

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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We thank Bro. Phil Snobelen for his years of service on the Committee. Bro. Phil has chosen to focus on his other duties in the Truth; we wish him Godspeed in all his efforts. We welcome Bro. Duncan Kenzie to the Committee and look forward to working with him. We are fortunate to continue our geographical diversity.

Joe Hill, Chairman

Letters to the editor can be sent to letters@tidings.org.

Please include your name, address, e-mail, and phone.

Submissions under 300 words are encouraged —

the magazine reserves the right to edit all submissions for length and clarity.

Editorial

Joy

“And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord” (Luke 2:10-11).

Introduction

When I was somewhat younger, I really had no idea what a Christadelphian memorial service looked like, because I stayed home with everyone except my father on Sunday afternoons (for it was an afternoon service). Indeed, with my father being recording brother, my mother did not get to memorial, except very occasionally, for perhaps decades. And it was not until I was about 14 that I got to go to the solemn occasion: and there was no doubt what would happen if I made any noise to disturb the quiet. Although the hymns were sung quite well, the tempo was not exactly energetic, and without amplification in a large hall sometimes it was hard to hear what was going on — not that I paid much attention at the time.

So it is not surprising that later, when I came across all the numerous references to “joy” in both the Old and New Testaments, that I wondered where the “joy” was on those occasions. It was not until I went to university that I began to really appreciate the joy and enthusiasm that the Truth involves, which has to a large extent stayed with me ever since.

But as we deal with the travails of this life — illness, unemployment, the disputes within our own community, the political and national strife that fills the headlines— I sometimes wonder where the joy is. As George Carlin said, “Life is tough, and then you die.” So when we remember the death of our Lord Jesus, we also remember his resurrection. However, we should also remember to express the joy that this should engender. The coming of the Messiah, who delivers his people and brings salvation, is the basis for rejoicing in the New Testament. The response of joy, gladness, or happiness should not only be a deep inward feeling, but is to be expressed in celebration when God’s people gather together.

Joy and grace

There are many words for “joy” used in both the Old and New Testaments: but of the occurrences in the KJV New Testament, the Greek word *chara* is the most frequent. And indeed the Greek word for grace, *charis*, is derived from *chairō* (to rejoice), and is closely related to *chara* (joy). What is the connection between grace and joy? Do they not both speak of the involuntary surging of spirit which longs to give and wants to praise? The epistle which is most full of joy is that to the Philippians, which was written in bonds and imprisonment. We should all have experienced the sudden, unpremeditated thrill of finding God’s goodness turn the darkness of pain, loss, and despair into hopefulness and joy. The great witness to God and His Word has always been the deep, inner joy of lives yielded

to Him in humble, loving service at work, at home, and in the ecclesia — in the homely devotion of ordinary life offered to Him, daily.

Do we lack joy?

“And the children of the Levites bare the ark of God upon their shoulders with the staves thereon, as Moses commanded according to the word of the LORD. And David spake to the chief of the Levites to appoint their brethren to be the singers with instruments of musick, psalteries and harps and cymbals, sounding, by lifting up the voice with joy” (1Chron 15:15-16).

The life of discipleship should be a life of increasing joy — joy not only in growing in the faith (e.g., Phil 1:25), but also in helping others grow in the faith. The New Testament is replete with references to the joy of those involved in the mission of the Church and the edification of its members. Paul rejoiced when he saw the successful spread of the gospel (Phil 1:18) and on occasions when he had indication of spiritual growth among the members of the churches (e.g., Philemon 7; 1Thess 3:9; Rom 16:19; Col 2:5). When Paul discerned a positive response on the part of the Corinthians to his tearful visit and sorrowful letter, he told them of his great joy (2Cor 7:4, 7, 9, 13, 16). John likewise rejoiced in the obedience of his community (2John 4; 3John 3, 4).

However, the New Testament is much less explicit than the Old about the manner in which joy is expressed. There is no doubt that joy was understood in terms of a deep inward experience, but this inner disposition quite likely found tangible expression in the Christian communities when they gathered. It would probably be safe to assume that the Old Testament concept of joyous celebration with jubilant singing and praise to God provided a model for the New Testament ecclesias. Paul does stress that joy is to be shared (Rom 12:12; 2Cor 7:13) and even employs a word (*sugchaird*) that emphasizes the shared nature of joy (1Cor 12:26; Phil 2:17-18).

So do we lack joy?

It is true that many of our services lack any obvious outward signs of joy, such as David established when he brought the Ark to Jerusalem. But it might well be that joy is there but it is undiscovered because it is unrecognized. That is to say, we might have a wrong idea of what we are looking for. It may be that we have confused cheerfulness with joy. Our services might be formal; our hymns dull; our methods perfunctory, and therefore we might think there is no joy. Perhaps we shy away from the exuberance that many of the churches around us exhibit, suspecting them of doing it out of habit, out of custom, not out of true Christian joy.

We do believe that people can have joy without shouting, dancing, or falling about. Let us not make a mistake here. There is nothing wrong with cheerfulness, happiness — at home or in the ecclesia. However, under the right conditions cheerfulness is excellent, but it is not the same as joy. Understand also that sometimes joy is expressed in songs and dance and radiant faces. But if these are absent we must not conclude that joy has gone. Joy may be expressed in the ordinary and the orthodox. David danced and so did Habakkuk; Mary sang a great song; the Emmaus disciples went back at the double and Hannah went home with a lilt in her step.

But perhaps our main mistake is equating joy with a great moment of ecstasy which comes in as a result of an unexpected (or expected) occasion, lasts for a brief period, and then is gone. We think of those celebrants who jumped for joy at the Olympics: we think of the joy we experienced at marriage, or the birth of a child. *“A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world” (John 16:21).*

The point we are stressing is that true Christian joy does not depend on a certain circumstances. As Paul says: *“The fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace ...” (Gal 5:22).* One cannot tell whether a certain ecclesia lacks joy by simply measuring the volume of their singing, or the width of their smiles on a Sunday morning. But we can surely tell whether we have true joy by looking at it as part of the fruit of the spirit, the fruit of our discipleship of Christ. Fruit is not a flash-in-the-pan thing. It is permanent, solid, substantial. The growth is real but often imperceptible. Slowness is not failure. It is there on dull days as well as sunshine days. If joy sings, it never tires. There is a song for June and a song for January. The word for joy is a common word. It is not a red-letter word, flaming with passion. It means something steady, quiet, divinely wonderful, like fruit. It means gladness, common delight — a sense of quiet assurance. I remember the joy I felt when I realized that I indeed had faith, and when I was baptized.

But I also remember those times when I have heard an exhortation that re-kindled that sort of joy. Of the excitement when I realize I truly understand what a passage means, one that I have been struggling with. Of the joy I have experienced in convincing others of the Truth.

And let us not forget that life might be tough, but it was tougher for the early disciples, and they showed forth true joy as they spread the Gospel. As Paul says, *“As sorrowful but always rejoicing” (2 Cor. 6:10).* Think of Acts 16. Two men are in prison. Their backs are torn and lacerated. They are chained in the lowest and darkest dungeon, cramped in the stocks — and they are singing. We can be sure they are exercising their discipleship on the highest level. They are not singing just to keep their spirits up; they are singing for joy. The song was the outcome of their gladness. It was the song of the resurrection. The stocks hurt them; their bloody backs pained them, but for some reason they were impelled to offer praise to God. Somehow the joy in their hearts had to find expression in the song, and no pain could muzzle it. The other prisoners heard it because no bars could fetter it.

That was true joy: the joy that caused Jesus to endure the cross: *“Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Heb 12:2).*

So do we have joy? We have to answer for ourselves, but we must remember if we lack joy, we truly lack the fruit of the spirit of Christ.

Peter Hemingray

Exhortation

Rottenness

The sons of Levi

Have you ever had something go “bad” in your refrigerator? It hits you as soon as you open the door. You know what to do: you throw it away. But what do you do when part of your family becomes “spoiled”?

What actions should you take when your children start to act “rotten”? That’s the issue we are going to be looking at in the story of Eli and his sons. This story takes place about 80 or 90 years before David became king and captured Jerusalem, so the Tabernacle was still in the city of Shiloh. Eli had been the priest of Israel at Shiloh for about 40 years, but he had not been an entirely successful father. “*Now the sons of Eli were worthless men. They did not know the LORD*” (1Sam 2:12 ESV).¹

How do you have a priest for a father and not know the LORD?

“It was not that they had no knowledge of God in theory, or were real atheists, but they were so practically; they denied Him in works, they had no love to Him, nor fear of Him, and departed from His ways and worship, as much as if they were entirely ignorant of Him.”²

So, what were the sons of Eli doing that was so evil? We read,

“The custom of the priests with the people was that when any man offered sacrifice, the priest’s servant would come, while the meat was boiling, with a three-pronged fork in his hand, and he would thrust it into the pan or kettle or cauldron or pot. All that the fork brought up the priest would take for himself. This is what they did at Shiloh to all the Israelites who came there” (1Sam 2:13-17).

That’s not what the Law of Moses specified for the priest’s portion...

“The priest shall burn the fat on the altar, but the breast shall be for Aaron and his sons. And the right thigh you shall give to the priest as a contribution from the sacrifice of your peace offerings” (Lev 7:31-32).

There were specific portions that the priest and his family were allowed to partake — the breast and the right thigh, not whatever comes up on the fork.

The fat of the offering

But, the fat of the offering was the most important part — and it was absolutely forbidden to eat. It was God’s portion and had to be completely burned on the altar.

“And he shall offer of the sacrifice of the peace offering an offering made by fire unto the LORD; the fat that covereth the inwards, and all the fat that is upon the inwards, And the two kidneys, and the fat that is on them, which is by the flanks, and the caul above the liver, with the kidneys, it shall he take away. And Aaron’s sons shall burn it on the altar upon the burnt sacrifice,

which is upon the wood that is on the fire: it is an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD... And the priest shall burn them upon the altar: it is the food of the offering made by fire for a sweet savour: all the fat is the LORD's" (Lev 3:3-5, 16).

Why was the fat so important? Because it represented **giving our very best** to God. In fact, the Hebrew word "*cheleb*" is used figuratively to mean the richest, choicest part — as in Numbers, where it describes the portion of Israel's offerings that were to be given to the priests...

"All the best of the oil and all the best of the wine and of the grain, the first-fruits of what they give to the LORD, I give to you" (Num 18:12).

That principle was recognized right from the beginning, by Abel. "*By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain" (Heb 11:4).*

Why was Abel's sacrifice so excellent? Because there was a full understanding and recognition of the principles involved in his sacrifice. And what did he offer?

"And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof" (Gen 4:4), which was the very best that could be given. It was the fat around the internal organs. It represented what was in your heart — that's what matters to God.

The Lord Jesus Christ was the fulfillment of that — we know that all the Old Testament sacrifices pointed to Jesus, the Lamb of God who would take away the sins of the world. But, in the Psalms we see God's portion of the offerings...

"In sacrifice and offering you have not delighted, but you have given me an open ear. Burnt offering and sin offering you have not required. Then I said, 'Behold, I have come; in the scroll of the book it is written of me: I delight to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart'" (Psa 40:6-8).

That was the fat of the offering that Jesus made. He gave his very best to God—he kept His law within his heart. And, isn't that what God wants from us? God wants to see the character of His son growing in our hearts — **that's** His portion — all the fat is the LORD's.

When we come to Samuel, we see the importance of this when we learn what it means to tamper with the portion that belongs to God.

"Moreover, before the fat was burned, the priest's servant would come and say to the man who was sacrificing, 'Give meat for the priest to roast, for he will not accept boiled meat from you but only raw.' And if the man said to him, 'Let them burn the fat first, and then take as much as you wish,' he would say, 'No, you must give it now, and if not, I will take it by force.' Thus the sin of the young men was very great in the sight of the LORD, for the men treated the offering of the LORD with contempt" (1Sam 2:15-17).

Eli as a father

That was the sin of Eli's sons. They robbed God of his portion. And, how did Eli deal with them? What kind of father was he?

“Now Eli was very old, and he kept hearing all that his sons were doing to all Israel, and how they lay with the women who were serving at the entrance to the tent of meeting. And he said to them, ‘Why do you do such things? For I hear of your evil dealings from all the people. No, my sons; it is no good report that I hear the people of the LORD spreading abroad. If someone sins against a man, God will mediate for him, but if someone sins against the LORD, who can intercede for him?’” (1Sam 2:22-25).

What difference did Eli’s words make in the lives of his children? None whatsoever.

“But they would not listen to the voice of their father, for it was the will of the LORD to put them to death” (1Sam 2:25).

Eli could have done something... But he didn’t do anything. He just gave them a “good talking to”. And ultimately his inaction led to their tragic deaths.

The Bible tells us that if we want what is best for our children when they’re rebellious and disobedient, we have got to do more than talk. *“Discipline your son, for in that there is hope; do not be a willing party to his death” (Prov 19:18).* Eli never got the hang of disciplining his kids, so he became a willing party to sons’ deaths.

But Eli didn’t cause his sons destruction ONLY because he didn’t discipline them. He led his sons to destruction because of his own example. We learn this from the words of the prophet which God sent to warn Eli of his condemnation.

“And there came a man of God to Eli and said to him, ‘Thus the LORD has said, ‘Did I indeed reveal myself to the house of your father when they were in Egypt subject to the house of Pharaoh? Did I choose him out of all the tribes of Israel to be my priest, to go up to my altar, to burn incense, to wear an ephod before me? I gave to the house of your father all my offerings by fire from the people of Israel. Why then do you scorn my sacrifices and my offerings that I commanded, and honor your sons above me by fattening yourselves on the choicest parts of every offering of my people Israel?’” (1Sam 2:27-29).

Eli himself was getting fat from the meat that was stolen from the people — and he was a fat man. We learn this where Eli is told of the outcome of the battle with the Philistines...

“As soon as he mentioned the ark of God, Eli fell over backward from his seat by the side of the gate, and his neck was broken and he died, for the man was old and heavy” (1Sam 4:18).

Eli KNEW his sons were robbing the sacrifices, and he partook of their sin. He may have even done it himself as they were growing up.

Lessons for us

- It’s hard to rebuke your kids for sins you don’t want to confront in yourself.
- How do you confront a child for lying when you lie yourself?
- How do you control a child with attitude problems if you can’t control your own temper?

