

THE CRISTADELPHIAN
TIDINGS
of the Kingdom of God

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The CHRISTADELPHIAN TIDINGS of the Kingdom of God

Peter Hemingray, Editor

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Reformation by Harry Whitaker

All human institutions are born to roll downhill. Whether it be a welfare society caring for the aged or a new political party, they all start with a flurry of idealism and high endeavor. Then, after a while the momentum begins to slacken. This goes on by imperceptible degrees. The burden of activity comes to be borne more and more by fewer and fewer, until at last it is only a handful of enthusiasts that keep the concern going, helped by the not-ever-so-effectual encouragement of a greater number of nominal sympathizers who are "leaners" rather than "lifters".

We have need of a resurgence of idealism and re-dedication. That will certainly come, but only when it is too late. The parable of the ten virgins makes that plain enough. Considering that the Christadelphian Faith is nearer to Bible Truth than any other faith available, it is a pity that a call to Reformation in the living of that Faith should be necessary. God has given us the best thing in the world, and we are content to treat it as something ordinary. Learning to cherish our spiritual inheritance and to live the life in Christ with zeal and idealism must become top priorities. But how are such lessons to be inculcated? Inspired and inspiring teachers are in such short supply. And those with more ability and better judgement than I seem to lack the energy or the courage to speak out clearly.

Editorial

Our Self-Inflicted Problems

North America

Let's be clear: The much-heralded "decline of Christianity" is not about God losing faith in humankind. In North America the vast majority of the populace still hold their faith in God. It isn't about losing their moral compass thanks to whatever you happen to loathe. It isn't about fickle millennials.

In fact, I would argue that Christianity isn't in trouble at all. Christadelphian ecclesias are in trouble. But we can't hold God hostage. God will do what God will do. Whether our ecclesias stay open for business, God will keep on loving all that God has made.

The tragedy — in the classic sense of self-inflicted wounds and fatal flaws — is that we mostly did this to ourselves, and we hurt many people along the way. Here is what we did:

1. We stopped trying.

For a time, ecclesias in North America were bold risk-takers. After the re-union in 1952, our community was re-energized. We used radio programs and later broadcast on local television networks. We almost all supported regional ASK efforts. We had booths at local fairs. We canvassed local households. Now, ASK efforts as local combined initiatives have almost totally disappeared. As a result, most (but fortunately not all) of these efforts have ceased, to be almost entirely replaced by the larger ecclesias focusing on Bible Seminars, rarely involving other local ecclesias in their efforts. We have mostly settled into maintenance mode, because it feels safe and comfortable. We fought over things that didn't matter because the things that did matter — gospel proclamation, strengthening the local young people, looking after our Sunday Schools, outreach into the community, all took too much effort. Instead we involved ourselves not in studying the first principles, but largely focusing on the precise details of the major first principles that have divided the Christadelphians in North America into two groups. If I compare the amount of material on my hard drive occupied by two topics, fellowship and resurrectional responsibility, with all the other areas covered in our statement of faith, I know which the larger amount is by far.

We used to have domestic as well as foreign missionaries: but now we find it hard even to find anyone to serve in the mission field. And how often have a few brethren or sisters gone for a few weeks into mission areas, and dispensed "advice" and funds, but thereby disrupted the local ecclesias. We need to be so careful, as affluent North Americans, thinking we can solve problems in local overseas areas in a few weeks, without taking advice from the brethren familiar with the area. We might feel we have fulfilled the directive to spread the gospel into all the world, by spending what is essentially a vacation abroad. Meanwhile, most areas of

North America lack any type of outreach. Our ecclesias are concentrated in fairly restricted areas, leaving vast areas not subject to our presence or preaching at all. I remember well, during periods when I was looking for alternate employment, not even going for interviews in several areas of our vast country because of my reluctance to take my family into isolation. We have no strong support network for isolated members, although we have quite a network in the mission field.

We used to have Sunday Evening Public lectures. These have, by and large, vanished. You might argue that few came to them anyway (including few of our members), but at least they often accomplished two things:

- They encouraged the speaking brethren to be intimately familiar with all our normal first principle topics
- They often served as a way to preach, if not to outsiders, at least to our young people, who not only heard what they needed to hear, but often had the opportunity to socialize as well.

2. We stopped giving.

Over the past 50 years, our giving has probably dropped by more than half as a percentage of family income, if we have followed the pattern of the churches around us. The Bible Missions are in financial difficulties, and are having to curtail their preaching work. We have deep reluctance to even acknowledge those who work on behalf of the ecclesias or the community. These deserve to be recompensed for their expenses, never mind their time. We acknowledge that the laborer is worthy of hire, as Paul tells us, but those who devote countless hours to prepare for the studies we enjoy do so without any thought of payment, because they know full well they will never obtain any. Books are written, videos made, lectures made, and the very thought of making payment, even to cover the production costs, appears alien to our community. Books which cost more than a nominal amount sit unsold. We are happy to spend \$50 on a meal, but not on things that might help us attain eternal salvation. We are prepared (somewhat reluctantly, I sometimes think) to support families in the mission field, but not to support full time evangelists. In fact, to my knowledge there are no full time domestic evangelists in our community. Those very few of our community who work full time on our behalf do so almost apologetically, and certainly do so at a great financial sacrifice. We have starved our ecclesias of resources. When tough budget choices had to be made, the facilities that we wanted usually defeat the mission that God wants.

3. We turned inward.

Just as American houses went from porches in front to patios out back, we stopped connecting with our neighbors. We opened our doors on Sunday and welcomed each other. If strangers (we sometimes even use the term aliens) do happen to come by, we can recognize them as such by the clothes they wear, the lack of head coverings of the females, by way they do not know when to stand up and sit down, the way we all look round at the stranger in our midst. So even though a few of us might talk to them afterwards, the welcome mat is not truly rolled out. And I must say that on several occasions I have attended ecclesias with my family and been totally ignored. How do we expect to encourage our friends and neighbors

to learn the message of hope we have when we largely ignore them when they happen to stop by. Not to mention it is often hard to even find what times we meet.

4. We Fixate on Sunday morning.

Long after Sunday changed character in American life, we kept expecting Sunday worship to do our work. Rather than transform lives through mission work, circles of growth, and personal spirituality, we had people sit for a crammed hour or so of singing, praying, announcing, chatting, listening, and (occasionally) learning. Then we sent people out to their cars and figured we had done our work for the week. We might hold a mid-week Bible Class, but this is usually attended by only a few, and all too often consists of a speaker talking for 45 minutes and a token period for comments — a form of teaching which might benefit the speaker, but rarely anyone else.

When we, as sometimes happen, suggest using our time to help in spreading the gospel, or performing community outreach, or helping those members who are poor financially or spiritually, even the suggestion is sometimes regarded with suspicion. To spend more time than a few hours on a Sunday and, perhaps, one evening, is regarded as an imposition on our time.

5. We trashed our reputation.

We have become known all too often as judgmental, angry, self-serving, smug, boring, cold and old. As far as people outside can tell, we live to fight between ourselves, we think too highly of ourselves, and we are moral scolds. Who needs that? We have fixated on the deep, complex things to be found in the Bible, and ignored the true simplicity of the gospel. We are accused of believing in faith by works — by Bible Study. We have been so busy trying to stamp out any variation from what we personally think is the true interpretation of particular passages, to take time to acknowledge our humbleness before the majesty of our God.

What, then, is the future? The future for God is as bright and glorious as ever. Our ever-changing, ever-dynamic, ever-loving, and ever-transformational God will be just fine. We can say our prayers with confidence.

Our ecclesias, on the other hand, are in trouble. Many will run out of money, or, more likely, close because of lack of members. Many who are brought up in the Truth have, and will, lose heart. Many have been discouraged by our internal disputes, by our reluctance to forgive human frailties, our tendency to stand on principle. And yet some, perhaps many, will rise to the challenge. They will give up the old certainties and do what Jesus did.

Those challenge-meeters will look outward, proclaim good news, welcome strangers, serve “the least of these,” give their lives and resources away, work for justice and mercy, spread the gospel seven days a week, and put love ahead of right opinion and kindness ahead of victory.

And God will be in the midst of them.

Peter Hemingray

Exhortation

Self-Sacrifice

Moses, one of three faithful men

Moses and Paul share something unique with our Lord Jesus. A brief overview of their lives shows that all these three demonstrate an incredible self-sacrifice.

Moses was raised in Pharaoh's house and for 40 years was taught the wisdom of Egypt.

"And when he was cast out, Pharaoh's daughter took him up, and nourished him for her own son. And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds. And when he was full forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren the children of Israel" (Acts 7:21-23).

Despite being surrounded by the comforts of the court, he decided instead to leave this environment and visit his brethren, in the hope that they would see him as their leader, so that he could set them free from their bondage to the Egyptians. God, however, had other plans for him.

"And it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown, that he went out unto his brethren, and looked on their burdens: and he spied an Egyptian smiting an Hebrew, one of his brethren. And he looked this way and that way, and when he saw that there was no man, he slew the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand. And when he went out the second day, behold, two men of the Hebrews strove together: and he said to him that did the wrong, Wherefore smitest thou thy fellow? And he said, Who made thee a prince and a judge over us? intendest thou to kill me, as thou killedst the Egyptian? And Moses feared, and said, Surely this thing is known" (Exod 2:11-14).

His brethren did not accept him as a ruler or judge over them, and so he fled the country. He left his family and comfort behind, and turned his life upside down. And during the next 40 years, God worked with him, training him to be a shepherd to lead His people out of Egypt. When Pharaoh finally let God's people go, they followed Moses into the wilderness towards the Promised Land. Moses worked extremely hard at leading God's people and at times was caught between God and His people. During this time Moses faced a lot of opposition from the people, who told him that it would have been better for them to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness into which Moses had brought them:

"And when Pharaoh drew nigh, the children of Israel lifted up their eyes, and, behold, the Egyptians marched after them; and they were sore afraid: and the children of Israel cried out unto the LORD. And they said unto Moses, Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out

of Egypt? Is not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt, saying, Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians? For it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness” (Exod 14:11-12).

It did not stop at grumbling and complaining; they even tried to kill Moses and those that stood with him: *“But all the congregation bade stone them with stones. And the glory of the LORD appeared in the tabernacle of the congregation before all the children of Israel” (Num 14:10).*

Even after all this, after facing so much opposition from almost everyone at one time or another, Moses was still willing to sacrifice himself for God’s people. In Exod 32:32 after the people committed the sin with the golden calf, he pleaded on their behalf: *“Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin--; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written.”*

What an incredible attitude of self-sacrifice Moses shows here for a people that at times resisted, openly opposed, hated and rejected him, even to the point of wanting to kill him.

Paul, an example for us

Paul, similarly to Moses, was raised in an elite society. He was a Pharisee, brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, taught according to the law. Even while he was still a young man, he was given a great deal of responsibility by the Jewish authorities. He was set in his ways thinking he would take care of God’s people by rooting out the heretics following the way of Jesus:

“And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, and desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem” (Acts 9:1-2).

He, too, probably hoped to be among the leaders of God’s people one day. However, Paul, just like Moses, saw his life turned upside down when he thought he was doing what he was called to do. Instead of persecuting Christ, he preached Christ. During this time when Paul preached the Truth to God’s people, he too faced a lot of opposition. Paul lists the many hardships he faced in his life for the sake of the Gospel:

“Are they servants of Christ? I am a better one — I am talking like a madman — with far greater labors, far more imprisonments, with countless beatings, and often near death. Five times I have received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one. Three times I have been beaten with rods; once I was stoned. Three times I have been shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been adrift at sea; on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brethren; in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. And, apart from other things, there is the daily pressure upon me of my anxiety for all the churches” (2Cor 11:23-28 RSV).

Among all the things he suffered, one was *“danger from my own people.”* And we know that on many different occasions he was persecuted by the Jews for preaching Christ, to the point where his own people, his countrymen, even those who at one time would have been close to him, tried to kill him.

Through the suffering Paul experienced in his life, he developed a character like that of Moses. By God’s grace, he was turned into a humble leader, not by man’s standards, but by God’s. He developed a quality of self-sacrifice. After all that his people had done to him, he was still willing to sacrifice himself for their sake. *“For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen by race” (Rom 9:3 RSV).* To remove any doubt of whom he was speaking, he specified who his brethren were in this case: *“They are Israelites, and to them belong the sonship, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises; to them belong the patriarchs, and of their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ” (Rom 9:4-5 RSV).*

According to Strong’s concordance, the word Paul uses for accursed has the meaning of a ban or excommunication. Therefore, Paul wished that he could have been banned and cut off from Christ, which would only lead to death. His wish has the same finality to it as Moses’ request when he asked for his name to be blotted out of God’s book. What an incredible attitude he had toward those who tried to kill him. He was willing to sacrifice himself. However, God decides to whom he shows mercy: *“For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion” (Rom 9:15).* Paul and Moses showed the spirit of self-sacrifice, but could not through their own human weakness, do what only the innocent Lamb of God could do.

Jesus, our supreme example

Jesus, like Moses and Paul, was living a life where he had his established place in society. He was raised as a carpenter in a small village and those around him viewed him as no different to anyone else. However, after 30 years, Jesus began his ministry, and the life he knew at home with his family was over. He knew what lay ahead of him, and that the three years leading up to that time were going to be the hardest years in his life. After his baptism, those that knew him as one of their own started to wonder, *“From whence hath this man these things? and what wisdom is this which is given unto him, that even such mighty works are wrought by his hands?” (Mark 6:2).*

Jesus worked tirelessly to turn the hearts of God’s people. He strove so hard, and faced so much opposition from those he was trying to save. The Jews were constantly looking for ways to accuse him of breaking the law, or trying to trick him into saying something they could use against him by asking “difficult” questions. After a while, when the Jewish leaders were so bitter and had hardened their hearts to their savior, they were looking for ways to kill him.

“So from that day on they took counsel how to put him to death... Now the chief priests and the Pharisees had given orders that if any one knew where he was, he should let them know, so that they might arrest him” (John 11:53, 57).

