

The
Christadelphian Tidings
of the Kingdom of God

Thoughts on the Way

Editorial

Exhortation
The Greatest
Commandment

Reflection
One in Seven, Seven in One

Why I Left ...
The Trinity, Idols

Jonathan
Final Article: The Greater
Picture

Reflection
So What Now?

Doctrines to be Rejected

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Our Opponents

“I appeal to you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught; avoid them” (Rom 16:17).

Introduction

Over the years, I have been exposed to many of those who have opposed our Christadelphian community. As I am sure is common to many of my readers, I have been both verbally challenged and read many tracts written by those who consider our beliefs apostate. Although the Internet has allowed us to spread our message, it has also allowed those who disagree with us to spread their own messages. In addition, I have received quite a few communications from our members asking for help when they have been attacked for their beliefs.

The aspect that has interested myself, and led to this editorial, is how, by and large, the arguments used on me many decades ago are virtually identical to those used today. The only (although major) difference is that the Internet allows these views and diatribes to be far more widely dispersed and readily available. Simply typing in “Christadelphians” often brings up one or more of these opposing websites, quite high among the almost 400,000 sites indexed by Google which mention “Christadelphian”. Decades ago, you might find the occasional pamphlet in Christian Bookstores, and some mentions in the more comprehensive encyclopedias, but you would have to be a very diligent researcher to find much more than this.

However, when I looked at these arguments, they seem to be based upon the same “research”. With rare exceptions, then, the approaches used by both those who oppose and those who defend have remained the same, and the lack of success of the opponents has likewise remained the same. Our community has not been exploding in size like those of the mega-churches around us, but our faith and our beliefs have remained unchanging. We all sometimes encounter those who create obstacles for us, and particularly those who are young in their work towards the Kingdom, but we can draw comfort, knowledge, and guidance in the fact that most of the challenges of those who oppose have been met long ago.

In the beginning

There have always been opponents of the Christadelphian faith, and those who were opposed the most vigorously became the most important in the development of our beliefs and community. However, I will concentrate on the attacks that have been most often repeated, and date back the furthest. I am not including any of the great debates of the past conducted by Bro. Roberts and others in which they directly challenged individuals who defended the false doctrines of Christendom, or even those of atheists. Some of these debates are still in print, and reflect Bro. Roberts’ mastery of this form of preaching.

It was not long after he commenced publishing *The Ambassador* (later *The Christadelphian*) that the nascent community was assaulted by **David King**, a Campbellite. This was not surprising, because a number of the members of his denomination formed the nucleus of the emerging Christadelphian denomination from 1849 on, including about half the congregation in Aberdeen where Bro. Roberts, as a boy of about 10, heard John Thomas speak.

The attacks continued, although David King refused all offers to debate with Bro. Roberts. There later was a broadside, written by him in 1881, entitled “A glance at the history and mystery of Christadelphianism”, and this is actually still being used by our opponents. To quote from what Bro. Roberts wrote at the time¹:

“It is not a history of the truth, but an unfriendly representation of certain incidents, over 30 years old, of no manner of moment to those who desire only to know what the Bible teaches. They are incidents connected with the visit of Dr. Thomas to Britain in 1848–9, incidents which were naturally galling to those whose fellowship he was leaving, but which in no way affect the question of Christ’s coming and Kingdom. They are incidents of which those who cherish Dr. Thomas’ memory need in no wise be ashamed. The Tract has been answered and the incidents explained long ago.

“As for ‘mystery,’ there is none in Christadelphianism. It is the outcome of a reasonable and frank acceptance of the Bible as the word of God. Studying this for himself, Dr. Thomas discovered that its teaching was at total variance with recognized theology in all points and particulars. He set himself to work by voice and pen to make this manifest. Others examined to see if it was so. They found it was so, and they in turn have done the same towards others. In this there is no “mystery,” but a very straightforward and obvious operation of reason and truth.”

It does seem strange to me that some episodes from over 150 years ago are used to attack a community whose foundation relies on the evidence of the Bible: although Bro. Thomas indeed developed much of what we believe, we only rarely cite any of his writings when we teach. And although it must be admitted a few of his prophetic views have not been fulfilled in the way he expected, we can still read his works with profit.

A common pamphlet

I first came across a pamphlet attacking the Christadelphians in the 1960’s, while browsing a religious bookstore. I did not know it at the time, but it was first published around 1910, and fully answered by Bro. Walker in 1912². The basis of Pollock’s attacks was a copy of “The Declaration”, in which each statement, of which there are 36, is followed by the appropriate Bible verses. Pollock chooses to address ten or so of these topics: as the whole reply would run to twelve pages or so of this magazine, it is impossible for me to even summarize the arguments. However, these are common to many who attack our doctrines: a list (as in bold) will probably suffice, because all these items are well covered in our literature,

and we all should be prepared to answer for our beliefs in each of these areas.

- **“Son Of God,” Not “God The Son”:** or The True Nature of Christ
- **Christ And Creation:** Or the Preexistence Of Christ
- **The Atonement:** or Representation not Substitution
- **The Gospel: “The Power of God unto Salvation”:** We must believe the Gospel to be Saved.
- **Baptism:** And Why It Is Essential To Salvation
- **David Is Not Ascended Into The Heavens:** There is no Heaven as a Place For Our Souls
- **The Thief On The Cross:** The meaning of *“Today thou shalt be with me in Paradise”*
- **The Holy Spirit:** the Power of God, not the Third person of the Trinity
- **The Devil:** A Symbol For The Temptations That Overcome Mankind
- **Hell:** Either The Grave Or Permanent Destruction
- **“Soul” And “Spirit”:** The Immortality of the Soul

Christadelphian prophecies

This is another area in which our opponents have assailed us, although in some cases you can argue they might be somewhat justified. There is an unfortunate tendency in our community to engage in speculation as to the time of Christ’s return, and this has persisted from the time of John Thomas to now. In writing “Anatolia” in 1854, (later published in a modified form as “Exposition of Daniel”, he was convinced that Russia would win the Crimean War. In the same year, he forecast:

“When this appointed time shall have elapsed [that is in 1866], the work of establishing the Kingdom’s economy in the land promised to Abraham and Christ, and to all constitutionally in them, will be commenced”³

Of course, this date, which has often been regarded as the end of the temporal power of the Pope, can be regarded as significant, but certainly did not fulfill the expectations of John Thomas. And this tendency to set specific dates has continued: I can remember quite a few of them even in my short time. Famously, an Australian brother, Charles Wauchope, actually had his prediction of Armageddon in 1934 entered into the Australian Parliamentary record in 1921. Some (although not all) were hedged by “we cannot be sure, but the signs of the times seem to indicate that...”. Of the return of our Lord we can be sure: but of the date, not so. So we should keenly look at the “Signs of the Times.” But I believe he will return when we (or at least most of us) least expect it. We need to be ready to make our defense before our opponents, and pray that, by the grace of God, we will be admitted to the Kingdom of our Lord.

Peter Hemingray

Notes:

1. *The Christadelphian*, 1881 p. 186–187.
2. *The Christadelphian*, 1912 p. 457, 487
3. *Herald of the Kingdom*, 1854, p. 225

Exhortation

I will walk at liberty...

Clear your minds

The heart that is ‘deceitful above all things’ rarely lets us enjoy our moments. It’s always reminding us what we don’t have, what we do poorly, that we aren’t as respected as some other person, what tasks we’ve left undone. The list goes on.

This situation is compounded by our feelings. Happy circumstances tend to promote (but do not guarantee) happy thoughts. But if we’re anxious, we obsess and inflate our often imagined woes. Whether feeling or thinking, our moments are quite an unreliable continuum: babble mixed with vanity and a dose of self-pity, not to mention thoughts completely inappropriate for polite conversation.

Scripture asserts strongly that what we think about will dictate every aspect of our lives. Simply put: *“Those who are dominated by the sinful nature think about sinful things...”* (Rom 8:5 NLT).

None of this is in **accordance** with the high calling we’ve received. The expectation of scripture is that we think and feel differently from those governed by the flesh. So here’s the question: How do you usually feel and what do you spend most of your time thinking about? And, does the summary above reflect your existence? Are your thoughts and feelings a basket case?

Mark Twain said this: “We all do no end of feeling, and we mistake it for thinking”. Precisely the point. We tend to exist in the matrix of confused emotions rather than clear thinking, and confuse this with measured reflection. Think about this translation of a passage in James: *“Clean up your lives, you sinners, and clear your minds...”* (James 4:8 NAS).

Here’s another dimension to our thoughts and feelings: We can get better at managing our thoughts and feelings, and getting better would do nothing but serve our interests, but we tolerate our weakness because that’s what we’re used to. This is our brutal reality. We know there is better, but our natural resistance to change and attraction to mediocrity limits us. I’ll never forget this quote by CS Lewis:

“We are half-hearted creatures... when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea... We are far too easily pleased.”

Whatever else, we all have to agree, living presently in the glory and appreciation of the things around us and the high calling we’ve received is not likely our normal state of being. Being frenetic, distracted, emotionally fragile (guilt! shame!) and self-indulgent more likely defines our existence.

This is the dilemma: Scripture insists we think and feel differently from those around us, but just how do we go about that? Delightfully, scripture insists that this is both possible and necessary for us to improve the quality of our discipleship.

God wants us to be free

A perfect summary I wish I learned decades ago is this: God wants us to be free. This is a perfect distillate of scripture's message of emancipation. In fact, it would be hard to find a better summary of how our faith should impact us.

There's a reason scripture uses slavery as a metaphor. Our adherence to the thinking of the flesh, though we know that it is not our best interests, is a brutal truth. It is true enslavement. We are kept against our will; slaves to the feeble thinking. And, most of the time we forget that we are slaves.

Slavery

Paul writes at length of the Jewish inclination to slide back into the slavery of the law: *"...how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements?" (Gal 4:9)*. It was hard for new Jewish converts to shift their psyches to something that they and their forefathers would otherwise have scorned: The idea that faith, alone, is the divine criteria.

It is near impossible to which to make the ideological shift to freedom. It's in Jewish (read: human) DNA to be legalistic: religion is what everyone else can see you doing. Such futile thinking. In fact Peter refers to it as the *"...worthless ways inherited from your forefathers" (1Pet 1:18)*. And even more cuttingly, Jesus says *"They worship me in vain; their teachings are merely human rules" (Matt 15:9)*. And, let's keep in mind, Jewish culture is a deeply religious culture. That is, being deeply religious is not a guarantee of sound divine principles.

Imagine inserting the words 'vain', 'futile' or 'worthless' into a conversation you are having with a colleague or friend about their work or religious principles. Think of the reaction those words would garner. That gives us an idea of the abrupt language scripture is deploying.

Knowing that scripture uses Israel as a foil with which to see ourselves, it is no surprise that our own faith can be just as futile. Think of all the hours we spend in classes, Sunday school and meetings. Hundreds of hours each year. If from all that time we are awash in human thinking - distraction, pride, comparativeness, shame and discontent - we, just as futilely, miss the point.

It is a perfect comparison: Some deeply religious Jews had converted to Jesus's teachings but were still enslaved by the law. Even more caustically, some able Bible students, often deeply religious, can be enslaved by a similar cycle of vanity: pride, anxiety and the reverence of men's opinions.

This is a travesty. We are to be free! And that means in our thinking. Our God is a God of our minds. If our thinking is self-indulgent God is not there. *"I the LORD search the heart and examine the mind..." (Jer 17:10)*

The proof

Here's the resounding proof that God wants us to be free. All of the principles and commandments we are to live by do nothing but make our lives better. Given this, it is bizarre how opposed the flesh is to divine guidance. Fleshly thinking has it that it's our 'obligation' to serve. But every principle of scripture makes us more like saints. Honestly speaking, what else is there? Does anyone actually want to be greedy, fear-laden, distracted, bitter, petty, or entitled? It is not an obligation to serve. It is a privilege.

Hopefully we all get to the place where we loathe our flesh and are humbled by the divine direction scripture gives us. Then we come to a wonderful realization: Of course! All the 'obligations' of scripture are deep-seated sources of freedom:

- The purpose of each teaching is to make our lives better.
- The purpose of eliminating pride is so that we live without feeding our own egos and can focus on honoring the creator in the here and now.
- The whole point of us being forgiving is so that we are free of the bitterness which is caused by holding a grudge. We are to be loving as that promotes the relationships that give our lives meaning.
- We are to study and reverence scripture because the more we can recall the principles, the more fulfilled we are in this life. It doesn't matter what teaching of Christ we think of, it serves our own interests; our freedom.

I walk at liberty

The principle that God wants us to be free is a pointed scriptural teaching. There is one passage of scripture that cements this for me: "*I will walk at liberty: for I seek thy precepts*" (Psa 119:45). This verse says much. It is telling us that if we are putting first the things of the kingdom of God, then we are free. It is telling us that we are free because we are actively trying to live by God's laws, not our own. It is telling us we can, right now, be free.

We needn't fear (read: reverence) what others think, or whether we are regarded highly by those around us, or if our appearance or occupation is meeting society's approval. I keep coming back to trying to appease others because our flesh is so focused on this, while scripture insists on the opposite. There are a dozen passages that echo this one: "*Why do you esteem mere men...and so forget the LORD...?*" (Isa 51:12,13).

We know what to do!

The second part of the above verse in the Psalm is the best part: "*for I seek thy precepts*". It's telling us we know how to act. We have no end of direction as to the people we ought to be: gentle, patient, sober, content, and deeply careful that we aren't being deceived by the flesh. This consciousness, that we are called to manifest God's character, and are told how to, is the greatest gift of our lives. Literally, scripture is '*a light unto our paths*'.