- How do you teach your child to speak kindly when you use foul language yourself?

Now, we need to be honest with ourselves here. None of us are without sin. We have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. And, we are all going to mess up as parents (or grandparents, or uncles and aunts), or as brothers and sisters in Christ.

The problem is not that we have faults — it's that we do not own up to our faults.

The best way to disarm the destructive nature of your own shortcomings is to own up to the fact that you have been wrong, admit that your actions were sinful, and then ask for forgiveness.

“He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy” (Prov 28:13).

But Eli didn't do that. He didn't admit his error. He didn't forsake his own sins. Eli probably just made excuses for why he was like he was, instead of confronting his own failings. And so his sons followed in their father's footsteps... and they all ended up facing the wrath of God.

Eli failed his sons because he refused to discipline them and because he'd already set a bad example for them. But ultimately, Eli's biggest problem was that he loved his kids MORE than he loved God, for in 1Sam 2:29 God's prophet asks Eli "... Why do you honor your sons more than me...?"

Jesus said *“Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me” (Matt 10:37).*

The example of Hannah

What a contrast with the story of Hannah and Samuel in this same chapter!

“And [Hannah] vowed a vow and said, ‘O LORD of hosts, if you will indeed look on the affliction of your servant and remember me and not forget your servant, but will give to your servant a son, then I will give him to the LORD all the days of his life, and no razor shall touch his head’... And in due time Hannah conceived and bore a son, and she called his name Samuel, for she said, ‘I have asked for him from the LORD... Therefore I have lent him to the LORD. As long as he lives, he is lent to the LORD’ ” (1Sam 1:11, 20, 28).

Eli was what would call today an “enabler” and he honored his sons more than God, but Hannah was willing to give her son to God.

Eli's sons died, and they lost their homes and families to the wrath of God

Hannah's son — Samuel — became one of the greatest prophets and leaders of Israel in all the Old Testament.

We read the words of Hannah's prayer:

“And Hannah prayed and said, ‘My heart exults in the LORD; my strength is exalted in the LORD. My mouth derides my enemies, because I rejoice in your salvation. There is none holy like the LORD; there is none besides you; there is no rock like our God’ ” (1Sam 2:1-2).

She doesn't brag about how handsome Samuel is, or how smart he is, or how neat it is that he can say prayers at his young age. She overlooks the gift and gives praise to the Giver. She put God first... she gave Him the fat of the offering, the very best of what she could give, her only son.

God offered His son for us. And we come to remember him now in the bread and the wine. The one who gave his whole life to God, whose law was within his heart, the one who poured out his soul unto death so that we can call God our Father, so that we, like Hannah, can rejoice in his salvation saying...

"There is none holy like the LORD; there is none besides you; there is no rock like our God" (1Sam 2:2).

Randy Davenport, Orlando, FL

Notes:

1. All References are from the ESV.
2. Gill's Commentary.

Preaching Plans For Fall 2014

May is a good time to plan our Autumn/Winter preaching efforts. Soon the Bible Schools will be upon us and it can become difficult to get a quorum together to move decisions forward.

Bible seminars are still the single most widely used method. We would like to invite ecclesias who have had ongoing programs in this area to share some of their ideas through the pages of the Tidings. In fact, we encourage submitting your ideas on any preaching effort in the hope that others may find them useful in their ecclesias.

We are especially interested in ideas about how to increase attendance. We can't accomplish much if the chairs are empty. But we also need fresh thinking on other components that go to making up a spiritually profitable preaching effort. From advertisement design to content to choice of location to making the transition to our ecclesial hall there are some methods that work better than others and no doubt some of us have learned some valuable lessons that others will find beneficial.

[Along these lines be sure and read the article in this issue from the Brampton ON ecclesia. Next month we plan to have an article from the Reseda CA ecclesia. Both of these ecclesias have had ongoing seminars that have been very productive]

Financial assistance is available from the Simi Hills Preaching Fund (SHPF) for up to 50% of your projected expenses. These funds are not unlimited and requests are generally handled based on the order received.

SHPF would also like to encourage a few preaching efforts that may try to reach people in a way we have not tried before. If the proposed approach has ecclesial approval, the SHPF percentage towards the necessary funding can be higher.

Please submit your preaching ideas to The Tidings. Funding requests should be addressed to SHPF at ksommerville@unitedagencies.com.

Bible Study

The Way of Cain — (8) Enoch versus Lamech

Thus far, the comparison between Cain and Seth's descendants has revealed that there were two distinct groups, which remained more or less separate from one another for four generations. In the 6th generation, however, the two groups began to marry, which initiated a decline in worship. The increased interaction between the two groups, and their opposing ideologies, morals, and behavior, inevitably resulted in a clash. The first recorded instance of violence between these two groups occurred in the 7th generation, when Lamech attempted to murder Enoch.

Unlike most of the individuals mentioned in the genealogies, Genesis presents the details of Lamech and Enoch in greater detail.

Lamech:

“Methushael was the father of Lamech. Lamech married two women, one named Adah and the other Zillah. Adah gave birth to Jabal; he was the father of those who live in tents and raise livestock. His brother's name was Jubal; he was the father of all who play the harp and flute. Zillah also had a son, Tubal-Cain, who forged all kinds of tools out of bronze and iron. Tubal-Cain's sister was Naamah. Lamech said to his wives, ‘Adah and Zillah, listen to me; wives of Lamech, hear my words. I have killed a man for wounding me, a young man for injuring me. If Cain is avenged seven times, then Lamech seventy-seven times’ ” (Gen 4:18-24).¹

Enoch:

“When Jared had lived 162 years, he became the father of Enoch. And after he became the father of Enoch, Jared lived 800 years and had other sons and daughters. Altogether, Jared lived 962 years, and then he died. When Enoch had lived 65 years, he became the father of Methuselah. And after he became the father of Methuselah, Enoch walked with God 300 years and had other sons and daughters. Altogether, Enoch lived 365 years. Enoch walked with God; then he was no more, because God took him away” (Gen 5:18-24).²

Lamech and Enoch were both born in the 7th generation, but despite being contemporaries, Lamech was much older than Enoch, a detail that will become important to the narrative. Moreover — and this is key to understanding the events of Lamech and Enoch's lives — Gen 4:18-24 and 5:18-24 are not separate stories, but rather two different perspectives concerning the same narrative.

Lamech: the polygamist

One of Lamech's defining characteristics, or one of the few details we are told about him, is that he took two wives: Adah and Zillah (Gen 4:18). Since polygamy is not previously mentioned in Genesis, we may assume that this was the first occurrence.

Polygamy violated one of the first laws God gave to humans: “A man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh” (Gen 2:24). The Creator intended men and women to be wed to one another. This is partly because this relationship — one man with one woman — mirrors the relationship between us and God;³ Christ and God;⁴ and Christ and his ecclesia.⁵

Lamech’s brazen contempt for God’s marital ideal caught the attention of a young man. In Gen 4:23, Lamech tells his wives: “I have killed⁶ a man for wounding me, a young man for injuring me.” This is an account of a violent encounter that Lamech had with an unidentified young man. That young man was none other than Enoch.

Recall that Lamech and Enoch were contemporaries. In spite of having both been born in the 7th generation, Enoch would have been considerably younger than Lamech, since he was a descendant of Seth. Adam’s third son was born *after* Abel’s death, and was therefore much younger than Cain, for he had reached sexual maturity when he made an offering to the Lord. By the time Seth had reached sexual maturity, Cain had already begun having children. This made Cain’s descendants older, though contemporaries. Thus Enoch, a descendant of Seth, would have been a *young man* in relation to Lamech, a descendant of Cain, yet both were considered to be part of the same generation.

This does not in itself prove that the young man mentioned by Lamech was Enoch (Gen 4:24). More evidence needs to be examined in order to convincingly show that the only logical candidate for the young man’s identity was Enoch.

Enoch: God’s Mouthpiece

Enoch’s name means to “begin” or “dedicate.” It is indicative of his “dedication” to please God, which is reflected in Heb 11:5: “*For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God.*” Likewise, Gens 5:24 declares: “*Enoch walked with God.*” Christ explained that “pleasing” or “walking with God” is the equivalent of obeying His commands (John 14:23). Thus Enoch’s name is a reflection of his efforts to obey God’s word.

Another possibility to the meaning of Enoch’s name is that it reflected his efforts in the 7th generation to “begin” or “dedicate” himself to reviving an ecclesia that had begun to decline in the 6th generation. How might he have done this? By preaching and exhorting from the word of God. The Hebrew root word *hmk* also yields the derivative *hek*, which means “speech, mouth, palate” — apt descriptions of a man who was a prophet of God. In his epistle, Jude⁷ includes one of Enoch’s prophecies:

“See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones to judge everyone, and to convict all the ungodly of all the ungodly acts they have done in the ungodly way, and of all the harsh words ungodly sinners have spoken against Him” (v. 14).

Jude notes that Enoch condemned “*ungodly ways.*” Polygamy is an “*ungodly way,*” since it does not fit within God’s framework for marriage (Gen 2:24). As a prophet, it is doubtful that Enoch would have remained silent in the face of Lamech’s disregard for God’s command to be monogamous. Just as the prophets

of old condemned the wickedness around them, Enoch, as God's "mouth, palate, speech," would have chastised Lamech for polygamy.

What effect might Enoch's condemnation of polygamy had upon Lamech? Doubtless it would have embarrassed Lamech and injured his pride, but that assumes Lamech was a prideful man. So, was he?

Lamech: Wounded Pride

One only has to look at Lamech's words in Genesis 4:23-24 to realize what a prideful man he was. A Genesis commentator, Charles John Ellicott, wrote that they represent a "boastful poem" in "praise of armed violence and bloodshed" that "gives utterance to [Lamech's] pride" (1897:32). In addition to the prideful nature of the poetic words he spoke,⁸ the answer to whether or not Lamech was a prideful man may be found in the meaning of his name.

Lamech or *lmk* is a combination that does not appear in Hebrew. Consequently his name has been shrouded in mystery. Strong's Concordance suggests that *lmk* is "from an unused root of uncertain meaning," but nevertheless suggests that his name be translated as "powerful" based on contextual evidence: Lamech had two wives, which Strong's believes to be indicative of his sexual prowess, and he had the ability to take someone's life, as demonstrated by the fact that he either killed or attempted to kill a young man (Gen 4:23). Such is Strong's justification for translating Lamech as "powerful." *Gesenius's Lexicon* (1813-1875) arrives at a similar conclusion, but bases its decision on tradition: "Lamech, the son of Methushael, of the race of Cain; well known for his misuse of arms, which his sons had invented"⁹ *Gesenius* refers to Lamech's misuse of weapons, which his son, Tubal-Cain, forged. Gen 4:22 affirms that Tubal-Cain was an artificer of all kinds of metal tools, perhaps weapons as well. However, there is no indication in Genesis or elsewhere in the Bible that Lamech "accidentally" killed anyone, nor was it through the misuse of his son's weapons. This is pure fantasy; the result of scholars relying on tradition and not the Bible for an explanation.

Another commentator¹⁰ suggests that Lamech's name is a combination of the Hebrew word *le* meaning "to" and *makak* (or *mkk* without the vowels) meaning "to be humbled" or "brought low," which is undoubtedly a reference to wounded pride. Prov 29:23 says that "a man's pride brings him low, but a man of lowly spirit gains honor." The following example involving King David demonstrates how a man's pride is able to "bring him low."

"When the prophet Nathan told David about a man who had slept with another man's wife and murdered the woman's husband, he was filled with indignation: David burned with anger against the man and said to Nathan, 'As surely as the LORD lives, the man who did this deserves to die!'" (2 Sam 12:5).

David's pride made him feel justified in sentencing the man to death, but when Nathan revealed that this man was none other than the king himself, he was humbled. Upon reflection of these events, David likened the injury to his pride as a *physical wound*:

“My guilt has overwhelmed me like a burden too heavy to bear. My wounds fester and are loathsome because of my sinful folly. I am bowed down and brought very low; all day long I go about mourning” (Psa 38:4-6).

Thus, if wounded pride can be likened to a physical injury, then it is possible that the nature of Lamech’s injury was also wounded pride; a conclusion supported by one of the meanings of Lamech’s name: to be “brought low” or “humbled.”

A tense situation

Having been chastised by Enoch for his disregard of God’s law concerning the unity of marriage, Lamech reacted violently. In Gen 4:23 there is a footnote in the New International Version that suggests the phrase, “*I have killed a man,*” may also be translated in the future tense as: “*I will kill a man.*” The possible shift in tense provides another clue that Enoch was the object of Lamech’s wrath.

Genesis and Hebrews both state that Enoch did not die: “*Enoch walked with God and then he was no more because God took him away,*” (Gen 5:24) and, “*He did not experience death*” (Heb 11:5). But if Enoch was mortal, how could he have escaped death?

There have been many different explanations for Enoch’s disappearance, but the simplest, most logical, and Biblically-sound answer may be this: the “death” being referred to by Hebrews is not a reference to the inevitable death that all mortals eventually succumb to, but rather “death” refers to a specific form of death, such as murder. As such, Gen 4:23 could be read as: “*Enoch walked with God and he was no more because God saved him from being killed,*” and Heb 11:5 as, “*Enoch did not experience murder.*”

This is not an improbable explanation, since there are other instances in the Bible when God miraculously intervened to save someone from the threat of violence. One such example is in Acts 12, which describes how Peter, who was placed in prison and who likely would have stayed there until he was killed — just as James, the brother of John was imprisoned by Herod and put to death (Acts 12:1-2) — was led out by an angel:

“Peter followed him out of the prison, but he had no idea that what the angel was doing was really happening; he thought he was seeing a vision. They passed the first and second guards and came to the iron gate leading to the city. It opened for them by itself, and they went through it. When they had walked the length of one street, suddenly the angel left him. Then Peter came to himself and said, ‘Now I know without a doubt that the Lord has sent his angel and rescued me from Herod’s clutches and from everything the Jewish people were hoping would happen’ ” (Acts 12:9-11).

Just as God saved Peter from the threat of violence, he may also have removed Enoch from a similarly threatening situation.

