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Commendation Letter

It is unusual to comment on an item of news, but the “Commendation Letter” (p. 48) deserves a brief explanation. Although the Tidings Committee considers it an acceptable basis by which all ecclesias should be able to welcome the Unamended ecclesias involved, we must consider this only the start of a process. Simultaneously, as mentioned in The Tidings, November 2013, the “Ontario Conference Series” is an ongoing dialog involving ecclesias in Ontario, both Amended and Unamended. These sessions could lead to complete agreement among the ecclesias in Ontario and we hope to be able to provide more details in the future.

As such, we encourage all ecclesias to continue to pray for unity within the brotherhood in North America, and not pursue any precipitate action. Ecclesias who are interested can obtain a copy of the full Commendation Letter from www.unitycl.org.

We acknowledge that the confusion over fellowship in Ontario will not end with the publication of this commendation letter. Although it has broad support in the region, this support is not unanimous. In addition, some ecclesias appear to be making fellowship decisions not in conformance with generally accepted Central Christadelphian fellowship practice. We therefore plan for the time being to add to the header for News & Notices the following caveat patterned after earlier reunions:

“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.”
A Time for Reflection

Mission Statement
As I enter my fifth year as editor, and also a New Year, I reflect on my brief occupation of the editorial position. I started in May of 2010 with a mission statement, so this will be the initial framework of my musings.

“The Christadelphian Tidings is the regional Christadelphian magazine for the Americas. It seeks to convey the scriptural message of the Hope of the Kingdom, and to help brothers and sisters in their collective walk in the Truth. It conveys news of ecclesias and events in North America, as well as news from the mission areas in the Americas. It strives, in all that it does, to reflect the glory of God through his son Jesus.”

I would hope that all I have written, and all that I have published, has conformed to this statement. In 52 issues, and about 900,000 words, there have inevitably been a few articles that deviate from the mission, and a few errors, but also many articles written by the many contributors which, it is hoped, have directly helped in the service of our Lord Jesus.

What I inherited
The Christadelphian community in North America is undoubtedly under stress, due to many factors:

- The increasing secularization of North America, and indeed the whole of the media, has made it increasingly difficult for our young people to live a Christ–like life.
- We are faced with a society that stresses inclusion and no discrimination, so as a result same sex marriage and toleration of alternative life style have made it very difficult to proclaim Christian morality. In fact, it would probably be unwise to publicize a lecture on the evils of homosexuality at present. One wonders what Paul would have thought of our society — although such problems obviously have troubled all true believers, both in Old Testament as well as New Testament times.
- Humanism, the Evangelical Movement, and the erroneous claims of evolution are impacting all of us, and particularly those young in the Truth.
- And of course there is the continuing stress over the attempts of some of the Amended Fellowship who wish to join with those of the Unamended community who would like to unite on a common Scriptural basis.

Frankly, little has changed since 2010 in any of these areas, although we are perhaps just a little closer in the last area. As many have commented, surely this litany is part of the signs that we can expect the return of our Lord soon, although perhaps not in the manner or at the time we expect. As Paul says “For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night” (1Thess 5:2).
The essence of the saying is that, not only is the coming unexpected, but that the householder is unprepared for such an event. Our focus, as always should be on preparation, not forecasting.

**Edification**

We can look back on all the articles that have appeared over the last five years, which number close to 300, and this excludes the intelligence, news and notices, and Mission news. We have published ongoing sections on “Youth Speaks” with Bro. Jason Hensley, “Sunday School” with Bro. Jim Harper, and a more occasional section on “Music in Worship” with Bro. Ken and Sis Joan Curry. Of course, other areas of edification have been covered, ranging from Articles on the Qur’an and the Mormons (Bro. Don Styles), to Job (by Bro. John Pople), Leviticus and the Tabernacle (Bro. Joe Hill), Marriage (Bro. Jon Bilello) and several series on the New Testament by Bro. Ryan Mutter. Many more have contributed, and I must apologize if space and practical constraints inhibit me from including all who have provided valuable insight, exhortation, and practical guidance.

The Special Issues (the August issue) have changed somewhat. We had, for some years prior, published extended treatments of a single passage or chapter, such as one on the Proverbs of Agur, Proverbs 30, by Bro. George Booker. Instead, we switched to collections by multiple authors on a common theme, and so have considered Preaching, Christadelphians and the World Around Us, By Sisters for Sisters, and All the Apostles. Many (but not all) of all these articles and much more can, of course, be found on the Tidings Website, Tidings.org, and any individual article which is missing can usually be obtained by e-mailing the editor.

**Intelligence**

The Tidings has certainly served as a source of news for the North American Christadelphian community: a quick survey showed, on average, about 50 different ecclesias submit intelligence every year, with a few not only submitting every year but also multiple times a year. Again, approximate statistics show the intelligence received from ecclesias represent 70% of the Amended ecclesias, and although about 60 ecclesias have not, versus the 90 (approximately) who have, most of these who have not are quite small.

Some who do not send in intelligence are quite large, however, which is a pity for future generations. The whole archive of *The Tidings* is shortly to be made available, and it has proved quite valuable in confirming baptism dates etc. So, if the Lord remains away, those who do not send in intelligence will not have contributed to this valuable archive of not only a host of informational, Biblically based articles but the comings and goings of our North American Community — all fully searchable.

The events section, as well as the notice section, is also quite valuable. Although many ecclesias circulate the ecclesias in their area with notices via e-mail (and a very few still by “snail mail”), it is still valuable for the wider community to be aware of all the on-going activities. After all, our young people do an incredible amount of travelling, as any parent of young people knows.
Looking forward

The signs of the times are fascinating, if a little hard to interpret. There is a strange duality surrounding the focus of our attention, which is of course events surrounding Jerusalem, Israel, and the Middle East. Simultaneously, Israel is in the position of being the dominant military power in the region, with most of its potential enemies in turmoil, so from a position of any realistic threat to its existence as a nation, it is surely dwelling in peace and safety (1Thess 5:3), and in a land of unwalled villages (Ezek 38:11). At the same time, the Palestinians who live in the land and in the Gaza Strip are continually inflicting pin-pricks with individual assaults, and intermittent episodes of random rocket fire. So life in Israel is both for the most part peaceful, but also wracked by the well-publicized disturbances that figure so prominently in the news.

At present, as I write, the Americans and a host of allied nations are focusing their might (or at least their aerial might) on combating the vicious quasi-religious group known as ISIS, which is so violent and so disruptive of the countries in which it operates. There is no doubt that conquering “Bayt el-Maqdis” (Jerusalem) and destroying the State of Israel is central to the group’s “jihad”, or holy war as the spokesperson for the group, Nidal Nuseiri, recently re-affirmed. However, he pointed out that ISIS has been taking a systematic approach in its campaign, and outlined six specific stages it said needed to be fulfilled before taking on Israel. Few of these have been achieved, and so it remains to be seen as to whether, in God’s purpose, ISIS will play a role as the “thief in the night”, when “sudden destruction” will come.

So as we continue to look at the turmoil in the Middle East, as well as the unfortunate disturbances in our community, we need indeed to “contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 1:3 ESV). Our focus needs to be on contending against the apostasy that surrounds us. Not focused internally, but externally, whence the major challenges facing us come from.

As the editor of this magazine, I must indeed focus on edification, on upbuilding. By the nature of our community, I and the Editorial Committee completely lack any authority to decide matters, to judge in any way either the doctrinal or fellowship puzzles that occasionally arise. As I have said before, the magazine is to convey news and a helpful Scripturally based message. Ecclesial matters are for ecclesias alone to decide: we can only report, and follow our normal procedures in attempting to ensure some sort of area agreement is reached. And in all things acknowledge that the judge of all things is our Lord Jesus, before whose judgment seat we must appear if we want to enter the kingdom, as all of us do.

I hope we can look forward to the return of Christ in the near future, although I must admit I have no idea how close the near future is. Many before us have looked to the return of Christ in their lifetime, as I do, but we must at the same time be prepared for it to come at any time, and at the same time strengthen those who remain, and seek to spread the true gospel throughout the world.

Peter Hemingray
Our times

There have been many interesting things happening around the world lately. Things that we, as a community, have been discussing and thinking about ever since the Christadelphians were founded as a movement in the mid-1840’s!

Hardly a day goes by without hearing of Russia becoming more warlike and pushing at Ukraine. As we know, the territory of Ukraine is identified by many with Magog in Ezekiel 38 and Revelation 20. During this spring and summer, we have seen Russia looming over the Ukraine, secretly aiding the insurgency. At the time of this writing (summer 2014), Russia has now been more open with their aid and small invasions. Other recent news from Russia Today recently reported “Moscow and Tehran (Iran) have signed far-reaching deals, from energy to consumer goods, which are expected to undermine Western-led sanctions against the two countries.” This is an interesting alignment, since we understand Iran occupies the land of former Persia. Ezek 38:5 mentions Persia in the countries that come against Israel at the time of the build up to Armageddon.

Meanwhile, America finds itself being dragged back into Iraq. America first said that the US would rescue the Yazidis before they are wiped out by ISIS (so-called Islamic State) genocide. However, on a larger picture, America and Europe are continuing to be increasingly worried at the barbaric ways of ISIS, who are beheading men, women, and children who either aren’t Muslim or Sunni. They are well funded, and their immediate goal is “…to bring Muslim-inhabited regions under their political control, beginning with the Territory of the Levant region, which includes Jordan, Israel, Palestine, Lebanon, Cyprus, and an area in southern Turkey…” (Wikipedia). ISIS currently is in control of the area of ancient Assyria, a brutal people who God used in the past in the judgment of Northern Israel in 2nd Kings. Again, Assyria is supposed to push against Israel in the latter days (Psalm 83). Also, newspapers (depending on which you read) either state that American is tiring of holding the role of the world police or America disagrees with Mr. Obama’s foreign policies. Either way, America is pulling back on involvement in other countries’ fights.

Finally, Israel has finished destroying Hamas’ tunnels under Gaza. This action may lead up to a time when Israel can dwell in “peace and safety”. I found this article in the NY Times interesting on August 12, 2014: “Role in Gaza Talks Signals a Comeback for Abbas” by Isabel Kershner. In it, she writes the following:

“Israel backs the idea of an internationally financed reconstruction package for Gaza funneled through Mr. Abbas, to enable supervision and bolster his influence and standing among the Palestinians. Israel also wants measures to prevent Hamas from rearming.
“Mr. Lapid’s [Yair Lapid, Israel’s Finance Minister and leader of the government’s second largest party, Yesh Atid] diplomatic initiative calls for an international conference, hosted by Egypt, to include the United States, Europe, Russia, Jordan, the Palestinian Authority, Israel and ‘moderate Arab states including Saudi Arabia,’ to work for the demilitarization of Gaza and the return of the Palestinian Authority there…."

Obviously very early days if there is a “peace process” that will happen between Israel and the surrounding Arab nations. But it is interesting that they continue to dialog about it.

In the time of Christ

Just as there are very many interesting things happening in the world now, which we think will mark the promised second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, there is also a lot of political events happening in and around Israel mentioned in the Gospels during the first coming of The Lord Jesus Christ. There was so much happening that when I started to look at where in the timeline to start this exhortation, I was forced to keep digging deeper into the background events! What we will look at this morning is that some Jews misapplied prophetic Scriptures and thought that Christ would set up His Father’s kingdom at that time. When Jesus did not fulfill their expectations, the Jews turned on Jesus. When we see these fantastic things happen, we must be encouraged that God is executing His plan, but we must not be discouraged if the time is not yet, and more importantly, we must not say “Where is the promise of His coming?”

The triumphal entry

Mark 11 and Mark 12 find us in the first part of the last week of Christ’s life. In Mark 11:1-11, we read of Christ’s triumphant entry into Jerusalem. However, as we know by end of week, Jesus is put to death at the hands of the religious leaders of Israel. First, I always have a difficult time understanding exactly how this action of Jesus riding the donkey and the nation cheering, waiving palm branches, and shouting “Hosanna!” came about. The really amazing thing to me is that Christ knew the entire time that the nation would turn from this “religious fervor” to crucifying him in one week! He had already warned his disciples at least three times that he would be put to death in Mark 8:31-9:1; Mark 9:30-32; and Mark 10:32-39. In Mark 10, Christ said:

“See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death and deliver him over to the Gentiles. And they will mock him and spit on him, and flog him and kill him. And after three days he will rise” (Mark 10:33-34 ESV).

Christ knew! He knew what he would have to endure. When no one else around him — his disciples, his friends, did not understand the situation at all. How lonely! He knew that this would all transpire, for this was his last week in Jerusalem. The parallel account in Luke records:
“But they [the disciples] understood none of these things. This saying was hidden from them, and they did not grasp what was said” (Luke 18:34)

It difficult for me to understand how Christ knew what was to happen yet was ready to be lead like a lamb to the slaughter.

How and why did this triumphant entry into Jerusalem happen? What was the mood and the scene in Israel at the time? John tells us:

“Six days before the Passover, Jesus therefore came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead” (John 12:1)

Many Jews would have been coming to Jerusalem to celebrate Passover at Jerusalem. Bethany was about 2 miles to the east of Jerusalem. It is just south of Bethpage, where the donkey and colt were found. John tells us that large crowds came to Bethany, not only to see Jesus, but to see Lazarus, whom Jesus had raised from the dead:

“When the large crowd of the Jews learned that Jesus was there, they came, not only on account of him but also to see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. So the chief priests made plans to put Lazarus to death as well, because on account of him many of the Jews were going away and believing in Jesus” (John 12:9-11).

The raising of Lazarus from the dead was so spectacular that the news had spread afar. The people wanted proof to see that a man was raised from the dead, and would have easily walked the two extra miles to meet Lazarus. This so incensed the chief priests, that “they made plans to kill Lazarus as well” because they feared losing their religious power over the people!

It always seemed strange to me that some of Israel came to Jerusalem, and took branches of palm trees and cried out “Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of The Lord, even the King of Israel”. This fulfilled the prophecies of Zech 9:9 and Psalm 118. This is where John’s gospel really shines, so let us look at John 12:12-19. Here we read that the disciples didn’t really understand anything that was happening until they reflected on the situation after his death, resurrection, and ascension. The record also bears out that the crowd in Jerusalem is the same crowd that had gone to see Lazarus. And finally, at least the Pharisees (though probably not the only group) realized that they were losing power to Christ.

“The next day the large crowd that had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, crying out, ‘Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!’ And Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, just as it is written, ‘Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold, your king is coming, sitting on a donkey’s colt!’ ” (John 12:12-15).

His disciples did not understand these things at first, but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written about him and had been done to him. The crowd that had been with him when he called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to bear witness. The reason
why the crowd went to meet him was that they heard he had done this sign. So the Pharisees said to one another, “You see that you are gaining nothing. Look, the world has gone after him” (John 12:19).

Additionally, the Jews wanting to be freed from the control of Herodian family and the Romans. I believe that they got caught up in nationalistic pride, and religious fervor, for “Hosanna” means “Oh Save!” and the Jews thought that Christ was there to set up the Kingdom of God, often quoting concerning the Kingdom of God:

“This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it. Save us, we pray, O LORD! O LORD, we pray, give us success!” (Psa 118:24-25).

These were the verses being quoted as Jesus rode into the city on the donkey. In the end, when Jesus wouldn’t deliver his Kingdom at that time, then the disappointed crowds were easily turned against Jesus.

It’s interesting how the Jews of the day, knew their Bible; they were actively looking for a Messiah, who was to save them. The Jews applied their understanding of the prophecies, and looked for things in their day, but when the prophecies weren’t fulfilled, or at least fulfilled according to their expectations, they were then easily swayed against our Lord Jesus Christ.

**The leaders of Israel**

In Mark 11 and 12, Jesus focused his message on the corrupt leaders of Israel. He did not condemn Herod or the Romans, as the Jewish people would have expected him to do, rather he condemned the religious leaders: the Chief Priests, the Scribes, the Pharisees, the Herodians, and the Sadducces. Between Mark 11:12-14 and Mark 11:20-25, we see the interesting juxtaposition of

- Jesus condemning a fig tree, because it leafed (matured), but there was no fruit;
- Jesus driving out the money exchangers in the Temple;
- Peter commenting to Christ that the fig tree had withered.

The Scripture makes a point of saying that it wasn’t the proper time for fruit, but the fact was that the tree had made the goodly appearance, as had the nation of Israel, but bore no fruit. The nation of Israel was keeping the feasts, was taking offerings to the temple, but these acts had become mere rituals. Certainly some were profiteering off of these rituals, yet they bore no fruit and therefore, would have been worthless to the owner of the fig tree. We also can see this happening today, we can look like we are righteous, i.e. attending our ecclesia, yet bearing no fruit, such as we are supposed to produce: “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law” (Gal 5:22-23).

Now, if we turn over to Mark 12:1 we have the “Parable of the Tenants”, in which we find another condemnation of the religious leadership of Israel in the format of a parable. The vineyard would have been an easy reference for the Jews to understand from Isaiah 5. In fact, the entire parable was lifted out of Isaiah 5.

Considering this parable: the vineyard was the land of Israel to be inhabited by vines, or the nation of Israel. Therefore, those whose responsibility to take care of
the vines, the tenants, would be the religious leaders. The Hebrew word used for grapes in Isaiah 5 is actually two different words. The grapes that The Lord sought would be good for making wine. Nice, sweet, fermented vintage wine. However, the wild grapes is from a word that is also translated “stinking or worthless things; stinkberries”! It is very interesting how some religious leaders, from the early days of Judaism, through Christ’s day, through today, consistently struggle with seeking power.

The last chapter of Chronicles records the demise of the first kingdom:

“All the officers of the priests and the people likewise were exceedingly unfaithful, following all the abominations of the nations. And they polluted the house of the LORD that He had made holy in Jerusalem” (2Chron 36:14).

Neh 9:26, Acts 7:52, and Heb 11:36-37 are three more passages that are relevant. And of course, those contained in documentaries such as “The Protesters” and “Fox’s Book of Martyrs” talk about those who have tried to bring about religious reform. If we view ourselves as the vine, then we must make sure that we first bring forth good fruit. If we view ourselves as the vinedressers, then we must be sure to promote the growth of good fruit.

Returning to Mark 12, Christ has interjected himself into the story. The owner of the vineyard, sent his beloved son, but they killed him, and threw him out of the vineyard.

“But those tenants said to one another, ‘This is the heir. Come, let us kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.’ And they took him and killed him and threw him out of the vineyard. What will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy the tenants and give the vineyard to others” (Mark 12:7-9).

This is what God has done: Given the land of Israel to others, until Israel declared independence on May 14, 1948. Of course the next phrase has become one of the cornerstones of our faith, when we remember the emblems on a Sunday morning:

“Have you not read this Scripture: ‘The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord’s doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes?’” (Mark 12:10-11).

Our Lord quotes this verse from Psalms 118. We have already mentioned that Psalm. That was the Psalm that the people were quoting while they waved their palm branches. Now, Christ does apply this Psalm to himself, but just not in the timeframe the people wanted. Christ is the cornerstone of our belief in a future Kingdom on earth, with Christ as the King.

Conclusion

What are the key ideas that I’d like the reader to remember from this exhortation? We need to completely understand Scriptures at many levels. The stories are rich with details that tell of people, situations, plots, and riots that could rival any political story that we find in our newspapers today. However, when the main character is The Lord Jesus Christ, then there are always lessons to be learned for us in virtually every word.
We need to apply the Scriptures to our lives today. We need to understand God’s plan for the earth and understand our role in His plan. From time to time, we might get the details wrong, but we need to then go back to the Scriptures a read more carefully. Reminding ourselves of the words of Peter:

“that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires. They will say, ‘Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation’ ” (2Peter 3:3-4).

Finally we need to develop the fruits of the spirit as we see the day of our Lord approaching. “…the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,” (Gal 5:22).

Joseph Sparacino (Ann Arbor, MI)

First Principles

God and His Son

(5) Oneness, Being Sent, and Pre-Destined

Christ as the creator

We now want to consider some additional passages in Hebrews, a book which is essential to understanding the subject of the Father and the Son. We will discuss the passage in Hebrews where the connecting of Jesus to the creation of the world, is thought by some to teach that he pre-existed.

“Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world” (Heb 1:1-2, ESV).

Verses 1 and 2 connect God’s Son with the making of the world; in fact the KJV says that God made the worlds by His Son. However, modern translations make it clear that the word “by” should be rendered “through”. God made the world through His Son. This is quite compatible with Christ being the basis for God’s plan rather than being the actual personal agent of creation. Also, consulting a concordance reveals that the Greek for “world” (v. 2) has the meaning of time (as for example, ancient times or the ancient world of people) rather than referring to the physical creation. It involves events, the lives of people, or “history”. The lives of God’s faithful are founded upon or created through, Christ. The working out of God’s plan of salvation for the world is based upon Christ. This is the meaning of the passage.

Christ subject to God

Leaving the subject of pre-existence for now, we’ll go on to Heb 1:8. “But of the Son he says, ‘Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, the scepter of uprightness is the
“scepter of your kingdom’ ” (ESV). The Son is here referred to as God, confirming his exalted status. V. 9 explains what is meant. “You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions.” It states distinctly that the Father is Jesus’ God. Jesus has been elevated (his status or rank has been made greater) to divine status, but he does not have a status of equality with the Father, as he is still subject to Him. The New Testament repeatedly teaches that God the Father is Jesus’ God:

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places” (Eph 1:3).

“The one who conquers, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God. Never shall he go out of it, and I will write on him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down from my God out of heaven, and my own new name” (Rev 3:12).

One of the main objectives of the book of Hebrews is to show to the (Christian) Hebrews, who were still living according to the Mosaic Law and system, the superiority of Christ to Moses and to the angels who gave the law to Moses. The quotation in vs. 8 and 9 shows that he (Christ) was their appointed ruler. The next, in vs. 10-12, connected by an “And”, shows that he will rule forever. It is a quote from Psalm 102, which overall, is about the “world to come”, and the Kingdom, of which the Messiah is the creator: see also (see vs. 12-16, 22).

“Of old you laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish, but you will remain; they will all wear out like a garment. You will change them like a robe, and they will pass away, but you are the same, and your years have no end” (Psa 102:25-27).

In two ways then, the contexts indicate that the founding or foundation of the earth referred to is the laying of the plans for God’s Kingdom which will be set up on earth when Christ returns. First, that is the theme of the Psalm that the quotation is taken from. Second, as mentioned just a paragraph ago, vs. 1 and 2 are not referring to a physical creation, but to the creation of the plan or sequence of time or events leading to salvation.

Also, we are told in Heb 2:5 that it is “the world to come, of which we are speaking”, referring back to these passages in chapter 1, confirming our conclusion that they refer to God’s plan and to the Kingdom. The Kingdom is the world to come. Heb 1:10-12 tells the Hebrews that Christ will continue forever. Even the Kingdom will come to an end at the time planned,“Like a cloak You will fold them up, and they will be changed” (NKJV), but Christ’s “years will not fail.”

We should really consider an even wider context in Hebrews. In a previous part of these studies, we have discussed Christ being tempted, and learning obedience, in passages found in Hebrews chapters 2 through 5, which rule out his pre-existence. Chapter 1 must be understood in light of these also.
Christ created

Hebrews teaches that Christ was created or made. We read in 2:7, “For You have made him a little lower than the angels.” If we look at Psalm 8, the source of this quotation, we see that it refers to the physical creation. One example is vs. 6-8 of the Psalm which are a quotation of Gen 1:26 about man being given dominion over the beasts. Thus Christ being made “lower than the angels”, doesn’t mean that his status was changed, but is talking about how he was made or created. Heb. 2:11a is important also. The Interlinear Hebrew - Greek - English Bible gives the Greek as “He both For sanctifying and the being sanctified of one all”. The last two or three words, “of one all” are rendered as follows by modern translations: “are all of one” (NKJV); “all have one source” (ESV); “are all from one Father” (NASB). This is a statement that Christ had a source. In other words, Christ (and the faithful as well, of course) has not existed eternally like God. God is the Father of both Christ and his brethren. We will discuss this joint origin in detail in a following section.

Heb 1:6 and passages in several other NT books (discussed below) describe Christ as the “first-born” (of the creation). The term “first-born” by itself tells us that Christ was created, but to describe him as the “first-born of the creation” (Col 1:15) confirms it without doubt. “First-born” refers to the superiority of Christ, rather than to the time or order of his birth and our births. Christ is the Son of God, the chosen King, and the Messiah. He is first in that sense.

Rom 8:29 tells us that God planned that we should “be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the first-born among many brethren.” Jesus was created or born like his brethren, as part of his Father’s plan. Vs. 29 does not refer to his literal birth, but to the fact that Jesus was superior and planned first, and then the faithful were planned, or predestined (and chosen).

Beginning of the creation

Rev 3:14, where Christ speaks of himself as “the beginning of the creation”, is very similar. Both terms, “beginning” and “creation” tell us that Christ was created. “Beginning” is consistent with the point made earlier in these studies, that God began His plan by deciding that His Son would be the Savior of the creation. The remainder of the plan was built upon that foundation decision.

Col 1:15 reads, “He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation”. The same comments apply. Note that God is invisible, but Christ showed us an image or picture of Him or “manifested” Him as the angels did in the time of Abraham, and Moses, and many others in the Old Testament. The translations vary in vs. 16 as to whether it was “in him” or “by him” that all things were created, but the end of the verse clears things up, “All things were created through him and for him”. Christ was the foundation of the plan, and all else was made to be consistent with that fact. The fact that Christ the Savior would be God’s Son, born at the appointed time, shaped everything else that happened up to that time, and continues to do so.
The character or nature of Jesus’ oneness with the Father

In John 10:30, Jesus says, “I and the Father are one.” In v. 36 he explains, “. . do you say, . . ‘you are blaspheming’, because I said, ‘I am the Son of God?’” Jesus is stating his oneness in plan and purpose, in goals and aims, in thinking and desires, with the Father. The Jews made the same mistake that many have since; they thought he was claiming to be the same as or equal to, God the Father. He was only making a statement consistent with all the rest of what he said, and this was summed up by saying, “I am the Son of God.”

Jesus’ oneness with the Father is not based on ideas about time and space such as co-eternity. God sent him and he was doing God’s work in exactly the way the Father would do it under the circumstances. Thus, Jesus was one with heaven. Whether he had ever been in heaven was not the point. He followed his Father’s word perfectly and therefore acted or worked as though he had been in heaven forever.

When Jesus said in John 8:23, “You are from below, I am from above”, he was not talking about two different places, up and down. He goes on to say, “you are of this world, I am not of this world.” We see that he was talking about the difference in quality between his life and the lives of those to whom he was speaking.

Use of symbolic meanings

When Jesus says that he is bread, we understand the saying figuratively, not literally: the bread is not an actual loaf but a symbol of his teaching and of his sacrifice (Matt 26:26; John 6:35, 51). Similarly, when he says, “Before Abraham was, I am” (John 8:58), we realize that if his purpose had been to merely date himself before Abraham in a simple time sequence, he would have said, “Before Abraham was, I was.” As it is, the phrase “I am”, whatever its full implications (which we will not attempt to expound), takes us out of thoughts about time in the same way as the symbol of the bread takes us out of thoughts about material things. There is one more thing about this passage which we wish to point out. The words of the Jews in v. 57 are a distortion of Jesus’ words. He did not say that he had seen Abraham in v. 56. He said that Abraham saw his (Jesus’) day. God revealed things to Abraham about one special descendent of his (Abraham’s) and Abraham rejoiced. This prophetic revelation by God to Abraham is an example of what Jesus was referring to.

Pre-existence and the faithful

In Christ’s prayer in John 17, he speaks of the oneness which he has given to the faithful: oneness of each of them with one another, and oneness of his disciples with himself and with the Father (John 17:21–23). So, there is a very close relationship between Christ and the faithful. There are many ways in which this oneness can be seen throughout the Bible.

We will now consider the ways in which the faithful are spoken of in the same way as Christ is, beginning by looking further at John 17. We won’t discuss vs. 5 or 24 now since these have meanings similar to other passages covered previously. In v. 14, Jesus says, “I am not of the world.” One could interpret this as, “I am from heaven where I pre-existed.” Similar passages which refer to Christ elsewhere in this Gospel (such as John 8:23) are used to support the idea in this way. But this
passage does not refer just to Christ. Jesus is making a comparison with his faithful followers which the Father has given him: v. 14, “they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.” He repeats the statement for emphasis in v. 16. Obviously, he does not mean that his followers are from heaven, but that their loyalty, faith, and love are directed toward their Father in heaven and toward His Son. Therefore, his statement about himself, “just as I am not of the world”, means his loyalty, faith, and love are directed toward the Father in heaven, not that he used to be in heaven.

The next comparison in v. 18 is more striking. Jesus speaks of being sent into the world in many passages in John; for example, 5:23, 36; 6:38. In John 17:18, the Lord says that he is sending the faithful into the world in the same way as the Father sent him:

“As You sent me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.”

The conclusion is obvious: Jesus was given a mission or work to do which came from heaven from God. He himself did not come from heaven any more than his followers did. And John 17:18 is not an isolated passage. Jesus makes the same statement after his resurrection:

“So Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace to you! As the Father has sent me, I also send you’” (John 20:21).

John the Baptist was sent by God but he did not exist in heaven before being sent. So it doesn’t mean that Christ pre-existed just because the New Testament speaks of him being sent by the Father or by Heaven.

In John 10:30, Jesus says that, “I and my Father are one”, and in 14: 9, “he who has seen me has seen the Father.” We have discussed both of these passages previously, but John 17:21-23 (which we discussed above) gives us further help with them. Vs. 21-23 show that the oneness between God and Christ extends to the faithful. They are one with Christ, and through him, and one with the Father: “that they also may be in us.” But this does not make them one person with the Father; therefore, being one with his Father does not make Jesus one person with Him. That is not what is meant; the oneness is in purpose and goals. Jesus and the faithful desire to bring glory to God, and His blessings upon His creation. In this, they are one with God.

The faithful and the foundation of the world

Besides being sent into the world and being one with the Father in ways similar to Christ, the faithful are also associated with the foundation of the world in a way very much like the Son of God. We read in Eph 1:4, “he chose us in him before the foundation of the world.” Verses 9 and 10 mentions the “purpose” (or “plan”, ESV) which God had for Christ and for the faithful, from the beginning. Verses 11 and 12 bring out that God is accomplishing His purpose through Christ and through us. These passages are referring to the same thing as those associating Christ with the creation or with the foundation of the world. From this we see that pre-existence is not involved; rather, they refer to the making of a plan.

Rom 8:29 is the same in its teaching. The faithful are associated with Christ in God’s plan, being “predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that
he might be the first-born among many brethren.” As discussed above, we have here that Jesus was created or born like his brethren. Peter summarizes Bible teaching about Christ’s place in his Father’s purpose:

“He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you” (1Pet 1:20).

To be predestined or foreordained means to be determined or planned (decided upon) in advance. It is quite different from ‘pre-existed’ which means to live before you are born. The birth of Christ at the appropriate time was the foundation of God’s plan. His plan for the salvation of everybody before that time and after it depended on Christ.

Elevation of Christ by his Father

We conclude by considering the elevation of Christ to God’s right hand. God is very emphatic in the Old Testament that there is no other god beside Him (Isa 45:5, 14, 18) and that no other god should be worshiped (Exod 20:3; 34:14). The leaders of the church in the second and third centuries were very concerned that this fundamental principle be observed (and we should be also). But they thought they had a problem. They felt that the birth of the Son of God as a man, followed by his elevation to the right hand of God and divine nature, seemed to conflict with the principle that there is no other god beside Yahweh, the God who had revealed Himself to the faithful before the time of Jesus’ birth. Jesus seemed to be another god. Some men put forth a doctrine, as the way to solve the problem, which said that Jesus was equal to God and had always existed. These human ideas developed into what we know as the Trinity.

In doing this, they observed one part of the Scriptures but ignored another part. They ignored the fact that Jesus and the inspired writers of the New Testament clearly and repeatedly, in many ways, stated that God is greater than Jesus, or to put it another way, that Jesus is not equal to God and never will be. If you study a written statement of the doctrine of the Trinity, it definitely contradicts these statements that God is greater than Jesus. For that reason, it cannot be correct.

The Biblical understanding is that God has chosen to elevate both Jesus and the faithful to divine nature and to unity with Him. He has not chosen to make Jesus equal to Him. Paul tells that even in the time when the next phase of God’s purpose is reached, Jesus will still be subject to his Father.

“Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet…. When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things in subjection under him, that God may be all in all” (1Cor 15:24, 28).

Peter states that the faithful will become “partakers of the divine nature” (2Pet 1:4). We know that the faithful will be given immortality and will be strengthened in many ways. We will obey Christ and serve him. In his prayer in John 17, Jesus speaks of his oneness with his Father and also of the oneness of the faithful with the Father and himself. These things are at least part of what Peter is speaking about.
God would not and will not accept the worship of any other being or object which men have selected. He has created many living beings and many objects. One of the living beings that He has created and that He has selected for worship, so to speak, is His Son, Jesus Christ. The New Testament teaches that it is acceptable to worship Christ and to call him God. For example:


“Thomas answered him [Jesus], ‘My Lord and my God!’” (John 20:28).

Therefore, this is acceptable to God, even though Jesus is not equal to Him.

There are many things for which worship is NOT acceptable to God. The sun, the moon, statues of men or of animals (idols) are examples. These are things that men have chosen for worship. The Old Testament commandments not to worship any other gods beside Yahweh apply to these kinds of things and also to many other kinds of idols (possessions, money, fame).

But, if we think about it, God can choose that His Son is to be worshiped even if he is not equal to Him. God has the wisdom and the power to make this decision, and to reveal it to us in His Word. We have to consider everything that He has set forth in the Bible and accept it all. Our beliefs must be based on everything that He has caused to be written. We do not have the right to pick some parts and leave out others as the basis of our beliefs.

What is the solution then to the “problem” of the elevation of the “man Christ Jesus” (1Tim 2:5) to divine status? It is to recognize that the great and holy God did it and that it is our place to humbly accept it. God has clearly revealed in His Word that this is what He did.

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Notes:
1. At the end of the Millenium (Rev 20: 2, 3, 7).
3. Christ.

The Word Made Flesh

The pre-existence of Christ as a person before he was born of Mary is logically impossible. But his existence in the intention and prevision of God, who made him in the image of Himself, is undeniable. And since only God can speak with certainty of things that are not as though they already were, the scriptures do the same in relation to Christ. In the same breath that the Spirit tells us that Jesus is the exact likeness of the invisible God, we are told that he is “the firstborn of all creation” (Col 1:15, RV). And the passage goes on to say, in view of Christ’s central position in God’s purpose, “By (or in) him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by (or through) him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together” (Col 1:16, 17, NIV).

Introduction
This is the second part of the concluding section of our study of “The way of Cain”. In it we finish by comparing the actions of Cain and his descendants along with Seth and his progeny, with the actions of members of the Early Church and down to our days.

Diotrephes and Cain: hateful men, murderers
Diotrephes not only refused to welcome John and others, but he spread “malicious gossip” about them (3John 9-10). Gossip stems from a hateful spirit, since its goal is to discredit an individual. In this case, Diotrephes was intent on discrediting John as an apostle of God. But he wasn’t “satisfied with that,” for he also refused to welcome others who associated with John. In his pursuit of “being first,” Diotrephes was willing to cut off brothers and sisters from the ecclesia — the body of Christ. By doing so, he cut them off from salvation, which condemned them to eternal death. Thus, in spite of the fact that he never actually killed anyone, Diotrephes was a murderer because he acted hatefully towards his brothers by denying them salvation.

That Cain was a murderer is obvious, but he, like Diotrephes, was also a murderer long before he actually killed his brother because of the hate he had for his brother. For John says that anyone who hates is a murderer (1John 3:15).

Fratricide is another characteristic of the false brother: In the first few centuries of Christianity, the only weapon the false brother had at his disposal was the ability to spread lies and excommunicate others from the ecclesia. Thus, men such as Diotrephes possessed the power to rob believers of their salvation. This was the power to destroy men’s souls referred to by Christ:

“Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell” (Matt 10:28).

Diotrephes had this power. By excommunicating members of his ecclesia from John and others, he was severing their ties from the truth. This resulted in their loss of salvation, which was the equivalent of destroying their soul or life. At this point in Christian history, Diotrephes was able to destroy the soul, but not yet the body.

Although there was the occasional respite, the first few centuries of Christianity were overwhelmingly defined by fratricidal violence. There were several different interpretations of the Trinity and arguments about the nature of Jesus. Each interpretation had its strong adherents and clergy following one view did not even recognize as legitimate clergy who followed another interpretation. If two prelates vied for an important bishopric the losers may opt to get the prize under a different banner. The most important “heresis” was Arianism, so called from the
name of its founder Arius (250-336CE). The theological difference from orthodox Christianity seems minute. Arius claimed that Jesus (the Son in the Trinity) was of similar (but not the same) substance as God (the Father) while the orthodox view is that the Son is of the same substance. The difference appears even more minute in the original Greek: ομοιουσιον (of similar substance) versus ομοουσιον (of the same substance). The situation, of destroying the soul but not the body, changed dramatically in the 3rd century. Hatred between Christian brothers thus simmered for more than two centuries, until 325 AD when Constantine sanctioned the “total destruction” of the heretics. In that moment, Christendom embraced the “way of Cain” (Jude 11), which resulted in 2,000 years of fratricidal violence.

At the council of Nicaea (325 AD), Constantine settled a dispute between two major Christian factions over the Trinitarian nature of Christ. Siding with Athanasius, he condemned Arius and his followers, along with everyone else who did not share the former’s idea of the “truth,” as heretics. For the first time, “Christians” gained the power to attack their enemies with the sword and thus acquired the ability to “destroy both soul and body”. To quote Gibbons (Decline and fall of the Roman Empire):

The grateful applause of the clergy [those aligned with Athanasius] has consecrated the memory of a prince [Constantine] who indulged their passions and promoted their interest. Constantine gave them security, wealth, honors, and revenge; and the support of the orthodox faith was considered as the most sacred and important duty of the civil magistrate. The edict of Milan (313 AD), the great charter of toleration, had confirmed to each individual of the Roman world the privilege of choosing and professing his own religion. But this inestimable privilege was soon violated; with the knowledge of truth, the emperor imbibed the maxims of persecution; and the sects which dissented from the Catholic Church were afflicted and oppressed following the ascension of Empower Constantine in 324 AD. The conquest of the East was immediately followed by an edict which announced their [non-Athanasius sects] total destruction. (Gibbons 1737-1794:401)

With Constantine’s consent, the catholic bishops sought revenge — nothing less than their heretical brother’s “total destruction” would suffice.

This explains in part why Cain, the first to murder his own brother, was such a relevant case study in the New Testament. His was a cautionary tale, used by Christ and the apostles to stress the importance of brotherly love. Otherwise, they cautioned, Christianity would be plunged into the same type of violence that marked the antediluvian era. Their intentions were good. But just as the mark of Cain – murder and revenge – was largely ignored by the antediluvian world, it was likewise neglected by Christendom.

**Cain’s legacy after Christ**

As has been shown, Cain’s inclusion in the New Testament is because he shared many similar characteristics to those exhibited by the false brother, of whom Di-
otrephes was a chief example. Cain was a powerful reminder to the ecclesia about the effects of pride, ignorance, and hate; dangerous characteristics, which were already present among some of the brothers and sisters in the first century AD.

Not only is Cain an example of the kind of wickedness that was and still is existent among the brethren, but because his actions set in motion a series of tragic events, which culminated with the earth’s destruction in the flood, his legacy is also a powerful exhortation for Christian believers on how it is possible for history to repeat itself. As the following comparison illustrates, the sequence of events that befell the antediluvian era is comparable to events occurring in the Christian era, to such a degree that the latter is a mirror image of the former:

1. Abel And Christ
   a) In the Antediluvian Era (AE): Abel, a righteous man, was murdered by his brother, Cain, a man who appeared to be God-fearing, but inwardly was proud, ignorant, and violent.
   b) After Christ (AD): Christ, the son of God, “the mediator of a new covenant,” whose blood, “speaks a better word than the blood of Abel’s” (Heb 12:24), was murdered by his Jewish brothers; specifically the priesthood, who had the appearance of godliness, but inwardly were a “brood of vipers” (Matt 3:7).

2. Seth and the Disciples
   a) AE: In the wake of Abel’s murder, Seth and others continued to spread God’s message by proclaiming His name (Gen 4:26).
   b) AD: In spite of Christ’s death, his brothers, the disciples, continued to preach the word of God.

3. The Growth of the ecclesias
   a) AE: The antediluvian ecclesia celebrated an initial period of growth, where men and women “called out to the Lord” (Gen 4:26).
   b) AD: The first century ecclesia met with initial success, attracting large groups of men and women throughout the eastern portion of the Roman world (Acts 6:7).

4. The Faithful aided by God
   a) AE: Representing the ecclesia, Mahalael’s name, which means “blessed” or “praised of God” (Gen 5:14-15), suggests that faithful were aided by the Almighty, although the particulars are unknown. Cain’s ancestor, Mehujael, whose name means, “smitten of God” (Gen 4:18), suggests that God cursed his lineage, although the details are once again, omitted.
   b) AD: God blessed the Christian ecclesia, which was evident in its growth in Judea and elsewhere. Moreover, God’s hand was visible in the many miracles, when people were healed or raised from the dead, or when apostles miraculously escaped death or imprisonment, spoke in different languages, and prophesied. On the other hand, the Jews were seemingly “cursed by God,” since they suffered heavy persecution under the Roman yoke, which climaxed in 70 AD, when Titus tore down the temple, slaughtered the people, and scattered the remnant.
5. The Decline of the Ecclesiias
   a) AE: After the ecclesia’s initial period of growth, the ecclesia began to decline, as Jared’s name suggests (Gen 5: 15-16). This decline may have been in the number of believers or in the quality of the worship. If the latter is correct, one likely cause of its corruption may have been the inclusion of pagan ideas via marriages between the believers and non-believers (Gen 6:2).
   b) AD: By the close of the first century, the apostles, gifted with the Holy Spirit, had mostly died. The loss of these leaders resulted in the increase in the corruption of God’s word. Men such as Diotrephes arose with increasing frequency, creating divisions, spreading untruths, and preaching false doctrines. Thus, while so-called Christianity flourished in the second and third centuries, it was not representative of the true ecclesia of Christ. Those who remained true to the simplicity of Christ’s message either separated themselves or were themselves disfellowshipped from the greater Christian church (3John 10). One might also see a correlation between the marriage of the faithful and non-believers in the antediluvian era, with Christianity’s marriage of opportunity, convenience, and toleration with pagan superstition, philosophy, and gnosticism; a marriage contributing to the corruption of God’s word.

6. The Triumph of the Wicked
   a) AE: Those who preached against the rising corruption on the earth were eventually murdered by wicked men, as was in the example of Enoch and Lamech (Gen 5:18-24; Gen 4:18-24). Enoch, a prophet of God, chastised Lamech’s polygamy, which wounded his pride and aroused in him the desire for revenge. Although Lamech’s attempt to murder Enoch was thwarted by God, nevertheless his intent to kill opened the door to further violence; the result of which was that the “whole earth was filled with violence” (Gen 6:11).
   b) AD: Beginning as early as the mid-to-late first century, bitter disputes, arguments, and divisions stirred up hatred within the ecclesia. These disputes reached a fever-pitch by 325 AD, when Constantine elevated Christianity to official status as the Roman religion. At the Council of Nicaea, the un-baptized “Christian” emperor settled a theological dispute between two major factions: he established the one as catholic (the universal church) and the other as heretics. In doing so, he permitted and encouraged violent reprisals against heretics (some of whom were guilty of distorting God’s word and others who clung to the simplicity of the truth as originally preached by Jesus). In this way, Christianity came to be characterized by murder and revenge. Just as vengeance has no end without forgiveness, Christendom, being void of Christ’s true spirit, shed blood until “the whole was filled with violence” (ibid.).

7. The Disappearance of Faith
   a) AE: The last three generations of the antediluvian era saw the decline of the ecclesia and the near-disappearance of faith on the earth. Although faith declined, the world thrived in its humanistic pursuits (Gen 4:20-22): Jabal’s herds increased and migrated throughout the earth; Jubal’s music and the culture produced by his instruments succeeded in distorting the memory of God’s
truth whilst deifying man; Tubal-Cain’s tools aided progress and provided mankind with the means to wage war; and Naamah’s arts in either seduction or beautification presented a stumbling block for weak-willed men, luring them away from their faith and hastening the ecclesia’s decline.

b) AD: Like Jabal and his herds, Christendom marched unto the ends of the Roman earth and beyond. In the spirit of Jubal, the memory of Christ was twisted by paganism, philosophy, and gnostic ideas, which resulted in the deification of popes and the transformation of men and women into immortal saints. Just as Tubal-Cain’s weapons “filled the earth with violence,” Christian zeal and intolerance filled the earth with bloodshed. The meaning of his name, “bring forth an aspect of Cain,” describes the fratricide, which pitted Christian against Christian. It forced the true ecclesia to flee “into the wilderness” (Rev 12:6) of the Roman Empire in order to escape Christianity’s sword. Just as God preserved the truth in Noah and a handful of others, He likewise “prepared a place” for the ecclesia in the Roman wilderness for “1,260 days” (Rev 12:6), where the truth could be preserved against corruption. There it hid for nearly two thousand years, until the spirit of the Enlightenment allowed the “woman” to come forth without persecution. Even Naamah’s influence infected the church. Sexual depravity of all kinds was, and still is rampant among the clergy and the people.

8. The Faithful Remnant

a) AE: Although the ecclesia vanished, there were a few individuals who remained faithful; in particular, Noah and his family. Angry with His creation, the Almighty sent the waters of the Flood to destroy a corrupt and violent world, while saving a remnant of the faithful (Gen 6, 7, 8 & 9).

b) AD: From one end of the earth to the other, the world is corrupt and full of violence. There remains only a few, by comparison to the earth’s billions, who have “not soiled their clothes, fallen asleep, or forsaken their first love,” and who have “persevered, overcome, and remained true to His name” (Rev 2 and 3). These men and women await “the great and glorious Day of the Lord” (Acts 2:20), when, like the Flood, Christ will return to rid the earth of its corruption and violence, and set up God’s kingdom.

Conclusion

This comparison shows how closely the sequence of events in the antediluvian era has thus far been echoed in the Common Era. The repetition of antediluvian history by Christianity was not necessarily an inevitable one, but owing to human nature, it chose to ignore the lessons of the past and followed a similar, tragic course.

Christendom is stained with many sins, but none so much as Cain’s “way.” His legacy of pride and ignorance, and murder and revenge resulted in millions being slaughtered in Christ’s name. No wonder the apostle Jude, armed with a prophetic vision of Christianity’s tragic future, wrote to the ecclesia with as much straightforwardness as he could and with as much as emphasis as is possible when committing ink to paper: “Woe to them! They have taken the way of Cain!”

Matthew Harrison (Ottawa, ON)
During his Third Missionary Journey, Paul took a trip to Macedonia and left Timothy behind to help lead the ecclesia at Ephesus. Timothy was reluctant to accept that responsibility at first, and he struggled with the task initially. Even though Paul did not expect to be away from Ephesus for long, he wrote 1st Timothy to encourage Timothy and to offer him guidance. The theme of 1st Timothy is “O Timothy, guard the deposit entrusted to you” (1Tim 6:20, ESV).

The Truth is the deposit that Timothy was to guard. The Truth is a treasure, and it has likewise been committed to us. That is a perspective that is important for us to remember. We need to value the Truth and to strive to guard it, just as Timothy sought to do in Ephesus.

Repetition

In guarding the Truth, Paul wanted Timothy to emphasize certain points to the Ephesians. They are indicated by the repetition of key words and phrases — “charge,” “faithful saying,” and “godliness” — that appear throughout 1st Timothy. There are five “charges” in 1st Timothy. They are identified by the key Greek word paraggello, which is rendered either “charge” or “command” in the King James.

The “charges” are:

- that people in the meeting should “teach no other doctrine” (1Tim 1:3)
- that “we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God” (1Tim 4:10-11)
- that sisters “may be blameless” (1Tim 5:7)
- that the commandment be kept “without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1Tim 6:13-14)
- that those who are rich “be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God” (1Tim 6:17).

Other points of emphasis in the Epistle are labeled “faithful (or true) sayings”:
“This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief” (1Tim 1: 15).

“This is a true saying. If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work” (1Tim3: 1).

“For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation” (1Tim 4: 8-9).

As the third “faithful saying” indicates, all of the lessons Paul wanted Timothy to convey were for the purpose of encouraging godliness. In fact, “godliness” is a key word in 1st Timothy. It appears nine times in the Epistle.3

What is the reason for the repetition? Why do “charge,” “faithful saying,” and “godliness” appear again and again in the Epistle?

The repetition of those words and phrases makes them memorable. All of the “charges,” for example, could have reminded Timothy that there were

1) Commands he had an obligation to keep and
2) Commands he needed to give to the ecclesia. The repetition of “godliness” could have reinforced the great need for him to train himself in godliness and to be an example to the rest of the ecclesia.

Repetition is a teaching device. Repetition is especially important in spiritual matters because the natural mind recoils against divine principles. We benefit from having spiritual concepts brought back to mind and reinforced.

The Lord Jesus taught using repetition.4 The disciple whom he loved taught using repetition.5 Paul taught using repetition, and it appears he wanted Timothy to use it in his instruction as well.

It is important to remember that we benefit greatly from repetition. That is why the daily reading of the Word of God again and again, year after year and regular attendance at meeting to remember the Lord Jesus Christ are so important.

Medical themes

In addition to the repetition of key words and phrases, there are several other features that characterize 1st Timothy. One of them is Paul’s use of medical language to convey spiritual concepts.

Paul used medical language in writing about the Law. He said it was made: “For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine” (1Tim1:10).

The Greek word translated “sound” is hugiaio.6 It is a word used throughout the New Testament, often in the context of the performance of miracles, to mean good physical health. But when Paul wrote to Timothy, he used the word in the context of good spiritual health. He used it to write about healthy doctrine in vs. 10, for example. The same Greek word appears again in the sixth chapter:
“If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself” (1Tim 6:3-5).

Paul used the Greek word hugiaino to characterize the words of the Lord Jesus as healthy (translated “wholesome” in the King James) in vs. 3.

The Greek word rendered “doting” in 1Tim 6:4 (above) is also generally used in the context of physical health. It is noseo and means “to be sick.” Paul wrote about “being sick about questions and strifes of words.” The ESV appears to get the sense with “He has an unhealthy craving for controversy...”. His point is that those in the meeting who engaged in pointless discussions and who loved to show off in academic debates with other believers had erred. They were sick with the thinking of the flesh.

Additional medical language appears in 1Tim 4. Paul cautioned that some believers would depart from the faith in the latter days: “Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron” (1Tim 4:2). The phrase “seared with a hot iron” is a single word in Greek. It is kauteriazo, a word that has entered the English language as “cauterize.”

Cauterization was a medical technique used in the ancient world to close an open wound by burning it, often with a hot piece of metal. The process destroys the existing tissue, which is replaced by scarring. Scarring lacks feeling.

Paul’s reference to the medical practice of cauterization is a reminder that “burning ourselves,” as it were, through exposure to the world’s thinking and by participating in immoral acts can dull our consciences; it can lower our sensitivity to (and repugnance of) wickedness and godless thinking. The writer to the Hebrews states that, as believers, we should have our “senses exercised to discern both good and evil” (Heb 5:14). The “scarring” of exposure to the “fire” of wickedness is the opposite of that sensitivity; spiritual scarring can make us less repulsed by wrongdoing and more susceptible to being drawn away and overcome by it.

Paul’s use of this (and other) medical language in writing to Timothy is grounded in Old Testament Scriptures: “My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings. Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the midst of thine heart. For they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh” (Prov 4:20-22).

The use of medical language in 1st Timothy was also probably a reflection of the shared experience that Paul and Timothy had of being physically unwell. Since Paul and Timothy both struggled with their physical health, it was probably a topic that tended to come up in their conversations, especially when they talked with Luke, the “beloved physician” (Col 4:14), who often traveled with them. It is quite natural then that - under inspiration - words relating to physical health would come up in Paul’s letter to Timothy.
Paul’s use of medical language in his letter to Timothy is yet another reminder that those two men did not accomplish all they did under ideal circumstances — at least from a natural perspective. “Ideal circumstances” are not an expectation the Bible teaches we should have. So, we cannot wait for “ideal circumstances” before beginning to labor and grow in the Truth. We have an obligation to do our best to work and develop in whatever circumstances we find ourselves.

Due to his frequent bouts with illness, Timothy could certainly appreciate the effect poor physical health could have on a person’s overall well-being. So, the medical language in 1st Timothy probably made Paul’s points about the necessity of correct belief and godly conduct even more vivid for him. Debates were not just “improper,” for example. They were “sick.” That was a powerful statement to a person who struggled with illness.

The lessons that come from Paul’s use of medical language are quite clear to us too. A life based on the doctrines and practices of the Gospel is essential to the spiritual well-being of the individual believer and the ecclesia. Departure from correct, Biblical teaching is an invitation to infection from the world and the resulting spiritual ill-health it brings.

We know that a body that is physically sick cannot perform as it should and is miserable. Just like poor physical health, being spiritually sick leaves us feeling bad, inactive, and unable to do our job effectively, and it ultimately leads to eternal death. In contrast, close adherence to the teachings of the Bible brings spiritual health and leads to everlasting life.

Ryan Mutter (Baltimore, MD)

Notes:
1. 1Tim 3:14.
2. It is Strong’s Number G3853.
3. 1Tim 2:2, 2:10, 3:16, 4:7, 4:8, 6:3, 6:5, 6:6, and 6:11.
4. Think of the Beatitudes and the repetition of “blessed” or John 15 and the twelve-fold repetition of the Greek word rendered “abide.” The Greek word is Strong’s Number G3306. It is translated a variety of ways in John 15, including “abide,” “continue,” “might remain,” and “should remain.”
5. Consider, for example, the repetition of key words “love” and “world” in 1John 2:15 that makes the verse so memorable: Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.) John’s writings are full of repetition – such as the twenty times the word “truth” (Strong’s Number G225) appears in his epistles.
8. The Greek word is Strong’s Number G2743. See A. Nicholls. Letters to Timothy and Titus. page 123.

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

In our Youth Speaks section, we’ve been spending our time looking at Jonathan, the faithful prince and friend of David. Lord willing, this next summer, Youth Conference California (July 5th-11th) will be studying the life of David, and so in preparation for that week of in-depth study, we will take a break from the Jonathan series and have a few articles written by young brethren involved in the Youth Conference. Hopefully you will find these articles to be inspiring and thought provoking.

Jason Hensley (Simi Hills, CA)

A shepherd

A shepherd is a leader, a leader who cares for and protects their flock. When a sheep goes astray, the shepherd goes and looks for that sheep. It is similar in our ecclesias today. We are shepherds in our ecclesia, and when a member goes astray, we are to go out and help them, and try to bring them back. In the Psalms, we read about Yahweh, who is our shepherd: “He restoreth my soul: He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name’s sake” (Psa 23:3). Moses tells us how that those who are shepherds, are to feed their cattle. “And the men are shepherds, for their trade hath been to feed cattle; and they have brought their flocks, and their herds, and all that they have” (Gen 26:32). Shepherds are also to make sure that their sheep have water. Later in the same book it states, “…and they rolled the stone from the well’s mouth, and water the sheep, and put the stone again upon the well’s mouth in his place” (Gen 29:3). But, most important, a shepherd protects their sheep. Jeremiah clarifies to us that it is important to do so, and to make sure that our sheep are gathered together. “…He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock” (Jer 31:10). We must lead and be an example, like Christ and David were.

When we read about the life of David, we think of a man who was a king, a shepherd, and a servant of God. We even read a little about David in the book of Ezekiel. One day, Israel will be gathered in the last days, which we see in Ezek 37:24. “And David my servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd: they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statues, and do them.”

We read a little more about this a few chapters before: “Therefore will I save my flock, and they shall no more be a prey; and I will judge between cattle and cattle. And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd” (Ezek 34:22-23). It says:

- The flock will be saved
- There will be no more animals to prey upon the flock,
- The cattle will be judged.
• There will be one shepherd over these people who will feed them, like God’s servant David.

And we know, that one day, Christ will rule over the nations. What great similar language this is to Revelation, where it tells us that, “For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes” (Rev 7:17). Literally, this means that he shall shepherd them, and lead them to eternal life. This is quite similar to Psalm 23.

Brother Harry Tennant in *The Man David* starts off his book by saying, “When we first meet David in the Scriptures, it is as a shepherd, keeping his father’s sheep. His days on the hillsides around Bethlehem taught him about God’s providence and care, and of the need for patient endurance. As he grew older, the shepherd skills were not forgotten. Under God’s providential hand they were used in David’s work as the shepherd-king over God’s people.” So, we see here that David was a shepherd in preparation for God’s ultimate plan. He used his skills as a shepherd to be king, and will one day use them again.

In 1st Samuel, we read about a giant named Goliath. At the beginning of chapter 17, we see the men of Israel standing together on one side of the valley of Elah, and the Philistines on the other side. And out of these Philistines was that giant of Gath. He was six cubits and a span tall (perhaps almost 9 feet). His helmet was of brass (or bronze), and he had a coat of mail. The weight of this coat was five thousand shekels of brass, or about 125 pounds. He also had brass on his shoulders and his legs. The spear’s head he had weighed six hundred shekels of iron, or around fifteen pounds. This giant was a symbol of the number of man. He represented sin, for brass often represents sin. Goliath asked to fight one of the Israelites, and offered to make a deal, saying if they won, they would be servants, but if the Philistines won, the Israelites would be their servants. Little did he know that a shepherd from Israel was destined to take up his challenge.

We read “And David was the youngest: and the three eldest followed Saul. But David went and returned from Saul to feed his father’s sheep at Bethlehem” (1Sam 17:14-15). This is where we learn for the second time that David was a shepherd. In verse 20, he left the sheep with a keeper, so he could deliver supplies. In verse 33, Saul didn’t think that David could fight this giant, because he was still a young man. David’s reply was:

“And David said unto Saul, Thy servant kept his father’s sheep, and there came a lion, and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock: And I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth: and when he arose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote him, and slew him. Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear: and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God” (1Sam 17:34-36).

So Saul gave David his armor, with a helmet of brass, and a coat of mail. David told him that he could not go with this: not, probably, because it was too heavy, but because, as the ESV says “I have not tested them” (1Sam 17:39). So, instead
we see that he used his staff and five smooth stones1 out of the brook, and put it into his shepherd's bag. This is an echo of the Psalm “...thy rod and thy staff they comfort me” (Psa 23:4): — so perhaps his staff reminded him of God's protecting staff. What dedication this young servant had, preparing for the future to come! Truly, he had faith that God was on his side. David is an ultimate example unto us, and can help us be good servants and good leaders, helping us to be the shepherds that we need to be. And so, we read on, and David defeated Goliath.

Throughout David's life, we see how great of an example he was in shepherding people, and how we, too, should do the same. David cared for his people, and wanted to save them. We see his care for his “sheep” in a later episode:

“And David spake unto the Lord when he saw the angel that smote the people, and said, 'Lo, I have sinned, and I have done wickedly: but these sheep, what have they done? Let thine hand, I pray thee, be against me, and against my father’s house.' And after this prayer, Gad came to him saying, 'Go up, rear an altar unto the Lord in the threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite'” (2Sam 24:17-18),

David's shepherding days prepared him to be king, to see a group of people as his sheep and to care for them.

The name David is the Hebrew number 1732, which means “beloved.” In a way, this is David as a type of Christ. “And lo a voice from heaving, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matt 3:17). When we look further, there are quite a few similarities between the Lord Jesus Christ and David, both of whom were shepherds. Listed are just some of them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>David</th>
<th>Christ</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A shepherd</td>
<td>The “Good Shepherd” (John 10:14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United all Israel (2Sam 5:1)</td>
<td>Will unite Israel (Ezek 37:21-22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restored true worship in Jerusalem (2Sam 6)</td>
<td>Will restore worship (Isa 2:2-4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subjected many nations (2Sam 8:10)</td>
<td>Will subject all nations (Isa 60:12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freed Jerusalem from the enemy (2Sam 5:6-7)</td>
<td>Will do the same (Joel 3:16, Zec 14)</td>
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One day, David will be raised, and Christ will bring judgment upon the earth. “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth” (Jer 23:5). What a joy it will be to that shepherd of Israel when he sees his “son” sitting upon his throne and being a true shepherd to the people of God.

Justin Reich (Thousand Oaks, CA)

Notes:
1. Some have argued, based on 2Sam 21:22, that the five stones were for Goliath and his four brothers.
The First 15 Minutes —
Ideas for Sunday School Excitement

For the past six years I have been blessed to be the Sunday School Superintendent of the Norfolk, Virginia, Ecclesia. Our Sunday school has a 15-minute opening period, from 9:30 to 9:45 AM. This is a time when, other than the opening hymn and prayer, the superintendent has a free hand to do what he'd like before classes begin. When I became Superintendent, the time was largely filled with hymns and spiritual songs.

This was nice, but we had a problem. Folks were arriving at almost any time during the first 15-minutes. Not ideal. What could we do to improve attendance and promptness and, most importantly, stimulate interest in being present for every minute of Sunday school?

To my mind, the opening period of Sunday school is very important. It is a time to put members in the right frame of mind for the Sunday school lessons that will follow. It is also a time for us to draw closer together as a Sunday school and ecclesia. This is how the chemistry of an ecclesia develops, lasting bonds are formed, and lifelong memories are made for children and adults alike.

So, instead of making an issue about attendance (using the rod), I thought that switching up the venue with other activities might be worth trying — activities that could get everyone’s attention, get them thinking and excited, and inject some life into our Sunday school service. And ecclesial response has been good! Here is a sampling of the openers that have worked well for me.

‘Super’ initiatives
One thing I do every Sunday morning is announce the birthdays of everyone for the day and the coming week. I keep an updated list printed on card stock at the lectern. It has everybody’s birthday on it: Sunday school students and ecclesial members alike, from the youngest to the oldest. They are listed by date so I can take out the list and see at a glance who has a birthday that week. I also like to ham it up a bit! I recently used a bubble gun to celebrate with the kids! You can get as creative as you like. Another idea: put on a party hat (or have a supply of party hats and put one on every birthday kid)! The antics add an element of fun to things. But even without the antics, the announcing of birthdays has been appreciated by our ecclesia, and it hasn’t taken a lot of time to do.

You will have to create a birthday list if your ecclesia does not already have one. On the back of mine I have also listed the birthdays by name instead of date. This way I can quickly look up anyone I want. I am careful about announcing ages. Younger children are usually thrilled to have their ages announced — birthdays are big milestones for them — but I am definitely careful with older members.¹
In keeping with the birthday theme, another activity that we have a lot of fun with is a game I call “Who’s That Baby?” Get as many baby or childhood pictures from members as you can, kids and adults alike. Scan them into digital form if you don’t receive them that way and be sure to return any actual photographs you get. Once you have a collection of digital pictures, create a PowerPoint or Keynote presentation: first slide = baby picture; second slide = “And the answer is …”; third slide = name (or a current picture of the person). Don’t rush the game. Give everyone time to look at each baby picture and guess who it is. But watch the time, too. If you have a lot of pictures, save some for another Sunday. This game is worth playing more than once.

Another activity that I really enjoy is moderating memory verse recitation. This kind of thing has been done in ecclesias worldwide for years. Its great value lies in stocking the spiritual toolboxes of our children and, at the same time, refreshing the minds of their parents as well.

To start, I give everyone the same memory verse printed on card stock. I like to include a color picture, too. You can usually print six or eight copies of the verse on a single sheet and then cut them out. I use card stock because the verse cards end up being used as bookmarks or saved on refrigerators, and the heavier stock wears better. After handing out the cards, I read the verse once from the platform and then have everyone read it together. During the week, I send a quick e-mail to everyone, reminding them what the memory verse is. This is easy to do with a group e-mail list that only needs to be created once. (The e-mail also catches anyone who may have been absent.) On the next Sunday I challenge anyone, kid or adult, to come up and recite the memory verse. They can recite it together or one by one, whatever they like. The children who successfully recite the verse get a prize from the prize basket. I keep the basket filled with fun and interesting prizes (bubbles, small toys, coloring books, you name it)! We do a second week with the same verse to really drive it home; I then pass out a new memory verse after the second recitation. This way, every two weeks, our Sunday school is learning a new memory verse. And parents like to be on time to hear the recitations!

Keep a record of the verses you do. A spreadsheet works well for this. From time to time, go back and see who remembers an earlier memory verse!

There are several other activities that I do on a fairly regular basis to keep things fresh and exciting. We still sing regularly, but not every Sunday. Other activities include Bible trivia games in which contestants raise their hands to answer the questions that I ask. It is great fun to praise the children when they raise their hands and answer a Bible question. The questions usually follow a theme that I get from Bible trivia books. An excellent Christadelphian publication you can use is called Know Questions on the Bible. This book has questions directly related to the daily Bible readings. It’s an excellent source of questions for Bible-based trivia games.

Another favorite game we play is a hangman-type game. I’ve renamed it “The Armor-of-God” game. I display a Bible phrase using my lap top and a projector. The letters in the phrase are initially represented by blanks, as they are in the hangman game. The audience takes turns guessing the letters that are needed to
fill the blanks and complete the phrase. I usually give a veiled hint at the beginning (the audience is extremely smart and makes short work of things if the hint is too obvious)! If they miss a letter, they lose a piece of spiritual armor. We really enjoy this game, and usually do a very good job of preserving our armor!

We also do **object lessons** from time to time. These are fun and memorable, and they help prepare our hearts and minds for the Sunday school lessons that follow. There really are a lot of thing you can do to ignite the fires of enthusiasm! All it takes is a little imagination and some preparation time. Your ecclesia will enjoy the activities and have good reason not to miss the all-important first 15 minutes of Sunday school!

*Josh Lagasse (Norfork, VA)*

**Notes:**
2. For more information on *Know Questions on the Bible*, with author listed as Aquila N. Priscilla, go to http://www.csss.org.au/know-questions-on-the-bible-annual.html.

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**Reflections**

**Why Will The Law Be Restored in the Millennial Kingdom?**

Our Creator will require many of the laws of the First Kingdom Age (The Law of Moses) to be taught and policed by His son and the immortalized saints during the Millennial Kingdom. The prophecies are clear, repeated and quite detailed. Temple worship, animal sacrifices, harvest feast weeks participation, Sabbath observance and circumcision will all be required. Similar to the first Kingdom Law application there will be serious consequences for non-compliance. Drought and plague are threatened to those who do not attend the annual Feast of Tabernacles (Zech 14:16-19). Anyone who is uncircumcised in either flesh or heart will be prevented from entering the temple (Ezek 44:9). There are certainly some new modifications in the temple design, the altar dimensions, sacrificial ritual order and component measures. However the four blood altar offerings and the two bloodless altar offerings (grain and wine) will certainly be restored for this restored Kingdom. As the king-priests serving under Christ the immortalized saints will be responsible for educating and judging in these matters. Even Christ will be offering burnt offerings and sin offerings outside that fourth temple in the divine plan (Ezek 45:17,22).

“… for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.” *(Rev. 5:9-10).*
“Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years” (Rev 20:6).

Since there can be no serious consideration of the ‘if’ question, we should focus our attention to the ‘why’ question. As the enlightened community, it is our privilege and responsibility to pursue the various divinely provided educational avenues for a more comprehensive understanding of our Creator’s righteousness. The appreciation for His right-ness throughout the full range of His eternal truths and principles constitutes the glory that will fill the earth as the waters cover the sea. If we don’t pursue that righteousness now, both intellectually and behaviorally, how can we have any confidence we will be invited to experience that divine righteousness creation to the complete absence of any contradictions to that right-ness, when Yahweh will be all in all?

The Law delivery and redelivery

There are two separate but complimentary answers to why the divine laws of the First Kingdom Age, originally delivered through Moses, will be re-delivered by Christ. Moses came down from the Mount with those Kingdom laws after spending 40 days with God to receive that Law, during which he neither ate nor drank (Deut 9:9). Those 40 days followed the 50 days between the day after that first Passover in Egypt to the day Moses ascended the mount to receive those Kingdom Laws. In similar fashion Jesus will descend from heaven (also without having any need to eat or drink) in about 2,000 years (40 x 50) after his antitypical Passover. These are the same 40 and 50 days repeated between the Feast of Unleavened Bread (when Jesus was immortalized) and Pentecost (when the 120 were awarded the Holy Spirit, the “earnest” of the promise of immortality). Jesus appeared over a 40 day period within those divinely appointed 50 days between the second day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread and the first day of the Feast of Weeks (Pentecost). We constitute the third transitional generation, paralleling those two previous generations when Kingdom Law was imposed and then temporarily eliminated. Our generation will serve as the transition generation progressing from the educational laws and rituals of the Ecclesial Age into the Restored Kingdom Age. This approximate 2,000 year shadow projection between the first and second immortalization events is validated by other divinely hidden shadows reserved exclusively for those with seeing eyes and hearing ears.

Hosea defines two resurrections in the divine plan as being both after two days (2 divine days of 1,000 years) as well as on the third day (Hos 6:1-3). This indicates the two immortalization events planned for the beginning and end of that third divine day following the precedent setting immortalization of our savior. Another reference to this 2,000 year wait from the first to the second immortalization event would be when Yahweh commanded the enlightened community to wait about 2,000 cubits back when the ark was carried into the Jordan waters to reverse the water flow from a life to death progression all the way back to the city of Adam (Josh 3). The enlightened community has waited almost 2,000 years since the antitypical Christ ark experienced the antitypical life to death reversal. There
are other complimentary shadows in divine communications framing this same substance that is hidden from the many while being revealed to the few, in order to give more to those who have while simultaneously taking away from those who have not (Matt 13:10-15).

Educational value and complete fulfillment

The two basic reasons why the laws and rituals of the original Kingdom will be restored along with the Millennial Kingdom are:

1) There is a significant educational value to these laws defining both validations and contradictions of our Creator’s righteousness.

2) There is a remaining measure of fulfillment to these laws that must be realized.

Sabbath observance will not be eliminated until the Sabbath Kingdom of a rest from sin and its effects has ended. The educational value in circumcision will continue until all flesh is cut off in the 8th divine day, following the conclusion of the Millennial Kingdom. The ark Noah built did not just save eight people. There were countless animals in that ark of salvation. Jesus must extend the salvation he achieved, not simply to mankind, but to all of creation, so making peace.

The law was certainly incomplete. Although there were some shadows of grace, that was not the educational theme of the Law. Kingdom Law did not surrender to the laws and rituals of the Ecclesial Age because those previous laws were somehow illegitimatized by grace. Judgment and grace are partners in the terms of our Creator’s righteousness. This is the foundational lesson in baptism, demonstrated in the baptism and testimony of our Messiah. He comforted a concerned John by explaining: “Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness” (Matt 3:15). The baptism of Jesus certainly had absolutely nothing to do with sin forgiveness. It was all about validation of God’s righteousness. In fact baptism declares the full alpha to omega range of Yahweh’s righteousness which is specifically why Jesus said his baptism projected “all” righteousness. We voluntarily descend into our baptismal grave to express our agreement that sin deserves death, that Yahweh’s Edenic judgment was right in demanding death for sin. We rise out of that water grave to demonstrate our Creator’s right-ness in extending renewed life on the basis of grace. This does not contradict the right-ness of His judgment of death for sin. Judgment and grace are not contradictions, but harmonize perfectly in our heavenly Father. If we favor either judgment or grace to the exclusion of the other, we are contradicting the divine pattern, which is not a safe policy.

The Law scholar apostle, appointed to the Gentiles

Saul of Tarsus was addressed by Jesus Christ, so that this exceptional Mosaic Law scholar could be appointed as the Apostle to the Gentiles. Although Peter used one of the keys of the kingdom given him by Jesus to offer salvation to the Gentiles at the house of Cornelius, Jesus wanted a Law scholar to preach to the Gentiles and structure their ecclesias. We can listen to this Law scholar as he defines the foundational educational purpose of those Kingdom laws that were eliminated with the Kingdom and will be restored along with the Kingdom.
“Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin” (Rom 3:20).

“Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound” (Rom 5:20).

“For when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions which were aroused by the law were at work in our members to bear fruit to death…. I would not have known sin except through the law” (Rom 7:5,7 NKJV).

Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good. Was then that which is good made death unto me? By no means. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful (Rom 7:13).

Paul repeatedly emphasizes that the primary educational purpose to the laws of the Kingdom of God was to define sin. If we try to understand sin outside the framework of that divinely assigned textbook our determinations will be highly suspect, if not dangerously incomplete. We need to understand why there were six sin offering procedures for sin for which repentance was required, and why there were also six sin offerings required even when there was no guilt assigned and no repentance demanded. We should be asking if these two categories of sin offerings have any relationship to the six exterior surfaces and the six interior surfaces of the Ark of the Covenant that were covered in gold. Interestingly those six guilt-free sin offerings parallel the nature of the six altar offering categories. There were four flesh and blood altar offerings (burnt, peace, sin, trespass) and two bloodless altar offerings (grain & drink… bread and wine). Correspondingly there were four guilt-free sin offerings for people and two for inanimate objects. The four guilt free sin offerings for people were:

1) Death defilement from touching the dead (Numb 19:9,17).
2) An unclean condition (Lev 15:15).
3) Leprosy (Lev 14:19-20).
4) Birthing a child (Lev 12:6-8).

The two guilt free sin offerings from which no repentance could possibly be expected were:

5) The dedication of the bronze altar of burnt offering (Exod 29:36-37).

The blood and flesh nature of the first four sin offerings as opposed to the bloodless nature of the last two sin offerings parallels the structure of the six altar offering categories of the four flesh and blood offerings (burnt, peace, sin and trespass) and the two blood free altar offerings (bread/grain/flour and wine).

The key question is WHY

We need to understand why each of those six sin offerings that required no repentance for any law transgression were each performed in order to achieve an atonement. We should be asking why there were bloodless atonement rituals, such as the fine flour for the atonement of the poorest Israelite (Lev 5:11-13)
and the census tax (Exod 30:15-16). These procedures each achieved an atonement without any blood application. How do we blend that observation into the blood-based atonement rituals? Since the immortalized saints will serve Christ as king-priests in the restored Kingdom of God, those of us who are invited to inherit this Kingdom will be assigned to teach and police these Kingdom Laws. We certainly do not live under these laws in the current Ecclesial Age. However, that observation does not deny the educational value of these laws and rituals. The divinely orchestrated restoration of these laws and rituals proves that inherent significant value, unless we are actually willing to question the wisdom of our Creator. Just as the temporary laws and rituals of the Ecclesial Age define the grace and imputed righteousness features of our Creator's eternal righteousness, so the soon to be restored laws of the Kingdom of God define the divine right-ness of the principles of judgment and personally projecting God's righteousness in our words and deeds (our individual 'works' generated by a living faith).

The sons of men, among whom we live and work, endlessly promote education as the key to a successful vocation. Applying our Messiah's advice to be wise as serpents but harmless as doves, we may want to pursue that wisdom. Shouldn't we be educationally preparing for a 1,000 year appointment as the priests that will teach and enforce the laws and rituals of the Kingdom Age that all provide insights into the eternal righteousness of our Creator? How will we answer the son of God if he asks why we thought so little of this prospective job that we didn't energetically prepare to be the educators, judges and enforcers of these divine laws and rituals?

Answers to the 'why' questions promoted in this consideration can be found in Bro. Roberts book “The Law of Moses” as well as a long series of articles entitled Vocational Training for An Immortal Priesthood. This series can be found at this web link: http://www.spiritsword.net/vocational-training-for-an-immortal-priesthood/.

Jim Dillingham (Cranston, RI)

The fact that the Law of Moses is suspended during the absence of Christ from the earth, and while his body is being developed by the faith and obedience of the Gospel, does not interfere with the testified purpose of God to restore it as the rule of Israel's obedience in the happy day of the return of His favor to them. In the day of Moses, it was the prophetic though unperceived adumbration of salvation by Christ, while serving the purpose of a national system and preliminary educator of the people of God: in the day of Christ, it will be the understood typical memorial of the work accomplished in him in the day of his rejection, while serving the purpose of a means, and joyful occasion of that obedience which it will be Israel's joy to render in a day when they shall be “all righteous, inheriting the land for ever” (Isa 60:21), and when the words of God will be fulfilled, which say: “A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you. And I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them” (Ezek 36:26).

Law of Moses: Robert Roberts
Treasures Unknown

Whether it is in a large city or a small hamlet, you can always reckon on locating a used bookstore. To visit any of these is an experience in itself. It’s like panning for gold in the streams that flow from the mountaintop, where the mother lode is said to be. Any one of various visits may yield a treasure.

Living on Vancouver Island, B.C. we have a number of gold, silver and coal mines, most of them in what have become ghost towns. The miners have sought for employment elsewhere but they have left their books behind, which now fill the shelves of the second hand bookstores. We were able to purchase a never-been used Strong’s Concordance for three dollars, with greater treasures to come; a tattered 1602 Bible, having once belonged to one family, now discarded by the last heir as of little value. Not knowing its history, we put it into the hands of a restorer of old manuscripts. Puzzled himself regarding this very old Bible, he called on a couple of University experts. After hours of research, they came to the conclusion it was a Bishop Bible printed in 1602. After many more hours of careful curation, the Bible is now fully restored and we use it in our Bible Exhibitions.

The first edition of the Bishop’s Bible was printed in 1568 as a replacement to the official 1539 Church Bible, also known as the Great Bible. The last printing was in 1603. The Bishop’s Bible, revision of 1572, was made the basis for the King James translation, supposedly authorized by King James 1 of England in 1611, but the translation was to be revised wherever necessary to accord with the latest Hebrew and Greek texts and other earlier translation.

Every old Bible bears a nickname, created from an isolated mistake in its pages, and so the Bishop’s Bible became known as the “Treacle Bible”. The reason being that, as recorded in most translation, we read in Jer 8:22: “Is there no balm in Gilead?” The early translators of Bishop Bible did not know what Hebrew behind “balm” was, so they translated it with “treacle”.

Wonderful trails are to be found looking through the unnumbered shelves of books. “The writing of books there is no end”. Recently in one of our travels from Victoria to Comox we visited an old mining town by the name of Cumberland. In the 1800’s it was a fast-growing coal town, producing the cleanest and best coal available in the west. The wooden shacks and tall buildings witnesses to a prosperous time when miners made a comfortable living with shovels and the oil lamps on their hardhats digging out the black gold.

We are blessed with the Light of the Gospel that prompted us to search out a book or books that would enrich us in this life but more so for the future age of God’s Kingdom.
In another shop, my wife saw, in a section entitled “Collector’s Books” with its royal blue cover, a well-preserved copy of Elpis Israel, by Bro. Thomas. The first thing we did was to see if the name of the previous owner was there, but to no avail. What a wonderful story its pages could tell. Who was its previous owner? Did the message of its pages cause the owner to be baptized? How did it find its way to this small coal town over 6.000 miles from England? The secret to these questions remain locked in this book’s vault. Asking the lady behind the counter how much she wanted for it, her answer was forty dollars. I explained to the lady I would be willing to give her a brand new copy of this book.

For some reason we had to return to that self-same store later on. She recognized us and explained on our departure she had double checked on the computer the list price for this “collector’s book”; and she said, the going price was fifty dollars. Asking questions about the book we were able to enlighten her on its author and contents. “It’s a very special book” she said. How right she was. For many people throughout the past years, especially the early twentieth century it was read often and encouraged many to embrace its teaching and to put on the saving name of Jesus Christ. It’s impossible to put a price on such a book. The disturbing question as we exited the store was “how precious is it in the believer’s lives today?” Most of us have a copy of Elpis Israel in our bookcases but how many have touched it or read its pages? How many times do young speakers, Sunday school teachers use it for a reference book? I know of a brother who would read it once a year.

The wandering into a used book store in Victoria BC gave another brother a surge of excitement when he discovered for a small amount of money, a well-preserved Coverdale Bible.

We are people of the Book, the inspired Word of God. It’s going to be a very sad day when the written words of this precious book is replaced by an electronic gadget. Paul’s advice to the young man Timothy was: “Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2Tim 2:15). Go to the used book store in your own home, take down the pioneer works and feast on them, and in that strength, go forth into the world and share their treasures with those who have poor understanding of the “Hope of Israel”.

“Of the writing of books there is no end”, but there is a divine book still in the making. Its author is anxious to write the last chapter. We can help Him to that end by so ordering our lives as God directs. Let us give Him reason to write our names in that book.

“Then they that feared the LORD, spake often one to another: And the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon His name And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of Hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him” (Mal 3:16-17).

Horace MacPherson (Victoria, BC)
Christadelphian Sisters Retreat 2014, Trinidad

In June 2014 a Sisters retreat was held at Claxton Bay, Trinidad. It was a very well planned and organized event, by God’s blessing, it was particularly helpful and encouraging to the sisters that attended. Following is a brief summary of this function. A full report can be obtained from Sister Cathy Badger — Cathybadger@yahoo.ca.

The Christadelphian Sisters’ Retreat was held at the Golden Jubilee Camp and Care Centre in Claxton Bay, Trinidad from June 20 to 22, 2014. Some 38 sisters joined by a number of young ladies (daughters, nieces and cousins) — approximately 55 persons in all — participated in the Retreat over the three (3) day period. They came from the Mt. Grace Ecclesia, Tobago; the Arima, Marabella and Erin Ecclesias, Trinidad and ecclesias in Canada. The lead facilitator for the retreat was Sis. Mary Styles of Canada. Sis. Mary is actively involved in individual and group counselling. The theme for the retreat was “I drew them….. with bands of love” (Hosea 11:4).

Objectives of the Retreat
The engagement of participants in this activity was aimed at achieving the following objectives:

a) To share information on relationships;
b) To learn techniques and skills to facilitate growth and harmony in our relationship with God, with one another and with our spouses;
c) To better inform ourselves on how to go about choosing a partner;
d) To encourage ourselves from the Word on how to build and maintain relationships with our children and influence them to be ‘in the Way’; and

e) To renew and enjoy fellowship with our sisters, daughters and nieces

**Session Topics**

**Session 1: Our relationship with God as a Saviour, Father, Friend, Husband (Psa 103:2)**

In this session we were reminded that God wants us to be a special people, as exhibited in Hos 11:4. He has given us his Word to help us learn about him and become inspired and comforted by his love and care for us. Just as the LORD covered Benjamin in Deut 33:12 and encouraged him to rest in Him, so should we rest in the LORD. The concept of God as our Saviour can be seen in his action to provide a means of our atonement for our sins and reconciliation to Him, through the sacrifice of his son Jesus Christ. Our response to his love and generosity should be as that expressed by Paul in Col 3:1- 4:6 — fleeing sin, putting on the new man with the fruits of the Spirit, immersing ourselves in the Word, submitting ourselves to each other in humility, continuing in prayer, walking in wisdom and looking for Christ’s return.

**Session 2: Forgiveness in Jesus: Jesus as Saviour, Brother, Friend, Husband (Rom 8:37)**

God provided Jesus Christ as our Saviour to redeem us to him, to restore us from our ‘brokenness’. The ensuing exercise to uncover verses in which Jesus Christ is shown as our Saviour, Brother, Friend and Husband was avidly addressed and uncovered many favourites and quite a few unfamiliar ones which, I’m sure, have since become treasured.

**Session 3: Relationships: practising forgiveness, compassion, being a savior (1John 4:21)**

The message of 1John 4:21 that ‘he who loves God must love his brother also,’ was both familiar and poignant. Our love for our brother (sister) must translate into care expressed in a myriad of ways.

One of the greatest gifts we can share with each other is that of our time and being prepared to listen. When we listen we can help others regulate their emotions and access the part of their brain that is needed for problem solving. The meeting also heard that in young persons, the brain is not fully developed until approximately age 25. This limits the individual’s capacity for flexible thinking and making wise decisions. The older sisters were therefore encouraged to act as mentors to the youths to assist them in their choices.

**Session 4: Choosing a partner: developing your ideals and finding them (Song 3: 1-5)**

The Bible emphasizes that love must exist in a marriage relationship. It presents two (2) models for finding one’s life partner. This love is what is called ‘ahava’. Isaac and Rebekah discovered ‘ahava’ after marriage, while Jacob and Rachel found it before marriage. How do we search for a partner? Gen 24: 27 says: “I, being in the way, the LORD led me”. For such a search we need to: Pray — Have patience — Be faithful — Fear and respect God — Be in THE WAY (the TRUTH). It was noted that partners must work at love and that each person must be able to grow individually while developing as a couple.
Session 5 — Marriage: Commitment for Life. (Matt 19: 1 – 6)

In Col 3:5-10 and 1Thess 4:3-7, we learn that God wants us to develop self-control. God designed sex for marriage and therefore we learn and understand that the following is wrong: pre-marital sex, extra-marital sex, homosexual sex and other prohibited perversions. It was emphasized that God does not want us to invest our time and ourselves in pornography and perversity because it increases our appetite for more of the same and God hates these things. God intended that man and woman be complementary and be together for life.

Session 6 — Parents and Children: The Family in the Ecclesia (Mal 2: 10 -16)

The books of Thessalonians provide parents with insight for influencing their children for the Lord:

- Parents should seek to please the Lord (1Thess 2:4).
- Parents should be honest in their relationship with their children (1Thess 2:5).
- Parents should be gentle and should share the gospel with them (1Thess 2:7-8).
- Parents should deal with their children as individuals (1Thess 2:11-12).
- Parents should teach them to be patient and wait for Christ’s return and not to look for instant gratification (2Thess 2:13-17).

We also learned that showing our children that we are imperfect and finding healthy ways to address our imperfections teaches them to look for solutions, look for resources, look for help when they need it. We need to employ and seek resources to address our concerns/needs. Brethren may also be advisers in some of these situations.

Conclusion

Appreciation must be expressed to Sis. Bernadette Edwards and the team in Trinidad for pursuing the staging of such a forum. The retreat presented a unique and long-awaited opportunity to discuss fundamental issues relating to relationships, in an open, frank manner, with the Bible as our guide.

To all who prayed, planned, partnered, prepared, presented, participated, sponsored and supported, you have our deepest appreciation.

We are grateful that our Omniscient GOD afforded us this wonderful opportunity to search his Word and find what is needful for positively engaging all our relationships. The retreat certainly met the objectives outlined. It also served to renew our commitment to our relationship with God our Father and Jesus our Saviour.

*Contributed by Sis. Pattie Duke, Trinidad
Submitted by Sis. Jan Berneau CBMA/C Publicity

Chile and Argentina — We appreciate the visits!

The challenges that face a small group of isolated brethren is well illustrated in Santiago, Chile. Three or four brethren dotted around a city of 6 million people need to be well coordinated to maintain regular contact. Over the last couple of months of 2014 visits by Brothers Rubén Barboza from Argentina, Nigel Fletcher from Melbourne, Australia, Robert Alderson from New Zealand, Sisters Anne
Aucott and Cynthia Miles from England, and Hipólito López from Temuco in the south of Chile have been a stimulus for this small group. Additionally, the arrival in Santiago of newly baptised Sister Eva Villarroel has been a welcome addition to the ecclesia. Sister Eva was baptised in October in Phoenix, Arizona while on an extended visit. The ecclesia in Santiago continues to meet in a small office right in the centre of the city and has particularly appreciated the visits from those brethren who have been passing through with work or holiday and have dedicated some time to spend with their brethren.

A frequent theme for exhortation in this environment is drawn from Zech 4:10, *who hath despised the day of small things?* For those who are so few and so far away, who live among millions and are surrounded by teeming evangelical churches, and the seemingly timeless institution of the Catholic Church, the assurance that God gives the prophet greatly assists our analysis of such situations: *Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit saith the LORD of hosts.*

A brief visit to the city of Córdoba in Argentina gave the opportunity to meet our four brethren and their families in that city. They too face the challenges of being a small an isolated group, perhaps best illustrated in Brother Francisco Gilardoni, 96 years of age and waiting patiently for the Lord’s return. (see photo)

Written by Bro. Robert Alderson, Auckland, New Zealand, CBMA Linkman
Submitted by Sis. Jan Berneau, CBMA/C Publicity
Quito, Ecuador

Another year, another visit ……

We are more than happy to make the journey to Quito, Ecuador to share fellowship for a month with our dear brothers and sisters. They always encourage us much more than we encourage them. It has been a privilege to watch this small group grow in maturity, organising themselves and making all the necessary ecclesial decisions. For us this is commonplace in our home ecclesias, but for them a completely new experience. Democracy doesn’t come easily. On Sundays there are normally the same five brothers to cover all the duties at the Breaking of Bread and the lectures. Their nearest brothers and sisters are in Colombia and Peru. So as they don’t get many visiting speakers, they really appreciate the weekly exhortations, written by various brothers worldwide and faithfully sent out, the monthly Latin American ecclesial update and the six weekly sister’s newsletter. So thanks to everyone who contribute to the effort.

A few months before our planned visit, a brother wrote to ask Bill if he would lead a series of workshops for the Bible Class on Ecclesiastes. Bill’s heart sank! He didn’t think he could get enthused about that! But we have all learned so much working through this fascinating book. I was especially amazed to find that the Spanish word for time ‘tiempo’ appears throughout chapter 3 (Reina-Valera 1995) yet does not distinguish between the three different Hebrew words used in this chapter. Looking in the concordance we see the three different meanings: a specially fixed or designated time, a time for general day to day occurrences, and a time of permanence or continuance. Verse 11 is a wonderful verse reaffirming that God is in control of everything from beginning to end and we will patiently wait for the fulfilment of His promises.

My heart sank equally as low as Bill’s when the sisters wrote and asked me to do a study for the sister’s class on Lamentations. I certainly didn’t aim for ‘verse by verse’ but more of an overview and historical background. After the class, we had our usual session of handicrafts using origami designs for the cards. We were especially pleased to find a stash of patterned paper and decorations sent from Canada by Sis. Rebekah (Hunter) and had great fun being creative. In fact we had three sessions in all at the sisters’ request which proves how beneficial it is to meet together informally.

So now our visit is over for another year. We pray for God’s blessing on these faithful brothers and sisters until Jesus returns.

Written by Sis. Carol Rawson, Exeter, UK
Submitted by Sis. Jan Berneau, CBMA/C Publicity
Addresses for Bequests and Donations

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Fairhaven Christadelphian Charitable Foundation provides assistance to Canadian ecclesias dealing with the health and welfare issues of senior members. Donations can be sent c/o Jonathan Farrar, 140 Whitwell Wall, Binbrook, ON, L0R1C0.
(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.)

ANN ARBOR, MI

Since our last ecclesial update, the Ann Arbor Ecclesia has been blessed with many visitors from ecclesias throughout North America and others parts of the Christadelphian world.

In November, the Ann Arbor and Royal Oak Ecclesias co-hosted a Revelation study day presented by Bro. Jim Cowie (Wilton, Aust.). Additionally, the Ann Arbor Ecclesia held its seventeenth annual Thanksgiving Gathering in late November where Bro. Jason Hensley (Simi Hills, CA) spoke on the topic, “Be Still and Know,” from Psalms 46.

The ecclesia has also, through the way of transfer, been blessed with a number of new members, including the following brothers and sisters, and their children from the Milford Road, MI Ecclesia: Glen and Julie Anderson, Grant Anderson, Hannah Anderson, John and Deb Betteley, Jonathan and Cathy Betteley, Lori and Christie Cusenza, Dave and Lauren Dreft, and Andrew and Sarah Moore. From the Denver, CO Ecclesia we have received: Joe and Courtney Robinson; and from the Detroit Livonia, MI Ecclesia we have received Paul and Mary Jane Styles.

The ecclesia has also been blessed with a number of new future Sunday school students with the birth of Elizabeth Martha to Bro. Jon and Sis. Becky Gore on October 8, 2014, and Silas Marc to Bro. Joe and Sis. Courtney Robinson on October 10, 2014. Additionally, we have commended our Sis. Jessica Niemi to the Detroit Livonia, MI Ecclesia, and Martha Monahan to the Largo, FL Ecclesia. Finally, it is with much sadness that we report the falling asleep of our Sis. Cheryl Cseke.

Peter Bilello

BEDFORD, NS

Over the past number of months we have enjoyed visits from many brothers and sisters and their families, as well as exhortations from a number of the visiting brothers. We are thankful for the visits and fellowship of these brothers and sisters: Marilyn Creer (Hamilton Greenaway, ON); Linda Cadeaux (Mississauga West, ON); Maryanne Browne (Toronto West, ON); Phil and Roz Clare (Gold Coast, Aust.); Joe Goodwin and Joan Goodwin (Sussex, NB); Charlotte Smith (Redditch, UK.); Bro. Ben Hagan (Aust.); Phil and Janice Baines (Sussex, NB); Brad and Debbie Goodwin (Sussex, NB); Carolyn Kelly (Sussex, NB); and Jonathan Bowen (Brantford, ON).

We enjoyed a study weekend in September given by Bro. Jonathan Bowen. His topic was very exciting, interesting, informative and exhortational. It was on, “The Evidence of Things Hoped For: The Testimony of Archaeology to the Truth of the Bible”. We are thankful for his efforts and for those who attended.

Bro. Michael and Sis. Ruth Carr returned to Ontario after spending nine years with the Bedford Ecclesia. We thank them for their work in Nova Scotia and wish them Godspeed. We commend to the care of the Hamilton-Greenaway, ON Ecclesia, by way of transfer, Sis. Wendy Dickson. We will miss them all, but know they will be assets

Peter Bilello
to and receive strength from the brothers and sisters in their respective ecclesias. Bro. Steve and Sis. Julie Snobelen and their family moved to California for a one-year sabbatical. We wish them well and pray for their safe return to the Bedford, NS Ecclesia in 2015. Bro. Ron Hill has had surgery on one eye and it is healing well. He is scheduled for surgery on the other eye in December. We pray for our Father’s healing hand to be upon him.

Beginning in September, we ran a six week seminar series entitled, “Keys to Success: Helping You to Understand the Bible”. We had four interested friends attend and are continuing with an eight week series entitled, “Genesis: The Book Of Beginnings”. The entire series is forty weeks long. If you are interested in this series, please contact Bro. Dale Crawford as per below.

Please note that we have changed our Bible class night to Wednesday evenings at 7:30 pm at the Scott Manor House in Bedford to accommodate our interested friends and run the follow-up seminar series. Please contact Bro. Dale Crawford by email at: Bedfordchristadelphians@gmail.com; or by phone at: 902-431-6650.

Dale Crawford

BOSTON, MA

It is with the deepest sadness that we report the passing of Cameron Coye, the son of Bro. Matt and Sis. Kelly Coye on October 31, 2014. Cam was 15 years old and leaves behind his older brother Tommy as well as many friends and family who loved him and are mourning his sudden loss. On September 13, 2014, SHAPOUR ALAM was baptized into the saving name of Jesus Christ. We pray for God’s blessing upon him in his walk to the kingdom. We would also like to thank Bre. Dean Brown and Ben Link for recently bringing us words of exhortation.

Jim Sullivan

BRANT COUNTY, ON

Since April 2014, we are thankful for the ministration of the word by the following brothers from the two closest local ecclesias: Aubrey and Paul Riddle (Brantford, ON); and Rod Ghent, Matt Drywood, Tim Young, Shawn Snobelen, Stephen MacFarlane, Richard Morgan and Matt Colby (Hamilton Book Road, ON). Bro. Ian MacFarlane (Hamilton Book Road, ON) presented studies on, “Haggai: Building the Lord’s House,” at our first SCYC Gathering and Ultimate Frisbee Challenge on Saturday, September 27, 2014. Approximately fifty young people were present for the classes and enjoyed a perfect afternoon, weather-wise, for the frisbee challenge.

Since April as previously reported, we tried submitting monthly advertisements in a local paper, sized at one sixth of a page, for our Tuesday evening lectures, but with no new visitors. We also placed three larger ads including two half page and a one third page ad in the same newspaper, which has a large circulation in the area, for the three Tuesday public lectures in November. Once again, there were no new visitors. However, during the course of the year, three friends have regularly attended meetings and one, a friend of a member, is studying for baptism. The theme for the three November lectures was, “Will the World Chaos Ever End.”

God willing, we plan to organize a campaign during the second quarter of 2015 which will be advertised solely by a flyer distributed by postal service in sectors of Brantford, and by member hand billing in the vicinity of our rented Community Centre. We have experienced better response by this method in the past. Of course, personal
invitation is one of the best methods. Tentative planning is also underway for a major effort focused on a Learn to Read the Bible Effectively Seminar during the last half of 2015. We pray that our heavenly Father will bless our collective witnessing efforts, as we anticipate the return of His son.

We transferred the membership of Bro. Ben Wilson to the Cabramatta, Aust. Ecclesia on May 19, 2014. We commend him to their love and fellowship, and pray for God's blessing on his sojourn with the brotherhood there. In February 2014, our Sis. Bekah Robertson spent time visiting in Australia, and returned in November. We are pleased to have her back with us and look forward to her presence and fellowship once again.

David Wisniewski

BRANTFORD, ON

We welcomed our Sis. Hannah McCorrie by transfer from the Coventry West, UK Ecclesia as of June 1, 2014 and are appreciating her help in the Lord's vineyard here. And also welcome our Sis. Patricia by way of transfer from the Paris Avenue, OH Ecclesia. We are happy to congratulate Bro. Joel Hynes and Sis. Patricia Prater on their wedding which took place on Oct 26, 2014. We pray the Father will bless this young couple in their walk together with us as we wait for the Kingdom. We thank our Bro. Ken Styles (Royal Oak, MI) for his ministrations including with the Prophecy Day on Nov. 22nd.

Daniel Billington

PETERBOROUGH, ON

The brothers and sisters of the Peterborough ecclesia would like to share some of our recent news. We meet every week at 11:00 am at St. Joseph at Fleming nursing Home, 659 Brealey Dr., Peterborough, Ontario. We welcome Sis. Murie Foote back to the Lords table. We continue to enjoy the fellowship of brothers and sisters who visit our ecclesia. We are thankful for all the brothers who have shared with us words of exhortation. Regular visitors such as Bro. Lee Elliot, Bro. Russ Dawes, Bro. Gord Easson, Bro. Ken Curry, Bro. Ken Darley, Bro. Norm Luff, Bro. Cliff Baines, Bro. Grant Abel, Bro Dan Rose, and Bro. Bruce Abel to name just a few, are much appreciated. Our ecclesia is pleased that the Niagara Falls Bible School has relocated to the area (Lakefield College) and welcome their presence every August. We welcome any brothers and sisters visiting Peterborough and the Kawartha’s to join us around the table of the Lord. At our annual general meeting, Bro. Percy Gwilliam remains as recording brother. Please address correspondence to percygwilliam@hotmail.com or 705-748-2357 or 465 Cordach Cres, Peterborough, ON, Can K9H 3A4.

Percy Gwilliam

PRINCE GEORGE, BC

The Prince George, BC Ecclesia has moved from its long standing meeting place to a new location. We now meet in the North Edge Ice Sports store in the Hart Mall. The address is: 3825 West Austin Rd., Prince George, BC V2K 2H7. The entrance to the facility is around the back of the mall. When one door is closed to us our Father will always provide another way for his children. We would also like to thank Bre. Paul O., Skip B., and Richard Hall (Vernon, BC) for coming and supporting our small ecclesia with classes and exhortations. If you would like to visit us please contact us by email at: pgchristadelphians@hotmail.com or phone Bro. Jonathan Lawrence at: 250-962-8191.

Jonathan Lawrence
LETTER OF COMMENDATION

The Tidings Publishing Committee is pleased to publish the following letter of commendation:

Basis for Commendation

It is agreed that the doctrines to be believed and taught are the first principles of the One Faith as revealed in the Scriptures. The BASF and the BUSF (the two principal statements of faith) with the common expressions of understanding articulated in the doctrinal sections of the NASU give a true definition of these principles. It is further agreed, however, that ecclesias may continue to use such statements as are current among them.

Notwithstanding participation in this Commendation, Central-community ecclesias worldwide recognize the BASF as a true definition of the One Faith and continue to fellowship on this basis. The Commending Ecclesias are pleased to welcome in full fellowship brothers and sisters from Unamended ecclesias which accept this Commendation.

The Commending and Commended Ecclesias hereby hope to emulate our Father’s patient dealings with us, and to demonstrate to the brotherhood that uniting the One Body will be diligently pursued in practice.

Commended Ecclesias

We, the undersigned Unamended ecclesias declare our agreement with the above basis for commendation: Bloomington, Champaign County, Chicago, Guelph, Huntsville, Marion, Picton, Rockford, Schooley’s Mountain, Toronto North.

Commending Ecclesias

We, the undersigned Amended ecclesias commend the above Unamended ecclesias to the ecclesias of the Central community in North America: Barrie, Brampton, Hamilton Greenaway, Kingston, Kitchener-Waterloo, Niagara, North Bay, Orangeville, Ottawa, Peterborough, Shelburne, Toronto East.

Comments from the Tidings Publishing Committee

The Tidings Committee sees the full letter as addressing:

• A set of doctrinal statements, based upon the NASU, designed to reassure both sides of the soundness of their interpretation of the doctrines that have divided us.
• A description of the transitional process for resolving fellowship issues, after which it is the intent of the Commended and Commending Ecclesias to adhere to the customary Central Christadelphian fellowship principles, as outlined, for example, in the December 2008 article in The Tidings.

We consider these doctrinal assurances and the fellowship process to be in conformance to the established principles of prior successful unity agreements. We therefore would like to encourage all Central ecclesias to support this unity effort to the best of their abilities.

The Commending Ecclesias have been in full fellowship with the Commended brothers and sisters for six years during which time there have been no signs of any doctrinal issues. All of these ecclesias are deeply concerned about maintaining the Truth, and this is reflected in their preaching and fellowship practice. The Commended Ecclesias are no longer in fellowship with Unamended ecclesias that have declared their rejection of NASU and their rejection of the Commended ecclesias for supporting NASU.
Applying advice from a similar situation half a century ago in Australia,6 “The situation regarding fellowship primarily in Ontario, but also elsewhere, is confused. Sincere endeavors are being made by brethren there to effect unity on a scripturally satisfactory basis and in our judgment nothing should be done which would militate against those endeavors.”

We encourage the Commended Ecclesias to submit their News & Notices and Coming Events for publication in the Tidings (please send messages to editor@tidings.org).

We encourage other likeminded Unamended ecclesias to join in this effort to unite the body of our Lord, to the glory of our heavenly Father. Further, we encourage the ecclesias in Ontario to continue working to develop the common understanding and trust that is so essential for brothers and sisters to share the blessings of mutual fellowship.

The Christadelphian Tidings Publishing Committee

Contact Information for Commended Ecclesias

We encourage interactions with the Commended Ecclesias. Here is their contact information:

Bloomington, IL Bro. John Fisher (greenfish@gmail.com)
Champaign County, IL Bro. Paul Zilmer (paul.zilmer@gmail.com)
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Schooley’s Mountain, NJ Bro. Alan Giordano (argiordano5@verizon.net)
Toronto North, ON Bro. Ron Waye (rwayne@cogeco.ca)

Notes:
1. The following is an abridged form of the full Letter of Commendation. The complete letter is available for review at www.unitycl.org.
5. Following the precedence from past reunions, we ask ecclesias who prefer not to recognize the Commended Ecclesias to allow the process to take its course.

Brethren, let us walk together
In the bonds of love and peace.
Can it be a question whether
Brethren should from conflict cease?
'Tis in union, 'tis in union
Hope and joy and love increase.
Hymn 341
Yoke up with Christ

A small package arrived in the mail, and when it was opened there was a beautiful tie inside with a Bible verse on it reading, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” What a pleasant surprise, a gift from a dear brother living 3000 miles away. He knows that this verse is a personal favorite of mine.

This verse is a wonderful verse for all of us to live by. When times are tough and we are struggling, we can feel encouraged, knowing that we can be strengthened by our Savior who endured all we have to endure and was always successful in doing His Father’s will. He wants us to take heart and believe that we, too, can be successful with his help.

Jesus invites us to come to him for strength. He tells us, “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

When I was young I liked these verses, but I did not understand them correctly. I thought that Jesus was asking me to take this big heavy yoke and put it around my neck. I believed that it was the correct thing to do but did not relish the thought of carrying this extra burden of a yoke everywhere I went.

What Jesus actually is offering us is so much better. He is willing to yoke up with us to help make our load more bearable. Just imagine if we were a farmer several hundred years ago. After we have harvested our produce and have loaded it into a cart, we go to the barn and bring out an ox and hitch him to the wagon for the trip to the market. What happens if the ox tries to pull the cart loaded with produce, but it is too heavy and he cannot budge it? Being a smart farmer we go to the barn and bring out another ox, take a yoke and yoke the two oxen together. Now when we climb on the cart and say, “Giddy up,” the two oxen start pulling together and can easily haul the load into town.

The Lord Jesus is offering his yoke so that he can help us; the yoke is necessary so that he can share our load. With him pulling along beside us we can more easily pull our load through life. In truth, we cannot do it alone, but by being yoked to Jesus we can do all things for he is right there with us, and strengthening us.

No one escapes life without some times of trouble. If we truly wish to be granted the gift of eternal life and a place in the Kingdom of God, we must be willing to endure hardship, as soldiers of Christ, and put our priorities on serving our Lord and seeking first the Kingdom of God. Jesus tells us, “Enter through the narrow gate, because the gate is wide and the way is spacious that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. But the gate is narrow and the way is difficult that leads to life, and there are few who find it.”
Those who are yoked together must travel the same direction. Either we choose to go with Jesus on the narrow road that leads to life, or we have to take off his yoke and travel the wide, popular way without him.

Moses wanted the children of Israel to make the right choice in their lives: He explained, “Look! I have set before you today life and prosperity on the one hand, and death and disaster on the other. What I am commanding you today is to love the LORD your God, to walk in his ways, and to obey his commandments, his statutes, and his ordinances.” Moses begged the people to choose the way of life: “I call heaven and earth to witness this day, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing. Choose therefore life, that both you and your seed may live.”

The choice should not be difficult to make. We can decide to follow the world and enjoy the pleasures of sin, which end in sorrow and death, or choose to walk with Jesus. Sadly, many do unyoke from Jesus and turn down the broad way that leads to destruction.

How thankful we should be that Jesus has offered to yoke up with us and help us travel the right way. Let us choose the narrow gate that leads to life, and let us yoke ourselves together with Jesus who will help us to bear our burdens and make them feel light. With Jesus sharing our load, we can say, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”

Robert J. Lloyd

Coming Events (Lord Willing)

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

JANUARY 2015

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

17 Toronto Church Street, ON Study day, three part study by Bro. Jim Dillingham (Cranston, RI). Starting time: 1 pm. Dinner 5 pm. Follow up exhortation/lecture Jan. 18. Please register with Bro. Peter Wisniowski peteresa@hotmail.com or call 416 695-3939.

31 San Diego County, CA Study day with Bro. Clyde Snobelen on “Why Jesus? Presenting reasons for belief and personal faith in Jesus Christ”. Begins at 9:30am.

FEBRUARY 2015


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

22-27 Palm Springs Bible School. The speakers will be: Bro. Arne Roberts (Wales); and Bro. Dennis Bevans (Baltimore, MD). 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, contact Jeff Gelineau at Register@christadelphianbibleschool.org or visit our website www.californiabibleschool.org.

MARCH 2015

APRIL 2015
2-5 Pacific Northwest CYC Conference at Camp Pringle on Shawnigan Lake. Speaker: Bro. Ryan Mutter (Baltimore, MD): “As it was in the Days of Noah”. For further information please contact Bro. Mike McStravick at mtmstravick@gmail.com.

4 New Westminster, BC Fraternal Gathering. Theme: Jesus Teacher and Healer. Speaker Bro Roger Long (UK). Contact: Bro James Prasad prasadsj@telus.net or 604 525 4056.


MAY 2015
8-9 Vancouver Island Sisters’ Weekend in Victoria, BC. Studies led by Sis. Sandy McLeod (Simi Hills, CA). Contact rosabailey@shaw.ca for information and registration forms.

JUNE 2015
27-July 5 Mid-Atlantic Bible School at Shippensburg University in Shippensburg, PA. The theme is “The Lord My Light and My Salvation” Psalm 27. The Youth Program theme will be “God’s 7000 Year Plan”. Bro. Jason Hensley (Simi Hills, CA): “Hezekiah: Faith in Desperate Times” and “Seeking the Lost” (teens); Bro. Steve Hornhardt (Salisbury, Adelaide, South Australia): “Come and See — Witnessing for Christ” and “Unlocking Revelation” (teens); and Bro. Garth Maier (Tulsa-Joplin, OK/MO): “Esther” and “Sacrifices of Yahweh” (teens). Website www.MidAtlanticBibleSchool.com.

JULY 2015
18-26 Midwest Bible School will be held at Triune University, Angola, IN. Speakers and their topics are: Bro. Roger Lewis, NZ “The Four Faces of Christ in the Gospels”; Bro. Mark Vincent, UK “The Problem of Suffering”; and Bro. Andrew Bramhill, UK “Isaac, The Overlooked Patriarch”. Contact Bro. Mike Livermore, 44943 Yorkshire Drive, Novi, MI 48375; 248-462-5740; mike.live@gmail.com or visit www.midwestbibleschool.com.

19-25 Idyllwild Bible School will be held at the Idyllwild Pines Camp in Idyllwild, CA. The speakers for this year are Bro. Barry McClure, Bro. Darren Guy and Bro. Jim Styles. To Register, contact Jeff Gelineau at Register@christadelphianbibleschool.org or visit our website www.californiabibleschool.org.

Guilt by Association?

Some would say that to allow a decision we feel is wrong, even if it is taken by a distant ecclesia, is to partake of another man’s sin (1Tim 5:22; 2John 11). This idea of guilt by association has plagued many discussions about fellowship with members of other groups. Though the word for ‘partake’ means ‘fellowship,’ the passage in Timothy is actually talking about the appointment of elders and the need to be sure of their credentials. When it is applied as a doctrine of fellowship, however, it has the effect of denying what it claims to uphold. Fellowships who practice what they call “Ecclesial Unity” — requiring universal approval of every fellowship decision — are prone to division.

But fellowship is about unity and reconciliation among brethren, not about schism! Once a split has occurred because of a difference of judgment on a non-fundamental point, or by seeking to define a principle more closely than scripture itself does, there is a tendency for further and more rapid splintering into ever smaller fragments. Each group adds to its statement of faith clauses which confirm the action which has been taken. This effectively restricts their fellowship for all future occasions. The history of minority fellowships sadly proves this process to be true. There is probably not a single group which still exists in an undivided state following its original secession from the Central fellowship.

The Christadelphian, 1992, p64
Editorial

The Basis of Our Faith

Introduction

As we have often stressed, our belief in the Bible principles is encapsulated in the document known as the BASF, (Birmingham Amended Statement of Faith). Many other statements of faith exist and are used but this BASF is the glue that binds our community together, even though we do not meet exclusively on this basis, but on the Bible Principles thereby encapsulated. I once collected a sample of the numerous statements of belief of various Christadelphian ecclesias and organizations from the Internet, and very few actually linked to the BASF.

However, technically this is not the only basis of our faith in North America. Some are aware that in Australia the long standing division between the two groups: “The Shield” and “Central” (the minority) was healed by what is known as “The Unity Book”, which is basically an account of the initiative by Brethren John Carter and Cyril Cooper in 1956, who visited at the request of the Australian Brethren.

Similarly, in September of 1952, Bro. John Carter while on a visit to the USA was invited to attend a joint meeting at the (Berean) Jersey City Hall between ecclesial representatives of some of the Central (Amended) ecclesias and many of the Berean ecclesias. (As in Australia, it appears the Central ecclesias were actually the minority.) The proposed basis was initially a resolution as discussed below.

The statement

At this meeting, a new statement was put to the delegates for consideration as a basis of reunion. The statement consisted of three items to which were appended Clauses 3–12 of the Statement of Faith and Doctrines to be Rejected 4, 5, and 27. The three items are:

1) That we agree that the doctrines set forth in the Birmingham Amended Statement of Faith are a true exposition of the first principles of the oracles of God as set forth in the teachings of Jesus Christ and his apostles, and that therefore these doctrines are to be believed and taught by us without reservation; the doctrine of the Scriptures on sin and its effects and God’s salvation from sin and death in Christ Jesus being defined in clauses three to twelve of the Statement of Faith.
2) That we recognize as brethren and welcome to our fellowship all who have been immersed by whomsoever after their acceptance of the same doctrines and precepts, and that any brother departing from any element of the One Faith as defined in the Birmingham Amended Statement of Faith is to be dealt with according to apostolic precept.

3) If an ecclesia is known to persist in teaching false doctrines, or to retain in fellowship those who do, other ecclesias can only avoid being involved by disclaiming fellowship.

Subsequently, all Central ecclesias in North America quickly agreed to this resolution, and over the next eighteen months or so many (but not all) of the Berean ecclesias agreed to the resolution.

**The resolution (not used)**

As a result the two previously divided communities were united after a separation of thirty years. So what appears to be the background to the three statements? A different resolution was passed by the Pomona (Berean) Ecclesia in 1940, and, as I have said, it was on the basis of this resolution that the conference was held in 1952. The resolution is worth repeating, as it encapsulates the major differences that apparently were believed, at least by some, to separate the two communities.

**FOUR ERRORS TO BE REJECTED**

1) That the nature of Christ was not exactly like ours.
2) That the offering of Christ was not for himself, and that Christ never made an offering for himself.
3) That Christ’s offering was for personal sins or moral impurities only. That our sins laid on Christ made him unclean and accursed of God, and that it was from this curse and this uncleanness that Christ needed cleansing.
4) That Christ died as a substitute. That is, that he was punished for the transgressions of others, and that he became a bearer of sin by suffering the punishment due for sins.

**SIX STATEMENTS OF TRUTH TO BE RECEIVED**

1) That death came into the world extraneously to the nature bestowed upon Adam in Eden, and was not inherent in him before sentence.
2) That the sentence defiled him (Adam) and became a physical law of his being, and was transmitted to all his posterity.
3) That the word “sin” is used in two principal acceptations in the Scriptures. It signifies in the first place “the transgression of law,” and in the next it represents that physical principle of the animal nature which is the cause of all its diseases, death, and resolution to dust.
4) That Jesus possessed our nature, which was a defiled, condemned nature.
5) That it was therefore necessary that Jesus should offer for himself for the purging of his own nature, first, from the uncleanness of death, that having by his own blood obtained eternal redemption for himself, he might be able afterward to save to the uttermost those that come to God by him.
6) That the doctrine of substitution — that is, that a righteous man can, by suf-
fering the penalty due to the sinner, free the sinner from the penalty of his sin — is foreign to Scripture, and is a dogma of heathen mythology.

These statements were not, in fact, made part of the final resolution: and I have heard grumblings about this from many over the years. This is not the place to consider these statements, but it is perhaps partially as a result of their abandonment that there is still a small Berean community in North America. (Whether their inclusion would have generated a split in the Central Community is hard to tell at a distance of 60 years. It is known some ecclesias objected to some of the language.)

**Comments on the three statements adopted**

The first statement, concerning the importance of the first principles as set forth in the BASF, is of course a sentence all in the Amended Community would agree to.

The second statement, concerning

- The acceptance of all baptized on the above basis, whether (by implication) Bereans or Central, was so that the formerly Berean were not required to be re-baptized on joining the Central community. This acceptance was universal among Central ecclesias. With very rare exceptions, we can see from the intelligence in *The Christadelphian* that those joining from affiliated groups (Unamended, Berean, Dawn, COGAF, etc.) were not and are not normally re-baptized.

- The second part of the statement, “that any brother departing from… the One Faith… is to be dealt with according to apostolic precept” is a phrase used in all subsequent reunions, and basically refers to the procedure laid down: “As for a person who stirs up division, after warning him once and then twice, have nothing more to do with him” (Titus 3:10 ESV).

The third statement about “disclaiming fellowship” with an erring ecclesia, is not used by subsequent reunions. I believe this was included due to the view that the Bereans had on ecclesial fellowship. To greatly simplify, the Bereans held that if an ecclesia A had an erring member and did not take action that a different ecclesia B approved of, then not only would ecclesia B withdraw fellowship from ecclesia A, but also from every other ecclesia C that did not take similar action. This practice is sometimes called “daisy chain fellowship”, “block disfellowship”, or “guilt by association”. In contrast, the third statement supports ecclesia B withdrawing from ecclesia A but not from the other ecclesias C.

In this statement I believe Bro. Carter was specifically eliminating the Berean view of fellowship, which as we have observed has led to a successive splintering of the Bereans and similar groups. The Central/Amended view requires adherence to the Biblical Principles of the BASF, but essentially leaves its enforcement to the local ecclesia, and in very rare cases, to local groups of ecclesias. Many times *The Christadelphian* and *The Tidings*, have resisted any attempts to form councils or other such committees, and although some local conferences are known, they all have only a very local remit and have no real powers over individual ecclesias.

*Peter Hemingray*
Exhortation

What’s the Point?

In the familiar words of Paul we’re told that:

“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete, throughly furnished unto all good works” (2Tim 3:16-17).

In this passage, the apostle Paul tells us that the target audience of Scripture are people like ourselves. At least we certainly hope that we fall under the category of “the man of God”. We realize, of course, that here “man” stands for both men and women.

The apostle also states the objective of Scripture: that we might be acceptable to God, that is:

• by being equipped to all good works,
• by proper understanding of doctrine,
• by being critical of ourselves,
• by being instructed in what God wants in terms of behavior, worship, and attitude.

So let’s have a look at the readings for October 26 and see if there are some points, contained with these passages, of doctrine, reproof, correction or instruction which we can apply to ourselves.

2nd Chronicles 23: Saving the line of Messiah

We find here the account of Jehoiada the priest, and his wife, Jehoshabeath, restoring the line of David to the throne. In looking at these events, we readily see some quite instructive exhortations.

To set the context we need to back up to the preceding chapter:

“But when Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah saw that her son was dead, she arose and destroyed all the seed royal of the house of Judah. But Jehoshabeath, the daughter of the king, took Joash the son of Ahaziah, and stole him from among the king’s sons that were slain, and put him and his nurse in a bedchamber. So Jehoshabeath, the daughter of king Jehoram, the wife of Jehoiada the priest, (for she was the sister of Ahaziah,) hid him from Athaliah, so that she slew him not. And he was with them hid in the house of God six years: and Athaliah reigned over the land” (2Chron 22:10-12).

Note particularly what we read about Jehoshabeath in these verses. First we learn she was sister of Ahaziah who has been killed by Jehu. Verse 10 tells us the mother of Ahaziah was the exceedingly wicked Athaliah. Thus Jehoshabeath, the heroine who rescued the line of David, was Athaliah’s daughter! She had acted in direct defiance of her powerful and fanatical Queen-mother.
We’re also told that Jehoshabeath is wife of the high priest, Jehoiada. It’s thus her husband who is the one who organizes the coup to overthrow and kill Athaliah, her mother. Why was it so important to get rid of Athaliah and preserve the Davidic line? Because of God’s promise to David that the great savior of Israel, the Messiah, would come from David’s seed.

We’re reading about an extraordinary woman who firmly believes in the promises of God to David and puts God first in her life.

It’s not hard to see three exhortations for ourselves in the events described here:

1) Childhood trauma does not have to destroy us: Jehoshabeath’s refusal to follow in the wicked path of Athaliah is a dramatic example that we don’t have to follow the pattern of our parents or let childhood trauma destroy us. Just imagine the horrible influences of Jehoshabeath’s childhood. She was raised by a mother who was a fanatical idolater. She would have been surrounded by the wicked practices of the worship of Astarte — the fertility goddess. She was probably personally subjected to some of this iniquity. But somehow Jehoshabeath was able to break the pattern, reject the example of her parents and keep what she experienced from destroying her life. As we know from our own lives, or from the experiences of others, that’s not easy, but Jehoshabeath is a great example that it can be done.

2) One person can do a lot: Another “instruction in righteousness” is the example seen from the impact this one couple had on the nation. 2Chron 23 puts significant emphasis on Jehoiada’s leadership (which was made possible by his wife’s rescue of Joash):
   a) 2Chron 23:1: And in the seventh year, Jehoiada strengthened himself, and took the captains of hundreds...
   b) Vs 8: And the Levites and all Judah did according to all things that Jehoiada the priest had commanded…”
   c) Vs 9: Moreover Jehoiada the priest delivered to the captains...
   d) Vs 11: And Jehoiada and his sons anointed him…
   e) Vs 14: Then Jehoiada the priest brought out the captains of hundreds…
   f) Vs 16: And Jehoiada made a covenant between him, and between all the people, and between the king, that they should be the LORD's people.
   e) Vs 18: Also Jehoiada appointed the offices…

3) We can easily shy away from seeking to accomplish any change because we’re just one person or one couple. But look what this one couple accomplished in Judah. Through their actions the line of David was saved and was once again restored to the kingly throne.

