers were honoring their Heavenly Father, He was undoubtedly blessing their enthusiasm. Observers could feel the excitement as the word of God was heard throughout the building.

There was something eye-opening about reading and hearing the Bible read continuously that seemed to add another dimension to the message. Those who followed along commented about how much and how often

the LORD had repeated over and over his warnings to Israel, and yet they still fell down farther and farther into wickedness until they were carried away captive. By the time the readers reached the New Testament, when the Lord Jesus presents the message of salvation, many of those listening were moved with emotion knowing that the Jews still misunderstood it. Approaching 1Cor 15, the sister at the microphone quivered as she read Paul's words, "*Death is swallowed up in victory! Oh, death where is thy sting?*" Her emotions rang in each one of us as we listened, for this indeed summed up the entire message of salvation that God has planned for us.

Should other ecclesias wish to present a similar Marathon, please contact Bro. Doug Hawthorne by e-mail at Cindy.and.Doug@Juno.com for help. By the way, you can still play the SimiBibleMarathon recordings on You Tube.

Doug Hawthorne (Simi Hills, CA)

Book Review

“Know Questions on The Bible” By Aquila and Priscilla



There came a time in doing the family Bible readings when things started to drag a bit. Someone suggested: “Maybe it would make things more interesting if questions were asked based on the chapter just read. It would help us all to pay more attention as we were reading.”

The initial reaction was somewhat negative. People don’t like being embarrassed by not knowing the answers. However, much to our surprise, the children liked the questions. Every effort was made to make sure anything asked was directly answerable from the chapter read.

And the intent was to gear the question to the ability of the person being asked.

It worked! Much better than we ever expected. Objections were only raised if the question was deemed too easy or if someone was overlooked in the process. And, of course, there was a problem in the younger ones calling out the answers of questions directed at their older siblings. Not wanting to feel left out, Mom began asking “Where’s my question?” Of course that opened the door to any adults present being included.

With this breadth of Bible knowledge being involved, the challenge now became greater for the person asking the questions. It is in having this challenge to face that we welcome a new book now available:

Know questions on the Bible.

The authors have undertaken the mammoth job of providing questions on every chapter in the Bible. They have even provided questions in three different formats:

- 1) Straight questions based on facts provided in the chapter just read. (An answer is also supplied along with the verse where the answer is found.)
- 2) Fill in the blank questions, again with answers and verse.
- 3) Research questions which require going outside the chapter. Again answers are supplied which include the appropriate verse reference.

In keeping with today’s electronic age, the book is available in many different formats and can be ordered on a website.

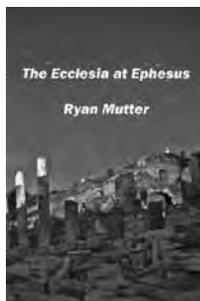
- Book printed like good old-fashioned books can be ordered from: www.lulu.com/spotlight/postphosprod where it’s available in hard cover for \$30 and in soft cover in many versions for \$5 to \$20.
- The full soft-cover version is also available from: Bro. Tom Graham, 2621 Riata Ct., Santa Rosa Valley, CA 93012 USA. Phone: (805) 491-2527 email: tom@bigbrand.com

- KQ App (free at iTunes store) but needs internet connection to function. To obtain go to iTunes store — search for: bible quiz — know questions.
- iBook — once downloaded does not require internet to function. Purchase from iTunes store. Search for: Aquila N. Priscilla. Questions on the Bible is \$8.99. KQs Genesis to Job for \$2.99.

Don Styles (Ann Arbor, MI)

Books from The Tidings

The Ecclesia at Ephesus by Ryan Mutter



Ephesus was one of the most advanced cities in the Roman Empire. Believers living there faced many of the same issues that confront followers of the Lord Jesus Christ today. The Bible captures more than four decades of the ecclesia's history through the Acts and the numerous New Testament writings penned by or to believers living in Ephesus. The lessons the Bible provides about the causes and consequences of events in the ecclesia remain relevant in today's ever-changing times. Studying the ecclesia at Ephesus provides powerful lessons in spiritual growth.
\$9.00 USD (264 pages, with Color Maps and Images)

Bible Guidelines for a Happy Marriage (Soft Cover) by John C. Bilello

Sound, proactive, Biblical advice on how to build and maintain a happy marriage. 127 pages, \$6.00 USD.