In Enoch’s case, that situation involved the threat of murder, and, as has already been discussed, the murderer was none other than Lamech. In Gen 4:23, he conveyed to his wives his intent to kill Enoch: “*I will kill a man for wounding [my*

pride], a young man [Enoch] for injuring me [my pride].” But Lamech was unable to carry out his threat because the LORD “took Enoch away,” so that “*he could not be found*” (Gen 5:24; Heb 11:5). The Bible never reveals where God took Enoch or for how long; all we are told is that Enoch disappeared, which prevented his murder.¹¹

Lamech and Enoch reinterpreted

As discussed, scholars have had difficulty translating the meaning of Lamech’s name. Moreover, they have been unable to describe the nature of Lamech’s “injury” or identify the “young man” in Gen 4:23-24. Yet, as has been shown, all of these questions can be satisfactorily explained by viewing Gen 4:18-24 and 5:18-24 as two different perspectives on the same story. Based on the evidence presented thus far, the following summary is an attempt to merge the two perspectives into a single narrative:

In the 7th generation, Methushael, a descendant of Cain, became the father of Lamech. Many years later, Jared, a descendant of Seth, became the father of Enoch. When Enoch grew up, he became a righteous man and walked with God, pleasing Him by obeying His teachings. As God’s prophet, Enoch spoke out against the increasing wickedness on the earth: “See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of His holy ones to judge everyone, and to convict all the ungodly of all the ungodly acts they have done in the ungodly way, and of all the harsh words ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.” In particular, Enoch chastised Lamech for marrying two women, Adah and Zillah. In doing so, he injured Lamech’s pride. Enraged, Lamech declared his intent to murder Enoch: “Adah and Zillah, listen to me; wives of Lamech, hear my words. I will kill Enoch for chastising me, this young man for wounding my pride.” Before he could carry out his threat, however, God concealed Enoch so that Lamech could not find him. In doing so, God spared Enoch from suffering Abel’s fate.

Cain avenged

“If Cain is avenged seven times, then Lamech seventy-seven times” (Gen 4:24).

A final component of the story of Lamech and Enoch involves Cain. Lamech knew that if he killed Enoch, he would create in others the desire for revenge. He acknowledges this when he says, “*I will be avenged seventy-seven times.*” This is an echo of the words God spoke to Cain: “*If anyone kills Cain, he will suffer vengeance seven times over*” (Gen 4:15). Lamech’s use of a similar-sounding phrase reveals an important connection to his ancestor.

Cain and Lamech were very much alike: they refused to obey God’s teachings because their pride blinded them to godly instruction, and they were both men of violence. As has been shown, there is a direct relationship between murder and vengeance, since killing creates in others a desire for revenge. Thus, because they were men of violence, they also were susceptible to vengeance.

In discussing Cain in previous articles, the narrative concluded with Cain building a settlement in Nod with his sister-wife, who gave birth to their first son, Enoch

(Gen 4:17). However, Cain's story does not end there. Lamech reveals that "*Cain was avenged.*" We may wonder how this was possible, since God had "*put a mark on Cain so that no one who found him would kill him*" (Gen 4:15). But as discussed, the mark was not a protective talisman; Cain could be killed.¹² God alluded to this possibility when He said: "*If anyone kills Cain...*" Lamech's account makes it clear that Cain was indeed murdered. Furthermore, Lamech reveals that the avenger's motive for killing Cain was vengeance: "*If Cain is avenged seven times...*" The conclusion is that Cain was killed to avenge the murder of Abel. The avenger is not identified. However, it may be that Lamech believed that the person who killed Cain was descendant of Seth, who was the spiritual inheritor of his brother, Abel's, legacy. Thus when Lamech professed his intent to kill Enoch, he did so in the belief that he was avenging Cain, since Enoch was a descendant of Seth.

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Notes:

1. Also of note: Genesis devotes exactly six verses in each genealogy to Lamech and to Enoch. Moreover, Lamech and Enoch each occupy the same numerical position within their respective genealogies: Lamech is referred to in Genesis 4:18-24 and Enoch is referred to in Genesis 5:18-24. (All references are from the NIV.)
2. Ibid.
3. "*And do not call anyone on earth 'father,' for you have one Father and He is in heaven*" (Matt. 23:9).
4. "*I and the Father are one*" (John 10:30).
5. "*For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother and shall be joined unto his wife, and the two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church*" (Eph 5:22-32).
6. As will be shown, "killed" can also be translated as "will kill" (NIV), which is an important detail when it comes to identifying Enoch as the "young man." Enoch was not killed, but he was "taken from this life, so that he did not experience death" (Heb 11:5). Therefore Lamech did not kill Enoch, but he certainly may have tried to do so.
7. There is much speculation surrounding Jude's use of Enoch. Was he referring to the "seventh from Adam," the actual antediluvian prophet, or was he quoting from the apocryphal Book of Enoch for some other purpose – perhaps, as some have suggested, to refute a popular myth about the prophet or to discredit the Book of Enoch, which was in circulation at the time of Christ? I have no doubt that Jude, who spoke with divine inspiration, was speaking about the actual prophet, since the context of his letter is on the ancient world, and includes other such ancient examples, such as an allusion to Korah's rebellion (vs. 5-6, 11); Sodom and Gomorrah (v. 7); and Cain and Balaam (v. 11). Any coincidence between Jude and the Book of Enoch is either coincidence, or Jude and the unknown author of the Book of Enoch were drawing from an original source, now lost (just like the lost book: The Book of the Wars of the Lord (Num 21:14-15). This may account for the slight differences between the wording used by Jude and the author of the Book of Enoch.
8. Lamech probably did not phrase his words in this exact way, rather the author of Genesis included a poetic version of the words Lamech spoke, which had survived and was popular at the time of the author's writing.
9. This particular tradition is thought to have originated from a poem entitled, "Song of the Sword," which was apparently included in one of the lost books of the Bible, The Book of the Wars of the Lord (Num 21:14-15). There is no Biblical evidence to suggest that this lost book ever contained this poem however.
10. The commentator is Abram-Publications.com, an online publication. It is not a scholarly publication. While some would dismiss any information the site contains outright – especially given its central thesis – it does contain some interesting ideas. And, as has been shown, older, well-established sources, such as Strong's and Gesenius, have fared little better in providing Biblically-based explanations of Lamech and the events surrounding him in Gen 4:23-24.

11. In spite of God's intervention to miraculously free Peter from Herod, the disciple eventually died. His death was foreshadowed by Christ in John 21:19. Likewise, in spite of God's intervention to save Enoch from Lamech, Enoch eventually died, since this is the fate of all of God's creatures: *"Man's fate is like that of the animals; the same fate awaits them both: As one dies, so dies the other. All have the same breath; man has no advantage over the animal. Everything is meaningless. All go to the same place; all come from dust, and to dust all return"* (Eccl 3:19-20). It is clear from the Preacher's use of the word "all" that no one, not even Enoch, escaped natural death. However, it is evident from the example of Peter that God will, on occasion, rescue people from the threat of violence. It is therefore possible that Enoch was likewise temporarily spared Lamech's violence, only to die at some later date of natural causes.
12. The mark was merely meant to educate others about the relationship between murder and vengeance and, subsequently, act as deterrence.

Life of Timothy

(2) "Thou hast fully known"

Paul initially went to Timothy's hometown of Lystra during his First Missionary Journey. Barnabas accompanied him. The two arrived in approximately 48 AD, which was about two years into the Journey. Although it is not possible to tell exactly how old Timothy was at the time, it is reasonable to assume that he was about 18. Paul was probably in his early 40s.

There is evidence that Paul was quite sick during this time. When he reflected back on this period in his Epistle to the Galatians, he recalled: *"Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you at the first. And my temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus. Where is then the blessedness ye spake of? for I bear you record, that, if it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me"* (Gal 4: 13-15). Some commentators believe that Paul was suffering from the effects of malaria during his time in Lystra and the other cities of Galatia. That could have affected his eyesight as well as his overall health. But it did not deter Paul from doing the work that was before him.

In addition to Paul's poor health, Paul and Barnabas had to endure many perils and hardships because of their preaching activities in the region. That could have been why their young travelling companion, John Mark, had left them and returned to Jerusalem (Acts 13:13). One of the dangers associated with preaching during that time was mob violence, and it threatened to erupt in Iconium, the town that Paul and Barnabas visited just before going to Lystra.

There was a plot in Iconium by the opponents of the Gospel to humiliate and kill Paul and Barnabas. The two learned of it and fled: *"And as a violent attempt was made, both by the GENTILES and Jews, with their RULERS, to wantonly disgrace and stone them, knowing it, they fled to the CITIES of LYCAONIA, Lystra and Derbe, and the SURROUNDING COUNTRY; and there they proclaimed glad tidings"* (Acts 14: 5-7, *Emphatic Diaglott*). Lystra, which was about 18 miles away, was the next town they visited. It was joined to Iconium by a military road.

Paul's preaching in Lystra bore fruit. 2Tim 1:5 indicates that Timothy's grandmother was the first member of his family to be converted. That verse states that

“the unfeigned faith” dwelt “first” in her. Given Timothy’s close relationship with her and his love of the Word, it is reasonable to assume that he would have quickly shown interest in Paul’s message. Since Timothy suffered from ill health, he might have been particularly intrigued by Paul, who even though he was sick, was still filled with great inner strength, energy, and determination.

Many years later, Paul reminded Timothy of the events that occurred in Lystra and the surrounding cities during his First Missionary Journey. That suggests that Timothy knew Paul during this period, and it indicates that he was among the early converts in Lystra: *“But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience, Persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me”* (2Tim 3: 10-11).

It was not long after meeting Paul that Timothy witnessed the dangers that could come with the work of spreading the Gospel. Acts 14:8-9 records that there was a crippled man in Lystra who Paul perceived had faith to be healed. The Apostle cried with a loud voice for him to stand, which he did (Acts 14:10). The people of Lystra were astounded when they saw the man walking and leaping. They began to cry out that the gods had visited the city in human form: *“And when the people saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in the speech of Lycaonia, The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men”* (Acts 14: 11).

The people called Barnabas “Zeus” and Paul “Hermes” (Acts 14:12). Their reaction harmonizes with historical evidence. Archeological discoveries indicate that the joint worship of Zeus and Hermes was common in the area, and there were local legends about those two gods appearing to people in human form. The shouts from the people about them being gods were in Lycaonian, which Paul and Barnabas evidently did not understand or they would have stopped the people immediately.

Paul and Barnabas realized that something was amiss when the priest of Zeus came with oxen that he intended to sacrifice to them (Acts 14:13). They rent their clothes to get the people’s attention and to express their objection to what was about to occur (Acts 14:14). They tried to reason with the people about the nature and character of God and to demonstrate that, as people, they were no different from them. Their arguments scarcely restrained the people of Lystra from sacrificing to them (Acts 14:19).

The people of the Lystra were either extremely embarrassed or very disappointed in Paul and Barnabas because they quickly turned on them. Jews from the nearby cities of Pisidian Antioch and Iconium arrived, and they persuaded the people of Lystra to stone Paul. Thinking that they had killed him, the people of Lystra dragged Paul’s limp body out of the city: *“But Jews came from Antioch and Iconium, and having persuaded the crowds, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing that he was dead”* (Acts 14: 19, ESV).

The disciples in Lystra, which probably included Timothy and his family, were very courageous following the attack on Paul. Unafraid and unashamed to be identified

with him, they gathered around his body outside of the city (Acts 14:20). Then an incredible event occurred. Paul rose up, and he returned to the city.

Paul quickly resumed his work. The next day he set off to preach in the city of Derbe: Howbeit, as the disciples stood round about him, he rose up, and came into the city: and the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe (Acts 14: 20).

Seeing Paul respond as he did must have had a tremendous impact on young Timothy. The boldness and strength coming from Paul's sick and battered frame must have been so moving and encouraging to him as he considered his own physical limitations. We can imagine Timothy yearning to learn more from Paul and wanting to follow in his footsteps.



Timothy and the rest of the new disciples in Lystra probably marveled at what Paul did next. Having traveled to Derbe, Paul had moved in the direction of Tarsus, his hometown. Given his condition and his recent experiences, it would have been natural for Paul to continue in the direction of his hometown and then on to Syrian Antioch where he could conclude his Journey, rest, and recover. But Paul consistently put the work of the Truth and the needs of his brothers and sisters above himself. Instead of moving towards his home after his time in Derbe, he moved away from it. He reversed course. He returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Pisidian Antioch — with all of their dangers — in order to strengthen and encourage the new disciples there:

“And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch, Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God” (Acts 19: 21-22).

What an amazing role model he was to Timothy!

As Paul stood before the Galatian disciples, they would see in the wounds that he bore from his stoning at Lystra, an illustration of his teaching that *“we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.”* He later made reference to those injuries in his Epistle to the Galatians: *“From henceforth let no man trouble me: for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus”* (Gal 6: 17).

While he was in Lystra and the other cities in the area, Paul organized the ecclesias and prepared them for the next few years when he would not be with them: *“And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed”* (Acts 14: 23).

It was likely during this time that the prophecies were given that indicated Timothy’s abilities. Paul made reference to those prophecies when he wrote his First Epistle to Timothy: *“This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare”* (1Tim 1: 18).

The laying on of hands and the imparting of Spirit gifts were part of the process of ordaining elders (1Tim 5: 22). It is likely, therefore, that it was during his second trip to Lystra that Paul laid his hands on Timothy. It appears that he was guided to do so by the prophecies that were given about Timothy: *“Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery”* (1Tim 4: 14). Paul referred to laying his hands on Timothy in his second epistle to him: *“Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands”* (2Tim 1: 6). The particular gift that Timothy received is not explicitly identified. But based on the context of the passages in which his gift is mentioned, it is reasonable to assume that he was given the gift of prophecy, which enabled him to speak *“unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort”* (1Cor 14:3).

Having strengthened and encouraged the new ecclesias in Galatia, Paul departed. He made his way back to Syrian Antioch. Acts 14:28 records *“and there they abode long time.”* He was probably there about two years.