4) Much can be accomplished in our older years: Jehoiada’s actions are seen to be all the more remarkable when we recognize he was a very old man when he took such powerful initiative. 2Chron 24:15 tells us that he was 130 years old when he died. From 2Chron 23:1, we see that Joash reigned 40 years. Since Joash was still on the throne when Jehoiada died, this means Jehoiada had to be at least in his early nineties when he took on the great reformation early in the reign of Joash.
We need to remember that at this point in history a normal life span was considered to be 70 years (Psa 90:10). People were not living to 900 years or even 175 as did Abraham. It's evident the average life time was much like it is today. So Jehoiada was a very old man when he was taking the lead on this great reformation. The exhortation to us is obvious: **We can accomplish great things when we are old.**

**Daniel 4: The humiliation of Nebuchadnezzar**

This chapter proclaims the great doctrine that God rules in the kingdoms of men and sets up over them whomever He wills. Therefore we can watch with great interest even today as God works out His plan to implement His kingdom.

Nebuchadnezzar's dominion was very great in his day: “...thou, O king, are grown and become strong: for thy greatness is grown, and reacheth unto heaven, and thy dominion to the end of the earth” (Dan 4:22). At the time of Daniel, Nebuchadnezzar had more power, authority and influence than any president, prime minister or dictator of our own day. But he was to learn “that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will, and setteth up over it the basest of men” (Dan 4:17).

This same declaration of God’s control over the nations is repeated in vs. 25 and 32. And when Nebuchadnezzar recovers his sanity he proclaims: “I praised and honored Him...who doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest thou?” (Dan 4:34-35).

The point of emphasis in the chapter is unmistakable and is a great doctrine for us to remember. For decades, believers have seen signs of our Lord’s return happening before our eyes. Yet where is the Lord Jesus? We are to take heart from this chapter. God rules in the kingdom of men. He is overseeing events through our Lord Jesus and the mighty angels. When necessary He is actively controlling what happens. Therefore we are to patiently wait on Him, for the Lord does according to His will among the inhabitants of the earth, and none can stay His hand.

**Acts 2: Major first principles are declared**

Here is Peter’s great speech given on the day of Pentecost as the Christian, the ecclesial era, is about to begin. In addition to the dramatic events of this day, we see some of our fundamental Christadelphian doctrines clearly confirmed.

What’s the point of this chapter? It reassures us we’ve got it right as a community and should hold fast to our fundamentals.

Peter makes it clear that the Lord Jesus Christ is a human being, not part of a Trinitarian godhead. One would almost think that he is refuting the great heresy which has become so entrenched in the theology of the apostasy.

The great Messiah is “Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God…” (Acts 2:22) not a pre-existent part of a triune godhead. It is this man “Him” who was “crucified and slain” (vs 23). It is this man “Whom God hath raised up” (vs 24). In Psalm 16, David was speaking concerning “him”, the man of Nazareth who relied fully upon his God (vs 25).It was “This Jesus…” whom God raised up (vs 32). “Therefore let
all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made **that same Jesus**, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ” (vs 36).

Peter has plainly stated the great doctrine: it was the man of Nazareth who is the Lord, the Messiah. He is no part of a godhead made incarnate in the womb of Mary. He is a human being, born in due time, approved of God, crucified, raised from the dead and exalted to the Father’s right hand. Right from the start, the apostles make clear a central teaching we are blessed to understand, and which we hold as a pillar of our faith.

A second great fundamental is woven into Peter’s words: we don’t go to heaven when we die. “For David is not ascended into the heavens” (vs 34). And the Lord Jesus, even his “soul” did not go to heaven at death but to the grave: “his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption” (vs 31). In these words, Peter confirms the singular teaching of Scripture from Genesis onward: “dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return” (Gen 3:19).

There is another first principle here as well. Baptism is essential for the forgiveness of sins. Upon the response of the people: “What shall we do”, the answer is clear: “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins...” (vs. 37-38). Again we are blessed to have ingrained in our community teaching the necessity of intelligent immersion as a requisite to salvation.

In addition to being good “for doctrine” the chapter is good for exhortation as well setting out the essentials of our lives in Christ. They are summarized in vs 42:

- **Doctrine** — the blessing of understanding the Truth is vital to our lives and our worship.
- **Fellowship** — from greatly varied backgrounds we are drawn together by the bond of our common convictions.
- **Breaking of bread and prayers** — in this fellowship we rejoice together in the memorial remembrance in which we are now participating.

What’s the point? of the Scriptures we have read: instruction, encouragement, and inspiration that we might be equipped unto all good work. It’s a good question to ask ourselves as we read the inspired word. What a blessing that we have it so readily available as we do this day. Amen.

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We do not want knowledge to make us wise in the worldly sense, to make us superior to others. We want to know more about His Word, we want to grow to understand it better. We wish to be in the Kingdom that He has prepared for us, and if through our readings we can be helped to train our minds in that direction, then it is a very good thing indeed. We want to read about God, about the scriptures and about life in Christ because those are the things that come first. They form the very bedrock of our lives. One of the best ways to ensure we approach our reading in the right spirit is to pray to God beforehand.

The Doctrine of the Trinity — Why it Cannot be True

Introduction:
We are given clear commandments that it is vital to our salvation to know the nature of our Heavenly Father.

“And this is eternal life, that they know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent” (John 17:3).

“But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth” (John 4:23-24).

We will use this brief series of studies to question the popular view of a Trinitarian God, as is common in today’s Christianity. The only place to turn to for a proper understanding is the Bible, God’s Word. We will find that the clear teaching from the Scriptures is that God is One, and there is no other. The concept of the Trinity is both confusing, and not in agreement with God’s word.

The Catholic creed

The Catholic Church to this day regards the so-called “Athanasian Creed”, composed around the 5th century AD, as the true Christian belief, and this belief is shared by many of the other churches. In part it says (in an English Translation of the original Latin text):

And the Catholic Faith is this: That we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity; Neither confounding the Persons: nor dividing the Substance. For there is one Person of the Father, another of the Son; and another of the Holy Ghost… Such as the Father is, such is the Son: and such is the Holy Ghost… So the Father is God, the Son is God: and the Holy Ghost is God. And yet they are not three Gods: but one God. And in this Trinity none is afore, or after other; none is greater, or less than another… But the whole three Persons are coeternal together: and co-equal.

Perhaps one explanation of the language is that in the Greek theater of the time it was common for an actor to appear as different “persons” simply by using different masks: indeed, this is one of the meanings of the Latin word behind our English “person”. The extent to which the original framers of the creed understood it in the term most believers in the Trinity do today is obscure: but certainly what is understood today is also obscure!
The popular view

In today’s Christian world, the Doctrine of the Trinity is held up as the litmus test of a true church. Groups that deny it are labeled heretics and cults. But the doctrine of a Triune Godhead is in disagreement with the Biblical message. The Trinitarian concept of the Godhead conflicts with the way God revealed himself to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Moses. The Trinity also was not part of the framework of the great Gospel message of the Kingdom of God proclaimed in the New Testament by Jesus and by the Apostles.

We do not find the words “Trinity” or “Triune God” in the Bible. Not once is God referred to in the Bible as consisting of three persons. Not once do we find the terms “God the Son” or “God the Holy Spirit”.

The often-repeated Trinitarian notion is that unless Jesus is God, we have no Savior. In contrast, the reality is that unless Jesus is a member of the human family, we have no assurance that human beings can be resurrected to eternal life. Proponents of the Trinity find comfort by saying that God so loved us that he became one of us. But the Bible tells us that: “God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that we might not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16). God tested Abraham to see if he was willing to give up his only begotten son Isaac. Likewise, God so loved us that He was willing to offer up His only begotten son Jesus so that we might have life.

By saying that God needed to become one of us to understand us, we are limiting His power, and it is an affront to His Majesty. He made us and He knows our frame. He is Omnipotent. This theory is an affront to His might and power.

Favorite verse

“In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard for his godly fear. Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered” (Heb 5:7-8).

Christ’s anguish and suffering in the Garden of Gethsemane as he faced the pending horror of the cross, reveals to us a situation incongruous to the idea of a Trinity. How could God the Son be in such anguish if he were the second person of the Godhead? How could one God pray to another, especially with such emotion and anguish? Such was the torment of his soul that his sweat became as great drops of blood falling down upon the ground. He prays in anguish to his Father, to the Father who could save him from death. Even hours before his death, Christ was learning. He was learning to be obedient to his Father.

(Although I am sure the Apostle had the Garden of Gethsemane in mind when he wrote the above verses, we can note that the word “days” is plural. So, this was
not a single stressful incident in Christ’s life. Instead the verses tell us of our Lord’s lifetime struggle with the flesh. This is a struggle we share with him, and we look to the example he gave us of how to live our lives and deal with temptation and sin.)

The case against the Trinity

It is a New Doctrine, Developed Several Centuries after Christ

It is indisputable, and as admitted by most Trinitarian scholars, that the full development and understanding of this core Christian doctrine did not come to complete fruition until long after the death of Christ. The progressive development of the teachings that now make up the Doctrine of the Trinity can be seen in the decisions of a number of general Church Councils.

And through it all, there was an abundance of blood spilled, a profusion of wars and a scarcity of peace in the centuries of church rule over the kingdoms of men. The doctrine of the Trinity achieved its domination of Christian doctrine by force, often by brutal force. We should also remember the old adage, “The winners write the History books” when we do some of our research. All the folks who did not believe in the Trinity conveniently carried the label of “Heretic”.

“Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son, whom He appointed the heir of all things, through whom also He created the world” (Heb 1:1-2 ESV).

This passage reinforces the Biblical teaching that Christ was begotten, that he came into being. In the Old Testament, God spoke through the prophets. But, after His Son was born, He spoke through him.

Defining the Trinity is problematic. God’s word should not be so difficult to understand.

Even ardent defenders of the Trinity often have difficulty explaining it. The complexity of three persons who are separate yet at the same time one being can be perplexing to illustrate, as attempted in the diagram above.

The Apostle Paul had no difficulty explaining the relationship between the Father, the Son & the Holy Spirit: it does not have to be a mystery.

“There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all, who is above all and through all and in all.” (Eph 4:4-6)

“For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.” (1Tim 2:5).

The Trinity is in opposition to over 3,000 years of Jewish teaching.

God chose the nation of Israel to make his name known among the nations. He delivered them from Egypt, disciplined them, sent them to Babylon and brought them back, all for His name’s sake. As He revealed himself to Israel, the great Shema (or declaration) of the Old Testament was:
“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD; and you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might” (Deut 6:4)

God re-emphasized this point over and over:

“know therefore this day, and lay it to your heart, that the Lord is God in heaven above and on the earth beneath; there is no other” (Deut 4:39).

“And Hezekiah prayed before the LORD, and said: “O LORD the God of Israel, who art enthroned above the cherubim, thou art the God, thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; thou hast made heaven and earth” (1Kgs 19:15).

“I am the Lord, and there is no other, besides me there is no God;... I am the Lord, and there is no other” (Isa 45:5).

“Declare and present your case; let them take counsel together! Who told this long ago? Who declared it of old? Was it not I, the LORD? And there is no other god besides me, a righteous God and a Savior; there is none besides me” (Isa 45:21).

“Have we not all one father? Has not one God created us?” (Mal 2:10).

“How can you believe, who receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the only God?” (John 5:44).

The idea of ONE God is a dominant theme of the message to Israel. Monotheism separated them from the Polytheism of the nations. God called out His people to be separate, for Israel to get away from the ideas the pagans had of deity. The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob had two significant differences. He was God alone (no others) and He was ruler over ALL the earth, not just the nation state of Israel.

Theologians can debate all they want about how the Scriptural record in the Old Testament uses Elohim, which is a plural word, but is invariably used in the singular when referring to the one true God: or debate the unity implied in the word translated ‘one’ in the quote from Deut 6:4. What they cannot escape is the unquestionable fact that the Jewish understanding of these words has always been that there is only ONE GOD. Hebrew is their language and it is theirs to fully understand its true meaning. Over and over, through much repetition and the usage of many synonyms, the Old Testament record emphasized that there is only ONE God. Instead of confusion we see a host of phrases like ‘God is one’, ‘there is no other’, ‘by Myself’, ‘all alone’, ‘none except Me’, ‘none besides Me’, ‘Hast not one God created us?’, ‘Thou are Lord alone’, ‘you alone are God’, etc. There is no room in the three plus millennia of Jewish teaching for a triune God. None whatsoever. And all Christian groups acknowledge that God chose the Children of Israel to be a special people through whom he made himself known to the world.

Moreover, Jesus endorsed the Jewish understanding of God. When asked by a scribe: “Which commandment is the first of all?” (Mark 12:28), Jesus expounds upon Deut 6:4–5 in his answer. The scribe wholeheartedly agrees and replies to Christ, “You are right, Teacher; you have truly said that He is one, and there is no other but He; and to love Him with all the heart, and with all the understanding,
and with all the strength, and to love ones neighbor as oneself, is much more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices” (Mark 2:32-33). Notice the emphasis of the scribe when he added, “there is no other but He.” Jesus saw that he answered wisely and said to the scribe, “You are not far from the kingdom of God.” If the Trinity were true, it would be inconceivable that Jesus would let this scribe, who would have considered the Trinity a blasphemous heresy, whom he had just told was not far from the kingdom, to walk away totally in error in his basic understanding of God. The only possible conclusion we can take from these verses is that the Jewish understanding of God is correct. Jesus must have understood and believed whatever Moses believed these words to mean.

Jesus also told the Samaritan woman that the Jews understood who God was when he spoke with her by the well.

“You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for such the Father seeks to worship Him. God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth” (John 4:22-24).

The Samaritans had an incorrect understanding of God and of the proper way to worship Him. Unlike the Samaritans, the Jews worshipped what they knew. The Jews did have a proper understanding of God. Salvation was from the Jews. Soon everyone who would seek salvation must worship God in spirit and in truth.

**Jesus agreed with the Old Testament proclamation of the only true God.**

“How can you believe, who receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the only God?” (John 5:44).

Jesus also had no quarrel with the teaching of the Law given by Moses.

“Think not that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets; I have come not to abolish them but to fulfil them” (Matt 5:17).

The New Testament record shows us that the Jews rejected the idea of a Trinity. In John 5 and in John 10 the Jews took up stones to kill Jesus because he had called himself the Son of God. They felt that such a claim was blasphemous and he was making himself equal to God. If the Trinity were true, Jesus should have taken these opportunities to explain to them the oneness of the Godhead. Instead, Christ takes pains both times to show them that he was not very God. He immediately says: “Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing; for whatever He does, that the Son does likewise” (John 5:19). He adds in vs 30 — “I can do nothing on my own authority; as I hear, I judge; and my judgment is just, because I seek not my own will but the will of Him who sent me.” In John 10 Christ refutes the Jewish charge of making himself God by quoting Psa 82:6 to show them they were misunderstanding what he meant when he called God his Father. What is puzzling is that, even though Christ basically tells the Jews they were wrong in their accusations in both John 5 & 10, Trinitarians seize upon the declarations made by the Jews as Truth rather than the corrections Christ gave them.
Another useful section in a similar line of faulty Trinitarian reasoning is the record of Jesus healing the paralytic man who was let down through the roof. Useful, because it ties in with this same error of using the accusation of the Jews as Truth rather than the rebuttal from Christ. In Mark 2, when Jesus heals the man, he tells him that his sins are forgiven. The Jews called this blasphemy because only God can forgive sins! Jesus asked them why they questioned what he did. To show them that the Son of man had authority on earth to forgive sins, he told the paralytic man to get up (which he did!). Trinitarians use the scribes’ statement that “only God can forgive sins” to show that Christ was indeed God. But, what they missed reading was the parallel passage in Matthew, “When the crowds saw it, they were afraid, and they glorified God, who had given such authority to men” (Matt 9:8) Clearly, the authority came from God and the one using it was the MAN Jesus Christ.

**Jesus conveyed the authority to forgive sins to his Apostles, yet no one accused them of being God because they could forgive sins.**

“And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained’ ” (John 20:22-23).

In the early church, one of the major problems the Apostles dealt with was the battle with the Judaisers, who wanted to go back to the Law. The Judaisers complained about food offered to idols, circumcision, eating food containing blood, and associating with Gentiles. If these physical matters were considered worthy of hot debate, how much more explosive to the new Jewish converts would be the idea of a three person Godhead? Yet, despite all the problems in the early church, the record is silent about the most explosive doctrinal change possible to the Jewish world, if true. Introducing the idea of the Trinity to a Jewish world would be like lighting a match in a gunpowder factory. The absolute silence of any sort of battle between Jews and Christians over the Trinity speaks volumes.

Lastly, Peter was given a magnificent opportunity to give us his belief in Christ’s identity. Jesus asked the disciples: “But who do you say that I am?” Simon Peter replied, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matt 16:15). Christ endorsed that understanding. Peter’s confession is simple and clear. Christ was the Son of God, not God the Son.

The point of this section is that Christianity has elevated the belief of the Trinity as an absolute necessity for salvation. Consequently, since the Hebrews have never believed in a Trinity, shouldn’t they all be lost? Yet clearly, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, Samuel, Samson, Barak, Deborah, Gideon, and a great host of others will be present in God’s kingdom.

**Lee Livermore, Avon, IN**

**Notes:**

1. In Gen 1:26, “And God [Elohim] said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness”, the “God” is singular. The normal explanation is that “us” refers to the angels. Other uses of Elohim (god) in the plural refer to pagan gods.

2. This passage “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord” is one of the four passages the Jews write on their phylacteries: see Mark 2:29 “The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord”
Hope for Life

“For the fate of humans and the fate of animals is the same; as one dies, so dies the other. All go to one place; all are from the dust, and all turn to dust again. Who knows whether the human spirit goes upward and the spirit of animals goes downward to the earth?” (Eccl 3:19-21).

Introduction

This is the first on a series of articles on the True Christian Hope, which we hope will show how such a simple topic illuminates many of the vital aspects of our faith.

From promises to prophecies, the Bible is eternally hopeful. “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future” (Jer 29:11). The Bible gives incredibly detailed descriptions about eternal life beginning with the promises to Abraham and David, to the hopeful visions of Isaiah. It's a free gift from God and centered on the “kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ” (Acts 8:12).

These articles are the result of a unique process. They were not written by one person, but instead, collectively, by one ecclesia. It was determined to write a book to further share our great Bible Hope. It helped promote personal Bible study among the members for each of these studies. This series, and the short book on which it was based, is not intended to provide exhaustive answers to all questions about eternal life in the Bible. Nor does it aim to give rebuttal to the differing opinions about the Bible. You may be surprised how Scripture provides a hope that is different from that which most Christians believe. Our desire is that these words will prompt readers to do additional Bible study about God's incredible promises. Jesus Christ is coming back to earth as King to set up his long-awaited Kingdom. The good news is that you are invited to participate with other faithful believers and inherit eternal life.

“For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope” (Rom 15:4).

Hope makes all the difference.

A wise teacher once asked a promising student a simple question: “What are your plans for life?” The student answered that he planned to work hard in high school to get good grades in order to get into one of the better universities. The teacher commended her student for planning ahead and then said, “And then what.” He told her what he knew about college and how he hoped to earn a four year degree in business in order to get a good job. The teacher gave a positive nod and again said, “And then what.” The student thought for a moment and then said that he would like to get a job in management in the advertising field so he could earn a good living. The teacher predictably followed up again, “And then what.” He was ready this time and said that he would like to get married and have a family, buy a house and get promoted at work. “And then what”, she said. The student now gave thought to areas beyond where he was comfortable. He gradually said that
he would like to earn enough money to retire early, travel with his wife and enjoy hobbies like golf. “And then what” came the expected response. The young man said that he would like to age gracefully and in good health, spend plenty of time with his grandchildren and dabble with inventions in his final days. His teacher pushed the envelope again and asked, “And then what.” The student had no more plans beyond these and so he replied that after all of these things were done, he supposed he would just die. That’s when the wise teacher played her final card by asking, “And then what!”

Do you relate better to the teacher or the student in this story? Does it really matter what you believe? Why should anyone spend time hoping for the future when life today is so good for so many? Knowing that so many religions teach opposite eternal rewards, why invest anything into something so uncertain? Who knows what THE Bible hope is anyway?

**Why hope in any afterlife?**

About 3,000 years ago, the wisest and richest man in the world was king of Israel. He built an empire with a strong military and key foreign alliances. He wrote 3,000 proverbs and 1,005 songs. He was known for having a kingdom of peace, and he built the greatest temple ever to the LORD God of Israel. The king became great and his wisdom and fame spread to peoples far away. Kings and queens traveled vast distances to see if the amazing news they had heard about him could be true. The king enjoyed life and personally had 1,000 wives and concubines to keep him happy. Whatever he wanted he got, and he didn’t hold back from any pleasure. He also worked hard and built incredible buildings and fortified cities. He designed innovative water systems and planted all kinds of fruit trees and gardens. Indeed, life was very good for the king we know as Solomon.

Yet despite having everything imaginable, Solomon grew old and unsatisfied. He wrote in his latter days: “Whatever my eyes desired I did not keep from them; I kept my heart from no pleasure... Then I considered all that my hands had done and the toil I had spent in doing it, and again, all was vanity and a chasing after wind, and there was nothing to be gained under the sun” (Eccl 2:10-11). Solomon recorded his final thoughts and advice for his subjects in Ecclesiastes. That’s where he reveals how his entire outlook on life, and eternal life, changed when he grew old.
You may not be old in the chronological sense, but everyone can relate to Solomon and learn from his wisdom and unique experiences. He probably didn’t have the same kinds of problems that you have, but he did have one big problem we all have in common. Solomon was mortal and knew he would die. Here are some of the wise lessons he left to his people regarding his mortality:

“But whoever is joined with all the living has hope, for a living dog is better than a dead lion. The living know that they will die, but the dead know nothing....even the memory of them is lost” (Eccl 9:4-5).

“Just as you do not know how the breath comes to the bones in the mother’s womb, so you do not know the work of God, who makes everything” (Eccl 11:5).

“Follow the inclination of your heart and the desire of your eyes, but know that for all these things God will bring you into judgment” (Eccl 11:9).

“The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God, and keep His commandments; for that is the whole duty of everyone. For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil” (Eccl 12:13-14).

What if I don’t believe in God?

It is said that there are no atheists in foxholes. This was a common saying in WWII when soldiers would turn to God when desperate for help. When their life was on the line, even an atheist would turn to God because they would be desperate and have nothing to lose. Of course, the assumption is that once these same soldiers were safe and out of the foxhole, they would no longer need to believe in a Creator. In fact, it’s a sad commentary on our American society that there is a Freedom from Religion Foundation that has erected a monument to “Atheists in Foxholes” because of its opposition to the statement of “no atheists in foxholes!”

While millions of people claim to not know any God, He certainly knows you. The Creator of the universe knew you before you were even born (Jer 1:5). He knows each of us inside and out and He helped piece you together in your mother’s womb (Psa 139:13-15). Every hair on your head is numbered and known to God (Matt 10:30). God called you to follow Him, His Son, and His plan of salvation. God doesn’t change His mind and He has a purpose for you. God is actually giving you the greatest hope that anyone has ever received (Eph 4:4). You were called to inherit a blessing, in fact, the most wonderful gift ever given (1Pet 3:9). God has a plan for the Earth to be filled with Godly people who want to be with Him. Our Heavenly Father has an incredible future for you, “plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope” (Jer 29:11).

There is a story about a science class that had a discussion about God’s existence. The teacher presented the following logic: “Has anyone in this class heard God speak?” Nobody answered. “Has anyone in this class touched God?” Again, nobody spoke. “Has anyone in this class seen God?” When nobody spoke for the third time, he simply stated, “Then there must be no God.” One young student thought for a second, and then asked for permission to reply. Curious to hear this bold
student’s response, the teacher granted it, and the student stood up and asked the following questions of his classmates: “Has anyone in this class heard our teacher’s brain?” Silence. “Has anyone in this class touched our teacher’s brain?” Absolute silence. “Has anyone in this class seen our teacher’s brain?” When nobody in the class dared to speak, the student concluded, “Then, according to our teacher’s logic, it must be true that our teacher’s brain does not exist!”

**We all need hope**

Death is not a subject most people enjoy discussing. We make plans for the future in nearly every way possible, except when it comes to our own death. Do you have a will? Have you bought a gravesite plot or a tombstone? How about a casket? Have you even thought about any of these in the past five years? If you’re like most people the answer is probably no. And you don’t like to think about anything related to dying either, do you? Why would you, it’s a negative, scary, unknown thought for many people.

Yet, this is the reason that every person on earth needs to have hope. Think about someone you know who acts like they have no hope. Are they happy or pessimistic? Are they content, or more like Eeyore in Winnie the Pooh? Is each new day vibrant for them, or unsatisfying? Do they enjoy life, or feel anger towards others who act hopeful. Are they thankful, or hurtful? Doesn't it seem that people who live each day without hope act differently than others who have a Biblical hope? It certainly should be obvious because that’s what God intended. He gave us hope intertwined with faith to help us avoid despair and learn about His plan for mankind.

Like Solomon, we will all die and then what? Without hope life is not worth living. Hope is one important difference between people and animals. Solomon taught that God gave mankind an eternal perspective unlike all animals (Eccl 3:11). We are able to think rationally, using evidence to draw conclusions that makes eternal hope realistic. Only blind confidence would steer someone to think that their pet could think the same. Unlike animals, we have hope and we have purpose. Without hope, how can we have meaningful purpose? Without hope, life is meaningless. Without hope, life is meaningless, and less. We shall find that true Biblical hope leads us back to the garden in Eden. Back to true earthly bliss. Back to our future.

The Bible says:

- God called you to hope. (Psa 119:49; Eph 4:4)
- Hope works with faith for a reward. (Heb 3:6; Heb 11:1)
- You need hope for life. (Psa 71:14; 2Tim 1:9; 1Pet 1:3)

*Chicago, Ill Ecclesia*
Life of Timothy

(10) “For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus”

New words

Paul made Ephesus his base of operations for much of the Third Missionary Journey. When he traveled from Ephesus during that time, he left Timothy behind. He wrote 1st Timothy to advise and encourage Timothy while he was away.

A characteristic of 1st Timothy is Paul’s use of Greek words that appear nowhere else in Greek writings up to that point. It is possible that Paul coined the words himself under inspiration. Three apparently New Greek words appear in this passage:

“If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself” (1Tim 6:3-5).

The words are “other-teach,” which is rendered “teach otherwise” in vs 3, “word-battle,” which is translated “strifes of words” in vs 4, and “constant friction,” which is rendered “perverse disputing” in vs 5.

Paul’s use of new words in 1st Timothy is a reminder of the uniqueness of the message that he, Timothy, and the other missionaries were proclaiming. Many in the Gentile world had never heard such ideas before. The message was so different from the natural thinking of man, in fact, that it appears the first-century Christians had to coin new words to convey it.

The Greeks were certainly familiar with debates: debating ideas was a hallmark of their culture, and skilled debaters were highly esteemed in Greek society. But Paul and Timothy taught that showy debates among believers on meaningless matters were wrong. To help make that point, it appears they had to introduce new words, such as “word-battle,” that conveyed the negatives associated with such debates, which the Greek believers might otherwise have viewed positively, since that is the way their culture viewed them.

Paul’s use of new words in writing to Timothy is a further reminder of the wonderful privilege we have of knowing the Truth. The Bible teaches us a new way of thinking and living, which is so much more fulfilling than what the world around us offers.

Corinth

Paul returned to Ephesus following his trip to Macedonia, during which he wrote 1st Timothy. He and Timothy were together again in Ephesus. Then Paul started
making plans to visit the ecclesia in Corinth, which was experiencing a myriad of problems that were causing him considerable anguish. The Corinthian ecclesia was beset by factions, serious lifestyle problems, and doctrinal concerns.

Paul decided to send Timothy from Ephesus to Macedonia and then on to Corinth in advance of his visit there. He wanted Timothy to help prepare the way for his arrival: “After these things were ended, Paul purposed in the spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, After I have been there, I must also see Rome. So he sent into Macedonia two of them that ministered unto him, Timotheus and Erastus; but he himself stayed in Asia for a season” (Acts 19:21-22).

Corinth was a hotbed of difficulties. After what he had endured in Ephesus during Paul’s absence, Timothy might have longed for a reprieve from the kind of challenges the Corinthian ecclesia presented. When Paul was in town, Timothy “ministered unto him” (Acts 19:22). Spending time in the Apostle’s company would have been spiritually refreshing. Timothy was probably more comfortable doing his work with Paul around. But at Paul’s request, Timothy left his side and set off for the rigors of Corinth.

While Timothy was on route, several delegations of Corinthians came to see Paul in Ephesus. They provided additional insight into the severity of the problems in Corinth. Paul wrote 1st Corinthians in response to the information they provided and the questions they asked, and he sent the Epistle by the hand of Titus. Paul anticipated that his Epistle would arrive in Corinth before Timothy did, and he mentioned Timothy’s upcoming visit to Corinth several times in 1st Corinthians. What Paul wrote about Timothy in 1st Corinthians provides valuable insight into the nature of his visit to Corinth and the quality of his character.

Timothy was a kind and gentle person, but the environment in the Corinthian ecclesia was very turbulent. Paul warned the Corinthians not to despise or intimidate Timothy. He wrote: “Now if Timotheus come, see that he may be with you without fear: for he worketh the work of the Lord, as I also do. Let no man therefore despise him: but conduct him forth in peace, that he may come unto me: for I look for him with the brethren” (1Cor 16:10-11).

Some in the Corinthian ecclesia were judgmental of people’s external characteristics. For example, they thought Paul had defects in his style and physical appearance. Paul did not want the Corinthians to look down on Timothy, treat him poorly, and discourage him. Timothy was a great asset. Paul really valued Timothy, and he wanted the Corinthians to learn from him. Some of what the Corinthians
may have viewed as Timothy’s weaknesses, such as caring nature, were, in fact, great spiritual strengths and worthy of emulation.

Paul wanted the Corinthians to be more like him. He told them: “Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ” (1Cor 11:1). The Corinthians could learn to be more like Paul by watching Timothy and doing as he did. Paul wrote:

“Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me. For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach everywhere in every church” (1Cor 4:16-17).

Note the context of Paul’s words “For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus.” Paul sent Timothy to Corinth so the Corinthians could be more like him, Timothy. That would, in turn, make them more like Paul and, by extension, more like Christ. Timothy was a living testimony to what Paul taught “everywhere in every church” (vs 17). He was Paul’s “beloved son, and faithful in the Lord.” Timothy would bring them into remembrance of Paul’s ways, “which be in Christ.” It is hard to imagine a greater compliment could be given to a person than what Paul wrote about Timothy in 1Cor 4:17.

“without were fightings, within were fears”

Giving a valiant effort for a good cause is not a guarantee of immediate success, however, even in spiritual matters. Timothy left Corinth before the situation in the Corinthian ecclesia had dramatically improved.

We know of Timothy’s departure and lack of complete success because Timothy’s next appearance in the Scriptural record is in the greeting of 2nd Corinthians: “Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, unto the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints which are in all Achaia” (2Cor 1:1). When Paul wrote 2nd Corinthians, he and Timothy were travelling in the direction of Corinth from Ephesus following Timothy’s return to Ephesus from Corinth. Paul recorded the anxiety he felt about the Corinthians’ spiritual state and the great joy he experienced at hearing of their change of heart following Titus’ visit to them:

“Nevertheless he that comforteth the lowly, even God, comforted us by the coming of Titus; and not by his coming only, but also by the comfort wherewith he was comforted in you, while he told us your longing, your mourning, your zeal for me; so that I rejoiced yet more. For though I made you sorry with my epistle, I do not regret it, though I did regret; for I see that that epistle made you sorry, though but for a season” (2Cor 7:6-8, RV).

When Timothy left Corinth, the Corinthians were still in need of repentance. Timothy’s appearance in the greeting of 2nd Corinthians (and the content of the Epistle) shows he maintained his interest and involvement in the Corinthians spiritual development, even though his efforts among them had not immediately born fruit. Timothy did not just give up on them.
Perseverance

Perseverance through difficult times was a hallmark of Timothy’s character, as other passages in 2nd Corinthians show. Paul wrote 2nd Corinthians in between Timothy’s visits to Corinth. They spent some of that time in Ephesus. While they were in Ephesus, the anti-Christian Silversmiths’ Riot occurred (Acts 19: 23-41). Paul referred to the Silversmiths’ Riot in 2nd Corinthians. His use of the pronouns “we” and “us” indicate Timothy was with him when the Riot took place:

“For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life: But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead” (2Cor 1:8-9).

Paul and Timothy had to leave Ephesus after the Silversmiths’ Riot. It was a very challenging period for them because, in addition to having had their lives recently threatened, they were very worried during that time about the situation in the Corinthian ecclesia, as well as in ecclesias in Galatia and elsewhere. Paul told the Corinthians about the great distress he and Timothy experienced: “For, when we were come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side; without were fightings, within were fears” (2Cor 7:5).

The way that Paul and Timothy responded to that adversity in their lives is wonderfully instructive for us. The Bible’s evidence is that Paul and Timothy dedicated themselves to helping people who were worse off than they were. In their case, it was the poor believers in Jerusalem. Several chapters in 2nd Corinthians are about their efforts to raise money to relieve the Jerusalem poor.

Timothy served as one of the Galatian ecclesias delegates who was charged with carrying the money that they raised to the poor believers in Jerusalem:

“And there accompanied him into Asia Sopater of Berea; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timotheus; and of Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus” (Acts 20:4).

The brethren listed in this verse traveled with Paul and bore their ecclesias’ donations.

Acts 20:4 is the final appearance of Timothy’s name in the Book of Acts. We will consider his continued service, during the period of time after the Acts record, in the next article in the series.

Ryan Mutter (Baltimore, MD)

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

The world tries to make claims on our children. It assumes that it has the right to do so. As a result, they can be called on to make some incredibly mature decisions while still in their teens. Everything they know about the Bible and everything they have learned at home, in Sunday school, in CYC, and in the ecclesia is sometimes put to the test.

Here is a report of the experiences that two Christadelphian young people had while they were in high school. The report was written by one of them shortly after the events took place.¹ Almost any Christadelphian young person who is in a public high school will be able to relate to these experiences and appreciate the decisions that were made.

A Navy rock concert at school

“It was mentioned to me one day at school that the Navy would be performing a rock concert at our school. I wanted to find out more about it before attending, so I decided to speak with the sophomore class advisor. The only information that she could give me was that the school mentors were sponsoring the event. As it turned out, my math teacher was the head of the mentors, so, one day before math class, I decided to ask her nonchalantly what the concert was about. I got the response, ‘It’s a rock concert, just come and see.’ This teacher had no idea that I am a conscientious objector. Obviously, her response did not help me much.

“I spoke with my mom and brother (who was in the same school) about whether or not we should attend the rock concert because we are conscientious objectors. We talked about what to do in this situation. Naturally, I didn’t want to make myself stand out unnecessarily, but I didn’t want to be where I shouldn’t be, either.

“With a few days left before the concert, my math teacher began making comments to the class like, ‘Now that you know these math equations, you can work on submarines, and you can sign up with the recruiters when they come on Tuesday.’ As recruiters commonly come to our school and set up tables at lunchtime, I wanted to know what recruiters she was talking about. Knowing full well that Tuesday
was the day of the concert, I asked what was happening on Tuesday? The response I got was, ‘You don’t know what Tuesday is? It’s the day of the rock concert.’ She then made additional comments how, on Tuesday, ‘You can sign up for the Navy.’

“When I knew that recruiters would be at the concert, it seemed to me that the intention was to get the teenagers hyped with rock music and then ask them to sign up for the Navy. I wasn’t comfortable with this. My brother agreed with me that he did not want to go to the concert, either. We decided that the best person to speak with about our concerns was the principal.

“Originally, our intention was for my brother and me to speak with the principal ourselves, but then we figured having an adult go for us might get better results. We asked our mom to speak with the principal, and she did. The principal was very understanding. Our mom told the principal that she had taught us her beliefs and that she was a conscientious objector. She said that we, however, would choose ourselves to be (or not to be) Christadelphians, as we got older, by confessing and being baptized. She told the principal that the only reason she was speaking for us was that we had asked her to. She added that we both felt strongly about being conscientious objectors, and for that reason we felt we could not attend military events.

“The principal was fine with this, and said we could go to her office when they called our grade levels for the concert, and she would not draw attention to us. She allowed us to stay in her office and do homework. When we heard everyone leaving at the end of the concert, we just went to our lockers with everyone else and went home. When other teenagers asked me where I had been, my response was, ‘I had something I had to do,’ which was true. I had to do my homework.

“We were fortunate that our principal was so understanding. Let us pray that all people we come into contact with may be as understanding.”

The ASVAB Test

“In March of my junior year, it was brought to my attention that the military would be administering a test to all the juniors in our school. It was the ASVAB Career Test, designed to assess student aptitudes and then use the results to steer students toward suitable careers.2

“After hearing this information, I went to the vice principal of the school and explained that I was a conscientious objector. I asked to be excused from the testing. He was very respectful of my situation and said that I need not explain my stand any further because he understood. He said that this was a matter we should discuss with the principal. He went with me to the principal’s office and explained the situation. The principal said that he remembered about a student in the school who was a conscientious objector but could not remember who
it was. (The principal remembered this because I had stated my position a year earlier concerning the military concert. He was vice-principal at the time.) The principal excused me from the test and offered to explain my position to anyone who wanted to know why I was not at the test site. I told him that I would be fine explaining the situation myself, but, as it turned out, there was no need to do so.

“I took an important lesson from this conversation. Although the principal could not remember which student was a conscientious objector, he knew there was one in the school. I realized that my behavior and attitude needed to always reflect my position and my beliefs, because my actions would speak louder than my words.”

**Awards dinner**

“Later the same spring, I attended an awards dinner for the junior class. When I walked into the room, I noticed a military serviceman present. This surprised me, and I began wondering what was going on because, to my knowledge, there was no reason for him to be there. I did not have long to think about it before the principal rushed up to my mother and me. He knew my conscientious objection stand from our previous conversation about the ASVAB Test. He addressed my mother and said that he just wanted us to know that the military man was present only to hand out awards.

“We were seated, and within minutes the vice-principal arrived at our table to explain the situation further. It turned out that the serviceman was there because he had earlier arranged for the military to cover the cost of the award plaques. For this reason it had been agreed that he should hand out the plaques. The administration had also explained to the serviceman that a family might be attending who were conscientious objectors. His response was (paraphrased): ‘If she doesn’t feel comfortable shaking my hand, she doesn’t have to.’ This came as a shock to me. It had never crossed my mind that someone might think a conscientious objector wouldn’t shake a person’s hand because that person was in the military! We explained to the vice-principal that we would not be rude to anyone because we are conscientious objectors, just because they are in the military.

“The vice principal also told us that other military officers had wanted to make the award presentation a military event, but this serviceman had spoken against the idea. He had maintained that this was to be a night for the juniors and not for the military.

“The serviceman handed out the plaques to each student, and when I was called, I shook his hand, just as I would any other person. I hoped that this action would show those involved that Christ did not teach his disciples to be rude or disrespectful to anyone.”

**Use as case studies**

There is nothing like a real-life story to get older Sunday school students thinking and talking. By adding a few questions as talking points, the stories told here can be used as case studies in Sunday school or CYC. Here are some suggested questions to use:
• How did the consciences of these young people work in the matter of the Navy rock concert? What steps did their consciences compel them to take?
• Would you have done anything differently?
• How did the decision to take one conscientious stand make it easier to take a similar stand later on? Have you ever had an experience like this?
• Would you have shaken the hand of the military man at the awards dinner? Please explain.
• Identify Bible references that apply to the situations described in these stories.

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Notes:
1. Written by Michelle Davey of Cranston, RI, now a sister in Christ. Her report is published with permission.
2. ASVAB: Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery. This career aptitude test is administered annually to high school students across America.

This is a mistake, at least, so far as the Christians called the “Nazarines” are concerned. Some of us, in the free use of our religious liberty, do not recognize ourselves as citizens in any sense, of any of the Governments of this world, whilst others, in the exercise of the same religious liberty, have hitherto regarded themselves as citizens to the extent in which the Apostle Paul regarded himself as a citizen of Rome, and availed himself of the protection which such a relation voluntarily afforded.

THE “NAZARINES”, as the Christadelphians were often known from 1843.

Special Invitation

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

You, your family and friends are invited to the 40th annual Church of God of the Abrahamic Faith Gathering at Denison University in Granville, Ohio, July 20-26, 2015.

Main Speakers:
• Bro. John Mannell: “A Life of Isaac: From Fear to Faith”
• Bro. Steve Davis: “Moving on to Maturity: A Study in the Letter to the Hebrews”
• Bro. John Downer: “Forty Years of Preparation”

Contact Bro. Brad Rek (330) 609-6957 or brad.rek@gmail.com. Visit our website at http://abrahamicfaithgathering.org/ for more information and to view talks from last year.
The Anointing of David

Why choose David?

Very little is written about David himself in the context of his anointing in 1st Samuel 16. Besides a brief description of his shepherd duties as well as his physical appearance in vs 12, we don't learn much more about him until chapter 17, in the battle against Goliath. And yet, in this chapter, there are countless types of Christ that can be found in the character of David, a man forgotten and despised by his brethren, but in God's eyes “beloved of the Lord,” in whom He was indeed well pleased.

We might ask ourselves, “Why did God choose David to be king of Israel, specifically?” First of all, the character of David and his life portrays a wonderful and quite remarkable representation of that of our Lord Jesus Christ. On another note, we can see many similarities between David and Joseph, Jesus being antitypes of both. Therefore, it is fitting that David would later be promised a seed that would “proceed out of [his] bowels, and [God] would establish his kingdom… [God] would be his father, and he shall be [God's] son” (2Sam 7:12-13).

In addition to the necessary ties to Christ, it was by God's will that David was in every way the opposite of Saul the son of Kish. He (David) was certainly not selected for “his countenance, or on the height of his stature” (1Sam 16:7), both of which were desirable traits present in the man Saul (9:2); and yet, in God's eyes, he was in every account better than that man:

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

The Hebrew word for “better” is tôb, meaning in the most literal sense “good,” and occurs oftentimes alongside the Hebrew word for “bad,” thus giving it the general meaning: “the opposite of bad.” Unlike Saul, we can see from this verse that David would be a king who would “love the good and hate the evil” (Amos 5:15). And this goes hand-in-hand with the next reason for David's candidacy: he was a man after God's own heart. Samuel reproves Saul for his disobedience to God's commandment, after he failed to trust in God (Deut 20:1-4). Samuel's words unto Saul were: “But now thy kingdom shall not continue: the Lord hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the Lord hath commanded him to be captain over his people…” (1Sam 13:14).

God requires this attitude of all His servants: to be one that loves Him, and seeks to walk in all His ways. As a leader of God's people, Saul was not doing a very good job of setting such an example; and thus, David son of Jesse was selected: “a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will” (Acts 13:22). Brother Roberts writes, “We look at the picture (David's anointing) and see nothing in it
obviously divine. It was all apparently natural: yet the boyhood of David was a
divinely superintended development — the laying of the foundation of that coming
‘man after God’s own heart,’ with whom the royal covenant of the kingdom was
to be established forever” (Ways of Providence pg. 124). The time David spent in
God’s Word during all his shepherd days certainly pleased Yahweh in choosing
him to be king over His people Israel.

Yet the most important contrast between these two men, however, is found as

“…and the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward…but
the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from Yahweh
troubled him.” (1Sam 16:13-14).

God had taken away his presence and providential blessing from Saul who, as the
first king of Israel, had utterly failed to act as a shepherd over Israel, and more
importantly had sinned in “rejecting the word of the Lord,” having no intention
of repentance (1Sam 13:13; 15:12, 23, 26). Clearly, God saw that this was not the
case with his servant David, and His choice for a successor to Saul’s throne was
indeed righteous and good. David was a man who sought after the word of Yah-
weh, not just in outward show, but with his whole heart; countless chapters and
Psalms lay testament to this.

Brother L.G. Sargent writes in his book Teaching of the Master, “In beautiful
contrast to Saul was the forefather of the Lord, whose faith was as true as a sheep’s
in its shepherd, and who, in spite of one great sin, remained in his contrition ‘the
man after God’s own heart.’ David is the most profoundly God-conscious man in
the Old Testament” (pg. 15).

Even as a young shepherd boy, David’s dependence and complete trust in Yahweh
can be seen in the Psalms:

“the Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want…yea, though I walk through
the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me;
thy rod and thy staff they comfort me”
(Psa 23:1,4).

**The anointing**

It is in fact at this point in his life, David
as the young shepherd boy of Bethlehem,
where our story takes place. While David
was tending to his father’s sheep, Samuel
the Seer made his way toward the small
town of Bethlehem, a little more than 10
miles south of his residence in Ramah.
With a horn of oil in hand and a heifer at
his side, he might have appeared to any
onlookers as an old man simply come
to sacrifice to the Lord (1Sam 16:2).
However, when he showed himself to the
ever the elders of the town, they trembled with
They asked. Everyone in the land of Israel would have known who Samuel was (1Sam 3:20; 25:1), and instantly would have recognized him wearing his famous mantle (1Sam 15:27; 28:14). What dealings could this great man of God possibly have had with the humble town of Bethlehem?

"Peaceably," was his response. "I am come to sacrifice unto the LORD: sanctify ourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice." According to Bro. Whittaker, it's possible that Samuel brought with him the ashes of a red heifer by which, over the period of a week (Numb 19:17-19), any who were ritually unclean might be purified. The sacrifice may have referred to a family feast, which Jesse and his sons were invited to, as seen in vs 5. Samuel would use another heifer to offer the sacrifice on behalf of them all, but before this would be done, Samuel desired that all the sons would be brought before him.

We remember the story: seven of Jesse's eight sons were made to pass before Samuel, starting with Eliab the eldest; for each of them, God's response was the same: "the LORD hath not chosen these." The divine reason is given in as:

"But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart" (1Sam 16:7).

We know that our God is One who "tests the minds and hearts" (Psa 7:9); He knows exactly where our motives lie, even if our outside appearances would show otherwise. As previously seen in the example of Saul, a man of the people was not the same as a man of God, and it was indeed a man of God who would be chosen on that day.

After the seven sons of Jesse passed before Samuel, he was just as confused as they were. He turned to Jesse and asked, "are here all thy children?" We can imagine a stifled groan coming from the rest of the sons when their father responded: "there remaineth yet the youngest, and, behold, he keepeth the sheep" Samuel knew all along that God would not have sent him in vain, and Jesse's words confirmed this to him. "Send and fetch him: for we will not sit down till he come hither." All waited by the sacrifice for David to arrive before the prophet, some less eagerly than others (1Sam 17:28).

Standing "in the midst of his brethren," he would have come before Samuel in his simple shepherd clothing, obviously unaware of the momentous occasion at hand. In fact, amidst all who were gathered at the sacrifice or "feast," Samuel was the only one who knew that he was about to anoint someone to be the king of Israel. Another suggestion made by Harry Whittaker is that, as far as Jesse and his sons knew, Samuel may have been selecting a new pupil for his college of "the sons of the prophets" (see 1Sam 7:16-17). Whether or not the true purpose of Samuel's visit was indicated to David at the time, we can be assured that he recognized the occasion to be something very important, and certainly related to God; this was all that he needed to know. He is described as: "Now he (David) was ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to" (1Sam 16:12).
Strange that the family had not yet begun to appreciate the superlative qualities of the youngest. Yet even at a glance there was something extraordinary about him — fine features, a fascinating pair of eyes, and glorious auburn hair. Good looks ran in the family (1Sam 16:7, 2Sam 15:25; 1Kgs 3:6), but clearly David had come in for more than his share. (See Whittaker, Samuel, Saul, & David, pg. 73). His outward appearance was the least of God’s concern; in His wisdom, He knew that this son of Jesse had all the aspects of a king that He sought for in an appointed leader (Deut 17:20). And so, Samuel would have been overjoyed to finally hear the words spoken unto him by Yahweh: “and the LORD said, Arise, anoint him: for this is he. Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward” (1Sam 16:12-13).

Surely God had provided himself a king to reign over His people Israel (1Sam 16:1)! And surely this king would not depart from “all the words of this law and these statutes” as the former had done, but would “learn to fear Yahweh his God” (Deut 17:18-19). This much is evident in God’s response to the anointing of David: “and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward” (1Sam 16:13). Although David did not know it yet, he was to be a man after God’s own heart; and furthermore he, like Abraham, would be father to a great promised Seed (Jesus the Christ)!

This was the first of four anointings for David: three by men, in Bethlehem, Hebron and Jerusalem, and one by God’s Spirit here at home at the very threshold of an almost unbelievably full life. Doubtless David became aware of the power which moved him from time to time, a power which issued forth in the psalms and revealed the very heart of the Lord’s anointed. David tells us how the Spirit moved him: “The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue” (2Sam 23:2). (The Man David, Harry Tennant, pg 22).

**The Spirit of God**

As mentioned earlier, the bestowal of the Holy Spirit upon David was a defining contrast between him and Saul. Taking a closer look at these words in 1Sam 16:13, we see that the Spirit “came upon” David. The ESV translates it as “the Spirit of the LORD rushed upon David from that day forward.” Young’s Literal transliterates it in this way: “prosper over David doth the Spirit of Yahweh from that day onwards.” Going even further, the Hebrew word is tsâlach and is translated 52 out of 68 times as “made to prosper,” or “prosperous.” David was not given the power of the Spirit gifts like the apostles did, neither was he made to prophesy, as Saul did in 1Sam 10:11; he didn’t need to! The Spirit of God made him to prosper from that day forward. The reason for us looking at this in such detail is because the conferral of the Holy Spirit upon David was such a defining moment in the commencement of his future reign; it not only signified God’s approval upon David, but it was what made him to prosper all his days of being king!

It is also important to realize that, whenever the Spirit of God came upon an individual, it was clear that that servant was divinely appointed to a particular task or occupation, by Yahweh. Such was true of the example of Bezaleel the crafts-
man of Judah. Bezaleel was “filled with the Spirit of God” in Exod 35:31 (note that the Hebrew word for “filled” is different from "tsâlach"), because he was divinely appointed to perform and lead all the work for the tabernacle (Exod 31:1-11; 35:30-35; 36:1; 37-38:22). The reason for God “rushing” His Spirit upon those whom He chose, was always to aid them in their service and obedience unto His commandments. Christ’s words to his disciples: “If a man love me, he will keep my words…and the word which he hear is not mine, but the Father’s which sent me…But the Comforter, which is the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you” (John 14:23-26). The Spirit of God was given always to the furtherance of His plan and purpose in each of His servants, both great and small. Again, this is apparent in the example of Bezaleel, and this was certainly true of David. God did not convey upon him His Spirit simply because of his (David’s) righteousness or faith. The reason was because God had chosen him specifically, a man after His own heart, to lead His children Israel, just as Jesus the Christ will. This indeed was the ultimate blessing of prosperity for a future king, and David surely recognized this later in his life, if not then. Obviously, David was no exception to this; he could not have succeeded as king without God’s blessing, and that blessing was one of prosperity, given to him by the Spirit. We know that Saul too initially received this blessing, but lost it; “But the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him” (1Sam 16:14).

We saw that each man’s attitude and spiritual countenance unto God was what truly set them apart. Saul forgot that “to obey is better than sacrifice;” David was a man after God’s heart. Only the latter was truly deserving of not only the blessing, but the occupation as well. Our thoughts should go to another man who was divinely appointed to the greatest task of all; who was anointed, or set apart in the waters of baptism; who received that blessing of prosperity by the Spirit of God, in the shape of a dove; and who was given the greatest divine approval of all: “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him” (Matt 17:15).

We need to realize that, God, as He did with David, has called each of us to be kings and priests in His Name, and that He is willing to place His Spirit upon us, to prosper in all our ways. He is willing to do so, so long as we put our trust in Him and His Word.

“Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, not standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night” (Psa 1:1-2).

Brandon Cipriotti (Thousand Oaks, CA)

Notes:
1. David was certainly selected for his spiritual attributes, but it is also apparent from the text that certainly in his appearance, and probably in his height, he was nearly a match for Saul.
2. Occurs in the phrase “good or bad” Gen 31:24; Lev 27:10; Numb 24:13; Deut. 1:39; 1Kgs 3:9. The same Hebrew word is used of the creation, which was “good”.
3. See also 2Sam 7:15
A Message

What message would you tell the world if you could use only 50 letters at a time and would be given 30 seconds to deliver it?

Not too long ago, we made a survey of people who were asked the question as to how they most often heard about a particular business, with at least half responding: “on-site signage”. More than TV, newspaper and radio combined, the overwhelming advertisement which caught their eye was on a building’s sign display. When combined with the adage of real estate agent’s three most important factors in buying a home: “location, location, location”, we believed that it was incumbent upon us to literally let our light shine in downtown Toronto. In this, the fourth largest city in North America, in a building at the very heart of the city, we sought to investigate a more prominent, public display to extend the borders of Israel.

Our view was to become to our surrounding community what our duty compels us to be: “the light of the world, a city that is set on an hill (and) cannot be hid” (Matt 5:14): a shining light-stand to all those around us. We have seen far too many ecclesial meeting places close down in the past years in Ontario (and know of at least three Christadelphian signs needing a new home), and we realized that a building exactly as old as the reborn state of Israel needed to remain. So the question was asked, “What do we say on our sign board?”

It seems that in this day and age, the world at large has generally grown ever more Biblically illiterate. However, I still come across sincere church goers with a readiness to discuss their faith, but quite often are ignorant of the most basic Scriptural information. That is why we need to stay away from “esoteric” language when we witness, which, by definition means “understood only by the select few; intended for an inner circle of disciples”. These apparently private or secret words to a society at large would see “Christadelphian Ecclesia” as foreign and would tend to shy away, not being of that “nationality”. Since most of us can’t speak the
language of the New Testament anyway, we do well to witness in simple language and not assume listeners have any ecclesiastical background. I was recently told by a brother that in pioneer times, the title of our congregation, it was suggested by John Thomas, ought to be “The Royal Association of Believers”¹ to distinguish our community’s place of worship. A unique idea. This would stand apart indeed nowadays and, in actuality, presents the fact that we are a Kingdom of priests in the making. However, I’m sure our interested friends, inclined to pay us a visit, would be extremely intimidated, perceiving that their lowly position was unworthy. And it is just this very humility which is the type of attitude we would want in the people visiting us. Certainly, we couldn’t turn them away with such a lofty banner above our door. Interestingly, the word “chapel” has been used in times past, as well as sometimes in these days, and is a much more accurate title for our assembly halls. This word has always suggested a humble place of Christian worship, synonymous with a country setting, sequestered away; small and intimate. The word often also refers to a smaller venue set aside from the main hall, such as is found in hospitals and other institutions. Surprisingly, one of the dictionary definitions was amazingly appropriate for us: “this British derived word also refers to chapels as a place of worship for non-conformists, and is the word for non-conformist doctrine and practice itself.” Seems these early brethren really got that one right! So, to be ever the more welcoming, it is best to be simply understood, that the place that we meet on a Sunday morning is associated with Biblical Christianity as the world about us would try to understand it. No Christadelphian sign that I know of was ever erected for us, it was put there to reach our neighbors. The sign is in fact one of the best preaching tools we have. Let it therefore be understood by those with whom we wish to share the Gospel. We know who we are, the public does not.

The Barrie Ecclesia has had a sign on the side of a highway for many years and millions of vehicles pass by, exposed to a thought provoking message, mostly on a regular basis. Certainly, this constant message has been a landmark to the many passersby and has identified us, in their minds, as a Bible-based community. Also, some time ago, on a rural route in the farm country of Shelburne, Ontario, there stood three markers, alone in a field, on the 10th Line at the 25th Side Road. Many years have come and gone since they were first erected, yet they were a landmark proclaiming the Christadelphians and the ASK organization, asking, “Is this a closed book to you?”, referring to the Bible. Today, on a busy downtown Toronto street, there is another landmark now erected to declare that there is a God in heaven Who continues to watch over mankind and will one day soon send His Son,
our Lord, to ensure that, “They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea” (Isa 11:9). Even so come Lord Jesus!

Ask Newsletter, Ontario, Winter 2014

Notes:

Perseverance

“We also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope” (Rom 5:3-4).

“Perseverance” is, quite simply, developing the ability to wait. If I can be sure, when the time finally comes for the Great High Priest to return from the Most Holy Place bringing the final blessing, that I’ll still be here, patiently waiting, rejoicing in the tribulations which I endure, having learned real patience, enough for a lifetime, of broken hearts and broken dreams… if I can be sure of that, then I know — as surely as I know anything — that, for us who are still waiting, ‘We will be saved’ will become, in that instant, ‘We are saved’!

But before me stretches what is left of a life which I know, just as surely, will continue to have hurt feelings, resentments, disappointments, bitter experiences, ailments and illnesses, and the gradual and insidious decline of all my human powers.

Surely, in what time remains, I will continue to fall short time and again of what I would like to be, but can’t quite be, and to ask forgiveness for the 490th time for the same sins, of forgiving others for the same number of times. Can I bear what lies ahead without throwing up my hands and walking away from the door of the temple, where I wait?

But if I turn and go away, I will be going out into the howling waste of a wilderness filled with subtle snakes and stinging scorpions, where there is no hope and no life and no love: the wilderness where Judas went, and Cain, and Saul, and a million others, those who could not truly believe that the High Priest was coming to bring them the last great blessing.

God give me strength enough to wait, as long as it takes. For I now know that “faith” is not some life-changing mystical insight into eternal things, but a dogged determination to hold on in my spirit to what I know in my mind to be true, no matter how long and how difficult it seems, and no matter how distracting are so many concerns and people around me.

Should I care what that God-given strength is called, whether it be His providence, His care, His Scriptural instruction, or even His Holy Spirit? Should I try to figure out how that strength comes to me, and is assimilated into my spirit? Or should I merely be humbly grateful when it is there, miraculously but inexplicably?

“I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope. My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning: I say, more than they that watch for the morning” (Psa 130:5-6).

George Booker (Austin Leander, TX)
“Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should 
be called the sons of God.” It is an incredible blessing to be a part of the family of 
God and this summer I had the wonderful opportunity of visiting our brothers 
and sisters who sojourn in Latin America whilst awaiting the coming of Messiah.

Following my incredibly inspirational experience with the Truth Corps in 2013, 
July saw me again heading for South America but this time my first stop was Bo-

livia’s capital city, La Paz. La Paz sits in the high Alta Plano of the country and at 
an altitude of 11,910ft (3,630m), it is the highest administrative capital city in the 
world. Bolivia is land locked and is equal in size to California and Texas combined. 
The disciples were told in Matt 28:19 to “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, 
baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit”. 
Following this example, so far the fruit of the labor is a small group of called out 
ones in La Paz. They, like so many of our brothers and sisters in remote parts of the 
world, rely heavily on support from the wider brotherhood for help not only to sow the 
word of God but also for much needed fellowship — “That 
their hearts might be comforted, 
being knit together in love, and 
unto all riches of the full assur-
ance of understanding, to the 
acknowledgement of the mys-
tery of God, and of the Father, 
and of Christ” (Col 2:2).

The current resident mission-
ary couple for La Paz is Bro. Shimon and Sis. Joanna Spina (from Australia) and 
I lodged with them and their two young children, Dallas and Zander, for the 
first three weeks I spent in Bolivia. The tiny Bolivian ecclesia consisting of two 
brothers and four sisters was doubled in size this July! Also staying in the Spina’s 
12th floor apartment was Bro. Shem Spina and his girlfriend Sis. Natalia Van der 
Meulen (Australia). Sis. Colleen Uiga (USA) was also in La Paz as a part of her 
time on Spanish Truth Corps and she has also been working on translation proj-
jects. As Bro. Freddy and Bro. Shimon had been taking it in turns to perform the
ecclesial duties each week, it was rewarding during my visit to be able to exhort, present a Thursday evening seminar and to participate at the various meetings. To help with this it was reassuring to have a Spanish teacher on hand to check any speaking notes. Exhorting in Spanish was a whole new experience for me and it was especially uplifting to see my talks being received and understood!

As well as some sightseeing in Bolivia and a midweek tour to Machu Picchu, yet another highlight of the trip was being asked to fly out to Chile for my last weekend to meet with the Santiago ecclesia for the breaking of bread service. Bro. Shimon gave a study, I gave the exhortation and after the service we were able to enjoy fellowship over tea and biscuits with yet more of our brethren for whom being able to experience our wider fellowship is often a luxury as much as it is necessary.

I was due to leave Bolivia the Thursday after we got back from Chile. However my flight was delayed so it was an unexpected blessing to be able to meet with the 8–10 seminar contacts again that evening! A last memorable moment of Bolivia was when even later in the evening, Johnny, one the seminar attendees who is also receiving baptismal instruction, arrived at my hotel and before saying Adios, he very kindly presented me with a neck-tie and a Bolivian flute!

Although challenging and even if initially daunting to some, mission work carries its own special kind of rewards. The simple act of fellowship cannot be underestimated and with it the small ecclesias in Bolivia and Chile, like so many others scattered around the world, gain much strength and encouragement from such visits, as do the visitors, that we may all “consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching” (Heb 10:24-25).

Written by Luke Foley, Coventry West Ecclesia, CBMA Spanish Truth Corps
Submitted by Jan Berneau, CBMA/C Publicity
Jamaica — Baptisms, Preaching and Fraternals

Baptisms

We are pleased to report that 24 year old Monique Grant took on the saving name of Jesus Christ on Sunday, September 7, 2014 in the waters of the Salt River. She grew up in the Truth with her family in the May Pen Ecclesia. As is the custom members and youth of the ecclesia gather by the river (a short drive from the Hall) to listen to a short baptismal talk, sing hymns and ask God’s blessing in prayer prior to witnessing the baptism. When Sis. Monique came out of the water, her physical expression in the photo with her arms indicated her joy! Back at the May Pen Hall, she was extended the right hand of fellowship, and at the same time presented with a small green Hymn Book, the Bible Reader’s Companion and a new Bible. There have been seven baptisms in the Jamaican Ecclesias in the last two years and some of the teenagers in the May Pen Sunday School in particular, recently expressed a desire to prepare for baptism as well. We pray that God will help the brothers and sisters to continue to guide the youth to the way of salvation.

Preaching

As previously reported, a campaign was held at the Broughton Ecclesia during the month of August 2014, supported not only by members of other island ecclesias, but also by members from New York. Follow-up efforts took place during the month of October, at which time Bro. Joe and Sis. Veronica Badlu, along with Sis. Claudette White, all from the South Ozone Park Ecclesia in New York, were present to help with youth activities and ecclesial meetings. Their support and encouragement was much appreciated! Sis. Claudette has actually spent several months in 2014 assisting the Broughton Ecclesia, and in particular with the Sunday School.

During the month of October, we were pleased to spend a week in Jamaica with members and supporting scheduled events of several ecclesias. First, a Bible class was held at the Kingston Hall on Friday evening, October 3rd for members of the Kingston, White Horses and Spanish Town ecclesias on the subject — *What does the Name of Jesus mean to me?* The next day we attended the quarterly CBM Jamaica meeting with representatives and members from nine ecclesias present. This last meeting of the year, is also the planning and budget meeting for the next year’s Calendar of Events supported by the CBM Canada. Sunday, October 5th was the start of a campaign organized by the May Pen Ecclesia. A banner which was hung on the front of the Hall about ten days previous, for two talks on the Sunday and one talk the following Wednesday. The ecclesia also passed out flyers to friends in the neighborhood. Several regular and some new visitors attended the talks,
there were about 40 in total, in attendance on the Sunday. Three visitors at the Wednesday evening Bible class were from the UK and visiting family on the Island. We had good discussion with the young man, who had Christadelphian connections during his youth in the UK! He gave us his email address and wanted help to get in touch with Christadelphians in Birmingham. He has been contacted by members of the Acocks Green Ecclesia near to where he lives, and it is our hope that the Lord will open his heart to the things of the Truth.

Following the weekend’s activities, we spent the next couple of days with the members of the Port Maria Ecclesia enjoying home visits and supporting advertised lectures to which a few interested friends attended. Sadly, one of the two brothers of this ecclesia, Bro. Harold Campbell, fell asleep in the Lord on Tuesday September 30th. His enthusiasm and desire to serve in the ecclesia is missed. This little ecclesia needs the support of the other Jamaican ecclesias and our prayers. We spent the last two days of our stay in the May Pen area, during which time we were taken by Bro. Melvin and Sis. Gerzel Gordon to visit Sis. Rebecca Smikle, an elderly sister who now finds it difficult to attend meeting. Several other sisters in the area came along, as we did a reading and conversed with Sis. Smikle, whose desire for the Kingdom is very strong indeed!

**Fraternals**

The CBMJ Annual Calendar of Events contains about 15 activities, of which three are fraternal gatherings on national holidays — February Ash Wednesday, Easter Monday and October Heroes Day. The Monday, October 20, 2014 Heroes Day Fraternal this year was sponsored by the Spanish Town Ecclesia at YMCA with 87 adults, youths and children in attendance — the accompanying photos shows a cross-section from most ecclesias on the Island. The theme for the day was — **Shining like the Sun in a Dark World.** See accompanying article for more information on this event. It should be mentioned that a mosquito-borne virus (Chikungunya) swept across the Caribbean during the last half of 2014 and negatively impacted the attendance at ecclesial functions. We pray for the whole brotherhood worldwide, under the various conditions in these days of our probation, that our faith remains strong!

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

On the steps of the YMCA where the Spanish Town Ecclesia meets.
Jamaica — Heroes Day Fraternal, October 2014

It was another delightful occasion as 87 brothers, sisters and young people attended the Fraternal Gathering at the Spanish Town Ecclesia. The main purpose of this gathering was to worship God and look at ways in which we can improve our walk towards the kingdom. This year, Heroes Day celebrations fell on October 20th. In God’s eyes the greatest heroes of faith are not those who achieve fame, prosperity and power in this life, but those who treat this lifetime as a temporary assignment expecting their reward in eternity. They wait patiently for a heavenly kingdom prepared by God.

We were off to a late start but the program followed through smoothly. It was comprised of three short talks followed by questions and answers. There were group discussions at the end of which, reports were given by a member of each group. The exhortation would prepare our hearts for the Lord's Table.

Theme — “Shining like the Sun in a Dark World”

Talk 1 — Surrounded on Every Side by Unbelievers

After a hearty welcome and prayer by Bro. Marlon Jackson it was time for the first talk done by Bro. Davion Sinclair. He interestingly reminded us that God has called us to work for Him — John 14:12. Lay aside anything in our lives that is preventing us from walking as Christ did. We are accountable to God for our walk. Make responsible choices so our light will shine in darkness. Maybe God’s passion in our hearts can make us visit the prison, the homeless, infirmary, and so on. Don't be burdened with worldly gain. Serve God. Make a difference in the life of unbelievers.

Talk 2 — Friendship with the World

Bro. Leecroft Blair ably delivered an effective talk on this important subject. A friend is one who is well loved, one with which you rap. There is mutual affection. This gives a unified feeling. To love God you have to hate the world. Do not associate with the world — Prov 12: 26. The world is constantly changing. God is consistent. If sinners entice thee, consent thou not. Prov 1: 10.

Talk 3 — Evil and Its Influences

Bro. Patrick Johnson aroused our emotions when he mentioned about the Aedes Aegypti mosquito bite which brings on the Chickungunya Virus. For the Aedes Aegypti mosquito to survive, it must have breeding places, for example swamps, water settling in containers for too long or uncleansed drains.

Evil is brought on by sin. The Bible never gives the idea that sin a virus from outside. Instead it is unwillingness to do God’s will. Sin is the result of choices we make. James 4:7-8. To change our ways focus on God. Prov 17:13. Don't be overcome with evil. Rewarding evil for good is a sin before God.

The interaction that took place next in all three Discussion groups was vibrant. The contribution made by the young people showed much maturity.
Group 1 Discussion — Prayer

Prayer is communication with God; Core of spiritual life; can be short, “Lord have mercy”; Paul encouraged us, “Pray for one another”. James 5:16; Answer will come — May not be what we expect or according to our timing

Group 2 — Resisting temptation

Temptation comes to us all — 1Cor 10:13; Yielding is sin; Jesus never sinned; Identifying pattern of temptation and stay away from those situations; Call on God for help; Turn off the television; Memorize Bible verses for quick defense

Group 3 — Economic Survival

Many people in Jamaica have to deal with economic survival; Hold on to strength and faith in God; Accept and appreciate God’s providing hand; Share — as all we have is from God; Some workers wait up to five years to get increase; Say, “No to Loto”, “No to Cash Plus”; You may end up losing all.

Exhortation — “The Way”

In his exhortation, Bro. Ray Arthurs, excitedly stated that the word, “way” is found approximately eight hundred times in the Bible, but there are only two ways or rather one way for us — God’s Way.

In Psa 102:25-28 God allowed Moses to look into His plan. He was the humblest man of all. He was obedient to God’s way. Isa 52:3 speaks of the promised Saviour as the way by which man will be redeemed. Stubbornness in our heart causes us to go our own way. God is the author of righteousness.

God is almighty beholding the good and the evil. When God sent His son on earth that was is way of compassion and love. He tests us and wait for us to come His way. Jesus said, “Not my will but thine be done.” God wants willingness in us to walk His way. Hold on to the light. Jesus is the only way. “No man cometh to the Father but by me”.

Parting Time

Thanks to God for a lovely day around His Precious Word. To all the brethren, sisters, friends and young people whose presence made this day so special, “A big thank you”. We were all encouraged by the Word of God. The melodious singing and heartfelt prayers brought joy to our ears. The spirit of new and old acquaintances strengthened us. Happiness turned to sadness when it was time to part.

Soon all buses were leaving for home. Those from the May Pen Ecclesia, totaling 24 people, were left stranded. Their bus did not come back. Bro. Keith Kinlocke, Recording Brother for Spanish Town Ecclesia, quickly arranged transportation for them. The day ended safely and well for everyone.

“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in times of need” (Psa 46:1).

Written by Gerzel Gordon, Jamaica
Submitted by Jan Berneau, CBMA/C Publicity
The Missionary Journeys of Bro. Rubén

Bro. Rubén Barboza lives in Córdoba, Argentina, where there are few Christadelphians and the Word struggles to prosper in the country’s rather sceptical European culture. In past years he has visited brethren and sisters in different parts of Brazil and Chile, and in 2014 he was able to revisit these countries and travel to Lima, Perú for the first time.

Along with his wife Roxana, Rubén flew to Lima in July to visit the six members there and do some outreach. He and Roxana were delighted to get to meet the local brethren and sisters for the first time, share some loving fellowship with them and see different parts of the city and country. In the course of their extended stay there were two memorial services with the members, with Rubén giving the word of exhortation on each occasion. His public talks on the kingdom of God were well received by an enthusiastic group of interested friends.

Rubén travelled again in late September. First he went to the neighbouring country of Brazil to spend a weekend with Bro. Emerson Acosta and his family. Emerson lives in isolation in the southern city of Canoas and was actually baptized by Rubén several years ago, so he always appreciates his visits and the chance to renew fellowship with him around the Word. Fortunately, Emerson speaks Spanish in addition to his native Portuguese and so is able to communicate well with the different brethren who visit him.

A couple of weeks later Rubén went in the other direction, taking the short hop west over the Andes to Santiago de Chile for a long weekend with the brethren and sisters and friends, delivering a couple of public lectures and encouraging and exhorting the members.

South America is a large continent with widely-scattered members, so that it is a great blessing for everyone down there when one of their own brethren is able to visit, give talks and share his love for the Truth with them.

Written by Jim and Jean Hunter, Link Couple
Submitted by Jan Berneau, CBMA/C Publicity
Books from The Tidings

On the Way: Bible Studies, Exhortations, Meditations and Musings, by George Booker

“The Way” is a path to salvation, a manner of living day by day, a journey through life with all its ups and downs. This book offers insights, encouragement and food for thought, to encourage all those “on the Way”, whether young in the Truth or baptized for many years. The 71 chapters vary in length from short reflections to in-depth studies. Each focuses on a different topic, from the serious to the lighthearted: practical issues of life in the Truth, difficult passages, exhortation from hymns and songs, personal memories, and observations about the modern world. Published: 2014 – soft cover, 309 pages, color and B&W photos $9.00 USD (plus S&H)

The Ecclesia at Ephesus, by Ryan Mutter

Studying the Ecclesia at Ephesus provides powerful lessons in spiritual growth relevant in today’s times. $9.00 US (soft cover, 264 pages, with color maps).

Bible Guidelines for a Happy Marriage, by John C. Bilello

Sound, proactive, Biblical advice on how to build and maintain a happy marriage. $6.00 US (soft cover, 127 pages).

The Creation Text: Studies in Early Genesis, by David Levin

Forty-nine studies offer fresh insights into early Genesis by examining the text and structure of the first five chapters. $12.00 US (364 pages).

My Journey in Faith, by Ronald Hicks

A brother shares his life experience in the Truth with Christadelphians around the world, and the joy of mission work. Special price: reduced from $10.00 to $5.00 US (372 pages).

Pictures of Redemption, by George Booker

Explores parables, analogies, and figures of speech used in Scripture to illustrate the many facets of redemption. $6.00 US (soft cover, 192 pages).

The Whole Armor of God, by Ryan Mutter

This story takes place nearly 3,000 years ago, but the spiritual challenges are familiar to today’s young people. $6.00 US (110 pages).

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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.

BOZEMAN, MT
We have been delighted to witness the baptisms of KEZIA and NAOMI BOTTOMLEY, daughters of Sis. Erin and the undersigned, in recent months. We thank many who have travelled from afar to this somewhat remote light stand during 2014 to encourage us along the way. Our ecclesial ballot produced some changes and Bro. Peter Jones assumes the duties of Recording Brother January 1, 2015. The details can be found in the ALS diary and North American address roll.

Paul Bottomley

BROOKLYN, NY
The Brooklyn Ecclesia ended 2014 in an unexpected sad note. Bro. Amrick Kilburn fell asleep in Christ. He came here just after his sixteenth natural birthday which almost coincided with his baptism in 1988, at the Colon Ecclesia in Panama. His loyal, fervent devotion to the truth was a wonderful encouragement to young and senior members. We knew of his serious illness, but his cheerfulness at meeting so overshadowed this condition that when his death was reported only the day after his lively participation at the Sunday meetings, it was an incredible shock! We take comfort that our brother sleeps in the hope of the resurrection. A depth of gratitude is due to our two sister ecclesias for their uplifting support. For 2015, we look forward to the baptism of a CYC’er who came under the tutelage of Bro. Amrick.

Clive Drepaul

CHAMPAIGN COUNTY, IL
We gratefully acknowledge the commendation of our ecclesia, published in this magazine, and we are delighted to share with you what has been happening in our ecclesia since our formation six years ago. Since this is our first report of ecclesial news, some background about the ecclesia may be of interest.

We are a mission ecclesia. That is, we intentionally established a new ecclesia in a community where there was none, in the same way that a mission ecclesia overseas might be started. We were spun off from the Bloomington, IL Ecclesia, which is about an hour away. Ongoing support from both Bloomington and the Chicago Ecclesia has been crucial.

The ecclesia formed in 2008, using a rented room at a hotel on Sundays, and a classroom at the University of Illinois for a midweek class. With the benefit of experience gained in the overseas mission field, primarily in South Africa, we opened a Bible Education Center in August 2009. The location is a storefront in a mall. We offer a limited selection of new and used Bibles, study aids, and gift items in our shop, at no markup. We also give DVDs, books and pamphlets free, and have a lending library. The primary focus,
though, is our classes. During most of the year we offer five classes a week: English as a Second Language (ESL), a noontime round-table women’s discussion group, an evening round-table discussion of a book of the Bible, and two instructor-led evening classes on a wide variety of Bible topics. During the holidays and over the summer the schedule is reduced to two or three classes.

Hundreds of people from the community have attended classes. Of these, there is a small core which continues to take classes regularly. Our Sunday services are held in the same location, so it is easy for students to transition to attending on Sunday, and a number do so. To date, we rejoice in reporting that there have been three baptisms: JAMES COPE on July 1, 2010; LIANE MORALES on December 4, 2010; and PAT CAUSEMAN on May 17, 2014. We thank our heavenly Father for the addition of this new brother and two new sisters.

Beyond classes, we have become deeply involved in the lives of many of our students and contacts. We strongly believe in the “touch and teach” approach, and with the Father’s blessing, the Center and our members have become an important part of many lives.

We gladly welcome volunteers to help in this work, for any period of time. We are very grateful to those who have come for a weekend, a week, or a month. We also thank several speakers who have provided classes from remote locations via the internet.

More information about our current classes, and the SNUGGLES program launched by our Sis. Jennifer Millay, can be found on our web site: BibleEducationCenter.org. Those interested in more information about getting a BEC started, or exploring volunteering with us, please contact the undersigned by email at: paul.zilmer@gmail.com; or by phone at: 309-750-9738.

Paul Zilmer

CRANSTON, RI

This past year the Cranston Ecclesia has experienced both sorrow and joy. We were saddened by the loss of two wonderful sisters. Sis. Margi Sano fell asleep in June. She was a faithful servant of this ecclesia for many years. She was baptized May 28, 1978. Sis. Fran Cooper fell asleep in September. Many of us have wonderful memories of Sis. Fran serving in the Lord’s vineyard with great enthusiasm spanning many years. They both will be missed while we look forward to that great day when the Lord Jesus returns and by God’s grace restores them and all those with like faith to life.

In May, Bro. Michael and Sis. Sarah Davey transferred membership to the Norfolk, VA Ecclesia. We will miss them greatly. In July, Sis. Janel Tucker was welcomed back into fellowship.

With great joy we had three baptisms the third week of December. They were NATHANIEL SOUCY, son of Bro. Gerald and Jayne Soucy; MITCHELL HAUGHTON, son of Bro. Bruce and Sis. Debra Haughton; and MICHAEL TUCKER, son of Sis. Mary Tucker.

The first weekend of 2015, Bro. Garth Maier (Tulsa/Joplin, OK) delivered a study titled “Titus: Ecclesial Order”. We thank Bro. Garth for his excellent ministrations. We had a large number of visitors including the Abington Ecclesia for Sunday memorial service. DVD video and audio recordings of this weekend can be ordered by contacting Bro. Bruce Haughton by email at: zandvoort98@gmail.com.

Jeff Wallace
GUELPH, ON

We are thankful for the commendation reported in the January 2015 issue, as a major step forward in recognizing the unity of God’s family, for which we have been working many years.

It is with great joy that we report two recent baptisms into the saving name of Jesus Christ: NICOLE TYLER (Gray) on November 9, 2014; and BRADEN MOYNIHAN on December 6, 2014.

The Guelph, ON Ecclesia hosted a successful Women’s Weekend November 28-30, 2014, attended by sisters and friends from many Ontario ecclesias. Our annual Youth Weekend will be held in February 2015, God willing. Our website: www.guelphchristadelphians.ca provides current information on ecclesial activities. In recent months, a choral group involving brothers and sisters of Guelph and nearby ecclesias has been performing in area seniors homes, proclaiming the gospel and spreading joy through song.

Daryl Finlay

KOUTS, IN

We are deeply saddened to report the sudden falling asleep of our Sister Patti Bobis this past October. It was very sudden and unexpected. Sister Patti was a faithful attendee at the memorial service and at our midweek Bible class. She was a diligent worker for our ecclesia in several capacities and her efforts in regards to our study days will especially be missed. She now sleeps in the sure hope of the resurrection at our Lord’s return. She is greatly missed.

We wish to thank Bro. Jeff Gelineau for his classes at this year’s fall study day in November. His classes on forgiveness were very uplifting and very well received. We thank him and Sister Kelly for their efforts on behalf of our ecclesia.

We are very happy to receive by transfer Bro. Jerry and Sis. Dorothy Asbury from the Troy, IL Ecclesia. They will be a great asset to our ecclesia. We also are happy to announce that after a good confession of his faith MATTHEW BRYAN was baptized on December 21. Our new brother is the son of Bro. Pat and Sis. Debbie Bryan and we rejoice with them in the commitment of our new brother to serve our Lord and Savior.

The undersigned is now acting as the recording Brother of the Kouts Ecclesia. e-mail: paulandmaryw@comcast.net.

Paul Wilson

LARGO, FL

We are saddened to report that our beloved Sis. Annette Haltom fell asleep in September after a long illness. Our thoughts and prayers are with her husband, Bro. Troy Haltom, and daughter, Sis. Leslie Davis, and family. We grieve with her family but rejoice that we will see her in God’s kingdom to come.

In March we welcomed Bro. Gerardo and Sis. Gwen Castellano to the Largo Ecclesia. They took an interesting path to the truth. Bro. Gerardo began reading the Bible and other religious literature at the age of five in his home land of Honduras. In his continued search for truth he met and married Sis. Gwen. They discovered some Christadelphian materials on the internet and eventually baptized themselves in the Gulf of Mexico after professing their belief in God and Jesus and the Kingdom to come based on our teachings. After giving a good confession of the faith before the
Largo Arranging Board they were both welcomed around the table of our Lord with all Christadelphians of like faith.

We welcome back Sis. Helen Gibson who has returned to the Largo meeting from her many and long travels to assist other brethren and sisters nationwide. We also welcome Bro. Chad and Sis. Martha Monahan from Beaufort, SC. We would like to thank our many visiting brothers and sisters who helped to swell our ranks and provide much good fellowship and service. The good Lord has blessed our little ecclesia once again and we thank Him.

Our dear Bro. Martin Walker suffered a stroke in August which has robbed him of his ability to remember family and more importantly, the truth. He resides in a nursing home close to his family. If any brothers or sisters wish to write or visit, please contact the undersigned for particulars.

In October we held an impromptu study day with the Orlando and Sarasota ecclesias after being contacted by Bro. Jim Cowie (Morton Bay, Queensland, Aust.). He presented a study on, “Events Surrounding the Return of Christ”. It was well attended by members from the area ecclesias. We also held our annual study weekend in November with Bro. David Jennings (Pomona, CA). His subject, “Led by the Spirit,” was not only very spiritually uplifting but gave us much food for thought and improvement.

Largo will host a study weekend in April 2015, the date to be announced, with Bro. Mark Giordano (Norfolk, VA). He will lead us in a study of, “Marriage from the Mind of God”. Please contact the undersigned for particulars.

Walt Dodrill

VIENNA, ON

We are saddened to report that Sis. Joyce Lucas, a life long member of the Vienna Ecclesia, fell asleep in the Lord on Saturday, December 27, 2014, at the age of eighty nine years. Sis. Joyce was baptized well over fifty five years ago and was a faithful member of the Vienna Ecclesia since that time. Her sojourn in this life is over and she now rests in hope of resurrection when our Lord returns.

We take this opportunity to thank the brothers and sisters from the Brant County, Hamilton MacNab, and London Ecclesias for their continued support during 2014 and the brethren for their ministrations at the breaking of bread services here. It is truly appreciated.

Alice Miller

WESTERLY, RI

We report the removal from fellowship in the Central ecclesias of Sam Taylor of the Westerly, RI Ecclesia.

Jim Burns

WICHITA FALLS, TX

Since last reporting, we have welcomed around the table of our absent Lord the following brothers and sisters: Stan Newton (Pomona, CA); Ed Newton (Verdugo Hills, CA); Linda Jones (Los Angeles, CA); Becky Goodwin (East Texas); Ron and Kristen Hefner, and David Phillips (North Houston, TX); and Peter Trotter, Antonio and Marcia Howell, Jacob Matthew, and Michelle Massip (Dallas, TX). We thank Bre. A. Howell, P. Trotter, D. Phillips and S. Newton for their words of comfort and exhortation.
In November we were pleased to welcome Bro. Jim Cowie (Brisbane, Aust.). We thank Bro. Jim for his very enlightening classes and exhortation on, “The Transfiguration of Christ”. He also gave a lecture entitled “The Bible Writes Tomorrow’s Headlines: Russia will Solve the Isis Threat,” alerting all to the nearness of Christ’s return.

We are very pleased to announce the birth of Emma Danielle to Bro. Ben and Sis. Sarah Beutel on December 5, 2014. All are doing well and we thank our heavenly Father for this wonderful blessing. Plans are underway for our annual Spring Gathering over the weekend of April 3-5, 2015, God willing. Bro. Kent Beeson (Seattle, WA) has consented to be our class leader and we invite as many as possible to join us in a weekend around God’s Word.

John A. Clubb

REPORT ON 2014 CHRISTADELPHIAN SISTERS’ RETREAT

The Annual Christadelphian Sisters Retreat sponsored by the New York Metropolitan Sisters’ Committee was held June 20-22, 2014, at the Homewood Suites, Allentown, PA. The theme for the Retreat was “Practical Topics to Daily Living in the Truth” and the sessions were facilitated by Sister Cynthia Pavia of Guadalajara, Mexico and attended by 40 sisters.

The classes were great reminders for our preparation of the coming Kingdom and our ultimate role as sisters in our ecclesias. First we looked at “I want to be in the kingdom”: An introduction and personal evaluation of ten aspects in my life. We looked at our attitudes and thoughts. I am what I think, the joy and willingness, confidence in my hope, strong in the Lord and peace in mind.

The next session looked at “My Private life, my attitude and actions”: I do what I want to do and how I choose life. We also looked at my relationship with God, how we need to improve our Prayers and Meditation by making our prayers real and always recognize to whom we are talking. We need to always be thankful to God for all things; obstacles, forgiveness, guidance and strength. In our prayers we were also reminded that we must not be selfish but always remember to pray for others and the kingdom to come. In meditation on God’s word, we need for God to listen to us as we reciprocate the same action by listening to Almighty God’s direction to us and by that course of action we would have answers to our various problems and at the same time build our faith.

In another session we looked at our participation in the Body of Christ: how well were we producing fruit, connecting, growing, blossoming, feeding, healing and serving. Finally we looked at the “Light of the World”: how much are we preaching to others in order to encourage as many people to get to know the Lord Jesus and accept him as their personal savior.

In all the sessions we looked at the obstacles that would prevent us from serving and what corrective measures we could use to improve our lives in the service of God. The level of participation by all sisters was commendable and it demonstrated how important it is for us to set aside time for retreats whereby we could come together not only for the interaction with each other, or to enhance good relationships, but also to promote good spiritual well-being among each other whereby we could be better helpmeets to our serving brethren and ultimately to the ecclesia. We therefore would like to encourage more sisters from other ecclesias to get involved in our next retreat which will be held in June 12-14, 2015, God willing.

Submitted by New York Metropolitan Sisters’ Retreat Committee.
Almost is not enough

When Paul was on trial before King Agrippa, Paul preached to him about the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul then looked at him and asked him, “King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets?” Before the king had time to respond, Paul answered for him and said, “I know that you do!” King Agrippa admitted, “Almost you persuade me to be a Christian.” Paul was thankful that he had touched the King’s heart and said, “I would to God, that not only you, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds.”

No doubt the room was filled with “almosts.” We don’t know if any of those hearing Paul that day responded to the power of Paul’s words and took further action. However, we do know from history that King Agrippa did not, and that despite being “almost persuaded,” he perished as an unbeliever. Almost is not enough.

All of us have known someone who almost believed. Years ago in a little Bible class at work, one of our co-workers was interested in what the Bible teaches, but said, “Everyone has the right to interpret the Bible for themselves as they see fit.” Lots of people feel this way. Yet the Bible is clear that no prophecy of Scripture can be interpreted any way we like. The apostle Peter tells us, “First of all, you must understand this: No prophecy in Scripture is a matter of one’s own interpretation, because no prophecy ever originated through a human decision. Instead, men spoke from God.”

One way to make the point clear is to direct the discussion toward an often ignored Bible principle that demonstrates that we are not free to interpret the Bible as we wish. Consider what Jesus and James have to say about taking an oath. Jesus tells us, “I say unto you, swear not at all.” James is very clear, saying, “Above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and your nay be nay: lest ye fall into condemnation.”

The logical question is, “When is it okay to take an oath?” Both Jesus and James said not to do it at all. One member of our class at work had just been elected mayor of his city and he told us, “I did not know it was wrong to swear, and now I know it is wrong — but I still do it.” He was going to take the oath of office anyway. In our little class it was now clear that here is a teaching in the Bible which is not subject to interpretation, and which many of those in the class were not prepared to obey.

Those who put their left hand on the Bible when they raise their right hand to recite an oath in court or at a public swearing-in ceremony show that they have no idea that the Bible they are putting their hand on says, “Do not swear.” Ironically the very book, God’s book, that they rest their hand on, says that they should not be swearing. The Bible is not so much misinterpreted as it is ignored.

Jesus says, “If you love me, keep my commandments.” Notice he did not say to keep some of them. Also, just as God did not give the children of Israel the ten
suggestions, God and Jesus do not give us suggestions; they want us to obey their commandments. Many people think they know what pleases God, and often will do many things they think God would like. However, they don’t make the effort to find out exactly what God wants and are not careful to obey all that God commands, which is why so many of those that the Lord has called will not be chosen.

Sadly, our little Bible class consisted of good living Christians who did not wish to follow all the principles of the Bible. They could “almost” believe the gospel, but not quite. They never chose to pursue the Truth. Almost is not enough.

We are not at liberty to pick and choose what we will obey and what we can ignore. God wants total dedication to His commandments. The Lord Jesus gave his all, even his life, for us, and he has asked us to take up our cross and follow him. We must do our part, just as the apostle Paul did, explaining, “I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” We will face challenges and endure hardships, and we are assured that we will be tried, but not beyond that which we are able to bear. Our trials are to refine our character, as Paul also explains, “Knowing this, that the trying of your faith works patience”

We cannot almost be Christians. We cannot almost obey the commandments. We cannot look over the teachings in the Bible and make our own decision as to which we will follow and which we won’t, which we will believe and which we won’t. We cannot interpret the Scriptures any way we want. Instead, we must be committed to learning what the gospel is and finding out exactly what the Lord requires of us. And then we must do it.

Let us not almost follow our Lord, but let us commit ourselves to dedicating our life to serving him, taking up our cross and obeying his commandments. Jesus tells us, “And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.” May we be among those that are blessed with eternal life. “Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life.”

Robert J. Lloyd

Coming Events (Lord Willing)

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

FEBRUARY 2015


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

22-27 Palm Springs Bible School. The speakers will be: Bro. Arne Roberts (Wales); and Bro. Dennis Bevans (Baltimore, MD). 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, contact Jeff Gelineau at Register@christadelphianbibleschool.org or visit our website www.californiabibleschool.org.

MARCH 2015


APRIL 2015

2-5 Pacific Northwest CYC Conference at Camp Pringle on Shawnigan Lake. Speaker: Bro. Ryan Mutter (Baltimore, MD): “As it was in the Days of Noah”. For further information please contact Bro. Mike McStravick at mtmcstravick@gmail.com.

3-5 Wichita Falls, TX Spring Gathering at the T4C camp, Freestone, TX. Speaker will be Bro Kent Beeson (Seattle, WA). Topic: “Let your light shine before men in such a way”. Contact Bro. Larry Beutel at lbeutel@alsco.com.


MAY 2015

2-3 Pittsburgh, PA Study weekend. Bro. Steve Cheetham (Moorestown, NJ) will speak on “Lessons of Past and Future Kings”. Travelers’ lunch provided at noon. Classes begin at 1:00pm. Contact Bro. Len Budney atpghecclesia@gmail.com or (412)983-1970.

8-9 Vancouver Island Sisters’ Weekend in Victoria, BC. Studies led by Sis. Sandy McLeod (Simi Hills, CA). Contact rosabailey@shaw.ca for information and registration forms.

JUNE 2015

12-14 New York Metropolitan Sisters’ Retreat at The Host Resort/Hotel, Lancaster, PA. The speaker will be Sis. Mary Styles (Shelbourne, ON). Her topic is “Abigail — A woman of Good Understanding and a Beautiful Countenance”. Contact: Sis. Averil Ferguson at 718-881-8705 email: averilpsm23@juno.com.

27-July 5 Mid-Atlantic Bible School at Shippensburg University in Shippensburg, PA. The theme is “The Lord My Light and My Salvation” Psalm 27. The Youth Program theme will be “God’s 7000 Year Plan”. Bro. Jason Hensley (Simi Hills, CA): “Hezekiah: Faith in Desperate Times” and “Seeking the Lost” (teens); Bro. Steve Hornhardt (Salisbury, Adelaide, South Australia): “Come and See — Witnessing for Christ” and “Unlocking Revelation” (teens); and Bro. Garth Maier (Tulsa-Joplin, OK/MO): “Esther” and “Sacrifices of Yahweh” (teens). Website www.MidAtlanticBibleSchool.com.

28-July 3 Vancouver Island Bible Camp at Lake Shawnigan on Vancouver Island, CA. Speakers are Bro. Ryan Mutter (Baltimore, MD) and Bro. Clyde Snobelen (Victoria, BC). For details see www.vibiblecamp.com and www.facebook.com/vancouverislandbiblecamp.

JULY 2015

5-11 Southwest Bible School, Schreiner University, Kerrville, TX. Speakers are Bro. Stephen Hornhardt: “Come and See — Witnessing for Christ” and “Unlocking
Revelation” (teens); Bro. Philip Lawrence: “Have you been converted?” and “The Lord is my Shepherd” (teens); and Bro. Dev Ramcharan: “The Law of Kindness is on her Tongue — Women in the Faith” and “Life skills for young people” (teens). Registration forms on website: www.swcbs.com.

18-26 Midwest Bible School will be held at Triune University, Angola, IN. Speakers and their topics are Bro. Roger Lewis, NZ: “The Four Faces of Christ in the Gospels”; Bro. Mark Vincent, UK: “Exploring the Psalms”; and Bro. Andrew Bramhill, UK: “Isaac, The Overlooked Patriarch”. Contact Bro. Mike Livermore, 44943 Yorkshire Drive, Novi, MI 48375; 248-462-5740; mike.live@gmail.com or visit www.midwestbibleschool.com.

19-25 Idyllwild Bible School will be held at the Idyllwild Pines Camp in Idyllwild, CA. The speakers for this year are Bro. Barry McClure, Bro. Darren Guy and Bro. Jim Styles. To Register, contact Jeff Gelineau at Register@christadelphianbibleschool.org or visit our website www.californiabibleschool.org.


26-Aug 1 Western Bible School at Menucha Conference Center, Corbett, Oregon. The teachers are Bro. Simon Dean (UK): “Read Mark and Learn”, Bro. John Launchbury (Beaverton, OR): “The Spirit is Willing but the Flesh is Weak”; and Bro. Shawn Moynihan (Guelph, ON): “Learning From the Twelve: Scenes of Discipleship”. Details on the website, www.menuchabibleschool.org or contact registrar Jane Szabo, szabojj@peak.org or 541-563-4726.

AUGUST 2015

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

OCTOBER 2015


NOVEMBER 2015

7-8 Sarasota, FL Fall study weekend with Bro. Richard Morgan speaking on “Prophecy, Predestination and the purpose of God.” Contact Bro. James Wilkinson at jameslwilkinson@hotmail.com or 941-412-7988.
The CHRISTADELPHIAN TIDINGS of the Kingdom of God
Peter Hemingray, Editor

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Thank you, Sister Rose

Sis. Rose Madge has decided to retire from The Tidings’s staff after ten years of selfless service. During that time, Sis. Rose has been responsible for managing the Tidings’ Subscriptions and Finances. Her work ethic has been an exhortation to us all. She has spent thousands of hours going to the post office, managing information on the computer, and corresponding with our subscribers and donors. She has also helped in other ways, like coordinating our annual meeting. She will be missed.

Sis. Rose has turned over her many Subscriptions and Finances tasks to Sis. Kathy Hill. As one result, please note that we have a new Post Office Box and email address for these (see above).

Bro. Joe Hill on behalf of everyone involved with the Tidings
Advice

“The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away” (Psa 90:10).

Introduction

It is interesting to look back at a life that will very soon extend to the “threescore years and ten”, and reflect on the lessons we have learned during the years of our probation. We look at the world around us, and the signs of the soon coming return or our Lord, and hope that indeed his return will take place before the stress and strain of modern life overwhelms our community and more particularly our young people. Indeed, we must live our lives as if the Lord will return tomorrow, but yet make provision in case he does not.

So as we reflect on these dual priorities, and we see our grandchildren growing up, we know we cannot predict either our or their future. But perhaps we can look back, and consider the ways the younger have been helped by the elders down through the ages, and wonder if we can in learn from those before us and help those coming after.

The advice of Paul to Timothy

Our brother Ryan Mutter has been looking at the life of Timothy, and it is perhaps of value to reflect on the ways Paul helped “Timothy, mine own son in the faith” (1Tim 1:1). Perhaps a few of the instructions of Paul to Timothy can help frame our ideas:

“Have nothing to do with irreverent, silly myths. Rather train yourself for godliness; for while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come… Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity. Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching” (1Tim 4:7-8, 12-13 ESV).

“Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands, nor take part in the sins of others; keep yourself pure. No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments’ ” (1Tim 5:22-23).

“O Timothy, guard the deposit entrusted to you. Avoid the irreverent babble and contradictions of what is falsely called ‘knowledge’” (1Tim 6:20).

“Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching” (2Tim 4:2).

Much of the advice is to be expected, coming from one who had devoted his whole being to preaching the gospel. But some is perhaps a little surprising: to avoid
discussion about Jewish myths, (Tit 1:4) but rather to focus, not on physical fitness, but on spiritual fitness. Most commentators assume Paul is expressing disapproval of the extreme form of fitness as practiced by the contemporary ascetics. I personally believe that, in fact, Timothy was wont to exercise his body as many do today, but Paul is pointing out that such exercise is of limited value in the eternal.

There are many other passages, not only from the letters to Timothy but also the one to Titus, that are clearly written by one seasoned, both in the Truth and in years, to a fellow believer much younger in both aspects. But I believe these passages contain the core of the advice

- Focus on the true message: do not be distracted by side issues and irrelevant controversies.
- It is quite proper to rebuke, but only with endless patience.
- Look after your body: do not neglect to take care of the physical as well as the spiritual body.

The advice of others
There was recently a discussion on one of Internet Christadelphian groups, asking for advice to the younger from the elders. Here are a few (only) of the comments as edited:

- Don't believe everything you are told. Think for yourself: read the Bible for yourself, not to confirm what others tell you.
- Do not live so as to improve the opinions of others. Be confident in yourself.
- Put your trust in God and in His grace, not in the edicts and predicts of men. His son will be the judge.
- There is always sunlight beyond the blackest cloud. Things are almost never as bad as you expect them to be. Push through and never give up.
- Wisdom is knowing when to speak up, and when to shut up. Wisdom thinks deep and long before it opens its mouth.
- Be true to yourself and walk with God. The rest is ephemeral.
- God is not out to get you on a technicality! Do not micro manage your weaknesses and certainly do not micro manage others' weaknesses.
- Live your life in appreciation for having been redeemed. Do not waste time trying to earn redemption, and never waste time judging others.
- Forgive yourself!! Every single person fails to meet their own standards sometimes (much less God's standards).
- Plug into the “light” of Christ and dedicate yourself to reflecting it the best you can. People learn from what they see you do, and much less from what they hear you say.
- Pray always, for yourself and others.

My advice
I can only offer comments, based on the short time I have been on this earth. And I must recognize the value of my upbringing, the patience and love of my wife, and the patience of my children as I have struggled, as we all do, in my walk. And I must
acknowledge, as many experience when they are young, that my father became a lot more knowledgeable and wise as I entered my later twenties — much to my surprise. In common with many young people, I thought my father was quite out of touch with reality for quite a decade, and I must apologize to his memory. So I doubt my comments will have much impact on the twenty-somethings for which they are supposedly intended, but, who knows, they might find I get smarter as they age. After all, how many in this age “stand up before the gray head and honor the face of an old man, and you shall fear your God: I am the LORD” (Lev 19:32). So here goes, based on my own experiences and no others. Others might have different opinions, and I respect them.

- Never write notes in your Bible in ink.
- Any good Bible is known for the number of question marks, both in the Bible text and regarding the comments of others.
- Do not be afraid of education. And do not mothball your children by keeping them isolated in a little cocoon. They will have to make their way into the world by themselves at some stage.
- Especially if you have children, do your best to live in an area with a vibrant ecclesia and other children of similar ages.
- If it becomes a choice between your current employment, which unfortunately requires moving into isolation with your family, and resigning, there is no real choice. Resign. God will provide.
- If it becomes a choice between a better job that requires your total commitment of effort and time, and your family and the Truth, there is no choice.
- Your proximity to an ecclesia is more important than where the ecclesia is. Do not be afraid of changing states, cities, provinces, or countries: after all, our true citizenship is not of any country.
- Take your children to Bible Schools all their lives, and youth weekends without fail.
- “Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord” (Eph 6:4). This is all you can do: children might not turn out as you desire, as sometimes happen. Look at the children of Samuel. “Yet his sons did not walk in his ways but turned aside after gain. They took bribes and perverted justice” (1Sam 8:3).
- If your children turn out fine, praise God, not yourself.
- Give praise and thanks to God and His son for your time on this earth, and only hope you have walked after the path of His son.
- “Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man” (Eccl 12:13).

Peter Hemingray

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

This exhortation is based on the healing of the infirm, or bowed, woman in Luke 13. It would appear that during most of the last year in the Lord’s ministry, there was a concerted move to deny Jesus any opportunity of preaching in the synagogues. In the gospel record of this period Jesus’ preaching on a Sabbath is mentioned only this once. And in this instance the ruler of the synagogue and a number of the congregation were hostile. So perhaps this occasion was deliberately laid on so that they might have opportunity to object, which is exactly what transpired.

“And [Jesus] was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath” (Luke 13:10).

Some of us will be familiar with the idea that each of the Gospels emphasizes a different aspect of Jesus’ role, and that each of these aspects relate to one of the four faces of the cherubim. It is said that Luke’s gospel relates to the face of a man, and that it emphasizes Jesus as the Man. One brother has suggested more specifically that it emphasizes Jesus as the perfect Priest.

Five of the seven recorded Sabbath day miracles are recorded in Luke’s gospel; more than any other Gospel. Perhaps Luke is emphasizing Jesus as the perfect Man, or Priest, who understands the true significance of the Sabbath. Keep that in mind as we read on.

The bowed woman

“And, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself” (Luke 13:11).

The subject of Jesus’ miracle was a woman who had “a spirit of infirmity”, or literally, ‘a spirit of feebleness, or weakness’ and she was “bowed together”. The ESV translates “She was bent over and could not fully straighten herself”.

Most think that this was a physical disease, such as curvature of the spine, although some believe it was a mental condition. Whatever the underlying cause was, the outward symptom of her problem was severe. She was “bowed together” and she could not lift herself up. The words “bowed together” in the original means ‘bent double’, or as we might say, ‘doubled-over’, so she could probably look forward only with extreme difficulty, and to lift up her eyes to heaven was impossible. And perhaps the learned in the audience were thinking of Isa 45:2, for there the Hebrew word for crooked also means to glorify.

In verse 16, Jesus says that Satan had bound her. In saying that, Jesus is connecting her condition with man’s great adversary: sin.

As Brother Edward Whittaker helpfully put it: “Disease is part of the legacy of sin.” In other words, disease is a by-product of Adam’s sin. It relates to the curse of
mortality, which includes weakness and disease, and that applies to all of Adam’s offspring.

**Eighteen years**

The fact that she was in this condition for “eighteen years” similarly connects her condition with the problem of sin and its cruel bondage. For example, let us go to an example to such bondage:

> “And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the Lord: and the Lord strengthened Eglon the king of Moab against Israel, because they had done evil in the sight of the Lord. And he gathered unto him the children of Ammon and Amalek, and went and smote Israel, and possessed the city of palm trees. So the children of Israel served Eglon the king of Moab eighteen years” (Jdgs 3:12-15).

This period of 18 years is used the same way later in Judges:

> “And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the Lord, and served Baalim, and Ashtaroth, and the gods of Syria, and the gods of Zidon, and the gods of Moab, and the gods of the children of Ammon, and the gods of the Philistines, and forsook the Lord, and served not him. And the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel, and He sold them into the hands of the Philistines, and into the hands of the children of Ammon. And that year they vexed and oppressed the children of Israel: eighteen years, all the children of Israel that were on the other side Jordan in the land of the Amorites, which is in Gilead” (Jdgs 10:6-8).

When Israel turned from God, they were enslaved to their enemies, for eighteen years. Turning from God, put them in bondage to sin.

From a practical perspective, what can we learn from the fact that the woman back in Luke 13 suffered in her condition for eighteen years? Let us stop and think about this for a moment. She was doubled over and unable to stand upright for eighteen years.

There was an article that was written by a sister many years ago. In writing about this bowed woman, the sister said that she herself had spent a half day walking around her home doubled over. She commented on how grim it was, always looking down at the ground, how dissatisfying it was to sit or lie down to rest, and how difficult it was to eat and drink.

But this woman in Luke was in this condition for eighteen long years. Until now, there was no one who could help her or release her from the bonds of “the legacy of sin”.

Although her physical condition was very difficult and the prognosis bleak, and despite the fact that it would have been very difficult and humiliating for her to make the trek to the synagogue, she did it. We aren’t given many details about her. For example, we don’t know her name, and we aren’t told about anything that she may have said on this occasion. But the very fact that she was at the synagogue tells us something about her. Even so, since the women in the synagogue worshipped
away from the eyes of the men members of the congregation, it may well have been
that she did not come face to face with her Lord until after the meeting had ended.
But the fact that she was there suggests that she had a very strong faith. Why else
would she have been there, and why would Jesus have called her out of the crowd?
We know she had faith because in verse 16, Jesus calls her a “daughter of Abraham”
and Paul tells us: “that [Abraham is] the father of all them that believe” (Rom 4:11).

Be that as it may, we know that this pitiful, hunched figure, who could in no wise
lift herself up, was seen by the Lord Jesus and that his compassion welled up for
her. Had this woman heard about Jesus’ teaching and his healing power? Did she
wonder if he was the Messiah?

Sometimes Jesus performed a healing miracle in response to a request. And there
are other times, like this one, when Jesus seeks out a person without being asked
to do so. The sight of her doubled over would have been something that would
catch the eye, especially the sympathetic eyes of Jesus, the perfect Priest.

“And when Jesus saw her, he called her to him, and said unto her, Woman,
thou art loosed from thine infirmity. And he laid his hands on her: and
immediately she was made straight, and glorified God” (Luke 13:12-13).

Jesus called her out of the crowd and she responded. He spoke words of promise
to her and she believed. He touched her, and she was cured and stood upright.
Then she glorified God. There’s a process here in these few words and we should
consider it.

The bowed woman is a parable of our condition. We all have a nature that is bowed
down, prone to sin, and mortal. It’s our misfortune, not our crime. Unless God
intervenes, we remain in bondage to sin. So God seeks us out and calls us to Him.
We have to decide whether to respond to His call. He speaks words of promise to
us and we choose whether to believe His words. Lastly, if we draw near to Him,
through prayer and by applying ourselves to His word, He can touch us, free us
from the bonds of sin through His son, and make us to stand upright. So we can
glorify Him.

The bowed woman should also cause us to think about our perspective. For ex-
ample, what direction are we facing?

Are we looking down at the ground, obsessed and focused on the here and now,
and all of the issues that press on us, or are we looking ahead, to God’s kingdom
and trusting that God will get us through our present difficulties?

Healing on the Sabbath day

The other main lesson in this story is what we noted at the outset: that this miracle
was performed on the Sabbath day. Of the seven times that Jesus healed on the
Sabbath day, he did it in the synagogue three times, and on all seven occasions,
it put him in direct conflict with the Jewish leaders, specifically, the Pharisees.

The Pharisees were obsessed with external rituals and tradition, and they had no
grasp of the deeper principles involved in God’s laws. Look at how the ruler of
the synagogue reacted to the healing of the bowed woman.
“And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the sabbath day, and said unto the people, There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the sabbath day” (Luke 13:14).

On two previous occasions, when Jesus healed the impotent man and the man with the withered hand, the Jewish leaders actually sought to destroy Jesus because he had healed on the Sabbath. So, this is the issue that triggered their plotting against him.

Look at Jesus’ response to the ruler of the synagogue.

“The Lord then answered him, and said, Thou hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering?” (Luke 13:15).

Jesus called him a hypocrite for allowing the care of animals on the Sabbath and opposing the healing of a child of Abraham.

**Work on the Sabbath**

Then Jesus proceeds to teach that the act of healing and loosing someone from bonds is in fact a **most** appropriate work on the Sabbath day.

“And **ought not** this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, **be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day**?” (Luke 13:16).

Jesus’ objective of healing on the Sabbath, of all days, involved more than challenging the traditions of the Jewish elders. As the perfect Priest, he was teaching the people about the true meaning of the Sabbath and what the Sabbath foreshadowed. Jesus was saying that his acts of healing should not merely be tolerated or accommodated on the Sabbath, but that they were part and parcel of the Sabbath. It was a core element of the Sabbath day. Jesus’ teaching was based on his sharp understanding of what God had said in the Law and the Prophets regarding the Sabbath.

It was clear that the children of Israel were commanded in the Law to do no work on the Sabbath. But the work they were **not** to do on the Sabbath was qualified by the work they were **not** to do on the other six days of the week.

Three times in the Law, God instructed Israel that they had six days a week to do their own work. Let’s look at one of these examples.

“**Six days thou shalt do thy work, and on the seventh day thou shalt rest: that thine ox and thine ass may rest, and the son of thy handmaid, and the stranger, may be refreshed**” (Exod 23:12).

Note the emphasis: they had six days to do their own work, and the natural extension was that they were not to do their own work on the Sabbath. It was to be a day of **refreshing**.

Isaiah leaves no doubt that this is the intended emphasis.
“If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words. Then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord;” (Isa 58:13-14).

They were not to do their own work but they were expected to honor God and to delight themselves in Him and His works. How?

“Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? (Isa 58:6)

Jesus fully appreciated this: that God wanted His people to honor Him on the Sabbath, by removing the burden of sin and through works of compassion and grace.

There is one final passage regarding the Sabbath that Jesus clearly appreciated and that helps us to understand its true significance.

“Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed” (Exod 31:16-17).

The Sabbath was a token of Israel’s special relationship to God, but it was also significant, or typical, of something greater than itself. It was a symbol that fore-shadowed the great age to come, when man would rest from the works of sin, and would be wholeheartedly devoted to the service of God, and when the burden of sin and its legacy will be removed.

When Jesus healed people on the Sabbath day, it proved that he was the Messiah, and it was a demonstration of what the Messianic, or Kingdom age would be like. Brother LG Sargent put it this way:

“When Jesus on the Sabbath performs the works of the Messianic Age—proclaiming liberty to the captives, the opening of the prison to them that are bound, opening the eyes of the blind and the ears of the deaf, and causing the dumb to sing — he is acting as the Messiah. In him the Messianic Age has come near, the Kingdom of God has approached. For that work no day is so appropriate as the Sabbath. He is Lord of the Sabbath because he is Lord of the Age which it prefigures: and his action in deliberately performing miracles on the Sabbath in itself implies a Messianic claim.”

The Jewish leadership should have known that. They should have recognized the Messiah wielding the power of God in their synagogue — the power of the Kingdom Age.

Comparison with Isaiah

And so let us return to Isaiah:
It was almost as though Jesus was bidding his listeners, who would have been even more familiar with the Old Testament than we are, to look at that prophecy!

**One last passage**

There is one last passage I'd like to look at together before we conclude. It’s Psalm 92. Title: “A Psalm, or song, for the Sabbath day”. It casts a light on the synagogue that we read about in Luke 13. There were two kinds of people in the synagogue the day that Jesus loosed the bowed woman from the bonds of the adversary.

First, there were those who rejoiced in the wonderful works of God, the works of the Sabbath day and of the messianic age.

> "It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto thy name, O most High: To shew forth thy loving kindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night, Upon an instrument of ten strings, and upon the psaltery; upon the harp with a solemn sound. For thou, Lord, hast made me glad through thy work: I will triumph in the works of thy hands. O Lord, how great are thy works! and thy thoughts are very deep” (Psa 92:1-5).

And sadly, there were those who did not understand, or recognize, the works of God in their midst. They did not understand the true meaning and purpose of the Sabbath. They were the “brutish” or beast-like. “A brutish man knoweth not; neither doth a fool understand this” (Psa 92:6).

They claimed that Jesus’ works were evil, but in fact, it was they that were “workers of iniquity”.

> “When the wicked spring as the grass, and when all the workers of iniquity do flourish; it is that they shall be destroyed for ever: But thou, Lord, art...
And lest we miss her, the bowed woman is also here in this Psalm:

“The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree, he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon” (Psa 92:12)

The Hebrew for palm tree is derived from a root word that means “to be erect”. Here then is the bowed woman: a true daughter of Abraham, by her faith. She rejoiced in the wonderful works of God, and looked forward to the messianic age to come, and she recognized the promised Messiah in Jesus. Because of her faith, Jesus singled her out and made her to stand upright like the palm tree, and like a cedar in Lebanon.

Conclusion

As we remember Jesus, the Messiah, and Lord of the Sabbath, and king of the Age to come, let us be thankful that he has called each of us out of the crowd and that he has given us the opportunity to be loosed from sin’s bondage and to stand upright, and glorify to glorify God.

As we partake of the bread and wine, may we resolve to devote ourselves to God’s work and service in the week ahead, and may the great age of healing, rest and time of refreshing come soon.

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Notes:
1. *The Testimony*, 1973, p. 423. Full sentence is “Because disease is part of the legacy of sin, in the New Testament it is often attributed to Satan. Satan, which literally means ‘adversary’, is clearly being used as a term for an adverse state within the body or mind of the individual affected.”

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**Special Invitation**

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

You, your family and friends are invited to the
40th annual Church of God of the Abrahamic Faith Gathering
at Denison University in Granville, Ohio, July 20-26, 2015.

Bro. John Linsenmeier:
“Behold the Lamb of God, Who Takes Away the Sin of the World”
Bro. Steve Davis:
“Moving on to Maturity: A Study in the Letter to the Hebrews”
Bro. John Downer: “Forty Years of Preparation”

Contact Bro. Brad Rek at 330-609-6957 or brad.rek@gmail.com.
Visit our website at www.abrahamicfaithgathering.org for more information and to view talks from last year.
The Doctrine of the Trinity
(2) The Apostle Paul’s Conversion and the Holy Spirit

The Apostle Paul was as Orthodox a Jew as you could find among the Pharisees, who were the most Orthodox of the Jewish parties. During his trial he cried out “Brethren, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees; with respect to the hope and the resurrection of the dead I am on trial” (Acts 23:6). Later he filled us in on his credentials and his zeal for the Jewish faith,

“I am a Jew, born at Tarsus in Cilicia, but brought up in this city at the feet of Gamali-el, educated according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers, being zealous for God as you all are this day. I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering to prison both men and women” (Acts 22:3-4)

He lived his life fully unto the law.

“If any other man thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the law a Pharisee, as to zeal a persecutor of the church, as to righteousness under the law blameless” (Phil 3:4-6).

Paul was converted from his zealous but ignorant persecution of the church when he met Jesus on his fateful trip to Damascus. Paul had much to wrestle with to understand that Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of the living God. Now all those Old Testament prophecies of the Messiah fell into place and this highly educated Pharisee finally understood who Christ truly was. The book of Acts records for us the wonderful missionary journeys he went on to spread the gospel message. His zeal in proclaiming the Truth and his willingness to endure hardships for his Lord humbles us all.

Paul did have much to learn in accepting Jesus as the Messiah. As a Pharisee he believed in a coming Messiah, an earthly kingdom, a resurrection and life after death. Paul needed to sort through the Old Testament prophecies to differentiate between the first coming of the suffering Messiah, and the second coming of the King. Paul required a better understanding of the Scriptures about the Messiah, and we see this change in his letters. What we do not see is him undergoing a complete change in his understanding of God. There is no record, documentation or explanation of Paul converting from the Jewish understanding of Yahweh to the concept of the Trinity. The transformation Paul did experience was to better interpret prophecy. The conversion to the Trinity that we don’t see is more than interpretation of prophecy: it is doctrine. Paul affirmed that he only believed in one God as he writes: “Now an intermediary implies more than one; but God is one” (Gal 3:20).
But if the Trinity were true, Jesus was not just the Messiah but God. There was no greater doctrinal transformation for Paul to experience than to revamp his Jewish understanding of God. Yet the pages of the New Testament are silent about this epic conversion. The Acts of the Apostles contains many public discourses by Paul, yet in none of them does he propose a change in the doctrine of God. In his final defense before King Agrippa Paul recounts his conversion. He was a strict and zealous Pharisee, but now he was on trial for his life. What was it he proclaimed? A new understanding of God? No, he was on trial for the hope of the promises made to the fathers, that God would raise us from the dead.

“My manner of life from my youth, spent from the beginning among my own nation and at Jerusalem, is known by all the Jews. They have known for a long time, if they are willing to testify, that according to the strictest party of our religion I have lived as a Pharisee. And now I stand here on trial for hope in the promise made by God to our fathers, to which our twelve tribes hope to attain, as they earnestly worship night and day. And for this hope I am accused by Jews, O king! Why is it thought incredible by any of you that God raises the dead?” (Acts 26:4-8).

Again, this silence concerning the Apostle Paul is a damning rebuttal of the Trinity.

**The Biblical language**

The Scriptural record in both the Old and New Testaments describes the relationship of God and Jesus in terms we can understand in our own experience. Terms such as Father, Son, firstborn, Son of Man, begotten, etc. Verses such as:

“I will be his father and he shall be my son” (2Sam 7:14)

“Thou art my Son, today I have begotten thee” (Psa 2:7).

“This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased” (Matt 3:17).

“And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David” (Luke 1:31-32)

His conception through the power of the Holy Spirit was the cause of his Sonship, not that he already was God the Son.

“And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God” (John 1:34).

“God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).

“.I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God” (John 10:17).

“God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law” (Gal 4:4).

“. . . but in these last days He has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also He created the world” (Heb 1:2).
“He who conquers shall be clad thus in white garments, and I will not blot his name out of the book of life; I will confess his name before my Father and before His angels” (Rev 3:5).

Trinitarian ideas force us to change the meanings of words beyond how they are used in every other context. Why would God’s word to mankind give us terms we directly experience but then have them lose their meaning when applied to Himself? We are all someone’s son or daughter. We understand what it means to beget someone, to be an heir, to be born, etc. But, the Trinitarian would have us take all these words that God uses to describe Himself to us, and twist their common meaning into something else.

The genealogy

If Jesus is indeed the embodiment of God who lived as a man for 33 years on the earth, then his ancestors were sorely deceived. They were all promised that Jesus would be a child born in their family. Under the Trinity, the body he inhabited was just a shell and the lineage served no purpose.

No serious Bible student can miss the stress placed upon the genealogy of Jesus Christ. Matthew begins his gospel with: “The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham” (Matt 1:1). The genealogy in Luke goes all the way back to Adam. The importance on his lineage begins in Genesis 3, where Jesus was the seed promised to Eve. Later in Genesis, Abraham was promised a seed who would inherit the land, possess the gates of his enemies, and by this seed all the nations of the earth would bless themselves. These promises were repeated to Isaac and Jacob. In Galatians, Paul declares that this promised seed was Christ.

When blessing his son Judah, Jacob prophesied about the ruler who would come through that tribe “The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet, until tribute comes to him; and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples” (Gen 49:10). Moses told the people that God would raise up from among their brethren a prophet like unto him: ‘And the LORD said to me, ‘They are right in what they have spoken. I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. And I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him’ ” (Deut 18:17-18). Christ gives us good advice that we should believe what Moses had to say “Do not think that I shall accuse you to the Father; it is Moses who accuses you, on whom you set your hope. If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote of me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words?” (John 5:45-47). What Moses understood about God and the Messiah should certainly provide an excellent instruction for us.

God declared to David, “I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come forth from your body, and I will establish his kingdom” (2Sam 7:12). And David knew this promise related to Christ (Acts 2:29-36). Peter declared on Pentecost that this was a promise about Jesus, showing how God has sworn to David with an oath that He would set one of his descendants upon his throne.

The list of verses dealing with the descent of Jesus is long and clearly meant to tell us how important his lineage was:
“The LORD swore to David a sure oath...One of the sons of your body I will set on your throne” (Psa 132:11).

“...and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David” (Luke 1:69).

“Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that He would set one of his descendants upon his throne, he foresaw and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ” (Acts 2:30-31).

“....I have found in David the son of Jesse a man after my heart, who will do all my will. Of this man's posterity God has brought to Israel a Savior, Jesus, as He promised” (Acts 13:22-23).

“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).

“Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, descended from David” (2Tim 2:8).

“For it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah” (Heb 7:14).

“lo, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David” (Rev 5:5).

“I am the root and the offspring of David” (Rev 22: 16).