The Creation Text: Studies in Early Genesis by David Levin

Forty-nine studies offer fresh insights into early Genesis by examining the text and structure of the first five chapters. \$12.00 US (364 pages)

My Journey in Faith by Ronald Hicks

A brother shares his life experience in the Truth with Christadelphians around the world, and the joy of mission work. Special price: reduced from \$10.00 to \$5.00 US (372 pages)

Pictures of Redemption by George Booker

Explores parables, analogies and figures of speech used in the Scriptures to illustrate the many facets of redemption. Softcover \$6.00 US

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)

How to Order

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Bible Mission News

Trinidad — A new space for the Memorial Meeting and Sunday School in Erin

Bro. Brad Butts, the CBMC Trinidad and Tobago linkman shares this information from his visit earlier this year.

For at least 20 years the Erin Ecclesia in Trinidad, West Indies, has been meeting in the living room of Bro. Sheriff Edo. The ecclesia has grown to 16 members and approximately 20 Sunday School members (including the CYC). Though this ecclesia has limited financial resources due to unemployment and medical conditions, it has continued to offer a wide variety of ecclesial activities with enthusiasm and perseverance.

In addition to regular Sunday meeting and midweek Bible Class ecclesial, activities include CYC and Sunday School events every Saturday, outreach classes with interested contacts twice per month, and youth gatherings during Carnival and Easter vacation periods. The group of contacts mentioned averages about six at each session, with two of them pursuing first principles classes with an eye toward baptism. The classes are held in a nearby village where most of the contacts live. On two occasions each month most of the group attends the Sunday Memorial Service. Bro. Edo sees to it that transportation is provided.



**New Meeting Room with Sunday School student,
Simeon Edo.**

In view of the above and more, the CBMC has funded the building of a meeting room with restrooms and kitchen on Bro. Edo's property. Bro. Edo's living room and porch can no longer accommodate the numbers. The "Annex", as it is commonly referred to, now has a firm foundation, walls, and a roof and will be completed, Lord willing, early in the Fall of 2013.

May the Almighty continue to bless this project and the good service of the Erin ecclesia.

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

South America — Lima and La Paz Ecclesias

Bro. Don Luff shares with us that it was a pleasure to visit the ecclesias in Lima, Peru and La Paz, Bolivia again. During the final days of June, he received a warm welcome by the members in Lima. Two advertised public lectures were held at which four and three visitors attended respectively. The topics were “How to Handle the Bible” and “The Gospel of Prosperity — for the love of neighbor or the love of money?” There was participation during both sessions reading the quotes — one woman in particular asked some very searching questions, indicating the Bible’s message really had an impact.

On Monday July 1st, Brothers César and Flavio took him on a tour of parts of the city of Lima, and the three of them had a very pleasant time together. A new bus system (some underground) has certainly improved transportation in this capital. At one point, they went through a Catholic museum and Cathedral — a shocking experience really! We’ve been on museum tours before, but this tour was certainly different. One large room was dedicated to full-sized displays of many torture methods used during the Inquisition. They were also taken down to the catacombs well below the main floor of the Cathedral — not a pleasant journey! From these two experiences the phrase in Jeremiah and the Revelation, “Come out of her, my people” has real meaning.

In La Paz, the attendance at advertised public lectures is usually high — between 20 to 40. Five thousand flyers were distributed by members in high-density pe-



Audience in attendance on Thursday, July 4th in meeting place in La Paz for advertised special lecture on “What must I do to be saved?” — 27 visitors (about 50% repeats and 50% first-timers), plus all active members and children. Great evening!

destrian areas of La Paz in the matter of a few hours, for a special lecture held on July 4th. A colorful banner was also hung in front of the ecclesial hall a week prior to the lecture. One sister phoned a number of contacts and most of the visitors attended due to this personal invitation. We were thrilled to see 27 regulars and first-time people came out to listen to the topic — “What Must I do to be saved?” The audience participation by helping with Bible readings and answers to questions was quite good. Many visitors arrived before the start time of 7:30 pm and stayed until 10 pm.