It is preposterous that we tolerate the chronic doubt, guilt and distraction that we do. Intellectually we know better. We can actually do the things expected:

reverence, discipline, gratitude and dedication. If we are active in the ecclesia and honestly trying to manifest God's character in every part of our lives, there is little that is wanting from us.

Here's where the trouble starts: our flesh has trouble acknowledging that we are doing as we ought. So, if we are about the master's work, we **must** learn to call it and let go of the perennial doubt and shame that normally hinders us and be thankful for the direction, even divine success, we have been given in this life.

Here's the point: scripture is full of direction as to the person we ought not to be. So, if we aren't the bitter, thoughtless, reactionary fool of scripture, and are the self-regulated, deliberate servant of Christ, then what would we possibly have to be unsure of?

The expectations of scripture are neither unclear nor unattainable. We can be excellent spouses. We can be good parents. We can be diligent workers. We can be worthy examples in our communities. We can be respectful ecclesial members. We can be devoted to the high calling in our youth. We can live free of fear, distraction, self-loathing and shame. The list, happily, goes on.

For I seek thy precepts

I repeat: Living presently in the glory and appreciation of the things around us and the high calling we've received is not likely our normal state of being. But it is the expectation! It is a relief that our problem is the norm. Most of us are not in control of our thoughts and feelings. This is a fundamental problem of our existence. We are actually enslaved, and are naturally attracted to our own enslavement. It's like we suffer from the Stockholm syndrome.

Remember, the 'deceitful' heart rarely lets us enjoy our moments, even if we have nothing to be concerned about! We often think of our 'obligation' to serve. This is part of our enslavement. Scripture is not an onerous, demanding message. It is a source of daily salvation. The point here is that all of God's laws invariably serve us. And, we can get better at living principled lives!

The expectation of scripture is that we think and feel differently **than** those governed by the flesh. Scripture does not ask us to do anything we cannot do. We can 'walk at liberty' with confidence knowing 'we seek (**his**) precepts'. And, these precepts are not a forever-evolving mystery: we know how to act. If we're doing wrong, knowingly, then, of course, we are not free. If we are doing the things of life, in the reverence and gratitude that comes from scripture, we have it all.

All the more reason to meditate on this passage: *"It was for freedom that Christ set us free; keep standing firm and do not be subject again to the yoke of slavery"* (Gal 5:1).

Dana Kohlman (Rolling Hills, AB)

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First Principles

Doctrines to Be Rejected — (12) Hell

Doctrine to Be Rejected # 9 —That the wicked will suffer eternal torture in hell.

This can be positively stated as: The wicked are destined to eternal oblivion in the grave, excepting only those of their number who are answerable to God and will be raised to condemnation, to return eternally to the grave.

This doctrine, associated with is as that of conditional immortality or the sleep of death, goes back in the history of our community to 1835, when John Thomas wrote his “34 questions”. They include, in part:

8. If, as soon as the breath is out of a man’s body, he be instantly translated to heaven or hell, how can he be said to be dead, and to rise again from the dead; is a man in heaven or hell, dead and alive at the same time? If so, where do the scriptures teach this?

9. Do the scriptures teach that men and women, and children, come from heaven and hell when they rise from the dead; or, do they not rather teach, that men’s mortal bodies will be made alive, i.e. re animated by the spirit, i.e. the power of God, as the body of Jesus was?

It is interesting that the earliest Statement of Faith by Robert Roberts, written in 1868, says:

That the popular belief in heaven and hell is a delusion, therefore, the wicked will not suffer eternal torture, but will be engulfed in total destruction after resurrection.

The first part, concerning man’s conscious existence in death, was covered last month.

Origin of hell

The concept of hell held by most professing Christian’s does not come from the Bible. Accepting the distorted ideas from this world, cut off from God, their beliefs originated from pagan philosophy. Before proving the truth about hell from God’s Word, we need to take note of the world’s traditional beliefs.



The *New Jewish Encyclopedia* comments on the subject of hell in a very definitive manner:

“Judaism does not teach a specific concept of hell. It is assumed that evildoers will be punished, but the manner and place of chastisement are left to the justice of God.”

Other religions exercise much more imagination to fit their concept of eternal punishment. One of the most concise summaries of man’s traditional concept of hell is found in the *Encyclopedia Americana*:

“As generally understood, hell is...whither lost or condemned souls go after death to suffer indescribable torments and eternal punishment...It is the place of divine revenge, untempered, never ending. This has been the idea most generally held by Christians, Catholics, and Protestants alike.”

As to the similarity of the concept of hell among various religions, the article continues, “The main features of hell as conceived by Hindu, Persian, Egyptian, Grecian, and Christian theologians are essentially the same.”

The writings of Dante Alighieri (1265-1321) made a strong impression on Catholics during the later Middle Ages. His work *The Divine Comedy* provided vivid details of sufferings in the dismal setting he described as hell or “Inferno”. His influential writings describing this inferno were inspired by many influences, including those of the Greek philosophers and strangely, it has been argued, the philosophy of Islam.¹ All these ideas were from sources other than the Bible.

Strangely, the Catholics have recently repudiated this concept of hell as a place. Pope John Paul II, in a statement published on July 28, 1999:

“The images of hell that Sacred Scripture presents to us must be correctly interpreted. They show the complete frustration and emptiness of life without God. Rather than a place, hell indicates the state of those who freely and definitively separate themselves from God, the source of all life and joy.”

Bible usage — Old Testament¹

In the Authorized Version of the Old Testament the word ‘hell’ appears thirty-one times, however, in the Revised Standard Version of the Old Testament the word ‘hell’ does not appear in any of these verses. Instead the word ‘Sheol’ appears. What does ‘Sheol’ mean? Sheol is a transliterated Hebrew word that means “a hollow and subterranean place, full of thick darkness”(Gesenius). The New International Version of the Old Testament does not use ‘Sheol’ or ‘hell’ in any of these verses but rather ‘grave’, ‘death’ or ‘the depths’.

In none of the verses where Sheol appears is there any association with the idea that this is a place of torment or punishment. The verses that do comment on what is experienced in Sheol, indicate that there is a complete lack of conscious thought or deliberate action there. For example:

“For in death there is no remembrance of Thee: in the grave [sheol] who shall give Thee thanks?” (Psa 6:5);

“there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave [sheol]” (Eccl 9:10);

“the grave [sheol] cannot praise Thee, death cannot celebrate Thee: they that go down into the pit cannot hope for Thy truth” (Isa 38:18).

‘Hell’ in the AV of the Old Testament is, therefore, to be understood as referring to that place to which all are gathered at death.

Hell in the New Testament

In the Authorized Version of the New Testament the word ‘hell’ appears twenty-three times. This may cause confusion because in the original Greek three different words are to be found. These are *Gehenna*, *Hades*, and also *Tartaros*, which ~~once occurs~~ in 2Pet 2:4.

The confusion is compounded in the New International Version, which renders *hades* as ‘hell’ in Luke 16:23, as ‘grave’ in Acts 2:27 and as ‘hades’ in Rev 1:18. In the Revised Standard Version there is less confusion and more consistency because *Gehenna* is always translated ‘hell’, and *hades* is left as ‘Hades’ (Matt 16:18 uses ‘death’, but the margin indicates ‘Hades’).

What do these Greek words mean?

Gehenna means ‘the valley of (the sons of) Hinnom’. In the Old Testament it is associated with idolatry, fire rituals and child sacrifices (2Kgs. 23:10; Jer 7:31,32; 19:1-6; 32:35).

The normal Christadelphian view is²:

In New Testament times it was still associated with fire and death. It was the place where the bodies of convicted criminals were thrown and where waste materials were deposited to be destroyed by the ever-burning fires. With the exception of James 3:6 it is used only by Jesus, and in passages in which he is stressing the certainty of annihilation at death if behavior and attitudes are not changed. “Hell fire” is not, therefore, speaking of the nature of the punishment for those adjudged as wicked but is a picture of what will happen to the unworthy. As the hot and corrosive conditions in the valley of Hinnom utterly destroyed anything left there, so the unworthy will cease to exist.

Hades is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew sheol and generally refers to that which the dead occupy: the grave. It is translated as ‘grave’ in the AV in this passage: “O death, where is thy sting? O grave [hades], where is thy victory?” (1Cor 15:55). This appears to be quoting Hos 13:14, where, interestingly, sheol is translated ‘grave’: “O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave [sheol], I will be thy destruction”.

The treatment of Hades is essentially quite correct. The discussion of *Gehanna* is essentially that repeated in almost every Christadelphian source we have seen.

There is no doubt that *Gehanna*, the valley of Hinnon, is undoubtedly the place of burial of convicted criminals as well as the location of “80 burial caves, most of which date to the time of Jesus, what archaeologists and other scholars refer to as the Herodian period (37 BC – 70 AD). Some of these tombs are in magnificent condition, still standing to their full height”⁴. But it probably did not gain this association because the garbage of the city was burned there: this is a very late tradition, recorded only in around 1200 AD by Rabbi David Kimhi.

However, the association of the valley with unquenchable fire in the minds of the Jews that Jesus was addressing is almost certainly correct. The theme of the “accursed valley” is developed in extra Biblical literature after the close of the Old Testament. In these writings, *Gehenna* represents an eternal, but still



localized, place of judgment (1Enoch 27) bearing that name (2Baruch 59:10, 85:13; 4Ezra 7:36). Isaiah, in a tradition parallel to the judgment in Jer 19:11-14, states, “~~their worm will not die, nor will their fire be quenched~~” (Isa 66:24 NIV).⁵ Though the two symbols (the valley and the unquenchable fire) do not refer to each other directly, they are associated with each other in these extra Biblical texts. Within the New Testament, these symbols are largely interchangeable metaphors (Mark 9:43). The association is likely due to the intertestamental synthesis of Jer 7:32 and Isa 66:24, the original (burnt) sacrifices offered in Hinnom, or the tradition that the Maccabees burned enemy corpses in it⁵.

Thus the Christadelphian view that hell (*Gehanna*) ~~represented~~ burning and complete destruction at the time of Jesus,

and hence ~~for~~ our interpretation of ~~the Bible~~, is correct. But the explanation that it was a place of the burning of garbage, and hence of perpetual fire and destruction, is based upon a dubious tradition of a millennia later than the time of Jesus.

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

Notes:

1. See the Wikipedia article on “Divine Comedy”.
2. These two sections are based upon the Testimony “Basic Bible Principles, on “Hell”.
3. See http://christadelphianbooks.org/agora/art_less/h08.html, among several other sources
4. See “Akeldama, Potter’s Field or High Priest’s Tomb?” By Leen and Kathleen Ritmeyer, Biblical Archeology Review March/April 1994.
5. Based on the entry on Gehenna in The Lexham Bible Dictionary. The same information is included in some modern major Biblical commentaries.

Why I Left the Roman Catholic Church (3) Diet, Mariolatry

Dietary commands are traditions of men

In the Roman Catholic Church, we are instructed to fast at Lent and to abstain from meat on Fridays. However, the Apostle Paul warns us:

“...Why, as though living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulations - “Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle,” which all concern things which perish with the using — according to the commandments and doctrines of men? These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion, false humility, and neglect of the body, but are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh” (Col 2:20-23).

“Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth” (1Tim 4:1-3).

I have thus learned that the Lenten and Friday fasts are from men and not from God. God clearly told us in Isaiah 58 what type of fasting He desires of us: *“Is this not the fast that I have chosen: To loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, and that you break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and that you bring to your house the poor who are cast out; when you see the naked, that you cover him, and not hide yourself from your own flesh?” (Isa 58:6-7; read all of Isaiah 58 for a more complete understanding).*

Marian piety

In the Roman Catholic Church, we are taught that Jesus’ mother, Mary, is “Queen of the Universe”, who was crowned Queen of heaven and earth on her arrival at the throne of God after the “assumption”. One rosary booklet states/prays to Mary that,

“Just as all creatures are subject to r Son and God by the rule of the Sacred heart, so he has placed all under  rule of the Immaculate Heart. You are Queen because you are “full of grace,” the mother of Christ, the Co-redemptrix, and because you triumphed over the devil, sin, concupiscence [intense sexual desire] and death. Christ, the Mediator between God and Man, has made you the Mediatrix of all Graces, permitting you to dispense all Heavenly blessings to us sinful creatures. Your most powerful prayer is the Beads. May we say them every day of our life,” (“Novena of Our Lady’s Rosary: with Meditations and Indulgences” by Bernard A. McCaffrey, p. 57.)

I must say that I used to say the rosary every day, with fervency and devotion. However, I do not engage in this practice anymore.

In the Catholic hymn “Immaculate Mary”, we sing: “Immaculate Mary, your praises we sing, you reign now in heaven with Jesus, our king... In heaven, the blessed your glory proclaim; On earth, we your children invoke your fair name... Your name is our power, your virtues our light...”. In an “Ancient Prayer”, we pray to Mary thus: “We turn to you for protection, holy Mother of God. Listen to our prayers and help us in our needs. Save us from every danger, glorious and blessed Virgin” (*Family Book of Prayer*, Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, p. 30). However, scripture proves that the above is not correct:

Mary as mediator

Concerning Mary being a Mediatrix, having power, and able to dispense heavenly blessings to humans, the Bible says unequivocally this is incorrect.

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

“Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

“Whatever you ask in my name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in my name, I will do it” (John 14:13).

