

The Christadelphian Tidings

of the Kingdom of God

Teaching Through
Experience

The New Testament
Church: The Ethos of
The Church

Who Is Jesus'
Beloved Disciple?

Our Message and
Our Young People

What Does the
Bible Say About
Resurrection?

Was Jesus' Nature
'Immaculate'?

Jonathan the Faithful
Prince: The Feast of
the New Moon

Reflection:
My Grandpa

The Most
Boring Chapter
in the Bible

The First
'Minute Meditation'

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Our Message and Our Young People

Public lectures, Etc.

For the past few years, my ecclesia has, every month or so, put on public lectures at various venues in the area, in order to present the Gospel message to the local region. We have selected a variety of public locations in the nearby towns, mostly libraries or community centers, and promoted them by various means, but lately relying on both direct mail and notifying all our contacts.

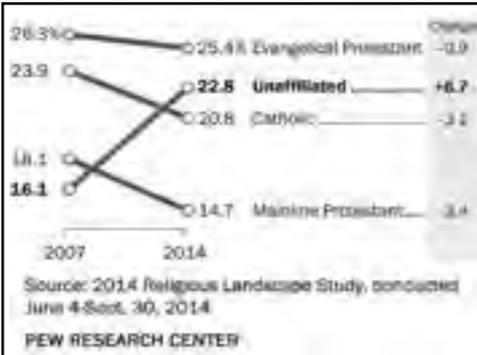
Looking back on these efforts, and other public activities over the decades, some themes are fairly clear:

- Overall, the public's response is quite limited.
- A topic like "Learn to Read the Bible" still has some appeal.
- Basic topics like "Does God still exist" etc. call forth almost no response.
- Significant interest has been shown in two areas
 - Prophecy – what does the Bible say about the current turmoil?
 - How archeology demonstrates the truth of the Bible.

However, even then the response has been limited — although we are spreading the true gospel message, this does not appear to resonate.

We have looked at preaching before, specifically in the Special Issue in 2011, and an editorial in May, 2013. It was clear some ecclesias and some individuals have seen quite a few who respond, but it is also obvious that many ecclesias see little response, even those that engage in major outreaches.

However, even though the response by the public to our message is not strong,



our community in North America appears to be growing, if only very slowly. In this it differs from the situation in the UK, where the Christadelphian community is shrinking by about 100 (over 1%) per year. This is also true of most Christian denominations, in the USA, as shown alongside. So the question to us is to why this is happening, and what can we do to improve the situation?

Positive factors — our young

There is no doubt, at least to my mind, that the major reason for any growth of our community is our success in retaining our young, who grow up in our Sunday schools. We, as a community, have had little success in retaining those

who attend Sunday school simply because they are in the neighborhood, as can be seen by the limited success of several ecclesias who have made this outreach. The retention of our own young people is, I believe, due to several factors (in no particular order):

- We are fortunate, in that in most areas of North America, around 70% claim some sort of Christian affiliation. So, our communities are often generally supportive of Christianity, even though they might think some of our beliefs are unconventional and our lifestyles are too restrictive.
- The normal tendency of children to follow in the footsteps of their parents
- The proliferation of Bible Schools throughout the continent.
- Likewise, weekends and special events for the youth of our community.
- The modern age with its ease of transportation, smart phones, video communication etc. has made the maintenance and development of relationships much easier.
- The strong message we promote to marry within our community.
- The emphasis on teaching our children from the Bible in our Sunday schools. Whether this is strong enough is another question.
- Very rarely do our young people seriously question their (or our community's) fundamental doctrines. Although it is perhaps inevitable for sometimes difficult questions to be asked, rarely do our basic beliefs get seriously challenged.

Negative factors

This retention is also negatively impacted by several factors. Some of these are drawn from a recent survey on reasons for leaving our community, which was dominated by responses from Australia and the UK.

- Our internal doctrinal and fellowship disputes.
- Unfortunately, many in North America belong to fairly small ecclesias, which are often dominated by extended families. So, somewhat naturally, apparent cliques form, which are perhaps unknowingly off-putting to other members.
- Some ecclesias are positively hostile when our young form a relationship with anyone outside our community.
- We all acknowledge marriage within our community is the best prescription for a stable, Christ-filled relationship. But how we handle what happens when this ideal is not followed can lead to the individuals affected leaving our community.
- Sometimes our community can appear to be narrow, judgmental, self-centered and not at all Christ-like, at least to our young people.
- I was somewhat surprised, but the survey reported that over half of those who felt dissatisfied by our community believed we harbored racist attitudes.
- There is a tendency for some speakers to address areas outside their competence (e.g., physics, biology, and archeology) seemingly without

recognizing the limitations of their background. If the young hearing them have knowledge in these areas, this can lead to the questioning of other areas of our teachings.

Potential improvements

In order to improve our retention, perhaps we can focus on several areas

- We should be careful, in all our activities, to ensure we are inclusive in all our activities. Nothing is worse to the young than a feeling of being an outsider.
- All ecclesias should do their level best to ensure their young people get the opportunity to attend at least one Bible School and Youth Gathering. Cost or transportation problems should not be an impediment: there is generally someone else going in that direction, and ecclesias etc. should be happy to reasonably assist with costs involved.
- Even if we have internal disputes, we must all acknowledge the gulf between our beliefs and those of the larger communities around us. To expose or affect our young people, and especially their gatherings, to our problems should be unacceptable.
- We should be careful in our conversations and correspondence to reflect the spirit of Christ: we might disagree, but should always strive to reflect that spirit, especially when the young are involved or might hear us.
- Our attitude to everyone should reflect the universal appeal of the gospel to all races and socioeconomic classes, and we should be mindful to convey a message of inclusivity of all groups in our addresses, lectures, and activities (e.g., PowerPoint presentations can have pictures of people from different backgrounds).
- We should be aware of the complexities and temptations of youth and nurture an atmosphere where young people who are genuinely seeking to follow the example of the Lord Jesus Christ can receive support and help with their struggles without fear of condemnation and rejection.
- In all things we should reflect the love and forgiveness of our Lord Jesus Christ, who healed the sick, comforted the poor, and dealt kindly with people like the Samaritan woman, who was of a race ostracized by the Jews, and also of an uncertain moral status.

So, until our Lord returns to cure the world of all its problems, we should ensure that our young people indeed grow up in our nurture and are encouraged to continue to seek after our Lord Jesus Christ with us.

“... put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all. Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience... Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity” (Col 3:10-14 NIV).

Peter Hemingray

I Will Never Leave Thee

We live in “Times of Trouble” and things are only getting worse. We live in a world full of evil and consumed by evil. We live in a world filled with man-made problems that can’t be solved. Our world is a mess.

The terrible things we see in the news, watch on TV, and read on the Internet remind us this is how the world would be just before Christ returns. Daniel said it would be *“a time of trouble such as never was”*. Jesus said *“Men’s hearts would be failing them for fear”*.

But... political turmoil, famines, disease, wars, droughts, global warming, water shortages, pollution, extinctions, etc...should not unduly concern us. As believers, what we should pay attention to are the words of the Bible written about the time in which we are now living.

Jesus said *“When the son of man returns, shall he find faith on the earth”*? How healthy are our ecclesias? Are they disappearing? Are our Bible classes empty? Are we preaching?

Are we “Forsaking the assembling of ourselves together”?

The word “Forsake” used in this passage means to “leave behind, to desert, to leave helpless, to leave in a lurch.” In my grandfather’s generation, they had huge presses that required four or more people to operate. If one person on the crew was missing, the machine could not run. Jesus said this is what the last day ecclesias would face. Perhaps we never realized that our leaving an ecclesia could cripple a part of Christ’s body. But our Lord saw our day and knew it could!

The danger I see is that when we become distressed by the problems outside, we forget we’re in God’s care and that we are witnessing God’s active hand. It is similar to being an Israelite watching the Father’s dealings with Pharaoh. But if our faith is already weak, if ecclesia problems are weighing us down, if we allow the outside world to collide with our ecclesial world, then the resulting despair can drive away disciples.

The first thing we need to remind ourselves is that God is in control. Everything in our world was described thousands of years ago. Seeing challenges in the world around us happen shouldn’t distress us but rather bring us confidence. They should re-assure us that Christ’s return is near! We stand with the Father, who will fix these things. We need to remember that the very hopelessness of the world will turn some outsiders to Christ in the end. At funerals, we sometimes quote Paul, who wrote: *“We should not sorrow as others who lose a loved one, because those in Christ have Hope”*. Using that mindset, we should not unduly sorrow over the condition of the world. Our hope is not grounded in this world but in the second coming of Christ.

We can't lose confidence in God. God is clearly in control. When we look at all the prophecies written 2000-3000 years ago being fulfilled now, in our lifetimes, we should see God's hand at work.

Ahaz

If we don't believe the Father will see us through all difficulties, we are headed in a fatal direction. Think of King Ahaz. He was fearful. His mortal enemies were Rezin King of Assyria and Pekah, son of Remaliah (Isa 7:4). God told Ahaz he would deliver him from the troubles he faced from these two powers. God's assurance can't be any stronger than these words about the plans of Rezin and Pekah:

"This is what the Lord Yahweh says: "It shall not stand, neither shall it happen" (Isa 7:7 WEB').

So what did happen? Ahaz refused to believe in God. Ahaz wanted nothing to do with God. Ahaz took matters into his own hands. Despite God's warning: **"If you will not believe, surely you shall not be established"** (Isa 7:9 WEB).

Trust in God and live. Don't believe and die. Ahaz's worst fears came true. We can read for ourselves what happened and the cause:

"Wherefore the LORD his God delivered him into the hand of the king of Syria; and they smote him, and carried away a great multitude of them captives, and brought them to Damascus. And he was also delivered into the hand of the king of Israel, who smote him with a great slaughter. For Pekah the son of Remaliah slew in Judah an hundred and twenty thousand in one day, which were all valiant men; because they had forsaken the LORD God of their fathers" (2Chron 28:5-6).

Ahaz refused to turn to God. He deserted God. It is nearly the Hebrew equivalent to the Greek word "Forsake" that Paul used of believers forsaking the ecclesia and body of Christ!

We can learn from the mistake of Ahaz.

Another reason believers might turn from God again involves a lack of belief. This also can happen when we don't think we're worthy and when we don't think we can be forgiven.

The throne

When Queen Esther went before King Ahasuerus to plead for her people, she was so fearful of approaching his throne that she asked all the Jews in Shushan to fast for three days and three nights. She knew if the king did not extend his scepter towards her, she would be killed. And this king loved Esther more than all the women that had been brought to him. Yet Ahasuerus reigned on a throne where he was greatly feared.

Hebrews

Now let's turn to the book of Hebrews.

“Let us therefore draw near with boldness to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy, and may find grace for help in time of need” (Heb 4:16).

Our Father rules on a throne of grace and mercy. It is approachable. At this place we find mercy and help when we need it most! God can and will forgive us. Why would we doubt this?

“But God commends his own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom 5:8).

Even when we were sinners, God’s desire was and is to turn us around and bring us back.

Five times in Scripture God says *“I will not leave thee nor forsake thee”*. This may be the most important of the promises God made to us. These are the only 5 occurrences where this phrase occurs:

- Jacob running for his life from Esau towards the land of Haran.
- To Israel before entering the Promised Land.
- To Joshua after Moses died.
- To Solomon just before David died.
- To us; *“I will never leave thee or forsake thee”* (Heb 13:5).

The Greek used in bullet five is worthy of note. The literal translation is:

“I will never, never let go of your hand; I will never, never forsake you”.

The Father “doubles” the assurance made to us. It is established from the LORD to us!

Understanding this simple promise should give us confidence. How could we contemplate leaving Him to enter a world where we are all alone?

Tightly incorporated in this great promise is the lesson of being content with what we have. *“Be free from the love of money and pleased with the things which you have;” (Heb 13:5 WEB)*. The implication is that the gathering and collecting of “Things, Possessions, Merchandise” of the world separates us from our trust in the Father. This “stuff” as Jesus puts it (Luke 17:31), weakens us. It clouds our vision of what is important, it keeps us joined to a world that is going away.

Jesus says to *“Strive to enter in by the narrow door, for many, I tell you, will seek to enter in, and will not be able...” (Luke 13:24 WEB)*. The word “strive” means “to contend, like a gymnast, to fight adversaries, to have a strenuous zeal.” We need to fight against all the things that pull us away from God’s service.

Are we clinging to God? Are we holding onto Him as much as He is holding onto us? Jude, the half-brother of Jesus writes:

“Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy” (Jude 24).

If we dissect the beginning of Hebrew 12, it’s all there. The first three verses speak volumes;

“Therefore let us also, seeing we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, lay aside every weight and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us” (Heb 12:1 WEB).

We are not alone. We are in this race together. We need to lay aside the distractions of the world and run towards God.

“looking to Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising its shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Heb 12:2 WEB).

This word “Looking” means “to have your eyes fixed on just one thing.” It gives the sense of a bird of prey focused, locked onto just one thing.