Despite all of that, the endless efforts Jesus made, the hatred he suffered, the threats of murder — he was still willing to lay down his life for them. Only he could do it, as he was the perfect sacrifice without blemish or defect, whereas Moses and Paul were not.

We must keep in mind that this self-sacrifice by Jesus was something that he wanted to do, but it was not easy for him! He prayed to God asking if the cup could be taken away from him. It was so hard for him that *“his sweat was as it were great drops of blood”* (Luke 22:44), and God sent an angel to strengthen him. Nevertheless, he went ahead with this incredible act of self-sacrifice.

Are we that self-sacrificing in our lives? We are not asked to sacrifice ourselves for others in the sense that Moses and Paul were prepared to do and that Jesus did, but we can apply the same attitude of self-sacrifice in our lives as these three men showed. Sometimes it seems so hard for us to do something even for those we love and those in our families or ecclesial family, but Moses, Paul and Jesus were willing to give up their lives for the sake of those who hated them!

These three men, from different backgrounds and different walks of life, teach us incredible lessons of love for others, a desire to do the will of God and to give up their own lives in God’s service. These are lessons that we can apply in our lives in many different ways. We can sacrifice our time, our energy, and our resources — not for ourselves, but for others. Whether it is by preaching to those outside the ecclesia, teaching those in the ecclesia, or helping with whatever needs might come up, near and far, we can develop the same attitude in our lives.

This quality of self-sacrifice will benefit those around us, but more importantly, give glory to The Most High God. Moreover, by God’s grace and His mercy, we can hope be called good and faithful servants, and allowed to enter into the joy of the Lord.

Let us then, like Moses, look ahead to Christ and his coming, remembering the words Christ spoke: *“And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be”* (Rev 22:12).

Jochem Hale (Cambridge, ON)

We need to emphasize this central place which the Lord Jesus occupies in the purpose of God. Without our Father’s great love in revealing Himself and the willing self-sacrifice that Jesus made, we would be nowhere. The promises which the Father made through Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and through King David, need to have a prominent place in our worship. They are brought to us through the sacrifice of Christ himself: “And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise” (Gal 3:29). Our own personal hope, the “hope of Israel”, hangs on these very promises. (The Christadelphian, 1996, p133)

First Principles

Hope — (9) Paul's Hope of Israel

“For the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain” (Acts 28:20).

It's three minutes to midnight

During WWII, a group of scientists worked on the Manhattan Project to build the first atomic bomb. The US dropped two of these bombs on Japan in 1945, effectively ending the war. Afterwards, the scientists became concerned that their invention could be misused as part of full-scale war. They started the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists to educate people about the dangers of atomic or nuclear weapons. In 1947, the magazine printed a Doomsday Clock, set at seven minutes to midnight. They designed this symbol to serve as a visual reminder so that government would not have too much control over nuclear weapons. Ironically, the builders of the first atomic bombs feared the future use of these weapons once they realized the power and destructive force they had created. The scientists changed their beliefs and became the equivalent of converted scientific pacifists. They made a plan and took action to teach the world the lessons they had learned.



Per the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists in 2015: “Unchecked climate change, global nuclear weapons modernizations, and outsized nuclear weapons arsenals pose extraordinary and undeniable threats to the continued existence of humanity, and world leaders have failed to act with the speed or on the scale required to protect citizens from potential catastrophe. These failures of political leadership endanger every person on Earth.” Despite some modestly positive developments in the climate change

arena, current efforts are entirely insufficient to prevent a catastrophic warming of Earth. Meanwhile, the United States and Russia have embarked on massive programs to modernize their nuclear triads — thereby undermining existing nuclear weapons treaties. “The clock ticks now at just **three minutes to midnight** because international leaders are failing to perform their most important duty — ensuring and preserving the health and vitality of human civilization”.

Paul's hope is your hope.

The Apostle Paul is known for having become the greatest example of conversion in the Bible. He grew up highly educated in the strictest branch of Judaism. Paul learned the letter of the law from the best of the rabbis in Jerusalem. The book of Acts says that Paul was educated at the feet of the prominent Pharisee, Gamaliel, who was well respected by all (Acts 5:34; 22:3). Paul would have spent his youth learning and studying the Hebrew Bible in preparation for being a

scribe, synagogue leader or Rabbi. He was a Roman citizen from Tarsus and had moved to Jerusalem to study. When he was older, his life changed dramatically on a journey to persecute Christians. Jesus stopped Paul in his tracks with a blinding light and told Paul how much his life would change.

In the span of just a few days, Paul changed from being the chief persecutor of early Christians, to being the main proponent for the new faith. What didn't change was his great "hope of Israel", which he kept with him throughout his ministry. Paul's hope was the same as all Jews — to be part of God's kingdom on earth. This would fit with what Abraham, David and Isaiah all experienced. But with his new discovery, Paul now focused on the return of Jesus as Messiah and not his former Jewish expectation of Messiah (1Thess 1:10; 2:19; 4:14). He wrote: *"For the Lord himself will come down from heaven. ...and the dead in Christ will rise first"* (1Thess 4:16).

The just shall live by faith

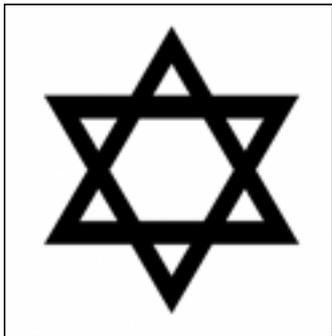
Protestants credit Martin Luther for changing Christian teaching about faith and works. About 1520, Luther wrestled with church abuses and his own sinfulness. He was taught that faith alone could not save him, but that works were needed as well. He eventually came to the conclusion that this isn't true as he meditated at length on Paul's words in Romans: *"The just shall live by faith"* (Rom 1:17). Luther's discovery and protest against the Catholic Church led to the Reformation in the Middle Ages. Paul's quote from the Old Testament prophet Habakkuk was also repeated in Gal 3:11 to reinforce that no person can be saved by works, by following the Jewish law. Paul learned and applied the life-saving lessons of grace, forgiveness, faithfulness and righteousness and made these key elements in his teaching. He changed to believe that mankind is justified by faith, and salvation is given by God's grace (Rom 3:28; 5:1-2).

Paul became an ambassador for Christ and a preacher to Gentiles, who are anyone who is not a Jew as in Gal 2:9. He became the key voice that Jesus used to build his church. Prior to Paul, Jesus' followers were reluctant to preach to Gentiles (Acts 10:28), because they were considered physically and spiritually unclean. Jews were not even supposed to eat a meal with Gentiles to avoid spiritual contamination! Since Abraham, the Hebrew law had taught that the only way to salvation for men was to be circumcised (Gen 17:9-13; Lev 12:3). Anyone who was not circumcised was considered unworthy of God's promises (Gen 17:14). Paul's travels and writings helped to change this teaching.

Paul used his scholarly skills to preach what he called 'the mystery of Christ.' He repeated this many times (Rom 16:25; Eph 1:9; Col 4:3) including: *"In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ"* (Eph 3:4). Paul taught that the suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus was, indeed, such a mystery because no one expected the promised Messiah, or Christ, to do this. The Christ was expected to act like a lion, and not like a lamb. He was supposed to be a priest, not a sacrifice himself. He was thought to come as a King, not as a suffering servant. Paul preached *"Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles"* (1Cor 1:23).

Paul also taught that baptism into Jesus Christ is essential for salvation (Acts 19:4-5; Rom 6:4-5; Gal 3:27; Col 2:12). He was baptized immediately upon understanding the gospel message, and he baptized many others. Circumcision is no longer required for salvation, but circumcision of the heart is what matters and is required (Rom 2:25-29; 1Cor 7:19).

Paul's inspired hope



Paul had a vivid hope that was perfected by his interaction with Jesus. Our Lord first spoke to Paul on the road to Damascus, as he was called out of darkness, both literal, for he was blinded, and spiritual. Jesus later spoke to Paul in visions and dreams, guiding him to preach about Jesus wherever he went (Acts 18:9-10; 2Cor 12:2-9). Paul obeyed Jesus' command *"to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light... so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me"* (Acts 26:18).

Although Paul became the leading Apostle and missionary for Jesus, he continued to have a hope, and not a guarantee, of his reward. Paul was saved in the past tense (2Tim 1:9; Titus 3:5), saved in the present tense (1Cor 1:18; Acts 2:47), and he hoped to be saved in the future (1Cor 15:2; 1Thess 2:16). Even Paul wrote that his personal salvation was conditional on remaining obedient to his faith and master. He wrote: *"Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it... I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus"* (Phil 3:12-14). See also 1Cor 9:27; 2Tim 2:10-12; Gal 5:4; Rom 11:22; Heb 3:12-14; Heb 6:4-6.

Near the end of Paul's life, he endured a dangerous trip to Rome as a prisoner. Once there, Paul was a witness for Christ to Caesar's household as predicted by Jesus (Acts 23:11). While in chains, Paul called together a meeting of the leading Jews to explain his situation and share his common Hope of Israel with them. All Jews believed this same hope, which was first given to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Later David, Isaiah and many Jewish prophets repeated the same hope of a Kingdom of God based in Israel. This hope included a Messiah, who Paul now proclaimed to be Jesus. It was this hope, which all Jews believed, that Paul emphasized as he appealed to his brethren. It's the same hope that believers continue to profess today.

Paul's gives us his last will and testament: *"For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand"* (2Tim 4:6). Due to intense persecution under Nero, Paul knew that his death would come soon, for he was already in prison. That's why he wrote a very personal letter to the young man Timothy as support for Timothy's faith and warnings about apostasy. But Paul's greatest gift to his followers came when he said, *"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the*

race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day — and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing” (2Tim 4:7-8). May each of us live to be faithful and confident, just as Paul was concerning his place in the great Hope of Israel.

Two friends were walking through the desert. During some point of the journey, they had an argument; and one friend slapped the other one in the face. The one who got slapped was hurt, but without saying anything, wrote in the sand: “Today my best friend slapped me in the face.”

They kept on walking, until they found an oasis, where they decided to take a bath. The one who had been slapped got stuck in the mire and started drowning, but the friend saved him. After he recovered from the near drowning, he wrote on a stone: “Today my best friend saved my life.”

The friend who had slapped and saved his best friend asked him, “After I hurt you, you wrote in the sand and now, you write on a stone, why?” The friend replied, “When someone hurts us we should write it down in sand where winds of forgiveness can erase it away. But, when someone does something good for us, we must engrave it in stone where no wind can ever erase it.”

Learn to write your hurts in the sand and to carve your blessings in stone.

“Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses” (1Tim 6:12).

“Take the first step in faith. You don’t have to see the whole staircase, just take the first step.” Martin Luther King.

“God is not glorified in any transaction upon earth so much as in the conversion of a sinner.” Archibald Alexander.

“For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people” (Titus 2:11).

The Bible says:

- Paul’s hope is in righteousness by faith. Rom 1:17; Rom 3:22; Rom 4:3
- Paul taught that the Gospel is available to Jews and Gentiles. Gal 3:27-28; Rom 3:22; 1Cor 12:13
- Paul’s hope of Israel is our hope too. Acts 13:32; Acts 26:6

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“For this cause therefore have I (Paul) called for you, to see you, and to speak with you: because that for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain... Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him” (Acts 28:20,31).

Doctrines to be Rejected

(6) Pre-Existence

Doctrines to be Rejected # 3: *That the Son of God was co-eternal with the Father.*

The statement

This can be positively stated as: **Jesus was begotten of the Virgin Mary; he was only “known” beforehand in the mind and purpose of Yahweh from the beginning.**

In particular, this statement can be compared to the Statement of Faith, clause 8 which reads:

That these promises had reference to Jesus Christ, who was to be raised up in the condemned line of Abraham and David, and who, though wearing their condemned nature, was to obtain a title to resurrection by perfect obedience, and, by dying, abrogate the law of condemnation for himself and all who should believe and obey him. (1 Cor 15:45; Heb 2:14-16; Rom 1:3; Heb 5:8-9, 1:9; Rom 5:19-21; Gal 4:4-5; Rom 8:3-4; Heb 2:15; 9:26; Gal 1:4; Heb 7:27; 5:3-7; 2:17; Rom 6:10; 6:9).

This Doctrine to be rejected is particularly concerned with the so-called “Pre-existence of Christ”. It is also partially related to clauses 1, 2, 9, and 10, which will not be repeated here: they are primarily concerned with the nature and Christ and his sacrifice.

This current statement can be compared with that written by Bro. Roberts in 1871 (or before):

The “Eternal Sonship” Of Christ. — That the Son of God was not co-eternal with the Father, *but is the result of the Father’s manifestation in the flesh, by operation of Holy Spirit upon Mary, in the manner defined in paragraph vii. (Luke 1:35; Matt 1:20; Rom 8:3; Heb 2:14,17; 4:15).*

This phrasing, that Christ was God’s “Manifestation in the Flesh” is an almost direct quote from 1Tim 3:16: the word “manifested” in the KJV translation (and many others) is in the Greek φανερώω, or phanerosis, which of course is the title of John Thomas’ book¹.

The italicized portion is now to be found elsewhere in the “Truth to be received”:

- Jesus was... God manifest in the flesh — Clause 10
- Begotten of the Virgin Mary by the Holy Spirit — Clause 1

The pre-existence of Christ

So this doctrine to be rejected, “*That the Son of God was co-eternal with the Father*”, is intended to reject the common non-biblical idea: that Christ pre-existed. To quote from the article on “Pre-existence of Christ” from Wikipedia:

The concept of the pre-existence of Christ is a central tenet of the doctrine of the Trinity. Trinitarian Christology explores the nature of Christ’s pre-

existence as the Divine hypostasis called the Logos or Word. This “Word” is also called God the Son or the Second Person of the Trinity. Theologian Bernard Ramm noted that “It has been standard teaching in historic Christology that the Logos, the Son, existed before the incarnation. That the Son so existed before the incarnation has been called the pre-existence of Christ.” Other aspects of Christology explore the incarnation of this Divine being as the man Jesus. In the words of the Nicene Creed, Christ “came down from heaven, and was incarnate.” Some Protestant theologians believe that God the Son emptied himself of divine attributes in order to become human, in a process called kenosis, while others reject this.

