

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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## Offend

*It is possible for a brother or sister to comment on another's behaviour, dress or speech, and suggest that they are, or that someone will be "offended" by it. A better argument, surely, is to show scripturally where the brother or sister is wrong (if they actually are). If a sister's clothing is considered to be immodest, that is a sufficient argument in itself. The apostolic advice to sisters is to "adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array" (1Tim 2:9, cp. 1Pet 3:3-5).*

*To rely on an argument which says, 'what you are doing is offensive to me,' often hides the fact that there is no specific scriptural support for the objection being raised. If there is a specific scripture on the subject, then that is the point which should be made.*

*Even if it is possible to say, 'what you are doing is offensive to me' — it is much, much harder to say, 'what you are doing will offend another brother or sister.' First of all, how can this possibly be known? And does the person mean, 'they ought to be offended by it, because I am'? In which case, the third person is being introduced merely to give an apparent strengthening to a weak argument.*

*The Christadelphian, 1999, 343-345*

# Editorial

## Cause to Offend

*“A brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city” (Prov 18:19).*

*“But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea” (Matt 18:6).*

### Introduction

Many things in life offend me: the apparent need for drivers to cut me off by merging into my braking space in traffic, the prevalence of unsuitable language, sales clerks asking for my address, loud music from my neighbors late at night, statements in addresses that I know are incorrect. Perhaps some are offended by my own actions or words: it is inevitable, I expect, that anyone who tries to present an assessment of almost any topic in our community will offend someone.

So what is one to do? To be so careful as to offend no-one is almost impossible, and if it were so you would finish up saying nothing of any significance or value. But the apparent advice of the Scriptures is to do exactly that: to attempt to avoid offending any brother, and certainly not any of the “little ones”, those who are young in the Truth. But can this be true? Some certainly think so: how many times have you heard something like this:

“I disagree with your actions (or opinions): furthermore, if you persist, you will offend me. As this is a cause of offense to me, you ought to desist.”

Perhaps looking at the above passages in a different, more modern translation will help.

*“A brother helped is like a strong city, but quarreling is like the bars of a castle” (Prov 18:19 RSV)*

*“If anyone causes one of these little ones — those who believe in me — to stumble, it would be better for them to have a large millstone hung around their neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea” (Matt 18:6 NIV).*

Admittedly, I have chosen a somewhat extreme example in using the RSV of the Proverbs passage, but it is clear the Hebrew is obscure and capable of different readings: so to put any weight on this passage is unwise. And all modern translations invert the sense of the Matthew passage in the KJV: it is more correctly translated as not to offend a person, but to cause them to stumble in their Christian walk.

### The message of Scriptures

To study the various passages makes it clear:

- 1) The word “offend” is never used to describe an attitude of mere displeasure, or to denote dissatisfaction with a decision.
- 2) The word “offence” in the New Testament almost always means a causing to

fall, an occasion of stumbling. Certainly this is the case with all those passages which exhort the servant of God not to give offence by his conduct; You can see this in these passages (all from the NIV)

*“But so that we may not cause offense, go to the lake and throw out your line. Take the first fish you catch; open its mouth and you will find a four-drachma coin. Take it and give it to them for my tax and yours” (Matt 17:27).*

*“It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or to do anything else that will cause your brother or sister to fall” (Rom 14:21).*

*“Therefore, if what I eat causes my brother or sister to fall into sin, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause them to fall” (1Cor 8:13).*

### **Meats offered to idols**

However, it is also clear that we must go to great lengths to avoid causing any servant of Christ to stumble. The New Testament examples are mostly concerned with “meats offered to idols”, which is not any sort of problem in our age. But the society in the 1<sup>st</sup> century was saturated with idol worship, and it was common for meat sold in the marketplace to have been consecrated as a sacrifice to false gods prior to its sale. The Jews would have nothing to do with such meat, wary of “unclean” food-handling practices and believing that to partake of consecrated meat was to give tacit approval of idol worship. Thus the Jewish Christians’ consciences were being severely affected, and the outcome of the Jerusalem conference provided a situation where Gentile converts could show their Jewish colleagues that, while they had not adopted the practices of Judaism, they had certainly separated themselves from paganism. This was the stumbling block to many Jewish converts, who sincerely believed that the Gentile believers’ failure to follow the precepts of the Law of Moses was an implicit rejection of the Faith and holding onto an ungodly way of life.

Paul was prepared to become a vegetarian to avoid causing his fellow Jewish Christians’ conscience to be so troubled. And so must we: our fellow believers’ faith must never be destroyed by our actions or statements. Fortunately, this “meat offered to idols” is not a problem: but there are somewhat similar problems today. I list a few below: I offer no comment on these problems, only to reflect on the way they are sometimes viewed in a way similar to “meats offered to idols”, as causing some to have their Christian consciences troubled.

- The celebration of Christmas: some are troubled by its pagan origin, some are not
- The Bible and Science: some are troubled by the insistence of a particular way of reconciling the Genesis account with modern science as being the only way
- Consumption of alcohol: some are troubled by the very idea of Christadelphians drinking any alcohol, some are not at all
- Non-Christadelphian friends: some give advice against any association whatsoever with non-Christadelphians, except as necessary to obtain employment etc. Some are quite happy to have both Christadelphian and non-Christadelphian friends

The actual effect of these potential ways of “causing to offend” can only be decided by the person who claims he has been caused to potentially offend his conscience. He has to say if his faith has been so seriously undermined that it may be destroyed, or if what has occurred has simply upset him. But it is worth remembering that there are many more things that can be categorized as upsetting, than can be classified as giving offence in the Scriptural sense. And, if the incident has merely upset him, it is wrong to speak about being offended, and about the seriousness of giving offence. He cannot use a passage like Matt 18:7 unless the incident has really placed his personal salvation in jeopardy. The giving of offense cannot be used to express displeasure with another’s actions or views, or to indicate dissatisfaction with a decision, whether it be individual or ecclesial.

### **I find that offensive**

All too often the offense that is caused is used as an occasion to impose one’s will on an individual or ecclesia. Even though the offense is not going to cause the individual to stumble in their faith, their dislike can often cause the threat that they will no longer attend. There might be occasions when the offense rises to the level as genuinely troubling someone’s conscience (we have seen such sometimes over the matter of fellowship), but such occasions are infrequent. More often such claims are used to impose one’s will, perhaps against the majority views of the ecclesia. Unfortunately, although majority rule is not the ideal way, it is, in the current dispensation, better than any other alternative (although sometimes I think that casting lots would be better — as has intermittently been argued in our community.)

Employing a so-called offence is sometimes used as a thinly disguised attempt to impose one person’s preferences upon the whole ecclesia. This is contrary to the overriding principle of ecclesial life, where each member has to learn to submit to the will of others, and not impose his or her own feelings unilaterally. Offence between brethren ought to be a contradiction in terms, for brothers and sisters have a relationship that was created by Christ’s work of reconciliation, and reconciliation breaks down barriers:

*“For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us ... that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby ... For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father” (Eph 2:14–18).*

It is a hard thing to do, to neither give nor take offense. A thoughtless word, an idle comment, a decision on a seemingly trivial point, can all cause offense. Let us all try to avoid making that offense a cause for stumbling. Let us try to avoid taking offense, and let us try to remember our savior, who reconciled ourselves to himself at such great cost. So let us be reconciled to each other, in the spirit of Christ.

*Peter Hemingray*

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# Exhortation

## Priority

*“Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus’ feet, and heard his word. But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me. And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her” (Luke 10:38-42).*

### Introduction

Our reading this morning was taken from Luke 10. Perhaps you were thinking I was going to give a talk on the Good Samaritan, or even the 77. But I’d like to talk today about the last few verses of the chapter: it’s just a few short verses, but I think we can get a lot out of this interaction between Jesus, Mary and Martha. As I was reading this, the word that popped into my head from this interaction between them, was the word “priority”.

The word “priority” is a very commonly used word in our time. I know I, and I’m sure some of you, like to just step back and take stock, and prioritize our busy lives. And as we see the world become more frantic, more fast-paced, more disconnected, more mobile, more involved and literally engulfed in so many different things, the word “priority” seems to be constantly on the lips of all of us, trying to sort out our lives and get some kind of order in terms of the things we need to be committed to. And if we go into a book store or search online, we’ll find many, many books on how to set priorities. We can hire people to come in and lecture us on how to prioritize things. It’s becoming a very popular topic to address in such a complex world we live in.

Now when we use the word “priority”, we usually mean what is the important thing, or what is the main thing, or what is most necessary. But it’s helpful to know that the word ‘priority’ is simply a form of the word ‘prior’. We know that the word ‘prior’ means before, or ahead of. A priority, then, is something that comes before everything else. It’s ahead of everything else. It’s what’s supreme, it’s what’s essential, it’s what is foundational, it’s what’s antecedent to everything that follows. So when we talk about priority, we’re really saying “what in my life comes before anything else and everything else?”

Now if we were to walk up to the average person on the street and ask them, “what is your priority?” we will most likely get a lot of different answers. For my kids to be happy and healthy. To love and be loved by my spouse. To be happy. To be wealthy. To feel secure. To lose weight. To control an addiction. To save for a holiday. To try and help others.

So, I wonder then, what our answers would be if we were to go around and ask others in our Christadelphian community, “what is your priority”? If we were to take out a piece of paper and a pen right now, and write down the number one priority of our lives, as a brother or sister of Christ, what would it be? What would we write down? And I don’t mean trying to make a list here. Like we said before, what is that priority that comes before everything and anything else? Now in just thinking about it, I’m sure some of you might be shuffling and sorting through a few... “Ummm, attending ecclesial functions, loving God, raising a Godly family, having a good job to support my family, witnessing, loving each other”, and so on.... And I guess we consider all of them as very important things in our everyday lives.

But I’m trying to find out if there’s just a way to simplify this list. What’s the one priority we can make, so that all these other priorities we have, will simply follow?

### **The one priority**

We can start to work out what this one priority is, when we see Jesus’ response to Martha. But before we talk about this “one thing that is needed” that Jesus is talking about, let’s take a quick look at a few other things mentioned here.

Now, if we were to look back in previous chapters of Luke, we’d work out that this is the last six months of Jesus’ life. He’s already been travelling on the road for a number of months, and he’s going from town to town, village to village proclaiming the word of God. And when we look on either sides of this story, there’s a lot of teaching being done by Jesus. And his students are not only the people who he’s visiting in these towns and villages, but they’re also his disciples and future apostles. Without knowing it just yet, for the disciples, this was to be the final semester with their loving professor, in preparing to graduate and take his message to the ends of the earth.

First I’d like to talk about the importance of the woman sitting at the feet of Jesus. Now you might not think it today, but back in Jesus’ time, this kind of thing wasn’t allowed. At least one commentator tells us that it was remarkable, some would say illegal, for a woman to sit at the feet of a rabbi. The rabbis didn’t allow it. A woman could learn in the back, or in the woman’s section. But here we have a woman right up at Jesus’ feet, getting as close as she could get, as near as she could be. The position shows how keen she is, how interested she is in his teaching.

Let us go back a few chapters, “*Everyone who comes to me and hears my words and acts on them*” (Luke 6:49) ... Jesus goes on to say “*builds his house on a rock*”. Compare “*Why do you call me Lord, Lord and do not do what I say?*” (vs 46). Jesus is saying here, “Saying I’m Lord, calling me Lord, isn’t enough... It’s those who come to me and listen to me and act on what I say that are truly mine.” And that’s exactly where Mary was placed.

### **At the feet of Jesus**

I’d like you, for a minute, to picture yourself at the feet of Jesus, just as Mary was. You’re sitting on the floor, at the feet of the most powerful, truthful teacher who ever spoke. You’re looking up in awe, listening intently to his every word as he

addresses the room. And as you sit there, he teaches about how to pray, about loving God and loving your neighbor, about persecution and suffering, about sin and what to avoid, about how to live righteously. He'll pause for a drink of water before he continues about humility, pride, forgiveness, judgment. He'll talk about the Kingdom of God.

Can we picture how monumental this opportunity is? It would be incredible. If we think back (some of us way back) to when we were started school in first grade, and our teacher would sit at the front of the class, and we'd be right there at their feet, feeding off every word they'd say. Their stories, their instructions, their teachings. Except that maybe, for some of us, our attention spans weren't probably up to scratch back then. So we can get a bit of an understanding of exactly what Mary was going through here. And to throw in that Jesus' teachings were life changing, radical, powerful, and urgent, would have had her enthralled even more.

So now, coming back to the priority we mentioned before, I expect that now it might be becoming a bit more evident. Well, I might as well make it clear now, what this priority is, by illustrating it by a quotation:

“The single priority for all Christians is to hear the Word of God because that is prior to every other spiritual duty, which is motivated by, informed by, and defined by Scripture.”<sup>1</sup>

And the story that happens here at the end of Luke 10 makes that pretty clear. So what's our priority? To hear what God has to say. Here, Mary was listening to God's word through His Son, Jesus.

*“Only one thing is needed”* (vs 42). He's saying here, “If you listen to and understand God's word, everything will follow. You'll be able to deal with all those other priorities down the list, working out which is necessary and which isn't.”

### **A closer look at Martha**

Martha probably also wanted to be sitting at Jesus' feet, listening to what he had to say. But she was distracted. It seems that her role was that of hostess, so she felt compelled to fulfill that function, despite her real desire to learn from the master.

And I know I can easily see myself as Martha at times. Sometimes far too often. And I'm sure we can ALL identify with Martha. When Jesus entered, Martha probably had the intention of sitting and absorbing God's word from no other than His Son. She had the opportunity to learn the profound, life-changing teachings of Jesus. *“But Martha was distracted with much serving”* (Luke 10:40). She got distracted, stressed, worried about other things. She had a meal to prepare and serve. She had guests to feed.

