

THE CHRISTADELPHIAN  
**TIDINGS**  
of the Kingdom of God

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# The CHRISTADELPHIAN TIDINGS of the Kingdom of God

Peter Hemingray, Editor

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## Editorial

### Where is the Wise Man?

*“Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints?... If then ye have judgments of things pertaining to this life, set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church. I speak to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you? no, not one that shall be able to judge between his brethren?” (1Cor 6:1, 4-5)*

#### Introduction<sup>1</sup>

This section in Paul’s first (recorded) letter to the Corinthian ecclesia is often used to discourage (and in some circles, prohibit) going to law in any circumstances. It also appears to have given rise to one of the later additions to our statement of faith, added right at the end of the doctrines to be rejected, which says: [It is a doctrine to be rejected] “that we are at liberty to recover debts by legal coercion.” It is clear, from the whole context of the discussions in the pages of *The Christadelphian*, that the prohibition of Paul against suing your brethren was extended to become a prohibition against suing anyone for debts: the phrase was added to the BASF around 1900 only because many brethren were suing at law in their business affairs. But the interesting point is that there was no mention, as far as I can see, of the recommendation of Paul: that regarding disputes between brethren, we ought to follow the advice of our “wise men”.

So it is not directly the topic of “going to law” I want to address: indeed, I covered the limits of such ideas in a previous editorial<sup>2</sup>. However, the advice of Paul as to what to do when faced with disputes between brethren has been turned into a simple prohibition against using the resources of our legal system, without considering the alternative Paul recommended.

#### The problem

So what is the solution to the problem of disputes within the brotherhood? There are of course many types, from disputes about details of Biblical interpretation, to ways of conducting our services and operations, to inter-personal disputes, and, sadly, problems of morality. Our methods of handling interpersonal disputes, or accusations of wrong-doing, are often based upon the advice of Jesus:

*“Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican” (Matt 18:15-17).*

I believe in his letter to the Corinthians Paul is recognizing that there are limits in bringing a problem or dispute before a whole ecclesia.

If this was true in Paul's day, it is true in our times. Our nominally democratic society and education emphasizes independent thought, distrust and questioning of authority, and lack of respect of our elders. Anyone who has brought up teenagers can attest to the fact that in the eye of the teenager, from the ages of 15 or so on, their parents are woefully ignorant of anything of value or interest: it is only when true adulthood arrives at 25 or so do parents suddenly become quite knowledgeable. (And I can attest to this, not only from the view of a parent, but from that of a son.)

Long gone are the days when age commanded any sort of respect, as age is now merely assumed to prove the person is totally out of date. Any accumulation of knowledge is distrusted: after all, "all human knowledge is to be found on the Internet, that reliable arbiter of truth." (Anyone who has had to study almost any topic in some depth will soon come to realize how little of human knowledge is actually found on-line!)

*"Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man, and fear thy God: I am the LORD" (Lev 19:32).*

### **Wisdom down through the ages**

*"Now therefore let Pharaoh look out a man discreet and wise, and set him over the land of Egypt" (Gen 41:33).*

*"Now there was found in it a poor wise man, and he by his wisdom delivered the city; yet no man remembered that same poor man" (Ecc 9:15).*

*"Who is the wise man, that may understand this? and who is he to whom the mouth of the LORD hath spoken, that he may declare it, for what the land perisheth and is burned up like a wilderness, that none passeth through? (Jer 9:12 ).*

*"Then the king made Daniel a great man, and gave him many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief of the governors over all the wise men of Babylon" (Dan 2:48 ).*

*"And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me" (Acts 15:13).*

*"Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom" (James 3:13).*

Not only were the wise respected by all, but clearly

- Timothy was clearly respected as the leader in Ephesus: he was the "wise man" despite his relative youth
- Titus was the leader in Crete
- And of cause Paul was the true apostle and wise man to the gentiles

It is also true that in past generations among our community, there were several who were respected, both for their Biblical knowledge, and also their wisdom. We think of Bro. John Carter, and more recently Bro. Harry Tennant, who both did

a great deal of good with their widely respected advice. I have seen such respect accorded few, if any. More often, advice is rejected out of hand if it does not line up with pre-conceived notions. (Sometimes, it must be admitted, advice is offered without wisdom!)

### **The situations**

It is difficult to know how the problem of lack of acknowledged wisdom can be addressed. But the following situations call out for solutions

- Divorce is unfortunately becoming somewhat prevalent among our community. A buffer is often needed between the parties: who better to act than a “wise man”.
- Perhaps an ecclesial “wise man” can act whenever two members come together in any contractual relationship, to help forestall or solve any disputes before (or after) they arise.
- I have become aware, unfortunately, of situations when our members have acted in a morally inappropriate way — and essentially gotten away with it, because of our communities’ reluctance to bring it to the attention of the legal authorities. Perhaps a “wise man” can avoid this, by eliminating the occurrence of false accusations, but ensuring the correct actions are taken.
- Disputes between and within ecclesias are also more common than many realize. A “wise man” could bring perspective and stop such disputes from causing the sort of harm that we see all too often.

### **The way forward**

So how do we identify a “wise man”? I am not sure we have any such individual: in some situations in which I have been involved, we have had many discussions about appealing to individual brethren, but none came to mind, or at least none that commanded respect from all involved. In a situation where distrust and suspicion is prevalent, almost any brother with widespread experience has probably offending many by coming to any sort of conclusion. Wisdom does not mean infallibility in this day and age, where we lack the direct guidance of the Holy Spirit.

So perhaps we need a sort of “court”, to use the term most are used to. A group of several brethren, selected to represent all the diverse views within our community – but who can be relied upon to be balanced, compassionate, and spiritual in all their doings, guided by the principles in the Bible and long experience and Bible study. Perhaps such a group could be neutral, fair, and truly wise. And perhaps such a group could lead to a more harmonious and spiritually active community.

Is there not a wise man?

*Peter Hemingray*

#### **Notes:**

1. Some of this editorial is based upon a Reflection by Sis. Eileen Henthorne, *The Tidings*, Oct 211 p 254.
2. *The Tidings*, June 2011, p 209

## Exhortation

### When I was Much Younger

When I was much younger, on a trip back from Bible school, my best friend and I were still basking in the glow of what had been, I must assume, a great series of classes and activities that sparked our interest in the truth. I assume as such, because I really don't remember.

What I do remember is a question my friend asked. Or rather a question we asked each other:

#### **Who is the FIRST person you want to meet in the kingdom, and why.**

And we couldn't say Jesus, that was our rule, he couldn't be the first person we wanted meet with, because we figured everyone should say Jesus and as we were youths we wanted to have different answers.

So we set about choosing our favorite characters from our favorite stories. I believe my first choice was Joseph, mainly because his story is one of my favorites. I have always wanted to interview him about how he felt when he recognized his brothers after so many years: how he handled the disappointment when the butler forgot to remind Pharaoh of how he, the butler, had been saved in the prison. My friend chose Jonathon. He wanted to see how he felt when he was heading off to his final battle with his brothers and father, if he knew this was the end.

The cool thing was, those weren't the only people we wanted to meet. We quickly decided we would also like to meet folks like David, Noah, Esther, and Daniel. The list went on for a few hours, as we added more and more names, together with the questions we wanted to ask those names. And, of course, before we finished, we assured each other that we did want to meet Christ.

It was perhaps silly, but constructive fun, and we, or at least I, never thought of it too much beyond a really cool conversation.

As time has passed, my thoughts about the Kingdom have changed. Where once I dreamed of being able to fly, or hang out with animals, now I look forward to serving in the kingdom. I think of being able to teach those who haven't yet been granted eternal life. So I guess, my priorities have changed a bit.

And sometimes, when looking back at the desires I had for the kingdom as a child, I feel they were a bit selfish. I wanted them for me. For my benefit. I remind myself that my desire should be to serve God.

In recent exhortations, I have focused a lot on a particular set of verses:

*“And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me” (Matt 18 3-5).*

And I constantly wonder how can I, how can we retain such a mentality? What aspects of children should we try to exhibit? The last time we looked at this set of verses, the focus was on the curiosity of a child, the constant quest for understanding and the innocence displayed. But today, I want to focus on the desire, that same desire that many of us showed as children, and that is a desire to speak with Biblical heroes. If we think about it, the mere statement: “I can’t wait to meet” insert your choice here “in the kingdom.” This brings to light a couple important facts about our faith as children:

**We know, in our hearts, that this individual WILL be in the kingdom.**

As children, we never had any doubt in our mind who we would see in the kingdom. We KNEW David would be present, as would Daniel, and Jonah, and all our favorite heroes. They would all be there and it would be glorious.

Which, we could certainly ask as adult, are you sure? Are you sure Jonah will be present in the kingdom? What about Solomon? As we grow older, and gather knowledge and understanding, we question things we once KNEW as children. After all, Jonah’s story ends with a swift word of reprove for his selfish nature towards Nineveh. We do not hear whether or not he turned his heart and followed God. The same could be said of Solomon, whose final years are a subject of study and debate for another time (although we must admit the verdict of the Old Testament is quite favorable!)

And indeed, it can be considered presumptuous to assume anyone, in Scripture or not, has already had their name written in the book of life unless we are so informed.

But there are certain brothers and sisters of old of whom Scripture seems to indicate that they WILL make it, that they already have found favor in God’s sight.

Daniel, for example in the final moments of his vision:

*“But go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days” (Dan 12:13).*

Or perhaps the thief on the cross:

*“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, you shalt thou be with me in paradise” (Luke 23:39-43).*

Which is clearly an indication that he will stand and be found worthy.

The same could be said of many individuals

*“And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gideon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephathae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets: Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness,*

*obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect” (Heb 11:32-40).*

So even now, we can be assured that many of our childhood/Sunday school heroes will indeed be found waiting in the kingdom. No, not all that we were sure we would see will be there. As we have previously stated, many of the individuals’ fates are left ambiguous. But some, if not most, of them will be.

### **We must be in the Kingdom to meet!**

Which leads to consider the second part of the statement:

- 1) **“I can’t wait to meet” insert your choice here “in the kingdom.”**
- 2) **If we are to meet them in the kingdom, not only must they be there, but so must we.**

It seems obvious: we can’t meet someone if we aren’t there, but think on that. WE haven’t yet been judged. We haven’t had books informing the world that we have made it, or Christ tell us that we WILL be there. WE still have to work towards it.

We want to meet with these individuals, but sometimes, we must ask the question: would they want to meet with us? Would David, Joseph or Paul WANT to sit down for a metaphorical cup of coffee.

There is a reason that these individuals are confirmed to be allowed entry. They found grace with God, walked in his ways, and obtained a good report. They did something right. So it makes total sense for us to wish to see them, to want to spend time getting to know them in person:

*“Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he” (Prov 29:18)*

If we want to meet with those we called heroes as children, we should absolutely follow in their footsteps.

I think one of the aspects of children we should never lose as we grow older is that excitement. True, as we grow and develop we see the world and the word in different lights. We begin to understand that our heroes had flaws and failures, that though we may have idolized them as children, we now see them for what they really are. Human.

But that is the point of growing up. We Develop. This does not mean all we thought as children was wrong and should be thrown out, but it should be built upon. And the fact that such brothers and sisters of old WERE human, and WERE flawed, and DID fail makes the fact that they are confirmed even more hopeful for us. And if we are to ever meet our brothers and sisters of old in the kingdom, we would do well to learn from them.

That is the beauty of these men and women's stories. We are blessed because we can see what they did right. We see that Daniel, despite the law placed down on him, continued to pray to the only God that mattered. So should we, when persecuted or mocked, fully rely on our God to deliver us from the den of lions (or whatever we are facing). When we read of David vs. Goliath or Gideon vs. the Mideonites, we know that the armies of man are nothing to the strength of God.

But the flaws of our heroes are written and recorded for a reason. We have the blessing to learn from their mistakes, to see what worked and why when they went astray it was a poor decision. We know that David's infidelity would haunt him for much of the rest of his life. Peter's denial of his lord makes us question how we would handle questions regarding our loyalty. These mistakes in the lives of the faithful can help us see what mistakes we are to avoid. They should not lessen our desire to be like them.

Because one, if not the one most important reason they were found of good report, is because of what they strove to do: emulate God. To be one with him in purpose and doctrine, to represent his will upon the earth.

### **To be Christ-like.**

Because, if we are honest, none of our heroes comes close to the level that Christ achieved in being one with our God. Christ's entire existence was devoted to God, and never once did he waiver. He achieved what no other brother or sister had before or has since.

If we are to be honest, we should want to meet Christ more than anyone else, because no one else can compare.

Which is why we are gathered here today. This is not just a gathering to remember Christ's sacrifice, though that is a huge aspect to our memorial. It is a promise:

*"But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom" (Matt 26:29).*

Christ knew he would be in his father's kingdom. And his message of assurance didn't stop with his disciples. We too can find ourselves in that day alongside all our brothers and sisters of old. WE have to want it, and we have to strive for it. To be like Christ. Christ like.

It wasn't that when my friend and I said we couldn't pick Christ first because we didn't want to meet him or that choosing him was cheating in some way. It was because of all the people in Scripture, of all the people we SHOULD want to meet, it should be Christ.

This, this moment of breaking bread, and drinking of wine is more than just a reminder of things that once were: they are the closest we can truly get to the coming kingdom. The closest we can get to breaking bread and drinking wine with David, and Moses, and Daniel.