It is interesting to note the same article comments:

“(There are) those who consider themselves Christians while denying the pre-existence of Christ, (but) who nevertheless accept the virgin birth. Today the view is primarily held by Christadelphians. (They) consider that Christ is prophesied and foreshadowed in the Old Testament, but did not exist.”

The arguments — starting with Adam²

The nature of Christ is a fundamental subject, and our understanding must be based on the whole of God’s revelation. Because God’s only begotten Son is central to the purpose of Creation, Christ occupies a unique position in the whole revelation of this purpose. Type, symbol, parable, prophecy — all are used in the Old Testament in anticipation of the arrival of the Messiah, and the New Testament must be seen through these different aspects. This approach is not taken by those who argue for the pre-existence of Christ, since their case is based more or less wholly on the New Testament, and in particular the Gospel of John, without generally making any use of Old Testament references. However, unless we use the Old Testament to help interpret the New Testament, we shall inevitably end up going astray on the subject of Christ’s nature.

The requirement for a son of God and the requirement for a Messiah is thus central to the purpose of God as set out in the first two chapters of Genesis. The Sonship of Christ and his lordship, then, have their roots in the creative purpose of God.

Due to the Fall, however, a new creation was required. A second and last Adam was brought into being, Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Jesus Christ is the man at the center of the new creation of God. This man is the new Lord of creation, given from heaven “*The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven*” (1Cor. 15:47). Thus he was the fulfilment of the purpose of God as shown in the creative actions of Genesis 1 and 2. The New Testament references must therefore be considered in the context of the Old Testament prophecies of Jesus.

How did Jesus pre-exist?

Jesus was of God, his origins were of old, his existence was from “before the earth ever was” because, as John explains, he was the Idea that was in the beginning, the Divine Idea through which the heavens and the earth were created, and for which all things exist.

In this sense his existence is before everything else, because everything (the Universe) was formed for him and through him. Without him, says John, was not a single thing made that was made. This is a profound spiritual, physical and literal truth that goes far beyond common misconceptions of Pre-existence. Jesus Christ preceded the creation of the Universe because he is the Reason that the Universe



exists. Jesus Christ was the cause of the creation of the Universe in a very similar sense that a child's crib is designed and built expressly to nurture a baby that is yet to be born, or that the Guggenheim Museum was conceived, designed and constructed for the expression of art yet to be created.

As a literally and physically real person (i.e., in the concrete sense that most people regard as “real”, i.e., “in the flesh”) it is evident that Jesus had no conscious existence as a person until after Mary conceived him through the Holy Spirit some 2000 years ago. He grew from a baby through childhood and into adulthood, and learnt obedience in the experience of his suffering. His creation and perfection involved a process of time and events, just like you and I, and so for him the world was made the way it is... as it is for us also if we are “in him”.

The difficulty that early theologians had with passages like John 1, which caused them to develop a “Pre-existence” theology, was the common human tendency to think in concrete terms, to think that for something to be “real” it is of necessity physical, concrete, or in the flesh. As someone once said, “I know it is real because I can kick it.”

So when the Bible speaks of Jesus as coming down from heaven, of being from before the world was, or even as of a Creator for whom the heavens and the earth were the work of his fingers, the concrete thinker assumes a personal and physical pre-existence of Jesus is what must be implied. In so doing he misses a most profound truth about both his own existence, the appearance of Jesus, and for that matter the creation of the entire Universe.

What is missed is the importance and power of an Idea.

Let's go back to the Guggenheim Museum. Today I can visit it, walk around it, sit inside it and admire the art contained inside. Today, the Guggenheim Museum is a concrete reality that I can kick, a physical icon of New York City to the whole world. But it wasn't always so. For many years, those soaring concrete spirals were but sketches of ink on paper. And many years before that, its shape was but a gleam in the eye of its architect. The Guggenheim Museum was nothing more than an Idea.

Today, looking at the concrete reality it is easy to forget the importance of the idea, and the importance of the mind behind the idea. Frank Lloyd Wright was undoubtedly an architectural genius even if his ideas were difficult to translate into concrete realities.



But were it not for his unique mind and the unique ideas of this unique mind, then the Guggenheim Museum as we know it would not exist. I would not be able to walk around it, sit in it, marvel at it, much less kick it...or if I

could, it would be in something very different. Guggenheim Museums do not just appear just because cement trucks can mix concrete.

And so, it is for any special creation. The idea precedes the concrete reality.

- The idea is translated into sketches.
- The idea inspires fellow minds.
- The idea determines the schedule.
- The idea obtains the materials.
- The idea forms the concrete.
- The idea is translated into concrete reality.
- The idea is the beginning.
- The concrete is the end.

This is how John might have described the creation of the Guggenheim Museum:

- In the beginning was the idea. The idea was with Frank Lloyd Wright.
- The idea was an expression of the mind of Frank Lloyd Wright.
- And the idea was made concrete, the Guggenheim Museum.

And so it is for Christ.

- In the beginning was the Idea.
- The Idea was with God.
- The Idea was an expression of what God is.
- And the Idea was made flesh, Jesus Christ the Son of God.
- The Idea was translated into the sketches we see in the Old Testament, in the law and the prophets.
- The Idea inspired the minds of the faithful of old.
- The Idea determined the history of the earth, raised up kings and nations, brought floods and famines, blessings and curses.

- The Idea formed the heavens and the earth, the mountains and the valleys, the moon and the stars, and all that in them is.
- The Idea brought forth people and formed them for his name.
- Everything that is and has been and will be is through this Idea.

The Idea was Christ.

And John's other point was that we (apostles) have actually seen him, we have talked to him, we have touched him, we have handled him, we have eaten with him, we have seen him crucified, we have seen him raised from the dead, we have seen him ascend on high!

John had actually seen the concrete reality, the Idea of God from before the beginning, seen the Son of God in the flesh.

John appeals to the human limitation of only taking concrete realities seriously by emphasizing his personal experience with the flesh and blood reality of Jesus Christ. But the drama and importance of seeing Christ in the flesh is only meaningful because he was the Idea that founded the entire Universe from the beginning, the Anointed Son of God, and easily the most amazing thing ever to happen in the history of the earth... and so in Christ the Idea has been fulfilled, and we have hope that the Idea works.

And to those of us who will hear him he has given the power to likewise become sons of God... and so fulfil the Idea in a multitude of individuals.

So this view also helps us understand why Jesus could say with perfect gravity, "Before Abraham was, I am". If the earth and all the Universe were formed for Christ, then how much more was Abraham's existence for Christ? Abraham was called out from Ur for Christ. And God could swear to Abraham by his very own self-existence that the promise (the Idea) would be fulfilled because, as John 1 says, the Idea was God. As surely as God exists, his Idea will see its fulfilment, his mind will be expressed, his word will go forth and it will surely achieve its purpose. So when we see Christ, we see God, for "how can you say show us the Father when you have seen me?" Jesus Christ was such an exact replica of God, such an exact copy of the mind of God, his character and personality such a spark of the divine, that for us he effectively is God.

Furthermore, if we take heed to his word, then we too will be part of the divine Idea, we too will have characters and personalities that replicate the divine, we too will be one with God. This has always been God's agenda and Idea from the beginning.

So the apparent "pre-existence" language that appears from time to time and causes such confusion of thought in popular theology is the language of ideas and thoughts, of mind and character and personality. John Thomas would say they are the language of God Manifestation. They are statements of the reality, importance and force of the divine ideas and relationships that have energized and created the entire world; things visible and things invisible.

When God expresses his mind, real things happen.

Summary

- “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved” (John 3:16-17).
- He was begotten the Son of God
- His relationship to his Father thus began earlier; at conception, when “the Holy Spirit” came upon Mary, and “the power of the Highest” overshadowed her
- She was told by the angel Gabriel: “*That holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God*”
- She [Mary] was given the information that Jesus was a son from the moment of conception, and that he was “holy” when he was begotten; separated right from the beginning for the special task of reconciling mankind to God
- These unique characteristics mark him out from every other being, human or angelic: “*For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee?*” (Heb 1:5).
- God was the Father of Jesus from his conception
- Jesus shared sinful mortal flesh with the rest of mankind
- Jesus manifested to the world the glory of God

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Notes:

1. The KJV has “God was manifest in the Flesh”: almost all modern translations have “He was manifested in the flesh” or similar: for the change from “God” to “He” see the notes in the NET Bible.
2. Some of this section is derived from an Article by Bro. Andrew Perry in *The Testimony*: 1983 p 383.

There are statements made of Christ [in the Old Testament] which seem to suggest that he was in some way present at creation and participated in its work. For example, “The firstborn of all creation ... before all things, and by whom all things consist” (Col. 1:15–17); “By whom also he made the worlds ... upholding all things by the word of his power” (Heb. 1:2, 3). Where in the Old Testament do we find anything which might suggest a background to these statements? The only text which speaks in terms of preexistence is “The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old” (Prov 8:22). The author of Proverbs is referring to divine wisdom, and we must explore this theme, not only in the Old Testament but as it was later developed in the literature of Judaism, for this provides the key to understanding New Testament passages which appear to suggest that Christ was in some way instrumental in creation.

Paul Wasson in The Christadelphian, 1987 p. 455.

Jonathan the Faithful Prince — (18) The Lie

The account resumes

It's been a year (*The Tidings*, December 2014) since we have discussed David and Jonathan together.

When we last left the story, David had fled from Saul in Naioth¹ in Ramah (1Sam 19:19). David had been with Samuel, saw Saul chase him, even to the old prophet's dwelling place, and then ran back to Gibeah to be with Jonathan. Yet, when David told Jonathan that Saul was again trying to kill him, Jonathan refused to believe it. His father had made an oath — how could he break it so quickly? With the words “*there is but a step between me and death,*” David brought the seriousness of the situation to his friend's attention.



As Jonathan heard these words, perhaps he realized the spiritual state of his friend. The promise of kingship felt so distant. The God's oft-received providential care felt like it was not applicable. David was terrified -- and Jonathan could see it. When he saw this fear, Jonathan knew that his friend was in desperate need of support. Thus, Jonathan pledged that he would do whatever David needed him to do in order to find out the mind of his father (1Sam 20:4). From there, David revealed a plan to Jonathan:

“And David said unto Jonathan, Behold, to morrow is the new moon, and I should not fail to sit with the king at meat: but let me go, that I may hide myself in the field unto the third day at even. If thy father at all miss me, then say, David earnestly asked leave of me that he might run to Bethlehem his city: for there is a yearly sacrifice there for all the family. If he say thus, It is well; thy servant shall have peace: but if he be very wroth, then be sure that evil is determined by him” (1Sam 20:5-7).

David's plan was essentially a good one — it was almost guaranteed to do exactly what he wanted it to do. David wanted Jonathan to see firsthand that Saul had broken his oath and was once again ready to do whatever it took to kill the son of Jesse. This plan was a brilliant way of bringing about that goal; in the past few days, Saul had essentially tried to kill David at every opportunity that he had.

When throwing the javelin didn't work, Saul followed David to his house. When capturing him at his house didn't work, Saul chased David to Ramah and the house of the prophet. When that didn't work, David was certain that Saul would follow him back to Gibeah and try to kill him at the upcoming feast of the new moon. If he wasn't there, clearly, Saul would want to know why he wasn't. If the excuse came from Jonathan, then Jonathan would easily be able to see Saul's reaction towards missing an opportunity to eliminate his target. If Saul wasn't worried about David's absence, then both David and Jonathan would know that the situation had changed. But, if he grew frustrated and full of wrath, then Jonathan would be convinced that Saul's oath had been broken.

The plan itself was excellent, and it was well designed to do what David wanted it to do — he had likely spent the journey from Ramah to Gibeah planning it out. (Not that it took too long — the two were within a few miles of each other). Nevertheless, despite all of its good qualities, there is something about it that once again reveals David's present state of mind: it's based entirely around a lie.



David's plan revolved around Jonathan telling his father that David had earnestly requested to go up to Bethlehem for a yearly sacrifice — the problem is that David actually did not seem to have a feast to attend, and he fully didn't intend to go up to Bethlehem. In fact, he very clearly said to Jonathan that he planned on hiding out in the field for three days:

“And David said unto Jonathan, Behold, tomorrow is the new moon, and I should not fail to sit with the king at meat: but let me go, that I may hide myself in the field unto the third day at even” (1Sam 20:5).

When David revealed his plan to Jonathan, he wanted Jonathan to say that he had gone up to Bethlehem, even when going to Bethlehem was not what he planned at all! Later in the record, it would appear as though this was exactly what he did. When the plan was put into action, David didn't leave Jonathan to go to Bethlehem, instead, he went out into the field:

“So David hid himself in the field: and when the new moon was come, the king sat him down to eat meat” (1Sam 20:24).

Thus began David's time of hiding in the field. When Jonathan later came to alert him to Saul's response, this was the same place that Jonathan found him — in the field (1Sam 20:35). As far as can be seen, it would fairly certainly appear as though David spent this entire three day period out in the field. He didn't go home and he didn't celebrate a yearly sacrifice in Bethlehem. The entire plan was based upon a lie.

Lying for God

When studying this record, one is left to wonder how it was that two spiritually based men —men who were so often examples for us — chose to deliberately act upon a lie. David's part in the lie can partly be excused, or rather, understood, when his desperate spiritual state can be recognized. But how can Jonathan's part in the lie be explained, especially considering that he was so often the spiritual leader between the two men, and he was such a strong man of principle. He held to his principles even if it put his life in jeopardy. What was it that convinced him to take part in this lie?

Perhaps an explanation can be found in some of the other incidents in Scripture. Throughout Scripture, there are occasionally characters which appear to lie and are actually commended by God for doing so. One of example of this is the Hebrew midwives at the time of Moses' birth:

“But the midwives feared God, and did not as the king of Egypt commanded them, but saved the men children alive. And the king of Egypt called for the midwives, and said unto them, Why have ye done this thing, and have saved the men children alive? And the midwives said unto Pharaoh, Because the Hebrew women are not as the Egyptian women; for they are lively, and are delivered ere the midwives come in unto them. Therefore God dealt well with the midwives; and the people multiplied, and waxed very mighty” (Exod 1:17-20).

