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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The Tidings Publishing Committee, with help from the Simi Hills Preaching Fund, has approved the creation of a series of Pamphlets and other Preaching aids. These are intended to be relevant, not only to the problems of the modern world, but also the expectations of current visual standards.

If there is anyone (or more than one) within our North American community who would be able to help in this endeavor, we would like to hear from you. The potential requirements are:

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- Is willing to help us create the visual templates for our publications, and help with the subsequent layout
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Editorial

Where is the Wise Man?

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

Introduction

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

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

The problem

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

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

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

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

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

**Wisdom down through the ages**

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

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

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

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

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

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

Not only were the wise respected by all, but clearly

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

It is also true that in past generations among our community, there were several who were respected, both for their Biblical knowledge, and also their wisdom. We think of Bro. John Carter, and more recently Bro. Harry Tennant, who both did
a great deal of good with their widely respected advice. I have seen such respect accorded few, if any. More often, advice is rejected out of hand if it does not line up with pre-conceived notions. (Sometimes, it must be admitted, advice is offered without wisdom!)

The situations

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

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

The way forward

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

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

Is there not a wise man?

Peter Hemingray

Notes:
1. Some of this editorial is based upon a Reflection by Sis. Eileen Henthorne, The Tidings, Oct 211 p 254.
2. The Tidings, June 2011, p 209
When I was much younger, on a trip back from Bible school, my best friend and I were still basking in the glow of what had been, I must assume, a great series of classes and activities that sparked our interest in the truth. I assume as such, because I really don’t remember.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

> “And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me” (Matt 18 3-5).
And I constantly wonder how can I, how can we retain such a mentality? What aspects of children should we try to exhibit? The last time we looked at this set of verses, the focus was on the curiosity of a child, the constant quest for understanding and the innocence displayed. But today, I want to focus on the desire, that same desire that many of us showed as children, and that is a desire to speak with Biblical heroes. If we think about it, the mere statement: “I can’t wait to meet” insert your choice here “in the kingdom.” This brings to light a couple important facts about our faith as children:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Or perhaps the thief on the cross:

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

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

The same could be said of many individuals

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

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

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

Which leads to consider the second part of the statement:

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

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

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

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

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

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

I think one of the aspects of children we should never lose as we grow older is that excitement. True, as we grow and develop we see the world and the word in different lights. We begin to understand that our heroes had flaws and failures, that though we may have idolized them as children, we now see them for what they really are. Human.
But that is the point of growing up. We Develop. This does not mean all we thought as children was wrong and should be thrown out, but it should be built upon. And the fact that such brothers and sisters of old WERE human, and WERE flawed, and DID fail makes the fact that they are confirmed even more hopeful for us. And if we are to ever meet our brothers and sisters of old in the kingdom, we would do well to learn from them.

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

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

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

**To be Christ-like.**

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

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

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

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

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

It wasn’t that when my friend and I said we couldn’t pick Christ first because we didn’t want to meet him or that choosing him was cheating in some way. It was because of all the people in Scripture, of all the people we SHOULD want to meet, it should be Christ.
This, this moment of breaking bread, and drinking of wine is more than just a reminder of things that once were: they are the closest we can truly get to the coming kingdom. The closest we can get to breaking bread and drinking wine with David, and Moses, and Daniel.

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

Ethan Bearden (Austin Leander, TX)

Sorrow turned into Joy

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

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

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

The Joy to Come

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

Everlasting Joy

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

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

The big freeze

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

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

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

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

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

Based on their research, conditions for an oasis, such as the Garden of Eden, within the perimeter of the Black Sea region, existed between 12,000 and 7,000 BCE. In the minds of most Bible students, this time frame may appear too early for the appearance of Adam and Eve, but these dates are only an estimate — perhaps the effects caused by the Younger Dryas may well have extended upwards of 4,000 BC, the era in which Christians have typically situated Adam. Moreover, The Big...
Freeze did not simply end one day with the world transformed overnight into warmer climes. The period in the wake of the Younger Dryas was most likely still cool and dry, as glaciers slowly receded. Given then, the possible harsh climatic conditions that existed on the earth at the time of Adam, it may explain why God “placed” Adam in a garden. There, in that oasis-like microclimate, where “all kinds of trees grow out of the ground — trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food” (Gen 2:9), Adam and Eve were sheltered from either the direct or residual effects of the Younger Dryas.

Beyond the oasis

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

It may also help explain the specific nature of the “curse” that God pronounced upon Cain in the wake of Abel’s murder:
Now you are under a curse and driven from the ground, which opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. When you work the ground, it will no longer yield its crops for you. You will be a restless wanderer on the earth” (Gen 4:11-12).

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

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

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

The search for Eden

In tandem with Ryan and Pitman’s research, are the findings of David Rohl, a British Egyptologist, former director of the Institute of the Study of Interdisciplinary Studies (ISIS), and author of several books on archaeology and ancient history. In his book, Legend: The Genesis for Civilization (1998), he provides linguistic and
archeological evidence showing that the Garden of Eden was located to the east of the Black Sea — the same region Ryan and Pitman’s research locates an “oasis” during the Younger Dryas period. Rohl narrows the location of the Garden of Eden to the Adjı Chay Valley (formerly known as the Median Valley), which is located in the Ararat Mountains in Turkey, Armenia, and North-Western Iran. Rohl cites a little known article entitled, *The Land of Eden*, published in an archaeological paper in the U.K. in 1986 by British scholar Reginald Arthur Walker. In his paper, Walker argued:

> It is possible to trace the origins of Greek mythology and religion back to the area which scholars have long believed to be the original homeland of the Indo-European culture — the Caucasus.6 (Rohl 1998:53)

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

**The Tigris and the Euphrates**

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

**The Gihon**

In the past, the Gihon has been associated mostly with the Nile. Gen 2:13 says that the river passes through the land of Cush, which is commonly associated with modern day Ethiopia. Furthermore, by placing the Gihon in Egypt, Eden’s geographical center becomes (more or less) Israel. This seems to fit with preconceptions about Israel’s past and future — that of being a lush and beautiful garden-like place, i.e. the Garden of Eden. However, there is no known association of the Nile River with the name Gihon, making the link between Israel and the Garden of Eden tenuous — the result of a preconceived bias towards Israel being the center of the universe. This type of thinking was popular in the medieval age, where ignorance of geography and a Christian-centric mindset caused maps to be drawn with Israel/Jerusalem as the geographical center of the world. According to Walker, Gihon was the ancient name of the river Araxes, whose source is north of Lake Van. During the period of the Islamic revolution in the 8th century,
stretches of the river Araxes were still known as Gaihun. In the 19th century, the Persians continued to refer to the river as the Jichon-Aras, a name that represents the intermediate stage in its name change: Gihon=Gaihun=Jichon-Aras=Araxes. As noted, Genesis says that the Gihon travelled through the land of Cush. While Ethiopia has been known in the past as Cush, so have the mountains east of Lake Van in Armenia. This range is called the Kusheh Dagh, or the Mountains of Kush. Therefore, the Gihon is to be identified as the present day river Araxes, located in the mountains of Kush, a place the ancients once considered to be rich in gold.

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

Rohl explains how the word Pishon became Uizhun:

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

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

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

Young’s Literal Translation translates Gen 2:8 as, “God planted a Garden in Eden, at the east,” or “in the eastern part of Eden.” The land where the Meidan or present-day Adji Chay flows through is a still beautiful, lush valley, enclosed on three sides by high-mountain walls. The Persian meaning for Eden — “enclosed garden” — would therefore be an appropriate description of this legendary place. And, because the garden-valley is hemmed in on three sides, the Adji Chay river is forced to flow eastward, making it the garden-valley’s only natural entrance and exit. This geographical detail concurs with Gen 2:10: [the Adji Chay] “watered the garden and flowed eastward from Eden.” Moreover, in order to restrict human access to the Garden of Eden after Adam and Eve’s transgression, the Lord had only to
place the cherubim on the eastern side of the Garden, since the northern, southern, and western routes into the Garden were not traversable, due to the valley’s high-mountain walls. Once again, the geography of the Adji Chay concurs with Genesis: “God placed the cherubim on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life” (Gen 3:10). Note that He did not place cherubim on the north, south, or west sides. As noted, the Adji Chay represented not only the entrance into the Garden of Eden, but also its only natural exit. Therefore, when Adam and Eve left the Garden, this river would have been a natural road, which presumably they traversed, either on foot along its banks or floating down upon a raft, into the rest of Eden. The Adji Chay flows through Eden and into Nod. Therefore, when Cain was exiled from Eden, he probably followed the river eastward into Nod; that same river that his parents followed out of the Garden after their transgression. This eastward journey would have taken Cain to a region that is located near the modern city of Ardabil in Northern Iran. Perhaps testifying to Cain’s ancient presence in these lands, there remains two regions north of the city that are known as the Upper and Lower Nodqi (or “of Nod”), as well as a village that is called Noadi.

**Setting the stage**

Walker and Rohl’s linguistic and archeological research locates the Garden of Eden, Eden, and Nod in an area that is presently made up of north-eastern Turkey, Armenia, Kurdistan, and northern Iran. Corroborating their findings is Ryan and Pitman’s climate research, which shows that the Black Sea area was an oasis during the Younger Dryas period, a mini-ice age, which took place between 12,000 and 9,000 BC. Importantly, their research is agreement with geographical details in Genesis. Altogether, they provide evidence that the location of the Garden of Eden was to the east of the Black Sea region, specifically in a mountain-valley in the
Ararat Mountains, where the Adji Chay river flows out eastward, and where the four head-waters of the Tigris (Heddekel), Euphrates (Perath), Araxes (Gihon), and Uizhun (Pishon) are situated. In all probability, this is the stage upon which the first events of human-kind occurred, and where, in relation to Cain, the events of his tragic life unfolded.

Matthew Harrison (Ottawa, ON)

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

Review of “Legend: The Genesis of Civilization”

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

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

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

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

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

A father and a son

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

Jonathan never would have expected that his father would try to kill him — but it would seem that Samuel’s words didn’t leave the mind of the troubled king. He wondered who it would be that would try to take the throne from him; and in his search, he found a perfect candidate in his eldest son. Jonathan had all of the qualifications — he was a man after God’s own heart, he could do things through his faith that Saul simply couldn’t do, and he had been a captain to the people. Over and over all of the pieces seemed to fit. In Saul’s mind, Jonathan was the one who would try to usurp the throne. Thus, Saul watched him and eyed all of his actions — making sure that his son didn’t try to do anything devious.
On the other hand, Jonathan’s feelings towards Saul were quite different. All throughout his life, he did whatever he could to keep a positive and loyal relationship with His father — because it was commanded by God (Exod 20:12), because it set an example for the nation, and a because it allowed him to try to influence his father for good. Thus, when David told Jonathan that Saul had broken his oath and that he sought David’s life, Jonathan had a difficult time believing that his father had done such a thing (1Sam 20:2). Again, though Jonathan loved and cherished his friendship with David, he chose to stay at home with Saul rather than run in the wilderness with his friend (1Sam 20:42). Even in Saul’s final battle upon the mountain of Gilboa — when he was told that he and his sons would die — Jonathan chose not to separate from his father but went with him into the doomed conflict, perhaps knowing that they would die together. When writing the song of the bow, David’s lamentation for Saul and Jonathan, David noted this about the two of them:

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

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

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

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

“And Jonathan Saul’s son arose, and went to David into the wood, and strengthened his hand in God. And he said unto him, Fear not: for the hand of Saul my father shall not find thee; and thou shalt be king over Israel, and I shall be next unto thee; and that also Saul my father knoweth” (1Sam 23:16-17).
Again, three times in this short passage it is stressed that Jonathan was the son of Saul — when again, that was clearly already known. Once more, that relationship between Jonathan and Saul was being highlighted. Jonathan was Saul’s son.

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

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

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

**War with Amalek**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“And the Lord said unto Samuel, How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? fill thine horn with oil, and go, I will send thee to Jesse the Beth-lehemite: for I have provided me a king among his sons. And Samuel said, How can I go? if Saul hear it, he will kill me. And the Lord said, Take an heifer with thee, and say, I am come to sacrifice to the Lord” (1Sam 16:1-2).
Even Samuel, one of the most respected men in the nation, feared for his life before Saul. Saul's bitter envy and zeal for his throne were not things with which someone should trifle. If Saul became suspicious, there was the chance that he would try to take the life of the man whom he suspected. However, Saul’s iniquity and bitter hatred would not yet end there. He would continue to fall deeper. His thirst for glory and his desire to make himself a name had brought him to the point at which he would kill anyone who would threaten his honor — and God would take him even further down that path which he chose.

**The evil spirit**

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

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

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

**Meeting David**

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

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

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

It was during this time in Saul’s court that Jonathan likely first met David. Scripture doesn't ever mention the two coming together in this chapter, but it would seem
odd to think that they didn’t at all meet sometime during this period — eventually, David was living in Saul’s house! Yet though they may have met here initially, they never seemed to have the chance to really come to know one another.

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

Jason Hensley (Simi Hills, CA)

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Have you Tried This? (1)

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

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

Reaching out
Sunday school superintendents and teachers can do a lot of things to reach out to their children, families, and neighbors. Do you have a student who misses Sunday school? Keep a supply of envelopes and postage stamps on hand in your Sunday school area. A postal scale might come in handy, too. Every time a child is absent from Sunday school, send the lesson material or assignment home as soon as Sunday meeting is over. This tells the child that he or she has not been forgotten, and it also says, “Our Sunday school work is important!” Be persistent at this!
Cards to kids. Kids still love to get mail: plain old ordinary snail-mail. One Sunday school teacher we met several years ago told us that she made a practice of writing a letter or card to each of her Sunday school children every week! She took the time to embellish each note or card with a bit of calligraphy, a little drawing, a sticker, or rubber stamping. All of this told her children that she cared for them and that they were important to her. The teacher would get these ready early in the week and then mail them so they arrived on Friday or Saturday. It gave the children something to look forward to, and the timing reminded them that Sunday school was coming up again soon. (Thanks to Sis. Eunice Treadway, Chicago, IL)

Find ways to build and strengthen relationships with your students. The previous idea got Esther and me thinking (we were still teaching our own Sunday school kids at the time). When we went anywhere, we tried to make a point of buying picture postcards and sending them to our Sunday school students while we were away. We planned ahead and made sure that we took stamps and addresses with us. Of course, the last three ideas relate to the dark ages of the pony express (almost!). No doubt in this day and age, you can think of ways you might use e-mail or texting or social networking strategies to make extra contact with your students and strengthen your relationship with them within the wholesome framework of the Truth. One thing to keep in mind though: modern electronic communications are fast, cheap, and commonplace. It is hard to make them seem special anymore. Any suggestions?

More communicating

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

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

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

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

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

Notes:
2. I would like to do an article on websites. Do you have a favorite website that you go to for Sunday school resources? I would like to hear about it.

From the Christadelphian Isolation SS Newsletter, Issue 159

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<td>Gives to man for good or ill.</td>
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From the Christadelphian Isolation SS Newsletter, Issue 159
Heart Rending Memories of Hymn 221:
“Was it for me thy flesh was wounded sore”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Pat Kryskow (Barrie, ON).

Letters to the editor can be sent to letters@tidings.org. Please include your name, address, e-mail, and phone. Submissions under 300 words are encouraged — the magazine reserves the right to edit all submissions for length and clarity.
In their book *Made to Stick: Why Some Ideas Survive and Others Die*, Professors Chip and Dan Heath use the pneumonic SUCCESs to summarize the six properties of successful ideas. Reading the book I realized that the gospel satisfies these properties; the gospel is made to stick because it is Simple, Unexpected, Concrete, Credible, Emotional, and it has many memorable Stories.

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

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

- The virgin birth: Jesus Christ, born of a woman without a human father, the only begotten son of God!
- His miracles:
  “The men marveled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and sea obey him!”
  “When the multitudes saw [the healing of the paralytic man], they marveled, and glorified God, which had given such power unto men.”
  “When the demon was cast out, the dumb spake: and the multitudes marveled, saying, It was never so seen in Israel.”
- His teachings:
  “And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings [of the Sermon on the Mount], the people were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.”
  “When [the Pharisees and Herodians] heard these words, [Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar’s; and unto God the things that are God’s] they marveled at his answer, and held their peace.”
- His crucifixion: A dead Messiah! The king, the hero of the story, suffers the most dishonorable death imaginable. “We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness.”
- His resurrection: Jesus Christ raised from the dead, alive for evermore. Even the disciples found it hard to believe.
• His ascension: Jesus Christ our Lord now sitting at the right hand of God, all power given unto him in heaven and in earth.

• His return: Jesus Christ will return to the earth to establish the kingdom of God, which will catch everyone off guard.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Concrete

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

Credible

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

Emotional

The gospel is truly emotional, as illustrated by these hymns:
• “Was it for me that flesh was wounded sore” (Hymn 221).
• “Amazing grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me. I once was
lost but now am found, Was blind but now I see.”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Ecclesia — a support network

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

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

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

This takes us to a central aspect of the work of the priests as well as the High Priest. In order to serve in this capacity, there had to be a full awareness of his own need for forgiveness. He too is “compassed with infirmity.” The High Priest offered first
for his own sins, then the sins of the people on the Day of Atonement. If priests then — and today — are to be effective, our acknowledgement of the principle must be clear. We are no better than another. In reality, since we only know how we personally have responded and at times failed with temptation, we must admit that we are the worst sinners that we know. As the old adage goes, “there but by the grace of God go I”.

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

**Definitions of holiness**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Confession

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

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

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

This is most instructive in dealing with one another as we struggle with sin. There are times when our brother has sinned, but he is not only aware of his sin, but capably moving to remove the temptation from his life. The brother involved in
an unholy relationship has ended the tryst. In such cases, we may judge that what our confessing brother needs is “compassion, making a difference.” This is when we encourage our brother, confirm our love to him. We may need to acknowledge the sin and the wrong thinking that went into it, but our primary service to our brother is comfort. That doesn’t mean comfort as if the sin was no big deal, but comfort in knowing he is loved and in the graciousness of our Lord in forgiving trespasses.

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

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

**The power of prayer**

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

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

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

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

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

Our next article will take a look at the foundation for Scriptural discipline — forgiveness. What must we understand about forgiveness if we are to be the watchmen that Scripture requires? How is forgiveness essential to the recovery of those who are in need of compassion as well as those who we must pull from the fire?

David Jennings (Pomona, CA)
The Seed Never Sees the Flower

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

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

The point is…just preach!

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

Our human nature always wants results right away and I’m no different. It’s wonderful to see the fruit of our labor! Yet plants begin to grow slowly at first as the Word did in us. God was patient, as we should be.

A brother at an ASK meeting not too long ago remarked that we ought to be more ‘task-oriented’, that is to keep our objective in mind that we have been commissioned to witness, not to ensure the results. Jeremiah, Noah and even Jesus couldn’t guarantee success in their preaching, but we do know it helped save them!
It would be wonderful to have an assured amount of converts every time but let’s keep witnessing anyway as we are assured of a great reward in our faithful attempt! (And yes, there are those still waiting to be called.)

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

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

John Connally — a Christadelphian Connection

Because it’s the around 50th anniversary of JFK assassination I’ll share my connection history. I grew up in Texas and attended the San Antonio Meeting, where my Grandfather guided the building/refitting (an old army barracks) of our meeting hall. My Grandfather was Philemon Connally, John Connally was my Grandfather’s nephew as his Father and my Grandfather were brothers. Anyhow that means my Mom and Governor John Connally were first cousins, and grew up near each other. When President Kennedy was shot I remember (although young) my mother’s reaction as we watched it on a very new TV. Her cousin was shot! That was partly why we were watching, because cousin John was of course Governor of Texas at the time.

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

Susie Lange (Champagne, IL)

Notes:
1. Actually, records show the land was donated around 1898 by Bro. John Colbath. There have been Christadelphian Bible Schools in the area since 1877.
In Memory of Bro. Wesley Booker

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Booker family thanks everyone for the hundreds of cards, phone calls, emails, and prayers, and now for the sympathy cards as well — even though we cannot acknowledge each one.
Return to Guadalajara — October 2013

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

They say that October is the best time of the year weather-wise to visit Guadalajara, and that it has the second best weather in the world — so thankfully it was quite pleasant during our stay. We arrived at the meeting Hall in Guadalajara for the daily Bible readings at 3pm on Saturday, followed by the first two talks in the Relationship series. The Mission mini-bus was used to pick-up 11 from the town of Ocotlán, an hour and a half away, so that they could attend both Saturday and Sunday activities in Guadalajara. There is a second storey above the large meeting room where they were able to stay over-night. Approximately 35 were present on the Saturday (about 20 members and the rest friends) for the first two talks which started at 4:30pm.

Sunday was a full day with the Remembrance Service, followed by two more presentations on
Relationships, with a hot meal provided by the sisters between the Bible studies. There were approximately 45 present — about 25 brothers and sisters, and a number of long-time visitors, and also several there for the first-time due to handbill advertising and posters.

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

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

CBMA Representatives, Don and Miriam Luff
Submitted by Sis. Jan Berneau, CBMA/CBMC Publicity
**Guyana Fall 2013**

**Baptismal Classes**

As a result of the enthusiasm generated by the Truth Core visit this past summer two baptismal classes have been started in Guyana. They are being conducted in Mocha and New Amsterdam. We started the Mocha class on the 8th Sept. with Derek Jr and Daniel (sons of Bro. Derek and Sis. Marlyn Babb), Jed and Jeron (sons of Bro. Jerrold and Sis. Elizabeth Joseph), Abigail (daughter of Sis. Dawne Semple), Sarafina (a Georgetown youth circle) and Faida (daughter of Bro. Abedi and Sis. Bawili N’djelekulu of Kilcoy). These are the seven who have persisted. The class is going very well as Bro. David Andrews guides the youths to an understanding of the first principles of the Faith.

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

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

**Annual Sports Day**

Bro. Sam David left home at 4:00 am to collect children and arrive in Georgetown by 8:30 am. Of course you couldn’t stick a pin in the bus it was so full. There were no attendants from Kilcoy nor New Amsterdam unfortunately. The day was sunny, just the right weather. Lots of participation even from Riumveldt Centre Sunday School children who enjoyed themselves tremendously. Every time they ran or entered an event they would run over to the SS coordinator and cry out,
¡Hola from Argentina! It’s hard to believe that I’ve been living here for the last month and a bit. Everything seems almost familiar and just a little bit strange, and I find myself saying, “Am I really in Argentina, almost 5000 miles from everywhere I’ve ever lived?” Even harder to believe how it’s beginning to feel not quite so strange to talk in Spanish, a language which I barely knew two months ago.

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

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

Joan Andrews, edited by Dolores Sleeper
Submitted by Sis. Jan Berneau,
CBMA/CBMC Publicity

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

No matter the distance, culture or language spoken, brethren in the Truth are brethren indeed. In a continent where it is typical to have ecclesias of less than 10, it is delightful to witness and participate in new brethren meeting and instantly recognizing the love of God in each other. In a continent where the brethren often feel so alone and in such a minority, how lovely is it to know that there are others where the hope has not grown dim, who also clearly watch and patiently wait for the return of the Son and the healing of the earth. As I was reminded by a recent CYC class that I had pleasure to Skype into: it is nothing with the LORD to help by many, or with them that have no power. Therefore please labor in your prayers with us, for the harvest is indeed great, the laborers are few, and we are of those who lift up our eyes to Him who is mighty to save.

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

Jim Sullivan

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

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

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

David Wisniewski

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

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

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

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

During a six week stretch the ecclesia experienced the falling asleep in Christ of three of the Lord's called out ones. On May 25, 2013, Sis. Helen Lunsman fell asleep after a long life of service to our heavenly Father. On June 17, 2013, Bro. Tom Mooney
unexpectedly fell asleep in Christ, just a week or so after what was considered successful heart surgery. On July 4, 2013, our Bro. Al Chamberland fell asleep in Christ after months of sickness due to terminal cancer. Our brothers and our sister now await the return of Jesus Christ to this earth, and we take comfort in the fact that their struggle with the nature of man is now suspended while they sleep in Christ, and that their next moment of awareness will be in the presence of the Lord.

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

Craig Nevers

KITCHENER-WATERLOO, ON

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

Martin J Webster

WICHITA FALLS, TX

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

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

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

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

John A. Clubb

THANKS TO BRO. BRIAN LUKE

On behalf of the Sarasota, Largo, and Orlando, FL Ecclesias, I would like to thank Bro. Brian Luke (Adelaide, Aust.) for leading us in a very uplifting study of, “The Sermon
Defending the faith involves listening as well as speaking up

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

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

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

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

The Apostle Paul would not hesitate to stand up for what was right, as he explains to the Thessalonians, “But even after that we had suffered before, and were shamefully entreated, as ye know, at Philippi, we were bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention.” However, Paul was careful in his boldness, as he explains, “For our exhortation was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile: But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so...”
we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts. For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloak of covetousness; God is witness: Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others, when we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ. But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children: So being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us.”

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

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

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

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

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

Robert J. Lloyd

“We are masters of the unsaid words, but slaves of those we let slip out”
Winston Churchill
Coming Events (Lord Willing)

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

JANUARY 2014


25 San Diego County, CA Annual Study day. Bro. Gary Cousens will be speaking on “Overcoming Ourselves”. Classes will start at 9:30am. Lunch is provided. Contact Bro. Kurt Wickham, todapuravida@hotmail.com for more details.

FEBRUARY 2014

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

APRIL 2014

18-20 New England Brothers’ Weekend. Being a 21st Century “Man of God” by Bro Chris Sales at Camp Joslin, Charlton, MA. Contact Bro Jason Dineen newengbros@gmail.com, 617-697-7717.

18-20 Wichita Falls, TX Annual Spring Gathering at T4C. Bro. Frank Abel (Hamilton Book Road, ON) will lead us in a study entitled “The Ecclesia — A Place of Refuge”. For registration contact Bro. Larry Beutel at Lbeutel@alsco.com.

JUNE 2014

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

JULY 2014

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

AUGUST 2014

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

Nonverbal communication represents two-thirds of all communication. Nonverbal communication can portray a message both verbally and with the correct body signals. Body signals comprise physical features, conscious and unconscious gestures and signals, and the mediation of personal space. The wrong message can be established if the body language conveyed does not match a verbal message.

Nonverbal communication strengthens a first impression in common situations like attracting a partner or in a business interview: impressions are on average formed within the first four seconds of contact. First encounters or interactions with another person strongly affect a person's perception. When the other person or group is absorbing the message they are focused on the entire environment around them, meaning the other person uses all five senses in the interaction: 83% sight, 11% hearing, 3% smell, 2% touch and 1% taste.

From Wikipedia article on Nonverbal Communication
Editorial

Communication

“Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man” (Col 4:6).

“A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver” (Prov 25:11).

Introduction

All too often, our modern communications are seasoned with venom, not salt. Waging war by e-mail, Facebook, Twitter or any other of the electronic tools spawned by the Internet has become routine, even, unfortunately, sometimes within our community. And this is only one of the problems we see today. The proliferation of these rapid, or even instantaneous, means of transmission of information, true or false, largely with little thought of the consequences, can overwhelm the Truth. Not only this, the very nature of transmission via the Internet leaves a permanent trail. Not only does the NSA¹ keep track of communications worldwide, but almost anything put on the Internet remains there almost indefinitely.

The world has been slow to adjust to this reality. It is a reality that when the communication is face to face, much of the information that is transmitted is non-verbal. A shrug, the intonation, facial expressions, and body language — they all provide context and additional information. But in electronic communications these additional channels are lost. How often has one written something, convinced of its meaning — only to find the recipient has misunderstood what you meant. Too often, in case of any ambiguity, the worst possible interpretation is placed on the writing.

Speed of communication

For the largest period of human existence, most communication was oral. Although writing was known quite early, the very slowness of producing hand written letters etc. did not really affect this. The invention of printing lead to much more effective mass forms of communication, and indeed the printing press was vital in the spreading of the early gospel by the forbears of our community. (John Thomas had his own printing press, which he used to produce his early magazines, and which in fact included the first Newspaper in St Charles, Illinois, where he was residing around 1842.) Up until the middle of the 19th century, communication was delivered no faster than the speed of a horse: then first the railway (up to 60 mph) and then the electric telegraph (almost speed of light, but very limited bandwidth) changed it. Still, printed media and public addresses were still the main forms of mass communication, until the radio and film industries arrived in the 1920’s. The telephone gradually made its impact in the early 20th century and became a major form of voice communication, but was by no means universal until the 1970’s. One per household was the norm! The radio was widely used by the Christadelphians in the USA to spread the truth almost from its inception:
likewise the television not long after its introduction in the 1950’s. All these electronic forms of communication sped up mass communication, but the letter and the telephone still were the rule for person to person communication.

The Internet changed all that: indeed its start was to facilitate the exchange of electronic mail: it became widely used in the early 1990’s, and its growth has been phenomenal. There are now almost 1 billion web sites, with well over 20 billion pages and perhaps 2.5 billion e-mail users. So a very significant fraction of the world’s population is connected to the internet, as are the vast majority of Christadelphians in North America.

Communication in the internet world

Despite the advent of the internet, the Biblical principles still apply.

- Speak often to each other (Mal 3:16-18)
- Exhort one another daily (Heb 3:13)
- Face to face is better than written (3John 13-14)
- Disagreements are to be handled firstly face to face: not by remote communications, nor in public (Matt 18:15)
  - This principle is repeated in Prov 25:9-10

There are several other tendencies of our modern forms of communication that are discouraged by these Biblical instructions

- Any form of rebuke or correction should always be face to face. Paul might have recorded his rebuke of Peter for all believers, but he performed his rebuke in person: “But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed” (Gal 2:11).
- We should never communicate sensitive information via e-mail. First of all, such communication is permanent, and secondly, your e-mail is often read by others. This particularly, I believe, applies to communications by or between members of ecclesial arranging boards.
- We should always avoid, as far as we can, discussing any controversial topics in any fashion other than face to face.
- And above all, think twice (at least!) before hitting the “send” button
  - Would I say this in person?
  - Is it helpful?
  - Do all the addressees need to see this?

Social Media

The whole world seemed at one stage to be present on Facebook, but it now seems about to be superseded by a whole raft of similar sites. (You either have to be a true techie, or obsessed by such sites, to identify all the sites shown — I cannot!) However, we should clearly recognize their utility as well as drawbacks

- It is a rapid way of communicating information to one’s circle of friends (and as a grandparent, information about grandchildren is always of interest!)
- It can reach an audience which is somewhat resistant to traditional communication means: many young people seem to rely only on their smart phones
as their sole method of interaction. Many are reluctant to do anything as old fashioned as talk on their device.

• However we are advised by Paul to focus on: “Redeeming the time, because the days are evil” (Eph 5:16). After all, time is perhaps the most valuable, as well as the most perishable of our possessions, and the abuse of social media and its often accompanying online game playing are together one of the most abused time-wasting activities of our day.

• We are told “In all toil there is profit, but mere talk tends only to poverty” (Prov 14:23 ESV). To broadcast your daily activities is surely mere talk. Few are interested in what you had for lunch.

The fundamental advice is that given by James:

“But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be” (James 3:8-10).

After all “But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment” (Matt 12:36). The idle words we speak ought not to be for self-aggrandizement, or prideful, but as befitting the ambassadors for Christ, which we ought to be.

Peter Hemingray

Notes:
1. The National Security Agency: as of the date of this editorial, it has been revealed they collect and store vast amounts of e-mails, telephone calls and other electronic information. And of course web-sites like Facebook archive all the communications that pass across its servers,
2. Some of these thoughts are derived from a talk given by Bro. David Wisniewski (Brant County, ON) at the Shippensburg Bible School 2013.

Letters to the editor can be sent to letters@tidings.org. Please include your name, address, e-mail, and phone. Submissions under 300 words are encouraged — the magazine reserves the right to edit all submissions for length and clarity.
Exhortation

The Two Pillars

The building of the temple

Seven years was the time it took Solomon to complete the Temple and the House of God. It must have been seven long years, and it was a massive undertaking: you have these monumental stones which had to be quarried in another place and hauled to the site without the use of any of our modern day mechanical means. Then they went to the mountains of Lebanon, to gigantic Cedar trees, and they sawed them down by hand, floated them down the coast line where they had to be dragged up back up on shore, cut and chiseled, and put in the different places where they were used in the Temple.

In addition, think of all the gold inside of the temple: everything was overlaid with gold. And then there was all those articles of brass as well. Solomon got the best man for the job (Hiram of Tyre: 1Kgs 7:13). For the Israelites whether it was the Tabernacle or the Temple, this was this place that symbolized that God dwelt among them, because this was the place where the Ark of the Covenant was kept. This was made obvious by the cloud that filled the Temple when it was inaugurated.

Just imagine yourself there amongst the Courts. Walk amongst the Priests giving sacrifices upon the altar. Would you have the same feeling of the Psalmist who said, “How amiable are thy tabernacles, O LORD of hosts! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the LORD: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God” (Psa 84:2-3).

We have nothing like a Temple in our service do we? Or perhaps we do. Paul writes “In whom all the building fitly framed together growth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit” (Eph 2:21-22). We can compare that to the actual temple, and then we realize the deep impact of his words. We think of Peter’s words: “Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ” (1Pet 2:5).

God does not dwell in a house made of stones, made with hands, but in you and me. And when we think about the Ecclesia it is supposed to be as glorious as that Temple of Solomon because we have somebody greater than Solomon dwelling in our hearts. Are we sanctified for the master’s use? When we approach God together, do we do it with the same reverence and fear that you would have coming into God’s temple in Jerusalem? Before the meeting starts our hymnist customarily plays hymn 168 which I think is very appropriate. “The LORD is in his holy temple, let all the earth keep silence before him” (Hab 2:20).
The pillars of bronze

Quite appropriately, then, we come before Him in silence before we offer up song and prayer and exhortation. And we will focus on one aspect of the temple: on the first item Hiram made for Solomon. It was not, as perhaps we might expect, the laver, or even the altar. We read “And King Solomon sent and fetched Hiram out of Tyre. He was a widow’s son of the tribe of Naphtali, and his father was a man of Tyre, a worker in brass: and he was filled with wisdom, and understanding, and cunning to work all works in brass. And he came to King Solomon, and wrought all his work. For he cast two pillars of brass, of eighteen cubits high apiece: and a line of twelve cubits did compass either of them about” (1Kgs 7:13-15).

So before he made the lavers, and before he made the altar, he cast two pillars of brass. These pillars represent the upholding of the house of God in truth and righteousness. A modern translation reads “He fashioned two bronze pillars, each one 27 feet high, with a circumference of 18 feet” (1Kgs 7:15 ISV). Then later on in the chapter it says they were polished bronze, so I imagine if you walked up to them you could see your reflection in these pillars. Not only that, but the text continues:

“He also crafted two capitals of cast bronze and set them on top of the pillars. The height of one capital was seven and a half feet, and the height of the other capital was seven and a half feet...That’s how he designed the pillars at the portico of the sanctuary. When he set up the right pillar, he named it Jachin. When he set up the left pillar, he named it Boaz. The work on the pillars was finished with a lily design on top of the pillars.” (1Kgs 7:16-22 ISV).

So if we could just get a sense of the enormity of these pillars we can see how much they dominated the whole courtyard of Solomon’s Temple. And they were so important that they were given names. Jachin means, “he shall establish” and
Boaz means “in it is strength”: some people see this as forming one sentence, “He shall establish it in strength”. They stood as two sentinels of the Temple, Testaments to God’s promises on which this house stood.

The covenants of promise

“I have heard thy prayer and thy supplication, that thou hast made before me: I have hallowed this house, which thou hast built, to put my name there for ever; and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually. And if thou wilt walk before me, as David thy father walked, in integrity of heart, and in uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded thee, and will keep my statutes and my judgments: Then I will establish the throne of thy kingdom upon Israel for ever, as I promised to David thy father, saying, There shall not fail thee a man upon the throne of Israel” (1Kgs 9:3-5).

At the beginning of verse 5 that word “I will establish” is related to the same Hebrew word that the name Jachin is built on. “I will establish the throne of thy kingdom forever”: so I see these pillars as representing the promises of God upon which this palace stood. The pillars stood for erectness and uprightness: if the people walked God’s ways, they would be established in God’s house as long as they kept His judgments. If they did not, if they were lacking in these things, then this Temple, including the pillars, would be cast out of His sight. To emphasize this point a little bit more on how these pillars were important in connection with the Kings, let us consider two other accounts involving these pillars.

“And he [Jehoiada] brought forth the king’s son, and put the crown upon him, and gave him the testimony; and they made him king, and anointed him; and they clapped their hands, and said, God save the king. And when Athaliah heard the noise of the guard and of the people, she came to the people into the temple of the Lord. And when she looked, behold, the king stood by a pillar, as the manner was, and the princes and the trumpeters by the king, and all the people of the land rejoiced, and blew with trumpets: and Athaliah rent her clothes, and cried, Treason, Treason” (2Kgs 11:12-14)

So Athaliah comes into the Temple of the Lord and she sees Joash by a pillar “as the manner was.” Athaliah knew what it meant.

“And the king sent, and they gathered unto him all the elders of Judah and of Jerusalem… And the king stood by a pillar, and made a covenant before the Lord, to walk after the Lord, and to keep his commandments and his testimonies and his statutes with all their heart and all their soul, to perform the words of this covenant that were written in this book. And all the people stood to the covenant” (2Kgs 23:1,3).

So put yourself there in the Courts of the Lord. It is jam packed with people, everybody is there and the King has a reserved spot. Again, which pillar do you think this was? I happen to think it was Jachin, “he shall establish”, and the very fact that he’s standing by one in particular was significant. (And it does say “standing by it” not between them.) A pillar means that which stands. And the people stood to the covenant as the King stood by the pillar.
“And the pillars of brass that were in the house of the LORD, and the bases, and the brasen sea that was in the house of the LORD, did the Chaldees break in pieces, and carried the brass of them to Babylon. And the pots, and the shovels, and the snuffers, and the spoons, and all the vessels of brass wherewith they ministered, took they away” (2Kgs 25:13-14).

As if they emphasize the depth of what happened to Israel there is one piece of furniture that is described the most, and that’s the pillars. It goes to describe them again, how beautiful they were and elaborate, and just bemoaning the fact that they were hewn into pieces, cut into pieces and carried off to Babylon. These pillars really represented the nation. To the Babylonians they were just loot, but to the Israelites it was so dreadful to see these pillars taken down and carried off.

The symbology of pillars

So it’s not surprising that pillars get used as symbols in Scripture.

“The LORD maketh poor, and maketh rich: he bringeth low, and lifteth up. He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory: for the pillars of the earth are the LORD’s, and he hath set the world upon them. He will keep the feet of his saints, and the wicked shall be silent in darkness; for by strength shall no man prevail. The adversaries of the LORD shall be broken to pieces; out of heaven shall he thunder upon them: the LORD shall judge the ends of the earth; and he shall give strength unto his king, and exalt the horn of his anointed. (1Sam 2:7-10).

The picture we get here is of the pillars of the earth. The earth is seen as a house (or maybe just the inhabitants), being born up by pillars. These pillars represent the true judgments of God, for they are associated with the throne of glory among princes. So before there was a human King for the Israelites, Hannah recognized that the Messiah would come, and that God would give His strength unto His King.

In the New Testament

“And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision” (Gal 2:9).

Under the New Testament, the believers become the new Israel, and therefore they become the foundation and pillars of God’s earth. They are the Temple of God in which the spirit dwells, and they’re pillars in the Temple. In Galatians, the security and the firmness of the foundation depends upon its leaders and upon its
members to be steadfast in the faith and to judge with righteous judgments: the Apostles James, Cephas and John are said to be pillars in the Ecclesia. They were pillars because it was upon their teaching and upon their leadership by the Holy Spirit that the Ecclesia would be established, and would grow, and would become strengthened in the Lord. It's no wonder that they are called pillars in the Ecclesia.

Do we have pillars in the Ecclesia now? We have to have such pillars in the Ecclesia. In order for the House to stand there has to be pillars in our Ecclesias. Do you recognize the pillars in your Ecclesia? It's a mistake not to recognize them, because when God takes away those pillars and the House starts to fall, we might have to be trying to continue what they were doing in the Household of God: trying to keep the House up and baring their burdens. We have to recognize the pillars in our Ecclesia. As we grow in the Truth, do we see ourselves as pillars in the Ecclesia, able to take on these burdens? Or if we went away would it really matter to the House of God?

“But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth” (1Tim 3:15).

In writing to Timothy, now the Ecclesia is the pillar and ground of the truth. So it is the Ecclesia which bears up on its back the pillars of the Truth. It is up to you and I, as brothers and sisters, to uphold the Truth that is in the Scriptures. God is expecting us to be pillars that will defend His Truth. When the Ecclesia doesn't have any pillars what does the world have to hope for? They can only turn to corruptness.

“Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name” (Rev 3:12).

In final passage that mentions pillars, it is our Lord speaking to the Philadelphia Ecclesia, which the Lord had nothing against. The allusion to Jachin and Boaz seems strong here: they are the only two Temple pillars that are given names. And here it says in this Revelation passage that there will be a name written upon those in the Temple of God who are made pillars. It makes me wonder if the original pillars had names inscribed on them: one Jachin and the other Boaz. These were carried away, but we find the ones in Revelation shall go no more out. They will never be carried away, they will be established in the Temple of my God forever.

This is our promise, that if we are pillars now, that we will be made pillars in the Kingdom to come. We will be made into Kings and Priests. Monumental responsibility stands before us as we look at the lessons and story behind the pillars. Let us take these to heart, let us stand fast to the covenants and the promises that God has given us, and follow His statutes and uphold His judgments. Let us make a new conviction that we will be pillars of God now, so that when our faith overcomes comes the world, we may be made pillars in the Temple of our God.

Tim Young (Hamilton Book Rd, ON)
Bible Study

The Way of Cain, (6) Cain: The Legacy

“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, especially 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 Gen 6 that chronicle key antediluvian events, but not occurring earlier than the fifth generation. Although Genesis doesn’t refer to these two groups by these particular names — sons of God, sons of men — prior to the fifth 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, 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, regardless of their lineage, 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;
- 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 chapter, 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 Gen 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 versus 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 second 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, Luke traces Christ’s lineage through Seth.² Thus in relation to Christ, Seth represents one of the first stones upon which our spiritual foundation rests. 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 vaguer. 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, 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, iyr, 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.)

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 is everlasting.

(In the next chapter, God willing, we will continue our study of contrasts in the descendants of Adam).

Matthew Harrison (Quebec, ON)

Notes:
1. Cain’s genealogy includes the reference to a single female descendant, Naamah, who was born in the eighth generation (Gen 4:22).
The Philistines attack
As David served in Saul’s court, the king loved him. All seemed to be going well — David could calm Saul’s outbursts, and the king appreciated the affect that the music had upon him. Nevertheless, something was about to happen that would change the dynamic between Saul and David — and David and Jonathan — forever.

One day, the message came to Saul’s court that the Philistines had rearmed themselves and were preparing an invasion into the land of Israel. The court would have been in a flurry as preparations were made to engage with the former enemy before they made it far into the land. David, likely because he was too young, was sent back home to be with his father, while his three oldest brothers were sent to the front lines (1Sam 17:13-15). Saul and Jonathan — with Saul still likely holding suspicions towards his firstborn — went together to the battle (cp. 1Sam 18:1).

For a few days, the armies faced each other, and no one dared to attack. Both camps were on a hill, with a valley in between them. Whoever chose to attack would be the one who was at a disadvantage. Finally, a champion from the camp of the Philistines came forth and offered a challenge — he would fight anyone in the camp of Israel. If they were able to slay him, then the Philistines would be Saul’s servants, but if he won, then the Israelites would be their servants. His name was Goliath, and he was a giant.

Goliath’s challenge would have shot fear into the hearts of the men of Israel. This man was huge! No one could stand up against him! Yet out of all of the men in the Israelite camp, it likely brought more fear to the heart of one man than it did to the others. When Saul heard the challenge, the pressure for him to fight must have been enormous. Who else could Goliath truly have been challenging? He even mentioned Saul’s name in his taunt (1Sam 17:9) — and hadn’t the children of Israel said that they wanted the king to go before them and fight their battles (1Sam 8:20)? Saul was much taller than many of the other Israelites, so even his stature was closer to Goliath’s than anyone else’s (1Sam 9:2). Truly, all eyes would have been on Saul.

Every day for forty days, morning and evening, Goliath stood before the armies of Israel and issued his challenge. Every day for forty days, morning and evening, no one from the camp of Israel did anything.

Waiting
How difficult this time would have been for Jonathan — the man who was filled with zeal to slay an entire garrison of the uncircumcised Philistines! Every morning and evening as he heard the blasphemy of the giant he would have burned
with anger — longing to go out and face him himself. Yet he never did — and one is left to wonder exactly why that was. How was it possible that Goliath defied Yahweh before Jonathan so many times, and the prince never made a move against him? Could Jonathan have been frozen by fear? Hardly. That didn’t seem to inhibit him in any of his other endeavors. But then why did he not do anything? Why did he stand there next to his father and hear the mockery every morning and every evening?

Perhaps again the context of the story helps to explain Jonathan’s actions. Just as in the battle against the Amalekites, Jonathan likely saw that it was prudent for him to stay in the background. All eyes were focused on Saul — and if Jonathan were to stand in Saul’s place and do what Saul should have been doing again, the end result would not be pleasant in Saul’s house.

To add to that, Jonathan knew that he was not the promised king who was to come (that king had already been called; 1Sam 13:14). There was another — and it appears as though Jonathan, while he waited for those forty days, was actively hoping and praying that the successor would reveal himself through this opportunity. His actions after the battle demonstrate this — soon after Jonathan heard David speak to his father about the battle, Jonathan took of his robe, his girdle, his armor, and his weaponry and gave them to David! Jonathan’s actions were a sign of his deference to the one whom he knew was destined to take the throne of Israel. Truly, he must have been watching and waiting in anticipation for the new king to appear and stand against the blasphemer.

Yet perhaps there was even another motive — and this would help to explain why Jonathan expected the new king to accept the challenge. When he had gone to fight against the Philistines before, Jonathan was certain that God wanted him to fight; he simply didn’t know how he was supposed to do so. Thus, in order to find out, he prayed for a sign. The sign revealed God’s will and Jonathan followed it. Is it possible that a similar type of thing happened as Jonathan heard the Philistine’s taunts those forty days? As his blood boiled within him and as he longed to go face the Philistine himself, perhaps Jonathan — knowing the impact that another attack like this would have upon his father — prayed for a sign from God so that he might know what he was to do. Should he attack or should he stay? Maybe the response came back that he was to stay — and that there was someone else who would take up the challenge, someone else who would be the captain of Yahweh’s people.

Thus, for whatever reason it was, Jonathan stayed with his father in the camp of Israel, listening to the giant’s blasphemous words, and waiting for the deliverer of Israel to reveal himself.

First encounter

Finally, he did — and just imagine the joy that would have filled Jonathan as he listened to the conversation going on between his father and David. David told Saul of his miraculous battles with the lion and with the bear. How his heart would have thrilled to hear of David’s courage and faith! Just picture Jonathan standing behind his father, eagerly listening to David’s tales of God’s power:
“And David said unto Saul, Thy servant kept his father’s sheep, and there came a lion, and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock: and I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered it out his mouth: and when he arose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote him, and slew him” (1Sam 17:34-35).

The stories which David told to Saul and Jonathan were stories which would have been utterly impossible — unless God were truly with David. Only a miracle would have allowed this young man to take a lion by his mane and slay him! There’s truly no comparison between a lion and a man — a lion could simply tear a man apart. Yet David had done the complete opposite and God had filled him with strength and power to do so.

As Jonathan heard these words, he would have recognized that here was a man who had God working in his life, in the same way that God had worked in his. Just as he and his armor bearer had come up against the Philistine garrison with seemingly impossible odds, Yahweh strengthened them and worked a miracle. It was the same type of event — one man versus a lion or a bear and two men against twenty Philistine soldiers. Could this be the one of whom Samuel had spoken? But David’s words continued:

“Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear: and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God” (1Sam 17:36).

David continued his words to Saul by telling him that just as he had been able to slay the lion and the bear, God would be with him in this endeavor. He was certain that God would strengthen him to slay the uncircumcised Philistine — Goliath had defied the armies of the living God, and that defiance would not go unchallenged.

As David spoke these words, almost undoubtedly, one of his words would have immediately caught Jonathan’s attention — because it was the same word which he too had used when he had charged against the Philistine garrison:

“And Jonathan said to the young man that bare his armor, Come, and let us go over unto the garrison of these uncircumcised: it may be that the Lord will work for us: for there is no restraint to the Lord to save by many or by few” (1Sam 14:6).

Uncircumcised. This was the way in which both Jonathan and David saw the Philistines. They were enemies of the covenant and were destined for destruction — and as Jonathan heard David use this word to describe Goliath, he would have realized that he was looking at a kindred spirit. He was looking at a man who held God’s covenant with His people in high esteem and who cherished God’s name. Yet not only so, just as Jonathan had said to his armor bearer “there is no restraint to the Lord to save by many or by few,” David had uttered his belief in the same thing. David recognized that though he was just a young man and Goliath had been a warrior from his youth, if God was with him, he could slay the giant. Even more, just as Jonathan was prepared to fight not only the twenty men in the garrison, but the whole innumerable multitude of the Philistines, David was resolved to do the
same. As he stood before Goliath, he taunted that not only would he kill Goliath, but he would singlehandedly kill all of the Philistines! Over and over, Jonathan would have seen in David the same mind which he had!

As the battle began and David stood before the Philistine, this connection between the two men was reinforced. Jonathan, standing by his father and looking over the valley where David and Goliath stood, heard David confess that he was fighting so that the whole Israelite army might recognize God’s ability to save, and acknowledge that the victory wouldn’t be for his own honor, but for the nation’s.

“And all this assembly shall know that the LORD saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle is the LORD’s and He will give you into our hands” (1Sam 17:47).

When David slew the Philistine, he wanted all of Israel to know that it wasn’t by his own might that he had won. Yahweh was the One who won the battle. He was the One who had the power. David fought against Goliath so that he might show all of Israel the power of their God — and his victory accomplished that goal. That day, the trembling troops of Israel were inspired and chased the Philistines back into their land — exactly as they had done when Jonathan had courageously attacked the Philistine garrison. At that time, the situation was the same. The army of Israel was full of fear and felt as though they were in a hopeless situation; but Jonathan’s faithful attack inspired the people to come out of their hiding place and chase the Philistines back.

Yet not only so, but David had also proclaimed that this victory would be a victory for Israel, not for him — “and he will give you into our hands.” David was fighting on behalf of the nation and for the nation’s honor. It wasn’t for his own name. Such was the same thinking which Jonathan had held when he went against the Philistine garrison:

“And the men of the garrison answered Jonathan and his armor bearer, and said, Come up to us, and we will shew you a thing. And Jonathan said unto his armor bearer, Come up after me: for the LORD hath delivered them into the hand of Israel” (1Sam 14:12).

Jonathan’s attack against the Philistine garrison was for the sake of Israel — not for his own name. Thus, as Jonathan heard David’s words, he would have been impressed with how remarkably similar the mind of this court musician and shepherd was to his own. He had seen the boy playing for his father and he had noticed him before, but he had never had a chance to really get an insight into his mind. Now, as he heard David speak, he suddenly realized that there was a perfect harmony between them:

• Both of them filled the void for leadership in Israel — Jonathan went up against the Philistines when Israel was trembling and his father was doing nothing; David came when all of Israel was petrified and no soldier had been willing to fight
• Both of them had experienced God’s mighty power working miracles in their lives
• Both of them had a love for the covenant and recognized that the Philistines were uncircumcised
• Both of them believed that God could save regardless of the odds
• Both of them desired to inspire Israel
• Both of them sought to fight for the nation rather than for their own glory
• Both of them chose to look upon Saul with respect and deference — their words towards him were almost always honorable, even though they could have straightly criticized him

Living in a court where this type of spiritual perception and love for the Truth was not held in high esteem by the king, Jonathan would have been overjoyed to see another man who thought in the same way. He would have already felt a deep affection for him. But his joy would have been even greater — he had refrained from fighting the battle because he was looking for the next king, and here was someone who was a man after God's own heart and who had just demonstrated that he had the ability to be the captain over God's people. All of the characteristics seemed to fit. Could he be the one?

As the battle ended, Saul looked on David with astonishment. He couldn't believe what he had seen — this young man who had played for him in his court had just slain the giant. Turning to Abner, he asked Abner what family it was that David came from — he likely wanted to know the details because his daughter was now pledged to David (1Sam 17:25). Yet Abner didn't know. Thus, David was called before the king himself — with Jonathan likely by his side.

“And as David returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, Abner took him, and brought him before Saul with the head of the Philistine in his hand. And Saul said to him, Whose son art thou, thou young man? And David answered, I am the son of thy servant Jesse the Bethlehemite” (1Sam 17:57-58).

It was a short and simple conversation — but it may have made all of the difference to Jonathan. He had seen David's faith and seen into David's thinking, but he hadn't known anything about David's lineage. But then he knew. David was from Bethlehem, meaning that he was from the tribe of Judah — he was from the kingly tribe. When Jacob had given his blessings to all of his children, he specifically blessed Judah by saying “the scepter shall not depart from Judah” (Gen 49:10) — and a man from the tribe of Judah was standing before Jonathan. He was from the kingly tribe.

With that, Jonathan knew that he was in the presence of the next king.

Jason Hensley (Simi Hills, CA)

“'The people is greater and taller than we;... and moreover we have seen the sons of the Anakims there’ (Deut 1:28).

‘There was none of the Anakims left in the land of the children of Israel: only in Gaza, in Gath, and in Ashdod, there remained’ (Josh 11:21).

‘And there went out a champion out of the camp of the Philistines, named Goliath, of Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span’ (1Sam 17:4).
Have you tried this? (2)

Here are some more good ideas. A word of thanks is extended to the Sunday school teachers who have shared these with me over the years. In passing them along to you, I hope you will see something that gets you thinking about new and different ways to effectively engage your children in the learning process.

There is a common theme of student creativity in the ideas that are offered this month. Creative activities go beyond the routine accumulation of Bible knowledge. They allow the children to demonstrate learning through the use of personal interests and talents. These kinds of activities can tell us a lot about our children and their understanding of the Bible.

Visual creations

Set up a permanent flannel graph in your kindergarten or primary class area (i.e., for your pre-readers and beginning readers). A good-sized bulletin board that is mounted low to the ground is ideal for this. Get a large piece of flannel at a fabric store and back the bulletin board with it. Make a big pocket for storing lots of stick-on figures. (One way to do this is to fold up the bottom of the flannel and tack it into a long shallow trough.) Let the children use the stick-on figures to retell the Bible story they have learned. They can easily put figures on the flannel, move them around, and take them off. Leave their creations up from week to week for review purposes or to add to as a Bible story unfolds. Any time you want to use the bulletin board for something else, the flannel backing can be left in place and other things mounted on it. (Thanks to Diane Sabean, Meriden, CT)

Copy and cut coloring book pictures into separate pieces, each piece being a complete person, animal, building, Bible object, etc. Give each child a set of pieces and let them create their own Bible picture. Have the children color/decorate their pictures, add titles, make up captions, find and copy appropriate Bible verses, etc. This makes a good lesson reinforcement activity. It allows your children to express their understanding of the lesson better than an ordinary coloring activity can.

Make Styrofoam mosaics. Buy a package of Styrofoam trays or plates at a grocery store, spray them different colors and cut them into small squares with a knife or razor blade. In Sunday school, the children glue the colorful squares onto a foam board to create their own Bible picture or saying. (Thanks to Peter Dixon, Southern New Hampshire, NH)

More visual creations

Get your students thinking about the topographic features of Bible lands. Have them create a relief map of Israel or another Bible region using homemade modeling clay. You can find recipes for homemade clay online. A simple clay, made with flour, salt, and water, can be painted when it is dry. Stick flags on the map to
identify key places. Have your students use the map to retell the story of important events that happened at these places. *(Thanks to Carol Link, Baltimore, MD)*

To help with a project like this, you might want to get a copy of Islip Collyer’s book, *Where It Happened*. In this little book, Bro. Collyer connects Bible events with the geography of the land. The book was published by The Christadelphian Office in 1946. Some brothers and sisters or ecclesias may still own a copy. The Office currently has copies available in its secondhand book supply.

Creating three-dimensional contour maps is another way to visualize the topographic features of Bible lands. Foam board works well for making contour maps. Draw and cut individual contours from the foam board, then glue the contours in layers to represent the elevation of the land. Paint the map, label it, and use it to tell what happened there in Bible times.

**Illustrated story telling**

Do you have students who like to draw? How about students who like to write? And do you have any budding orators? Let them put their talents together to create an illustrated Bible story. Then have them present their story to the rest of the Sunday school or the ecclesia. One older Sunday school class did this as a culminating activity after their studies of the life of the apostle Paul. They presented their story, complete with thirty colorful pencil drawings and maps projected on a screen, a full narration, and background music. The students did everything from start to finish. They also recorded their presentation. *(Thanks to June Cawston, Victoria, BC. The project was done with a Sunday school class in Vernon, BC, several years ago.)*

A variation of this idea is to have students create comic-strip depictions of Bible stories. Let them share their work with the rest of the class. This is also the kind of thing that can be easily published and credited in a Sunday school newsletter.

One teacher had her little ones create their own Bible story books. Each page was a visual representation of some part of the story. For example, the sun, moon, and stars, cut from gold and silver foils and mounted on construction paper to depict the fourth day of Creation. When all the pages were finished, they were punched and bound together with colorful yarns and ribbons. The children used their completed books in Sunday school to review the Bible story. Parents were also encouraged to have the children use their books at home to retell the Bible story to their families. *(Thanks to Janice Baines, Sussex, NB)*

**Song writing**

Children do not have to be musicians in order to write their own Bible songs. Let them write words to go with a familiar melody. Some might like to write songs that incorporate body movements as well (bowing, praying, etc.). Have the entire Sunday school learn to sing the songs that the children create.

Familiar melodies can be found in many Sunday school song books. Simple tunes and meters work best for this kind of creative activity. *(Thanks to Mary Jane Farrar, Mountain Grove, ON)*
Other student creations
Some children like to create word puzzles as well as solve them. Word searches are a big favorite. Have your students identify several key words in a Bible story and make a word search out of them. Others might like to try their hand at making a crossword puzzle, a cryptogram, or a jumble word puzzle. Let them try out their puzzles on each other. Student work of this kind can also be published and credited in a Sunday school newsletter.

Get some blank jigsaw puzzles at a craft store. Have the children make their own Bible jigsaw puzzles. When they are finished, some might like to donate their puzzles to the Sunday school for later use as a Bible learning center activity.¹

Revisiting Sunday school goals²
Sunday school is about more than imparting Bible knowledge to children. By allowing the children to be creative and put their interests and talents to work, we can help them develop positive attitudes toward the vital things they are learning in Sunday school. That is what this month’s ideas are about. If you haven’t tried any of them before, give some thought to doing so. And send me your good ideas, too, please!

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

Notes:

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

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

Main Speakers:
• Bro. Mark Drabenstott: “The Seven Great ‘I Ams’: Our Abundant Life”
• Bro. Doug Davis: “Christ in the Jewish Feasts”
• Bro. John Pople: “Wearing the Name”

Contact Bro. Brad Rek (330) 609-6957 or brad.rek@gmail.com. Visit our website at http://abrahamicfaithgathering.org/ for more information and to view talks from last year.
"Those Round About" — Ezekiel 35

Introduction

The nations around Israel have been very much in the news, especially the Palestinians. As this is being edited, in late 2013, US Secretary of State John Kerry will return to the Palestinian territories and Israel to engage in peace talks at Ramallah on January 1 for an additional round of shuttle diplomacy with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas. The United States is seeking to broker an agreement on a “two-state solution” in which Israel would exist peacefully alongside a new Palestinian state. Previously, the Palestinians’ September 2011 submission at the UN to be formally recognized as a nation-state in its own right had been much in the news. The current head of this state-in-formation, Mahmood Abbas (President of Fatah), travelled all over Europe and in contact with China, Russia and other nations to persuade them to support the Palestinian application. All this in the face of clear Israeli opposition and a US veto in the Security Council. And in November 2012, the UN recognized the status of the Palestinians as a nation state. There were 138 votes in favor, nine against and 41 abstentions in a vote to upgrade the Palestinian Authority’s observer status at the United Nations to “non-member state” from “entity”.

What relevance does Ezek 35 and 36 have to all of this? Simply this: The Arab attitude reflected in this ancient prophecy is being replayed in our day, bringing about the full and complete fulfillment of these prophecies. So who is Mt. Seir in Ezekiel? Mt. Seir was the ancient/historical homeland of Edom (cp. Ezek 35:13). And Edom is the nation descended from Esau, the twin brother of Jacob.

Just as Esau hated his brother Jacob for taking from him his birthright and inheritance of the land (the blessing), and continually sought to reclaim it, so his descendants to this very day still seek to take back the land that was given to the descendants of Jacob.

Listen to the language of Ezek 35:

- v.5: “perpetual hatred” — an historical, and almost cultural characteristic of the Middle Eastern Arab/Palestinians. They are well known for holding onto grievances generationally.
- v.10: “these TWO nations and TWO these countries shall be MINE and WE will possess them (although the LORD was there).” The goal these descendants of Esau are very clear. And the language remarkably similar to the stated goals of the Palestinians!
- 36:2: “the ancient high places have become our possession.” High places = holy places of the Jewish people. Interestingly, almost all of Israel’s ancient holy places are found in the West Bank, and many are occupied by the Palestinians.
- 36:5: Edom with other nations “gave my land to THEMSELVES as a possession.”
Here is the same thinking, the same attitude, the same determination that is found in the descendants of Esau today (the Palestinians). So it is very much worth our time to think about what is going on now before our eyes and to see in this what God is seeking to accomplish.

**What do the Palestinians want?**

They want to be recognized as a nation with all its rights and privileges and protections afforded those recognized by the international community. They want this state to consist of the West Bank and Gaza.

This sounds fair enough, but it is not all. In November 2010, a major investigative poll of the West Bank and Gaza Palestinians was released by Greenburg Quinlan Rosner Research. The results were very interesting. The results indicated that ~60% of those polled from the West Bank and Gaza were very much in favor of a two-state solution. *But* the poll went on to uncover that the same 60% saw the two-state solution only as a *first step* towards a *one* state solution, one Palestinian state occupying all the land from the Mediterranean Sea to the Jordan River. Additionally, almost 70% believed that an armed struggle is ultimately the only way they will gain back “their land”.

This is why every map in Palestinian textbooks and hanging in Palestinian homes have a glaring omission: Israel is nowhere to be found on these maps! As Ezek 35:10 says, “*These two nations and these two countries shall be mine!*”

But where are the “mountains of Israel” and why does Ezek 35 talk about “Mt. Seir” and not simply Edom or Esau? The reason becomes abundantly clear when one superimposes a map of the West Bank over the ancient mountains of Israel. *They are identical.* The “West Bank” is simply the modern term for Ezekiel’s “Mountains of Israel.”

And why Mt. Seir? Because we are being asked to see these two mountains, Mt. Seir and the Mountains of Israel, as being in bitter conflict, with Mt. Seir trying to reclaim the Mountains of Israel as their ancient homeland! This is nothing short of a prescription for a devastating war!

**God’s purpose**

Step back from this picture. Why is God allowing all this to happen? What is His purpose in all this?

Consider what Joel 3:1-2 puts before us. God’s intention is to bring the nations of the earth to judgment. For what reason? Because they scattered His people and divided His land. Note the critical emphasis of these words: Israel is HIS people. The land is HIS land. The nations are being judged for their presumption and arrogance in assigning to themselves what belongs solely to God!

And how will God judge them? He will “*gather all nations to Israel for the purpose of war*” (v.2). “*Prepare for war! … Let all the men of war draw near … Be your plowshares into swords and your pruning hooks in spears … Let the nations be wakened and come up to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; For there I will sit to judge all the surround nations*” (Joel 3:9-14).
It is startling to discover that the Young’s Literal translation in v. 9 of “prepare for war” is “sanctify a war”, that is, declare a holy war. (The same Hebrew word is translated sanctify in Joel 2:16.) In our modern day we hear that very cry coming from the Palestinians — “Jihad!” It means “holy war”. And this “holy war” will begin with the Palestinians.

Consider carefully Zech 12:2-3. What is a siege? “Anything that blocks or limits movement of people and goods (cf. Israel’s “siege” of Gaza). The Palestinians have a different word: “Intifada”, “The use of violence, struggle and martyrdom...for the liberation of our (Palestinian) lands from the Zionist occupation.” The Palestinians are on their third intifada which they define as “Diplomatic struggle, designed to isolate Israel in the International arena and force it to submit to all Palestinians.” It is only a matter of time before intifada and siege become interchangeable as the Palestinians begin to engage in a violent struggle to prevent Israel from occupying Palestinian territory.

Now consider the implications of v.2: A man that is reeling from drunkenness is the extreme example of uncoordinated movements. They are unable to achieve any success in their aggressive, physical disputes. God is making very plain that the Palestinian intifada/siege will fail again and again!

You might want to ponder the significance of the international intervention in Libya in 2011. On March 19, 2011, the United Nations Security Council approved resolution 1973 and authorized the use of “all necessary measures to...protect civilians”. This authorization was based on a new policy adopted by the international community, “The Responsibility to Protect.” In essence, this policy sets aside the sovereignty of states to handle their own internal conflicts when “a State is manifestly failing to protect its citizens from mass atrocities.” Does this new policy, coupled with the Libyan precedent, set in place the foundation for the international action indicated by Zech 14:2? Now ponder this passage. Where once they failed, now this enemy succeeds! What is the difference? “For I will gather all nations to battle against Jerusalem.” (v. 2). It is only through international help that the Palestinians can at last achieve their goal.

The suffering of Israel

The unmistakable implication of all these prophecies is that Israel will eventually suffer greatly in their conflict with the Palestinians. Zechariah says the two-thirds of the Jewish population in the land with die (Zech 13:8). Daniel tells us that these devastating conditions for his beloved people Israel will not end until “the power of the holy people has been completely shattered” (Zech 12:7).

And it will break God’s heart: “As I live, says the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn, turn from your evil ways! For why should you die, O house of Israel?”

We can sometimes be a bit cavalier about the loss of life indicated by Zechariah. God isn’t. He doesn’t want to redeem only one-third of His people, He wants to redeem all of them!
What God wants

So what does God want? He wants His people’s repentance; He wants them to return to Him:

“I will return again to my place till they acknowledge their offense. Then they will seek my face; in their affliction they will earnestly seek me.” (Hosea 5:15)

“Now, therefore, says the LORD, turn to me with all your heart...rend your heart and not your garments; Return to the LORD your God, for He is gracious and merciful...” (Joel 2:12-13)

“And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved. For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be deliverance. As the LORD has said, among the remnant whom the LORD calls.” (Joel 2:32)

And there will be a remnant from among His people, a people who will hear and repent and turn to their God in their time of crisis. And God will hear them and have compassion on them “when He sees that their power is gone, and there is no one remaining bond or free.” (Deut 32:36)

Then “the LORD will roar from Zion, and utter His voice from Jerusalem; The heavens and earth will shake; but the LORD will be a shelter for His people, and the strength of the children of Israel.” (Joel 3:16)

The end of the matter

“And there shall no longer be a pricking brier or a painful thorn for the house of Israel from among all who are around them, who despise them. ... And they will dwell safely there, build houses, and plant vineyards; yes, they will dwell securely, when I execute judgments on all those around them who despise them” (Ezek 28:24-26).

“And they shall no longer be a prey for the nations, nor shall beasts of the land devour them; but they shall dwell safely, and no one shall make them afraid. ... Thus they shall know that I, the LORD their God, am with them, and they, the house of Israel, are My people, says the Lord GOD” (Ezek 34:28).

Here is seen the enduring passion of God for His people Israel. Despite all their turning away, their centuries of faithlessness and treachery, God will fulfill His abiding love — the Jewish people will finally become “My people”, and Yahweh will become “their God” forever. Why should we be concerned with all this?

Why be concerned? Because the nexus or meeting point of Israel’s redemption and our redemption is found in the man who finally delivers Israel from their enemies: “They will look on me whom they have pierced. Yes, they will mourn for him as one mourns for his only son...” (Zech. 12:10).

Only one man fits this description, bearing in his body the marks of crucifixion, the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the one in whom we have placed our confidence; the one in whom God will bring to completion all He has promised for the Jewish people and for us who have been adopted into this divine family through Jesus Christ.

Ted Sleeper (San Francisco Peninsula, CA)
Scriptural Discipline
(3) Forgiveness as a Foundation to Discipline

In our last article we discussed how the ecclesia is Divinely designed to be a powerful tool in the fight against sin. We are all engaged in a personal and communal battle against wickedness. Our goal is to give honor and glory to God by exhibiting His holiness in our lives.

Forgiveness

In order for us to meet this challenge, we must understand how to forgive. If our ecclesias are to be beacons of openness and support, there will be times when we are called to forgive when there initially is repentance — and when it is not. But, as we’ll see, there is a difference!

I would like to refer you back to a wonderful series of articles on Forgiveness that was written by Bro. David Lloyd and Bro. Joe Hill in the Tidings. These articles provide a valuable insight into how to forgive, and also some of the myths associated with forgiveness.

Our survey of forgiveness is similar, but with a slightly different focus. We would like to examine how forgiveness is an important element in the Scriptural discipline process. Specifically, what are the types of sins that MUST be addressed with my brother? When is reconciliation optional and when is it required? What can I do when there is no initial repentance expressed? What is the Divine expectation for me toward my brother when he is entangled in sin?

So, in this article, we will briefly comment on
- The Divine standard for forgiveness,
- The purpose of human forgiveness,
- Forgiveness and reconciliation.

While there can be no doubt that we are to strive to forgive as our Heavenly Father forgives, it is a standard that is not common to man. Micah wrote, “Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy. He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea” (Mic 7:18-19).

God delights in mercy. Think about that. It gives Him pleasure to forgive — it is not done grudgingly. He chooses not to retain His anger. Further, He not only has compassion on us but He subdues our iniquities. The Septuagint has a nice way of putting this — “he will sink our iniquities, and they shall be cast into the depths of the sea, even all our sins.”

Listen to what God says about David’s life when he counsels Solomon.
“And if thou wilt walk before me, as David thy father walked, in integrity of heart, and in uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded thee, and wilt keep my statutes and my judgments: Then I will establish the throne of thy kingdom upon Israel for ever, as I promised to David thy father, saying, There shall not fail thee a man upon the throne of Israel” (1Kgs 9:4).

Would you have described David’s life this way? Scripture openly exposes us to David’s terrible failures. Many times he failed to be the upright man that was required. Yet, God includes none of that in the Divine eulogy. In God’s view, the sins were put away. Because He delights in mercy, He chose not to look at David’s shortcomings and sins, but rather provide Solomon with a portrait of a man who walked with God in integrity of heart.

This is the Divine standard for forgiveness. Can we put away the failings of one another when sin is repented of and see our brother the way God chooses? Ask yourself if you feel less love, less compassion for the great characters of the Bible as their weaknesses are exposed? Do you feel less love for Peter when the cock crows twice? Is your view of Jacob, the Prince with God, diminished when we see in his early life deceptiveness and lying? Many would say that it is our exposure to these faults that makes them more intimate to us. We are encouraged when we see that even these great men and women of faith had trials and weakness of faith, just as we do.

So, why would we ever feel that knowing about our brother’s sins and faults would taint our perception of him? There must never be such a falseness in our ecclesias that would presume that to be “solid” believers we must all be in perfect control of our sins. We aren’t. The ecclesia is designed to allow for frankness and openness in the battle against sin. When it goes silent, we are in great peril.

The instruction this provides to us is important because it addresses our attitude toward forgiveness. Forgiveness is what we must long for. It must give us great pleasure to choose mercy and to see our repentant brother the way the Lord does.

A few introductory points are to be made here.

- The topic of Forgiveness is about a process of restoration — for **BOTH** the offended and offender
- Forgiveness, to be effective, must fundamentally acknowledge that the Lord is the Master of our lives
- There is no offence that he does not understand — he alone knows how to deliver
- Forgiveness is a process that frees the offended by acknowledging that the Lord is in control

This then permits us to exhibit righteous behavior toward the offender so that we might be reconciled

In our Scriptural review of discipline, it is essential that we are able to distinguish between sins. God does. True, “all unrighteousness is sin...” (1John 5:17). There are no “good sins.” However, it is clear in Scripture that God sees a difference in sins.
When Moses was on the Mount he received a revelation of the character of God and the Name of the LORD.

“And the LORD descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children’s children, unto the third and to the fourth generation” (Exod 34:5-7).

Often I have read right over those words, “iniquity and transgression and sin” as if they were three ways of describing the same thing. However a review of the Hebrew for these words paints a very different picture. The word for iniquity is also translated as perversity and evil. We recall Isaiah’s words about how the nation of Israel were continuously sinful, such that they were “laden in iniquity.” So, the first word is for people who are no longer struggling with sin, but are overcome by it. Their lives are filled with perversity. The second word is transgression. This word might be thought of as a single sin, but that would be incorrect. The Hebrew word, pescha, is used for revolt and rebellion. This is not about disciples who are struggling through sin either — they are rebellious. They will not submit to God and His righteousness. God pleads through His prophets for Israel to stop being stiff-necked and rebellious to Him. The last word is the word for an offence. As opposed to the first two definitions, it could very well be applied to a person who has fallen in a sin due to weakness. This is not a person whose life is filled with sin or one who is rebellious. This is the brother or sister that is aware of their sin and attempting to overcome.

These three definitions are critical for our review of Scriptural discipline. God views each separately and in our application of discipline, so must we. In our current review of forgiveness, this must be embraced.

Jesus and later the Apostle Paul both helped us with these differentiations about sin. In Mark 7, Jesus listed a number of sins that, when they “proceed from the heart” defile the man. Paul speaks of a similar list of sins associated with the Gentiles in Rom 1. His conclusion is that they that commit such things (and take pleasure with those who do) are worthy of death. To the Corinthians and Galatians, Paul provides a listing of sins that would keep a non-repentant brother or sister from inheriting the Kingdom of God (1Cor 6:9-10, Gal 5:19-20). The importance of Paul’s listing is that he says that these works of the flesh are “manifest” or made apparent. In other words, these are observable and not restricted to the final judgment of the hearts. They are all tangible behaviors — fornication, adultery, idolatry.

We must acknowledge that there are many sins in Scripture that are NOT listed as sins unto death in such a way. Brethren not working and being busybodies in Thessalonica. Those that cause divisions by poor use of Scripture. Those that are involved in genealogies, foolish questions, contentions about the Law. The unruly, the proud. Those lacking love. It’s not that these are not sins, however, the way that we must deal with them is different.
Bro. Roberts wrote about this distinction in 1895, “For the present it will suffice to note that the sin or trespass that Christ alludes to is a palpable, obvious, fatal sin. When doubt exists on this point, let us not apply Matt 18:15–17. ‘Some men’s sins are open beforehand’. Some are not, and therefore, we have to wait for later circumstances, or Christ’s infallible judgment, to disclose them.”

The application of Matt 18, which we will further deal with in our next article, is for these sins unto death. Other sins may require correction and rebuke, but what is in the hearts of those so involved is reserved for the Final Judgment of our Lord.

Review of forgiveness

So how does this impact our review of Forgiveness?

There are times when offences occur to us or within the ecclesia that require us to seek restoration and repentance. We must do all we can to bring this about because eternal life is at stake. However, there are other offences where we may need to guide, correct and show compassion, but restoration is not required. As we move through life, all of us are scarred by offences against us. None are spared. Perhaps you have been emotionally abused, unfairly maligned by a brother, double-crossed by business associates, betrayed by a loved one, deceived by one in whom you trusted? When these happen to us, it is never pleasant and if we permit it, they can disable us for years.

How is it, then, that I can be more like my Lord when such sins occur? When he was wrongly accused, physically abused, betrayed by a disciple, guile was not found in his mouth. When reviled, he reviled not. When threatened, he threatened not. How was the Lord able to live to such a standard when my natural inclination is to fight back and look for “justice?” Peter brings us to the answer. For during this ordeal, indeed throughout his life, he “committed himself to Him that judgeth righteously” (1Pet 2:23).

This is a key to unlocking our understanding of forgiveness. Jesus could have prevented these wrongdoings, having the capability to summon twelve legions of angels. But, instead, he committed his cause to Him that judgeth righteously. He accepted that his Father was in control. He could hand this situation over to his Father and He would make things right.

What a challenge this is to our faith, especially when we are feeling hurt and victimized! Do we fundamentally trust that the Lord controls our lives? Can we entrust our worst problems to “him that judgeth righteously?”

Here again is a clue from the New Testament Greek. In the New Testament, there are two separate words associated with the translated word, “forgive” or “forgiveness.” The second is charizomai, which is used of unconditional forgiveness. This is associated with a brother who has resolved his conflict with his brother and they are restored. The sin is to be forgotten, put away. It calls for us to forgive as we call upon our Lord to forgive — to remove the sin forever, as if it never occurred. This is the word used about the incestuous man in Corinth, who had repented. They were to unconditionally forgive him and to confirm their love to him.
But the first word is different. It is the word *aphiemi*, which is to send forth or cast away. This word is used by our Lord at his crucifixion, “Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.” Stephen, as he was being stoned to death, asked the Lord not to lay this sin to their charge. How, then, can one forgive when reconciliation has not yet been realized? In fact, for some being prayed for, reconciliation would never be achieved.

This is the power of *aphiemi*. It means to cast it up, to send it forth. I would like to suggest that this is exactly what The Apostle Peter meant when he said that Jesus “committed his cause to him that judgeth righteously.” Forgiveness, then, can be extended to those who have sinned a sin unto death, whether against us or our Lord. Until there is repentance, it cannot be *charizomai* forgiveness (unconditional), but *aphiemi* forgiveness provides the outlet of a fundamental acknowledgement that we are handing this situation over to him that judgeth righteously.

Here’s the power of this concept. When someone sins against us, we can easily become victims. We hold on to the feeling of pain, the sorrow of separation. If we must wait for full restoration and reconciliation before we can forgive, we are stuck — we are unable to move forward. Our interactions with our brother are greatly strained. It will be very difficult for us to be Christ-like to one who is hurting us so badly.

But the Lord instead tells us to give the problem to him. Cast it up, send it forth. I need not be victimized by this offence because I have asked the Lord to solve the problem for me!

In the fine articles on Forgiveness by Bre. Lloyd and Hill, a number of myths were identified about forgiveness. I once again refer you to those articles. However, let me just remind you that when we “*aphiemi*” forgive someone by giving the problem to the Lord, you are not blind to the consequences of the sin. Here’s a brief list they provided of some of the myths about forgiveness.

- If they do not repent, I should not forgive
- They need to show change before I should forgive
- Forgiveness means rebuilding the relationship
- Forgiving someone means allowing them to hurt you over and over
- Forgiveness requires release from consequences
- Forgiveness is ignoring sin
- The result of forgiveness is we can now trust the offender

This initial step for forgiveness is essential for freeing us from being stuck in our interactions with the offending brother. It jettisons the feelings of revenge or anger. We know that there are issues to be resolved if we are to get to *charizomai* forgiveness, but *aphiemi* enables us to move forward without mouths filled with guile, threats or reviling.

So, what have we seen about Forgiveness that will instruct us about Scriptural discipline? First, offences against us and our Lord are NOT to be swept under the rug or harbored inside us. In cases that are sins unto death, the focus must move from being about OUR need for justice to OUR BROTHER’S need for restoration.
It is a matter of life and death. In matters that are sins, but not sins unto death, we are called on to *apheimi* our brother. If reconciliation is not realized, we put this in the Lord’s care and move forward. If reconciliation is realized (in both cases), we forgive unconditionally (*charizomai*).

Our next article will take a fresh look at Matt 18 and it’s essential guidelines for Scriptural discipline. However, it is important that we take these foundations for forgiveness with us to that discussion.

*David Jennings (Pomona, CA)*

**Notes:**

**Escape from the Matrix**

Some time ago, 1999 to be exact, a science fiction movie came out that was both innovative and disturbing; intelligently complex, yet filled with violence. The film was ahead of its time in both subject matter and in special effects. There was nothing ever made like it. It went on to become extremely successful artistically, commercially and culturally. Enter the world of “the Matrix”. The movie’s writers/directors certainly had an imaginative vision of the world of tomorrow as they wove an exciting, futuristic tale unheard of until now, with its original characters and plot… or was it really that original? In a bleak, man-made landscape a century or two from now, man’s inventions have taken over the world and society is completely oblivious to the fact of this role reversal. The hero of the story is presented as a loner, soon contacted by a mysterious fugitive known by the world to be a wanted criminal, considered highly dangerous. When they finally meet, a shocking revelation of life-changing proportions is presented with the proviso that: once enlightened, the hero cannot go back to his old existence; life would never be the same again for him. He is told that there has always been something gnawing at his mind, not knowing exactly what it is, but strongly desiring to know the truth.

Again, we ask, is this original? This past September, many ecclesias undertook to present the annual “Learn to Read the Bible Effectively” seminars, a now traditional witnessing effort these past nearly 20 years, starting typically in autumn of each year. The brotherhood has put a lot of time, labor and funding into these exciting seminars, benefiting hundreds of students with a better understanding of Scripture and, God willing, hopefully a wisdom that will lead to salvation. Besides the blessing to our various audiences, it provides inestimable experience to our presenting brethren. Our first night of the seminar brought out a cross-section of the multi-ethnic diversity that is Toronto.

As in years past and in many locations throughout the province of Ontario and around the world, advertisement and venues were booked, registrants were processed, workbooks were handed out, introductions were made as the foundation was begun to be laid. And so it was upon this first night of our journey together, we replayed the scene from the story which every yearning Bible student has for centuries encountered: of his or her introduction to the world that “truly is” versus the one the world “thinks” is, one from which most will never awaken. They were
told that the message is very much as the film portrays — only better, as it is God's Word which came first and will outlast all others who only borrow heavily (and often without due credit) from the One Source. But, like all the best stories, the film lifts this parable of the “world” right out of the pages of Scripture, portraying a society which we already know too well to be containing only “the lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life”. The Biblical theme of a wondrous hope for tomorrow is never touched upon, however, as the man-made facsimile offers nothing better than freedom in a world bleak, cold and immoral, a sad commentary on mankind whose future view holds none of the Biblical promises of peace, joy and fulfillment. And so the hero is told: “You accept what you see only because you're expecting to wake up…” Our audience was then asked: “Do you believe in Providence”? “You're here because you know something. You can't explain it, but you've felt it your entire life... Have you ever had a dream that you were so sure was real?” The messenger went on... “There's something wrong with the world, like a splinter in your mind. Everywhere. All around you the world has been pulled over your eyes to blind you to the truth... That you are a slave... Born into a prison for your mind.” And so the messenger offers one of two choices: (where we offer only one!) 1) “To go back to sleep and wake up again and believe whatever you want to believe” or 2) “Follow the passage and see where it takes you. All we're offering is the truth...nothing more”. But to this we would add: “Consequently, the Truth brings with it a joy unspeakable, of a life blessed now and an endless one to come!” All WE offer is the Truth. Without them knowing, almost every human heart yearns for something better than himself, to know in Whose image he was made: to touch and embrace that which defines freedom and Truth, purpose and love, security and hope, a longing for the unseen and as yet unrealized.

“For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal” (2Cor 4:17-18).

Yes, the world is hungry for Truth, but often does not know it. We are the lights of the world, the salt of the earth. We are a city set upon a hill that cannot be hid and we must seek to lift the veil from their eyes. Having salt within us, in our speech and in our actions, we ought to make our hearers thirsty for more, to develop a taste for righteousness, to fill an ever empty and aching soul. Our message must continue as so often we are the only Bibles most people will ever read. And it's our daily duty to lead them to life; our commission to help them “escape from the ‘Matrix’”.

Peter Wisniowski (ASK Newsletter, ON)

On the book “Escaping the Matrix” by Richard Moore

“Richard is both a gifted writer and wise seer. In Escaping the Matrix, he helps us really take the red pill and examine the awful tragedy of our current world situation. More importantly, he then shows us an exciting path we can actually take to create a world that works for everyone.” [But the path is faulty!]

Jim Rough, author of Society’s Breakthrough
David and Goliath (1Sam 17)

The story of David's victory over the Philistine giant Goliath was real, of course, but it is also an acted-out parable of the promise of Gen 3:15. It symbolizes the work of Christ in two different, though related, aspects:

- Christ's moral victory over the power of sin in its personal form, in himself and for us, through his life, death and resurrection; and
- Christ's coming military victory over sin in its governmental forms, when he returns to set up God's Kingdom.

It was necessary that Christ first conquer the “world” in himself, by subduing the desires of the flesh, so that he might be qualified to conquer the nations and rule over them. Both these victories — one now past, the other still future — are beautifully outlined in the stirring drama of 1Sam 17. In this epic encounter between faith and force, spirit and flesh, the godly and the earthly, we see all the redemptive purpose of God, unfolding from Eden onward.

“The Philistines gathered their forces for war” (1Sam 17:1). The name “Philistine” has found a place in the English language as a common noun, describing those who are ignorant and uncultured, those who are “of the earth, earthly” (1Cor 15:47), without any aspirations toward higher things.

The Philistines pitched their tents in “Ephes Dammim”, which signifies “the border of blood”. This site was a little south of Jerusalem and halfway over toward the Mediterranean Sea, at the border between the Israelite hills and the Philistine plain. In this vicinity, in and around Jerusalem, the City of the great King, Christ and the saints will fight the last battles to establish the Kingdom of God.

The “border of blood” marked the crest, or high point, of human power — the point where it was broken and turned back. It symbolizes both Golgotha in the past, and Armageddon in the future. “Ephes Dammim” is closely related in meaning to Acel-dama (“the field of blood”), where the traitor Judas met his fate (Acts 1:19).

“The Philistines occupied one hill and the Israelites another, with the valley between them” (1Sam 17:3). Mountains in Scripture often represent military powers (Zech 6:1), while valleys are places of sorrow, humiliation, and trial — and sometimes of destruction. The prophet Joel says the serpent-power of the Gentiles will be broken in the valley of Jehoshaphat (Joel 3:12). Like David, Jesus had to go into “the valley of the shadow of death” (Psa 23:4) to conquer the “giant” of sin.

“Goliath” (vs. 4) means “exile”; “Gath” means “winepress” — a place where grapes are trodden underfoot. The Philistine giant was, like Cain (Gen 4:14, 16), an exile from God because of sin. He was trampled down by David, even as all human power and pride will be trodden down by Christ in the great winepress of the wrath of God (Rev 14:19). Goliath's height was six cubits (the number of man (cp. the number “666” in Rev 13:18) and a short span. Perhaps this “span” represents the brief transition period between the long years of human rule and the kingdom.

Goliath was covered with brass, the symbol of flesh. He was the human equivalent of the brass, or brazen, serpent of Numb 21 — the power of sin destroyed by Christ
on the cross. He was arrayed in armor and weapons of the flesh, in contrast to the spiritual arsenal of Eph 6:13-17, in which David trusted (1Sam 17:45), as did Jesus.

This mighty champion of the flesh came out into the valley between the two armies, every day for forty days, to defy the God of Israel. It was a sad, shameful spectacle; not a man of Israel, not even Saul, himself a giant (1Sam 10:23), had the faith and courage to confront this blasphemer (17:11).

Now comes a sudden break in the narrative (vs. 12), introducing the second principal warrior in this great struggle. David was a young man, a shepherd of Bethlehem (vs. 15), who had been sent by his father to take provisions to his three older brothers serving in Saul's army (vv 17-19).

When he came to his brethren, David was met with scorn and derision (vs. 28). Likewise Jesus, when he came to save his brethren from the “giant” of sin, met the same ridicule. How much natural man needs salvation; yet how little he realizes it!

The young man David could not understand the inaction of Saul’s men:

“Who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?” (vs. 26).

The words of this young shepherd came to the ears of the distressed king, who was so desperate that he sent for him. And the poor shepherd said to the mighty king:

“Let no one lose heart on account of this Philistine; your servant will go and fight him” (vs. 32).

Saul reasons according to the flesh, which is fatally obsessed with size and natural advantage: “You are not able...” (vs. 33).

But why not, if God is with him? How often do we forget the strength of faith, and make the same mistake — being tentative, timid, and even fearful? How often we forget that, if God is for us, no man or nothing can stand in our way!

David wisely refused Saul’s offer of armor. The children of the Spirit are no match for the children of the flesh if they attempt to meet them on their own ground and do battle with their own weapons. The “seed of the woman” will always be outclassed by the “seed of the serpent” — whether it be in numbers, experience, prestige or education. Their defense and offence must be in the “shield” of faith and the “sword” of the Spirit (Eph 6:16,17)!

For his weapon, David took his sling and then chose five smooth stones out of the brook. (Why five? Was it because Goliath had four brothers, also giants?) The sling, made of animal skin, would require a death for its preparation. Like the garments that God prepared to cover Adam and Eve’s nakedness after their sin, the sling also pointed to a sacrificial death.

This sling (symbolizing a sacrificial death) gave all the power to the stone which David hurled against the giant. The stone which brought down Goliath symbolizes Christ: He is the stone rejected by the builders, but later made the cornerstone of God’s building (Psa 118:22). He is also the stone cut out of the mountain of human flesh without hands (i.e., born of a woman, but without a human father:
Gen 3:15), which struck and destroyed Nebuchadnezzar’s image (Dan 2:34), and then filled the whole earth.

The smiting of the “dream” image in Daniel 2 is parallel to David’s smiting of Goliath, with one significant difference: One stone struck Goliath in the head (cp. Gen 3:15), which symbolizes the center of life, and thought. The other struck the image on the feet, which (as the image is constructed) symbolizes the time when its destruction is accomplished. But the end result is the same: the image is destroyed, and Israel is saved.

The Nebuchadnezzar image represents the accumulated history of the four great empires that collectively make up the “serpent-power” of the Kingdom of Men, which oppressed God’s kingdom of Israel. David’s selection of five stones relates his victory to the fifth great Kingdom, the Kingdom of God that will finally conquer all and fill the earth with His glory.

“The stone sank into Goliath’s forehead” (1Sam 17:49). This is a pattern of the fulfillment of God’s promise in the Garden of Eden, that the woman’s seed should bruise the serpent’s head. The complete fulfillment of this picture stretches from the cross to the military destruction of the last pieces of human rule and oppression, when Christ returns.

So “David ran... and drew out Goliath’s sword... and cut off his head” (vs. 51). And he brought the head to Jerusalem (vs. 54). David’s act symbolized the destruction of the head of sin, accomplished by Jesus in his own body, and finalized at Golgotha (the place of the skull!) just outside the walls of Jerusalem. (Hebrew tradition suggests that Golgotha was so named because it was the burial place of Goliath’s head.)

David’s act also pointed forward to the cutting off of all mortal ruling power, and the transferring of all the world’s power to Jerusalem, “the city of the great king” (Matt 5:35).

David’s wonderful victory revitalized the army of Israel, which then went on to totally defeat the Philistines. Those who were powerless and afraid to face Goliath received new strength and courage from David’s victory. Like David, Jesus was the only one capable of winning the special victory over the “serpent”. And his victory over the “devil”, like David’s over Goliath, delivered his brethren who “through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage” (Heb 2:15).

“O death, where is your sting? O grave, where is your victory?... But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1Cor 15:55,57).

It is this victory, which Christ won for us, that we remember as we take the bread and the wine.

And it is the final portion of this victory, to which we look forward, when we pray, “May your kingdom come!” “For I tell you I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.”

George Booker (Austin Leander, TX)
Jamaica — Heroes’ Day Fraternal Gathering

Surely, every day with Jesus is sweeter than the day before. This experience is a great one. The greetings were friendly. The smiles were real and the hugs were warm. There was spontaneous expression of happiness all over the faces. The joy of meeting together as one in the Lord could be felt — “Come ye that love the Lord and let your joys be known”. This was exactly the mood that about 100 brethren, sisters, friends and young people exhibited at the annual Fraternal Gathering on October 21, 2013, in the May Pen Ecclesial hall. We were in one accord to exalt the name of our Lord God.

The tent at the front was as close as it could be to the hall. This was necessary to assist in accommodation for the day. The windows and doors of the meeting room were wide open so the cool westerly winds came in with great delight. The sun peeped in for a short while, but was no match for the continued coolness of the welcomed winds. The theme for the day was, “The Ways of Righteousness”.

The Righteousness of Elijah

Bro. Marlon Jackson of Round Hill Ecclesia interestingly drew our attention to
the righteousness of Elijah — I Kings 17:1-6. God used the prophet as an answer to Ahab’s and Jezebel’s wicked deeds. Baalism was very rampant in those days and God sent His righteous servant to eradicate such a vile, cruel religion. Elijah showed undaunted courage, zealously, calmness and upright which placed him among the most outstanding characters produced by Israel.

Elijah loved God greatly. God used him to stop rain from falling for some years. He proved who was the true and living God on Mount Carmel, when he had an encounter with the worshippers of Baal. God fed Elijah by a raven and a widow from Zarephath when a jar of meal and a cruise of oil never failed because of his righteous life style.

For God to use us, we have to avail ourselves. Show trust and confidence in the living God and exhibit a full life of righteousness. Display the characteristics of the “Fruit of the Spirit” in Galatians 5:22-23. Follow the marvelous example of Elijah. He stood for righteousness in all circumstances. Let us be vigilant and become servants of Elijah’s God.

The Righteousness of Daniel

Bro. Ray Arthurs from Broughton excitingly gave the second talk. Reading was from Daniel chapter 1. Daniel was a remarkable man, absolutely unwavering in his own conviction. King Nebuchadnezzar tried very hard to change Daniel and his friends. The Lord gave them firm determination to be true, whatever the situation.

Daniel refused to eat the king’s food, knowing from the law that it might have been offered to idols. He kept his righteousness. Although Daniel’s three (3) friends knew the terrible punishment if they refused to bow down to Nebuchadnezzar’s image, they stood firm to their righteousness. The angel of God protected them in the fiery furnace and there was not a scorch on them. The Lord sent His angel and shut the lions’ mouth. Darius realized that no other God could deliver after that sort and that only Daniel’s God should be worshipped.

It is also clear that we carry our religion wherever we go. Read the Bible and pray every day. Trust the Lord in all things. Always make our decisions with God in our hearts and He will see us through. The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous and His ears are open to their prayers.

Group Discussions

The essence of the group discussions showed that walking, standing or sitting in the way of righteousness is the only acceptable way forward to the kingdom of God. These options should be taken seriously, as
God is a righteous Father and if we would follow Him, we have to be doers of righteousness. Don’t take lightly what God has done for us — Eph. 2:8-9. If we purpose in our hearts to not sin against God and to stay in the way of righteousness, God’s grace is sufficient to keep us there.

God wants us to share the good news right where we are so that when we stand before Him one day, He can say, “Mission accomplished!” True believers need to adhere to the righteousness of Elijah, Daniel and other sincere servants of God. They were inclined to doing the purpose of the Lord God. These examples were written for our admonition and learning.

Let us go where Jesus would have us go, do what he would have us do. Remember that faith & works walk hand in hand. We should visit the sick, support the activities of the ecclesias, communicate with those in isolation, be strong and do works of righteousness.

**Deliverance of the Righteous**

Bro. Keith Kinlocke of Spanish Town was emphatic in giving his exhortation about how God uses different strategies to deliver the righteous. He will certainly deliver us but we have to do our part. There is an outstanding principle throughout the Scriptures that we work out our salvation with trembling and fear. We have the assurance that God works with and through us to carry out His plan and purpose. Never doubt the promises of God. There are too many evidence of His power.

There are times when the offender behaves in such a way as to bring about his own destruction and deliverance to the people of God (Deut 2:30). When the King of Syria realized that Elisha was the informer in the camp, he ordered his governors to camp around the city by night in preparation to attack and destroy Israel. Elisha’s servants were afraid but he assured them that the Lord would be their deliverer. The Syrians were smitten with blindness — 2Kings 6:1-25, while Israel was delivered. Elisha knew that there was greater strength in the unseen reality of the host of heaven than in the visible situation in the Syrian camp.

Again, in Isaiah 36:14&15, the Assyrian king challenged God’s greatness when he told the people not to trust in Hezekiah’s God for He couldn’t deliver them. But in chapter 37:36, God smote them and brought deliverance to His people. Do we show faith in the God we serve? Daniel showed extraordinary faith in the God he served. He is our God too. Let us endeavour to live an acceptable life before God so that He finds it pleasurable to deliver us in times of trouble and eventually enter us into eternal life. The right hand of God and His loving arms will carry us through.

During the day we enjoyed the well appreciated convenience of two female wash rooms and one for the male, thanks to the CBMC through the CBMJ. Previously there was only one washroom for all. Attending this Fraternal Gathering was a real blessing to us. We were refreshed and motivated to let our light shine even brighter, so that our righteousness can be seen in our actions.

*Sis. Gerzel Gordon, May Pen Ecclesia
Submitted by Sis. Jan Berneau, CBMA/CBMC Publicity*
Trinidad Baptisms

Bro. Brad Butts let us know that two lovely young Sunday School teenagers have been baptized in the Erin Ecclesia. While only 15 and 16 they have been strong students of Scripture for a number of years and were anxious to make the commitment to Christ. Bro. Colin and Sis. Kathy Badger worked with them as young girls. Bro. Colin would have been thrilled to see these developments. There were a number of brothers and sisters who traveled to Erin for the occasion and enjoyed the use of the new hall.

Our new sister’s names are Angel Ramsaroop (16) and Raveena Sedath (15). They took on the name of Christ on December 8, 2013 and will be members of the Erin ecclesia.

Submitted by Sis. Jan Berneau, CBMA/C Publicity

The Message Does Not Change!

In looking through an old diary, two advertisements for Christadelphian Bible Mission lectures caught my attention. They announced a series of public lectures to be held at the Institute of Jamaica in downtown Kingston in March 1959. These ads appeared in Jamaica’s national newspaper then called “The Daily Gleaner”.

What is particularly interesting are the topics and how similar they are to subjects we may use today. These ads are over 50 years old but the message remains the same. This is as it should be. Regardless of time and place in this world, the wonderful message of God’s purpose and God’s call to salvation continues to be the same in content and appeal. The sowing of the good seed of the Word of God is the constant work of the followers of Jesus. May God’s blessing be upon all faithful preaching of His Word.

Ken Curry (Toronto East, ON)
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 CICH, c/o David & Connie Stiles, 3 Blue Acre Rd., Middletown, CT 06457. For info e-mail daconstiles@att.net

**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
(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.)

BALTIMORE, MD

We very much appreciate the help of the following brothers in giving lectures for our ecclesia: Ben Link (Meriden, CT), Jason Hensley (Simi Hills, CA) and Tim Lange (Norfolk, VA). We also thank our Bro. Dennis Bevans. Each lecture was preceded by a CYC leafleting effort in the neighborhood of our hall.

Once again we had a Vacation Bible School this summer. It was very much enjoyed by children from both the Baltimore and Washington Ecclesias, as well as some children from the neighborhood. The Baltimore CYC has hosted several study weekends. Bro. Jim Cowie gave classes at their Frisbie challenge. They also held a beach camping trip for the young men in our group. The CYC's annual boat challenge was enjoyed by many young people. Classes were given at both of these weekends too. There were a number of out-of-town visitors at these events. Bro. Nathan Badger (Cambridge, ON) presented a helpful series of classes at a study day in September. The talks were entitled “Jacob: In His Strength He Struggled with God.”

In October the Baltimore Ecclesia hosted our semi annual Baltimore/Washington gathering. Bro. Steve Davis (Boston, MA) was our guest speaker. We very much enjoyed his talks on, “Gleanings from Ruth”.

Our ecclesia was delighted to welcome a baby daughter, Shaina, born to Bro. Josiah and Sis. Jenny Hewitson on July 1, 2013. Shaina is baby sister to Skylar and Victoria. We rejoiced with the Bevans family as their daughter, Sis. Hailey Bevans, married Bro. Brian Moore on November 9, 2013. May God bless their marriage as they walk together toward God’s kingdom.

We are currently presenting a series of seminars on Learning to Read the Bible Effectively. These talks are being held at our ecclesial hall, instead of at a library as we have done previously. Having it at the hall seems to be an advantage. We have been blessed to have ten or eleven visitors at each talk. They are an enthusiastic group and remain after each class to chat and ask questions. We also have a number of our young people attending. We are planning to continue, God willing, with another series when the current classes end in January. This is a cooperative effort with our Washington brethren. Bro. Dennis Bevans and Bro. John Woodward (Baltimore) are presenters with Bro. David Perry (Washington).

We have begun a Mutual Improvement class for brethren of all ages as well as brethren-to-be. Our goal is to promote excellence in service, with attention to study, presentation, presiding, reading and prayer. These classes are also a joint effort with the Washington Ecclesia.

Andy Bilello

BRANTFORD, ON

We are happy to welcome back our Sis Ona Lawton by way of transfer from the Barrie Ecclesia as of September 8, 2013 and look forward to our continued fellowship together.
We rejoice with our family in heaven that after giving a good confession of his faith, SAMUEL RIDDLE, the son of Bro. Paul Riddle and Sis. Pauline Van Every, was baptized on October 26, 2013. It is encouraging to us all to see another of our young people commit their way to our Lord. We thank our Bro. David Griffin (Kings Norton, UK) for his ministrations and studies at our October Thanksgiving Gathering including “From Gifts to Gratitude” a presentation on the Christadelphian Jewish Relief program. We also thank our Bro. Neville Clark (Tea Tree Gully, AUS) for visiting us following winter Bible school and giving the exhortation and Bible Class on the prophecy of Daniel. God willing our annual Brantford Junior CYC & Little Disciples Winter Gathering is to again be held on February 8th, 2014 at Camp Trillium under the theme of Peter.

Bro. Daniel Billington

DETROIT ROYAL OAK, MI

Since the last report from the Royal Oak Ecclesia, there have been many happy events to report from this lightstand. We are pleased to report the following baptisms into the saving name of Christ: STEPHANIE RAMIREZ (July 2012) and DAVID STYLES (March 2013). David is the son of our Bro. Ken and Sis. Diane Styles.

Some of our young people have been united in marriage recently: In August 2013, Sis. Stephanie Ramirez was married to Bro. Michael Jackson. In July 2012 Bro. Davy Morgan and Sis. Jakki Beckerson were united in marriage and we welcome them into our ecclesia by way of transfer from the Ann Arbor ecclesia. We wish all our young couples well in their united walk towards the Kingdom.

We welcome by transfer from the Kouts, IN ecclesia Sis. Heather Kehn. By way of transfer, we commend Bro. Peter and Sis. Karly Styles to Brantford ecclesia. We also commend Bro. David and Sis. Joanne Halton, and Bro. Ryan and Sis. Jerusha Vaughn to the San Luis Obispo, CA ecclesia, and also Sis. Sarah Wilhoit to the Detroit (Milford Road) ecclesia. We are sure all these Brethren and Sisters will be of great assistance in their new ecclesias, as they were in ours.

We are also pleased to note the following potential additions to our Sunday school. Thomas Ryan (born August 2011) to Bro. and Sis. Jeremy and Sarah Wilhoit. Amelia Ruth (October 2012) to Bro. and Sis. Matthew and Samantha Jackson.

With great sadness we announce the falling asleep of two of our most much loved sisters. Sis. Isabel Comito fell asleep in the Lord September 2010. She was the wife of our Bro. Tony Comito, and mother and grandmother to several members of our ecclesia. Sis. Isabel will be remembered for her cheerful disposition and willingness to help others.

Sis. Ruth Rankin, beloved mother of our Sis. Joyce Comito, fell asleep in February 2013 during her 94th year. She will be remembered for her long service to the Lord, having contributed in many ways, including, with her late husband Bro. Curtis, as agent for the Christadelphian. She loved to tell the story of having been instrumental in the holding of the first Eastern Bible School at Wilbraham Academy in 1947, as she was employed at the school.

Our sympathy is with our Sis. Susan in the death of her husband, Bro. Arthur Armstrong (Livonia) during August, 2013. Bro Arthur was baptized in 1953, and during his long walk in the Truth he was a tireless preacher. We share with all these faithful the sure hope of our future resurrection in the Kingdom.

We announce that Bro. Mark Newth has resigned from the Christadelphian Fellowship.
Bro. Greg Muniz has assumed the duties of recording brother. Please direct all correspondence to romi.christadelphians@gmail.com.  

_Bucky Wilhoit_  

**HONESDALE, PA**  

We welcomed Sis. Anne and Bro. Dave Cheetham at our ecclesia when Bro. Dave gave us his wonderful exhortation. Our sisters celebrated their visit with a tasty luncheon. Our ecclesia is very thankful and blessed for the many years of visiting brother service provided to us by the Moorestown, NJ Ecclesia.  

_Stephen J. DeMarco_  

**MERIDEN, CT**  

During 2013 we enjoyed the company of many visiting brothers and sisters from ecclesias across the US and Canada including: Abington, MA; Atlanta North, GA; Austin-Leander, TX; Boston, MA; Cranston, RI; Echo Lake, NJ; Honesdale, PA; Kingston, ON; Largo, FL; Manhattan, NY; Moorestown, NJ; Pittsburgh, PA; Portland, OR; Detroit Royal Oak, MI; Shelburne, ON; Southern New Hampshire; Wachusett, MA; and Westerly, RI. We want to thank all who joined us at the Lord's table, and also the visiting brothers who exhorted us including: Chris Sales (Shelburne, ON), Jim McKelvie (Moorestown, NJ), Peter Hemingray (Detroit Royal Oak, MI) and Jim Barton (Kingston, ON).

