

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

Vol. 78

September, 2015

No. 8

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# The CHRISTADELPHIAN TIDINGS of the Kingdom of God

Peter Hemingray, Editor

The CHRISTADELPHIAN TIDINGS of the Kingdom of God (USPS 107-060) is published monthly, except bimonthly in March-April, by The Christadelphian Tidings, 643 Remuda Dr., Glendora, CA 91740-4581. PERIODICALS POSTAGE PAID at Glendora, California and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Christadelphian Tidings, P.O. Box 91781, Austin, TX 78709-1781.

Tidings Publishing Committee: Joe Hill (Chairman), John Bilello, Peter Bilello, Steve Cheetham, Ken Curry, Randy Davenport, Clive Drepaul, Kevin Flatley, Duncan Kenzie, Ted Sleeper, Ken Sommerville, Jeff Wallace.

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Subscriptions and Finances: Kathy Hill. Printing and Mailing: Brian McDonald. Webmaster: Peter Bilello.

The Tidings is published on the 25th of the month for the month following. Items for publication must be received by the 5th of the month. Correspondence to the editor: Peter Hemingray, 3079 Kilburn Rd. W., Rochester Hills, MI 48306-2915, or by e-mail to editor@tidings.org. Publication of articles does not presume editorial endorsement except on matters of fundamental doctrine as set forth in the BASF. Letters to the editor will only be accepted via e-mail to letters@tidings.org. Please include your name, address, e-mail address, and contact phone numbers. Submissions under 300 words are encouraged — the magazine reserves the right to edit all submissions for length and clarity. Copyright 2015, Tidings Publishing Committee. Reproduction in whole, or in part, without permission is prohibited.

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## Subscriptions

**USA: \$24, Canada: \$32.** Checks payable to *The Tidings* and sent to P.O. Box 91781, Austin, TX 78709-1781. Tax-deductible donations may be sent to the same address. Changes of address and other subscription matters to Kathy Hill at the above address, or by e-mail to kathytidings@aol.com. **Australia: \$39.** Checks to Fran Caudery, 9 Eycot St., Kilsyth South, VIC 3137. **New Zealand: \$39.** Checks to David Jackson, 13 Byron St., Trentham, Upper Hutt 5018. **South Africa: R150.** Checks to Anthony Oosthuizen, P.O. Box 50357, Durban 4062. **United Kingdom: £18.** Checks to Malcolm Cross, 43 Kirkby Rd., Ripon HG4 2HG.

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## Sunday School – Appeal for Contributor

*As any reader of this magazine will have realized, for several years our Bro. Jim Harper has contributed a monthly series of articles under the general title "The Joy of Sunday School". Since its start in May 2010, Bro Jim has written, or encouraged others to write, on a whole range of subjects relating to this vital topic. As pointed out in the first article, the first Sunday school was started in England almost 150 years ago, and since then many tens of thousands of our school students have been baptized into Christ. After all, Paul wrote:*

*"For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?" (Rom 10:13-14).*

*In our times, we have several lesson plans for teachers, and a few magazines aimed at students, but almost no help for those who work with our students. As Bro. Standeven put it: "As soon as belief changes one's personal way of life, it becomes vital to pass on to others the joy, knowledge and experiences it involves. One becomes a teacher with a clear message to give."*

*Bro. Jim feels the time has come to pass on the responsibility of editing and contributing to this section to others. So we are grateful for his work in this area, and are now appealing for any Brother or Sister who might feel able to contribute. Please contact the editor as above if you can help.*

## Editorial

### My Old Battered Bible

#### My Bible



My Bible needs really needs to go to a nursing home, or perhaps be subject to the book equivalent of a mercy killing. I doubt it could be revived, even by the best bookbinder's care. The gold on the edges of the pages has faded to dingy yellow, the leather cover has a shiny worn look, and the embossed words on the binding are almost invisible. I smile when I remember that this is the "New" Revised Standard Version.

I bought this Bible 25 years ago at the Christadelphian Office in Birmingham, England, and it replaced a similar but much less expensive one, which I purchased when I was a student. Due to somewhat unusual circumstances, I was not exactly penniless as a student: I remember Bro. LG Sargent, the editor of the Christadelphian magazine at the time, being surprised and perhaps a little envious that I had bought a copy of the Jerusalem Bible when the Christadelphian Society at the University was studying the Apocrypha. As a Catholic Bible, it had this content, and my sister had recommended it as she had some experience with the French version from which it was derived.

However, in 1981 I was quite gainfully employed, so I bought the most heavy duty version I could find, hoping it would serve me well. Indeed it has, being in my "Bible bag" almost continuously since. It has seen several hymn books come and go, as well as many Bible bags. There is cellophane tape over many of its torn pages, which I assume is a testimony to my favorite passages. (Why do only Bibles use this tissue-thin paper?). It perhaps has been protected more than many Bibles in our community, because I use pencil, usually dislike underlining, and am somewhat sparing in what I put in. But many pages are dog-eared, and I must admit some of the notes have gotten erased over the years — but still many question marks remain. I don't always remember a chapter-and-verse citation, but I usually remember where that verse can be found on a page of this old Bible.

I should get another copy, but I can't bring myself to put this so old book on the shelf. The older my Bible becomes, the deeper it travels into my heart. That's not because there haven't been new suitors. It was not the first Bible to attempt to capture me, and one of the penalties of being a little bit of a Bible student is that you tend to buy most of the new versions to compare.

I was brought up in a normal Christadelphian home, if there is one, with my father being for quite a while the Recording Brother of a large meeting, and I had the

opportunity to hear many prominent brethren give excellent exhortations and lectures, a few I still remember. They certainly must have influenced me in ways which, as a normal teenager, I did not appreciate at the time. But they all affected me and served to drive the reverence for the Bible into my psyche.

## University

University was disruptive, as it often is. But during those formative years I must have developed a sense that the book was something I would now call something more than just a collection of paper: something to rely on. I was an engineering student, but somewhat naturally got involved with the religious studies department and developed many friends among its students, as well as an appreciation for the knowledge of some of its professors.

So I learned how to appreciate the current scholarship approaches to the text, although that was certainly my most difficult learning experience. In those days I sometimes felt as if my faith was dangling over a cliff, clinging to a branch. But I always came back to my Bible (then a well-worn pocket edition that fitted in my jacket.) So I was amazed to discover I fell easily only inches from where I started.

The more I understand about the Bible's dust-and-grit humanity, the more real it became as I finally appreciated the knowledge and wisdom of my father and his generation: after all, those times were a revolutionary period in England as well as America. I found that the Bible had even more authority because it revealed how God inspired humans, who stayed human when they wrote. Communities of faith, whose members have already committed every sin and faced every peril they could possibly experience, recorded in fallible ways the infallible truth of our redemption. That makes me love both God and ancient human words about God all the more.

I have long believed that the events and message of the Bible was passed down through many generations, before, through inspiration, it became the text as we know it. I realize that we have no idea who wrote the Epistle to the Hebrews, and I read some of the Old Testament without totally being able to appreciate its context and treatment of the numbers and details. But if my house were on fire, this old Bible is still one of the first things I would grab before running out the door.

I cannot discard it on the shelf of previously read books: I might have newer copies, but the old one is the one I carry on a Sunday. I might have numerous versions and many notes present on my laptop in my Bible bag, but my old Bible is the one I read from.

There have been many times when I could not sleep and finally surrendered to the restlessness and went into my study. There I pulled out my tattered old Bible and read words like, *"You have kept count of my tossings; put my tears in your bottle. Are they not in your record?" (Psa 56:8).* Then I could finally go back to sleep.

On the dark nights there is a reason that I don't go to my Kindle or my laptop to read those words of spiritual comfort. Just holding the cherished, tattered old book reminds me of what I believe in — a great faith that has persevered even though it's been tossed around with everything else.

## Person of the Book

I was thinking of doing this editorial on the way to use the numerous books that comment on the text, the people, the contemporary environment, and the message they present. To comment on the ones that discuss the doctrines of the Bible, the commandments of Christ, the history of the times, the history of our community, archeology, prophecy in all its details, but I find I come back to the text itself to draw strength and comfort. I read most of the magazines of our community, but often I find they make me think of other passages in the Bible. I read learned dissertations, written by those in our community and others. But I often find they seem to focus on the twigs on the trees, not even on the trees or the forest: they focus on the text with a microscope, but miss the central message. I find the totality of the message can only be grasped, at least by myself, by thinking about what the passage as a whole is saying: reading the words without comprehension is so easy, as we let the familiar words wash over us. I actually find it easier to focus on the content by hearing the passage read and thinking about the words: after all, I have certainly read them many times before. Listening is a skill, I believe: hearing is a physical endowment, but we are told:

*“And Ezra the priest brought the law before the congregation both of men and women, and all that could hear with understanding, upon the first day of the seventh month. And he read therein before the street that was before the water gate from the morning until midday, before the men and the women, and those that could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law” (Neh 8:2-3).*

And how many times did Jesus say *“He that hath ears to hear, let him hear”*. Let us not be as the Jews in Ezekiel’s time, of whom God said: *“Son of man, thou dwellest in the midst of a rebellious house, which have eyes to see, and see not; they have ears to hear, and hear not: for they are a rebellious house” (Ezek 12:2).*

## Concluding thoughts

The previous issue (August 2015) of *The Tidings* was focused on the topic “God has Spoken”, which demonstrated quite clearly the numerous proofs and evidences for its veracity and place in our lives. But I believe that close familiarity through intelligent reading and study of a particular physical Bible can help reinforce this message. We will become familiar with not only its words, but with the layout of those words on a page: be ready to turn to various passages because you might not remember the precise reference, but know where to find it. And have passages that are with particular insights, gathered in my case from both personal study as well as the study of others, both from within our community and outside.

So an old battered Bible still serves me well. I wonder indeed if it will continue to serve until the Lord returns, which we all hope will be soon.

*Peter Hemingray*

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

# Exhortation

## Poetry

*Cowboys*  
*World Explorers*  
*Honorable Samurai*

Almost all enjoy poetry, but, I never have. Last fall I made a decision to understand Poetry. I frankly hadn't understood or cared about poetry in my life. I found it hard to "get", and unapproachable. So, I bought "Poetry for Dummies" and started there. It has been a fantastic read! I have found I enjoy poetry much more than I expected, and have learned quite a few things that have had direct benefit on my life. But the thing that has stuck with me above the others, these last 6 months or so, has been the definition of "poetry" that I found in there.

Definition of Poetry in "Poetry for Dummies" is: The ability to read from words more than what the words may literally say.

I'm going to illustrate this with a poem by the Japanese master poet Kobayashi Issa,

*Morning:*  
*one deer licks*  
*snow from the other's*  
*coat*

This poem is *not* only a description of the interaction of two animals. It's the transference of the idea and feeling of spring, newness, kinship, and recovery, a delicate and sweet image of two creatures caring for each other in the wild, while still dealing with the harshness of cold. It's a masterful collection of so very few words saying so much.

I've been thinking that God's message for us is the same. God's message for the earth is large, beautiful, powerful, magnificent, all encompassing. In that previous sentence alone I'm making the point that God's message is too large for words. In a sense, His love to us *is* poetry.

*It is ideas that cannot be entirely transferred in words alone.*

God's salvation offered to us through the life and death of His son Jesus, **is a gift too large for words.**

God communicates this to us throughout the Bible, that to understand Him, we often need to understand more than what is literally being said. *Poetry speaks in more than just words. God speaks in more than just words.*

I want to explore how Poetry accomplishes this, being "larger than what the words say". And, we will find the Lord communicates in the same ways. In studying poetry, I have learned that the Bible has a ton of poetic styles.

We'll look at this similarity in three ways:

- Poetry is deliberate
- Poetry is contextual
- Poetry is emotional

Three concepts that are used or demonstrated in Poetry that God also uses with us.

### **Poetry is deliberate**

Even though God's message is poetic, as I'm saying, I am not saying it is unclear. I think God is so very deliberately clear.

One passage by Paul shows this: "... *the word of faith, which we preach; That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved*" (Rom 10:8-9).

So very specific on how we are to be saved. But in this clarity, we're left with much to respond to and think on. Verses as direct as this leave an impression larger than the words themselves.

Often, we do not recognize the poetry in the Bible as such: it certainly has neither rhyme nor rhythm, even in the Hebrew. However, Hebrew Poetry has many forms, the most interesting being Parallelism and the Acrostic form. The RSV in particular recognizes Hebrew Poetry forms: the Song of Moses in Exodus 15 is an excellent example. Note in particular verse 4, where the same idea is expressed twice in the two lines.

*1 Then Moses and the people of Israel sang this song to the LORD, saying,*

*I will sing to the LORD, for he has triumphed gloriously;  
the horse and his rider he has thrown into the sea.*

*2 The LORD is my strength and my song,  
and he has become my salvation;  
this is my God, and I will praise him,  
my father's God, and I will exalt him.*

*3 The LORD is a man of war;  
the LORD is his name.*

*4 "Pharaoh's chariots and his host he cast into the sea;  
and his picked officers are sunk in the Red Sea.*

*5 The floods cover them;  
they went down into the depths like a stone.*

*6 Thy right hand, O LORD, glorious in power,  
thy right hand, O LORD, shatters the enemy.*

*7 In the greatness of thy majesty thou overthrowest thy  
adversaries;*

*thou sendest forth thy fury, it consumes them like stubble.*

*8 At the blast of thy nostrils the waters piled up,  
the floods stood up in a heap;*

*the deeps congealed in the heart of the sea"*  
(Exod 15:1-8 RSV).

Psalm 119, on the other hand, is an acrostic poem, recognized as an amazing poem in its intricacy. 176 verses where 8 words (Word, Law, Testimonies, Ways, Precepts, Statutes, Commandments, Rules) essentially meaning the same thing, are used repeatedly in many ways. A very technically stunning poem, even *recognized in poetry for Dummies*. It is an example of an alphabetical or acrostic psalm, where the first section or line begins with the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet, the next with the second, and so on, until all the letters of the alphabet have been used. Thus, Psalm 119 consists of 22 groups of eight verses each. The number of groups equals the number of letters in the Hebrew alphabet. The first letter of each verse in a group is (in the original Hebrew text) that letter of the alphabet which corresponds numerically to the group. The NET Bible shows this clearly:

“א (Alef) How blessed are those whose actions are blameless, who obey the law of the LORD” (Psa 119:1).

“ב (Bet) How can a young person maintain a pure life? By guarding it according to your instructions!” (Psa 119:9).