Brother Shimon and Sister Joanna Spina from Australia arrived on April 15th, the replacement missionary couple in La Paz for Brother Paul and Sister Naomi Osborn, who have returned to North America. The Spinas and their daughter Dallas and son Zander are facing the challenges of learning Spanish and adjusting to a different culture. The time we spent with the ecclesia bill pushing, at the Breaking of Bread and studying together was indeed heartwarming. The fellowship shared in both countries, and hospitality extended to Bro. Don by members and visitors alike provide very pleasant memories.

Submitted by Sis. Jan Berneau, CBMA/CBMC Publicity

This photo was taken in a busy pedestrian area in the heart of La Paz, “El Prado”. We handed out several thousand flyers during a two hour period. This photo was taken in front of a notice board in the area for public use. The centre left was the newspaper ad, and then there are 12 smaller flyers — the handbill.



Those on the photo, left to right: Joanna Spina in front with Zander, Bro. Don in the back, Bro. Freddie, Sis. Delma (recently baptized) and Sis. Jackeline and her daughter Carla in front.

Panama — August 2013

Preaching Campaign and Bible Camp

During the month of August, the Colon and Panama City Ecclesias enjoyed two successful and well-attended weekend events. The 10 day period of special activities began with a social evening on Friday, August 16 in Colon for both ecclesias and overseas visitors. We all enjoyed a “fish fry”, a devotional talk on “Twos” in the Bible and a hymn singing.

Prior to the Saturday, August 17, Campaign Day, 50 posters were displayed around Colon on poles, in windows and on pin-boards — plus 1,000 flyers were distributed. Approximately 45 people attended four talks on “What does the Bible say about Relationships?” This number included about 13 members from both ecclesias (of a possible 24) and about 10 children and teens from their families; brothers and sisters visiting from North America; and 15 visitors — half of which have attended meeting in Colon before. Audience attention and participation was good. The activity included several refreshment breaks and a hot meal. The program started at 11:30 and concluded at 3:30, however many remained for at least an hour afterward, conversing and helping with clean-up of the rented conference room. A Church of God pastor and his wife attended a Christadelphian activity for the first time. At the conclusion of the day, she told one of the Colon sisters that if she had not attended, she would have missed Bible teaching that she had never heard before! — startling, considering her husband is a ‘pastor’. All attendees received a folder with outline notes for the talks, and many were adding their own jottings as the day proceeded. A very encouraging event!

The following day, Sunday August 18th, a joint Remembrance Service was held at the same location. Once again, about 45 attended. One woman who attended a Christadelphian Campaign for the first time in Colon in June of 2012, has attended almost every Sunday since. After the weekend’s activities, she made a special request on the following Monday — she wanted to be baptized and made a commitment to begin baptismal classes immediately. The atmosphere was jubilant all week. We reviewed the essential elements of conversion with her at the Colon Bible Class on the 21st and she is ready to dedicate her life.

On Saturday, August 24th, vehicles loaded with members, friends, teens and children from both cities converged on an outdoor facility about an hour from Panama City, for a day of Bible study and recreational activities. Two studies were delivered to the adults on *We are Members of the Body of Christ* and *He is our Head and Building Together*. One class was also delivered to the teens on *Friendships*. A hot meal was provided, basketball was enjoyed by the young people, and about an hour was allowed for fun in the pool — for all ages!

Sunday was another special day for sure! A joint Memorial Service was held at the Panama City Hall. Twenty-five Christadelphians and their children, plus about 20 visitors (adults, teens and children) attended — about 50 altogether. One Panama City sister brought about 10 adults, teens and children visitors. The Hall was almost full! Some visitors stated that they had never heard nor seen the Bible referred



Breaking of Bread Service Sunday, Aug 25th in Panama City Hall. Front, left to right: Sisters Miriam Luff, Vanessa Sobers and Olga Duncan.

had been set-up for this purpose.