It has been a monumental year for us. After ten years of prayers, planning, progress, delays, concerns, and answered prayers, the Meriden Ecclesia moved into a lovely new ecclesial hall in August. Our new address is: 145 Evansville Avenue, Meriden, CT, 06451-5155. Construction was completed in mid-July. The timing was perfect. We held the last meeting at our old hall on July 21, 2013. For the next two Sundays we met with the brothers and sisters at the Eastern Christadelphian Bible School in New London, CT. During this time we scurried to get the new hall ready for occupancy. On Sunday, August 11, 2013, we held our first Memorial service in the new hall. It was a very happy occasion. It is difficult to extend adequate thanks to the many brothers and sisters whose prayers, generosity, and hard work have supported us in this project. And we are thankful to the worldwide brotherhood for its generous response to the building appeal that we made in 2013.

Bro. Mark and Sis. Ngaere O’Grady (Tawa, Wellington, NZ) were among the participants at this year’s Eastern Bible School. Their itinerary brought them directly to Meriden after the school, and they joined us for dinner at the new hall on August 6, 2013. Afterward, Bro. Mark led our inaugural service: a midweek Bible class on, “The Lamb’s Book of Life”. Many visitors from around southern New England joined us for dinner and Bible class that evening. It was a very special occasion.

The year has been memorable for us in other ways, too. In January, Bro. Chris Sales led a Bible study weekend on, “The Life of Joseph”. His classes rounded off the Genesis studies we were having with Bible seminar attendees. The classes were very well received and we thank Bro. Chris for them. In February, the ecclesia enjoyed a tasty “Soup Off”. Everyone made donations for the privilege of sampling the many soups and, at the end, voted for their favorites. The winning soup maker chose to have the proceeds sent to the Christadelphian Save the Children Fund.

In May, our brother and sister, Brad Sabean and Alyssa Tuck were united in marriage. Our prayers and best wishes are with the newlyweds. They now serve the ecclesia
very effectively together. In October, we enjoyed a visit from Bro. Peter and Sis. Pat Hemingray. It was like old times again, since Bro. Peter, Sis. Pat and their children were an integral part of the Meriden Ecclesia from 1984 to 1996. Bro. Peter led a study weekend and exhorted us during their visit.

We are happy to report that Bro. Bryan Camarillo transferred his ecclesial membership from Austin Leander, TX, to Meriden in August. He is a welcome addition to our meeting. Late last year, 2012, Sis. Sarah Waite changed jobs and transferred her membership from Meriden to the Atlanta North Ecclesia. We commend her to the love of the brothers and sisters there. In November 2013, Sis. Rosamond Smith transferred from Meriden to Worcester, MA. Sis. Ros grew up in the Worcester Ecclesia many years ago, and she returns to the support and care of the brothers and sisters there.

Several of our members have been hospitalized during the past year. These include Bro. Everett Wight, Bro. Rob Hammond, Bro. David Stiles, Sis. Helen Sweet, Sis. Camelia Harvey, and Sis. Norma Papandrea. Thankfully, they are all home at the present time and managing fairly well. Sis. Faith Wight was quite sick earlier in the year. Sis. Debbie Ferraiolo has been very ill all year. And our aged Sis. Edythe Skinner has been in and out of hospital and rehab facilities several times during the year. We are reminded how much we need the healing touch of the Lord Jesus.

Our hearts go out to Sis. Faith Marra who lost a young daughter-in-law, Michelle, to cancer in August. Our prayers are also with her son, Danny, who was a member of the Meriden Sunday School when he was growing up. Danny is left with four children, the youngest of which was born just before Michelle died.

Stephen Harper

PARIS AVENUE, OH

The members of the Paris Avenue Ecclesia (OH) have enjoyed fellowship with brothers and sisters from other ecclesias during the Second Semester of 2013. Words of exhortation were given on October 6th by Bro. Henry Ternent of the Pittsburgh Ecclesia.

For our Fall 2013 Study Weekend we were led in classes dealing with the temple of Ezekiel entitled “Enter into His Gates with Thanksgiving and into His Courts with Praise” by Bro. Stan Isbell (North Houston, TX). Nearly two hundred were in attendance with visitors from Ontario, Newfoundland, Virginia, Michigan, Indiana, South Carolina, Texas, Washington and Pennsylvania.

We are pleased to report the addition of Sis. Ashley Harris to our ecclesia and her subsequent marriage to Bro. Phillip Prater on August 3, 2013. One week later, on August 10, 2013, we celebrated the marriage of Bro. Mike Cooper and Sis. Danielle Walker. We wish both couples God’s blessing on their new lives together.

We acknowledge Sis. Victoria Bates’ decision to separate from fellowship and the breaking of bread. With great joy we welcome back into fellowship Sis. Jennifer (Snyder) Needs. Another event of great joy was the celebration of the ninety-seventh birthday of Sis. Louise McDonald on September 17, 2013.

Our annual ecclesial picnic was held at Snyder Lake on August 17, 2013, with visitors joining us from Ontario and Pittsburgh. Our ecclesia hosted a Preaching Campaign on the topic, “Signs of the Times” at the Foltz Center in East Canton on three Thursday evenings in October. On Saturday afternoon, October 19, 2013, all three lectures were presented at a shopping mall in Alliance, OH. Then from October 24-December 19,
2013, a follow-up seminar was presented back at the Foltz Center dealing with the topic, “Fundamentals of Bible Prophecy” for which the attendance was heartening.

Upcoming events this year, Lord willing and if our Lord and Master has not returned, will be our Spring Study Weekend on March 8-9, 2014, with Bro. Ken Styles (Detroit Royal Oak, MI). The topic of that weekend will be announced later. Lord willing, our Fall Study Weekend is planned for September 13-14, 2014, with Bro. Michael Owen (UK). For further information on either of these study weekends, contact Bro. Derek Elder by phone at: 216-965-9763, or by email at: delder1@kent.edu. We ask that, if you plan to attend either event, that you register with Bro. Derek for purposes of planning.

SAN DIEGO COUNTY, CA
We’re delighted and thankful to report that on July 14, 2013 we rejoiced in the baptism of LANCE STICKNEY, son of Bro. Mike and Sis. Myra Stickney. On December 15, 2013, JOSHUA TUNNELL was baptized; Josh is the son of Bro. Ethan and Sis. Shawna Tunnell. Both young men grew up in our Sunday School. We pray for the Father’s continued blessings on our young brothers as we walk together toward the Kingdom.

We were blessed with a natural birth as well: Zoe Lawrence was born on December 1, 2013. She is the daughter of Bro. Drew and Sis. Kelley. Zoe was born with a cataract to her left eye and surgery has been scheduled. We pray for our Father to bless the outcome. We share the sorrow of our Sis. Diane O’Kelley whose brother (Bro. Mark O’Kelley of Little Rock, AR) fell asleep in Christ in December.

In September, by way of transfer we welcomed Bro. David and Sis. Gerry Ann Lloyd from Simi Hills, CA following their relocation to the nearby community of Ramona. We have also enjoyed the presence of Sis. Sarah Bilello, from the Detroit area, who now attends the University of San Diego. We appreciate the many brothers and sisters who have visited us and especially thank those who provided exhortations and classes.

Bro. Kent Ellis

SARASOTA, FL
The Sarasota ecclesia is pleased to announce the baptism into the saving name of Christ of TABITHA HALL, daughter of the late Sister Marge Forbes and the late Ted Forbes. Our prayer is that Sister Tabitha feel the presence of the Lord in her new walk in Christ.

James Wilkinson

SUSSEX, NB
We have been blessed by visits during the summer from several brethren and sisters: Phil and Barb Wilton (Toronto West, ON); Eugene, Rose and Ben Deadman (Australia); Jason and Maryann Deadman and family (Mississauga West, ON); and Peter and Norma Forbes (Glenfield, UK). We thank brethren Peter and Jason for their exhortations and Bible Class study.

Our Thanksgiving gathering last October was led by Bro. Ron Hicks (Washington, DC) and we thank him for his uplifting studies and fellowship. At this time we also had several brethren and sisters from Nova Scotia and the New England States.

We are looking forward to the visit of Bro. Martin Webster (Kitchener/Waterloo, ON) on April 26-27, 2014. He will lead a study weekend on “1 John – Epistle of Sublime Truth & Love”. Our Spring Youth Camp will be held May 16-18, to be led by Bro. John Mannell (Toronto West, ON) and the Thanksgiving Gathering October 11-12 which
will be lead by Bro. Jim Sullivan (Boston, MA) on “The Sons of Zeruiah”. We are pleased to have the Kabangu family from Tanzania who are now living in Moncton, NB.

*Cliff Baines*

**TORONTO EAST, ON**

We rejoice in the baptisms of AMANDA CURRY, daughter of Bro. Steve and Sis. Marie-Lynn Curry, and CAROLINA ARCHIBALD, daughter of Bro. Dan and Sis. Maribel Archibald into the household of faith on November 24, 2013. We pray for God’s blessing on them both as they commit their lives to Christ.

*Andrew Webb*

**VICTORIA, BC**

We continue to be blessed with numerous visitors, coming from near and far. The list is, happily, too long to accurately record. We welcome them all to meet with us. We have received by transfer from the Saanich Ecclesia, Bro. Kevin and Sis. Rebecca Hunter, as well as Bro. Casey Brown and his sister in the flesh, Sis. Becky Brown. From the Southern New Hampshire Ecclesia, we have received Bre. Micah and Philip Quindazzi. From the Vernon Ecclesia, we received Bro. Alex Harper. Bro. Dave and Sis. Kessia Higgs have been transferred with our love to the Comox Valley Ecclesia. Our Sister Rebekah Dixon has resigned from the ecclesia.

We rejoiced with our new sister, ANDREA CERON at her baptism into the saving name of Jesus on October 12, 2013. Our new sister came to us following a campaign surrounding a public lecture on Israel a few years ago.

We held our second Bible Mission Fundraiser on February 9, 2013. It was a great success, with over $10,000.00 being raised for mission activities. Bro. Jim Styles (Simi Hills, CA) spoke on the subject, “God’s Wonderful Plan of Redemption” at our 2013 fraternal gathering in September 2013.

Bro. Chris Sales spoke at our fall 2013 study weekend held on November 9, 2013. His subject for the weekend was, “Pictures of Redemption.” We thank our brethren for their work among us.

We are looking forward to a spring 2014 visit from Bro. Jason Hensley. Our brother will be speaking at our Spring study weekend to be held March 15-16, 2014. His topic will be, “And I Will Send You the Comforter.”

Our annual Pacific Northwest CYC Conference is scheduled for the Easter weekend, April 18, 2014. Speaking will be Bro. Jay Mayock (Hamilton Book Road, ON). Our fraternal gathering, God willing, will be held: Labor Day, 2014. For further information please contact the undersigned by email at: victoria@cssl.ca.

*Clyde Snobelen*

**BRO. GORDON DANGERFIELD**

At 7:20 am on Saturday November 2, 2013, in Victoria, BC, Canada, our dearly loved Bro. Gordon Dangerfield fell asleep in Christ. He was born in Adelaide, Aust. on July 2, 1946, and was baptised into Christ in that same city on April 4, 1965.

Gordon leaves his beloved wife, Sis. Beth, and his three children, Sis. Leanne, Sis. Karen and Bro. Mark as well as their spouses and three grandchildren. Our brother died in the hope of the resurrection and the coming kingdom and because of this we do not mourn as others mourn who do not have a hope. However, we do feel
sadness in our hearts as we think of Gordon. He lived a life which has left us many good memories.

Gordon was known throughout the worldwide brotherhood for his friendly character, his sense of humour, his Bible studies and talks, and his direct and practical advice. His Bible knowledge was shown equally in Spanish and in English. He was guided and motivated by spiritual principles which he not only preached but also practised. He had a genuine interest in others and could talk with people from all backgrounds. In meetings with young people, formal meetings with the elders of the ecclesia and private conversations with his friends, he showed his energy and enthusiasm.

Gordon died of a brain tumour. During the last months this caused him problems in forming words and communicating his thoughts. The last thing he lost was his capacity to pray to his heavenly Father. Beth and Karen said a prayer was one of the very final things he said.

Gordon now sleeps in Christ, awaiting the moment of the trumpet call, when by God’s grace he will be transformed.

“Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.” (1Corinthians 15:58)

Clyde Snobelen

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**Early Intelligence from Victoria**

VICTORIA (B.C.) — Brother Heritage writes: — “We have been encouraged in falling in with two fellow-travelers to the Kingdom in the persons of brother and sister Nelson, who were contemporary with Dr. Thomas, in New York. They have held on to the truth through many years and many changes. There are six of us here now; we sometimes wish some of our brethren who are travelling, and can preach the Word of God and His Kingdom, would make this their home. The climate is good, and the opportunity to make a living, we think, is as good as most other places. Your efforts on the ‘Life of Christ’ are appreciated here.”

The Christadelphian, 1890 p 39
Are We Learning From Our Experiences?

“Experience is a hard teacher because she gives the test first, the lesson afterward,” major league pitcher Vernon Saunders Law observed. The test may not be enjoyable, but the important part is learning from the experience.

While it is possible to have grown in wisdom from 20 years of experience, it is also possible not to have benefited from one year of experience even if repeated 20 times over. Do we learn from our experiences or do we repeat the same mistakes over and over again? The thing about the school of experience is that it will repeat the lesson if we flunk the first time. As Archibald McLeish observed, “There is only one thing more painful than learning from experience and that is not learning from experience.”

We each are given 24 hours a day during which we make choices, things happen, and we busy ourselves with our activities. How do we deal with the challenges that come our way, the calamities that may befall us, the illnesses, the miserableness of human nature in ourselves and others? What lessons are we learning from our day-to-day experiences? Are we learning the lessons that the Lord wants us to learn?

Paul tells the believers in Rome, “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ … and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope.”

What does Paul mean, that we glory in tribulations? Because, as he explains, we benefit from them. We may find it hard to actually thank God for our troubles, but we can bear them with a better spirit when we realize that our loving heavenly Father is sending them our way with a good purpose: so that we learn patience, gain experience, and become full of hope for the coming age of glory. Paul continues his explanation, “And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts.” We learn to love God more because we are so thankful for the hope of the kingdom that God is lovingly preparing us for.

James also encourages us to rejoice in our troubles: “My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.” He helps us to recognize, as Paul did, that we learn patience from our troubles, and this learning is essential to our development towards perfection.

We read in Hebrews that we should be “looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.” The trials Jesus endured are much more than what we have to face, as the book of Hebrews
explains: “For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls. You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin.”

Although we may not relish pain or trouble, we read in Hebrews that we should be pleased that it is happening and learn from it: “And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: ‘My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; For whom the Lord loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives. If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons.’ ”

Chastening is difficult while it is happening, but we need to look past it and realize that God is using it to teach us valuable lessons for our eternal welfare. The section from Hebrews continues, “Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness.”

What a wonderful privilege, to be partakers of his holiness! We flawed, weak creatures can be granted this gift only after our characters are refined. We know that Jesus, God's own beloved son, learned by hardships: “Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered.” How did Jesus deal with it? As we just read, “for the joy that was set before him, he endured the cross and despised the shame.”

We know all his suffering was worthwhile for our Savior because his loving father, God, was training him, and we need to accept the trials we are now enduring by realizing that we also are being trained. We must learn the lessons God is teaching us and follow the example of our Lord, looking beyond our present troubles. As he did, we can visualize in our mind’s eye the glorious time soon to come when Jesus will bestow upon his faithful that crown of righteousness. Paul summed up the benefits of the hardships in his life when he said, “Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.”

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.)

FEBRUARY, 2014

8 Brantford, ON Junior CYC & Little Disciples Winter Gathering is again to be held at Camp Trillium under the theme of Peter.
23-28 Palm Springs Bible School  The speakers this year will be Bro. Wilfred Alleyne (Birmingham, UK), and Bro. David Jennings (Pomona, CA). The school offers a wonderful environment for the mature adult to study God’s word and enjoy fellowship. To register, contact Bro. Jeff Gelineau at register@christadelphianbibleschool.org, or visit our website www.californiabibleschool.org.

MARCH, 2014

1 New England Little Disciples at Barton Center, North Oxford, Ma. A day of Bible study and activities for children pre-K to 7th grade. Students are expected to complete a workbook(available online) in advance. See website www.nelittledisciples.com. Contact Sis. Tammy Rundle nelittledisciples@hotmail.com or 781-829-4410.

8-9 Paris Avenue, OH Spring Study Weekend with Bro. Ken Styles (Detroit Royal Oak, MI). The topic will be announced later. Contact Bro. Derek Elder by phone at: 216-965-9763, or by email at: delder1@kent.edu.

15-16 Victoria, BC Spring study weekend with Bro. Jason Hensley. His topic will be, “And I Will Send You the Comforter.” Contact Bro. Clyde Snobelen victoria@csl2.ca.

APRIL, 2014

5-6 Boston, MA 23rd Annual Spring Study Weekend. Boston Ecclesia, 48 Freeman Street, Stoughton, MA. Bro. Aaron MacAdams (Worcester, MA) “Hear Now, You Sons of Levi!” Registration and coffee at 10:30AM Saturday with three classes beginning at 11:00AM. Lunch provided. The fourth class is scheduled for Sunday morning at 9:30AM, followed by Memorial Service. Contact Bro. Jim Sullivan at 781-837-8865 or jimsulliv@aol.com.


18 Victoria, BC Pacific Northwest CYC Conference. Speaking will be Bro. Jay Mayock (Hamilton Book Road, ON). Contact Bro. Clyde Snobelen victoria@csl2.ca

18-20 Wichita Falls, TX Annual Spring Gathering at T4C. Bro. Frank Abel (Hamilton Book Road, ON) will lead us in a study entitled “The Ecclesia — A Place of Refuge.” For registration contact Bro. Larry Beutel at lbeutel@alsco.com.

26-27 Sussex, NB Study weekend lead by Bro. Martin Webster (Kitchener/Waterloo, ON). His topic will be “1 John – Epistle of Sublime Truth & Love”.

MAY, 2014

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

JUNE, 2014

28-July 6 Mid-Atlantic Christadelphian Bible School at Shippensburg University, Shippensburg, PA. Theme: “O Lord God of Israel, there is no God like thee” (2Chron 6:14). The teachers will be Bro. Jim Cowie (Moreton Bay, Queensland, Australia); “Contending Earnestly for the Faith” (adults) and “Cameos of the Kingdom” (teens); Bro. Jay Mayock, Jr. (Hamilton, Book Road, ON): “All in All (A Study of Psalm 8)” (both); and Bro. Stephen Palmer(Mumbles, Swansea, UK): “Simon Peter: Learning Lessons in Discipleship” (adults) and “Digging for Treasure in the Epistle of Peter” (teens). Contact by e-mail Robin Colby macbs@live.com or check our website: www.midatlanticbibleschool.com.
JULY, 2014

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

19-27 Midwest Bible School will be held at Hanover College, Hanover, IN. Speakers and their topics are: Bro. Jim Cowie (Moreton Bay, Brisbane, Australia) “Nazarites Unto God” and Bro. Matt Norton, (Lismore, Australia) “Impressions of Christ.” For registration information, contact Bro. Mike Livermore, 44943 Yorkshire Dr., Novi, MI, 48375; 248-462-5740, e-mail: mike.live@gmail.com or visit www.midwestbibleschool.com.

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

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


AUGUST, 2014

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

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

SEPTEMBER, 2014

13-14 Paris Avenue, OH Fall Study Weekend with Bro. Michael Owen (UK). Contact Bro. Derek Elder by phone at: 216-965-9763, or by email at: delder1@kent.edu.
Life of Timothy

On Page 117 of this issue, we commence a new study on the Life of Timothy, by Bro. Ryan Mutter of the Baltimore, MD, ecclesia. Some of you might have heard his Bible Studies on the subject, and will remember how he brings out insightful details and illustrations from the life of this young, dynamic preacher of the gospel.

As Bro Ryan says

“One of the key lessons that emerges from the narrative of Timothy’s life is the contrast between the characteristics the world values, and those God values. The traits Timothy developed and the choices he made were valued by God, even though those around him did not always appreciate them.”

We hope this series will help us all, especially the younger brethren, find many examples and much to emulate in our walk towards the Kingdom.

Correction — Note on John Connally in January 2014 Tidings

The editor, by error, ascribed Sis. Susie Lange to the Champagne (sic.), IL ecclesia. She is a member of the Bloomington, Ill ecclesia, not the Champaign, IL ecclesia.
Editorial

No Man is an Island

“No man is an island, intire of it selfe; every man is a piece of the Continent, a part of the maine; if a clod bee washed away by the Sea, Europe is the lesse, as well as if a Promontorie were, as well as if a Mannor of thy friends or of thine owne were; any mans death diminishes me, because I am involved in Mankinde; And therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; It tolls for thee....” (John Donne, 1624)

The ideal ecclesia

I know it is unusual to start an editorial in The Tidings with a secular quote, but this well-known passage, usually seen as a poem, illustrates my topic: we are all connected, we are all part of the whole, especially in an ecclesial setting. When any member leaves, either to the sleep of death or by transfer or any other way, we and the ecclesia are thereby diminished. Paul also emphasizes the interconnected way an ecclesia functions:

“For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching: Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity: he that ruleth, with diligence: he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness. Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another;” (Rom 12:4-10).

It is easy to agree to this: but the practical outworking is much more difficult. All too often, inter-personal conflicts arise, for any of a multitude of reasons. Sometimes we disagree over the finer points of doctrine: sometimes our personalities conflict: and sometimes our personal problems enter into our relations with others.

It is clear what the ideal is: we all walk in the Truth in a harmonious manner, “in honour preferring another”, as Paul says. Unfortunately, this rarely happens, as we can see from the New Testament, and as we can observe in all but a few of our ecclesias.

So what I want to consider is the conflicts that might arise, and some possible ways of dealing with them. I will not consider disagreements over what can be considered a violation of our common first principle beliefs. Such situations (as well as the one we are considering) were dealt with by Bro. Robert Roberts in his ecclesial guide over 130 years ago, and are as valid now as when he wrote them. He also considered many of the areas I will deal with, but my observation is that
we have a tendency to give lip-service to Bro. Robert’s advice, but many avoid having to follow them for one purported reason or another.

The reality

Most ecclesias, however peaceful and Christ-like they strive to be, are made up of all too human individuals. Down through the ages, conflict and problems have arisen. Paul dealt with

- Personality conflicts: disputes between followers of Apollos and Paul (1Cor 3:4-6)
- Arguments about conscience (over meats offered to idols) (1Cor 6:13 etc.)
- Terrible immorality (1Cor 5:1)
- Grave apostasy over resurrection of Christ (1Cor 15:15)
- Disputes about trivia: fables and genealogies (1Tim 1:4)

The list could be continued: but I might mention a sample of disputes that have, to my knowledge, divided ecclesias in these days.

- Colors of the walls of ecclesias
- Attitude for prayer: whether to stand or sit
- Precise forms of the baptismal formula
- Divorce and remarriage
- Who gets to hold what office, or who gets to provide food for fraternals
- Temperature of the meeting room
- Who sits where in the hall
- Length of sister’s skirts, or whether it is necessary for brethren to wear a suit to meeting
- Brethren with beards: should they be on the platform

Again, this list could be endless: and the matter of divorce and re-marriage has probably split more ecclesias than any others, in my lifetime and before. But almost all of these purported reasons are in fact are colored, if not caused, by personality conflicts.

Ecclesia hopping

But why do these problems, big or small, result in such conflicts that they cause disruptions, with members leaving? Only rarely are the steps laid down by Robert Roberts properly followed. None of the above would be considered by most to involve a denial of the Truth. I believe the major cause is that we have come to believe “ecclesia hopping” is acceptable. If we have a dispute, often it is not worked through, but instead members leave and join another meeting. Any area with a multiplicity of meetings sees this happens: and members often travel quite long distances as a result.

Robert Roberts does not deal with this problem: in his days, there was rarely more than one ecclesia within commuting distance. But I personally believe that leaving a meeting for any other reason than the formation of a genuine new light-stand, or a change in your location, should be considered to fall under the provisions
of “A time to separate…”, clause 40 in the ecclesial guide. As I commented in the start of this editorial, the departure of one member diminishes us all. It inevitably changes the dynamics of an ecclesia, usually for the overall worse. After all, conflict is not necessarily bad: “Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another” (Prov 27:17). If all the ecclesia is of the same mind in everything, I would suspect something. The only problem is when a disagreement becomes a conflict, and a conflict becomes so serious that the only resolution seems to be to go separate ways. So how do we avoid getting to that serious a situation?

Conflict resolution

“Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph 4:3).

The principle is easy to say, but hard to practice. With all the best will in the world, conflicts can escalate. We have dealt, and are dealing with, such topics in these pages, and I only have space for a few suggestions. These deal mainly with the problem of conflict with an individual, but this is usually the root behind what might be considered a dispute about conduct or doctrine.

• Pledge your commitment (Rom 12:18).
• Pray for yourself (Psa 139:23–24).
• Prepare before you ask for a meeting (Prov 16:21).
• Provide a private place (Matt 18:15).
• Purpose to be honest (Prov 12:17).
• Permit total forgiveness (Col 3:13–14).
• Perceive a future harvest (Gal 6:9).

Of course, the best way of resolving conflict it to avoid them. As Paul told Timothy “Have nothing to do with foolish, ignorant controversies; you know that they breed quarrels” (2Tim 2:23 ESV). It is often said that it takes two to make an argument: just because you disagree with someone is no reason to attempt to change their mind. After all, even if you think you succeed, a mind changed against its will is of the same mind still.

Sometimes, we might unfortunately discover the conflict has made someone into what most would consider an enemy. We can, perhaps, run and hide, and move to another ecclesia so we can avoid the conflict. But what did Paul counsel? “Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good” (Rom 12:20–21). Avoidance was not recommended: engagement rather. So that hopefully you can turn the one who has become an enemy back into a friend, and can walk united towards the kingdom.

Peter Hemingray

Letters to the editor can be sent to letters@tidings.org.
Please include your name, address, e-mail, and phone.
Submissions under 300 words are encouraged —
the magazine reserves the right to edit all submissions for length and clarity.
Kindness

Use words with kindness

Breaking News! Did you hear that Scientists have finally found the cause of global warming? The cause has been determined to be Kindness!

While that may sound like a silly opening for an exhortation, Kindness can really accomplish much, and it has been said, “That just as the sun makes ice melt, kindness causes misunderstanding, mistrust, and hostility to melt away.”

I believe the Apostle Paul described the opposite of kindness to us in the third chapter of Colossians when he said now is the time to rid ourselves of all such things as anger, rage, malice, slander and filthy language. There is a lot in his words that should cause us to reflect on our own behaviors.

In our conversations, do we sometimes use words that we later regret? The easiest place for us to make such a mistake is when we are home with family members, whose everyday kindness we may take for granted.

And here, in the Ecclesia of God, when we believe our position on a matter is being challenged, we are wise to remember to be kind, even if our position is right, because we may sin in the way we treat those with opposite opinions. Paul tells us to clothe ourselves with kindness and humility, gentleness and patience. We should use those characteristics when interacting with others.

Paul also instructs us in Col 3 to avoid foolish arguments, because they produce quarrels. The Lord’s servants must not quarrel; instead we must be kind to everyone, able to teach and not resentful. We must gently instruct those opposed to us in hopes that God will lead them to accept the Truth.

Prov 151:4 (NIV) tells us that a gentle answer turns away wrath…and that the tongue that brings healing is a tree of life, but a deceitful tongue crushes the spirit. So please be careful with the use of your words. With the English language things are so often misunderstood…all the more reason to think carefully about our words before just blurting out the first thought that comes to mind.

Jesus came to heal the sick and those in need. We must follow his lead and understand that we have no permission to crush someone who is in need. Neither should we stand by, while rationalizing why we shouldn’t be the person to provide help. Even if we think the person should be able to help himself and is not REALLY in need of our help. We should be moved to take positive actions to help.

As you go through the week, please consider your ways and your words with a slant towards kindness. And pray that we may be kindly affectioned, one to another, putting the interests of others before ours, because that is what Scriptures teaches us to do.
Application to our lives
So how can you apply this part of Scriptures to your life?

Well, if in the course of your daily conversations, you find yourself talking and thinking always about yourself or the things that interest you, then you need to regroup because, life is not supposed to be about us. It is about giving glory to God and praying that He will use us as an instrument of His peace.

As much as possible we are called to live at peace with one another and place their interests before ours.

There is nothing more purposeful about this message, except that I should heed its advice. At meetings, we all tend to be too quick to put forth our own opinions as forcefully as possible. We need to tone this down.

What about you? Have you heard anything so far that might change what you do this week?

The Bible is full of examples about kindness that we should consider. Naomi prayed that the Lord would deal kindly to her daughters in law, as they too were kind towards her. She cared so much for her daughters, so much that she prayed, asking the Lord to treat them kindly.

I once observed someone acting exactly opposite of Naomi. It was at a retirement party a few years back when the retiree’s farewell address included the words, “I hope you all get what you deserve.” He said these words in a negative tone of voice. Frankly, it was sad that he carried so much resentment instead of kindness.

The call to be at peace with each other means putting out the effort to go to your Brother or Sister and actively seek a positive relationship. That is so much better than saying, “As long as I stay away from so and so, things will be okay”. Remember that Jesus taught us to proactively make peace. In Matt 5 he tells us to leave the gift at the altar and go make amends/reconcile with your brother.

In the OT, we read about Joseph, who had every right to treat his blood brothers the same way that they treated him, rather he told them to fear not… “I will nourish you”. And we are told in Gen 50 that he comforted them and spoke kindly to them. Joseph knew that God’s purpose prevails over the evil ways of men. He had his mind set on the things above (Col 3:2). He managed to overcome the natural tendency to carry resentment towards his brothers.

Nehemiah spoke of God’s great kindness…if anyone should have lost patience with people it was God, who had the right to give up on His people but Nehemiah points out that He forsook them not.

“[They] refused to obey, neither were mindful of thy wonders that thou didst among them; but hardened their necks, and in their rebellion appointed a captain to return to their bondage: but thou art a God ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and forsookest them not. Based upon these examples, we will hopefully conclude that we must be kind to others too. We shouldn’t give up on anyone” (Neh 9:17).
Practical examples

Please try this simple thing during the upcoming week.

Listen to someone who needs to talk. Recently, when faced with a personal emergency, a friend found time to talk to me and advise me. In a show of kindness, this friend called me one evening…it was 9:05pm, and happened to be when I was writing this exhortation. He called to be certain things were going well. Ordinarily you wouldn’t call someone so late at night, but under the circumstances, it was a very kind gesture. You remember that kind of kindness.

This week, please stop and listen to someone who needs your attention. Don’t wait for them to interrupt you because most people won’t do that. You may have to ask if they wish to talk about things that are troubling them.

It often hurts when we realize that an opportunity to be kind to someone was missed. At night when you’re winding down and recapping things that happened to you, you sometimes realize that you glossed over a comment from someone who was crying for attention. Thankfully, when we fail, and we all fail, we can turn to God and repent, for He is merciful and of great kindness. And of course, nothing prevents us from circling back to people and following up with them to make sure their concerns are addressed.

Finally, Jonah was certain that the people of Nineveh did not deserve God’s kindness. But he was shown otherwise. Jonah was made to recognize that God judges people, and that we should not judge others. We too must not condemn others with our words. During the upcoming week, please give someone a chance…lend them an ear and be careful about your tone of voice. Please remember to encourage others because we are all, from time to time, in great need of kindness, the same bountiful kindness that we saw evidence of this in the Scriptural passages that were referenced.

“But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee. Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves? And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise” (Luke 10:33-37).

We must remember to be kind one to another, just as the Good Samaritan was kindhearted and helpful. Jesus tells us about the Good Samaritan for a reason, so as we approach the upcoming week, let us conduct ourselves in a similar fashion, by picking someone up who is in need of our kindness.

Tony Pezzulo (Moorestown, NJ)
Enosh versus Enoch

Enosh (or Enos), the son of Seth, was born in the 3rd generation. As has been discussed, his name means “mortal.” The word enosh or enos is rooted in the Hebrew word nsh, which is associated with man or mankind, while its derivatives, “mortal, frail, weak,” are an apt description of the human condition. As has already been discussed, Seth chose this name for his son in order to acknowledge mankind’s lamentable condition, and to seek from God salvation from death. This was also the focus of the first ecclesia’s worship, when “men began to call upon the name of the Lord” (Gen 4:26).

In contrast, Cain named his firstborn son after the city he was building: “Cain was then building a city and he named it after his son Enoch” (Gen 4:17). Cities are often thought of as permanent or eternal. For example, Rome is nicknamed the Eternal City. Thus, while Enosh’s name is a reflection of human frailty, Enoch’s name, in association with the establishment of the first city/settlement, speaks to a human desire for permanency, which, throughout history, has often been pursued through the construction of such edifices as cities, tombs, and monuments. The desire for immortality is best demonstrated in the example of Nebuchadnezzar, the Babylonian king (c. 605 - 562 BC) who lived during the time of Daniel:

“As the king was walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon, he said, ‘Is not this the great Babylon I have built as the royal residence, by my mighty power and for the glory of my majesty?’” (Dan 4:28-30).

In his moment of pride, God stripped Nebuchadnezzar of his senses and he wandered mad in the fields, like cattle. To a madman, the great monuments were of little consequence. Thus in an instance, Nebuchadnezzar lost all that he had built. This example demonstrates the impermanency of humankind’s works and their inability to achieve immortality through bricks and mortar.

As for Enoch’s name itself, it is derived from the Hebrew word hanak, which means “begin” or “dedicate,” suggesting that either he was born when Cain began building his city or upon its completion, when the city was dedicated — but dedicated to who is the obvious question. Did Cain dedicate the city to his son, Enoch? Or to himself? Or to, perhaps, the fiery cherubim, which was to him God?

Kenan versus Irad

Kenan, the son of Enosh, was born in the 4th generation. He shares a name that is similar to Cain, since both are derived from the Hebrew word qyn or qana, meaning “to acquire” or “get.” Unlike Cain’s name, however, kenan has a double emphasis on the Hebrew letter “n” or nun, a difference that may aid in identifying the meaning of his name. Typically, however, Kenan’s name is translated as “pos-
session,” (derived from Cain’s name, “acquire” or “get”) or as a derivative of the verb qin (similar to qyn), which means, “lamentation” or “sorrow.” “Possession” perhaps refers to Kenan’s relationship with God, i.e. he was God’s possession because he gave himself up (devoted himself) to the LORD. Or perhaps “lamentation” is a better translation, which may reflect his father’s name, “mortality.” In this way, Enosh and Kenan’s names represent a sort of cause and effect: mortality (Enosh) caused lamentation or sorrow (Kenan) — the effect.

Another possibility may be the slight, but significant difference between Kenan and Cain. As noted, the extra “n” in Kenan’s name may be there in order to emphasize the verb. Thus Cain’s name, “acquire” or “get,” becomes “increase” (acquire or get more) when the “n” is emphasized in Kenan’s name. It strongly suggests that Kenan’s name, therefore, means to increase or increased.

But what might “increase” refer to? If Kenan was a descendant of Cain — a man and his descendants who reflect the status of human progress on the earth — then we might be tempted to see in his name a reflection of the earth’s population in the 4th generation, in that the number of inhabitants increased. However, the names of Seth’s descendants relate to heavenly matters, and so Kenan’s name must reflect the status of faith on the earth. As such, his name “increase” may refer to a growth in the number of people who “called upon the name of the LORD” (Gen 4:26). This increase in the number of the faithful in the 4th generation was likely the result of Seth, Enosh, and others, who proclaimed, called out, or cried out to God for salvation from death in the 2nd and 3rd generations.

Regardless of which translation is used, Kenan’s name, within the framework of this study, must be a commentary on the status of the faithful in the 4th generation: as “possession,” he belonged to God; as “the lamentер,” Kenan’s name reflects the sorrow humans may have expressed in recognition of their own mortality; and as “increase,” his name suggests that the message of salvation from death was received by many, and the ecclesia grew for a time.

Although there is more scholarly evidence for the translation of Kenan’s name as “possession,” or “lament,” rather than for “increase,” contextually, an increase in the number of worshippers of God at this period in time would better reflect the work of God when it’s in its initial stages of being proclaimed and established. For example, the ecclesia in the first century AD experienced — after a short time from the moment of being introduced — a similar period of growth or increase.

Peter and the other apostle’s proclamation of the good news (Acts 4:11-12) so resonated with people that it caused “the word of God to spread and the number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly” (Acts 6:7). Thus it seems that after the apostles had spent some time preaching the good news, the “seed” fell on good soil and “yielded a crop a hundred times more than was sown” (Luke 8:8). Likewise, it is possible that, according to the alternative meaning of Kenan’s name — “increase” — the work of Seth, Enosh, and others in the 2nd and 3rd generations, resulted in a similar period of spiritual growth in the 4th generation.
Irad, the son of Enoch, the son of Cain, was also born in the 4th generation. His name is a construction of two words, *ir* or *ur*, which means “city”, and *ad* or *ud*, which means “repeat” or “return.” Thus Irad’s name is translated as “city repeated,” which suggests that either he or his father built a second city. Its construction establishes a pattern of city-building among this particular branch of Cain’s descendants.

Cities, with their walls and fortifications, provide protection against animal and human predators, while resources can be more easily shared, and knowledge can be quickly disseminated amongst those living in closer proximity. Thus for practical reasons, cities aided civilization’s progress — which may be one of the meanings behind Irad’s name.

As will be shown, the establishment of cities by Cain’s descendants was part of the process, whether deliberate or not, to forge new homes, new tribes, to corrupt God, or replace the idea of God altogether, and to vainly seek immortality by constructing monuments, edifices, and tombs. Their activity was in stark contrast to the kind of permanency Seth, Enosh, Kenan, and others sought by taking refuge in the Lord, who alone they recognized as having the power to grant salvation from death.

**Mahalalel versus Mehujael**

Two men with similar sounding names were born in the 5th generation: Mahalalel and Mehujael. Like Kenan and Cain, the difference in their names testifies to the dissimilar relationships they shared with God and thus supports the contrasting framework — spiritual versus earthly.

Mahalalel was the son of Kenan. The spelling of his name is made up of two elements: *halal*, which in Hebrew means “praise” (i.e., hallelujah), and *el*, the name of God. As such his name can be translated as “praise God” or “praised of God.”

Likewise, Mehujael’s name is composed of two parts: the former comes from the root word *machah*, which means “to wipe out,” “strike,” or “smite,” while the latter part, *el*, refers to God’s name. As such, his name may be interpreted as “smitten of God.” *Machah* is used 36 times in the Bible, usually in association with God blotting out the memory of the wicked from His “book of the living.” From this we can surmise that Mehujael was particularly wicked — so much so that he was singled out in Genesis to be remembered as a man “struck down” or “blotted out” by God.

Moreover, that Mahalalel and Mehujael have such similar but opposing names — praised of God/smitten of God — suggests that these two individuals, who lived in the same generation, may have shared an experience that was similar to what transpired between Cain and Abel. For, just as God praised Abel’s offering and rejected Cain’s, it is possible that He may have, similarly, praised Mahalalel and rejected (smote) Mehujael’s.

Given Genesis’ omission of the details surrounding these two individuals, the only thing we can say for sure about them is that their names well reflect the contrasting framework for the study of Gen 4 and 5: Mahalalel, a faithful man, a man “praised by God,” and a descendant of Seth, is clearly to be identified with
the sons of God, while Mehujael, a wicked man, a man “smitten by God,” and a descendant of Cain, is clearly to be identified with the sons of men.

**Jared versus Methushael**

The first ecclesia may have flourished during the 4th generation, as indicated by Kenan’s name, which may mean “to increase.” This trend likely continued into the 5th generation, a time when Mahalalel was “praised of God” — his name a clear indication that he was faithful, and which may also suggest that “faith” was still very much alive at the time of his birth, and during a portion of his life.

However, by the 6th generation, the ecclesia fell into decline. This may be the meaning of Jared’s name, which is derived from the Hebrew word, yarad, and means to “descend, decline, pour out,” or “go down.” Thus his name may be an indication that 6th generation was a period of spiritual decline. This decline corresponds to events in Gen 6 — verses which present a narrative of conditions on the earth leading up to the Flood from the 6th generation on:

“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 were beautiful, and they married any of them they chose. Then the Lord said, ‘My Spirit will not contend with humans forever, for they are mortal; their days will be a hundred and twenty years’” (Gen 6:1-3).

Contained within these verses is the cause of the ecclesia’s decline: intermarrying between the righteous and the unrighteous. The 6th generation marks the beginning of this decline, a trend that continued throughout the 7th generation, and reached its zenith in the 8th generation. Thus Gen 6:1-3 chronicles a period of decline, which took place over three generations, beginning in the 6th generation.

The reference to intermarriage in Gen 6:2 suggests that prior to the 6th generation, the sons of God did not marry the daughters of men. While this separation may have been the result of geography, it is far more probable that the sons of God, like the children of Israel during the time of Moses, remained separate so that their faith would not be influenced (corrupted) by the women they married; women who inevitably introduced pagan beliefs and philosophies to their husbands, and who subsequently brought these beliefs into the ecclesia. Moses warned the Israelites about the catastrophic effect intermarrying with the surrounding nations would have on their faith:

“Do not give your daughters to their sons or take their daughters for your sons, for they will turn your sons away from following me to serve other gods, and the Lord’s anger will burn against you and will quickly destroy you” (Deut 7:1-5).

Likewise, this was true of those living in the 1st century AD, for Paul said to the Corinthians: “For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness?” (2Cor 6:14). Thus, if this was true of those living in the days of Moses, and also in the 1st century AD, then it was also true for antediluvians living in the first centuries BC.
Jared’s contemporary was Methushael, the son of Mehujael. His name is composed of *mat*, which in Hebrew means “mortal,” and *shael*, which is similar to *sheol*, meaning “grave.” Like Jared, Methushael’s name also corresponds to events in Gen 6, in particular verse 3, “My Spirit will not contend with man forever, for he is mortal; his days will be a hundred and twenty years.”

The decline in those who called upon the name of the LORD, and the increase in wickedness angered God such that He shortened human life spans to 120 years. For a people accustomed to living upwards of 800-900 hundred years, God’s pronunciation² was akin to a death sentence. Given God’s decision to drastically reduce the life span of humans, Mehujael’s choice to name his son, “grave,” was an appropriate one.

The shortening of human life was a gradual process. In his book, *The Science of God* (1997), Gerald L. Schroeder makes a similar observation:

> Following Noah, a trend is clear. Lifespan becomes shorter through the generations. The Biblical concept is that change takes place over time and through generations.³

Although the pronunciation of human’s shortened lifespan by God occurred in the 6th generation, like the progress of Adam’s curse, the process of reducing human lifespan was gradual; it did not come to fruition until well after the Flood.⁴

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Notes:
2. Although God may have communicated His decision to shorten life spans through a prophet, this “pronunciation” need not be taken literally.
3. Pg. 15.
4. Noah — 950; Shem — 500; Arphaxad — 403; Eber — 430; Peleg — 209; Reu — 207; Serug — 200; Nahor — 119, the grandfather of Abraham — the trend is one of a gradual shortening over a period of eight generations.

**Life of Timothy**

(1) “From a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures”

What character traits do we value? It is a question we might not think about often, but our answer is important. It affects our decision making, which, in turn, impacts our development.

Is physical appearance particularly important to us? If so, we may invest in how we look, perhaps to the point that our spiritual growth is limited because so much of our time and attention is going to our exterior. Valuing looks can also affect our choice of friends - perhaps even who we marry.

The characteristics we value also influence those around us. We share with people what we think is important through our conversation and how we spend our time. The signals our words and actions send can impact others. If a father loves to talk about football and never misses a game, his son will probably come to think football is important too. A brother who loves to share his business exploits and usually greets others at meeting with a question about what is happening at work,
might cause some in his ecclesia to question whether they should have the same fervor for their careers that he does. A mother who organizes a summer beach trip instead of getting her family to a Bible school teaches her children to love leisure and the pleasures of this life.

Our words and actions show what characteristics we value. What do they say? Do we act like Isaac at a spiritual low point in his life and overvalue physical attributes and the skills the world prizes? Or are we care about and seek to cultivate obedience, teachability, humility, self-sacrifice, and a love of God?

“Valued of God”

The life of Timothy is the subject of this series. One of the key lessons that emerges from the narrative of Timothy’s life is the contrast between the characteristics the world values, and those God values. Timothy’s name is a reminder of that distinction. It means “valued of God.” The traits Timothy developed and the choices he made were valued by God, even though those around him did not always appreciate them. The record of Timothy’s life reminds us that we should always be aware of the difference between what the world values and what God values.

The Bible’s record of Timothy’s life is the story of a young man. But the lessons from it apply equally well to all believers. We should all continue to grow spiritually, like Timothy, “and to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men” (1Thess 3:12), regardless of who we are or our stage in life.

Growing up in Lystra

The society in which Timothy was raised had a vision of what young men were supposed to be like. They were to be athletic, vigorous, and versed in the thinking of the philosophers. Reminders of this vision were everywhere. It was given physical form in the statutes that dotted the cities of the ancient world. It was celebrated in the games, like the Olympics, which were such an important part of public life.

Timothy did not look like the statues that were on display in the cities. He bore little resemblance to the heroes of the games. The Bible suggests he was sickly and somewhat timid. It also indicates his natural limitations sometimes weighed on him.

Yet Timothy possessed some wonderful traits, which he used to help establish and encourage ecclesias in many lands. People from all walks of life embraced and continued in the faith because of Timothy’s example. He brought people hope. He taught them about the Lord Jesus. He changed lives. His contributions, therefore, were of far greater and lasting value than anything done in the games or commemorated by a statue.

Timothy’s background helped shape him into the man he ultimately became. He was from Lystra, a frontier outpost in the province of Galatia. Timothy might have grown up in a mud brick house. They were common in that area during Roman times.

Lystra was situated on a highland plateau with mountains on two sides. The nearby mountain tribes were known for being wild and unruly. The Emperor Augustus placed a Roman garrison in Lystra to try to tame them.
Timothy’s mother was Jewish. His father was Greek. The natives of Lystra spoke Lycaonian (Acts 14:11), so Timothy’s father was probably not from there. He may have moved to the city because of the Roman garrison.

The language of Acts suggests there was tension in Timothy’s family: “Then came he to Derbe and Lystra: and, behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timotheus, the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed; but his father was a Greek” (Acts 16: 1). The phrase “but his father was a Greek” indicates there might have been conflict in the home. That suggestion is supported by other details provided about Timothy’s upbringing.

Acts also records Timothy was not circumcised as a baby: “Him would Paul have to go forth with him; and took and circumcised him because of the Jews which were in those quarters: for they knew all that his father was a Greek” (Acts 16:3). The fact Timothy was not circumcised was probably due to his father’s objections to the practice. Paul observed that Timothy’s mother tried to raise her son in harmony with the Old Testament Scriptures. Towards the end of his life, Paul recalled: “And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus” (2Tim 3:15). The Greek word rendered “child” means “an infant.” The word is rendered “a babe” in the Revised Version. Timothy’s mother instructed her son from the Scriptures from a very early age. She would have wanted him circumcised. Circumcision was an ordinance given to Abraham and his descendants (Gen 17:11-12) and a command under the Law (Lev 12:3). It was an important part of Jewish identity and symbolized profound spiritual lessons.

Timothy’s mother was named Eunice (2Tim 1:5). It was an appropriate name for her in the context of Timothy’s life because it means “good victory.” Timothy’s godly development was a good victory to which Eunice contributed. As with many achievements, however, her work was not always easy. There would have been many difficulties during Timothy’s early years that she had to faithfully overcome.

The Bible’s brief record of Timothy’s upbringing is a reminder of several important lessons.

- First, it illustrates the conflict and unhappiness that can arise from marrying outside of the Truth. The Bible does not give the reason that Eunice married an unbeliever. It could have been her choice or it might have been due to circumstances beyond her control. Either way, being married to someone who did not share her faith brought added challenges to her life and the life of her son.
- Second, the information we have about Timothy’s early years illustrates that believers can move past a challenge in their background, even if it is a major one. Eunice was faced with a real difficulty when Timothy was born, and she and his father had different views about how he was to be raised. But she was persistent. She was determined to do right in God’s sight to the best of her ability despite the obstacles that confronted her. Eunice did not allow a challenge from her past — marrying an unbeliever — to ruin her future or the future of her son. She was still faithful. She still managed to raise a young
man who loved God and who wanted to dedicate his life to serving Him. (It is worth noting that although certain aspects of Timothy’s personality created challenges for him as an adult, lack of persistence was not one of them. Timothy had a determination to follow God’s commands. He also possessed a resiliency in the face of dogged opposition from opponents of the Truth. Those are traits he may have developed from observing his mother and learning from her example as she raised him.)

• Third, the Bible’s record of Timothy’s upbringing is a reminder of the impact we can have on our children by teaching them from the Bible in our homes starting at an early age. It is worth noting that Timothy’s spiritual instruction during his early years occurred primarily in his home.

There is no record of Paul preaching in the synagogue in Timothy’s hometown of Lystra, even though that was the Apostle’s usual practice. That suggests that there was no synagogue in the city, which is a conjecture supported by secular history. Even if there had been a synagogue in Lystra, Timothy would probably not have been permitted to participate in its activities because he was uncircumcised. Acts 16:3 records that the Jews in the area were well aware that Timothy had not undergone circumcision. Consequently, they probably would have discouraged other Jewish young people from mixing with him. Thus, the wonderful foundation in godliness Timothy received as a boy, which he was able to draw on for the rest of his life, was probably due in large measure to the loving instruction from the Scriptures he received in his home. Timothy’s spiritual development is a wonderful illustration of the principle that is so important to remember as we decide how to allocate our time and energy in our homes: “Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it” (Prov 22: 6).

• Fourth, Timothy’s grandmother played an important role in helping him to develop into a godly young man. Paul mentioned her by name: “When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also” (2Tim 1: 5).

Lois followed the guidance of Scripture and recognized that her role in child rearing did not end when her own children were grown. She knew she had a Scriptural obligation to help instruct and guide her grandson in the ways of God: “Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them thy sons, and thy sons’ sons” (Deut 4: 9). The wonderful influence Timothy’s grandmother had on him is an illustration of the important role God has given to grandparents.

The details provided about Timothy’s background suggest he would not have “fit in” very well in Lystra as a young person:

• First, Lystra was a military frontier town in the Roman Empire. Its people would probably have prized strength and athleticism. Timothy, however, was not physically robust.

• Second, the conflicts in Timothy’s home, especially those related to how he was to be raised, were probably unsettling to him. They could have contributed to his shyness.
• Third, Timothy had a Jewish heritage and Jewish training in a town without many Jews. Plus, the few Jews that might have been there, probably would have avoided him.

• Fourth, Timothy's father could have been an immigrant to the area, which might have made Timothy feel like even more of an outsider.

• Fifth, Timothy's relationship with his father was probably not close. It appears Timothy's father was not supportive of Judaism, so he probably would not have appreciated the spiritual qualities Timothy had developed based on the Scriptures. He might have wished Timothy had chosen his way of life instead of his mother's. Timothy was also emotional and given to shedding tears (2Tim 1:4). Consequently, his father might have viewed him as somewhat of a disappointment.

But Timothy's Heavenly Father saw much that was of great value in the young man. One day an event occurred that had a lasting impact on Timothy's life. It ended up giving Timothy a tremendous sense of purpose, a wonderful community to truly belong to, and the opportunity to harness the guidance he had received and the spiritual traits he had begun to develop to change many lives and bring glory to the Father. That event was the arrival of two missionaries in Lystra.

(To be continued)

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Notes:
3. The Greek word used to describe him is Hellen, which is Strong's Number G1672. It can be used to describe a Greek national or in a wider sense for a non-Jew. J.H. Thayer, Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament. e-Sword 9.9.0.
4. Commentators disagree on what this language was. Some claim it was a corruption of Greek, perhaps with Syriac influences. The events of Acts 14: 11-15 and some historical sources indicate Lycaonian was not easily understandable to Greek speakers. A. Clarke, Commentary on the Bible. e-Sword 9.9.0.
8. J.H. Thayer, Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament. e-Sword 9.9.0. “Eunice” is Strong's Number G2131. It comes from the Greek words eu, which is Strong's Number G2095, and means “good” and nike, which is Strong's Number G3529 and means “victory.”
10. Lois' husband is not mentioned. Does that suggest that she, like her daughter, also married an unbeliever? Was a mistake she made repeated in her daughter's life? We are not told, and the two women ultimately became exemplary believers.
Jonathan the Faithful Prince:
(11) More Than a Friendship

Jonathan and David
As Jonathan looked at the man standing before his father, everything seemed to fit. David was a man after God’s own heart. He had been a captain and a deliverer over God’s people. He was from the tribe of Judah. When he heard David’s lineage, all of the pieces fell into place — and Jonathan knew that he was in the presence of Israel’s future king.

“And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul” (1Sam 18:1).

Immediately after the short conversation between Saul and David, Jonathan loved David as his own soul. He saw that all of the prophecies — both Samuel’s and Jacob’s, fit together and pointed towards the young Bethlehemite who was in front of him. Thus, in a selfless acknowledgement of what he knew to be true, Jonathan made a covenant with David and gave him his kingly possessions.

“Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul. And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle” (1Sam 18:3-4).

How astonished David would have been as the prince of the nation called him over, took him to a quiet place, and handed him his prince’s robe! David had hardly even known Jonathan! He was the king’s son, and here he was, holding out his royal apparel to him. Can you picture it? At first David would not have wanted to take it — it was Jonathan’s, and David was no prince. But Jonathan would have urged him, saying that it truly belonged to David. David was the rightful heir to the throne, not him.

Yet as David abashedly took the robe from Jonathan, Jonathan gave him his garments, (or as the word is rendered in other translations (NKJV, ESV, NASB), his “armor”), David would have simply been stunned. First the robe, then his armor — then even his sword. What a gesture this would have been! As has been noted before, only Jonathan and his father had iron swords out of everyone in the nation (1Sam 13:22). But Jonathan, in selfless humility, held his sword out to the shepherd boy.

As David took the sword, Jonathan continued to give him his most treasured possessions. The next thing that he handed to the future king was his bow; and again, this would have had a special significance. For Jonathan’s family, the bow was the special weapon of choice and one at which they were particularly skilled in using (1Chron 12:1-2). He gave even this to David.
**Mentorship**

There David stood, holding the possessions of the king's son. What a moment it would have been! Jonathan, the one who for years had believed that he was going to be the next king, the one who had the same types of talents and abilities as David — here he was, giving these treasures to the young shepherd boy! It was another demonstration of Jonathan's beautiful character. Just as he had poured out his desires and his dreams in trying to serve his father and help him turn his mind back to Yahweh, Jonathan did the same type of thing with David. He didn't resist David's kingship, but gladly submitted to it and encouraged it. He gave his entire life in support for his friend. His story and his example is a powerful reminder to the way in which true disciples of Christ should be living. Their focus should never be on their own glory, like Jonathan's vain father, but on humbly submitting to God's plan and on giving all of their time and energy to helping others grow nearer to God and His son. In doing this, Jonathan forged a lasting friendship with the new king and played an essential role in shaping David's character for his new role.

And really, that's exactly what Jonathan did. Often when we think about “David and Jonathan,” we think about two men who were best friends and who did everything together. Nevertheless, it would seem as though their friendship was a bit different from what is typically portrayed.

While Jonathan and David were good friends, their relationship would seem to have been more of a mentorship. All throughout their activities with one another, Jonathan guides David.

Just think about the covenants which the two men made. Jonathan made the first covenant with David, not the other way around (1Sam 18:3). With their second covenant, it was the same situation:

“So Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, Let the Lord even require it at the hand of David's enemies” (1Sam 20:16).

The first covenant was initiated by Jonathan, and so was the second. It shouldn’t be surprising, then, to see that the third and final covenant made between the two men came about through Jonathan's encouragement:

“And Jonathan Saul's son arose, and went to David into the wood, and strengthened his hand in God...And they two made a covenant before the Lord: and David abode in the wood, and Jonathan went to his house” (1Sam 23:16, 18).

Jonathan came to David when David was struggling and strengthened his faith. He lifted up David's mind to heavenly things and reminded David of God's plan — ending their time together with another covenant between the two of them. Over and over, Jonathan initiated these covenants. He was the one who took their friendship and set its focus upon heavenly things. Such was Jonathan's role in the relationship. Jonathan wasn't just a best friend, he was a spiritual leader to David. He was a mentor. Jonathan was the one who led this relationship and who set its focus upon the principles of Yahweh.
Jonathan’s love

Again, this is emphasized in the way that Scripture describes the love that the two men had for one another. Almost always, Scripture states that Jonathan had love for David — not the other way around:

“And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul” (1Sam 18:1).

Jonathan loved David in the beautiful type of love that God had sought to teach His people (Lev 19:18). He loved him as his own soul. If David succeeded, then to Jonathan, that was as though he succeeded. If David became king over Israel and led the people in Godly ways, then Jonathan would be overjoyed. Nevertheless, notice that the passage didn’t say anything about David’s love. Again, when Jonathan’s love for David is expressed just two verses later, the record doesn’t mention David’s love for Jonathan:

“Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul” (1Sam 18:3).

Jonathan loved David. Again, this is how it is recorded just a few chapters later:

“And Jonathan caused David to swear again, because he loved him: for he loved him as he loved his own soul” (1Sam 20:17).

After Jonathan realized that David was to be the next king of Israel, Jonathan had a deep love and affection for him — loving him as his own soul. Three times this is said of Jonathan’s love for the young king. Yet it isn’t said about David towards Jonathan — only once, after Jonathan died, did David speak, in a rather elliptical way, of his love for the man who had helped him so greatly:

“I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan: very pleasant hast thou been unto me: thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women” (2Sam 1:26).

In the Song of the Bow, David was distressed over Jonathan’s death. It’s almost as though it’s here that David finally realized the depth of Jonathan’s love for him — “thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women.” Even as David sought to show his affection for his brother, he couldn’t help but speak about the immensity of Jonathan’s love.

This isn’t to say that David didn’t love Jonathan — but more to emphasize that the relationship wasn’t necessarily reciprocal. Just like the relationship between a mentor and their apprentice, Jonathan gave himself for David, while David graciously received from his friend.

Such was the situation. Jonathan was the initiator and Jonathan was the leader. Jonathan was the one who gave of himself for David. It typically wasn’t the other way around. And really, this would make sense, because when a bit of time is taken to work out the numbers, it would appear as though Jonathan was quite a bit older than David. Thus, the elder was teaching the younger how to effectively be a captain over God’s inheritance.
Jonathan’s age

Working out Jonathan’s exact age is difficult, and perhaps even impossible. But, by putting together a bit of the chronology, a rough age can be approximated. In fact, at one end of the Jonathan’s approximate age can be deduced.

After Saul had reigned for two years, he made Jonathan one of the commanders of his army (1Sam 13:1-2, KJV). According to the Law of Moses, men could not go to war until they were 20 years old (Numb 1:2-3; Numb 26:2). Thus, when Jonathan took his troops and led them against the first Philistine garrison, he would have been at least twenty.

Saul continued to reign over Israel for another 38 years (Acts 13:21). So, by the time Saul died on Gilboa, Jonathan would have been at least 58. This is quite a contrast to David’s age at Saul’s death. At that point, David was only 30 (2Sam 5:4-5).

However, this chronology can be difficult to say dogmatically, particularly because most modern versions read differently in 1Sam 13:1-2, and conclude that the verse is the conventional account of the age of Saul at kingship and the length of the reign. For example, the NIV has “Saul was thirty years old when he became king, and he reigned over Israel forty-two years”.

On the other hand, another possibility (and one that would seem to be more probable) is that Jonathan was older than David, but not quite 28 years older. This idea is substantiated by Ishbosheth’s age. Ishbosheth was Jonathan’s youngest brother (2Sam 2:8). When Saul died, Ishbosheth was 40:

“Ishbosheth Saul’s son was forty years old when he began to reign over Israel, and reigned two years. But the house of Judah followed David” (2Sam 2:10).

Ishbosheth, the youngest of Saul’s four sons (and two daughters?), was 40 when Saul died. Jonathan was the oldest out of the four sons, so he could have been quite a bit older than forty. Regardless of the exact age, based off of Ishbosheth’s age, Jonathan had to be at least in his mid-40s when Saul died.

Thus, when Jonathan and David made their first covenant together, Jonathan was a good deal older than David. If David was 17, Jonathan was at least 30. As the elder member of this friendship, Jonathan acted as a mentor and leader. Throughout their time together, Jonathan used his wisdom and experience and helped the youngest of Jesse’s sons to keep his faith throughout extremely trying times. Yet even more, Jonathan showed David what it truly meant for someone to give their life for someone else.

A final contrast

Thus, the son of Jesse and the son of Saul created an eternal friendship. It was a friendship that had largely been initiated and begun by the prince — and David likely even resisted when Jonathan tried to give him his robe and his sword and his bow — but it was a friendship which was focused on preparing David to be a wise king over Yahweh’s people. Jonathan had been the one whose soul had first been knit to David’s. Jonathan had been the one who suggested that the two make a covenant together. Jonathan had been the one who gave his kingly apparel to David.
Such was the love that Jonathan had for the shepherd who was so much younger than he. He would give up all of his dreams and all of his ambitions in order to see God’s plan fulfilled and David exalted to kingship. He loved him as he loved his own soul.

When Jonathan first began to recognize David after the battle with the Philistine, the prince could have created so many different reasons as to why he wouldn’t submit to him. He could have said that he himself was the rightful heir. He could have said that he was a man of faith. He could have said that he was older and thus he could rule first and then David could rule after. The justifications that Jonathan could have created — as his father did — were plenteous. But he didn’t do that. That was the beauty of Jonathan’s character. As can be seen in his attack on the Philistine garrison, in his interactions with his father, and in his mentorship with David, Jonathan’s actions were characterized by a Godly humility. Jonathan esteemed others better than himself (consider the parallels to an even greater king; Phil 2:5-9). He gave what he had all of the time so that he might make an effort to bring others nearer to salvation.

Unfortunately, as has been shown so often throughout Jonathan’s story, his reaction was a stark contrast to the reaction of his father. While Jonathan gladly recognized David as the next king, Saul too realized that his suspicion of Jonathan had been misplaced — but his realization was characterized by a very different emotion than that which had characterized Jonathan’s. For Saul, this young man who had suddenly begun to steal the hearts of the people wasn’t a joyful thing at all. It was terrifying. The paranoia which had once been focused upon Jonathan, soon found another target:

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

While his son had come to love the king as his own soul, Saul’s reaction was tragically different. Thus Saul’s vain and prideful spirit — as a contrast to the humble and selfless spirit of Jonathan — would cause him to eye David from that day and forward, until the envy and fear which had once prompted the attempted murder of his own son would soon do the same to the son of Jesse.

Jason Hensley (Simi Hills, CA)

… the opening of 1 Samuel 13… is generally agreed should read: “Saul was … years old when he began to reign, and he reigned … and two years over Israel” (see RSV). No-one knows why the numbers are missing, but attempts to harmonize the original Hebrew text as it stands are unconvincing. The Septuagint version does not offer much help, as most Greek manuscripts completely omit the first verse of the chapter. The NIV inserts the figures of thirty years for Saul’s age when he became king, and forty (two) years for the duration of his reign.

Michael Ashton, Samuel the Seer, Christadelphian 1994 p 247
Have you tried this? (3)

Bible games are educational and fun, and this gives them a special value. When education and fun are combined in Sunday school, positive attitudes can develop. Bible games also give children an opportunity to put life lessons into practice. Teamwork, fair play, rejoicing in the success of others; these and other life skills are part of a game that is well played.

There is no end to the kinds of Bible games that creative teachers come up with. A few are described here, with thanks to the Sunday school teachers who shared them with me. Have you tried any of these? Take a look at the ones that follow and plan some educational fun for your children!

Seek and Find

When our kids were little, they each had a file folder of Bible cut outs: a harp, a bow, a sheep, a boat, a fish, etc. From time to time, especially on rainy Saturdays, the cut outs were hidden around the house, and the kids had great fun trying to find them. Who would be first to find all their cut outs and return them to the file folder? If they got stuck, they could help each other find a missing item. When this happened, everybody was a winner.

You may not have a lot of room to hide things in your Sunday school area, but with a bit of imagination it may be possible to play a “seek and find” game in the space that you have. In the process, think about ways the Bible objects can be connected with the children’s Sunday school lessons.

Bible Baseball

Bible Baseball is an active indoor game that can be played several ways depending on how many players you have. Set up chairs to make a playing field as shown.

Prepare questions on four levels of difficulty: single, double, triple, and home run. Write these on four different colored file cards. When a batter comes to the plate (by sitting in chair H), he chooses the level of question he wants to try. The umpire (U) selects and asks the question. If the question is answered correctly, the batter moves to the appropriate base (and sits in chair 1, 2, or 3; a home run lets him touch all the bases and score!). When the batter gets “a hit”, players already on base move up the same number of chairs or score by touching home. If the question is answered incorrectly, the batter is out and goes back to the dugout.
Bible baseball can be a fun way to review an entire year’s worth of Sunday school lessons. (Thanks to some game Sunday school teachers in the Meriden, CT, Ecclesia.)

Ground rules. It probably won’t be necessary to lay down many rules for Bible Baseball, but here is something for the umpire to keep in mind: (1) limit the number of easy questions a team may use during each turn at bat, or (2) agree ahead of time that a team must use questions on all four levels during its turn at bat.

Variations. (1) Play Bible Baseball with two bases instead of three. Use single, double, and home run questions. A two-base game makes it easier to score. It also works better with small teams. (2) Don’t count the number of outs. Instead, a half inning ends when every player on a team has had one or two turns at bat. (3) If you have lots of players, form a third team. An inning lasts until all teams have had a turn at bat.

**Multiple choice Bible games**

Organize small teams. Give each team four cards labeled A, B, C, and D. Read out a multiple choice question and its four answer choices. On the count of ten, each team holds up an answer card. Correct answers get a point.

Variations. (1) Seat the teams equidistant from you. Read out a multiple choice question. The first team to bring the correct answer card to you wins the point for the question. But be prepared. This is a very active way to play the game! (2) The same as (1), except every team that brings a correct card to you earns a point. This restores some sanity to the game!

More ideas. (1) Project the multiple choice questions on a screen using a data projector. This adds a visual component to the game and helps make sure that the questions are clearly understood. (2) Fast moving games keep things interesting. Occasionally, though, you might want to slow the pace a little and include questions that require teams to open their Bibles.

**A lesson review game**

Prepare a chart like this on a piece of Bristol board or poster stock and laminate it.

The letters across the top stand for Sunday school lessons the children have had, and the numbers down the left side represent questions based on the lessons. Once the chart is ready, it can be used over and over again. You will also need a few water soluble markers for the children to use.
When it comes time to review a set of Sunday school lessons, the children take turns requesting questions (e.g., C-4, F-1, etc.). The question is read, and if the child answers it correctly they write their initials in the corresponding box on the chart. When a child gets their initials in three boxes in a row (horizontally, vertically, or diagonally), they get a point.

This makes for an interesting review game; it can also be a study in human nature. Sometimes players choose questions to get points for themselves and at other times they choose questions to block the progress of someone else (a bit like playing tic-tac-toe). I think we allow this behavior by calling it strategy!

When the game is over, the board can be wiped clean with a damp sponge and it is ready to use again. Keep in mind that you do not have to use the entire board every time you play the game. If you want to review fewer lessons or have fewer questions for each lesson, just block off the boxes you do not need. (Thanks to a Vernon, BC, Sunday school teacher.)

**How well do you know ...?**

How well do you know Genesis? How well do you know Jesus? How well do you know the Acts? How well do you know the books of the Bible? This game has many possibilities and is easy to prepare. Develop a set of questions on any Bible subject. Write each question on one side of a file card. Place the cards face down in a pile. The children take turns drawing the top card and reading out the question that is on it. If they answer the question correctly, they keep the card. If not, the card must be returned face down at the bottom of the pile. At the end of the game, the number of cards a child has determines his or her score. As an added incentive, let the children turn in their cards at the end of the game for treats or small prizes.

Variation. This game can also be played as a game of concentration. Spread out the cards, face down, on a table. The children take turns picking up a card and trying to answer the question that is on it. Again they keep the card if they answer the question correctly. Otherwise they must return the card to its place on the table. Another child who knows the answer to the question can pick up the same card when his or her turn comes around. (Thanks to a Vernon, BC, Sunday school teacher for this idea.)

**Hang Haman!**

This is the well-known “Hangman” game with a Biblical twist, and it gets the children using their Bibles. After studying the book of Esther, give the children a homework assignment: supply each of them with four or five file cards on which to write questions and answers about the story of Esther. Assign different chapters of Esther for each child to prepare questions from. Prepare some questions yourself.

When it comes time to play the game, all you need is a black board (white board nowadays?) or flip chart and the prepared questions. Draw a set of gallows to get started and then let the children take turns asking their questions. Every time the class answers correctly, the questioner gets to draw a part of Haman on the gallows (head, ear, arm, etc.). The game continues until Haman is hanged!
Variations. (1) Get some noisemakers for the children! Tell them the story of Purim. Each year, at the feast of Purim, the Jews read the book of Esther. Every time the name of Haman is mentioned, the Jewish children hiss and jeer. Your children can enjoy their own variation of this. Every time they get a correct answer to an Esther question, let them celebrate with the noisemakers! (2) Playing Hang Haman does not have to be limited to the book of Esther. The game can provide an opportunity for the children to prepare review questions after any subject they have studied in Sunday school. Letting them prepare the questions is good educational practice. You may want to find a different way for them to celebrate their correct answers, though! (Thanks to Melinda Flatley, Paris Avenue, OH.)

Nearly all the games described above involve the use of questions and answers. There are other kinds of games as well. With an endless variety imaginable, please let me know about a game that your Sunday school kids like to play. I will be happy to tell others about it.

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**Some Principles of Teaching The Teacher**

Contemplation of the Great Teacher, the Lord Jesus Christ, must impress us with an important truth; namely, that a teacher must be bound up with his teaching… Let their lives reinforce their message, teaching with their persons as well as with lessons. It is an indispensable condition of success.

All the foregoing, it is hoped, will persuade us of the importance of the teacher in the great campaign of the Truth. Our Sunday Schools and Youth Circles require the best efforts of the best of our meetings. It is a pity this is not always realized. There is a disposition to treat these branches of our work too lightly, and to delegate them to any who are prepared to try. With our available numbers so limited the scope for careful selection is small, and this fact lays stress on the need for deliberate effort on the part of those who are serving, whether they be veterans or recruits. Some may be lacking at first in natural aptitude. Let them take heart. Interest in the task and devotion to its cause will in the end prove far more effective, under God’s blessing, than the halfhearted exercises of the born teacher. The preparation of lessons will be an unfailing expression of this interest. It is an axiom of education that the really good teacher is always a student, and this will ensure a brightness and freshness in his lessons. The famous educationist, Thring, described teaching without study as serving water from a stagnant pool, while the student-teacher refreshes his class from running streams. But all the time, the teacher should be looking unto Jesus. “What would Jesus do?” is a question which has been suggested as a touchstone for right living. It is well to bring it particularly into these activities with our young. What would Jesus do? How would he now teach and guide our children in the way they should go?

Will Watkins, The Christadelphian 1947 p 54
Scriptural Discipline: (4) Rebuke and Correction

In the last article we looked at some fundamentals of Forgiveness associated with Scriptural discipline. Clearly, all Scriptural discipline is aimed at restoration. Our God delights in mercy and we must too. The first step in forgiving our brother is to have a personal awareness of our own need — that we too are encompassed by infirmity. Because of this, we then can “cast up” the problem to our Lord, to trust in his justice and righteousness. Ultimately, we know that we can commit our cause to “him that judgeth righteously.”

It is clearly true that not all offences are repented of, or restitution made. For sins not unto death, we can move forward because we “aphiemi” forgive. Whether we are fully restored is not essential. But, for sins unto death, whether against us or our Lord, we must pursue restoration since one’s eternal life is at risk.

Restoration

That may fly in the face of the common thinking in the world around us. The Humanistic thinking of the world tells us that we have no “right” to judge another’s behavior and that if such is done in “private” we have no responsibility in the matter. This could not be further from the true teachings of Scripture and serves as a warning to our generation. We are in this together. Your eternal life is my business and mine yours.

What does Scripture say about this? Solomon spoke about the warning to the one who views the sin and does nothing when he wrote:

“Rescue those who are being taken away to death; hold back those who are stumbling to the slaughter. If you say, “Behold, we did not know this,” does not he who weighs the heart perceive it? Does not he who keeps watch over your soul know it, and will he not repay man according to his work?” (Prov 24:11-12 ESV).

Ezekiel was warned about the role of the watchman when he was told,

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

In the Law, Moses wrote,
"Do not pervert justice; do not show partiality to the poor or favoritism to the great, but judge your neighbor fairly. Do not go about spreading slander among your people. Do not do anything that endangers your neighbor’s life. I am the Lord. Do not hate a fellow Israelite in your heart. Rebuff your neighbor frankly so you will not share in their guilt. (Lev 19:15-17 NIV).
(The margin in the KJV says, “that thou bear not sin for him.”)

We need to view sins unto death this way. If they are not repented of, it is as if we are watching our dear brother or sister being taken away to execution. They WILL NOT inherit the Kingdom unless they repent. Think of it the way Solomon describes it. If you see your brother marching off to slaughter, you would do all you can to warn him and encourage him to change his direction. This is the responsibility we all have one to another. If we turn our heads, if we ignore it, we will be answerable to our God. He knows our hearts.

It is important, however, to know what we are and are not to judge. Perhaps you have heard within our own circles comments about how we are not to judge one another: that function is strictly the role of the Judge, our Lord Jesus Christ. Well, this can be absolutely right on some matters and DEAD wrong on others. We are to judge, but it is essential to know what we do and don’t judge.

**Judgment**

In the New Testament, there are several words used for judge or judgment. We must know the difference between these words if we wish to appropriately understand Scriptural discipline. The first word is “krino.” This word is used for one that separates, selects, chooses, to pronounce judgment. This is used for the role of an adjudicator, in the process of a trial or the execution of sentence. In most cases, this is NOT our role. This is why Jesus tells us not to “judge” our brother, to judge not that ye be not judged. The judgment being spoken of here is all about a final sentence. Paul, in the context of areas where we have liberty, says:

“But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God. Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother’s way” (Rom 14:10-13).

In these cases, we are being warned about condemning our brother over matters of liberty, acting as if we are “the judge.” We do not belong in this role.

However, elsewhere the Apostle mixes the word “krino” with another word — *diakrino* — which means to separate throughout as in the sense of arbitrating. In 1Cor 11, Paul uses *diakrino* to say “if we discerned ourselves.” In the RV it is “if we discerned ourselves.” So, let’s take a look at this passage. Paul writes:

“Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints? Do ye not know that the saints shall judge (krino) the world? and if the world shall be judged (krino) by you, are ye
unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that we shall judge (krino) angels? how much more things that pertain to this life? If then ye have judgments of things pertaining to this life, set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church. I speak to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you? no, not one that shall be able to judge (diakrino) between his brethren?” (1Cor 6:1-5).

What’s the message here? We will “krino” in the world to come. That will be a significant part of our role as a kingdom of priests. However, now, we are not called on to judge such matters. We are called on to diakrino, or to arbitrate, to seek resolution and restoration between brethren.

Here’s a quick way to look at our judgment today. We are expected to judge. But our judgment involves the application of the Word and God’s standards to OBSERVABLE behaviors. In some cases, this may require nothing more than a private rebuke or corrective word. In other cases, it may require us to fully follow the Lord’s direction in Matt 18. But primarily, we are to deal with observable behaviors, not with what we believe lies within the heart. Perhaps that is the great lesson from the Parable of the Tares, where the judgment of the unrighteous is finally apparent in the tares at the harvest. It is separated by the angels, not us.

So, if a brother in Corinth is eating food offered to idols, this is observable, but it does NOT necessarily indicate that he is falling back to idolatry. If a sister no longer is attending meeting, that’s clearly observable. What we cannot assume or judge is that she no longer values the Truth. If a man frequently returns to substance abuse, we cannot judge that his repentance was never sincere. We must understand the difference and deal with the observable sin, rather than the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Bro. Fred Pearce wrote in “A Duty to Withdraw” that “we need to distinguish between ‘judging’ whether a man is worthy of salvation, and ‘judging’ that a persistent fornicator, for example, cannot be retained in fellowship, while leaving the final judgment in his case to the Lord.”

Earlier, Bro. Islip Collyer wrote these instructive words:

“The spirit of the law deals mainly in positives in which none but we ourselves and Christ can judge us. If a man steals or commits adultery we are called upon to judge, and withdraw from his company, although even then we must act with humility and the desire that he shall be saved. If a man spends the whole of his life without any real love for God or for man in his heart he must be left to the judgment of the Master. We cannot withdraw from a brother simply on the grounds that he is lacking in love. Yet the sins of omission may be far more serious than the sins of commission. The one wicked act may only be the expression of a moment’s weakness. The loveless inactivity may express the tendency of a lifetime. Humanity may judge that a certain one never did anything wrong. Christ may judge that neither did he ever do anything right. The picture of the judgment in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew shows us the righteous commended
for what they had done, not for what they had avoided, and the wicked
condemned for what they had neglected, not for what they had done.”

So, with this as a platform, let’s now move into a quick examination of Matt 18.

**Matthew 18**

For many years, I viewed (wrongly) Matt 18 as a process for getting restoration
or repentance by a brother or sister that sinned against me. Clearly, Matt 18 does
deal with this. However, it is not restricted to this. Matt 18 is intended, I believe,
to deal with any sins unto death that are either committed against me or against
our Lord. In other words, I have a responsibility to my brother or sister to follow
Matt 18 when I become aware of them being involved in a sin unto death — even
if it is not an offence against me. This is a critical distinction and consistent with
our role as watchmen for one another.

Perhaps much of the difficulty has been in translation. The KJV says, “Moreover if
thy brother shall trespass against thee…” Because of this, I had always seen this as a
process for dealing with matters that are significant sins unto death, but restricted
to sins against me. However, this was never consistent with other parts of Scrip-
ture. The Sahidic, Egyptian Coptic texts that have been preserved in Alexandria,
Egypt are now being viewed by newer translations are a more accurate way of
looking at this passage.

“If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the
two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over” (Matt. 18:15 NIV).

“Be on your guard! If your brother sins, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive
him. And if he sins against you seven times a day, and returns to you seven
times, saying, ‘I repent,’ forgive him” (Luke 17:3-4 NASB).

This is an essential principle for understanding Matt 18. Matt 18 is a process to
restore any who are lost in sins unto death. It is a process for restoration — not
for one’s personal “justice” about being offended. This seems consistent with the
context of Matt 18, which is all about restoration. Jesus warns:

- Be converted and become as little children;
- Woe to him that causes offences;
- Remove foot, hands, eye if it offends you;
- Despise not one of these little ones;
- The searching for the lost sheep of the flock of one hundred;
- The standard of forgiveness of seventy times seven;
- The unrighteous servant;
- How we are to forgive from the hearts our brother of his trespasses.

This doesn't mean that I should not follow the principle of Matt 18 when dealing
with a personal offence or a sin not unto death. In fact, the guidance the Lord
gives about privately going to our brother is of great value. But, Matt 18 is not
to be fully applied to matters where personal liberty or sins not unto death are
involved. Here’s what Bro. Roberts wrote on the matter:
“For the present it will suffice to note that the sin or trespass that Christ alludes to is a palpable, obvious, fatal sin. When doubt exists on this point, let us not apply Matt 18:15–17. ‘Some men's sins are open beforehand.’ Some are not, and therefore, we have to wait for later circumstances, or Christ's infallible judgment, to disclose them.”

It is interesting to see the way our Lord pulled this process together, using skillfully the guidance from the Law. The principle of going directly to your brother and keeping sin at bay as close to the source as possible is fully consistent with the Law. Moses wrote:

“If thy brother, the son of thy mother, or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend, which is as thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, Let us go and serve other gods, which thou hast not known, thou, nor thy fathers; Namely, of the gods of the people which are round about you, nigh unto thee, or far off from thee, from the one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth; Thou shalt not consent unto him, nor hearken unto him; neither shall thine eye pity him, neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him: But thou shalt surely kill him; thine hand shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterwards the hand of all the people. And thou shalt stone him with stones, that he die; because he hath sought to thrust thee away from the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage” (Deut 13:6-10).

Israel operated best with this principle in mind. The role of all was to work together so that as a family, a tribe, a nation they would all be holy people unto their God. **Discipline is best handled closest to the individual and as early as possible.** No member was to be an island, but accountable to the body. The first place that sin should be fought is in the close, intimate relationships we have in our lives. We are warned to spare not! What an important lesson for our ecclesias today! If we all serve as watchmen to those we know best, if we don't conceal missteps, we not only serve those we love best, but protect the ecclesia. More on this later.

So, if we deal with observable sins unto death as our Lord commands, we are doing what we can to save a soul from death. If our brother is approached in love by the concerned brother or sister, the vast majority of times they are saved and the repentance process begins. The Lord has laid out for us two additional steps, witnesses and the ecclesia, if the private communication and rebuke does not bring about at least an expression of repentance. But, if one will not hear the brother, the witnesses or the ecclesia, this is not just a sin unto death, it is rebellion! We have already looked at how our God views rebellion. The core issues that bring about rebellion, which can all be traced back to the flesh and pride, must be dealt with. But, that process is not for us. It is the work of our Lord and his angels. We are called on to “deliver him unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh.” In this part of the restorative process, the Lord works with the individual to bring them to a place of repentance. It involves a process of crushing one's pride to bring them to point of repentance. In our next article, we will be specifically dealing with this...
final step of the disciplinary process. It is frequently misunderstood and often poorly applied.

So, how might we understand this importance process for helping our brother? We might think of it this way.

- Remember your own weakness and need — a critical starting place!
- Forgive (*aphiemi*) and give the resolution of this matter to the Lord
- Pray for your brother and for yourself — that you will be guided in your work
- Arrange for a private conversation
- Make an appointment, select an appropriate time/place
- Begin with affirmation of your love (been praying for you, concerned)
- Ask permission to share your concern
- Share (behaviorally) your concern
- Listen
- Use Scripture to govern standards
- Promise to continue praying
- Follow-up

If this does not lead at least to an expression of repentance, you MUST progress to private corroboration with 2-3 witnesses. If this does not lead to expression of repentance, the matter must be taken to the ecclesial and the brother is confronted by the many. If this does not lead to an expression of repentance, then sadly we must progress to public condemnation and censure (delivered unto Satan for destruction of the flesh).

Is this the end of the disciplinary process? Absolutely not! It has reached a stage when all our efforts to bring about repentance have failed. We now hand this over to our Lord and ask him to work in our brother or sister’s life so that they will repent and not be lost. Our next article will specifically look at how our Lord does this work.

**Conclusion**

In closing, we would like to share a couple of final thoughts. First, too often we hear comments about ecclesias applying this final disciplinary step as being unloving, not reflective of brothers and sisters who truly care for one another. Further we hear comments that would indicate a sincere doubt that such a step would do little more than drive away the brother or sister. Actually, there is no more of a loving process we can follow than Matt 18. Following it in a compassionate manner, reflecting the love of our Lord, states that we love our brother and sister so much that we will not turn our faces from them — we will not stand by while they destroy their spiritual lives.

Last, I would like to share some comments from Bro. Roberts about the need for private conversation when we first hear of such sins. He wrote:

> “Nothing tends more to the keeping or the restoring of peace than the observance of this law; and no law is more constantly broken. The universal impulse, when anything is supposed to be wrong, is to tell the matter to
third persons. From them, it spreads with the result of causing much bad feeling which, perhaps, the original cause does not warrant, and would not have produced if the aggrieved person had taken the course prescribed by Christ, and told the fault “between thee and him alone.” If good men, or those who consider themselves such would adopt the rule of refusing to listen to an evil report privately conveyed, until it had been dealt with to the last stage according to the rule prescribed by Christ, much evil would be prevented. Disobedience is almost the universal rule in this matter. The results are serious now, in the generation of hatred instead of love. Much more serious will the result be to the offenders against this rule in the day when all matters will be measured and settled by the divine rule…”

In our next article we will look at “delivering unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh” or the final step of Matt 18, viewing a rebellious brother as a heathen man or publican.

David Jennings (Pomona, CA)

Notes:
2. The Christadelphian, 1913, p 203.
3. The Christadelphian, 1895 p 57.
4. The Christadelphian, 1888, p 458. See also Nazareth Revisited, p 201.
Summary
“The fairy tale romance is typically the story of a boy and girl attracted to each other with magical passion, enduring some perverse trial that threatens to destroy them and painfully end their relationship, but they conquer all and go on to live happily ever after. Unfortunately in real life almost all the challenges begin after the fairy tale ends. No matter how hard we try there will always be potholes and humps along the road in any relationship. But the mutual caring, love and emotional support of a husband or wife can make all the difference in whether or not we persevere.”

This book offers sound, proactive, Biblical advice on how to build and maintain a happy marriage.

Introduction
The author of this very important book is a respected brother in North America, who, along with his wife Mary have had over 50 years of marriage. They have counselled many couples, often dear friends, on multifaceted aspects of marriage. Also they have given sound Biblical and practical advice to many seeking marriage in the Lord. The book is based partly on a series of articles published in The Christadelphian Tidings (the monthly fraternal magazine of the North America community).

The sole purpose of this book is an attempt to provide sound, proactive, Biblical advice to brothers and sisters on how to have a “happy marriage”. Their hope and prayer is that the book will be of help to brothers and sisters throughout the world in facing the many strains, hardships and temptations that inevitably occur in the course of married life.

Content
The book begins with a look at marriage in the twenty-first century, comparing it with the way in which it was arranged, often by parents, in Bible times (and still is in some parts of the world). Even though men and women often make their own free choices of when to marry, it does not mean that we are necessarily wiser or happier in terms of our relationships — invariably it is quite the opposite! Statistics from North America, United Kingdom and Australia painfully reveal that second and third marriages fail at an even greater rate than first marriages!

The failure of marriage tends to peak almost universally from between the seventh to the eleventh years of marriage and not early on! Often it is caused by pent up frustrations that have remained unresolved, until they eventually lead to a rupture in the relationship.
Not only does this book explain why there are so many causes of unhappy marriages, but it gives realistic advice based on God's principles that help everyone to put into practice the guidelines that God has given for our benefit.

The author makes it very plain that marriage is a God given institution and should therefore be taken very seriously. He has tackled such subjects as “choosing wisely”, “making love last”, “committing to a relationship” and “setting realistic expectations.

He also analyses the reason why people nowadays often do not enter into marriage but just partner someone with no life commitment! It is a reflection of the emphasis that our society places on self-fulfillment; it’s all about me; getting and not giving. Few realize that the “more selfish you are the less happy you are!”

The key to success, says John, in a chapter on “Becoming Simpatico”, is open communication. The advice of Paul in Ephesians chapter 4 on talk and action, the combination of which builds up rather than breaks down, is so important. Even if you are absolutely right or if you think your way is more logical, it does not automatically make for a better solution. Rarely is there a perfect resolution to a problem — sometimes good enough is enough, suggests John. Reminding your partner of all their other faults, that are not relevant to the issue at hand, means you go nowhere fast!

The author states the obvious in some areas e.g. “it is unrealistic to expect any marriage to sail along without hitting rough waters from time to time. We must not try to resolve conflict by destroying the character and ego of our partner. Only a person who has completely given up their own identity would be able give in to every conflict; and that is a form of abuse.” Perhaps one of the worst disagreements is on how to handle finances and the practical advice given is very relevant on this major issue, whether we are married or not.

“Finding wise counsel” is of great importance and a chapter is devoted to it. John strongly suggests that all ecclesias should seriously consider pre-marital counselling — and I strongly support that view from a life-time of experience in our body. You would certainly be on the right track if you based it on this book!! Who should give the guidance to a potential couple, and when it is best done, is considered, but wisdom is the principal thing.

“Earning a living” receives incisive treatment in a chapter which is full of Scriptural advice again, but in the context of the modern world with all its promotion of self-centeredness.

The major issues of “having children” and “raising them in the Lord” takes a further two chapters. The critical subject of discipline for children is treated in depth with lots of down to earth advice based on God given guidelines and examples — not the latest theories from child development gurus!

Two further chapters deal with the every important topics of “immorality - before and after marriage” and “intimacy — its contribution to a happy marriage.” The “one flesh” principle is clearly established as the benchmark in both Old and New Testaments in spite of the influence of the heathen world that surrounded
the physical and spiritual Jews! I quote “The Bible does not avoid discussing marriage intimacy and neither should we”. It is very interesting to see how the author expands on this and makes it relevant to everyone. He says “This book cannot possibly do more than open the door to this weighty subject”. (There are many further sources of information at the end of every chapter).

“In-laws and Out-laws” is an intriguing chapter. After giving some Scriptural rules to remember, John says that he can personally testify that these maxims work having faced these situations in his own life, as well as witnessing other brothers and sisters relationships. Whom John calls “Outlaws” and their effect on a marriage is very illuminating, especially when he shows how they should be handled in a happy marriage.

As already stated, differences normally occur in any marriage and the author devotes his penultimate chapter to “Resolving Conflicts”. After reviewing the major reasons for disagreement, John gives Biblical ways of dealing with anger. He explores Ephesians 4 again and realistically says it is our human nature that lets us down. Yet anger does not necessarily lead to sin, he says, but we must not let it fester. Essential practical measures are then outlined and of great interest are his “Dos and Don’ts” list.

A cooling off period is recommended when emotions take over, but this is no excuse for not dealing with the problem. “Clamming up and refusing to work out a problem can drive an even bigger wedge in a relationship” he says.

And what if an impasse is reached? Seeking counsel from parents or other in-laws who are nonjudgmental may help, but often advice is best sort elsewhere — as long as wisdom is there! Obviously we have a huge advantage in our community over the secular world because of the good number of mature married couples that can help. Even then, John suggests, professional counselling may be in order, but do remember the support networks that exist — under different names — in North America, the UK, and Australia. “I am sorry, forgive me; I will try to do better in future” is a valuable recommendation that he makes.

“Till death do us part” is the final chapter. John again uses God given principles to guide his comments, but also looks at the situations where things do not go according to plan. Manmade solutions like divorce, do not bring happiness, and often financial hardship follows in their wake, as well as upsetting the balance in family life.

Man has come up with ingenious methods to alleviate the suffering but all the models are in serious contraction to the way of Christ and our Father. “The wife of our youth” should be for life as we all know. Even retirement can bring new challenges in a relationship with both being in each other’s company more. And what about weightier issues like “serious illness, intimacy problems, adult children difficulties, diminishing income, ageing parents and so on” he says. A good solution is given in principle along with practical advice. John, in a page and a half reviews the guidelines that he has provided throughout the book; it is quite a revelation, but you will have to read it for yourself to find out.
Conclusion
I consider this book a truly major contribution to the subject of marriage. Not only is it recommended to all age groups, married or not, but it gives a spiritual as well as practical dimensions on how to have a happy life. If our King delays his return, this book will go a long way to helping our survival and the health and happiness of our community worldwide.

Malcolm G. Cross (Doncaster, England)

Books from The Tidings

The Ecclesia at Ephesus, by Ryan Mutter
Ephesus was one of the most advanced cities in the Roman Empire. Believers living there faced many of the same issues that confront followers of the Lord Jesus Christ today. The Bible captures more than four decades of the Ecclesia’s history through the Acts and the numerous New Testament writings penned by or to believers living in Ephesus. The lessons the Bible provides about the causes and consequences of events in the Ecclesia remain relevant in today’s ever-changing times. Since the Bible records the development of the Ecclesia as a whole and also certain of its individual members, studying the Ecclesia at Ephesus provides powerful lessons in spiritual growth. $9.00 US (264 pages, with color maps and images).

Bible Guidelines for a Happy Marriage, by John C. Bilello
Sound, proactive, Biblical advice on how to build and maintain a happy marriage. $6.00 US (soft cover, 127 pages).

The Creation Text: Studies in Early Genesis, by David Levin
Forty-nine studies offer fresh insights into early Genesis by examining the text and structure of the first five chapters. $12.00 US (364 pages).

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

Pictures of Redemption, by George Booker
Explores parables, analogies, and figures of speech used in Scripture to illustrate the many facets of redemption. $6.00 US (soft cover, 192 pages).

The Whole Armor of God, by Ryan Mutter
This story takes place nearly 3,000 years ago, but the spiritual challenges are familiar to today’s young people. $6.00 US (110 pages).

How to Order
Online – www.tidings.org (Go to ‘Books’) E-mail – books@tidings.org
Telephone – Karen Guist, 440-227-0212
Mail – Tidings Books, 11659 Caves Rd., Chesterland, OH 44026
Shipping & handling extra. Make checks payable to The Christadelphian Tidings.
Truth Corps Leaders Needed!

The CBMA is in search of married couples or individuals to act as leaders for Truth Corps for 2014 and beyond — but primarily for 2014!

Truth Corps is a CBMA missionary program that gathers together a group of young Brothers and Sisters — all 18 or older, usually three or four Brothers and three or four Sisters — plus a Brother and Sister acting as their team leaders, and send them to ecclesias in need of assistance around North America, Latin America and the Caribbean for several weeks of intensive missionary work. Not only does Truth Corps create lasting impacts in the ecclesias it works with — both helping bring in contacts from outside, and rejuvenating the youth and preaching efforts of the ecclesias themselves — but it also forever changes the young people who embark upon it. Young people come away from Truth Corps with a newfound confidence in preaching the Gospel in their personal lives, an enthusiasm for preaching both in their home ecclesias and abroad, and with lasting friendships formed while on the team. To be effective, however, a group of young people needs a spiritually mature Brother and Sister traveling with them; someone to provide necessary supervision and chaperoning, as well as providing wisdom, counsel, and encouragement to the team as they leave their homes and families and embark on a summer of intensive missionary service. This is where the team leaders come in!

God willing, this year’s Truth Corps’s locations include the Mid-Atlantic United States, Guyana, and Trinidad & Tobago. The program will be four weeks long, lasting from July 5th to August 2nd, 2014.

Below are the answers to a few questions you might have, but if you have any additional questions, please contact Allen and Tara Laben at allenandtara@gmail.com, or by phone at (757) 870-7579.

Q: Do we need to have previous experience with Truth Corps?—

A: Previous experience with Truth Corps, either as a team member or a member of a host ecclesia, is helpful but by no means a necessity! Team leaders will be provided with a manual that will tell you everything you need to know about the training, structure, and work of Truth Corps. More important than Truth Corps experience is the ability to help manage and support a small, tight-knit group of young people. Additionally, there are local leaders in each Truth Corps location who will help you manage the work in that particular location.

Q: Will our trip be paid for?—
A: Yes, all of your travel expenses will be paid for and most of your food will be provided as well — your only expenses will be your personal effects and any “pocket money” you wish to carry with you in your travels.

Q: Do I need to speak a foreign language? —

A: Not at all! English is widely spoken in all of Truth Corps’ locations for this year.

Q: What does a typical day with Truth Corps consist of? —

A: The team stays together, either in hotels or in homes hosted by local ecclesial members. As a leader, your day would start by helping make sure the team is up and ready for the day, and starting the day with breakfast, prayer, a devotion (led by the team’s Brothers in rotation), and sometimes the first daily Bible reading. Mornings with Truth Corps are usually filled with some kind of preaching activity, such as door-to-door canvassing, leafletting, teaching at a Vacation Bible School, or some similar activity; the leaders help keep the team on-track and also participate with the team in these activities. Lunch is provided by the local ecclesias, and following the second and third daily Bible readings and a short First Principle workshop (facilitated by team members on rotation), afternoons are usually for rest, personal Bible study, and sometimes fellowship with the local ecclesias. Evenings are usually spent attending ecclesial events such as CYC, Bible Class, public lectures, etc. that Truth Corps would be participating in, or visits to the homes of Brothers and Sisters needing help or encouragement. Each day ends with a the team discussing the events of that day, renewing their commitment to service and preaching for the next day and closing the day with prayer. Travel days differ from this outline, as do the team’s one leisure day each week during which you would participate in a recreational activity planned by the local ecclesia. There is a lot more information about this in the Truth Corps Leaders’ Manual, which will be provided to you well in advance!

Q: What do I do next?

A: Please contact us as soon as possible at allenandtara@gmail.com, or by phone at (757) 870-7579; leave a voice message if you don’t reach us right away. We would also appreciate your prayers for the efforts of the CBMA and Truth Corps as we seek to spread the Good News.

Thank you in advance for your help and prayers!

With love in Christ, Allen and Tara Laben

Visit to Chile: In Which I am Amazed

According to my guide book, over a third of the 16-17 million Chileans live in Santiago, the capital. It is a booming metropolis nestled between some pretty large mountains, aka the Andes, and a fascinating combination of 400 year old churches and modern skyscrapers. It boasts some pretty fantastic public transportation, including an extensive bus and metro system.

I had the privilege of visiting the ecclesia Santiago de Chile at the beginning of this year for just under a week. I don’t know who laughed more, the brethren and
contacts or I, at the number of times I exclaimed just how similar Santiago is to Southern California in so many ways. One of the first is the freeways, which rival LA freeways in size and scope, except with a little less graffiti than downtown. Another was the climate, with warm, dry days and cool nights, which are also typical of the irrigated semi-desert of Southern California. By far the most startling appearances were the companies; shopping malls filled with brands such as Apple, TGI Fridays, Nike, and many others.

However, the real thing that constantly amazed me about the similarities between the country of my birth and this land I had never visited was the connections instantaneously formed with those of such precious likeminded faith. When I arrived, one of the sisters was there to pick me up and take me back to her house, and treated me with all the care of a queen. The ecclesia met during the weekend for a meal and breaking of bread, and I became part of the gregarious, loving and slightly chaotic thing that is a family. When we studied the Scriptures together using the daily readings, we were all reminded together of that hidden pearl. That treasure so great that to give all of our life to it is merely our reasonable service. I was heartened to be reminded, yet again, that the message of the good news of the coming kingdom transcends all nations, peoples, tribes, and tongues. That the message of the messiah has power whether you are rich or poor by the world’s standards, educated or uneducated, whether you live in the shadow of hundreds of Catholic cathedrals hundreds of years old or in the shadow of the mountains of sub-Saharan Africa, or in the shadow of generations of Christadelphian forefathers.

Also quite surprising to me was the thankfulness of the brethren for my short visit. “Why are you thanking me?” I wonder. “You are the ones who housed me, inspired me with your stories, made me to feel so welcome, shared with me your lives and are the ones who continue to teach me more and more what it is to be a disciple of the master in so many diverse places.” My thanks should go to them, for their selves and their heart.

“But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, to show that the transcendent power belongs to God and not to us” (2Cor 4:7).

Colleen Uiga, Spanish Truth Corps
Submitted by Jan Berneau, CBMA/C Publicity
Christmas Vacation in Puerto Rico

Puerto Rico is one of the bigger islands in the Caribbean with a population of close to 4 million. It is an American territory or commonwealth and Puerto Ricans have US citizenship.

Although it has its share of economic challenges, Puerto Rico is a delightful island. It is a bit like Hawaii — the people are friendly, the water is safe to drink and the chain stores and restaurants are familiar. Spanish is the main language but many people speak English.

Sis. Kathy and I became interested in visiting Puerto Rico when we read Bro. Don Luff’s article in the Tidings (January 2013). We decided to spend the Christmas holidays on the island, and the highlight of our visit was a delightful couple of days spent with Bro. Miguel and Sis. Aida Robles. The Robles are retired and in their late 60’s and live in Ponce which is the second largest city after San Juan. They were baptized over 25 years ago by Bro. Basilio Fernandez, now living in Florida and are a wonderful example of a couple living faithfully in isolation. Meeting with them was a privilege, as they are very warm and generous, and they welcomed us with open arms.

During our visit on Christmas Day and the following Sunday we were treated to delicious island style food (barbeque chicken, rice and fried plantain). We did the readings and shared a breaking of bread together. The language was a bit of a challenge due to our limited Spanish and their limited English, but we were aided in this regard by the Robles’ eldest son, Miguel Jr. (about 40), who speaks good English and was more than happy to sit in with us and aid our discussions.

The Robles are not shy about witnessing to their family, friends and neighbors, and while we were there we spent time talking with an elderly neighbor and retired language professor, Tomas, who asked some insightful questions. We also had the opportunity to talk with Miguel Jr., who has a high regard for his parents’ faith.

For a variety of reasons there has been very little witnessing in Puerto Rico. The Roman Catholic Church is dominant and the Pentecostal churches are also strong. However the JWs, Seventh Day Adventists, Mormons and other, smaller groups have made inroads, and so there are opportunities for preaching. The CBMA has provided support to this area over the years, and currently a number of students are taking our Spanish Bible correspondence course.

Two other Christadelphians live on the island. A younger brother, Edgardo Saldana, who found the truth from our Spanish website labiblia.com and was baptized in...
Los Angeles a few years ago, lives in San Juan. A friend of the Robles, Bro. Roberto Martinez, was baptized a few years ago and lives nearby in Ponce.

We were instantly drawn to the Robles despite the language hurdle, and got along famously. While sharing some meaningful discussions about our lives in Christ, we soon learned that our experiences and struggles in the world are similar. But of course they have other challenges too because of their isolation (which made us feel thankful for our own ecclesia). We also enjoyed their enthusiasm and their own little ways of doing things, and they seemed to enjoy ours in return! Sis. Kathy and I feel blessed to have had the opportunity to meet this special family, and hope to go back for another visit in the not too distant future. Puerto Rico is becoming a popular tourist destination, and we encourage others to visit the island and support the brethren.

Martin and Kathy Owen (San Diego, CA)
Submitted by Jan Berneau, CBMA/C Publicity

All-Mexico Bible School


Argentina Report — January 2014

Hello again from Córdoba, Argentina, the little part of Europe that ended up in South America! Hello from the land of tango, the land of gauchos, the land from which the current Pope hails, and the land that will take your breath away with its scope, diversity, and beauty. Hello from a land so different from my own, so diverse, with many stories to be told.

I had a friend ask me, “What is it like? What is it like to leave your culture, your ecclesia, and move to a place so different? How did you adapt?” To which my short response is: I haven’t yet. Not completely anyway. The first month was a wondrous dream: each event had a new facet to it, everything was so new and intriguing. I was extremely blessed to come here at a time when there was a missionary here from an English-speaking country, who explained to me how things are different, what social customs exist, and helped me when I had questions that would seem obvious to a native. A little example: here they have a tea drink called yerba mate, or mate for short (pronounced ma-tay), which is drunk with a silver plated straw from a gourd filled with tea leaves. All parties share the same straw, and it is passed from the person serving to each person in succession. If one doesn’t want any more, he or she simply says ‘thank you’ upon returning it. This drink is everywhere, and I may even call it the national drink of Argentina. Walking, one will see the familiar...
shape of the mate gourd and thermos in many a person’s hand. If needed, someone might explain this to the foreigner, but there is a connection that’s formed when it is found that they don’t need to, the ‘foreigner’ already know. Personally, I very much like mate and find the custom delightful.

A little bit more difficult to become used to is the perception of time here. I read an article once about Americans and how we view time. It stated: 5-10 minutes early is ‘on time’, and 5 minutes after is ‘late’. If you are going to be more than 10 minutes late, it is polite to call and inform the host. Not so in Argentina. Time is a shifting and moving creature, and pinning it down to your expectations is well-nigh to impossible. Being here requires that one set aside preconceptions and judgments around time. Because often, the person is ‘late’ according to North American standards because he or she was interacting, relating to, or helping someone else. Here, the relationship is very important, more important many times than business.

I can’t say as of yet that I have clear insight on the people, the culture, or even everything about how to get around, but I’m enjoying discovering more little by little. There is a reason for every difference, for every action, and I’m loving listening to find out not just the ‘what’, but the ‘why’.

There is a structure in the Spanish language which uses the verb ‘tener’ followed by ‘que’ and a verb, and it’s used to express obligations, duties, and basically whatever things need to get done. Therefore ‘ienes que hablar’ is translated as ‘you have to speak.’ In terms of adjusting, by far the biggest obstacle has been the language. When I talk in English, I don’t even realize the variety of sentence structure and vocabulary that changes with each subject that I use. Listening, my mind picks up naturally the shades of meaning and missing sounds of others, and my mind grasps the concepts, ideas, and levels of meaning of the communicator. What an amazing thing is the mind. Not so in Spanish. Here, when learning Spanish, it is necessary to listen, listen carefully, ask questions when you don’t know something, and always, always....tienes que hablar. Only by practicing, learning from mistakes, and taking the brave step forward to just speak will you really improve when learning a new language. You will worry about looking foolish, and saying the wrong thing, but you must not let that rule over you. How much is that like our speaking in the Truth? For realistically, our language, concepts and thoughts in the Truth are a new language to the natural man. We need to listen, study, and especially need to speak of the things that we have seen and heard. There is a day coming, and we are the watchmen. Have we sounded the alarm? Will I? Will you?

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

Brothers Brydyn Melles and Pancho
News & Notices

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

BARRIE, ON

Since our last correspondence Sis. Pat Kryskow has transferred to Kitchener-Waterloo, ON Ecclesia, and we subsequently rejoiced with Sis. Pat in her marriage to Bro. Fred Bouttell. Sis. Ona Lawton transferred to the Brantford, ON Ecclesia, and we have accepted the transfer of Bro. Patrick and Sis. Susan Smidt from the Cambridge, ON Ecclesia.