Jesus never said that we could ask anything in anyone else’s name, including that of his mother. He even goes on to tell us about the “helper” He will send. It is not his mother, but God’s Holy Spirit:

“And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another helper [Comforter], that he may abide with you forever — the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him; but you know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you. I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you” (John 14:16-18).

Jesus Himself did not exalt His mother, Mary, in the three times he is recorded as speaking to or about her:

- In the first instance, Jesus was a boy of 12 and stayed behind in the temple after his parents had left the Passover Feast at Jerusalem. His mother said, “‘Son, why have You done this to us? Look, your father and I have sought You anxiously.’ And he said to them, ‘Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about my Father’s business?’ But they did not understand the statement which he spoke to them” (Luke 2:48-50).
- Another time, Jesus was preaching and healing. “Then ~~His~~ mother and brothers came to him, and could not approach him because of the crowd. And it was told him by some, who said, ‘Your mother and your brothers are standing outside, desiring to see you.’ But he answered and said to them, ‘My mother and my brothers are these who hear the word of God and do it’” (Luke 8:19-21).
- As he was dying on the cross, Jesus took care of his mother by giving her to his disciple as the disciple’s own mother. (John 19:25-27).

Mary as a “Saint”

Regarding Mary’s supposed triumph over the devil, sin, intense sexual desire and death:

- Jesus had earthly (blood) brothers and sisters (see Luke 8:19; Acts 1:14; Gal 1:19; Matt 13:55; Mark 6:6; Matt 12:46; Mark 3:31). In Mark 6:3, they are even named: *“Is this not the carpenter, the Son of Mary, and brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon? Are not his sisters here with us?”* This is to be expected, since Joseph and Mary were married, and had normal marital relations after Jesus was born: Joseph *“took Mary home as his wife. But he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.”* (Matt 1:24-25 NIV). This proves that Mary is *not* “ever virgin”, and that she did not “triumph over concupiscence”.
- In 1Cor 15:20-28, Paul explains how *everyone* dies because of Adam, and all can have life because of Christ. And, *“the last enemy that will be destroyed is death.”* (See also Rev 20:13-14). How could Mary triumph over death if Christ Himself had not yet destroyed death? Also, the writer of Hebrews explains that *Jesus* destroyed the devil. No mention is made of Mary doing the same. *“Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death he might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil”* (Heb 2:14). Nowhere in the Bible does it state that Mary never sinned, nor that she triumphed over the devil. The only one who was made of flesh yet did not sin was Jesus (1John 3:5; Heb 5:15).
- In the Bible, Mary is not mentioned as having been “assumed” into heaven. In fact, scripture says, *“No one has ascended to heaven...but the son of Man who is in heaven”* (John 3:13). The Bible teaches that Mary is, as is every human who has passed away, asleep, or dead. If she is “asleep in Christ”, that is, if she has been faithful to the gospel, she will be raised to eternal life when Jesus comes again (see 1Thess 4:13-18; Acts 2:38; 2Tim 4:1; John 12:48).

In some rosary booklets, the “coronation” of Mary is “proven” by Rev 12:1: *“A woman clothed with the sun, and the moon was under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars”*. However, the woman here is not Mary (please see the rest of chapter 12, and note that the book of Revelation is a very figurative book, and one can see that the “woman” is not a real woman, but represents something else). The woman is the ecclesia (church/people) who are likened to a “chaste virgin” (2Cor. 11:2; Eph 5:23). But, as sections of the ecclesia had been guilty of unfaithful (Rev 2:20-23), the onetime “chaste virgin” is now represented as being with child, pregnant with the seeds of error (Acts 15) (*The Book of Revelation; Verse by Verse Exposition*, by H.P. Mansfield, p. 149). One can see the parallel of God’s virgin bride (Christians) falling because of unfaithfulness, and the virgin of Israel falling *“The virgin of Israel has fallen; She will rise no more,”* (Amos 5:2).

Thus, the doctrine that Mary was ever-virgin, that she did not die, that she was assumed into heaven and crowned Queen of heaven, is a teaching of men.

Ruth Anne Chisholm-Davin (Shelburne, ON)

Isn't It Time To Discuss Revelation? (1)

Introduction

One of the tragic characteristics of our community over the past 160 years has been repeated divisions. Time and again, different groups of brethren have revealed a deplorable tendency to allow their zeal for the Word to degenerate into unbrotherly squabbling, which frequently produced damaging separation. Even if it is true, as is sometimes claimed, that the process resulted in a closer definition and refinement of our doctrine, it was nonetheless obtained at a high price and through a denial of a central theme of the preaching of Jesus Christ.

In my own time in the Truth, during much of the second half of the 20th century, the old problem reappeared in a slightly different form. Particularly from the 1970's two distinct schools of thought emerged in the brotherhood as to how to understand the book of *Revelation*. This did not, as it might have done a century earlier, lead to an open split. The accompanying behaviour of individuals and groups within the ecclesial world was, however, the same as before. Old friends ceased speaking, families, ecclesias and groups of ecclesias became estranged. Ironically, the first appearance of this tragic phenomenon in our community, the break between Robert Roberts and his formerly close companion from Edinburgh days, George Dowie, had its origins in a disagreement over *Revelation* and the subject of a personal devil. (*Wilson A.R. The History of the Christadelphians p. 321, citing Wm. Norrie's Early History*)

The real tragedy was that it was almost impossible to discuss the problem except with the likeminded. The old injunction: "*Come let us reason together,*" (*Isa 1:18*) which had so often before helped brethren to resolve other differences, seemed to have been neutralised. Any attempt at discussion invariably produced more heat than light. The subject of *Revelation* became like a Victorian family secret, always referred to in veiled terms and never brought into the open in unfamiliar company.

Choose a side

What made matters even worse was the unspoken expectation that you should belong to one side or the other. Like characters in an old-time western movie, you were expected to show your allegiance by the color hat you wore. Or like English teenagers in the 1960's, you were expected to be a fan of either Elvis Presley or Cliff Richard. Nobody, least of all myself at that time, saw the obvious resemblance to the childhood tale in *Gulliver's Travels*, about the Big-enders and the Little-enders of Lilliput, in a community divided over which end of a boiled egg should be opened at breakfast.

On looking back, it was the classic situation facing all members of a society riven by internal conflict; the dilemma of all citizens in a civil war. But this is a

perspective that came only with old age and a little experience. At the time it was confusing, frightening, disturbing for a young person anxious to do the right. Small wonder, then, that many of us avoided coming to terms with the book of *Revelation*, keeping it at a safe arm's length to avoid unwanted consequences.

And all the while, I am now convinced, we were unable to find the right answer because we were repeatedly asking the wrong question: which way of understanding *Revelation* is the correct one? It was at the time, through a combination of custom and circumstance, the only question that suggested itself: it seemed to be the only choice we had. It took me decades to realise that we were looking in the wrong direction: that an answer lay not in narrowing our vision but in broadening it. We are dealing, after all, with a product not of fallible men but of the Maker of heaven and earth, whose thoughts are far above our thoughts (Isa 55.8). What is more, He gave it to His Son Jesus so that it could be passed on to his servants for their enlightenment (Rev 1.1). So we avoid it to our own detriment.

It was an insight that would lead me to a very different understanding of the book and its power.

The sad thing about not coming to grips with *Revelation* is that it is such a wonderful book. What a pity that the atmosphere of discord that has come to surround it is such a powerful deterrent to trying to understand it.

Even at a purely human level, *Revelation* is full of excitement. The ongoing struggle between good and evil and the climactic triumph of right could easily be turned into a stirring film of the kind made by Stephen Spielberg. The human tragedy of the fallen bride reminds one of a novel by John Steinbeck. I have often thought that *Revelation* could provide the basis for a motivational movie aimed at disciples. It gives ample warning of the hardships ahead, but these are always interspersed with encouraging glimpses of future joy and final victory.

But, of course, the book of *Revelation* is so much more than just an exciting story. We sometimes forget that it is the only book in the whole Bible from Jesus Christ himself and that it was written expressly for his servants. Sometimes, too, we overlook the exhortation in the first chapter: "Blessed is he that readeth." (Rev 1:3) Jesus himself encourages us to apply our minds to his message, complicated though it may be, and promises a reward to those who respond.

Find your ecclesia!

Chapters 2 and 3 of *Revelation* contain the letters sent by Jesus to the seven ecclesias of Asia Minor. In them we see a picture of the entire ecclesial world in every age. Read them carefully and you will be sure to recognize your own ecclesia, with its particular strengths and its own weaknesses. What is more, Jesus himself points the way to improvement and reform. It would be a wonderful idea for the Arranging Brethren of an ecclesia to make a check list from these letters and to review it in full each year at a general meeting of the members. Notice, however, that this evaluation does not include finding fault with the ecclesia down the road!

Even if your own elders don't take kindly to this idea, there is nothing to stop you from making a list of your own, to test your own discipleship (and never anyone else's). The seven letters are as much a primer for the individual Christian as they are a guide for ecclesias. Either way, they enable us to identify problems and set about solving them, which seems to me to be a good working definition of the business of discipleship. So the seven letters provide a helpful way of starting to unravel the message of the book.

The visions

These letters are followed by a vision given to John of a throne in heaven. If we accept that *Revelation* is a book of symbols, as we are clearly told in the opening verse, one teaching of this vision is quite clear and applies to every disciple of every age. It repeats the lesson of Daniel's prophecy: God is in full control of our world (Dan 4:17). John's vision, however, provides the additional information that God has delegated authority to Jesus, the Lamb slain yet now alive (Rev 5:12). And, to the Lamb, God has also given the power to open the scroll Daniel was told to seal (Dan 12:4). In this way Jesus can reveal to his servants the shape of future events.

If in the past we have avoided the book of *Revelation*, the time has surely come for us to tackle the problems that surround it. Perhaps, as we read it, a first step towards a solution lies in recognizing that a question which has not produced a useful answer in a generation needs to be abandoned. What we must learn to do, surely, is to begin asking the right questions about it

The interpretations

Over the centuries, four main ways of understanding the book of *Revelation* have been suggested. Much of the debate over the book has centred in three of these and over the problem of which of these explanations is correct. It may be helpful, therefore, briefly to review the different interpretations, without at this point endeavouring to assess their merits.

Preterist. Traditionally, the writing of *Revelation* is dated at the end of the first century, about 93 A.D, although some Bible scholars, like Isaac Newton, have suggested that perhaps the book was intended to prepare believers for the tragic events in Palestine in A.D. 70, when Roman armies destroyed Jerusalem. Either way, the political opponents of the early brethren came from Rome. The forces of evil portrayed in symbol, therefore, can be taken to represent the power of pagan Imperial Rome which, at the time the book was written, had placed the fledgling Christian community under great pressure. Part of this persecution was the exile of the apostle John to the island of Patmos in the Aegean Sea (Rev 1:9). No matter which starting date one prefers, this understanding of the book, because it places focus upon past events, is often labelled the *preterist* (from the Latin for 'past') interpretation.

Continuous Historical. Later, however, another view of the book emerged. Particularly from the time of the Protestant Reformation in the 16th century, when the monolithic power of the Roman Catholic Church was broken by

dissenting Christian groups in Europe, a different understanding of *Revelation* became popular. This explained the book as a portrayal of historical events from the days of John to the time of the return of Christ and the establishment of the Kingdom of God. It was this understanding that, through the writings of John Thomas, became, for about a century, the standard Christadelphian explanation of *Revelation*. It is often referred to as the *continuous historical* interpretation, to distinguish it from the simpler historical explanation referred to in the previous paragraph.

Futurist. The third way of explaining *Revelation* argued that the book is to be understood as directing attention to the events immediately surrounding the Second Coming. It is therefore seen as a presentation of predicted events, not in the distant past, as the *preterist* explanation suggests, nor in the immediate past, as the *continuous historical* view claims, but still in the future. Because of this emphasis, the label often attached to this interpretation is *futurist*. Its first appearance in the literature of our community appears to have been as early as 1865, when, according to Bro. Christmas Evans, (writing about 1959) two members of the Galashiels congregation in Scotland were expelled because they argued that the Apocalypse referred not to past events but to those still future.

Spiritualist. The fourth interpretation perhaps has its roots in disagreements that arose in Christian circles over the relative merits of the three opinions outlined above. It argues that the book is not intended to be literally understood. It is, rather, a timeless and universal portrayal of the Christian's perpetual struggle against adversity. It gives the ultimate assurance that, in spite of all evidence to the contrary, good will eventually prevail and virtue will at last be vindicated. This is often described as the *idealist* (or, by some the *spiritualist*) interpretation, but is almost unknown in Christadelphian circles.

On the face of it, this brief overview may have made the problem appear worse. It may seem that one now faces an embarrassment of choice but that the pressure to choose has been intensified. It is as well then to observe that, if we are to understand the size and nature of the problem that faces us, we need to gather as much information as we can about it.

But, even considering the matter of choice, we have to wonder once more if we are asking the right question.

Continuous historical view¹

As the continuous historical view has been the standard Christadelphian explanation for so long, it may be helpful to understand a little more about what is known of its origins. The Protestant Reformation generated in Western Europe a great interest in Bible study. The book of *Revelation* particularly came to be understood as revealing the decline of apostolic Christianity into a counterfeit system of religion which had entirely abandoned the principles of the original gospel. This understanding was fundamental to that Protestant opposition to Rome which had motivated the breakaway from papal control.