“ג (Gimel) Be kind to your servant! Then I will live and keep your instructions” (Psa 119:17).

This deliberate style shows us that, even with a great amount of verses and words, there is no wasted words. God is direct and specific. He does not waste words. The English Bible as we have it in the KJV is normally written as prose (which just means any written word without metric or structure), but still it is a clearly designed message.

We have the famous memory verse: “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:” (2Tim 3:16). Poetry is the same way. I’ve learned this in writing poetry as well, when you write ideas down, the first step is to strip away all wasted words. Poetry has no wasted words. God also is deliberate and focused in his message to us.

Poetry, being deliberate and economical with words leads to the message becoming more than what has been said.

### **Poetry is contextual**

Poetry usually has context, words and phrases that you already know and understand, so, you can fill in more information in your head, without needing ideas re-introduced every time.

The ISSA poem from earlier, uses Snow and Deer, and the title “Morning” as things that we already know and have associations with in our heads. Poetry uses words and tools to trigger memories inside the readers. **God does this with types in the Bible.** The Bible is full of shadows, types, and reminders of things previously said.

Again, from Paul:

*“For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon*

*the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? As it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom 10:11-17).*

Here, God uses the idea of Jew and Greek so clearly established in the Old Testament as the context of how we need to transform from a people who understand that following a law of God, and earning our salvation as the Pharisaical Jews believed they could, to a law of Grace, salvation given despite our unworthiness.

*“For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance. For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief: Even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy. For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all. O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen” (Rom 11:29-36).*

This is the message of Grace we remember every Sunday, Jesus on the cross. This indeed was typified throughout the Bible, all poetic types of Jesus.

- The sacrifice of Joseph by his brothers,
- The golden serpent,
- Jonah in the whale.

Romans has all sorts of context around it: If we read Romans alone for the first time, Paul’s arguments would not be as effective. This message becomes more than what has been said, for the words are full of the context as Paul uses them.

### **Poetry captures and shares emotions**

Communication, as we use it, is imperfect. Communication is one person trying to share with another an idea OR an emotion. The problem is that we, as humans, only have very few ways to communicate. In speech, even this exhortation as an example, I am stringing together a few hundred words and saying them out loud. I am hoping that an idea that I have in my head, is being copied in all of your heads. But, we all know, that does not usually happen. Maybe, if you’ve been paying perfect attention, you have most of the idea I have in my head. However, you likely only have a small portion, and you also may not have been listening at all, and you might have 1% of the idea I’m sharing.

This exhortation is also the sharing of an emotion. I am blown away by the beauty

of our LORD and how He wants to share His love with us, through the sacrifice of His son, and my goal in this exhortation is to share that emotion with you.

One of the great powers of poetry is that, when understood, it draws an emotional response. Poetry causes emotions to be felt in us, without telling us to feel them. Remember the Issa poem we started with? Clearly an emotion of friendship and closeness has been transmitted: and by the way, this does NOT work by just saying “now, feel the warm feeling of friendship”.

The statement of emotions is completely ineffective.

*“We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain,” (Heb 6:19).*

God transmits emotions to us in the Bible over and over, and, even more beautifully, He does this to each of us in different ways! We all have different parts of the Bible that we feel particularly connected to. The assurance of the details of prophecy can be such a warm and confidence building feeling that we know comes directly from our Father. The life guidance found in the Epistles can be that feeling “directions we need from our older siblings”. The beautiful songs and poems in the psalms can be the expressions of comfort and worship that we feel when we know we are loved by God.

These different emotional responses we get from Scripture is another poetic way that God gives us His message from the Bible. By understanding the poetry of it, we understand more than what is literally said. The combination of this and other factors make Poetry.

## **Jesus**

Consider Jesus, who combines these three aspects in his life and in his words. He was so deliberate in his speech, his message was full of context, and he elicited an emotional response. *“Take eat, this is my body” (Matt 26:26)*. He spoke these words deliberately and clearly. These words were shadows and types, and we hear the shared emotion of an intimate meal with close friends in family, colored by the message of Christ’s sacrifices

*“And when he had taken the cup, giving thanks, he gave it to them, ‘drink from it all of you... I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of this vine from now until I drink it together with you in My Father’s Kingdom’ ” (Matt 26:27-29).*

We are all welcome to the Love of God in Jesus. That is message that says so much more than the words themselves, when we read them here on the paper.

Poetry has helped me remember to think on a different plane. God’s plane. We should all raise our thinking to understand that God’s message of love to us is deliberate. He uses so many ways to reach us, and all we need to do is listen, read, and understand. This bread and this wine is a Poem for us. This Poem results in salvation.

*Levi Gelineau (Simi Hills, CA)*

# First Principles

## Hope — (6) Isaiah's Visionary Hope

*"Yet those who wait for the Lord will gain new strength;  
They will mount up with wings like eagles,  
They will run and not get tired,  
They will walk and not become weary" (Isa 40:31).*

### Hope in the book of Isaiah has changed the world

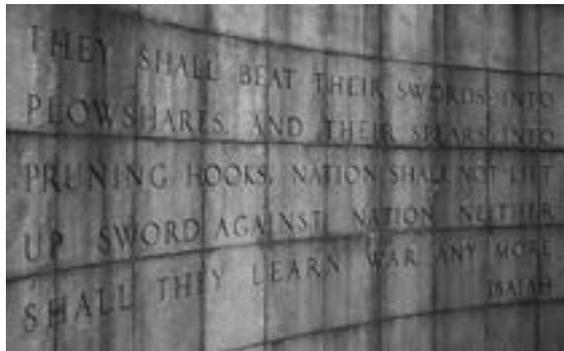


The United Nations was established post WWII as a world authority to manage international conflicts and end war. The U.N. has been headquartered in New York City since 1951 and many nations have given it historical symbols of peace. Surprisingly, it was the Soviet Union in 1959 that donated a sculpture with a quote that says: "Let Us Beat Swords Into Plowshares," (see photo). The sculpture is of a workman beating a sword into a plowshare and bears the Biblical quote from 28 centuries ago. Interesting, this gift inspired another monument not located on U.N. property, but positioned across the street to appease any nations that would be opposed to this Biblical quote. It quotes the full Isaiah verse (above) and is often misquoted as being engraved on one of the U.N. buildings. Appropriately, this site is now simply called "the

Isaiah Wall." It says: *"They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore."*

Isaiah was a major prophet who is quoted more times in the New Testament than any other Old Testament prophet. Jesus quoted Isaiah many times and alluded to his writings as well (Matt 5:4; 11:5; 12:18-21; 15:7-9; 21:5). Isaiah's name means "salvation of the LORD" and his message parallels that

of all prophets who acted as God's spokesmen to the people. The nation of Israel was steeped in sin at the time, and Isaiah had the unpopular job of rebuking and exhorting the people to change and obey Yahweh, the God of Israel. He gave a doom-and-gloom outlook for the people and their country, if they continued



in their wayward ways. Isaiah saw the sins of idolatry and declared God's will to repent for nearly 50 years. It was a challenging job for any man of God as he predicted one disaster after another.

However, Isaiah was also blessed to announce some of the most amazing visions of the future. Of all the books in the Bible, Isaiah gives more specific, beautiful and unique pictures of the future Kingdom of God. The Gospel of Isaiah — as it should be known — presents the true Bible hope regarding the King, the Kingdom and the eternal glory to be revealed. It is an uplifting prediction about all the goodness that God intends for mankind on His earth. It's a rare look into the reality of God's promises.

### **Isaiah and The King**

The book of Isaiah introduces all hopeful people to the personality of the Messiah. Other books in the Bible talk about what the Messiah will do, but Isaiah gives insights to his feelings and emotions (See Isaiah 53). Isaiah is contemporary with the great King Hezekiah, who became a savior to his people. Hezekiah overcame incredible hurdles through his Godly faith, and became a forerunner of the Messiah. Jesus comes alive in Isaiah. We learn about his virgin birth and his sacrificial death. We learn that salvation comes through the Servant-Messiah. Great expectations are given about the future arrival of the Savior, and his miraculous powers. Some of Isaiah's predictions were fulfilled during Jesus' time on earth, and others will be completed at his return. Here are a few glimpses into Isaiah's pictures of the future Messiah, King of Israel, and the whole earth:

*“Many peoples will come and say, ‘Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths.’ The law will go out from Zion, the word of the Lord from Jerusalem” (Isa 2:3).*

*“Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever” (Isa 9:7).*

*“The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn” (Isa 61:1-2).*

*“The Lord has made proclamation to the ends of the earth: ‘Say to the Daughter of Zion, “See, your Savior comes! See, his reward is with him, and his recompense accompanies him.” They will be called the Holy People, the Redeemed of the Lord; and you will be called Sought After, the City No Longer Deserted’ ” (Isa 62:11-12).*

### **Isaiah and the Kingdom**

Like virtually every prophet in Israel, Isaiah led a ministry of peaks and valleys. Isaiah prophesied during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah and

concluded with evil Manasseh. Isaiah lived at the time when the northern kingdom of Israel was conquered by Assyria and the people were removed from the land. He predicted the fall of the southern kingdom, Judah, as well and this was ultimately fulfilled by Babylon in 586 BC. Isaiah was tasked for many years with unpopular messages condemning the godlessness of the Jewish people. He had a job nobody else would want until the righteous King Hezekiah began to reign. He literally cleaned up the country from its idolatry and Hezekiah's kingdom became a symbol of the future Kingdom of God. The book of Isaiah is closely connected to Hezekiah's kingdom and points forward to Jesus as king of the greater Kingdom. Regarding this promised kingdom, Isaiah gives many gleams of



hope to encourage the troubled people. Those who have faith in Abraham's promises and in Isaiah's predictions are sure to inherit the good news in Isaiah about God's future kingdom. Isaiah said:

*"The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them... They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea" (Isa 11:6, 9).*

*"Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Then will the lame leap like a deer, and the mute tongue shout for joy. Water will gush forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert....*

*And the ransomed of the LORD will return. They will enter Zion with singing; everlasting joy will crown their heads. Gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away" (Isa 35:5-6, 10).*

*"Behold, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in what I will create, for I will create Jerusalem to be a delight and its people a joy. I will rejoice over Jerusalem and take delight in my people; the sound of weeping and of crying will be heard in it no more... They will not toil in vain or bear children doomed to misfortune; for they will be a people blessed by the LORD, they and their descendants with them. Before they call I will answer; while they are still speaking I will hear. The wolf and the lamb will feed together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox, but dust will be the serpent's food. They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, says the LORD" (Isa 65:17-25).*

Isaiah is considered the greatest of all Hebrew prophets. He left a bright gleam of hope that is just as relevant today as it was in ancient times. Isaiah wrote about a great King and his kingdom to come. He filled in the gaps in the promises to

Abraham and David with amazing detail and emotion. He prophesized about salvation in the promised Messiah and introduces us to the personality of Jesus Christ. Thanks to Isaiah, we have a living hope that can last forever.

“We could never learn to be brave and patient, if there were only joy in the world” Helen Keller.

“The Old Testament teems with prophecies of the Messiah, but nowhere is it intimated that that Messiah is to stand as a God to be worshipped. He is to bring peace on earth, to build up the waste places — to comfort the broken-hearted” Olympia Brown.

*“He will swallow up death forever. The Sovereign Lord will wipe away the tears from all faces; This is the LORD, we trusted in him; let us rejoice and be glad in his salvation” (Isa 25:8-9).*

### **The Bible says:**

- Isaiah gave detailed insight into the Bible hope (Isa 11:6-9; Isa 35).
- Isaiah predicted a great hope tied to the coming Messiah, King of Israel (Isa 9:7; Isa 61:1-2).
- Isaiah wrote unlike any other about the Kingdom of God (Isa 2:2-4; Isa 25:6-9; Isa 45:18).

*Chicago, Ill Ecclesia*

## **Doctrines to be Rejected**

### **(3) — The Necessity**

### **Introduction**

In the first of this series (*The Tidings*, June 2015, p223), we considered some of the objections to the inclusion of the “Doctrines to be Rejected”, and the reasons for their continuing inclusion. It must be emphasized that, indeed, these are a vital part of the glue that binds are community together by defining, in many areas, doctrines and teachings that are not part of our beliefs, and must specifically be excluded. They also include several commandments that echo some of the Ten Commandments of the Old Testament: Thou Shalt Not: (For example, join the armed forces).

It must also be stressed that there are three sections of our Statement of Faith: (1) The Truth to be received, (2) the doctrines to be rejected, and (3) the Commandments of Christ. Together, these three parts form “A Statement of Faith Forming the basis of Our Fellowship.” As it is this Statement that holds the Christadelphian Community together, the three parts are inseparable. There are reasons as well as Scriptural Precedents for a set of negative as well as positive statements:<sup>1</sup>

- The Ten Commandments summarizing the Law God gave to His people Israel is possibly the best illustration to be found anywhere in Scripture. The last five commandments are all straight negatives, introduced by the chilling phrase, “Thou shalt not...” But the other five are by no means wholly positive, even

though the effect of all ten should have been both positive and beneficial to the believing Jew. He was told, for example, to “Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy”, and that this could only be achieved if “in it thou shalt not do any work”. God also declared that He is “the LORD thy God who brought thee out of Egypt”, therefore “thou shalt have no other gods”.

- After the Law had been given through Moses to the infant nation, the implications of obedience were also emphasized. If God’s people obeyed His commands, they would receive abundant blessings, “in the city ... in the field ... when thou comest in ... when thou goest out”. However, if they disobeyed, not only would the blessings be withheld, but “cursed shalt thou be in the city ... in the field ... when thou comest in ... when thou goest out” (Deuteronomy 28).
- The examples are not limited either to the Law of Moses or to the Old Testament. When the Apostle Paul listed the attributes that should flow from a believer’s association with the Lord Jesus Christ, calling them “the fruit of the spirit”, he set forth the positive outworking of the gospel, saying that “against such is no law”. But this list is immediately preceded by another containing activities wholly incompatible with the new life in Christ. These, by contrast, are “the works of the flesh”. Only by placing side by side these contrasting ways of life could the Apostle declare so forthrightly the positive and constructive conclusion that must be drawn: “They that be Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit” (Gal 5:19–25).
- One final example, taken from the Lord’s own final message, must suffice in making the point that the Scriptures abound in negative definitions to strengthen and define positive truths. In summarizing the message of the Apocalypse, the voice from heaven revealed to John that, “he that overcometh shall inherit all things”. The measure of those who are the heirs of God’s eternal promises is shown by describing who will not inherit: “the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and idolators, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone” (Rev 21:7, 8).