We are sad to report the falling asleep of Sis. Jean Donnelly on Dec. 3, 2012. Despite Sis. Jean being legally blind, she was an inspiration to our ecclesia for her positive outlook on life and spiritual vision. Her presence is greatly missed. A service of remembrance was held at our ecclesial hall which was filled to capacity with relatives and neighbors.

God willing, in October our ecclesia, with assistance from ASK, is making plans to have a preaching booth at the 2014 International Plowing Match which is coming to our area this year.

We pray for God’s blessing on these efforts.

Grant Abel

CALGARY, AB

We inform the brotherhood of the resignation of our Bro. Mike Lindsay.

Paul Aback

MISSISSAUGA WEST, ON

We thank Bro. Bill Link, (Baltimore, MD) for leading our studies at our Ecclesial Retreat in March of 2013. This was the second Ecclesial Retreat we’ve had that has proven to be a wonderful opportunity to strengthen our ecclesial family around the word of God.

In December, we rejoiced to see the baptism of EMILY ROSE, daughter of Bro. Adrian and Sis. Cathy Rose. Our new sister has grown up in our Sunday school and CYC activities and stands as a wonderful example to our other young people.

In recent months we also welcomed, by way of transfer, Bro. Tom and Sis. Vivian Thorp (Hamilton Greenaway, ON) and Bro. Paul and Sis. Brenda Ghent (Toronto Church Street, ON). Having moved to South Australia, we commend Bro. Daniel and Sis. Kym Cadieux to the One Tree Hill Ecclesia. Bro. Daniel, Sis. Kym and their children have been greatly missed.

We are grateful to Bre. Ken Styles (Detroit Royal Oak, MI) and Dave Billington (Brantford, ON) for leading the classes at our Fall Prophecy Day in November. We were encouraged to see the convergence of many prophecies and the powerful hand of our God. Surely our Lord’s return must be soon!

Like so many in the brotherhood, we have faced some very difficult trials over the last year. Both with sickness and the loss of loved ones, we have been reminded of the frailty of the human condition, but we know that “Yahweh is nigh unto them that are
of a broken heart and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit” (Psalms.34:18). Despite this, we have so much to be thankful for and we more earnestly look forward to the return of the Lord Jesus.

Graham Baldock

PITTSBURGH, PA

Our ecclesia rejoiced to have the honor of witnessing the marriage of Sis. Sarah Telles and Bro. Michael Davey on June 2, 2013. Sarah grew up in our ecclesia. We wish them God's richest blessings as they walk together to His kingdom.

Bro. Zachariah Kemp has transferred to the Northern Virginia Ecclesia.

Our annual study weekend was held on May 3-5, 2013. Bro. Ryan Mutter spoke on “The Life of Timothy”. We very much appreciated his classes and exhortation.

Our CYC study weekend was held September 21-22, 2013. Bro. Jim Cowie spoke on the subject, “How God Deals with the Jacob in All of Us.” Young people and adults were blessed by his encouraging and instructive talks.

We have welcomed visitors from many ecclesias in the United States, Canada and Australia. We want to especially thank the brethren who gave us words of exhortation: Ian Nibloe, Kevin Flatley, Art Hibbs, Caleb Folkerts, Tim Cooper, Craig Stickney, Michael Davey, Richard Morgan and Jim Bates. We also wish to give a special thanks to Bro. Ryan Mutter for leading our adult Sunday school in December on John's first letter.

We are looking forward to having Bro. Mike Robinson (Echo Lake, NJ) on May 3-4, 2014, for our annual study weekend. Lord willing, he will present classes on, “The Levites: They Shall Be Mine.”

Len Budney

RICHMOND PETERSBURG, VA

The Richmond Petersburg Ecclesia continues to meet at the Virginia Home for Boys and Girls, 8716 West St. Broad Street, Richmond, VA 23294, and would like to invite all brothers and sisters visiting the Richmond, VA area to meet with us either for Sunday Memorial Service or Bible Class on Thursday evenings at 7:30 PM. Sunday school starts at 9:30 am, and Memorial Service starts at 10:45. Midweek Bible study is Thursday at 7:30 pm.

For more information contact Bro. David King at 804 270-2153 or 804 241-5863.

David King

SPRINGFIELD, MA

We have had an exciting, albeit busy year in our small ecclesia. First, we have been blessed to be joined by Sis. Eliza Djuma, her husband, and five children who have come to us from the refugee Tongogara Camp Ecclesia located in Zimbabwe. She and her family have now been with us for over a year. This has been a challenging transition for Sis. Eliza, her family, and our ecclesia, as we have had to overcome communication issues as well as attempt to meet the needs of her and her family. Their adjustment to this country from their native country of Africa has been no mean task; additionally, their employment situation continues to be tenuous. However, “when one member suffers, all members suffer; when one member rejoices, all members rejoice.” I have marveled at the collective spirit of sacrifice with which our members have been attempting to meet their needs. Your prayers on their behalf are most needed.
Additionally, our ecclesia has been blessed with the opportunity to present the “Learning to Read Your Bible Effectively” seminar in our area. This effort was met with overwhelming interest. At one time, we had over forty five people attending this seminar. We have continued to conduct follow-up seminars due to continuing interest for almost a year and a half. This has been both an exhausting and an exhilarating work in the Lord’s service. Hopefully this work will culminate in some baptisms. Thanks be to God!

Gary Chodkowski

SUSSEX, NB
We welcome Bro. Philip and Sis. Janice Baines who are commended to us in love from the Cambridge, ON Ecclesia.

Cliff Baines

VANCOUVER, BC
We rejoice with the angels of heaven at the baptism of DANIEL FEDORSKI on January 12, 2014. Daniel is the son of Bro. Tim and Sis. Debbie Fedorski of this ecclesia. We have watched him grow over the years through his continued attendance at Sunday school, CYC and our regular meetings. We pray for God’s blessing on him as he joins us on our walk to Zion.

Bro. Simon Snobelen has assumed the role of recording brother. His address is: 16523 59th Avenue, Surrey, BC, V3S 4G2. He may be reached by phone at: 604-575-8557, or by email at: simonsnobelen@shaw.ca. We thank Bro. Jonathan Stodel for his hard work over the past four years.

Commencing in February we are planning to hold a series of seminars on Sunday evenings in our hall.

Terry Fearn

NEW ECCLESIA — MONROE, WASHINGTON STATE
On November 3, 2013, the Monroe Christadelphian Ecclesia, a new ecclesia in Central Fellowship, was established in the metropolitan area of Seattle, Washington. The brethren together have purchased an ecclesial hall and meet at 235 S. Lewis Street, Monroe, Washington, which lies thirty miles northeast of downtown Seattle. Our ecclesial activities are: Sunday School (9:15 am), Memorial Service (11:00 am), Wednesday Bible Class (7:30 pm), and a combined CYC with the Seattle ecclesia (Saturdays, 7:30 pm in homes of the brothers and sisters).

The following brothers and sisters are the founding members, all of whom are former members of the Seattle ecclesia: Tony and Amy Ball, Emily Ball, Bethany Bleichner, Dan and Linsdey Bleichner, John and Dawn Bleichner, Tim Cooper, Steve and Mindy Faver, Eric and Susan Hawthorne, Shindano and Deta Ikola, Sifa Ikola, Alice Lake, Dan and Michelle Lake, Ethan Lake, Krista Lake, David and Liz Luaulu, Amber Onstot, Adam and Amanda Seagoe, and Dan and Penny Whitcomb.

All ecclesial correspondence should be sent to the Monroe Christadelphian Ecclesia, 235 S. Lewis Street, Monroe, WA 98272, or by email to secretary@monroechristadelphians.com.

Your brother in Christ,
Eric Hawthorne, Secretary
SEATTLE, WA

As of November 3, 2013, the Seattle Ecclesia recognizes the formation of a new ecclesia in Monroe, Washington. We therefore acknowledge the transfer of the following brothers and sisters from the Seattle Ecclesia as founding members of the Monroe Ecclesia: Tony and Amy Ball, Emily Ball, Bethany Bleichner, Dan and Lindsey Bleichner, John and Dawn Bleichner, Tim Cooper, Steve and Mindy Faver, Eric and Susan Hawthorne, Shindano and Deta Ikola, Sifa Ikola, Alice Lake, Dan and Michelle Lake, Ethan Lake, Krista Lake, David and Liz Luaulu, Amber Onstot, Adam and Amanda Seagoe, and Dan and Penny Whitcomb.

Harley Young

Seattle Intelligence

Brother Trussler reports that about the latter end of April last, he received a letter from a brother Wellington Frost, of Seattle, Washington Territory (a city about ten days journey by train from Boston), conveying interesting particulars. He was living alone, having none but the world around him. He was immersed by a London brother, while living at San Francisco (Cal.). This brother left him to go back to London. Before leaving him he told him of a publishing house somewhere in England, but brother Frost did not succeed in getting into communication. At last he applied to the postmaster at Boston, who gave him the address of the Christadelphian meeting place at Chandler Hall, Essex street. By this means he got into communication with the brethren. Brother Trussler says, “Since then I have received another letter, full of love and gratitude.” He says, “I now feel that I can reach out my hand as it were, and have it clasped by some one, who in sincerity has a hope and faith like my own.” He encloses P.O.O. for the Christadelphian, Christendom Astray, and The Trial. He intends (the Lord willing) having quite a collection of Christadelphian works, including Eureka, Elpis Israel, &c. Elpis Israel was the book that made a lasting impression.

The Christadelphian, 1886, p 335

WEST SEATTLE (Wash.).—3233 Walnut Avenue.—We have removed from North Yakima to above address, where we meet for breaking of bread. We advertise in one of the daily papers, and a sister Smith, who is on a visit to Seattle, saw it, and has met with us. Her home is in Wisconsin, where she has been in isolation. On Sunday, August 15th, we had with us a daughter of brother McNair. She, sister Thompson, has also been in isolation since she removed from Winnipeg to Seattle. She saw the advertisement, and says she is thankful to have a meeting she can come to. If any brother or sister should be passing this way, or living near enough to meet with us, we shall be pleased to welcome them.—JOHN DUGDALE.

The Christadelphian, 1915, p 479.
Boasting in the Lord

Jeffrey Gitomer, while giving advice to salesmen, noted, “My experience has shown me that if you have to say what you are, you probably aren’t. Think about that for a moment. ‘I’m honest,’ ‘I’m ethical,’ even ‘I’m the boss,’ or ‘I’m in charge,’ usually indicates just the opposite. Doesn’t it?” CherLisa Biles would agree; she said, “There is no need to boast of your accomplishments and what you can do. A great man is known, he needs no introduction.”

The truth of these words can be seen in examples such as the used car dealer calling himself “Honest John”, who had a reputation for making shady deals with his customers. We should not want or need to tell others how wonderful we are. Solomon’s advice is to “Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth; a stranger, and not thine own lips.”

Isaiah warns us about boasting, “Shall the axe boast over him who hews with it, or the saw magnify itself against him who wields it? As if a rod should wield him who lifts it, or as if a staff should lift him who is not wood.” We are God’s creation. We cannot take credit for what we manage to accomplish because of how God made us. Paul tells us, “For who sees anything different in you? What do you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it?” All that we are and have is a gift from God. James makes it clear, “You boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil.”

Remember a famous world heavy weight boxing champion who used to strut around and stick out his chest saying, “I’m the greatest?” He lost his abilities and faded from the public eye after losing his mind due to blows to his head. Remember the ocean liner that advertised that it was unsinkable — until the Titanic ran into an iceberg and sank? God can bring all mankind’s boasting to nothing.

Is boasting ever a good thing? We learn in Micah, “Thus says the Lord: ‘Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches, but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the Lord.’ ” We should boast in knowing our God and obeying Him. As Paul tells us, “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.”

Paul does boast. He tells us, “But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.” Any other boasting must be of only one kind, as Paul explains, “If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness.” Paul was afflicted with what he called a “thorn in the flesh” that he prayerfully begged to have removed. The answer God gave him was “My grace is sufficient for you, for my strength is made perfect in weakness.” Paul concluded, as he tells us, “Therefore I will boast...
all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.”

The greatest man that ever lived was the Lord Jesus Christ. He describes himself by saying, “I am meek and lowly in heart:” Paul explains what meekness meant for our Lord: “But [he] made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” Jesus took no credit even for the words he spoke, explaining that he spoke only what the Father gave him to speak, and he submitted to His Father’s will in all things, even though it involved suffering and dying. He never would give himself glory, but only gave glory to God.

Let us follow the example of our Lord and humbly serve our God. Any boasting must be of our thankfulness for the hope of salvation we have been given from the sacrifice of our Lord, and appreciation for our weaknesses. When we feel weak, we learn to depend on the Lord, to trust in his strength, as Paul did. There should be no boasting about anything else.

We are thankful for the love and strength that we have been given, and while we do not take credit for any achievements, and recognize our weakness and dependence on our God, yet, as Paul tells us, “In all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

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.)

MARCH, 2014

1 New England Little Disciples at Barton Center, North Oxford, Ma. A day of Bible study and activities for children pre-K to 7th grade. Students are expected to complete a workbook(available online) in advance. See website www.nelittledisciples.com. Contact Sis. Tammy Rundle nelittledisciples@hotmail.com or 781-829-4410.

8-9 Paris Avenue, OH Spring Study Weekend with Bro. Ken Styles (Detroit Royal Oak, MI). The topic will be “Godly Love”. Contact Bro. Derek Elder by phone at: 216-965-9763, or by email at: delder1@kent.edu.

15-16 Victoria, BC Spring study weekend with Bro. Jason Hensley. His topic will be, “And I Will Send You the Comforter.” Contact Bro. Clyde Snobelen victoria@csll.ca.

29-30 Ann Arbor/Royal Oak, MI Joint Study Weekend: “Surviving Perilous Times,” Bro. Jonathan Bowen (Brantford, ON).Saturday 10am arrival at Ann Arbor Ecclesial Hall,
5795 Pontiac Trail, Ann Arbor, MI 48105. Class 1: “By their Fruits Ye Shall Know Them”; Class 2: “Take Heed to Yourselves and to the Flock”; Lunch; Class 3: “Warring a Good Warfare”. Sunday 10am Memorial Service “Christ Hath Suffered Leaving us an Example” and Class 4: “Sanctify Them Through the Truth”. Contact Info: Bro. Dan Styles, dnstyles@hotmail.com or (313) 743-7302.

APRIL, 2014

5-6 Boston, MA 23rd Annual Spring Study Weekend. Boston Ecclesia, 48 Freeman Street, Stoughton, MA. Bro. Aaron MacAdams (Worcester, MA) “Hear Now, You Sons of Levi!” Registration and coffee at 10:30AM Saturday with three classes beginning at 11:00AM. Lunch provided. The fourth class is scheduled for Sunday morning at 9:30AM, followed by Memorial Service. Contact Bro. Jim Sullivan at 781-837-8865 or jimsulliv@aol.com.


18 Victoria, BC Pacific Northwest CYC Conference. Speaking will be Bro. Jay Mayock (Hamilton Book Road, ON). Contact Bro. Clyde Snobelen victoria@csl.ca

18-20 Wichita Falls, TX Annual Spring Gathering at T4C. Bro. Frank Abel (Hamilton Book Road, ON) will lead us in a study entitled “The Ecclesia — A Place of Refuge.” For registration contact Bro. Larry Beutel at lbeutel@alsco.com.

26-27 Sussex, NB Study weekend lead by Bro. Martin Webster (Kitchener/Waterloo, ON). His topic will be “1 John – Epistle of Sublime Truth & Love”.

MAY, 2014

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

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

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


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

APRIL, 2014

5 Caring Network of Canada sponsoring a “Seminar on Elder Care Issues”. It will be held at Toronto North Hall, 39 Knox Ave, North York.

18-20 Toronto Fraternal Gathering will be held at Mayfield Secondary School, 5000 Mayfield Road, Caledon, ON. The speaker will be Bro. Stephen Palmer (Mumbles, UK): “Studies in John — How to become sons of God”. Contact Info: Bro. Peter Dulis, Toronto West, pdulis@rogers.com or 905-820-9541.
26-27 Baltimore/Washington Gathering and Study day at Washington DC Ecclesia, 9240 Riggs Road, Adelphi, MD 20783. Speaker will be Bro. Ron Kidd (London, ON) on “God’s Timetable for Redemption”. Begins Saturday at 1pm, and Sunday at 10:30am. Contact Bro. Bob Kling by phone: 301-498-5245 or e-mail: rkling@acm.org.

JUNE, 2014

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

22-28 California Kids Camp. Topic this year is “Revelation”. Teachers: Bro. Stephen Hornhardt (Australia) and Bro. David Wisniewski (Canada). For registration information go to www.kidscampcalifornia.com or contact Bro. Tom Graham at tom@bigbrand.com. Please register by Mar. 31.

28-July 6 Mid-Atlantic Christadelphian Bible School at Shippensburg University, Shippensburg, PA. Theme: “O Lord God of Israel, there is no God like thee” (2Chron 6:14). The teachers will be Bro. Jim Cowie (Moreton Bay, Queensland, Australia): “Contending Earnestly for the Faith” (adults) and “Cameos of the Kingdom” (teens); Bro. Jay Mayock, Jr. (Hamilton, Book Road, ON): “All in All (A Study of Psalm 8)” (both); and Bro. Stephen Palmer(Mumbles, Swansea, UK): “Simon Peter: Learning Lessons in Discipleship” (adults) and “Digging for Treasure in the Epistle of Peter” (teens). Contact by e-mail Robin Colby macbs@live.com or check our website: www.midatlanticbibleschool.com.

JULY, 2014

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

19-27 Midwest Bible School will be held at Hanover College, Hanover, IN. Speakers and their topics are: Bro. Jim Cowie (Moreton Bay, Brisbane, Australia): “Nazarites Unto God”, Bro. Matt Norton (Lismore, Australia): “Impressions of Christ” and Bro. Stan Isbell (North Houston, TX): “Discovering Disguises Through the Bible”. For registration information, contact Bro. Mike Livermore, 44943 Yorkshire Dr., Novi, MI, 48375; 248-462-5740, e-mail: mike.live@gmail.com or visit www.midwestbibleschool.com.

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

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


AUGUST, 2014

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

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

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

SEPTEMBER, 2014

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

OCTOBER, 2014

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

NOVEMBER, 2014

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

Joy

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

Introduction

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

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

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

Joy and grace

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

**Do we lack joy?**

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

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

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

**So do we lack joy?**

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

We do believe that people can have joy without shouting, dancing, or falling about. Let us not make a mistake here. There is nothing wrong with cheerfulness, happiness — at home or in the ecclesia. However, under the right conditions cheerfulness is excellent, but it is not the same as joy. Understand also that sometimes joy is expressed in songs and dance and radiant faces. But if these are absent we must not conclude that joy has gone. Joy may be expressed in the ordinary and the orthodox. David danced and so did Habakkuk; Mary sang a great song; the Emmaus disciples went back at the double and Hannah went home with a lilt in her step.
But perhaps our main mistake is equating joy with a great moment of ecstasy which comes in as a result of an unexpected (or expected) occasion, lasts for a brief period, and then is gone. We think of those celebrants who jumped for joy at the Olympics: we think of the joy we experienced at marriage, or the birth of a child. “A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world” (John 16:21).

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

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

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

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

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

Peter Hemingray
Rottenness

The sons of Levi

Have you ever had something go “bad” in your refrigerator? It hits you as soon as you open the door. You know what to do: you throw it away. But what do you do when part of your family becomes “spoiled”? What actions should you take when your children start to act “rotten”? That’s the issue we are going to be looking at in the story of Eli and his sons. This story takes place about 80 or 90 years before David became king and captured Jerusalem, so the Tabernacle was still in the city of Shiloh. Eli had been the priest of Israel at Shiloh for about 40 years, but he had not been an entirely successful father. “Now the sons of Eli were worthless men. They did not know the LORD” (1Sam 2:12 ESV).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The fat of the offering

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

“And he shall offer of the sacrifice of the peace offering an offering made by fire unto the LORD; the fat that covereth the inwards, and all the fat that is upon the inwards, And the two kidneys, and the fat that is on them, which is by the flanks, and the caul above the liver, with the kidneys, it shall he take away. And Aaron’s sons shall burn it on the altar upon the burnt sacrifice,
which is upon the wood that is on the fire: it is an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD... And the priest shall burn them upon the altar: it is the food of the offering made by fire for a sweet savour: all the fat is the LORD’s” (Lev 3:3-5, 16).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

What difference did Eli’s words make in the lives of his children? None whatsoever. “But they would not listen to the voice of their father, for it was the will of the Lord to put them to death” (1Sam 2:25).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Lessons for us**

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

Now, we need to be honest with ourselves here. None of us are without sin. We have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. And, we are all going to mess up as parents (or grandparents, or uncles and aunts), or as brothers and sisters in Christ. The problem is not that we have faults — it’s that we do not own up to our faults. The best way to disarm the destructive nature of your own shortcomings is to own up to the fact that you have been wrong, admit that yours actions were sinful, and then ask for forgiveness.

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

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

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

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

The example of Hannah

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

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

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

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

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

We read the words of Hannah’s prayer:

“And Hannah prayed and said, ‘My heart exults in the LORD; my strength is exalted in the LORD. My mouth derides my enemies, because I rejoice in your salvation. There is none holy like the LORD; there is none besides you; there is no rock like our God’” (1Sam 2:1-2).
She doesn’t brag about how handsome Samuel is, or how smart he is, or how neat it is that he can say prayers at his young age. She overlooks the gift and gives praise to the Giver. She put God first… she gave Him the fat of the offering, the very best of what she could give, her only son.

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

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

Randy Davenport, Orlando, FL

Notes:
1. All References are from the ESV.
2. Gill’s Commentary.

Preaching Plans For Fall 2014

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

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

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

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

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

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

Please submit your preaching ideas to The Tidings. Funding requests should be addressed to SHPF at ksommerville@unitedagencies.com.
The Way of Cain — (8) Enoch versus Lamech

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

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

Lamech:

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

Enoch:

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

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

Lamech: the polygamist

One of Lamech’s defining characteristics, or one of the few details we are told about him, is that he took two wives: Adah and Zillah (Gen 4:18). Since polygamy is not previously mentioned in Genesis, we may assume that this was the first occurrence.
Polygamy violated one of the first laws God gave to humans: “A man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh” (Gen 2:24). The Creator intended men and women to be wed to one another. This is partly because this relationship — one man with one woman — mirrors the relationship between us and God; Christ and God; and Christ and his ecclesia.

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

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

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

**Enoch: God's Mouthpiece**

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

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

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

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

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

**Lamech: Wounded Pride**

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

Lamech or *lmk* is a combination that does not appear in Hebrew. Consequently his name has been shrouded in mystery. Strong’s Concordance suggests that *lmk* is “from an unused root of uncertain meaning,” but nevertheless suggests that his name be translated as “powerful” based on contextual evidence: Lamech had two wives, which Strong’s believes to be indicative of his sexual prowess, and he had the ability to take someone’s life, as demonstrated by the fact that he either killed or attempted to kill a young man (Gen 4:23). Such is Strong’s justification for translating Lamech as “powerful.” Gesenius’s Lexicon (1813-1875) arrives at a similar conclusion, but bases its decision on tradition: “Lamech, the son of Methusael, of the race of Cain; well known for his misuse of arms, which his sons had invented.”

Gesenius refers to Lamech’s misuse of weapons, which his son, Tubal-Cain, forged. Gen 4:22 affirms that Tubal-Cain was an artificer of all kinds of metal tools, perhaps weapons as well. However, there is no indication in Genesis or elsewhere in the Bible that Lamech “accidentally” killed anyone, nor was it through the misuse of his son’s weapons. This is pure fantasy; the result of scholars relying on tradition and not the Bible for an explanation.

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

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

David’s pride made him feel justified in sentencing the man to death, but when Nathan revealed that this man was none other than the king himself, he was humbled. Upon reflection of these events, David likened the injury to his pride as a physical wound:
“My guilt has overwhelmed me like a burden too heavy to bear. My wounds fester and are loathsome because of my sinful folly. I am bowed down and brought very low; all day long I go about mourning” (Psa 38:4-6).

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

A tense situation

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

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

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

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

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

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

In Enoch’s case, that situation involved the threat of murder, and, as has already been discussed, the murderer was none other than Lamech. In Gen 4:23, he conveyed to his wives his intent to kill Enoch: “I will kill a man for wounding [my
pride, a young man [Enoch] for injuring me [my pride].” But Lamech was unable to carry out his threat because the Lord “took Enoch away,” so that “he could not be found” (Gen 5:24; Heb 11:5). The Bible never reveals where God took Enoch or for how long; all we are told is that Enoch disappeared, which prevented his murder.11

Lamech and Enoch reinterpreted

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

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

Cain avenged

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

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

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

In discussing Cain in previous articles, the narrative concluded with Cain building a settlement in Nod with his sister-wife, who gave birth to their first son, Enoch.
(Gen 4:17). However, Cain’s story does not end there. Lamech reveals that “Cain was avenged.” We may wonder how this was possible, since God had “put a mark on Cain so that no one who found him would kill him” (Gen 4:15). But as discussed, the mark was not a protective talisman; Cain could be killed. God alluded to this possibility when He said: “If anyone kills Cain…” Lamech’s account makes it clear that Cain was indeed murdered. Furthermore, Lamech reveals that the avenger’s motive for killing Cain was vengeance: “If Cain is avenged seven times…” The conclusion is that Cain was killed to avenge the murder of Abel. The avenger is not identified. However, it may be that Lamech believed that the person who killed Cain was descendant of Seth, who was the spiritual inheritor of his brother, Abel’s, legacy. Thus when Lamech professed his intent to kill Enoch, he did so in the belief that he was avenging Cain, since Enoch was a descendant of Seth.

Matthew Harrison (Ottawa, ON)

Notes:
1. Also of note: Genesis devotes exactly six verses in each genealogy to Lamech and to Enoch. Moreover, Lamech and Enoch each occupy the same numerical position within their respective genealogies: Lamech is referred to in Genesis 4:18-24 and Enoch is referred to in Genesis 5:18-24. (All references are from the NIV.)
2. Ibid.
3. “And do not call anyone on earth ‘father,’ for you have one Father and He is in heaven” (Matt. 23:9).
4. “I and the Father are one” (John 10:30).
5. “For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother and shall be joined unto his wife, and the two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church” (Eph 5:22-32).
6. As will be shown, “killed” can also be translated as “will kill” (NIV), which is an important detail when it comes to identifying Enoch as the “young man.” Enoch was not killed, but he was “taken from this life, so that he did not experience death” (Heb 11:5). Therefore Lamech did not kill Enoch, but he certainly may have tried to do so.
7. There is much speculation surrounding Jude’s use of Enoch. Was he referring to the “seventh from Adam,” the actual antediluvian prophet, or was he quoting from the apocryphal Book of Enoch for some other purpose – perhaps, as some have suggested, to refute a popular myth about the prophet or to discredit the Book of Enoch, which was in circulation at the time of Christ? I have no doubt that Jude, who spoke with divine inspiration, was speaking about the actual prophet, since the context of his letter is on the ancient world, and includes other such ancient examples, such as an allusion to Korah’s rebellion (vs. 5-6, 11); Sodom and Gomorrah (v. 7); and Cain and Balaam (v. 11). Any coincidence between Jude and the Book of Enoch is either coincidence, or Jude and the unknown author of the Book of Enoch were drawing from an original source, now lost (just like the lost book: The Book of the Wars of the Lord (Num 21:14-15)). This may account for the slight differences between the wording used by Jude and the author of the Book of Enoch.
8. Lamech probably did not phrase his words in this exact way, rather the author of Genesis included a poetic version of the words Lamech spoke, which had survived and was popular at the time of the author’s writing.
9. This particular tradition is thought to have originated from a poem entitled, “Song of the Sword,” which was apparently included in one of the lost books of the Bible, The Book of the Wars of the Lord (Num 21:14-15). There is no Biblical evidence to suggest that this lost book ever contained this poem however.
10. The commentator is Abrim-Publications.com, an online publication. It is not a scholarly publication. While some would dismiss any information the site contains outright – especially given its central thesis – it does contain some interesting ideas. And, as has been shown, older, well-established sources, such as Strong’s and Gesenius, have fared little better in providing Biblically-based explanations of Lamech and the events surrounding him in Gen 4:23-24.
11. In spite of God's intervention to miraculously free Peter from Herod, the disciple eventually died. His death was foreshadowed by Christ in John 21:19. Likewise, in spite of God's intervention to save Enoch from Lamech, Enoch eventually died, since this is the fate of all of God's creatures: "Man's fate is like that of the animals; the same fate awaits them both: As one dies, so dies the other. All have the same breath; man has no advantage over the animal. Everything is meaningless. All go to the same place; all come from dust, and to dust all return" (Eccl 3:19-20). It is clear from the Preacher's use of the word "all" that no one, not even Enoch, escaped natural death. However, it is evident from the example of Peter that God will, on occasion, rescue people from the threat of violence. It is therefore possible that Enoch was likewise temporarily spared Lamech's violence, only to die at some later date of natural causes.

12. The mark was merely meant to educate others about the relationship between murder and vengeance and, subsequently, act as deterrence.

Life of Timothy
(2) “Thou hast fully known”

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

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

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

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

Paul’s preaching in Lystra bore fruit. 2Tim 1:5 indicates that Timothy’s grandmother was the first member of his family to be converted. That verse states that
“the unfeigned faith” dwelt “first” in her. Given Timothy’s close relationship with her and his love of the Word, it is reasonable to assume that he would have quickly shown interest in Paul’s message. Since Timothy suffered from ill health, he might have been particularly intrigued by Paul, who even though he was sick, was still filled with great inner strength, energy, and determination.

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

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

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

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

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

The disciples in Lystra, which probably included Timothy and his family, were very courageous following the attack on Paul. Unafraid and unashamed to be identified
with him, they gathered around his body outside of the city (Acts 14:20). Then an incredible event occurred. Paul rose up, and he returned to the city.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Ryan Mutter (Baltimore, MD)
Jonathan the Faithful Prince:
(12) Love and Envy

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

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

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

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

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

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

“And Saul was very wroth, and the saying displeased him; and he said, They have ascribed unto David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed but thousands: and what can he have more but the kingdom? And Saul eyed David from that day and forward” (1Sam 18:8-9).
While Saul had once felt his murderous envy towards his son, he soon began to realize that there was one in his courts who was more likely than Jonathan to be the chosen successor. In the eyes of the nation, Saul had slain a great number of people — but David had slain even more! Yet to add to Saul’s fears, all throughout the country the people were beginning to find themselves attracted to David — even Saul’s servants were happy to have him in their midst (1Sam 18:5).

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

Hidden hatred

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

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

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

“No and Saul said unto him, Why have ye conspired against me, thou and the son of Jesse, in that thou hast given him bread, and a sword, and hast
enquired of God for him, that he should rise against me, to lie in wait, as at this day? Then Ahimelech answered the king, and said, And who is so faithful among all thy servants as David, which is the king’s son in law, and goeth at thy bidding, and is honorable in thine house?” (1Sam 22:13-14).

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

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

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

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

**Going public**

Such was exactly what happened to Saul.

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

For some of those who were close to him or who were Saul’s servants, his hatred of David started to become fairly clear. Whereas his first openly murderous act against David — the throwing of the javelins — was probably attributed to his temporarily inhibited judgment, his second openly murderous act was of an
altogether different nature than that of the first. The original attempt at pinning David to the wall had been a relatively simple affair: Saul had picked up the javelin, thrown it, missed, picked it up again, thrown it, and missed again. After the second miss, the event was over; Saul didn't chase David, didn't tell the palace guards to seize him, and didn't really pursue the issue or involve anyone else. It was over as quickly as it started, and would have seemed to simply be a quick flare of the temper. Yet the second act was quite different, and would have likely been a shock to many — especially Jonathan:

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

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

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

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

Jason Hensley (Simi Hills, CA)
Have you tried this? (4)

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

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

The Sunday morning quick drill

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

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

The “Anytime Table”

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

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

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

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

**“Uncle Alex Sheets”**

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

**The Bible memory campaign**

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

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

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

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

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**Special Invitation**

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

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

Main Speakers:
- Bro. Mark Drabenstott: “The Seven Great ‘I Ams’: Our Abundant Life”
- Bro. Doug Davis: “Christ in the Jewish Feasts”
- Bro. John Pople: “Wearing the Name"

Contact Bro. Brad Rek (330) 609-6957 or brad.rek@gmail.com. Visit our website at http://abrahamicfaithgathering.org/ for more information and to view talks from last year.
In our last article, we looked at the implications of the Matthew 18 “process” for recovery. It challenges our commitment to the fight against sin and our fundamental love of our brother. Just a bit of unfinished business. I’d like to take a quick look at the job of “witnesses” before we deal with this article’s focus — delivering unto Satan.

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

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

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

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

That doesn’t sound much like the role of witnesses today does it? When the Jews brought a woman caught in the very act of adultery to Jesus, she was accompanied by witnesses. The account in John 8 would give us the impression that there were a good number of witnesses and there may have been a variation in age. They were doing what they thought they should do in order to attempt to trap Jesus. They brought one caught in a sin unto death before him. Under the Law, assuming the
witnesses were correct, she was to die — as was the man who had been with her, who they conveniently left out of the confrontation! But Jesus masterfully teaches these elders a lesson about Forgiveness as well as critical lesson for us about being witnesses. Jesus does not deny the sin. Rather, he asks for the one without sin to cast the first stone. One by one, seemingly by age, they all walk away. Jesus then tells the woman, who certainly sounds repentant, “Neither do I condemn thee: go and sin no more” (John 8:11).

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

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

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

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

**Ecclesial correction**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Paul’s message to Corinth about the incestuous man in their ecclesia is a case study for this restorative process. A review of 1Cor 5:1-13 would tell us that the sin of fornication was continuing in the ecclesia and the ecclesia had not taken adequate action (if any) to address it. Paul wrote to them to take immediate action with the unrepentant man, removing him from the ecclesia and suspending all social activity with him. The situation in Corinth was quite grave. Not only was this man involved in a sin unto death, but the effects of this sin were now being felt in the ecclesia, like a canker, and it was spilling outside the ecclesia to the general population of the city, tarnishing the reputation of the Truth in the city.
Paul’s words to Corinth throughout his first epistle indicated that there were a number of serious problems brewing. The ecclesia had been a remarkable story — growing rapidly in a difficult pagan environment. The change in lives of brothers and sisters from the morass of evil would have been perhaps unlike anything we have experienced. But, it appears that there was pride bubbling up! In 1Cor 4:18, it would appear that the leaders had started to think that the success of the ecclesia was their own doing and they no longer needed the counsel and words of Paul. One wonders if they had begun to rely on their own sense of what was right and wrong and had begun to depart from sound application of the Word itself? Perhaps this case of the incestuous man had a number of extenuating circumstances? Was the father part of the ecclesia? Did the father have a number of wives? Was the woman in question a believer? Was it an unwanted relationship by the woman? Were there family connections that made this a “sticky” item to address?

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

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

**Destruction of the flesh**

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

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

When we withdraw from our brother, it is a serious matter. We do so because the Lord has instructed us that there is no other way for restoration. It must become apparent to the withdrawn brother what he is forfeiting now, and potentially in the Lord’s Kingdom. It demands that we not send wrong or misleading messages. They are not just being restricted from the bread and wine, but from our very fellowship.
This message is diluted, not strengthened, when we continue to act as if nothing has really changed. Our fellowship is made up on many activities — Bible classes, Bible Schools, Fraternal gatherings, Study Days, Bible Campaigns, Public seminars, social events and receiving ecclesial newsletters. When withdrawn brothers and sisters continue to be involved in these activities, it is not the spirit of Matthew 18 (let him be to thee as a publican or a heathen) or Paul’s counsel to the ecclesia in Corinth.

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

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

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

Restoration

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

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

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

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

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

This is our prayer for our friends, siblings, children, aunts and uncles, mothers and fathers that may have slipped away under the control of the flesh. We pray that the strong arm of the Lord will touch them and bring them to repentance. We are to pray without ceasing for them. Not in some generic format, but specifically and
by name. May they never be forgotten in our ecclesias or our prayers. Only the Lord can remove a guilty conscience when poor choices are made in our lives. He heals us by transforming us from minds wracked with paralyzing feelings of guilt to freed spiritual minds that are likened to having a “sprinkled conscience.” In the days that remain, let us pray brethren that the Lord will heal us all!

David Jennings (Pomona, CA)

Notes:

Preaching

Bible Seminars: The Brampton Experience Updated

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

Recent update

In the fall of 2013, the Brampton Ecclesia began the presentation of the 18th year of consecutive seminars, based on “Learn to Read the Bible Effectively”. Once again, the LORD extended His blessing upon our efforts. In response to the two advertisements placed in our local weekly paper, we received 83 registrations, and of these, 51 attended classes on the first evening.
Our series of Seminars consist of

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

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

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

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

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

1) **Be true to your word.** The most singular common comment made by those who now freely discuss first principles with us, is that we gained their respect by staying true to our promise that we would not overtly attempt to convert them. Awareness of error developed of its own accord as true knowledge of the Word was established.

2) **Involvement.** We keep all the brethren and sisters of the Ecclesia informed and involved as the seminar’s progress.

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

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

_Dave and Marlene McKay (Brampton, ON)_
Book Review

“The Ecclesia at Ephesus” by Ryan Mutter

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Andrew Bilello (Baltimore, MD)
Truth Corps 2013

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

On June 22, 2013, Sis. Myra Lucke, Sis. Kelty Campbell, Sis. Naomi Gaston, Sis. Trudy Stuchlik, Bro. Luke Foley, Bro. Forrest Brinkerhof and I all met at the Toronto airport and departed for Georgetown, Guyana; it was there that we would be spending our first 2 weeks. Upon arriving in Guyana, we were met by local brothers and sisters and taken to where we would be staying; there, we met Sis. Dilean Rupenarine and Bro. Joel Tenassee, two Guyanese young people who would be full participants in our team for the first week. We spent our first couple of days getting our feet on the ground, attending the ecclesial functions (CYC, memorial service etc.), getting familiar with the program and material that we would be discussing with interested friends, and of course getting to know the members of the team. Familiarizing
ourselves with one another would go a long way toward uniting us as a team and allowing us to be as effective as possible when spreading God’s Word. During our first week in Berbice, we were joined by Bro. Clive and Sis. Christine Drepaun, who had a great deal of local knowledge. They were able to guide us, along with Sis. Myra and other local members, in reaching out to the community as well as the three ecclesias in the Berbice area.

A typical day in the first week started off with a devotion to get everyone motivated and energized in their service that day. We would then take a taxi or go by foot to our target preaching area, and split off into pairs, (usually mixing foreigners with local Brethren) and headed off into our given areas holding our Bibles and presentation binders. Walking up to the first house, one of the partners would call into the house, “inside… inside” and would then wait for a response. What amazed us was that when someone was home, ninety percent of the time that person would be willing to listen to a 10-15 minute Bible presentation! The presentation was based on the Bible’s “Covenants of Promise”, and ended with a piece on the hope of the Kingdom. Along with the presentation, any other topics raised by the contact would be discussed, and finally we would leave them with literature, further contact information and an invitation to a public lecture. During the evenings, the team might attend a public lecture or Bible class, either given by a local Brother or a Brother on the Truth Corps team; if no ecclesial event was scheduled, the team would visit the elderly or some member of the local ecclesia who was in need. At their homes we would do the daily readings and sing hymns to boost their spirits and encourage them around the Word of God.

Each week, the team would get a much-needed day of recreation after laboring hard through the week. The first week, we were shown around a market and then went to a pool to have some fun and the second week, we joined up with a large group of young
people and travelled to what the Guyanese call a ‘creek’ to play some water activities.

For our second week in Guyana we travelled to Demerara where there were three more ecclesias: Georgetown, Eccles, and Mocha. There we met up with two additional Guyanese young people: Bro. Timothy Barnwell and Sis. Atiya N’djelekulu, who would be joining our team for the week. Bro. David and Sis. Joan Andrews joined us as team leaders. Most of the second week was similar to the first, with a number of lectures, Bible classes and time spent preaching; however, added to all of this was a fraternal gathering for all six ecclesias in Guyana. The amazing studies and fellowship we shared together with our Guyanese brethren was incredibly uplifting. There was also a Vacation Bible School which Truth Corps helped to lead, and a 1-day youth conference which was based on the topics of Godly relationships and Godly decisions.

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

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

Josh Hodge

Following our spiritually uplifting two weeks in Guyana, we were all too soon leaving for our next assignment: Ocotlan, Mexico. On July 6th, the Truth Corps team flew to Guadalajara, Mexico. Brothers David Jennings and David Lloyd became our designated leaders, and Bro. Gabriel and Sis. Cynthia Paiva de Lopez, a newly
married couple and members of the Guadalajara ecclesia, were our generous hosts for the week. Also staying with us were Sis. Joan Dondero and Sis. Sandy Sillers who kept us wonderfully fed and gave us the stamina to cover as much ground as possible.

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

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

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

On Friday night while Brother Sergio gave the Bible talk, the Truth Corps team ran a carnival we had organized for the children of any visitors who might attend the first of the Bible talks. Among other fun activities there was a
bouncy castle and game stalls — with prizes! The carnival was a big success and we counted twenty-three children in attendance. After all the fun and games, the children settled down for a Bible lesson on Daniel given by Sis. Olive.

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

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

On 14th July we arrived at Kelowna Airport, British Columbia. From there we travelled to the BC Youth Conference. This week was filled with many profitable discussions, talks, and fellowship. The volleyball and water games were terrific fun and the “Crazy Olympics” caused much hilarity for the teams and judging by the craziness of some of our antics, I think for a number of the on-lookers too. During the week, we enjoyed an exciting and relaxing time and made many new and lasting friendships before heading to Kamloops for our final week of spreading the good news of Israel’s hope.

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

The VBS was to run Monday to Friday concluding with a presentation for the parents at the end.
of the week. Bro. Nick Froese kindly gave us the use of his home where each morning we were able to plan and prepare the lessons/ various crafts etc. Then after a good lunch, also thanks to Bro. Nick, we set off to the hall to wait for the children so that we could help them learn how they too can become friends of God. This was done through fun lessons, crafts, singing songs and playing various games, including the tiring favorite of ball tag, and also recreating David versus Goliath as the kids popped his balloon-head! On Friday, the children put on an impressive presentation for their parents, acting out a series of short plays based on their lessons. They had a great time performing action songs such as ‘The Wise Man Built His House upon the Rock’ showing how we too can be friends of God by building our lives upon Jesus. Following the presentation, the children were each given a t-shirt and a Bible (or a puzzle for those who already owned a Bible). After this week of smiles, lively youngsters, hospitality, love and fellowship we had come to the end of a truly unique experience.

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

Bro. Luke Foley
England, UK
Addresses for Bequests and Donations

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Jim Sullivan

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

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

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

Mike Day

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

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

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

Tom Alexander

ROGUE VALLEY, OR

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

Henry Wisniewski

SARASOTA, FL

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

James Wilkinson

THOUSAND OAKS, CA

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

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

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

On November 30, 2013, we had a spiritual birth in our ecclesia as BRANDON CIPRIOTTI, son of our Bro. Mike and Sis Wendy Cipriotti, was baptized into the saving name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Our congratulations go out to Bro. Brandon as he starts his journey with his brothers and sisters to the kingdom of God.
We also have a natural birth to report as Bro. James and Sis. Kristen Styles became parents of Lydia Marie Styles on November 30, 2013. We look forward to having a new Sunday school scholar in the near future!

Tom Graham

NEW YORK SISTER’S RETREAT 2013

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

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

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

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

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

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

Claudette White

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

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

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

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

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

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

It is impressive that those who heard Peter and John could tell that they had been with Jesus: “Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marveled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.” Does everyone who knows us know that
we belong to Christ and that he is the center of our life? This goal should be our priority as we mix with the world, but are not part of it.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Robert J. Lloyd

Let Your Light So Shine Before Men

TIDINGS — MAY, 2014 205
Coming Events (Lord Willing)

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

MAY, 2014

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

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

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


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

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

JUNE, 2014

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

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

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

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

28-July 6 Mid-Atlantic Christadelphian Bible School at Shippensburg University, Shippensburg, PA. Theme: “O Lord God of Israel, there is no God like thee” (2Chron 6:14). The teachers will be Bro. Jim Cowie (Moreton Bay, Queensland, Australia): “Contending Earnestly for the Faith” (adults) and “Cameos of the Kingdom” (teens); Bro. Jay Mayock, Jr. (Hamilton, Book Road, ON): “All in All (A Study of Psalm 8)” (both); and Bro. Stephen Palmer (Mumbles, Swansea, UK): “Simon Peter: Learning Lessons in Discipleship”
(adults) and “Digging for Treasure in the Epistle of Peter” (teens). Contact by e-mail Robin Colby macbs@live.com or check our website: www.midatlanticbibleschool.com.

**JULY, 2014**


**19-27 Midwest Bible School** will be held at Trine University, Angola, IN. Speakers and their topics are: Bro. Jim Cowie (Moreton Bay, Brisbane, Australia): “Nazarites Unto God”, Bro. Matt Norton (Lismore, Australia): “Impressions of Christ” and Bro. Stan Isbell (Houston North, TX): “Discovering Disguises Through the Bible”. For registration information, contact Bro. Mike Livermore, 44943 Yorkshire Dr., Novi, MI, 48375; 248-462-5740, e-mail: mike.live@gmail.com or visit www.midwestbibleschool.com.

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

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

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

**AUGUST, 2014**

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

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

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

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

SEPTEMBER, 2014

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

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

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

OCTOBER, 2014

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

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

NOVEMBER, 2014

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

Herzog was born in Belfast, Northern Ireland in 1918. He immigrated to Palestine in 1935, and served in the Jewish paramilitary group Haganah during the Arab revolt of 1936–39. He joined the British army during World War II. He participated in the liberation of several concentration camps, including Bergen Belsen. In 1975 Herzog was appointed Israel’s Ambassador to the United Nations, in which capacity he served until 1978.

On 22 March 1983, Herzog was elected by the Knesset to serve as the sixth President of Israel. He assumed office on 5 May 1983 and served two five-year terms (then the maximum permitted by Israeli basic law), retiring from political life in 1993. As president of Israel, Herzog made a number of visits abroad, being the first Israeli president to make an official visit to Germany, during which he visited Bergen Belsen in April 1987. He died in 1997.
A Strange Coincidence

My sorrow is continually before me

Every time I read this passage in Psa 38:17, my mind goes back many years to a still, quiet evening in Germany. I was at Bergen Belsen, almost by accident, as I was in the area on business with a largely free evening. There, in the peaceful surroundings of rural farmland, I came across those verses, engraved on a white limestone slab from Jerusalem, which had been placed there on the occasion of a visit by Chaim Herzog, at the time the President of Israel. At the unveiling ceremony in 1987 he said:

“I only pray we in Israel will prove worthy of the sacrifice... grief is felt not as a perpetual hatred, not as barren, paralyzing hostility, but a call to understand the depths to which a human soul can sink and a call to rise above them. I do not bring forgiveness with me, nor forgetfulness. The only ones who can forgive are dead; the living have no right to forget.”

In fact, it was not the first time Chaim had been at Bergen Belsen: as a young British lieutenant he had been present a few days after its liberation in 1945. So, 42 years later, he returned, a sign indeed of the growing strength of the relationship between Israel and Germany. And he erected this simple memorial, in front of which I stood, quite alone. My thoughts and respect for the 50,000 Jews who died there almost overwhelmed me. Many are still there, in the mounds of the mass graves, and among these anonymous bones is that of Anne Frank, perhaps one of the most famous casualties of the Holocaust.

The coincidence

My wife and I often usher at the local live theater, and quite frankly we usually have no prior idea of the subject of the play. So I settled down to watch a play, of which I knew the title only after the play was introduced. It was “And Then They Came For Me: Remembering the World of Anne Frank”. It is a multimedia play that weaved videotaped interviews of Holocaust survivors,
Eva Schloss and Ed Silverberg, with live actors, recreating scenes from World War II. Eva Schloss features prominently: she is actually the stepsister of Anne Frank, as her mother married the widowed father of Anne Frank. Her father did not survive, nor did the mother of Anne Frank.

However, that was not all. At the close of the play, when the audience normally heads rapidly for the exit, an older lady walked onto the stage, quite unexpectedly, and we were introduced to Eva Schloss. As I listened to her accounts of those days, the reality of the terrors of old came home to me quite forcefully. As the ranks of the survivors of the Holocaust dwindle, we do need to remember the horrors of the time, and the way these horrors were primarily responsible for the emergence of the State of Israel in 1948.

The relevance to us

To return to the phrase “My sorrow is continually before me”, the title of Psalm 38 is “A Psalm of David, to bring to Remembrance.” Quite apart from its obvious relevance to both the memorial offering, and the acknowledgment of our personal sins, as we read these words we must be reminded of the place of the Jewish nation in the purpose of God. And of the truth of the words of Chaim — “This is a call to rise above the depths to which humans can sink. The sorrow of our trials and tribulations sometimes threaten to overwhelm us, and sometimes we do not understand the reason for these adversities. But, as David did, we acknowledge our need for God’s mercy: ‘Forsake me not, O LORD: O my God, be not far from me. Make haste to help me, O LORD my salvation’” (Psa 38:21-22).

Few of us have to experience the depth of sorrow of those who lost relatives in the Holocaust. But we see the outworking of God’s purpose every day as the land of Israel continuously dominates the news. We must never forget that this is a clear sign of the sureness of the return of our Lord, and to communicate this to our friends, colleagues, and indeed all those with whom we have the opportunity to discuss our faith. There are many occasions we can use, and topics of conversation, to make clear our belief in the reality of God working in the world today. I had no idea that I was going to hear from a Holocaust survivor when I went to see the play — but her presence and her words were a strong reminder to me of the often mysterious workings of God in our lives, and in the survival of the nation of Israel.

We do not often focus on the miracle of the survival of the nation of the Jews. Their history over the last two millennia is replete with persecution, banishment, and worse. Very few nations ever permitted their Jews to reside in peace: they
were banished from England in 1290 AD, and not re-admitted until 1656 AD. Banished from many other countries, Eastern Europe was for many centuries a place of refuge, until the advent of WWII, the events of which so largely facilitated the establishment of the modern State of Israel. The pride that many English express in the Balfour declaration of 1917, significant though it was, must be counter-balanced by the reluctance of the British to permit the re-settlement of Jews during their mandate.

So as the events of the Middle East work out in ways we find hard to understand, the only certainty we have is that the Jewish nation still has a significant part to play in the affairs of the world. Whether President Obama will succeed in establishing a lasting peace in the Middle East is not easy to predict with any certainty. We only have to think back a generation, when it was almost an accepted tenant among Christadelphians that Britain would not (and many said could not) join the EEC. Based as it was on the identification of Europe as part of the “Beast of the Earth”, many still look for signs that Britain will sever ties with the EEC. All we can be sure about is that our God is truly in charge of the affairs of man — and that indeed His ways are unsearchable.

But the persistence of the Jewish nation, and the widespread presence of Jews in North America, are a remarkable proof of the power of prophecy — for the restoration of the Jewish nation is one of the lynch pins of our faith. It was primarily because of his realization of the importance of the Hope of Israel that John Thomas was re-baptized in 1847, which really noted the start of the existence of our community. So as we see and meet the Jews among whom we live, their very existence demonstrates the power of God. (I thought there were a significant number of Jews in the county where I live — and indeed there are, to the tune of 70,000+, or 6.5% of the population. But this is dwarfed by Manhattan, New York, with 300,000+, or 20% of the population.)

In the last analysis, the fate of the Jews is almost too much for the world’s conscience. Even with our Scriptural insight, we may find the judgments visited upon the Jews still hard to comprehend. Paul, it seems, found God’s dealings with Israel beyond description: in a chapter dealing with the fall of Israel — and their grafting in again — he concludes: “How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!” (Rom 11:20–33). The way in which the Jewish nation has persisted is equally mysterious, but is also strong evidence of the outworking of his plan and purpose.

Unlike some other magazines, The Tidings has no section on “Signs of the Times.” But this does not mean we should be unaware of the work of our Heavenly Father in the affairs of men — and keenly follow the events of the world around us, especially as they relate to the Nation of Israel.

Peter Hemingray

Letters to the editor can be sent to letters@tidings.org. Please include your name, address, e-mail, and phone. Submissions under 300 words are encouraged — the magazine reserves the right to edit all submissions for length and clarity.
Exhortation

What’s in a Name?

Names
The Social Security Administration website has a section where the popularity of baby names is ranked by year, going back to 1879. For 2012, the top two boy names were Jacob and Mason, while girl names were Sophia and Emma. Much to our sadness, Kenneth and Joyce have never ranked in the top 20 in the last 50 years. There are lots of considerations when you’re deciding on a name, such as appeasing relatives, avoiding embarrassing initials or nicknames, and steering clear of what appears to be cute at the time but will wear thin over time. Choosing a child's name is a big decision — after all, it follows them for the rest of their life. The way it works for everyone is that when a child is born, the name reflects more on the parents than the child. Parents make the decision on a name because the child can't do it for themselves. But as a child gets older, the name will also reflect on them, especially when behavior, good or bad is associated with that name. Social behavior specialist, Dale Carnegie, said “Remember that a man's name is to him the sweetest and most important sound in any language.” A response is sure to be had when speaking an individual's name, either using that name with a question, an answer, a compliment, an insult, a request, or a rebuke.

In John 10:1-3, Jesus tells us, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.”

In the Old Testament, the book of Isaiah reveals,

“But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine” (Isa 43:1).

Double names
Scriptural references concerning names, knowing names, and speaking names are quite plentiful. However, we were quite surprised to find during one of our studies that importantly, but rarely, is placed in both the Old and New Testaments, an emphatic repetition of names, or a double salutation, that occurs specifically to get that person's attention. We hope then, by way of exhortation, to see that when a name is called twice, on each occasion not only was the attention called to of that individual, but also the truths associated with the occasion has significance for us as well.

Turn with me then to Gen 22. It is a well-known story, the sacrifice of the first born son of promise. Abraham is seen as deliberate in all his actions, rising early,
setting out to the place appointed, preparing the altar and in binding Isaac and taking the knife in which to kill the son that was 25 years in promise, all to show his absolute trust in the Heavenly Father and an abiding faith, both in resurrection and the surety that the promises would be kept.

“By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure” (Heb 11:17-19).

As he took the knife with which he would kill his son, an angel called out his name in what was in a double salutation, “Abraham! Abraham!” (see Gen 22:11); instructing him not to harm Isaac, and that his faith was recognized and received in heaven. The truth associated then was supreme for Abraham, but what about for us? Critics argue about the utter cruelty of expecting a parent to sacrifice, to kill a child in this manner. However, Bro. Mansfield very poignantly points out, in the Genesis expositor, that many parents are willing to offer their children on the altars of self-ambition and in the pursuit of self enhancement, that in the end do nothing for the eternal benefit of their children. To see the benefit of this double salutation in the life of someone else, consider David, when he numbered the people in 2Sam 24. Gad the seer came to him with three choices by which the Lord’s wrath could be turned away. He could choose seven years of famine, to flee before his enemies three months, or that for three days pestilence would be upon the land. David chose the pestilence, seeking to fall into the Lord’s hands, rather than into man’s, depending on the mercy of God. Seventy thousand died in the pestilence.

And David said unto Gad, I am in a great strait: let us fall now into the hand of the Lord; for his mercies are great: and let me not fall into the hand of man. So the Lord sent a pestilence upon Israel from the morning even to the time appointed: and there died of the people from Dan even to Beersheba seventy thousand men. And when the angel stretched out his hand upon Jerusalem to destroy it, the Lord repented him of the evil, and said to the angel that destroyed the people, It is enough: stay now thine hand. And the angel of the Lord was by the threshing place of Araunah the Jebusite” (2Sam 24:14-16).

This is the imagery, was a stretched out blade with which to slay, as Abraham had helod a similar one over Isaac. David’s faith faltered in numbering Israel, and the way to overcome a lapse in faith is to seek to exhibit the absolute trust which Abraham showed upon mount Moriah. The double call of the name should garner our attention.

Later in Genesis, in his old age, Jacob having suffered the breakdown of his family, the death of Rachel and the believed death of Joseph, receives news that Joseph was not only alive, but a royal prince in Egypt, and that Joseph had sent a caravan of wagons to take Jacob into Egypt. The land of promise was not Egypt, in fact, his father Isaac was warned by God not to go into Egypt. Jacob then was in a struggle, should he leave the land of promise to see Joseph?
“And Israel took his journey with all that he had, and came to Beersheba, and offered sacrifices unto the God of his father Isaac. And God spake unto Israel in the visions of the night, and said, Jacob, Jacob. And he said, Here am I. And he said, I am God, the God of thy father: fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will make of thee a great nation: I will go down with thee into Egypt; and I will also surely bring thee up again: and Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes” (Gen 46:1-4).

With the double salutation Jacob is assured that the journey did have a purpose. Perhaps he recognized that the reason given is an echo of the first promise Abraham received when he first left Haran: “Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will show thee: And I will make of thee a great nation” (Gen 12:1-2). Jacob’s journey and the subsequent time in Egypt would culminate in a great nation being delivered from Egypt. Life at times does present us with challenges we did not anticipate or even go looking for, but the salutation of Jacob should teach us that a working out of the divine purpose is going on with each of us, seeking to bring us to day of promise and the reuniting of loved ones such as Jacob and Joseph enjoyed.

Moses at the bush

In the barren Sinai desert, Moses tended the sheep of his father-in-law, and did so in daily solitude and in obscurity. To his surprise he saw a bush burning, when he perceived no fire had started it, either from earth or heaven, and even stranger, the bush was not consumed. We know it was an extraordinary manifestation of the divine presence and glory. He saw a flame of fire and his inquisitive mind sought to know more. How true is it that divine things should be diligently enquired about. God gave him a gracious call with the double stating of his name, Moses, Moses, to which he returned a ready answer, here am I.

“And when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I. And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God” (Exod 4:4-6).

It was when Moses took notice of the burning bush, and turned aside to see it, AND left the business of his father-in-law, then God called to him. It is for those who seek to know divine things, that their approach should be with a committed mind. In those circumstances, those that diligently seek God shall find Him. “Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you” (James 4:8).

“Wherever Lord thy people meet, there they behold the mercy seat, where e’re they seek thee, thou art found and every place is hallowed ground.” (Hymn 244)

Attitude in the presence of God is marked by the encounter at the bush. Moses was cautioned about casual or an irreverent approach in the divine presence. We
should be keenly aware of the distance that exists between our God and ourselves. The privilege is that we have been invited to draw near, and care must be taken that familiarity does not lead to a lack of respect. Removal of shoes was an expression of our proper respect and submission to the God we worship.

**Samuel**

When God called Samuel’s name twice (1Sam 3:1-10): it happened after He had called out to him two other times, but Samuel had mistaken God’s voice for that of Eli’s.

> “And the **Lord** called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou didst call me. And Eli perceived that the **Lord** had called the child. Therefore Eli said unto Samuel, Go, lie down: and it shall be, if he call thee, that thou shalt say, **Speak**; for thy servant heareth. So Samuel went and lay down in his place. And the **Lord** came, and stood, and called as at other times, **Samuel, Samuel.** Then Samuel answered, **Speak**; for thy servant heareth” (1Sam 3:8-10).

Young Samuel was quite diligent in his service to the tabernacle and in his devotion to Eli. The record portrays him in stark contrast to the wickedness of Eli’s sons. The sons of Eli brought dishonor to the office of the high priest, but Samuel ministered to him; they showed no regard for their father’s instruction but Samuel obeyed them. Samuel never showed that he was in any way influenced by their bad example. This early life was preparing him for much more later on, and stands as a lesson that it is never too early to learn respect for the things of God.

In Eli’s day, the prophetic word was scarce, and those who sought divine counsel had very little recourse. The evil attributed to the tabernacle is those days lead to a corruption on a national scale. We are told that there was no open vision, and it is assumed that the immorality that was practiced in the tabernacle infected the whole nation. This caused the Spirit of prophecy to dry up, until a more suitable and faithful priest and prophet was revealed in time.

Somewhat amusing is the story is of Samuel running to Eli and twice being told to go lay down, with Eli’s perception finally coming to the realization that something special is happening with Samuel. The old man could have harbored a grudge that the young boy was receiving a manifestation of word and power that he was not, and Samuel could have overreacted in fear. Neither is evident, the old man assured the young boy, and he did as Eli told him, to listen while God speaks, and receive the instruction when it is given. “I will hear what God the **Lord** will speak: for he will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints: but let them not turn again to folly. Surely his salvation is nigh them that fear him; that glory may dwell in our land.” (Psa 85:8).

**Summary**

In each of these instances, especially the last one, it is true the heavenly voice uses the double salutation because of a need to get that person’s attention. The double calling of Abraham validated what the seed of Abraham must live to be like. The father of faithful was a leader by deeds not words. Jacob was given back the son
he thought he lost by allowing the circumstances of life to be in God’s control, something he could not do earlier in life, when through his own strength and cunning sought control for himself with Esau and Laban.

Moses at the bush became the nation of Israel’s deliverer and the giver of the Law; and at the bush an expansion of the revelation of the divine purpose was given in the memorial name. This was for the intention that a vast company of redeemed should rule the earth in righteousness, with holiness and obedience to the Law. Samuel would become the first in a line of prophets, who would faithfully bring God’s World to His people. For sure, all four of these Old Testament individuals were key people in Israel’s history, and this truth no doubt is why God’s redoubling of their names happened at the key turning points in their lives.

In the New Testament, we find Jesus using the double salutation as well. When Martha was upset with Mary for not helping her prepare a meal for Jesus who was visiting with them, the Lord called out to her:

“And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her” (Luke 10:41-42).

How instructive is that episode for all of us in our service. When the work that we do, we value too highly, and the perceived lack of effort by others infects us — we would all do well to consider the double salutation here.

Space does not permit us to consider the other examples of repetition:

• After the institution of the memorial feast the Lord predicted Peter’s denial. He called out to him, “Simon, Simon”; how crushing that reality was for Peter.
• When Christ was on the Cross and it was the ninth hour, just moments before the Lord said “it is finished,” he cried out to God, “Eloi, Eloi”.
• On the Damascus road, where Jesus called out “Saul, Saul”.
• When the Lord expressed his intense emotions for Jerusalem, which had become a wicked city, even though God intended for it to be His holy city. So Jesus called out, “Jerusalem, Jerusalem”.

The double salutation is used in a time and in a situation when it was urgent and something critically important was being taught, so let us stop and listen whenever we see it.

We should be comforted then, with the assurance that Moses had when he was told by God, “I know thee by name, and thou hast also found grace in my sight” (Exod 33:12).

 Ken Comito (Detroit Royal Oak, MI)
The Way of Cain — (9) Lamech

Seventy-seven times

When Lamech says, “If Cain is avenged seven times...” he is not referring to the number of times Cain was avenged, since one can only be avenged once, but rather the generation in which Cain was avenged. That generation was the 7th generation, for it is the generation in which Lamech attempted to murder Enoch, a descendant of Seth.

Likewise, if Lamech’s use of “time/s” refers to generations, then Lamech, according to his own prediction, would have been avenged in the 77th generation, for he says: “I will be avenged seventy-seven times.” The 77th generation is not a random generation. It is a very special generation, since it is the one in which Christ was born into, as demonstrated in Luke’s genealogy:

1) Adam 21) Abraham 41) Jonan 61) Josech
2) Seth 22) Isaac 42) Joseph 62) Semein
3) Enos 23) Jacob 43) Judah 63) Mattathias
4) Kenan 24) Judah 44) Simeon 64) Maath
6) Jared 26) Hezron 46) Matthath 66) Esli
7) Enoch 27) Aram/Arni/Ram 47) Jorim 67) Nahum
8) Methuselah 28) Admin/Ram 48) Eliezer 68) Amos
9) Lamech 29) Amminadab 49) Jesus 69) Mattathias
10) Noah 30) Nahshon 50) Er 70) Joseph
11) Shem 31) Salmon 51) Elmadam 71) Jannai
12) Arphaxad 32) Boaz 52) Kosam 72) Melki
13) Kainan 33) Obed 53) Addi 73) Levi
14) Shelah 34) Jesse 54) Melki 74) Matthath
16) Peleg 36) Nathan 56) Shealtiel 76) Joseph
17) Reu 37) Mattatha 57) Zerubbabel 77) Jesus of Nazareth
18) Serug 38) Menna 58) Rhesa
19) Nahor 39) Melea 59) Joanan
20) Terah 40) Eliakim 60) Joda

This genealogy in Luke 3:23-37 shows that Christ appeared in the 77th generation. Although it may seem odd that Christ and Lamech are connected, Matt 18:21-22 shows how they are related:

“Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, ‘Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?’ Jesus answered, ‘I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.’” 2

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1. Bible Study
2. TIDINGS — JUNE, 2014
The relationship between Christ and Lamech is this: Christ tells Peter to forgive seventy-seven times, while Lamech tells his wives that he will be avenged seventy-seven times. Just as vengeance and forgiveness are antithetical concepts, so too are the espousers of these respective notions: Lamech and Christ. This juxtaposition illustrates the stark contrast between the sons of God (Seth/Christ) and the sons of men (Cain/Lamech):

“For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness?” (2 Cor. 6:14).

We might add, “For what does vengeance have in common with forgiveness?” It is true that they are antithetical, and although opposites, they are related in that forgiveness is the panacea for vengeance. For without forgiveness, vengeance has no end. In saying to Peter, “forgive seventy-seven times,” Christ was expressing — numerically — the idea of limitless or eternal forgiveness, since this number is a multiple of seven — a number that is consistently associated in Scripture with God, who is eternal.

Moreover, Christ was born in the 77th generation. Prior to Christ, the Law, with its “eye for an eye” policy (Exod 21:24) did not allow for forgiveness. However, Christ’s sacrifice on the cross opened the way to forgiveness for the first time since the Law was enacted. He was raised to life everlasting, and as such became immortal or eternal. Thus Christ, a man born in the 77th generation; the first to espouse forgiveness; and the first man raised from the dead to everlasting life, represents eternal forgiveness.

This association with Christ, a man born in the 77th generation, and who was granted immortality; his use of the number seventy-seven in relation to forgiveness without end; and the number seven’s (and arguably its multiples) symbolic association with God, who is eternal; makes the number seven and its multiples symbolic of the eternal.

Given the number’s spiritual relationship to Christ and God, how is it that Lamech came to choose the number seventy-seven? What did this number mean to him, because surely we can’t presume that he had any spiritual foreknowledge to know that Christ, his opposite, would be born in the 77th generation to put an end to his cry for vengeance. Was it perhaps God speaking a prophecy through a wicked man? This is certainly possible, since there are other instances where God has communicated through wicked men. Two such instances occurred when the Lord spoke through Balaam (Num 24:1-9), and through the high priest Caiaphas (John 11:49-52); the former who Jude lists among the wicked (Jude 11), and the latter who was responsible for crucifying Jesus.

Certainly, there is a spiritual component to Lamech’s words and, as has been shown, they are prophetic — of the coming of the Messiah in the 77th generation who would bring an end to vengeance through forgiveness.

But Lamech was unaware that the words he spoke were prophetic. Instead, he must have chosen that number based simply on the idea of a multiple. By intending to murder Enoch in the 7th generation, Lamech believed he was avenging his ancestor.
Like Cain, he would have understood that avenging his ancestor would have, in turn, created in others a desire for revenge (the mark of Cain). Thus Lamech knew that his vengeful actions in murdering Enoch would have spawned an avenger. And, as has also been noted, Lamech was a man of great pride. His ego, in relation to his own death at the hands of an avenger, would have, in turn, demanded that the act of avenging him to be great — greater than even his ancestor, Cain; seventy-seven times greater. As such, Lamech’s use of the number seventy-seven was basically an egotistical expression, through multiplication, for the desire of his death to be exponentially more significant than Cain’s.

So far, we’ve seen how God, speaking through Lamech, spoke a prophecy about the coming of Christ in the 77th generation, who would put an end to vengeance through eternal forgiveness; we’ve also seen how Lamech’s use of that multiple was in relation to his ego’s desire to be avenged even greater than his ancestor, Cain. But there is one final component to Lamech’s expression of the number seventy-seven.

In wanting to be avenged seventy-seven times greater than his ancestor, Lamech was demanding to be avenged throughout seventy-seven generations, because that number was used in relation to generations. Unbeknownst to him, that number was also symbolic, in particular of the eternal (this was demonstrated by Christ’s use of it in relation to forgiveness, Matt 18:21-22). So, by demanding to be avenged seventy-seven times, Lamech was, in a sense, making a declaration of war — a never-ending or *eternal* war, which would have been directed against his perceived enemy; namely Enoch, and all others who associated themselves with God. If God had not “removed” Enoch from the murderous hands of Lamech, his blood would surely have been spilt, and would have represented the second casualty in the war waged between the sons of men and the sons of God; the first casualty being Abel. Just because Lamech could not kill Enoch, does not mean that further bloodshed between the sons of God and the sons of men did not occur in the 7th generation and beyond. Christ confirms that righteous blood has been shed since the time of Abel, through the antediluvian age, into the post-Flood age, up until, and including the time of Christ:

“And so upon you will come all the righteous blood that has been shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah son of Ber- ekiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar” (Matt. 23:35).

In his condemnation of the Pharisees, Jesus equated them with Cain, for they, like the world’s first murderer, were responsible for an unbroken chain of violence perpetrated against the righteous — from the time of Abel through to his age.

But the war against the righteous did not end with Christ. For, as will be shown in the final chapter of this study, the cycle of conflict between the righteous and the unrighteous; between the spiritual descendants of Abel/Seth and Cain; between the sons of God and the sons of men; between Enoch and Lamech; and between Lamech and Christ, continued, unabated in the first century AD. Not only did the rulers and priests of that time attempt to murder the apostles and believers, but men arose within the ecclesias who, in time, would turn their hatred against their fellow brothers and sisters — to the point of murder. Jude warned the ecclesias
about such men when he wrote: “certain men... who have secretly slipped in among you... [are] dreamers who pollute their own bodies, reject authority, and slander celestial beings” (v. 4,8). Though these actions are obvious precursors to violence, they are not overt references to bloodshed in themselves. However, Jude makes reference to Cain in his epistle — a man who is associated with murder and who killed the first righteous man — and by doing so connects these “certain men” and their “wicked” actions with Cain, indicating that violence was inevitable. As we know from history, Jude’s prophecy about Christianity came true, since violence has become a hallmark characteristic of Christendom.

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Notes:
1. A footnote in the NIV states that, “some manuscripts have Amminadab, the son of Admin, the son of Arni; other manuscripts vary widely.”
2. All references are from the NIV.
3. The Bible, especially Revelations, is full of examples, too numerous to discuss here, that demonstrate God’s association with the number seven.

Life of Timothy:
(3)“Behold, a certain disciple was there”

God’s help to Lystra
Paul went to Lystra, Timothy’s hometown, during his First Missionary Journey. As he prepared to leave, Paul told the members of Timothy’s ecclesia: “We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God” (Acts 14:22).

Paul’s message is quite different from the “prosperity gospel” preached in many churches today. That teaching about Christianity as a path to worldly success and enjoyment is in direct contrast to the experience of many first-century believers, as well as the Bible’s clear instruction about the necessity of trials for refining our characters. The Gospel is not intended to be a vehicle to make us financially prosperous or to fill our lives with ease. Its aim is to mold us into people who please God, which often requires the experience of trial. James writes: “My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing” (James 1: 2-4).

As the believers in Lystra listened to Paul speak about tribulation, they could see in the wounds on his battered frame an illustration of what he was talking about. He was not speaking to them about abstractions. His injuries were evidence of tribulation he had experienced (Gal 6: 17).

Paul’s injuries had come from the people living in the same town as those in the ecclesia. They had stoned him and dragged his body out of the city. Some in the meeting probably feared that something similar might happen to them or those they loved.

Paul spoke about tribulation in the nearby ecclesia at Iconium as well. The believers there, like those in Lystra, were new to the Truth, and they too lived among
violent opponents of the Gospel. After his visits to the ecclesias in Lystra and Iconium, Paul left and was away from them for about two years. That was the period between his First and Second Missionary Journeys.

While Paul was away, God provided help to the new ecclesias in Lystra and Iconium. Given their circumstances, they would have benefited from comfort, exhortation, and encouragement to remain steadfast in the faith during the early years following their conversion. The first few verses of Acts 16 identify one of the forms the help took.

Before examining those verses, it is worth taking a moment to think about the forms the help did not take. With such determined opposition facing them, God could have sent the ecclesias in Lystra and Iconium a skilled orator, like Apollos, who could “mightily convince” their opponents in public. Or God could have sent them someone who worked “special miracles” or a powerful, physically imposing man, like a converted former centurion, to calm their hearts. But there is no record of that happening.

God helped the believers in Lystra and Iconium. But the help came in a form that was probably somewhat unexpected. It came by way of a frail, shy young man who was probably just out of his teens. Corinthians says: “But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty” (1Cor 1: 27). Those words were certainly applicable in Lystra and Iconium where help to the young ecclesias came from Timothy.

God has promised that He will help us, and He will. But the help He provides may not always come in a way we expect. There is no record of the embattled ecclesias in Lystra and Iconium getting help from someone who exuded natural strength or leadership. But those ecclesias still embraced the help God gave them. They were not like the children of Israel in the Wilderness, who so often despised and rejected the help God offered.

It is important for us to recognize, accept, and appreciate God’s help when it comes. It may sometimes come in an unexpected form. But God’s help will always come in the right form. God is far wiser than we are, so the help He provides will always be exactly what we need — and come when we need it — to bring us through our trials.

Paul returned to Lystra and Iconium at the beginning of the Second Missionary Journey after having been away for about two years. He made Lystra and Iconium early stops on his Second Missionary Journey. That may have been because he was particularly anxious to know how the believers there had fared during his absence with so many challenges confronting them.

When Paul arrived in Lystra, he found faithful brothers and sisters. One member of the ecclesia stood out in particular: “Then came he to Derbe and Lystra: and, behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timotheus, the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed; but his father was a Greek” (Acts 16:1).
Timothy in Lystra

“Behold” is not a word that is used casually in the Bible. It is frequently used in the context of remarkable occurrences. For example, in Acts, it is used in the account of Christ’s ascension: “And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven (Acts 1: 10 - 11). “Behold” is used when Stephen witnessed Christ standing at God’s right hand before he was stoned: “But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God” (Acts 7: 55-56). It is also used when Ananias was instructed to go preach to Saul, the former persecutor, after he had been blinded on the road to Damascus: “And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth” (Acts 9:11).

The word “behold” is used when Timothy is mentioned in Acts 16:1 to highlight that there was something remarkable about him. What stood out about him is identified in the next verse: “Which was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium” (Acts 16: 2).

Acts 16:2 reveals Timothy had made excellent use of the time Paul was away. The members of the ecclesia in Lystra spoke well of him. Timothy had also been an encouragement to the believers in the nearby city of Iconium. The fact that he
was “well reported of” by the brethren there indicates they knew Timothy well. He must have travelled to Iconium often.4

There are several aspects of Timothy’s service during the years Paul was away that are worth highlighting.

1) First, Timothy had evidently not made excuses and allowed them to impede his service to God and his brothers and sisters. He could have claimed his poor health, his youth and lack of experience, and/or the dangers associated with the work kept him from laboring in the Truth. But he did not. Timothy would have been familiar with the Bible’s warnings against excuse-making (e.g., Prov 22: 13). It seems Timothy was not looking for excuses; he was looking for opportunities to serve.

2) Second, although Timothy struggled with poor health, he still managed to travel the 18 miles back and forth between Lystra and Iconium. What he lacked in physical health, he made up for with determination to serve God.

3) Third, the work Timothy did was extremely dangerous and required a great deal of courage. Think of the number of times he must have passed the spot where Paul was stoned. The fact that the Apostle had been assaulted in his city did not deter him. Instead, he chose to carry on Paul’s work. The courage Timothy showed could not have been based on confidence in himself. He really had no grounds for self-confidence. Instead, the courage he displayed must have been based on his confidence in Christ and the strength he provides.

When we are doing something in service to our Lord that we find challenging and we fear we are not up to the task, we can encourage ourselves by remembering it is not our feeble strength we need to rely on. It is through Christ who strengthens us that we “can do all things” (Phil 4:13).

Fourth, in journeying to a dangerous place, like Iconium, to help an ecclesia in need, Timothy was following the example of the Apostle Paul. Timothy had seen Paul visit ecclesias in perilous places for the purpose of strengthening and encouraging them, and he would have known from his own experience — when Paul returned to Lystra after he had been stoned there — how helpful such visits could be. Let this be a reminder to us of the importance of setting a good example for others to follow. It can have a tremendous impact.

In our next article in the series, we will consider the change in Timothy’s life that occurred following Paul’s return to Lystra.

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Notes:
3. For further discussion, see S. Kingsbury. Teenagers of the Bible: Growing Examples of Godliness. (Findon, South Australia: Logos), pages 425-426.
Jonathan the Faithful Prince: (13) Faith Into Action

In the last article, we saw Jonathan put into a trying situation. His father, the one whom he sought to influence for good, had just told him and his servants to kill David. What would Jonathan do? He loved David. Yet, at the same time, he loved his father. In this article, we will see his faith put into action and watch him seek both the good of his father and his friend.

A conflict

As Jonathan heard his father’s words, he was put into a frustrating position. The conflict which raged within him is aptly shown by the way that 1Sam 19 describes him — in verse 1 it already described him as Saul’s “son,” and then again, it said the same thing in next verse, but also emphasized his love for David:

“But Jonathan Saul’s son delighted much in David: and Jonathan told David, saying, Saul my father seeketh to kill thee: now therefore, I pray thee, take heed to thyself until the morning, and abide in a secret place, and hide thyself” (1Sam 19:2).

Scripture called Jonathan “Saul’s son,” and referred to Saul as his “father” — yet in the same sentence, said that Jonathan “delighted much in David.” What a choice this would have been for Jonathan! If he chose to stand with his best friend, he would be standing against his father. If he stood with his father, he would be standing against God’s future king and his best friend — the one whom he sought to encourage!

With this awkward situation, Jonathan’s least disruptive option probably would have been to simply ignore the issue — many of us would have likely followed that course of action. Jonathan could have just avoided David entirely for the next few days or weeks, so that Saul wouldn’t suspect their friendship and wouldn’t suspect Jonathan’s protection of his friend. Jonathan knew that David was the promised king, so he knew that God’s providence would watch over David — no matter what Saul tried to do, he wouldn’t be able to kill him. Thus, the easiest course of action would have been for Jonathan to remove himself entirely from the situation — but that wouldn’t have been the most faithful thing for him to do.

Instead, Jonathan knew that he had to act. He couldn’t just sit back with the information that he had been given. His faith and his love for David compelled him to do something. But at the same time, his love for his father also demanded that he do whatever he could to try to help Saul out of his violent determination. Thus, in a beautiful application of God’s principles, Jonathan decided what he was to do; he immediately went to David and warned him of the danger, then revealed his plan to try to change his father’s heart.
Results

It was a brilliant plan — yet it was one that required a solid faith in living by principles, rather than living by results. It required a faith that believed that God could work the impossible. If he had ignored the whole situation, his life would have been safe; but according to this plan, his life was in God's hands. How would Saul, a man who had previously wanted to kill his son, respond to Jonathan defending David — the man whom he feared? If Jonathan had been a man who was results-focused (as we so often are!), he would have quickly dismissed this plan and simply ignored the entire situation. But he wasn't — Jonathan was a man who lived upon principle, not results. Jonathan was a man who did what he needed to do, leaving the results to the One in Heaven.

It was just like the situation when he stood up against the Philistine garrison — when Jonathan and his armor bearer discovered themselves to the Philistines, they didn't know whether or not God would be for them. They knew what they needed to do, but they didn't know the outcome. So it was in this incident as well. Jonathan knew what he needed to do, and he did it, even if the likely results were unfavorable.

May this serve as an example to us — how often do we brush aside God's principles because we believe that the result will be unfavorable? How many times have you or I closed our mouths and refrained from preaching to someone because we believe that they won't listen to the Truth? How many times have we not tried to reach out to someone who has left the meeting because we are afraid that we are going to push them further away? How many times have we not prayed for something because we don't think that it will change the result? So often we make our decisions based off the results — but, as it would seem, the results aren't what are important! When we preach, the important thing is that we are preaching, not whether or not someone comes to the Truth — as the apostle said, he planted, Apollos watered, and God gave the increase (1Cor 3:6-7). God is the One who calls, and God is the One who touches hearts. God is the One who can do what we see to be an impossibility. Our job is to bring the message. We can't allow ourselves to be paralyzed because we are afraid that we won't use exact right word or because our preaching method might not be exactly right. Perhaps this isn't an issue that you have — but for me, over and over I find myself focusing on results, and because of that, I end up being entirely inactive!

Instead of looking at our results, it would appear as though God is concerned with the fact that we preach and we do our best to base our preaching off His Word! When we seek out the lost, the important thing is that we are seeking and trying to help them come back to their first love. When we pray, the important thing is that we are praying, not what the end result will be — that's up to God. God is the One who will effect a result, not us. The same is true in all kinds of situations. Throughout Scripture, God is seeking to change the way that we think. Instead of living for results, we need to recognize that those are His realm, and instead live by the principles of the Truth.
Considering the effect

Nevertheless, in considering the way that our decisions need to be based on principle, we don’t want to diminish our attempts to achieve favorable results. When we preach, if we simply cast off all care of how the preaching would be received, that wouldn’t be helpful — though he recognized that God gave the increase, the apostle Paul didn’t simply disregard results. As he wrote in Corinthians, he sought to be “all things to all men” (1Cor 9:22); thus, his method of preaching the gospel to Jews was different than his method of preaching the gospel to Gentiles. In fact, this can be seen in the preaching of all of the disciples. When Peter spoke to Jews on the day of Pentecost, he quoted a number of verses from the Old Testament (large pieces of Joel 2, Psa 16, and one verse from Psa 110). He did the same type of thing in Acts 3, as well as quoting the Old Testament in Acts 4. All of those speeches were presented to a Jewish audience; to a group for whom the Old Testament held a huge amount of weight. Nevertheless, when Peter sought to preach to Cornelius and his house — a group of Gentiles — his method was quite different. As he spoke to them, he never once quoted the Old Testament; instead, he preached the same message — the death and resurrection of Christ — but didn’t quote any verses because the Old Testament wasn’t important to Gentiles! Paul did the same thing in Acts 17 when he spoke to the Greeks on Mars Hills; he didn’t quote any of the Old Testament, and in fact quoted one of the Greek poets (Acts 17:28)! Thus, in service to God, considering the method that will likely achieve the greatest results is important, but principle should come first and the possibility of unfavorable results shouldn’t cause us to ignore one of God’s principles.

In other words, when trying to make a decision, all of the principles should first be considered. In Jonathan’s case, he did so. He recognized that in love for his father and in love for David, he needed to take action. He needed to seek to try to change his father’s mind and he needed to warn David about Saul’s evil intentions — even though the end result of this decision could have been his own death. Regardless of the results, Jonathan steadfastly made his choice and shared his plan with David. The next morning, David was to be on his guard and hide himself in a secret place out in the field — Jonathan would then approach David’s hiding place with Saul, so that David could hear their conversation:

“And I will go out and stand beside my father in the field where thou art, and I will commune with my father of thee; and what I see, that I will tell thee” (1Sam 19:3).

David would hide out in the field, and Jonathan would plead with Saul only a short distance from David’s hiding place. In this way, David could hear everything that Saul said about him — thus, if Saul was even more extreme than he had been the day before with Jonathan, then David could make plans to escape. Afterwards, since David could only hear the conversation, and not see it, Jonathan would share with him what he saw in his father’s expression and body language.

Conclusion

Truly, in looking at Jonathan’s story, we see some of the critical pieces of decision-making. Though he had the opportunity to take the “easy way” and leave his father
to his own devices, Jonathan’s love for both his friend and his father compelled him to act differently. Jonathan was a man of principle. Though the result of his decision might not be favorable, he was willing to accept that result as long as his principles were not compromised.

And yet, in a touching picture of God’s mercy to one of His servants, the results were hardly what Jonathan would have expected…

Jason Hensley (Simi Hills, CA)

The Joy of Sunday Schooling

Have you tried this? (5)

Are you looking for something special to do with your children? Something that goes beyond the routine of their weekly Sunday school lessons? On two different occasions over the years I have asked brothers and sisters across North America to tell me what they do that’s special. What kinds of extracurricular activities do they carry out that help make “belonging” special for their Sunday school children and families? On both occasions I received many good responses.

Here’s a list, with the ideas stated as they were given to me. If you are looking for something special to do with your Sunday school children, take a few minutes to look at the list. You may not find exactly what you want, but you may find one or two things that fire your imagination: things you can run with. I hope so.

To organize the list, I grouped the activities into a few general categories. Clearly, some of them fit into more than one category. The categories themselves tell us something about the goals that ecclesias address when they provide extracurricular activities for their children.

Ecclesial programs:
- Junior and Senior CYCs.
- Open House for parents, with supper and plays.
- Pre-CYC for four- to 12-year-olds, every other Friday night, October to May: Bible study and crafts.
- Recognition Day / Open House to encourage parents to attend their child’s class and keep in touch.
- Sunday school awards day, prize giving; Sunday school program (e.g., with skits, plays, presentations).
- Wednesday evening Bible Explorers.

Educational programs:
- Bible Day Camp (a one-week program).
- Bible school tuition funding for the children.
- Bible word puzzles, quiet activities for children to do at the midweek Bible class; classes for children on Bible class night.
• Children’s Choir (two levels).
• Dramatic reading group = different ages get together to do dramatic Bible reading.
• Field trips; visiting a museum or an exhibit of something that has Biblical interest.
• Group classes with all ages involved in team-building activities.
• Hymn sings, scheduled semiannually.
• Music Program.
• Plays, skits.
• “Thought for the Week”: children take turns preparing and presenting.
• Tour a Jewish synagogue.
• Whole-group summer projects (e.g., a Sunday school play, movie, newspaper).
• “Words from the Wise”: personal testimonies about life before and after baptism.
• Younger children periodically participate in a worship service by singing songs they have learned during music praise time.
• Young people’s study days, study weekends.
• 15-minute *Praise The Lord* hymn sings with the Sunday school.

**Interecclesial activities:**
• At least two ecclesias presently sponsor biennial Bible schools.
• Combined CYC activities.
• Informal get-togethers with other ecclesias.
• Joint Sunday school entertainment programs.
• Joint Sunday school picnics, outings.
• Planned trips to gatherings.
• Regional CYC activities (study and devotional time) hosted by the ecclesia (*Thanks to a small ecclesia for this big idea.*).
• Sunday school exchange visits.

**Interpersonal activities and events:**
• Chili cook-off, soup and pie cook-off. (These can be carried out as fund raisers).
• CYC hosted in family homes.
• “Evening with the Teacher”.
• Family days; family nights every six weeks: skating, bowling, tobogganining, etc. followed by a potluck supper. (Some assume you live in the North of America!)
• Get-togethers throughout the week.
• Mother’s Day celebration.
• Secret friends (aunt/uncle and child).
• Social time with snacks between Sunday school and Meeting.
• Tribe Sundays. All members of the ecclesia are grouped in tribes, bridging the age levels. On “Tribe Sunday” members of a tribe get together to participate in a common activity.
Parties, picnics, and banquets:

- Barbecues.
- Costume parties.
- Mother-Daughter Banquet.
- Pancake breakfasts.
- “Pizza and Readings” evenings.
- Potluck lunches / suppers on a regular basis.
- Sunday afternoon outings (e.g., picnics in the park).
- Sunday school kickoff breakfast each semester.
- Sunday school picnic.

Recreation:

- Activity days (e.g., recreation in the afternoon followed by a theme dinner).
- Baking, biking, bonfires, bowling, camping trips, canoeing, carnivals, craft programs, hayrides, kite making and flying, minigolf, outside game days / inside game days, ping-pong, rocket launching, (ice) skating parties, sledding, sleepovers, summer swim parties, zoo trips.
- Fun days combined with dramatic presentations.
- Nature hikes to see God’s handiwork, trips to the mountains.
- Recreation day held at a local college facility or gym.

Service projects:

- Card making and sending.
- CYC runs one or two days of activities for the younger kids.
- Fund raising for Agape-in-Action² (Thanks to a young Granite State sister who told me about this project.).
- Hall care day; work days that include the Sunday school children.
- Leaflet pushing, preaching efforts.
- Neighborhood barbecue as an outreach project.
- Organizing a special Mother’s Day luncheon (the children take charge of this).
- Preparing and distributing Thanksgiving baskets.
- Save the Children³ bake sale.
- Taking the younger children on an outing or helping them in some other way.
- Visiting nursing homes.
- Visiting shut-ins.
- Volunteer work in the community.
- A Boy’s Club (This idea was proposed in The Tidings magazine in December, 1958, by our late Bro. Fred Buckler of California. It’s worth republishing. Does anyone know how this project turned out?):

“Our Sunday School is going to organize a Boy’s Club. We would be happy to have any boys from other Sunday Schools, between the ages of 8 and 12 attend. The main object of our club will be service to others. We hope to make things for people in Christadelphian homes for aged or any other project of serving others. By meeting other boys and working with
them, we hope to teach them that the Christadelphian way of life is a life of service to others and that serving others brings joy to our own lives.”

Bro. Buckler puts things into perspective for us. When all is said and done, we need to be wary of activity for activity’s sake. The point of extracurricular activities is not to have a calendar full of grand events and polished productions that do little more than entertain the children, if that. Spur-of-the-moment activities can often be as effective as well-planned ones. And in all the doing, we must not let the children lose sight of the fact that ecclesial life is not about “What can I get out of it?”, but, rather, “What can I put into it and what can I do to help?”

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Notes:
1. Praise The Lord, Hoddesdon Christadelphian Services, Reprinted 2010. E-mail: sales@hoddesdon.org. Also see Carol Linsenmeier, “Music – Part 1, A Valuable Teaching Tool”, The Tidings, September, 2013, pp.400-402.
3. Save the Children. See www.christadelphianchildren.com

Scriptural Discipline: (6) Restoration!

The motivation that we must all share is to restore

In our last article, we looked at the power of our Lord, as manifested in how he works with those who are unwilling to repent of sins unto death. We do not simply “throw the problem over the wall” when we must withdraw from our brother or sister. Rather, we prayerfully deliver them for the destruction of the flesh. The Lord is in command of this process and knows how to intimately work with erring saints.

This brings us to our final topic — restoration. It is important to note that restoration is a fundamental desire of our God, going all the way back to the Garden. We have the voice of the prophets to remind us of how God pleaded with Israel to repent — to turn from rebellion and sin to the sweet fellowship only He could offer them. It is essential for us to remember this point as we consider discipline in our ecclesias. The motivation that we must all share is to restore. It must never be punitive or out of exasperation. At no time does our brother stop being our brother whom our Lord died. Love must guide our thoughts, group deliberations and actions.

Therefore, all discipline, especially the action of withdrawal, must be taken with all soberness of mind. Bro. Carter wrote in 1950, “This step of withdrawal is not something to be lightly undertaken, for it is a gravely responsible action. Its gravity might deter some brethren from taking the step, but it should be remembered that it is equally grave to refrain from separation when that should take place. A man of a combative nature will emphasize the duty to withdraw when he should look well to the motives behind his contention; a man who finds controversy distasteful and strife a burden has to remember the duty of the defense of the faith and of loyalty to the command of Christ.”
Bro. Carter illustrates a major point in these articles. Sound Scriptural discipline is not to be based on our personal preferences or those of one ecclesia versus another. These are the commands of our Lord! Sound Scriptural discipline, and particularly withdrawal, is to be approached with a deep sense of reverence. We are not to rush into it. We should not be pressured into moving faster than is appropriate. We should never desire such separation. Yet, to fail to follow the Master’s commands and demonstrate our love for our brother, because we find the work unappealing, is just as unacceptable. Remember, our work is to either save by showing compassion or to fearfully pull them out of the fire, hating even the garment spotted by the flesh. There is no place here for inaction.

Thankfully, most Scriptural discipline results in repentance long before we must exercise the full process of Matthew 18. Most of our service can be done through prevention! Paul wrote to Timothy, “And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will” (2Tim 2:24-26).

The phrase here, “instructing those who oppose themselves” is most illustrative of the real situation we face with Scriptural discipline. When our brother sins, when he continues in that sin and rebels, he is opposing HIMSELF. Our service to him in instruction is to help him with the battle he is facing with his own worst enemy — his deceitful and desperately wicked heart. The Divinely-appointed checks and balances of his life, self-examination and the engrafted Word are no longer operating as they should. Now, we wish to assist him in recovery from this snare. In most cases, this can be accomplished by the sound dividing of the Word of God. The Greek word for instructing here, paideuo, is translated as “chastening” in several places, including Heb 12, and doesn’t involve simply providing education or classes, but the word also commands an active oversight. It is similar to the concept Paul uses in Gal 3:24, where the Law was our “schoolmaster” to bring us unto Christ. The RSV translates “schoolmaster” as “custodian”.

Involving others lives

Here’s why these thoughts are so important for our consideration of Scriptural discipline. It is not sufficient for us to only offer formal classes for our ecclesial members and young people on the threats of the flesh. These have a significant place in the battle against sin, but they cannot be fully effective unless they include OVERSIGHT. This requires us to be involved in each other’s lives, by literally going to war with one another in our collective battle against sin. But, let’s not underestimate the value of a sound educational process in the ecclesia! This calls for our ecclesias to be watchmen, scanning the horizon for approaching threats. It would be to our great benefit to discuss these threats and couple them with sound Scriptural discussion long before the threat arrives at our gates. We need to identify the spiritual principles that believers should embrace in the governance of their lives. There can be little doubt that this is what the Apostle Peter meant when he wrote that the elders were to “Feed the flock of God which is among you,
taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind” (1Pet 5:2). This is an appeal to the elders of modern ecclesias to be regularly guarding against threats to the flock. What are the new threats that the flock may be experiencing? What are the Scriptural principles that should guide our future actions?

A last comment on Paul’s admonition in 2Tim. Did you notice HOW the instruction was to occur? It must be done with meekness. As you will recall, this is always an essential part of recovery. We must not “instruct” with a wagging finger or with an air that we ourselves would never fall to such temptations. Of course we could! The High Priest was always aware of the fact that while he was offering for the sins of the people, he too was “compassed with iniquity.” On this point, we too often approach the education on moral matters as if the main application of these is for “our young people.” When it comes to issues such as fornication, for example, we may be drawn to direct our instruction to them solely. But, recent research on fornication, associated with areas like internet pornography, show that this is NOT simply a “youth issue.” We need to stop positioning morality classes exclusively at our youth. Yes, the instruction is needed for our young people as they are progressively exposed to these threats as their life becomes increasingly independent. However, morality issues are topics of instruction and discussion for all ages. We must remember meekness when we are chastening!

The next passage I’d like to share is one that has deep personal meaning for me. Paul writes: “Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ” (Gal 6:1-2). Notice here the similarity of message. Restore in meekness, considering thyself lest ye also be tempted. Restoration must be undertaken always with our own need in mind. However, the word I’d like to focus your attention on here is “restore.” The Greek word is katartizo. It is the same word used about the disciples “mending” their nets on the seaside in Galilee. It is a word that in Greek literature is for the setting of bones. Here's where I can personally relate, as can anyone who has experienced a significant bone break. In my case, it was a spiral fracture of the tibia and fibula. The pain was pretty significant. The doctor asked me to drape my leg over the hospital bed and gently, but quickly he pulled my foot down and snapped the leg back into place. Instantly, 95% of the pain was eliminated.

When we restore, it truly is like gently putting bones back in place. It is about patiently removing the seaweed and filth from our nets and mending them so they will be useful for the next day. This is an important guide to us as we contemplate working with our brother or sister who has been overtaken in a fault. Don’t condemn or use a hammer! Gently help to restore, to put things back in working order.

**Practical matters**

I’d like now to turn to a few practical matters associated with withdrawal, because they are often critical in the recovery process. **First, in most cases, the decision of the ecclesia about withdrawal should be communicated live and in person to the withdrawn brother or sister.** Preferably, the full ecclesia should deliver
this message in a special meeting with the brother or sister. However, in almost no case is it appropriate for such decisions to be communicated for the first time by post and certainly never by email! Letters are important to document decisions made, but they often rarely effectively communicate the true feelings and intents of the writer or the ecclesia. This is best done face to face. Years ago a faithful brother told me never to post such a letter. The letter should be written, but hand delivered, where one can personally communicate the action. In such cases, it is important to remember that we want to make the repentance and return of our brother or sister as easy as possible. This is a unique opportunity to express to the brother or sister our deep sorrow and the hope we have of quick restoration. It is important to let the brother or sister know that the whole ecclesia will be praying each day for their repentance. They will not be forgotten.

Another consideration is **how the ecclesia can stay engaged with the brother or sister** during a time that it is important for them not to be participating in our ongoing services. We indeed must deliver them to Satan for the destruction of the flesh and as we have seen previously, this requires a certain “censure” from the fellowship that we enjoy. One thought is for a brother and/or sister to serve as volunteers to keep in touch with the withdrawn member. It might even be advisable to let the withdrawn brother or sister know the names of the brother and sister who have lovingly volunteered to stay in touch. But, what does that really mean? Preferably, this should NOT be a family member. Families will likely be in touch and have more regular interactions with the brother or sister because they are a family. From personal experience, I can say that often the family is in the worst position to encourage and lovingly chasten one who has left. The volunteers should plan to regularly communicate. This is best if it is face-to-face. If not practical, a telephone call once a month (or minimally once per quarter) should be made. And what is the purpose of the call? Since the brother or sister expects the contact, the purpose should be understood. How are you doing? Have you been able to make changes in the matter that brought about the withdrawal? Do you need my help with anything? Minimally, it is to remind the withdrawn that they are at the top of our minds. We are praying for him or her specifically each week as an ecclesia and daily as individuals. We need them back!

I offer the suggestions above in all humility, recognizing how frequently I have failed to live up to such a standard. Generally, my experience is that we forget such brethren over time. Our prayers diminish and finally cease. Out of sight, out of mind. Yet, perhaps at the core of this issue is that I am limiting my Lord. In Psa 78:40-41, the rebuke of Israel was they had limited God. “How oft did they provoke him in the wilderness, and grieve him in the desert! Yea, they turned back and tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel.” Let’s not limit our God. Though our brother may be in the process of the destruction of the flesh for decades, the Lord has not abandoned him. He is powerful to save. We must never allow ourselves to forget our brother or to doubt that the Creator of the Universe can certainly heal the mind of our brother or sister.

The censure of the Bible is a far cry from the ecclesiastical excommunications practiced in other denominations. First, a brother or sister should not be with-
drawn from without the ecclesia knowing about the matter and giving its approval of the action. The power of the ecclesia itself in the recovery process is essential. The voice of many brothers and sisters, in one accord, communicates a powerful message to the rebellious brother or sister. Once withdrawn from, we must take steps to make clear the change in the brother or sisters life. Communications and interactions are not to remain the same. Yet, let us never be a people who will not acknowledge and greet our withdrawn brother or sister we see on the street. Such encounters offer an opportunity to confirm our love, remind the brother or sister that we are praying for them and to demonstrate the character of our Lord.

By the power and mercy of our Lord, change may begin to happen. If we have broken all contact, if they are no longer in our minds and hearts, we will not be likely to know that repentance and change has occurred. Again, this is where the volunteer brother or sister can be of such a service. That regular contact may uncover positive change, or at least a movement in the right direction. At that time the volunteer brother and sister may determine that increased contact is appropriate. Perhaps an invitation to come to their home for dinner and the readings? Maybe simply an invitation to meet for a cup of coffee or to get together for a shared interest in recreation. Remembering Paul's counsel in Corinth, we ought to go and confirm our love to our repentant brother — not wait until he walks back through the ecclesial doors. Let's reinforce the positive ground that has been made. Give the withdrawn brother or sister a renewed taste of how wonderful our fellowship is and the joy it can bring to aching hearts. But, until repentance is complete, we must stop short of full engagement.

Repentance

Our last words will focus on the blessed day where our brother or sister has finally repented and desires restoration. Here, we know that even the angels in Heaven share in our joy. The angelic work with the brother or sister has brought them to a point where they have “come to themselves” and seen clearly once again the vision of returning to the Father’s house.

For years, I’ve seen a number of ways that repentant brothers and sisters “come back” to meeting. I have also heard from those who’ve returned just how incredibly difficult that re-entry can be. It can conjure up deep feelings of guilt that were once quelled. Brothers and sisters, not intending anything but to be accepting, can say things that hurt rather than help. So, what can be done to make the re-entry and restoration a better process for our brother or sister?

First, it all begins with how we parted ways. Did we express love in our separation? Do they feel that the sin that they were holding onto was condemned or that they themselves were rejected and condemned? Did they feel the ongoing presence of faithful prayers? Were they encouraged by the volunteering brother and sister that stayed faithfully with them through the darkest hours?

But still, it is difficult to come through those doors after months or years away. How can this be made easier? Here again, the volunteering brother and sister can be of tremendous help. When return to the meeting is warranted, offer to be at their
home to pick them up that morning! The volunteer brother and sister should be there with them through the day to guide and cheer. I remember a brother gone for several decades who, after repenting, talked about coming back to meeting for nearly six months. What broke the stalemate? A brother called him and told him he would be picking him up for meeting that coming Sunday. It worked and the brother was back in the ecclesia for several years before falling asleep.

When we restore our brother or sister, let's not have them sheepishly “enter the back door.” We have a need as a body to confirm our love to them, to welcome them back into the service of the ecclesia. A faithful brother in my home ecclesia made a recommendation several years ago that we adopted as a regular practice. When we restore fellowship, we once again extend the right hand of fellowship. This is done much the same way we offer it to our newly baptized. Up front, before the eyes of the entire ecclesia, we welcome our restored brother or sister. I have found this process to be a deeply spiritual experience and one that brings to the ecclesia a great sense of joy. Eyes are rarely dry! The words of the two hymns we sing afterward, “The Lord Bless Thee” and “Blessed be Jehovah” seem to capture the spirit of the moment. Our dear brother or sister is back! The Lord has worked mightily in his or her life. We are to be filled with praise!

Bro. Nicholls wrote in 1977, “There might well be fewer ‘automatic’ withdrawals, or less abandoning of those who have been withdrawn from, if there were in fact more true ecclesial discipline exercised in the spirit of helping one another towards a spiritual maturity, and a fuller realization that forgiveness and restoration are complete in God’s sight for those who at least attempt to mortify the flesh.” May we renew a firm commitment to Scriptural discipline. The Lord delights in mercy. We can count on this.

In summary, there are many reasons for us to be committed to sound Scriptural discipline. Among the reasons are that the honor of God’s Name is promoted; the integrity of the ecclesia is preserved; pure doctrine is protected; a rescue process is undertaken for wayward believers; and a warning is provided to the assembly about accountability. But for our ecclesias in this Dark Age, it promotes a culture of love and support that is consistent with the first century ecclesias. By God’s grace, our ecclesial light on the hill will shine brighter. Our members will see the ecclesia as a place where real issues can be surfaced and loving support will be present in time of need. If I find myself at complete odds with God and overcome by sin, I can trust that my brothers and sisters will not turn away or abandon me. They are with me for life!

So, what can I do? I can labor to create an environment of trust and openness where real problems can be discussed and comfort and encouragement given. I can work to ensure my ecclesia is clear on Scriptural principles governing discipline. I can openly discuss and identify threats to holiness — the intrusions of Humanism in our thinking. I can work to locate the Lost Sheep of my ecclesia and make sincere attempts to restore. I can courageously face into any long-standing and festering issues that need to be addressed — in my ecclesia and certainly in my own life.

My grandmother’s favorite verse in the Bible was Mal 3:16-17, “Then they that
feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it,
and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord,
and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, says the Lord of hosts,
in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spares his
own son that serves him.” Perhaps this is a good place to close our consideration of
Scriptural discipline. If we fear our Lord, if we talk about Him and his principles
for living, if we think about his Name, we will not be lost in a world of darkness
that is about to be judged, but rather, we will be His jewels, His special treasure.
In a world that desires to own us, we will be His! May this be our joy and vision
in these Last Days before our Lord’s return.

David Jennings (Pamona, CA)

Notes:

The Core Values of Our Faith

One of the things that really impressed me when I was introduced to the Christadelphians over 30 years ago, was the fact that this group of men and women had been held together for over 150 years, not by a institutionalized type of religion, but by a common bond as found in the Scriptures. It was the recognition of a rediscovered truth, that held this little group of Bible students together from all around the world. And if there were no core value of truth among this group, it could never have held together so long, without a paid ministry. Core values have always been a critical piece of what keeps us together as brethren and sisters worldwide.

So what are core values?
The MacMillan Dictionary defines it this way — core values are the most important beliefs of a person or a group, they form the foundation on which people perform work and conduct themselves. Core values are a person’s driving force, which influence all their actions and reactions. Core values are critical not only in our personal lives, but the life of our ecclesia and the brotherhood of whole.

The analogy of a three-legged stool
The more I thought about it, the more the analogy of a Three-legged Stool came into mind. A three-legged stool is unique in that it has a special design feature that keeps it from falling over. The three legs ensure that it will never wobble even on uneven ground. That's why farmers originally used the three-legged stool to milk their cows. It's the dynamic integrated nature of these three legs that make it sturdy, even on uneven surfaces. All three legs play an integral part; take away one leg and the chair collapses. This three-legged stool also has something very critical in its design called the center securing piece. It is a ring or joining piece that “holds” the three legs together. The “Critical Link” in our analogy, is simply the “Bigger Picture” which holds our core values together. In everything that we do in the brotherhood, we need to be cognizant of the greater good of the brotherhood and it's development as a family of God — that's the BIGGER picture! Paul exhorts us: “whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God” (1Cor 10:31). Let us never
forget this principle in our dealings with each other.