Her intentions seemed right. She wanted to be hospitable. She wanted to feed her guests, to share her food, to help others. In her mind, that seemed like the right thing to do. And we could say that serving others is a righteous, Christian act. We could say that her devotion to showing kindness to strangers was commendable. So what was the issue here? Why did Jesus tell Martha that Mary, who wasn't worried about serving and preparing the meal, was doing the right thing instead?

Well, I believe it's because Mary had her priority right. And her priority was to listen to the word of God. Forget the meal, forget the arrangements, and forget the fussing around.

And then what's even more fascinating is what follows. *"But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached him and said 'Lord, do you not care?' "* (Luke 10:40). Let's just stop there. Now she was obviously frustrated, irritated. And rather than going to Mary, she took that frustration directly to Jesus. And as soon as she starts with *"Lord, do you not care?"* I'm sure a fair few in the room, maybe even Jesus himself, were a little taken back. I guess it's kind of like Martha saying *"Well, are you just going to sit there, and just keep talking about life-changing, transforming, sin-shattering, peace-giving, joy-producing truth and ignore the fact that Mary isn't helping me set the table?"*

And we can see here that Martha was too busy, caught up in the bread that perishes. But here she had, in her very house, the bread of life that would never perish. Martha was worried about the bread that feeds the body, and Mary was worried about the bread that feeds the soul.

Now before we become too judgmental and condemn Martha, what is it that keeps US from being here to hear the word of God? What is it that's keeping US taking the time to discuss the word of God with others? What is it that's keeping US from doing our daily readings? I'm exhorting to myself here. Seemingly too often, I try time and time again to commit myself to read my Bible more, yet too many things sneak into that growing list of priorities, and that top priority slides down the list. For some of us, it could be our jobs, it could be a social function, it could be some other priority that usually ends up irritating or frustrating us. It makes us mad when we know we should be sitting at the feet of Jesus hearing his word. So before we look at Martha and wonder if her priorities are twisted, before we cast the first stone, let's take this opportunity today, as we examine ourselves, to see if our priorities are twisted. Because we all allow ourselves to get sucked into all the unnecessary things that only lead to greater frustration. And like Martha, you might even try and condemn those who are doing the right thing, trying to justify yourself.

Now, I guess Jesus could have replied to Martha and said "Whoa, back off Martha", like we might. But He didn't. It is recorded: *"And Jesus answered and said to her, 'Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. But only one is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her' "* (Luke 10:41). And we can see here how Jesus highlights this priority.

## **Our priorities**

David has a similar comment:

*"One thing I have desired of the Lord, That I will seek. That I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, To behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in His temple" (Psa 27:4).*

So David, too, had one priority in mind. He wanted to seek out one thing. He wanted to dwell in the House of the Lord and behold God's beauty. How do we

come to know God and see His beauty? How do we get to know His mind? We hear His word. We listen to the words He's given us, which gives us everything we need to know about Him.

It doesn't take long for us to step out of our frantic lives, just for a moment, and see that it is so full of unnecessary things. It can control us. It can ruin our attitudes. It can eat away at our relationships. Some of us get frustrated over matters of no consequence, like politics or sports. What Jesus taught both Mary and Martha is to commit their lives to one thing, to see the beauty of the Lord just like David. And that if we want to look back on the list of priorities that we made, we need to know that the path to all those things, prior to all those things, is to hear Him speak through his word.

Deut 8:3 tells us that "*Man shall not live on bread alone but every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God*". And our one priority, prior to everything else, becomes just that. Jesus tells us that, in our short lives on this earth, nothing is more important than hearing the Lord speak. Nothing compares to it. And when the opportunity is there, we need to grasp it, just like Mary. And Jesus says, "*I'm not taking that away from her*" (Luke 10:42). It is as if Jesus was saying "I'm not sending her into the kitchen." It is obvious that Mary was never going to be a preacher. She was never going to be a rabbi. But she was going to know more about God, and long to be like His Son, Jesus, with every word that came from his lips. This rare opportunity was too rich and too critical to turn to anything else.

So in knowing this, let's step back and take stock, knowing we live in a country where we can freely study God's word at any time and at any place. And now, as we take in the bread and wine, symbols of the life-giving hope that we have in Jesus who suffered for us, let's examine ourselves and our priorities. Let's consider what's necessary, what's critical, and what's most important, as we are seated at the feet of Jesus.

Nick Boyle (Saanich Peninsula, BC)

**Notes:**

1. From a sermon on this passage by John MacArthur.

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**The single priority for all Christians  
is to hear the Word of God**

# First Principles

## God and His Son

### (2) The Revealing of God by Christ

#### The Memorial Name of God and His purpose

One of the things that we can learn from reading and studying God's Word is what God's purpose was and is. What is His purpose or plan for men and what was His purpose in sending His Son? We might expect that if we can understand God's purpose, it will help us to understand other things presented in the Scriptures. This turns out to be true and it especially helps us in understanding the Memorial Name of God, Yahweh<sup>1</sup> (or as it is sometimes rendered, Jehovah). One reason this is true is that the Name is one of the ways in which God revealed His purpose. However, we must consider the subject of God's purpose from a more general point of view before beginning to examine how the Memorial Name relates to it.

God revealed His purpose to Moses: *"But as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD"* (Num 14:21). Creation was for God's glory and honor: *"You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power: for you created all things, and by your will they exist and were created"* (Rev 4:11, ESV).

God's purpose to fill the earth with His glory is described again in a number of other passages:

*"And blessed be His glorious name forever! And let the whole earth be filled with His glory. Amen and Amen"* (Psalm 72:19).

*"They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea"* (Isa 11:9).

*"For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea"* (Hab 2:14).

There are many ways in which God is filling the earth with His glory but the chief way is through the work of the Son of God, Jesus Christ, and we will focus on that avenue. There are also many things to consider about God's glory, but we will emphasize His righteousness (or moral perfection).

Since God is glorious by nature, the best way for the earth to be filled with His glory is for Him to be fully revealed to the world. The Scriptures show us that one of the central features of Jesus' work was to show or manifest the Father to the world.

#### Christ as the Word

God and His Word are inseparable. When God speaks, His will is carried out:

*"And God said, Let there be light: and there was light...And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters (Gen 1:3,6)*

*"By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them*

*by the breath of his mouth” (Psa 33:6).*

When the Word became flesh, God’s glory began to be shown to men much more completely than it had been previously.

*“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of **the only Son** from the Father” (John 1:14).*

In other words, Jesus gave us a perfect picture of God by living and working perfectly according to the Scriptures. Only the Son of God could have done this.

*“For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God; the only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has made him known” (John 1:17-18).*

Jesus made God known by his preaching and by his example. This includes the example and the message of his sacrificial death, which showed God’s righteousness and man’s sinfulness. His death was a continuation and completion of his ministry, in which he revealed God to us. Such revealing therefore includes not only speaking and teaching, but also actions.

We have brought out that Jesus revealed, showed, or manifested many things about God’s glory. How else has God’s glory been shown? The physical creation - the living world around us - shows it in an astonishing number of ways if a person is willing to see it. But, the revealing which has by far the greater impact on our spirits and minds is that given through Christ and through the Bible. And Christ is the Word (the Bible) made flesh. When we see how extensive Christ’s role is in revealing to us God’s glory, it helps us to understand how he (Christ) relates to God’s Memorial Name.

### **The meaning of God’s Memorial Name**

The revelation of God’s divine Name to Moses is recorded in Exodus 3. The Name is given in an expanded form in verse 14. Generally, the translation of this given in the text is “I AM WHO I AM”. This is appropriate as an expression of God’s existence and His clear identity as the one and only God and creator. Footnotes for the various translations explain that the Name in verse 14 can have several related meanings<sup>2</sup>. A fuller meaning begins to be seen when the secondary meanings are examined, such as “I WILL BE WHAT I WILL BE”. An implied meaning or suggestion of a future purpose or event is introduced.

Studies by unbiased scholars indicate that “I WILL BE WHO I WILL BE” is a valid meaning, and that the shorter forms of the Name, Yahweh or Jehovah, would then have the corresponding meaning, “HE WHO WILL BE”. This would tell us that God’s existence (as the glorious King of the Universe) would be expressed in the future through some person. Does this meaning make sense? It certainly does if we apply it as a prophecy of God’s Son, Jesus the Christ.

### **Immanuel, God with us**

We have seen previously that one of the central features of Jesus’ work was to show or manifest the Father to the world. Christ was sent by his Father to be

sacrificed, to show God's righteousness (Rom 3: 21-26). Righteousness is a very important part of God's glory but Christ showed us many other things about his Father. Jesus showed what the Father is like so well, that if God came to the earth as a man, Jesus showed what that man would be like. Thus the name, Immanuel, meaning "God with us", was very appropriate though it is used only in Isa 7:14, as quoted in Matthew:

*"She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins. All this took place to fulfil what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel (which means, God with us)" (Matt 1:21-23).*

The writer to the Hebrews puts it another way:

*"In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets; but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom He appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. He **reflects the glory of God** and bears the **very stamp** of his nature, upholding the universe by his word of power" (Heb 1:1-3).*

Jesus "reflects the glory of God and bears the very stamp of his nature". Jesus shows the glory of God by **reflecting** it. "Very stamp" can be rendered literally "exact impress". Thus, the image of God which Jesus shows by reflection is a true image of God. It is complete so as to accomplish God's purpose in every way.

### **Christ, the image of God**

The fact that Jesus is the image of God is expressed by Paul

*"He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation; for in him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or authorities - all things were created through him and for him" (Col 1:15-16).*

This last passage also brings out how important Christ is to the purpose of God. In order that the creation can be filled with the Glory of God through Jesus Christ, all things in it have been made to depend on him, and to serve him.

In the following passages in John, Jesus himself states that to know him is to know what God is like and to see him is to see what God is like.

*"They said to him therefore, "Where is your Father?" Jesus answered, "You know neither me nor my Father; if you knew me, you would know my Father also" (John 8:19).*

*"If you had known me, you would have known my Father also; henceforth you know him and have seen him. Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father, and we shall be satisfied. Jesus said to him, Have I been with you so long, and yet you do not know me, Philip? He who has seen me has seen the Father; how can you say, 'Show us the Father?'" (John 14:7-9).*

*"O righteous Father, the world has not known thee, but I have known thee; and these know that thou hast sent me. I made known to them thy name,*

*and I will make it known, that the love with which thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them” (John 17:25-26).*

These passages all state that Jesus is the image of the Father. And an image is not the same as that which it is the image of. It is separate, and it is always different from the original. For example, we often speak of a child being the image of one of the parents at the same age. But, they are an entirely different person. In a somewhat similar way, Jesus is an entirely different person from his Father.

Paul speaks of *“the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the likeness of God”*, and *“the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ”* (2Cor 4:4-6). Christ showed mankind what God is like and when we know what God is like, we see His glory.

## **HE WHO WILL BE**

We have learned that God caused His Son to be born so that His Son could reveal Him, to act for Him, and to speak for Him. We see from this why God chose, as His Memorial Name, YAHWEH, “HE WHO WILL BE”, or in its longer form (Exod 3:14), “I WILL BE WHO I WILL BE”. God’s purpose was for His glory to be shown by him who was to come as the Son of God, Jesus Christ. The Memorial Name in the form referring to the future was a prophecy that Christ would show His Glory.

With Christ’s coming, the prophecy given by the Name was fulfilled. Its purpose of looking forward to the coming of the Son of God was completed. Therefore, YAHWEH is not used in the New Testament. No one, not even Jesus, uses it in the New Testament. Not only that, but when an Old Testament passage is quoted in which Yahweh is used, the Greek word for Lord is substituted.

This is no accident of translation, as is shown by Rom 9:29, and James 5:4 where a name of God in the form, the Lord of Hosts<sup>3</sup>, is used. In the **Greek manuscripts**, Lord is a Greek word, while Hosts is the Greek transliteration of the Hebrew word used in the Old Testament — Sabaoth, and is used without translation. Why wasn’t Yahweh transliterated along with the word for Hosts? Paul and James have deliberately avoided using Yahweh while keeping the Hebrew word for Hosts. This could not be and was not accidental. We believe that it was done to show that it is not essential to use Yahweh any more.

What name has taken the place of Yahweh in referring to God? Jesus usually spoke of God as the Father, and addressed him in prayer as Father. However, the change is even greater than that. We will consider what is said about Jesus’ name (Yah saves, Joshua, Jesus). But first, let us make sure we understand that Jesus’ mission is described as being to bring glory to the Father’s Name. We are not talking about bringing glory to the name Yahweh. It is not used by Jesus, or by the New Testament writers. So, what is meant by Jesus bringing glory to the Father’s Name is that Jesus was to make His wonderful nature and being known.

God’s glory must be known by men and women in their minds, hearts, and spirits. Words, except God’s Word, and **any names** made up of letters are inadequate. When the Word was made flesh in Jesus Christ, God’s purpose to bring glory to His Name began to be fulfilled.

The following passages illustrate how Jesus viewed his mission to bring glory to his Father's Name.

*“Pray then like this: Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name” (Matt 6:9).*

*“I have come in my Father's name, and you do not receive me; if another comes in his own name, him you will receive” (John 5:43).*

*“Jesus answered them, ‘I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness to me;’ ” (John 10:25).*

*“... for this purpose I have come to this hour. Father, glorify thy name. Then a voice came from heaven, ‘I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again’ ” (John 12:27-28).*

*“Whatever you ask in my name, I will do it, that the Father may be glorified in the Son; if you ask anything in my name, I will do it” (John 14:13-14).*

### **The name of Jesus**

As we stated above, Jesus addresses God as Father, and does not use Yahweh. And, as we brought out, the change is even greater than that. Peter states about Jesus in Acts 4:12: *“And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”* What does this mean? Jesus' work (and our work) is still to bring glory to the Father's Name. We are now to approach the Father through Jesus Christ. Let's look at a few more passages in Acts about Jesus' Name.

