

The
Christadelphian Tidings
of the Kingdom of God



Editorial:
Empty Words

**The Family that
God Created**

**First Principles:
Is the Kingdom
the Church?**

Praying to Saints

**Isn't It Time to
Discuss Revelation?
(Concluded)**

**Sunday School:
Ready-to-Use
Character Plays (2)**

Be Ye Reconciled

**Thoughts on the Way:
The Devil, You Say!**

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Empty Words

*“Let no one deceive you with **empty words**, for because of such things God’s wrath comes on those who are disobedient” (Eph 5:6 NIV).*

*“He [Moses] said to them, “Take to heart all the words by which I am warning you today, that you may command them to your children, that they may be careful to do all the words of this law. For it is no **empty word** for you, but your very life, and by this word you shall live long in the land that you are going over the Jordan to possess” (Deut 32:46-47 ESV).*

Signal-to-noise ratio

Apart from a technical meaning (familiar perhaps only to those with an engineering background), this term has come to have a more common meaning: “The ratio of useful information to useless information in any given statement.”¹ It is becoming an enormously difficult problem in our modern society to distinguish empty words from words which may form our very life, words that can help us achieve eternal life. In fact, there are two problems:

- 1) There is a tendency to rely on the internet as the source of all human knowledge, even those items related to our eternal salvation.
- 2) The Internet is so vast, at around 1 billion (US) sites, and an amount of data that has to be written in scientific nomenclature: 10^{24} bytes, or more usefully 10^{24} individual alphanumeric characters.

There are of course several consequences:

- 1) We expect to find any information we want on the internet.
- 2) There is an incredible amount of information on the internet, both true or false, both valuable and worthless or worse. This makes it very difficult to find reliable information, even if the information is actually there.
- 3) The sheer amount of information, in the form of Web pages, Facebook groups, private forums, creates so much noise that useful information is difficult to obtain: there is too much noise.

To take the first consequence: Anyone who has studied any subject in depth recognizes how much knowledge is either unpublished, considered proprietary, or in the heads of experts in the field. To take a trivial example, to build a modern reliable automobile in high volume requires the combined skills of a large number of experts and hard won knowledge, almost none of which is readily available. And perhaps more relevantly, of the information I possess either in hard copy (books, etc.) or electronically about the Christadelphian community, less than 1% can be found on the internet.

The second consequence: There are around 400,000 sites with the term “Christadelphian” in them: many are just mentions, and quite a number are from those opposed to us, but that still leaves an overwhelming number of sites

to look at. And this excludes the areas of the internet many rely on for their information — sites like Facebook and all the other social media sites.

Noise: Information flies at lightning speed from person to person, often spreading rumors, half-truths, false accusations, etc. They sometimes excuse the basest of sins, by words such as: “If it feels good, do it,” “If it hurts no one else there’s nothing wrong with it.” These are the empty words Paul is talking about: “*Let no one deceive you with empty arguments [that encourage you to sin], for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon those who habitually sin*” (Eph 5:6, AMP). Among all the words, we have the tendency to choose the ones that best fit what we want, not what is the best for us or the ones that reflect the will of God.

Empty words

In the context of Ephesians, the “empty words” refer particularly to those on whom God’s judgement will fall, who will be subject to the wrath of God. Because those guilty of the empty words are those who are immoral, impure, or greedy, as the NET puts v. 5. They want to persuade true believers that a little indulgence in the normal customs of the time are harmless. And this is one of the great problems of the “noise” on the internet: the sheer volume of “vulgar speech, foolish talk, or coarse jesting” to be found there almost desensitizes those who browse it to what are actually highly immoral activities. The three Greek words translated by the NET in verse 4 as “vulgar speech, foolish talk, and coarse jesting” are all only used once in the New Testament, and are difficult to translate, but are clearly terms for language unsuitable for believers to utter, and ones they should be avoiding. Good wholesome humor is sometimes what we need to brighten our spirits, but the apostle stresses thankfulness over wittiness. As he says: “*always giving thanks to God the Father for each other in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ*” (Eph 5:20).

Many are the words, empty of spiritual meaning, that we hear or read, and especially in the anonymity of the internet, with its chat rooms and anonymous browsing. How often when looking at harmless news sites do pop-ups or images tempt you to look at other sites, often not so harmless? How often does the language in exchanges, even between Christadelphians, reflect sentiments that ought not to be uttered? How many times do you read opinions that are based on ignorance rather than any appreciation of the truths so clear in the Bible?

How many times do we think:

- “If it feels good, you can do it” ?
- “If it hurts no one else there’s nothing wrong with it” ?
- “It’s not the destination, it’s the journey that counts” ?
- “What happens in Vegas stays in Vegas”
- “No-one will know if I just...” ?
- “There is no harm in a little...” ?

Is there a solution?

“*For it is no empty word for you, but your very life, and by this word you shall live long.*” As there are empty words, unsuitable words, there are instead words full

of life. Words we can hear at our ecclesias, when we converse with our friends. Words we can read from the Bible, words we can read from the books of our community, and if we are careful many other books that can help us in our life of what we hope is full of thanks to God and our Lord Jesus. And perhaps most important of these, words we hear from our fellow members, whether be it inside the ecclesial building or outside it. But we must stress these ought not to be “empty words” of idle gossip, trivial chit-chat, repeats of scandal, but conversations about those things that matter: the upbringing of children, affairs of our community, Bible-based discussions, and enjoying “*speaking to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making music in your hearts to the Lord*” (Eph 5:19).

And we can also enjoy the internet, and take advantage of what it has to offer, which is a great deal. If you have a talk to deliver or are studying a particular subject, there are many resources on almost any topic and any passage in the Bible. There are many of the classic books of our community available online. Many audio classes, especially from Bible Schools, are available at sites like the Christadelphian Vault and the Livonia Tape Library. Christadelphian videos are also available on YouTube, although care has to be exercised in general on this site. These tools can allow you to listen to excellent talks on your computer or while driving.

We have to work at it

It is so easy to sit back in front of your computer and let your mind wander along the pathways of all the distractions it presents. It is like the empty words of Paul’s day, full of enticements to indulge in the seemingly harmless ways of the world. All things change and advance, but human nature has changed little over the millennia. As the Phillips translation puts it: “*The key-note of your conversation should not be nastiness or silliness or flippancy, but a sense of all that we owe to God*” (Eph 5:4). For “conversation” we could insert “internet surfing” or “social media use.”

So how do we make it easy to turn our conversation to paths more suitable for believers? How do we walk in the light of the truth? How do we make our mind turn away from the idle temptations of our society? I do not mean we are to isolate ourselves in our little cocoons of ecclesia and family, for how are we to let our light shine forth if we hide ourselves. And I do not mean we have to turn every conversation with our work colleagues into an overt preaching effort, or refuse to discuss anything but Bible topics — but it should be clear where our interests lie, which does not include off-color jokes or rants about our politicians. For our days are just as evil as those of the Ephesians.