So what are the cores values that have held us together for so long?

For simplicity sake, I’ve boiled it down to three core values.

1) “The Royal Law of Love”, as James calls it (James 2:8)
2) “The Great Commission” to which we’ve been called (Acts 1:8)
3) And our core beliefs, as summarized in our “Statement of Faith”,

That’s what has held this little group of Bible students together for over 150 years. So lets look at these core values a little closer.

Core Value #1 — “Royal Law of Love”

James exhorts us: “If ye fulfill the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself” (James 2:8). Why is it called “The Royal Law” and what makes it one of the three pillars of our Christadelphian core values? The word “royal” is a Greek word which signifies “belonging to a king” and as a “royal law”, it expressed a chief governing principle; in other words, it over-ruled all the other laws. Therefore love and not partiality should become the governing factor in a life in the truth. That’s what James’ argument is all about in this chapter.

There is a lovely string of verses I like to use when speaking about “The Royal Law of Love”.

• “Above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfectness” (Col 3:14). The word “bond” is that which binds together in a bundle. Love is the binding power that holds the whole body of Christ together. The tendency of any body of people is sooner or later to fall apart. Love is the bond that will hold them together in an unbreakable fellowship.

• “Above all things have fervent love among yourselves: for love shall cover the multitude of sins” (1Pet 4:8). Love, says Peter, “hides a multitude of sins”. John points out to us in that “We love him (God), because he first loved us” (1John 4:19). It’s much easier to be patient with our own children than with the children of strangers, therefore we can forgive them because we love them. So it should be with our fellowmen. Our love should forgive others of their sin towards us, as we would have God forgive us. If we love others, God will overlook a multitude of sins in us.

• The Lord lays down another commandment — “A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another” (John 13:34-35). “By this love” shall all men know that you are my disciples. Jesus is laying down his farewell commandment to his disciples and he exhorts them that “By this love”, people will recognize that they were the true disciples of the Lord. “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13).

• “For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself” (Gal.5:14), and it doing this, “If ye fulfill the royal law according to the scripture” (James 2:8).
Core Value #2 — “The Great Commission”

The Lord lays down his final commission for his disciples, “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth” (Acts 1:8). The commission of Acts extends unto us and contains Christ’s marching orders for his ecclesia.

Let us note certain things about a “witness”. A witness is a man or woman who says “I know this is true”. In a court of law, a man cannot give evidence by way of a carried story; it must be his or her own personal experience. A witness does not say “I think so”, but must say “I know so”. Isn’t it interesting that one of the Greek words for “know” is ginosko, which means “knowing by an experiential knowledge”. Jesus taught his disciples that “this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent” (John 17:3). Making God real in our lives makes us an effective witness. A real witness is not one of words, but of deeds. The best leaders lead by example. Finally the word “witness” is the Greek word mar'-toos, and that’s where the English word for “martyr” comes from. A witness has to be ready to become a martyr, loyal to the cause no matter what the cost. That’s the calling to which we’ve been called. We’ve been given a great commission to share our hope, and it’s one of the three core values that keep us together as a worldwide ecclesia.

Core Value #3 — our beliefs, as summarized in our “Statement of Faith”

We learn that “they that gladly received his word were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers” (Acts 2:41-42). So how do we define our Christadelphian faith? The grounds of our beliefs are founded in the inspired word of God, and that’s what has kept our community together for over 150 years. But many churches around us who arrive at radically different conclusions have also quoted the Bible. So what we need to help us clarify what the Bible teaches, is our statement of faith. It’s taking scripture and putting it side by side with our understanding of it that makes up our statement of faith.

The doctrine of the apostles is described as “the first principles of Christ” and it is a sure foundation on which Christian lives can be built. “Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God” (Heb 6:1). No teacher would ever get anywhere if he had to lay the foundations all over again every time he began to teach. So the writer to the Hebrews says that people must use the “First principles” as a building block to go on to “perfection”. But you need the “First principles” in the first place. From the earliest days, Christadelphians have described their understanding of “first principle” Bible teachings as the basis of their fellowship together.

As the years passed in the history of our community, certain challenges arose to challenge our first principle Bible teachings, therefore the summaries of gospel truth were refined, usually with the object of clarifying our brotherhood’s beliefs.
For over 150 years, our “Statement of Faith” has been accepted as a faithful summary of Bible teaching “concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ” (Acts 8:12). This summary first formed the Statement of Faith of the ecclesia in Birmingham, England, and was quickly and widely used as a model by other ecclesias for their own statements of faith, and became known as the BASF (Birmingham Amended Statement of Faith). It was comprised of three parts: The first part lists the foundational Bible teachings believed by Christadelphians, the second part lists teachings widely accepted in the religious world that are not supported by the scriptures. And finally the third part contains the Lord’s commandments for daily living.

A faithful definition

Even though each ecclesia has its own statement of faith (sometimes with wording produced locally), ecclesias are part of the Central fellowship because they recognize the BASF as a faithful description of the one faith. It is therefore a very serious matter if a brother or sister cannot accept the teachings listed in the statement of faith. We do not simply accept that these doctrines are based on the scriptures, but that they are first principle teachings, and therefore provide solid ground on which there can be fellowship with other believers. We do not fellowship:

- Anyone who believes differently about these critical teachings.
- Anyone who does not treat them as first principles.
- Anyone who wants to add further doctrines as tests of fellowship.

Our focus should be firmly based on the Bible teachings that are listed in the statement of faith, more than on the words that have been selected to describe those teachings.

In summary, hopefully our brief look at the core values that have driven our brotherhood over 150 years, may awake a response in all of us to appreciate the great value of the Christadelphian basis of fellowship, for it unites ecclesias and their members all over the globe. By living our lives according to the “royal law of love”, may we influence and help others towards God’s kingdom as our Lord did. By proclaiming the “Good news of the kingdom and the name of Jesus Christ”, may we be remembered in turn when our Lord returns. By adhering to our established and well documented set of fundamental teachings, as summarized in our statement of faith, there can be fruitful cooperation and joyous service as together we form one body made up of many different parts. “By this all men will know that you are my disciples”.

Peter Dulis (Toronto West, ON)

The Early Ecclesia in Jerusalem:
A Template for Today

The first disciples of Jesus enjoyed the unique benefit of being directly taught by the Master Teacher for a period of three and a half years. What a privilege it must have been to have access to the skilled and perceptive teaching of the Son of God.
Yet despite this special opportunity, the disciples were not prepared for events that took place when Jesus was arrested and condemned to death by crucifixion. They were confused, disillusioned and uncertain about the meaning of these startling developments.

Two disciples left Jerusalem shortly after the crucifixion. Clearly, they were saddened by the death of the One who they “…thought should have redeemed Israel” (Luke 24:21). Their sorrow and disappointment were evident when the Lord encountered them and questioned the reason for their sadness. “And he said unto them, What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad?” (Luke 24:17). As events unfolded Jesus rebuked them for being “…slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken” (Luke 24:25). With skill and patience, Jesus proceeded to teach matters they had not fully understood or connected with the current situation: “…He expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself” (Luke 24:27). From the risen Lord they received new information, new understanding and new insights that would change their lives from that day forward.

Shortly after this dramatic encounter, the Lord appeared to the disciples that were assembled in the upper room. His presence confirmed his resurrection and Jesus then proceeded to eat with them and to teach them “…that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me” (Luke 24:44). By these Scriptures “…opened he their understanding that they might understand the scriptures” (Luke 24:45). These Scriptures spoke of the suffering of Messiah, His resurrection on the third day and “…that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem” (Luke 24:47). Again, Jesus’ followers were given new information, new understanding and new insights that would strengthen their personal faith and guide them in their mission as disciples.

Full conversion of the disciples was enabled by Jesus’ teaching after his resurrection. Six weeks later the same disciples who fled when Jesus was arrested were now speaking boldly to thousands of people in the temple square in Jerusalem. This amazing transformation was evidence of a rapid maturity of their faith and new courage to serve the Lord as each had originally pledged.

Their message was simple. Jesus of Nazareth was indeed the long-awaited Messiah. He was rejected and killed by the Jewish leaders. Peter said: “This Jesus hath God raised up whereof we are witnesses” (Acts 2:32). His speech was dramatically convincing. About 3,000 people were baptized as a result of the Apostles’ preaching.

These newly baptized disciples comprised the core of the new ecclesia in Jerusalem. They added substantially to the 120 disciples who gathered before Pentecost in Jerusalem. This remarkable growth and very rapid expansion must have presented a great challenge to the disciples as they commenced to guide and organize this assembly of new believers. For several reasons, they would not all be able to meet in one place. It is unlikely there was an assembly hall large enough to accommodate such a sizeable group. As well, it would have been dangerous for such a substantial number to congregate in one place — the followers of Jesus having
been threatened in a variety of ways when Jesus was among them. “...The Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue” (John 9:22).

What now takes place is a remarkable and thoughtful approach to guiding the formation of this new ecclesia. We are left in no doubt as to how the apostles proceeded with this daunting task. It is clearly stated that the new disciples “…continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers” (Acts 2:44). Let us now examine each of these four pillars of the first century ecclesia within the immediate context of their application.

**The Apostles doctrine**

The three thousand Jews who were now disciples of Jesus living in Jerusalem and the surrounding area would have strong belief in the God of Israel, the promises to Abraham, a longing for Messiah and deliverance by God from Roman oppression. These were Godly, serious minded and devoted Jews. They were in Jerusalem, at the temple, for the annual Feast of Pentecost. When Peter gave his stirring and compelling speech that convinced them of the Messiah-ship of Jesus, there was immediate response and submission to baptism. We should not conclude, however, that these new believers had complete understanding of the new way of life they had just embraced. Indeed the apostles themselves had only six weeks earlier come to understand how Jesus of Nazareth fulfilled the prophetic teachings about Messiah.

The new Jewish converts had much to learn. They would need to understand in greater depth the wonderful message of Jesus, how redemption was obtained through His name and what daily life as a believer and follower of Jesus entailed. As well, they would need to understand how Jesus fulfilled the Law of Moses and in so doing how they must now abandon traditional worship as the Law prescribed. All was fulfilled in Christ and it would require a giant step of faith and understanding to lay aside Mosaic traditions that were central to the Jewish religious system. The Apostles’ doctrine (or more correctly, Apostles’ teaching) would center on Jesus as the head of their religious practice and the heart of their devotion and service to God.

**The Apostles fellowship**

As an assembly of new believers there was also much to learn about fellowship with other believers. In his startling instruction, Jesus had redefined the household of God. It would no longer be comprised only of Jews but would soon embrace a multitude of Gentiles in many distant lands. Christian Jews would need to learn that the people of God were those who followed the commands of Jesus. Part of this new fellowship would require identification of individuals among the Jewish community that were baptized believers. It was dangerous to be a believer in Jesus. Affiliation with the synagogue was lost. Association with family and friends could be jeopardized. The ability to carry on life as previously lived would likely be seriously hindered. The fellowship of sharing, of Christ-like love and of caring for the practical and spiritual welfare of people not previously known as part of their religious family would constitute a momentous challenge. “This is my com-
mandment, *That ye love one another, as I have loved you*” (John 15:12). The apostles would teach them the privileges and obligations of this new fellowship.

**Breaking of bread**

It is very likely that the only people among the three thousand newly baptized Jewish believers, who had direct experience eating bread and drinking wine in memory of the Lord, were the immediate disciples of Jesus. The Lord taught them and instructed them how to remember him in his absence at the Passover Feast. This was just forty days prior to Pentecost. The Apostles may have shared this with a few believers but certainly not with the newly baptized believers in Jerusalem. It was the Apostles responsibility to teach these new disciples how to remember the Lord in his absence, to show them how bread represented his body and wine his poured out blood. This was a new religious observance. It would be taught from house to house on a daily basis, showing more and more people this simple, solemn way the Lord commanded His followers to remember Him. “And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart” (Acts 2:46).

**Prayer**

Throughout their history Jews have prayed to God and no doubt God-fearing Jews in first century Judaea prayed fervently. What need was there for the Apostles to provide instruction about prayer to newly baptized Jews in Jerusalem? There are a number of important aspects they would need to learn about prayer. There was a new mediator between God and man, Jesus, our intercessor. “For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (1Tim 2:5). The Levitical Priesthood had fulfilled its purpose and was no longer needed for intercession by God’s people. Their High Priest and mediator was Jesus Christ. The next thing they would need to learn was that prayer to God would be made in the name of Jesus. Because of his work and because of his exalted position at the right hand of God, Jesus was the means by which prayer and intercession was made acceptable to God. These were new concepts and would need to be explained and discussed with these recently baptized disciples.

**Putting this all together**

The work of the Apostles with new members of the Ecclesia in Jerusalem is a true example of stewardship and effective guidance. Their work was focused on four key matters that would equip new disciples to be faithful in their walk and to ensure continuity, stability and growth of the ecclesia.

Members of the new ecclesia in Jerusalem were taught doctrines and teachings about Jesus the Messiah and about Jesus their Savior. They would be given the “keys” to the kingdom from Peter and the other Apostles. This teaching would be enlarged and enriched in the coming years as Spirit guided letters were written to individuals and ecclesias by the Apostles.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>The Apostles’ template for teaching individual and ecclesial life in Christ.</strong></th>
<th><strong>New Teachings for Converted Jews in Acts 2</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Doctrine (Teaching)</strong></td>
<td>The Jews needed to understand and accept that Jesus was the Son of God and Messiah. Forgiveness of sins was found only with belief in and obedience to the Lord’s commands. These teachings would require further instruction and development within the new ecclesia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fellowship</strong></td>
<td>Jesus redefined the Household of God using family terms (Brother and Sister). The ecclesia was now comprised of baptized followers of Jesus Christ. Disciples must learn how to practice Christ’s love and care for one another in this new fellowship of believers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Breaking of Bread</strong></td>
<td>The emblems of Bread and Wine were the way that Jesus taught his followers to remember him until he returns. New disciples had to be instructed in this observance and its meaning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prayer</strong></td>
<td>Following the resurrection of Jesus, he became the mediator and High Priest of God’s people. As Mediator, prayer was now made through the Name of Jesus. Animal sacrifices were to be abolished.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Newly baptized Jews would need to learn the parameters of a new fellowship defined by Jesus. Their spiritual brothers and sisters were no longer natural Jews by birth but were now spiritual Jews and Gentiles reborn in baptism. Their relationship with other believers should be considered a family relationship with all its obligations of love, care and support. Other believers were to be considered Brothers and Sisters and treated as family. As an ecclesia they were all Brethren of Jesus. New Jewish converts would need to learn how and why to remember the Lord Jesus in the Breaking of Bread. These symbols would replace their previous commitment and practice of Mosaic religious tradition, recognition of the Levitical priesthood and offering of regular animal sacrifices. And finally, they would need to acknowledge Jesus as their mediator and High Priest. They would come to understand the purpose and priority of offering prayer through the saving name of Christ Jesus their Lord.

Their conversion required complete rethinking and reevaluation of their approach to God and how they should now worship in a new relationship with fellow believers. All this they learned from men who had only themselves recently learned these concepts and practices.
Letter to the Editor

Bro. Harrison’s article in The Tidings of January, 2014, raised a few questions in my mind. In citing Ryan and Pitman’s suggestions about Noah’s flood being confined to the Black Sea region and the climate conditions inherent to their theory, Bro. Harrison highlights their comment about “stone age hunters and gatherers” being forced to areas where fresh water could be found and temperatures would be more favorable.

In the context of this, Bro. Harrison places the “appearance” of Adam and Eve and the Garden of Eden in general, along with the possible reason that Cain’s curse would have been viewed as greater than he could bear.

The question this raises for me is what exactly is Bro. Harrison suggesting about the Biblical account in Gen 1-4? Was the Earth only blessed with plenteous vegetation in Eden while the rest of the world languished in ice? Were there other humans around at this time? Were Adam and Eve just a subset of these “hunters and gatherers”? Were there other humans around outside the garden? Did these survive the postulated “local” flood?

If I have understood correctly the scenario suggested by this article, then this, in turn, raises other questions about the veracity of these early chapters in Genesis.

Might it just be possible that what Ryan and Pitman discovered is post-Noahaic flood glaciation, and what David Rohl mentions (cited by Bro. Harrison) about the location for the origins of civilization is actually the location of Noah and his family from whom all human life on earth and civilization branched out according to Genesis 10?

Ted Sleeper (San Francisco Peninsula, CA)
El Salvador Bible School 2013

In late December we headed south once again for the annual Bible school in El Salvador. It is always the highlight of the year for the brethren and sisters and young people. Unfortunately, because the holidays fell mid-week, fewer people than normal were able to attend, but the enthusiasm of those present was palpable.

On this occasion the brethren had chosen a new venue in the town of San Julián, close to Sonsonate, where there is an ecclesia. The facility is just an hour west of San Salvador in a beautiful park-like setting full of flowers, shade trees and lots of birds. We were provided large rooms, a swimming pool that was well used, and abundant, delicious food.

The adult classes focussed on the real meaning of Paul’s proclamation of salvation by faith and some examples of how the concept should mould the believer’s conduct. For their part the teens analysed four Biblical first principles and how they will impact our life style if we really believe them. In both groups there was great participation from the students.

The traditional evening Bible competition produced the usual noise and excitement, with one precocious 5-year-old answering several questions, to everyone’s amazement (and much to the pride of her parents). The day before she had gone...
crying to her father because the teenagers hadn’t let her participate in a Bible quiz they were having! It is lovely to see such enthusiasm for learning the Scriptures!

Young People’s Games

The week after the school we visited the extended ecclesial family in Usulután. Only a few had been able to attend the Bible school due to work commitments, so it was very good to be able to spend a day with them. The brethren were eager to show us their newly-renovated (provisional) hall and had prepared a “chompi-pollo” (a “turkey/chicken”; i.e., a very large chicken) Salvadoran-style in an outdoor clay oven. After lunch Jim gave a class to the men and boys and Jean spoke to the ladies. There were about 30 of us altogether.

The Usulután ecclesia plans to hold a large campaign in April, God willing, by covering the area with leaflets, then offering talks and a Bible exposition in a big tent on municipal land. The brethren will be grateful if we keep this effort in our prayers.

Written by Bro. Jim and Sis. Jean Hunter, Link Couple
Submitted by Sis. Jan Berneau, CBMA/C Publicity

New Missionaries in La Paz — First Update

It has been nearly ten months since we moved to La Paz, we have had our work cut out adjusting to the culture, learning Spanish and working with the members and contacts.

La Paz is a colorful city. Blockades, demonstrations and street parades are all very much part of everyday life here, as well as street markets selling everything from fresh trout to cocoa leaves.

We live in a twelve story apartment in the city. Dallas, our 5 year old daughter, attends a small, all Spanish speaking kindergarten within a block of our apartment. Zander, our 2 year old son, spends his time in the apartment wishing he was out and running around! Within a few months Dallas was more or less ‘kinder’ fluent with her Spanish and now seems to have no trouble at all with the language, the advantage of learning a language young!
Our Spanish has not been quite as rapid but we can at least now understand most of what is being said and get our message across (eventually): a work in progress! If only the gift of tongues was still available! But, having at least functional Spanish is making everyday life like shopping, getting around and paying bills a lot easier and is also essential for preaching, exhortations, classes and continuing to get to know the brothers and sisters better. Fortunately we have a Spanish teacher who ensures that at least all our notes for classes, Sunday school lessons and exhortations are correct!

The La Paz ecclesia currently consists of four sisters and one brother and we have a group of around eight regular, long term friends that come out almost every week for our public class on Sundays and to any social activity we hold. Public lectures usually attract a crowd of around 25-30. Being a religious country, though mainly Catholic, interest in the Bible is high and there is as much preaching and teaching work here as you have time for! It’s quite refreshing being able to have a Bible discussion with almost anyone.

The baptized members here always bring along as many of their friends and family that are willing, which is such an example of how valuable their Hope is to them.

On the 30th of November 2013 the ecclesia held the annual ‘Run for the everlasting cure’. After a short talk on the Kingdom and a prayer for those struggling with illness, we headed off for a walk up ‘Prado’, the centre of town. Clad in our colorful t-shirts, we handed out 2,000 flyers about the Kingdom of God and the hope it provides as well as the correspondence course we offer, followed by lunch back at the ecclesial hall.
Personal classes have also commenced with one long term contact with two others expressing interest in starting personal classes also. It is particularly welcome for the ecclesia of La Paz considering all three expressing interest are men and the La Paz Ecclesia currently only has one local Brother.

With all this interest in the city of La Paz we can only pray that as always, God will give the increase.

Written by Shimon and Jo Spina,
La Paz, Bolivia
Submitted by Sis. Jan Berneau, CBMA
Publicity

Above: Carla and Dallas at Sunday school. To the right: Dallas and friends after a kinder presentation.

Jamaica 2013 Yearend Bible School
At the Lord’s Table New Year’s Eve

Approximately 40 brothers, sisters and young people from ecclesias in Jamaica met at Kendal Camp and Conference Centre for a very peaceful time around God’s Word at the annual Yearend Bible School. It was like an oasis of refreshing living water, while surrounded by a world in chaos. The four-day Bible School (December 29th to January 1st) theme was Practical Lessons from the Law of Moses and the Book of Revelation. We considered a number of “Principles” found in studies on the Cities of Refuge, the Sons of Kohath, the Daughters of Zelophehad and “An offering unto the Lord”.

Time was spent during one class on the first three chapters of the Revelation reviewing the Lord’s appeal letters to the seven ecclesias. Some of the main lessons for us are — he knows our works, asks us to repent, wants us to listen and encourages us to overcome as he did. One evening program was dedicated to a workshop on the Importance & Need for Sound Leadership, using “Who then is that faithful and wise steward” of Luke 12:42-44 as the focal point.
During the four days, there was a nice amount of time for daily readings and discussion, singing, prayer, recreation and rest. As in previous years, the physical food was ample and tasty! Once again, the CBMC set out tables of sample literature with sign-up sheets for each of the items, such as the Christadelphian Instructor, the Declaration, the Bible Reader’s Companion, Preparing for Baptism, Living the Truth and the Study Guide on the Tabernacle. One of the high points to this Bible School is the 10:30 New Year’s Eve Breaking of Bread Service. The exhortation topic was “A Soft Answer” (Prov 15:1) — we live in a sometimes loud, impatient and confrontational society — when things have to be done yesterday (not today or tomorrow), and there’s no time to think and respond in a calm, proper manner. We hear harsh words, anger and hasty “come-backs” that cause great hurt and sometimes the wounds go deep, and never really heal. As the Apostle Paul states clearly — “The servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men,…”. It was sobering to realize how we have failed, and must follow our Lord’s example (1Pet 2:18-25) in the home, ecclesia, neighborhood, school and workplace.

On the morning of January 1, 2014 after listening to one of the daily readings, we all left Kendal refreshed to begin a new year, re-dedicating ourselves in service to our Heavenly Father and His Son.

During the rest of our week-long stay in Jamaica we enjoyed Bible Classes with the Kingston and May Pen Ecclesias, as well as spending time in members’ homes. We were much encouraged by the fellowship and hospitality extended to us by the members and youth — and look forward to returning!

Written by Bro. Don Luff, CBMC Linkman
Submitted by Sis. Jan Berneau CBMA/C Publicity
Books from The Tidings

The Ecclesia at Ephesus, by Ryan Mutter

Ephesus was one of the most advanced cities in the Roman Empire. Believers living there faced many of the same issues that confront followers of the Lord Jesus Christ today. The Bible captures more than four decades of the Ecclesia’s history through the Acts and the numerous New Testament writings penned by or to believers living in Ephesus. The lessons the Bible provides about the causes and consequences of events in the Ecclesia remain relevant in today’s ever-changing times. Since the Bible records the development of the Ecclesia as a whole and also certain of its individual members, studying the Ecclesia at Ephesus provides powerful lessons in spiritual growth. $9.00 US (264 pages, with color maps and images).

Bible Guidelines for a Happy Marriage, by John C. Bilello

Sound, proactive, Biblical advice on how to build and maintain a happy marriage. $6.00 US (soft cover, 127 pages).

The Creation Text: Studies in Early Genesis, by David Levin

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

My Journey in Faith, by Ronald Hicks

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

Pictures of Redemption, by George Booker

Explores parables, analogies, and figures of speech used in Scripture to illustrate the many facets of redemption. $6.00 US (soft cover, 192 pages).

The Whole Armor of God, by Ryan Mutter

This story takes place nearly 3,000 years ago, but the spiritual challenges are familiar to today’s young people. $6.00 US (110 pages).

How to Order

Online – www.tidings.org (Go to ‘Books’) E-mail – books@tidings.org
Telephone – Karen Guist, 440-227-0212
Mail – Tidings Books, 11659 Caves Rd., Chesterland, OH 44026

Shipping & handling extra. Make checks payable to The Christadelphian Tidings.

Special Offer all Six books (reg $44) for only $30 plus shipping:


Designed so ecclesias can sample these books. Offer extended through July 31, 2014.
News & Notices

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

BRANT COUNTY, ON

The ecclesia began the year with a New Year’s hymn sing, readings and social activity at the home of Bro. Dan and Sis. Ashley Robinson. Soon after this on January 19, 2014, we were deeply saddened by the falling asleep in the Lord of Sis. Joan Newth, following open-heart surgery. She and her husband, Bro. Lloyd Newth, had just celebrated their sixty-eighth wedding anniversary a week previously. Our thoughts and prayers have been with Bro. Lloyd, and their sons Bro. Jeff, Bro. Mark and Bro. Carl, and their families. We long for the resurrection day when mortality will be swallowed up through the victory of our Lord, and all God’s saints will be rewarded.

On February 12, 2014, Bro. Frank and Sis. Dorothy Abel (Hamilton Book Road, ON) were with us for the day. Frank showed a DVD to the whole Sunday school on metamorphosis, in particular, on the Monarch butterfly. This served as a basis for his exhortation. The photography of the DVD was spectacular and the beauty of the butterfly in God’s creation was overwhelming. We enjoyed a hot meal together and then Frank gave a Bible Class on, “Accountability, Resurrection and Judgment,” a sobering examination of Scripture.

Our public lecture on Tuesday, February 25, 2014, was delivered by Bro. Joel Robinson (Hamilton Book Road, ON). He dealt specifically with Daniel chapter 11 regarding the history of the king of the North and the king of the South, a very informative presentation! Bro. Peter and Sis. Karly Styles (Brantford, ON) visited us on Sunday, March 2, 2014. Peter led us in, “Studies on the Book of Jonah” for the entire Sunday school, the exhortation, and following lunch together, an afternoon Bible class as well. It really turned into a very informative and uplifting study day for the whole ecclesia!

The weekend of March 29-31, 2014, proved to be extra-special for the ecclesia. After good confessions of faith by ASHLEY and STEPHEN PRYER, daughter and son of Bro. Grant and Sis. Rachel Pryer. We witnessed their baptisms on Saturday, March 30, 2014. Sunday, March 31, 2014, the Sunday school classes gave their annual presentation to the ecclesia. From one year olds to early twenty year olds, they all entertained the members with plays, memory work and hymn playing. The last presentation was by the teens/early twenties class on Esau and Jacob based on the book of Obadiah. It brought us to the judgment seat of Christ, where two sons had to answer for their actions. The youth left us with a sobering message regarding our faith and works. The whole event lifted our spirits and encouraged us to serve better, together.
We will miss Sis. Joyce Webb, who has moved to the Hamilton area to live with family. She has faithfully attended the Brant County Ecclesia since its inception in July of 2011. Consequently, as of Sunday March 31, 2014, we commended her to the love and care of the Hamilton Greenaway, ON Ecclesia.

Lastly, we have added a new preaching initiative to our annual proclamation efforts, which was common in the past. We took out a monthly 1/6 page size advertisement for our Tuesday evening lectures in a local weekly newspaper with good circulation. We usually have one or two regular visitors each week, but we want to try and let the light of the gospel shine brighter in the area.

David Wisniewski

ORLANDO, FL
We welcomed the following brothers and sisters as visitors to our meeting over the last few months: Brian and Sharon Adams and family, and Ken and Celia Green (Washington DC); Julian and Sandra Baseley (Guildford, UK); Michael and Pauline Walker (London, ON); Phil and Jean Hale (Castleford, UK); Samantha Markwith (Orlando, FL); Ken and Bonnie Burcaw (Ann Arbor, MI); Jack and Shirley Robinson, Mike Pearse, Lacey Robinson, Cassidy Robinson, and Paul and Bonnie Robinson (Cambridge, ON); David and Sue Brewer (Blackburn, Aust.); Alistair and Megan Fletcher (Clayton, Aust.); Jennifer Armitage and family (Carthage, NC); and Alan Markwith (Hamilton, ON). Our sincere thanks to those brothers who exhorted.

Randy Davenport

RICHMOND PETERSBURG, VA
With sadness we report to the brotherhood the falling asleep in Christ of Bro. Buluma Luendo on March 19, 2014. Bro. Luendo was baptized August 27, 1996 and was a member of the LUGUFU Ecclesia in Tanzania. He came to this country with his family 10 years later in 2006, and joined the Richmond Petersburg Ecclesia. Bro. Luendo was a wonderful example for all of our members, traveling 60 miles to our ecclesia from his home in Charlottesville when his work schedule would allow. In spite of difficulties understanding English, Bro. Luendo would follow along in Sunday school and Memorial service in his Swahili Bible. Our brother faced many challenges in his life and service to his master, the last of which was lymphoma. But his challenges never dampened his enthusiasm for the truth or his love for the brethren. He will be greatly missed. Our prayers are with his wife, Salima, and children, Noella, Kaimba and Enoch.

We would also like to thank our visiting brothers who provided us with words of exhortation; recently, Bro. Andrew Fraser on, “The Day of Provocation”, and Bro. David Mutter.

David King

SARASOTA, FL
The Sarasota ecclesia extends its sympathy to the family of Sis. Chris Butts, who fell asleep in Christ on March 30, 2014. She now rests alongside her dear husband, Bro. Bill Butts, waiting for that great day when the trump of God shall sound, and the dead in Christ shall rise. Sis. Chris will be greatly missed. She has left an example of Christian love and piety for us to meditate on, and in some way emulate. She had lifelong challenges to her health, which she bore with great dignity and grace. The Apostle Paul’s words, no doubt, gave our sister great encouragement: “My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather
glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take
pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for
Christ’s sake: for when I am weak, then I am strong.” (2 Corinthians 12: 9-10).

James Wilkinson

WICHITA FALLS, TX

Since last reporting our ecclesial news, we have welcomed the following brothers
and sisters around the table of our absent Lord: Linda Jones, Alex Cervantes (Los
Angeles, CA); Justin Reich, and David and Erin Clubb (Simi Hills, CA); Max and
Linda Wickham (San Diego County, CA); Bucky and Debi Wilhoit (Detroit Royal
Oak, MI); Micah Hatch (Avon, IN); Megan McStravick (McKenzie, BC); Janet Link
(Baltimore, MD); Maggie Howt (Comax Valley, BC), Matt Bryan, Steve Bryan, Phil
Morgan, and Rachel Morgan (Kouts, IN); Samantha Fletcher (Heathmont, Aust.);
Ronnie and Kristen Hefner, and Bethany Young (North Houston, TX); Miah Hefner,
Andrea Banta, David Ishman (Austin Leander, TX); and Peter Trotte (Dallas, TX). We
thank Bre.: M. Hefner, R. Hefner, P. Trotter and B. Wilhoit for their words of comfort
and exhortation.

In January Bro. Jim Cowie (Brisbane, Aust.) led our weekday Bible class with a talk
entitled, “Watchman — What of the night? Britain, Europe and Russia” tying many
current world events to Bible prophecy, and heralding the return of our absent Lord.
We thank our brother for his very encouraging class. We’re pleased to share the blessing
of the birth of Nathan to our Sis. Janet Sunday and her husband, Edwin, in February.
We’re thankful for our new Sunday school scholar!

It’s with great sadness we report that our Bro. Aaron Clubb fell asleep in Christ, March
30, 2014, after a fourteen month battle with cancer and various complications. Our
brother’s pain and suffering has ended, and now he awaits the call of our Lord. We
are so thankful for the overwhelming love and generosity of our brothers and sisters
during this time of trial. We are certainly blessed to be a part of the body of Christ!
May our Saviour return soon!

Over the weekend of April 18-20, 2014, we held our annual spring gathering. Our
speaker this year was Bro. Frank Abel (Hamilton Book Road, ON), and his theme
was, “The Ecclesia-A Place of Refuge”. We were also very pleased that Sis. Dorothy was
also able to come. We thank our brother for his exhortation to appreciate the value
of the ecclesia and the importance of contributing to its edification. We also thank
the support and valued contributions of all those who enjoyed this weekend around
God’s word with us this year.

John A. Clubb

CHRISTADELPHIAN INDIAN CHILDREN’S HOME (CICH)

Please note that donations in US dollars can now be sent to CBMA and earmarked for
CICH, c/o Jeff Gelineau, 567 Astorian Dr., Simi Valley, CA 93065-5941.
An ancient Chinese proverb says, “If you won’t want anyone to know, don’t do it.”

Most of us have done something that we do not want others to know about. Little children may sneak that cookie before dinner, older children may accidentally break something while rough housing and hide the evidence, and most adults have done certain things they hope do not become public knowledge. After a misdeed, peace of mind is disrupted. The thief and the murderer live in fear of being found out. We who may be guilty of lesser faults still worry about discovery. All of us can lose sleep from regretting our actions and a guilty conscience. Octavia E. Butler once said, “I have a huge and savage conscience that won’t let me get away with things.”

When we are tempted to do something we know is wrong, we should follow the Chinese proverb: — don’t do it. Then there is no worry about others finding out. The apostle Paul tells Felix, “So I always take pains to have a clear conscience toward both God and man.” Paul tried very hard not to do evil as he went about his daily living. We should do the same.

Although Paul earnestly tried to serve his God faithfully, he was afflicted with the same nature with which we all struggle. He despairingly admits, “For the good that I would do: but the evil which I would not, that I do.” We share his problem, as Paul reminds us, “for all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.” When we do something bad, we need to remember that our secret, while it may be hid from our friends, is not hid from the One who not only knows what we did but knows what we are thinking. David tells us “O Lord, You have searched me and known me. You know my sitting down and my rising up; You understand my thought afar off. You comprehend my path and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word on my tongue, But behold, O Lord, You know it altogether. You have hedged me behind and before, And laid Your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; It is high, I cannot attain it.”

David felt overwhelmed by God’s omniscience and we should feel the same. Ishmael Vargas once said, “You can fool some of the people some of the time and all of the people some of the time. POSSIBLY you can fool all of the people all of the time, but you can’t fool God, ‘For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil.’ No, you can’t fool Him my friend, not even once. He will bring every deed into judgment, EVERYTHING!”

How thankful we are for the forgiveness offered us by our heavenly Father. Although God knows about every one of our sins, He is a merciful God who has provided a way for forgiveness of sins through the sacrifice of His Son our Savior. Our Heavenly Father is willing to cast all our sins behind His back and remember
them no more, as Isaiah tells us, “Thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption: for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back.” What a wonderful blessing to realize that we can go to bed each night completely forgiven because, as John tells us, “If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

We are reminded by Paul that “We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.” Thankfully those sins that the Lord has cast behind His back will not be brought up when we stand before His son in judgment. Our Heavenly Father is loving and forgiving to those who seek to serve Him faithfully. We need to heed the wise advice not to do anything that would displease Him, and when we fail, we need to confess our sins to Him and be thankful that we will not be judged for the sins that He has forgiven.

We believe that the return of our Lord is near. As we read in Hebrews, “Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.” We take comfort knowing that “For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”

Robert J. Lloyd

Reseda Preaching Experience

As we indicated in the May issue, The Simi Hills Preaching funds offer to help fund preaching efforts (ksommerville@unitedagencies.com). This account is extracted from that of The Tidings August, 2011 issue

Our ecclesia has been blessed with many baptisms from the seminars over the past many years. This has come from teaching that began with materials that were fuzzy, slanted on the page and were a copy of a copy of a copy and no one knew where the original was. This has progressed over the years, but with all this the consistent piece is brethren who understood their bible, encourage questions from the students, are enthusiastic about the message, and of the great Hope they have.

Our seminars start with an advertising effort sent multiple times (usually four) prior to the seminar. **Beginning Seminar:** This starts with two instructors who are dressed to teach. At the end of the 12 weeks we roll directly into the next section. **Intermediate Seminar:** Using the foundation of Genesis already laid, we discuss the promises to David, the Devil, Satan, Baptism, Resurrection, One God, The Son, The Holy Spirit and explain all the first principal doctrines of God’s Truth. The approach avoids “the bible does not teach that….” but rather focuses on allowing the bible to speak for itself as the authority doing the instructing. **Advanced Seminar:** Having the first principals now taught, this portion takes them through the baptismal questions. Our seminar has developed by God’s blessing with much prayer, just ‘doing it,’ lessons learned, trial and error, sharing our experiences with each other and an enthusiasm to “be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the Hope that is in you.”
**Coming Events (Lord Willing)**

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

**JUNE, 2014**

12-18 Simi Valley, CA Bible Reading Marathon Bring a friend to our Bible Reading Marathon, where guests will read the entire ESV Bible beginning at 10:00 AM Friday, June 12 night and day until finished. Follow along at BibleReadingMarathon.com. Want to join us? Email cindy.and.doug@juno.com.

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

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

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

28-July 6 Mid-Atlantic Christadelphian Bible School at Shippensburg University, Shippensburg, PA. Theme: “O Lord God of Israel, there is no God like thee” (2Chron 6:14). The teachers will be Bro. Jim Cowie (Moreton Bay, Queensland, Australia): “Contending Earnestly for the Faith” (adults) and “Cameos of the Kingdom” (teens); Bro. Jay Mayock, Jr. (Hamilton, Book Road, ON): “All in All (A Study of Psalm 8)” (both); and Bro. Stephen Palmer (Mumbles, Swansea, UK): “Simon Peter: Learning Lessons in Discipleship” (adults) and “Digging for Treasure in the Epistle of Peter” (teens). Contact by e-mail Robin Colby macbs@live.com or check our website: www.midatlanticbibleschool.com.

**JULY, 2014**

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


19-27 Midwest Bible School will be held at Trine University, Angola, IN. Speakers and their topics are: Bro. Jim Cowie (Moreton Bay, Brisbane, Australia): “Nazarites Unto God”, Bro. Matt Norton (Lismore, Australia): “Impressions of Christ” and Bro. Stan Isbell (Houston North, TX): “Discovering Disguises Through the Bible”. For registration information,
contact Bro. Mike Livermore, 44943 Yorkshire Dr., Novi, MI, 48375; 248-462-5740, e-mail: mike.live@gmail.com or visit www.midwestbibleschool.com.

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

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

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


AUGUST, 2014

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


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

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

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

SEPTEMBER, 2014

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

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

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

OCTOBER, 2014

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

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

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

NOVEMBER, 2014

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

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.
Editorial — The Ways of Destroying the Ecclesia are Many and Various

Exhortation — The Tabernacle of the Congregation, Wesley Butler

Bible Study:
- The Way of Cain, (10) Methuselah versus Jabal, Jubal, Tubal-Cain and Naamah, Matthew Harrison
- Life of Timothy, (4) Leaving Lystra, Ryan Mutter

Youth Speaks — Jonathan the Faithful Prince:
- (14) Yahweh Wrought Salvation, Jason Hensley

The Joy of Sunday Schooling — Have you tried this? (6), Jim Harper

History — Forgotten Incidents — Megiddo Church,
- Peter Hemingray

Letters — The Disfellowship of Job

Reflections — Knowing Jesus, Katie Dawes

Bible Mission News — Jamaica — Stewardship Workshop at Round Hill Ecclesia; Full of Farewells — April 2013;
- Convivencia in Ecuador — March 1-4, 2014

News & Notices

Minute Meditation — Take courage, Robert J. Lloyd

Coming Events
Did Lamech Kill Cain?

An article in the latest Biblical Archeology Review (May/June 2014) addresses this question. It was pointed out that ancient interpreters noticed that the Hebrew word for man, ish, only occurs twice in Genesis 4, once in 4:3 announcing the birth of Cain, and once in 4:23-24, where we read “And Lamech said to his wives, Ada and Sella, Hear my voice, ye wives of Lamech, consider my words, because I have slain a man to my sorrow and a youth to my grief. Because vengeance has been exacted seven times on Cain’s behalf, on Lamech’s it shall be seventy times seven” (LXX). It is therefore possible, from the Septuagint, to infer Cain was the recipient of the vengeance.

This is illustrated by the frieze above from the Cathedral of Saint-Lazare, which shows blind Lamech hunting with his son Tubal-cain, who is pointing out a noisy target in the bushes. They accidentally kill Cain, mistaking him for a wild animal.
Editorial

The Ways of Destroying the Ecclesia are Many and Various

“This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come… But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived” (2Tim 3:1,13).

Introduction

There are indeed many ways of destroying the ecclesia, and unfortunately, we can truly see the prophecy of Paul coming to pass in these last days. Independent of the pressures from the world around us, all too often the problems we encounter within our ecclesias are inflicted from within. Although not a new phenomenon, the situation does appear to have gotten worse over the last few decades, even independent of the difficulties being occasioned by the situation in Ontario. It is clear that many ecclesias are under considerable stress. Some are relatively peaceful, growing in membership, concerned collectively with their attempt to walk in the steps of our Master. They worship in harmony, study collectively, spread the true gospel and reflect the Glory of God in their lives in some small way. Some ecclesias differ considerably from this ideal, in many ways and due to many causes.

Small children

Truly, the ways of harming our ecclesias are many and various. And there does not appear to be a magic bullet, or any readily available cure, that will prevent this happening. And the ways this happen seem to be rooted in out all too human natures.

We have all seen all too often. Take two young sibling children: one starts playing with a toy. The other almost inevitably decides he wants the same toy. There is rarely any prior discussion about the subject. One child just tries to snatch the toy away from his friend. The harder he tries to remove it, the more strongly and fiercely his sibling grips the desired object. Soon a veritable tug-of-war develops, the toy acting as the rope, and is likely to be destroyed or rendered useless by the undue pressure exerted on it.

If the toy breaks, it is immediately discarded, and the incident is over. Both children move on to something else. It is as if, during the struggle, their interest soon transferred from the toy to the objective of gaining the victory over their opponent. They started the day as friends. The relationship changed during the struggle to one where they were bitter enemies. Children might soon forget their quarrels: but unfortunately adults are not so ready to forgive, or forget.

The adult stage

Transfer this scene to the adult stage; to the things of the Truth and our worldwide Brotherhood. At different times — and sadly it is still true today — it is as if ecclesias are torn apart by opposing forces. Strong pressures exerted at the
extremes sometimes threaten the stability of all, as if the combatants are heedless of the collateral damage. No one seems to take stock of the situation, and total destruction is threatened. If this seems to be overstating the risks, perhaps we should note the Apostle’s warning in the days of the early ecclesias: “If ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another” (Gal 5:15).

Extreme positions can be adopted by just a few, leaving the rest of the ecclesia battered and bruised, like the broken toy destroyed in the conflict. This can occur whether the subject under discussion is important or trivial — either can result in serious damage. So we see many types of problems arise:

- Factionalism: deciding that one’s view of an item is the only possible view
- Heresy, whether real or imagined (and it is more often imagined that real)
- Having one’s focus on matters other than following in the footsteps of our Master
- Superficial conversion: either due to inadequate instruction, or the pressure of relationships that might not endure
- The failures of human nature: gossiping, lack of prayer, bitterness for minor reasons, sustained Biblical illiteracy, self-promotion, materialism.

The list can go on, without referring to any of the specific problems that commonly occur in our ecclesias. So what can we recommend as possible solutions? I believe there are some possibilities, although I would be the first to admit many situations resist any easy solution. I have come across many difficult situations in a journey which includes half a century of various countries, ecclesias, and situations. And some observations are the result of the interest I have had for several decades, which is the history of the origins and development of our Christadelphian community.

**Possible solutions**

We all ought to look first into our own hearts, then look at the life of our own ecclesia and of the Brotherhood, since individual influences can destroy the spiritual life of an ecclesia, and ecclesial problems sometimes wreak world-wide havoc in an inter-linked community like ours. Do we nurse private grudges or help to drive wedges between brother and brother? Have we fully appreciated the fact that the very existence of a group within an ecclesia creates a gulf between brethren? Do our own activities help to build up the corporate life of the ecclesia, or destroy it? And do we assess those who refuse to be a party to our divisive activity as therefore belonging to another faction?

Sometimes the attempt is made to justify the unilateral activity of a brother, or a group, or an ecclesia, on the grounds that it is a defense of the faith, and others are then considered responsible for creating the division by their resistance to a particular attitude or approach. One of the dangers of party spirit is that it seeks to justify itself when the Scriptures have nothing but condemnation for it. When we begin to speak or think in terms of “we” and “they” instead of “we be men that are brethren” our case is desperate indeed. Nothing that is unrighteous or uncharitable in itself is ever truly done for the glory of God, however much we may persuade ourselves that it is so.
“If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. Let us have no self-conceit, no provoking of one another, no envy of one another. Brethren, if one is overtaken in a fault, you who are spiritual should restore him, in a spirit of gentleness. Look to yourself, lest you too be tempted” (Gal 5:25–6: 1, RSV).

In addition, we often disregard the wise counsel of Bro. Robert Roberts. His ecclesial guide is the result of decades of helping the nascent community in its growing struggles, as he was involved in almost all the disputes that inevitably arose as individuals and ecclesias struggled in their pursuit of the Truth. To quote from the Ecclesial Guide, clause 39:

“If the matters of difference inclining to this course do not affect the question of the truth or the commandments, it is the duty of the lesser to submit to the greater number. There is no other practicable rule of action. In such a case the minority will bear their disappointment and conform to the decision of the majority. It is their duty to do so by every law of association — human and divine. They will be enabled to do it the more easily if they remember that it is a matter of apostolic command to submit one to another; to give place to disadvantage; to overcome evil with good; to bless, and curse not. Men of the apostolic stamp will not retort that this is equally binding on the others. Men of the apostolic stamp will be more bent on subjecting themselves to the apostolic law than imposing it on others.”

How many times have we seen the minority refusing to accept the will of the majority? They raise spurious objections, or threaten to leave the ecclesia and join another (and even worse, do so!) I admit it is often difficult to accept “majority rule”. As Churchill said “Democracy is the worst form of government, except for all those other forms that have been tried from time to time.” And this was just after he had been voted out of power in 1947. Until our Lord comes to bring with him a perfect government, we have to abide by the will of the majority in most cases.

**Forbearance**

We have the example of Paul, who found it necessary to beg Sisters Euodias and Syntyche to stop quarrelling. (Phil 4:2). Very often differences such as these are not solved, because no one is willing to give way, and disputants are prepared to jeopardize the ecclesia rather than yield. On such occasions principle was often invoked when no principle other than that of the self-assertiveness of human nature is involved. We need to remember the words of Paul: “I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you, that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph 4:3).

Peter Hemingray

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Exhortation

The Tabernacle of the Congregation

Instructions

The instructions for making a sanctuary for God amongst the people was first given back in Exod 25-28, and after a time of preparation, it was time for the building to begin. Israel was camped at Mount Horeb and had received the Law through Moses. The instructions to make the Tabernacle was part of the Law. God wanted to dwell amongst His people, but that could only be done under specific requirements, for people could not come near a perfect and Holy God in sin and presumption. The design of the Tabernacle and its ordinances were to teach the Israelites to aim high in their spiritual commitment in their collective worship. The provisions for personal sacrifices, not only sacrifices by the priests on behalf of the nation, were to teach the Israelites the values and attitudes they needed to have as individual men, women and families. The reason for the Tabernacle and its ordinances is summarized in Exodus:

“Then I will dwell among the Israelites and be their God. They will know that I am the LORD their God, who brought them out of Egypt so that I might dwell among them. I am the LORD their God” (Exod 29:45-46).

God wanted to dwell with His people, but the only way that could succeed is if there was agreement between them. The implied challenge that makes, to the people whom God wants to dwell, is picked up by David.

“LORD, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart. He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour. In whose eyes a vile person is contemned; but he honoureth them that fear the LORD. He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not. He that putteth not out his money to usury, nor taketh reward against the innocent. He that doeth these things shall never be moved” (Psa 15)

This Psalm starts by asking who is able to dwell with God, and the answer is the one with the highest practice of righteousness and morality in deed, word and thought. The bar for who can abide with God is set very high.

While divine presence is not represented by any physical place at our time in history, God is said to dwell the hearts of those who are faithful. So we must ask ourselves how well is that cohabitation in our lives and hearts? Are our lives in agreement with these divine standards, or do we find ourselves falling short? If we are honest with ourselves, we find ourselves falling short, as would any Israelite who contemplated the implications of the instructions given as to how to make a sanctuary for God.
There are a number of places in the New Testament that expound this theme, highlighting the similarities between our relationship with God and that of the Israelites. Paul, in one of these passages, adds some practical instructions to people about things they must make corrections to in their lives for God to dwell them.

“And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the LORD, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the LORD Almighty” (2Cor 6:15-18).

John in his letters links the need for Christian love and the indwelling of the spirit of God, to the spirit of Christ in us. We are reminded that perfect love casts out fear. Indeed, the Israelites had great reason to fear their God, and many died in the decades in the wilderness when they failed to uphold His laws. They tried to live next to God but were not in agreement about how they should live, but instead focussed on their own needs and pleasure, and did not trust in God. There is also in this a warning to us, but the Apostle John is able to provide an answer to the question about who can dwell with God: the answer is the individual who loves God, and therefore loves His mercy and justice while reflecting this back to others.

“Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. We love him, because he first loved us” (1John 4:15-19).

The application to ourselves
The principle for us to understand when reading the Law and its ordinances, is to understand that these are types and shadows of greater things to come. Thereby we can understand how these things from such a long time ago have relevance for us. They are not the end in themselves, but are laid out in accordance with divine wisdom. This is true for whenever God has sought to dwell in the hearts and minds of the people He has made. Our basis to understand the Law of Moses this way is expounded in the letter to the Hebrews. Even though the writer says very little about the Tabernacle itself, he had much to say about the priesthood, the succession of the priests after Aaron, and the greater priesthood to come in Christ. At the beginning of Heb 9 he mentions some of the furniture of the Tabernacle itself, but does not take the time to expound their meaning. He goes on to remind the reader that the tabernacle was made by human hands as a place to offer animal sacrifices to God. However, the final plan of God does not involve human craft, or the offering of animals, but instead the life and obedience of one who was perfect.
“But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building: Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us” (Heb 9:11-12).

These things were the copies or representations of greater things to come, as expounded in Heb 9:24. However, we can learn much from the way God set out to have the Israelites in the wilderness make a sanctuary. We will study some of the themes from these chapters in Exodus, with the mind that these are all lessons for us to teach about our relationship with God and how these things are types and shadows for us to learn about Christ.

The plundering of the Egyptians

The first instruction regarding the making of a Tabernacle for God’s dwelling amongst the people was a collection of materials and wealth from the people. At the time of this commandment in Exod 25, the Israelites had been freed from slavery and out of Egypt for only three months. It is explained twice, earlier in the narrative of the Exodus, that the Israelites were to ask of their Egyptian neighbours to “borrow” clothes and other items of wealth for their use, and the Egyptians would be quite willing to give them whatever they asked. This was the unorthodox means by which God allowed the Israelites to plunder the Egyptians, to receive wages for two centuries of hard labour. Clearly the providential hand of God was in this, otherwise this plan would not work. Why would any Egyptian willingly give their wealth to households of slaves that lived among them? Perhaps we could imagine the humbler Egyptian peasants being sympathetic to the oppression of their Israelite neighbours and being willing to help them. However, it is hard to imagine that many of the wealthy and powerful Egyptians, who had the kind of fine luxury items that the Israelites acquired in great abundance, being eager to give to a group of agitating slaves. Despite this, that is how God planned the plundering of the Egyptians. A spirit was put on the Egyptians that made them willing to give whatever was asked of them, and the end result is that the Israelites left Egypt with a vast amount of fine fabrics, also metals such as gold, silver and bronze, jewels and wood, all items that recently freed slaves would not normally possess. The principle behind this fact that the raw materials for the Tabernacle of the Congregation came from Egypt, is that the source of the people for God’s household are from out of the world. Just as the Israelites were drawn out of Egypt, we are drawn out of the races of humanity living in various nations. The problem that created for Israel, is that since the Israelites developed into a nation while in Egypt, the people learned much of the thinking of Egypt. Even though they could physically be removed by God’s power and separated from the rest of the peoples of the world, it was much harder to remove and unlearn the thinking of Egypt from them. We are no different from them, and we are deceiving ourselves if we think we somehow are not influenced by the thinking of the people of the place and times in which we live.
Significance of the building materials

Therefore, the cloth, the metals, the wood, the incense, and all the other precious items that the Israelites had at Sinai represent peoples drawn out of the nations, and we could think of ourselves as simply one of these items. The gold and silver could be to make furniture for the Tabernacle to worship God, representing faith, or it could be fashioned into idols. The cloth could be for curtains around the Holy and Most Holy Place, to mark a separation between the Holy and the common, or instead these fine things could be used to adorn the body or house of an Egyptian noble, perhaps the very ones who were enslaving God’s people. The incense could be prepared in a way to be a sweet smelling aroma from the altar of incense before the veil, symbolizing the prayers of the faithful, or it could be used on the mummy of some Egyptian or in a temple of any number of false deities along the Nile. The oil could be used to provide light from the seven part lamp stand, symbolizing divine light, or this oil could be used for simple daily life. There was nothing inherently holy in these materials, and there is nothing inherent in us as disciples that makes us valuable in God’s sight. We are just raw materials taken out of the world, that could be fashioned and used by God’s wisdom into things that please God, or we could be fashioned and used by the world conforming to the things of the world.

After Israel would come into the land and offerings of animals, grain, oil and other goods would need to be provided for the continuous operation of the sanctuary, and this would come from the agricultural production of the land that God had given to His people. Thus the things needed to maintain God’s house were given by God to people, and they were asked to simply give back some of what they had been first given. This is the same principle that we have already read out of 1 John, that God loved us and gave to us, therefore He wants us to give back the same way. Moses was instructed to ask the people for willing contributions from their plunder to make a sanctuary. Most of these items were essentially useless in the desert, most would have been heavy or awkward to carry. Their only value to the Israelites would have been for what they could be used for once they settled in a new land. More than that, any Israelite who thought about it would have realized that the only reason they had this wealth is because God set it up for them to get it. If not for divine power, they would still be slaves toiling away or dead at the hands of the Pharaoh and his people. The Israelites were being taught that everything they had was given to them, and it only made sense to give it back to God when asked for it. This is the same for us as well. It is not just material wealth, but our entire lives are likewise given to us, and nothing we have or can do is really from us. When we are asked to give something back and serve in some way, we should feel a moral obligation to give. Clearly many of the Israelites felt this need to give, and there was an abundance provided in likely heaps of expensive materials for the task for building a sanctuary for God, with all its associated items of worship. However, it is emphasized at the beginning of Exod 25 that the call to contribute was for anyone with a willing heart. Likewise, our worship is a willing giving of ourselves, it is not something that should be forced by one upon another.
“Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring me an offering: of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart ye shall take my offering. And this is the offering which ye shall take of them; gold, and silver, and brass, And blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats’ hair, And rams’ skins dyed red, and badgers’ skins, and shittim wood, Oil for the light, spices for anointing oil, and for sweet incense, Onyx stones, and stones to be set in the ephod, and in the breastplate. And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them” (Exod 25:2-8).

The design

The design for the Tabernacle and its ordinances was given by God to Moses, and given to chosen people to carry it out and make the items. It was not a design created by the Israelites, for a short time later when the Israelites had the opportunity to make things by their own design for their religious and social needs, they made a Golden Calf and danced around it, delighting in their own cleverness and passions. This was in accordance with the thinking and behaviours they knew from Egypt. This was a religion for the masses of humanity that indulged them and distracted them, not taught them to look back to the promises to their ancestors and look forward in faith, but to think of themselves here and now. Our society, with its mass media and diverse kinds of distractions and indulgences is doing the same thing as this Golden Calf did for the Israelites. While Moses was on the mountain receiving the instructions as to how to make a sanctuary for God to dwell in, his people had all but given up on his message of hope for the future and wanted something to gratify their needs and hopes in the short term. The message for us is likewise to not get distracted. Both the Israelites and ourselves have been delivered from slavery, the Israelites from bondage and labour to Pharaoh, and we have been delivered from sin. However we can very easily turn back in our hearts, even while thinking that we are acting religiously and rightly, just as the Israelites who made a Golden Calf for their religious needs, claimed that this was the god who brought them out of Egypt. We struggle with the sin in our minds and bodies, just as the Israelites who came out Egypt did, and we are prone to all the same mistakes they made in their lives and their collective worship, even though we may not immediately recognize the false thinking.

The manner in which the work was done, was by men and woman who were given the skills to do the work. Moses could not possibly have written out everything needed to make the tabernacle and its associated items. If this had been a project done by people under normal circumstances, it would have required teams of highly trained specialists in various crafts, including working with fabrics, wood, metal, jewellery, and perfumes, with an infrastructure of supervisors, with levels of management and design staff. All these people would have different skills to contribute to the project, and they all would have put their own ideas along with their efforts into the whole. God’s project management for the making of the Tabernacle was based on two men, who seem to have led the task over a period of about a year. Perhaps they had some of these skills from their lives in Egypt, but most of what they needed to do this was given to them by God. These two were called specifically by name, as they were vessels prepared for this work, and their
names and their assignments are given to them.

“And Moses said unto the children of Israel, See, the LORD hath called by
name Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah; And he
hath filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, and in
knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship; And to devise curious works,
to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, And in the cutting of stones, to set
them, and in carving of wood, to make any manner of cunning work. And
he hath put in his heart that he may teach, both he, and Aholiab, the son of
Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan. Them hath he filled with wisdom of heart,
to work all manner of work, of the engraver, and of the cunning workman,
and of the embroiderer, in blue, and in purple, in scarlet, and in fine linen,
and of the weaver, even of them that do any work, and of those that devise
cunning work” (Exod 35:30-35).

They were given by the God ability to teach, so there were others involved as
well, whom we know less about. Verse 25 mentions women who were skilled in
weaving preparing the yarn from the raw materials. Verses 4 and 8 of chapter 36
mention other artisans contributing. By the metaphor from the New Testament,
the building of the sanctuary for God is the building of the ecclesia. There was a
place for all to contribute to this effort, according to the abilities given to each.
Bezalel and Ahoiliab serve in a role analogous to that of the Apostles who were
specially called and prepared, and who in the New Testament times had the ability
to teach and pass on skills to others, by the means of laying on of hands and the
transferring of the Holy Spirit. The structure of the building of the tabernacle, and
the manner in which work was divided up, is similar to how different Holy Spirit
gifts were given to individuals to contribute to the ecclesia, all under the guidance
and leadership of the Apostles. The gifts in Exodus were weaving, engraving, metal
work and other trades, while the gifts in the time of the Apostles were speaking
in tongues, prophesying and teaching, but the structure is similar, because God
was behind both projects.

Levites were appointed with the job of assembling and moving the elements of
the Tabernacle. It needed to be assembled in the correct way, it had to be put
together with labour and skill of faithful people so it could perform the function
it was intended. Otherwise it would be just a collection of curtains, furniture and
gold covered wood poles, not a dwelling place and focus of true worship. Its poles
had to be set up, holding up curtains up and it all tied together, teaching a lesson
many parts with one purpose and unity. Priests were appointed to serve in it, and
all had a role to play to contribute to a common goal.

We have seen that the Tabernacle was made of materials taken from Egypt, the
world, willingly offered by a thankful people who had been delivered from slavery,
and who were eager to give back to God who orchestrated it so they would have
those materials when they were needed. The design of the God's Sanctuary came
from God through Moses: it was not something devised by man to serve human
needs and wants, but was a type and shadow of God's purpose to come in the
future. The making of all the pieces was implemented by craftsmen specially ap-
pointed and inspired with the necessary skills, who led others who also were given the skills, by either providence or inspiration. These are warnings about getting distracted and wanting to indulge our own needs and wants instead, or of trusting in our own cleverness and devising items to add to God’s worship to suit our own opinions. The making of a place for God to dwell in is one of the Bible’s great metaphors. These are principles that are introduced in the writings of Moses with the Tabernacle, and are developed through subsequent Biblical events in building and maintaining the Temple by faithful kings and skilled craftsmen. The failings of the flesh and the opposition of sin is typified by wicked kings plundering the temple for its wealth, and the setting up of idols in and around it, culminating with its destruction by Gentiles. As Israel’s history continues, we read of God’s working by providence to allow the faithful to return and the temple being modestly rebuilt by hopeful people despite the poverty and trials of their times, teaching that there is a hope for the future for God’s remnant. The Tabernacle and Temple, God’s purpose of making a dwelling place, is a seed bed of principles and types for us to learn from. All of this provides an example of how we are to conduct and contribute to our worship, for though we do not have a physical sanctuary to focus our attention to worship God, we believe in the return of Christ to the earth. All these principles, types and shadows are fulfilled in the person and purpose of Christ, together with need to work together and contribute to our common worship, to be united just as are curtains being drawn tight together by ropes.

As we come to the emblems before us, the bread and wine, the symbols of Christ’s body and life given to us, we are commanded to contemplate our own lives in comparison to his.

While speaking it the bluntest possible language about the enmity between the mind of sin and the mind of God, Paul reminds the believers that if the mind of Christ, and the mind of God who raised Christ could come to dwell in us, then we are promised to share also in that Resurrection. So the lesson of the Tabernacle and the dwelling of God with us speaks directly to the reason we have assembled this morning, to remember the death and resurrection of Christ, and our promise to share in it, and to become the sons of God. Finally, Paul teaches some of the principles of God’s dwelling place in believers, the ultimate place in which God intends to dwell.

“So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God” (Rom 8:8-14)

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The Way of Cain — (10) Methuselah versus Jabal, Jubal, Tubal-Cain and Naamah

“When Enoch had lived 65 years, he became the father of Methuselah. When Methuselah had lived 187 years, he became the father of Lamech. And after he became the father of Lamech, Methuselah lived 782 years and had other sons and daughters. Altogether, Methuselah lived 969 years, and then he died” (Gen 5:21, 25-27).

Methuselah

Methuselah, the son of Enoch, born in the 8th generation, is credited with being the longest living man ever — 969 years. His name is composed of two parts, mat or meth meaning “man,” and shelah, which refers to a non-specific missile weapon, such as a dart, javelin, or spear. Thus, his name has often been translated as “the man of the spear.” And yet, it is difficult to imagine that “man of the spear” is the correct meaning of Methuselah’s name, given that Seth’s genealogy chronicles men of faith, not violence. Moreover, what makes Methuselah unique is his longevity, and as such one ought to expect that his name in some way reflects that extraordinary fact. Therefore, a better explanation for the meaning of his name is needed.

The Hebrew word, mat, which refers to man, is derived from the root word, mathay, which may mean “When?” or “How long?” or “After how long?” Regardless of which interrogative phrase is used, the question it asks is surely related to Methuselah’s longevity, since his great age would have been the subject of much curiosity in the antediluvian age. It may have given rise to speculation on when he would die, if ever. With this in mind, his name could be translated as: “How long will the man (mat) live?” or “When will the man (mat) die?” As noted, the latter portion of Methuselah’s name, shelah, refers to a non-specific missile weapon. Missile weapons are projectiles and as such they must be sent forth from the user’s hands. Thus shelah could be translated as the action or verb associated with the weapon or object, not the object itself. As such, shelah would translate as: “sent forth, let go, released.” When the two parts of Methuselah’s name are combined, the full meaning of his name is revealed: mat/meth, “How long until he dies?” and shelah, “Until it is sent forth” or “Until it is released.” It is a name that is unique in that it poses a question and answers it.

The last remaining riddle concerning Methuselah’s name is identifying what the “it” in his name refers to: “Until it is sent forth” or “Until it is released.” Depending upon which version of the Bible is used, Masoretic, Septuagint (Alexandrinus), or Samaritan, Methuselah died before the Flood. The Masoretic and Samaritan calculate that he died in the exact year of the Flood, while the Septuagint (Alexandrinus) indicates that he died six years before the Flood. Thus, the “it” in “until it is sent forth” or “until it is released” signifies the Flood.
Therefore, Methuselah's name should be translated as follows: “How long until Methuselah dies? Until the Flood is sent forth,” or “God will not send forth the waters of the Flood until Methuselah is dead.”

But why would God spare Methuselah from the Flood? One possibility is that God did not wish to condemn a righteous man with the wicked:

“Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. So the Lord said, ‘I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth’” (Gen 6:5-7).

That Methuselah was a righteous man is evident from the fact that he was included in Seth’s genealogy, and that his name refers to God sparing him from a death with the wicked. Recall also that Enoch, a prophet of God, was Methuselah’s father. Doubtless Methuselah grew up listening to his father preach against wickedness and prophesying about the coming Messiah (Jude 14-15), which surely inspired his own faith. These factors combine to give a picture of a faithful man who, despite the omission, also “walked with God” (Gen 5:22).

Why then wasn’t he included on the ark? The simple answer is that he was far too old. Due to his age, he would not have lived for long after the Flood, nor would he have survived the traumatic experience of being on the ark for such a long time, the effects of the great storm, or the difficult process of starting over in the post-Flood age.

In considering Methuselah, we might imagine that his great age was a blessing. In his lifetime, however, he witnessed several tragic events: Lamech’s attempt to murder his father; his father’s subsequent disappearance; the decline of the ecclesia and the rise of corruption and violence, which spread across the ancient earth (Gen 6:1-11). And yet Methuselah also lived to see the joyful birth of Noah and the construction of the ark, 2 a vessel that represented a new beginning and a new hope.

The mothers of human “progress”

“Lamech married two women, one named Adah and the other Zillah” (Gen 4:19).

In relation to Lamech’s polygamy, Genesis could have simply said that he had more than one wife. Given that so few women are referred to at all in the early chapters of Genesis — including wives — we might wonder why the author bothered to mention the names of Lamech’s wives at all.

As discussed, the Bible is a very economical text. It does not include superfluous information. Far from being superfluous, the inclusion of the wives’ names, Adah and Zillah, illustrates how polygamy works and why God considers it a sin.

Adah’s name means “ornament” or “jewel.” As her name attests, she was precious in Lamech’s eyes. In contrast, Zillah’s name, “shadow,” emphasizes the subordinate role she played in relation to Adah; Zillah was like a shadow in relation to the bedazzling light cast by Adah, the jewel.
Thus Adah and Zillah’s names illustrate the nature of polyamory: however well-intentioned, participants in a polygamous relationship do not share equality; someone will always be favored. Since inequality does not create oneness, it violates the unity God intended for marriage: “A man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh” (Gen 2:24).

Moreover, polygamy creates division, strife, and jealousy, which is demonstrated in the marital lives of Abraham and Jacob. Abraham’s wife Sarah was jealous of Hagar and treated her unkindly until Hagar fled (Gen 16). Likewise Leah was not Jacob’s first choice — Rachel was — and as such, she was consistently feeling unloved by her husband (Gen 9:30-35). Therefore, the inclusion of Adah and Zillah’s names in Genesis is meant to show how polygamy creates inequality, which leads to strife, division, and jealousy — qualities which are the antithesis of what God desires in us. It is also to reinforce why God decided that only one man and one woman represented a good and equal partnership.

**Jabal: father of nomadic peoples and the great migration**

“Adah gave birth to Jabal; he was the father of those who live in tents and raise livestock” (Gen 4:20).

The phrase “live in tents” refers to a nomadic people. As the “father of those who live in tents,” Jabal is associated with its popularization. Moreover his name means “to move,” which emphasizes his migratory activity. Thus the meaning of his name and the reference in Gen 4:20 to “living in tents,” suggests that Jabal was responsible for initiating the first widespread “move” or migration upon the earth.

Jabal’s migration was a significant event in antediluvian history. Prior to the 8th generation, humans more or less dwelt in a small geographical space relative to the rest of the earth: the well-watered lands of Eden and within proximity of the eastern cities of Nod — Enoch and Irad. However in the 8th generation, humans began to migrate. The cause of this mass migration was likely due to a population explosion, which is confirmed by several passages in Gen 6:4 “men began to increase on the face of the earth,” and, “for the earth is filled.” Accompanying a growth in population, there was also an increase in the number of livestock. This was also a motivating factor in causing the mass migration. As the antediluvian population increased, so too did their animals. Just as Abraham and Lot were forced to separate due to the increase in their respective flocks (Gen 13:2-11), so too did Jabal and his fellow herdsmen. Thus, in addition to a population explosion, there was also increased competition for pasture.

Not only was Jabal the “father of those who live in tents,” but he was also the father of those who “raise livestock.” The Hebrew word for livestock, mikneh, refers to an unspecified herd, such as cattle, sheep, or goats. Our first inclination might be to argue against this notion. Wasn’t Abel the first shepherd (Gen 4:2)? Although Abel was the first shepherd, his untimely death prevented him from instructing others. Thus he cannot be thought of as a “father.” Jabal surely was not the first to raise livestock, but Genesis states that he was the first to widely
promote or teach others the practice of raising livestock, thereby making him the “father” of husbandry.

Jabal's life as a herdsman was intimately related to his “living in tents.” Tents are used by people who lack permanency, because they move about the land. Jabal dwelt in tents because his home was where his herds grazed and slept. Thus Jabal’s activities as a tent dweller and herdsman are intimately connected, since they explain how the earth came to be “filled” (Gen 6:16).

**Jubal: father of music, mnemonics, and myth-making**

“Jubal was the father of all who play the harp and flute” (Gen 4:21).

Jubal was the father of those who play the harp and flute (or ancient versions thereof), although it is unclear whether he invented these musical instruments or whether he merely popularized their use. These two musical instruments are not arbitrary: the flute is a wind instrument, while the harp is a string instrument. The two major classes of instruments are thus represented in Jubal.

The flute is a wind instrument and as such requires breath to make music. It is not surprising then that Jubal’s name means “breath.” The word Jubal is also the root word for “jubilee,” which is associated with celebration and exaltation, both of which require breath to vocalize joy or excitement. His name and the association with the word jubilee suggests that the 8th generation was a celebrated era. But of what? Surely not the state of the ecclesia, since it was well in decline by this point. Rather it is likely that his name, in association with “jubilation,” refers to a celebration of the great civilizing advances made by him, his brothers, and his sister (and possibly others) in the 8th generation.

Speculating on what this age may have looked like: the population explosion suggests that humans were adapting well to their environment. The cities of Enoch and Irad were surely crucibles for knowledge and invention, where arts, culture, and entertainment could be found — a climate in which both Jabal’s musical inventions/discoveries contributed to hero-worship, myth-making, and oral history, and where (as we shall see) Naamah’s skills in cosmetology and/or seduction/pleasure contributed to the beautification/sexualisation of women towards — perhaps — ancient rites of marriage and procreation, and the creation of prostitution. The first mass migration upon the earth brought about new discoveries, and with it increased trade and commerce. Those inroads into the rest of the world could not have been as successful without Tubal-Cain’s tools, which were used to subdue, explore, and extract minerals and other resources from the earth.

Given these presumed developments, Jubal’s name, “jubilee,” is an apt description of a celebrated time in human history, at least from a worldly perspective.

But Jubal wasn’t just a musician; he was also the first bard. Since writing was only established in around 3,000 BC, oral history was the only way for antediluvians to record and share experiences. Oral history requires mnemonic devices to aid in the storytelling process. With its rhyming, meter, and structure, music is one such mnemonic device. Through music, Jubal gave Jabal’s nomadic people a mnemonic tool, useful for sharing and preserving history as they travelled through the earth.
As they migrated further away from the cradle of civilization — Enoch and Irad — their stories, preserved through song, would have been a vital link to their past.

What might the bard’s tales entail? Doubtless their repertoire included songs of Creation, of Adam and Eve and the Garden of Eden, and of Cain and Abel, since these were foundational stories. But due to the decline in faith, we must assume that, gradually, the bard’s version of these events underwent significant transformation — the result of time, memory, and bias — so much so that they no longer represented true accounts. In particular, it isn’t difficult to imagine that bards who were descendants of Cain reinterpreted the events surrounding their ancestor in a more favorable light; perhaps even exonerating him, while casting God as an unfair deity and Abel as a usurper of his brother’s hierarchical status within the family. They did this without fear, since they were “unafraid to slander celestial beings” (Jude 8). As a result, their versions of the truth “corrupted the earth” (Gen 6:11). Moreover, in the process of reinterpreting events, “men of renown” were worshipped as heroes and, in the course of time, deified:

“The Nephilim were on the earth in those days — and also afterward — when the sons of God went to the daughters of men and had children by them.
They were the heroes of old, men of renown” (Gen 6:4).

Men cannot be “renowned” unless they and their deeds are spoken of/sung by others. Likewise, “mighty men” or “heroes” are only “mighty” and “heroic” if they are remembered as such. Thus the reference in Gen 6:4 to “heroes of old, men of renown” illustrates the mind-set of the antediluvian people: they did not worship God and pursue righteousness, but rather they discarded God in favor of worshiping man and his achievements. As time passed, these heroes were mythologized and deified. Genesis refers to them as “giants,” which is not a description of their physicality, but rather a comment concerning the esteem others had for them. To the great majority of people at that time, these men or heroes loomed so large that they were giants on the earth — Titans.

As has been shown, Jubal’s discoveries in music cultivated culture, produced entertainment and merriment, and provided the means by which to record oral history. However it also led to the distortion of truth, to hero-worshipping, myth-making, and the worship of men.

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Notes:
1. All references are from the NIV
2. The construction of the ark was completed within 35 years. This is deduced in the following way: Noah was told to build the ark after his three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japeth, were born (Gen 6:10). Noah was 500 years old when he became a father (Gen 5:32). The Flood did occur until he was 600 years old (Gen 7:6). Thus, the maximum number of years for Noah to build the ark was 100 years. However the command to build the ark was not given until after his sons had already taken wives: “But I will establish my covenant with you, and you will enter the ark — you and your sons and your wife and your sons’ wives with you” (Gen 6:18). According to the list of ages given in Gen 5, men became fathers no earlier than 65 years old, based on Gen 4 and 5. Thus if 65 is used for the earliest age that antediluvian men married and had children, this leaves approximately 35 years or less for the construction of the ark.
3. The order that Lamech’s wives are listed in Gen 4:23 need not dictate the order in which
he married his wives: Adah may have been Lamech's first wife, which explains why she is mentioned before Zillah, but it is also possible that Zillah was Lamech's first wife and she is listed after Adah because she was not his favorite. In the Bible, the favored wife, not the first wife, is routinely listed or mentioned first. For example, Jacob married Leah first, then her sister, Rachel. However, Rachel was his favorite. Thus, in Gen 31, whenever Jacob calls to his wives, he refers to Rachel first, then Leah: “So Jacob sent word to Rachel and Leah to come out to the fields where his flocks were” (Gen 31:4). Genesis mirrors Jacob’s favoritism by also giving precedence to the Rachel over Leah: “Then Rachel and Leah replied, ‘Do we still have any share in the inheritance of our father’s estate?’” (Gen 31:14). Moreover, when Jacob feared Esau’s revenge for having stolen his birthright, he sent out, wave after wave, gifts and servants to meet Esau. Those he valued the most were kept until last. Thus, he sent out Leah and her children before he sent Rachel and her children (Gen 33:2). Even the book of Ruth, which was written centuries later, gives Rachel precedence: “May the Lord make the woman who is coming into your home like Rachel and Leah” (Ruth 4:11).

5. This “filling” of the earth may simply refer to the known portions of the earth at the time when Genesis was written or received, i.e. the known portions of the earth in the days of Moses — if Moses was its author. This “filling” of the earth was initiated by Jabal’s mass migration, which began in the 8th generation.
6. From studying the bardic tradition in the Balkans in the early part of the 19th century, Harvard Professor, Milman Parry, discovered that songs (and poems) sung/recited by guslars (Yugoslavian bards) contained a mnemonic formula: “A group of words regularly employed under the same metrical conditions to express a given essential idea” (Ryan and Pitman 1998:220-221). This formula aided the guslar (bard) in remembering/retelling the story, either through song or poem. This ancient linguistic formula likely had its origins in Jubal’s musical discoveries.
7. Cain’s words, “My punishment is more than I can bear,” likely contributed to the view that God had unfairly treated him.
8. Adam and Eve, Cain, Lamech, Jabal, Jubal, and Tubal-Cain, perhaps even Naamah, were considered “heroes of old, men [and women] of renown.” For example, the significant event in Lamech’s life survived in the form of a poem or a song (Gen 4:18-24), which as has been shown was the way in which ancient bards passed on oral history.
9. I’ve deliberately referred to these “men of renown, heroes of old” as “Titans” to suggest a connection between the Bible and Greek mythology. Is it possible that these unknown men, heroes, may have been remembered, centuries later, in Greek mythology as the Titans, a primeval race of powerful deities that ruled during a legendary golden age — possibly the antediluvian age or, more specifically, the 8th generation? The Greeks believed that the Titans were “overthrown” by a younger race of Olympian gods (newer gods) — a reference to the post-Flood heroes (men of renown) who were deified and who replaced the old gods of the antediluvian age?

Special Invitation

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

39th annual Church of God of the Abrahamic Faith Gathering at Denison University in Granville, Ohio, July 21-27, 2014.
• Bro. Mark Drabenstott: “The Seven Great ‘I Ams’: Our Abundant Life”
• Bro. Doug Davis: “Christ in the Jewish Feasts”
• Bro. John Pople: “Wearing the Name
Contact Bro. Brad Rek (330) 609-6957 or brad.rek@gmail.com.
Visit our website at http://abrahamicfaithgathering.org/
Life of Timothy (4): Leaving Lystra

Introduction
In the previous article in this series, we considered an episode in Timothy’s life that is a reminder of the importance of following our absent leader and role model, the Lord Jesus Christ. While Paul was away from Lystra, Timothy’s hometown, between the First and Second Missionary Journeys, Timothy faithfully followed Paul’s example even though Paul was not physically present with him. After Paul returned to Lystra at the beginning of the Second Missionary Journey, he was pleased with how Timothy had acted, and he invited the young man to travel with him and Silas.

Paul’s response to Timothy when he came back is a small foreshadowing of what will occur with us at the return of Christ.

- If we labor without excuse despite the obstacles that are before us,
- If we look past our natural limitations and place our trust in God,
- If we are aware of the spiritual needs of those around us and work to do our part to address them,
- If we follow in the footsteps of Christ, our absent leader, and put the needs of our brothers and sisters above our own,
- If we do as Timothy did:

We will then be pleasing to the Lord at his return, and we will be given greater opportunity to serve in the Kingdom.

In these last days, as we await the return of the Lord, it is important that we develop the mindset Timothy had when he was in Lystra. Those early years in his life were foundational to his later work.

Perspectives on Timothy’s early role
Timothy accepted Paul’s offer to accompany him on the Second Missionary Journey. The year was approximately 51 AD. Timothy was probably about 20.¹

Paul and Barnabas had previously a young brother travel with them on the First Missionary Journey. His name was John Mark, but he had abandoned Paul and Barnabas. It appears that Timothy was selected to fill the role on the Second Missionary Journey that John Mark had once had on the First Missionary Journey.

Why did Paul want a young person to accompany him on his missionary journeys? There were probably a number of reasons, and it can be instructive to think about them.

Although it is not recorded in the Bible, there was probably a need for routine tasks, like getting supplies, arranging meetings, and delivering messages, to be done faithfully. Those would be ideal jobs for a reliable young brother to perform.

As we consider our own service in the Truth, it is important to remember the need for mundane, sometimes thankless tasks — like printing fliers, washing dishes at the hall, and setting up equipment — to be done well. We need to keep our eye
out for those kinds of jobs, make ourselves available for them, and give them our best effort. They can be so important to a well-functioning ecclesial event.

Also, a young person could have been particularly useful for reaching out to other young people that the missionaries met. Outreach efforts benefit from having people from a wide range of backgrounds involved. Even if we feel that we do not have the ideal aptitudes for preaching efforts, we should still try to involve ourselves in them. We might end up encountering someone who is very similar to us and turn out to be the exact person who is best suited to connect with that particular individual. People sometimes shy away from participation in outreach efforts because of who they are. “I’m short and shy,” they might reason. But who better to engage with a short and shy person than another short and shy person! Everyone’s participation is needed in Gospel proclamation efforts.

Finally, bringing a young person along gave Paul the opportunity to provide tremendously valuable on-the-job training to a future leader of the ecclesia. Paul was probably in his mid-40s during the Second Missionary Journey. He was in one of the most active stages of his work in the Truth. Yet he was already preparing the next generation to continue the work when he would no longer be around. It is important that we follow his example. We should strive to share whatever talents we possess with people who are younger than us so that they can continue the work that we are doing should age, illness, or death stop our labors before the Lord’s return.

Circumcision

Acts 16 records Paul circumcised Timothy before they left Lystra: “Him would Paul have to go forth with him; and took and circumcised him because of the Jews which were in those quarters: for they knew all that his father was a Greek” (Acts 16:3).

Paul and Timothy knew preaching the Gospel in synagogues was challenging. Doing so with an uncircumcised person who had a Greek father would have been even harder. Paul circumcised Timothy to avoid that obstacle to their preaching work. But the fact he did so was remarkable, given what was occurring in the ecclesial world at the time.

The previous chapter, Acts 15, describes events that took place at a conference in Jerusalem prior to the Second Missionary Journey. Certain brethren from Judea had been teaching circumcision was necessary for salvation. Paul and Barnabas had opposed them, and they decided to take the matter before the apostles and elders in Jerusalem: “And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved. When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question” (Acts 15:1-2).

Acts 15 records that at the conference in Jerusalem that followed, the apostles and elders declared circumcision was not necessary for salvation. They then asked Paul, Barnabas, and certain other brethren to carry decrees with that message to the ecclesias (Acts 15:22-29). One of Paul’s activities during the Second Missionary
Journey was delivering those decrees. In fact, Paul, Timothy, and Silas shared those decrees — about circumcision not being necessary for salvation — with the other ecclesias of Galatia just after he circumcised Timothy. The very next verse after Timothy’s circumcision is recorded describes the missionaries’ work delivering the decrees about circumcision not being necessary for salvation: “And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem” (Acts 16:4).

It says a great deal about Timothy’s character that he was willing to undergo circumcision. He could have offered a shallow argument about doctrinal correctness and refused to undergo the procedure. If he done so, he would have saved himself the considerable physical pain associated with adult circumcision. But instead he humbled himself and willingly endured the pain so the Gospel message could be furthered.

Timothy was willing to sacrifice of himself so that other people could more easily learn the Truth and bring glory to God. His choice illustrates the mindset we need to have. The Truth must always come before our own pride and comfort.

In the years following Timothy’s circumcision, it appears that Judaizing elements in the Galatian ecclesias used Paul’s circumcision of Timothy to erroneously claim that Paul taught that circumcision was necessary for salvation. (Remember that Timothy was Galatian.) Paul addressed the issue in his Epistle to the Galatians: “And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? then is the offence of the cross ceased” (Gal 5:11). Paul reasoned that the persecution he suffered from those who stressed the importance of circumcision was proof he was not preaching the same message that they were.

“Before many witnesses”

There is evidence that there was a gathering of Timothy’s ecclesia to commend him on his journey before he left Lystra. Paul later made reference to it: “Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses” (1Tim 6:12).

Paul wrote 1Tim to help Timothy at a spiritual low point in his life. Although it is not obvious from the text what the exact purpose of the gathering Paul referred to was, it is clear it was something that had positive associations in Timothy’s mind. Paul later mentioned it to strengthen and encourage Timothy when he was down.

It appears that whatever isolation Timothy may have experienced in Lystra prior to learning the Truth had become a thing of his past. The ecclesia in Lystra clearly meant a great deal to Timothy. They had embraced him, and he loved and labored for them. But Timothy was willing to leave them behind, along with his faithful mother and grandmother and whatever career he had embarked upon, for the rigors of missionary work with the Apostle Paul.

Timothy knew full well the trials and dangers that travelling with Paul could entail. But he embraced the wonderful opportunity for service to God it offered.
“Servants of the most high God”

Accompanied by Paul and Silas, Timothy left Lystra. One of their first major stops was Philippi. An ecclesia was formed there as a result of their preaching efforts.

One day Paul healed a mentally ill slave girl in Philippi who made her masters a lot of money by fortune telling.

“And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by sooth-saying: The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation. And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour” (Acts 16:16-18).

The events that followed reveal a great deal about Timothy’s character. After she was healed, the girl’s masters were enraged because they could no longer make money off her. They seized Paul and Silas and dragged them before the authorities (Acts 16:19, ESV). What followed was a scene of intense violence:

“The crowd joined in attacking them, and the magistrates tore the garments off them and gave orders to beat them with rods. And when they had inflicted many blows upon them, they threw them into prison, ordering the jailer to keep them safely. Having received this order, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks” (Acts 16:22-24, ESV).

That night, while they were in prison, Paul and Silas prayed and sang hymns to God: “And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them” (Acts 16:25). It is interesting to consider the Scriptures’ evidence about why they might have done that.

They might have been “rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame” for the Lord’s name (Acts 6:41). It might also have been that they were doing what they usually did at night. Perhaps they sang hymns every evening.

It is certainly evident from Paul’s writings — and in his writings to Timothy in particular — that singing hymns was a very important part of their spiritual life. Both of Paul’s epistles to Timothy contain what many commentators agree must be excerpts from hymns. The following passage is believed to be from a hymn of praise:

“Which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen” (1Tim 6:15-16).2

One of the “faithful sayings” in 2Tim is in metrical Greek, which suggests it was also an extract from a hymn: “For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him. If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us. If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful” (2Tim 2:11-13).3

Paul wrote 1 and 2 Timothy to help Timothy, his “son in the faith” (1Tim 1:2), during times when Timothy was struggling. The fact that Paul quoted from
hymns in each of his epistles to Timothy indicates that Timothy must have loved and been greatly encouraged by spiritual music. Perhaps there were many nights where Paul, Timothy, and other faithful brothers and sisters concluded the day’s activities and prepared for the next day’s events by singing hymns together and offering prayers to God.

As we look for ways to improve our service to God, strengthen our families, and provide godly alternatives to this world’s entertainment and distractions, we might wish to consider dedicating time every night to singing listening to, and being encouraged by hymns and spiritual music.

Timothy was not with Paul and Silas the night they were imprisoned. But he was a faithful servant to the Lord in Philippi and in the cities he went to thereafter. We will consider the form his service in Philippi took in the next article in the series.

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Notes:
3. Brother A. Nicholls provides a fascinating discussion of the connection between this passage and the Epistle to the Romans. He suggests that someone in the Roman ecclesia (or perhaps Paul himself) turned the exposition into a hymn. See A. Nicholls. 1991. Letters to Timothy and Titus. (Birmingham, United Kingdom: The Christadelphian), page 290-292.

The Circumcision of Timothy

There is no contradiction between Paul’s act in circumcising Timothy (Acts 16:3) and his doctrine that circumcision invalidated a Gentile’s standing in the faith. Timothy was a Jew, and as such, stood in a natural relation to circumcision, which was enjoined upon Abraham as a token of the covenant under which his seed, after the flesh, were nationally chosen. Paul’s doctrine and Paul’s general course were misunderstood by the Jews. They represented him as a destroyer of the law, and a preacher of Mosaic disobedience, whereas his great contention was that it was the Gentiles who had nothing to do with Mosaic institutions, and that any justified Gentile seeking justification by the law or by circumcision, had “fallen from grace.” Paul circumcised Timothy at Lystra, “because of the Jews who were in that quarter,” — not to gain their favour, but to deprive them of the occasion of helping the slander that was current elsewhere, that he “taught all the Jews which were among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs” (Acts 21:21). Afterwards, the Jewish brethren at Jerusalem, who knew the nature of Paul’s objections to the law as affecting only Gentile believers, gave him this advice: “We have four men who have a vow on them: them take and purify thyself with them … and all may know that those things whereof they were informed concerning thee are nothing, BUT THAT THOU THYSELF WALKEST ORDERLY AND KEEPEST THE LAW” (Acts 21:23, 24). Paul acted on this advice, and thus gave public illustration of the true nature of his attitude. (Robert Roberts, The Christadelphian 1882 p 128)
Jonathan the Faithful Prince:
(14) Yahweh Wrought Salvation

The call to kill David
When Jonathan heard Saul’s command to kill David, he didn’t know what to do. Indeed, he loved David as he loved his own soul, but he also couldn’t simply abandon his father — he loved him too and longed to see him repent. Thus, Jonathan found himself in a quandary. How could he devote himself to his friend and devote himself to his father at the same time? And, even more, how could he do that safely?

After much consideration, Jonathan — a man who lived by principle and not by results — knew what he had to do. He had to warn David, and he had to try to persuade his father to abandon the plan. He had to convince Saul that attempting to kill David was a heinous sin. It was an extremely dangerous undertaking, but again, Jonathan was concerned about principle, and his principles dictated that he live in self-sacrificing love for his father and his friend.

But at the same time, Jonathan was practical. While his focus on principle overrode his focus on results, he didn’t simply ignore the results. He didn’t throw them out and pretend as though he didn’t care about them. Instead, while his principles dictated his overall choices, the results dictated how he put those principles into play. Thus, while his principles determined that he would talk to Saul and defend David, the results determined the way in which he would talk to Saul. In this article, we’ll see Jonathan’s carefully chosen words, and we’ll notice that while he didn’t allow results to cripple him, he did whatever he could to placate the vengeful spirit of his father. In all of this, Jonathan again gives us a powerful example of what it means to be a true and loving friend.

Carefully chosen words
The next morning, as Jonathan went to speak to his father, he didn’t come to him haphazardly. He had likely spent a long time that night thinking about how to best confront Saul and how to sway his thinking. Thus, his words were not an attack or a harsh criticism of Saul’s feelings; instead, they were a carefully calculated and reasoned appeal to Saul to reconsider his ways:

“And Jonathan spake good of David unto Saul his father, and said unto him, Let not the king sin against his servant, against David; because he hath not sinned against thee, and because his works have been to thee-ward very good” (1Sam 19:4).

Just imagine how Jonathan would have felt as he led his father out into the field and began to speak these words to him! With heart pounding, he was speaking to one who was full of suspicion and paranoia.
His plea began with a reference which Jonathan had likely chosen very carefully: “Let not the king...” It wasn’t an accident that Jonathan referred to Saul here as “the king.” Jonathan was well aware of what it was that Saul feared; so he didn’t simply call him “father” or just begin to speak to him without addressing him. Instead he called him “the king,” and with this title applied to him, Saul would be reminded of his son’s loyalty to his throne.

Yet there was more. Not only did Jonathan refer to Saul as “the king,” but notice the way in which he referred to David — there was a purposeful contrast in Jonathan’s description of the two men. Saul was “the king” and David was “his servant.” Again, Jonathan didn’t speak about David as Saul’s son-in-law or as his army commander — positions which exalted David — but called him Saul’s “servant,” in a deliberate reference to David’s loyalty and faithfulness to Saul.

Thus, Jonathan’s plea to Saul was to the king about the king’s servant — but again, notice that it wasn’t for the servant’s sake. Jonathan didn’t speak to Saul about David on David’s behalf, but rather for Saul’s own sake. If Saul were to truly try to kill David, it would be a “sin” against David — once more, this specific word was chosen with great care. The word “sin” is generally a word which is filled with connotations, all of them being negative. Sin means death, sin means the wrath of God, sin means that we have done something that is terribly wrong. Such would be the case if Saul tried to kill David — and it was almost as if Jonathan was using this word specifically because he wanted to wake Saul up to what a terrible thing it would be if he followed his feelings in this case. It was one of Jonathan’s attempts to help his father come back to a realization of God’s presence in their lives and His care for all of their actions.

But even further, Saul’s murder of David wouldn’t only be a sin — it would also be entirely impractical. Here was where Jonathan’s argument would have truly taken force with the faithless king. David’s works toward Saul had been good! When the Philistines arose up in the south, David was able to go over and subdue them! David was one of Saul’s most loyal soldiers — and Saul had even acknowledged that when he had promoted David all through the ranks of the army. When Saul became upset, David was able to play music to soothe him! All throughout his time in the courts of Saul, David’s presence had been a huge benefit to Saul! How could Saul want to kill someone who was willing to give up their life for his sake?

“For he did put his life in his hand, and slew the Philistine, and the Lord wrought a great salvation for all Israel: thou sawest it, and didst rejoice: wherefore then wilt thou sin against innocent blood, to slay David without a cause?” (1Sam 19:5).

Jonathan took his father’s mind back to the past — reminding him of the terror that Saul had felt as the giant presented himself to Israel for forty days. All of Israel had looked to Saul to fight against Goliath, and Saul simply couldn’t muster up the strength. Thus, the army had awkwardly and fearfully encamped against the army of the Philistines, waiting to see if anyone from their ranks would take up the challenge, and hearing the giant’s taunts for over a month. But then, the entire situation changed when the son of Jesse visited the camp. He had been filled with
faith and had risked his life to fight against Goliath — making it so that Saul didn’t have to. How could Saul want to kill a man like that? Had not David effectively saved Saul and the entire nation from being filled with shame?

**Yahweh wrought salvation**

But even more so, the victory wasn’t won by David! Surely, David had gone out to fight the giant in faith, but it was Yahweh who was with David and who had won the battle that day — and Jonathan’s specific phrase “the LORD wrought a great salvation for all Israel” would have really struck a chord with Saul here. In fact, it was one which he had used himself at the end of a previous battle. Saul, just after being made king, had won a mighty victory over the Ammonites — and after the battle, some of the Israelites wanted to find the men who had protested about Saul being their king and slay them. Upon hearing those words, Saul stopped the men in their evil plans by telling them that God had wrought a great salvation that day:

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

In a happier and more faithful time, Saul had stood against the men who wanted to murder his opponents — what a different attitude than he held at the present time! It was almost as if Jonathan sought to use this specific phrase in order to bring Saul’s thoughts back to that battle and back to his time of faith. He sought to remind Saul of how he had felt when he trusted in God and when he lived as though God were active in his life! At that time, he had those who were threatening his reign and those who sought to dethrone him (1Sam 10:26-27), but he spared their lives and even prevented others from killing them.

How different was his attitude at the present time! And sadly, it didn’t need to be — that was Jonathan’s point! Back during his time of faith, Saul’s reign was secure and God worked through him to accomplish victories. But things were different now, and Jonathan’s phrase would have likely reminded Saul of that as well — because though Jonathan used the same phrase as Saul in the battle against the Ammonites, Jonathan wasn’t speaking about God working through Saul. Instead of working through Saul to crush His enemies, God had wrought salvation through David. Such had been the change as time passed; the spirit of God had left Saul and had gone to David. This change was something which was very much on Saul’s mind and Jonathan’s reference to God working through David would have likely pricked his attention. Just notice what was said of Saul in the previous chapter:

> “And Saul was afraid of David, because the LORD was with him, and was departed from Saul” (1Sam 18:12).

God had effectively stopped working through Saul, and instead accomplished His victories through David — this was a fact which Saul knew and was essentially the fact which caused Saul to want David dead. Jonathan’s plea to Saul offered Saul an alternative. David didn’t need to die — God had wrought salvation through Saul before and Saul hadn’t been plagued by insecurity. If only he could go back
to how he had lived and acted before during that time of faith, then things could be different.

If Saul was willing to turn around and once again worship God in sincerity and truth, things could change. Though the end of his kingdom was prophesied, if Saul repented, things would change — such is the mercy of God. Throughout the prophets, God explicitly explained this concept to the people: even though He prophesied the demise of a kingdom, if they repented, they would be spared:

“At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it; if that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them” (Jer 18:7-8).

Despite the prophecy of destruction, if a nation turns from their wickedness, God would turn from the destruction which He promised. Again, this was the reason that Jeremiah was told to write down all of God’s indictments against Israel and Judah — so that they might turn and God would not have to destroy them:

“Take thee a roll of a book, and write therein all the words that I have spoken unto thee against Israel, and against Judah, and against all the nations, from the day that I spake unto thee, from the days of Josiah, even unto this day. It may be that the house of Judah will hear all the evil which I purpose to do unto them; that they may return every man from his evil way; that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin” (Jer 36:2-3).

God is constantly looking for the repentance of His people — and when they repent, He withdraws His wrath and often withdraws His promised punishments. This is God’s prerogative! He can do what He so desires with His own (Matt 20:15). Though He has stated that a kingdom will come to its end, if they repent, He can reverse that promise. Such was the case with the city of Nineveh; when Jonah prophesied that they had forty days until their complete destruction, they repented, and God withdrew the prophecy.

The same could have been the case with Saul — and perhaps Jonathan sought to help him realize and remember. In times past, God had been with him — it wasn’t as though God had always turned His face against him and forsaken him forever. Nevertheless, at this point, God sought to work through another, because Saul refused to follow Him in faith. But if he turned and repented, things could be different.

Thus, Jonathan’s speech was filled with a powerful argument — not only for Saul to ignore his violent feelings towards David, but if Saul pondered the depth of his son’s words, he would see that there was also a powerful argument for him to humbly turn to his God in repentance. It was a beautiful application of Jonathan’s commitment to following the principle of serving both his father and his friend, and yet at the same time, trying to achieve the best possible results. Jonathan didn’t rush towards his father, fervently rebuke his immaturity, and seek to force his repentance. Instead, Jonathan’s words were carefully chosen and were presented in gentleness. As such, they were perhaps the most effective plea which Jonathan could have presented to his father.
But, regardless of their potential effectiveness, Jonathan had no idea how Saul’s embittered mind would react. And so there he stood, palms sweating and heart pounding, waiting for his father’s next word.

Jason Hensley (Simi Hills, CA)

The Joy of Sunday Schooling

Have you tried this? (6)

Go online. There is a wealth of Christadelphian Sunday school material waiting to be discovered and put to use. Three Sunday school programs in the brotherhood now offer at least some material online:

1) The Christadelphian Sunday School Union (UK)
2) The Australian Christadelphian Sunday School Union
3) The Christadelphian Sunday School Association (Australia)

Simply put, these committees have posted teaching material on their websites that can be downloaded and used for free. All three sites can be accessed from the Sunday School Lessons board on my Pinterest site (www.pinterest.com/2harps4u/) or at the web addresses given below.¹ The sites are worth exploring.

Christadelphian Sunday School Union (UK) – http://www.cssu.org.uk/

If you are looking for a source of Sunday school lessons for all ages, you will find it on the Christadelphian Sunday School Union (UK) website. Nearly all the CSSU lessons — for pre-readers up to teens — are now posted on the site and can be downloaded for free. Over 500 lessons are available. They provide teacher notes and student activities for most of the lessons that used to be available only in book form.² The CSSU site is also a collecting point for Sunday school plays that feature a wide variety of Bible themes. Many of these can be downloaded and printed, ready to use. The site is easy to navigate.
The Australian Christadelphian Sunday School Union is beginning to make its lessons available for download. Much of the Kindergarten (ages 4-5) material is now online, and Senior (ages 15 and up) material is coming online. ACSSU is embedding active resource links in its teacher notes. This is a unique feature of the site, and the links are very useful. They not only take you to outside sources of free teaching materials for any given lesson; they provide direct access to Christadelphian resources as well. A set of Sunday school projects for all ages and several Sunday school plays are available for download from the ACSSU site.

The Christadelphian Sunday School Association, Australia, has updated its website and added some attractive new features. While lesson books must still be ordered
separately, virtually all of the CSSA activity sheets, for all age levels, are available for free download. This represents a lot of teaching material. In addition, more than 160 Sunday school plays are available, covering a complete range of Bible themes. Don’t be put off by the User login box that appears on the CSSA home page. You do not have to log in to access the free materials and download them.

And here is a fourth site to explore with Sunday school in mind …


“This Is Your Bible” is the English language website of the Christadelphian Bible Missions (ACBM, CBM, CBMA and CBMC). Its purposes are educational. If you have been wracking your brain what to do with an older teen class, why not enroll them in one of the online Bible courses that TIYB offers? *Exploring the Bible* and *Learn to Read the Bible Effectively* are two of the courses available, each with something different to offer. As online students, your teens will interact with a Christadelphian tutor and you become their learning facilitator, monitoring their progress and discussing the lessons with them.

The TIYB site can also be used by your students as a research site. It has a large library of pamphlets on Bible subjects. It also provides answers to many commonly asked Bible questions. Here is something to do: assign a Bible research question to your older students and encourage them to use the TIYB website for information.

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

**Notes:**
1. My Pinterest site is entirely devoted to Christadelphian Sunday schooling. More will be said about it in the September issue of *The Tidings*.
2. Hardcopies of most CSSU materials are still available and can be ordered online, prices listed.
3. A 2014 order form for hardcopies of the ACSSU materials can be printed from the website, prices listed.
4. A full range of CSSA products can be ordered directly from the website, prices listed.
5. Hard copies of *Exploring the Bible* and *Learn to Read the Bible Effectively* materials can be downloaded and printed by Sunday school teachers who are registered TIYB tutors. Four other Bible Mission courses and Exploring the Bible can be downloaded and printed from the Sunday School Lessons board on my Pinterest site.
Forgotten Incidents — Megiddo Church

Introduction

Few have ever heard of the Megiddo Church, and even fewer know that its origins start with the Christadelphians in 1870, and have been intertwined to a greater or lesser extent ever since. Some readers might remember a debate between Ruth Sisson and Duncan Heaster held in the pages of *The Tidings* in 1992: and a few (and I am one) might recall seeing a copy of a magazine called *Megiddo Message* in your doctor’s office. But the whole account of this little denomination is quite fascinating, replete with ship wrecks, “gospel cars”, band wagons and somewhat strange beliefs. Now a tiny group of no more than 35 members of the one church in Rochester, NY, they still publish their magazine, with a claimed circulation of 15,000. They still appear to have scattered adherents elsewhere, but even so the total numbers are quite small, and apparently decreasing: reported visits to their services recently show only 25 or so attendees, mostly elderly.

L. T. Nichols

L. T. (Lemuel Truesdale) Nichols was born October 1, 1844 in Elkhart County, Indiana. When he was about five years old, his family moved to Wisconsin. As an adolescent, he became skeptical of the established Protestant tradition in which he had been raised and began an intense study of the Bible. His views were often controversial and were ridiculed by his school classmates and others in the community.

In 1864 he was married, and two weeks later was drafted into the army. In the army he refused to bear arms and was transferred to service in a military hospital. After the war, he returned home to his wife to farm and to begin his ministerial career as an itinerant preacher in the Fox River Valley region of Wisconsin, northwest of Milwaukee.

In 1874, L. T. Nichols, accompanied by his family, including his wife, his parents, and his sister, as well as several other followers, moved to McMinnville, Oregon. There he established a church which he called “Christadelphian,” because of the similarity between his views of the Bible and those of Dr. Thomas, leader of the Christadelphians. Nichols held a popular annual camp meeting, published religious tracts, engaged in public debates on religious issues, and gained many additional followers.
For a while in the 1870’s the pages of *The Christadelphian* were replete with accounts written by this L. T. Nichols, with accounts of baptizing at least 70 into the Truth, and his fame spread quite widely in the Pacific north-west. (McMinnville is a little town about 30 miles Southwest of Portland.).

In 1880, Nichols’ concluded that “no man could be saved apart from knowing and keeping every commandment of God.” This discovery has led the Megiddo Church to identify 1880 as the year of its founding because at this point Nichols called his followers to lead lives that set them apart from their contemporaries. It also led to his departure from the Christadelphian community.

The controversial doctrines preached by L. T. Nichols resulted in considerable persecution and in 1883 he decided to leave Oregon, settling himself and his followers in Dodge County in southeastern Minnesota. Here Nichols established a small church and preached in nearby communities. It was here also that he began his career as an inventor, patenting such inventions as a harness for four-horse hitches and a coupler for railroad cars. The profits from these inventions became a major source of support for the church.

One fundamental issue concerned how to achieve salvation. Nichols believed that people must live holy lives, while the Christadelphians accepted the concept of atonement by grace. In 1891 Nichols visited England and the histories of his church claims he debated Robert Roberts. (There is no other record I can find of this.) Nichols then largely abandoned his attempts to convince the Christadelphians and renamed his body the “Christian Brethren.” He did debate Thomas Williams in 1892, with no success from his point of view, and from then on there are very few references to him in the literature of our community. He is claimed to have visited England again in 1897, but made no attempt as far as I can tell to contact Christadelphians, but concentrated on those he had previously converted. *The Advocate* records his death in 1912, but it is clear he had not troubled the Christadelphian community for many years. However, the later history of the community he founded is fascinating, if a little strange.
Nichols predicted that the Second Coming of Christ would occur sometime between 1896 and 1901. As 1901 approached, Nichols felt compelled to carry the Brethren’s message to a wider audience. Ordering the construction of a large steamboat, which he named the “Megiddo,” he closed all his churches and gathered between eighty and ninety of his followers on the boat, which plied the Mississippi and Ohio River systems during the navigation seasons of 1901 through 1903, stopping at ports along the way where the Brethren held meetings. While on the rivers, Nichols continued to publish tracts, as well as flyers for distribution to announce meetings.

The ship excited much curiosity, and the newspapers along the Mississippi and Ohio rivers published front-page stories describing the marvelous craft. The boat cost $22,000 to build. It was red, white, and blue in color, had a complete machine shop for manufacturing and repair work, a carpenter shop, and a flour mill. Although the brethren, like members of the Megiddo Church today, were characterized by a high level of participation and a high degree of cooperation, they were committed to the principle of private property. Each family had its own living quarters and its own dining area, storage locker, and cupboards. Women cooked for their own families in the ship’s kitchen, and there were often as many as 30 meals being prepared at one time.