“For consider him who has endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, that you don’t grow weary, fainting in your souls” (Heb 12:3 WEB).

We must be persistent. We must never, never let go of our grip to the Father.

You may have seen one last connection between the previous passage in Jude and this passage in Heb 12:2

YOU are the Joy that allowed Jesus to endure the cross.

The vision he saw was presenting us to his Father blameless, without the spot of sin, without fault. This vision of saving us allowed him to endure.

The vision of us standing before our creator, standing next to His son on that great day, should keep us striving to keep ourselves strong, our brothers and sisters united, our ecclesias healthy.

Steve Cheetham (Moorestown, NJ)

Notes:

1. WEB: World English Bible, is a Public Domain updated revision of the American Standard Version (1901).

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
41st annual Church of God of the Abrahamic Faith Gathering
at Denison University in Granville, Ohio, July 25-31, 2016.

Bro. Kyle Tucker: “A Study in First-Century Christianity”

Bro. Todd Fazekas: “The Lord Saves”

Bro. David Styles: “The Forgotten Stories: Lessons from the End of Judges”

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.

First Principles

Hope, (11) Resurrection

Resurrection is the beginning of eternal life

The transformation of a caterpillar into a Monarch butterfly is nothing short of a miracle. God created caterpillars to live for just a few weeks as they eat constantly and grow stronger. The caterpillar then envelops itself in a self-made silk cocoon (pupa) and basically hibernates for 10-14 days as it undergoes a dramatic metamorphosis. Eventually a beautiful butterfly emerges, which is naturally immune to its main food — poisonous milkweed leaves. The Monarch varies in its life expectancy, with some butterflies migrating up to 2,000 miles in North America. Most interestingly, recent research has shown that some butterflies actually remember some parts of their life as a caterpillar, as measured by smelling tests! This may be our spiritual key to why God made these creatures and what we can learn from them.



Christians have correctly compared the transformation of a caterpillar into a butterfly as similar to death and resurrection. Like a caterpillar, disciples of Christ spend their entire lives working and living in preparation for a future life. The present time is temporal, short-term, and focused on a better life to come. Like a caterpillar in a cocoon, believers become “*asleep in Christ*” (1Cor 15:6, 18; 1Thess 4:13-15; 2Pet 3:4) at death and unconsciously wait for the resurrection (John 5:21-23; Phil 3:20-21). Their labors are finished and each awaits the next step in their life cycle. Upon awakening, Monarch butterflies get to work, only this time in a glorified body and with an innate mission. They faintly recall some aspects of their prior existence, but focus on their new life. In a similar way, people who are resurrected and glorified will find themselves in a new world, with a heightened focus on the things of God. Those who are counted as worthy will partake in all of the promises and blessings as new creatures (2Cor 5:17; Rom 6:4). May each of us live to be like a butterfly in the Kingdom of God. But first, we must understand what to expect with our own resurrection.

Bible examples of resurrection

During Jesus’ ministry, a group called the Sadducees ruled as priests. These leaders were known for their riches and corruption, as well as for their lack

of belief in angels or resurrection. They approached Jesus and challenged him with a hypothetical example intended to disprove the resurrection and Jesus' teaching. They wanted Jesus to answer a trick question about resurrection and asked what would happen when one woman was married seven times. Which man would she be married to when resurrected? This turned out to be an easy test for Jesus as he said, *"You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God. At the resurrection people will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven"* (Matt 22:29-30). Jesus knew their hearts and questions about resurrection, and he knows ours as well.

There are more than ten examples of people who were resurrected in Scripture. Elijah and Elisha both raised boys from the dead, and another dead man rose after touching Elisha's bones (1Kgs 17:19-23; 2Kgs 4:32-35; 2Kgs 13:20-21). Peter raised faithful Tabitha (Acts 9:37-41) and Paul raised the young man, Eutychus (Acts 20:9-12). Jesus raised the most people from the dead. In mercy, he raised the daughter of Jairus, a desperate synagogue official (Luke 8:41-54). Another time, Jesus raised a young man being carried on the way to his burial (Luke 7:12-15). One famous example is when Jesus raised his friend, Lazarus, after he was in a tomb for four days (John 11). That's when Jesus affirmed his teaching and authority regarding resurrection:

"Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this? She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world" (John 11:24-27).

Other examples of resurrection are the Lord himself and the "many saints" raised after his resurrection (Matt 27:52-53).

Who will be resurrected?

No one knows, specifically, who will be resurrected and judged by Jesus. But we do have enough Biblical evidence to have a good understanding. Every person since creation will not be resurrected. In the book of Daniel it says, *"And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt (Dan 12:2)*. Jesus taught that the resurrection is something to which believers attain, and not something that is guaranteed for all (Luke 20:35; Rev 20:6). Many reasons why people will be resurrected and appear in judgement are provided in the Bible. Paul confirmed that all dead, faithful, baptized believers would be resurrected and after judgment given glorified bodies. We know others, but not all, will be resurrected and judged according to their beliefs and actions. We must seek after Jesus so as to become like him eternally.

What is a resurrected body like?

In the first century Christian church, people asked basic questions about resurrection. They didn't know all of the answers. Some mistakenly thought

that the resurrection was already past tense and ended (2Tim 2:18). Some former priests still held to the false belief that there is no resurrection at all (1Cor 15:12; Acts 23:8; Acts 6:7). Paul spent considerable effort correcting wrong doctrine in what is known as the resurrection chapter (1Cor 15). He told the Corinthians that a resurrected body is a glorified body. *“It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body”* (1Cor 15:44). *“For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality”* (1Cor 15:53).

When Jesus was resurrected, he was made a partaker of the Divine nature. Before he had ascended to his father (John 20:17), Jesus was able to supersede normal laws of time and space. When his disciples were in a closed room, Jesus appeared out of



nowhere to be among them (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 know that Jesus also visibly ascended to heaven forty days after his resurrection. No longer was Jesus' body perishable, but it was made immortal. Paul added that Jesus *“will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body”* (Phil 3:21).

Where and when will the resurrection occur?

When Jesus returns to the earth, faithful and unfaithful saints will be gathered together from the four corners of the earth to meet him.

“For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always be with the Lord” (1Thess 4:16-17 NASV).

While the details are still fuzzy – Paul says we see in a mirror dimly (1Cor 13:12) — we've already established that the reward for all faithful is eternal life on earth. When Jesus died, the gospel of Matthew records that many dead people were resurrected. They walked out of their tombs and appeared to many people in Jerusalem. While these faithful people were not glorified with immortality, their resurrection is an example for the manner in which they were raised. They were resurrected in the location where they were buried. They were recognized by

others who had known them before. They were all resurrected at the same time. The timing coincided with Jesus' glorious revival. This is our hope as well, that if we have fallen asleep (died), then we will be resurrected and given immortality by the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

May we share the vision and hope that Paul expressed when he said, *"that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings, being conformed to his death; in order that I may attain to the resurrection of the dead"* (Phil 3:10-11).

"Let the resurrection joy lift us from loneliness and weakness and despair to strength and beauty and happiness." Floyd W. Tomkins

"We live and die; Christ died and lived!" John Stott

"Your dead will live; their corpses will rise. You who lie in the dust awake and shout for joy" (Isa 26:19).

The Bible says:

- There will be a resurrection from the dead. 1Cor 15; Dan 12:2; Isa 26:19
- There are requirements to be resurrected. Rom 6:3-5; Luke 20:35; Mark 16:16
- Faithful resurrected people will be judged and given immortality. Matt 25:34-40; John 5:21-23; Col 3:4

Chicago, IL Ecclesia

Doctrines to Be Rejected (8) Christ's Nature

Doctrine to Be Rejected # 5: *"That Christ's nature was immaculate"*.

Introduction

This is the second of the numbered doctrines that was added by Robert Roberts after the first statement, which was written sometime before 1871. The Doctrine to be rejected is #5 in the 1883 edition: **That Christ's nature was immaculate**". In common with #4, **That Christ was born with a "free life"**, it is also hard to understand in the 21st Century. Also in common with #4, it had its roots in the controversy generated by Edward Turney, as we discussed last month.

This doctrine to be rejected can be restated in a positive way:

Through his birth, Christ inherited a nature sin-affected, and destined to death, being mortal, as are all others

"Immaculate"

The major problem with this phrase is that, in normal usage, the word "immaculate" is largely used of a person's dress or behavior. From a dictionary you find it defined in such terms as:

1. Completely clean; extremely tidy, such as "his clothes were immaculate"
2. Completely flawless, etc., such as "an immaculate rendering of the symphony"

3. Morally pure; free from sin or corruption, such as “immaculate conception”
4. Biology: of only one color, with no spots or markings

However, if you hunt through Christadelphian literature, it is almost always the third definition that applies.

Robert Roberts, during the heart of the dispute, wrote about one of the questions put to him by Edward Turney:

QUESTION 32. — If Jesus was neither a sinner by constitution nor an actual transgressor, in other words, if free from sin, was he not therefore **immaculate**?

Answer. — This question is founded on premises not conceded in the foregoing answers. **Jesus certainly was not immaculate**, if by that is meant incorruptible in nature; or, a nature free from impulses in a sinful direction. He was not an actual transgressor. All the desires of the Adamic nature, which he had in common with ourselves, were kept in absolute subordination to the Father’s will. But he partook of the flesh of sin (English version — sinful flesh); and if this is what is meant by “a sinner by constitution,” then he was a sinner by constitution. His mission required that he should be in the nature of the transgressing race. The blood of bulls and goats could not take away sin, because they had nothing to do with the transgression. The nature of angels had nothing to do with the transgression. Therefore, ‘he took not on him the nature of angels;’ but the seed of Abraham was of a transgressing and condemned nature. Therefore, he took on him the seed of Abraham, and was made, in all things, like unto his brethren (Heb 2:17)”¹

In this he was only reflecting the views of John Thomas before him, for in 1856 Bro. Thomas wrote:

“But if the human nature of Christ were **immaculate** (excuse the phrase, O reader, for since the Fall we know not of an **immaculate** human nature) then God did not ‘send Jesus in the likeness of sinful flesh’; he did not ‘take hold of the seed of Abraham’; he did not ‘become sin for us’; ‘sin’ was not ‘condemned in the flesh’; and ‘our sins’ were not ‘borne in his body upon the tree’. These things could not have been accomplished in a nature destitute of that physical principle styled ‘sin in the flesh’. Decree the immaculateness of the body prepared for the Spirit, Psa 40:6, Heb 10:5, and the ‘Mystery of Christ’ is destroyed, and the gospel of the kingdom ceases to be the power of God for salvation to those that believe it.”²

False teaching — its ancient origin

The false teaching about this matter goes back to the 5th century, to the Council of Chalcedon, which was a church council held from October 8 to November 1, AD 451, at Chalcedon (a city of Bithynia in Asia Minor). The judgements and definitions of divine nature issued by the council marked a significant turning

point in the Christological debates that led to the separate establishment of the church in the Western Roman Empire during this century.

Many Anglicans and most Protestants consider it to be the last ecumenical council. These churches, per Martin Luther, hold that both conscience and Scripture preempt doctrinal councils and generally agree that the conclusions of later councils were unsupported by or contradictory to Scripture. The Council of Chalcedon was convened by Emperor Marcian, with the reluctant approval of Pope Leo the Great, to set aside the 449 Second Council of Ephesus, which would become known as the “Latrocinium” or “Robber Council.”

The Council issued the ‘Chalcedonian Definition,’ which repudiated the notion of a single nature in Christ, and declared that he has two natures in one person and hypostasis; it also insisted on the completeness of his two natures: Godhead and manhood. His begetting by the power of the Holy Spirit gave Jesus qualities that can only be described as divine: thus, according to the Council, his nature was “immaculate”, i.e., he could not sin in any way.

The truth

Jesus was his Father’s Son, and shared many of His characteristics. He knew His Father’s will instinctively, where the rest of mankind needs to learn it, by laying “precept upon precept,” it was therefore due to his Sonship that Jesus repelled, with a ready recourse to his Father’s Word, each temptation as it arose. This unique quality that marks Jesus out as God’s Son was shown prophetically when Isaiah recorded about the Christ: *“The spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him ... and shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord” (Isa 11:2 & 3).*

Jesus had not only a closeness of relationship to his Father, born out of his unique Sonship, but *“he took on him (the nature of) the seed of Abraham” (Heb 2:16).* He was therefore both Son of God and Son of Man at one and the same time in the unity of his nature. His character displayed his unique relationship to God, but like all who are *“made of a woman, (he was) made under the law”* of sin and death (Gal 4:4). It is not helpful when attempting to understand Jesus’ nature to separate these two aspects of his being.

Jesus was a whole and complete character. He brought his closeness to God to bear upon the problems all human beings receive as sons of Adam, and overcame them. He could only do this if he truly shared these same characteristics. The established church’s view of Jesus as a divine being in an envelope of human flesh (what they define as the Incarnation) utterly fails to provide an answer to this need. Jesus’ compliance with God’s will could not have benefited the rest of mankind unless he had overcome in himself the temptation to sin, which he shared with all mankind, and which they struggle with every day of their lives.