### Relationship to “Truth to be Received”

1.	<b>That the Bible is only partly the work of inspiration—or if wholly so, contains errors which inspiration has allowed</b>	Foundation Clause
2.	That God is three persons	I
3.	That the Son of God was co-eternal with the Father	I,II,VIII,IX,X
4.	That Christ was born with a “free life”	VIII
5.	That Christ’s nature was immaculate	VIII
6.	That the Holy Spirit is a person distinct from the Father	I
7.	That man has an immortal soul	IV,V
8.	That man consciously exists in death	—

9.	That the wicked will suffer eternal torture in hell	—
10.	That the righteous will ascend to the kingdoms beyond the skies when they die	V I , X I X , XXIII
11.	That the devil is a supernatural personal being	—
12.	That the Kingdom of God is “the church”	XVIII,XIX
13.	That the Gospel is the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ merely	XVII,XVIII
14.	That Christ will not come till the close of the thousand years	XX,XXVI
15.	That the tribunal of Christ, when he comes, is not for the judgement of saints, but merely to divide among them different degrees of reward	XXIV
16.	That the resurrection is confined to the faithful	XXIV
17.	That the dead rise in an immortal state	XXIV
18.	That the subject-nations of the thousand years are immortal	XXVI
19.	That the law of Moses is binding on believers of the gospel	—
20.	That the observance of Sunday is a matter of duty	—
21.	That baby-sprinkling is a matter of duty	—
22.	That “heathens”, idiots, pagans, and very young children will be saved	XVI
23.	That man can be saved by morality or sincerity, without the Gospel	XVI
24.	That the gospel alone will save, without the obedience of Christ’s commandments	XVI
25.	That a man cannot believe without possessing the Spirit of God	XVI
26.	That men are predestined to salvation unconditionally	XVI
27.	That there is no sin in the flesh	V
28.	That Joseph was the actual father of Jesus	II
29.	That the earth will be destroyed	XIX
30.	That baptism is not necessary to salvation	XVI
31.	That a knowledge of the truth is not necessary to make baptism valid	XVI
32.	<b>That some meats are to be refused on the score of uncleanness</b>	—

33.	<b>That the English are the ten tribes of Israel, whose prosperity is a fulfilment of the promises made concerning Ephraim</b>	
34.	<b>That marriage with an unbeliever is lawful</b>	—
35.	<b>That we are at liberty to serve in the army, or as police constables, take part in politics, or recover debts by legal coercion</b>	

The ones in bold were added after 1883: one was dropped, which read “That Christ was of a different nature from other men”. It will be discussed later along with the previous one, #4, “That Christ’s nature was immaculate”.

This list shows that some crucial teachings, necessary for belief and fellowship, only occur explicitly in the list of Doctrines to be Rejected. And just because the doctrine refers to a clause in the “Truth to be Received”, does not mean it merely repeats it. For example, we reject in #17 that “That the dead rise in an immortal state”, but the clause 24, the “amended” clause says “That at the appearing of Christ prior to the establishment of the Kingdom, the responsible (namely, those who know the revealed will of God, and have been called upon to submit to it), dead and living—obedient and disobedient — will be summoned before his judgement seat ‘to be judged according to their works’ ”. It does not explicitly cover the state of the resurrected, and this was a subject of controversy and division in the 19th century, and still has echoes today as will be covered when we discuss it in due course.

Strong objections have also been made to the somewhat archaic language, particularly to clause #22, “That ‘heathens’, idiots, pagans, and very young children will be saved”. We will cover this topic in its turn, but we must realize that this simply reflects the belief we have, that understanding of the Gospel message is essential to salvation. Those totally incapable of rational thought (“idiots” in the language of #22) are, of course, incapable of understanding: it should be noted that this wording does not restrict the Father’s power to save whomsoever He chooses.<sup>2</sup>

*Peter Bilello (Ann Arbor, MI)  
and Peter Hemingray (Detroit Royal Oak, MI)*

**Notes:**

1. This section, and the table below, is based upon the “Studies in the Statement of Faith”, Chapter 11. Obtainable from *The Christadelphian* Office.
2. This phrase is quoted from some of the voluminous discussion regarding this topic, here as in *The Christadelphian*, 2009, p445.

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## ***Last change to Birmingham Amended Statement of Faith***

*That in Clause 35, under the heading “Doctrines to be rejected,” we insert after the words “in the army” the words “or as police constables.”*

*The Christadelphian, 1919 p 559*

# The Joy of Sunday Schooling

## Life Application Activities #2

Life applications put Sunday school lessons into practice. They are activities that address the important educational goal of becoming “doers who act and are blessed in the doing”. If this goal is not deliberately addressed, students may remain “hearers only” (James 1:25).

### **(1) “After fasting and praying they sent them off” (Acts 13:3).**

#### **Praying for the Bible Mission**

- Bring copies of *The Bible Missionary* magazine and/or *The Tidings* magazine (Bible Mission News section) to class. Have students read or listen to an article on the preaching and pastoral work that is currently going on in some part of the world. This can be of special interest if the students are familiar with some of the people or places involved. Pay close attention if an article asks for prayers. After reading the article, have your students generate a list of things to pray for and then lead them in a prayer for the missionary work.
- Provide your students with reprints of missionary articles from the magazines. Ask them to read these with their families during the coming week and have a family prayer at home for the work being done. Make sure parents know about this so they can give it their full support.

### **(2) “They had John to assist them” (Acts 13:5).**

#### **Supporting the Bible Mission**

- Write letters or cards to encourage someone in the mission field. Look through our preaching magazines with your students. Identify mission workers and families to write to.
- Plan a stamp cutting party. Collect envelopes from as many places as possible. Cut off the used postage stamps for the CBM. Be sure to leave a margin of envelope (about a quarter-inch / half-centimeter) around each stamp. Send the stamps to Jean Pearson, 1 Brook Vale, Bewdley, Worcs. DY12 1BQ, U.K. Write to Sis. Pearson and find out how this service has helped the Christadelphian Bible Mission over the years.
- Find out if a nearby Bible School conducts a “sale of goods” to raise funds for the Bible Mission. If so, have students plan and prepare something to contribute to the sale.

### **(3) “Barnabas and Paul” (Acts 13:7); “Paul and his companions” (Acts 13:13).**

#### **Cooperating in Service**

Paul emerged as the missionary leader. Barnabas accepted a supporting role.

- Create a list of things you can do to support others (at home, in Sunday

school, in the ecclesia, at school, at work) without demanding your own way. Ask each student to select one thing from the list to put into practice during the coming week. Share the results of these efforts the next time you meet.

- Ask your Sunday school families to talk about the roles and responsibilities that each member of the family contributes to the functioning of the home. Afterward, talk about the different family roles in class.
- Give your students a list of the serving positions in your ecclesia (Recording Brother, Finance Brother, Table Sisters, etc.). Discuss how each position contributes to the life of the ecclesia.
- Tell your students who holds these positions if they do not already know. Have them each talk with a brother or sister who holds one of the positions. Find out how the brother or sister perceives their duties? How do they see their role contributing to the overall operation of the ecclesia? Have students discuss their findings in class afterward.
- Alternatively, invite one or two serving brothers and sisters to come to your Sunday school class and talk with your students about the roles they play in the operation of the ecclesia.

#### **(4) “Sergius Paulus, an intelligent man, sought to hear the word of God” (Acts 13:7).**

##### **Seeking to understand the Bible**

- Encourage the families of your students to do the daily Bible readings *together* every day during the coming week if they do not already do so.
- Have the students write down one thing that interests them in each day’s readings.
- Have them bring their lists to class next week and take a few minutes to talk about their findings.
- Share your own highlights from the week’s readings.
- Sergius Paulus called for Barnabas and Saul to hear the word of God. Follow his example. “Call for” a knowledgeable brother or sister in the ecclesia to come to your class and tell you about a favorite Bible story or Bible subject. Find out why it is a favorite.
- Generate a list of Bible questions that your students would like to find out more about. “Call for” a knowledgeable brother or sister to come to your class and address one or two of the questions.

#### **(5) “Elymas the magician opposed them” (Acts 13:8-11).**

##### **Dealing with right and wrong**

- Ask your students and their families to take time during the coming week to identify things in the world around them that “pervert the right ways of the Lord.” Evaluate such things as advertisements, magazines, television, movies, websites, different kinds of entertainment, toys, games, stores, businesses, common teachings, accepted behaviors, etc. Create a log of things that promote unbelief and ungodliness.
- Discuss student logs in class next week. What is the standard by which a

disciple evaluates these things? What action should a faithful disciple take in relation to these things? The Lord struck Elymas blind. How can we “blind” these things as far as their ability to influence us is concerned? <sup>1</sup>

- Pray together for God’s help when it comes to making right choices in life.

**(6) “Men of Israel and you who fear God, listen” (Acts 13:16).**

**Preaching the word**

- Look at the book of Acts and identify ways that the gospel was preached in New Testament times. Then generate a class list of ways the gospel is being preached today. For example, look at the Ecclesial News entries in our magazines to see what different ecclesias are doing to preach the gospel.
- Also look at our preaching magazines, explore the This Is Your Bible website together ([thisisyourbible.com](http://thisisyourbible.com)), look at ecclesial websites and Christadelphian postings on YouTube, etc.
- Talk about the ways that preaching in our times is the same as it was in New Testament times and how it is different. What will you do with the list of preaching methods you have generated?
- See *Praying for the Bible Mission* above. Carry out the same learning activities for preaching efforts being made by your ecclesia or by other ecclesias in your area. Ecclesial news entries in our magazines often tell what individual ecclesias are doing to preach the gospel. Pray for them.

Please tell me about a life application activity you have done in your Sunday school or CYC. I’d like to share it with other *Tidings* readers.

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

**Notes:**

1. See Carol Linsenmeier, “The Philippians 4:8 Challenge, Teaching Teens to Evaluate What They Hear and See,” *The Tidings*, December 2013, pp.553-555; John Perks, “Media Literacy,” *The Tidings*, December 2014, pp.570-573.

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*The Bible Mission in America (CBMA) and the Bible Mission in Canada (CBMC) have common goals. Our mission, by the grace of God, is to help preach the Truth of God’s Word in the countries located in North America, Central America, South America and the Caribbean; and to encourage and strengthen our brother’s and sister’s lives in Christ with pastoral and welfare assistance. In these ways we assist in building ecclesias.*

- *Your donations make possible the (Preaching) efforts, in the western hemisphere undertaken by the many brethren and sisters who volunteer for short visits and long term assignments.*
- *We are the only “safety net” available (Welfare) for most of the ecclesias we serve.*

*(Extracted from the July 2015 CBMA Newsletter)*

## Youth Speaks

### The Death of Saul

#### The end

Blood stained the grass. It soaked the dirt — the same dirt that shook under the weight of combat. The air was thick with the sounds of warfare, shouts of victory, and cries of defeat — the resounding shriek of metal on metal, and the sound of lives claimed by the sword. In the midst of it all lay God's anointed, losing life with each breath to the arrow that had been guided into his flesh. So we find Saul in his last few minutes of life. Before we let our imagination witness his death, let's rewind the story.

The last few days of Saul are a sad story for any brother or sister in Christ to read, or, at least they should be. How easy it is for us to feel a sense of vindication on David's behalf when we read that Saul proves his ungodly and self-centered character to all by finally reaching death by suicide. I will put to my readers, however, that when we feel only this emotion we have severely missed the lessons left for us in the life of Saul. Of course we do feel relieved for David that his trials related to Saul are ended and that he will no longer be head hunted for simply being a faithful servant of the LORD. This feeling is appropriate.

When studying Saul's life from start to finish we can (and should) see a Brother in Christ who was called by the most high to be a captain (not a king) to God's people; to play a key role in the LORD's purpose. We see a man whose beginning was not perfect, and not too unlike many of our own beginnings; a man who faced trials that fueled his flesh to the point that it overcame him at times; a man whose consequences followed him closer than his own shadow; a man who was given opportunity after opportunity to repent and continue in his calling before his God. A man whose life is not too different from any brother or sister in Christ.

#### Saul lacking spirituality

All of us come to a knowledge of the truth at some point in our lives. Whether raised in a Christadelphian home or exposed to the truth of God's Holy Scriptures later in life, there came a point for each of us at which we became responsible to our Heavenly Father's great and high calling. Saul's start as captain of God's people was no different. While searching for his father's asses, Saul's servant informed him that "*there is in this city (Ramah) a man of God*" (1Sam 9:6). Take note here that it was Saul's servant that knew at least something of this man of God. Neither of them, however, knew the seer by name. Later in the chapter we see that Saul approached Samuel himself and asked the whereabouts of the seer's house (1Sam 9:18). Imagine the thought process of Samuel here. He had just been told in the preceding verses that this man Saul would be captain over the nation of Israel — a man who was so lost in his spiritual life that he didn't know a prophet when he saw one standing in a city with an altar during a feast time. The indication here that

Saul's spiritual life was in need of strengthening begs the question, of what things filled Saul's mind on a daily basis? It was not a knowledge of ecclesial matters as is clearly seen by his lack of awareness of Samuel and his role, as well as the feast that was taking place. Where was his heart? Where were his priorities if they were not on such spiritual matters? Perhaps his thoughts were on himself or his own endeavors. Evidence from Scripture throughout Saul's life seems to indicate that he was a man who was focused on the outward appearance and fleshly gain. After all, *"there was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he: from his shoulders and upward he was higher than any of the people"* (1Sam 9:2). The attributes that Scripture takes the time to mention about Saul are all outward, and the people noticed. In 1Sam 9:20 Saul is told that the nation desired a man like him to be their leader. They wanted Saul's outward appearance and his stature to lead them into battle against their enemies; to represent them. The nation, sadly, was not after his heart. God, however, was — just as much as he is after ours.

Saul's first attempts to be spiritual show us how little he had let the Word seep into his heart: *"... Am not I a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel? and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? wherefore then speakest thou so to me?"* This was Saul's response to Samuel's news that the people desired to have him as their leader, who was to deliver them from the hand of the Philistines. These words of Saul show us a man who was so humble and meek that he felt that surely Samuel had the wrong person. Or do they? Gideon has a very similar reply to the angel of God when he is told that God had chosen him to deliver Israel from the Midianites: *"Oh my LORD, wherewith shall I save Israel? behold, my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house."* (Jdgs 6:15). Saul quoted faithful Gideon here in his response to God's call. But, his response, unlike Gideon's, lacked truth. In 1Sam 9:1 we read that Saul's father Kish was *"a mighty man of power..."* The word here for power is sometimes translated *substance or wealth*. Saul's family was not least in the tribe of Benjamin! In fact, his family seems quite renowned. We see here Saul's ability to find spiritual words from the faithful that went before him. What we do not see is Saul adopting the principles found behind the words.