*“Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name” (Acts 5:41: see vs 40)*

*“But when they believed Philip as he preached good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women” (Acts 8:12).*

*“But the Lord said to him, ‘Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel; for I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name’ ” (Acts 9:15-16).*

If we consider references to “name” in the rest of Acts, and in all the rest of the New Testament, we find that same strong emphasis upon the Name of Jesus Christ. One passage that is especially important is:

*“Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil 2:9-11).*

So, the exaltation of Jesus' name has the great overall purpose of bringing glory to God.

It is clear then that God has caused the name “Jesus” to be substituted for the name “Yahweh” or “Jehovah”. Where the Name of God is referred to, it is meant in

a broader sense than that of a single spoken word or a single spoken (or written) phrase. The Name of God is made up of all the ways in which His Glory is expressed and shown. It is especially shown through the work of Christ and of the faithful.

### **Jesus subjected to God**

This great prominence of Christ given to him by God must be balanced against the goal of God's purpose and this is done very well in 1Cor 15:24-28. We'll just give vs 28 here: *"When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things under him, that God may be everything to every one."* But, until this goal is reached *"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given"* to Jesus (Matt 28:18). We read in John 3:34 *"it is not by measure that He (God) gives the spirit."* Verse 35 continues, *"the Father loves the Son and has given all things into his hand."* The "all things given" evidently includes that the name Jesus is, in many ways, to be used instead of Yahweh. Keep in mind that Jesus commanded us to pray to God through his name.

Does this all mean that we should never use the name Yahweh? There hasn't been any command given not to use it. So it can be used, and should be used often enough so that all of us keep it in mind and understand it. Perhaps it should be rendered as such in the translations of the Old Testament instead of being masked as LORD. It is clear though, that the Name of God is now to be expressed in a broader and fuller and more glorious way than in letters and words. There are situations in which a name made of letters is needed. For these, we should usually follow the example of Jesus and the Apostles and use God or Father in referring to God or addressing Him in prayer. Finally, we need to understand and keep in mind that Jesus has been given "the name which is above every name", and "there is no other name under heaven by which we must be saved."

Before leaving the subject of the revealing or manifestation of God by Christ, we need to consider the instances recorded in the New Testament in which Jesus is called God or is worshiped. The above discussion of the use of Jesus' name in the New Testament instead of Yahweh, is helpful in understanding these instances, as is the role of Jesus in manifesting or showing God, his Father. Jesus was fulfilling a very exalted role during his ministry on earth.

There is a distinct difference between the description in the Old Testament of the revealing of God by the angels, and the description in the New Testament of the revealing of God by Christ. It was not made clear in the Old Testament that angels were acting and speaking for God. We have to study all the applicable Scriptures (Old and New Testaments) carefully before we are sure that this is the case. In the New Testament, we are always sure that it is Christ who is acting and speaking for God, and not God Himself. The angels were called God and worshiped as though they were God in the Old Testament. This was done frequently. The angels were identified as angels often enough for us to understand their role of revealing or representing God.

Christ was called God and worshiped (though only a very few times). So, God considers it acceptable for this to happen. It helps us to realize the exalted role

Christ filled during his ministry on earth and the even more exalted role he is filling now, and will have in the future.

The following is a complete list of the places where Jesus is called God as far as we know.

*“And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God” (John 20:28).*

*“Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen” (Rom 9:5)*

*“waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,” (Titus 2:13).*

*“But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows” (Heb 1:8-9, quoting Psa 45:6-7).*

*“Simeon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who have obtained a faith of equal standing with ours by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ” (2Pet 1:1 ESV: there are variations in the translations)*

There are about six instances in which Jesus was worshiped. Two examples are:

*“Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God” (Matt 14: 33).*

*“And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him [Jesus]” (John 9: 38).*

It was therefore acceptable to call Jesus Christ God or worship him in a limited number of occasions in New Testament times. It is difficult to say how the faithful should apply these examples today and we won't attempt to discuss that.

*Gar Cooper (Pittsburg, PA)*

**Notes:**

1. In most translations, when we see LORD in capitals in the Old Testament, the Hebrew behind it is יהוה, usually transliterated by Yahweh.
2. The various meanings are derived from the fact that the Hebrew of the Old Testament has no future tense, only past and continuous i.e. present as well as future. So the idea might be represented as the idea of a continuing, eternal being — to be revealed to us in Jesus.
3. The Lord of Hosts: RSV. The KJV has “Lord of Saboath”.

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## ***New Zealand Christadelphian Bible School***

*December 28th —January 3rd 2015.*

*New Zealand Christadelphian Bible School*

*Speakers and Subjects: Bro Mark Vincent, “Exploring the Psalms” and “A tale told twice” the life of Joseph. Bro. Anthony Oosthuizen, “This is My beloved Son”. Registrations [www.nxcbs.co.nz](http://www.nxcbs.co.nz).*

# Bible Study

## The Way of Cain (12) Antediluvian History at a Glance

As has been shown, Gen 6:1-11 correlates to events occurring in the genealogies of Gen 4 and 5. The following chart illustrates this correlation:

Cain's Lineage (The Sons of Men)	Seth's Lineage (The Sons of God)	Genesis 6	Overview
<b>2nd Generation Antediluvian</b>			
<p><i>Cain</i> "I have begotten a man, even Jehovah," a reference to the "coming one" or "messiah," foretold by God to Eve concerning her seed. His mistaken belief that he was the promised "messiah," played a role in the ensuing tragedy.</p>	<p><i>Seth</i> "Appointed" or "granted," a reference to Adam and Eve being given another child to replace Abel, who they lost due to fratricide. Also associated with "foundation," a reference to Seth's role as founding the first ecclesia, which was accomplished at the birth of his son, Enosh. This was when "men began to call upon [or proclaim] the name of the LORD" (Gen 4:26).</p>		<p>The establishment of two distinct groups in relation to God: Seth, who represents those who worship God, and his spiritual descendants, who are later referred to as "the sons of God, and Cain, who represents those unconcerned or opposed to God, and his earthly descendants, who are indirectly referred to as "the sons of men" (Gen 6:2).</p>
<b>3rd Generation Antediluvian</b>			
<p><i>Enoch</i> Hanak, meaning "to begin" or "to dedicate," a reference to his father's construction of the first city, which was built or being built at the time of his birth (Gen 4:17)</p>	<p><i>Enosh</i> Nsh, meaning "man" or "mankind," a reference to the human condition. His father, Seth, chose this name from his understanding about our</p>		<p>The birth of Enoch in association with the construction of the first city marks the start of what is referred to as "civilization," while the birth of Enosh marks the beginning of the first ecclesia.</p>

	<p>mortality: the only escape from death was by salvation from the Lord. Seth's preaching efforts led others to "call upon the name of the LORD" (Gen 4:26). The first ecclesia coalesced around the idea of God providing salvation from death.</p>		
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**4th Generation Antediluvian**

<p><i>Irad</i> Ir or ur, meaning "city," and ad or ud, meaning "to repeat," a reference to the construction of a second city either by Irad, or his father, Enoch.</p>	<p><i>Kenan</i> Similar sounding name to "Cain," however Kenan contains a double emphasis on the Hebrew letter nun, which alters the meaning of his name to: "increase" or "propagate." Because the line of Seth is associated with spiritual developments, the meaning of his name describes the growth of the ecclesia in the 4th generation.</p>		<p>The birth of Irad in association with the construction of a second city, shows how rapidly humans were progressing. It is assumed that along with the construction of cities, there also followed advancements in other fields. Kenan's name is associated with an initial growth in those who called upon God for salvation from their mortal condition.</p>
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**5th Generation Antediluvian**

<p><i>Mehujael</i> Composed of two parts: machah, meaning "to wipe out" or "smite" or "to blot out" and el, meaning "God." Hence his name is translated as "smitten of God."</p>	<p><i>Mahalalel</i> Composed of two parts: halal, meaning "to praise," and el, meaning "God", thus his name is translated as "praised of God."</p>		<p>The names of these two individuals shows the stark contrast between God's view of Cain and Seth's descendants.</p>
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<b>6th Generation Antediluvian</b>			
<p><i>Methushael</i> Composed of two parts: mat, meaning “mortal,” and shael, meaning “grave,” a reference to God’s decision to reduce human lifespan to 120 years.</p>	<p><i>Jared</i> Yarad, meaning “to decline,” a reference to the decline in the ecclesia due to the inauguration of marrying between Seth and Cain’s descendants. Hitherto the righteous did not marry the unrighteous.</p>	<p><i>Gen 6: 1-3</i> “When men began to increase in number on the earth and daughters were born to them ... and they married any of them they chose. Then the Lord said, ‘My Spirit will not contend with man forever, for he is mortal; his days will be a hundred and twenty years’”</p>	<p>This period marks the beginning of a decline in faith, which was the result of corrupt ideas and practices introduced into the community through marriages with the “daughters of men.” God lamented the decline in faith and reduced human lifespan to 120 years (Gen 6:2-3), which was reflected in the name of Methushael, meaning “mortal.”</p>
<b>7th Generation Antediluvian</b>			
<p><i>Lamech</i> Lmk, a combination not found in Hebrew. Related to mkk, which means “brought low” or “humbled,” a reference to Lamech’s pride being wounded by Enoch, who chastised him for polygamy (Gen 4:18), which was in contrivance to God’s martial ideal (Gen 2:24). In attempting to kill Enoch, Lamech invoked the name of his ancestor, Cain. He believed that by killing Enoch, he was somehow avenging</p>	<p><i>Enoch</i> Means “to begin” or “to dedicate,” a reflection of his preaching and prophesying efforts to revive an ecclesia in decline. May be reflective of his dedication to pleasing God (Heb 11:5).  Hek, is a derivative of Enoch, which means “speech,” “mouth,” or “palate,” a reference to his preaching/ prophesying (Jude 14-15). Enoch preached against Lamech’s polygamy. In response, Lamech tried to kill him</p>	<p><i>Lamech &amp; Enoch</i> Gen 6: 11-13: “Now the earth was corrupt in God’s sight and was full of violence. God saw how corrupt the earth had become, for all the people on earth had corrupted their ways. So God said to Noah, ‘I am going to put an end to all people, for the earth is filled with violence because of them.’”</p>	<p>Lamech’s polygamy was an example of the kind of “corruption” described in Gen 6:11.  Lamech’s attempt to kill Enoch inaugurated a new era of violent animosity towards the sons of God. It was also indicative of the kind of violent behavior that would “fill the earth” (Gen 6:11)</p>

<p>Cain; a belief based on the assumption that Cain was murdered by one of Seth's descendants in order to avenge Abel. Lamech avenged Cain in the 7th generation. His reference to "seventy-seven," was a declaration of war against the sons of God for all eternity, as symbolized by the use of a derivative of the number seven, which is associated with God and thus the eternal. Unbeknownst to Lamech, his declaration was a prophecy of Christ's coming in the 77th generation. Through forgiveness, Christ put an end to the cycle of murder and vengeance he and his ancestor, Cain, inaugurated (Matt 18:22).</p>	<p>but God thwarted his intentions.</p>		
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**8th Generation Antediluvian**

<p><i>Jabal</i> Father of those who live in tents and have livestock. As populations of humans and livestock increased, more land was required. Jabal led first migration of</p>	<p><i>Methuselah</i> Composed of two parts: meth, meaning "man," and shelah, referring to an unspecified type of missile weapon that is thrown, such as a javelin or</p>	<p><i>Jabal</i> Gen 6:1,13: "<i>When men began to increase in number on the earth... So God said to Noah, 'I am going to put an end to all people, for the earth is filled with</i></p>	<p>The 8th generation represents a celebrated period in human progress, for this era is marked by several key achievements: music as entertainment; story-telling,</p>
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<p>herdsmen beyond the borders of Eden and Nod. In this way, the earth was “filled” (<i>Gen 6:11</i>).</p> <p><i>Jubal</i> Father of those who play the flute and harp (i.e. a musician skilled in wind and string instruments). His name is similar to “jubilation,” referring to music’s association with entertainment, praise, and celebration, a commentary on what was considered to be a celebrated period in antediluvian history. Music was also used as a mnemonic device for bards to aid them in the telling of oral history, which came to include hero-worshipping and mythmaking. The truth was gradually reinterpreted and corrupted.</p> <p><i>Tubal-Cain</i> Father of those who work in bronze and iron. He is credited with crafting tools and weapons out of these metals. His superior weapons led to the subjugation of</p>	<p>spear. Derivative of mat or meth is mathay, meaning “After how long?” He lived to be nearly a 1,000 years old, and so his name refers to his death: “After how long will he die?” The latter part of his name can also be translated as “sent forth,” since missile weapons are sent forth from the user’s hands. Thus his name means: “After how long until he dies? When it is sent forth.” The “it” refers to the Flood, which was sent forth by God in the year before, or the year of his death.</p>	<p><i>violence because of them.</i>”</p> <p><i>Jubal</i> <i>Gen 6:1: “The Nephilim were on the earth in those days — and also afterward — when the sons of God went to the daughters of men and had children by them. They were the heroes of old, men of renown.”</i> Also: <i>Gen 6:11: “Now the earth was corrupt in God’s sight...”</i></p> <p><i>Tubal-Cain</i> <i>Gen 6:11: “The earth was filled with violence.”</i></p> <p><i>Naamah</i> <i>Gen 6:2: “The sons of God saw that the daughters of humans were beautiful.”</i></p>	<p>hero-worshipping; Tubal-Cain’s tools of bronze and iron providing the means to explore and subdue the earth and its inhabitants; and Naamah’s arts making women more appealing to men of weak faith.</p>
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<p>others, which led to wars, which “filled the earth with violence” (Gen 6:11).</p> <p><i>Naamah</i> The only recorded female in either genealogy. Her name means, “beautiful” or “pleasure,” referring to her discoveries in either cosmetology or in the arts of seduction.</p>			
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Matthew Harrison (Ottawa, ON)

## Life of Timothy

### (6) When I could no longer forbear

#### On to Thessalonica

In the previous article in this series, we considered Timothy’s faithful service when Paul and Silas were arrested in Philippi and throughout their time in that city. Following Paul and Silas’ release from prison, Timothy accompanied them as they left Philippi. Their next major stop was Thessalonica. Paul labored to support himself financially while he was in Thessalonica: “*For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail: for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God*” (1Thess 2:9). Note the pronoun Paul used. He wrote “we.” In fact, he did it more than once and also used “our.” Paul’s use of language is probably significant. Paul’s wrote opening greetings from Silas and Timothy: “*Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians which is in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ*” (1Thess 1:1). Paul appears to be deliberate in his use of “I” and “we” in 1Thess. For example, when he refers to his situation and his travels, he uses the word “I” (e.g., 1Thess 2:18, 3:5). But he appears to switch to “we” when he refers to Silas and/or Timothy as well. Paul’s use of the pronoun “we” in the verse about his labors, therefore, suggests Timothy may have followed Paul’s practice of working to earn money to help support himself financially in addition to all of his preaching activities. If that was the case, then there are at least two lessons we can gain from that aspect of Timothy’s life.

