

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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A Coincidence



*I had no idea when I wrote the article on “Lost” Christadelphian Churches in the September, 2014 Tidings that much had been happening in Lanesville, VA. When I visited the area about twenty years ago, the building was in poor shape, with only a small sign to witness its former existence as a Christadelphian Church. At the time (although there have been some houses built in the area recently) it was a very rural area, and indeed the building was quite hard to locate (after all it was before the widespread use of GPS, Google maps and Street View). I made no contact with the then owner of the property, who lived in the house in back of the church. I had been told that too many Christadelphians had called, drawn by the story (I hesitate to say account) in *The Christadelphian*.*

So I was quite surprised to see that the building had been completely overhauled by local builders, as guided by the current owner, Carrol Walker. And now the building is to be donated to the local historical society, with whom I have been in contact. Hopefully, the Lanesville building will become a historical reminder in the local area of the existence of the Christadelphians, who at one time over a 100 years ago were a thriving community, visited by many including Robert Roberts.

Editorial

Our Common Heritage

“There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ” (Eph 4:4-7).

The one Gospel

Christadelphians all have the one Gospel, the one Truth. By long tradition, for at least 150 years now, all in the Central, Amended community acknowledge one common statement of faith. Even though many ecclesias have their own internal statement¹, they all accept the statement, known, at least in North America, as the BASF, an abbreviation for the Birmingham Amended Statement of Faith². In fact, the “Birmingham” Central ecclesia, of which the BASF was their own “in-house” statement, dissolved in 2008, after an existence of more than 150 years. For many years, at least from around 1870 into the 1970’s, it was the largest ecclesia in the world. Founded in 1852, it owed its prominence to the guidance of Bro. Robert Roberts, who joined in 1864. It grew rapidly, from around 25 or so when he arrived: by 1877, the ecclesial “Record” I have shows a membership of 362. Indeed the undoubted primacy of the ecclesia was solidified by the membership by successively of all the editors of *The Christadelphian* for over 100 years. After Robert Roberts, there was CC Walker, John Carter, and LG Sargent, whose successor, Alfred Nichols, in 1969 retained his membership of his current ecclesia. By the 1980’s, its membership, which peaked at almost 2,000, was rapidly diminishing as suburban ecclesias proliferated and the members moved out of the inner city.

The “Birmingham” statement was modified many times after the issuance of their original statement, which as far as I can tell was first printed in 1869 (the earliest copy I have is dated 1871). It was recast in a major way in 1883, and the phrase which gave rise to the term “amendment” was added in 1898 by the ecclesia at the suggestion of CC Walker, although Robert Roberts had earlier coined the phrase “namely, those who know the revealed will of God, and have been called upon to submit to it”.

Despite the demise of the originating ecclesia, the “Birmingham” Statement of Faith has remained the common Statement for the Amended Community. It was actually subsequently changed in a relatively minor way in 1919³, but it has remained a constant in a changing world, through global wars and much change in the society and the religious landscape around us.

So the Christadelphian body around the world are for the most part united on agreement with the Biblical principles as set forth in the BASF, although not every Christadelphian, especially in the mission field, is aware of this⁴.

The culture

However, this editorial is not about the history of our common statement of faith. Unchanged for almost 150 years, it has defined the bedrock of the faith held by our community, but as I have pointed out, it can be expressed in many ways. And this bedrock can underlain many different types of edifice. Ecclesias of a very few, and ecclesias of many hundreds, inevitably differ not only in the types of buildings they use but the way they conduct their services. Anyone who travels around this continent or, more particularly, abroad will observe differences, not only in the mode of the service, but also in the way the common truth is expressed. Some worship takes place in quiet, solemn reverence where you can almost hear a pin drop. They attempt to express the awe they feel at the majesty of God and the miracle of the forgiveness through Jesus in words of solemn remembrance. Some ecclesias joyfully and happily express the emotion they feel, along with the hubbub that the presence of a number of small children inevitably create.

Some ecclesial members attend in almost a uniform of dark suits, white shirts and sober ties for the brethren and elegant dresses with elaborate hats for the sisters. Others attend in much less formal attire, with jackets, ties and formal dresses rare. There seems no relation that I have been able to discern between the ecclesia's grasp of the Truth and their eagerness to spread it, and their mode of conducting services, or the care taken in their clothing. Unfortunately, we can tend to confuse behavior, culture, and dress with doctrinal views. Some ecclesias formally or informally attempt to legislate over matters that most would consider irrelevant. It is known for ecclesias to prohibit bearded brethren from platform duty, which has proven difficult when a certain editor of *The Christadelphian* was invited to speak. To contrast, I have been in ecclesias where all the duties were performed by bearded brethren (including myself) — and we must remember the elaborate beard sported by John Thomas.

The first century ecclesia

It must be admitted that the tendency to equate external form with inward truth is not a new problem. The Jews in the time of Christ attempted to legislate for almost every aspect of their dress and behavior, and as a result ignored kindness to others and the love of God.

“And the Lord said unto him, Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter; but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness. Ye fools, did not he that made that which is without make that which is within also? But rather give alms of such things as ye have; and, behold, all things are clean unto you. But woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment and the love of God: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. Woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye love the uppermost seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets” (Luke 11:39-43).

And indeed this type of behavior made its way into the early ecclesias.

“My brothers, show no partiality as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus

Christ, the Lord of glory. For if a man wearing a gold ring and fine clothing comes into your assembly, and a poor man in shabby clothing also comes in, and if you pay attention to the one who wears the fine clothing and say, 'You sit here in a good place,' while you say to the poor man, 'You stand over there,' or, 'Sit down at my feet,' have you not then made distinctions among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?' (James 2:1-4 ESV).

Those who equate “Sunday Best” with true Christian virtue are ignoring the examples of the early church as well as the apostate church. Dress and true Christian beliefs and actions are not related in any discernable way. Certainly we ought to conduct ourselves “*decently and in order*” (1Cor 14:40), but it must be remembered that the context is the chaos that seemed to have been caused by “speaking in tongues”, not by dress or deportment.

The present day

We are joined by a common set of beliefs, not by a common culture, way of conducting our services, or by our dress.

So as we reflect on our common heritage, on the truth that binds us together, we must remember we have no Ordnung, no set of rules to live by as the Amish do today and the Pharisees did in their time. The way of Christ is not in external appearances or even the way we conduct our services, but in the heart. There is nothing wrong in elegant dress: I am sure the “modest apparel” of the Ephesian Sisters was quite elegant in a sober way. We are all joined by a common faith, not by common dress. The faith we have must work out in our actions, in our preaching, in the trustworthiness and honesty in which we conduct ourselves. The BASF itself does not instruct us in the way we conduct ourselves, but in the common faith we share, and this common faith needs to work itself out in our actions more than in our appearance. Our Lord Jesus did not think of his appearance on the cross: we should not think of our appearance or the minutiae of our services as of any real importance, but of the way we can honor our Lord by our thoughts and our deeds. “*Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God*”.

So in this ever changing world, let us rest on the bedrock of the Truth, for we “*are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone*” (Eph 2:20).

Peter Hemingray

Notes:

1. There are a large variety of internal Statements of Faith. Some “Amended” Ecclesias use statements that predate the adoption of the “Amendment” of 1895, and others statements that differ considerably in form, although not content.
2. Although the other major Christadelphian community in North America is called the “Un-amended”, in fact their statement of Faith in its present form was developed in 1909, well after the Amendment, which was adopted in 1898.
3. The change was to add the words “or as Police Constables”, in the hope of deflecting the then current controversy over conscientious objection (which it did not do).
4. I personally was baptized in a large Christadelphian ecclesia which had its own Statement. I did not know of the existence of the BASF for until some years later.

Exhortation

Two Mites

“And he looked up, and saw the rich men casting their gifts into the treasury. And he saw also a certain poor widow casting in thither two mites. And he said, Of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all: For all these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God: but she of her penury hath cast in all the living that she had” (Luke 21:1-4).

In 2007 the Washington Post did a social experiment on “Context, Perception and Priorities.” They wondered if people could cut through the fog of life and recognize true beauty right in front of their eyes. So they arranged for Joshua Bell, a world-renowned musician, to dress in jeans and a baseball cap and perform at a metro station in Washington, D.C. during the morning rush hour. On his 3.5 million dollar 1713 Stradivarius violin he played some of the most graceful and enduring music ever written. They then watched to see if anyone took notice.

During his 45-minute recital, only seven people recognized that there was something special about his playing and were willing to take a minute or two out of their busy days to stop and listen. Over a thousand people were oblivious to the extraordinary event. Almost every passer-by failed to appreciate the beauty in the street performance.

Similarly, two thousand years ago, a seemingly insignificant widow performed an act of beauty that would be recorded for the ages — and only one person noticed.

The temple

It happened in the temple, which in the time of Jesus was a grand place. Josephus describes its splendor:

“Viewed from without, the Sanctuary had everything that could amaze either mind or eyes. Overlaid all round with stout plates of gold, the first rays of the sun it reflected so fierce a blaze of fire that those who endeavored to look at it were forced to turn away as if they had looked straight at the sun. To strangers as they approached it seemed in the distance like a mountain covered with snow; for any part not covered with gold was dazzling white” (The Jewish War, p. 304).

The Jewish rulers and priests were proud of their magnificent sanctuary. With no regard for the characteristics their God required of them, they used whatever tactics they deemed necessary to preserve it, including cruelty, threats, lies, deception, false accusations, violence, or murder.

The temple could get as busy as the Washington metro. During feast times, hundreds of thousands of people descended on the temple area. As well as a place of worship and sacrifice, it was a marketplace, a place for exchanging money, a place to make business deals. It was even used as a shortcut for daily commuters.

Inside, the Pharisees wore flowing garments, gave elaborate orations and prayers, and maintained an impressive appearance of righteousness. There were many structures, people, and activities to catch the attention and interest of visitors.

Contrast all this with Jesus' description of the temple: *"It is written, 'My house shall be a house of prayer,' but you have made it a den of robbers"* (Luke 19:46).

Describing those who controlled it he said: *"Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes, and love greetings in the marketplaces and the best seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at feasts, who devour widows' houses and for a pretense make long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation"* (Luke 20:46).

Jesus viewed the temple as a leprous house that had to be destroyed.

"As for these things that you see, the days will come when there will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down" (Luke 21:6).

The widow

In this place of presumed righteousness, no one took notice of the widow. Yet, in her state of poverty amidst all the extravagance, she was the proverbial elephant in the room!

This was supposed to be God's house, where such circumstances should not exist: *"A Father of the fatherless and protector of widows is God in His holy habitation"* (Psa 68:5). The place of worship had become more important than the true worship God desired and the care He had commanded them to give to others.

Although we do not have a literal temple today, our traditions, buildings, Bible schools, magazines, or infrastructures can become more important to us than being compassionate, merciful and just. If we resort to ungodly behaviors in order to maintain our "temple", we become a whitewashed wall, a clean bowl on the outside filled with filth on the inside.

Thus the widow remained invisible — but Christ saw what no one else saw. He always sees what others fail to see.

- Christ sees your heart and the principles you live by.
- He sees your public and your private life.
- He sees your emotional, financial, mental, and physical condition.
- He sees your motives.
- He sees your assessment of yourself.

But even when he points her out to the disciples, they completely miss the lesson. Unmindful of the widow's donation, they immediately start admiring the splendor of the temple and the notable donations — a lot like the commuters who ignored the world-famous violinist.

Only Jesus takes notice, only he is moved by the sincerity, the beauty and power of her action. She gives her all, holding nothing back.

The offering

A mite was a small amount of money. It was a lepton, about 1/128 of a Denarius, or about six minutes of a laborers' daily wage. Some have even suggested that it was the minimum one could offer. Yet if it was the minimum to Jews, to Jesus it was the maximum. In the eyes of the world her



offering was barely an offering. In the eyes of Jesus her offering was everything.

In 2Cor 8:10-13 the Apostle Paul offers a different way of assessing things: *"For if the readiness is there, it is acceptable according to what a person has, not according to what he does not have"* (vs. 12). This way of assessing ourselves and our offerings can be very encouraging.

Have you ever thought of Christadelphians as the two mites? There are about 60,000 of us worldwide. Compare this to the individual local churches in the United States that boast congregations of over 50,000 members. In the eyes of world religions, we are barely noticeable. On any given Sunday the television evangelist Joel Osteen will speak to a live audience of 45,000 with seven million more watching him on their televisions. We are a mere pittance.

In the eyes of the world we are insignificant. But what the world fails to see, our Lord and Savior notices. In Jesus' eyes we can be precious. We can be that violinist producing beautiful and elegant music. But what is it that makes us beautiful? Is it not living those godly characteristics of compassion, mercy, truth, justice, and longsuffering? Is it not our dealings with each other and with those around us?