In this story, it would seem fairly clear that the Hebrew midwives lied to Pharaoh. They feared God and wanted to preserve the Hebrew children — thus, they refused to kill them. However, when they came before Pharaoh to explain what they had done, they lied, saying that the Hebrew women were able to deliver too quickly and the midwives were not able to come to them and kill the child. Because of what they did, God blessed them. In another famous incident, Rahab lied about the two Israelite spies who were in her house.

“And the king of Jericho sent unto Rahab, saying, Bring forth the men that are come to thee, which are entered into thine house: for they be come to search out all the country. And the woman took the two men, and hid them, and said thus, There came men unto me, but I wist not whence they were: and it came to pass about the time of shutting of the gate, when it was dark, that the men went out: whither the men went I wot not: pursue after them quickly; for ye shall overtake them” (Josh 2:3-5).

Once again, it was the same type of situation. Rahab lied to save the lives of God's people. A few verses later, she explained to the men that she had a fear of God (Josh 2:8-11). Finally, because of what she did, she was actually blessed by God and protected, while the rest of Jericho crumbled (Josh 2:14, 18-20).

These two stories have a few important aspects in common:

- They are both about various people who lied
- These people did so for the purpose of saving God's people
- The rescuers were motivated by Godly fear

- As a result of their action, the people who lied were blessed

Interestingly enough, Jonathan was in the same situation. Certainly, it cannot be known for sure, but perhaps when Jonathan was thinking through David's plan, he was able to see himself following in the footsteps of these two prior incidents. He possibly realized that his circumstances were very similar — he would be lying to save one of God's people, and, as was clearly indicated by his encouraging words to David, he was motivated by Godly fear. Nevertheless, while this may have been Jonathan's motivation, and while this may have been a righteous action at that time, may we pray that we are never in a situation like the ones we have described. As far as we know, in our dispensation, the Lord Jesus demands total honesty of his followers. These were not simple matters of trying not to insult someone, or trying to calm someone's temper. These were situations in which a believer's life was in jeopardy. If we find ourselves attempting to use these situations to justify our own desire for deceit, may we seriously and soberly assess the situation to see if it truly does bear parallels to the ones above. More often than not, it won't.

A scary problem

Indeed, our God calls us to lives of total honesty: *“Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds”* (Col 3:9): *“Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another”* (Eph 4:25). May all of those who speak to us always feel certain that our “yes” truly means “yes” and that we are men and women of integrity.

And thus, while Jonathan perhaps had a Godly motivation for going along with David's plan and, while he likely understood why it would be allowed by God, this lie was the beginning of a serious problem for David. While the lie may not have appeared to have any immediate consequences, it had a major impact on David himself. Throughout the rest of his time escaping from Saul, David continually used deceit. When he came to Ahimelech and the priests in Nob, he told them that he was on a special mission for the king: *“And David said unto Ahimelech the priest, The king hath commanded me a business, and hath said unto me, Let no man know any thing of the business whereabout I send thee”* (1Sam 21:2). This was clearly untrue. Later in the same chapter, he used deceit when he appeared before Achish, feigning himself to be mad: *“And he changed his behaviour before them, and feigned himself mad in their hands”* (1Sam 21:13). Finally, when he later ended up dwelling with the Philistines, he constantly lied to Achish about the battles which he fought. *“And David and his men went up, and invaded the Geshurites, and the Gezrites, and the Amalekites:... And David smote the land, and left neither man nor woman alive, and took away the sheep, and the oxen, and the asses, and the camels, and the apparel, and returned, and came to Achish. And Achish said, Whither have ye made a road to day? And David said, Against the south of Judah, and against the south of the Jerahmeelites, and against the south of the Kenites... And Achish believed David”* (1Sam 27:8-12).

Perhaps the most terrible of all of these uses of deceit was David's attempt to cover up his sin with Bathsheba.

Raw humanity

Perhaps the lesson should be clear: There have been extreme circumstances in which God has blessed those who have protected His people through their lies. Those circumstances are so extreme, may we pray that we are never confronted with them. Indeed, for those of us who live more “normal” lives, where we aren’t around believers whose vitality is in jeopardy, may we stay as honest as we can. Indeed, sometimes even though our motivation may be right, we could be complicit in the development of a terrible problem — such as what began here with David, and ultimately culminated in sending Uriah to the forefront of the battle.

Finally, bringing all of these points together, perhaps one of the most powerful things that comes from this story is David’s raw humanity. So often we see David as a rock. We see him as a pillar of faith, and as a man whose belief was almost untouchable. Indeed, he was a man of faith and a man of righteousness — but at the same time, as this story shows us, he was a man who was scared, alone, and beginning to feel momentarily unsure about his trust in his God.

The David in this chapter is the same David who stood up in total faith and slew the giant. The David in this chapter is the same David who won major victories against the Philistines. But at the same time, the David in this chapter — as in all the other chapters — is a David who is entirely human. He is a man who, while full of trust and confidence in his God, has moments in which he isn’t sure what to do and moments in which he isn’t sure that he can continue. He has moments when it feels as though his faith is crumbling and believing almost feels as though it is too much effort.

This is one of those moments.

This is one of the moments in which we are reminded that this remarkable character had his moments of weakness too. Just as we sometimes struggle to believe and struggle to trust that God is working all things together for good, so did David. May we remember that, because at times, his faith can sometimes seem so unattainable and so mighty. May we remember that even he too had moments where he failed. But like him, in those moments where we don’t know what to do, may we find help and support in friends like Jonathan — brethren whose motivation is found in what is true and just and lovely. Though Jonathan may have collaborated with David in the lie, his motivation was pure, and as we’ll see in the next article, he sought to refocus David on God’s immovable promises.

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Notes:

1. Apparently a section of Ramah, not a separate village. Because the word means something like ‘dwelling places,’ it may have referred to the common living place or monastery of the band of prophets to whom Samuel gave inspiration and leadership.

There is included in the Old Testament a record of self-resignation at least equal to that of John the Baptist. This is the example of the Crown Prince of Israel, Jonathan. Not a great deal is told of him but what is revealed is eloquent of his sterling worth — every inch a man — especially in his relations with David. F. E. Mitchell, (The Christadelphian, 1962, p. 360).

History

Racism and Prejudice

(1) Reflections on 70 Years of Jewish Life in Berlin

Today in Europe, the attitude towards Jews may have changed, but questions remain about the beliefs and attitudes of many towards Jews. Antisemitism is a persistent belief that is very difficult to eliminate. The world war and its consequences may have affected attitudes towards Jews, but anti-Semitic beliefs may still persist.

Introduction

This started out as an article examining whether prejudice still occurs against Jews in Germany and Europe today, despite years of coming to terms with the Holocaust. However, recent events in Charleston, South Carolina forced a rethink about this article's purpose. I decided to broaden the scope to ask what is prejudice and racism and what guidance can we find in the Bible about these issues in our day-to-day lives.

In June 2015, a man wearing a concealed weapon entered the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston and joined a Bible class. After sitting with the group for about an hour, he gunned down nine unsuspecting Bible class attendees. It turned out this man was a white supremacist with a hatred for African-Americans. The contrast between discussing the Bible and the mass-murder is so striking. Apparently, reading and discussing the Bible was no guarantee of preventing this heinous act. This man had nurtured a prejudice that began with words and thoughts and ended with an act of violence. This crime was seen as an act intended to strike fear into African-Americans and to assert "white supremacy".

This event in South Carolina against African-Americans and similar events recently occurring in France against Jews raises so many questions. Why does prejudice persist? What exactly is prejudice and how do seemingly normal people develop a prejudice against other people or groups? What guidance can we find in Scripture about this? Clearly, it has no place in the Christadelphian community, but it is subtly makes it difficult to spot, let alone challenge. Jeremiah the prophet observing the human condition wrote:

"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" (Jer 17:9).

Prejudice is so stubbornly persistent and its most persistent target down through the ages since the time of Christ has been against Jews, although, of course, not exclusively. Minorities in every country seem to be targets, but the most vitriol hatred seems to have been reserved for Jews. Each generation has seen yet another resurgence of anti-Semitism. There are attacks against African-Americans by white supremacist in the United States, by Islamic Extremists in the Middle East, and Jews being targeted in France and elsewhere. Are we entering a new century

of bigotry and prejudice? All these events forced me to try to really understand prejudice and understand why it is so persistent.

The nature of prejudice

Horrible acts of racism seem so foreign to us. We read about them in history books or learn about them in the news media. Yet, these acts are the extreme end of a continuum that begins in written or spoken words about other peoples or groups.

In his groundbreaking book, *The Nature of Prejudice* published in 1954, Gordon Willard Allport came to a number of important conclusions about prejudice based on his experiences of working with refugees, including Jewish refugees, during and after World War II. Allport defined prejudice as

“[a] hostile attitude toward a person who belongs to a group, simply because he [or she] belongs to that group, and is therefore presumed to have the objectionable qualities ascribed to the group.”

In its briefest form, Allport defined prejudice as “*thinking ill of others without sufficient warrant.*”

Categorization is inevitable

Categorization is a natural human behavior as it helps us quickly classify something encountered. It helps us in our daily life as it is based on a belief of a high probability of something occurring. We see a Pit Bull, for example, a breed known to attack humans, although in fact other breeds may actually attack more frequently. Nevertheless, we prepare to defend ourselves because we **believe** these dogs attack humans. This belief leads to the categorization of Pit Bulls as dangerous and to be avoided.

The philosopher Bertrand Russell asserted that open-mindedness is not really possible because we are quick to put anything into a category. “*A mind perpetually open will be a mind perpetually vacant.*” Categorization is a necessary part of managing the complexities of life. However, there are rational and irrational categorizations. A rational categorization requires considerable knowledge. Apples are fruits and they are edible. When we are in a forest and see the fruit of a bush we do not recognize, we are apt to categorize this fruit as poisonous and deadly. Although we need evidence to justify this categorization, we base our initial belief on a categorization that unknown fruits are not to be eaten.

To take an absurd example, imagine we have been repeatedly told that people wearing blue shirts are greedy, money-grubbing liars, secretive, keep to themselves, emotional and prone to violent outbursts. Where is the evidence? It is only in our belief that it is so. In reality, the color of a shirt has very little to do with a person's personality. It is an irrational categorization based entirely on an irrelevant factor. Now, imagine we have been told that people wearing yellow shirts, are generous, selfless, intelligent, peaceful and kind. Again, we **believe** these attributes of blue and yellow shirted people. Therefore, when we encounter a person wearing either a blue or yellow shirt, our beliefs will affect our attitudes towards that person.

Prejudice involves both belief and attitude

Prejudice involves both a **belief** and an **attitude**. A negative attitude towards another person or group can only be sustained through a belief. The attitude can only be changed through a change of beliefs. The problem is that beliefs are very persistent and very difficult to change.

Consider a person holding a prejudicial attitude towards Jews. An often-cited cause of this prejudice is the belief that Jews take care only of themselves, they only think of money, are devious and keep to themselves. Add to this the ancient notion that the Jews are personally responsible for the death of Jesus Christ and a toxic, persistent anti-Semitism is the result. There are many reasons for the persistence of anti-Semitism, but a significant factor has been an enforced separation throughout history between Jews and non-Jews, usually by a Christian majority. Another more potent and deadly reason has been a need for a convenient scapegoat for societal ills. This has resulted in a subtle hostility towards the Jews who were perceived to be “outsiders”, which they literally were, due to their enforced isolation. To add to their discrimination, Jews were objects of ridicule and hostility. From time to time this prejudice erupted into violence and purges where Jews had to leave to find new homes for themselves. As the history of the Jews shows, prejudice can be forced to be held in check by laws or culture norms, but the beliefs and attitudes can persist awaiting the next opportunity to express itself.

Allport's prejudice scale

Allport developed a scale of prejudice that, given the opportunities can lead to outright genocide. “Barking does not always lead to biting, but there is no biting without first barking”:

Antilocution (Speech): This is a passive behavior that is a type of speech, usually in the form of jokes and negative stereotypes about a particular group. It is usually shared amongst groups of like-minded people, and sometimes this is far as it is taken. Surprisingly, it is often seen as just harmless fun, but the more spontaneous and irrelevant the comment, the stronger the hostility behind it. This speech can take on more sinister forms when, for example, the word “Jude” was painted on storefront windows in Nazi Germany. In all cases, this speech is targeted against an out-group (usually a minority) with the intent to assert the superiority of the in-group (usually a majority).

Avoidance: This is also a passive behavior but it is more intense and directed at specific individuals. A decision is made to avoid dealing with or even communicating with a member of a particular group. No direct harm is made or sometimes even intended, but the isolation has the effect of enforcing an in-group and an out-group division. Surprisingly, often the avoider believes he or she is taking on the hard task of avoiding the out-group so as not to inflict harm. For example, in Nazi Germany a shopper simply avoided shopping at a store with the word “Jude” on the window so as not to “cause harm” to the Jewish shop owner. However, this resulted in the bankruptcy of the business and real harm to the owner.

Discrimination: Prejudice can become an active part of society based on a group decision, usually in the form of laws or norms. This is the active removal of an “out-group” from the normal activities of the “in-group”, or society. Through preventative action, an out-group is excluded and actively prevented from participating normally in life. In Nazi Germany, Jews were systematically excluded from associations and groups until they were excluded from all forms of normal life. Segregation in the United States achieved the same effect by circumscribing where African-Americans could live, work, shop, and eat and so forth. In all cases, it was a form of hostility and caused real harm, although not physical harm, to the individuals discriminated against.

Physical Attack: Active prejudice becomes menacing when it leads to the destruction of property or personal harm. It is often random but can sometimes be organized by in-group members who are emotionally worked up to do the attacks. For example, the infamous “Kristalnacht” in 1933, which led to the smashing of windows of Jewish storeowners in German, served to threaten and create fear. This act gave the more timid amongst the in-group a license to attack and in some cases, murder Jews.

Extermination: This is the extreme end of prejudice. When an attempt is made through any means to eliminate an out-group, it is called *genocide*. Sadly, history is littered with these atrocities. The “Final Solution” to the “Jewish Problem” in Nazi Germany is, of course, the most well-known modern example, but sadly not the only one.