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

Notes:

1. *The Christadelphian*, 1873, p. 322–323.
2. *Herald of the Kingdom*, 1856, p. 268.

The Joy of Sunday Schooling

Creativity Without Crafts: Teaching Through Experience

Creative teachers do not have to be craft experts. In fact, you can be a creative person without ever coming near a craft. Creativity is the ability to be original or imaginative. You may think you are not creative, when in fact you really are but just don't know it. You may ask, "How do I start those creative impulses flowing?" For me, creativity in the classroom stems from one basic principle: people remember experiences.

Therefore, if we can find something for our students to experience while they are learning, they will remember what they have learned better than if they have just heard it. When you experience something, you personally participate in it. Experience can take place through activity or through understanding something in a different way, in a different light.



Create experiences

So where does creativity come in?

We cannot take our children to the Middle East to cross the River Jordan as Joshua did. We need to create a way for our children to experience this without actually being there. Here

is where creativity comes in. Children have great imaginations, so we can use fairly simple ideas. Here was my thought process when faced with teaching a group of energetic three-year olds about Joshua:

1. What do I want the children to learn?
 - Joshua loved God. God loved Joshua. God dried up part of a river so Joshua and the Israelites could cross to the other side. The name of the river was Jordan. Joshua and the Israelites crossed the river to attack Jericho, an evil city.
2. How can the children experience the love and power of God?
 - We can cross the River Jordan as the Israelites did.
3. What are the basic characteristic of this river and this Bible story?
 - A river is blue and long, and this river needs to come apart in the middle to show how God parted the river.
4. What do I have that I can use for this?
 - Blue towels and blue cloths.

It worked beautifully! We camped out on one side of the river, God parted the river (with a little help in this case), and we crossed over to attack Jericho. Weeks later I asked one of the three-year olds if he remembered what he had learned about the River Jordan. I threw some T-shirts and jeans on the floor in a line, and he very proudly showed how God divided the river and how the Israelites passed through.

For teens, too

Experiences can be used to teach teenagers also. One week my husband and I were teaching a class of 15- to 17-year olds about a parent's responsibilities. We wanted the students to really understand what parents go through, so we decided to use an experience. We used the same thought process as outlined above.

1. What do I want the teenagers to learn?
 - Parenting is a lot of hard work. There is more to being a godly parent than we often realize.
2. How can the teens experience parenting?
 - Have them take care of children, keeping specific God-given goals in mind.
3. What basic characteristics of parenting do I want the teens to experience?
 - Parents teach their children about God. Parents use a lot of energy just keeping children under control.
4. What do I have that I can use for this?
 - Children from a younger class. The lesson plan and activity for the younger class.

The class we chose consisted of four- and five-year olds. They were learning about the book of Psalms, and their activity was an outdoor scavenger hunt for object listed in a specific psalm. After discussing the responsibilities of parents, we had each teenager take two children and act as their temporary parent. They had to teach the children about the psalm, help the children find the objects in the psalm (e.g., a rock), and finally, keep them out of the mud while they went scavenging for the objects.

Afterwards we asked the teen class how it went. Many of them said that it was difficult to keep the children under control while trying to teach them.

Although some teens felt frustrated because they thought they were not able to teach the children anything, one young girl was excited because she taught a small child about Jesus being strong like a rock.

This experience helped them understand that good parenting is harder than it looks. Learning from a firsthand perspective also made learning about God's word interesting and fun.

Teaching through experience can be enjoyable for both teachers and students. All it takes is a little bit of creativity to make a lasting impression on a student. So, be creative!

Laura Ross (Cleveland, OH)

Jonathan the Faithful Prince (20) The Feast of the New Moon

Introduction

In those last twenty four hours, Jonathan's help had been invaluable for David. The young shepherd had reached a point in his life where he was so worried and afraid of what might happen to him, that he had forgotten the future which God had promised. In those last few days, his entire world had crumbled. He had narrowly escaped being pinned to the wall with Saul's javelin; he had been forced to leave his wife by climbing out of a window in his own home; and he had seen Saul and his troops chase him to the dwelling of Samuel the prophet, even attempting to take him in the seer's presence. Running back to Gibeah, he went to one of the only other people whom he believed could bring him comfort.

Though the beginning of their interaction was rocky, Jonathan recognized David's need for support. After being convinced of the seriousness of the situation, Jonathan pledged that he would do whatever David needed him to do in order to help. Not only so, but Jonathan also powerfully brought David's mind back to God's promise by making a covenant with him. He spoke of the day when David would be king over Israel and asked him to watch over Jonathan's family when he became king. In this way, he showed David his confidence that the young man would one day reign. Though Saul sought his life, he would not be able to take it.

After the covenant was made, Jonathan and David finalized plans whereby Jonathan would be able to see Saul's intentions towards David. From that point, once the plan had been enacted, the two men would try to decide David's action based off of Saul's feelings. If he still desired to kill David, then David would have to escape. But, if Saul had relaxed and had changed his mind, then David could stay in Gibeah.

Such was where the story left off. David and Jonathan had formulated their plan, made the covenant together, and David had been strengthened by his spiritual friend. His struggle was a reminder that that even men who are giants of faith — men who are willing to do amazing acts in the name of God — still have moments in which they simply aren't sure what to do. David, though he almost consistently is an example of righteousness throughout Scripture, still had moments in which his faith wavered and he needed help. Though the characters of the Biblical record can sometimes seem to be so perfect and so much more righteous than us, David's story is an example that God has always worked with flawed humanity — and that no matter how perfect a character may seem, bar the Lord Jesus Christ, they had moments when their faith was crumbling and when they couldn't look to the future.

At the same time, Jonathan gave an excellent example of a truly spiritual friend. He lifted David's mind to God's promise and he was willing to give of himself to do whatever David needed.

As the story progresses in this article, Jonathan and David will put the plan into action, leaving David's seat empty at Saul's table during the feast of the new moon. Saul's reaction to David's absence will be exactly what David expected, and as a result, David and Jonathan will have to part ways. In a touching scene, David will go forth into the wilderness, Jonathan will go back to the city to be with his father and to selflessly spend his time with a madman, hoping to somehow have some type of influence for good.

Throughout all of this, Jonathan will once more come forth as a powerful example of a godly friend. Though Saul's envy will force the two men to part company, Jonathan will again keep his mind on the future, reminding David of his eventual kingship — but even more, of the kingdom of God, in which the two of them, by God's grace, will be together forever.

Requirements under the law

The two men had made their covenant and they had made their plan. Soon, it was time for the plan to be put into action:

“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).

Just as they had discussed, David went out and hid in the field. Jonathan, on the other hand, probably went back to his normal routine, and then prepared to eat with his father for the feast of the new moon. It was an important time of the month, and a few select individuals in Saul's court were gathering to celebrate together.

Nevertheless, this mention of “the feast of the new moon” should raise some questions — because this feast isn't one which is mentioned very often throughout the Bible. In fact, this chapter is the first place where the term “new moon”¹ is ever used in all of Scripture; as such, the feast is likely fairly unfamiliar to many of us.

Unlike some of the other feasts celebrated throughout the year, this feast is fairly intriguing, because it wasn't one of Israel's major feasts. Throughout the year, Israel celebrated a number of extremely important feasts — and during those times, they were commanded by God to all journey to the place where He had set His name.

“Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before the LORD thy God in the place which he shall choose; in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles: and they shall not appear before the LORD empty” (Deut 16:16).

During three major feasting seasons, all of the Israelite males were commanded to appear before God — during the feast of unleavened bread, which also included the Passover and the Firstfruits; during the Feast of Weeks; and during

the Feast of Tabernacles, which also probably included the Day of Atonement. During these three periods of the Jewish year, major feasts took place and all of the males had to be present together in order to worship God as one. Interestingly enough, the feast of the new moon is not one of these feasts — it wasn't a feast which required Israelites to travel together to a certain place and it wasn't one of the major feasts.

Yet there was even more about this feast that was different from the major Israelite feasts. Unlike the major feasts, the feast of the new moon actually wasn't just celebrated once a year. The Hebrew calendar was a lunar calendar; as such, it was based upon the cycles of the moon. Thus, each new month began with a "new moon" — meaning that the feast of the new moon was something that was celebrated much more than once a year, it was actually celebrated twelve times every year!

At the beginning of each month, Israel celebrated the new moon. Under the law, it was to be a special time of rededication to God — the old month having ended and the old moon disappearing, a new month had come and a new moon had appeared. During this time, the Israelites offered their daily offerings and also a special set of burnt offerings:

"And in the beginnings of your months ye shall offer a burnt offering unto the LORD ; two young bullocks, and one ram, seven lambs of the first year without spot" (Num 28:11).

Each of these burnt offerings, which symbolized total dedication to God (cp. Mark 12:33), was also offered with its accompanying meal offering (Numb 28:12-13) and drink offering (Numb 28:14). Finally, in addition to the burnt offering, a sin offering was also prepared:

"And one kid of the goats for a sin offering unto the LORD shall be offered, beside the continual burnt offering, and his drink offering" (Num 28:15).

Thus, the feast of the new moon was a time for the nation to put away their sin and rededicate themselves to the Father; just as the old moon passed away and a new moon came, so the Israelites could put away their old ways and commit themselves to God anew.



However, as mentioned earlier, unlike those three major feasts, all Israel didn't gather together in order to witness these sacrifices. Because of this, it would be easy for everyone in the nation to forget about this

feast of rededication and renewal; thus, it would appear as though God declared that every new moon the silver trumpets would be blown:

"Also in the day of your gladness, and in your solemn days, and in the beginnings of your months, ye shall blow with the trumpets² over your burnt offerings, and over the sacrifices of your peace offerings; that they may be to you for a memorial before your God: am the Lord your God" (Num 10:10).

In blowing these special silver trumpets, the feast of the new moon would be a “memorial” for them before their God. As the trumpet blast passed throughout the land, all Israel would hear and recognize that the new moon offerings had been offered — reminding them to put away their past sins and start afresh. In the Psalms, this blowing of the trumpet is also mentioned, but another aspect of the new moon is brought out:

“Sing aloud unto God our strength: make a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob. Take a psalm, and bring hither the timbrel, the pleasant harp with the psaltery. Blow up the trumpet in the new moon, in the time appointed, on our solemn feast day. For this was a statute for Israel, and a law of the God of Jacob” (Psa 81:1-4).

This passage begins by encouraging the reader to sing and joyfully praise God; it paints a picture of music, gladness, and praising God together. All of this was to happen at the time of the new moon which was described as a “solemn feast day.” All of this rejoicing and all of this celebration was a “statute for Israel, and a law of the God of Jacob.” In addition to all of the other aspects of the new moon that have already been seen, this time of the month was also a time for faithful Israelites to gather together with each other, to sing of God’s glory, and to think of His goodness as they share a meal.

This idea of the feast of the new moon being a day in which Israel was to set their minds on God’s glory is also backed up by the indication that it was similar to the Sabbath. During this feast, it would appear as though the people were commanded to rest from their work. In the Book of Amos, the prophet recorded some of the criticisms that hypocritical Israelites had towards the new moon — and those complaints were centered around not being able to sell their merchandise on that day, just as they couldn’t on the Sabbath.



the criticisms that hypocritical Israelites had towards the new moon — and those complaints were centered around not being able to sell their merchandise on that day, just as they couldn’t on the Sabbath.

“Here this, O ye that swallow up the needy, even to make the poor of the land to fall, saying, When will the new moon be gone, that we may sell corn? and the sabbath, that we may set forth wheat, making the ephah small, and the shekel great, and falsifying the balances by deceit?” (Amos 8:4-5).

For the hypocrites to whom Amos addressed his prophecy, the time of the new moon and Sabbaths were times in which they had to stop their monetary transactions and halt their business proceedings! They would celebrate this feast and this day, but they resented the restrictions that the “celebrations” placed upon them — which would indicate that just like the Sabbath, the feast of the new moon was a time for rest and remembering God’s greatness.

Such were the statutes of the new moon. Each month, a specific series of offerings would be offered — and when this took place, the silver trumpets would be blown, allowing the nation to know what had just taken place. In addition to those aspects of worship, the time of the new moon was also a time of feasting, of joy, and of praising God. It was a time when the Israelites would rest from their daily pursuits and set their minds on the things of the Father.

In addition, it is clear this pattern will persist into the Millennial age, for in the last chapter of Isaiah we read:

“And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the LORD” (Isa 66:23).