Just to be clear, Jesus was not just a good man that God chose to be the Messiah. He is both Son of God and Son of man. His lineage from man goes all the way back to Adam. But he is also Son of God, as the LORD told David: “I will be His father and he shall be my son” (2Sam 7:14).

This royal sonship from both David and God was taught by Jesus:

“And as Jesus taught in the temple, he said, How can the scribes say that the Christ is the son of David? David himself, inspired by the Holy Spirit, declared, ‘The Lord [this would be God] said to my Lord [David’s Lord = Christ], Sit at my right hand, till I put thy enemies under thy feet.’ David himself calls him Lord; so how is he his son?” (Mark 12: 35-37:

Even though he was the son of David, he is also David's Lord and will sit upon David's throne in Jerusalem when he establishes the Kingdom. How? Because God elevated him — “Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified” (Acts 2:36).

The Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit has few “Trinitarian” references in the Scriptures.

In studying the development of the Trinity, the addition of the Holy Spirit into the Godhead was the last segment added to the doctrine. There are a number of verses which, if misunderstood, seem to support Trinitarian ideas about the relationship between God and His Son. But verses addressing the Holy Spirit in this manner are rare. If indeed the Holy Spirit is one third of the Godhead, he gets very little proclamation in the Scriptures. In the seventeen epistles opening with an invoca-
tion of grace and peace, in only one is the Holy Spirit referred to, and then as the means of sanctification, and not the source of grace. Why the invocation to God and Christ, and not to the Holy Spirit, if the latter were a Personage within the Godhead? Similarly, in the eleven occurrences of thanksgiving or blessing which follow the invocations in the epistles, not one contains any mention of the Holy Spirit.

The reality of the scriptural record is that the Holy Spirit is the power of God. This is clearly defined for us when the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary:

“The angel said unto her [Mary], The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God” (Luke 1:35).

Luke gives us, in this verse, one of those algebraic formulas that help us in our Bible study. Mary was told that the Holy Spirit would come upon her and in the second phrase it is equated to the power of the Most High.

Another problem here for the Trinity is that if the Holy Spirit is indeed a person; he is the Father of Christ rather than God the Father. They should have a problem with the angel's message to Joseph, which also ascribed the conception to the Holy Spirit.

“Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit” (Matt 1:20).

The Holy Spirit can be shown to be a power by a careful comparison of the following passages:

“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth . . . And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters” (Gen. 1:1,2).

Other references to creation attribute the work to God’s power

“It is I who by my great power and my outstretched arm have made the earth” (Jer 27:5).

“It is he who made the earth by his power, who established the world by his wisdom, and by his understanding stretched out the heavens” (Jer 10:12).

“By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath [Heb. “ruach”, spirit] of his mouth” (Psa 33:6).

“Also, Jesus breathed on the disciples and they received the Holy Spirit” (John 20:22). (This language is understandable if a power were conveyed, but inappropriate if the Holy Spirit were a divine Person.)

Similarly, the Holy Spirit was transmitted by the laying on of hands:

“Then they laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit. Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles’ hands, he offered them money, saying, ‘Give me this power also, so that anyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit’ ” (Acts 8:17-19).
Was this the transmission of a divine Personage within the Godhead?

The Holy Spirit was given “without measure” to Jesus (John 3:34). “Without measure” is an appropriate description of Holy Spirit power, but it is not the kind of language ordinarily associated with a person. The Holy Spirit is also described as a gift and these “gifts” are itemized for us by Paul:

“To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues” (1Cor 12:8-10).

The divine order is set out for us, again by Paul through inspiration: in “But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God” (1Cor 11:3). Why is there no mention of the Holy Spirit in this hierarchy if he were a person and one-third of the Godhead? And why is God the head of Christ if they are co-equal parts of the same being?

**The Holy Spirit today**

God gave His Holy Spirit to the apostles. They needed special help to establish Christianity, for it would not be easy. The Romans, who ruled Israel, had their own gods. The Jewish leaders hated Jesus so much that they crucified him. The fact that the apostles could perform miracles added weight to their words. God must have sent them to preach about Jesus, and the results were impressive. Thousands believed and were baptized, so much so that within thirty years, Christians were living in well-organized groups in many towns and cities, including Rome. By then, the special gift of the Holy Spirit had served its purpose. Only the apostles had been able to pass on the power of the Spirit to others by the laying on of hands. And so, after they died, and those to whom they gave it died, this special gift ceased.

From the first century until today, nobody else has had personal control of God’s Holy Spirit. We now have written down for us to read for ourselves, the complete, inspired Bible; these scriptures “are able to make you wise for salvation, through faith in Christ Jesus” (2Tim 3:15). We need nothing more.

God is still working through His Spirit by directing world affairs. Daniel told a king, “the Most High rules the kingdoms of men and gives it to whom he will” (Dan 4:32). God is still doing that today. The end of it all will be “the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed” (Dan 2:44). God is still working through His word the Bible. Paul said the gospel of Christ “is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes” (Rom 1:16). We can be influenced by God’s word. “Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom 10:17 NKJV).

In the next article, God willing, we will continue by considering facts about Christ, that cannot be about God.

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Hope — (2) Why Hope from the Bible?

“For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, so that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope” (Rom 15:4).

Hope from the Bible makes all the difference.

Some philosophers compare the journey of life to climbing a mountain. Religions generally start with mankind at the bottom of the mountain and a map for getting to the top of the mountain. By this thinking, all religions have the same united goal to get to the top of the mountain to receive the same blissful reward. Each religion sees the mountain from a different point of view and has a unique path to the top. One religion climbs a rocky path that requires a difficult hike and careful planning. Another climbs the mountain up a gradual grassy side with a relatively easy walk. A third religion climbs an icy path with a slippery slope and concern for falling down. A final religion climbs the hardest route to the top of the mountain, straight up the face and needing much training and special equipment. This philosophy answers the challenging question why each religion is different and why each one claims to be correct. From what each one can see, their point of view is clearly correct and others seem incorrect. That's because, as people, we can only see one side of the mountain and lack the ability to see all sides of the mountain, or story. By this reasoning, all religions are correct and all lead to the same blissful reward.

Unfortunately, this concept is not true. At least that's what the Bible says. The serpent in Genesis first invented this lie when it told Eve, “You surely shall not die.” Jesus affirmed the same when he called the serpent “a liar, and the father of lies” (John 8:44). Today, many modern humanistic and spiritual ideas continue the age-old fable that we shall not die. It’s politically correct, non-judgmental and more popular to think that everyone, everywhere, from all time, will end up at the top of the mountain. Unfortunately, universal salvation is illogical and unbiblical. The Bible teaches that salvation is exclusive to few people, not many: “For many are called, but few are chosen” (Matt 22:14). The Bible also gives many details about how there is only one exclusive path to the top of the mountain. No other route will work. There is only one possible path that leads to the ultimate reward and this teaching excludes all other paths. The Bible declares itself to be the only true hope, so why should anyone believe it?
Is the Bible inspired by God?
While the Bible declares itself to be true, it is external, historical and archaeological evidence that makes the case rock-solid. Below are just a few of the many significant reasons for believing that the Bible is uniquely and divinely inspired with God’s true hope for mankind.

The Jewish history and Israel. The Bible and the Jewish people are forever intertwined. Since Abraham became the father of the Jews (Rom 9:7; Heb 11:9), the Bible records Jewish history and prophecy culminating today with the nation of modern Israel. Since the early 20th century, Bible students have witnessed the unprecedented re-gathering of Jews to the land of Israel (ancient Canaan or Palestine). When the UN General Assembly voted to approve the Jewish homeland on November 29, 1947, the Bible came alive as 2,500 year old prophesies proved to be true. In the book of Ezekiel is one of many specific places that say this: “When I gather the house of Israel from the peoples among whom they are scattered…. then they shall settle on their own soil that I gave to my servant Jacob” (Ezek 28:25). Isaiah had preceded this with another incredible prophesy: “Who has heard of such a thing? Who has seen such things? Shall a land be born in one day? Shall a nation be delivered in one moment? Yet as soon as Zion was in labor she delivered her children” (Isa 66:8). This passage was literally fulfilled on May 14, 1948 when the Jewish leaders declared the revival of modern Israel. There are many, many other prophecies that predict the suffering, scattering and eventual re-gathering again of the Jewish people to the land of. This example is totally unique among nations in the world and clearly predicted over 2,500 years earlier. No other people can claim such history and living proof of prophecies, which acts as proof that the Bible is true and divinely inspired.

In June 1967, Israel won what became known as the Six Day war, winning control of the ancient city Jerusalem. To Jews and Bible students, this miracle fulfilled some amazing ancient prophecies about the eternal Jewish capital. “For God will save Zion (Jerusalem) and rebuild the cities of Judah; and his servants shall live there and possess it” (Psa 69:35). “The Lord builds up Jerusalem; He gathers the outcasts of Israel” (Psa 147:2). The city of Jerusalem is mentioned hundreds of times in the Bible and is noted as chosen by God above all the earth “For the Lord has chosen Zion; He has desired it for His dwelling place: This is my resting place forever; here I will dwell, for I have desired it” (Psa 132:13-14).

The Dead Sea Scrolls. The very same year that Israel was approved to be re-born as a nation, a local Bedouin found the first ancient scrolls in the Qumran region of Israel, on the northwest side
of the Dead Sea. The story of this discovery is even more fascinating considering it happened in the middle of Israel’s initial war in 1947. These precious scrolls were written over 2,000 years earlier and contained fragments of every book of the Hebrew Bible except the book of Esther. It also contained a relatively intact, complete copy of the book of Isaiah, which was more than 1,000 years older than the previous known copy. This amazing archaeological discovery has added strong evidence to both believers and non-believers that the Bible is truly the inspired word of God. No longer could any reasonable person disbelieve the historical evidence of the Bible. The unique characteristics of the Bible — such as many authors writing a book over a 2,000-year period — add to the overwhelming proof that only an unreasonable skeptic might deny. Truly we live in an age when “many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase” (Dan 12:4). The modern age helps faith-building discoveries like the Dead Sea Scrolls spread good news of God’s plan for mankind.

**Resurrection of Jesus Christ.** To Christians, there is no more meaningful event than the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The entire weight of the Christian faith rests or falls depending on whether Jesus was truly resurrected three days after his crucifixion. The apostle Paul said this himself when he wrote “if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and…if for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied” (1Cor 15:17-19). Two critical facts give credibility to this important belief. First, the historical fact is that the body of Jesus was never found. If his disciples somehow broke through the Roman guard, carried away Jesus’ body and hid it, they would have accomplished a bigger miracle than Jesus rising from the dead! Roman guards who let prisoners go free would suffer execution and were known for their extreme professionalism. Many other details regarding the physical resurrection of Jesus (found in the four gospel records) add to the absolute credibility and accuracy of the text. Second, it is historically known that the closest followers of Jesus, known as apostles or disciples, suffered personal martyrdom. Some, such as the apostle James, were executed for their faith (Acts 12:2) shortly after Jesus ascension into heaven. The issue in question is if Jesus’ followers did remove his body and hide it in order to build a new church, does it make sense for them to suffer death in order to maintain a deception (Acts 7:54-60; Acts 9:17-23)? Logic says that people would tell the truth and not die if they knew their cause was a lie, and that telling the truth would avoid a terrible death. The fact that Christianity grew because of persecution only adds to the belief that Jesus was indeed resurrected from the dead and his words are true.

**The Bible Hope is believable**

Hope is mentioned in the Bible over 130 times. “Eternal life”, “everlasting life” and mentions of immortality abound as our great hope in the Bible. It’s why Gilbert Beeken once wrote: “Other men see only a hopeless end. The Christian rejoices in an endless hope.” There have been many famous people who believed the Bible to be the Word of God, but probably none more intelligent than Sir Isaac Newton. Arguably the greatest scientist who ever lived, Newton was born in 1642, the same year that Galileo died. Newton discovered the three laws of motion, calculus, the law of gravitation and the composite nature of light — all before the age of 30.
The foundations of modern astronomy and physics are still largely based on theories Newton first presented more than 300 years ago. A humble and reclusive figure, Isaac Newton was a Christian who studied the Bible daily and believed that God created everything, including the Bible. He believed that the Bible was true in every respect. Throughout his life he continually tested Biblical truth against the physical truths of science and never observed a contradiction, according to his many biographers. Newton’s writings reflected his belief that his scientific work was a method by which to reinforce belief in the authority of the Bible. After he completed his greatest scientific works, he began to devote more and more of his time to researching the Bible, eventually writing a book he believed unlocked the prophecies contained in Daniel and Revelation. The great bulk of his Bible writing went unpublished, as many of Newton’s Bible convictions were unpopular in his day because they paralleled those of the early Christian church. Newton is a striking scientific example of one great mind who saw the divine and perfect order found in the Bible.

The Bible, indeed, is THE map book that leads to life. It is our Creator’s only divinely inspired book that has been proven reliable and true. Scripture emphasizes that our Heavenly Father has a plan and a purpose for every person and every nation. He is in charge. He did not create our world to be left to chance. He cares for you and gave you hope. “For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the LORD, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope” (Jer 29:11).

The Bible says:
- The Bible is the only source for eternal life: Heb 4:12; Heb 6:17-19; Is 46:9-10; Deut 18:20-22.
- The Bible has great evidence for its claims: Rom 8:22-25.
- Any eternal hope outside the Bible is not dependable: Eph 2:11-12; Rev 22:18-19.

Chicago, Ill Ecclesia
Life of Timothy  
(11) “My workfellow”

Corinth

Timothy made two trips to Corinth near the end of the Third Missionary Journey. His first trip was short; it was intended to prepare the way for a future visit by Paul. Paul made reference to that first trip by Timothy in 1st Corinthians. He told the Corinthians not to “despise” Timothy or make him afraid (1Cor 16:10-11). Paul urged the Corinthians to follow Timothy’s example because he was a living testimony to what Paul taught “every where in every church” (1Cor 4:17).

Timothy’s second trip to Corinth occurred when he returned with Paul. Paul wrote the Epistle to the Romans during that visit to Corinth. The end of the letter contains a greeting from Timothy to the believers in Rome: “Timotheus my workfellow, and Lucius, and Jason, and Sosipater, my kinsmen, salute you” (Rom 16:21). Paul referred to Timothy as “my workfellow.” That is one of a number of the Bible’s descriptions of him.

Paul wrote Romans in approximately 58 A.D. Timothy was about 28, and he had been in the Truth for about 10 years. During that time, Timothy had also been called “a disciple,” (Acts 16:1) approximately 51 A.D., a “brother, and minister of God” (1Thess 3:2) approximately 52 A.D., and a “man of God” (1Tim 6:11), approximately 56 A.D.).¹ Those labels — given over that period — describe a person who consistently honored God, who made himself available to preach and to help his brothers and sisters in need, and whose leadership in the ecclesia took the form of service.

Timothy’s work in the Truth during those years was not always easy. The very epistles that describe him in positive terms also indicate that Timothy’s circumstances were often challenging, and his relationships with his brothers and sisters were sometimes strained. Disagreements occurred, and people in the meeting were not always kind or respectful to him. But Timothy still gave of himself for his brothers and sisters. He sacrificed for them, and he used his difficulties as opportunities for spiritual growth.

Timothy is called a “man of God” in 1st Timothy. Yet that epistle also identifies some of Timothy’s weaknesses, such as his tendency to be overly harsh in reproving certain elders, and it corrects him (1Tim 5: 1). While 1st Timothy was a letter written to Timothy, it was also intended to be an “open letter.”² It was somewhat of a public document. Other people in the meeting would have read it. Its exposure of Timothy’s struggles and weaknesses might have been uncomfortable and perhaps a bit embarrassing for him. It is a good reminder that our spiritual growth — the process by which we become men and women of God — may sometimes require us to experience something similar; it may involve us receiving correction and/
or being embarrassed — sometimes even in the presence of others. That can be unpleasant. But, like Timothy, we can grow as a result of those experiences.

The labels given to Timothy — “disciple,” “brother,” “minister,” “man of God,” and “workfellow” — are indicators of his godly reaction to the many trials and difficulties he encountered. They are a reminder that our spiritual maturation will involve some pain, but a wonderful commendation awaits us if we remain faithful.

Jerusalem

The Epistle to the Romans indicates that Paul planned to make his way from Corinth to Jerusalem to deliver the Fund for the poor believers who lived there:

“But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints. For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem. It hath pleased them verily; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things” (Rom 15:25-27).

Timothy traveled with Paul and his company towards Jerusalem as a representative of the Galatian ecclesias and as a bearer of their contributions to the Poor Fund: “And there accompanied him into Asia Sopater of Berea; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timotheus; and of Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus” (Acts 20:4).

Paul and Timothy had worked to collect money for the poor believers in Jerusalem for much of the four-year period of the Third Missionary Journey. Paul’s epistles indicate that he, Timothy, and others gave considerable attention and effort to the task.

The funds Timothy carried from the Galatian ecclesias had — at least in part — been collected four years earlier near the beginning of the Third Missionary Journey when Paul and his company passed through Galatia.3 Timothy held on to that money for a long time, including episodes when he and Paul were in great financial need.

In 1st Corinthians Paul describes some of the circumstances they endured: “Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwellingplace; And labour, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it” (1Cor 4:11-12). Those verses characterize the situation in Ephesus where Paul and Timothy spent three years.4 Paul and Timothy had to suffer hunger, thirst, lack of adequate clothing, and the uncertainty of not knowing where they were going to sleep at night while they were carrying considerable sums of donated money with them. The fact that Paul and Timothy did not use some of that money for themselves, even in the extreme circumstances they were in, is an illustration of their remarkable character. They truly strove to show the self-sacrificing character of their Master, the Lord Jesus Christ, and to obey the commands of God, even when doing so was incredibly challenging. Their example undoubtedly contributed to their success in sharing the Gospel with others.
Bearing such a large sum of money also brought with it considerable risk. There is some biblical evidence, for example, that the mob that formed during the Silversmiths’ Riot tried to seize the Jerusalem Poor Fund. (That riot occurred in Ephesus during the Third Missionary Journey and took place between Timothy’s first and second visit to Corinth.) God did not allow the rioters to succeed in taking the Fund, but the experience of their narrow escape was still harrowing for Paul and Timothy.5

The Poor Fund consisted largely of donations from Gentile believers for poor Jewish Christians. Paul and Timothy probably hoped that its delivery could help heal the rifts that had formed between those two communities and could help bind them together in love. After four years of work and worry, Paul and Timothy probably looked forward to the natural and spiritual benefits that could come from finally delivering the Poor Fund to Jerusalem.

But Paul, Timothy, and their companions ended up having a very tumultuous experience when they came to Jerusalem. There is no record of them delivering the Poor Fund to the needy, or of Jewish believers acknowledging the generosity shown by their Gentile brothers and sisters. Instead, the Bible records that some Jews visiting Jerusalem for Pentecost saw Paul in the Temple and started to cry out against him. They made false claims that he had brought a Gentile into the Temple, and further brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place. (For they had seen before with him in the city Trophimus an Ephesian, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple.)” (Acts 21:28-29).

Their shouts quickly led to a riot. Paul was seized, dragged down the Temple’s steps,6 beaten, and arrested.7 Paul spent years in prison in consequence.

Timothy could have been extremely discouraged by what had happened. He could have concluded that the years of hard work, challenge, and danger spent collecting the Poor Fund had come to nothing. He could have become frustrated and reasoned that good deeds are too often rewarded with bad treatment. He could have lost his zeal for the work of the Truth. But that is not the way that a “man of God” reacts to adversity, and that is not the way Timothy responded to what happened in Jerusalem.

Prison

Paul’s arrest in Jerusalem led to him being taken to Rome in about 61 A.D. to be tried by Caesar. He spent his time awaiting Caesar’s judgment as a prisoner in chains.8 His situation prevented him from visiting his faraway brothers and sisters, but he continued to guide and encourage them in the faith by writing letters to them.

The epistles that Paul wrote show that Timothy traveled to Rome and was with Paul while he was a prisoner there. The content of the letters reveal how much of a help Timothy was to Paul and the ecclesias during that period.
Paul wrote Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon during his imprisonment. Timothy is mentioned in three of those letters: Philemon, Colossians, and Philippians. Those epistles were written in approximately 62 AD. Timothy was about 32 at the time.

The Epistle to Philemon contains a greeting from Timothy: “Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ, and Timothy our brother, unto Philemon our dearly beloved, and fellowlabourer” (Philemon 1). Paul told Philemon: “For we have great joy and consolation in thy love, because the bowels of the saints are refreshed by thee, brother” (Philemon 7). Under inspiration, Paul appears to have been very deliberate in his use of pronouns in his epistles. It seems he wrote “I” when he was just referring to himself and “we” when he intended to refer to the other people in the greeting as well. In the case of Philemon, “we” was Paul and Timothy. Therefore, verse 7 of Philemon is a further indicator of Timothy’s interest in the spiritual well-being of his brothers and sisters. It shows how he experienced “great joy” because of the good that they were doing, even if it was simple (but important) service, like showing hospitality.

Philemon was a member of the Colossian ecclesia, and Paul’s Epistle to the Colossians was probably sent out at the same time as Philemon. Timothy is also mentioned in the greeting of Colossians, and he appears in a number of “we” passages, which provide additional insight into his character.

Paul also wrote: “We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints” (Col 1:3-4). This passage reveals Timothy’s strong feelings of thankfulness to God for the faithfulness of his brothers and sisters and his willingness to express that sentiment. It also shows that he habitually prayed for them. Paul wrote that he and Timothy were “praying always” for them.

Another “we passage” appears several verses below in the same epistle:

“As ye also learned of Epaphras our dear fellowservant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ; Who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit. For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding” (Col 1:7-9).
This passage indicates that Timothy was involved with Paul in receiving ecclesial delegates, such as Epaphras, and in communicating back to distant meetings.

The Epistle to the Philippians also contains a greeting from Timothy, as well as another description of him: “Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons” (Phil 1:1). The Greek word rendered “servants” is doulos, which means “slave.” Paul and Timothy regarded themselves as “slaves” of the Lord Jesus. They meant they tried to do all he asked, even when it was hard or contrary to their immediate self-interests.

The Epistle records that Paul planned to send Timothy to visit the Philippians after he wrote to them: “But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state” (Phil 2:19).

Timothy’s close association with Paul brought with it considerable risk. Paul was, after all, a prisoner of the emperor, and the Christian community was hated by many. Timothy ended up being arrested and imprisoned during this period. His release from prison is mentioned by the Writer to the Hebrews, who was also a prisoner who expected to be released soon: “Know ye that our brother Timothy is set at liberty; with whom, if he come shortly, I will see you” (Heb 13:23).

It was approximately 63 A.D. when Hebrews was written, and Timothy would have been about 33. He and the Writer, who was probably Paul, were making plans to travel to Judea at the time the Epistle was sent.

In the next and final article of the series, we will consider Timothy’s continued service during the last years of Paul’s life and beyond.

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Notes:
4. Paul wrote 1st Corinthians from Ephesus. See 1Cor 16:8.
5. See, for example, Rom 16:3-4 and 2Cor 1:8-10.
7. The incredible irony of the events is that Trophimus, the Gentile that the Jews were yelling about, was in Jerusalem carrying his ecclesia’s contribution for the Jerusalem poor (Acts 20:4). He had travelled with Timothy as an ecclesial delegate responsible for the Poor Fund. He was in Jerusalem to help poor Jews, yet the people rioted because of him.
8. See Eph 6:20; Phil 1:7, 13-16; Col 4:3, 18; and Philemon 10, 13.
11. The Greek word is Strong’s Number G1401.
12. Heb 10:34.
The location
One of the most beloved passages in Scripture recorded for us is that of 1Samuel 17, where a man after God’s own heart stands up to the giant that has the audacity to defy God. This wonderful record is what we will be going through for this article, for guidance, for an inspirational example to us, and to reclaim that zeal that our brotherhood needs now.

Beginning at the first verse, we are told that the Philistines gathered their armies and camped in Ephes-dammim, which in Hebrew is the plural form of H1818 meaning “boundary of blood.” There would be blood dropping from one of their own soon enough. In the third verse we are given the armies’ positions: the Philistines on a mountain on one side and the Israelites on the mountain just across from them, and in between them, the valley of Elah.

Already we find a good lesson to keep in mind. As there was a valley between the Philistines and Israelites, so should there be separateness between the Brothers of Christ and the brotherhood of men.

Moving on we find that Goliath of Gath is introduced as being a champion of the Philistines. This giant man was over nine feet tall. After a description of his bronze armaments, it says he stood and cried out to the armies of Israel. He called them servants to Saul, really giving a hint to who he really wanted to fight. However he tells them to choose a man to fight him and gives them an offer. If the man chosen can actually stand his ground with and kill him, then they
will be his servants. Nevertheless if he kills the chosen Israeliite warrior then they would be his servants, therefore giving him his desired leadership. The Israelites immediately were consumed with fear. Where was their “giant warrior” (see 1Sam 9:2, 10:23) with whom they put their trust in to call him their king? He also hid himself in great fear. The Israelites’ fear demonstrates their search for security in a human king had utterly failed.³

Goliath of Gath presented himself morning and evening every day for forty days to the Israelites, hoping a man would finally show himself, ready to fight. As we all know, forty represents probation. We have probation (period or process of testing or observing the character or abilities of a person in a certain role); it is this life we are living now. This life’s decisions have an eternal impact on us. We are being tested now, and when our brother King returns, let us be found ready.

David appears

Next, the man after God’s own heart was introduced. The soon to be hero is said to be from Beth-lehem-Judah and that his father is Jesse. Three of his oldest brothers, (Eliab, Abinadab, and Shammah) went to the battle grounds with Saul and his army. David was the youngest and he instead went to feed his father’s sheep, a task that King Saul before he was anointed couldn’t even do, back home (1Sam 9:1-10).

The story then goes back to Bethlehem, where Jesse tells David to go to his brethren on the battlefield and bring corn and loaves of bread for his brothers to their camp. An allusion no doubt is brought into our minds of David’s greater son with the bread, later on recorded for us:

“Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread. And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst” (John 6:34-35).

In 1Sam 17:19-20, we have written that Saul and all the men of Israel appear to fight with the Philistines. Isn’t that curious? How are they already fighting?² Well, they didn’t actually start fighting till after David had killed the giant. This verse is just saying that their armies were in formation and ready to fight. The verse following describes David up in the morning leaving his sheep with a keeper. Now that is a true leader. Not always looking out for his own but leaving them with someone responsible to keep them when he is gone. It is definitely worth highlighting the phrases that show David’s loyalty to his sheep: “…to feed his father’s sheep…left the sheep with a keeper,…kept his father’s sheep…delivered it out of his mouth” (1Sam 17:15, 20, 34, 35).

David makes haste as he goes to see his brethren and how they fare. While talking with his brothers, the formidable Goliath comes out to the armies of Israel to give his daily speech. However, this time it was different. This time, there was someone in the enemy camp who would not tolerate him or his vain babblings. The men of Israel fled from this giant and were “sore afraid”. The NIV translation renders it “great fear”. This is a neat little connection back to 1Sam 17:11 — greatly afraid. The cowardly men talk about the gargantuan of a man that defies them and that if someone kills him, the king will give him riches, his daughter, and his house
free in Israel. Then David interjects what should be done to the man who kills this giant. Nevertheless, it was not that David wanted all that the men had talked about, for his motivation was higher. He says that Goliath is an uncircumcised Philistine and who is he to defy the armies of the living God? That was his God that the stupid and blithering man was cursing. David understands that Goliath is a man who is one with his flesh-uncircumcised. Let us be the exact opposite of Goliath, a man that is one with his flesh. We must cut off ours and move as far away as we can from it.

After this great exclamation from David, his oldest brother Eliab comes down upon him. It says “his anger was kindled against David” (1Sam 17:28, KJV). The NIV translates this as “he burned with anger at him”. Why did Eliab give such a cold reply to his own brother who was justly defending God, as they should have? Eliab was jealous of his brother, and that blinded him from truly understanding what kind of man his younger brother was (1Sam 16:13). David replies in the NIV translation: “Can’t I even speak?” Fellow brothers and sisters, we must try our utmost not to be like this. We cannot grow jealous of each other. We must love and appreciate them, especially when they are only standing up for the Truth. And where are we in this conflict? Are we like Eliab who stood against his own brother? Or are we all on the same side, defending and holding on to the Truth as best we can, helping each other and picking each other up on our walk to the kingdom. We must be as a disciplined army, each man with his shield protecting his brother next to him, ready to fight against the fleshly lusts that race to consume us.

The fight begins

Saul’s messengers had come back to him telling him the same words that came out of David’s mouth. Immediately, Saul sent his men back out on the battlefield to bring David to him. David explains to Saul, whose heart had failed him as well as each and every one of the Israelites, that he will go and fight Goliath. Saul then tells David that he cannot because he is young and that Goliath, this Philistine that he would be going up against, has been trained to kill from a young age. Instantly David tells Saul he kept his father’s sheep, (instantaneously something that would trigger a memory by Saul of himself, when he was found wandering aimlessly when Samuel found him), and that while he (David) did, a lion and bear took a lamb out of the flock. With the help of Almighty God, he struck down both wild animals and saved his father’s sheep. Then he says that this Goliath of Gath will be taken out just like the lion and the bear and that Yahweh will deliver him as He did before. Such zeal we find in this young man! We should try our hardest to always be zealous for the Truth and our God. All of us brothers and sisters when we first were baptized had this same passion. We must not lose it! Hold onto it and spread it to others. We are the lights shining in this dark world; it is our responsibility to shine! Do not wax cold and grow dim, be bright, enthusiastic, eager to have such a bright future and hope ahead of us, let us show our God that we not only appreciate all that he has done for us, but also let us be like David’s Greater Son who intercedes on our behalf for all our foolish transgressions. Keep the zeal brethren and sisters!
Saul, understanding now that there is no way to turn this bright young individual away from fighting this giant, decides to give him his armor. But David could not take this defensive equipment with him for he had not “proved it”. This word for proved is ‘nasah’ which means to test; by implication to attempt. So he took them off and went on his way.\(^5\)

David took his staff and went into the brook and chose five smooth stones, as we all know from our readings every year. Nonetheless this is a very interesting point. Five smooth stones, why five you might ask, if you remember this great story, it only took one to take out the giant. Maybe, he needed extra, just in case…WRONG! David took five stones because this was just the beginning. Five stones were put in the bag, one for each of Goliath’s brothers. After this, they would hunt down the rest of Goliath’s brothers (2Sam 21:16-22; 1Chron 20:4-8). With his sling in his hand, he with his heart and mind in the right place, he walks with courage toward that big mouthed giant.

Goliath sees a man in the distance and walks toward the man he had been waiting for, for 40 long days. Probation was over, and so was this giant’s life. From the moment he saw this young man, he disdained him as is not surprising. He despised him because was just a boy to him, a young boy with a handsome face: not only that, but David was unarmored. “The army of the Israelites sends this pretty boy, to fight me?” is what probably went through his head. “Am I a dog, which thou comest to me with staves?” (1Sam 17:43) he exclaims. He threatens David and David sends it right back at him. He tells him he has defied the living God, that he will die, and all will know that there is a God in Israel. That all the assembly around him will know God saves not with weapons of man. The word for assembly in 1Sam 17:47 in the Septuagint is rendered \textit{ekklesia}, which we use as “ecclesia”. Both David and the ecclesia together would defeat the giant with God’s help. So should we brethren and sisters have the same resolution that David had, that we stand up for the Truth.

Goliath of Gath draws closer to David. So David in return runs with all he has to meet his enemy, the enemy that dared to defy his God. While running, David pulls out a stone from his shepherd’s bag and slings it right into the Philistine’s forehead. After he fells Goliath, David further goes to the giant’s body, unsheathes Goliath’s sword, and beheads him. This is symbolic of Christ destroying sin with death.

The Philistines saw their tall warrior die before the hands of the young shepherd and ran for their lives. Now, all the Israelite men on the battlefield
had been strengthened by the courage of the young man who would later become their leader. With revitalized strength, they all together were strengthened by David’s example and chased their enemies away to Ekron and Gath, and looted their camps. David brought the head to Jerusalem and the armor into his tent. Going back in time, as David runs to kill Goliath, Saul asks Abner, his right hand man and captain of the host, “Whose son is this youth?” At first this may seem an odd question but if you remember, he had seen David before; he was the boy that played the harp, to appease him. He knew who David was, but not of his background. After the Goliath’s death, David brought by Abner to Saul. Saul asks who he is and David respectively says, “I am the son of thy servant Jesse the Bethlehemite” (1Sam 17:58). What an ending to a fantastic record.

Concluding thoughts

This chapter in 1st Samuel is one of the best we could ever read. It contains so many lessons for us to keep in our minds and hearts as we endure through this life for the prize of the high calling in the next. We must keep ourselves completely separate from this world, for we are in it but not of it. There must always be a valley between the brothers of Christ and the brothers of men. We must also not put our faith in man, but in our Heavenly Father that predestinated us from the very beginning. This life now is a test, to see if we are fit for the kingdom of God and let us be ready for that day. We must be separate from our nature, not like Goliath who was uncircumcised, or one with his flesh. Together, we have a responsibility to stand by our brothers and sisters, protecting and caring for them every step of the way. Our zeal and passion for the Truth must not undermined by the world. We cannot let our light wax cold, even for a second. Every day, we come out of our homes and into this dark world as lights, beacons of hope. Our lights must be burning much hotter and brighter than it did the day before. We must see David and the Israelites triumph over the Philistines as representative of the Greater Son of David helping us accomplish wonders: finally destroying death and sin and revealing Yahweh’s name throughout the entire Earth. Let us brethren and sisters be as David, never giving in to this world and showing forth his appreciation for all that his God has done for him through his never fading passion for the Truth. For the Truth was everything to David, and it must be everything to us.

Noah Fratello (Reseda, California)

Notes:
1. Ephes-dammim (called Pas-dammim in 1Chron 11:13) was the site of some notable skirmishes between Israel and her warlike neighbors, and may have been named for its violent history: “Boundary of blood”.
2. The place can readily be located today: any American would describe the “mountains as” “hills”, as the NIV translates it, with the Philistine Hill the steeper. There is around 1,000 ft elevation between the heights and the valley.
3. The Jewish commentary, the Targum, adds “And ye, men of Israel, what noble exploit has Saul, the son of Kish, of Gibeah, done, that ye should have made him king over you? If he be a hero, let him come down himself and fight with me; but if he be a weak or cowardly man, then choose you out a man that he may come down to me.” This appears to give the true sense of Goliath’s speech.
4. The NIV reads “Early in the morning David left the flock in the care of a shepherd, loaded up and set out, as Jesse had directed. He reached the camp as the army was going out to
Reflections

During a Winter Snowstorm

Last week the first snowfall of winter descended as a white blanket covering the earth. With the first fall there came the beautiful snow-crystals, six-sided, lacy forms that abound in myriad variations of design. Like the leaves of the forest no two crystals ever seem identical. It is one of the marvels of nature. The later flakes usually are larger, due to many crystals colliding in mid-air and adhering, thus forming the large flakes with which we are more familiar.

Of old the Prophet Job wrote of the “treasuries of the snow,” and inquired whether any could understand them. It remains so to this day. We observe the phenomenon, but only dimly comprehend the way in which such marvels are produced. The word “treasury” is sometimes translated “storehouse,” and quite properly. The snow is a vast storehouse of blessing to mankind. The snow brings down from the atmosphere many chemicals which enrich the soil, so much so that it has been called “the poor man’s fertilizer.” But in more senses than one the snow is a vast treasury for man’s benefit.

On the high mountains of northern Palestine the snows of winter are deposited in huge drifts. There they hold the moisture till the warmth of the summer sun melts the snow and gives rise to the rivers which water the lands at the foot. The “rivers of Damascus” which Naaman the leper, praised so highly, Parphar and Abana, are fed by the snow which gathers on Mount Hermon. All through the torrid months of summer, they pour down to the fields of Damascus the clear, cool water which makes possible life and agricultural prosperity to the entire region.

Even the headwaters of the Jordan receive their flow from the little streams which tumble down from the lofty heights of Hermon. And the Psalmist recounts the blessings which Hermon and its snow bestow upon the land in the form of refreshing dew, which he likens to the blessing of God, even life forever more.

Not only in Palestine is the snow a treasure house for man’s good, but all over the world there are large areas which would be barren wildernesses were it not for the accumulations of snow in winter time. California on our western coast, and many of the “plains” states east of the Rockies, are dependent upon the “treasury” of the snow. High up in the mountains, snow gathers to a depth of twenty, thirty or even fifty feet, and then through the summer months the Missouri, the Kansas, the Platte, the Rio Grande — in fact most of our rivers, pour down the melting snows to enrich the fields and orchards of our land.

5. [Editor] I have always argued that the reason for David not using the armor was lack of practice, not the armor being too big: that David in his young adulthood was close to Saul’s size.
6. Of course, Gath was the home of Goliath,
In the cities snow is a great hardship, and its coming always results in suffering, accidents and discomfort for all the inhabitants. But one who believes in the over-ruling providence of God, and who believes He does all things well, can see in these visitations the wise provisions of the Creator to make glad those who depend on the soil for their livelihood.

When the snow is swirling around our doors and blocking our streets and sidewalks, remember that it is God’s way of piling up moisture for the crops of the following summer. Rain is often referred to as the blessing of God. “and [He] sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust” (Matt 5:45). But snow is equally beneficial to man. Rain soon flows away and its blessing passes with the coming of the hot sun, but the treasuries of the snow then commence to bestow their blessing upon the parched land. And the hotter the sun becomes, the more the snow melts, and the more water is sent down the mountain sides to supply the harvest fields.

This may be clearly seen in the high mountains of Canada and Colorado. In July when no rainfall occurs in our western wheat fields, the streams that come down from the towering, snowcapped peaks are running bank-full, to make glad the wheat and corn farmers of our mid-west.

Could blind force provide thus for the benefit of mankind? None but a wise Creator could have foreseen the need for these “treasuries of the snow” and in wisdom so contrived the earth that the mountains bring forth the snow-fed streams to make glad the hearts of all of God’s creatures.

From the Christadelphian Herald, January 1947.

The Christadelphian Herald

[Editor]. The Christadelphian Herald was a Central Community magazine that ran from 1946 to 1954. (At least those are the only issues I have been able to locate.) Its committee in 1946 is recorded as:

The Herald Publishing Committee:
M. Anderson, Chairman

Editorial Staff:
Reuel A. Brittle Short Hills, N. J. John Parkin Toronto, Canada

Subscriptions may be sent to: Donald W. Sabean, Treasurer
News and correspondence to: W. P. Brittle, Secretary.

Most of the news and articles were contributed by members in New England and Mid-Atlantic, with some from Ontario. It must be remembered that The Christadelphian Tidings was being published in California at this time, but until 1953 or so it was the voice of the Local Berean Ecclesias in that area.
Seeking Godly Contentment

A book of relationships:

Have you ever realized how much the Bible talks about relationships? They are woven into the fabric of every book, every interaction, and every principle within the scriptures. The Bible describes God’s relationship with us, and it is an instruction manual for our interactions with everyone else around us. Interactions with our neighbours, friends, family, coworkers, spouses, and even governments are all relationships laid out in scripture for guidance, instruction and to teach us how to strengthen our love for our Creator. God requires us to walk after Him, seek His face, and give up everything to Him continually and whole heartedly. We are going to examine some of the challenges of being single and ways to strive to be content in whatever state God has placed us in at this moment.

Single and content

To be content and happy while being single can be difficult, especially if a lot of your friends are in relationships or married. Our nature makes it so easy to dwell on what we are lacking or perceive as missing, and consequently let precious years of building our character be wasted by being unhappy and dissatisfied. A friend frequently reminded me that every day has two outcomes; Christ’s return followed by marriage feast, or today God has given us an opportunity to serve Him. Every opportunity must be used to strengthen the multitude of relationships we have been granted:

- To encourage a neighbor or co-worker
- To inspire young people and
- To fortify the faith of friends and family in our walk to God’s kingdom.

Instead of lamenting singleness, let us make the choice to live happily serving others and perfecting your relationship with God. People think they cannot be happy without a particular relationship, but this is not the case and it is up to you to make the choice!

If you feel that being single is lonely and a huge challenge, you are not alone. The Apostle Paul says in Phil 4:11 that he had learned to be content in whatever situation he was in. Powerful words because this is not easy, and also completely contrary to the flesh! It did not come naturally to Paul, and it will not be easy for each of us to be content in every phase of our life. Learn how to be content — even if you are in financial troubles, have ailing health, or are presently single.

I frequently suffer from the ‘grass is greener’ syndrome and I am sure I am not alone! However, do not be disillusioned! Every individual will have trials and heartache; they just might come in various forms and at different times. Particularly regarding marriage there can be a perception of ‘happily ever after’, but with marriage comes a whole new slew of challenges to face. Any married brother or sister will tell you that having a good marriage is hard work a lot of time, with much effort and self-sacrifice being required. But each challenge that we face also has its own rewards and benefits, regardless of being single or in a partnership.
Sound familiar? Does not God plead with us to turn back to Him, and fight for our relationship with Him?

“I have sent also unto you all my servants the prophets, rising up early and sending them, saying, Return ye now every man from his evil way, and amend your doings, and go not after other gods to serve them, and ye shall dwell in the land which I have given to you and to your fathers: but ye have not inclined your ear, nor hearkened unto me” (Jer 35:15).

“Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord” (Lam 3:40).

Do we do the same? All relationships that we have now are intended for us to humbly learn the qualities and characteristics God desires to bring us closer to Him. And good news! This can be done both in the married state and the single state.

There are so many things we can do as single young people. Generally you have more available ‘free’ time as a single; you don’t have the responsibilities of a family, and if you’re living at home, you don’t have the chores of running of house. Use this ‘extra’ time you have to benefit yourself and others, by serving in the Ecclesia, doing Bible study, visiting others, helping those in need, spending time with friends etc. It is a unique opportunity to grow in our relationship with our Heavenly Father if we choose to use it! Ruth is an incredible example! Instead of turning back to Moab were she could have sought another husband and continued on a life she was familiar with, she chose to follow Naomi, to serve God and remain in a single state. God in His infinite grace provided a God fearing husband for Ruth and she is now part of the lineage of Christ! What an amazing example. Live today for God; let Him work mightily through you for you never know what doors God may open that seem closed.

Trust completely that God is leading our life in His way. He has an incomprehensible plan for each of us created out of love and hope where we will all exist in oneness with each other and our Creator (Jer 29:11). God knows the beginning from the end and has our best interests at heart. We need to accept that whatever path that is set before us, even if it means being single at present, our goal is a path to the Kingdom. I personally take great comfort that if Christ were to return even this very minute, God willing I will be a part of the multitudinous bride. Keep our garments pure, perfect our character to model Christ, and deepen our relationship with God and God willing may we all hear those delightful words we all long to hear “well done thou good and faithful servant”. Let us all turn to God, and seek His face, redeem the time, and learn to live contently with what God has richly blessed us with today.

“Hide not thy face far from me; put not thy servant away in anger: thou hast been my help; leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation” (Psa 27:9).

“Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time” (Col 4:5).

Becky Elliot (Toronto West, ON)
On the Way: Bible Studies, Exhortations, Meditations and Musings by George Booker

On the Way is uplifting and delightful reading. The title, a play on Jesus’ name for himself in John 14:6 and the name given in Acts to followers of the gospel, suggests lessons learned and observations made along life’s path. That is what this book delivers. Covering numerous and wide-ranging topics in 71 short chapters, the book drives home lessons with touches of humor and sadness (which serve to enhance a serious message), and through Bible studies, in an engaging, personal style.

Each chapter stands alone, so the reader can skip around the book. My intention was to read it straight through, but some of the chapter titles were too intriguing not to read ahead. Among them were “Harold [not a typo] of the Coming Age”, “Has it Ever Occurred to You that You Might Be Wrong?”, and “Wesley and the Free Cheese”.

A mind attuned to spiritual things will find spiritual parallels even in ordinary life experiences. In “A Walk in the Park”, for example, the sight of special needs children each walking with one or more companions becomes a living parable for us: we are all handicapped in God’s sight; we all need His grace and help. Further, He has provided us with each other for help and support as we walk toward the Kingdom.

For Bible studies, a personal favorite of mine was “The Tower of the Flock and the Birth of Jesus”. In it, evidence is given which suggests that the Tower of the Flock (Migdal Eder, within the surrounding area of Bethlehem) was a place from which shepherds watched over their flocks and oversaw the birth of lambs for the Passover sacrifice, and the possible birthplace of Jesus. How very fitting if it was indeed Jesus’ birthplace. Without being dogmatic, a case is presented which left me marveling at God’s way.

There is much here for everyone, from lighter chapters to more in-depth Bible studies, but each one leaves the reader pondering a spiritual lesson or considering Divine things. More than one dinner table discussion was prompted by gems in this book. It was edifying and enjoyable from start to finish — regardless of the order in which it is read. I hope there’s a sequel.

Connie Styles (Meriden, CT)

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Guyana Youth Camp — Summer 2014
My Personal Experience

It’s hot and humid, you’re in a hall with basic facilities miles from the closest ‘civilization’. You’re suffering from lack of sleep and surrounded by arguments. You’re probed with the most obscure Bible questions and you’re here for a week of spiritual stimulation surrounded by laughter, shouting, challenges and friendship. Welcome to Guyana Youth Camp!

This summer I had the privilege of returning to this small English speaking country on the top coast of South America. With its colorful landscape, exotic fruits and ever present warmth, the reason Guyana is so special is due to it being the home of not less than six ecclesias founded upon the hope of Israel.

In 2013, I was a part of Truth Corps where first we travelled to Guyana for two weeks of intense preaching. How special an opportunity this was, is testified to by the fact that three of the team were back in Guyana this summer for the Annual Youth Camp at Plegt Anker. Bro. Joshua Hodge (Canada) who was speaking for the week on Sampson and Sis. Trudy Stuchlik (US) both returned along with myself. The ecclesias in Guyana are small and greatly appreciate support from their wider family.

Guyana Youth Camp is an intensive experience. You wake up before 6:00 am, go outside, stretch, jog, return to the hall, discuss one of the readings then have a thought for the day and all before breakfast! As 1Tim 4:8 says, “for bodily exer-
The fun, lively and engaging atmosphere of the camp provides a fantastic opportunity for everyone to be guided and encouraged to a better understanding of Scripture. New friendships are made and existing ones strengthened so that together, with God’s blessing, the eyes of our understanding might be enlightened and that we might know what is the hope of God’s calling and what is the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints.

Written by Luke Foley (Coventry West, UK)
Submitted by Jan Berneau, CBMA/CBMC Publicity
A Baptism in Haiti

In early October I went to Haiti to visit Gironald Julien, a friend I have known since 2010. Our paths would not normally have crossed except for the fact that Gironald, along with his wife Esther, had travelled to Ecuador in 2010 as refugees in the aftermath of the devastating earthquake in Haiti that left so many homeless. My family and I spent a few months in Ecuador during 2010/2011 and were introduced to Gironald and Esther, who were renting a room from the grandparents of my wife Maribel.

Gironald was very interested in knowing more about the Bible and already believed, based on his own study, that God was one. We introduced him to the ecclesia in Quito where he attended regularly and enjoyed the opportunity to study with the brothers and sisters, as well as with the Hunters (Kevin and Rebekah) who spent time there in 2011.

In late 2011 Gironald and Esther decided to return to Haiti to try and re-establish their lives there. They struggled, and continue to struggle, in the process of rebuilding what was lost. However, in the midst of these struggles Gironald did not lose his faith nor the desire to grow his understanding of God and His plan. Gironald continued to study the Bible regularly and came to the decision this year that he wanted to be baptized.

I planned a trip for early October for us to discuss his beliefs face to face and to help arrange for his baptism. We spent a couple of days reviewing the Scriptures and talking about his beliefs. Gironald gave a good confession of faith based on a sound understanding of Bible teachings. He was bap-
tized on Sunday, October 5th into the saving name of Jesus. After his baptism we enjoyed a meal together and the following morning, before my departure, we broke bread.

Gironald aspires to teach others in his neighbourhood about God’s word and has started some neighbors out on a Christadelphian Bible course. God willing, his efforts may lead others to better understand their Bibles and God’s plan for them.

Written by Dan Archibald (Toronto East, ON)
Submitted by Sis. Jan Berneau, CBMA/CBMC Publicity

The St. Lucia Ecclesia –
A Faithful Light in the Caribbean

As we read the many wonderful reports and articles written for the Bible Missionary Magazine, we realize there are so many brethren and sisters who are in such difficult circumstances, but our Heavenly Father is caring for them and guiding their lives in a way that is beyond our comprehension. God’s care is evident through life changing events helps us to realize how much we all need the Lord in our lives.

It was a privilege to visit St. Lucia again from early November to early December 2014. The daily schedule was similar to that of previous visits but the need to reach out and present the gospel is always there. The former “Lunch & Learn” classes have become “The Bible Enrichment Hour”. These Bible studies are now held later in the afternoon for about an hour (hence the change in the name). We looked at the prayers of Solomon, Daniel, and some of Jesus’ prayers, particularly the Lord’s Prayer, with three friends who attend consistently. There is always constructive discussion during the classes, with lots of active participation.

We are thankful that the “upper room” (the meeting room) is available for these activities. This helps the local residents to know where the classes are being held, and shows that we are keen on having our activities in a convenient and accessible location.

Three public Bible talks were held, all of which had challenging topics: “You Can’t Blame the Devil — the Bible Blames You”; “Our Great Journey”; “According to the Bible Your Death need not be Forever”

We had seven of our regular friends attend the first night, with a few less the second and third nights. The weather may have been a contributing factor. After the first night,
there was a lot of rain and St. Lucians do not like to go out if the rain is heavy! November through December is near the end of the rainy season so we expected some precipitation.

Personal visits were made to see elderly friends whom we’ve known for several years, and had Bible classes with them on past visits. This time we read the New Testament portion of the daily readings with them, with appropriate discussion afterwards. One of the ladies was still recovering from a Caribbean virus called “Chikungunya”. There were quite a number of cases on the Island; with one brother having had the virus a couple of months before we arrived. The virus is quite incapacitating, affecting joints and brings on a strong sense of tiredness that lasts several weeks.

Bible classes and readings are a regular feature of each day. These are held at the mission apartment when brothers, sisters and friends could attend. We were able to visit the ecclesias’ most senior member — Bro. George Rock — at his home and we shared the Bible readings with him. He loves to play his keyboard, so he would play a hymn prior to each reading. He explained at the time why he wanted that certain hymn.

This was another worthwhile visit. Continued encouragement, spiritual feeding and clear straightforward preaching are always needed by ecclesial light stands throughout the world. May God be pleased to bless this work while we await the Lords return.

Written by Cliff and Julia Baines, Sussex, Canada
Submitted by Jan Berneau, CBMA/CBMC Publicity

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**WINDWARD/LEEWARD ISLANDS: OCT. 29–NOV. 12**

Another preaching effort is being planned later this year for Antigua and St. Lucia in the West Indies. So far as we are aware, the Truth has not been preached in St. Lucia before, and it is intended to use Antigua as a base for starting preaching work there. Preaching activities will be undertaken in St. Lucia, Nov. 5–12. The consecutive dates are to enable brethren and sisters to preach and vacation in either or both islands as desired.

*The Christadelphian, 1994 p 159*
Addresses for Bequests and Donations

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

CHICAGO, IL
The Christadelphians of Chicago have formally met since 1867. We have historically been identified as Unamended, though our meeting, and all Illinois ecclesias, have been open and inviting for full fellowship with the Central community. In fact, because Chicago is such a major travel city, we often have visiting brethren from other countries who fellowship and speak at our meeting. Our website is www.thebiblehope.org and has a lot of content including many videos of our exhortations.

We enthusiastically welcomed the recent commendation letter and appreciate the long-term work by many to overcome our historical fellowship barriers. Any brethren can contact me below for a contact list of our members and we wholeheartedly welcome all to visit and stay with members if you are in the Chicago area. “How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity!”

Dan Richard

HONESDALE, PA
We were very edified by Bro. Steve Cheetham’s (Mooresstown NJ) visit and exhortation in December. He also presented his lecture titled, “Why I Believe In God” on our new audio-visual equipment for our Holy Bible study after the service. It was extremely educational. The sisters provided lunch and a birthday cake for Bro. Steve DeMarco to celebrate the tenth year anniversary of his rebirth in baptism.

Stephen J. DeMarco

MISSISSAUGA WEST, ON
We're grateful for the efforts, over recent months, of brethren David Styles (Shelburne, ON), Steve McKay (Cambridge, ON) and Jay Mayock (Hamilton Book Road, ON) for providing words of exhortation, and in particular the labor of Bro. Jon Tarry (Orangeville, ON) who led our Ecclesial Study Day in December on the topic, “On a Mountain with the Lord Jesus”.

We welcomed three new additions to our ecclesial family in recent months with the birth of Remington to Sis. Sarah Cooper, the birth of Isla to the undersigned and Sis. Sarah Baldock, and the birth of Ethan to Bro. Craig and Sis. Holly McAnuff.

We report that Bro. Tim Weir has been removed from fellowship.

Graham Baldock

MOORESTOWN, NJ
It is with great sadness that we report the falling asleep of our dear Sis. Kathy Ryder on January 20, 2015. Sis. Kathy was the wife of Bro. Don and we will sorely miss her
wonderful smile and positive attitude in her service in the Lord. May her sleep in the 
Lord be short as we see the day drawing ever closer.

In September 2014, we welcomed the transfer of Bro. Ben Phillips, Sis. Cadi Phillips, 
Sis. Hannah Phillips, and their family from the Echo Lake, NJ Ecclesia.

Bill Lam

PARIS AVENUE, OH

We are pleased to congratulate Bro. Derek Elder and Sis. Emily Carrick on their 
wedding which took place on November 1, 2014, and as of December 24, 2014, we 
welcomed our Sis. Emily by way of transfer from the Toronto West, ON Ecclesia. We 
also congratulate Bro. Joel Hynes and Sis. Patricia Prater on their wedding which took 
place on October 26, 2014. We commend Sis. Patricia’s transfer to the Brantford, ON 
Ecclesia. We pray the Father will bless these young couples in their walks together as 
we wait for the Kingdom. We also commend the transfer of Bro. Scott and Sis. Aubrey 
Scheiner to the Denver, CO ecclesia. We pray the Father will bless them in their new 
ecclesial family.

Our ecclesia rejoices in the baptism of KATIE NOBLE, niece of Bro. Dave and Sis. 
Amy Noble, as well as GABRIEL MUNIZ, son of Bro. Everett and Sis. Amanda Muniz. 
We pray that Yahweh’s blessings will be with both of them as they journey toward the 
kingdom.

We’ve been blessed with several births including: Naomi Narjes to Bro. Mike and Sis. 
Madison Narjes; Lauralynn Cooper to Bro. Tim and Sis. Annalee Cooper; Simon 
Canady to Bro. Jordan and Sis. Pauli Canady; and Mason Scheiner to Bro. Scott and 
Sis. Aubrey Scheiner.

We are grateful for the labors of Bro. Ken Styles who gave our March 2014 study 
weekend on the topic of, “Love”. We are also grateful for the labors of Bro. Bryan Styles 
who gave our September 2014 study weekend on the topic of, “Joel”. We look forward 
to our Spring Study Weekend the weekend of March 7-8, 2015. Bro. Mike Livermore 
(Milford Road, MI) will be leading us that weekend on the topic of, “Bearing His Cross”, 
which will consider the events surrounding the Lord’s crucifixion.

Dave Noble

RICHMOND-PETERSBURG, VA

During the past six months our ecclesia has enjoyed visits and exhortations from 
Brethren Matthew Link and David Mutter. Bro. Frank Abel also provided us with a Bible Class on the Brazen Serpent of Numbers 21 and a weekend study entitled “Follow Me” centered on instructions given by our Lord. We would like to thank our brethren for their efforts.

The Richmond-Petersburg Ecclesia is centrally located along the east coast near 
Interstates 95 and 64. We are a small ecclesia and would welcome anyone interested 
in relocating to our area and helping our ecclesia grow. The area economy is relatively 
good and residents enjoy four seasons, including a mild winter. If you’d like to consider 
moving here, please contact us at deekatking@comcast.net or paulga@juno.com. The Richmond-Petersburg Ecclesia meets exclusively on the basis of the Birmingham Amended Statement of Faith.

David King
SHELBURNE, ON

The year 2015 began with a lot of excitement for the Shelburne Ecclesia.

We welcome as new members, transferring from Bedford, NS Bro. Mike and Sis. Ruth Carr. They have moved back to the Ontario region after several years of domestic missionary work in Nova Scotia. We are excited to have their enthusiasm and love for the truth as a part of our ecclesia.

On January 24, 2015, we joined with the Orangeville Ecclesia for our annual Sunday school entertainment. The young people performed a variety of plays and songs, much to the delight of parents and grandparents. Instilling the love of God's word and the knowledge of the important Bible stories is a strong Christadelphian tradition.

On January 25, 2015, we had an extremely busy, exciting and rather unique day as BOB VENTON and HEATHER SMITH were married in the morning and baptized in the afternoon! Sis. Heather first came out to the Bible seminars in Collingwood six years ago and became a regular attendee at our weekly Collingwood Bible class, asking great questions and soaking in the word. Bob, her common-law husband of twenty plus years, also showed a keen interest in the Bible and read Elpis Israel, Eureka, the Bible Magazine and followed Christadelphian talks online and on DVD. They wanted to formalize their relationship before God and begin a new life together in Christ, so after a great confession of faith, we welcomed them to the family on Sunday. The ceremony and baptisms took place in Collingwood so Heather's family could attend, and members from Shelburne joined us to celebrate. We look forward to having Bro. and Sis. Venton join us in Shelburne and add their excitement for the word to our ecclesia.

Chris Sales

Bro. Bob and Sis. Heather Venton's baptism

GRAND VALLEY (Ont.).— Bro. and sis. Frank Abel, bro. and sis. James Scott, and bro. and sis. Ben Nelson now comprise the Grand Valley ecclesia. We were non-resident members of the Scarlett Rd. ecclesia, Toronto, Ont., but decided to form an ecclesia of our own to meet each Sunday. We recently held a campaign in a nearby town and find it beneficial to be an ecclesia.

The Christadelphian, 1966, p 143.
VANCOUVER ISLAND BIBLE CAMP

More info & registration at www.vibiblecamp.com

Vancouver Island Bible Camp (VIBC) is a 6 day Christadelphian bible camp along the beautiful shore of Lake Shawnigan on Vancouver Island, Canada. Its purpose is to provide families an affordable spiritual retreat, focusing on bible study, fellowship and recreational activities.

Our dates for 2015 are Sunday June 28 to Friday July 3.
Speakers: Bro. Ryan Mutter, Baltimore USA and Bro. Clyde Snobelen, Victoria BC

For updates, news, camp information and registration, please visit:
Web: www.vibiblecamp.com
Facebook: www.facebook.com/vancouverislandbiblecamp
Minute Meditation

Trembling Will Not Save

When Paul was in prison in Caesarea, the Roman ruler Felix had Paul brought to him often, and Paul preached to him concerning Christ. We read that as Paul reasoned with Felix of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, that Felix trembled.

Sadly, trembling is all he did. We read that Felix had a more accurate knowledge of that way, so he was familiar with the message of salvation through Christ that Paul preached, but his only reaction was to tremble. He did not act on his fears. Thoughts about the coming judgment of God on a wicked world may have frightened him, but he was not frightened enough to respond to the gospel call.

Fear is not a bad thing. We read that “By faith Noah, being warned of God concerning things not seen as yet, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house.” Fear motivated Noah to take the action necessary to save his life and the lives of his family. He worked very hard to build the ark because he was afraid of the coming flood.

Fear can help motivate us to make wise decisions. Knowing the consequences of robbing a bank or driving at excessive speeds makes us fearful to do those things lest we end up in jail or have to pay large fines. We learn in the book of Proverbs, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.” Knowing that our God is the mighty creator of the universe, the one who has the power of life or death over us, it is wise for us to have a healthy fear of Him and to seek to please and obey Him. In Proverbs we also learn, “In the fear of the Lord is strong confidence: and His children shall have a place of refuge. The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death.” Safety and security as well as the hope of eternal life are the reward for those who fear the Lord.

Our attitude should be, as we read in the book of Hebrews, “Let us serve God acceptably with reverence and fear, for our God is a consuming fire.” We do well to show a healthy respect and reverence for our God and strive to please Him. We have a warning, “For if we are willfully sinning after receiving the full knowledge of the truth, there remains no more sacrifice concerning sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment” and “zealous fire being about to consume the adversaries.”

Those in the world around us who ignore God or who fail to respect His standards face divine consequences. They should be afraid. Those who love and fear God and have chosen to obey the gospel and be baptized and serve Him do not need to be afraid. We read in the epistle of John, “There is no fear where love exists. Rather, perfect love banishes fear, for fear involves punishment, and the person who lives in fear has not been perfected in love. We love because God first loved us.” God loves those who respond to His love for them, and He has given His Son...
to bring salvation to those who will listen and obey His call. While godly fear may have been the initial motivation for us to respond to God’s call, we now can rest in His love knowing that it is the Father’s good pleasure to give us the kingdom.

What do we say to the many people living in the world nowadays who are trembling? Mankind is facing terrible problems in our times. There are countries teetering on the point of financial collapse and almost bankrupt. There are wars in the Middle East, between Russia and the Ukraine, and in Africa. Al-Qaeda and ISIS, organizations dedicated to destroying Israel, also hate the US and its allies. We hear warnings about global warming, rising ocean levels, widespread drought, crop failures, famines, epidemics of diseases such as Ebola, and other natural disasters such as tsunamis, earthquakes and extreme weather. Morally our society seems to have sunk to the depths.

We are witnessing the fulfillment of the words of Jesus: “For as in the days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark. And knew not until the flood came and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the son of man be.” Jesus said that prior to his coming, “There shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring. Men’s hearts failing them with fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken.”

We do believe that we are now living in those last days just prior to the return of our Lord, who when he comes will make all the wrong things in this world right. There is some trembling going on around us right now but there is a lot more to come.

Trembling is not the answer. We need to hear the exhortation of our Lord, “Take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and cares of this life, and that day come upon you suddenly like a snare; for it will come upon all who dwell upon the face of the whole earth. But watch at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of man.”

The coming of the Lord will find the whole world just like Felix when he trembled and did nothing more. Felix perished. Let us warn all those we know to seek the Lord while there is still time. We pray that folks will heed the warnings that our world is in the final stages before the return of Christ. We pray that they may choose to be baptized as we have been, and then together we can look expectantly for the coming of the Lord.

Even so come Lord Jesus.

Robert J. Lloyd

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It is a great mistake, as we have already remarked, to be afraid of Him and to act in His presence like a timid and craven slave trembling with fright before his master.

Alphonsus Liguori
Coming Events (Lord Willing)

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

MARCH, 2015


APRIL, 2015

2-5 Pacific Northwest CYC Conference at Camp Pringle on Shawnigan Lake. Speaker: Bro. Ryan Mutter (Baltimore, MD): “As It Was in the Days of Noah.” For further information please contact Bro. Mike McStravick at mtmcstravick@gmail.com.

3-5 Toronto, ON Fraternal Gathering. The Toronto area ecclesia’s invite you to a weekend of study and fellowship together. This year’s speaker is Bro. Joni Mannell (Walsall, UK). Location: Mayfield Secondary School, Brampton, ON. Contact: Bro. Lloyd Cooper.

3-5 Wichita Falls, TX Spring Gathering at the T4C Camp, Freestone, TX. Speaker will be Bro. Kent Beeson (Seattle, WA). Topic: “Let Your Light Shine Before Men in Such a Way.” Contact Bro. Larry Beutel at lbeutel@alsco.com.


11-12 Boston, MA 24th Annual Spring Study Weekend. Boston Ecclesia, 48 Freeman Street, Stoughton, MA. Bro. Jason Hensley (Simi Hills, CA): “Unlocking the Mystery”. Registration and coffee at 10:00am Saturday with three classes beginning promptly at 10:30am. Lunch will be provided. The fourth class is scheduled for Sunday morning at 9:30am, followed by Memorial Service. Contact Bro. Jim Sullivan at jimsulliv@aol.com.

24-26 Brother’s Weekend. Please join us for a weekend of camping and fellowship around the Word of the Lord. Our subject is: “But a Faithful Man Who Can Find?”. Studies led by Bro. Paul Styles (Ann Arbor, MI). All meals are provided and the weekend is funded by donations. Contact Bro. Gordon Hensley ThreeHensleys@sbcglobal.net or Bro. Levi Gelineau leviandjessica@gmail.com.


MAY, 2015

2-3 Pittsburgh, PA Study Weekend. Bro. Steve Cheetham (Moorestown, NJ) will speak on “Lessons of Past and Future Kings.” Travelers’ lunch provided at noon. Classes begin at 1:00 p.m. Contact Bro. Len Budney at pghecclesia@gmail.com or 412-983-1970.

8-9 Vancouver Island Sisters’ Weekend in Victoria, BC. Study led by Sis. Sandy McLeod (Simi Hills, CA). Topic: “Becoming a Woman of Purpose”. Registration Fee: $75.00. Contact: Sis. Rosa Bailey, 3-1431 Simon Road, Victoria, BC, V8X 3G9 or rosabailey@shaw.ca.
JUNE, 2015

12-14 New York Metropolitan Sisters’ Retreat at The Host Resort/Hotel, Lancaster, PA. The speaker will be Sis. Mary Styles (Shelburne, ON). Her topic is, “Abigail — A Woman of Good Understanding and a Beautiful Countenance.” Contact: Sis. Averil Ferguson at 718-881-8705 e-mail: averilpsm23@juno.com.

27-July 4 Great Lakes Bible School at Lakeland College, Plymouth, WI. Theme verse is 1 Peter 5:10-11. The teachers are Bro. Martin Webster (Can), Bro. Don Davies (Can), Bro. Bill Link (US), and Sis. Laura Ross (US). Detailed information and registration is on the website, www.glcbhs.org. Registrar: Sis. Marcia Stull Marcia.stull@glcbhs.org. Secretary: Bro. Alan Johnson alan.johnson@glcbhs.org.


28-July 3 Vancouver Island Bible Camp at Lake Shawnigan on Vancouver Island, BC. Speakers are Bro. Ryan Mutter (Baltimore, MD), and Bro. Clyde Snobelen (Victoria, BC). For details see www.vibiblecamp.com and www.facebook.com/vancouverislandbiblecamp.

JULY, 2015

1-6 Calaveras Family Bible Camp. Calaveras Big Trees State Park, Arnold, CA. Contact Bro. Brian McDonald at 626-335-3787 or bmcdonald@mcdonald-printing.com.


18-26 Midwest Bible School will be held at Triune University, Angola, IN. Speakers and their topics are: Bro. Roger Lewis (Christchurch, New Zealand): “The Four Faces of Christ in the Gospels”; Bro. Mark Vincent (UK): “Exploring the Psalms”; and Bro. Andrew Bramhill (UK): “Isaac, The Overlooked Patriarch.” Contact Bro. Mike Livermore, 44943 Yorkshire Dr., Novi, MI 48375; 248-462-5740; mike.live@gmail.com or visit www.midwestbibleschool.com.

19-25 Idyllwild Bible School will be held at the Idyllwild Pines Camp in Idyllwild, CA. The speakers for this year are Bro. Barry McClure, Bro. Darren Guy, and Bro. Jim Styles. To register, contact Jeff Gelineau at register@christadelphianbibleschool.org or visit our website www.californiabibleschool.org.

25-Aug 2 Eastern Bible School. Connecticut College, New London CT; Theme: “As for me and my house we will serve the LORD.” Bro. Joe Hill (Austin-Leander, TX): “The Gospel in Leviticus and the Tabernacle” (adults) and “Hearing the Word: Learning to Study from the Parable of the Sower” (teens); Bro. Steve Cheetham (Moorestown, NJ): “Lessons for us from the Kings” (adults) and “Judges: Go in and Possess the Land” (teens); Bro.
Jason Hensley (Simi Hills, CA): “The Second Exodus and the Work of Elijah” (adults) and “Jonathan, the Faithful Prince” (teens). For registration information contact Sis. Cindy Nevers at 18 Sibley Street, Auburn, MA 01501 or cindynevers@verizon.net.


26-Aug 1 Western Bible School at Menucha Conference Center, Corbett, OR. The teachers are Bro. Simon Dean (UK): “Read Mark and Learn”; Bro. John Launchbury (Beaverton, OR): “The Spirit Is Willing But the Flesh is Weak”; and Bro. Shawn Moynihan (Guelph, ON): “Learning From the Twelve: Scenes of Discipleship.” Details on the website, www.menchuchabibleschool.org or contact registrar Jane Szabo, szabojj@peak.org or 541-563-4726.

AUGUST, 2015


17-22 Lakefield Bible School at Lakefield College. The school is located east of Toronto near Peterborough ON, on a beautiful lake side campus. Contact Bruce and Barbara Abel: bnb69abel@hotmail.ca or call 519-925-5297. www.lakefieldbibleschool.com.

SEPTEMBER, 2015

19-20 Bedford, NS Study weekend with Bro. Chris Sales (Shelburne, ON) on “Hebrews – A Practical Exposition”. Location: North Woodside Community Centre, Dartmouth, NS. Contact Bro. Dale Crawford at Bedfordchristadelphians@gmail.com or 1-902-431-6650.

26-27 Kouts, IN Fall Study Weekend at Woodland Park Community Center, 2100 Willowcreek Rd beginning at 10:00am. Bro. Matt Norton (Lismore, New South Wales, AUS) speaking. Theme: “An overview of Revelation”— great for adults and kids. Contact Bro. Joe Bennett at 219-762-2704 or jkb8275@comcast.net.

OCTOBER, 2015


NOVEMBER, 2015

7-8 Sarasota, FL Fall Study Weekend with Bro. Richard Morgan speaking on, “Prophecy, Predestination, and the Purpose of God.” Contact Bro. James Wilkinson at jameswilkinson@hotmail.com or 941-412-7988.
NEW BOOK

Observations Along the Way
A Bible Journal

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

305 pages, illustrated
$9.00 USD

(See page 198 for ordering information)
The Christadelphian Mind

“But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory... ‘For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?’ But we have the mind of Christ” (1Cor 2:7, 16 ESV).

Introduction

This passage at the end of 1Cor 2, quoted from Isa 40:3, says two things

- That the mind and wisdom of God is beyond our comprehension, but He has imparted a portion of it to us.
- That Paul, at least, considered he had the “mind of Christ”: that in all his actions, thoughts, and writings he presented a true vision of the way Christ would have us think.

So I think it important to consider this topic, and also to define how a “Christadelphian Mind” might differ from the world view of most of those around us, even those of other Christian denominations. It is quite common to find articles, web sites, and even books discussing the “Christian mind” or its synonym, the “mind of Christ”, but that is not the topic of this article. Rather it is to discuss how our world view should be governed, in a distinctive way, by our distinctive beliefs.

It is perhaps unfortunate that if we do a web search on the term “Christadelphian Mind” you get mostly negative definitions, bemoaning the apparent unwillingness of Christadelphians to accept such things as the evidence of the age of the earth around us, and that accuse Christadelphians of twisting Bible passages to suit their own perspective. However, there are other more positive definitions: the one I like best is:

The Christadelphian mind that is constantly centered around the “wisdom from above” is certain to in, actions, life and character, exhibit symptoms of that which has been learnt.

But is that all there is? What is unique about the Christadelphian mind-set that sets it apart from that of most all of the denominations around us? We believe we have more of the Truth than these: so should our world view show more of the “mind of Christ” and of his Father? I am certain it should: but how does this show in the core of our beliefs, as we are instructed by the word of God? So let us explore the ways these beliefs direct our mind in ways that are different. It is fairly common to produce a brief set of characteristics of a Christ-like mind, and I am sure we would all like to possess such a mind. For example:

- Develop a strong desire for the mind of Christ.
- Submerge yourself in the Word of God. Read the Scriptures to learn them, love them, live them.
- Let Scripture rebuke you.
• Cultivate habits that encourage Christ-like thinking.

• Set goals to keep your mind actively thinking Christ-like thoughts.

These are all goals that are common to many of the other denominations around us, although some of our community would say our belief and study of the Word of God is unique: I suspect this might have been true a few generations ago, but I wonder whether it is true today.

The Christadelphian mind

There are several ways in which, I believe, a “Christadelphian mind” should reveal itself. It should not, of course, reveal itself in the way some members of other denominations act, by asking people “are you saved?”, or by attempting to button-hole strangers in the street. But our whole attitude should reflect the fact that, not only are we followers of Christ, but our mind is focused on him in certain unique ways, by the core elements of our set of beliefs. These beliefs are those which we hold, as Christadelphians, to be the Truth as revealed to us. The following are only a brief description of some areas that, I believe, should reveal the way in which we, as Christadelphians, view the both the fashion in which we live our lives and the manner in which we regard the world around us. I invite other suggestions!

God’s word

“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works” (2Tim 3:16-17).

As first and foremost “Bible Believers”, we should always study the Bible for ourselves, and expect anyone who applies for baptism to have done the same. As a community, we have developed a framework of principles we all agree to: but this is merely a framework. As Robert Roberts pointed out, there are indeed “true principles and uncertain details”. We do not follow the recipes of some hierarchy, but search out the word of God for ourselves. I will just reprint a couple of comments from the long article.

• The Devil
  • General principle: that the Bible Devil is the personified antagonism of flesh and blood to God, in various forms and methods.
  • Uncertain detail: What was the particular form of Bible diabolism that Michael encountered in the dispute about the body of Moses? What was the particular form of the Bible devil that tempted Jesus in the wilderness?

• The Judgment Seat
  • General principle: that Christ will call the living and the dead before His judgment seat at His coming.
  • Uncertain detail: where will He set it up? Will it be in Palestine, or in Egypt, or in the Arabian Peninsula, in the solitudes of Sinai?
There are a vast number of areas of each of our beliefs that we can hold as vital to our own understanding of the Bible: but to impose those beliefs on others, or imply some are not true believers because they differ from us, is not part of true Bible Study – or the Christadelphian Mind

**Strangers and Pilgrims**

“There all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth” (Heb 11:3).

The fact we are strangers in the true Christian sense should drive much of our attitude to the world around us: not for us is participation in politics, armed forces, or elected office. As government employees, if we so choose, we should strive to do our best, for our subordinates, superiors, or the public: but it should not be our choice to influence the laws of our country.

**Focused on our Eternal Salvation**

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek” (Rom 1:16).

It is all too easy to focus on the here and now: the best career, the most money, the best vacations. But our priority ought always to be the salvation of ourselves and our family, whether it means

- rejecting a promotion that involves excessive hours,
- rejecting to a move, or employment, in an area with no ecclesia,
- refusal to join in the social activities of our work or community,
- too deep an involvement in any activity that precludes participation in ecclesial events and duties.

**Independence of Present Authority in this Dispensation**

“Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God” (Rom 13:1).

Our one and only true leader is our Lord Jesus, who has been revealed for us in the Bible. For convenience, we have those to whom we have delegated some affairs of our ecclesias: but the members of an ecclesia, collectively and individually, are the actual leaders. There is no authority above an ecclesia in our community. We obey the authorities and laws without question: we pay taxes as required. But there is no governing authority among Christadelphians, just an agreement on the framework of beliefs that we all adhere to.

*Peter Hemingray*

**Notes:**

1. Usually attributed to Bro. HP Mansfield.
2. The Christadelphian, 1898, pp 182-189.

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

TIDINGS — MAY, 2015 161
Humility

“Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted” (Luke 18:10-14).

Balloon stomp

There once was a fourth grade class in which the teacher introduced a game called “balloon stomp.” A balloon was tied to every child’s leg, and the object of the game was to pop everyone else’s balloon while protecting one’s own. The last person with an intact balloon would win. The class really got into the game. Balloons were relentlessly targeted and destroyed. A few of the kids tried to stay near the walls, but their balloons all got stomped just the same. The game was over in a matter of seconds, with only one balloon left un-popped. The winner turned out to be the least liked kid in the class, which is not surprising, because you have to be pushy and rude in order to win at balloon stomp.

The interesting part of the story was that a second class was introduced to the same game. Only this time it was a class of mentally handicapped children. They were given the same explanation as the first class. But, this time, the game went very differently. It may have been that the handicapped kids didn’t completely grasp the instructions; but the one idea that got through was that the balloons were supposed to be popped. So it was the balloons, not the other players that were viewed as enemies. Instead of fighting each other, they began helping each other pop balloons. One little girl knelt down and held her balloon carefully in place, like a holder for a field goal kicker. A little boy stomped it flat. Then he knelt down and held his balloon for her. It went on like this for several minutes until all the balloons were destroyed, and everybody cheered. Everybody won.

It makes you wonder: who got the game right, and who got it wrong?

In our world, we tend to think of another person’s success as one less opportunity for us to succeed ourselves. For example, it’s often the case that if one person gets a job promotion, that reduces the chance of others getting a promotion.

I was watching my 12-year old son’s basketball game yesterday. When one team got a basket, half the parents cheered, while the other half sighed or just sat quietly. Then the other team would score and the first group of parents sighed while others
cheered. But, you never have all the parents cheering at the same time (unless one of the kids gets up after being hurt). That’s just the nature of competition.

But, in the ecclesia it’s different, because we’re here to serve Christ, not ourselves. And, the most effective way to do that is by elevating others while humbling ourselves.

**Family home evening**

My family talked about this one Friday night because it was our family home evening; it’s something we do one night a week where we’re all together as a family and everyone participates, with a different theme each week. This week’s theme was humility, and the parable of the Pharisee and the publican was our reading:

> “I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted” (Luke 18:14).

The children thought Jesus was saying it was the Pharisee who went home justified. So, I had to explain that even though the Pharisee praised God, fasted, and gave up 10% of his income, he didn’t have God’s approval; because the quality God was actually looking for was **humility**. Humility is a **Christian characteristic**, because it was part of the character of Christ. Jesus said:

> “Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls” (Matt 11:29).

What that means is: if we learn to follow Jesus’ example — to be gentle and humble in heart — we will find peace. Pride and arrogance throw us into tension and turmoil, but humility gives us peace from that competitive spirit.

> “Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment. . . Do not be proud. . . Do not be conceited” (Rom 12:3,16).

Consider the ways in which Jesus showed humility.

- First of all, his focus was on **God’s will**, not his own. This is the crux of the Christian faith. Whether or not we following Jesus is determined by whether we are doing **our will** or God’s will.
- To be a Christian means you are no longer living by your own will, but have surrendered to and are seeking to live out God’s will in your life. Jesus said, “For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me” (John 6:38).
- Facing the cross, in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus prayed: “My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will” (Matt 26:39).

And, that’s the mind we need to have if we want to **belong to Jesus**.

> “Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being
born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross” (Phil 2:5-8).

Pride and arrogance are destructive to our lives, but humility enables us to surrender to the will of God, and experience peace. Jesus humbled himself by surrendering his entire life to God; and, in so doing, he proved what he said in the parable that: “everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted” (Luke 18:14). Being humble means I understand that I don’t know it all, and that I can’t do it on my own.

Even Jesus said, “I can of my own self do nothing... my judgment is just, because I do not seek my own will but the will of the one who sent me” (John 5:30).

Our humility

Being humble means I give up my pride and surrender to God’s will. Another way in which Jesus demonstrated humility was that his focus was away from himself, not on himself.

- He came to do his Father’s will, not his own.
- He came to serve, not be served.
- He came “to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10).

Since we’re supposed to be like Jesus, the Bible says, “Nobody should seek his own good, but the good of others” (1Cor 10:24).

Proud people are self-focused. They love talking about themselves. They tend not to ask how someone else is doing, or what is going on in others’ lives. It is all about them. They are the most important person in their universe.

Consider the argument Jesus’ disciples were having at the time of the Last Supper. Jesus just got through telling them that one of them would betray him to death; and the very next verse says, “A dispute arose among them as to which of them was considered to be greatest” (Luke 22:24). How sad is it that, at a time like that, they were only thinking of themselves! Jesus had just told them that one of them is going to betray him. He explicitly stated that they would all fall away from him and that Peter would deny him.

He warned them to pray so that they do not fall into temptation, but all they could think about was their status — about who would sit on Jesus’ right and left in the kingdom. It should have been a time for humility, not pride and self-righteousness. It’s been said that “Humble people don’t think less of themselves . . . they just think about themselves less.”

There’s a seminary student who once wrote about his experiences during a 10-week term in the slums of Calcutta with Mother Teresa;¹

“People often ask me what Mother Teresa was like. Sometimes it’s like they wonder if she glowed in the dark or had a halo. She was short, wrinkled, and precious, maybe even a little ornery — like a beautiful, wise old granny. But there is one thing I will never forget — her feet. Her feet were
deformed. Each morning in Mass, I would stare at them. I wondered if she had contracted leprosy.

“But I wasn’t going to ask, of course. ‘Hey Mother, what’s wrong with your feet?’ One day a sister said to us, ‘Have you noticed her feet?’ We nodded. She said: ‘Her feet are deformed because we get just enough donated shoes for everyone, and Mother does not want anyone to get stuck with the worst pair, so she digs through and finds them. And years of doing that have deformed her feet.’ Years of loving her neighbor as herself deformed her feet.”

Humility means that our focus is away from ourselves, not on ourselves. The Scripture says, “Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others” (Phil 2:3-4).

The third thing about the humility of Jesus is: His focus was on serving, not being served. Nowhere do we see the humility and servant-spirit of Christ more than at the Last Supper when he washed the feet of his disciples — the very ones who would betray him, deny him and desert him.

“Because Jesus knew that the Father had given everything into his control, that he had come from God, and that he was returning to God, therefore he got up from the table, removed his outer robe, and took a towel and fastened it around his waist. Then he poured some water into a basin and began to wash the disciples’ feet and to dry them with the towel that was tied around his waist” (John 13:3-5).

That was humility. He KNEW he was sent by God and was about to ascend to God’s very throne in heaven — and what did he do? He performed the task of a slave in front of his own disciples!

“AAfter Jesus washed their feet, he said to them: ‘Do you understand what I have done for you? You call me “Teacher” and “Lord,” and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you’ ” (John 13:12-15).

There was a poll conducted in January 2006 by an organization called “Terror Free Tomorrow.” The poll suggested that humanitarian aid delivered by real human beings is a very effective way to improve how Muslim countries view the United States of America. A comparison was made to a previous poll which was conducted in Indonesia in 2003 shortly before the tsunami which devastated the country. That poll showed that only 15 percent of people in Indonesia — the world’s most populous Muslim nation — had a favorable view of the U.S.

In the year that followed, humanitarian aid poured into the affected areas from the U.S. and other Western nations. As a result, the January 2006 poll showed that Indonesian people with a favorable view of the U.S. had nearly tripled, jumping to 44%. In addition, the Indonesian Survey Institute reported that “support for Bin Laden and terrorism had dropped to its lowest level since 9/11”, and that
Indonesians with a “very unfavorable” view of the U.S. had fallen to just 13 percent — down from 48% prior to the tsunami. The conclusion of the poll was that the care that was shown to that nation made a huge difference!

This proves that the love of Christ is more powerful than the sword — or bombs from drones. That’s just one small example of what can happen when we humble ourselves and take on a servant spirit — even serving our enemies and doing good to them. So often, we want to find the perfect argument for defending our faith, and we miss the most powerful argument we have — the example of our faith.

We come now to remember the sacrifice of our Lord — the one who said:

“Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls” (Matt 11:29).

As we draw near to the Father and Son, let us do it with humility:

- that focuses on the Father’s will, not our own;
- that focuses away from ourselves, rather than on ourselves,
- and that focuses on serving rather than being served.

Dan Garan (Orlando, Florida)

Notes:

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**Humility**

Disciples ought to be humble: pride is the very antithesis of discipleship. Yet here is the problem: in striving for humility, the very essence of it can be eroded. Putting it plainly, when you know you are humble it tends to make you proud. It seems, therefore, that humility is not so much a virtue which you can strive for and achieve by itself — it is more the unconscious outcome of other forces operating in a disciple’s character. For example, you can on a certain date resolve to be loving all day and when you fall asleep you can say thankfully that you have acted lovingly. But somehow to do the same with humility does not bring the same result. Love is active, practical and positive. But with humility you can act humbly without being humble.

So, measured by the meekness of Christ, humility is not the assumption of a shrinking attitude, pretending that things are not what they are. It is not a prudent calculation to be lowly. It is a love-mastered inclination to serve in small things or great, without thought of renown. Humility is unconscious meekness, too committed to worry about reputation. Of the man who humbled himself it is written: “He took the form of a servant” (Phil 2:7). Love vaunteth not itself. Meekness is love’s quality. Let this mind be in you.

Dennis Gillett (The Christadelphian, 1982 p. 368)
The Doctrine of the Trinity

(3) Facts About Christ that cannot be about God

The Bible tells us so much about Jesus of Nazareth, our Lord and Savior. He was seen by men, slept, died, had a will separate from God, learned obedience, was born of a woman, became tired, knew discouragement, suffered pain, didn’t know the date of his own return, was tempted in all points like we are, and grew in his understanding of the word of God. None of these attributes can be applied to God. In fact, the Bible specifically says that none of the items listed can be true of God. Not only do we have a host of verses to show that Jesus and his Father were two separate beings, we have many Scriptures about Jesus that CANNOT be about God.

Trinitarians acknowledge this fact, but are not swayed by the impossible situation it creates for their doctrine. Instead Christ is divided into two parts; he is both God and man simultaneously. Terms are created such as the Hypostatic Union proposing that Jesus had two distinct natures: divine and human. Or the Communicatio Idiomatum (Latin for “communication of properties”) which is the teaching that the attributes of both the divine and human natures are ascribed to the one person of Jesus.

Again, we see confusion instead of clarity. Both divine and human characters existing simultaneously in one being? Both mortal and immortal natures present at the same time? Why create conundrums and paradoxes where none exist?

What the Bible student should be paying attention to is the word of God:

“Jacob’s well was there, and so Jesus, wearied as he was with his journey, sat down beside the well. It was about the sixth hour” [Our God is never weary.] (John 4:6).

For as by one man’s [Adam’s] disobedience many were made sinners, so by one man’s [Christ’s] obedience many will be made righteous. [How can God be obedient?] (Rom 5:19).

“But when the time had fully come, God sent forth His Son, born of woman, born under the law,” (Gal 4:4).

“and this will be made manifest at the proper time by the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no man has ever seen or can see. To him be honor and eternal dominion. Amen” [Yet, multitudes saw Jesus.] (1Tim 6:15-16).

“Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same nature, that through death he might destroy him who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong bondage... Therefore he had to be made
like his brethren in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make expiation for the sins of the people. For because he himself has suffered and been tempted, he is able to help those who are tempted [God has never been tempted or had our nature.] (Heb 2: 14-15, 17-18).

“For we have not a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin” (Heb 4:15).

“Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered; 9 and being made perfect he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him,” (Heb 5:8).

“and the living one; I died, and behold I am alive for evermore,” [God alone has Immortality: God Cannot Die!] (Rev 1:18).

Along this vein of thought, some of the events in the New Testament would be quite implausible if Christ were God, and the Apostles understood this to be the case. What these events really show is that even Christ's closest friends had much to learn about his role as Messiah, when he would claim his kingship, and why he had to die. The fact remains that these incidents would be quite puzzling if Christ were indeed God.

- Would Judas have betrayed God? Could he even have considered such a thing possible if Christ were God?
- The disciples all fled when Jesus was arrested, Peter denied him three times, and most were afraid to even attend the crucifixion. If they had known he was God the Son would they have behaved this way?
- Why would Peter use his sword in the Garden? Would he think God was incapable of defending Himself?
- At the Transfiguration the disciples offered to build three tabernacles for Jesus, Moses and Elijah. If Christ were God, wouldn't this be inappropriate? It almost makes Elijah and Moses equal to God.
- In John 15, Jesus commanded the disciples to love one another. He told them they were no longer his servants but his friends. He had made known to them all he heard from his Father. Did they think he was God?
- If they understood Christ was God, would Peter and the other disciples have given up and gone back to their fishing in Galilee?

**Christ was still a MAN after his resurrection**

The Trinitarian dogma of Christ's combined divinity and humanity should end at his death and resurrection. After he was raised from the dead to sit at the right hand of God, his human nature would no longer exist. Yet the Scriptural record continues to describe Jesus as a man, even after he ascended to the right hand of his Father.

“because He (God) has fixed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom He has appointed, and of this He has given assurance to all men by raising him from the dead” (Acts 17:31).
“For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,” (1Tim. 2:5).

Plus — Paul ties this belief to salvation in verses 3 and 4, “God, who desires all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.”

“The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants what must soon take place; and he made it known by sending his angel to his servant John,” (Rev. 1:1).

The Father is Christ’s God

Without a shred of doubt, the Biblical record demonstrates that the Father is described as Christ’s God. Again, our Trinitarian friends will counter that this was a description of the relationship between the Father and His Son during Christ’s human life on earth. But, in truth, the description of the Father as God continues AFTER his resurrection and ascension to Heaven. How is it remotely possible that one person of the Godhead can be the God of the other? Particularly when such language is NEVER used in the other direction or in regard to the Holy Spirit?


[The next verses are all AFTER his resurrection]

“Jesus said to her, ‘Do not hold me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brethren and say to them, I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God’ ” (John 20:17).

“May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom 15:5-6).

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort,” (Rom 15:5-6)

“…that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him,” (Eph 1:17).

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!” (1Pet 1:3).

“…to the only God, our Savior through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and for ever. Amen” (Jude 25).

“He who conquers, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God; never shall he go out of it, and I will write on him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem which comes down from my God out of heaven, and my own new name” (Rev. 3:12).
God and Christ are clearly identified as two separate persons
While similar to the verses used earlier, the Bible clearly differentiates between God and Jesus. Jesus prays to God, God hears his prayers, He is the God of Christ, Christ turns the Kingdom over to Him in the end, etc.

“In these days he went out to the mountain to pray; and all night he continued in prayer to God” (Luke 6:12).

“…yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist” (1Cor 8:6).

“But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a woman is her husband, and the head of Christ is God” (1Cor 11:3).

“For God has put all things in subjection under his feet. But when it says, ‘All things are put in subjection under him,’ it is plain that he is excepted who put all things under him. When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things under him, that God may be everything to every one” (1Cor 15:27-28).

“For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,” (1Tim 2:5).

“and to the assembly of the first-born who are enrolled in heaven, and to a judge who is God of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks more graciously than the blood of Abel” (Heb 12:23-24).

Christ’s own growth and personality
The New Testament record tells very little about Jesus’ childhood. But it does show us that he grew up just like we do, learning from his experiences and gaining knowledge about God. The following two verses from Luke 2 are almost identical to the description given to us in 1st Samuel about the childhood of Samuel himself. Again, these are great descriptions of a Son growing to be a man, but odd for a God.

“And the child [JESUS] grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him” (Luke 2:40).

“And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature, and in favor with God and man” (Luke 2:52).

“In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard for his godly fear. Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered; and being made perfect he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him, being designated by God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek” (Heb 5:7-9).

God is greater than Jesus
Another set of verses in the Bible show that God the Father is greater than his Son. Again, this hierarchy applies to both before and after Christ’s resurrection
from the dead and elevation to the right hand of God.

“The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brethren — him you shall heed —. ….I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brethren; and I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him” (Deut 18:15, 18).

“He said to them, ‘You will drink my cup, but to sit at my right hand and at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father’ ” (Matt 20:23).

“I can do nothing on my own authority; as I hear, I judge; and my judgment is just, because I seek not my own will but the will of him who sent me” (John 5:30).

“You heard me say to you, ‘I go away, and I will come to you. If you loved me, you would have rejoiced, because I go to the Father; for the Father is greater than I’ ” (John 14:28).

“He said to them, ‘It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has fixed by His own authority’ ” (Acts 1:7).

“Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified” (Acts 2:36).

“In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets; but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. He reflects the glory of God and bears the very stamp of his nature, upholding the universe by his word of power. When he had made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much superior to angels as the name he has obtained is more excellent than theirs” (Heb 1:1-4).

Two separate wills

“And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, “My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt” (Matt 26:39).

“I can do nothing on my own authority; as I hear, I judge; and my judgment is just, because I seek not my own will but the will of him who sent me” (John 5:30).

“And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross” (Phil 2:8).

“Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name” (John 20:30-31).

(Concluded)

Lee Livermore (Avon, IN)
Hope — (3) What’s in it for me?
Immortality and so much more!

“Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake; some to everlasting life” (Dan 12:2).

Hope springs eternal from the Bible.

There was a group of students talking together when one of them asked the others, “Where do you think you go when you die?” The Buddhist friend stated that he believed in reincarnation and that he hoped to become a flying eagle with his rebirth. The Muslim friend acknowledged that he would likely go to hell for a short period, but he hoped to go to Paradise and be with Allah. The Orthodox Jewish friend believed that he would remain unconscious in death until Messiah comes and then he would be made immortal. The Pentecostal friend believed that he would instantly go to heaven and receive his reward along with many others. Finally, the Catholic friend said that due to his not-so-righteous life, he figured he’d go to Purgatory when he dies and wait to be prayed up to heaven by one of his relatives! Yes, that was really his plan.

The Bible has a lot to say about immortality. Since Adam and Eve first sinned, mankind has been seeking for ways to escape the reality and shortness of our lives. Fortunately, our Creator has set eternity in our hearts (Eccl 3:11), allowing you to think about what happens to you after you die. This hope of immortality is reflected throughout the Bible:

“For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom 6:23).

“Truly, truly I say to you, he who believes has eternal life” (John 6:47).

“And this is the promise which He Himself made to us: eternal life” (1John 2:25).

“And as for me, I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last He will take His stand on the earth. Even after my skin is destroyed, yet from my flesh I shall see God” (Job 19:25-26).

“For this perishable body must put on imperishability, and this mortal body must put on immortality” (1Cor 15:53).

Doesn’t everyone have an immortal soul?

Actually, no. If fact, only one man is currently immortal and that is Jesus (1Tim 6:16). Every other person — past and present — is mortal and looks forward to being made immortal. The Bible gives great emphasis to the nature of man and how we are merely composed of dust. From the beginning (Gen 2:7, 3:19), God tells his creation that man is dust and he shall return to dust. We are the clay (Isa 64:8). We are of the earth, earthly (1Cor 15:47). We will return to dust when the Almighty takes back His spirit (Job 34:13-14). We are but dust and ashes (Gen 18:27). The wise king Solomon tells us what happens when we die: “the dust returns to the earth as it was, and the breath (spirit) returns to God who gave it” (Eccl 12:7).
Perhaps surprisingly, the words ‘immortal’ and ‘soul’ do not occur together anywhere in the Bible. This is in contrast to most other religions, and even Christian interpretations of the Bible. For whatever reason, it seems that many people continue to believe the serpent’s lie: “You shall surely not die.” One reason is that most Christians misunderstand how the Bible defines the word ‘soul’. The common belief is expressed like this: Soul = Spirit. But the Biblical definition differs by declaring: Soul = Body + Spirit. Understand the difference? The soul is not a spiritual or invisible part of a person, but the entire person including the body and spirit. Consider the following evidence regarding ‘Soul’ in Scripture:

Many modern translations use the word ‘you’ or ‘person’ or ‘lives’ in place of the Hebrew/Greek word for ‘Soul’. A good example is from Ezek 18:4 which says “the soul that sins shall die” in KJV, but “the person who sins shall die” in NIV.

Of the hundreds of times the Hebrew word nephesh (soul) is used in the Bible, the vast majority are used regarding the soul dying. Souls are destroyed (Ezek 22:27; Lev 23:30; Psa 22:29; Josh 11:11). God can destroy the soul (Matt 10:28).

Nephesh (soul) is also translated as “corpse” or “dead body” in Num 9:6.

The first passage in the Bible with “soul” is in Gen 2:7 where “the LORD God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living being (soul/nephesh).” This sets the precedent throughout Scripture for using the word “soul” better as ‘a person’. Soul = Body + Spirit (or breath of life from God). ‘Soul’ and ‘spirit’ can be divided (Heb 4:12). Our soul is not the same as our heart/spirit (Matt 22:37).

The Bible uses a phrase “asleep in Christ” to describe how Godly believers will remain unconscious after death, waiting for their resurrection (1Cor 15:6, 18; 1Thess 4:13-15; 2Pet 3:4; Psa 103:14-16).

The Epic of Gilgamesh was one of the earliest known writings in ancient Mesopotamia. That story is about the quest to become immortal and how all mankind is bound to die as mortal. Ultimately the poignant words addressed to Gilgamesh in the midst of his quest foreshadow the end result: “The life that you are seeking you will never find. When the gods created man they allotted to him death, but life they retained in their own keeping.” Surprisingly, this conclusion parallels the same summary given throughout the Bible.
What good is immortality?

In Greek mythology, Sisyphus was a king who was eternally punished by being compelled to roll a huge rock up a steep hill. Unfortunately, before he could reach the top of the hill, the rock would always roll back down, forcing him to begin again and again and again. Sisyphus was fortunate to gain immortality and live forever, but his quality of life wasn't exactly what he had in mind. Happily, those who inherit eternal life don’t need to worry about such problems, but what is it we will do with infinite time on our hands?

Is your great hope to sit on your own cloud, playing a harp and doing nothing for eternity? Is it to rest aimlessly with no purpose and no meaning? What are Disciples of Christ promised besides the quantity (longevity) of eternal life? What is the quality of eternal life that makes every personal sacrifice absolutely worthwhile? The Bible has answers that may surprise you. Later in this series (part 10) we will learn that the Kingdom of God will be on earth and will give Biblical evidence of a 1,000-year time period called the Millennium. Here’s what we have to look forward to as our reward on earth:

- We shall be “kings and priests serving our God, and they will reign on earth” (Rev 5:10). We will have secondary authority to reign over, and teach, the remaining mortals. This parallels Christ’s parable where the faithful servants were rewarded with five or ten cities to rule over (Luke 19:12-19).
- There will be universal peace throughout the earth. The sign in front of the United Nations about never learning war anymore will be fulfilled (Isa 2:2-4). All modern weapons will be destroyed (Hos 2:18; Ezek 39:9). Jerusalem, the city of peace, will finally command peace as the capital of the world and center to all nations (Zech 9:10; Mic 4:1-4).
- There will be plenty of food for all peoples and no famine or hunger (Ezek 36:29-30; Isa 49:10; Rev 7:16). Our reward involves a return to an agricultural society with the ground yielding its full fruit and no more thorns and thistles (Mic 4:4; Amos 9:13-15).
- Animals will be peaceful, just as we imagine they were in the Garden in Eden (Isa 11:6-9; Isa 35:9; Isa 65:25). All animals will be vegetarians.
- Sickness and physical handicaps will be obsolete. “The eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then the lame shall leap like a deer; and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy” (Isa 35:5; Isa 33:24).
- Those who are counted worthy of eternal life will not sit idly, but will work building houses and cities (Isa 60:10; Isa 65:21-22; Amos 9:14).
- Unlike the reward for martyrs in the Koran, the Bible says those saved will not have sex or be married in the Kingdom (Luke 20:36). We will recognize people we know today, just as Jesus’ disciples recognized him after he was resurrected (Luke 24:38-43; John 21:7).
- We will be given a spiritual body with Holy Spirit powers. We will prophesy, see visions and travel instantly so that today’s physical limitations will no longer exist (Joel 2:28-32; 1Cor 15:49-50; Acts 8:39-40).
• We will become like angels (Luke 20:36; Rom 8:23). We will also rule over angels (1Cor 6:3).
• There will be no tears or sadness anymore (Isa 35:10; Isa 65:19; Rev 21:4).
• The entire earth will be filled with the glory of God, and peace and righteousness will rule (Numb 14:21; Gal 3:8). “The earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea” (Hab 2:14).

The best present ever!

Do you remember the last time you had a birthday and thought you knew when someone was buying you a great gift? You were excited with anticipation as you thought about it a lot and hoped that it would come true. You might have restrained yourself a bit just in case it wasn’t true and you ended up with a less-than-expected gift. Did you ever receive a gift that was wildly beyond your imagination? Something that was so incredible that it seemed impossible realistically. (Think Cinderella!)

You might recall that Jesus gave such incredible gifts to people that they couldn’t have imagined possible. There was the man born blind to whom Jesus gave sight. And the disciples who caught so much fish that they knew it was a great miracle. Remember the man named Legion to whom Jesus gave back his right mind? Or the 5,000 people who received an unexpected meal? What about the daughter of Jairus, whom Jesus raised from the dead? Or the deaf man near the Sea of Galilee who Jesus cured with his saliva? Can you imagine being severely handicapped physically or mentally, and then receiving healing beyond your expectation?

The most wonderful thing about hope in the Bible is that God has promised to give his faithful children eternal gifts beyond our wildest imagination. We’re told that present sufferings and problems are not worth comparing to the amazing glory and reward to be revealed in the future (Rom 8:18-25). The Bible compares the entire earth as if in waiting with birth pangs for the delivery of a heavenly earth. This is the New Jerusalem, which will come down out of heaven and fill the whole earth with righteousness and God’s glory (Rev 21:2). The most amazing thing is not only that God has promised great gifts to his servants. It’s that we are not even capable of understanding how wonderful our future can be!

“I don’t want to achieve immortality through my work. I want to achieve it through not dying!” Woody Allen

“We do not know what to do with this short life, yet we want another, which will be eternal.” Anatole France

“Strive to enter through the narrow gate...for the gate is narrow and the road is hard that leads to life, and there are few who find it” (Matt 7:13-14).

The Bible says:
• Mankind is presently mortal. Only Jesus is immortal today. Gen 2:17; Job 34:14-15; Eccl 9:5-10; 2Tim 1:10; 1Tim 6:16.
• Immortality is a gift of God. Rom 6:23; John 10:28; 1Cor 15:53.
• Additional, unbelievable gifts add to immortality. Rom 8:18; 2Cor 3:7-8.
• “And the scripture was fulfilled which says, ‘and Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness,’ and Abraham was called the friend of God” (James 2:23).

Chicago, Ill Ecclesia

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In a Modern Hospital

A few months ago I spent some time in a modern hospital, watching by the side of a loved one. Past our door rolled the stretchers of those poor afflicted ones who were going to or returning from the operating rooms. We saw the suffering and the anguish written upon many of the faces, and recalled the words of the Great Physician who was able to lay his hands upon the halt, the deaf, the blind and the mentally disordered ones, and with a word restore them whole and in their right mind. And we thought of the day when returned from heaven to this earth, Jesus of Nazareth would either in person or through his saints, who are to share the “powers of the age to come,” visit such institutions and bid all the inmates, “rise up and walk.”

Even now we have a great consolation in the knowledge that we “have a great High Priest who can be touched with the feelings of our infirmities” and can lift up fainting spirits and strengthen failing hearts and thus bring back from the brink of death those who trust in him. We heard the moans of the dying, and the glad greetings of those who were recovering. One small boy, who was recovering, shouted in high glee the words of the old song, “Old man MacDonald had a farm.”

But in other cases where misery was unrelieved, the long watches of the night were so prolonged that time seemed to have turned backward in its flight. Down the corridor was the maternity ward, and each evening there was a procession of the young mothers who before lights were out, came forth from their own rooms to see their tiny offspring, each in its own crib, and some in the incubators*. The mothers were arrayed in gay robes of varied colors — pink, blue, purple, red — and one in radiant cloth of gold! And again our thoughts went back to that Mother of Bethlehem, lying in a stall in the stable, with the young child in the manger. And what a difference! No white-robed nurses to grant every wish; no drugs to ease the pain; no finery to please the feminine eye; only the blue dress of a woman of Galilee, and swaddling clothes she had brought in anticipation of the “event.”

The words of the “Magnificat” came to mind: “My soul doth magnify the Lord!” Thus spake Mary, of the birth of Jesus. “For He hath regarded the low estate of His handmaiden.” What does this mean? Simply this: God knew the humiliation that would come to Mary because of the virgin birth; He knew of the finger of scorn, the words of reproach, the ostracism that would be her portion. No one would believe her story; she would be an outcast from friends and from her kindred. “He has taken into account the deep humiliation of His handmaiden — this is the meaning of the words.

From the Christadelphian Herald, December 1946

*Editor: How different it is in 2015: the infant spends their time in their mother’s room, usually with the father present. Thus the bonding begins early, just as it must have begun between Mary and her newborn Jesus.
The Life of Timothy

(12) “Do thy diligence to come shortly”

Paul was arrested in Jerusalem at the end of the Third Missionary Journey. He was ultimately taken to Rome where Timothy joined him and assisted him in his work of strengthening and encouraging ecclesias through correspondence. Paul’s Epistles to Titus and his Second Epistle to Timothy reveal that he was released from prison for a time and was able to move about freely.¹

Paul’s situation (and that of all the Christians) changed dramatically in 64 A.D., however. On the night of July 19, the Great Fire of Rome occurred. It damaged or destroyed 70 percent of the city of Rome. The Roman historian Cassius Dio claimed that while the fire raged, the Emperor Nero put on a stage costume and played a dirge for the burning city on his lyre.² Regardless of whether that was part of his reaction,³ the Roman populace was enraged at Nero because they believed he started the fire.⁴,⁵ Seeking to shift their fury away from him, he blamed the fire on the Christians and began a savage persecution of them. The historian, Tacitus, who was young boy at the time, describes what happened as follows:

“Consequently, to get rid of the report, Nero fastened the guilt and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abominations, called Christians [or Chrestians] by the populace ... an immense multitude was convicted, not so much of the crime of firing the city, as of hatred against mankind. Mockery of every sort was added to their deaths. Covered with the skins of beasts, they were torn by dogs and perished, or were nailed to crosses, or were doomed to the flames and burnt, to serve as a nightly illumination, when daylight had expired. Nero offered his gardens for the spectacle, and was exhibiting a show in the circus, while he mingled with the people in the dress of a charioteer or stood aloft on a car. Hence, even for criminals who deserved extreme and exemplary punishment, there arose a feeling of compassion; for it was not, as it seemed, for the public good, but to glut one man’s cruelty, that they were being destroyed.”⁶

As part of Nero’s persecution, the Romans apprehended and imprisoned Paul. He wrote 2nd Timothy from prison in about 67 A.D. Timothy was approximately 37 at the time and was most likely in Ephesus.

“my dearly beloved son”

Many Christians were absolutely terrified by Nero’s ferocious persecution and distanced themselves from Paul. Paul wrote to Timothy: “This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me; of whom are Phygelius…"
“And Hermogenes” (2Tim 1: 5). Even Timothy, who had stood for the Truth in very dangerous situations in the past, needed to be encouraged not to be afraid: “Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands. For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God” (2Tim 1: 6-8). It was a frightening time, and Timothy needed to be a good example to others.

Paul anticipated that he was going to be executed. He longed to see Timothy before he died.7 He wrote: “Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me” (2Tim 4: 9). His great affection for Timothy is shown by the fact that he repeated his urging just several verses later: “Do thy diligence to come before winter. Eubulus greeteth thee, and Pudens, and Linus, and Claudia, and all the brethren” (2Tim 4: 21). Those were among the last inspired words that Paul wrote.

Paul wanted Timothy to come to him quickly, but the guidance Paul gave in 2nd Timothy was not just for immediate application. Some of the Epistle's content was for the time after Paul’s death when Timothy would return to Ephesus to lead the ecclesia, and would no longer have Paul available to advise him. It is a testimony to Paul's love for Timothy that he was thinking of Timothy’s needs (and those of other brothers and sisters) as his own execution was approaching.

Paul told Timothy that there were false doctrines that he needed to resist. One of them was the teaching that the resurrection had past: “And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some” (2Tim 2: 17-18). Paul also told Timothy that he needed to avoid the bickering over unimportant matters that was taking place among certain brethren: “But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes” (2Tim 2: 23). It is truly remarkable that during a time of crisis when believers were being arrested and killed with the utmost cruelty, and when some brothers and sisters were fleeing the meeting in terror, that some of those who remained in the ecclesia were quarreling with each other over unimportant matters. Why weren’t they helping those whose lives had been devastated by the persecution — who had lost homes, livelihoods, parents, spouses, and children? Why weren’t they busy reaching out to those who had become overwhelmed by fear and forsaken the meeting?

In these last days, as the ecclesia is being threatened in a different way — not by Roman persecution but by the influence of the world — we need to make sure that we are doing the hard work of not being ashamed of the Lord Jesus and of helping our brothers and sisters. Let us ensure that we are not being distracted from that work by striving with one another. There are parts of 2nd Timothy that are quite sad. Paul wrote about fighting in the meeting, the spread of false doctrine, brethren forsaking him in his time of need, and his impending death. But there are also parts of 2nd Timothy that are quite stirring in their beauty. Paul calls Timothy “my dearly beloved son,” for example (2Tim1:2). It must have been so wonderful for Timothy to have known that he had a father who truly loved...
him and who appreciated him for the spiritual man that he was, especially given the Bible's indication that he and his natural father were not close. Timothy had probably longed for the acceptance of a father figure. He got that from Paul.

As for Paul, in Timothy he had a son that he could cherish. Timothy shared Paul's love of the Truth and the Brotherhood, and he possessed many of Paul's spiritual qualities (Phil 2:20). At the end of his life, when so many people had deserted him and he had never had a natural family of his own, Paul must have been so thankful that God had given him Timothy. Their relationship is an illustration of the blessings of the Truth in this life.

“Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus”

Paul was executed in about 68 A.D. Timothy must have felt his loss keenly. The Bible does not state anything more about Timothy directly following Paul's death. But his continuing effort in the work of the Truth is clearly indicated. The evidence of his leadership through service and his relentless determination to do right — despite the obstacles — appear in the last book of the Bible.

When Paul wrote 2nd Timothy, the ecclesia at Ephesus was beset with doctrinal problems. Thirty years later, when the Apocalypse was written, Ephesus was a successfully laboring ecclesia, which was commended for its doctrinal soundness.

Tradition has it that Timothy made Ephesus his base and was the leader of the ecclesia there for the rest of his life. Some have suggested that Timothy was “the angel of the ecclesia at Ephesus” to whom the Lord's message in Revelation was directed. That is an interesting conjecture, but nothing more. Regardless of whether he was even alive at the time that Revelation was written, the Lord Jesus' commendation of the Ephesians is, in part, a legacy of Timothy's service to the Truth there: “Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars” (Rev 2: 1-2). In Timothy, the Ephesians had seen a wonderful example of doctrinal soundness and tireless labor in service to the Truth. They had done well in choosing to be like him.

In his last letter to him, Paul told Timothy that there was a need for him to commit the Gospel to “faithful men” who would continue his work in the Truth (2Tim 2:2). Today there continues to be a need for faithful men, women, and young people to step forward and live and speak as those godly people once did. Meditating on the life of Timothy, who was valued of God, and trying to bring his characteristics to
life in our lives can help us to be a part of that group of faithful individuals both
now and, God willing, as kings and priests in the future.

Ryan Mutter, Baltimore, MD

(Concluded)

Notes:
1. See, for example, Titus 3:12 and 2Tim 4:20.
3. Tacitus wrote that Nero opened public buildings and his private gardens during the fire to
shelter people who had been made homeless. He stated that the charge that Nero had played
on the lyre while the city was in flames was “a rumor” that “had gone forth everywhere.” See
5. The fire permitted Nero to rebuild sections of the city according to his design and to purchase
History of Western Civilization.
7. Great courage would be required on Timothy’s part to visit Paul in Rome. Paul was a well-
known Christian during a time in which followers of the Lord were being routinely appre-
hended and executed. It appears that visiting Paul in prison had cost a brother from Ephesus
named Onesiphorus his life. Paul mentioned Onesiphorus’ faithful service in 2nd Timothy.

Special Invitation

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

You, your family and friends are invited to the
40th annual Church of God of the Abrahamic Faith Gathering
at Denison University in Granville, Ohio, July 20-26, 2015.

Bro. John Linsenmeier: “Behold the Lamb of God, Who Takes Away the Sin of
the World”
Bro. Steve Davis: “Moving on to Maturity: A Study in the Letter to the
Hebrews”
Bro. John Downer: “Forty Years of Preparation”

Contact Bro. Brad Rek at 330-609-6957 or brad.rek@gmail.com.
Visit our website at www.abrahamicfaithgathering.org for more
information and to view talks from last year.
It’s Ready to Use

In the months to come, God willing, the JOYSS section of The Tidings magazine will feature more ready-to-use Sunday school materials. Given available magazine space and the huge variety of teaching materials that could be featured, this will need to be a carefully managed venture. Still it is prayerfully hoped that this shift in emphasis will be helpful. It will help, too, if you, as readers and teachers will give me feedback and suggestions. And if you have a neat class activity that has worked for you, I would like to hear about it.

For now, the materials will be offered without a lot of “how to use” instructions. If there is one thing I have learned over the years, it is that Sunday school teachers are resourceful and don’t need me to tell them how to do things! So please have at it!

(1) Gimme, Gimme, Gimme! A life management case study

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied” (Matt 5:6).

“Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?” (Matt 6:25-26)

The Problem

• Only a few days into the exodus journey, what was Israel’s complaint? Exod 15:22-24.
• One month into the journey, what was Israel’s complaint? Exod 16:1-3.
• At the end of the exodus journey, in the 40th year, was the new generation of Israelites any better than their parents? What was their complaint? Numb 21:4-5.
• Did God let Israel starve to death during the exodus? What lesson did He want His people to learn? Deut 8:2-3.

A Modern Equivalent

Several years ago the food at one of our Bible schools was noticeably subpar. Before the week was half over, a group of young people formed a committee, selected a spokesperson, and complained to the Bible School Committee. A list of the kinds of food the young people wanted was drawn up and presented to the Bible School Committee. In the meantime, some of the young people started going off campus to eat and bring in food. This was a clear violation of Bible school rules.
Questions for thought and discussion
1) How about us? Are we any different from the Israelites of old?
2) How many of the Bible school students that did not go off campus for food starved to death during the week? Take a guess!
3) What is the purpose of Bible School anyway?
4) Identify similarities between the conduct of the young people in this case study and that of the Israelites during the Exodus.
5) If we are resolved to be different from the average complaining human being, what kind of attitude must we develop toward life’s problems?
6) How did Jesus understand the main issue of this case study? Matt 4:1-4.

(2) A Matter of Life or Debt. A life management case study
This is the all-too-common story of a young couple that mismanages their lives. It is the kind of story that faithful young people can decide to prevent before it happens.

The Problem
Brother and Sister X are in their mid-thirties. He is a businessman and she works in the health care field. Their combined salaries come to well over six figures (more than $100,000 a year). They are also in deep financial trouble.

After their daughter was born, Bro. and Sis. X decided to move out of their modest apartment and buy a house. They wanted to live in a respectable neighborhood, and the house they bought turned out to cost more than they really wanted to pay. Their monthly mortgage payments are now almost twice what they used to pay for rent.

The house needed a facelift. The kitchen was outdated and the appliances were a bit old, so they ran up hundreds of dollars in restaurant bills over a two-month period, while borrowing thousands more to remodel the kitchen. To this was added other decorating costs throughout the house, some new furniture, a home entertainment system, and a large new deck in the back — all bought with credit.

Bro. X often has to meet business clients around town, so he decided to get a nicer car. The new car added a few hundred more to the monthly bills. At the same time, the price of heating oil went up unexpectedly, and utility bills took a sharp increase.

Today Bro. and Sis. X are tens of thousands of dollars in debt, not counting their mortgage and car payments. They have “maxed” several credit cards and cannot always meet the minimum monthly payments on all of them.

The debt just gets deeper and deeper. It is possible they will face foreclosure on their home. Bro. and Sis. X quarrel bitterly with each other about who is responsible for the mess they are in.

Questions for thought and discussion
1) Can Christadelphian families get themselves into financial problems like this? Is it justifiable?
2) What do you think are some of the reasons that people get into financial problems like this? Does it speak well for their priorities in life? Does it speak well for their understanding of Bible principles? What principles?

3) Identify as many things as possible in this story that indicate that Bro. and Sis. X are not facing life or themselves realistically, let alone faithfully.

4) What have Bro. and Sis. X done to their spiritual life? How do you know? How does Matt 13:22 apply in their case?

5) How can any Christadelphian avoid getting into a mess like this? (Here are a few Bible references that help: Prov 8:18-21; 11:4; 11:28; 13:7; 23:4-5; Luke 12:15; 14:28-30; 16:10-13; 1Tim 6:6-11. Can you think of others?)

6) What would you do to get out of a financial mess like this?

7) What alternatives did Bro. and Sis. X have to:
   a) Purchasing the expensive house they did?
   b) Running up restaurant bills?
   c) Borrowing thousands to remodel the kitchen?
   d) Getting a fancier car?
   e) Redecorating and purchasing expensive things on credit?
   f) Being caught off guard by the rise in oil prices and utility bills?
   g) Getting additional credit cards and “maxing” them (i.e., using the cards to their credit limit)?
   h) Quarreling over who is at fault for the mess they are in?

8) Why do you think Bro. and Sis. X did not choose some of these alternatives in the first place?

9) Do you think it is possible for you to get into a financial difficulty like this? Why?

10) Based on this case study, identify:
    a) One thing that contributes to bad decision making.
    b) Two principles of good decision making.

Digital copies of these case studies can be obtained on request.

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www.pinterest.com/2harps4u/ (Meriden, CT)

“Neither did we eat any man’s bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you: Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us. For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat. For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies. Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread” (2Thess 3:8-12)
In the wilderness of En-gedi…

“David’s heart smote him, because he had cut off Saul’s skirt” (1Sam 24)

David, unable to find safety amongst the Ziphites, crosses over into the wilderness of En-gedi which is located near the western shore of the Dead Sea; an area characterized by an abundance of caves and cliffs — some 2000 feet tall. It was a region noted for its extremely harsh terrain, and would have been difficult for Saul and his men to find David. Conder (‘Tent Work in Palestine’ ii 126) describes this area as an almost impassable area, so much so that it took four and a half hours of hard riding for his party to travel only 6 miles. What an unrelenting hatred Saul must have had towards David. Imagine the effort and time it would have taken Saul and his men to search every cave and ravine for David, especially when some caves are said to be so massive that they are able to hold as many as 3000 people! It would have been quite the task that lay before Saul, and was undoubtedly the reason why he took so many men with him in his search.

As Saul and his men were combing through this vast and rugged wilderness they came to the sheepcotes where Saul entered to “cover his feet”, or, as most modern translations say “relieve himself”. These ‘sheepcotes’ were piles of stones that where built up like a wall around the mouth of a cave to keep the sheep in a protected and enclosed area, and to keep wild beasts out. Furthermore, there were typically thorns placed around and on top of the stones to protect the sheep from wild beasts climbing over the walls. This would have made this cave a perfect place for Saul to enter into without fear of being interrupted. However, we see that Saul was incorrect in his assumption that the cave was empty².
As Saul entered into the cave, David’s men must have been elated. Finally their chance had come. Finally God had delivered them from living their lives as fugitives fleeing from the King, unable to worship their God in the way the law required. The time had come for all of that to change. David had been told by the prophet Samuel that he would become the next King of Israel, and now it seemed it was his for the taking (cp Matt 4:8-10; John 6:15.) But David realized that this kingdom was not his for the taking, and that he had no right to stretch forth his hand against the Lord’s anointed (1Sam 24:5; 26:9-11.) Instead, David approached the king and “cut off the skirt of Saul’s robe privately (unnoticed NIV).”

**The cutting off of the skirt…**

There is quite a difference between the skirt that David cut off of Saul’s garments, and the skirt or hem as we know it today. In ancient times the hem of a Jew’s garment was not simply just a fold in the bottom edge used to prevent the edge from fraying and coming apart. The Hebrew word ‘kanaph’ means wing, or skirt and it refers to the extremity. Attached to this ‘kanaph’ was a ‘tsiytsith’ [a fringe or tassel] (Numb 15:37-41; Deut. 22:12.) A part of this tassel that hung from the skirt of their garment was a cord of blue which signified the heavenly calling to which they had been called. It would have served as a reminder to the wearer, as well as to the observer, to “recall all the commandments of the Lord and observe them” (Deut 15:40). Thus all Israel were to have in their tassels this reminder of the covenant they had made to be a holy people. A reminder to have a spiritual mindset and ultimately to walk on the path of righteousness. They were, in essence, representatives of the LORD on earth: “a kingdom of priests and a holy nation” (Exod 19:6, cp Phil 2:14-16). This addition to the dress of the Jews was what made them visibly stand out amongst the Gentiles. It is significant to note that if a Gentile was to enter into the household of a Jew, one of the first things they were required to do was to change their dress so that it conformed to the Jewish law “it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, Even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you” (Deut 21:10-13; cp Zech 8:23).

This tassel then was much more than just a piece of their clothing. It made a statement about the wearer. For example, we are told that the Pharisees were reprimanded by our Lord Jesus Christ for enlarging their fringes, suggesting that
they were attempting to magnify their own importance (Matt 23:5.) When Christ was walking among the crowds, there were those who sought his healing powers, “that they might only touch the fringe of his garment, and as many as touched were made whole” (Matt 14:36.) There was a common understanding that the fringe of a man's garment had a special significance and importance “And, behold, a woman, which was diseased with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind him, and touched the hem of his garment” (Matt 9:20) When David came to Saul in the cave and “cut[s] off the skirt of Saul's robe privily”, instantly David's heart smote him.