Prejudice and racism is a sad and persistent part of the human condition. It is based, however, entirely on beliefs that work themselves out in attitudes. It begins in speech and ends in destruction and crimes against humanity. One would expect the godless to hold prejudicial beliefs and attitudes, but as we will see later, even the closest friends of Jesus would become racist and prejudiced. Like many other evils, the deceitful heart can twist reason and emotions and do great harm to even our brothers and sisters in Christ.

We now turn to our main theme, which is of the Jews in Germany today.

The current state of Jewish life in Germany and Europe

Through my Jewish friends here in Berlin, I have learned about the current state of Jewish life in Europe, and in particular Germany and Berlin. I feel particularly grateful that I have been privy to an inside look at Jewish life. It is especially poignant because many of these people are direct descendants of Holocaust survivors, sometimes even witnessing the horrors first-hand. Even after 70 years, the emotions are still very raw for them. So, they know firsthand the effects of anti-Semitism and are very sensitive when it makes an appearance in the press, on the street, in the courts of law and in the government.

I was invited to present the Christadelphian beliefs to a group composed of both Jews and Christians here in Berlin. I received a sympathetic hearing and they were surprised to learn that the Christadelphians commented negatively about the National Socialist government from at least 1925¹. They also learned that from

the mid-1800's our community were strong supporters of Jewish immigration to Israel and still support Israelis today with clothing drives and other efforts.

Later, I was invited to attend a synagogue service. This was quite an experience. I was offered a place near the front, and after been given a Kappa to wear I listened intently as the service proceeded. It was in Hebrew but an English translation was available. The theme for the Sabbath service was the restoration of the Temple in Jerusalem. A heart-felt desire for it to be restored was palpable amongst the attendees. I was invited to join what I think was a Hakafot, a circular dance, which was quite an experience and an honor to be asked to join in. Many distinguished guests were in attendance, as the chief rabbi of Jerusalem was in Berlin at that time. I was struck by the optimism and hopefulness of the service. This was even more poignant as I could not help but realize that this very synagogue was the site of rioting and destruction on Kristalnacht in 1933.

Life is as good as it has been for over a century

Relatively speaking, life for Germany's Jews is better, for the most part, than it was from the time of Bismarck in the 1870s to the Holocaust and World War Two. Of course, the number of Jews living here has been greatly diminished. In 1946, the only Jews living in Berlin were those few who emerged out of hiding. Today approximately 30,000² Jews live in Berlin. This seems like a large number, but it a vastly diminished number from a pre-war high of about 160,000³.

Berlin has the fastest growing population of Jews in Europe. It has a thriving Jewish community and many synagogues and Jewish centers have been rebuilt. The Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra has recently elected its first Jewish conductor. Berlin has, in fact, three Jewish conductors. The nine-branched Menorah is regularly placed in front of the Brandenburg Gate each year during Hanukkah. The Jewish museum of Berlin is very popular and many Jews are thriving both socially and in business. This has much to do with the groundwork of North American and other Jews moving here, and has been augmented by hundreds of Russian Jews choosing to make Berlin their home. Even young Israelis are moving to Berlin for its social life. Some tension does exist between the older Jewish community and the new Russian immigrants, but the community is thriving nonetheless.

State and Federal laws protect the Jewish community in Germany, and there is an active police presence at all Jewish centers and synagogues. (Israeli guards and security agents are also present). The Central Jewish Committee is the official voice of the Jews of Germany. It actively promotes its causes and will take a forceful stand against anti-Semitism in all its forms and demand action by the relevant German governments at all levels. It also supports Holocaust education in schools.

The Stolpersteine

A way for many Germans to appreciate and remember the lives lost to the holocaust is the Stolpersteine⁴ (Stumbling Stone). These are brass covered concrete cubes placed in the pavement in front of homes where Jewish residents were taken away to concentration camps and death. Recently, a very elderly Jew from Canada and his children came to Berlin to witness the placing of a Stolpersteine in front of the

home where his parents had lived before they were deported to a concentration camp and death. German young people who lived in the house came out to witness the laying of this Stolpersteine. They seemed genuinely moved by the event. This Stolpersteine now serves as the family's memorial for their lost parents and grandparents.

Rumblings of anti-Semitism

Yet, the Jewish community can hear rumblings of a resurgence of anti-Semitism. Anti-Semitic remarks are often not recognized by the non-Jewish society, as I learned the hard way when I was boy. I clearly recall being scolded by my mother after saying that the candy storeowner “Jewed” me. And this was the 1960's Canada. As time passes, the Holocaust is slowly becoming only an historical event, and something that is taught only in schools. The Jews are no longer “a homeless people” but have a state to call their own — Israel. It is still taboo in Germany to criticize a Jew, but it is becoming increasingly seen as acceptable to criticize Israel. Hence, anti-Semitism has been made socially acceptable by applying anti-Semitic language to a state rather than to an individual. “We are criticizing Israel not Jews”, but the underlying circumlocution can hide anti-Semitism. Significantly, part of the definition of anti-Semitism used by the European Union includes “such manifestations [of anti-Semitism] could also target the state of Israel, [which is] conceived as a Jewish collectivity.”⁵

Threats from Radical Islam and Neo-Nazis

Not much needs to be said about the rise of radical Islam and its associated anti-Semitism in Europe. This threat is well known. Recent terrorist events in France show how it has caused real worry for the Jewish community and, of course, the security agencies. Recently, the Central Jewish Committee advised Jews to not wear outwardly Jewish symbols in Muslim areas of German cities to avoid provocation, something that was unthinkable even five years ago.⁶ It has caused a revival in an interest in Aliyah, a “return to Israel”, for many European Jews, although not significantly from Germany's Jews.⁷

As for the Neo-Nazis, these groups are a continual threat to the German state and for German Jews. In fact, according to a government report, attacks against Jewish targets in Germany by Neo-Nazis exceeded those by extremist Muslims during the reported year (2013). A more disturbing aspect of the report was the lack of intervention by the public to come to the aid of the victims of the attacks. Nevertheless, this amounts to approximately 2,500 anti-Semitic attacks against persons and property in 2013, despite the best efforts of the authorities to prevent it.⁸

Secondary anti-Semitism

Another problem in recent years is quite surprising. It is called “secondary anti-Semitism” and comes from segments of academia and the professional classes. These are the opinion makers or “intelligencia” of Germany who are often left leaning or Liberal. Recently, the Times of Israel reported that the German press used “perceived anti-Semitic stereotypes” about the new Jewish conductor of

the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra Kirill Petrenko.⁹ Aside from the fact that is caused the conductor to stop taking interviews from the German press, it showed an ignorance of anti-Semitic language from those who should know better — the well-educated elites of the German press. There is no point repeating the offending phrases here.

This form of anti-Semitism is not specifically targeted against the Jews of Germany but against the State of Israel, which is seen as a “Jewish collectivity.” During the 1960’s and 1970’s, the Left and Liberals saw the Jew romantically as “Nathan the Wise”.¹⁰ In this romanticized view, the Jew was transformed by the concentration camp experience into the wise and tolerant character of Lessing’s novel of the same name. Now the Left has adopted the Palestinian cause and in turn sees the Jew, in the form of the Jewish state, as “The Oppressor”. This idealized love of “Nathan the Wise” has so quickly turned into an irrational hate. Hence, this new anti-Semitism, a “secondary anti-Semitism” has emerged out of a segment of German society that was once Israel’s strongest supporters. Surprisingly, the average German understands the taboo of anti-Semitism, while the Conservative German leadership is now one of the strongest supporters of Israel.

As my Jewish friends have told me, it is not that the Jewish community is closed to entertaining criticism of Israel when it is factual and fair. However, this new anti-Semitism is seen as a knee-jerk support of the Palestinians and a view of Israel that echoes the Left’s former criticism of the National Socialists. Further, it is that a general belief amongst the German Jewish community that Germany lost its moral right to criticize Israel due to its responsibility for the Holocaust. Most Germans had accepted this belief for many years, but with the passing of time, the intelligencia are feeling free to openly criticize Israel and unfortunately are wandering into dangerous anti-Semitic territory.

(To Be Continued).

Glen Lea (Berlin, Germany)

Notes:

1. *The Christadelphian*, 1925 p. 451.
2. http://www.jewishjournal.com/travel/article/rebirth_of_jewish_life_in_berlin_20120605.
3. <http://www.ushmm.org/>. United States Holocaust Memorial Website.
4. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stolperstein>. Translated Stumbling Block, these brass plaques are placed only at the approval of the family of the deceased Jew and the owner of the house or building where the deceased Jew lived. Currently, there are over 20,000 Stolperstein in place across Europe.
5. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antisemitism>.
6. <http://www.n-tv.de/ticker/Zentralrat-der-Juden-warnt-vor-Tragen-der-Kippa-in-Problemvierteln-article14597936.html>.
7. <http://www.theguardian.com/news/datablog/2015/feb/05/is-there-really-a-jewish-exodus-from-western-europe>.
8. <http://www.i24news.tv/en/news/international/europe/64386-150315-neo-nazi-attacks-on-german-jews-far-outnumber-those-by-islamists>.
9. <http://www.timesofisrael.com/berlins-new-jewish-conductor-faces-anti-semitic-german-press/>.
10. Based on a play by the German playwrights Lessing, whose character Nathan the Wise demonstrated “friendship, tolerance, relativism of God, a rejection of miracles and a need for communication.” This phrase still appears in the German press.

Bible Study

The New Testament Church (6) The Apostles' Doctrine

The basic Christian doctrine

We are here concerned, particularly, with germs of truth. We are concerned with the basic Christian doctrine as presented to us and as preached by the Apostles and as recorded in the Book of Acts.

The earliest picture we have of the church gathered together as a living entity is in the second chapter, when they were all gathered together in one place on the day of Pentecost. Then the Holy Spirit descended and they were given this “power from on high” which enabled them to go out into the world and preach the Gospel. We have Peter standing up and preaching to the Jews on Pentecost and we read:

“And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. And all that believed were together, and had all things common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved” (Acts 2:42-47).

Here we have the early band of enthusiasts with the power of the Spirit openly manifested among them, continuing in the Apostles’ doctrine and teaching. All the aspects of the Apostles’ teaching would be involved here. Certainly the basic facts of the Christian faith. Their prayers were communal, and they broke bread from house to house. This may mean that they had a memorial of the Lord or may mean that they used to eat in one another’s homes — the phrase “the breaking of bread” has more than one meaning. It may mean both. It is quite probable that in these early times, in the first flush of enthusiasm, whenever they had meals together they remembered the Lord as part of the meal, and took some of the bread and said, “Let us remember our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us”; and some of the wine, which was a common feature of their table, which they would take and remember the Lord. So “breaking bread from house to house” may mean that they both had a meal together and shared the remembrance of the Lord’s sacrifice.

We notice:

- The gladness of their hearts, a characteristic of the early enthusiasm of these believers,
- The gladness that bubbled up in them,
- Their “singleness of heart” as those who had become changed men and women by the influence and impact of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The church, using the church in its more general sense, has for a long time associated the Apostles Creed with this verse. “*They continued in the apostles’ doctrine*”. It has been alleged by Dr. Blunt, that this is a reference to what is known as “the Apostles Creed,” a statement of Christian faith in its simplicity, which has been handed down certainly from as early as the third or fourth century. In fact, Blunt quotes writers of the fourth century who refer to the Apostles Creed as being then of great antiquity, so whatever we say about it, the Apostles Creed goes back very near to Apostolic times, and there has always been a school of thought that has felt that it was formulated by the Apostles in their day in order to give a solid platform of dogmatic belief on which the Christians could build.

The Apostles Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of Heaven and earth; ... and in Jesus Christ, His only Son Our Lord,

Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended into Hell; the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into Heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God, the Father almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy... Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body and life everlasting.

I think it is unlikely (and a great many writers agree) that it goes back as far as Apostolic times. It seems more probable that it was a production of the second century, when the church felt a greater need for defining its position, when more and more strange ideas had come in and the church had to state its position. Now I think that most of us would agree that the Apostles Creed could be accepted as a brief statement of the Christian faith as we understand it, and reveals at any rate that the church felt a need, as we ourselves have felt a need, for defining in some way its doctrinal position. A detailed study of the Apostolic preaching in Acts leads, as I have said, to some fairly general conclusions and simple propositions that I want now to look at.

Use of Old Testament

Turning then to the record of Acts, there are two approaches evident in the preaching of the Gospel. When the apostles were preaching to the Jews we find that always they went back to the Old Testament Scriptures and developed their arguments from there, quoting the prophecies with which the Jews would be familiar. We shall see in one of the later studies, a lot of their preaching began in the synagogues. They went first to the synagogue, and when they were refused permission or when the atmosphere became too violent in the synagogue, then they went somewhere else and preached to the Gentiles. And when they were preaching to the Jews we find them over and over again going back to the Scriptures for the support of their statements and trying to demonstrate from the Holy Scriptures

that *“This Jesus I am proclaiming to you is the Messiah”* (Acts 17:3 NIV). This was the burden of their message to the Jews, that *“God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah”* (Acts 2:36 NIV).

So in Acts 2, we find the Apostle Peter quoting directly from Joel 2, Psalm 16, and Psalm 110, somewhat lifting these verses out from their context, and saying this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; or here were fulfilled the prophecies concerning the Messiah which David himself foretold concerning him. So we see the Apostles again preaching to the Jews in Jerusalem. *“The God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Jacob,”* (Acts 3:13), he says, thus bringing them back to the Scriptures, to the familiar ground of the Jewish church, and trying to lift them through that to an understanding of the Christian message — that Jesus, the crucified Jesus, is the Messiah. Again he appeals to the prophetic writings: *“But those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled”* (Acts 3:18). Again, he quotes Deut 18:15: *“For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me”* (Acts 3:22). Then: *“Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days,”* (Acts 3:24). Then in the next verse he goes back to *“the covenant that God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, and in thy seed shall all kindreds of the earth be blessed”*.