We are grateful to a number of North American brothers and sisters who support the Panamanian ecclesias on an annual basis. Bro. Clive and Sis. Christine Drepaoul as well as Bro. Euhart and Sis. Elvia Thompson from New York, along with Bro. Don and Sis. Miriam Luff from Ontario were present for these activities organized by the two ecclesias. Sister June Neblett from Ontario lives in Colon for about six months of the year and is very supportive of the ecclesial efforts. Bro. Clive and Bro. Don delivered the various talks, and special Bible Classes which were also held by both ecclesias during the week.

We thank our Heavenly Father for His blessing on all the activities. The interest shown by the visitors was a great encouragement. Our involvement with all the ecclesial activities was a very uplifting experience! Preliminary discussions took place regarding immediate visitor follow-up, as well as another Campaign and Bible Camp in 2014, God willing. Support for next year's events (or at any time) from North America (and elsewhere) would be much appreciated. Even though the main language in the country and ecclesias is Spanish, both Spanish and English are used weekly in each ecclesia, therefore an English only speaking brother is effective and appreciated, since several Panamanian brothers can translate. Contact Bro. Ian Neblett at ianneblett@hotmail.com for information.



Bible Class Aug 21 in Colon Hall. Front, left to right: Sis. Miriam Luff, Bro. Luis Sobers and Bro. Ian Neblett with daughter Nylayah on lap.

Submitted by Sis. Jan Berneau, CBMA/CBMC Publicity

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.)

AUSTIN-LEANDER, TX

We rejoice with Bro. Will and Sis. Jacqueline Jackson in the birth of their son, Benjamin, born Nov. 26, 2012.

We are saddened to report the sudden loss of Bro. John Banta. He fell asleep May 25, 2013. Our prayers are with daughters Sis. Amanda Buck and Sis. Andrea Banta, son Luke, as well as his father, Bro. Joe Banta, and his many other relatives. He is greatly missed by our ecclesia.

In November we had our annual fall fraternal gathering at the HEB camp. We thank Bro. Jason Hensley for his classes, and were pleased that Sis. Ruth, and daughter, Bethany, were able to accompany him. In March our CYC hosted a young people's gathering at T4C. We thank Bro. Jay Mayoock Jr. for his classes.

We are pleased to welcome Sis. Cassie Hymel back into fellowship, and commend her to the North Houston, TX Ecclesia. We also commend Sis. Hannah Hill to the Wachusetts, MA Ecclesia, and Bro. Bryan Camarillo to the Meriden, CT Ecclesia. May the Lord bless them in their new ecclesias. We welcome back Bro. Keith Aardal from the Los Angeles, CA Ecclesia.

We welcomed the following brothers and sisters from other states or countries: Bryden Melles (Waitakere, Auckland, NZ); Dean and Andrea Bailey (Cambridge, ON); Robb and Jodee Webb (Hamilton Greenaway, ON); Dan Styles, and Leah Styles (Orangeville, ON); Holly Roper (Adelaide, Aust.); Blanche Wallace (Freehill, Jamaica); Phil Morgan (Kouts, IN); Haleigh Harper (Meriden, CT); Dennis and Tiffany Bevans, Courtney Bevans, and Hailey Bevans, (Baltimore, MD); Scott and Cindy Nevers (Wachusett, MA); Marion Clayton (Brantford, ON); Kamice Bailey (Echo Lake, NJ); Keena Charles (Albany, NY); Linda Putnick (Ann Arbor, MI); Connie Goodlander (Avon, IN); and Elsie Simmons (Los Angeles, CA).

We wish to thank Bre. Dean Bailey, Mark Wade, Michael Gottschall, Dennis Bevans, Scott Nevers, and Kainon Irons for their words of exhortation.

Fred Bearden

BEDFORD, NS

Over the past number of months, we have enjoyed visits from many brothers and sisters and their families as well as the exhortations given by a number of the visiting brothers. We are thankful for the visits and fellowship of Kurt and Kate Ruhland and Phil and Janice Baines (Cambridge, ON); Brad and Miriam Wilton and family (One Tree Hill, South Aust.); Phil and Barb Wilton (Toronto West, ON); Paul Baines and family, Brad and Debbie Goodwin and family, Joan Goodwin, Linda Ikle and Jennifer Wetmore (Sussex, NB); Matthew Bennett (Victoria, BC); Charlotte Smith (Redditch, Birmingham, UK); and Bruce and Pat Waite, and Jay and Joan Behrig (Southern NH).