**The first** is how central spiritual considerations should be to do what we do. The Truth is not something that should be relegated to the outskirts of our lives. It

should be the heart of our existence. Everything in Timothy's life revolved around the Truth. It seems even his secular work was done so with the furtherance of the Gospel in mind — so it could be made available to people without charge. Timothy's goal was to bring glory to God. His secular pursuits were a means to that end and not an end themselves. As we consider the choices we make in our lives, we need to make sure we have our priorities straight. The Truth must come first, and the activities of our lives should aim to further it. The fact that there are so many diverse opportunities for service in the Truth helps makes this possible. If we love sports, for example, we can help organize and support youth study weekends where a sport is played (e.g., the football challenge, soccer challenge, etc.). If we have a gift for music, we can create and perform the spiritual music that is an encouragement to so many. If we have a talent for making movies, we can help produce outreach videos. Whatever our particular strengths are, there are opportunities to use them to bring glory to God and strengthen others.

**Second**, we should be careful in letting ourselves off the hook because we are weary, so to speak, when it comes to work in the ecclesia. The Bible's record indicates Paul and Timothy maintained an absolutely exhausting schedule with their missionary work. Any secular labors were in addition to their preaching activities.

Paul, Timothy, and their companions must have worked as they did because they recognized what a wonderful gift the Truth was, what an extraordinary opportunity they had to share it, and because they knew that God was with them. We need to remember that we too have been put in a wonderful position. Reflecting on how blessed we are can stir us up to give more in our service to God and to push ourselves as hard as we can.

### ***“Certain lewd fellows of the baser sort”***

There was a positive response to the proclamation of the Gospel in Thessalonica (Acts 17:4). However, the Jews of the city were filled with envy at the interest the people showed in the Truth. Acts 17:5 records they reacted by taking *“unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort.”*

The Greek word rendered “lewd” means “atrociously wicked.”<sup>1</sup> “Of the baser sort” is one word in Greek. It is *agoraios* and means “relating to the market-place.”<sup>2</sup> It is a reference to the people who loitered about in the market places of cities looking for opportunities to agitate and cause trouble.

In tandem with the Jews, these people created a huge disturbance. They claimed the Christians were engaged in sedition and were teaching people to disobey Caesar (Acts 17:6-7). Sedition was a serious offense in Roman times. Just being charged with it could ruin a person.<sup>3</sup>

The city authorities were “disturbed” at the accusations made against the Christians (Acts 17:8, ESV).<sup>4</sup> The Bible indicates they banned Paul from the city. Later when Paul wanted to return to Thessalonica, he wrote to the believers there that he could not because “Satan hindered us:” *“Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again; but Satan hindered us” (1Thess 2:18)*. The hindrance of “Satan” is probably a reference to the prohibition against him returning to the city.

Paul, Timothy, and Silas had to leave Thessalonica following the disturbance. Timothy later ended up playing an extremely important role in supporting the believers there since Paul was not allowed to return to the city.

## Berea



After departing from Thessalonica, Timothy's next stop was Berea. Acts 17 records the Jews there were more receptive to the Gospel (verse 12). However, when the opponents of the Truth in Thessalonica heard about the preaching in Berea, they sent agitators to stir up trouble: *"But when the Jews of Thessalonica had knowledge that the word*

*of God was preached of Paul at Berea, they came thither also, and stirred up the people"* (Acts 17:13).

The enemies of the Gospel in Thessalonica were relentless. They acted as determinedly as Paul had once been to destroy the fledgling Christian community, and Paul had indeed been a ferocious foe. Just as Paul had done, they were willing to travel to other cities to persecute the believers (c.f., Acts 26:11). That was the character of the opponents Timothy had to repeatedly contend with.

After the arrival of the agitators from Thessalonica, the brethren in Berea became extremely concerned about Paul. The situation was so bad that they sent him away "immediately" to Athens, which was over 200 miles to the south (Acts 17:14-15).

When Paul fled, he left Silas and Timothy behind in Berea to continue the work: *"And then immediately the brethren sent away Paul to go as it were to the sea: but Silas and Timotheus abode there still"* (Acts 17:14). Silas and Timothy had the extremely important task of confirming and exhorting the young ecclesia in the face of the dangerous opposition that had gathered against them.

The fact that Timothy agreed to the assignment is an indicator of his willingness to sacrifice of himself for the Truth. He had seen the toll Paul's labors had taken on him. It appears that when Paul left Berea he could not even travel on his own. He had become so frail that he had to be accompanied by brethren from Berea (Acts 17:15). But even though Timothy had witnessed firsthand what Paul's work had done to him — he had seen him forced to flee the city in a really weakened condition — Timothy was still willing to take up that work and continue it when Paul no longer could. Timothy's decision to do so showed how much he was willing to give of himself to help his brothers and sisters and to advance the work of the Truth.

Timothy did not remain in Berea for long. From Athens, Paul sent for him and Silas to join him: *"And they that conducted Paul brought him unto Athens: and*

receiving a commandment unto Silas and Timotheus for to come to him with all speed, they departed” (Acts 17:15). The reason for Paul’s request is indicated in the First Epistle to the Thessalonians.

### **“To establish you, and to comfort you”**

Paul was quite worried about the Thessalonian ecclesia. They had only recently “turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God” (1Thess 1:9). Yet they faced tremendous opposition:

*“For you, brothers, became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea. For you suffered the same things from your own countrymen as they did from the Jews, who killed both the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and drove us out, and displease God and oppose all mankind” (1Thess 2:14-15, ESV).<sup>5</sup>*

Paul was worried the faith of some in the fledgling ecclesia would wilt in the face of such opposition and they would be tempted to return to their former beliefs and practices to escape persecution.<sup>6</sup> To try to prevent that from happening, Paul sent Timothy back to Thessalonica after he had called him to Athens from Berea:

*“Wherefore when we could no longer forbear, we thought it good to be left at Athens alone; And sent Timotheus, our brother, and minister of God, and our fellow-labourer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you, and to comfort you concerning your faith: That no man should be moved by these afflictions: for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto. For verily, when we were with you, we told you before that we should suffer tribulation; even as it came to pass, and ye know. For this cause, when I could no longer forbear, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter have tempted you, and our labour be in vain” (1Thess 3:1-5).*

Paul needed someone “to establish” and “to comfort” the Thessalonians. The Greek word translated “comfort” in vs 2 is *parakaleo*. It means “to exhort.”<sup>7</sup> In fact, that is exactly how it is translated when it appears in Acts 14: “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 14:22). Recall the context of that passage. It is about Timothy’s home ecclesia! When Timothy had been a new convert in Lystra, he had personally heard Paul give the same message about faithfulness through tribulation that needed to be given to the Thessalonians.

Who could be better to deliver that message in Thessalonica than someone who had both heard it before and who had personally followed the guidance that was given? The Truth was quite young in the Roman world at that point. There were not many people who had endured trials for the Truth over an extended period of time. But Timothy had.

So, Paul sent Timothy to help the Thessalonians. What Timothy asked them to do was very challenging. He called on them to be willing to suffer great loss for the Truth. Leading them required courage, compassion, and the wise application of spiritual principles. Timothy was quite young and would have had to interact with and try to help people from a wide variety of backgrounds and who were in

very different stages of life than him. It is an indicator of the great trust that Paul had in Timothy that he sent him to help the Thessalonians during such a critical time in their development.

Timothy was successful in his mission, and Paul was overjoyed at what he heard from Timothy about how the Thessalonians had responded: *“And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ” (Acts 18:5).*

The KJV rendering “pressed in the spirit” is quite literal. However, it does not fully convey the sense of what Paul was feeling. The Greek word translated “pressed” is a word associated with very strong emotion.<sup>8</sup> Timothy’s arrival and the good news he brought about the Thessalonians energized Paul. It enthused him and compelled him to increase his efforts in Corinth — where he was based at the time — even more.

The success of Timothy’s mission to Thessalonica is an illustration of the power of a good example and of the importance of sound leadership in an ecclesia. The Thessalonians obviously benefited greatly from Timothy’s presence among them.

Paul’s reaction to Timothy’s mission is a reminder of how inter-connected we all are and should be. Good news about others in the Brotherhood should truly fill us with joy, and the positive example of our brothers and sisters should motivate us to increase our own service.

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**Notes:**

1. The Greek word is G4190. The definition is from Mickelson’s Enhanced Strong’s Greek and Hebrew Dictionaries.
2. The Greek word is Strong’s Number G60. The definition is from Mickelson’s Enhanced Strong’s Greek and Hebrew Dictionaries.
3. F. Bruce. 1955. Commentary on the Book of the Acts, page 344.
4. As indicated by Acts 17:7, the agitators probably made a point of emphasizing the Christians’ belief in the coming Kingdom of Jesus. They had in their hands a brother named “Jason,” which is the Latin version of “Jesus.” His presence combined with all of the shouts about the Christians wanting to have “Jesus” as king probably added to the confusion. See H.P. Mansfield. 2006. The Story of the Bible. Volume 8, page 226.
5. 1Thess 3:5 records that Paul was concerned that “the tempter” may “have tempted” the Thessalonians so that his labor among them had been in vain. Orthodox Christianity tends to offer a simplistic and inaccurate interpretation of this passage because they do not compare Scripture with Scripture. The People’s New Testament commentary writes, “The tempter is Satan.” Matthew Henry concurs. In commenting on this passage, he states, “The devil is a subtle and unwearied tempter, who seeks an opportunity to beguile and destroy us.” The historical context, however, makes it quite clear that the Apostle’s concern was the foes of the Gospel in Thessalonica. They had demonstrated their determination to oppose the Christian community, and they had not hesitated to use violence in trying to achieve their ends.
6. That is a concern that appears throughout the epistles of the New Testament. See, for example, Heb 12:4-8.
7. The Greek word is Strong’s Number G3780. The definition is from Mickelson’s Enhanced Strong’s Greek and Hebrew Dictionaries.
8. The Greek word is Strong’s Number G4912. It is used, for example, in Luke 8:37 and 45, Luke 12:50, Luke 19:43, and 2Cor 5:14.

## Philip the Evangelist

### Philip appears on the scene

The instructions of the Lord at Olivet must have left the Apostles wondering just how the great commission would be done. How would it take place? When would it all happen? What would allow them to take the Gospel to Jerusalem, Judaea, Samaria and the uttermost parts? How would they fund it? Would they preach to Jews exclusively? How would the issue of Gentiles and the Law be solved? It is the absence of these details and disclosing of an executional plan that is really the message here. The Lord would reveal it to them, in his way and in his time. The Gospel would be preached successfully in many new and unfamiliar lands, but it would not be dependent on the ingenuity or wisdom of the disciples. The plan for the Gospel, indeed the plan for our lives, rests with our Lord and his angels.

Scripture is silent about the background of this outstanding man. From the selection of Philip as one of the seven that attended to the needs of the Hebraic and Grecian widows, we might assume that he was a young man with great potential. He was viewed as being honorable and trustworthy, worthy of commanding complete confidence in the work he would do. Considering what we know of Stephen from Acts 7, we might assume that Philip also had been greatly blessed with the Spirit. He was a man that bridged divergent groups, one that could be counted on to serve without partiality. Such a man is of great value in any ecclesial situation.

No doubt, Philip had many of the same personal desires we all have. He wanted to serve. He wanted to make his life useful to his Lord. Eventually, no doubt, he hoped for the opportunity to have a family and the intimacy of loved ones. But, there would be time for that. Right now he was busy doing whatever the Lord needed of him. In Acts 6-8, what we see is a brother fully unencumbered from distraction — able to move and serve in any way possible.

The introduction of Philip in Acts 6 results from squabbling and murmuring in the Jerusalem ecclesias. We cannot be sure how much truth there was to the allegations that the Hebraic widows were receiving preferential treatment to the Grecian widows. Nevertheless, it was a significant threat to the accord of their fellowship and a major distraction within the ecclesia. This “problem” would eventually drive positive change in the ecclesia, as it often does. The Apostles realized that they could no longer *“leave the word of God, and serve tables.”* This led to a first recorded “division of labor” in the early church, with the apostles doubtless drawing this instruction from the counsel of Jethro in Exodus 18.

Until the martyrdom of Stephen and the following persecutions against Hellenistic believers in Jerusalem, of whom Philip was one, no doubt Philip assumed that the care for the widows would be his life-long work. Maybe not what he would have personally chosen, but it was nevertheless important work. He must have thought, “If the Lord wants me to do this work, I am honored to do it!” So, for what appears to be a short period of time, the narrative leaves Philip, serving tables in Jerusalem.