David's heart smote him...

Initially this seems very strange that David would be so stricken by the act of removing the skirt and tassel from Saul's garment. It seems to be just a simple sign that David was in close proximity to Saul and had the opportunity to kill him, but ultimately refused to do so. Why then was David so affected by this action? There is only one other place where we read that David's heart smote him. We read, “And David's heart smote him after that he had numbered the people. And David said unto the LORD, I have sinned greatly in that I have done: and now, I beseech thee, O LORD, take away the iniquity of thy servant; for I have done very foolishly” (2Sam 24:10). Even taking into account the fact that this skirt and tassel were symbols of the covenant that Israel was under, symbols of the spiritual life that each Israelite was to live, why would David be so affected by the cutting off of Saul’s skirt?

A part of the answer can be found by looking back at the life of Saul when Samuel came to him after he failed to utterly destroy the Amalekites. Samuel informed him that he had “rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD hath rejected thee from being king over Israel. And as Samuel turned about to go away, he laid hold upon the skirt of his mantle, and it rent. And Samuel said unto him, The LORD hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day, and hath given it to a neighbour of thine, that is better than thou” (1Sam 15:26-28.)

This story, which doubtlessly had been told to David, would have instantly come to remembrance as soon as he saw the skirt of Saul in his hand. Saul had sought to take matters into his own hands, and as a result the kingdom would be rent from him and given to one that was better than him. One who would recognize his place, and would allow God to rule through him, not taking matters into his own hands.

This act of cutting off of the skirt of Saul was not simply an indication that he had been near the king, had the opportunity to kill the king. He had not simply removed the tassel which was a sign of the righteous walk that every Israelite was to have, but he had also reminded the king that he would no longer be king because of his failure to heed the instruction of the LORD. The kingdom would be “rent” from him as a result of his poor leadership “and given to a neighbor” of his. David's actions, which initially seemed harmless, had a much deeper meaning and really gives us a look into the spiritual disposition of the man David.

We also read in that “the men of David said unto him, Behold the day of which
the LORD said unto thee, Behold, I will deliver thine enemy into thine hand, that thou mayest do to him as it shall seem good unto thee” (1Sam 24:4). David reacts to his men’s words by arising and cutting “off the skirt of Saul’s robe privily.” In doing this, David was heeding the instruction of his men and attempting to take matters into his own hands, in essence proving that he was guilty of the same malfeasance as Saul.

The typical man would have seen his enemy come into the cave, and instantly seized the opportunity to kill him. A typical God-fearing man would likely have acted in the same way David had; by approaching his enemy and taking some evidence that he could later use to persuade his enemy that he meant him no harm. However, we see in David a true man after God’s own heart. David took the evidence that he had been near the king, and instantly regretted his actions. He was so remorseful that he responds in the same way as he does when Abishai offers to smite Saul to the ground with his own spear by saying, “The LORD forbid that I should stretch forth mine hand against the LORD’s anointed” (1Sam 26:8-11.) He likened this action of cutting off the skirt of the king to the act of killing the king. This is the magnitude of the trespass David saw in his action. He realized that he, even in a minor way, had taken matters into his own hands when in reality God was in control. He had no right to expedite his own ascension to the throne. David returned to his men and spoke unto them, saying “The LORD forbid that I should do this thing unto my master, the LORD’s anointed, to stretch forth mine hand against him, seeing he is the anointed of the LORD” (1Sam 24:6). So David realized the foolishness of his actions, returned to his men and reproved them. The only reason he would do this, would be if it was his men that had initially suggested that he should stretch forth his hand against the LORD’s anointed. “So David stayed his servants with these words, and suffered them not to rise against Saul.”

**Conclusion**

Finally this story, which many of us would have heard numerous times as children in Sunday school, comes together. It is not only a story that only reveals to us the mindset of Saul, and how unjustified his hatred of David was, but it also reveals to us the frame of mind that David had even in the earlier years of his life. How he was constantly seeking to serve the LORD and to let the LORD’s will become his own.

The principles we see in this chapter can be applied to us as well. We must not try to take matters into our own hands, but allow God to rule in our lives. We must keep our skirt and tassels about us, visible to everyone around so that we may “be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom [we] shine as lights in the world” (Phil 2:15). So that we, when our future King returns to sit upon the throne of David, “may rejoice in the day of Christ” (Phil. 2:16).

Seth Robinson (Thousand Oaks, CA)

**Notes:**
1. This book can be downloaded from the Internet, as of March 2015, from archive.org.
2. A Jewish tradition is that God caused a spider to weave a web at the entrance to the cave, so Saul assumed no one had been there recently.
Reflections

On a Magnolia Bush

Some years ago we planted a magnolia bush in our garden and waited for the springtime when its large blooms would prove a beauty spot on the lawn. It bloomed sparsely for a season or two and then ceased. We dug about it and fertilized the soil, but to no avail; it barely survived the next year.

Then we learned the proper treatment for it. Immediately it sprang into new life. From out of its roots came forth a new shoot which grew so rapidly that soon it became the main stem of the plant and buds for the next season formed in profusion. As we watched the transformation we remembered the history of Israel, and its failure to bring forth righteousness; and there came to mind the prophecies concerning the Seed of David, the Messiah, the Righteous Branch.

For ages Israel had not responded to the treatment of the prophets who were sent to speak in the name of God and who endeavored to awaken the people to spirituality and righteousness. Then God did something. He sent His only begotten Son, and there was fulfilled the words of the Prophet Isaiah “There shall come forth a Rod out of the stem of Jesse and a Branch shall grow out of his roots” (Isa 11:1).

Jesse was the father of David and this prophecy referred to the coming of David’s “greater Son” — the Christ — who would spring out of the line of David at a time when Israel would be in an almost hopeless condition. At his birth it was said by the angel Gabriel, “He shall be great and shall be called the Son of the Highest, and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David, and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end” (Luke 1:32-33).

Here in our garden we had an illustration of the revival of the hopes of the faithful in Israel who had waited for the “consolation” and rejoiced to see the Lord’s Anointed. Israel as a whole did not respond to this opportunity to receive the Messiah: “He came to his own but his own received him not” (John 1:11).

But the “Rod out of the stem of Jesse” has grown to be the “Tree of Life” in the garden of the Lord. In him all the promises of God are centered and through this “Branch of Righteousness” all of God’s plans and purposes will be accomplished. As the new strong shoot grew and sent forth its own branches, the old, withered branches of the original stock were pruned away. How like Israel of old — they were “broken off because of unbelief.” And a people (the Gentiles) who had not known God were caused to come forth and blossom from the strength of the original tree.

From this we see the character of the divine plan of salvation. God intended from the beginning to bless all nations, who would hear His voice. He chose the Jewish people as the means of sending His blessing and the knowledge of His ways all over the world. But the Jews in selfish egotism thought that they alone were the favored recipients of God’s favor. The mere mention of the Gentiles as possible
benefactors of God’s mercy was enough to rouse the Jewish mind to fury, as so often occurred in the life of Paul.

And this selfishness withered the Jewish soul and caused him to fail in his God-given opportunity to serve all mankind. But God would not be thwarted. He sent His Son to be a “light to lighten the Gentiles.”

And that Son of God who was also Son of David, grew up to be the Rod out of the stem of Jesse to whom the “Gentiles were to seek” and find righteousness through the forgiveness of their sins because of their faith in God’s “Branch of Righteousness.”

And there in the lawn my magnolia tree bears witness in its own “natural” way to God’s “mystery of the gospel” as to how the Gentiles should be brought into the blessings of the covenant which He promised to Abraham, and become fellow-heirs of the household of faith; and how the “Branch” of David should become the “tree of life” for the healing of the nations.

*From the Christadelphian Herald, March 1947*
Dear Bro. Peter,

I am writing to comment on the article titled, “Why will the Law be restored in the Millennial Kingdom” (The Tidings, Jan 2015, page 32.). The article states, “Even Christ will be offering burnt offerings and sin offerings outside that fourth temple in the divine plan” (Ezek 45:17,22).

This, surely, is a serious misunderstanding of Scripture and a serious misunderstanding of the immortal person of the Lord Jesus. Ezek 45:22 states:

“On that day the prince shall provide for himself and all the people of the land a young bull for a sin offering.” (RSV)

Jesus does not need to offer a sin offering for himself. He was, and is, sinless. To suggest that he needs to offer a sin offering for himself, is completely incorrect. Whatever this verse means, it most certainly does not refer to Jesus. The prince here has to be a mortal person, capable of sinning.

Your brother in Christ Jesus,

Ian Hyndman (Beechworth, Victoria, Australia. Feb 7 2015)

Reply

Dear Bro Peter:

I am happy to respond to Bro. Ian’s objection to the understanding Jesus Christ has to be the prince who will offer a sin offering for himself and the people in the temple during the restored Kingdom of God.

There is certainly no question that Christ is now and will always subsequently be immortal and without sin assigned against him in any way. That recognition does not eliminate the appropriate application of the observation I presented. Jesus still has work to perform in the defeat of sin, and he is the only one qualified to do this. No other possible application of the “Prince” would have the capacity to defeat sin as Jesus still has to accomplish. So far he has only defeated sin in himself. This corresponds to the second of the three maturing stages of sin that James highlights (James 1:14-15). The first is the guilt free stage of temptation, generated from within our sin cursed nature. The second stage is the conception of sin, which does apply guilt. The third is the full maturity of sin, bringing death which is the divine answer for sin. While Jesus was certainly tempted and died to sin, he never allowed temptation to conceive into the guilt assignment stage of sin (2nd maturity sin stage). He clave the power of sin in his death by experiencing the first and last sin maturing stages, but never the second, validating his Father’s righteousness in the judgment of death for sin. This is why we break the bread (representing his body).

Christ still has two more applications of sin to defeat. The first stage of lustful temptation emanating unbidden from human nature has to be defeated in the
immortalization of the saints at the beginning, as well as the end of the Millennial Kingdom. Our sin producing nature must be covered (atoned) with immortality (1Cor 15:51-54; 2Cor 5:1-4). After the Sabbath Kingdom of the seventh day has ended, that third and last sin maturing stage will be eliminated in circumcision like fashion on that eighth divine day. This is the last enemy: death (1Cor 15:26). After Jesus eliminates death (the third sin maturing stage) he will deliver the Kingdom to his Father (1Cor 15:24) in the exact state that was intended before the first day of Yahweh’s creative activity. Jesus Christ, the only possible “Prince” of the Millennial Kingdom, exclusively has the capacity to defeat these additional maturity stages in the progression of sin. The full comprehensive understanding of what constitutes sin is provided by John: All unrighteousness is sin (1John 5:17). Whatever does not qualify as divinely right does qualify as sin. The reference to merely transgressional sin from 1John 3:4 should never be mistaken as being comprehensive.

These three defeats of sin by our savior are spelled out in his very name. There are six letters forming the name of Jesus in the Greek text of the New Testament: iota, eta, sigma, omicron, upsilon, and sigma. The corresponding numerical values of these 6 letters add up to 888. Just as the man of sin is identified by triple sixes (Rev 13:18), the man of righteousness is identified by triple eights. These three eights derived from the six Greek letters of our savior’s name have two primary applications. One is the three maturing stages of sin from which Jesus must save all of creation over the course of three divine days of 1,000 years each, prophetically projected by the three full days and nights that death had dominion over our savior in the tomb. The second is the three salvation events in the divine plan when sin will be covered with immortality, when six will become eight on three occasions. Six is the number of the curse of sin and death. Eight is the number endlessly associated with immortality, salvation and our Messiah. His was the first immortalization almost two divine days preceding the second (as prophesied in Hos 6:1-3). The second will be the immortalization of the saints at the beginning of the Millennial Kingdom and the third will be the immortalization of the remaining saints at the conclusion of the Millennial Kingdom.

This 6-8-3 pattern of our savior’s name is repeated subtly in many divine shadows, emphasizing the same lesson to those within the enlightened community with seeing eyes and hearing ears. The structural design of the Ark of the Covenant was achieved by six surfaces being joined at eight corners where third surfaces met. Abram’s covenant of heaven and earth required the cleaving of three three-year old beasts, making six sacrificial components to which two whole birds were added to make the necessary eight total sacrificial components. Additionally, those three beasts cleaved into six components each had eight foundational cloven hoof components upon which they stood. There are many, many applications of this shadow pattern to demonstrate the three applications when our savior will defeat sin with righteousness and replace death with life, replacing the six with the eight at three points in the divine plan.

The fact that our Prince has no guilty sin assigned to him is actually what qualifies him to offer the Millennial Kingdom sin offering at the temple, as he is the only
The Prince

The most important personage referred to in the chapters of Ezekiel dealing with matters concerning the Sanctuary is the Prince. The title is almost anonymous, as nothing is said about him that specifically indicates who he is and why he is uniformly described by that title. Yet he occupies so important a position in the last nine chapters of the Prophet's writings that he must be a person of supreme importance. Who, and what is he?

In earlier chapters of Ezekiel the term is applied to the reigning king of Israel. It occurred, for example, on the occasion when Ezekiel acted the part of an emigrant, and it was said, “This oracle concerns the prince in Jerusalem” (Ezek 12:10) — the prince being the king. It occurred also in the reference to King Zedekiah when the words were used, “O unhallowed wicked one, prince of Israel, whose day has come, the time of your final punishment” (Ezek 21:25). On the latter of these two occasions it was further said, “There shall not be even a trace of it until he comes whose right it is; and to him I will give it.” He whose right it is, is unquestionably Jesus the Christ, the son of David, “Great David's greater son,” of whom it was said by the angel who spoke to Mary of Nazareth, “He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David” (Luke 1:32). It is obvious, therefore, that the Prince of Ezekiel's prophecy is the same — Jesus Christ, Israel's Messiah. When the use of the term in previous chapters is examined it will be realized that this is the only conclusion that can be drawn. When the Prophet referred to the One Shepherd who is to be set up over the house of Israel, he, speaking for God, said “I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd. And I, the Lord, will be their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them; I, the Lord, have spoken” (Ezek 34:23-24). In the visions of dry bones and the united sticks, the same idea is expressed, “My servant David shall be king over them, and they shall all have one shepherd” (Ezek 37:24). In all of these quotations the application is the same; Israel's Messiah is referred to — God's beloved Son. David means beloved, and he it is whose right it will be to occupy the supreme position when the Sanctuary is built.

The Book of the Prophet Ezekiel, W.H Boulton, 1962 Edition p 289
Costa Rica Bible School 2014 and trip to El Salvador

Greetings, brothers and sisters! I would like to tell you of our year-end activities in Costa Rica, where God blessed our Bible school with three lovely baptisms. Our new brother and sisters are Steven Cascante, Yuliana Rivera and Marjorie Alvarado. In another vein, we thank Bro. Dennis Paggi of the Verdugo Hills Ecclesia in California for coming down to visit us and for leading a series of studies based on Paul’s letter to the Philippians.

After the end of the school, held from December 19th to 21st, a group of young people accompanied by a few more-experienced brethren and sisters departed for El Salvador to enjoy the fellowship of our counterparts there. We visited all three ecclesias and attended their Bible school on the weekend following ours. Then we left to return to Costa Rica, very grateful for the hospitality and affection of the Salvadoran branch of our spiritual family.
Back home, our ecclesia bid farewell to the year 2014 in our hall, sharing a delicious meal, games, photos of our trip, readings and prayers. May the New Year be filled with blessings for all of us and may we see each other again soon — if not in this life, then in the Kingdom.

El Salvador Bible School 2014

The three Salvadoran ecclesias held our annual Bible school last December, joining in fellowship and welcoming visitors from different countries so that we could live out together a brief but precious foretaste of the kingdom. Mechanical problems with the vehicles taking us to the school site 45 minutes outside the capital city caused some anxiety, but these were solved with the aid of brethren and helpful passers-by and soon we had all arrived to be allotted our rooms, have a good lunch and get on with the rest of the activities.
We were blessed with a good number of visiting young people from Costa Rica and the brethren and sisters shepherding them. Bro. Victor and Sis. Marina García and family drove over from Guatemala, while Bro. Diego and Sis. Nelly Millán flew all the way from Quito, Ecuador; also present was Bro. Vit Reznicek of the Czech Republic, presently residing here. Regrettably, some of our members had to miss all or parts of the school because of work or illness, but even so, by the end there were 115 of us.

Bro. Jim and Sis. Jean Hunter spoke to the adults and young people, respectively, on the themes “In the image and likeness of God” and “Making holy decisions: learning from the young people in the Bible”; they also gave the men’s and women’s classes. The younger children were taught by local members. Tasty and generous meals, open-air sports and games, Bible memorization sessions with Sis. Adela Cortez, the traditional Bible competition and Saturday-night bonfire, Bible skits and the Sunday-school prize-giving filled out the three most-awaited days of the year.

We thank God for having giving us another chance to strengthen the spiritual bonds among ourselves and with visitors from abroad. May we be allowed to continue this yearly festival of fellowship until the glorious coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, when we will all be together forever.

Written by Alejandra García, Sonsonate, El Salvador
Submitted by Jan Berneau, CBMA/CBMC Publicity

Children at El Salvador Bible School
Jamaica Year-End Bible School at Kendal Conference Center

It was indeed a pleasure to speak at the year-end Bible school, where approximately 20 members and young people from ecclesias around Jamaica met at the Kendal Camp and Conference Center in Manchester. The theme was extracted from the teachings of the apostle Paul in regards to what does God require of us and leading up to the various roles of each member and reflection time. The setting could not be more comfortable, 80 breezy degrees during the day and a cool 70 at night. The food was quite filling to say the least with bammy, festival, dumplins, and various local dishes. On the Wednesday evening we had a late night breaking of bread service concluding with prayer at midnight.

Getting to the island proved to be a bit of a challenge, apparently there was a missing screw on the bottom of the US Airways plane and that required a switch to Delta, however it meant I would not get my baggage until the following day. (It actually did not arrive until two days later, thankfully Bro. Keith Kinlocke lent me some clothing)

Upon arrival we were greeted by Sis. Kay who took us to Bro. Ray’s and the following morning we were on our way to the Kendal Conference Center, an absolutely breathtaking facility, it was truly a wonderful two and half days there. After the classes we were able to spend some time in the recreation area playing
some ball games and taking pictures. The discussion sessions was quite lively demonstrating that even the little ones, Akeelah at seven years old was listening! The memorial service that ended at midnight was certainly a nice way to end the year and begin the next.

On New Year’s Day after a short devotion at Kendal we arrived at Round Hill and stayed at the apartment next door to the ecclesial hall. After unpacking and settling in Sis. Sonia took us along with Sis. Deb Lea to visit a sister whose mother had died not too far up the hill. It was quite an experience (grave digging ceremony) instead of mourning and somberness, there was music and food and what seemed to be a village social gathering. On our way back we stopped at the home of Bro. Marlon Jackson to visit his mom. Bible class was at 7:30 pm and after the class everyone just stuck around for an hour or so to chat.

The following day, we visited with Sis. Janet a cripple who was truly delighted with our visit. CYC was at 7:30 pm and that was quite lively with karaoke style singing by each member of the CYC. This time everyone stayed for about two hours after the doors were closed admiring the stars and full-moon on the stairs of the hall. On Saturday we visited with Sis. Syslin an amputee who was just as delighted to see us. We then packed our bags and headed for Negril with Sis. Sonia and Bro. Marlon accompanying her. We were able to catch up with Sis. Claudette who was unable to make it the Bible school. I was asked to do the exhort on Sunday at Broughton and it was certainly a delight to visit with the members there and see some familiar faces.

Round Hill CYC

It was indeed a pleasure serving our brothers and sisters in the Island of Jamaica and we would like to thank everyone who worked so hard to make this event possible, Bro. Don Luff and the members of CBMJ, Bro. Keith, Sis. Annette and also Sis. Kay, Sis. Sonia, Bro. Marlon, Bro. Ray, Bro. Patrick for leading the classes with me, and all those who helped to make our stay a real delight.

Love in Christ, Gideon and Asha Drepaul
Submitted by Sis. Jan Berneau, CBMA/CBMC Publicity
Books from The Tidings

On the Way: Bible Studies, Exhortations, Meditations and Musings, by George Booker

“The Way” is a path to salvation, a manner of living day by day, a journey through life with all its ups and downs. This book offers insights, encouragement and food for thought, to encourage all those “on the Way”, whether young in the Truth or baptized for many years. The 71 chapters vary in length from short reflections to in-depth studies. Each focuses on a different topic, from the serious to the lighthearted: practical issues of life in the Truth, difficult passages, exhortation from hymns and songs, personal memories, and observations about the modern world. Published: 2014 – soft cover, 309 pages, color and B&W photos $9.00 USD (plus S&H)

The Ecclesia at Ephesus, by Ryan Mutter
Studying the Ecclesia at Ephesus provides powerful lessons in spiritual growth relevant in today’s times. $9.00 US (soft cover, 264 pages, with color maps).

Bible Guidelines for a Happy Marriage, by John C. Bilello
Sound, proactive, Biblical advice on how to build and maintain a happy marriage. $6.00 US (soft cover, 127 pages).

The Creation Text: Studies in Early Genesis, by David Levin
Forty-nine studies offer fresh insights into early Genesis by examining the text and structure of the first five chapters. $12.00 US (364 pages).

My Journey in Faith, by Ronald Hicks
A brother shares his life experience in the Truth with Christadelphians around the world, and the joy of mission work. Special price: reduced from $10.00 to $5.00 US (372 pages).

Pictures of Redemption, by George Booker
Explores parables, analogies, and figures of speech used in Scripture to illustrate the many facets of redemption. $6.00 US (soft cover, 192 pages).

The Whole Armor of God, by Ryan Mutter
This story takes place nearly 3,000 years ago, but the spiritual challenges are familiar to today’s young people. $6.00 US (110 pages).

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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.

BRANTFORD, ON
We welcomed our Bro. David and Sis. Elisabeth (Lisamarie) Galloway by transfer from the Hamilton Greenaway Ecclesia as of December 21, 2014. We pray the Father will be with them as we continue our walk together. We are happy to congratulate Bro. Shaphan Bowen and Sis. Lisa Wiens on their wedding which took place on January 10th, 2015. We pray the Father will bless this young couple in their walk together with us as we wait for the Kingdom.

We enjoyed the visit of our Bro. Brian and Sis. Lorna Luke (Brighton, Australia) this past December and thank Bro. Brian for his ministrations. We also enjoyed the visit of Bro. Andrew and Sis. Julia Hynes (St Johns, NF) and thank Bro. Andrew for his studies on Joseph for our spring Senior CYC Gathering.

Daniel Billington

HAMILTON GREENAWAY, ON
We have been blessed with the fellowship of Bro. Doug Weir who transferred to Greenaway from the MacNab Ecclesia, Sept. 8, 2013, also Sis. Joyce Webb who transferred from the Brantford Ecclesia in April, 2014, and Sis. Wendy Dickson who transferred from the Bedford Ecclesia.

Our most recently baptized member is our Bro. JESSE ANDREWS who was baptized into the Lord November 3rd, 2013, at our London satellite ecclesia. We thank our heavenly Father for his mercy towards us in continuing to call out a people for his name and rejoice that we are able share this blessing and fellowship with our Bro. Jessie.

Bro. Tom and Sis. Vivian Thorp two longstanding members of Greenaway transferred their membership to the Mississauga West Ecclesia June 30, 2013. Bro. Tom acted as recording Brother for 30 years. We thank our Bro. Tom and Sis. Vivian for their many years of support and dedication to the edification of the Greenaway Ecclesia. We report that Bro. Craig Scott withdrew his membership from the Greenaway Ecclesia, March 10th, 2013.

Bro. Mark Jennings has taken over the duties of recording brother for the Hamilton, Greenaway, ON Ecclesia. Correspondence should be sent by mail to 224 Montmorency Dr., Hamilton, ON, L8K 5H1 or by e-mail tojenningsmark@rogers.com

Mark Jennings
HONESDALE, PA
We were blessed by the visit of Bro. Steve Cheetham in March. We were edified by his exhortation and by his adult Bible school presentation on “Kings.” Then we enjoyed our fellowship together with him in the luncheon which followed. We are very thankful to the Moorestown Ecclesia, NJ, for their long standing and continued visiting brother program.

Steve DeMarco

KITCHENER WATERLOO, ON
Since last reporting we have had visits from many brethren and sisters. We have enjoyed their company at the table of the Lord and thank the brethren who have exhorted and encouraged us from the Word.

At the end of 2013, Bro. Matthew Stapley and Sis. Hadassah Hammond were united in marriage and we pray for the Father’s blessing on their life together.

We are sorry to record the falling asleep of Bro. Doug Clayton on 28th February. Bro. Doug was six weeks short of his 102nd birthday! He was born in Newton, Lancashire, England and the youngest of seven children. His introduction to the Truth was through his now deceased wife, Sis. Joy (nee Ward), and he was baptized on 14th February 1937. Bro. Doug had a very clear mind right up to a few days before falling asleep. Bro. Rob Huc led the funeral service at which family members paid tribute to his life and great faith in the hope of the gospel. He now awaits the return the Lord and the day of resurrection. The poem following the news was written by Bro. Doug.

Martin J Webster

PICTON, ON
Love and greetings to all our beloved brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus. It is indeed with heartfelt joy that we send out to the Tidings magazine news about our ecclesia here in Picton ON, Canada. We thank our heavenly Father for the wisdom and courage of our brethren who have worked so hard and with a Christ-like spirit to bring us this far in healing the division that has separated brethren for whom Christ died. It is our hope and prayer that this process will continue to heal the wounds and mistrust and bring us together as one body in Christ Jesus.

The Picton Ecclesia is located in the beautiful County of Prince Edward. We meet in our own hall for Sunday school at 10:10 am and memorial service at 11:10 am every Sunday morning. Our Bible classes are held in the homes of brothers and sisters every Wednesday at 8:00 p.m.

Our ecclesia is very active and all members participate in helping support our light stand. Our special event of the year is the Picton Harvest Gathering. It is held in September to build and encourage our ecclesia, and to get to know brothers and sisters who attend from many different ecclesias in Ontario and the US. We always have a full house with around 130 of like precious faith attending.

We preach the Good News and are involved in what we have called Community presence activities. One of the first of these was the Snuggles program. The sisters and friends get together once a month to knit squares for South Africa. This has proven to be very successful in bringing together our neighbors and friends to do a good work. Our outreach activities for this year include a special lecture to be held in the Belleville (a larger community about one-half hour north) Central library on March 28th.
We are a growing ecclesia. We have recently welcomed into our ecclesia two young couples and their families. Mark and Amy Hill and their children have moved back from Australia and Rick and Sonya Szabo and their children have recently returned from missionary work in South Africa. It is a joy to have them with us and a big boost to our little ecclesia. For further information regarding our ecclesia please visit our website www.goodnews4thecounty.com.

Rick Hill

SAN DIEGO COUNTY, CA

We are pleased to announce the baptisms of two of our young ladies within the ecclesia. On December 7th, 2014, EDEN TUNNELL, daughter of Bro. Ethan and Sis. Shawna Tunnell gave a good confession of her faith and entered into covenant relationship with God and His Son. Eden has grown up her whole life in the Sunday school and CYC. Just a short time later on December 28th, SCARLETT SZYMANSKI, daughter of Sis. Alyssa Szymanski Schlottman, entered into the waters of baptism. Scarlett has been a long time member of the Sunday school and CYC. We pray God’s blessing on these two new Sisters as they begin their walk toward the soon coming Kingdom.

In addition we are grateful for the efforts of the following Brethren who have given public lectures in support of our preaching effort within the last six months: Bro. Greg Robinson (Thousand Oaks, CA), Bro. Stephen Palmer (Wales), Bro. David Collister (Verdugo Hills, CA) and Bro. Ed Newton (Pomona, CA).

Kent Ellis

SAN FRANCISCO PENINSULA, CA

Since it has been so long since we last reported, we have a lot of catching up to do. We extend our sincerest thanks to Bre. Matt Palmer (Mendocino, CA) and Gary Cousens (Cambridge, ON) for their ministrations at our annual Day with the Word in 2014 and 2015. We would also like to thank our many visiting exhorters who have filled in many gaps in our speaking schedule.

Last June our dear Sis. Keren Robertson was united in marriage with her Scottish fiancé, Bro. David Dawson-Bowman. They are awaiting the very slow immigration process for him and his youngest daughter to receive their visas. In the meantime, they make do with sporadic visits here or there. However, thankfully, David’s oldest daughter, Sis. Naomi has received her visa and she is here working with a family in our ecclesia.

Last July, our Sis. Channa, from Phnom Penh Ecclesia, arrived to be united with her husband, Bro. Gary Gonzales. She has now received her green card so we have another new member. In August, Bro. Angel Palma and Sis. Angeles Tafolla and their two sons, due to a doubling of their rent, were forced to move 60 miles from his job and our ecclesia. They are no longer able to have a mid-week Bible class and no longer able to attend every Sunday. This is a loss to both them and us.

Our Bro. Dale Edgett retired from his job in October, sold everything here and in November moved to Sparks, Nevada, where he could find housing that he could
afford. He is hoping to meet with Bro. and Sis. Koniak from Carson City, Nevada. He remains a member of our ecclesia. Many of our brethren who rent are facing the effects of the housing crisis here. Please remember them in your prayer. Our Sis. Sharon Bell also moved out of the area to New Hampshire. We wish them all God speed in their new homes.

February was a month of grief and loss for us. February 2nd, 2015, our Bro. Richard Naylor fell asleep in the Lord after a protracted illness (severe rheumatoid arthritis). His ashes were sent to his family in Little Rock, Arkansas.

February 11th our Bro. Robert Sleeper unexpectedly fell asleep in the Lord. He had been diagnosed with metastatic stomach cancer, but we thought he had a few months still. We are thankful that his suffering was shortened by God’s mercy, but nevertheless stunned by the suddenness. He is greatly missed, as he was an inspiration to all of us with his gentle, yet committed demeanor, always holding his faith as the center of his life. He has been an active and devoted part of our ecclesia since the days of his parents, bro. George and sis. Winnie Sleeper. His middle name, Clark, carried the direct line in him from bro. William Clark, the original founder of the ecclesia in the San Francisco area in the late 1800s.

Dolores Sleeper

SARASOTA, FL
The Sarasota ecclesia is pleased to announce that after a very good interview, Bro. Patrick Brown has become a member of this ecclesia. He was a member of another fellowship. We are also pleased to announce that Sis. Carol Whitham and Bro. Patrick Brown were united in marriage on February 15th, 2015. We pray that our Heavenly Father might bless on on their walk toward the Kingdom.

James L Wilkinson

WASHINGTON, DC
This was inadvertently left out of our previous intelligence. On Saturday, January 11, 2014, Sis. Martha (Mary) McWeadon, beloved wife of the late brother Earnest McWeadon fell asleep in the Lord. Sis. Mary was a long time member of the Washington Ecclesia having been baptized in 1957. Bro. Lee Huff of the Northern Virginia Ecclesia performed the funeral service.

The Washington DC ecclesia has enjoyed the visits of many brothers and sisters since our last intelligence and wish to thank the following brethren for their words of exhortation: Josiah Hewitson (Baltimore, MD), Mike Kemp (Northern Virginia, VA), Alton Stuchlik (Ann Arbor, MI) and Tony Moore (Barnet, UK).

In early November we enjoyed fellowship with the members of the Baltimore Ecclesia who hosted our semi-annual Baltimore/Washington Gathering. We would like to thank Bro. Ryan Mutter of Baltimore for his words of exhortation and Bro. Ron Hicks of Washington for his talk in the afternoon.

At the end of November, we had our annual Family Bible Camp Hashawha. We would like to thank Bro. Brad Butts of the Denver, CO Ecclesia for his studies on “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life”.

On December 2nd, we had a memorial service for Sis. Margot Cuppett who fell asleep in the Lord suddenly on October 28, 2014. Brothers and sisters, family and friends gathered from near and far to share stories and memories of our beloved Sis.
Margot. We would like to thank Bro. Alton Stuchlik (Ann Arbor, MI) for his words of remembrance of Sis. Margot before she came to Washington and the hope we have in the resurrection.

Bob Kling

__________

**Untitled**

*Don’t weep for me when I have gone,*  
don’t shed a single tear,  
For now I sleep in Jesus,  
who one day will appear  
To rule this world in righteousness  
and take away all sin and pain.

To those who look for Him,  
He surely will come again.  
To rule this world with equity.  
To banish sin and death.  
And give to those who wait for Him  
an everlasting breath.

To reign with Christ, a thousand years,  
rule nations great and small.  
To be with Him for ever more,  
all who on His great name call.

So as I said a while ago,  
don’t weep or cry for me.  
For all past years, I was bound by sin,  
but now at last I’m free.  
Free to rest a little while,  
not dead, but just asleep.

Waiting for the trump of God  
to call me to my feet.  
To stand before the mighty Judge,  
the Judge of all the Earth  
Who will judge us all for what we have done  
Since the day of second birth.

And though I have fallen many times,  
being cradled, born in sin.  
I trust in His great mercy  
And so I come to Him …  
Lord, have mercy on me,

A Sinner
Do what you can with what you have right where you are

We cannot be do-nothing followers of Christ. Jesus explains this principle in the parable of the talents. “A man, going into another country, called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one; to each according to his several ability; and he went on his journey. Straightway he that received the five talents went and traded with them, and made other five talents. In like manner he also that received the two gained other two. But he that received the one went away and digged in the earth, and hid his lord’s money.” The servants who used their talents wisely were rewarded, but the servant who did nothing was condemned severely: “And cast ye out the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

No matter how talent-less we may think we are, we are expected by our Lord to do what we can with what we have been given. John Wooden, a famous basketball coach, told his players, “Don’t let what you cannot do interfere with what you can do.” We need to do whatever we possibly can to serve our Lord.

“I am only one; but still I am one. I cannot do everything, but still I can do something. I will not refuse to do the something I can do.” These words were spoken by Helen Keller who was born blind, deaf and dumb. Are any of us blind, deaf and dumb? Didn’t think so. Each of us has a contribution to make, and we should get busy doing it. We need to put our personal inadequacies, complaints and fears aside and serve our Lord. We can share our hope, we can help those who are hurting, we can contact those who have lost their faith, but the main point is, we can do something.

Moses was carefully chosen and groomed by God to lead the Children of Israel to the Promised Land. Yet when God asked him to do the job, Moses felt overwhelmed by his inadequacies. “And Moses said unto the Lord, Oh Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant: for I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue. And the Lord said unto him, Who hath made man’s mouth? or who maketh a man dumb, or deaf, or seeing, or blind? is it not I the Lord? Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt speak.” God made us and He knows our weaknesses. God expects us to do His will in spite of our deficiencies, and He will help us to accomplish it.

Later on, Moses might have been full of pride and self-importance because of his privileged position as the leader during the plagues and the Exodus and the special relationship he had with God, yet the record tells us, “Now the man Moses was very meek, more than all people who were on the face of the earth.” Moses’ acute awareness of his inadequacies kept him from taking credit for the monumental task he was given to accomplish. We are called to a high calling, but we must humbly
give God the glory for what we may accomplish, knowing we are frail and cannot succeed without His help.

God knows our weaknesses. He made us. God wants us to work in His service understanding that we cannot do it on our own. As Paul explains, “But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God.” God works with our weaknesses, and our very weaknesses help us to serve God more effectively because we recognize that it is His power that accomplishes His will. We are but tools in the hands of the Master Craftsman.

As we get older we find that many things we used to be able to do are not possible anymore. At over eighty years of age, we can become so discouraged about what we cannot do that we stop doing anything. This thinking is wrong. Look at Moses, eighty years old, having for forty years lived in Midian with his wife and two sons peacefully shepherding sheep, yet not having begun the major work of his life. We never are too old to serve our God. We may not be able to travel to far off lands or do hard physical labor in the Lord’s service anymore, but we can find work for us to do right where we are. As long as the Lord preserves our life we can do something, and we need to find it and do it.

If we think every day, “Do what you can with what you have right where you are,” then we will look for opportunities to serve no matter how weak we are. If we cannot visit the sick then we can call them up, send them a card, or write them an email. We can offer prayers for those who are in need. We have only this life to live, and, however we find ourselves, we should make the most of it to serve our Lord.

Paul had a weakness that he pleaded with the Lord to remove. The answer Paul was given was, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Paul concluded, “Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For when I am weak, then I am strong.” The weakness of old age and its infirmities gives us the opportunity, as Paul, to be more fully aware that God’s power is made perfect in weakness. Let us serve our God with all our power, knowing that with Paul we can say, “When I am weak, then I am strong.”

Robert J. Lloyd

Although we use the word talent today to describe the gifts or abilities of a person, that is not what is meant in the parable of the talents; for these talents were given to each servant according to his ability. Therefore, they represented the possessions of the Lord. Whilst Jesus was always welcome at the homes of his many friends, he had “emptied himself” of all material property, so that he could truthfully say: “The Son of man has nowhere (of his own) to lay his head” (Matt 8:20). What then were his talents or goods? The word “goods” is translated from the Greek word huparchō which means “things existing.” Thus it can refer to material or spiritual possessions; and as Jesus had no possessions of substance, the word “goods” must refer to the spiritual riches he imparted. (The Christadelphian, 1985 p. 52)
Coming Events (Lord Willing)

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

MAY, 2015

2-3 Pittsburgh, PA Study Weekend. Bro. Steve Cheetham (Moorestown, NJ) will speak on, “Lessons of Past and Future Kings.” Travelers’ lunch provided at noon. Classes begin at 1:00 p.m. Contact Bro. Len Budney at pghecclesia@gmail.com or 412-983-1970.

8-9 Vancouver Island Sisters’ Weekend in Victoria, BC. Study led by Sis. Sandy McLeod (Simi Hills, CA). Topic: “Becoming a Woman of Purpose.” Registration fee: $75. Contact: Sis. Rosa Bailey, 3-1431 Simon Rd., Victoria, BC, V8X 3G9 or rosabailey@shaw.ca.

16-17 Echo Lake, NJ Mid-Atlantic Gathering. Speaker is Bro. Selvin Sawyers, (Union, NJ); his subject for the weekend is to be “Enthroned in your Heart.” The meeting will begin on Saturday May 16th at 2:00pm in the Moorestown Ecclesial Hall, 101 N. Lenola Road, Moorestown NJ 08057 and then a combined Memorial Service and final class will be held in the Westin Hotel, 555 Fellowship Road, Mount Laurel, NJ 08054 on May 17th.

16-17 Prince George, BC Annual Fraternal. Our new speaker is Bro. Andrew Jackson speaking on “I dwell in the high and holy place.” Contact Bro. Jonathan Lawrence at pgchristadelphians@hotmail.com or phone 250-962-8191 to register.

29-31 Champaign County, IL Women’s Study weekend at Urbana, IL. Sis. Cathy Badger from Ontario, Canada, her topic is “Psalms for Women”. Contact Sis. Jennifer Millay millay64@gmail.com or Sis. Dana Pratt DanaLPratt@gmail.com.

JUNE, 2015

6-7 Nashua, NH Study weekend with Bro. Jim Sullivan (Stoughton, MA): “Unto This Day: Revealing Lessons from God’s Wonderful Word.” Contact Bro. Peter Dixon at jpdixon@charter.net.


12-14 New York Metropolitan Sisters’ Retreat at The Host Resort/Hotel, Lancaster, PA. The speaker will be Sis. Mary Styles (Shelburne, ON). Her topic is: “Abigail — A Woman of Good Understanding and a Beautiful Countenance.” Contact: Sis. Averil Ferguson at 718-881-8705 e-mail: averilpsm23@juno.com.

27-July 4 Great Lakes Bible School at Lakeland College, Plymouth, WI. Theme verse is 1 Peter 5:10-11. The teachers are Bro. Martin Webster (Kitchener-Waterloo, ON), Bro. Don Davies (Canada), Bro. Bill Link (Baltimore, MD) and Sis. Laura Ross (US: Sister’s class). Information and registration is on the website, www.glcbs.org. Registrar: Sis. Marcia Stull marcia.stull@glcbs.org. Secretary: Bro. Alan Johnson alan.johnson@glcbs.org.

28-July 3 Vancouver Island Bible Camp at Lake Shawnigan on Vancouver Island, BC. Speakers are Bro. Ryan Mutter (Baltimore, MD), and Bro. Clyde Snobelen (Victoria, BC). For details see www.vibiblecamp.com and www.facebook.com/vancouverislandbiblecamp.


JULY, 2015


11-18: Manitoulin Family Bible Camp. Bro. Stephen Whitehouse (Birmingham, Hall Green, UK): “Facing the Giants” (adults and young people) and Bro. Ron Hicks (Washington, DC): “From Gethsemane to Golgotha” (adults and young people). See the website for details www.manitoulinfamilycamp.com. Rates increase as of May 31st.

18-26 Midwest Bible School will be held at Triune University, Angola, IN. Speakers and their topics are: Bro. Roger Lewis (Christchurch, New Zealand): “The Four Faces of Christ in the Gospels”; Bro. Mark Vincent (UK): “Exploring the Psalms”; and Bro. Andrew Bramhill (UK): “Isaac, the Overlooked Patriarch.” Contact Bro. Mike Livermore, 44943 Yorkshire Dr., Novi, MI 48375; 248-462-5740; mike.live@gmail.com or visit www.midwestbibleschool.com.

19-25 Idyllwild Bible School will be held at the Idyllwild Pines Camp in Idyllwild, CA. The speakers for this year are Bro. Barry McClure, Bro. Darren Guy, and Bro. Jim Styles. To register, contact Jeff Gelineau at register@christadelphianbibleschool.org or visit our website www.californiabibleschool.org.

25-Aug 2 Eastern Bible School. Connecticut College, New London CT; Theme: “As for me and my house we will serve the LORD.” Bro. Joe Hill (Austin Leander, TX): “The Gospel in Leviticus and the Tabernacle” (adults), and “Hearing the Word: Learning to Study from the Parable of the Sower” (teens); Bro. Steve Cheetham (Moorestown, NJ): “Lessons for Us from the Kings” (adults), and “Judges: Go In and Possess the Land” (teens); Bro. Jason Hensley (Simi Hills, CA): “The Second Exodus and the Work of Elijah” (adults), and “Jonathan, the Faithful Prince” (teens). For registration information contact Sis. Cindy Nevers at 18 Sibley St., Auburn, MA 01501 or cindynevers@verizon.net.

25-Aug 1 Manitoulin Island Bible Camp. Theme: “In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works”: The speakers and topics will be Bro. Stephen Palmer (Swansea, UK): “Titus - Sound Doctrine, Good Works” and Bro. Jay Mayock (Hamilton, CA): “Shechem — A Shadow of Good Things to Come”. Details on www.christadelphianbibleschool.ca. For registration, contact Bro. Alex Browning at jabrowning@rogers.com or phone 416-284-0290.

26-Aug 1 Rogue River Bible School Speakers and subjects: Bro. Roger Lewis (Christchurch, New Zealand): “The House of Asaph — Family of Faith/Masters of Music”; Bro. Dev...
Ramcharan (Toronto Church Street, ON): “A Life of Samson — ‘I will Shake Myself’”; Bro. Jim Cowie (Moreton Bay, Australia): “Events Surrounding the Return of Christ.” For more information contact Bro. Randy Yoshida at yoshida@cpros.com. For registration, contact Sis. Pat Posey at rogueriverbibleschool@gmail.com.


AUGUST, 2015
15-21 Winfield Bible School Winfield, BC. Our theme: Hebrews 7:25 “Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost.” Speakers and subjects are Bro. Joni Mannell (UK): “At the Breaking of Bread”; Bro. Dev Ramcharan (Toronto Church Street, ON): “The God of the Fallen”; and Bro. Jim Cowie (Moreton Bay, Australia): “Melchizedek — Priest of the Most High God.” Registration: Winfield Bible School, c/o Dan Fuhr, 4401 Westview Dr, Vernon, BC, Canada V1T 9B2 or e-mail: registerforwinfield@hotmail.com. Any other enquiries: Bro. John Gareau 250-275-7787 or Bro. Ken Loveridge 778-475-4602 or e-mail: winfieldbibleschool@hotmail.com.

17-22 Lakefield Bible School at Lakefield College. The school is located east of Toronto near Peterborough ON, on a beautiful lake side campus. Contact Bruce and Barbara Abel: bnb69abel@hotmail.ca or call 519-925-5297. www.lakefieldbibleschool.com.

SEPTEMBER, 2015
19-20 Bedford, NS Study Weekend with Bro. Chris Sales (Shelburne, ON) on “Hebrews — A Practical Exposition.” Location: North Woodside Community Centre, Dartmouth, NS. Contact Bro. Dale Crawford at bedfordchristadelphians@gmail.com or 902-431-6650.

19-20 Chicago Lombard, IL Fall Gathering with Bro. Steve Davis leading the adult classes starting at 9:30am Saturday. Please contact Sis. Sue Johnson for housing and to RSVP at 847-438-4890 or email: tarthurjo@juno.com.

26-27 Kouts, IN Fall Study Weekend at Woodland Park Community Center, 2100 Willowcreek Rd. beginning at 10:00 a.m. Bro. Matt Norton (Lismore, Australia) speaking. Theme: “An Overview of Revelation” — great for adults and kids. Contact Bro. Joe Bennett at 219-762-2704 or jkb8275@comcast.net.

OCTOBER, 2015


NOVEMBER, 2015
7-8 Sarasota, FL Fall Study Weekend with Bro. Richard Morgan (Hamilton Book Road, ON) speaking on, “Prophecy, Predestination, and the Purpose of God.” Contact Bro. James Wilkinson at jameswilkinson@hotmail.com or 941-412-7988.
Youth Speaks

“Youth Speaks: A section devoted to the thoughts, experiences and hopes of young people”: thus opens the first of a continuing series of valuable articles contributed by those who might be young in calendar years, but in most cases wise beyond this. The series originated in The Tidings in 2001, and was initially under the aegis of Bro. Ben Brinkerhoff. Many Brethren and Sisters have contributed over the years since then, and we must thank them all. Bro. Ben continued in that role until 2006, when the section was retired for a while, and we must thank him for this.

Bro. Jason Hensley first appeared as a writer in this series in 2005, and it was with the May issue in 2010 that he took over the role as the section editor. Since then, I have been most grateful of the way a new article appears every month, either written himself or from one of the many contributors organized by him, without any need for involvement by myself, for which I thank him. He has also been busily involved in many other efforts for the brotherhood, so it is not surprising that after five years he has decided that the passage of time and the pressures of his many involvements, as well as the demands of a new family, has required the passing of the assignment to a new brother. Bro. Jason has promised to continue contributing material, including completing his series on Jonathon.

So we welcome Bro. Ethan Beardan (Austin, TX) in the role of section editor for “Youth Speaks”. He has already written several articles for The Tidings, and is sure fill the role with enthusiasm and spiritual and practical content.

The Editor
[God] sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust

“Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust” (Matt 5:43-45).

Disasters

When a widespread disaster makes the news, we often worry as to whether anyone we know, or anyone in our community, is affected. You only have to think of the recent cyclone in Vanuatu¹, or the earlier ones in the Philippines, to appreciate what I mean. In both cases, the Christadelphian message system lit up with the news, and in the case of Vanuatu, to the relief of all there were no injuries or loss of life reported among the brotherhood. As reported “It is with thanks to our Father that we found not one person… was even injured. All of our brothers and sisters on the island are safe.” For this we are all grateful, but the damage to property was immense, so quite naturally the ACBM, among other organizations, has launched an appeal for funds to help in the aftermath of the terrible destruction.

It seems natural to express such thanks when those of our community are spared from the effects of disasters. But it must be realized, unfortunately, that tragedies befall us all from time to time. Anyone who has been in the community for any period can remember sad events: death by car accident, gunfire, and illness can all strike with suddenness, and cause grief and sadness to all involved. Many thought that Christadelphians would be protected from the German bombs that rained down in WW2: but a reading of The Christadelphian shows no such protection, as at least eleven brethren and sisters lost their lives during such air raids. There is no assurance that being a Christadelphian conveys any remit from disaster, whether it be natural, man-made, or individual. As Jesus said in those familiar words “Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish” (Luke 13:4-4). And I am sure he was saying, not that repentance would prevent their eventual demise, but that unless they repented their demise would be eternal. If they repented, then they had the hope of resurrection to life eternal, which is what they (and we) most surely hope for.

The one certainty

There is one uncertainty which everyone faces. There is no escape from death. So, even for the person whose life runs on oiled wheels, the greatest uncertainty of all is an ever present danger. No one knows in advance the day of his or her death, or how it will occur. There is an irony here. Because this is an uncertainty shared without exception with all mankind, the human mind seems able to shut
it out, when it can't shut out other uncertainties. People live with the constant uncertainty of death, and hardly ever give it a passing thought, when the merest hint of adversity in another form causes them to lose sleep, get severely stressed or even clinically depressed. Of course, some people can cope with such stressful life events better than others, but almost no-one worries overmuch about their ultimate fate until it is imminent.

Many people live as if there is a real possibility of their never dying. They accumulate wealth which they are unlikely to spend on themselves; they make plans without ever qualifying them with “if the Lord will”; and they confidently expect their future years to be better than those in the past.

The trouble is that, surrounded by this common attitude, we can so easily act in the same way. We too can make plans with little thought about adverse circumstances arising to disturb them. We too can surround ourselves with many of the things which make life comfortable and pleasant, as if life will always continue as it does at present. This is not to say that the arrival of difficulties in life automatically focuses a person’s mind on the things of God, for it can have exactly the opposite effect, making a man curse and swear about the “God of love” whom he alleges religious people foolishly believe in.

There is no simple formula; no foolproof method. What Job learned during his time of trial is that it is impossible to draw conclusions about a man’s standing in God’s sight from observing what occurs in his life. Good and evil, comfort and trouble, can afflict the wicked and the righteous. As the Psalmist said with surprise and bewilderment: “I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay tree” (Psa 37:35).

**The wicked and the righteous**

The prosperity of the wicked seems to mock at God’s righteous purpose, giving any who are inclined to forsake His ways a ready-made excuse not to serve Him. If there were exact and immediate divine retribution for sin, men and women would serve Him only through fear of the consequences of disobedience.

Why then do we so often act as if this was not the case? Why do we infer, even if it is not directly stated, that ungodly behavior is subject to immediate and appropriate judgement? We slip easily into the line of thinking of Job’s friends, and are inclined to believe that if a disaster strikes in someone’s life there must be an explanation for it: some hidden fault which has caused God’s anger.

And why do we maintain the opposite? Why do we maintain that righteous behavior will protect us from disaster? What do we truly learn from Job’s troubles? Is it not that it is only when we accept that disasters can fall upon the good as well as the evil, that we have any hope of salvation?

This is particularly comforting in times of trouble, when all human aid seems futile. These are the occasions when, “with strong crying and tears”, prayers are made to the one who is able to save us from all affliction and lead us gently towards His kingdom. But the message of the Scriptures is that the greatest benefit will
be found by those who have made prayer their lifetime’s activity, and not just something which is undertaken when trouble strikes. But the only certainty is that death will, in the end, befall us all. Affliction might befall us, despite our strong prayers. Even though “The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much” (James 5:16), this does not mean that such prayer will always be answered. We think of Paul, who said:

“And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, my grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me” (2Cor 12:7-9).

So even the entreaties of Paul were not answered. But he rested secure in the love of Christ. As we know, in the end Paul was almost certainly beheaded soon after his last imprisonment described in 2 Timothy at around the age of 60 or so, after a long life full of many hardships, as described in 2 Corinthians 11. But he rested secure in the sure hope of uniting with Christ in the kingdom:

“For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom 8:38-39)

Conclusion

As has often been said, we need to live our life as if Christ will return at any time, whether this is true for all mankind, as we hope and expect is near — or for us individually, for we know not when death might take us. Our hope is that of redemption, of the ultimate freedom from death in the future kingdom, and we should live our lives in that hope, not in freedom from troubles in this world. I am sometimes known to remark “Life is tough, and then you die”. As Christadelphians, we have no special treatment, no particular dispensation from the troubles and disasters that affect all mankind, whether it be natural events or man-made.

“Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything” (James 1:2-4).

So indeed let us persevere to the end, treating with joy the trials that beset us all, for the hope that is before us. It is not for us to assume that being Christadelphians will save us in this world, but in the world to come.

Peter Hemingray

Notes:
1. It is a reflection, I expect, of the lapse of time since I studied world geography, that I had no idea initially where Vanuatu was. It was only when I realized it was formerly call New Hebrides that I could place it.
Exhortation

Now These Things Happened for Examples

As we prepare our minds to remember our Lord Jesus it can be useful to consider the lives of some of God’s other servants which are recorded for us in the Bible as an example to us, as mentioned by Paul in First Corinthians.

The tenth chapter of Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians talks about the bread and wine, which represents our communion in the body of Christ. And here not once, but twice, Paul reminds the brethren at Corinth that events in the Old Testament, specifically in the life of Moses and the people under his charge, were written for our example and exhortation. The letter reads:

“But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come” (1Cor 10:5-11).

The exhortation that Paul is delivering here is that we can learn from the temptations, trials, failures and success in the lives of Bible characters, so that we are admonished to forsake temptation to sin and put on the mind of Christ.

We will follow Paul’s advice and take a look back at some of the trials and temptations the nation of Israel and their strong leader Moses were exposed to as they left Egypt for the Promised Land. As we look back at the experiences of Israel journeyed through that great and terrible wilderness, we can find many good lessons that can serve, as Paul wrote, as examples to us as we consider life in Christ.

The Nation of Israel Leaves Egypt

All that the generations in Israel had known to the point they left Egypt was slavery. For hundreds of years they had been taught to obey their masters out of fear; if they did not do as they were told they were beaten or killed. Their lives were full of fear; fear of death. Even so, they has a great fear of leaving the land they had always known, even though it was a life of slavery. They learned to love the few simple pleasures they had each day: a roof over their heads, a place to sleep and food to fill their bellies. They had likely learned to covet Egyptian styles and fashion, and perhaps even attempted to imitate it. Many had grown up worshiping the idols of Egypt: gods they could see and touch which offered a sense of comfort and whom they controlled and made as they pleased.
“In the day that I lifted up mine hand unto them, to bring them forth of the land of Egypt into a land that I had espied for them, flowing with milk and honey, which is the glory of all lands: Then said I unto them, Cast ye away every man the abominations of his eyes, and defile not yourselves with the idols of Egypt: I am the LORD your God. But they rebelled against me, and would not hearken unto me: they did not every man cast away the abominations of their eyes, neither did they forsake the idols of Egypt: then I said, I will pour out my fury upon them, to accomplish my anger against them in the midst of the land of Egypt. But I wrought for my name’s sake, that it should not be polluted before the heathen, among whom they were, in whose sight I made myself known unto them, in bringing them forth out of the land of Egypt” (Ezek 20:6-9).

However, along came Moses who removed them from this situation in which they had lived their whole lives. He removed them from their slavery in Egypt and marched them to freedom. They were baptized in the cloud and in the sea, and all that they had known changed.

“Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea;” (1Cor 10:1-2).

After they left Egypt and had been spiritually baptized in the Red Sea, they were asked to serve an invisible God, whom they could not see or touch. They were asked to obey His commands, not out of fear of punishment or death as they served in Egypt, but out of respect, love and appreciation for what He had done for them. They were asked to leave the false Egyptian gods and idols behind. They were asked to give up their simple pleasures: the comfort of a home, and tasty food to fill their stomachs in exchange for a nomadic life of wandering in the wilderness and surviving on the simple food which God provided. God was asking them to forget their former life, to leave Egypt behind and to begin anew.

However, as we know, the people failed miserably to reach the goals that God had set for them. That generation never learned to serve God out of respect, love and appreciation for what He had done for them. Instead, they rebelled against God constantly and as a result, that generation was never allowed to enter the land God promised.

“Because all those men which have seen my glory, and my miracles, which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have tempted me now these ten times, and have not hearkened to my voice; Surely they shall not see the land which I sware unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that provoked me see it;” (Num 14:22-23).

When the people did wrong, they failed to repent on their own. Only when God threatened them would they repent and obey; for example, when there was a plague or thunder or snakes. That is how it had worked in Egypt — obey or face the whip. As human beings it is understandable that we would be motivated to a certain extent by fear, however, that should not be the principle motivating factor in our decision to obey God.

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The spies in the land
Let’s look at an example. After the spies returned from spying out the Promised Land the people refused to take the land because they feared making war against its mighty inhabitants — even though God had said He would protect them. So the LORD said:

“Doubtless ye shall not come into the land, concerning which I sware to make you dwell therein, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun. But your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, them will I bring in, and they shall know the land which ye have despised. But as for you, your carcases, they shall fall in this wilderness. And your children shall wander in the wilderness forty years, and bear your whoredoms, until your carcases be wasted in the wilderness” (Num 14:30-33).

And only with that threat did the Israelites respond.

“And Moses told these sayings unto all the children of Israel: and the people mourned greatly. And they rose up early in the morning, and gat them up into the top of the mountain, saying, Lo, we be here, and will go up unto the place which the Lord hath promised: for we have sinned” (Num 14:39-40)

Israel was not motivated by the goodness God had shown them, or the wonderful promises He offered; they were moved primarily by the fear of losing the sort of lives they were living. And so, they only repented when God threatened them. Just like in Egypt, where they were slaves moved by fear of punishment and loss. A slave acts out of fear to preserve what little he has in this life. God called His people out of slavery into hope and He asked them to act, not out of fear of loss, but out of hope and faith that God would provide something much better in the future.

The slavery of Egypt represents a life lived without God; a life of serving sin and fearing loss without a future hope. Israel leaving Egypt and passing through the waters of the Red Sea represents a change in direction: a baptism, a washing away of sin and the old ways and leaving them behind. The journey towards the Promised Land represents a journey of faith and hope towards the kingdom and that is where we are today. Each one of us is on a journey which we hope leads to the kingdom. We begin that journey when we decide to leave behind our old worldly ways and are baptized into Christ. And just as God wanted Israel to be motivated and driven forwards in their new life by the hope of the Promised Land, even when the way ahead seemed hard, in our new lives we should not be motivated by fear or because we think we can avoid worldly hardship if we serve God.

Conclusion
Being a baptized Christian is not a guarantee that everything in life is going to be without difficulty. As we study Israel in the wilderness, we see that that they faced hunger and thirst and hard work. Of course God was always there to help them through tough times. All He asked from Israel was their trust and their faith. However, that generation of Israelites failed to please Him and we too will fail unless our service is driven by faith, hope and love.
There are many sound reasons for the Christian to base his service on these things. Sin and death may be a necessary part of our journey, but the more important reality is that in Christ’s mercy, goodness, joy and life will triumph and any struggles will be proven worthwhile. Paul wrote to the Corinthians:

“… for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty” (2Cor 6: 16-18).

God is calling people to ‘come out’ and form part of His holy temple which is built on Christ, and we are told that He will ‘dwell in’ that people, and they will be His sons and daughters. What a wonderful hope to motivate us as we go forward.

Dan Archibald (Toronto East, ON)

Caleb the son of Jephunneh

Caleb the son of Jephunneh shines forth as one of Israel’s most illustrious sons. His eminent and gracious life provides lessons of permanent value for all generations. The designation “the son of Jephunneh” is used in sixteen out of the twenty-eight passages in which he is named in the Scriptures. In three of the sixteen, the additional title “the Kenizzite” is applied to him. Are we to assume, then, that Caleb was not of Israelitish birth or descent? Not necessarily. A reasonable explanation is that a member of the tribe of the Kenizzites took service with Judah before the Israelites went into Egypt; and that prior to the Exodus, Jephunneh married a woman of the household of Caleb, and by her had a first-born son, to whom was given the family name of Caleb. This youth in time became the head of the household and a chief of Judah.

In an age of compromise, uncertainty and doubt, men and women who “wholly follow the Lord”, who manifest absolute devotion to Him and His Word, are as much to be desired as His chosen people today as they were in ancient Israel. Few of us, without serious reservations, could claim that we are influenced in our every action by that animation and vigor which characterized Caleb the son of Jephunneh. The more we strive to approach the pattern of God’s Son, the more we discern our unlikeness to him. But by Divine grace, we may in the Day of account, be enabled to plead that, in spite of frequent stumbles, it has been our paramount aim to “follow the Lord”, who having begun a good work in us will, we pray, bring it to completion in the Day of Christ.

The Christadelphian 1981 p. 97
Hope — (4) Abraham’s Hope: Promises for you too.

Hope in the Bible starts with Abraham

There was a poor woman who was born in Gloucestershire, England. She attended school and found her love was for writing fantasy stories. She would often write stories and tell them to her sister. She moved from village to village many times and traveled often. In December 1990, her mother died, and she moved to Portugal in order to teach English as a foreign language. Before her mother’s death, she had already begun writing what later became a novel. In Portugal, she married, but the couple separated in 1993. However, she did have a daughter and the two moved to Scotland. During this time, she was diagnosed with clinical depression and often contemplated suicide. She was unemployed and living on welfare. She was able to write and complete her first novel by going to different public cafés with her daughter. Who is this poor woman, and what book did she write? Perhaps you’ve heard of the young man Harry Potter? Today, J.K. Rowling is worth over $1 billion, has sold hundreds of millions of books and is famous throughout the world. In October 2010, J. K. Rowling was named ‘Most Influential Woman in Britain’ by one set of magazine editors, thus completing her very unlikely road from extreme rags to extreme riches and power.

Abraham was one of the greatest rags-to-riches stories in the Bible. He wasn’t known to be homeless or very poor, but God called Abraham to leave the country of Ur (modern Iraq) and go to an unknown land (Gen 12:2). He had been well off, living among many friends and family, and was already 75 years old at the time. Ur was known to be a large, metropolitan, wealthy, progressive and idolatrous city. It was basically like God telling a professional in New York City to move to Greenbow, Alabama! Not exactly a great career move, and not attractive to anyone who enjoys the fine food, entertainment and business opportunities of a major population center. But Abraham obeyed, in faith, and began his journey away from the negative spiritual influences of his own father. “And Joshua said unto all the people, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time, even Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor: and they served other gods. And I took your father Abraham from the other side of the flood, and led him throughout all the land of Canaan, and multiplied his seed, and gave him Isaac” (Josh 24:2-3). He went from a spiritual life of rags to a faith filled with eternal riches.
The first Gospel message

If you read your Bible, where would you say is the first place we read about the Gospel (good news) message? Some might look to Jesus’ first preaching campaign after being tempted in the wilderness. Others might question if John the Baptist was the one to first preach the gospel, since he proclaimed the “way of the Lord” and “the kingdom of heaven at hand” (Matt 3:2). Still others might point to one of the Old Testament prophets who predicted the coming of Messiah. Surprisingly, we find the answer an unexpected quote by Paul: “And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, ‘All the nations shall be blessed in you’” (Gal 3:8). To learn more about Abraham and the original gospel message, we must look 2,000 years before Christ to the man who became the Father of both Jews and Arabs.

Because of Abraham’s incredible faith and actions, God blessed him above all peoples of his day. In fact, God repeated His messages to Abraham so that we can count these blessings as God’s unwavering promises. Here are God’s amazing promises of hope, first delivered to Abraham:

Abraham would be the father of a son: “And, behold, the word of the Lord came unto him, saying. This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir” (Gen 15:4). Not only would he be the father of one son, he would also become the father of a chosen son named Isaac when Abraham was 100 years old: “And Abraham was an hundred years old, when his son Isaac was born unto him” (Gen 21:5)! God promised to establish all of his blessings through Isaac, the chosen child: “Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise” (Gal 4:28). It was through Isaac, that people began to recognize that he was, indeed, the one 'blessed of the Lord'.

Abraham would be the father of many peoples. God said he would multiply Abraham’s descendants to be as numerous as the stars of the heavens, and as the sand that is on the seashore. This promise has been fulfilled, as Abraham became the father of hundreds of millions of Jews and Arabs.

Abraham would be the father of a promised descendant. Though Isaac became Abraham’s child of promise, God said that kings and nations would come from Abraham. The Bible clearly points out that Jesus became the ultimate child of Abraham, fulfilling God’s promise: “And said, By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; And in thy seed shall all the nations of
the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice. (Gen 22: 16-18; see Gal 3: 14-16; John 8: 53-56). Jesus would be the one chosen seed, who would live to make all nations blessed.

Abraham was promised a special land to inherit. God repeated this promise several times: “And the Lord appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there built he an altar unto the Lord, who appeared unto him” (Gen 12:7; see Gen 13:15; Gen 15:18). This was to confirm how secure and eternal this promise is. Yet, the Bible provides historical details about where Abraham lived, and how he did not inherit the land. So what happened? Hebrews clarifies for us that Abraham looked forward to the ultimate land reward.

“So God has prepared a country for Abraham and his physical descendants. And not only to Abraham, but to all who have been baptized into Christ and are accounted as “For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise” (Gal 3:27-29). The modern land of Israel is part of the special property God promised to Abraham, but which is yet to be completely fulfilled.

Abraham was promised eternal blessings. Once again, God made promises to Abraham that last forever. God gave Abraham an everlasting covenant as a witness to fulfill his promise. God asked Abraham to accept His offer by being circumcised,
and Abraham was the first Jew ever circumcised. In the New Testament book of Romans, it is said that baptism and faith in Jesus Christ make a person a spiritual Jew. This supersedes the covenant of circumcision so that baptism now leads to the same eternal blessings promised to Abraham: “Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise” (Gen 17:7; see Rom 4:9-12; Rom 6:4).

The promises to Abraham would not be important to anyone today if they are obsolete, or were meant only for Abraham. But the Bible gives ample evidence that the promises to Abraham are actually the same as the New Testament gospel. In fact, the word ‘gospel’ means ‘good news’, and includes the promises given to Abraham and repeated by Jesus: “Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven” (Matt 6:10; see Luke 13:28). One of the best definitions of the gospel is found in Acts 8:12 where it says they were “preaching the good news (gospel) about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ.”

**Capital of the world**

There’s a saying in retail business that the most important differentiator is location, location, location. In the world today, there is one place on earth that is the most valuable piece of real estate: and it’s not for sale. It’s a very small area, outside the tropics and wouldn’t be in such demand without its incredible history. It is an area within a medium-sized city and much of that area looks more backward than forward. It’s a holy site for Jews, Christians and Muslims and has been the location of many, many wars. The location is called Mount Moriah, or better known as the Temple site in Jerusalem.

The Bible introduces us to Moriah in Gen 22:2 when Abraham is told by God to offer his son Isaac as a burnt offering on that mountain. Of course God spares Isaac at the last moment and Abraham receives more blessings for having obeyed God. Later, King David offered a sacrifice at the same location in order to appease God and end a pestilence on the land: “And Gad came that day to David, and said unto him, Go up, rear an altar unto the L ORD in the threshingfloor of Araunah the Jebusite” (2Sam 24:18). David bought that piece of property especially for that emergency sacrifice, and it has remained the most precious place on earth. A few years later, King Solomon began building a glorious temple to the L ORD God of Israel and he picked the very same location to build: “Then Solomon began to build the house of the L ORD at Jerusalem in mount Moriah, where the L ORD appeared unto David his father, in the place that David had prepared in the threshingfloor of Ornan the Jebusite” (2Chron 3:1). Solomon’s temple wasn’t particularly large, but it was world-renowned and in keeping with what his father, David, had intended.
In the future, there may well be a temple built by Jesus and his servants on that same site (Ezek 40-48). Or it may be that Jesus will rule from that site without a temple, as we know temples today: “And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it” (Rev 21:22; see 1Pet 2:5; Psa 40:6-8). Either way, the faithful who inherit Abraham’s promises will follow in Abraham’s footsteps. Like Abraham, we will leave the hopelessness of this world and join the kingdom of God on earth, New Jerusalem. Like Abraham, we will go out in faith to a place which God promises will be perfect for us. Like Abraham, we will realize that we are only strangers and pilgrims on earth, and our eternal hope lies in being connected to Abraham and his ultimate seed Jesus. Like Abraham, we must have faith in God and His promises, to inherit the blessings of the gospel first preached to Abraham (Gal 3:8). What a wonderful hope Abraham had, and we have too.

“All I have seen teaches me to trust the Creator for all that I have not seen.”
Ralph Waldo Emerson

“Lack of faith in God is the source of most of society’s troubles.”
Albert E. Ribourg

“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Heb 11:1)

The Bible says:
- God chose Abraham because of his great faith. Heb 11:8; Rom 4:9-16
- Those who are faithful can inherit the same promises as Abraham. Gal 3:27-29, 4:28

Chicago, Ill Ecclesia

The Life of Abraham

Obviously, all we have said about studying the life Abraham applies to anybody in scripture whom we study. We only read a record of select events of their lives and attempt to use the information we have to nourish our faith. With respect to Abraham, Scripture emphasizes the emulation of his faith. Let us always read and study to that end. We conclude by asking of ourselves specific questions, comparing our learning to the development of our faith. We know Abraham forsook his comfortable lifestyle and settled existence for the sake of the Truth. Are we willing to do the same? We know Abraham trusted God even when it seemed certain God had forgotten him. Do we do the same? We know Abraham trusted God even when it appeared God didn’t answer his prayers. Do we do the same? We know Abraham willingly offered his whole future to God. Are we willing to do the same?

Jesus said, “If you were Abraham’s children, then you would do the things Abraham did” (John 8:39).

David Levin: from his series on “Abraham” in the Tidings, 1998 p 415
Doctrines to Be Rejected
(1) Why the Series

Introduction
This is the first of what is intended to be a systematic study of that section of our communities’ Statement of Faith known as “Doctrines to Be Rejected”. There are, of course, three sections: “Truth to Be Received”, “Doctrines to Be Rejected”, and “Commandments of Christ”. Most of the focus of the discussions and writings concerning this Statement of Faith, or BASF as it is normally referred to, concerns the first of these areas. There are quite a few books on the topic, and even the major one that is entitled “Studies in the Statement Faith” only devotes one chapter out of 12 to doctrines to be rejected, and it is really only a summary. In fact, there does not appear to be any systematic consideration in our literature of the individual doctrines, much less of their origin and development.

In this series, we hope to remedy this deficiency, and put this area of our statement of faith in its true context. We hope to emphasize the importance of the doctrines, especially as they relate to our present day situations. It must be admitted some of the topics covered have, perhaps, little direct relevance to our challenges in our days (who lately has been troubled by “British Israelitism!”), but the importance of this section and concerns and areas covered are still relevant.

Our approach will be
1. Consider the history and development of the doctrines to be found in our current document.
2. Present an overview of the main areas covered, and identify those areas that extend, amplify, or illustrate those doctrines covered in the area of “Truth to Be Received”.
3. Present the “Doctrines to Be Rejected”, as grouped in common areas, not necessarily in their normal numerical sequence.
4. Emphasize their relevance to our faith and our life as we search to discover the Truth as revealed in the Bible, both as relevant in our common walk and our struggle against the false doctrines common around us.

The origin of this series, as can be seen by the byline, is twofold:
1. A long interest in the current and past statements of faith
2. A study extending over many weeks, at the Adult Sunday School at the Ann Arbor Ecclesia, Michigan.

I leave it to our readers to discover which author was involved in which area!

Why the study
The significance and importance of our Statement of Faith is undoubted. Our community is largely we are bound together by the Biblical Principles to be found in the Bible, of which the BASF is regarded as a true account. It is not necessarily the only true account: many ecclesias have adopted their own “Statement of Faith”, but all acknowledge the validity of the BASF. In areas of dispute we tend to strongly
emphasize a few phrases or sections. Many of these phrases are to be found in these doctrines to be rejected, for example:

- That the dead rise in an immortal state
- That we are at liberty to serve in the army, or as police constables
- That marriage with an unbeliever is lawful

These and many more were added to clarify the position of the community in times of dispute. And if fact, many of these additional doctrines help clarify the doctrines held by our community in several areas that are still to this day the subject of internal controversy, although often overlooked, ignored, or explained away.

**Objections to the studying doctrines to be rejected**

There have been several objections raised against the current listing of “doctrines to be rejected” from inside our community, for example:

- It is suggested that the list grew up in an age when the community was growing and evolving significantly, so many of the doctrines to be rejected are not current today, or are worded in ways that are not understood or are offensive to the modern ear.
- Clauses utilizing language whose meaning has not changed, but that would not be used today because of certain sensibilities or associations; however these should also not be discarded if they relate to important truths.
- In the early days of our community there was a greater awareness of the need to define the differences between our beliefs and those of others who also claimed to rest their faith on Bible teachings, so why still use them?

There are two reasons why the situation is somewhat different today.

- It the days the BASF was being developed, during the late nineteenth century in England, many newly baptized members were converts from one of the sects of ‘Christendom’ and it was necessary to highlight the errors of any former denomination they might have belonged to.
- Also, there was at that time much greater knowledge of the Scriptures and a wider acceptance that they should form the basis for belief.

However, we believe their inclusion helps clarify our position in many areas, and should not be ignored just because some situations and areas of controversy are no longer current.

In an ideal world, perhaps it would be best to re-write some of the clauses, and perhaps indeed re-cast the whole document in modern language. But there is absolutely no prospect of this happening, and no mechanism extant. When it was written, and modified, it was almost entirely drafted by Robert Roberts, the dominant figure in the community and the acknowledged leader of both the largest segment and the largest ecclesia by far. No such leader or ecclesia exists today.

**The beginning**

The “Synopsis of the One Faith” was written by John Thomas, true founder aof the Christadelphian community, in 1867. It included one section on “As Believed by
The second section is as reproduced below.

(II) AS PERVERTED BY THE APOSTACY.

1) A triply-compounded God, without body and parts, defined as “Father Son and Holy Ghost.”

2) Jesus Christ, the Son, yet “very God,” incarnated and killed, to appease the wrath of that part of the triune God that remained unincarnate.
3) The Devil, a fallen but immortal archangel, the enemy of mankind, and great antagonist of the Deity; some think he is mortal and to be finally destroyed.
4) Man, an immortal ghost, tabernacling in an animal body.
5) HUMAN DESTINY: The translation of righteous Immortal ghosts or souls, (leaving the body in the article of death,) to kingdoms beyond the bounds of space. The descent of the wicked immortal ghosts or souls at the same crisis of experience, to a hell of fire and brimstone, to be tormented by devils throughout eternity.
6) Face-Sprinkling in Infancy, a means of salvation
7) Infants and Idiots saved, whether sprinkled or not
8) Salvation achieved by good works.
9) Baptism (Immersion) may be practiced, but is not essential to salvation.
10) The heathen will be saved without believing the gospel
11) Purgatory, a state or place for the purgation of souls.
12) The resurrection, a re-uniting of the body and soul, in order that the souls of the wicked may be brought up from hell, and the souls of the righteous from heaven for judgment.
13) The resurrected bodies of the righteous, spiritual, while the bodies of the rejected are fleshly bodies, in the judgment.
14) The unjust (according to others) not subject to a resurrection.
15) The kingdom of God, the “Church.”
16) The kingdom, a state of bliss above the stars.
17) Sabbath observance required of Gentiles.
18) “Conversion,” a change affected by the Holy Spirit, without a knowledge of the Scriptures.
19) The one faith not necessary to salvation; any faith, with morality, being saving.
20) Conversion of the world, by the preaching of the gospel.
21) The Old Testament superseded by the New Testament
22) The historical development of these “Doctrines to be Rejected” will be briefly covered in the next article in the series, God willing, before we pass on to consider the individual items.

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

Notes:
1. “Studies in the Statement of Faith” Published by the Christadelphian Office
2. There were a few sections drafted by the Arranging Brethren of the Birmingham ecclesia, in particular the amendment to clause 24 and a minor change to the last of the doctrines to be rejected.

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

Case studies give students an opportunity to identify and apply Bible principles in real life situations. They illustrate the fact that Bible principles are timeless and are the key to faithful living in a faith-challenging world. The case studies that follow can be used in combination with Bible lessons or they can be used as stand-alone activities. They are carried out in the form of dramatic readings by the students, followed by class discussion of the “Questions for thought and discussion”.

(1) Swindlers at Philippi – Acts 16: A conscience case study

Narrator 1: The mind is a complicated thing. Not everybody’s works the same way. Take the slave girl of Philippi, for instance. She was not normal. But she sensed things that you and I might easily miss. She became a public wonder for her curious insights, some of which were amazingly accurate. Add a few greedy men to the picture who saw that they could exploit the girl’s talents for personal gain, and we have the tragic scene that Paul and Silas faced when they got to Philippi. How did the girl come to know why Paul and Silas were there? She obviously heard them preach the gospel and quickly caught the sense of who they were.

Slave Girl: These men are the servants of the Most High God. They show us the way of salvation!

Narrator 2: She was right on the money, of course, and pronouncements like this put her owners in the money, too! The girl was fascinated by Paul and Silas. She followed them everywhere and advertised their mission. But it was unwanted publicity. The apostles were not fortune tellers! And they were not part of any money-making scheme. The kingdom of God that they preached was offered to everyone “without money and without price.” They could also see that the exploited girl needed help. Paul finally took action to clear her mind and make it possible for her to understand the good news she was so vigorously announcing. He rebuked the spirit that trapped the girl’s mind, using terms common to the time:

Paul: In the name of Jesus Christ, I command you to come out of her.

Narrator 1: The results were instant, and her owners were almost as quick to realize that their game was up. The girl was no longer trapped in a mental state that fascinated superstitious people ... and this drained money from their pockets!

Narrator 2: But when you frustrate the greed of men, you are asking for trouble.
The Apostle Paul undoubtedly knew this when he healed the girl, but he simply refused to let life-saving truth be confused with the self-serving ambitions of men. The apostles were assaulted by the slave owners and dragged into court.

**Slave owner:** *These men, being Jews, exceedingly trouble our city, and teach things that are not lawful for us to do, being Romans.*

**Narrator 1:** Really? One wonders why the slave owners hadn’t pressed these charges against Paul and Silas before the girl was healed, if that was what really bothered them. The charges were phony. They were a cover up for the real motive: revenge.

**Narrator 2:** What goes on in the hearts of men, anyway? Without a conscience before God, men will do anything. Honesty doesn’t matter. Can you imagine how far the slave owners would have gotten if they had told the magistrates their real motive for dragging the apostles into court? We can hear it now:

**Slave owner:** These men have healed the crazy girl who used to make us rich. Now we can’t swindle the public anymore! Make them pay!

**Narrator 1:** Human nature hasn’t changed in 20 centuries. Men are still dishonest, and they still do whatever it takes to cover themselves. The desire to have a clear conscience before God is no more common today than it was in Philippi 2,000 years ago. Unless honesty strips away our covering and lays us bare before God, we will never be candidates for the kingdom of God.

**Questions for thought and discussion**

1) The slave girl was right. Paul and Silas did serve the Most High God, and they did show people the way of salvation. Why were her public announcements undesirable?

2) Comment on the conscience and honesty of the slave owners. What causes men to be like them? How does it affect a person’s chances of salvation?

3) Comment on the characteristics of a public that is taken in by fortune telling and willingly pays out money for it. How do these characteristics affect a person’s chances of salvation?

4) What are the counterparts of fortune telling in modern society?

5) Read Deut 18:9-15; 1Chron 10:13-14, and Isa 8:19-22 (especially clear in ESV, NIV). What’s wrong with fortune telling?

6) How easy is it to strip away our public face and lay ourselves bare before God and men? What does it take to do this? Find one or two Bible passages that address the subject of honesty before God.

**(2) Free at last in the inner prison – Acts 16: A conversion case study**

**Narrator 1:** The jailer at Philippi knew about Paul and Silas. For one thing, the apostles had been preaching in the city for a while and lots of people knew about the salvation they offered — without cost! — through the Jewish Messiah called Jesus. No doubt the jailer also knew about the slave girl miracle and the charges that were brought against the apostles. Paul and Silas probably impressed the jailer as strange Jews with strange ideas, but little more. What he knew about the gospel they preached was certainly different from anything he had ever heard, but
it was nothing he could take seriously. After all, he had a tough man's job to do. The responsibilities that went along with handling criminals didn't leave a lot of room for things like mercy and forgiveness!

**Narrator 2:** The jailer was a candidate for eternal life though! He just did not know it yet. The risen Lord knew it, and it was more than just revenge on the part of angry slave owners that put Paul and Silas in his prison. It was a matter of divine providence, under the guidance of the Lord Jesus Christ. Circumstances were about to make the matter of salvation vital for the rough and tumble jail keeper.

**Narrator 1:** The way Paul and Silas conducted themselves had a lot to do with it. It is no fun to suffer shame for Christ's sake the way they did. But they had the faith to know that God is in control. They did not, like other men, shout threats and curses at those who beat them. And when they were cast into prison and put in chains, they responded with prayer and songs of praise. These men were strange prisoners indeed. The fact was not lost on the jailer or the other prisoners.

**Paul:** “I cry aloud to the LORD; I lift up my voice to the LORD for mercy. I pour out my complaint before him; before him I tell my trouble. When my spirit grows faint within me, it is you who know my way. In the path where I walk men have hidden a snare for me. Look to my right and see; no one is concerned for me. I have no refuge; no one cares for my life. I cry to you, O LORD; I say, ‘You are my refuge, my portion in the land of the living.’ Listen to my cry, for I am in desperate need; rescue me from those who pursue me, for they are too strong for me. Set me free from my prison, that I may praise your name. Then the righteous will gather about me because of your goodness to me” (Psa 142 NIV).

**Narrator 2:** Are earthquakes just the convulsions of a mindless earth? Or does the Lord Jesus, who calms storms, also cause disasters when it is in his purpose to do so?

**Narrator 1:** At midnight an earthquake shook the Philippian jail to its foundations. And it shook the jail keeper! It was exactly what he needed. If something doesn't shake us up, we may never know that we need salvation.

**Narrator 2:** Cell doors flew open. Chains came loose from the prison walls. And prisoners went free. As if driven by a higher power and a deeper instinct, the prisoners all rushed to the inner prison rather than the obvious freedom of the streets outside. They fled to Paul and Silas whom they had heard singing and praying. They fled to the men who had peace with God, no matter what the danger or hardship.

**Narrator 1:** Then all was quiet. There was nothing but the dark and the anxious waiting to know if the earthquake was really over. And then the sounds and a silhouette: the jail keeper was moving in the outer prison. His prisoners were gone! It meant his life at the hands
of the Roman authorities. They'd kill him for this! There was nothing left for him but a fearful looking for judgment to come.

**Narrator 2:** From the inner prison Paul heard the jailer draw his sword. The man was going to kill himself! Other prisoners must have heard it, too, but they didn't say a word. Were they willing — even glad! — to remain silent while a man took his own life? What was going on in their minds? Only the man of God intervened in that split instant to give a life-saving command. It was only the man of God who had anything worthwhile to offer:

**Paul:** Don't harm yourself! We are all here!

**Narrator 1:** What manner of spirit was this that shone forth from the Apostle Paul? Most prisoners would have rejoiced at the death of the hated jailer. Good riddance! But not Paul. This was the mercy and forgiveness that he preached about. This was the spirit of the Jewish Messiah who died to save all men. And now the jailer knew that these things had meaning for him. Mercy and forgiveness had become the realities of his experience in the midnight of his need! He, too, rushed to the inner prison, for he now realized that he would find his freedom there:

**Jailer:** Sirs, what must I do to be saved?

**Questions for thought and discussion**

1) How does Jesus work in our lives, in unseen ways, before we come into the Truth? Think about the way he worked in the life of the Philippian jailer before his conversion.

2) How does Jesus work in our lives after we come into the Truth? Think about the way he worked in the lives of Paul and Silas.

3) What is “divine providence”? How are the ways of providence seen in the story of the Philippian jailer?

4) Does it take an earthquake to jolt people out of sleep? Is it essential to wait until a life-threatening experience or a crisis of conscience strikes a person before they commit their life to Christ? What do you think?

5) Some people react negatively to life-threatening experiences. The Philippian jailer almost did. Such people react as if there is no God when things go wrong or, even worse, they blame God when disaster strikes. What is missing in the thinking of people who react this way?

6) How important is your conduct — your way of life — when it comes to preaching the Truth to others? Be specific. Do you personally know someone whose Christlike conduct has had a good effect on others?

7) See Matt 5:16. How do Paul and Silas interpret these words of Jesus for us?

Digital copies of these case studies will be gladly provided on request.

**Notes:**

David, Abigail, and Nabal

“Now the name of the man was Nabal; and the name of his wife Abigail: and she was a woman of good understanding, and of a beautiful countenance: but the man was churlish and evil in his doings; and he was of the house of Caleb” (1Sam 25:3).

Introduction

The story of David and Abigail is gripping. It is a story of a woman who acted in sheer wisdom to save not only her household, but also the reputation of the mighty man David. It is the story a man who acted foolishly in his haste for revenge. And it is the story of a man who was a selfish fool in his actions towards God’s beloved. If we scrutinize ourselves closely enough, we will more than likely be able to see a little bit of ourselves in all three of these characters. We at times act in urgency and do not allow ourselves the time to step back and look over our situations properly. At other times we can be so blinded by self, that the obvious needs of others are not so obvious to us as we recline in the comfort of our own mighty accomplishments. Finally, at other times, being void of selfishness, having put the cares of others before our own, we can see beyond our meager existence into the needs and desires of others, and follow the words of the law: “But thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him, and shalt surely lend him sufficient for his need, in that which he wanteth” (Deut 15: 8). So as we begin pulling back the layers of this story and revealing the true characters of Abigail, David, and Nabal, we have to pry into our own minds and notice the fool in us, for only after we recognize our problems, can we begin to piece together a solution.

The story opens for us in 1Sam 25. Before Scripture even alludes to the household of the fool, or the generosity of David, Scripture reveals to us that a mighty hole had been created in David’s life, a hole which would be filled before the chapter’s end. “And Samuel died; and all the Israelites were gathered together, and lamented him, and buried him in his house at Ramah. And David arose, and went down to the wilderness of Paran” (1Sam 25:1). So Samuel was dead: the great mentor, the father figure to David, had passed away. The two had spent time together: “So David fled, and escaped, and came to Samuel to Ramah, and told him all that Saul had done to him. And he and Samuel went and dwelt in Naioth” (1Sam 19:18). David scarcely had time to mourn for the great man who had affected him so immensely. Saul wanted David dead, and had armies all over Israel trying to flush him out of hiding so he could be killed. Unbeknownst to David at the time, he would not see his greatest companion Jonathan again, his wife Michal had also been taken from him and given to another man, and he had no place to call home. All he had was his six hundred men who forsook their old lives and followed him in his flight from Saul through the wilderness. David was in desperate need of a companion, a companion that would be much closer and much more spiritual...
than what the six hundred men could offer, and at the absolutely perfect moment, God intervened. David would march into the account of chapter 26 having been refreshed, reinvigorated, and ready to take on the challenges that lay ahead with an honest, endearing, and most of all, spiritually uplifting wife, given to him from His Heavenly Father.

**Nabal**

We come onto the scene of 1Sam 25 with the description of the wealth of Nabal. We are told he possessed thousands of livestock and a household overflowing with goods which he had accumulated in his greed. Nabal indeed was a man who needed bigger and bigger barns to hold all his goods. With all of Nabal's greed, Scripture then chooses to introduce someone who was a total opposite of Nabal. Scripture is very specific when it introduces these two characters onto the scene, Abigail is described first as a woman of good understanding and a woman who was of a beautiful countenance (1Sam 25:3). The last person Scripture described in this way was actually David himself: “Then answered one of the servants, and said, Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, that is cunning in playing, and a mighty valiant man, and a man of war, and prudent in matters, and a comely person, and the LORD is with him” (1Sam 16: 18). After the introduction of Abigail, we are then introduced to a man who Scripture labels as a fool, a man who was “churlish and evil in all his doings.” Nabal was not only a fool, but he was rude, arrogant, and would do anything to anyone without giving a second thought to their wellbeing.

So the inquiring and inquisitive mind has more than likely asked a couple questions. Why would any loving parents name their son a name symbolizing a “fool”? Secondly, how did the God fearing woman Abigail end up with such a fool as her husband? Well, perhaps both questions can be answered by suggesting that Nabal simply became a greedy fool further into his life and he simply allowed that greed to overtake him. Over the course of time he would have developed a reputation of a complete fool to those with whom he came into contact. We are told Nabal was of the house of Caleb, (1Sam 25:3) so somewhere in the history of this family there was an upright and faithful line of individuals. If Nabal had started out this way, it would certainly explain that the name “fool” was developed rather than bestowed at birth, and it would also explain why Abigail would agree to marry this kind of man. If Abigail found traits that reflected some sort of spirituality in this man at one time, the thought of a spiritual, wealthy man may have attracted her. Another possibility is that Abigail was under the custom of an arranged marriage, in which case she would have had no choice but to marry Nabal. But whatever the cause of Nabal’s character, the lesson must be derived from what Scripture reveals to us, and that was his folly. It was this fool and his family who had been the benefactors of David’s kindness.

David’s flight had brought him to the wilderness of Paran. The wilderness of Paran was known for its occasional attacks on the citizens of the area as the Amalekites would sweep through this land on their way north into Judah. (1Sam 30) With David and his 600 men stationed in this area, it greatly discouraged the advances of these Amalekites into the wilderness. It discouraged them so much in fact,
that we are told no one was harmed while David and his men kept watch over the shepherds of this area. We are not told exactly how long David stayed in this area to keep and protect the shepherds and families, but it was perhaps a few months in time, enough time to leave a great impression upon the shepherds: “But the men were very good unto us, and we were not hurt, neither missed we any thing, as long as we were conversant with them, when we were in the fields” (1Sam 25:15).

This was possibly long enough for rumors to reach the palace of Saul of David's whereabouts. However long it may have been, David's help was greatly appreciated and it was time for him to depart. No doubt during this time in Paran he would have heard of the wealth (as well as the folly) of the man Nabal. Before he departed, he sent ten of his men to kindly ask Nabal for provisions for their labors.

“And David sent out ten young men, and David said unto the young men, Get you up to Carmel, and go to Nabal, and greet him in my name: And thus shall ye say to him that liveth in prosperity, Peace be both to thee, and peace be to thine house, and peace be unto all that thou hast. And now I have heard that thou hast shearers: now thy shepherds which were with us, we hurt them not, neither was there ought missing unto them, all the while they were in Carmel. Ask thy young men, and they will shew thee. Wherefore let the young men find favour in thine eyes: for we come in a good day: give, I pray thee, whatsoever cometh to thine hand unto thy servants, and to thy son David” (1Sam 25:5-8).

We see that David had high hopes of receiving quite a bit of provision in the fact that he sent ten of his men to collect. When the young men arrived at the household of Nabal they were met with a very different attitude then they probably expected. Nabal, with a complete lack of respect, denied them any reward or wage — instead he mocked David and David's men. Nevertheless it is highly likely that Nabal knew exactly who David was despite his comment: “And Nabal answered David's servants, and said, Who is David? and who is the son of Jesse? there be many servants now a days that break away every man from his master” (1Sam 25:10).

Most of the nation would have heard of the brave young man who slew the giant and brought a victory to Israel over the dreaded Philistine army. Nabal knew that David had found employment in Saul's army, and that this 'rebel' David was fleeing from his master. Nabal seems to be a large admirer of Saul, his king who was a head taller than the rest, a man who the flesh could look up to, a king that was like a king of the other nations. Saul seems to be an idol of a sort to Nabal. Many similarities can be found between Saul and Nabal in their dealings with
David. It is also fairly obvious that Nabal had heard of David prior to this because he refers to him as “the son of Jesse” a phrase which Scripture does not say was used by the young men, but rather a common known fact of the time. One man who was known very well for his derogatory use of the phrase “son of Jesse” was Saul himself. Despite the greatness of David, and despite the kindness David had showed him, Nabal still refused to aid the man who his king was hunting down.

David’s reaction to Nabal

Upon the return of the the young men to David, we are introduced to another fantastic lesson from which we can greatly benefit. The ten young men bring Nabal’s response back to David, and David’s immediate reaction is to retaliate with violence. Now we must note that first off all, this reaction of David’s was a dire mistake on David’s part, but not only that, but there are no words uttered by the 600 men! There are no words of rebuke, no calm warnings about being too hasty, there was only a taste of revenge that was shared by every individual present. We have to ask ourselves, if we had been numbered in the 600 men who followed David through the wilderness, would we have the faith to stand up against David and 599 others and preach righteousness? Or would we notice that our opinion would be hopelessly outnumbered and choose rather to stay behind: “And David said unto his men, Gird ye on every man his sword. And they girded on every man his sword; and David also girded on his sword: and there went up after David about four hundred men; and two hundred abode by the stuff” (1Sam 25:13)?

In ecclesial life, going with the flow as it were can be a dangerous path to take. If we see a brother or sister struggling in their efforts in the truth, and no one is reaching out a hand, where do we stand? Is our arm outstretched? Is our hand open to them? Do we take the time out of our lives to help instruct and guide our brother or sister along the path to eternal life? Or are we somehow equally choked by the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of our possessions, as in the parable of the sower: (Matt 13:22)? It is a hard task, but a vital task. Had just one individual stood up against David, and carefully criticized his actions, the wisdom of David may have overcome his hasty lust of revenge and David may have been enlightened to his actions. But no one stopped him, rather 400 of them simply girded themselves with swords and followed him to exact ‘justice’ on Nabal and on his household. It was at this moment that we see a certain characteristic of David that is only revealed a handful of times. David seems to have had a sense of act now and think later — a characteristic that got him into quite the quandary with Bathsheba. We see the same instinct here with Nabal, instead of stopping to think what repercussions his actions would have, he instead followed the calling of his emotions and not his head. How often do we fall into the same trap? In our emotions we make unintelligent and foolish choices, as David did, nevertheless in both instances with Nabal and Bathsheba, by God’s grace, the shame and regret that David suffered built him into a better servant of God than he was before the trial. Likewise we, when we have erred, should look back at the mistake and search out how we can better ourselves from it. David grew exceedingly that day, thanks to guidance of a wonderful and Godly woman. How much David would have
wished someone like Abigail would have been there the day he glanced and saw the woman bathing on the roof.

**Abigail**

It was to this fascinating woman that the servants rushed, the ones who owed their lives to David. As quickly as they could they warned her of the impending destruction that David had planned for the household of Nabal. We learn a lot from Abigail, in her speech to David as recorded in 1Sam 25:24-31. For example, from vs. 28: “I pray thee, forgive the trespass of thine handmaid: for the LORD will certainly make my lord a sure house; because my lord fighteth the battles of the LORD, and evil hath not been found in thee all thy days.”

From this, we learn that her priorities were focused on things above. We also learn that she knew her husband was indeed a fool, and that she was perfectly aware of the greatness and might of this man David (1Sam 25:28). And it was with this knowledge of David as a man of reason and a man of faith that she knew that he could be enlightened to the error of his ways. So she hurried and gathered enough food for the entire company of David and gave them to the servants to bring to David. “Then Abigail made haste, and took two hundred loaves, and two bottles of wine, and five sheep ready dressed, and five measures of parched corn, and an hundred clusters of raisins, and two hundred cakes of figs, and laid them on asses” (1Sam 25:18). So five sheep are already dressed and ready to be eaten before she even addresses David.

**Two skins of wine**

This indeed was a very wealthy family, to have that much food just sitting around ready to be devoured. It makes Nabal’s refusal to help just that much more shocking. We also see the wisdom of Abigail brought to light here. In the piles of food to be brought to David, it is only two skins of wine that she brought. There was no doubt in her mind of the dangers of wine, for her husband was a drunkard as we learn “And Abigail came to Nabal; and, behold, he held a feast in his house, like the feast of a king; and Nabal’s heart was merry within him, for he was very drunken: wherefore she told him nothing, less or more, until the morning light” (1Sam 25:36).

So in the heaps of food for the men, there is only a small amount of wine to be distributed among 600 men — this was a wise woman indeed. It was this wisdom that led Abigail to do something which David would never have forgotten. The
moment she saw David, she got off of her animal and prostrated herself on the ground before him and took the blame of the entire incident upon herself. How these words would have moved David from fury to regret. It was in the speech of Abigail that David was awakened out of his trance of vengeance and saw that God had indeed intervened on his behalf. Her words spoke of her faith in the promises of the Heavenly Father, they spoke of her understanding of David's future position as King over God's people, and her words solved the dispute of an imminent clash of violence. How often does our loving Heavenly Father send these Divine interventions into our lives? How often do we allow ourselves to see them? Abigail saw it. David saw it. David's 600 men saw it. The words of the wise woman Abigail saved two massive households that day. I wish we had time to speak of the lovely exhortations which Abigail gave that day, the soft answer that turned away wrath and saved her house.

Once the men had eaten, once David had been made aware of the error of his ways, and once Abigail had soothed the quick temper of her future husband and king, both David and Abigail returned their own ways. It is quite amazing how our Heavenly Father works, for only the morning after this incident, God struck Nabal with a paralyzing disease and ten days later he was dead. David would have been so grateful that it was the hand of God that took Nabal's life, and not his own vengeful hand. How this would have helped him in his flights from Saul, and the restraint he would show towards sparing the life of God's anointed. So upon hearing the words that Nabal had died, he sent for this incredible woman, desiring that she become his wife — a phenomenal improvement to the wife Michal who had been taken from him. A similar replacement to his best companion Jonathan which he would not see again on this side of the kingdom. She could also be seen as a successor from God for Samuel, his mentor in the truth. Upon hearing the words of David, we are told that Abigail was ecstatic, she hasted and rushed to become the wife of a future king rather than the foolishness of this world. She takes with her five damsels, five wise women following the future bride to meet her husband and they together leave behind the foolishness of the world, a beautiful type of those of us waiting to be retrieved by our coming Groom.

Conclusion
What a perfect ending to the story of David and Abigail. David needed a spiritual influence in his life and it was in the mercy of the Heavenly Father that he was provided this in a way which he would never forget. He was given a wife, a friend, a spiritual companion, and someone who not afraid of putting herself in harm's way to do what she knew was right to the benefit of the truth. So we, as we pull lessons from this fantastic couple, should see ourselves as an Abigail, a servant of our Father who will do whatever necessary to guide our brothers and sisters into that great day when our Groom will call forth his bride as he prepares this earth to be filled with the glory of his Heavenly Father.

Jason Robinson (Thousand Oaks, CA)

Notes:
1. The size of a skin of wine is unknown: it could be anywhere up to 120 liters, 30 gallons, but it is probably much smaller. See Septuagint at Hos 3:2. [Editor]
The New Testament Church
(1) Apostolic Christianity

Introduction
Thus series of articles is based upon a set of addresses, given by Bro. Len Richardson some years ago, and which were later (in 1996) published in “The Australian Christadelphian Shield”, which ceased publication in 2002. Bro. Len was a very well-known speaker in England, who died in 1997 aged 81, after a life full of activities and a writer of several quite well known books. Among these are “Sixty Years a Christadelphian” and “Balancing the Book”. They have been updated to better reflect the North American scene, and to remove some of the problems in transcribing the spoken word, but I hope I have retained Bro. Len’s unique style, which I so enjoyed on several occasions.

The Editor

Apostolic Christianity
We like to think that our Faith is what we describe as “Apostolic Christianity revived,” and we quote with evident satisfaction, at times, the writing of Bertrand Russell, a philosopher whose other views we probably reject decisively. He said that it was probably true that the Christadelphians in some respects were the nearest approach to the Christianity of New Testament times. We get a good deal of satisfaction from this, and in fact it is not at all unknown for it to be one of our lecture subjects on Sunday evenings — “Apostolic Christianity Revived”; which is a big claim to make by any standards.

It is probably true that we are the nearest of the denominations around us to the Christianity of the New Testament, but what I am asking in this series is, how near are we in fact to Apostolic Christianity? I am not trying to “prove” anything; I haven’t an axe to grind! I am neither trying to shock you nor to reassure you, and I am not whistling in the dark. I have tried as nearly as possible in this study to arrive at some objective conclusions about how near we really are to the Christianity of the New Testament.

I know it is virtually impossible to approach any question with a completely open mind. I do not think any of us who are thoughtful people would ever say that we approach anything with an open mind. We may pretend we do, but be assured that there is very little at all that is approached with a completely unprejudiced mind. Yet we always tell other people that this is the way they ought to approach religion.
I have tried to make this a genuine endeavor to dig into the New Testament and find where we are like the New Testament Church and where we are not like it, to see how close we really are in some respects; and in others how far we may be away from the First Century Church. In our organization, doctrine and spirit, to study the points of accord and discord between our community and the 1st Century Christians.

Where we find agreement between the ways we behave, the things we believe, and the way we organize ourselves it will confirm us in our faith. Where we find divergences, as I think we shall from time to time, it may be possible for us to make adjustments; though in some cases the Apostolic conditions cannot be revived, as for example in respect to the miraculous element. I do not think many of us would expect to see the miraculous element that was there in the early church revived in our own day, though of course there are some who would say that this is because of our lack of faith! I feel that the weight of evidence is that the “gifts of the spirit,” that is the power to work miracles and to do similar miraculous acts was withdrawn towards the end of the first century, and I would not be looking for a revival of that kind of work of the spirit. In any case, it is clearly not among us, and it is one of those areas in which we will have to accept that there is a big difference between us and them, inasmuch as the Apostles with the power of the Holy Spirit were able to work the tremendous miracles that were so to impress their generation with the truth of their message. Leaving this for the present, however, we are going to start as seems appropriate with Jesus himself, and with the indications of the future church that we get in the Gospel records.

Jesus Christ in the Gospels

The work of Jesus Christ as recorded in the Gospels is very different from the picture of the church which we see in the Acts and in the Epistles. I don’t think any of us will quarrel with that statement. As soon as you go over from the end of John’s Gospel to the beginning of Acts you are aware of a difference. As soon as you come into the second chapter of Acts you are plunged into the work of the New Testament Church, which is quite different from the vagrant itinerant preaching of Jesus and his Apostles as described for us in the Gospel record. There we see Jesus going about with a small band of first twelve, and then seventy, disciples, who helped him in the work of preaching his message in the towns and villages of Judea and Galilee.

He did not set up ecclesias or establish groups of believers, and they had no buildings in which they met. “A sower went forth to sow the seed” is a good description in fact of what we see Jesus doing in the Gospels. The sower went forth to sow his seed, and his message was, “Follow me.” He began by challenging individual men, Peter and Andrew and others, who became his close disciples: “And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men. And they straightway left their nets, and followed him” (Matt 4:18-20). So with this brief challenge they followed him. This term “Follow me” is a summary of the message of Jesus Christ as we see
and the majority did not. Many heard him gladly, but most of them did not become his disciples. Twelve men went everywhere with him; a few women looked after his material needs; and his message was always a call to men to accept himself, to adopt his standards and love his person.

“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls” (Matt 11: 28-29).

His message to the men of Israel among whom he went preaching the Gospel was: “If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him” (John 14:23). Is this one point of difference with our own preaching of the Gospel in the twentieth century? He preached “the Kingdom of God,” we say. He went everywhere preaching “the gospel of the Kingdom,” and we tend to make it mean that Jesus went about giving Christadelphian lectures about the throne of David, and the restoration of Israel, and the signs of the times, and Gog coming down against the land of Israel, and similar ideas which we talk about when we preach the gospel of the Kingdom of God. But Jesus does not appear to have given anything like Christadelphian lectures on the subject.

The Kingdom of God

In the Gospels the Kingdom of God was a wider term than “a divine political kingdom soon to be established on this earth.” Certainly Jesus preached this gospel. Reading between the lines of his teaching, to his disciples particularly, we see this “divine political kingdom” as a background to his instruction and exhortation. But clearly, I think, his understanding of the Kingdom of God was much more than just a divine political kingdom soon to be established. His preaching of the Kingdom was much more than just a divine political kingdom soon to be established. His preaching of the Kingdom was almost entirely concerned with the ethics and morality of the Kingdom — now, in this life.

What he was teaching men, when he preached the Kingdom, was that there was deliverance from sin; deliverance from death; and eternal life to be obtained by following him. This was his message. It was a present and an urgent thing to Jesus.

Mark tells us in the opening of his Gospel that Jesus went throughout all Judea preaching the gospel of the Kingdom and saying: “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel” (Mark 1:15). So in some sense the times were then fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God was then at hand, in the person of Jesus; in the preaching of his message he was calling upon men not just to take an intellectual interest in Old Testament prophecy, but to repent; to change their minds — to change their way of life — and to “follow him,” with all the implications of that phrase.

On another occasion he said: “Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein” (Luke 18:17). And it seems that in this saying of Jesus we get this larger view of his preaching of the Kingdom. A divine political kingdom in the end of time, when the Son of Man
should come in his glory and all the holy angels with him, was certainly there; but what Jesus emphasized in his preaching of the Kingdom was that you have got to become subjects of the Kingdom now if you entertain any hope of entering it in the age to come. “Except you now receive the Kingdom of God as a little child you shall not enter into it then.”

He was concerned with men's behavior and attitudes towards God and towards their fellows. And this comes out continually in the Gospels. We know it; I have always known it; I have tried to avoid it sometimes in my thinking. I have wished that Jesus did give the kind of lectures I give when asked to speak on “the Kingdom of God,” but he did not in fact.

What is recorded of the teaching of Jesus is almost entirely concerned, in his public message, with calling men to repentance; with their attitudes and their behavior towards their fellow men, especially their attitudes towards God. The first and great commandment: “And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself” (Luke 10:27). These were the cardinal principles of the teaching of Jesus Christ, and he was the center of the message. Not Abraham, not David, not Moses, but Jesus was the center of the message.

Men were to receive his teaching and were to act on it, seeing themselves as children of their Father in heaven. We notice that he does not call God by the Old Testament names of awe; not once does he use the name Yahweh; not once does he address God as “the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.”

Of course Jesus knew better than you and I the names of the Deity, but he taught us to think of God as “our Father who art in heaven” — your heavenly Father who knows your needs — and men were to imitate the character of their Father. “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect” (Matt 5:48).

A community of believers

There are clear indications even in the Gospels that Jesus intended his work to take a more structured form than we see in the four records given by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John; that there was to grow up later on a church, a community of believers, with positive function in society. Now I take you first of all to Luke:

“Also I say unto you, Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God: But he that denieth me before men shall be denied before the angels of God. And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Spirit it shall not be forgiven. And when they bring you unto the synagogues, and unto magistrates, and powers, take ye no thought how or what thing ye shall answer, or what ye shall say: For the Holy Spirit shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say” (Luke 12:8-12).

You may say, how does that bear on the subject of the New Testament Church? I see it in this way: Jesus is saying to his disciples that the time is coming when they will have to testify publicly to their faith in him, and that because of this faith,
and because of their testimony concerning him, they will become a persecuted people. He envisages an identifiable witness of those who believe in him in the world; they would be clearly identifiable as his disciples; set, as it were, against “the world.” Set against the magistrates, principalities and powers of their day. Here would be people recognizably disciples of Jesus, and persecuted for their faith in him. And so he said to them

“Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Matt 5:14-16).

Clearly he is envisaging here a community activity of all the believers, as a light shining in the world; a city set on a hill; a candlestick to give light to all that are in the house. Or again he says, “Ye are the salt of the earth,” (Matt 5:13), the grains of salt sent out into the world to permeate society with Christian thinking. He did not see his followers therefore as being withdrawn from the world as a kind of secret society, in privacy, but as a community of men and women influencing society to goodness and truth. And this I see as an indication that later on (and indeed this text from which I have quoted speaks of what will happen to them later on) when this time comes for the church corporately to witness in the world, and to be tried before judges and magistrates, they are not to worry about what they should say, but are to speak by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit of God.

Len Richardson

Notes:
1. In 1938 Bertrand Russell wrote, “Christianity was in its earliest days, entirely unpolitical. The best representatives in our time are the Christadelphians, who believe the end of the world to be imminent, and refuse to have any part or lot in secular affairs.” Power, A New Social Analysis, p 83 in Routledge Classics 2004.

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

You, your family and friends are invited to the
40th annual Church of God of the Abrahamic Faith Gathering
at Denison University in Granville, Ohio, July 20-26, 2015.

Bro. Steve Davis: “Moving on to Maturity: A Study in the Letter to the Hebrews”
Bro. John Downer: “Forty Years of Preparation”

Contact Bro. Brad Rek at 330-609-6957 or brad.rek@gmail.com. Visit our website at www.abrahamicfaithgathering.org for more information and to view talks from last year.
The JOCIs of the Bible

Acronyms are wonderful inventions. Governments and self-help speakers use them, assisting people to remember and refer to complicated ideas in simple ways: USA. IRS. FBI. UK. LOL. KISS (Keep it short and simple). I would like to introduce a new acronym. It's spelled JOCI, and pronounced jō'si. A JOCI is a Juxtaposition Of Counterintuitive Images.

What does this mean? Juxtaposition is putting two things alongside one another in order to compare or contrast them. Counterintuitive describes something that is very much different from what might ordinarily be assumed. So the juxtaposition of counterintuitive images is putting two pictures or ideas alongside one another in ways that are not expected, resulting in an unsettling contrast. It just doesn't seem right. You may never have thought of it this way, but the Bible is filled with JOCIs.

Some JOCIs are easy

We'll start with a couple of easy ones: The apostle Paul writes,

“For Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak then I am strong” (2Cor 12:10).

This is an easy JOCI. The two ideas are absolutely contradictory: Paul says he is, simultaneously, weak and strong. How can that be? In the immediate context Paul explains that, for Christ’s sake, he has joyfully endured great hardships because in doing so he has come to understand more perfectly that the Lord’s power will be made perfect in his weakness (vs. 9). Paul now knows that, even when he is weak and without help, naturally speaking, Christ’s power gives him a spiritual strength. Thus he can hold in his mind two contrary ideas at the same time: I may be weak (physically), but through faith in Christ’s love I can be strong (spiritually), in the promises and the hope of eternal life.

Here’s another easy one: Jesus says,

“Whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it” (Luke 9:24).

How can you work hard to save your life but lose it at the same time? How can you deliberately lose your life, but also save it? The simple answer is in two little words in that quote: “whoever loses his life for me will save it.” Whatever you given up now for Christ’s sake is not really lost. It is more like transferring funds from one bank account to another: from your Here-and-now Daily Account to your Heavenly Treasure Savings Account.

The teaching here is, indeed, counterintuitive, but it is at the heart of the gospel. The preceding verse (vs. 23) says, “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.” When you deny yourself to follow...
Christ, you may choose present disadvantage. Maybe, each day, you defer, perhaps only slightly, what you’d like to do, and instead do something for someone else, which is more difficult. You “lose your life” every day, in something greater than yourself, to save your life in Christ.

In Christ, we become weak so as to become strong. We lose ourselves so as to save ourselves. And we die a little every day in order to live forever with him.

**A more complex JOCI**

Let’s look at one other JOCI. This one is more complex, and somewhat jarring.

In Revelation 4 and 5, a door is opened into heaven. This reveals a throne, with some special characters and a great number of observers or worshipers (angels?). They are praising the One who sits on the throne (the Lord God Himself). In His right hand, God holds a scroll in which are written future events. The scroll must apparently be taken from His hand and unrolled before those events can come to pass. The future of the world itself depends on this scroll being opened, not only in order to see future events, but to allow future events actually to take place. Without someone who can open the book, the future is unknown and unfulfilled, and it may remain unrealized. In short, it may never happen!

Seemingly, no one can open the scroll. In all the great host of heaven, absolutely no one can open the special book. As John stands there, in his vision, he weeps and weeps because no one has been found who is worthy to open the scroll and look inside — and the future may never come to be. Then one of the elders says to John, “Do not weep! Don’t worry. The Lion of the tribe of Judah will come and open the scroll.”

The great assembly around God’s throne hopes that the Lion of Judah, the most powerful and fiercest of creatures, with the most royal and dignified bearing, will come to open the scroll. But he hasn’t come yet, and no one — absolutely no one else — can do what the Lion can do. The Lion must come! The whole group is waiting, weeping, praying for the Lion to come. We can feel ourselves joining with this group: May the Lion come, and may he come soon, for nothing can happen until he arrives. When will the mighty and kingly Lion appear?

The stage is set now, for an extraordinary juxtaposition of counterintuitive images. It happens so subtly that, if we read quickly and superficially, and fail to visualize the scene, we may miss it altogether. So let’s imagine that we are all sitting in the audience at a play. The tension mounts. The audience is waiting breathlessly, hearts pounding, for the climactic moment. Somewhere, offstage, the Lion is preparing to make his majestic entrance. He will come, the King of Beasts, and his mighty roar will cause the earth to tremble, and strike fear in the hearts of all men.

The excitement grows. He must be coming, any moment now. Just wait, one more second, and he will be here! Do we hear the sound of his coming? Then from offstage enters, not a lion, but a lamb! Not a great lion with flowing mane and a roar that shakes the ground. It’s only a little lamb, which can scarcely utter a mild bleating sound, the quietest of animals, and the least threatening. This is the one
who is going to strike fear in the hearts of evildoers? The one who is prepared to exercise a magisterial control over the unfolding of the world’s history?

Besides which, the lamb looks to be half-dead. It is “a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain” (Rev 5:6). What a letdown. What a disappointment. Maybe this is a lamb that has only, for a moment, survived the attack of the mighty Lion? Maybe the Lion is in the wings, about to appear and finish off the little lamb? But no, we see that’s not the case. The Lamb, the one who “had been slain”, with blood dripping from his throat, actually comes forward and takes the scroll. He is the One who will open the scroll. In fact, he is the Lion!

In our minds the mighty Lion and the gentle Lamb are set beside one another, in harmony and perfect peace. It is contrary to all know of nature now, and it is very troubling. What it is, also, is yet another JOCI; we’ve been caught off guard by this paradox.

We all thought one creature would come, and we all knew what he would be like. And he did come, but he was altogether different, the total opposite of what we expected. The bleeding, feeble, passive, submissive Lamb is the One who is worthy. How can that be? He has overcome; he is worthy to receive all the power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise that we were prepared to give to the Lion. He will sit on the throne with the Lord God.

In this juxtaposition of counterintuitive images, there never was a Lion, not really. First of all, there had to be a lamb, ready and willing to be slain, to lay down his life: “Not my will, but Yours be done.” A lamb to wear the crown of thorns and be sacrificed on God’s altar, the terrible Roman cross. That lamb had to die, in the way God Himself appointed, and be raised from the dead on the third day, “a Lamb that had been slain”, before the Lion of the tribe of Judah could ever appear. And when that Lion did appear, it would be as a lamb, to subdue the nations and rule on the throne of his father David over a redeemed world. When the Lion finally appears, he will command praise and honor and glory as a Lamb. He will rule over the world as though he were a Lion, but those who have faith will always see him as the bruised, suffering, slain lamb.

An old proverb says, “Better is the patient man who controls his temper and his anger than the mighty warrior. Better is the man who conquers his own spirit than the man who conquers a city.” That’s a paraphrase based on the various renderings of Prov 16:32. It defines the person, and the character, of Jesus Christ just about perfectly. Only the man who can be the perfect Lamb, in submission and service and sacrifice, can ever be the Lion who rules. Only the man who wore the crown of thorns can ever wear the golden crown.

George Booker (Austin, TX)

This phrase “a lamb as it had been slain” (Rev 5:6) brings us to the central feature of Tabernacle worship, and of the purport of the Apocalypse. A living lamb appears which had previously been slain; comparable with the sprinkled blood in the Tabernacle, and a combination of the living and dead goats associated with the Day of Atonement. (The Christadelphian, 1975, p.118)
Bible Mission News

Jamaica – February 18 Ash Wednesday Fraternal

Members of eight ecclesias gathered in the Round Hill Ecclesial Hall on February 18th to enjoy fellowship around the Holy Scriptures. As usual, the Round Hill members provided a clean meeting place and hearty hospitality for the 84 adults and 27 children present. The study theme for the day was “Battling Sin”. Initially this may not seem like an uplifting topic, however, the two talks and three discussion groups left all in attendance much encouraged to follow and develop the mind of our Master. Bro. Don Luff from Ontario, Canada, spoke on “Be Alert in the Battle” and Bro. Leecroft Blair from the Round Hill Ecclesia presented a study on “Sin wage war”. After the lively discussion group session, we were served a hot chicken and rice meal. We were behind schedule a little, so we started the Breaking of Bread Service a few minutes early — the exhortation theme was “Be Christ-like”. The Scriptures counsel us to follow or imitate and thus mimic good examples — like the Apostle Paul, our Lord and our Heavenly Father. We are to follow in our Lord’s footsteps, bearing the yoke of service together. We must learn of him, since he has shown us the way. The day of activities concluded around 3 pm — in good time for the several hours of travel home which many had ahead of them. Nevertheless, some members walked around the room still singing hymns, while others were enjoying conversation — they were in no hurry to go home. It was a good day together.

While visiting in Round Hill, we discussed with Bro. Marlon Jackson (recording brother) improved methods of capturing more water during the rainy season. Some of you may have heard that during 2014, Jamaica experienced the worse drought in over 30 years. The CBMC assisted by supplying a tank-truck load of water to fill one of the storage tanks by the Hall. The meeting hall has an expansive roof, and with additional and larger storage tanks, more rain water can be collected when the ‘heavens open-up’. The ecclesia is to present a proposal in this regard.
During the rest of our stay, we visited a few sisters in the Round Hill and May Pen areas, who are unable to attend meeting for various reasons — such as, physical health or advanced age. While in the Round Hill area, Sis. Sonia Blair took us to visit and read the Word with Sis. Sislyn Wilkie and Sis. Jannette Elliott — both house-bound for physical reasons — we are clearly aware of our mortality, and the hope we have of being clothed upon with immortality, and thus receive a new body.

Another sister we spent time with was Ruby Smikle of the May Pen Ecclesia, who will be 90 in July this year. She has a daughter and granddaughter baptized in the May Pen Ecclesia. Another day Bro. Melvin Gordon of the May Pen Ecclesia drove Bro. David Welch (Teignmouth, UK) and me to share a Breaking of Bread Service with Sis. Marjorie (Madge) Harley. She has been struggling with health issues for a number of years, but in recent times has been blessed with improved mobility, so as to be able to sit with us during our time in her house. One morning, Bro. Melvin also drove four of us to visit two locations in May Pen — the infirmary where a woman (long-time friend of the family) is living, and the hospital where Sis. Ruby McLeod was recovering. The 13-year-old grandson of Sis. Beverly Gibbs — Dwayne Thomas, crippled from birth — was also in the children’s section of the hospital with kidney problems. At both these facilities, it was evident by the cleanliness of the rooms and care of the people, that the staff is doing their best. We were told at the infirmary, that there is always a need for clothing and disposable diapers...

We were also able to meet with the members of the May Pen and Round Hill Ecclesias for Bible Classes, as well as remember our Lord in the Kingston Ecclesial Hall on Sunday, February 22nd, when members of May Pen and Spanish Town also joined us for the Breaking of Bread, Bible Class and a lunch together. Our stay in Jamaica also included moving topsoil with a wheelbarrow, sowing grass seed and replacing chain-link fence. It was a full and rewarding trip. I was treated with total hospitality, including a birthday cake the last evening!

Don Luff, CBMC Jamaica Linkman, submitted by Sis. Jan Berneau

A Bible School at the Highest Level

As had been announced, the Ecuador ecclesia celebrated its seventh annual Bible School this last February, gathering together brethren and sisters from this country with others from North, Central and South America. Taking advantage of the Carnaval four-day weekend, the South American ecclesia took on the teachings of Revelation chapters 2 and 3, along with the books of the Kings of Israel and Judah.
We devoted some profound study and analysis to the words of Jesus to the seven churches. The objective was to try to understand the way in which the Son of God spoke to those brethren in his final words — the way in which he counseled them, how he exhorted them, how he encouraged them to persevere in the hope of the Kingdom of God. After some intense but fruitful sessions, his messages were revealed in all their clarity.

In classes distributed across mornings and evenings for the four days of the gathering, we also spent several hours studying the theme of the kings of Israel and Judah, beginning at Solomon, and their behavior before God.

The classes were accentuated with project work, reading exercises, and topic research and analysis, all contributing to a great learning experience.

Geographically, the ecclesia in Quito is not only at the center of the world, but also one of the highest in the world, at 2860 meters above sea level. Quito is a beautiful city surrounded by imposing volcanoes. From our location in the Parroquia of Tabalela, on a clear day we could discern both Rucu (Old) and Guagua (Baby) Pichincha, Cotopaxi, Antisana and Cayambe, all volcanoes between 4800 and 5800 meters high. Currently dormant, they surround the capital of Ecuador, sentinels of the landscape that embraced the Bible School’s attendees. The country’s natural beauty, its raging rivers, imposing waterfalls, majestic mountains and extraordinary flora and fauna became the ideal framework for fellowship in the outdoors. The brethren organized spectacularly beautiful hikes and walks in the hills around Tababela. We also enjoyed some international soccer, with representatives from Ecuador, Canada and Argentina playing in short, breathless bursts at 2600 meters. A rematch is pending for next year!