We should, today, and every day after, pray for that day to come soon. That day when all those found of good report are gathered together. Let us pray that the next time we gather together it will be in the Kingdom of God, and that

*Ethan Bearden (Austin Leander, TX)*

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### **Sorrow turned into Joy**

*As his own trial drew near, Jesus felt very keenly the trial which his disciples would also undergo. He knew that their faith would be sorely tested, and that they would need comfort and strength:*

*“Verily, verily, I say unto you, that ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy . . . Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full” (John 16:20–24).*

*This is one of the profound truths about true joy. Sorrow can be turned into joy, but joy is not turned into sorrow. In this it differs again from enjoyment: “Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful; and the end of mirth is heaviness” (Prov 14:13).*

### **The Joy to Come**

*Joy is not confined to our present experience; there is a joy to come. “Rejoicing in hope” is the expression used by Paul. What is true of us was also true of our Lord, “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” (Heb 12:2). What was that joy? Was it only that he would be free from the shackles of mortality, raised to the divine nature to die no more, seated at the right hand of his Father? It was all this and more. The supreme joy was in the fact that he had accomplished our redemption. He saw “of the travail of his soul” and was satisfied. And what was true of him was equally true of his chosen apostles. Paul asks the question, “What is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing?” and he answers it, “Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?” This is a joy yet to come. It may be the privilege of some of us to meet in the Kingdom those who, unknown to us, have been brought to a knowledge of the way of salvation by some word or act of ours.*

### **Everlasting Joy**

*The joy we experience now is real enough, but is transient and passing. We have our moments of sorrow and depression as well as joy, but the joy to come is different. “Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.” And when that day comes there will be an end of sorrow and trial. Weeping will give place to joy, a joy which will know no end:*

*“And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away” (Isa 35:10).*

*Philip Hinde: The Christadelphian, 1977, p. 209.*

# Bible Study

## The Way of Cain

### (5) Garden of Eden, Eden, and the land of Nod

#### The big freeze

In *Noah's Flood: New Scientific Discoveries about the Events that Changed History* (1998), distinguished American geophysicists,<sup>1</sup> William Ryan and Walter Pitman, suggest that during the period before the Flood, which they believe was limited to the Mediterranean and the Black Sea regions, the earth was recovering from a climatic period referred to as the Younger Dryas, also known as The Big Freeze. This period, which took place perhaps between 12,000 and 9,000 BC, has been defined as one in which the earth saw a rapid return to conditions similar to previous ice ages: a severe drop in temperature, lack of moisture, an increased accumulation of dust in the atmosphere, and snow and glaciations in the mountains.

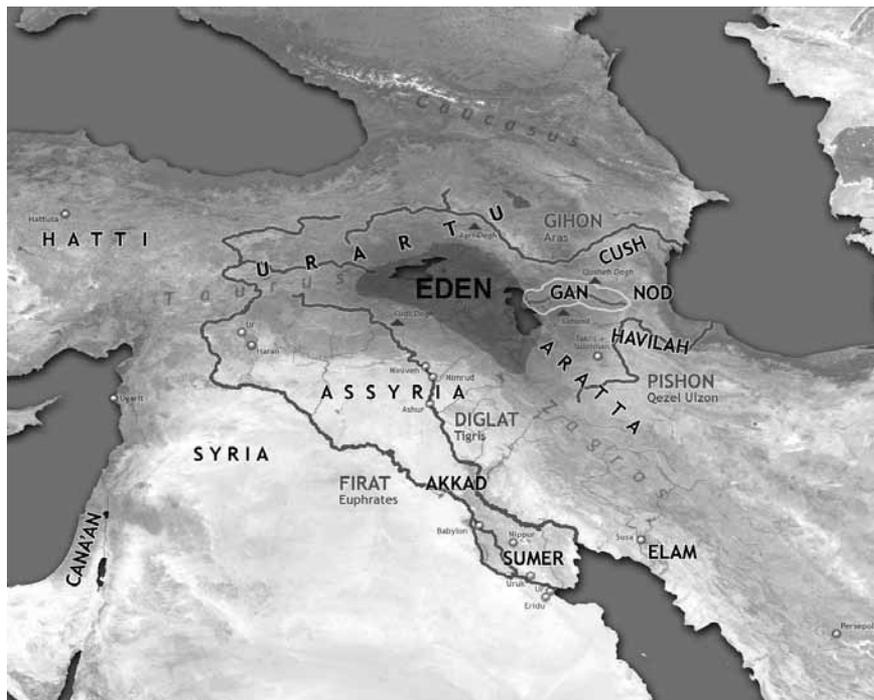
While it is thought that The Big Freeze affected vast portions of the earth, including the Middle East, “warm pockets” continued to exist during this period. First proposed by American geologist, Raphael Pumpelly, in the early 1900s, this theory came to be known as the Oasis Theory of Agricultural Origins:

Throughout his extensive travel, he [Pumpelly] noted that the climate in central Asia had become significantly drier in the wake of the last ice age [Younger Dryas]. He wondered whether, during this desiccation, “stone age hunters and gatherers” had found themselves clustered together around the edges of the remaining water holes, along with wild animals and plants.<sup>2</sup>

In their book, Ryan and Pitman present evidence that one of these oases may have existed in the Black Sea region:

The Black Sea offered warmer temperatures and perennially flooded river valleys to cereals and grasses no longer able to survive the cooler temperatures in their previous habitat... The Black Sea had all the prerequisites of an ideal refuge. Due to its setting below the level of the external ocean, it remained warm when the mountain flanks of the Fertile Crescent, the Negev highlands, and the Anatolian plateau chilled. It held vast volumes of fresh water when the lakes elsewhere shriveled to undrinkable salt ponds and marshes, and the Jericho spring dried up. Streams from the Balkans, the Alps, and Caucasus mountains kept the Black Sea's rivers in flow year-round when the Euphrates water no longer arrived at Abu Hureyra.<sup>3</sup>

Based on their research, conditions for an oasis, such as the Garden of Eden, within the perimeter of the Black Sea region, existed between 12,000 and 7,000 BCE. In the minds of most Bible students, this time frame may appear too early for the appearance of Adam and Eve, but these dates are only an *estimate* — perhaps the effects caused by the Younger Dryas may well have extended upwards of 4,000 BC, the era in which Christians have typically situated Adam. Moreover, The Big



Freeze did not simply end one day with the world transformed overnight into warmer climes. The period in the wake of the Younger Dryas was most likely still cool and dry, as glaciers slowly receded. Given then, the possible harsh climatic conditions that existed on the earth at the time of Adam, it may explain why God “placed” Adam in a garden. There, in that oasis-like microclimate, where “*all kinds of trees grow out of the ground — trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food*” (Gen 2:9), Adam and Eve were sheltered from either the direct or residual effects of the Younger Dryas.<sup>4</sup>

### **Beyond the oasis**

Either during or in the wake of the Younger Dryas, as one moved beyond the Garden of Eden climatic conditions would have worsened. For example, the Garden would have been, as noted, an oasis (Gen 2:8-10). By comparison, the land of Eden, in which the oasis was situated, would have been, by degrees, drier and cooler; vegetation would not have been as abundant, or as easily obtainable. And, in comparison to Eden, the land of Nod, which was everything outside of Eden, would have been even more dry and cool. Thus life in Nod would have been very difficult, which may explain – in part – why, when contemplating the prospect of having to “wander” in that land, Cain exclaimed to God, “*My punishment is more than I can bear!*” (Gen 4:13).

It may also help explain the specific nature of the “curse” that God pronounced upon Cain in the wake of Abel’s murder:

*Now you are under a curse and driven from the ground, which opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. When you work the ground, it will no longer yield its crops for you. You will be a restless wanderer on the earth" (Gen 4:11-12).*

The land was considered “cursed,” because Nod was still suffering the effects of the Younger Dryas period, and was simply too dry and cool to produce the kind of harvest Cain had formerly enjoyed in the more lush environs of Eden. Cain’s curse was specific to him because he, alone (not including his wife), was exiled to a land that was cooler and drier, and where farming would be near-impossible — for a time. As the direct or residual effects of the Younger Dryas period lessened, and the land became warmer and wetter, agriculture would have become possible. Whenever this occurred, however, Cain may no longer have been alive, and thus this particular curse would have appeared (and was) relegated to him (and may have included his immediate kin) — in accordance with God’s pronouncement (Gen 4:11).

At the same time, as the effects of the Younger Dryas disappeared, Adam’s curse — *“Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat food from it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you” (Gen 3:17)* — would have gradually appeared, growing in intensity, until it reached its zenith at the time of Noah’s birth in the 10th generation. On that occasion, his father, Lamech, remarked: *“He will comfort us in the labor and painful toil of our hands caused by the ground the LORD has cursed” (Gen 5:29)*. Thus the nature of Adam’s curse must have been gradual, since there is no mention of the effects of the curse from the time of Adam until the time of Noah’s birth — about 2,000 years.

Therefore, in Cain and Adam, we see the interaction of both curses at play: the Younger Dryas created in this part of the world, a cool, dry climate. And, as one moved away from the various oases that existed in such places as the Black Sea region, farming would have been near-impossible. This resulted in Cain’s inability to grow crops as he once had when he lived in Eden, which was closer in proximity to the warmer, wetter oasis of Eden: hence, exile to Nod resulted in his “curse.” However, the Younger Dryas also prevented the effects of Adam’s curse from appearing suddenly. As the Younger Dryas receded, the land would have become generally warmer and wetter, which made farming possible. At the same time, however, it also brought on the effects of Adam’s curse: the thorns and thistles, as well as insects, animals, weeds, and other nuisances farmers are typically plagued by, and which exist in great abundance in warmer climes. These nuisances or “curse” would have come on gradually, until the Younger Dryas had completely disappeared, and the world was a warmer, wetter place — the time of the birth of Noah.

### **The search for Eden**

In tandem with Ryan and Pitman’s research, are the findings of David Rohl, a British Egyptologist, former director of the Institute of the Study of Interdisciplinary Studies (ISIS), and author of several books on archaeology and ancient history. In his book, *Legend: The Genesis for Civilization* (1998), he provides linguistic and

archeological evidence showing that the Garden of Eden was located to the east of the Black Sea — the same region Ryan and Pitman's research locates an "oasis" during the Younger Dryas period. Rohl narrows the location of the Garden of Eden to the Adji Chay Valley (formerly known as the Median Valley), which is located in the Ararat Mountains in Turkey, Armenia, and North-Western Iran. Rohl cites a little known article entitled, *The Land of Eden*, published in an archaeological paper in the U.K. in 1986 by British scholar Reginald Arthur Walker. In his paper, Walker argued:

It is possible to trace the origins of Greek mythology and religion back to the area which scholars have long believed to be the original homeland of the Indo-European culture — the Caucasus.<sup>5</sup> (Rohl 1998:53)

The Caucasus is an area *east of the Black Sea*, which is the same area where Ryan and Pitman found evidence for the existence of an oasis, and where, as we shall see, Rohl places the Garden of Eden and Eden — places where the first seeds of civilization took root, and where "religion" — as Walker asserts — or "faith" — as the Bible indicates — originated. Following Walker's lead, Rohl concludes in *Legend* that the Garden of Eden was located in the Adji Chay Valley, which is situated in present day Armenia. We shall see how Ryan and Pitman's research, along with Walker and Rohl's arguments are in exact agreement with the details (clues really) in Genesis concerning the location of the Garden. The following is a brief summary of Rohl's evidence based on Walker's research.<sup>6</sup>

### **The Tigris and the Euphrates**

A river flowed from Eden to water the garden, and from there it divided into four head-waters: Pishon, Gihon, Hiddekel, and Perath (Gen 2:10-14). Hiddekel was known among the Jews as the Tigris river (present day Iraq), while the Perath was known to the Greeks as the Euphrates.<sup>7</sup> The source of both rivers is located near Lake Van and Lake Urmia, both of which lie in the mountains of Armenia. The identities of the two other rivers — the Pishon and the Gihon — have long remained a mystery.

### **The Gihon**

In the past, the Gihon has been associated mostly with the Nile. Gen 2:13 says that the river passes through the land of Cush, which is commonly associated with modern day Ethiopia. Furthermore, by placing the Gihon in Egypt, Eden's geographical center becomes (more or less) Israel. This seems to fit with pre-conceptions about Israel's past<sup>8</sup> and future<sup>9</sup> — that of being a lush and beautiful garden-like place, i.e. the Garden of Eden. However, there is no known association of the Nile River with the name Gihon, making the link between Israel and the Garden of Eden tenuous — the result of a preconceived bias towards Israel being the center of the universe. This type of thinking was popular in the medieval age, where ignorance of geography and a Christian-centric mindset caused maps to be drawn with Israel/Jerusalem as the geographical center of the world. According to Walker, Gihon was the ancient name of the river Araxes, whose source is north of Lake Van. During the period of the Islamic revolution in the 8th century,

stretches of the river Araxes were still known as Gaihun. In the 19th century, the Persians continued to refer to the river as the Jichon-Aras, a name that represents the intermediate stage in its name change: Gihon=Gaihun=Jichon-Aras=Araxes. As noted, Genesis says that the Gihon travelled through the land of Cush. While Ethiopia has been known in the past as Cush, so have the mountains east of Lake Van in Armenia. This range is called the Kusheh Dagh, or the Mountains of Kush.

Therefore, the Gihon is to be identified as the present day river Araxes, located in the mountains of Kush, a place the ancients once considered to be rich in gold.

### **The Pishon**

Walker believed the Pishon is presently known as the Uizhun, which flows out of Kurdistan, the same geographical area as the three other head-waters. The Uizhun is also known as the Kezel Uzon or “long gold,” a reference to Gen 2:11-12, which says the land the Pishon meandered in was filled with gold. Ancient gold mines have been found in this area, and a river called the Zarrineh Rud, which flows from a volcano in the same area as the Pishon, means “Golden River.”