Not long afterwards, the preaching and martyrdom of Stephen is recorded for us in Chapter 7. We see in Stephen a man that represented great potential in the church.

Described as “*a man full of faith and the Holy [Spirit],*” Philip is named next on the list. Stephen represented the first record of a Hellenistic Jew to stand before the Jewish leaders and “*perform great wonders and miracles among the people.*” If Peter and John had been a threat previously, Stephen was a three alarm fire! Even a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith, signaling to the Jewish leaders that they were in the midst of crisis.

### **Philip to Samaria**

It is after the Jews murdered Stephen, that a wider persecution began of those in Jerusalem that carried the name of the Lord. Only the Apostles stayed on in the city, but other disciples, including Philip, were scattered abroad. There was no plan recorded, no strategic conference called to decide where they would go. Perhaps Philip was intending to head to Galilee? But, he finds himself in Samaria and takes the opportunity to share the Gospel message with the Samaritans. The Lord had previously plowed this territory, as was recorded in John 4, so, perhaps, Philip may have thought, there could be interest. Was there ever! The Samaritans gave heed to Philip and he did “signs” among them. It might appear to us that this is really the work always intended for Philip. Perhaps he thought so too. Recalling the words of Jesus in Acts 1, Philip would have known that Samaria was a near term target for the Gospel. Perhaps he connected the dots and calculated that indeed the Lord had decided that this, not waiting on tables in Jerusalem, was his intended “mission.” The visit of Peter and John confirm the authenticity of belief of the Samaritans and it would be only reasonable to assume that Philip was filled with joy to have the Lord involve him in such exciting work.

It is unclear whether Philip returned to Jerusalem with Peter and John or if he stayed on in Samaria, doing the work. If the former, one might wonder if he returned to the work of serving tables, or if he now had been viewed as an apt teacher and one that would be of great service in the city. If the latter, one might imagine that there were countless hours of teaching and serving. Either Philip must have thought that he newly-defined mission was to preach to the Samaritans, or he was destined for significant work back in Jerusalem.

### **The way that goes to Gaza**

But then quite expectantly, the angel commands Philip to go to the south, the way that goes to Gaza, which is desert. No reason is given, no compelling plan is revealed by the angel. Rather, Philip was told to go and he went. As he arrives in the region (and only then), he was told to go and join himself to the Ethiopian eunuch in his chariot, reading aloud what we know to be Isaiah 53. Perhaps this had been reading this passage because it had been debated in Jerusalem during his recent stay there? Whatever the reason, the angelic guidance puts Philip, who runs to meet the eunuch, at exactly the right place and the right time to preach to him Jesus Christ. He “*began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.*” Unfortunately, this article doesn’t permit us to explore this interaction further, but it demonstrates the faith and obedience of Philip to do the Lord’s work. Again, we might think that Philip had thought to himself that his mission apparently was now to go with the Ethiopian to his homeland and further the Gospel there. But,

the chapter ends with Philip being snatched away after the immersion and is next seen at Azotus a few miles inland from the Mediterranean Sea and south of Joppa.

### **Azotus**

Azotus? What was the work that he was to do there? Scripture is rather silent about Philip for many years. Yet, we might not be surprised to see that between Azotus and Caesarea, his final destination, there were 4 ecclesias (Appolonia, Lydda, Joppa, Saron) spoken of in New Testament Scriptures. Could these have been a result of his work? It would not be surprising to learn this to be true.

Remember our initial premise about Philip? We postulated that Philip was a young man when we are introduced to him in Jerusalem. But, now some 20 years have passed and in Acts 21, as Paul, Luke and others continue their missionary journey, we find them arriving in Caesarea and lodging at the home of Philip, now called the Evangelist — one of the seven. What of this man now? It is said that he had four virgin daughters who did prophesy. What a fantastic blessing for this man — daughters that were rich in the Spirit and fully dedicated to the Lord's service. Could anyone ask for more? The nomadic life of this wonderful preacher found permanent residence in a Roman town on the seaside of the Plain of Sharon, many miles from Jerusalem.

This story is teeming with exhortations for us all. When the Lord puts opportunities for us to serve in front of us: find a way to say yes! You never know where it may ultimately take you. A small contribution, a word in season, can lead to results we may never have been able to predict. Not because it is our planning and thinking, but because when we say yes to the work before us, it is the Lord that commands the ship. Philip's life also seems like a wonderful illustration of the Lord's exhortation – *“seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.”* The Lord knew Philip's needs and desires and he knows ours too. Philip put the Lord's work as being primary in his life. There was nothing more important to him than serving and seeking his righteousness. In the end, the Lord greatly blessed him, heaping on him blessings Philip might never have imagined. Can we seek him first?

The Lord spoke a wonderful parable about the wind (John 3), the night Nicodemus came to him. We can feel the wind and hear it, but we don't really know where it comes from or where it is going. The wind *“bloweth where it listeth.”* Can we honor our Lord by following his promptings like this, allowing him to blow us whatever direction he finds useful? Can we find a way to become unencumbered in our lives so that we can respond when the Lord calls? If we will do this, he knows our needs and will bless us beyond what we ourselves could ever do by our own hand. He will give us strength and opportunity to serve in ways we never dreamed.

We can pause here to imagine how Philip would look back over his life with great joy as he saw how the strength of the Lord was present in his life and presented him a life experience filled with meaning and purpose. How blessed he must have felt. Are there tables to serve in your life? Find a way to say “yes!”

*David Jennings (Pomona, CA)*

## Youth Speaks

### Jonathan the Faithful Prince (15) A Serious Oath

Jonathan had just presented his plea to Saul, that David be not slain (article 14, *The Tidings*, July 2014). It was a heartfelt plea — one which begged his father to reconsider his feelings toward David, but even more, to reconsider his life towards God.

In this article, we'll consider Saul's reaction to that petition, and we'll look a bit more at Jonathan's tactics, searching for what we can learn for our own conflicts.

#### Saul's answer

There must have been a wave of silence as Jonathan finished his petition, looking at his father with concern in his eyes. Then, the silence was broken by Saul, a man who had struggled for so long with his pride:

*“And Saul hearkened unto the voice of Jonathan: and Saul sware, As the LORD liveth, he shall not be slain” (1Sam 19:6).*

David would live. In a decision of humility and in a moment of his old character, Saul threw his pride behind and quietly gave up his will for the will of his God — all at the gentle prompting of his son. *“As the LORD liveth, he shall not be slain.”*

It was an echo of the words that he had proclaimed after that fateful battle with the Ammonites! *“There shall not a man be put to death this day.”* What welcome words these would have been to Jonathan, and how relieved he would have felt as he heard them come from the mouth of his father! He had listened — and it was as though he had caught Jonathan's reference to the earlier battle and had remembered the better, more faithful times. But not only did Saul's mind go back to the faithful times, and not only did he say that David would live, but he in fact *swore by God* that he would. This was a serious oath which Saul made — it was one which he was then required by law to keep. If he broke it, he was specifically breaking Yahweh's command:

*“And ye shall not swear by my name falsely, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God: I am the LORD” (Lev 19:12).*

#### An oath to God

Under the law, God had commanded His people to make their oaths in His name — such was the way in which they could truly prove that they meant what they said; God's name was the greatest thing upon which they could swear (Deut 6:13). Nevertheless, with this serious of an oath came an equally serious obligation to follow through with what had been said. If someone swore to the truth of a matter or swore to perform an action, they were then bound to perform it:

*“And Moses spake unto the heads of the tribes concerning the children of Israel, saying, This is the thing which the LORD hath commanded. If a man*

*vow a vow unto the LORD, or swear an oath to bind his soul with a bond; he shall not break his word, he shall do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth” (Num 30:1-2).*

Thus, the law was clear. When a man made an oath to God, he was entirely and fully bound to do what he had promised — there was no compromise and there was no going back. Even if the situation was such that following through with the oath would actually end up being detrimental to the individual who swore it, the righteous and faithful thing was for them to still seek to perform what they had sworn. This was what happened in the case of the Gibeonites. They were an indigenous tribe to the land, they were supposed to have been destroyed by Joshua and Israel, but because the princes of the land had sworn to them that they would not be killed, Israel was forced to allow them to live (Josh 9:18-20). Again, in another situation, David had a similar type of experience with Shimei. He had sworn to Shimei that he would not kill him (2Sam 19:23) — yet Shimei was a wicked man who was a snare to David’s reign. Thus, once David passed on the kingship to Solomon, David told Solomon to take care of Shimei and his wickedness — but David himself refused to do so, specifically because he had made an oath to Shimei that he would not kill him. Throughout the Old Testament, if someone made an oath or swore by God that they would do something or wouldn’t do something, then they were bound to perform the oath. The law was clear and the principle was straightforward.

When Saul spoke these words to Jonathan and swore by Yahweh that David would not be slain, he full well knew what he was doing (remember, he seems to have known the law quite well) — and both he and Jonathan would have likely taken the oath very seriously. Considering Saul’s behavior just a few verses later, in which he once more sought to pin David to the wall with his javelin, this is perhaps hard to believe — but nevertheless, keeping in mind the seriousness of the law towards oaths, notice the way in which Saul fervently stuck to the things which he swore all throughout his life:

During the battle against the Philistines, just after Jonathan smote their garrison, Saul made an oath that none of the people would eat until the evening:

*“And the men of Israel were distressed that day: for Saul had adjured the people, saying, Cursed be the man that eateth any food until evening, that I may be avenged on mine enemies. So none of the people tasted any food” (1Sam 14:24).*

Saul swore that anyone who ate food until the evening would be cursed — and he was extremely serious about this oath. He was so serious, that none of the men of Israel dared to break it for fear of what his response might have been.

Just a few verses after making the oath about his army fasting, Saul swore again. This time, it was when Saul realized that someone had broken his command and had eaten food during the period in which the people were supposed to be fasting:

*“And Saul said, Draw ye near hither, all the chief of the people: and know and see wherein this sin hath been this day. For, as the LORD liveth, which*

*saveth Israel, though it be in Jonathan my son, he shall surely die. But there was not a man among all the people that answered him” (1Sam 14:38-39).*

When Saul realized that someone had broken his oath, Saul swore again, saying that even if the offender had been his son Jonathan, he would slay them. There is no doubt that Saul seriously planned on sticking with what he had sworn in this case — very soon after he had uttered these words, the people had to prevent him from killing his own son.

Even later in his life, Saul once again was very serious about his oaths. When God would not respond to Saul’s pleas for His insight, Saul decided to consult a medium. She — knowing that her divination was forbidden under the law — was afraid to practice before him, thinking that it could possibly lead to serious consequences for her. Thus, Saul swore to her that she would not be punished:

*“And the woman said unto him, Behold, thou knowest what Saul hath done, how he hath cut off those that have familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land: wherefore then layest thou a snare for my life, to cause me to die? And Saul sware to her by the LORD, saying, As the LORD liveth, there shall no punishment happen to thee for this thing” (1Sam 28:9-10)*



**Saul and the Witch of Endor**

Despite the fact that this woman should have been killed according to the law (Lev 20:27), Saul stayed true to his oath. He had sworn to her that she would not be punished, and knowing the seriousness of his oath, he didn’t break it.

To Saul, if he made an oath or if he swore by God’s

name that he would do something, he planned on doing it. He knew the seriousness of an oath. When he swore an oath, he planned on keeping it. Thus, when he swore that he wasn’t going to kill David, it would seem as though he truly meant what he said. At the time, he full well planned on sparing David’s life and on turning from following his violent emotions.

What a relief this would have been to Jonathan — who likely knew how seriously his father took his oaths. As Jonathan and his father parted ways after that conversation, the young prince was perhaps convinced that Saul was going to act upon what he said and cease from any vain attempts to kill David. In Jonathan’s mind, his courageous action based off of principle had truly gone the absolute best that

it could have. Thus, with a firm belief in the fulfillment of Saul's oath, Jonathan went to David to tell him that the danger was past.

### **Debriefing and aftermath**

*“And Jonathan called David, and Jonathan shewed him all those things. And Jonathan brought David to Saul, and he was in his presence, as in times past” (1Sam 19:7).*

After the two men — the king and his son — parted ways, Jonathan called David to him in order to tell him exactly what he saw. Certainly David would have come to Jonathan with a much relieved heart, and Jonathan would have been able to confirm that relief as he reinforced what David had heard in the field by telling him the seriousness of his father's expression and the earnestness which he had seen. Truly, the two men believed that the danger was past and that Saul had ceased from his evil intentions — and as it would seem, Saul believed that his hatred of David was past as well. David was brought into his presence and everything was as it had been before. David came before Saul and played the soothing music — and Saul loved him for it. For some length of time, everything was as it had been in times past.

### **The power of gentleness**

Regardless of Jonathan's specific results, there is truly value in examining the way in which Jonathan spoke to his father — not just because it worked, but because it was truly a Godly way to “instruct” a man who was “opposing himself” (2Tim 2:25). Jonathan knew that his love for his father compelled him to speak to him — but he could have come and presented his plea in a number of different ways. Jonathan could have censured Saul for his wickedness and desire to kill an innocent man! He could have shouted at him and given him a list of all of his sins, telling him that he needed to reform his life before God tore the kingdom from his hands. On the other hand, Jonathan could have merely said that Saul needed to rethink the idea about killing David, but not really carefully considered his words and ideas.

Essentially, the way in which Jonathan came to his father was the absolute best way in which to approach an erring brother. Just notice the steps which Jonathan took:

- 1) He didn't constantly correct his father. He stood back during the battle with the Amalekites and with Goliath, but when the issue was such that it required his intervention, he willingly did so. In more modern terms, Jonathan chose his battles.
- 2) He carefully considered what he was going to say — using terms like “the king” and “his servant.” He didn't throw his ideas together haphazardly. He pondered what would be most effective.
- 3) He approached his father with an attitude of gentleness. He wasn't there to harshly reprimand Saul, but presented this to Saul *for Saul's sake*. Jonathan took steps so that his father wouldn't feel defensive, but rather felt as though he was speaking to someone who was looking out for his best interests.
- 4) Though he was gentle, he spoke openly and honestly. He wasn't afraid to speak

the truth and tell Saul that killing David would be a “sin” and that he would be spilling “innocent blood.”