When we participate in outreach, our efforts are often in second-rate locations, with mediocre equipment and presented by brethren who do not always have the most polished style. There are religious groups with their own cable channels and daily radio broadcasts, multi-million dollar budgets, beautiful sets, and celebrity endorsements. Yet Christ sees what we're doing. In the noise and chaos of Christianity, our Savior sees.

In 2013, World Vision, a Christian charitable organization had \$982 million in revenue and support. Agape in Action, a Christadelphian charitable organization, was able to reach approximately \$1 million. In the eyes of the world, that seems like a mere two mites. In the eyes of Christ — it is magnificent.

Remember we are not being judged by what we don't have. We are being judged by what we do with what we do have.

True giving

What about within our community? How do the “big” ecclesias view the smaller ones? Are they small and therefore insignificant? Are they even noticed? Are they invisible? Yet we are told, “Where two or three are gathered there I am in the midst of you.” Do you offer your support? Visit once in a while, offer to play the piano, exhort, or just share in fellowship?

Let’s personalize it. What about the brothers and the sisters in our meetings? Are any of them insignificant? Do you feel invisible? When someone is absent, do you notice? Are there members that “matter” and the “others”? Not in the eyes of our Savior. He notices what no one else does! He places value where we might see none. You can be that expert violinist, creating beauty, pouring your heart and soul into every action, word and thought. You can be that widow making the offering that catches the Savior’s eye.

If the world doesn’t notice, it doesn’t matter; if other ecclesias don’t notice, don’t fret; if the members of your ecclesia fail to recognize what you’ve done, be at ease. It is God and His son that you are praising, it’s them you’re thanking. As long as you are holding nothing back, your Savior sees.

May ours never be the ecclesia and may each of us never be the individual that diminishes the importance of any of our brothers or sisters, young or old, male or female. They are all essential. When we share in the bread and the wine, we participate in something many people refuse to see. Their lives are just too busy to stop and observe. To them there is no value in what we do each Sunday. Yet, it is the most beautiful, powerful and priceless thing we do.

When Christ was hanging on that stake many people would have passed by and barely taken notice. If they did see, all they saw was three criminals. Three criminals crucified by the Romans to teach a lesson — don’t do what they did, or you will end up like them. Yet Jesus’ message was, take up your cross and follow me. Follow my example; don’t run from it.

“And he said to all, ‘If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself?’”
(Luke 9:23-25).

When we partake of the bread and the wine, let us be thankful that our Savior sees what others don’t see. May we follow His example and give attention to all of our members, to all of our ecclesias, and to all of our offerings. Let us hold nothing back in dedicating ourselves to our God.

John Perks (Ottawa, ON)

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

Submissions under 300 words are encouraged —

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

First Principles

God and His Son

(3) The Relationship Between the Father and the Son

We have considered the revelation of God by the angels, and by our Lord Jesus Christ, and we have considered the Name of God, and how Jesus did and is glorifying God's Name. We will now study the relationship between God and Jesus.

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is and from the beginning, always has been, the center and foundation of God's Plan for man, for the earth, and for all His creation. We read that Christ ". . . *was destined before the foundation of the world but was made manifest at the end of the times for your sake*" (1Pet 1: 20). The importance of the coming of the Messiah or Christ (anointed, crowned as king) is shown by the repeated promises and prophecies of his coming in the Old Testament as well as by all the symbols pointing forward to him in the worship of God by the Jews under the Law of Moses. The foremost example of the latter is the animal sacrifices for the forgiveness of sins, which pointed forward to the sacrifice of Christ, for the salvation of all men from their sins, who have faith.

The fact that Jesus Christ is the central figure of the Christian religion is obvious to all. However, persons who are not Bible students may not realize that God's Word teaches that all time and events since the creation have basically been in preparation for the coming of Christ as Savior. In view of this very great importance of Jesus Christ, it is even more necessary for us to have a correct understanding of the relationship between God, and His Son than we might have realized. We could draw conclusions, based on human reasoning, which are incorrect, if we don't read carefully what God's Word says.

Christ's purpose

In John 14: 9, Jesus said, "*He who has seen me has seen the Father.*" However, it is clear that he meant that those who saw him, saw what the Father is like, not that they saw God Himself. "*No one has ever seen God; the only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has made Him known.*" (John 1:18: See also 1Tim. 6: 16, and 1John 4: 12). Thus Christ cannot be God, since men have seen Christ, and no man has ever seen God. Christ is divine, being the Son of God, but it is not customary in the Bible to call him God except in limited circumstances.

What then is the relationship between God, the Father, and Jesus, the Christ, the Son of God? What does the Bible have to say about the status or position of the Son relative to the Father?

First of all, without taking anything away from the exalted status of the Son, all has been **given** him by the Father. "*Jesus .. said, 'Father, the hour has come; glorify thy Son that the Son may glorify thee, since thou hast given him power over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom thou hast given him. . . Now they know that everything*

that thou hast **given** me is from thee' ” (John 17: 1-7). “ .. All authority in heaven and in earth has been **given** to me ” (Matt 28: 18). This is spoken by the risen Christ, no longer in the flesh. All had been **given** to him. He did not possess power and glory by right as an equal, but as a gift from God.

Second, it is clear that both during his ministry and now, Jesus is subject to the command and direction of the Father. (He now possesses all power to decide and command, but that authority is bestowed by the Father.) He is at the right hand of the Father, an exalted position, but he does only what God wants him to do¹. “*This Jesus .. being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this which you see and hear*” (Acts 2: 32-33; also Rom 8: 34, Rev 1: 1, and many other references). In John 14: 28, Jesus says “ .. for the Father is greater than I ”.

Now, there is a sense in which Jesus is equal with God. We read in the Gospel of John, “*This is why the Jews sought all the more to kill him, because he not only broke the Sabbath but also called God his Father, making himself equal with God*” (John 5: 18). Jesus claimed to be of God’s “family”, as the Son of God. As Prince Charles or Prince William of England have royal status, being the son and grandson of the Queen, so Jesus has divine status, being the Son of God. His status is greater than ours, like the stars are higher than the sky. However, as Prince Charles is not equal to the Queen, so Jesus is not equal to God. In John 10: 30, Jesus said, “*I and the Father are one.*” In verse 36, he explained that he meant, “*I am the Son of God*”, and so was not claiming to be God. The subject of the oneness of Jesus with the Father will be discussed in more detail in an article to follow.

“to my God”

Jesus and his disciples regard the Father as Jesus’ God. After Jesus’ resurrection, he said, “ .. *I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God*” (John 20: 17). God is spoken of as the God of Jesus in the following:

“That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom 15:6).

“Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort;” (2Cor 1:3).

“The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is blessed for evermore, knoweth that I lie not” (2Cor 11:31: See also Eph 1:3, 1Pet 1:3).

If the Father is Jesus’ God, then Jesus must worship Him, and obey and serve Him, and in all ways acknowledge that he is subject to Him. Paul says “*the head of Christ is God*” (1Cor 11:3).

Paul tells us, in 1Cor 15:24-28, that Jesus will still be subject to the Father at the end of his reign over the Kingdom of God (1000 years!). In fact, at that time, he returns the authority which has been given him, back to God (“*delivers the kingdom to God the Father*”). (We feel that this will not really be a step down, but a step forward to an even more glorious state, a state beyond our understanding at present. But, Christ will still not be equal to God.). It specifically says in vs. 28,

“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.”

So we see that Jesus taught that he was the Son of God, subject to the Father as a Son, looking up to the Father as his God, and never claimed to be God or to be equal to God. All power that he has, was given to him by the Father, for the purpose of bringing glory to God, and for fulfilling God’s plan of salvation.

Christ’s sonship

One of Christ’s chief titles is “Son of God”. For example,

“Thou art my beloved Son; with thee I am well pleased” (Luke 3: 22).

“Simon Peter replied, ‘You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.’ And Jesus answered him, ‘Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven’ ” (Matt 16: 16-17).

Now if the word “son” means anything, it means a man sired by a father at a particular time. Reading in Luke, *“And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the most High . . . And the angel said unto her, ‘The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God’ ” (Luke 1: 31-32, 35).* An important passage is *“The Lord has said to Me, ‘You are My Son, today I have begotten you’ ” (Psa 1:7).* Besides helping confirm that the Messiah is the Son of God, it rules out the idea put forward by some, that Christ “pre-existed” and was “eternally begotten”. It is quoted in Acts 13:33, and in Heb 1:5, and 5:5. “. . . today I have begotten you.” is certainly saying the opposite of “You are eternally begotten.”

A person reading the above passages without previous ideas would conclude that Jesus Christ came into being at the time of his conception in the womb of Mary. If God had intended some other meaning, He would have used some other word.² He might have used “brother”, for example, instead of “son”, if Jesus had always existed, and was just assuming a mantle (clothing or covering) of flesh. Brother might be appropriate if Jesus had existed as long as God has, instead of being created by Him. Now we have to take into consideration other Scripture about Jesus, and come to an overall understanding which agrees with the other Scripture as well as the above. However, the Scripture about Jesus as Son of God is primary or fundamental, as we will show shortly. And no one can reasonably suggest that the word “son” is being used symbolically. The words “the Christ, the Son of God” therefore mean that Jesus is a created being. These words are so familiar to us that the above reasoning may seem too simple at first. However, as we think about them, we see the power of the only possible meaning they can have.

Son of Man

The fact that Jesus came as Son of Man, as well as Son of God is also a foundation (basic) principle. He was born of Mary, having the same flesh, and the same nature as we. (Heb 2: 14) To deny this is disastrous. To even de-emphasize it by teaching that he was conscious of and knowledgeable about a previous existence

is very dangerous. The Apostle John points out. *“For many deceivers have gone out into the world, men who will not acknowledge the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh; such a one is the deceiver and the antichrist”* (2John 7). Jesus’ coming in the flesh as a Son is primary. It is fundamental. Jesus almost always referred to himself as the Son of Man. Sometimes others referred to him as the Son of God and he didn’t object, but he called himself the Son of Man.

Having come in the flesh, Jesus was not yet perfect (Heb 2: 10) and could be tempted; (Heb 2: 18, 4: 15) that is, it was possible for him to sin since he came in the flesh (if he couldn’t sin, he wasn’t in the flesh). But he did no sin and was SAVED from (eternal) DEATH (Heb 5: 7). He LEARNED obedience through what he suffered and was MADE perfect.(Heb 5: 8, 9). He spoke *“as the Father taught me”* (John 8: 28), Thus, his coming in the flesh doesn’t fit in at all with the idea of Jesus being conscious of a previous existence. This last statement is discussed in more detail in a later article.

Son of God

We stated above that the Scripture about Jesus as Son of God is primary or fundamental in relation to other Scripture. The promise of a son or a seed (child, descendent) is the most important promise in God’s Word. It was first given to Adam and Eve, then to Abraham, and also Isaac, and Jacob. The promise of a son was repeated to David, and God revealed to David that the promised one would be God’s son. We can see all these promises revealed in the Bible:

“I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel” (Gen 3:15).

“And I will make of you [Abraham] a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing” (Gen 12:2).

“He [Solomon] shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son. When he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men” (2Sam 7:13-14).

The fact that Jesus is the son of Abraham and David is the keynote verse of the New Testament, *“The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God”* (Matt 1: 1). There is a lot more that could be said about this subject. The point is that the fulfillment of God’s purpose, and the salvation of man depends upon and is based upon the coming of God’s Son. Thus, the revelation in Scripture about *“the Christ, the Son of God”* is fundamental, and the interpretation of other Scripture should rest upon this as a basis. This is not to say that we are to ignore or distort other Scripture, but that we have to build upon the Biblical foundation.

The Word (John 1)

A passage which everyone thinks of in connection with the subject of the Father and the Son is John 1, and we should not proceed any further with the subject without considering it.

In John 1: 1, we read *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”* In Gen 1: 1 - 3, we read, *“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. . . And God said, ‘Let there be light’; and there was light”* . A word is an expression of an idea or of reasoning. We see from the above comparison that John is leading us to associate a Word with the beginning, the time of the creation. Now a word can describe a person, but a word is not a person in itself. John says in 1:14, *“And the Word became flesh . . .”* The probable meaning of John 1: 1 then is that God had a thought or plan at the very beginning, a plan or word that described the Lord Jesus Christ. Then, at the appointed time, His purpose was fulfilled by the birth of the Son of God.

Is this suggested meaning logical, and does it agree with the rest of Scripture? We know that God has a plan of salvation for His creation:

“For thus says the LORD, who created the heavens (he is God!), who formed the earth and made it (he established it; he did not create it empty, he formed it to be inhabited!): ‘I am the LORD, and there is no other. I did not speak in secret, in a land of darkness; I did not say to the offspring of Jacob, “Seek me in vain.” I the LORD speak the truth; I declare what is right’” (Isa 45: 18-19).