Peter Hemingray

Notes:

1. From “The Urban Dictionary”, on the internet.

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

Exhortation

The Family God Created

Families, natural and spiritual

Let us consider the reasons that God ordered human families the way that he did:

- Why join a husband and a wife together until old age and death?
- Why have children that require 20 years of parental support?
- Why link us together with brothers and sisters for so many years inside a family?

Throughout the course of our physical lives we play many roles: dependent child, brother or sister, husband or wife, parent, grandparent, and often are once again so old that we become dependent on our children. Is it just coincidence that many of our roles in the church or ecclesia are modelled in the same way? Consider the roles that God asks us to play in our spiritual lives:

- Child of God
- Brother and sister in Christ
- Bride of Christ
- Elder or Spiritual parent

Family and ecclesial life are part of a preparation; family and ecclesial life are like a training ground preparing us for something bigger, something even more important — something to do with the very purpose of life itself.

Consider why God chose to create our planet with its seas, lands, rivers, and skies and to fill them with fish, birds, animals, and finally people. What was the purpose in all of that? It's a purpose reflected in our family and ecclesial lives. It is God's purpose:

- To have children that form a family.
- To have each love his fellow man as brother and sister.
- To join Christ and His other children in unity like the unity of a bridegroom and bride.
- To be a Father supporting His children.

The whole purpose can be boiled down into one statement: That God may be all in all. One family unified in God. All of our roles in our family and in our ecclesia: child, sibling, spouse, parent, grandparent, and elder — they are all roles which God is using to prepare us for His ultimate purpose: One family unified in Him.

“How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is” (1John 3:1-2 NIV).

“In bringing many sons to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the author of their salvations perfect through suffering. Both the one who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers” (Heb 2:10-11 NIV).

“Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God” (Rom 7:4).

“Then one said unto him [Jesus], Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee. But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother” (Matt 12: 47-50).

When a new sister gets baptized into the family of God, all of those roles can ultimately be spiritually fulfilled by our new sister: daughter, sister, bride, and mother. The same goes for every sister and brother here, we have been called to fill spiritual roles as children, siblings, spouses, and parents. God’s purpose is for people, through joy and hardship, to learn and to grow and so form one family in Him. God in all, and all in God.

And now, at this memorial service, we are before the cross of Jesus. Before the bread and wine — representing the body and blood of our elder brother. Of that cross we read of the following account:

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

And so, when we sit before the body and blood of our elder brother and partake of these emblems, we should look around at those partaking with us. Look in front, behind, and to our sides, for behold, these are our brothers and sisters, our mothers and fathers, our sons and daughters. God intends this to be a family. Why else do we share together partaking of the same body and the same blood?

Only we must be careful to make this a family. God may intend it, but we are the ones who must want it, choose it and work for it.

Every day is a choice

It only takes a moment to form a family relationship.

- How long does it take to be born and become a son or a daughter? (A relatively short time, the span of a birth.)
- How long does it take to become a brother or sister? (Likewise, in the span of a birth.)

- How long does it take to get married and become a spouse? (The time it takes to say “I do”.)
- How long does it take to become a parent? (Whether through a birth or through adoption: in the span of a birth, or the signing of the papers.)
- All of these family relationships are formed and begin in a short moment of time: child, sibling, spouse, and parent.
- And how long does it take to get baptized?

As we have often witnessed, it takes only a short moment of time for a new brother or sister to begin a new spiritual relationship, being placed under the water, and a couple seconds later out of the water: child of God, sister of Jesus, bride of Christ, and spiritual mother for the young. And similarly for a new brother: child of God, brother of Jesus, bride of Christ, and spiritual father for the young.

Quick to form, quick to destroy, but LONG to build

However, like any family relationship, while it begins in a moment, it takes years to form a deep and strong relationship. And just as abruptly as a brother-sister, husband-wife, or parent-child relationship begins, it can be quickly damaged or even destroyed. Careless or hurtful words or actions can undo a relationship in moments. James wrote: *“Likewise, the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark”* (James 3:5 NIV).

It takes but moments for a small spark to set a forest on fire. On the other hand, to build up love, trust, and companionship takes months and years and decades. Is a good marriage built in a day? Do we become good children over night? How about good parents? The answer is NO.

A successful family relationship, whether parent-child, husband-wife, or brother-sister takes time and effort. It is not a one-time decision, taken one day and forgotten. Being a good child, sibling, spouse, or parent takes daily work, year after year. And so it is with all who are baptized and have put on Christ: We have all heard these words: “Baptism is only the beginning of our walk in Christ”. And so it is.

You become a child of God, a sister or brother of Christ, a member of the ecclesia which is the bride of Christ, in one moment of time. We are buried in baptism and within seconds, in the eyes of God, we are raised in newness of life, out of the watery grave and into God’s family, having been joined to the body of Christ. However, to be a good child, sibling, and spouse is a daily battle that lasts a lifetime. It is a journey that is filled with many ups and downs, joys and sorrows, and it is one that requires much endurance.

No guarantees in our natural families

With our natural families there is never any guarantee that our family relationships will work out well. Consider parent-child relationships in this world. How many children run away from their parents? In Canada about 30,000 every year (according to Missingkids Canada). And aside from the runaways,

how many more parent-child relationships are poor or even just “lukewarm”? Certainly many, many more. Some of the reasons parent-children relationships break down:

- Parents hurting or neglecting children;
- Parents not accepting children’s decisions or lifestyle;
- Children disagreeing with parents’ rules or decisions and as a consequence seeking more independence;
- Children being ashamed of some aspect of their lives;
- And perhaps even more commonly:
 - Parents not spending enough time with children;
 - Parents not giving enough love to their children;
 - Children not respecting or being willing to forgive parents;
 - Children growing up and not giving enough of their time to their parents, due to being busy, or moving away, or just not caring.

We could list similar reasons for husband and wife relationships. Approximately four in ten Canadian marriages end not by the death of one of the partners, but by divorce. Many more live in cold or even “lukewarm” marriages. Some of the top reasons marriages do not work out:

- Lack of communication;
- Not being considerate of spouse’s needs;
- Infidelity;
- Not pulling one’s weight or being irresponsible;
- Neglect, not spending enough time together.

The basis of breakdown between sibling, parent-child, and husband-wife relationships is similar. It generally boils down to lack of time, consideration, self-sacrifice, and love.

And so there is certainly no guarantee that our natural family relationships will work out. As already mentioned, they begin in a moment and can be damaged just as quickly, but they require months, years, and decades of time, consideration, self-sacrifice, and love in order to build.

No guarantees in our spiritual family

All that has been said with regard to natural families applies to our spiritual family. As we all know, there is never any guarantee of salvation even though we have been baptized. None of us can sit here and say for sure we will be judged worthy to be part of Christ’s bride, his ecclesia, or worthy of being a son or daughter of God. There are certainly ups and downs and there will be times when it appears we are failing in our spiritual family. And so, in our roles as God’s children, consider for a moment that our spiritual relationships fail and succeed for the same reasons that our natural relationships do.