- 5) He logically presented his argument and had strong proofs for his points. When he said that David risked his life for Saul, he was able to back that up by reminding Saul about David fighting against the giant.
- 6) He focused his father’s mind on to spiritual things. He reminded Saul of the great security which he had once had when following Yahweh, back in the time when Yahweh wrought a great salvation through him. Back then, Saul had not been afraid to have those around who appeared to be his opponents.

With those six elements — and with a strong belief that he was following the principle of love for his father — Jonathan won over his father’s heart. It was a beautifully put together plea, and it is a way of communication which could greatly benefit ecclesial life. How often is it that when we hear an erring brother say something from the platform that we simply want to take him aside after his address and blast him with all of the reasons why he is wrong? How often is it that we hear about a brother and a sister struggling because of some type of lifestyle issue, and we simply want to ignore the situation because it would be less complicated for us if we didn’t get involved?

We are presented with situations like the one faced by Jonathan all of the time! Ecclesial life is made up of times in which we must be driven by principle to speak to a brother or sister — regardless of what we think the results may be. Perhaps there is a brother or sister who continually is set on doing something that is clearly a sin. If only we could approach them as Jonathan approached his father! If only we could do so in gentleness tempered by speaking the Truth. If we could have that type of attitude, the soft answer which proceeded from our lips would turn away the wrath which so often is generated from these types of situations.

## **Conclusion**

Thus, in the story of Jonathan pleading for David, there develops a picture of a man who was dedicated to living by God’s principles — even to the point of putting himself in a situation where he could have lost his life — but who recognized that there was still a large importance in the way that those principles were applied. Jonathan approached his father with an attitude which was focused on spiritual matters, which spoke the truth in love, and which made it clear that he was speaking to his father because he cared about him. Through Jonathan’s wisdom and faith, there was a brief moment in which his father was pricked and earnestly swore that he wouldn’t act despite his murderous feelings towards David. It was a beautiful moment — and one over which Jonathan must have rejoiced with David. Sadly, though Saul sought to stay true to his oath, the pressure was too strong, and the moment of peace was not to last. As the situation became more and more desperate, Jonathan would sadly hear from David that his father had broken his oath, and he would approach the king once more to plead for his friend.

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# The Joy of Sunday Schooling

## Teaching and Learning: What works best?

As Sunday school teachers, it can be a great help to recognize the different ways that children learn. Think about your own learning experiences. How do *you* learn new things? What works best for you? And what doesn't work very well when you are trying to learn something new? After you have given some thought to this, ask someone else the same questions. They may not give the same answers. Two important facts are clear:

- 1) Not everyone learns exactly the same way.
- 2) Some instructional methods that are more generally effective than others.

### Try an experiment

Here are three situations that require you to learn something new. Several different ways of learning are offered with each one. Which way would *you* prefer to learn in each situation? Take a minute to decide for yourself and then, perhaps at your next Sunday school teachers meeting, ask your fellow teachers to do the same thing. Compare the results. Almost certainly some learning patterns will emerge. These ought to be taken seriously when it comes to planning Sunday school lessons, because our children are not so very different from us in the ways that they learn.

### Teaching and Learning: What works for you?

#### Situation 1:

You want to take up sailing as a hobby, but you need to learn how to sail. Rank the following ways to learn from 1 to 6, depending on how well each would work for you. (1 = my best way to learn; 6 = my worst way to learn).

- Attend lectures on sailing.
- Get on a boat and try it yourself.
- Read an instruction manual on how to sail.
- Watch a video on how to sail.
- Use a computerized simulator (virtual reality).
- Work with an experienced sailor who shows you the ropes.

#### Situation 2:

You need to learn (relearn?) how to do fractions. Your job demands it and education was definitely wasted on the young when you had to learn this in the sixth grade! What learning method would work best for you and be remembered longest? Rank the methods from 1 (best) to 4 (worst).

- Bake a cake (using measuring cups, spoons, etc.) or build a model airplane (using rulers, scales, etc.).
- Go to night school and let a teacher show you how to do fractions on the blackboard.

- — Read a math book.
- — Read a math book and do several practice problems.

### **Situation 3:**

You want to improve your understanding of what the Bible teaches about the devil. What method would work best for you? Rank the methods from 1 (best) to 6 (worst).

- — Attend a Christadelphian lecture on the devil.
- — Do a personal Bible study, using a concordance and taking notes.
- — Keep up with the daily Bible readings for a couple years.
- — Listen to a set of audio classes on the subject.
- — Read a pamphlet on the devil.
- — Teach an interested friend whose major problem is an understanding of the devil.

On two different occasions, I asked groups of Sunday school teachers to participate in this experiment. They read the three situations and ranked the learning methods offered in each one. They worked individually and then we compared the results. The main points were confirmed: (1) individuals vary in the ways they learn, and (2) some learning methods are more generally appealing than others.

### **A closer look**

**Situation 1.** There are a lot of critical skills and cause-effect relationships involved in sailing. By far the majority of individuals said they would prefer to work with an experienced sailor if they wanted to learn how to sail. Beyond this, working under simulated sailing conditions and watching a “how to” video came in quite high on their lists. Attending lectures or reading the instruction manual appealed to only a few, very few! Practically everyone agreed that they would eventually have to get on the boat and do it themselves if they were going to master the process, but it was felt that there were too many pitfalls and personal risks involved to make this their initial learning method.

What does this tell us? To be sure there are a few academics in any group of people. They are the ones who can learn almost anything by listening to lectures and studying textbooks. They are excellent passive, reflective learners. But most of us need to see it, experience it, and do it for ourselves in order to learn. We need active, participatory learning methods. And having an experienced mentor who can guide us through the hands-on processes can be of enormous value.

Let it be added, however, that a person must *want* to take up sailing before any learning method will be of real value to them. The learning methods we are thinking about in this article do not address the issue of *motivation*.

**Situation 2.** For many people, doing fractions won't be as much fun as sailing. It is more conceptual, more abstract, and demands some exacting thought processes that we might prefer to avoid. But it's a bit like learning to sail in the sense that there are certain rules that must be mastered in order to do it in a hands-on way. Don't be surprised to find out that a majority of people want a mentor here, too,

and they want real experience working with fractions as a basis for long-term learning. The one-two choices of our Sunday school teachers were: “Bake a cake ... build a model” and “let a teacher show you how”. The more academic approaches to learning came in dead last on this one, too!

Again this tells us something. Let a master show his learners how it’s done, and then let the learners do it for themselves. Immerse the “doing” in real-life situations. This is exactly the way Jesus taught his disciples to preach the kingdom of God. As recorded in Luke, he selected his class of prospective preachers.

*“And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles;” (Luke 6:12-13).*

Later in Luke he showed them how to preach the kingdom in very practical ways.

*“And it came to pass afterward, that he went throughout every city and village, preaching and shewing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God: and the twelve were with him” (Luke 8:1).*

And subsequently he sent them to do it themselves.

*“Then he called his twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases. And he sent them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick” (Luke 9:1-2).*

As soon as possible, we need to show our children how to learn and do the things of discipleship and then give them relevant contexts in which to practice these things for themselves. Telling them about the things of the Truth is vitally important to be sure, but it may not, by itself, be enough to produce real learning.

**Situation 3.** In this situation we deliberately focus attention on a demanding Bible subject: the devil. The responses of the teachers again showed some clear preferences. The one-two choices for improving their understanding of the subject were: “Do a personal Bible study” and “Teach an interested friend”. Once more, the level of learner participation in these processes is very high. It only assumes that somewhere along the line they have learned how to do their own personal Bible study.

Can we bring these findings to bear on the way we teach Sunday school?

### **Some implications**

- 1) We need to see ourselves as mentors of our children and not simply dispensers of information. This means having their interests at heart seven days a week and keeping in touch beyond the regular Sunday school time. It means modeling the discipline of discipleship in our own lives for them to see and emulate. It is particularly important that we show an enthusiasm for learning and obeying the ways of God, so that our children may be infected with the same enthusiasm. We teach our children who we are.
- 2) We need to teach Bible stories as more than just information to be “learned”. We need to look for the essence of the stories — the lessons of discipleship that

God has built into them — and focus attention on these lessons. Sunday school needs to be an ongoing training ground with practical how-to-live instruction coming out of the lessons. It is this that will give the lessons lasting value.

- 3) We need to give the children opportunities to practice the Truth skills that are found in each Sunday school lesson. This will almost certainly become an active, hands-on process rather than a passive one. To be sure, as much as their mental capacities allow, they will need to be shown how to do some level of Bible study as they get older, and they will need to be given opportunities to apply these skills for themselves. But along the way they must also glean from their lessons and put into practice such things as prayer, obedience, cooperation, service, walking in faith, living the fruit of the spirit, submitting their wills to the higher authority of God, avoiding temptation, and on and on. As their mentors, we need to plan instruction that shows them how these are done and helps them put these discipleship skills into practice. If they are going to learn how to sail, they need to be shown the ropes and then allowed to get into the boat and use them.

*Jim Harper (Meriden, CT) [sundayschool@tidings.org](mailto:sundayschool@tidings.org)  
<http://www.pinterest.com/2harps4u/>*

## Letter

Dear Bro Peter,

Thanks for your article on the Megiddo Church (*Tidings*, July 2014). I had often assumed their roots must have had some Christadelphian contact with so many similar beliefs to ours. Much of their material I have found to be a useful reference source on first principles.

One of their very different beliefs concerns the composition of Christ's army when he goes forth "conquering and to conquer". Their Bible Study Section 22 says on this point: "They will be drawn from the large number of unfaithful servants, those who broke their covenant with Him and were turned to the left at the Judgment of the covenant-makers. ... Because the unfaithful refused to serve Him during their lifetime, they will be compelled to serve in His army in the great task of cleaning up the earth and making it a fit place for God's Kingdom. ... They will not be permitted to share in the glories of the Kingdom they have helped to shape, but *"shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death"*. (pp 14-15).

The rest of their material in this Section, even in its fine detail, is very reflective of general Christadelphian understanding. Section 10 on "The Trinity Mystery" is particularly well presented and was the means by which at least two Christadelphian families in India first began their search for the truth.

*Love in Christ Jesus,  
Tim Galbraith (Hyderabad, India).*



## Bible Mission News

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### Truth Corps 2014



The 2014 Truth Corps Team returned in August from four weeks devoted to preaching the Gospel in Virginia, Guyana, and Tobago. This year's team consisted of four young brothers and four young sisters: Brothers Jordan Milne, Zach Kemp, Gideon Hewitson, and Matthew Sturgeon, and Sisters Anna Margaret Hoult, Stephanie Keating, Autumn Burns, and Rebecca Pommer. The team was led,

at various locations, by Bro. Allen and Sis. Tara Laben, Bro. Duncan Kenzie, and Sis. Myra Lucke.

The team began their journey at the Norfolk, VA Ecclesia, where they completed their training (a combination of team-building and preaching-training sessions), engaged in their first door-to-door preaching work together as a team, and also assisted the ecclesia with a Vacation Bible School for the children in the local community and their parents. Here are some of the things the team said about their time in Norfolk:

“I found our door-to-door preaching in Norfolk to be a very beneficial experience. It not only benefited those who heard our presentations, but it also benefited us. It helped us to improve preaching skills, to build close friendships, and to spread God’s message. When walking from house to house, we were able to talk to each other about our preaching experience at the last house. We discussed how we did and how we can improve next time. *‘Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another’ (Prov 27:17).*”  
— Jordan Milne

“My Norfolk experience was incredible. It was so amazing to see how many children, even outside of the Truth, that were so eager and willing to learn. We can learn from these children’s experience and put it to use in our own lives. We need to be as little children with open minds and hearts, always eager and willing to learn more about God’s Word, and then going on to

spread it to others. The door-to-door preaching was a new experience for me. I have never done anything like that before and I am so thankful I was able to do so. You get used to the closed doors and people who aren't interested but that doesn't stop you from pressing on. It is well worth the closed doors if even one person is willing to listen to you." — Rebecca Pommer

"The Vacation Bible School was a huge success at the Norfolk Chapel. There were 29 kids on the first day, and that number increased to 37 on the second day! The kids absolutely loved it, as well as all those involved in organizing and running the Bible School. It was a great way to share God's word and to get the Christadelphian name out into the



**Sis. Becca and Sis. Stephanie help local kids in Norfolk with crafts at the Vacation Bible School.**

community. The ecclesia also benefited from making many contacts who are happy and eager to come back for Sunday school and CYC events, as well as their parents who were very impressed with the success of the Bible School and are interested to learn more." — Jordan Milne

"Norfolk was an amazing way for us to start the Truth Corps experience. From seeing the kids at the VBS have such a desire for God's word, to sitting down with someone for the first time and trying to explain to them the Scriptures and the importance of God's promises, to visiting with the families and young people from the Norfolk area, it was one of the most uplifting weeks of my life. One of my favorite memories was sitting down with a woman from the very first door we knocked on, and trying to explain how our beliefs matter to God. After spending an hour and a half with her just engaging in Biblical conversation, we soon realized that we had to leave and get back to the hall — we had spent all of our leafleting time with the first woman we talked to!" — Gideon Hewitson

"My experience in Norfolk was wonderful. At the end of the Vacation Bible School, seeing all the kids sing and recite the verses was more than we could have hoped for. They were enthusiastic, they were excited, and they were all in unison. By the end of the week, I definitely felt like the ecclesia and the kids had done much more for us than we had done for them. God blessed us with so many positive experiences and brought us all closer together as a family of believers." — Matthew Sturgeon

Next, the Truth Corps team flew down to South America to spend two weeks working and preaching among the Brethren in Guyana. Their main activities included working with the CYC and assisting with and teaching at a Youth Camp, conducting two vacation Bible Schools and doing door-to-door canvassing. In addition, three young people in Guyana joined the team as in-country Truth Corps members — Bro. Adrian David, and Sisters Faida N'djelekulu and Abigail Semple.