We also know that His plan centers around and depends upon Jesus Christ. Therefore we see that He must have begun His plan by deciding that His Son would be the Savior. All the rest of the plan would have come after that decision had been made. Thus when His Son was born, the Word or plan was made flesh. This is logical, but does it agree with the rest of the Scriptures?

The Word and Wisdom

Well, what else do the Scriptures say about the Word? The commands (words) which God spoke at the creation are described as His Word: *“By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and all their host by the breath of his mouth”* (Psa 33: 6, see 7- 9) There are other references but especially helpful is Prov 8: 12- 31 (esp. 22- 31), where wisdom is spoken of as being at the beginning with God and personified in the same way as the Word is in John 1. Like a word, wisdom is also thought or reasoning and so this is a very strong indication that the Word is to be understood as having this meaning rather than some less usual or special meaning.

Now the Scriptures themselves are God’s Word, and are referred to as such in them: (for example, Mark 7: 13, Rom 9: 6). In these references, the primary meaning is what we know as the Old Testament, the New Testament not yet being complete. The Old Testament is the revelation by God of the details of the Word or plan which he formulated at the beginning. It of course speaks of the Messiah or Christ who was to come, by the picture given by the events of the lives of the great men of old, by the sacrifices commanded and the many other symbols given, and by the words of the prophets. Thus when Christ was born, the Word or Scriptures became flesh. All was fulfilled in him.

These comparisons of John 1: 1 with Genesis 1 and with all of the Old Testament are very helpful in understanding its meaning. Going on for a moment to John 1: 4-9 which refer to the light, we see that the comparison with Genesis 1 is strength-

ened, for God's first commandment of creation was "Let there be light" (Gen 1: 3). Returning to verse 1, the question remains why it is written the way it is. The statement "the Word was *with* God" tells us that there is no separation between God and His Word. We believe that this had a special meaning at the time it was written in combating the teaching of a group called the Gnostics. They believed that the Supreme Being was part of a divine world which was separate from the material world or creation. They regarded material objects as inherently evil. John is emphasizing that the world created by the Word of God is "very good", and that God is not separated from it by any permanent obstacle. His plan of salvation is designed to restore the Creation to its original state of being very good.

The expression of His being

In "the Word *was* God", we have a statement of the Truth that God's intentions have all the weight of accomplished or completed events. There is no way that His Purpose can be prevented from coming to pass. As surely as God exists, His Word, His commands, His Purpose will be carried out. Thus the Word was with God, and cannot be separated from Him, and the Word was God, the expression of His being, and will surely be carried out.

Careful examination of the language and context of these passages shows them to say that the Father planned that His Son would be the Savior of the world; and therefore Christ is the center around which the whole creation is molded. In Biblical terms, God made the world through him and for him. Once God had planned that His Son would be the Savior, then he proceeded to make the rest of His Plan. The rest was not possible until the plan for Christ was made. Thus the creation as we know it was made possible through the plan for Christ. It could not be made until it was planned, and it could not be planned until the plan for Christ was made by his Father.

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Notes:

1. A person was given a position at the right hand of an all-powerful human king for the convenience of the king. The king wanted him there so that it would be convenient to give him orders, etc. No one thought that he was equal to the king.
2. Two Greek words are used in this connection. The most commonly used means son, descendant, or offspring. The other, found chiefly in John's writings, is translated "the only begotten" or "the only Son" in the various versions.

*By the word of the Lord the heavens were made,
and all their host by the breath of his mouth*

Bible Study

The Way of Cain (13) The Legacy Part 1

“When human beings began to increase in number on the earth and daughters were born to them, the sons of God saw that the daughters of humans [men] were beautiful” (Gen 6:2).

The history of the antediluvian world can be viewed as a struggle between two groups: the sons of God versus the sons of men. These two groups emerged from the conflict between Cain and Abel. When, in relation to the offerings Abel “*did what was right*” by presenting the Lord with an acceptable offering (Gen 4:4), he distinguished himself from the ignorant worship of his brother. In that moment, God divided the two brothers — hitherto indistinguishable from one another with regard to the outward expression of their faith — into two groups: Abel came to represent those who worship God in a spirit of reverence and understanding, while Cain came to represent those who worship out of fear and ignorance.

Genesis does not initially refer to these two groups as the sons of God and the sons of men, but rather the occurrence of the phrase “sons of God” appears much later in the antediluvian narrative, specially Gen 6:2: “*The sons of God saw that the daughters of humans [men] were beautiful.*” This passage concerns the period prior to the Flood and is part of the 11 verses in total in Genesis 6 that chronicle key antediluvian events, but not occurring earlier than the 5th generation. Although Genesis doesn’t refer to these two groups by these particular names — sons of God, sons of men — prior to the 5th generation, nevertheless they did exist in the first four generations; they were simply referred to as those who “*called upon the name of the Lord*” (Gen 4:26). And in that regard: if there was a group that called on the name of God, there must also have been a group that did not; hence “the sons of men.”

Yet Gen 6:2 does not refer to “sons of men,” but rather “daughters of men.” However, the expression, “sons of men,” can be extrapolated from the phrase “daughters of men,” since it is reasonable to conclude that if there were daughters of men there must also have been sons of men. And because Gen 4 and 5 chronicle only males,¹ it is evident that the struggle is meant to be portrayed in Genesis as one between the sons of God and the sons of men — not the sons of God and the daughters of men. That said, women most certainly played a role in this struggle, as we shall see specifically in the character of Naamah (Gen 4:22).

Heavenly Father / earthly father

The title “sons of God” in Gen 6:2 does not refer to a specific genealogy. Rather, it describes anyone, who by their behavior demonstrates that God is their spiritual Father. Likewise, God considers anyone who calls Him “Father” to be His son. This relationship is described by Paul in his letter to the Galatians:

“Because you are His sons, God sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, ‘Abba, Father’. So you are no longer a slave, but God’s child; and since you are His child, God has made you also an heir” (Gal. 4:6-7).

Similarly anyone who does not call God “Father” is not His son. It then stands to reason that if we do not consider God our Father, then we must limit our definition of “father” to one of mere mortal descent. Ergo, sons (daughters) of men. Since the designation of “sons of God” is not biological but spiritual, it cannot refer to a particular genealogy. And yet, Gen 5 chronicles a specific branch of Seth’s descendants who were faithful. This gives the impression that the reference to “sons of God” in Gen 6:2 concerns only this particular branch of Seth’s descendants. However, Gen 4:26 states that, *“at that time people began to call on the name of the LORD.”* The plurality of the word “people” suggests more than one “called on the name of the LORD.” Since Seth only had one son when this “calling” occurred, “people” must refer to others — Seth’s parents, and any other children (sisters) born to them before and/or after his birth. Therefore, there were many genealogical strands of the faithful that Genesis could have focused on. But because none of these lineages produced any faithful men or women down to the 10th generation (they had, by this point become corrupted and wicked), their lineages were doomed to be wiped out in the Flood. Chronicling their lineages would thus have been pointless.

In comparison, only Seth’s genealogy — and only that branch that extended from Seth to Noah — remained faithful to the 10th generation, or the generation in which the Flood occurred. Thus Seth’s genealogy represents both a complete biological and — importantly — spiritually faithful lineage. And it is for this reason that Genesis chose to focus solely on his particular genealogy.

Seth’s genealogy

While the title, “sons of God,” is unrelated to a specific lineage, Gen 5 nevertheless focuses on a particular branch of Seth’s descendants. Genesis does so for the following reasons: to provide narrative continuity from Adam to Noah; when in contrast with a specific branch of Cain’s descendants, it illustrates the difference between the faithful and the unfaithful; it provides an explanation for God’s decision to destroy the earth in the Flood; and it is, most importantly, the branch from which Christ is descended from.

Cain’s genealogy

Similarly, Gen 4 focuses on a specific branch of Cain’s descendants for two similar reasons: to illustrate the stark contrast between the faithful and the unfaithful, and to provide an explanation for God’s decision to destroy the earth in the Flood.

The sons of God versus the sons of men

“What fellowship can light have with darkness? ... What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever?” (2Cor 6:14-15).

As noted in the beginning of this article, the relationship between the sons of God

and the sons of men is defined as a struggle. Cain's murder of Abel represented the first antagonistic act by the sons of men against the sons of God, or the righteous. As time progressed, acts by the sons of men against the sons of God would continue. It would not always take the form of violence, but would come to include corruption or general wickedness.

The following examination of these two genealogies juxtaposes two specific branches of Seth and Cain in Genesis 4 and 5 within a framework that presents Cain's descendants in the context of earthly matters, while presenting Seth's descendants in the context of heavenly matters; hence the use of the titles, sons of men vs. the sons of God.

Seth versus Cain

Seth, the third son of Adam and Eve, brother to Cain and a number of unidentified sisters, was born in the 2nd generation. He was given the name "appointed" or "granted," a name that refers to Eve's proclamation, "*God has granted me another child in the place of Abel since Cain killed him*" (Gen 4:25). His name is derived from the Hebrew word *shet*, which also means "foundation." This alludes to Christ, since he is the foundation upon which our hope rests: "*For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ*" (1Cor. 3:11). Moreover, Matthew and Luke trace Christ's lineage through Seth.² Thus in relation to Christ, Seth represents one of the first stones upon which our spiritual foundation rests upon. The name "foundation" is also befitting of someone who was instrumental in founding the first collective worship of the Lord: "*Seth also had a son and he named him Enosh. At that time, men began to call upon the name of the LORD*" (Gen 4:26). This verse associates Seth with a key antediluvian event, for at the time that his son, Enosh, was born, people began to call upon or proclaim God's name. In doing so, they represent the first ecclesia. The Greek word ecclesia can be translated as "assembly," which is a word that describes a gathering of people, usually for a specific purpose. The focus of the antediluvian's calling was on the "name of the LORD." But to what end? Why did they call on His name?

The antediluvian ecclesia

It might seem to us strange to inquire about the nature of the ecclesia's purpose or focus, since it's obvious, week-to-week, what our focus/purpose of worship is. In the antediluvian world, however, the gathering of people who called on the name of the LORD appears more vague. For, as far as we know, they received little heavenly instruction (few commands, laws, ordinances). Thus, in wondering about this first gathering of believers, it is entirely reasonable to ask: What was the nature of the first ecclesia's worship? Did they assemble purely to revere the Creator or did they also meet to address a particular facet of the human experience in relation to God?

The answer to this question may lie in the name Seth chose for his son. Enosh's name means "mortal," which echoes the words God spoke to Adam: "*Dust you are and to dust you will return*" (Gen 3:19). In choosing this name for his son, Seth acknowledged that he was painfully aware of his ephemeral nature. Moreover, the birth of Enosh is associated with the birth of the ecclesia (Gen 4:26).

Thus the two are related. In Gen 4:26, the Hebrew word *qara*, “to call out” or “to proclaim,” can also mean “to cry out.” Enosh’s name, “mortality,” reveals that, in addition to revering the Creator, worshippers also “cried out” to Him for salvation from death (mortality). In speaking of these “ancients,” Hebrews confirms that the substance of their faith was indeed a hope based on salvation from death.

“But we do not belong to those who shrink back and are destroyed, but to those who have faith and are saved. Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. This is what the ancients were commended for” (Heb 10:39 - 11:1).

Among the many promises God has made to us, and the ancients, resurrection from the dead is chief. Thus the ecclesia’s purpose for calling, proclaiming, or crying out to the Lord was the hope of being saved from death — the same hope that we share in approximately 6,000 years later.

Heavenly versus earthly foundations

The antediluvian ecclesia was in all probability led by Seth, for, as has been shown, his name means “foundation.” In contrast, Cain – like Seth – was also a founder, but what he founded was altogether different and related, of course, to the earth.

When his son Enoch was born, Cain was in the midst of constructing the world’s first city: “*Cain was then building a city and he named it after his son Enoch*” (Gen 4:17). The “city” or in the Hebrew, *iyar*, could really be thought of as a settlement. In particular, it was, as has already been noted, a guarded place, perhaps containing a wall or like defenses. This was to keep out the avenger, the result of having murdered Abel (murder creates in others a desire for vengeance, etc.). It was also a dwelling place that brought people together; where resources and skills were shared; where tasks were divided up amongst the inhabitants; and where, in this process, the time for leisure eventually arose, out of which grew entertainment and culture. This settlement/city was, in essence, the genesis for society, and thus Cain should not only be thought of as a murderer, but also as a founder of ancient civilization.

In this way, both of Adam’s sons were founders; whereas Cain laid the foundations for ancient civilization, which were impermanent and doomed to ruin, Seth laid the foundations for God’s spiritual house, which are everlasting.

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Notes:

1. Cain’s genealogy includes the reference to a single female descendant, Naamah, who was born in the 8th generation (Gen 4:22).
2. Matt 1:1-17; Luke 3:23-38.