Wherever the boat went, the men on board sought work while the women took care of housekeeping and knitted woolen goods for sale to support their families and the mission. The children attended school aboard the boat. A handbill distributed to the public announced: “We manufacture acetylene gasometers and windmills and are agents for a first-class automobile.” The members also earned money from houses they built and rented in Nashville where the boat spent its first winter.

Upon arrival in a new port, if it were possible to borrow some horses, the uniformed Christian Brethren band would travel through the streets in their bandwagon, playing music and distributing handbills to publicize their meetings. They either arranged to meet in a public auditorium or pitched their 40 x 80-foot tent in a prominent location. The services consisted of songs, prayers, Scripture readings, and sermons by either L. T. Nichols or Maud Hembree, “the lady preacher.” The services were well attended, and the press reported Captain Nichols’ messages at length.

After two years on the water, the Megiddo experienced navigational problems while returning to the Mississippi from Cincinnati in the fall of 1903. Nichols had hired a captain who landed the boat on a sandbar. The next boat captain did the same thing. These mishaps resulted in expensive repairs and emphasized the danger of operating the Megiddo in those Midwest waterways. Besides, there were considerable risks from ice floating down the river. Feeling responsible for the many lives on board, Nichols decided that the river ministry was no longer practical, and the Megiddo was sold. The Christian Brethren relocated to Rochester where the Nichols’ had relatives. At about this time Nichols changed the name of his denomination to Megiddo Mission (or Church): no-one knows why.
Further work

Once in Rochester, they carried on an active mission work locally. Initially it was by such methods as a band wagon, which showed their fascination with band music (which still continues today). When Nichols died in 1912, it was by special dispensation that the band played at his gravesite.

It was not before long they realized how close they were to the Great Lakes, so the group acquired a series of motor launch- es, the last they called “Megiddo III”. They cruised the waters for eight years from 1916, and was replaced by a “mission car.” In both cases, six or so young men lived and peached from their conveyance, and the mission work proceeded.

By the 1920, the travelling missionaries were replaced by a publishing operation. As I already mentioned, they continue distributing their “Megiddo Message” quite widely, as well as a number of tracts and books. It is amazing that such a small congregation can distribute so widely a magazine, which is quite attractive in its layout, and some of the content is quite acceptable.

The Megiddo Church today

Each year on October 1st, members or the Megiddo Church gather in Mount Hope Cemetery at the grave of the church’s founder, L. T. Nichols. They gather not only
to celebrate the founder’s life and his contributions to the church but also to affirm their belief that he and others who are buried in the Megiddo plot will one day rise to be judged and rewarded by Jesus when he returns to establish his kingdom.

L. T. Nichols and the members of the group arrived in Rochester on January 27, 1904. Within a couple of months, Nichols purchased five acres on the southwest edge of Rochester, then outside the city limits. In 1907, the members of the group constructed their own church building. The church cost about $5,000 and seated 400 people. It was dedicated on March 22, 1908 with about 250 people in attendance. Today, the Megiddo Church still owns the complex of buildings across the street from the church and about 35 people live there.

Megiddos have long been recognized for the distinctive dress of the women which is characterized by long skirts, long sleeves, and high necklines. Women also use no makeup and gather their hair into buns, but unlike members of some conservative religious groups, they do cut their hair when it becomes inconveniently long. Colors of clothing are a matter of personal choice, and several of the women wear bright colors. The men, whose clothing styles are more likely to be dictated by the dress requirements of their employers, wear conservative suits and functional work clothes. The one requirement of clothing is that it conform to the Bible’s principal of “modest apparel”. While many observers tend to characterize Megiddo attire as old-fashioned, the Megiddos themselves consider their dress to be merely conservative.

Their beliefs
The original cause of separation from the Christadelphians was that Nichols believed that it was works that saved, not grace. The Megiddo Church still denies the Trinity, and believes in a personal devil: they also have similar beliefs on the soul and the millennial reign of Christ.

However, apart from the role of grace in a Christian life, they differ from our community in that they

- Members of the Megiddo Church eagerly await the arrival of Elijah, who, they believe, is presently living on another planet in God’s vast universe, awaiting the time when he will return to earth to prepare the way for Christ.
- They deny the role of water baptism.
- They celebrate Christmas — but on the first of Abib, in the spring.
- They venerate Nichols, remembering his death every year.
- They discourage marriage and child-bearing, holding these take away from the focus on waiting for the return of Elijah.

There has been no real contact between the Megiddo Church and the Christadelphians for over a hundred years, and only one or two members have joined our community from the group in the past century. And I wonder if the Church will even survive: like the Shakers before them, discouraging marriage and children is not a prescription for survival, even although, like them, we do expect the return of our Lord before long.

Peter Hemingray
Dear Bro. Hemingray,

An article last month in *The Tidings* (May 2014: article #5 on Spiritual Discipline: p 184) troubled me somewhat, for it suggested that Job was “disfellowshipped”. It was said in the brother’s argument about “withdrawal from those whose walk has compromised the truth” without repentance.

The written record of Job, (probably written down by Moses when he fled Egypt to Midian), does not tell us that Job was disfellowshipped. In fact God praises Job for his integrity, and God challenges the “adversary”, a man, maybe Amalek, who obviously had not attended the ecclesia for some time and who just visited the ecclesia — for he was asked why HE, the adversary, was there!

We must not attribute to the “declared righteous” Job, (by God) who we know was not “sinless” — which amounts to is slandering his name — or we become just like Job’s friends to whom God said in Ch. 42 had not spoken RIGHT. The friends were the ones that needed to repent (also the adversary) they must go to Job and have him pray for THEM. The “Satan”, was probably an envious relative — that may have only attended to stir up trouble — or to cause Job to stumble. God allowed the trial to make a point, to not only prove that Job was righteous, but to vindicate God Almighty’s name as well. The adversary was challenging God — as if God didn’t know Job’s heart? We think this adversary very well could have been uncle Amalek, half-brother to Teman, Eliphaz’s father. We believe Amalek didn’t change, but perhaps the friends did. Job was restored.

Anonymous

**Comment from Bro. David Jennings**

Thank you for your comments about the fifth article on Scriptural Discipline. I believe that you may have misunderstood my reference to Job and the activities of the “Satan” in Job. It was never intended to imply that Job was disfellowshipped. In fact, it is quite clear that Job was an upright man. The intent of the reference was to demonstrate the way that God works with men and women in some circumstances to bring them to a change of heart, or a better spiritual mind. In Job’s case, the adversity he faced was not brought upon him because of sin, but was nevertheless it was ultimately helpful to bring Job to a closer understanding of the Almighty and his position before Him.

When we read references about being delivered “unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh” in Corinthians, what is clear to us is that the Lord and his angels will work in the life of those who have had fellowship removed to bring them to a sound mind, a renewed commitment to their life in the Truth. The point made was that our Lord may indeed employ similar methods to bring about the conversion of one who is lost. Consider the prodigal son example for a moment. He too saw
the loss of his wealth (and at the most inopportune time) and intense danger and dejection before he came to himself. What we do when we deliver one to Satan is to acknowledge that we put them in the care of the Lord. He will employ whatever is needed to crush pride and bring one to a sound mind.

I hope this explanation is helpful. God bless.

Reflections

Knowing Jesus

“To know and be known by Jesus.” This was the answer a friend of mine gave when asked in a devotion what she wanted to accomplish in this life. Profound, I thought, but what do those two concepts mean?

As far as “being known by Jesus”, we can look to parables about his return. I remember a statement in Matt 25, which is spoken by the bridegroom to the five foolish virgins when they pleaded with him “ ‘Lord, lord, open up for us.’ But he answered, ‘Truly I say to you, I do not know you’ ” (Matt 25:11-12 NASB). These virgins did not reflect the qualities of Jesus so as to be identified by him and known by him. This forces us to look seriously at ourselves and ask, how much of Jesus would he be able to see in us?

But what of “knowing Jesus”? Paul had a clear sense of who Jesus was, and his relationship with Jesus gave him the strength to continually choose spiritual things over fleshly things. He states, “I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ” (Phil 3:8 NASB).

I think when it comes to knowing Jesus we need a real familiarity with the Biblical record of how he lived and what he taught. So much so, that we can recall the things Jesus said and the things he did, as if we had been witness to them in person. For example, when we see fresh flowers we can think of Jesus’ words to his disciples,

“And why are you worried about clothing? Observe how the lilies of the field grow; they do not toil nor do they spin, yet I say to you that not even Solomon in all his glory clothed himself like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, will He not much more clothe you? You of little faith! Do not worry then... for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you” (Matt 6:28-33 NASB).

The flowers we see can serve as a reminder of Jesus’ words, but more importantly of the principle he was trying to impress upon his disciples of daily trust in our Heavenly Father.

A second example could be when we are discouraged with our preaching efforts, and as we think of Jesus speaking to his disciples,
“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matt 28:19-20 NASB).

Jesus’ words and example should be near enough to our hearts and minds that his influence can be a living force in our life, as it was in the lives of his disciples. In this regard, it is like recalling experiences with a loved one who has passed away, who we loved so much, and meant so much to us, that we still feel their presence with us each day. Their life continues to impact ours even after they have passed away. This is very similar to the relationship we can develop with Jesus; his life can and must impact our lives each day. However, Jesus is not dead; he is alive and active and aware of our struggles as we walk toward the Kingdom. He actively serves as our mediator, bridging the gap between us and our God. How much more then should he be a fixture in our lives!

Another component that can help us get to know Jesus is our common fight against sin. Just as going through a similar experience or struggle in life can make us feel closer to one another, our fight against sin can help us identify with events in Jesus’ life. Paul refers to this when he says, “that I may know him and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings, being conformed to his death” (Phil:10 NASB). This common fight against the flesh is one central aspect to our life which links us not only to Jesus and his fight, but also to all those faithful individuals who have fought against the flesh.

How wonderful then to be given the opportunity to come to know Jesus, through the words of Scripture and by aligning ourselves with this goal of overcoming the flesh. God willing, when he does return, we will have taken the time provided to study his life, and his fight against sin, which can help us to develop characters which are reflective of his. And to develop a relationship with Jesus, so that when we finally do see him, it is as our faithful Shepherd who we have come to not only know, but love.

Katie Dawes (Toronto East, ON)
Jamaica — Stewardship Workshop at Round Hill Ecclesia

In a number of our Lord’s parables we find an emphasis on the importance of the “faithful and wise steward”. For several reasons, the CBMJ decided to hold a Stewardship Workshop and the Round Hill Ecclesia hosted it on Saturday, February 15th. This was follow-up on an evening session at the Yearend Bible School, and an extra activity on the CBMJ 2014 Calendar of Events, which already had 15 items scheduled for this year. It was therefore uncertain how many would be able to attend. Communication went out to all the ecclesias, transportation was arranged and an appeal was made to brothers, sisters and unbaptized youth to attend — since service in the ecclesia should be encouraged at an early age. The Workshop was attended by approximately 70! — and over half were children, teens and those in their twenties — who participated well, as they listened keenly, took notes and were very eager to assist with the readings.

There were handout summary notes and worksheets available for the three interactive presentations. The three topics dealt with were — Examples of Stewards in the Bible, Stewardship begins at Home and An Appeal to the Younger Members and Unbaptized. A list of characteristics was put together as to how we would describe a steward, in the Biblical sense. In summary, we found that a steward was absolutely trustworthy, full of integrity, a servant overseeing and looking to the needs of others, and blameless. Although stewards in the Bible were mainly men, it is evident that women also fulfilled steward-like roles, such as Deborah — providing leadership in Israel when men of courage and conviction were scarce! Tabitha also faithfully served the needs of others, as a type of the virtuous woman of Proverbs 31. And then there is Phebe in Romans 16, ministering to others as a nurse-like helper — she is described as a sister (first), a servant, saint-like and a succorer of many. However, our Heavenly Father is seen as the model of stewardship. He oversees and cares for all, providing meat in due season — as found by reading Psalm 145:8-20 — and His son followed His Father’s example. The appeal to the youth was to follow the example of our Lord at 12 years old — “about my Father’s business”. They were challenged to bear three yokes, but in the proper order: 1) The yoke of service when they are young (Lam 3:27); 2) To be yoked with Christ in baptism (Matt 11:28-30); and 3) To be (equally) yoked in marriage (1Cor 6:14).

We were thankful to the Round Hill Ecclesia for welcoming with refreshments, those who travelled several hours from different locations across the Island to arrive at 10:30 am. We were also served a delicious hot meal at noon. It was encouraging for all of us to be together and support each other in these difficult
times, and promote dedicated service among the members of the Body of Christ.

During the rest of our time in Jamaica, we attended Bible class at the Broughton Ecclesia on February 12th, and had a special Remembrance service with the Harvey River Ecclesia on Thursday, February 13th. On Sunday, February 16th we enjoyed a Breaking of Bread service at the Kingston Ecclesial Hall, when 32 members from three ecclesias held a mini-fraternal — White Horses, Spanish Town and Kingston. A DVD on the metamorphosis of the butterfly (especially the monarch) was also viewed, as it related to Rom 12:2 and the word “transformed” (metamorphoo). On Tuesday evening, February 18th, a Bible class was held at the May Pen Ecclesial Hall on the topic Lessons from the Wilderness Wanderings, with about 30 in attendance. We were also pleased to be able to spend time in members’ homes and enjoy their friendship and fellowship — and good Jamaican food!

If there is an interest in supporting the Annual Calendar of Events sponsored by the CBMJ, please contact the CBMC chairman, Bro. Phil Snobelen — philsnobelen@shaw.ca

Don Luff, CBMC Linkman

The White Horse Ecclesia Sunday school children and Mary an interested friend.

Those present (32) from White Horses, Spanish Town and Kingston after the Breaking of Bread.
I am told that time passes faster as you get older. Although I don’t feel any older than I was when I first arrived in Córdoba six months ago, the time has passed more quickly than I could have imagined. I feel that just now I am beginning to understand the culture, beginning to know the people. It’s the little things, like hoarding small bills because you know that half of the people won’t be able to make change: learning which stores have the best croissant-like medialunas; and knowing which of the hundreds of buses that pass every day will lead to where you want to go, that really make a foreign country feel more like home. It’s the chance to connect, to build bridges that haphazardly span the language and culture barrier, the really makes you feel blessed. I am often reminded of the apostle Paul’s statement, how he planted, Apollos watered, but God grants the increase as I leave Córdoba, with their small but lovely ecclesia, to move on to Bolivia. And somehow, like so many others who have travelled, I find myself coming away feeling richer, knowing that I have been given so much by my time here.

On my way out of Córdoba and into Bolivia, I had the pleasure of stopping by for visits, always too short, in Santiago, Chile and Lima, Peru. I have decided that I will never understand why a flight between Argentina and Bolivia, that share a border, is so much more economical if I travel through two other countries first. I don’t understand, but am more than happy to have a chance to greet brethren from other parts of the world. They send their love and wonder when you are coming for a visit, maybe to stay for a month or six? With the brethren in Chile, we shared some lovely fellowship with our Bro. Robert Alderson from New Zealand, and he encouraged us and exhorted us. We welcomed Eva,
just moved to Santiago from La Paz, and explored the city a little bit.

Lima was a bit of a whirlwind visit, but in my day there I had the pleasure of breaking bread with the small ecclesia that meets in a second floor room of the house of one of the members set aside for that purpose. That evening, one of the families with their three children and I met for a lovely dinner and Bible readings, and then I was off early the next morning, always wishing for more time, but happy to see the fruits of the faithful work of local and foreign brethren over time.

Right now as I write this, once again I’m sitting in an airport, watching the people pass by, thinking back on my past experiences and wondering what adventures will be coming next. Good-byes are always sad, but in our faith they are less so, as I look forward to the day when all the faithful will be gathered from the four corners of this round earth to meet the son at his appearing. May we all be found faithful in him at that day. Until next time, God be with you until we meet again.

Sis. Coleen Uiga, Spanish Truth Corps
Submitted by Sis. Jan Berneau, CBMA/C Publicity

Convivencia in Ecuador — March 1-4, 2014

As we grow and develop in our families and ecclesias, communication and behavior is never perfect, with the inevitable outcome of minor annoyances, significant, heart-breaking hurt, and everything in between. One of the principal themes of the Bible — if not the most important of all — is the healing of these rifts in our relationships. And of course, our most important, most enduring relationship is the one we have with our Father in Heaven, who demonstrates his love for us in sending his son, his only son, to show us the way to forgiveness and healing.

At this year’s annual ‘convivencia’ (gathering) in Ecuador on March 1-4, Bro. David Lloyd (San Diego, US) led several talks, on that most important of things — Forgiveness. The studies were held at a new location for us, just outside the town of Atuntaqui, two hours north of Quito. As we have done since the second
convivencia five years ago, we took advantage of the only Ecuadorian four-day weekend, at Carnaval. On Saturday morning many of us gathered bright and early at the ecclesial hall and loaded the Bibles, hymn books, electric piano, SS supplies — and ourselves! — into the bus and set out. Along the way we picked up other brothers and sisters who live along a corridor towards the North of the city, and at our last stop, we collected Bro. Wilson and his wife Sandra in the town of Cayambe, about halfway to our destination.

Atuntaqui is a small town known for the quality and workmanship of its leather products, nestled in a valley between the spectacular Imbabura and Cotacachi volcanos. The hostel where we stayed was just a few blocks outside the center of town and in our free time in the afternoons most of us went for walks together, either into town or up into the hills and fields above us. In a small ecclesia where many of the members live significant distances away from each other these opportunities to relax and be together for hours on end are tremendously valuable times of quiet conversation, where we can really get to know each other and strengthen our bonds in not only the Truth, but in the many life experiences and challenges we all share in this life.

Bro. David devoted six hours of interactive classes to exploring the Bible's message surrounding forgiveness, healing, and some of the more practical, day to day aspects of resolving relationship breakdowns amongst ourselves and with God. One of the most important principles we learned is that forgiveness is like breathing — it is life giving only if it happens in both directions — flowing out of us towards others, and into us from God. In the context of Lord's Prayer we are told that indefinitely holding our breath — not allowing forgiveness to flow out from ourselves to others — is just as fatal as not breathing at all. The principle is simple to verbalize, but can be incredibly challenging to actually live — day in, day out, year in, year out — with our families, neighbors, and ecclesias. Over the course of our meetings together we explored a wide range of situations in which we can suffer hurt, and also spent hours discussing the practical obligations we have in both forgiving and seeking forgiveness from others. For example, when we ask forgiveness of others, we must do so wisely, as we may be imposing an additional burden on them if they are not yet ready or able to fully forgive, and if we aggressively pursue an expression of forgiveness from someone else, in an inappropriate way or at a bad time, we can add even more injury and hurt.

After four days immersed in studying, singing, praying, reading, playing and talking together, we came home to Quito on Tuesday afternoon, in awe of the love our Father and his son Jesus Christ, who are willing to set aside an incalculable debt to teach us how much they value us and their relationship with us. God willing, our Lord will give us all the strength and courage to practice these principles with everyone around us.

Kevin and Rebekah Hunter
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](http://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](http://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](http://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: [wcffoundation.org](http://wcffoundation.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](http://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](http://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 & 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.)

BEDFORD, NS

Over the past number of months we have enjoyed visits from many brothers and sisters and their families, as well as the exhortations we received from a number of the visiting brothers. We are thankful for the visits and fellowship of Ron Hicks (Washington DC); Ken and Gloria Charlton (Southport Queensland, AUS); Graham and Sarah Baldock (Mississauga West, ON); Clyde and Evelyn Snobelen (Victoria, BC); and Nathan Crawford (Kingston, ON).

We commend to the care of the Kingston, ON Ecclesia, by way of transfer, Bro. Nathan and Sis. Sarah Crawford. We will miss them but know they will be an asset to and receive strength from the brothers and sisters in Kingston.

Bro. John Ching has had surgery on one eye to repair tears to his retina and it is healing well. He will be scheduled for surgery on the other eye. We pray for our Father’s healing hand to be upon him.

The Bedford Ecclesia is inviting brothers and sisters to consider assisting us over the next year in preaching the gospel message in the Halifax area of Nova Scotia. We are planning to run a number of seminars, starting in September 2014 with follow up classes. Brothers and sisters who would like to come for a week or more, or even consider moving here, can assist with seminars, follow-up classes, Bible readings and discussion for interested friends during the days, as well as other activities. If you are interested, please contact Bro. Dale Crawford by email at: Bedfordchristadelphians@gmail.com, or by phone at: 1-902-431-6650.

Dale Crawford

BROOKLYN, NY

Three notable events have occurred recently. Bro. Dillon Gittens and Sis. Anastacia Duesbury were united in marriage; Sis. Asha Drepaal of the Kilcoy Ecclesia in Guyana was able to join her husband, Bro. Gideon; and the NY Metro Fraternal had a remarkable series on “Seeking the Lost”, by Bro. Jason Hensley (Simi Hills, CA). We thank Bro. Jason for his labors on our behalf.

Clive Drepaal

COACHELLA VALLEY, CALIFORNIA

Over the past few years, our small ecclesia has grown from four members including: Sis. Daisy Gray, Sis. June Thompson, and Bro. Eric and Sis. Jen Vortriede, to our current number of thirteen. Bro. Dennis and Sis. Mary Bazant transferred their membership from the Los Angeles, CA Ecclesia a few years ago. My mother-in-law, Sis. Grace Cooper, transferred her membership from the Jackson County, OR Ecclesia to our ecclesia in 2012, and Bro. Robert and Sis. Joanna Alexander recently transferred their membership from the Pomona, CA Ecclesia.

Sis. Corky Emett and Bro. Don Graybill returned to the Christadelphian community after an absence of some years, and we were very happy to welcome them back. Bro.
David and Sis. Norma Stevens, who are members of the Los Angeles Ecclesia but live in Morongo Valley, are regular participants in our ecclesia, and we are very happy whenever we see them.

We are happy to announce that CRAIG NANKERVIS was baptized on February 14, 2012, and ERLINDA IRIGAYEN was baptized on August 16, 2012. We wish God's blessings upon our new brother and sister.

If you are travelling through the Palm Desert/Palm Springs area, we would be very happy to have your fellowship. We are grateful to the brothers and sisters who have visited our ecclesia over the past few years and especially thank the brothers who have given us words of exhortation.

Sis. Daisy Gray, who has lived in this area all her life, has recently stepped down after being the Ecclesial Secretary of the Coachella Valley Ecclesia for many faithful years. We are very grateful to Sis. Daisy for her dedicated service. The undersigned is now the Ecclesial Secretary/Recording Brother of the Coachella Valley Ecclesia.

Eric Vortriede

HONESDALE, PA

We were glad to have Bro. Steve Cheetham (Moorsetown, NJ) visit us on May 4, 2014, and exhort us. After his excellent exhortation the sisters hosted a wonderful luncheon. We also began having a Wednesday night Holy Bible reading and study meeting in May.

Stephen J. DeMarco

VICTORIA, BC

We continue to be blessed with numerous visitors, coming from near and far. The list is, happily, too long to accurately record. We welcome them all to meet with us.

We were saddened by the loss of our dear Sis. Joan Highton on April 25, 2014. Sis. Joan and husband, Bro. Joe, were part of a major migration to Victoria of British brothers and sisters in the late 1940’s and early 1950’s. Sis. Joan’s parents were John William and Elizabeth Anna Clover who were members of the Oldham Ecclesia in the 1930’s and 40’s. Joan, Mavis, and Jack attended Sunday school there. Joan was baptized in 1942 in Blackpool. Joan Clover and Joe Highton were married in Oldham at the Bridge St. ecclesial hall in 1943. The Clover family moved to Blackpool in 1948. Joan and Joe, with their sons, Beverley, and Kenneth, immigrated to Canada in 1952. Jack followed six months later and was baptized at the Victoria meeting hall in 1954. We mourn her falling asleep, but not as others. We rejoice in the blessed assurance that the saints will not be abandoned in the grave as we all continue in the hope of the resurrection.


For further information about any of these events, please contact the undersigned at victoria@csll.ca.

Clyde Snobelen
WASHINGTON, DC

The Washington DC Ecclesia has enjoyed the visits of many brothers and sisters in 2013 and wish to thank the following brothers for their words of exhortation: Dennis Bevans, Andy Bilello, and David Kerr (Baltimore, MD); Craig McInturff (Shenandoah, VA); Jayson Bright (North Virginia, VA); Richard Palmer (Kings Norton, UK), David King (Richmond-Petersburg, VA); Garnet Alchin (Boolaroo, Aust.), Ken Crane (Bedford, UK); and Neville Clark (Tea Tree Gully, Aust.). In addition the following brethren gave Bible classes: Ryan Mutter and Allen Laben (Baltimore, MD); and Jim Cowie (Morten Bay, Aust.).

In January, we welcomed by way of transfer, Sis. Beth DeSouza, previously a member of the London, Finsbury Park, UK Ecclesia.

In February, Bro. Andrew and Sis. Erin Amis and their three children transferred their membership to the Northern Virginia, VA Christadelphian Ecclesia. They will be greatly missed.

We were saddened by the news that our Bro. Jonathan (Jack) Walker fell asleep in the Lord on February 23, 2013, at the age of ninety-four. He was born May 2, 1919, and was baptized in January 1959. He was a long time member of the Washington DC Ecclesia. Due to failing health, Bro. Jack moved to Orlando, FL in February 2010 to live with his daughter Sis. Debbie Fenn. While there he attended the Orlando Ecclesia as his health permitted but never officially transferred his membership from Washington. He now sleeps in the Lord awaiting the second coming of Jesus and the resurrection of the dead.

In April, we enjoyed fellowship with the members of the Baltimore Ecclesia, and many more visitors to our Semi-annual Baltimore/Washington Gathering weekend. We would like to thank Bro. Tim Lange (Norfolk, VA) who gave classes for the weekend on the subject, “The Miracle of the English Bible”.

In May, we hosted the Mid-Atlantic Fraternal Gathering and Study Weekend in Mt. Laurel, NJ on the theme, “Thou Shalt Not Covet.” We wish to thank Bro. Frank Abel (Hamilton Book Road, ON) for all his efforts in preparing for and leading the study weekend, and the Moorestown, NJ Ecclesia for hosting the study day at their hall.

In November, we had our annual Family Bible Camp Hashawha. We would like to thank Bro. Jason Hensley (Simi Hills, CA) for his studies on, “The Second Exodus and the Work of Elijah”. In December we rejoiced in the marriage of Bro. Matt Link to Sis. Ruth Perry. We welcome Sis. Ruth to the Washington Ecclesia by letter of transfer from Handsworth, her former ecclesia in the UK.

We have worked with the Baltimore, MD Ecclesia on a new preaching effort with Learn to Read the Bible Effectively seminars at both ecclesias and have also begun a series of Mutual Improvement classes for brothers in both ecclesias.

Our Heavenly Father has blessed our ecclesia with the birth of Miles Xavier Lara on June 20, 2013, to Bro. Roberto and Sis. Megan Lara; the birth of Colton Robert Perry on July 23, 2013, to Bro. Jon and Sis. Katy Perry; and the birth of Zara DeSouza on December 30, 2013 to Malcolm and Sis. Beth DeSouza.

Bob Kling
Confucius said, “To see what is right, and to not do it, is want of courage, or of principle.”

We know that our God always does right, as Abraham said in his prayer, “Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?” The children of Israel were commanded to do right, as we read in Deuteronomy, “And thou shalt do that which is right and good in the sight of the Lord: that it may be well with thee.” As disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ, we need to do right, as we read in the book of James, “Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.” If we understand and recognize what is right, why are we not doing what we know we should be doing? According to Confucius, is it because we lack courage or are we lacking principles?

For most of us it surely is the lack of courage. We know we should be doing right, but it seems more than we feel we are able to do. Sometimes we don’t know how to begin, but often, we are afraid. As Oliver Wendell Holmes once said, “Courage is about doing what you’re afraid to do. There can be no courage unless you’re scared. Have the courage to act instead of react.”

We are thankful that we serve a merciful Father who will not give us more than we can handle. As Paul tells us, “There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able: but God is faithful, who will will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.” Our duty is to do the right thing when we see that something should be done. We begin the job and do the best we can do with what we have right where we are. We may feel inadequate to the task, but we can assure ourselves, as Paul did, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”

Helen Keller, who was born blind and deaf, wisely realized, “I am only one, but still I am one. I cannot do everything, but still I can do something. I will not refuse to do the something I can do.” Few of us are as handicapped as she was. She recognized that there were some things that she could do, and so she proceeded to do what she could using those abilities she had.

John Wooden, a famous basketball coach, had good advice when he said, “Don’t let what you cannot do interfere with what you can do.” All too often we use the excuse we cannot do everything, so we do nothing. Truly there is much we cannot do, but, as John Wooden notes, we should not let that stop us. Whenever there is the opportunity, we need to take action and do the right thing, because we know with Christ strengthening us, we can.

The second reason why we do not do what we know is right according to Confucius is want of principle. What does it mean to be unprincipled? By definition, an
unprincipled person follows no moral code, has no integrity and should not be trusted. An unprincipled person is not living a life doing what is right.

Let us hope that “unprincipled” does not describe any of us. Perhaps Confucius’s first suggestion that we are not doing what we should be doing is because we lack the courage.

Many of God’s chosen leaders lacked courage. God tells Abram after he battled the kings, “Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.” God tells Moses when he was facing a battle, “Fear him not: for I have delivered him into thy hand.” After Moses had died and the millions of Israelites were under the command of Joshua, Joshua no doubt lacked courage, because God reassures him several times, “Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.” We know that Joshua obeyed in spite of his fears and led the children of Israel across the Jordan River into the Promised Land.

When King Asa needed courage, we read, “Now the Spirit of God came upon Azariah the son of Oded. And he went out to meet Asa, and said to him: ‘Hear me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin. The Lord is with you while you are with Him. If you seek Him, He will be found by you; but if you forsake Him, He will forsake you. But you, be strong and do not let your hands be weak, for your work shall be rewarded!’ And when Asa heard these words and the prophecy of Oded the prophet, he took courage.” God knows that sometimes we lack the courage we should have and often He sends someone to us to help us.

When Jesus was in his final hours in Gethsemane, God sent an angel to strengthen him. When the apostle Paul was travelling to Rome as a prisoner, we read, “And from thence, when the brethren heard of us, they came to meet us as far as Appii forum, and the three taverns: whom when Paul saw, he thanked God, and took courage.”

How thankful we are to know that the Lord knows all about us, and when we are lacking courage, He will strengthen us. Sometimes the messengers He sends are other weak mortals, but we can help each other by words of encouragement. Also, we can get strength from our own personal study of the Scriptures where we read how others took courage and did do right.

Let us each keep quoting the words of Paul to ourselves, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” He could and so can we.

Robert J. Lloyd

“To see what is right, and to not do it, is want of courage, or of principle.”
JUNE, 2014

28-July 6 Mid-Atlantic Bible School at Shippensburg University, Shippensburg, PA. Theme: “O Lord God of Israel, there is no God like thee” (2Chron 6:14). The teachers will be Bro. Jim Cowie (Moreton Bay, Queensland, Australia): “Contending Earnestly for the Faith” (adults) and “Cameos of the Kingdom” (teens); Bro. Jay Mayock, Jr. (Hamilton, Book Road, ON): “All in All (A Study of Psalm 8)” (both); and Bro. Stephen Palmer (Mumbles, Swansea, UK): “Simon Peter: Learning Lessons in Discipleship” (adults) and “Digging for Treasure in the Epistle of Peter” (teens). Contact by e-mail Robin Colby macbs@live.com or check our website: www.midatlanticbibleschool.com.

JULY, 2014


19-27 Midwest Bible School will be held at Trine University, Angola, IN. Speakers and their topics are: Bro. Jim Cowie (Moreton Bay, Brisbane, Australia): “Nazarites Unto God”, Bro. Matt Norton (Lismore, Australia): “Impressions of Christ” and Bro. Stan Isbell (Houston North, TX): “Discovering Disguises Through the Bible”. For registration information, contact Bro. Mike Livermore, 44943 Yorkshire Dr., Novi, MI, 48375; 248-462-5740, e-mail: mike.live@gmail.com or visit www.midwestbibleschool.com.

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

26-Aug 2 Christadelphian Bible Camp, Manitoulin Island. The speakers will be Bro. Joni Mannell (Walsall, UK) on “The Difference was Daniel” and Bro. Gary Cousens (Cambridge, ON) on “James — My Beloved Brethren”. More details on www.christadelphianbiblecamp.ca. For registration, contact Bro. Alex Browning at jabrowning@rogers.com or phone 1-416-284-0290.
26-Aug 3 Eastern Bible School Connecticut College, New London, CT; Theme: “That We May Know Him.” Bro. Ted Sleeper (San Francisco Peninsula, CA): “That I May Know Him” (adults), and “Challenges to God and Faith” (teens); Bro. Andrew Bramhill (Shirley, UK): “The Lord’s Encounters With Women” (adults), and “Questions, Questions, Questions” (teens); Bro. Tec Morgan (Birmingham, UK): “God Has Spoken” (adults), and “The Kingdom of God” (teens). For registration information contact Sis. Cindy Nevers at 18 Sibley St., Auburn, MA 01501 or cindynevers@verizon.net.


AUGUST, 2014

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


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

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

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

30-31 Victoria, BC Fraternal gathering. Bro. Dennis Paggi will be the speaker on the subject, “The Potter and Clay-God’s Hand in the Lives of the Believers.” Contact: Bro. Clyde Snobelen at victoria@csl.ca.

SEPTEMBER, 2014

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

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

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

20-21 London, ON Fraternal Gathering. Our speaker will be Bro. Andrew Bramhill, (Shirley, UK): “Themes from Luke’s Record”. Bro. Andrew will also be giving a Bible Class on Wednesday, September 17th on the subject “The Year of Jubilee”.

OCTOBER, 2014

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

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

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

NOVEMBER, 2014

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”. Please contact Bro. Joe Bennett at (219) 762-2704 or jkb8275@comcast.net.

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

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

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

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.

MARCH 2015

15 Victoria, BC Spring study weekend with Bro. Jim Harper. Contact: Bro. Clyde Snobelen at victoria@csll.ca.
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The CHRISTADELPHIAN TIDINGS of the Kingdom of God
Peter Hemingray, Editor

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Special Issues

Welcome to the latest special issue, which focuses on those individuals of the early church identified as apostles in the pages of the New Testament.

Previous Special Issues have included:

2008 – The Women of Matthew
2009 - Hearing the Word: Studies on the Parable of the Sower
2010 - The Proverbs of Agur: A Detailed Study of Proverbs 30
2011 - Preaching in the Americas
2012 – Christadelphians And The World Around Us
2013 - By Sisters and For Sisters
2014 – All the Apostles in the Bible

We do have extra copies of most of these issues, and will send them upon request to: Brian McDonald, (bmcdonald@mcdonald-printing.com). Single issues $2 each + shipping: multiple copies will be advised.
Introduction
This special issue is designed to strengthen the commitment of all of us to behaving like an apostle – one who is sent with a vitally important message, which is of riches in the Kingdom beyond any present day valuation.

What is an Apostle?
Although the word is quite common in our language, it is not really an English one, but a Greek word — apostolos — in an English dress. It was not a term of frequent occurrence in Greek literature, but it has some interesting associations in terms of classical Greek. Herodotus used it in his record of an incident when the king of Sardis sent a herald to Miletus, so that an apostle in this sense may be a herald, one who takes a message from someone to a particular individual or people. The word is best defined in classical Greek as a messenger, but more than a messenger, an ambassador, or an envoy. It is related to apostoleus, a magistrate who had to fit out a squadron for service, while a kindred word is apostolē, a sending off, or away, a mission, a dispatching. In the Greek Septuagint version of the Old Testament, we find only one example, where it is usually translated “sent”:

“And it was so, when Ahijah heard the sound of her feet, as she came in at the door, that he said, Come in, thou wife of Jeroboam; why feignest thou thyself to be another? for I am sent to thee with heavy tidings” (1Kgs 14:6).

Thus the Greek apostolos is composed of apo, from, or away from; and stolos, an equipment, an expedition, whether by land or sea, but generally used for sending or going on a journey, or for whosoever goes, or is sent, on a journey. It also carries with it the idea that an important message is associated with the sending: as in an ambassador, who is one charged with representing the authority of the person who sends. The word was therefore a very suitable one to apply to men who were given the commission to make in turn disciples of all the nations, to go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation (Matt 28:19; Mark 16:15). It is also the term that is used for those who are charged with carrying the message of Jesus, as they changed from those who are taught (disciples) to those who teach (apostles). To say an apostle simply means “one who is sent” is incorrect in how the New Testament uses it, as we shall see. It is an example of the way the authors of the New Testament, through inspiration, took classical Greek words and used them in a way quite different to their prior use.

The application of the term “apostles” varies in different parts of the New Testament. In the Gospels, it generally refers to the twelve disciples (except probably in Luke 11:49, where it seems to be prophetic). Note the term is not used in the Gospel of John, except as noted below. In the earlier chapters of the Acts it refers to the Twelve who were personally chosen by Jesus of Nazareth to be his special companions, substituting Matthias for Judas Iscariot. They were the leaders of the church during its earliest days. Later, the term was applied to Paul and Barnabas,
and, by implication, to James, the Lord’s brother (Gal 1:19). Besides these, the term is applied to Andronicus and Junia, fellow prisoners with Paul, who he says were of note among the apostles (Rom 16:7). In another connection it is applied to certain officers in the early church, being placed before pastors and teachers (1Cor 12:28; Eph 4:11). The term is therefore somewhat elastic in use, in addition, in three cases the Greek word is used, but most translations use other terms:

“Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him” (John 13:16).

“As for Titus, he is my partner and fellow worker in your service; and as for our brethren, they are messengers of the churches, the glory of Christ” (2Cor 8:23).

“I have thought it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier, and your messenger and minister to my need” (Phil 2:25).

Only Young’s Literal Translation uses “Apostle” in all these cases, but it is difficult to see why Titus in particular, as well as Epaphroditus, cannot be considered to be Apostles, so they will here be so treated.

**Apostle — the various meanings**

a) In the New Testament, “Apostle” always denotes a man who is sent, and sent with full authority. Thus the Greek gives us only the form of the NT concept. We can say this quite exclusively because throughout the NT the word is used only of men, although according to the course of things women might also have been called apostles. Yet this would have been a self-contradiction, since women had very restricted legal competence in Judaism. Above all, they could not appear as witnesses.

b) In John 3:16 “Apostle” is simply a rendering of the legal term in its sense of one who is lawfully charged to represent the person and cause of another. “Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent [apostle] greater than he that sent him” (John 13:16).

c) Apostle — commissioned representative of a congregation. “Whether any do enquire of Titus, he is my partner and fellowhelper concerning you: or our brethren be enquired of, they are the messengers [apostles] of the churches, and the glory of Christ” (2Cor 8:23).

d) Finally, apostle is a comprehensive term for “bearers of the NT message.” The name is first borne by the circle of the twelve, i.e., the original apostles (including Matthias brought in as a replacement in Acts 1:26). Their sending by Jesus is presupposed.

This last use dominates the presentation of Luke, in his Gospel and especially Acts. The twelve are here almost a closed college alongside that of the other disciples. Among them the figure of Peter is pre-eminent (2:37; 5:29). In all these cases the term is absolute and self-explanatory; and it is always plural.

Yet the name is also applied to the first Christian missionaries or their most prominent representatives, including some who did not belong even to the
wider groups of disciples. Even in Acts we find this usage at least in 14:4, 14, where Paul and Barnabas are called apostles without any sense of impropriety on the part of the author. Thus, although the twelve are apostles for Luke, they are not the only apostles. Paul especially is an apostle, in this sense, and be constantly uses the word of himself, especially in the salutations to his epistles. James, the Lord’s brother, may also be mentioned: like Paul he joined the community only after the death of Jesus.

e) In Heb 3:1 Jesus himself is called apostle. “Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus.” Here the only possible meaning of apostle is that in Jesus there has taken place the definitive revelation of God by Jesus.

The twelve Apostles – an introduction

Below is a table of the twelve, together with their names in the various gospels.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Simon, who is called Peter</td>
<td>Simon (to whom he gave the name Peter)</td>
<td>Simon, whom he named Peter</td>
<td>Peter</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrew, his brother</td>
<td>Andrew</td>
<td>Andrew his brother</td>
<td>Andrew (identified as Peter’s brother)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James the son of Zebedee</td>
<td>James the son of Zebedee</td>
<td>James</td>
<td>identified only as one of the “sons of Zebedee”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John, his brother</td>
<td>John the brother of James (to whom he gave the name Boanerges, meaning “sons of Thunder”)</td>
<td>John</td>
<td>identified as one of the “sons of Zebedee”, thought to be the “disciple whom Jesus loved” [13:23; 20:2]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Philip</td>
<td>Philip</td>
<td>Philip</td>
<td>Philip</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Bartholomew</td>
<td>Bartholomew</td>
<td>Bartholomew</td>
<td>Bartholomew or Nathanael</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thomas</td>
<td>Thomas</td>
<td>Thomas</td>
<td>Thomas (also called Didymus) [11:16; 20:24, 21:2]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Matthew, the tax collector</td>
<td>Matthew/Levi</td>
<td>Matthew/Levi</td>
<td>not mentioned</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James the son of Alphaeus</td>
<td>James the son of Alphaeus</td>
<td>James the son of Alphaeus</td>
<td>not mentioned</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Thaddaeus  |  Thaddaeus | Judas the son of James | “Judas not Iscariot”[14:22]
Simon the Zealot | Simon the Zealot | Simon who was called the Zealot | not mentioned
Judas Iscariot | Judas Iscariot | Judas Iscariot | Judas Iscariot

Others mentioned as Apostles are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person called apostle</th>
<th>Where in Scripture</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paul</td>
<td>Numerous Places</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barnabas</td>
<td>Acts 14:14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andronicus and Junia</td>
<td>Rom 16:7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silas or Silvanus</td>
<td>1Thess 1:1, 2:6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timothy</td>
<td>1Thess 1:1, 2:6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Epaphroditus</td>
<td>Phil 2:25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apollos</td>
<td>1Cor 4:9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Titus</td>
<td>2Cor 8:23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Many of these individuals, along with some of the twelve apostles/disciples of Jesus, have almost nothing recorded other than their name, but we can be sure the very fact they are mentioned as apostles says a great deal for their zeal and mission. Many, also, of these individuals are subject to separate articles in this special issue, so we will not introduce them here. However, we cannot ignore the contributions of the apostles not elsewhere dealt with, so we will cover them, somewhat briefly, in one later article. Timothy, although on our list, is being currently dealt with in a series of articles by Bro. Ryan Mutter, so we will defer to those articles.

**Other sources**

The literature of our community is rather scant in its consideration of the apostles as a group. Some years ago, Bro. Arthur Hall wrote a little book entitled “The Twelve — The Lord’s Men”. There is also a little book called “His Twelve Disciples” by Bro. M.D. Southgate. These two hard to find books, together with scattered articles in the various magazines, represent all I can find. It is therefore partially to fill this void this special issue was put together. It is important to remind ourselves, in these turbulent times, of the lives of the apostles, and their commitment to both spreading the gospel and giving guidance to the nascent ecclesias.

*Peter Hemingray*

**Notes:**
1. The basis of this section is to be found in “Theological Dictionary of the New Testament” by Kittel et al.
The first, Simon, who is called Peter — Lessons in Leadership.

The importance of knowing Simon¹ is vital to understanding him as an apostle, and understanding his role in the first century ecclesia. To take lessons from his life and role without a correct understanding of his personality and his characteristics, would be a mistake. The context of such understanding in any real life situation can change your conclusions about the motive and reasons behind the actions. So I will focus on his character as we discuss his vital role as leader, first of the twelve apostles, and then of the early church.

To begin with, we need to put Simon Peter in a position to which we can relate. I know I often find it difficult to empathize when I’m studying the lives of Biblical men and women. I tend to see them as dynamic characters in an interesting book, rather than as real humans who lived lives with the same principles and goals as we have.

The problem we face looking from our perspective, and making conclusions before thinking about the information we have been given about Peter, is that we remove ourselves from the thick of the action, and create our own conclusions based on a few small scenario’s. This is the mistake Jack Zavada made on the christianity.about.com website; and without seeming presumptive, it is the same mistake that many Christadelphians who have studied Peter also seem to have made. Jack described Peter as “…a rough and tumble man whose emotions often got him into trouble… His aggressiveness made Peter a natural spokesman for the twelve. Often, however, he spoke before he thought, and his words led to embarrassment.”

People see Peter as a spontaneous lightning bolt, an irrational, hyperactive disciple, the ‘big brother’ to the sons of thunder. Now, a lot of things Jesus did do not make immediate sense to us; like giving the money bag to the man most likely to abuse the privilege; but choosing an “irrational, hyperactive, ask questions later” type character to “feed his sheep”, the sheep he lived for every day, and for which he sacrificed everything, does not seem to add up at all.

Peter was a family man; he ran a business with his cousins, he was married, and his home life was shared with his brother and his wife’s mother. Before we even get past these introductive details, the character profile does not seem to fit. A man who is not in control of his mouth or his actions would not last long in a family business, let alone in a small, cosy house with his mother-in-law.

The character of Peter

I believe the first real picture we get into Peter’s true character is shown at his calling. Jesus saw him fishing with his brother, and asked him to be one of his disciples. Immediately, right then and right there, Peter left his nets, and followed Jesus. Peter knew his business and income were not an eternal method of providing for his family, and he trusted Jesus, and was fiercely loyal to him from this moment on.

Consider the result of the healing of Peter’s mother-in-law in Matt 8. Peter, and a large amount, if not all of his business, had closed as they have committed them-
selves to the service and discipleship of Christ. He would have already been feeling some pressure on his responsibility as a husband to provide for his household, and then his mother-in-law falls sick with a fever, a life threatening situation in those times. Jesus intervenes and heals her, and I don’t think it’s a mistake that it tells us that “she arose, and ministered unto them” (Matt 8:14). This would have meant a huge amount to Peter, and we’ll see, that from this moment onwards, his appreciation of Jesus, and his loyalty and love for him was on an immeasurable scale.

There is the situation where he wanted to be with Jesus more than anything else, and walked across water to be with him. Then in Mark 8:29 he declares his belief in Christ and his role as the Messiah; but the intensity of his devotion to Jesus, and a small picture into the closeness of their friendship is portrayed in vs. 32 after Jesus has told him about how he will be killed. Peter can’t bear the thought of what Jesus has told him is going to happen, and the literal translation is that he physically takes hold of Jesus, and forbids him to go any further. There is nothing irrational or overzealous about this. This is a man, who loves his friend, and doesn’t want to see harm come to him. There is an attribute of a shepherd being portrayed, but as Jesus explains, Peter’s feelings on a human level will interfere with the greater purpose that is being fulfilled. Jesus would have loved to remain with his disciples too, you can see this by the language of his prayer in John 17, and seeing Peter visibly upset would have only exacerbated this normal human emotion.

Peter was utterly loyal and completely confident in his friendship with Jesus. He could not have loved Jesus more, because he was prepared to die for him (John 15:13). Many would contest this due to the three denials. But if we consider the situation in the Garden when the mob comes to take Jesus, even if every disciple had weapons, it wouldn’t take a mighty general to explain that their chances would have been close to nil. Peter knew that as he drew his sword and took a deadly swing at one of the high priest’s men, it meant that it was open season for them to retort with the same.

“Then Simon Peter having a sword drew it, and smote the high priest’s servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant’s name was Malchus. Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?” (John 18:10-11).

It was the unexpected response of Jesus that put Peter into a helpless position so far as human efforts were concerned, and this is what I believe lead to his fear in the courtyard. The fear stemmed from his not knowing what to do. His reaction to this circumstance was for self-preservation, because in his mind, the only way of saving Jesus had gone, and he at that immediate time, did not recall or perhaps understand the greater work that was being completed.

Hopefully looking at these few early situations from a fresh perspective leaves the picture of the rash, act-without-thinking, aggressive Peter, far in the back of your minds; and instead, a much more realistic picture, of a natural leader, devoted to family, compulsively attracted to Christ, a man whose intense passion for his master, and naturally protective personality — both more than appropriate on a
human level. These characteristics had to raise his mind, and look to things further than the present, and further than the loyalty of a mortal friendship.

This change in the life of Peter, brought about by a massive blow to his expectations, was what caused him to become a true rock in the early ecclesia.

When we look at ‘natural born’ leaders in today’s world, they are strong willed, motivated, and confident in their abilities. Their resolve in turn instils focus and determination in their employees that either the corporate chain, or the local territory’s food chain, put in their hands.

The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God (1Cor 3:19) and it is the will of God that the ignorance of foolish men should be put to silence (1Pet 2:15). It is very evident from these statements, and the example of Christ’s choice of ecclesial leader in Peter, that just because somebody would be seen to be a leader in the things this mortal life, their position does not carry over to the things which are eternal. It is so often the case that the wisest advice, and the strongest encouragement, comes from the feeblest of the elderly, or the freshest of spiritual newborns.

This is not to say that a natural ability, useful for progression in secular areas of this life, is worthless to God. Some would suggest the opposite in the example given in the parable of the talents (the pun in English is quite ironic). What it does mean to say however, is that we cannot by our natural abilities earn a position of leadership in the ecclesia, rather it is the role of a servant we are all required to contribute. Unfortunately due to the extent of the liberalities taken by some, there would probably be retort if I did not point out that our contributions need to be within certain bounds when expressed publicly; the very obvious example is that for the sake of maintaining the symbol of Christ’s headship, women and men's contributions are different in an ecclesia. (This may seem to be a tangent, however Peter gives direct advice towards it in regard to exhibiting true leadership within marriage, reflecting into the ecclesia — 1Pet 3.)

**The advice of Peter**

Over his two epistles, Peter gives much valuable advice to us.

To those who lead for their own gain (2Pet 2:3-4). This might be through covetousness, or a desire to have greater position and honour amongst the brethren; saying what they need to say to acquire their brethren’s admiration and receive in turn an ego boost. Basically it says in vs. 4, it isn’t worth it, because James 3:1 applies directly. They will be judged more strictly.

To the elders (beginning of 1Pet 5). Feed the flock, not because you feel like you have to, or because it satisfies you to do so, but because you willingly desire to help feed the flock. Don’t do your role by acting as though you are the master, controlling and being a subjugator, but instead, undertake your role as an example, in humble service, demonstrating a pattern that is useful to follow.

To the youthful, be obedient to the elder (Christ). Live your own life for other people, in a way that is truly humble. Because a proud person repels from God, but a humble person receives humility.
Peter certainly backed his advice for the elders with the example that he showed. But in regard to his own role as the rock, which Christ used to build his ecclesia on, it is very interesting to see just how he went about it.

1Pet 2 describes the way Peter saw the whole rock metaphor, and it shows exactly why Christ chose him. There is nothing about himself in there, but instead, he directs the audience to look at the cornerstone, and model themselves on that. This is the sign of a true and humble spiritual leader. Someone who is willing to sacrifice their life, literally, or in the giving of time and energy to encouraging their fellow brethren and sisters. You’ll notice his positive direction towards those who are disobedient in vs. 7, encouraging them, because this new spiritual house is capable of reshaping stones that may not have been the right fit the first time around.

A true leader, even one selected by Christ, doesn’t point at themself and say, “copy me”, they direct the attention to the real head of our worldwide ecclesia and say, “attain to that way of life”. They gently correct, and regularly count the sheep to ensure none are missing.

Peter demonstrated that this is a role that all who have received the free gift are required to undertake. There are always sheep in the flock that need feeding, and there are plenty of desolate ones that need to belong to the flock of Christ.

“Be always ready to give an answer of the hope that is in your heart” (2Pet 3:9-10). “For the Lord is not slack concerning his promise ….. and the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night.” (1Pet 3:15).

“…are you my friend? Feed my sheep” (John 21:17) — Jesus

Tobias Knowles (Southern Vales, Adelaide, AUS)

Notes:
1. Simon undoubtedly was his birth name, but he was named Peter by Jesus himself: see John 1:42.
James and John — Inseparable Brothers

There are the four places where Jesus’ apostles are named: Matt 10:2-4, Mark 3:16-19, Luke 6:13-16 and Acts 1:13. Though the order of the list changes each time, three things remain the same. The list always starts with Peter, ends with Judas Iscariot (except for Acts 1:13, since by that time Judas had died), and though the grouping and order of the other apostles change, the Gospels and Acts all list James and John together.

James and John: here were two inseparable brothers who served together in the Lord’s service. Together they were called by Jesus to be among his 12 disciples (Mark 1:19-20), named “Sons of Thunder” (Mark 3:14-17), struck out in judgment (Luke 9:49, 9:54) and as a result received rebuke and instruction (Luke 9:50, 9:56), were select witnesses to Jesus’ miracles (Mark 1:29, 5:37), petitioned Jesus for special favor (Mark 10:35-41) and received more instruction as a result), were present at Jesus’ transfiguration (Matt 17:1), heard the details of the Olivet Prophecy (Mark 13:3-4), were drawn aside with Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane (Mark 14:33), pulled the miraculous draught of fishes and saw the risen Lord (John 21:1,6; Acts 1:13). Together they witnessed Jesus’ ascension into heaven and saw thousands of people answer the call of the gospel; however, although these two brothers were associated so closely in their lives, they met very different ends.

John was the last of the apostles to die. After the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD, it seems he joined the Ephesian ecclesia before being exiled by the Roman government to the prison island of Patmos (Rev 1:9).

In contrast, James was the first apostle to die for his faith. In 44 AD, just prior to the feast of Passover, James was killed at the order of King Herod Agrippa I, grandson of Herod the Great, in an effort to appease his Jewish populous (Acts 12:1-2). James was not the first follower of Christ to lose his life for his faith (Stephen’s death is recorded in Acts 7:58-60. Acts 9:1 speaks of Saul’s “threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord”), but he was the first apostle to do so. Herod Agrippa’s sword shattered any illusion that the apostles were immune to violence and persecution. Even though James, along with his brother John, was particularly close to Jesus, this did not mean they would be free from persecution. Jesus had warned that his followers would face hardship, opposition and even death (Matt 10:16-26).

While James faced his hardship in the form of an early, violent end to his life, John’s hardship was stretched over the following 50 years as he witnessed waves of persecution and the rise of apostasy within the ecclesia. However, though the forms of their trials differed, both were prophesied by Jesus some 14 years before when Jesus told James and John that they “shall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of” (Mark 10:39). By the end of their lives, James and John did drink of that cup, but both men had to learn that this cup of Christ’s sufferings must come before a crown of glory. Though the nature of the drink differed between the two brothers, the principle they needed to learn was the same.

We first meet James and John in the gospel of Matthew while fishing in the Sea of Galilee: “And going on from thence, [Jesus] saw other two brethren, James the son of
Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them. And they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him” (Matt 4:21-22). Their response to Jesus’ call was instantaneous and without hesitation — a virtue in this case, but as we see in three separate instances, the immediate, zealous responses of James and John were often not tempered with knowledge. James and John were quick to act on how they thought things should go and had to learn the principle that “zeal is not good without knowledge” (Prov 19:2, Holman’s Christian Standard Bible).

Shortly after their calling, Jesus gives us some insight into their character in calling them “Boanerges” or “Sons of Thunder” (Mark 3:13-17). The Greek is here a transliteration of a compound Hebrew word that refers to someone who “quivers violently with emotion”, or as Jesus says, like thunder. This can be either a good thing or bad (Strong, Gesenius). James and John had to learn to control their intense zeal, temper it with knowledge and use it to do God’s will. We are shown three times in the gospels where they failed to do this.

The three failures

The first instance is in Luke 9:49-50. John told Jesus “Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name; and we forbade him, because he followeth not with us.” Their reaction was instantaneous when they saw something they thought was amiss — they “forbade” or prevented this man from continuing in his task. James and John showed zeal — but as Jesus points out in the next verse — it was not tempered with knowledge. He rebuked them directly. “Forbid him not” said Jesus, “for he that is not against us is for us” (Luke 9:50). Mark’s account adds this “for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me” (Mark 9:39).

The account is reminiscent of one in Num 11:25-29 in which there was a report of two men prophesying in the camp. When Joshua heard it, he responded in a manner similar to James and John. “My Lord Moses,” Joshua cried, “forbid them” (Num 11:28). Likewise, Jesus’ reaction in the gospels is an echo of Moses words, “Enviest thou for my sake? would God that all the Lord’s people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his spirit upon them!” (Num 11:29) Just like zealous Joshua was too quick to judge and had to be corrected by Moses, James and John had to learn from Jesus that zeal must be combined with knowledge.

James and John had a second opportunity to learn this lesson as Jesus and the disciples journeyed down to Jerusalem. Only recorded in Luke 9:51-56, we are told that when James and John learned that the Samaritans would not receive Jesus, they turned and say to Jesus in Luke 9:54, “Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did?” Having been on the wrong side of an Old Testament precedent in the prior situation (where James and John embodied the zealous but misguided words of Joshua to Moses), here James and John cite the actions of Elijah. (Interestingly, this is the only place where the Samaritans are portrayed in a negative light — consider Luke 10:25-37, 17:11-19, Acts 1:8, 8:4-25.)

This reference seems appropriate for the context as well. We are told in the beginning of Luke 9 that James and John witnessed Jesus’ transfiguration where they saw
Moses and Elijah — having failed to follow the example of Moses previously, could they redeem themselves by following the example of Elijah in calling down fire (2Kgs 1:1-18)? And having just seen Jesus’ transfiguration, they certainly understood that Jesus had access to this kind of power!

Jesus taught them again that it is not good to have zeal without knowledge, “But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men’s lives, but to save them” (Luke 9:55-56). They failed to understand that the precedent of Elijah was not just one of fire and judgment, but one of preparing people’s hearts for the Lord. It was the later example that James and John were supposed to follow.

Likewise, they failed to understand the nature of Jesus’ ministry. Reading from Isaiah in the synagogue in Nazareth, Jesus summarized his role this way: “He hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord” (Luke 4:18-19). Jesus purposely ended his citation of Isaiah Isa 61:1-2 prior to the description of God’s righteous judgment, “the day of vengeance of our God” (Is 61:2b). The purpose of his earthly ministry was to “proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord” (Isa 61:1a). When he returns he will bring “the day of vengeance of our God” (Isa 61:2b).

Jesus taught them that their role was to call men to repentance and warn of the judgment to come (compare with Luke 9:5, 10:13-16 and 17:20-36). But if they were rejected, the response is to move on, even as Jesus “went to another village” (Luke 9:56).

The final time that Jesus redirected James and John’s zeal is recorded in Matt 20:20-23 and Mark 10:35-41. In both accounts, Jesus gave his clearest statement yet about what awaited him once they reached Jerusalem: “Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be delivered unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes; and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles: And they shall mock him, and shall scourge him, and shall spit upon him, and shall kill him: and the third day he shall rise again” (Mark 10:33-34, cp. Matt 20:18-19).

On the right hand and the left hand

But James and John heard only want they wanted to hear. The danger of uninstructed zeal is that it can cause us to completely miss the plain truth, and here James and John respond to the pronouncement of Jesus’ crucifixion with a question about securing a position of preeminence in the Kingdom.

Mark’s gospel records the following “And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, come unto him, saying, Master, we would that thou shouldest do for us whatsoever we shall desire. And he said unto them, What would ye that I should do for you? They said unto him, Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory” (Mark 10:35-37).

James and John weren’t trying to be insensitive to Jesus’ revelation about his upcoming crucifixion — they just interpreted what Jesus had said to mean what they wanted to hear! James and John thought that Jesus was clearly talking about the final conflict that would usher in the kingdom and that now would be the perfect time to ensure
they secured places next to Jesus in that new order! Their statement came out of zeal for the kingdom and a desire to be close to their Master in his glory; but again, it was misguided. This time, James and John were wrong on three counts.

1) First, as Jesus showed in his response, James and John didn't know what they were asking for. They enthusiastically responded that they would be able to drink of the cup and partake in the baptism of Jesus’ death, but failed to understand what that would involve (Mark 10:38-39).

2) Second, James and John failed to realize that they would not achieve preeminence through petition. Jesus told them in Mark 10:40 “But to sit on my right hand and on my left hand is not mine to give; but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared.” This was a lesson he had taught his disciples before in a parallel episode in Mark 9:31-37. Both instances start with Jesus proclaiming that he is going to be killed and rise again (Mark 9:31, Mark 10:33-34) and are followed by a question of obtaining positions of greatness (Mark 9:33-34, Mark 10:35-37). In Mark 9, the question arises among all the disciples “they had disputed among themselves, who should be the greatest” (Mark 9:34). In Mark 10, the question of preeminence comes specifically from James and John — they had failed to learn the lesson Jesus taught in the earlier episode “If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all” (Mark 9:35).

3) The third issue created by their question is seen in Mark 10:41. Their unguided zeal upsets the other disciples, “And when the ten heard it, they began to be much displeased with James and John” (Mark 10:41). All the disciples had heard Jesus’ lesson in the prior chapter and here James and John were looking for special favor, pushing themselves ahead of the rest.

James and John, the Sons of Thunder, showed zeal for the Truth but needed to have it tempered with knowledge. Their temperament led them to be quick to judge and speak, where they needed to be reminded three times of the importance of service, love, mercy and understanding.

The lessons learnt?

And it seems that both learned this lesson.

In Acts 12:1-2, James became the first of the apostles to lay down his life in his service to Jesus, drinking of the cup and partaking in the baptism of Jesus’ suffering. James had learned that service would lead to salvation and that the cross came before the crown.

John also drank of that cup and learned to live a life of devoted service and sacrifice for the Truth, where his zeal, while undiminished, became guided with knowledge. We see in his care for Mary (John 19:25-27), deference to Peter (John 20:4-5) and especially in his epistles that John learned the lessons Jesus taught him about tempering judgment with mercy, understanding the Father’s plan and importance of love for our brethren.

The two Sons of Thunder bookend the apostolic ministry and give us an example of the need for zeal and heart-felt enthusiasm for the Truth. They also serve as a warning of how that zeal must be combined with knowledge.

Allen Laben (Baltimore, MD)
Matthew: “The Gift of God”

Matthew: His calling

Due to the fact of where Matthew worked and lived (in Capernaum), it is a good possibility that he may have seen Jesus or even met him before his calling. In both Mark 2:14 and Luke 5:27, 29 Matthew is referred to as Levi. We know that Jesus was accustomed to changing people’s name to reflect the purpose of the work they would perform in the Lord. Many of the Apostles had their names changed to emphasize who they were to become. When Levi worked as a “publican” or a “Tax Collector” most likely he would have joined (the meaning of his name) himself very closely with the Roman government. Jesus changes his name to Matthew in order that he could use his God given talent as a writer and so likewise become Matthew (“the Gift of God.”)

I find The Calling of Matthew quite intriguing. There is no dialog between Levi and Jesus at all; it was just a simple “Follow Me. And he arose, and followed him.” There was no hesitation on the part of Matthew at all. We might take a second and think about our own Calling. Was it like this? Luke 9:62 comes to mind when I think of his response. “And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.”

It appears that Levi was ready to make that change and put his hand to the plough and not look back, but serve the Lord with all his might. I can imagine that Matthew already understood the principle, “Thou shalt Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself.” Even knowing all this, he knew it was necessary to take the next step. This is where the gospel of Luke adds the comment “And he left all, rose up and followed him.” At that very moment, he left everything behind. The first thing he had to do was walk away from a very lucrative job as a Tax Collector and eventually put everything behind in order to be an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ. This was the first test of his faith.

His identity

As it was already mentioned that Matthew’s name before his calling was Levi. In Mark 2:14 Levi’s father is identified as Alpheus and that is all we are told about his family. Another apostle, James the son of Alpheus, had a father with the same name. It is doubtful that the two were brothers or we would have been given some other Scripture to back this up1. As a speculative thought, I wonder if Levi was born into the tribe of Levi? It was common in the Jewish world to name the young men according to what tribe that born into, especially if they were exceptional children. If indeed Levi was a Levite by birth, his life and career up to this point was a reflection of how far the children of Israel had removed themselves from the principles that God had laid down for them to follow in the Laws that were given to Moses.

Living in North America all my life, I find it hard to comprehend the occupation of a publican during the time period in which Matthew lived. The Roman practice of placing the burden of tax collection on individuals or groups was later referred to as Tax Farming or Revenue Leasing. In essence, these individuals or groups paid the taxes for a certain area and for a certain period of time and then attempted to cover their outlay by collecting money or saleable goods from the people within that area. If this
occupation does not merit the title of “licensed extortioner” I don’t what does. One of the spiritual pit falls of the occupation would be to let greed get the best of you. If the economy was doing well you could see how easy it would be to take advantage of those passing through your tax office if you had an “Evil Eye”. John the Baptist gave this advice to the publicans what they should do.

“Then came also publicans to be baptized, and said unto him, ‘Master, what shall we do?’ And he said unto them, ‘Exact no more than that which is appointed you’ ” (Luke 3:12-13).

John’s response to the publican’s was simple and Godly advice. “Do good to all men, especially those of the household of faith” and don’t be greedy. Be content with the things that God hath given you.

The only modern day example that I can share that even comes remotely close to Matthew’s occupation is one of a trip that my wife and I took to the Bahamas. It was in the spring of 2001, we took a trip to Treasure Key, one of the barrier islands. When traveling to foreign countries you must pass through customs when entering and leaving the country. They want to know the purpose of your visit, and so forth. Entering is sometimes easier than leaving. When departing they want you to declare any and all goods that you have purchased during you stay. I had heard of the trafficking of illegal goods in the 70s, 80s, and the 90s in the Bahamas although I had never been to the Island’s. The customs agent that waited on us was in his sixties and had probably worked in this position for quite some time. My guess was that he had traded for some of the jewelry that he was wearing, turning a “blind eye” to goods that passed through his gate. The Rolex watch, the 18K gold chain around his neck, and the gold ring that weighted down his right hand, I doubt came from his paycheck as a “customs agent.”

This is the impression that I have in mind of how the Jewish people felt about “publicans” during the time in which Matthew worked. They were viewed as crooks, swindlers, and classified with some of the worst “sinners”. Who would want a job like that? It is possible that Levi chose this career because the Levitical Priesthood had fallen apart, and he noticed there was money to be made if you were a savvy-minded businessman and one could put up with the public humiliation. It also appears that the “publicans” had formed a society of their own, maybe something like a Guild. Based on some of the comments from the scribes and the Pharisees it was necessary for them to band together in order to survive those troublesome times.

“And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples)” (Matt 9:10).

**His hospitality**

There are only two publicans named in the New Testament, Matthew and Zacchaeus. Both of these men, it appears, experienced very lucrative careers as tax collectors. Both men also had a sense of hospitality. Both men gladly received Jesus into their house, fed him and his disciples and treated them like honored guests. (Luke 19:1-9.) Here is a curious thought! Who washed Jesus’ feet when he entered the house as a guest? We know from our history studies that it was customary for someone to wash the feet of the houseguest. The only thing that I could compare that to today, would be to ask
your guest if they need to freshen up and to offer them something to drink. In today’s world, we might refer to this behavior as having good manners and being hospitable.

The motive of both Matthew and Zacchaeus in dining with Jesus was to learn more about him and to see if he truly was the Messiah. We are told that many publicans were looking for the Messiah based on Luke 7:29. “And all the people that heard Him (Jesus), and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John.” Maybe this is how Matthew and Zacchaeus knew about Jesus. We might contrast Luke 7:36-50 where “one of the Pharisees” invited Jesus to dine with him. Remember this is where Jesus chastised Simon, the Pharisee, for not washing his feet, nor greeting him with a Holy Kiss, nor anointing his head. Where was his hospitality? It appears that he had an agenda, and it did not seem to be on a spiritual plane. This is when we are introduced to a woman referred to by Simon as “a sinner”. Some translations call her a harlot, and some mention that this could possibly be Mary Magdalene. Either way, it is interesting that her vision of Jesus was very clear. Jesus emphasized the point that all men are sinners and this woman had sinned much, (vs.47) “her sins, which are many.” Although this was true, because of her great Faith, her sins were forgiven and Jesus tells her “Thy faith hath saved thee”. I wonder if this woman came to Matthew’s house when he held the feast just before he set off on his mission work as Jesus disciple/apostle. This is another probing thought. Are we hospitable?

**Good advice**

Matt 18 has always been one of my “Go To” chapters whenever I am in the midst of conflict, or if a friend is seeking advice about conflict that they are dealing with. The chapter revolves around being converted and developing a child-like spirit if we desire to enter into the Kingdom of God. One aspect the Matthew dwells on is offences and how to repair the breach. This is where I can see how his career as a Publican became a useful tool in writing this gospel message. No doubt Matthew had encountered re-buke, offences, conflict and many other negative responses when he told them what the tax was going to be if they wanted to pass through his collection booth. Matt 18:15-17 provides us with simple spiritual advice on how to handle trespasses. None of the other Gospel writers seem to address this matter in this way. Matthew gives us a step-by-step recipe to follow that only requires us to be honest, loving, humble and forgiving. If we choose to skip one of these critical steps for reconciliation the results can be disasters. Matthew concludes his thoughts with the remark:

> “But if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto the as an heathen man and a publican” (Matt 18:15).

Thank you Matthew for this thought. He knew what it was like to be treated like a publican by the world, and now he knows how Jesus treated the heathen and the publicans. Forgive them 70 times 7 is the advice that Jesus gave Peter just minutes later. I can hardly wait to ask Matthew about some of his other encounters as a tax collector that helped prepare him for his new life as a disciple of Jesus Christ.

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**Notes:**

1. [Editor]: It is normally assumed, both within and outside our community, that in fact the two were brothers.
Andrew

We are so accustomed to the idea that Jesus called his disciples to help him with his preaching, that it comes as a surprise to realize that, although this was one of the reasons for their call, it was not the first one. Mark informs us that “he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach, and to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils” (Mark 3:14,15). It is clear, therefore, that he valued their companionship, and that there was something that the disciple could give to his Lord.

It is a valuable thought that the twelve, in spite of their limitations, could help Jesus with their fellowship, and that their presence made it easier for him to face the immense difficulties which he overcame. In fact, their association was a partnership in which the devotion of the disciples, misdirected as it sometimes was, repaid in some measure his services to them.

The development of the band of men who were afterwards to carry the gospel throughout the world was one of the supreme achievements of Jesus. The insight with which he realized their good points, and the skill with which he developed these qualities until they came to full fruition, are among the noblest manifestations of his grace. His care for them is instanced by many occurrences in the Gospel stories which show his peculiar ability to bring the best out in them.

“What seek ye?”

Although there are not many references to Andrew in the Gospels, the few that exist are eloquent of his development under the hand of Jesus. We first read of him as a follower of John the Baptist (John 1:35, 40), and are told that in company with another disciple he was standing by on the day when Jesus passed by, and John the Baptist was led to exclaim, “Behold the Lamb of God!” (vs.36).

As Jesus moved away Andrew and his companion followed him. To their surprise Jesus turned round and addressed them: “What seek ye?”, to which, in their apparent embarrassment they could only reply: “Master... where dwellest thou?”. They received the gracious reply: “Come and see”.

Taking Jesus at his word, they went with him and spent the rest of the day with him. What transpired during their visit we are not told, except that it is clear that Andrew became convinced that Jesus was the Messiah. The result of it, however, gives us our first clue to his character. He had heard during the day things which had convinced him that Jesus was even greater than his previously adopted leader, John the Baptist. The news to him was glorious. It was such as could not remain locked up in his own breast. He must share it. With whom should he share it? Why not begin at home?

His brother Peter was a warmhearted man, and these tidings would seem good to him also. Andrew, therefore, “first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messias” (John 1:41). To his joy Peter responded, and he brought him to Jesus.
Doubtless Andrew in later years performed many services for Jesus, but never one greater than his first. Who shall measure the gain to the Christian movement because Andrew’s work started at home?

There seems to have been a wide difference between Peter and Andrew. The former was a brilliant man, able to sway multitudes by his eloquence, and from time to time to have intuitions which led him to speak words which, once said, could never be forgotten: “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God”, said he (Matt 16:16), and Jesus replied that man had not told him that, but God.

There is no evidence that Andrew had these gifts. He seems to have been cast in a quieter mold, and the call of Peter shows his ability as a quiet introducer of the gospel message. If he could not emulate the public deeds of his brother, he was not jealous of him. In his own way he could yet with quiet charm reason privately the value of the things which he had learned of Jesus. This phase of his character has been well expressed by the poet:

“A brother’s heart had Andrew, joy beyond.
All joy to him the promised Christ to find,
But heavenly joy may not be duty blind:
He cannot rest, his bliss is incomplete,
Till Simon sits with him at Jesus’ feet,
His brother then by more than natural bond”.

Although Andrew and Peter had thus become acquainted with Jesus and had accepted his Messiahship, it does not appear that they realized at this stage the full nature of the demands he was to make on them. They continued to ply their trade of fishing in the Sea of Galilee, until the day when Jesus came to them and said, “Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men” (Mark 1:17). The preliminary work of Jesus had had its due effect on them, and Mark is able to say that straightway they left their nets, and followed him (vs. 18).

**A return visit**

In the same chapter Mark recounts how Jesus returned the visit previously paid to him by Andrew, and went to the house jointly occupied by the disciple and his brother in Capernaum (vs. 29). He arrived at an opportune time, for Peter’s mother-in-law was in need of his aid, being ill with fever. The healing hand of Jesus was soon applied, however; and so effective was it that she was able to help in the entertainment of the guests, who included James and John. Tidings of what had happened spread quickly into the city, and as the sun was setting a large concourse of people, many of them ill and diseased, surrounded the door. Jesus did not fail them. A fountain of healing was opened, and many had cause to be thankful for the friendship which had been formed between Jesus, Andrew and Peter.

Another side of the character of Andrew is shown by a later event, which is described in John 6. On the slopes of a mountain near the sea of Tiberias Jesus and his disciples were surrounded by a huge company of men and women, anxious to see him perform some sign. As was his wont, Jesus had a care for the physical needs of those who followed him, and turning to Philip he asked where bread
could be obtained to feed the people. Being a native of the neighboring city of Bethsaida, Philip might be expected to know where food could be bought. Philip failed to perceive that Jesus was testing him, and exclaimed that much more would be required than the resources of the disciples could afford. Andrew was standing by, however, and his watchful eye had seen the lad with his five loaves and two fishes. He drew attention to the supply, perhaps wondering whether Jesus would perform a miracle; but, as if half afraid of his temerity, immediately added, “but what are they among so many?” (John 6:9). His desire to be helpful, however, was not in vain, for his suggestion was the means of providing for the feeding of the whole company by Jesus.

In this case Andrew appears as a man standing by looking for an opportunity to be of use. Such men and women of tactful helpfulness are of the utmost value to any cause or company, and we may be sure that the quality which Andrew displayed on this occasion was often manifested in the day-to-day life of Jesus and his colleagues. The poet again has drawn attention to this side of the disciple’s character:

“Quick eye had Andrew. He it was amid
The thronging multitudes that marked the lad,
And what his basket, and how much it had.
Two fishes small, and loaves of barley five,
Rewarded eye to trivial things alive.
In that poor basket, what rich mercy hid!”

Almost the last incident in which Andrew appears as a leading figure is also recounted for us by John (12:20-22). A number of Greeks had come to Jerusalem for the Passover, and, having heard of Jesus, desired to meet him. Approaching Philip they said to him, “Sir, we would see Jesus”. This apparently simple request put Philip in a difficulty. He and all his colleagues had observed the heavy strain which was imposed upon Jesus by his constant labors. Their leader was at every man’s beck and call, and no sincere enquirer was ever sent empty away. Solitude, even for prayer, was denied him, except in the hours of night. Devoted to him as they were, the disciples could not but be concerned at his heavy burden, and be desirous of sparing him as much as possible. If, therefore, the desire of the Greeks was idle curiosity, Philip would wish to keep them from Jesus; on the other hand, if their request was sincere and serious, he knew that Jesus would not thank him for failing to introduce them to him. In his difficulty to whom did Philip turn? Andrew was the one who he thought would be able to help him. To Andrew he went, and after discussion the two of them told Jesus. The narrative does not say that Jesus saw the Greeks, but the nature of his discourse makes it almost certain that he did so. What he said about the death of the wheat was calculated to appeal to men who, being Greeks, would probably have some acquaintance with the Greek nature religions.

In this incident Andrew exhibits both his particular qualities; as a tactful helper, and an introducer of men to Jesus, he enriches the occasion.
The encouragement of lowliness

In many ways Andrew is the most encouraging of the disciples from the standpoint of the ordinary follower of Christ. None of us can hope to achieve the power of Peter, or to acquire that full sympathy with the Savior which John came to enjoy. When, however, we think of Andrew, it is immediately apparent that his qualities are, in some degree at least, within our reach. Rejoicing, as he did in the Master beyond compare, we can surely find the means to convey the secret of our rejoicing to others, not perhaps in public words, or even in words at all, but by the quiet confidence and joyousness of our lives. Moreover, who, having known the fellowship of Jesus, can fail to have the desire to find some small sphere in his service, in which he can tactfully help forward the work, either of the individual, or of the body of believers as a whole? However humble we may be, we can find comfort and encouragement in the example of Andrew.

F.E. Mitchell. Reprinted from The Testimony, January 1938 p.3

Who Baptised The Apostles?
Answered By Dr. Thomas.

The answer to this question is emphatically, John the baptizer. The apostle Andrew is styled by the apostle John, one of John’s disciples (John 1:35, 37, 40). This testimony is decisive as to him; but how are we to get at the certainty that the twelve were all baptized of John? We reply, that John’s baptism divided the Jews into two classes — the first class comprised “all the people that heard, and the publicans;” the other, “the Pharisees and lawyers.” The former class were very numerous; for “Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, were baptized of John in Jordan, confessing their sins.” Referring to the completion of this work, Luke says, “Now when all the people were baptised, and it came to pass that Jesus also being baptised, and praying, the heaven opened.” The other class being composed of the “upper ten thousand,” were “respectable” and few. They were “the righteous,” who, in their own estimation, needed no physician, having no occasion for repentance. As a class, they despised the people as cursed, knowing not the law. They regarded a baptism of repentance for remission of sins as quite unsuited to them; so that “they rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptised of John;” while the people, on the contrary, who thought more humbly of themselves, “justified God, being baptised with His baptism” (Luke 7:29, 30).

The Christadelphian, 1880, p. 433
Judas, the Betrayer

Who was Judas?

From the outset there are several remarkable things about Judas Iscariot, son of Simon (as John invariably calls him). His name, “Judas”, is the Greek form of Judah, which means “Praise” — a remarkably inappropriate name.

While we may not be absolutely sure, “Iscariot” would seem to be equivalent to “Ish-Kerioth”, “a man of Kerioth”. The most likely Kerioth is a city east of Judah, not far south of Jerusalem. (See Josh 15:25). If indeed this is a correct understanding of his name, then Judas becomes the only apostle called from the Judean area, all the others being from the Galilean area. This, in turn, forms a noteworthy parallel to (and parable of) the later and larger rejection of Christ: It was from Judea that the massive campaign to subvert Christianity first arose.

“Son of Simon”, as in John 6:71, 13:16 (KJV1) is perhaps the most astonishing piece of gospel information, suggesting a surprising interconnection of people. To appreciate the suggestion to be offered, consider the following parallel passages: Mark 14:3-8, John 12:1-8, and John 11:1-3. Notice the following points of similarity:

- The two incidents happen in the same place, Bethany.
- In both cases a woman does the anointing.
- In both cases the woman uses spikenard ointment, “very costly”.
- The anointing in each case gives rise to the same statement about selling the ointment for 300 denarii and giving it to the poor.
- This comment elicits the same response from Jesus.
- Each event takes place the same at the same time (during the week prior to the Passover).

It is hard to resist the conclusion that Mark and John are describing the very same incident. And, if this is indeed true, the conclusions that follow are particularly astonishing! “The House of Simon the Leper” was the home in which Lazarus and his two sisters, Mary and Martha, lived (John 11:1-3). More to the point, Lazarus, Mary, and Martha were, at the very least, closely related to Simon.

Connecting this with John’s usual way of identifying Judas as “son of Simon”, one is led to a most unexpected discovery: Mary, Martha, Lazarus, and Judas are all related! No wonder Jesus had such a special interest in Judas! The depth of this concern, as Judas gradually marked out the path he would eventually take, we will now look at…

Judas, the disciple

“And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles...and Judas Iscariot, which also was the traitor” (Luke 6:13,16).

“Traitor” is the name forever linked with Judas, like the epitaph engraved on the memory of another traitor: Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, “who caused Israel to sin.” (Is there here a greater similarity than might first appear?)
The implication of this selection is profound. Judas must have had the potential to be an excellent apostle, one capable of faithfully witnessing to the death and resurrection of his Lord. Otherwise we must imagine a deceptiveness inconsistent with Jesus' character. Would Jesus choose a man whose only purpose was to act the part of traitor? Wouldn't this label Jesus' efforts to save Judas as mere playacting? While the potential for betrayal was there, so too must have been the potential for good.

But is that really any different from any of us?

It is likely that at this time Judas was also chosen to be treasurer. John mentions Judas had the treasurer's bag (John 12:6). And, as Jesus was at this moment hard at work organizing his little band of disciples, this surely was the appropriate time to commit this important work to one of them. But why not Matthew? Surely this was the obvious choice? As a tax collector by profession, he was accustomed to financial matters. Was his past life with all its unsavory associations a memory Matthew preferred not to revive? Whatever the details, this one fact remains: Jesus deliberately committed to Judas the vital responsibility of handling their finances.

The conclusion is hard to resist: Jesus deliberately committed to Judas this vital role. Would Jesus deliberately commit to Judas the very object of his future downfall? Again, this seems quite inconsistent with our Master's character. Judas, therefore, must have been a man of considerable ability. When happened to Judas? Why was this potential never realized? What was missing?

For a man like Judas, one can only wonder whether the first impressions of apostleship were very encouraging: “sheep in the midst of wolves”, “deliver you up to the councils and will scourge you in synagogues”, “he who loses his life for my sake shall find it” (Matt 10:16, 17, 39). These last words must have seemed particularly difficult to digest.

The crisis

It was inevitable that a crisis should arise in the ministry of Jesus. What the people wanted just did not match where Jesus was headed. They looked for the Lion of the tribe of Judah to vanquish their enemies: he came as the Lamb.

The crisis happened as Jesus' work had moved into its final year. It was Passover time, not more than a week or two since John the Baptist’s tragic death. This man, John, had given the people so much hope that his humiliating end must have brought great discouragement to the people. So they now came in great numbers to their only other source of hope, like lost sheep in search of a shepherd.

When Jesus saw them, he was deeply moved by their plight. In his compassion he healed them and taught them, and when at last they would not leave him, he fed them, more than 5000 at one time. The death of John followed by this astonishing miracle was more than the people could bear: “This is of truth that prophet that should come into the world!” The very thought electrified the multitude: ‘Here is our king! Let’s anoint him now!’

“When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come to take him by force, to make him king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone” (John 6:15).
Another gospel (Matt 19:23) tells us that “he went up...to pray.” The pressures on Jesus to succumb to this old temptation were immense! There was no other place he could go except to his Father at a time like this.

But the pressure on his little band of disciples was even greater. Why else were they following him, if he was not their Heaven-sent King and Redeemer? And what better moment than this to have their master enter his kingly glory. Were not the multitudes totally behind him? Who on earth could resist this man who could command even the physical elements to obey him? It was no light expression of words used by one of these disciples later when by the Spirit he recalled that frightening moment: “and straightway Jesus constrained his disciples to get into a ship...” (Matt 19:22). These twelve faithful men were in such danger of being carried away by the same false expectations that Jesus compelled them to leave with an urgency they had perhaps never before experienced.

It was without doubt a deeply troubled set of men that reluctantly launched their boat that evening, the dark tossing sea an apt mirror of their own tumultuous thoughts. Why had he refused the crown? Was he, or was he not, the king they looked for? When he came to them that night they found reassurance in his presence, but not peace. All they had ever thought about him, now seemed disrupted; on the morrow it would be shattered!

**The turning point**

As he spoke those life-giving words the next day to the multitude that sought him, and later to the people in the Capernaum synagogue, the crowds, which had just clamored for his anointing, stumbled: “Many of his disciples, when they heard this, said, ‘This is a hard [harsh or stern] saying. Who can hear it?’ ”

Was Judas one of these? Did he, with these others, feel deceived by Jesus? Misled? Betrayed? Because Jesus was refusing to be the one they thought he should be?

“When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, ‘Does this offend you? ...But there are some of you that do believe not’ ” (John 6:61,64).

Is this the one thing Judas lacked — an unreserved commitment to trust Jesus fully and to follow his master wherever he may go? At this critical moment when the whole work of Christ was on a thin edge, the contrast between Peter and Judas could not have been greater.

**“Will you also go away?”**

Peter, despite his doubts, saw no other choice but to believe: “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. Also we have come to believe and know that you are that Christ, the Son of the living God” (John 6:68-69).

Yet Judas, because of his doubts, just could not believe.

“Jesus answered them, ‘Did I not choose you, the twelve, and one of you is a devil (accuser)?’ He spoke of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon: for it was he who would betray him, being one of the twelve” (John 6:71).
“From that time many of his disciples went back and walked no more with him” (John 6:66).

This was the turning point for Judas too. He had seen enough to know that Jesus did not fit the Messianic mold he wanted or expected. So why didn't he leave? What did he expect to accomplish by staying? Was he afraid of the ridicule? Or was there some other motive now coming to birth in the hidden recesses of his mind? Was this also the time when his thoughts began to turn towards the bag in his possession?

A deeply troubled disciple

Judas was deeply troubled. His Lord didn’t seem to understand where he was going. He was all the prophets had said...and more! And yet, he had refused his rightful crown at the very moment when he could have seized on the fervor of the populace and electrified the whole nation into action! That disastrous Passover one year ago led Jesus not only to drive away many of his supporters in bitter disappointment, but ever since Jesus has talked more of dying than reigning: After feeding 5000 (John 6), Peter’s confession (Luke 9:21-22), transfiguration (Luke 9:43-45), going up to Jerusalem (Luke 18:31-34), last week before crucifixion (John 12:27-33), during anointing by Mary (Matt 26:11-12), and at last supper (Matt 26:26-28, Mark 14:22-24, Luke 22:19-20).

And worse, Jesus connected his death with someone betraying him.

“…when Jesus had finished all these sayings, he said to his disciples, ‘You know that after two days is the Passover, and the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified’ ” (Matt 26:1-2).

That was it. Judas had had enough. He had no choice now. He must act before another disaster destroy altogether this movement to release Israel from Roman domination!

The last straw

There is a noticeable tension between Judas and Jesus during this last week. Judas must have been very conscious of Jesus’ remarks about a betrayer. His dispute with Jesus over Mary’s waste of precious ointment served only to bring the matter to a head (Matt 26:6-14 and John 12:3-8).

What was Judas thinking as he quietly slipped out to make his seemingly ruthless deal with the rulers? Did he feel he just had no other course open to him? ‘If betrayal will set this man on the right path, then betrayal it will be!’ Putting together Luke 22:3-6 and Matt 26:14-16, we see the betrayal in action:

“Then Satan entered Judas, surnamed Iscariot, who was numbered among the twelve. So he went his way and conferred with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray him to them. ‘What are you willing to give me if I deliver him to you?’ And they were glad, and agreed to give him money. And they counted out to him thirty pieces of silver. So he promised and sought opportunity to betray him to them in the absence of the multitude.”
The last meal

“One of you twelve will betray me!” How this moment must have deeply pained Jesus. Each disciple, searching within themselves said, “Lord, is it I?” Judas also asked this, curiously, addressing him as “Rabbi”, not as “Lord” (i.e. Master). Was Judas already distancing himself from Jesus? (Matt 26:20-25)

As the disciples sat together at that last meal, Jesus reached out to Judas one last time with a token of friendship and affection. “He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me” (Matt 26:23). How many unspoken words must have passed as their eyes met! Whatever Judas saw in the searching look of his Master, we cannot know, but for Judas the moment of decision had come: “And after the piece of bread, Satan entered him” (John 13:27).

Jesus saw that terrible moment when the sin of betrayal became master of Judas’ heart. Every line in Judas’s face revealed the rapidly hardening heart. Reclamation was no longer possible. The power of darkness and evil was now in control. “What you do, do quickly!” And without a word Judas rises suddenly and leaves his Master’s presence into the darkness of that night.

The betrayal

Judas knew exactly where to find Jesus. Jesus had often resorted to the little garden beyond the brook Kidron. So, fortified with soldiers from the chief priest and Pharisees, he came to Jesus.

“Jesus therefore knowing all things that should come upon him, went forward and said to them, ‘Whom are you seeking?’ They answered him, ‘Jesus of Nazareth.’ Jesus said to them, ‘I am he.’ And Judas, who betrayed him, also stood with them” (John 18:4-5).

How ironical the words! Judas, having walked in the counsel of the ungodly, now stood with the sinners. Perhaps it is to Judas’ credit that he never sat in the seat of the scornful as the chief witness against the man he had just betrayed.

Why the betrayal?

Why did Judas betray his Master? This has been the source of much speculation: Love of money? Jealousy? Felt that Jesus had betray the nation? A mixture of these?

There is one suggestion that has not only an attractiveness about it, but a consistency that rings true: Judas, being himself bitterly disappointed with Jesus’ refusal of the crown (and with it the kingdoms of this world), betrayed his Lord in order to force him into an open declaration of his kingship and power. If Jesus would not willingly take the right path, Judas would make him take it.

Not only is this motive a consistent extension of the crisis recorded in John 6, but Judas also unknowingly fulfills the role of the wilderness adversary in perpetrating the second and third temptations all over again. (See Luke 4:13). Finally, it is consistent with the reactions of unbelieving men to unfulfilled promises of God: They take the responsibility for fulfillment into their own hands, devising fleshly stratagems foreign to the purpose of God.
The end

Matthew pieces together the final hours of Judas’ life. “Now the chief priests, the elders, and all the council sought false testimony against Jesus to put Him to death, but found none. Even though many false witnesses came forward, they found none. But at last two false witnesses came forward” (Matt 26:59-60).

They found none? How could this possibly be? Would these men arrest Jesus if they didn’t have the required witnesses all set to accuse him? Would they have threatened their whole flimsy case by leaving out this vital link? What had gone wrong? Where was their key witness?

We may not be able to answer this question conclusively, but Judas’ conspicuous absence from these proceedings is remarkable. Why wasn’t the man with the damning, inside information there? Would not the witness of Judas have clinched the case beyond all question?

The evidence builds that Judas had no intention of following through with the evil scheme of these evil men. Indeed, the final piece of evidence is hard to put aside:

“They saw that he was condemned, was remorseful and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, ‘I have sinned by betraying innocent blood.’ And they said, ‘What has that to do with us? You see to it!’ ” (Matt 27:3-4).

Why this great concern for Jesus? If all he really wanted was quick and easy money — what would he care? Besides, Judas knew all along Jesus was innocent of the charges, so why now the concern? Finally, why the remorse when Judas discovered his actions had actually gotten Jesus condemned? Had something gone terribly, horribly wrong with all his well-laid plans? Was the man who he wanted to be king, now going to be violently removed from this role after all?

Whatever the true explanation, Judas could see only one path open to him: “and he departed, and went and hanged himself” (Matt 27:5).

Lesson of the uncommitted disciple

Judas never was committed. He never was prepared to follow his Master wherever he might lead. Rather, he kept his own ambitions and desires…and tried to shape Jesus accordingly. A true disciple doesn’t shape his master to suit himself; he is shaped by his master. Nor does a true disciple lead his Lord; he follows, ever seeking to imitate the one who knows better.

Acts 1:25 sums up Judas’ whole life: “…that he might go to his own place.” Judas had always been going to his own place, never to his Master’s.

The path of failure

Could we betray Jesus? If we found Jesus leading us in a direction that we hadn’t expected? Not leading us where we had wanted to go? Could we turn away in our heart and become a subversive force among our brethren? Judas did, but it did not happen all at once. His downhill path to failure was at first a slow one, one that he may not even have been aware of.
It began when he perceived his Master's direction was not what he thought it would be. Then, instead of sitting at his Master's feet to learn of this better way, he became:

- First a source of grumbling, complaining and discontent.
- Then, with his hands in the moneybag, he became a disciple who was faithless and untrustworthy in the little things.
- Finally, he graduated into faithlessness in a big way, selling the very life of his own Lord and Master to his enemies.
- How easily this could become us: ‘This is not what I thought my new life in Christ would be like! It's not going in the direction I thought it would! This whole thing is not so exciting anymore.’ In other words, like Judas, the path of failure...
- Begins with dissatisfaction: dissatisfaction with our lot as a brother or sister in Christ, dissatisfaction with our ecclesia, dissatisfaction with the whole course of our new life.
- Then comes the grumbling: Grumbling about other disciples (“they think they are so holy”); grumbling about the things they (or the ecclesia) do; grumbling about the hard demands of Jesus' way of life.
- Faithlessness in small things quickly follows. For Judas it was his hands in the moneybag. For us it might be failure to faithfully fulfill ecclesial duties. Or slightly altering the commands of the Master so we can justify our actions. Or, perhaps using our association with the brethren for material gain an advantage.
- Uncontrollably, this path rushes headlong into faithlessness in big things: For Judas, it was selling the very life of his Lord to his enemies. For us, forsaking our Lord’s own meal table, often. Outright strife and quarreling. Dereliction in ecclesial duties.
- Then the final Step: Departure from The Faith — a rejection of our Master and Lord. For Judas this ended in physical suicide; for us it is the oblivion of spiritual suicide.

Lord, is it I? No fate is ever sealed until one makes that final, dreadful, suicidal choice. But never forget this: Even betrayal can be forgiven. Remember Peter… and remember to whom we belong:

"Through the Lord's mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness. "The LORD [is] my portion," says my soul, “Therefore I hope in Him!” (Lam 3:22-24)

Ted Sleeper (San Francisco Peninsula, CA)

Notes:
1. [Editor]: Note, however, that almost all modern translations have “son of Simon Iscariot” in both places.
2. [Editor]: I believe the evidence is strong that Judas was in a favored place to the left of Jesus, resting along with John, who was to the right of Jesus, on one of the normal three place couches.
James, The Lord’s Brother

We are fully justified in regarding James as an apostles, for Paul writes “But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord’s brother” (Gal 1:19). There is much we do not know about James but we do know his attitude towards his brother, Jesus, underwent a dramatic, revolutionary change.

Introduced as the eldest of the Lord’s four brothers (Mark 6:3), James went from initial speculative neutrality to open hostility: and then to resolute certainty as regards belief in his brother, the Son of God.

The change in James

As the beginning of his public ministry, Jesus had the support of James and the rest of the family. “After this [water to wine miracle at Canaan Galilee] he went down to Capernaum, he and his mother and his brother, and his disciples...” (John 2:12). However, this support officially evaporated and we read:

“Jesus’ brothers said to him, ‘Leave Galilee and go to Judea, so that your disciples there may see the works you do. No one who wants to become a public figure acts in secret. Since you are doing these things, show yourself to the world.’ For even his own brothers did not believe in him” (John 7:3-5 NIV)

Notice the challenging words of his brothers, ending with the writer’s statement, “For neither did his brother believe in him”. Worse yet they considered him “besides himself” (Mark 3:21).

At the embryonic Jerusalem Ecclesia, after Jesus’ death, resurrection and ascension, James and the rest of the family are present, “These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren” (Acts 1:14).

A notable event clearly had occurred which transformed James into a determined apostle for the cause of Christ. It is recorded by Paul in catalogue of resurrection appearances, “After that, he was seen of James, then of all the apostles” (1Cor 15:7).

In this context James is paired with the apostles along with another converted apostle — Paul. There are no further details in the New Testament of this Resurrection Appearance, but one thing is certain: the mind of James was changed from one of disbelief, to one who life was both renewed and forever changed by the presence of his Brother — his Lord.

James, the new Apostle

The upkeep of the truth in Jerusalem and its spread to the Roman world needed men of singular commitment: James and Peter for stability at home; Paul for evangelizing in the empire. So as the Jerusalem Ecclesia struggled under violent persecution (Stephen and John’s brother were killed, Peter was imprisoned) James rose to the occasion.

“But he [Peter], beckoning unto them with the hand to hold their peace, declared unto them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. And he
said, Go shew these things unto James, and to the brethren. And he departed, and went into another place” (Acts 12:17)

Peter miraculously released, requested that “Go shew these things unto James”. Likewise Paul before his ministry began met with James as we discussed above.

These three apostles, James, Peter and Paul, met again at the Jerusalem conference (Acts 15) when the shrewd presiding of James averted a split between the fledgling Antioch Ecclesia at the established Ecclesia over a doctrinal issue!

“And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me: Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things. Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world. Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God: But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood. For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath day” (Acts 15:13..21).

James clearly was presiding over this conference, which was so vital in ensuring that the gospel could be delivered to the Gentiles without requiring the onerous imposition of all the requirements of the Law, which the Judaizers wanted. The decision of the conference, as declared by James, was conciliatory, but it gave Paul what he wanted. The influence of James was that which defused the crisis at this important time. We can see James as a wise, perhaps mild, but tolerant and practical man! Does not our community still need brothers of this caliber?

James, the pillar of the early church
James was clearly the acknowledged leader of the early church in Jerusalem:

- When Paul came to Jerusalem with his collection for the poor, it was by James and the Elders he was received (Acts 21:18).
- Paul's first visit to Jerusalem after his conversion was to James and Peter (Gal 1:19)
- Fourteen years later, James, Peter, and John are the “Pillars of the Church” (Gal 2:9)
- He clearly had enormous influence over the early Jewish Christians outside Jerusalem as well as indeed, as we can read in his epistle “James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting” (James 1:1).

His epistle indeed shows faith in action, and quoting now “The Christadelphian Expositor”, we see this in five aspects:
• Faith can triumph over trials,
• Faith can govern action towards other,
• Faith can discipline the tongue
• Faith can purify character
• Faith can create confidence in God.

Why, incidentally did Jesus not put his mother in the care of James? We cannot be certain of the reason. John (beloved disciple) was at the cross, the only male. James was not and not yet converted! Whatever the reason, we clearly see that relationships within the Truth can be far stronger then “flesh and blood” ones. Perhaps, a few of our natural kin are in doubt regarding the Truth we embrace, perhaps even hostility. But there is hope that they, like James, can be transformed by our constant and consistent presentation of a crucified Jesus, just as was James who saw his brother Jesus alive after his death on the cross.

The death of James

So James disappears from the New Testament, and like most the apostles, his ultimate fate is not recorded. However, Josephus, a contemporary historian, records that, during the brief interval between the death of Festus, and the arrival of Albinus, the next Roman governor, Ananus the high priest sees his opportunity to dispatch the leader of the Jerusalem Christians,

So Ananus, being that kind of man, and thinking that he had got a good opportunity, — because Festus was dead and Albinus not yet arrived, held a judicial council; and he brought before it the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ; James was his name, — and some others, and on the charge of violating the Law he gave them over to be stoned. (Antiquities of the Jews; 20; 9,1.)

And so James passes from the scene, faithful to the last.

Clive Drepaull (Brooklyn, NY)

James—The Lord’s Brother

The references in the New Testament to the brothers James, Joses, Jude and Simon, and sisters (whose names are unknown) of Jesus have led to much discussion. Some suggest that the terms “brother” or “brethren” could denote near relationship such as cousin. We understand, however, that the Greek originals translated “brothers” and “sisters” are unambiguous and that they bear the meanings normally associated with them. There is no necessity to believe that the “brothers and sisters” were later children of Joseph and Mary. In fact the available evidence suggests that it was not so.

The records which exist relating to the last days and death of James, suggest that he was a much respected “figure in the Church” by which time he had become known as “the Just One”, a name probably won by years of devoted service. It might not be too far wide of the mark to suggest that James was born about 20 B.C.

Paul, Apostle of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles

The apostle Paul is one of the most important people to have ever lived. Paul’s transformation from sinner to saint is a pattern for us all. His call and preaching efforts make up over half of the book of Acts. His epistles make up nearly half of the New Testament. It is difficult to imagine how any of us would have been able to understand the gospel without Paul’s efforts. As the apostle to the Gentiles (Rom 11:13; 1Tim 2:7; 2Tim 1:11), his mission was nothing less than to deliver the Gentiles as an acceptable and holy offering to God: “That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy [Spirit]” (Rom 15:15).

On the other hand, Paul is also the most misunderstood of the apostles. His epistles are full of polemics, with Paul defending his one true gospel against bad doctrine and bad behavior. Even his good partner Barnabas found himself opposed to Paul on more than one occasion (e.g., Acts 15:36-39). Surprisingly, Peter and Barnabas and other Jewish believers in Antioch were persuaded by some brethren who came from James (the Lord’s brother and ‘Recording Brother’ for the Jerusalem Ecclesia) that Paul’s policies concerning Jewish and Gentile believers eating together was mistaken (Gal 2:11-14). Peter would later write,

“And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction” (2Pet 3:15-16).

Paul’s background

Acts and the epistles enable us to construct a fairly detailed resume for “Saul, who also is called Paul” (Acts 13:9).


A free born Roman citizen:

“And as they bound him with thongs, Paul said unto the centurion that stood by, Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned? When the centurion heard that, he went and told the chief captain, saying, Take heed what thou doest: for this man is a Roman. Then the chief captain came, and said unto him, Tell me, art thou a Roman? He said, Yea. And the chief captain answered, With a great sum obtained I this freedom. And Paul said, But I was free born. Then straightway they departed from him which should have examined him: and the chief captain also was afraid, after he knew that he was a Roman, and because he had bound him” (Acts 22:25-29).

A tentmaker: “After these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth; and found a certain Jew named Acquila...with his wife Priscilla...and came to them. And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought;
for by their occupations they were tentmakers” (Acts 18:1-3). This occupation allowed Paul to move around freely. He could easily find work in any of the cities he visited. This particular trade put him in contact with lots of people, making it easy for him to share the gospel.

A Hebrew of the Hebrews:

“If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews” (Phil 3:4b-5; cf. Rom 11:1; 2Cor 11:22).

A Pharisee, son of a Pharisee:

“…brought up in this city [Jerusalem, Acts 21:15, 17] at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day” (Acts 22:3; cf. Gal 1:13-14).

“My manner of life from my youth, which was at the first among mine own nation at Jerusalem, know all the Jews; which knew me from the beginning, if they would testify, that after the most straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee” (Acts 26:4-5; cf. Acts 23:6; Phil 3:5-6).

Concerning zeal, persecuting the church: Luke depicts Saul’s persecution of the way, including Paul’s defense before the Jews and then before Agrippa:

“Saul, yet breathing out threatening against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, and desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem” (Acts 9:1-2).

“I [Paul] persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prison both men and women” (Acts 22:4; see also vv. 5, 17-20; Acts 7:57-8:3; 26:9-11).

Paul’s persecution of the ecclesia before his call is a recurring theme in his epistles: “For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God” (1Cor 15:9). “For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews’ religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it” (Gal 1:13). “Concerning zeal, persecuting the church” (Phil 3:6). The burden of this terrible sin weighed heavily on Paul’s conscience. It made him feel inadequate to be an apostle. He could not forget the damage he had inflicted owing to a religious zeal caused by his own ignorance and unbelief.

On the other hand, Paul’s transformation from persecutor to preacher prompted the Judaean ecclésias to glorify God in him:

“Afterwards I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia; and was unknown by face unto the churches of Judaea which were in Christ: But they had heard only, that he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed. And they glorified God in me” (Gal 1:21-24).
Paul’s call out of darkness into light

Saul was transformed on the road to Damascus, when Jesus appeared to him in a light from heaven (Acts 9:1-22; 22:4-21; 26:12-23). As if dead and in the grave, he was without sight and didn’t eat or drink for three days, after which scales, as it were, fell from his eyes and he was baptized. Immediately he preached Christ in the synagogue, that he is the Son of God. He was called to preach the gospel to Gentiles, to be the apostle to the Gentiles.2

The calling of a prophet: arguing that his gospel came by revelation directly from Jesus Christ (Gal 1:10-24), Paul writes, “But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb he called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood” (Gal 1:15-16). Here Paul uses the same language as Jeremiah’s calling to become a prophet unto the nations: “Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations” (Jer 1:5; cf. Isa 49:1-8). As Isaiah prophesied, Paul was to be a light unto the Gentiles (Acts 13:46-48; 26:22-23; cf. Isa 42:6; 49:6; 60:3).

One born out of due time: Listing the resurrection appearances of Christ, Paul writes,

“And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time. For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me. Therefore whether it were I or they, so we preach, and so ye believed” (1Cor 15:8-11).

Having seen the glorified Lord, Paul was born again. This birth was premature because it happened before the time had come for the nation of Israel to repent.3 Paul becomes a type of the future salvation of God’s chosen people, when “they shall look upon him whom they have pierced, and shall mourn for him”.

A pattern for all believers: More generally, Paul’s life-changing experience provided evidence for the essence of his gospel and established a pattern for all believers: if I Paul, the worst of all sinners, can obtain mercy and be saved through Jesus Christ, then anyone who believes in him can do the same:

“And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I abstained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting” (1Tim 1:12-16).

The signs of an apostle: Paul was filled with the Holy Spirit: “And Ananias went
his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy [Spirit]” (Acts 9:17). “Then Saul, (who is also called Paul,) filled with the Holy [Spirit]” (Acts 13:9). Beyond this, he had the power to convey the Holy Spirit to others, which only the apostles could do: “And when Paul laid his hands upon them, the Holy [Spirit] came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied” (Acts 19:6; cf. 2Tim 1:6; Acts 8:14-25).