Rohl explains how the word Pishon became Uizhun:

Let us drop the initial vowel in Uizhun. This leaves us with [...]izhun, which, allowing for the usual linguistic variations in vocalization (sh to s or z, and o to u) would be identical with the Biblical [...]ishon. It appears that, in the Hebrew text of Genesis, the vowel ‘u’ underwent a conversion to the labial consonant ‘p’. Uizhun is thus the original name of the river, stubbornly retained by local tradition into modern times, whilst the Pishon is a Biblical corruption of that original name. (Rohl 1998:57)

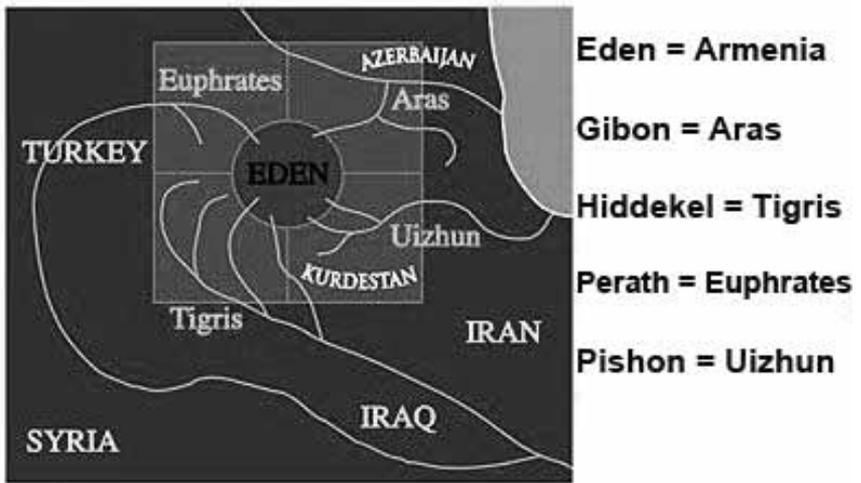
Thus the river Pishon is most likely the river Uizhun, located in present day Kurdistan, which is also in the same geographical region as the other three rivers.

### **The Adji Chay**

As has been shown, Eden’s four head-waters are situated within a geographical area occupied by Turkey, Armenia, Kurdistan, and Iran. As for the Garden of Eden itself, Rohl suggests that the river, which “watered the garden and flowed eastward from Eden” (Gen 2:10) was the Adji Chay. The river’s much older name is the Meidan, a Persian word meaning “walled garden” or “enclosed-court,” which has been used to describe enclosed parks or gardens of Persian kings (Rohl 1998:66).

Young’s Literal Translation translates Gen 2:8 as, “*God planted a Garden in Eden, at the east,*” or “*in the eastern part of Eden.*” The land where the Meidan or present-day Adji Chay flows through is a still beautiful, lush valley, enclosed on three sides by high-mountain walls. The Persian meaning for Eden — “enclosed garden” — would therefore be an appropriate description of this legendary place. And, because the garden-valley is hemmed in on three sides, the Adji Chay river is forced to flow eastward, making it the garden-valley’s only natural entrance and exit. This geographical detail concurs with Gen 2:10: [the Adji Chay] “*watered the garden and flowed eastward from Eden.*” Moreover, in order to restrict human access to the Garden of Eden after Adam and Eve’s transgression, the Lord had only to

place the cherubim on the eastern side of the Garden, since the northern, southern, and western routes into the Garden were not traversable, due to the valley's high-mountain walls. Once again, the geography of the Adji Chay concurs with Genesis: "God placed the cherubim on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life" (Gen 3:10). Note that He did not place cherubim on the north, south, or west sides. As noted, the Adji Chay represented not only the entrance into the Garden of Eden, but also its only natural exit. Therefore, when Adam and Eve left the Garden, this river would have been a natural road, which presumably they traversed, either on foot along its banks or floating down upon a raft, into the rest of Eden. The Adji Chay flows through Eden and into Nod. Therefore, when Cain was exiled from Eden, he probably followed the river *eastward* into Nod; that same river that his parents followed out of the Garden after their transgression. This eastward journey would have taken Cain to a region that is located near the modern city of Ardabil in Northern Iran. Perhaps testifying to Cain's ancient presence in these lands, there remains two regions north of the city that are known as the Upper and Lower Nodqi (or "of Nod"), as well as a village that is called Noadi.



### Setting the stage

Walker and Rohl's linguistic and archeological research locates the Garden of Eden, Eden, and Nod in an area that is presently made up of north-eastern Turkey, Armenia, Kurdistan, and northern Iran. Corroborating their findings is Ryan and Pitman's climate research, which shows that the Black Sea *area* was an oasis during the Younger Dryas period, a mini-ice age, which took place between 12,000 and 9,000 BC.<sup>10</sup> Importantly, their research is in agreement with geographical details in Genesis. Altogether, they provide evidence that the location of the Garden of Eden was to the east of the Black Sea region, specifically in a mountain-valley in the

Ararat Mountains, where the Adji Chay river flows out eastward, and where the four head-waters of the Tigris (Heddekel), Euphrates (Perath), Araxes (Gihon), and Uizhun (Pishon) are situated. In all probability, this is the stage upon which the first events of human-kind occurred, and where, in relation to Cain, the events of his tragic life unfolded.

Matthew Harrison (Ottawa, ON)

Notes:

1. At the time of writing, William B. F. Ryan and Walter C. Pitman are adjunct professors at the Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory of Columbia University and recipients of the Shepard Medal of Excellence in sedimentary geology.
2. Ryan & Pitman 1998:165.
3. Ryan and Pitman 1998:186-87.
4. Gen 2 describes the formation of man and includes details concerning his immediate surroundings in the Garden — it does not describe what conditions were like outside of the Garden. If the rest of the earth was such an hospitable place — ideal for the propagation of humankind — we might ask ourselves why God chose to “place” Adam in a garden. It stands to reason that the Garden was a kind of shelter, and in this function, it sheltered Adam from harsh conditions that may have existed in the rest of the earth, i.e. The Younger Dryas period.
5. The Caucasus is a geopolitical region situated between the Black and the Caspian Seas. It borders Turkey, Armenia, and Iran, among other nations.
6. *Legend: The Genesis of Civilization*, 1998:53-68
7. The Arabs have referred to the Euphrates river as the Firat. Notice the how similarly-sounding Perath and Firat are.
8. Israel was described to the Hebrews leaving Egypt for the Promised Land as a country “*flowing with milk and honey*” (*Exod 3:8*), which has the ring of being paradisiacal.
9. Future Israel is described by the prophet Amos: “*New wine will drip from the mountains and flow from all the hills. I will bring back my exiled people Israel; they will rebuild the ruined cities and live in them. They will plant vineyards and drink their wine; they will make gardens and eat their fruit*” (*Amos 9:13-14*).
- 10 As noted, this is only an estimate. The *effects* of his period may have lasted for thousands of years following the event, including the period in which Adam and Eve existed in the Garden.

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## Review of “Legend: The Genesis of Civilization”

*The Garden of Eden - an amazing place of myths and legends that forever will be part of human history. A place that has a different (and at the same time exactly the same) meaning for everybody and a place from where everything has started. And this book will help you to find it.*

*It is an excellent example of superbly researched material, put together in one book. It's simply an amazing piece of deductive/investigative work (at least for me), that at the end will give you the most probable location of the Garden of Eden (I'm truly impressed here by the amount of exceptional work that the author has put into this book).*

*If you are interested in ancient myths, the Bible, Sumer.. or even beginnings of our civilization, you simply have to read this book.*

*(Extracted from Amazon Web site)*

## Youth Speaks

### Jonathan the Faithful Prince: (9) Jonathan Saul's Son

As the curtains close on the story of Jonathan and his armor bearer, and as the spotlight moves to the next major battle - Saul against the Amalekites - Jonathan begins to play a much less prominent role in the Scriptural record. Truly, Jonathan's service to God didn't end or slow down, but much of his work was more behind the scenes. Every now and again, he appears in the narrative for a brief moment — when he first recognized David as the next king or when he found David in the wood and strengthened his hand in God, but for the most part, Scripture begins to focus on David, the coming king, and Jonathan, the faithful prince, simply plays a supportive role.

Thus, because of his fairly unique appearances, this series of articles is going to take a bit of a turn. Instead of looking at all of the details in Jonathan's story, it will try to piece together a consistent picture of what he may have been doing — based off of his already demonstrated character and based off of what is explicitly stated of him later in the record. Where was he when during the battle of David and Goliath? What was his involvement in David's life when David fled from Saul as a fugitive? In this particular article, we'll look specifically at Jonathan's role in Saul's war against Amalek and we will also take note of Saul's continual downfall. In all of this, the selfless character of Jonathan will truly shine forth — and may his example be one which stands to inspire all of us to the same type of mindset which he had.

#### **A father and a son**

For years, the relationship between Saul and Jonathan had been fairly good. Saul had made Jonathan one of the commanders of his army and had given him a large amount of authority amongst the people (1Sam 13:1-2). It would seem as though Saul truly trusted his son. On Jonathan's end, he loved his father and didn't seem to mind that Saul took credit for his destruction of the Philistine garrison (1Sam 13:3-4). But, on that fateful day of the battle against the Philistine garrison, everything changed. Saul became bitter towards the son who loved him.

Jonathan never would have expected that his father would try to kill him — but it would seem that Samuel's words didn't leave the mind of the troubled king. He wondered who it would be that would try to take the throne from him; and in his search, he found a perfect candidate in his eldest son. Jonathan had all of the qualifications — he was a man after God's own heart, he could do things through his faith that Saul simply couldn't do, and he had been a captain to the people. Over and over all of the pieces seemed to fit. In Saul's mind, Jonathan was the one who would try to usurp the throne. Thus, Saul watched him and eyed all of his actions — making sure that his son didn't try to do anything devious.

On the other hand, Jonathan's feelings towards Saul were quite different. All throughout his life, he did whatever he could to keep a positive and loyal relationship with His father — because it was commanded by God (Exod 20:12), because it set an example for the nation, and because it allowed him to try to influence his father for good. Thus, when David told Jonathan that Saul had broken his oath and that he sought David's life, Jonathan had a difficult time believing that his father had done such a thing (1Sam 20:2). Again, though Jonathan loved and cherished his friendship with David, he chose to stay at home with Saul rather than run in the wilderness with his friend (1Sam 20:42). Even in Saul's final battle upon the mountain of Gilboa — when he was told that he and his sons would die — Jonathan chose not to separate from his father but went with him into the doomed conflict, perhaps knowing that they would die together. When writing the song of the bow, David's lamentation for Saul and Jonathan, David noted this about the two of them:

*“Saul and Jonathan were lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in their death they were not divided: they were swifter than eagles, they were stronger than lions” (2Sam 1:23).*

David spoke of Saul and Jonathan together — because that's how they often operated. Even as Saul plunged into his darker and more haunting days, Jonathan stood by his side. This was the importance which Jonathan put upon his relationship with Saul. It — aside from his relationship with his God — was of paramount importance. Perhaps this is why the divine record refers to Jonathan as “Saul's son,” even when it is already clearly known by the reader who Jonathan was. All the way after David married Michal, five chapters after Jonathan was introduced, he is called “Saul's son” — and not only once, but repeatedly:

*“And Saul spake to Jonathan **his son**, and to all his servants, that they should kill David. But Jonathan **Saul's son** delighted much in David: and Jonathan told David, saying, Saul **my father** seeketh to kill thee: now therefore, I pray thee, take heed to thyself until the morning, and abide in a secret place, and hide thyself there” (1Sam 19:1).*

By this point in the record, Jonathan's identity and connection to Saul were already quite clear. We know that he is Saul's son and we know that Saul is his father. Nevertheless, the inspired Word mentions *three times* in the space of those two verses that Jonathan was Saul's son or that Saul was his father! Yet why does it make this emphasis? Perhaps because that is how Jonathan saw himself. He was Jonathan *Saul's son*. This was a relationship which was extremely important to Jonathan. He was Saul's son, someone who would respect, honor, and encourage his father in all of the ways that he could. Again, this same wording is used a few chapters later, at a time when Jonathan came to David to encourage him:

*“And Jonathan **Saul's son** arose, and went to David into the wood, and strengthened his hand in God. And he said unto him, Fear not: for the hand of Saul **my father** shall not find thee; and thou shalt be king over Israel, and I shall be next unto thee; and that also Saul **my father** knoweth” (1Sam 23:16-17).*

Again, three times in this short passage it is stressed that Jonathan was the son of Saul — when again, that was clearly already known. Once more, that relationship between Jonathan and Saul was being highlighted. Jonathan was *Saul's son*.

Though Jonathan loved David and would have longed to be out in the wilderness with him, Jonathan chose to stay with his father. Feeling as though his divine duty was to respect his father, Jonathan chose to stay with Saul — just hoping that somehow he could have a positive influence.

This was the type of relationship that Jonathan tried to cultivate with Saul all throughout his life. As he saw his father fall farther and farther into despair and darkness — even though Saul may have suspected him in the beginning — he became even more resolved to stand beside him and help him through the days of trial. Jonathan was committed to doing whatever he could to help his father come back to the heights from which he had fallen. This desire characterized Jonathan's feelings towards his father throughout the rest of his life. His willingness to put up with Saul's false accusations (1Sam 20:30) and all of the selfishness, pride, and lies truly shows how selfless of a character he had. Jonathan spent the rest of his life with a man who tried to have him killed (cp. 1Sam 20:33); and not only spent his time with him, but he tried to help him! He gave all that he had — even following Saul to his death — in the hopes that he might have an impact on his father and draw him nearer to salvation. May his example stay with all of us. We can't just give up on people. Instead, like Jonathan, we have to keep fearlessly working, reminding them of the joys of the truth and of peace with God. Like Jonathan, the results of our efforts may sadly prove to be fruitless — yet on the day of the restitution of all things, we will know that regardless of the result, we earnestly sought to live for God's principles and that we attempted to fight the good fight. The results of that fight and those efforts to convert are up to the One who can both soften and harden hearts.