“Now Jesus himself was, as it was thought, the son of Joseph... the son of Cainan, the son of Arphaxad, the son of Shem, the son of Noah, the son of Lamech, the son of Methuselah, the son of Enoch, the son of Jared, the son of Mahalalel, the son of Kenan, the son of Enosh, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God” (Luke 3:23, 36-38 NIV).

Life of Timothy

(7) “Our fellow labourer in the gospel of Christ”

Timothy in Thessalonica

There were determined foes of the Gospel in Thessalonica. The Bible indicates they managed to have Paul banned from the city (1Thess 2: 18), and they posed a tremendous challenge to the ecclesia that had formed there. Timothy was given the responsibility of establishing and exhorting the new believers in Thessalonica in person since Paul could not travel there himself.

1Thess 3 indicates how Timothy went about his work in Thessalonica: *“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”* (1Thess 3: 2). Timothy is called a “brother” in this verse. It characterizes how Timothy viewed himself and how he acted in Thessalonica. It is an indicator of his humility.

It is worth noting that throughout the pages of the New Testament, Timothy is never rebuked for being filled with pride. That is remarkable, especially since he was given the tremendous responsibility of guiding the Thessalonian ecclesia at a young age. The Scriptures warn that it is hard for young men not to become prideful, in particular, when given positions of responsibility (1Tim 3:6). Plus, Timothy was very close with the Apostle Paul. That relationship could have made him feel “special,” entitled, and puffed him up. But there is no evidence of that happening. Timothy must have been exceptionally grounded in the Truth — and kept the Lord Jesus as his standard — to have maintained his perspective and remained humble. His humility was probably an important contributor to his success in leading the Thessalonians.

Timothy is also called a “minister” in 1Thess 3: 2. The Greek word means “a servant.” It was clear to the Thessalonians that Timothy was among them to help them and not with the intention of personally benefitting from them. His leadership took the form of service.

Timothy had a very challenging message to deliver in Thessalonica. He called on the members of the ecclesia to be willing to suffer loss for the Truth. The fact that he came to them with an intention to serve was probably one of the reasons they responded so well to his message and his guidance.

Paul wrote 1 Thessalonians in response to the good report he received from Timothy. Timothy returned to Thessalonica bearing that Epistle. Then after spending more time with the Thessalonians, Timothy again returned to Paul with a report. Paul wrote 2 Thessalonians in response. Timothy also carried that Epistle, which contains a greeting from him. In total, Timothy visited Thessalonica at least four times during the Second Missionary Journey. His four visits were

- 1) the initial trip in Acts 17 that ended with Paul being banned,
- 2) the trip referred to in 1Thess 3: 1-5,
- 3) the trip where he carried 1 Thessalonians,
- 4) the trip where he carried 2 Thessalonians

Lessons from the Letters

The two letters to the Thessalonians reveal additional aspects of Timothy's character. First, they show that he noticed, rejoiced in, and was eager to speak about the good that his brothers and sisters were doing, even when they had problems. Timothy was the one who shared with Paul how well the Thessalonians were doing, and he did it in a way that brought Paul great joy: "*But now when Timotheus came from you unto us, and brought us good tidings of your faith and charity, and that ye have good remembrance of us always, desiring greatly to see us, as we also to see you: Therefore, brethren, we were comforted over you in all our affliction and distress by your faith*" (1Thess 3: 6-7). It is noteworthy that Timothy did not just convey generalities to Paul. He did not merely report, "The Thessalonians are doing fine." He observed specifics and talked about them. He noticed and shared, for example, how highly the Thessalonians thought of Paul and how much they missed him.

It is all too easy to find fault with our brothers and sisters and to criticize them in our thoughts or in private conversation. But focusing on the good that our brothers and sisters are doing — even when they have shortcomings — can motivate us and challenge us in our discipleship.

Timothy helped to build up the Thessalonians by noticing their faith and the positive things that they were doing and joyfully sharing the news with others. But while Timothy focused on the good in Thessalonica, he was not blind to problems. He recognized the importance of sound doctrinal understanding. When error began to creep into the Thessalonian ecclesia, he did not ignore it.

Some of the Thessalonians had developed a misunderstanding of the timing of Christ's return. They thought it was imminent. Timothy reported back about the problem to Paul, and that was a reason why Paul penned 2 Thessalonians, which is where he explained that Christ would not return before "the man of sin" was revealed:

"Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition" (2Thess 2: 1-3).

Ephesus

Timothy delivered 2 Thessalonians near the end of the Second Missionary Journey. It is likely that he re-joined Paul at some point because they were together again early in the Third Missionary Journey: "*So he sent into Macedonia two of them that ministered unto him, Timotheus and Erastus; but he himself stayed in Asia for a season*" (Acts 19:22).

The Third Missionary Journey began in about 54 AD. Timothy was approximately 24 at that time. Paul and his company departed from Antioch: And when he had landed at Caesarea, and gone up, and saluted the church, he went down to Antioch. And after he had spent some time there, he departed, and went over all the

country of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples (Acts 18: 22-23). Galatia was an early stop on the Third Missionary Journey. Timothy was probably with Paul at that point and had the opportunity to see his mother and grandmother. If so, that would have been the first time that he had seen them in three years.



Map: Key Locations in Timothy's Life

The Third Missionary Journey lasted about four years. Timothy spent much of that time in the city of Ephesus in the Roman province of Asia. Ephesus was an important commercial center and one of the largest cities in the Empire. It was the base from which many of the other ecclesias in the province of Asia — Colossae and the ecclesias to which Revelation was written — were founded. Timothy ended up spending many years of his life in Ephesus and eventually became the leader of the ecclesia there.

While Paul was in Ephesus, he performed “special miracles.”

“And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul: So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them” (Acts 19: 11-12).

This is the only occurrence of the phrase “special miracles” in the Bible. What made Paul’s miracles in Ephesus “special” was that he healed people from a distance by sending them items — such as sweat cloths and work clothes — that he had with him.

It would have been particularly remarkable for the Ephesians to witness items from Paul healing people since Paul himself was not well. Timothy was not well either. When Timothy was in Ephesus, Paul could only encourage him to “*Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach’s sake and thine often infirmities*” (1Tim 5:23). But Paul could not actually heal Timothy.

There is no record of Timothy complaining about the situation or of characterizing it as “unfair.” But it is easy to imagine that it could have been a struggle for him

to witness other people being healed while his own infirmities limited the work that he wanted to do in the Truth.

There was, however, a larger benefit that came from Timothy's struggles with illness in Ephesus while people all around him were being made well. The fact that Paul healed so many people but did not heal his beloved companion, Timothy, would have been compelling proof that the miracles he performed were not due to any power that he personally possessed. Instead, they were incredible signs confirming the existence of the God about whom he preached. This point would have been extremely important to emphasize in Ephesus where there were many tricksters who claimed to perform miraculous healings by their own power:

“Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth. And there were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, and chief of the priests, which did so. And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye? And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. And this was known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified” (Acts 19:13-17).

Timothy's health in Ephesus is a reminder that we sometimes have to endure trials that can be hard to understand. But the challenges that we experience may be part of a greater plan that is drawing other people to God and bringing glory to His Name. Timothy wanted God to be glorified even if it meant hardship for him, as the next episode in his life illustrates.

Ryan Mutter (Baltimore, MD)



History

Lanesville — an Update

Since the article on “Lost” Christadelphian Churches was in The Tidings (Sept 2014), there appeared an article on its new status. It can be found in the Tidewater Review (King William County) for Sept 17 2014, authored by Jackson McMillan (Used by permission).

The King William County Historical Society (KWCHS) will assume control of King William County’s historic Lanesville Christadelphian Church sometime early next year. Former KWCHS President Carl Fischer said the KWCHS expects to be deeded the property sometime in the first quarter of 2015. The property is being donated by its current owner, Carroll Lee Walker, who also led the church’s successful restoration effort. “We voted to accept the donation (of the Lanesville



King William County’s historic Lanesville Christadelphian Church. The Sunday School and men’s and female’s privies were constructed by during the property’s restoration.

church),” Fischer said. “The building is very nice and we felt it should be preserved. We’ll accept the title to the land — a third of an acre — that includes the church. We’ll also receive a small contribution for upkeep. Fischer said he does not yet know what the KWCHS will use the church for, but that it will probably be rented for weddings and other formal events. The Lanesville church was restored in 2006 by Walker, a local man who has since 1969 taken on numerous restoration projects in the county. When Walker purchased the property, the church had fallen off of it’s foundation and was in great need of renovation. Charles Edwards, great-grandson of the church’s founder, had tried several avenues to restore the building as a historical landmark, but was ultimately unsuccessful. He eventually sold Walker the land and donated the contents of the property. “I knew he had done other buildings and I knew he had the connections to do it, so what did we have to lose,” Edwards said of Walker. “We had to pass the torch onto someone who could do it (the restoration).” The church’s restoration took Walker and his crew only a few months to complete. Walker tried to keep the property as true

to its original form as was possible — his team refinished the pulpit furniture and original pews — but also added a Sunday School building and two restroom houses that were originally not on the property. The Lanesville Christadelphian Church was built in 1876 by Dr. Lemuel Edwards, a county physician and minister who treated soldiers during the Civil War. The church, which at one time had a congregation of 30 to 40, closed its doors in 1964 after dwindling down to seven members. “Christadelphian” means “Brothers in Christ,” Edwards said. Edwards still lives on the family property located behind the church at the corner of Mt. Olive-Cohoke Road and Pocahontas Trail. Christadelphianism traces its origins to the nineteenth century. Central to Christadelphian belief is that Christ will return to the Earth to establish the Kingdom of God and grant eternal life to those who have followed Him and God. Christadelphianism also has no central body or hierarchical structure, as is the case with other Christian faiths, such as Catholicism. Edwards said that this denomination did not believe in paid ministry. His great-grandfather, grandfather, and father all lead the church without pay. He also said the King William denomination, which is the oldest body in the U.S., was unique because most Christadelphian congregations did not build churches and met in rented spaces of homes. Christadelphian services also differ from most Christian services because they study verse by verse of the Bible from the beginning to the end. Edwards said they believe in a more literal translation of the Bible than most religions. “The confusion comes with what happens to you immediately after you die,” Edwards said. The belief is that the spirit sleeps in the grave until Judgment Day and then the Lord decides whether you go to Heaven or Hell. Edwards said

Christadelphians do not believe a spirit goes anywhere until Judgment Day. There are about one million members [*sic.*] worldwide of the Christadelphian belief, namely in New Zealand, Australia, and England. David Brown, current president of the KWCHS, said while the building’s restoration is important to the

Lanesville Christadelphian Church



The Sunday school building and men’s and women’s privies constructed by Walker and his team at Lanesville during the property’s restoration.



Christadelphian faith, it is likewise significant for residents of the county. “I think it’s important for people to have these touchstones to remind them of their past,” Brown said. “In a lot of Virginia’s rural counties, more buildings are disappearing quickly.” Fischer said the KWCHS’ goal is to ultimately have the Lanesville church added to the national registry of historical places. McMillan can be reached at jmcmillan@tidewaterreview.com. Frances Hubbard contributed to this story.

Peter Hemingray (Detroit Royal Oak, MI)

Report of the English Test Case for WW1

Introduction



One of the more important events in the fight for the recognition of the right for conscientious objection by our community was a hearing in England which took place in 1916, usually known as the test case. It has often been inadequately covered in our literature: this is primarily because the young brother selected by the authorities was in fact, not a member of the larger “Temperance Hall” (now usually known as Amended or Central), or even the smaller Suffolk St group. Instead, he was a member of those Christadelphians aligned with the Advocate group in America, although known as the “up and be doing” movement in England. These ecclesias were strongly represented in London, and so the young brother chosen

was Bro. Charles Gordon Ramsden, usually known as Gordon Ramsden. Baptized in 1914, he was a member of the London Camberwell meeting. When Bro. Frank Jannaway recounts this episode in his “*Without the Camp*”, he does mention Bro. Ramsden’s name, but *The Christadelphian* does not do so.

A full account to be found is in the magazine “*The Fellow Labourer*”, now almost totally forgotten. The magazine was folded into the *Advocate* as of July 1917: however, the group associated with the magazine joined with the Suffolk Street group in 1921, which in turn rejoined the Central community in 1956.

Report of the test case from *Fellow Labourer*¹

Readers of the *Fellow-Labourer* have followed with deep interest and concern the reports of proceedings before the various Tribunals under the Military Service Act on applications for exemption for our young brethren on conscientious grounds. As will have been observed, the results have usually taken the form of exemption from combatant service only. In all such cases, it is believed, an appeal has been lodged to the Appeal Tribunal.