If we are too busy to care about our heavenly Father, to speak to Him, to read His word, and appreciate His hand in our lives, then we will drift away from Him, just as we would if we treated our own natural fathers like that.

In our roles as spiritual parents to the young (e.g., elders, leaders, role models, teachers), remember that our spiritual relationships fail and succeed for the same reasons that our natural relationships do.

- Parents must spend time to get to know their children.
- Parents must be patient and loving towards their young to build their trust.
- Parents must make the effort to teach and to guide the spiritually young if the young are to grow and to reach their potential.
- Every member has a part to play in guiding the youth of the ecclesia, even if it's as simple as listening and providing a helping hand.

Regarding our roles as brothers and sisters: again, our spiritual relationships fail and succeed for the same reasons that our natural relationships do. If we do not treat our brothers and sisters with kindness and consideration, we will drive walls between us. If we let ourselves get too busy and fail to spend time together we will drift apart.

“And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another — and all the more as you see the day approaching” (Heb 10:24-25 NIV).

It's important for us to take the time and effort to get to know one another. We cannot spur one another to love and good deeds if we don't meet together and act with goodness toward one another: at the memorial, at Bible class, in our homes, and whenever or wherever our brothers and sisters have need.

Our role as the bride of Christ

Once more, remember that our spiritual relationships fail and succeed for the same reasons that our natural relationships do. What does a bride vow when she is married?

We are all familiar with the following vow: *I take thee to be my wedded husband, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love, cherish, and to obey, till death us do part, according to God's holy ordinance; and thereto I give thee my troth.*

That wedding vow, which goes all the way back to at least 1549, forms the basis for most of the English speaking world's wedding vows, and was based on the Biblical ideal of a husband-wife relationship. Similar to the groom's, the bride's marriage oath is a solemn promise to love, cherish, and obey the husband from that day onwards. Like any literal man-woman marriage in the world today, our spiritual marriage to Christ will fail if we neglect it, do not put in the effort, or are unfaithful to Christ.

What is unfaithfulness to Christ?

The figure of marriage is the figure of oneness and unity. The bride of Christ forms one body with him: *“for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal 3:27-28).*

We are unfaithful to Christ when we fail to act as part of Christ's body: not obeying Jesus, our head, and not serving and caring for the other members of the body. Infidelity happens when we serve the old man or woman, whom we were supposed to have put off at baptism, instead of Christ, whom we have put on. And so, when we serve ourselves instead of obeying Christ, we are jeopardizing our union or marriage with him.

Conversely, when we follow Christ's teachings and example and serve his body as if it were our very own, we fulfill our role as Christ's bride, destined to become one with him and with the Father, and to fulfill Christ's prayer for us. Christ prayed "...that they may be one as we are one: I in them and you in me" (John 17:22,23).

Joy in God's family

The whole purpose can be boiled down into one statement: that God may be all in all. One family unified in God. All of our roles in our family and in our ecclesia: children, sibling, spouse, parent, they are all roles which God is using to prepare us for His ultimate purpose: one family unified in Him. Eternal joy as part of one family unified in God is a prospect beyond compare. All of the effort and sacrifice required to be part of God's family is worthwhile. I leave you with Paul's words of exhortation to the Colossians:

"...you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all. Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievance you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him" (Col 3:9-17 NIV).

Dan Archibald (Toronto East, ON)

"Like as a father pitieth his children,
so the LORD pitieth them that fear him" (Psa 103:13).

"And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts,
in that day when I make up my jewels;
and I will spare them,
as a man spareth his own son that serveth him" (Mal 3:17).

First Principles

Doctrines to Be Rejected — (16) Church

Doctrine to Be Rejected # 12: That the Kingdom of God is “the church.”

This can be stated in a positive way: the Kingdom of God is a divine political empire to be established on earth at the return of Jesus Christ.

“And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the LORD” (Isa. 2:2-5).

This can be compared with the BASF clause 19:

That God will set up a Kingdom in the earth, which will overthrow all others, and change them into “the kingdoms of our Lord and His Christ.”

Dan 2:44; 7:13-14; Rev 11:15; Isa 32:1, 16; 2:3-4; 11:9-10.

We note that this belief has been part of our Statement of Faith from its earliest times: John Thomas included it in 1867 as part of his synopsis among the doctrines as Perverted by the Apostacy: “The Kingdom of God, the ‘Church.’”

The belief of most of Christendom

The belief that the term “The Kingdom of God” does refer primarily to the present Church goes back around 1600 years. To quote a summary:¹

Early church writings talk about the Kingdom of God, yet its meaning wasn’t articulated fully until St. Augustine. Augustine (AD 354-430) was the first Catholic theologian to thoroughly define the Kingdom of God. In his book “City of God,” Augustine describes two kingdoms: The Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Man. For Augustine, the Kingdom of God on earth was the Catholic Church. Augustine also described the Kingdom of God as encompassing a heavenly element: those believers who had already passed away. The Kingdom of Man consisted of everyone outside the Church.

This has been echoed in many more recent creeds:

- 1) The Heidelberg Catechism identifies the keys of the kingdom of heaven as the preaching of the gospel and Christian discipline by which believers are accepted of God in the fellowship of the congregation and by which

unbelievers are excluded from the fellowship of God and excommunicated from the church. Thus this creed identifies the church as the kingdom. Thus also, the Catechism teaches that the kingdom is spiritual. The same Reformed Confession explains the second petition of the model prayer, about the coming of the kingdom, this way: “preserve and increase Thy church.”

- 2) The Belgic Confession establishes the identification of the church as the kingdom as Reformed orthodoxy when it declares Christ to be the king of the church: “This church hath been from the beginning of the world, and will be to the end thereof; which is evident from this, that Christ is an eternal King, which, without subjects, cannot be” (Art. 32).
- 3) The Westminster Confession of Faith is explicit: “The visible church, which is also catholic or universal under the gospel ... is the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ”. Significantly, the Confession immediately adds, “the house and family of God.” The phrase that is added is significant because it shows that the Confession has its eye on 1 Timothy 3, where the phrase is found.

The threefold meaning

It is perhaps unfortunate that our Christadelphian statements, such as the BASF, lack the acknowledgement that the term “Kingdom of God” (or “Heaven”) is used in several senses in the Bible, which sometimes force us on the defensive when discussing this. It has, unfortunately, also sometimes caused internal controversy, as some have pointed this out and have been assailed for so doing. This was particularly so in the 1970’s, a time of some turmoil in our community in the UK. This caused Bro. Fred Pearce to contribute a valuable article on the subject, in which he commented:²

“It is evident from our correspondence that there is some discussion at present about the meaning of ‘the kingdom of God (of heaven)’ in the Scriptures. Some would maintain that the expression refers only to the future Kingdom to be set up by Christ at his return to the earth; others would add to this an occasional reference to the person of Jesus Christ as the embodiment of divine, kingly power; and still others would say that, in addition to these senses, ‘the kingdom of God’ in the New Testament sometimes refers to the sovereignty of God and of Christ over the saints during their probation.”