The lives of Timothy and the other new disciples in the area would not have been easy during that period. Paul had warned them that they would experience “much tribulation” because of their beliefs. They knew from seeing him what that could mean. They were in a dangerous area. They lived among determined opponents of the Gospel who were willing to use violence against them to try to suppress Christianity. But Timothy and the members of his ecclesia also had a wonderful hope; they had been strengthened by the Holy Spirit gifts, and they had witnessed the sterling examples of Paul and Barnabas.

In the next article in the series, we will consider how Timothy spent his time during the two years that Paul was away and the events that occurred following his return to Lystra.

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Youth Speaks

Jonathan the Faithful Prince: (12) Love and Envy

In an instant, Jonathan's life had drastically changed. As he handed his armor, his robe, and his weaponry to the young shepherd from Bethlehem, he effectively pledged him his support. He had heard Samuel's words about the end of Saul's kingdom, and he had believed them, but now he was living them!

Thus, in a beautiful show of humility, Jonathan willingly gave to David the symbols of his royalty — knowing that he was submitting to a man whose heart was filled with a love for God and His ways. All throughout the battle between David and Goliath, Jonathan had seen this. David spoke of the miracles which Yahweh had performed when he sought to rescue the sheep from the paw of the lion and the bear. David had gone out to fight against the uncircumcised and he didn't fight for his own glory, but for the glory of God's nation. Truly, he was the man of whom Samuel spoke — the man after God's own heart — and the man to whom Jonathan would ungrudgingly give the right to the kingdom. He was God's choice, and thus he was Jonathan's choice.

For Jonathan, it would appear as though his recognition of David's future role was almost immediate. Just after David spoke to Saul about the battle and about his family, Jonathan took him aside and gave him his symbols of royalty. However, this recognition took slightly longer for Jonathan's vain-glorious father — and the reaction to it was extremely different. Nevertheless, when Saul didn't realize that David was the one who would take his throne, Saul, just like Jonathan, exalted him:

“And David went out whithersoever Saul sent him, and behaved himself wisely: and Saul set him over the men of war, and he was accepted in the sight of all the people, and also in the sight of Saul's servants” (1Sam 18:5).

At first, Saul was in awe of David's military prowess — so much so, that he made him one of the major commanders in his army! David wasn't simply given a group of men who followed him, he was “*set over the men of war.*” As it would sound, he became one of the commanders. Saul, immediately recognizing his abilities, promoted him to one of the highest ranks.

Thus, for a time, David's presence within the court of Saul was quite positive. However, that would soon change. As the time passed, it quickly became clear to Saul that it wasn't his firstborn son who would take the throne from him. Instead, he began to hear the young maidens sing songs about the accomplishments of the shepherd boy from Bethlehem:

“And Saul was very wroth, and the saying displeased him; and he said, They have ascribed unto David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed but thousands: and what can he have more but the kingdom? And Saul eyed David from that day and forward” (1Sam 18:8-9).

While Saul had once felt his murderous envy towards his son, he soon began to realize that there was one in his courts who was more likely than Jonathan to be the chosen successor. In the eyes of the nation, Saul had slain a great number of people — but David had slain even more! Yet to add to Saul's fears, all throughout the country the people were beginning to find themselves attracted to David — even Saul's servants were happy to have him in their midst (1Sam 18:5).

Suddenly, while he had once loved David, Saul wanted him dead. Every moment, he was suspicious of what David might do. Eventually, his paranoia became so overwhelming that he unexpectedly tried to kill David twice while David played music for him (1Sam 18:10-11). However, it would seem likely that this attempted murder was dismissed because of Saul's known affection for David, and instead attributed to the mental illness that was plaguing him. Thus, while David was almost slain by the king, no one seemed to do anything. Instead, he continued to interact with Saul and serve him faithfully.

Hidden hatred

As time went on, Saul's evil intent toward David remained concealed. The adverse circumstances began to stack up, but they were never outrightly against David:

- Soon Saul removed David from his exalted position in the army and made him a captain over a thousand (1Sam 18:13).
- When, according to Saul's word at the battle against Goliath, David was supposed to marry Merab, Saul's daughter, she was given to another man (1Sam 18:19).
- Instead, David was made to marry Saul's younger daughter Michal — a woman of whom Saul *said* "I will give him her, that she may be a snare to him" (1Sam 18:21).
- In pledging Michal to David, Saul purposefully sent him and his men into battle against one hundred Philistines — a task which was meant to destroy David (1Sam 18:25).

All of Saul's attacks upon David were behind the scenes and entirely hidden from the eyes of the people — including David himself. When the message of Saul's required dowry for Michal came to David, the future king didn't see the request as a threat but instead gladly took up the challenge (1Sam 18:26). The same can be said for the general populace in Israel; as Saul's jealousy and hatred towards David began to subtly manifest itself, no one really noticed. On the outside, it would have seemed to them that Saul and David worked together. Instead of seeing Saul's envy, they likely saw that David was still given a high position in the army, he went out and fought battles on the king's behalf, and he had just married into the king's family — upon Saul's prompting (1Sam 18:18,23). If they had known Saul's true feelings towards David, they would have been shocked! In fact, this was the result a few chapters later when Ahimelech, the high priest, faced Saul's wrath for helping David:

"And Saul said unto him, Why have ye conspired against me, thou and the son of Jesse, in that thou hast given him bread, and a sword, and hast

enquired of God for him, that he should rise against me, to lie in wait, as at this day? Then Ahimelech answered the king, and said, And who is so faithful among all thy servants as David, which is the king's son in law, and goeth at thy bidding, and is honorable in thine house?" (1Sam 22:13-14).

Saul was furious with Ahimelech — the priest had given David both bread and Goliath's sword! Nevertheless, when Saul castigated Ahimelech for his aid to David, Ahimelech was entirely confused! He answered Saul by saying that he had merely helped the king's most loyal and faithful servant! How had he done anything wrong? In his mind, there was no one more dedicated to Saul than David, and Saul loved David for that trustworthy service. He couldn't understand why Saul was so upset.

Such was the situation in Israel at the time. David's circumstances were quickly, but subtly, declining, and no one in the nation had any idea. Saul kept his feelings to himself, but he continued to do whatever he could behind the scenes so that he might somehow innocently effect David's death.

It, again, is a scary picture of what happens when we are overcome by envy. Silently, Saul wished ill upon this man who had been chosen by God. Constantly he plotted how he might bring about David's death. And sadly, while we might not go to such extremes as Saul, we sometimes do the same thing. How often do we find ourselves being frustrated by a brother or sister, and wishing that somehow things just wouldn't work out for them? How often do we find ourselves wanting to see a brother or sister fail — even just a little bit — because then, perhaps, they would learn to be as "righteous" as we are?

Perhaps it isn't an attitude that plagues you — but at least for me, envy (or pride!) can be a powerful emotion. And, oftentimes it brings about feelings towards brothers or sisters that we never should have had. Even more, sometimes, if we allow it to continue, it begins to manifest itself in the exact way that it appeared in Saul's life — at first it starts out small and we can hide it, but as time passes, we start talking to other people about how bothered we are by these certain brethren. We try to create sides and we want to bring our friends on our "side."

Going public

Such was exactly what happened to Saul.

As the days went by, it became harder and harder for Saul to hold his feelings inside. David continued to become more and more respected amongst the people — and Saul simply couldn't deal with that. Perhaps as a result of Michal's dowry (one hundred Philistine foreskins), the Philistines mustered their men for battle (1Sam 18:27-30) — and as a result of the battle, David was once again exalted in the eyes of Israel. Finally, after this last battle, it would seem as though Saul could no longer merely try to destroy David behind the scenes.

For some of those who were close to him or who were Saul's servants, his hatred of David started to become fairly clear. Whereas his first openly murderous act against David — the throwing of the javelins — was probably attributed to his temporarily inhibited judgment, his second openly murderous act was of an

altogether different nature than that of the first. The original attempt at pinning David to the wall had been a relatively simple affair: Saul had picked up the javelin, thrown it, missed, picked it up again, thrown it, and missed again. After the second miss, the event was over; Saul didn't chase David, didn't tell the palace guards to seize him, and didn't really pursue the issue or involve anyone else. It was over as quickly as it started, and would have seemed to simply be a quick flare of the temper. Yet the second act was quite different, and would have likely been a shock to many — especially Jonathan:

“And Saul spake to Jonathan his son, and to all his servants that they should kill David” (1Sam 19:1).

The hatred which Saul had sought to hide again became visible — and this act was much less excusable than the one previous. This time, Saul's thoughts were clearly premeditated. It wasn't simply a quick flare of the temper. Saul had plainly thought about ways in which he could kill David and settled upon the involvement of his son and others in his courts. Thus, he presented his plan to Jonathan and all of his servants — they needed to kill David. Clearly Saul had no idea about the covenant which the two men had made, otherwise he wouldn't have asked for Jonathan's help in David's execution.

How this must have stunned so many in Saul's palace, especially Jonathan! Just as the rest of Israel, Jonathan had essentially been unaware of his father's loathing of David. The relationship between Saul and David had been so good — Saul loved David and David was even part of Saul's family. Jonathan had likely been filled with excitement when David joined their family — here was another man who could try to influence his father for good! But now the king wanted him dead. What a sad statement this would have been for Jonathan to hear from the lips of his father! Constantly Jonathan hoped that he would be able to help effect some type of repentance and change within Saul — he had stayed back from the battle against the Amalekites and had refrained from charging against Goliath, but clearly, despite Jonathan's efforts to help, the envious king had not changed. When he suspected his son of being the future king, he had no qualms about spilling his blood; the same was true when he realized that David was the one who had been prophesied by Samuel — Saul would do whatever he could to keep the throne and annihilate any challengers. Sadly, Jonathan's faithful presence and influence hadn't helped his father to change or repent. In fact, he had actually gotten worse — no longer was he trying to disguise his violent intent, but he was freely sharing it with his son and his servants!

Yet the faithful prince wouldn't lose hope. As we will see, Lord willing, in the next few articles, his faith would dictate his actions — and in all of this, he would still seek to effect some sort of change within his arrogant father.

Jason Hensley (Simi Hills, CA)

The Joy of Sunday Schooling

Have you tried this? (4)

Ecclesial life is enriched by many unique things that we do together. A few years ago, the culminating event of our Sunday school year was a marathon reading of the New Testament. Young and old paired up to read, back and forth, for several minutes at a time. It took a little over 17½ hours to read the entire New Testament. More recently, the Simi Hills Ecclesia, in California, tackled a non-stop reading of the entire Bible! Activities like these are fun for everyone. They enrich the life that defines our ecclesias.

The Sunday school can often spearhead activities like these, especially if they are of an educational nature. Some may be carried out within the Sunday school itself, while others may be enlarged to involve the entire ecclesia. Here are a few to think about trying.

The Sunday morning quick drill

The Sunday morning quick drill is something that Sunday school superintendents can easily put into place. Prepare a list of short-answer questions that relate to the children's Sunday school lessons, or have each teacher provide a few questions. Spend three or four minutes drilling the entire Sunday school on the questions when everyone is together for the opening or closing exercises. Be sure to involve all the children in the activity and keep it brisk. Keep track of questions that are missed, and ask them again next time. Repetition is a good teacher.

If your opening and closing exercises include the adults, it is fun now and then to draw them into the questioning process. Have the adult Sunday school members answer the children's questions. Let the children decide whether the adult answers are correct or not!

The "Anytime Table"

If you have room in your Sunday school area, think about setting up an "Anytime Table". The point is to provide one or two engaging things that anyone can do anytime, when there is a bit of down time. Tell the ecclesia about the table during your Sunday school announcements and encourage everyone to use it.

- Bible jigsaw puzzles are a great item to put on the table. Young and old alike enjoy taking a minute to fit a piece into a puzzle that is a work in progress.
- Stand a picture of some curious Bible artifact on the table. Offer four or five choices of what it is. Put blank file cards and a box next to the picture. Anyone who wants to guess the identity of the artifact can write their name and choice on a file card and drop it in the box. Offer small prizes for those who correctly identify the artifact, and periodically announce the winners. Bible archaeology magazines and websites are good places to find pictures for this activity.
- Vary the previous idea by letting brothers, sisters, and Sunday school children

try to identify a picture of some Bible event. Leave the picture up for a couple weeks and see how many winners you get.

- Vary the idea again by displaying part of a Bible map. Pose the question, “Where Is It?” Provide some choices, some file cards, and an answer box.
- Vary the idea again by displaying childhood pictures of older ecclesial members. “Who Is It?” Encourage the Sunday school children to try and identify their elders. Again, small prizes can add incentive to the fun.
- Have the technology buffs in your Sunday school set up an interactive Bible quiz game that anyone can try their hand at.
- Put some take-away items on the table. Copies of Bible word puzzles fall into this category.

Use your imagination. Get ideas from others. Keep it simple. If something doesn't fly, change it. In any case, change the “Anytime Table” on a fairly regular basis. Be sure to announce what is currently on the table and always make a big deal about contest winners.

“Uncle Alex Sheets”

Dear Uncle Alex

My name is _____
I am _____ years old.

I really enjoyed your exhortation today.
Thanks very much.

I copied down all the verses
that you mentioned today during your exhortation.
They are listed below:

With love from your
Sunday School friend!

“Uncle Alex Sheets” encourage the children to listen to the Sunday exhortation and gain practice writing down Bible references. They help the children become acquainted with the exhorting brothers, and they give the exhorting brothers an opportunity to say a few encouraging words to the children. Exhorting brothers should spend a few minutes reviewing the sheets after the children have turned them in, take time to write a helpful comment or two on each one and give them back to the children the following Sunday. Paying attention to each other works both ways.

The Bible memory campaign

The Bible passages they chose for their campaign were the Promises to Abraham, the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, the 23rd Psalm, the Books of the Bible, and the Beatitudes. A distinctive seal was affixed to each certificate, identifying the passage that had been successfully mastered. Certificates were of nice quality, suitable for framing or keeping in a scrapbook.

Variations. (1) As an added incentive, prizes can be offered to anyone who masters all the passages before the Bible Memory Campaign is over. (2) Create “memory verse teams” – old with young – to help each other in the memorizing process. (3) Memory verses are often included in the Sunday school lessons that we give our children. Teachers sometimes use certificates and prizes to encourage the children to learn the verses. Here is what one teacher did: when one of her children earned ten certificates (for ten memory verses learned), the child was allowed to choose a

special goodie from the teacher's "prize basket". (Thanks to Melinda Flatley, Paris Avenue, Ohio, Ecclesia.)