To the Gentiles

This is characteristic of the way in which the Apostles, with the power of the Spirit, were moved to preach the Gospel to the Jews. They took these Holy writings, these Scriptures that they believed in, that they held so dearly, and showed the Messiah-ship of Jesus. But when they preached to Gentile audiences we find very little reference back to Scripture. We do not find them quoting extensively from the Old Testament, but we do find them preaching the death and the resurrection of Jesus. This is the kernel of their message, that Jesus is raised from the dead; that he had been put to death by the Jews at Jerusalem and now he is alive; they preached that he is coming again and that God was calling upon all men everywhere, Jews and Gentiles, to accept the Lordship of Jesus.

For a characteristic example of this we should take Acts 17 when Paul was preaching on Mars Hill. A model, I should think, of how to preach the Gospel to unbelievers. A wonderful example of how Paul tried to find some basic ground, which he shared with his hearers, and then build upon that his Christian message. So to the Jews he finds his common ground in their acceptance of the Scriptures, and builds upon that. To the Gentiles at Athens when he was preaching on Mars Hill, the Areopagus, what did he do? He said, in effect, *“Gentlemen of Athens, I see everywhere around me the evidence of your religiousness. (That is the meaning of the word ‘superstitious.’) And I see everywhere these altars, to all sorts of gods, showing how devout you are in your religion. And here I saw an altar to the Unknown God. Now that is the god I want to tell you about.”*

Thus Paul develops his message, having some common starting point with the unbelievers. He even quotes, as we know, not from the Old Testament Scriptures

but from the Greek poets. *“As certain also of your poets have said, for we are also his offspring”* (Acts 17:28) — quoting the Greek poet Aratus¹. Then he comes to the crunch line as it were. He has built up from their religiousness, from the fact that they have this quest for God, and led them through to the revelation of the living God, and we can fill in, of course, with a little imagination, some of the things Paul said. These are only his notes. He fills in the picture, leads them on to the God he wants to tell them about and then comes to the great message that Jesus of Nazareth has been raised from the dead, and this is the assurance God is giving to you gentlemen of Athens, that one day He will intervene again, that one day He will call all men to account, and *“Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead”* (Acts 17:31). See the basic simplicity of the message, the core of it to the Gentiles being Jesus Christ, raised from the dead; to whom men are now accountable; and who will come again in judgment in the fullness of time.

To the Corinthians

From Athens, Paul went on to Corinth, and we read, *“He reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks”* (Acts 18:14). By “the Greeks” is usually meant the Greek converts to the Jewish religion.

“And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles. And he departed thence, and entered into a certain man’s house, named Justus, one that worshipped God, whose house joined hard to the synagogue” (Acts 18:6-7).

There is a bit of irony there, typical of this great apostle. He said, all right you will not have me, I will go next door. So he moved in next door, right next to their synagogue, and the Corinthians crowded in to hear him. God had already told him he had much people in this city and Paul was “fishing” for them and finding them.

We are told almost disparagingly in Acts 17 that he did not make many converts there. *“Howbeit certain men clave unto him, and believed: among the which was Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them”* (Acts 17:34). The plain inference of the text is that he did not make much headway there. They listened to him. They said, “Well it is interesting, we will hear you again someday”; but they were not very impressed, even though Paul had presented the message to them in what we would think was such a clever way.

In the wake of his disappointment at Athens Paul goes on to Corinth, and he says, “I am going to just get back to the basic fundamentals.” And he continued there 18 months “teaching the word of God among them.”

There is an interesting passage that suggests that Paul may have changed his tactics when he went from Athens to Corinth. *“And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified”* (1Cor 2:1-2). As though Paul said to himself, with all this clever

development of the argument at Athens, and trying to meet them on their own ground, it did not really cut much ice.

This suggests to me that having preached the simplicity of the Gospel, *“Jesus Christ and him crucified,”* the simple message of the redemption possible through Jesus Christ; of his coming again as the Messiah; and of the judgment which he will effect at his coming; he was 18 months there developing their understanding. Now what Paul said in 18 months teaching the Corinthians I do not know. We may be sure that when on one notable occasion he *“continued his speech until midnight”* (Acts 20:7), and went on till the early morning, he would not be just repeating the ABC of the Christian message. He would be developing it, as he does in his epistles.

The point I am trying to make is this. There was a simple structure of dogmatic truth that they went out and preached. Men having received that became Christians. And then there was fruitful soil on which a deeper, richer, fuller understanding could be developed, and was developed, by the Apostles — Paul particularly, in his epistles and in his expositions.

What he actually preached at Corinth we do in fact know, because he tells us, and you could not have anything much more basic and simple than this.

“Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep” (1Cor 15:1-6).

Now here is some more basic Christian preaching. But, of course, in this very chapter we see him developing a lot of the implications of these basic ideas. *“If Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?”* (1Cor 15:12).

It seems incredible to us that Paul should write to a Christian church that he had founded, among whom he had preached the gospel and developed the theme for 18 months, and yet there were some among them that were saying that there was no resurrection of the dead. (We would have in his situation dealt with them very drastically if they did not believe in the resurrection of the dead!) The basic principle that Christ rose from the dead, that Paul had taught them, meant certain things in terms of doctrine, and the doctrine that he develops, for example, in this chapter, is man’s mortality apart from grace: *“And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable”* (1Cor 15:17-19). So it is obviously correct to deduce from this basic preaching of the resurrection that man is mortal.

We also find Paul developing the doctrine of the second coming, because if Christ rose from the dead, and if those who believe in him fall asleep in faith, then they must wait for him to come again in order that they may be raised from the dead. *“Afterward they that are Christ’s at his coming”* (1Cor 15:23). So we have the second coming, the resurrection of believers, the kingdom of God on earth: *“For he must reign until he has put all enemies under his feet”*) and the ultimate triumph of God over evil (verse 24-28) together with the call to men to respond (verse 58), all hidden in this basic conception: *“For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures”* (1Cor 15:3-4).

It blossoms out, as it were, into these other doctrines, and leads on to the conclusion: there is something you have got to do. It is not just head knowledge; the doctrines have got to have some impact on your living.

“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord” (1Cor 15:58).

This, I think, is an aspect of the preaching of the first century church which we ourselves ought to bear more particularly in mind. We have something of a reputation for being pure dogmatists. We have been accused of hammering away all the time at what we call “doctrine.” But there was always this element in the Apostolic preaching, of the impact of God’s word in men’s lives. It was a call to repent and be converted, and let it influence your living. *“Be steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.”* If you believe this, it must do something to you, and this is an aspect which I think we ought to give more thought to in our own preaching of the gospel.

Len Richardson

Notes:

1. From the Cilician poet Aratus (c 315-240 BC): “It is with Zeus that every one of us in every way has to do, for we are also his offspring” — which is also found in Cleanthes’ (331-233 BC) earlier Hymn to Zeus.

Len Richardson

With a deep sense of loss and sorrow we report the falling asleep on June 22, 1997, aged 81, of our Bro. Len Richardson. Bro. Len was baptized in Northampton in 1933 and faithfully served his Master in many ecclesial offices for 64 years in many ecclesias. Although his dynamic, caring and loving presence will be missed by us, we know we shall see him again at the last day. With the passing of Bro. Len Richardson, the Brotherhood has lost one of the most colorful and popular speaking brethren of this generation. He was known for his logical appraisal and plain speaking on all issues closely affecting our community. He wrote as he spoke, and the reader can envisage Bro. Len as present there while he is reading the books.



Bible Mission News

St. Lucia July 2015 Bible Exposition



Brother Hamer and Sister Carol Ottley are members of the Mount Grace ecclesia in Tobago. They had come to know Brethren Andre George and Eddie Anthony from Castries, St. Lucia on the occasions they have been down to help with preaching activities in Tobago and Guyana. When arrangements were made for Bro Hamer and Sis. Carol to go to St. Lucia the members of the Castries ecclesia gave the visitors a very warm welcome. The purpose of the visit was to encourage the members of the ecclesia, preach to interested friends and hold an exposition in the public library.

Brother Hamer had prepared a number of items that he brought with him which were displayed for three days in the library. Handbills announcing the exposition were printed and

handed out in the city. Radio interviews were held and whenever possible members spread the word about what would be presented.

This key event of their visit was scheduled for the final week of their three-week stay and the result was encouraging. The hours of the exposition were from 1100 to 1700 on each day. Also on each of these three days a lecture followed at 1800 in the ecclesial hall which is not far from the library. Lecture titles were "Behold the King", "Valley of Decision" and "Thy Kingdom Come". A number



Bro. Hamer being interviewed

of those who toured the exposition plus other visitors who were contacted by phone attended the lectures. The daily average for people who were given a “tour” of the displays was eleven in addition to a good number of casual visitors.

The work of following up with those who attended these events is in progress. We pray that the Lord will bless this work.

Submitted by Jan Berneau, CBMA/CBMC Publicity

Bro. Timothy Barnwell

Do we ever get the feeling when we pray that God is not listening?



**Bro. Timothy Barnwell and his mother,
Sis. Ann-lou Barnwell**

Consider the sense of utter frustration recorded in the remarks of those who were keeping ‘wake’ at the home of Mary and Martha shortly after the “falling asleep” of their brother Lazarus. In John 11:37 they ask: *“Could not this man, who opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?”* Lazarus and his two sisters who shared a common home were not just regular acquaintances of Jesus, they were really close friends at whose home he would seek rest

from time to time from his labours.

Jesus was quite some distance away ‘beyond Jordan’ when Lazarus fell ill, so imagine the fervent prayers for his recovery. As near panic stepped in they sent a hurried message to Jesus... *“Lord, he whom you love is ill.”* What does Jesus do? He spends two more days in the same place where he was!

With the full record before us we can thankfully see how their sorrow was eventually turned to joy, but were we present at the time no doubt we would all be similarly consumed by inconsolable grief and frustration while waiting for over three days for Jesus to make his appearance, and lo... no Jesus! Did he not care? How could this possibly be? How would we have reacted during this waiting period were Lazarus a member of our family?

This so fittingly reminds us of our recent grief over our beloved Brother Timothy Barnwell of the Eccles Ecclesia in Guyana. Bro. Timothy was a very hard-working, committed brother, who went out of his way for the work of the gospel. He helped found the CARE group of young people which is still committed to visiting and cheering up the elderly brethren. He labored at the forefront of the youth circles in Guyana, and even stretched his missionary efforts over to neighbouring Trinidad and Tobago.

It was yet dark on the very morning of his 29th birthday, (20th August last) that Timothy was on his way from his place of work in the outlying countryside to the airport to receive his fiancé Sis. Corrine Bailey of Trinidad when his motor car ran off the road and crashed into a post, immediately rendering him unconscious as a result of the multiple injuries sustained. He died five days later in ICU without regaining consciousness, on his spiritual birthdate!

The outpouring of grief over the death of this admirable young soldier of Christ is beyond our description! Then the questions began to pour in: “Could not the Lord whom he so faithfully served, have caused that even this accident be prevented?” Young and old alike were stunned as we groped around in pain and searched the Scriptures for answers. In all honesty, no one can claim to have a completely satisfactory answer. We can only glean from the word of God that sometimes seemingly bad things are allowed to happen to good people, in this case, His own servant.

As Brethren in Christ and children of God, we have come to see and understand from previous experiences that our Heavenly Father always has our best interest at heart and, hard as it may seem, we can no more see into the future or attempt to judge God than our infant children can understand why we are moving the family out of town resulting in their having to leave their cherished friends and customary surroundings. Our Saviour is able to see what we cannot see, and nurtures plans that only he knows would conflict with our present ‘comfort’ zone.

1 Kings 14:1-13 tells of how young Abijah, son of Jeroboam was taken away in the mercies of God. This accords with the words of the prophet Isaiah 57:1 which declares this principle as defying the wisdom of this world because the future belongs to God Almighty alone.

We may be assured that when we cry out to God for our petitions to be heard, they always are! They may not always however, be answered in the manner we expect, again, for reasons known best only to a loving father in Heaven. Take our Lord Jesus as a prime example, in Gethsemane. With his brutal torture and crucifixion drawing near, he cries out with excruciating tears as no man can possibly cry out to a father. And yet, the answer was a firm but loving ‘no’ even though we are told his prayer was heard! How was his prayer heard? He was not saved from the cup of suffering itself, but from the power of death! His father faithfully raised him to life eternal, because he knew no sin.

By the same token, the Apostle Paul reassures us:

“But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, (i.e. faith in his holy Word) he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwells in you” (Rom 8:11).

As the battle raged within his mortal frame Jesus dug deep and gathered the final dregs of his spiritual strength and flung himself at the feet of his Father in full surrender: *“Not my will, but thine be done”*, an elevated attitude of spiritual development to which we must all eventually come. Had his cup been avoided,

you and I would still be void of a saviour, consigned forever to an endless, hopeless trek from cradle to the grave of eternal oblivion.

Those who surrender to the father's will, live in Hope that though we sow in tears today we will reap a life of eternal joy tomorrow. Let us accept then that in as much as we would so dearly have wished our beloved Timothy to remain with us, our Lord has a better plan for him. He called him to rest at the height of his spiritual endeavours thus leaving an indelible legacy for us to inherit and share.

At the soon appearing of His son Christ Jesus, "*he will wipe away all tears, and there will be no more death, sorrow or crying*". We will, please God, see Timothy again at that glorious resurrection! Let us therefore trust God 'though the night be dark around us' and repose in Him the benefit of whatever doubt the stubborn flesh may harbor' and let His will be done.

David Andrews (Guyana)

A Chance Encounter ??????

Hello my name is Breighanna. I am the newest Sister of the Bedford Ecclesia (Nova Scotia, Canada) as of August 15th, 2015. For you to get to know me a little I will tell you this: I am 25 years old, currently working as a nurse, I enjoy traveling. I have a golden retriever named Nova and I am newly engaged to a lovely man named Bro. Ben Davis from New Zealand. I was brought up in Catholic family. I have been asked to write a piece on how I came to finding the Truth and my experience with the Bible Courses I have completed on **thisisyourbible.com**.