How easy it is for us to fall into the same trap as Saul! How often in our lives do we (even with the best intentions) find ourselves quick to put on the outward appearance of spirituality, to use the words we feel we *should* say, when deep down inside the principal is absent? This mistake is often seen in our lives in retrospect but God has a way of touching our hearts to open our eyes to these types of (sometimes) well intended shortcomings.

And so was Saul's start. We find him, like his father's asses, lost. The Bible stories were present, but the principles were not yet rooted — the same way that most of us begin our walk in response to our Heavenly Father's call: in need of much guidance and spiritual developing.

### **The early work of Saul as king**

In 1st Samuel 11 we have recorded for us an amazing work by the newly appointed king. Right at the start of his rule he pulls off a brilliantly spiritual act that renewed

the kingdom and gave the new king the start that he needed. When a desperate plea for reinforcements from the men of Jabesh-gilead reached the ears of Saul, he jumped at the call of duty to God's people, despite the lack of reaction from the rest of the nation. In fact, he rallied the rest of the nation to come and fight for their brethren in Jabesh. Perhaps Saul was encouraging the nation to avoid such divisions as lay in their history with Jabesh-gilead (Jdgs 20:1, 21:1-9). Or perhaps his heart was just being moved to care for his people: "*the Spirit of God came upon Saul when he heard those tidings*" (1Sam 11:6). Whatever his reason he brought the nation together in his mighty and spiritual act. Can we relate to Saul here? Just think about that feeling just after our baptism when we are so spiritually energized by our new commitment that no task in the ecclesia seems too big to take on. When no work is too daunting when it is for the name of the LORD? That short period before any real trials have begun to break us down so that God can build us back up the way he wants us. Saul's trials, just as ours, were fast approaching.

And come they did. In 1st Samuel 13 we see Saul's mindset goes back to self-focus and worldly gain. He took credit when credit was not due to him. Jonathan slew a garrison of the Philistines, yet conveniently, "*all Israel heard say that Saul had smitten a garrison of the Philistines...*" (vs.4). We see Saul progressing back to his old ways. Jealousy this time drove him in the opposite direction of God and spoiled his relationship with those with whom he should have been closest. Are we ever guilty of this same (very human) shortcoming? Do we ever let our own fleshly pride sneak up on us and rob us of our relationships in the ecclesia? Saul's focus was so much on his own gain that he traded his relationship with his own son for outward appearance and praise of the nation. Do we ever seek the outward appearance over genuine and godly relationships with those in our community? If we are very honest with ourselves, I think many of us will be able to think of times that we have, even if on a very small level.

Notice later in the chapter that Saul is actually given the chance to be like Jonathan. God worked that way with Saul. He wanted to be like others that he read about or witnessed and God decides time and time again to give Saul the opportunity to recreate those episodes and to be like those whom he looked up to or desired to be like. In verses 5-7 we see the Philistines now confronting Saul and his army to fight. The reaction? The people of Israel scattered in fear — hiding in caves and thickets even! Why so fearful? After all, Jonathan had just slain a whole garrison of the Philistines! But, the answer was in their leadership. Saul was their leader this time, not Jonathan. Saul had not disappeared into a cave to hide, but inside he wanted to — "*As for Saul, he was yet in Gilgal, and all the people followed him trembling.*" (vs.7). The people followed suit with Saul. That short burst of spiritual stamina mentioned a few paragraphs ago had come and gone. The real trials of life and Saul's calling now confronted him, just as they finally do for all of us.

We see in the next few verses that Saul again mishandled the situation and broke God's law when he took it upon himself to offer burnt and peace offerings rather than wait for Samuel as he had been instructed. So, how do we (or did we) react to those first few real trials in our walk? I am talking about the trials that introduced us to the molding power of our God when He, as the potter, pressed us so hard

that we were moved to change and conform to His ways. Did we handle them perfectly? Or were we, like Saul, caught off guard. I imagine most all of us learned the hard way in through those first few trials.

His relationship with his son continues a downward spiral in chapter 14 when Jonathan partook of the (foolishly) forbidden honey. We even see in 1Sam14:44 that *“the people rescued Jonathan, that he died not.”* This was after a royal decree from the king himself that stated that Jonathan should die! Saul’s own countrymen did not have faith in their king enough to trust his judgement or follow his royal commands. Saul had miserably failed his calling. Recall his mission — *“thou shalt anoint him (Saul) to be captain over my people Israel, that he may save my people out of the hand of the Philistines”* (1Sam 9:16). Saul had neither shown himself a worthy captain of God’s people nor delivered the nation. God constantly had to work through others to make this happen, as is seen in the next chapter when Samuel must step forward because of yet another of Saul’s failings when he spared Agag’s life. Saul did not see eye to eye with his God and that was evident. The next in line for the throne, however, did.

### **David appears**

*“...behold, he keepeth the sheep.”* This is the first description of David recorded for us in Scripture. This is where he is found when his great calling begins. It was quite a contrast to the now soon-to-be dethroned king who was found to have *“hid himself among the stuff”* (1Sam 10:22) when he was called forward to lead the nation. David looked after the ecclesia, Saul looked after himself. David put his best foot forward when called upon by his God, Saul has to be “fetched” (10:23), forced by the people to step forward. The first recorded words of David are also a great indication of his character: *“who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?”* (1Sam 17:26). Being completely focused on his God, David saw the battle against the giant as God’s battle, nothing of his own to bring him personal gain. At first, David’s character moved Saul to recruit him. He wanted his talent, his faith, his drive to use in his royal work. And David willingly served, as that was the type of man he was.

Everything was fine between Saul and David so long as David’s rank was far below the king’s. The jealousy began when Saul realized David’s potential was being noticed by the nation. In 1Sam 18:7 we read of David returning from the slaughter of the Philistines when the woman sang in the streets of Saul’s thousands slain and David’s ten thousands! The people continued to lose faith in their king as we saw earlier.

Now that David was present to fill in where Saul was lacking, Saul’s shortcomings were brutally exposed. There was no hiding his deficiencies now. He began to exist in the shadow of another. Saul quickly realized this as we can clearly see from his reply to the singing in vs. 8 *“what can he have more but the kingdom?”* The Jerusalem Bible translates this phrase *“he has all but the kingship now.”* Recall that Saul was to be *captain* over God’s people, but never a king. Saul can now see David surpassing him in this area and this drives his jealousy to rage and gives way to his mission of removing David.

Because the last several articles in this series have covered the life of David from his anointing up until our current topic, including the growing hostility from Saul toward David and the trials that ensued for both parties, I will not digress into the events already aptly covered by other brethren. Instead let's fast forward to Saul's last few days. It is in his final hours, and ultimately in his death, that the lessons of his life really hit close to home for any brother or sister in Christ.

### The final days of Saul

In 1st Samuel 28 we find Saul again confronted by the Philistines. Not much has changed for Saul over the course of his life by way of his spiritual development. We read in vs.5, *"And when Saul saw the host of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart greatly trembled."* This is a sad record to read. We read in 1Sam 13:7



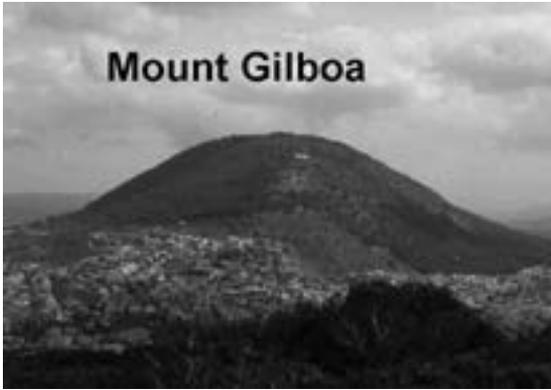
that he trembled at the sight of the Philistine army. After years of God trying to develop Saul's character through many opportunities (some created especially for him), he continued to tremble. Saul would not let God into his life. He was well aware of His hand at work around him and even in his own life as we are told: *"And Saul was afraid of David, because the LORD was with him, and was departed from Saul"* (1Sam 18:12). However, his stubbornness and self-centered

mind kept him distant from his God. In his final hours we read of his visit to the woman of Endor, a necromancer who, had Saul done his job thoroughly, should not have remained in Israel (1Sam 28:3). It was during that visit that he was given the message from God that he and his sons will be dead in 24 hours' time.

Imagine the impact that such a message would have on Saul. For all his personality defects and stubbornness to accept God, he knew the truth behind God's words and he did not doubt them. We would expect that God was finished with Saul at this point. After all, what was there left for God to work with? But God is not like us. He is *"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...” (Exod 36:6-7). We see God again giving Saul one more opportunity: a final 24 hours to give hard thought to whether or not he would remain guilty before God or change and let God forgive his iniquity. This would have been a solemn night for our brother Saul.



The next day brought battle on Mount Gilboa. Our beloved Jonathan and his brothers found death at the hand of the enemy, just as had been the message from God, and we find Saul where we left him at the beginning of our considerations.

Saul was alive enough to talk to his armor bearer and fear what the Philistines

would do to him. Fatal as his wound was, he wasn't going to die immediately. This was Saul's final opportunity from God. After giving Saul a final 24 hour warning, God found it in His heart to use the last precious moments of those 24 hours to reach out to Saul one more time. Even now as he lay bleeding on the ground Saul could have repented. The words of David come to mind: *"What is man, that thou art mindful of him?"* (Psa 8:4). Even when we have removed ourselves from the presence of God, He still desires that we would repent and have us return to Him. This was the story of Saul's life. But as is Saul's way, he committed his life to his sword and the grave rather than to his God.

*"And David lamented with this lamentation over Saul and over Jonathan his son:"* (2Sam 1:17). We have a beautiful song in the next verses penned by David revealing his innermost emotion towards Saul and Jonathan. *"The beauty of Israel is slain upon thy high places: How are the mighty fallen!"* The only way David could have recorded these words genuinely was by realizing the big picture — by understanding that the years he spent being chased by Saul belonged to God and he was using them to give Saul the opportunity to repent. That time was used for Saul's benefit and we find no malice in David upon his death.

I hope that after briefly looking at the life and death of Saul we can all see that Saul was not too unlike any brother or sister in Christ. We have all been called. We all become overtaken by our flesh at times. And we all experience at some time or another, to some extent, the same fleshly emotions that Saul experienced. Let us heed the lessons left for us in his life that we might avoid such downfalls as became Saul and instead turn towards our God in response to the great invitation extended to us.

*Jonathan Newth (Reseda, CA)*

# Bible Study

## The New Testament Church (3) The Structure of the Church

### Introduction

In the last Article (*The Tidings*, July 2015) we studied the way in which there are references to the Church in the Gospels, and we saw that the disciples of Jesus, in the period covered by the four Gospels, were not formed into any recognizable groups. They had no special membership. They had no churches in which they met. They went about with Jesus wherever he went, accompanying him on his journeys. The Church as we find it in the Acts of the Apostles, however, is clearly much more organized than this. It is no longer a disjointed society of disciples moving about with their Lord. It is now becoming an organized entity.

The embryonic church of the Gospels was brought to birth at Pentecost, and in the opening chapter of Acts of the Apostles we're told that they were to "*tarry at Jerusalem*" until the Holy Spirit came upon them, and that then, with the power of the Spirit, they were to go out into all the world and bear Christ's testimony to the whole of mankind. Now if we go to Acts 1:15, we immediately see that instead of a dispersed number of people who were disciples of Jesus, some of whom went around with him and some of whom did not, we now have all the disciples gathered together in one place. "*And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty...)*".

Just pause there for a minute. We have the number recorded of the disciples of Jesus. In other words, somebody must have counted them; somebody took stock. I do not say they had a registrar appointed, but there were "about 120" names of disciples who were recognizably members of the Church, gathered together in the upper room. Notice the definite article in the margin. Gathered together in "the" upper room, presumably the same upper room in which the Passover had taken place. And their names, or more exactly, the number of their names, is clearly recorded. There were 120 of them.

In Acts 2:41 we read: "*Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.*" So again they are counted. They know how many there are. I know it says "about," but to say "about 3,000" means that somebody had taken the trouble to number them; give or take one or two, we may suggest, there were 3,000 persons added to the Church on that occasion. So there are 3,120 now — members of the Church.

"*Howbeit many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand*" (Acts 4:4). Notice the staggering numbers here — 120; 3,000; now 5,000 — that makes a minimum of 8,120. And it says "*the number of the men,*" so presumably there were women as well who were baptized, but who

appear not to have been counted; or it may have been that only the men were there at the time listening to the word being preached. This we do not know.

*“And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of priests were obedient to the faith” (Acts 6:7).* So we have got 120 + 3,000 + 5,000, and now we are told the numbers “multiplied in Jerusalem greatly.” So how many thousands and thousands of Christian believers there were in Jerusalem by the 6th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles I do not know. But it is interesting to notice the numbers, and we shall have cause to refer to the tremendous numbers involved later on in our study.

Now we go back in Acts and read: *“And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty). Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas” (Acts 1:15).* He goes on to say that Judas having fallen by the wayside through his betrayal of the Lord, another apostle has to be appointed to make up the number of the twelve. It is clear that the qualification of apostleship here is *“those that have companied with us ever since the Lord went in and out among us.”*

Two things arise from this incident.

- Peter clearly, at this stage, was the leader of the Church at Jerusalem. Here are 120 members of the church gathered together in the upper room, and Peter stands up in the midst and obviously takes the lead, and says, “Now we have got to do something about it brethren, we’ve got to fill the place of Judas.”
- I think, though you may not agree with me, that we have here the first election of an ecclesial officer. That is to say, Peter advised the assembled brethren that one must be ordained who has the qualifications for apostleship; and “they put forth two.” Who put forth two? — the assembled multitude. It has been suggested that they had a ballot. That they said, in effect; “Now brethren, we need one brother for this office”; and there were two who were put forward by the assembled multitude. Two nominees for one office having an equal number of votes. And so they cast lots. Having two candidates for the post each equally qualified, each with their supporters among the church, they said, “Well, let the Lord decide.” And they cast lots, and “the lot fell upon Matthias.”