Do I need to ask again? Please tell me what you are doing in your Sunday school and ecclesia. Even if it seems old hat to you, someone else may think it's a great idea.

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



Special Invitation

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

*You, your family and friends are invited to the
39th annual Church of God of the Abrahamic Faith Gathering
at Denison University in Granville, Ohio, July 21-27, 2014.*

Main Speakers:

- Bro. Mark Drabenstott: "The Seven Great 'I Ams': Our Abundant Life"
- Bro. Doug Davis: "Christ in the Jewish Feasts"
- Bro. John Pople: "Wearing the Name"

*Contact Bro. Brad Rek (330) 609-6957 or brad.rek@gmail.com.
Visit our website at <http://abrahamicfaithgathering.org/> for more
information and to view talks from last year.*

Reflections

Scriptural Discipline

(5) “*Deliver Unto Satan for the Destruction of the Flesh*”

In our last article, we looked at the implications of the Matthew 18 “process” for recovery. It challenges our commitment to the fight against sin and our fundamental love of our brother. Just a bit of unfinished business. I’d like to take a quick look at the job of “witnesses” before we deal with this article’s focus — delivering unto Satan.

Witnesses

It’s easy for us to confuse the role of witnesses with how one serves as a witness in a judicial trial. The role of witnesses under Man’s rule is associated with gathering evidence or verifying what was or wasn’t done by the defendant. That view has more similarity to the role of witnesses under the Law. However, the role of the witness under the Law of Christ operates much differently.

First of all, witnesses under the Law of Moses were primarily involved in verification of facts in order to assess and confirm punishment. This is what the Law of Moses says about witnesses.

“If there be found among you, within any of thy gates which the LORD thy God giveth thee, man or woman, that hath wrought wickedness in the sight of the LORD thy God, in transgressing his covenant, And hath gone and served other gods, and worshipped them, either the sun, or moon, or any of the host of heaven, which I have not commanded; And it be told thee, and thou hast heard of it, and enquired diligently, and, behold, it be true, and the thing certain, that such abomination is wrought in Israel: Then shalt thou bring forth that man or that woman, which have committed that wicked thing, unto thy gates, even that man or that woman, and shalt stone them with stones, till they die. At the mouth of two witnesses, or three witnesses, shall he that is worthy of death be put to death; but at the mouth of one witness he shall not be put to death. The hands of the witnesses shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterward the hands of all the people. So thou shalt put the evil away from among you” (Deut 17:2-7).

Under the Law, witnesses were gathered to establish guilt. Witnesses were themselves directly involved in the execution of the sentence.

That doesn’t sound much like the role of witnesses today does it? When the Jews brought a woman caught in the very act of adultery to Jesus, she was accompanied by witnesses. The account in John 8 would give us the impression that there were a good number of witnesses and there may have been a variation in age. They were doing what they thought they should do in order to attempt to trap Jesus. They brought one caught in a sin unto death before him. Under the Law, assuming the

witnesses were correct, she was to die — as was the man who had been with her, who they conveniently left out of the confrontation! But Jesus masterfully teaches these elders a lesson about Forgiveness as well as critical lesson for us about being witnesses. Jesus does not deny the sin. Rather, he asks for the one without sin to cast the first stone. One by one, seemingly by age, they all walk away. Jesus then tells the woman, who certainly sounds repentant, *“Neither do I condemn thee: go and sin no more”* (John 8:11).

What can we take from this story about witnesses? The witnesses had borne an accurate witness — there is no denial of the charge (though what of the man involved?). Jesus saw this as an opportunity to teach a valuable lesson — that even this convicted woman, if she repented, could go and sin no more. The Law wasn’t designed for punishment, but for leading men to repentance and righteousness. The role of the witnesses, as applied to Matthew 18, is chiefly a restorative process. They are not brought into the situation in some forensic way to establish guilt. Their chief role is to teach and to rebuke — much as a priest would help one overcome with sin.

Based on this, how might we consider the selection of witnesses today? First, the ideal witnesses are those who are sincerely concerned about the spiritual welfare and eternal life of the wayward brother. Since their primary purpose is to restore, do they have the skills requisite for this task? Are they apt to teach and strong in the Word? Does the offending brother know them and perhaps have experience with them? Do they understand their role as witnesses? Will they keep this confidential? Will their testimony to the ecclesia be acceptable?

Just as the first step of confidentially approaching the brother one-on-one is a great act of faithfulness and love, so also is the work of the witnesses. Their work is to guide, to demonstrate Scriptural principles. Only when they are unsuccessful in bringing about repentance will they take the matter to others outside this exclusive communication team.

In our ecclesias today, many faithful brothers and sisters serve in the capacity of witnesses. Their work is seldom recognized or even known across the ecclesia — and they would have it no other way. He who agrees to serve in this capacity is one who has a genuine love of the brother or sister, recognizes the gravity of the situation, is able to control his/her emotions and tongue and knows how to apply Scriptural wisdom. They are treasured resources in our midst!

Ecclesial correction

We now move on to consider the final ecclesial step of correction, potentially leading to withdrawal.

Before looking at Scriptural direction on this, we begin with a couple of comments about the age we live in. Too often we hear that some ecclesias are not “disfellowshipping ecclesias.” Some say that withdrawal only drives people away and has no practical value for restoration. This sounds much more like the influence of Humanism in our midst than it does sound dividing of Scripture. Did not the Lord himself provide us with these processes? We must accept that our Lord

understands sin and repentance far better than we. Are we going to trust in his judgment or our own? It is as straightforward a question as that.

Maya Angelou, the American poet and author, once wrote, "I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel." I have witnessed this on many occasions in ecclesial life. Perhaps one of the reasons we have such a negative view about withdrawal is because it is often done at a point where unfortunate things have been said and feelings have been hurt. The standard for Matthew 18, as we have said previously, is all about love and restoration. We need not reach the point of withdrawal with frustration and anger. This last step of discipline must be a witness of the love and concern we have for our brother or sister.

There are really three ways that we are involved with judgment:

- First, there is the ongoing judgment of ourselves — an important signal of spiritual health. We ought to judge ourselves, that we be not judged. We must examine ourselves against righteous principles and standards.
- A second judgment is the Lord's chastening, designed to shake us out of complacency and to return to judging ourselves appropriately.
- Then there is the Final judgment, which will bring condemnation on those who do not judge themselves.

Sadly, when we are overcome with sin, we often find self-examination is broken in our lives. We no longer can look at our lives with spiritual discernment. Our pride stands in the way of accurate assessment. The flesh is dominating our mind's operation. If this continues, we become callous to sin. When confronted with our sin, we may become rebellious. The natural, healthy process for Saints is one where there is a continual self-monitoring against sin. While we confess that even our own hearts may deceive us, there is great value in looking at our lives diagnostically and with the right standards in view.

When we reach the stage where one overcome in sin has been unwilling to hear a faithful brother, then witnesses and finally the ecclesia, the self-examination process is completely disabled. Rebellion has taken its place. Until the flesh is brought under some modicum of control, a fleshly mind cannot please God and is at enmity against God. For this mind, a complete reversal of thinking must occur. The flesh must be crushed and the brother restored once again to a mind that operates in harmony with our Lord's.

Paul's message to Corinth about the incestuous man in their ecclesia is a case study for this restorative process. A review of 1Cor 5:1-13 would tell us that the sin of fornication was continuing in the ecclesia and the ecclesia had not taken adequate action (if any) to address it. Paul wrote to them to take immediate action with the unrepentant man, removing him from the ecclesia and suspending all social activity with him. The situation in Corinth was quite grave. Not only was this man involved in a sin unto death, but the effects of this sin were now being felt in the ecclesia, like a canker, and it was spilling outside the ecclesia to the general population of the city, tarnishing the reputation of the Truth in the city.

Paul's words to Corinth throughout his first epistle indicated that there were a number of serious problems brewing. The ecclesia had been a remarkable story — growing rapidly in a difficult pagan environment. The change in lives of brothers and sisters from the morass of evil would have been perhaps unlike anything we have experienced. But, it appears that there was pride bubbling up! In 1Cor 4:18, it would appear that the leaders had started to think that the success of the ecclesia was their own doing and they no longer needed the counsel and words of Paul. One wonders if they had begun to rely on their own sense of what was right and wrong and had begun to depart from sound application of the Word itself? Perhaps this case of the incestuous man had a number of extenuating circumstances? Was the father part of the ecclesia? Did the father have a number of wives? Was the woman in question a believer? Was it an unwanted relationship by the woman? Were there family connections that made this a “sticky” item to address?

Maybe we could find in this list of possibilities one or more areas for us to consider in our own ecclesias? Do we push aside Scripture and contemplate what must be done based on what “feels right” to us? Do we allow blood relationships and ecclesial family influences to cloud our judgment? Do we fail to take urgent action because it is unpleasant? If so, we really need to listen to Paul's counsel in Corinth.

The counsel of Paul was to “*deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus*” (1Cor 5:5). It's a very curious phrase isn't it? The world has a superstitious view of a supernatural Satan that entices one into sin. Here, the errant brother is delivered to Satan for the DESTRUCTION of the flesh in order that the brother may be saved.

Destruction of the flesh

So, what does this really mean to us in our ecclesias? Bro. Carter wrote:

“One of the objects of withdrawal is corrective and disciplinary — in the apostle's language a delivering to Satan for the destruction of the flesh (1Cor 5:5), delivered to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme. It is a judgment and as such must be made carefully and modestly; it is saying in effect, “Your behavior is so far short of the standard required of members of the body of Christ, that we feel compelled to dissociate ourselves from it and show our disapproval in the way the apostles have enjoined. If it is done arrogantly its effect upon the offender might be the very opposite of that desired and indeed aimed at. It must be done with sadness and regret at its necessity. If so performed it should have the effect of bringing home to the offending brother or sister the gravity of their position, without making them feel they are treated as enemies, but rather admonished as brethren (2Thess 3:15).”¹

When we withdraw from our brother, it is a serious matter. We do so because the Lord has instructed us that there is no other way for restoration. It must become apparent to the withdrawn brother what he is forfeiting now, and potentially in the Lord's Kingdom. It demands that we not send wrong or misleading messages. They are not just being restricted from the bread and wine, but from our very fellowship.

This message is diluted, not strengthened, when we continue to act as if nothing has really changed. Our fellowship is made up on many activities — Bible classes, Bible Schools, Fraternal gatherings, Study Days, Bible Campaigns, Public seminars, social events and receiving ecclesial newsletters. When withdrawn brothers and sisters continue to be involved in these activities, it is not the spirit of Matthew 18 (*let him be to thee as a publican or a heathen*) or Paul's counsel to the ecclesia in Corinth.

What we are fundamentally doing is reintroducing the conversion process, placing the individual back in a world of darkness that they may once again see light. It is not punitive, but disciplinary — to chasten, to teach, to “destroy the flesh” to be “saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.” This is a critical action to be taken with an unrepentant sinner. It is an acknowledgement that all efforts have failed and we must now turn this over to the Lord for the discipline and destruction of the flesh. It is in the Lord's hands.

Paul's counsel in Corinth was to put away that wicked man, to not even eat with him. As we compare 2Cor 2, which appears to be a later account that focuses on this incestuous man, it appears that the ecclesia did follow through with Paul's instruction — at least the majority. The word in 2Cor 2:6 is translated as “punishment.” But the Oxford KJV margin offers “censure.” The censure was inflicted on many. We must wonder how the censure took place in Corinth? Did they fraternize with him? Was he involved in ecclesial events? I doubt this. Rather, in 2 Corinthians we find this man now humbled and repentant. The risk now was that he might be “swallowed up with overmuch sorrow.” The Corinthians were to proactively go to him, confirming their love. What about forgiveness? The word used by Paul for this repentant brother is *charizomai* — to forgive unconditionally.

In this man's life, the Lord had worked with him and so had the ecclesia. It had become clear to the man that the choice of continuing in the sin of fornication was also a choice to reenter into the depravity from which he had once escaped. He would not enjoy the fellowship of his brethren and he was headed to rejection at the day of the Lord.

Restoration

It's interesting to note how the Lord works in our lives when we are “delivered unto Satan.” Perhaps it is useful to go back to the life of Job, who indeed was delivered over to Satan. What were the tools of the destruction of the flesh for Job? First he lost his possessions. Then his family. Then his health is removed. His closest and most intimate counselors — his wife and his friends — failed to be of any redeeming help. He was falsely accused by his brethren. All these (and more) are the methods our Lord works with us to bring about the destruction of the flesh. Alas, not all will come to their senses and return to the Lord. But, the Lord is in control and he will do what is right.

Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar is a fascinating example of a similar process of restoration. God had given him the dominion of the nations and elevated him to lead the most powerful nation on earth. Yet, his heart was filled with pride as he

declared, *“Is not this great Babylon that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and the honor of my majesty?”* Daniel’s record in 5:20-21 describes how a palace revolt occurs, and *“they took his glory from him.”* He was driven from men and his heart was made like the beasts until seven times passed over. We can only imagine the terrible experience this once great King went through — rejected by his own people, without a home and in a state of madness. Yet, while he would have certainly appeared non-redeemable to the people, God was working mightily in Nebuchadnezzar, crushing his foolish pride and fleshly thinking. Daniel’s record provides us with the very words of the restored King. We are told that at the end of these days, he *“lifted his eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me and I blessed the Most High...”* (Dan 4:34). The madness now gone, he was in a sound mind and suddenly he possessed a clarity of mind that could only occur by a spiritual transformation. The flesh had been destroyed. No matter how bleak the situation, no matter how unlikely it may appear that our brother or sister will ever desire the Truth again once they have left, the most High still rules in the kingdoms of men and for *“those who walk in pride, he is able to abase”* (Dan 4:37).

When we withdraw fellowship, we hand over those most intimate in our lives to our Lord. It is a period of time where the Lord will work with our brother or sister to crush their pride and destroy their fleshly thinking — to help them to clearly see what is lost. This is an absolute requirement for restoration. We must not invalidate that message by acting as if the breach is not real and that life can continue as it always was. But, we must take this action in a spirit of love. If we do this, the pathway back to repentance and the ecclesia is much easier.