Another of the activities was the Sunday school presentation, with children and young people that dramatized the story of the sacrifice of Isaac, and also added joy to our evenings with some songs.

The Bible School was well organized, a great, international event that left us all with a yearning to repeat the experience without fail, God willing, until our Lord Jesus returns. Congratulations to the Quito ecclesia in Ecuador! And thank you very much for everything, and we’ll hope to see you all again next year when we’ll have more brothers and sisters from around the world gathered for fellowship in the middle of the world.

Rubén Barboza

Submitted by Sis. Jan Berneau, CBMA/CBMC Publicity
Trinidad & Tobago Sisters at work in God’s field

During a recent trip to Trinidad and Tobago I was once again reminded of how much good work our dear sisters do in the nurturing of young plants in the Lord. Scripture teaches that we should “Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it”. And though sisters do not have the leadership role in ecclesial affairs there is so much they can do in “planting and watering” good seed in young minds as well as in the minds of adults who show an interest in the gospel of salvation. And what a blessing it is to behold when we see God give the increase!

One such sister from the Erin Ecclesia caught my attention as a wonderful example of this work. There is much unemployment and poor health that is faced by our brethren in this particular ecclesia. This sister’s husband is unemployed and on disability for a variety of health issues and she works a part-time job to help make ends meet. They have an eight year-old son who loves to read the Bible out loud and interact with others of the faith whether young or old. In addition, despite their limited income she and her husband, a brother in the faith, are raising two teenage girls and a young teenage boy who are part of their extended family.

The teenage girls put on the saving name of Christ about a year ago and are very dedicated in their walks of faith. God gave the increase! The young boy suffers from sickle cell anemia and has to “travel” with his sister for medical check-ups and treatment. In Trinidad “to travel” means you have to take a taxi or minibus. Despite the young boy’s illness he has a beautiful spirit and wonderful smile. He too is being brought up in “The Way” of salvation by his loving aunt and uncle.

Speaking of transportation the Canadian CBM has provided the Erin ecclesia with a small but dependable vehicle. It is used to bring four regular contacts to meeting and Bible classes from a nearby village as well as to collect the Sunday school and CYC students for regular meetings and activities. It is so well used that the seat upholstery is wearing out!

Another blessing for the Erin Ecclesia is the new but modest meeting hall built with funds donated from our brothers and sisters in Canada. This hall is very well used and appreciated. In addition to regular memorial services and Bible classes it has served as the venue for Trinidad’s sisters’ classes which have been a huge boost to the morale of all who attend, but particularly the somewhat isolated sisters of Erin. The sisters get together once a month, Lord willing, to encourage each other in the walk. They deal with a variety of health and personal issues back home so these gatherings provide much needed support and instruction in the hope we share.

All in all, the example of our sisters in Trinidad provides inspiration for the rest of us particularly in their work with the young people. And while we may not have the opportunity to raise children in need in our own home, most of us have children in our ecclesial home or the brotherhood who need heartfelt and regular nourishment in the things of the gospel. It is not the work of our Sunday school teachers and CYC leaders alone. Our children are a “heritage from the LORD”, meant to be a “godly seed”. As such we must make their development in the faith a priority in
our service to the One who gave them to us. May the Almighty Creator bless us all in this work in the days that remain before our Lord’s return.

Brad Butts, Linkman for Trinidad & Tobago
Submitted by Sis. Jan Berneau, CBMA/CBMC Publicity

Sister Annette Johnson…

…is missed greatly in Jamaica and by many in different parts of the world. She fell asleep in the Lord on Sunday, April 5, 2015 at the age of 44. She was a life-long member of the May Pen Ecclesia in Jamaica. Her parents are Bro. Melvin and Sis. Gerzel Gordon of the same ecclesia, as is her husband Bro. Patrick Johnson. Patrick and Annette have three children — Kharma 15, Nogomo 13, and Akilah 7 (see attached family photo taken early this year). Sis. Annette has one sibling, Bro. Casmon Gordon, who along with his wife Sis. Nicky are members of the Brooklyn New York Ecclesia. Annette and Casmon grew up together in the May Pen Sunday School, and she was baptized April 17, 1989. It is with sadness we report that she succumbed to cancer and has left a big void in many ways — firstly to her husband, three children and natural family. At the same time, Annette was involved in the Truth in so many ways; it will take some time for the Jamaican Brotherhood to adjust to her absence. In her own ecclesia she was Sunday school teacher for many years, which duties she shared with Sis. Lorraine Johnson (not
— the two of them taught about 20 children in two groups. The accompanying photo shows them at their best — working together serving ice cream to the children! One of her other ecclesial efforts in recent years was to carry on the work of her mother to encourage ecclesial CYC activities Saturday afternoons. This meant reminders by phone calls and text messages, plus Patrick and Annette using the family vehicle to help those who needed transportation. Her initiatives for the youth extended beyond her home ecclesia — and along with other Jamaican brothers and sisters, she was instrumental in the planning and execution of the four-day Annual Easter Youth Camp in Jamaica, which is of great benefit to the children and youths. Annette also helped ensure that as many teens and young adults as possible attended the Triennial Caribbean Youth Camp — which she went to as well to chaperone and assist in daily activities.

The Jamaican Ecclesias have their own Bible Mission committee — the Christadelphian Bible Mission Jamaica (CBMJ). This committee organizes a full annual Calendar of Events — about 12 per year. Sis. Annette served as secretary on the four member committee for a number of years, assisted the treasurer preparing spreadsheet financial reports, and liaised with our overseas supporting organization, the Christadelphian Bible Mission Canada (CBMC). The Calendar of Events requires much communication with the ecclesial CBMJ representatives and recording brothers, as well as helping to coordinate transportation to the various activities, and reserving of the venues for Camps and Fraternals. Annette was in regular communication with many members by phone, email or text in preparation for the events.

Sister Annette was tireless in her efforts for her natural family and the Jamaican Brotherhood, and beyond. It was evident at her funeral that her outgoing and helpful manner had been witnessed by many during her life since approximately 500 people were in attendance. Her energy, enthusiasm and zeal for the Truth were infectious. Her example of service to the Master has affected many for good, and will continue to encourage others to follow in the steps of our Lord! We have many happy memories together with Annette! Now the challenge is to fill the void, and there are other sisters who are willing to do so. That being said, we appeal to brothers and sisters overseas to consider helping us here in Jamaica in our efforts to support and strengthen the members. There are few brothers in the ecclesias, and visits of any length will help us in our efforts, in these last days before our Lord returns. Please contact the undersigned for information.

Although we sorrow at the loss of our Sister Annette and miss her presence, we continue in the same hope, which is, looking forward to the fulfilment of God’s sure mercies at the glorious day of the resurrection of God’s faithful servants.

Keith Kinlocke, CBMJ chairman, kkinlocke@yahoo.com
Addresses for Bequests and Donations

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

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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, LOR 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.

BRANTFORD, ON

We are very happy to welcome our Sis. Lisa Bowen, by transfer from the Saskatoon, SK Ecclesia as of April 26, 2015, and look forward to her continued ministration and fellowship with us. We enjoyed the visit of Bro. Frank and Sis. Dorothy Abel (Hamilton Book Road, ON) and thank Bro. Frank for leading our annual spring family study day, held this past April on the theme, “And He Shall Be My Son.”

Daniel Billington

HONESDALE, PA

In April we were blessed by the visit of Bro. Jim Sullivan, his wife, Sis. Cindy, and their two boys, Josh and Luke (Boston, MA). Bro. Jim gave us four exciting and uplifting talks all on the subject of, “Building Faith: An Exhortation, the Wilderness Wanderings”. He also gave three talks on: “The Beatitudes”, “Zeal in the Life of Phineas”, and “2Peter 1:1-8, Experiential Knowledge”. Our sisters provided a wonderful luncheon where we were able to enjoy their company and get to know them. We are truly grateful for their visit and faith building talks.

Stephen J. DeMarco

PITTSBURGH, PA

With sorrow we report the falling asleep of our two most elderly members: Sis Anna Holetich on November 29, 2014 at the age of 91, and Sis Mildred Martin on February 14, 2015 at the age of 94. Both sisters came to the truth later in life. Sis. Ann began taking classes after being contacted by the 1975 Truth Corps team, and Sis. Mildred was baptized after the death of her mother, Sis. Cecelia Phillips, and sister, Sis. Virginia Larkin, in 1981. Both sisters traveled together to the Mid-Atlantic Bible School for many years and will be remembered by many. May their rest be brief and their hope of the resurrection soon realized.

We had our annual study weekend with Bro. Steve Cheetham on May 3 and 4 on ‘Lessons on Past and Future Kings’. We all enjoyed the talks and will use the instructions taught us through the Scriptures in our daily lives. We very much appreciated Bro. Matthew Trowell’s (Book Road, Ontario) classes on ‘One Day in the Kingdom of God’ on October 4 and 5 for our CYC Study Weekend.

We were happy to receive words of exhortation from brethren Caleb Folkerts (Paris Avenue, OH), Ken Burcaw (Ann Arbor, MI), Chris Stilwell (Paris Avenue, OH), Richard Morgan (Book Road, Ontario), Peter Hemingray (Royal Oak, MI), and Mike Narjes (Paris Avenue, OH). On August 30, Bro. Tim Pommer was united in marriage with Sis. Rochelle Quicpuaro.
Lord willing, we plan to have a CYC study weekend November 14 and 15 with Bro. Kevin Mayock (Mooresetown, NJ) as our speaker.

Len Budney

NANAIMO, BC

Due to uncertain family travel and vacation arrangements by our small membership, we have, with regret, decided to suspend our regularly scheduled breaking of bread at our ecclesial hall from August 2, 2015–September 6, 2015 inclusive. Any visitors in our area at that time who wish to do so may be able to break bread by arrangement using the contact information in the CALS diary.

Our thanks go out to the brothers from near and far who have given us exhortational support over this past year. They include: Horace Macpherson, Joe Myren, Matt Neville, Jeremy Foster, Greg Ferrie and Peter Lawrence (Victoria, BC); Dave Snobelen (Saanich Peninsula, BC); Jim Hestermann (Maple Ridge, BC); Art Bull (Vancouver, BC); Roger Bennett (New Westminster, BC); and Graeme Alexander (Seattle, WA).

Once again we would encourage anyone contemplating moving to the West Coast of Canada to consider the Nanaimo area which offers a temperate climate, but with snow covered mountains, reasonably priced real estate, and waterfront activities in a smaller city offering big city amenities. It also is a central location for many vacation activities. Our ecclesia is blessed with our own easily kept and accessible hall. For further information, please call, or e-mail the noted recording brother.

Tom Alexander

OTTAWA, ON

We were pleased to welcome the following visitors during this winter: Sisters: Abigail Saxon (Dandenong, Aust.); Kelty Campbell and Becky Elliot (Toronto West, ON); and Katie Dawes (Toronto East, ON). We also welcomed brothers and sisters: Gerhard and Carolyn Runge, Curtis Runge and Loren Runge (Shelburne, ON), Rick and Sonja Szabo (Picton, ON); and Tom and Kathie Perks (Barrie, ON). We thank them for their love and fellowship, and words of exhortation.

We are very pleased to welcome Bro. Dale and Sis. Rhoda Andrews with their children Damaris, Daniel, and Darius, who have transferred from the Cambridge, ON Ecclesia.

Visitors are always welcome to our small, but growing ecclesia. The breaking of bread is usually held in Room 1C, Ben Franklin Place, 101 Centrepointe Drive, Ottawa, ON at 11:00 am. Occasionally we meet in homes, so visitors should check with the undersigned to confirm arrangements.

Charles Archard

SANTA BARBARA, CA

It has been a little less than a year since we last reported the activities of the Santa Barbara Ecclesia and a lot has happened. Even with our aging members, most of which are over ninety years old, we continue to keep the light stand glowing in our community.

We welcome by way of transfer, our Sis. Heather McDaniel and her two children, Connor and Chloe from the Simi Hills, CA Ecclesia. We have also been blessed to have Chris Riba from the Simi Hills Sunday School attending Westmont College and bringing friends to Sunday School and Memorial Service. We are thankful that God continues to call out a people for His name.
In that regard we were pleased to witness the baptism of ROE JONES, the wife of our Bro. Richard Jones on January 15, 2015. May God bless our new sister in her walk toward His kingdom.

We are sad to announce the death of two of our members this year. Our Sis. Hazel Lyon passed away on September 6, 2014, at the age of eighty-nine. Sis. Hazel was a loving, devoted, giving and gracious sister in Christ for seventy-three years. Her love for the truth was contagious and over the years was responsible for introducing many into the meeting. She has been sorely missed. Then on February 5, 2015, our Bro. Rod Sumner passed away at the age of sixty-four. Bro. Rod was a very active member of our ecclesia. As a limo driver, he never missed the opportunity to share the gospel message with his clients. We look forward to the day when we will once again stand with our brother and sister in our Fathers kingdom.

Many of our members have been plagued with the infirmities of the flesh. Our Bro. Richard Jones has been battling brain cancer for many years and at the writing of this letter, the doctors feel there is no more they can do to sustain his life. So, he is currently home with his sister wife Roe under Hospice care. Our Bro. John Seagoe underwent open heart surgery this past month and is recovering well at age ninety-two.

Our Bro. Floyd Elsas fell at the Palm Springs Bible School, and broke his knee cap. He is now getting around with a walker, but not able to care for himself at the age of ninety-seven. So, Bro. Floyd's daughters have decided to move him to Escondido, near his family, to care for him. Bro. Floyd is a pillar in our ecclesia and we will miss his knowledge of God's word, his vigor for the things of the kingdom, his smiling face and keen sense of humor as well as the fact that he was always the first one to the meeting hall to get everything open and ready to go. You could always depend on him no matter what the activity.

Our Sis. Dorothy Woolridge has been battling boils on her legs, but comes to meeting whenever possible. Our Sis. Jesse Stevens is confined to her home with Alzheimer's and her daughter, Sis. Julie Gibson is tending to her needs. Our Bro. George Engle, eighty-eight, Sis. Jean Larson, ninety-eight, and Vivian Seagoe, ninety-three, all live in assisted living facilities but continue to faithfully come to Sunday school and Memorial Service every Sunday. Their love and passion for the truth is such an example to all of us. Please keep all of our ailing brothers and sisters in your prayers as they are plagued with the infirmities of the flesh. We long for that day when our Lord and Master will come and there will be no more sickness or death.

We would like to say a special thanks to Bro. Ron Stewart (Lompoc, CA) and Bro. Jason Hensley (Simi Hills, CA) as well as the many CYC members who have come this year to minister and assist our ecclesia. May God richly bless all of you for your love, dedication and support for your brothers and sisters. “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.”

This past year we welcomed around the table of our lord the following brothers and sisters: Ron and Shirley Stewart, and Steve and Kathy Settle (Lompoc, CA); Jason and Ruth Hensley, Gordon and Rosa Hensley, Chris Stickney, Heather McDaniel, Robin Riba, Michael Sternad, and Ryan DeCaussin (Simi Hills, CA); Jerry and Wendy Hirst, and Jim and Marilyn Seagoe (San Francisco, CA); Michael and Myra Stickney, Lance Stickney, Jane and Emily Tunnell, Owen and Jolie Tunnell, Hannah Tunnell, Ethan Tunnell, Tom Nagel, Seth and Sharnie Tunnel, and Isaiah Tunnell (San Diego, CA); Mark and Arunit Seagoe (Portland, OR); Alistair and Jean Henderson (South Africa); Becky Mullins, Jan Berneau, Nathan and Jenee Blanchard, Bryan and Harmonie
Blanchard, Matthew and Jenni DeCausin, Laura DeCausin, and Karen Washeck (Verdugo Hills, CA); Andrew and Carly Culver (Norfolk, VA); Nigel and Katie Fletcher (Aust.); Pam Vandiver (Rogue Valley, OR); Larry and Kathleen King (Jackson County, OR); Jorge and Julie Garcia (Houston, TX); Steve Pursell (Monroe, WA); Ed and Linda Hawthorne, Manuel and Celina Cervantes, and Alex and Eric Cervantes (Los Angeles, CA); Tom and Judy Griffiths (Manchester, UK); and David and Becky Seagoe (Olympia, WA). We would like to thank the following brothers for Bible classes and the word of exhortation including Bre. Ron Stewart, Jason Hensley, Michael Stickney, Chris Stickney, Jim Seagoe, Alistair Henderson, Nigel Fletcher, Jerry Hirst, Andrew Culver, Tom Griffiths, Ed Hawthorne, Alex Cervantes and Nathan Blanchard.

God willing, we are planning a public lecture on May 12, 2015, entitled, “The Fall Of The Kingdoms Of Men-Bible Prophecy for Today,” based on Daniel 2. This special lecture will be delivered by Bro. Jim Cowie (Brisbane, Aust.). May God bless our efforts to put forth His gospel message, further preparing a people for His Name.

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

Craig Stickney

WICHITA FALLS, TX

Since last reporting our ecclesial news, we have welcomed around the table of our absent Lord the following brothers and sisters: Brook Styles, Jenny Styles (Ann Arbor, MI); Dan LeDuke (Cambridge, ON); Stephen Bryan, and Matt Bryan (Kouts, IN); Aaron Spray (Mildura, Aust.); Meg Milner (Brampton, ON); Rachel Newton Los Angeles, CA); Michael Connor (Gaudalajara, Mexico); Kathie Atwood (Pomona, CA); Ed Newton (Verdugo Hills, CA); David and Erin Clubb (Simi Hills, CA); Peter Trotter, Jacob Matthew, Michele Massip, and Antonio and Marcia Howell (Dallas, TX); Ronnie and Kristen Hefner (North Houston, TX); Andrea Banta, and Ralph Hollenbeck Abilene, TX); and Luke Banta (Austin, TX). We thank Bre. A. Howell, P. Trotter, D. Clubb and R. Hollenbeck for their words of comfort and exhortation.

Over the weekend of April 3-5, 2015, we held our annual Spring Gathering at the T4C Camp. Bro. Kent Beeson (Seattle, WA) gave a series of classes on the theme, “Let Your Light Shine Before Men in Such a Way.” Our brother encouraged each one of us to manifest the character and live the life which brings people to God and Christ. We were pleased that Sis. Lorraine was also able to make the trip. We thank our brother for his efforts on our behalf.

John A. Clubb

SUSSEX, NB FORTIETH ANNIVERSARY

This year will mark the fortieth anniversary since the Sussex, NB Ecclesia was established. To celebrate this occasion we are holding various activities during the weekend of August 29-30, 2015, and invite all brothers and sisters to participate with us. Contact Bro. Cliff and Sis. Julia Baines for further details: christad@nbnet.nb.ca; or 506-433-1728; or to 97 Fourth Street, Sussex Corner, NB. E4E 5V9, Canada.

Cliff and Julia Baines
What is missing?

Cornelius is described as, “A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people and prayed to God always.” Cornelius has a vision. An angel of God comes and says to him, “Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God.” The good things Cornelius has done and his reverence for God have been noticed. The angel then tells Cornelius to send men to Joppa to find Peter who will tell him what he should do.

A lesser man might say, “Am I not doing enough already?” Fortunately Cornelius immediately sends men to find Peter. Something is missing in Cornelius’ life, and he has no idea what it is, but God knows. God’s angel is sent to direct Cornelius to find out what he is lacking, and Cornelius has the humility to obey the angel’s command and to accept the instruction of Peter.

It is important to understand what Cornelius is missing, an important element of salvation. It is not enough to pray frequently and to devote time and money to the needy in service to God. We are thankful that God does hear the prayers of those who reverently seek Him in prayer. However, more is required — a belief in the gospel. Cornelius needs to learn about our Savior and to obey the command to be baptized into his name.

There are many in the world around us who lead exemplary lives as far as living honorably and honestly and supporting good causes. Yet, all their good works will not earn them the right to eternal life. We all need to understand the sinfulness of our nature, our need for a savior, and then we need to believe in Jesus, obey his commandments, and serve him for the rest of our lives. We cannot earn the reward of eternal life and a place in the kingdom of God, but God is willing to forgive our sins and grant us this reward through our faith and His grace through our Lord Jesus Christ. Love, prayer and good works are not enough. Belief in the Truth of God and faith and obedience to the commandments are also required.

Peter’s visit to Cornelius did not mean that Cornelius should stop praying to God always or stop giving alms to the poor and supporting the local synagogue. Instead, now that Cornelius is baptized into the saving name of our Lord Jesus Christ, he serves God by continuing with his good works with a fuller understanding that now he has access to the throne of grace to have his sins forgiven, and that now he should try to put down his fleshly instincts and live a life of self-sacrifice as Jesus did, obeying the commandments of Christ.

The angel who appeared to Cornelius could have done an excellent job teaching Cornelius. Yet the angel was not given that job. The risen Lord Jesus also would have been able to powerfully influence Cornelius, but Jesus did not appear to preach to him. God uses mortals, such as Peter, as a means to accomplish His purpose. Peter was not a perfect man and neither are we, but God may use us to help others
find the truth, and He may use us to help our fellow brethren and sisters as we all struggle to do what is right. We may have been selected to help others find out what they should be doing to serve God, just as Peter was. We may be selected to reach out to those in need. We may not get our instructions from immortal angels as Cornelius did, or see a vision and hear commands from heaven as Peter did, but God has directed us through the pages of his living Word, the Bible, to preach the gospel and to take care of others.

God expects us to be active in showing our love for Him by the way we serve others. Who do you know that would be encouraged by hearing from you? Who do you know that you can turn to when you are feeling down and discouraged? Each of us needs to be encouraged and to encourage others. Sometimes we just need to be there for someone — in person or on the phone or by correspondence. We all need to keep in touch with those we love and those who are in need, particularly those who are believers.

It is important to stretch ourselves to serve our Lord. We should reach beyond our familiar friends and family to serve others. It was Peter’s love for God that caused him to walk from Joppa to Caesarea to see Cornelius, when he did not really want to go. God sent him and he obeyed. Jesus preached to publicans and sinners who heard him gladly. Each of us right now can extend our efforts beyond our comfort zone as a way of trying to serve God by the things we are doing for someone else. Write an encouraging note to someone in the mission field. Support a child for Agape in Action. Visit an elderly member of the ecclesia or someone in the hospital. Send a card to those who are sick.

Someone out there needs to hear from us today. Are we going to do it, or do nothing? Jesus has said that what we do does not need to be a great spectacular action, but that simply a cup of cold water given to one who is thirsty is remembered for our good by God. Jesus tells us, “Truly I say unto you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me.”

There was something missing in Cornelius’s life. He gave much alms to the people, and he was a man of prayer, but he had not yet been baptized. We also need to do kind and thoughtful deeds for others. We also need to pray fervently every day. We also need to be baptized and, like Cornelius, we need to believe the gospel and live out our lives in faithful service to our Lord. Let us each examine ourselves and think what more can we be doing for Jesus as we share our hope with those without hope and care for the needs of others.

Robert J. Lloyd

All Gentiles are at liberty to partake of “the promise in Christ by the gospel,” but in no other way. Such as are inclined to take “heart of grace” from the case of Cornelius must remember that Cornelius was in the right way, so far as it was possible for a Gentile to be. Therefore, his prayers were heard and the way of life opened to him by an angel. (The Christadelphian, 1895, p. 296)
Coming Events (Lord Willing)

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

JUNE, 2015

6-7 Simi Hills, CA Study Weekend with Bro. Allen Laben. Subject: “James, the Testing of Our Faith.” Contact Bro. James Walker e-mail walker697@att.net.

12-14 New York Metropolitan Sisters’ Retreat at The Host Resort/Hotel, Lancaster, PA. The speaker will be Sis. Mary Styles (Shelburne, ON). Her topic is: “Abigail — A Woman of Good Understanding and a Beautiful Countenance.” Contact: Sis. Averil Ferguson at 718-881-8705 or e-mail averilpsm23@juno.com.

27-July 4 Great Lakes Bible School at Lakeland College, Plymouth, WI. Theme verse is: 1Pet 5:10-11. The teachers are Bro. Martin Webster (Kitchener-Waterloo, ON); Bro. Don Davies (Canada); Bro. Bill Link (Baltimore, MD); and Sis. Laura Ross (US: Sister’s class). Information and registration is on the website, www.glcbs.org. Registrar: Sis. Marcia Stull marcia.stull@glcbs.org. Secretary: Bro. Alan Johnson alan.johnson@glcbs.org.

27-July 5 Mid-Atlantic Bible School at Shippensburg University in Shippensburg, PA. The theme is: “The Lord my light and my salvation” (Psa 27). The Youth Program theme will be: “God’s 7,000 Year Plan.” Bro. Jason Hensley (Simi Hills, CA); “Hezekiah: Faith in Desperate Times,” and “Seeking the Lost” (teens); Bro. Steve Hornhardt (Salisbury, Australia): “Come and See — Witnessing for Christ,” and “Unlocking Revelation” (teens); and Bro. Garth Maier (Tulsa-Joplin, OK/MO): “Esther,” and “Sacrifices of Yahweh” (teens). Website www.midatlanticbibleschool.com.

28-July 3 Vancouver Island Bible Camp at Lake Shawnigan on Vancouver Island, BC. Speakers are (among others) Bro. Clyde Snobelen (Victoria, BC). For details see www.vibiblecamp.com and www.facebook.com/vancouverislandbiblecamp.


JULY, 2015


11-18 Manitoulin Family Bible Camp Bro. Stephen Whitehouse (Birmingham, Hall Green, UK): “Facing the Giants” (adults and young people), and Bro. Ron Hicks (Washington, DC): “From Gethsemane to Golgotha” (adults and young people). See the website for details www.manitoulinfamilycamp.com.
18-26 Midwest Bible School will be held at Triune University, Angola, IN. Speakers and their topics are: Bro. Roger Lewis (Christchurch, New Zealand): “The Four Faces of Christ in the Gospels”; Bro. Mark Vincent (UK): “Exploring the Psalms”; and Bro. Andrew Bramhill (UK): “Isaac, the Overlooked Patriarch.” Contact Bro. Mike Livermore, 44943 Yorkshire Dr., Novi, MI 48375; 248-462-5740; mike.live@gmail.com or visit www.midwestbibleschool.com.

19-25 Idyllwild Bible School will be held at the Idyllwild Pines Camp in Idyllwild, CA. The speakers for this year are Bro. Barry McClure, Bro. Darren Guy, and Bro. Jim Styles. To register, contact Jeff Gelineau at register@christadelphianbibleschool.org or visit our website www.californiabibleschool.org.

25-26 Rolling Hills, AB Annual study day. The theme is ‘Elijah’ presented by Bro. Jonathan Lawrence (Prince George, BC). There will be children’s classes as well. Accommodations are available at the homes of brother’s and sister’s. Tenting and RV’s are more than welcome. Please, if you are coming, confirm by email dana.kohlman@grasslands.ab.ca or by contacting Sis. Cherri-Lynn via phone 403-964-2562.

25-Aug 1 Manitoulin Island Bible Camp Theme: “In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works.” The speakers and topics will be, Bro. Stephen Palmer (Swansea, UK): “Titus — Sound Doctrine, Good Works,” and Bro. Jay Mayock (Hamilton, ON): “Shechem — A Shadow of Good Things to Come.” Details on www.christadelphianbiblecamp.ca. For registration, contact Bro. Alex Browning at jabrowning@rogers.com or phone 416-284-0290.

25-Aug 2 Eastern Bible School Connecticut College, New London CT. Theme: “As for me and my house we will serve the LORD.” Bro. Joe Hill (Austin Leander, TX): “The Gospel in Leviticus and the Tabernacle” (adults), and “Hearing the Word: Learning to Study from the Parable of the Sower” (teens); Bro. Steve Cheetham (Moorestown, NJ): “Lessons for Us from the Kings” (adults), and “Judges: Go in and Possess the Land” (teens); Bro. Jason Hensley (Simi Hills, CA): “The Second Exodus and the Work of Elijah” (adults), and “Jonathan, the Faithful Prince” (teens). For registration information contact Sis. Cindy Nevers at 18 Sibley St., Auburn, MA 01501 or cindynevers@verizon.net.


AUGUST, 2015

15-21 Winfield Bible School Winfield, BC. Our theme: “Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost” (Heb 7:25). Speakers and subjects are, Bro. Joni Mannell (UK): “At the Breaking of Bread”; Bro. Dev Ramcharan (Toronto Church Street, ON): “The God of the Fallen”; and Bro. Jim Cowie (Moreton Bay, Australia): “Melchizedek — Priest of the Most High God.” Registration: Winfield Bible School, c/o Dan Fuhr, 4401 Westview Dr., Vernon, BC, V1T 9B2 or e-mail: registerforwinfield@hotmail.com. Any other enquiries: Bro. John Gareau 250-275-7787 or Bro. Ken Loveridge 778-475-4602 or e-mail: winfieldbibleschool@hotmail.com.
17-22 Lakefield Bible School at Lakefield College. The school is located east of Toronto near Peterborough ON, on a beautiful lakeside campus. Contact Bruce and Barbara Abel: bnb69abel@hotmail.ca or call 519-925-5297. www.lakefieldbibleschool.com.

29-30 Sussex, NB Fortieth Anniversary celebrations. Contact Bro. Cliff and Sis. Julia Baines for further details by email christad@nbnet.nb.ca; or by telephone 506-433-1728; or to 97 Fourth Street, Sussex Corner, NB. E4E 5V9, Canada.

SEPTEMBER, 2015

12-13 Nashua, NH Study Weekend with Bro. Jim Sullivan (Stoughton, MA): “Unto This Day: Revealing Lessons from God’s Wonderful Word.” Contact Bro. Peter Dixon at jpdixon@charter.net.

19-20 Bedford, NS Study Weekend with Bro. Chris Sales (Shelburne, ON): “Hebrews — A Practical Exposition.” Location: North Woodside Community Centre, Dartmouth, NS. Contact Bro. Dale Crawford at bedfordchristadelphians@gmail.com or 902-431-6650.

19-20 Chicago Lombard, IL Fall Gathering with Bro. Steve Davis leading the adult classes starting at 9:30 a.m., Saturday. Please contact Sis. Sue Johnson for housing and to RSVP at 847-438-4890 or e-mail: tarthurjo@juno.com.

26-27 Kouts, IN Fall Study Weekend at Woodland Park Community Center, 2100 Willowcreek Rd. beginning at 10:00 a.m. Bro. Matt Norton (Lismore, Australia) speaking. Theme: “An Overview of Revelation” — great for adults and kids. Contact Bro. Joe Bennett at 219-762-2704 or jkb8275@comcast.net.

OCTOBER, 2015


NOVEMBER, 2015

7-8 Sarasota, FL Fall Study Weekend with Bro. Richard Morgan (Hamilton Book Road, ON), speaking on: “Prophecy, Predestination, and the Purpose of God.” Contact Bro. James Wilkinson at jameswilkinson@hotmail.com or 941-412-7988.
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Sharp eyes might perhaps notice a change in the masthead of this magazine. Bro Kevin Flatley (Pittsburgh, PA) is the new book editor, in association with Sis. Ethel Archard (Ottawa, ON). Bro. Kevin is now responsible for the selection and evaluation of books for publishing: Sis. Ethel continues in her role as editor and desktop publisher, assisted as always by her husband Bro. Charles. In addition, The Tidings is hoping to initiate the production of smaller pamphlets, not only of areas that are not suitable for the length of books, but also of ones that we hope will be of help in the vital work of preaching in North America.

We take this opportunity to thank Bro. John Bilello (Ann Arbor, MI), who relinquishes his role as Book editor, which he has filled since 1993. Bro. John led our efforts to expand into the publication of books ever since he helped form the Tidings Committee. He wrote the first book we published, Parables, which was very well received, and which successfully launched our book business. He used this first book to set up distribution channels throughout the Christadelphian world, which are essential for any book publishing endeavor. In addition to that critical first book, we have published two other of Bro. John's books, Miracles and The Bible and Science, which have also been successful. This in addition, of course, to many other books, details of which can be found on our web site, Tidings.org.
Editorial

The Tradition of the Elders

“And he said to them, Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written, ‘This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.’ You leave the commandment of God and hold to the tradition of men” (Mark 7:6-8).

“What then, brothers? When you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up” (1Cor 14:26).

Introduction

I was recently looking at the original “Ecclesial Guide” by Robert Roberts, issued in 1883. I noticed many differences between that guide and the one currently in print, including not only some differences in the Statement of Faith but also in the instructions for the conduct of our meetings. Some of the differences, particularly to the “Doctrines to be Rejected”, are considered elsewhere in this issue, God willing, but it was the directions for meetings that caught my attention. Indeed, Bro. Frank Shuttleworth penned quite a section for the correct mode of conduct for prayers, exhortations, etc. This disappeared from subsequent editions.

However, this made me decide to compare the prescriptions in the Ecclesial Guide with the models as given in the New Testament, often by Paul in particular.

Comparisons

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<td>Exhortation</td>
<td>Anyone with comments: a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, an interpretation</td>
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<td>Arranging Board</td>
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<td>Time of Memorial</td>
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<tr>
<td>Voting</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Universal</td>
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<td>Sisters voting</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Singing</td>
<td>No accompaniment, Psalms</td>
<td>19th Century hymns mostly, often accompanied by piano</td>
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Collections | For poor fund in Jerusalem | For ecclesial purposes plus various organizations  
--- | --- | ---  
Presiders | Appointed by Elders | Sometimes elected, sometimes all who want to be involved  

Of course, you can find ecclesias that do not follow some or all of these traditions in the last column, but I believe that our current practices are fully appropriate for the purposes of ensuring the “all things should be done decently and in order” (1Cor 14:40). My point is not to disparage the way we conduct our meetings, but to point out they are based, not on Biblical precepts and examples, but mainly on those that were common in Robert Roberts’ time among the churches he was familiar with. So our practices are not “cast in stone”: in following them we follow the precepts of man, neither of God or Christ, nor by inspiration, or the apostles.

**Change**

How many times have we seen attempts to change even minor details of the way we do things produce dissension, troubles, and the use of the “I will join another ecclesia if you do…”. In apostolic times, there was of course largely adherence to the guidance of the apostles and the overseers that they had appointed: with their death, unfortunately it was not long before a paid hierarchy developed, with all the problems that involved, and which our forebears universally rejected. So we are left with our current procedures, in which each ecclesia is in practice governed by the collective will of all members — or rather the will of those who vote! It might be helpful to examine some areas that have caused such intense disagreement that brethren and sisters have left their own ecclesias over the topic.

**Attitude for Prayer**

It is customary in most ecclesias to stand for prayers: some sit for prayers for the emblems. But even a change such as this, duly voted and approved a large majority of the ecclesia, has been known to result in some members “voting with their feet”. Which is strange, because the Bible is full of examples of different postures (which is quite a little study in itself).

- 1Sam 1:26 - Hannah stood
- 1Chron 17:16 - David sat
- Ezra 9:5 - Ezra fell on his knees and spread his hands
- 2Chron 6:13 - Solomon kneeled down upon his knees and spread forth his hands
- Mark 11:25 - Stand praying
- Acts 20:36 - Paul kneeled down and prayed

The custom of kneeling for prayer is common in private prayer, and of course the custom in many churches, but I have not come across it much in our Christadelphian services. But lacking any specific guidance, the whole point of prayer is to show a listening, reverent humility. Robert Roberts indeed counsels
against having prayers where you stand immediately adjoining hymns where we also stand, in case of fatigue: but I think this reflects the Victorian trait of long prayers more than anything else.

**Owning Your Meeting Places**

At least in the UK, when I was much younger it was the normal practice for most “Central” ecclesias to meet in rented halls, perhaps reflecting the expectation for the soon coming of Jesus. But when the reunion with the “Suffolk Street” ecclesias took place, it was noted that most of the latter owned their own halls. This was a pattern that soon spread to all those ecclesias in a position to do so. But this very topic has been known to cause divisions and dissension: it is quite rare for an ecclesia to decide to buy their own hall (or a new one) without some internal dissension and animosity. This over a topic which would seem quite innocuous. And I can find no guidance on this topic in the Bible. It is interesting that this subject of owning halls is rarely to be found in the pages of *The Christadelphian* prior to 1956, but is quite common afterwards.

**Times of Meetings**

Apart from the fact that the early church met on a Sunday, and most likely in the evening, a time when most could attend, the New Testament is silent on this. And many ecclesias in the early days met on Sunday afternoons, mainly because public transport was more available then. In the UK, like North America, the majority now meet in the mornings, but unlike in North America, quite a few in the UK still have afternoon meetings. (Afternoon meeting in North America are very rare.)

But, once again, any change has often provoked dissension and trouble. The times used are quite variable, from 9:30 to 11 am, and some have Sunday school before, some after, and a very few during. There seems no Biblical guidance for this: surely it is the wish of the majority that should rule in this, following the advice of Robert Roberts.

**Conclusion**

The mode of conduct of our meetings, their times, their places, and many other aspects of our worship reflect our situations, and we should remember the purpose of such arrangements: to let all worship our Lord with reverence and humility. There is no “traditions of men” that should bind us to any particular form of worship, other than the directions of Paul to remember our Lord regularly when we meet: and even though we customarily do that on a Sunday, there is no direction to make that the only day, or that day especially. After all, our statement of faith says that “That the observance of Sunday is a matter of duty” is a doctrine to be rejected.

*Peter Hemingray*

**Notes:**

1. Bro. Frank was a close associate of Robert Roberts through to about 1890, but subsequently had many personal problems and died in 1908, no longer in fellowship.
2. Of course, the use of tongues disappeared when the outward gifts of the spirit disappeared in the first century.
Self-Questioning for Spiritual Growth

Comprehension

Comprehension is one of the hardest things to teach a student that is struggling to read. A child can read and read, but retain nothing from the material. Comprehension, or understanding, often decreases as text complexity increases. As a reader understands less and less, their interest wanes, which leads to a further lack of retention. In short, reading is hard, and retaining what was read is even harder.

In recent years (or maybe not so recent) a strategy has emerged which has become fairly popular among teachers interested in increasing a student’s reading retention. It is called the Self Questioning Strategy, and has been shown to increase student’s test scores by 50 to 100%. That may not seem impressive to some, but for an English teacher, this is music to ones ears.

Now, before venturing further, the obvious question to get out of the way is, will this be an exhortation on how to improve my reading skills? Yes. Absolutely. And with little to no tweaking, the self-questioning strategy can be applied to our spiritual lives as well, both in how we read the Scriptures, to how we conduct ourselves in our daily walk.

But first, let me explain the strategy. There are books upon books explaining in detail how to properly administer the strategy among a class of intrepid young learners. There are tests, charts, and data that should be collected by the teacher, imputed and analyzed for the strategy to have a lasting effect on student’s scores. But if you are just looking to read a story or an article and get more information out of it, let me walk you through the steps.

- Divide a paper into three columns. Label in order, questions, predictions, answers.
- Having done this, number the paragraphs (sentences for shorter articles). DO NOT READ THE TEXT!
- Now, the prep work being done, you may read…
- THE TITLE!
- STOP.

One thing you will notice doing this strategy, is you never read a lot at a time. This is super helpful for novice readers, as they do not get overwhelmed by the text. But for experienced readers, this can prove frustrating and tedious. Don’t despair! Having read the title, turn to your chart, and ask a question. It is best to ask open ended questions, more “Where is this article taking place,” less “will he take out the garbage?” Upon asking the question, we then make a prediction. What do we think the answer will be to the question we ask? Predictions should be based on real world experience and what we have read already.
For example, if the title is “Zoo Time,” I might ask a question like: “What does the author mean by zoo time?” Seeing as all I have read is the title, my prediction may be as simple as “I think this is about a time he or she went to the zoo.” I do not, however, answer the question, because I am looking for that in the text (which I cannot emphasize enough, I HAVEN’T READ). The prediction is what I know before I read, the answer is what I find when I read. All good? Still with me? So far, we have read the title, asked a question, and made a prediction. Now, forging ahead, we read the first paragraph. And STOP!

Now, before we do anything, we need to see, did our question get answered? If it did, we write the answer down and where we found it. But what if it wasn’t answered? Well, it is important that we do not get tempted to making something up to fill in the missing answer. If the answer isn’t there, then we leave the blank, well, blank. Now, having read the title, and the first paragraph, we now write a new question that we hope will give us more information to the article, one we hope will be answered by the end. And, yes, we must also make a prediction: as we read on, we can answer any previously unanswered questions with new information as we find it.

So, in short, the process is as follows:

- Ask a question.
- Make a prediction.
- Read a paragraph.
- Answer any questions with what we read.
- Repeat until finished with the article.

It seems like a lot of work, and frankly it makes the reading take at least twice as long, but the amount of information retained will increase dramatically. It stems from the idea that we ask questions because we do not know the answers. It serves little purpose to ask: what color is my car, when we know the answer already. By asking quality questions and actively seeking the answers, we are more likely to retain the information read.

**Our Daily Readings**

This is not just a great study tool for a book, or for the local paper, but in our daily readings as well. Is there a confusing chapter that we are preparing for Wednesday night class? Break it apart by the verses and ask genuine questions that we want answered. By focusing our questions, and asking questions we don’t know the answers to, we can glean more useful information from the words.

Yes, many of us already do this, a verse by verse analysis of a chapter, but often we find ourselves discussing points and questions that have already been answered or discussed, or we ask simplistic yes/no questions, without much if any spiritual growth or retention taking place.

And this principle applies to our daily life. We should constantly be asking questions about our walk. “What will happen if I do this?” “Is this action Christ-like?” “What does God expect me to be doing?”
“My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”

This is a great example for a man asking a key question in his life, one we have sometimes wondered ourselves when times have overcome us with hardships. And David was a man like us who wondered this same thing:

“My God, my God, why have You forsaken me, and are far from my deliverance, and from the words of my groaning? (Psa 22:1 NKJV).

We often ask questions like this, but do we often think through and try to solve the puzzle? We cannot stop at the question, and David is a clear example of the next step.

“O my God, I cry in the daytime, but You do not answer; and in the night, and am not silent. But You are holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel. Our fathers trusted in You; they trusted, and You delivered them. They cried to You, and were delivered; they trusted in You, and were not ashamed. But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised by the people. All who see Me mock me; they shoot out the lip; they shake the head, saying, He trusted on Jehovah; let Him deliver Him; let Him rescue Him, since He delights in Him! For You are He who took Me out of the womb, causing Me to trust while on My mother’s breasts” (Psa 22:2-9).

Predictions

David’s prediction, if you will, was that God was not with him because he was unworthy. Despite the fact that the history of Israel was filled with times of being delivered from turmoil, David’s only solution was that he must not be of that caliber.

Sometimes we get this far in our self-questioning. We ask the question, and we sometimes make a prediction.

• Q: “What will happen if I miss meeting one week?”
  • P: “I might miss out on the company of my brothers and sisters.”
• Q: “What does God expect me to be doing?”
  • P: “Do my readings, go to meeting, hold memorial.”

These predictions are based on our prior knowledge and experience. And often they are faulty.

In the question, “What does God expect?” while the prediction was not incorrect, it was incomplete. Predictions often are, because they are not founded on anything more than prior knowledge.

That is why, whether in an article, or a chapter of Scripture, or in our daily lives, we must do the next step, because it is crucial.

• Read.
• Seek the answers.

Unless we do this step, asking a question as to “why has god Forsaken me” is useless. Even if we make a prediction, that is not enough. Not without the answers. And the only way we can get answers, is if we read.
David did just this:

“You who fear Jehovah, praise Him; all of you, the seed of Jacob, glorify Him; and fear Him all the seed of Israel. For He has not despised nor hated the affliction of the afflicted; and He has not hidden His face from him, but when he cried to Him, He heard. My praise shall be of You in the great congregation; I will pay My vows before the ones who fear Him. The meek shall eat and be satisfied; those who seek Jehovah shall praise Him; your heart shall live forever. All the ends of the world shall remember and turn to Jehovah; and all the families of the nations shall worship before You. For the kingdom is Jehovah’s; and He is the ruler among the nations. All the fat ones on the earth shall eat and worship; all those who go down to the dust shall bow before Him; and none can keep alive his own soul. A seed shall serve Him; it shall be spoken of Jehovah to the coming generation. They shall come, and shall declare His righteousness to a people that shall yet be born, that He has done this” (Psa 22:23-31 NKJV).

Perhaps David was recalling the story of Job, and the trials meant to test his faith. Perhaps he read about the tests Jacob went through, and the lessons he learned to rely on God. Whatever he read, David came to the conclusion that God would not abandon him, any more than he had abandoned his servants of old. And the solution, or answer to his question is evidenced in the following Psalm:

“A Psalm of David. Jehovah is my Shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. He restores my soul; He leads me in paths of righteousness for His name’s sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table for me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; my cup runs over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I shall dwell in the house of Jehovah forever” (Psa 23:1-6).

The Lord would be with him, and would keep him safe as long as he put his trust and faith in the lord.

- Q: Why hast thou forsaken me?
- P: It is because I am a worm.
- A: The lord will deliver those who trust in him. This is what I must do.

David asked, made a prediction, and searched for the answer.

The missing answer

Sometimes though, just as when we ask questions about articles, or about readings, no matter how much we read, the answer isn’t there. Often it is and is not the answer we wanted, but sometimes, it just isn’t visible. “Why did this happen to me?” “When will God put an end to this?” “How much more till we are finished?”

“And He went a little further and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me. Yet not as I will, but as You will” (Matt 23:9).
Not worded as a question, but a query none the less. “Must I endure this?” Followed by a prediction: “if it is God’s will then yes.”

I have no doubt that Christ was reading, or even recalling, Scripture fervently that night, seeking the answer to his all important question. And he makes a very good prediction, basing it on flawless understanding of God’s plan and purpose. But his answer would not be one he wanted, or even one he would find until it was over.

Sometimes, the answers to our questions are not immediate. Sometimes we do not see them at all. Still we must seek them. We must search, knowing that our current understanding is not enough. We should implore the Lord when we need to make a decision. Ask Him when we are unsure of the path ahead. Ask, even when we are sure, and seek the answer, to be assured or be redirected.

Ask when we meet a stranger “How can I help them to the truth?” Ask when we see a brother or sister “how can I be a strength or comfort to them?” “Am I being a strength or comfort to them?”

Question: “Why have I come to this memorial?”

Prediction: I am here to remember the last supper, to break bread and drink of the cup. I am here to seek forgiveness of my sins. I am here because it was commanded of me. I am here because I want this more than anything the flesh has to offer.

“...and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat, this is My body. And He took the cup and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink all of it. For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on, until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father’s kingdom. And singing a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives” (Matt 26:26-30).

Answer: I am here because I am waiting for that day when Christ will return and drink it new with me in his Father’s kingdom. I am here because of the covenant that was made by the pouring of his blood for the remission of sins.

Ethan Bearden (Austin Leander, TX)

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Did God Abandon Jesus?

There is an opinion that God abandoned Jesus on the cross. We believe that this notion is untenable. While it is true that he uttered the cry of dereliction, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” (Matt. 27:46, Mark 15:34), we must also bear in mind that from the records of Luke and John, to be considered in due course, the Lord was in communion with his Father. He foresaw that the apostles would abandon him, but he knew that this would not be true of his Father. “Behold, the hour cometh, yea is come, that ye shall be scattered every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me” (John 16:32).

Tom Barling (Teignmouth, UK): from The Tidings, August 2000
Hope — (5) David’s Hope in His Psalms

“Surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever” (Psa 23:6)

Hope in the Bible comes alive in David’s Psalms

Who am I? I became the king of Scotland when I was only 13 months old and legally assumed full control when I was 15 years old. When I was 35, I became King of both England and Scotland. The following year, I added Ireland to become King of Great Britain. I was a shrewd, flawed ruler known for extended peaceful rule. I was a poet. I died at 58, but not before agreeing to do something that would make my name immortal in literature. When I was 38, I commissioned a new version of the Bible that came to be known as the Authorized Version. I picked 47 scholars from the Church of England to produce a new Bible version, which also reinforced official church doctrine. My 1611 Bible is still widely in use 400 years later and I am…King James.

Royalty has its privileges. Kings and Queens generally rule by their own rules, and are able to have extreme control over their subjects. Amazingly, quite a few monarchies exist today with many nations still having a King or Queen as head of state. Many other nations have a dictator who rules, sometimes outside of the law, and sometimes changing the law to fit the leader. Very few modern nations have a theocratic form of government, though Vatican City is one well-known example. Yet this is exactly the form of government that King David led, and his subjects enjoyed. Under David’s guidance, Israel prospered into a regional superpower, and the people realized a small portion of what the Kingdom of God will be like in the future. Despite his glaring flaws, David became a man “after God’s own heart” and he led Israel in Godly worship and a glimpse of righteousness.

Because David came from a humble family life, keeping the sheep (1Sam 16:11), God picked him to lead his chosen people as their shepherd. David was a positive contrast to King Saul, whom God removed due to disobedience. David proved to be a great man of faith as he fought against Goliath while still a youth. David knew that God had symbolically promised him to be king: “Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward” (1Sam 16:13). It was clear to David he couldn’t die in battle before being made king. Having life-or-death faith in the
God of Israel, and in His promises, led David’s focus in the path for life. David was a great man of God, who developed a deep eternal hope. David’s understanding built upon the promises to Abraham, and God’s Spirit, provided David with better insights about the future Messiah and the Kingdom of God.

What did David write in his Psalms?

David was known as the “sweet psalmist” as he was a musician from his youth. David wrote almost half of the psalms in the Bible and his son, Solomon, wrote 1005 songs (1Kgs 4:32). The difference between most writers and David is that David was truly inspired by God to declare His will. We know this because David was a prophet, and many of his songs contained prophecies about the greater son of David, Jesus (Psa 22:1, 6-18; Luke 24:44). Listed below are some of David’s expressions declaring his vivid hope for eternal life in the ultimate house of God, for David clearly believed that he would live again after he died.

“God is to us a God of deliverances; and to God the Lord belong escapes from death” (Psa 68:20).

“Thou wilt prolong the king’s life; his years will be as many generations. He will abide before God forever” (Psa 61:6-7).

“Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices; My flesh also will rest in hope. For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption. You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore” (Psa 16:9-11; see also Psa 133:3, Psa 145:1)

David had a special connection with a future house (temple) of God. He lived in a glamorous house himself and wanted the place of worship to be worthy of his Creator (2Sam 7:2). David wasn’t able to build this himself, but he did amply provide provisions so that his son, Solomon, would be able to build a special house for the God of Israel.

“Then David said, This is the house of the LORD God, and this is the altar of burnt offering for Israel.’ So David commanded to gather the aliens who were in the land of Israel; and he appointed masons to cut hewn stones to build the house of God. And David prepared iron in abundance for the nails of the doors of the gates and for the joints, and bronze in abundance beyond measure, and cedar trees in abundance; for the Sidonians and those from Tyre brought much cedar wood to David. Now David said, ‘Solomon my son is young and inexperienced, and the house to be built for the LORD must be exceedingly magnificent, famous and glorious throughout all countries. I will now make preparation for it.’ So David made abundant preparations before his death. Then he called for his son Solomon, and charged him to build a house for the LORD God of Israel. And David said to Solomon: ‘My son, as for me, it was in my mind to build a house to the name of the LORD my God; but the word of the LORD came to me, saying, “You have shed much blood and have made great wars; you shall not build a house for My name, because you have shed much blood on the earth in My sight. Behold, a son
shall be born to you, who shall be a man of rest; and I will give him rest from all his enemies all around. His name shall be Solomon, for I will give peace and quietness to Israel in his days. He shall build a house for My name, and he shall be My son, and I will be his Father; and I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Israel forever.” Now, my son, may the LORD be with you; and may you prosper, and build the house of the LORD your God, as He has said to you. Only may the LORD give you wisdom and understanding, and give you charge concerning Israel, that you may keep the law of the LORD your God. Then you will prosper, if you take care to fulfill the statutes and judgments with which the LORD charged Moses concerning Israel. Be strong and of good courage; do not fear nor be dismayed. Indeed I have taken much trouble to prepare for the house of the LORD one hundred thousand talents of gold and one million talents of silver, and bronze and iron beyond measure, for it is so abundant. I have prepared timber and stone also, and you may add to them. Moreover there are workmen with you in abundance: woodsmen and stonemasons, and all types of skillful men for every kind of work. Of gold and silver and bronze and iron there is no limit. Arise and begin working, and the LORD be with you” (1Chron 22:1-16).

David longed for this when he said, “One thing I have asked from the Lord, that I shall seek; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to meditate in His temple” (Psa 27:4).

David stood in awe at the eternal promises of God. David said, “For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand outside. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of the Lord than dwell in the tents of the wicked” (Psa 84:10). David understood God’s amazing promises and how any position in the Kingdom of God would be far beyond his dreams. No one who serves the Son of David in the Kingdom will be disappointed.

David understood that his eternal reward would be on the earth. He wrote something so important that Jesus quoted it as one of Beatitudes on the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus said, “Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.” This quote from Matt 5:5 came directly from the 37th Psalm where David also said “Delight yourself also in the LORD; and He will give thee the desires of thine heart” (Psa 37:4). David’s faith and hope combined to give him confidence that his reward would be eternal life on earth.

**Where did David go when he died?**

David was a man after God’s own heart and one who was chosen because of his Godly spirit. After he was anointed to be King, “the spirit of the LORD came mightily upon David from that day forward” (1Sam 16:13). David possessed Holy Spirit powers as a warrior and as a writer of God’s decrees. We also know that David prophesized about Jesus and looked forward to his day. The words of Jesus:

“And David himself saith in the book of Psalms, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, Till I make thine enemies thy footstool. David therefore calleth him Lord, how is he then his son?” (Luke 20:42-44)
Of all the righteous and faithful people in the Bible, isn’t it obvious where David went after he died? Actually, the answer given in the Bible is not what most would expect. In fact, to most Christians it is the opposite.

The prophet Ezekiel predicted that David would rise again in the resurrection and rule as shepherd. Part of this prophesy points toward Jesus as the ultimate Son of David, but the primary fulfillment is literally the man David:

“They will all have one shepherd; and they will walk in My ordinances, and keep My statutes, and observe them. And they shall live on the land that I gave to Jacob My servant, in which your fathers lived; and they will live on it, they, and their sons, and their sons’ sons, forever; and David My servant shall be their prince forever” (Ezek 37:24-25).

Peter adds to this when he said plainly, “For it was not David who ascended into heaven” (Acts 2:34). Peter clarifies that King David not only died, but he was buried and remains buried in his tomb, waiting for the resurrection (Acts 2:29). Combined with the earlier explanation of ‘asleep in Christ’, we now know that when David died, he fell asleep, and became unconscious in death. Paul makes this point crystal clear when he says, “For David, after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation, fell asleep, and was laid among his fathers, and underwent decay” (Acts 13:36). Paul adds that David’s death was different than Jesus’ in that while Jesus was resurrected, David stayed in the grave asleep. This parallels the words of Jesus when he said “And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven” (John 3:13).

Finally, the Hall of Faith chapter of Hebrews says: “And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect” (Heb 11:39-40). So we know that David and all other righteous believers have not yet received their reward, because they must wait until the judgment and resurrection to life. Therefore, when the Bible says that David died, it means exactly that and nothing more. David died in hope of resurrection and eternal life on earth.

Promises to David

David was a child of promise. From an early age, he made the right choices and trained for greatness. He used his idle time as a shepherd to become an accomplished musician. He defended his sheep and managed to kill both a lion and a bear (1Sam 17:36). David killed a giant fighter Goliath, who was previously
undefeated and very experienced. David fled from Saul for years, comforted by his faith that he would be the next king of Israel. After he was anointed King and midway through his reign, David was an incredible success with his spiritual life, leadership, military conquests, and growing family. David was fabulously rich and accumulating new cities and buildings with his wealth. He was on top of the world and knew that the God of Israel freely gave him all of his gifts. This is the time when David decided that the ark of God deserved to have a majestic home.

He proposed to build a fabulous temple to house the ark, but God had other plans for David. Instead of David giving God a gift, God gave David many gifts. God promised several blessings to David, similar to the same promises given to Abraham, including that God promised to give David a son who would be king after him. He already had other sons, but now was promised a special child who would be king:

“And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom” (2Sam 7:12)

“For thy servant David’s sake turn not away the face of thine anointed. The LORD hath sworn in truth unto David; he will not turn from it; Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne” (Psa 132:10-11)

God promised to give David a greater son, Messiah, who would reign as king. Jesus, himself, claimed to be the promised son of David:

“And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David.” (Luke 1:31-32)

“Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh;” (Rom 1:3: see also Rev 22:16)

God promised to give David a son who would build the Temple (house of God) that David so desired. This was particularly soothing for David to know that his spiritual dream project would come true:

“He [David] shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever” (2Sam 7:13).

God promised that David’s throne would last forever in God’s kingdom “And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever” (2 Sam 7:16; see also 2 Sam 23:5). This is the same eternal covenant promise that Abraham received about inheriting the land and the same promise given about Jesus: “There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness” (Isa 9:7).

Someone once said that promises are like babies: easy to make, hard to deliver. With people this is very true, but with God, promises are guaranteed. For life. David believed God’s promises and never doubted. He looked forward, in faith
and hope, to his eternal reward in God’s ultimate Kingdom. David made sure that his great hope was alive and well through his beautiful Psalms.

“God never made a promise that was too good to be true.” Dwight L. Moody

“No pillow so soft as God’s promise.” Author Unknown

“In the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised long ages ago” (Titus 1:2).

The Bible says:

- David never received his reward, but still waits, in sleep, for the resurrection. Acts 2:25; Acts 13:22.
- David received great promises, which we also participate in. Isa 9:7; Ezek 37:24-25.

Chicago, Ill Ecclesia

Notes:
1. The Greek in all three occurrences of “Lord” here is the same (kurios).

Doctrines to be Rejected
(2) The History

Development by Robert Roberts

It is to Robert Roberts we owe the development of our Statement of Faith, with its associated Doctrines to be Rejected and Commandments of Christ. In this, he largely followed the efforts of his mentor John Thomas, and as we saw in the first installment, Thomas had published a “synopsis” in 1867 divided into two parts, “truth to be believed” and “fables to be refused”. The first recorded “Statement of Faith”, which, of course, was written in the first instance for the Birmingham Ecclesia, appears to have been published in 1868, as shown in notes in The Christadelphian. Whether this differs from the earliest one we know of from 1871 is not clear, but what is clear is that the statement was changed quite frequently in ways both minor and major over the next almost 50 years, but after 1919 not at all. Many of the changes were due to the various controversies that troubled the community over this time, although the major structural change in 1883 appears with the issuance of the ecclesial guide, again by Robert Roberts.

We will deal with some of the modifications, the reasons behind them, and their implications for today, as we deal with the individual statements in their turn. But the changes can be considered in broad-brush terms. Specifically

- The arguments over the nature of Christ presented by Edward Turney in 1873 caused a controversy that has had ripples down to this day, and caused several changes
- The “partial inspiration” dispute that was initiated by Robert Ashcroft in 1885 also caused the introduction of the “foundation” clause to the statement of faith, and a corresponding clause added in the doctrines to be rejected.
• Of course, another discussion related to the atonement, but customarily related to the question of judgment responsibility, was initiated by John James Andrew in 1894. However, this only caused a modification to the statement of faith in 1898, after the death of Robert Roberts, but there was no resultant change to the “doctrines to be rejected”.

• There were also several other changes generated by basically life issues: jury service, military service etc. which were added at various times from 1883 on, as the number of doctrines to be rejected grew from the 31 in the 1883 version, to 32 by 1891, and the current number of 35 by 1911. The last change in 1919 was a modification of # 35, when phrase “or as police constables” was passed in a failed attempt to head off what became the “Berean” division. Note that one of the clauses “5a. - That Christ was of a different nature from other men” was dropped.

**Before and after 1883**

One major change after 1883 was that no Scriptural references were ever added to the “Doctrines to be Rejected”. The reason for this is unclear, although it must be pointed out that John Thomas’ “synopsis” of 1867 included no Scriptural references at all, although perhaps this was because he wanted to produce a one page “Statement of Faith”. Quite why references were added after 1883 to the “Truth to be Received” but not for “Doctrines to be rejected, formerly “Fables to Be Refused” we will have to ask Robert Roberts in the Kingdom.

I do not know quite when the Scriptural references were added: certainly they were present by 1898, when the amendment concerning who was responsible to resurrection was added.

Note the current BUSF (Birmingham Unamended Statement of faith) is slightly different from the one listed, but the differences will not be covered in this series.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fables to Be refused (1871-1879) : the items in bold added after Turney’s Free Life Proposals in 1873</th>
<th>Doctrines to be Rejected as 1883, in the Ecclesiastical Guide of that date. In Bold added later: item 5a dropped</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17. The Trinity.—That God is not three, but One, out of whom are all things—even the Spirit and the Son.</td>
<td>1.—That the Bible is only partly the work of inspiration—or if wholly so, contains errors which inspiration has allowed.</td>
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<td>2.—That God is three persons.</td>
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18. THE ETERNAL SONSHIP OF CHRIST, AND THE FREE-LIFE DOCTRINE—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 par. 7. and that when he so appeared, his life in the flesh was no more a “free life” than that of his brethren whom he came to redeem, but was “in all points,” what theirs was, as his mission (to put away death by death) required, the difference between him and them being that he was without transgression.

3.—That the Son of God was co-eternal with the Father.

4.—That Christ was born with a “free life”.

5.—That Christ’s nature was immaculate.

5a. - That Christ was of a different nature from other men.

19. THE THIRD PERSON IN THE GODHEAD.—That the Holy Spirit is not a person, but the vehicular effluence of the Father, filling all space, and forming the medium and instrument of all the Father’s operations.

6.—That the Holy Spirit is a person distinct from the Father.

20. THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL.—That the immortality of the soul is a pagan fiction, subversive of the first law of the Deity’s moral government, viz. that the wages of sin is death.

7.—That man has an immortal soul.

21. THE THEORY OF DISEMBODIED EXISTENCE.—That there is no existence in death, conscious or unconscious, and that the popular belief in heaven and hell is a delusion. Therefore

8.—That man consciously exists in death.

A. That the wicked will not suffer eternal torture, but will be engulfed in total destruction after resurrection.

9.—That the wicked will suffer eternal torture in hell.

B. That the righteous will not ascend to kingdoms beyond the skies at death or at any other time, but will inherit the earth for ever.

10.—That the righteous will ascend to the kingdoms beyond the skies when they die.
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<td>22. SUPERNATURAL PERSONAL DEVIL. — That there is no such thing as a supernatural personal devil, the devil of Scripture being a personification of sin in its several phases and manifestations among men.</td>
<td>11. — That the devil is a supernatural personal being.</td>
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<td>23. That the kingdom of God is not “the Church,” or a region beyond the stars, but a system of things to be established under Christ on earth, in the Holy Land.</td>
<td>12. — That the Kingdom of God is “the church”</td>
</tr>
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<td>24. THREE-FACT GOSPEL. — That the gospel is not the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ merely, but “the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ.”</td>
<td>13. — That the Gospel is the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ merely.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. NO JUDGMENT AT THE COMING OF CHRIST. — That the judgment of the saints at the tribunal of Christ, when he comes, is not a simple allotment of rewards, but a dividing of the faithful from the unfaithful, with reference to the question of life or death.</td>
<td>15. — That the tribunal of Christ, when he comes, is not for the judgement of saints, but merely to divide among them different degrees of reward.</td>
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<td>26. THE FIRST RESURRECTION. — That the resurrection at the appearing of Christ is not confined to the faithful, but extends to all who have made a profession of his name, whether faithful or not.</td>
<td>16. — That the resurrection is confined to the faithful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. IMMORTAL RESURRECTION. — That those thus rising are not in a glorified state, but appear before Christ in their natural body, to have it decided whether they are worthy of being clothed upon with immortality, or deserving of a return to corruption.</td>
<td>17. — That the dead rise in an immortal state.</td>
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<td>28. IMMORTAL NATIONS IN THE MILLENNIUM. — That the subject-nations of the thousand years are not immortal.</td>
<td>18. — That the subject-nations of the thousand years are immortal.</td>
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Peter Bilello (Ann Arbor, MI) and Peter Hemingray (Detroit Royal Oak, MI)

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

Special Invitation

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

You, your family and friends are invited to the 40th annual Church of God of the Abrahamic Faith Gathering at Denison University in Granville, Ohio, July 20-26, 2015.

Bro. Steve Davis: “Moving on to Maturity: A Study in the Letter to the Hebrews”
Bro. John Downer: “Forty Years of Preparation”

Contact Bro. Brad Rek at 330-609-6957 or brad.rek@gmail.com. Visit our website at www.abrahamicfaithgathering.org for more information and to view talks from last year.
A Second Jewish Captivity

There are many within the Christadelphian brotherhood who believe there will be a period of suffering for Israel before our Lord Jesus returns. So what form will this suffering take? This article is written to show from Biblical prophecies that there will be probably be a second captivity of the Jews of Jerusalem before the return of Jesus. The first captivity (from Jerusalem) was when Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon took most of Jerusalem’s population into captivity in 596 BC.

We cannot regard the Roman destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD as a captivity, as the Jews were not taken captive then. They were scattered, homeless, into all countries throughout the world for 2,000 years, but they were not in captivity.

The prophecies of a second Jewish captivity are found in Zechariah 14, Luke 21 (Jesus’ own words), Ezekiel 39, Psalm 79 and Isaiah 11. So let us consider the passages in each of these prophecies.

Zechariah 14:2

“I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city shall be taken, and the houses plundered and the women raped. Half of the city shall go into exile, but the rest of the people shall not be cut off from the city.” (Bold mine)

There is no question from these words that Jerusalem will be defeated: (“The city shall be taken”). There is also no question that a great number of Jews will be taken into exile: (“Half of the city shall go into exile”)

In 2011, the population of Jerusalem was 801,000. Of these, 497,000 (62%) were Jews. Does Zechariah mean that half of the Jewish population will go into exile (about 248,000) or does he mean that the half of the population who are not “cut off” from the city will be non-Jews? If so, there would be 497,000 (or more) Jews going into exile as a result of Jerusalem’s defeat.

Either way, a huge number of Jews will be taken into exile — 248,000 at the very least. Taking this number of prisoners of war would be a major exercise, watched by the world in amazement. Nearly a quarter of a million Jews being taken into exile is a far larger number than anything we have seen since the Second World War.

Where will they be exiled? As we will see later in this article, they will be exiled into various surrounding Middle Eastern Islamic countries.

But what about the next verses in Zechariah 14, prophesying that the Mount of Olives will be split in two by a major earthquake when the Lord’s feet stand upon it? This major event will be part of a major victory by God against His enemies. But as we have seen, Zech 14:2 describes a major defeat for Jerusalem and its people. It is suggested that there is a gap in time between the defeat in verse 2 and
the earthquake in verse 4. This, too, is confirmed in other Scriptural prophecies as we shall see.

The earthquake that will destroy the Mount of Olives (and incidentally, Jerusalem) will occur after Jesus’ return, not at the time of the defeat of Jerusalem. There is good reason for thinking that this earthquake is the same earthquake that is used to destroy Gog — after Jesus returns.

“And it shall come to pass at the same time when Gog shall come against the land of Israel, saith the Lord GOD, that my fury shall come up in my face. For in my jealousy and in the fire of my wrath have I spoken, Surely in that day there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel; So that the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the heaven, and the beasts of the field, and all creeping things that creep upon the earth, and all the men that are upon the face of the earth, shall shake at my presence, and the mountains shall be thrown down, and the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground. And I will call for a sword against him throughout all my mountains, saith the Lord GOD: every man’s sword shall be against his brother. And I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood; and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands, and upon the many people that are with him, an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone. Thus will I magnify myself, and sanctify myself; and I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am the Lord” (Ezek 38:18-23, see also Ezek 39:1-6; Rev 16:17-21)


Jesus spoke of this same defeat of Jerusalem and captivity of its people:

“And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto. For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled” (Luke 20:20-24). (Bold Mine)

The first thing to note about these words of Jesus is that he is not referring to the fall of Jerusalem in 70 AD. The Jews were not “led captive” as a result of Rome’s attack on Jerusalem in 70 AD and subsequent years. They were scattered amongst the nations of the world for the next 2,000 years. Few Jews were taken captive by Rome.

In fact, Jesus refers to the Jewish captivity being amongst all nations. Rome was a single entity. Psa 79:1 confirms this:

“O God, the nations [note the plurality here] have come into your inheritance. They have defiled Your holy temple. They have laid Jerusalem in ruins” (Psa 79:1)
As we know, Ezekiel 38 and 39 contain considerable detail about the attack against Israel by Gog. These chapters thus have a future context, and Ezekiel 39 twice mentions the future captivity of the Jews.

“The nations shall know that the house of Israel went into captivity for their iniquity, because they dealt so treacherously with Me that I hid My face from them and gave them into the hands of their adversaries” (Ezek 39:23).

“They shall know that I am the Lord their God, because I sent them into exile among the nations.” (Ezek 39:28). (Bold mine)

It is important to note that, as with Zechariah 14, Luke 21 and Psalm 79, the captivity of Israel involves multiple nations.

God speaks of their iniquity and treachery. Today, only 63% of Jews believe in God. 37% are either not sure or don’t believe that God exists. Thus, almost 4 out of every 10 Jews either don’t believe in God, or are not sure that He exists. For a nation of people who are God’s chosen people, this rejection of Him is astounding. Add to that rejection the notion of giving away part of God’s land to the Palestinians, thus breaking the covenant between them and God, and we see why God accuses them of iniquity and treachery.

So we see at the time of Gog’s attack against Israel, there will be many Jews in captivity, having been taken into captivity some years earlier when Jerusalem was defeated by the attacking nations. If the Gogian attack takes place after Jesus returns (as the writer believes) we have a scenario which is as follows:

- There will be a huge number of Jews in captivity in surrounding Arab/Islamic nations when Jesus returns.
- Gog attacks Israel, thus pitting himself against Jesus. This raises the prospect that the Gogian battle against Jesus may be the same battle described in Rev 19:19-21 when the beast attacks Jesus and is destroyed by Jesus. Thus, Gog could be the beast.
- Gog and his hordes are devastatingly and totally destroyed by Jesus: “You [Gog] shall fall on the mountains of Israel, you and all your hordes, and the peoples who are with you. I will give you to the birds of prey and to the beasts of the field to be devoured. You shall fall in the open field, for I have spoken, declares the Lord God” (Ezek 39:4-5)

(Compare these words with Revelation 19:17-18 concerning the battle of the beast against Jesus).

Ezekiel gives graphic detail on how Gog and his army will be destroyed. There will be a massive earthquake and natural elements will be unleashed against him:

“On that day, when Gog shall come against the land of Israel, says the Lord God, My wrath shall be roused. For in My jealousy and in My blazing wrath I declare: On that day there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel; the fish of the sea, and the birds of the air, and the beasts of the field, and all creeping things that creep on the ground, and all the men that are on the face of the earth, shall quake at My presence, and the mountains shall
be thrown down, and the cliffs shall fall, and every wall shall tumble to the ground. . . I will enter into judgement with him, and I will rain upon him and his hordes and the many peoples who are with him torrential rain and hailstones and fire and sulphur” (Ezek 38:18-22).

Revelation also describes this scene of total destruction of Gog. We are told that:

“ And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done. And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great. And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath. And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great” (Rev 16:17-21).

• There will be a great earthquake, greater than has ever been.
• Jerusalem will be split into three parts.
• The cities of the nations will fall.
• Islands will be flooded and covered, and mountains destroyed.
• A massive hailstorm will occur, with hailstones about 100 pounds each (45 kg) falling from heaven on people.

This will surely be the time that the Lord’s feet will stand upon the Mt. of Olives, which will be split in two from east to west by this massive earthquake.

Ezekiel states that God will bring them (the captive Jews) back from their enemies’ lands, where He sent them into exile among the nations:

“Then they shall know that I am the LORD their God because I sent them into exile among the nations and then gathered them into their own land. I will leave none of them remaining among the nations anymore” (Ezek 39:28)

This brings us to Isaiah 11 which tells us that Jesus will regather these captive Jews from the nations where they have been in exile, and bring them home to Israel.

Isaiah 11

Isaiah 11 prophesies of Jesus once he has returned to the earth. Verse 1 speaks of him as “a shoot from the stump of Jesse”, and verses 2 to 5 are descriptions of Jesus in his glorified form in which “righteousness shall be the belt of his waist and faithfulness the belt of his loins.”

We learn from verse 10 that he will be “a signal for the peoples — of him shall the nations inquire, and his resting place shall be glorious.”

It is verse 18 that tells us of his regathering of the captive Jews (the banished of Israel and the dispersed of Judah — verse 12) from the nations in which they have been in exile. Those nations are named:
• Assyria (Turkey, Syria and Iraq)
• Egypt (Egypt)
• Pathros (Upper Egypt)
• Cush (Sudan or Ethiopia)
• Elam (Iran)
• Shinar (Iraq - Babylonia)
• Hamath (Upper Syria)
• Coastlands of the sea (Gaza)

All of these nations are today either governed by Islamic rule, or have large Islamic populations (e.g. Egypt).

Thus, the hundreds of thousands of Jews to be taken captive into these Islamic nations will be regathered by Jesus — the second regathering (Isa 11:11). The first regathering took place after the Second World War, and Israel was declared a nation in 1948. In that future day of regathering, the Jews, having returned to God and in recognition of Jesus as their Messiah and King, will proclaim:

“Behold, God is my salvation. I will trust and not be afraid, for the Lord God is my strength and my song, and He has become my salvation” (Isa 12:2).

Conclusion

The thoughts in this article are not those we normally associate with latter day prophecy. However, we cannot ignore the frequent references to a latter day captivity of a huge number of Jews from Jerusalem. It is suggested that this will be the catalyst that brings Israel to its knees and brings them back to God.

The work of Elijah at this time in “turning the hearts of fathers to their children, and the hearts of children to their fathers” (Mal 4:6) will also be focussed on turning the Jews back to God and His ways, as well as preparing them for the coming of their Messiah.

For us, we should not be dismayed at the defeat of Jerusalem before Jesus returns, or the Jewish captivity presented in prophecy. These are just some of the many major prophetic events leading up to the return of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We must be prepared.

Ian Hyndman (Beechworth Ecclesia, Victoria, Australia)

The Refining Of Judah

Zechariah devotes a good proportion of his prophecy to this theme and in so doing reveals the divine method of humbling and refining the faithless and ungodly people who now inhabit the land. Briefly, he reveals that: Jerusalem is to become the center of international controversy. Jerusalem is to be trodden down for the last time by the Gentiles. Two-thirds of the population is to be destroyed. The remnant will be morally cleansed and brought into the bonds of the Covenant through baptism into Christ. (Extracted from Bro Jim Cowie’s work on “Events subsequent to the return of Christ”)
Case Studies: Life Application Activities

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

(1) “Lord, what do you want me to do?” (Acts 5:6).

Conversion

- Invite a brother or sister to tell your Sunday school class how he or she came into the Truth. This will be especially relevant to a lesson on Saul of Tarsus if the brother or sister was at first opposed to the Truth before accepting it.
- Have each student interview a brother or sister to find out how he or she came into the Truth. Brainstorm a set of interview questions with your students beforehand. For example, did the brother or sister have to overcome any obstacles in order to come into the Truth, and how did the Truth change their life? Share the results in class after the interviews have been carried out.

Obedience to God was the vital response of Saul of Tarsus in his life-changing conversion. Talk frankly with your students about the kinds of attitudes that produce obedience to God and the kinds of attitudes that do not. Also help them identify practical ways that they, at their age, can obey God. Baptism into Christ is a crucial act of obedience, but there are other things they can begin to do, even if they do not yet feel ready for baptism. Obedience to God does not automatically turn on at baptism. As a follow-up to this discussion, identify some ways to be more obedient to God in the week ahead, select something to try, and share your successes and failures next week. Be supportive of each other’s efforts.

(2) “Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins” (Acts 22:16).

Baptism

- Visit and support the baptism service of a young person in another ecclesia.
- Have your students go through recent ecclesial news published in one of our magazines (The Christadelphian, Logos, The Tidings, etc.). Look for reports of recent baptisms, and then send a baptism card or note to someone whose baptism is recorded.

(3) “Saul... attempted to join the disciples. And they were all afraid of him... But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles” (Acts
Friendship, Fellowship

- Plan a welcoming party or visit a new Sunday school family for the purpose of getting acquainted and making them feel at home.
- Have your students write welcome cards or do some act of kindness for a new family or a new Sunday school student.
- Identify a child who could use a friend or a bit of encouragement (e.g., someone in the Sunday school or in the neighborhood around your meeting place). Plan something that you can do as a Sunday school class to reach out to this child. Do it.

(4) “For a whole year they met with the church and taught a great many people” (Acts 11:26).

Ecclesial Service

- Have your class generate a list of ways that they, as young people, can help the work of the ecclesia or the Sunday school. Talk with your arranging board or Sunday school superintendent about the goal of this activity and then do something to be helpful.
- Have students pair up — a Barnabas and Saul team — and identify something on the class list that they can do together. When they have carried out their service, have them tell the class how it went. If your Sunday school is small, involve the entire Sunday school in the project.

(5) “So the disciples determined, everyone according to his ability, to send relief to the brethren” (Acts 11:29).

The Needs of Others

- Plan and carry out a collection or fund raiser for a needy family. Or prepare and deliver a meal to someone who would benefit from your thoughtfulness.
- Send a letter, card, or other memento from your Sunday school class to a sick brother or sister, young person, or ecclesial acquaintance.
- Arrange to visit an elderly brother or sister or someone who is shut-in. Do the Bible readings together.

From time to time The Tidings magazine publishes a list of “Addresses for Bequests and Donations”. Several Christadelphian charities/service organizations are included. Have your students select one of these organizations and find out more about the work it does. Then plan and carry out a fund raiser for the organization: a bottle and can drive; a bake sale; a car wash; an ecclesial dinner with a student presentation on the work of the organization, etc.

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

Jim Harper: sundayschool@tidings.org
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Notes:
Introduction

In our lives, each one of us, has experienced highs and lows. They are unavoidable and necessary for our growth in the Truth and to develop our character according to the will of the Father. For some of us, we might only experience minor lows and great highs. Others might experience great lows and very few high points. In either case, when we do have low points in our lives, there are many great examples in the Bible that we can take lesson from. In this article we will be looking at the life of David so that when we do have a low, we know that David probably had it a lot worse off than we could ever really imagine. Now with that being said, here in North America we are very blessed to have the freedoms and opportunities to believe what we want. In other countries though, people are sometimes less fortunate and can probably relate to David’s experiences a lot better than we could. Regardless of where we live, we will have lows in our lives as David did. We will have to encounter uncomfortable or desperate situations where we might make wrong decisions. But never forget the example we have of David during his time as a refugee.

Our main focus will come from 1st Samuel 27 to 30 when David is at the latter part of his exile. Before we get started though, let us take a look at some context at the beginning of when David started running from Saul. It is very important that we understand the mindset of David and how he went from a man of great faith, to desperate actions of deception and self-trust. We all know the stories of when David defeated the bear and the lion. One of the most famous stories is when David defeated the champion of the Philistines with just a stone, sling, and great faith in God, or when he defeated countless waves of Philistines for Saul. Each time he had great faith that God would take care of him. But something changed in David the night that it was confirmed that Saul wanted to kill him.

After all the great battles David had won, only one man could strike fear in him: King Saul, the anointed of the Lord. Saul wanted to kill David because he knew that the kingdom would be rent from him and his family. He hated that David was going to take that away so he tried to take matters into his own hands. But, there is a question to be asked of David. Was he running out of fear from Saul or was he running from himself? He knew that he couldn’t kill the Lord’s anointed, but what if the opportunity arose? David knew that if it came to him...
and Saul in a battle, there would be a possibility that either Saul would kill him, or he would have to kill Saul. So David ran. He didn't just run for his life, but perhaps also for the life of Saul. Latter on when David had the opportunity to kill Saul in the cave, he couldn't because he knew that Saul was anointed by the Lord. Even but just cutting off the hem of the king's garment, he lamented for doing so.

During David's exile he made many mistakes. The first mistake was rather than putting his faith in God, he had Johnathan lie so they could see if Saul really wanted to kill him or not (1st Samuel 20). He then lied to Ahimelech the priest in Nob in 1st Samuel 21 when he asked for supplies. David feared that if he were to tell anyone that he was running from Saul, that they turn him over. So he lied and told the priest he was on a secret mission from Saul. He was hoping that he would go unnoticed, but that wasn't the case unfortunately. The lie was not the main problem of this encounter though. David had an opportunity and a sign from God that he needed to ask for guidance and strength. When the sword of Goliath was presented to him by the priest, it was sitting behind the ephod. This was a sign that David needed to put his trust and faith in God rather than putting his trust in the things of the flesh. In a moment of weakness, he chose the sword over help from God. This was not a general trend in David's life, nevertheless, one thing that is interesting, it doesn't appear as though David ever asked God if Saul would truly kill him. He always asked if he would be turned in or if he should go and attack an enemy, but he never asked God specifically what to do about Saul. So David was running, and we can see that it was a difficult time for his faith.

Now that we have covered some context and asked a few questions, let's turn our attention to 1st Samuel chapter 27. By this time in David's run from the king, he has encountered many supporters and many more who were against him. He has learned that he needs to go to God before he makes any move. Little by little he is learning about becoming a Godly leader and king. He had to have great humility, compassion, understanding and wisdom. Only through the trials God put before him could he understand what was expected of him. With any trial, there can come a point where our faith is at its lowest. We know that David was exhausted, torn down, depressed and in dire need of encouragement:

“I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul: there is nothing better for me than that I should escape into the land of the Philistines; and Saul shall despair of me, to seek me any more in all the borders of Israel: so shall I escape out of his hand” (1Sam 27:1 RV)

I'm sure that the people with David were feeling close to the same as him, but they kept following him. They knew he was a stronger, more Godly and far better a leader than the alternative.

David, as the strong leader that he was becoming, made one of the boldest, and probably hardest of decisions he could make. He chose to take his men and people into the hands of the Philistines, the enemy of Israel and God. Let's just take a moment to reflect on what was really going on. David was loved so much by his men. They trusted him and would follow him anywhere he went. That says that David was a great leader. He was able to convince 600 men plus all their families
to go into the land of the Philistines. David was desperate to keep the people safe from the wrath of Saul and he knew that Saul would never attempt to follow him or his people there. It is hard to say what he was thinking when he made that decision but we know one thing is certain: he did not enquire of the Lord about what he was about to do. Just like the instance at Nob, David did not call upon the Lord for guidance. So during their stay in the land of the Philistines, David was put into some very difficult situations. Despite his lack of communication, God was still watching over him and the people.

Within a short period of time, David had gained the trust of the king of Gath, Achish. Luckily for him, Achish was easily deceived and David exploited this weakness. This act of trickery was the last step to pulling David in deep with the Philistine ranks and started a chain reaction of events that became out of his control, because unfortunately, as we will see, his trickery worked better than he probably expected.

Ziklag

With great trust, Achish gave David Ziklag as his home base. This southern city had once belonged to Judah in the time of the judges but was later invaded and controlled by the Philistines. It was only fitting that David would take back a part of Israel for him and his people to call home. In considering the meaning of Ziklag from the Strong's concordance, it means “winding.” Ironically, the path that David had taken was one of uncertainty and the things he was forced to do were uncharacteristic of him. With this in mind, we can get a good picture of the mindset David had during this time. His thoughts and actions were truly wandering in the presence of the enemy. It is thought that during the time David was in the land of the Philistines, he didn’t write any psalms which likely means he was spiritually struggling and slightly influenced by his surroundings. Regardless though, he still was thinking ahead to when he would become king. David knew that he and his men couldn’t just be idle, there was work to be done. So David began to finish wiping out the Canaanites and other enemies, something Saul should have done during his own time as king.

David was only looking for a place of refuge for himself and for those who fled from Saul’s insanity. But, rather than getting Ziklag as a temporary home, it became a dangerous trap. You see, David did such a good job of making Achish believe he had “made Israel, his people, to abhor him” (1Sam 27:12), that in the king’s mind, David and his men would be at his disposal for ever. Achish made him “keeper of his head” or his personal bodyguard. This eventually comes into to play later on 1st Samuel 28, when the Philistines gathered their armies to fight against Israel.
Now that David was put into his position of stature, he and his men were being forced to fight against Saul and his armies. Achish said: “Understand that you and your men are to go out with me in the army” (1Sam 28:1 ESV). David now had to make a choice. Either he and his men had to fight against Saul, or they would have to go in to battle and turn on the Philistine armies. Both options could have had great consequences. The angels were working in the background though to keep that from happening. When Achish and David arrived at the front lines, the princes of the Philistines feared that this adopted Philistine army would turn on their forces during the battle. God knew that something terrible would have happened to David and his men that day, so he created another path for them to escape harm, yet again.

The Amalekites

After the men were dismissed from the battle, they made their way back to Ziklag. Upon their return to their home, they saw that the Amalekites had invaded and burned Ziklag. All those who stayed behind, the women, children and the elderly were taken captive and led away by the Amalekites. From the time David started his stay with the Philistines to now, he had not written any psalms or asked for guidance from God. David’s mind had been influenced by the Philistines and it seems that up until this point, David felt that he was in control. If you think about all the times David went to God for guidance, he did not ask for it before going into the land of the Philistines, or at least we are not told that he did. It seems that David felt he was in control of the situation, But reality struck when the men he was with began to speak against him and threatened to stone him. The men were infuriated with David because he had led them into this situation and now all of their families were taken captive by the enemy. Due to the extreme situation, David finally went to God for guidance:

‘And David said to Abiathar the priest, the son of Ahimelech, ‘Bring me the ephod.’ So Abiathar brought the ephod to David. And David inquired of the Lord, ‘Shall I pursue after this band? Shall I overtake them?’ He answered him, ‘Pursue, for you shall surely overtake and shall surely rescue’” (1Sam 30:7-8 ESV).

David was no longer in control and was on the verge of destruction by his own men. Those who were so dedicated to David just days before, wanted to turn on their leader and kill him. David had no other choice than to turn to God for guidance, and God delivered his servant from destruction. With the help of God the men of David were able to recover everything down to the smallest items. It was a great day for David and the mighty men since God had provided for them. When they returned to where they had left the men left behind, some of the wicked men who went to the spoil, did not want to share their newly gained wealth. The
great leader that David had become knew he had to take care of those men who did not partake in the raid, so he made a rule. All those who bring back spoils of war must distribute to those who stayed behind to protect the camp. They may have not been at the front lines, but they still had jobs to do, so why shouldn't they partake? David also sent spoils to his friends, the elders of Judah. David was a wise and strong leader as he had learned to be from his time running from Saul.

The lessons

There are so many lessons for us to learn from all of David’s trials while living in the land of “wandering” called Ziklag. The most apparent lesson is be specific when talking with God, and asking for his guidance. During his time of running from Saul, even from the beginning, David never asked what to do specifically about Saul wanting to kill him. When he did inquire of the Lord, it was about his next move. When we pray to God about a problem or needing assistance, we have to be specific with what we ask for. Now in David’s case, much like our own, it was necessary for him to go through the things he did in order to be exercised and molded into what God needed him to be as king.

The next thing we can take away is that we have to be extremely careful about who we associate ourselves with. David got himself so deep in with Achish that for a time, he was distanced from God. We know he didn’t write any psalms during his stay and we are not told that he inquired of the Lord until he was desperate. We cannot forget though, that David was still a man of God, he always had God’s people at the forefront of his mind.

The lesson for us

That bring us to the next point. Being a part of an ecclesia, we must look after everyone in it! We have to support those who are busy working in the forefront of our ecclesia, but we also have to take care of those who seem less involved. Just as David did when he distributed the spoils of the Amalekites to those who did not fight. Everything David did was for his “ecclesia” and we need to take example of that in our lives. David was a Godly man and he made many mistakes, but, he knew that he had to endure them to be prepared for kingship. We too will make mistakes, but let us be reminded that we are being shaped and molded to be fit vessels for God’s plan when His son sets up the Kingdom on earth. Let us rejoice and have hope in that coming Kingdom!

Matt Hatcher (Thousand Oaks, CA)

Notes:
1. Looking at the root of Ziklag in Hebrew, it seems to me more likely to refer to some type of metal smelting or perhaps pressing out (of Olives) etc., but most scholars say it is of unknown origin. Ed.
The New Testament Church

(2) The Church

An ecclesia

The Schofield Bible interestingly heads Matthew 16 — “First Mention Of The Church”:

“And Jesus answered and said unto him, blessed art thou Simon Bar Jonah for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee that thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matt 16:17-18).

“On this rock I will build my church” — we can argue, if you like, whether Jesus meant that the church was to be built on the foundation statement of Peter: “Thou art the Christ the son of the living God.” On this rock, this confession of thy faith which the Father hath made known unto thee, “I will build my church.” Or there are those who feel that Jesus is saying that Peter himself was the one to whom the keys of the Kingdom would be committed, as indeed they were, and that on this “moveable rock” of Peter the “immoveable rock” of the church would be established. Personally, I incline to the view that it is the statement of Peter, this rock of confession, on which the church was to be built.

In any case, here is the first use of the word “ecclesia.” Not a peculiarly Christian word, in fact. The Jews were familiar with it, and so were the Gentiles. It was the Greek equivalent of the word “assembly.” Stephen used it in his famous speech in the 7th chapter of Acts of “the church in the wilderness”, the Jewish congregation in the wilderness, gathered together about the Tabernacle. Interestingly, I found, the same word was used by the Town Clerk of Ephesus when he said: “If, then, Demetrius and his fellow craftsmen have a grievance against anybody, the courts are open and there are proconsuls. They can press charges. If there is anything further you want to bring up, it must be settled in a legal assembly” (Acts 19:38-39 NIV). (Assembly = Ecclesia — the same word!)

Our word “meeting” is a very good equivalent to this word ecclesia. When we say, “You are going to the meeting tonight,” we know what we mean. You are going to the ecclesia. You are going to the place where the ecclesia meets. You are going to the worship of the brethren — the meeting — and that’s really what the ecclesia was. Jesus says he is going to build his church, his ecclesia, on this foundation that Peter has stated. So you see Jesus clearly saw his disciples, his future disciples, as a people called out to be an assembly, or an ecclesia, or a meeting together of believers.

In other words, Christian living was not to be in a vacuum; it was not going on for ever as just a band of vagrant preachers going about sowing seeds, leaving the
place behind. The church would grow like a building, on a foundation of rock. “On this rock I will build my church [ecclesia]; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matt 16:18).

Matthew 18

We know this chapter very well because it is the one that is incorporated in most ecclesial constitutions to deal with difficulties that arise between brethren and is cited as the law of Christ on the matter. And so of course it is. We read there:

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

Now where was the church? When Jesus spoke these words he was probably somewhere out in the wilderness, or on some grassy slope of Galilee, or in the Temple court. I do not know exactly where he was delivering this message, but there was not a church. They had not yet been formed into groups. Esoteric groups of this kind, in which you could take one or two brethren and “tell it to the church,” the brother presenting his case before the Ecclesia as a Body, had not at that time been established. But it shows that Jesus had in mind that the believers would one day be organized in some way as a group, as a community, and that they would have community rules and recognizable membership. “Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven,” he goes on to say, “And whatsoever thou shalt loose one earth shall be loosed in heaven,” suggesting a divine authority in the decisions that should be taken by the community of believers, which we would probably, and rightly, I think, disclaim for ourselves today.

Not many of us would be prepared to say that when the ecclesia meets together, and puts up its hand about any matter, and the majority prevails, that this is the decision of heaven. So here is another difference between the church as Jesus envisaged it in New Testament times, and the way in which we organize ourselves today. “Tell it to the church,” he says, implying a corporate responsibility, which we will look at again later. Here Jesus is clearly not saying, “Tell it to an Apostle, or tell it to one of the leaders of the community.” He is saying that the whole community of believers are responsible for the decisions that are arrived at, and if the aggrieved brother will not hear the church gathered together in solemn conclave, which is clearly in the vision of Jesus, then he is to “be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican,” which implies that there would be a definite membership, and that if the man should neglect to abide by the decision of the ecclesia, then he would necessarily find himself outside that ecclesia. So that the final authority, in the view of Jesus here, is vested in the whole membership, embodied in the phrase, “Tell it to the church.” I suppose it could be likened to our own business meetings, and as already stated, we write these procedures into the constitution of Christadelphian ecclesias.
But I want you to notice in passing that Jesus does not leave it there. He does not just say, “If he won't hear the church, out him.” He goes on to speak about love, and about forgiveness. He tells us that love of one another is to be the hallmark of this church. “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another” (John 13:35). And note the immediate context here in Matthew 18: Peter immediately goes on to say: “How oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Till seven times?” (Matt 18:21). Jesus replies by taking up, I think, the account of Lamech, who boasted to his two wives: “If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, truly Lamech seventy and sevenfold” (Gen 4:24). “I’ll show what I’ll do to them,” Lamech says. Jesus takes up that thought — not “seven times” forgiveness, but “seventy times seven.” Forgiveness, not vengeance! Not demanding rights and seeking vengeance!

He goes on to speak about the two debtors, one who owed an enormous sum, the other one who owed a little amount; and the one man wouldn’t forgive his brother. So, if you demand justice, Jesus says, if you demand from your brother, be careful, you might get it. “So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your heart forgive not everyone his brother their trespass” (Matt 18:35).

It puts a rather different light on what we call the law regarding personal offences. Of course it is the law. This is the way to go on. If you want to write something into your constitution about how brethren are to go on when they fall out with one another, Matthew 18 is a good text to write in. But let us also write alongside it the rest of the chapter; write it in our minds and in our hearts; don’t demand justice, but show mercy.

The growth of the church

Here is another example that came to me as something new: it may do to you, or you may say it is “old hat;”:

“Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh. Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods. But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; And shall begin to smite his fellowservants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, And shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Matt 24:44-51).

What has that to do, you might say, with our thesis that we have incipient mentions of the church in the gospels? It implies, does it not, some kind of recognized leadership of a community, or of a household. Here is Jesus speaking to a scattered mass of people, presumably sitting around the hillside on the grass, with no formation, no community life, no organization, no church, no meeting place, and he is saying, “Who is the faithful and wise steward, whom the Lord hath made
ruler over the house to give meat unto his fellow servants?” (Luke 12:42). And when the Lord comes will he find him doing this job for which he has been appointed? It leads us, surely, to expect the growth of some kind of organization of believers; to see men appointed to have authority in the Church, to be “rulers” over God’s house; and there will be leaders and led, there will be shepherds and sheep; developed in the apostate church in the second century into “clergy” and “laity.” That was a wrong development of this thought. But we have to recognize from the teaching of Jesus here, which is more fully developed in the next study, that the church in the beginning was not to be without some kind of organized leadership; that it was not going to be “all chiefs and no Indians.” There would be those who had the duty and responsibility of leading a household, of feeding the flock of God, of tending the sheep. And if that is to be so, then there must be some kind of organized community life. And this, I think, Jesus is envisaging in this parable; seeing the stretching out of time until the end, when he shall come, he says, “who is going to be this faithful and wise steward in the house, of God, to give meat to the household in due season?”

Now these are some of the scattered hints that we have in the Gospel records that Jesus did not intend his followers to remain a disorganized group of vagrant preachers. The work would go on and would become established, not among the Jews only but among Gentiles also. Jesus said: “And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd” (John 10:16).

He saw groups of disciples forming organized ecclesias, or churches, to forward the work of preaching, with recognized membership and rules of behavior (Matthew 18). A “household” with a structured leadership (Matthew 24) with himself, Jesus the Christ, the foundation, the life, the soul and the heart of it all. And yet he did nothing to organize this in his own lifetime here on earth, apart, perhaps, from appointing Peter as the leader of the future church.

The church period

We have to wait until after his resurrection, and the pouring out of the spirit at Pentecost, to see the church emerge as a living entity. So we turn finally to the Acts, going out of the Gospels now, and into the church period. “The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Spirit had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen” (Acts 1:1).

Dr. Blunt, who is quite familiar to us as the author of the book about Scripture Coincidences, has suggested in another work⁴, that here is an indication that Jesus was instructing the Apostles on how they were to go about the work of transforming the vagrant preaching of the Gospels into the established church of Acts, “after that he through the Holy Spirit had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen” (Acts 1:2). He makes the point rather cogently, that the commandments of Jesus had already been given clearly to the Apostles in his teaching. They had heard all Jesus had to say — the Sermon on the Mount, all his private teaching
to them. This was no new thing for him to tell them how they ought to behave, what his commandments about Christian conduct were; but Blunt suggests that here Jesus is clearly telling the Apostles how they should go about organizing the church, and building up this “body of Christ,” which was to be his ecclesia, “the fulness of him that filleth all in all” (Eph 1:23).

Clearly a new development is envisaged in this first chapter of Acts, for we read: “And being assembled together with them, he commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me” (Acts 1:4). So here they were, eleven close disciples, apostles of Jesus, Judas having fallen by the wayside, and they were waiting. The Gospel period was over, the vagrant preaching was past, and they were now assembled in Jerusalem waiting. For what? For the promise of the Father, the Holy Spirit, to be poured upon them from on high. The embryonic church of the Gospels was about to be born of the Spirit in Acts.

Finally, let us think of one or two conclusions that we may draw from this, for the benefit of the church of the twentieth century. Questions we must ask ourselves. Do we preach Jesus? He went about calling men to be disciples of himself. “Come unto me all ye that labor” “He that loveth me, him shall my father honor.” Is Jesus the center and soul of our teaching? Is “the Kingdom of God” in the Gospels a wider phrase than our normal lectures on the subject? It represented in the teaching of Jesus not just a theological conception, but a way of life. The “sovereignty” of God! (Some of the new translations actually use this phrase to translate the Kingdom of God.) In some sense I think they are right. It is indeed the sovereignty of God, or the reign of heaven.

Jesus was not only, or perhaps chiefly, concerned with the divine political content of the future Kingdom, though that underlay his teaching. There was clearly this ultimate purpose always in view. What is called the eschatological content of the preaching is always there; but he was more concerned with a man’s response to God, witnessed by his willingness to commit himself to discipleship to Jesus.

So, perhaps we ought to make our message more relevant to the daily life of man. I am not saying that we ought to stop giving typical Christadelphian lectures on the Kingdom of God. I am not saying that at all. But it may be that looking at the teaching of Jesus in the Gospel, we shall see that there is a larger content than the divine political kingdom. That the message of Jesus has a relevance to man’s living. We are right to talk of the last days, of course, and the ultimate purpose of God, but Luke 21 need not be the only chapter in the Gospels that we refer to, need it!

Jesus should be the center of our preaching, not as a figure of theological strife, but as a leader, to love, and to follow. A personalization of all that God wants us to be. So that we should not be religious know-alls who can throw texts at people to prove that we are right and they are wrong, but disciples of Jesus who follow the Lamb whithersoever he goes.

Len Richardson

Notes:
1. The Christian Church During the First Three Centuries: John James Blunt (on Google Books).
Reflections

The Garments of the High Priest

The garments of the High Priest were “of blue, purple and scarlet yarn, and of finely twisted linen — the work of a skilled craftsman” (Exod 28:6, etc.).

The preponderant materials were “gold, blue, purple, scarlet, fine-twined linen”: the materials of the veil and the gate hangings of the tabernacle. The significance of these materials are the same as in the tabernacle itself: tried faith, healing by chastisement (better, heavenliness), royal destiny, sin-nature, and spotless righteousness. The question is, what is there of ‘glory and of beauty’ in these significances? The appropriate answer would be, what is there not of glory and beauty in them? They all involve one transcendent truth, which is to all others as the sun in the heavens — the hallowed supremacy of God as the rule of being. Consider: What is faith but trust in His word? Who so royal as the King of glory, whether in Father or Son, to whom every knee shall bow? What is sin-nature but nature cursed by God because of disobedience? What is righteousness but the doing of His perfect will?

Thus God is in every aspect of the typical garments: and there could be no greater ‘glory and beauty’ than this proclaimed fact that He will and must be worshipped and obeyed as ‘head over all’ before there can be true well-being (in ‘body, mind, and estate’) for man whom He has made. The man chosen as priest had to be covered with garments having all these meanings in a concealed manner. God not only plainly declared, “I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me” (Lev 10:3), but He required such to be arrayed in vestments which were not only glorious and beautiful in an artistic sense, but which typically proclaimed the supremacy of God and the complete subordination of man as the conjoint and indispensable conditions of acceptable fellowship. We may miss all the meanings intended, but some of them are very manifest.

Not man unclothed: not man naked: not man as he is in himself, but man invested or “clothed upon” with superadded attributes or conditions, is acceptable. And these superadded conditions must be of divine pattern and prescription: “See thou make all things according to the pattern shown to thee in the mount” (Heb 8:5; Exod 25:40).

This, in the Mosaic shadow, is the condemnation of all human invention in religion; and the confutation of the popular idea that sincere ignorance or ignorant sincerity is eligible in worship: or that man can save himself by his own devices. Man is “condemned already”, and can only escape this position by God’s own provision, of which man can only become aware or avail himself through the enlightenment of revelation. The revelation is abundant and clear, if men would but make themselves acquainted with it. This Mosaic shadow is part, and no inconsiderable part, of the revelation.

_Eusebia J. Lasius, Patterns of Things in the Heavens_
Barbados

The CBMC sponsors the annual Bible School during the Easter Holiday period each year. In April 2015, Bro. Ken Styles (Royal Oak, MI) led a study of Nehemiah with the intent of encouraging the brethren and sisters in Barbados to build walls to keep the influence of the world out and to work together in the ecclesia to bring glory to God in all they do.

During the week we all were thankful and grateful to our Father in heaven as we witnessed the baptism of Sis. Shirley Bradshaw the daughter of Sis. Ida Yearwood. Sis. Ida's father was the first Bajan Christadelphian in Barbados when in the late 1800's the Truth came to Barbados.

It was a pleasure to use for the first time the completely rebuilt ecclesial hall for the Bible School. The hall had seriously deteriorated over the years since it had been purchased in 1974 from another organization. Bro. Anthony Hunte coordinated the project financed by the CBMC which included new windows, walls, floor and roof.

The Bible School was ably supported by Bro. David and Sis. Sarah Corbin from Brooklyn, USA, who encouraged all attendees to love and good works. At the
memorial meeting, it was a great pleasure that Bro. David, formerly from Barbados, presided and gave Sis. Shirley the right hand of fellowship. We pray our loving Father will watch over all our members in Barbados and encourage them to help one another on the road which leads to life.

*Rod Ghent, Linkman for Barbados*

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**Bro. Oral Stanford interviewing Sis. Shirley Bradshaw for baptism**

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**Sis. Ida Yearwood and Bro. Ken Styles witnessing the baptismal interview**

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**The baptism of Sis. Shirley Bradshaw, April 5, 2015**
Bible Mission Fundraiser Dinner, Victoria, BC

“And they came...as many as were willing hearted”

Have you ever wondered what actually happens out in the mission field? What progress is being made? What wondrous work or small miracle is the LORD working? The brethren in Victoria, British Columbia have found an exciting way for the mission field to seem a little less remote, giving those around a way to understand and support the work of taking the gospel into all the world.

Every two years the brethren in Victoria hold a Bible Mission fundraiser dinner. Their third one, January 24th of this year, was one of their most successful yet and raised over $12,000. It featured a lovely dinner, a presentation by Bro. Nathan Badger, a craft sale, a bake sale, and an auction with such diverse items as a flight with the local flying club and free range chickens. Bro. Nathan highlighted the tireless labor of those working with CBMC (Christadelphian Bible Mission Canada) in the field (mostly the Caribbean), and also highlighted the great need that exists for people to either volunteer their help or support the work by donations.

Aside from simply raising awareness, events like this are a prime way that brethren who don’t have a way to experience the field firsthand can show their support. Sis. Myra Lucke, one of the organizers, remarked that she couldn’t think of an event that involved so many people. From making food and decorations, donating items for the silent auctions, helping on the night, auctioneering like Bro. Duncan Kenzie, to simply attending and supporting with their prayers, there are ways for everyone to be involved.

In the past, fundraiser like these were also held in California with great success, planned by a group of young sisters and/or other ecclesias as well. Please contact Sis. Myra Lucke or Sis. Jan Berneau if you would like additional details on planning an event like this.

May the LORD continue to grant the increase, and may He continue to send workers to the field! And may all of us, as many as are able, support those who serve in their labor of love as we all eagerly wait for the return of the son.

Submitted by Sis. Jan Berneau
CBMA/CBMC Publicity
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.

BOSTON, MA

Our Bro. Jean Claude Asende was recently diagnosed with liver cancer. Bro. Jean Claude, his wife Sis. Justine and their six children are refugees from the Congo. They have been in the United States and members of the Boston Ecclesia for the past 10 years and recently bought their own home. We ask that you please keep Bro. Jean Claude and his family in your prayers.

On April 11th, we hosted our 24th Annual Spring Study Day with Bro. Jason Hensley of the Simi Hills Ecclesia. We want to thank Bro. Jason for his presentation on the subject of ‘Unlocking The Mystery’ as well as for his exhortation on Sunday April 12th.

We would also like to thank Bro. John Perks of the Ottawa Ecclesia for his CYC presentation on the subject of ‘Media Literacy’ on Saturday, March 14th as well as his exhortation on Sunday March 15th.

We would like to thank Brothers Steve Stewart, Ron Waye and Tom Cannon for their recent exhortations as well.

Jim Sullivan

HONESDALE, PA

We were blessed by the visit in May of Bro. Dave Cheetham and his wife, Sis. Ann, (Moorestown, NJ). Bro. Dave gave us an excellent exhortation and after the memorial service we shared a wonderful luncheon with them that our sisters made.

Bro. Steve Cheetham drove all the way from the Moorestown Ecclesia, NJ, to visit us on June 7. He gave us a wonderful exhortation and Holy Bible study lecture after the memorial service. We later enjoyed a great time of fellowship during our luncheon.

Stephen J. DeMarco

KITCHENER WATERLOO, ON

We are very pleased to report the marriage on May 9, 2015, of Bro. Caleb Myers (Brantford, ON) and Sis. Emily Robinson. Sis. Emily has transferred to the Brantford, ON Ecclesia to which we commend her.

We are concluding a season of seminars. “The Apocalypse,” has been the theme for the season. God willing in September, a new series will be started. We are encouraged by the continued attendance of some interested friends.

Martin J Webster
ORLANDO, FL
Sincere thanks to our brother and sisters who planned, hosted and helped with the “Third Sunday Get-Togethers”. Members, friends, and children thoroughly enjoyed the fellowship, food and fun. Many thanks for all your hard work.

We were blessed to have the following brothers, sisters and their families attend our meeting during the last several months: Trevor and Ruth Deedman, Lexie Deedman (Wardley, UK); Mark Patterson (Los Angeles, CA); Phil and Jean Hale (Castleford, UK); Julian and Sandra Baseley (Guildford, UK); Jenny Nicholson (Lincoln, UK); Kieren Wilson (Happy Valley, Aust.); David and Eileen Bilton and Greg Bilton (Maidenhead, UK); Edgar and Erica Rodriguez (Gainesville, FL); Bryan and Keleigh Styles, Glen and Mindy Stark, Alice Stark (Livonia, MI); Bob and Norley Kling (Washington, DC); Tome and Vivian Thorp (Mississauga West, ON); Alan Markwith (Hamilton Greenaway, ON); James and Kiersten Rutkovsky (Westerly, RI); Reid and Patricia Ferguson, and Jason and Sylvia Grant (Orangeville, ON).

Our thanks to those brothers who so graciously exhorted.

Randy Davenport

SARASOTA, FL
Sis. Vivian LaManna, of Fort Myers, fell asleep in the Lord May 4, 2015. She had been in failing health the past several years, and was confined to a nursing facility in the Fort Myers area. She was immersed late in life, but as a young girl growing up in New Jersey, knew several of the members of the Sarasota, FL Ecclesia.

It was this writer’s great pleasure to preside over the uniting in marriage of Bro. Kevin Cronin and Sis. Christine Dillingham. May their new life together as husband and wife be blessed by the Lord, while we all await the return of our Lord and Savior.

The Sarasota Ecclesia thanks Bro. Jim Cowie (Moreton Bay, Queensland, AUS) for leading us in consideration of the three healings and the enacted parable in Mark. All who heard our brother’s words were greatly encouraged.

James Wilkinson

SUSSEX, NB
We are very thankful that Bro. John Perks (Ottawa, ON) was able to step in and lead our April study weekend on, “Paul’s Second Letter to Timothy”, as a replacement for Bro. Tom Wilson, who is quite ill at the moment. Also visiting with Bro. John was his wife, Sis. Rachel, and Bro. Dale and Sis. Carol Crawford (Bedford, NS).

We are grateful to Bro. John Mannell (Toronto West, ON) who led our Youth camp weekend studies during which weekend we were also blessed with the company of Bro. David, Sis. Sharon and Sis. Sue Hayles (Orangeville, ON), and Sis. Katie Boyko (Boston, MA).

Bro. Ken and Sis. Nipun Easson (Toronto East, ON) and family and mother-in-law were able to visit with us at the end of May and also spend some time with Bro. Ron Easson who was quite ill at the time and in the local hospital.

We are sorry to report the falling asleep of Bro. Ron Easson on June 3, 2015. Bro. Ron was baptized in 1954, in Aberdeen, Scotland and spent many years of his early life at sea, visiting numerous ecclesias in Australia, South Africa and other areas on his journeys. He and Sis. Arla travelled across Canada and were members of several
Canadian ecclesias, before finally settling down in Sussex, NB, ten years ago. Bro. Ron endured much sickness since Sis. Arla fell asleep nearly three years ago, and was admitted to a local nursing home where he was well cared for. He was able to get to most of our Sunday meetings until a few months ago. We will miss his extensive Bible history knowledge, and extend our sympathy to his sons, Bro. Ken and Sis. Nipun, and Bro. Gordon, and look forward to the great day of resurrection.

Please note that our ecclesial mailing address has changed to: 201 Roachville Road, Roachville, New Brunswick, E4G 2J4.

Cliff Baines

ASK (ADVANCEMENT OF SCRIPTURE KNOWLEDGE) DAY

We are planning on bringing back another ASK Day on Saturday, September 12, 2015, at the Brantford Ecclesial Hall and invite one and all, young and old, to a day of fellowship and witness! We look forward to making this day an opportunity for interactive discussion and presentations; to encourage our preaching work in availing ourselves of both Scriptures’ counsel and being uplifted through spiritual song. We want to bring back the enthusiasm we once enjoyed and recognize the need to be a witnessing community. Prepare to get involved!

“the harvest truly is plenteous but the labourers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that He will send forth labourers into His harvest” (Matt 9: 37-38).

Lunch will be provided. Please pre-register at peteresa@hotmail.com or call 416-695-3939.

A TRIBUTE TO BRO. RICK SALES

My father in law, Brother Richard Sales, fell asleep in Christ on Sunday May 10, 2015. He died at home, in peace, in the loving care of his wife Sister Elaine. They had been married for 56 years.

Through the 1960’s Rick and Elaine had a long friendship with a Christadelphian family. Try as they might, their friends Brother Ron and Sister Joan Evans (West Ave, Hamilton, ON) couldn’t move the Sales family toward Biblical truth. The time wasn’t right. Moving to Australia in the mid-1970’s changed the Sales’ life. They spotted the Christadelphian name in a newspaper, advertising a talk on Bible prophecy; they attended and were intrigued. After a year of instruction Rick, Elaine and their daughter (my wife, Sister Carol Link) were baptized into Christ in Melbourne, Australia on May 12, 1976. Their son Brother Chris Sales was baptized in Shelburne, Ontario after the family returned from five years in Australia.

Brother Rick and family have often commented on the welcoming spirit of the brethren in Melbourne. The Sales were complete strangers, far away from home, and yet were welcomed into Christadelphian homes. That welcoming spirit was an important factor in their receiving the Truth. It became the model for how they would live, and serves as a powerful example for all of us. Reading through the many cards and letters the Sales received during Rick’s illness, I noticed the recurring theme of his kindness, his
interest in people, and the generosity with which he and Sis Elaine provided for the needs of others.

Before he died, Rick’s children and all of his grandchildren were blessed to spend time with him individually, to exchange bittersweet goodbyes and to receive his counsel. Brother Rick reminded us that the dead in Christ will rise first, and then said that he would be waiting for us. I was deeply impressed with the resolution of his faith in facing death. He wanted no memorial service because he didn’t want people to focus on him. He was entirely focused on loving care for others. In a quiet moment, he surprised me by saying that he’d like to write his own obituary. “Well,” I said, “just don’t be too modest.” He replied, “Oh, it’s not going to be about me.” I marvel at a man who wants his own obituary to not be about him.

Brother Rick never got to write his obituary, but he told Carol the things he wanted to say. There were three things on his mind.

The first was a desire that the good work of Agape in Action may continue. Brother Rick worked tirelessly on behalf of that charity for nearly a decade as Treasurer, and I will remember him sitting in bed, too sick to get up, but still working on accounts with the help of Brother Chris. Brother Rick asked that any memorials that might be made in his name, be made to the Agape in Action — Widow’s fund. For details on the charity, and to make online donations, see http://www.agapeinaction.com.

Brother Rick’s second concern was for families. Our families don’t get enough attention, he said. Where there is upheaval, for whatever reason, seek to reconcile. “Lay the cards out on the table again and take a close look at them.” The times are too evil, the days too few for us to allow any obstacles to hinder us in preparing for the Master’s return.

His third concern was like the second, but on a larger scale. He wanted a united Brotherhood. Paul says that divisions manifest the flesh, rather than the spirit (1Cor 3:3, Gal 5:19-21). The status quo is not acceptable, nor has it been for over 100 years. Brother Rick implored us to attribute the best motives to those on the other side of the issue from ourselves, making reference to Philippians 4, “think on these things.” His advice was for brethren to “have humility.”

We will miss Brother Rick. While it would be presumption for us to anticipate Jesus’ words to him at the judgment seat, we have confidence that it is the Father’s good pleasure to give us the kingdom, and that a crown of righteousness is laid up for all who love his appearing. So we wait in hope of the resurrection, and the manifestation of the Sons of God. By God’s grace we pray to be reunited with our much loved, faithful and hard-working brother in that good.

Bill Link (Baltimore, MD)

“I have preached righteousness
    in the great congregation:
Lo, I have not refrained my lips,
    O LORD, thou knowest.
I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart;
    I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation:
I have not concealed thy lovingkindness and thy truth
    from the great congregation.”

(Psa 40:9-10)
Do we really want to be saved?

“What must I do to be saved?” was the urgent question the Philippian jailor asked Paul and Silas after an earthquake brought the jail crashing down. Why did he ask that question? He thought he was doomed if his prisoners escaped after the earthquake, and when Paul told him they were all there he was filled with relief and hope. He knew that Paul and Silas had been preaching a message of salvation, a message of hope for the future, and he wanted to know about it.

We, too, want to be saved from death, to have eternal life, and we also would like to know how to get it. A young man asks Jesus, “Good master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?” Jesus answers, “If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.” The young man assures Jesus that he already does, and wonders if there is anything else that he might lack. Jesus tells him, “If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me.” The young man goes away sorrowful because of his many possessions. The abundance of material goods most people have nowadays may cause some of us also to feel sorrowful for similar reasons. Is there a lesson here for us?

That young man was rich, and Jesus explains to his disciples that a rich man can hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven; that it is easier for a camel to pass through a needle’s eye. When Peter asks Jesus, “Who then can be saved?” the Lord replies, “With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.”

We should be so thankful that God truly desires for us to be saved and has made it possible for us. Peter later writes, “The Lord is not slack concerning His promises as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. God does not want us to fail. However, not everyone will be saved because it is easier not to follow the way to salvation. As Jesus warns, “For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.” Jesus also warns, “Many are called, but few are chosen.”

What is required for our salvation? First of all, we need a Savior, because our sins separate us from God. Because of sin we are dying creatures and are helpless to extricate ourselves from the law, “The wages of sin is death.” Because our Heavenly Father wants us to be saved, He gave His son to make it possible: “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” We scarcely can comprehend that God gave His beloved son, and that our Lord Jesus Christ gave his life so we can be saved. Through his sacrifice, we can have our sins forgiven, our iniquities covered, be judged faithful and be given the gift of immortality at the judgment. How thankful we are that God and Jesus both want us to be saved!
As Jesus advised the young man, there is more required. We have to do our part. We need to respond to the call of God and, as Paul tells the Philippians, to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling. Salvation is conditional on our response and our attitude. We need to obey the commandments, as Jesus tells the young man, and we need to give up caring for the things of this life and follow our master by dedicating our life to him. We cannot presume that we are saved; we must remain faithful and constantly work at pleasing God, following Paul’s example, as he explains, “I always take pains to have a clear conscience toward both God and man.” Paul, a man chosen by God to preach to the Gentiles, was acutely conscious that he himself might be rejected at the judgment seat of Christ if he did not struggle continually against sin, as he explains, “but I buffet my body, and bring it into bondage: lest by any means, after that I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected.”

What about us? Do we want to be saved? How badly do we want eternal life? Do we really want to be in the Kingdom more than anything else in all the world? It is easy to say yes, but are we confirming our desire by our actions and thoughts? We know that many are called but few are chosen, and we want to be among those who are chosen.

First of all, do we obey the commandments? Have we been baptized? Do we attend the memorial meeting regularly? Do we do the Bible readings every day? Do we pray regularly? Do we share our faith with others? Do we search the Scriptures to refresh our understanding of God’s Truths? Do we support others, comforting those in need, helping our brethren and sisters with their burdens? Are we honest, responsible stewards, faithfully giving good service in our duties, serving our earthly masters as we would our Lord? Are we keeping our mind and body pure by thinking godly thoughts and not indulging in fleshly pursuits? We have a high calling, and we struggle to fulfill it, but God is merciful and will forgive us when we fail if we repent and ask forgiveness and continue seeking to serve Him in spite of our weakness.

Second of all, we need to develop a giving attitude of mind, as Jesus advised the young man. We need to care about the needs of others, using our material possessions to supply what they might lack. Our treasure should not be the money or things we have accumulated, but what we can do to serve our master by caring for his other children around us. As Jesus says, “Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.”

We must constantly work to bring our thoughts and actions under control, as Paul did, knowing that it is a continual struggle against sin. Choosing to seek first the Kingdom of God does not mean that we are spared hardship, but we have the support of our Lord to help us through our trials. We have the example of knowing how the Lord Jesus Christ endured the terrible pain he was suffering on the cross. Hebrews tells us “Look unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.”
Coming Events (Lord Willing)

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

**JULY, 2015**

**1-6 Calaveras Family Bible Camp** Calaveras Big Trees State Park, Arnold, CA. Classes by Bro. Matt Palmer on Samson: “My Strength Is Made Perfect in Weakness.” Contact Bro. Brian McDonald at 626-335-3787 or bmcdonald@mcdonald-printing.com.


**11-18 Manitoulin Family Bible Camp** Bro. Stephen Whitehouse (Birmingham, Hall Green, UK): “Facing the Giants” (adults and young people), and Bro. Ron Hicks (Washington, DC): “From Gethsemane to Golgotha” (adults and young people). See the website for details www.manitoulinfamilycamp.com.

**18-26 Midwest Bible School** will be held at Triune University, Angola, IN. Speakers and their topics are: Bro. Roger Lewis (Christchurch, New Zealand): “The Four Faces of Christ in the Gospels”; Bro. Mark Vincent (UK): “Exploring the Psalms”; and Bro. Andrew Bramhill (UK): “Isaac, the Overlooked Patriarch.” Contact Bro. Mike Livermore, 44943 Yorkshire Dr., Novi, MI 48375; 248-462-5740; mike.live@gmail.com or visit www.midwestbibleschool.com.

**19-25 Idyllwild Bible School** will be held at the Idyllwild Pines Camp in Idyllwild, CA. The speakers for this year are Bro. Barry McClure, Bro. Darren Guy, and Bro. Jim Styles. To register, contact Bro. Jeff Gelineau at register@christadelphianbibleschool.org or visit our website www.californiabibleschool.org.

**25-26 Rolling Hills, AB** Annual Study Day. The theme is: “Elijah,” and the study will be presented by Bro. Jonathan Lawrence (Prince George, BC). There will be children’s classes as well. Accommodations are available at the homes of brothers and sisters. Tenting and RVs are more than welcome. Please, if you are coming, confirm by e-mail dana.kohlman@grasslands.ab.ca or by contacting Sis. Cherri-Lynn via phone 403-964-2562.

**25-Aug 1 Manitoulin Island Bible Camp** Theme: “In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works.” The speakers and topics will be: Bro. Stephen Palmer (Swansea, UK): “Titus — Sound Doctrine, Good Works,” and Bro. Jay Mayock (Hamilton Book Road, ON): “Shechem — A Shadow of Good Things to Come.” Details on www.christadelphianbiblecamp.ca. For registration, contact Bro. Alex Browning at jabrowning@rogers.com or phone 416-284-0290.