We were very pleased to welcome by our Father's good care, Bro. Matthew Bennett, who cycled from Victoria, BC to Halifax, NS this summer covering over 6,600 kilometers in 66 days.

This summer, Bro. John and Sis. Sair Ching hosted an ecclesial yard sale to raise money for the Diabetes foundation. We also held a one day seminar in Dartmouth, NS entitled, "Keys to Success: Unlocking the Mystery of Bible Reading". We did have one registrant attend and we enjoyed a day of friendship and fellowship around God's word.

On September 21-22, 2013, we held a Study Weekend in St. Margaret's Bay, NS entitled, "Prophetic Possibilities Concerning Israel and the Return of Jesus Christ". This was a wonderful weekend of fellowship and learning. Our Bro. Bruce Waite (Southern NH) led us through this study. We had brothers and sisters from the Sussex, NB, Southern NH and Redditch, UK Ecclesias share in this study with us.

Sis. Jerusha Snobelen has gone to St. John's, NF to continue her post-secondary studies and Bro. David Crawford has returned to Truro, NS for his final year of post-secondary studies. Bro. Nathan and Sis. Sarah Crawford have moved to Kingston, ON to pursue careers, however, Bro. Nathan has returned to Halifax, NS until December to complete his post-secondary education before joining Sis. Sarah. Although we miss all of our brothers and sisters that have moved, we rejoice with them as they pursue their careers and we ask our Father's favour and blessings upon them.

We were deeply saddened with the falling asleep of our Bro. Ken Dickson on August 24, 2013. Bro. Ken was the husband of Sis. Wendy Dickson. Bro. Ken was born in Scotland in 1938 and married Sis. Wendy at the age of 50. They moved to Canada and moved to Hamilton, ON, Sussex, NB and then to Dartmouth, NS. He had been diagnosed with cancer two years previous, but remained his usual, calm, wise and soft-spoken self, always with a story and keen sense of humour. We pray our Lord's return will be soon when we will see him and all our brothers and sisters who have fallen asleep in the Lord.

The Bedford ecclesia has grown over the last 12 years to 18 brothers and sisters and three children. We do have a complete program of activities that includes running a Bible seminar series and other outreach activities. We would greatly welcome the assistance of brothers and sisters, through visitation, or through those who would consider relocation to the Halifax, NS area. For information contact Bro. Dale Crawford by email at: Bedfordchristadelphians@gmail.com, or by phone at: 1-902-431-6650, or visiting the re-locate section of our website at: www.christadelphians.ns.ca/relocate.

Dale Crawford

HONESDALE, PA

We sadly report that Bro. Gary Burnard went to sleep in the Lord on September 22, 2013. He will be greatly missed until the Lord returns. We hope then to meet him in the kingdom, God willing.

On September 29, 2013 we were blessed to hold the celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the building of our chapel. Our chapel was filled with the happy hymning voices of our brethren and many visitors. Bro. Steve Cheetham traveled from Moorestown's Ecclesia to give us a special exhortation. After the memorial service we had a grand dinner afterwards. We are thankful for the faith of our parents and grandparents who were sure we would be remembering Jesus every Sunday until he returns.

Steve DeMarco

LONDON, ON

Our annual Fraternal Gathering was held on September 21st. Bro. Stephen Whitehouse (Birmingham Hall Green, U.K.) spoke on the theme: “The Work of Faith, Patience of Hope and Labour of Love” taken from 1 Thessalonians. Bro. Stephen also spoke at our Bible Class on “The Comfort of Messiah in Job”. We thank him for his labour of love on our behalf, which was of great benefit to our ecclesia.