There had been wise words written by Bro. LG Sargent many years before when discussing the Sermon of the Mount:³

“ ‘The Kingdom’, then, has a threefold meaning. First and last it is the future reign into which men may enter through judgment, and this must govern all secondary meanings. But it is also the power, authority, sovereignty, vested in the King; and in this sense the Kingdom was in their midst when he was among them, searching and testing them by their response to him. Further, the Kingdom is the message through which men become related to the future order. The use of ‘Kingdom’ in this sense is something more than a metonymy, because the message is an operative power working among men to prepare the materials

out of which the future Kingdom is to be formed; and the relation to the Kingdom of those who accept the message is more than a hope: it is a covenant. Because covenant and kingdom are inseparable for the people of God, the present possessive can be used even of the time of their probation: theirs' is the Kingdom. The ground of their blessedness is their relation to God and His King."

Past Kingdom

There is, of course, a further aspect to this topic, that of the Kingdom of Israel:

"And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel" (Exod 19:6).

"And the LORD said unto Samuel, hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them" (1Sam 8:7).

"And of all my sons (for the LORD hath given me many sons) he hath chosen Solomon my son to sit upon the throne of the kingdom of the LORD over Israel" (1Chron 28:5).

Of course, this Kingdom was taken away from the inhabitants because of their wickedness, and the prophets described the future glorious kingdom.

Present possession

To further quote from the article by Bro. Pearce concerning the third aspect:

"In Romans 14 the Apostle Paul is insisting that the right way to 'live unto the Lord' is not to demand that certain days must be observed, nor that certain foods or drink must be banned; for *'the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit'* (v. 17, RV). Here 'The kingdom of God' is directly identified with qualities of the mind, as in the Apostle's description of 'the fruit of the Spirit', which begins: 'love, joy, peace ...', and of course righteousness is implied anyway. To come under the influence then, of the Spirit of God and the spirit of Christ (Rom 8:9), in place of 'the spirit of the world' and 'the natural man' (1Cor 2:12, 14), is to come under 'the kingdom of God'. That this is the right understanding is shown by the way Paul goes on: *'For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God'* (v. 18). To be 'in the kingdom of God' in this sense is a matter of serving him in the right way, in the spirit and not in the flesh.

"Even more striking is Paul's description in his Letter to the Colossians of the change of status which had been granted to the believers. God has *'made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: (he) hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son'* (Col 1:12-13). Both the verbs are in the past tense, implying that their actions have already been accomplished. 'To translate' here means to remove from one place to another, and what this involves for the saints is 'redemption ... even the forgiveness of sins'

and being 'reconciled' to God (v. 14, 21). Abundant confirmation that this is what Paul means by the transferring of the saints 'into the kingdom' of Christ is found in parallel passages like these:

"Paul describes his commission to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles as *'to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God'* (Acts 26:18).

'Ye were once darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light ...' (Eph 5:8).

'Ye are ... a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye should shew forth the excellencies of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light' (1Pet 2:9 RV).

'Ye turned from idols to serve the living and true God ...' (1Thess 1:19).

"To be 'translated into the kingdom' of God's Son then is to serve God, to be *'in the light'* (as John puts it, 1John 2:10) and so to walk as *'children of light'*, or, being *'good seed'*, as *'children of the kingdom'* (Matt 13:38)."

The future Kingdom in the BASF

Of course, we must emphasize the primacy of the future Kingdom in this discussion. It is clear that this aspect dominates most the Old and New Testaments, and it is rightly the focus of our preaching and is the larger part of our Statement of Faith: "The Things of the Kingdom". As such, it comprises just about 25% of the statement.

As it says (clause XVII): That the things of the Kingdom of God are the facts testified concerning the Kingdom of God in the writings of the prophets and apostles, and definable as in the next twelve paragraphs:

XIX. — That God will set up a kingdom in the earth, which will overthrow all others, and change them into "the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ."

XX. — That for this purpose God will send Jesus Christ personally to the earth at the close of the times of the Gentiles.

XXI. — That the kingdom which he will establish will be the kingdom of Israel restored, in the territory it formerly occupied, viz., the land bequeathed for an everlasting possession to Abraham and his seed (the Christ) by covenant.

XXII. — That this restoration of the kingdom again to Israel will involve the ingathering of God's chosen but scattered nation, the Jews; their reinstatement in the land of their fathers, when it shall have been reclaimed from "the desolation of many generations"; the building again of Jerusalem to become "the throne of the Lord" and the metropolis of the whole earth.

XXIII. — That the governing body of the kingdom so established will be the brethren of Christ, of all generations, developed by resurrection and change, and constituting, with Christ as their head, the collective "seed of Abraham", in whom all nations will be blessed, and comprising "Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets", and all in their age of like faithfulness.

XXIV. — That at the appearing of Christ prior to the establishment of the Kingdom, the responsible (namely, those who know the revealed will of God, and have been called upon to submit to it), dead and living — obedient and disobedient — will be summoned before his judgement seat “to be judged according to their works”; and “receive in body according to what they have done, whether it be good or bad.”

XXV. — That the unfaithful will be consigned to shame and “the second death”, and the faithful, invested with immortality, and exalted to reign with Jesus as joint heirs of the kingdom, co-possessors of the earth, and joint administrators of God’s authority among men in everything.

XXVI. — That the Kingdom of God, thus constituted, will continue a thousand years, during which sin and death will continue among the earth’s subject inhabitants, though in a much milder degree than now.

XXVII. — That a law will be established which shall go forth to the nations for their “instruction in righteousness”, resulting in the abolition of war to the ends of the earth; and the “filling of the earth with the knowledge of the glory of Jehovah, as the waters cover the sea.”

XXVIII. — That the mission of the Kingdom will be to subdue all enemies, and finally death itself, by opening up the way of life to the nations, which they will enter by faith, during the thousand years, and (in reality) at their close.

XXIX. — That at the close of the thousand years, there will be a general resurrection and judgement, resulting in the final extinction of the wicked, and the immortalization of those who shall have established their title (under the grace of God) to eternal life during the thousand years.

XXX. — That the government will then be delivered up by Jesus to the Father, who will manifest Himself as the “all-in-all”; sin and death having been taken out of the way, and the race completely restored to the friendship of the Deity.

General summary:

*“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men”
(Luke 2:14).*

*“The God of heaven shall set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed;
and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces
and consume all kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever” (Dan 2:44).*

Peter Bilello (Ann Arbor, MI) and Peter Hemingray (Pittsburgh, PA)

Notes:

1. From <http://peopleof.oureyverydaylife.com/views-roman-catholics-kingdom-god-2441.html>: extracted 2016.
2. *The Christadelphian*, 1977, p 411.
3. *The Teaching of the Master*, LG Sargent, Christadelphian Office 1961.