Thus was the situation when the story closed upon Saul, Jonathan, and the people of Israel and their pursuit of the Philistines after Jonathan and his armor bearer had slain the garrison. Saul was burning with envy and suspicion against his son, and yet Jonathan sought to do whatever he could to stay loyal to his father and keep their relationship strong.

### **War with Amalek**

Perhaps it was this focus that explains Jonathan's role (or lack thereof) in Saul's next battle. In the chapter following Jonathan's exploits in the Philistine garrison, Saul was commanded by God to utterly destroy the Amalekites (1Sam 15:3). When he was finished with them, there was to be nothing left. This was the type of task in which we would assume that Jonathan would play a large part. In the battle against the Philistines, he had been the instigator and the deliverer of the people. He was one of the generals (1Sam 13:1-2). When the people were trembling and they couldn't see a way out of their predicament, he faithfully led them and inspired them.

**But that wasn't the case with the war against Amalek.**

In the war with the Amalekites, it appears as though Jonathan didn't even accompany his father. He is nowhere in the record of the battle. He didn't lead any troops, he didn't make any plans, and he didn't even give any suggestions to Saul. He is entirely absent from the story — as though he wasn't even there.

This would seem to be a rather odd thing for such a man of faith and such a warrior to do — it would be thought that Jonathan would have been one of the first ones on the battlefield. Yet perhaps his absence can be explained in the idea that he had seen the change in his father. He had seen the way that Saul now looked at him differently and he was a little bit wary after his father's willingness to kill him. Perhaps Jonathan realized that Saul was now a man who was quite paranoid — and the further he stayed from the battle and allowed Saul to have the glory, the more he could placate his father and prove to him that he wasn't the one who was going to take the throne.

Nevertheless, while Jonathan possibly stayed back from the battle in order to ease his father's mind, the results of that battle caused Saul to fall even deeper into darkness. When he again failed to follow God's instructions regarding the utter destruction of the Amalekites, he was once more told that he would lose the kingdom:

*“And Samuel said unto him, The LORD hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day, and hath given it to a neighbor of thine, that is better than thou” (1Sam 15:28).*

It was the same issue as before — Saul tried to worship God in his own way and tried to bring himself riches and fame. Thus, the same punishment was given to him — he would lose the kingdom. But, the terms of punishment were slightly more specific than they had been before — now, a time limit was put on his reign. The kingdom had been torn from his hands *that day*. His hours as king were numbered — and he only had a short time before the new king came. Even more, the kingdom would be given to “a neighbor” of his. The victor for his throne would be someone *whom he knew*. It would be someone who was close to him! As Saul heard these words, one can only imagine how his fierce jealousy would have been kindled and how his distrust for the son who loved him would have multiplied.

As time passed and the record continues, the king's evil state of mind came to be better known. It became clear, at least to a few, that Saul was willing to kill to keep his position — perhaps because they had heard about his earlier attempt to kill Jonathan. Samuel himself expressed this opinion when God commanded him to go down to Bethlehem and anoint the next king. He was certain that if Saul found out what he was doing, Saul would kill him:

*“And the LORD said unto Samuel, How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? fill thine horn with oil, and go, I will send thee to Jesse the Beth-lehemite: for I have provided me a king among his sons. And Samuel said, How can I go? **if Saul hear it, he will kill me.** And the LORD said, Take an heifer with thee, and say, I am come to sacrifice to the LORD” (1Sam 16:1-2).*

Even Samuel, one of the most respected men in the nation, feared for his life before Saul. Saul's bitter envy and zeal for his throne were not things with which someone should trifle. If Saul became suspicious, there was the chance that he would try to take the life of the man whom he suspected. However, Saul's iniquity and bitter hatred would not yet end there. He would continue to fall deeper. His thirst for glory and his desire to make himself a name had brought him to the point at which he would kill anyone who would threaten his honor — and God would take him even further down that path which he chose.

### **The evil spirit**

After David was anointed, the spirit of God departed from Saul and lighted upon the new king. In its place, Saul was given an “evil spirit” from God.

*“But the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD troubled him. And Saul’s servants said unto him, Behold now, an evil spirit from God troubleth thee” (1Sam 16:14-15).*

Saul was taken even deeper into his madness. He had brought it all upon himself — Yahweh didn't force him into paranoia. Saul had made the choice on his own and now God had reinforced it. Not only was he afraid of the next king coming and overthrowing his dynasty, but this was a thought and a fear which began to consume his life. It became all that he thought about.

### **Meeting David**

It was while Saul was in this type of mental state that the future king was first introduced to him. David was brought into the court as a means of bringing Saul out of his depression and fear. Somehow one of the court servants had heard David's music before and recommended him highly — and thus the young man stood before the king. Though his music would not have gone to the root of the problem — Saul's relationship with God — it did serve to have some type of soothing effect. David could calm the mind of the troubled king. He could help him to stop worrying about the next successor and to think about other things which were more pleasant. Because he could help Saul in this way, Saul loved him.

*“And David came to Saul, and stood before him: **and he loved him greatly**; and he became his armor bearer. And Saul sent to Jesse, saying, Let David, I pray thee, stand before me; for he hath found favor in my sight. And it came to pass, when the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took an harp, and played with his hand: so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him” (1Sam 16:21-23).*

David's music soothed Saul's tormented mind. Little did he know that the man who stood before him was the one who would later take the throne. Thus, Saul loved him because of that music. He loved him because of what he could do for him — a sad demonstration that Saul's thinking never changed. Constantly, he was focused on himself and on how he could benefit from others.

It was during this time in Saul's court that Jonathan likely first met David. Scripture doesn't ever mention the two coming together in this chapter, but it would seem

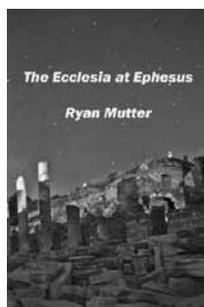
odd to think that they didn't at all meet sometime during this period — eventually, David was living in Saul's house! Yet though they may have met here initially, they never seemed to have the chance to really come to know one another.

Eventually, though, something was about to take place that would knit the men's souls together forever. Yet that event, Lord willing, will be the subject of our next article.

Jason Hensley (Simi Hills, CA)

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# The Joy of Sunday Schooling

## Have you Tried This? (1)

This article and four more to follow are about ideas — lots of ideas. Most of them have been collected from Sunday school teachers and students over the course of many years. They involve things that have enriched Sunday school programs and broadened the goals that Sunday schools have addressed with their children. I hope by sharing these with you, they will get you thinking about new things to try or, perhaps, stimulate your own teaching creativity. By all means, read them and run with them.

### Serving others

- Once a year, say at Thanksgiving time, have the Sunday school children bring in items for “sunshine baskets” for the elderly, sick, isolated, or shut-ins. Involve the children in the preparation and delivery of the baskets. Some interesting human nature lessons may be learned in the process.
- *“Be ye kindly affectioned one to another” (Rom 12:10)*. Here is something a CYC has done. Each week a different member of the CYC identifies someone in the ecclesia who has a birthday or an anniversary or who is sick and could use a cheerful “hello”. Then after class a card is circulated for all the CYC members to sign. (*Thanks to Bro. Dan Wilkinson, Worcester, MA.*)
- Adopt a grandparent! Bridge the generation gap in your ecclesia. This can be done in several ways. Sunday school children can be paired up with older members of the ecclesia. Then from time to time the children prepare something — a card, a small craft item, a plant or flower, an edible treat — and give it to their “adopted grandparent” between Sunday school and meeting time. Doing this once is good; doing it more than once is better. It helps build relationships where they may not otherwise exist.
- Here is a variation on the same idea. An older Sunday school student might be encouraged to “adopt” an elderly member of the ecclesia or a neighbor and visit them in their home. Chat with them, do a Bible reading together, share an interest, run an errand, wash some windows or do something around the house for the “adopted grandparent”. It should be stressed, of course, that the point of this is not to earn money, but to give kindness to someone. *“It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35)*.

### Reaching out

Sunday school superintendents and teachers can do a lot of things to reach out to their children, families, and neighbors. Do you have a student who misses Sunday school? Keep a supply of envelopes and postage stamps on hand in your Sunday school area. A postal scale might come in handy, too. Every time a child is absent from Sunday school, send the lesson material or assignment home as soon as Sunday meeting is over. This tells the child that he or she has not been forgotten, and it also says, “Our Sunday school work is important!” Be persistent at this!

Cards to kids. Kids still love to get mail: plain old ordinary snail-mail. One Sunday school teacher we met several years ago told us that she made a practice of writing a letter or card to each of her Sunday school children *every week!* She took the time to embellish each note or card with a bit of calligraphy, a little drawing, a sticker, or rubber stamping. All of this told her children that she cared for them and that they were important to her. The teacher would get these ready early in the week and then mail them so they arrived on Friday or Saturday. It gave the children something to look forward to, and the timing reminded them that Sunday school was coming up again soon. (*Thanks to Sis. Eunice Treadway, Chicago, IL*)

Find ways to build and strengthen relationships with your students. The previous idea got Esther and me thinking (we were still teaching our own Sunday school kids at the time). When we went anywhere, we tried to make a point of buying picture postcards and sending them to our Sunday school students while we were away. We planned ahead and made sure that we took stamps and addresses with us.

Of course, the last three ideas relate to the dark ages of the pony express (almost!). No doubt in this day and age, you can think of ways you might use e-mail or texting or social networking strategies to make extra contact with your students and strengthen your relationship with them within the wholesome framework of the Truth. One thing to keep in mind though: modern electronic communications are fast, cheap, and commonplace. It is hard to make them seem special anymore. Any suggestions?

### **More communicating**

One thing you might do by email is to send out an occasional Sunday school newsletter. It has never been easier to put one together. Almost everything you own these days can take digital pictures! Adding text is a breeze. Lots of color pictures of the Sunday school kids in action, a few words about what is going on in Sunday school, a calendar of upcoming events, and a few words of Godly wisdom can be put together and sent out to everyone almost as fast as you can think about them. This is one way that “fast, cheap, and commonplace” can be put to good advantage. Print up a few hardcopies of the newsletter for those in the ecclesia who don’t do computers. Help everyone be more aware of what the Sunday school is doing.

Take the Sunday school newsletter idea to a higher educational level. Get the children involved in producing it. Give them some responsibility for reaching out and telling others what is going on in *their* Sunday school. Work closely with them to make this a success and give them a sense of accomplishment.

A carefully edited hardcopy of your Sunday school newsletter might also be mailed to the families of children that live near your meeting place. Let them know what is going on in the Christadelphian Sunday school and provide them with a way to get in touch with you if they would like to know more.

## Revisiting Sunday school goals<sup>1</sup>

Sunday school is about more than imparting Bible knowledge to children. It is also about developing relationships with them within the bonds of the Truth, and it is about helping them develop Godly relationships with others. In many respects, that is what this month's ideas are about. If you haven't tried any of these before, give them some serious thought. And send me your good ideas, too, please.<sup>2</sup> I will be happy to share them in the pages of *The Tidings* magazine.

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

### Notes:

1. See "What's the Goal? – Part 1", *The Tidings*, February, 2011, pp. 79-81; "Part 2", March-April, 2011, pp.135-139.
2. I would like to do an article on websites. Do you have a favorite website that you go to for Sunday school resources? I would like to hear about it.

<b>Where is Your God?</b>	<b>Here is my God!</b>
Where is your God? widows cry	Here is my God, What a wonderful world!
Where is your God? The millions die	Here is my God speechless vistas I see!
Where is your God? Not in Sierra Leone	Here is my God, Bounty, plenty, free!
Where is your God? Are you all alone?	Here is my God, Gives to man for good or ill. Spurning my God, Pollution, treachery.
Where is your God? No rapist lament	Ignoring my God, Man-to-man - inhumanity.
Where is your God? choked with cement	
Where is your God? When cancer is spread?	Here is my God, Tho' spurned, loves us still.
Where is your God? When you bury the dead!	Here is my God, The Son shows the way
Where is your God? Hitler, Milosevic	Here is my God The world's in his hands
Where is your God? Dunblane, Omagh, Auschwitz	Here is my God Good will triumph one day.
Where is your God? Left you in the lurch	This is God's will, His Kingdom will hold sway!
Where is your God? While you are in church!	

*From the Christadelphian Isolation SS Newsletter, Issue 159*

## Music in Worship

### Heart Rending Memories of Hymn 221: “Was it for me thy flesh was wounded sore”

When I learned the Truth in 1985, I lived on the 24th floor of an apartment building in Toronto, and had a view of most of the city. I used to stand on the balcony and wonder why God would choose me to call out of all those people. A few years later Bro. Harry Tennant was giving the classes at a Bible School I went to, and he gave a vivid description of the crucifixion. He told how Christ would have had the “crown” of thorns slammed on his head, be whipped with pieces of bone embedded in the lashes, how he was impaled on the cross and the cross being lifted up and slammed into the ground. Yet Christ endured not only the pain, but the taunts as well. Then Brother Tennant said, “If you were the ONLY person in the history of the world to come to God, Christ would have done that for you.” I was shaken and cried, not for me Lord, not that.