Joseph Mede, a Puritan scholar at Cambridge, after a careful study of *Revelation*, published *Clavis Apocalyptica* ("The Key to the Apocalypse") in 1627. In this work he laid the foundation of the understanding that would come to be known as the continuous historical interpretation. More than half a century later, Pierre Jurieu, a French Protestant, wrote a study called *Accomplissement des Prophetes*, in which he followed the same line of explanation as Mede but in addition saw particular significance unfolding in the French monarchy, whose fall he foresaw as a result of what he read in *Revelation*. By the 19th century, the continuous historical understanding of *Revelation* was generally accepted in the Protestant world.

In 1832 a young Englishman named John Thomas emigrated to the New World, where he began a search for religious understanding. He was soon brought into contact with the movement in North America now sometimes referred to as Restorationism. Its aim was a return to the basic values and principles of biblical Christianity. In the course of his investigation, Thomas spent some time in association with Alexander Campbell, founder of what later became the Church of Christ and the Disciples of Christ. Then Thomas broke away to develop his own understanding of Bible teaching. In the process he came to see the significance of the nation of Israel in God's purpose. In 1849, after a lecture tour of Britain, he published his ideas in *Elpis Israel*.

John Thomas

As part of the process of refining what he had learned, Thomas became interested in the prophetic efforts of William Miller, who prophesied the return of Christ in 1844. As a result he began a detailed study of *Daniel* and *Revelation* and of books that had been written about it. As a result, he read the works of Joseph Mede and of Pierre Jurieu, as well as the most recent study in English, Edward Elliott's *Horae Apocalyptica*, which had appeared a few years earlier in 1844, as well as the work of James Bicheno, who had written extensively on the restoration of the Jews. Part III of *Elpis Israel* was devoted to a preliminary exposition of *Revelation* in a way that harmonised with Thomas's understanding of the Hope of Israel. This exposition was developed and expanded in the great work of his *magnum opus*, which he triumphantly entitled *Eureka* ("I have found it!") published in three volumes between 1865 and 1868.

In the meantime, John Thomas's teaching had attracted attention in the United States and in Britain. The result was the growth of a religious community that, during the American Civil War of the early 1860s, adopted the name 'Christadelphian', at the time explained as "Brethren in (or of) Christ", although the Greek 'adelphoi' signifies siblings of either gender. By the time Thomas died in 1871, there were Christadelphian ecclesias in several parts of the English-speaking world, all of them acknowledging the role of *Elpis Israel* and *Eureka* especially in helping them to understand Bible teaching.

The growth and development of this community was nurtured by Bro. Robert Roberts, first editor of *The Christadelphian* magazine and a devoted adherent of the expositions of Bro. Thomas. In 1869, Roberts wrote: "I got the Truth from

reading Dr Thomas's works 15 years ago. That event put me on the track of bible (sic) study which I have ever since followed. I discovered nothing for myself. There was nothing to discover." Another revealing comment by the same writer appears in his account of Thomas's life: "Dr Thomas' political prognostications, based on prophecy, have been too signally realized to admit of the supposition that he was radically mistaken in his chronological scheme." (Cited in the introduction to *Elpis Israel*, 1990 edition.)

For almost the next hundred years, *Eureka* became in Christadelphian circles the standard exposition of *Revelation*. During that time, almost all the books published on the subject by Christadelphians were attempts to simplify *Eureka* and to make its ideas more accessible to ordinary brothers and sisters. The time came, however, when thinking readers were compelled to acknowledge that *Eureka* no longer offered answers to questions raised by the events of the 20th century.

(To be continued, God Willing. We will next discuss the beginnings of the differing views of Revelation in the Brotherhood, **beginning** in the 1950's.)

Robin Lamplough (Pinetown, South Africa)

Notes:

1. A comprehensive account (in four volumes) of the history of this interpretation is LeRoy Froom's "The Prophetic Faith Of Our Fathers", to be found on the Internet. It covers Bro. Thomas.

The Joy of Sunday Schooling

Isolated Sunday School Children¹

"This is the will of the Father who sent me, that of all He has given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day" (John 6:39).

When the Apostle Paul visited Lystra he made a happy acquaintance with Timothy, whose father was Greek and mother and grandmother, faithful Jewish women. He observed the young man's character and found him a more Christ-centered disciple than any other he had met in his travels. With a keen eye for the next generation to continue Christ's work, he eventually drew Timothy into his special team of missionary workers.

"For this reason I have sent to you Timothy, my son whom I love, who is faithful in the Lord. He will remind you of my way of life in Christ Jesus, which agrees with what I teach everywhere in every church" (1Cor 4:17).

"I have no one else like him [Timothy], who will show genuine concern for your welfare. For everyone looks out for their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ" (Phil 2:20-21).

"And the things you [Timothy] have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others" (2Tim 2:2).

The Apostle John's approach was similar; he wrote to *the "elect lady and her children, whom I love in the truth"* (2John 1). She was so hospitable that being alone, she was vulnerable to brethren of perverted doctrine if invited into her home. Though an old man himself, John was especially concerned for the spiritual well-being of these isolated children who could be adversely influenced by ungodly visitors (vv. 9 – 11). *"I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children walking in truth"* (v 4).

Regional ecclesias and the challenge elsewhere

In many (but not all) of North America's larger cities, our young people find many Christadelphian friends in their own or nearby ecclesias. This social experience is not the essence of our life in Christ but it does provide the support of friendship and encouragement that makes the Truth more attractive. While certain small, isolated, ecclesias have grown in recent years, history shows that such ecclesias often struggle to maintain numbers and this limits the opportunities in Christ for adults and their families.

Consider a family of four children, with a local ecclesia of 10 members that meets 30 miles away. Father works long hours, contact with any brother or sister during the day is unlikely, mother would rarely see her fellow sisters mid-week, a sisters' class is unlikely to exist, the children are the only Christadelphians in the local school, Sunday school has multi-age classes and the chances of always having enthusiastic teachers are not high.

These children live in a different world as far as the Truth is concerned. If they are making a healthy stand for their beliefs then they invite a cold isolation. It is inevitable that the events of the town and area will have more relevance to them than if they were in the company of an active and warm ecclesia and youth group. All children seek friends of their own age group but as they reach teenage years the strong likelihood is that these contacts will expose them to dangerous temptations that could quickly compromise their spiritual life. It is rare to find Christadelphian families in isolation whose children mix with principled friends of their own age, even of other denominations, outside the Truth.

These are the latter days and we knew that this general deterioration would come. Consider the challenges facing Christadelphian parents in semi-isolation. Wise advice is challenged most days by strong allurements at school and about the area. It is hard for our isolated children to avoid the sporting and social interests of their school friends.

How can we help?

Some would say "it's just too dangerous to live in isolation with children. They need company beyond their family and worldly attractions are likely to influence their minds and take them away". It is not hard to agree with these sentiments. But must all such parents pull up anchor and move to a city where the ecclesias are readily at hand? And if they did, our witness in the regional areas would be even less than it is now; not to mention the increased isolation of those who could not move.

In the earliest days of Gospel preaching there were ecclesias in relatively isolated areas. *“Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel” (Mark 16:15)* does not sound as though the Truth was to be only found in a few large congregations with nothing in between. Family connections, employment, business opportunities and inheritance are all factors that ensure that there will always be some members living in isolated areas and this is important for a continuing witness to the Truth. Are there ways we might better help families in isolated areas? Answers to the following questions may enable us to hold out a strengthening hand to our brothers, sisters and children in isolation.

- 1) How could our ecclesia develop a “special” relationship with one in isolation?
- 2) How could our ecclesia conduct occasional joint events with the young people or Sunday School of an out-of-town ecclesia?
- 3) Could our ecclesia provide staff for correspondence Sunday school?
- 4) Could our ecclesia contribute to a roster of visitors to isolated ecclesias?
- 5) When visiting distant ecclesias do we remember the children of that meeting and ensure we take our own children with us?
- 6) Does our young people’s group ensure that young people in isolation are regularly informed of the youth program and accommodation is offered to encourage attendance?
- 7) What gifts could we take to isolated families? What recordings of talks, what books etc., are suited to the ages and needs of the family?
- 8) Has our Sunday school and young people’s group ‘adopted’ children in isolated areas so that they enjoy frequent contact with larger ecclesial families and their children? Involving mother, father and their children in spiritual relationships between larger and smaller ecclesias is likely to increase the success rate.
- 9) What can isolated brothers and sisters do to enhance contact between themselves, their children and families in larger ecclesias? Fraternity is a two-way street. Is the isolated ecclesia an attractive site for an occasional ecclesial camp?
- 10) Could our ecclesia offer accommodation to isolated young people who are coming to their local area for study or work?

Conclusion

In this busy age those in distant places may be easily overlooked. Let us bear in mind the wider Christadelphian community and in particular respond to the anxieties of those parents in outlying areas who pray for their children to be in the Truth and not be swept up in the passing interests of their local community. When we care for isolated children, we strengthen whole families and benefits accrue at several levels; the family’s spiritual health increases which can lead on to vigorous preaching in their local community. When the Truth is preached with enthusiasm, ecclesias grow, if God wills, to His praise and glory.

Notes:

1. Based on Australian Association Christadelphian Ecclesias (AACE) Issues paper — Country Children, August 2012.

The *Bible Truth* and Gustav Aue

The *Bible Truth*

Occasionally, you might come across little old issues among the dusty relics of an old collection of magazines in a Christadelphian household. And if the box was old enough, it might contain a few issues of one called “Bible Truth”. It was almost entirely the work of one brother, Gustav Aue, who seem to have published it largely by himself. You might almost call it one of the “lost” Christadelphian Magazines, because few copies survive, nor is it referred to. Even though it had a circulation larger in North America than any other Christadelphian magazine at the time, because its focus was strongly on carrying the message of The Truth to the public, it was rarely kept. Over the first 12 years, 400,000 copies were printed: so over its run from 1911 to 1935 probably close to 1 million copies were circulated. I have managed to accumulate copies of most of the issues, thanks to many individuals, and it does fill in some information about our community in North America. It also has an abundance of many interesting first principle articles, for this magazine was first and foremost a preaching magazine. Rather like the “Glad Tidings” of today, (which has actually been published in the UK since 1885) its focus on being a preaching magazine, so few were retained for any period of time. And because of its focus on preaching, its discussions of affairs of the brotherhood is very limited. There are a few obituaries, a smattering of ecclesial news, and many samples of lecture topics from around North America.

There are, however, a few topics of interest in the pages of this little magazine, and some of the “first principle” articles are worth reprising, so I will on occasion hopefully reproduce a few [sample](#) over the coming months. It also of interest that, a few years after the demise of the *Bible Truth* in 1935, the “Dawn” magazine was started in England as a successor preaching magazine. This was probably partially because Bro. Aue, along with many others at the time, became part of the Berean Fellowship in the division of the 1920’s, and the Dawn magazine only later became the fraternal magazine of a group [the](#) divided out of the Berean Fellowship. This is what was written about the start of the “Dawn”.

“This effort is a continuation of the noble work commenced by our late beloved Brother Gustav F. Aue, of New Jersey, U.S.A., who a few years ago laid down his pen in death. Many faithful brethren were fellow labourers with him in the distribution of his little work, “Bible Truth,” and they, with us, were impressed with his untiring efforts-in this direction and the ultimate results of his work, under the Hand of God, in bringing many sons and daughters unto the Father.”¹

When first published, it was to supplement the public lectures which were being given by the Christadelphians in Jersey City, NJ, and vicinity, by sending the truth to those who were interested, and to others who did not attend the lectures. It was not long before there were requests to send it to other parts of

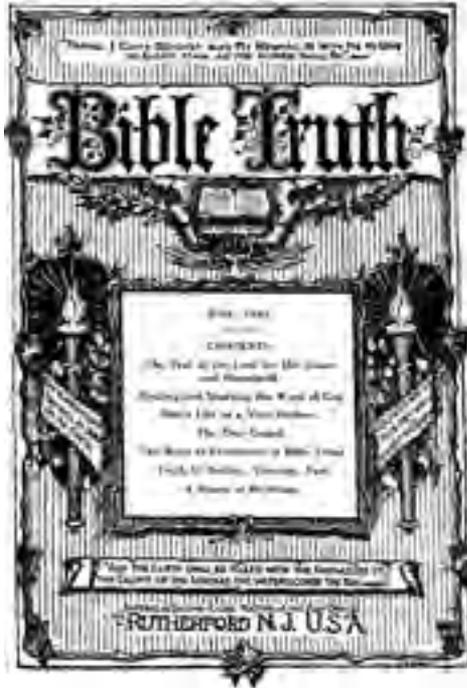
the U.S.A., and; then to Canada and foreign countries.

The magazine ceased publication on the death of Bro. Aue, who died on July 20, 1935.

Gustav Aue

Bro. Aue first heard the Truth in Jersey City, and he obeyed it in baptism on March 20th, 1899, and met with the Jersey City Ecclesia, Bro. Aue devoted his entire life to the work of preaching the Gospel. He was born in New York City, NY August 19, 1869, and married Florence Atkinson, who died after the birth of their son Paul. He later married his wife's best friend, Sister Pauline Hamlin Walker (born November 28, 1872 & Died February 14th, 1964). Gustav Aue was Vice President of the McCaw Coal Company in New York City. Since there was a huge demand for

coal at this time, he traveled a lot in search for new sources of coal to such places as Nova Scotia, even importing coal to America from Wales, all along devoting himself to the study and preaching of the Gospel Message. This wealth appeared to have given him the resources to publish the Bible Truth for 24 years.