Why I Left the Roman Catholic Church

(6) Praying to Saints and Conclusion

Praying to “saints”

As I explained¹, we are told that the dead in Christ are “asleep” in the earth, waiting for his second coming — they are not alive in heaven. But Catholics pray to the dead saints and to Mary, as if they had already been raised, as if they did not have to wait until the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, like *all* those who sleep in Christ: “*And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day*” (John 6:40). Therefore, when we make our confession at Mass and say, “...and I ask the Blessed Virgin, and all the angels and saints, and you my brothers and sisters, to pray for me to the Lord our God,” we are asking the impossible. In the Eucharistic Prayer No. 1, we say, “...In union with the whole Church we honor Mary, the ever-virgin mother of Jesus Christ our Lord and God. We honor Joseph, her husband, the apostles and martyrs Peter and Paul, Andrew, etc. and all the saints. May their merits and prayers gain us your constant help and protection.”² However, Scripture shows us that these dead people can in no way “gain us your constant help and protection.” Believing and professing that they can is tantamount to disbelief in God’s word.

Paul writes,

“Beware lest anyone cheat you [plunder/take you captive] through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ. For in him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in him, who is the head of all rule and authority and power... Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in false humility and worship of angels, intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, and not holding fast to the head, from whom all the body, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase that is from God,” (Col 2:8-10, 18-19).

According to Scripture, elevation of the Pope is blasphemy

Despite the above admonition, the Pope claims to have all power on earth. At the Council of Trent, it was stated: “He hath all power on earth... All temporal power is his; the dominion, jurisdiction and government of the whole earth is his by divine right. All rulers of the earth are his subjects and must submit to him”.³ However, Jesus made the SAME CLAIM: After Jesus had been risen from the dead, he “*came and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations... teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age’*” (Matt 28:19-20). Who, then, has this divine power? Who is telling the truth? The Pope, or Jesus Christ?

Final thoughts

Paul warned us that before the second coming of our Lord Jesus, there would be someone who *“opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshipped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God”* (2Thess 2: 4). This “mystery of lawlessness” was already at work in the infant church, altering the true traditions and gospel message as preached by Jesus and his Apostles:

“The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan [meaning adversary; one in opposition to God], with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness” (2Thess 2: 9-11).

Who is this lawless one, who *“will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of his mouth and destroy with the brightness of his coming”*? (2Thess 2: 8). We are warned in Revelation to *“come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues,”* and *“in the measure that she glorified herself and lived luxuriously, in the same measure give her torment and sorrow”* (Rev 18: 4).

Likewise, John warns us about deceivers who were among the early Christians:

“As you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come... They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us. But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you know all things.... Therefore let that abide in you which you heard FROM THE BEGINNING. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father. And this is the promise that He has promised us — eternal life” (1John 2: 18-25).

The Apostle Peter warns us about false teachers (men), and tells us to heed the Scriptures, because *“prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit,”* (2Pet 1: 21). So, in the book of God’s Word, we are taught that we must rely solely on Scripture for spiritual guidance, and not on the traditions of men.

In Revelation, Jesus warns us:

“For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book” (Rev 22: 18).

A personal appeal

Finding and obeying God's Truth is a matter of eternal life and death. It is the most important thing that one can do in his or her entire earthly life. Jesus said *"This is life eternal, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent"* (John 17:3). If the above is the Truth and I ignore it or reject it because of the assurance of false teachers, will the teachers be willing or able to plead to the Lord for me at the *"great and terrible day of the Lord"*? *"None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him"* (Psa 49:7). I alone am responsible for my behavior; I will stand alone before the Judgment seat of Christ.

In light of the above, I cannot remain in the Roman Catholic Church. Some of her practices and doctrines are clearly from men and oppose Scripture. As Peter said, *"we ought to obey God rather than men"* (Acts 5: 29). I have thus decided to "come out of her."

If anyone would like to talk to me about the above, please do not hesitate to contact me. I earnestly wish you well on your own journey of faith and search for Truth. I pray that both you and I may be found pleasing in God's sight, and that we might attain that glorious hope of eternal life with Jesus Christ, our King, where *"God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away"* (Rev. 21:4).

[Concluded]

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Notes:

1. See #4, *The Christadelphian Tidings*, Sept 2016.
2. 1996 Catholic Sunday Missal, p. 27.
3. "Roman Catholicism: *The Banner of Truth & Trust*", by Loraine Boettner, London, 1966, p. 478.

The Bible contains very blunt descriptions of the foolishness of attributing miracles to the souls of the dead. The apostle Paul foretold the rise of Romanism *"with all power and signs and lying wonders"* (2Thess 2:9) and the prophecy of "Babylon's" overthrow says that *"by thy sorceries were all nations deceived"* (Rev 18: 23).

One of the articles adopted at the Council of Trent reads; "Likewise the saints reigning together with Christ are to be honoured and invocated; that they offer prayers to God for us; and that their relics are to be venerated".

To a saint prayers will thus be offered, and the *"one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus"* will be practically set aside for the nonexistent services of imaginary souls of dead men and women. So men have turned from truth to fables, as the apostle Paul said they would.

John Carter, *The Christadelphian* (1946) p. 123

Isn't It Time to Discuss Revelation? (4)

Events and processes

One of the difficulties encountered by many of us has been the common failure to distinguish between events and processes. An event is a single happening. A process involves a series of related happenings. Change seldom comes overnight, although it often seems as if it does. Before 1948, for example, which saw the independence of India and Israel, it was hard to imagine (in spite of Hiroshima and Nagasaki) that the world had greatly changed. It took the Suez Crisis of 1956 to expose the weakness of Britain and France in the face of the new dominance of two powers from outside Europe, the USA and the USSR. And it was only in 1973, after the fourth Middle East war, that the world's dependence upon oil was fully demonstrated. When in the next year the Shah of Iran was deposed, no-one could foresee that this was a foreshadowing of the revival of a militant Islam with world-wide implications.

Among the casualties of this process of change has been our own community, divided by the way its members interpreted world events in the light of their understanding of Bible prophecy. In the ensuing acrimony, several fundamentals came to be overlooked as common ground often is in time of conflict. On neither side of the great divide did anyone ever question the central lesson of Daniel the prophet: that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men. Nobody suggested that Israel, after it had been invaded by a hostile force, would be the epicenter of a world upheaval. No-one ever denied that Jesus Christ would then return to save his people, or that the resurrected saints would be able to rejoice at his victory. So the basic expectations of all Christadelphians remained the same as they had always been since the rediscovery of the gospel truth in the 19th century.

What was not clear was why such widely separated views had developed, which was perhaps because we were looking in the wrong direction for an answer.

As one reflects on the complexity of issues that our consideration of Revelation has uncovered, perhaps it is helpful to take a step back. When we endeavor to come to grips with the Apocalypse (or 'uncovering') of Jesus Christ, what is it precisely that we are trying to do? A little thought reveals that the central objective must be to seek to better understand the way Bible prophecy is fulfilled, and in particular, to understand the prophecies delivered by the Lord Jesus.