To think that we shall be like Jesus with an immortal body that will never be tired or sick or die and we will be with our Lord for ever and ever is a hope that defies our wildest imagination. Let us do our part. Let us faithfully do what we must do to be saved. We cannot earn a place in the Kingdom, but God wants to give us salvation if we do our part. With Paul we say, “Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift.”

*Robert J. Lloyd*
25-Aug 2 Eastern Bible School Connecticut College, New London CT. Theme: “As for me and my house we will serve the LORD.” Bro. Joe Hill (Austin Leander, TX): “The Gospel in Leviticus and the Tabernacle” (adults), and “Hearing the Word: Learning to Study from the Parable of the Sower” (teens); Bro. Steve Cheetham (Moorestown, NJ): “Lessons for Us from the Kings” (adults), and “Judges: Go in and Possess the Land” (teens); Bro. Jason Hensley (Simi Hills, CA): “The Second Exodus and the Work of Elijah” (adults), and “Jonathan, the Faithful Prince” (teens). For registration information contact Sis. Cindy Nevers at 18 Sibley St., Auburn, MA 01501 or cindynevers@verizon.net.


AUGUST, 2015

15-21 Winfield Bible School Winfield, BC. Our theme: “Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost” (Heb 7:25). Speakers and subjects are: Bro. Joni Mannell (UK): “At the Breaking of Bread”; Bro. Dev Ramcharan (Toronto Church Street, ON): “The God of the Fallen”; and Bro. Jim Cowie (Moreton Bay, Australia): “Melchizedek — Priest of the Most High God.” Registration: Winfield Bible School, c/o Dan Fuhr, 4401 Westview Dr., Vernon, BC, V1T 9B2 or e-mail: registerforwinfield@hotmail.com. Any other enquiries: Bro. John Gareau 250-275-7787 or Bro. Ken Loveridge 778-475-4602 or e-mail: winfieldbibleschool@hotmail.com.

17-22 Lakefield Bible School at Lakefield College. The school is located east of Toronto near Peterborough ON, on a beautiful lakeside campus. Contact Bruce and Barbara Abel: bnb69abel@hotmail.ca or call 519-925-5297 or www.lakefieldbibleschool.com.

29-30 Sussex, NB Fortieth Anniversary Celebrations. Contact Bro. Cliff and Sis. Julia Baines for further details by e-mail christad@nbnet.nb.ca; or by telephone 506-433-1728; or to 97 Fourth Street, Sussex Corner, NB E4E 5V9.

SEPTEMBER, 2015

12 ASK Day at the Brantford Ecclesial Hall. A day of fellowship, witness and discussion. Lunch will be provided. Please pre-register at peteresa@hotmail.com or call 416-695-3939.

12-13 Nashua, NH Study Weekend with Bro. Jim Sullivan (Stoughton, MA): “Unto This Day: Revealing Lessons from God’s Wonderful Word.” Contact Bro. Peter Dixon at jpdixon@charter.net.

19-20 Bedford, NS Study Weekend with Bro. Chris Sales (Shelburne, ON): “Hebrews — A Practical Exposition.” Location: North Woodside Community Centre, Dartmouth, NS. Contact Bro. Dale Crawford at bedfordchristadelphians@gmail.com or 902-431-6650.

19-20 Lombard, IL (Chicago) Fall Gathering with Bro. Steve Davis leading the adult classes starting at 9:30 a.m., Saturday. Please contact Sis. Sue Johnson for housing and to RSVP at 847-438-4890 or e-mail: tarthurjo@juno.com.
26-27 Kouts, IN  Fall Study Weekend at Woodland Park Community Center, 2100 Willowcreek Rd. beginning at 10:00 a.m. Bro. Matt Norton (Lismore, Australia) speaking. Theme: “An Overview of Revelation” — great for adults and kids. Contact Bro. Joe Bennett at 219-762-2704 or jkb8275@comcast.net.

OCTOBER, 2015

3-4 Ontario Fall Gathering  at Maple High School, Vaughan, ON. Theme: “Through Patience and Comfort of the Scriptures we have Hope” (Rom 15:4). Speakers Bre. John Mannell and Scott Wentworth. Contact Bro. Bruce Abel bnb69abel@hotmail.ca. For registration contact Bro. Will Snodgrass OCFGathering@gmail.com.


10-11 Vancouver, BC  Fraternal Gathering. Speaker: Bro. Tec Morgan (Castle Bromwich, UK). Contact Bro. Phil Snobelen at 604 881 4733 or philsnobelen@shaw.ca.


NOVEMBER, 2015

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

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Introduction to Special Inspiration Issue

The Bible

Our society in North America has largely been trained to distrust authority in any form, an attitude we see reflected almost every day in the news. Whether it be politicians, the press, lawyers, religious leaders, or business tycoons, all seem to figure in our headlines, and normally to their detriment. Thus it is not surprising that when we refer to the Bible as an authority which governs our lives as well as our hope, many, especially the young, express skepticism.

The bedrock of our beliefs is trust in the message contained in the Bible. Not only the message, but the whole of the Bible, must be regarded as trustworthy, as infallible, for who can say, if some part is in error, which parts are true? In our Christadelphian community, disputes concerning this called forth a resolution passed by the Birmingham Ecclesia in 1885 which said:

“That this Ecclesia believes that the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, which now exist in all languages, were originally produced, in all parts of them, by inspiration of God, in this sense, namely, that the Holy Spirit moved and guided the writers either to use their own words conveying information of which they had no knowledge, or to record their own knowledge in words which it superintended; or to adopt and incorporate from outside sources whatever it might approve or require to be recorded for its own purposes — the writers being in no case left to their own unaided efforts, and the result being that their writing was free from error.”

This is, I believe, quite a good description of the way our community understands the inspiration of the Bible. We believe in verbal inspiration, but not in the sense the Bible was dictated to the various writers of the 66 books of the Bible. (Of course, some passages record what is said to be the words of God, but we cannot know for certain whether these are actual “words”, or ideas which the writers transcribed under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.)

Contradictions

Some will still insist that there are errors or contradictions in the Bible: but a careful study will show almost all such can be ascribed to either a misunderstanding of the text, or an apparent error in the many generations in copying of the text. There might, indeed, be a few errors or contradictions we do not understand, but they are so few we can rest in the comfort that all relevant knowledge is not yet revealed to humankind. Indeed, over the years discoveries in archeology, ancient history, and science have helped to illuminate and explain many formerly apparent contradictions.

It must also be pointed out that it is not necessary to come up with what is necessarily a “true” answer to any of the claimed contradictions. We cannot prove contradictions do not exist: Instead, all that is required of us is to come up with plausible, reasonable, or possible explanations, so that what is purported to be a
contradiction is in fact not such in reality. Whether or not our explanation is the “true” one is not all that relevant in such contexts.

Outline of the issue
I must acknowledge that this issue was put together almost entirely by the efforts of Bre. Randy Davenport and Ted Sleeper, who encouraged a large number of other brothers to contribute their expertise and time. I thank all involved, and pray God will bless their combined efforts in addressing this vital topic of inspiration.

This issue is designed to introduce some evidence for the authority of the Bible, as a whole, not just some selected parts. It presents a few snapshots of such areas as:

- The Old and New Testament claims for the way God has inspired the writers to put forth His words.
- The way Divine Inspiration is, and has been, regarded by Christadelphians.
- Several proofs, from prophecy to creation, showing the ways history and the world around us offers proof of the veracity of the Bible.
- A brief consideration of some evidence to be found in archeology.
- A sample of the way to handle apparent contradictions in the Bible.
- How we got our Bible: the account of the way the books of both the Old and New Testament were recognized as inspired.
- And finally, why we can put our trust in the Bible as the true word of God.

Conclusion
It is hoped the Special Issue will let us look at the Bible we have, in whatever translation we use, in its true light: as an invaluable guide given to us by God, to guide us in the way we should lead our life. After all, the gift of eternal life we seek and hope for is indeed a treasure for which we “press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Phil 3:14).

The message one can take from this whole series of articles is that, as has been said more than once, “I want to make one thing clear at the outset. I am not here to defend the Bible. You don’t need to defend a lion in a fair fight. Let it loose and it is well able to look after itself.” There might be obscurities: there might be passages we find hard to understand or appreciate: but the overwhelming message of Truth rings clear and loud. No one who has read the Bible with an open mind can fail to discern the inherent simple message: it is the only true authority we have in this day and age.

So our challenge is to accept the truth in this inspired word of God, to study it for ourselves, and to draw from it both hope for our future and guidance for our lives. Let us pray this challenge is something we will all accept, both individually and as a community. We can get distracted from this goal by the challenges of our life, both individually and ecclesiably. Let is all strive to shake off these distractions, and concentrate on these inspired words.

Peter Hemingray

Notes:
Atheists
Among the world’s population, there are various views about the existence of God. Many people, perhaps the majority of people, do not believe that there is a God. They believe he is just an imagined concept invented to provide hope and comfort in a power bigger than themselves. They believe that God is simply a wish, a hope, an illusion. They do not believe in any god; they worship no divine being. Life for them is what they personally experience with no expectation of plan or purpose beyond the steady, relentless unfolding of random, uncontrolled events. People in this group are called atheists.

God-Worshippers
In contrast to the position that there is no God or Higher Power, there is a second group of people who believe in a God, or perhaps many gods. The religious perspectives of this group of people range from a simple belief in one God to all sorts of variations. They include belief in two or more gods that are thought to influence various parts of life and the world. With people in most cultures today, and dating back to antiquity, evidence can be found of belief in a god or gods that should be worshipped. Among this group there is no common thread of belief or practice that in any way could be regarded as universal. These groups are disparate and often in serious opposition to each other. For purposes of this article this group will be referred to as god-worshippers.

Agnostics
There is a third classification of people who fall between the atheists and god-worshippers. People in this group simply declare: “I don’t know if there is a god or not. There may be but I cannot find sufficient evidence to prove it with enough certainty for me to believe in god.” This group is not critical of atheists for their lack of belief, nor are they disdainful of god-worshippers for their commitment to a god or gods they believe to be real. They simply confess that they do not know for sure if god exists and therefore remain unaligned with any religious system. This group are called agnostics.

Common features
It is very interesting to look at a common feature of each of these three groups. Atheists either
- Do not believe in God because they are not aware of any compelling evidence to believe. As they observe life, the world and the universe around them they see no proof of God, no reason to alter their completely independent
mindset and lifestyle to conform to any religious system. They want proof of God’s existence.

- Or choose to be so because they do not wish to accept the responsibility this belief entails. Hence, no amount of evidence can change their adherence to atheism.

The god-worshippers approach belief in god through many faith systems. From all over the world, over long periods of time, many religious systems have developed and today have large committed communities of adherents. They are widely disparate in belief and practice. They have no common authoritative information about the god they claim to worship.

The agnostics, by their own admission, do not know what to believe or why they should believe any of the numerous and conflicting claims about God. They are not convinced on matters related to God because they lack an authoritative source, if for them one even exists.

All three groups (except the second type of atheists) need information. They need trustworthy, reliable, verifiable information to support their conclusions about the existence of God, who He is and why He is important to them.

**What is God’s purpose?**

Once the question is settled about the existence of God there remains another major issue. What communication is there from God? What is His purpose in creation and more specifically what is His purpose with humankind? How can a person understand their relationship with an all-powerful God who created the earth?

There is a continuing search for information about God. There is certainly beauty, complexity and design in everything around us which testifies to a higher, purposeful intelligence. But who is this God and what can a person know about Him?

In the vast literature of human history there have been many attempts to describe the creator God, and what He plans to accomplish with the creation. But in all this compendium of literature there is no voice of authority. There is reason and speculation. There are observations and conjecture. Science is co-mingled with philosophy to project views about God, purpose, the meaning of life, and the future of all things. There remains, however, the essential missing ingredient — where is the voice of authority? Where can we learn about the nature of God, the meaning of life, and the future of the world we inhabit?

The book we call the Bible claims to be this authority. It claims to document the actions, the words, the expectations of the creator God. In this respect it is unique among books. To claim to be the inspired Word of God does not make it true. There needs to be sound reasons for believing this claim. The next section of this article will show why we can have complete confidence in the Bible’s claim of Divine inspiration. It will cover the claims of the Old Testament and why it can be trusted as a record of God’s purposes and His oversight of His creation.
Reasons for believing the Bible

There are sound fundamental reasons for believing in God and that the Bible is the inspired Word of God. This introductory section deals with only one of these factors — the record of the Old Testament to show evidence of God speaking, hearing and acting. There are at least five additional factors of great significance.

Historical Accuracy: The historical accuracy of the Old Testament is the subject of extensive, careful scholarship in universities around the world. Historical records of ancient cultures and nations provide abundant confirmation of interchange with people and events documented in the Old Testament.

Archaeological Evidence: Hundreds of archaeological excavations in Israel and throughout the Mediterranean basin have verified the existence of people and places described in the Old Testament. Thousands of artifacts, excavation of ancient cities, examination of ancient buildings, seaports and trade routes all help confirm the accuracy of the Bible record. Examination of thousands of ancient documents and manuscripts provide abundant evidence of the veracity of the Hebrew Scriptures.

Fulfilled Prophecy: Fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies related to Israel, Egypt, Phoenicia, Assyria, Babylon, Philistia and other nations in the ancient world have come true with remarkable accuracy. Prophecies related to the families of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, David and Solomon have unfolded exactly as outlined in the Bible record.

Witness of the people of Israel: The descendants of Abraham who later became the people of the ancient nation of Israel are the subject of most of the Old Testament record. What God said to them, how He instructed them, how He treated them are all primary themes of the Books of the Old Testament. Within this context are many specific prophecies that predict important events that affected the Nation of Israel. These prophecies were fulfilled with amazing accuracy, thus supporting their Divine source.

The Bible’s accurate assessment of human nature: Analysis of human nature is a subject of extensive study and observation. Countless books have been written to explain human behavior, to analyze the normal and abnormal behavioral patterns, and attempt to predict future attitudes and conduct. While not seeming to be a psychology book, the Bible is outstanding in its analysis of human behavior and the consequences of the full range of human conduct. Human mortality, with its limitations and potential, are described in surprisingly accurate detail throughout the Bible.

The Bible’s claim of Divine Authority

One of the most important claims in the Old Testament is that the record clearly claims to be God speaking, God hearing and God acting. Here are some examples of statements taken directly from the Bible that claim to be God speaking or acting.

“Now the LORD said to Abram, Go forth from your country, and from your relatives and from your father’s house, to the land which I will shew you;
and I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great; and so you will shall be a blessing; and I will bless those who bless you, and the one ho curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed” (Gen 12:1-3).

“Then the Lord said to Moses, ‘Go to Pharaoh and speak to him, “Thus says the Lord, the God of the Hebrews. ‘Let my people go that they may serve me’ ” (Exod 9:1).

“The Lord said to Joshua, See, I have given Jericho into your hand, with its king and the valiant warriors” (Josh 6:2).

“I, the Lord, search the heart, I test the mind, Even to give to each man according to his ways, According to the results of his deeds” (Jer 17:10).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bible Text</th>
<th>Occurrences in OT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Thus saith the Lord”</td>
<td>413 times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“the word of the Lord came unto me saying”</td>
<td>416 times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“and the Lord said”</td>
<td>203 times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“and God said”</td>
<td>30 times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“and the Lord God said”</td>
<td>4 times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“God commanded”</td>
<td>14 times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“God saw”</td>
<td>11 times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“the Lord heard”</td>
<td>10 times</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These are unusual statements. They cannot be the words of men. They speak of things far beyond the scope of normal human perception and ability. The Bible is full of such words that claim to be the voice of God speaking. Consider the words or actions directly attributed to God in the Old Testament

The above chart shows that there are over 1000 direct references in the Old Testament that claim to be God's words or God's actions. What are we to make of this? If this is a true and accurate documentation of God speaking, responding, or acting then the Bible is a unique record that demands our careful attention. If these claims are not to be trusted the Bible should be regarded as a work of fiction, or even worse, a record of dishonest claims of a fictitious God.

Another fact is clear. It is reasonable to conclude that the Bible stands or falls as a complete document. Either it is a divinely inspired record of God’s actions, His words, interventions and guidance in human affairs or it is fictitious and cannot be trusted. It stands or falls together. We cannot highly regard the 10 Commandments that claim to be given by an all-powerful and all-knowing God, if we do not believe in that God. If God did not give the 10 Commandments to Moses, as is documented in the Book of Exodus, then the record is fraudulent and dishonest.
Putting it all together

Let's now put the parts of this consideration together. There are those who do not believe in the existence of god — any god at all. There are those who declare that they don't know if a god exists. And there are people who worship god in many diverse ways. Accurate, reliable information is what each of the groups need to confirm their position. There is no single source of information on this matter that is universally trusted. The Bible stands out among world literature as a document that claims to record information about God. Its claims are unique and require us to satisfy our minds about its reliability.

The chart to the right identifies factors that validate the truth and reliability of the Bible.

Any one of these witnesses would strongly support belief in God and the Bible. Taken together they provide a comprehensive and reliable bases for belief that the Bible is the inspired Word of God.

This study is not an intellectual exercise. The conclusions we reach on this subject will affect our whole outlook on the meaning and purpose of life. More specifically, our conclusions will affect our personal view of life, and the standards and values we will live by. Will God be a part of our living? The following quote from John Carter’s book *The Oracles of God* provides a valuable challenge to our thinking on these matters.

“The authority of the Bible is in itself, because it is God’s word. There is no satisfactory middle ground between full acceptance and complete rejection. If it is God’s word its witness concerning itself is of primary importance: that witness we have seen to be consistent and uncompromising. We decide our attitude to it, and so doing determine whether we will accept infallible divine guidance, or set up a standard of our own by which to guide our lives”.

*Ken Curry (Toronto East, ON)*

Further recommended reading on this topic:
- *The Oracles of God*, John Carter (1944) CMPA Birmingham, UK
- *The Bible as History*, Werner Keller (Rev 1983) Bantam Books NY, NY
How the New Testament Confirms Divine Inspiration

Citations in New Testament

The New Testament is replete with citations and direct and indirect allusions to the Old Testament. The Blue Letter Bible\(^1\) online has a list of over 900 references. These statistics alone are impressive evidence of the interdependency of the two major sections of the Scriptures. It is clear from the sheer number of connections that the New Testament narrative and teaching is tightly coupled to that of the Old Testament, whether by prophecy, comparison or contrast. Every New Testament writer cites or alludes to the Old Testament. Each one treats the text as divinely inspired for the purposes of either storytelling (for example, the four Gospel writers and Luke with Acts), or for doctrinal exposition (Paul, James, Peter and the writer of Hebrews).

Paul, in particular, was raised as a student of the Law and the Prophets. As a Pharisee, he knew his Bible inside out (Acts 23:6, Phil 3:5). Yet, even though his previous religious convictions put him violently at odds with Christ, after his conversion he wrote with full conviction that “all scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness” (2Tim 3:16 ESV). The Scripture he referred to here is what we call the Old Testament. So, post-conversion, Paul continued to accept the divine inspiration of the Old Testament, albeit with a different understanding. The extensively reasoned arguments for faith in Christ we find in Romans are based heavily on Paul’s exposition of Old Testament texts. The implicit assumption he made is that those texts are “God breathed”. For example, Romans 4 cites the promises to Abraham in Gen 15:5,6, Gen 17:5,10 and Psa 32:1,2 to prove that believers in Christ are counted righteous by faith and consequently forgiven. This teaching is in direct contrast to that of the Pharisees who taught that righteousness was attained by works. Yet astonishingly, Paul, rather than renouncing his belief in the inspiration of Scriptures, confirmed it by continuing to refer to Old Testament texts in building his arguments for the truth of the Christian faith.

Peter also relied heavily on Old Testament passages to prove the resurrection of Jesus Christ, in Acts 2 and onwards. In that seminal public speech in Jerusalem, Peter quoted extensively from Joel 2, Psalm 16 and Psalm 110 to prove that God raised Jesus from the dead. He gave a radical interpretation of Old Testament texts that, up until this point, had only been understood as if through a cloudy lens. Peter presented them with a fresh, reasonable and life-saving application. In expounding Psa 16:10 in particular (“You will not abandon my soul to Hades or let your Holy One see corruption”), Peter sensibly and logically asserted:

>“Brothers, I may say to you with confidence about the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants on his throne, he foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption. This Jesus God raised up, and of that we are all witnesses” (Acts 2:29-31).
Peter's newfound courage and, undoubtedly, inspired speech resulted in three thousand converts to Christ that day. The crowning point of his speech, and the one that brings about a conscience-riven reaction from his audience, relied on the most quoted Old Testament passage in the New Testament: “The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool” (Acts 2:34, citing Psa 110:1). Peter's exposition of this is plain: “Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified” (Acts 2:26). The prophetic validity and moral force of this Old Testament text are powerful, and because Peter's words fell on the fertile ground of the minds of many present, they were also life-saving. This is divine inspiration in its most creative effect: the new creation of the ecclesia of God is founded upon the truth of the death and resurrection of Jesus, and his exaltation to God's right hand as the Christ. Peter's speech is a practical demonstration of Paul's assertion: “I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek” (Rom 1:16).

Jesus from a child

Perhaps even more significant than Paul and Peter's acceptance of the divine inspiration of the Old Testament is Jesus' attitude towards it. From a child he was taught to love the word of God. Luke recounts how, at the young age of twelve, Jesus was so enthralled with learning that he remained with the teachers of the Law, “sitting among” them, listening to them (first) and asking them questions (second). Bro. Harry Whittaker and others speculate on the nature of the questions he asked them, as later in his ministry: “What think ye of Christ? Whose Son is He? If David call Him Lord, how is He then his Son?” “Which is the first and great commandment?” “Who is my neighbor?” Whatever his questions were, the teachers clearly asked Jesus questions in return, for “all who heard him were amazed at his understanding, and his answers” (Luke 2:47). Already, Jesus was confident and familiar enough with the text to engage in adult discussions regarding its meaning.

The Old Testament

As he matured to full manhood we see Jesus use the OT Scriptures in a number of ways. Here are some examples:

- As a bulwark against temptation — Matthew 4.
- Prophetically — Matt 11:7-11; 21:42; most of ch 24; 26:54-56.
Early in Jesus’ ministry, shortly after he returned from the wilderness experience “in the power of the Spirit,” (Luke 4:14) he entered the synagogue at Nazareth. He stood up to read from the scroll of Isaiah at chapter 61:1. Halfway through verse two he sat down. All eyes were then fixed on him. He did not complete the reading. In addition, he interjected a portion of Isa 58:6: “to set at liberty those who are oppressed” (Luke 4:18). At this point, Jesus expounded the text, starting with “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing” (vs 21). From there he continued to preach directly to them from the OT text. In subsequent verses we read of Jesus making several references to 1st Kings, to prove that the gentiles are included in God’s plan of salvation. Here Jesus clearly demonstrated his belief that the OT text is inspired and he uses it as the authoritative basis of his teachings.

**Divorce and Jesus**

The discussion over the applicability of divorce in Matthew 19 is a particularly powerful example for demonstrating Jesus’ belief in the inerrant inspiration of the OT Scriptures. The Pharisees challenged him on this topic in an attempt to embroil him in controversy, knowing that this was a question that was cause for division amongst themselves. They hoped that Jesus’s response would inflame that division. The school of Shammai held a conservative view while the school of Hillel understood the phrase ‘matter of shame’ from Deut 24:1 in the “widest possible sense, and declared it sufficient ground for divorce if a woman had spoiled her husband’s dinner”.

Jesus answered them using an approach that was foreign to their own debating style. They were used to quoting different rabbinical writings or sayings in defense of their positions, rather than appealing to the original text. In contrast, Jesus cited Gen 1:27 and Gen 2:18: “Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, ‘Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife and the two shall become one flesh?’ So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together let not man separate” (Matt 19:4-6). By quoting directly from Scripture Jesus both elevated the discussion and removed himself from the foolish debate of the Pharisees. His response was based on the divine authority of Genesis rather than the opinions of rabbis, and corresponded to neither school of thought. He taught them that the God’s teaching on the subject was much more conservative than any of their own. Rather than divorce being a right or privilege, it is an expediency: “Because of your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so” (Matt 19:8). Again, Jesus expounded the original text. In this case he drew a contrast between Moses’ provision in Deut 24:1-4 and God’s original intent in Genesis 1 and 2. His use of the phrase “from the beginning” draws our attention back to Genesis 1. Throughout the discussion Jesus relied on the OT text alone for his reasoning and treated it as authoritative and divinely inspired.

**Jesus teaches from the Old Testament**

In another encounter with the Pharisees Jesus asked them a question. His intention was not to ‘test’ them, as they did him, but rather to teach them about who he is: “What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?” When they replied “The
son of David” he asked a follow-up question in which he explicitly expressed his acceptance of the OT Scriptures as being divinely inspired: “How is then that David, in the Spirit, calls him Lord, saying ‘The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies under your feet’?” [my emphasis] (Matt 22:41-45). Here Jesus told them, as on previous occasions, that he is the Son of God. But rather than just asserting that fact with no witness he used the witness of God’s word to prove it. And he applied an interpretation that previously had escaped their understanding: the reference to ‘my Lord’ by David can only mean one thing — that, even though Jesus was descended from David by birth, prophetically David regarded him as his Lord and Master. The silent response of Jesus’ audience in verse 46 speaks volumes. Jesus’ application of the text was unassailable. He had proven his sonship by relying on those texts he had learnt as a child and held dear to his heart for all those years. He unquestioningly accepted the fact of both the continued relevance and the inspiration of the OT text.

Although all New Testament writers reference the OT text in one way or another, what better witness to the veracity, reliability and relevance of the Old Testament and the New Testament’s inextricable dependency on it can we have than the evidence of Jesus’ own trust in its divine inspiration? If Jesus believed it, we can too.

Duncan Kenzie (Saanich Peninsula, BC)

Notes:
1. www.blueletterbible.org/study/misc/quotes.cfm.
3. Both occurrences of “Lord” use the same Greek word, kurios.

Partial Inspiration Controversy and Its Lessons for Today

Introduction

In this article, we will mainly focus on the effects of the dispute on our community’s view on inspiration, and not on the somewhat messy details of the division itself. The events we describe took place starting in 1885, but their ramifications and effects lasted until the resultant split was healed in 1956. The agreement at that time included a statement on the inspiration of the Scriptures, although this had not been a matter of dispute for some time. (The other topics, including marriage, resurrectional responsibility, and treatment of error, all were then of more concern.) This statement was:

“We agree that the Holy Scriptures, consisting of the Old and New Testaments, are the only authoritative source of knowledge concerning God and His Purpose. They are wholly given by the inspiration of God and are consequently without error except such as may be due to transcription or translation.”
This can be compared with the foundation clause of the BASF, which says:

“That the book currently known as the Bible, consisting of the Scriptures of Moses, the prophets, and the apostles, is the only source of knowledge concerning God and His purposes at present extant or available in the earth, and that the same were wholly given by inspiration of God in the writers, and are consequently without error in all parts of them, except such as may be due to errors of transcription or translation”.

It should be noted that this statement of 1956 actually corrects the flaw in the “Foundation Clause”, which, although all accept that Roberts was referring to the whole Bible, states “the Scriptures of Moses, the prophets, and the apostles” which seemingly excludes several books, including the historical books and the Psalms among others!

Robert Ashcroft, the main protagonist

The dispute had its origin in the early 1880’s. Robert Ashcroft, a converted Congregationalist minister, was becoming increasingly popular as a lecturer. Robert Roberts, showing considerable personal generosity, appealed for aid to maintain Ashcroft in the position of sub-editor of the Christadelphian magazine. This proposal was accepted, and the American brethren came forward at this time with offers for Ashcroft to conduct a lecture tour among them, which was undertaken in the latter part of 1882. However, Ashcroft never settled to the work of assisting in publishing, and towards the close of 1884 Ashcroft proposed to begin another magazine, although Roberts did not consider the time opportune. He had no official position from which to prevent the development of other publications, nor even to appeal for a boycott. As long as Ashcroft remained un-heretical Roberts had no legitimate cause to quarrel. The Christadelphian was not an official organ, could dictate neither doctrine nor procedure — at least in theory, and could not even regard a new magazine as a rival.

So Ashcroft started his magazines, The Biblical Exegetist.

The article in the Exegetist

It seems appropriate to quote from the Exegetist itself, rather than quote from those describing its content. The article is entitled “Theories of Inspiration”, and we only have space to use one extract.

“We apply a much more reasonable canon of interpretation to the sacred writings when we so far overcome our timidity as to acknowledge in them the presence of a human as well as a divine element. It may be presumed that the Providence of God has superintended the conveyancing of the
Scriptures from the date of their production to the present time; and, although this divine surveillance has ensured the infallibility of every text and word, it has yet been ample for all the ends contemplated thereby. Those ends are of a moral and spiritual character, and are abundantly served by the Scriptures as we now have them, notwithstanding all alleged inaccuracies and contradictions. It is not intended that we test the soundness of every bolt and link in the chain which supports the bridge we may wish to cross; there may be a hundred flaws in these portions of the architecture, but the structure itself is, notwithstanding, strong enough to bear the weight of a whole population.”

Roberts summarized the view of Ashcroft as:

- That only parts of the Old Testament Scriptures are inspired, viz., such parts as could not otherwise be produced.
- That the Bible is not to be spoken of as the word of God, without qualification.
- That there is in it a human (i.e., an erring) as well as a divine element.
- That historical infallibility is not to be conceded to everything recorded in the Bible.
- That inspiration only covers “all that may be said to belong to divine revelation proper: by which is to be understood everything in the Scriptures that may have been beyond the power of man to discover for himself.”
- That subordinate features “may have been introduced into the Bible,” with which inspiration has nothing to do, and that such things form “legitimate topics of critical enquiry.”
- That inspiration does not teach that which is otherwise ascertainable.
- That, except where Christ expressly ascribes a divine authority to particular predictions, we are not to regard his allusion to particular books of the Bible as proving the inspiration and authority of those books: such allusions being merely proof of the notoriety of the books at the time and of their reception by the Jews.
- That it is unreasonable to suppose “that the attestation which Christ and the apostles gave to the divine mission of Moses and the prophets extends to every point and portion of the Jewish history,” or proves the circumstantial truth of every narrative of the Old Testament.
- That the apostles did not regard the very words of all the Hebrew Scriptures as the product of inspiration.

The fundamental point of the article is to regard only some parts of the Bible as inspired and infallible: and which other parts are regarded as products entirely of man, and not God, is essentially left to human discretion. Hence the term “partial inspiration”.

**The result of the article**

So the suggestion was that inspiration attached only to those parts of the Bible which contained things which a man could not discover for himself. Ashcroft thereby recognized a human element in Scripture, which he asserted was not
historically infallible. To this departure from accepted understanding, Ashcroft later added a somewhat scornful onslaught on the work of John Thomas, and a eulogy of clerical scholarship.

Roberts’ retort was immediate and unequivocal in defense of the complete divinity and infallibility of all Scripture. Within a few days he wrote and issued a pamphlet under the title of ‘The Inspiration of the Bible.’ In spite of this defense, the intemperateness of tone which Roberts displayed displeased some brethren, the dispute extended, and the community spiraled into a division. Roberts accused Ashcroft of ‘pernicious and disloyal trimming to meet the requirements of modern criticism.’ ‘God had left the Bible as an institution for the taking out of a people for his name, and it must not be tampered with.’ ‘Brother Ashcroft has taken to popularizing the truth among the gentle and “learned” . . . he ought to know that very few learned men and women ever embraced the faith of the “poor and needy man”, . . . has brother Ashcroft forgot, or did he ever know, that it’s the poor and simple-minded (and therefore unlearned) that God has chosen in every age in the working out of his plans?’

Nonetheless the theory of partial inspiration met with some success from the start. Ashcroft had, after Roberts, ‘more moral weight in the ecclesias than any living brother.’ Every ecclesia had to go into the matter and state its position, with Roberts urging all to take their stand on the Bible. But some chose to regard Roberts’ view as only a theory, on which loyalty did not depend. Once divided, every attempt to reconcile the contending parties merely resulted in widening the gulf, creating new and varying positions of schism. There were heretics, those who would fellowship heretics, those who would emphatically ‘disfellowship’ heretics, and those who sought to pass resolutions which permitted heretical views on inspiration to find accommodation in ecclesias predominantly orthodox. In North America there was less willingness to divide over the matter, although a few ecclesias did support those who separated from Bro. Roberts, as was reported in the Fraternal Visitor magazine.

Consequences

There was a tremendous outpouring of articles and pamphlets over the next few years, and indeed the pages of the Fraternal Visitor remained concerned with the dispute, at least partially reflecting the views of Ashcroft, for many years. We might in addition mention a long “letter” from JJ Andrew, in which he defends Roberts at great length: over 60,000 words. He expounds on these propositions (slightly modified):

- That Divine Inspiration involves infallibility in what is spoken or written under its influence — so controlling the speaker or writer as to exclude error.
- That the recording under Divine Inspiration of uninspired utterances, does not, unless otherwise indicated, do more than guarantee an accurate record of what was uttered.
- That the incorporation, under Divine Inspiration, of human with inspired writings (if such incorporation has taken place) would constitute them of equal authority.
• That the existing evidence of the divine authority of the writings comprising the Bible, and the absence of any to the contrary, justifies the conclusion that they have been produced or incorporated under divine inspiration.

• That any errors found in the Bible as we now have it are not attributable to the original writers, but are either mistakes on the part of copyists or translators, or designed alterations, omissions or interpolations. It is noticeable that all such errors are unimportant, and do not impair its reliability or the truth and consistency of its message.

• That, in view of the length of time which has elapsed since the production of the autographs, and the extent to which difficulties in existing copies have been removed, through modern discovery and research, we are justified in attributing any other errors to insufficient information.

• That the fundamental principle involved in the foregoing propositions, viz. — the divine authorship and consequent infallibility of the Bible — is an essential element in our basis of fellowship, and therefore we decline to fellowship those who attribute to some parts a fallible authorship.

I would consider these propositions cover both the essence of our belief in the Inspiration of Scriptures and what it entails, and the result of denying these propositions in whole or in part.

Peter Hemingray (Detroit Royal Oak, MI)

Notes:
1. The Fraternal Visitor became the magazine of those who split from Roberts. First published in 1885, it ceased publication in 1957 in order to cement the re-union of the “Fraternal Visitor” Fellowship with the “Central” Fellowship.


3. JJ Andrew a few years later came up with a new theory as to who was resurrected to Judgment, but at the time (1885 – 1886) was a staunch supporter of Roberts in this controversy.

The Healing of the Inspiration Division, 1957

The Reunion Committees have laboured earnestly and prayerfully to remove all reasonable doubts and misgivings put forward by ecclesias and individuals; and they feel that the assurances and explanations which have been given by interview and correspondence are such as should enable all brethren and sisters to co-operate fully in promoting the unity of the Body in love and harmony.

We believe the move to re-unite to be based upon sound principles, mutually understood and accepted. Brethren and sisters will realise, none the less, that such a move, to be entirely successful, requires an act of faith and mutual trust on the part of all. Goodwill, patience, and faithful adherence to the principles defined in the Final Statement, we believe, will bring effective and harmonious co-operation.

We pray for the divine guidance and blessing in this reunion, so that the division which has so long separated us may give place to fruitful unity and endeavour, to the glory of God and in the preparation of a people prepared for the Lord at is coming.
An Audacious Claim

Bible Believer: Hi, are you interested in the Bible and God?

Interested But Skeptical: Yes, well, I’m interested but also somewhat skeptical.

BB: Hence, the name.

IBS: Mm, so, what’s your best proof there’s a God then?

BB: Israel.

IBS: That’s a country, not a reason.

BB: King Fredrick the Great of Prussia asked a similar thing in 1779.

IBS: He’s in good company, then. So, what was the response?

BB: He asked for an irrefutable proof of God and was told, “The Jews”!

IBS: That’s a race, not a reason.

BB: Well the Jews and Israel are proof that God exists and his Bible tells the future.

IBS: An audacious claim, indeed!

BB: The Bible prophesied the Jews would be scattered then re-gathered, including these words from Isaiah:

“And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth” (Isa 11:11-12).

“Fear not: for I am with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west; I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth;” (Isa 43:5-6).

IBS: When was that written? What if it was written after the event just to make it look like God knew it would happen?

BB: Isa 1:1 says it was written at the time of Hezekiah, so about 700 BC. Among the Dead Sea scrolls was the book of Isaiah, which has been dated to the 1st Century BC. Also, the Masoretic text of the Bible is dated to the 10th Century AD, so the prophecy was undeniably given over two thousand years ago.

IBS: How do you know it wasn’t talking about an earlier Jewish re-gathering?
BB: The interesting thing about the Isaiah 11 prophecy is its reference to a “second time” of gathering. The Jews were re-gathered to Israel a first time in the mid-6th Century BC, but only from Babylon/Persia. This prophecy speaks of “the islands of the sea… and the four corners of the earth”.

IBS: Are those the only prophecies?

BB: No, there are plenty of them. Here are some others:

Deuteronomy speaks of the scattering and persecution of the Jews

“ye shall be plucked from off the land whither thou goest to possess it. And the LORD shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other; and there thou shalt serve other gods, which neither thou nor thy fathers have known, even wood and stone. And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest: but the LORD shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind:” (Deut 28:63-65).

“And I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all countries whither I have driven them, and will bring them again to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase” (Jer 23:3).

“… the heathen shall know that I am the LORD, saith the Lord GOD, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes. For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God” (Ezek 36:23,24,28).

IBS: Enough already!

BB: One more, my favourite one is from Jeremiah 23 where God declares that he would be known as the God who brought Israel back to the land, something that has recently occurred.

“the days come, saith the LORD, that they shall no more say, The LORD liveth, which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; But, The LORD liveth, which brought up and which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all countries whither I had driven them; and they shall dwell in their own land” (Jer 23:7,8).

IBS: When were those written?

BB: Jer 1:2-3 says it was written at the time of the last kings of Judah, around 600BC. Parts of Ezekiel and Jeremiah were found in the Dead Sea Scrolls, copied in the 1st Century BC, and remnants of Ezekiel were discovered in Masada dated 1st Century AD, and both are in the Masoretic Text of the 10th Century.

IBS: But you can read back into things and project your own viewpoint on past events!

BB: True, but plenty of Bible believers understood this well before it happened and at a time when it appeared impossible.
IBS: Such as?

BB: Some 19th Century Authors:

“There is then a partial and primary restoration of Jews before the manifestation … and the Jewish colonists will return in unbelief of the Messiahship of Jesus.” John Thomas, *Elpis Israel*, 1849 14th Ed. p.441

“ ‘The great tribulation’ is yet future. It pre-supposes the Jewish nation restored to Palestine in unbelief to serve Gentile political ends, and brought there by the active intervention of a great maritime power” (*Exposition of the Revelation of Jesus Christ*, Walter Scott 1796-1861)

IBS: So, I agree that the Bible and these prophecies were definitely written thousands of years ago and that Bible students understood them to refer to Israel, but when did Israel become a nation?

BB: On May 14, 1948 an unpretentious man read a declaration of independence. It is easy enough to find footage of it. How many times can you watch a film clip of Bible prophecy being fulfilled?

IBS: Wow, that is pretty impressive.

BB: How else it could be explained? It's not like we're inundated with examples of nations that maintained their identity while dispersed throughout the world and then returned to their homeland after two millennia.

IBS: I suppose it could be a lucky guess.

BB: I admire your faith.

IBS: My faith?

BB: Yes, you cannot empirically prove God's existence one way or another, but these prophecies are genuine evidence. You would have to have great faith to believe it was an extraordinary coincidence and a fantastic guess.

IBS: I see your point, but there are some lifestyle consequences…

BB: Ah, your skepticism may have had an added motivation?

*Joseph Palmer (San Diego, CA*  

\[\text{“Massacred by thousands, yet springing up again from their undying stock, the Jews appear at all times and in all regions. Their perpetuity, their national immortality, is at once the most curious problem to the political inquirer; to the religious man a subject of profound and awful admiration.”}\]


Notes:
1. Variously attributed to his doctor Zimmerman and chamberlain, Marquis D'Argens.
### The Fate of other Nations

Let us set the fate of God’s People, Israel, in contrast to the fate of her enemies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event Description</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Those who curse Israel will be cursed, those who bless her will be blessed.</td>
<td>Gen 12:3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>God would make a full end of the oppressors of Israel, but not Israel.</td>
<td>Jer 30:11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Babylon specifically would be overthrown and destroyed, never to be inhabited again.</td>
<td>Isa 13:19-21;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jer 51:26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt would become a base nation, never to rise up again to its former splendor, never to be ruled by one of its own.</td>
<td>Ezek 29:8-16;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30:13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tyre would be utterly destroyed, scraped clean as a rock, and made a place for the casting of nets, never to be built again.</td>
<td>Ezek 26:3-14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The record of human history records how unerringly the Divine principle concerning cursing and blessing holds true. From the Egyptians to the Assyrians to the Babylonians down to our day, nations that blessed Israel were blessed, nations who turned against God’s People were cursed. Amos 1 is a historical example. Britain, in the twentieth century, from the Balfour Declaration favoring the Jews’ colonization of Palestine to the infamous White Papers, provides another striking example of both blessing and cursing. The United States treads the same dangerous ground today.

As to Babylon, Egypt, and Tyre, each in its turn fell to the Divinely directed events that fulfilled their prophetic destiny: Babylon was overthrown, eventually drying up and disappearing into the mists of history, a haunt for the wild animals of the desert. Mighty Egypt lost her grandeur as well as her power, then succumbed to permanent foreign domination, while her people degenerated into a base and ignoble race to this day. And Tyre, destroyed first by Nebuchadnezzar, was ultimately, literally, scraped bare by Alexander’s army in order to provide material for a causeway out to the island fortress of a second Tyre. Any encyclopedia or history book can provide fuller details. Everything happened as God said. (“Evidence That Demands a Verdict”, by Josh McDowell, provides a good compendium of quotes from historical sources to document the fulfillment of these prophecies).

**Now consider:** The first point made in the grid above is ever in danger of being falsified: Just find one example where this has not proved true and the certainty of God’s Word is forever lost.

Could the diverse histories of those who oppressed or made merchandise of God’s People be just shrewd guesses based on the knowledge of history and the political movements of the times? Why didn’t they get Egypt or Babylon or Tyre mixed up? How could the prophets know the history of these people in such exacting detail?

Most remarkably, these prophecies could be disproved at any moment in history. Egyptians could regain their national birthright and glory; the great city of Babylon
could be raised up from its ruins (as Saddam Hussein attempted in recent years); and someone could rebuild the prosperous city Tyre on its ancient foundations. But none of these things have happened...yet; and those who believe the Bible would suggest that they never will. God’s word has and ever will stand firm.

Ted Sleeper (San Francisco Peninsula, CA)

The Mystery of Daniel 2

Babylon is a name that emerged into common parlance during the Gulf War. Sadaam fancied himself to be a modern King Nebuchadnezzar, the ancient king who rebuilt Babylon into one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. If Sadaam knew his history, he might have been a little less arrogant, for it was such boasting that got Nebuchadnezzar into serious trouble in his day! (Daniel 4).

Nebuchadnezzar’s Image

Nebuchadnezzar is first known in the Bible as the king who subjugated the nation of Israel, then as the king who had an impressive dream. He dreamed of a mighty image of man, made of different metals and awesome in appearance. As he watched in his dream, a stone, cut out of a mountain by some unknown means, came hurtling towards the feet of this mighty image and struck it on its feet. As Nebuchadnezzar watched in utter amazement, this stone broke the whole statue in pieces, and ground it to a powder carried away by the wind, leaving this stone to become a great mountain which filled the whole earth.

Nebuchadnezzar was overwhelmed. He searched everywhere for someone to make known to him the interpretation. At last, a young Jewish prophet named Daniel was brought to him. The king said to Daniel, whose Babylonian name was Belteshazzar, “'Are you able to make known to me the dream that I have seen and its interpretation?' Daniel answered the king, ‘No wise men, enchanters, magicians, or astrologers can show to the king the mystery which the king has asked, but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and he has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days. Your dream and the visions of your head as you lay in bed are these...’” (Daniel 2:26-29).

Daniel proceeded to outline for the king a prophecy of staggering scope.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>You, O king…are the head of gold.</th>
<th>Babylon (vs. 37-38)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>After you shall arise another kingdom (of silver) inferior to you…</td>
<td>Medo-Persia (v.39; cf. ch.8:20-22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and yet a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over all the earth.</td>
<td>Greece (before &amp; after Alexander the Great) (vs. 39; cf. ch.11:1-4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And there shall be a fourth kingdom, strong as iron, because iron breaks to pieces and shatters all things; and like iron which crushes, it shall break and crush all these.</td>
<td>Rome (vs. 40)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
And as you saw the feet and toes partly of potter’s clay and partly of iron, it shall be a divided kingdom; ...(also) the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly brittle… they will mix with one another in marriage, but they will not hold together, just as iron does not mix with clay.

And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, nor shall its sovereignty be left to another people. It (the stone) shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand for ever; God’s King who destroys all enemies, establishing God’s kingdom on earth in their stead. (vs. 44)

All of these “world” empires can only claim one thing in common: They all dominated and oppressed the Land and the People of Israel. But why is there only four? Because it is plain history that Rome was the last power to have dominion and control over both the land and people. (Others, such as the Arabs and later the Turks controlled the land at various times, but not the Jewish people.)

**How could this possibly be?**

Because Rome in 70 AD completely blotted out Israel’s national existence and dispersed the Jews to the four winds of heaven. From AD 70 to AD 1948, when Israel became a viable nation in its own land, no other power has been capable of either fulfilling or disproving this prophecy.

When Israel re-emerged in 1948 as a people and nation in their own land, the stage was set for the final act of this prophecy: The emergence and destruction of a fifth and final power to dominate the nation and people of Israel. This power will apparently be a confederacy of nations raised up from the still-remaining remnants of the old, authoritarian Roman Empire co-mingled with others.

**Now consider:**

How did Daniel know there would be only four super-power oppressors of Israel and a fifth, final manifestation involving elements of the fourth? Daniel makes no mention of a delay, yet almost 2000 years intervenes between the 4th and 5th power. How did he know the 4th of these (the Romans) would so decisively scatter the Jews that the possibility of another desolator could not arise between the 4th and 5th desolator?

And consider this: This prophecy ever stands ready to be disproved in our day and age. If the next oppressor, arising from the fragments of the old Roman Empire, does not bring about the final work of God with His People and presage their final deliverance, then not only the Bible, but all who put their trust in this book as the only revelation of the God of Heaven, will forever be discredited.

*Ted Sleeper (San Francisco Peninsula, CA)*
A Challenge from God

Not quite two thousand years ago an extraordinary event occurred, an event that ultimately changed the course of human history to this day. The incident itself was not particularly noteworthy. I’m certain this was not the first time in human affairs that such a thing had occurred. What made it significant was the individual who was involved. What am I talking about? I’m talking about a tomb that was found empty.

Why should you or I care about this particular tomb? Because the man it once held was subsequently claimed by his followers to have been brought back from the dead by God, never to die again. This same man was both the Lord and Christ to whom we must submit as God’s appointed King. (See Acts 2:32-36). Wow. That is another audacious claim…if it is true.

This is where the Divine challenge is found: In that small word “if”. But how can we determine whether this story is really true, rather than just a myth perpetuated by the disillusioned disciples of Jesus? If it is just a myth, then even an atheist would agree “if in this life only we have hope in Christ [who has not be raised from the dead –v.17], we are of all men most pitiable” (1Cor 15:19).

Center of conflict

There have been some who have argued from time to time that Jesus never died, but somehow managed to escape from the tomb. No serious historian believes this because there is sufficient evidence of Jesus’ existence and crucifixion by the Romans. There is only one question that has ever been seriously argued: How did the tomb become empty? This is the central question we must be able to answer for our young people and our friends and neighbors.

Abductive Inference

There is a scientific tool used by those seeking to examine an historical event, it is called “abductive inference”. This is not quite the same as the deductive or inductive reasoning used in most research. Abductive inferences are like this:

- Major Premise: If a mudslide occurred, we would expect to find felled trees.
- Minor Premise: We find evidence of felled trees.
- Conclusion: Therefore, we have reason to think that a mudslide may have occurred.

To move a conclusion from “may have” to “certainly did”, one must evaluate all competing hypotheses to eliminate all but the most likely cause, or, demonstrate there is only one known cause for the event.

Generally accepted evidence

Let’s review the evidence generally accepted by historians before examining the evidence for the resurrection of Jesus.
Messianic Expectations of Jewish People
The Jews in the first century were fervently expecting the fulfillment of OT messianic prophecies (e.g. Dan. 9).

Jesus Was a Real, Historical Person, Crucified by the Romans Around 30 AD
Wikipedia provides a succinct affirmation of this evidence: “Most modern scholars of antiquity agree that Jesus existed, but scholars differ on the historicity of specific episodes described in the Biblical accounts...(there is) almost universal assent that Jesus...was crucified by the order of the Roman Prefect Pontius Pilate.” (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Historicity_of_Jesus)

Roman Crucifixion Ensured Jesus Really Died
Crucifixion was a Roman form of punishment, carried out according to Roman law. It involved severe scourging prior to execution. Those entrusted with this responsibility did so knowing their own lives would be forfeit if they failed to complete the execution.

Burial According to Jewish Custom
Jesus’ body was taken from the execution site, anointed with costly spices, and tightly wound from head to foot with linen, all in accord with acknowledged Jewish custom.

Tomb Was Sealed
Jesus was buried in a rock-hewn tomb sealed by Jewish leaders to ensure no one would tamper with it (Matt 27:66). Sealing of a tomb was an official and legal Roman practice; disruption of seals carried a penalty under Roman law.

Tomb Guarded By Soldiers
Jewish leaders also put a guard in place to doubly secure the tomb. If these were Roman soldiers, their lives were at stake. If this was the Jewish temple guard, they would be even more diligent for racial and religious reasons, besides the discipline to which they were subject.

Tomb Was Empty
Three days later this same tomb was found empty. This one fact has never been seriously disputed, not even by the chief antagonists to Christian claims, the Jews. The dispute has always centered on how the tomb became empty.

Transformation of Disciples: Fearful to Fearless
Jesus’ disciples by their own accounts did not expect his death. Again, by their own accounts, they were completely disillusioned and demoralized when it happened. These disciples had to be convinced by both physical and Scriptural evidence that Jesus truly rose from dead. Fifty days later these same disciples began to preach the resurrection of Jesus with a strength and boldness that astonished their enemies. Almost all the Apostles (as well as some other disciples, e.g. Stephen) died violently for the conviction they had not only seen Jesus alive from the dead, but also
talked to, ate with, handled, and watched him ascend. Others suffered life-long humiliation, deprivation, and loss of property and social status.

**Conversion of Skeptical Witnesses**

Paul, trained in the strictest sect of the Jewish religion, went from vigorous enemy to the most powerful defender of Christianity. He suffered many things for his new convictions about the risen Jesus. James, the half-brother of Jesus, was a strong skeptic throughout Jesus’ ministry (John 7:5). Even the care of Jesus’ mother was not committed to James. Yet, soon after Jesus ascended, James was counted among the believers, and became a leader in the Jerusalem ecclesia.

**Moral Imperative of Christianity**

The teaching of both Jesus and his Apostles called men to a highly moral life: honesty and integrity were fundamental virtues of this life. Lying, deceit, hypocrisy, and all forms of immorality were grounds for exclusion from the early Christian community. The virtuous and highly moral conduct of early Christians was well known even to their enemies. (Matt 15:18-20; 1Pet 3:9-12; Eph 4:22-25; Gal 6:7-10; Letter of Pliny the Younger to Trajan, Epistle X.96; Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, Edward Gibbon, Ch.15, p.182 and others.)

**Principle of Embarrassment**

Would writers of history invent details that do not help their cause? While one might not expect the first eyewitness of a risen Jesus to be important dignitary like Caiaphas, Pilate, or King Herod, one would expect a disciple like Peter or John to be there. Instead, we find it was a woman of questionable background, Mary Magdalene, who first encountered Jesus. Why would the Gospel writers claim this Mary was first eyewitness? Either the writers were foolish, exceedingly clever, or they wrote precisely what happened.

**Nazareth Inscription**

The Nazareth Inscription is a marble tablet (24 by 15 inches) providing the earliest known written record that many scholars believe references the events concerning Jesus’ empty tomb. The Nazareth Inscription is almost certainly authentic and is a summary of an imperial edict issued by the Emperor Claudius in 41 AD.

The early date strongly suggests that this was written with the events surrounding Jesus’ empty tomb in mind. The details of the decree do indeed appear to fit Jewish burial practices as opposed to Roman or gentile practices: the reference to sepulcher stones in the edict is in line with Jewish burial practice of the first century A.D. and not with gentile burial practice of this period. Roman burial was generally in dug graves or cremation and not by entombment as implied in the decree. The Romans used coffins in which bodies or urns were buried in individual graves in cemeteries, while Jewish burial, as we know from the New Testament and surviving remains, was in tombs or sepulchers (see John 19:38-42).
EDICT OF CAESAR

It is my decision [concerning] graves and tombs — whoever has made them for the religious observances of parents, or children, or household members — that these remain undisturbed forever. But if anyone legally charges that another person has destroyed, or has in any manner extracted those who have been buried, or has moved with wicked intent those who have been buried to other places, committing a crime against them, or has moved sepulcher-sealing stones, against such a person, I order that a judicial tribunal be created, just as [is done] concerning the gods in human religious observances, even more so will it be obligatory to treat with honor those who have been entombed. You are absolutely not to allow anyone to move [those who have been entombed]. But if [someone does], I wish that [violator] to suffer capital punishment under the title of tomb-breaker.

It would appear the issue of Jesus’ empty tomb eventually came before Caesar who accepted the Jewish religious leaders’ explanation of what happened at the tomb and how Jesus’ body came to be missing. Given the Roman respect for the dead, it would appear that Caesar wanted to make sure the same event did not happen again. This is probably why he issued the edict and had the Nazareth stone created.

Attempted explanations for the empty tomb

Let us now look at the explanations that have been put forward to explain the empty tomb. Remember that in abductive reasoning to establish that only one explanation is possible, you must eliminate all other attempted explanations. In this case, only four basic explanations have been offered to explain the empty tomb over the past 1900 years. We will examine them to see how they hold up given the accepted evidence above.

Disciples Stole Body While Guards Slept

This is the best explanation contemporary enemies of Christians could provide for the empty tomb, which they had personally sealed and set a guard nearby to prevent any tampering with the tomb. But does this really explain the accepted facts? Consider:

- And why were they not severely punished by the Jewish or Roman authorities for failing in their duty?
- Tomb was sealed and zealously guarded by men who were charged to prevent the very thing they now said happened.
- If they “slept”, how did they know it was Jesus’ disciples who stole the body?

Most damaging of all: This deception runs completely counter to all that is acknowledged about early disciples and their teaching. Why didn’t one of the inner circle expose this sham, especially since most paid for their “deception” with their own blood?

Finally, this explanation completely fails to adequately account for the explosive growth and spread of Christianity in the face of Jewish and Gentile hostility. The facts concerning Jesus could be personally verified by many early Jewish converts.
Even more significantly, the conviction that the Jewish Messiah died and was raised on the third day was used to convert the Jews by appeal to Old Testament prophecies about these very things!

**Recovery in The Tomb**

It has been suggested that Jesus only appeared to die on the cross and later revived either naturally in the coolness of tomb or with help of drugs administered by those in on the “plot”. He later presented himself as having risen from the dead (or allowed his disciples to assume this), then quietly disappeared from the scene. This explanation fails to account for a number of accepted details:

- Roman soldiers were professionals in the business of death. Scourging prior to crucifixion was designed to expedite death. The spear thrust bringing forth blood and water is medically consistent with death. When asked by Pilate whether Jesus was dead, the soldiers literally staked their own lives on their answer.
- The method of Jewish burial argues against recovery. Tightly wrapped linen filled with ointment that secured limbs and blanketed the face would have ensured the death of a victim, rather than promoting a recovery.

This theory fails to account for the sealed tomb, the tomb guard, and Jesus’ physical condition. Does it really seem possible that Jesus unwrapped his tightly bound body, did the impossible by rolling back a sealed stone from the inside, terrified a large contingent of soldiers, walked several miles on severely wounded feet, and, presenting himself to his disciples, overcame their skepticism, then convinced them that the battered and bruised man before them was their risen and immortalized Lord? Does having an accomplice in this matter really make this more plausible?

This theory meets an insurmountable barrier when the character and teaching of Jesus is taken into consideration. A plot to deceive regarding the very foundation of Christianity is completely out of character for either Jesus or his disciples. Jesus’ teaching constantly inculcated the highest regard for integrity and truth, and constantly exposed human nature with its propensity for deception. The honesty and integrity of early Christians was well known even by their enemies.

**Mass Hallucinations or Visions**

It has been suggested that the shock and grief of Jesus’ death resulted in a kind of religious hysteria or mass hallucination in which the disciples thought they saw their risen Lord. Based on this experience they went on to hazard their lives by proclaiming the resurrection to the world. This theory also fails to account for a number of critical details:

The disciples by their own admission were demoralized and disillusioned by Jesus’ unexpected death and had to be convinced of the resurrection by hard physical evidence. Unlike the normal grief process wherein one thinks they see their loved one as still alive (because they see someone with a similar shape or build), these men and women not only saw him, but ate and drank and handled him until all doubts about his resurrection were dispelled. They refused to believe the report of the women, and when initially confronted with the risen Christ, they were
skeptical and assumed they were seeing a phantom. (Luke 24:9-12, 36-43; John 20:19-29; 1John 1:1-3). It is noteworthy that Mary mistook Jesus for a gardener; she clearly did not expect to see Jesus. (John 20:14-16).

The disciples on the way to Emmaus had to be convinced by Jesus “opening up the scriptures” to them — an appeal to reason and logic, not to emotion (Luke 24:13-27). The disciples’ subsequent preaching was based on careful reasoning from the Old Testament, as well as on their own personal experiences. (e.g. Acts 2:3,13). Since both Paul and James did not participate in this claimed emotional scene, how can the conversion of these two skeptics be explained?

Finally, and most significantly, why wouldn’t the enemies of the Christians simply have produced the body of Jesus in order to silence, once and for all, these foolish claims?

Wrong Tomb or Family Tomb

It is sometimes suggested that the disciples mistakenly went to the wrong tomb and when they found it empty, they assumed Jesus had risen from the dead. A recent (2007) alternative suggested Jesus was buried in a family tomb known to the early Christians. Again, this explanation fails to account for all the known evidence.

- The disciples’ extreme reluctance to believe Jesus actually was alive from the dead.
- The NT writers state that Jesus was put in a new tomb belonging to Joseph of Arimathea (Matt 27:60).
- If no one else knew where Jesus was put, surely this man would. And if he knew, why wouldn’t others know? The same would surely be true of a family tomb. Many would know its location.

Nor does this theory account for the tomb being sealed by the Jewish authorities and being watched by a contingent of soldiers. Others may have been mistaken, but these men would not have been. And worst of all, any claims that Jesus rose from the dead would have been quickly dispatched simply by producing the body from the “right” tomb.

Only alternative

The failure of all these explanations for the empty tomb leaves, by abductive reasoning, only one viable alternative: Jesus of Nazareth rose from the dead as claimed. “Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for he is risen, as he said” (Matt 28:5-6).

Implications

Having looked closely at the evidence that the only viable explanation for the empty tomb is the resurrection of Jesus by God, we should not be shy in setting out the implications of this fact as well. First and foremost is that the God who raised Jesus now has another substantial witness to His existence. Peter and Paul make it clear that as a consequence all men everywhere must acknowledge the God of the Bible as the only true God (Acts 3:19-26; 17:30-31).
A risen Jesus also gives us a reasonable basis for believing all that Jesus spoke and all that the Scriptures say about him is true. Jesus appealed to the Scriptures as the genuine Word of God, revealing God's purpose with man. The resurrection gives us reason to believe this is true. The resurrection was an act of Divine intervention in the affairs of men. God has promised He will intervene again, this time sending His Son to rule the world in righteousness and to establish God's kingdom on earth. If Jesus did indeed rise from the dead, we can have confidence in this future event as well.

Finally, the resurrection is the historical fact on which the hope of Christianity, the hope of the resurrection from the dead, is founded. Because it happened once in fulfillment of God's word, we have solid reasons to believe it can happen again… to us, if we are willing to join our lives to this man.

Bro L. G. Sargent summarized the implications well: “(It is) the crown in the arch of the whole structure of God's revelation… It ties together the whole of the promises and prophecies of the past and their realization in the future… It is the crux of the working of God with men” (A Sound Mind, p.166).

Ted Sleeper (San Francisco Peninsula, CA)

Finding Moses
(An Archeological and Anthropological Approach)

Introduction

Over the years I have heard many arguments that the stories of the Old Testament were not actual historical events and were only meant to provide moral lessons for the children of Israel. Does it matter to us, as believers, if Moses was a real man?

Of all of the accounts recorded in Scripture, the story of Moses is one of special significance. There is no other event recorded that our Heavenly Father uses to identify Himself to his people more than how He was the one that delivered them from Egypt. Even the Lord Jesus validates the life of Moses when he makes mention of him throughout his ministry, and especially in the book of John:

“For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?” (John 5:46-47).

If all Scripture is given by God's inspiration, and the Lord Jesus is the son of God and our savior, then there is a compelling, logical reason to believe it is true if for no other reason than Jesus says it's true.

Logic also dictates that we shouldn't just blindly follow the Bible without validating its truthfulness. To say we believe in the Bible because the Bible says it is true does not do anything to validate our faith. The Quran and the Book of Mormon both make the same claim. One of the things that has been used to validate the truth as we know it is archeology. But archeology of itself cannot recreate a story; there exists a much broader field of study that works to incorporate not only artifacts, but also the culture and traditions of people, as well as their day to day life.
The purpose of this article is to employ this anthropological approach as we evaluate the account of Moses and see if there is any possibility that the account is historically accurate. We cannot, of course, prove that the story happens just the way that we tell it here, but my purpose is primarily to demonstrate that it is plausible and that the Biblical account agrees with what we know about the culture in ancient Egypt at the time. So without any further build up, let’s go on a journey back to ancient Egypt in the year 1525 B.C.

**Ancient Egypt**

Pharaoh rules the world. He is viewed as a man-god, as a representation of Osiris on earth. Osiris was the Egyptian god of the dead and he was actively working through the pharaoh. Pharaoh had a somber responsibility to maintain ma’at. Ma’at is the order and peace in the world that could only be maintained if all of the gods were happy. If the Nile does not flood, if there is famine in the land, if there is great disease afflicting the Egyptians, the pharaoh would be the one to blame. Even after death, the pharaoh would enter the afterlife and continue his role in maintaining ma’at just like the pharaohs before him.

The term “daughter of pharaoh” was much more than a reference to the offspring of Pharaoh; it was a title in itself. The “Daughter of Pharaoh” was also called the “Throne Princess” and she was considered to be a god in her own right. The Egyptians at the time believed she had “Ra-blood” (Ra, the sun god) and that validated her as being the next queen. It was also her responsibility to marry the firstborn son of Pharaoh who was considered to be the god “Horace” manifested on earth. The marriage of Horace to the Throne Princess would create a new manifestation of Osiris and Isis on Earth. Yes… that meant she was destined to marry her brother!

We began in the year 1525 B.C. because that is the approximate date of the Egyptian records that state that all male slaves were to be killed. While it does not explicitly state that the slaves were Hebrews, the rest of the story seems to match up pretty well. The pharaoh at the time would have been Thutmoses I who ruled from 1526 BC – 1512 BC, which means he took immediate action when assuming power in ordering the death of the newborn males. In secular history, he is best remembered for building the Valley of the Kings and as a prominent military leader. There are no records to suggest that people looked at Thutmoses I as dimwitted or slow-minded, so this leads to a troublesome question: If he was so smart, why did he not kill Moses as soon as his daughter brought the child to him? He certainly knew that this was one of the condemned Hebrew children; so did pharaoh’s daughter (Exod 2:6).

The Daughter of Pharaoh, who would later become one of the very few female pharaohs, was Hatshepsut at that time. Critics will often say that if this was the case, then Scripture should have recorded her name. The simple answer is that the name of the Throne Princess was never recorded, because only the title was used as a show of respect. The only reason this woman’s name is recorded in Egyptian history is because she later became a pharaoh.
As we remember from before, this woman was considered a god. Also, there are two gods that rule the Nile, Hapy and Khnum. Hapy was the god of the Nile and Khnum was the guardian of the Nile. When they are coupled with the Throne Princess, there would be than a total of three gods that found it fit to save this child's life. When pharaoh was presented with this child who was apparently blessed by the three gods, he was faced with a decision: He could fulfill his order and kill the child, or he could try and maintain ma'at and not offend the gods by slaughtering the child.

When this is coupled with the fact that a 10-12 year old Hatshepsut presents the child to her father and says that his name is Moses, one might say she named him after her father, (Ma’at, or it could also mean “draw out of water”).

As the years passed, Hatshepsut marries her brother Thutmoses II and they have seven daughters and no sons. This was a problem as far as succession was concerned because the dynasty was supposed to continue through the marriage of Horace to the Throne Princess to create the equivalent of Osiris and Isis on earth. Thutmoses did have other children through other wives; the firstborn son of Thutmoses II was Thutmoses III.

This situation created a very interesting political situation. Who would be the next pharaoh and ruler of Egypt? Moses was the man who was blessed by the gods and Thutmoses III was the firstborn son of the present pharaoh, but not the son of the Throne Princess.

“By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season” (Heb 11: 24-25).

Hebrews 11 paints a picture of a path to being pharaoh being well paved for Moses. It was his for the taking!

The validity of this account is reinforced because there are Egyptian records that show Thutmoses II had prophesied that Thutmoses III would become pharaoh. There would be no need for a prophecy if the line of succession was uncontested. Thutmoses II’s prophesy never came to fruition as Hatshepsut assumed the throne for herself and made Thutmoses III a general in her army. Thutmoses III excelled in that role and never wanted to give it up. He did, though, ultimately become pharaoh after Hatshepsut mysteriously disappeared.

There were many rules in the land of Egypt, but there is one rule of particular interest: no Egyptian was supposed to harm or kill another Egyptian. This rule was so strongly followed that even if a pharaoh wrongfully harmed an Egyptian, he would be punished (pharaoh was responsible only to the high priest).

**The Exodus**

Scripture tells us that not long after the children of Israel are set free, pharaoh sends his army after them to bring them back. Many people look at that event and say the account of Moses cannot be true because there is no record of it. That seems like a logical point because it is true that there is no record of it happening. But
to be fair, there also is no Egyptian record of any of the ancient Egyptians losing a battle. Ever. In fact, there is an Egyptian record of the battle of Kedesh where Rameses the Great made a monument to his great victory. Upon the evaluation of other ancient records from other countries, it turns out the victory was grossly overstated and it was really more of a draw.

After the events of the Red Sea several things happened. First, Amenotep II sent out another army to Asia and captured 750,000 people that were brought to Egypt to work as slaves and then someone destroyed all of Hatshepsut's cartouches, effectively killing her in the afterlife. If Amenotep II did break all of Hatshepsut's cartouches, he was taking a big risk of angering all of the gods and upsetting the balance in the world. One could argue that in his mind the balance was already upset and that ma'at was already destroyed. No one can fault him his anger though. If Hatshepsut was the one that pulled Moses from the river, then he felt she was to blame for all of the misfortune that he had encountered.

Was this the way that it really happened? No one knows for sure. Was Hatshepsut the Daughter of Pharaoh that was spoken of in Exodus and Hebrews? Perhaps we will find out in the Kingdom age. The purpose of this article is not to provide the exact story of what happened, it is to provide plausibility. Does the historical account presented in the book of Exodus agree with what we know of the history and culture of ancient Egypt? I believe it does and I believe that the events really did take place. If they did not, our hope is lost.

We mentioned earlier the words of Jesus:

“For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?” (John 5:46-47).

These words are as true today as when they were when Jesus first spoke them. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.

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**What Happened To Archaeology?**

**Development of a chronology**

Like the timelines developed to support the belief in evolution, archeology has not been immune to similar pressures to support anti-Biblical biases. In an earlier time, archeologist routinely used the Bible as the basis of their explorations. In the early 19th century when Napoleon brought the treasures of ancient Egypt to the attention of the world, fascination with Egypt grew enormously. This ultimately led to the development of a chronology that relied (to a large extent) on a list of pharaohs compiled by the Egyptian priest Manetho in the 3rd century BC. Carbon-14 dating, especially for the Middle and Old Egyptian Kingdoms, and the alleged pre-dynastic period, has been used to provide some support for this dating. The Egyptian chronology, though, put the beginning of Egypt’s Old Kingdom to be around 3000 BC, or some 700 years before Noah's flood. Hence the problem.
It is not just the Biblical account of the flood that has been called into question by this new chronology. All the history from Abraham, to Joseph, to Moses, to Joshua down through the end of the Northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah has also been called into question. The Dec. 18, 1995 cover of Time magazine asked the question, “Is The Bible Fact or Fiction?” Here are some of their answers: “(Years) of searching have convinced all but the most conservative experts that Abraham, and the rest of the Patriarchs, were inventions of the Bible’s authors.” “Apart from the Bible, there is no evidence that (Moses) ever lived.” “The walls of (Jericho) did come tumbling down, say most historians, but centuries before Moses’ protégé could have arrived.” (“Are the Bible’s Stories True?” — sidebar to featured article.) Here are the critical problems when following the Egyptian Chronology:

**Problems of Egyptian chronology**

**The Exodus Problem**

The Exodus from Egypt was not only the most significant event in the history of the Jewish people; it was also an unprecedented and unequaled catastrophe for Egypt. In the course of the pharaoh’s stubborn refusal to let the Israelites leave and the resultant plagues sent by God, Egypt was devastated. Hail, disease and infestations obliterated Egypt’s produce and livestock, while the plague of the first-born stripped the land of its elite, leaving inexperienced second sons to cope with the economic disaster. The drowning of the ruling pharaoh and the Egyptian army in the Red Sea left Egypt open and vulnerable to foreign invasions.

Such a momentous series of events must find a reflection somewhere in the archeological record, but, according to the currently accepted chronology, in the year of the Exodus, the greatest warlord Egypt ever knew, Thutmose III, embarked on a series of conquests, extending the Egyptian sphere of influence and tribute over Palestine, Syria and crossing the Euphrates into Mesopotamia itself. No archeological evidence exists from this time supporting any of the Biblical claims.

**The Wilderness Problem**

Forty years is a very long time for 2 million people to live in the wilderness. The considerable time they would have spent in various locations should have left evidence. Archeologists, using the standard chronology, have not found any such evidence.

**The Canaan Problem**

The problem only gets worse in trying to find evidence for the major devastation of cities recorded in the book of Joshua. Archeological evidence bears little resemblance to the Biblical account of the conquest of Canaan. Archaeologists say Israel “emerged” from among the Canaanite peoples without a conquest. In other
words, there is virtually no evidence for the mighty overthrow of the Canaanites as recorded in the Bible.

**The Iron Age Problem**

There were invasions, but they were from the north, from Syria and Mesopotamia, and they came in several waves, unlike the lightning conquest under Joshua. The people who settled the land after the invasions also came from the north, and seemed to settle an empty land after it had been destroyed by others. The south remained in the hands of the Bronze Age inhabitants, albeit on a lower material level. (See chart above.)

The conclusions drawn from this evidence? The people in the south, who supposedly constituted the kingdom of Judah, have been determined to be of Canaanite descent, if not biologically, then culturally. And the people in the north, supposedly the ten tribes of Israel, have been determined to have no relation to the tribes of the south. The idea of twelve tribes descended from the sons of Jacob has been removed from the history books and re-catalogued under “Mythology, Jewish.”

**The Real problem**

The acceptance of the Conventional Egyptian Chronology has not been universal, but the use of it in evaluating and dating archeological evidence is so common and dominant that Bible dictionaries and popular archeology books and magazine all reflect the same belief: Little, if any, evidence exists to support the plain reading of the Old Testament. As the Time article put it: “…parts of the Old Testament where the evidence is contradictory or still absent, (include) slavery in Egypt, the existence of Moses, the Exodus and Joshua’s military conquest of the Holy Land…”
Kathleen Kenyon, who excavated at Jericho for six years, found no evidence of destruction at that time” (p. 54).

However, the real problem turns out to be the Conventional Egyptian Chronology (CEC) itself, not the Bible. The flaws in this chronology have produced continuing problems in trying to correlate finds throughout the eastern Mediterranean world. A number of archeologists have begun calling for its revision. In *Centuries of Darkness*, Peter James (British historian and author specializing in the ancient history and archaeology of the Eastern Mediterranean region) calls traditional chronology a “gigantic academic blunder.” David M Rohl writes, “The only real solution to the archaeological problems which have been created is to pull down the whole structure and start again, reconstructing from the foundations upward.”

An illustration of the mismatch can be seen from an article in Biblical Archeology Review of Sep/Oct 1987. The authors looked at the cities that Joshua attacked and destroyed. According to the current dating of these sites, there is no evidence for any destruction at all by Joshua (Late Bronze Age). When the authors examined these cities during an earlier period (Middle Bronze Age), suddenly there was significant evidence of destruction or abandonment consistent with the Biblical account.

The authors’ conclusion: “In summary, the chart reveals a basic inconsistency between the situation at the end of the Late Bronze Age and the Biblical account of the conquest of Canaan, while the situation at the end of Middle Bronze II is consistent with the Biblical account.”

**One possible correction**

David Down (field archaeologist; editor of Archeological Diggings.com.au), in *Unwrapping the Pharaohs*, synthesized the work of many experts to produce what he feels is a cohesive narrative consistent with the Bible. He points out many synchronisms between the histories of Israel and Egypt, providing a plausible identification for many of the characters found in the Old Testament. His work also seems consistent with the history of surrounding nations. (Short article here: http://creation.com/searching-for-moses.)

When the Egyptian chronology is corrected, the missing evidence for Joseph, Israel as slaves in Egypt, Moses as potential heir-apparent to the throne, the Exodus and its devastating effects on Egypt, the wilderness wanderings, Joshua’s dramatic conquest of Canaan, Israel under David and Solomon as the super power of the Middle East, through the destruction of Israel and Judah — all these missing pieces now find reflections in the archeological record. The alignment is a powerful confirmation that God’s Word really can be trusted.

The chart below, based on the proposed revision by archeologist David Down, illustrates the contrast between the Conventional Egyptian Chronology and Down’s revised chronology.

Another researcher, Patrick Clarke (specializes in pharaonic tombs in the Valley of the Kings; their architecture, artwork and afterlife texts), has a series of research
articles arguing for a slightly different lineup. (His conclusion places Joseph nearer to 1750 BC and would have Mentohotep II as the pharaoh in Joseph’s day, which would alter the overlaps in the dynasties.)

**Why should I care?**

Archeological discoveries once were seen as confirming evidence of the validity and truthfulness of the historical narratives of the Bible. Archeologists with Bible in hand searched out ancient ruins to discover this evidence. Not all archeologists were happy with this approach; some had little respect for the Bible, much less a desire to authenticate it. When archeologists began put together a timeline of the ancient Middle East based on the Egyptian king lists in the early 1900s, the pressure to expel the Bible as a legitimate historical text began. Today, as the *Times* article mentioned earlier demonstrates, the Bible has been completely dismissed.

So why should you care? Because each of us ultimately has to make a decision: Did God speak through the Bible or is the Bible just another ancient text with lots of myths? The first choice acknowledges there is a God and that He has something to say to me. The second choice is to jettison God altogether and live in a meaningless, directionless, and sterile world.

**Resources:**

For helpful discussions of the dating problems behind the traditional chronology, see the suggested references below. These are all from researchers and scientists that accept the Bible to actually be God’s inspired word.


2) David Down & Dr. John Ashton, *Unwrapping The Pharaohs*, Ch. 28, “A Correct Chronology”.

Chronology Prove That the Bible Is Unreliable?”


5) An interesting new video: “Patterns of Evidence: The Exodus”. This video explores the striking archaeological evidence that Hebrews once existed in Egypt. It also demonstrates some of the difficulty behind establishing an exact Egyptian chronology.

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Notes:

Beware of Premature Conclusions about Alleged Biblical “Contradictions”

Some people look at apparent contradictions in the Bible and see a justification for not accepting the Bible as divinely inspired. People of faith look at apparent contradictions and put them in a mental folder awaiting their explanation. Often further research produces a reasonable explanation. In some cases we await future developments. The Jewish historian, Flavius Josephus, points out how an apparent contradiction between the prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel was seized upon by King Zedekiah and his advisors and used as a pretext for ignoring their prophecies.¹

The background story

The setting for the incident is the events surrounding the Babylonian captivity of Israel. The Babylonian captivity actually occurred in three distinct stages over a 20 year period. In the first, Daniel and his friends were taken to Babylon (2Kgs 24:1, Jer 25:1, Dan 1:1-7). In the second stage, 10,000 were taken including Ezekiel and King Jehoiachin (2Kgs 24:10-16: Ezek 1:1-2, Esth 2:5-6). The final stage resulted in the horrific destruction of Jerusalem and the temple with much loss of life and all but a few being taken to Babylon (2Kgs 25:1-27). Jeremiah was not taken in any of these stages, but rather taken to Egypt by the remaining rebels (Jer 43:6).

Prophetic contradictions?

Ezekiel was prophesying from captivity while Jeremiah was prophesying in Jerusalem. Both prophets, at God’s direction, were desperately trying to get Zedekiah and the Jews to repent and thereby save their nation from total destruction.

Ezekiel’s prophecies were brought to Jerusalem. So, when the Jews in powers found a particular section of his prophecy that seemed to disagree with Jeremiah’s prophecy, they used the apparent contradiction as justification for ignoring all the warnings of the prophets, to continue in their evil practices. (How prone we all are to seek to discredit that which is opposed to our preference!)

We pick up story in Josephus’ “Antiquities of the Jews” Chapt. 7. (Emphasis is mine)
“Now as to Zedekiah himself, while he heard the prophet (Jeremiah) speak, he believed him and agreed to everything as true, and supposed it was for his advantage; but then his friends perverted him, and dissuaded him from what the prophet advised, and obliged him to do **what they pleased.**

Ezekiel also foretold in Babylon what calamities were coming upon the people, which when he (Jehoiachin who was also in captivity) heard he sent accounts of them unto Jerusalem. But Zedekiah did not believe their prophecies, for the reason following: It happened that the two prophets agreed with one another in what they said as in all other things, that the city should be taken, and Zedekiah himself should be taken captive; but Ezekiel disagreed with him, and said that Zedekiah should not see Babylon, while Jeremiah said to him, that the king of Babylon should carry him away thither in bonds. And because they did not both say the same thing as to this circumstance, **he disbelieved what they both appeared to agree in,** and condemned them as not speaking truth therein, although all the things foretold him did come to pass according to their prophecies, as we shall show upon a fitter opportunity.”

Here are the relevant verses from the two prophecies in question. (Again, emphasis is mine.)

“And Zedekiah king of Judah shall not escape out of the hand of the Chaldeans, but shall surely be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon, and shall speak with him mouth to mouth, and **his eyes shall behold his eyes;** And he shall lead Zedekiah to Babylon, and there shall he be until I visit him, said the Lord; though ye fight with the Chaldeans, ye shall not prosper” (Jer 32:4-5).

“My net also will I spread upon him, and he shall be taken in my snare and I will bring him to Babylon to the land of the Chaldeans; **yet shall he not see it,** though he shall die there” (Ezek. 12:13).

The apparent contradiction was that Jeremiah said that King Zedekiah would actually look into the eyes of the king of Babylon. “…and his **eyes shall behold his eyes**…” Ezekiel said “…I will bring him (Zedekiah) to Babylon…**yet shall he not see it.**” It looked like one prophet was saying Zedekiah would see the king of Babylon and one said he would not. How could Zedekiah see the king of Babylon and not see Babylon? But in the end events fell out in such a way that both prophecies were literally fulfilled down to the last detail as follows:

“Then the city was broken up, and all the men of war fled, and went forth out of the city by night by the way of the gate between the two walls, which was by the king’s garden; (now the Chaldeans were by the city round about:) and they went by the way of the plain. But the army of the Chaldeans pursued after the king, and overtook Zedekiah in the plains of Jericho; and all his army was scattered from him. Then they took the king, and carried him up unto the king of Babylon to Riblah in the land of Hamath; where he gave judgment upon him. And the king of Babylon slew the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes: he slew also all the princes of Judah in Riblah. Then he put out the
eyes of Zedekiah; and the king of Babylon bound him in chains, and carried him to Babylon, and put him in prison till the day of his death” (Jer 52:7-11).

Thus everything happened exactly as prophesied. King Zedekiah “…looked into the eyes of the king of Babylon…” exactly as Jeremiah had prophesied; but not in the city of Babylon. And he was brought to the city of Babylon but he never saw it…exactly as Ezekiel had prophesied.

The point to us

Josephus hits the nail on the head. Because Zedekiah did not want to believe Jeremiah and Ezekiel “…he disbelieved what they both appeared to agree in, and condemned them as not speaking truth therein, though all the things foretold him did come to pass according to their prophecies…”.

When someone is telling us something we do not want to hear, we become professional fault finders. We start looking for any evidence that will enable us to reject what is being said. We do this in our daily lives and we see it done by those who would justify their rejection of the Bible as the word of God. Because all their questions cannot be answered at this time to their satisfaction, they reject the preponderance of indisputable examples of fulfilled prophecy that authenticate the Bible as a divinely inspired work.

It is not easy to be open-minded when the discussion is accumulating evidence that opposes our current position in any area of our lives. Thankfully, John Thomas was an open-minded scholar. If he were not, he would still be in the Disciples of Christ.

Ken Sommerville (Simi Hills, CA)

Notes:
1. Flavius Josephus wrote in approximately 93 or 94 A.D. The details for this article are taken from The Antiquities of the Jews, translated by William Whiston.
How We got our Bible: Preservation and Transmission

Bible texts
For the text of the Bible, we will present two different accounts, one for the Old Testament (OT) and one for the New Testament (NT). The OT has something like a dozen primary sources, whereas the NT has more than five thousand. Variations abound in the NT sources; but these variations are all minor and confident reconstruction of an accurate “original” is still possible in all but a few cases. In contrast, there are very few variations in the OT sources; most variations have been eliminated because almost all old and defective manuscripts were destroyed to avoid flaws being promulgated in the sacred texts.

The study of these issues is called textual criticism. For the most part, we depend heavily on others in this area of Bible study; one brother put it this way, “We need to be contextual scholars, not textual scholars.” That said, it is useful to know a little bit about the subject.

Old Testament
Two definitive works on textual criticism of the OT are:


The primary OT sources include the Masoretic Text (MT, Hebrew), the Samaritan Pentateuch (written in the Samaritan alphabet), the Septuagint (LXX, Greek), the Targums (Aramaic, including explanatory glosses), the Peshitta (Syriac, a dialect of Aramaic), the Vulgate (Latin), and the Dead Sea Scrolls.

The Masoretes (“Transmitters” or “Tradition Keepers”) were a group of Jewish scribes-scholars based in Tiberias, Jerusalem, and Babylon between the sixth and tenth centuries AD. The ben Asher family from Tiberia was largely responsible for producing and preserving the MT. The MT is widely viewed to be the most accurate text of the OT. The ben Asher Masoretes not only determined the proper Hebrew consonants of the OT text, they also added vowel pointing for vocalization, para-textual elements (e.g., division of the text into sections), and apparatus documenting their decisions and alternatives. The most famous in this family was Aaron ben Moses ben Asher, who was a scribe living during the first half of the tenth century. He made it his life’s work to understand and preserve God’s Word, a true “modern” Ezra (cf. Ezra 7; Neh 8). Once the Masoretes had created their definitive text, efforts were made to destroy all other OT manuscripts because they were deemed to be inferior.
Two of the existing manuscripts of the MT are the Aleppo Codex (A, 925 AD) and the Codex Leningrad (L, 1009 AD). Printed editions of the Hebrew Bible include:

- *Biblia Hebraica* (BH or BHK) (1951), edited by R. Kittel and P. Kahle, in Hebrew, based on L.

In addition to the text itself, these Hebrew Bibles include marginal apparatus showing textual variations, etc. These resources are for serious students who know Biblical Hebrew. They are the starting point for most all English translations of the OT.

The Dead Sea Scrolls are a collection of 981 texts that were found in 11 caves at Qumran between 1946 and 1956. Most of them are in Hebrew, with some in Aramaic, and a few in Greek. There are 225 Biblical texts, including at least some portion of 38 of the 39 OT books (the exception being Esther). Psalms, the Torah, and Isaiah are heavily represented. These scrolls come from much earlier than the MT manuscripts; their discovery pushed the date of our earliest manuscripts back more than 1,000 years. The truly amazing thing about the Dead Sea Scrolls is how much they confirmed the MT, which significantly increased scholarly confidence in the text of the OT.

**New Testament**

There are many useful books on the textual criticism of the NT, including:


The primary NT sources fall into three categories: 128 papyri, 323 uncialis (upper case letters), and 2,882 minuscules (lower case cursive letters). In addition, there are over 2,400 lectionaries (collections of passages read in worship services). The papyri are dated from 250 AD and on. Three of the earliest and more important uncialis are Sinaiticus (*Aleph*, 4th c.), Alexandrinus (A, 5th c.), and Vaticanus (B, 4th c.). The minuscules are from the 10th c. and on. A couple of the lectionaries go back as far as the 4th c.

Though there are hundreds of thousands of variations, they are almost all minor. By comparing all the witnesses, it is usually possible to determine accurately what the “original” text must have been.
Scholars who specialize in textual criticism have identified a common set of scribal errors that lead to variations. Understanding these makes it possible to determine when they have occurred, hence how to reconstruct the “original”. To illustrate, here are some examples:

- Repeated words or phrases can cause the intervening text to be deleted. For example, some manuscripts leave out Luke 12:9 because it ends with the same phrase as Luke 12:8; i.e., they both end with “before the angels of God.” A similar thing happens in some Coptic manuscripts of John 17 which omit verses 15-16 because verses 14 and 16 both end with “even as I am not of the world.”

- Homonyms can cause the correct word to be replaced by another word that sounds the same. Analogous examples in English are common: e.g., “there”, “their”, and “they’re” are often confused and so are “to”, “too”, and “two”. (It is believed this occurred because the monks who produced the copies did so by listening to one reading the text).

- Phrases from parallel accounts are sometimes inserted into a text. This kind of error occurs occasionally in the Gospels.

- Intentional corruption of the text to support traditional doctrinal positions. The most famous example of this is reflected in the KJV of 1John 5:6-8. A single Greek manuscript was created in which a forged verse 7 was inserted to provide explicit support for the doctrine of the Trinity.

- Another kind of problem can happen as a result of lectionary usage. Citing Dean Burgon, Harry Whittaker suggests that this is the reason some manuscripts leave out Mark 12:9-20 and John 8:1-11. (see Studies in the Gospels: A New Extended Edition, pp. 846-847).

Notes:
1. Treating the collection of Quram texts as one source.

The Canon of Scripture

“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom 10:17).

Introduction

Bro. Joe Hill’s article told of the wonderful way in which the Bible text was preserved and transmitted through history, and so used by those who translated it into English. But the question remains — “How did these particular texts come to be included in what we know as the Bible?” After all, many religious texts were written during the time of the Old and New Testaments. Which of these should be included and which should be rejected? What was the basis for these decisions? Who made them? Finding the answers to these questions involves looking at what has become known as the Canon of Scripture.

This somewhat odd-looking word has nothing to do with artillery, but is from the Greek kanon and probably borrowed from the Hebrew qanon meaning a reed or rod (see Ezek 40:5 and Gal 6:16). We get our English word “cane” from these
and since reeds and rods were used to measure things in those times, the idea of a canon being a support, a standard or a rule came into being.

Thus, to speak of writings being “canonical,” or “part of the Canon,” is to refer to those writings which have become part of the books which are regarded as having Divine authority and were inspired by God. But it is important to understand that there is a difference between a book's authority and whether or not it is canonical. Whether or not a book is properly included in the Canon is based on its authority (but not vice versa). For example, the Gospel of John had its own intrinsic authority from the time it was written, based on the text itself, having been Divinely inspired. Or Paul’s first Epistle to the Corinthians, which plainly claims to be speaking on behalf of God: “If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord” (1Cor 14:36-37).

However, both of these books only became canonical when they were generally accepted by the ecclesiastical authorities as being written under the Hand of Providence. The books of the Bible have their own intrinsic authority, and no human group or institution can (or indeed needs to) confer this authority. These sacred writings were authoritative long before there were any religious councils deeming them so, or books to incorporate them.

It is very important to be clear about the development of the Canon. It is not an evolutionary process by which certain religious writings were increasingly accepted and given special status by a religious group (church). It was not (and remains not) a means by which sacred status was conferred on particular writings. The development of the Canon was rather mankind’s response to the Divine authority inherent in these Biblical writings from their beginnings. Said more succinctly, the Bible is not an authorized collection of books; rather it is a collection of authoritative books!

The Canon of the Old Testament

“God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;” (Heb 1:1-2).

Most of the details by which the Old Testament writings were recognized as authoritative and to be set apart from other Jewish works have been lost to history, but it is clear that, by the time of Jesus, the Canon of what we now call the Old Testament had been fixed for some time.

The Jews divided their Scriptures into three parts: The Law, The Prophets and The Writings. The Law was composed of the five books of Moses (what we know as Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy). The Prophets consisted of the four “Former Prophets” (our Joshua, Judges, 1&2 Samuel, 1&2 Kings) and the four “Latter Prophets (our Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, plus the Book of the Twelve — our Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi). The Writings were a collection of
eleven works (our Psalms, Job, Proverbs, Ruth, Song of Solomon, Ecclesiastes, Lamentations, Esther, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, 1&2 Chronicles). This grouping of twenty-four Old Testament “books” (remember that our modern form of books is very different from the ancient Hebrews’) was the original count of the Jews as far back as we can trace it. Later, certain Jews appended Ruth to Judges and Lamentations to Jeremiah to get a correspondence with the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet, but this seems to be somewhat of a contrivance.

The earliest Jewish scholars of whom we have records indicate that God had given his Word in twenty-four books. The Jewish historian Josephus was one of those who mentioned the Hebrew counting of twenty-two, but refers to every book in what has become our full modern list of thirty-nine. Early Christian writers, including Origen (184 – 253 A.D.) and Jerome (347 – 420 A.D.), all confirm the number of books accepted and listed by Josephus.

Much New Testament evidence clearly shows that, when the Gospel and Epistles were written, there was a definite and fixed “canon” of the Old Testament. Repeated phrases such as “the Scripture” (John 10:35, 19:36; 1Pet 1:20), “holy Scriptures” (Rom 1:2), “the Law and the Prophets” (Matt 5:17, 7:12, 22:40) create the unmistakable idea that there was a complete and sacred collection of Jewish writings set apart from other literature.

Jesus recognizes the tripartite division of the Hebrew Scriptures when he speaks of “the Law of Moses, and the prophets and the psalms” and applies them and their fulfillment to himself: “And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me” (Luke 24:44).

In another instance, Jesus may also have alluded to this grouping (and ordering) when he says: “That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar” (Matt 23:35). While Abel was the first righteous man in history to suffer persecution from the wicked, someone named Zechariah was not chronologically the last martyr named in the Old Testament. However, there was a Zechariah (2Chron. 24:20-21) who may have been the final one recorded in the last book of the Hebrew Bible at the time of Jesus.

The Canon of the New Testament

“For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled” (Matt 5:18).

Compared to the Old Testament Canon, we know a great deal about the development of the New Testament Canon. This is not surprising, since the books of the New Testament were written over a much shorter time period (less than 50 years versus more than 1,000 years). In addition, many more documents survived from the first few centuries after Christ than from antiquity, and Jewish practice from Old Testament times required their old scrolls to be buried rather than preserved. All of these factors make it much easier to trace the history of the
New Testament texts, their distribution throughout the early Christian church, and the process of recognizing their Divine origin.

As an illustration, a surviving manuscript, written by Justin Martyr in the middle of the second century noted that at Christian services on Sunday, “memoirs of the apostles” were read together with “writings of the prophets.” It is clear that, not long after the passing of the first generation of believers, written materials were being circulated and read generally throughout the newly-formed churches.

In the early Church, there was no thought of developing a “New Testament.” The Scripture of God was the Old Testament as it had come down from the Jews. Like the Lord Jesus himself, the apostles “opened up the Scriptures” (i.e., the Old Testament) and showed how Jesus was the fulfillment of the promises contained therein. They were living witnesses to the signs and wonders he performed, and could testify personally to his resurrection. Early believers felt that the return of Christ was imminent and they likely had no thought of creating writings which would be read two millennia later.

However, as the good news of the Gospel spread throughout the Roman Empire, and as (from the believers’ perspective) the return of Jesus was delayed, and as the eyewitnesses began to die off (from both natural and unnatural causes), written materials began to take on greater and greater significance for the new community.

From early on, the followers of Jesus had begun to write of their experiences with Jesus and of His teachings (the earliest New Testament book [James] was probably written by 46 A.D.). It was inevitable that these “first-hand” accounts would become accepted as authoritative and be collected into a single whole. From the time they were written, the Apostle Paul’s letters were seen as valuable, not just to whom they were addressed, but to the community as a whole. As a result, they were copied and circulated across what was becoming a far-flung community of believers.

There is a natural progression we can see in the development of the New Testament Canon. Christ stressed to his followers the importance of the Scriptures and how he came not to abolish but to fulfill them. The initial authority of the early church was the words of Christ and the events of his life, death and resurrection. He chose his apostles as his witnesses, and their words (whether oral or written) would have carried Divine authority.

The need to preserve these early testimonies was also driven by the need to protect the Truth from the false teachers of whom even Jesus warned his believers. In particular, the rise of a group known as the Gnostics in the late first and early second centuries made it imperative that the authentic writings of the apostles, as well as Luke and Paul, be preserved.

Other religious writings were also in circulation at the same time, some of which have survived until today, including “The epistle of Barnabas” and “the Shepherd of Hermes”. Although beyond the scope of this article, you can find more about them on the internet.
As these “collections” of materials were assembled at different times and in different places, it was inevitable that there would be some differences in these early volumes. Not all of the books in what we now know as the New Testament were received without hesitation. For example, uncertainty over the authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews presented a temporary obstacle to full acceptance. However, most of the writings were generally embraced as having inspired authorship from the first.

Fragmentary evidence shows that a list of canonical books existed as early as 170 A.D. The “Muratorian Fragment,” published in 1740 A.D., indicates that even that far back there were four Gospels, the book of Acts, thirteen epistles from Paul, John’s Revelation, as well as letters from Jude and 1&2 John as having full acceptance as canonical and being read in the churches. The only New Testament books missing from this list are the letters to the Hebrews (uncertain authorship), James, 1&2 Peter and (possibly) 3 John. The Fragment also mentions two documents, but indicates that “some of our people do not want to have them read in the church.”

By the third century, according to Origen of Alexandria, even these other works were being accepted by most believers, albeit with some still holding reservations. One of Origen’s later writings compares these New Testament writings with the trumpets which felled the walls of Jericho, and, with certain dramatic flourishes, enumerates all of the books we know as the New Testament. All of the uncertainties are gone by the mid-fourth century; in 367 A.D., Athanasius of Alexandria published a list of the twenty-seven books of the New Testament that were accepted in his time. These are the same books which are recognized today, and he adds the following postscript: “these are the springs of salvation … Let no one add anything to them or take anything away from them.”

Good advice then and good advice now. The Bible owes its authority to no individual, group, or religious body. It has been fairly said that no churches control the Canon, but the Canon controls the churches. Divine authority was (and remains) inherent in the books of the Bible themselves.

Kevin Flatley (Pittsburgh, Pa)

Notes:
1. This is especially true of the NT: the process by which the OT canon was formed it not known.

One thing must be emphatically stated. The New Testament books did not become authoritative for the Church because they were formally included in a canonical list; on the contrary, the Church included them in her canon because she already regarded them as divinely inspired, recognizing their innate worth and general apostolic authority, direct or indirect.

(Quoted from FF Bruce)
The Apocrypha

“For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book:” (Rev 22:18).

After the Old Testament canon was recognized as closed by the Jews, and prior to the close of the New Testament period, many other religious writings were in existence and being circulated. Among these are certain writings which have been collected into a body of literature we know as “the Apocrypha,” a word taken from the Greek (by way of Medieval Latin) and meaning hidden, secret, or obscure. These were all written between 200 B.C. and 100 A.D., and while not included in the Hebrew Canon, were included with some versions of the famous Septuagint Greek-language translation of the Hebrew Scriptures.

The fifteen books traditionally included in the Apocrypha are 1&2 Esdras, Tobit, Judith, Additions to Esther, Wisdom of Solomon, Ecclesiasticus, Baruch, the Letter of Jeremiah, the Prayer of Azariah, Susanna, Bel and the Dragon, the Prayer of Manasseh, and 1&2 Maccabees.

Some (or all) of these books are considered part of the Bible used by certain religious groups (e.g., Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox) and are considered canonical (or more properly termed, “Deuterocanonical,” or part of a second, and presumably lower-order, canon of Scripture).

The books themselves are a mixture of various types of writings – historical, legendary, prophetical, and devotional – and include fables, purported additional details of Biblical events, rules for personal conduct, and some history of the time between the Testaments.

Although some of these writings may have value (e.g., the Prayer of Manasseh has wonderful examples of repentance, and Maccabees shed light on historical events), should they be part of the Canon of Scripture? Consider this:

• They were never part of the Hebrew canon
• They were never accepted by Jesus or the Apostles (no quotes from or references to them)
• They were not accepted by early Jewish writers, such as Josephus
• They do not contain the same intrinsic qualities of inspired work (indeed, many of them are obvious fables and/or contain errors of historical and geographic fact)
• They do not claim Divine inspiration (and some actually disclaim it)
• They contain support for doctrines found nowhere else in Scripture
• They have always been of uncertain status

In summary, there are good reasons to exclude them from the Canon of Scripture.
The Bible Today

As a young Sunday school student, I remember being astounded to learn that the English language had not yet been spoken anywhere in the world when Jesus and his Apostles taught the Gospel — it hadn’t even been invented yet. On the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit allowed people from “every nation under heaven” to hear the message in their own language, English was not one of them. The Bible which we revere and believe to be the inspired word of God is, of course, a translation from the original Hebrew, Aramaic1, and Greek Scriptures. This article will focus on English Bible translations and highlight questions to consider when selecting versions for personal study, public reading, and teaching/preaching.

A short history of the English Bible translations

The English language probably came into existence sometime during the 5th century, but it wasn’t until the 1380’s when the first hand-written English Bibles were produced by John Wycliffe. During these medieval times in Europe, the Roman Catholic Church prohibited the translation of the Scriptures into the common languages of the people and only permitted priests to read the Latin Vulgate.2

After the fall of Constantinople by Muslim Turks in 1453, many Greek scholars fled to Western Europe with their Greek manuscripts because the Byzantine Empire, which had been a bastion of Christian culture, was now under a foreign power with a different religion.3 The influx of Eastern scholars resulted in a desire among many to examine the Scriptures in their original form rather than in Latin (Wycliffe translated his Bible directly from the Latin Vulgate). By the 16th century, the availability of original language Biblical texts caused scholars to question the authority of the church. Aiding in the Reformation movement was the first printed compilation of Greek texts (based on 6 different manuscripts), published by Erasmus in 1516.

Less than 10 years later, this Greek edition was used by William Tyndale as the basis of the first English translation of the New Testament from Greek rather than from Latin. Additional Bibles soon followed, before the publication of the King James (or Authorized) Version in 1611. What distinguished this from the earlier printed Bibles was that it was the first to be produced by a committee of scholars. The King James Version went on to become the single most influential book in history and remains the version most commonly used by Christadelphians today.

The first major English version produced after the KJV took place in 1881 when the New Testament Revised Version was published. During the more than 250 years between versions, an abundance of original language manuscripts had been discovered and these were added to the source manuscripts used in the translation. Scholars as well as the brotherhood were eager to update obsolete and antiquated words, and remove questionable grammar.4 Similar thoughts were expressed in the Preface to the Emphatic Diaglott, published around the same time. Benjamin Wilson wrote, “It is generally admitted by all critics that the Authorized or Common Version of the Scriptures absolutely need revision. Obsolete words,
uncouth phrases, bad grammar and punctuation, etc., all require alteration. But this is not all. There are errors of a more serious nature which needs correction. It seems that the release of the Diaglott and Revised Version made the brotherhood aware of past errors in translation. It is somewhat coincidental that the same year the complete Revised Version was published, Brother Roberts and the Birmingham ecclesia added a “Foundation Statement” to their statement of faith. This clarification which addressed the full inspiration of Scripture included a wise comment about translation errors: “That the book currently known as the Bible… is the only source of knowledge concerning God and His purposes at present extant or available in the earth, and that the same were wholly given by inspiration of God in the writers, and are consequently without error in all parts of them, except such as may be due to errors of transcription or translation.”

Since the introduction of the Revised Version, an abundance of English Bible translations have been introduced. Notable modern versions include The Revised Standard Version — RSV (1946), The New American Standard Bible — NASB (1971), The New International Version — NIV (1981), The English Standard Version — ESV (2001), and the New English Translation — NET (2005). Like the King James Version before them, all these Bibles have certain biases and make interpretive translation decisions which they sometimes get wrong. Despite these challenges, God ensures that people can still learn the truth of the Gospel in their own language through the use of translations — errors and all.

There is Scriptural precedent for the use of Bible translations and this fact should reassure us. During Jesus’ ministry on earth, the Jewish Scriptures most widely used in Israel were not Hebrew copies, but was a Greek translation called the Septuagint, which was not an exact word-for-word translation of the Hebrew. Despite this fact, the inspired writers of the New Testament often quoted Old Testament passages using the Septuagint version demonstrating that God believed it was sufficiently near the original to be quoted in the inspired word. If this was the method used by the inspired writers, it is clear that in the eyes of God that translation from the original text is an acceptable use of His word.

How to choose a Bible translation

With so many English Bibles available to us today, it is natural to wonder which is “the best” translation. The answer, of course, depends on who will be using it, and for what purpose. We use our Bibles for many purposes: daily reading, in-depth personal study, and for sharing the truth of the gospel with others. A Bible designed for general reading may have been translated with an emphasis on ease of comprehension, but this may come at the expense of accuracy. Similarly, a Bible that has extensive foot notes and center column references may be a good study Bible, but may be formatted in such a way that makes it is more difficult for some to read. A Bible that is ideally suited for preaching the gospel, likely won’t use words that need explaining or re-defining (e.g., “soul departed”, “go into hell”, etc.).

One of the best ways to understand which translation might be right for you is to read the publisher’s preface at the front of each Bible. Translations will usually
include a preface that explains the translators’ approach and methodology for translating words and phrases from the original. The preface will also describe which source manuscripts were used, give information about who sponsored the translation, and share other pertinent information about that particular version. For example, some Bibles are the work of a single person and others are the work of a committee (preferred). What follows are six questions to help you understand differences in Bible translations.

**Question 1: What is the Source used in the translation?**

Some translations are just that; entirely new translations based upon the available Hebrew and Greek manuscripts. Others are not translations, but revisions to existing English Bibles with additional reference to original language manuscripts. Here are some quotes from the preface section of various Bibles:

King James Version — The KJV was not a translation, but a revision of the Bishops’ Bible: “We never thought from the beginning, that we should need to make a new translation..., but to make a good one better.”

New American Standard Bible — The NASB is a revision of the ASV and KJV. “In 1959 a new translation project was launched, based on the time-honored principles of translation of the ASV and KJV. The result is the New American Standard Bible.”

English Standard Version — The ESV is a revision of the 1971 Revised Standard Version: “The words and phrases themselves grow out of the Tyndale-King James legacy, and most recently out of the RSV, with the 1971 RSV text providing the starting point for our work”.

New International Version — The NIV is a translation: “The New International Version is a completely new translation of the Holy Bible made by over a hundred scholars working directly from the best available Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek texts.”

New English Translation — The NET is also a translation: “The NET Bible is a completely new translation of the Bible with 60,932 translators’ notes! It was completed by more than 25 scholars - experts in the original Biblical languages - who worked directly from the best currently available Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek texts.”

**Question 2: What Original Language Manuscripts were used in the translation?**

When the King James Version was created in 1611, the translators developed the English New Testament using a compilation of Greek texts from the Byzantine family of manuscripts that had been put together by Erasmus, a Dutch scholar. Erasmus’ compilation, known as Textus Receptus, was the best available at the time, however it was based on just six manuscripts, none of which was earlier than the tenth century. Of the six manuscripts that Erasmus was able to use, only one of them had the Gospels and only one had part of Revelation (the missing part of Revelation was translated from Latin instead).

In the 400 years since the publication of the King James Version, an abundance of additional source manuscripts have been discovered, some of which predate
Erasmus’ texts by hundreds of years. Today, the New Testament is preserved in far more manuscripts than any other book from antiquity. Now there are thousands of original language texts, many manuscripts of translation into Syriac, Egyptian and other ancient languages, and even New Testament quotations from early writings and letters. Modern Bibles, beginning with the Revised Version and Diaglott in the late 1800s have benefited from these discoveries. Translations introduced after 1979 use a compilation of texts known as the Nestle/Aland which makes use of 588 handwritten copies of the Greek New Testament, including all known manuscripts dating earlier than the 6th century.13

Not all documents are equally reliable, and since we no longer have the original texts (so called “autographs”) and instead rely on manuscript copies, it is necessary to evaluate the sources. Textual scholars refer to this process as Textual Criticism and its goal is to determine which ancient manuscripts are nearest to the original autographs. In general, older manuscripts are preferred and consequently some verses which are absent in earlier manuscripts are omitted from Modern Bibles and are instead relegated to footnotes. This is sometimes reassuring when, for example, the Modern Versions remove the erroneous “Comma Johanneum” from 1John 5:7-8 as seen in the KJV (the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one). At other times some find it disconcerting, for example, when modern version like the ESV has a significantly shorter version of the Lord’s Prayer recorded in Luke than when compared to Matthew.

Question 3: What is the Translation Style and Methodology?

The goal of all Bible translations is to convey the meaning of the ancient texts as accurately as possible. Realize that professional lexicographers, translators, and commentators know more about the Bible and its original languages than even most ardent Bible students. Translators want the modern reader to come away with the same understanding of God’s message as the original hearers. Still, they don’t always get it right. There are a number of challenges to this objective which result in the differences between Bible translations. As we have seen, these variances are sometimes based on different source texts. Other challenges facing the translators include:

1) Hebrew and Greek words and phrases don’t always correspond precisely to English.

2) Sometimes words can have a wide range of meanings depending on the context. For example, the English word “trunk” can mean the front of an elephant, the back of a car, or the bottom of a tree.14

3) Phrases can sometimes carry idiomatic rather than literal meanings. We are familiar with English “Figures of Speech” (e.g., “she laughed her head off”, “he changed his mind”, etc.). Ancient Hebrew and Greek had similar idiomatic expressions which are often translated figuratively.

4) Some ancient words are little used and therefore difficult to interpret. Modern versions have sometimes benefited from archaeological and linguistic discoveries which make the meaning of these words clearer.
One of the most helpful developments in understanding the variances between Bible translations can be found in the extensive translator notes in the NET Bible. From the preface: “The translators and editors used the notes to show major interpretive options and/or textual options for difficult or disputed passages, so that the user knows at a glance what the alternatives are”.

Other variances between English translations can be attributed to the translation approach used by the translators. There are two basic translation styles: literal and dynamic equivalence.

**The literal translation style** uses a word-for-word approach and is concerned with keeping as closely as possible to the words and sentence structure of the original Hebrew and Greek. Because no two languages use words and grammar in exactly the same way, it is a practical impossibility to have a same word-for-same word translation. The Diaglott and Young’s Literal are probably the closest, but these are extremely difficult to read and are best used for study purposes. The New American Standard (NASB) advertises itself as a translation using the literal approach. “Ultimately, what separates the New American Standard Bible from the various available versions is that the NASB is a literal word-for-word translation from the original languages. In contrast, the others … place the highest priority on ease of reading and a lower priority on word-for-word preciseness.”

**The Dynamic Equivalence style** is more concerned with keeping the idiom and general meaning of the original by translating on a thought-for-thought basis. Some translations are freer with this approach than others. At one end of the dynamic equivalence spectrum is the King James Bible and at the other end is the New Living Translation. The NIV is said to be somewhere in the middle. Here is what the publishers of the NIV said about dynamic equivalence in the preface to the 2011 version. “The first concern of the translators has continued to be the accuracy of the translation and its faithfulness to the intended meaning of the Biblical writers. This has moved the translators to go beyond a formal word-for-word rendering of the original texts. Because thought patterns and syntax differ from language to language, accurate communication of the meaning of the Biblical authors demands constant regard for varied contextual uses of words and idioms and for frequent modifications in sentence structures”.

The preface to the King James offers similar thoughts about its use of the dynamic equivalence style. “We have not tied ourselves to an uniformity of phrasing, or to an identity of words, as some peradventure would wish we had done.” One well known example of the KJV’s thought-for-thought approach is found in the phrase, “God forbid”. The original literally reads, “certainly not”, but the KJV translated the phrase using a figure of speech familiar to those in the 16th century.15

**Question 4: Is this a translation or a paraphrase?**

Paraphrase Bibles typically do not translate specific words, phrases, or the grammatical construction from Hebrew and Greek. Instead, a paraphrase Bible attempts to improve clarity by rewording passages to capture what the translator believes is the essence of the passage. The Message is an increasingly popular
paraphrase written by Eugene Patterson. The publisher states, “The goal of The Message is to engage people in the reading process and help them understand what they read. This is not a study Bible, but rather a reading Bible.” As with all paraphrase Bibles, caution should be exercised. While a paraphrase might make a particularly difficult to understand passage make perfect sense, they sometimes accomplish that at the expense of accuracy.

**Question 5: How is the translation formatted?**

Different Bibles use different formats and this is largely a matter of personal preference. Some Bibles are written in paragraph form while others are in a verse-by-verse format. Some have extensive center column references while others do not. Pay attention to how the Bible identifies quotes from the Old Testament. Is it easy to see that the New Testament writer is quoting from the Old? Many modern versions format Biblical poetry as poetry, not prose. Some versions will include section headings that provide more detail than can be found in chapter headings alone.

**Question 6: Are Complimentary Study aids available?**

Years ago there were few complimentary study tools for anything but the King James Version. Exhaustive concordances like Strong’s were based on the KJV and this posed a difficulty for those using other translations. Advances in information technology have eliminated this concern. Free online multi-version concordances are easily accessible at sites like biblehub.com and blueletterbible.org. More robust online tools like Logos Bible software are available starting around US$250. While expensive, software is more cost effective than purchasing hard copies of all the tools available on Logos 6, for example. If you prefer holding a book, start with good Hebrew and Greek Lexicons for understanding the definition and meaning of the original. Modern lexicons are far superior to Strong’s very limited definitions. Additionally, a reverse interlinear can be particularly helpful. A reverse interlinear features the English phrasing as the top-line entry with the original language text beneath it. It makes it practical to use as an everyday Bible since the English lines of text are clear, readable and lucid. In contrast, a conventional interlinear provides the sentence structure of the original language on top with the English written below in an order that is not easy to read.

**Concluding Thoughts**

Sometimes controversies over Bible translations have arisen in our community. This need not be, especially when we recognize that all versions are imperfect in one way or another. The reality is that God’s saving truth can be discovered no matter which translation is used.

For those of us with a long history of using the King James Bible, it is important to acknowledge that some people find this version difficult to use and understand. If it is our desire to help our congregations, families and friends come to a better understanding of the Gospel, we should recognize and welcome modern versions which may prove to increase their comprehension of God’s Word. Similarly, for those of us who use modern versions, it is important that we empathize with
those who have used the KJV all their lives. Many a brother and sister have memorized parts of the King James and take comfort at the familiar phrasing of favorite passages.

When Israel returned to Jerusalem after their captivity in Babylon, Ezra and the Levites gathered the people by in the city square so they could hear the Book of the Law read aloud. Scripture says, “They read from the book, from the law of God, translating to give the sense so that they understood the reading” (Neh 8:8, NASB). We should give thanks to God that we live in an age and in countries where God’s Book is available for us to read freely, and in our own language. Let us make the most of this opportunity.

Steve Davis (Boston, MA)

Notes:
1. Aramiac is only used in about 250 verses in Daniel and Ezra.
3. The Book We Call the Bible, By J. R. Ensey, Advance Ministries.
5. Benjamin Wilson, ‘Emphatic Diaglott’.
7. The Birmingham Amended Statement of Faith (BASF).
9. “The translation of the Seventy ([LXX] dissenteth from the Original in many places...It is certain, that that [Septuagint] was not so sound and so perfect, but it needed in many places correction; and who had been so sufficient for this work as the Apostles or Apostolic men? Yet it seemed good to the holy Ghost and to them, to take that which they found…” The Translators o the Reader, Preface to the KJV 1611.
10. Benjamin Wilson, ‘Emphatic Diaglott’.
11. Ibid
12. Ibid

Translation is hard. It involves two steps:

Understanding the meaning of the original text in its original historical context (i.e., What did the Hebrew or the Greek mean when it was written for the original audience?), and

Making sometimes difficult or impossible choices on how best to represent that meaning in the target language suitable for a modern audience (i.e., How should this meaning be expressed in English for today’s readers?).

Neither of these steps is easy. We should be thankful that there are scholars who have dedicated themselves to these endeavors. (Joe Hill)
Put your Trust in His Word

A special Book
Several years ago a movie came out called “The Neverending Story”. It was about a young boy named Bastian who wanders into a store one day and gets talking to the owner about a book that the owner is reading. He is told that this book is not like other books. He’s told that this book is special, but when Bastian presses him to explain why, he tells him only that it’s not ‘safe’ like all other stories he might read. Eventually, Bastian’s curiosity gets the better of him and he steals the book and starts to read it. For a while the book is no different than any other. It’s exciting and interesting but no less ‘safe’ than others. But as he reads along he starts to realize that there’s something strange going on. What he discovers is that he is actually one of the characters in the story. The book isn’t just speaking to him, it’s speaking about him. That’s the part that isn’t ‘safe’. What do we do when we realize that you can’t escape the story simply by closing the book?

The power of the Word of God
This is an analogy that can also be used to explain the power of the Word of God. The Bible is not like any other book because it doesn’t just speak to us, it speaks about us, and it speaks in such powerful ways that the truly curious have to read on. Consider the words of the writer to the Hebrews,

“the Word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Heb 4:12).

The power of this Word is so penetrating that it divides soul and spirit and is a discerner of the very thoughts and intents of your heart. It is not a ‘safe’ book! Now, consider how complete the Word of God is. Paul says that:

“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works” (2Tim 3:16-17).

All Scripture is given by God, the creator and sustainer of the Universe, and all of it is profitable. There is no other book so complete that every word has meaning.

Christadelphians have a very unique perspective on the Word of God because we believe it is the lifeline of faith. The Bible alone is the source of all truth and God has revealed His truth so that the believer can see the plan and purpose of God and conform to His will. Put another way, the Bible is not one of the foods that feeds faith, it is the food of faith, as Paul writes to the Romans “Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God” (Rom 10:17).
Consider the manna in the wilderness. The children of Israel didn’t subsist for 40 years on a variety of foods including manna; they lived on one food alone, manna. An alert Bible student will quickly discover that manna is representative of the Word of God which came down like bread from heaven. We ought not, therefore, to pick and choose what to eat from the Word of God. We must recognize and accept that all Scripture is from God, that it is all part of the one food, and as a result, we are blessed to be able to see wonderful harmonies throughout, that help feed our faith and renew our spirit day by day.

The Word of God is Truth

In the same vein we should appreciate that approaching the Word of God from a critical or ‘prove it to me’ perspective can be as unhelpful as picking and choosing what parts of His word we want to believe. The Word of God does not set out to prove itself in the same way a mathematical proof would. It doesn't start out with a hypothesis and then lay out a set of ‘proofs’ to verify what it's suggesting is accurate. Instead, it simply puts forth truth from the source of truth, the Lord God Almighty.

Consider the opening words of the Bible: “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth” (Gen 1:1). There is no explanation of where God came from or what His thought process was in deciding to create the heaven and the earth. He simply spoke and it came into being. Yet man has spent endless hours and money trying to figure out how He did it or even if He did it. At best the word of God today is seen as a ‘possible’ truth; at worst it’s completely thrown out as fiction.

We understand His word is truth and not just a version of the truth, in the same way we understand the bread of life is not just some type of bread. In speaking of both the power and completeness of this book, the Apostle John put it this way:

“I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book” (Rev 22:18-19).

That doesn’t mean we shouldn't have a discerning eye; in fact the Lord commends those who do. Paul commends the Bereans by saying:

“Those were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so” (Acts 17:11).

The Bereans were commended by Paul because they 'searched the scriptures’ to determine if what he was claiming was true. They turned to the Word of God for truth.

Truth can be found in the Word of God, but for those who believe the Word of God it is much more: It is power. Paul expresses this idea as: “I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that
believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith” (Rom 1:16-17). ‘From faith’ means that God is faithful. His word is truth and can be trusted. ‘To faith’ speaks of those who approach His Word believing in its truth. Only to those who do so will the truth of God’s word reveal itself and transform the individual, as it says ‘The just shall live by faith’.

Unto this day

If we approach the Word of God with the humility of faith, we will find that any and every part of Scripture will offer to us marvelous revelations about God’s truth. Consider again Paul words: “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works” (2Tim 3:16-17). Often, we will discover that what seems like the most insignificant word or phrase will be pregnant with meaning, because its very placement has been guided by the hand of God.

One example is the obscure phrase found throughout Scripture, ‘unto this day’. This expression is found 89 times in the King James Version of the Scriptures, yet it often has the appearance of being a complete throw away expression; but we know that there are no throw away phrases in the Word of God!

In 2nd Kings it is expressed this way “So these nations feared the LORD, and served their graven images, both their children, and their children’s children: as did their fathers, so do they unto this day” (2Kgs 17:41).

Unto what day? Presumably the author of 2nd Kings was saying that these nations were worshipping in this manner unto the day that he wrote this passage. What day would that be then? You’d need to be an exceptional Bible historian to even get within a stone’s throw of when that day might have been. So how is this profitable information for us?

What the author of 2nd Kings is talking about is the formation of the people who became known as the Samaritans. At this time in 2nd Kings the Assyrians came down and conquered the northern kingdom of Israel, so the Israelites were removed and the Assyrians brought in the people of five other conquered nations into the land. But, we are told that these new peoples didn’t fear the LORD, “therefore the LORD sent lions among them, which slew some of them” (2Kgs 17:25). In response, they sent a message back to the king of Assyria who sent back one of the priests of Israel to teach them how to worship the God of that land:

“Howbeit every nation made gods of their own, and put them in the houses of the high places which the Samaritans had made, every nation in their cities wherein they dwelt… So these nations feared the LORD, and served their graven images, both their children, and their children’s children: as did their fathers, so do they unto this day.” (2 Kgs 17:29, 41)

The phrase ‘both their children, and their children’s children’ is a biblical phrase that means that each and every succeeding generation continued in that same practice ‘unto this day’. Again, unto what day?
This is actually speaking of a very specific day, a day the one who wrote this passage would have no real understanding about. The only way the true meaning of this phrase comes alive is when the overseeing hand of God provides the fulfillment!

**The fulfillment**

We find this fulfillment in the New Testament when it says of Jesus that “He must needs go through Samaria” (John 4:4). Remember what we were told in 2nd Kings about the people the Assyrians brought into this area. It says they brought in people from five other nations and that ‘every nation made gods of their own’. It then tells us that they feared the Lord and served their graven images from that day forward. So, you had a mixed religion. You had the gods of these five nations trying to fit together with the one God of Israel.

Now, consider John 4. First of all it tells us that Jesus ‘had’ to go through Samaria — why? We know that Jesus was headed from Judea to Galilee, and we know that Samaria lies directly between the two, but we also know that, despite that fact, the Jews regularly went around Samaria when traveling because they hated the Samaritans. Maybe Jesus and his disciples were in a hurry and didn’t have time to go all the way across the Jordan and up through the area of Decapolis? We know that can’t be true because John 4:40 tells us that Jesus stayed there an extra two days at the behest of the Samaritans.

So, why did he “have” to go through Samaria? Because God told him to in the passage in 2nd Kings.

When Jesus arrives in Samaria he meets a woman of Samaria and he asks her for a drink of water. She’s shocked because she knows that Jews and Samaritans don’t talk to each other. But Jesus doesn’t care about such prejudices; instead, he starts to talk to her about the living water that he could provide to her, a water that can spring up ‘into everlasting life’. She says “Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw” (John 4:15). Jesus then tells her to go get her husband. When she says that she has no husband Jesus says “Thou hast well said, I have no husband: For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly” (John 4:17-18).