The parting of David and Jonathan

Thus, in the story of David and Jonathan’s parting, the scene was set at the time of the new moon. It was a time of renewal, rest and praise to God, a time which should have especially encouraged the nation to lift its thoughts up to higher things. Sadly, it doesn’t appear as though this is how the feast was celebrated during the time of Saul — and such shouldn’t be surprising. Saul wasn’t a man of faith; he was a man who performed the works simply because he was told to do so, or because they were beneficial to him. He followed the statutes and ordinances, not because they truly meant something to him, but because following them advanced his goals. When he was fighting against the Philistines, he offered the burnt offering in Samuel’s place because the people were “scattered” from him and he wanted to bring them back together — not because he wanted to obey God’s commands or dedicate his army and their thoughts to God (1Sam 13:11-12). When he fought against the Amalekites, it was the same story. He was told to destroy everything — and yet he saved all of the best of the animals for a sacrifice (1Sam 15:21). Clearly, Saul didn’t understand the lesson that the sacrifices were meant to teach; instead, he followed the works of the Law — but even more so, he followed them when they suited him! Thus, such was likely the situation with the feast of the new moon. It was a feast which was celebrated in Saul’s court, but it wasn’t a feast that was celebrated for the glory and honor of Yahweh — instead, it was celebrated for the glory and honor of Saul.

It’s in this background that Jonathan will plead, once again, for his dear friend.

Jason Hensley (Simi Hills, CA)

Notes:

1. It is often hard to distinguish between a “new moon” and a month, for both use the same Hebrew word. As The Israelites used a lunar calendar, by definition a month started on a new moon, so the terms were often synonymous. Other translations use the term “new moon” more frequently than the KJV. For example, ESV of Numb 29:6 reads *“besides the burnt offering of the new moon, and its grain offering, and the regular burnt offering and its grain offering, and their drink offering, according to the rule for them, for a pleasing aroma, a food offering to the Lord”*. [Editor]
2. The word “Trumpet” in Numb 10:10 is the Hebrew for a silver trumpet, as opposed to a trumpet of ram’s horn, which is the one described in Psa 81:3. Hence the illustration. [Editor]

The New Testament Church (8) The Ethos of The Church

In the previous article (#7, January Tidings), we considered the gospel message, and where the emphasis was then, and ought to be now. We now switch topics a little, to consider our relationship to those around us.

How do Christadelphians differ from other people? Have you ever been asked that question? I am sure we all have, at some time or another: “What’s the difference between you and other people?” And what do we reply? Generally I think most of us begin by saying, “Well you see we believe the Bible. We believe the Bible is wholly inspired and infallible. We do not believe you go to heaven when you die, we believe that man is mortal. We believe in the second coming of Jesus Christ, and the kingdom of God on earth, and baptism by immersion,” and so we go on. These are the points of difference, we say, between ourselves and other people. That is to say that we point, not to the quality of life as being the difference, but to the distinctiveness of our doctrine.

Manner of life

But, if you read any history of the very early church, when the great apologists were defending the Christian religion against their pagan detractors who were wanting to throw them to the lions, or burn them at the stake, you will find that they continually appealed not just to their religious dogmas as being the difference between themselves and their pagan neighbors, but to the manner of life of their converts as evidence of the truth of what they were teaching. They said over and over again, “Look at us, look at the Christians and see the differences for yourselves, and then ask yourselves if we are really the dangerous, demented maniacs that you think us to be.”

I had sent to me by a brother from the north of England the following quotation which I thought was interesting in this connection. It comes from a work called *Science for the Citizen* and was written by a man named Lancelot Hogben of whom I have not the slightest knowledge, but he makes the following citation from Simon’s authoritative work, *English Sanitary Institutions*:

“A conspicuous firstfruit of the Creed was that in all early Christian communities the giving of alms to the poor, of personal tending to the sick, of shelter to the homeless and generally of brotherly and sisterly help to persons in necessitous circumstances of mind, body or estate became, as it were, a characteristic ritual of the new faith.”

Now coming as it does from such a learned work as *English Sanitary Institutions*, I thought that was a very interesting tribute to the early church in its ethic and in the way it approached its fellows. What he is saying is that the very first thing that is noticed in the growth of Christianity, when the church of Christ

went out into the world with its doctrine, is the kindness and benevolence with which it approached its fellow men. I have another quotation from the same source, quoting Cadoux's book, *The Early Church and the World*, and this is the paragraph which I am interested in:

“In the first place then it must be clear even to the most casual observer that in the work of the pre-Constantinian church, whatever else we may or may not have, we certainly have a moral reformatory movement on a scale and with a potency unparalleled at any other epoch before or since. Make whatever allowances you like for the exaggerations of Christian rhetoric, (and here he is referring to the Christian apologists who pointed to the good lives of their adherents as an evidence of their faith), for actual moral shortcomings of increasing prevalence and gravity, and for the lofty, ethical attainments of other reformers and their followers, yet it remains true that the achievements of the early church can defy comparison with those of any other religious or moral movement known to history.”

And that is what I mean in the title of this study *The Ethos of the Church*. Where it was getting them, what it was doing to them, how it was motivating them. There was nothing to equal the tremendous enthusiasm, and purity of life, and zeal for truth, and love for their neighbors, of these early Christians. And they were able to point to it and say, “If you want to know how we differ from our pagan neighbors look at our lives. Look at the kind of people we are.”

Dr. Blunt in his *History of the Church of the first Three Centuries*, maintains that the spread of the gospel was aided by three quite positive qualities in the Christian church.

- First of all, he says, “There were singular differences seen in Christian behavior.” The pagans were quite well able to see what was happening to these people who turned from idolatry to become Christians. They saw the mark in their lives. They saw immediately that it was making a difference to them. They no longer indulged in politics. They no longer joined the armed forces. These are facts of the early Christian church. It was something that distinguished them immediately as, indeed, it distinguishes Christadelphians today from their fellow men.
- Secondly, it was not just in the things they did not do. It was in the things they did, as well. Their persecutions, Blunt argues, drew attention to the sect and publicized their views. This helped to spread the gospel. The more they burnt them, the more they tossed them to the lions, the more people took notice of them. Here were men who would not relinquish their faith. Do what they liked to them, these men remained steadfast to their calling in Jesus Christ. And men took notice of them and said, “There is something in this. These people have something that the others have not got.”
- Thirdly, Blunt argues, their goodness and sincerity impressed even their opponents. What a lovely phrase that is: “Their goodness and sincerity impressed even their opponents.” Of Barnabas it was said: “*For he was a*

good man, and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord" (Acts 11:24). Here seems to be the same kind of argument that Blunt is using for the spread of the Christian religion. This is what impressed people. "*He was a good man, and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith,*" and why does the writer add, "*And much people was added unto the Lord*"? Because they took notice of men like this, and they said, "Their religion is doing something to them."

Now we, I think, although one should not generalize about this, tend to say rather apologetically: "You do not have to judge Christianity by Christians"; or even, "You do not have to judge Christadelphianism by Christadelphians." Our line may occasionally take something like this form: "Get back to the Bible. If they speak not according to this word, never mind about anything else, we have got the truth. If you have come across the odd Christadelphian who you thought did not behave like a Christian well forget it, this is the Truth." This is the line we may feel compelled to take.

But it is not the line Jesus took. Jesus did not say, "Do not judge Christianity by Christians." On the contrary, he said, "Judge Christianity by Christians." He said, "*By their fruits shall you know them.*" "*Men do not gather figs of brambles, or grapes or thorn bushes. You judge the quality of the tree by the quality of its fruit. Therefore by the quality of their fruits you shall know them.*" "*By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one towards another.*" "*If there is this spontaneous bubbling up of true love for men, because you have known the love of God, then men will know that you are my disciples,*" Jesus said. "*Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven.*"

The early church was able to advance this witness to the truth of what they proclaimed. Can we? Dare we? "I cannot hear your words for the noise of your deeds," somebody has said. Or in another simple sentence — actions speak louder than words. And we ought to be this kind of people, if we have the truth, which we believe we have. If we have the right doctrine, which we maintain we have, then we should be able to say, "Look at those Christadelphians. See the kind of people they are. See the kind of lives they lead, and you will see Christianity in action."

Active social life

The first picture we have of the apostolic church is one of active social life. We have to go back for this to the very beginning of the book of Acts. Although the organization of the church grew, this feature of kindness and benevolence, of true social life, of fellowship or "sharing," remained constant. So that Paul in Gal 2:10 says of himself, that when he went up to see James; Cephas and John, who seemed to be pillars of the church at that time in Jerusalem, they said in effect, "Well, you do the ministry to the Gentiles and Cephas (or Peter) will be the minister to the circumcision." "*Only they would that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do.*" Now that basic ethic remained with the church all the way through, "*Only they would that we should remember*

the poor.” And Paul said, “I have never forgotten that anyway: that has always been part of my Christianity, to remember the poor.”

Now, we go to Acts again and we find a passage we have already referred to in another connection. We now look at this aspect of their generosity, of their sharing together, of their social life in the true sense of the word. *“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 2:43-47).*

Here they are then *“having all things common”*. Here is the abandon of the early faith. No man counted anything he possessed as being his own. They handed it all over, and they shared and shared alike; and they had great joy in this fellowship of ministrations. The responsibility for the ministrations at that time clearly was in the hands of the Apostles. *“And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus — and great grace was upon them all. Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the price of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the apostles’ feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need” (Acts 4:32-35).*

So there we have it, the “ethos,” (if you like the word) or the way of life (if you do not like the word) of the church in its budding infancy. Having all things common, sharing together, selling their possessions, bringing the price, giving it to the apostles, who saw that it was administered for the good of the whole community. But, of course, we know, as we have already seen in the study of the officers of the church, that it soon became necessary for the benevolence of the church to be administered in some other way. There had to be a sort of organized physical relief of needy members.

So the apostles delegated the work to the seven deacons, or the seven “ministers,” who were appointed to have the charge of this matter (Acts 6:3). They now became responsible in the church at Jerusalem for the administration to the needs of their poorer brethren. And then, later, we see collection being taken, where there was no compulsion except love for men and gratitude to God. So Paul writes: *“Let every man lay by him according as God has prospered him. Now concerning the collection, for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come” (1Cor 16:1-2).* And he goes on to say how he, with approved brethren, appointed by themselves, will take their largess up to the poor saints at Jerusalem.

Len Richardson

Who is Jesus' Beloved Disciple? (1)

John the son of Zebedee?

For decades I assumed the disciple whom Jesus loved was the apostle John the son of Zebedee. I presumed that whatever slight doubt there was, would be eliminated if I took the time to study the matter in detail. Then I had an occasion to read the gospel of John straight through in one sitting, and two things struck me:

- 1) The fourth gospel has none of the episodes found in the synoptic gospels¹ in which Jesus takes Peter, James, and John into his special confidence. John's gospel doesn't have the healing of Jairus' daughter, or the Transfiguration, or the Olivet Prophecy, or any of the other "inner circle" incidents. These exclusions are strange if John Zebedee were indeed the eyewitness behind this gospel.
- 2) This one came like a thunderbolt: if you read John 11-13 without stopping, then the Beloved Disciple is no longer "anonymous" — his name is Lazarus.

This article (in two parts, God willing) summarizes the evidence supporting Lazarus and challenging John Zebedee as the Beloved Disciple. The sections of the article correspond to the appearances of this "other, Beloved Disciple" at the supper (John 13), at the trial (John 18), at the cross (John 19), at the tomb (John 20), and at the lake (John 21). The last of these will be completed in Part 2, which will continue with a sketch of Lazarus as an ideal disciple who mirrors the experiences of Jesus, and then close with a proposed answer to the related question, "Who wrote the gospel according to John?"

At the supper (John 13:23-25)

"Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, who Jesus loved <25 agapao>..." (John 13:23).

The assumption that this Beloved Disciple is the apostle John is common (see John Carter, *The Gospel of John*, Preface, pp. 5, 37, 149, 203, 213, 219, 229, 232; Harry Whittaker, *Studies in the Gospels*, pp. 78, 647, 735, 776, 800, 801, 803-805, 826, 834; Sam Alexander, "John: the disciple whom Jesus loved," *The Testimony*, December 2013, pp. 454-459; Bill Link, Jr., "The Apostles in the Gospel of John," *The Tidings*, August 2014, pp. 366-369; and many others). It is so conventional that it is often presumed without argument.

When evidence is offered it is often based on a process of elimination:

- 1) It starts by asserting that the twelve apostles were the only ones with Jesus at the last supper (Mark 14:17), so the Beloved Disciple must be an apostle.
- 2) He must also be one of those listed in John 21:2 — Simon Peter, Thomas, Nathanael, the sons of Zebedee [James and John], and two other of his disciples (John 21:1-7).
- 3) In addition, he must have had a particularly close relationship with Jesus, which the synoptic gospels show to have been true, for example, of Peter, James, and John.

- 4) Peter is ruled out because he appears with the Beloved Disciple in every episode except at the cross.
- 5) James Zebedee can be crossed off the list because he died too early (Acts 12:1-2, fulfilling Mark 10:39).
- 6) Thomas can be eliminated because he doubted the resurrection (John 20:24-29) in contrast to the reaction of the Beloved Disciple (John 20:1-10).
- 7) Nathanael is not possible because he couldn't be the unnamed disciple in John 1:35-51, who is assumed to be the same as the Beloved Disciple (see the citations above).
- 8) This leaves John Zebedee or one of the two unnamed disciples in John 20:2.

Therefore, because he had to be an apostle, and he was regularly seen with Peter, and he had a special relationship with Jesus, the Beloved Disciple must be the apostle John.