Hymanaeus and Philetus were withdrawn from in Thessalonica for the destruction of the flesh. It is clear that this bold measure was required to teach them a lesson that they could not learn while they were in fellowship.

In our next article, we will look at the topic of restoration and how we might consider the re-entry of our brothers and sisters into our ecclesias. But, I’d like to leave you with the parable of the Prodigal Son. It’s unlikely that this young man had a grand plan in place to ruin his life. Few do. Rather, he made a series of bad decisions. He left his father’s house and went off to spend his inheritance on lifestyle that must have, for a time, brought him pleasure. But, spiritually he was dead. However, in the parable the Lord worked with him to bring about repentance. At the same time that the money ran out, a famine gripped the land. In desperation he joins himself to a Gentile. The Gentile puts him into a job that was below what this man ever thought his life could spiral down to — actually feeding the swine for a Gentile! On top of that, he was struck with a hunger he had never experienced while living with his father. At that point of utter desperation — he came to himself.

This is our prayer for our friends, siblings, children, aunts and uncles, mothers and fathers that may have slipped away under the control of the flesh. We pray that the strong arm of the Lord will touch them and bring them to repentance. We are to pray without ceasing for them. Not in some generic format, but specifically and

by name. May they never be forgotten in our ecclesias or our prayers. Only the Lord can remove a guilty conscience when poor choices are made in our lives. He heals us by transforming us from minds wracked with paralyzing feelings of guilt to freed spiritual minds that are likened to having a “sprinkled conscience.” In the days that remain, let us pray brethren that the Lord will heal us all!

David Jennings (Pomona, CA)

Notes:

1. *The Christadelphian*, 1961, p323.

Preaching

Bible Seminars: The Brampton Experience Updated

The account of how the Brampton Ecclesia on Ontario succeeded with their seminar experience was covered in the Special Issue on Preaching, August 2011. Their seminars began on September 19, 1995, with their first Seminar on “*Learn to Read the Bible Effectively*.” As Bro. and Sis. McKay report, through the grace of our Lord, a wonderful and exciting new experience in presenting the Word of God was suddenly opened up to us. From that point forward, we have been generously blessed by our Heavenly Father, not only in the opportunity to proclaim His Word, but in the Spiritual well-being, vitality, and fellowship within our Ecclesia. To date, approximately half of our members have been baptized as a direct result of our efforts in this area, for which we fell greatly blessed.

Recent update

In the fall of 2013, the Brampton Ecclesia began the presentation of the 18th year of consecutive seminars, based on “*Learn to Read the Bible Effectively*”. Once again, the LORD extended His blessing upon our efforts. In response to the two advertise-



ments placed in our local weekly paper, we received 83 registrations, and of these, 51 attended classes on the first evening.

Our series of Seminars consist of

- Learn to Read the Bible Effectively (Six week course)
- The Book of Genesis (six week course)
- The Life of Christ (8 week course)
- The Acts of the Apostles (8 week course).

At present, in addition to attending the weekly seminar evenings, 13 students are now regularly attending the Wednesday evening, “Be Ready” classes in our home. Of these 6 are now beginning to join us at our Sunday morning service.



As in earlier years, many of our previous students, who are now baptized, attend the “Be Ready” classes each week, providing support and encouragement to the new searching hearts.

The consistent response to these seminars continues to generate enthusiasm and excitement among the members of our Ecclesia, emphasizing to us that the seminar approach to presenting the Word of Truth still provides a viable method of preaching in our local community.

We feel the most important principles to follow in our seminars is:

- 1) **Be true to your word.** The most singular common comment made by those who now freely discuss first principles with us, is that we gained their respect by staying true to our promise that we would not overtly attempt to convert them. Awareness of error developed of its own accord as true knowledge of the Word was established.
- 2) **Involvement.** We keep all the brethren and sisters of the Ecclesia informed and involved as the seminar’s progress.

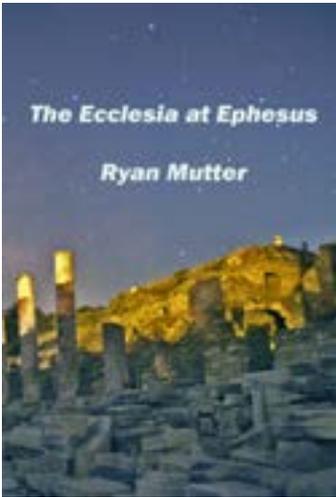
In God’s grace, based on such response, the members of the Brampton Ecclesia feel obligated to continue in these efforts each year, as long as the Lord demonstrates His blessing upon this work.

In the meantime, in addition to thanking our Father for this blessing, we are thankful to Him for the great blessing we have in the members of the Simi Hills Ecclesia, and the Williamsburg Foundation, who enable us financially as partners in the Lord in presenting this service before Him each year.

Dave and Marlene McKay (Brampton, ON)

Book Review

“The Ecclesia at Ephesus” by Ryan Mutter



When I first considered writing a review of “The Ecclesia at Ephesus” by Bro. Ryan Mutter I almost abandoned the idea. My initial reluctance was due to two factors. The first drawback was the fact that Bro. Ryan and I attend the same ecclesia. I consider Ryan to be friend and I did not want to be put in a position where I might criticize his work. Especially when I knew firsthand how emotionally invested he had been in developing this material. Many times Ryan had shared the lessons from his research on the Ephesian ecclesia in Bible Class, Sunday School and by Exhortation. However, the experiences of listening to the variety of Ryan’s presentations on Ephesus made it unlikely that I would not appreciate this book.

The second factor that held me back, at first, from reviewing the book was the fact that I am not very well-read as a Christadelphian. I often find many long-form writings in our community to be overly academic in tone and full of our own jargon. As a result, I was not sure that I was best qualified to provide a review. In the end, my confidence in the material that I had personally heard from Bro. Ryan led me to read the “The Ecclesia at Ephesus.”

The book tells the story of the first century ecclesia based in the wealthy city of Ephesus in Asia Minor (modern day Turkey). By weaving together the accounts in the book of Acts, with references from the letters of Paul and some noteworthy historical research, Bro. Ryan brings to life a story about brothers and sisters who are not very different from ourselves. The book places an emphasis on the spiritual lessons to be learned by considering the events, people and culture of Ephesus. Those lessons are relevant for any believer, regardless of age or experience. They are communicated clearly and concisely in manner that is most helpful for those new to living in a community of believers. As a result, I recommend the book for all brothers and sisters, but especially for those who are newly baptized or young adults.

The best word I can come up with to describe this book is “accessible.” This description is meant as a great compliment. The story of the Ephesus ecclesia is easy to understand and serves as a practical guide on how to use Scripture for personal development. The organization of the book itself offers instruction. The use of text boxes to highlight points of spiritual importance is particularly helpful. These boxes offer valuable reminders to the reader of how we apply the lessons

of Scripture in our lives. The text boxes also make for a ready-made guide to go back and re-read sections of the book.

These highlighted lessons speak to a process that all young, or new, believers must go through as they mature. It is not enough to be informed. The Bible demands that our behavior be influenced for the better by an improved understanding of God's principles. Those principles are seen more easily when witnessed in the lives of believers that have gone before us (in this case the ecclesia members in Ephesus). This heightened awareness is encouraged through text box titles such as "Reaching out to those in need", or "Having direction in our lives."

Bro. Ryan has also provided context for our reading of many events recorded in the New Testament. A prime example is the historical and cultural background of Ephesus outlined in Chapters 3 and 4. These two chapters give insight into the infamous riot at Ephesus (Acts 19). By describing not only the physical structure of Diana's temple, but also the culture of a city centered on the temple's social and economic influence, we better understand the challenges faced by the fledgling ecclesia. These early Christians were people drawn out from a culture that was self-serving in every way. Their commitment to Jesus was both remarkable and courageous. The drama of the riot is properly positioned as the angry response to the threat Christianity posed to the financial profit, as gained from work related to the idolatrous practices associated with the Ephesians' worship of Diana.

Later in Chapter 11, this background offers a valuable perspective as we consider Paul's message in the Book of Ephesians. In particular, the reader gains a greater appreciation for Paul's words in Eph 2:21 when he tells the brethren that each of them have a place in God's plan: "*in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord.*" This is a powerful concept for people living in the literal shadow of a temple that earned a place among the so-called seven wonders of the ancient world. Bro. Ryan suggests, and I think correctly, that Paul purposefully uses imagery of a temple precisely because it would make such a strong impression upon the believers in Ephesus.

This section of the book follows with an examination of how a diverse group of believers can, and should, build upon the core concepts that have brought them together to become a single household, or temple, dedicated to God. Paul's inspirational message that there is one body one spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism and one God, stood in sharp contrast to the culture that surrounded the Ephesians. And, those same principles of unity and singleness of heart still resonate with our 21st century challenges to discipleship.

This narrative style connects the culture of Ephesus, and the life experience of these ecclesia members, with the lasting instruction of Paul's letter. This is where "The Ecclesia at Ephesus" succeeds: making the story of Ephesus our story as well. The book is not simply a snapshot of Ephesus' place in Bible history. Ephesus becomes the lens by which we see our own community, our own ecclesia and our own journey as a believer. For that reason "The Ecclesia at Ephesus" is well worth the read.

Andrew Bilello (Baltimore, MD)



Bible Mission News

Truth Corps 2013

The CBMA's Truth Corps program is a short and intensive experience in which young people from across the world embark on a journey to spread the 'good news' and to strengthen and edify their Brethren. After having the pleasure of being a part of Truth Corps this past summer (2013), I can say that the experience will impact me for the rest of my life! Over the course of the trip, I learned many lessons and principles that have not only altered the way I view our short time in these mortal bodies, but also how to better reach out to those searching for truth, those who need a helping hand in the truth, and ultimately how to draw closer to God. The Truth Corp experience shapes the individual who engages in it, but this is just a small part of what is accomplished. Ultimately, participating in Truth Corps aims to be an expression of God's character where other people become your focus. It is about serving brothers, sisters, young people and interested friends, and encouraging them to have a zeal for the truth themselves. It is about sharing God's message, and giving an opportunity to those who have never heard about the Bible's great and precious promises.

On June 22, 2013, Sis. Myra Lucke, Sis. Kelty Campbell, Sis. Naomi Gaston, Sis. Trudy Stuchlik, Bro. Luke Foley, Bro. Forrest Brinkerhof and I all met at the Toronto airport and departed for Georgetown, Guyana; it was there that we would be spending our first 2 weeks. Upon arriving in Guyana, we were met by local brothers and sisters



and taken to where we would be staying; there, we met Sis. Dilean Rupenarine and Bro. Joel Tenassee, two Guyanese young people who would be full participants in our team for the first week. We spent our first couple of days getting our feet on the ground, attending the ecclesial functions (CYC, memorial service etc.), getting familiar with the program and material that we would be discussing with interested friends, and of course getting to know the members of the team. Familiarizing

ourselves with one another would go a long way toward uniting us as a team and allowing us to be as effective as possible when spreading God's Word. During our first week in Berbice, we were joined by Bro. Clive and Sis. Christine Drepaul, who had a great deal of local knowledge. They were able to guide us, along with Sis. Myra and other local members, in reaching out to the community as well as the three ecclesias in the Berbice area.



TC 2013 Guyana, Berbice Back row Forrest Brinkerhoff; Luke Foley; Josh Hodge Front row Myra Lucke; Dilean Rupenarine (Guyana); Kelty Campbell; Naomi Gaston; Trudy Stuchlik; Joel Tenassee (Guyana)

A typical day in the first week started off with a devotion to get everyone motivated and energized in their service that day. We would then take a taxi or go by foot to our target preaching area, and split off into pairs, (usually mixing foreigners with local Brethren) and headed off into our given areas holding our Bibles and presentation binders. Walking up to the first house, one of the partners would call into the house, "inside... inside" and would then

wait for a response. What amazed us was that when someone was home, ninety percent of the time that person would be willing to listen to a 10-15 minute Bible presentation! The presentation was based on the Bible's "Covenants of Promise", and ended with a piece on the hope of the Kingdom. Along with the presentation, any other topics raised by the contact would be discussed, and finally we would leave them with literature, further contact information and an invitation to a public lecture. During the evenings, the team might attend a public lecture or Bible class, either given by a local Brother or a Brother on the Truth Corps team; if no ecclesial event was scheduled, the team would visit the elderly or some member of the local ecclesia who was in need. At their homes we would do the daily readings and sing hymns to boost their spirits and encourage them around the Word of God.

Each week, the team would get a much-needed day of recreation after laboring hard through the week. The first week, we were shown around a market and then went to a pool to have some fun and the second week, we joined up with a large group of young





TC 2013 Demerara, Guyana Back row David Andrews (Guyana) Next row Timothy Barmwell (Guyana);Forrest; Josh; Luke Next row Kelty; Naomi, Atiya N'djelekulu (Guyana); Trudy Front row Myra; Joan Andrews (Guyana)

people and travelled to what the Guyanese call a 'creek' to play some water activities.

For our second week in Guyana we travelled to Demerara where there were three more ecclesias: Georgetown, Eccles, and Mocha. There we met up with two additional Guyanese young people: Bro. Timothy Barmwell and Sis. Atiya N'djelekulu, who would be joining our team for the week. Bro. David and Sis. Joan Andrews joined us as team leaders. Most of the second week was similar to the first, with a number of lectures, Bible classes and time spent preaching; however, added to

all of this was a fraternal gathering for all six ecclesias in Guyana. The amazing studies and fellowship we shared together with our Guyanese brethren was incredibly uplifting. There was also a Vacation Bible School which Truth Corps helped to lead, and a 1-day youth conference which was based on the topics of Godly relationships and Godly decisions.

Immediate results can't always be expected, and God will 'call whomsoever he will' but it is our duty to sow the seed and not hide our light under a bushel. However, our team had the blessing of witnessing immediate results; over the course of the first two weeks in Guyana, we had approximately 20 interested contacts come out to the public lectures we advertised. Furthermore, it is not only the impact of Truth Corps on interested contacts that matters, but the impact on the local ecclesias and the young people. Exciting news came to us only a couple of weeks after the trip had ended; 5 young people in Guyana started taking baptismal classes and a number of other young people had re-committed themselves to ecclesial functions.