Ron Kidd

LOS ANGELES HISPANIC, CA

The idea of preaching in Spanish in Los Angeles was conceived by brethren in this area who wished to disseminate the Truth among the burgeoning Hispanic portion of the local population. After leaving El Salvador we relocated here at the beginning of 1998 and began to advertise the Bible correspondence course in the Spanish-language newspaper. Later in the year we rented a storefront west of downtown and began inviting our postal students to public lectures on Saturday and Sunday afternoons. In addition, people frequently come in off the street to request literature and attend classes, so that to date we have welcomed about 860 visitors.

After the first baptisms came along in 2000 we adopted our present Sunday format of a breaking of bread in the morning followed by a public lecture and simultaneous Sunday school, then a light lunch, which provides a great opportunity for fellowship and for chatting with our friends. The Saturday afternoon lecture morphed into an ecclesial Bible class; we added a second on Thursday evenings and CYC on Monday evenings. We also offer classes for children and young people during our ecclesial Bible classes, so that visitors with young families can bring their children, which they usually do. The demographics of the area mean that the adults need talks and classes in Spanish, while the youngsters want theirs in English. We now have 24 active members living in this area, while several have fallen asleep in Christ and others have moved to different parts of the US or returned to Latin America.

We were sorry to lose Bro. José Carlos Leiva in December 2012 when he moved back to El Salvador to be with his family. We recommend him with love to the Sonsonate Ecclesia, and pray that God will bless him there.

With sadness we report that Sis. Emilia Sánchez fell asleep in Christ last April at the age of 92. Sis. Emilia had recently returned from a trip to visit her family in El Salvador. Our sympathy is with all her family, but especially with those in our ecclesia — her son, Bro. Danilo Sanchez, her daughter, Sis. Delmy Castro, and two granddaughters, our sisters Jessica Sanclemente and Paola Martínez. Sis. Emilia was “grandmother” to us all and now sleeps in the hope of the resurrection.

On Saturday, July 20 we witnessed with great joy the baptisms of three of our interested friends at the home of Bro. Manuel and Sis. Celina Cervantes. Our new brethren are ERNESTO MARTINEZ (65), who began attending meeting in 2007 after walking in off the street; CELSO ARELLANO (48), who requested the postal course in 2005 and began coming out in 2008; and JESUS RODRIGUEZ JR. (17), oldest son of our Bro. Jesús and Sis. Carmen Rodríguez and a member of our Sunday school and CYC since he was 7. The baptisms were witnessed by a large group of brethren and sisters and young people from most of ecclesias in Southern California, plus a number of our interested friends. It is our prayer that God will bless and protect our new brethren, keeping them in his ways until the return of Jesus.

We recently held a series of special lectures on the trial, crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus and what it all means to us, and were encouraged by the attendance of six or seven interested friends each week. At the moment there are three new young couples coming regularly with their families.

After having attended our ecclesia for nearly three years, Bro. David Lloyd has moved to San Diego to be near family. We thank him for his support and his example of perseverance (in learning Spanish!). He will be missed, but we know that the San Diego County meeting will benefit from having him there.

Jim and Jean Hunter

PRINCE GEORGE, BC

We rejoice with our heavenly father at the baptism of ALLAN NORDAL on Sept 14, 2013. Bro. Al has been attending our seminars for the past 3 years and our regular meetings more recently.

We thank our Bro. Simon Snobelen for doing our fall study day on Sept 28-29, 2013. It was a wonderful weekend of fellowship and spiritual encouragement. We also thank the other brethren who have traveled to our small northern ecclesia to support and strengthen us. Our ecclesia is always in need of help as our membership is shrinking as well as aging. Any support is very welcome.

Jonathan Lawrence

THOUSAND OAKS, CA

During the past few months we have been pleased to welcome many brethren and sisters from our neighboring California Ecclesias around the table of our Lord. In addition, we welcomed from afar: Henry and Sharon Wisniewski, and Jessica Yoshida (Rogue Valley, OR); Paul and Belinda Styles (Detroit Livonia, MI); Mike, Anna and Jamin Moore (Brant County, ON); Michelle Fletcher (Heathmont, Aust.); Sarah Abel (Okanagan, BC); Rosey Knowles (South Vales, Aust.); Bethany Bleichner (Seattle, WA); Meagan McStravick (Victoria, BC); Maggi Hoult (Comox Valley, BC); Martha Levin (Denver, CO); and Jason Henderson and Rebekah deCaussin (Norfolk, VA).