“I found the door to door preaching in Guyana to be a great learning experience. One of the main challenges I had with preaching before this was that I wasn't sure how to initiate the conversation about God's word in a way that others would make them interested. While going from village to village, we had the privilege to preach to a variety of people from all different backgrounds and religions. After trying to



**Leafletting in Guyana**

preach to a number of people, I realized that you can't use the same teaching style and teaching material with everyone. Some people may have difficulty understanding or identifying with a topic that others may have fully grasped and understood. I learned that the most effective way to preach is dependent on who the person is. Here is an example of what worked for me: After introducing yourself and breaking the ice with them, the first



**Sis. Autumn and Sis. Stephanie with Sunday School students in Guyana.**

step is to learn about **them**. Find out where they are at regarding the Bible. What is their religious background? Have they read the Bible? What do they believe? Once you find out where they are at, then you will know where to start: either lay a foundation and teach them of God's word, or build on what they already know.”  
—Jordan Milne

“The experience in Guyana was amazing. The brethren and sisters there in all six ecclesias we visited were very welcoming and really made me feel like I was at home. Preaching was very different there — you don’t go “door-to-door” preaching, you go “gate-to-gate”. Almost every house has a front gate where we would stand and call “inside!” for them to come out. It was rare if someone ignored you; most people in Guyana are very receptive to what you have to say and accept any pamphlet you offer them. Spending time with the CYC in each ecclesia was one of my favorite parts. It was awesome to see how much we could encourage them just by showing them the importance of why we were there and giving them our time to get to know them a bit better. I believe they all enjoyed the time they had with us as much as we did with them. I plan on returning someday if I can!” — Rebecca Pommer

“While the team was in Georgetown, we spent some time handing out pamphlets with information about the Bible on them, and asking people if they would like to know more about the promises to Abraham; how the promises God made to Abraham relate to us, and why they are so important. The team split off into groups of two, sometimes three, and we each gave presentations regarding our faith to complete strangers. I will definitely never forget doing that — I don’t think I’ve been so nervous in my entire life! We also had a Vacation Bible School in Mocha, and over 70 children from the village showed up! With some effort and a lot of teamwork the VBS was a huge success.” — Autumn Burns

“The two weeks we spent in Guyana were some of the most exhausting and challenging, and yet spiritually uplifting and encouraging weeks of our lives. The team really bonded over these two weeks! We were constantly spending time with the local Christadelphian young people, and seeing their motivation to know God’s word and how our presence really helped them was amazing. From learning how to play cricket, to teaching them to play American football, to playing hours and hours of the “Animal game”, the young people were always a highlight of our weeks together. One of my favorite memory is of meeting a man who had discovered most of the true Gospel for himself, and sitting down with him for two days in a row and explaining the promises to Abraham and how they applied to us — seeing his desire to learn was fantastic. Our last night in Guyana we got together with the members of the Georgetown meeting, and put on skits and shows for each other. The fellowship there was an amazing memory that I will not soon forget.” — Gideon Hewitson

Finally, the team flew to Tobago for their final week of mission work to assist with the annual Trinidad and Tobago Bible School, preach downtown and from house-to-house and support the local CYC at the Mt. Grace ecclesia.

“Tobago is a beautiful island, both in the physical beauty of the place, and the spiritual beauty of the Brethren we visited.” — Matthew Sturgeon

“While in Tobago our team had the privilege of leafleting in the busy town

of Scarborough. Our task was to walk around the busy streets full of pedestrians, to hand out leaflets and talk to people about God's plan for the world. This was definitely a great learning experience for all of us. We were not only following Jesus' command to preach the Gospel (Mark 16:15-16), but through the experience we were also developing our effectiveness to preach, our confidence to



**Sharing a meal during the Tobago Bible School.**

share God's word, and most importantly our faith. It was very encouraging to observe the interest and responsiveness of the general public when prompting them with the question: Are you interested in learning about God's plan with the word? I didn't realize that so many people are truly interested in hearing what the Bible has to say. The words of Christ echoed out to me from John 4:31: "*Lift up your eyes, and see that the fields are white for harvest*". It may be that the people of Tobago are generally more receptive, but I am confident that back in North America there will be people similarly searching for truth." — Jordan Milne

"Tobago was a fantastic week. We again had a great time going out door-to-door preaching. At this point we had learned a lot and I think we may have made our greatest impact in Tobago. Meeting the local young people was again an amazing highlight. Seeing some of the young people who had not been coming out to ecclesial events recently, and having them there with us, was an amazing and encouraging moment for each of us on the team. Overall, Truth Corps was a life changing four weeks, and I would strongly encourage anyone and everyone to go. If you don't have time, make it. If you don't like new things, give it a chance. The past month changed my life for the better, and I cannot wait to implement the things I learned back home." — Gideon Hewitson

We are thankful that our Heavenly Father blessed the efforts of Truth Corps this past summer, and we pray that He might give increase to the seeds that the team planted and watered! God willing, we will host another Truth Corps program in 2015, and we encourage all those interested to serve as a host ecclesia, team leader or team member to visit [www.cbma.net](http://www.cbma.net) and fill out the Volunteer Information form, indicating their interest.

As our Lord and Master said, the fields are "white for harvest"!

*Compiled by Allen and Tara Laben, Truth Corps Leaders  
Submitted by Jan Berneau*

# News and 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 August 17th to witness the baptisms of SHARON HAMPTON and FAY PRETTY into the saving name of Jesus Christ. May our Father be with them as they begin their journey toward His everlasting kingdom.

This past April we held our 22nd Annual Spring Study Weekend. Our classes were led by Bro. Aaron MacAdams on the topic 'Hear Now Ye Sons of Levi'. We would like to thank Bro. Aaron for his exceptional work on our behalf.

We would also like to thank Brothers Ben Link, Al Browning, Steve Stewart, Mark Vincent, Richard Dineen Sr. and Richard Dineen Jr. for bringing us exhortations over the spring and summer.

*Jim Sullivan*

## **BRANTFORD, ON**

We rejoice with our family in heaven that after giving a good confession of their faith, JOSHUA BILLINGTON (son of Bro. David and Sis. Alicia Billington) was baptized on February 7, 2014 and ARIEL BERING (daughter of Bro. Tim and Sis. Karen Bering) was baptized on July 7, 2014. We thank the Father for these blessings and the encouragement of witnessing two more of our young people dedicating their lives to the truth.

We thank our Bro Garth Maier (Tulsa-Joplin, MO) for leading our spring studies on the theme of "Joseph: Saviour of the World". We are also happy to be able to report that after working through a recovery process with our brother Edward Dove we have welcomed our brother back into fellowship as of August 24, 2014. We pray the Father will continue to be with our brother as we prepare for the coming of our Lord. We also thank the many brethren who have visited us to serve on our behalf this past year.

*Daniel Billington*

## **DETROIT MILFORD ROAD, MI**

The Milford Road Ecclesia has been through a very active period. We transferred the following brethren and sisters to the Ann Arbor, MI Ecclesia: Glen and Julie Anderson, Grant Anderson, John and Debbie Betteley, Jonathan and Cathy Betteley, Christi Cusenza, Lori Cusenza, Dave and Loren Dreffs, and Andrew and Sarah Moore.

The ecclesia has had great cause to celebrate. LEAH BEKKER accepted the saving name of Jesus Christ and was baptized on August 4, 2013. Leah's baptism was witnessed by young people from around the Great Lakes area. We welcomed the transfer of Sis. Allison Pipe from the Book Road Ecclesia and celebrated at the wedding of Sis. Allison to our Bro. Andrew Livermore.

We are grateful to Brethren Duncan and Michael Movassaghi for leading a study on the prophet Malachi. We also thank our Bro. Paul Sparacino who led us in a study of the last days of our Lord's life. We enjoyed the fellowship of visitors from the Ann Arbor, MI; Austin Leander, TX; Avon, IN; Hamilton Book Road, ON; Granite State,

VT; Livonia, MI; Moorestown, NJ; Pittsburgh, PA; Ringwood, AU; Detroit Royal Oak, MI; Shirley, UK; and Washington DC Ecclesias.

*Jeff Livermore*

### **ECHO LAKE, NJ**

With warm regards we commend Bro. Ben and Sis. Cadi Phillips and family to the Moorestown, NJ Ecclesia, as they have requested a transfer so they can fellowship closer to their home. We thank them for all their love, work, fellowship and prayers for the Echo Lake Ecclesia over the years. We know they will be a tremendous blessing to the brothers and sisters at Moorestown

*Michael Day*

### **GRANITE STATE, NH**

We are very happy to announce that we have a new sister in the family of Christ. KARI-ANNE BUNKER was baptized into the saving Name of our Lord Jesus Christ on July 28th. We pray that Yahweh will bless her walk in faith keeping her in the way of salvation. It is so uplifting to see the hand of God continue to work in this generation bringing men and women into the Hope of His coming Kingdom! May that great day soon come!

*Steve Smith*

### **HONESDALE, PA**

We held our annual picnic on August 10th at Welcome Lake, PA: a 3,300 acre hunting campsite. Visiting brethren from the Moorsetown Ecclesia, PA, arrived Friday night and stayed in the hunting lodge. They tried their skill at skeet shooting Saturday afternoon. Few skeet survived, but none were served for dinner. We held our memorial service facing the lake at 11:00 AM with Bro. Steve Cheetham (Moorsetown, PA) exhorting, followed by a picnic. It was great to have the non-Christadelphian families of our brethren attend together with our neighbors and some strangers. All were very welcome.”



*Stephen J. DeMarco*

### **PRINCE GEORGE, BC**

We did not hold our annual fraternal gathering in 2013 due to our lack of numbers, but decided to try again this year. Over the May long weekend in 2014 we had classes led by our Bro. Jason Hensley from the ecclesia in Simi Hills, CA on Moses “The birth of a deliverer”. The fraternal was well attended and very successful with the blessing of our heavenly father. Many thanks to our Bro. Jason and his wife, Sis. Ruth, for the classes and also to all those who were able to attend.

We would also like to thank all the brethren who have come up to help the small ecclesia here in Prince George with words of exhortation. Brethren Caleb Lawrence, Jon Fletcher, Paul Osborne, Terry Houghton, Jed Dillingham, Skip Bartholomew, Dan Sargent, Jim Cowie, Jesse Fletcher, Rick Evans, Stephen Bartholomew, Rick Evans, and Wayne Osborne. Their support is very much appreciated.

If anyone would like to visit and help our small ecclesia we would love to have you. Please contact Bro. Jonathan Lawrence at [pgchristadelphians@hotmail.com](mailto:pgchristadelphians@hotmail.com).

*Jonathan Lawrence*

## **SAN DIEGO COUNTY, CA**

We're pleased to report the marriage of Bro. Seth Tunnell and Sis. Sharniie Kirkwood. The couple was married on June 13th in Sydney, Australia, where Sis. Sharniie's family resides. We rejoice with the respective families and pray God will bless Seth and Sharniie in their journey to the Kingdom together.

We appreciate the efforts of Bro. Gary Cousens (Cambridge, ON) who led our January study day on "Overcoming Ourselves". We would like to thank Bro. Stephen Palmer (Wales) and Bro. Greg Robinson (Thousand Oaks, CA) for their recent public lectures at our Hall in San Diego. Both brothers spoke on different aspects of Bible Prophecy in light of the recent events in the Middle East. Several visitors and interested friends attended.

Our thanks also go out to the many visiting Brethren who have provided words of exhortation in 2014. We are always grateful to hear them and to meet their families.

*Kent Ellis*

## **SANTA BARBARA , CA**

It has been over a year since we reported the activities of the Santa Barbara Ecclesia. The Santa Barbara Ecclesia continues to maintain a strong and active light stand in our community with six visitors attending Sunday School and Bible Classes in our ecclesial hall.

We are thankful that God continues to call out a people for his name and that we are able to respond to the call. In that regard, we are happy to announce the baptism of our sister VICTORIA WALKER on August 3rd, 2014. Sis. Victoria is the wife of our Bro. Fred Walker. May God be with our new sister on her journey toward His kingdom.

It is with sadness that we report the death of our Sis. Wilma Hirst on July 13th at the age of 98. Sis. Wilma was the sister in the flesh of our Bro. Floyd Elsas of Santa Barbara and Sis. Edith Mc Dougal of the Verdugo Hills Ecclesia. Sis. Wilma was born December 13, 1915, and both she and our Bro. Floyd were baptized December 7, 1935. After many years of faithful service in the Truth, Sis. Wilma was laid to rest awaiting the resurrection of the dead when "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."

After many years away from the table of our Lord, we are happy to welcome back into fellowship our Bro. Richard Jones, formerly of the Simi Hills Ecclesia. We would like to thank the so many of the Brethren and Sisters of the Victoria BC Ecclesia as well as the Brethren and Sisters of the Simi Hills Ecclesia for their prayerful efforts in restoring our brother Richard to us on December 29, 2013. We look forward to service together in our masters vineyard as we await the return of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We also have been blessed this month with three new Sunday School members and a sister moving to Santa Barbara. Sis. Heather Mc Daniel and her two children, Conner (13) and Chloe (10) are transferring from the Simi Hills Ecclesia. We also have Chris Riba from the Simi Hills Sunday School returning again this year to attend Westmont College. May God be with them in their moves.

Out of 26 members, we now have five brothers and sisters over the age of 91 and four over the age of 88. Our Bro. George Engle had a heart attack and is currently in a rest home, Sis. Hazel Lyon is losing her eye sight, but still comes to memorial service and our Sis. Jesse Stevens is suffering from Alzheimer's disease and is not able to attend meeting any more.