Truth Corps was a great opportunity for me, and is a great opportunity for any young people who are ready to 'speak boldly as they ought to' in regards to their first principles, who have a desire to go 'into all the world and preach the gospel', who can 'visit the fatherless and widow's in their affliction', and who can 'do good to all, especially unto them who are of the household of faith'.

Josh Hodge

Following our spiritually uplifting two weeks in Guyana, we were all too soon leaving for our next assignment: Ocotlan, Mexico. On July 6th, the Truth Corps team flew to Guadalajara, Mexico. Brothers David Jennings and David Lloyd became our designated leaders, and Bro. Gabriel and Sis. Cynthia Paiva de Lopez, a newly



married couple and members of the Guadalajara ecclesia, were our generous hosts for the week. Also staying with us were Sis. Joan Dondero and Sis. Sandy Sillers who kept us wonderfully fed and gave us the stamina to cover as much ground as possible.

The day after our arrival,

we attended the Memorial Service at Mexico's first ecclesia, Guadalajara. Although we were unable to understand most of the Spanish service, the hymns were easily recognisable by their tunes and we were still able to enjoy sweet fellowship and praise our Heavenly Father together.

Ocotlan is fifty minutes east-southeast of Guadalajara and houses one tiny ecclesia. Our mission in Mexico was to help brighten this small lamp-stand. The rest of our week consisted mainly of canvassing Ocotlan with the aim of adding to this satellite meeting of the larger Guadalajara ecclesia. So far Bro. Manuel Rodriguez, the first person from Ocotlan to be baptized, along with Bro. Sergio Lomeli Medina and his wife Sis. Olive, make up the ecclesia here. They meet in a large room in Bro. Manuel's home along with eighteen regular Bible students. The room is also utilized by a thriving Sunday school. Using Bro. Manuel's home as our daytime base, we hit the streets, splitting off into groups of two or three each day. Each group was assigned a different area to distribute hand bills advertising two public Bible talks to be given on Friday and Saturday nights respectively. After much posting, handing out and many pleasantries along with some brief conversations for those of us with some background in Spanish, we managed by God's grace to distribute in excess of 20,000 leaflets. Other methods of advertising included use of a weekly radio slot and loud speaker announcements broadcasted from a hired van.

During the week our team continued to sharpen and focus each other with first principals and devotionals, while relaxing with various games. One evening, under floodlights, we played a soccer match with a large group of local youths. I'm not quite sure who won, but the game was thoroughly enjoyed by all.

On Friday night while Brother Sergio gave the Bible talk, the Truth Corps team ran a carnival we had organized for the children of any visitors who might attend the first of the Bible talks. Among other fun activities there was a



bouncy castle and game stalls — with prizes! The carnival was a big success and we counted twenty-three children in attendance. After all the fun and games, the children settled down for a Bible lesson on Daniel given by Sis. Olive.

Following the canvassing in Ocotlan, there was a good turn-out for both public addresses. On Friday, there were seventeen visitors present, eight of whom were new faces. We hope that our Mexican brothers and sisters were as encouraged by our visit as we were by their warm and joyous reception. We thank them all for their generous hospitality.

Since our visit we have had reports that ten new people have been attending the mid-week Bible classes and there have been eight requests for correspondence. We rejoice to have been able to help sow and water the seed in these mission areas and to have been of help to our Brothers and Sisters there and to those who may come after us as the labour in our Lord's vineyard continues. We pray that God will continue to give the increase so that more may learn of the wonderful hope



we are blessed with and take on the saving name of our Lord Jesus to the honour of our Heavenly Father.

On 14th July we arrived at Kelowna Airport, British Columbia. From there we travelled to the BC Youth Conference. This week was filled with many profitable discus-

sions, talks, and fellowship. The volleyball and water games were terrific fun and the “Crazy Olympics” caused much hilarity for the teams and judging by the craziness of some of our antics, I think for a number of the on-lookers too. During the week, we enjoyed an exciting and relaxing time and made many new and lasting friendships before heading to Kamloops for our final week of spreading the good news of Israel's hope.

On arrival in Kamloops the team was greeted with a BBQ kindly put on by the host ecclesia to welcome us. The ecclesia's hospitality did not end there, and during the week they took it in turns to host us for dinner so that we could encourage each other in fellowship. Bro. Dan and Sis. Wonda Sargent were our gracious hosts for the week. As it was the team's responsibility to run a Vacation Bible School for children in Kamloops, we then set to work preparing the final details of the programme we had planned together over the internet in the weeks prior to our travels.

The VBS was to run Monday to Friday concluding with a presentation for the parents at the end





of the week. Bro. Nick Froese kindly gave us the use of his home where each morning we were able to plan and prepare the lessons/various crafts etc. Then after a good lunch, also thanks to Bro. Nick, we set off to the hall to wait for the children so that we could help them learn how they too can become friends of God. This was done through fun lessons, crafts, singing songs and playing various games, including the tiring favorite of ball tag, and also recreating David versus Goliath as the kids popped

his balloon-head! On Friday, the children put on an impressive presentation for their parents, acting out a series of short plays based on their lessons. They had a great time performing action songs such as 'The Wise Man Built His House upon the Rock' showing how we too can be friends of God by building our lives upon Jesus. Following the presentation, the children were each given a t-shirt and a Bible (or a puzzle for those who already owned a Bible). After this week of smiles, lively youngsters, hospitality, love and fellowship we had come to the end of a truly unique experience.

Through means of readings, prayers, devotionals and walking in 'the unity of the spirit' we had encouraged each other and increased our faith. Also, through fellowship and worship with the young people in the host ecclesias, we were able to contribute to their spiritual growth. This experience was a wonderful introduction to mission work and long enough to both inspire and guide us in preaching, that we might continue to help lead people to God's Truth while there is still time. Truth Corps challenged us to come out of our comfort zones and we worked closely together to shine as lights in a world of gross darkness. We went home with renewed zeal and new friendships in our hearts, stronger in the gospel of which we are not ashamed 'for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth.'

*Bro. Luke Foley
England, UK*



Addresses for Bequests and Donations

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

Christadelphian Bible Mission Canada (CBMC) supports preaching work throughout the Caribbean and bequests for similar activity. Visit www.cbma.net for an update on current activities as well as to make Canadian dollar online donations. Donations by cheque should be sent to Box 55541, Unit 119, 15280 101 Ave., Surrey, BC, V3R 0J7

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

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

Williamsburg Christadelphian Foundation (WCF) supports pastoral and preaching activities throughout the world. c/o Ray Pratt, P.O. Box 88, Deland, IL 61839-0086. Website: wcfoundation.org

Christadelphian Tape Library. Contact Reuben E. Washington, 196 E. Stearns St., Rahway, NJ 07065-4923.
Phone: 732-381-4590 Fax: 732-499-8415
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Spanish language literature is available at P.O. Box 947, Monrovia, CA 91017-0947. 626-303-2222, e-mail: jdhunter@gte.net

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

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

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

Christadelphian Indian Children's Homes (CICH) donations in US dollars can be sent to CBMA earmarked for CICH, c/o eff Gelineau, 567 Astorian Dr., Simi Valley, CA 93065-5941, or contact jeffandkellie@gelineau.org.

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

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

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

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

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

News & Notices

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

BOSTON, MA

It was our pleasure on March 16, 2014, to witness the baptism of EVETTE YOUNG, the daughter of Bro. Phil and Sis. Anita Young, into the saving name of Jesus Christ. May our Father be with her as she begins her journey toward His everlasting kingdom.

We would like to thank our Bre. Steve Stewart (San Diego, CA) and Jon Mark Ghent (Toronto West, ON) for recently bringing us words of exhortation.

On March 15, 2013, the Eastern Christadelphian Bible School held a dinner and fund raiser at the Worcester, MA Ecclesia. We would like to thank the members of the Worcester Ecclesia for their efforts as well as all those who attended, contributed and made donations toward the school.

Jim Sullivan

ECHO LAKE, NJ

The Echo Lake Ecclesia rejoiced as we once again held Memorial meeting at our hall on February 16, 2014. The meeting hall had been closed for extensive necessary renovations since early fall 2013. We thank the brothers and sisters of the Moorestown and Union Ecclesias for welcoming us to attend their meeting during that time.

Although we were not together during those months, we had occasion to rejoice together. HANNAH PHILLIPS, the eldest daughter of our Bro. Ben and Sis. Cadi Phillips was baptized at Moorestown ecclesial hall on behalf of Echo Lake, on January 12, 2014, as witnessed by family, brothers and sisters.

We also rejoiced with Bro. Mike and Sis. Sarah Robinson and with Bro. Adam and Sis. Suzie Phillips as both families welcomed baby boys, Noah and Ezra, into the world.

Mike Day

NANAIMO, BC

Due to uncertain family travel and vacation arrangements by our small membership, we have, with regret, decided to suspend our normally scheduled breaking of bread at our ecclesial hall from August 3-31, 2014, inclusive. Any visitors in our area at that time who wish to do so may be able to break bread by arrangement using the contact information in the CALS diary.

We have been blessed over the past year with exhortational support from the following Bre.: Mark Snobelen, Matthew Bennett, Jeremy Foster, Horace MacPherson, Peter Lawrence, Bob Stodel, John Pillion, Greg Bennett, Jamie Myren, Joe Myren, Matthew Neville, and Clive Daniel (Victoria, BC); David Snobelen (Saanich Peninsula, BC); Einar Halbig, Art Bull and Dan Orsetti (Vancouver, BC); Jim Hestermann (Maple Ridge, BC). Visitors from further afield included Bre.: Eric Evans (Prince George, BC); Rob Alexander (Toronto Book Road, ON); Graeme Alexander (Seattle, WA); and most recently, Nathan Daniels (North Houston, TX).

We also very much appreciated the study evening conducted by Bro. Andrew Bramhill (Shirley, UK) last March.

Should anyone be considering moving to the West Coast of Canada, please consider our area. The Nanaimo Ecclesia has an easily accessed hall, and Nanaimo itself is an ideal retirement center with reasonably priced real estate, an ideal climate, beautiful surroundings and recreational and cultural facilities.

Tom Alexander

ROGUE VALLEY, OR

We thank the following visiting brothers for their exhortations in recent months: Tom Muniz (Jackson County, OR), and Matthew Hatcher (Thousand Oaks, CA). On April 5-6, 2014, an internal study weekend was conducted by the Rogue Valley Ecclesia on the topic of "Headship". We also look forward to a study weekend with Bro. Dev Ramcharan on September 13-14, 2014, on "Psalm 119." We welcomed around the Table of the Lord the following Sis.: Sarah Muniz and Kathleen King (Jackson County, OR); Marie Cooper (Seattle, WA); and Marcie Cleveland (Portland, OR).

Henry Wisniewski

SARASOTA, FL

The Sarasota Ecclesia commends Sis. Tabitha Hall to the Austin, TX Ecclesia at Leander. We will miss her, but we are sure that she will benefit greatly from her new ecclesia, as we are confident that the Austin Leander Ecclesia will benefit from her joining them around the Table of our Lord and Savior.

James Wilkinson

THOUSAND OAKS, CA

During the past few months we have been pleased to welcome around the Table of our Lord many brothers and sisters from our neighboring California ecclesias. In addition, we welcomed brethren from afar: Henry and Sharon Wisniewski, and Jessica Yoshida (Rogue Valley, OR); Michelle Fletcher (Heathmont, Aust.); Sarah Abel (Okanagan, BC); Rebekah deCaussin (Norfolk, VA); Alcia Hodgskinson (Perth, Aust.); and Jim Cowie (Moreton Bay, Aust.).

Our thanks go out to the following Bre.: John McConville, and Neal Caplan (Reseda, CA); Chuck Stivers (San Luis Obispo, CA); David Jennings (Pomona, CA); and David Clubb (Simi Hills, CA) for their exhortations and afternoon classes. We also thank our Bro. Jim Glover (Reseda, CA) for his exhortation. Bro. Jim Cowie led our annual "Day with the Word" for us in January 2014, on the topic of, "Judah First" including a Sunday school class and exhortation. We sincerely wish to thank our brethren for their service to our ecclesia with these uplifting talks.

By way of transfer, we are sorry to lose our Sis. Torrie Vetkos to the Simi Hills, CA Ecclesia but certainly wish her God speed as she meets with the brothers and sisters there. Bro. Justin Reich has transferred from the Simi Hills, CA Ecclesia to our ecclesia and we welcome him around the Table of the Lord.

On November 30, 2013, we had a spiritual birth in our ecclesia as BRANDON CIPRIOTTI, son of our Bro. Mike and Sis Wendy Cipriotti, was baptized into the saving name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Our congratulations go out to Bro. Brandon as he starts his journey with his brothers and sisters to the kingdom of God.

We also have a natural birth to report as Bro. James and Sis. Kristen Styles became parents of Lydia Marie Styles on November 30, 2013. We look forward to having a new Sunday school scholar in the near future!

Tom Graham

NEW YORK SISTER'S RETREAT 2013

On Friday, June 21, 2013, about 49 sisters of all ages, and young people from the Metro New York, New Jersey, Albany, Atlanta and Washington DC ecclesias, retreated to the Home Wood Suites in Reading, PA for a weekend of activities around God's word.

In her welcoming remarks, Sis. Averil Ferguson reminded us of the goals of the retreat, which included providing ourselves an environment conducive to studying and becoming worthy vessels in our various ecclesias, and to enhancing healthy relationships among us. Over the weekend, a series of four talks with a group workshop was presented. Our speaker, Sis. Borgette Charles helped us to examine the qualities of the Virtuous Woman in Prov 31 as we considered "The Role of Sisters in the Ecclesia". She reminded us that God created woman to be a help meet for man, enabling us to focus on our various roles within our natural and spiritual families. The discussions which followed were lively. This year, the workshop session took an interesting format. Four groups discussed and role-played topics based upon our roles in the ecclesia. The topics ranged from head covering to being unequally yoked. The Rap Session was both motivational and instructional. We began that session by viewing a tape the two facilitators used to engage the group in spirited discussion.

After an early dinner on Saturday, we were privileged to find temporary shelter in the "Ark" at the Sight and Sound Theatre in Lancaster, PA, as we joined the cast for their performance of "Noah". What a thrilling and breathtaking experience!