### **The first “deacons”**

Now we go over to Acts 6, and here we have what is generally called the appointment of the seven deacons. Now they are not called deacons in the record, and we shall have something to say in a moment about the office of a deacon in the New Testament, but generally these are thought to be the first “deacons” of the church. At any rate they were *“seven men of good report, full of faith and of the Holy Spirit”* who were chosen for the day to day ministration to the poor.

The business of administering the ecclesial largess, as it were, had become too much for the Apostles to manage. They said, *“It is not meet that we should leave the word of God and serve tables.”* “So now you had better appoint some brethren to do it.” And, again, “the Church” appointed them. Look at Acts 6:5: *“And the*

*saying pleased the whole multitude*”: and they chose Stephen, Philip, and the others. So who chose them? The Apostles did not say, “It’s you and you, and you and you and you.” That was not the way it was done. The Apostles said to the whole multitude, “*Look out seven men of good repute, and let them be appointed to this task*”; and they appointed them. And I suggest that, having in mind the tremendous growth in numbers which we have already seen described in the Acts of the Apostles, there would be no other way in which they, the multitude, could make these nominations except by having some kind of ballot system; some kind of voting. It is even possible, I would now suggest that there was more than one church in Jerusalem, and that it might have been representative of several churches who through their nominees made the recommendations as to the brethren who should till these offices. It seems a little incredible to me that such vast numbers of believers as are described should all be housed together in one church or ecclesial building in Jerusalem. (Certainly not in the Upper Room of Acts 1.)

Now we go over to Acts 15, to which we shall have occasion to refer on a number of occasions in these studies, because it is one of the wonderful little insights into the ecclesial situation in the New Testament times. Trouble has arisen in the Church at Antioch because Paul and Barnabas, having taken the Gospel to the Gentiles and founded the Church at Antioch, there are now “*certain men come down from Jerusalem,*” Judean Christians, who are saying (verse 1): “*Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.*” And in verse 2, it says, “*When there had been 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.*”

So, clearly, here we have a situation in which the Jerusalem Church is looked upon as being the mother church, and the Antioch Church is looked upon as being, shall we say, an off-shoot that has gone out from Jerusalem. And when the difficulties arose in the Antioch Church, they determined to send to the Apostles and elders at Jerusalem and ask their opinion on the new situation. Who determined? I suggest again that it is clear that it was the Church at Antioch. It was the whole body of believers, or their representatives. We could say it was the rank and file members who said, “Well, we seem to be in a lot of trouble over this. Let us send representatives up to Jerusalem to find out what the Apostles and the elders of the church at Jerusalem, think about it.” So Paul and Barnabas are sent up to Jerusalem on behalf of, as representatives of, the Antioch Church to discuss the problems with them. And in verse 4: “*When they were come to Jerusalem,*” (I want you especially to notice the next words) “*they were received of the church, and of the apostles and elders, and they declared all things that God had done with them.*”

“*They were received of the church and of the apostles and elders*” — so I suggest that it was one vast ecclesial meeting that took place in Jerusalem on this occasion. Whether it means, again, that all the 8,120 (or however many there were by now) were all present in one vast concourse, or whether through ecclesial representatives, cannot be known, but certainly the rank and file of the church were represented. It was the body of the church that met Paul and Barnabas, with the apostles and elders as their leaders. I would suggest that there were at least 10,000 souls either

present or represented here — in the Church at Jerusalem at this time. And to them Paul and Barnabas communicated the nature of the problem that they had come to discuss.

And, then, there were objections (verse 5) from the Judaizing element, those who had gone from Jerusalem to Antioch and were disrupting the faith of the believers. *“There rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed.”* Two interesting points here to notice in passing. First, *“a great company of the priests,”* we have read already, were obedient to the faith; secondly, many of the Pharisees apparently came to believe. Members of the sect of the Pharisees became Christians! Go back to the Gospels and you would think it impossible. The Pharisees were the ones who were always at the end of the lash of Jesus’ tongue, were they not? But some of them took notice. Some of them were affected, no doubt, by the wonderful news of the resurrection, and thus both priests and Pharisees are represented in the Jerusalem Church. But, of course, they had this tendency, and it runs all through the New Testament, to try to bring the church back to the synagogue; to say that belief in Jesus is one thing, but to turn away from Moses is something quite different. They wanted to have it both ways. They wanted their old prejudices concerning the Law to be carried over, as it were, into the new Christian church; and this was the nature of the problem that the church had to deal with. So verse 6: *“And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter.”*

### **Delegates discuss**

Now here a new point arises. First of all the whole church was there — the church, with the apostles and elders; and now it would seem that the apostles and elders went into some kind of committee meeting (as we should say). They seem to have said, “Well, we will talk about it and think about it, discuss it, and then report back to the church”; and this is exactly what they appear to have done. Verse 12: *“Then all the multitude kept silence, and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul, declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them.”* So the apostles and elders having considered the matter, in their position of responsibility for the leadership of the church, now go back to the whole meeting to report the situation; and Paul and Barnabas make their report to the whole church.

In Acts 15:13 it would appear that by this time James had taken over the leadership of the Jerusalem church, because he appears to have acted as president at this, what we might call, “business meeting” of the ecclesia. “After they had held their peace, James answered them.” And he summed up the matter in words with which we are all familiar, pointing out that Peter had already had this revelation from God, through the vision that was given to him at the time of Cornelius’ conversion, that he should consider no man as being common or unclean, but that God is taking out of every nation a people for His name. And then in the 22nd verse they summarize the whole thing, and a decision is arrived at. And I want you to notice how the decision is arrived at — *“Then it pleased the apostles and elders with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. And they wrote letters by them after this manner. . .”*

Now we know the kind of things they put in the letters. We need not go into that. It is not our purpose at this stage, though we may look at it later on in this series of studies. But what we are interested in is the way the thing was done. The apostles and elders considered it. They reported to the whole church. The whole church, with the apostles and elders, came to a decision as to what should be done, and the letter was sent out in the name of them all. It was “the church, with the apostles and elders” who sent out the letter guiding the Gentile ecclesias, for the time being, in the way in which they should act in this particular situation. And this is roughly the pattern we see in all the New Testament epistles.

### **The particular offices**

I want now to consider the particular offices referred to, especially in the Epistles, and see how this early pattern is reproduced and enlarged as the church grows. First of all there were the Apostles, the “special messengers” with overall responsibility for the activities of the church, being specially appointed by the Lord as those who had been witnesses of his resurrection. There is no real counterpart today, of course, to the Apostles. Notice in passing, that the Apostles were more than “the twelve.” The title “apostles” came to be applied, first of all to the eleven. (There were only eleven when Judas had gone, although the twelve are referred to. “*He appeared to the twelve,*” though there were only eleven in the number at that time.) Matthias was appointed to make up the twelve, but Paul in 1 Corinthians 15 said: “*He appeared to Peter, and then to the twelve,*” and later to “*all the apostles.*” So that “the twelve” and “all the apostles” are a separate entity. There were other “apostles” besides the twelve. We must take note of that. Paul and Barnabas in Acts 14:14 are referred to as “*the apostles Barnabas and Paul.*” Now they were not of the original group as we well know, but they were “apostles of the Lord,” they were special messengers with a special responsibility.

When we come to the second-stage-down, if we can use such a term, we have the bishops and elders of the church. “Bishops”, — the word is “*episkopoi*” and “elders” is “*presbuteros*” whence we get “the presbytery” and they seem to me to be fairly generally mixed up. I would think that at this time in the history of the church, in New Testament times, they are used interchangeably. Whether or not there was a distinction in their responsibilities I do not know; but, for example, in the Epistle to Titus we find that Paul uses the terms “bishop” and “elder” interchangeably. It could mean, of course, that all bishops were elders, but all elders were perhaps not bishops.

It may be that as the church developed, first of all the “eldership” was appointed, and then perhaps a particular member was appointed as the shepherd or “bishop” of the ecclesia, a little bit like, though not exactly like, our own arranging brethren and recording brother. The Recording Brother has a distinct responsibility, although he is ex officio one of the arranging committee. But in Titus we read: “*For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee. — if any man be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly. For a bishop must be blameless as the steward of God*” (Titus 1:5-7), and so on. So

here the bishop and the elder are one and the same person. Paul is describing the qualifications of the elder, and in justification of what he is saying he says, “*For a bishop must be blameless.*” The elders then, or the bishops of the ecclesia, I think were the rulers of the local ecclesias; probably adopted from the Jewish custom of having rulers in their synagogues.

Do you remember how in the Gospel narrative we have accounts of how “*the ruler of the synagogue*” handed Jesus the scroll to read on the Sabbath day? It was another “*ruler of the synagogue*” whose servant was sick; these were the “elders” of the synagogue, and it seems to me as though in the early church the apostles, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, adopted many of the practices and the customs of the synagogue worship. I suppose these elders would answer roughly to our own arranging brethren, and it seems certain that they would have been elected by the whole congregation.

Dr. Alvan Lamson<sup>1</sup> in his history of the church proves conclusively, from the historical narratives that he quotes, that the appointment of bishops other than by the individual ecclesia itself did not come until late in the second century. The bishops up to that time were always appointed, he alleges, by the ecclesias themselves, and this would be in harmony with what we have already seen in the 1st chapter and the 6th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. It is possible, as I have suggested, that in time one of the elders became a permanent “chairman of the committee” as we would say, and that he had the particular title of bishop, just as the recording brother may be thought of as the “leader” of his ecclesia today. That is to say that his function is not just to be a secretary. It is to keep a general eye on the well-being of the whole ecclesia; to give a lead to the arranging brethren; and to be responsible in a great degree for the welfare of each of its members.

And this is the very essence of the idea of a bishop, a “shepherd,” one who cares for everybody in the church. So we often speak today of an ecclesia as being “brother so-and-so’s meeting,” when we mean that he is recording brother of it. We do not mean that he owns it, but that it is associated with his name and with his work, and that he is the member of the ecclesia to whom the responsibility is generally given to superintend the oiling of the wheels and seeing that the thing runs along smoothly. This, as I see it, would be the comparison between the eldership of the New Testament churches, or the bishopric if you like, and the ecclesial elders today whom we choose to call arranging brethren, or some such similar term.

*Len Richardson*

Notes:

1. Alvan Lamson “The Church Of The First Three Centuries” 1865. (To be found on the Internet)

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*With the passing of Bro. Len Richardson, (on June 21, 1997 at age 81) the Brotherhood has lost one of the most colorful and popular speaking brethren of this generation, certainly one of the best known in this country and abroad. He was known for his logical appraisal and plain speaking on all issues closely affecting our community; his booklets and pamphlets, and published letters written during the last forty years. (The Christadelphian, 1997, p316)*

## Reflections

### “I’ve got plenty”



Seven miles from New Amsterdam, Guyana, is the riverside village of Sisters. Thirty years ago Bro. John Shako lived there, in a tiny shack amid the rice fields. He was very poor and entirely bedridden following amputation of both his legs. For a few years, until he fell asleep in the Lord, the New Amsterdam ecclesia made arrangements for breaking of bread in his little hut. The following is an exhortation which brother Shako gave on one such occasion in 1964. The brother who transcribed it — we never knew who it was — added a comment: Brother John emphasized each point enthusiastically by bouncing up and down on his bed.

*Editors, The Caribbean Pioneer  
(Submitted by Bro. George Booker)*

Welcome to my home, brethren. It's not a palace, but, small as it is, it's God's house, and it's His gift to me, so I am thankful. Why should I fret? The Son of man had nowhere to lay his head, and I can't say that. So I am better off than he was when he came to live and die for me. The bread is a bit dry, since the loaf has had to last me all week. But we can still say, "This is my body," and be joyful.

You know that I was very ill indeed, and never thought I would get through the illness to be here today. There were five operations, each one bigger than the one before. The strain affected my brain, and I became very depressed. Even when I did recover, it was only to find that I had no legs, and then I felt really low, and for a long I time fretted about my misfortune. "What about my bike? I'll never be able to ride it again!" Lying awake at night, brooding about such things as this made me feel even more depressed.

Then one day I thought of the verse, "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth" (Heb 12:6). Then He must love me! I must have lost my legs for a purpose. God made me! He could have taken all of me; but He didn't. It all seemed so different when I started to think like this. The Lord knows our frame, the psalmist said. And He knows best: He does what's right. This "natural body", this frail mortal frame,

doesn't count for much anyway, does it? Rich or poor, it makes no difference. Do what you like, say what you like, death comes to us all. Man comes and makes a lot of noise, then the next thing you know he's dead. Do you know, two Nobel Prize winners have come from this one little village,<sup>1</sup> and they are famous. But Mr. Nobel, whoever he was, won't save them. He can't give them eternal life. I'm a lot better off than they are, because I have Jesus my Savior. I have the Truth. What more could I wish for? The main thing is to face death with confidence.

I used to be afraid of death, but I'm not now. I've got more faith now without legs than when I had two. I've got more faith now than when I could walk, because I didn't seem to need faith so much then. Even when I first learned the Truth, it seemed like words. But now it is practical and living, because I feel it in me. That is why hardship, and problems, and suffering are good, for they make us feel that this life is nothing, and God is everything. I must live so that when I die, I am sure of life. No suffering can compare with the promise of glory which is before us. Isn't that what those emblems on the table here are telling us right now? Some of those worthies mentioned in Hebrews 11 really suffered, yet they are certain of life. Even if they didn't start off poor, most of them were poor before they finished the race. So what does it matter if we are poor anyway? There's the challenge for us if we want the promise of God to come true. Doesn't it say that Jesus was rich, but for our sakes he became poor (2Cor 8:9)? Why should we expect a different road to the same reward?

Just think what a wonderful thing it is that the God who makes those beautiful clouds out there, and the sweet wind that blows through my little house every day, is concerned with you and me. I've got plenty, plenty — I'm so happy, thanks to God. Funny, but a lot of people are just too busy ever to stop and count their blessings. He is good to everybody, but I think I've experienced His love more than most. That's why I would never be weary of talking about His goodness.

It's time to break bread. I look forward to this more than anything else in my life. Tell me, how can any brother start a week without it? It brings us to our senses. It tells us what's real and what's just temporary and passing. Come, brethren, share it. It will make you just want to jump for joy.

*“For Christ is like a single body with its many limbs and organs, which, many as they are, together make up one body. For indeed we were all brought into one body by baptism, in the one Spirit, whether slaves or free men, and that one holy Spirit was poured out for all of us to drink. Now you are Christ's body, and each of you a limb or organ of it” (1Cor 12:12, 13, 27).*

*John Shako (New Amsterdam, Guyana).  
From Caribbean Pioneer, Nov 1993, pp. 2,3*

**Notes:**

1. Evidently Brother John is referring to the Guyana Prize for Literature, which has been won by at least two residents of New Amsterdam. Sometimes this prize is called “the Nobel Prize of the Caribbean” (GB).