He spoke with tongues and had the gift of prophecy: “I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all” (1Cor 14:18). “Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing” (1Cor 11:1-2).

Paul had an abundance of revelations, and wrought the signs of an apostle:

“It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago… of such an one will I glory: yet of myself I will not glory, but in my infirmities… And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure… Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ’s sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong… Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds” (2Cor 13:1-12; cf. Acts 14:3; Rom 15:19).

Paul emphasizes that the signs of an apostle include not only signs, wonders, and mighty deeds, but also infirmities, reproaches, necessities, persecutions, and distresses for Christ’s sake. It is difficult to identify Paul’s “thorn in the flesh”; but it seems to have been a recurring health condition that incapacitated the apostle whenever it surfaced.

**Paul’s preaching and epistles**

We cannot go into the details of Paul’s missionary journeys or his epistles in this short biography. He preached the gospel from Jerusalem and Antioch in the east to Rome (Acts 13-28) and possibly Spain (Rom 15:22-29) in the west. He summarizes his life as a preacher in poignant language:

“Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger
and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches” (2Cor 11:23-28; cf. 2Cor 4:1-18).

Paul ministered unto the saints in four ways: he visited them directly when he could; and when he wasn’t free to go himself, he sent surrogates to minister on his behalf,\(^5\) he wrote epistles to them as an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God,\(^6\) and he prayed for them incessantly.\(^7\)

Paul’s epistles fall into four major groups, differentiated by time, topics, and recipients:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>During</th>
<th>Epistles</th>
<th>Primary Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>c. 50</td>
<td>2nd Missionary Journey</td>
<td>1Thessalonians, 2Thessalonians</td>
<td>Return of Jesus Christ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. 55</td>
<td>3rd Missionary Journey</td>
<td>1Corinthians, Galatians, 2Corinthians, Romans</td>
<td>Paul’s Gospel to the Gentiles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. 60</td>
<td>1st Imprisonment</td>
<td>[Hebrews](^8), Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians, Philippians</td>
<td>Nature and Sacrifice of Christ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. 65</td>
<td>Intermediate Freedom and 2nd Imprisonment</td>
<td>1Timothy, Titus, 2Timothy</td>
<td>Ecclesial Leadership</td>
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</table>

Although Paul wrote to address specific issues of his day, his epistles are surprisingly relevant today. The epistles are full of arguments against the false doctrines of the Jewish Christian counter mission:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Jewish Christian Counter Mission</th>
<th>Paul’s Gentile Christian Mission</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kingdom</td>
<td>Kingdom already established; believers reigning already; brethren had quit work, and were living off the ecclesia as “kings”; rich and sated; the common purse led to poverty, calling themselves Ebionites (the poor); they thought of themselves as spiritual beings, spending all day in prayer, meditation, visions, healings &amp; miracles or signs; they thought they were already changed, already immortal, that the resurrection had already happened, that there would be no physical</td>
<td>Kingdom not yet; challenges them to reconsider; lots of negative comments about the kingdom, encouraging better behavior, emphasizing that they had not already inherited the kingdom; still awaiting the coming of Jesus; certain events must take place first: Phase I-the current persecution, mystery of unlawfulness already at work, the future being held up / delayed; man of sin not yet revealed; Phase II-the man of sin is revealed, in the temple, making</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kingdom (cont.)</td>
<td>resurrection of dead corpses; they needed to be comforted when someone died; cf. the Church of Christ today</td>
<td>himself God; Phase III—Lord Jesus Christ returns, destroys man of sin, persecutors, and those who believe a lie; raises the dead, judgment, life or death; words like “first fruits” and “earnest” show that early events had begun to occur; exhortations to work for their food, as Paul taught and did</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wisdom</td>
<td>Words of wisdom, Jewish Halakhah (way of walking) inferred from exposition of Scripture by sages, scribes, and midrashim; the oral law, rabbinic tradition, “traditions of the elders”, taught words of man’s wisdom; Gentile believers must convert to Judaism, be circumcised, keep the food laws, the calendar laws, the whole law; cf. today’s “orthodox” Christians, whose faith is based on tradition</td>
<td>Wisdom of God, Christ crucified, the cross; foolishness of preaching; not beyond what is written (the Bible and only the Bible), like the Foundation Clause of the BASF; concerning food and days, let each be persuaded in their own mind; led to Paul’s negative statements about the law and to his emphasis on love being the fulfillment of the law, love is the touchstone; crucified with Christ, buried with Christ, raised in newness of life, Christ living in us</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>Words of knowledge; knowing God thru visions of His heavenly throne; Merkabah (cherubim chariot of God) mysticism; Hekhalot (palaces) literature (levels of nested heavenly temples; cf. the levels of modern video games); worshipping of angels, dangerous and difficult to combat; led brothers and sisters to become ascetics regarding sex and food; cf. modern “gnostics” like Masons, Oral Roberts, Mormons; cf. the vows of Roman Catholic priests and nuns</td>
<td>Knowledge of God via Jesus Christ; God invisible, God can’t be seen except in Christ; Paul takes over his opponents’ terms and glosses them by adding editorial explanations, putting them into a proper context emphasizing Jesus Christ, love, etc., resulting in long, complicated sentences; Jesus Christ greater than the angels; negative statements about angels; marriage is okay</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Meeting</strong></td>
<td>Tongues, visions, angel worship; emphasis on spirit gifts; like Pentecostal churches today</td>
<td>Focus on the better gifts, especially prophecy (= teaching); orderly service; love is a more excellent way; manifest the fruit of the spirit</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Christ</strong></td>
<td>Jesus was an ordinary man, born to Joseph and Mary in the usual way; Christ was an angel/spirit who possessed Jesus at his baptism and left him on the cross; docetism: Christ didn't die, he was an impassible spirit being, only Jesus died; they worshipped Christ as one of the many angels, but they “cursed Jesus” because he wasn’t worthy of worship; Jesus was David’s seed; a prophet, like Elijah &amp; Elisha, like Moses; cf. Unitarians today</td>
<td>“Jesus Christ” was not two distinct beings, but one; the Son of God; born of a woman; God manifest in the flesh; the image of God; died on the cross; raised in bodily form; ascended to heaven, at the right hand of God; more than just David’s son; more than just an Elijah &amp; Elisha prophet; more than just the prophet like unto Moses; greater than the angels; the one mediator between God and man; misunderstanding of the New Testament later led to the doctrine of the Trinity</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Gospel</strong></td>
<td>Another gospel that is really not another (Gal 1:6-9; 2Cor 11:4); cf. the many Christian denominations today, e.g., the prosperity gospel</td>
<td>Paul’s gospel; Gentiles included in Christ as Gentiles; one God of both Jews and Gentiles; the one faith</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Target Audience</strong></td>
<td>Started out being addressed primarily to Jews and proselytes, but then “taken on the road” to Gentiles, especially when the Jerusalem leadership learned about Paul’s practices, which seemed to disregard the law</td>
<td>Gentiles; Paul the Apostle to the Gentiles; epistles to Gentile ecclesias and their leaders; he had to defend his gospel against the false ideas of the Jewish Christian missionaries; this is the reason most of the New Testament is polemical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leadership</strong></td>
<td>Claimed authority from the Jerusalem ecclesia; came in the name of the twelve apostles (Cephas/Peter and John the son of Zebedee) and the Lord’s family (his brother James, later Jude); itinerant missionaries; cf. Roman Catholics today</td>
<td>From the Antioch ecclesia; Paul, Timothy, Titus, Barnabas, Apollos, and Priscilla &amp; Aquila; set up local ecclesial leadership like our Arranging Boards; warnings against itinerant preachers who don’t teach the truth</td>
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</table>
An example to be followed

Paul uses himself as a powerful exhortation for us all, that we should be followers of him as he was of Christ:

“Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ. Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you” (1Cor 11:1-2).

“Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you... What things also you learned and you received, and you heard and you saw in me, these things perform you; and the God of peace shall be with you” (Phil 3:13-15; 4:9).

“For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing” (2Tim 4:6-8).

What a remarkable man was the apostle Paul! What a wonderful example for us to follow! It will be a delight to meet him in the kingdom. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with us all. Amen.

Joe Hill (Austin Leander, TX)

Notes:
5. E.g., 1Cor 4:17; 2Cor 12:17-18; Phil 2:25-30; 1Thess 3:1-5; 2Tim 4:12; Philemon 4.
6. See Rom 1:1, 7; 1Cor 1:1-2; 2Cor 1:1; Gal 1:1-2; Eph 1:1; Col 1:1-2; 1Tim 1:1-2; 2Tim 1:1-2; Tit 1:1-4.
7. E.g., Rom 1:9; Eph 1:15-16; Phil 1:3-4; Col 1:3, 9; 1Thess 1:2-3; 2Thess 1:11; 2Tim 1:3
8. I believe that Hebrews was written by Epaphras and is “the epistle from Laodicea” referred to in Col 4:16 (cf. Col 1:3-8; 4:12-13, 15a; Philemon 23). Paul endorses Epaphras and exhorts the two ecclesias to exchange epistles, the one he wrote to Colosse and the one Epaphras wrote to Laodicea, as both are relevant to their common circumstances.
Barnabas and Silas

Where do we begin when a friend we love is not in the Truth? Where do we begin when it is someone we dislike? Where do we begin when an individual, any new brother or sister, accepts the Truth?

Barnabas — Where do I begin?

Barnabas may have been asking that same question when approaching Paul for the first time after his conversion. The first time we meet Barnabas is in Acts 4:31-37:

“And when they [the apostles] had prayed, the place where they were assembled was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the Word of God with boldness. And the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul. And not one said that any of the things which he possessed was his own. But they had all things common. And the apostles gave witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus with great power. And great grace was on them all. For neither was anyone needy among them, for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and they laid them down at the apostles’ feet. And distribution was made to every man according as he had need. And Joses, who was surnamed Barnabas by the apostles (which is, being translated, The son of consolation), a Levite, a Cypriot by race, a field being his, selling it, he bore the proceeds and placed them at the apostles’ feet” (Acts 4:31-37).

Barnabas was a caring man, a giving man, ready to give up all he had in the service of the Lord Jesus Christ, and we see much of this nature displayed as we continue. Bro. W. H. Boulton suggests that Paul and Barnabas might have been students together in Tarsus (Paul the Apostle, pp. 27-28). Barnabas’ first recorded meeting with Paul (Acts 9:27) took place many years after their time in Tarsus. There is a strong possibility that they met or knew of each other before the meeting that is recorded in Acts. Barnabas, like Paul, was not an immediate convert of Christ, at least not until the apostles had reached him as recorded in Acts 4. It is possible that prior to this conversion he was of a similar mindset as was Saul prior to his own. He may have watched his former schoolmate persecuting the Christians with fervor and thought to himself:

“Where can I begin with him?”

There is a simple beauty in the way God works in our lives, always the way He intends, and if Barnabas and Paul had been classmates, then it made Barnabas the perfect candidate to assist Paul in his time of need. The first time Barnabas meets his new brother was after Paul’s life had been threatened. Forced to flee from Damascus, surely depressed and distraught at the resistance, the one thing Paul needed was a friendly face.

In Barnabas’ eyes, this answered his question. He began years ago, at a school for Levites, establishing a connection that would, through God, blossom into a wonderful friendship.
And what can we learn from this? How we conduct ourselves is essential. Barnabas surely had no idea that someone he knew from his schooling would become his travel brother, just as we have no idea who in our lives will become someone just as important. True, we do not know exactly how, or if they knew each other at all, but Barnabas has a connection with Paul that not many others in the ecclesia did and that was enough to create a bond between the two. Barnabas had the same mind, the same speaking abilities, and the same training in such fields that he could empathize with Paul and encourage him.

Barnabas was opposite Paul in many ways. Paul carried the weight of a sullied reputation among the Jews and Gentiles alike. Barnabas was an imposing man, likely good looking and displaying authority. We know this from Acts:

“This one heard Paul speaking; and Paul, looking intently at him, and seeing that he had faith to be healed, said with a loud voice, Stand up on your feet! And he leaped and walked. And seeing what Paul did, the crowd lifted up their voice, saying in Lycaonian, The gods have come down to us, becoming like men. And they called Barnabas Jupiter, and Paul Mercury, because he was the chief speaker. And the priest of Jupiter, being before their city, brought oxen and garlands to the gates, wishing to sacrifice with the crowds” (Acts 14:9-13).

It is never stated explicitly why the Lycaonians chose to label Barnabas as Jupiter. According to Roman mythology, however, Jupiter was king of the Roman gods. The pagans must have seen Barnabas as a good representation of their lightning hurling idol. And while this does not mean he had a dangerous demeanor or blasphemous attitude, it may speak to his physical nature. Barnabas was strong, thankfully both in body and in spirit. This event in the life of Barnabas brings to mind an often misunderstood element to his character. Paul was the chief speaker, and it seems that the assistants of Paul often are overshadowed by such a powerful orator. This, however, does not mean that Barnabas was in any way a bad speaker. In fact, it seems Barnabas was a well-regarded member of the brethren and his words were highly respected.

Many years prior to their ministry together, and sometime after their first encounter, Paul was yet again called on by Barnabas to accompany him to Antioch. Barnabas’ recommendation of Paul allowed for him to be more widely accepted in the ecclesia. Again, this would never have been possible if their friendship had not already been built. It is likely the Barnabas saw and remembered this zealous Saul from their youth, and felt that his energy was now ready to be directed towards helping, not hindering, Christ’s message. In a way, Barnabas acted as the training wheels that Paul would need to begin his journey — a brother with similar life experiences, and a warm heart.

Barnabas is a great example of the strength we should have when we approach a new brother or sister. He showed Paul love and acceptance in the face of adversity. Paul did not seek out Barnabas, nor did the church send Barnabas to help Paul, rather Barnabas sought Paul of his own accord. Barnabas had no misgivings about his former classmate’s intentions, despite the fearsome reputation Paul had attained.
'Where do I begin?' is no longer a cry of helplessness, but of excitement and anticipation of the journey ahead. 'Where do we begin?' is a cry of joy, like a family planning a vacation. ‘We will begin in Antioch…” and from there Paul and Barnabas spread and spoke the truth to all who would hear. His willingness to forgive made him the perfect partner for a budding apostle.

Barnabas stood by Paul as a teacher and guide when Paul needed more direction. Paul quickly rose in leadership and came into his own, and Barnabas stepped back as Paul stepped forward and, before long, the two would separate.

It was Barnabas’ forgiving nature that tore the two apart. When Barnabas asked if they could bring a young man, Mark, with them on a repeat journey to several ecclesias, Paul said no, because Mark had failed them in their time of need. As Bro. Boulton points out (pp. 73-74), it is pointless to state whether Paul was too harsh or if Barnabas was too forgiving; in truth, it was God’s hand at work. Barnabas was a strong speaker and a leader and God separated them so that both could grow and spread the truth separately to more brethren.

Silas — How can I help you?

In the wake of separation, Paul chose to bring with him a brother by the name of Silas. If Barnabas was the brother to introduce Paul to the ecclesias, Silas’ role was to prove to the new believers that what Paul and the other apostles were preaching to them was the truth. Silas is first introduced in Acts:

“Then it pleased the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men from them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; Judas, whose last name was Barsabas; and Silas, chief men among the brothers. And they wrote these things by their hand: The apostles and elders and brothers send greeting to the brothers, from the nations in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia. Because we have heard that certain ones who went out from us have troubled you with words, unsettling your souls, saying, Be circumcised and keep the law! (to whom we gave no such command); it seemed good to us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, men who have given up their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore we have sent Judas and Silas, who will also announce to you the same things by word” (Acts 15: 22-27).

Silas was one of the chief men in the brotherhood, hand chosen to travel with Paul and Barnabas. Yet, for all his prominence in the ecclesia, Silas often comes in second in Scripture. When paired with another of the apostles, Silas only ever is mentioned first with regards to Timothy. It may be that the writers of the New Testament just wanted to put the apostles in alphabetical order but, to counter that point, remember that Barnabas and Paul quickly switched to Paul and Barnabas when the leadership roles were reversed. This leads us to a theory as to why Silas is so often mentioned second. You see, while Barnabas specialized in early development (similar to Paul), Silas was a confirmer or reinforcer of the Truth. He came behind or after a brother had introduced the Truth, and proved that what they had been saying was accurate, or at the very least believed by the whole ecclesia.
“And when they had read it, they rejoiced at the comfort. And Judas and Silas, also being prophets themselves, exhorted the brothers with many words and confirmed them. And remaining for a time, they were let go in peace from the brothers to the apostles. But it pleased Silas to remain there” (Acts 15:31-34).

Keep in mind, we live in a beautiful age of easy contact. If we want to make sure we have a clear understanding of the Truth, we can refer to a number of solid works by brethren and compare thoughts via email and phone. But in an age where first principles were just being introduced, how were the ecclesias to believe that anything Paul was preaching was what the rest of the churches believed? They would look forward to other teachers, those that would come later or, as often in Silas’ case, would stay behind. In this case, Judas and Silas would confirm what Paul and Barnabas had said was true and when Judas and Silas taught the same principles, it would have been absolutely clear that what had been said before was truth.

This is not a role to be taken lightly. As we know, after he had left a town, Paul had to deal with brethren coming through that town preaching something completely different. It was essential that Silas, and brethren like him, would come to the ecclesia preaching the same message, without it being polluted.

Silas was also a supporter. On several occasions, even while traveling with Paul, Silas would stay behind to make sure that the ecclesias would be able to function without his presence. It is important to note that he was not asked to stay but in many occasions made the independent choice. He stayed behind to work with an ecclesia, to make sure they truly understood what Paul had preached.

It is likely that Silas comes first in regards to this young brother, Timothy, because Silas was so good at building up what Paul had started. He became a Barnabas figure to Timothy while Paul continued on to Athens. He prepared Timothy, just as Barnabas had prepared Paul, to eventually go on missionaries of his own.

Once Silas reaches Athens and travels to Macedonia to meet Paul, his name disappears from the records. After this point, Luke (the writer of the Acts) begins referring to the group in the first person plural (we), implying that he had joined the traveling ministry. Silas would have been a valuable asset to the group, strengthening and reaffirming their faith. And it was in these times that Paul would truly need some support. Shipwrecks, prison (again), beatings, harsh debates all would take their toll on Paul and he did not need another leader like himself by his side. He needed someone to confirm what he was saying was true and right. Silas provided this.

If we are to take anything from these two brothers, it should be this: God chooses who He will to get the job done. He knows what we need, who we need, when we need them. These two wonderful brethren were picked by God because He knew how they could help build His servant Paul. No, they were not the focus, but then neither was Paul. He was a messenger, an apostle, an ambassador for Christ, just as they were, just as we are.

Ethan Bearden (Austin Leander, TX)
Titus

“Whether any do enquire of Titus, he is my partner and fellowhelper concerning you: or our brethren be enquired of, they are the messengers [Apostles] of the churches, and the glory of Christ” (2Cor 8:23).

Who was Titus?
Titus is clearly a most important individual in the spreading of the gospel: and indeed he is referred to as an apostolos in the passage above, so he is included in our survey of The Apostles. Even a cursory read of Paul’s letter to Titus reveals that the circumstances and issues being addressed are very familiar to the brotherhood in these last days — travelling near and far to spread the gospel of salvation; establishing administrative arrangements and procedures in new ecclesias; ensuring a proper doctrinal foundation for ecclesial growth and godly behavior; making clear distinctions between the ecclesia and the world; handling controversies with antagonists of the Gospel; and more besides. To put the point in contemporary language, it’s as though the great apostle was writing a CBMA handbook, or an ecclesial guide or manual for the ecclesial elders, and indeed for all of us, to have within easy reach — inspired guidelines, not only for Titus the great preacher and ecclesial administrator, but for us too in these far off days. The timelessness of Scripture is revealed yet again. We are, or should be, the modern Titus’s being guided on how we should handle our great tasks in the Master’s service.

Who, then, was Titus? Well, it’s perhaps puzzling to find that the name of one so respected by the apostle Paul does not appear in the Acts of the Apostles. It’s possible that he was the person recorded as Justus in Acts 18:7, a name prefixed by Titus in some early manuscripts. But such surmising is not especially fruitful. Much more important to note is that Titus appears many times in Paul’s correspondence, especially in his letters to the Corinthian and Galatian ecclesias, reflecting the important role played by Titus in that early preaching to the Gentiles.

Scripture reveals that Titus was a Gentile disciple (Gal 2:3). He was very likely a native of Antioch in Syria, the great center of early Gentile Christianity. It was also likely that he met Paul there, and was taught the Truth by him, becoming his “true child in the common faith” (Titus 1:4). He accompanied Paul and Barnabas on the journey to Jerusalem for the council meeting on the “Gentile controversy” (Gal 2:1). Being a Gentile, Titus “was not compelled to be circumcised” (Gal 2:3). Subsequently, Titus probably accompanied Paul on some of his missionary travels into the Gentile world, including to Galatia.

Messenger to Corinth
Into the able and discreet hands of his friend, Paul entrusted his first letter to the Corinthians, with its stern rebuke of serious abuses affecting morality. While Timothy was sent to Corinth about the same time, his terms of reference seem to have been related to reconciliation rather than controversy (1Cor. 16:10–11). The role of Titus would make considerable demands upon him for tact and firmness of decision in persuading the vain and unpredictable Corinthians to accept the admonitions of Paul.
The mission to the Corinthians

The Apostle Paul was very anxious about the reception of his first letter to the Corinthians, especially as Titus failed to keep his appointment at Troas on the journey to Macedonia. He says that he had “no rest for his spirit, because he found not Titus his brother” (2Cor 2:12–13). Further on in his journey, however, Titus met Paul with good tidings of the success of his mission. In a reference to this in the second letter to Corinth, we are permitted a glimpse into the close relationship existing between the older and younger man, and the strong character of the young disciple himself.

“Nevertheless God, that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus; And not by his coming only, but by the consolation wherewith he was comforted in you, when he told us your earnest desire, your mourning, your fervent mind toward me; so that I rejoiced the more” (2Cor 7:6-7).

Titus thus played an especially important role at the time of the crisis in the Corinthian ecclesia. As we see, Titus is reported as bringing reassuring news to Paul in Macedonia that the troubles within the Corinthian ecclesia were being resolved. Titus, clearly a fine ambassador and diplomat in the Lord’s service, with a concern and affection for the Corinthian ecclesia (2Cor 8:16), was delighted to bring Paul such comforting news (2Cor 7:13-16). Titus later returned to Corinth, commissioned by Paul to complete the organization of the welfare collection system there (2Cor. 8:6). In appreciation, Paul describes Titus to the Corinthians as “my partner and fellow worker in your service” (2Cor 8:23). Paul especially commends Titus for not “taking advantage” of the Corinthians in any way (2Cor 12:18).

Several years later, Paul, following his release from imprisonment, took Titus with him to Crete (Titus 1:5). He apparently left him there to assist with the growth and organization of the Cretan ecclesia. This ecclesia was finding itself in a very difficult and generally hostile social environment (1:10), in which Titus needed the greatest support.

The Cretan populace was notoriously unsteady, insincere and quarrelsome; they were given to greed, falsehood and drunkenness in no ordinary degree, and the Jews who had settled among them appear to have exceeded the natives in immorality. Among such a people it was no easy office which Titus had to sustain when commissioned to carry forward the work Paul had begun; that of setting in order the “things that are wanting” in the ecclesias. This involved the “stopping the mouths of unruly and vain talkers”; “speaking the things which become sound doctrine”; and “rejecting heretics”.

“For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake. One of themselves, even a prophet of their own, said, The Cretians are alway liars, evil beasts, slow bellies. This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith” (Titus 1:10-13).

Of a practical and willing turn, Titus was doing well, manfully striving to overcome the obstacles before him. It called for a no nonsense approach, to inculcate and
organize an orderly, disciplined and useful Christian life in all ages and classes. It appears that Titus received Paul's letter in Crete soon after the great apostle had left the island. Subsequently, Paul encouraged Titus (3:12) to join him at Nicopolis, on the west coast of the Aegean Peninsula, when relieved in Crete by either Artemas or Tychicus. Later still, 2Tim. 4:10 refers to a visit by Titus to Dalmatia (modern Croatia). Non-Biblical sources (Eusebius) assume his later return to Crete, describing him as a bishop or elder until his old age.

Paul, therefore, knew Titus well. (It is argued by Bro. John Carter that Titus was, in fact, the natural brother of Luke.)² Although he was not a constant and close companion, as were Timothy, Luke, and Silas, he clearly relied on him greatly, including sensitive and difficult assignments. Paul appreciated his fellowship and assistance — especially in dealing with the turmoil in the Corinthian ecclesia, and now with the difficult social and ethical environment in Crete — and was anxious to encourage him. Paul had no need to remind Titus of basic doctrinal truths which he and Timothy, the recipients of the Pastoral Epistles, knew well.

Searching questions for ourselves

It would be difficult to find such examples of ardent and constant friendships employed on so wide a scale and to such noble ends as appears in the Christian career of the Apostle Paul. Such a contemplation prompts some searching questions in regard to our own chosen associates. Who are these companions? What are the links which bind us to them? What benefits do we derive from them, and through them confer on others? Our companions receive our influence and reflect our feelings and habits of thought. Through them we leave our impress on society and they regulate in measure our attitudes in the home, the work-a-day world and in the ecclesia.

However broad our views of life and its associations, if our main interests center around anything less noble than Jesus Christ, our discipleship will fail of its best. Loyal allegiance to the Son of God is the one link that should unite us, the one strong bond that will give strength and meaning to lasting friendships and lead us to "adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things" (Titus 2:10). May it be our aim so to testify and minister that we may be good stewards of God's manifold grace, ambassadors through whom God Himself may entreat men and women to be reconciled to Him.

“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works” (Titus 2:11-14).

This article based in part on an article by Ron Hicks (Washington DC), which appeared in the Lampstand.

Notes:
1. Some of this is from The Christadelphian, 1983, p 409
2. See The Christadelphian, 1960, p 296
Apostles — Little Known, but Vital

Introduction

Some of the apostles listed in the opening article are known only by their recorded name in the New Testament. These individuals are often overlooked, but the context in which they are named indicates their vital importance in the first century ecclesias. It is perhaps surprising so little is recorded about several of the twelve apostles, but we can often deduce much from the context and their names. Thus we will deal with them in two groups: first the little known of the twelve apostles, including Matthias, selected by the other disciples to replace Judas Iscariot, and then the others designated as Apostles later in the New Testament.

Bartholomew (or Nathaniel)¹

We must assume these two names represent the same individual for these reasons:

1) Bartholomew is not itself a first name. Bar means son of, and Bartholomew probably means son of Tolmai. Bartholomew must, therefore, have had a first name.

2) The first three Gospels never mention Nathanael, and the fourth Gospel never mentions Bartholomew. In the two passages where Nathanael is mentioned in the fourth Gospel he is in the company of apostles and is spoken of in a way that makes it very likely that he was an apostle (John 1:43-51; 21:2).

3) In the lists of the twelve in the first three Gospels and in Acts the, names of Philip and Bartholomew always occur together, as if it was natural to speak of them together; and in the fourth Gospel we learn that it was Philip who brought Nathanael to Jesus (John 1:45). Since, then, Philip is closely connected with Bartholomew and Nathanael, Bartholomew and Nathanael are the same person.

Our knowledge of Nathanael comes from two passages in the Fourth Gospel. Nathanael came from Cana in Galilee (John 21:2). He was a friend of Philip, and when Philip discovered Jesus he went straight to Nathanael and communicated his discovery to him. It was Philip's belief that in Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph, he had discovered the Messiah to whom all the Law and the prophets pointed. Nathanael was skeptical, and found it hard to believe that so great a figure could emerge from a place like Nazareth. Philip did not waste time and breathe in argument; he invited Nathanael to come and meet Jesus for himself. Jesus greeted Nathanael with the words: "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!" Nathanael asked how Jesus knew who he was. Jesus answered that before Philip had called him he had seen him under the fig tree.

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The point of this saying is that for many people in Palestine the fig tree was a kind of private room. It was the custom to have a fig tree at the door of the cottage. In Palestine the houses of the poorer people usually had only one room; and often, when they sought quietness to pray and to meditate, they sought privacy beneath the shade of the fig tree. In effect Jesus was saying to Nathanael, “Nathanael, I saw you at prayer, in your private devotion in the only secret place you have, there I saw into the secret and private places of your heart; and I know the seeking that is there.” It is as if Jesus, like God himself, understood Nathanael’s thought afar off. (See Psa 139:2.) To Nathanael it seemed an amazing thing that anyone should have the Divine power to read the secrets of his heart. “Rabbi,” he said in awed amazement, “thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel.” Thereupon Jesus promised Nathanael even greater things; he promised him that he would be a witness of the ultimate triumph and glory of the end (John 1:43-51). Meager as our information about Nathanael is, it is nonetheless true that when we put it together, the character of Nathanael clearly emerges.

1) Nathanael was a searcher of the Scriptures and a seeker after truth. The way in which Philip put his announcement is the proof of that: “We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write” (John 1:45). The clear implication is that Philip and Nathanael had spent long hours poring over the words of Scripture, searching for information as to what the Messiah must be like and as to when he should come.

2) Nathanael was a man of complete sincerity. He was an Israelite indeed in whom there was no guile (John 1:47). The proof of that is his willingness to be convinced. At first he was unwilling to believe that any good thing could come out of Nazareth, but when he was confronted with Jesus, his prejudices and his presuppositions vanished, and he believed.

3) Nathanael was a man of prayer. It was under the fig tree that Jesus saw him (John 1:48). The implication of the story is that Nathanael spent many an hour there.

4) Nathanael was a man of staying power. He was still there with the apostles after the agony of the Cross (John 21:2). “Thou art the King of Israel,” he had said. The man whom he called king found a cross for his throne, but Nathanael still believed.

James the son of Alpheus

James, the son of Alphaeus, is the apostle about whom we know the least. The New Testament tells us nothing but his name (Matt. 10:3; Mark 3:18; Luke 6:15; Acts 1:13), and even legend and tradition are almost silent about him. When we study closely all that the New Testament says and implies about this James, we may come to five conclusions.

1) James is identified as the son of Alphaeus. The first three Gospels all tell us about the call of Matthew (Matt. 9:9; Mark 2:14; Luke 5:27, 28). For our present purposes it is the accounts of Mark which is the most significant. Matthew says: “And as he passed by, he saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the receipt of custom, and said unto him, Follow me.” There is no doubt that
Matthew and Levi are the same person. Since that is so, the name of Matthew's father was also Alphaeus; and Matthew and this James, most likely, would have been brothers.

2) In the lists of Matthew and Mark the last four apostles to be named are James the son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot (Matt 10:3-4; Mark 3:18-19). In Luke's lists in his gospel and Acts the last four disciples are James the son of Alphaeus, Simon Zelotes, Judas the brother of James and Judas Iscariot (6:15-16; Acts 1:13). It is therefore certain that Judas the brother of James and Thaddaeus are the same person.

3) Since these four are so consistently named together, there must have been some common factor which bound them into a group. Simon, we know, was a Zealot, a fanatical Jewish patriot; Judas Iscariot, it is probable, was also such a patriot. There is thus a considerable amount of evidence that Thaddaeus was also a Zealot. So then, Simon, Thaddaeus or Judas, and Judas Iscariot were all most probably Zealots. It must, then, be a reasonable deduction that the fourth member of this unaltering group shared the sympathies of the other three. It must be regarded as probable that James, the son of Alphaeus, Simon the Zealot, Thaddaeus or Judas, and Judas Iscariot were bound together by the bond of intense and fanatical patriotism, and it may well be that all four had once belonged to the Zealot party. So we have our fact and our reasonable deduction. Matthew and James the son of Alphaeus were brothers. James was very probably a Jewish nationalist of the fieriest type, and both were members of the apostolic company.

So it could be that the fact that Matthew and James were both members of the twelve is one of the great illustrations that Jesus came not only to reconcile men to God, but also to reconcile them to each other.

**Simon the Zealot**

Simon the Zealot is a man about whom we know so little that even his name produces problems. The New Testament tells us nothing but his name, and in the KJV the designation by which he is called differs from place to place. In Matthew and Mark he is Simon the Canaanite (Matt 10:4; Mark 3:18); in two other places he is Simon who is called Zelotes (Luke 6:15; Acts 1:13). In the Luke passages there is no difficulty, for Simon is called by the Greek word zelotes, which means a zealot. The problem lies in the Matthew and Mark passages. There the Greek manuscripts have two readings. The later manuscripts, which the KJV followed, read Kananites, which the KJV translates Canaanite. That is quite certainly wrong. The Greek for Canaan is Chanaan, and the adjective from it is Chananaios. The reading of the best and most ancient manuscripts is Kananaios, which is the word that the RV and most modern versions transliterate correctly Cananaean: note the NIV has “Zealot”. This word is derived from the Hebrew verb kana, which means to be jealous; and it was used for those who were jealous for the Law; zelotes is precisely the same word in Greek; it also means one who is jealous. And in this case the jealousy is of those who were jealous for the sanctity and the honor of the Law. Cananaean is the correct reading, and Cananaean and Zealot are the same word, the first in Hebrew, the second in Greek.
It is this which gives us our key to Simon. We know nothing about him personally, but if he was a Zealot, we know very well what kind of beliefs he once held and what kind of man he once was, for we have ample evidence to form a picture of the Zealots and their characteristic beliefs. They were fanatical Jewish nationalists, who had a heroic disregard for the sufferings involved in the struggle for what they regarded as the purity of their faith.

The constitution of the twelve presents us with a situation which is nothing less than a miracle in personal relationships. Within that society there was Matthew the tax collector and Simon the Zealot — Matthew who had accepted the political situation, and who was profitably engaged in help to administer it, and Simon who would have assassinated any Roman whom he could reach and would have plunged a dagger into any Jew who dared to co-operate with the Romans.

After the crucifixion Simon was still there (Acts 1:13). Here is the proof that Simon had come to see that the dagger must abdicate for the Lord. Simon had dedicated his life to reformation by power politics, and yet he had come to accept the way of sacrificial love.

**Philip the Apostle**

The apostle who was the first to be called (John 1:43) is often confused with Philip the evangelist: it is hoped the latter will be the subject of a character study in an upcoming issue.

We only have four records of his appearance in the New Testament (apart from his presence in all the lists of the twelve apostles). Each help us to understand the character of this apostle. Even if he had never again appeared in our record, he would forever be known as the first to whom it was said “follow me”!

1) After his call by Jesus, Philip's first action was to find Nathanael and to tell him of this Jesus whom he had discovered and who had discovered him. He told Nathanael that they had found him of whom Moses and the prophets spoke. But Nathanael was skeptical. “Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?” he asked. Philip did not argue; he answered, “Come and see” (John 1:45-46). This incident tells us two things about Philip. First, he had the missionary instinct. The moment he had found Jesus Christ for himself, he was determined to share Christ with others. Second, Philip had the right approach to the skeptic. He did not argue; he may have been well aware that Nathanael could have sunk him in any battle of argument. He simply said, “Come and see!” Argument often only obscures; confrontation sweeps away a man's defenses.

2) The next time we meet Philip is at the feeding of the five thousand. It is to Philip that Jesus addresses the question, “Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?” And Philip answers, “Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them that every one of them may take a little” (John 6:5-7). It has been suggested that the answer of Philip comes so immediately and so unhesitatingly that he must already have been calculating in his own mind how this multitude could be fed. Maybe Philip was calculating the irreducible
minimum necessary to give every person in the crowd a bite! A denarius was a working man’s pay for a day. It is as if Philip said, “A year’s pay would not buy enough to give this crowd a bite apiece!”

3) The next time we meet Philip is in the last days of Jesus’ life. Certain Greeks had come to Jerusalem, and they came to Philip with a request to see Jesus. They probably came to Philip because Philip is a typically Greek name, and because they thought that their best chance of establishing contact with Jesus was through a man with such a name. Philip’s reaction was to go to Andrew and to tell him; and only then did Andrew and Philip bring the Greeks to Jesus (John 12:20-22). Here we see Philip as the man who disliked responsibility, but he knew his own weakness, and in that he was a wise man.

4) The last time we meet Philip is in the Upper Room. Jesus was talking, about the Father and how he was going to the Father. Philip was a man for whom faith was difficult. “Lord,” he said, “shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us.” Philip received what is maybe the greatest answer Jesus ever gave anyone: “He that hath seen me hath seen the Father” (John 14:8-9). For Philip, to believe involved to see. But Philip did not bottle up and restrain his questioning mind. He took his question to Jesus; and Philip that night learned that if we want to see what God is like we must look at Jesus — and that is the central truth of the Christian religion.

5) And so Philip disappears off the scene. We learn of his subsequent activities elsewhere than in the Bible, but it is clear his faith endured to the end.

Matthias

Matthias, of course, was elected to take the place of Judas Iscariot. The mode of election of the twelfth apostle was somewhat remarkable. First, “they appointed two” who had the needful qualifications, Matthias and Joseph Barsabbas. It is remarkable that apparently there were only two who were deemed qualified. To decide between these two there was now recourse to the drawing of lots, and Matthias was selected. Nothing more is known about these two men except what can be inferred from Joseph’s double cognomen: Barsabbas–Justus. The first name here identifies a zealot for Sabbath keeping, and the second one who was a dedicated observer of the Law of Moses, as also was Judas Barsabbas (Acts 15:22). In view of the Judaist tensions and contentions which beset the early church before very long, it may well be imagined what awkward situations would have arisen if such as one as Joseph had joined the Twelve.

There are those who express doubts about this selection process. After all, it is argued, this method was one of human choice before the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Ought not Peter and the rest to have waited for a lead from heaven in this matter? And since, before long, Paul was so emphatically an apostle — the “youngest” of the Twelve, should not the selection of Matthias be invalid? However, these arguments have to give way before the clear witness of the inspired text in the rest of Acts: “Peter stood up with the eleven” (2:14); “the twelve called the multitude unto them” (6:2). Nor is it likely that Luke would have been guided to narrate this selection procedure in such detail if indeed it was a mistake from the start.
His name, Matthias, means Gift of Yah, and also Given to Yah, the secondary sense being seen in his wholehearted service to his God. It is to be hoped that all parties concerned participated with the understanding of the appropriateness of Matthias. Maybe their names will not be found in New Jerusalem with the Twelve, but we can be sure Matthias was deserving of his selection.

**Andronicus and Junia (Junias)**

In Paul’s commendation of the saints he sought to commend (Rom 16:6) were Andronicus and Junia. He gives a four-fold sketch of these fellow-laborers “My kinsmen — My fellow-prisoners — Who are of note among the apostles — Who also were in Christ before me.” Kinsmen is a title Paul gives to six persons in this chapter, and it probably implies that they were members of the same nation — Jewish as Paul was. My fellow-prisoners is a phrase suggesting that at some time or another they shared imprisonment with Paul: Paul’s “fellow-captives in Christ’s war.”

“Who are of note among the apostle’s”, can mean one of two things: either they were distinguished as apostles themselves, being included in “all the apostles” (1Cor 15:7), or Andronicus and Junia were the most highly esteemed by the apostolic circle, being honored above others for their toil and character.

“Who also were in Christ before me.” When these two apostles were converted to Christ we are not told, but from them Paul had heard of such a transaction. Andronicus was one of the traveling evangelists or missionaries who preached the Gospel from place to place, and was likely one of the most prominent and successful of these itinerant envoys of the Early Church. Together with Junia, they must have made a powerful team in the spreading of the gospel.

*Whether Junia/Junias was a male or female has been the subject of much debate, with the Ancients as well as modern scholars being evenly divided. If indeed Junia was female, it is attractive to regard the pair as husband and wife, in the fashion of Priscilla and Aquila.*

**Apollos**

When Paul wrote about the apostles who were made a spectacle unto the world and to angels and to men, he includes Apollos along with himself in the wider apostolate (1Cor 4:6,9). This cultured and educated Jew of the Alexandrian race (Acts 18:24), came into contact with Paul while he was in Ephesus during his third missionary journey. Luke gives us a full account of the remarkable ability of Apollos to expound the Scriptures, and how, after his private tuition from two godly souls, Aquila and Priscilla, he mightily convinced the Jews of the Messiahship of Jesus (Acts 18:24-28). Paul seems to allude to Apollos’ eloquence, wisdom, and letter of commendation in defense of his own position as an apostle with authority (1Cor 3:1-8,22). The last glimpse we have of Apollos is when he is recommended along with Zenas the lawyer to Titus (Titus 3:13), who was then on a missionary journey through Crete and was probably the bearer of this epistle addressed to him by Paul (Titus 1:5).
There has been a tendency to represent Paul and Apollos as rivals based on Paul’s stricture regarding the folly of partisanship: “Are you for Paul or Apollos?” But the hearts of these two workers were almost certainly knit together in a bond nothing could break. That there must have been something refreshing about the unique ministry of Apollos may be gathered from the way both Luke and Paul compared him to water. Luke, thought of Apollos as “boiling hot” in earnest spirituality, for this is what the word fervent means. Paul, the great missionary statesman, spoke of Apollos’ words as cool streams upon a burned-up garden, “Apollos watered” (Acts 18:25; 1Cor 3:6). The drooping converts of Corinth, so spiritually parched, were being revived under the preaching of Apollos. His fellow-apostle, Paul, rejoiced in having gained such a capable partner. Within the ecclesias today there are many drooping, withering plants in dire need of watering, but their case is forlorn if the ecclesia lacks those like Apollos, who can water God’s garden.

**Epaphroditus**

One cannot read the epistles of Paul, without realizing what a genius for friendship he had.

All we know of Epaphroditus, the Macedonian, is recorded in two vivid passages in Paul’s letter to the Philippian church, but from these brief sketches we gain a good deal of insight into the life and character of this brother who was so precious to Paul the aged (Phil 2:25; 4:18).

Paul shows for us the true character of Epaphroditus, who was certainly one of the most loyal and devoted servants of the Lord mentioned in the Pauline epistles.

1) He was a brother: in all likelihood Epaphroditus was a convert of Paul, but he certainly created for himself a singular place in Paul’s affection. With deep feeling he could speak of him as “My Brother”.

2) My companion in labor: Epaphroditus was among Paul’s best helpers, being among those gifts of our Lord to his ecclesia, which Paul describes as helps (1Cor 12:28).

3) My fellow soldier: “for he nearly died for the work of Christ, risking his life to complete your service to me he was sick unto death” (Phil 2:30 RSV). He considered his life worth nothing, but sought to finish his race to aid Paul.

4) Your messenger (apostle) and minister: a brother honored with the apostolic gifts, so he could indeed minister to the beginning ecclesias.

He was therefore an example for us: he struggled through sickness, but never lost his zeal for the Truth.

*Peter Hemingray (Detroit Royal Oak)*

Notes:

1. The source I have found the most helpful about the twelve Apostles is William Barclay’s little book “The Master’s Men”, long out of print.
The Apostles in the Gospel of John

John’s gospel is different

Matthew, Mark and Luke are called the “Synoptic” gospels, because the events of Jesus’ life and ministry are seen from roughly similar perspectives. The Gospel of John is different. There is no account of the birth of the Savior, but an account of the spiritual rebirth of those who “received him.”

“But as many as received him, to them gave he the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God” (John 1:12-13).

John alone omits Jesus’ words about the bread and wine at the Last Supper, but alone records Jesus’ teaching about bread from Heaven:

“I am the living bread which came down out of heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: yea and the bread which I will give is my flesh, for the life of the world . . . He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood abideth in me, and I in him” (John 6:51, 54-56).

The Synoptic gospels all record Jesus’ saying that we must take up the cross and follow him. John does not, but illustrates the principle in reporting the new commandment:

“This is my commandment, that ye love one another, even as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:12-13).

John’s account of the life of Christ is less comprehensive than the Synoptics, but invites us to a deep contemplation of the events recorded. John highlights Jesus’ involvement in the spiritual development of the apostles, his authority as Lord and Master, his love in calling them friends (15:13-15). John alone recounts the foot-washing:

“So when he had washed their feet, and taken his garments, and sat down again, he said unto them, ‘Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me, Master, and, Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, the Lord and the Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have given you an example, that ye also should do as I have done to you.’ ” (John 13:12-15).

John alone records the prayer of Jesus on the way to Gethsemane (John 17). Verses 6-19 of this prayer are for the disciples; the remainder (17:20-26) is for us. The focus and goal of the gospel is given in the last verses of John 20:

“And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name” (John 20:30-31).

In this article we consider some of the unique aspects of John’s gospel in its portrayal of the apostles. We do so bearing in mind that John wrote his gospel so that we may believe, and in hope that our belief can spring up to eternal life through Jesus’ name.
Nathanael is referred to as “Bartholomew” in the Synoptics; James and John are not mentioned by name in John, although is normally assumed that the “beloved Disciple” is John. Thaddaeus is “Judas son of James” in Luke and “Judas, not Iscariot” in John.

**The first five**

John’s gospel begins with John the Baptist, “sent from God” (1:6), bearing witness of Christ (1:15). Two of his disciples see him gazing at Jesus, hear his words “Behold, the Lamb of God”, and follow him (1:36-40). One is identified as Andrew, brother of Peter; the other is not named. It is likely that this other is John, the author of the gospel, who refers to himself only as “the disciple whom Jesus loved,” and whose delicacy is such that the only reference to himself and his brother is as “the sons of Zebedee” (21:2). The two accompany Jesus to his lodging “and abode with him that day.” Nothing is recorded of that day, but its profound effect is evident in what follows: Andrew finds his brother Peter and says “We have found the Messiah!”

Natural incredulity yielded to the evident conviction and enthusiasm of brother and friend, and Peter himself went to meet Christ (1:42). Once again we are told little of the encounter, except that Jesus “looked at him” — not a glance but a gaze, a steady and fixed look¹ — and said that Peter would be known as Cephas, “the Stone.” No words of Peter’s are recorded; no response is given, but further explanation is deemed unnecessary. From this time on, Peter is a disciple and an apostle.

It seems safe to assume that Philip was a friend of Peter, John and Andrew; that Jesus heard of him through them (1:44). Jesus sought Philip (1:43) and said “Follow me.” As with Peter, there is no record of a direct response. But that Philip joined the previous three is evident from his words to Nathanael: “We have found him of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write. . . .”

In these three episodes, the sparseness of the record speaks volumes. A skilled musical composer uses silence artfully; the best painters can shape impressions with few strokes of the brush. So it is with the gospel of John. Think of those who, sent to arrest Jesus, returned empty-handed (7:45-46). Challenged for their failure they could only say “Never man spake like this man.” It was explanation enough. Such is the effect of the Master. His sheep know his voice (do we?) and forsaking all, follow him (10:3-4,16).
The record of Nathanael’s first encounter with Christ is more detailed than that of the previous four, but still tantalizingly spare (1:45-51). Jesus speaks first, greeting Nathanael as “an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile.” Nathanael, taken aback, responds “How do you know me?” Jesus’ response, that he had seen Nathanael when he was under the fig tree before Philip’s call, was enough to convince Nathanael: “Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel.”

Jesus’ next words, alluding to Jacob’s ladder, are often laid together with his reference to Nathanael as without “guile.” Jacob’s name and history bear witness to something less than a guileless character. It is supposed that Nathanael was contemplating the life of Jacob when Jesus saw him, and that this awareness of his inmost thoughts was the basis of Nathanael’s conviction. This may be the case — if it please God, some day we will meet Nathanael, and ask him personally! But regardless of the explanation, the power of Jesus’ presence and words is manifest, as on so many other occasions. “Whom seek ye?” he said to the mob sent to arrest him (18:4-5). “Jesus of Nazareth” they replied. His simple response “I am he” had the power of a blow: “they went backward, and fell to the ground” (18:6).

So Nathanael became a disciple of the Lord, joining Peter and Andrew, John and Philip. There is no further specific reference to him, except as among the seven on the remarkable morning which began with Peter saying “I go a fishing” (21:3). Nathanael shared the breakfast of bread and freshly cooked fish prepared by the Lord himself (21:12-13). That blessed morning surely prefigures another day, described by the Lord this way:

“Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them sit down to meat, and shall come and serve them” (Luke 12:37).

**Thomas**

Table 1 highlights a difference between John and the Synoptics. Philip, Nathanael and Thomas are only mentioned in lists of names in the Synoptics, but John gives glimpses of their experiences and spiritual development. John tells us it was Philip that Jesus tested, asking where they could buy bread to feed the 5000 (6:5-7); that it was Philip to whom certain Greek proselytes came “saying, ‘Sir, we would see Jesus’” (12:20-21); that it was Philip who said “Show us the Father,” prompting Jesus’ response “Have I been so long time with you, and dost thou not know me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; how sayest thou, ‘Shew us the Father?’”

Similarly, all that we know about Thomas, we know from the Gospel of John. He is best known as the “Doubting Thomas” (20:19-29) who would not believe the risen Lord had met with the other apostles. Luke’s account of that very meeting (Luke 24:36-49) says those present “were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they beheld a spirit”; that Jesus showed them his hands and feet and urged them to “handle me, and see” and that still “they believed not for joy.” Perhaps we have been too hard on Thomas, who was not present and desired the same proofs. A week later Jesus gave those same proofs to Thomas, and his response was unqualified conviction “My Lord and my God!” Jesus said to him “Because thou hast seen me, thou hast
believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed” (20:29). If there
is reproach in the words, it is mild reproach; the emphasis is on the blessedness
of those who, having not had their doubts so convincingly set aside, still believe.

The picture of Thomas as dithering and irresolute does not fit with our first introduc-
tion to the man in John 11. Jesus and disciples had withdrawn to Peræa, the region
“beyond Jordan” (John 10:40) after repeated attempts on his life (8:59; 10:31,39). Word
came from Bethany, “Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick.” Lazarus was dying,
and Jesus knew it. He must return to raise him “for the glory of God, that the Son
of God may be glorified thereby.” The disciples all opposed the return to dangerous
territory: all but one, that is. Thomas said, “Let us also go, that we may die with him
(11:16). The words may have been imperfectly thought out, like Peter’s unmeasured
assertion that he would die rather than deny Jesus (echoed by 10 other disciples:
Matt 26:35). But they are not the words of a coward, a ditherer, a doubter, and they
received no rebuke from Jesus. They were the words of a loyal follower.

In light of this the epithet “Doubting Thomas” seems unfair. Yet some point to
the thrice repeated phrase “Thomas, called Didymus,” offering the explanation
that Didymus means “the Twin” in Greek, and commentary to the effect that this
means he was a “double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.” There is a simpler
explanation. “Thomas” also means “the Twin” in Hebrew; John’s gospel was written
to a predominantly Gentile audience and thus includes the name by which he was
known among Gentiles.

The disciple Jesus loved

Our consideration of the apostles in the gospel of John could not be complete
without mention of John himself. He is “the disciple whom Jesus loved” mentioned
as “reclining in Jesus’ bosom” at the Last Supper (13:23), the one to whom Jesus
committed his mother’s care from the cross (19:25-27), the one who outran Peter
to the empty tomb (20:1-5).

What an extraordinary title: “The disciple whom Jesus loved!” Jesus’ love for all his
disciples was the basis of the new commandment; it is the most comprehensive
love imaginable. But that love for all does not disallow a special affection for John,
or for Lazarus and his sisters (11:5) or for a rich young ruler caught in the web of
materialism (Mark 10:21). These descriptions do not detract from the comprehen-
siveness of Jesus’ love; they enhance our appreciation of the humanity of our Master.

The disciple whom Jesus loved was specially privileged to know the love of Christ.
Writing as an old man, he could say “we know and have believed the love which God
hath in us . . . we love, because he first loved us.” (1John 4:16-19). His gospel reveals
the very personal nature of Christ’s dealings with the disciples, and with those that
believe on Him through their word.

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Notes:
1. Same word as used of the Baptist in 1:36, and notably in Luke 22:61 of Jesus’ look at Peter
from across the courtyard of the high priest’s house.
2. It has been argued that “The Disciple who Jesus loved” is Lazarus, but the normal assumption
is that it is John himself, as assumed here.
These Who Have Turned the World Upside Down

Cowering in a house in Jerusalem, their remaining hope was to escape the sword. Jesus had been crucified and buried along with their hopes of seeing his Kingdom established. The eleven who remained were scared. But soon, these same men would turn the world upside down. Soon they would spread God’s word the across the Roman world. How could that be possible?

To answer this, we need to look at the first Apostle, Jesus. (Heb 3:1)

As the word Apostle implies, Jesus was a messenger, a representative of God, sent to preach, heal and save. What we forget is that Jesus wasn’t sent into the world as a grown man. For 30 years he had to learn and grow spiritually. At the age of 12, his mission was unfolding before him, “I must be about my Father’s business”. His spiritual development came in large part from Joseph, Mary, and the elders in his family. Some of his ‘Uncles’ would also raise other apostles who would follow Jesus. This example of helping and guiding the younger members in our own ecclesia is sometimes lost. We assume their spiritual growth just happens on its own. This is a dangerous assumption.

Suffering

Jesus was raised by believers that God brought into the realm of His son’s life to teach him. Through stories, lessons, observations and questions, Jesus grew. His mentors showed him right from wrong, gave him examples in living their daily lives that would help him. By watching, Jesus would learn to love good and hate evil. They taught him the boundaries set up by His heavenly Father for proper thoughts and actions.

“Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered” (Heb 5:8).

This verse is not talking about Jesus suffering in the Garden of Gethsemane and on the cross. This is talking about his life, all the “days of his flesh” (vs. 7). It describes his determination not to submit to the flesh and the suffering that resulted from it. He “learned” by watching, hearing, putting into practice things he saw.

“My son, don’t despise Yahweh’s discipline, neither be weary of His reproof: for whom Yahweh loves, He reproves; even as a father reproves the son in whom he delights.” (Prov 3:11-12, WEB’)

Everything about his childhood indicates that his heavenly Father was active in raising His son and ensuring His son was taught and instructed by those around him. It seems Jesus would do the same to teach his apostles, his “little children”? (Matt 18:3)

In Hebrews, Paul writes of Jesus; “For in that he himself has suffered being tempted, he is able to help those who are tempted” (Heb 2:18 WEB). In other words, the lessons and methods used to raise and teach Jesus as he suffered and learned to deal with the flesh, would be shared with his disciples. This passage shows his determination in passing them on.
It’s pretty easy to see that Jesus was always teaching the Apostles, letting them observe him, answering their questions, and challenging them with his own questions. Jesus mentored them on a daily basis.

Learning our ABC’s

The Apostle Peter reflects on this idea of mentoring and guiding when he writes “For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps” (1 Pet 2:21)

The word “example” used above is a rare word which means; “A writing copy, including all the letters of the alphabet, given to beginners as an aid in learning to draw them”. This is describing the means that children use to learn the alphabet and write sentences. The Greek letters would be traced until the form and pattern of each one was memorized. Like little children, the Apostles had to learn their spiritual ABC’s. The Apostles had to learn to pattern themselves after Jesus in order to form his character. Jesus was their teacher, their mentor. His examples were being burned into their minds, one letter at a time. We see this mentoring throughout his ministry. The gospels are full of vignettes of him taking them aside to teach.

Jesus and Peter alone discussing the tax imposed on them; “Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea, and cast an hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money: that take, and give unto them for me and thee” (Matt 17:26).

Jesus and four disciples; “And after six days Jesus taketh with him Peter, and James, and John, and leadeth them up into an high mountain apart by themselves: and he was transfigured before them” (Mark 9:2)

Jesus and the twelve; “And Jesus going up to Jerusalem took the twelve disciples apart in the way, and said unto them…” (Matt 20:17).

A good example of the process of mentoring is found in Luke when we put a few verses together.

1) “And it came to pass afterward, that he went throughout every city and village, preaching and showing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God: and the twelve were with him,” (Luke 8:1). Notice the emphasis on the twelve being with him. Now let’s go forward one chapter.

2) “Then he called his twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases” (Luke 9:1). By having watched Jesus, the 12 Apostles were ready to go out on their own and heal and preach the kingdom. But it didn’t stop with the 12 Apostles. Let move one another chapter in Luke.

3) “After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come” (Luke 10:1).

And just as important, they reviewed and shared with Jesus what was accomplished and the problems they encountered.

“And the seventy returned again with joy…” (Luke 10:17).
“And the apostles gathered themselves together unto Jesus, and told him all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught. And he said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat” (Mark 6:30-31).

The emerging pattern is that they were taught by Jesus, and then they were sent out to put these lessons into practice. Once the twelve were successful, seventy more that had been trained were sent out. It’s clear that they were watching, learning from Jesus example and using that to help them preach.

“For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard” (Acts 4:20).

“That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life;” (1John 1:1).

After Jesus’ Resurrection they are sent into the whole world to preach. (Acts 1:8) But how could eleven men turn the world upside down? By mentoring others, the same way Jesus guided them.

Barnabas takes Paul, Paul and Barnabas take John Mark. Paul trains Timothy. And each of those who were trained, eventually trains others. Like roots on a tree, the Ecclesia’s grow, the word spreads across the Empire. Paul sums this up when he writes: “Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do”! (Phil 4:9).

Perhaps a little formula will put things in perspective.

\[1x = 10,000:\] What this expression means is that we tend to be a community of Bible Students and not mentors! As a community we are skilled in teaching, Bible marking, writing verse-by-verse expositions, instructing each other in first principles, etc. What we are not very good at is being Mentors, or “Fathers”. Paul explains the above formula in this verse;

“For though you have ten thousand tutors in Christ, yet not many fathers. For in Christ Jesus, I became your father…” (1Cor 4:18 WEB).

Paul wants you to be the “x” in the formula. Paul wants us to be fathers to others in the Truth. These weren’t empty words, Timothy wasn’t just another student, Paul thought of him as a son.

“But you know the proof of him, that as a child serves a father, so he served with me in furtherance of the Good News” (Phil 2:22 WEB).

“Unto Timothy, my own son in the faith:” (1Tim 1:2).

And the person we mentor does not necessarily have to be young! When Paul wrote this to Timothy, “Let no man despise thy youth;” Timothy could have been in his thirties! In Rom 16:21 Timothy is now described as Paul’s “work fellow”. Then Timothy starts to train others;
“The things which you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit the same to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also” (2 Tim 2:2 WEB).

Do these things – a few practical examples

My greatest lessons growing up were from Brothers and Sisters who would pull me aside and help me, set examples for me to follow, take me along on visits to other Ecclesias, and challenge me to do better. My Grandfather, Bro. Bill Thompson gave me a great love for books. He would suggest them as topics for classes or just books we would discuss. He would teach me how to use study tools, how to slow down my delivery when giving a talk, remind me to take a deep breath before speaking. But the key is, he would take time. In a calm, loving way he would help me.

It was normal for members of my Ecclesia to suggest a verse or thought to me after a class I taught that would help me the next time. This still happens to this day. Sometimes it wasn’t words but actions. On Truth Corp in 1978, I remember handing out pamphlets alongside Bro. Don Snobelen who had a bad hip. Don was semi-retired, yet everyday he was out alongside a bunch of teenagers preaching the truth, talking to anyone who would listen, never complaining about the pain. Don taught me that “laboring in the vineyard” wasn’t just for young people.

At one of my first lectures in another city, Bro. Harry Whittaker showed up. He should have been the one speaking and not me. Afterwards he took me aside and in a fatherly way shared some thoughts and advice that was helpful to me. These brothers and sisters didn’t need a podium to teach others, and neither do we.

My work in the Lord

Paul sums this all up very nicely in Corinthians.

“Am I not an apostle? Haven’t I seen Jesus Christ, our Lord? Aren’t you my work in the Lord? If to others I am not an apostle, yet at least I am to you; for you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord” (1Cor 9:1-2 WEB).

Paul and Peter followed the “tracings” or the “ABC’s” left by Jesus as a pattern that they followed. Those who followed Paul had a similar “seal” or inscription in Paul that they could trace and follow. One generation following another in greater numbers.

In those earlier passages from Luke when teams of Jesus followers were trained and sent out in increasing numbers, we find this verse: “And sent messengers before his face: and they went,… to make ready for him” (Luke 9:52).

We may not be Apostles, but in our extended families and Ecclesia’s we need to be ‘Fathers’, preparing the next generation, so we can all “make ready for him”.

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Notes:
1. WEB is short for World English Bible, which is a free updated version of the ASV (American Standard Version).
What Happened to the Apostles?

We know Jesus chose His apostles for the most important mission in history. “And he said unto them, Go ye unto all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark 16:15-16). But other than the New Testament accounts of the lives and the preaching of a few of the apostles, where did they all go and how did their lives end?

There are a few passages in Scripture that give an indication of what was going to happen to some of them. The other accounts of their lives and fates that have come down to us from non-scriptural sources cannot be verified. There is a certain credibility in the reports of most of them having died as martyrs, in the fact that the New Testament does give a clear indication of that likelihood.

The following is intended to be a brief summary of what is known, what is not known and what has been passed down regarding the twelve apostles listed in Matthew: “Now the names of the twelve apostles are these…” (Matt 10:24).

Peter, Andrew, James the son of Zebedee, John the son of Zebedee, Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Mathew, James the son of Alpheus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Canaanite, Judas Iscariot. We have also included Mathias and Paul. Mathias because he succeeded Judas and Paul because of his prominence in the New Testament.

But where are Luke and Mark? Many of us (who can’t remember the Sunday school song “There Were Twelve Disciples”) would put them on our list but they were not of the twelve that journeyed with Jesus throughout his ministry. They were disciples.

The difference between an apostle and a disciple

What is the difference between an apostle and a disciple? Simply put, all Jesus followers were disciples but apostles were those he specifically sent forth to preach. We in this age are Jesus’ disciples, but we are not apostles in the same sense the subjects of this article were. Think about it this way. Under the law, all priests were Levites but all Levites were not priests…only those who were the sons of Aaron. Jesus definitely sent Paul forth to preach, and good cases can be made for including some others under the designation of “apostles” as elsewhere in this issue, but the names we listed will serve our purposes adequately.

Scriptural indications of the apostles’ future fates

General prophetic warnings were given by Jesus to the affect that his followers were going to be subjected to persecution, beatings and, as we know in the case of Stephen, martyrdom. Mark 13:8-13 is a good example. “…ye shall be beaten… brother shall betray the brother to death, and the father the son; and children shall rise up against their parents, and shall cause them to be put to death…ye shall be hated of all men….”

Jesus’ conversation with two of his apostles serves as a prophetic warning in a specific example. In Matt 20:20-23 we have the exchange between the mother of
Zebedee’s children, who were the apostles James and John, asking Jesus to grant that her two sons “may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left, in thy kingdom.” Jesus responded with this question to James and John: “Are ye able to drink the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able. And he saith unto them, Ye shall drink of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with…” The baptism Jesus was about to be subjected to was the cross and all it entailed; extreme torture, suffering, humiliation and death. Jesus’ assurance that James and John were going to face similar trials was prophetic of their fates and reasonable indicators of what awaited all the apostles.

James, John’s brother, is he only apostle on our list whose martyrdom is recorded in Scripture. Acts: 12:2 is the brief statement that Herod: “…killed James the brother of John with the sword.” James’ death fulfils the Lord’s warning in the extreme.

But what happened to the rest of them?

The problem with early records
The trustworthiness of the stories that come down to us suffer from their profusion, their mutual contradictions, and their obvious mistakes (in geography for example) and finally from the wide-spread tendency towards creative writing. But that does not mean they are all false. Not by any means. They suffer in our minds from the same affect that that one lie has on all the truths we have ever spoken. It brings everything under the same cloud. We see in this example an exhortation to our own integrity.

We suggest, therefore, that we read what follows from the premise that, in the main, there does appear to be a consistency in the accounts that the apostles died in witness for their faith. The following is not being brought forward in any attempt to prove or disprove anything, but in the hope that there is much to be gained in inspiration and encouragement for our own walk towards the Kingdom of God.

What do the early records tell us about the apostles and their deaths?
This brief summary will not address the Scriptural accounts of the apostles lives already covered in the preceding articles.

1) Peter. There are reasons to think Peter went to Syria, Babylon, Corinth and Rome. Not necessarily in that order. Paul in Gal. 2:11 said: “But when Peter was come to Antioch (in Syria)...” That is all that is said. How long he was there we do not know. Peter’s closing sentences include: “The church that is at Babylon, elected together with you, saluteth you, and so does Marcus my son” (1Pet 5:13). This certainly looks like Peter was writing from Babylon¹. However this salutation has also been pointed to as support for Peter being in Rome because Babylon has been taken to mean Rome (Rev 16:19, 17:5 etc.). There are many historical sources that place Peter in Rome. Tertullian states that Peter was crucified in Rome by Nero. Eusebius, who died in A.D. 339, was a friend of Constantine and is supposed to have had access to all the documentation that existed. He compiled a “History of the Church.” Eusebius maintained that Peter was crucified on June 29 A.D. 67. Peter was supposed
to have requested that he be crucified upside down. Most accounts say that
this was at Peter’s request, but that he gave no reason.

2) **Andrew, Peter’s brother.** Nothing is said in Scripture about Andrew after
the resurrection. Legendary accounts place him in Philippi, Macedonia (near
Greece) in 69 A.D. Andrew was making many converts which was bound to
raise tensions. Rome was extremely sensitive to any kinds of organizations
meeting for any reason. The Roman Empire was a conquered empire. Upris-
ings and revolts were always fomenting. Conspiracies and assassinations were
common in the capital city itself. An example of how far reaching Rome’s
concerns in this area are is seen in Emperor Trajan’s (circa 98 A.D.) response
to a letter from Pliny, a Roman official who was sent to govern the province
of Bythnia. A large fire occurred in the city of Claudiopolis and it gave rise
to the suggestion that the citizens organize a fire department. Pliny wrote to
Trajan for his permission to proceed and Trajan turned him down. The fol-
lowing is an excerpt from Trajan’s response to Pliny. “…but we must remember
that it is societies like these (in this case a volunteer fire department) which
have been responsible for political disturbances in your province, particularly
in its cities. If people assemble for a common purpose, whatever name we
give them and for whatever reason, they soon become a political club.” This
injunction against all clubs regardless of their purpose comes up repeatedly.
We point this out to illustrate that, along with Christians being persecuted for
their religious beliefs, as an organized entity they were automatically under
suspicion regardless of their religion. We can readily understand the town
clerk’s concern in Acts 19:40 when he spoke to end the riot in Ephesus “For
we are in danger of being called into question for this day’s uproar…” Being
“called into question” by your Roman overlords was not going to be a pretty
prospect for any of them. Rome did not like upset. According to one tradi-
tion Andrew met his death in the following way. He had miraculously healed
the Roman appointed governor’s wife, but he viewed it as an alienation of
affection. The Roman governor was going to put an end to Andrew’s growing
Christian church. Andrew was arrested and tied to a cross. He was not nailed
to the cross so that his death would take much longer and be more painful.
Ultimately he was cut down but died shortly thereafter.

3) **James, John’s brother, a son of Zebedee.** As already noted, his murder by
Herod is recorded in Acts 12:2. One wonders why a chosen apostle would
be cut down so early in the beginnings of early Christianity. But there is no
profit in speculation. An aside if I may. Fifty plus years ago when a young
brother and sister who were extremely active in preaching were killed in a
tragic auto accident the brotherhood was in shock. Questions were raised. My
father, Bro. John Sommerville, concerned that I might be hearing unprofit-
able questions, wrote me pointing to the example of James’s early death as an
example of these kinds of unexplained tragedies. His point was that our lack
of knowing why is no call for unprofitable speculation. It was wise counsel.
We are under no obligation to answer every cause.

4) **John.** The Scriptures give us a good account of John through his writings.
Iranaeus in various passages of his own writings agreed with the generally
accepted tradition that John lived up to the time of Emperor Trajan. Tertullian stated that John miraculously survived being immersed in boiling oil after which he was banished to the Isle of Patmos where he received and wrote “Revelation.” He is supposed to have been the only apostle that died a natural death, although if the tradition of his being boiled in oil is accurate he certainly was persecuted. That this could have occurred is not incredible in any way when we consider the miraculous deliverances from snake bite, prisons and near drownings etc. that Paul experienced.

5) Philip. As we have already learned, there was a lot more to Philip’s life than most of us had thought. According to tradition he preached in Asia Minor (essentially Turkey today) in Carthage, and finished his life in Hierapolis, Syria. Carthage was a city in Tunisia which is northern Africa on the Mediterranean coast across from the Sicilian boot of Italy. It is 1,500 miles from Jerusalem as the crow flies. If this tradition is correct it is another example of the far flung regions to which the gospel was spread. He is thought to have baptized 3,000 Gentiles and 1,500 Jews before going to Syria. Philip is supposed to have been crucified upside down like Peter in A.D. 90, probably during the persecution under Emperor Hadrian. The circumstances that allegedly preceded his death are disturbingly similar to Andrew’s. The Roman governor in Hierapolis became upset when Philip cured his wife of an eye disease. Whether or not this was the case we do know that the apostles had the Holy Spirit and were able to miraculously heal people.

6) Bartholomew. His name only shows up four times in the New Testament. Once in the accounts of Matthew, Mark and Luke when the apostles are listed and again in Acts 1:13 when all the apostles except Judas are gathered in the upper room. There has also been raised the possibility that Bartholomew was also called Nathanael which would give a little more background. C. Bernard Ruffin cites both Eusebius and Jerome as believing Bartholomew went to India. Evidently a scholar by the name of Pantanaeus was sent to India by Demetrius, bishop of Alexander, around A.D. 180. When Pantanaeus got to India he found a copy of the gospel of Matthew, written in Hebrew, which had been brought there by the apostle Bartholomew. The idea of Matthew being written in Hebrew may sound strange at first: however there is a long history of Jewish settlements in India that go back as far as 2,500 years. Jews were forced into exile from Israel at various stages in their history and because so little is known about what happened to them we refer to them as “The Lost Ten Tribes of Israel.” (One wonders if they will make up a large part of Elijah’s ministry when he returns.). Under Israeli law Jews from anywhere in the world have the right to return and live in their ancestral land. In the October 20, 2013 issue the Jewish newspaper “Haaretz” reported that 2,000 Jews from the Bnei Menashe community in India were now living in Israel and 5,000 more were waiting to immigrate. The number of Jews in India today may exceed 2,000,000. According to traditions, the local ruler Astriagas became upset over the number of people Bartholomew was baptizing and began a persecution of the budding Christian community. Bartholomew was beaten with clubs, skinned alive and finally beheaded. It is because of this
tradition that Michelangelo’s painting “The Last Judgment” depicts in grizzly
detail Bartholomew holding aloft in his right hand a knife, and in his left his
empty, rumpled skin.

7) **Thomas.** Nothing is said about Thomas in the Bible after he is listed as present
in the upper room after Jesus’ ascension. However there are copious accounts
of his preaching activities in the legendary accounts that have come down
to us. Thomas is believed to have been active in Osorene which is north of
Palestine (eastern Turkey today), Iran, Armenia and India. Evidently there is
a Syriac document circa 200 A.D. known as “The Acts of Thomas” which is a
historical fiction novel supposedly based on Thomas’ preaching work in India.
In this case however there may be more substantial reasons to believe Thomas
preached in India. Portuguese traders and missionaries were astounded to
arrive in India in the 16th Century and find a large, active community of
Christians who firmly believed that their community had been originally
founded by Thomas. There were ancient books written in Syriac, songs, and
a large amount of oral tradition. Thomas is supposed to have met his death
July 3, A.D. 72. He is thought to have died from stab wounds received at the
hand of Brahman priests who feared that his preaching threatened Hinduism.

8) **Matthew.** There is little consistent said about Matthew after the resurrection.
There is speculation he may have gone to Ethiopia. However, all the accounts
agree in two essential elements: he preached and died for his master. And
this educated, formerly affluent disciple, became the first man to write down
the teachings of Jesus.

9) **James the son of Alpheus.** Like several of the apostles, not much is recorded
about them in the New Testament period. It is thought that he stayed in Jerusa-
lem and according to a tradition he was stoned to death by a mob of irate Jews.

10) **Thaddaeus.** He is listed in Matt.10:3 as “Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thad-
daeus”. However he was listed in some ancient versions of Matthew as Jude.
(He is not considered to be the author of the Epistle of Jude.) Jude, Judas, and
Judah are the same name and were one of the most common names extant in
Israel which sets the stage for confusion. The reference in Luke to “Judas son
of James (NIV)” almost certainly refers to the same individual. If Thaddaeus
and Jude (Judas) are the same person he is the one referred to in John 14:22
where John carefully identifies the Judas he is referring to as “not Iscariot”.2
Nothing more is said about Thaddaeus. Briefly summarizing from C Bernard
Ruffin’s work we learn that Eusebius’ and the “Apostolic History of Abdias”
related the following. Thaddaeus and Simon the Canaanite (Zealot) teamed
up towards the end of their ministry and were preaching in the city of Sua-
nir in Persia (Iran). The miracles they performed and the conversions that
followed caused those with a vested interest in the local deities to violently
oppose them. A mob was incited to violently attack the two apostles. They
began to stone them. One man ran up and thrust Thaddaeus through with a
spear. Simon was seized and sawn in pieces. How accurate this is we have no
way of determining; however it does call to our minds Heb. 11:37; “They were
stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, and were slain with the sword…”
11) Simon the Zealot (Canaanite KJV). Again, virtually nothing about him in the Bible. As noted, one tradition holds that he died with Thaddaeus.

12) Judas Iscariot: We know all we need to know about his life and the manner of his death from the Bible. When the full enormity of what he had done sunk into his mind and conscience he repented and tried to return the bribe he had taken from the chief priests. “he cast down the pieces of silver in the temples, and departed, and went and hanged himself. And the chief priests took the silver pieces…..and they took counsel together and bought with them the potter’s field, to bury strangers in” (Matt 25:5-7). However, we read “Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out” (Acts 1:18). So presumably Judas hung himself, and when he was cut loose from the rope he fell to the ground and burst asunder. The potter’s field was purchased with his ill-gotten funds and so it is credited to his account. Three and one half years in the presence of God’s son, witnessing his miracles and hearing his words was worth 30 pieces of silver to Judas. I believe it was Bro. Harry Tennant who posed this question to us in his lecture one day: “How much are you willing to sell Jesus for?” How do we value our priorities?

13) Mathias. He was Judas’ replacement chosen as recorded in Acts 1. Nothing more is said about him in Scripture. It is possible he preached in Armenia. Tradition holds that he stoned to death by a hostile crowd of Jews after returning to Jerusalem around A.D. 51 which, if so, would make him the second apostle to die.

14) Paul: We know from Scripture that Paul was in Rome and it is there that he is believed to have met his death. Paul had come so close to death so many times as he recounts in 2Cor 11:23-27. There was a horrific persecution of Christians in Rome by the emperor Nero from about A.D. 65 until Nero's deposition and suicide in A.D. 68. The Roman historian Tacitus tells us that Nero had self-acknowledged Christians arrested. Then, on their information, large numbers of others were condemned. (“…children shall rise up and cause their parents to be put to death”) Some were dressed in animal skins to be torn to pieces by dogs. Some were crucified and others were turned into human torches. Paul is supposed to have been beheaded about A.D. 66.

What do we take away from these accounts?

Willingness to die for what one believes is agreed on all hands to be the ultimate proof of the sincerity of one’s convictions. Martyrdom does not prove those convictions as being correct as the recent proliferation of suicide bombers etc. shows. However there is no questioning the sincerity of the beliefs of those who are willing to die in the furtherance of their cause. The apostles believed that Jesus Christ is the resurrected Son of God. And if you believe that fact you believe what Jesus preached…all of it.

Perhaps there is one question we could profitably consider for ourselves. Can we imagine a situation, a circumstance, where we would be willing to die rather than disown and dishonor our Lord? If you have invested enough time to read these
articles, spend three minutes now with your eyes closed and imagine a scenario, a trial, a confrontation, a change in the laws and the liberal climate in the lands in which we live, perhaps brought on by terrorist threats and war, that could force you to have to renounce your Christadelphian faith…or face extreme consequences. How did you do? How would I do?

We pray we will never be tested as the apostles and other martyrs in God’s name were tested.

Ken Sommerville (Simi Hills, CA)

Sources:

There are no original records extant today. Almost all of the extra-scriptural information comes from the legends and traditions that writers and historians in the first four hundred years after Christ collected and, for the most part, brought forward with no means of verification.

We are indebted to the following for most of the information in this article.

- Encyclopedia Britannica. 1957 edition. Excellent summaries on most of the apostles referencing their sources.
- And of course the ubiquitous internet.

Notes:

1. [Editor]. I am not sure why Christadelphian's (and others) generally assume Rome was referred to here. The use of Babylon as a cipher for Rome was much later.
The CHRISTADELPHIAN TIDINGS of the Kingdom of God
Peter Hemingray, Editor

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See Page 44 for details
Editorial

What’s in a Name?

The origin

Most Christadelphians know about the origin of the name of our denomination: indeed, the name “Christadelphian” has quite a history, as well as great significance. It was coined to provide the small company of believers in USA during the Civil War with a name. This was required, so as a religious body they could apply for exemption from military service in the North. Dr. Thomas gives the account of this origin in a letter which was printed in The Ambassador for 1865. He says:

“The crisis had come, and something had to be done to save brethren in deed and in truth from being seized upon by the Devil and Satan; and hurled into the Bottomless Abyss, now engulfing with the voraciousness of Death and Hades, the sinners of this ungodly nation. I did not know a better denomination that would be given to such a class of believers than “Brethren in Christ.” This declares that true status; and, as officials prefer words to phrases, the same fact is expressed in another form by the word Christadelphians, or cristou adelpoi Christ’s Brethren.”

Not quite so well know is his explanation of the name in his Petition for conscientious objection to the US congress, also in 1865. He says:

“During the past eighteen hundred years, they have been distinguishable from the heterogeneous “names and denominations” of the kingdom of the clergy, by various titles imposed upon them by their enemies. These names they repudiate; and, in accordance with apostolic teaching, that all the real children of God are the Brethren of Jesus (a relationship in which their brethren in all ages have glorified), your petitioners choose to be known as CHRISTADELPHIANS, or BRETHREN OF CHRIST”

If you ask most Christadelphians what their name means, they will reply “Brethren in Christ”. And if you look on the Internet, this is largely the explanation used: for example, Wikipedia, that universal compendium of knowledge, so explains the term. But is this accurate? It is without question that when the problem of finding a name for them arose, John Thomas said that “Brethren in Christ” defined the status of the believers. But the word he chose and by which we as a community are known was derived from Christou adelphoi which he correctly translated as Christ’s Brethren. There are at least a dozen references in his writings where he refers to the name, and he uniformly gives Brethren of Christ as the explanation for the term “Christadelphian”. In Col 1:2 we read “to the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse:” There the phrase “faithful brethren” is adelphois en Christos which means “Brethren in Christ”, and we cannot think he was not aware of it, yet he did not use it. We do not think there is any doubt John Thomas thought of Brethren of Christ as the meaning of the name he had chosen.
Which to use?

Some have argued strongly that to use the term “Brethren of Christ” to explain our relationship to our Lord and Master is presumptuous and inappropriate. It has been pointed out that when the term is used, it is as given by Jesus, and not used by his disciples. For example:

“Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid: go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me” (Matt 28:10).

“For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren,” (Heb 2:11).

“For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother” (Mark 3:35).

So the question is, despite the use of “Brethren of Christ” to denote the name of our community, is it appropriate to use the term to describe ourselves? It is no light matter to be called a brother of the Lord, but if the Lord is not ashamed to call the sanctified his brethren, should we not humbly recognize the fact? John does not hesitate to say, “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is” (1John 3:2). So are we not truly “sons of God”, because those who receive the Lord are given power, right, or privilege to become sons of God? In the passage from Hebrews above, the inspired writer connects the fact that Christ uses the word brethren with the other fact that both he and his brethren are all of one Father, and he adds that he shared the same nature as the other children. There is, however, a tremendous difference in the basis of the sonship of Jesus and of ours, for which cause we hesitate to speak of the Lord as “elder brother”.

A quick survey of the usage of the terms in The Tidings over the last sixty years shows a preference for “Brethren in Christ” over “Brethren of Christ” by about 2:1, but there is no doubt both terms are in common use. It is by grace we can be called a brother of Christ, but it is a fact that we are firstly brethren in Christ. We are brothers and sisters in the Truth, first and most important because we are baptized into Christ. We become related spiritually, through Christ and his action in reconciling us with God through his sacrifice.

In addition, we are baptized, not into the Christadelphian community specifically, but into a body of believers who share the same beliefs, the same first principles. It is possible, although rare, for a person to be baptized (by whoever, as most of our constitutions say), with the same set of beliefs and not discover the Christadelphian community until later or even perhaps never!

Who is a brother?

It is clear, therefore, that who is my brother is defined by the validity of their baptism. Your natural brother remains your brother throughout your life, even though you might become estranged from them. So someone who has been validly baptized so remains a brother, unless by abandoning the Truth, or by through some outrageous act that is clearly a sin against the Holy Spirit, as discussed below.
When a brother or sister from another fellowship seeks to join us, we normally conduct an interview to check the validity of their baptism and their grasp of the Truth, but we do not normally re-baptize them. We accept the baptism as valid of all who accept what we consider as basic Bible doctrines, and as such we recognize them as our brethren. We do not have the right to say that somebody is no longer a brother of Christ because they disagree with us, neither can we imply that only the baptisms performed by our community are valid. The validity of your baptism depends on the state of your knowledge and attitude, not on the person who baptizes you. As we have pointed out, we are “Brethren in Christ”, not brethren because we happen to go to a Christadelphian ecclesia on a Sunday. After all, we are baptized into none other than the Lord Jesus Christ (let not the wonder of that escape us), not some church or organization. We must not think of those who might leave our Amended community for others as renouncing their status as Brethren in Christ, and we should continue to recognize them as Brethren. If we neglect this duty, it mean that it is our decision to admit them to our community that makes them a brother in Christ, rather than their faith and baptism into the Lord their Savior. The whole question of how we should fellowship them is quite a different discussion.

The limits

“But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat. For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within? But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person”

Clearly, there are limits, as Paul shows. But we must be very careful to assume that one who is in what we might consider doctrinal error, is no spiritual brother of ours. As we read “And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother” (2Thess 3:14). So even those we do not readily keep company with are still our Brethren in Christ.

The custom of Robert Roberts and the rest of the community has always been to regard those who might disagree with us on some point of doctrine to be brothers in error, not as those who totally disagree with us. (We can see this in reference, for example, to Robert Ashcroft and JJ Andrew, both of whom promulgated doctrines that were refuted by Robert Roberts.) Of course, we do not so regard as brethren those of most of the religious communities around us, even though a fair number have been baptized as adults. And we must remember that Christ, through God, will judge all in the Kingdom: I expect there will be many surprises at that event. So not only do we have no right or ability to gather up the tares from among the wheat, but it is the clear teaching of the Bible that if condemn our brother, we too will be condemned.

So are we Brethren in Christ, or Brethren of Christ? The clear answer is both: we address each other as brother (or sister), because we are Brethren in Christ. But
we are all Brethren of Christ, though the grace of God in giving us His son, our Lord Jesus, through whom we can hope to become true sons of God.

Peter Hemingray

Exhortation

Never Give Up

The memorials

The memorials of our Lord that are before us, testify about what God and Christ have done out of love for us, and what they have done to save us from death that is our natural end. We see a body that was mortal like ours, put to death, and raised to immortality. We see the extent of God’s power to save and of our Lord Jesus’ desire to save. This has stood as an example through all the ages: the compassion of God for His creation and especially for His people does not come and go. We are all dependent on God’s love and faithfulness. Peter observed “The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2Pet 3:9): this must first be applied to ourselves. Except for the long-suffering of God on our account there would be no hope. And in Rom 5:8 we learn that his patience with us began well before we were aware of our need: “while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.”

God loves his creation, especially His Holy people. God does not give up on His people. The Bible is full of examples of God working to save men, whom we might have thought were beyond hope. Consider Saul of Tarsus, a man greater in accomplishment, and greater in sin, than any one of us. He surpassed all in his nation in regards to the Law of Moses, and he persecuted the disciples of Christ Jesus even to death. Such a man, vehement in his opposition to the true ways of God, zealous for the false ways of the Pharisees, was seen in the early church as the most fearsome of their enemies. In the face of the direct commandment of the Lord, the faithful disciple Ananias balked, protesting that this was a man to be feared and avoided, not a man to be helped. But Christ insisted, and Ananias baptized Saul who went on to become Paul, the apostle of Christ.

Another example is King Manasseh, who was initially one of the wicked kings of Judah. 2Chron 33 tells how he stopped the worship of the Lord in Jerusalem, and promoted the most debased idolatry; yet God turned him around and redeemed him from his wickedness through exile and prison time in Babylon. We wouldn’t ordinarily think of this as God’s way to redeem such a man, but that was the effect for Manasseh. Even with such a man, God did not give up.

Israel, the holy people, are presented to us in Scripture as wayward throughout their history. There were occasional reformations, but they were always followed by apostasy and idolatry. In the end, God likens His relationship to Israel to a marriage that has reached its end.
“They say, If a man put away his wife, and she go from him, and become another man’s, shall he return unto her again? shall not that land be greatly polluted? but thou hast played the harlot with many lovers; yet return again to me, saith the Lord. Lift up thine eyes unto the high places, and see where thou hast not been lien with. In the ways hast thou sat for them, as the Arabian in the wilderness; and thou hast polluted the land with thy whoresoms and with thy wickedness. Therefore the showers have been withholden, and there hath been no latter rain; and thou hadst a whore’s forehead, thou refusedst to be ashamed. Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, My father, thou art the guide of my youth?” (Jer 3:1-4).

He sent Israel away from His holy land, into the home of idolatry, into Babylon. But this is not a record of God giving up on his people — to the contrary — “Return, faithless Israel…” (Jer 3:12). Even in the extremity of divorce and expulsion, God did not give up on His people Israel, but was willing to restore them to favor and to His land.

Never give up

These are all examples of the divine precept in 1Cor. 13:8, “Love never fails.” There is a day of judgment; a day in which the righteous will be given God’s gift of life, and the wicked will be condemned. There is a day of death, beyond which no man can respond to God and be saved. But until that day, God, our Father, is tireless in His efforts to redeem any and all who will respond to His mercy. Until that day, there is hope even for men such as Saul of Tarsus and Manasseh king of Judah.

Here then is the faithfulness of God and of His son Christ Jesus our Lord: they will never give up on their people. With this reassurance, and with the Lord’s memorial before us, we should consider our response to the unfailing, steadfast love of God. In this wonderful love, we all have found hope. Think about how it will affect our lives. There are two responses we should consider: first our response to Christ and his Father, and second towards each other. Here is the call, then: Never give up! This may describe the essence of faith in God: a consistent reliance on the Almighty, our Father. It is God who has called us to obedience; therefore before the world and the temptations of this life, never give up! There is no condition in life; there is no opponent more powerful than our Father. Never give up on God.

God does reprove and discipline his people, a fact that has led some of them to wonder whether it’s a good thing to be God’s people. There may be times when we wish He would give up on us! But the essential thing about this special position is that it’s eternal. If you have hope of eternal life, that life will be in the presence of God. So it’s important to get used to His presence now.

Do not mistake the Father’s correction for abandonment. No one should expect that this life will be trouble-free: the Bible tells us plainly that the Father chastens or disciplines every son whom He loves. God is patient; we need also to be patient with Him and His son. Continue to rely on God in prayer, even though sometimes we need a “No!” and sometimes we need to wait for God’s time. We need to understand that there are proper things to pray for. But God always works with us in
prayer to increase our appreciation of His ways. God gives us a clear statement of His dealings with Israel. They had challenged God many times, thinking He did not see their need or did not care for them. His explanation is found:

“And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live” (Deut 8:3).

It took them a very long time to learn this lesson! But how many times did they lose faith, giving up on God who loved them and was trying to teach them His ways. Some patience — extreme patience is what is required of us.

Jesus’ statement in John 6:37 is a guide to our dealings with him: “All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.” The thief on the cross was a condemned, dying man — and justly so, as even he admits. In his dying he reached out to Christ, justifying our Lord rather than himself, and pursuing a desperate hope of mercy. One who was condemned and being executed for his crimes, as good as dead, won eternal life in that moment. God had not given up on him, and he did not give up: he came to the Lord Jesus, and the Lord did not turn him away. And know this: even when you have given up on Christ, he does not give up on you: “if we are faithless, he remains faithful — for he cannot deny himself” (2Tim 2:13 NLT).

**Our dealings with our brethren**

If we are all going to enjoy eternal life in the presence of God, we shall most assuredly enjoy it in the presence of one another. So get used to it! Years ago I realized this and have been using this little prayer, which I recommend to all: “May God so bless me that I may spend eternity with this person.” Now, with many of the Lord’s people this is a heartfelt and earnest prayer: I really enjoy your company and anticipate that eternity in your presence will never be tiresome. With others, I’m afraid it’s a bit of an attitude adjuster. The thing I hope for most is that all of saints may be saved — and I recognize a responsibility to work for that end. It does not mean that I accept every one, no matter how they behave. It means that I accept that every one of us has the potential to manifest God, and I will not give up on any of my brothers and sisters.

If we are to be the sons and daughters of God, it is fitting that now we should behave as God’s children toward one another. I do not mean by this, “Yeah, you need to behave toward me like God’s child.” I mean rather, how would God deal with the problems we see in one another? Does God give up? Does God consign His people to oblivion before the Day of Judgment?

It is all too easy to give up, to say things like “He’ll never change!” or, “You’re wasting your time!” or, “These people are a bunch of hypocrites.” It is easy and therefore an early option on both sides of every disagreement, to say, “I’m absolutely right; you’re hopeless”, and in so doing, to judge God’s people, to condemn those for whom Christ died. This is true whether it’s a disagreement with one brother, or several, with a whole ecclesia, or indeed with the brotherhood as a whole.
In the Bible, the idea of judgment is always associated with finality. These are blessed forever; these are rejected and outcast forever. The command, “judge not, lest ye be judged” means that kind of judgment. It cannot mean, “Don’t tell anyone he’s done wrong” because that is exactly what the Bible does every time we read it. It cannot mean, “Don’t require any one to repent of his sins” because that is the way of salvation. And, as the Proverb says, “reprove a wise man, and he will love you.” No, the command not to judge others means, don’t consign any one to damnation before the time because that is the way God works with all of His creation. To judge someone then, is to give up on him. Brothers and sisters, none of us nor all of us has any right to do this. The Day of Judgment will come. And here is how the Lord Jesus describes it.

“When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal” (Matt 25:31-46).

In prison? This does not mean only, one who was in prison unjustly; the Lord did not place any such limit on his mercy. Hungry, poor or afflicted? Often the pitiless will find reason for turning away, saying “he brought it on himself.” This is not the spirit we see in Christ. Christ may instruct, he may warn, he may even rebuke those who behave foolishly or wickedly. But he does not abandon them in their folly or in their wickedness. If this memorial means anything to us at all, it must remind us, as the apostle Paul noted — he who was formerly Saul of Tarsus — “while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom 5:8).

Jim Seagoe (San Francisco Peninsula, CA)
(1) The Revelation of God by the Angels

This subject is of interest in itself, but it is also important as an introduction to the subject of the Father and the Son, which is a consideration of the relationship between God and His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Millennia ago, the angels showed or revealed to the people living at the time, the things about God that He wants everyone to know, so that we all can worship and serve Him in a faithful way. This work of the angels was then recorded by writers inspired by God, such as Moses, and this record has come down to us in the Bible. (Rather than reveal, “Manifest” is quite common in older translations of the Bible, being used 38 times in the KJV New Testament, and has the same meaning as to reveal. So we can say the angels “manifested” God.)

Why did God create angels?

The Creator Himself is so powerful and glorious that He cannot be approached in person by human beings, ordinary men and women. He alone “hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto: whom no man hath seen, nor can see” (1Tim 6:16). Angels do not have man’s limitations, and can therefore approach God and talk to Him directly. And they can then act for Him to fulfill His will. In particular, they represent Him when talking with men and women. They bridge the huge gap between the Holiness and Perfection of God in heaven and the shortcomings of dying people on this planet. Angels were made immortal (that is, never to die).

No man can see God and live:

“And He said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live” (Exod 33:20).

“No man hath seen God at any time” John 1:18,

“And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape” (John 5:37).

Yet in the Old Testament, the Bible frequently speaks of God appearing and speaking to men and women. There is a simple explanation, but it takes a little getting used to, because God, for good reasons, has not made the explanation stand out in an obvious way in the Scriptures. But, He has made sure that we can find a Bible explanation if we look for it. So, let’s see what the Bible tells us.

The first passages we will look at are from Genesis and Hosea.

“And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day. And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob’s thigh was out of
joint, as he wrestled with him. And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me. And he said unto him, What is thy name? And he said, Jacob. And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed. And Jacob asked him, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, thy name. And he said, Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name? And he blessed him there. And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved” (Gen 32:24-30).

“The LORD also brings a charge against Judah, And will punish Jacob according to his ways; According to his deeds He will recompense him. He took his brother by the heel in the womb, And in his strength he struggled with God. Yes, he struggled with the Angel and prevailed; He wept, and sought favor from Him” (Hos 12:2-4 NKJV)

Verse 2 shows Hosea is talking about Jacob. While a number of incidents in his life are spoken of by Hosea, the words we have just quoted refer to Gen 32. It is clear from Hosea that it really an angel, who was representing God, which struggled with Jacob. Taking point by point:

- Jacob says: “So Jacob called the name of the place Peniel, saying, ‘For I have seen God face to face, and yet my life has been delivered’ ” (Gen 32:30 ESV).
- No man can see God and live.
- Hosea 12:2-4 tells us that it was an angel representing or acting for God that Jacob wrestled with.
- Jacob’s experience was frightening and awe inspiring, so he spoke as he did.

Next, let’s consider the time when the angel in the burning bush spoke to Moses (Exod 3:2) as God: “I am the God of your father…” (v. 6). The angel reveals to Moses that “I AM” is the Name by which God is to be known (vs 13-15). It is represented by LORD in the majority of Bible translations. The Name is printed in all capital letters - LORD - to indicate the special nature of the Name. The Hebrew behind this name is often represented by Yahweh. The Jews of the time of Jesus regarded it is too sacred to pronounce: it is not found in the New Testament. In addition, special angels bore this name for God.

“Behold, I send an Angel before you to keep you in the way and to bring you into the place which I have prepared. Beware of Him and obey His voice; do not provoke Him, for He will not pardon your transgressions; for My name is in Him” (Exod 23:20-2121 NKJV)

It is not appropriate for people to see God, and so He sends His messages and commands to people through special angels. We have already seen in John 5:37 that no-one has seen God.

“Then fled Moses at this saying, and was a stranger in the land of Madian, where he begat two sons. And when forty years were expired, there appeared to him in the wilderness of mount Sina an angel of the Lord in a flame of fire in a bush. When Moses saw it, he wondered at the sight: and as he drew
near to behold it, the voice of the Lord came unto him, Saying, I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Then Moses trembled, and durst not behold. Then said the Lord to him, Put off thy shoes from thy feet: for the place where thou standest is holy ground. I have seen, I have seen the affliction of my people which is in Egypt, and I have heard their groaning, and am come down to deliver them. And now come, I will send thee into Egypt. This Moses whom they refused, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge? the same did God send to be a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the angel which appeared to him in the bush” (Acts 7: 29-35).

When reading Exodus 3, we can see from vs 2 that the angel appeared to Moses but we may not be sure whether it is the angel or God Himself that is speaking in 3:4 through 4:17. However, if we read the speech of Stephen in Acts, then clearly it was the angel of God doing the speaking.

“And when forty years were expired, there appeared to him in the wilderness of mount Sina an angel of the Lord in a flame of fire in a bush… This Moses whom they refused, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge? the same did God send to be a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the angel which appeared to him in the bush. (Acts 7:30, 35).

These passages from Acts show clearly that it was the angel that spoke.

**Revealed in the angels**

Angels displayed the joy of God:

“When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?” (Job 38:7)

“And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people” (Luke. 2:10).

Angels carried the Name of God:

“And the angel of the LORD said unto her, I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude. And the angel of the LORD said unto her, Behold, thou art with child, and shalt bear a son, and shalt call his name Ishmael; because the LORD hath heard thy affliction” (Gen 16:10-11).

“In that day shall the LORD defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the LORD before them” (Zech. 12:8).

At the Exodus of the Jews from Egypt and at Mount Sinai, angels showed the power and glory of God

“And the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them” (Exod 14:19).

(See also Exod 19:16-20:21; Acts 7:30-35, 38, 53).
In the appearance of the angels at Mt. Sinai (Exod 19:9-20), the angels are not mentioned in the chapter. God wanted the Children of Israel (and us) to think of it at the time as being God that was appearing on the mountain though concealed by clouds of fire and smoke. It is only from Acts that we know that an angel appeared then.

“This is the one who was in the congregation in the wilderness with the angel who spoke to him at Mount Sinai, and with our fathers. He received living oracles to give to us… You who received the law as delivered by angels and did not keep it” (Acts 7, 35,53).

The angel of God’s “Presence”

Observe the authority given to the angel as described in Exodus 23!

“Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgressions: for my name is in him. But if thou shalt indeed obey his voice, and do all that I speak; then I will be an enemy unto thine enemies, and an adversary unto thine adversaries” (Exod 23:20-22).

God had put His name into the messenger: the angel would guard them on the journey, but he must be obeyed or he would punish them. Yet God Himself would “not go up in your midst” but would allow His “presence” to be with them (Exod 33:3, 14). The divine power, glory and authority would be wholly with this angel. It does not mean that the angel would be seen by the people, but the evidence that he was there would be the pillar of cloud in the daytime and the pillar of fire that would be over the Tabernacle at night.

Again, when Moses on Mount Sinai desired to see the face of God Himself he was not permitted to do so, only to witness the glory of God passing by: “You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live” (Exod 33:20). John confirmed this when he wrote “No man has seen God at any time” (John 1:18). The angels therefore brought divine guidance to men and women, which they could not otherwise receive because of God’s holiness and man’s sinfulness.

Jesus greater than the angels

In His wisdom, God requires and insists that His holiness and sanctity be always completely preserved. Therefore, in Old Testament times He used the angels to carry out His will and all His work with regard to all men and women. But it is necessary that we recognize that it was God’s will and God’s work, and that the angels were doing everything according to His will. Therefore the Bible is written in a way that causes us to think of the things that were done and the messages that were spoken, as being done and as being spoken by God. We are to praise, worship, obey, and love God. The angels are to be respected and obeyed but they should not be worshiped, as Paul writes “Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshy mind” (Col 2:18). We need to recognize and respect their role, but we usually do not need to emphasize it. The
reason that we have studied it now is to help us to understand the role of Jesus in revealing God to us.

Followers of Jesus are left in no doubt that he is greater than the angels when they read the letter to the Hebrews. The early chapters demonstrate how God has spoken to man, how the angels are His servants and how Jesus, the Son of God, is now superior to the angels and directs them in their service to his Father. The writer says that God spoke in the past in many different ways (for example, by angels delivering God’s word to ordinary people and to prophets) but He now speaks directly through His Son, who is “the express image of his person... having become so much better than the angels, as he has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they” (Heb 1:3-4). The Son is greater than the servants.

Yet, he says, the angels still have their work to do:

“Of the angels He says, ‘He makes his angels winds, and his ministers a flame of fire’. ... Are they not all ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation?” (Heb 1:7, 14, ESV)

So God has shown Himself by intermediaries, angels, who reveal God to us. In Old Testament times, the angels spoke and acted for God. To the people who saw and heard these angels, it often seemed as though it was God Himself. As we read the Old Testament, we can think of the things described being God appearing and acting, because the angels were perfectly carrying out God’s will. It is important, though, that we realize that no one has ever seen God’s form or heard His voice. This is more than an interesting and remarkable subject. We need to understand it in order to be able to understand how Jesus revealed God to us: “Jesus saith unto him,.. he that hath seen me hath seen the Father” (John 14:9)

Gar Cooper (Pittsburgh, PA)

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**Generosity a family trait**

There is a remarkable spirit of generosity that pervades the family of God. The Deity shared with the angels; the angels chose to share with man. The Father shares with the Son and the Son will be generous with the redeemed: “To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne” (Rev. 3:21). The glory and honor Christ has at present includes authority over the angels. The Lord Jesus “is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him” (1Pet 3:22). This is real, not nominal, authority for when the Lord Jesus comes again, “he shall send his angels...and they shall gather together his elect...” (Matt 24:31; 13:41). Angels are now under the Lord and subject to his direction. Christ has been designated “the firstborn of every creature” over even the angels, for it pleased the Father that “in all things he might have the pre-eminence” (Col 1:15,18-19).

The Tidings, 1995 p. 77
The Way of Cain — (11) Tubal-Cain: A Man of War and Naamah: Mother of Beauty

Tubal-Cain

“Zillah also had a son, Tubal-Cain, who forged all kinds of tools out of bronze and iron!” (Gen. 4:22).

Tubal-Cain is a character cloaked in myth. One traditional, non-Biblical version of his story involves his father, Lamech, accidentally killing a young man through the misuse of weapons, which he forged. A variation of this story has Tubal-Cain as the young man who is slain. Neither version is, however, confirmed by the Bible. Genesis merely states that Tubal-Cain was an artificer of bronze and iron.

Gen 6:11 says that by the time of the Flood, “the earth was filled with violence,” indicating that, in addition to personal conflicts, there was also war. As has already been discussed, there was a population explosion in the 8th generation. From the example of Abraham and Lot, it is possible to see how conflicts, large or small, may have occurred:

“Now Lot, who was moving about with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents. But the land could not support them while they stayed together, for their possessions were so great that they were not able to stay together. And quarrelling arose between Abram’s herders and Lot’s” (Gen 13:5-7).

Just as the land could not support both Abram and Lot’s herds, we may surmise that the available land around Eden and Nod grew smaller as the inhabitants and their livestock multiplied, and as cities expanded. And, like Abram and Lot, conflicts arose between antediluvian families or tribes in competition for space and resources. These conflicts may have intensified with the advent of Tubal-Cain’s armaments. A family/tribe possessing iron or bronze weapons would certainly have a military advantage over another which was likely wielding inferior weapons — probably wood or a combination of wood and stone. Thus, in the course of this great transitory moment in history, with space growing smaller and populations of humans and domesticated animals increasing, wars broke out. Not only were Tubal-Cain’s weapons used in these conflicts, but their very existence may have even encouraged the use of violence in settling conflicts, since the military advantages iron and bronze weapons provided would almost certainly have been exploited by those in possession of them. As such, wars arose, or as Gen 6:11 says, “the earth was filled with violence.” Thus “man of war” is an appropriate moniker for Tubal-Cain, a man whose weapons gave the means for people to slaughter one another en masse.

While we may think of Tubal-Cain as the man of war, the first part of his name, Tubal, means “thou will be brought of.” The latter part of his name, Cain, is either a direct reference to his great ancestor or carries the same meaning as Cain’s name.
does: “acquire” or “get.” The latter suggests that his name be expressed as, “thou will be brought of/acquired,” while the former suggests his name be expressed as, “thou will be brought of Cain.” Other ways to phrase this are: “thou will manifest Cain,” or “thou will manifest/bring forth an aspect of Cain.” However the interpretation, “thou will be brought of/acquired,” is vague and therefore meaningless, providing us with no useful information. Thus we must look for an alternative interpretation — one of which can be found when Tubal-Cain’s name is expressed as “thou will manifest an aspect of Cain.”

Cain is notorious for having murdered his brother. As such, Cain and murder are synonymous. Thus the “Cain” part of Tubal’s name invokes the memory of his ancestor, in particular his most defining characteristic: murder. Therefore Tubal-Cain’s name should be expressed as: “thou will bring forth murder, an aspect of Cain.” This confirms that Cain continued to be remembered, even in the 8th generation, as the father of violence. It also is an appropriate choice of name for a man whose iron and bronze weapons enabled mankind to “fill the earth with violence.”

Tubal-Cain’s name demonstrates the powerful legacy that Cain’s actions wrought upon the earth. From his name, we can see that Cain’s murder of Abel continued to resonate down through time.

Finally, Tubal-Cain is the last male descendant recorded in Cain’s genealogy. How fitting then that Cain’s lineage begins and ends with bloodshed: Cain murdered his only brother and Tubal-Cain developed the means for mankind to murder thousands of his “brothers.”

Naamah: mother of beauty

Zillah also had a daughter: “Tubal-Cain’s sister was Naamah.” (Gen 4:22)

The first and only mention of a woman in either genealogy should pique our curiosity. We are obviously meant to notice her inclusion and derive a particular meaning from it.

Naamah’s name means “beauty” or “pleasure.” Tradition credits her with cosmetics/cosmetology or the sensual arts, depending upon which meaning of her name is used. Regardless, within the framework for this study either meaning suggests a worldly, not spiritual, connection. Naamah may have been extraordinarily beautiful or a particularly pleasure-seeking individual, but the fact that her brothers, Jabal, Jubal, and Tubal-Cain, are mentioned in the genealogy in relation to their discoveries — or what they “fathered” — suggests that she also made a significant contribution to the 8th generation. And has also been shown, Naamah’s brothers ‘contributions’ in the 8th generation are not only noted in Genesis 4, but also in Genesis 6. Thus we can expect that whatever her contribution was, it will also be referred to in Genesis 6.

As noted, Naamah means “beauty” or “pleasure.” These may not seem as important as Jabal’s migration, Jubal’s music, or Tubal-Cain’s weapons of bronze and iron, but their significance to the antediluvian world — in particular to the 8th generation — is revealed in Genesis:
“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 were beautiful, and they married any of them they chose. … When the sons of God went to the daughters of humans and had children by them” (Gen 6:1-4).