The first case before the County of London Appeal Tribunal, which was held on Monday, 13th March [1916], at the House of Commons, was that of Bro. Charles Gordon Ramsden, of the Camberwell Ecclesia. Mr. Donald Maclean, M.P., presided over the whole body of 25 members, and at the outset made a short state-

ment on the subject of procedure, in the course of which he said that appeals by conscientious objectors would be heard by the tribunal as a whole, so as to secure uniformity of treatment. Mr. Maclean, as the *Times* report states, dealt in a shrewd but wholly sympathetic way with the applicants, and in this respect Bro. Ramsden had certainly nothing to complain of.

As, no doubt, it will be of interest to all our readers to know of the form in which Bro. Ramsden made his appeal, the following is the statement which he read to the Tribunal :—

To the members of the Appeal Tribunal. GENTLEMEN,

In obedience to the requirements of the Government, I come before you to state the grounds of my conscientious objection to Military Service.

By Military Service I mean Military Service in the widest sense of the term; that is to say, every form of service involving the taking of the oath, or affirmation, or attestation, or its equivalent, under the military authorities in connection with war or war work.

My conscientious objection to military service is the result of a deep religious conviction that wars, fightings, and fleshly strivings are contrary to the letter and the Spirit of the laws of Christ, as expressed in the sermon on the mount, and amplified in the writings of the apostles, by which I, as a Christadelphian, or brother of Christ, am bound.

To me, war is opposed to every principle of the doctrine of Christ. Under no circumstances therefore could I join the ranks of those who make war — be the consequences what they may — not even as a so-called non-combatant; because I agree with your law, which holds a man responsible who helps another man to strike, he is an accessory to the deed. The combatant and non-combatant are both alike integral parts of an organisation which is kept for the special purpose of fighting. They are essential to one another; in fact one is the complement of the other. They belong to the same body, are subject to the same law, and are under the same oath, which involves a solemn undertaking to fight for king and country.

My conscientious objection to combatant service therefore, equally holds good in regard to the so-called non-combatant service.

On these grounds and under these special and exceptional circumstances, I respectfully beg to claim a complete and unconditional certificate of exemption from Military Service, which you have the power to grant, and which is my right under the provisions of the Act relating to conscientious objectors, as interpreted and explained by Mr. Walter Long in the Local Government Board instructions issued on Feb. 4th, 1916, explaining the application and effect of the Act, where it expressly states that in exceptional cases in which the genuine convictions and circumstances of the man are such that neither exemption from combatant service, nor a conditional exemption will adequately meet the case, absolute exemption may be granted in these cases if the Tribunal are fully satisfied of the facts.

This provision gives effect to the assurance of Mr. Asquith in a speech reported on Jan. 6th : That the Government had taken every care to secure that no one shall come under the obligation created by this Bill unless it is manifest he has no reasonable ground for not responding to his country's call. Gentlemen, believing as I do that the return of Jesus Christ to the earth, to establish His kingdom, will soon be a literal fact and wishing to be ' found of Him in peace, without spot, and blameless,' I affirm that I cannot—I dare not—I will not—take any part in the war."

The statement was read by Bro. Gordon Ramsden with marked effect. The Tribunal were evidently impressed by it, and after a few questions had been asked and answered, the Chairman intimated that he would be exempted from military service on condition that he is engaged in some work of national importance. Although in a certified occupation, Bro. Ramsden had, of course, refused to claim exemption on this ground, basing his appeal wholly on grounds of conscience. He, therefore, courteously but firmly, declined to accept the finding, and asked for leave to appeal. to the Central Tribunal. After the committee-room had been cleared for a private conference, Bro. Ramsden was re-called, and it is satisfactory to be able to report that leave to appeal was granted.

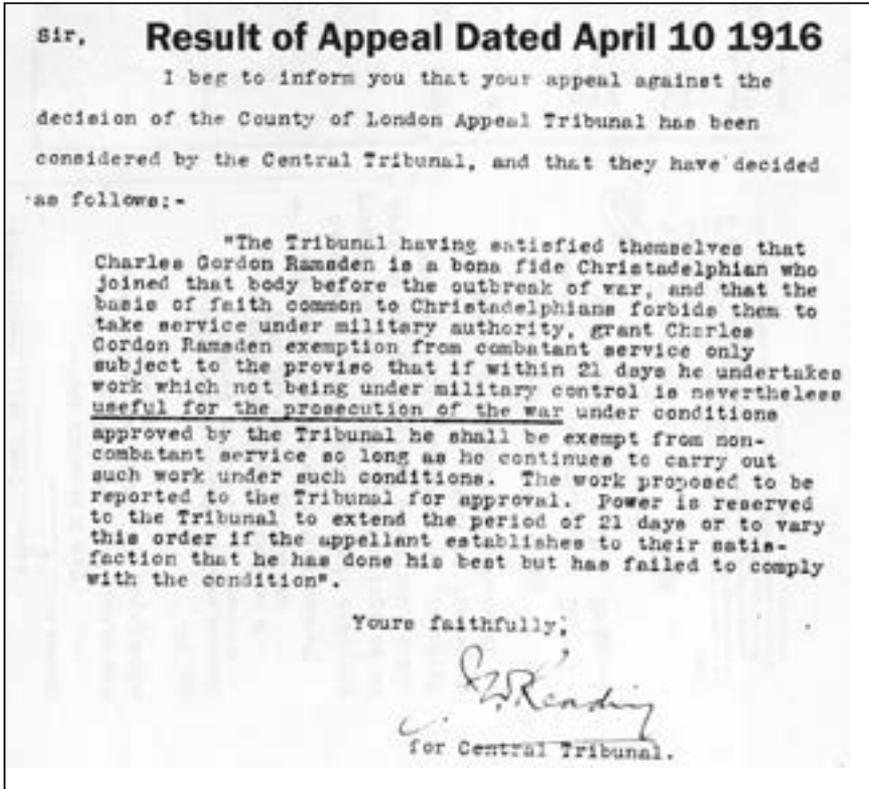
This further appeal was carefully prepared, and was accompanied by a covering letter intimating that if the claim of the Christadelphian body to absolute exemption from Military Service were allowed, those concerned would no doubt voluntarily agree to help the country in any civil work which would leave them freedom of conscience. Just as this number goes to press, a letter has been received from the Central Tribunal inviting us to state what civil work we are prepared to undertake. Three days only have been allowed in which to submit our suggestion, and it is hoped it will be possible to discuss the matter with the authorities in conference.

The above is the position up to the time of writing, and we are very grateful that we have succeeded so far. No doubt a good deal of ridicule, scorn, and contumely will be levelled at our young brethren, but they are making a strenuous fight for the liberty of conscience, and everything that can possibly be done to strengthen their hands is imperative. In this connection it has been made abundantly evident at the various Local Tribunals and also at the House of Commons that the Ecclesias throughout the country will require to take very strict lines in order to preserve our neutrality to the world's affairs. On many occasions evidence has been called for to show our sincere and determined attitude in this matter, and the crisis is such as will try us in every way to see if we can stand the test and come out purified.

It is only right that acknowledgment should be made of the assistance we have received from a member of the Standing Committee of the Brixton and Mornington Hall Ecclesias who has very kindly placed at our disposal copies of suggested answers to the questions on the forms of application for exemption; particulars of the statement of the Christadelphian position and copies of the evidence in support of it. Mention must also be made of some very helpful letters and leaflets issued by a brother in Birmingham, extracts from which have been embodied in Bro. Ramsden's statement as given above².

Other contemporary records³

Bro. Gordon, at the time of his appearance, was employed as a Boiler Stoker in a laundry (another vanished profession!), which was reportedly a reserved profession, although Bro. Gordon did not claim as such when he appeared before the tribunal. The result of the appeal mentioned above was communicated as shown below on April 10, 1916:



Bro. Gordon, like several other brethren, subsequently worked on a farm near Sevenoaks, Kent. He was quite a prominent brother after the war: his passing is recorded in *The Christadelphian* for 1983, his service for the magazine *Glad Tidings* being particularly mentioned.

It might also be mentioned that he was one of 1,716 British Christadelphians given alternative service under the "Pelham Committee", almost half the total so treated in WW1.

Conclusion

I believe the above account is an interesting demonstration of the power of sincerity in presenting our position on Conscientious Objection, and demonstrates how this tenant of our faith is consistent over all the various divisions within our

community. Although there was no official joint committee at the time, by the inception of WWII both the amended and unamended communities presented a united front to the authorities in the USA.

In addition, the statement by Bro. Ramsden clearly and succinctly sets forth the basis of our objection to non-combatant as well as combatant service. This is

- 1) The whole idea of war is quite contrary to the spirit of Christ
- 2) The combatant and non-combatant are both alike integral parts of an organization ... They belong to the same body, are subject to the same law, and are under the same oath, which involves a solemn undertaking to fight for king and country.

Local Tribunal: Name Camberwell.
Address Town Hall, Camberwell.
Certificate No. 126

This is to certify that:—
Name (in full) Charles Gordon Ramsden,
Address (in full) 72, Oakhurst Grove, East Dulwich.

Age 22.
Occupation, profession or business Engine Tenter and Boiler Stoker.

is exempted from the provisions of the Military Service Act, 1916.

The exemption is* from combatant service, & provided that so long as he is employed as an agricultural labourer as at present under conditions approved by the Central Tribunal, he is exempt also from non-combatant service.

The ground on which the exemption is granted is conscientious objection.

to report on 1st of each month to Clerk to Tribunal.

Signature [Signature]
Date 12. 3. 16
[Signature] for the Tribunal.

* State whether the exemption is absolute, conditional (in which case the conditions should be stated) or temporary (in which case the period of time should be stated).
If the exemption is granted on conscientious grounds and is from combatant service only, this should also be stated.

Peter Hemingray (Detroit Royal Oak, MI)

Notes:

1. As seen in *The Fellow Labourer*, April 1916, p. 283
2. In *Conscription and Conscience* by John Botten, it is claimed the statement was as drafted by Bro. Viner Hall, presumably the "London Brother" referred to above. This is what was claimed by Bro. Viner, but is probably somewhat of an exaggeration.
3. I must thank Bro. John Ramsden, a nephew of Bro. Gordon, for supplying the illustrations.

Remembering Our Brethren's Work in The Vineyard of the Lord (Honesdale)

It is exciting when an ecclesia builds their first ecclesial hall after many years of renting halls and meeting in homes. It is exciting when you host a missionary effort around your town. Baptisms are welcomed by angels. So many wonderful, blessed events happen in our ecclesial lives. We are thankful. Over time an ecclesia has many of these special events as well as the every week Memorial Service and Bible Class. Sometimes it is worthwhile to reflect on all of these blessings from God and consider how our walk in the truth has borne fruit.

An ecclesial history records these blessings and brings to mind the long term commitment to the truth of our brethren who have labored in this vineyard of the Lord. It reminds of their persistence in providing a meeting place, where we can remember our Lord in our memorial services. As a result, we can grow in understanding and wisdom by sharing our study of the Holy Bible, and this has resulted in the current membership.

We in the Honesdale Christadelphian Ecclesia, PA, have compiled our history and used it. There are many other ways of doing the same and perhaps this has already been done by numerous ecclesias, but perhaps it might be a new idea to some and it might provide some inspiration.

Our ecclesia dates back to the late 1880s in the Pocono Mountains in eastern Pennsylvania. We have been fortunate in that our recording brothers have been diligent in providing notices to the various Christadelphian magazines throughout the long years. In the 1990s Sister Esther Dunn and Sister Esther Garing compiled a history of our ecclesia. They wrote a summary of our history which was followed by a complete listing of all of the notices published in the magazines. They also included photographs, letters, and a listing of baptisms. I think they left a legacy of memories of the blessings bestowed upon our brethren over the years of waiting for our Lord and Savior to return. They wrote "It has been a labor of love for all our brothers and sisters. Those of us who worked on this feel a close bond with our faith and our fellowship."

Sis. Esther Dunn was moved to bring this history to our congregation recently. She and I hosted two classes in 2012 reviewing this history with all of our brethren, their families, and our friends. It was a wonderful reunion where we all reminisced about what our ecclesia had done with God's help, what our grandparents had accomplished, and the benefits that our ancestors bestowed upon us. It was an eye opener and we all felt thankful for God's providence throughout thick and thin.

It was amazing to learn about a trainload of Christadelphians who visited us in 1893 from New Jersey who brought encouragement and education, the early years of meetings in houses, quarterly tea meetings, the letter from the commanding officer of a WWI conscientious objector brother commending his character, the great flu epidemic following that war which caused our meetings to be suspended, meetings in a rented Odd Fellows Hall, the memories of an elder brother about his WWII conscientious objector status, the effort to support their alternative

service in the Civilian Corps (no pay), the erection of our current chapel in 1963, the support by visiting brothers from other ecclesias, the work in aiding the establishment of Camp Ladore and the Shippensburg Bible College, and many other events that are new to younger brethren. It was uplifting to think about the many faithful years of upholding the Word of God and how it brought so many into the light and baptism. This set the ground work for our 50th anniversary of the dedication of our chapel last year. We went into this celebration with a better knowledge and understanding of the spade work of our early brethren. Several elderly sisters reminisced about carrying the foundation stones over to the chapel construction to aid their brothers. Now when we look at our chapel we see their hands in the building that provides us shelter from the outside world.