A few years later I moved to Barrie and began learning to play the piano, as we had no organist. As my ability improved, I wanted to learn a hymn I’d never heard before, and came across Hymn 221. I shook as I read,

*Was it for me thy flesh was wounded sore,  
Thy body lifted high on Cross of shame?  
Was it for me the King of Glory bore  
So meek the scourge and ruthless men’s defame?*

Bro. Tennant’s vivid description came flooding back to me. “Was there no way for any man to live but thou must die, no joy but through thy grief? Is sin so dark that God cannot forgive save through thy sacrifice, and our belief?” That feeling of “not for me Lord, not this” overwhelmed me again.

As I began to learn how to play the music, I realized the music and words complement each other. Shivers still come over me every time I play this hymn, thinking of what Christ went through for me.

*Lord, let me learn thy sorrow, mark thy pain,  
That no more heedless through the world I roam,  
But come to take the pardon thou didst gain,  
And find within thy fold, eternal home.*

I pray that I may be ever mindful of this, that I might never take the agony out of the sacrifice He made for me.

*Pat Kryskow (Barrie, ON).*

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**Letters to the editor can be sent to [letters@tidings.org](mailto:letters@tidings.org).  
Please include your name, address, e-mail, and phone.**

**Submissions under 300 words are encouraged —  
the magazine reserves the right to edit all submissions for length and clarity.**

# Reflections

## The Gospel is Made to Stick

In their book *Made to Stick: Why Some Ideas Survive and Others Die*, Professors Chip and Dan Heath use the mnemonic **SUCCEs** to summarize the six properties of successful ideas. Reading the book I realized that the gospel satisfies these properties; the gospel is made to stick because it is Simple, Unexpected, Concrete, Credible, Emotional, and it has many memorable Stories.

Simple  
Unexpected  
Concrete  
Credible  
Emotional  
Stories

### Simple

The gospel is simple indeed: it is “the good news of the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ.”

### Unexpected

The gospel is filled with unexpected events and ideas; here are a few of the most surprising:

- The virgin birth: Jesus Christ, born of a woman without a human father, the only begotten son of God!
- His miracles:

*“The men marveled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and sea obey him!”*

*“When the multitudes saw [the healing of the paralytic man], they marveled, and glorified God, which had given such power unto men.”*

*“When the demon was cast out, the dumb spake: and the multitudes marveled, saying, It was never so seen in Israel.”*

- His teachings:

*“And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings [of the Sermon on the Mount], the people were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.”*

*“When [the Pharisees and Herodians] heard these words, [Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar’s; and unto God the things that are God’s] they marveled at his answer, and held their peace.”*

- His crucifixion: A dead Messiah! The king, the hero of the story, suffers the most dishonorable death imaginable. *“We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness.”*
- His resurrection: Jesus Christ raised from the dead, alive for evermore. Even the disciples found it hard to believe.

- His ascension: Jesus Christ our Lord now sitting at the right hand of God, all power given unto him in heaven and in earth.
- His return: Jesus Christ will return to the earth to establish the kingdom of God, which will catch everyone off guard.

*“Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come... While the bridegroom tarried, they all [both wise and foolish virgins] slumbered and slept.”*

*“The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night.”*

- Forgiveness of sins and life everlasting, through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ our Savior:

*“This is the new covenant in my blood, shed for many for the remission of sins.”*

*“Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.”*

- Gentiles included as children of Abraham by faith, heirs according to the promise: *“The scripture foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed... that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith... For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized have put on Christ... ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.”*

### **Concrete**

The gospel message is concrete. The kingdom of God is to be on earth: Jerusalem the capital, Jesus the king, the saints the rulers with him, the Promised Land the territory, Israel the citizens, God’s rule the law of the land, and the nations sharing in the blessings. *“The earth will be filled with the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the seas.”*

### **Credible**

The gospel is credible. *“These things were done to fulfill that which was spoken by the prophet.”* Jesus came not to destroy the law and the prophets, but to fulfill them. He taught as one having authority. The Holy Spirit gifts given to the apostles made them credible; God testified to the authenticity of their message through the signs and wonders He empowered them to do. They had God’s stamp of approval. They could do these things only if they had been sent by God. It was by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God that all these things came to pass, and this is made clear to all who have ears to hear.

### **Emotional**

The gospel is truly emotional, as illustrated by these hymns:

- “Was it for me that flesh was wounded sore” (Hymn 221).
- “Amazing grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me. I once was

lost but now am found, Was blind but now I see.”

- “Take my life and let it be Consecrated, Lord, to Thee” (Hymn 163).
- “Hark, ten thousand, thousand voices Sing the song of Jubilee” (Hymn 296).
- “Hail to the brightness of Zion’s glad morning! (Hymn 294).
- “A rose shall bloom in the lonely place” (Hymn 289).

## Stories

The gospel is full of memorable stories, including some new ones we are still living. To illustrate, let me tell you a part of the story of how I came into the Truth.

I was not raised a Christadelphian; in fact, I was not raised in any church. I knew nothing about the Bible. In my senior year of high school, a friend had read Hal Lindsey’s *The Late Great Planet Earth*, which claimed that Christ would return by 1988. I was skeptical. Being a debater and seldom at a loss for words, I argued that you could make anything out of the Bible, after all, there were so many churches, and they all taught and believed different things, yet they all pointed to the Bible as the source of those beliefs. *Ex post facto*, the Bible could be used to prove whatever you wanted to prove. Consequently, it was essentially useless to prove anything. Mind you, I knew nothing about it.

When I got home that night I found a Bible and searched the table of contents for something on prophecy. Finally, at the very end, I found a book called “Revelation” which sounded like it might be about prophecy. I read it straight through, and concluded that my earlier argument was clearly correct because no one could know for sure what this stuff was all about; it was so highly symbolic, with no obvious meaning anywhere near the surface. Of course, I had no background to make such a judgment and if I had stopped there, I would have been wrong, “dead” wrong! The real result of that night was that I committed myself to learn as much about the Bible as I could, not so much because I intended to believe it, but because I never wanted to be caught as unprepared for an argument as I had been that evening. (This was an essential method for success in debate: always be preparing for the next one.)

My grandma, Sis. Noma Hill, was a devoted Christadelphian and she read “the chapters” (from the Bible Companion) every day. I had been with Grandma to Sunday school and meeting a couple times and knew Christadelphians studied the Bible seriously. So, when it came to learning something about the Bible, I thought it made sense to get in touch with the Christadelphians. They knew their Bibles and I remembered there were Christadelphians who had been Baptists, or Catholics, or just about anything else, so I assumed they would accept people, including me, no matter their background, without prejudice.

I visited Grandma the summer before I was to start attending the University of Texas in Austin. She gave me a bag full of material, including lots of *Heralds*, an old copy of *Christendom Astray*, some *Logos* pamphlets, some *Christadelphian Expositors*, the 2nd edition (1946) of *Bible Fingerposts*, etc. Lots of stuff. One of the *Heralds* had Bro. Thomas’ “abjuration” in which he explained how Gal 3:8 proved that the gospel was not merely the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ

as taught by most Christians, but that it also included the promises to Abraham. What an important breakthrough!

I loved reading all the material Grandma had given me. I discovered the flaw in my argument. Though the churches claimed to teach what was in the Bible, they really didn't. It wasn't the Bible that was the source of all the competing ideas, it was men and women. The Bible itself taught one truth, one gospel. And that gospel was different than the teachings of essentially all churches. For me, that was a new perspective. But it also opened my eyes to another critical idea: I had to study the Bible for myself, perhaps with the help of others, but never trusting in what other people taught. I was personally responsible for understanding what God said. I could not delegate that responsibility to anyone else. I could read and listen to lots of others, but I had to search the Scriptures myself to separate the wheat from the chaff.

To bring this story to an end, let me tell you about my first Sunday at the Austin meeting. I discovered that my new apartment in Austin was about four blocks from the YWCA where the ecclesia met. The first Sunday I was in town, I walked over, and was welcomed at the door by a woman I had never met, who said to me, "You must be Joe Hill!" What a nice surprise. Turns out that after my visit with Grandma, and before I showed up in Austin, she had attended Midwest Bible School where she told Bro. Joe and Sis. Marie Banta that I might show up and asked them to treat me nice if I did. The Bantas and other families in the Austin ecclesia "adopted" me as if I were their own. This is the primary reason I stayed in school for 10 years — I didn't want to leave my spiritual family.

Anyway, back to that Sunday morning. I was pointed to the teen class that was held in the back on the stage. There must have been 20 students in the class, which was being led by Bro. Rick Hollenbeck. The topic was miracles. We were going around the table with each student having to name a miracle. They all had their favorites: Joshua and the walls of Jericho, Daniel in the lion's den, Daniel's friends in the fiery furnace, Jesus walking on water, Jesus raising Jairus's daughter, etc. I knew none of these. From my reading of the material Grandma had given me, I could think of one miracle, the virgin birth of Jesus. But I was last to go, and there was no way it would get all the way around to me without someone giving this miracle. It was too good, too important. I was terrified. Here on my first day meeting these folks I was going to look like a complete ignoramus. What a nightmare. They kept going around the table, naming miracles by Moses, Elijah, Elisha, Jesus, and the apostles. I didn't know any of these. There were so many, because the Bible is full of great stories, many of them miracles. It finally got to me, and the virgin birth was still unnamed, so I lucked out. They all thought I was a genius, but I knew better.

The gospel really is a message made to stick. It is simple, unexpected, concrete, credible, emotional, and it is full of memorable stories. We should keep these principles in mind as we preach the gospel and as we teach the Bible. God has made the gospel easy for people to understand. It can't help but be the ultimate SUCCESs.

*Joe Hill (Austin Leander, Texas)*

## Scriptural Discipline

### (2) Mutual Confession and Support

In our first article, we took a quick look at the high calling we have accepted as disciples of our Lord. Holiness is a reflection of Godly character which we are expected to exhibit now and completely, by God's grace, in the Kingdom.

We ended the last article commenting that the battle we face against sin is not to be undertaken alone. The phrase “muscular Christianity” was coined several decades ago to describe those who felt that they could overcome sin by their willpower alone and personal might. In fact, we are not likely to win such a battle alone. Our Lord was never alone. While he occasionally drew strength from the surges of faith by his disciples, it was his relationship with his Father that was his constant defense against the pulls of the flesh. His use of Scripture exhibited a life whereby the implanted Word had blossomed, ripened and produced the fruit of righteousness.

#### **But, what about faith in the 21st Century?**

A close examination of Israel and the primitive Christian church demonstrates that it is involvement and participation — fellowship — that is designed by God to help us to win the war against sin. But before we can begin our examination of how the ecclesia is designed to be a primary instrument in the fight against sin, we will need to put aside our own personal experience for a moment. We will need to temporarily park our cultural norms and personal preferences. The questions to be answered are not about what feels comfortable to us, but what is described as the Scriptural standards for our experience. This can only be achieved by a close examination of Scripture.

It may be helpful here to briefly discuss the potential for variance between our “religious life” and our “spiritual life.” At times, it is the religious life that gets almost all our attention. It is the world that is observable: that is, subject to evaluation by others. Indeed, as we've seen, our religious life should be an expression of our innermost self. However, we've also seen that our hearts are capable of deceiving us. Our hearts fool us into thinking that if we keep certain rituals and do good works, we must be holy inside. This is the trap we can fall into when we think of righteous acts separate from holiness.

Even Christadelphian eulogies tend to focus on our religious experiences. A sister who faithfully attended meeting throughout her life and during her last years fraught with illness. A brother who was an outstanding expositor of the Word. An ecclesial servant who faithfully visited those sick and helped those in need. Of course, these acts of faith are highly commendable and essential to fellowship. But, in such cases there is little possibility of knowing what the brother or sister was experiencing inside. The invisible may very well be what is either strongest or weakest in the sleeping brother or sister's life.

When Jesus was confronted by the ruler asking what “*good thing must I do to inherit eternal life*” he was met by someone caught up in “religious” thinking. His

life had been fixed on the observable, the religious traditions — those things most likely to be seen of men. But, the solution to this young man's quest was not about observance of righteous acts, but by dealing specifically with the core of what was troubling him spiritually — the love of money. Jesus took him right to the most unappealing and dark area of the man's spiritual quest. In our lives, he will do the same for us. I've often wondered how the young ruler really dealt with this. Did he deny the need? Did he quickly understand the Lord's call to surrender? Was he willing to make the fundamental change required in his life? Additionally, did he receive any help from others as he contemplated this decision? Was he able to talk with his kinsmen and the elders about the struggle he must have felt inside?

Personally, I doubt it. Why? Because most of us don't have that kind of relationship either. If his experience matches ours, he would have had to struggle for long hours, feeling perhaps quite alone. He would be left to wonder if only he alone struggled with the issue? He would have been absent of the assurances from others of faith that would have reminded him that the Lord never forsakes those who trust

in him.

### **The Ecclesia — a support network**

So we come to the focus of this article. The ecclesia is to represent a support network unlike anything the world has ever experienced. It is to be a place where brothers and sisters can openly deal with the issues of life. It is where we must go to bind up the bruises and open, oozing wounds. The ecclesia is designed to ensure that all parts of the body are cared for and nourished. It is not designed for the members to feel isolated or alone.

Perhaps it is helpful to briefly discuss here the role of the priests in Israel. What were they to do and why did God appoint these men for full-time work? In fact, the priests were exempted from warfare with the nations because they were already engaged in a life and death war against sin. They were to “do the service” or “war the warfare” against sin in Israel. They were to help fellow Israelites to apply Scriptural principles for life, to discern between the clean and unclean, the holy and unholy. This was not done in some detached, formal way. Priests would have been intimately involved in the confessions and problems of their fellow brothers and sisters. The standard of the priesthood repeated in Malachi was that the priest's lips should “turn many away from iniquity.” The priests would impart their own experience and knowledge to the erring brother in attempt to teach the righteous principles of God. We read in Hebrews:

*“For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins: Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity. And by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins” (Heb 5:1-3).*

This takes us to a central aspect of the work of the priests as well as the High Priest. In order to serve in this capacity, there had to be a full awareness of his own need for forgiveness. He too is “compassed with infirmity.” The High Priest offered first

for his own sins, then the sins of the people on the Day of Atonement. If priests then — and today — are to be effective, our acknowledgement of the principle must be clear. We are no better than another. In reality, since we only know how we personally have responded and at times failed with temptation, we must admit that we are the worst sinners that we know. As the old adage goes, “there but by the grace of God go I”.