# History

## The Christadelphian Evangelist

### Introduction



One of the most unusual magazines of the panoply of Christadelphian Magazines is one called “The Christadelphian Evangelist”, published briefly in New York over a hundred years ago. It was the start of what was intended to be an attempt at a major outreach to the colored race of the city, and this effort did indeed appear to succeed for a few years. The magazine appeared only briefly, as far as I can tell: I have only been able to locate three issues, all from 1906, and although the outreach continued for a little while and even extended down to Richmond, VA, few traces can now be found of the work.

So I looked through the few issues of the magazine I found, and some of the other related events, so I believe we can piece together this little history and its brief existence.

### The main participants

There were two main brethren involved, both colored but clearly from different backgrounds. William Nelson appears first, moving from Washington, DC. Sometime after 1900, one Lionel Benjamin came from British Guiana (now Guyana), and joined in the work with Bro. Nelson. They reported their initial success to the Boston Fraternal Gathering in 1904, and Bro. Nelson spoke at the New England Fraternal Gathering held in Worcester in September 1905. Shortly afterwards, on September 10, the first ecclesia of the “Christadelphian Ecclesia” was established at 218 West 60th St, NY, which was the work of the Christadelphian Evangelical Association, founded a year earlier. The objectives of the association were, and I quote

Its objects are in the main: 1. The conversion of Negroes in the hope of the gospel. 2. To establish and oversee negro Ecclesias D.V. throughout these United States. 3 To unify and mutualize these through one central government and so insure permanency, efficiency and strength. It regards as a thing most sacred the unity of “the one body”. The fixed policy of its ecclesial department, under the control of Bro. Benjamin, is to promote and to maintain fraternal relations with all ecclesias and brethren in a manner that will not compromise its principles, confound its individuality or the nature of its character, or conceal its true motives. Brethren who shall read this and who may desire to know more about this movement, are cordially invited to address their inquiries direct to the office of the C E.

Association, Dept, of Ecclesias No 227 W 63rd street. They should be clear, distinct and definite. To all prompt and respectful attention is guaranteed.<sup>1</sup>

It was not long, however, before the two brethren separated: we first turn to the efforts of Bro. Nelson

### **William Nelson**

This account appears in the history of the Washington, DC ecclesia.

“In 1898, Brother William T. Nelson moved from Richmond, Virginia and joined the Washington DC ecclesia. He and Brother Louis Ray became good friends. Brother Nelson would stop by the Ray home on Sunday mornings and Brother and Sister Ray, with their son and daughter and Brother Nelson, would walk together to the meeting. As time went on, rumors developed in the neighborhood that their 16 year old daughter had a colored beau. At the time, this was construed as saying she was a girl of low morals. Brother Ray, realizing that he had to protect the reputation of his daughter, discussed the situation with Brother Nelson. With tears streaming down their faces, they decided to take their pleasant walks together no longer. Shortly thereafter, Brother Nelson moved on to New York City, and in 1899 opened an employment agency there, as well as commencing an ecclesia. According to reports, he made a particular point of inviting job seekers to his lectures and classes. Brother Nelson was the brother who reported that President Abraham Lincoln came incognito to hear Dr. Thomas preach, although this account is unverified in the voluminous Lincoln literature.”<sup>2</sup>

By the end of 1906, Bro. Nelson had maintained good graces with the New York ecclesia, and in August of that year he produced the first of his magazine “The Christadelphian Evangelist”. In the three issues to hand, much of it is devoted to the description of a “Southern Trip” to Richmond, VA, basically to lecture to the little ecclesia which met in Rio Vista, now located on part of the campus of the University of Virginia. Clearly little came of this attempt at outreach, and it is uncertain what became of the efforts spearheaded by Bro. Nelson. It is clear at the time there was an ecclesia, mainly made up of colored members, in New York City. It is also clear that the major rift between him and Bro. Benjamin was never healed. Thomas Williams made a visit to New York, primarily to heal this rift. He commented:

“Upon Bro. Benjamin’s arrival in New York he united in the movement with Bro. Nelson and the work went on until there was quite a body there. Then a dispute arose and these two leaders separated, each having sympathizers and — yes, we venture to say, followers. Part of our mission in New York City was to meet these brethren and get the rights of the situation if possible, and show that our attitude was not because of prejudice against the colored race, though still not very sanguine of the real and permanent success of the Truth among them in their present state and status. We think we removed the misunderstanding of our attitude, but to remove the estrangement between the two leading brethren was

impossible. We spent some time with both separately, and heard enough hard sayings from each against one another to make clear that fellowship was out of the question, and any attempt at even union, to say nothing of unity, would end in total *failure*.

Bro. Nelson had started a paper in which to publish his doings, and he came to the conclusion that they had better be left to do the work among the colored people their own way without help or interference from the white brethren. This met our approval, since we confess that if the movement requires the ways, means and manner followed, and published in Bro. Nelson's paper, we could not give place thereto in the pages of the *Advocate*. The trouble between the two hostile brethren, so far as we were concerned, reduced itself to a question of veracity. So there they are, at work separately, Bro. Nelson with quite a number, Bro. Benjamin with very few, the former with the ostentation which he says is adapted to the race; the latter seemingly more humble with much less success — at least, so far as numbers are concerned.”<sup>3</sup>

However, after this was published, and Bro. Nelson's rebuttal later that same year of 1907, there is no further trace of Bro. Benjamin or of his little ecclesia. Sadly, it was many years before the Truth was revived in New York, although the ecclesia in Jersey City, anchored by Sis. Lasius, John Thomas' daughter, maintained its own viable light stand.

### **Lionel Benjamin**

Although in 1907 Bro. Williams reported that Bro. Nelson had the largest group, this clearly was short-lived, because intelligence from New York over the next few years showed that Bro. Benjamin was the leader of the New York ecclesia: he wrote an article in *The Advocate* in 1908, and in 1909 was recorded as being the mainstay of the New York ecclesia, which numbered twenty-three. He also visited England, and perhaps as a result several pieces of intelligence from New York appear over his signature in *The Fraternal Visitor*<sup>4</sup>. This, not surprisingly, resulted in a reproof from Thomas Williams, as *The Advocate* was not at the time in fellowship with *The Fraternal Visitor*. There were several accounts of the success of the ecclesia, including an outreach to the Italian immigrant community over the next few years, until 1911.

Nothing more is heard from Bro Benjamin until his removal to Philadelphia, in 1915, where he remained until his death in 1929. He remained faithful to the end. His death and time in Philadelphia is recorded:

“Philadelphia, PA... Bro. Benjamin had been a member of our ecclesia since January , 1915, having for some time prior to that been engaged in proclaiming the Truth in New York City, where at one time a large ecclesia of colored brethren and sisters existed. He was well known in England, where he visited in 1910 and lectured at various places. The present writer was in England in 1924 and heard pleasing references of Bro. Benjamin's visit. He had not been in good health for a considerable time, and about a

year ago was in hospital for several months. About three weeks before his death he went to the hospital again and fell asleep on Monday, August 12th, the cause being uremia, with chronic nephritis and chronic myocarditis. He was laid to rest at Sham Hill, a suburb of Philadelphia, on August 16th. He was 57 years of age and learned the truth in British Guinea (sic) where he was born. He leaves a sisterwife and three children”<sup>5</sup>

Thus ends the last remnant of the activities in New York that produced such an unusual magazine. Perhaps we might close with the comments by Bro. Roberts on the wisdom of such an outreach to such a segment of our society.

“The Christadelphian Evangelist, “Devoted to the Evangelisation of the Coloured Race” (New York). By the “coloured race” is meant the negroes. We decline to recognise distinctions of colour and race “in Christ.” The movement is a mistake. But no doubt the promoters mean well, and things find their level in the long run.”<sup>6</sup>

*Peter Hemingray (Detroit Royal Oak, MI)*

**Notes:**

1. *Advocate*, 1905, p 351.
2. See “History of the Washington, DC Ecclesia” by Ron Hicks
3. *Advocate*, 1907, p 82.
4. This was the magazine of the group that split off over “Partial Inspiration” in 1885: it ceased publication in 1956 after the split was healed.
5. *Advocate*, 1929 p 282.
6. *The Christadelphian*, 1907, p 572.

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**New York.** Bro. Lionel Benjamin writes: *It is with a deep sense of gratitude we acknowledge the generous sympathy and encouragement variously expressed by fellow workers so remotely situated as Great Britain. On the 1st ult. our hearts were made glad by the company of three “Masonic Hall” brethren at the table of the Lord, viz., J. Faulkner, W. Harton, and J. Jackson, who, it may not be out of place to note in passing, are occupying quarters in the newly-acquired building. Words of exhortation were impressively spoken by the last-named brother. On the same occasion an Italian convert, instructed and immersed by Bro. Garritti, was received into fellowship. The services on this date were rendered unique in the history of the work of the Truth in New York by the fact that they were part in English and part in Italian, there being about eight of the latter nationality present. At the conclusion the presiding brother (A. L. Benjamin) said he had been reminded of the Pentecostal outpouring of the Holy Spirit, when every nationality then present heard the Gospel preached in its native tongue, and thanked and congratulated Englishmen, Americans, and Italians for the striking example of mutual forbearance, as indicated by the manifest and well sustained interest of all present. There were also present three other visiting brethren. Since the mixed demonstrations above noted our Italian fellow laborer (Bro. G.) has, under God, led two others of his nationality (one a former Seventh Day Adventist minister) from darkness into light. That these services exerted a powerful influence cannot be doubted. Present mixed membership 13.*

*The Fraternal Visitor, August 1911, p. 255.*



## Bible Mission News

### Visit to Chile

At the end of the road that runs down the western coast of South America is the city of Puerto Montt, Chile. It is a long way from anywhere, however, we live in an age when Distance has lost much of her power. Our friend in Puerto Montt who met us via Facebook, read about us in [www.labiblia.com](http://www.labiblia.com), studies with us on



**Daniel**

Skype, and occasionally receives a letter from us in the post, is a good example of how the call of God's word isn't fussy about the medium.

It was a highlight to be able to meet Daniel in Puerto Montt during a brief visit to Chile in

March of this year. The stop to see Daniel was well timed as the following day Volcán Calbuco erupted. Chile — which is essentially a country defined by one long fault line — regularly experiences earthquakes and eruptions. Calbuco is about 20 kilometres from Daniel's house and can be seen from his front door. It closed down the airport.



**Volcán Calbuco Eruption**

This visit also provided the opportunity to meet with the small ecclesia in Santiago and with Brother and Sister Polo and Ester who live in the city of Temuco, about halfway between Santiago and Puerto Montt. Bro. Polo is currently working



**Polo and Ester in Temuco**

in Calama in the north of Chile which means that the brethren and friends are spread over 2500 kilometres from north to south. Distance flashes her claws.

As we do with all our isolated brothers and sisters, we pray that our common faith binds them with us in a unity that disregards our separation.

*Written by Robert Alderson  
Submitted by Jan Berneau, CBMA/CBMC*



**The Ecclesia  
in Santiago,  
Chile**

## **Jamaica News**

We have enjoyed the fellowship of a number of overseas visitors this year, and several brothers have ministered the Word at our February Ash Wednesday Fraternal, the Easter Youth Camp & All-Island Fraternal, and the June Mutual Improvement Day. The CBMJ is thankful for this support of the Island ecclesias, arranged in conjunction with the CBMC.

We are sorry to report the falling asleep in the Lord of Sis. Udaphne McLeod on June 20, 2015, at the age of 82. She was in the Truth for 58 years and a long-time member of the Norwood, Montego Bay Ecclesia. Sis. Udaphne was actually the last active member of this ecclesia, which had no regular services for a number of years. She attended Island Fraternals up until about two years ago, when failing health prevented her from doing so. The rear property line where she lived in Norwood, was adjacent to the where the Norwood Ecclesial Hall used to be. She was a kind, loving and caring person who will be missed — always with a smile and ready to do the readings, and to remember the Lord through bread and wine when visited in her home — and she loved to sing! On July 25th sisters from several ecclesias across the Island met at Bro. Ray Arthurs' place in Negril for their annual Study Day, and one word was used to describe it — “Wonderful!” — seems we need to do this more than once a year.

*Keith Kinlocke, CBMJ Chairman*

## **A Visit to Three Ecclesias in South America May 2015**

It was a joy to see the brethren and sisters and friends in Córdoba, Argentina and especially to find Bro. Pancho Gilardoni as sharp and enthusiastic as ever at the age of 96. Sis. Julia Reynoso, 86, continues to talk the Truth to everyone she can, quoting the Bible from memory since her eyesight is failing. Two friends of hers, along with Sis. Teresa Suárez, participated in a couple of long Bible discussions in Julia's apartment. We were also able to have a long Bible class with Bro. Ruben



### **The Breaking of Bread in Argentina**

He attended the memorial service at Bro. Pancho's house and spent a day with us at the Barbozas.

Leaving Cordoba, we made the short hop over the Andes to Santiago, Chile, for a six-day visit with the ecclesia. It had been a year since our last trip and it was great to see all the members again, offer a public lecture and hold some personal Bible classes with friends. We met a Chilean lady, Angélica Gálvez, who has an interesting story. Taken to Manchester, England as a child, she found herself living next door to a Christadelphian family who took her to Sunday school. She kept up the contact sporadically as an adult and then when she moved back to Chile to live she got in touch with the brethren and has been attending ever since. Another returned Chilean is Sis. Eva Villaroel. She attended meetings while living in La Paz, Bolivia, and then was baptized on a trip to the US last year. Now she has moved back to Chile and is a welcome addition to the ecclesia. As an aside, an interested friend in the far south of this long, narrow country participates in the activities in Santiago via Skype. He is also studying for baptism (also via Skype) with Bro. Brydyn Melles in New Zealand. One of the positive sides of modern technology!

During a final week in Lima, Peru, we enjoyed the fellowship of the brethren and sisters and gave four public lectures. These attracted 11 adult friends and five children (taught by Sis. Jean), including for the first time a family of four who are close friends of Bro. Flavio and Sis. Gloria Carmona and their son Nahuel. For the breaking of bread there were 13 of us present, quite filling the little meeting room in Flavio and Gloria's house. Bro. Carlo Vergara brought along his wife Yesenia, who paid close attention and contributed greatly to the conversation afterwards. We had pizza for lunch and chatted until it was time to go back to our hotel for the afternoon lecture. We pray that God will continue to bless, encourage and prosper the little ecclesias in each of these three countries.