The first point to be noted is that prophecies are often fulfilled more than once. A simple illustration of this comes from the double warning of Moses to the children of Israel that, if they turned away from their God, some of them would be reduced by enemy action to eating their own offspring: *"And ye shall eat the flesh of your sons, and the flesh of your daughters shall ye eat"* (Lev 26:29; see also Deut 28:53). Scripture reveals that this happened in Samaria when the Assyrian army laid siege to the city: *"And the king said unto her, What aileth thee? And she*

answered, *This woman said unto me, Give thy son, that we may eat him to day, and we will eat my son to morrow. So we boiled my son, and did eat him: and I said unto her on the next day, Give thy son, that we may eat him: and she hath hid her son*" (2Kgs 6:28-29). We can further infer from Jeremiah's Lamentations that it happened again at Jerusalem during the Babylonian assault: "*Behold, O LORD, and consider to whom thou hast done this. Shall the women eat their fruit, and children of a span long? shall the priest and the prophet be slain in the sanctuary of the Lord?*" (Lam 2:20 see also 4:10). And the Jewish historian Josephus reports that it happened yet again in AD 70 when the Roman legions surrounded the city: "As soon as she had said this, she slew her son; and then roasted him; and eat the one half of him; and kept the other half by her concealed" (Josephus, Wars 6.3.208).

An example of a similar prophecy from Jesus himself is found in his predictions to the disciples on the Mount of Olives (Matthew 24). Although some have argued that the Olivet prophecy refers only to the events of AD 70, there seems to be general consensus in the brotherhood that the prediction refers to both the Roman invasion and to the time of the Second Coming. Some commentators are able to distinguish between those details which refer to the first of these events and those which tell of the second but again most agree that the words can often be applied to either. This is a valuable clue in our search for clarity about Revelation.

The work Of Elijah

Even more to the point are the comments of the Master on Malachi's prophecy about Elijah: "*Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD*" (Mal 4:5). Jesus was descending the Mount of Transfiguration with his closest disciples when these men, who had just seen Moses and Elijah speaking with Jesus, asked "*Why do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?*" (Matt 17:10). The response they received was puzzling. First Jesus told them: "*Elijah will come.*" In other words, he confirmed that the interpretation of the doctors of the law was correct. But then he went on, "*But I tell you, Elijah has already come and they did to him what they willed*" (v. 12). Then they understood that he was speaking to them of John the Baptist.

If, as the Master appears to be showing, the prophecy of Malachi had two applications, widely separated in time and in circumstances that were not on each occasion identical, then is this not a valuable pointer to the way we can view the Apocalypse? If this is at least possible, then we do not need to keep asking: "Which interpretation of Revelation is the correct one?" The questions we should be putting instead are: "Who decided that there is only one correct way of understanding the Apocalypse?" and "On what authority was that decision made?" To state the matter even more plainly, should we not ask: "Why is Revelation not capable of more than one valid interpretation?"

I readily confess that this is at first a disturbing thought. It seems to shake the foundations of everything we have been taught since we first began to learn of these things. But I find it impossible to escape the logic of the argument that

has emerged from the passages referred to in this article. Most heartening of all, however, is that it points to a way forward towards a positive resolution of what has proved thus far to be an intractable problem for our community.

That alone makes it worth giving our serious consideration.

In the previous article it was suggested that there is a way through the minefield of interpreting the Apocalypse. This proposition needs now to be developed and expanded.

Multiple interpretations equally valid

The book was given to the apostle John for transmission to the disciples of Jesus: *“The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John” (Rev 1:1)*. Those servants contemporary with John, and immediately after his era, lived in a world dominated by pagan Rome. Rome’s leaders refused to tolerate a small community whose members would not worship the emperor, who had been officially proclaimed divine. However, these servants of Christ were later followed by others who lived under the heel of ecclesiastical Rome, which would not countenance any religious teaching other than its own.

These medieval disciples were followed in turn by believers who saw the universal church threatened, first by the intellectual challenges of the Renaissance, and then seriously weakened by the Protestant Reformation. Their children and grandchildren saw the emergence of nation states, leading to colonization, militarism and industrialization, with its shift of population from the farm to the city. Later generations experienced two world wars, the Holocaust and the atomic bomb, as well as witnessing the creation of the United Nations and the European Union. Peoples outside Europe, previously seen as primitive and servile, themselves emerged as modern nations, some enriched by the discovery of oil, and others resentful of the wealth of their northern neighbors.

All through these momentous changes, the servants of God faced the same spiritual challenges in widely differing circumstances. And, as a light in a dark place, God had provided the sure word of prophecy, as testimony to His promise: *“Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets” (Amos 3:7)*. We have seen that prophecies may be fulfilled more than once, sometimes (as Jesus showed the disciples) in very different circumstances and eras. If we accept these principles, then we should have little difficulty in accepting that our 1st century brethren and sisters may well have understood the book of Revelation as reassuring them in the face of the threat of pagan Rome and reminding them that God was in control of events. This is the understanding of the Apocalypse that later came to be labelled the ‘preterist’ view.

But believers living in the centuries of Papal dominance needed a different picture to uphold their faith. It was not a correction of the earlier explanation. It was a wondrous provision by an all-knowing and all-powerful Father, who inspired the construction and writing of the book in a series of layers, each

valuable and instructive to all believers, but particularly according to the age in which they would live. Believers in the middle period therefore received what we call the 'continuous historical' understanding. This helped them to understand the world in which they were required to remain faithful.

Disciples living in the world to which the Lord Jesus would return, however, require yet a further level of understanding to prepare them for what lies before them. This is because their world has gone through another series of bewildering changes. So the wonderful book of Revelation was designed with yet a third layer, which has particular relevance to the time of the end. We call this the 'futurist' view and it is clear that we do not yet understand it in all its complexity. But the real point to be made here is that Revelation is far vaster in scope and depth than anything we previously imagined. Our problems with it stem from our own inability to cope with its magnitude. Understanding this principle helps us to achieve a useful perspective on the difficulties which have plagued us for decades.

And our generation particularly has felt the disturbing shuddering of a formerly stable foundation, not so much because of waywardness and intransigence in the brotherhood, as because we stand, as it were, on a tectonic plate of human history, as the age of the Gentiles draws to a close and the era of the kingdom of God approaches. So we should not be surprised that the topic of Revelation creates controversy. But with a broader understanding than we previously had we can see the controversy for what it really is: another inevitable symptom of our changing world, with its promise of wonderful things to come.

It would be naïve to imagine that a new way of understanding the depth and scope of Revelation removes all the problems that may have plagued our earlier efforts. The fact is that we are still trying to understand the word of prophecy, which has never been easy.

Sometimes we miss the implications of the passage in which Moses provides the test for believing a prophet. The central question is: "How shall we know what the LORD has spoken?"

"And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the LORD hath not spoken? When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him" (Deut 18:21-22).

The confirmation of prophecy for man is always *retrospective*. It is only by looking back on what has happened that we receive confirmation of the earlier prediction. Our search for meaning, therefore, must be on-going and developmental. It can never be fixed and static. Furthermore, we are given no instruction ourselves to be prophets, except in the sense of being people who speak out for God. We have no license to make predictions, except for those essential and plainly expressed central teachings relating directly to the coming of God's kingdom. We all, quite naturally, have our favorite personal expectations

but not infrequently they prove to be unfounded and we have no license to claim that they are direct from God.