So, let’s try to move this learning back to our assessment of the Divine design of the ecclesia in the fight against sin.

### **Definitions of holiness**

The ecclesia does have an important role to play in education — to this there can be no doubt. Bible classes and exhortations must be relevant in dealing with the real issues that disciples face. The standards for Scriptural application have often been learned through these talks and discussions. But, each generation has a critical role in defining what holiness looks like in the time they are living. The standards don’t change, but the threats take on new faces. A hundred and fifty years ago, our community was not struggling with threats of internet pornography, school systems that teach for “fact” that evolution explains man’s existence, widespread acceptance and condoning of aberrant sexual practices and lifestyles, or confusion about the role of brothers and sisters in the ecclesia. These are all challenges on our watch.

In 1935, the Los Angeles Ecclesia responded to what they viewed as the looming threats to the ecclesia by issuing this direction to their ecclesia...

“Resolved that in order to maintain the high standard of ecclesial life as understood from the Scriptures, the Ecclesia expresses its definite disapproval of the practice of attending theatres, picture shows and collective dancing in homes or elsewhere, and members of the Ecclesia should not countenance such practices. The resolution is...to be read at the Sunday morning meeting from time to time.”

These brethren were attempting to be faithful priests to the flock in Los Angeles. You may quarrel with the way it was implemented or pronounced, but you cannot argue with the standard that these brethren were holding themselves to. Incidentally, we might find it amusing to know that the “picture shows” of 1935 that they were addressing would receive a “G” or “PG” rating in today’s assessments. Mutiny on the Bounty, The Bride of Frankenstein and the Marx Brother’s “A Night at the Opera” headlined the movies that were identified as concerns. Clearly, such movies would hardly be seen as a threat today — especially given the vulgarity that is regularly presented at the cinema, on our televisions and PC’s.

Public pronouncements from the arranging brethren are rarely the appropriate standard for our ecclesias. These can sound like edicts. At best, such edicts ask for compliance, often at the risk of not ensuring a sound understanding of the important spiritual principles governing the issue. Rather, the arranging brethren have a dutiful responsibility to ensure that the threats to the ecclesia are discussed and that adequate Scriptural study is done. These standards need to be clear from

personally studying Scripture and they ought to be to us as clear as our understanding of First Principles.

Scripture is clear that there is great power in being able to confess our missteps and faults to one another. James wrote, “**Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much**” (James 5:16).

So simple, but so complex! We all agree with the principle, but you go first!

## **Confession**

Let’s take a look at this passage a little more closely. First, it is not about a person who is willfully involved in rebellious sin. This is a brother that is struggling with temptation and wanting to overcome it. That’s important. Confession of sin is of no value unless there is a desire to repent. In the 1930’s, the Oxford Group professed that there was great benefit in public confession. Their meetings were filled with personal public “confessions” where they openly confessed everything they had ever done to meeting rooms full of strangers. They entertained their audiences with wild, humorous, and sometimes licentious stories of their sins, misadventures and escapades before they were changed into moral people. The teachings of Frank Buchman and the Oxford Group later would be embraced by Alcoholics Anonymous, which has helped many to overcome their addiction to alcohol and other substances. However, it is NOT the standard of confession in the ecclesia. Confession in the ecclesia is done not with a sole desire to free oneself of the burdened heart of sin, but it is intended to provide a mechanism for obtaining the loving support and real help needed in overcoming the sin. We are not to parade our sins, but rather to confess them because that’s what’s needed to move on to sustained repentance.

What then does confession require? First, we must acknowledge and accept the gravity of our sins and the need for us to restore righteousness in our lives. We cannot hide it or conceal it from the Lord, our brethren or even ourselves. It also is an acknowledgement that we need the help of others. I can’t do this alone and I must depend on the love and compassion of my brothers and sisters to survive. It also is a public acknowledgment of the acceptance of our accountability to the ecclesia. My fight against sin is the business of my brothers and sisters. They have a stake in my life and my path to righteousness. If I am astray, they are weakened. Confession requires our commitment to do whatever is necessary to fight sin — even if it requires us to expose our shame. Jude wrote:

*“But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy [Spirit], Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. And of some have compassion, making a difference: And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh” (Jude 20-23).*

This is most instructive in dealing with one another as we struggle with sin. There are times when our brother has sinned, but he is not only aware of his sin, but capably moving to remove the temptation from his life. The brother involved in

an unholy relationship has ended the tryst. In such cases, we may judge that what our confessing brother needs is “compassion, making a difference.” This is when we encourage our brother, confirm our love to him. We may need to acknowledge the sin and the wrong thinking that went into it, but our primary service to our brother is comfort. That doesn’t mean comfort as if the sin was no big deal, but comfort in knowing he is loved and in the graciousness of our Lord in forgiving trespasses.

But, this is not always the case. Sometimes we are incapable of rescuing ourselves. The power of sin has gripped us in a way where we feel overwhelmed. This is when we are expected to “pull them out of the fire.” The brother who has fallen into addiction to substance abuse, for example, is not one that is likely capable on his own to be able to overcome the battle. We may be called on, in some circumstances, to take a measure of control of our brother’s life (with his permission!) to separate him from the addictive substance and help him get critical therapy and counseling.

In both cases, this can take us into a world with our brother or sister that we have never gone before. It may expose us to dark secrets, “unsanitary” situations. We may be terribly surprised to know that our brother could be involved in such a sin and that it may have lasted so long. But, this is where the awareness of a priest is required. We must first acknowledge our own sin, that we too are in need. We can’t help him if we distance ourselves by thinking we are better than him.

### **The power of prayer**

This brings us to the power of prayer. I find it interesting to observe that we as a community feel very comfortable in asking for prayers and joining together in prayer for those who are seriously sick or experiencing financial or occupational troubles. Certainly, these belong in our prayers and we must bring our petitions to our Heavenly Father on their behalf. He is the Great Physician that heals, the LORD over all aspects of our lives. But, I also find it is far less likely that we would confess our sins and ask our brothers and sisters to pray for us in our struggle against sin. This, in my view of Scripture, is what First Century fellowship was all about!

Furthermore, Scripture teaches us that if we are unrepentant and our heart is not right with God, our prayers may be hindered. Isaiah wrote, “Behold, the LORD’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear” (Isa 59:1-2). Peter emphasized that ill-behavior to our spouse can also limit our prayers. “Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered” (1Pet 3:7). This may bring new meaning to why we would wish to ask for others to pray for us. At times when we may be overwhelmed and entangled in sin, “the prayer of a righteous man availeth much.” There can be little doubt that healthy ecclesias are regularly engaged in prayers for one another. This is best done when we adhere to Scriptural admonition about confessing our sins to one another so that we can indeed pray for one another.

We are called to be intimately involved. We are not to shy away when our brother needs us most. Our role is to warn, to have compassion, to assist. Ezekiel wrote:

*“Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. Again, When a righteous man doth turn from his righteousness, and commit iniquity, and I lay a stumblingblock before him, he shall die: because thou hast not given him warning, he shall die in his sin, and his righteousness which he hath done shall not be remembered; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Nevertheless if thou warn the righteous man, that the righteous sin not, and he doth not sin, he shall surely live, because he is warned; also thou hast delivered thy soul” (Ezek 3:17,20-21).*

We are called to be watchmen. We are expected to be vigilant and to cry out so that the righteous might turn from their iniquity and live. To fail to do so is to jeopardize BOTH my brother and myself!

So, what does that require of ecclesias? The message for us today is significant. While the world around us speaks against authority and decries standards imposed by others, believers embrace Divine standards and the RESPONSIBILITY and ACCOUNTABILITY of brothers and sisters to one another as we strive to live to Divine standards. The cultural norms that may prevail about being “private” with the challenges and doubts in our lives must be rethought. Often in our ecclesias we are so busy, moving from one class to another, from one programmed event to the next, we fail to provide an opportunity or the time to really deal with the issues that we are struggling with. Someone struggling with a sin of fornication, for example, can easily cruise through Sunday school, Memorial Service and an afternoon program without the slightest chance of being able to have the conversation that is burning in their heart. How do we make time for this? That’s a challenge for each ecclesia to decide. Do you provide a mechanism for real discussion of life? Does the ecclesia pray together for righteousness — in a specific and targeted way? Can ecclesial members depend on some mechanism that will allow them to share their own needs for support? Is your ecclesia “intimate” and a place where one can share that they are flawed without being labeled or unduly judged? Each ecclesia must face these questions to the best of their ability.

**The Foundation  
for Scriptural Discipline  
— Forgiveness.**

Our next article will take a look at the foundation for Scriptural discipline — forgiveness. What must we understand about forgiveness if we are to be the watchmen

that Scripture requires? How is forgiveness essential to the recovery of those who are in need of compassion as well as those who we must pull from the fire?

*David Jennings (Pomona, CA)*

## The Seed Never Sees the Flower

In this day and age, and I guess all throughout history, man has been, particularly when it comes to business, goal-oriented. We are creatures of the flesh: seeing, wanting, craving, and needing statistics and the facts and figures that go with it. After all, aren't we supposed to get back a return for our investment? This thinking has even found its way into our witnessing efforts and I'll admit to endorse the view that if something works — don't get in the way! But what of those ways as yet untried and never receiving recognition? What of all the efforts that have apparently 'failed' which have not seemingly borne fruit? And what of the attempts which were made by the few whose unknown labor went unnoticed? Is any faithful effort wasted...is any seed sown to His glory unfruitful...does any of the falling rain not fulfill its purpose...does His Word ever return to Him void? (Isa 55:10, 11)

This is not to say that we either knowingly waste time and resources or cast our pearls before the obviously maddened and irreverent crowd. But as is so often the case, we don't know the outcome of our preaching so it's best to prayerfully try! The best we can do is to plant and water hoping that God provides the increase. It was never intended for us to know the results in advance and even when faced with supposed lack of success, there is always a wealth of experience we can draw from, fond fellowship to strengthen our bonds, verses to be made more familiar and ever more ready at our fingertips and on our tongues, improvements in public speaking and debates, Scriptures enabled to be unwrested, and unlimited added insight into our spiritual conversations. Who knows if that particular form of preaching will work?!

**The point is...just preach!**



In the parable of the sower, the seed was scattered everywhere. The sower wasn't careful to specifically scatter the seed on fertile ground...it went everywhere...and that's our job...to preach to everyone and anyone.

Our human nature always wants results right away and I'm no different. It's wonderful to see the fruit of our labor! Yet plants be-

gin to grow slowly at first as the Word did in us. God was patient, as we should be.

A brother at an ASK meeting not too long ago remarked that we ought to be more 'task-oriented', that is to keep our objective in mind that we have been commissioned to witness, not to ensure the results. Jeremiah, Noah and even Jesus couldn't guarantee success in their preaching, but we do know it helped save them!

It would be wonderful to have an assured amount of converts every time but let's keep witnessing anyway as we are assured of a great reward in our faithful attempt! (And yes, there are those still waiting to be called.)

The seed never sees the flower...we don't know what our efforts today will bring tomorrow and we may never see its fruits in this lifetime...but God sees the flower — the end result. So, plant those seeds and let God take care of the rest... the flowers will come!

*From an Autumn Editorial: Ask Newsletter (Ontario, Canada)*

## John Connally — a Christadelphian Connection



Because it's the around 50th anniversary of JFK assassination I'll share my connection history. I grew up in Texas and attended the San Antonio Meeting, where my Grandfather guided the building/refitting (an old army barracks) of our meeting hall. My Grandfather was Philemon Connally, John Connally was my Grandfather's nephew as his Father and my Grandfather were brothers. Anyhow that

means my Mom and Governor John Connally were first cousins, and grew up near each other. When President Kennedy was shot I remember (although young) my mother's reaction as we watched it on a very new TV. Her cousin was shot! That was partly why we were watching, because cousin John was of course Governor of Texas at the time.

One of the following years while Lyndon was President I have this memory while attending the Hye Bible School. A dark limo drives up over the "cattle guard" and pulls up alongside the open tabernacle where we held lectures. The President of the United States rolls down the window, and gets some hugs and "hey old boy" from some of the older brothers: he then proceeds to listen to the lecture. Secret Service men were down at the gate (the cattle guard). The Johnson ranch is just a mile or two up the river from the Bible School Grounds. If I am not mistaken Old Johnson (Lyndon's Grandfather)<sup>1</sup> had given the grounds to the Christadelphians (over 100 years ago). I must have been then about 8-10 then. I was almost seven when JFK was shot. So there you go! My sister still lives on a ranch near "Uncle John's" ranch although his has an air-strip and hers does not.

*Susie Lange (Champagne, IL)*

### Notes:

1. Actually, records show the land was donated around 1898 by Bro. John Colbath. There have been Christadelphian Bible Schools in the area since 1877.

## In Memory of Bro. Wesley Booker



Bro. Wesley Booker was a humble man who quietly influenced many lives. He lived a simple life, but there was an unfathomed depth behind his apparent simplicity.

For most of his life, Wesley was a fifth grade mathematics teacher. He was also an expert tennis player, and enjoyed coaching others. In later years, he served as a volunteer for Meals on Wheels, and taught retirees to play bridge at a senior center in South Austin. While a strong competitor in most sports and games, he was also a gracious and humble person.