How does Jesus know that she has had five husbands and the man she’s with is not her husband? Because she is ‘the woman of Samaria’, she represents the Samaria that was formed back in 2nd Kings. That Samaria was made up of five polytheistic religions all married together and one monotheistic religion that could never be married to the others. The Samaritans had all practiced that same religion throughout every generation and as ‘the woman of Samaria’ her life with her five husbands and the one now who is not her husband reflected that false religion ‘unto this day’.

But, on this day Jesus spoke to her about “the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth” (John 4:23-24). And she went back to the others and told them to come meet a man “who told me all things that I ever did.” Then they came and
listened to Jesus and believed on him as well saying, “Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world” (John 4:42).

So, for at least one generation of Samaritans, they did not continue to “fear the LORD and serve their graven images, both their children, and their children’s children: as did their fathers” (2Kgs 17:41). Instead, they believed on Jesus because “the Father seeketh such to worship him” (John 4:23).

When the disciples came back and urged Jesus to eat, he said “I have meat to eat that ye know not of.” Neither the disciples nor the author of 2nd Kings would have known about this day because it was ‘meat to eat [they] knew not of’. And what did he understand? “My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work” (John 4:34). That’s why ‘had’ to go through Samaria, because the Father had sent Him as part of his great work to take out a people for his name.

We see then that when we approach the word of God ‘from faith to faith’, we can discover things that bring to life the power of transforming spirit of the LORD. You can play it safe and leave this book closed, or you can open it and let it reveal to you things that divide asunder soul and spirit, and joints and marrow, and discern the thoughts and intents of your heart, because the Father seeks such to worship him. Are you curious?

Jim Sullivan (Boston, MA)

Reflections on Inspiration

The intertwined Bible

Although the Bible consists of many parts, these parts are all very closely linked together. Thus Exodus continues the story begun in Genesis, and assumes that we have read and accepted Genesis. Leviticus and the first part of Numbers fill in some detail, while the remainder of Numbers and Deuteronomy carry on the narrative. Thus we are led to the books of the kings of Israel and Judah. These books make reference to certain prophets who spoke to the people; and later, in the books of the prophets, we read messages which in turn refer back to the kings. We observe too that the prophetic books frequently quote each other in a manner which shows perfect agreement. It is significant that the last of the Old Testament prophets, Malachi, exhorts the people to remember the Law of Moses, God’s servant. The “Law and the Prophets” are bound together.

The same sort of agreement between its component books is seen in the New Testament. The gospel writers describe the same Lord Jesus Christ. To a large extent they cover the same ground, relating the same discourses, describing the same miracles, recounting the same parables. But there are differences of approach and emphasis, and details omitted by one gospel writer are supplied by another; and together they give us as complete a picture as we need to have of the Lord’s mission. The Acts of the Apostles takes the story of the beginnings of Christianity further. We read of the birth of Christian communities. The work begins in Jerusalem, then extends to Judea and Samaria and thence to the “uttermost parts of the earth”.

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Very understandably the apostles would want to communicate with these infant ecclesias, and we are not surprised to find a further section of the New Testament consisting of letters, written by the apostles, to these communities and to some of their elders.

We are impressed also by the links which bind Old and New Testaments together. The New Testament contains hundreds of quotations and references to the Old Testament. These in turn make it clear that the New Testament writers accepted the Old Testament, and regarded themselves as God’s servants, appointed to carry on the work commenced by the prophets. Indeed the New Testament contains a number of explicit statements concerning the divinity, the infallibility and the authority of “the Scriptures”, both the Old and the New Testaments.

The recognition of authority and inspiration
As we have seen, the Old Testament is simply the word of God as accepted and acknowledged by Jesus and all the nation of Israel at the time of Jesus. And we have argued quite cogently, we believe, is that when various so called “authorities” discussed which of the New Testament books as we have them deserved to be regarded as the Word of God, that they were simply recognizing the reality of the way the inspiration of these books shone through their words, as they were circulated and spread throughout the growing ecclesias.

As Bro. Steve Davis has discussed, for the vast majority who cannot read Hebrew or Greek, we have access to a large number of different translations, differing in their target audience, utility for study for different purposes and ease of understanding, but all providing the same essential message echoing down through the millennia. Not only that, but the vast collection of information available to all Bible students, such as via the Internet enables all who so desire to study the text, letting all dive as deep as they want to into both the original languages and the context of any passage. So our community can readily confirm our one-time reputation as a people of the Bible. It is our hope that this can become a true reality.

Prophecy, history and the Bible
One of the main demonstration of the inspiration of the Bible is the way the prophets, under the inspiration and guidance of God, so accurately described events still future for them, but now revealed to us. But, in addition, the writers of the various books recorded history in ways that no human would normally do. To quote Robert Roberts:

“Man could not be trusted to write divine history. The written history of God’s work is the principal part of the work of God in a day like ours. It is the principal illustration of His mind and will. In the writing of such a history man would leave out that which was divinely essential — the record of man’s continual failures and sins — whoever might happen to be affected; and he would insert that which was immaterial — the mere political gossip of the age, tending either to human exaltation or depreciation according to the prejudices of the moment. And in all cases, he would be liable to err in his representations, and, therefore, could not
be trusted to give us a writing on which the children of God could rely. Things might be ‘infallibly true’ in themselves, as it is inaptly phrased; but the record of them for divine purposes is an affair of correct knowledge, divine discrimination as to what is important, and unsparing fidelity in the record of the things selected. All these things required inspiration. The things might be known in the mass without inspiration; but only inspiration could assort and select for divine ends. It is a question of the divine use of human materials, and for this divine guidance was necessary.”

The very way history is recorded, human failings as well as triumphs, serves to demonstrate the veracity and truth of the Bible. You simply have to read the records of kings in secular ancient writings to realize how the Bible rings so true: Who would dream of recording the failing of a man like King David, when his very name was so praised at the time as well as by succeeding generations? And the way wise King Solomon is criticized so roundly for his failings, but whose inspired writings have been recorded for us in the Proverbs?

So we have looked at some prophecies: concerning Israel, concerning the nations of the image of Daniel 2, of the way the life and work of Jesus was conveyed long before his birth. So indeed “We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit” (2Pet 1:19-21).

We have considered how Egyptian records illustrate the life of Moses, and how supposed problems with the archeological record of Egypt can be so easily reconciled with the Bible.

And we have only scratched the surface of the enormous amount of material available to those interested in the way the inspiration of the Bible can so easily be demonstrated. A few items worthy of referring to in this context are included at the end of this issue

**Conclusion**

Paul gives us assurance, through inspiration, that “all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works” (2Tim 3:16). We know that here Paul is referring to the Old Testament, but we recognize even in the New Testament his words were regarded as inspired, as Peter wrote “our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him. He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction” (2Pet 3:15-16). So we see that the New Testament, equally with the Old, should be treated in its totality as the inspired word of God. And so most of us have read it, time and again, and comprehended the truth of the words, ideas,
instructions, and above all the account of the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus contained therein.

However, we must recognize that ultimately it is only intimate personal experience with the unique qualities of the Bible, when it is approached reverently, that can bring that depth of conviction of its divine origin which can withstand all the assaults of the enemy. Such experience is a demonstration in itself that the Word of God is indeed, quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Having had such experience, a man can truly say with the Psalmist “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path” (Psa 119:105). Let us honor the Bible then for what it is, the inspired Word of God, and allow its light to guide us to His kingdom.

Peter Hemingray

Notes:

Further Reading

Books etc.
- H. Sulley and JJ. Andrew, The Bible defended from religious unbelief (Birmingham, The Christadelphian, 1884).
- The Testimony, Inspiration (Special Issue, July 1982)

Articles
• F.G. Jannaway, “Hold fast that which thou hast”, *The Christadelphian*, 1920, pp. 540-542.
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Sunday School – Appeal for Contributor

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

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

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

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

My Bible

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

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

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

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

I was brought up in a normal Christadelphian home, if there is one, with my father being for quite a while the Recording Brother of a large meeting, and I had the
opportunity to hear many prominent brethren give excellent exhortations and lectures, a few I still remember. They certainly must have influenced me in ways which, as a normal teenager, I did not appreciate at the time. But they all affected me and served to drive the reverence for the Bible into my psyche.

University

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Concluding thoughts

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

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

Peter Hemingray

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

Poetry

*Cowboys*

*World Explorers*

*Honorable Samurai*

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

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

I’m going to illustrate this with a poem by the Japanese master poet Kobyashi Issa, *Morning:*

> one deer licks  
> snow from the other’s  
> coat

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

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

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

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

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

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

We’ll look at this similarity in three ways:
• Poetry is deliberate
• Poetry is contextual
• Poetry is emotional

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

**Poetry is deliberate**

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

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

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

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

1 Then Moses and the people of Israel sang this song to the Lord, saying,
I will sing to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously;
the horse and his rider he has thrown into the sea.
2 The Lord is my strength and my song,
and he has become my salvation;
this is my God, and I will praise him,
my father’s God, and I will exalt him.
3 The Lord is a man of war;
the Lord is his name.

4 “Pharaoh’s chariots and his host he cast into the sea;
and his picked officers are sunk in the Red Sea.
5 The floods cover them;
they went down into the depths like a stone.
6 Thy right hand, O Lord, glorious in power,
thy right hand, O Lord, shatters the enemy.
7 In the greatness of thy majesty thou overthrowest thy adversaries;
thou sendest forth thy fury, it consumes them like stubble.
8 At the blast of thy nostrils the waters piled up,
the floods stood up in a heap;
the deeps congealed in the heart of the sea”
(Exod 15:1–8 RSV).
Psalm 119, on the other hand, is an acrostic poem, recognized as an amazing poem in its intricacy. 176 verses where 8 words (Word, Law, Testimonies, Ways, Precepts, Statutes, Commandments, Rules) essentially meaning the same thing, are used repeatedly in many ways. A very technically stunning poem, even recognized in *poetry for Dummies*. It is an example of an alphabetical or acrostic psalm, where the first section or line begins with the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet, the next with the second, and so on, until all the letters of the alphabet have been used. Thus, Psalm 119 consists of 22 groups of eight verses each. The number of groups equals the number of letters in the Hebrew alphabet. The first letter of each verse in a group is (in the original Hebrew text) that letter of the alphabet which corresponds numerically to the group. The NET Bible shows this clearly:

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Poetry is contextual**

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

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

Again, from Paul:

“For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon
the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? As it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom 10:11-17).

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

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

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

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

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

**Poetry captures and shares emotions**

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

This exhortation is also the sharing of an emotion. I am blown away by the beauty
of our Lord and how He wants to share His love with us, through the sacrifice of His son, and my goal in this exhortation is to share that emotion with you.

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

The statement of emotions is completely ineffective.

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

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

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

Jesus

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

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

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

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

Levi Gelineau (Simi Hills, CA)
Hope — (6) Isaiah’s Visionary Hope

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

Hope in the book of Isaiah has changed the world

The United Nations was established post WWII as a world authority to manage international conflicts and end war. The U.N. has been headquartered in New York City since 1951 and many nations have given it historical symbols of peace. Surprisingly, it was the Soviet Union in 1959 that donated a sculpture with a quote that says: “Let Us Beat Swords Into Plowshares,” (see photo). The sculpture is of a workman beating a sword into a plowshare and bears the Biblical quote from 28 centuries ago. Interestingly, this gift inspired another monument not located on U.N. property, but positioned across the street to appease any nations that would be opposed to this Biblical quote. It quotes the full Isaiah verse (above) and is often misquoted as being engraved on one of the U.N. buildings. Appropriately, this site is now simply called “the Isaiah Wall.” It says: “They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore.”

Isaiah was a major prophet who is quoted more times in the New Testament than any other Old Testament prophet. Jesus quoted Isaiah many times and alluded to his writings as well (Matt 5:4; 11:5; 12:18-21; 15:7-9; 21:5). Isaiah’s name means “salvation of the LORD” and his message parallels that of all prophets who acted as God’s spokesmen to the people. The nation of Israel was steeped in sin at the time, and Isaiah had the unpopular job of rebuking and exhorting the people to change and obey Yahweh, the God of Israel. He gave a doom-and-gloom outlook for the people and their country, if they continued
in their wayward ways. Isaiah saw the sins of idolatry and declared God's will to repent for nearly 50 years. It was a challenging job for any man of God as he predicted one disaster after another.

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

**Isaiah and The King**

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

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

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

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

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

**Isaiah and the Kingdom**

Like virtually every prophet in Israel, Isaiah led a ministry of peaks and valleys. Isaiah prophesized during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah and...
concluded with evil Manasseh. Isaiah lived at the time when the northern kingdom of Israel was conquered by Assyria and the people were removed from the land. He predicted the fall of the southern kingdom, Judah, as well and this was ultimately fulfilled by Babylon in 586 BC. Isaiah was tasked for many years with unpopular messages condemning the godlessness of the Jewish people. He had a job nobody else would want until the righteous King Hezekiah began to reign. He literally cleaned up the country from its idolatry and Hezekiah’s kingdom became a symbol of the future Kingdom of God. The book of Isaiah is closely connected to Hezekiah’s kingdom and points forward to Jesus as king of the greater Kingdom. Regarding this promised kingdom, Isaiah gives many gleams of hope to encourage the troubled people. Those who have faith in Abraham’s promises and in Isaiah’s predictions are sure to inherit the good news in Isaiah about God’s future kingdom. Isaiah said:

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

“Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Then will the lame leap like a deer, and the mute tongue shout for joy. Water will gush forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert.... And the ransomed of the LORD will return. They will enter Zion with singing; everlasting joy will crown their heads. Gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away” (Isa 35:5-6, 10).

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

Isaiah is considered the greatest of all Hebrew prophets. He left a bright gleam of hope that is just as relevant today as it was in ancient times. Isaiah wrote about a great King and his kingdom to come. He filled in the gaps in the promises to
Abraham and David with amazing detail and emotion. He prophesized about salvation in the promised Messiah and introduces us to the personality of Jesus Christ. Thanks to Isaiah, we have a living hope that can last forever.

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

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

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

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

Chicago, Ill Ecclesia

Doctrines to be Rejected
(3) — The Necessity

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

It must also be stressed that there are three sections of our Statement of Faith: (1) The Truth to be received, (2) the doctrines to be rejected, and (3) the Commandments of Christ. Together, these three parts form “A Statement of Faith Forming the basis of Our Fellowship.” As it is this Statement that holds the Christadelphian Community together, the three parts are inseparable. There are reasons as well as Scriptural Precedents for a set of negative as well as positive statements:
- The Ten Commandments summarizing the Law God gave to His people Israel is possibly the best illustration to be found anywhere in Scripture. The last five commandments are all straight negatives, introduced by the chilling phrase, “Thou shalt not...” But the other five are by no means wholly positive, even
though the effect of all ten should have been both positive and beneficial to the believing Jew. He was told, for example, to “Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy”, and that this could only be achieved if “in it thou shalt not do any work”. God also declared that He is “the LORD thy God who brought thee out of Egypt”, therefore “thou shalt have no other gods”.

- After the Law had been given through Moses to the infant nation, the implications of obedience were also emphasized. If God’s people obeyed His commands, they would receive abundant blessings, “in the city ... in the field ... when thou comest in ... when thou goest out”. However, if they disobeyed, not only would the blessings be withheld, but “cursed shalt thou be in the city ... in the field ... when thou comest in ... when thou goest out” (Deuteronomy 28).

- The examples are not limited either to the Law of Moses or to the Old Testament. When the Apostle Paul listed the attributes that should flow from a believer’s association with the Lord Jesus Christ, calling them “the fruit of the spirit”, he set forth the positive outworking of the gospel, saying that “against such is no law”. But this list is immediately preceded by another containing activities wholly incompatible with the new life in Christ. These, by contrast, are “the works of the flesh”. Only by placing side by side these contrasting ways of life could the Apostle declare so forthrightly the positive and constructive conclusion that must be drawn: “They that be Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit” (Gal 5:19–25).

- One final example, taken from the Lord’s own final message, must suffice in making the point that the Scriptures abound in negative definitions to strengthen and define positive truths. In summarizing the message of the Apocalypse, the voice from heaven revealed to John that, “he that overcometh shall inherit all things”. The measure of those who are the heirs of God’s eternal promises is shown by describing who will not inherit: “the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and idolators, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone” (Rev 21:7, 8).

### Relationship to “Truth to be Received”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Foundation Clause</th>
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<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>That the Bible is only partly the work of inspiration—or if wholly so, contains errors which inspiration has allowed</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>That God is three persons</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>That the Son of God was co-eternal with the Father</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>That Christ was born with a “free life”</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>That Christ’s nature was immaculate</td>
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<td>6.</td>
<td>That the Holy Spirit is a person distinct from the Father</td>
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<td>7.</td>
<td>That man has an immortal soul</td>
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<td>8.</td>
<td>That man consciously exists in death</td>
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<td>That the wicked will suffer eternal torture in hell</td>
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<td>10.</td>
<td>That the righteous will ascend to the kingdoms beyond the skies when they die</td>
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<td>11.</td>
<td>That the devil is a supernatural personal being</td>
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<td>12.</td>
<td>That the Kingdom of God is “the church”</td>
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<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>That the Gospel is the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ merely</td>
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<td>14.</td>
<td>That Christ will not come till the close of the thousand years</td>
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<td>15.</td>
<td>That the tribunal of Christ, when he comes, is not for the judgement of saints, but merely to divide among them different degrees of reward</td>
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<td>16.</td>
<td>That the resurrection is confined to the faithful</td>
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<td>17.</td>
<td>That the dead rise in an immortal state</td>
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<td>18.</td>
<td>That the subject-nations of the thousand years are immortal</td>
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<td>19.</td>
<td>That the law of Moses is binding on believers of the gospel</td>
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<td>20.</td>
<td>That the observance of Sunday is a matter of duty</td>
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<td>21.</td>
<td>That baby-sprinkling is a matter of duty</td>
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<td>22.</td>
<td>That “heathens”, idiots, pagans, and very young children will be saved</td>
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<td>23.</td>
<td>That man can be saved by morality or sincerity, without the Gospel</td>
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<td>24.</td>
<td>That the gospel alone will save, without the obedience of Christ’s commandments</td>
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<td>25.</td>
<td>That a man cannot believe without possessing the Spirit of God</td>
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<td>26.</td>
<td>That men are predestined to salvation unconditionally</td>
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<td>27.</td>
<td>That there is no sin in the flesh</td>
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<td>28.</td>
<td>That Joseph was the actual father of Jesus</td>
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<td>29.</td>
<td>That the earth will be destroyed</td>
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<td>30.</td>
<td>That baptism is not necessary to salvation</td>
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<td>31.</td>
<td>That a knowledge of the truth is not necessary to make baptism valid</td>
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<tr>
<td>32.</td>
<td>That some meats are to be refused on the score of uncleanness</td>
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The ones in bold were added after 1883: one was dropped, which read “That Christ was of a different nature from other men”. It will be discussed later along with the previous one, #4, “That Christ’s nature was immaculate”.

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

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

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

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

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Last change to Birmingham Amended Statement of Faith

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

The Christadelphian, 1919 p 559
Life Application Activities #2

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

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

Praying for the Bible Mission

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

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

Supporting the Bible Mission

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


Cooperating in Service

Paul emerged as the missionary leader. Barnabas accepted a supporting role.
- Create a list of things you can do to support others (at home, in Sunday
school, in the ecclesia, at school, at work) without demanding your own way. Ask each student to select one thing from the list to put into practice during the coming week. Share the results of these efforts the next time you meet.

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

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

Seeking to understand the Bible

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

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

Dealing with right and wrong

- Ask your students and their families to take time during the coming week to identify things in the world around them that “pervert the right ways of the Lord.” Evaluate such things as advertisements, magazines, television, movies, websites, different kinds of entertainment, toys, games, stores, businesses, common teachings, accepted behaviors, etc. Create a log of things that promote unbelief and ungodliness.
- Discuss student logs in class next week. What is the standard by which a
disciple evaluates these things? What action should a faithful disciple take in relation to these things? The Lord struck Elymas blind. How can we “blind” these things as far as their ability to influence us is concerned? 1

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


**Preaching the word**

- Look at the book of Acts and identify ways that the gospel was preached in New Testament times. Then generate a class list of ways the gospel is being preached today. For example, look at the Ecclesial News entries in our magazines to see what different ecclesias are doing to preach the gospel.

- Also look at our preaching magazines, explore the This Is Your Bible website together (thisisyourbible.com), look at ecclesial websites and Christadelphian postings on YouTube, etc.

- Talk about the ways that preaching in our times is the same as it was in New Testament times and how it is different. What will you do with the list of preaching methods you have generated?

- See **Praying for the Bible Mission** above. Carry out the same learning activities for preaching efforts being made by your ecclesia or by other ecclesias in your area. Ecclesial news entries in our magazines often tell what individual ecclesias are doing to preach the gospel. Pray for them.

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

Jim Harper: sundayschool@tidings.org; www.pinterest.com/2harps4u/ (Meriden, CT)

Notes:


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

- Your donations make possible the (Preaching) efforts, in the western hemisphere undertaken by the many brethren and sisters who volunteer for short visits and long term assignments.

- **We are the only “safety net” available (Welfare) for most of the ecclesias we serve.**

(Extracted from the July 2015 CBMA Newsletter)
The Death of Saul

The end

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

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

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

Saul lacking spirituality

All of us come to a knowledge of the truth at some point in our lives. Whether raised in a Christadelphian home or exposed to the truth of God’s Holy Scriptures later in life, there came a point for each of us at which we became responsible to our Heavenly Father’s great and high calling. Saul’s start as captain of God’s people was no different. While searching for his father’s asses, Saul’s servant informed him that “there is in this city (Ramah) a man of God” (1Sam 9:6). Take note here that it was Saul’s servant that knew at least something of this man of God. Neither of them, however, knew the seer by name. Later in the chapter we see that Saul approached Samuel himself and asked the whereabouts of the seer’s house (1Sam 9:18). Imagine the thought process of Samuel here. He had just been told in the preceding verses that this man Saul would be captain over the nation of Israel — a man who was so lost in his spiritual life that he didn’t know a prophet when he saw one standing in a city with an alter during a feast time. The indication here that
Saul’s spiritual life was in need of strengthening begs the question, of what things filled Saul’s mind on a daily basis? It was not a knowledge of ecclesial matters as is clearly seen by his lack of awareness of Samuel and his role, as well as the feast that was taking place. Where was his heart? Where were his priorities if they were not on such spiritual matters? Perhaps his thoughts were on himself or his own endeavors. Evidence from Scripture throughout Saul’s life seems to indicate that he was a man who was focused on the outward appearance and fleshly gain. After all, “there was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he; from his shoulders and upward he was higher than any of the people” (1Sam 9:2). The attributes that Scripture takes the time to mention about Saul are all outward, and the people noticed. In 1Sam 9:20 Saul is told that the nation desired a man like him to be their leader. They wanted Saul’s outward appearance and his stature to lead them into battle against their enemies; to represent them. The nation, sadly, was not after his heart. God, however, was — just as much as he is after ours.

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

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

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

**The early work of Saul as king**

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

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

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

We see in the next few verses that Saul again mishandled the situation and broke God’s law when he took it upon himself to offer burnt and peace offerings rather than wait for Samuel as he had been instructed. So, how do we (or did we) react to those first few real trials in our walk? I am talking about the trials that introduced us to the molding power of our God when He, as the potter, pressed us so hard
that we were moved to change and conform to His ways. Did we handle them perfectly? Or were we, like Saul, caught off guard. I imagine most all of us learned the hard way in through those first few trials.

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

David appears

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

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

Now that David was present to fill in where Saul was lacking, Saul’s shortcomings were brutally exposed. There was no hiding his deficiencies now. He began to exist in the shadow of another. Saul quickly realized this as we can clearly see from his reply to the singing in vs. 8 “what can he have more but the kingdom?” The Jerusalem Bible translates this phrase “he has all but the kingship now.” Recall that Saul was to be captain over God’s people, but never a king. Saul can now see David surpassing him in this area and this drives his jealousy to rage and gives way to his mission of removing David.
Because the last several articles in this series have covered the life of David from his anointing up until our current topic, including the growing hostility from Saul toward David and the trials that ensued for both parties, I will not digress into the events already aptly covered by other brethren. Instead let’s fast forward to Saul’s last few days. It is in his final hours, and ultimately in his death, that the lessons of his life really hit close to home for any brother or sister in Christ.

The final days of Saul

In 1st Samuel 28 we find Saul again confronted by the Philistines. Not much has changed for Saul over the course of his life by way of his spiritual development. We read in vs.5, “And when Saul saw the host of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart greatly trembled.” This is a sad record to read. We read in 1Sam 13:7 that he trembled at the sight of the Philistine army. After years of God trying to develop Saul’s character through many opportunities (some created especially for him), he continued to tremble. Saul would not let God into his life. He was well aware of His hand at work around him and even in his own life as we are told: “And Saul was afraid of David, because the Lord was with him, and was departed from Saul” (1Sam 18:12). However, his stubbornness and self-centered mind kept him distant from his God. In his final hours we read of his visit to the woman of Endor, a necromancer who, had Saul done his job thoroughly, should not have remained in Israel (1Sam 28:3). It was during that visit that he was given the message from God that he and his sons will be dead in 24 hours’ time.

Imagine the impact that such a message would have on Saul. For all his personality defects and stubbornness to accept God, he knew the truth behind God’s words and he did not doubt them. We would expect that God was finished with Saul at this point. After all, what was there left for God to work with? But God is not like us. He is “merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression...”
and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty...” (Exod 36:6-7). We see God again giving Saul one more opportunity: a final 24 hours to give hard thought to whether or not he would remain guilty before God or change and let God forgive his iniquity. This would have been a solemn night for our brother Saul.

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

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

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

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

Jonathan Newth (Reseda, CA)
The New Testament Church
(3) The Structure of the Church

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

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

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

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

“Howbeit many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand” (Acts 4:4). Notice the staggering numbers here — 120; 3,000; now 5,000 — that makes a minimum of 8,120. And it says “the number of the men,” so presumably there were women as well who were baptized, but who
appear not to have been counted; or it may have been that only the men were there at the time listening to the word being preached. This we do not know.

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

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

Two things arise from this incident.

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

**The first “deacons”**

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

The business of administering the ecclesial largess, as it were, had become too much for the Apostles to manage. They said, “It is not meet that we should leave the word of God and serve tables.” “So now you had better appoint some brethren to do it.” And, again, “the Church” appointed them. Look at Acts 6:5: “And the
saying pleased the whole multitude”: and they chose Stephen, Philip, and the others. So who chose them? The Apostles did not say, “It’s you and you, and you and you and you.” That was not the way it was done. The Apostles said to the whole multitude, “Look out seven men of good repute, and let them be appointed to this task”; and they appointed them. And I suggest that, having in mind the tremendous growth in numbers which we have already seen described in the Acts of the Apostles, there would be no other way in which they, the multitude, could make these nominations except by having some kind of ballot system; some kind of voting. It is even possible, I would now suggest that there was more than one church in Jerusalem, and that it might have been representative of several churches who through their nominees made the recommendations as to the brethren who should till these offices. It seems a little incredible to me that such vast numbers of believers as are described should all be housed together in one church or ecclesial building in Jerusalem. (Certainly not in the Upper Room of Acts 1.)

Now we go over to Acts 15, to which we shall have occasion to refer on a number of occasions in these studies, because it is one of the wonderful little insights into the ecclesial situation in the New Testament times. Trouble has arisen in the Church at Antioch because Paul and Barnabas, having taken the Gospel to the Gentiles and founded the Church at Antioch, there are now “certain men come down from Jerusalem,” Judean Christians, who are saying (verse 1): “Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.” And in verse 2, it says, “When there had been no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question.”

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

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

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

Delegates discuss

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

In Acts 15:13 it would appear that by this time James had taken over the leadership of the Jerusalem church, because he appears to have acted as president at this, what we might call, “business meeting” of the ecclesia. “After they had held their peace, James answered them.” And he summed up the matter in words with which we are all familiar, pointing out that Peter had already had this revelation from God, through the vision that was given to him at the time of Cornelius’ conversion, that he should consider no man as being common or unclean, but that God is taking out of every nation a people for His name. And then in the 22nd verse they summarize the whole thing, and a decision is arrived at. And I want you to notice how the decision is arrived at — “Then it pleased the apostles and elders with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. And they wrote letters by them after this manner. . .”
Now we know the kind of things they put in the letters. We need not go into that. It is not our purpose at this stage, though we may look at it later on in this series of studies. But what we are interested in is the way the thing was done. The apostles and elders considered it. They reported to the whole church. The whole church, with the apostles and elders, came to a decision as to what should be done, and the letter was sent out in the name of them all. It was “the church, with the apostles and elders” who sent out the letter guiding the Gentile ecclesias, for the time being, in the way in which they should act in this particular situation. And this is roughly the pattern we see in all the New Testament epistles.

The particular offices

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

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

It may be that as the church developed, first of all the “eldership” was appointed, and then perhaps a particular member was appointed as the shepherd or “bishop” of the ecclesia, a little bit like, though not exactly like, our own arranging brethren and recording brother. The Recording Brother has a distinct responsibility, although he is ex officio one of the arranging committee. But in Titus we read: “For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee.— if any man be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly. For a bishop must be blameless as the steward of God” (Titus 1:5-7), and so on. So
here the bishop and the elder are one and the same person. Paul is describing the qualifications of the elder, and in justification of what he is saying he says, “For a bishop must be blameless.” The elders then, or the bishops of the ecclesia, I think were the rulers of the local ecclesias; probably adopted from the Jewish custom of having rulers in their synagogues.

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

Dr. Alvan Lamson¹ in his history of the church proves conclusively, from the historical narratives that he quotes, that the appointment of bishops other than by the individual ecclesia itself did not come until late in the second century. The bishops up to that time were always appointed, he alleges, by the ecclesias themselves, and this would be in harmony with what we have already seen in the 1st chapter and the 6th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. It is possible, as I have suggested, that in time one of the elders became a permanent “chairman of the committee” as we would say, and that he had the particular title of bishop, just as the recording brother may be thought of as the “leader” of his ecclesia today. That is to say that his function is not just to be a secretary. It is to keep a general eye on the well-being of the whole ecclesia; to give a lead to the arranging brethren; and to be responsible in a great degree for the welfare of each of its members.

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

Len Richardson

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

With the passing of Bro. Len Richardson, (on June 21, 1997 at age 81) the Brotherhood has lost one of the most colorful and popular speaking brethren of this generation, certainly one of the best known in this country and abroad. He was known for his logical appraisal and plain speaking on all issues closely affecting our community; his booklets and pamphlets, and published letters written during the last forty years. (The Christadelphian, 1997, p316)
Seven miles from New Amsterdam, Guyana, is the riverside village of Sisters. Thirty years ago Bro. John Shako lived there, in a tiny shack amid the rice fields. He was very poor and entirely bedridden following amputation of both his legs. For a few years, until he fell asleep in the Lord, the New Amsterdam ecclesia made arrangements for breaking of bread in his little hut. The following is an exhortation which brother Shako gave on one such occasion in 1964. The brother who transcribed it — we never knew who it was — added a comment: Brother John emphasized each point enthusiastically by bouncing up and down on his bed.

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

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

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

Then one day I thought of the verse, “Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth” (Heb 12:6). Then He must love me! I must have lost my legs for a purpose. God made me! He could have taken all of me; but He didn’t. It all seemed so different when I started to think like this. The Lord knows our frame, the psalmist said. And He knows best: He does what’s right. This “natural body”, this frail mortal frame,
doesn’t count for much anyway, does it? Rich or poor, it makes no difference. Do what you like, say what you like, death comes to us all. Man comes and makes a lot of noise, then the next thing you know he’s dead. Do you know, two Nobel Prize winners have come from this one little village,¹ and they are famous. But Mr. Nobel, whoever he was, won’t save them. He can’t give them eternal life. I’m a lot better off than they are, because I have Jesus my Savior. I have the Truth. What more could I wish for? The main thing is to face death with confidence.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Introduction

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

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

The main participants

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

Its objects are in the main: 1. The conversion of Negros in the hope of the gospel. 2. To establish and oversee negro Ecclesias D.V. throughout these United States. 3 To unify and mutualize these through one central government and so insure permanency, efficiency and strength. It regards as a thing most sacred the unity of “the one body”. The fixed policy of its ecclesial department, under the control of Bro. Benjamin, is to promote and to maintain fraternal relations with all ecclesias and brethren in a manner that will not compromise its principles, confound its individuality or the nature of its character, or conceal its true motives. Brethren who shall read this and who may desire to know more about this movement, are cordially invited to address their inquiries direct to the office of the C E.
Association, Dept, of Ecclesias No 227 W 63rd street. They should be clear, distinct and definite. To all prompt and respectful attention is guaranteed.1

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

**William Nelson**

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

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

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

“Upon Bro. Benjamin’s arrival in New York he united in the movement with Bro. Nelson and the work went on until there was quite a body there. Then a dispute arose and these two leaders separated, each having sympathizers and — yes, we venture to say, followers. Part of our mission in New York City was to meet these brethren and get the rights of the situation if possible, and show that our attitude was not because of prejudice against the colored race, though still not very sanguine of the real and permanent success of the Truth among them in their present state and status. We think we removed the misunderstanding of our attitude, but to remove the estrangement between the two leading brethren was
impossible. We spent some time with both separately, and heard enough hard sayings from each against one another to make clear that fellowship was out of the question, and any attempt at even union, to say nothing of unity, would end in total failure.

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

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

**Lionel Benjamin**

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

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

"Philadelphia, PA… Bro. Benjamin had been a member of our ecclesia since January, 1915, having for some time prior to that been engaged in proclaiming the Truth in New York City, where at one time a large ecclesia of colored brethren and sisters existed. He was well known in England, where he visited in 1910 and lectured at various places. The present writer was in England in 1924 and heard pleasing references of Bro. Benjamin's visit. He had not been in good health for a considerable time, and about a
year ago was in hospital for several months. About three weeks before his
death he went to the hospital again and fell asleep on Monday, August 12th,
the cause being uremia, with chronic nephritis and chronic myocarditis.
He was laid to rest at Sham Hill, a suburb of Philadelphia, on August 16th.
He was 57 years of age and learned the truth in British Guinea (sic) where
he was born. He leaves a sisterwife and three children.5

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

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

Peter Hemingray (Detroit Royal Oak, MI)

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

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

The Fraternal Visitor, August 1911, p. 255.
Visit to Chile

At the end of the road that runs down the western coast of South America is the city of Puerto Montt, Chile. It is a long way from anywhere, however, we live in an age when Distance has lost much of her power. Our friend in Puerto Montt who met us via Facebook, read about us in www.labiblia.com, studies with us on Skype, and occasionally receives a letter from us in the post, is a good example of how the call of God’s word isn’t fussy about the medium.

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

This visit also provided the opportunity to meet with the small ecclesia in Santiago and with Brother and Sister Polo and Ester who live in the city of Temuco, about halfway between Santiago and Puerto Montt. Bro. Polo is currently working in Calama in the north of Chile which means that the brethren and friends are spread over 2500 kilometres from north to south. Distance flashes her claws.

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

Written by Robert Alderson
Submitted by Jan Berneau, CBMA/CBMC
A Visit to Three Ecclesias in South America
May 2015

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

Jamaica News

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Written by Jim and Jean Hunter
Submitted by Jan Berneau CBMA/CBMC Publicity
Puerto Rico — Good News!

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

We enjoyed our first few days with Bro. Edgardo studying, in particular, keeping the Sabbath and the Law of Moses (a common misunderstanding) in preparation for a contact we were scheduled to visit — unfortunately the man cancelled last-minute. However, we were able to visit two other men the same day. Urayoan received us at his nice, airy, second story apartment in an older colonial-style home. He spoke very clearly and freely about his belief in Christadelphian understanding of the Truth — appears to have no problems and very happy to have found us. He has finished three correspondence courses with Sis. Jean Hunter in California. He showed Edgardo and me a big pocket folder with all his lessons and booklets he had received. He read sections from “Viviendo La Verdad” (Living the Truth) — thinks it’s a great booklet! He had a full hot meal ready for us when we arrived — a very pleasant man! The other man, Alejandro, met us at a MacDonald’s. He and wife were JWs, but found too many false teachings, plus their manner of dealing with people to be unacceptable. He was very happy to have found us on www.labiblia.com. He wants to know more and more... and appears to understand demons of OT as idols and in NT as sicknesses, but wanted to have a fuller understanding. So we have a follow-up with both men. We pray that God will help us guide them to the Truth of His Word!

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

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

Written by Don Luff, CBMA linkman for Puerto Rico
Submitted by Jan Berneau, CBMA/CBMC Publicity
Books from The Tidings

Observations Along the Way: A Bible Journal, by George Booker
As the sequel to “On the Way”, this book is the album of a spiritual journey, written for fellow travelers along the Way to the Kingdom. Its pages present in-depth studies and thoughtful exhortations, as well as lighter meditations and musings. The subject matter is wide-ranging: practical issues of life in the Truth, Bible exposition, biographical sketches, reflections on today’s world, personal viewpoints, and much more. 305 pages, illustrated; $9.00 USD

On the Way: Bible Studies, Exhortations, Meditations and Musings, by George Booker
Insights, reflections, practical issues, difficult passages, personal observations and more to uplift and encourage all those “on the Way” whether young or old in the Truth. $9.00 US (309 pages).

The Ecclesia at Ephesus, by Ryan Mutter
Studying the Ecclesia at Ephesus provides powerful lessons in spiritual growth relevant in today’s times. $9.00 US (soft cover, 264 pages, with color maps).

Bible Guidelines for a Happy Marriage, by John C. Bilello
Sound, proactive, Biblical advice on how to build and maintain a happy marriage. $6.00 US (soft cover, 127 pages).

The Creation Text: Studies in Early Genesis, by David Levin
Forty-nine studies offer fresh insights into early Genesis by examining the text and structure of the first five chapters. $12.00 US (364 pages).

My Journey in Faith, by Ronald Hicks
A brother shares his life experience in the Truth with Christadelphians around the world, and the joy of mission work. Special price: reduced from $10.00 to $5.00 US (372 pages).

Pictures of Redemption, by George Booker
Explores parables, analogies, and figures of speech used in Scripture to illustrate the many facets of redemption. $6.00 US (soft cover, 192 pages).

The Whole Armor of God, by Ryan Mutter
This story takes place nearly 3,000 years ago, but the spiritual challenges are familiar to today’s young people. $6.00 US (110 pages).

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Dear Bro. Peter,

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

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

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

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

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

Joachim Bromet (Sacramento, CA)

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

Please send in news and notices by the 5th of the preceding month; please include full name of ecclesia and recording brother.
Word files or e-mail in text-only format are preferred.

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

Baltimore, MD

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

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

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

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

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

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

Tidings — September, 2015
Our CYC continues to be very active and helpful for our young people. Our members are from the Baltimore and Washington ecclesias. In addition the CYC has been pleased to welcome young people from the Catonsville Ecclesia and interested friends of CYC members. The theme for classes has been, “Preaching the Word”. The focus has been on sharing and spreading the gospel. One class per month has been a “Bring A Friend” endeavor.

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

Carol Link

BRANTFORD, ON

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

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

Daniel Billington

JASONVILLE, IN

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

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

Ted Plew

MISSISSAUGA WEST, ON

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

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

We report that Bro. Jeff and Sis. Karen Rose, Sis. Caitlin Rose and Sis. Nicole Rose have transferred to the Hamilton Book Road, ON Ecclesia, and that Bro. Rhe and Sis. Patti Desjardins and Bro. Tom and Sis. Yolanda Baldock have transferred to the Cambridge, ON Ecclesia. We commend them to the love and care of their new ecclesial families.
We also welcome by way of transfer, Bro. Dave and Sis. Edith Luff (Hamilton Book Road, ON) and Sis. Lynda Perks (Toronto Church Street, ON)

Graham Baldock

NORFOLK, VA

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

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

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

Mark Giordano

PRINCE GEORGE, BC

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

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

Jonathan Lawrence

THOUSAND OAKS, CA

During the past few months we have been pleased to welcome many brothers and sisters from our neighboring California ecclesias around the Table of our Lord. In addition, we welcomed from afar: Henry and Sharon Wisniewski, Randy, Suzanna, Jessica Yoshida, and Hannah Suggs (Rogue Valley, OR); Samantha Fletcher (Heathmont,
Aust.); Graeme and Rachel Osborne (Okanagan, BC); Coleen Uiga, Andrew and Carly Culver, and Jeff Lang (Norfolk, VA); Dennis and Tiffany Bevans (Baltimore, MD); Paul and Belinda Styles (Detroit Livonia, MI); Sis. Brooke and Jennifer Styles (Ann Arbor, MI); Ken and Diane Styles (Detroit Royal Oak, MI); Gary and Shirley Smith, and David Wisniewski (Brant County, ON); Steve and Julie Snobelen (Halifax, NS); and Carl and Virginia Parry (Salisbury, Aust.).

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

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

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

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

Tom Graham

VIENNA, ON

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

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

Alice Miller
Are you afraid? What are you doing about it?

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

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

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

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

Both cities were doomed. Both cities were known for their wickedness. Everyone in both cities was afraid. Both cities were visited by someone who gave advance warning. Jericho was destroyed, but God spared the family of one who trusted in Him, and in Nineveh the whole city responded and all were spared. It is important to fear and respect our God and to cry mightily to Him, the only source of salvation.
From the signs of the times around us we can see that a time of trouble is coming on the earth such has never been before. We face problems on every front: climate change, economic collapse, widespread violence, and declining standards of morality. The common man is very aware of the crises the world is facing and that there are no good answers. Jesus tells us of a time coming when men’s hearts will be failing them for fear and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth; we may be seeing it now — and it probably will get worse.

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

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

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

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

Robert J. Lloyd
SEPTEMBER, 2015

12 ASK Day at the Brantford Ecclesial Hall. A day of fellowship, witness and discussion. Lunch will be provided. Please pre-register at peteresa@hotmail.com or call 416-695-3939.

12-13 Nashua, NH Study Weekend with Bro. Jim Sullivan (Stoughton, MA): “Unto This Day: Revealing Lessons from God’s Wonderful Word.” Contact Bro. Peter Dixon at jpdixon@charter.net.

19-20 Bedford, NS Study Weekend with Bro. Chris Sales (Shelburne, ON): “Hebrews — A Practical Exposition.” Location: North Woodside Community Centre, Dartmouth, NS. Contact Bro. Dale Crawford at bedfordchristadelphians@gmail.com or 902-431-6650.

19-20 Lombard, IL (Chicago) Fall Gathering with Bro. Steve Davis leading the adult classes starting at 9:30 a.m., Saturday. Please contact Sis. Sue Johnson for housing and to RSVP at 847-438-4890 or e-mail: tarthurjo@juno.com.

26-27 Kouts, IN Fall Study Weekend at Woodland Park Community Center, 2100 Willowcreek Rd. beginning at 10:00 a.m. Bro. Matt Norton (Lismore, Australia) speaking. Theme: “An Overview of Revelation” — great for adults and kids. Contact Bro. Joe Bennett at 219-762-2704 or jkb8275@comcast.net.

25-27 Norfolk, VA CYC Study Weekend. Bro. Dev Ramcharan (Toronto Church Street, ON) will speak on the theme of “The Women who Followed the Lamb.” Registration fee is $35. For more information and to register, please go to http://norfolkchristadelphians.com/norfolk-cyc-study-weekend.

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3-4 Ontario Fall Gathering at Maple High School, Vaughan, ON. Theme: “Through Patience and Comfort of the Scriptures we have Hope” (Rom 15:4). Speakers Bre. John Mannell and Scott Wentworth. Contact Bro. Bruce Abel bnb69abel@hotmail.ca. For registration contact Bro. Will Snodgrass OCFGathering@gmail.com.


9-11 Vancouver, BC Fraternal Gathering. Speaker Bro. Tec Morgan (Castle Bromwich, UK): “God Dwelling with Man”. Contact Sis. Pam Snobelen at pamela721@shaw.ca or 604 881 4733 for a program.


12 Brantford, ON Thanksgiving Gathering, Bro. Ken Styles (Detroit Royal Oak, MI). Theme “Fruits of the Spirit.” To be held at the Copetown Community Centre, registration 12:30pm, dinner provided. For more information contact brantfordchristadelphians@gmail.com.

Coming Events (Lord Willing)

(Please send in notices at least two months before the date of the event. Three months is preferable.)
16-18 Women at the Well Retreat, Desert Hot Springs, CA. Sis. Carol Link (Baltimore, MD) will be leading our classes on “Lord, help me: a women’s cry”. Register with Sis. Bonnie Sommerville kenandbonnie@simihills.org. For questions contact Sis. Sandy McLeod sandrarmcleod@gmail.com or Sis. Denise Sisco siscofamily@msn.com. Sponsored by Simi Hills, CA Ecclesia.


NOVEMBER, 2015
7-8 Sarasota, FL Fall Study Weekend with Bro. Richard Morgan (Hamilton Book Road, ON), speaking on: “Prophecy, Predestination, and the Purpose of God.” Contact Bro. James Wilkinson at jameswilkinson@hotmail.com or 941-412-7988.

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

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

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

DECEMBER, 2015
26-Jan 1 Ontario Winter Bible School, The Best Western Highland Inn & Conference Center, Midland (ON). Speakers: Bro. Mark O’Grady (Tawa, NZ); Bro. Everett Muniz (Paris Ave, OH); Bro. Paul Billington (Brantford, ON) adults; Bro Jesse Adair (Hamilton Book Rd, ON) young people. Registration information and other details are available from our web site www.ontariowinterbibleschool.com.

FEBRUARY, 2016
6 Brantford, ON Annual Junior CYC & Little Disciples Winter Gathering at Camp Trillium. Workbooks will be posted toward the end of the year on www.brantfordchristadelphians.com. For information email Bro. Peter and Sis. Karly Styles at peterandkarly@juno.com.
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Children: Extract from chapter on “Having Children” from “Bible Guidelines for a Happy Marriage” By John Bilello (Tidings Books)

An old adage claimed that children cement a marriage. Indeed, children are a heritage from the Lord (Psa 127:3) and He intended from the very beginning that the family would be the foundation of society. After creating Adam and Eve, He commissioned them: “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth” (Gen 1:28). Before a couple gets married, they absolutely must discuss how they feel about being fruitful and multiplying. Perhaps no other decisions can affect the harmony of a marriage more than whether or not to have children, and if so blessed, how to deal with them at every stage of life. Failing to carefully consider what children would mean to the marriage relationship could find the couple ending up with cement that crumbles rather than binds as the years go by. In ages past, the decision to have children was entirely left up to the natural course of things in a marriage. If blessed with offspring, mother and father dealt with it and raised them to adulthood whatever number came along. My father’s mother, born in the 19th century, had 12 children, giving birth literally every couple of years until she was no longer able.
“Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it” (Prov 22:6).

The Way he (or she) should go

This verse is sometimes used to indicate that it is the fault of parents if the child does not turn out correctly, follows the Truth, is baptized, and raises contented Christian children in his (or her) turn. Many Christadelphian parents are consumed by worry as to whether they will (or have) messed up their children's lives. They are focused on ensuring their children will follow the way laid out in the Proverbs above, the path that, they believe, will surely lead to their own Christian faith and values being successfully transmitted to their offspring, who in turn will become faithful, active members of an ecclesia.

When our children fail (as they inevitably will, if only in not living up to their parent’s hopes and expectation), they are truly concerned, because essentially they believe in psychological determinism, that parenting produces the child. How often have we heard “as the twig is bent, so grows the tree” Or “the apple does not fall far from the tree”.

“Train up a child according to his way (RVm) and when he is old he will not depart from it” (Prov 22:6).

As the margin of the Revised Version puts it, this is not a verse which truly teaches that acceptance of the Truth by a child is the responsibility of the parents. We read “The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him” (Ezek 18:20). That whole chapter in Ezekiel’s prophecy is laying down the clear principle of individual responsibility. Election and calling is surely in the control God, and not with the parents. The parents’ responsibility is to “train” the child, to teach him the precepts which, when applied as guiding principles in life, can bring the greatest joy. The lessons of life are the same for everyone, but the approach, emphasis and attitude to them will vary from child to child. When the lessons are learnt, the choice is with the individual son or daughter, whether or not to be a servant in God’s household.

The parable

“But what think ye? A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to day in my vineyard. He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went. And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir: and went not. Whether of them twain did the will of his father? They say unto him, The first. Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots

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Jesus used this parable, firstly, to teach of the need for obedience, a lesson we all find hard to learn. However, it also describes in a quite remarkable way his insight into the true nature of man. There is no parent who has more than one child who has not learnt that children are different, and that they require different handling. Just because the first child sleeps through the night at an early age, is obedient to their parents, and is generally trouble free is not necessarily a reflection of the excellent child rearing skills the parents’ possess. Wait for the next one! (And often vice-versa.)

“Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right... And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (Eph 6:1,4).

Child rearing is a two way street. As the old sage goes “grandchildren are your reward for not dispensing with your teenagers”. And I am sure many can agree with the (supposed) saying of Mark Twain “When I was a boy of fourteen, my father was so ignorant I could hardly stand to have the old man around. But when I got to be twenty-one, I was astonished at how much he had learned in seven years”. Many teenagers do not appreciate it at the time, but we must still strive to do the best we can, despite the lack of appreciation. There is at least a reasonable possibility that they will come to acknowledge your efforts later!

Parents in the Bible

“And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also of David and Samuel and the prophets:... And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us” (Heb 11:32,39-40 NKJV).

Clearly, we experience that some parents are “winners” and some are “losers”. We all know parents, God-loving couples, with a child in trouble or in jail, an agnostic child, children who are, at best, lukewarm in the Truth, with children in turn who have not declared their faith and might never do so.

But some parents who seem incorrigible, lacking faith and seemingly impervious to Christian morality, can produce God-fearing faithful children, well grounded in the Truth and exhibiting it in the way they live their lives. And such is the examples we find in the Bible. The spiritual giants listed in the Hebrews chapter quoted above were many of them deeply flawed parents. Abraham had a child with a maidservant, and then agreed to banish the son. Moses had as a parent a young, pagan, unmarried daughter of Pharaoh. Jephthah was the son of a prostitute, and whatever happened to his daughter was the result of an impetuous vow.

Many more parents from the Bible confound our parenting expectation. Samuel’s sons turned out so poorly that the people insisted on a new ruler. But, on the other hand, Jonathon was the upright, righteous son of murderous King Saul. Josiah, was commended as one who “like unto him was there no king before him, that turned to the Lord with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might”
(2Kgs 23:25). Yet his father was Amon, who “did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord” (2Kgs 21:20).

The reality

We must acknowledge that those who are in the Truth are such, not necessarily because of their upbringing, however spiritual it may have been, but because they have been called by God. Such is our privilege to have been foreknown and predestined, to be transformed by God into vessels fit for His glory. This process begins at birth: “For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren ... And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory” (Rom 8:29; 9:23).

The notion of a child arriving as a blank slate upon which we can inscribe whatever we desire appears to be part of our culture, instilled in countless parenting books. We are responsible to teach our children to worship and fear our God, “And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up” (Deut 6:7), in other words, all the time. But we must be clear about our own limits and responsibility. We are not capable of producing perfect followers of Christ, certainly not because of our parenting skills. We will inevitably parent imperfectly, our children will make their own choices, and God will wondrously use it all to advance His children.

Conclusion

Every age has their own problems. In my childhood it was a spirit and time of rebellion against authority in all its forms. In my parenting years it was the beginnings of the Internet, with the unrealized dangers it brought and is still bringing. My parents in their turn were brought up in a time of great hardship. And my grandchildren are being exposed to the enormous influences of social media, to universal smart phones, and to the rapid explosion of technology in all its civilization disrupting forms. And meanwhile, according to the Pew Research Center (see http://www.pewforum.org/2015/05/12/americas-changing-religious-landscape/) the percentage of individuals totally unaffiliated with any religion has increased by 6.7% in only the last seven years, mirroring the drop in affiliation with Christianity. We might be able to protect our children from the worst of these influences for a while, but in the end all have to make their own way in our society. All we can do is provide the instruction and the example.

So as parents (and grandparents) we must fulfill our obligations to nurture our offspring in the way of the Truth, but acknowledge that any results for good or evil are not ours alone, but in the hands of our almighty Father. To predict the results is not in our power, but in the hands of our God and His son. So as we wait the return of our Lord to rid the world of all the evil and trouble that beset us, we must strive to inculcate our own faith into the generations to come, recognizing it is not our will, but His, that will be done.

Peter Hemingray
Exhortation

Foundation Principles

The Lord’s return

I am sure we realize the signs of the end are being quickly fulfilled, and the time of our Lord's return is at hand! It is with great urgency that I would like to remind ourselves, that now more than ever is the time for us to make our calling and election sure. We have to watch and pray: now is not the time to be distracted! Now is not the time to be sitting around idle! Now is the time that we should be busying ourselves in the Lord’s work. We should be about our Father’s business. We, like the children of Israel who were about to leave Egypt, are to eat the Passover with haste, with our loins girded, and our shoes on our feet and a staff in our hand. (Exod 12:11). There is no time to waste!

I have come to realize that the fundamental things about the Bible are sometimes missed when we are too busy slicing and dissecting intricate details. There is a lot of benefit in looking at the big picture, like a bird’s eye view of things. If we do this we will notice some fundamental principles.

Firstly, there is only one God and besides Him there is no other. When we recognize and understand this fundamental principle we will quickly realize that since there is one God then it means that we have all sinned and are in need of salvation. The intention is that we must then be humble when we understand that we cannot save ourselves, no matter how righteous we think we are. We will then see Jesus as the only way of salvation, and this will bring about the humility that the Lord seeks from us. Pride is abominable in God’s sight, as I’m sure we already know. Think about it: God made us out of dirt. Not sure how much lower he could have made us. I suspect the point again is for us to humble ourselves.

We recognize that we desperately need salvation. God has provided for our need by sending His one and only Son to die, to declare His righteousness as the basis on which He will forgive our sins. As we have read and know, the principle is that by the death of a sinless man, God is shown to be righteous, while at the same time He is forgiving of our iniquities, transgressions and sins. By Christ’s perfect obedience we can be reconciled to God.

Secondly, God is a savior. What does that mean? God’s underlying ‘modus operandi’ is to save us: that's the strategic objective. Why is this important? It is important because it should be our objective as well, because we are to be about our Father’s business. This means that we should approach our preaching efforts with the mindset of saving others as the core objective. This means that we don’t say or do things that will chase away people before they even start coming to the meeting. As they say, if we do that, we may have won the battle but lost the war. We are to know time and judgement; there is a time and a place for everything and we have to know when to speak and when to keep silent. It must be seen in our
words and actions that we are children of God. This should be even more obvious now as the world continues to decline morally. Even the United States Supreme Court has already declared that the court is going to make it a matter of applying the constitution to allow same sex marriages. We don't have to look very far to see that our society has hit dirt bottom. We have to watch and pray, for indeed the days are evil. We must not allow ourselves be deceived by what we see. There is the normal opinion that we are an advanced society, and that we are living in modern times, which many say justifies certain evil beliefs and practices. We are not immune: we have to be careful that we do not allow the beliefs and practices of the world to creep into our ecclesia and into our personal lives. We have to watch and pray as we see the day approaching. Who would have thought that topics such as evolution would be a problem or even considered to be true among Christadelphians? We are supposed to be different! We are to be a peculiar people unto our God. We must not try to blend in. It must be even more obvious that we are Christians now more than ever. We should not have to tell anyone that we are Christians: it should be obvious. We must not bring shame to the name of Christ.

**God is love.** This is telling us that the thing that drives our Lord’s actions is love. We may slice and dice Christ's crucifixion and look at all the gruesome details, but we run the risk of missing the key point that is at the center of it all. God's love is shown for all to see in that He sent His only begotten Son to die for us. Also seen is Jesus's willing cooperation with our Father's will in following through with it. The love of the Father and His Son is seen in Christ's sacrifice. Also, it is not just that Jesus died for wretched sinners as we are, it's also the way he died. It was a horrific and painful death; of which none of us are worthy as we already know. Personally, when I see Christ's death it helps me a lot, and gives me hope that no matter how bad my sins are/were and no matter how far I may feel I have fallen, that God still loves me, and that He is more than willing to forgive me. This point cannot be stressed enough: God allowed His Only Son to die the way he did to send a message that God will do what it takes to save us; that He really loves us and that He wants us to live. It is written in Ezekiel the prophet “Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord GOD: and not that he should return from his ways, and live?” (Ezek 18:23).

**Retrospection**

It is a good time now more than ever to take stock of our lives. We should look into ourselves especially as we are about to partake of the emblems. It is always good to be introspective. We remember Nehemiah, how he assessed and rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem. He was facing opposition from Sanballat and Tobias who hindered the work of rebuilding Jerusalem. We will notice that Sanballat and Tobias’ tactic was to have the Jews of Nehemiah's time trade with them and intermarry with them. The intention was for the Jews to just cease from being peculiar and special, but to just blend in with them and then eventually disappear. This Nehemiah vigorously opposed:

“In those days also saw I [Nehemiah] Jews that had married wives of Ashdod, of Ammon, and of Moab: And their children spake half in the speech of...
Ashdod, and could not speak in the Jews’ language, but according to the language of each people. And I contended with them, and cursed them, and smote certain of them, and plucked off their hair, and made them swear by God, saying, Ye shall not give your daughters unto their sons, nor take their daughters unto your sons, or for yourselves” (Neh 13:23-25).

We can draw valuable lessons from this. The obvious point is that we must be in the world but not of the world. We must not have the same beliefs and practices of those in the world. We must also assess ourselves to see if we are adopting the stance of the world as they oppose that of Christ and of God. We have to pay attention:

“Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world” (James 1:27).

There was a song I used to hear on the radio back in the 90’s that said ‘In the end only kindness matters’. So we are to show kindness whenever and wherever we can. We are not Gnostics: knowledge of itself does not save us. It is my understanding that when we study to show ourselves approved, we are actually learning how to think and act the way God wants us to think and act. The intention is that we will begin to do things that are acceptable in God’s sight. We will most importantly, develop the right attitude. Attitude is everything. I believe that attitude makes all the difference. We recall Christ’s words about the judgement seat and the separation of the sheep from the goats. It would appear that the sheep and the goats were both doing what we may call good works. However, the sheep were accepted and goats were not. The only conclusion there can be is that the goats did not have the right attitude. We have to pray for our Lord to guide us and counsel us in this so that we may by his grace develop the right attitude.

We have to make sure that we have moved beyond the academic knowledge. When we say that we love God, and that we love Jesus, and that we worship and adore our Lord and how awesome he is, it should be from deep within our hearts. It should not be something we say because we are commanded to do so, or that we may be under threat of being cursed or death if we do not. We should thoughtfully do so and mean it. If we look closely, it is evident that God gave us freewill, with the power to choose whether or not we are going to love, obey, worship, adore appreciate Him and His Son for all he has done for us. He could have made us ‘pre-programmed’ as it were to do all of the things He wants us to do. I can only imagine, since I am not the Almighty, that He desires that we do these things of our own volition and not because we are made to do it or even forced to do them. Love is not real if there isn’t the option to not love. Likewise obedience is not real if there isn’t the ability to disobey. Similarly praise is not effectual without choice. Again, I can only imagine that making us without choice would probably be like having automatons. I suspect that God wants us to do all of these things not because we have to, but because we want to.
The Lord’s supper

Some more thoughts for us to consider as we prepare our minds to partake of the Lord’s supper. We all recognize how much we have been forgiven of past sins. We all recognize our need for ongoing forgiveness. We all recognize that we are not good people who sin from time to time, but that we are sinners who are being reckoned as righteous because we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Doing a lot of what we might call ‘good works’ does not make us righteous, it is our association with Jesus and our belief in his sacrifice that makes us righteous. This is very important because if we begin to believe that we are righteous because of the works that we have done over the years then we have a big problem. Christ’s sacrifice loses its efficacy. His death becomes of none effect! People in the world do not understand this point. They believe that if they give away billions to charity that that will of itself make them righteous; but not so with God. He requires that we understand that there is none righteous, no not one. He has provided a means by which He will consider us righteous, which is by belief in His Son and our Lord Jesus Christ and baptism. We are reminded of this fact when we partake of the emblems.

God went to great lengths and at great cost to Himself in providing a means of salvation for us. He has forgiven us of a whole multitude of sins for which we are extremely grateful. When God forgives us He closes the book with regards to the sins that were committed in the past. God is very serious when it comes to forgiveness. In fact, not forgiving others is a sin in which God will reopen the books that were closed and visit His wrath on those who have themselves been forgiven but who refuse to forgive others. I am sure we remember well the parable of the two servants where one was forgiven a debt of ten thousand talents. He straightway went to another servant and demanded 100 pence. When the other servant couldn’t pay back the 100 pence he had the other servant thrown into prison. When the Lord of the servants heard of it it made him very angry. We are told “And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him” (Matt 18:21-35). The point is clear: if we are not willing to forgive one another of relatively small things then our Lord will not forgive us of our sins. In fact, he will visit the consequences of old sins on us too. To bring this more into focus, we can see the order of magnitude when we compare ten thousand talents with 100 pence. I have heard it said that ten thousand talents adjusted for inflation would be worth many millions of dollars today¹, which would be quite impossible for the unforgiving servant to pay back. While on the other hand 100 pence would be equivalent to about a few months’ pay for an average person. The point that is being made is that the unforgiving servant was forgiven a debt that there was no way he could have paid it back. He in turn refused to forgive a debt that could have been paid back relatively easily. We must recognize that what God has done for us through Jesus In forgiving us of our sins, which is a debt that we cannot dream of paying back. We must appreciate this fact and it should encourage us to forgive one another of the relatively little and insignificant things that they may have done to us.
Forgiveness

We may not realize this, but not forgiving others is in fact a sin! Just like being ungrateful; not appreciating all the goodness and the mercy that God has bestowed upon us.

If we purpose in our hearts that we are not going to forgive someone of whatever word or deed that may have done to us, then we might as well stay home and watch the football game or whatever show is on television, because it would be pointless to come to the meeting. It is a very serious thing that the Lord God will not tolerate. That is what our Lord Jesus was saying: “And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses” (Mark 11:25-26). This point is made in many times and in many ways in Scripture.

We are encouraged to produce fruit in season and out of season. That is to say, when it is convenient and when it is not convenient. We must not make any excuses! This applies on both a group level as well as at a personal level. As an ecclesia, we should always be busy doing our Father’s business. This includes not only preaching but the things that are needful and are consistent with the overall strategy and purpose of saving men and women. We should be looking for creative and innovative ways to reach out to the people who we come in contact with or those with whom we interact, or even to go out into the communities and seek those that are lost. Perhaps God will grant them repentance. We should go out of our way, even when it means leaving our comfort zone in order to reach out to people in the world that need our help. Our Lord has extended His lovingkindness and His tender mercies to us. And we must reciprocate this love to others.

We should also bear fruit on a personal level as well. We are to display the fruit of the Spirit. We are already familiar with the doings of the Spirit: “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law” (Gal 5:22,23). If we exhibit these good qualities then we will be acceptable in the day of the Lord’s coming. If we are not exhibiting these qualities then there is cause for concern. We have to examine ourselves and pray that our Lord will help us to develop the mind of the Spirit, a Christ-like mind which is precious in God’s sight.

We remember the mercy that was shown to us when our God called us out of the world of darkness and sin, from Egypt as it were, into His marvelous light. It is most definitely not because we are good or anything like that, but because of His love, and His mercy, and for His own name’s sake He has done this. We see and remember the love shown to us in partaking of the emblems, the bread and the wine which are symbols of Christ’s body and his blood.

The bread signifies that we have been made a part of the body of Christ. The wine symbolizes that we are sharing in Christ’s life. With this in mind it should motivate us to walk in a way that is acceptable in God’s sight. We should say and do the things that are pleasing to Our Lord (which by the way includes our activities on Facebook).
We remember Christ’s sacrifice once a week. We do show his death until he come. Again we are counselled to watch and pray for the time of the end of the age is upon us. We must make ourselves ready. He is even at the door. May we all hear those wonderful words:

“Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world” (Matt 25:34).

Casmon Gordon (Brooklyn, NY)

Notes:
1. Ten thousand talents is around 750,000lbs. With silver at roughly $15 per ounce today, this is $180 million.

“Hope” — A Remarkable Bible Idiom

An interesting and helpful illustration of the use of the word “hope” in the Old Testament is the way in which this particular Hebrew idiom has carried over to the New Testament also, even though the normal Greek word for “hope” does not normally have any suggestion of the specialized connotation which the Old Testament seems to insist on.

The moving story of Naomi and her two daughters-in-law makes a suitable introduction to this study. “Turn again, my daughters, go your way; for I am too old to have an husband. If I should say, I have hope, if I should have an husband also tonight, and should bear sons; would ye tarry for them till they were grown?” (Ruth 1:12, 13).

It is immediately evident that the word “hope” is used here with the specialized sense: “hope of having children”. Can it be that here is a key to unlock the meaning of other passages where this word “hope” is used? Further investigation confirms the impression.

Paul picks up the expression for use in the same sense when writing about Abraham’s belief of the promise: “Who against hope (of a son being born) believed in hope” (Rom 4:18).

Peter speaks of “being begotten again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance, incorruptible and undefiled” (1Pet 1:3).

The Apostle had surely the identical idea in mind in his Pentecost Speech. He quoted David’s prophecy of Christ’s death and resurrection, including the words: “My flesh also shall rest in hope”, the hope of children — with which compare: “he shall see his seed . . . he shall see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied” (Isa 53:10-11). Appropriately, then, Peter adds: “God raised him up, having loosed the pains (literally: birth-pangs) of death . . .” (Acts 2:24,26).

From H. A. Whittaker in The Christadelphian, 1959, p253
Hope — (7) Hope in Jesus

“Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

Hope in Jesus

Hope is hopeless without Jesus.

About 1750, a slave trading ship captain had experienced enough. For years John Newton had participated in the slave trade, treating African slaves as mere units of cargo. He led ships from England to Africa to pick up slaves, then across the Atlantic to unload his shipment in the New World. The journey was dangerous and deadly, as often 20% of the blacks on board would die on the inhumane voyage. John Newton transported more than a few shiploads of the six million African slaves brought to the Americas in the 18th century. It was a book he found on board — Thomas à Kempis’ Imitation of Christ — which sowed the seeds of his conversion. When a ship nearly sank in a storm, he converted to be a Christian and left sailing to become a minister for the last 43 years of his life. At 82, Newton said, “My memory is nearly gone, but I remember two things: that I am a great sinner, and that Christ is a great Savior.” A far greater testimony outlives Newton in the most famous of the hundreds of hymns he wrote. It begins:

Amazing grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me,
I once was lost, but now am found, was blind, but now I see.

Jesus Christ was unlike any man who ever lived. He was uniquely Son of Man and Son of God. He was chosen and destined since before the foundation of the world: “Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you” (1Pet 1:20). In fact, he was “the lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (Rev 13:8). He was the fulfillment of centuries of prophecies from many different prophets. He was the promised child to Abraham, and the promised King to David. Jesus (Hebrew name Yeshua or Joshua) was central to God’s plan for mankind from the very beginning’

“God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they” (Heb 1:1-4).

God knew that Jesus would be the savior to the whole world, and He prepared the setting for His Son to conquer the world. God’s plan of salvation for mankind has always been centered on Jesus: “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only
begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). Without believing in Jesus and his message, all hope is futile.

As the son of a simple carpenter, Jesus’ first words in his ministry were to “repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matt 4:17). Jesus taught that the poor, handicapped and hungry of the world are more blessed than all others. He gave hope to those who needed it most. He healed the sick and raised the dead. He literally and spiritually fed his followers. He taught as no man taught before. He touched the untouchables of his day. He loved those who were unloved. He cared for those in need. He showed forgiveness to sinners. He led a sinless life as a perfect example. And ultimately, Jesus offered himself as a sacrifice for those who believe in him.

Why Jesus?

Religion has known many spiritual leaders who claimed divine inspiration. Many people have proclaimed themselves to be specially chosen, often with supposed powers of providence. Some people have even believed that they are the Second Coming of Christ today! They claimed to declare God’s will and generally benefited from their self-worshiping faith. But Jesus was unique in his humility. He taught about his suffering and sacrifice. He knew that he would be crucified. He had faith that he would rise from the dead. Jesus lived a unique life unlike any other person, through which we have hope:

- Jesus was sinless his entire life (2 Cor 5:21; 1 Pet 2:22; Heb 7:26). He was one “who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin” (Heb 4:15).
- Grace and truth were revealed in Jesus (John 1:17; Titus 3:6-7). Forgiveness was practiced and preached by Him. Those who believe in Jesus will receive forgiveness of sins: “That through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins” (Acts 10:43).
- No one needs to fear the Devil today thanks to Jesus, who destroyed the Devil through his death: “that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil” (Heb 2:14).
- Jesus was, and is, superior to angels (Heb 1:4).
- All things in heaven and on earth are subject to Jesus: “For He hath put all things under his feet” (1Cor 15:27).
- Jesus was a redeemer to his followers. He provided the way of escape from the curse of death in the Hebrew law: “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of
the law” (Gal 3:13); See also Job 19:25; Titus 2:13-14; Col 1:14).

- Jesus provided the way for people to have peace with God. His death and resurrection gave opportunity for all people to have eternal hope: “there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal 3:28); see also Eph 2:12-13.

- Jesus was the perfect representation of God to the people and reflected God’s character: “Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature” (Col 1:15); see also 1Tim 3:16.

- Jesus is the only way to the Father. He is the only way leading to life. “Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6); see also John 10:28; John 17:2.

Who was Jesus?

Jesus has frequently been misunderstood. When he was just a baby, Herod thought that he was a threat and tried to kill him (Matt 2:16). Later, some thought that he was either John the Baptist, Elijah or Jeremiah (Matt 16:14). Others didn’t understand him when he said people needed to eat his flesh and drink his blood (John 6:60-66). Jewish leaders mistakenly thought that he was born of fornication (John 8:41). Some accused him of being a Samaritan with a demon (John 8:48). They also thought that Jesus was a sinner for breaking the Sabbath (John 7:30). Others didn’t know where he was from (John 9:29). Some even thought that Jesus claimed to be God (John 5:18; 10:33).

Believers and non-believers have misunderstood Jesus as well. In 325 AD, the Christian Council of Nicaea voted to teach that Jesus was co-equal and co-eternal with God. The early ‘Apostle’s Creed’ was therefore amended to add what became known as the ‘Nicene Creed’. The Roman-led church officially declared that Jesus was actually the same person as God the Father! Somehow this mystery that Jesus is actually part of God became accepted doctrine to Christians. For the first time, monotheist Christians declared that there is one God in three persons, or a triune God. Why does this matter? Because Jesus said that hope for eternal life is dependent on correctly understanding this relationship. Jesus said: “Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent” (John 17:3).

It is vital that we understand that Jesus is the Son of God, and not God the Son. Jesus generally called himself “Son of Man” and he was never called “God the Son.” He said that his Father is greater than he and that he (Jesus) was not even ‘good’ (John 14:28; Mark 10:18). Jesus taught that “God is one” (Not three — Mark 12:28-34) as faithful Jews had believed since Abraham. Jesus prayed to God, his Father and was always subservient to his Father (John 8:28). God raised Jesus from the grave and Jesus ascended to his Father (John 20:17). Clearly, Jesus believed that he was one in spirit with his Father, but not as one God. It’s how he could be humble and tempted. It’s how he willingly offered himself as a sacrifice as only a human could (Heb 7:26-28).

Jesus’ followers learned and applied the same belief about God. Paul believed in one God and, separately, that Jesus is His Son (1Tim 2:5; 1Cor 15:24-28; 1Cor 8:6;
1Cor 11:3; Eph 4:4-6). Jesus’ brother, James, wrote that God cannot be tempted, and yet Jesus was tempted (James 1:13; Heb 4:15). His most important Apostle, Peter, called Jesus “a man” after his resurrection, which would be offensive if Jesus was really God (Acts 2:22). The Bible says God cannot be seen or die, however Jesus was obviously seen and did die (1Tim 6:16; 1John 1:1).

The Bible says that believing in Jesus, as the Son of God, is required to be saved (Rom 10:9). “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom 6:23). Thanks be to God for His incredible gift of hope, in Jesus.

“I am a historian, I am not a believer, but I must confess as a historian that this penniless preacher from Nazareth is irrevocably the very center of history. Jesus Christ is easily the most dominant figure in all history.” H. G. Wells, British writer.

“Life with Christ is an endless hope, without him a hopeless end.” (Anonymous)

“Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him” (Heb 9:28).

**The Bible says:**

- No one has any hope for eternal life apart from Jesus. Acts 4:12; Acts 2:32-36; Heb 7:25
- Jesus was the only begotten Son of God. Heb 1:1-4; John 3:16
- Jesus was the Son of God, but not God the Son. John 17:3; 1Tim 2:5; 1Cor 8:6; John 14:28

*Chicago, Ill Ecclesia*
Doctrines to be Rejected— (4) Foundation

The Foundation clause
The opening clause in the Christadelphian statement of Faith is not numbered: it was added in 1885 after a controversy initiated by Robert Ashcroft, who issued a magazine called the *The Biblical Exegetist*. In it, he proposed that the Bible was only partially inspired, in that some parts must be considered the product of erring human beings, and in turn could be in error. The topic of what exactly was meant by inspiration of the Scriptures had not previously troubled the community, so it was not surprising this suggestion was not well received. This resulted in the following two additions to the then-current statement of faith:

- The foundation clause that heads the whole statement.
- An opening clause added to the Doctrines to be Rejected.

The Foundation — That the book currently known as the Bible, consisting of the Scriptures of Moses, the prophets, and the apostles, is the only source of knowledge concerning God and His purposes at present extant or available in the earth, and that the same were wholly given by inspiration of God in the writers, and are consequently without error in all parts of them, except such as may be due to errors of transcription or translation.

Doctrines to be Rejected #1: That the Bible is only partly the work of inspiration — or if wholly so, contains errors which inspiration has allowed.

This can be restated in a positive way: The Bible, in its original text, is altogether the work of inspiration, and that God has been the true author of every part of His Word, thereby constituting it as infallible, error-less document, at least in its original manuscript.

The addition of this clause recognizes the vital importance of accepting that every word of Scripture is that which proceeded from the mouth of God (Matt 4:4). If we doubt this, we can progress no further in our knowledge of the Truth, for the whole reliability of Scripture is called into question. If it is only partly God's Word, we are not bound to submit to its authority; and may even be at liberty to disagree with some of its teachings. In addition, who would decide which parts of the Bible were truly inspired by God, was inspired and which were not?

Consequences
We can summarize these as follows:

- The Foundation Clause recognizes that over the long period of the Bible’s history there may be difficulties created by errors of transcription or translation
- For the Old Testament, at least, we have the guidance of the Lord Jesus and his apostles in their quotation and use to assure us that nothing of substance has been lost or impaired
- Given the meticulous process of copying later developed and the diligent labors of translators who believed that they were handling the Word of God, we may be sure that the Lord has overseen the preservation of the word,
although we must be careful not to ascribe this to any particular Hebrew or Greek manuscript or to any particular Bible Translation.

- We may rest in confidence, therefore, that our faith is based upon solid foundations and that our hope of the Kingdom and eternal life stands upon the Rock of Israel Himself.

** Another controversy **

Much detail concerning the whole topic and ramification of Biblical Inspiration can be found in the special issue referred to above and its bibliography. It is undoubtedly because the Brotherhood was so well armed against spurious theories of inspiration that problems in this area hardly arose for almost eighty years after the controversy in 1885.

However, neither the Foundation Clause nor the associated Doctrine to be Rejected defines what is meant by “inspiration”, and this gave rise to quite a discussion in the 1960’s, as reflected in the columns of the community’s magazines in the 1960s (although not much in *The Christadelphian*). These bear witness to the fact that the critical views of theological scholarship had again penetrated the Brotherhood. Brethren had lost the careful habit of saying, “The Spirit through John writes...”; speakers and writers were being unconsciously influenced by their wider reading of non-Christadelphian commentators, and had begun to speak without qualification of ‘Paul’s style’ or ‘Hosea’s tenderness’; younger generations had grown up who did not know the answers about the supposed discrepancies or inconsistencies in the Bible, which the apparently learned world took almost for granted; and not a few brethren actually began to flirt openly with the latest theories from the arenas of theology and Biblical studies — ‘latest theories’ that were in many cases little other than old views in new dress.

It might, therefore, be useful to briefly summarize the considerations and conclusions of the articles that dealt with this topic, as reflected in several articles from that period. They amplify and expand on exactly what is, and was, intended by the phrase (converting to the positive) “That the Bible is totally work of inspiration — and does not contain any errors which inspiration has allowed”. Although the controversy of the 1960’s has died down, the topic still crops up from time to time.

So let us briefly consider exactly what “inspiration” entails — and the errors which sometimes happen when you attempt to define too closely exactly what happens between the mind of God and the written word.

** Verbal inspiration² **

Fundamentally, of course, the doctrine of verbal inspiration builds upon the high confidence in the detailed accuracy of Scripture implied is such words as “one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law till all things be accomplished” (Matt 5:16), which in its context includes the prophets as well, and by implication the whole Old Testament; and “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away” (Matt 24:35), in which the Lord makes the same claim for his own words, and by implication for those of his messengers, whom the Spirit was to “lead into all truth” (John 16:13). It dwells on the detailed use of Scripture’s
niceties such as can be found in the Lord’s and Paul’s use of the Scripture, and seeks to account for them.

The expression will be used, then, to mean that the original disclosure of everything that truly forms a part of Scripture was verbatim what God intended it to be. That is, the ultimate motivation of Scripture is from above. Whatever the will of man may have been, it was not the real reason why the Scripture came into being, seen with respect to the divine purpose. God's counsel overrides where it is necessary, but steers the course throughout, so that Scripture, when it is formed, is what He intended.

It is important to make this point clear, because the doctrine has often been condemned on the assumption that it made the “authors” of Scripture into mere automata, men who lose their freewill entirely when they write or speak as they are moved by the Holy Spirit.

But large portions of Holy Scripture bear evident marks of the personalities of their writers. We can illustrate this by Jeremiah's account of his own frame of mind when he was obliged to reveal God’s promises of woe against a background of bitter persecution (Jer 15:10; 20:7-12); or by Psalm 51, which reveals David's personal penitence after his sin with Uriah's wife; or by Paul's confession of his own feelings of affection for those among whom he labored (“I thank my God on every remembrance of you”), and the like. It would be impossible to maintain that any of these men in such circumstances was acting passively under compulsion when in this way he disclosed his heart, and any doctrine which sought to do so would be self-condemned.

The prophets write as the occasion brings forth their inspiration by God, moved from time to time according to His will. But to Jesus, God gives not the Spirit by measure. “Verily, verily”, means to him that he has God with him in all his utterances. “I say unto you” lacks nothing of the force of, “God says to you through my lips”. As God reveals in the Letter to the Hebrews, He has in the last days spoken to us in His Son.

It is this Son of God who gives such a high evaluation to the Scriptures. We do well to remember when we walk with the Word of God that we tread on holy ground. This will not prevent our searching, nor will it put blinders on our eyes, but it will preserve us from rashness, and help us to show due respect to what God has “magnified above all His Name” (Psa 138:2).

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

Notes:
1. Some of the enormous body of Christadelphian literature dealing with this controversy was summarized in The Tidings’ Special Issue on “Inspiration”, August 2015. It will not be repeated here. See also the Testimony Special Issue on “Inspiration”, July 1982.
2. Some part of this section is based upon an essay by AD Norris in The Christadelphian, 1964, p 296.
Ready-to-Use Bible Games

Bible games are a fun way to review and reinforce Bible knowledge. And while friendly competition is often involved, it is important for everyone to keep in mind that winning is determined by what we learn from the word of God, not by beating somebody on the scoreboard.

Here are two ready-to-use, multiple-choice Bible games. They’re easy to organize and play. Both games come with several questions that have four answer choices. Any number of teams can play, and each team will need a set of answer cards labeled A, B, C, and D, corresponding with the answer choices. Bible use is always a good option to offer with these games.

The games can be played a couple of different ways. There’s an active way: the moderator asks a question, reads the four answer choices, and braces himself! The first team to run the correct answer card to the front wins the point. Protective padding is optional!

A more civilized version of the game involves timing. After each question is asked, everybody gets a set amount of time to decide on the answer. Then, on signal, all teams hold up what they think is the correct answer card. Every team with a correct answer gets a point. Since the game could result in a tie, you might want to have a few tie-breaker questions on hand to use at the end.

PowerPoint versions of both games are available on request. They give you the added ability to project questions and answers onto a screen for everyone to see.

1) Bible Facts
A Multiple-Choice Bible Game with 23 Questions and Answers

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 – How many books are in the Bible?</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 – How many books are in the Old Testament?</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 – How many books are in the New Testament?</td>
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<td>4 – What is the shortest book of the Bible?</td>
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<tr>
<td>A – Nahum</td>
<td>B – Obadiah</td>
<td>C – Philemon</td>
<td>D – John</td>
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<td>5 – What is the longest book of the Bible?</td>
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<tr>
<td>A – Psalms</td>
<td>B – Isaiah</td>
<td>C – Matthew</td>
<td>D - Revelation</td>
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<tr>
<td>6 – What is the shortest chapter in the Bible?</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>What is the longest chapter in the Bible?</td>
<td>A – Genesis 1</td>
<td>B – Numbers 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Which book in the Old Testament is not one of the Minor Prophets?</td>
<td>A – Nehemiah</td>
<td>B – Joel</td>
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<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>What is the Greek translation of the Old Testament called?</td>
<td>A – Pentateuch</td>
<td>B – Torah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>What version is the earliest translation of the entire Bible into English?</td>
<td>A – The King James</td>
<td>B – The Wycliffe Bible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>In what language was most of the Old Testament originally written?</td>
<td>A – Aramaic</td>
<td>B – Hebrew</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>In what language was the New Testament originally written?</td>
<td>A – Aramaic</td>
<td>B – Hebrew</td>
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<td>22</td>
<td>When was the Old Testament written?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Options</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Answer Key:**
1 (D), 2 (B), 3 (A), 4 (D), 5 (A), 6 (B), 7 (C), 8 (B), 9 (B), 10 (D), 11 (A), 12 (A), 13 (A), 14 (D), 15 (A), 16 (D), 17 (D), 18 (C) 19 (B), 20 (B), 21 (C), 22 (A), 23 (C)

2) *Where in the Word?*

*A Multiple-Choice Bible Game with 40 Questions and Answers*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Options</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 – Sin and Death enter the World</td>
<td>A – Genesis 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 – The Faith Chapter</td>
<td>A – Romans 6</td>
</tr>
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<td>6 – The Ten Commandments</td>
<td>A – Genesis 49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 – Twelve Spies spy out the Promised Land</td>
<td>A – Exodus 40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 – David and Goliath</td>
<td>A – 1 Samuel 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 – God’s Promise to King David</td>
<td>A – 1 Samuel 16</td>
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<tr>
<td>13 – The Whole Armor of God</td>
<td>A – Romans 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 – The Birth of Jesus</td>
<td>A – Matthew 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 – The Baptism Chapter</td>
<td>A – Romans 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 – The Fruit of the Spirit</td>
<td>A – Galatians 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 – Seven Parables of Jesus</td>
<td>A – Matthew 5-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 – The Resurrection of Christ</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

31 – Lazarus is raised from the Dead

32 – The Resurrection Chapter
A – Romans 6   B – 1 Corinthians 13   C – 1 Corinthians 15   D – Hebrews 11

33 – The Ascension of Jesus
A – Matthew 27   B – Mark 15   C – John 21   D – Acts 1

34 – The Day of Pentecost
A – Acts 1   B – Acts 2   C – Acts 6   D – Acts 7

35 – The Conversion of Saul of Tarsus

36 – Paul’s Shipwreck on the way to Rome
A – Acts 21   B – Acts 27   C – Romans 1   D – Romans 15

37 – The Jerusalem Conference
A – 1 King 8   B – Ezra 4   C – Acts 15   D – Hebrews 8

38 – The Love Chapter
A – Romans 6   B – 1 Corinthians 13   C – 1 Corinthians 15   D – Hebrews 11

39 – A Prophecy of Israel’s Restoration
A – Leviticus 26   B – Deuteronomy 28   C – 1 Chronicles 29   D – Ezekiel 36-37

40 – A Picture of the Coming Kingdom of God
A – Psalm 72   B – Isaiah 53   C – Hebrews 1   D – Revelation 1-3

Answer Key:
1 (C), 2 (A), 3 (C), 4 (B), 5 (D), 6 (B), 7 (C), 8 (A), 9 (A), 10 (B), 11 (D), 12 (B), 13 (D), 14 (D), 15 (A), 16 (C), 17 (A), 18 (B), 19 (C), 20 (A), 21 (A), 22 (A), 23 (A), 24 (C), 25 (A), 26 (A), 27 (B), 28 (B), 29 (C), 30 (D), 31 (B), 32 (C), 33 (D), 34 (B), 35 (C), 36 (B), 37 (C), 38 (B), 39 (D), 40 (A).

If you would like ready-to-use, printable copies of these Bible games, contact me at the Sunday school email address below. I will send them by reply email. Other ideas for Bible games were published in *The Tidings*, March-April, 2014, pp.127-30. You can also find a few game ideas pinned to the Bible Games board on our Sunday school Pinterest site.

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Letters to the editor can be sent to letters@tidings.org. Please include your name, address, e-mail, and phone. Submissions under 300 words are encouraged — the magazine reserves the right to edit all submissions for length and clarity.
About God — (1) The God of the Bible is Fact

Is there a God? The prophetic evidence

One of the longest debates in history is the disagreement between there being a God or not being one. Curiosities and doubts can arise for anyone trying to answer that question. Is there a God and if so does anyone actually know Him? With enough searching, it is clear that the Bible is an inspired book, and teaches that God does in fact exist. This can be shown through various methods. In this article, the prophetic words of the Bible will be compared to real life events to show the Bible has foreknowledge in a way no man can have. In the following article, Jewish history will be compared to the Bible, and objections from science will be examined to definitively prove that the Bible must be inspired by something greater than man and therefore that the God of the Bible truly does exist.

Tyre

By far, the strongest argument for the Bible being inspired is through the prophetic word being fulfilled. The common arguments against this point are:

- the prophecies were fulfilled through chance,
- they were written after they were fulfilled,
- the symbolism used could be twisted to fit a large amount of situations
- they were likely to happen anyway.

Although these are plausible arguments for a few prophecies, there are plenty of prophecies that defy all of them — one of which is the prophecy of Tyre found in Ezekiel 26. Tyre was a Phoenician city that was on the eastern part of the Mediterranean Sea. It was extremely wealthy and was in a very strategic location both economically and militarily. It is supposed that the city dated back to approximately 2,700 B.C. and was one of the oldest cities of the time (Butt)¹. While reading through Ezekiel 26, it is bluntly stated that, “Many nations” (Ezek 26:3) will fight against Tyre. Josephus, quoting “the records of the Phoenicians,” says that Nebuchadnezzar “besieged Tyre for thirteen years in the days of Ithobal, their king” (Butt, op cit.). Nebuchadnezzar’s siege was the first attack against Tyre after the prophecy, matching the prophecy when it states, “For
thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I will bring upon Tyrus Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, a king of kings, from the north, with horses, and with chariots, and with horsemen, and companies, and much people” (Ezek 26:7). However, Nebuchadnezzar failed to take the city, which allowed for the prophecy to be fulfilled to its full extent. If Nebuchadnezzar had taken the city, then only one nation would have come against Tyre, not multiple as the prophecy states. Throughout time the city was destroyed, rebuilt, and destroyed again multiple times. This being said, the more persuasive evidence that this prophecy had to be inspired comes out in the later parts of the chapter.

Alexander the Great’s destruction of Tyre show that this prophecy could only have been made by inspiration. Alexander besieged Tyre because they denied him the right to make a personal sacrifice in the city’s temple. Tyre moved from the mainland to a small island just off the mainland to avoid Alexander’s army. After quickly destroying the original Tyre, Alexander made a plan to build a land bridge using debris from the original city to get to the island. After he completed the land bridge with his army, he destroyed the newer Tyre as well killing everyone on the island (Butt). When compared to the Biblical prophecy of Tyre’s destruction, the similarities and details can be shocking. Ezekiel states, “They shall lay thy stones and thy timber and thy dust in the midst of the water” (Ezek: 26:12) which is exactly how Alexander the Great made it to the island of Tyre. Furthermore the prophecy states:

“When I shall make thee a desolate city, like the cities that are not inhabited; when I shall bring up the deep upon thee, and great waters shall cover thee; When I shall bring thee down with them that descend into the pit, with the people of old time, and shall set thee in the low parts of the earth, in places desolate of old, with them that go down to the pit, that thou be not inhabited; and I shall set glory in the land of the living; I will make thee a terror, and thou shalt be no more: though thou be sought for, yet shalt thou never be found again, saith the Lord God” (Ezek 26:19-21).

In other words, water would cover the city and it would never be inhabited again. One of the strongest counterarguments relies on this point in an attempt to show this prophecy is false, because currently there is a city named Tyre in a relatively close location to the original location of Tyre. The issue with this claim is that the mainland ancient Tyre, which is what Ezekiel was predominantly prophesying about, is in fact currently lost underwater. “In approximately A.D. 1170, a Jewish traveler named Benjamin of Tudela published a diary of his travels” (Butt). In his diary he made the statement, “A man can ascend the walls of New Tyre and see
ancient Tyre, which the sea has now covered, lying at a stone’s throw from the new city” (Butt), showing that in fact the original Tyre is underwater, fulfilling Ezekiel’s prophecy at all points.

**Babylon**

Another concrete prophecy that cannot be explained through mere chance is the prophecy of the destruction of Babylon. The part of the prophecy that best shows the Bible’s inspiration is:

> “Behold, I will stir up the Medes against them, which shall not regard silver; and as for gold, they shall not delight in it. Their bows also shall dash the young men to pieces; and they shall have no pity on the fruit of the womb; their eyes shall not spare children. And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees’ excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there. But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures” (Isa 13:17-21).

The two major points in the prophecy are that the Medes would kill many Babylonians, and that Babylon would remain uninhabited. The prophecy, as many prophecies in the Bible, was fulfilled throughout different time periods in history. Around the time of 550 B.C., Babylon was captured by the Medes. There was no battle that took place, rather, the Medes took the city by surprise and Darius the Mede was made the new leader (Foster). It was through a series of rebellions that the Medes went on killing Babylonians, the first one being in 521 B.C. According to, “An inscription written on a rock cliff in Bisotun, Iran” (Foster) the Babylonians elected their own king and tried to rebel. The rebellion was quickly defeated with most of the rebels being impaled. Another rebellion occurred in 482 B.C. Xerxes, the Median king of the time, sent an army to recapture the city which resulted in the destruction of all the idols of the Babylonian god. The city declined in power until Alexander the Great wanted to rebuild the city, but he died before he could complete the task. Over time Babylon was deserted little by little until it became entirely abandoned. The president of Iraq, Saddam Hussein, attempted to rebuild Babylon, which would have defied the prophecy.
Ironically, during his rebuilding Saddam Hussein was, “Found hiding in a small underground bunker near a farmhouse in ad-Dawr, near Tikrit”. This led to his trial and execution on December 30, 2006, making it so he could not rebuild Babylon as he planned, further showing that the prophecies of the Bible are concrete and inspired. Currently Babylon can be visited during times of peace but has remained uninhabited for nearly 2,000 years, truly fulfilling Isaiah’s prophecy. Probably the most prominent prophecy in today’s time would be the prophecies dealing with Israel’s return. Throughout the Bible, there are multiple prophecies dealing with Israel returning as a nation and the Jews returning to it. A few examples of this are:

“And say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land” (Ezek 37:21).

“There saith the Lord of hosts; Behold, I will save my people from the east country, and from the west country; And I will bring them, and they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God, in truth and in righteousness” (Zech 8:7-8).

“And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth” (Isa 11:11-12).

These are just three of many occurrences in which the Bible talks about Israel returning as a nation and as a people. In 1948, Israel did in fact become a state again. A nation coming back to its original location after nearly 2,000 years is unparalleled in history. Not just is it unparalleled, but the Bible predicted it multiple times. These prophecies about Israel are some of the strongest ones that go against any critic’s counterargument because one cannot say that these were written after their fulfillment.

As clearly shown, the prophetic word goes hand in hand with historic events. Throughout time, evidence has shown the Bible to be more and more accurate as humanity learns more about the past. Another major factor which plays into the Bible’s inspiration is the Jewish people. According to the Bible, they play a large role in God’s plan. In next month’s article, Lord willing, Jewish history will be compared with the Bible and a few scientific objections will be discussed in order to thoroughly conclude God truly does exist.

Matthew Tuckson (Norfolk, VA)

Notes:
Deacons

In the previous article (The Tidings, September 2015) we considered the office of the Bishop. Next we come to the deacons\(^1\). Now although we do not have the office of a deacon in our own community, it was clearly an office, and an important office, in New Testament times.

The Epistle to the Philippians opens with these words: “Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons.” And in 1st Timothy 3 the office of a deacon is mentioned four times, and the qualifications of a deacon are set down alongside those of the bishop. A bishop must have these specified qualities, and the deacons must similarly be “men of good repute,” and their wives also must be sensible, well balanced people, as I would summarize it.

Now the word deacon originally meant a servant, or a minister. It is the same word, in fact, in the New Testament. When we read “the bishops and deacons” we could perhaps read the bishops, or elders, and “servants” or “ministers,” although it is clear that the office of a deacon was something special, for which special qualifications were required. Jesus actually used this word of himself when he said: “The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and give his life a ransom for many” (Matt 20:28).

The word minister is the same as deacon and it carries with it the idea of the more menial tasks, as that of a servant to others. That is what a deacon really was — a servant of the church. In 1st Timothy 3 we have already seen it seems clearly to be an office in the church, with particular qualifications attaching to it. And that takes us back again to Acts 6, when seven men were appointed to look after the day to day running of the ecclesial finances — the “soup kitchen” as we might say — to see that everybody was fed and that the poor were not neglected.

“And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration. Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business” (Acts 6:1-3).

There had been complaints that the Greek converts were being neglected in the “daily ministration,” and these seven deacons, or ministers, were appointed to organize matters. Not that they would physically necessarily ladle out the soup,
if we may use that expression, but that they would superintend the work, and see that these functions were performed. We notice in passing that though they had these jobs to do, ministering to the membership, it did not mean that they did no other jobs as well. For example, Stephen in Acts 6:8-15 and in Acts 8:5 is seen as an “evangelist” and preacher of the Gospel.

So it means that brethren who have speaking appointments, and may therefore be looked upon as having their primary function as ministers of the Word, may still quite properly be seen in the kitchen doing the washing up at a fraternal gathering, or helping with the cleaning of the hall. There is nothing inferior about any of these tasks. The office of a deacon was a very important office in the early church, but the holders performed a multitude of sometimes “menial” tasks.

We read of Phoebe as a “servant” of the church. “I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deaconess of the church at Cenchre-ae” (Rom 16:1 RSV). Here the word is properly rendered deaconess: it is “servant” in the KJV. You will find the Revised Version margin and the Revised Standard Version, and other newer versions, all concur in translating the word as deaconess. That is to say, they take the view that Phoebe was not just a general “servant” but that she had an office in the church. She was one of those deacons who ministered to the well-being of the members of the church of Christ.

It reminds us, just in passing, that women in New Testament times were sometimes allowed some part in the ecclesial affairs and in ecclesial offices. You may remember that Paul refers to “every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head; for that is even all one as if she were shaven” (1Cor 11:5). This would appear to indicate a public office of praying and prophesying on behalf of the church; not praying at a bedside, and certainly not “prophesying” at a bedside. These were elements in the ecclesial worship, and there were sisters of the early church who had this responsibility given to them, just as Phoebe had the office of a deaconess in the church; and it may be that we are losing some excellent service to the ecclesia by our rather rigid and Victorian rule that no woman shall do anything in the ecclesial life except teach the Sunday School and wash up at fraternal gatherings.

What would be the equivalent, do you think, of deacons in our own organization? It is true that we have no such office today, but perhaps we ought to have, for if we claim to be “apostolic Christianity revived” where are our deacons? I suppose the kind of things that deacons would do, if there were such an office in our ecclesia, would be the serving on Sunday morning of the emblems, (and the word “server” is deacon — it is the very same word — a servant, or a server) — so our serving brethren would be deacons; the hall stewards, the doorkeepers, the visitors of the sick, the hall cleaners, the table attendants — all these would be the kind of functions performed by the deacons of the early church; and the office of a deacon therefore, in the 1st century church, should serve to remind us of the importance of all these ministrations in the ecclesia of today.

Let us never think that they are unimportant offices. Resist the temptation to think that they are jobs to give to somebody as a sop because he is unable to get on to
the platform. Let us realize always that these offices of ministration, these servile offices, if you like so to describe them, are in the Apostles' book very important indeed. Linked up with the bishops are the ministers, or deacons, who would perform the kind of functions of which I have spoken.

**Other offices**

There are other offices mentioned in the New Testament and I would like to take you now to the words of Paul, where he seems to be saying that when Jesus went to heaven, “when he ascended on high,” (Eph 4:8): it was for the benefit of the church. Jesus himself said something like this in John's gospel: that if he did not go, “the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you” (John 16:7). And what the Apostle is saying here in Ephesians is, (quoting from Psalm 62.18) “When he ascended up on high he led captivity captive and gave gifts unto men.” Now the “gifts” that he gave unto men, the Apostle says, were these officers of the church. “And he gave some, apostles; and some prophets; and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers. For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ” (Eph 4:11).

So Paul sees Christ's ascension into heaven, as it were, releasing these powers that came upon men to enable them to perform these functions in the church, which were Christ's gift to the particular churches. This was so that some churches needed the ministration of the Apostles, some specially the ministration of prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers and so on. All was supplied, therefore, by the grace of Jesus Christ shedding forth this power, and bestowing on men these various functions — apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers are those specifically mentioned in the context of Ephesians 4 as above.

**Speaking with tongues**

In 1st Corinthians 12 we have a slightly different list of offices, and Paul there is enumerating them in order of their importance. You will be aware of the situation at Corinth, that there were some of the brethren there who over-emphasized the importance of the gift of tongues. They seem to have had it in their mind that this was something more spectacular than the other powers, and they aspired to be able to “speak with tongues.” It became quite a problem in the church, because whatever we may understand by speaking with tongues, it is clear that it was not very edifying, unless there was somebody there who could tell the others what the speaker was saying, and so Paul is endeavoring to get the matter in proper perspective.

Paul, in this epistle, sets out for them what are the important gifts, and what they should most of all aspire to attain. “And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues” (1Cor 12:28). Notice that he puts “diversities of tongues” at the very end of the list of importances! And clearly he has in mind to point out to them which are the more important of the gifts. First apostles, secondarily prophets, then teachers, after that miracles and so on, and tongues right down the bottom. So they got their answer on that particular point.
Apostles. I wonder if we can identify some of these offices here mentioned. Apostles, as I have said, would not appear to me to have any relation at all to our own organization, because these were men specially appointed, usually because of their personal acquaintance with the Lord himself, but they are linked in the Letter to the Ephesians with the second grade, the prophets. Now the prophets were men who spoke the word of God. That is what prophecy really is. We often get all mixed up about this, and think that prophecy is foretelling the future. But this is only a part of the prophet’s work. Primarily, prophecy is the gift of speaking God’s word (forth telling and not foretelling). And if a brother in the twentieth century gets up on the platform and speaks God’s word he may be thought of as a “prophet” in this sense only. Paul says in the context here that the Apostles and prophets are the foundation of the church, which is “built upon the foundation of the Apostles and prophets, with Jesus Christ himself as the chief corner stone,” (Eph 2:20); and it would seem to me reasonable to suppose that Paul here is thinking not of the Old Testament Prophets, but of the New Testament Prophets. Those who preached the word faithfully were second only to the Apostles in importance.

Then there were teachers. I would think teachers would be a more private kind of office; not so much public teachers of the word, but as those like Priscilla and Aquila, who took Apollos home with them and taught him the way of God more perfectly, getting out the Scriptures and discussing it in depth; “apt to teach,” as the Apostle would say, and able to communicate their message to individuals in this way.

The miracles and gifts of healing do not seem to be manifest among us at all today. But such helpers would probably answer to deacons, that is, those who help the work in a practical way, as Paul, for example, had John Mark as his “minister,” and the word again is deacon. He was a man whose function it was to “help” the Apostle with his task. Timothy similarly, later on, was the young man who went about with Paul on his missions as his helper, his servant, his minister, or deacon. The governments, I suppose, would be the office of the eldership, or the arranging brethren as we should say today. Lastly came the gift of tongues. If you are ever worried about this, (and I suppose we all are from time to time, when we meet people who say we ought to have tongues, or that they have the gift which we do not possess) it is worth remembering and reminding people, that in the list of importances the gift of tongues, even in New Testament times, was put so low, at the end of the list, that it is regarded by Paul as relatively unimportant.

It would seem to me that the Ephesian and Corinthian passages I have referred to above are surveying the whole ecclesial scene; not thinking of the local ecclesiastical, but of the body as a whole, although several of the offices would operate at local level. Apostles, prophets and evangelists, however, would be superimposed on the normal church organization. The evangelists, who went about from place to place preaching the gospel, were not to be received of the churches without question, although they were endowed with this particular office of being evangelists, yet it was still a duty of the rank and file members to exercise judgment concerning the words that they preached. There were warned: “Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they be of God” (1John 4:1).
It would appear to me from what we have seen already, that the church in New Testament times was not less well organized than we are, but better organized. There was more direction from the leadership at the top. There was more specialization in the work that they performed. In Hebrews 13 there are three distinct references by the Apostle urging the duty on the church of obedience: “Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account” (Heb 13:17). Now it is true to say that our arranging brethren today, or the office of the Recording Brother with the arranging committee of any ecclesia, are not precisely the same as the eldership and the bishopric of the first century church: but still I would say, let us be aware of this, that even if it is not precisely the same, by and large it is the same office, with a similar responsibility, and depending upon the members of the ecclesia to show loyalty (if we won’t use the word obedience, because we are a democratic society) at least let us say that it is our duty to show loyalty to those who are appointed to the leadership of the ecclesia.

Len Richardson

Notes:
1. [Editor]. It is clear that this term came to take on a strictly Christian term in the early church. Although it was based on the term which meant servant, it took on special connotations when associated with Bishops etc.
2. [Editor]. I recognize there is a wide range of views on this in our community, and do not believe the opinion of Bro. Len is necessarily correct.
3. *The Tidings* Special Issue in 2014 (August) dealt with “All the Apostles in the Bible”.

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**Apostles**

*The Greek apostolos is composed of apo, from, or away from; and stolos, an equipment, an expedition, whether by land or sea. It also carries with it the idea that an important message is associated with the sending: as in an ambassador, who is one charged with representing the authority of the person who sends. The word was therefore a very suitable one to apply to men who were given the commission to make in turn disciples of all the nations, to go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation (Matt 28:19; Mark 16:15). To say an apostle simply means “one who is sent” is incorrect in how the New Testament uses it. The application of the term “apostles” varies in different parts of the New Testament. In the Gospels, it generally refers to the twelve disciples. In the earlier chapters of the Acts it refers to the Twelve who were personally chosen by Jesus of Nazareth to be his special companions, substituting Matthias for Judas Iscariot. They were the leaders of the church during its earliest days. Later, the term was applied to Paul and Barnabas, and, by implication, to James, the Lord’s brother (Gal 1:19). Besides these, the term is applied to Andronicus and Junia, fellow prisoners with Paul, who he says were of note among the apostles (Rom 16:7). In another connection it is applied to certain officers in the early church, being placed before pastors and teachers (1Cor 12:28; Eph 4:11).*

From *The Tidings* Special Issue on “Apostles”, August 2014
The Most Unusual Wedding Ever

I am going to tell you a sort of parable. As it unfolds, please bear in mind the title (and subject) of this article. What you are about to see will be quite unusual, and perhaps unsettling, frightening and confusing.

Imagine a meeting room, perhaps like the rooms where many of us have our Sunday meetings. This room has been re-organized in anticipation of some special event. There are flowers everywhere, and bright new decorations. People are assembling, dressed more formally than usual. Women are wearing their new dresses. Some of the men feel a little stiff in their new suits. A few women are giving last-minute instructions, checking their lists. Music is playing, but it seems more solemn than usual. Food is arriving; someone is laying out a special cake in the next room. There is an undercurrent of anticipation and a building excitement. Something is about to happen.

The last arriving guests are finding their seats. Now a pause, and a hush. Then music begins again, stirring music, music announcing — something, someone, but what? And whom?

Another pause, followed by familiar music, a march. In the center aisle appears a proud older man with a young woman on his arm, arrayed in a flowing white gown. They begin to walk slowly and with dignity, down the aisle, measuring their steps as they come. She is beautiful, her eyes are sparkling, and her smile is dazzling. Everyone is smiling now; joy is in the air. She is escorted to the front of the room, where she takes her place alongside her companions.

They all wait. Something, or someone, is missing. Everything about the scene suggests that there must be a young man, suitably dressed, waiting for her. But no one has yet come. Everyone is waiting. There are whispers: the one they expected has been known to be late before.

Next comes a great noise, thundering and echoing all around, at a distance and then just outside the building, with confused shouting, excited and fearful, then cries of terror. It is as though a great storm has suddenly blown in, a hurricane perhaps, to engulf the building and the surrounding area. Then, just as suddenly, there is an awful stillness.

Before anyone can react to what they’ve heard, a new commotion arises in the back of the building. Someone is coming. Those seated near the front can hear a general murmur of surprise and bewilderment. What is going on?

At that moment, he enters. All eyes turn from the young woman at the front and look toward the door, where they see — a man. Yes, it’s the man they expected. But his appearance is altogether altered, so they can scarcely recognize him. He is carrying a sharp sword in his hand. Most striking are his clothes; they were once fine and clean, but now they are dripping with blood. He looks like a butcher just...
finishing a hard day at the slaughterhouse. He takes one step, and another, and another, making his way down the center aisle, and the assembly is in shock. On this joyous occasion, he has arrived covered in blood, as though he is the last man standing, just arrived from a terrible battlefield. With every step he takes, down the white runner stretched from front to back of the aisle, he leaves bloody footprints. Can this possibly be the bridegroom?

A few brave folks peek out the windows. They see fields and roads in every direction, and even the parking lot, covered with the carnage of battle. The bodies of warriors lay everywhere, fallen like autumn leaves. Already, vultures circle and tear at the corpses, only just now dead. They are enjoying their own unexpected feast.

You may remember that a previous article (The Tidings, June 2015) dealt with what I called JOCIs: juxtapositions of counterintuitive images. So I have to ask you: what did you expect as I began this short story? What happened, instead? If you were the least bit surprised, then you have experienced one more JOCI — perhaps the most disconcerting of all.

Furthermore, what you’ve experienced comes straight from the Bible. In the book of Revelation we have, in short order, these three scenes:

The preparation of the Bride and the wedding:

“Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear…. ’Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!’ ” (Rev 19:7-9).

The arrival of the Bridegroom, dripping in blood:

“There before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and makes war. His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns…. He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood…. Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. ’He will rule them with an iron scepter.’ He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: King of kings and Lord of Lords” (Rev 19:11-16).

The carnage of battle:

“I saw an angel standing in the sun, who cried in a loud voice to all the birds flying in midair, ’Come, gather together for the great supper of God, so that you may eat the flesh of kings, generals, and mighty men, of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, small and great’ ” (Rev 19:17,18).

This is the Marriage of the Lamb, which we desire and pray for. Christ is the Bridegroom, covered in blood.

Yes, the wedding will be a lovely, as we all imagine — more beautiful and more wonderful, in fact, than we can ever imagine. But other images and features will accompany it, before and after.
Are you shocked to see the Bridegroom covered in blood? Are you shocked to see the great feast of God — at least one part of that feast — consisting of dead bodies scattered across the earth. Does it surprise you? Should it?

**Conclusion**

The One who was the silent Lamb led to slaughter, shed his own blood, so that his multitudinous Bride could be redeemed and forgiven in God’s sight. That same Lamb has become, in Bible terms, a ravening and roaring Lion, dripping with blood. This time the blood is not his own; it is blood from the slain bodies of his enemies. He was righteous when he shed his own blood, and he will be righteous when he sheds the blood of others — however that might be accomplished (and by no means am I saying I know how it will happen). No matter how this great judgment on the earth is accomplished, the One who brings it about, the lamb turned into a lion, is still the same Lord and Savior who laid down his life.

When Israel looked for a Lion to destroy the Romans, they got instead a Lamb ready to die. Likewise, when we look for the marriage supper of the lovely Lamb of God, we get, instead, a great predator Lion of the tribe of Judah!

Jesus Christ is both. Each week we celebrate with the memorials the Passover Lamb who was slain for us. We know that he is alive forevermore, that he alone has the power of life and death for all humanity. When the time is right, he will use that power, terrifying as it may be.

Are you uncomfortable with this picture? Are you disturbed when you contemplate this final juxtaposition of two events, a lovely wedding and a gruesome slaughter, side by side? It’s difficult, isn’t it? You know what a wedding is like (from experience). You know what a battle is like (probably from books, photographs and movies). Instinctively you may feel that “never the twain shall meet.” But they do meet, here. The bridegroom arrives at his wedding celebration, having come directly from the battlefield.

Beware of putting the Father and His Son into a box that makes you comfortable with them. They are too awe-inspiring and multi-faceted for that. Quite possibly they will continue to surprise you again and again, in the future.

World history is a chronicle of unjust, foolish wars that have often done more harm than good. One man, and one man only, will wage an absolutely righteous war. He can do this because he has already fought the only perfectly righteous war — the internal war against temptation and sin in his own life. As the only person who has conquered temptation and sin in himself, he is uniquely qualified to conquer a city, a nation, and a world.

The Father has given him all power in heaven and earth. No one can question his right to execute judgments upon the earth, in any way he sees fit. Nor can anyone question his right to show mercy on anyone he pleases.

He is the one we remember each week, at our small “marriage supper of the Lamb”, which anticipates the great feast that will surely come.
“I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it anew with you in my Father’s kingdom” (Matt 26:29).

We cherish that simple promise, as we sing words of welcome to the Bridegroom:

“The bridegroom is arising, and soon he draweth nigh”
“May all our lamps be burning, our loins well girded be: Each longing heart preparing with joy to welcome thee”

Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

George Booker (Austin Leander, TX)

Notes:
1. (Laurentius Laurenti, (1660-1722). Printed as Hymn 361 in Christadelphian Hymn Book (Birmingham, UK 2002)

“Who Are You?”

Many years ago, I was about to retire for the night at a rest house in the tropical rainforest of Guyana. Suddenly from the pitch darkness outside came a voice loud and clear: “Who are you?” I was obviously an intruder, but who was challenging my presence there? Again there came the insistent query: “Who are you?” This was no human voice; it turned out later that it was the typical call of the burrowing owl, busy about his nightly business. But the question had to be answered — who was I? It’s a question we all have to answer sooner or later. Are we who we think we are, or have we perhaps a split personality? The matter is important because it could affect our standing at Christ’s judgment seat. The Lord had some severe words to say about those who thought they were righteous and despised others:

“And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted” (Luke 18:9-14).

When Moses looked upon the burdens of his fellow Israelites in Egypt and felt moved to correct injustice, one of those same Israelites challenged his authority: “Who made you ruler and judge over us?” (Exod 2:14). As we would put it, “Who do you think you are?” Moses fled to Midian and spent 40 years learning to be a shepherd, after which God did appoint him to be a ruler and judge. This time it was Moses who asked, “Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?” (Exod 3:11), to which God replied, “I will be with you.” It was a humbler Moses who, when confronted with the people’s complaint about lack of food, said: “Who are we, that you should grumble against us?... Who are
we? You are not grumbling against us, but against the Lord” (Exod 16:7-8). It was God who had brought them out from slavery and it was God who would provide for all their needs in the wilderness. Moses had learnt to trust God, “as seeing the invisible”, and he had no pretensions to greatness.

Later, when Miriam and Aaron criticized him, and accused him of high-handedness, God intervened and justified His servant. Significantly, the record adds, “Now Moses was a very humble man, more humble than anyone else on the face of the earth” (Numb 12:1-12).

So the first rule of self-examination is: are we humble? How do we react to criticism? If it is unjust, do we take it personally, or are we sad that others have misunderstood us? And then are we patient enough to explain matters carefully to avoid that same criticism being repeated? If it is a valid comment, then can we take it and do something about it? A great deal of 2nd Corinthians is taken up with Paul’s defense of his Christ-given authority, couched in terms that honor the Lord who called him but also sensitive to the criticism that he was exploiting the Corinthians for his own ends.

We are blessed with more examples in Scripture of those who have examined themselves and committed themselves wholeheartedly to God. Take David, the “man after God’s own heart”. After Nathan had revealed to him the wonderful covenant God was promising, David found it hard to believe that this was real. “Who am I, O Sovereign Lord, and what is my family, that you have brought me this far?” (2Sam 7:18). He was overwhelmed by God’s grace. He didn’t see this as some kind of reward for his faithfulness but recognized it as part of God’s unfolding purpose: “For the sake of your word and according to your will, you have done this great thing...” (v. 21). He then launched into a great paeon of praise and thanksgiving.

Let us ask ourselves the same question: who are we, that God should have made great and precious promises to us, sinful and erring as we are? Has time blunted the freshness and beauty of those promises? Or, are we still left breathless by God’s grace and rejoicing continuously in His mercy?

Chris Tarry (Walsall, U.K.)

Thousand Oaks Christadelphian Library

Bro. Tom Graham who runs the Thousand Oaks Christadelphian Library has moved and wishes to give a new address for those who purchase books through the library. The new address is:

Thousand Oaks Christadelphian Library
c/o Tom Graham
1857 Tuscan Grove Pl.
Camarillo, CA 93012
Bolivia — La Paz Convivencia (Ecclesial Bible Camp)

From the 30th April to the 3rd of May we held the annual La Paz Convivencia (Ecclesial Bible Camp) and were fortunate enough to have Bro. Douglas and Sis. Marisol Vanegas from Costa Rica with us, with Bro. Douglas leading a marathon of studies. With 10 studies, daily Bible readings and 15 separate eating times throughout the three days it really was a weekend full of food!

Nineteen people attended throughout the weekend (17 for the whole time), a mix of brothers and sisters, children and long term contacts (and a couple of keen more recent ones!). The subjects had been pre-selected by the brother and sisters of the La Paz ecclesia so it was great to hear their comments at the end of the Convivencia about how much they enjoyed the studies and how uplifting and fortifying they had been.

After an introduction on Thursday evening Bro. Douglas then gave four studies on the times of the Judges followed by the memorial and a variety of selected subjects on Israel, Satan in Job, The great battle in heaven from Revelation 12, and the coming Judgement.

Being able to listen to a native Spanish speaker was obviously a wonderful break for the ears of everyone, rather than the poorly pronounced mumbling of an
Jamaica — Tiny Missionaries

When Nathan and I were newly married and venturing into the mission field together (India), we carried with us the romantic notion that one day it would be wonderful to take our as-yet-to-be-realized children with us, to expose them early and often to different cultures and the rigors of travel, and most importantly, to the joys and hard work of missionary life. “When the youngest is five,” we told ourselves, our ignorance blissful.

Australian! And Bro. Douglas being such a thorough explainer and methodically using the Bible to interpret itself resulted in many comments regarding how clear the message and lessons were.

While the adults were in the study sessions the children had Sunday school sessions, with one activity involving making the kingdom of Solomon entirely out of edible things — the temple, cedars of Lebanon, monkeys, peacocks, ships, the kings throne and Solomon himself. It was then appreciatively pulled apart and devoured by everyone — perhaps not to dissimilar to what sadly happened to the Kingdom after Solomon.

In addition to the studies our Convivencia together had plenty of physical activities. A Bible games night, football, walks to the nearby lake and table soccer competitions, as well as time to sit down and enjoy each other’s company. All in all it was a very encouraging weekend together and we thank our God that we are able to have events like these.

And a spot of ongoing news regarding La Paz, three interested friends are taking personal ‘preparing for baptism’ classes so we pray with God’s blessing that these will soon form part of the ecclesia in La Paz.

Written by Shimon Spina (La Paz, Bolivia)

Submitted by Jan Berneau, CBMA/CBMC Publicity

Selfie with Bro. Douglas and Sis. Marisol

Jamaica — Tiny Missionaries

When Nathan and I were newly married and venturing into the mission field together (India), we carried with us the romantic notion that one day it would be wonderful to take our as-yet-to-be-realized children with us, to expose them early and often to different cultures and the rigors of travel, and most importantly, to the joys and hard work of missionary life. “When the youngest is five,” we told ourselves, our ignorance blissful.
Our romantic notions were the shattered with the arrival of babies and the fog of exhaustion that parenting brings, with the demands of their ever-constant needs and the reordering of our family from a twosome to a foursome. We came to terms with the realities involved in taking little people along on a trip to Somewhere Different, and stayed at home.

But they grew, as babies do, and our desire to be involved in missionary work remained, and whilst Talia’s fifth year came and went without a foray into the field, her sixth year rolled round and God gave us the opportunity to join Bro. Don Luff on a visit to Jamaica. So at the ages of nearly nine and six, we packed up Zinnia and Talia, and took them on their first adventure to the West Indies to see that God’s truth is the same everywhere.

How fun it will be, we told them, and just to be sure it was, we filled backpacks with books and colored pencils, and loaded up two iPods with audiobooks and handed them one each.

And how fun it was! We arrived several days earlier than Don, partly to enjoy a few days on the beach, and partly to let the girls acclimatize gently to being Somewhere So Different. And it was different. The turquoise waters of the Caribbean Sea were just a three minute walk away, and lizards ran all over bougainvillea in the guesthouse gardens. The indomitable and fantastic Bro. Ray Arthurs was our very close neighbor, with his big laugh and bigger faith welcoming us to the island. Mangoes fell like great golden raindrops. Ripe breadfruit plummeted from the trees, splattering messily at our feet. Gigantic land crabs scuttled around in the grass, as abundant as the bunny rabbits in Virginia.

To the girls, it smelled a little funky and the bathrooms were weird. The guesthouse rooms didn’t look quite like hotels in the States. Menus contained suspicious items like salt fish and callaloo. It was hot, and the air conditioner died. Someone small accidentally locked herself in the bathroom. Mosquitoes consumed our fresh flesh.

So we smoothed the passage a little, and rode a glass-bottomed boat out to a reef, snorkeling with the pretty fish. We ordered BLTs instead of salt fish, banana smoothies instead of beetroot juice, and played in the beautiful water. Without realizing it was happening to them, the girls adjusted and when Bro. Don arrived three days after us, we were ready to work.
In addition to the fun of controlling their own audiobook destiny, the next best thing for them about traveling in Jamaica was the complete lack of seatbelts in the back seat of any vehicle. On Tuesday morning, six of us piled into Brother Ray’s pickup to head out to the Harvey River Ecclesia, Don with his long legs in the front, our family of four in the back (it was a 2-seater Toyota 4-wheel drive pickup). When we screeched to a halt to pick up two elderly sisters waiting for us on the roadside, we deferred to our elders and the four of us climbed into the bed of the pick-up. With hair blowing every which way and the sun beating down, the girls snapped headphones over their ears, and settled in for the ride of their little lives along a twisty, bendy road under the lush, towering bamboo, up the mountain to Harvey River.

Harvey River is a rural spot, and home to a small ecclesia of one brother and four sisters. We broke bread with them, reminded of our future hope in the Kingdom. More immediate for the girls was the hope of dabbling their feet in the river which runs right below the hall, and as soon as meeting was over, they took off down the hill, squealing at the prospect of splashing in cool water on a hot day.

For Nathan and me, each place, each ecclesia we visited was an opportunity to encourage our brethren, and to be encouraged in return. For our girls, it was an opportunity to explore somewhere new, to see what lay beyond the bend in the trail or just the over the hill. Anything that inspired excitement in them and developed their desire to both be there and return some day, seemed worth encouraging. Getting stuck in a thunderstorm in the middle of a rainforest on a road to nowhere and having to get out of the pick-up into the pouring rain so it could make it up the hill? This is fun, girls! FUN!

The second half of our trip brought a different kind of adventure. The May Pen Ecclesia has a vibrant Sunday school, and Zinnia happily romped around in the back yard of the ecclesial hall with a gaggle of girls after meeting. Tali, meanwhile, was busy making mischief with little Akilah Johnson, daughter of Brother Patrick and the late Sister Annette. The two of them, sprung from the same zesty bean pod, spent three days chasing bugs and making see-saws from rickety bricks and splintery pieces of wood. Children, regardless of where they grow up, are full of ideas.

Talia asked to stay in Jamaica for three more months, with or without the rest of us!! Zinnia conceded that maybe we could go back there some day, just so long as it was at least five years hence.