Recall that prior to the 6th generation the righteous (sons of God) did not marry the unrighteous (daughters of men). Gradually, however, this changed. Intermarrying began to occur in the 6th generation, and as this trend continued, so too did the ecclesia’s decline. Gen 6:1-4 states that the defining reason that the sons of God began to marry the daughters of men was that they found them to be “beautiful.” Yet it is difficult to imagine that the daughters of God were somehow uglier than the daughters of men.

The word for “beauty” in this passage is towb, and it has a variety of uses, including an association with that which is spiritual (ethically/morally) good (Isa. 5:20); that which is physically beautiful (Isa 5:9); and that which smells good (Psa 133:2).

In the first sense: if the morals of the sons of God had been corrupted, then they would, indeed, perceive the morals of the daughters of men as good; since they would no longer be able to distinguish between good and evil from the LORD’s perspective. But what specific role Naamah would have played in this is obscured. That she, alone, could have corrupted the sons of God seems unlikely. Rather, it is more probable that she, in some way, contributed to the ongoing corruption of the sons of God.

The second, possibly third, possibilities for the meaning of her name and her association with the 8th generation provide more satisfactory explanations. In the second sense, the “beauty” the sons of God saw in the daughters of men was likely superficial; one created from cosmetics, jewelry, perfumes, and apparel. Paul’s writing to Timothy illustrates the contrast between the appearance of godly women and worldly women:

“I desire therefore that... women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing, but which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works” (1Tim 2:9).

Women in Christ were meant to emphasize their inner, not outward beauty, which was contrary to a Roman world that, for the most part, only valued women for their procreative and attractive qualities. Since God’s requirements for the transformation of our inner character have not changed since the foundation of the world, we may safely assume that what was intended for women in the 1st century ecclesias would have also been intended for women in the antediluvian ecclesia.

Thus, there would have been a notable difference in the appearance of godly and ungodly antediluvian women. This difference was likely the result of Naamah’s cosmological contributions and/or in the arts of pleasure (“sensual arts”) that would continue to be taught to courtesans and prostitutes for thousands of years.

Thus Naamah’s name “beauty” or “pleasure” signifies that the daughters of men made themselves superficially attractive: either by painting their eyes and adorn-
ing themselves in jewels, perfumes, and fine clothes, and/or who were skilled in the arts of seduction.

The third possibility — beauty as related to scent — plays on the second idea, perhaps hinting that Naamah had discovered/created perfume. But to think that perfume alone had the power to steal the sons of God away from the daughters of God is too simplistic. Instead, perfume is likely representative of cosmetology in general, which, once more, leads back to the second idea — that the “beauty” referred to in Gen 6:1-4 was a superficial one.

Since “beauty” as ethically/morally good, provides no real explanation of how Naamah, alone, could have contributed to the intermarrying of the sons of God and the daughters of men, this explanation should be rejected. That leaves the second (the third is really part of the second) as the only viable explanation for the meaning behind Naamah’s name: superficial beauty and/or sexual “pleasure,” i.e. the sensual arts.

Thus by making the daughters of men look superficially or sexually attractive, Naamah’s crafts seduced the already spiritually weak sons of God. And, by their admittance into the ecclesial body through marriage, the daughters of men had the opportunity to corrupt - whether intentional or unintentional - the community’s ideas and practices. This further weakened an already weak ecclesia, and thus hastened its decline.

End of the line

Although Seth’s genealogy extends into the 9th and 10th generations, Lamech’s children — Jabal, Jubal, Tubal-Cain, and Naamah — are the last of Cain’s descendants mentioned in the genealogy of Genesis 4. This is because Genesis is not an all-encompassing history book. It only deals with those people, places, and events that affect the progress of God’s plan and purpose. And for a time, Cain’s legacy had just such an effect: in relation to Seth’s descendants, Cain’s legacy illustrated the contrast between the spirit and the flesh; it explained how violence “filled the earth;” and why those who “called on the name of the Lord,” gradually disappeared. In regards to the latter, Cain’s legacy provides the motive for God’s decision to destroy the earth in a Flood, since without His intervention, the faithful would surely have died out, been utterly corrupted, or murdered, as was almost Enoch’s fate.

Moreover Genesis does not chronicle Cain’s descendants past the 8th generation because intermarrying had erased any significant distinction between his and Seth’s lineage, excepting two individuals: Lamech, Noah’s father, and Noah. Although human progress continued, Genesis considered their discoveries and inventions immaterial in relation to the corruption and violence that consumed the earth.

When the Flood erupted, Cain’s descendants were destroyed. Although dead, Cain’s spirit of ignorance, pride, and jealousy, combined with the worship of a god he neither knew nor understood, emerged 4,000 years later, when, among the Christian brethren of the first century, division grew and Cain’s spirit manifested itself as hatred and fratricide.

Matthew Harrison (Ottawa, ON)
Notes:
1. [Editor] Some might argue that iron was not available in those days, for the “Iron Age” did not begin until at the earliest 1500 BC. But it can be shown that iron from meteorites was available and used from the earliest times: see for example “Iron is taken out of the earth, and brass is molten out of the stone” (Job 28:2). The only form of iron existing in its natural state is meteoritic iron.

Life of Timothy

(5) Ye Know the Proof of Him

Introduction
During the years immediately after his conversion, Timothy followed Paul’s example and conducted his own, local “missionary work.” He made trips to the nearby, embattled ecclesia in Iconium, and he also helped the members of his ecclesia with the tribulations they had to endure. Doing that kind of work is how Timothy wanted to use his energy and spend his time. He must have been excited, therefore, when Paul returned to Lystra, Timothy’s hometown, and invited him to join him on the Second Missionary Journey.

Timothy traveled with Paul and Silas to Philippi. Their initial preaching efforts there were successful. However, Acts 16 records that the people of Philippi had a violent reaction to one of Paul’s miracles. A mob formed, and the rulers of the city commanded Paul and Silas to be beaten and cast into prison. “And the multitude rose up together against them: and the magistrates rent off their clothes, and commanded to beat them” (Acts 16:22).

The day Paul and Silas were attacked and the night they spent in prison must have been hard for the new members of the ecclesia in Philippi to endure. At the time, they did not have the perspective that comes with hindsight. They did not know that the events that had transpired would ultimately lead to the conversion of the city’s jailer and his family.

The Philippian Ecclesia
All the members of the Philippian ecclesia knew is what they had seen and heard. A violent anti-Christian mob had convulsed their city, and their wonderful teachers, who they had come to know and love, had been abused and imprisoned. Some in the ecclesia would probably have been fearful because of what had taken place. What would happen to Paul and Silas, to them, and to their families the next day and in the coming weeks and months? Others in the meeting might have been disheartened and questioned the ways and/or the power of God. Why would He allow such terrible things to happen?

The believers in Philippi probably gathered together. That is how first-century ecclesias often responded when tumultuous events occurred.1

Acts 16 does not indicate where Timothy was or what he did during that difficult time. But the Epistle to the Philippians, which Paul wrote years later, provides insight. It states: “But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state. For I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state. For all seek their own, not the
things which are Jesus Christ’s. But ye know the proof of him, that, as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel. Him therefore I hope to send presently, so soon as I shall see how it will go with me” (Phil 2: 19-23).

Paul described Timothy as “naturally” caring for the Philippians (verse 20). (The English Standard Version renders the phrase as “be genuinely concerned.”) It is hard to imagine, therefore, that Timothy could have been anywhere else but with the members of the ecclesia during that great time of need.2

Timothy’s command of the Scriptures and his years in Lystra and Iconium had certainly provided him with the wisdom and experience needed to relate to what the Philippians were going through. He had felt what they were feeling, and he had had a godly response to it. Some of those moments in his past that had seemed so painful — like the time that Paul was stoned in his city — would have revealed their great value if he drew upon them in speaking to the Philippians, offering them encouragement, assuring them, showing them genuine care, and providing them with perspective on what had happened.

In his Epistle, Paul also reminded the Philippians that they knew “the proof” of Timothy (verse 22). The Greek word rendered “proof” means “trial.”3 The English Standard Version translates the phrase as “you know Timothy’s proven worth.” The Philippian believers had evidently seen Timothy remain steadfast during difficult times. That could be a reference to his response to the attack on Paul and Silas.

**Timothy among the Philippians**

Timothy’s steadfastness during trial must have been a source of encouragement to the ecclesia in Philippi. That is probably why Paul made reference to it when he wrote to them. It is a reminder to us that our faithful behavior during difficult times can help and strengthen the people around us who are watching us and how we respond.

There is also more that we can learn about Timothy from what Paul wrote than just how he might have responded to the attack on Paul and Silas. If we consider what Paul said about him within the context of his overall message, we can get a glimpse of Timothy throughout his time in Philippi. Paul’s words reveal what a wonderful example Timothy’s character had been to the ecclesia while he had been with them.

Phil 2 shows that Timothy had developed many of the characteristics Paul wanted the believers in Philippi to have. For example, Paul wanted the Philippians to be of one mind in service to God together with him: “Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind” (Phil 2: 2). Like-mindedness was a characteristic Timothy displayed when he had been among them. “For I have no man likeminded,” wrote the Apostle about him in verse 20 of the same chapter.4 Paul wanted the Philippians to develop the same unity of mind he and Timothy had.

Unity of mind is made possible when we are not focused on ourselves and the pursuit of our individual wants. Paul wanted the Philippians to be mindful of the
needs of others and to serve one another: “Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others” (Phil 2: 3-4). That is exactly what Timothy had done when he had been among them: “For I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state. For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ’s. But ye know the proof of him, that, as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel” (Phil 2: 20-22). Instead of looking out for himself, Timothy had cared for the Philippians and elevated their needs, knowing that they belonged to Christ.

Phil 2 contains some well-known language about the Lord Jesus, which tends to come up in first-principles discussions: “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men” (Phil 2: 5-7). The point Paul was trying to make in this passage was that even though the Lord had an exalted status, he had humbled himself and given himself to serving others. Several verses later, Paul noted that Timothy had followed in the Lord’s footsteps and had also given himself to service: “But ye know the proof of him, that, as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel” (Phil 2: 22).

Timothy was a great asset to the preaching work in Philippi. He did more than just speak about the principles of the Gospel. He demonstrated them in the way he lived his life.

Godly behavior can be very influential. Paul exhorted the Philippians by recalling how Timothy had conducted himself when he had been among them. Paul’s message was not, “Remember Timothy’s words and what he taught in his classes.” It was, “Remember how Timothy acted and do likewise.” That emphasis is a compelling reminder that we should live our lives so that our behavior demonstrates our beliefs and offers encouragement in godliness to those around us. As the life of Timothy illustrates, a godly example can have a tremendous impact by showing the principles of the Gospel in meaningful and memorable ways.

Ryan Mutter (Baltimore, MD)

Notes:
1. See, for example, John 20:19 and Acts 12:12.
2. Bro. Shane Kingsbury has some excellent thoughts on what the attack on Paul and Silas would have meant for Timothy and how he responded in S. Kingsbury. Teenagers of the Bible: Growing Examples of Godliness. (Findon, South Australia: Logos), pages 427-429.
3. The Greek word is Strong’s Number G1382. The definition is from J.H. Thayer, Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament. e-Sword 9.9.0.
Eternal Hope in Times of Temporary Sorrow

‘Jeremiah said, “The word of the LORD came to me: Hanamel son of Shallum your uncle is going to come to you and say, ‘Buy my field at Anathoth, because as nearest relative it is your right and duty to buy it’ ” (Jer 32:6-7).

Depressing times in Jeremiah’s time and ours

At times the world can bring us down. We see the doom and gloom on the news, the failing economy, the increasingly prevalent immorality, or our own sinful nature, and it can simply depress us. When this happens, and inevitably it will when we consider the magnitude of the world’s problems, we need a spiritual refresher. We need something that gives us renewed hope and comfort to see beyond current troubles. The account of Jeremiah's purchase of the plot of land in Jerusalem is an excellent example of a spiritual refresher. As we will see, it gave Jeremiah and all the Israelites who witnessed it hope in the midst of a dire circumstance, as it does for us now. Let's start out by going through the process that should be undertaken with every Bible passage: backing up and looking at context.

The events preceding Jeremiah 32 give us an understanding about why this chapter is here. The book of Jeremiah can definitely be considered one of the most 'gloomy' books in the Bible; much of the writing focuses on such topics as the idolatry and sinfulness of the tribe of Judah and the impending captivity of the people at the hand of the Babylonians. Apart from the first 12 verses of the book, the first 29 chapters are almost entirely about the failings of the people of Judah and God’s judgment on all the nations, Judah included. It would weigh heavily on the hearts of those living in the time period described in these chapters, to see God explaining through His prophet Jeremiah the way in which the nation of Babylon was to completely take over Judah. But in His infinite wisdom, God set up the book of Jeremiah in the most extraordinary way. After all the doom and gloom of chapters 1-29, the next section of Jeremiah, chapters 30-33, has a completely opposite tone. These four chapters provide reassurance from God of His wonderful plan for the faithful remnant. God telling Jeremiah: “Write all the words which I have spoken to you in a book. ‘For behold, days are coming’, declares the LORD, ‘when I will restore the fortunes of My people Israel and Judah’ ” (Jer 30:2-3; all quotations are from the NIV). The next two chapters further expound upon this statement, offering a message of hope. All this sets us up for chapter 32, where Jeremiah purchases the plot of land.

The purchase of a field

By this time, it’s quite clear that Judah would be taken into captivity; in fact, it says: “Now at that time the army of the king of Babylon was besieging Jerusalem...” (Jer 32:2). Despite all the despair, God spoke to Jeremiah and told him that his cousin Hanamel would approach him and ask him to purchase his field, and God
commanded Jeremiah to accept this offer and purchase the field! This seems very
bizarre since the desolation to be caused by Babylon didn’t exactly make this prime
real estate buying season. Of all the times to buy a field, this would appear to be
the worst. Buying land is usually associated with times of prosperity, or at least
some stability; certainly not when nationwide captivity is on the horizon! From
a human perspective, it would make no sense to buy a field at this time, knowing
that king Nebuchadnezzar was in the midst of ransacking Jerusalem and taking
captives by the masses to Babylon, and even if one were to be left in the land, it
is doubtful that the Babylonians would honor any title deeds of the people of the
land. Nevertheless, Jeremiah follows through with God’s instruction and buys his
cousin’s field for seventeen shekels of silver. It is also recorded that there was an
official ceremony, with witnesses observing the transaction. For these witnesses, it
doubtless seemed like complete foolishness for Jeremiah to buy this field; perhaps
they looked at him in the same way the people of the world looked at Noah when
he built his ark on dry ground.

We know God has a purpose in all that He does, and so we can draw through
deductive reasoning that God had a plan when He told Jeremiah to buy this field,
and we can also assume His plan was not to see Jeremiah make a useless purchase.
Why then, we should ask, would God want His faithful prophet to buy this plot
of land in this most peculiar of times? Let’s delve into this further, because the
language used in this passage, as well as context, will reveal the picture God was
painting for Jeremiah. Jeremiah declares that he took the deeds of purchase and
made sure there was a crowd to see: “...In the sight of Hanamel my uncle’s son and
in the sight of the witnesses who signed the deed of purchase, before all the Jews who
were sitting in the court of the guard” (Jer 32:12). Jeremiah wants people to witness
this property purchase. Verse 14 gives us the best clue of what is really going on:
“Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, ‘Take these deeds, this sealed deed
of purchase and this open deed, and put them in an earthenware jar, that they may
last a long time’ ”. The LORD instructs Jeremiah to make certain that these deeds
are to be preserved ‘for a long time.’ This makes sense when we read the next verse:
“...Houses and fields and vineyards will again be bought in this land.” This would
occur; after 70 years of captivity, the nation was reestablished. This is irrelevant
for Jeremiah, though, because he was not a young man when this happened and
wouldn’t outlive the period of captivity. By the time Judah returned from captivity,
Jeremiah would have long been dead. But this wasn’t an ordinary land purchase
and God wasn’t interested in having Jeremiah inherit this property while a mortal
man; He wanted Jeremiah to invest in eternity! It is my belief that Jeremiah bought
this plot of land because he will one day inherit it, forever in the most holy city
in the world: Jerusalem!

The reason for the purchase
There is a reason that Jeremiah purchases this land under such difficult circum-
stances. The realization of what was to come had to be upsetting for Jeremiah; he
was only human after all, and to see utter destruction to his fellow people would
not have been an easy thing to experience. We don’t know exactly what was going
on in Jeremiah’s head when this happened, but we do know what was happening
in his country, and it very well may have become too much for him to handle. God chooses this moment, when perhaps Jeremiah was at his lowest, when he was struggling to stay strong, to present to Jeremiah a promise. This promise was that one day, Judah would be restored. This passage in the Bible has always been so uplifting to me, as it should be for you too; it is an amazing reminder that even in the most difficult of circumstances, God has a plan for us. How inspiring it must have been for Jeremiah, who, after giving prophecies of destruction and captivity for some time, surely needed this enlightenment from Y ahweh. This verse would have resounded clearly with Jeremiah after this purchase: “For I know the plans I have for you, ” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future” (Jer 29:11). God knew Jeremiah needed reassurance in times like these, and this was His way of comforting His servant.

How incredible it is when we consider the fact that God did this just to bring comfort to Jeremiah! We may think that one man would be insignificant in the eyes of the Creator of all things. Not true at all, for one person who cares means everything to Y ahweh. In order to comfort this one man, the Lord planned this eternally significant land purchase. It shows the ends to which God will go to help any one of us if we only seek His help!

The significance of the purchase

The question could be posed: how did Jeremiah know what was really happening? Perhaps he was simply blindly following God’s decrees with no knowledge that he was investing in eternity? We may also ask: how do we even know this was an eternal investment and not just an ordinary purchase of land? Firstly, the fact that it is recorded in Scripture shows it’s not something completely ordinary that’s happening; that much we know. The true answer to this lies in the way in which Jeremiah responds to God after the purchase of the field: he praises God! Jeremiah offers a heartfelt prayer to God:

“Ah, Sovereign Lord, you have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and outstretched arm. Nothing is too hard for you…” He goes on to say: “See how the siege ramps are built up to take the city. Because of the sword, famine and plague, the city will be given into the hands of the Babylonians who are attacking it. What you said has happened, as you now see. And though the city will be given into the hands of the Babylonians, you, Sovereign Lord, say to me, ‘Buy the field with silver and have the transaction witnessed’ ” (Jer 32:17, 24-25).

These verses show not only the significance of the transaction, but additionally his praise of God demonstrates Jeremiah’s understanding of the significance of the purchase; this was a prayer showing gratitude to the Maker for extending His mercy to His faithful servant. Jeremiah sees God’s grace, and is abounding with joy because of it; it does not matter that Jerusalem is about to be besieged by the Babylonians, for he has been given a powerful picture showing that, many years from the day of his purchase, God will reign supreme over all the nations. In that day, Jerusalem will no longer be besieged, no longer be subject to human rule, but eternally be filled with faithful believers joyously giving praise to Yahweh.
Almighty and His son Jesus Christ. It is quite clear from his prayer in Jer 32: 17-25 that Jeremiah was fully aware of God’s eternal gift being demonstrated in the purchase of his cousin Hanamel’s field.

**Faithless Hanamel**

Like many Biblical accounts, Yahweh, in mindfulness of the readers, presents not only the example we should emulate of a faithful servant in Jeremiah, but also the example not to be emulated in the faithless Hanamel. Jewish custom maintained that owning land had great significance. Amongst families, land was usually passed down from generation to generation. Similar to having children, owning land was a way of preserving one’s lineage, and furthering the success of future generations. In selling his field, Hanamel was giving up hope. Perhaps Hanamel didn't think about the long-term consequences of his actions, that there was eternal significance in this transaction, but by going through with it he was showing faithlessness and short-sightedness. Difficult times call for us to look beyond the current situation and have faith in God’s greater picture. If not, we show ourselves to not be pleasing in God’s sight, as Prov 24:10 hints at: “If you falter in a time of trouble, how small is your strength!” It is not the moments when life is great and everything seemingly is going our way that define us (although I’m not downplaying the significance of our choices in ‘prosperous times’), but when we have our backs against the wall and keeping on the right path becomes difficult, that is when our true characters come out. The encounter between cousins Jeremiah and Hanamel rings similar to that of brothers Jacob and Esau when Esau sells Jacob his birthright. The account is found in Gen 25:29-34. Hunger caused Esau to despise a long-term investment. In the story, Esau declares to Jacob: “Look, I am about to die...what good is the birthright to me?” (Gen. 25:32) We can imagine Hanamel looking around at the dire situation and declaring something very similar as he sold his inheritance. Both Esau and Hanamel were short-sighted and not spiritually minded enough to consider the future consequences of their birthright and land, respectively. When we face times when we must choose between God’s way or man’s way, either to temporarily please the flesh or permanently please God, we must remember to avoid making the same mistakes Esau and Hanamel made.

**The significance for us**

This story has great significance not only to Jeremiah but to us likewise. We see from this how deeply God cares about His believers. He will never abandon us if only we seek Him wholeheartedly. Jeremiah was just one man, but the LORD loved him enough that He went through this process of arranging the purchase of his cousin’s field so Jeremiah would feel comforted in a dark and disturbing time for the nation of Judah and all its inhabitants. When the world brings us down, God will lift us up if we seek Him. He cares about each and every one of us, so much that, in the words of Christ, “…the very hairs on (our) head are numbered…” (Luke 12:7). At times, in God’s omnipresence and vastness, it is difficult to see that He is a very personal God and loves us individually. But despite His power, there is a completely personal connection between Yahweh and every single one of His creation. The lesson we can most certainly take from this story is that even
when our world seems to be crashing down, God is there, and He has a plan for you and me. On a very personal level, God is not just the omnipotent Creator of everything; He is our God, and He never will forget His children. Never, ever, let the thought cross your mind that the future is hopeless, or worse yet, never think that God doesn't care. The only way we can believe that the future is hopeless is if we become short-sighted and lose faith in the big picture, unable to see past our current trials. If we have that vision of the glorious future that lies ahead, then no current circumstance can ever have us beat, regardless of how much the pain is. The story of Jeremiah's purchase provides us with a refreshing reminder of God’s future plans with the nation of Israel, a nation we all strive to be part of.

*Dalton Henley (Sacramento, CA)*
“Lost” Christadelphian Churches

There was an article in *The Christadelphian*, November 1993, about the “lost” Christadelphian Meeting place in Lanesville, Virginia. In the article it was reported that this ecclesia was quite unknown before being discovered by accident when a brother was delivering a mail order in rural Virginia. He noticed a Christadelphian Hall on the property, and on enquiring was told that indeed the house owner was a Christadelphian, but had not any contact with any other Christadelphian for over 40 years. And so this “lost” ecclesia was re-discovered. But why was it “lost”?

In fact, it is not the only lost Christadelphian Hall, for elsewhere in Virginia is an isolated hall, obviously disused, with a new signpost saying “Bethany Christadelphian Church, Est. 1895”. And near Baltimore, MD, is another building, still active, with a sign outside saying “First Christadelphian Chapel of Maryland”, but which is listed in no directory of Christadelphian ecclesias.

In fact, all these ecclesias share a common history, and their background does illuminate, in a small way, some of the background of Christadelphians in North America. I am not going to give a history of the individual ecclesias, but use their common origins to describe some of the background of the divisions among us.

AH Zilmer

Born in 1868, Albert Herman Zilmer was initially associated with the “Church of God”, the forerunner of what is today known as the Church of God of the Abrahamic Faith. By 1896 he was a pastor there, and was later appointed evangelist. However, on July 26, 1906 he was baptized into the Christadelphian Faith at Plymouth, IN. As elaborated in “A Minister’s Reason for Leaving his Church”, the reasons were a general dissatisfaction with the looseness over baptismal requirements, and also disagreement over judgment (the “Immortal Emergence” problem).

He rapidly became as prominent among the Christadelphians as he had been among the “Church of God”, and upon the death of Thomas Williams in early 1914 was appointed editor of “The Advocate”: he had since about 1910 been associated with John Lea in editing “The Faith”, a magazine designed strictly for proclaiming the Truth to strangers.
Zilmer’s editorship of *The Advocate* ceased with the issue of June, 1917, reportedly because the committee could no longer afford to pay Zilmer his stipend of $50 per month (about $1,000 per month in 2014 dollars). It was not long before he became sole editor of *The Faith*, which he turned into a fraternal magazine.

When Zilmer in 1927 published a small book entitled “Sin: A Treatise”, he seemed to endorse an “Amended” view of the atonement, and was therefore accused by many voices of endorsing Strickler’s views, and hence of “Clean Flesh”. Since Zilmer lived in Morrilton, Arkansas, where the Unamended had long had an active ecclesia, he exerted considerable influence there, and several ecclesias lent support to his views. The pages of *The Advocate* for a time bristled with debates between “orthodox” Unamended writers and Zilmer or those sympathetic to his perspective. However, at the end of 1933 the then editor of *The Advocate*, Albert Hall, was removed from editorship: when the magazine resumed after an absence of a year, Bro. Zilmer totally disappeared from its pages. In fact, both Zilmer and the ecclesias associated with him were ostracized from the broader Unamended community.

Zilmer continued *The Faith* until his death in 1949, and his wife, Anna, continued it until her death in April, 1959. He maintained his views on the Atonement, and also a much more loose view on fellowship than was customary within either the Amended or Unamended groups at the time. His “Statement of Faith” consisted of the “Synopsis of the One Faith” (although only the positive statements), as written by John Thomas in 1867, and he was prepared to fellowship anyone who agreed with it. He strongly disagreed with the Amended community making belief in “responsibility” a requirement for fellowship, maintaining the belief in the “Synopsis” a necessary, but sufficient, condition for fellowship.

**Germany**

Zilmer’s background was German, in which language he was fluent. It was therefore natural that he served as one of the main conduits to the German brethren. The little German ecclesias, which have continuously witnessed the Truth for almost 100 years, was essentially founded by a Bro. Albert Maier, who emigrated to the USA from Germany, and was converted around the turn of the nineteenth century. Maier returned to Germany for good by 1914, and spread the gospel there. Bro. Zilmer became the main contact of the little group when it became a viable group soon after the First World War, and many letters from the German ecclesias can be found in the pages of *The Faith*, including the sad note in the issue for 1946 noting the execution of Bro. Albert Merz for refusing military service under the Nazis.

**Zilmer’s beliefs**

It is hard to summarize his beliefs, but clearly he strongly disagreed with the notion that mankind, as well as Jesus, is born in a perishing condition, prone to sin i.e. that they all possess “sin in the flesh” as a physical reality. Zilmer held that “we are morally bound to exempt him [Jesus] from the necessity of making a sin offering for himself”. In this he seemed to reflect the type of ideas that Strickler, a contemporary, held. His views are therefore more extreme in this than Amended
beliefs, but they are much closer to that of the Amended than the views of the majority of Unamended.

The Faith ecclesias

The ecclesias associated with him were known as “Faith” or “Zilmer” ecclesias, and as you might have guessed the three ecclesias discussed in the first paragraph all were part of the group. Lanesville membership appeared to have slowly shrunk: in 1951 was the last recorded intelligence by a Sis. Edwards, although I have an old newspaper clipping from 1954 describing the church, as told by Bro. Charles Edwards, great-grandson of the founder, Lemuel Edwards. Bethany shut down in the 1980’s, with the remaining members transferring to other ecclesias. So Baltimore remained, along with a group led by Bro. Ernest Robinson in the Richmond “Faith” Ecclesia. Upon his death around 2000 this ecclesia disbanded, with members joining the three other Unamended ecclesias in town. The few other ecclesias either dwindled to nothing or joined the Unamended. The only (early) exception was the Washington DC Ecclesia, which had joined the Amended Community in 1954. A few others survived for a while: Waterloo, Iowa, Marion, Illinois, and San Saba, Texas: these also either returned to the Unamended fold or, like Lanesville, disappeared.
Thus the number of Faith ecclesias slowly dwindled: the last remaining one in Baltimore is prepared to fellowship any Christadelphian, but because of this is not officially welcomed anywhere among our community, although it maintains ties with the Church of God of Abrahamic Faith, particularly the Cleveland church.

Going back to 1956, the last issue of *The Faith* I can find lists 22 ecclesias: this list is interesting for several reasons:

- Of the ecclesias listed, eight also appear in *The Advocate* for the same year, although fourteen do not.
- The geographical spread is illuminating, for only one isolated ecclesia is reported in Texas, and no others in the Southern United States at all.
- Several “Faith” ecclesias are reported in Ontario, including two duplicate with *The Advocate* list.
- Similarly, Western Canada has two “Dual” ecclesias.

Among the members of ex-Faith Unamended ((Advocate) Ecclesias, even those with relatives of Bro. Zilmer, all I have talked to would disassociate themselves from the views put forth by Bro. Zilmer. But is seems clear that the current geographical grouping among the Unamended is somewhat similar to that one can discern from *The Advocate* versus *The Faith* grouping from 50 years ago. Very few in the southern USA endorsed the NASU, for example, while most with old connections to Zilmer did when it was voted on in 2005.

**Conclusion**

I believe Zilmer influenced many in the Unamended ecclesias with whom he was associated to embrace views on the atonement somewhat close to those of the Amended. I believe that traces of those views still linger in some Unamended ecclesias, particularly those disposed to unity with the Amended community. However, it is also probable that along with those views comes a view of fellowship boundaries that differ from that of the Amended community, and it is this latter problem that has proved to be the harder problem to solve in the current unity discussions.

As we consider the current state, I hope a little historical background shows why many in the Unamended community have historically held views on the atonement (and hence “responsibility”) compatible with those of the Amended, while recognizing how different were the views of Zilmer on fellowship.

Peter Hemingray

**Notes:**

1. A brief account of the Truth in Germany is to be found in *The Christadelphian*, 1957 p 211
Teaching and Learning:
Some Simple Ways to Improve Instruction

It is easy to suppose that teaching is telling. In other words, if we tell our Sunday schoolers something they will learn it. Lecturing and storytelling are prime examples of this kind of teaching. To be sure, some students learn a lot from a lecture, and many of them remember important details of a story long after it has been told. It also goes without saying that it is important for the children to develop good listening skills. But good teaching often requires more than telling, because learning often involves more than listening. Some students are not good auditory learners, and for them other ways of receiving information are important.

Using all the common senses

There are several ways that students take in information. Hearing is just one of them. Seeing is another. When we draw on sound and sight at the same time, we have audio-visual instruction. Audio-visual instruction is often more effective than either one alone. Audio-visual materials are more engaging. It is no surprise that children often pay close attention to age-appropriate DVDs, and adults often find lectures more compelling when PowerPoint or Keynote illustrations are used.

There are other ways of taking in information as well. Manipulating objects can be instructive. Children learn by handling and manipulating things. Drawing, coloring and writing are common manipulative activities. So are doing jigsaw puzzles, working with matching cards, and physically putting things in order (e.g., sequencing). Often there is room to increase the use of manipulatives in Sunday school and to draw on their unique instructional power.

Physical movement is a fourth way in which the senses are engaged and learning can take place. Skits, charades, finger puppets, and songs with body movements are just a few of the learning activities that involve physical movement.

There will even be times when the engagement of smell and taste are appropriate in a Sunday school lesson. The point is that all of our God-given senses allow us to take in information that contributes to learning.

Children differ

It is recognized that children differ in how they learn, and at least part of this has to do with the different ways in which they take in information. Some are excellent auditory learners. Others are more visual. Still others respond well to tactile (handling) or kinesthetic (moving) activities. Teachers are not the first to recognize this fact. The Bible honored these differences in people long ago.

“For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot (moving) shall say, Because I am not the hand (handling), I am not of the body; is it therefore
not of the body? And if the ear (hearing) shall say, Because I am not the eye (seeing), I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. And if they were all one member, where were the body?” (1Cor 12:14-19).

In the body of Christ we are not all alike, and we complement each other by serving with our different God-given strengths. Similarly, a body of instruction is more effective when it engages the different ways that children take in information and learn.

Can it really be done?

Is it possible for a teacher to accommodate so many differences in a single Sunday school class? Actually quite a lot can be done. Give a little thought to the things you already do and you may be able to find ways to engage more of the common senses. Think again about the examples of lecturing and storytelling. Each of these can be enriched by providing additional ways for the students to take in information.

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Go ahead. Evaluate the things you do in Sunday school. See if there are ways you can add something to engage more of the common senses. Almost certainly you will improve instruction in the process.

Jim Harper (Meriden, CT)

sundayschool@tidings.org ; http://www.pinterest.com/2harps4u

Notes:
1. Watch a child use an IPad. Seeing, hearing, and manipulating are all involved in whatever it is they may be doing and learning!
2. Good questions that require written answers take learning beyond just listening and seeing. For information about question design, see “The Questions We Ask”, Tidings, June, 2012, pp.228-231; July 2012, pp.281-285.
The Gospel of Forgiveness

What is the purpose of God, as seen through the Scriptures? It is to make one again, in heart and mind, the relationship between God and man. It is to help man become “right” again in God’s sight, so man can give honor and glory to God in the “right” way.

The Jews could not grasp this was God’s main goal. They figured they were already “right” in God’s sight by merely being, physically, children of Abraham. Therefore, they did not focus on the promise of God, to Adam and Eve, of one who would destroy sin in himself. The Jews ignored the fact that the first thing promised to Abraham, even before the land, was forgiveness. The land is promised to Abraham, prospectively, in Genesis 13. However, before the land promise is actually confirmed to Abraham, by the covenant described in Genesis 15, we are told that “God counted Abraham’s faith as righteousness,” or “rightness”, in God’s sight.

This concept is so important to God that this particular verse is quoted in Galatians, twice in Romans 4, as well as in James! Paul in Galatians is berating the people of Galatia for departing from the true gospel. What does Paul quote as the gospel? He quotes Gen 12:3: “In (or by, through) you shall all nations be blessed.”

To what does Paul apply this blessing? To the future kingdom? No. To the future king, the Lord Jesus Christ? No. To future immortality? Not even that. Instead, Paul applies this important gospel definition to forgiveness, that is, to being made right, or becoming justified in God’s sight.

"The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, ‘All nations will be blessed in you.’ So then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer. For as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse; for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the Law, to perform them.’ Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident; for, ‘The righteous man shall live by faith’ ” (Gal 3:8-11).

Paul stresses in the letter to the Galatians that we are not automatically made right in God’s sight just by being a Jew, or by saying we are baptized into Christ, but we are made righteous by having and continuing in the same type of faith Abraham had.

What type of faith did Abraham have that we need? He believed that: God would and could do what He said He would do — in His time:

“For this reason it is by faith, in order that it may be in accordance with grace, so that the promise will be guaranteed to all the descendants, not only to those who are of the Law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all, (as it is written, ‘A father of many na-
tions have I made you’) in the presence of Him whom he believed, even God,
who gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist. In
hope against hope he believed, so that he might become a father of many
nations according to that which had been spoken, ‘So shall your descendants
be.’ Without becoming weak in faith he contemplated his own body, now as
good as dead since he was about a hundred years old, and the deadness of
Sarah’s womb; yet, with respect to the promise of God, he did not waver in
unbelief but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully assured
that what God had promised, He was able also to perform” (Rom 4:16-21).

God could and would achieve the seemingly impossible (impossible to man): “And
He took him outside and said, ‘Now look toward the heavens, and count the stars, if
you are able to count them.’ And He said to him, ‘So shall your descendants be.’ Then
he believed in the LORD; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness” (Gen 15:5,6).

There would be a savior to be a sacrifice for sins, as promised to Abraham in
Genesis 22.

“And said, By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast
done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: That in bless-
ing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars
of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed
shall possess the gate of his enemies; And in thy seed shall all the nations of
the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice” (Gen 22:16-18).

“Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to
seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ” (Gal 3:16).

If we believe as Abraham did, what does Paul say will be given to us? The same
forgiveness, the same “accounted as right” in God’s sight, as Abraham received:

“Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may
be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a
tutor. For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus” (Gal 3:24-26).

That is the first main part of the gospel. In order to inherit the rest of the prom-
ises made to Abraham (the land, forever), we must first be made right, and one
with God. He must be able to justify us, and meet us, clean from our sins in His
sight. This will be the permanent forgiveness, the permanent right-ness with
God — forever.

What were the apostles and disciples to teach?

“He said to them, ‘Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise
again from the dead the third day, and that repentance for forgiveness of
sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from
Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things’ ” (Luke 24:46-48).

What did Jesus do the first time here on this earth? His main purpose then was to
be a sacrifice for sins — a perfect sacrifice — for our sins. If we choose to believe
that action in that person, we are granted forgiveness, justification, righteousness!
 Forgiveness has to come first, a blessing now through Abraham, through Christ
Jesus our Lord. We can be made “right” in God’s sight! What a joyful, incredible happening! We who are not worthy at all, the dust of the earth (1Pet 1:24, Isa 40:6-8; James 1:10, 11; 4:14, etc.), have been granted the incredible opportunity to be made one with God, the Creator of our world, the Universe. He is willing to remove all our wrongdoings, our sins, our faults, so they are never seen again, and make us as if we were perfect in His sight, only if we believe.

What an offer! What a gift! These verses of the Scriptures mean so much more now when we try to comprehend the awesomeness of God’s love for us — each of us.

“Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! (Rom 7:24, 25).

“He will again have compassion on us: He will tread our iniquities under foot. Yes, You will cast all their sins into the depths of the sea” (Mic 7:19).

“The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, Because the LORD has anointed me To bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to captives And freedom to prisoners; To proclaim the favorable year of the LORD And the day of vengeance of our God; To comfort all who mourn, To grant those who mourn in Zion, Giving them a garland instead of ashes, The oil of gladness instead of mourning, The mantle of praise instead of a spirit of fainting. So they will be called oaks of righteousness, The planting of the Lord, that He may be glorified” (Isa 61:1-3).

“How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered! How blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity, And in whose spirit there is no deceit!” (Psa 32:1-2).

“To give to His people the knowledge of salvation By the forgiveness of their sins, Because of the tender mercy of our God” (Luke 1:77-78).

“For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world — our faith. Who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?” (1John 5:4-5).

“Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?... But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom 8:35, 37-39).

And finally,

“The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord” (1Cor 15:56-58).

Maritta Terrell (Austin Leander, TX)
According to the book by Bro. Stanley Owen, “Into all the Word”, the beginnings of the Truth in Guyana goes back as far as the 1890’s. Following the history of the ecclesias in this country is quite intriguing and encouraging. The work of the brethren there has been supported by many over the years, and this has been helpful since members have immigrated to other countries in the past decades.

The six ecclesias in Guyana, about 100 members in total, undertake the task of organizing and implementing a full slate of scheduled annual activities. The CBM Canada provides assistance to the brotherhood in Guyana in various forms — such as Sunday School supplies, speakers for Bible Schools, and hall repairs and upgrades — as well as funding towards transportation needs. Bro. Ted and Sis. Dolores Sleeper have served as CBMC link couple for a number of years — they also lived in Guyana in the past as missionaries, so they have provided a valuable long-term support for the brotherhood in this country.

The most recent fraternal activity for all the ecclesias was the 43rd Annual Bible School, which was a four-day event during the Easter Weekend. The School was held at the Georgetown Ecclesial Hall, Friday, April 18th to Monday, April 21st, 2014. The theme was “Law and Grace”, and the speakers were Bro. Rafeek Soolaman from British Columbia and Bro. Don Luff from Ontario. The attendance varied from 90 to 130 brothers, sisters, teens and children during the course of the weekend. Bro. Rafeek reviewed aspects of the Tabernacle of David and Bro. Don presented practical topics from the Law of Moses. The highlight was the baptism first thing Sunday morning of one of the Sunday School scholars — Abigail Semple, who is the oldest of Sis. Dawn Semple's two daughters, from the Georgetown Ecclesia. It was an emotionally happy day for all who attended. We were also entertained by the talents of the members, teens and children that afternoon by means of recitations, singing and different performances. A full and spiritually uplifting day indeed!
During my eight day stay in this country, I was taken by Bro. David and Sis. Joan Andrew to view the other five ecclesial halls. It is evident that the members care for and appreciate their meeting places by the cleanliness, well-maintained appearance of each hall. We were also pleased to see the revitalization of the Plegt Anker farm by a young couple of that ecclesia. They have planted many trees which bear tropical fruit, as well as large vegetable gardens.

Wednesday evening April 23rd we attended a joint Bible Class of the Georgetown and Eccles Ecclesia’s, at the Eccles Hall. A study on “Putting our Hand to the Plow” was the topic, and tilling and sowing the focus for the class. Lessons from the natural and symbolic or spiritual applications were drawn from soil, tilling, planting and watering — and applied to our daily lives in the Truth. As we serve together on our way to the Kingdom, there are “waymarks” along the path to encourage us to keep our hands on the plow (discipleship and life in the Truth) and to look ahead to the hope that is set before us. The Bible School certainly did that for all of us. I really enjoyed my first visit to Guyana!

Written by Don Luff, CBMC representative
Submitted by Jan Berneau, CBMA/CBMC Publicity

New Amsterdam Hall looks great, bright, clean with flowers/plant/shrubs all around!

Above: Kilcoy Hall, very presentable from the street!

Left: Plegt Anker Hall with sign in it
Jamaica Easter Youth Camp — a Perfect Weekend!

Our Journey to Jamaica for the Easter Youth Bible School really started six months before we left. Preparation, they say, is the key to a successful trip. Bro. Don Luff, from the Brant County Ecclesia in Ontario was our designated CBMC support person to help us prepare. And prepare us he did. Monthly meetings, numerous emails, many phone calls, sewing backpacks in the basement, and collecting supplies from the Christadelphian Save the Children Fund (CSTCF) in London, Ontario, for classes were just a few of the planning steps. And that was not including three brethren preparing for classes and devotions. It was a labor of love, and we are truly thankful for the support and guidance in making sure we were well prepared to go down. It gave us the confidence that we would be as helpful as we could be for the brethren and sisters and young people in Jamaica, as we strove to work in God’s vineyard. With eleven eager laborers, we were the largest group to go down in a long time.

We left on Thursday morning, April 17th, 2014, and landed in Montego Bay, Jamaica in the evening. The heat was a wonderful change from a winter of freezing temperatures in Ontario. We gathered our 15 suitcases, and met with our bus and driver for the two hour journey to Westmoreland, on the south of the island. It was a bumpy ride in the dark, which meant we could not see the beauty of the country. (We were able to however, on the return trip home). At last we arrived at the Easter Gathering location at just after 9 pm. Everyone had been waiting patiently for us to arrive. Bro. Stephen Macfarlane was asked to provide some fun icebreakers to get the young people introduced to each other and the visitors from Canada. It was a fun evening, and we were able to get to know most of the kids and brethren and sisters that were there. After all the excitement and introductions, the young people headed off to bed, but not to sleep! Many rekindled old friendships and created new ones — chatting and socializing until the wee hours of the morning.

We awoke to a stunning site! Having arrived at the camp in the dark we were now able to see that the camp is located directly on the beach. The camp grounds covered about a 3-acre parcel of land, lush and green— the west side was the aquamarine Caribbean Sea and the east side displayed an inland mountain range. The Camp Hope facility was perfect for the weekend including a lot of room for
the kids with separate boy’s and girl’s dorms, a large common area in the middle and a kitchen at the back.

The morning moved quickly as the organizers had a 6 am wake-up call for the campers. Stretching and exercises, and a brisk run certainly woke everyone up. Each morning started like this, and when the exercises were over, various groups of young people from each ecclesia on the island presented a morning devotion. Then off to a full breakfast!

Friday and Saturday were both busy days, with two classes in the morning, and one after lunch. The theme for the morning classes was “Lessons from the Sower”, presented by Bro. Shawn Snobelen, and the afternoon sessions were mutual improvement style classes presented by Bro. Stephen. Separate classes were held for the under 12-year-olds out on the front lawn with Sis. Marnie Snobelen, Sis. Rachel Pryer and Sis. Realle Macfarlane. The sisters and brothers thoroughly enjoyed these opportunities to share the Truth with the young people and really get to know them on a more individual and personal way. Afternoon activities included group team games in the form of a field day and a fantastic cook-off competition.

Following dinner we enjoyed a quiz championship on Friday and a challenging treasure hunt on Saturday. Each day ended with a devotion on the Fruit of the Spirit by Bro. Grant Pryer — our sub theme for the weekend.

The weather was beautiful. It was over 30 degrees (86 F) both days, and humid. We had heavy rain for a short afternoon burst almost every day which cooled down the heat, and provided ample opportunity for volleyball in the rain — a popular activity on the weekend! Much of our free time was spent playing volleyball on the grassy area in front of the main building and heading to the beach to swim.

Sunday came too soon — and preparation for our memorial service was under way. We have all had to speak in different kinds of weather, however this was the hottest temperature any of us have had to endure. Imagine an exhortation in 37 degrees (99 F) weather. Some
of us started to miss the cold north — even if just for a moment. However, we had a wonderful opportunity to break bread with the brothers and sisters and young baptized. Following lunch we had a lecture entitled “What Kind of Believer are You”. Sunday afternoon was spent in games, spiritual conversation, and preparation for the formal dinner and talent night that was scheduled for that evening. Part of the preparation included a class on etiquette that was prepared by Sis. Kay Brown. The young people were really excited and spent many hours getting ready for the dinner. The male campers were dressed in their finest clothes and waited patiently for the young ladies to make their entrance. It was a wonderful evening, with great food and an entertaining evening of Biblical skits, songs of praise and poems. The evening ended in a devotion on kindness.

Monday was the All-Island Fraternal Gathering which involved a flood of brethren and sisters, friends and children from across the island converging on Camp Hope to meet and fellowship with each other. Some arrived by car, others by bus, and soon there were over 100 people in the main room. Bro. Stephen presented a talk entitled “Passing the Charge” and then we had a memorial service and lunch. It was wonderful to meet so many from Jamaica, and get to know some, and reminisce with others who had previously met some of our relatives and brethren and sisters from Canada. (Brethren Philip Snobelen, Ted Hodge, Ron Leadbetter, Ron Ghent, Daniel Leadbetter and others).

We left sad, but exhilarated at 3 pm. Driving out of the camp, heading back to the Sangster Airport, we really felt it was too short, and that we needed more time to learn more about our brethren and sisters. Yet we also felt that we had formed strong bonds with many of them. Since our group included various ages of both males and females, we were blessed to engage in spiritually uplifting conversations with many different individuals throughout camp. It was a unique and fulfilling experience for all of us, and one that we would certainly repeat if our Lord remains away, and we are afforded the opportunity.

Written by Shawn and Marnie Snobelen
Submitted by Jan Berneau, CBMA/CBMC Publicity

In St. Lucia — Preaching is Living!

Preaching is always a challenge! Even after many years’ experience it is still a challenge! In the Caribbean country of St. Lucia, Brothers and Sisters have been presenting the gospel for fifteen years. There have been countless discussions with people in an endeavour to turn them “from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God”. Friendships have been made, contacts have come and gone, and sadly even some members of the ecclesia no longer attend.

History

For many years St. Lucia was a battle ground between England and France. The small island changed hands fourteen times before it finally became part of the British Empire in 1814. While the island was under French control the Roman Catholic Church became very well established and this continued under British
rule. However Protestant churches came to St. Lucia during the 19th and 20th centuries and became established. These include Anglican, Seventh Day Adventists, Methodists, Pentecostals, Jehovah's Witnesses and a few others.

**It’s the Devil, it is always the Devil!**

Our discussions over the years with members of all these congregations have centered on the devil and demons. Since most of the inhabitants are ethnically from Africa where the culture is steeped in voodoo and superstition, many people who live in the Caribbean carry these ideas from generation to generation.

We have given a number of lectures (well attended by visitors) and had many discussions with people about the devil and (almost) convinced them that Lucifer is not a fallen angel and the ‘war in heaven’ is not about what happened before Genesis 1:2 but is a graphic prophecy of events future to John’s day. But the stumbling block is ‘demons’. People in St. Lucia have ‘seen’ too many occasions when a demented person is apparently cured and are convinced that a demon has left the cured person. We are always looking for better answers to these questions!

One ‘good’ contact who began discussions with a member of the ecclesia a couple years ago accepted the Bible teaching on the devil, but in this visit in early 2014, he argued vigorously that Lucifer is the angel that sinned in heaven and was cast down! Old convictions are hard to dislodge. All too often this man argues from ignorance!

This is a topic that is reviewed fairly often with members to cement into their minds the truth concerning the devil and the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. As the saying goes, ‘it was relatively easy to get the Israelites out of Egypt, but it was quite another thing to get Egypt out of the Israelites’.

Then of course there is also vigorous discussion about keeping the Sabbath day. Many view the Sabbath as being sacred above all days. They maintain that to worship on Sunday rather than Saturday is a mark of false religion.

**The author of confusion?**

The topic of the “Holy Spirit” comes up quite often in discussion. Many people here talk about the Holy Spirit in their lives. Really what they mean by this is the word of God is in their thinking. To say that it is the “Holy Spirit” as in New
Testament times does not fit the situation today. We point out the contradiction, that the Pentecostals say they have the Spirit, but assert that when a believer dies he goes to heaven however. The Seventh Day Adventists who also claim to “have the Spirit” strongly deny this teaching of the Pentecostals. The Adventists say that death is death, the believer is asleep until the resurrection. The same is true for other churches.

Challenges of a small Ecclesia

It is not very easy to be a member of a small ecclesia where there are only a couple of brethren to exhort and give public talks. Every other week an exhortation has to be prepared. Members who are not able to be at the Breaking of Bread because of age or infirmity have to be visited and encouraged. So the question is raised; who will encourage those who encourage? Visitors to St. Lucia can make a great contribution to the spiritual wellbeing of the members and coming for an extended stay really raises the spirits of brothers and sisters. Perhaps this is where you can help.

There is great personal benefit participating in active overseas preaching. In discussions with contacts and friends about the first principles you will learn a lot about what the Scriptures say on all these topics. You will be asked challenging questions and have to seek the answers. Then in finding the answers, your faith will be stimulated and grow. You will see things in the Word of God that you have not seen before. Bible truth will be taught to others and your personal faith will be refreshed and strengthen.

Anyone interested in obtaining information about actively helping support mission work in St Lucia should contact Bro. Phil Snobelen. (CBMC Chairman).

Martin and Lois Webster, Link Couple
Submitted by Jan Berneau, CBMA/C Publicity
Puerto Rico — So many churches, and so much deception!

For many years, the CBMA has sent correspondence course material to people in Puerto Rico. However, the contacts on this Spanish-speaking island in the Caribbean are an enigma. There has been no response to advertised lectures, phone calls receive a cool answer and acceptance to our appeals to visit in contacts homes is minimal — even from those who answer the course with enthusiasm. Most Latin American countries are the opposite! Part of the problem could be the materialistic life style, or the many “Prosperity Gospel” type churches, which have a strong appeal. On top of all this, the deception of these churches is hard to overcome with the simplicity and common sense of the Truth.

During the month of March, my wife and I spent five days in Puerto Rico visiting the few brethren in this country. Bro. Edgardo met us at the airport and took us to a little efficiency apartment he had arranged for our stay. For most of the first three days of our stay, we spent our time with Bro. Edgardo and two of his friends. This seems to be the most effective method of reaching people — personal contact. One woman contact is quite open to the things of the Truth, but the other considers that he believes the same as we do. The problem is that he also believes in keeping the Law of Moses (7th day) and has some different thoughts on the nature of Christ, as well as some unique views on the angels. After a few hours of conversation, it was evident that he really did not believe the same as we do. The matter of rebaptism had been previously discussed with him, however he saw no need for that. We pray that with more study, time and patience the seed of the word will grow in him, since he is open to discuss the Word and quite friendly.

We spent an enjoyable day on Sunday, March 23rd with Bro. Edgardo, Bro. Miguel and Sis. Aida (at their home in Ponce) and with a woman contact. The three Puerto Rican members and the two of us enjoyed fellowship by mean of a Breaking of Bread Service, and after that we were treated to a delicious meal. Monday, March 24th we were hosted by Bro. Miguel, Sis. Aida and their oldest son, Miguel Junior. For all the years this couple have been in virtual isolation, they are very strong in their faith. There are only four Christadelphians on the island of Puerto Rico and we pray that God will help them remain strong in these last days.

Sis. Aida, Bro. Miguel, Sis. Miriam, contact/friend Solveig and Bro. Edgardo

On behalf of the CBMA, Don and Miriam Luff
Submitted by Jan Berneau, CBMA/CBMC Publicity
Books from The Tidings

On the Way: Bible Studies, Exhortations, Meditations and Musings, by George Booker

“The Way” is a path to salvation, a manner of living day by day, a journey through life with all its ups and downs. This book offers insights, encouragement and food for thought, to encourage all those “on the Way”, whether young in the Truth or baptized for many years. The 71 chapters vary in length from short reflections to in-depth studies. Each focuses on a different topic, from the serious to the lighthearted: practical issues of life in the Truth, difficult passages, exhortation from hymns and songs, personal memories, and observations about the modern world. Published: 2014 – soft cover, 309 pages, color and B&W photos $9.00 USD (plus S&H)

The Ecclesia at Ephesus, by Ryan Mutter
Studying the Ecclesia at Ephesus provides powerful lessons in spiritual growth relevant in today’s times. $9.00 US (soft cover, 264 pages, with color maps).

Bible Guidelines for a Happy Marriage, by John C. Bilello
Sound, proactive, Biblical advice on how to build and maintain a happy marriage. $6.00 US (soft cover, 127 pages).

The Creation Text: Studies in Early Genesis, by David Levin
Forty-nine studies offer fresh insights into early Genesis by examining the text and structure of the first five chapters. $12.00 US (364 pages).

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

Pictures of Redemption, by George Booker
Explores parables, analogies, and figures of speech used in Scripture to illustrate the many facets of redemption. $6.00 US (soft cover, 192 pages).

The Whole Armor of God, by Ryan Mutter
This story takes place nearly 3,000 years ago, but the spiritual challenges are familiar to today’s young people. $6.00 US (110 pages).

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HONESDALE, PA
We were very happy to have Bro. Dave and Sis. Ann Cheetham visit us on June 22nd and share a luncheon with us after our memorial service. Bro. Dave is one of the brothers from the Moorestown Ecclesia, NJ, who periodically devote a Sunday to visiting us, giving us excellent exhortations. We greatly appreciate this service which has benefited us for many years.

Stephen J. DeMarco

LONDON, ON
In April we enjoyed our annual Study day led by Bro. Jay Mayock Jr. (Hamilton Book Road, ON) on “Secret Narratives of the Kingdom”. We thank Bro. Jay for his labors on our behalf. We enjoyed a brief visit from Bro. Peter and Sis. Norma Forbes (Glenfield, UK) in July. We thank Bro. Peter for his Bible class and exhortation.

We rejoice in the baptism of STEPHANIE WINTER on July 17th. Sis. Stephanie is the youngest daughter of our Bro. Dave and Sis. Audrey Winter. We pray that God will richly bless her walk in the Truth.

We are saddened to report that two of our members fell asleep within a short time of each other, Sis. Jean Webb on March 19th, followed by her husband Bro. Philip Webb on July 23rd. Bro. Philip and Sis. Jean will be sadly missed by us all but especially by their daughters Sis. Jennifer (Ron) Gordon, and Sis. Joanne (Ron) Broda who lovingly cared for them both in their later years. We pray that God will comfort them in their sorrow.

Ron Kidd

NANAIMO, BC
It was with great joy that we baptized sister SHARON MASON into covenant relationship with our Lord on May 25th, 2014. Sis. Sharon is the eldest daughter of the late Bro. Don and Sis. Jean Jenkinson, who were also long standing members of this ecclesia. Again we thank the visiting brethren who have supported our small ecclesia with words of exhortation.

Tom Alexander

OTTAWA, ON
Our Bro. Nsanga Kasongo fell asleep in Christ on February 15th. Bro. Nsanga and Sis. Monica came to Canada with their four children in 2001. Originally from the Democratic Republic of Congo, they had lived in refugee camps for 10 years, learning the Truth in Malawi. The family deeply appreciates the love shown by the Brotherhood in its generous financial assistance with the funeral and other needs. The Ottawa ecclesia has enjoyed fellowship with brothers and sisters from various Ontario ecclesias and the UK. We thank those visiting brothers who have exhorted and given Bible classes.

Charles Archard
PITTSBURGH, PA

We thank Bro. Mike Robinson (Echo Lake, NJ) for his instructive classes in May on “The Levites, They Shall Be Mine.” On May 28, we witnessed the baptism into Christ of our new sister, ROCHELLE QUICQUARO. She responded to our ecclesial website and has attended and studied with us faithfully since then. We pray that the Lord will guide her in her walk to the kingdom. We have received a letter of transfer from Paris Avenue, OH, Ecclesia for Bro. Kevin and Sis. Melinda Flatley and Sis. Melinda’s mother, Sis. Jean Wilson, who we welcome into our ecclesia. We look forward to serving our Lord with them.

We enjoyed visitors from Canada, Columbus, Ohio, Cranston, RI, Paris Avenue, OH, Northern Virginia, Livonia, MI, Kouts, IN and Costa Rica. We thank Brethren Tim Cooper, Kevin Flatley, and Art Hibbs for their encouraging words of exhortation. We also thank Bro. Tim Cooper for his informative talk about his trip to Kenya, which made us aware of the work being done there and the needs of the people there.


Lord willing, we plan to have a CYC study weekend October 4 and 5. Bro. Matthew Trowell (Hamilton Book Road, ON) will speak on “One Day in the Kingdom of God”.

Len Budney

SARASOTA, FL

The Sarasota ecclesia is very pleased to announce that another of Adam’s race has taken on the saving name of the lord Jesus Christ. KEVIN CRONIN was immersed as a result of an interview conducted by two of the brothers in Sarasota over the Skype video link-up. Technology has made events like this possible, and more will occur, I’m sure. This baptism came about by a wonderful effort on the part of a number of brothers and sisters. I would especially like to thank the brothers and sisters of the Orlando Ecclesia, who were able to host the baptism and memorial service at a member’s home, where there was a swimming pool available. This is another example of laboring together in the Master’s vineyard, and the labor has brought results. We thank our Heavenly Father for blessing this effort. Our prayer is that more may respond to His gracious call before that great day of His Son’s return is at hand.

Our new brother is currently in Jacksonville, FL. The immersion took place in Orlando which is half way between Jacksonville and Sarasota. Our prayer for our new brother is that he may continue in his walk to the kingdom.

James Wilkinson

SHELBURNE, ON

Please note that as of July 1st, 2014, Bro. James Pearce will assume the role of Recording Brother for the Shelburne Ecclesia. We thank him for volunteering for this important service to the members of our ecclesia. He can be contacted via email at shelburne.announce@outlook.com.

Sis. Janine Finlay has transferred her membership to the Shelburne Ecclesia from the Guelph Ecclesia. We look forward to her presence among us and pray that there will be mutual benefit for ourselves and Sis. Janine in the days that remains until our Lord returns.
On a final note the Shelburne Ecclesia will be hosting their annual Fall Gathering on the weekend of September 26-28, 2014. God willing, Bro. Martin Webster will lead the studies around the theme of “First Principle — Truth and Love: A study of 1 John”.

Chris Sales

SIMI HILLS, CA

Our ecclesia has recently been blessed with many visitors and would like to thank brethren Harley Young of the Seattle Ecclesia and Dennis Paggi of the Verdugo Hills Ecclesia for their exhortations. We also wish to thank brethren Mike Robinson of the Echo Lake, NJ Ecclesia and Wilfred Alleyne of the Birmingham, U.K Ecclesia for their Wednesday night Bible Classes.

On February 23, our ecclesia hosted a get together for Sis. Julie (Jennings) Fernando. Sis. Julie was married last December in Sri Lanka to Bro. Naleen Fernando. Bro. Naleen was not able to be with Sis. Julie as he awaited his immigration papers, but we were excited to welcome Sis. Julie home and congratulate her on her marriage. We are also happy to announce Bro. Russell McLeod’s engagement to Sis. Tricia Woolcock. We pray God’s blessings on them both as they plan their future together.

Bro. Steve Hawthorne has been undergoing cancer treatment and has been having a difficult recovery from surgery. We look forward to Bro. Steve being able to return to the Sunday meetings in the near future. He has further surgery scheduled in the next few months.

We rejoice in the baptism of AUSTIN DE CAUSSIN on Friday, February 28. We are thankful another was called out from the world.

Our softball team, made up of members from the Simi Hills, Verdugo Hills and Thousand Oaks ecclesias, had a very successful season, winning their division.

Jeff Gelineau

WORCESTER, MA

We are pleased to announce that Sis. Rosamond Smith has transferred to our ecclesia from the Meriden, CT, Ecclesia. We thank our Father for bringing her to us.

Mark Fulmer

2014 RUN FOR THE EVERLASTING CURE

The 2014 Run for the Everlasting Cure will take place, God willing, on Saturday, November 29. Make this your year to run!

Since 2005, ecclesias and youth groups all over the world have participated in a yearly day of prayer, followed by a 5 KM Run/Walk. From India to Ecuador, Costa Rica to Canada, England to Australia, the USA to New Zealand, family and ecclesial groups from 3 to 300 have gathered to pray and run/walk together on the last Saturday in November.
This event is a great way to cement ecclesial unity in prayer together, as we reflect on our urgent need for the healing power of God in our lives, and the only true and lasting hope — the return of Christ as King in Jerusalem.

Join our worldwide community in prayer for our friends and family in the faith who are struggling with debilitating and terrible illnesses — particularly cancer.

To add your friends, family and ecclesial members to the prayer list posted online, or for further information, write to bible@christadelphia.org. You can also join the facebook group Run for the Everlasting Cure to correspond with other run organizers and participants around the world or at http://www.runfortheeverlastingcure.org/.

Kevin and Rebekah Hunter

**PRINCE GEORGE, BC APPEAL**

Dear Brethren and Sisters, when Paul was on his second missionary journey he received a message through the spirit of a man from Macedonia asking him to come and help them. (Acts 16:9.) I am making that same appeal to you.

I am the recording brother of a small ecclesia in Prince George, British Columbia, Canada. Our ecclesia has shrunk to 13 members over the past 10-15 years. Most of this has been from people moving to other ecclesias throughout North America most of which are still strong, active members of our worldwide ecclesia. Prince George is a wonderful place to live and work both in the ecclesia and in our day to day lives. We function with a Sunday school, memorial meeting, regular mid-week Bible class and a sister’s class. We have had a recent baptism from our seminars and plan to run them again in the fall.

Our Sunday school has five children in it with one more on the way. Their ages range from three to nine. There is another even smaller ecclesia in Ft. St. James that we also try and support as much as we can, as it is two hours west of Prince George. We would love to continue to grow in numbers as well as spiritual strength. Moving here would allow you to work constantly in Gods vineyard to support the ecclesia as well as reaching out to see if there are any other hearts that are open to receive God's word.

We would be most grateful if any, young or old, would be willing and able to either visit or relocate to our beautiful part of the world. There are wonderful educational and employment opportunities in our small community of about 80,000. Housing is very affordable and you can enjoy all four seasons of weather when you live here.

If you are unable to visit or move to our ecclesia we would appeal to all brothers and sisters in these last days to support and help any ecclesia they can. The world is pressing ever closer into our ecclesias. We need to stay strong and firm in our foundation of God’s word in these last days before Christ’s return.

If you have any further questions please feel free to contact me by email at pgchristadelphians@hotmail.com or by phone 250-962-8191.

With love in our Master name, Jonathan Lawrence

**TEXAS CHRISTADELPHIAN CAMP AND CONFERENCE CENTER (T4C) APPEAL**

My dearest brethren and sisters in the Lord Jesus Christ; it has been a few years since our last letter so I would like to update you on some of the events and projects that are going on at the Texas Christadelphian Camp and Conference Center (T4C) and the Texas Youth Conference (TYC). We continue to hold at least two or three weekend
gatherings per year (hosted by various Texas ecclesias) and (by the time you read this) will have completed our ninth Youth Conference! This year we were blessed to have Bro. Shane Kirkwood from Sydney, Australia leading our young people in a week of spiritually uplifting Bible studies. We had just over 80 young people along with about a dozen support staff for a week of Bible study, fellowship and lasting memories with those of like precious faith!

Two years ago, we completed a 24’ x 30’ metal building that holds 12 bunk beds (24 sleeping spots) that is primarily used as the ‘guys’ dorm. Just over one year ago, we installed a 40’ x 60’ concrete pad for basketball, volleyball, foursquare, etc. along with two light poles so that the court can be utilized after dark.

The T4C camp, although used throughout the year for various gatherings, is still focused on the week-long Youth Conference at the end of each year and the improvements that are made ultimately benefit these young people the most. This year for the first time, we had to set a cap on the number of attendees because we have reached the limit that we can provide beds for. Also, with 80 young people wanting to take HOT showers each morning, it has maxed out our water heater! We have a commercial hot water disinfecting dish washer in the kitchen and it cannot do its job and provide steady hot water for the showers at the same time. This year shower times were staggered in the hopes of having enough hot water to go around for the kids AND the kitchen. But we are blessed to have this “problem” to deal with!

The Youth Conference has continued to grow in popularity each year, showing that our young people are craving opportunities like this where they can renew old friendships, make new ones and do it all while learning and talking about the incredible hope that we all share in the Christadelphian Brotherhood!

Our basic needs operating costs (water, electric, propane, insurance, etc.) averages about $4,500.00 a year. If our Lord remains away and if we are blessed with the resources to do it, we would like to build another dorm that the girls could use (fully built and furnished average about $30,000.00); add a separate water heater for the kitchen (@ $1,200.00); install coverings over the front and back patios of the main building so that they can be utilized more (@ $1,400.00) and install water and electricity hookups where families can park campers or RV’s.

We fully realize that financial times are hard on everyone, but what better investment can we make than in our young people who are so fervent in the truth, and for brethren and sisters of all ages to have places such as T4C and TYC to benefit from?

It is with this thought that we, the T4C committee, humbly request financial donations for the continued growth of this camp that our Heavenly Father has blessed us with thus far. We also realize that not only financial donations, but the continual prayers and volunteering of time and talents will help us to grow. We pray that our Lord’s return will circumvent this need; if until then, may he continue to bless our efforts until that day.

Donations may be sent to: T4C, c/o Bro. Dave Gadberry, 24506 Jocelyn Park Court, Katy, Texas, 77493.

Yours truly in the hope that we all share,
Mark Ishman — Secretary of the T4C Committee
Bodily Exercise versus Godliness

As we age we realize that our strength is fading and our body is failing. Is improving our fitness a cure? The many benefits of physical fitness, according to health experts, include greater strength, flexibility, energy and a better mood as well as long term health benefits. When we look for a Scriptural answer, we read the words Paul wrote to young Timothy: “Bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having a promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come”.

Notice that Paul did not say that bodily exercise is useless, but that it only profits a little compared to godliness. Think about the time and money that many in the world devote to bodily exercise. The gyms are full of people working out. Sporting goods stores are packed with gear such as stationary bicycles, tread mills, and weights to sell to those who want to improve their fitness. Think how many people run in the many marathons and other shorter races happening each week in various places. Drive through any neighborhood in the early morning or late evening and notice how many are walking, jogging, or running. Many folks faithfully work out each day to keep their body fit. Others have fitness equipment stored in their homes that is not very useful because they never touch it. Sadly, every one of them eventually ends up dead, and any time spent on bodily exercise gives no benefit beyond the grave.

When Paul compares bodily exercise and godliness, he acknowledges that exercise has its benefits, but the benefits of godliness completely overpower the short term benefits of physical exercise. Godliness helps us prepare ourselves to live forever with the Lord in his soon coming kingdom. Godliness can bring the reward of eternal life. Those who do physical exercise still die.

If folks who spend so much time in bodily exercise would only apply that time and energy to godliness, how much more profitable would their efforts be, because their exercises would work towards their eternal welfare rather than such a temporary welfare that only affects this life.

What kinds of activities would we be doing if we were exercising in godliness? We would be learning about what God has told us. It does not take special equipment to study the Bible or memorize verses. Certainly we do our daily readings every day, don’t we? If any of us are too busy to read God’s word each day, then we are simply too busy in the affairs of this life. As an athlete is careful what he eats, so we need to ingest the bread of life, the word of God, for our spiritual health while avoiding the evil ways of thinking that our world offers.

Exercising in godliness involves living according to God’s will. When we wake up each morning we need to think, “What can I do today to help someone else in his walk to the Kingdom?” We show our love for God by the way we treat some of His other children. James gives us his definition of true religion, “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.” What we do does not need to be something spectacular, because Jesus tells us that if we just give a person in need a cup of cold water it will be remembered by him. We need to ask ourselves, how thoughtful are we to the needs of others? How can we help someone bear his load? Paul tells the Galatians, “Bear ye one another’s burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ.” We need to be fully engaged each day in doing kind things for others.

Another aspect of godliness is preaching to others. Christ spent his time preaching the gospel of the Kingdom of God, and to be godly, we need to try to do likewise. Truly loving our neighbor means that we want him to have the opportunity for everlasting life in the kingdom of God. We need to share our hope with those who surround us in the hope that they may hear and choose to seek the Lord and begin to walk in the way of salvation.

Paul tells Timothy to train himself to be godly. We exercise our godly muscles by filling our minds with the word of God and living a life following His commandments and looking out for the welfare of our fellows. May we spend each day living in a godly manner so that when our Lord returns we will be welcomed into his kingdom. Our prayer, like Nehemiah’s, is, “Remember me, O my God, for good”.

Robert J. Lloyd

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**Coming Events (Lord Willing)**

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

**SEPTEMBER, 2014**

13-14 **Paris Avenue, OH** Fall Study Weekend with Bro. Bryan Styles (Livonia, MI) speaking on the topic: “Joel’s Prophecy — Rend your hearts and return to Yahweh”. Contact Bro. Derek Elder by phone at: 216-965-9763, or by email at: derekelder1@gmail.com.

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

13-14 **Southern NH (Nashua), NH** Study Weekend with Bro. John Pople (San Francisco Peninsula, CA) on “Growing Closer to God.” Contact Bro. Peter Dixon for additional information jpdixon@charter.net.

20-21 **Bedford, NS** Study Weekend with Bro. Jonathan Bowen (Brantford, ON): “The Evidence of Things Hoped For” at the Masonic Hall, St. Margarets Bay, NS. Contact Bro. Dale Crawford at Bedfordchristadelphians@gmail.com or 1-902-431-6650.

20-21 **London, ON** Fraternal Gathering. Our speaker will be Bro. Andrew Bramhill, (Shirley, UK): “Themes from Luke’s Record”. Bro. Andrew will also be giving a Bible Class on Wednesday, September 17th on the subject “The Year of Jubilee”.

**TIDINGS — SEPTEMBER, 2014** 431
26-28 Norfolk, VA CYC Study Weekend. All CYCers ages 13 and up are encouraged to attend. Bro. Nathan Giordano will be speaking on “Visions of the Kingdom”. For more information at amyandniq@hotmail.com or 757-222-6726.

26-28 Shelburne, ON Fall Gathering. Bro. Martin Webster will lead the studies around the theme of “First Principle — Truth and Love: A study of 1 John”.

OCTOBER, 2014

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

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

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

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

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 waldodrill@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@csl.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.

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 websige www.runfortheeverlastingcure.org.

MARCH 2015

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

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

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

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

The Christadelphian, 1999, 343–345
EDITORIAL

Cause to Offend

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

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

Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The message of Scriptures

To study the various passages makes it clear:

1) The word “offend” is never used to describe an attitude of mere displeasure, or to denote dissatisfaction with a decision.

2) The word “offence” in the New Testament almost always means a causing to
fall, an occasion of stumbling. Certainly this is the case with all those passages which exhort the servant of God not to give offence by his conduct; You can see this in these passages (all from the NIV)

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

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

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

**Meats offered to idols**

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

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

- The celebration of Christmas: some are troubled by its pagan origin, some are not
- The Bible and Science: some are troubled by the insistence of a particular way of reconciling the Genesis account with modern science as being the only way
- Consumption of alcohol: some are troubled by the very idea of Christadelphians drinking any alcohol, some are not at all
- Non-Christadelphian friends: some give advice against any association whatsoever with non-Christadelphians, except as necessary to obtain employment etc. Some are quite happy to have both Christadelphian and non-Christadelphian friends
The actual effect of these potential ways of “causing to offend” can only be decided by the person who claims he has been caused to potentially offend his conscience. He has to say if his faith has been so seriously undermined that it may be destroyed, or if what has occurred has simply upset him. But it is worth remembering that there are many more things that can be categorized as upsetting, than can be classified as giving offence in the Scriptural sense. And, if the incident has merely upset him, it is wrong to speak about being offended, and about the seriousness of giving offence. He cannot use a passage like Matt 18:7 unless the incident has really placed his personal salvation in jeopardy. The giving of offense cannot be used to express displeasure with another’s actions or views, or to indicate dissatisfaction with a decision, whether it be individual or ecclesial.

**I find that offensive**

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

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

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

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

*Peter Hemingray*

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Exhortation

Priority

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

Introduction

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

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

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

Now if we were to walk up to the average person on the street and ask them, “what is your priority?” we will most likely get a lot of different answers. For my kids to be happy and healthy. To love and be loved by my spouse. To be happy. To be wealthy. To feel secure. To lose weight. To control an addiction. To save for a holiday. To try and help others.
So, I wonder then, what our answers would be if we were to go around and ask others in our Christadelphian community, “what is your priority”? If we were to take out a piece of paper and a pen right now, and write down the number one priority of our lives, as a brother or sister of Christ, what would it be? What would we write down? And I don’t mean trying to make a list here. Like we said before, what is that priority that comes before everything and anything else? Now in just thinking about it, I’m sure some of you might be shuffling and sorting through a few… “Ummm, attending ecclesial functions, loving God, raising a Godly family, having a good job to support my family, witnessing, loving each other”, and so on…. And I guess we consider all of them as very important things in our everyday lives.

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

**The one priority**

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

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

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

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

**At the feet of Jesus**

I’d like you, for a minute, to picture yourself at the feet of Jesus, just as Mary was. You’re sitting on the floor, at the feet of the most powerful, truthful teacher who ever spoke. You’re looking up in awe, listening intently to his every word as he...
addresses the room. And as you sit there, he teaches about how to pray, about loving God and loving your neighbor, about persecution and suffering, about sin and what to avoid, about how to live righteously. He’ll pause for a drink of water before he continues about humility, pride, forgiveness, judgment. He’ll talk about the Kingdom of God.

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

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

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

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

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

**A closer look at Martha**

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

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

Her intentions seemed right. She wanted to be hospitable. She wanted to feed her guests, to share her food, to help others. In her mind, that seemed like the right thing to do. And we could say that serving others is a righteous, Christian act. We could say that her devotion to showing kindness to strangers was commendable. So what was the issue here? Why did Jesus tell Martha that Mary, who wasn’t worried about serving and preparing the meal, was doing the right thing instead?
Well, I believe it’s because Mary had her priority right. And her priority was to listen to the word of God. Forget the meal, forget the arrangements, and forget the fussing around.

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

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

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

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

**Our priorities**

David has a similar comment:

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

So David, too, had one priority in mind. He wanted to seek out one thing. He wanted to dwell in the House of the Lord and behold God’s beauty. How do we
come to know God and see His beauty? How do we get to know His mind? We hear His word. We listen to the words He's given us, which gives us everything we need to know about Him.

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

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

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

Nick Boyle (Saanich Peninsula, BC)

Notes:
1. From a sermon on this passage by John MacArthur.
The Memorial Name of God and His purpose

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

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

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

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

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

“For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea” (Hab 2:14).

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

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

Christ as the Word

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

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

“By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them
by the breath of his mouth” (Psa 33:6).

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

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

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

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

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

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

The meaning of God’s Memorial Name

The revelation of God’s divine Name to Moses is recorded in Exodus 3. The Name is given in an expanded form in verse 14. Generally, the translation of this given in the text is “I AM WHO I AM”. This is appropriate as an expression of God’s existence and His clear identity as the one and only God and creator. Footnotes for the various translations explain that the Name in verse 14 can have several related meanings2. A fuller meaning begins to be seen when the secondary meanings are examined, such as “I WILL BE WHAT I WILL BE”. An implied meaning or suggestion of a future purpose or event is introduced.

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

Immanuel, God with us

We have seen previously that one of the central features of Jesus’ work was to show or manifest the Father to the world. Christ was sent by his Father to be
sacrificed, to show God's righteousness (Rom 3: 21-26). Righteousness is a very important part of God's glory but Christ showed us many other things about his Father. Jesus showed what the Father is like so well, that if God came to the earth as a man, Jesus showed what that man would be like. Thus the name, Immanuel, meaning “God with us”, was very appropriate though it is used only in Isa 7:14, as quoted in Matthew:

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

The writer to the Hebrews puts it another way:

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

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

**Christ, the image of God**

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

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

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

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

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

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

“O righteous Father, the world has not known thee, but I have known thee; and these know that thou hast sent me. I made known to them thy name,
These passages all state that Jesus is the image of the Father. And an image is not the same as that which it is the image of. It is separate, and it is always different from the original. For example, we often speak of a child being the image of one of the parents at the same age. But, they are an entirely different person. In a somewhat similar way, Jesus is an entirely different person from his Father.

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

HE WHO WILL BE

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

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

This is no accident of translation, as is shown by Rom 9:29, and James 5:4 where a name of God in the form, the Lord of Hosts3, is used. In the Greek manuscripts, Lord is a Greek word, while Hosts is the Greek transliteration of the Hebrew word used in the Old Testament — Sabaoth, and is used without translation. Why wasn’t Yahweh transliterated along with the word for Hosts? Paul and James have deliberately avoided using Yahweh while keeping the Hebrew word for Hosts. This could not be and was not accidental. We believe that it was done to show that it is not essential to use Yahweh any more.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The name of Jesus

As we stated above, Jesus addresses God as Father, and does not use Yahweh. And, as we brought out, the change is even greater than that. Peter states about Jesus in Acts 4:12: 

“And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.” What does this mean? Jesus’ work (and our work) is still to bring glory to the Father’s Name. We are now to approach the Father through Jesus Christ. Let’s look at a few more passages in Acts about Jesus’ Name.

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

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

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

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

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

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

It is clear then that God has caused the name “Jesus” to be substituted for the name “Yahweh” or “Jehovah”. Where the Name of God is referred to, it is meant in
a broader sense than that of a single spoken word or a single spoken (or written) phrase. The Name of God is made up of all the ways in which His Glory is expressed and shown. It is especially shown through the work of Christ and of the faithful.

**Jesus subjected to God**

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

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

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

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

Christ was called God and worshiped (though only a very few times). So, God considers it acceptable for this to happen. It helps us to realize the exalted role
Christ filled during his ministry on earth and the even more exalted role he is filling now, and will have in the future.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Gar Cooper (Pittsburg, PA)

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

New Zealand Christadelphian Bible School

December 28th —January 3rd 2015.

New Zealand Christadelphian Bible School

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

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cain's Lineage (The Sons of Men)</th>
<th>Seth's Lineage (The Sons of God)</th>
<th>Genesis 6</th>
<th>Overview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>2nd Generation Antediluvian</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cain</td>
<td>Seth</td>
<td></td>
<td>The establishment of two distinct groups in relation to God: Seth, who represents those who worship God, and his spiritual descendants, who are later referred to as “the sons of God, and Cain, who represents those unconcerned or opposed to God, and his earthly descendants, who are indirectly referred to as “the sons of men” (Gen 6:2).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I have begotten a man, even Jehovah,” a reference to the “coming one” or “messiah,” foretold by God to Eve concerning her seed. His mistaken belief that he was the promised “messiah,” played a role in the ensuing tragedy.</td>
<td>“Appointed” or “granted,” a reference to Adam and Eve being given another child to replace Abel, who they lost due to fratricide. Also associated with “foundation,” a reference to Seth’s role as founding the first ecclesia, which was accomplished at the birth of his son, Enosh. This was when “men began to call upon [or proclaim] the name of the LORD” (Gen 4:26).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3rd Generation Antediluvian</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enoch</td>
<td>Enoch</td>
<td></td>
<td>The birth of Enoch in association with the construction of the first city marks the start of what is referred to as “civilization,” while the birth of Enosh marks the beginning of the first ecclesia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hanak, meaning “to begin” or “to dedicate,” a reference to his father's construction of the first city, which was built or being built at the time of his birth (Gen4:17)</td>
<td>Nsh, meaning “man” or “mankind,” a reference to the human condition. His father, Seth, chose this name from his understanding about our</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
mortality: the only escape from death was by salvation from the Lord. Seth's preaching efforts led others to “call upon the name of the Lord” (Gen 4:26). The first ecclesia coalesced around the idea of God providing salvation from death.

### 4th Generation Antediluvian

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

### 5th Generation Antediluvian

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Mehujael</strong></th>
<th><strong>Mahalalel</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Composed of two parts: machah, meaning “to wipe out” or “smite” or “to blot out” and el, meaning “God.” Hence his name is translated as “smitten of God.”</td>
<td>Composed of two parts: halal, meaning “to praise,” and el, meaning “God”, thus his name is translated as “praised of God.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The names of these two individuals shows the stark contrast between God's view of Cain and Seth's descendants.
### 6th Generation Antediluvian

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Methushael</th>
<th>Jared</th>
<th>Gen 6: 1-3</th>
<th>This period marks the beginning of a decline in faith, which was the result of corrupt ideas and practices introduced into the community through marriages with the “daughters of men.” God lamented the decline in faith and reduced human lifespan to 120 years (Gen 6:2-3), which was reflected in the name of Methushael, meaning “mortal.”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Composed of two parts: mat, meaning “mortal,” and shael, meaning “grave,” a reference to God’s decision to reduce human lifespan to 120 years.</td>
<td>Yarad, meaning “to decline,” a reference to the decline in the ecclesia due to the inauguration of marrying between Seth and Cain’s descendants. Hitherto the righteous did not marry the unrighteous.</td>
<td>“When men began to increase in number on the earth and daughters were born to them ... and they married any of them they chose. Then the Lord said, ‘My Spirit will not contend with man forever, for he is mortal; his days will be a hundred and twenty years.’”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 7th Generation Antediluvian

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lamech</th>
<th>Enoch</th>
<th>Lamech &amp; Enoch</th>
<th>Lamech’s polygamy was an example of the kind of “corruption” described in Gen 6:11. Lamech’s attempt to kill Enoch inaugurated a new era of violent animosity towards the sons of God. It was also indicative of the kind of violent behavior that would “fill the earth” (Gen 6:11)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lmk, a combination not found in Hebrew. Related to mkk, which means “brought low” or “humbled,” a reference to Lamech’s pride being wounded by Enoch, who chastised him for polygamy (Gen 4:18), which was in contrivance to God’s martial ideal (Gen 2:24). In attempting to kill Enoch, Lamech invoked the name of his ancestor, Cain. He believed that by killing Enoch, he was somehow avenging Enoch’s preaching/prophesying efforts to revive an ecclesia in decline. May be reflective of his dedication to pleasing God (Heb 11:5). Hek, is a derivative of Enoch, which means “speech,” “mouth,” or “palate,” a reference to his preaching/prophesying (Jude 14-15). Enoch preached against Lamech’s polygamy. In response, Lamech tried to kill him</td>
<td>Means “to begin” or “to dedicate,” a reflection of his preaching and prophesying efforts to revive an ecclesia in decline. May be reflective of his dedication to pleasing God (Heb 11:5).</td>
<td>Gen 6: 11-13: “Now the earth was corrupt in God’s sight and was full of violence. God saw how corrupt the earth had become, for all the people on earth had corrupted their ways. So God said to Noah, ‘I am going to put an end to all people, for the earth is filled with violence because of them.’”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Cain; a belief based on the assumption that Cain was murdered by one of Seth’s descendants in order to avenge Abel. Lamech avenged Cain in the 7th generation. His reference to “seventy-seven,” was a declaration of war against the sons of God for all eternity, as symbolized by the use of a derivative of the number seven, which is associated with God and thus the eternal. Unbeknownst to Lamech, his declaration was a prophecy of Christ’s coming in the 77th generation. Through forgiveness, Christ put an end to the cycle of murder and vengeance he and his ancestor, Cain, inaugurated (Matt 18:22).

| 8th Generation Antediluvian |  |
|-----------------------------|--|---|
| **Jabal** | Father of those who live in tents and have livestock. As populations of humans and livestock increased, more land was required. Jabal led first migration of |  |
| **Methuselah** | Composed of two parts: mat or meth, meaning “man,” and shelah, referring to an unspecified type of missile weapon that is thrown, such as a javelin or |  |
| **Jabal** | Gen 6:1,13: “When men began to increase in number on the earth… So God said to Noah, ‘I am going to put an end to all people, for the earth is filled with |  |
| | The 8th generation represents a celebrated period in human progress, for this era is marked by several key achievements: music as entertainment; story-telling, |  |
herdsmen beyond the borders of Eden and Nod. In this way, the earth was “filled” (Gen 6:11).

**Jubal**
Father of those who play the flute and harp (i.e. a musician skilled in wind and string instruments). His name is similar to “jubilation,” referring to music’s association with entertainment, praise, and celebration, a commentary on what was considered to be a celebrated period in antediluvian history. Music was also used as a mnemonic device for bards to aid them in the telling of oral history, which came to include hero-worshipping and mythmaking. The truth was gradually reinterpreted and corrupted.

**Tubal-Cain**
Father of those who work in bronze and iron. He is credited with crafting tools and weapons out of these metals. His superior weapons led to the subjugation of violence because of them.”

**Jubal**
Gen 6:1: “The Nephilim were on the earth in those days — and also afterward — when the sons of God went to the daughters of men and had children by them. They were the heroes of old, men of renown.”

Also:
Gen 6:11: “Now the earth was corrupt in God’s sight...”

**Tubal-Cain**
Gen 6:11: “The earth was filled with violence.”

**Naamah**
Gen 6:2: “The sons of God saw that the daughters of humans were beautiful.”
others, which led to wars, which “filled the earth with violence” (Gen 6:11).

Naamah
The only recorded female in either genealogy. Her name means, “beautiful” or “pleasure,” referring to her discoveries in either cosmetology or in the arts of seduction.

Matthew Harrison (Ottawa, ON)

Life of Timothy

(6) When I could no longer forbear

On to Thessalonica

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

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

Second, we should be careful in letting ourselves off the hook because we are weary, so to speak, when it comes to work in the ecclesia. The Bible’s record indicates Paul and Timothy maintained an absolutely exhausting schedule with their missionary work. Any secular labors were in addition to their preaching activities. Paul, Timothy, and their companions must have worked as they did because they recognized what a wonderful gift the Truth was, what an extraordinary opportunity they had to share it, and because they knew that God was with them. We need to remember that we too have been put in a wonderful position. Reflecting on how blessed we are can stir us up to give more in our service to God and to push ourselves as hard as we can.

“Certain lewd fellows of the baser sort”

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

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

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

The city authorities were “disturbed” at the accusations made against the Christians (Acts 17:8, ESV). The Bible indicates they banned Paul from the city. Later when Paul wanted to return to Thessalonica, he wrote to the believers there that he could not because “Satan hindered us:” “Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again; but Satan hindered us” (1Thess 2:18). The hindrance of “Satan” is probably a reference to the prohibition against him returning to the city.
Paul, Timothy, and Silas had to leave Thessalonica following the disturbance. Timothy later ended up playing an extremely important role in supporting the believers there since Paul was not allowed to return to the city.

**Berea**

After departing from Thessalonica, Timothy’s next stop was Berea. Acts 17 records the Jews there were more receptive to the Gospel (verse 12). However, when the opponents of the Truth in Thessalonica heard about the preaching in Berea, they sent agitators to stir up trouble: “But when the Jews of Thessalonica had knowledge that the word of God was preached of Paul at Berea, they came thither also, and stirred up the people” (Acts 17:13).

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

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

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

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

Timothy did not remain in Berea for long. From Athens, Paul sent for him and Silas to join him: ‘And they that conducted Paul brought him unto Athens: and
receiving a commandment unto Silas and Timotheus for to come to him with all speed, they departed” (Acts 17:15). The reason for Paul’s request is indicated in the First Epistle to the Thessalonians.

“To establish you, and to comfort you”

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

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

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

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

Paul needed someone “to establish” and “to comfort” the Thessalonians. The Greek word translated “comfort” in vs 2 is parakaleo. It means “to exhort.” In fact, that is exactly how it is translated when it appears in Acts 14: “Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God” (Acts 14:22). Recall the context of that passage. It is about Timothy’s home ecclesia! When Timothy had been a new convert in Lystra, he had personally heard Paul give the same message about faithfulness through tribulation that needed to be given to the Thessalonians.

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

So, Paul sent Timothy to help the Thessalonians. What Timothy asked them to do was very challenging. He called on them to be willing to suffer great loss for the Truth. Leading them required courage, compassion, and the wise application of spiritual principles. Timothy was quite young and would have had to interact with and try to help people from a wide variety of backgrounds and who were in
very different stages of life than him. It is an indicator of the great trust that Paul had in Timothy that he sent him to help the Thessalonians during such a critical time in their development.

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

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

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

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

Ryan Mutter (Baltimore, MD)

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

Philip appears on the scene

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

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

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

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

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

Not long afterwards, the preaching and martyrdom of Stephen is recorded for us in Chapter 7. We see in Stephen a man that represented great potential in the church.
Described as “a man full of faith and the Holy [Spirit],” Philip is named next on the list. Stephen represented the first record of a Hellenistic Jew to stand before the Jewish leaders and “perform great wonders and miracles among the people.” If Peter and John had been a threat previously, Stephen was a three alarm fire! Even a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith, signaling to the Jewish leaders that they were in the midst of crisis.

**Philip to Samaria**

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

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

**The way that goes to Gaza**

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

Azotus

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

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

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

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

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

David Jennings (Pomona, CA)
Jonathan the Faithful Prince
(15) A Serious Oath

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“And Moses spake unto the heads of the tribes concerning the children of Israel, saying, This is the thing which the Lord hath commanded. If a man
vow a vow unto the Lord, or swear an oath to bind his soul with a bond; he shall not break his word, he shall do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth” (Num 30:1-2).

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

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

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

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

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

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

“And Saul said, Draw ye near hither, all the chief of the people: and know and see wherein this sin hath been this day. For, as the Lord liveth, which
saveth Israel, though it be in Jonathan my son, he shall surely die. But there was not a man among all the people that answered him” (1Sam 14:38-39).

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

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

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

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

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

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

Debriefing and aftermath

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

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

The power of gentleness

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

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

1) He didn’t constantly correct his father. He stood back during the battle with the Amalekites and with Goliath, but when the issue was such that it required his intervention, he willingly did so. In more modern terms, Jonathan chose his battles.

2) He carefully considered what he was going to say — using terms like “the king” and “his servant.” He didn’t throw his ideas together haphazardly. He pondered what would be most effective.

3) He approached his father with an attitude of gentleness. He wasn’t there to harshly reprimand Saul, but presented this to Saul for Saul’s sake. Jonathan took steps so that his father wouldn’t feel defensive, but rather felt as though he was speaking to someone who was looking out for his best interests.

4) Though he was gentle, he spoke openly and honestly. He wasn’t afraid to speak
the truth and tell Saul that killing David would be a “sin” and that he would be spilling “innocent blood.”

5) He logically presented his argument and had strong proofs for his points. When he said that David risked his life for Saul, he was able to back that up by reminding Saul about David fighting against the giant.

6) He focused his father’s mind on to spiritual things. He reminded Saul of the great security which he had once had when following Yahweh, back in the time when Yahweh wrought a great salvation through him. Back then, Saul had not been afraid to have those around who appeared to be his opponents.

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

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

Conclusion

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

Jason Hensley (Simi Hills, CA)
Teaching and Learning: What works best?

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

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

Try an experiment

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

Teaching and Learning: What works for you?

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

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

Situation 2:
You need to learn (relearn?) how to do fractions. Your job demands it and education was definitely wasted on the young when you had to learn this in the sixth grade! What learning method would work best for you and be remembered longest? Rank the methods from 1 (best) to 4 (worst).

—— Bake a cake (using measuring cups, spoons, etc.) or build a model airplane (using rulers, scales, etc.).
—— Go to night school and let a teacher show you how to do fractions on the blackboard.
Situation 3:
You want to improve your understanding of what the Bible teaches about the devil. What method would work best for you? Rank the methods from 1 (best) to 6 (worst).

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

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

A closer look

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

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

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

Situation 2. For many people, doing fractions won’t be as much fun as sailing. It is more conceptual, more abstract, and demands some exacting thought processes that we might prefer to avoid. But it’s a bit like learning to sail in the sense that there are certain rules that must be mastered in order to do it in a hands-on way. Don’t be surprised to find out that a majority of people want a mentor here, too,
and they want real experience working with fractions as a basis for long-term learning. The one-two choices of our Sunday school teachers were: “Bake a cake ... build a model” and “let a teacher show you how”. The more academic approaches to learning came in dead last on this one, too!

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

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

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

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

And subsequently he sent them to do it themselves.

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

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

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

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

**Some implications**

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

2) We need to teach Bible stories as more than just information to be “learned”. We need to look for the essence of the stories — the lessons of discipleship that
God has built into them — and focus attention on these lessons. Sunday school needs to be an ongoing training ground with practical how-to-live instruction coming out of the lessons. It is this that will give the lessons lasting value.

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

Jim Harper (Meriden, CT) sundayschool@tidings.org
http://www.pinterest.com/2harps4u/

Dear Bro Peter,

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

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

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

Love in Christ Jesus,
Tim Galbraith (Hyderabad, India).
Truth Corps 2014

The 2014 Truth Corps Team returned in August from four weeks devoted to preaching the Gospel in Virginia, Guyana, and Tobago. This year’s team consisted of four young brothers and four young sisters: Brothers Jordan Milne, Zach Kemp, Gideon Hewitson, and Matthew Sturgeon, and Sisters Anna Margaret Hoult, Stephanie Keating, Autumn Burns, and Rebecca Pommer. The team was led, at various locations, by Bro. Allen and Sis. Tara Laben, Bro. Duncan Kenzie, and Sis. Myra Lucke.

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

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

“My Norfolk experience was incredible. It was so amazing to see how many children, even outside of the Truth, that were so eager and willing to learn. We can learn from these children’s experience and put it to use in our own lives. We need to be as little children with open minds and hearts, always eager and willing to learn more about God’s Word, and then going on to
spread it to others. The door-to-door preaching was a new experience for me. I have never done anything like that before and I am so thankful I was able to do so. You get used to the closed doors and people who aren't interested but that doesn't stop you from pressing on. It is well worth the closed doors if even one person is willing to listen to you.” — Rebecca Pommer

“The Vacation Bible School was a huge success at the Norfolk Chapel. There were 29 kids on the first day, and that number increased to 37 on the second day! The kids absolutely loved it, as well as all those involved in organizing and running the Bible School. It was a great way to share God's word and to get the Christadelphian name out into the community. The ecclesia also benefited from making many contacts who are happy and eager to come back for Sunday school and CYC events, as well as their parents who were very impressed with the success of the Bible School and are interested to learn more.” — Jordan Milne

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

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

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

“I found the door to door preaching in Guyana to be a great learning experience. One of the main challenges I had with preaching before this was that I wasn’t sure how to initiate the conversation about God’s word in a way that others would make them interested. While going from village to village, we had the privilege to preach to a variety of people from all different backgrounds and religions. After trying to preach to a number of people, I realized that you can’t use the same teaching style and teaching material with everyone. Some people may have difficulty understanding or identifying with a topic that others may have fully grasped and understood. I learned that the most effective way to preach is dependent on who the person is. Here is an example of what worked for me: After introducing yourself and breaking the ice with them, the first step is to learn about them. Find out where they are at regarding the Bible. What is their religious background? Have they read the Bible? What do they believe? Once you find out where they are at, then you will know where to start: either lay a foundation and teach them of God’s word, or build on what they already know.”

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

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

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

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

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

“While in Tobago our team had the privilege of leafleting in the busy town
of Scarborough. Our task was to walk around the busy streets full of pedestrians, to hand out leaflets and talk to people about God’s plan for the world. This was definitely a great learning experience for all of us. We were not only following Jesus’ command to preach the Gospel (Mark 16:15-16), but through the experience we were also developing our effectiveness to preach, our confidence to share God’s word, and most importantly our faith. It was very encouraging to observe the interest and responsiveness of the general public when prompting them with the question: Are you interested in learning about God’s plan with the word? I didn’t realize that so many people are truly interested in hearing what the Bible has to say. The words of Christ echoed out to me from John 4:31: “Lift up your eyes, and see that the fields are white for harvest”. It may be that the people of Tobago are generally more receptive, but I am confident that back in North America there will be people similarly searching for truth.” — Jordan Milne

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

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

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

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

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

BOSTON, MA

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

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

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

Jim Sullivan

BRANTFORD, ON

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

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

Daniel Billington

DETROIT MILFORD ROAD, MI

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

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

We are grateful to Brethren Duncan and Michael Movassaghi for leading a study on the prophet Malachi. We also thank our Bro. Paul Sparacino who led us in a study of the last days of our Lord's life. We enjoyed the fellowship of visitors from the Ann Arbor, MI; Austin Leander, TX; Avon, IN; Hamilton Book Road, ON; Granite State,
VT; Livonia, MI; Moorestown, NJ; Pittsburgh, PA; Ringwood, AU; Detroit Royal Oak, MI; Shirley, UK; and Washington DC Ecclesias.

Jeff Livermore

**ECHO LAKE, NJ**

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

Michael Day

**GRANITE STATE, NH**

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

Steve Smith

**HONESDALE, PA**

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

Stephen J. DeMarco

**PRINCE GEORGE, BC**

We did not hold our annual fraternal gathering in 2013 due to our lack of numbers, but decided to try again this year. Over the May long weekend in 2014 we had classes led by our Bro. Jason Hensley from the ecclesia in Simi Hills, CA on Moses “The birth of a deliverer”. The fraternal was well attended and very successful with the blessing of our heavenly father. Many thanks to our Bro. Jason and his wife, Sis. Ruth, for the classes and also to all those who were able to attend.
We would also like to thank all the brethren who have come up to help the small ecclesia here in Prince George with words of exhortation. Brethren Caleb Lawrence, Jon Fletcher, Paul Osborne, Terry Houghton, Jed Dillingham, Skip Bartholomew, Dan Sargent, Jim Cowie, Jesse Fletcher, Rick Evans, Stephen Bartholomew, Rick Evans, and Wayne Osborne. Their support is very much appreciated.

If anyone would like to visit and help our small ecclesia we would love to have you. Please contact Bro. Jonathan Lawrence at pgchristadephians@hotmail.com.

Jonathan Lawrence

SAN DIEGO COUNTY, CA

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

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

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

Kent Ellis

SANTA BARBARA, CA

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

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

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

After many years away from the table of our Lord, we are happy to welcome back into fellowship our Bro. Richard Jones, formerly of the Simi Hills Ecclesia. We would like to thank the so many of the Brethren and Sisters of the Victoria BC Ecclesia as well as the Brethren and Sisters of the Simi Hills Ecclesia for their prayerful efforts in restoring our brother Richard to us on December 29, 2013. We look forward to service together in our masters vineyard as we await the return of our Lord Jesus Christ.
We also have been blessed this month with three new Sunday School members and a sister moving to Santa Barbara. Sis. Heather McDaniel and her two children, Conner (13) and Chloe (10) are transferring from the Simi Hills Ecclesia. We also have Chris Riba from the Simi Hills Sunday School returning again this year to attend Westmont College. May God be with them in their moves.

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

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

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

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

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

Craig Stickney

WICHITA FALLS, TX

Since last reporting our Ecclesial News we have welcomed around the Table of our absent Lord the following brothers and sisters: Stan and Eunice Newton (Pomona, CA); Ed Newton (Verdugo Hills, CA); Rachel Newton (Los Angeles, CA); Peter Trotter, Antonio Howell Sr, Michele Massip, Jacob Matthew (Dallas, TX); Ronnie and Kristen Hefner, Richard and Susan Young (North Houston, TX); Jeremiah Hefner,
Amanda Buck, David Ishman, Jim and Marti Hagler (Austin Leander, TX). We thank Brethren P. Trotter, A. Howell, R. Young and D. Ishman for their words of comfort and exhortation. We also thank Bro. Richard and Sis. Susan Young for their special class on “Vessels of Honor and Dishonor”.

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

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

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

John A Clubb

CAMP HASHAWHA, WESTMINSTER, MD.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

When we have good news we should be willing to share it. The gospel is good news, and it is our privilege as well as our duty to share it with all we know. If some won’t listen, that is their problem, but if we fail to tell them, it could be our
problem. The prophet Ezekiel was warned by God that it was his duty to tell the children of Israel of coming judgment if they did not repent from their sins. If he did not warn them then they would die, but Ezekiel would be held responsible. God said that their blood would be on Ezekiel. If Ezekiel warned them and they did not listen, they still would die, but Ezekiel would not be responsible, and their blood would be on their own heads.

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

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

Robert J. Lloyd

Coming Events (Lord Willing)

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

OCTOBER, 2014

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

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

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

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

18-19 Echo Lake, NJ Study weekend. Theme: “God’s Wonderful Plan of Salvation Through Jesus Christ Our Lord”. Speakers: Bro. Matthew Trowell (Hamilton Book Road, ON) and Bro. Richard Morgan (Hamilton Book Road, ON). First class: 11am Lunch and Dinner will be provided. On Sunday the final class 10 am. Memorial Service: 11 am followed by Fellowship Luncheon. Contact Bro David Link at 973-696-3316 for further details.
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 waltdodrill@msn.com or 727-410-0896.

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

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

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

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

29 Run for the Everlasting Cure. A worldwide day of prayer followed by a 5 Km Run/Walk. For more information write to bible@christadelphia.org or see the websige www.runfortheeverlastingcure.org.

DECEMBER 2014


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.
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 statement, they all accept the statement, known, at least in North America, as the BASF, an abbreviation for the Birmingham Amended Statement of Faith. 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 1919, 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 this.
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 that 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 “Unamended”, 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)

Letters to the editor can be sent to letters@tidings.org. Please include your name, address, e-mail, and phone. Submissions under 300 words are encouraged — the magazine reserves the right to edit all submissions for length and clarity.
(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 do. “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. 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.

Gar Cooper (Pittsburgh, PA)

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.
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. 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 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, iyr, 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.

*Matthew Harrison (Ottawa, ON)*

**Notes:**

1. Cain’s genealogy includes the reference to a single female descendant, Naamah, who was born in the 8th generation (Gen 4:22).

“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)_

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_The ancient Greek agora in Thessalonica_
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 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. Chistadelphianism 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 Labourer¹

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 above.

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Other contemporary records

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:

![Image of the Appeal Result]

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 WWI.

**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.

\[\text{Local Tribunal: Name } \text{ Camberwell.}\\ \text{Address} \text{ Town Hall, Camberwell.}\\ \text{Certificate No. } 126\\ \text{This is to certify that:—}\\ \text{Name (in full) } \text{ Charles Gordon Ramsden,}\\ \text{Address (in full) } 72, \text{ Oakhurst Grove, East Dulwich.}\\ \text{Age 22.}\\ \text{Occupation, profession Engine Tender and Boiler Stoker,}\\ \text{is exempted from the provisions of}\\ \text{the Military Service Act, 1916.}\\ \text{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.}\\ \text{The ground on which the exemption is granted is}\\ \text{conscientious objection.}\\ \text{to report on } 10^{\text{th}} \text{ of each month to clear the Tribunal.}\\ \text{Date} \text{ 12. 3. 16.}\\ \text{Signature} \text{ for the Tribunal.}\\ \text{* State whether the exemption is absolute, conditional (in which case the condition should be stated) or temporary (in which case the period of time should be stated).}\\ \text{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

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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 ESV).
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. I 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.
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)*.
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

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 overviewing 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.

Sis. Jackeline birthday celebrated at Bible School. Her daughter, Carla is hugging her.
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 other. How wonderful it is to 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
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
(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 CYNTHERIA 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 (Daventry, 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)
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

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**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 walt dodrill@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@cslil.ca.

**14-16 Austin Leander, TX** Fall Gathering at the HEB Foundation camp near Leakey, TX. Bro. Jeff Gelineau (CA) will be speaking on “The Lord Raised Up Judges”. Contact Sis. Maritta Terrell mt-ct@swbell.net or Bro. David Ishman david.ishman@leanderisd.org.
22 Brantford, ON Prophecy Day, The German Hall, 194 Henry Street, Brantford (ON) starting at 10:00 am, brown bag lunch at 12:30 pm. 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


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.
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Editorial Apology

Some might have wondered about “The Way of Cain” last month, that it seemed repetitive. Indeed it was — an old version repeated. So the issue this month has the same title as the one last month, but is the start of the concluding section of the study.

I must apologize to Bro. Matthew and all so unfortunately confused by this error!

Requests for Articles

I am always receptive for new articles, especially in two categories:

1) Stand alone “reflections” on episodes in a life, or any other type of thought, that have relevance to our discipleship. They can be of any length, form a few hundred words to a few thousand.

2) Topics that might be a series, or a stand-alone topic, in areas that I personally would like to see covered:

(a) Topics plucked from today’s hot button social issues (you know what I mean!)

(b) Major thoughts on minor characters

(c) Does God preserve Christadelphians?

(d) The other commandments of Christ (Foot washing, Holy Kiss etc.)
The End of the World

“Then said he unto them, Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: And great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences; and fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven” (Luke 21:10-11).

“lightning and hail, snow and clouds, stormy winds that do his bidding,” (Psa 148:8).

One winter’s morn

I immigrated to Rhode Island, and the first few winters did not live up in any way to the pictures of a New England winter I had expected. In fact, many said to me “they don’t have winters like we used to”. Then, one morning, my wife and I woke up, after enduring a difficult, snowy commute home, to a true winter wonderland. All outside was totally white and howling: the storm-blown snow had drifted up to totally block all the doors into the house, so we could not have gone out, even as the near hurricane force winds continued the pile the snow up as the blizzard continued. So, quite naturally, we went back to bed. Before it finished, the storm had dumped well over three feet of level snow, although the snow was far from level. And it was almost a week before we went back to work.