GUSTAV F. AUE

Gustav's son George Aue moved to California in the early 20's and met Sister Kathleen Norris, formerly from Birmingham England, in Los Angeles where he was working. They were married June 6, 1924. They were a driving force in whatever ecclesia they were members of from Los Angeles, Glendale, Eagle Rock, Dana Point and finally, In their retirement years, the Rogue Valley Oregon Ecclesia in Grants Pass Oregon for 20 years until their deaths. Brother George exhorted and lectured up until the week before his death at age 92. Their daughter Sister Shirley-Ann married Bill Stickney, and they had four children, all who have been baptized into the household of faith².

The contents

In almost 300 issues, most of which have 20 pages, the magazine produced an enormous quantity of articles on Bible Topics and first principles. There are many interesting articles

- A long series of articles on “Messiah in the Psalms”, by Bro. Aue himself. He goes through almost every one, pointing out all the direct references, allusions, echoes, and types to be found throughout.
- Several transcripts of the radio addresses given in Los Angeles from 1930 on.
- There are many moving obituaries of the brethren and sisters who did so much to spread the gospel in this country in the early years.
- The issue of September 1916 is a comprehensive account of the way the community in the USA united in objection to military service (although there are no later accounts of the trials to which those who so objected were subjected.)
- Long accounts of the visit of Frank Jannaway to the USA in 1914 – 1915.



Although there was some news from the ecclesias in the early years, and more so during the war years, by 1921 almost all such information dwindled away, as the total focus was on reaching out and conveying the first principles. In addition, many issues include copies of flyers advertising bible lectures, such as the one enclosed from 1919. The ecclesias in California seem particularly active.

Conclusion

It is a little sad that the little magazine “Bible Truth” disappeared as the only direct preaching magazine in North America. The *Glad Tidings* comes to us from the UK, and is widely distributed, but I believe the end of this work, conducted as it was almost entirely due to the drive and vision of one brother, leaves a gap in our preaching effort. Perhaps such is not needed in this Internet age, but I would hope its memory and its influence can encourage to carry on our attempts to spread the gospel with renewed vigor and determination.

Peter Hemingray (Detroit Royal Oak, MI)

P.S. If anyone has old copies of the *Bible Truth*, perhaps they can send me details of which issues they have. I do have quite a number, either physically or electronically, but there are gaps.

Notes:

1. *The Berean Christadelphian* — February, 1941, p 62.
2. I must thank Bro. Craig Stickney and his mother, Sis. Shirley-Ann, for much of this information.

The Hero's Journey: a Story from the Lord

A standard mythology

Have you ever heard of the hero's journey? Perhaps you recall your middle school English class going over it at some point or perhaps you are a bit of a literature nerd like me.

The hero's journey is often referred to as the monomyth, mono meaning one, and myth being short for mythology. One mythology. The idea is that most, if not all stories follow a similar path or structure from the beginning to the end. This has been a topic of some discussion by many a mythology enthusiast or student of popular culture. Opinions vary as to which parts count and which parts need to be revised but on a whole, the hero's journey is a fairly fascinating study.

Chances are you have heard it before. Let's see if you can tell what story I am referring to:

A character is told that he or she has been chosen by some force to go on an adventure to save their world. At first, the hero doesn't want to, but bad stuff happens that forces them to go on the adventure. Along the way they find friends who help them on their quest while they overcome various obstacles and temptations.

Towards the end of the journey, the hero is defeated by their nemesis and must give up on everything they love. They are left to die. When all hope is lost though, they find the strength within themselves and rise to face their conflict. This time, they succeed and embody the hero they were told they would be. Then, villain defeated, they return to their home, with knowledge or wealth or whatever force they needed to save their world from disaster.



Now, what story did I just tell you? That was The Lego Movie. **Wait what?**

Let's look at it again and I will replace the words with Indiana and other appropriate locations or events:

Emmit is told that he or she has been chosen by the "piece of resistance" to go on an adventure to save their world from Lord Business by stopping the Kraggle (crazy glue). At first, the Emmit doesn't want to, but bad Cop

and Lord Business chase him which forces him to go on the adventure. Along the way he finds Wild Style (love interest), Princess Unikitty, Benny the Spaceman, Metalbeard, and Batman (friends) who help them on their quest while he fights Lord Business and Bad Cop.

Towards the end of the journey, the Emmit is defeated by his foes and must sacrifice himself so that his friends will live. He falls out of reality and thus is dead to all his friends. When all hope is lost though, he returns with new confidence in himself and understanding of what makes him special. He uses this knowledge to convince the bad guys that they too can be special and unites his world in peace. Or piece.

But of course, I could have also been talking about lord of the Rings. Or Harry Potter. Or Star Wars, Star Trek, Mad Max, The King's Speech, Guardians Of The Galaxy, The Hunger Games, any Disney film or any number of popular stories with this same structure. I basically copied and pasted names and places and events in the correct spots and outlined a popular kid's movie. It's like a giant game of Mad lib. Now, obviously not every single story follows this exact formula. Parts, as I said before, are often replaced or left out altogether. And obviously this doesn't work on other genres, such as horror or comedy. This works mainly on adventure stories or quests.

The memo

But this is a formula and it is one that works. Seriously. Look at the list a couple paragraphs above this. Star wars is one of the, if not the highest grossing film series of all time. Harry potter also made millions in books and in film as did the hunger games. Mad max, and Kings Speech are some of the most popular Post picture nominees/recipients. And Disney simply cannot be matched as far as number of quality films that were also insanely popular. Seriously, there's an actual formula they use, sent in a Memo in 1975.

Why does it work? Numerous studies have been done on this question and the closest answer people have come up with is how relatable these stories are. Most have been asked to do something they didn't want to only to be forced into the quest of some sort. Many of us have been in situations where we were tempted or tried and had to rely on our close friends for support. Some, if not most have felt despair or hit rock bottom, facing death or loss in ways we never

1. The Ordinary World,
2. The Call to Adventure,
3. Refusal of the Call,
4. Meeting with the Mentor,
5. Crossing the Threshold to the "special world",
6. Tests, Allies and Enemies,
7. Approach to the Innermost Cave,
8. The Ordeal,
9. Reward,
10. The Road Back,
11. The Resurrection,
12. Return with the Elixir.

thought possible. And many have risen from those challenges, or we hope we will at some point. In a way, the hero's journey is a beacon of hope. A message

that all challenges can be overcome and we respond to it. We love to see that others made it, even if those others are fictional characters.

Now there are arguments that this formula is not really applicable to all adventures. For many stories, such as Beowulf, The Epic of Gilgamesh, and many other stories from various cultures feature unlikable heroes, or stories that end poorly for the heroes. Opponents of the Monomyth point out that not all personalities are represented, not all lifestyles shown.

While this may be somewhat true, it is important to look at the numbers as evidence of the hero's Journey's effectiveness as a narrative tool: the epic of Gilgamesh has never seen a film adaptation (and is likely unfilmable due to its nonlinear nature and lack of protagonist) and most adaptations of Beowulf have not been commercial successes. Even the 2007 animated version was only moderately successful, but nowhere near the success of say, Star Wars. So yes, while the hero's journey model is not perfect, nor does it represent all factions of life, one cannot argue it is, at the very least, the most popular model of storytelling.

The words of the Preacher

So, what's my point? Well, I'd like to turn to an interesting [verse](#) that applies directly to all that we've written so far:

“The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem. Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity. What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun? One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh: but the earth abideth for ever. The sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and hasteth to his place where he arose. The wind goeth toward the south, and turneth about unto the north; it whirleth about continually, and the wind returneth again according to his circuits. All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full; unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again. All things are full of labour; man cannot utter it: the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing. The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun. Is there any thing whereof it may be said, See, this is new? it hath been already of old time, which was before us. There is no remembrance of former things; neither shall there be any remembrance of things that are to come with those that shall come after” (Eccl 1:1-11).

I've always loved these verses because they display a futility of human achievement. Don't get me wrong: I am a huge fan of ingenuity and creativity. I watch expos every year, learning what I can about upcoming software and gaming advances. But these verses always remind me that all the things that mankind makes are merely repeats of old creations, or perhaps expansions or evolutions of the original concept.

And when it comes to storytelling, the same is true. These stories have been passed down from generation to generation, with details getting adjusted or

tweaked to fit various morals or ideals. Yet despite, or perhaps in spite of that, the basic story telling structure has remained the same. And there is not better proof than in scripture itself. Take, for example, the story of Joseph.

“And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it his brethren: and they hated him yet the more. And he said unto them, Hear, I pray you, this dream which I have dreamed: For, behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and, lo, my sheaf arose, and also stood upright; and, behold, your sheaves stood round about, and made obeisance to my sheaf. And his brethren said to him, Shalt thou indeed reign over us? or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us? And they hated him yet the more for his dreams, and for his words. And he dreamed yet another dream, and told it his brethren, and said, Behold, I have dreamed a dream more; and, behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me. And he told it to his father, and to his brethren: and his father rebuked him, and said unto him, What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth? And his brethren envied him; but his father observed the saying” (Gen 37:7-11).

Hero’s in the Bible

Now here we have the hero’s calling, these dreams that would tell Joseph of the things that were to come, that he would rule over his brothers and sisters and parents. And while we do not have recorded the “refusal to be called,” we do see events forcing Joseph along a rather unpleasant journey.

“And they took him, and cast him into a pit: and the pit was empty, there was no water in it. And they sat down to eat bread: and they lifted up their eyes and looked, and, behold, a company of Ishmeelites came from Gilead with their camels bearing spicery and balm and myrrh, going to carry it down to Egypt. And Judah said unto his brethren, What profit is it if we slay our brother, and conceal his blood? 7 Come, and let us sell him to the Ishmeelites, and let not our hand be upon him; for he is our brother and our flesh. And his brethren were content. Then there passed by Midianites merchantmen; and they drew and lifted up Joseph out of the pit, and sold Joseph to the Ishmeelites for twenty pieces of silver: and they brought Joseph into Egypt” (Gen 37:24-28).

Here our hero is taken away from his home, forced on his journey. He leaves everything behind. Along the way he makes friends, in the form of Potiphar, the jailer, the baker, and the butler. He resists temptation by getting away from Potiphar’s wife. This is where he is cast into prison, a form of death. He is buried and forgotten, until one day, when the Pharaoh is plagued by relentless nightmares. These remind the butler of the man who understood dreams and Joseph is resurrected. He, is brought before the Pharaoh and upon interpreting the dreams, he is raised to a position of ultimate authority.

He uses this authority, or boon, to deliver the land out of turmoil and rescue his brothers, the same ones who had abandoned him so many years prior. Through this, his hero’s journey is complete.

Now, here the fascinating part: this journey is used repeatedly throughout scripture. We can trace this journey through the life of Moses (he outright refuses the call at one point), David, Elijah, Daniel, Samson, and many others. Beat for beat, each of these characters go through the stages of the Hero's Journey.

Growing up, we think of these individuals as characters in grand stories, complete with epic battles and dynamic choices. It's only as we grow up that it begins to dawn on us that these were real people with real lives that went through these real problems and grew through them. That being the case, one must ask, why did God make them go through such similar situations, failing or feeling like they had failed at similar points in their spiritual journey? Why follow such a structure that repeated itself so many times?

I think it was for us.

True accounts

First, think about the human brain: for the most part, we like to predict things, and we like to be correct. When we hear a story, we like to know where it is heading. We like to guess at the end results, and when we guess correctly, our brain rewards us. It sends a message that basically says "you are smart, good job." The same is true in film: of the 10 most successful films in history, adjusted for gross income, at least six feature some form of the Hero's Journey within their stories. That's likely due to the fact that our brains enjoy predicting the outcomes of these films. As we said, the structure works, and our brains like it.

And back to scripture, we must realize that as God made us the way we are, **he** knows what our brains like. He knows how to reach us, and telling us stories in a predictable way, a way our brains will latch onto and feel good about makes sense. And why must they make sense? Because we are to learn from these stories. The stories are relatable, especially for those seeking redemption through Christ.

(Perhaps we should call them **accounts**, because even the word "story" might imply an element of fiction, although the dictionary definition is "a narrative, either true or fictitious, in prose or verse, designed to interest, amuse, or instruct the hearer or reader".)

Our own spiritual story

We are called: *"For many are called, but few are chosen"* (Matt 22:14). And many refuse the call. But our lives often force us to reconsider and take up the journey towards God. We make that choice, in this case, baptism, and our journey truly begins. Along the way we meet friends and allies:

"For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt 18:20).

We face trials and tribulations, and many of us will die, literal deaths.

"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: But we wait

that coming day that we will be literally resurrected. We will enter into the kingdom of God and bring with us treasures stored up in heaven, incomparable to the things of the world” (Rom 5:12-13).

Our lives were meant to follow the hero’s journey. That is a huge part of God’s plan for us. If you need further proof, look no further than Jesus Christ. Christ was called by God to serve **him**, to be a fulfillment of the law. He was tempted in the wilderness, a refusal to answer his calling. But through his trial he made a conscious decision to follow his Father’s will and begin his journey. Along the way, he gained followers, but none closer than his 12 disciples, who strengthened him in the times he needed them. But he faced his death alone, save for the angels God sent to comfort him. He laid down his life, literally dying. But it would not be the end, for in three days he was resurrected and brought to his disciples both then and now, a perfect example of how a true hero returns, not for their own honor or glory but so that their people, their friends and family may thrive.