In addition to this, the prophecy of Revelation was given by Jesus the Messiah, whose words are often hard to understand. The Jewish leaders *never* understood what he was saying about the future: *“I have many things to say and to judge of you: but he that sent me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of him. They understood not that he spake to them of the Father”* (John 8:26-27).

- When he was only twelve, even Mary and Joseph were mystified by the explanation he gave of his disappearance in Jerusalem: *“And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father’s business? And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them”* (Luke 2:50-51).
- His closest friends, we are repeatedly told, could not grasp what he meant *“Then answered Peter and said unto him, Declare unto us this parable. And Jesus said, Are ye also yet without understanding?”* (Matt 15:15-16).
- When he spoke of his approaching death: *“Then he took unto him the twelve, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished. For he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on: And they shall scourge him, and put him to death: and the third day he shall rise again. And they understood none of these things: and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken”* (Luke 18:31-34).
- Mary wisely kept his sayings in her heart: *“And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart”* (Luke 2:18-19).
- The disciples, when they looked back on what he had told them, began to understand: *“These things understood not his disciples at the first: but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of him, and that they had done these things unto him”* (John 12:16).

Is there any reason for us to have a better grasp than they had? And, particularly, can we really expect to have the full picture in advance, when those closest to him, who had spent three years in his company, had to rely on the benefit of hindsight, the acid test of prophecy given to Moses?

Mental horizon

The principal benefit of seeing the Apocalypse as a book with layers of valid meaning is that achieving this extends our mental horizon. It does not make our searching any simpler but it does help to remove some of the distracting irrelevancies that can cloud our vision, and particularly, perhaps, that instinctive and debilitating sense of wrong-doing which can so unnecessarily hamper our search for understanding when we move away from a long-held understanding. In this connection, a homely comparison that comes repeatedly to mind is that of a childhood sweet, available in my own youth but known also to my Victorian grandparents. Given a popular name that would today be offensive to many, it

was made up of layers in different colors. Only sustained and persistent sucking could reveal what lay in its glorious interior. This can be a helpful image as we contemplate our efforts to understand the last book in the Bible.

Perhaps, in closing, we should remind ourselves of the words John used to introduce his account of the vision he was given: *“Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand”* (Rev 1:3). A blessing is promised to those disciples who apply their minds to understanding the book. A similar blessing is held out to those who hearken to its message and who not only hear it but also who seek to make its principles the motivation of their lives by keeping them faithfully. There is good reason therefore, for every disciple of Christ to come to grips individually with this wonderful book, especially as, like John, we live in an age when, we believe, *“the time is at hand.”*

If these promises mean anything at all, they mean that each one of us, by humble and prayerful application to these last words of our Master, can arrive at an understanding that will sustain and strengthen us as this age comes to a close. And we will be able to say, with the faithful apostle in exile on Patmos: *“Even so, come, Lord Jesus!”* (Rev 22:20).

[Concluded]

Robin Lamplough (Pinetown, South Africa)

Letters

August Special Issue

Dear Brother Peter

May I congratulate you on your August special issue, which provides a great deal of helpful advice for reading the word of God. The best way to get to know God’s word, of course, is to put it into practice. Only when one has turned the other cheek or tried to love one’s enemies do such commandments take on their true meaning, in a way that desk-bound study will never achieve. This gives hope to all of us who consider ourselves not to be especially studious — everyone of us can attempt putting these teachings into practice. As the Psalmist says, “I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts”.

Through its second hand book service the Christadelphian Office (www.thechristadelphian.com) is still able to supply a number of the titles mentioned, including Harrington-Lees’ “The Joy of Bible Study”.

*Sincerely your brother,
Andrew Bramhill (Editor, The Christadelphian)*

The Joy of Sunday Schooling

Ready-to-Use Character Plays (2)

A good play has a message in it. Here's one for your Sunday school or CYC to do. "The Case of Frances Fault-Finder" is one of several short plays about developing Christ-like character. All the plays in the series are set as dialog between Dr. Goodword and a patient who comes to his Spiritual Clinic. The afflictions that the good Doctor treats are chronic disorders like pride, hypocrisy, and temptation.¹

The play is short and simple. Add a few props and costumes and you are ready to go to work. Encourage the kids to put feeling into it and be sure to have someone behind a camera. Your cast and crew will enjoy watching the play afterward, and so will the rest of the ecclesia. The message doesn't grow old.

The Case of Frances Fault-Finder

Characters:

Announcer, Doctor Goodword, Frances Fault-Finder, one or more Bible readers.

Props:

The setting is the Doctor's office. A desk (card table) and two chairs will do. The Doctor has a pencil, pad, and Bible on his desk. Give Doctor Goodword a white coat, spectacles, and a moustache. Fancy up Frances and you are ready for the camera(s) to roll.

Enter Doctor Goodword and Frances. Fran has a serious case of beam-in-my-itis.



Script:²

Announcer: Here we are at the Spiritual Clinic of Doctor Goodword, where we find the wise old physician of the soul turning his attention to the case of a certain young Frances Fault-Finder. At the moment the young lady has the floor.

Frances: (Standing) And this friend of mine — she is such a gossip! There isn't a person in the entire ecclesia that she doesn't talk about ...

Doctor: (Cutting in) Will you be seated, please, Miss Fault-Finder?

Frances: Thank you, sir. As I was saying — this friend of mine is just ...

Doctor: (Cutting in) Now, let me have your full name again, please?

Frances: Frances Fault-Finder.

Doctor: And your address?

Frances: No. 1 Trouble-Maker Street.

Doctor: Oh, yes. That's over in Meddlers Park, isn't it?

Frances: Yes ... and, Doctor, you can't imagine what a neighborhood I live in. Why, the people there are ...

Doctor: (Cutting in) Let me see if I have this correct now. Miss Frances Fault-Finder, No. 1 Trouble-Maker Street, Meddlers Park. Do I have that right?

Frances: (*Slightly annoyed*) Yes, of course.

Doctor: Now, Miss, what is your ailment?

Frances: Why, Doctor, you misunderstand me. I'm not here for myself.

Doctor: Not here for yourself?

Frances: Oh my, no! You see, there's nothing wrong with me. My spiritual health is fine. It's my friends I'm concerned about.

Doctor: I see.

Frances: Now, take Cindy Little, for instance. She's a lovely girl. But so selfish.

Doctor: I see. I'll just make a note of that. Anything else you think I should know?

Frances: Let me tell you about Mark Himwell. Now don't get me wrong, Doctor. I think Mark is a very nice boy. The only trouble with him is he's too bossy.

Doctor: Uh huh.

Frances: He wants to run everything all the time.

Doctor: I see.

Frances: And Mimi Furst. I hope you don't think I'm picky, Doctor. It isn't that. It's just that I want you to know about these people so you'll be able to help them.

Doctor: Yes, I understand.