Our thanks go out to Bro. Tony Fratello and Bro. Carl Newth (Reseda, CA) for their exhortations and afternoon classes.

Again, we were blessed to be able to hold our annual Kids Camp this year. Our subject was “Moses” and we thank Bro. Mike Moore (Brant County, ON) and Bro. Jim Styles (Simi Hills, CA) for their classes at the school and for the exhortations they shared with us during their visit. We really appreciate our brethren speaking for us on these occasions as we endeavor to be ready for our Master when he returns.

Tom Graham

WORCESTER, MA

We are pleased to announce the marriage of our Sis. Naomi Therien to Bro. Michael Tretola from the Brighton, Aust. Ecclesia. Sis. Naomi is the daughter of Bro. Denis and Sis. Cindy Therien and Bro. Michael is the son of Bro. Peter and Sis. Grace Tretola. We were pleased to have Bro. Michael’s family visiting us and thank Bro. Sam Tretola, Michael’s brother, for exhorting at our Memorial Service. We wish them all God’s blessings and pray to meet them again in our Lord’s kingdom.

Mark Fulmer

Minute Meditation

Are we serving God each day?

The apostle Peter believed in Jesus and followed him faithfully for three years, and yet at the last supper, Jesus tells him, “When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.” Are we converted? We certainly hope so. Peter might have thought he was converted, but clearly Jesus did not. Peter’s actions later that evening confirmed that Peter’s faith was unsteady. Conversion requires a change in thinking and actions, and Peter’s thinking had not altered to the point that he was converted.

We want to be converted to become disciples of Christ, which means the way we think and live our lives must change. John Maxwell tells us, “You will never change your life until you change something you do daily. The secret of your success is found in your daily routine.” The philosopher Ralph Waldo Emerson reveals the key to how to make it happen: “We become what we think about all day long.”

What kind of habits do we have? What do we think about all the time? If we don’t make an effort to build godly habits into our daily life and fill our minds with the word of God, we are not changing our characters to what would please our God. If we want to be converted and change to become children of God, we need to start channeling our thinking to the kind of thoughts that lead us towards the kingdom, and then behave accordingly.

The world is constantly trying to affect our thinking. We must fight back by planning spiritual thoughts, otherwise we will not become spiritually minded. We know the importance of spiritual mindedness because the apostle Paul tells us: “Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.” If we want our Lord to accept us into his Kingdom, we need to be renewing our minds towards that goal. The Phillips translation of this passage is helpful: “Don’t let the world around you squeeze you into its mold but let God remold your mind from within.” We must resist the squeezing influences of the world around us, a world that is intent on shaping our thinking to the popular mold, by allowing God to remold us from within by filling our mind with His word.

If we wake up in the morning to a clock radio, even before we are fully awake we are bombarded with advice about what to think, what to buy and where to go. Throughout the day, television, newspapers, the Internet and billboards all are trying to grab our attention. None of these influences builds us up spiritually. We need to change our routine right from the start, to begin our day with God, so we are more conscious of God’s ways all day. We are more likely to find opportunities to think godly thoughts and to behave in a godly manner during the day if we put God’s thinking at the forefront of our mind.

If we do not have a plan towards godly thinking, we will naturally drift into the world’s way of thinking because it is right there, pushing its way into our thoughts.

There are important consequences, as Paul explains, “For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.” Paul is very blunt – the alternative to godly thinking is death. We need to pay serious attention. Paul goes on to elaborate, “Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.”

Paul makes it plain — if we think only fleshly thoughts we cannot please God. However, Paul does not stop there, because if we are believers, we should be thinking and acting differently: for God’s hand is in our lives. Paul reassures us, “But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you.” What Paul is not saying is that we have the Holy Spirit gifts and do miracles or speak in tongues, for none of us do, and neither did those in the Roman ecclesia to which he was writing. What he means is that we believers need to get the Spirit of God inside of us which will help us to think spiritually in godly ways. We can all be in the Spirit every day if we keep our minds centered on God’s word.