Christ is the reason the hero’s journey exists. God wasn’t just creating a rhetoric that could be easily followed, he was tracing his plan and purpose for us to see throughout the ages. HE was painting an image that we could follow, a map that would lead us to the kingdom. God has called us, arguably **he** has called everyone in the world to **him**, and **he** knows we may indeed refuse that call. But **he** knows also that we must be the ones to make the choice to begin the journey, just as it was Christ’s choice to answer his father’s call. He wants us to make friends and family that will support us on our journey, just as Christ had his closest friends to strengthen him. And God wants us to know that we will face downfall, and that we must do so willingly. God wants us to know that this is part of the journey, that most of us will face such hardships that we may feel as though there is no recovery. But at the end of our journey, there is hope.

“These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city” (Heb 11:13-16).

This story, old as human history, is one of hope and deliverance. It is told in a way that we can enjoy, grasp and share. Told by a God that knows **his** creation through the actions of the faithful of old. Told so that we might follow and pattern our lives after them, that we might seek that country, one better than anything under this sun.

Ethan Bearden (Austin Leander, TX)

Have an exhortation, devotion or article you would like posted in the Tidings Youth? Email Brother Ethan Bearden at ejbearden1988@gmail.com, or find him on Facebook.

The New Testament Church, (12) Meeting Places

Upper rooms

There is a **similar** growth, and a rather interesting one, apparent in the use of the buildings for Christian worship. The first meeting place seems to have been “*the upper room*” (Acts 1:13) — the definite article being used as you will find in the margin and in new versions, which would be the room in which the first breaking of bread took place, the Lord’s supper, when Jesus met with his disciples “*in the upper room.*” (Probably loaned to him by one of his sympathizers, almost certainly by Mary the mother of John Mark.) And this upper room, if it were the house of Mary the mother of Mark, is still in use in Acts 12:12. This is the occasion when Peter had been released from prison: “*And when he had considered the thing, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark; where many were gathered together praying.*”

Now we have already seen previously that the numbers of the disciples in Jerusalem had grown marvelously in these early days, and though a number of the disciples were met in the house of Mary, clearly there would have been many other places where the Christians were meeting in Jerusalem at that time, though it is possible that this house still remained the headquarters of the Christian church. There are some indications in the New Testament, even in the Acts of the Apostles, of the establishment of regular meeting places other than people’s homes. We know that a great many of the Christian churches were able to meet in the homes of their wealthier brethren: “*The church that is in thy house,*” is a familiar phrase in the epistles.

In Ephesus, however, we find Paul either renting or being offered the use of the school of Tyrannus.

“And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God. But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus. and this continued by the space of two years” (Acts 19:9-10).

So for two years Paul’s headquarters for his preaching was in the school of Tyrannus, which may not, of course, have been a building, it may have been a portico or grounds in which Tyrannus, probably some philosopher or teacher of the times, used to assemble his students, or disciples. But Paul by hook or by crook (by some of the means by which Christadelphians have acquired Oddfellows halls and all manner of strange places to hold their meetings) found himself holding his meetings in the school of Tyrannus, and he used it for two years.

There is an interesting verse in James where, you will remember, James is upbraiding the brethren because they had the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ with partiality. And he said: *“For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come also a poor man in vile raiment; and ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool: are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts?”* (James 2:2-3). Now the interesting point for our study is that the word James uses here for assembly is “synagogue.” We have already seen how James, the leader of the church at Jerusalem, in New Testament times, certainly in the Acts of the Apostles, was very much influenced by his Jewish background. Now here is James using the word synagogue of the Christian meeting places, which suggests that the church by this time was meeting in halls or public places, or churches of some kind that were probably based upon the synagogue worship with which they were already so familiar.

Dr. Blunt makes an interesting point, which I would not attach too much importance to, but which I thought was very interesting in tracing out the development of the church in the first century. Paul says *“What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not”* (1Cor 11:22). Here he is upbraiding the brethren because of their disorderly conduct at the Lord’s Table. As we know they used to have a “love feast,” which they used to bring their food to, and in the course of the meal they remembered Jesus. But, of course, like all human things it got out of hand. As soon as men start touching the loveliest and holiest of things they seem as though they have to spoil it in some way; so that which began with the purest idea, that the brethren (and especially probably the poorer brethren) should be able once a week to have a good meal together and in the course of the meal to remember the Lord Jesus Christ, now degenerates, and we find rich men bringing, as we should say today, their cold chicken and bottles of champagne, and really living it up, while the poorer brethren had not enough to eat.

Blunt makes the point that there is a distinction being made here by the Apostle between the houses that they customarily eat and drink in and the house of God. This is holier than their houses. This is the place where they meet to worship God and remember him. As I say, I am not going to press the point, but I think it is interesting as a straw in the wind as to what was developing. Clearly, it seems to me, towards the end of the first century the church was meeting in buildings, which they had erected or taken over for that purpose. In some cases it would be the homes of wealthy brethren, and in other cases it would be buildings such as the school of Tyrannus, or other places such as the “synagogue” of James where their services would take place. Perhaps it is in this context that we should understand *“Let your women keep silence in the church,”* which you will find the New English Bible translates *“keep silence in church,”* taking the church here as meaning the place where the ecclesia met together.

Eusebius, when he wrote his history in the 4th century, relates rather interestingly that between 200-250 AD “the old edifices” were replaced by more splendid buildings. In other words, by this date the church had grown opulent, grown in organization, developed a hierarchy, become much more popular and numerous, and they were pulling down what Eusebius calls the old buildings and putting up more splendid edifices, probably more like the churches we are familiar with today (in England) which often date from Mediaeval times. It suggests that the church buildings’ originally were less ornate and more functional in these earlier days. It suggests, too, that if between 200-250 they were pulling down the old buildings, then those old buildings must have been up fairly early in the beginning of the second century. It is probably a similar story to our own.

Christadelphian Halls

Those of you who have read Wilson’s *Sects and Society*, in which he describes the growth and organization of the Christadelphian community, will remember that he is somewhat out of date, because he is talking about “the creaky little wooden stairs and the funny little buildings at the top”, that Christadelphians meet in, and little back alleys and Oddfellows Halls and things like that, which, of course, was true a generation or two ago. It is still true, of course, of some of the ecclesias, but we have grown, as the first century church had grown. We have replaced these in a great many cases.

As a community we now meet in very nice Christadelphian halls, functional buildings. Not ornate, but functional. Splendid little buildings in which we delight to worship God and to hold our meetings. And so in our own history the thing has changed quite rapidly. In my early days in the truth it was fairly unusual for a Christadelphian ecclesia to meet in their own hall. They might have a tin hut somewhere, a Scouts Hall that they had managed to buy up, but to have a splendid purpose-built Christadelphian Hall was almost unheard of. Now this is nearer the norm, and those ecclesias that have not got one look rather enviously on their better-off brethren¹.

The lesson that we can draw from the history of the early church is that there should be a necessary balance between the one and the other. It was not very long before the functional buildings, perfectly adapted to the needs of the church towards the end of the first century, became the ornate churches, the cathedrals, the “livings” of the bishops and archbishops of the third and fourth centuries; and although I think the balance is generally well observed today, I do believe this needs watching. It gladdens my heart to see these lovely Christadelphian halls being built, perfectly suitable for what they are wanted for, yet we must never lose sight of the fact that the ecclesia is essentially the membership and not the buildings in which they meet. That is what happened, and it could happen again.

Church services

There are gleanings in the New Testament which give us some idea of the way in which they conducted their meetings and I want to look at this a little more

closely. In many respects, as I think we saw earlier, they were not unlike our own meetings. They had a president, e.g. Acts 1, Peter was president; Acts 15, James was president. Probably later on, one of the elders would act as president, or some of the elders might have shared the duty, just as we ourselves elect some of our more able brethren to be presidents of the ecclesia and these often double-up as arranging brethren. They met for the breaking of bread, and as we have already seen, in primitive times they shared a meal together — the “love feast” — which quite clearly was dropped before the end of the first century, probably for the reasons we have already seen.

There was preaching and teaching of the word of God and reading of the Scriptures. “*Give attendance to reading*”. Here 1Tim 4:13 seems to mean, and the new versions certainly take it to mean, the public reading of the word of God: for example the NET reads “*give attention to the public reading of scripture*”. The Roman Governor Pliny writing to the Emperor Trajan at the end of the first century refers specifically to the meeting of Christians in their churches in which he says they “sing hymns in honor of Christ.” And we have already seen that as part of their meeting they used to have a collection.

Breaking Of Bread

I would like to speak a little more about the breaking of bread. The fullest account we have is the one in 1Corinthians 11, and there is the implication that the church met regularly to remember the Lord’s death. But the New Testament does not seem to have institutionalized the communion as the later churches did. In a book called *A History of the Corruptions of Christianity*, Dr. Priestly enumerates, for example, the doctrine of the immortality of the soul as one of the corruptions of Christianity; similarly, the doctrine of the Trinity, and many other things with which we would be quite familiar and in which we would agree with him.

But he also includes the breaking of bread, or the communion service, as one of the corruptions of Christianity, his reason being that the church in the second century at least, if not earlier, had “institutionalized” the Lord’s remembrance. The breaking of bread was not ever intended to be a kind of “sacrament” of the church. It was intended to be a simple remembrance of Jesus, and all the ornate paraphernalia which the church invented to go with this Dr. Priestly sees as a corruption of what was originally intended, and what was originally practiced, when in those delightful words of Acts. “*they continued in the Apostles doctrine and fellowship and in breaking of bread and prayers; and with gladness and joyfulness of heart did eat their meat and break bread from house to house*” (Acts 2:42). The church came to regard it as some kind of magic rite, as though by attending at the communion service and taking the “sacraments” a man was magically transformed in some way.

Now I am not suggesting that we are doing anything of that kind, but I do think it is worth noting that this is what happened, and we must not “institutionalize” the remembrance of the Lord and the breaking of bread. It is an expression of our daily discipleship, not a substitute for it.

Hymn singing

I have already mentioned the way hymn singing developed and you will gather that I find it particularly interesting. There are several references to hymns in the New Testament. *“And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives”* (Matt 26:30). In Acts 16:25 when Paul and Silas were put in prison, what did they do? *“And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them.”* According to Young’s Concordance, the word “praises” is “hymns”, and the same Greek word is used in Heb 2:12 *“Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee”*. They sang hymns at midnight. Col 3:16 and Eph 5:19 essentially say the same thing, so we will only look at one of them. *“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord”* (Col 3:16).

Hymn singing clearly, therefore, was a familiar exercise to worship in the New Testament church. It would be part of their meetings, we may be sure of that. (As, in fact, Pliny writing to Trajan says it was.) And there are several interesting references in Paul’s letters to the popular Christian hymns that they were singing at that time. Some of these are rather interesting to follow out, because Paul quite often used in his letters such phrases as, *“This is a true saying,”* which are thought to be a reference to some of these hymns that they sang at this time. Who wrote them? I do not know. I wonder if Paul wrote any himself? I wonder who was the hymnologist of the early church? But certainly they used to sing hymns, and it seems quite reasonable to suppose that it is from these hymns that Paul is quoting in these passages that I have mentioned. In those early days I suppose it would have been simple congregational singing. (“Making joyful noise,” as we say when we cannot sing the parts!) Choir singing was developed much later, about the fourth century according to Dr. Lamson.² And the congregation then took a back seat. I think we can learn a little from this, without making any special point. Of course, it is nice to sing the parts, and, of course, it is nice to have good singers among us, but there is a danger in making things too “professional.” That is what happened, you see, as the church grew and developed, when it became a little bit obscene to hear people croaking away with funny voices and not being able to sing properly. So they said scrub it, and let us have a choir! And the choir took over, and there was this breach again made between the ordinary congregation and the choir who could sing nicely. So let us not despise our vociferous singers, even if they do sing a bit out of key sometimes. I would rather have that, myself, than become so professional that we are ashamed to lift up our voices in praise to the Lord because we do not happen to be very good singers.

Len Richardson

Notes:

1. My observation is that this change occurred in the Central Fellowship when they united with the Suffolk Street Fellowship in 1956. Most Suffolk Street ecclesias owned their own halls, while those in Central largely rented. [Editor]
2. See chapter on “Hymnology of the Ancient Church” in “The Church in the First Three Centuries” by Alvan Lamson

Bible Mission

2016 Jamaican Easter Youth Camp

The Jamaica Easter Youth Gathering was underway at Camp Hope. Inside, Brothers Joel Sultz and Nathan Giordano led the group of teens and twenty-somethings through the topic of 'The Book of Ruth - Searching for Your Beloved', and the lessons we can glean from the relationship of Ruth and Boaz. Outside, in the shade of a nearby mango tree, the rest of the North American visitors were catching craft supplies as they were blown every which way by the breeze, twenty little pairs of hands reaching out to help. With the turquoise waters of the Caribbean just down the hill, the setting was idyllic, even if not particularly conducive for crafting.



The youngest of the two groups (children's class) instructed by left to right: Sis. Verity Sultz (Brant County), Sis. Shoshanna Bowen (Brantford Dunsdon), Sis. Antonia Giordano (Norfolk, Va under tree) & Sis. Bailey Doherty (North Battleford)

The kids we taught, from Sunday schools all over the island, were a wonderful group. We thought for sure, as we prepped for our trip, that we'd go to Jamaica and teach them something about the book of Ruth. What we learned was that they already knew the story inside out, could recite perfectly Ruth's epic words to Naomi. Knew how the story ended. And they weren't even a bit bored to hear it all again. They couldn't wait to answer questions and show us how very much they understood.

On Friday, they were strangers to us, faces we couldn't quite find the names for. By Saturday, their individual selves were starting to shine. Chloe loved pink. Lovena loved a cuddle. Romaine's crafts were creative and immaculately made.