Other ecclesias might want to consider the value in remembering the labors of brethren past. Newer ecclesias can start this right now by publishing their events in the Christadelphian magazines, collecting important letters, taking photographs of events, recording exhortations, and more. The magazines these days have databases of on-line ecclesial notices that can be easily searched and compiled into a chronological history. While we patiently wait for our Lord's return you will be continuing to prepare the newer brethren to also wait patiently; soon we pray.

Stephen J. DeMarco (Honesdale, PA)

Youth Speaks

Jonathan the Faithful Prince (16) Breaking the Oath

In the last few articles, Jonathan had shown his fervent dedication to live according to principle, regardless of what the results may have been. Though he knew that his father was liable to react to him violently, he also knew that out of love for David and out of love for Saul, he needed to do something. Thus, he determined to speak to his father.

Nevertheless, though he came to his father because of principle, not the results, Jonathan still did what he could to achieve the best possible outcome. Before he came to Saul, he must have spent time thinking about how he could say what needed to say and somehow change his father's mind. With a gentle and yet firm approach, an approach which demonstrated the apostle's phrase of "speaking the truth in love", Jonathan was able to turn his father's mind back to happier and more faithful days, reminding him of the firm confidence that he had once had in God.

In doing so, and with God's blessing, Jonathan's effort turned Saul's heart. The stubborn and envious king began to rethink his feelings towards David and solemnly pledged that he would repeal his decree to kill him. David would live. For the next while (days, maybe even months), life in Saul's court returned to how it had been before. David periodically came before Saul to soothe his mind, and Saul appreciated his presence. Perhaps it would have even seemed as though Saul's love for David returned.

With joy in his heart, Jonathan would have thanked the God of Israel for his success with his father, and perhaps even believed that the time of violence towards David was past. Sadly, if this was the case, then Jonathan was wrong. Unbeknownst to him, Saul's murderous streak had returned, and though he had made a vow that he would not kill David, Saul simply couldn't hold to what he had promised. David had fought another battle with the Philistines, winning a great victory, and likely winning more of the hearts of the people. David's growing popularity was something that Saul couldn't stand — and as David played his soothing music before him, Saul didn't feel soothed. His fingers would have tightened around his javelin and the urge to kill the young man would have begun to overtake him. Suddenly, he threw the javelin at David, and the young shepherd's safety was once more in question:

“And there was war again: and David went out, and fought with the Philistines, and slew them with a great slaughter; and they fled from him. And the evil spirit from the Lord was upon Saul, as he sat in his house with his javelin in his hand: and David played with his hand. And Saul sought to smite David even to the wall with the javelin; but he slipped away out of Saul's presence, and he smote the javelin into the wall: and David fled, and escaped that night” (1Sam 19:8-10).

This was now the second time that Saul had tried to kill David in this way. It was as though Saul's oath of David's safety had never even existed. With this violent action towards him having resumed, David knew that he was no longer safe in Saul's court. Fearing for his life, David ran from the king into the night, eventually coming to his own home. Unfortunately, this was one of the first places that Saul thought to look for him — telling his servants to watch David's house and kill him when the morning came. In great distress, Michal, David's wife, who somehow knew of her father's plans (how did she know?), told David that he needed to flee that very night: once the morning came it would be too late:

“Saul also sent messengers unto David's house, to watch him, and to slay him in the morning: and Michal David's wife told him, saying, If thou save not thy life to night, to morrow thou shalt be slain” (1Sam 19:11).

Not knowing what lay ahead, David heeded the warning of his wife, being secretly dropped down to the ground from one of their windows. From there, likely wondering if he would ever see Michal again, David ran to a place where he knew that he could find sanctuary, the house of Samuel the prophet:

“So David fled, and escaped, and came to Samuel to Ramah, and told him all that Saul had done to him. And he and Samuel went and dwelt in Naioth” (1Sam 19:18).

All throughout the land, Samuel was a respected man. He had been the spiritual leader of the entire nation: *“Behold, here I [Samuel] am: witness against me before the LORD, and before his anointed: whose ox have I taken? or whose ass have I taken? or whom have I defrauded? whom have I oppressed? or of whose hand have I received any bribe to blind mine eyes therewith? and I will restore it you. And they*

said, *Thou hast not defrauded us, nor oppressed us, neither hast thou taken ought of any man's hand. And he said unto them, The LORD is witness against you, and his anointed is witness this day, that ye have not found ought in my hand. And they answered, He is witness*" (1Sam 12:1-3). Surely David thought that he would be safe with the old seer. But Saul's hatred had lost all restraint; for a time his lethal thinking towards David had been withheld by his vow, but with that already broken, Saul had nothing to keep him back. He had missed with the javelin, he had failed to kill David in his own house — and so he would do whatever he needed to do to finish the job, even if it meant invading the house of his former mentor.

But, things wouldn't be so easy for Saul. With each group of messengers that Saul sent to Samuel's house to capture David, the Spirit of God came upon them and they began to prophesy, rendering them totally unable to apprehend the son of Jesse:

"And Saul sent messengers to take David: and when they saw the company of the prophets prophesying, and Samuel standing as appointed over them, the Spirit of God was upon the messengers of Saul, and they also prophesied. And when it was told Saul, he sent other messengers, and they prophesied likewise. And Saul sent messengers again the third time, and they prophesied." (1Sam 19:20-21).

Three groups of messengers were sent and three groups of messengers began to prophesy. Finally, in exasperation, Saul decided to go himself: he would find David and kill him at Samuel's house, if that's what it took. Nevertheless, the same thing that happened to the messengers happened to Saul:

"And he went thither to Naioth in Ramah: and the Spirit of God was upon him also, and he went on, and prophesied, until he came to Naioth in Ramah. And he stripped off his clothes also, and prophesied before Samuel in like manner, and lay down naked all that day and all that night. Wherefore they say, Is Saul also among the prophets?" (1Sam 19:23-24).

Just as with the messengers, the Spirit of God came upon Saul and he found himself unable to capture David — he was moved by the spirit and spoke the words of God. Tragically, even this powerful experience had no effect on the hardened king. The spirit of God had been absent from his life for so long: *"But the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD troubled him"* (1Sam 16:14). Its reappearance should have caused him to think about why it had departed from him for so many years. Yet, even more, the exact same thing had actually happened to Saul before, and this instance would have no doubt reminded Saul of his previous experience prophesying. Just after Samuel had anointed him, the very same thing had taken place:

"And when they came thither to the hill, behold, a company of prophets met him; and the Spirit of God came upon him, and he prophesied among them. And it came to pass, when all that knew him beforetime saw that, behold, he prophesied among the prophets, then the people said one to another, What is this that is come unto the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets?" (1Sam 10:10-11).

Those days were surely better times for Saul. It was during those days that Saul was “little” in his own sight: *“And Samuel said, When thou wast little in thine own sight, wast thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel, and the LORD anointed thee king over Israel?”* (1Sam 15:17). He had much more humility than he had in his later years. In was during those days that God was able to work with him and able to accomplish a “great salvation” against the Ammonites. Once again, Saul had another experience in his life, which, just like his conversation with Jonathan a few verses prior to him chasing David, should have caused him to stop and think. Saul should have thought about why it was that the spirit of God had left him for so long. On top of that, he should have been reminded of his life back when the same thing had happened to him before — he should have been reminded of how different and how much better it was when he acted in humility. Sadly, this event seems to have had little effect upon Saul. His hatred towards David burned just as strong as ever, and David, in desperation and fear, feeling as though he was not even safe with Samuel, fled back to Gibeah to the only other tangible source of comfort that he knew, his dear friend Jonathan.

Such is the context of one of the most moving events in all of the Scriptural record. In the next few articles, we will examine the story of David and Jonathan’s parting, in which two of Israel’s most spiritually-minded and faithful men were separated because of the envy of a foolish king. The story begins with David earnestly trying to convince Jonathan of Saul’s revived intentions; progresses to the two mens’ plan for revealing Saul’s schemes; moves on to the implementation of that plan; and finally shows the future king and the prince together as they realize that David can no longer stay in Gibeah with Saul. It’s a touching story of friendship and service, in which Jonathan shines forth as an example of how to bring comfort to a friend whose faith is wavering and who simply has no idea what to do.

Jason Hensley (Simi Hills, CA)

Reflections

Do Disciples Pass Away?

Passed away. We’ve all heard neighbors, friends and colleagues use this phrase when discussing the death of a relative or someone they knew. It is used as a way of broaching what is for many people a very uncomfortable subject. It is viewed as a gentle way to discuss an unpleasant event.

How does Scripture use this term? The first time that the phrase “**pass away**” is used with reference to man is in

*“My brothers are treacherous as a torrent-bed, as torrential streams that **pass away**, which are dark with ice, and where the snow hides itself. When they melt, they disappear; when it is hot, they vanish from their place. The caravans turn aside from their course; they go up into the waste and perish”* (Job 6:15-18 ESV¹).

Job compares his brethren who have not comforted him to the brooks of water that disappear and perish or cease to exist when the heat comes. Again, in (ESV) Elihu speaks about the righteousness of God and how the wicked shall **pass away** or perish.

*“Therefore, hear me, you men of understanding: far be it from God that he should do wickedness, and from the Almighty that he should do wrong. For according to the work of a man he will repay him, and according to his ways he will make it befall him. Of a truth, God will not do wickedly, and the Almighty will not pervert justice. Who gave him charge over the earth, and who laid on him the whole world? If he should set his heart to it and gather to himself his spirit and his breath, all flesh would perish together, and man would return to dust. If you have understanding, hear this; listen to what I say. Shall one who hates justice govern? Will you condemn him who is righteous and mighty, who says to a king, ‘Worthless one,’ and to nobles, ‘Wicked man,’ who shows no partiality to princes, nor regards the rich more than the poor, for they are all the work of his hands? In a moment they die; at midnight the people are shaken and **pass away**, and the mighty are taken away by no human hand” (Job 34:10-20).*

In Psa 58:8 the psalmist requests that the wicked should **pass away** or perish as a snail that melts or a stillborn baby.

In the NT with reference to man the phrase occurs in Luke: *“Truly, I say to you, this generation will not **pass away** until all has taken place” (Luke 21:32).* Jerusalem was indeed surrounded and destroyed in A.D. 70. The temple worship ceased and the nation ceased or perished.

In Paul’s writing the phrase becomes passed away: *“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has **passed away**; behold, the new has come” (2 Cor 5:17).*

Finally:

*“Let the lowly brother boast in his exaltation, and the rich in his humiliation, because like a flower of the grass he will **pass away**. For the sun rises with its scorching heat and withers the grass; its flower falls, and its beauty perishes. So also will the rich man fade away in the midst of his pursuits. Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him” (James 1:10-12).*

Bro. Neville Smart wrote:

“As the grass is withered by the scorching wind, so also,” writes James, “shall the rich man fade away in his going”; the last word is a specific allusion to the ‘journeyings’ of the rich man (the same word is used of the ‘journeying’ of Jesus towards Jerusalem, (Luke 13:22); James envisages the wealthy merchant cut off in the very midst of the journeys and voyages he undertakes in pursuit of his business enterprises. It is a sobering thought: and it recurs later on in a slightly different form (4:13ff). Let the rich brother

have before his gaze some more worthwhile treasure than that which is so uncertain and fleeting! ²

For those who have been baptized into Christ when we die we are not as the wicked that perish but instead sleep awaiting the resurrection.

“Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed.” (1Cor 15:51-52).

“But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. Therefore encourage one another with these words” (1Thess. 4:13-18).

The religions of this world have strayed so far from Scriptural teaching that things which should be understood are given new meanings for those with itching ears to make them more palatable. Even the Jews, who are God’s people and should know what the Old Testament teaches with regards to death, have become apostate in their beliefs.

Quoting from the website askmoses.com:

“In Judaism we avoid the word ‘death’ since the person’s soul does not ever ‘die’. Instead, it ‘passes away’ or ‘passes on’ to a different plane of reality, a spiritual realm. ‘Death’ suggests a final stage in a person’s life cycle. However, Judaism says that not only does the soul continue after the body ceases to be alive, but that even the body will live once again during the era of the redemption when the resurrection of past generations will take place.”