*Written by Jim and Jean Hunter  
Submitted by Jan Berneau CBMA/CBMC Publicity*

Barboza's wife, Roxana. She was greatly stimulated by the family's trip to the Ecuador Bible School in February and hopes to attend again next year, God willing.

We were intrigued to finally meet Bro. David Vine after hearing about him for many years. He's a young English brother who has been visiting Cordoba and other parts of South America since about 1998 and speaks excellent Spanish.

## Puerto Rico — Good News!

After a number of years of encountering difficulty in meeting with contacts in Puerto Rico face-to-face, our recent visit in May to this Island was indeed a blessing! Our main purpose was to spend some pastoral time with the four brethren — one in the San Juan area on the north side of the Island and three in Ponce to the south.



**Urayoan (contact) on left and Bro. Edgardo on right on balcony of his apartment, with central park in background.**

We enjoyed our first few days with Bro. Edgardo studying, in particular, keeping the Sabbath and the Law of Moses (a common misunderstanding) in preparation for a contact we were scheduled to visit — unfortunately the man cancelled last-minute. However, we were able to visit two other men the same day. Urayoan received us at his nice, airy, second story apartment in an older colonial-style home. He spoke very clearly and freely about his belief in Christadelphian understanding

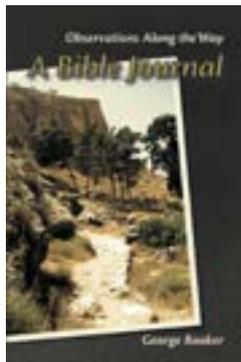
of the Truth — appears to have no problems and very happy to have found us. He has finished three correspondence courses with Sis. Jean Hunter in California. He showed Edgardo and me a big pocket folder with all his lessons and booklets he had received. He read sections from “Viviendo La Verdad” (Living the Truth) — thinks it’s a great booklet! He had a full hot meal ready for us when we arrived — a very pleasant man! The other man, Alejandro, met us at a MacDonald’s. He and wife were JW’s, but found too many false teachings, plus their manner of dealing with people to be unacceptable. He was very happy to have found us on [www.labiblia.com](http://www.labiblia.com). He wants to know more and more... and appears to understand demons of OT as idols and in NT as sicknesses, but wanted to have a fuller understanding. So we have a follow-up with both men. We pray that God will help us guide them to the Truth of His Word!

The last day was spent with Bro. Miguel and Sis. Aida in Ponce, as well as with their son Miguel Jr. They always appreciate visits and are very hospitable. The other brother, Robert, who lives nearby had a recent fall and was unable to receive our visit.

It was a short but profitable stay, and we pray that God will open the hearts of these few interested friends to the Truth of the Scriptures.

*Written by Don Luff, CBMA linkman for Puerto Rico  
Submitted by Jan Berneau, CBMA/CBMC Publicity*

## **Books from The Tidings**



### **Observations Along the Way: A Bible Journal, by George Booker**

*As the sequel to "On the Way", this book is the album of a spiritual journey, written for fellow travelers along the Way to the Kingdom. Its pages present in-depth studies and thoughtful exhortations, as well as lighter meditations and musings. The subject matter is wide-ranging: practical issues of life in the Truth, Bible exposition, biographical sketches, reflections on today's world, personal viewpoints, and much more.*

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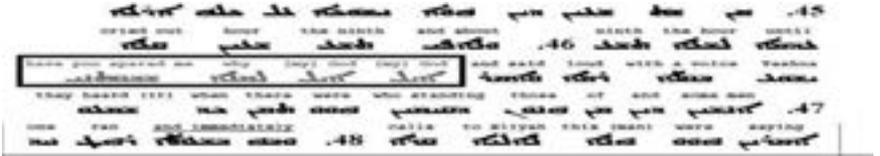
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# Letters

Dear Bro. Peter,

In the July 2015 Tidings there was a “filler” entitled “**Did God Abandon Jesus?**” by Bro. Tom Barling. He quoted John 16:32 “...yet I am not alone because the Father is with me”, but he did not fully explain Jesus’ seemingly disturbing utterance on the cross, namely: *how is it that the Father abandoned his own Son at the time of his tribulation?*

The answer to this dilemma is that Jesus never said, “*Why have you forsaken me?*” He said, “*Why have you spared me?*”<sup>1</sup> These words are straight from the Aramaic English New Testament (AENT), which is a translation of the oldest NT ever discovered, the Khabouris Codex written entirely in Aramaic. Regardless of whether the Gospels were first written in either Greek or Aramaic, no reputable person disputes that Jesus spoke to the people in Aramaic. Here’s the AENT text along with its footnote:



*“And about the ninth hour, Y’shua cried out with a loud voice and said, My El! My El! [Lemana shabakthani] Why have you spared me?” (Matt 27: 46).*

For many, Jesus’ last utterance is either understood as a cry of desperation, or a declaration of his Messiahship from Psalm 22:1; “*My El, My El, why have you forsaken me.*” Greek versions attempt to transliterate the Psalm as *Eli, Eli lama sabacthani*. However, the Aramaic Peshitta NT reads: “*Eli, Eli lemama shabakthani,*” while Psalm 22 reads: “*Eli, Eli lama azbatani.*” Both the Greek and Aramaic transliterations reflect the Aramaic as does the Peshitta. However, there is a key difference between *azbatani*, which only means “to forsake” and its Aramaic counterpart *shabakthani* which has multiple meanings including: **(1) reserve (2) keep (3) spare (4) forgive**. In Luke 23:34, Jesus uses the same word, “Father, *shbak* (forgive) them for they know not what they do.”

Therefore, I suggest that the most viable reading is: “*My El, my El, why have you reserved/kept/spared me.*” Since he fully knew the reasons for his suffering, the preferred choice is “*why have you spared me?*” or namely: “*I’ve been here for six hours and will die for this cause, but how much more time will this take?*” In other words, “*My mission has been accomplished.*” In response to this question Scripture tells us that Jesus dies shortly thereafter, thus validating the context.

*Joachim Bromet (Sacramento, CA)*

## Notes:

1. [Editor]. Of course, in the Matthew account the Greek is quoting from the Septuagint of Psa 22:1, and the Greek in both places is best translated forsaken, as per almost all translations.

## 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.**

*The ecclesial position primarily in Ontario, and perhaps elsewhere, is at present confused as unity-related matters are being resolved. Intelligence is published for information purposes only without endorsement by the Tidings Committee.*

### **BALTIMORE, MD**

During the past year our sisters have begun a joint class with the sisters in Washington. We meet once a month on Saturday mornings in alternate ecclesias beginning with a potluck breakfast followed by a class. After the class we have been spending time together writing cards to those we know who are sick or have difficulties. They have found this to be a special time of sisterly fellowship for our two ecclesias.

This year we rejoiced to have two baptisms. MICAH HEWITSON, son of Bro. Mark and Sis. Jane Hewitson was baptized in February 2014. Micah has been a member of our Sunday school and the CYC. SCOTT SMITH was baptized in December 2014, after attending our Learn to Read the Bible Effectively Seminars. Bro. Scott's mother is Sis. Diane Smith, who learned the truth on the internet some years ago. Sis. Diane is rejoicing to have a member of her family embrace the truth.

We have continued with our seminar effort. We have several regular attendees, and as recorded above, it resulted in Bro. Scott Smith being baptized. We are also encouraged to have some of our young people attending. In addition to the seminars, we have begun what we call "Lunch and Learn" sessions about once a month. The purpose is to have an ecclesial activity to which we can invite those who have been attending seminars. Following lunch with ecclesial members two talks are given, the first by a brother who is an experienced speaker, and the second by one of our younger brethren who is just beginning to give talks. In addition to seminar students, we have been pleased to have a number of our young people attending.

The Mutual Improvement class, begun a year ago, has continued. This is for brethren of all ages and for CYC members. This endeavor is a joint effort with the Washington Ecclesia. Those attending have found the classes to be very helpful.

We held a Vacation Bible School. The theme was, "The Lord's Prayer". There was an average of 25 children attending from the Baltimore, Washington and Arlington Ecclesias and a few children from the neighborhood of our ecclesia. We were blessed to have 21 adult and teen helpers from the three ecclesias as well as visitors from Livonia and Ann Arbor, MI. The week finished with a dinner and evening program in which the children sang songs and Bro. Josiah Hewitson gave a talk on the Lord's Prayer.

We rejoiced with the Bevans family as their daughter, Sis. Courtney, married Bro. Jonathan Godfrey on June 7, 2015. As "heirs together", may God bless them as they walk toward the kingdom. Our ecclesia has been delighted to welcome two baby girls recently. Mary Anna was born to Bro. Allen and Sis. Tara Laben in January 2015. She is baby sister to Noah and Elijah. Eleanor Jane was born to Bro. Nicholas and Sis. Connor Pratt, also in January 2015. It is a source of joy and thanksgiving to see our Sunday school continuing to grow.

Our CYC continues to be very active and helpful for our young people. Our members are from the Baltimore and Washington ecclesias. In addition the CYC has been pleased to welcome young people from the Catonsville Ecclesia and interested friends of CYC members. The theme for classes has been, "Preaching the Word". The focus has been on sharing and spreading the gospel. One class per month has been a "Bring A Friend" endeavor.

The CYC hosted our annual boat challenge in June 2015. The Frisbee challenge will take place in August, and the annual Men's Beach Camping trip in September.

*Carol Link*

## **BRANTFORD, ON**

We are happy to congratulate Bro. Caleb Myers and Sis. Emily Robinson on their wedding which took place in Brantford on May 9th and welcome our Sis. Emily by way of transfer from the Kitchener Waterloo, ON Ecclesia as of April 12th. We pray the Father will bless this young couple in their walk together with us as we wait for the Kingdom .

We thank the Father that another of our young people, CASSIA BILLINGTON, the daughter of Bro. Dave and Sis. Alicia Billington, has chosen the way of life and was baptized following a confession of her faith on June 12. We look forward to the upcoming Thanksgiving Gathering to be held October 12-13th with our Bro. Ken Styles (Detroit Royal Oak, MI) and invite local ecclesias to join us (see event calendar for details). Please note that Bro. Dave Hill is now serving as the Recording Brother of the Brantford Ecclesia and can be contacted at [brantfordchristadelphians@gmail.com](mailto:brantfordchristadelphians@gmail.com) or +1 (519)753-2096.

*Daniel Billington*

## **JASONVILLE, IN**

The Jasonville Ecclesia is pleased to report the baptism of AMBER TODD on May 2, 2015. We pray God's blessings will guide her to the kingdom. It is with sorrow that we report the passing of Sis. Dorothy Griggs. Dorothy was 85 years of age and had been a faithful member of this small ecclesia for forty-seven years. She was an aunt to Bro. Bill Griggs and Sis. Nancy Boruff.

We would like to express our appreciation to the Avon, IN Ecclesia for their assistance in sending an exhorting brother to Jasonville regularly.

*Ted Plew*

## **MISSISSAUGA WEST, ON**

We thank Bre. Mike Moore (Brant County, ON) and Ken Curry (Toronto East, ON) for providing words of exhortation and especially Bro. Clive Daniel (Victoria, BC) for leading our ecclesial retreat in March.

We were thrilled to witness the baptism of one of our Sunday school students, KATE SELWAY, daughter of Bro. Jonathan and Sis. Naomi Selway, in May 2015.

We report that Bro. Jeff and Sis. Karen Rose, Sis. Caitlin Rose and Sis. Nicole Rose have transferred to the Hamilton Book Road, ON Ecclesia, and that Bro. Rhe and Sis. Patti Desjardins and Bro. Tom and Sis. Yolanda Baldock have transferred to the Cambridge, ON Ecclesia. We commend them to the love and care of their new ecclesial families.

We also welcome by way of transfer, Bro. Dave and Sis. Edith Luff (Hamilton Book Road, ON) and Sis. Lynda Perks (Toronto Church Street, ON)

*Graham Baldock*

## **NORFOLK, VA**

We are pleased to resume news of our ecclesia after six years. In 2009, the ceiling of our chapel's main assembly room fell in, releasing asbestos into the airways. As a result, we spent the following two years in a massive project of abatement and renovation. We are so very grateful to all those ecclesias and individuals who made contributions to help defray the cost. Contemporaneously, Sis. Esther Giordano was widowed, and for her ongoing care, we entered a substantial addition project, which included a satellite facility for other ecclesial activities.

Acknowledging the guiding hand of our heavenly Father throughout this period, our ecclesia has been blessed with much good news. We rejoice in the testimony of those who took on the name of our Lord in baptism. In 2008: MELANIE BOLDUC, who transferred to Cranston, RI; SUQUOIA MOSBY, AL STURGEON, JESSICA PITMAN and DORIS BERMAN, now asleep in Christ; in 2009: AARON MULE, and MATTHEW STURGEON; in 2010: JORDAN ANDERSON; in 2012: JAY PITMAN; in 2013: JASON HENDERSON, BRUCE LANDERS, JORDAN McKEE, MICHAEL SAVAGE, and VALERIE (SANTIAGO) SAVAGE; in 2014: AARON McKEE, NIKI MULE, LAUREN PONSENBY, RUSSELL PITMAN, SAMUEL STURGEON, MATTHEW TUCKSON, and DAWN USACK; and in 2015: BEATRIZ COIMBRA and GEORGE LAMS.

Also, we rejoice with the birth of new family members: Silas and Lydia Culver, Talia Giordano, Lilly and Jasper Pitman, Kinleigh and Charlotte Porterfield, Eva and Grace Chippada, and Jackson Timothy Mule. Over the years we have been thankful for the many brethren who visited from various parts, for the Truth Corps in 2013 and 2014, and the young people who have joined us for the past three years for our Annual Young Peoples Gathering, held every Fall. This September 25-27, 2015, Bro. Dev Ramcharan will be speaking on the subject, "The Women Who Followed the Lamb"

*Mark Giordano*

## **PRINCE GEORGE, BC**

We have been very blessed to have a number of visitors in the first half of this year. We thank our Bre. Ed Hawthorn, Harley Young, Einer Halbig, Rick Evans, James Bowen, Paul Osborn, Graeme Osborn, and Jesse Fletcher and their families for their support and encouragement. We always appreciate visitors to our small ecclesia. If anyone is interested in visiting or travelling to northern BC we would love to have you stop in.