Teeny tiny Tessann knew the entire story of Moses and wanted to tell us all about it.

This was a really good weekend. From Rise & Shine exercise each day as the sun was coming up, all the way through the evening devotion at the very end of the day, God's name was praised. Every morning, a group of young people led [Morninspiration](#) with music, a thought for the day, and a Bible reading, and we started our day giving thanks to God as a group.



In the kitchen, an amazing group of ladies worked all day for us, cooking up the most fabulous food — curried goat with rice and peas, callaloo and salt fish, fried plantains and juicy watermelon, and escovitched fish (eyeballs included). We ate so well.

During the afternoon of the team cook-off, four open cook fires blazed in the kitchen courtyard. Little kids milled around the flames, offering moral support to the teens as they worked together to create what they feverishly hoped would be the winning meal. (Fried potatoes won the day. What can I tell you? North Americans were judging the contest.) Races were run. Treasures were hunted. We splashed in the sea and hunted for crabs. Sis. Letisha taught an etiquette session and everyone dressed up in their finery for an evening in the hall, beautifully decorated by Sis. Kay. Young men pulled out chairs for the ladies and we ate a splendid formal dinner with knives, forks and dainty outstretched pinkies.

The younger kids loved their weekend of beach and Bible lessons. Doing crafts, eating abundant candy and playing with their friends was a welcome break from the grind of real life. The teens told us over and over how much they enjoyed the classes, as they learned so much about relationships — the importance of seeking a godly partner, and how to conduct themselves as they head towards the ultimate goal of a godly marriage. A weekend in a peaceful place with friends who believe the same as you can do a lot to clarify what's truly important in life.

The North American visitors had a great time. Several were visiting the mission field for the first time, and soon realized that what we gain in visiting our brethren, and experiencing the Truth in a culture different from our own, is so much more than we can hope to give. Our brethren and young people in Jamaica focus so well on love and thankfulness. They were thankful every morning because God had woken them and they had another day to give praise and glory to him. Meeting brothers who exhort every other week because there are only two brothers in their ecclesia — and consider that work a joyful privilege, not a burden — will give you a perspective on your own service. Getting to know those little kids who were so open with their love and so excited by little things like crafts and candy filled us up with gratitude for the opportunity we'd been given to share this experience with them.

God's word transcends time and place. Different people in different places do things differently, but God's word pierces through it all and you see how, in every way that matters, we truly are all one in Christ. To be in a setting where life is simplified for a few days and the focus is on thanks and love — Bro. Patrick Johnson expressed it best each day. "I'm giving thanks this morning."

*Compiled by Antonia Giordano with input from Joel and Verity Suntz;
Shoshanna Bowen; Bailey Doherty;
Nathan Giordano and Zinnia & Talia Giordano*

Bible Enrichment! St. Lucia



St. Lucia Ecclesia from left to right: Bro. Benji St. Ange, Bro. George Rock, Sis. Lauretta Valcin, Bro. Andre George, Bro. Edward Anthony, Leah Hutchinson, Sis. Dawn Hutchinson, Sis. Lois Webster, Sis. Julie Gonzaque.

It was a typical January day in Ontario, Canada. Snow! It was snowing when we wakened at 0515. It was snowing when we left for a rather messy drive to the airport. It was snowing at the time we were due to take off (at 0930) and we were still in departure lounge! We boarded the plane a short while later, but it was still snowing therefore the plane had to be 'de-iced' (as the saying goes) so by the time we were off the ground we were ninety minutes late. But that is the risk of winter in Canada! However, Bro. Andre George and our taxi driver, Keith Philip were at the airport to meet us.

It was the start of a five week visit to St. Lucia. A busy time with plenty of Bible discussions with members of the ecclesia and contacts. On this visit we focused on the "Bible Enrichment" program We had not decided on what topic to base the classes on but a very stimulating book by Bro. Stephen Irving entitled "Studies in the Gospel of John" which we had been reading provided the idea.

The first class began with about five visitors attending and the approach was to begin at John 1:1. Rather than getting bogged down with a lot of discussion

that would prevent us from preaching the gospel, our approach was to teach as opposed to raising points for discussion. Any question that was raised was quickly answered and if not relevant to the point it was deferred to another time.

The size of the classes grew and by the end we had ten visitors attending and most had been to all the classes. By the conclusion of the eighth class we had reached the end of chapter three. The group said they wanted to carry on and suggested stealing our passports so that we would *have* to stay!

In addition to these classes we presented some videos of lectures on the Middle East and a movie on the time of the Reformation. We were pleased that fourteen visitors came to these presentations. Then of course there are the exhortations each week followed by lunch and discussions at the CBMC apartment. We were encouraged that one of our contacts came along to all of the memorial services we attended and lunch afterwards.

We also continued (from our last visit) to have baptism discussions with the sister of Bro. Eddie Anthony. Jessica's knowledge of the Bible is growing and we pray that it will bring forth fruit to the glory of God.

The day came for us to return home. But it was a typical winter day in Ontario, Canada. Snow! Yes, the situation was the same as the day we left, five weeks earlier. The outbound flight from Toronto had to be 'de-iced' before take off and was therefore ninety minutes late. This delay of course meant that the return flight (the plane and crew go and return on the same day) was also ninety minutes late. It was well past midnight by the time we were home. We were deeply thankful to our Heavenly Father that our trip was so blessed.

But the work has to continue. We pray that the Lord will send labourers into that part of his vineyard.

*Written by Martin and Lois Webster, Link for ST. Lucia
Submitted by Jan Berneau, CBMA/CBMC Publicity*



A Bible Enrichment session

Fifty Years In Spanish Speaking South America

2015/2016 marks the fiftieth anniversary of the start of Christadelphian Bible Mission activities in Spanish speaking South America. On the 22nd of April 1965 Brethren George Smith and Gordon MacRae moved from Panama to settle in Bogotá, Colombia's capital. Gordon from Edinburgh had spent the last night with us in England before we saw him off on the boat from Southampton to Panama..."Aye", he later remarked, with wry Scottish humour, "that was my first night in a foreign country!" (Leaving Scotland for England).

In the next three years the work around Bogotá was blessed with sixteen baptisms, beginning with Sis. Carmen, an elderly but very lively lady. A small ecclesia was formed. Many of those early members were well advanced in years and have now passed off the scene to await our Lord's return; also five younger members married and moved to England.

Last year saw three members of those earlier times meet up in Restrepo (Meta) 80 km from Bogotá. We travelled by bus with Bro. Juan Pablo Ospina, down winding Andean roads, dropping more than 2000 metres through splendid mountain scenery. The bus seemed to be going excessively slowly, for which one might have been more than a little thankful, except that in due course the warning siren



Bro. Juan Pablo Ospina meeting up with Sis. Rosa and Bro. Luis Hernandez in Restrepo

indicated that the pneumatic brake system was failing! We were blessed in the end with a late but safe arrival and soon the three Colombians were full of talk of earlier times, of the days of their baptisms in 1967/68. Bro. Juan Pablo now lives in the UK whilst Luis and Rosa soldier on in Restrepo with not very good health. They share one good eye between them; Luis being blind, and Rosa being partially sighted.

Communication with the couple in Restrepo is maintained by mobile phone and by e-mail. The man at the internet is a good friend of Luis; he is serving a prison sentence "casa por carcel" and so, although under house arrest, has opened his home to offer this internet service. Luis sits at the internet, with all the other clients listening whilst our messages/ exhortations are read out loud, or whilst Luis with his booming voice dictates his replies.

After a moving service with bread and wine in their home, we reluctantly, the next day, returned to Bogotá. Quite recently Luis and Rosa have been visited by Bro. David Vine from the UK and also the Christadelphian Meal a Day team who were down from the States to review projects in that area.



Five brethren and sisters together with family members meet for a study day in the Medellín area.

In 1972 about five years after participating in the start-up work in Bogotá, Bill Rawson and his wife Carol, moved to Medellín some nine hours away by bus. Again the work was blessed by baptisms; some eight in total in 1974/75.

In January 2016, the group in Medellín met up for the day, and a Bible study “The Arrival of the King” was undertaken. It is remarkable that the group still meet and care for one another. They had almost no contact with other Christadelphians during the late 1980s and 1990s when Medellín was suffering over 30 drug related murders per night.

Today everyone is getting older. One sister works in the informal sector selling her “empanadas” which she cooks each day; another brother, an ageing artist, often struggles to make ends meet, and Bro. Jaime a university lecturer, who is about to retire himself, keeps an eye on the more elderly couples in the group.



Bro. and Sis. Realpe in their home in Tabio, outside Bogota

The preaching work has continued and progressed further south into Ecuador, Bolivia, Peru, Chile and Argentina. This does not mean however that there are not yet opportunities in Colombia to communicate the good news and the hope we share. One long standing contact in Bogotá is still visited, and a very caring family of four adults regularly see Bro. Jesús and Sis. Julia Realpe, who are over 90 years old, to share time in prayer and scripture reading.

*Written by John and Mélida Burton
Submitted by Jan Berneau, CBMA/CBMC Publicity*

Addresses for Bequests and Donations

Christadelphian Tidings Publishing Committee publishes this magazine and other works on the Truth. P.O. Box 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 www.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 P.O. Box 146, Three Rivers, CA 93271-0146, or 97 Twenty Place Blvd., Mount Hope, ON L0R 1W0 or via website www.agapeinaction.com
e-mail: agapeinaction@rogers.com

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

Christadelphian Save the Children Fund provides Bible learning materials, personal items, and scholarships to needy children in 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 provides fully confidential help for overcoming alcohol dependency. Phone: 866-823-1039

Christadelphian Care Line provides fully confidential help with emotional and spiritual problems, as well as family issues. Phone: 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.

HONESDALE, PA

Bro. David Cheetham (Moorestown, NJ) visited us on May 15, 2016, to give us a stirring exhortation and to share fellowship with us. Our sisters made a wonderful luncheon for us all.

Stephen J. DeMarco

NANAIMO, BC

Due to uncertain family travel and vacation arrangements by our small membership, we have, with regret, decided to suspend our regularly scheduled breaking of bread at our ecclesial hall from July 31, 2016–September 4, 2016, inclusive. Any visitors in our area at that time who wish to do so may be able to break bread by arrangement using the contact information in the CALS diary, or the notice on the hall door.

Our thanks go out to the brethren from near and far who have given us exhortational support over this past year. They include: Horace Macpherson, Joe Myren, Peter Lawrence, Clive Daniel, Bob Stodel and Jonah Knorr (Victoria, BC); Dave Snobelen (Saanich Peninsula, BC); Jim Hestermann (Maple Ridge, BC); Shaun Budden, Art Bull and Dan Orsetti (Vancouver, BC); and Graeme Alexander (Seattle, WA).

Once again we would encourage anyone contemplating moving to the west coast of Canada to consider the Nanaimo area which offers a temperate climate, but with snow covered mountains, reasonably priced real estate, and waterfront activities in a smaller city offering big city amenities. It also is a central location for many vacation activities. Our ecclesia is blessed with our own easily kept and accessible hall. For further information, please call or e-mail the above noted recording brother.

Tom Alexander

SARASOTA, FL

Bro. Patrick Brown and Sis. Carol Brown have transferred their membership from the Sarasota, FL Ecclesia to the Largo, FL Ecclesia.

James L Wilkinson

SIMI HILLS, CA

The Simi Hills Ecclesia has a number of items to report on since we last checked in back in 2014. We have been blessed with several fraternal gatherings, new preaching activities, three marriages and a large number of additions to our ecclesia. We've hosted three study days since late 2014. Bro. Brian Luke (Aust.) led our study day in December 2014, on the subject "Family Life in the Lord". Bro. Allen Laben taught us in June 2015, on "James: The Testing of Our Faith", and in December 2015, Bro. John Billington (ON, Canada) spoke to us on "Events Leading to the Return of Israel's King,

Understanding our Time”. This last study day was both a fraternal and preaching activity as we invited all our seminar students to attend and had a nice turnout.

After several years’ hiatus, we began a new seminar series in fall 2015, and are now in our second round of reaching out to the people around us. We thank God for the number of interested visitors at the seminars. Our ecclesia also sponsors a booth at the Simi Valley Street Fair each year in the spring, where we advertise our Annual Bible Reading Marathon. The Marathon is held at our hall with many in our own ecclesia, as well as surrounding ecclesias, helping read out-loud the entire Bible over four days time. The event is broadcast on the internet.

The additions to our ecclesia have come by way of transfer, baptism and birth. Transferring in were Sis. Karen Washeck from the Denver, CO Ecclesia; Sis. Tricia McLeod from Canada in 2014; and Bro. Mark and Sis. Robin Kelso, Bro. Andrew and Sis. Carly Culver, and Bro. Michael and Sis. Alisa Jennings in 2015.

MICHAEL SESMA was baptized on April 20, 2014; LIZ SANCHEZ on April 24, 2014; CORINNE REICH on July 31, 2014; LIZ MCCORMACK on September 2, 2014; ABBEY SNOBELEN on April 7, 2015; CORAL REICH on July 30, 2015; MICHAEL STERNAD in September 2015; and KYLE DE CAUSSIN on January 28, 2016.

We were excited to witness the uniting in marriage of Bro. Michael Sesma and Sis. Cher Bucknam on October 4, 2014, Bro. Jared Patterson and Sis. Liz Sanchez on May 2, 2015, and Bro. Michael Sternad and Sis. Karen Washeck on March 12, 2016.