Now that we have seen the way Scripture teaches us what passed away means and the connotation that not only false religions but even the Jews themselves have given to this phrase. So let us not use the phrase in speaking of our brother or sister who has died. Instead may we speak of them as Christ spoke of Lazarus *“he is not dead but sleepeth”* and do as instructed by the apostle Paul by comforting one another with the hope which we share — that those who have fallen asleep in Christ will rise again at the trump of God.

Carol McKelvie (Moorestown)

Notes:

1. All references are from the ESV.
2. The Epistle of James, Neville Smart p. 50.

Letter

Dear Brother Peter,

Thank you for your recent editorial, *What's in a name?* (*The Tidings*, Sept 2014). I especially thought your comments under the section, "Who is a brother?" were helpful. I agree that Scripture tells us that those who are validly baptized into Christ become members of the One Body and are rightly known as brethren in Christ.

As you pointed out, there are limits. There are times when it becomes necessary to withdraw fellowship from false teachers, unrepentant sinners, leaders of factions, blasphemers, and the immoral. At the same time, we need to draw a distinction between brethren who fall into these categories and brethren who are misled. Paul warns us to keep away from those who cause divisions, and who "*by smooth talk and flattery deceive the hearts of the naïve*" (*Rom 16:18 ESV*). Paul's recommended punishment of withdrawal here was focused on those causing the divisions, not on the simple minded who had been led astray by them.

To withdraw fellowship from those badly taught or misled is to abandon them to the wolves. Instead, I would suggest that Scripture teaches us to continue to share fellowship around the Lord's Table with these baptized believers. It is through this ongoing association that we have opportunity to reprove, rebuke and exhort one another with all longsuffering. To ignore and otherwise not keep company with known members of the One Body is like the eye saying to the hand, "*I have no need of thee.*"

One purpose of sharing the memorial meal together is to demonstrate that those baptized into Christ are members of the One Body. Paul says, "*And though we are many, we all eat from one loaf of bread, showing that we are one body*" (1Cor 10:17 NLT).

With love in Christ,

Steve Davis (Boston, MA)

Response from Editor

Dear Bro. Steve,

I thank you for your letter. I would like to address your point "*I would suggest that Scripture teaches us to continue to share fellowship around the Lord's Table with these baptized believers*".

The question of which Brethren (or Sisters) we actually hold such close fellowship as to share the Memorial Emblems is not an easy one, conflated as it is by our communities' use of ecclesially based fellowship. I did try to not extend my editorial into this area: as I said "The whole question of whether we should fellowship them is quite a different discussion". I consider this topic was adequately dealt with some years ago in the article "Fellowship Practice of Central Ecclesias", (*The Tidings*, Dec 2008).



Bible Mission News

Mexico Bible School



On August 1-4, 82 brothers, sisters and family members gathered near Lake Chapala, on the outskirts of Guadalajara, for the first all-Mexico Bible School. It was a wonderful weekend and in many ways the culmination of years of diligent work in Mexico. Participants travelled to the Bible School from as far north as Tijuana and as far southeast as Campeche in the Yucatan Peninsula.



Bro. Bill and Sis. Carol Rawson (UK) joined the Bible School and Bro. Bill led very helpful classes on Judges. Bro. Bill and Sis. Carol have been faithful servants across Mexico over the years and it was only fitting that he would be the inaugural speaker for the Mexico Bible

School. In addition to the adult classes, there were classes provided for children, of which there were over 30. On Saturday evening, we were treated to a play by the children on the life of Samson.

A highlight of the weekend was the baptism of five new brothers and sisters on Saturday morning. The new brothers included Gonzalo Iniguez Ramirez (who had been studying with the group in Ocotlan since 2012), Maria de la Luz Hernandez de la Torre (a student from Guadalajara's Centro Biblico since 2013), Rosalba Torrez Solorio (a contact referred by Bro. Robert Frisby in early 2014), and San-



tiago Lomeli Carillo and his wife, Lisbeth Diaz Sandoval. Santiago is the son of Bro. Sergio Lomeli and Sis. Marta Olivia, members of the Ocotlan meeting. We continue to give thanks to our Heavenly Father for calling men and women across Mexico to respond to the Gospel. As time has passed, we see in Mexico more diversity in those who respond — coming

not only from the critical formal preaching work, but also through the witness of families and friends.

One of the important outcomes of a Bible School is the deep bonds of love and affection that are strengthened when all are able to share several days together. This was very visible throughout the extended weekend. Children from Tijuana, Ocotlan, Guadalajara, Las Margaritas and Campeche were all able to spend time together in classes and recreation together. Adults stayed near the pool talking and under the large shade trees that gave shelter from the warm August sun. It gave a feeling of community across Mexico to all.

Special thanks to the Guadalajara Ecclesia for organizing and facilitating the school, especially the Arranging Brethren for their careful attention to all the details of the school. It was an honor to be at the school and to share in this important event for Truth in Mexico. We also thank our brothers and sisters across North America for their countless prayers over the years on behalf of the work in Mexico. All your contributions are appreciated!

As an added plus, Bro. Bill and Sis. Carol were able to extend their stay and went to Ocotlan, where there is a new, growing meeting that is a satellite of the Guadalajara Ecclesia. During the ten extra days, Bro. Bill led classes for many interested students. He and Sis. Carol were of tremendous assistance with the activities in Ocotlan. We are very blessed to have their ongoing support.

*Contributed by David Lloyd
and David Jennings (Link
Brothers)*

*Submitted by
Jan Berneau*



Jamaica — Focus on Youth

We realize the importance of encouraging and training the youth in our ecclesias in the ways of the Lord. In Jamaica, the CBMJ has increased its emphasis on activities for the youth. Several ecclesias' now have regular C.Y.C. and Sunday School activities. A pen friend project between the Manitoulin Island Ecclesia's Sunday School and the Sunday Schools in Jamaica began in early 2014. With respect to this project, a postal exchange of letters and photos of children, teens and members of all ages took place.

The 2014 Easter Youth Camp at Camp Hope was said to be the best such event in a long time, which also included the All-Island Fraternal on Monday, April 21st. The Camp Committee reported that 56 young people attended, and by the time all the adults arrived for the Fraternal, over 165 were present (which included the adult Camp counsellors and Camp class leaders). Planning for this weekend began a year in advance and was supported by several families from Ontario, Canada.

On Saturday, June 14th a Mutual Improvement Day for all ages and all members (brothers and sisters) was held at the Kingston Ecclesial Hall — about 90 were in attendance for the event. The day consisted of three sessions starting at 11 a.m. until 3 p.m. The first session focused on the importance of planning, preparation, time and forethought as found in the Scriptures and applying the examples to our service in the ecclesia.



After lunch four young men, who had been assigned tasks in advance of the day, were asked to present their studies. First though, a 17 year old youth read 2 Timothy 2:1 to 15. Then a 12 year old Sunday School scholar read his short talk about the *soldier*. He set the tone for the rest of this session – giving an excellent presentation, after which the audience clapped in appreciation for the enthusiasm shown! Actually the audience clapped after each short talk, they were so thrilled with the young men's efforts. Then three teenagers (ages 14, 14 and 19) presented 5 to 10 minute talks on different topics in the same chapter — the *athlete*, the *husbandman*

and the *workman*. They had prepared well and their presentation style and content was great! All five young fellows also dressed well for the occasion – good shirt/pants and tie – they looked sharp! Only one of the five young men was baptized. They were from the Round Hill, Spanish Town and May Pen Ecclesias. Parents of the young men were in tears witnessing their sons giving their best! The main reason for working with the youth at this age is to prepare and encourage them for service in the ecclesias, particularly in light of the fact that there are so few brothers to minister to the needs of the ecclesia across the Island, at this time. It was heartwarming to see and hear the efforts of these young men.

The third and the last sessions related to our worship by practicing hymns taken from the green hymn book. It was mentioned how King David in 1 Chronicles organized the singers and instrument players ready for temple worship. This was reviewed along with Paul's instructions in the New Testament. In particular, the guidance in 1 Cor 14:15 is applicable to our day — “*I will sing with the spirit and I will sing with the understanding also.*” It was an uplifting and inspiring way to end the day — and the neighbors around the Kingston Hall and those passing by outside, knew there something going on! Both the harmony and the volume increased as the session progressed. It was a very good day!

*Written by CBMC Linkman, Don Luff
Submitted by Jan Berneau, CBMA/C Publicity*



Two of the young men presenting at the Mutual Improvement. Left is 12 year-old Nogomo Johnson, Bro. Patrick and Sis. Annette Johnson's son.



Jamaica appeal by Bro. David Welch

Over the last eight years I have made several visits to Jamaica and come to know most of our brethren and sisters there. If the Lord permits, I would like to visit them again in January/ February 2015. I have always traveled alone (though sometimes in the company of a local brother). This time I would like a brother from the U.K. or North America to accompany me at his own expense. Interested brethren should contact me by email for full information: david.welch40@gmail.com.

David Welch (Teignmouth, UK)

Bolivia and Peru

Different cultures and different responses to God's word — Don Luff



Sis. Jackeline birthday celebrated at Bible School. Her daughter, Carla is hugging her.

Once again, the ecclesia in La Paz, Bolivia planned their Annual Bible School. It was held over the weekend from May 23rd to May 25th at a camp facility about 30 minutes outside of the city. Seventeen attended the Bible School, which include members, friends and children. Bro. Paul Osborn from British Columbia delivered four studies on “Benaiah — In the Presence of the King”. He also reviewed the instruction for kings starting with Proverbs 25. The lessons helped us prepare ourselves for future service in the presence of *the King*.

Bro. Don Luff from Ontario led three classes on the One Body, stressing the Headship of Christ and our care for each other as members of the Lord's Body. He also spent one session over-viewing the Book of Job under the theme phrase from James “Ye have heard of the patience of Job.” One of the Bolivian members, Bro. Freddy Monrroy, along with resident missionaries Bro. Shimon and Sis. Joanna Spina, as well as Spanish Truth Corps member Sis. Colleen Uiga organized two highly entertaining evenings of Bible-based games for all ages. The whole weekend was a very enjoyable time indeed and an oasis away from the everyday routine of life. The Camp was an ideal spot with quiet surroundings, good-sized rooms for all the activities and ample food provided by the staff.

On the Monday evening, May 26th, an advertised public lecture was held at the ecclesial at the ecclesial hall in La Paz. An advertisement was placed in the newspaper, numerous posters were placed on poles and signboards, about 4,500 handbills were distributed and a new 3.5 meter by 3 meter sign was mounted on the wall beside the hall entrance prior to the lecture. The ecclesia has found that all these methods attract attention. There were 30 visitors in attendance — some repeats and some first-timers. The topic was on the First Century Spirit Gifts and whether those gifts exist today. Paul gave the address, starting at 7:45 and the last visitor didn't leave until 10 pm — a good evening! Since then there have been three new visitors attending the Thursday evening study class and one regular attender has requested baptismal classes.



Bro. Paul Osborn presenting at the public lecture.

Then they that feared YHWH – Colleen Uiga

There is nothing in the world like the spiritual feast of a study weekend or Bible school. Even more notable is the effect of such on people who had never experienced such before. One wouldn't be able to see the difference between the people that pile into the large van to take them from the ecclesial hall to the camp, and those that left from the same van three days later, apart from a light in their eyes. However, I know that those who left the mountainous city of La Paz to have a 'mountain top' spiritual experience for those three days, will never forget the weekend that they had.

The last weekend of May we had the pleasure of having Brethren Don Luff and Paul Osborn share with us studies around the word of life. Bro. Don exhorted and instructed us on unity and how to be one body, while Bro. Paul encouraged us with the life of Benaiah and practical lessons 'in the presence of the king'. Of the 15 or so attendees, the majority had not been to a study weekend before.

It truly was a weekend of feasting, both natural and spiritual, as each day at the camp we were served three meals and two 'snacks', which were really other small meals. Even more heartening to me than the natural food was the topics of conversation discussed outside the classes. The brothers speaking presented their material clearly, giving those who were listening ample to spiritual food 'chew over' during meals and free time, not only filling the classes but the entire weekend with valuable conversations. During free time, one could see most of the attendees huddled in groups, Bibles in hand, discussing, debating, and exhorting each other. How wonderful it is to be have time away from the pressures of the world to study the world of God without persecution! And even more wonderful: this experience is available all the time as they that fear YHWH speak often one to another. May He that began this work here, in La Paz, carry it on to completion until the day of the return of the Sun of Righteousness.



Lima, Peru — by Don Luff

On Wednesday, May 28th Paul began his two-day journey home, while Don left for Lima, Peru. The CBMA link couple, Bro. Jim and Sis. Jean Hunter, had organized preaching and ecclesial activities for the six members in Lima, inviting postal contacts to attend two first-principle lectures. On the evenings of Friday, May 29th and Saturday, May 30th talks were given on what happens after death and the issue of Spirit gifts once again. Two visitors attended the first evening and three the second — as well as most members. One young man, who attended both evenings and has come out to several previous lectures held in this city, shows keen interest in the Truth of the Scriptures.