Many of Wesley's summer vacations were spent leading Truth Corps teams and training them to present the gospel. After retiring, he devoted himself to preaching.

Wesley was a member of the Austin South Ecclesia. He was a leader of the meeting; he taught Bible classes and Sunday School; he presided and gave words of exhortation; he gave people rides; and he visited those who couldn't make it to meeting. He will be missed.

Combining his teaching ability and his love for the Bible, Bro. Wesley created a set of first principle notes that he used to teach many people the Truth. He also wrote booklets of comments and questions on the readings for Genesis and on the New Testament, and a Bible Jeopardy game. Wesley was a proofreader for the *Tidings*. He focused on checking the Bible references; based on his nearly photographic assimilation of the Scriptures, he could instantly identify mistakes in the wording of quotations or in verse citations. And typical of his way, Wesley preferred to do this without any public recognition.

Bro. Wesley Booker was born on June 25, 1951 in San Saba, Texas, to Bro. Eldon and Sis. Ruth Booker. He was baptized into Christ on June 28, 1970, and remained faithful to the gospel throughout his life. He fell asleep in Austin on December 4, 2013, at the age of 62. Wesley is survived by his two children, Elizabeth Hudson of Austin and Daniel Booker of Oakland, California; his brother and sister-in-law Bro. George and Sis. Barbara Booker; his nephew Bro. Adam Booker and his wife Sis. Wallesha, with their daughter, Miriam, of Austin.

Wesley was in excellent health throughout his life. The brain tumor, which came on suddenly, impacted his strength, memory, and speech, but Wesley continued to read his well-marked Bible and to watch his beloved Atlanta Braves. He died in the sure hope of the resurrection, and was laid to rest at the Johnson Family Cemetery in Stonewall, Texas. He will be remembered with love and fondness by many, in both Austin and worldwide. Donations in Wesley's name can be made to Agape in Action — U.S., 521 Valmont Dr., Monrovia, CA 91016.

The Booker family thanks everyone for the hundreds of cards, phone calls, emails, and prayers, and now for the sympathy cards as well — even though we cannot acknowledge each one.



## Bible Mission News

### Return to Guadalajara — October 2013

On Thursday evening October 17th, we arrived in Guadalajara, Mexico for four days of ecclesial activities. Two series of seven advertised talks were presented to members and friends in two cities, Guadalajara and Ocotlán. The Biblical themes were “Relationships” and the “One Body”. Two additional Bible Classes were delivered in Ocotlán on Friday evening October 18th on the topics of “How to wait with hope and Patience in a World without Hope” and “How to make decisions in life which are Biblical and not Emotional”. There are two brothers and one sister in this city, however, there were about 20 in attendance for the two Bible classes — seven brothers and sisters from the two cities, and the rest — adult visitors and children from Ocotlán.

They say that October is the best time of the year weather-wise to visit Guadalajara, and that it has the second best weather in the world — so thankfully it was quite pleasant during our stay. We arrived at the meeting Hall in Guadalajara for



the daily Bible readings at 3pm on Saturday, followed by the first two talks in the Relationship series. The Mission mini-bus was used to pick-up 11 from the town of Ocotlán, an hour and a half away, so that they could attend both Saturday and Sunday activities in Guadalajara. There

**Pictures from Hall  
in Guadalajara.**

is a second storey above the large meeting room where they were able to stay over-night. Approximately 35 were present on the Saturday (about 20 members and the rest friends) for the first two talks which started at 4:30pm.

Sunday was a full day with the Remembrance Service, followed by two more presentations on



Relationships, with a hot meal provided by the sisters between the Bible studies. There were approximately 45 present — about 25 brothers and sisters, and a number of long-time visitors, and also several there for the first-time due to handbill advertising and posters.



**All three members or the Ocotlán ecclesia. Samuel on the left, Sergio taller man in the centre and his wife Olivia sitting to the right in the bright top.**

**Below:  
Ocotlán Hall**

On Monday evening, October 21st three more studies were delivered in Ocotlán on the principles of the One Body with 11 adults participating in these studies. The three members along with the regular visitors are experiencing the challenges we all face in the Truth, as each changes his or her behavior to be more in-line with Christ's example. This little group needs the scheduled support of the ecclesia in Guadalajara.

Each country has its own cultural traits, and when individuals are baptized into Christ, they must continue the process of being transformed by the renewing of the mind, as they prepare to be citizens of the coming kingdom. These two groups are helping each in this process, in order to be found acceptable when He returns. We are thankful for the warm hospitality extended us for the duration of our stay. We were also encouraged to witness the timely and orderly manner in which the Guadalajara Ecclesia conducts its services.



*CBMA Representatives, Don and Miriam Luff  
Submitted by Sis. Jan Berneau, CBMA/CBMC Publicity*

## Guyana Fall 2013

### Baptismal Classes

As a result of the enthusiasm generated by the Truth Core visit this past summer two baptismal classes have been started in Guyana. They are being conducted in Mocha and New Amsterdam. We started the Mocha class on the 8th Sept. with Derek Jr and Daniel (sons of Bro. Derek and Sis. Marlyn Babb), Jed and Jeron (sons of Bro. Jerrold and Sis. Elizabeth Joseph), Abigail (daughter of Sis. Dawne Semple), Sarafina (a Georgetown youth circler) and Faida (daughter of Bro. Abedi and Sis. Bawili N'djelekulu of Kilcoy). These are the seven who have persisted.



Mocha baptismal class

The class is going very well as Bro. David Andrews guides the youths to an understanding of the first principles of the Faith.

At New Amsterdam we have Sharon and Susan (daughters of Bro. Rayman and Sis. Kamla Arjune), Sarah, Reaz and Imraz and, sometimes, Joel (children of Bro. Shaheed and Sis. Mohani Rasheed), Sarah Ramoutar (Reaz's girlfriend) and, sometimes, Sonia (daughter of late Bro. Sankar and Sis. Bibi Rupenarine). This class meets every other week, Sundays 8:00 am when we are in Berbice. This requires a commitment just to rise and travel early in order to be there.

We are hopeful that the young people in these classes will decide to commit to a new life in Christ. We pray that their faith will germinate and grow and that the encouragement and nurturing they will need to mature in Christ will be provided. These in Berbice are especially on their own as there are so very few brothers there and they are more isolated from one another. The pull away from the ecclesia can be very powerful. New Amsterdam in particular is in desperate need of a missionary couple to reside there for at least one year.

### Annual Sports Day

Bro. Sam David left home at 4:00 am to collect children and arrive in Georgetown by 8:30 am. Of course you couldn't stick a pin in the bus it was so full. There were no attendants from Kilcoy nor New Amsterdam unfortunately. The day was sunny, just the right weather. Lots of participation even from Riumveldt Centre Sunday School children who enjoyed themselves tremendously. Every time they ran or entered an event they would run over to the SS coordinator and cry out,



Girls sports team

Below: Boys team

“Ms December, we nearly win dah race yes, buh de string buss on we jes befor we rech the finish line”. (Roughly translated: We nearly won the race but the finish line string was broken just before we got there). Fortunately, Bro. Sam was able to take a nap before heading back home to Plegt Anker.

*Joan Andrews, edited by Dolores Sleeper*

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



## Argentina: Few in number, little flock . . .

¡Hola from Argentina! It’s hard to believe that I’ve been living here for the last month and a bit. Everything seems almost familiar and just a little bit strange, and I find myself saying, “Am I really in Argentina, almost 5000 miles from everywhere I’ve ever lived?” Even harder to believe how it’s beginning to feel not quite so strange to talk in Spanish, a language which I barely knew two months ago.

The people in Argentina are passionate. I mean, extraordinarily passionate. Almost every greeting, every day you see them it is as though you had been away for years. You are as likely to discuss religion and politics as the weather, and every person will have a vociferous opinion, well-reasoned or not. Phrases in Spanish carry so much more emotional weight than the exact same phrases in English, and the city here is vibrant, teeming with life, music and a very active pedestrian culture. The small ecclesia here has welcomed me with open hands and open hearts, and I am continually reminded that Christ is in the midst of us, even when only two or three are gathered together. We meet simply in houses, participating in the same readings as brethren the world over, breaking bread and drinking wine, praying as I know we all do, that perhaps this memorial supper, this remembrance would be the last reunion before we eat again at the marriage supper of the Lamb.

One of the highlights of the last month has been the gathering last week in Mendoza, a city in Argentina near the border of Chile, where we had a beautiful little weekend ‘convivencia’ (literally meaning ‘living together’, a lovely concept) at a facility nearby. Though every person had to travel at least 10 hours by bus, still we gathered together...a few from the ecclesia in Santiago de Chile and a few from Córdoba to laugh, learn and encourage each other even more as the day is approaching. One of the sisters and her son joined the group from Córdoba as we returned. Always lovely, but not surprising in the slightest, the ecclesia here welcomed them with open arms.



**Sis. Colleen Uiga and Sis. Milena Barboza**



**Bro. Brydyn Melles, Sis. Gisella Pintado with Jeremy**

clearly watch and patiently wait for the return of the Son and the healing of the earth. As I was reminded by a recent CYC class that I had pleasure to Skype into: it is nothing with the LORD to help by many, or with them that have no power. Therefore please labor in your prayers with us, for the harvest is indeed great, the laborers are few, and we are of those who lift up our eyes to Him who is mighty to save.

*Written by Sis. Colleen Uiga,  
Spanish Truth Corps  
Submitted by Sis. Jan Berneau,  
CBMA/CBMC Publicity*



**Jeremy, Sis. Gisella Pintado, Roxana Martínez (Milena’s mother), Sis. Milena Barboza**

## News & Notices

### **BOSTON, MA**

We mourn with our Sis. Judi Salamone at the passing of her husband, Bro. Charlie Salamone. Charlie was a long-time member of the Boston Ecclesia and will be missed. He now awaits the resurrection and the fulfillment of his hope in Christ's return. We would like to thank visiting brothers, Matt Fulmer (Worcester, MA) and Jonathan Link (Echo Lake, NJ) for their recent exhortations. We report that Sis. Nancy Warner has removed herself from fellowship.

*Jim Sullivan*

### **BRANT COUNTY, ON**



Our Sunday school reconvened this September with a kickoff breakfast. Our young classes are using Stage 5 of the Australian course of study, while our teen class is learning Bible Study Techniques using Obadiah as a case study.

This fall we held a six-week campaign of lectures on Tuesday evenings with the first lecture being given by Bro. Stephen Mansfield (Adelaide, AUS.) on "Jerusalem, Future Capital of the World". There were several visitors to each lecture resulting from our newspaper advertisement, bill pushing to the local residents, and God's blessing. May our heavenly Father continue to bless our light stand in this area of Ontario by bringing the gospel message to a population of perishing people.

We thank many visiting local and overseas brethren for their assistance with exhortations, classes, and lectures. In addition to Bro. Stephen and Sis. Beth Mansfield (Adelaide, AUS) who were here, we also enjoyed the company and ministry of Bro. Jim and Sis. Marg Cowie (Brisbane, AUS).

*David Wisniewski*

### **CRANSTON, RI**

It has been about a year since our last report of news from Cranston and much has happened over the past year while our Lord has remained away.

Three have entered the waters of baptism having given a good confession of faith, confirming their belief in the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ. On May 12, 2013, we were happy to witness the immersion of TABITHA PRIDE, daughter of Bro. Michael and Sis. Nancy Pride, and granddaughter of Bro. David and Sis. Karen Pride. On June 30, 2013, the ecclesia once again rejoiced to witness SCOTT MACADAMS enter the baptismal waters. Bro. Scott is the son of Bro. Graham and Sis. Gail MacAdams, grandson of Bro. Richard and Sis. Betty Stormont (Cranston, RI); and Sis. Dorothy MacAdams (Worcester, MA). Both Sis. Tabitha and Bro. Scott were raised up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord by parents in the Cranston Ecclesia. On August 11, 2013, ELMA BROTHERS entered the waters of baptism here in Cranston after a very unusual means of introduction to and subsequent learning of the saving truth in God's Word. Sis. Elma is from the island of Moorea near Tahiti in French Polynesia where there is little to no Christadelphian presence. She was introduced to the truth by Bro. Glenn Haughton (Cranston, RI) while he vacationed there many years ago. Their continued relationship brought Sis. Elma to understand God's word, which she learned over the past year or so with the help of the Australian Christadelphian Bible Mission via weekly Skype classes with Bro. Robert Alderson (Waitakere, Auckland, NZ). Following an interview into the principles and precepts of God's Word conducted via Skype with Bro. Robert and brethren from Cranston, Sis. Elma traveled to Rhode Island where she was promptly baptized into the saving name of Jesus Christ.

We are very happy to also announce three couples who have married in the Lord during the past year. On June 2, 2013, two of our members, Bro. Michael Davey, son of Sis. Gabrielle Davey, and Sis. Sarah Telles were united in marriage at the ecclesial hall in Pittsburg, PA where Sis. Sarah was originally from. On July 20, 2013, Bro. Brandon Entwistle was joined in marriage to Sis. Lisa Zeng from Shanghai China at the Cranston Ecclesial hall. Bro. Brandon has been in Shanghai teaching there and brought Sis. Lisa to a knowledge of the truth. She was recently baptized in Shanghai, while Bro. Brandon's parents, Bro. Ray and Sis. Lori Entwistle (Cranston, RI) were able to watch and participate thru the Skype technology that is a great blessing to us. Bro. Brandon and Sis. Lisa reside in Shanghai. On August 17, 2013, Bro. Glenn Haughton and Sis. Elma Brothers were united in the sight of God at our ecclesial hall marking the third time this year that this type of Christ and the ecclesia was witnessed by many of our brothers and sisters.