Our thirty-fifth annual fraternal gathering was once again blessed with success by our heavenly father. A huge thanks to our Bro. Andrew Jackson for filling in at the last moment.

*Jonathan Lawrence*

## **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 from afar: Henry and Sharon Wisniewski, Randy, Suzanna, Jessica Yoshida, and Hannah Suggs (Rogue Valley, OR); Samantha Fletcher (Heathmont,

Aust.); Graeme and Rachel Osborne (Okanagan, BC); Coleen Uiga, Andrew and Carly Culver, and Jeff Lang (Norfolk, VA); Dennis and Tiffany Bevans (Baltimore, MD); Paul and Belinda Styles (Detroit Livonia, MI); Sis. Brooke and Jennifer Styles (Ann Arbor, MI); Ken and Diane Styles (Detroit Royal Oak, MI); Gary and Shirley Smith, and David Wisniewski (Brant County, ON); Steve and Julie Snobelen (Halifax, NS); and Carl and Virginia Parry (Salisbury, Aust.).

Our thanks go out to Bre. John McConville, Len Mazzuca and Neal Caplan (Reseda, CA); and David Jennings and David Cooper (Pomona, CA) for their exhortations and afternoon classes. We also thank our Bre.: Dennis Bevans, Randy Yoshida, Paul Styles, Phil Wong, Carl Parry, David Wisniewski, and Graeme Osborne for their exhortations. Ken Styles led our annual Day With the Word for us in January on the topic of “Bible Prophecy” which included a Sunday school class and exhortation. We sincerely wish to thank our brothers for their service to our ecclesia with these uplifting talks.

By way of transfer, we are pleased to have Sis. Coleen Uiga (Norfolk, VA) and Sis. Jessica Yoshida (Rogue Valley, OR) join our ecclesia and we look forward to our walk to the kingdom with our new sisters.

We have been truly blessed with the spiritual birth in our ecclesia of eight new sisters: LYDIA VETKOS on December 5, 2014, daughter of our Bro. Jimmy and Sis. Jenny Vetkos; MORIAH CIPRIOTTI on December 19, 2014 and ALLYSE CIPRIOTTI on January 14, 2014, daughters of Bro. Mike and Sis. Wendy Cipriotti; BETHANY ROBINSON on January 10, 2015, and RACHEL ROBINSON on March 6, 2015, daughters of our Bro. Greg and Sis. Michelle Robinson; and TABITHA VETKOS January 10, 2015, LEAH VETKOS on March 27, 2015, and ELIZABETH VETKOS on June 12, 2015, daughters of our Bro. Jared and Sis. Kim Vetkos; who were all baptized into the saving name of the Lord Jesus Christ. We indeed look forward to their help in strengthening the things that remain as we await our Lord’s return.

Once again our Kids Camp and our Youth Conference were well attended and very successful. Bre. Carl Parry and Graeme Osborne lead the camp on the subject of, “David In His Early Years”, and Bro. Carl Parry led our Youth Conference on the subject of, “David In His Later Years”. We wish to extend our deepest gratitude to these brothers for their hard work in making these endeavors the great successes that they were.

*Tom Graham*

## **VIENNA, ON**

This letter is to advise you that the Vienna, ON Christadelphian Ecclesia was closed in April 2015, due to circumstances beyond our control, ending a 94 year history as an ecclesia. Our Sis. Joyce Lucas fell asleep in the Lord in December and now awaits the resurrection morning when she will be summoned from her sleep of death to appear before our Lord and Master. As the only remaining member of the Vienna Ecclesia, my ecclesial membership was transferred to the London, ON Christadelphian Ecclesia in April 2015, thus bringing the Vienna, ON Ecclesia to a close.

As an historical note, the ecclesia was started in April 1921 when my grandfather and grandmother, Bro. Christopher and Sis. Hannah Jennings and their family moved to the Tillsonburg Vienna area. Since that time there has been a consistent Christadelphian presence in the area with ecclesial activity throughout those years. Although the ecclesia has closed, there are members of the greater Jennings family in many of the ecclesias in Southern Ontario, and out west in British Columbia, Arizona and California.

*Alice Miller*

## Minute Meditation

### Are you afraid? What are you doing about it?

The Psalmist and Solomon both tell us that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. A respectful fear of God is a good thing. However, it should not be incapacitating. In the parable of the talents, Jesus tells us about the unprofitable servant who was so afraid of losing what he had been given that he took his talent and buried it in the ground to keep it safe to return to his lord. He was not a thief, but he allowed fear to so immobilize him that he did nothing. Our fears can either motivate us to action to serve our Lord, or they can cause us to retreat and do nothing. Do we fear God, and if so, what are we doing about it?

God's words to Moses help us to understand what God wants: "And now, Israel, what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to fear the LORD thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul." Fearing God implies loving Him, obeying Him, and living a life of whole-hearted dedication to pleasing Him.

Our God is a loving, merciful God who wants to save us. Peter tells us, "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some count slackness; but is longsuffering towards us, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." Unfortunately, in our world there are many who are like the unjust judge in the parable who says, "I fear not God, nor regard man." God may be calling, but many folks are not listening and certainly do not fear Him. God will not save those who are unwilling to respond to Him. Most in our world are following a path to destruction. They lack a healthy fear of God.

God is looking for hearts that will respond to His call. Sometimes these hearts are found in places we would not expect. God sent Jonah to the city of Nineveh. Jonah did his job of warning them that in 40 days their city was going to be destroyed due to their wickedness. We read that the people believed God and proclaimed a fast, and from the king on down they covered themselves in sackcloth and cried mightily unto God. God spared the city. In the city of Jericho, Rahab told the two spies she was hiding, "We have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea and what you did unto the two kings of the Amorites, and as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did remain any more courage in any man because of you." Rahab saved herself and also her entire family because of her faith in God and her courage to act on her faith.

Both cities were doomed. Both cities were known for their wickedness. Everyone in both cities was afraid. Both cities were visited by someone who gave advance warning. Jericho was destroyed, but God spared the family of one who trusted in Him, and in Nineveh the whole city responded and all were spared. It is important to fear and respect our God and to cry mightily to Him, the only source of salvation.

From the signs of the times around us we can see that a time of trouble is coming on the earth such has never been before. We face problems on every front: climate change, economic collapse, widespread violence, and declining standards of morality. The common man is very aware of the crises the world is facing and that there are no good answers. Jesus tells us of a time coming when men's hearts will be failing them for fear and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth; we may be seeing it now — and it probably will get worse.

Our God is merciful and not willing that any should perish and has provided warning signs for mankind to change his ways; God has sent droughts, famines, diseases, floods, earthquakes and volcanic eruptions to shake up a world bent on ignoring Him. The Bible's prophecies of the time of the end are coming closer to fulfillment as we see the nations of the earth aligning in the prophetic patterns and a world that will resist the rule of Christ coming sharply into focus. The outcome will be a disaster for most people in our world. The prophet Jeremiah tells us, "The slain of the LORD shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth: they shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried; they shall be dung upon the ground".

What saved Rahab and her family was her understanding of the power of God and faithfully obeying what was required. What saved Nineveh was hearing the preaching of Jonah and responding by repenting and seeking mercy from God. Our world is not responding correctly. They may be afraid, but not of God. Sadly, those who are wise in their own eyes are determined to accomplish their agenda of wiping God from people's minds and imposing their secular, humanistic philosophy. The sanity of a scientist who believes in God is now suspect, and humanistic acts that were considered immoral even 10 years ago are now not only common but are protected by law.

We who fear God and know what has been prophesied must follow the command of Jesus to go out and preach the gospel to every creature so that they might change their ways. Noah was a preacher of righteousness for 100 years, yet only his personal family was saved from the flood. We may not be as successful as Jonah was with Nineveh, but we hope to possibly save some in a world that thinks it is too smart for God. God sent Jonah to the men of Nineveh, and we may be whom God is sending to preach to our world. Let us not try to run away like Jonah did. Our world needs to know what God has foretold about its fate and how the gospel can save us. Our preaching, which may appear foolish to the world, may cause some to believe. The alternative is clear from Hebrews, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

Let us truly fear God and act on it. We share Zechariah's prayer that we might do our part, "That He would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life".

*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.)

## SEPTEMBER, 2015

- 12 ASK Day** at the Brantford Ecclesial Hall. A day of fellowship, witness and discussion. Lunch will be provided. Please pre-register at peteresa@hotmail.com or call 416-695-3939.
- 12-13 Nashua, NH** Study Weekend with Bro. Jim Sullivan (Stoughton, MA): "Unto This Day: Revealing Lessons from God's Wonderful Word." Contact Bro. Peter Dixon at jpdixon@charter.net.
- 19-20 Bedford, NS** Study Weekend with Bro. Chris Sales (Shelburne, ON): "Hebrews — A Practical Exposition." Location: North Woodside Community Centre, Dartmouth, NS. Contact Bro. Dale Crawford at bedfordchristadelphians@gmail.com or 902-431-6650.
- 19-20 Lombard, IL (Chicago)** Fall Gathering with Bro. Steve Davis leading the adult classes starting at 9:30 a.m., Saturday. Please contact Sis. Sue Johnson for housing and to RSVP at 847-438-4890 or e-mail: tarthurjo@juno.com.
- 26-27 Kouts, IN** Fall Study Weekend at Woodland Park Community Center, 2100 Willowcreek Rd. beginning at 10:00 a.m. Bro. Matt Norton (Lismore, Australia) speaking. Theme: "An Overview of Revelation" — great for adults and kids. Contact Bro. Joe Bennett at 219-762-2704 or jkb8275@comcast.net.
- 25-27 Norfolk, VA** CYC Study Weekend. Bro. Dev Ramcharan (Toronto Church Street, ON) will speak on the theme of "The Women who Followed the Lamb." Registration fee is \$35. For more information and to register, please go to <http://norfolkchristadelphians.com/norfolk-cyc-study-weekend>.

## OCTOBER, 2015

- 3-4 Ontario Fall Gathering** at Maple High School, Vaughan, ON. Theme: "Through Patience and Comfort of the Scriptures we have Hope" (Rom 15:4). Speakers Bre. John Mannell and Scott Wentworth. Contact Bro. Bruce Abel bnb69abel@hotmail.ca. For registration contact Bro. Will Snodgrass OCFGathering@gmail.com.
- 9-11 Atlanta, GA** Fraternal Gathering, speaker Bro. Jason Hensley (Simi Hills, CA): "Hezekiah: Faith in Desperate Times." For more information: Sis. Carolyn Carter 770-833-8915.
- 9-11 Vancouver, BC** Fraternal Gathering. Speaker Bro. Tec Morgan (Castle Bromwich, UK): "God Dwelling with Man". Contact Sis. Pam Snobelen at pamela721@shaw.ca or 604 881 4733 for a program.
- 10-11 Washington, DC** Bible Study weekend at Washington, DC, Ecclesia, 9240 Riggs Rd., Adelphi, MD 20783. Speaker: Bro. Stephen Whitehouse (Birmingham Hall Green, UK). Topic: "Jesus a High Priest after the Order of Melchizedek". Saturday, 1pm, classes and dinner. Sunday: Sunday school, Memorial, Lunch and afternoon talk. Contact Bro. Bob Kling by phone: 301-498-5245 or email: LearnToReadTheBible@juno.com.
- 12 Brantford, ON** Thanksgiving Gathering, Bro. Ken Styles (Detroit Royal Oak, MI). Theme "Fruits of the Spirit." To be held at the Copetown Community Centre, registration 12:30pm, dinner provided. For more information contact brantfordchristadelphians@gmail.com.

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

Periodicals postage paid at Glendora, California and at additional mailing offices.  
Send address corrections to: The Tidings • P.O. Box 91781 • Austin, TX 78709-1781

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**16-18 Women at the Well Retreat**, Desert Hot Springs, CA. Sis. Carol Link (Baltimore, MD) will be leading our classes on "Lord, help me: a women's cry". Register with Sis. Bonnie Sommerville [kenandbonnie@simihills.org](mailto:kenandbonnie@simihills.org). For questions contact Sis. Sandy McLeod [sandramcleod@gmail.com](mailto:sandramcleod@gmail.com) or Sis. Denise Sisco [siscofamily@msn.com](mailto:siscofamily@msn.com). Sponsored by Simi Hills, CA Ecclesia.

**23-25 Lombard, IL (Chicago)** Adult Study Weekend in southern Wisconsin with Bro. Ed Carpenter. Contact Sis. Sherry Johnson at [simonsjoy@yahoo.com](mailto:simonsjoy@yahoo.com).

### **NOVEMBER, 2015**

**7-8 Sarasota, FL** Fall Study Weekend with Bro. Richard Morgan (Hamilton Book Road, ON), speaking on: "Prophecy, Predestination, and the Purpose of God." Contact Bro. James Wilkinson at [jameswilkinson@hotmail.com](mailto:jameswilkinson@hotmail.com) or 941-412-7988.

**13-15 Austin Leander, TX** Gathering/Study weekend at HEB Camp, Leaky, TX (near Kerrville, TX). Bro. David Jennings (CA) speaking on "Led by the Spirit". Cost \$10 per person; Family cap \$40. Contact Sis. Maritta Terrell for registration or information by email at [mt-ct@swbell.net](mailto:mt-ct@swbell.net).

**14-15 Pittsburgh, PA** CYC Study Weekend. Our speaker will be Bro. Kevin Mayock (Moorestown, NJ). His subject will be "Joseph". Travelers' lunch will be provided at noon and classes will begin at 1:00pm. Contact Bro. David Pommer at [david.pommer@verizon.net](mailto:david.pommer@verizon.net) or (724) 224-7363.

**20-22 Washington, DC** Camp Hashawha Family Bible study weekend. Bro. Ryan King (Richmond Petersburg, VA) is scheduled to speak. The topic for the weekend is "Jeremiah and his friends". Contact: Ken Green, 443-497-3497 or e-mail Ken at [Hashawha@gmail.com](mailto:Hashawha@gmail.com) for additional information.

### **DECEMBER, 2015**

**26-Jan 1 Ontario Winter Bible School**, The Best Western Highland Inn & Conference Center, Midland (ON). Speakers: Bro. Mark O'Grady (Tawa, NZ); Bro. Everett Muniz (Paris Ave, OH); Bro. Paul Billington (Brantford, ON) adults; Bro Jesse Adair (Hamilton Book Rd, ON) young people. Registration information and other details are available from our web site [www.ontariowinterbibleschool.com](http://www.ontariowinterbibleschool.com).

### **FEBRUARY, 2016**

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