We enjoyed several get-togethers with the brethren and sisters, as well as meeting around the Lord's Table on Sunday, June 1st at Bro. Flavio's and Sis. Gloria's home, which is the regular meeting place in Lima. We truly enjoyed the brotherly warmth and hospitality of the members. For their part, they much appreciate the regular pastoral visits sponsored by the CBMA, the electronic mailing of weekly exhortations by Sis. Sara Alvarado from the UK and the monthly Latin-American newsletter sent out by Bro. Robert Alderson of New Zealand."

Although the cultures are different and the responses in each country to the CBMA's preaching efforts are also different, we continue to plant and water, and pray that God will give the increase.

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

The End?

"Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" (2Tim 4:2). There is the command. So we go: at home and abroad. We go quietly, with a word spoken in due season to the tired. We go with the timeless trumpet, "Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!" The fresh young face goes with the energy of youth, the seasoned veteran with the wisdom of experience. We go alone, in pairs or groups. We meet others along the way; some stay for a moment, some for a while. Their memories remain with us when they leave, and we are not the same.

Preaching is not easy. Bro. John Carter wrote:

"The conditions in the world—apathy, pleasure seeking, etc. - may make the task of those who bear the message, whether at a door or on a platform, not an easy one. But whether people hear or forbear, to us who have heard



Family and friends at Milena's baptism

is the injunction given—Let him that heareth say, Come. It is in the context of the prophecy of the last days' perilous times that the command is found: Preach the Word." *Preach the Word*: pg. iii

Words fail me to express what a blessing it has been to spend the last nine months or so in South America. I have traveled to the 'middle of the world' in Quito, Ecuador. I have visited the 'southernmost city of the world' in Ushuaia, Argentina. I have seen the technology of Chile, the labour of Bolivia, the beaches of Brazil and have tasted the amazing seafood of Peru. More important still, I have seen your brethren. I can't count the number of times that I have laughed...and cried. And now, the time has come to leave. In every place I've passed, the brethren plead, "Please. Please tell them to send someone to help us. Can you stay longer? There is much work to be done." This is very true.

The lack of laborers is not only an issue of today. Two thousand years ago the Lord Jesus Christ commanded his disciples to ask that Lord of the harvest send laborers, because there was more work than workers.

It is easy and natural to make excuses: Didn't even Moses ask the Lord five times, directly or indirectly, to not send him? Yet God was with him, and did not leave him in the forty years during which he traveled.

As we go about our comfortable lives and the business of the day, it is easy to forget about those labourers at home and abroad. How can I help them? How can I join them? Will I truly be a light in the world, shining forth the word of life? As I leave South America, these are the questions I take with me. They are the questions I ask you. The answers are intensely personal, but the response has the ability to touch many.

Would you like to help with the vital work in the Americas? Visit CBMA.net to find out more.

Written by Sis. Colleen Uiga, Submitted by Sis. Jan Berneau

Addresses for Bequests and Donations

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

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

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

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

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

Christadelphian Tape Library. Contact Reuben E. Washington, 196 E. Stearns St., Rahway, NJ 07065-4923. Phone: 732-381-4590 Fax: 732-499-8415
christadelphiantapelibrary@verizon.net

Spanish language literature is available at P.O. Box 947, Monrovia, CA 91017-0947. 626-303-2222, e-mail: jdhunter@gte.net

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

News 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.)

BROOKLYN, NY

We report the baptism of CYNTHIA NIGHTINGALE on September 13, 2014. Cynthia grew up at Sunday School in the Colon Ecclesia, Panama, and relocated here with her mother, Sis. Celia. She was a regular attendee at Sunday School and CYC. Our rejoicing at the baptism ceremony was further enhanced by the encouraging support of the two nearby ecclesias in NYC, South Ozone Park and Manhattan. We record our heartfelt thanks for their thoughtfulness. Another wonderful occasion of fraternity in September was the annual outdoors Breaking of Bread at Westchester, hosted by the Manhattan Ecclesia. Hot lunch/BBQ was prepared at the park, and there was ample time for relaxation and games in the open country atmosphere. Thanks to the Manhattan Ecclesia for inviting us.

Clive Drepaul

ORLANDO, FL

Bro. Thomas and Sis. Natalie Sanfilippo welcomed Andrew Howard and Caleb August to their family. The adorable twins were born on June 18, 2014. Caleb was born at 10:52 pm, followed by Andrew at 11:01 pm. Two year old Joshua is their very proud and helpful big brother. The boys' grandparents are Bro. Wilson and Sis. Betty Ross (Miami, FL).

The following brothers and sisters attended our meeting over the last few months: Ken and Bonnie Burcaw (Ann Arbor, MI); Bruce and Barb Abel (Barrie, ON); Julian and Sandra Baseley (Guilford, UK); Tom and Vivian Thorp (Hamilton, ON); Gerardo and Gwen Castellanos, and Stephen and Betty Lou Lewis (Largo, FL); Kelly Miles, with Autumn and Caleigh (North Bay, ON); James and Mindy Wilkinson, Kevin Cronin, and Christine Dillingham (Sarasota, FL).

Randy Davenport

SUSSEX, NB

We are grateful to Bro. Martin Webster (Kitchener Waterloo, ON) for his talks at our April Study weekend. He was accompanied by his wife, Sis. Lois. At this time we had several members of the Halifax, NS Ecclesia present too.

In May, for our young people's Spring Youth Camp and studies, Bro. John Perks stepped in at the last minute, for which we are very thankful. Bro. and Sis. Paul Harrison (Davenport, UK) visited in July, and Bro. and Sis. Bruce Waite (Maine, USA) visited in August. We thank Bre. Paul and Bruce for their exhortations.

We are sorry to report that on August 18, 2014, Bro. Arnold Pring fell asleep.

With great joy we are able to report the baptism of Emily Ruth Baines on September 7, 2014. Sis. Emily is the daughter of Bro. Paul and Sis. Marie Baines. We pray for God's blessing on her walk to the kingdom.

Cliff Baines

THOUSAND OAKS, CA

During the past few months we have been pleased to welcome many brothers and sisters from our neighboring California ecclesias around the table of our Lord. In addition, we welcomed those from afar: Steve and Christine Hornhardt (Salisbury, Aust.); Henry and Sharon Wisniewski, Hanna Suggs, and Jessica Yoshida (Rogue Valley, OR); Glen and Sarah Abel (Okanagan, BC); Coleen Uiga, Andrew and Carly Culver (Norfolk, VA); Martha Levin (Denver, CO); Dan and Ashley Robinson, Gary and Shirley Smith, Dave and Nicole Wisniewski, Sarah Wisniewski, and Martha Suggs (Brant County, ON); Janet McDonald (Paris Avenue, OH); Luke Kilgus (Wilston, Aust.); and Chase Snobelen (Hamilton Book Road, ON).

Our thanks go out to Bre. Tony Fratello (Reseda, CA) and Jason and Gordon Hensley (Simi Hills, CA) for their exhortations and afternoon classes. We also thank our Bro. Roger Schlottman (San Diego, CA) for his exhortation. Bre. Steve Horndardt and Dave Wisniewski led our very successful Kids Camp activities for us, as well as leading us in studies and exhortations while with us. Bro. Steve also led our Youth Conference this year, with both camps studying the book of Revelation. We sincerely wish to thank our brethren for their service to our ecclesia with these uplifting talks.

Tom Graham

Thousand Oaks, CA — It's Origin

Please be advised that a new light stand has been formed in Ventura County, CA which will be known as the Thousand Oaks Christadelphian Ecclesia. We will begin with 21 former members of the Reseda Ecclesia. Due to the growth of the Reseda Ecclesia, the distance of travel for many and the fact that no extensive outreach work has ever been done in the Thousand Oaks area, it was felt expedient to form an ecclesia in this area. We will meet in a rented building in the village of Westlake, CA at 741 Lakefield Rd., Suite I. Memorial service will initially be held at 11:30 A.M. and Sunday school at 10 A.M. with our first meeting being held on Sunday, June 7. We will meet on the B.A.S.F. without reservation and will fellowship those who consistently meet on this basis. Our plan is to continue working closely with the Reseda Ecclesia with the intent of sharing several activities and speakers with them while continuing to support the policies and practices that we have been comfortable with over the past several years. We would extend a cordial welcome to our brethren and sisters to meet with us in this area. Tom Graham, Rec. Sec.

The following accompanying letter was received from the Reseda, CA Ecclesia. Please be advised that a new light stand has been formed in southern California. Twenty-one former members of this ecclesia have formed an ecclesia 25 miles northwest of us which will be known as the "Thousand Oaks Christadelphian Ecclesia." All are members in good standing in our ecclesia and we look forward to working with them in joint projects and efforts in the years to come, Lord willing. Our blessing and prayers are with our brethren and sisters of this new ecclesia as they endeavor to expand the work of our Lord in a new area. Bro. John McConville is now the recording brother of the Reseda Ecclesia and all correspondence should be addressed to him. John McConville, Rec. Bro

(From The Tidings, July 1991)

Minute Meditation

What is pure religion?

What is pure religion? Some may think it relates to doctrinal purity and keeping separate from those who do not share their beliefs. Others may consider pure religion has more to do with serving God by living pure lives and not indulging in immorality. The Biblical definition can be found in the book of James, “Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.”

Notice there are two parts to pure religion; *action* and *avoidance*. The *action* is not the purging out of false beliefs, or the study and teaching that we might expect. Although we know doctrine is important and we need to obey our Lord and “Go out into the world and preach the gospel to every creature,” James shows us that more is required of us. The definition of pure religion tells us that our service to God includes caring for the weak and needy. A good example is the apostle Paul, who not only dedicated himself to preaching to the Gentiles, but also worked diligently to collect money to support the poor believers in Jerusalem. We learn from Jesus’ parable of the Judgment Day that those on his right hand have looked after those who need food or visits. If we want to have pure religion, James’ words make it clear that we need to go to the aid of the unfortunate such as widows and orphans.

It may sound like a simple thing to do, to visit those in need, but it is very difficult to put into practice in our lives. Visiting the fatherless and widows in their affliction is not done regularly by many of us who call ourselves Christ’s brother and sisters — at least not as we ought to do. We are busy with work, caring for our families and possessions, there are so many distractions such as television or the Internet, and little time may be left for anything else.

Every day each of us should ask ourselves, “Who can I visit today and cheer up? Who might need help in their affliction?” There is no shortage of those who need our attention. What we do does not need to be spectacular — Jesus tells us that just a cup of cold water given for Christ’s sake will be remembered. We should ask ourselves, are we spending our time doing something to help those in need, and if not, why not? We need to make visiting and helping others a priority, not an afterthought.

The second part of pure religion many feel is the hardest, and that is keeping ourselves unspotted from the world: it is *avoidance*.

Just imagine walking through a muddy field and all around us are people who are throwing mud balls at each other. Even if we are not participating in throwing the mud, we are still likely to be spotted by those who are. We live in a world that is fascinated by dirt, and we cannot help that. However much we work at keeping separate from the world, evil surrounds us, and we are not immune to its touch.

We want to avoid sin. We try to fill our mind with God’s words rather than the

thinking of the world around us. In spite of our best efforts, however, we will sin, because we are fleshly, prone to sin. We will sin again and again. Paul's cry rings in our ears, "The good that I would I do not; but the evil that I would not, that I do. Oh wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from this body of death?"

Thankfully, because the Lord is merciful and forgiving, we can go to bed each night with all our sins forgiven. John tells us, "if we confess our sins God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness", which makes it possible for us to go to sleep unspotted from the world.

We have a high calling in Christ and we look forward to the kingdom age when the troubles in our world will be over, and the righteous rule of Christ will begin. Until that time, we who desire to serve our God need to do more for His children, caring for those in need, such as widows, and spending time and resources to help others. Those very actions will help us with keeping separate from the world because we will be so busy helping others that we will not be so tempted by the frivolous pursuits of those in the world.

Let us resolve to practice more pure religion in our lives. We need to ask ourselves, "What kind of religion do we have?" James warns us in his letter that our religion can be vain and we can deceive ourselves. Let us encourage one another to good works, to seek out those in need and help them and to live our lives prayerfully striving to keep unspotted from the world and asking for forgiveness when we fail. May we hear those welcome words, "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

Robert J. Lloyd

Coming Events (Lord Willing)

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

NOVEMBER, 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 waltoddrill@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@cssl.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.

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

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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 website 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.

JANUARY 2015

2-4 Cranston, RI New Years Study weekend with Bro. Garth Maier speaking on "Titus: Ecclesial Order". Contact: Bro. Bruce Haughton by e-mail a.zandvoort98@gmail.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. 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.