I'm sure after reading my introduction you want to know more about the part where I was brought up in a Catholic family and how I got to where I am now. It all started for me as an adolescent: you know those years 14, 15, 16...etc. I started questioning the Catholic Church's credibility. The church was making the news on an ongoing basis and not for the better. Priests were becoming offenders; churches were being demolished or shut down. From a young age I could only see the hurt the Catholic Church was causing its own people. People began leaving the faith, me included. I knew in my heart I loved God, but I was lost. Where was I going to find a group of people of like mindedness; whose beliefs were believable, in which their common focus was to show glory to God; who did not have a designated head of the Church made up by man, but recognize that only God can provide that form of leadership for them; who base their beliefs on the teachings in the Bible? I had so many unanswered questions...

I was 24 years old traveling in Greece with some girlfriends. I was on vacation getting away from work for a while on my first overseas experience. I was so excited! On my second day in Greece, on Mykonos Island to be exact I met Ben. I did not know at the time that Ben was going to be put in my life to give me the tools to find exactly what I was looking for all along. It was our third date when the topic of religion had first surfaced over dinner. Ben asked me, "Do you have a faith are you religious?" I remember saying to him, "I was brought up Catholic. I believe in God, but I'm not a practicing Catholic." He left the topic there and

we proceeded to enjoy the rest of the evening. The next day I was leaving for Santorini with my friends. I thought I wasn't going to see Ben again, until I got a message from him saying he had changed his plans and he was going to come meet me in Santorini. At this point I was interested to hear more from him on what his outlook on religion was. In my own personal experience it isn't every day that your date asks you, "Do you have a faith: are you religious?" Ben told me that he was Christadelphian. I had never heard of the Christadelphians until that moment. Now to make things clear this isn't something I just jumped into. Once I left Greece I had several Skype conversations with Ben about his beliefs. I was keen to learn more. It seemed by meeting him I was getting the opportunity to have several of my questions listed above answered.

New Zealand was the next chapter in my search. Off I went to visit Ben for five weeks. I met his family and all of his friends. Attended the Auckland Waitakere Ecclesia, NZ, with him every Sunday I was there. One night around the bon fire with Ben's parents I even had the opportunity to have a much more in depth conversation about what Christadelphian beliefs are. Ben's Mom and Dad suggested **thisisyourbible.com**. As I had vocalized to them that I felt I needed to find the information out for myself. I came back to Canada determined to find more answers, to see if this path was in fact going to be right for me.

I wasn't far into the 28 lessons on **thisisyourbible.com** when I realized I wanted to be included in this community of believers. I requested to be baptized and voiced this to my then tutor Bro. Michael Carr. He said he had a good friend at the Bedford Ecclesia named Bro. Dale Crawford who would provide feedback on my questions on the **thisisyourbible.com** lessons and who would also help me set up my interview and baptism once the lessons were completed. Ben was aware that I was partaking in the lessons, but he was completely surprised that I had made a request to be baptized. Ben had the opportunity to come to Canada to be there to witness my special day in becoming more Christ like through baptism. We are now engaged and share a meeting together over Skype every Sunday. I live about 4.5 hours away from the nearest Ecclesia (Bedford, Nova Scotia, Canada) and keep in touch when I can.

If there is anyone who is reading this and has come to finding the Truth in one way or another, I ask you to please pay close attention to the special gift that has been put before you. I truly believe God brings us to finding certain things in our lives for a reason. It is up to you to decide what you will do with your findings. I hope God blesses you all and keeps you safe.

*With warm regards, Breighanna Hussey
Submitted by Sis. Jan Berneau, CBMA/CBMC*

Addresses for Bequests and Donations

Christadelphian Tidings Publishing Committee publishes this magazine and other works on the Truth. P.O. Box 981781, Austin, TX 78709-1781, www.tidings.org

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

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

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

Williamsburg Christadelphian Foundation (WCF) supports pastoral and preaching activities throughout the world. c/o Rick Szabo, P.O. Box 1528, West Caldwell, NJ 07007-1528 wcfoundation.org

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

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

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

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

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

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

Fairhaven Christadelphian Charitable Foundation provides assistance to Canadian ecclesias dealing with the health and welfare issues of senior members. Donations can be sent c/o Jonathan Farrar, 140 Whitwell Way, Binbrook, ON, L0R 1C0

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

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

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

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

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.

BEDFORD, NS

Over the past number of months we have enjoyed visits from many brothers and sisters and their families. We are thankful for the visits and fellowship of Ed Rivet (North Bay, ON); Charlotte Smith (Edinburgh, UK.); Benjamin Davis (Auckland, NZ.); Abi Hardy (Studley, UK.); Chris and Martha Sales (Shelburne, ON.); and Joan Goodwin, Phil and Janice Baines, Brad and Debbie Goodwin, Carolyn Kelly, Paul and Marie Baines, Cliff and Julia Baines, Carolyn Kelly, Bernadette Sears, and Jenny Wetmore (Sussex, NB).

We enjoyed a study weekend in September given by Bro. Chris Sales. Bro. Chris' topic was: "Hebrews: The Better Hope—A Practical Exposition". We are thankful for his efforts, the fellowship with Sis. Martha and Abel, as well as those who attended.

Bro. Steve and Sis. Julie, Sis. Abi, Jed and Tzipi Snobelen returned from a one-year sabbatical in California. We are very thankful for their safe return. While attending the Simi Hills, CA Ecclesia, ABIYAH SNOBELEN was baptized on, April 8, 2015. Although we wished we could have been physically present, we are extremely pleased to welcome our new sister and thank our heavenly Father for guiding her.

We are extremely pleased to announce the baptism of BREIGHANNA HUSSEY. Our new sister lives in Sydney, NS. She came into contact with truth when vacationing in Greece in 2014. There she met Bro. Ben Davis of Auckland, NZ. They struck up a friendship and Breighanna registered for the "Exploring the Bible" online course through Thisisyourbible.com. She was very diligent, often completing two courses per week, and her responses were excellent. She requested baptism and she and Bro. Ben visited Halifax. Her baptismal interview was a demonstration of how she has grasped the truth, firmly understanding its principles, and has committed to a life in Christ. Our new sister was baptized, August 15, 2015, in St. Margaret's Bay, NS. Sis. Breighanna and Bro. Ben became engaged shortly thereafter and Bro. Ben is making arrangements to move to Canada. We thank our heavenly Father for guiding Sis. Breighanna and ask his blessing upon their plans. (Note: Sis. Breighanna's story can be found on pages 573-574 in this issue.)

In October, we began a 10-week seminar series entitled, "Keys To Success: The Life and Ministry of Jesus Christ". We have three interested friends attending. We are holding the seminar on Wednesday evenings in lieu of our Bible class at Scott Manor House in Bedford, NS.

For any inquiries, please contact Bro. Dale Crawford by email at: Bedfordchristadelphians@gmail.com; or by phone at: 1-902-431-6650.

Dale Crawford

BOSTON, MA

It is with great joy that we announce the baptism of JOSHUA MOORE SULLIVAN into the saving name of Jesus Christ. Josh is the son of Bro. Jim and Sis. Cindy Sullivan. May our Father be with him as he begins his journey toward His everlasting kingdom.

We would like to thank Bro. Jim Harper for his Sunday school class and exhortation on Sunday October 25, 2015.

Jim Sullivan

BROOKLYN, NY

The year is passing eventfully! Earlier we lost Bro. Amrick Kilburn, in his forties, baptized over twenty years. A few weeks ago, Sis. Elvia Thompson fell asleep in Christ. She was in her sixties, baptized over forty years ago at the Colon, Panama Ecclesia, and raised Christadelphian as the fourth of the fourteen children of Bro. and Sis. Fisher. Both Amrick and Elvia were diligent and faithful laborers in the vineyard especially with the young people, leaving a great void to fill. Elvia witnessed the baptism of grand-daughter Jessenia, at the start of the family camp during the summer this year.

Mid-week Bible class has been well supported with the in-depth study of Romans yielding edifying results. The Sunday afternoon workshop sessions on the book of Isaiah are yielding similar results.

Our Breaking of Bread has been enriched by exhortations from Bre. Joe Badlu and Tyrone Smartt (South Ozone Park, NY), and Selvin Sawyers (Union, NJ). We thank these brothers for their labors on our behalf. Local preaching was a three occasion outreach led by Bro. Martin Eastman at the nearby Prospect Park, and occasional leaflet distribution in front of our hall. South Ozone Park also had a very successful Parking Lot Preaching Outreach with a record number of visitors and with ample BBQ, games and horseback riding for all.

We are currently encouraging more brothers to submit electronic exhortations to the Tidings in order to maintain the depleting bank.

Internationally, we have identified with Latvia, Barbados, and Jamaica through Bro. David; Trinidad and Tobago and Jamaica through Bro. Gideon and Sis. Asha; and Guyana and Panama through the undersigned.

Clive Drepaul

KINGSTON, ON

Inter-ecclesial activities continue to grow between the ecclesias of Eastern Ontario. In May, Kingston welcomed a joint meeting with the Ottawa Ecclesia at the Barton home and in June, Kingston members attended the Picton Ecclesia's annual Sunday School Picnic. It's so very nice to enjoy the expanded fellowship afforded by the ecclesial growth in Eastern Ontario and the unity efforts.

We often have visiting speakers and guests from ecclesias near and far, too many to thank personally, but we are appreciative of all those who share their fellowship and encourage us along the path.

Bro. Justin and Sis. Abi Keene are pleased to announce the birth of their baby girl, Wynnter Elyse born on, March, 25, 2014. She is healthy, lively and vivacious. They are now a family of five and the Kingston children now number six in total. We provide Sunday school each week to two children, to bring them up in the Lord.

Another wonderful addition to our meeting has been the arrival of Sis. Sarah and Bro. Nathan Crawford from the Halifax, NS Ecclesia. They both contribute their skills generously. Sarah provides Sunday school lessons for the children, and plays piano for our meetings. Nathan exhorts, presides, preaches and occasionally fills in for the children's Sunday school lessons. We have been truly blessed to have them come our way.

Regretfully Sis. Sharon Lording has relocated away from us to the Barrie area. We pray the Lord will bless and keep her in His wonderful hope.

Local preaching efforts continue. The year started with a follow-up course to our Learn To Read The Bible Effectively Seminars begun in the Fall of 2014. We covered the book of Genesis but it was only attended by four students.

Further outreach was conducted at the International Plowing Match and Expo in Finch, ON, just north of Cornwall, in September 2015, with the assistance of ASK. Bro. Harold and Sis. Karen Coffell (Ottawa, ON), Bro. Rick and Sis. Eunice Hill (Picton, NZ), and Steve Keating (Toronto East, ON) came to help Kingston hosts Sis. Anne and Bro. Jim Barton. Overall two thousand seven hundred leaflets were handed out with "Ten Bible Questions and Ten Bible Answers" along with dozens of other booklets to preach the gospel. So far two contacts have resulted from that effort.

Recently, Sis. Rebekah Norman, whose family is of the Barrie Ecclesia, has taken up residence in the Kingston area as she continues her education at Queen's University. It's our pleasure to welcome her to our meetings.

So far we are still able to meet in member's homes. Most Sunday meetings are followed by a light luncheon and fellowship time. Do come and join us if you are in the area. The Barton's recently built a new home that offers free camping hookups for summer campers who may be traveling by. We may still be small in number but we are sincere of heart. Please come join us if you can.

Jim Barton

KITCHENER WATERLOO, ON

We are very pleased to welcome as a member of the Kitchener Waterloo, ON Ecclesia, Bro. Bob Howes from the Hamilton Greenaway, ON Ecclesia. We look forward to his company on our journey to the kingdom of God.

During 2015 we have welcomed many visitors and thank those brethren who have assisted us with exhortations and class addresses. We continue to hold weekly seminars with some interested friends attending regularly.

Martin J. Webster

MISSISSAUGA WEST, ON

We were delighted to witness the baptism of three members of our Sunday School recently: JOSHUA JACKSON, son of Bro. Doug and Sis. Carolyn Jackson, daughter of Bro. Joel and Sis. Amy Thorp; and NOAH BINGHAM, son of Bro. Trevor and Sis. Lori Bingham have each chosen to put on the name of the Lord Jesus. It's wonderful to see the active hand of God in the lives of our young people.

Graham Baldock

ROGUE VALLEY, OR

We are happy to announce the baptism of PAULINE FIELDS, and as well, the return of our Sis. Martha Suggs from the Brant County, ON Ecclesia. We are preparing for the Rogue River Bible School in 2016. We also have a long time visitor with us, Bro. Matt Hatcher, from the Thousand Oaks, CA Ecclesia, who is looking to resettle in Grants Pass, Oregon. He is also acting as our Sunday School Coordinator.

On April 2-3, 2016, we will have a study weekend with Bro. Jim Cowie (Moreton Bay, Brisbane, Aust.). The topic will be, "The Spirit of Christ in the Psalms". For information, please contact Bro. Henry Wisniewski by phone at: 541-956-5829; or by email at: henrywisniewski@hotmail.com. On July 31-August 6, 2016, we will have our Rogue Valley Bible School, with speakers: Bro. Carl Parry (Salisbury, Aust.) speaking on, "The Life of Noah"; Bro. David Wisniewski (Brant County, ON) speaking on, "Parables in the Gospels"; and Bro. Ken Styles, (Detroit Royal Oak, MI) speaking on, "Forgiveness". For registration information, please contact Sis. Pat Posey by email at: Pat1Posey@gmail.com.

Henry Wisniewski

SHELburne, ON

We are pleased to announce the formation of a new lightstand in the Collingwood, ON area. The following brothers and sisters are transferred from the Shelburne, ON Ecclesia to the new ecclesia in Collingwood: Benjamin and Lydia Abel; Joe and Kate Abel; John and Darla Anderson; Allan and Jessica Crandlemire; Gerhard and Carolyn Runge; Kurtis Runge; Lauren Runge; Chris and Martha Sales; Silas Sales; Verity Sales; and Bob and Heather Venton. We wish God's richest blessing on their endeavours and look forward to mutual fellowship and strengthening until our Lord returns. This is the third ecclesia to come out of Shelburne, as previously the Barrie and Orangeville Ecclesias were established. We pray for God's continued blessing on this corner of His vineyard that the ecclesias in the area will continue to grow and prosper.