We continue to thank our Heavenly for comforting and strengthening our elder brethren and sisters in their various situations and those of our ecclesia who minister to them. They are such an example to our ecclesia of faithfulness to the service of God in these last days of Gentile times. Our elderly are the faithful attendees to Bible class, Sunday school and Memorial service as well as all ecclesial functions. May Yahweh continue to bless them and our ecclesia as we anxiously await the return of His son.

This past year we welcomed around the table of the Lord the following brethren and sisters: Jason and Ruth Hensley, Gordon and Ruth Hensley, Chris and Kathleen Stickney, Kendra Smith, Rick and Denise Sisco, Levi and Jessica Gelineau and Heather McDaniel (Simi Hills, CA); Ron and Shirley Stewart and Steve and Kathy Settle (Lompoc, CA); John and Becky Laben and Andrew and Carly Culver (Norfolk, VA); Sid Wattles (North County, CA); Mark Seagoe (Portland, OR); Michael and Myra Stickney and Jane Tunnell, (San Diego, CA) Jim and Marilyn Seagoe and Jerry and Wendy Hirst (San Francisco, CA); Lolita Van Merlo (Pomona,CA); Shelley Carlson and Jan Berneau (Verdugo Hills,CA); Jim and Marilyn Land (Los Angeles,CA); Jon and Carrie Spencer, Larry and Kathleen King (Jacson County, OR); Dave and Becky Seagoe, Denise Main (Olympia, WA); Nigel and Katie and Michelle Fletcher (Australia); Alistair and Jane Henderson, Mark Bilton (South Africa); Joe Briley and Sarah Price (UK); Tim and Liz Woods and Gordon and Pamela Clark (New Zealand).

We would like to thank the following brethren for ministering to our ecclesia with Bible classes and the word of exhortation: Brethren Ron Stewart, Jason Hensley, Michael Stickney, Chris Stickney, Mark Seagoe, Jim Land, Ken Smith, Alistair Henderson, Nigel Fletcher, Jerry Hirst, Nigel Fletcher, Andrew Culver and Levi Gelineau.

If you are ever heading up the California Coast, be sure and stop in the beautiful little coastal town of Santa Barbara and enjoy fellowship around the word with our ecclesia. It is our prayer, if Christ remains away, that you like Santa Barbara so much you will want to stay. Our fervent prayer is that our Lord and Savior Jesus the Christ will return soon to establish his Fathers Kingdom on this earth and all our plans are interrupted by that great and glorious day.....even so come Lord Jesus.

*Craig Stickney*

## **WICHITA FALLS, TX**

Since last reporting our Ecclesial News we have welcomed around the Table of our absent Lord the following brothers and sisters: Stan and Eunice Newton (Pomona, CA); Ed Newton (Verdugo Hills, CA); Rachel Newton (Los Angeles, CA); Peter Trotter, Antonio Howell Sr, Michele Massip, Jacob Matthew (Dallas, TX); Ronnie and Kristen Hefner, Richard and Susan Young (North Houston, TX); Jeremiah Hefner,

Amanda Buck, David Ishman, Jim and Marti Hagler (Austin Leander, TX). We thank Brethren P. Trotter, A. Howell, R. Young and D. Ishman for their words of comfort and exhortation. We also thank Bro. Richard and Sis. Susan Young for their special class on “Vessels of Honor and Dishonor”.

In June, Sis. Janet Sunday moved to Houston, Texas. We certainly will miss our sister and family and commend them into the care of our Brethren and Sisters in the Houston area.

We are very pleased to announce the birth of Atley Reece to Bro. Caleb and Sis. Megan Clubb on July 14th. All are doing well and we are thankful for our new Sunday School scholar.

Please note the Ecclesial fund for Bro. Aaron Clubb’s medical and monthly needs has been closed. Once again we thank our Brethren and Sisters for their overwhelming love and support shown to our Brother and his family during his extended illness. We report that Sis. Loretta Clubb has left fellowship. We long for Christ’s return and the establishment of our Heavenly Father’s righteousness in this Earth.

*John A Clubb*

### **CAMP HASHAWHA, WESTMINSTER, MD.**

The Washington, D.C. ecclesia extends a loving invitation for all to attend our family Bible Study weekend at Camp Hashawha, 300 John Owings Rd, Westminster, MD 21158. The weekend is planned, God willing, for November 28-30, 2014. Bro. Brad Butts of the Denver, Colorado ecclesia is scheduled to lead us in classes entitled “Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life”.

Bible classes for all ages will be held Saturday and Sunday beginning at 8:45AM. A nursery for those under four is available. Sports, daily readings, a Bible discussion group, an evening program and a campfire hymn sing are planned for Saturday. Sunday School, Memorial Service and lunch complete the weekend on Sunday.

Mail registrations will be accepted on a first come, first-served basis and ONLY with proper deposit. NO phone or e-mail reservations will be accepted! (No walk-ins please!) The Camp requires registration numbers to plan for meals so please register early.

**Registration deadline is November 10, 2014.** Registration fee for those over 4 is \$60.00 (US funds only). A \$30.00 deposit, per person, is required with your registration. Make checks payable to Washington Christadelphian Ecclesia. Mail registrations to: Bro. Ken Green, 14006 Barkham Court, Laurel, MD 20707. For forms or information, phone: 443-497-3497 or e-mail Bro. Ken at Hashawha@gmail.com. (Forms should be available on the website [hopeofthekingdom.com](http://hopeofthekingdom.com) or contact Bro. Green.)

**Day attendees MUST pre-register.** There will be a \$30.00 fee for those attending the classes but not staying at the camp. These will be accepted on a first come basis and only to the extent that full time registration has not exceeded classroom limitations. Those desiring to attend classes (with or without meals) should send their registrations and deposits in as soon as possible. Those planning to attend only the Memorial service on Sunday need to register as well. We cannot accept walk-in registrations. Classroom & Memorial service space is limited and preference must be given to those staying at the camp. We look forward to an uplifting weekend of fellowship and study around the word of God.

## Minute Meditation

### Worldly Wisdom versus Bible Knowledge

Theodore Roosevelt often said, “A thorough knowledge of the Bible is worth more than a college education.” When Roosevelt was President of the United States in the early 1900’s, he would search the Scriptures when facing problems, looking for spiritual guidance. How our world has changed. Then, even though a college education could be a ticket to lifelong prosperity, the superiority of godly wisdom that only can be gained from Scriptural knowledge was recognized. Not anymore.

Think how many hundreds of thousands expend huge amounts of effort, time and money each year to attend school to get that college education but never take the time to even open the pages of a Bible, the book God has given us to help make us wise unto salvation.

The Bible points out that the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. Over the years, how many topics of study, such as Latin, physics, chemistry, and medicine, to name a few, have changed completely from what was once considered essential knowledge. It certainly is not wrong to have a college education, and it can be helpful to obtaining a good job, but the pursuit of human wisdom must not come ahead of the pursuit of Bible knowledge in the lives of the saints. Jesus has told us to seek first the Kingdom of God. First means first, not second or third in our priorities. It is sad that in the lives of most college students, as well as for most people in our world, the goal of seeking God’s kingdom does not rank at all.

No wonder that there are so few that will be saved. God is not in their thoughts ever. Most people fit Paul’s description of “aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.” What a tragic position to be in, and yet most of our neighbors, fellow students, and those who work alongside of us all fit that description.

Do we care? How much effort do we put into sharing our hope with those around us? We see some folks almost every day, and if they were ill we would be concerned, ask them about their condition, and maybe send them a card. How much more should we care about their spiritual health? Have we shared with them our hope in the promises that God has made to those that love Him, the gift of eternal life for those judged faithful, the soon return of Christ and the establishment of the Kingdom of God?

Most of us sadly must answer this question with a “no”. Why? Certainly we are not ashamed of our hope are we? Jesus warned us, “For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and my words, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Fathers.”

When we have good news we should be willing to share it. The gospel is good news, and it is our privilege as well as our duty to share it with all we know. If some won’t listen, that is their problem, but if we fail to tell them, it could be our

problem. The prophet Ezekiel was warned by God that it was his duty to tell the children of Israel of coming judgment if they did not repent from their sins. If he did not warn them then they would die, but Ezekiel would be held responsible. God said that their blood would be on Ezekiel. If Ezekiel warned them and they did not listen, they still would die, but Ezekiel would not be responsible, and their blood would be on their own heads.

Many years ago an elderly man who learned the truth was so excited about his new found hope that he told everyone he met. He even preached to the man in the bed next to him when he was in the hospital. His favorite saying was, "I don't talk good but I am excited about the hope I want to share with you. If you are interested I can get you help to learn more about it." He played tapes of Bible talks to all who would listen. A number learned the truth as a result of this simple man's introduction. He could not answer their hard questions, but he knew brethren he could call on to help him when he found someone who was interested.

We all can learn a lesson from this simple man and his faith. We have a wonderful hope and we should be happy to share it with all we can. The very last words that Jesus said to his disciples just before he ascended into heaven were, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." All our worldly acquaintances are perishing for lack of this knowledge. Are we listening to the Lord's command to share our hope with them?

*Robert J. Lloyd*

## Coming Events (Lord Willing)

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

### **OCTOBER, 2014**

**4-5 Pittsburg, PA** CYC Study weekend. Bro. Matthew Trowell (Hamilton Book Road, ON) will speak on "One Day in the Kingdom of God".

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

**11-12 Vancouver, BC** Fraternal Gathering with Bro. Mark Giordano (Norfolk, VA): "Wonders of the Kingdom". Contact Bro. Phil Snobelen at 604 881 4733 or philsnobelen@shaw.ca.

**17-19 Women at the Well Sisters Retreat** at Palm Springs, CA. Theme: "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of Knowledge" Prov 1:7 with Sis. Patty Reister. Contact: Sis. Sandy McLeod sandrarmcleod@gmail.com. Registration: Sis. Bonnie Sommerville kenandbonnie@simihills.org.

**18-19 Echo Lake, NJ** Study weekend. Theme: "God's Wonderful Plan of Salvation Through Jesus Christ Our Lord". Speakers: Bro. Matthew Trowell (Hamilton Book Road, ON) and Bro. Richard Morgan (Hamilton Book Road, ON). First class: 11am Lunch and Dinner will be provided. On Sunday the final class 10 am. Memorial Service: 11 am followed by Fellowship Luncheon. Contact Bro David Link at 973-696-3316 for further details.

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

Periodicals postage paid at Glendora, California and at additional mailing offices.

Send address corrections to: The Tidings • P.O. Box 530696 • Livonia, MI 48153-0696

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### **NOVEMBER, 2014**

**1-2 Kouts, IN** Fall Study Weekend at Woodland Park Community Center, 2100 Willowcreek Rd., Portage, IN. Beginning at 10:00 A.M. Bro. Jeff Gelineau (Simi Hills Ecclesia, CA): "Forgiveness: Doing the Unthinkable". Contact Bro. Joe Bennett at (219) 762-2704 or jkb8275@comcast.net.

**7-9 Brothers' Weekend** in New Hamburg, ON. The speaker will be Bro. Mark Carr. Contact natejbadger@gmail.com for any questions.

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

**8-9 Victoria, BC** Fall study weekend with Bro. Stephen Snobelen speaking on, "Bible Perspectives on the Environment". Contact: Bro. Clyde Snobelen at victoria@csll.ca.

**14-16 Austin Leander, TX** Fall Gathering at the HEB Foundation camp near Leakey, TX. Bro. Jeff Gelineau (CA) will be speaking on "The Lord Raised Up Judges". Contact Sis. Maritta Terrell mt-ct@swbell.net or Bro. David Ishman david.ishman@leanderisd.org.

**22 Brantford, ON** Prophecy Day, The German Hall, 194 Henry Street, Brantford (ON) starting at 10:00 am, brown bag lunch at 12:30pm. Speakers: Bro. Jonathan Bowen (Brantford, ON); Bro. Ken Styles (Royal Oak, MI); Bro. David Billington (Brantford, ON). For information call 519-751-3833 or 519-448-3419 (email daniel.lindsay@biblemagazine.com). Notes this date is a correction to that printed in the July 2014 Bible Magazine.

**28-30 Washington, DC** Family Bible study weekend at Camp Hashawha, Westminster, MD. Bro. Brad Butts (Denver, CO) will speak. Contact: Bro. Ken Green, 443-497-3497 or e-mail Bro. Ken at Hashawha@gmail.com for additional information.

**29 Run for the Everlasting Cure.** A worldwide day of prayer followed by a 5 Km Run/Walk. For more information write to bible@christadelphia.org or see the websig [www.runfortheeverlastingcure.org](http://www.runfortheeverlastingcure.org).

### **DECEMBER 2014**

**20-26 Ontario Winter Bible School**, The Best Western Highland Inn and Conference Center, Midland (ON). Speakers and subjects: Bro. Brian Luke (Brighton, S. Australia): "The Friends of Jeremiah", young people "The Seven Angels and the Seven Trumpets"; Bro. John Owen (Mumbles, South Wales, UK): Israel "my witnesses"; and Bro. Bryan Styles (Livonia, MI): "The Enigma of Ecclesiastes — who knoweth what is good for man?" Registration information on our web site [www.ontariowinterbibleschool.com](http://www.ontariowinterbibleschool.com).

### **FEBRUARY 2015**

**7 Brantford, ON** Annual Junior CYC and Little Disciples Winter Gathering at Camp Trillium. Workbooks will be posted toward the end of the year on [www.brantfordchristadelphians.com](http://www.brantfordchristadelphians.com). For additional information email Bro. Peter and Sis. Karly Styles at peterandkarly@juno.com.

### **MARCH 2015**

**15 Victoria, BC** Spring study weekend with Bro. Jim Harper. Contact: Bro. Clyde Snobelen at victoria@csll.ca.