There’s nothing easy about going anywhere with children, not even to the post office, and the effort involved increases exponentially with each different
element added. Scorching temperatures and ravenous mosquitoes are not foreign to our little Virginians, but not being able to retreat into air conditioning is. Sitting through meeting once a week? No problem. Four memorial services at different ecclesias, two evening ecclesial Bible Classes, a home Bible Class and a Mutual Improvement Day for all ages (about 90 in attendance) at the Kingston Ecclesial Hall in the course of one week? That’s bit more of a stretch. Throw in some hard pews and intense heat, and the discomfort (and vocalization of it) increases.

Was it always fun? By no means. But was it good? Oh yes! Our little people stretched and grew, learning so much more than they realize and next time, (and God willing, there will be a next time), they’ll grow and learn a little more. So will we.

Written by Antonia Giordano (Norfolk, VA)  
Submitted by Jan Berneau, CBMA/CBMC Publicity
Out of all Distress — A Parable of Redemption and Salvation”, under which a total of six topics were addressed.

Bro. Patrick Joseph, the Recording Brother of the Eccles Ecclesia, presided on the 4th July, 2015, where he began with the welcoming remarks. The first topic delivered by Bro Carr was “Outside the Camp” and the reading was taken from Matthew 1:1-17. This served as an introduction to all the topics that were to follow. Bro Carr pointed out the two main themes that can be found in this chapter — “Redemption” and the act of being “Outside the Camp”. The second topic that he dealt with for that day was “She has been more faithful than I”. The introductory reading was taken from Genesis 38. The main focus of this topic was the relationship between Judah and Tamar, one of the couples mentioned in Matthew 1:1-17. Tamar wanted to be associated with the Kingdom of God so she did everything in her power to get into God’s Kingdom, even if that was to play the harlot with Judah. She was then redeemed and brought back into the Camp.

Bro. Jermaine Porte was the president on the 5th July, 2015, where there was a baptism before the Memorial Service commenced. Our new brother in the Truth, Bro. Shamroy Hope, was baptized by our guest speaker Bro. Mark Carr. After the baptism had concluded the Memorial Service commenced at which Bro. Carr delivered his third topic entitled “She sent them out another way” and the reading was taken from Joshua 2. This topic was based on the relationship between Rahab and Salmon. She was a prostitute and he redeemed her and brought her into the Camp. The topic for the afternoon session was “Under whose wings thou have come to trust” and the introductory reading was taken from Ruth 4. Boaz took over the responsibility for Ruth and redeemed her.

On the final day, 6th July, 2015, Bro. Jerrold Joseph presided and the two topics done were entitled “Assuredly thy son shall reign after me” and the reading was taking from 1 Kings 1:11-31, and “Fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife” and the introductory reading was taken from Matthew 1:18-25. The first talk focused on the relationship between Bath-Sheba and David. Bath-Sheba was a Gentile, along with Rahab, Tamar and Ruth and had no right being associated with the Kingdom of God but she did all she could to secure her position. The final talk was based on the love that Joseph and Mary shared. He accepted a woman who was pregnant and protected her from any form of retribution.

All of these women mentioned in Matthew 1:1-17 were protected by scarlet. This scarlet represents the ashes of a red heifer burnt with scarlet and hyssop which was added to water and used to sprinkle on those who were unclean and cleansed them. All the women were sprinkled with this liquid and purified by their husbands.

It was indeed a pleasure to be present at this Fraternal Gathering and hear the word brought by Bro Mark Carr. On behalf of the members of the Eccles Ecclesia we would like to thank all who assisted in the preparation and success of this gathering and Bro Carr for all the work that he has done at the Fraternal Gathering.

Joanna Porte
Guyana Bible School

The 44th annual Guyana Christadelphian Bible school 2015 was held at the Kilcoy Christadelphian hall from Friday April 3rd to Monday April 6th 2015. The Theme considered was “The Law of God is perfect, converting the soul; the Testimony of God are pure making the simple wise” (Psa 19:7). The Bible school was well attended by members of all six ecclesias in Guyana. On average we had about 65 persons for the day including children and youth circlers.

We greatly appreciated the ministrations of our two overseas speakers. Their classes meshed together remarkably well. Bro. Dev Ramcharran dealt with the sub-theme: “Saving the Galatians”; while Bro. Jeff Gelineau focused on the sub-theme: “Strength in Weakness”. The talks were very well delivered and it was clearly understood by even the young ones because of the questions that were asked afterwards.

Sis. Christine Drepaull was able to assist with the Sunday school classes during the Bible school time. This was greatly appreciated by both children and adults. They met under a canopy in front of the hall to shelter them from the intense tropical sun while adult classes were inside the hall.

Rose and Diane Ndjeleku
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.

CHICAGO, IL

The lightstand in Chicago was blessed to have two baptisms August 31, 2015. DANIEL RULINDA and BAWILL RUBONEZA were baptized after good confessions of their faith. Both members were born in Congo and fled for their lives about ten years ago. Daniel had actually survived being a victim of a firing squad, and their stories of survival are intense. Their travels took them to South Africa, where their families met up with Bro. Lucas and Leona Scheepers near Pretoria. Bawili’s sister, Kiza, was baptized in South Africa and that is how their family became familiar with Christadelphians. Bawili’s husband, Oliver, was also baptized in South Africa just over a year ago, before moving to Chicago, and he has been a wonderful addition to our ecclesia. We now have about fifteen total family members from Congo who attend services each week, including the large Emena family which faithfully attends one hundred percent of every service we have. We have many members who have helped with resettling the refugees, and we may be able to assist other ecclesias if requested.

The Chicago Ecclesia recently received notice that two brothers originally from Iran are expected to receive refugee status and arrive in Chicago Sept. 21, 2015. These brothers, Bre. Milad and Masih Bahadorzadeh, had a three page article about their lives by Bro. Ron Hicks in the July 2014 issue of Bible Missionary. Bro. Tim Galbraith has been very involved in their lives, as well as Bro. Karl Baloch, who is originally from Pakistan (in Sri Lanka himself, awaiting refugee status to Canada). Needless to say, Chicago is a major city that seems connected with various refugee charities and we are finding more of our homeless and stateless brethren arriving in our area. We thank our heavenly Father for these new members, and for the amazing experiences each brings to our church. If any would like further information, please contact the undersigned below.

Dan Richard

KITCHENER WATERLOO, ON

We are very pleased to welcome as members of the Kitchener Waterloo Ecclesia, Bro. Michael and Sis. Ruth Buxton-Carr from the Shelburne Ecclesia. We are looking forward to their contribution to working with us as we await the coming of the Lord.

Martin J Webster

WASHINGTON DC

The Washington DC ecclesia has enjoyed the visits of many brothers and sisters since our last intelligence and wish to thank the following brothers for their words of exhortation: Bill Link and Allen Laben (Baltimore, MD); Noah Bradburn (Northern Virginia); Matt Colby (Hamilton Book Road, ON); George Bediako (Richmond
Petersburg, VA); Wilfred Alleyne (Birmingham, Handsworth, UK); Dean Brown (Avon, IN); and Peter Trotter (Dallas, TX).

In February 2015, Sis. Beth DeSouza transferred her membership to the San Francisco Peninsula, CA Ecclesia when her husband Malcolm’s job was relocated to California. She and her family will be missed. On March 4, 2015, we rejoiced with Bro. Eric and Sis. Dawn Kling on the birth of their fourth child, Jäger Izaac Kling.

In April 2015, we enjoyed fellowship with the members of the Baltimore Ecclesia when we hosted our semi-annual Baltimore/Washington Gathering and Study Day. We would like to thank Bro. Matt Colby (Hamilton Book Road, ON) for his words of exhortation and talk on, “The Burdens of the Messiah and his Forerunner” on Sunday, and his studies on, “Reasons to Believe” on Saturday.

We would also like to thank Bro. Allen Laben (Baltimore, MD) who along with Bro. Matt Link have been leading our Learn to Read the Bible seminar since April. We are pleased to say that after five months, we still have five contacts in regular attendance.

On May 31, 2015, we were blessed to witness the baptism of PATRICIA CATHERINE HERDOIZA HERNANDEZ into the saving name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. We report that we have removed the names of Sis.’s Heather Locke, and Allana McDaniel and Bro. David Rodriguez from our membership.

In June 2015, we hosted our CYC camping and canoe trip with families from a number of ecclesias attending. We wish to thank Bro. Jeff and Sis. Ruth Jensen (Shenandoah, VA) for all their help in making it a success.

In August 2015, we received a letter from the Sarasota, FL Ecclesia commending Sis. Elaine David to the Washington DC Ecclesia. She was a member of our ecclesia many years ago and it is good to have her back with us.

Our beloved Bro. Alvan Brittle fell asleep in the Lord Sunday, August 16, 2015, at the age of ninety-seven. Bro. Alvan was baptised in the saving name of our Lord Jesus Christ on September 21, 1939, and he and Sis. Trynie Brittle transferred their membership from the Echo Lake, NJ Ecclesia to the Washington DC Ecclesia in June 1985. Bro. Alvan had been bed ridden for several months and now rests in peace awaiting the return of our Lord and the resurrection of all those who sleep in Christ Jesus. Our thoughts and prayers go out to his family. We pray his sleep will be short. A memorial service for family and friends to share stories and memories of our beloved Bro. Alvan’s life is planned, God willing, for September 26, 2015, at our ecclesial hall.

We look forward to and invite all to attend a study weekend by Bro. Stephen Whitehouse October 10-11, 2015, on the topic, “Jesus a High Priest After the Order of Melchizedek,” and our Family Bible Weekend at Camp Hashawha with Bro. Ryan King on the topic, “Jeremiah and His Friends”.

Bob Kling

FAMILY BIBLE STUDY WEEKEND
CAMP HASHAWHA, WESTMINSTER, MD.

The Washington, D.C. ecclesia extends a loving invitation for all to attend our family Bible Study weekend at Camp Hashawha, 300 John Owings Rd, Westminster, MD 21158.

The weekend is planned, God willing, for November 20-22, 2015. Bro. Ryan King (Richmond Petersburg, VA) is scheduled to lead teens and adults in classes
entitled “Jeremiah & His Friends”. Please note this is a week earlier than previous years when it was the Thanksgiving weekend.

Bible classes for all ages will be held Saturday and Sunday beginning at 8:45AM. A nursery for those under 4 is available. Sports, daily readings, a Bible discussion group, an evening program and a campfire hymn sing are planned for Saturday. Sunday School, Memorial Service and lunch complete the weekend on Sunday.

Mail registrations will be accepted on a first come, first-served basis and only with a proper deposit. No phone or e-mail reservations will be accepted. No walk-ins please. Day attendees must pre-register. The Camp requires registration numbers to plan for meals so please register early.

Registration deadline is November 3, 2015. Registration fee for those over 4 is $65.00 (US funds only). A $30.00 deposit, per person, is required with your registration. Make checks payable to Washington Christadelphian Ecclesia. Confirmation of your registration will be e-mailed or phoned to you. Guardians, for those under 18 attending without their parents, must be staying on site at the camp and must be over 25 years old.

Mail registrations to: Bro. Ken Green, 14006 Barkham Court, Laurel, MD 20707. For forms or information, phone: 443-497-3497 or e-mail Bro. Ken at Hashawha@gmail.com. (Forms should be available from your ecclesia, on our website hopeofthekingdom.com or contact Bro. Green.)

__Origin of the Chicago Ecclesia__

A man by the name of Saunders, who had come to Chicago from Ohio, finding a few people of like persuasion with himself gathered them together and organized a mission in 1843. The group thus organized held the views of Dr John Thomas who had for some years been associated with the movement led by Alexander Campbell. He had been introduced to Mr. Campbell in the early thirties by some Cincinnati brethren and had been cordially received by him.

In 1834 Dr Thomas projected a publication to be known as The Apostolic Advocate and to be published at Philadelphia. Mr. Campbell heartily approved of this project and in his announcement of it spoke of Dr Thomas as a “talented, devout and zealous disciple of the Messiah,” and commended The Apostolic Advocate to the attention of the readers of The Millenial Harbinger. Not long after this, however Dr Thomas began to give publicity to certain very radical views and to advocate doctrines which Mr. Campbell regarded as speculative and divisive. He felt called upon, therefore to answer this and a controversy ensued which lasted a number of years and finally resulted in the withdrawal of Dr Thomas from the Campbell movement.

It was natural, however, since the Thomasites had been affiliated with the Campbell movement and were known Christians, that Disciples coming to Chicago in the years immediately following the organization of the mission should unite with it. However, the two groups were not harmonious so there were frequent debates and some friction, and finally L.C.P. Freer, one of the Thomasites, proposed a separation. Those adhering to the Campbell movement, therefore, withdrew, and in 1849 organized a church with seven charter members.

From “The Disciples of Christ in Chicago...” by Perry James Rice
We are members of God’s family

An article in the local newspaper tells about a man who died on his 88th birthday leaving his wife he was married to for 68 years, 17 children, 137 grandchildren, and 70 great grandchildren. Almost every day would have been a birthday for someone in his family. If he tried to keep in regular contact with all his family members he would have been a very busy man.

While this man certainly had a large family, it is tiny compared to the family of our Heavenly Father. We are God's children, and He keeps track of all of us. Jesus tells us that not even a sparrow can fall to the ground without the Father knowing it, and that we are of more value than many sparrows. The psalmist tells us that our Heavenly Father knows when we sit down and when we stand up and He is acquainted with all our ways. How privileged we are, that the eternal God cares so much for us, and allows us to call Him our Heavenly Father.

Do we live each day of our lives mindful that all we think and say and do is known to Him? When we go to bed at night what grade do we think our Heavenly Father will give us for this day’s activities? Have we served our God by what we have done? Have we read the Bible, God’s word given to guide us through the perils of this life to salvation? Joshua was told that the key to him prospering was to meditate on the Word of God day and night. At the very least do we do our daily Bible readings? Have we looked for opportunities to share our hope of salvation with those living in darkness in our increasingly troubled world? Paul advises the Thessalonians to pray without ceasing — do we? Do we discuss the details of our life with our Heavenly Father, looking for His blessing and guidance, knowing that our burdens can be light when we share the yoke with Jesus? Have we showed kindness to others, helping them with their burdens? Living a godly life involves making a conscious decision to think about God's ways and to try to live according to His standards as best we can.

We have no secrets in heaven. Each day we live is another day to serve the Lord. When our life appears to have been extended it must mean there is still more God wants us to do. What is our purpose in living, and are we redeeming the time? However young or old we are, there is something we can do today for Him.

James tells us that faith without works is dead. He does not mean that we can earn salvation by our works. Nothing we could ever do would be enough to earn eternal life, but our Heavenly Father wants to give it to us if we will show our love for Him by keeping His commandments to the best of our ability. Jesus tells us that it is his Father’s good pleasure to give us the kingdom.

How comforting for us to know that both our Heavenly Father and His son, our Lord Jesus Christ, want us to be in the Kingdom. Jesus has told us that none of us can come to him unless our Heavenly Father has drawn us, so we really are special chosen vessels if we have been given the opportunity to learn the gospel
of salvation. It is up to us to want to be in God’s kingdom as much as they want us to be there. If there is anything we want more, then that is a weed choking our growth in godliness. Weeds can be a person, or an obsession for something like money or a career or a sport, or a distraction like a computer or television. We cannot let the weeds threaten our salvation by choking the Word of life in our lives. Most of us do need a job, we need money to live, we may need computers or phones to do our work properly, but we cannot let these things take over our lives. We must remember our priority in life is to seek first the Kingdom of God, and that all these other things are to be cut down in importance, like cutting down weeds, so that they don’t distract us from our true purpose in life.

What is it that takes our time and thoughts each day? If we were to keep a log of everything we did and thought about in one 24 hour period, we would probably be surprised and, perhaps, ashamed. How much of the time left over when we are not sleeping or eating do we actually spend in thinking about God, studying His Word, and working in His service? These questions each of us needs to answer, and the answer can lead to life forever, or rejection at the judgment seat of Christ.

Our God cares for us His children more than any natural father cares for his family. He has made it possible for us to inherit eternal life if we are willing to live our lives as His children. Let us be thankful that we have been called, and let us pray that we may be among those who are chosen and faithful

Robert J. Lloyd

God’s Family

In God’s lovingkindness He was well pleased to treat me in the same way as He did the Ethiopian eunuch returning home from his worship in Jerusalem (Acts 8:26–40). He sent one of His adopted sons in my way who taught me doctrines that I at first would not believe (Isa 53:1). Before this, God had made me prepare the way through the study of the English language. And so God, in His mercy, opened my understanding that I might understand the Scriptures. And He said unto me: “Thus it is written”, and so He showed me the wonderful things in His law. He showed me that “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved” (Mark 16:16). I had been taught that I already was baptized and a child of God, but now I had personally to face the question of baptism. I had to make my choice myself, to be baptized or not. God’s inspired servant Peter had given the answer to the question of baptism. When the Jews asked, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” he replied: “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:37-38). In reality there was no choice for me. I had to be baptized if I was to obey the commandment of God through His inspired disciple.

And so I was adopted as a son of God. I took my place in God’s family on earth, and I was the object of love and kindness from older members of the family. May God help us to be His fervent witnesses to this untoward generation. His Kingdom is coming, and those who are ready are to meet it. Shall we see any among them whom we helped to find the way of life?

Coming Events (Lord Willing)

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

OCTOBER, 2015

3-4 Ontario Fall Gathering at Maple High School, Vaughan, ON. Theme: “Through Patience and Comfort of the Scriptures we have Hope” (Rom 15:4). Speakers Bre. John Mannell and Scott Wentworth. Contact Bro. Bruce Abel bnb69abel@hotmail.ca. For registration contact Bro. Will Snodgrass OCFGathering@gmail.com.


9-11 Vancouver, BC Fraternal Gathering. Speaker Bro. Tec Morgan (Castle Bromwich, UK): “God Dwelling with Man”. Contact Sis. Pam Snobelen at pamela721@shaw.ca or 604 881 4733 for a program.


12 Brantford, ON Thanksgiving Gathering, Bro. Ken Styles (Detroit Royal Oak, MI). Theme “Fruits of the Spirit.” To be held at the Copetown Community Centre, registration 12:30pm, dinner provided. For more information contact brantfordchristadelphians@gmail.com.

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


NOVEMBER, 2015

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

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

14-15 Mississauga West, ON Study weekend with Bro. David Levin (Baltimore, MD) on “The Many Facets of Resurrection”. Begins Saturday at 10:30am. Classes on Saturday are “Resurrection as History: The Challenge and Value of an Empirical Basis of Faith”; “Resurrection as Worldview: The Bible's Ultimate Statement”; “Resurrection as Basis of Preaching: The Use of Resurrection in the First Century”. Sunday begin at 9:30am. Talk titles are “Resurrection as the Basis of Character Development and Spiritual Growth” and “Resurrection the Basis of Exhortation”. Contact John Mannell jwmannell@gmail.com.
14-15 Pittsburgh, PA CYC Study Weekend. Our speaker will be Bro. Kevin Mayock (Mooresetown, NJ). His subject will be “Joseph”. Travelers’ lunch will be provided at noon and classes will begin at 1:00pm. Contact Bro. David Pommer at david.pommer@verizon.net or (724) 224-7363.

20-22 Washington, DC Family Bible Study weekend at Camp Hashawha, 300 John Owings Rd, Westminster, MD 21158. Our speaker will be Bro. Ryan King (Richmond Petersburg, VA) on “Jeremiah & His Friends”. Everyone must register. Registration deadline is November 3rd. Forms available on hopeofthekingdom.com or contact Bro. Ken Green, 14006 Barkham Court, Laurel, MD 20707; phone: 443-497-3497 or e-mail Hashawha@gmail.com. (Please note this is a week earlier than previous years when it was the Thanksgiving weekend.)

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.

FEBRUARY, 2016
6 Brantford, ON Annual Junior CYC & Little Disciples Winter Gathering at Camp Trillium. Workbooks will be posted toward the end of the year on www.brantfordchristadelphians.com. For information email Bro. Peter and Sis. Karly Styles at peterandkarly@juno.com.
Editorial — Kim Davis
Exhortation — Escape from Egypt, Dan Archibald
First Principles:
  Hope, (8) Hope in Jesus, The Chicago, Illinois Ecclesia
  Doctrines to Be Rejected, (5) The Trinity,
    Peter Bilello and Peter Hemingray
The Joy of Sunday Schooling — A Hundred Years Ago,
    Jim Harper
Youth Speaks — About God, (2) The God of the Bible is Fact,
    Matthew Tuckson
Bible Study — The New Testament Church,
  (5) Elections and Doctrine, Len Richardson
Preaching:
  Peer Learning Discussion Groups, Michael Carr
  Meriden Family Bible Fair, Meriden (CT) Preaching Committee
Letters — Why Hast Thou Forsaken Me?
Bible Mission News — Mexico Bible School 2015; Panama — A
  Spiritually and Naturally Refreshing Visit; Trinidad Bible
  School 2015
News and Notices
Minute Meditation — Steering wheel or spare tire?,
    Robert J. Lloyd
Coming Events
Kim Davis

When working for Caesar, as Ms. Davis does, she is obligated to render unto Caesar. As a citizen, and as believer Ms. Davis could have made an even stronger case by stepping down from her role as clerk and then, as a private citizen, expressing her disagreement. Or express her disagreement while still rendering to Caesar. In this case, issuing the marriage license while stating her personal disagreement.

God does not need a defense attorney. Ms. Davis may feel like she's standing up for her faith by obstructing what she has sworn to uphold, but is it really?

This is really a distortion of the message where Jesus asks us to accept what civil government throws at us, or even offends us with, since there's a higher goal at stake. Many people of faith refer to a verse in the Apostle Peter’s first Epistle that tells us to always have a “defense for our faith” (1Pet 3:15). More accurately, he wasn’t talking about “defending” our faith but about knowing how to explain our faith. It’s absurd to think that God needs defending, but it makes some believers feel that they can find more favor with God that way.

Our role is not to change culture but to pronounce the Gospel and let it change culture. When we try to change culture, it gets confrontational. When the Gospel changes culture, it's transformational.

From The Christian Post (Adapted)
Kim Davis

Who is Kim Davis?

Probably, by the time this editorial is read, few will remember Kim Davis. She is (or was) the elected clerk of Rowan County in northeastern Kentucky, along the edge of the Appalachian Mountains. She is a Democrat who was first elected in 2014 with 3,909 votes, or 53% of the vote. The county has 23,655 residents. Though on the job only since January 2015, Davis is hardly new to its demands. Her mother was the county clerk for 37 years, and Davis worked 27 years for her. Davis, 49, has spent her entire life in Rowan County. Davis refused to issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples, defying the U.S. Supreme Court ruling in June 2015 that legalized same-sex marriage. “It is not a light issue for me. It is a heaven or hell decision,” Davis said in a statement, citing her religion, which is Apostolic Pentecostalism. For this refusal, she was briefly thrown into jail for contempt of court, but released when her deputy clerks (including her son) agreed to issue marriage licenses for same sex couples. (There was some early confusion about the denomination she belonged to, as it was initially described as “Christian Apostolic”.) Her notoriety was further enhanced when it was revealed she had met privately with the Pope during his visit to the USA.

So what do Apostolic Pentecostals believe?

- Pentecostalism is a Christian movement that emphasizes a personal experience of God, including the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues. The movement grew out of the 1906 Azusa Street Revival in California and takes its name from Pentecost, when early Christians first received the gifts of the Holy Spirit, such as the ability to heal and prophesy.
- Apostolic Pentecostals then split from the rest of the movement in 1916 over a disagreement about the nature of the Trinity.
- Apostolic Pentecostals believe “Father,” “Son” and “Holy Spirit” aren’t three distinct persons, but three different titles for one person: Jesus.
- The group also believes you must speak in tongues to be saved, a practice known as glossolalia, which involves uttering a foreign language previously unknown to the speaker.

What does this have to do with Christadelphians?

The position of Christadelphians on same sex marriage, and homosexuality in all its forms, is quite clear: it is against the clear teachings of the Bible, and as such not to be countenanced among us. For example:
“God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them” (Gen 1:27).

“And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him... And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man” (Gen 2:18,23).

“For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh” (Eph 5:30-31).

Of course, this is not the first time Christadelphians have been faced with the legal or legislative system recognizing same sex marriage.

**Same sex marriage elsewhere**

The first legal same-sex marriages were performed in Ontario on January 14, 2001. The legality of the marriages was questioned and they were not registered until after June 10, 2003, when the Court of Appeal for Ontario upheld a lower court ruling which declared that defining marriage in heterosexual-only terms violated the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Thus Ontario became the third jurisdiction in the world (after the Netherlands and Belgium) as well as the first jurisdiction in the Americas to legalize same-sex marriage. On July 20, 2005, Canada became the fourth country in the world, and the first country outside Europe, to legalize same-sex marriage nationwide with the enactment of the Civil Marriage Act which provided a gender-neutral marriage definition.

In 2013, the British Parliament passed legislation to the effect that the law regarding “marriage” of same-sex couples will come into effect when the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Bill and the Marriage and Civil Partnership (Scotland) Bill have passed through their respective Parliaments in England and Scotland and received the Royal Assent, which happened early in 2014. (It is worth noting that in both Canada and the USA it was the legal system that recognized same sex marriage, not the legislature.) However, the legislation did provide protection for those churches which opposed same sex marriage.

The British Government proposed what it calls a “quadruple lock” of protective measures to “put this position utterly beyond doubt”, as follows:

1) Ensuring that the legislation states explicitly that no religious organization, or individual minister, can be compelled to marry same sex couples, or to permit this to happen on their premises.

2) Providing an “opt-in” system for religious organizations who wish to conduct marriages for same-sex couples.

3) Amending the Equality Acts 2010 to reflect that no discrimination claims can be brought against religious organizations or individual ministers for refusing to marry a same-sex couple or allowing their premises to be used for this purpose.

4) Ensuring that the legislation will not affect the Canon Law of the Church of England or the Church in Wales.
It should be noted that in both the USA and Canada, there is no such explicit protection for the views and beliefs of such churches as ourselves, who find homosexual conduct abhorrent and the very idea of same sex marriage against the explicit commandments of the Bible.

Lessons for us

So why did I start with Kim Davis? Much as you might recognize the strength of her convictions (although it is interesting she has been married four times), the very fact she is an elected official was what put her in the position to have to choose between the law of the land and the commandments of the Bible. In addition, she chose to make such a public stand, when she could simply have resigned her post. I believe this contrasts with our stand on conscientious objection, which says we are not to: “serve in the army, or as police constables, (or) take part in politics”. Not only that, the whole basis of this belief is primarily that we do not serve or bear allegiance to our government, but our allegiance is to our Heavenly Father and His Son.

We should not willingly put ourselves in a position, such as Kim Davis did, where we have to choose between the commandments of Christ and that of men. We are commanded:

“I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty” (1Tim 2:1-2).

Or goal is to live at peace, not to call unnecessary attention to ourselves, but to ensure that we can help the purpose of our Lord “Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth” (1Tim 2:4). The way to live in peace is not to seek employment in areas we know are likely to call us to decide between serving our God or those who are in authority. Thus we do not willingly swear allegiance to any temporal authority: for example, the legal profession is not a common profession itself among our community (although there are exceptions, and potential within that profession to avoid problems.)

I have considered the topic of suitable occupations for Christadelphians before, at some length (See The Tidings, July 2013). However, I believe the lesson for us in the example of Kim Davis is to ensure we can live in peace in our present society, recognizing that the very recognition by society of such an immoral state as same sex marriage is a sign of the end. Indeed the decrease in God-fearing people and the willingness of our society to tolerate such evil was foreseen by Jesus:

“Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved” (Matt 24:12-13 NIV).

Peter Hemingray

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

Escape from Egypt

The Exodus

As slaves, Israel suffered under the oppressive power of their Egyptian rulers who made their lives bitter with hard bondage (Exod 1:14). We read that God saw their afflictions and heard their cries (Exod 3:7), and we see that His hand continued to bless them (Exod 1:12, 20, 21). God set in motion a plan to save His people from slavery when Moses was born. When the time came for Israel’s redemption to occur, an angel appeared to Moses in a burning bush to reveal that plan. God spoke to Moses about a reversal in Israel’s fortune that would soon come to pass:

“And I will make the Egyptians favorably disposed toward this people, so that when you leave you will not go empty-handed. Every woman is to ask her neighbor and any woman living in her house for articles of silver and gold and for clothing, which you will put on your sons and daughters. And so you will plunder the Egyptians” (Exod 3:21 NIV).

When we read the account of Israel leaving the land of Egypt we are told that they did just that. They left with not only their own flocks and herds, but also anything else that they asked of the Egyptians:

“The Lord had made the Egyptians favorably disposed toward the people, and they gave them what they asked for; so they plundered the Egyptians” (Exod 12: 36 NIV).

God blessed Israel with the wealth of Egypt. They left with articles of gold and silver (jewelry, plates, coinage etc.) as well as Egyptian clothing. What a sign that would be to the children of Israel that their God was prepared to protect and care for them on the road ahead. How unfortunate it is to read later on that the children of Israel were using the blessings which the Lord their God had given them to serve another god:

“And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him. And Aaron said unto them, Break off the golden earrings, which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them unto me. And all the people brake off the golden earrings which were in their ears, and brought them unto Aaron. And he received them at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt” (Exod 32: 1-4).

We see that while Moses was away the people reverted to serving false gods which they could see and touch and control. They formed the golden calf out of the
jewelry they had plundered from the Egyptians — the very blessings God had provided them through His out-stretched hand.

**Back to Egypt**

They had physically left Egypt but they had not left it in their minds and hearts. They longed to go back to Egypt, even if it meant going back to slavery. As such, when the road they walked was hard they complained. For example, we read:

“And the mixt multitude that was among them fell a lusting: and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat? We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlick: But now our soul is dried away: there is nothing at all, beside this manna, before our eyes” (Numb 11:4-6).

It is because they had not fully let go of Egypt that they decided to use the jewelry that God had given them to behave like they had in Egypt, going after false gods and behaving badly. Israel's reluctance to let go of Egypt was also demonstrated by their fondness for Egyptian ornaments with which they would decorate themselves regularly. We read shortly after Moses had destroyed the golden calf that God said:

“...for I will not go up in the midst of thee; for thou art a stiffnecked people: lest I consume thee in the way. And when the people heard these evil tidings, they mourned: and no man did put on him his ornaments. For the Lord had said unto Moses, Say unto the children of Israel, Ye are a stiffnecked people: I will come up into the midst of thee in a moment, and consume thee: therefore now put off thy ornaments from thee, that I may know what to do unto thee. And the children of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments by the mount Horeb” (Exod 33:3-6).

Like so often was the case, Israel responded to threats, rather than being motivated to good works by the hope set before them. The Lord threatened to consume them, and so they fell into line and stripped off their ornaments.

Up to that point Israel had not been wisely using the gifts God had given them. We know that they used the Egyptian jewelry they were wearing to build a golden calf, and we know that they were quite happy to adorn themselves with their ornaments. Some had fine Egyptian robes and we can imagine them being quite content to put them on and enjoy Egyptian luxury.

They had likely established in their minds that the wealth plundered from the Egyptians was meant to be used for their own enrichment and benefit. They may have thought to themselves “What else are we supposed to do with the silver, gold and fine linen that God has given us while we are in the middle of a wilderness?”

In like manner, sometimes we don't know how best to use the gifts that God gives us. He has blessed us all in different ways and with different abilities. However, as we journey through the spiritual wilderness that is this world, perhaps we choose to use God's blessings to serve our own selves — not knowing if there is some better use for them.
Wealth in the wilderness

That is an issue that Israel faced as they left Egypt: how were they to use their fine linen, gold and jewels in the middle of a wilderness? The answer to that question became clear shortly thereafter. God told Israel:

"Take ye from among you an offering unto the LORD: whosoever is of a willing heart, let him bring it, an offering of the LORD; gold, and silver, and brass, And blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats’ hair, And rams’ skins dyed red, and badgers’ skins, and shittim wood, And oil for the light, and spices for anointing oil, and for the sweet incense, And onyx stones, and stones to be set for the ephod, and for the breastplate. And every wise hearted among you shall come, and make all that the LORD hath commanded... And they came, every one whose heart stirred him up, and every one whom his spirit made willing, and they brought the LORD’s offering to the work of the tabernacle of the congregation, and for all his service, and for the holy garments. And they came, both men and women, as many as were willing hearted, and brought bracelets, and earrings, and rings, and tablets, all jewels of gold: and every man that offered offered an offering of gold unto the LORD. And every man, with whom was found blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats’ hair, and red skins of rams, and badgers’ skins, brought them. Every one that did offer an offering of silver and brass brought the LORD’s offering: and every man, with whom was found shittim wood for any work of the service, brought it" (Exod 35:5-10, 21-24).

And so we are told that God’s tabernacle, including the utensils and the fine priest’s clothing, were made from the gold, silver, copper, wood and fine linen donated by those Israelites who were of a willing heart.

At first it would not have been clear how God wanted Israel to use some of these gifts He had given them, but at the right time He made it known to them; the fine linen, silver, gold and jewels could be used in the work of building a tabernacle for the worship of The LORD. So the people who were wise took off their Egyptian jewels and ornaments, of which they had become so fond, and they threw them into a furnace to be melted down into gold, silver and copper for God’s service. These metals would be used to build such things as the altars, the candlestick, the lavers, the utensils, the bases for the posts and even the ark of the testimony itself.

Similarly, the wise in heart gave up their fine linen Egyptian robes and cloth to be destroyed and taken apart for the blue, purple, and scarlet thread used in the tabernacle cloth and priest’s garments. So the tabernacle was built from wealth that came from the land of Egypt. However, though it was clear that God’s hand had directly provided that wealth, any decision by the people to give it back for the tabernacle was strictly voluntary. Those who chose to retain their Egyptian wealth could do so. On the other hand, those who chose to completely forsake it were also free to do so.

A family which had some silver Egyptian plates, gold coinage and fine linen robes was free to keep those Egyptian goods if they valued them. They would also have to deal with any burden which may have come from carrying them along as they
wandered in a wilderness where many of those things would have had little use. On the other hand, the same family was also free to unburden themselves of those Egyptian memories and put them to meaningful use in God’s tabernacle. They would suffer no ill effects due to lightening the load from unnecessary things and trusting in God who would provide for their needs such as food (Exod 16:35) and clothing (Deut 29:5).

And so, the tabernacle and the articles of service were built with these voluntary gifts from people of a willing heart. The children of Israel may not have understood at first the purpose of their Egyptian wealth, but God revealed His higher purpose to them at the proper time. Those who chose to give saw their gifts melted down and taken apart, into a state in which they were no longer recognizable as Egyptian, and then refashioned into something fit for use in the worship of God. They witnessed a wonderful transformation from something worldly into something that was spiritual and good.

Our blessings

We can consider these examples in the light of our current lives. Like the Israelites, God has given us worldly blessings to varying degrees. Some of us may have exceptional abilities or skills, others may have intelligence or strength and yet others, material goods such as land or business wealth. The lesson from Israel’s exodus is that just as they were not supposed to use their livestock, their fine linen, their gold and their jewels merely for their own pleasure, neither are we supposed to be using our blessings simply to serve ourselves.

We should consider how our blessings are being employed and whether or not we could do better, both for our families and for ourselves, by ‘lightening the burden’ caused by ‘carrying around’ worldly excess and other things we don’t really need. There are many good spiritual goals to which we can devote our resources. We may not always know exactly what God’s plan is for our lives, or how God wants us to use the abilities and gifts He gives us, but God certainly does have a purpose for each of us if we are willing to be patient and put our trust in Him.

God was able to take the gold of Egypt and melt it into lavers, tables and furniture for worship in His tabernacle. God was able to take the flocks and herds which had fattened and multiplied in Egypt and put them to use in tabernacle sacrifices. God was able to take the fine colored linen of Egypt and to pull it apart, re-forming it into cloth for the tabernacle’s curtains and garments for the priests. In like manner He can work with each of us and put our blessings to use in His service, if we have a heart that is willing.

Over time we ourselves can be transformed from people of the world into children of God who are fit for His service. We are all works in progress whereby the old worldly person must be transformed into a new creation in Jesus Christ — just as the gold had to be melted and re-formed into a new object, and the linen pulled apart and woven into new cloth. Hopefully as the transformation takes place something new and spiritual emerges while the appearance of the former world fades and vanishes.
In a figurative sense God is re-forming a temple in Christ Jesus. We are called to leave slavery to sin and to be baptized into Christ Jesus. After baptism, if we are not careful, there is the risk of looking back to our old worldly ways, and sin when life is hard and temptation is strong. However, it is important for us instead to look ahead, driven and sustained by faith and hope towards the Promised Land, making the choice to work at building a temple of worship to God that brings us closer to Him.

God is calling us to re-form ourselves into part of His new temple built on Jesus Christ, as the apostle Paul wrote:

“No therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord” (Eph 2:19-21).

With this exhortation in mind, let us contend diligently to keep our faith and hope strong and to transform ourselves, after the example of Jesus, into new creations fit for use in God's living temple.

Dan Archibald (Toronto East, ON)
Hope — (8) Hope in Jesus

“This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven” (Acts 1:11).

Return of Jesus to the Earth
Hope is void without Jesus’ return.

Some people will not realize what happened. Others will notice that people are missing. Some people will watch as people disappear. Cars will crash amid great chaos, as drivers are not found. People on airplanes will suddenly evaporate, leaving only their clothes and jewelry. Everyone in the world will seek for answers while blaming someone, or something. The media will have more questions than answers.

This is the opening scene presented in the popular “Left Behind” series, as their interpretation for what will happen when Jesus returns to the earth. While this book (and movie) gives an entertaining view of what is called the Rapture, the Bible provides instead an accurate description of Jesus’ second coming. The Bible answers some basic questions such as:

• Why will Jesus return to the earth?
• When will he return? What will happen when he returns?
• What signs can we expect before he returns?
• Where will he return? How will he return?
• How does this fulfill our Bible hope?

Why will Jesus return to the Earth?

Some people may think that it doesn’t matter if Jesus returns to the earth as long as they are safe in heaven. In an earlier article (May 2015) — “What’s in it for me?” — we learned that the true Christian hope is eternal life on earth (Matt 5:5). The Bible teaches that no man is in heaven today (John 3:13), but instead faithful disciples wait for the day of resurrection and judgment. So, why will Jesus return to the earth?

He will return primarily as king to set up his promised kingdom, which will never be destroyed (Dan 2:44). His return will restore the kingdom to Israel, only this time as a perfect theocracy based in
Jerusalem (Isa 2:2-4). Jesus will fulfill the promises to Abraham and David, as the savior of the world. He will come to put an end to this dysfunctional world and introduce peace and righteousness.

Jesus will also return to grant immortality to his ‘good and faithful’ servants (Matt 25:21). Jesus himself said, “Look, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to each person according to what they have done” (Rev 22:12). He will judge the living and the resurrected dead at one time, as appointed by God (1Pet 4:5; 2Tim 4:1; Acts 10:42). The Bible gives repeated direction that faithful believers will receive their reward when Jesus returns and not before (1Pet 5:4; Dan 12:2; John 5:25-29). The “day of judgment” is frequently described as a time of both reward and punishment (2Pet 2:9; 3:7; 1John 4:17; Matt 10:15).

When will Jesus return?

Some Bible believers, since the time of Christ, have tried to use the Bible as a riddle to solve for the date of Jesus return. In the Old Testament, Daniel was able to use his wisdom and the previous inspired prophecies to determine the year that the Jews would return to Jerusalem from their Babylonian captivity (Dan 9:2). He studied Jeremiah’s prophecy and was rewarded with a visit from the angel Gabriel. The Bible also gives many prophetic numbers, and signs, for “times and seasons” (Dan 9:24-26; Dan 12:11-12; Rev 11:2; Rev 13:5). Jesus taught: “But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father” (Matt 24:36). Read that again. During his ministry, even Jesus didn’t know the date of his return! But, despite this, many have spent their time attempting to determine the date of Jesus’ return,

Jesus told his disciples that not only wouldn’t they know the date of his return, but that he “will come at an hour when you do not expect him” (Matt 24:44). Jesus wants his followers to be ready for his return every day, and any day. He warned his followers against attempting to determine the exact date. He gave parables about being spiritually awake and alert, but not about dates or times (Luke 12:35-40; Acts 1:7; 1Thess 5:2-5).

What signs can we expect before Jesus’ return?

Human beings are naturally curious, particularly about the future. Some are concerned about tomorrow’s weather, while others think about the futures markets. Jesus’ followers asked him what signs to expect at the time of his return and he gave a reply in a passage called the Olivet Prophecy, because they were on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem (Matt 24:3). Jesus gave many signs about the “last days” prior to his return including:

- Many false Christ’s will come and pretend to be Jesus (Matt 24:5, 23-24).
- There will be many wars, famines and earthquakes (Matt 24:6-7).
- There will be a time of tribulation for all people, including believers (Matt 24:8-10, 21, 29).
- Jerusalem will be surrounded by armies (Luke 21:20). This echoes many passages from Old Testament prophets such as Zech 12:1-3; Zech 14:1-4; Joel 3:11-17.
• There will be literal (or perhaps spiritual) signs in the sun, moon and stars (Matt 24:29).
• Morality will be like the days of Noah, when evil and violence reigned (Luke 17:26-30).
• The Jewish people must say, “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord” (Matt 23:39). God’s chosen people must cry out for Messiah and his salvation.

Disciples of Christ are wise to watch for signs in the nation of Israel. Prophecies such as Psalm 83 identify an invasion of Israel by the surrounding nations in the last days. Also, the ancient proclamation, “I will bless those who bless you, and curse those who curse you” (Gen 12:3) still applies today regarding Israel and other nations. But to attempt to use these signs to determine the exact date is pointless and futile.

Where will Jesus return?
The Bible gives one clear answer to what location Jesus will return to on earth: Jerusalem. When Jesus ascended to heaven, an angel specifically told his followers, “This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven” (Acts 1:11). He ascended from a special point on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem, and other scriptures confirm that this is the location of his return. Zechariah gives an incredibly detailed description regarding Jesus’ return: “On that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem, and the Mount of Olives will be split in two from east to west, forming a great valley, with half of the mountain moving north and half moving south” (Zech 14:4). This is no surprise, since God called Jerusalem His eternal capital, and scripture is filled with passages emphasizing this chosen city of peace (Isa 24:3; 62:6; Zeph 3:16-20; Zech 8:3; 14:11; Psa 135:21).

How will Jesus return?
Jesus will descend from heaven in the same way that he went to heaven (Acts 1:11). How did he ascend? After his resurrection, human dimensions of time and space have no longer limited Jesus. He entered rooms without going through doors (John 20:19). He could disappear in front of people (Luke 24:31). His appearance seemed to change (Luke 24:31; John 21:4, 12). We have additional descriptions in Mark and Luke that Jesus was visibly elevated from the earth when he ascended to heaven. His followers actually watched him ascend to heaven! This is the same way that the angel told Jesus’ followers how he would return (Acts 1:11). His return to the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem will be a visible event to all peoples.
Jesus compared his return to lightening, which is visible from one end of the sky to another (Matt 24:27). He wanted his disciples to know how obvious his return would be, so that they would not be fooled or deceived. “So if anyone tells you, ‘There he is, out in the wilderness,’ do not go out; or, ‘Here he is, in the inner rooms,’ do not believe it” (Matt 24:26). Jesus has not returned invisibly and he hasn’t returned secretly as another person. He is seated at his Father’s side until the time is right, by God’s providence, to return to earth and set up his promised kingdom (Matt 26:64; 2Thess 1:7, 10; Rev 1:7).

How does this fulfill our Bible hope?
The Bible hope involves immortality, promises, love, peace, kindness, joy and so much more. But the foundation for our hope lies on the foundation of Jesus Christ. If Jesus had not been resurrected, then there would be no Christian hope today. “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). If Jesus doesn’t return from heaven in the future, as he promised, then Christians have an empty faith. The Bible hope cannot be complete until Jesus returns, because all faithful believers will receive their reward at the same time, together. Even great men of faith such as Abraham, Joseph, Moses and David are dead (asleep) today, waiting for their resurrection and reward. “These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised, since God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect” (Heb 11:39-40).

Jesus’ return to set up his kingdom fulfills the promises given to Abraham, David and the prophets. He must return to earth in order to set up his kingdom in Jerusalem. He will return in great glory, with all the angels (Matt 25:31). He will return to fulfill many Bible prophecies and resurrect his deceased faithful followers. Jesus will return because God will send His Son to conclude His ultimate plan to fill with His glory the entire earth: “But as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD” (Numb 14:21).

“Dream as if you’ll live forever...live as if you’ll die today.” James Dean

“When Jesus comes, the shadows depart.” Author unknown

“For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first” (1Thess 4:16).

The Bible says:
- Jesus will return to the earth, visibly in Jerusalem. (Acts 1:6, 10-11; 1Thess 4:13-17; Matt 24:27-31)
- Jesus gave many signs that will occur before he returns. (Matt 24:30; Matt 24:5-24; Luke 17:22-30).
- Jesus must return in order for anyone to receive the reward of immortality. (Heb 11:39-40; 1Cor 15:51-57; John 5:28-29).

Chicago, Ill Ecclesia
Doctrines to be Rejected
(5) The Trinity

That God is three persons
This is an example of a doctrine not really dealt with in the “Truth to be received”, but which is a doctrine that fundamentally separates us most of the Christian Churches around us. John Thomas appears to have discarded the orthodox doctrine of The Trinity early in his studies of the Truth, perhaps influenced by Elias Smith, who preceded him in the Disciples Church in Philadelphia. However, his full mature view of God was not developed until around 1847, when, as a result the views of Dr. Lara, a Jew, John Thomas wrote a series of articles later reprinted as Phanerosis. Some of this is represented in the first section of the “Truth to be received”. However, the doctrine of the Trinity is not specifically rejected in it, but that erroneous belief is, and always has been, specifically rejected by all Christadelphians. The form of words has changed, as below, but the idea has remained.

1) Current Doctrine to be Rejected # 1: “That God is three persons”
2) Synopsis of the One Faith by John Thomas 1867: (As Perverted By The Apostacy): “A triply-compounded God, without body and parts, defined as “Father Son and Holy Ghost.”
3) Fables to be Refused (Robert Roberts), 1870 till 1883: “The Trinity.—That God is not three, but One, out of whom are all things—even the Spirit and the Son”. This has the following references:
   a) “But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him” (1Cor 8: 6).
   b) “One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all” (Eph 4:6).

It can be restated, perhaps, in a positive way: “The doctrine of the Trinity being false, it remains that God is a Being of Spirit; the Lord Jesus Christ is His Son, born of the Virgin Mary; the Holy Spirit is His power.”

“For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (1Tim 2:5).

“And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth” (John 1:14).

And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high” (Luke 24:49).

The Trinity
We need to be careful in discussing the Trinity, because we often attack the Trinity on the basis of the Nicene Creed, which says Christ is “God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father”. 
Rather, we ought to discuss it in terms of modern day beliefs, which say:

- The Trinity is One. We do not speak of three Gods but of one God. Each of the Persons is fully God. They are a Unity of Persons in one divine nature.
- The divine Persons are distinct from each other. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are not three appearances or modes of God, but three identifiable persons, each fully God in a way distinct from the others.
- The divine Persons are in relation to each other. The distinction of each is understood only in reference to the others.

**Brief history of the doctrine of the Trinity**

According to almost all Biblical scholars, Scripture does not contain a formulated doctrine of the Trinity. Although there is much debate as to whether the beliefs of the Apostles were merely articulated and explained in the Trinitarian Creeds, or were corrupted and replaced with new beliefs, all scholars recognize that the Creeds themselves were created in reaction to disagreements over the nature of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. These controversies, however, were great and many, and took some centuries to be resolved. Of these controversies, the most significant developments were articulated in the first four centuries by the Church Fathers in reaction to Adoptionism, Sabellianism, and Arianism.

**Adoptionism** was the belief that Jesus was an ordinary man, born of Joseph and Mary, who became the Christ and Son of God at his baptism (c. AD 269).

**Sabellianism** taught that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are essentially one and the same, the difference being simply verbal, describing different aspects or roles of a single being (c. AD 220).

In the fourth century, **Arianism**, as traditionally understood, taught that the Father existed prior to the Son who was not, by nature, God, but rather a changeable creature who was granted the dignity of becoming “Son of God”.

In AD 325, the Council of Nicaea adopted the **Nicene Creed** that described Christ as “God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father”, as mentioned above.

**Discussing the Trinity**

What do theologians mean when they affirm that the one who so lived and so died was “very God,” co-equal with the Father from all eternity? To one who has not been cradled in Trinitarian belief such propositions seem self-destructive. Surely, if God required us to believe in the Trinity, He would teach the doctrine in plain language.
Even the fact of the Creator’s existence is taught plainly and reiterated in the Bible. “I am the LORD.” “I am God and there is none beside me” (Isa 44:21). Such expressions are frequent in Scripture. The greatness, power, and knowledge of God are all emphasized in language that cannot be mistaken. If we are to believe that God, supremely great, wise and powerful, in some way became a human baby and was born of a woman, we may surely expect that the doctrine be taught in plain language. We may not reasonably expect to understand the details, but where is a plain affirmation of the fact?

All Bible students are aware that the Bible does not contain any such affirmation of the doctrine of the Trinity. There is no language used in any way comparable to that of the Athanasian Creed, or the creeds of modern Catholicism. When a supporter of the Trinity is challenged to defend his belief from Scripture, he quotes passages from which inferences may be drawn in harmony with his creed, but which, certainly, played no part in forming it. The favorite passages for such a purpose are those in which a form of language is used agreeable with the idea that Christ existed as a person, previous to his birth. The same form of language is often employed, however, where no such doctrine is involved. When we read in the book of Genesis: “Kings shall come out of thy loins,” everyone understands the sense in which the words are used. When, however, the Lord Jesus expresses the truth of his divine origin in similar language, “I came forth from God,” it is regarded as proof that he came as a personality before being born as a baby. There is nothing to favor such a construction except the natural prejudice of opinions in which people have been nurtured.

Most of the passages quoted by Trinitarians are of this character. Often there is a companion passage that might have been designed to correct misconceptions and show the true meaning.

Thus, the Lord Jesus said: “I and my Father are one,” (John 17:11), but he also prayed that the disciples might be one, even as he was one with the Father. He spoke of “Glory I had with thee before the world was,” (John 17:5), but the Apostle Paul also used the same language regarding the brethren, (Rom 8:30) showing that it was in the foreknowledge of God that Christ and all his disciples lived before the foundation of the world. The Apostle Peter so speaks regarding Christ: “Who, verily, was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world but was manifest in these last times” (1Pet 1:20).

Jesus said: “I have power to lay down my life and I have power to take it again,” (John 10:18) but he also added, “This commandment have I received of my Father” (also John 10:18). He said: “I am from above,” but he immediately added, “ye are from beneath.” Their life and character was from beneath, so that they were entirely earthly; his life and character were direct from God, so that he was the Lord from Heaven. Jesus said that the Father had sent him into the world, but he added “even so, have I sent you into the world.” In neither case are we to suppose the existence of the personality previous to birth.
Reading the Bible

Try, for a little while, to imagine the case of a man who has no prejudices studying the Bible to find the truth revealed regarding God and Jesus Christ. Surely he would study the law given to Israel as the first step towards finding the true God. He would read the records of the birth of Christ to find exactly who Christ was.

This is only common sense. If we have a reliable biography of a man, we can soon ascertain who his parents were if we will consult the chapter dealing with his birth. We must not bring a theory from outside and then try to find odd passages in the book that can be made to harmonize. Consult the first proclamation of a law to find the authority of the law-giver. Go to the account of a man's birth to find a plain statement of his ancestry.

If we adopt such a method with the Bible we are left in no doubt as to the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom He has sent. God made proclamation to Israel: “Hear, O Israel, the Lord your God is one Lord” (Deut 6:4). This doctrine was supported by all the prophets. There were many angels, who, being sent by God, could speak the words of God, but it is always made clear, that, above them all, was one supreme God and Creator. The Jews recognized no Trinity.

If we turn to the record of Christ's birth, the account of his ancestry is as explicit as anything that has ever been written. “The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee,” said the angel to Mary. “The Power of the Highest shall overshadow thee, therefore that holy thing that shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God” (Luke 1:35). Even a man who holds the doctrine of the Trinity may well pause at these words. Why should the third person of the Trinity come upon Mary so that the second person of the Trinity should be born of her? And why is that word “therefore” there? Try, however, to put yourself in the place of a man with no pre-conceived opinions to defend, searching the Scriptures in the pursuit of truth. In the Old Testament it is made clear that God is One. By the power of His Spirit He knows all and can perform all according to His will. In Psalm 139 there is a wonderful description of the Spirit filling the universe, and in its penetrating powers being equal to the actual presence of God. This Spirit came upon prophets to make them speak divine truth. It is constantly referred to as the “Word of the Lord.” But, although God's word was spoken, men all sinned, and no one was found to carry out God's will perfectly. The word became articulate, the word became writing, but in Old Testament times it was never made flesh.

The student passes on to the New Testament Scriptures to read of the Savior provided by God. He learns there, that the Holy Spirit came upon a chosen virgin of the house of Israel, not merely to make her speak the words of God, but to make her conceive a son without ever having known man. The child born was, therefore, to be called the Son of God. He was born as a babe, nourished according to nature, and as he grew he increased in wisdom and in favor. Early he showed his superiority to other children. He grew to manhood and constantly proclaimed his dependence on the Father who had sent him.

“The words that I speak, I speak not of myself. The Father that dwelleth in me, He doeth the works” (John 14:10).
“My Father is greater than I” (John 14:28).

“My Father is greater than I” (John 14:28).

“Of that day and hour knoweth no man, no not the angels which are in Heaven, neither the Son, but the Father” (Mark 13:32).

Even after his resurrection from the dead, when the days of fleshly weakness were over, he speaks of ascending “to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.” Even after the ascension, the book of Revelation is described as “the revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave to him.” In that book we still have the expression, “My God.” (Rev 4:12)

If the student pursues the matter further, studying the writings of the apostles, he will find the plainest of re-affirmations of the truth. “There is one God and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus.” (1Cor 11:6).

These statements are in harmony with Christ’s own presentation of the matter. He addressed the Father as “the only true God.” In claiming power over all flesh, he made it clear that this authority was given him by the Father. In harmony with this, the Apostle Paul, in writing of the time of the end when death shall be finally vanquished, states that God will put all things under Christ. He points out a truth that should be manifest, that God, being the giver of this subjecting power, is obviously excepted from the “all things” that are to be subjected. When all the works of creation are finally subdued by Christ, then, the Son shall be subject to the one who put all things under him, that “God may be all in all. (1Cor 15:28). Study these words of the Apostle. They cannot be harmonized with the Trinitarian view, but they blend perfectly with the true doctrine of the Bible.

Summary

A man who could study the Word of God entirely without prejudice would assuredly find no difficulty in grasping its teaching. One God with supreme power and understanding. One spirit or emanating power of God, carrying the searching knowledge of the Eternal to the desert, to the grave, or to the uttermost part of the sea, filling even the darkness with a divine light of knowledge and power as if the very presence of the Creator were there (Psa 139).

By His Holy Spirit, God made chosen servants speak His Word. By the same Holy Spirit He made a chosen virgin give birth to a Son who was, therefore, called the Son of God. By the in-dwelling power of His Spirit, He gave the Son wisdom and strength, so that he became a perfect manifestation of the divine character, the Word of God in the form of a man. By the same power He will put all things under the feet of this perfect mediator until the time when the last enemy shall be destroyed.

When we recognize the truth that Christ was begotten by the Holy Spirit of God as taught in the Gospel narrative of his birth, all that is written regarding him becomes intelligible. He was the living Word, as the Bible is the written Word. He was the perfect expression of the will of God in the form of a man. He was “God with us,” — a manifestation of the character (Luke 1:80), of the Father in a living conscious being, who really grew in knowledge and increased in wisdom, (Luke 2:52), who really suffered and overcame, really died and was raised to life again.
Beware of any doctrine that shall, in effect, deny that the Father is the only true God, and that Jesus is the Son who can reveal the Creator to us. Remember that the Lord Jesus, in praying to the Father, said, “This is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent”.

Conclusion
The Lord God of heaven and earth stands behind all the teaching that has been revealed to us, from the creation of the world and of mankind, to the final phase of the Kingdom of God. For the faithful He has been the source of all light in their native darkness. The thought of Him has been their consolation and faith in Him has been their strength in times of trial. The knowledge of Him, made clearer to them in the Person of His Beloved Son, has been a guide and an inspiration in their life of service.

Sources
Pamphlets (Some available on the Internet)
- Jesus, son of God or God the son (Fred Pearce) (Christadelphian Office)
- Doctrine of the Trinity (EJ Newman) (Old Pamphlet series)
- One God or a Trinity? (James and Deb Flint) (Printland Publishers)

Books (available from most Christadelphian book Suppliers)
- Trinity, The Doctrine Of (P E White) 226 pgs.
- Trinity, True or False? (Broughton/Southgate) 407 pgs.

Notes:
1. U.S. Catholic Catechism for Adults.
2. Some of this section is based upon an old pamphlet by Bro. Islip Collyer, “The God we Worship”.

Generations of devout men and women have sung the words of Bishop Heber’s hymn:

“Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty,
All thy works shall praise thy name in earth and sky and sea.
Holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty,
God in three persons, blessed Trinity.”

Often the singing has been with more devotion than understanding, for the doctrine of the trinity is commonly acknowledged to be difficult to comprehend and is frequently taken on trust. This difficulty of comprehension has been a stumbling block also to critics of the doctrine who have often revealed their own lack of understanding by the shallowness of their criticisms.

Opening to “Doctrine of the Trinity”, EJ Newman
A Hundred Years Ago

For many years, in the late 1800s and early 1900s, the Christadelphian Office published The Christadelphian Children's Magazine.¹ It was full of all kinds of Bible stories and activities that our grandparents and great-grandparents took delight in when they were young. Perhaps your Sunday school children would like to try their hand at a couple of the same activities.

The Bible from A to Z²

Children can work alone or in groups to solve this challenging puzzle. How many can they get right? Can they find Bible references to support their answers?

A — was a man who was youthful and fair, but he hung in an oak by his long curly hair.

B — was a prophet who rode on a mule. He tried to curse Jacob, and died like a fool.

C — was a river of Old Testament story, where once a prophet had visions of glory.

D — was a woman who served for the poor, they mourned her when dead, but long life was in store.

E — was a preacher, though short was his name, he built a high pulpit, and preached from the same.

F — was a governor, pompous and grand, but preaching on judgment he never could stand.

G — was a young general, who, early one morn, did rout a great army with pitcher and horn.

H — was a man who brought shame to his mother. He hanged on the gallows he built for another.

I — was a boy who was vulgar and rough, whose impudent mocking brought him trouble enough.

J — was a brave wife, who, with a nail and a hammer, slew Israel’s foe without army or banner.

K — had a son, a very tall boy; they made him a king, and then shouted for joy.

L — married two wives and murdered a man. In the days before Noah these evils began.

M — was a woman both loving and kind, but careful and troubled and fretful in mind.
N — was a captain with servants and gold, but his leprosy filled him with horrors untold.
O — was a land that was far, far away, where the ships went for gold in King Solomon’s day.
P — was a preacher of wonderful fame, who in all the wide world did the Gospel proclaim.
Q — stands for one whom Paul calls a brother, and in all the Bible it’s the name of no other.
R — was a maiden, and strange ’tis to tell, she first met her lover beside an old well.
S — stands for a man who a lion could tear, and yet he was bound by a woman so fair.
T — was a twin who continued to doubt, till the Lord gave a sign which put fears all to rout.
U — was a land from which nature recoils, where once an old patriarch suffered from boils.
V — was a beautiful Queen in the East, who refused to be seen at a grand royal feast.
W — is that which is better than gold. Who’ll seek it and find it? Its price is untold.
X — was a king who another name bears: Ahasuerus, the Bible declares.
Y — is what Jesus invites us to wear, that we may find rest in his loving care.
Z — was a priest who an angel did see; a mighty forerunner his great son would be.

Answer Key:
A = Absalom (2Sam 18:9-10); B = Balaam (Numb 22:21-30; Numb 31:8); C = Chebar (Ezek 1:1; Ezek 3:23); D = Dorcas (Acts 9:36-41); E = Ezra (Neh 8:1-4); F = Felix (Acts 24:25); G = Gideon (Jdgs 7:16-22); H = Haman (Esth 5:14; Esth 7:9-10); I = Ishmael (Gen 21:9-10; cp. Gen 16:15); J = Jael (Jdgs 4:17-22); K = Kish (1Sam 9:1-2); L = Lamech (Gen 4:19-24); M = Martha (Luke 10:38-42); N = Naaman (2Kgs 5:1-5); O = Ophir (1Kgs 9:28; 2Chron 8:18); P = Paul (Acts 9:15; 13:46-47; 22:21; 26:16-18, etc.); Q = Quartus (Rom 16:23); R = Rachel (Gen 29:1-12); S = Samson (Jdgs 14:5-6; Jdgs 16:4-21); T = Thomas (John 11:16; John 20:24-29); U = Uz (Job 1:1; Job 2:7); V = Vashti (Esth 1:9-12); W = Wisdom (Prov 2:1-7; Prov 3:13-14); X = Xerxes (Esth 1:1, see Bible dictionary); Y = Yoke (Matt 11:28-30); Z = Zacharias, Zechariah (Luke 1:5-17)

A Bible Acrostic
Can the children identify these Bible names? The first initials name a man on whom the greatest of miracles was performed. In what chapter of the Bible is his story found?
1) One of the twelve tribes of Israel on whom a special honor was conferred.
2) A very wicked king of Israel. He was killed in battle.
3) A rich man who gave half of his goods to the poor.
4) A famous city in Greece where Paul preached the Gospel.
5) The wife of a patriarch and the mother of his favorite sons.
6) A country from which Abraham came when he went into Canaan.
7) A woman who in the time of the Apostles was guilty of a great sin for which she was suddenly and fearfully punished.

Many more creative and engaging Bible puzzles appeared in The Christadelphian Children's Magazine. Take a look at it online. You may well find others that your children would like to try.

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Notes:
2. Published in (The Christadelphian) Children's Magazine, May, 1902.
3. Published in (The Christadelphian) Children's Magazine, February, 1903. The puzzle was submitted by 12-year old John Carter of Halifax. Thirty-four years later, this spiritually minded young man became the third editor of The Christadelphian Magazine.

John Carter was born on December 12, 1889, at Catherine Slack, a little village about two miles out of Halifax. Like many men who have done great things, he owed much to his mother, a woman of character of whom he often spoke with love and admiration. His early days on the Yorkshire moors may have helped to build up the tough constitution abounding with energy which so marked him in adult life. John Carter was baptized into Christ in 1906. During the First World War he became dissatisfied with some conditions then existing among ecclesias with which he was associated, and in December, 1915, he joined the Central Fellowship.

The Christadelphian, 1962, p 289.

Halifax — We have pleasure in reporting the obedience to the Truth of three of our young men, viz., Fred. Chambers, Frank Wilson (son of our Sis. Wilson), and John Carter (son of our Bro. and Sis. Carter). They are all in the senior class of our Sunday school. After a very intelligent confession of the one Faith, they were immersed into the saving name on March 21st. It is very encouraging when our young people decide on serving the Master. It is evidence that the efforts of the Sunday school, the M.I.S., and the public lectures are not in vain. Our hope and prayer is that they may be useful servants in the Master's vineyard, and at the coming of the Lord receive the crown of life that fadeth not away. T. Lumb

Fraternal Visitor, March 1906 p 89

(Note: The Children's Magazine cited above was published by The Fraternal Visitor Magazine: it is not on the internet)
Youth Speaks

About God — (2) The God of the Bible is Fact

God has shown himself to be real through multiple means, the strongest of which being shown through the prophetic word as we discussed in the first article (October 2015). In addition:

- The Jewish history, both prophetically and not prophetically, can be used to show that the God of the Bible does exist.
- A study of Jewish Medicine as revealed in the Bible shows how much it was ahead of its time, under the direction of God and His prophets.
- The big bang theory as well as the theory of evolution will be examined, all leading to the conclusion that our God is indeed real.

The return of the Jews to the land

The Jewish people stand out in history as an abnormality. All the religions that came about the same time of the Jewish religion have seemed to die out. The Mesopotamian, Egyptian, Greek, Roman, and many others surrounding the time of the Jewish religion rising are all gone, whereas the Jewish religion is still alive today. Not only so, but the Jewish people are the focus of the Middle Eastern world right now. The Jewish people have survived this long, yet have been extremely small in population. By all the other examples in history they should have died out like the other religions that came into history around their time. The following chart

Announcement of State of Israel in 1948
goes through the Jewish heritage and history as well as their population. As one can see, the max population of the Jews was around 16.6 million people. According to “records that the Romans kept about 2,000 years ago, there were between 8-10 million Jews living in the world” (Packouz) at the time of Christ. That means over 2,000 years the Jewish population has about doubled. The Chinese people, on the other hand, went from 30 million people to about one billion people in the same amount of time (Packouz). There should be many more Jews then there are today, and unsurprisingly the Bible predicted their small population. The Bible states, “And the LORD shall scatter you among the nations, and ye shall be left few in number among the heathen, whither the LORD shall lead you” (Deut 4:27). Throughout the 2,000 years of the Jews being a smaller people they have consistently remained a distinct people, and played a major role in history (Packouz).

Probably one of the most sad but true facts about Jews that the Bible predicts is the massive amounts of persecution they would face. The Bible states, “And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest: but the LORD shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind: And thy life shall hang in doubt before thee; and thou shalt fear day and night, and shalt have none assurance of thy life” (Deut 28:65-66). Specifically focusing on the section stating, “Neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest” (Deut 28:65), the Jews truly have never had a place to rest until Israel’s reestablishment. In fact, from 250 A.D. to 1945 A.D. the Jews have been expelled from various countries a total of 82 times (Packouz). In some cases it was for silly reasons such as being “blood drinkers,” even though their law prohibits them from even eating meat with blood in it. In the same time period, there have been over 105 either miniature or major genocides against the Jews ranging from the burning of Rabbi’s to the Holocaust. One of the scariest facts would be that, “In almost every generation there is an attempted Jewish genocide somewhere in the world on a macrocosmic or microcosmic scale” (Packouz). The irrational persecution of the Jewish people was definitively predicted in the Bible and could not be guessed or fulfilled through pure chance.
Jewish medical practices

Not only do the Bible’s prophecies show that the Bible is inspired and therefore God exists, but it also gave the Jews medical practices well ahead of their time. The most apparent example of this would be in the handling of dead bodies. “Prior to the twentieth century surgeons used to handle the dead and the dying and then, without washing their hands, go into the operating theatre. Because of this many patients lost their life through infection” (“Reasons to Believe — Reason 7”). In modern day medicine, a surgeon doing something along those lines would cause an uproar and would likely be subject to a malpractice law suit. The Jews on the other hand knew that they must wash after handling the dead for thousands of years prior to modern medicine. The Bible states, “He that toucheth the dead body of any man shall be unclean seven days” (Numb 11:11), which then would require a cleansing process. An unclean person, “shall purify himself with it on the third day, and on the seventh day he shall be clean” (Numb 11:12). When a person was unclean in the Jewish law, they were not allowed to interact with society, and any person they touched would become unclean as well. The purifying process was a full cleaning of the person and their clothing. The Bible states, “And the clean person shall sprinkle upon the unclean on the third day, and on the seventh day: and on the seventh day he shall purify himself, and wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and shall be clean at even” (Numb 11:19). This means that in contrast to a surgeon going from handling the dead straight into surgery, a Jew would have to separate himself from society for seven days and have a clean person thoroughly wash both him and his clothing. This is just one of multiple examples of the Jewish law being thousands of years ahead of its time, and adds to the idea that a supernatural, all-knowing being actually created these laws.

When brought up to an atheist, or someone who does not believe in a God, the typical response is that someone had to figure out these things first. In other words, there would have to be a first group to figure out that handling the dead without cleaning after is unhygienic and the Jews happened to be that group. Although this is plausible in some aspects, it fails to be a fulfilling explanation of the Jews being so far advanced medically. Today, if the United States were to develop a cure to cancer, within a few weeks multiple nations would have the same cure. Although this is by and large because of modern technology, it is very unlikely it would take two to four thousand years for people to come to the same conclusions the Jews did when these laws were created, if the Jews had discovered these medical laws through science and reasoning.

Probability

One of the largest oppositions to the belief in God, and specifically in the inspiration of the Bible, is through science. In the creation account in Genesis, the Bible claims human kind and all animals were made within a two day process. Scientists disagree, claiming that evolution is the explanation for how human beings came into being. Statistically speaking, the theory of evolution is highly improbably. William Lane Craig, an avid evangelist with a PhD in philosophy, states that “The probability of the evolution of the human genome is between four
raised to the negative 180th power, raised to the 110,000th power, and four raised
to the 360th power, raised to the 110,000th power” (Craig). He also states that
in the time for one tenth of the evolutionary process to occur purely by chance,
the sun should have expanded and destroyed the Earth (Craig). This shows that
when one takes away the existence of God and leans on the theory that chance is
what brought us into being, they are going entirely against statistical probabilities.

The Big Bang

Another common theory used
to explain the creation of
everything is the big bang
theory. One form of this
theory claims that all matter
and time came into existence
at one moment on its own.
The issue with this theory
is that this means nothing
caused nothing to become
something. On contrast, the
Genesis account of creation has an almighty being causing nothing to become
something. A common question asked to a Christian is the question of, “If the
universe could not exist without a creator, then using the same logic, the creator
must have a creator. So who created God?” This directly goes against a believer
of the Bible’s claim though. The Bible claims, “The eternal God is thy refuge, and
underneath are the everlasting arms” (Deut 33:27). Since Christians claim that
God is eternal, there is no need for a creator of Him. To further explain, God has
no beginning, and therefore does not need to be created. The universe is almost
universally accepted to have a beginning, and therefore must have a creator (Craig).

Belief in God does require an amount of faith, and cannot be absolutely proven
through reasoning, but that does not take away that there is plenty of evidence that
leads to the conclusion of there being a God. Through prophecy that has predicted
improbable events, Jewish people standing out in history, and clearing up a few
scientific oppositions, it is evident that the God of the Bible must be true. The
question of, “Does God exist?” is an extremely popular question, and is personal
to people both of faith and without it. When approaching the question through a
statistical scope, it seems extremely improbable for the Bible to have been written,
say the things it does, and then be correct without some form of inspiration through
a higher being, thus showing that the God of the Bible indeed real.

Sources

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  vs Christopher Hitchens — Does God Exist?” YouTube.
- Packouz, Kalman. “7 Wonders of Jewish History.” Simple to Remember
  Judaism Online.
- “Reasons to Believe — Reason 7.” Reasons to Believe (on Web)

Matthew Tuckson (Norfolk, VA)
Elections

In the previous article (The Tidings, Sept 2015) we considered the office of Deacons, among others. Here we firstly look at the mode of elections. In the first Century after Christ, there was not a rigid hierarchy, as in the apostate church that superseded it and that has continued in that way through the ages, in which the “clergy” and “laity” were separated, and the latter had no say in anything. It was not like that at all. There was plenty of flexibility in the way the offices were operated, and as we have already seen, there were men like Stephen and Philip and the Apostle Paul himself, who exercised more than one of these functions.

Paul could say, “I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all: Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue” (1Cor 14:18-19). So Paul had the gift of tongues, but was careful in its use.

Another point which emerges is that the election of serving brethren is not only a sensible arrangement but a scriptural one. I used to think, and I was brought up to believe, that the apostles more or less dictated everything, but I think we can see sufficiently in the Acts of the Apostles to know that the church itself, the body of believers, was a responsible body, and not just dumb, driven sheep. They were expected to exercise their judgment, and they were expected to be able to appoint the right men for the right job.

The recording brother, as I have suggested, would generally have the oversight and care of the local ecclesia, and answer to the New Testament “bishop”, who was probably in charge of all the house churches of the city, which together formed the “ecclesia”, as in the “ecclesia at Rome”. The arranging brethren would answer to the eldership, jointly responsible at local level, with a collective responsibility for leading the ecclesia in God’s ways. The deacons, for which we have no special office in our present day organization, remind us of the importance of this kind of work, the “serving” jobs in the ecclesias; and also suggest the possibility that we might open our doors a little wider to the services of our sisters who perhaps are not being used enough. (In our organizations, probably not as much as they were in New Testament times). The prophets would correspond in some way to the speaking brethren, though they are not now specially endowed with a gift of prophecy. At the present time, through the word of God, and perhaps with the help of His Spirit, men are still able to expound to us the word of God, and we should be thankful for that.

Evangelists? Who would they be today? Preachers going from place to place. Inter-ecclesial bringers of the message. Unattached, as they seem to have been in
New Testament times, to any particular ecclesia. Perhaps we could think of our Bible Mission workers, out there far away, taking the word of God from place to place; or those who give their time to Bible campaign work. This is more the kind of work, as I see it, that the evangelists would do.

The whole church

And finally, and most importantly, I want to come to the office of the whole church, on whom and for whom the work was carried out. Paul says: “For we are labourers together with God: ye are God’s building. According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ” (1Cor 3:9-11).

I want you to notice especially that Paul is not saying that all the church were the “labourers together with God.” They were not all to be evangelists; they were not all to be prophets; certainly not all to be apostles. They were “the field.” They were “the building.” He is not saying you are all laborers together with God. He is saying we, the Apostles, and the workers appointed by the church, are the laborers together with God, and you — the Church — are “God’s building.” You are the people being worked on. You are God’s field, tilled by our Apostles. So he said, in paraphrase, “Let every man be careful how he carried on this work, because on the day of judgment his work will be seen for what it is worth, by what it has produced,” in those for whom it has been carried on.

The beauty and grandeur of the church is to be seen not in the men in the limelight, who are doing the prominent work. The real test, the Apostle says, is what is happening in the body of the ecclesia. That is where “the gold and silver and the precious stones” are to be seen. That is also where “the wood, hay and stubble” will become visible in the Day of Judgment. I am suggesting therefore, that we should not try to be “all chiefs and no Indians.” That was not the way it was organized in New Testament times. There were those who had responsibility. There were those, and many of them, having different kinds of functions to perform in the church. But for the body of the believers, their function was to be good Christians; to allow the work of the Apostles and prophets, and evangelists, and teachers and pastors; the influence and power of the word of God; to so work in them that they would be faithful men and women, who could hold up their heads in the day of judgment, and the Apostles could take delight in them.

Finally consider the words of Paul after he had reviewed the various offices and gifts in the Church: “Covet earnestly the best gifts” (1Cor 12:31). So there is nothing wrong with aspiring to have some ecclesial office. There is nothing wrong with wanting to have a part in the more active forms of the work. “If any man desireth the office of a bishop, he desireth a good thing” (1Tim 3:1). But remember that “a bishop must be blameless, the husband of one wife, well reported of for good deeds” and so on. Let him always remember the qualifications that go with the office to which he aspires; but the most important thing is what follows.
“Now eagerly desire the greater gifts. And yet I will show you the most excellent way. If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing. Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth... For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when completeness comes, what is in part disappears. When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me. For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known. And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love” (1Cor 12:31 – 13:13 NIV).

These are not offices in the ecclesia. They are fruits of God's work in our lives. So we don't want to become a community of office holders, and least of all of office seekers. What we want to become is a group of men and women holding the most important office of all, that of being true disciples of Jesus, and examples of the believers, in word and conversation and godliness.

The doctrine of the church: what it taught and what it emphasized

I think the first thing we ought to say in beginning this study is that we do sometimes, and frequently, in fact, attach to the word doctrine a meaning that is not necessarily there in the New Testament. We have given the word a "technical" meaning, and it has come to be synonymous with "dogma." We accept doctrine as the basic facts of our religion, the dogmatic statements on which our Christadelphian faith is founded, whereas, in fact, the word “doctrine” in New Testament language really means “teaching” — any kind of formulated teaching; and it includes, and indeed more frequently refers to, moral teaching, as well as "dogmatic" doctrine. So that Paul writing both to Timothy and Titus uses the word in the context of his ethical teaching. “Speak thou the things which become sound doctrine, that the aged men be sober, grave” (Titus 2:1-2), and goes on to describe the kind of people, the kind of characters, that they should be. And it is more often in this sense that the word doctrine is used in the New Testament. However, for our present purpose in studying the doctrine of the church, we are thinking more particularly of its dogma; of those things which were axiomatic to the faith of the first century ecclesia. We notice first of all that Jesus preached everywhere in Galilee and Judea “the gospel of the kingdom of God.” Mark tells us in the opening of his gospel that “in those days Jesus came into Galilee preaching the gospel of the kingdom and saying, Repent ye, for the kingdom of God is at hand” (Matt 3:1-2). The political background of the phrase “the kingdom of God” is not very clearly evident in the teaching of Jesus.
Although it is the background, and although the Messianic hope, and the Messianic promises, and the prophecies of the Old Testament Scriptures are the roots out of which his message grew, yet Jesus’ teaching, as recorded by the gospel writers, the preaching of the Lord Jesus as we have it on record, was much more concerned with the way into the Kingdom, than with the Kingdom itself. Men’s behavior and attitudes were the things that Jesus talked most about, as any cursory reading of the gospels will make clear. He preached the “sovereignty” of God, which is a phrase used by many of the new versions for the phrase “the kingdom of God.” That is to say, the kingdom of God in the sense in which we see it in the gospels, is the sovereignty of God in men’s lives now, as a preparation for an inheritance in the sovereignty of God when it shall be manifested in the earth in the Kingdom age.

There are, of course, references to the political aspect of the kingdom in some of the parables; and there are quite clear warnings of its sudden advent, when he is talking privately to his disciples, warning them to be ready for his coming, and for the advent of the Kingdom, when it is to be manifested in the earth; but always the teaching of Jesus revolves round the present duty of service, faithfulness and love as a preparation for an inheritance in the kingdom. The nearest we get in the gospels to any clear definition of what we might call “dogmatic faith” is in the famous declaration of Peter when Jesus said: “Whom do men say that I the Son of Man am?” (Matt 16.15), and Peter steps forward and says, “You are the Christ, the son of the living God.” Jesus saw this as such an important declaration that he said: “Flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto you, Peter, but my Father that is in heaven has made known this wonderful truth to you.”

Basis of church doctrine

Now here is the basis of the doctrine of the church. It would be difficult to find a simpler affirmation of what the Christian dogma is than this declaration of Peter’s: “Thou art the Christ, the son of the living God.” There are three important truths contained in this statement. First, that the God that Jesus represented in his ministry on earth, the God that Christians have come to believe in, is the Living God revealed in the Scriptures to the Jewish people in Old Testament times. Thou are the Christ, the son of “the living God.” That God exists is the fundamental of Christian faith. That Jesus of Nazareth is the Son of God, is also clearly stated in this affirmation of faith. “Thou art the Christ, the son of the living God.” So that the second declaration of faith is that Jesus is the Son of God. And the third is, (and this was the remarkable revelation to which Jesus, I think, particularly referred, when he said that “flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven”) that he was the Messiah and the Savior: “Thou art the Christ, the son of the living God” — the Messiah, as predicted in the Old Testament Scriptures. The Messiah, or Christ, for whom the Jewish people were taught to look by the study of these prophecies. “Upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matt 16:18).

So here are three basic Christian doctrines

- That God exists (and by inference that He is the God revealed to the nation of Israel, that He is “the God of Abraham Isaac and Jacob,” the God of the
Now when we come over to Acts we get more development of doctrine than those three simple statements contained in Peter’s declaration in the Gospels. But still the doctrinal content in the preaching of the church, as it is revealed to us here, is very simple. I have done a fairly close study of the preaching of the Apostles as shown to us in Acts. We can read a lot into it, but if we take what is recorded, (and we may surely take it that the pith and substance of what the Apostles said is in their recorded speeches), the basic Christian dogmas that the Apostles preached are very simple statements. The Epistles, later on, developed more detailed expositions. There we have something more like the polemical Christianity with which we as Christadelphians are more familiar, the deeper more detailed arguments arising out of the basic preaching presented to us in the Acts of the Apostles.

It seems probable that the original apostolic preaching was quite simple, and that other more precise definitions were added later on, developed as it were to combat heresies that arose within the church and which are evident even in New Testament times. As we read through the Epistles we find “the mystery of iniquity” already working. We find men bringing in “damnable heresies” and things of that kind which had to be met, and it would seem that as the first century church developed, the simple basic preaching of the Acts was added to and developed in the Epistles, in order that the church might be instructed and that their understanding might be developed on the basis of the platform that had been truly laid in the early preaching of the Apostles. A little bit like the developing Statements of Faith in our own community. The primitive Christadelphian statement of faith was a fairly simple thing in Dr. Thomas’ day, for example, but as other ideas came along and brethren felt the need to resist this view or that view, they built into the statement more and more detail so that now we have a very complex statement of faith that has arisen out of the simplicity of the early statement, in order to try to safeguard the truths from being spoiled by the intrusion of wrong ideas.

The primitive preaching was very simple, but it was added to, understandably, and rightly, by the apostles in their expositions in the Epistles, so that the church should grow in knowledge. There was “the milk of the word” and there was “the meat” to which the Apostles were leading them on, and which gave us such wonderful expositions as Romans and Ephesians and Hebrews, these classic demonstrations of the way in which the simple faith can be expanded and developed in all sorts of ways, along all sorts of avenues, so that the germs of truth have many facets which are developed in the Epistles.

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. The Christadelphian, 1997 p 316.
Peer Learning Discussion Groups —
A Potential Outreach Opportunity

There is a possible way for senior brothers and sisters to reach out to other seniors in their communities by the use of Peer Learning Discussion Groups which are sometimes available in Senior Centers in towns and cities across your country.

The courses usually run for eight weeks and meet for one two-hour session per week. The meetings usually consist of approximately 8 to 12 people sitting around a large table. Each course has a theme that gives rise to a number of possible topics. At the preliminary meeting, the moderator proposes a list of subjects and the group may suggest others. Each person then selects a topic and undertakes to prepare a 20 minute talk to be given at some point in the next eight weeks. At each weekly meeting, there are two 20 minute presentations, each followed by a 30 minute discussion. This allows for a coffee or tea break between sessions. This type of atmosphere is very conducive to friendly discussion and an opportunity to meet others who have similar interests.

Course subjects can vary but in my local Senior Community Centre we have considered and are considering such subjects as:

- The Middle East — Roots of Conflict and Possible Solutions.
- The New Longevity.
- Faith, Religion and Science.
- Endangered Species and Invasive Species.

There are a host of possible subjects that could be considered and obviously suggestions which would engender discussion on Bible subjects would be preferred.

Typically in Canada Senior Centers cater to those aged from 55 years and up and if your local senior organization doesn’t presently run such a program it could be suggested that they do. Many of these Centers are actively encouraging seniors to exercise their minds as well as their bodies in order to prolong and enrich the retirement process. One could volunteer to set up a committee to organize and oversee such a program in your community. It is an opportunity for both brethren and sisters to engage in these talks and discussions. Typically an email list is made up from the attendees and even if people attending the sessions are reluctant to speak up on points made during discussion they can often correspond with you at some later date via email.

If brethren and sisters see an opportunity in their community and would like further details on setting up such a group I would be happy to share with you my personal experiences and some possible advice.

“Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD” (Isa 1:18).

Michael Carr (Kitchener/Waterloo, ON): buxtoncarr@hotmail.com
Meriden Family Bible Fair

The Family Bible Fair is an outreach idea that “just seemed to morph” into reality over a period of several months. Now that we have done it, we look forward to trying it again, in whole and in part.

Our inaugural effort ran for four hours — 9 am to 1 pm — on a very warm Saturday in August. As the name suggests, there were things for everyone in the family to do, and we made sure that there could be no mistake on the part of any visitors: we identify ourselves with the Bible. Of course, everything was free.

With beaches and amusement parks not far away and other churches running carnivals to beguile people, we didn't expect to be trampled underfoot by big crowds. But a few families came, and we got to talk with some fathers and mothers.

A key part of this outreach effort, in our estimation, was the range of games, crafts, and prizes that catered to children. A large open tent was set up in our side yard with all kinds of activities for kids. It was highly visible. Additional stations were set up for children in our fellowship hall. Many of our sisters, brothers, and young people got involved running these events — most dressed in bright yellow T-shirts that had our name, logo, and website on them. There is little question that families came to the fair because there were things for children to do.

Beyond this, we made sure there were lots of Bible-related things for adults. We ran a Psalms Read-A-Thon in our meeting room and everyone was invited to join in.1 One grandmother arrived at the beginning and listened quietly for more than two hours. She stayed through the reading of 75 psalms while her daughter and grandchildren enjoyed other parts of the fair. There were exhibits with large identifying banners: “Seven Centuries of the English Bible” and “The Bible Comes to America”. We had a “Bible and Technology Chat Room” just off the entryway for anyone who might be interested in Bible apps and things like that. Nearby, a flat panel TV played a continuously running slide show about our 122-year ecclesial history.

And, of course, we wanted to get information into visitors’ hands. To this end we had a big “Bible Build-A-Bag” table in the entryway. Each adult visitor was offered a large cloth bag — imprinted like the T-shirts — to fill with freebies: imprinted water bottles, fridge magnets, pens, three different Bible DVDs, laminated Bible Companion bookmarks, a nicely bound set of Bible reading tips, and items related to the exhibits. Copies of “Answering Your Questions About The Christadelphians” and a companion leaflet describing our ecclesial services were already in every bag.2

And what would a Bible fair be without Bibles? The centerpiece of our build-a-bag table was free Bibles. Since we live in an area that has a growing Hispanic population, we offered Bibles in both Spanish and English. A nice, relatively inexpensive, hardbound bilingual Bible drew particular interest.

Obviously, we had to advertise, and this took about half of our FBF budget. Two small, full-color display ads went into the local newspaper, starting about two weeks before the fair. An Ad Note (a stick-on ad) went on the front page of the
paper a week before the fair, and a flyer was inserted in the same paper two days beforehand.

In addition, our young people — and some not so young! — canvassed local neighborhoods one week before the fair with extra copies of the newspaper insert. We also put up two lawn signs in front of our hall to announce the event.

Nearly all the things we prepared for the Family Bible Fair can be used again. We also have leftover giveaways on hand for another time. It will not cost as much to run another fair. Some of the things can be used with other events as well. For example, the exhibits can be set up at Bible reading seminars. The Bible Companion and the set of Bible reading tips can be given away at almost any outreach event. The Family Bible Fair has good prospects of being cost effective.

And it is adaptable. We designed the fair to make good use of our entire ecclesial venue — inside and out. Other ecclesias would need to adapt it to their own settings. It is a “non-threatening” event, and we found that people come. Our visitors now know where we are and they have been inside our hall. Key things, we believe, include a range of inviting activities for all ages, advertising, and putting it firmly in God’s hands. We prayed a lot about this. Then it ran its course. And everyone in the ecclesia had an opportunity to get involved.

Meriden (CT) Preaching Committee

Notes:
1. Did you know that a group can read 119 Psalms aloud in 4 hours and 10 minutes?
2. Three Bible DVDs were offered free of charge: “Introducing the Bible”, “Introducing Jesus”, and “God’s Land of Promises”, all obtained from the Williamsburg Christadelphian Foundation at an astonishing low cost. We played the DVDs on another small TV so visitors could see what they were getting.
Why Hast Thou Forsaken Me?

From Bro. George Booker

Dear Brethren Peter and John,

I agree wholeheartedly with Bro. Barling’s statement, which Bro. Bromet questions in his letter (The Tidings, Sept. 2015, p. 420). In the fillter Bro. Barling quotes John 16:32: “I am not alone, because the Father is with me”. Other passages also help to explain and mitigate what appears to be the temporary feeling of abandonment which our Lord experienced, when he cried, “My God… why have you forsaken me?” from the cross (Matt 27:46; Mark 15:34; Luke 24:44, citing Psa 22:1).

In addition to John 16:32, which Bro. Barling quoted, a long list of other such mitigating passages also point in the same direction, such as vs 24 from the same Psalm 22, presumably also quoted by Jesus on the cross: “For he [the LORD] has not despised or disdained the suffering of the afflicted one; he has not hidden his face from but has listened to his cry for help.” This suggests that Jesus’ “Why have you forsaken me?” was a cry for help, which the Father heard.

A whole group of other Messianic psalms suggest our Lord’s temporary fear or doubt. As we know, these are very human emotions, common to all of us. But whatever reservations Jesus felt were then answered by his own renewal of faith and trust in his heavenly Father. These include the following:

“Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God” (Psa 42:5,6).

“Do not forsake me when my strength is gone. For my enemies speak against me; those who wait to kill me conspire together. They say, ‘God has forsaken him; pursue him and seize him, for no one will rescue him.’ Be not far from me, O God; come quickly, O my God, to help me” (Psa 71:9-12). These verses actually suggest another possibility: that Jesus’ “My God…” cry was, to some extent, referring to the taunts of his enemies.

“Surely in vain have I kept my heart pure; in vain have I washed my hands in innocence… My heart was grieved and my spirit embittered… Yet… you hold me by my right hand. You guide me with your counsel, and afterward you will take me into glory” (Psa 73:13,21,23,24).

“Unless the Lord had given me help, I would soon have dwelt in the silence of death. When I said, ‘My foot is slipping,’ your love, O Lord, supported me. When anxiety was great within me, your consolation brought joy to my soul” (Psa 74:17-19).

Bro. Bromet refers to the “seemingly disturbing utterance” of Jesus on the cross (“My God, why have your forsaken me?”). But when I consider what it must have
meant for Jesus to be a man, born of a woman, and thus destined by his very nature to be tried in all matters like we are, then I do not find such a cry disturbing at all; I find it reassuring. Jesus’ words give voice to our own fears and doubts, and help us to see the man in Gethsemane, and on the cross, as our Savior and our Redeemer, for he has experienced our weaknesses too.

Did God truly “forsake” His Son? Or does Jesus’ perfectly understandable feeling of abandonment, expressed at that moment, explain the words? If it was the latter, then we have the very best example in his words and actions for how we ought to deal with our own similar feelings: by resorting to the Word of God and its assurances, and by reminding ourselves of how our heavenly Father has cared for us in the past.

Is a brief or momentary fear a sin? How can it be? If we see even the slightest hesitation or wavering in Jesus’ purpose and faith as a sin, — and try to explain it away by looking for dubious translations or alternative readings — then I believe we are on the way to creating in our minds a would-be Savior who is much less man and more “Angel” or “God”, and that is simply wrong. That Jesus felt such fears is proof that he was “tempted in every way, just as we are”; that he did not succumb to such fears, but overcame them by a continuing exercise of faith, is proof that he “was without sin” (Heb 4:15).

Bro. Bromet offers, as an absolute statement, that Jesus really said, “Why have you spared me?”, and he cites as his only authority the Aramaic English New Testament. He then says — another absolute statement — that the AENT is “a translation of the oldest New Testament ever discovered, the Khabouris Codex written entirely in Aramaic”. This is simply wrong for several reasons, as a quick search of the writings of such eminent New Testament scholars as F.F. Bruce and Bruce Metzger will confirm.

F.F. Bruce writes:

“Because the Syriac Bible is written in a variant dialect of the language that Jesus spoke, extreme views are sometimes expressed about the forms in which his sayings appear in the Syriac Gospels, as though his actual words in the language in which they were uttered might be found there. The ordinary reader, for example, may readily infer from the writings of Mr. George Lamsa [an early translator of the Aramaic Gospels] that the Peshitta Gospels preserve the very words of our Lord better than the Greek Gospels do. This, of course, is quite wrong; the Peshitta New Testament is simply a translation of the Greek.”

Bruce Metzger, probably the leading world authority on the New Testament text until his recent death, has stated that Lamsa’s claim to have translated the New Testament from original Aramaic manuscripts is a fraud, and that he would never produce the manuscripts from which he was supposedly translating. Metzger also points out that the whole of the New Testament could not have been written in Aramaic because the language would have been unknown to some of the ecclesias to whom Paul wrote, such as Rome or Corinth.
Ironically, the recent (August 2015) special issue of *The Tidings*, entitled “God Has Spoken”, goes a long way toward refuting such claims about the Aramaic English New Testament and others. On page 354, Bro. Joe Hill lists a number of the most useful books on the textual criticism of the New Testament, including Bruce Metzger’s definitive work, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*. The serious study of the history and background of the New Testament should start with such books as these. Again, on page 367, Bro. Steve Davis writes: “Aramaic is only used in about 250 verses in Daniel and Ezra.” And the “Further Reading” compiled on the last page of the special issue is another very useful resource.

Yours in Christ,
George Booker (Austin, TX)

Notes:

From Bro. Rick Brower

I was intrigued by Bro Bromet’s commentary on this question. He suggests that Jesus’ statement on the cross, ‘Why have you forsaken me’, is better translated ‘Why have you spared me’. I would like to suggest that his conclusion is highly unlikely, for three specific reasons. I would also like to suggest a perspective which supports the traditional reading, and eliminates the “so called” dilemma.

In the first place, Bro. Bromet appeals to an Aramaic text known as the Khabouris Codex, which apparently prefers the word ‘spared’ in place of ‘forsaken’. However, as you rightly pointed out in a footnote, nearly all translations of all other manuscripts do use the English word ‘forsaken’. This renders the Khabouris Codex an outlier. Given that this manuscript is an isolated minority source, carbon dated to over a 1000 years after Christ, it is simply an unreliable basis upon which to make an appeal for alternative translation of a specific word. The text claims in its opening abstract to be a copy of a much older text, but whether it is or not is of little consequence. It is impossible to make a convincing textual argument for the alternative translation on scholarly grounds.

In the second place, the third party response to Jesus’ statement on the cross appears to support the traditional reading of ‘forsaken’. “And some of the bystanders, hearing it, said, ‘This man is calling Elijah’...But the others said, ‘Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him’ ” (Matt 27:47,49 ESV). Although it is admitted that the bystanders either didn’t understand Aramaic, or at least didn’t understand Jesus very clearly (for they thought he called for Elijah), nevertheless they did assume that Jesus was calling for help. Not help, in the sense that Bro. Bromet assumes whereby Christ wished to hasten his own death, but help in the sense of salvation from the death experience itself. So then the bystanders themselves interpreted Jesus’ statement in a manner which makes more sense if we read ‘forsaken’, and not ‘spared’.

In the third place, we cannot change the original context of David’s emotional struggle in Psalm 22. He very obviously did feel that God had abandoned him, at least for the moment. This is a completely normal, human feeling. David states
“O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer” (ESV, v.2). So then to assert an alteration to Christ’s statement on the cross is to say that Christ did not actually quote Psalm 22. Considering the numerous and striking similarities between the experience of David and the experience of Christ as described in the passage, this too is an unnecessary stretch of the imagination.

All of these things indicate that we need look elsewhere for a Biblical solution. I believe we have that, with the final OT quote from Christ before he died. “Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, ‘Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!’ And having said this he breathed his last” (Luke 23:46 ESV). Based on this quote, we know that Christ had moved on in his mind at the point of death from Psalm 22 to Psalm 31. This is very significant, because there are several parallels in that passage as well between the life of David and the life Christ. For our purposes here, the most important can be found in Psa 31:22: “For I said in my haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes: nevertheless thou hearest the voice of my supplications when I cried unto thee”.

If the spiritual parallel holds, then it is clear that Christ did feel that God had abandoned him in the moment, even though he knew in a technical sense that such a thing was simply not true. Is this not the very essence of the human condition? Most certainly, and Christ would be forced to endure every bit of it. The tension between what we feel and what we know in our head is a very real and present struggle, which should cause us to reflect on the love and promises of our great Heavenly Father just as Christ did even in the face of death.

Rick Brower (Troy, IL)

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Between the two living manifestations, was interposed the death-state. In this state, the Cherubic Flesh was deserted by the Eternal Substance. The effluent spirit forsook Jesus when he exclaimed upon the cross, “My AIL, my AIL, why hast Thou forsaken me?” The effluent power by which he had taught and worked was withdrawn from him for some time before he died. The Spirit no longer rested upon the Cherub, yet that Cherub continued to live as other men. In process of time he expired. He was now, like the Cherubic Veil of the Temple, “rent in twain.”

It was no longer affirmative that “I and the Father are one”; but that “I and the Father are twain”; for the Father was no longer in him, nor he in the Father. In the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, the body was in the condition predicted in Psalm 38: “Yahweh’s arrows stuck fast in it, and His hand pressed it sore. There was no soundness in the flesh; its wounds stank; and its loins were filled with a loathsome disease; feeble and sore broken, his lovers and friends stood aloof from His stroke, which had consumed him, and laid him low in a horrible pit.” This was the death state of the Cherub. Will any one affirm that that dead body was the Father? That it had lived in the world before the world was? That it was the Creator of all things? Nay, it was the flesh only in which sin was condemned and had it been left there, it would have crumbled into unprofitable dust (Psa 30:9).

John Thomas, Phanerosis, p 45 (1869 edition)
Mexico Bible School 2015

From July 16-20 the Mexico Bible School was held at a hotel near Lake Chapala. Bro. David Lloyd, the link brother, shares these thoughts since he attended the school.

It was the second Mexico Bible School and was highlighted by a couple of baptisms and the visit of 12 brothers and sisters from Costa Rica (first time visitors). There were exactly 50 attendees — the 12 from Costa Rica, some from Campeche, in the Yucatan, one from Salamanca and the rest were from the greater Guadalajara area (including Ocotlan). It was a lovely cultural exchange and the Costa Ricans were very friendly and energetic.

Bro. Bill Rawson of England gave splendid classes on Ecclesiastes and there was much discussion about the talks and how to practice the valuable lessons in our lives. There was a large teen class taught by Bro. Luis. And there was a very small class of little children. Because there were spirited teens from Costa Rica, they really enlivened our young people and they seemed to have a great time together.

On the third day of the Bible School there were two baptisms, Bro. Gustavo Aguirre and Sis. Cynthia Alvarez. They are from Ocotlan and have been taking three classes a week in Ocotlan for more than a year. Ocotlan is an exciting area about an hour from Guadalajara where we have been having lots of interest and conduct a full meeting each week. It’s not an ecclesia yet but a satellite — but this adds two more members to this group.

It was a full schedule of classes and afternoon activities for all. The afternoon Bible readings were popular and went overtime each day. These are special times for the brethren who live great distances to the ecclesia and do not have the fellowship of group Bible readings except at the Bible School. They also spent time singing some hymns (Spanish Hymnbook) that are favorites in Costa Rica.
The swimming pool was a big hit with everybody. There was a nice soccer field that some enjoyed. One afternoon the group went down to the shore of Lake Chapala and walked along the park and the pier and bought souvenirs from the artisans. A brother from Costa Rica bought me a fresh coconut cut open for a straw to drink from. Very tasty. The teens enjoyed getting to know each other.

The first evening program Bro. Teo gave a class and then everyone introduced themselves and told how they came to know the Truth and be baptized. Even the youngest of the young people shared. Some told detailed stories and were emotional because their finding the Truth was a life-saver.

The second evening program featured a lovely Hebrew dance by three of the young girls from Costa Rica and singing by first the group of Costa Rican visitors and then the whole congregation. It was very lively!

At the end, here is the group in their souvenir t-shirts to remember the time spent on things of eternal value. We in North America, as well as other heavily populated Christadelphian areas around the world have multiple Study Weekends and Bible Schools to choose to attend. This is a new experience to gather together in fellowship and new cultures based on their common faith.

Submitted by Sis. Jan Berneau CBMA/CBMC Publicity
Panama — A Spiritually and Naturally Refreshing Visit

Once again we were happy to team-up with Brother Clive and Sister Christine Drepaul from New York to support the two Panama ecclesias for special activities from July 19th to 29th, and their Annual Bible Camp which was held from July 24 to 26th at Santa Clara on the Pacific Coast of Panama.

Brother Clive gave the exhortation and Bible Class at the Panama City Ecclesia on Sunday, July 19th. The Colon Ecclesia had organized a preaching effort on Wednesday, July 22 at a hotel conference room near the Colon meeting room — there were 31 in attendance from both ecclesias, plus five visitors. Three of the visitors have previously attended and two had registered to go to the Bible Camp! The theme for the Colon initiative and also for the Panama City Ecclesia’s witness evening on Tuesday, July 28th was — “Genesis — Foundation for Faith”. The schedule concluded with a combined Bible Class on the Atlantic side of the Isthmus in Colon on July 29th, with members from both ecclesias present, as well as friends.

![Image of people in Panama]

The focal point of our time in Panama was the Bible Camp. There were 21 members, teens and children from the two ecclesias present plus the two friends. The study theme for the weekend was based on four judges as found in Hebrews 11:32 — Barak, Gideon, Jephthah and Samson. Many lessons were gleansed from these examples of faith, mixed with failure through compromise. The admonition was clear for the Brotherhood today, in this very humanistic society — we must stand fast in the Faith, and put on the whole armor of God!

The waters of the Pacific Ocean were calmer this year, allowing a number to enjoy swimming. Another natural feature of this area of Panama is the abundance of mango trees. The trees are loaded with this fruit in July and the mangos were supremely delicious!
Our time in Panama was rewarded with enjoyable fellowship around the Word of God — a refreshing oasis in our busy lives. The two ecclesias are very hospitable and welcome visitors any time of the year, since each ecclesia has about 13 members with only a few brethren to take care of the weekly services.

Don Luff, CBMA linkman

**Trinidad Bible School 2015**

We were glad to have the opportunity to attend the Trinidad & Tobago Bible School, which was held on the island of Trinidad this year from July 31 – August 4. (The Bible School alternates between Trinidad and Tobago each year). It was an exceptional gathering around God’s word as we enjoyed our studies and fellowship together. The hospitality of the Caribbean brethren is as warm as their sunshine! Bro. Sam and Sis. Bernadette Edwards graciously hosted us before and after the school. Their home is also the location for the Amiri Ecclesia. There are two other ecclesias on the island — Marabella and Erin. Brethren from all three ecclesias and from the Tobago ecclesia attended the Bible School. We had between 20-45 attendees throughout the school. Not everyone could stay at the site with us the whole time, as some were working or had other commitments. All ages participated, as well — we had newborn babes to beloved elders!

The Bible studies provided by Bro. Jeff Gelineau of Simi Hills, California, and Bro. David Andrews of Georgetown, Guyana were very well received. Bro. Jeff spoke about the purpose of our lives and how we can use our unique, personal skills and characteristics to serve God, and Bro. David spoke about the glory of God and how we can glorify Him. It was amazing how the two classes dovetailed together! They were continually referring to one another’s remarks, and blending them together into a cohesive and rich whole. One of my favorite aspects of the Caribbean brethren is the lively questions and comments after each study. Those sessions were so helpful and inspiring. Everyone’s intention of bringing the studies into practical use in our daily lives is apparent. The discussions always round out the program perfectly.
One afternoon, we had a fun outing to the beach. Along the way, we stopped to see the Pitch Lake, which is the largest natural deposit of asphalt in the world! It was quite odd to realize that what we cover our roads with comes out of a lake! From there we continued on to a nice beach. We played Frisbee in the warm water together, and had a lot of good laughs. (Not many of us were very skilled with the Frisbee!)

We greatly enjoyed meeting the brothers and sisters of Trinidad and Tobago and left feeling as if we had made many dear friends. We would highly recommend to everyone that you attend this Bible School. The brothers and sisters greatly appreciate visitors, and their vibrant faithfulness greatly blesses those who have the opportunity to visit their islands of the Caribbean.

Written by Jeff Gelineau
Submitted by Jan Berneau

Beginnings in Trinidad

The true Gospel came first to Trinidad in 1889, when the intrepid Barbadian, Brother John Blenman, took the newly baptized Isaac Barnes from Kingston, Jamaica, to Port of Spain. They found the island to be a stronghold of Roman Catholicism (though Protestantism, Hinduism and Islam have since influenced its religious life), yet they managed to establish the roots of a small ecclesia in the capital. Their work was reported by a London brother, Herbert Horsman, in the Fraternal Visitor magazine in July 1890. However, Isaac Barnes soon left the Caribbean, on his way to West Africa; and by 1891, Brother Blenman — who said of Trinidad that ‘evil abounds there exceedingly’ — had become ill and had moved to Georgetown in British Guiana. Even so, by 1899 there was an ecclesia of eight members in Port of Spain. A Brother E A Thomas wrote of the difficulties at the time:

“Trinidad is a Roman Catholic community. Catholicism has greatly impoverished all spiritual appetite for Truth, especially among the higher and middle classes. We therefore, as poor fellows, are only able to sound our voices among friends — and that in a careful manner, to try to open up to them the Truth as it is in the Scriptures. In this way many have been startled and convinced."

For the next 55 years Trinidad, like all the Caribbean outposts, remained isolated from the rest of the Christadelphian community. Then came those marvelous years in the 1950s when in so many parts of the world the Lord sent forth his servants once again. From Guyana in 1954 came ‘Operation Caribbean’ — a newspaper-advertisement campaign in the islands, which sowed the seeds of revival — followed by a steady flow of mission workers from other stations in the Caribbean or from overseas. It may well be true that very few countries have been as vigorously or extensively evangelized by Christadelphians as Trinidad and Tobago. The reasons are simply the zeal of the local members — they want the name and the message to be widely known — and the fact that over the years a succession of capable and active Christadelphian preachers has visited the islands.

(From “Into all the World”, Bro. Michael Owen, p. 97)
Books from The Tidings

Observations Along the Way: A Bible Journal, by George Booker
As the sequel to “On the Way”, this book is the album of a spiritual journey, written for fellow travelers along the Way to the Kingdom. Its pages present in-depth studies and thoughtful exhortations, as well as lighter meditations and musings. The subject matter is wide-ranging: practical issues of life in the Truth, Bible exposition, biographical sketches, reflections on today’s world, personal viewpoints, and much more. 305 pages, illustrated; $9.00 USD

On the Way: Bible Studies, Exhortations, Meditations and Musings, by George Booker
Insights, reflections, practical issues, difficult passages, personal observations and more to uplift and encourage all those “on the Way” whether young or old in the Truth. $9.00 US (309 pages).

The Ecclesia at Ephesus, by Ryan Mutter
Studying the Ecclesia at Ephesus provides powerful lessons in spiritual growth relevant in today’s times. $9.00 US (soft cover, 264 pages, with color maps).

Bible Guidelines for a Happy Marriage, by John C. Bilello
Sound, proactive, Biblical advice on how to build and maintain a happy marriage. $6.00 US (soft cover, 127 pages).

The Creation Text: Studies in Early Genesis, by David Levin
Forty-nine studies offer fresh insights into early Genesis by examining the text and structure of the first five chapters. $12.00 US (364 pages).

My Journey in Faith, by Ronald Hicks
A brother shares his life experience in the Truth with Christadelphians around the world, and the joy of mission work. Special price: reduced from $10.00 to $5.00 US (372 pages).

Pictures of Redemption, by George Booker
Explores parables, analogies, and figures of speech used in Scripture to illustrate the many facets of redemption. $6.00 US (soft cover, 192 pages).

The Whole Armor of God, by Ryan Mutter
This story takes place nearly 3,000 years ago, but the spiritual challenges are familiar to today’s young people. $6.00 US (110 pages).

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Brief Note on the Current State of Reunion

Since the notice, in *The Tidings* of January 2015, of the Commendation Letter (CL) between some Unamended ecclesias in Ontario and elsewhere, and 12 Amended ecclesias in Ontario, there has continued to be tension, with many letters circulated by e-mail. This development was partially anticipated, as we acknowledged at the time of publishing the notice, “the confusion over fellowship in Ontario will not end with the publication of this Commendation Letter.” Unfortunately, some of this confusion appears to be spreading, with a few ecclesias communicating their decisions to refuse fellowship to all participants of the CL and also those Amended ecclesias who recognize it.

There have been a few positive developments, but the unfortunate cessation of the Ontario Conference Series (OCS), in which the majority of the Ontario ecclesias participated, has led to several other efforts to solve the various concerns expressed. There have been several recent meetings, both private and with larger groups, and a tentative consensus appears to have emerged:

1) First, the commendation process used, although founded on long-proven precedents in our community, has not yet produced the wide acceptance as hoped for within the Amended community. On the other hand, two of the four OCS ecclesias have accepted the commendation and there has been some success with those Unamended ecclesias that have indicated they share common beliefs with the Amended community over the areas that have historically divided us (e.g., resurrectional responsibility).

2) Second, it has been unhelpful and inconsistent with Central fellowship practice for Amended ecclesias to discontinue fellowshipping the Commending ecclesias and the other Central ecclesias that have accepted the commendation. These ecclesias have long been part of and remain part of the Central community. At present, the committees of the major fraternal magazines of the Central community (*The Christadelphian*, *The Tidings*, and *The Lampstand*) do not consider it appropriate for ecclesias to take such unilateral block-disfellowship actions regarding long-standing Central ecclesias.

3) Lastly, some of the ecclesias involved have provided concise assurances that are especially encouraging.¹ We hope that these assurances, if perhaps further explained and accompanied by a better-defined path towards the agreed upon end state, will result in acceptance, not only by the local ecclesias, but by all
BOSTON, MA

We are sad to announce that after a long illness, Bro. Jack Warner fell asleep in Christ on September 3, 2015. He was 86 years old. Bro. Jack was a dedicated servant of the Lord Jesus Christ and the Boston Ecclesia. He was baptized into the saving name of Jesus Christ on November 4, 1953, and remained an active member of the Christadelphian family in almost every capacity. Whether it was as an arranging, assistance and examining board member, or an exhorter, a presider, a Sunday school teacher, an outreach leader and so much more, he worked right up until the last couple of years when illness precluded him from continuing. Bro. Jack sleeps now with his wife, Sis. Alicia, resting in the sure hope of the resurrection at our Lord’s return.

Jim Sullivan

HONESDALE, PA

Bro. David Stiles and his wife, Sis. Connie, visited us on September 27, 2015, all the way from the Meriden, CT Ecclesia. Bro. David gave us a wonderful exhortation during our memorial service and a great Holy Bible study afterwards. Our sisters hosted a very tasty luncheon where we were able to enjoy our fellowship.

Stephen J. DeMarco

SAN DIEGO COUNTY, CA

We thankfully report the baptism on August 30, 2015 of NATHANIEL TUNNELL, son of Bro. Owen and Sis. Jolie Tunnell, and on September 12, 2015 of ALISE STICKNEY, daughter of Bro. Mike and Sis. Myra Stickney. Both have grown up in our Sunday School and CYC. We rejoice with their respective families, praise our Father that His Word is still at work, and offer our prayers for these young people as they begin their journey with us in the Lord.

By way of transfer from the Simi Hills Ecclesia, we welcome as members, Bro. Aidan Smith, who relocated here in January to pursue training, and his parents, Bro. Geoff and Sis. Brenda Lee Smith who recently relocated here in connection with employment. We also welcome Bro. Ramin Hatami, originally of Afghanistan and more recently of Turkey. He relocated here in January. In addition, we are happy to welcome as a member of our ecclesia, Bro. John McColl, who has relocated to our area from the Seattle, WA Ecclesia.

Our ecclesia joined in sorrow with the parents and family on the tragic loss of Vanessa Owen who died at age thirty-eight on April 4, 2015. We pray for God’s healing for

The Tidings Publishing Committee

Notes:
1. The Unity Communications Committee (UCC) of the Commended and Commending ecclesias recently stated, “It is the intent of the Commendation Letter (CL) process to welcome in Fellowship Unamended Ecclesias that confirm their agreement with the CL, dated September 3, 2014 (see http://unitycl.org/). The CL recognizes that the BASF is the basis of inter-ecclesial fellowship for the resulting world-wide Christadelphian Community.”
Bro. Martin Owen, Sis. Becky Owen, Sis. Kathy Owen, and family. We also mourn the loss of Bro. Floyd Elsas of Santa Barbara, CA who was father, grandfather and great grandfather to members of our ecclesial family.

We recently became aware in July of a refugee family that was placed in our area. Bro. Alulu Kashindi and Sis. Noella Tabisengwa were originally from the Democratic Republic of Congo, but spent approximately 15 years in a refugee camp. They arrived in San Diego in May 2015, with their five children. There are many challenges for them and also for our ecclesia as we attempt to be of help. We welcome any advice from other ecclesias dealing with similar opportunities.

We appreciate the various visiting speakers who encourage us by way of exhortation.

We are currently conducting a six-week “Learn to Read the Bible” series, and we have a continuing class with an interested couple from the Fall 2014 seminar. We praise God for allowing us these opportunities to share the gospel.

Kent Ellis

SARASOTA, FL

The sympathy of the Sarasota, FL Ecclesia is extended to Sis. Pat Souder on the falling asleep in the Lord Jesus Christ, on October 4, 2015, of her husband, Bro. Howard Souder.

Bro. Howard served this ecclesia faithfully for a number of years, including in the positions of recording brother, treasurer, and arranging brother. He also served for a number of years on the Florida Bible School committee. He set an example of diligence in the positions he held, guided by a great love for Christ and the brotherhood. He served his Master until only a few months ago, when due to his illness, he could no longer continue in those positions. He faced his final illness with courage and dignity, confident in the great hope we all share.

Amazingly, or perhaps not so amazingly, Howard found the strength, with a great deal of help from Pat, to attend Memorial service less than a month before falling asleep. Our condolences also go to his daughters, grandchildren and great grandchildren.

James L Wilkinson

News correction: In the September Norfolk, VA news Bro. Jason Henderson's baptism was in September 2011, and Bro. George Rams name was incorrectly given as Lams.

Sarasota Ecclesia Begins

We [Detroit, MI] have been very sorry to lose bro. and sis. F. Gulbe and bro. and sis. W. S. Thomas, who have moved to Sarasota, Florida. With a few others already living there, they meet together regularly to encourage each other, to remember the Master, and to maintain a lightstand for the Truth. They would be very happy to have the company of any visiting in that area. (The Berean, June 1950 p 189)

SARASOTA, Florida, U.S.A.—We are happy to announce that here in this corner of God's vineyard there is a Christadelphian ecclesia meeting regularly to study the Word and keep in memory the death and resurrection of our Lord. We shall be very glad to welcome all in our fellowship. Please send all communications to Fred Gulbe (Rec. Bro.), (The Berean, July 1950).
Steering wheel or spare tire?

Holocaust survivor Corrie Ten Boom once asked the question, “Is prayer your steering wheel or your spare tire?” Do we steer our life by trusting in God? Do we pray about our daily duties and challenges or is prayer only for emergencies? Some pray only when in danger and forget about God when things are going well. During the war there was a saying that there are no atheists in the fox holes. Do we look to God for help when there are no other options, but then ignore Him once the crisis has past?

Truly God is our refuge and strength in time of trouble and He does hear prayer. James tells us, “The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.” David said, “In my distress I called upon the LORD, and cried to my God: and he did hear my voice out of his temple, and my cry did enter into his ears.” However our Heavenly Father should not be merely an emergency lifeline but be our Father all the time, not just when we are in trouble. The prophet Micah tells of people who hate the good and love the evil, and that “Then they will cry to the LORD, but he will not listen to them. In fact, he will hide his face from them at that time, because they were so wicked in what they were doing.” If we don't put God first using prayer as our steering wheel, we may find our spare tire flat when we go to use prayer in an emergency.

There are billions of people on earth today who never ever think about God. They would never think to pray, and should the thought occur to them, God might not be listening because of their godless way of life. There are many who only think about Him when in trouble or in danger. These are the ones who consider Him their spare tire, good in emergencies; but not for much else, and who would be surprised to know that God may not be listening to their prayer because of their lack of interest in Him. There also are some who do think about God more regularly and go to church on Sundays, but He does not have a high priority in their lives; religion is just one of a number of interests that they maintain. God expects more.

There are few who realize that God needs to be number one in their life and that they need to love Him with all their heart. God will not play second fiddle. He is either number one or we are failing Him. We need to steer our thoughts and actions towards focusing on God. We all have troubles and concerns about daily needs, but these should not be our priority. Jesus tells us in what has become known as the Sermon on the Mount to “Seek first the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added unto you.” If our love for God steers our life, then the other cares will fall into line.

How do we make God number one in our lives? Jesus says that we must, but how do we do it? It is not easy. Jesus tells us, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with thy soul, and with all thy mind.” Jesus was quoting Moses who told the children of Israel, “And now, Israel, what doth the LORD thy God require
of thee, but to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul.” The children of Israel had witnessed God dividing the waters of the Red Sea and had walked safely through it to escape the Egyptians. They also were fed every day with manna, their thirst was quenched by water from a rock, and they saw the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai. These people had good reasons and daily reminders of the power of God in their lives, and it should have been easy for them to love God. Yet, out of the millions who left Egypt, only Joshua and Caleb entered the Promised Land. Obviously many did not love God the way Moses had commanded them to do—they did not love Him with all their hearts.

We have not witnessed the miracles God did for Israel but we know about them through the divine record in the Bible. We are seeing the hand of God shaping the nations today in preparation for the return of Christ. We also know that God loves us. He has not only given us this beautiful world to live in, but because of the sacrifice of Jesus He has given us the opportunity for eternal life through faith and obedience to His Word. We can have all our sins forgiven. God has called us from a world headed to certain death, and asks us to love Him and His Son who gave his life for us so that we can have life. We should be so full of thankfulness for the goodness that God has shown us, and the love He has for us that we feel an overflowing love for God and a burning desire to please Him. Our love for God will grow as we think about what He has done for us. We should humbly and gratefully make God the center of our life and praise and thank Him using prayer as our steering wheel to guide our steps in His service.

How comforting to know, not just think but know, that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are the called according to His purpose. The apostle Paul asks, “What shall we say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?” Paul continues, “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?”

Let us, like Paul, steer our lives every step of the way towards living a life of godliness so we, with Paul, can say, “I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Robert J. Lloyd

Note on Rom 5:38. All Paul sought to do was to show that whatever the influences, personal or impersonal, which operate in the Christian’s life, these are subject to ultimate Divine control. All things work out for the good, for the salvation, of those who are called according to God’s purpose, and the assurance of victory lies both in God’s power and in God’s love. His theme is that “if God be for us, who can be against us?” The Christadelphian, 1961, p. 366.
NOVEMBER, 2015

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

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

14-15 Mississauga West, ON Study weekend with Bro. David Levin (Baltimore, MD) on “The Many Facets of Resurrection”. Begins Saturday at 10:30am. Classes on Saturday are “Resurrection as History: The Challenge and Value of an Empirical Basis of Faith”; “Resurrection as Worldview: The Bible’s Ultimate Statement”; “Resurrection as Basis of Preaching: The Use of Resurrection in the First Century”. Sunday begin at 9:30am. Talk titles are “Resurrection as the Basis of Character Development and Spiritual Growth” and “Resurrection the Basis of Exhortation”. Contact John Mannell jwmannell@gmail.com.

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

20-22 Washington, DC Family Bible Study weekend at Camp Hashawha, 300 John Owings Rd, Westminster, MD 21158. Our speaker will be Bro. Ryan King (Richmond Petersburg, VA) on “Jeremiah & His Friends”. Everyone must register. Registration deadline is November 3rd. Forms available on hopeofthekingdom.com or contact Bro. Ken Green, 14006 Barkham Court, Laurel, MD 20707; phone: 443-497-3497 or e-mail Hashawha@gmail.com. (Please note this is a week earlier than previous years when it was the Thanksgiving weekend.)

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 website www.ontariowinterbibleschool.com.

FEBRUARY, 2016

6 Brantford, ON Annual Junior CYC & Little Disciples Winter Gathering at Camp Trillium. Workbooks will be posted toward the end of the year on www.brantfordchristadelphians.com. 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 with seven different pools on the premises, each one fed by natural hot springs at temperatures varying from 86 degrees
to 106 degrees. 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.
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 or 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 that 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
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, nd 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)
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 protagonist 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

Chicago, Ill Ecclesia

“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. (1Cor 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 φανερόω, or phanerosis, which of course is the title of John Thomas’ book.

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 Adam

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.

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 Naioth 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 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 we 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).
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 supremacists 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
Horrific 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 probably 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 oft 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 quests 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 30,000 Jews live in Berlin. This seems like a large number, but it a vastly diminished number from a pre-war high of about 160,000.

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 Stolpersteine (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.”

**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. 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.

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.

**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 “intellergencia” 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. 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.” 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 intellergencia are feeling free to openly criticize Israel and unfortunately are wandering into dangerous anti-Semitic territory.

(To Be Continued).

Glen Lea (Berlin, Germany)

Notes:
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.
6. 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.
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.
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 Aratus'. 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.

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.
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
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?

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 Thisisyournbible.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, Wynntr 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.

Bro. Justin and Sis. Abi Keene
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.

Regrettably 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.thisisyoubible.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, Shannan 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 Moler (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 (Thousand 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 (Westport, CA). 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!

We were pleased to welcome 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 ECCLEZIA — 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

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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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