David Styles

ST. LUCIA

During recent years the small ecclesia in St. Lucia has been busy keeping to the faith and preaching to those who will listen. The support from England, Canada and Caribbean countries has been greatly appreciated. Under the initiative of visitors, a programme of "Bible Enrichment" classes are being held. Members and visitors come to take part in discussions on first principle topics as well as expositions of some books of the Bible.

Bro. Andre George has written several books and these have been promoted to friends and visitors in several Caribbean Countries. The titles include: "The Devil & Satan Exposed and Unmasked", "The Trinity — Myth or Mystery?" and "The Secret of Immortality". These books are available at www.thisisyourbible.com and brothers and sisters are encouraged to use these publications in their preaching work. We report that Bro. Gabriel Fontenelle is no longer a member of the ecclesia.

If it possible for you to visit the beautiful island of St. Lucia either on vacation or to assist in the mission work please do contact the undersigned at martinjwebster@gmail.com for information. For vacationers the offer to present a Bible class or the word of exhortation would be welcomed. For anyone interested in a longer stay in order to get involved with the mission work, accommodation is available and arrangements can be discussed after contact has been made through the above email address. The

accommodation is about a 15-minute walk from the ecclesial hall where the memorial service is held at 10:15 (approximately) each Sunday. The Bible Enrichment classes are held on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 17:00 also at the hall.

Martin Webster

SUSSEX, NB

We were very pleased to have the company of Bro. Bruce and Sis. Pat Waite (Nashua, NH) at our Thanksgiving gathering in October. We are very grateful to Bro. Bruce for leading the study weekend on, "Abraham, the Friend of God". We were blessed with visiting brothers and sisters from Bedford, NS; Meriden, CT; and Boston, MA.

Our Fortieth Anniversary celebration was very successful, and we thank all who participated, especially Bro. Jim Harper, accompanied by his wife, Sis. Esther, (Meriden, CT) for giving us a devotional class and exhortation.

Cliff Baines

VANCOUVER BC

Since our last correspondence we have rejoiced with Bro. Wesley Butler and Sis. Silvia Halder (Dhaka, Bangladesh) in their marriage in December 2014. It was joyful, though somewhat tempered by patience required to gain her immigration to Canada, which is now expected before the end of 2015. We wish them God's richest blessing as they walk together.

In her ninety-third year, Sis. Lucie Harris fell asleep in August 2014. With her husband, Bro. Bill, who fell asleep in 1984, she awaits the day of resurrection. While age limited Sis. Lucie in recent years, she always had a smile and a twinkle in her eyes, opening her home in generous hospitality.

Bro. Caleb and Sis. Julia Lawrence, with Ethan and Bethany, returned to Ontario in August 2014, transferring to the Cambridge Ecclesia. We miss their lively participation in the ecclesia. During 2014 we enjoyed the stimulation of two Bible Seminar series, Learn to Read the Bible Effectively and the Acts. Several participants in the first series enthusiastically discussed the amazing message of Scripture. Sadly, none returned for the second series.

We have welcomed many visitors from near and far; the shared fellowship within our worldwide community continues to uplift our members. Especially appreciated are the messages of exhortation and Bible talks delivered by the brethren. Special thanks go to our Fall Fraternal Gathering speakers: in 2014: Bro. Mark and Sis. Jean Giordano (Norfolk VA). Bro. Mark's theme, "Wonders of the Kingdom" brought to light promised blessings. In 2015, Bro. Tec and Sis. Mary Morgan (Castle Bromwich UK). Bro. Tec's theme, "God Dwelling with Man," took us through the blessing of God's presence from the very beginning and into the kingdom age. We advise that Bro David and Sis Mary Barrett are no longer in fellowship.

During the spring, Bro. Eric Sternad (Simi Valley CA) led us through a series of presentations and group discussions on, "Relationships", providing valuable personal communication tools. Continuing workshop type sessions drawing on Biblical examples, are providing us with practical guidance. We also enjoyed the blessing of a weekend retreat in the midst of mountain grandeur at Manning Park, and the wonderful opportunity for members, young and old, to share readings, meals and campfire singing at a secluded lodge.

As the flow of refugees into Europe reveals the evil of war and the unspeakable suffering of innocent people, we rejoice in the company of five new Iranian brothers and sisters now free to believe and witness for the truth as it is in our Lord Jesus. Last December, Sis. Yalda Dehghani, and in February, Bro Medhi and Sis Maryam Sohani, with four year old Mahak, arrived from Turkey. Then in September, Bro. Ali and Sis. Mehrnaz Owji arrived from Sri Lanka. Their resolve to trust in God's guiding hand, placing them in a new land after several years of hardship is a sobering reminder that our freedom of worship is a blessing and not an entitlement. We pray that our God will richly bless their lives in this land and our fellowship in Christ.

Phil Snobelen

WICHITA FALLS, TX

Since last reporting our ecclesial news, we have welcomed the following brothers and sisters around the table of our Lord: Andrea Banta, Fred and Laura Bearden, Matthew Bearden, Amanda Buck, Paul and Cindy Burkett, Gene and Seba Faye Farley, Jeremiah Hefner, Josh and Brittany Hefner, David Ishman, Mark and Julie Ishman, and Cliff and Maritta Terrel (Austin Leander, TX); Peter Trotter, Antonio and Marcia Howell, Jacob Matthew, and Michele Massip (Dallas, TX); Daniel and Rebecca Goodwin, and Sarah Maie, (East Texas); Leah Wolfe, Wendy Hicks, Phyllis Hollenbeck, Rick Hollenbeck, Ralph and Elizabeth Hollenbeck, and Allyson Hollenbeck, (Abilene, TX); Carmel Glumac (Houston, TX); Deborah Bruce,, Nathan Daniels, Ronnie and Kristen Hefner, Shannon and Jeanne Strickland, Bethany Young, Brandon Hefner, David Phillips, and Tamar Goltz (North Houston, TX); Aron and Darlynn Cherry, Tyler Cherry, Christy Nau, Jackie Wade, and Didier and Shannon Moleres (West Houston, TX); David and Erin Clubb (Simi Hills, CA); Max and Linda Wickham (San Diego County, CA).; Cheryl Kitch, and Sandra Maggard (Albuquerque, NM); Stephen Bryan (Kouts, IN); Matt Bryan (Detroit Livonia, MI); Linda Jones (Los Angeles, CA).; Justin Reich (Thousands Oaks, CA); Kathie Atwood, and Stan Newton, (Pomona, CA); Bill and Kelly Ellison, and Esther Ellison (Westerly, RI); Ralph and Renee Schwarz (Granite State, NH); and Ed Newton (Verdugo Hills, CA) We thank Bre. M. Wickham, B. Ellison, P. Trotter, A. Howell, R. Schwartz, R. Hefner, S. Newton and E. Newton for their words of encouragement.

We were pleased to welcome Bro. Jim Cowie (Brisbane, Aust.), in June. He gave 2 classes entitled, "Forty Years from Armageddon to the Kingdom," and "It is Done-The 3 Covenants Fulfilled". We thank Bro. Cowie for uplifting us in preparation for our Savior's return!

With much joy we report the union of Bro. Daniel Beutel and Sis. Malinda Lewis in October 2015. Over seventy brothers and sisters joined us on this wonderful occasion. We seek God's blessing upon them as they begin their walk together to His kingdom.

John A. Clubb

NEW ECCLESIA — COLLINGWOOD, ON

In association with the announcement from the Shelburne Ecclesia, here are the details of the new ecclesia.

The ecclesia will be known as the Collingwood, ON Ecclesia. Contact recording brother Perry Braux, phone: 705-444-7492 or email: pbraux@me.com. Meetings are held in the Raglan Retirement Home, 89 Raglan Street, Collingwood, at 10 am on Sundays. Weekly Bible study on Thursdays at 7 pm in the homes (call for details).

Minute Meditation

Total commitment is required

The famous football coach Vince Lombardi once said, “Most people fail, not because of lack of desire, but because of lack of commitment.” No one ever achieved greatness or success in some worthwhile endeavor without focusing on the goal and working to achieve it. The more difficult the accomplishment, the more effort and dedication is required for success. Our goal in life should be to serve our Heavenly Father faithfully, and we will never be able to even partially achieve that goal without total commitment to it.

We cannot please our God with a half-hearted effort. The standard is high, as we read in Deuteronomy, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.” Jesus tells us, “Seek ye first the Kingdom of God.” Paul explains how he sets his priorities, “But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” We need to commit ourselves as single-mindedly as Paul did.

We are living in times when fewer people are willing to commit themselves to much of anything. In North America, many spend countless hours distracting themselves by listening to music, following Twitter and texting on social media, playing electronic games, as well as watching TV and keeping up with the local sports teams. They have a job but are not particularly committed to it. Many do not marry due to a lack of commitment. Folks seem to have lost the sense of where they are going in life and drift along just doing whatever comes along. They aren't setting goals or planning their future, because, as Lewis Carroll once said, “If you don't know where you're going, any road will get you there.” A Chinese proverb says that water will flow wherever it is diverted; that is the problem with those just going along with the flow because they can be easily influenced in any direction, at times towards unprofitable or unsavory activities.

We need to be different. We must not let the unfocused attitude of those around us influence us. These people will be failures in life, even by worldly standards. They are not looking to do anything worthwhile and have a hard time handling life's setbacks. In God's eyes, they are like grass, as the prophet Isaiah explains, “All human beings are like grass; they last no longer than wild flowers. Grass withers and flowers fade when the LORD sends the wind blowing over them. People are no more enduring than grass.” What really matters? Isaiah makes it clear: “The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever.”

We need to follow the advice of the apostle Paul, who said, “Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.” Solomon tells us, “Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not depend on your own understanding.” If we don't want to be like grass, but instead would like to be given immortality in the Kingdom of God, we must, as David says, “Commit thy way unto the LORD;

trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass.” We need to read our Bible to find out what God wants, because, as Paul tells us, “The Holy Scriptures . . . are able to give you the wisdom you need for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.”

Would you like to be immortal and live forever in a paradise that God has designed to fix the problems of our world — no more pain or suffering or death, instead, a life of peace and beauty and contentment? Almost everyone answers, Yes! Yet, as Vince Lombardi predicts, most people will not be there because while they may desire to be there, they lack commitment. Total commitment to serving Him is what God wants. Nothing less is good enough. We must truly seek first the kingdom of God by committing our life to serving our God.

God loves us and loves our world. As John tells us, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life.” How thankful we are that we have such a loving and merciful God who wants us to have eternal life. The way is open but we must respond. Belief in God is essential. The writer to the Hebrews explains that we must believe that God exists, and that He rewards them that diligently seek Him.

May we commit ourselves to diligently seeking Him by reading His word and obeying His commandments, so that when our Lord Jesus returns we may hear those welcome words, “Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your Lord.”

Robert J. Lloyd



BOXTOPS FOR THE CHRISTADELPHIAN HERITAGE SCHOOL

After a bit of a hiatus with the Box Tops program, the Christadelphian Heritage School is now signed on with it again! So, if you notice that you have spare “Box Tops for Education” labels, and you have time to cut them out and send them to the school, we would really appreciate that! Every little bit helps!

Please send the Box Tops to: Christadelphian Heritage School, c/o Jason Hensley, 6701 Santa Susana Pass Road, Simi Valley, CA 93063.

Over the last few years, it has been really beautiful to see how many throughout North America have been thinking about us and cutting out box tops. It’s a powerful reminder that we’re all working on this together. Thank you!

*Jason Hensley
Principal, Christadelphian Heritage School*

Coming Events (Lord Willing)

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

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.

JANUARY, 2016

16-17 Tampa Bay, FL Study Weekend at Largo Ecclesia, 12212 104th N Largo, FL 33773. Speaker will be Bro. Jim Cowie (Brisbane, AUS) on "The Quarrel of my Covenant at Gibeah of Saul". Contact Bro. Stephen Lewis, numbers1421@gmail.com or 727-501-5777.

30-31 San Diego County, CA Annual study weekend. Classes start at 9:30am. Bro. Shane Kirkwood (Sydney, AUS) will be the speaker. "Encounters with the Master — How Jesus Changed Lives." Contact Bro. Kurt Wickham at kwickham28@gmail.com or 760-728-7807.

FEBRUARY, 2016

6 Brantford, ON Annual Junior CYC & Little Disciples Winter Gathering at Camp Trillium. Workbooks will be posted on www.brantfordchristadelphians.com. For information email Bro. Peter and Sis. Karly Styles at peterandkarly@juno.com.

21-26 Palm Springs Bible School will be held, Lord willing, at the Miracle Springs Resort in Desert Hot Springs, CA. The speakers for 2016 are Bro. Anthony Whitehorn (Maidenhead, UK): "Faith and Doubt" and Bro. Steve Davis (Boston, MA): "Moving on to Maturity". The Bible School is held at a natural hot springs resort. The School offers a wonderful environment for the mature adult to study God's word and enjoy the fellowship of other brethren and sisters. To register, please contact Jeff Gelineau at jeffgelineau@gmail.com or visit our website www.californiabibleschool.org for more details.

APRIL, 2016

2-3 Rogue Valley, OR Study Weekend with Bro. Jim Cowie (Moreton Bay, Brisbane, AUS). His topic will be "The Spirit of Christ in the Psalms". For information, contact Bro. Henry Wisniewski at 541 956-5829 or henrywisniewski@hotmail.com.

MAY, 2016

6-7 Vancouver Island Sisters' Weekend in Victoria, BC. Study led by Sis. Maritta Terrel (Austin Leander, Texas). Topic: "Renew Your Mind". Registration Fee: \$50.00. For further information or to register contact Sis. Rosa Bailey, 3-1431 Simon Road, Victoria, BC, V8X 3G9 or rosabailey@shaw.ca.

JULY, 2016

31-Aug 6 Rogue River Bible School Speakers: Bro. Carl Parry (Salisbury, AUS) on "The Life of Noah"; Bro. David Wisniewski (Brant County, ON) on "Parables in the Gospels"; and Bro. Ken styles (Detroit Royal Oak, MI) on "Forgiveness". For registration information, contact Sis. Pat Posey at Pat1Posey@gmail.com.

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