To be truly converted, we need to change, and it is not easy. As John Maxwell advises, to change we must develop habits that become part of the routine that we practice every day. We need to develop habits of godly thinking. There are so many ways that the world intrudes into our private lives trying to squeeze us into its mold, that it is imperative that we fight back by consciously bringing God into our thinking. Rather than allowing the radio or television or the Internet or even the printed word and pictures consume our time and attention, let us devote our attention every single day to reading God’s book, our Bibles, to fervent prayer to our Heavenly Father, and to thinking about and doing good for some of His other children. Let us each fill every day doing those things that please the Lord so that he will be pleased to say to us when he comes, “Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.”

Robert J. Lloyd

Coming Events (Lord Willing)

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

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, TX), Theme: “Signs of John (Law and Grace in Miracles)”. Please contact Bro. Joe Bennett at (219) 762-2704 or jkb8275@comcast.net.

8-10 Brothers’ Weekend at New Hamburg, ON. Theme: Training to Join God’s Family Forever. Speaker: Bro. Jim Styles (Simi Hills, CA). Please contact Bro. Nathan Badger at natejbadger@gmail.com or see our new website: www.christadelphianbroswknd.org.

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.

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15-17 Austin Leander, TX Fall Gathering at the HEB Camp near Leakey, TX. Our speaker will be Bro. Allen Laben (Baltimore, MD). His topic is "The Testing of Your Faith and the Challenge of James". For registration contact Bro. Cliff and Sis. Maritta Terrell at mt-ct@swbell.net.

16 Mississauga West, ON. Prophecy Day at Port Credit Secondary School, 70 Mineola Rd. E. Further details to follow. Contact Bro. Doug Jackson at dcjackson@bell.net.

29-Dec 1 Washington, DC Family Bible study weekend at Camp Hashawha, 300 John Owings Rd, Westminster, MD 21158. Bro. Jason Hensley (Simi Hills, CA) will lead us in classes entitled "The Second Exodus and the Work of Elijah". Classes begin at 8:45am. Fee is \$60. A deposit of \$30 is required with registration. Mail registrations only, deadline is Nov. 12th. Day attendees must pre-register and their fee is \$30. Mail registrations to: Bro. Ken Green, 14006 Barkham Court, Laurel, MD 20707. For forms or information, phone: 443-497-3497 or e-mail Bro. Ken at Hashawha@gmail.com, or see our website site www.christadelphians.net/adelphi/.

30 Run for the Everlasting Cure. Annual 5K run or walk and special prayer for family, friends and ecclesial members who are struggling with cancer and other serious illnesses. Please visit: www.runfortheeverlastingcure.org, join the Facebook group, or email Sis. Rebekah Hunter at: bible@christadelphia.org for information.

DECEMBER 2013

21-27 Ontario Winter Bible School at The Best Western Highland Inn & Conference Center, Midland (ON). Speakers and subjects: Bro. Neville Clark (Tea Tree Gully, S. Australia): "Abraham & His Times"; Bro. David Nicholls (Gorseinon, South Wales, UK): "Under whose wings thou art come to Trust", young people "Redemption in Christ"; and Bro. Tim Osborne (Okanagan, BC): "The Epistle of James, Reflections on the Lord's Ministry". Registration information and other details are available from our website www.ontariowinterbibleschool.com.

FEBRUARY 2014

23-28 Palm Springs Bible School. The speakers this year will be Bro. Wilfred Alleyne (Birmingham, UK), and Bro. David Jennings (Pomona, CA). The school offers a wonderful environment for the mature adult to study God's word and enjoy fellowship. To register, contact Jeff Gelineau at register@christadelphianbibleschool.org, or visit our website www.californiabibleschool.org.

JULY 2014

6-12 Southwest Christadelphian Bible School at Schreiner University in Kerrville, TX. The teachers will be Bro. Jim Cowie (Wilston, Brisbane, AUS), Bro. Stephen Palmer (Mumbles, South Wales, UK), and Bro. Leen Ritmeyer (Cardiff, Museum Place, Wales, UK). Please mark your calendars now! More information will be posted on the website as it becomes available: www.swcbs.com.