Some of these arguments and this conclusion are more suspect than may appear at first. For example, the starting point in the above argument is flawed because we know there were other people at the last supper besides Jesus and the twelve; in particular, at least the two candidates to replace Judas were there: *"Wherefore of these men which accompanied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of this resurrection"* (Acts 1:21-22). This period includes the last supper.

The concluding inference is not necessary either, as the Beloved Disciple could just as easily be one of the two "other" unnamed disciples mentioned in John 21:2. This possibility is all the more likely because *"the disciple... whom Jesus loved"* (John 20:2) is repeatedly called *"the other disciple"* (John 20:2, 3, 4, 8) in the episode of the empty tomb (John 20:1-10), and probably also at the trial in the palace of the high priest (John 18:15-16). Referring to the Beloved Disciple as *"the other disciple"* might be the author's way of indicating that he wasn't one of the twelve.

Besides these issues, we should note the obvious: there are no references anywhere in the New Testament to Jesus "loving" John Zebedee in any special way.

This last point is even more telling because, in contrast, just two chapters earlier Lazarus is explicitly said to be loved by Jesus. This epithet is repeated four times:

- 1) In their message to Jesus that Lazarus is sick, Mary and Martha say, *"Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest <5368 phileo from 5384 philos> is sick"* (John 11:3) — this phrase by itself is sufficient for Jesus to know that they were talking about their brother Lazarus (John 11:1-3).
- 2) The author declares outright, *"Now Jesus loved <25 agapao> Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus"* (John 11:5).
- 3) Jesus says, *"Our friend <5384 philos; cf. 3:29; 15:13-15> Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep"* (John 11:11).

4) Finally, seeing Jesus weeping at the grave of Lazarus, the Jews observe, "*Behold how **he loved** <5368> **him!***" (John 11:33-36).²

Here are four witnesses to the fact that Lazarus was loved by Jesus. This testimony alone should be ample evidence that Lazarus is the Beloved Disciple. Lazarus (John 11-12) disappears by name just as the Beloved Disciple appears (John 13; John 18-21); the two are never seen together. The author of the fourth gospel follows a similar pattern for Mary of Bethany, the sister of Martha and Lazarus (John 11-12; cf. Luke 7:36-8:3; Mark 14:3-9; Matt 26:6-13), who is referred to as Mary Magdalene in John 19-20 (cf. Mark 15-16; Matt 27-28) but not before.³

*"Now **there was leaning on Jesus' bosom** one of his disciples, who Jesus loved. Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, that he should ask who it should be of whom he spake. **He lying on Jesus' breast** saith unto him, Lord, who is it?" (John 13:23-25; cf. 21:20).*

It is unlikely that this disciple is John Zebedee. It wasn't long before this incident that John and his brother James had manifested an inappropriate superiority complex which annoyed the other ten:

"And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, come unto him, saying, Master, we would that thou shouldst do for us whatsoever we shall desire. And he said unto them, What would ye that I should do for you? They said unto him, Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory... And when the ten heard it, they began to be much displeased with James and John" (Mark 10:35-37, 41).

After such self-important thinking, would Jesus have encouraged John Zebedee by giving him the place of honor at this historic meal? Would he have risked further irritating the others by doing so?

In contrast, this place of honor would be especially appropriate for Lazarus, whom Jesus had only recently raised from the dead. Jesus would want him to have it, and so would the others. In fact, this is precisely where we find Lazarus in the previous chapter:

*"Then Jesus six days before the Passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead. There they made him a supper; and Martha served: but **Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him**" (John 12:1-2).*

At the trial (John 18:15-16)

*"And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did **another disciple; that disciple was known unto the high priest**, and went in with Jesus into the palace of the high priest. But Peter stood at the door without. Then went out **that other disciple, which was known unto the high priest**, and spake unto her that kept the door, and brought in Peter" (John 18:15-16).⁴*

Compared to John Zebedee, Lazarus is a much better candidate for this other disciple who was known to the high priest.

John Zebedee was a Galilean and a fisherman. Both of these make it highly unlikely for him to have been known to the high priest. It is difficult to imagine a plausible scenario in which John Zebedee was known to the high priest while his coworker Peter was not. The idea that John Z provided fish to the high priest's household is an invention without evidence, created to fill an obvious gap in the usual assumption. Months after the trial of Jesus, following the healing of the lame man at the temple, Peter and John's interrogators are surprised by the boldness of these uneducated men: "Now when they [including the high priest and his family, v6] saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marveled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus" (Acts 4:13). In other words, before this incident the high priest and his entourage had not known John Zebedee personally; they realize that he had been a disciple of Jesus who had exhibited similar qualities (John 7:15).

On the other hand, Lazarus was certainly known by the priests. Lazarus lived in Bethany just outside Jerusalem, providing convenient access to the temple and the priests (cf. the last weeks of Jesus' ministry).

Moreover, his father was a Pharisee (Luke 7:36-50), Simon the leper (Mark 14:3; Matt 26:6). Lazarus and his sisters Mary and Martha were unmarried, perhaps because leprosy was in the family. Dealing with this disease would have required regular interaction with the priests (see Lev 13-14; Mark 1:40-44; Matt 8:2-4).

Many Jews [i.e., Jewish leaders]⁵ attended Lazarus' funeral to mourn for him and to comfort his sisters:

*"And many of the **Jews** came to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother... The **Jews** then which were with her in the house, and comforted her, when they saw Mary, that she rose up hastily and went out, followed her, saying, She goeth unto the grave to weep there... When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the **Jews** also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled... Then said the **Jews**, Behold how he loved him!... Then many of the **Jews** which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him" (John 11:19, 31, 33, 36, 45).*

This behavior shows that Lazarus and his family were well-known to and well-liked by the Jewish leadership.

Following his resurrection, Lazarus was certainly known to the chief priests:

*"Then Jesus six days before the Passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead. There they made him a supper; and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him... Much people of **the Jews** therefore knew that he was there: and they came not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom he had raised from the dead. But **the chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death**; Because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus" (John 12:1-2, 9-11).*

At the cross (John 19:25-27)

*“Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and **the disciple** standing by, **whom he loved** <25>, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son! Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home” (John 19:25-27).*

The synoptic gospels Matthew, Mark, and Luke say the apostles had fled so were not at the cross or at most saw it afar off (Mark 14:27, 50; 15:40-41; Matt 26:31 cf. Zech 13:7; Matt 26:56; 27:55-56). This makes it unlikely that John Zebedee could have been “standing by”.

Also, John Zebedee lived in Galilee, a long way for Mary to walk, especially since “*from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home.*” Besides, would Jesus have entrusted his mother to the care of one whom he had called to leave his family and career to become an itinerant fisher of men? (Mark 1:19-20; 10:23-31, esp. v28). As Peter says, “*we have left all and followed thee.*”

On the other hand, Lazarus was from Bethany, near Jerusalem, whose family (Mary, Martha, and Lazarus) was loved by Jesus, and whose home would be suitable for his mother Mary. Jesus had spent lots of time at this home with this family. It had been his home base for the weeks leading up to his crucifixion. The record in Acts makes it likely that Mary lived near Jerusalem: “*These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren*” (Acts 1:14). Mary living with Lazarus would also explain how Lazarus came to know about the wedding at Cana (John 2:1-11): Mary, who had attended the wedding, told him about it.

At the tomb (John 20:1-10)

*“The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre. Then she runneth to Simon Peter, and to **the other disciple, whom Jesus loved** <5368 phileo>, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him. Peter therefore went forth, and **that other disciple**, and came to the sepulchre. So they ran both together: and **the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre.** And he stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in. Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie, and the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself. Then went in also **that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre**, and he saw, and believed. For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead. Then the disciples went away again unto their own home” (John 20:1-10).*

If this is John Zebedee, then why doesn't Luke include him? “*Then arose Peter, and ran unto the sepulchre; and stooping down, he beheld the linen clothes laid by*

themselves, and departed, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass” (Luke 24:12). (This is one of many occasions in which one of the gospels omits people known from parallel records to have been present.)

On the other hand, if this is Lazarus, then Mary Magdalene ran to her own home, where she knew everyone was gathered, including Peter and her brother Lazarus. It is easy to imagine how Lazarus would have been able to outrun Peter: first, he was from nearby Bethany, so he knew the way (he had probably taken the same path many times); second, he was energized by his restoration to life and health; and third, he was eager to see Jesus alive again. (Lazarus of all people would know that this was a real possibility).

That Lazarus would have believed first makes sense, too. His spiritual acuity was now off the charts. Furthermore, he immediately recognized the significance of “the napkin”,

*“And the **napkin** <4676 soudarion>, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself. Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw, and believed” (John 20:7-8),*

because it recalls his own experience:

*“And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a **napkin** <4676>. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go” (John 11:44).*

At the lake – Fishing on the Sea of Tiberias (John 21:1-7)

*“After these things Jesus shewed himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias; and on this wise shewed himself. There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and **two other of his disciples**. Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee. They went forth, and entered into a ship immediately... But when morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore: but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus... Therefore **that disciple who Jesus loved** <25> saith unto Peter, It is the Lord” (John 21:1-2, 4, 7).*

John the disciple, together with his father Zebedee, brother James, and Simon Peter, were Galilean fishermen, so it makes sense that he was among those involved in this episode.

Lazarus fishing on the Sea of Tiberias? This is the only episode that, naturally speaking, fits John Zebedee better than Lazarus. Perhaps this story is included to show that after being raised from the dead Lazarus was now able to travel. He was eager to be with Jesus wherever he went. That Lazarus would be first to recognize the Lord was another example of his increased spiritual awareness.

Joe Hill (Austin Leander, TX)

Notes:

1. The synoptic gospels are Matthew, Mark and Luke. The word “synoptic” comes from Latin (syn-opticus) and means “seeing together”. In contrast with John, these three gospels

have many of the same episodes in the ministry of Jesus which are often displayed side-by-side in parallel columns.

2. Both Greek words for "to love" (*agapao* and *phileo*) are used for Lazarus (*agapao*: John 11:5; *phileo*: 11:3, 36; *philos*: John 11:11) and for the Beloved Disciple (*agapao*: John 12:23; 19:26; 21:7,20; *phileo*: John 20:2). In effect, the two words are used essentially interchangeably as is generally the case (see the multiple discussions on this issue in the *Tidings*, 1998, pp. 61, 105, 215-217, 271-273, 349-351).
3. See Harry Whittaker, *Studies in the Gospels*, Chapter 74 Three Women, pp. 247-250, and Mark W. G. Stibbe (1992) *John as Storyteller: Narrative Criticism and the Fourth Gospel*, Cambridge University Press: New York, pp. 62-70.
4. This "other disciple which was known unto the high priest" is usually assumed to be the same as "disciple whom Jesus loved" (see, for example, John Carter, *The Gospel of John*, 1980 reprint, p. 203, who makes this assumption without comment). Some evidence for this assumption comes from observing that the beloved disciple is called "the other disciple" throughout the episode at the tomb (John 20:2, 3, 4, 8). As I suggested earlier in this article the author may call him "that other disciple" to emphasize that he is not one of the twelve.
5. In the fourth gospel, "the Jews" often refers to Jewish leaders; for example, compare John 5:16-18 with Mark 3:6; compare John 8:48 with Mark 3:22 and Matt 12:24. Harry Whittaker writes, "Accordingly, when John's mission had lasted some time, 'the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou?' (John 1:19). This is the first of many examples in the fourth gospel where 'the Jews' means the leaders of the nation. It is a point to be borne in mind for the more exact interpretation of other passages. When the gospel refers to the common people, the word 'multitude' is generally used" (*Studies in the Gospel*, p. 75). Other instances include John 2:18, 20; 3:1, 25; 5:10, 15, 16, 18; 6:41, 52; 7:1, 11, 13, 15, 35; 8:48, 57; 9:18, 22; 10:19, 24, 31, 33; 11:8, etc.

THE RAISING OF LAZARUS

Laz'rus is dead, his sisters weep!
"No", said the Lord, "he is asleep,
And for his loving sisters' sake
I'll make him from that sleep awake."
"Believe in me", the Master said,
"For he will live though he be dead."
He prayed to God in heaven above
With eyes turned upward, filled with love,
Then looking in the open tomb,
Cried: "Lazarus, I bid you come!"
"Loose him!" said Jesus, "Let him go!
Martha and Mary, take him home.
In place of sorrow joy is come."
Jesus will come on the last day
When all earth's sorrows flee away.
Lord Jesus, Master, think on me,
From death set your disciple free!

A. H. Nicholls: The Christadelphian 1994 p. 283

Reflection

My Grandpa: Monday, December 14, 2015

My Grandpa, Bob Lloyd, died this morning.

Last Tuesday, he was still driving. Last Tuesday, he woke up, dressed, showered, walked downstairs, made breakfast, and worked on his computer. Last Tuesday, he was an old man, but a reasonably healthy one. Last Wednesday, he suffered a massive stroke, and went into a coma. And this morning, he died. And, in some ways, I'm thankful to God that he died the way he did.