We were also thrilled to welcome many future Sunday school students to our ecclesia during this time. Two boys, Caiden Elijah Gelineau, born April 16, 2014, and Zane Isaiah Gelineau, born November 4, 2015, to Bro. Luke and Sis. Heather Gelineau; Sarah Annalise Hensley, a daughter, born to Bro. Jason and Sis. Ruth Hensley on July 2, 2014; two daughters, Riley Lynn Wheeler, born August 1, 2014, and Skyler Ann Wheeler born February 3, 2016, to Bro. Colton and Sis. Rachel Wheeler; Andreen Pixie Levy, a daughter, born to Bro. Oniel and Sis. Kelsey Levy on January 1, 2015; and Evan Andrew Clubb, a son, born January 11, 2016, to Bro. David and Sis. Erin Clubb.

We enjoyed having Bro. Steven and Sis. Julie Snobelen and family with us on an extended visit in 2014-2015. The Snobelens returned to Nova Scotia in June 2015. We also had to say goodbye to Bro. Matt and Sis. Leah Elton and family who after an extended stay here moved back to Australia. Bro. Nolan and Sis. Kelly Patterson and family moved to the San Diego area in 2014. Bro. Geoff and Sis. Brenda Lee Smith and Bro. Aidan Smith moved to San Diego in September 2015. Also in September, 2015, Bro. Vaughn Smith moved to Wales to attend college.

Jeff Gelineau

MEMORIAL TABLEWARE

We have items used for memorial service at the Florida Christadelphian Bible School and will send them to anyone interested in having them. There are 12 glass cups, plates and table cloths and collection bags. Anyone interested, should contact me at the phone number or email provided. Walt Dodrill (727-410-0896) (waltdodrill@msn.com). In our Lord’s service, thank you.

Thoughts on the Way

How Did the First Day Replace the Sabbath?

Why Sunday, and Not Saturday?

*“Now about the collection for God’s people: Do what I told the Galatian churches to do. **On the first day of every week**, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made” (1Cor 16:1,2).*

*“**On the first day of the week** we came together to break bread. Paul spoke to the people and, because he intended to leave the next day, kept on talking until midnight” (Acts 20:7).*

Since so many in the early ecclesias were Jews, and since they were already in the habit of observing the Sabbath, why were their regular meetings at this time held on Sundays rather than Saturdays?

The obvious answer is that “the first day of the week” was plainly associated with the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ (Matt 28:1; Mark 16:2,9; Luke 24:1; John 20:1,19), and that the breaking of bread was a commemoration not just of his death but especially of his resurrection.

At the very beginning, and perhaps for a couple of generations, the Jewish Sabbath, that is Saturday, was set aside and observed by many Jewish Christians. They may have frequented the synagogues (Paul and his companions did this regularly) for the purpose of meeting with friends and relatives, and probably also for the purpose of preaching the gospel to their fellow-Jews.

Of course, when they attended a synagogue, they could scarcely have a breaking of bread service there which was exclusive to believers. Nor could Gentile believers be expected to attend the synagogue at all. So they would have to meet later, probably after synagogue services (morning and evening?) were finished.

Therefore, if Jewish Christians wanted to attend synagogue services, this would leave Saturday night available, after the Sabbath had officially ended, for memorial meeting. This may account for Paul, in one instance, speaking until midnight (Acts 20:7). It is not likely that Paul began speaking in the morning or even at midday, and continued thereafter until midnight, but rather that he began at 8 pm or 9 pm, and the service continued until midnight.

Regular evening services, as soon as the Jewish Sabbath ended, might help explain why Paul calls the breaking of bread “the Lord’s Supper” (1Cor 11:20). The word he uses for “supper” is the Greek “*deipnon*”, which means exactly that: an evening meal, and quite often a banquet. This also supports the idea that the earliest believers celebrated the breaking of bread on Saturday evening (right after the Jewish Sabbath ended), and not Sunday morning.

Because it was an evening service, and because it was for partaking the bread and the wine, such a “supper” would evoke both the Jewish Passover and traditional Jewish Sabbath services, as well as Christ’s own evening “Passover” which he kept with his disciples before he suffered.

Jews would keep the Sabbath by refraining from work. This was presumably allowed in most places in the Roman Empire because their religion was usually recognized by the authorities. But by Sunday morning they may have had to follow local custom and be available for work, market, and other business activities. Nevertheless, this would leave Saturday night, after synagogue services were finished, for Christians to meet together.

Keep in mind, also, that by Jewish reckoning, the “first day”, or Sunday, began when the sun went down in the evening after the 24-hour Sabbath finished.

Later, when Christianity became a recognized religion in parts of the Roman Empire and elsewhere, Sunday would likely be recognized as a day of rest also. By then, Christians might have begun to hold meetings at various times on Sunday (as we now define it, from midnight to midnight). But in the beginning, and for several generations, Saturday evening (as Gentiles saw it), but very early on Sunday (as Jews saw it), may have been the most convenient time for the Lord’s Supper.

George Booker

**NEW BOOK: PART OF THE FAMILY
CHRISTADELPHIANS, THE KINDERTRANSPORT, AND RESCUE FROM THE
HOLOCAUST
IWASPARTOFTHEFAMILY.COM**

In 1938 and 1939, the Kindertransport occurred — a movement to bring thousands of Jewish children out of Nazi occupied territories to safety in Great Britain. These children came without their parents, almost always without a knowledge of English, and also little experience with English culture. They came to a new family, a new country, and a new life. Approximately 250 of these children were sponsored by Christadelphians. They came and lived in houses with Christadelphian families, or lived in hostels that the Christadelphians had started.

So often the Holocaust is considered in terms of statistics — how many perished and how many were affected. Yet it is often the individual stories that provide the most powerful human connection and the opportunity to learn. Rather than focus on the statistics, this book examines the experiences of these people, who came to England as children, and lived with Christadelphians.

Ten of the former Jewish refugees, and their families, were contacted and collaborated in this effort to bring about this first volume. These are their stories.

The book is available from the Thousand Oaks Christadelphian Library, The Christadelphian Office, and Amazon.com (for Kindle edition).

Jason Hensley

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

JULY, 2016

2-10 Mid-Atlantic Bible School, Shippensburg, PA. The speakers are Bro. Ron Kidd (London, ON), "A Journey of Life in a Wilderness of Death" (Adults), and "Building for the Future (Prophecy of Haggai)" (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, New Zealand), "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 The speakers are 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 Gospels" (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 are available on the Bible school website, www.swcbs.com.

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

23-30 Christadelphian Bible Camp, Manitoulin Island. Theme: "... even so we also should walk in newness of life." The speakers and topics will be Bro. Bill Link (Baltimore, MD): "The Righteousness of Faith: Paul's Letter to the Romans" and Bro. Shane Kirkwood (Sydney, Australia): "John the Baptist — The Lord's Best Man". More details on www.christadelphianbiblecamp.ca. For registration, contact Bro. Mike Keene at mikesharon.keene@gmail.com or phone 613-353-6599.

23-30 Eastern Bible School **New Location This Year** Franklin Pierce University, Rindge, NH; Theme: "Let Us Consider One Another to Provoke unto Love and Good Works." Bro. Dennis Bevans (Baltimore, MD): "Jonah and Nahum: Christ's First and Second Advent" (adults), and "Philippians: Christ Our Everything" (teens); Bro. Allen Laben (Baltimore, MD): "Peter: A Living Hope" (adults and teens); Bro. Jim Styles (Simi Hills, CA): "Family Life Lessons from Genesis" (adults), and "Ecclesiastes: Lasting Happiness Can Only Be Found with God" (teens). For registration information contact Sis. Cindy Nevers at 18 Sibley St., Auburn, MA 01501, or cindynevers@verizon.net.

24-30 Western Bible School at Menucha Conference Center in Corbett, OR. The speakers are Bro. George Booker (Austin Leander, TX): "Freedom and Assurance of Glory"; Bro. Cameron Beeler: "Our Kingdom Lives"; Bro. Jeff Paggi *(Verdugo Hills, CA): "Second Principles of the Bible Guiding Us on the Way." Visit our website: www.menchabibleschool.org, or contact Sis. Rachel Launchbury: rachel.launchbury@gmail.com, or 503-702-6138.

31-Aug 6 Idyllwild Bible School at the Idyllwild Pines camp in Idyllwild, CA. The speakers and topics for this year are: Bro. Wilfred Alleyne (Handsworth Birmingham, UK): “Learning from the Lord”; Bro. Dev Ramcharan (Toronto Church Street, ON): “Esther: Thou Art Come to the Kingdom for Such a Time as This”; and Bro. Simon O’Grady (Tawa Wellington, New Zealand): “Daniel Narratives.” Idyllwild Pines is a rustic camp in the San Bernardino National Forest in the mountains above Palm Springs. The camp is at 5,200 feet elevation, and is quite dry and dusty. There is a lot of walking required on the campus, with a few hills. The Bible School is considered fairly “casual” due to the camping nature of the school. To register, or for more information, go to www.californiabibleschool.org, or e-mail Bro. Jeff Gelineau at: jeffgelineau@gmail.com.

31-Aug 6 Rogue River Bible School Speakers: Bro. Carl Parry (Salisbury, Australia), “The Life of Noah”; Bro. David Wisniewski (Brant County, ON), “The Honor of Kings — Searching Out the Parables”; and Bro. Ken Styles (Detroit Royal Oak, MI), “Forgiveness.” For registration information, contact Sis. Pat Posey at pat1posey@gmail.com.

AUGUST, 2016

20-21 Largo Tampa Bay, FL Study Weekend to be led by Bro. Steve Cheetham (Echo Lake, NJ). All are invited. Please contact Bro. Walt Dodrill at 727-410-0896 for further information.

20-26 Winfield Bible School will be held at Winfield, BC in the Okanagan Valley, BC. Our speakers will be Bro. Roger Long (UK): “We have found the Messiah”; Bro. Richard Morgan (Canada): “Malachi” and Bro. Joseph Palmer (USA): “Philippians”. Registration: Winfield Bible School, c/o Dan Fuhr, 4401 Westview Drive, Vernon, BC, Canada V1T 9B2 or email: registerforwinfield@hotmail.com. All other enquiries: Bro. John Gareau (250) 275-7787 or Bro. Ken Loveridge (778) 475-4602 or email: winfieldbibleschool@hotmail.com.

22-27 Lakefield Bible School at Lakefield College School, located east of Toronto near Peterborough, ON, on a beautiful lakeside campus. Full program of fellowship, instruction, and recreation for all ages. Contact Bro. Bruce and Sis. Barbara Abel br71abel@gmail.com, or call 519-925-5297. Website: www.lakefieldbibleschool.com.

27-28 Victoria, BC Fraternal Gathering will be held one week earlier this year. Bro. Roger Long will be our speaker. Contact Bro. Clyde Snobelen at victoria@csl.ca.

SEPTEMBER, 2016

17-18 Bedford, NS Study weekend with Bro. Dev Ramcharan (Toronto Church Street, ON). His topic is “ ‘I will arise and shake myself!’ A life of Samson”. The classes will be held at the North Woodside Community Centre, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia. For information contact Bro. John Ching at kiwijohn47@hotmail.com or 1-902-404-0196.

24-25 Kouts, IN Fall Study Weekend at Woodland Park Community Center, 2100 Willowcreek Rd., beginning at 10:00 a.m. The speaker will be Bro. Bryan Styles (Detroit Livonia, MI). Theme: “Peter’s Conversion.” Please contact Bro. Joe Bennett at 219-762-2704, or jk8275@comcast.net.

OCTOBER, 2016

1-2 Ontario Fall Gathering at Maple High School, Vaughan, ON. Perennial Theme: “For he is not ashamed to call them brethren” (Heb 2: 11). Speaker: Bro. Bill Link (Baltimore, MD). Topic: “Portraits of the Lord”. Contact Bro. Bruce Abel at br71abel@gmail.com or 519-925-5297.

7-9 Norfolk, VA CYC Study Weekend. Speaker: Bro. Jeff Lange (Norfolk, VA). Theme: “Ancient Principles for Modern Life”. Registration is still only \$35! For more details and/or to register: norfolkchristadelphians.com/norfolk-cyc-study-weekend, or contact Sis. Amy Lagasse: 757-222-6726 or amyandniq@hotmail.com.

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8-10 Atlanta, GA. Fraternal gathering. Speaker is Bro. Nigel Small (Echo Lake, NJ). His theme is "Faith, Hope and Love". Registration deadline September 1, 2016. Contact Sis. Carolyn Carter 770-833-8915.

8-9 Vancouver, BC Fraternal Gathering. Speaker Bro. Marc Hunter (Saanich Peninsula, BC): "Thinking Twice & the Sermon on the Mount" Contact Sis. Pam Snobelen at pamela721@shaw.ca or 604 881 4733 for a program and accommodation

14-16 Women at the Well Retreat, Palm Springs, CA. Sis Mary Styles (Shelburne, ON) will be leading our classes on the topic of 'Renewal'. Sponsored by the Simi Hills, CA Ecclesia. For information regarding the weekend contact Sisters Sandy McLeod sandrarmcleod@gmail.com or Denise Sisco denisesisco@outlook.com. For registration contact Sis Bonnie Sommerville kenandbonnie@simihills.org.

NOVEMBER, 2016

18-20 Washington, D.C. Family Bible Study weekend at Camp Hashawha, Westminster, MD. Bro. Dennis Bevans (Baltimore, MD) is scheduled to be the teacher. The topic for the weekend is yet to be determined. Contact Ken Green, 443-497-3497 or e-mail Ken at Hashawha@gmail.com for additional information.