Following breakfast on Sunday morning, we reassembled for the prayer circle which seemed to be one of the high points of the weekend. It was a very moving experience as we joined hands and hearts together in presenting our various petitions to the Lord.

The final and formal session was a very solemn Memorial service. Sis. Borgette urged us to use whatever talents we possess in the service of our Lord and Master remembering that we are vessels of honor called to be daughters of Zion. Then after lunch, that moment arrived when we said our goodbyes and departed to our respective cities.

Our 2014 New York Metropolitan Ecclesias annual Sister's Retreat will be held, Lord willing, on June 20th-22nd. Please join us for a weekend filled with spiritual bonding, upliftment, and fellowship around God's word. The retreat will be held at the Homewood Suites, 2801 Papermill Road, Wyomissing, PA 19601. The speaker will be Sis. Cynthia (Cindy) Paiva (Guadalajara, Mexico). Her topic will be "Practical Aspects of Daily Living in the Truth". Please contact Sis. Averil Ferguson at 718-881-8705 for more detailed information.

Claudette White

Intelligence from Orlando and Brant County ecclesias arrived just too late to make this issue.

The Sarasota ecclesia extends its sympathy to the family of Sis. Chris Butts, wife of the late Bro. Bill Butts, who fell asleep in Christ on March 30. Details next month.

Minute Meditation

Let your light shine

Rick Warren in his “Purpose Driven Life” wrote: “Live in such a way that those who know you but don’t know God, will come to know God because they know you.” What a wonderful way to live, what a lofty goal, is to live a godly life and share with others the Word of God, so that they in turn are more knowledgeable about God and are drawn to serve Him because of us. We who are seeking to serve our God faithfully find inspiration in this thought. However, these words set a standard that most of us find difficult, if not impossible, to live up to. Jesus was the ultimate example of demonstrating the character of God in his life, and the words he spoke were not his own words, but the words of his Father. Jesus fulfilled this ideal character perfectly.

Paul tells us, be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ, and he gives practical advice to his spiritual son Timothy to help him towards this goal: “Show yourself in all respects to be a model of good works, and in your teaching show integrity, dignity, and sound speech that cannot be condemned.”

Many claim to be living a godly life, and may do many good deeds, but they miss important aspects. We learn from the prophet Micah, “He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?” We need humility and child-like faith, as Jesus explained to his disciples, “Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.” There is no room for pride, but rather for behind-the-scenes acts of kindness, dedication to Bible study and acts of service for God in all aspects of life. Walking humbly with our God means serving him quietly without great fanfare. By our fair and honest practices, consideration for others, work ethic, and faithful adherence to the commands of Christ, those around us should be able to discern that our standards are godly ones. We also need to constantly talk of our faith so that others can learn about God from us.

The wise observation, “What you are doing, is hollering so loud I cannot hear what you are saying” can apply to us if we do not uphold the standards that we preach. One man was asked once by a colleague why he parked his Christianity at the threshold of the office when he walked in the door. We may talk the talk about our beliefs, but we should be acting in harmony with our talk. Let us not be like those the apostle Paul describes, “They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.”

It is impressive that those who heard Peter and John could tell that they had been with Jesus: “Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marveled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.” Does everyone who knows us know that

we belong to Christ and that he is the center of our life? This goal should be our priority as we mix with the world, but are not part of it.

When Moses came down from the mount after having been with God for 40 days and 40 nights, his face actually shone so brightly that the people were blinded by it. He had to cover his face with a veil to shield them from the brightness. In time the brightness faded and he no longer had to wear the veil. If we stay out in the hot sun on a summer day for a long time, we also begin to glow from the effects of the sun's rays shining upon us. We perspire and can get sun burn. In time we cool down, our skin cells eventually renew themselves, the effect fades and our glow goes.

Many years ago I returned to work on Monday morning after having attended Bible School the previous week. A coworker standing near the door as I arrived asked, "How was your vacation?" I answered, "It was great! I went to Bible School, enjoyed three excellent teachers, learned and talked about Bible topics all week and had a wonderful time!" He said, "You are glowing." I thanked him for noticing. This was Monday morning.

On Thursday afternoon the same man walked by my office and looked in my open door. I was sitting behind a desk piled high with files talking into two phones, one at each ear. I had a client on one line and an adjuster on the other line and was trying to negotiate a claim for my client. He paused for a moment and then called out, "The glow has gone." It had.

Sadly, some never glow, while for most of us the glow fades with the cares of this life. We need to recharge our glow by filling our minds with the things of God, and work to keep our glow for the Lord glowing no matter what else is happening in our life.

Let us try to live so close to God and his son that others will be able to see the spiritual glow that we have for things eternal. Let us strive to align ourselves so closely to the Lord Jesus that we actually seem to shine because we are so full of love for our Lord. The opening quote can be modified to say, "Live in such a way that people who know you but don't know Christ will want to know Christ because they know you." When others see the character of Christ in us by how we live our life, it can help motivate them to want the same glow for themselves.

May the way we live our lives be an example to those around us so that they will want to know more about our God because of us. As our Lord said, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

Robert J. Lloyd

**Let Your Light So
Shine Before Men**

Coming Events (Lord Willing)

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

MAY, 2014

2-4 Southern California Brother's Weekend at Lake Cachuma, CA. "Rejoice in the Lord Always", classes lead by Bro. Ryan Mutter (Baltimore, MD). An examination of how joy, peace, contentment, and hope can apply to brother's roles as leaders in their homes, ecclesias and workplaces. Contact Bro. Gordon Hensley at simi.rosa.hens@gmail.com or Bro. Levi Gelineau at Leviandjessica@gmail.com.

3-4 Pittsburgh, PA Annual Spring Gathering. Bro. Mike Robinson (Echo Lake, NJ) will be speaking on "The Levites: They Shall Be Mine". Travelers' lunch will be provided at noon and classes will begin at 1:00 pm. Contact Bro. Len Budney at pghecclesia@gmail.com or (412) 983-1970.

16-18 Sussex, NB Spring Youth Camp will be led by Bro. John Mannell (Toronto West, ON).

18 Mid-Atlantic Gathering. Contact Bro. David Cheetham at 856-273-3654.

31-June 1 Meriden, CT. Spring Study weekend with Bro. Ron Hicks. Sunday school picnic to follow on Sunday afternoon. Contact Bro. Steve Harper at shaper.rn@me.com.

31-June 1 New York Fraternal Gathering at the South Ozone Park Ecclesial Hall, 120-22 131st St., South Ozone Park, NY 11420. The speaker will be Bro. Jason Hensley (Simi Hills, CA) on "Seeking the Lost".

JUNE, 2014

12-? Simi Valley, CA Bible Reading Marathon Bring a friend to our Bible Reading Marathon, where guests will read the entire ESV Bible beginning at 10:00 AM Friday, June 12 night and day until finished. Follow along at BibleReadingMarathon.com. Want to join us? Email cindy.and.doug@juno.com.

18-21 Houston North, TX Texas Bible Day camp four wonderful days for 3-12 yr olds centered around God's word. The topic will be "Minor Prophet Links to the Kingdom". Please register at: www.nhchristadelphians.org.

20-22 New York Metropolitan Ecclesias annual Sister's Retreat at the Homewood Suites, 2801 Papermill Road, Wyomissing, PA 19601. The speaker will be Sis. Cynthia (Cindy) Paiva (Guadalajara, Mexico). Her topic will be "Practical Aspects of Daily Living in the Truth". Contact Sis. Averil Ferguson at 718-881-8705 for more detailed information.

22-28 California Kids Camp. The topic this year is "Revelation". Teachers: Bro. Stephen Hornhardt (Australia) and Bro. David Wisniewski (Canada). For registration go to www.kidscampcalifornia.com or contact Bro. Tom Graham at tom@bigbrand.com.

28-July 6 Mid-Atlantic Christadelphian Bible School at Shippensburg University, Shippensburg, PA. Theme: "O Lord God of Israel, there is no God like thee" (2Chron 6:14). The teachers will be Bro. Jim Cowie (Moreton Bay, Queensland, Australia): "Contending Earnestly for the Faith" (adults) and "Cameos of the Kingdom" (teens); Bro. Jay Mayock, Jr. (Hamilton, Book Road, ON): "All in All (A Study of Psalm 8)" (both); and Bro. Stephen Palmer (Mumbles, Swansea, UK): "Simon Peter: Learning Lessons in Discipleship"

(adults) and “Digging for Treasure in the Epistle of Peter” (teens). Contact by e-mail Robin Colby macbs@live.com or check our website: www.midatlanticbibleschool.com.

JULY, 2014

6-12 Southwest Christadelphian Bible School at Schreiner University in Kerrville, TX. The teachers will be Bro. Jim Cowie (Moreton Bay, Brisbane, Australia): “The Life and Times of Jehoiada the Priest”; “Events Subsequent to the Return of Christ” (teens); Bro. Stephen Palmer (Mumbles, Swansea, UK): “Gospel of John”; “Josiah” (teens); and Bro. Leen Ritmeyer (Cardiff, Museum Place, Wales, UK): “The Power of Bible Places in the Life of Christ”; “Tasting Biblical Hebrew” (teens). website: www.swcbs.com.

19-27 Midwest Bible School will be held at Trine University, Angola, IN. Speakers and their topics are: Bro. Jim Cowie (Moreton Bay, Brisbane, Australia): “Nazaries Unto God”; Bro. Matt Norton (Lismore, Australia): “Impressions of Christ” and Bro. Stan Isbell (Houston North, TX): “Discovering Disguises Through the Bible”. For registration information, contact Bro. Mike Livermore, 44943 Yorkshire Dr., Novi, MI, 48375; 248-462-5740, e-mail: mike.live@gmail.com or visit 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, New Zealand), and Bro. Joseph Palmer (San Diego County, 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 Bro. Jeff Gelineau, 567 Astorian Dr., Simi Valley, CA 93065. E-mail: mail@gelineau.org. Register at the website: 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, CA): “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 St., Auburn, MA 01501 or cindynevers@verizon.net.

26-Aug 2 Christadelphian Bible Camp, Manitoulin Island. The speakers will be Bro. Joni Mannell (Walsall, UK) on “The Difference was Daniel” and Bro. Gary Cousens (Cambridge, ON) on “James — My Beloved Brethren”. More details on www.christadelphianbiblecamp.ca. For registration, contact Bro. Alex Browning at jabrowning@rogers.com or phone 1-416-284-0290.

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. For registration, contact Sis. Pat Posey — robandpatposey@gmail.com.

AUGUST, 2014

1-4 All-Mexico Bible School Come help start an annual event at a beautiful location at Hotel Perico in the hills overlooking Lake Chapala near Guadalajara. Speaker: Bro Bill Rawson. Contact Bro. David Lloyd davidrllloyd@earthlink.net 818-352-6486.

16-24 Manitoulin Bible Camp, Manitoulin Island, ON. The speaker will be Bro. Carl Parry on “Elijah”. Register at www.youthconference.com.

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

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16-22 Winfield Bible School Theme: "Seek Ye First the Kingdom of God and His Righteousness" Teachers are Bro. Stephen Whitehouse (UK): "Zechariah: Your King Cometh"; Bro. David Jennings (USA): "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God they are the Sons of God", Rom 8:14; and Bro. Jeff Gelineau (USA): "Forgiveness: Doing the Unthinkable". Concerning registration fees, call Bro. Don at 250-545-5988 donzantingh@hotmail.com. Concerning accommodation, call Bro. Harold at 250-478-0343 hjcawston@gmail.com.

17-22 Lakefield Bible School (formerly Niagara Falls Bible School) at Lakefield College. The school is located east of Toronto near Peterborough, ON, on a beautiful lakeside campus. For information contact Bruce and Barbara Abel: bnb69abel@hotmail.ca or call 519-925-5297. Website www.lakefieldbibleschool.com.

23-29 Vancouver Island Bible Camp will be held at Camp Pringle, Shawnigan Lake, Vancouver Island, BC. Speakers are Bro. Dennis Paggi (Verdugo Hills, CA): "Philippians – Rejoice!"; and Bro. Ted Sleeper (San Francisco Peninsula, CA): "The King's Highway". The camp offers a beautiful environment for all ages to enjoy fellowship and study of God's Word. Contact Bro. Duncan Kenzie at djkenzie@gmail.com. Register on-line at www.vibiblecamp.com or by email to Sis. Karen Grover at karengrover@shaw.ca.

SEPTEMBER, 2014

13-14 Paris Avenue, OH Fall Study Weekend with Bro. Michael Owen (UK) speaking on the topic: "Joy of Living the Truth". Bro. Michael will be doing several cottage classes prior to the weekend. Contact Bro. Derek Elder by phone at: 216-965-9763, or by email at: delder1@kent.edu.

13-14 Rogue Valley, OR Southern Oregon Study Weekend. Study of Psalm 119 on theme of "Open Thou Mine Eyes, that I may behold wondrous things" by Bro. Dev Ramcharan (Toronto West). For registration, contact Bro. Randy Yoshida at yoshida@cpros.com (541) 479-5358 or Bro. Tom Muniz at tmuniz816@gmail.com (248) 561-1553. For accommodation, contact Bro. Henry Wisniewski at hwisniewski@hotmail.com (541) 956-5829.

20-21 Bedford, NS Study Weekend with Bro. Jonathan Bowen (Brantford, ON) The classes will be held at the Masonic Hall, St. Margarets Bay, Nova Scotia. Contact Bro. Dale Crawford at Bedfordchristadelphians@gmail.com or 1-902-431-6650.

OCTOBER, 2014

11-12 Sussex, NB Thanksgiving Gathering will be lead by Bro. Jim Sullivan (Boston, MA) on "The Sons of Zeruah".

17-19 Women at the Well Sisters Retreat at Palm Springs, CA. "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of Knowledge" Proverbs 1:7 will be our focus this year with Sis. Patty Reister leading the classes. Contact: Sis. Sandy McLeod sandrarmcleod@gmail.com. Registration: Sis. Bonnie Somerville kenandbonnie@simihills.org.

NOVEMBER, 2014

8-9 Largo, FL Fall Study Weekend with Bro. David Jennings (Pomona, CA). Subject: "Led by the Spirit." Contact Bro. Walt Dodrill at waltdodrill@msn.com or 727-410-0896.