You see, my Grandpa was a doer. He was someone who cared deeply about others, and tried to make a difference in their lives. His attitude was that, as long as God gave him the strength to serve, he was going to. And he did. He only stopped giving study days because he literally collapsed on the plane on the way back from Oregon. He went to the Idyllwild Bible school every single year. And when they forbade him to go there because of his health, he went to Shippensburg instead, until his health stopped him from even doing that. And, at every Bible school he went to, he held an "unbaptized class" where he tried to help unbaptized people decide whether they should be baptized. Every single one.

Even when he didn't have the strength to travel very much, he still tried to do as much as he could. He still went to meeting, every Sunday, and made an effort to say "hi" to everyone. He still exhorted. Every month, he wrote a minute meditation for *The Tidings* magazine, and sent a compilation of them to everyone he knew who got baptized. Things got harder, but he kept doing as much as he could, while he could, because, as long as God gave him the strength to serve, he was going to.

But, he was an old man. He was losing his strength. It was becoming harder and harder for him to do things. And that was really hard for him, because he still cared, and still wanted to make a difference, and there were fewer things where he could still be effective.

And so, I think God was being merciful by having him die while he still could do a little. While he hadn't become completely powerless yet. While he could still be a servant.

Because, although his death will be hard for his wife, and his children, and for me, I think it will be a good thing for him. Because, for him, the next thing he'll see is the resurrection.

You see, my grandpa sold insurance. And he was a very good insurance salesman. He truly believed in his product, and bought it himself. Now, there's no insurance you can buy to protect you from death. You can buy life insurance, but that's not the same thing. But, there is something you can do to protect yourself from death. You can give your life to Jesus Christ. And he'll keep it safe, no matter what happens.

“For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel’s, the same shall save it” (Mark 8:35)

My grandpa didn’t die the violent death of a martyr. But that doesn’t mean he didn’t give his life for Jesus. He spent his entire life serving him. As long as God gave him the strength to serve, he was going to. And he did.

And although God has taken away his strength to serve now, I know that, in the resurrection, He’ll give it back to him. All the strength he had at his prime, and more. And my grandpa will be able to serve Him again. Forever.

And if there’s anything I want, more than anything else in the world, it’s to be there too. With my Grandpa.

James Robinson (Simi Hills, CA)

Righteousness and Peace Kiss Each Other

“Surely his salvation is near those who fear him, that his glory may dwell in our land. Love [mercy: KJV] and faithfulness [truth: KJV] meet together; righteousness and peace kiss each other. Faithfulness springs forth from the earth, and righteousness looks down from heaven” (Psa 85:9-11 NIV)

“Righteousness and peace kiss each other!” Like two old friends who finally meet after a long separation, they embrace and kiss one another, so thankful for each other’s company. So why should righteousness and peace finally kiss each other? Or, to go back to the beginning, why were these two old friends ever parted in the first place?

The answer, as we might expect, is found in the early chapters of Genesis. When Adam and his companion Eve were placed in the lovely Garden of Eden, they lived in a totally harmonious environment. The Almighty Creator had made all things good; His creation existed, quite peacefully, in a full and free fellowship with Him. The LORD God walked among the trees of the garden, and talked freely with Adam and Eve.

The sin of Eve and Adam changed all this. Their disobedience to their Creator’s wise requirements — in other words, their unrighteousness — caused them to be exiled from the garden, away from the peaceful life they had once enjoyed.

In poetic terms, the wonderful partnership of righteousness and peace had been dissolved, and Adam and Eve had lost both. Now they lived in a world of thorns and troubles, consequences and guilt, confusion and sin and death. And by the time they realized what they had done, they could no longer retrace their steps to that place of pristine righteousness which had been theirs in the beginning. Their sins had shut the door upon the place where God’s righteousness and God’s peace had resided in beautiful harmony, and they were on the outside looking in, with no key! Cast adrift in a broken world, they had absolutely no remedy.

We know now what Adam and Eve found out firsthand: that the Almighty God, who is perfectly righteous, cannot even look upon sin, much less have true and lasting fellowship with sinners. Between the Heavenly Father and the crowning

glory of His first creation — man and woman — there was a great gulf fixed, and a region where there could be no real peace because there was no real righteousness to be found there. And when children and then grandchildren were born to these two outcasts, they also inherited the same tendencies to sin and the same experience of enmity, or hostility, from the LORD God.

Something or someone was needed to bridge the gap between the righteousness of God and the peace of God. If that great gulf could be bridged, then this sad world so soon filled with sinners could begin to find its way back to that first place of peace and comfort in the presence of God.

So, how can a pure God save a world of impure sinners?

In God's work of salvation through His Son, two disparate (almost mutually exclusive) elements are at work together. God's righteousness was declared and vindicated in the sacrifice of His Son, a sacrifice that demonstrated the decreed consequences of sin and its nature (Rom 3:21-31). Because of that sacrifice, and the obedience of the Son who offered it, God was pleased also to offer His peace through His merciful forgiveness of sinners who showed faith in that Son (Rom 5:1,2).

Thus, it is a wonderful miracle that in and through Jesus, both the truth of God and His mercy have been manifested in the Word made flesh (John 1:14-18). These divine attributes parted company at the fall of the first Adam, when God's holiness decreed an exile from the garden of His presence. They have been joined together again with the coming of the last Adam. Thanks to His Son's role as a mediator, the irreproachable righteousness of God can save sinners and bring them peace (joyful reconciliation and fellowship with Himself), without any diminishing of His absolutely righteous character. Jesus alone could pray, as he surely must every day: "Father, forgive them, for my sake!"

Surely his salvation is near those who fear him, that his glory may dwell in our land. Love and faithfulness meet together; righteousness and peace kiss each other. Faithfulness springs forth from the earth, and righteousness looks down from heaven.

As pictured by the psalmist, this figurative meeting of heaven and earth in Psa 85:10,11 is an anticipation of the advent of Jesus. In him, heaven and earth meet together: Son of God and seed of the woman. This is described in the words of the hymn written by David Brown (Christadelphian Hymn Book, No. 83), words which are themselves a paraphrase of John 1:14:

*Thy grace and truth became
Flesh for a saving name.*

In His righteousness God looked down from heaven, and then planted the seed which germinated in the "earth", that is, in the womb of the young woman Mary. Out of that barren soil of fallen human nature there sprang up a Righteous Branch — the Word made flesh in an absolutely righteous human being, the like of which had never been seen before. Jesus Christ was the heir of all God's promises and the perfect expression of His will — as priest, mediator and king.

Only through such a man as this could God offer to the rest of us the “righteousness” of sins forgiven, and thus the “peace” of eternal fellowship with Himself.

Righteousness and peace kiss each other

One of the subtle beauties of these verses is that word “kiss”. God’s offer of salvation to man may be worked out and explained in a fairly logical manner, and we are grateful that it can be so explained. Some people need this type of explanation in order to understand and accept the gospel.

But, really, the gospel of salvation as described in the Bible bears much more resemblance to a look of love, a tender kiss, and a gentle caress. It is seen in a husband’s gentle caress of a good wife. It is seen in a father’s tender kiss of a small and helpless child. And it is seen in the devoted love of a man laying down his own life for his friends.

So, is God’s plan of righteousness a matter of logic, like a deed or a contract? Or is it an ongoing act of love? There are certainly elements of a legal contract to be seen in God’s dealings with man — there are covenants, conditional promises, and the inheritance of land. What God promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob can be ours too if we believe the right things and take the right actions.

But the heart and soul, the spirit and avowed intent, of God’s interaction with us is a kiss. Nothing good could ever have happened without the divine love manifested in such a kiss. It began with a gentle kiss of divine love, soft as a small bird settling lightly upon a person:

“As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, ‘This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased’ ” (Matt 3:16,17).

And it culminated in an embrace and a kiss of joyful reunion:

“But while [the prodigal son] was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him” (Luke 15:20),

The psalmist saw all this in the brightness of a clear morning, as the sun rose on a dew-covered pasture, its beams sparkling like a million diamonds. The dawning of a new day, in all its freshness of possibilities, was like a new creation and a new birth:

“Arrayed in holy majesty [the beauties of holiness: KJV], from the womb of the dawn you [Zion] will receive the dew of your youth” (Psa 110:3)

It was then that the writer knew that those fresh drops of dew symbolized those who were born again from the dead:

“But your dead will live; their bodies will rise. You who dwell in the dust, wake up and shout for joy. Your dew is like the dew of the morning” (Isa 26:19).

The inspired poet looked again, and in the beautiful sunrise and the sparkling dewdrops he saw a glorious heaven kiss a perfect earth. He knew then that God's ancient promises would come true — that even the worst of sinners could be part of the eternal family born out of that divine kiss of love and joy, never to die again.

George Booker (Austin Leander, TX)

The Most Boring Chapter in the Bible (Numbers 7)

“After the tabernacle of the Lord had been built, according to the plan given to Moses, there was a special ceremony of dedication” (Num 7:1).

The leaders of the 12 tribes of Israel brought a special gift, of their own choosing, to assist the Levites in their duties of transporting the Tabernacle from place to place. Much of the actual structure could be disassembled and made easier to carry, but God (and Moses) accepted the wagons and oxen that the leaders offered to facilitate this work.

All this, however, was only prelude to the main purpose of the chapter: to list, in extraordinary detail, all the offerings of each tribe for the service of the tabernacle. Each of the 12 tribes was asked to contribute exactly the same offering as the other 11. This was for each tribe:

- 1) One silver plate weighing 130 shekels;
- 2) One silver sprinkling bowl weighing 70 shekels;
- 3) Fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering, enough to fill each plate and bowl;
- 4) One gold dish weighing 10 shekels, filled with incense;
- 5) One young bull, a year old, for a burnt offering;
- 6) One ram, a year old, for a burnt offering;
- 7) One male lamb, a year old, for a burnt offering;
- 8) One male goat for a sin offering;
- 9) Two oxen, a year old, for a fellowship offering;
- 10) Five rams, a year old, for a fellowship offering;
- 11) Five male goats, a year old, for a fellowship offering; and
- 12) Five male lambs, a year old, for a fellowship offering.

Numbers 7 describes this, in almost excruciating detail, 12 times. The rest of the chapter, up to verse 88, itemizes this whole list over and over again, for each of the twelve tribes, as they brought their offerings, day by day for a full 12 days:

- On the first day, Judah brought its offerings (vv. 12-17).
- On the second day, Issachar brought its offerings (vv. 18-23).
- On the third day, Zebulun brought its offerings (vv. 24-29).
- On the fourth day, Reuben brought its offerings (vv. 30-35).
- On the fifth day, Simeon brought its offerings (vv. 36-41).
- On the sixth day, Gad brought its offerings (vv. 42-47).

- On the seventh day, Ephraim brought its offerings (vv. 48-53).
- On the eighth day, Manasseh brought its offerings (vv. 54-59).
- On the ninth day, Benjamin brought its offerings (vv. 60-65).
- On the tenth day, Dan brought its offerings (vv. 66-71).
- On the eleventh day, Asher brought its offerings (vv. 72-77).
- On the twelfth day, Naphthali brought its offerings (vv. 78-83).

As if it weren't enough detail to make the point, the text of Numbers 7 then also gives a full summary and complete total of all the offerings of all the twelve tribes, and the combined weight of all silver and gold in all the separate vessels (vv. 84-88). Even to list this in abbreviated outline form seems boring, doesn't it? There is the reading of the whole 88 verses, up to the conclusion of these 12 identical offerings, repeated fully 12 times, and finally concluding with a thirteenth reiteration to summarize and total the first 12 full listings.

The 88 verses that precede this final verse make Numbers 7, in the opinion of many, the most boring chapter in all the Bible. And we might find ourselves agreeing with this assessment! At long last, however, after what can seem like an endless march through mind-numbing lists, we come to the final verse of chapter 7. What a payoff there is at the end:

“When Moses entered the Tent of Meeting to speak with the LORD, he heard the voice speaking to him from between the two cherubim above the atonement cover on the ark of the Testimony. And he [the LORD] spoke with him [Moses]” (Num 7:89)

When we put things in their proper perspective, how this final verse redeems all the rest! After all the tribes have meticulously brought all their offerings and sacrifices, in perfect order, and after they have all been accounted for and catalogued, carefully and even tediously... only then does the LORD God Almighty speak to Moses from His own special place above the mercy seat.

It is then that we must ask ourselves the question: how could a chapter in the Bible qualify as “boring”, in any way imaginable to true believers, when it culminates with the voice of God speaking to man?

What price would we pay, what effort would we go to, and what years might we be willing to wait and watch, in order that God would finally speak directly to us?

And when the LORD God finally does speak to us, will the sacrifice and the wait have all been worthwhile?