After several years of withdrawal from fellowship, we were happy to welcome back around the table of the Lord, our Sis. Bonnie Arnold and Judith Entin. We subsequently commended our Sis. Judith to the care of the brothers and sisters in the South Florida Ecclesia that meets in Pompano Beach, FL where she currently lives. Sis. Bonnie's return to fellowship brought with it the blessing of an immediate addition to our Sunday school, where younger children have been lacking due to our ecclesia's age demographics. We have a large and thriving CYC age group, but a large gap in age between those and the youngest ages that are now being filled in with children born to our members over the past two years.

We have also transferred the membership of two of our members, Bro. Donald Haughton and Sis. Eleanor Soucy, to the Sarasota, FL Ecclesia. We have withdrawn fellowship from Sis. Kaitlyn Nevers.

During a six week stretch the ecclesia experienced the falling asleep in Christ of three of the Lord's called out ones. On May 25, 2013, Sis. Helen Lunsman fell asleep in Christ after a long life of service to our heavenly Father. On June 17, 2013, Bro. Tom Mooney

unexpectedly fell asleep in Christ, just a week or so after what was considered successful heart surgery. On July 4, 2013, our Bro. Al Chamberland fell asleep in Christ after months of sickness due to terminal cancer. Our brothers and our sister now await the return of Jesus Christ to this earth, and we take comfort in the fact that their struggle with the nature of man is now suspended while they sleep in Christ, and that their next moment of awareness will be in the presence of the Lord.

All future ecclesial correspondence should be addressed to Recording Brother at the address of our ecclesial hall, 2104 Cranston Street, Cranston, RI 02920.

*Craig Nevers*

### **KITCHENER-WATERLOO, ON**

We are very happy to report that following a good confession of his faith MATTHEW JOSHUA STAPLEY was baptised into the name of the Lord Jesus Christ on December 1, 2013. We welcomed visitors from neighbouring ecclesias on that day. Bro. Matthew came to a knowledge of the gospel through Sis. Hadassah Hammond. Our prayer is that our brother will be blessed as he continues his walk to the Kingdom.

*Martin J Webster*

### **WICHITA FALLS, TX**

Since last reporting we have welcomed around the table of our absent Lord the following brothers and sisters: Ed Newton (Verdugo Hills, CA); Linda Jones and Rachel Newton (Los Angeles, CA); Stan and Sis Eunice Newton (Pomona, CA); Hannah Tunnell, Emily Tunnell, and Jane Tunnell (San Diego, CA); David Clubb (Simi Hills, CA); Sis Kelly Ellison, Westerly, RI; Ronnie and Kristen Hefner, Pearce and Holly Prater (North Houston, TX); Shannon Milke (West Houston, TX); Gene and Seba Farley, Amanda Buck, Jeremiah Hefner, David Ishman, Cliff Terrell, Ken and Juanez Bearden (Austin Leander, TX); Andrea Banta, Jeremy and Leah Wolfe (Abilene, TX). We thank Bre. R. Hefner, D. Clubb, C. Terrell and K. Bearden for their words of exhortation.

In May, Bro. Ben and Sis. Sarah Beutel were blessed with the birth of Bryson. We are very thankful for our new Sunday school scholar! In October, we welcomed Bro. Jim Cowie (Brisbane, Aust.), and enjoyed a special Bible study on, "Events Surrounding Christ's Return". Certainly there are many necessary changes and wonderful events that will come with the return of our Lord and Saviour! In November, we welcomed Bro. Colin and Sis. Chris Hollamby (Glenlock, Aust.). We thank our Bro. Colin for his class on, "Lessons from the Foundation of the World".

We are also very pleased to announce that in November we witnessed the baptism of MELINDA LEWIS. It has been a joy to watch her grow in an understanding of the things of the kingdom over the last year. We pray that our heavenly Father will bless our new sister in her walk to His kingdom.

Plans are underway God willing, for our annual Spring Gathering at the T4C Camp, April 18-20, 2014. Our Speaker this year is Bro. Frank Abel (Hamilton Book Road, ON) and his subject is "The Ecclesia-A Place of Refuge". We welcome as many as possible to join us in this weekend spent around God's word.

*John A. Clubb*

### **THANKS TO BRO. BRIAN LUKE**

On behalf of the Sarasota, Largo, and Orlando, FL Ecclesias, I would like to thank Bro. Brian Luke (Adelaide, Aust.) for leading us in a very uplifting study of, "The Sermon

on the Mount”, and for his encouraging words of exhortation. I am sure that everyone there felt lifted up by our brother’s words, and came away spiritually refreshed. We were also very happy to enjoy the company of Bro. Jim Luke, Brian’s brother, who accompanied him.

*James Wilkinson*

## **Minute Meditation**

### **Defending the faith involves listening as well as speaking up**

Winston Churchill once said, “Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak; courage is also what it takes to sit down and listen.”

Sometimes we can be so sure of ourselves that we rush to fix a problem that is much more complex than we realize. We may not fully understand the thinking of those who oppose us, and we have not have taken the time we should to listen. As Churchill suggests, there are two parts to courage, and while boldly standing up for right is one part, the part that takes more time is the courage to wait, to talk together and to listen to the opposing point of view. The expression, “Fools rush in where angels fear to tread,” is not a scriptural quote but suggests that the very human characteristic, to shoot first and ask questions later, is not a godly way to act.

An Old Testament example is from the book of Joshua when the tribes assembled to attack their brethren on the other side of the Jordan River, because they thought that they had built an altar to a false god. The armies were ready to fight, but when the leaders went to talk with those who built the altar, they discovered that the altar was not for false worship. It was to witness to all that those on the other side of the river were part of Israel and were faithful to the God of Israel. By talking to and understanding the thinking of those in opposition, war was averted and unity maintained.

We all agree that it is right to stand up for the Truth against error. We want to be ready to defend our faith, explaining to others the good reasons for the hope we share. However, it is possible to sin while defending what we believe to be right. An elderly brother once explained this principle to me: “If you believe that divorce is the unforgivable sin, is it better to kill a spouse you hate, since murder is forgivable?” It is faulty reasoning to do evil that good may come. Just as murder is not a good method to avoid the sin of divorce, so we must not fight wrong by also doing wrong.

The Apostle Paul would not hesitate to stand up for what was right, as he explains to the Thessalonians, “But even after that we had suffered before, and were shamefully entreated, as ye know, at Philippi, we were bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention.” However, Paul was careful in his boldness, as he explains, “For our exhortation was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile: But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so

we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts. For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloak of covetousness; God is witness: Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others, when we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ. But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children: So being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us.”

Do we treat those who do not agree with us as a nurse cherishes her children? Sometimes we may not be this gentle to those who oppose us, but it was Paul’s approach, and it should be ours. The Thessalonians were dear to Paul, he loved them and he worked to convince them of the Truth tenderly, with affection.

Paul gives fatherly advice to his young son in the Lord, Timothy, who was dealing with ecclesial problems. He tells him, “Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, love, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart. But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes.” After pointing out how to avoid some problems, Paul suggests what to do when problems arise. “And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth.”

So Paul’s advice when dealing with disputes was to gently work with both parties, instructing meekly those who are opposing themselves, praying that they will listen to your appeal to bring about peace and unity.

Paul warns us, “For the time is coming when people will not endure sound doctrine, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.” This time may be here, and it is a trial for all concerned. We are promised that we will be tried, for God does try those He loves, but He will never try us more than we can bear. Paul tells us we must “reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching.” We must be careful that we continue to treat others as we want to be treated, and to love those who we feel are opposing themselves and, as a nurse, cherish them and try to help them. Some may be wrong who are still our brothers and sisters in the Lord, and we should want to help them, not avoid them or be unkind, even though we do not agree.

We all share the hope of Jesus returning soon and establishing the kingdom on earth. We want to live forever with our dear brothers and sisters. We need to work at getting along with each other now as we journey over rough ground on the way, seeking out any sheep that may be lost, striving to build each other’s faith. May we have the courage to stand up for the Truth and to listen to those who oppose us to try to help them so that all of us together may be blessed with a place in the Kingdom.

*Robert J. Lloyd*

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*“We are masters of the unsaid words, but slaves of those we let slip out”  
Winston Churchill*

# Coming Events (Lord Willing)

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

## JANUARY 2014

- 17-19 Rogue Valley, OR** Study Weekend with Bro. Jim Cowie (Wilton Brisbane, AUS). The topic is: "The Sabbath — Its Prophecies, Principles, and Prospects". Contact Bro. Randy Yoshida for further information — [yoshida@cpros.com](mailto:yoshida@cpros.com)
- 25 San Diego County, CA** Annual Study day. Bro. Gary Cousens will be speaking on "Overcoming Ourselves". Classes will start at 9:30am. Lunch is provided. Contact Bro. Kurt Wickham, [todayuravida@hotmail.com](mailto:todayuravida@hotmail.com) for more details.

## 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](mailto:register@christadelphianbibleschool.org), or visit our website [www.californiabibleschool.org](http://www.californiabibleschool.org).

## APRIL 2014

- 18-20 New England Brothers' Weekend.** Being a 21st Century "Man of God" by Bro Chris Sales at Camp Joslin, Charlton, MA. Contact Bro Jason Dineen [newengbro@gmail.com](mailto:newengbro@gmail.com), 617-697-7717.
- 18-20 Wichita Falls, TX** Annual Spring Gathering at T4C. Bro. Frank Abel (Hamilton Book Road, ON) will lead us in a study entitled "The Ecclesia — A Place of Refuge". For registration contact Bro. Larry Beutel at [Lbeutel@alasco.com](mailto:Lbeutel@alasco.com).

## JUNE 2014

- 28-July 6 Mid-Atlantic Christadelphian Bible School** at Shippensburg University, Shippensburg, PA. The teachers will be Bro. Jim Cowie (Moreton Bay, Queensland, AUS), Bro. Jay Mayock, Jr. (Hamilton, Book Road, ON) and Bro. Stephen Palmer (Mumbles, Swansea, UK). Contact by e-mail Robin Colby [macbs@live.com](mailto:macbs@live.com) or check our website: <http://www.midatlanticbibleschool.com/>. More information will be forthcoming.

## JULY 2014

- 6-12 Southwest Christadelphian Bible School** at Schreiner University in Kerrville, TX. The teachers will be Bro. Jim Cowie (Moreton Bay, Queensland, AUS), Bro. Stephen Palmer (Mumbles, South Wales, UK), and Bro. Leen Ritmeyer (Cardiff, Museum Place, Wales, UK) Information will be posted on the website: [www.swcbs.com](http://www.swcbs.com).

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*"Once in a while you will stumble upon the truth but most of us manage to pick ourselves up and hurry along as if nothing had happened."*

*"A lie gets halfway around the world before the truth has a chance to get its pants on"*

*Quotes from Winston Churchill*

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**19-27 Midwest Bible School** will be held at Hanover College, Hanover, IN. Speakers and their topics are: Bro. Jim Cowie (Moreton Bay, Brisbane, AUS) "Nazarites unto God" and Bro. Matt Norton, (Lismore, New South Wales, AUS) "Impressions of Christ". For registration information, contact Bro. Mike Livermore, 44943 Yorkshire Drive, Novi, MI, 48375; 248-462-5740, E-mail: mike.live@gmail.com or visit [www.midwestbibleschool.com](http://www.midwestbibleschool.com).

**20-26 Pacific Coast Bible School** will be held at the Idyllwild Pines Camp in Idyllwild, CA. The speakers for this year are: Bro. Mark Vincent (UK), Bro. Rob Oosthuizen (Invercargill, NZ) and Bro. Joseph Palmer (San Diego, CA). The school offers a wonderful environment for the whole family to study God's word and enjoy the fellowship of other brethren and sisters. For registration and more information contact Jeff Gelineau, 567 Astorian Dr., Simi Valley, CA 93065. email: [mail@gelineau.org](mailto:mail@gelineau.org). Register at the website: [www.californiabibleschool.org](http://www.californiabibleschool.org).

**26-Aug 3 Eastern Bible School.** Connecticut College, New London CT; Theme: "That We May Know Him". Bro. Ted Sleeper (San Francisco Peninsula): "That I May Know Him" (adults) and "Challenges to God and Faith" (teens); Bro. Andrew Bramhill (Shirley, UK): "The Lord's Encounters with Women" (adults) and "Questions, Questions, Questions" (teens); Bro. Tec Morgan (Birmingham, UK): "God Has Spoken" (adults) and "The Kingdom of God" (teens). For registration information contact Sis. Cindy Nevers at 18 Sibley Street, Auburn, MA 01501 or [cindynevers@verizon.net](mailto:cindynevers@verizon.net).

**27-Aug 2 Rogue River Bible School.** Topics and teachers are: "The Divided Kingdom" by Bro. Peter King (Worcester, UK); "The Days of Ahab" by Bro. Richard Morgan (Hamilton Book Road, ON); "The Faithful Kings: Rebuilding the Ecclesia" by Bro. Greg Robinson (Thousand Oaks, CA). Contact Bro. Randy Yoshida for further information — [yoshida@cpros.com](mailto:yoshida@cpros.com) For registration, contact Sis. Pat Posey — [robandpatposey@gmail.com](mailto:robandpatposey@gmail.com).

### **AUGUST 2014**

**17-22 Lakefield Bible School** (formerly NFCBS) at Lakefield College. The school is located east of Toronto near Peterborough Ontario, Canada on a beautiful lakeside campus. For information contact Bruce and Barbara Abel: [bnb69abel@hotmail.ca](mailto:bnb69abel@hotmail.ca) or call 519-925-5297. Website [www.nfcbbs.com](http://www.nfcbbs.com).