So I experienced the first of my “hundred year” snow storms, but not the last. A few years later we were told we were experiencing the “blizzard of the Century” (not in my mind, I must admit), and we continue to experience extreme weather events, from “Polar Vortexes” to extreme droughts, earthquakes, tsunamis, earthquakes, and volcanic eruptions.

It is not surprising that we are experiencing frequent reports of catastrophic “natural” disasters, or that these dominate the news. They make good television, and it is natural for many of us to gobble up such news: after all, another’s problems let us feel happier in our circumstances. In addition:

• The news of such events can flash around the world at the speed of the internet.
• People are increasingly moving into areas subject to the effects of nature, whether to the coasts where hurricanes and storms occur, to the flood plains of rivers, or to fire-prone forests.
• There seems little doubt that humans by their exploitation of fossil fuels are contributing to an increase in global temperature, which have at least some influence in the frequency and intensity of hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, and droughts.

Our preaching

We need to take careful stock of what we preach, and the basis of our appeal. As many of our Bible talks reveal, we believe there are many signs in the world...
around us indicating that we are living in the Last Days. We point to all the factors of increasing population, environmental mismanagement, volatility in the commercial world, and the stockpiling of nuclear weapons, in order to show our friends they cannot assume that “all things (will) continue as they were from the beginning of the creation” (2Pet 3:4). We also speak about the approaching day of Armageddon, and of the kingdom conditions only being introduced after the Lord Jesus has destroyed those who rise up against his leadership.

We also, on occasion, talk about the weather induced catastrophes around us as evidence of the soon coming return of Christ, and refer to the latest earthquake, or the latest famine in Africa, and say they are only a small portent of what lies ahead. We sometimes quote the economists who prophecy an economic collapse as imminent, and again play on our fears of such a collapse, as occurred in the 1930's and to a lesser extent a few years ago.

But these arguments are in fact quite hard to make. I heard comments about Hurricane Sandy being a sign of the impending catastrophes we can expect, when in 2012 it devastated the New York area. Although it was extremely costly (the second most costly hurricane in the USA), its strength was only a class 1. Its impact was due almost entirely to the place where it struck. In fact, for at least the last 100 years hurricane impacts on the USA have been decreasing.

The example of the Bible

Following the apostle’s lead in Heb 4:9, where he shows that “There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God”, we have always seen the account of God resting on the seventh day of His creation as involving a prophecy of a millennial rest for His people. Six thousand years of man’s dominion on earth are to be followed by a thousand years during which the earth will be subdued and God’s dominion will spread “from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth” (Psa 72:8; Zech 9:10).

But if this was all our message, we would not be preaching a full gospel. There must have been many occasions in the lifetime of the Apostle Paul, when it would have been easier or safer for him to refrain from preaching certain aspects of the Lord’s teaching. Yet he was able to say to the elders of the Ephesian ecclesia, “I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God” (Acts 20:27).

We must be no different, whatever difficulties may be caused as a consequence. Doubtless it would have been much easier for Noah not to warn of the impending
destruction coming on the world, but it was his response to the message he had received from God, and he undertook the work faithfully despite scorn, rebuke and apathy.

I sometimes wonder whether we are following the example of some of the cults around us, who rely on fear to encourage converts to their cause: fear of what lies ahead. We should not be surprised by these things, for the Lord Jesus prophesied about the time of his return to the earth as an age when “Men's hearts fail them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth” (Luke 21:26).

We often cite “And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet” (Matt 24:6). We might indeed hear of wars every day, but in fact the world is now more peaceful than any time in at least the last 50 years, since the end of WW2.

However, the truth of the Scriptures is not based on, and nor does it rely upon fear for its appeal. As we proclaim in our Statement of Faith, during the thousand years:

“sin and death will continue among the earth's inhabitants, though in a much milder degree than now ... The mission of the kingdom will be to subdue all enemies, and finally death itself, by opening up the way of life to the nations, which they will enter by faith, during the thousand years, and (in reality) at their close” (Clauses 26, 28).

There is no talk here of the complete destruction of the rest of the world's inhabitants in an Armageddon battle at the end of the age, but of a process whereby the longsuffering of God will be revealed again as it was in the days of Noah (1Pet 3:20). Noah preached for about 100 years while building the ark, but this was after God had made the decision to destroy man and all other earth-born creatures.

If we wish to preach the whole counsel of God, then we have to preach about His patience, and His desire that all should come to repentance — as well as making it clear that He will not allow those who knowingly oppose His will to continue their wicked ways for ever. Our preaching should not be based on fear, whether it be of wars and rumors of wars, or great signs from heavens. God has used weather and earthquakes to fulfill his purpose in the past: but it seems certain that the coming of the Lord will be unexpected even to those watching for his return, as we should be always. The setting of dates, however carefully circumscribed they may be, only tends to make us relax until the date arrives, then disappointed when it passes.

“Even so, come Lord Jesus” (Rev 22:20).

Peter Hemingray
Exhortation

It is the Way the Record is Written

Enoch, Moses, and Elijah all have something in common. Their life stories end in curious ways. Enoch is translated that he should not see death (Genesis 5:24; Hebrews 11:5). His story ends like this and it mystifies us.1 Moses dies in full vigor on Mount Nebo after viewing the promised land, and no man knows where he is buried (Deut 34:1-7). The unusual details surrounding his death stir our curiosity. And Elijah is swept up to heaven as he walks and talks with Elisha (2Kgs 2:11). His story also mystifies us; it is literally left in mid-air! Every one of these stories is open-ended. Every one of them calls for completion. It is the way the record is written.

Enoch, Moses, and Elijah all have something else in common. Their stories find some sort of resolution on the mount of transfiguration. So, in fact, do the stories of all faithful men and women. But we will come to this later.

In the New Testament, also

The New Testament is not without similar curious stories. Philip the evangelist is caught away by the Spirit after preaching Christ to the eunuch from Ethiopia. The eunuch sees this and goes on his way rejoicing (Acts 8:39). The apostle Paul is caught up to the third heaven — into paradise — and sees and hears glorious things that defy human description (2Cor 12:1-4).2 And, in due time, we will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, a prospect that Paul says should comfort us (1Thess 4:16-18). In all of these cases life goes on.

It is worth thinking about these Biblical stories under one overarching theme. They are all “hereafter events”. They all involve faithful people. They are all miraculous. And they all hold promise for the future. They all tell us something about the things that God has in store for those who love him.

It is certainly no accident that God has provided at least one of these “hereafter events” in every age of man’s frailty. Enoch lived before the Flood; Moses in the earliest days of Israel’s history; Elijah during the dark days of Israel’s decline. Their experiences prompted hope in something better beyond this life. And when we come to the New Testament, hope finds fulfillment in the transfigured Lord Jesus Christ. It is the way the record is written.

Enoch

“And Enoch lived sixty and five years, and begat Methuselah: And Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters: And all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty and five years: And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him” (Gen 5:21-24).

The Letter to the Hebrews adds this:
“By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God. But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him” (Heb 11:5-6).

The story of Enoch is unique in the Old Testament, with the exception, of course, of Elijah’s experience in 2Kgs 2. The idea of his translation challenges us for explanation, as witnessed by the strange things that have been written about it over the years.

We get caught up, and we allow ourselves to get distracted, by the question of what happened to Enoch. The fact is that we are not told. So let it be said that we will be on solid ground, and remain on solid ground, if we avoid explanations that circumvent the fundamental Biblical principle of sin and death. In other words, it is axiomatic that all men die, without exception.

But having said this, the Biblical account of Enoch is deliberately framed to show us a man who lives and whose death is not recorded. It is the way the record is written.

And what kind of man is this? It is the man who comes to God and walks with God. It is the man who believes that God is and that he rewards those who diligently seek him. It is the man who pleases God. Enoch was this kind of man, and God gave him a unique foretaste of the reward. In a miraculous way, under circumstances that are only hinted at in the early chapters of Genesis, God gave Enoch life instead of death.

In 1870, the year before his own death, Bro. John Thomas wrote some wonderfully perceptive words about the translation of Enoch:3

“Such was the religion of the righteous among the Antediluvians. They were faithful and obedient; and, as the earnest of what awaited them in the fullness of time, ‘Enoch was translated, that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him; for before his translation, he had this testimony, that he pleased God.’ Thus they were taught that the corruptible body should put on incorruption, and this mortal should put on immortality, and so ‘death should be swallowed up in victory.’”

Enoch was God’s archetype of the redeemed for a world that desperately needed redemption. His miraculous deliverance gave hope to those who were hanging on by faith.

**Moses**

The unique experiences of Moses began long before his death. It is he who wrote about Enoch. It is he who wrote the word that was in the beginning, declaring God’s purpose to create men and women who would be with him and be like him:

“And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion … over all the earth” (Gen 1:26).

Almost certainly Moses understood that it was God’s purpose to show his glory
in a body of redeemed men and women. And Moses became God's archetype of
the man of glory.

- God commanded Moses to draw near to him: “Moses rose up early in the
  morning, and went up unto Mount Sinai, as the Lord had commanded him”
  (Exod 34:4).
- And God drew near to Moses: “And the Lord descended in the cloud, and stood
  with him there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord” Exod 34:5).

There is resurrection language in the ascent of Moses, and there is advent language
in the descent of God. It is the way the record is written.

And there was glory for the man who met with God: “And it came to pass, when
Moses came down from Mount Sinai … that Moses wist not that the skin of his face
shone while he talked with him” (Exod).

The glory that beamed from the face of Moses was temporary, as we know. None
of the Old Testament archetypes — Enoch, Moses, or Elijah — experienced any-
thing permanent. The enduring glory remains for the age to come. But Israel had
a glimpse of the glory in Moses.

In due time, God commanded Moses to ascend another mountain: “And the Lord
said unto Moses, Get thee up into this mount Abarim, and see the land which I have
given unto the children of Israel. And when thou hast seen it, thou shalt be gathered
unto thy people” (Numb 27:12-13).

The fuller record is to be found at the end of Deuteronomy:

“And Moses went up from the plains of Moab unto the mountain of Nebo, to
the top of Pisgah, that is over against Jericho. And the Lord shewed him all
the land of Gilead, unto Dan, And all Naphtali, and the land of Ephraim,
and Manasseh, and all the land of Judah, unto the utmost sea, And the south,
and the plain of the valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees, unto Zoar. And
the Lord said unto him, This is the land which I sware unto Abraham, unto
Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, I will give it unto thy seed: I have caused thee
to see it with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither. So Moses the
servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of
the Lord. And He buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against
Bethpeor: but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day. And Moses
was an hundred and twenty years old when he died: his eye was not dim,
nor his natural force abated” (Deut 34:1-7).

The story calls for completion. Moses was allowed to see the Promised Land but
was not allowed to enter it. God is not unkind! He does not toy with His children
and then toss them away! He gave Moses a glimpse of things to come: a “not now,
but hereafter” lesson for him and for every faithful man and woman who reads
what is written in the record.

And why tell us that Moses still had the vigor of manhood when he died? Is it not
to make us understand that God interrupted the life of this faithful man when so
much more could have followed? And is there not much more to follow, beyond
this life? God will renew the strength of Moses; this faithful man will mount up with wings as an eagle; he will run again and never be weary; he will walk again and never faint!

God alone knows where Moses is buried. That is all that matters for any faithful man or woman. It holds the promise of resurrection from the dead.

Elijah

We turn the clock forward 700 years: “And it came to pass, when the Lord would take up Elijah into heaven by a whirlwind, that Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal” (2Kgs 2:1).

The story continues by telling us that Elijah and Elisha went from Gilgal to Bethel to Jericho to the Jordan. It was a journey that took them back to Moab where Moses died. “And Elijah took his mantle, and wrapped it together, and smote the waters, and they were divided hither and thither, so that they two went over on dry ground” (2Kgs 2:8).

The entire story calls for comparison with Deut 34 and the early chapters of Joshua. Elijah and Elisha were leaving the land that Moses had seen and Israel had entered under Joshua. In the process they made another “not now” statement. To leave the land of promise is to say that the kingdom is still future; the land that God will give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and their seed, is an inheritance still to come.

Yet, in this context, Elisha asked for an inheritance! “And it came to pass, when they were gone over, that Elijah said unto Elisha, Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee. And Elisha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me” (2Kgs 2:9).

A double portion is the inheritance of the firstborn; and in this case not just any inheritance. A gift of the Spirit portends the inheritance of life. Elisha received a token of eternal life to come.

And then it happened: another “hereafter event” that held promise for the future: “And he said, Thou hast asked a hard thing: nevertheless, if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be so. And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven” (2Kgs 2:10-11).

The Lord came and took Elijah to heaven.

A point is worth inserting here. We often think of Moses as the representative of the Law and Elijah as the representative of the Prophets. But when it comes to the “hereafter events” of the Old Testament, Moses represents those who have died, and Elijah represents those who are alive:

“And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that … Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.”

What happened to Elijah? To be sure, he was simply but miraculously caught up into the air, into the enfolding whirlwind. The Hebrew word for heaven is also
the word for air in the Old Testament. That this is the way to understand Elijah’s experience is corroborated by the Apostle Paul in the New Testament:

“For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord” (1Thess 4:16-17).

The parallels with Elijah’s experience are obvious. And in vs. 17 Paul uses a word that means air. It is not the customary New Testament word for heaven.

Yet for all of this, heaven is perhaps the way to understand 2Kgs 2:1! The taking away of Elijah was an earnest of heavenly things to come. It pointed forward to the time, still future, when Elijah, and Elisha, and the prophets who looked on from afar, and we who also look on from afar, will be caught up together into the presence of God. Elijah’s experience pointed forward to the time when heaven will come to earth. The Lord will descend and we will ascend, and faithful men will meet with God.

Where is Elijah now? The simple fact is that we are not told. It is worth repeating that we are on solid ground — and will remain on solid ground — if we avoid explanations that circumvent the fundamental Biblical principle of sin and death. In other words, it is axiomatic that all men die, without exception.

If we want the resolution of Elijah’s story, then we need to accept the resolution that God provides and not speculate about things he doesn’t tell us. The story of Elijah, along with the stories of Enoch and Moses, find their resolution in the New Testament, in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is the way the record is written.

The transfiguration

We turn the clock forward another 700 years.

“But I tell you of a truth, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God” (Luke 9:27).

The way Jesus announces this to his faithful friends and the transfiguration that follows invite comparison with Enoch’s experience:

“By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him” (Heb 11:5).

This is not to say that translation and transfiguration are the same thing. Yet, like transfiguration, the translation of a man that he should not see death is a kingdom of God experience! When faithful Enoch is found again, he will be in the kingdom of God. He will be found in divine glory, forever beyond the reach of death. This is the resolution of his story.

And it is the resolution of Moses’s and Elijah’s stories as well:

“And it came to pass about an eight days after these sayings, he took Peter and John and James, and went up into a mountain to pray. And as he prayed,
the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and
glistering. And, behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses
and Elijah: Who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he
should accomplish at Jerusalem” (Luke 9:28-31).

The life stories of all men and women are incomplete until they connect themselves
with the decease — the exodus from sin and death — that Jesus had to accomplish
at Jerusalem. Everything turns on this, and now it is done.

The mount of transfiguration assures us that glory with Jesus on earth will follow.
This is the kingdom of God in which Enoch will be found alive. It is the Promised
Land that Moses will inherit when God raises him from the dead. It is the heaven
where Elijah will also be found, in the presence of God. It is where we will ever
be with the Lord.

This is the resolution of every faithful life that has been lived since the earliest days
of man’s frailty. Therefore comfort one another with these words:

“When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with
him in glory” (Col 3:4).

Jim Harper (Meriden, CT)

Notes:
   pp.167-173, for a helpful consideration of this subject.
3. [Editor] Dr. Thomas wrote in Elpis Israel (p. 43„Logos Edition): “Jesus was changed to εις
   πνεύμα into a spirit, and was therefore enabled to pass through it to the right hand of the
   Majesty in the heavens. Enoch, Elijah, and Moses, are also cases to the point.” Most would,
   however, disagree with him.
4. Dr. Thomas, “Immortality, Heaven And Hell, Section IX, The Tree of Life,” The Christadelphian,
   1870, p.199. Emphasis added.
6. H8064, shaw-mah’, is translated heaven 398 times and air 21 times in the Old Testament
   (KJV).
7. In 1Thess 4:16, the word for heaven in G3772, ouranos; in 1Thess 4:17, the word for air is
   G109, aer.

Leaving the presence of the Lord,
Upon the sacred hill,
On Moses’ face in splendor poured,
The glory lingered still.
Rapt in the vision of the place,
The leader passes on,
The light of God upon his face,
Unwitting that it shone.
So in communion with God,
Touched with the light divine,
His saints on heavenly heights have trod,
Nor know how bright they shine.       (C. A. Ladson)
God and His Son

(4) Christ, A Created Person

The pre-existence of Christ

An important part of the false Doctrine of the Trinity is the idea of the “pre-existence of Christ”. This teaches that Christ existed in Heaven with God the Father, and was sent to earth by God as His Son to become the Savior of mankind. If this is so, then Christ existed before or previous to the time that he was born of Mary. We have discussed this doctrine briefly in the last article, in connection with the Sonship of Christ.

This is a subject in which it is possible to be saying similar things in different words. So let us remind ourselves of the charge to “avoid disputing about words, which does no good, but only ruins the hearers” (2 Tim 2:14). We will try to use Biblical terms and words as much as possible. Also, let us acknowledge that the birth of the Son of God is a unique event, outside ordinary human experience. Therefore there are bound to be things about this event which are difficult or impossible for our limited human minds to understand. To put it another way, Jesus is the only Son of God. There is no other. So again, we cannot fully understand what it was like for him and how he did what he did. However, the Bible is a message given by God for us to understand. So let us try to see what it is saying to us, and neither add to it, or subtract from it.

He came in the flesh

We are commanded to acknowledge the coming of Jesus in the flesh as a Son (1John 2:22; 4:2,3; 2John 7). His flesh was made the same as ours for a purpose. That purpose was so that he could, through his death, destroy the power of sin and death. Therefore “he himself likewise partook of the same” nature as men and women, flesh and blood (Heb 2:14). Now Jesus was one person; he was not partly Son of God, and partly Son of Man; he was both at once in one person, just as we are a child of both our father and our mother. He came in the flesh as Son of God as well as Son of Man. We cannot say that some things about him are due to his flesh and some other things are due to some other part of him. He was the Word made flesh. All of God’s plan was being carried forward in him.

Jesus was conceived in Mary’s womb by the power of the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:31-35). From that point on, we are not informed of anything unusual about her bearing of him or of his early development except, “And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him” (Luke 2:40). The fact that he never sinned, even as a child, indicates the wisdom (wise tendencies) referred to in the quotation, was what he had as Son of God. On the other hand, the text doesn’t go beyond this. A child who was quick to learn, and a good person is described.
Able to be tempted

Having come in the same flesh as we have, he was tempted (Heb 2:17-18; Matt 4:1-11) like we are and could have sinned. If it wasn't possible for him to sin, he couldn't be tempted and he wasn't in the flesh. And he couldn't have gained the sympathy and understanding which he has for us and our temptations, if he wasn't really in the flesh. James tells us that, “God cannot be tempted” (James 1:13). Comparing Scripture with Scripture in this way shows immediately that Christ was not God because Christ was tempted.

But Jesus was in the flesh and there were other things for him to experience besides temptation. Like an ordinary human child, one of his most important activities was to learn; increase in knowledge (John 5:19-20; Luke 2:46), increase in wisdom (Luke 2:52) and learn about life and how to cope with it and still be completely obedient to his Father. “Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered” (Heb. 5:8). So, on the one hand, we see his childhood as almost within the scope of an exceptionally bright and obedient child of ordinary human parents (but beyond it in that he never sinned). On the other hand, he had to learn obedience to his Father. Thus there was nothing about his childhood (or early life) that indicates or requires that he had “pre-existed”.

And having to learn, especially having to learn obedience, is inconsistent with his having “pre-existed”. There would be no meaningful connection between the Jesus Christ in the flesh, and a pre-existent Christ in Heaven if Jesus Christ in the flesh had no awareness or memory of a pre-existent Christ in Heaven and didn't remember anything about a previous existence. If he did have awareness and remembrance of a previous eternal existence, then there could be no need for learning anything, especially obedience. Heb 5:9 tells us that Jesus was perfected.

In the Bible, this has the meaning of becoming complete. The things which Jesus learned made him complete in God’s eyes. The things that he learned were not trivial. They were necessary in order for him to become our Savior.

Avoid man’s reasoning

Jesus was in the mind of God before the creation. He was the Son of God. These things are what are revealed in the Scriptures. Was there some further way in which he was influenced because he was the Anointed Savior sent by God? Is there some way he was influenced which we are not told about in the Scriptures? Possibly, but we should base our beliefs on the Scriptures, not on speculation, not on the ideas, theories, and reasoning of men. We especially should avoid the influence of human philosophy, originally developed by pagans.

Those who think of Jesus as God come down to earth really do not give him credit for what he accomplished. God, who has all power and strength, would have no difficulty with temptation and no fear of death. Jesus, born a man of the same flesh as we, overcame temptation and all the weakness of the flesh, including the fear of death. He obeyed his Father’s command to lay down his life for us even though he did not deserve to die, having never sinned. He is thus the greatest man who has ever lived, the Son of God.
To summarize, the facts that Jesus was subject to temptation, and that he had to learn, among other things, obedience, rule out the idea that he existed previous to his birth. These are just not the characteristics of a divine being who has already existed eternally. James spells out for us what we should realize for ourselves, “God cannot be tempted” (James 1:13).

**Arguments for the doctrine**

Having considered some of the Scriptural problems with the idea of the “pre-existence” of Christ in this study and in the previous ones, let us now consider some of the Scripture used to support it, beginning with the Old Testament.

First, Gen 1:26. The fact that God said, “Let us make man in our image”, using plural pronouns, is thought by those who argue for the pre-existence to show that God and Christ worked side by side to create man. The Hebrew word translated God in the first five chapters of Genesis is always “elohim” or mighty ones (a plural word). “Mighty ones” is a good description of the angels: “Bless the LORD, O you his angels, you mighty ones who do his word, obeying the voice of his word!” (Psa 103:20 ESV). Thus it is reasonable to think of the above verse as referring to the association of the angels with the Father in the work of creation. Elohim is translated “angels” in Psa 8:5, at least in the KJV, “For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels.”. The writer of Hebrews quotes this passage and renders elohim as “angels” (Heb 2:7).

“God” in the Old Testament is usually from “elohim”, though not always. Now, it should go without saying, that the angels are not God. But, as we brought out when discussing the revealing of God in previous articles, many places in the Old Testament where God is spoken of, it is clearly angels speaking and acting for God. This was necessary because of God it is said “no man has seen or can see [Him]” (1Tim.6:16). So, it is quite reasonable to assume that plural pronouns are used in Gen 1:26 because the angels were involved in the creation. In light of the reasons to believe that Christ did not pre-exist, this view is the best interpretation of the passage.

We will discuss angels further in connection with the next passage, Gen 18:1 - 19:1. We are told that the LORD (Yahweh) appeared to Abraham, who saw three “men”. Later, two of them go on to Sodom, and we are told in 19:1 that they are angels. The LORD remains and talks with Abraham. Those who believe in “pre-existence” contend that the LORD is Christ. There is no basis for this in the Scripture itself, but let us think about the matter a little further by considering the Divine Name, Yahweh. This name was declared to Moses as recorded in Exodus 3. In vs. 2, we are told “the angel of the LORD [Yahweh] appeared to him”. Next, “God called to him”, and among other things, declared to him that the Name of God is Yahweh (vs 14, “I Am Who I Am”, or , “I Will Be Who I Will Be”).

**Angel delivered message**

It is clear from Exod 23:20-23 and Acts 7:30-38 that the angel who appeared in the burning bush, Exod 3:2, also delivered the message (made the pronouncement, Exod 3: 6, 13-14). The angel spoke for God in the name of Yahweh. In Exod
23:20-23, Moses was told, “my Name [Yahweh] is in him” (the angel being sent “before you”). In Acts 7:35, Stephen tells us that God sent Moses “as both ruler and deliverer by the hand of the angel that appeared to him in the bush.” So the LORD who appeared to Moses and to Abraham was an angel representing or “manifesting” God. If it were Christ that appeared to them, Stephen would certainly have made that plain in his comment regarding the appearance to Moses.

The next passage sometimes used to support “pre-existence” is Dan 10:4-6, where the prophet has a vision of the appearance of a being who appeared very similar to the vision which the Apostle John had of Christ in Rev 1:12-16. The contention is that Christ appeared to Daniel, and that therefore he existed at the time. First, Daniel repeatedly says that this was a vision (vs. 7-8), weakening the assumption that this was some sort of literal appearance of Christ. Second, there are many connections between Daniel and Revelation. Many of the elements of the beasts in his visions in chapters 7 and 8 are used extensively in Revelation 12, 13, and 17. The prophecies in Revelation are more detailed versions of those in Daniel, or the giving of a later phase or recurrence of the same type of activity. Daniel was given revelations of the future, and this passage in chapter 10 is such a revelation. Moses and the Jews were also given revelations about Christ in the form of the Tabernacle, the Mercy Seat, the altars, and the sacrifices. These were also prophecies of Christ, as are many other parts of the Old Testament. There is thus a great variety of ways in which Christ was prophesied, and Daniel’s vision is one of these many. There is no indication that Christ actually appeared and so no support in Daniel 10 for the pre-existence of Christ.

New Testament passages

Turning now to the New Testament, let us consider Paul’s exhortation to humility in Phil 2:5-11. The key passage relative to our study is in vs. 5-6, “Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God” (ESV). The question is whether “in the form of God” refers to a previous existence or has some other meaning. There is reason to believe that this passage is a quotation of an early hymn. The NIV and the Jerusalem Bible indicate this by setting it out in the form of a poem, as is done with the Psalms. When this is done, the parallelism between “the form of God” in vs. 6, and “the form of a servant” in vs. 7 becomes very apparent. It thus helps us to understand the first by considering the second.

So then, in what sense did Christ take “the form of a servant”? The thrust of the passage is that he had the humility of a servant (and in this is, as always, our supreme example to follow) and was willing to humbly serve his Father. He took on the place of a servant (Luke 22:27). In John 13, Jesus explains the statement of Luke 22:27. By washing the disciple’s feet, Jesus shows how they should serve one another. He explains in vs. 13-14, “You call me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet.” He had acted as a servant, but he was their Lord.

We see that “in the form” does not mean “nearly identical with” but rather perhaps “resembling in some (important) ways”. Thus, Jesus being in the form of God means that during his ministry, he was like God in very important things about
him. This is brought out elsewhere as in 2Cor 4:4, “Christ, who is the likeness (NASB - image) of God.”, and Heb 1:3, “He reflects the glory of God and bears the very stamp of his nature”. Christ bears the stamp of God’s nature, being the Son of God. A son resembles his father, but is not identical to Him, and in the Bible, is never equal to Him.

**Him only shall you serve**

Christ’s role as servant of his Father is brought out clearly in his temptation at the beginning of his ministry, (Matt 4:1-11). Each temptation begins with an appeal to his status as Son of God: “If you are the Son of God”. This might be paraphrased, “If you are in the form of God”. Christ ends the matter with a quotation about serving God: “You shall worship the Lord your God and Him only shall you serve”, vs 10, quoted from Deut 6:13-14. Thus Christ assumed the role of servant to man, but he is mankind’s Lord. He, like all of us, is a servant of God, and is subject to God. Chapters 42, 49, 50, and 53 of Isaiah tell us that the Messiah is God’s servant. See also Acts 3:26, 4:27, 30 in modern Bible versions.

Returning to Phil 2:6-11, the passage is now clear. The Son of God did not reach for equality with his Father, but served in the role of servant of God, and of Lord and servant of mankind perfectly. “Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed upon him the name which is above every name”. God has exalted and bestowed! There is no hint here of the restoration of a glory which Christ had before. The sense of the passage is that Jesus Christ, who came in the flesh as Son of God, and as Son of Man, has been exalted from the flesh, and from his role as servant of man, to immortality and divine Lordship of all.

**“That Rock Was Christ”**

“For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ” (1Cor 10:4), is clearly symbolism. Few would claim that a pre-existent Christ took the form of a rock. At the end of 1Cor 9, Paul is using symbolic runners or athletes to teach us how we should exercise personal discipline in all parts of our life to strengthen our spirits in faith and obedient service. He is leading up to an exhortation about idolatry (which begins in 1Cor 10:7). Athletes cannot “worship idols” such as lots of rich food or a perfect home and grounds, which interfere with their dedication and preparation for the race that they want to win. He then gives a lesson in symbolism (10:1-6) which helps the reader to understand the symbol of preparation for a race. In 10:4, he is also giving a hint to understand the important symbolism of Exod 17:6-7 and Numb 20:7-13. The striking of the rock to give water was a symbol of the crucifixion of Christ to give life. There is no indication that Christ was actually present, nor is there any reason to think so.

In the next article, we will consider subjects including the meaning of the world being created through Christ, Christ being subject to God, and more about Christ being a created person.

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**Notes:**

1. “In the Flesh” is a term probably used to counter the early view that Christ was a spirit, not really present in a physical way.
The Way of Cain
(13) The Legacy Part 1

“Woe to them! They have taken the way of Cain; they have rushed for profit into Balaam’s error; they have been destroyed in Korah’s rebellion” (Jude 11).

The end of the line

The 10th generation came to a close with the construction of the ark and the advent of the Flood, a unique catastrophe in which Cain’s entire lineage was destroyed:

- Jabal’s tribes, who had migrated unto the ends of the earth — obliterated;
- Jubal’s music, by which the truth was corrupted and men and women were deified as gods — silenced;
- Tubal-Cain’s tools of bronze and iron which, while easing the burdens of mankind, gave humans the ability to wage war — broken;
- Naamah’s arts of seduction or cosmetology, which made women seem more attractive to weak-willed men — lost.

The scope of the flood was such that every living creature was erased from the surface of the earth, which makes it clear that Cain’s legacy was utterly destroyed. Or was it?

Cain’s physical lineage may have been wiped out, but sadly his legacy was not. Murder and revenge, hallmarks of his character, continued unabated in the post-Flood era for 76 generations, the number of generations Lamech had unknowingly prophesied, until the 77th generation, when a very special child was born:

“To us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace” (Isa. 9:6).

The Prince of Peace was Jesus, not Cain. He was the Coming One, the even Lord that Eve had, in hopeful expectation, named her firstborn after. With his message of love and forgiveness, Christ offered a panacea to the cycle of vengeance, which had been founded by Cain, built upon by Lamech, and which had had such a profound and sanguinary effect upon mankind. The New Testament was built upon a foundation of love and forgiveness. As such, it might seem odd that Cain, the most notorious of murderers, was so often referred to by Christ and the apostles. Would not have Cain been more relevant in the Old Testament, when violence was common and the spirit of fratricide prospered among Israelites? The puzzle surrounding Cain’s exclusion from the Old Testament and his inclusion in the New Testament recalls the question posited at the beginning of this study: What was Cain’s significance to the ecclesia in the first century AD? Put another way, why was Cain relevant after being irrelevant for so many thousands of years?
The Old Testament: Nations as villains

Before this question can be answered, it is helpful to understand why he was not referred to in the Old Testament.

It was generally uncommon for Old Testament writers to refer to specific “villains” outside of the historical context in which they originally appeared. For example, Cain, Korah, and Jezebel, all of whom are mentioned in the New Testament, are not included in any of the books of prophecy or poetry for purposes of exhortation (i.e. as examples for instructional purposes). Instead, Old Testament writers often referred to wicked nations or peoples. This is because most Old Testament prophecies and/or poetic compositions were composed in relation to the nation of Israel, not in relation to any one individual or group.

Moreover, God’s overarching complaint against the Jews was idolatry. This is because idolatry is all-encompassing: when one forsakes God, one forsakes all of His commandments. Thus, whenever a prophet chastised Israel for idolatry, other sins were not always indicated, but nevertheless implied. This was a very economical way to treat Israel’s general state of wickedness.

The New Testament: Individuals as villains

In contrast, the New Testament letters were generally addressed to specific people (Theophilus, Timothy, Philemon, etc.) and small groups of believers or ecclesias (Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, etc.). Although the apostles routinely drew upon Israel’s history in order to connect the present with the past, when it came to exhorting believers on how to personally emulate Christ, God understood that historical individuals are more relatable than nations or peoples.

Moreover, while the Old Testament routinely condemned a wicked nation of idolatry, the New Testament most often focused on people who believed in God. Whether New Testament audiences faithfully understood and applied Christ’s teachings or whether they intentionally or otherwise misinterpreted and/or misapplied his teachings, they at least appeared to worship God; they were not, as in days of old, abandoning God for pagan gods.

Furthermore, Cain was a murderer. As the first of such creatures, he was designated by God to be a sign concerning the relationship between murder and revenge (in that murder arouses in others a desire for vengeance). Thus, Cain, as a sign or a mark, is associated with vengeance. His absence from the Old Testament arises in part from the fact that the Law of Moses made some provision for vengeance.

The Law explicitly states:

“Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against anyone among your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the LORD” (Lev 19:18).

Yet, in spite of this decree, God recognized that killing, whether deliberate or accidental, would nevertheless occur, and avengers would consequently arise.

In the case of premeditated murder, the Law stipulates: “The murderer is to be put to death. The avenger of blood shall put the murderer to death” (Num 35:18-19).
the case of manslaughter (accidental death), the Law took a more pragmatic approach by providing the murderer with a place of refuge from the avenger (Num 35). If, however, the murderer met the avenger before they arrived at one of the seven cities of refuge, then “the avenger of blood may kill the accused without being guilty of murder” (Num 35:17). Because the Law made allowance for some instances of vengeance, Cain, as a sign or a mark to deter vengeance, would hardly have been relevant.

For these reasons, Cain was excluded from the Old Testament, but included in the New Testament. However, there are additional reasons for Cain’s inclusion in the New Testament: Cain also shares characteristics with the false brother: a type of person who emerged from within the Christian brotherhood to corrupt and destroy the truth. Moreover, Cain’s legacy and its relationship to the fate of the antediluvian era is a powerful reminder for Christians not to repeat the same mistakes.

**Cain: A false brother**

Although Christianity celebrated an initial period where it closely resembled the spirit of Christ, it was short-lived. The letters of Paul, Peter, John, and Jude, which were written in the latter part of the first century AD, reveal that the simplicity and purity of Christ’s message was in danger of being corrupted by false ideas introduced, spread, and practiced by members of the ecclesia; men and women who appeared as though they were part of Christ’s flocks, but were in fact self-serving individuals intent upon twisting God’s word to serve or justify their own wickedness. Christ had warned the disciples to be on guard concerning this type of person: “Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves” (Matt 7:15).

Paul clarified from where these “wolves” would emerge:

> “Keep watch over yourselves and all the flocks of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood. I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flocks. Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. So be on your guard! Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears” (Acts 20:28-30).

Paul wasn’t alone in warning the ecclesia about this enemy within, for Peter also cautioned his readers:

> “There will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them — bringing swift destruction on themselves. Many will follow their shameful ways and will bring the way of truth into disrepute. In their greed these teachers will exploit you with stories they have made up. Their condemnation has long been hanging over them, and their destruction has not been sleeping.

> “Bold and arrogant, they are not afraid to heap abuse on celestial beings; yet even angels, although they are stronger and more powerful, do not heap abuse
on such beings when bringing judgment on them from the Lord. But these
people blaspheme in matters they do not understand. They are like unreason-
ing animals, creatures of instinct, born only to be caught and destroyed, and
like animals they too will perish.

Their idea of pleasure is to carouse in broad daylight. They are blots and
blemishes, reveling in their pleasures while they feast with you. With eyes full
of adultery, they never stop sinning; they seduce the unstable; they are experts
in greed—an accursed brood!

“For they mouth empty, boastful words and by appealing to the lustful desires of
the flesh, they entice people who are just escaping from those who live in error.
They promise them freedom, while they themselves are slaves of depravity—for
“people are slaves to whatever has mastered them” (2 Pet 2:1-3; 10-12; 18-19).

As did Jude:

“For certain individuals whose condemnation was written about long ago
have secretly slipped in among you. They are ungodly people, who pervert
the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our
only Sovereign and Lord.

“Though you already know all this, I want to remind you that the Lord at
one time delivered his people out of Egypt, but later destroyed those who did
not believe. And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but
abandoned their proper dwelling — these he has kept in darkness, bound with
everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day. In a similar way, Sodom
and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual im-
morality and perversion. They serve as an example of those who suffer the
punishment of eternal fire. […] These ungodly people pollute their own bodies,
reject authority and heap abuse on celestial beings. But even the archangel
Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did
not himself dare to condemn him for slander but said, “The Lord rebuke you!”
Yet these people slander whatever they do not understand, and the very things
they do understand by instinct — as irrational animals do — will destroy them.

“Woe to them! They have taken the way of Cain; they have rushed for profit
into Balaam’s error; they have been destroyed in Korah’s rebellion. These
people are blemishes at your love feasts, eating with you without the slightest
qualm—shepherds who feed only themselves. They are clouds without rain,
blown along by the wind; autumn trees, without fruit and uprooted—twice
dead. They are wild waves of the sea, foaming up their shame; wandering
stars, for whom blackest darkness has been reserved forever” (Jude 4-13).

Christ refers to them as “false prophets,” Paul calls them “savage wolves,” Peter
declares them to be “false teachers,” and Jude notes that they are “shepherds who
feed only themselves,” but regardless of the terminology used, they are all speaking
about the same type of person: a false brother or sister.

Although Jews and pagans were the declared enemies of Christianity in the
beginning, the real threat to the ecclesia came from within; individuals such
as Diotrephes, who, at the time when John wrote his third letter, “desired to be first,” and consequently was trying to discredit him and others by spreading malicious gossip (3John 9-10). Moreover, Diotrephes refused to welcome John and disfellowshipped anyone who did so. Because Diotrephes appeared as though he belonged to Christ, but acted in a contrary way, he is a chief example of the false teacher, savage wolf, false prophet, and self-serving shepherd, which Christ and the apostles spoke about. As has been shown, specifically in Jude’s letter, Cain was referred to in the context of the false brother. This is because he shares many of the same characteristics, which were also exemplified in Diotrephes. As the following comparison shows, Cain, Diotrephes, and the false brother are one and the same type of person.

Diotrephes and Cain: Men of authority

Diotrephes was a brother of some standing in the first century ecclesia AD. Although it is unclear as to what role he held (whether he was a presbyter, teacher, deacon, or elder), John’s third letter indicates that he was some type of leader, for he says that Diotrephes “loves to be first” (vs. 9), which is an indication that he stood out among the brethren in his ecclesia. Moreover, John says that he was spreading malicious nonsense about him and others (vs. 10). In order for gossip to spread, it must be repeated by more than one person, which was the case in Diotrephes’ ecclesia. It is obvious that brothers and sisters were spreading the lies he told, and for people to have listened to his lies, he must have been a brother of some standing within the ecclesia. Furthermore, Diotrephes possessed the power to refuse to welcome (disfellowship) certain brothers, including John (vs. 10). The power he held must have been placed in his hands by others, which once more illustrates the sway he had over his fellow brothers and sisters.

Likewise, Cain was a child of unique standing within the Adamic family. He was special among men, for he was the first to have been born from a woman. Genesis, more than any other book in the Old Testament, emphasizes the importance of being the eldest. The eldest son was often the favorite of the father, as was in the case of Isaac. Moreover, the eldest was the recipient of the birthright (inheritance) and the blessings (designation as the head of the family). As such, much responsibility and promise was placed upon the eldest’s shoulders.

As the eldest, Cain was responsible for looking after his younger brothers’ and sisters’ spiritual well-being. In this role, Cain should have been the spiritual shepherd, not Abel. However, just as Esau did not take his familial responsibilities seriously, but instead traded away his birthright to his younger brother, Jacob, for a bowl of stew (Gen 25:28-30), Cain likewise neglected his obligations as the eldest, which were taken up by Abel.

Just as Diotrephes was invested by his brothers with authority, Cain also occupied a position of responsibility within his family. Yet, both men abused their positions of authority and in doing so displayed characteristics common to the false brother:

“There will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them—bringing
swift destruction on themselves. Many will follow their depraved conduct
and will bring the way of truth into disrepute. In their greed these teachers
will exploit you with fabricated stories” (2Pet 2:1-3).

Diotrephes and Cain: The appearance of men of faith

Diotrephes had the appearance of a brother in Christ. He was one of many be-
lievers who John desired to visit. Moreover, John had, at one time, considered
Diotrephes to be his brother, since he expected to be welcomed by him upon his
arrival (3John 10).

Likewise, Genesis makes no distinction between Cain and Abel before they
presented their offerings to the Lord, other than to note their order of births,
their names, and their vocations. With hindsight, much can be deduced about
his character from these scant details, but it must be acknowledged that Genesis
makes no overt judgment concerning Cain’s faith before he presented his offering
to the Lord. Moreover, because Cain presented an offering to God, it suggests
that, in the very least, he appeared to worship the Lord.

Although both Diotrephes and Cain initially appeared as men of God, in time they
manifested their wickedness. Their metamorphosis from the appearance of believ-
ers into unrighteous men is another characteristic exhibited by the false brother:

“They come to you in sheep’s clothing but inwardly they are ferocious wolves”
(Mat 7:15).

“Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order
to draw away disciples after them” (Acts 20:28).

“There will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destruc-
tive heresies” (2Pet 2:1).

“For certain individuals whose condemnation was written about long ago have
secretly slipped in among you. They are ungodly people…” (Jude 4).

Diotrephes and Cain: Pride and ignorance

The apostle John was one of the first disciples; he had personally known, loved,
and been loved by Christ, and he was invested with the Holy Spirit, a sign of God’s
authority on the earth. In spite of John’s spiritual credentials, Diotrephes’ desired
“to be first” (3John 9). This desire was the source of his pride, and it resulted in
making him ignorant of Christ, who says: “If anyone wants to be first, he must be
the very last and the servant of all” (Mark 9:35). These words were spoken by a
man who demonstrated the supreme act of putting oneself last and others first:

“Who, being in the form of God, did not consider equality with God some-
thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a
servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as
a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death — even death on
a cross!” (Phil 2:6-8).

Diotrephes’ example demonstrates the cause and effect relationship between pride
and ignorance: pride blinds one to spiritual wisdom, since the obtaining of wis-
dom requires humility: “When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom” (Prov 11:2). Thus, by his pride, Diotrephes was made ignorant of Christ and subsequently God.

Cain’s prophetic name also instilled within him a great sense of pride, which blinded him to wisdom. As a result, he grew up ignorant of God, not knowing who He was or what He required. This resulted in the following errors: not knowing what sacrifice meant, Cain presented an offering devoid of blood; lacking humility, he refused to learn from his mistake and accept God’s advice to “do what is right;” unwilling to discover who God was, he believed that the Creator was merely the cherubim and this faulty assumption led him to believe that he could lie to the Lord about Abel’s whereabouts; and his pride in his prophetic name, along with his status as the eldest son, made the welfare of others, including that of Abel, beneath his concern, for he said to God: “Am I my brother’s keeper?”

Pride and ignorance — qualities Diotrephes and Cain both possessed — are chief characteristics of the false brother:

“Bold and arrogant, they are not afraid to heap abuse on celestial beings. ... These people blaspheme in matters they do not understand” (2Pet 2:10, 12)”

“These ungodly people … reject authority and heap abuse on celestial beings. But even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not himself dare to condemn him for slander but said, “The Lord rebuke you!” Yet these people slander whatever they do not understand…” (Jude 8-10).

To be concluded
In the next (concluding) article, we will finish our look at the contrast and similarities between Diotrephes and Cain, and then conclude with looking at the legacy of Cain in the times since Christ.

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Notes:
1. In Ellicott’s commentary on the Flood, he quotes Prof. Tayler Lewis in Lange’s Commentary: “We have no right to force upon him (the author of Genesis) and upon the scene so vividly described, our modern notions or our modern knowledge of the earth, with its Alps and Himalayas, its round figure, its extent and diversities, so much beyond any knowledge he could have possessed or any conception he could have formed.” Of course, this is just one opinion.

2. “If Cain is avenged seven times, then Lamech seventy-seven times,” (Gen 4:24).

3. Balaam is the one exception. He is referred to by Nehemiah and Micah. Korah is mentioned in 1 Chronicles, but it is purely for the recounting of history and not for purposes of exhortation.

4. Excluding Genesis, of course.

5. At least not in the first century AD. As Christendom progressed, however, the simplicity of the truth was so corrupted with pagan and humanistic ideas that the worship of Yahweh was eventually transformed into a pagan concept, as is most notably expressed in the form of religion practised by Catholics.
Life of Timothy
(8) “I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus”

Timothy remains in Ephesus

There is compelling Biblical evidence that Paul left Ephesus during the three years he was based in that city to visit Macedonia and Corinth. While he was away, he left Timothy behind to help guide the ecclesia at Ephesus. Paul wrote 1st Timothy while he was traveling to give instruction and encouragement to Timothy.

1st Timothy offers insight into Timothy’s life. It reveals he had doubts, fears, insecurities, and knew there were limits to his natural abilities. It shows people in his meeting did not always agree with him. It indicates he made mistakes he had to recover from and move beyond.

Timothy struggled to lead the ecclesia in Ephesus while Paul was away, and it appears he made some poor decisions even though his previous leadership and conduct in Philippi and Thessalonica had been exemplary. This episode in his life reminds us we may encounter circumstances that will challenge us spiritually even if we have done well with recent trials.

If do we find ourselves struggling, especially after we have had a period of relative spiritual strength, we should not become overly discouraged and succumb to the temptation to give up. (Note that Timothy was not given the option of fleeing to Philippi or Thessalonica — where he was liked — during this period.) Timothy’s struggles in Ephesus — and his response to them — are a reminder that we can get a handle on difficult circumstances, deal with them faithfully, and grow spiritually as a result of them.

1st Timothy provides guidance on how to respond to adversity by following Timothy’s example. It reveals Timothy remained humble during trials. He was teachable and willing to receive advice from Paul. He was also determined to follow God even when it was hard.

Timothy’s situation in Ephesus is a reminder that our trials alone do not determine who we become. Our response to them matters more.

Problems in Ephesus

The opening of 1st Timothy indicates that Timothy did not want to stay behind in Ephesus. He wanted to travel with Paul instead. Paul wrote: “As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine” (1Tim 1:3). A number of translations render “besought” in 1Tim 1:3 as “begged.” Paul had to beg Timothy to stay behind in Ephesus. But even though he had to be urged, Timothy ultimately did agree to Paul’s request. He stayed behind in Ephesus and assumed leadership responsibilities. It is an example of Timothy subordinating his own wants — and fears — to the work of the Truth.

Timothy’s reasons for not wanting to stay behind in Ephesus are indicated by the content of the Epistle. Serious doctrinal problems were beginning to emerge in
the ecclesia. Some in the meeting were advocating Greek philosophy (1Tim 6:20). Others were corrupting the faith with Jewish traditions and fables, which were probably similar to those of the Talmud (1Tim 1:4,7). Still others had reverted to a superstitious belief in devils and spirits (1Tim 4:1).

Lifestyle problems were also arising. Sisters were trying to usurp the role of brethren in the ecclesia (1Tim 2:11-15), and the wrong kind of men were trying to lead (1Tim 3:1-13). Some of the rich were looking down on the poor (1Tim 6:17), and some of the poor were seeking to be rich even at the expense of the Truth (1Tim 6:5-10). Meanwhile, others were content to live in idleness and be supported by the ecclesia (1Tim 5:3-16). Paul had already had to withdraw from some people in the meeting, including Hymenaeus and Alexander (1Tim 1:19-20). Alexander subsequently caused serious problems for Timothy and Paul for many years (Acts 19:33, 2Tim 4:14).

Imagine if you had an opportunity to move to a new city and you found out that its ecclesia was experiencing what is described in 1st Timothy (e.g., “doctrines of devils”). Would you want to go? Circumstances in Ephesus were tremendously challenging, and Timothy had to try to lead the brothers and sisters and improve the situation. Judging by the the Epistle, it seems Timothy struggled to rise to the task of leadership. He faced a number of obstacles. Timothy was young, probably about 26. He was sickly (1Tim 5:23). He was also naturally timid (2Tim 1:6-7).

The ecclesia in Ephesus was deteriorating around Timothy. Part of the problem appears to be that Timothy was reluctant to confront some people who had gone astray. Paul had to remind him that he had an obligation to do so: “These things command and teach. Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity” (1Tim 4:11-12). It seems that when Timothy mustered the courage to address a problem he sometimes overcompensated for his quiet nature and was unduly harsh in the way he handled the situation. Paul told him: “Rebuke not an elder, but intreat him as a father; and the younger men as brethren” (1Tim 5:1). The Greek word rendered “rebuke” is a strong word. Thayer defines it as “to strike upon” or “beat upon.” Paul reminded Timothy to be mindful of his tone and approach when offering words of correction. Instead of being overly forceful, Paul told Timothy to “intreat” those in the meeting.

The Greek word rendered “intreat” in 1Tim 5 is used throughout the New Testament for giving an exhortation. Paul’s guidance to Timothy suggests, therefore, that we should strive to use the same tone and approach in offering words of correction in private that we would use in an exhortation. We would not, for example, raise our voice, glare, or point our finger at a person from the podium, so we should not do those things in a private conversation either. Instead, we should make an appeal and reason from the Scriptures when speaking to a person who has strayed, just as we would when speaking from the platform.
Timothy wanted to do right

Timothy’s problems in Ephesus were not with his intentions. He wanted to do right, but he was allowing himself to be hindered by his natural disadvantages. He was conscious of them and tried to compensate for them. He turned to exercise, for example: “For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come” (1Tim 4:8). Perhaps he thought exercising would make him healthier, enhance his physical presence, and give him more confidence.

He also might have attempted to curry favor by showing partiality to certain groups in the meeting perhaps to win their support: “I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality” (1Tim 5:21).8

Timothy was trying to guide the brothers and sisters in Ephesus who had strayed back to the Truth. Paul directed him to use a more spiritual approach than the strategies he had been pursuing. He encouraged Timothy to make himself an example of godliness: “This charge I entrust to you, Timothy, my child, in accordance with the prophecies previously made about you, that by them you may wage the good warfare, holding faith and a good conscience. By rejecting this, some have made shipwreck of their faith” (1Tim 1:18-19, ESV).

Paul sought to re-direct his “own son in the faith” (1Tim 1:2). Timothy had been given the role that he had because of his faith and conduct, so Paul wanted him to better himself by investing in his spiritual development. He wrote: “But refuse profane and old wives’ fables, and exercise thyself rather unto godliness” (1Tim 4:7). The Greek word rendered “exercise” is used for vigorous training, like the preparations of an athlete for a contest.9 Developing godliness was not to be a haphazard activity for Timothy. Paul wanted Timothy to push himself and to bear through the difficulties, and the pain, so that he would become spiritually stronger.

We should all give careful heed to Paul’s advice to Timothy because it runs so contrary to our natural inclinations. As the Bible makes clear time and again, God does not value the same characteristics people instinctively do. He does not care about our personal appeal or our natural abilities. His interest is in our commitment to Him. It was through his personal spiritual development that Timothy could help his entire ecclesia. That is where our focus should be and where we should concentrate our efforts to improve ourselves.

Paul did not really provide Timothy with explicit guidance on how to argue against the false teachings emerging in the ecclesia in the Epistle. Instead, Paul encouraged Timothy to focus on positive instruction and to cultivate godliness in his life so that he would be an example to the ecclesia. He wrote: “be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine” (1Tim 4:12-13). Paul wanted Timothy to help guide the ecclesia through his godly example — both in the formal activities of the meeting, as well as in the ordinary, daily activities of life.

The guidance Paul gave to Timothy has broad application to us. It can help change
and improve our lives, and the lives of others, even if we are not in a formal leadership position in an ecclesia (as he was) or even if we are not leading anyone other than ourselves. Regardless of our position, we should focus on our spiritual development. To the extent that we do lead — through service on the Arranging Board, as Sunday school teachers, as parents or grandparents, or in any of a variety of other roles — we should seek to do so through positive instruction and by setting a godly example. That is what Paul advised Timothy to do.

The effect of Timothy’s conduct on the Ephesians’ embrace of the Gospel was of the highest importance. That is why Paul emphasized it again and again in his Epistle: “These things I write to you, though I hope to come to you shortly; but if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth” (1Tim 3:14-15, NKJV).

Paul expected Timothy to continue to grow spiritually: “Practice these things, immerse yourself in them, so that all may see your progress” (1Tim 4:15, ESV). Notice the word “progress.” Timothy was not to remain stagnant. The same is true for us. The status quo is not an option. Like us, Timothy’s continued spiritual development was critical. It would not only help him; but it would also help his brothers and sisters in the ecclesia as well: “Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers” (1Tim 4:16, ESV).

Timothy continued to grow spiritually even as the work he was called on to do became more challenging. We will consider his continued service in Ephesus and through the rest of the Third Missionary Journey in the next article in the series.

Ryan Mutter (Baltimore, MD)

Notes:
2. The Weymouth New Testament and the Darby Bible Translation render the word as “begged.” The NIV, ESV, and NASB render the word as “urged.”
3. Titus 1:14 refers to “the fables” as Jewish fables.
6. The ecclesia at Ephesus may have had some explosive personalities in it. There are multiple warnings against anger and wrath in the ecclesia. See, for example, “without wrath” in 1Tim 2:8 and “Be ye angry, and sin not” in Eph 4:26. A. Nicholls. 1991. *Letters to Timothy and Titus,* page 68.
8. See T. Benson. “A Study in the Life of Timothy (6) In Charge at Ephesus.” *The Testimony,* 1970, page 60. It is also possible that Timothy entertained spurious accusations by some in the ecclesia against other members, perhaps to try and gain their approval or support: Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses (1Tim 5:19).
Reasons for embracing the Ancient Gospel, contained in a Narrative of the Conversion of an OPPONENT

Introduction by the Editor

This article appeared in the November 5, 1832 issue of a magazine edited by Walter Scott, called “The Evangelist”, and is the first article written by John Thomas after his arrival in the USA earlier in 1832. It recounts the story of his baptism, and the account differs somewhat from that recorded by Robert Roberts in his “Dr Thomas — his Life and Works”, which was in turn based upon the verbal account of John Thomas in 1862, some thirty years later. I have added subtitles, corrected some minor errors, and added a few illustrations, but not in any way altered what John Thomas wrote, some 32 years before he decided on the name “Christadelphian”.

The Letter by John Thomas

When I arrived at New-Y ork from England, I was introduced to a respectable Baptist Minister of that city. Having informed him of my intention to travel west, he observed, “Well, Sir, you will find the people of the Western country intelligent, kind, hospitable, and attentive to strangers; but it is a fact much to be lamented, that society there, is very much infected with reformation; it is a heresy that strikes at the root of all vital religion, and is making sad havoc among the churches.”

I had never heard of Mr. Campbell in my own country, except in connection with his able defense of Christianity, against the attacks of Robert Owen; and hence — I supposed that instead of his principles being dangerous, they were such as ought to meet with the encouragement and support of the Christian World. My surprise, therefore, was not a little excited, when I was so carefully warned against their evil tendency. My views of sects and parties did not permit me to seek further information on the subject, as I had made up my mind to know nothing among them but Jesus Christ and him crucified. I thought I saw so much evil resulting to real religion from the division and splitting of professors into separate and adverse communities, each contending that it alone was the truly orthodox, and had the influence of the Holy Spirit, that I determined to belong to none of them, but simply to take the word of God as contained in the scriptures of the Old and New Testament as the only authority in matters of religion; to follow the Truth wherever it led; to shape my course through life according to the precepts of the Gospel; and to trust for my eternal salvation to the blood of Christ which was shed on Calvary for the remission of sins. I had strong objections against being called after the name of any man. Whether he be Calvin, Arminius, Luther, Wesley, or Campbell; for in the word of God I find no such names written, though I doubt not they may be found in the Lamb’s Book of Life; — I desired only to be a Christian in name and deed.
On to Cincinnati

With these views I arrived in Cincinnati. Here I was thrown into the Society of Friends whose opinions differed. I resided with a Wesleyan, received many kind attentions from Calvanistic Baptists, and cultivated the proffered friendship of those, who have been invidiously designated by the name of Mr. Campbell. Discussion naturally arose upon topics of a religious character, and among other things mooted, was the necessity of baptism for the remission of sins. Hitherto I had viewed baptism as non-essential, and a mere question of party; and I had said I would never be immersed, since I considered the act as a mere initiation or admission within the pale of a particular sect. The Millennial Harbinger, and the Evangelist were lent me, but I read them not; and subsequently a sermon on the Holy Spirit was put into my hands. It was composed by Mr. Walter Scott; I perused it, and upon reflection, saw no proposition to which I could not yield assent. I still felt no inclination to pursue the subject, being quite unconcerned about Baptism, Operations of the Spirit, or any other similar topic, all of which I classed under the head of non-essentials.

But the anxiety of some of my friends, who considered me in an unenlightened condition, would not allow them to let me alone. When I visited them, no other subject of conversation seemed to interest them, than those to which I have already referred. I began to perceive that there was nothing non-essential in matters of religion, which is commanded by the word of God; — that our Heavenly Father requires nothing of us which we are not able to perform; that he never works without means, and that these are always adapted to some specific ends; that, as in the ordinary affairs of life, so also in our spiritual concerns, we are required to exercise the faculties God has given us, or we cannot expect the promised blessings; for “the hand of the diligent maketh rich,” and by believing, by repenting, and by being baptized, we receive the remission of our sins, and the gift of the Holy Ghost. I saw, instead of waiting till I experienced some special primary influence of the Spirit to induce me to a saving faith, and to assure me of pardon that the word of truth was nigh me, even in my mouth, and that I was quite as competent to embrace the Gospel, as I am to receive or reject any other testimony whatever. I felt I was a sinner, not by any miraculous impartation, but because the word of God told me so; — “that I was born in sin,” and that therefore I was “exceeding sinful,” and that my only escape from “the wrath to come,” was by “laying hold of the hope set before me in the Gospel.” Till now, I thought I had done this; but I found my belief in Christ was without obedience to his commands, and that I was in the predicament of one who knew his Lord’s will but did not fulfil it, and that I might certainly expect to be beaten with many stripes, if I persisted in refusing to yield to my convictions of the truth.

Conversion

I began now to perceive the cloud of darkness in which my mind was involved. I had heard Christians date their conversion from some sudden, arresting, and supernatural influence, independent of the testimony of Scripture, which compelled them to faith in Christ, I had been the subject of no such operation.
therefore attributed the morality of my life, and my faith, to educational causes; and, though I had examined the evidences of Christianity, had devoted much time to the study of prophesy, and had watched the progress of events in the history of human affairs, as corroborative of the Book of God, all of which left me no doubt of the infallibility of the scriptures, and their supremacy in all matters of conscience, faith, and practice; still, although my convictions had often drawn tears in secret, I was told I was in the gall of bitterness and in bondage. I feel now that I was in bondage; not in the bondage of Satan so much as in the bondage of orthodox opinions as they are called. When I was crossing the Atlantic, I acted in the Capacity both of chaplain and physician; not because I felt myself competent to the cure of spiritual diseases, but I thought in the absence of more efficient aid, I might warn my companion voyagers to flee from the wrath to come. I felt great difficulty in doing this, because I could not see the use of exhorting them to believe and repent, if it were true that no one had the power of doing so unless compelled by supernatural influences. They seemed to be in the situation of a man, who was told to do a thing and with the same breath was assured he could not possibly do it, and yet if he did not do it, he should be punished. Impressed with the idea that this was the decree of God, and to have harbored such a sentiment I confess was the result of a superficial, or rather no examination of the question at all, my mind has long been the subject of doubts, and fears, and misgivings, which are generally referred to conflicts with Satan, instead of the error in doctrine, which to me appears so flagrant, of the Holy Spirit compelling us to do that, which we are quite capable of effecting by the exercise of those faculties God has graciously bestowed upon us. The conversation adverted to led me to see that the blood of Christ was indeed shed for the remission of our sins, but that we could not expect to receive the blessings of the Holy Spirit, which are joy and peace in believing, unless we complied with the command of our Savior to be baptized. “Those who believe and are baptized shall be saved,” and again, “except ye repent ye shall likewise perish,” are the words of Christ; and the declaration of Peter on the day of Pentecost, in reply to the inquiry of the convicted multitude, “men and brethren what shall we do?” exhibits the plain and simple way, and natural order in which we shall obtain the forgiveness of our past sins, and “a right and title to eternal life.” “Repent,” Says he, “and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of your sins, and ye shall receive the Holy Ghost.” I learned from the Record that their consciences were smitten with the conviction that they had indeed crucified the Messiah of God; for it declares “they were pricked in their heart.” They saw their fearful condition, and determined to accept any terms that the Apostle should offer, by which they could be pardoned for the wickedness they had done; — they repented of their evil deeds (as we may all do if we will) and resolved that instead of persecuting his disciples, they would themselves become his followers and obey his commands, being assured that in doing so they would be freely pardoned, and that their past sins would never again be quoted against them. They were baptized; this was a test of their sincerity; for by acting thus they became identified with a people under the proscription of the Law, and exposed to all the vindictiveness of its administration. They were baptized for the remission of their sins; the sins which they had committed, I apprehend were remitted
or pardoned, not on account of the meritoriousness of the act, but in obeying the command by which the purifying efficacy of the blood of Christ was applied to their souls; for baptism I consider as an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual regeneration, and unless the ordinance has been complied with, the sinner has not accepted the terms of pardon proposed, and has certainly no right to expect the blessing consequent on his compliance, which is the gift of the Holy Ghost. By “searching the scriptures,” which we are commanded to do, “for in them we think we have eternal life,” I perceived there was no warranty for the opinion that the Holy Ghost was given to men, prior to faith, to induce them to believe, though I found instances in which it was bestowed anterior to baptism. But these cases are exceptions to the ordinary rule of the Spirit’s operation, and therefore they establish the proposition that the gift of the Spirit is consequent and not anterior to faith and baptism, that it never precedes belief and that the order of faith, repentance, baptism, remission of sins, and the gift of the Holy Ghost, is never inverted, except when miraculous and special results are designed. Thus we find that its descent upon the Apostles, on the day of Pentecost, was attended with signs and extraordinary appearances, which resulted in the miraculous faculty of speaking with “other tongues.” Again we are informed that Peter and John were sent to Samaria, that they might pray for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost. For we are told in the 16th v. of the 8th of Acts, “as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only (or notwithstanding) they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then laid they hands on them and they received the Holy Ghost.” In this case an act was performed, the Apostles laid hands upon them, and the effects were so astonishing that Simon wished to purchase the power they possessed for gold. This was not an ordinary gift of the Holy Ghost, and so far from its being anterior to faith, so as to make them believe, they had even been baptized, and had not then received it until Peter and John conferred it upon them by virtue of power received from God. Shall we say then that Christians of our own day, who simply believe and have not been baptized for the remission of their sins, have received the gift of the Holy Ghost? Is the position they maintain founded upon and supported by the word of God? They may appeal to their feelings and experiences, but I humbly conceive the scriptures do not give birth to this article of their creed.

Paul and Cornelius

Again, in the case of Paul;— his conversion was miraculous, and it is a remarkable fact that even he did not receive the Holy Ghost till after he had believed. “Three days” elapsed between his conversion and receiving his sight, and during this time, though he had believed in him whom he had persecuted, the Holy Ghost had not been bestowed upon him; for the scriptures tell us that Ananias “put his hands on him” and he declared to Paul that the Lord, even Jesus, had commanded him to do so, that he might not only receive his sight, but “be filled with the Holy Ghost.” And if there were any case in which baptism might be considered as non-essential it was Paul’s; but we are told that even he was baptized. All the circumstances of this case were miraculous and special; not ordinary and general.
Again, the case of Cornelius, and his household is analogous to that of the Apostle's, for as the descent of the Holy Ghost upon them was a demonstration that salvation had come to the Jews, so its descent upon the Centurion and his household, became a Pentecost to the Gentiles, on whom in like manner "also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost." The results were similar, for they spoke "with tongues." And again, Paul found at Ephesus certain disciples, and he inquired of them "have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" But they declared they did not even know there was such a thing as the Holy Ghost; which very much surprised Paul, for he seemed astonished that men who had been baptized should not have received the Holy Ghost. "Unto what, then," said he were you baptized?" But they explained the mystery by saying, "we were baptized unto the baptism of John;" and when they heard Paul's declaration that John baptized with the baptism of repentance, teaching that they should believe on him, who should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus, they were baptized again "in the name of the Lord Jesus." Here they had believed in John's testimony and in Paul's, yet they had not the Holy Ghost until God conferred it upon them through Paul, who is recorded to have "laid his hands upon them," after which the Holy Ghost came on them, and as the communication thereof had been special and extraordinary, the results were miraculous; for "they spake with tongues and prophesied. And all the men were about twelve." Hence we see that where special purposes were designed, visible means were employed, showing that God works by means, whether it be to heal the sick, give sight to the blind, impart the faculty of speaking with tongues and performing miracles, or to induce a belief in the divinity of his Son. In respect of the latter, I believe a man may have faith, if he will only exercise those faculties which God has given him, and that it is as much in his power to give ear to the things which belong to his everlasting peace, as it is to those which relate to his interest and happiness in common life. Hence, all are left without excuse, and it can no more be urged that we are irresponsible for our unbelief, on the plea that we cannot have faith unless it is imparted to us by the Spirit.
**Baptism**

These topics are some of those which formed the burden of the conversations I had with Major D. Gano and Mr. Walter Scott. The light of the Gospel did not burst suddenly upon my mind, but one truth after another seemed to develop themselves in succession. I had endeavored to comprehend the doctrines of the Gospel by an effort of my understanding, but I could not; I had been told religion consisted not in head knowledge, but in the experience of the heart; but I now see God requires us to believe nothing in relation to salvation we cannot comprehend. I saw that the command to be baptized, was imperative. “Why then did I hesitate to obey,” was a question put to me by Mr. Scott. I felt I could give no valid reason, still I did not like what I supposed would be an ostentatious display and desired to defer compliance. I was assured there would be none, and perceived that an immediate and unceremonious performance of the ordinance was scriptural and therefore justifiable. I complied, and in the presence of a few friends, I was baptized in the Miami Canal, on Sunday evening, Oct. 14, at 19½ o’clock.

It has been put to me since this occurred, whether I had received the Holy Spirit, and if I had, how I knew it? In answer to this I can only say that, whereas before I was blind, now I think I see, and that the doctrines of scripture, instead of being unintelligible and obscure, now appear to be entirely comprehensible and clear; and, as we are elsewhere informed, so plain and simple, that a wayfaring man, though unlearned, cannot err therein. One thing only I regret, that is, that my immersion was not more public, as it might have operated as an example and inducement to others. This I can say, that all fear of death is removed, and I feel firmly assured that the doctrines I have embraced are the pure doctrines of the Gospel, and abundantly efficacious in the practice they enjoin to procure me a safe and certain introduction to Everlasting Life.

*John Thomas*
Media Literacy

I recently gave an evening talk at one of our Bible schools on the subject of “Media Literacy — Discerning between Good and Evil.” Based on comments received afterward, the topic struck a responsive chord. Parents, children, and ecclesias are struggling to cope with the messages of mass media and their remarkable ability to intrude on our daily lives.

Although turning off our media delivery devices (i.e., smartphones, televisions, computers, etc.) is often a helpful choice, it fails to take into consideration the vast scope of media and the fact that many of these devices have positive uses. It has become essential, therefore, that we teach ourselves and our children how to think critically about what we are being bombarded with on a daily basis. Media literacy equips us to deconstruct media with the purpose of discerning between good and evil.

The wide impact of mass media and the importance of media literacy are considered in a document called *Literacy for the 21st Century*:

“When one considers videogames, television, pop music, radio, newspapers, magazines, billboards, the internet — even T-shirts! — we are exposed to more mediated messages in one day than our great-grandparents were exposed to in a year. Media literacy teaches the skills we need to navigate safely through this sea of images and messages — for all our lives.”

With this in mind, I would like to discuss some of the ways that Sunday schools and CYCs can counteract the ungodly messages that our children face on a daily basis.

Starting point

Because every parent will have a separate policy regarding media exposure and usage in their home, a good place to start with children of all ages is to have a look into their world. This should be done with a desire to find out how best to help them, not out of a spirit of judging others.

Check into your students’ world by asking them questions like these:

- If I (the SS/CYC teacher) was thinking of buying a video game or app for my kids, what would you suggest?
- If I have time for a little TV tonight, is there anything good on?
- What are some of the popular musical groups these days? What do you think of their music?
- What are some of the things that are ‘going viral’ right now? Do you ever get involved in them?
- What’s going on at your school that’s cool or uncool, fascinating, unfair, outrageous or worrisome?
Once you’ve got a list, keep your eyes and ears open for examples from their world that you can use to illustrate concepts when you are ready to teach media literacy.

It is also important to get an idea of your students’ knowledge and perspectives of media. Again, here are some useful questions to ask them:

- What is included in the given media?
- In general, how does it make you feel?
- Has the information you received from the media ever made you feel angry or good?
- Do you think the media has an influence in your life, your choices, and your attitude?
- What are some of the values that are promoted by the media?
- How does the media portray smoking, violence, and personal relationships?
- Have you ever considered how God views our use of media?

Asking questions like these will give you an idea where to start with the young people.

**Four principle messages of media**

There are many messages that are promoted by mass media. I have identified four that I feel are particularly insidious and need to be addressed both in our homes and in our ecclesias. The media will often try to do the following:

1) Sexualize everything.
2) Promote materialism.
3) Elevate and promote immoral and risky behaviors.
4) Make violence entertaining.

It is extremely important for our children to begin recognizing the crafty ways that media present these messages and that turning away from them can be a matter of salvation. It is also imperative that parents, aunts, and uncles, take the lead in these matters. If our kids don’t see and hear us condemning violent, immoral, materialistic messages, they won’t comprehend why they are bad for them.

**Five key concepts**

There are five key concepts to have in mind when analyzing media. The more our young people become familiar with these concepts, the better able they will be to focus their examination of media; and the better able they will be to understand the stated and implied meanings that are embedded in the messages they are analyzing.

1) All media messages are ‘constructed.’ It is important for children to know that media presentations don’t just happen. Commercials, songs, movies, newscasts, television shows, etc., are always created for very specific purposes.
2) Media messages are constructed using a creative language that has its own rules. When a media message is created, it is done using tested and proven language and techniques that are designed to persuade you to do something.
3) Different people experience the same media message differently. When media messages are created they often target a specific audience. It is beneficial to
try to view the message from another person’s perspective in order to gain a
greater understanding of the message.

4) Media have embedded values and points of view. Quite often these values
are in the subtext of the message. It is important to consider what types of
behaviors or lifestyles are being promoted or sold.

5) Most media messages are organized to gain profit and/or power. It is important
to understand that no media is concerned with our spiritual well-being. Its
primary purposes are to make money and gain power.

Combining the five key concepts with the four principal messages of media equips
a Sunday school or CYC class with many tools to begin deconstructing and in-
terpreting media. It will be important for teachers to select media examples that
are appropriate for their age group to analyze. There are many, many examples
that would never be appropriate, yet it is quite easy to find examples that will en-
able you to teach good media literacy skills. Keep your eyes open for ads, movie
posters, magazine covers, songs, video games, T-shirts, billboards, etc., that carry
corrupting messages and can be appropriately analyzed in class.

Activities

Deconstruction. Select a media sample and analyze it using the key concepts.
The goal is to get to the truth of the message. Asking the right questions is crucial
when deconstructing a media sample. For example: Who created this message and
why? Who is their target audience? What creative or persuasive techniques have
they used to catch my attention? How close is it to reality? What values or morals
are being promoted or ignored?

Finish the Story. This is a particularly good strategy to use with advertisements,
but it also works with other media trends and messages. It is always beneficial to
have students follow things through to their logical ending. Have them imagine
that they have purchased a certain product and started using it. They “finish the
story” by discussing, writing, acting out, or drawing a picture that represents the
truth about their life after using the product. Ultimately this should demonstrate
the many false claims that ads make and the consequences of risky behaviors.

Create an Infographic. Infographics display a lot of information in a simple, attrac-
tive way. Show your students some examples and have them create an infographic
to educate their peers about the dangers of a specific media topic. Students can
create infographics online by going to sites like piktochart.com/ and www.easel.
ly. In the process, they can make media serve them, not the other way around.

Prepare a PowerPoint (or Prezi) Presentation. Have individuals or groups of
students create a PowerPoint presentation for their Sunday school or CYC class
that promotes positive media use, the dangers of media, online safety, effective
strategies for curbing the overuse of media, etc. I also mention Prezi because it
can be used to create a presentation online. The presentation can be stored and
then accessed anywhere. Go to prezi.com/ to get started.

Create a Commercial. Have students use the techniques they have learned to
create a commercial that promotes Godly behaviors and characteristics. You’ll
be amazed at what young people can do using their media knowledge and tools.

**Be an Ad/Media Detective.** Have students bring in an ad or media message that is trying to sell them something. Have them identify the strategies that the ad/media uses and have them explain the real message that is being communicated.

**Bible examples of “Sales Jobs”.** Find examples in the Bible of people or groups that used creative techniques to sell a message (Jeroboam, Absalom, Rabshakeh, etc.). Use media literacy skills to analyze their messages.

**Create a Counter Ad.** Start with a specific ad. Using the format of the ad itself, have the students recreate it, cutting through the deception and providing truthful statements that can be glued over the original ad.

**Of great importance**

The most important thing you can do for your Sunday school or CYC class members is to gradually transfer the responsibility of discernment to them. It is essential that they begin to monitor their own habits, and that they begin to think critically about what the world is trying to feed them. It is essential that they become able to independently analyze and interpret the bombardment of messages they receive and not let media control them. It is vital that they understand that all the things promoted by the world are temporary; they are all going to pass away. Spending our time and energy on eternal things is of much greater value.

The most important tool we have at our disposal is the word of God. We must continue to make our Heavenly Father’s way of thinking our way of thinking. Most of what we see and hear being promoted these days is utterly opposed to our God. We need to have verses imprinted on the tablets of our hearts so that when temptations arise, the verses will shout out to us to reject the evil and choose what is good. Throughout all the activities discussed, verses need to be at hand and committed to memory. Below are a few that can be used as starting points.

- Sexual Immorality: Psa 103:3; Job 31:1; Matt 5:28; 1Cor 6:18.
- Violence: Gen 6:11 and Matt 24:37; Psa 11:5.

Much more could be said, but this article provides a way for families and ecclesias to get started in media literacy. It has never been more important to do so. Historically, we have done a very good job of teaching our children the essential message of the Bible and how to defend ourselves against false doctrine. In the meantime, the world has been devising more and more ingenious and subtle ways to divert our hearts away from our Heavenly Father. It is time to start teaching our children how to stand up against this insidious onslaught and why it is essential.

*John Perks (Ottawa, ON)*

**Notes:**

2. Charts, diagrams and graphs are common examples of infographics.
The situation at Ramah had left David quite disturbed. He had thought that he would be safe with Samuel: he had likely calculated that Saul wouldn’t even think to capture him while he was with the old prophet, at least out of respect for Samuel. However, the sudden appearance of Saul’s messengers had probably made him feel quite uneasy. Though the messengers were stopped from their evil deed by the spirit of God, it would seem as though David still didn’t entirely feel very good about their presence. His discomfort would have increased dramatically when he saw the murderous king at Samuel’s house. Saul too, like the messengers, was stayed from his intentions, but David could no longer feel safe with Samuel. The prophet’s presence had not kept the king from attempting to capture him, but how long would the spirit of God keep these men prophesying?

**What was he to do?**

In a desperate attempt to find some form of safety, being driven from his home and his wife, being driven from Samuel, David went to his best friend, the one who had before pleaded on his behalf:

> And David fled from Naioth in Ramah, and came and said before Jonathan, What have I done? what is mine iniquity? and what is my sin before thy father, that he seeketh my life?” (1Sam 20:1).

One of the most unsettling things about this entire experience for David was that he didn’t know what to do to make the problem go away: he had no idea what he had done to bring about this hatred of his father-in-law! Whatever Saul had asked, he had done:

- When the eyes of Israel were looking to Saul to kill Goliath, David filled the void and fought the giant, so that Saul didn’t have to!
- Whenever the Philistines attacked, David fought against them and won. When Saul told him that he wanted a dowry of one hundred Philistine foreskins, David had brought two hundred.

All throughout his time with the king, David had experienced Saul’s love and had seen Saul’s favor bestowed upon him. Suddenly, Saul’s feelings towards him had drastically changed and he couldn’t understand it! Did Jonathan have some sort of insight into his father’s feelings? David knew that Jonathan and Saul shared a close relationship — perhaps Jonathan could tell him what he was doing wrong.

But Jonathan’s answer would have exasperated David even further.

> “And he said unto him, God forbid; thou shalt not die: behold, my father will do nothing either great or small, but that he will shew it me: and why should my father hide this thing from me? it is not so” (1Sam 20:2).
Though the situation was dire, Jonathan didn’t feel nearly as distressed about it as David: clearly, he thought that nothing was wrong. When David wanted to know what he had done to provoke Saul’s anger, Jonathan essentially told David that he didn’t need to worry, Saul wasn’t planning on doing anything to him anyway. If he were, surely, Jonathan said, he would know.

Somehow, Jonathan had missed the events of the last few days. Knowing nothing about Saul throwing the javelin at David, putting a guard around David’s house in order to kill him in the morning, and chasing him all the way to Samuel’s house, Jonathan felt fairly relaxed about the entire situation. He knew that his father had made an oath, and Saul, he thought, didn’t break his oaths.

How this answer must have been a massive emotional letdown for David! He didn’t know if he would ever see his wife again, Samuel the prophet was not able to help him (at least, so he thought), and now his only other friend thought that he was being too dramatic and worrying too much! Thus, in an attempt to show Jonathan how serious he was, he too, just as Saul had done, made an oath:

“And David sware moreover, and said, Thy father certainly knoweth that I have found grace in thine eyes; and he saith, Let not Jonathan know this, lest he be grieved: but truly as the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, there is but a step between me and death” (1Sam 20:3).

With these words, Jonathan would have known that the situation was somehow different than he thought it was. This wasn’t the David that Jonathan remembered. “There is but a step between me and death” were the words of a David who was struggling to believe (or had perhaps forgotten for the moment?) that God had anointed him to be king, and would eventually exalt him. They were the words of a man who was struggling to walk in faith.

**David’s struggling faith**

Truly, this was a time of desperation for David, and his faith would appear to be faltering. Just consider some of the signs that show what a struggle this was for David:

1) In the past few hours, he had just been *miraculously* preserved from *three* of Saul’s bands of men, and from Saul himself. God had saved his life in a way that could only be attributed to divine intervention. The Spirit of God had come on the men and it was impossible for them to harm the LORD’s anointed. Nevertheless, he chose to leave the house of the prophet, presumably because he didn’t feel safe there. Even with that demonstration of power, David still couldn’t see past the moment of trial.

2) David had just expressed, in quite dramatic terms, that he believed that he was very close to death. Though God had anointed him and promised him the throne of Israel, David *seriously* thought that he might not survive the next twenty four hours. While David’s breakdown is entirely *reasonable*, considering the sudden and dangerous shift that had just taken place in his life, viewing death as a possibility seems like a lapse of faith. He was the LORD’s anointed. As long as he stayed true to his God, he would rule over Israel. God
had made a promise, and He wasn’t going to break it (as evidenced by his miraculous deliverance just hours prior!).

3) Throughout the years in which David fled for his life from Saul, there were many times in which David was able to remember that God would deliver him from all evil. As with any of us, he didn’t feel this way all of the time, but there were certainly moments of great faith during David’s fugitive years. In Psalm 59, the psalm which was written after David left his wife and fled from his own house through the window (see the psalm’s title), David expressed his confidence in God’s power and willingness to save:

“Deliver me from mine enemies, O my God: defend me from them that rise up against me. Deliver me from the workers of iniquity, and save me from bloody men. For, lo, they lie in wait for my soul: the mighty are gathered against me; not for my transgression, nor for my sin, O LORD” (Psa 59:1-3).

Thus, right in the beginning of the psalm, David laid out his petition. Even as his enemies watched his own house and he had to quickly create plans to escape, David turned to God for deliverance. Even more so, towards the end of the psalm he not only turned to God for salvation from Saul, but he fervently believed that this salvation would come:

“But I will sing of thy power; yea, I will sing aloud of thy mercy in the morning: forp thou hast been my defense and refuge in the day of my trouble. Unto thee, O my strength, will I sing: for God is my defense, and the God of my mercy” (Psa 59:16-17).

When reading these verses, it’s important to remember that David probably wrote these words, “when Saul sent, and they watched the house to kill him.” They were not written after he had successfully escaped from his house. They were written in the very moment of trial, the very moment when David didn’t actually know what was going to happen! Nevertheless, when he wrote the last two verses of the psalm, David wrote as though the conflict had already finished. When he escaped from Saul, it was night time, and Saul’s men were going to take him when the morning came (1Sam 19:11). But despite this, even though David knew when they planned to take him, he confidently wrote, “I will sing aloud of thy mercy in the morning.”

David earnestly believed that he would survive to see the morning light and that in the morning, he would be free from Saul, because “thou hast been my defense and refuge in the day of my trouble.” Thus, with all of his heart, he would sing to God. This same attitude appeared in David’s mind all throughout Saul’s pursuit of his life. Just a few days later, while he was still running from Saul, David wrote another psalm, this time about Doeg (again, see the psalm’s title), whom David had seen when he was at the tabernacle in Nob (1Sam 21:7). In that psalm, David expressed his confidence in God’s deliverance once again:

“Why boastest thou thyself in mischief, O mighty man? the goodness of God endureth continually. Thy tongue deviseth mischiefs; like a sharp razor, working deceitfully. Thou lovest evil more than good; and lying rather than to speak righteousness. Selah... But I am like a green olive tree in the house of God: I trust in the mercy of God for ever and ever. I will praise thee for
ever, because thou hast done it: and I will wait on thy name; for it is good before thy saints” (Psa 52:1-3, 8-9).

While Doeg was out working iniquity and bringing words of David’s presence in the tabernacle to Saul, David wrote that he would continue to trust in God “for ever and ever.” God would be his source of strength. He would remain faithful. He would do whatever he could to bring praise to his God.

David’s trust in God

Finally, in another example of a psalm that was written just a few days later, David once more showed that same solid trust in the God of Israel. After fleeing from Doeg and the tabernacle, David thought that he could find solace in the territory of the Philistines (1Sam 21:10). Once he had arrived, he realized that his assumption was desperately wrong, as the Philistines immediately recognized him as Israel’s great warrior who had slain “ten thousands.” Fearful of what the king of the Philistines might do to him, David feigned himself to be mad before the king, who was a man named Achish (also known as Abimelech). Upon seeing David's apparently “poor” mental state, Achish cast him out of his courts, declaring, “Lo, ye see the man is mad: wherefore then have ye brought him to me?” After escaping from the courts of Achish, David wrote another psalm (see title) — and once again, this psalm reaffirmed his trust in his God:

“This poor man cried, and the LORD heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles. The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them... The righteous cry, and the LORD heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles... Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD delivereth him out of them all” (Psa 34:6-7, 17, 19).

Just as with the other two psalms, David was filled with confidence and trust in his God. He knew that Yahweh had the power to save him, and he believed that He would, probably because David remembered that he had been promised a throne and he had been anointed to be king over God’s people.

Just as the Lord Jesus Christ, who could say that “Are there not were twelve hours in the day”: it was not yet time for the light of the world to set. So David often had the same attitude. He recognized that God's angels encamped around him and that God had a plan for him which was not yet fulfilled. Thus, he had a fervent trust that God would be his defense. Unlike Jonathan and his armor bearer, who essentially said that they knew that God had the ability to save them, but He might choose to not do so (1Sam 14:8-10), David had reason to earnestly believe that God would be his deliverance. Often he believed it: he had this confidence in the incident just before this meeting with Jonathan and in the incidents just after. But in the interim, as he approached Israel's prince, that confident and trusting attitude was nowhere to be found. Instead, the declaration came forth, “truly, as the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, there is but a step between me and death” (1Sam 20:3).

Indeed, this was a dark day for the man whose thoughts were so often in line with his Creator's.
Guyana News 2014

The six ecclesias in Guyana have been busily engaged in ecclesial ministrations both in care for one another and in preaching. Here are some of the highlights of this year now nearing its close.

In January, after suffering a major stroke our beloved Sis. Enid D’Anjou was removed from Guyana to the US where her daughter could attend to her care. She reluctantly bid good-bye to her dear Georgetown ecclesia.

In March, Eccles decided to move their Gospel Proclamation across the river where they run a satellite Sunday school of about 25 children started a few years ago by Sis. Candace. The hope is that the parents of the children attending Sunday School will hear the Gospel that their children are being taught in Sunday school.

In April, Georgetown hosted the annual Guyana Bible School. Brethren Don Luff, of CBMC, and Rafeek Soolaman, formerly from Kilcoy ecclesia, were the two speakers. Bro. Don especially enjoyed his first visit to Guyana.

In May, brothers and sisters gathered for the now annual brother’s seminar and sister’s seminar; it was the ever-enthusiastic sisters that began this tradition a few years back.

In July, the ecclesias welcomed the expanded Truth Corps team in Guyana for a second year. As anticipated, the team was well-received and found many different avenues of services. The team leaders were Bro. Duncan Kenzie and Sis. Myra Lucke both from Canada and both visiting Guyana for the second time. Guyana has that kind of draw. The brothers and sisters are warm-hearted and welcoming and the avenues of service are varied and never lacking.
New Amsterdam remains in critical need of a missionary couple. There are significant needs for someone to guide and build the ecclesia as well as instruct the large group of teens and young adults. This group is at a crossroads in their lives and desperately need direction and encouragement.

In August, Sharon Arjune, daughter of Rayman and Kamla, was baptized having completed nearly a year of instruction classes with our resident “field worker” David Andrews. Just a week after her baptism, she left for China on a scholarship to study medicine. She is the second young person from New Amsterdam to leave the country to get the education needed to obtain employment. Bro. Robin Rupenarine is in his final year studying in Cuba. When families do not have funds to pay for university studies, the children can sometimes qualify for scholarships overseas. These are often difficult programs as the language of instruction is not English, so there are not only cultural hurdles and academic ones, but language issues. Please remember these young people in your prayers.

In September, the oldest son of Derek and Marlyn Babb, Derek Jr., was baptized into Christ in Mocha. A week later Cosmo Brown, friend and now husband of our sister Sade Barrow, was baptized. Sade is a wonderful example of faith and commitment. She waited for her friend to make the decision to be baptized and complete his months of instruction classes before they were married. Now Eccles has not only another brother to join them, but a couple. Two couples, Dacie and Rayon Agard in Eccles and Dilean and Ryan Anamayah in New Amsterdam, welcomed their first baby. Joel and Ronique Tenesse are shortly anticipating the birth of their first child. Unfortunately they will be leaving Plegt Ankar and settling in Black Bush so Joel can complete his teacher-training program. We pray God’s richest blessings on each of these young couples and their little treasure from our Heavenly Father.

In December, God willing, all eight Sunday schools in Guyana will host a year-end Sunday school party for their nearly 200 Sunday school children. The generosity of the Christadelphian Save the Children’s Fund (CSTCF) in cooperation with CBMC and the local brethren make this possible as a very special event each year. CSTCF provides all Sunday school materials including lesson books, supplies, prizes and, even for some, clothing to wear to Sunday school. We very much appreciate their labors.

We are deeply thankful
for the generosity of so many brethren worldwide who give donations to CBMC and CSTCF, who give their time to visit Guyana teaching classes and encouraging the brethren there and who remember our brethren in prayer. The amazing energy and dedication of our Guyanese brethren sends a sweet smelling savor to our Father and attests to the power of the love of the brethren as we seek to keep that new commandment our Lord Jesus gave us; we forge on despite discouragement and hardship. Praise be to God.

Ted and Dolores Sleeper, CBMC links to Guyana

Panama — Santa Clara after 40 years!

Once again during July and August of 2014 the two Panama Ecclesias planned a number of preaching and fraternal activities. Brother, sisters and young people from New York and Ontario were there to support special Bible Classes, campaign activities and a Bible Camp — they were a big boost to all events! Most of the talks were given in English and Spanish. The speakers for the week’s program were brothers Clive Drepaul (New York) and Don Luff (Ontario).

On Saturday, July 26th, the Panama City Ecclesia held two advertised lectures on the following topics at their meeting place — “How to use our money and time as children of God” and “The zeal for the Word of God”. Approximately 30 adults, teens and children attended — this included several interested friends. On Sunday, a remembrance service was held at the hall, followed by a nice hot meal served by the sisters, and then a Bible Class was given on the subject: “God — Father and Creator”.

During the week home visits took place, as well as two public lectures in Colon at a banquet hall on Wednesday, July 30th on the subjects — “The Things concerning the Kingdom of God” and “The Things concerning the Name of Jesus Christ”. There was good attendance by members of both ecclesias, as well as six visitors — about 30 in total. Two of the visitors were women, who had participated in ecclesial activities in Colon for over two years — they had been preparing themselves for baptism. Both ladies had successful interviews for baptism during the week, and baptismal arrangements were made for the upcoming weekend.
Friday, August 1st to Sunday, August 3rd was the big event — the Bible Camp! Members, their families, and friends travelled to a campground about two hours from Panama City in an area called Santa Clara. It is believed that the last time such a weekend Bible School took place was about 40 years ago, and at the same location! What an experience! All the activities were well-planned, and the spiritual and natural food were both ample. The two themes presented at the Camp were on different aspects of the Christian Life and preparing ourselves for the Kingdom of God. One of the many encouraging observations was the fact that about 20 teens and children were present of the 47 in total at the Camp. This has sparked the need to increase the activities for the young in both ecclesias. It has been many years since there has been a CYC in either ecclesia. On a related matter, the Colon Ecclesia has since acquired the room adjacent to their current meeting room (in the same building). This will be used for the growing Sunday School and other activities. However, the highlight of the Bible Camp took place Saturday morning August 2nd — we all walk down the road from the campgrounds to a beach on the coast of the Pacific Ocean to witness two baptisms — Loretta and Malva took on the saving name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Both were extended the right hand of fellowship during the Breaking of Bread Service the next day — the last activity of the weekend. The emotion displayed by the two new sisters, and the warmth and fellowship expressed to them during and after the service was an enjoyable and uplifting culmination to the week and the weekend together. Preliminary plans have already been discussed for July/August 2015, God willing. We pray for the ongoing growth in Panama, but especially for God's blessing on the youth in the two ecclesias, at this time.

*Bro. Don Luff, CBMA representative
Submitted by Sis. Jan Berneau, CBMA/C Publicity*

Confession of faith on beach prior to baptism of Malva (on left) and Loretta.
Books from The Tidings

On the Way: Bible Studies, Exhortations, Meditations and Musings, by George Booker

“The Way” is a path to salvation, a manner of living day by day, a journey through life with all its ups and downs. This book offers insights, encouragement and food for thought, to encourage all those “on the Way”, whether young in the Truth or baptized for many years. The 71 chapters vary in length from short reflections to in-depth studies. Each focuses on a different topic, from the serious to the lighthearted: practical issues of life in the Truth, difficult passages, exhortation from hymns and songs, personal memories, and observations about the modern world. Published: 2014 – soft cover, 309 pages, color and B&W photos $9.00 USD (plus S&H)

The Ecclesia at Ephesus, by Ryan Mutter
Studying the Ecclesia at Ephesus provides powerful lessons in spiritual growth relevant in today’s times. $9.00 US (soft cover, 264 pages, with color maps).

Bible Guidelines for a Happy Marriage, by John C. Bilello
Sound, proactive, Biblical advice on how to build and maintain a happy marriage. $6.00 US (soft cover, 127 pages).

The Creation Text: Studies in Early Genesis, by David Levin
Forty-nine studies offer fresh insights into early Genesis by examining the text and structure of the first five chapters. $12.00 US (364 pages).

My Journey in Faith, by Ronald Hicks
A brother shares his life experience in the Truth with Christadelphians around the world, and the joy of mission work. Special price: reduced from $10.00 to $5.00 US (372 pages).

Pictures of Redemption, by George Booker
Explores parables, analogies, and figures of speech used in Scripture to illustrate the many facets of redemption. $6.00 US (soft cover, 192 pages).

The Whole Armor of God, by Ryan Mutter
This story takes place nearly 3,000 years ago, but the spiritual challenges are familiar to today’s young people. $6.00 US (110 pages).

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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.)

GRANITE STATE, NH
It is with great sadness that we share news of the falling asleep of our Sis. Eileen Corbeille. She fell asleep suddenly on October 2, 2014, following surgery.

Sis. Eileen was baptized in the Toronto, ON Ecclesia in 1983 and following her marriage to Bro. Bob Corbeille, became a beloved, active, and supportive member of the Granite State Ecclesia, then known as the Merrimack, NH Ecclesia. She served the Lord with her brothers and sisters in many ways through the years, and most lovingly as a Sunday school teacher for the young ones. She will be greatly missed, especially by her brothers and sisters in this ecclesia and also by many throughout the New England area. We pray that Yahweh's grace and love will provide comfort to our Bro. Bob, and his two daughters, Rachel and Nicole.

Our earnest hope is for the soon return of our Lord Jesus Christ when those who sleep in his Name will hear his voice and rise to meet their Lord at last. With that hope in our hearts we can endure the loss of our loved ones and overcome our sorrow, being assured that they will live again, and through God's great mercy and grace may live forever in His kingdom.

Steve Smith

HONESDALE, PA.
We welcomed Bro. Dave Cheetham (Moorestown, NJ) to our chapel on October 26, 2014, to exhort and were very edified by his words. Afterwards we enjoyed the luncheon that the sisters prepared.

Stephen J. DeMarco

SARASOTA, FL
The Sarasota Ecclesia is pleased to announce that after a satisfactory interview, Sis. Carol Whitham has become the newest member of this ecclesia. She was a member of another fellowship.

We would also like to thank Bre. Rick Hackett (Austin Leander, TX) and Jim Cowie (Moreton Bay, Aust.) for their encouraging words of exhortation. We would also like to thank Bro. Jim for his recent study day at the Largo, FL Ecclesia, as well as his “Super Sunday School” at the Sarasota Ecclesia.

James Wilkinson

SUSSEX, NB
We thank Bro. Jim Sullivan for his studies on, “The Sons of Zeruiah” at our Thanksgiving gathering in October. We were also pleased to have other brothers and sisters attending from the Boston, MA area, Meriden, CT, North Battleford, SK, as well as the UK.

Our next study weekend is April 25-26, 2015, and Bro. Tom Wilson (Cambridge, ON) will be the speaker.
On Thanksgiving, October 10-11, 2014, the speaker will be Bro. Bruce Waite (Meriden, CT).

We apologize to Bro. and Sis. Paul Harrison in reporting they were from the Daventry, UK Ecclesia when in fact they are from Dudley Queens Cross, UK Ecclesia.

Cliff Baines

VICTORIA, BC

We continue to be blessed with numerous visitors, coming from near and far, including: Surrey, Maple Ridge, New Westminster, Vernon, Okanagan, Comox, Saanich, Shelbourne, Nanaimo, Cumberland, Toronto East, Prince George, Mississauga West, and Maple Ridge in Canada; Seattle, Verdugo Hills, and Pittsburgh in the US; as well as S. Aust. and Sri Lanka. The list is, happily, too long to accurately record. We welcome them all to meet with us.

We were saddened by the recent loss of our Sis. Marjorie MacIvor on September 15, 2014. Sis. Marjorie was the mother of our Sis. Joan Bennett, and the daughter of Bro. Ernest Bird. We mourn her falling asleep in Christ but not as others without our precious hope.

We rejoiced in gaining two new members by baptism. JONAH KNORR was baptized on September 14, 2014. Bro. Jonah is the son of our Sis. Denise and the late Bro. Jerome Knorr. ALEX STARCHER was baptized on October 26, 2014. Bro. Al comes to us from the Learn to Read the Bible Effectively Seminar held in 2001.

Our Sis. Becki Brown was transferred, with our love, to the Okanagan, BC Ecclesia on September 21, 2014. This past summer, our Bro. Dan Ferrie and Sis. Danielle Henley of the Sacramento, CA Ecclesia were married and are now residing in Sacramento, CA.

On July 27, 2014, we hosted the Seattle Ecclesia on the occasion of the baptism of JOSEPHINE and ANTHONY HOWE. Bro. and Sis. Howe have roots on Vancouver Island and had been attending for many years before relocating to Seattle for employment. It was a joyous occasion for both ecclesias.

Our third Bible Mission Fundraiser is scheduled for January 24, 2015. We anticipate another exciting evening on behalf of the CBMC.


The Pacific Northwest Annual CYC Conference is to be held again at Camp Pringle on Shawnigan Lake, on April 2-5, 2015. Bro. Ryan Mutter (Baltimore, MD) will be speaking. His theme will be, “As it was in the Days of Noah”. For further information please contact our CYC leader, Bro. Mike McStravick at: mtmcstravick@gmail.com.

For further information please contact the undersigned at: victoria@csll.ca.

Clyde Snobelen

WASHINGTON DC

The Washington DC Ecclesia has enjoyed the visits of many brothers and sisters since our last intelligence and wish to thank the following brothers for their words of exhortation: Allen Laben, John Gischel and Denis Bevans (Baltimore, MD); David Fertig and Lee Huff (Northern Virginia, VA); Ron McPhee (Richmond Petersburg, VA); Mike Livermore (Milford Road, MI); Ted Sleeper (San Francisco Peninsula, CA);
David Leigh (Erdington, UK); Victor Perfitt (Bournemouth Winton, UK); and Luke Mansfield (Enfield, Adelaide, Aust.).

In April, we enjoyed fellowship with the members of the Baltimore Ecclesia and many visitors to our Semi-annual Baltimore/Washington Gathering Weekend. We would like to thank Bro. Ron Kidd (London, ON) who gave classes for the weekend on the subject, “God’s Timetable for Redemption”.

We would also like to thank Bro. Allen Laben (Baltimore, MD) who along with Bro. Roberto Lara, has been leading our Learn to Read the Bible Seminar since May. We are pleased to say that after five months we still have five contacts in regular attendance.

In June, we hosted our CYC camping and canoe trip with families from a number of ecclesias attending. We wish to thank Bro. Craig and Sis. Diane McInturff (Shenandoah Valley, VA) for all their help in making it a success.

On June 12, 2014, we rejoiced with Bro. David and Sis. Elizabeth Perry on the birth of their daughter, Shaye Abigail Perry.

On September 20, 2014, Bro. Tom Brittle presided over the wedding of Sis. Keena Charles and Bro. James Cupertino at our chapel. We pray God will bless their union, and help them strengthen one another in the days ahead while awaiting the return of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

On October 28, 2014, we were saddened by the falling asleep of our Sis. Margot Cuppett. Sis. Margot transferred to the Washington DC Ecclesia from Michigan in 2007, where she had been a member of the Novi, MI and then the Grand Rapids, MI Ecclesias. She took on the saving name of Jesus Christ on February 4, 1990, and now sleeps in the Lord awaiting his return and the resurrection of the dead.

Bob Kling

The Relatives of John Thomas in Washington

Brother Thomas’ two brothers, Robert and Alfred, and his sister, Jane, all lived in the city. Robert and Alfred, both doctors and much younger than John Thomas, both had been baptized at some point not now known, and met with the brothers and sisters of the Washington ecclesia on occasion. Jane, one year Brother Thomas’ junior, was employed as a school teacher. While baptized at some unknown stage, she was a member of the ecclesia, but inactive. Dr. Thomas’ father, also John, died in Washington in 1864, apparently quite suddenly. Brother Thomas, in a letter in October 1864, notes that his father had died in Washington earlier in the year “without the least sickness”.

(Condensed from History of the Washington Ecclesia by Bro. Ron Hicks)
She Did What She Could

When Mary, the sister of Martha, poured a box of very precious ointment of spikenard upon the feet of Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair, we read that Judas Iscariot complained about the waste. Jesus’ reply was, “Let her alone... She hath done what she could.”

Our Lord does not ask any of us to do more than we can, but he also does expect us to do what we can. We are all different people and we all have different kinds of talents, but each of us can do something. At the judgment seat the Lord will ask us about things we did or did not do during our lifetime — whether we did what we could. What will we say?

Someone may ask, what about those who have physical disabilities? There is always one thing each of us is able to do every day regardless of our age or physical condition. We can pray. Prayer is a wonderful gift God has given us, the opportunity to talk directly to our Creator and address Him as “our Father,” and He wants us to pray to Him.

Paul tells us to pray without ceasing, and James assures us that the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous person availeth much. Paul counsels the believers in Philippi, saying, “Don’t worry over anything whatever. Tell God every detail of your needs in earnest and thankful prayer, and the peace of God which surpasses human understanding, will keep constant guard over your hearts and minds as they rest in Christ Jesus.”

What a wonderful way to live! Not only is prayer something every one of us is able to do, but the peace of God will fill our hearts and we will be able to rest in our Lord. Are we praying regularly?

What else should we be doing in addition to praying? Each of us can do something more to serve our God every day, even though we each have different abilities. The prophet Micah tells us, “and what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.”

To walk humbly with our God, means we have to get up and get going, moving our feet while asking God to guide us. He cannot guide our feet if we just sit around all day. We need to travel in God’s direction, as the wise man Solomon explains, “Trust in the LORD with all your hearts and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct thy paths.” We need to find a path, a godly path, to serve our God in our daily life. Even if we are bedridden or in a wheelchair, we can figuratively move our feet as we look for ways to serve our God. Most of us can manage cards, letters or phone calls to give encouragement to others who are lonely or stressed or in need. Paul, under house arrest in Rome and not able to move around freely, preached to all he came in contact with, wrote letters to distant ecclesias, and even converted some in Caesar’s household.

Minute Meditation

She Did What She Could

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What a wonderful way to live! Not only is prayer something every one of us is able to do, but the peace of God will fill our hearts and we will be able to rest in our Lord. Are we praying regularly?

What else should we be doing in addition to praying? Each of us can do something more to serve our God every day, even though we each have different abilities. The prophet Micah tells us, “and what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.”

To walk humbly with our God, means we have to get up and get going, moving our feet while asking God to guide us. He cannot guide our feet if we just sit around all day. We need to travel in God’s direction, as the wise man Solomon explains, “Trust in the LORD with all your hearts and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct thy paths.” We need to find a path, a godly path, to serve our God in our daily life. Even if we are bedridden or in a wheelchair, we can figuratively move our feet as we look for ways to serve our God. Most of us can manage cards, letters or phone calls to give encouragement to others who are lonely or stressed or in need. Paul, under house arrest in Rome and not able to move around freely, preached to all he came in contact with, wrote letters to distant ecclesias, and even converted some in Caesar’s household.
Brethren and sisters confined to the hospital have preached to their doctors, nurses, roommates and visitors. Surely those of us in better health can do more. God knows all about us, even to how many hairs we have, which for some of us is not many, but still it is more than we know. He knows what we can do, and He expects each of us to do that. We should not limit ourselves. We need to ask our Heavenly Father to guide us and then get moving, looking for something we can do and then doing what we believe He wants us to do.

Micah also tells us we must be just in all our dealings with others and we must be merciful. We are told that we will be shown as much mercy by the Lord as we have shown to those we deal with. In the Lord’s Prayer we ask for our sins to be forgiven as we have forgiven others. Based on these criteria there are some who will receive little or no mercy because that is how they have treated others. Even when we are in the right and others are wrong, those in the wrong are also God’s children that we can try to help, knowing that God is not willing that any should perish but that all come to repentance. James tells us: “He who converts a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall cover a multitude of sins.”

Another point Micah makes is humility; we are to walk humbly. If God is doing the guiding of our feet, we know we will walk humbly for we cannot take credit for the way God is guiding them. After all, we have asked Him to direct our steps, so how can we be proud of where He is taking us? Paul tells us, “For who makes you different from anyone else? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as though you did not?” We need to give our best effort to our work for the Lord, but recognize that the outcome is the Lord’s, and to God be the glory.

Doing what we can may change over time. Certainly what many of us are able to do now is not the same as it was years before; the years go by, and our strength and capacity for work may seem so much less than what they were 20, 30, 40 or even 50 years ago, but still there is something we can do. After turning our life over to God in prayer and asking Him to direct our steps, we will discover that we will be able to do “what we can” for Him. And it will be something. It cannot be doing nothing, for God will be directing us to do justly and love mercy and walk humbly before Him.

Robert J. Lloyd

She Hath Done What She Could
DECEMBER 2014
13 Toronto Church St., ON Study Day at Church Street Ecclesia, 728 Church St., Toronto, ON. Start time: 10am. Speaker: Bro. Brian Luke (AUS) on “The Atonement”. Please register for lunch with Bro. Peter Wisniowski peteresa@hotmail.com or 416-695-3939.

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.
17 Toronto Church Street, ON Study day, three part study by Bro. Jim Dillingham (Cranston, RI). Starting time: 1 pm. Dinner 5 pm. Follow up exhortation/lecture Jan. 18. Please register with Bro. Peter Wisniowski peteresa@hotmail.com or call 416 695-3939.

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

APRIL 2015
2-5 Pacific Northwest CYC Conference at Camp Pringle on Shawnigan Lake. Bro. Ryan Mutter (Baltimore, MD) will be speaking. His theme will be, “As it was in the Days of Noah”. For further information please contact Bro. Mike McStravick at mtmcstravick@gmail.com.

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