George Booker (Austin Leander, TX)

The record of the offerings of the princes of Israel is given us in the seventh chapter of Numbers, one of the longest, if not the longest chapter in the Scriptures. To most of us it is not a particularly appealing chapter, for it contains much repetition, and so we may be inclined to “skip” through it, feeling there is little for us. Yet this is not so, for the incidents narrated are of interest in themselves and also give us several lessons. (*The Christadelphian*, 1969, p.174)

Letters

Dear Bro. Hemingray,

Letter to the Editor in response to Peter Hemingray's "Our Self-Inflicted Problems" (*The Tidings*, Dec. 2015)

I feel that I can shed some outside perspective on one of the issues that you raised in your editorial, that is, outreach into the community. Raised Christian in both the Evangelical and Anglican Church, I first heard of the Christadelphians in 2001 when I met my future husband, Matthew Harrison. It became my touchstone faith community in my twenties, carrying me forward in my walk with Christ through a stringent Bible study for which I was hungry. I was baptized Christadelphian in 2008. While I felt more intellectually stimulated than ever before and my eyes were opened to new truths within the Biblical text, there are elements that I found — and still find — lacking within the practices of the body. I believe that these hinder growth and are damaging to our ability to outreach beyond our own members. I will name a few:

For one, the music is outdated and though there is some effort, there is mostly reluctance to embrace modern forms of worship and even to consider singing as a legitimate form of prayer to our Heavenly Father. It feels as though Bible study is seen as the only outlet for growth, and people's spiritual and emotional needs are left largely neglected. In Christianity, prayer and praise services are used to foster, feed and develop people's spiritual sides.

Though admittedly controversial, many brethren believe that there is no Biblical foundation to the requirement for women to cover their heads, and for many it is not an issue that has any bearing on salvation. Yet it is generally enforced as the norm, despite its abhorrence as a practice to any incoming outsider as representative of long-out-of-date societally-based gender hierarchies.

Finally, though the King James Bible is a beautiful text, its value is akin to that of Shakespeare. It should be appreciated privately, but when it comes to meetings that should be considered publicly accessible, colloquial translations should be employed. This particularly comes to mind when brothers, sisters or outsiders join the meeting from other countries and English is not their first language.

Despite our important message of hope, Christadelphians often act as though we are a private club. To turn outward, to appear inviting, accessible and public, should be the goal, in my humble opinion, of a truly evangelical ecclesia. From my perspective, the message is too valuable to be lost because of a petty clinging to non-Biblically founded traditions. Your call to focus on the "true simplicity of the gospel" was refreshing.

Catherine Harrison (nee Sinclair)
(Ottawa, ON)

Dear Brother Peter:

This note is to thank you for your bold and challenging editorial in the December Tidings 2015 Magazine. I have read it several times and felt how accurately you have assessed the general character and trends of our ecclesial community. The strength of your article is evident in each of the topics you addressed. And so I thank you for writing and publishing such perceptive and helpful editorial.

I have often thought about the institutionalization of functions in the Christadelphian Community. There was a time when there were no organized mission activities. Now we have four mission organizations that have annual budgets that sometimes exceed half a million dollars or more. In the past there were no organized care facilities for the aged. Now, in several countries there are modern well run facilities for seniors and those in need of care. Again, these are expensive operations to run. The combined nursing home network in the UK likely has the Community's highest annual budget. There was a time when there were no vacation "Bible Schools". Now they are abundant throughout the world. Once there were no "Study Days". Today many ecclesias hold these on an annual basis. They seem to have replaced many large Fraternal Gatherings. In recent years, Christadelphian schools have been established in several countries which again requires resources from the Community to operate.

All of these functions require an infra structure, staffing and substantial financial resources to support. While each of these initiatives has merit, there are perhaps some elements that account for some of the trends you described in your editorial.

Thank you again for your provocative editorial.

With kind regards in the Lord,

Ken Curry (Toronto East, ON)

Dear Bro. Peter,

Thank you for your recent editorial in *The Tidings*, December 2015, *Our Self-Inflicted Problems*. You did a fantastic job issuing a wakeup call to our community, correctly identifying some real shortcomings and the ramifications if we continue to neglect Jesus' example and commands. However, we wanted to share a story of hope.

In 2008, Christadelphians in central Illinois founded a new ecclesia with the specific purpose of outreach and preaching. Then, in 2009, we founded the first English-speaking Bible Education Center (BEC) in North America, modeled after the successful BEC models overseas. Our prayer was God's blessing on spreading the Gospel, and also showing that the BEC model can succeed in North America.

The BEC is located in a community shopping mall and is open five days a week. Hundreds of people walk past the BEC each day, with both familiar and new faces regularly stopping in just to sit and talk. We hold Bible classes 3 nights a week, and a daytime women's Bible study. We also use the Bible to teach English

in a weekly ESL (English as a Second Language) class. We conduct individual classes for people further along in their walk. We use modern technology like Skype and a blog on the Daily Readings to widen our audience and our impact. We provide two meals a week to any students, friends and walk-ins that choose to attend our Tuesday night Bible class or our Sunday Service. We host an annual women's Bible study weekend inviting our students, the public, as well as Christadelphian sisters from across North America.

We strongly believe in the "touch and teach" principle. Though focused on Bible teaching, the BEC also extends God's love to the community through various "touch" activities such as weeding at the local Boys & Girls Club or raking leaves for seniors. We visit seniors in nursing homes and work with the homeless. We have a booth in a local festival which has been quite effective in notifying the community of our presence and our offerings. Community members participate in knitting squares as part of the SNUGGLES program we created that provides blankets for needy South African children. We have a very special "celebration party" called a "Stitchathon" once a month, attended by a variety of our regular stitchers, to thank them for making the 62,000+ squares that have been generated. We can happily say that your statement "In fact, to my knowledge there are no full-time domestic evangelists in our community" is disproved here in Champaign, Illinois. (BTW, our ecclesia has 13 members.)

What are the results of this? There have been baptisms, for which we rejoice, but fruit is not only in baptisms, as some are prone to think. People's lives have been changed for the better. Alcoholics have been helped to seek rehab, Scriptural ignorance has been dispelled, hungry people (both spiritually and physically) have been fed, ongoing friendship has been offered to the lonely, sinners have been encouraged to repent. Dozens of Christadelphian volunteers, from North America and beyond, have themselves been built up through participation. We, the workers, have grown. The life we are called to--preaching, teaching, serving--is difficult, yes, but oh so rewarding. Yes, and new brothers and sisters have joined the family of God. We are seed planters; God brings the increase in His wonderful variety of grace and in His own time.

We always welcome visitors or volunteers to come experience or join our work.

Nathan Richard (Champaign, IL)

Many of our readers may have noted that portions of the December 2015 Editorial were abstracted, without proper quotation marks and source citation, from an on-line Christian article by Tom Ehrich (which is available, for example, at www.religionnews.com/2015/05/19/5-ways-churches-inflicted-pain-commentary/). We apologize for this oversight. We hope that our readers will appreciate that the ideas and especially the expanded comments relevant to our own Christadelphian Community are appropriate to our situation as indicated by the letters above.

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.

Fellowship in Jamaica

We arrived in Jamaica Monday, September 28, 2015 for a week of activities with various members and ecclesias. The first few days were spent enjoying fellowship in the homes of members of the May Pen Ecclesia — Brother Melvin and Sister Gerzel Gordon, and then with the family of Brother Leroy and Sister Lorraine Johnson. On Wednesday, Brother Donovan Frazier of the Kingston Ecclesia drove me to the northeast corner of the Island, where the Port Maria Ecclesia received me warmly for three days of activities. Our first visit was with 92 year old Sister Enid Hall in Port Antonio — the only surviving member of the ecclesia which used to meet in this town. Brothers Romain Henry, Conroy Rose and I shared a Breaking of Bread Service with Sister Enid, as well as enjoying a Bible study and hymn singing. We supplied her son and daughter-in-law (who now live with her for company) with some groceries to help with her circumstances of need.



Members of Port Maria Ecclesia

During the next few days we visited members and their families in several homes — in particular, Sisters Alissa Fisher and Sandra Reid. On Friday, Port Maria brothers and sisters came to the room where I was staying, for a Breaking of Bread Service and exhortation on the theme of “A Soft Answer” from Proverbs 15. We also sang hymns, enjoyed a meal together and shared good conversation. This little ecclesia has endured many trials in recent years, and appreciates the support of the CBMJ and the CBMC.

On Saturday October 3rd — Romain, Sandra and I got a taxi ride the quarterly CBMJ Meeting at the May Pen Ecclesial Hall. It rained for a considerable part of our journey but this was welcomed by the residents who have experienced a long drought. Eight ecclesial representatives from the 10 Island ecclesias were present. This meeting was also the annual planning meeting for 2016. The draft 2016 Calendar of Events was reviewed and approved, which includes 12 activities. The three-day Easter Youth Camp and Monday All-Island Fraternal will once again be supported by brothers, sisters and youth from North America — it is hoped that about 12 to 15 will be able to attend. Plans are in motion for North America Truth Corps members to be in Jamaica during July, teaming up with Jamaican youth, as well as brothers and sisters, for preaching and ecclesial activities. There is great anticipation for 2016, God willing.

Finally, we travelled to the southwest corner of the Island for a mini-fraternal held at the Broughton Ecclesial Hall on Sunday October 4th, when members from the Harvey River and Argyle Mountain areas joined Broughton for a day of fellowship. About 40 brothers, sisters and young people were present. We spent the last two evenings enjoying the company of Brother Ray Arthurs at his place in Negril, departing from Montego Bay on October 5th. It was a full and rewarding stay!

*Written by CBMC
Jamaica linkman,
Don Luff
Submitted by Jan
Berneau CBMA/
CBMC Publicity*

**Some at
Broughton
for a mini-
fraternal on
Sunday, Oct.
4th**



A New Young Brother in Lima, Peru

On Sunday, October 18, 2015 we had the privilege of baptizing Nahuel Carmona into the name of Jesus on the rooftop terrace of his family’s home in Lima, Peru. A short time later he was received into fellowship at the memorial service held in the living-room of the house, the meeting-place of the Lima Ecclesia. The only



Bro. Nahuel Carmona being received into Fellowship

child of Bro. Flavio and Sis. Gloria Carmona, Nahuel has been keenly interested in the Bible ever since his parents first requested the postal course in early 2007, and had long looked forward to baptism. To that end he received weekly preparation classes from Jean by telephone for about two years and continues with post-baptismal classes by Skype. We pray God’s blessing on Nahuel’s walk in the Truth alongside his parents and the other members of this warm and growing little ecclesia.

*Jim and Jean Hunter, CBMA Link Couple
Submitted by Jan Berneau*

Baptisms at Los Angeles Hispanic

We had the pleasure of witnessing the baptisms of two new members — Isabella Sotomayor (21) and Ricardo Rodriguez (18) on Saturday, September 26, 2015 — at the Los Angeles Santa Fe Springs Ecclesial Hall in California.

Sister Isabella is the wife of Julio, cousin of our brothers Edwin and David Sanclemente. Isabella was born in Brazil and speaks Portuguese, Spanish and English. She attended ecclesial activities with her family for about a year and a half, and received baptismal classes for over a year, twice a week. Her two children — Alex and Sophia — are very active Sunday School scholars.



Brother Ricardo is the son of our Bro. Jesus and Sis. Carmen Rodriguez, and brother in the flesh of Bro. Jesus Jr and Sis. Rocío. Ricardo began attending the ecclesia when he was five years old, and has always been an enthusiastic member of the young people's group. It gives us much pleasure to now have him as a brother in the faith!

We are very grateful to the brethren of the Los Angeles Ecclesia for the use of their Hall. We had a supper of 'pupusas' (the typical food of El Salvador) prepared by the relatives of Sis. Celina Cervantes. There were approximately 80 people present, including the brethren and friends from other Christadelphian ecclesias in the area, who shared in the joy of our brother and sisters, and enjoyed good fellowship with those of the family of God.

We thank God for His support and guidance in our lives, and we appeal to Him to continue blessing Ricardo and Isabella in their walk towards the Kingdom of God.

*Jim and Jean Hunter, CBMA Link Couple
Submitted by Jan Berneau, CBMA/CBMC Publicity*

ThisIsYourBible.com — Bible Courses used to Prepare for Baptism

Bro. Warren Shapcott, in New Zealand shares this very interesting story of using TIYB.com on-line courses which led two families to become Christadelphians.

The story starts 10 years ago when I did an employment phone interview with a Dennis Tabiliran who was in Saudi Arabia and looking for employment in New Zealand. During the interview we spoke about religion. He was a Christian in a Muslim country and was concerned for his family. The interview was successful

and the Tabiliran family (Dennis, his wife Resa and two children Christie and Christian) was on their way to New Zealand.

It wasn't long after settling in that Dennis and I got talking about religion again, and I invited him to a Bible seminar which was one of many that Dennis attended over the forthcoming years. Two years ago Dennis asked if we could have a cottage class at his home so that the family could get the benefit of Bible studies. A short time into the cottage classes Dennis asked if another family who lived in the same block of flats could join us and so we were introduced to the Pablo family (Pong, his wife Virgie and their two sons Athan and Sam).

Over the next 12 months we used the TIYB.com online course as a basis for our studies. In November 2014 we witnessed two baptisms on the same evening. Dennis Tabiliran was baptised first and then he helped baptise Virgie Pablo into the saving name of our Lord. We continued the cottage classes one on one with Resa Tabiliran and Pong Pablo for another twelve months resulting in their baptisms in October 2015.

We now have two families in the truth and their children attending Sunday school. The families are very appreciative of the truth and they are a wonderful blessing to our ecclesia. This has been a remarkable journey for my sister wife Sheryn and myself as we had to deal with a language barrier during the teaching process. I thank our heavenly Father that we have been used to sow the seed of his wonderful gospel message and also thank the many people who assisted in this very emotional journey.



The two families, starting from the left Bro. Dennis Tabiliran, his two children Christie and Christian, and Sis. Resa Tabiliran. Then the next family; Sis. Virgie Pablo then their two sons Athan and Sam and then Virgie's husband Bro. Pong Pablo.

Addresses for Bequests and Donations

Christadelphian Tidings Publishing Committee publishes this magazine and other works on the Truth. P.O. Box 91781, 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 jeffandkellie@gelineau.org

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

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

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

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 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 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.

ANN ARBOR, MI

We have had a change of recording secretary at Ann Arbor as Bro. Peter Bilello has completed his four year term. Effective January 1st, 2016, Bro. Dan Styles will serve in this capacity, contact information as follows: 1638 Hickory Ridge Ct. S., Canton, MI 4818, email dstyles@ford.com, and phone 313-743-7302.

Dan Styles

CHAMPAIGN COUNTY, IL

The work of sowing and watering the seed continues at our mission ecclesia, and we are delighted to report that God has again given increase, with the baptism of TAMMIE MORRISON on Dec 16, 2015. Our new sister has been a student at our Bible Education Center for over two years.

We continue to offer four classes a week at the BEC (with a reduced schedule in the summer), and positive interest from the community also continues. A number of instructors from all over North America have taught classes via the internet, and we now have some remote students as well. We also continue to have guest volunteers to teach and help out with our other activities, supplementing the work of our local volunteers. Last winter Bro. Peter and Sis. Maggie Stonell from Hamilton Greenaway, ON made a return visit for a month, and this winter we look forward to Bro. John and Sis. Mary Bilello from Ann Arbor, MI joining us in February.

We are most appreciative of our guest teachers, and we also extend our thanks to guest exhorters, mainly from the Bloomington and Chicago ecclesias. These guests enrich our meetings, and we thank brethren Jonathan Smith, Anthony Green, Dan Richard, Russ Johnson, John Fischer, John Bilello and Peter Stonell for their service during the past year.

In May we hosted our annual women's study weekend. The instructor this year was Sis. Cathy Badger from Cambridge, ON, who spoke on "Psalms for Women". In August, we welcomed by transfer from Chicago, IL, Bro. Nathan and Sis. Abigail Richard. One of the regular activities at the BEC is the SNUGGLES program, organized by Si. Jennifer Millay. To date over 62,000 knitted or crocheted squares have been sent to South Africa. There they are assembled into blankets for children, by residents of their townships and Christadelphian volunteers.

Please see our web site (BibleEducationCenter.org) for information on our classes and the SNUGGLES program. We urge you to consider joining us for any length of time as a guest volunteer. If you would like information about volunteering, or about attending classes remotely, you can email us from the site.

Paul Zilmer

TORONTO CHURCH STREET, ON

It has been a while since we updated the Brotherhood on our ecclesial developments so this message covers key changes since 2014. In the last two years we have gained the following new members as fruit from our weekly Learn to Read the Bible Effectively seminars: Sister Arina Ligay (March 2014), Sister Deborah McLaughlin (May 2014), Sister Michelle Mowat (September 2013) and Sister Beverly Beech (November, 2015). We are grateful for these sisters and their work in support of the ecclesia has been wonderful.

A number of transfers occurred over the period. In May, 2015, Sister Lynda Perks transferred her membership to the Mississauga West Ecclesia (May, 2015), Brother Jim Perks transferred to the Toronto East Ecclesia (August, 2015) and Sister Janet Hurd transferred to the Toronto West Ecclesia (January, 2016). We thank them for their efforts through many years of membership at Church Street. Members who joined Church Street included Dev and Rose Ramcharan, from the Toronto West Ecclesia (2014), and Sister Sheryl Thackoorie, from the Book Road Ecclesia in Hamilton (2015).

We are saddened to report the falling asleep of Sister Betty Ashley (July 2015) and Sister Anita Smith (June 2015), both long standing and beloved ecclesial members. We look forward to that day when death will no longer have its sting for us.

We thank those many brethren from the region who have spoken at our memorial meetings and Bible Classes since 2014. In particular, we thank Brother Jim Dillingham, Brother Brian Luke and Brother Ted Hodge Jr. for their inspiring and edifying Study days. Our little ecclesia continues to be a very active lamp-stand in downtown Toronto. Please address all correspondence to Dev Ramcharan, Recording Brother, 1050 Shawmarr Road, Unit 51, Mississauga, ON, L5H3V1.

Dev Ramcharan

TORONTO EAST, ON

Dear brethren effective January 1st, 2016, Bro. Ken Curry is assuming the responsibility as recording brother at Toronto East Ecclesia. His contact information is 6 Alpaca Dr., Toronto, ON M1J 2Z7, 416-431-7069, and email: krcurry@sympatico.ca.

Andrew Webb

MID-ATLANTIC CHRISTADELPHIAN BIBLE SCHOOL(MACBS) SHIPPENSBURG, PA JULY 2- JULY 10, 2016

God willing, the Mid-Atlantic Christadelphian Bible School(MACBS) will be held July 2 - 10, 2016 at Shippensburg University in Shippensburg, PA. The theme this year is "Commit Thy Works unto the LORD", Proverbs 16:3. The Youth Program theme will be "Creation: Spiritual Applications". Bro. Frank Abel (Hamilton Book Road, ON) will speak on the subject "The God of Peace" to the adults and "The Answer of a Good Conscience" to the teens. Bro. Dafydd Jenkins (Cardiff Museum Place, UK) will speak on the subject "Prophets and Kings" to the adults and "Getting to Know My Lord" to the teens. Bro. Roger Lewis (Christchurch North, NZ) will speak on "Gabriel – Messiah's Evening Angel" to the adults and "The Spiritual Habits of the Saints of God" to the teens. Rates for those who register before May 15: Adults: \$520, Teens (Ages 12-19): \$440, Ages 3-11: \$265, Ages 0-2: \$25. Rates after May 15: Adults: \$545, Teens (Ages 12-19): \$460, Ages 3-11: \$280, Ages 0-2: \$25. This information will be available on the MACBS web site: www.MidAtlanticBibleSchool.org

A Minute Meditation

Note: this is the first “Minute Meditation” By Bro. Bob Lloyd, as published in *The Tidings* for February 1958. Bro. Bob took over the editing of the Magazine from Bro. Carl C. Wolfe in January of that year.

Editorial

“How forcible are right words,” says Job, and Solomon declares that “a word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver.” We would also like to include “a word fitly written.” It is our prayer that with God’s help this magazine shall fulfill its obligation in speaking “right words,” words fitly written that will be “like apples of gold in pictures of silver.”

Those who write have a grave responsibility since the written word is a permanent record of thought, put down on paper to influence others. It has been said that the “pen is mightier than the sword.” This is true. The Bible itself is the greatest example of the power of the written word. Look at the effect it has had upon the lives of sincere men and women who have read it and died for the principles set forth in its pages. Men like Tyndale gave their life endeavoring to see that this written word might be available to all.

Today we read our Bible in peace, there are no threats over our head. We also may read almost anything else we want since there is no scarcity of the written word. “Of making many books there is no end,” declared Solomon. We have available all kinds of books on every conceivable subject. They run from the trash of many pulp magazines all the way up to the Bible.

The words we read have a great effect upon what we are, since we are what we think, and the words we read become absorbed into our minds and to a great extent become us.

We shall be wise to choose our books as we do our friends, to read those things which are true, honest, just, pure, lovely and of good report.

We of “*The Tidings*,” realizing the responsibilities of preaching “The Truth” via the written word, have accepted this assignment with trembling hearts and feeble knees acknowledging, as Solomon, that we are but little children, and we are in the midst of God’s people, a great people, and so we pray with Solomon that God will give us an understanding heart that we may discern between good and bad that our words may be fitly written as “apples of gold in pictures of silver”.

Robert Lloyd

Minute Meditations (10th Edition) available from:

The Christadelphian Office (thechristadelphian.com)

Thousand Oaks Christadelphian Library (christadelphianlibrary.com)

Detroit Christadelphian Book Supply (christadelphianbooks.com)

Coming Events (Lord Willing)

Please send in notices at least two months before the date of the event.
Three months is preferable. Send all submissions to kathytidings@aol.com

FEBRUARY, 2016

6 Brantford, ON Annual Junior CYC and Little Disciples Winter Gathering at Camp Trillium. Workbooks will be posted toward the end of the year on www.brantfordchristadelphians.com. For information e-mail 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 Bro. Jeff Gelineau at jeffgelineau@gmail.com or visit our website www.californiabibleschool.org for more details.

MARCH, 2016

19-20 Baltimore, MD Bible Study weekend at the Baltimore Ecclesia, 6311 Loudon Avenue, Elkridge, MD 21075. Speaker will be Bro. Steve Cheetham (Moorestown, NJ). Subject: "Lessons from the Kings". Saturday classes begin at 1 p.m. and include dinner. Classes resume on Sunday at 9:30 a.m. during Sunday School, followed by Memorial Service and lunch. Afternoon talk TBD. Contact: Sis. Carol Link at linkgang87@gmail.com.

25-27 Wichita Falls, TX Annual Spring Gathering at the T4C Camp, Freestone, Tx. Bro. Colin Hollamby (Glenlock, S. Aus): "The pleasant theme of Israel's Psalms". For information contact Bro. Larry Beutel lbeutel@alsco.com.

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.

16-17 Largo Tampa Bay, FL will host a study weekend at the ecclesial hall. Bro. Frank Abel (Hamilton Book Road, ON) will lead us in the study of God's word. For further information, contact Bro. Walt Dodrill, Recorder at 727-410-0896 or email waltdodrill@msn.com.

22-24 New England Brothers' Weekend at Camp Joslin, Charlton, MA. The speaker will be Bro. Dean Brown on "Great Prayers". Please register early. Registration: Bro. Ben Link, 39 Perkins St., Apt 416, Lowell, MA 01854; newengbros@gmail.com; for general information: Bro. Jim Boyko jnkboyko@gmail.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.

7-8 Meriden, CT Spring Study Weekend on "The Testimony of Archaeology to the Truth of the Bible". Speaker Bro. Jonathan Bowen. Please contact Bro. Steve Harper for details at sharper.rr@me.com.

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JUNE, 2016

17-19 New York Metropolitan Sister's Retreat, The Homewood Suite, Lancaster, PA. Speaker is Sis. Cadi Phillips (Moorestown, NJ). Her topic is "The Importance of words". For registration, please contact: Sis. Averil Ferguson, at (718) 877-6618, email adferguson@gmail.com.

JULY, 2016

2-10 Mid-Atlantic Bible School, Shippensburg, PA. The speakers are Bro. Frank Abel (Hamilton Book Road, ON): "The God of Peace" (Adults), and "The Answer of a Good Conscience" (Teens); Bro. Dafydd Jenkins (Cardiff – Museum Place, UK): "Prophets and Kings" (Adults) and "Getting to Know My Lord" (Teens); and Bro. Roger Lewis (Christchurch North, NZ): "Gabriel – Messiah's Evening Angel" (Adults) and "The Spiritual Habits of the Saints of God" (Teens). This information will also be available on the MACBS website: www.MidAtlanticBibleSchool.com.

9-16 Manitoulin Family Bible Camp. Speakers Bro. Andrew Bramhill (Birmingham, Shirley, UK) and Bro. David Billington (Brantford, ON). See the website for details (www.manitoulinfamilycamp.com).

10-16 Southwest Bible School at Schreiner University in Kerrville, TX. The speakers this year are Bro. Roger Lewis: "The Four Faces of Christ in the Gospel" (Adults) and "The Spiritual Habits of the Saints of God" (Teens), Bro. Wilfred Alleyne: "The Book of Beginnings" (both), and Bro. David Jennings: "For Who hath Despised the Day of Small Things" (both). Registration forms will be available on the Bible School website, Lord willing, the beginning of 2016: www.swcbs.com.

16-24 Midwest Bible School held at Trine University, Angola, IN. The speakers and their subjects are Bro. Jesse Adair (CA): "Judas Iscariot"; Bro. Matt Norton (AUS): "The Tabernacle in the Wilderness"; and Bro. Tim Morgan (UK): "Arise and Build". For registration information, contact Bro. Mike Livermore, 44943 Yorkshire Drive, Novi, MI 48375, phone: 248-462-5740, email: mike.live@gmail.com or visit www.midwestbibleschool.com.

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 "The Honor of Kings – Searching Out the Parables"; and Bro. Ken Styles (Detroit Royal Oak, MI) on "Forgiveness". For registration information, contact Sis. Pat Posey at Pat1Posey@gmail.com.