Frances: Now, Mimi is the kind of girl who craves attention. She's a terrible show-off. Are you making a note of all this, Doctor?

Doctor: I have it down. You go right ahead.

Frances: Good. And there's Barry Burdens, too. A great talker and all, but he's always complaining about something.

Doctor: It's too bad about Barry, isn't it?

Frances: It certainly is. Poor Barry. I hope you'll be able to help him. ... Did I tell you about Karen Service yet?

Doctor: (*Sounding annoyed*) Let me see. No ... No, I don't believe you did. What's wrong with Karen?

Frances: I don't think I like the way you said that, Doctor.

Doctor: I'm sorry. I didn't mean any offense, I'm sure.

Frances: It sounded as though you might think I'm too critical.

Doctor: Go on with your story, Miss. Tell me about Karen Service. What's her ailment?

Frances: Karen is such a fine girl in so many ways. Wonderful leader, hard worker and all.

Doctor: But she has her faults?

Frances: She certainly has! And plenty of them!

Doctor: I recognize the symptoms. It's just as I thought.

Frances: Do you think you'll be able to help them, Doctor?

Doctor: I'll give you a prescription that will do the trick, I'm sure.

Frances: For all of them?

Doctor: For *you*, young lady!

Frances: But I'm not the one who's sick. It's these friends of mine that I'm concerned about.

Doctor: Yes, I understand. So you follow this prescription and I'm sure everything will turn out all right. It won't be long until you're back in the pink of condition.

Frances: (*Getting upset*) You don't seem at all concerned about my friends, Doctor. They're the ones who need help!

Doctor: This will help them, I'm sure. If you follow this prescription faithfully for even one week, I'm positive you'll find that your friends have improved one hundred per cent.

Frances: I don't see how my friends are going to be helped if you give *me* a prescription!

Doctor: I'll give it to you now, and I want you to read it over once before you leave my office — and once a day for the next fourteen days.

Frances: May I see it, please?

Doctor: (*Opening his Bible to Matthew 7*) Yes, here it is — all set for you.

Frances: It's from the Bible, isn't it?

Doctor: Yes, all my prescriptions are from the Bible, Miss Fault-Finder. There's not a spiritual ailment known to man for which the Bible doesn't have a remedy. (*Handing his Bible to Frances*) Read Matthew 7, verse 5, please.

Frances: (*Reading*) "*You hypocrite ...*" (*indignantly*) Hypocrite?! The very idea!

Doctor: Go on. The prescription will do wonders for you.

Frances: "*You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.*"

Reader: "*Judge not, that you be not judged. For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you*" (*Matt 7:1-2*).

Reader: "Do not grumble against one another, brothers, so that you may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing at the door" (James 5:9).

Reader: "So then each of us will give an account of himself to God. Therefore let us not pass judgment on one another any longer" (Rom 14:12-13).

Curtain.

If you would like printable copies of the plays in the series, just drop me an email. I will send them to you as PDF files.

*Jim Harper, sundayschool@tidings.org,
www.pinterest.com/2harps4u/ (Meriden, CT)*

Notes:

1. Source information wanted. The plays in this series are quite old. They are not Christadelphian in origin and the source is unknown. Anyone who recognizes the plays and has information about their origin is asked to contact me. I would like to credit the source if possible — Jim Harper.
2. Play scripts have been revised, and in some cases familiar Christadelphian words like ecclesia, CYC, daily Bible readings, etc. have been introduced.



Pictorial puzzle by Robert Roberts

Explanation Of Enigma

No. 1: Joseph dreams of the sheaves making obeisance. **No. 2:** He dreams of the sun, moon, and stars doing the same. **No. 3:** His father sends him to his brethren at Shechem. **No. 4:** His brethren, with their flocks, depart to Dothan. **No. 5:** Joseph cannot find them at Shechem, but is directed to Dothan. **No. 6:** His brethren see him coming, and plot mischief. **No. 7:** They lower him into a pit. **No. 8:** They afterwards sell him to the Ishmaelites. **No. 9:** Jacob is shocked being shewn Joseph's coat rent and stained in blood. **No. 10:** Jacob refuses to be comforted. **No. 11:** Joseph, imprisoned in Egypt, becomes manager of the prison, and interprets the dreams of the butler and baker. **No. 12:** He is sent for by Pharaoh.

From *The Christadelphian Children's Magazine* 1884

Be Ye Reconciled

Broken relationships

As humans God has created in us a need to be in relationships with people. Those relationships matter a great deal to us, and when they breakdown, if the relationship was one that truly mattered to us, we will go to almost any length to go back to the way things were, and pay any price to do so.

That is the definition of reconciliation: the act of going back to the way things were before, taking a broken relationship and making it work again.

The ecclesia at Corinth had a lot of problems: they were blending philosophy and the gospel. They argued from Greek philosophy that their bodies would die but their spirit would be raised so they were free to use their bodies however they liked.

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil. Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade others. But what we are is known to God, and I hope it is known also to your conscience”
(2Cor 5:10-11).

They lived in extreme wealth and prosperity, and many of its members would have been part of the cities' trade and commerce. Many of those same members were pushing for a return to the respectability of the Jewish law, which even the Grecians and Romans could admire, and was seen as almost prestigious. Rabbinical thought, as inspired by Babylonian ideas, influenced most of the ideas and concepts of the Greek philosophers, like Plato and Aristotle. They got most of their ideas on spirits and the afterlife from the mysticism of the Judaism of the time. This in turn filtered back into the ecclesia from the Gentiles. If that wasn't enough, its members were under assault almost endlessly from temptations, as there was a temple to Aphrodite in Corinth, which had over one thousand priestesses.

The ecclesia at Corinth was in the same state as that of the world today. The whole world has become like Corinth of old, and the temples to the modern gods of greed and covetousness fit in our pockets. And to top off all their problems, their relationship to the man who had given them the truth had almost completely broken down; he had been the link between surrounding ecclesias for over a year and a half. In the same way the whole world today has broken its own relationship to God.

Paul tried to correct them with a visit, but it did not go well: the Corinthians rejected him and wanted nothing to do with him, believing that he was not interested in them anymore. He did not go back, for he did not want to continue rebuking them. Rather, he wanted to return as a friend.

“For I made up my mind not to make another painful visit to you. For if I cause you pain, who is there to make me glad but the one whom I have pained? And I wrote as I did, so that when I came I might not suffer pain from those who should have made me rejoice, for I felt sure of all of you, that my joy would be the joy of you all” (2Cor 2:1-3).

As a last resort, Paul wrote a letter with the intention of rectifying the situation. Its effect was to cause this rebellious and out of control ecclesia to seek reconciliation, to realize their need and desire to return to friendship with Paul.

“For even if I made you grieve with my letter, I do not regret it — though I did regret it, for I see that that letter grieved you, though only for a while. As it is, I rejoice, not because you were grieved, but because you were grieved into repenting. For you felt a godly grief, so that you suffered no loss through us. For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death. For see what earnestness this godly grief has produced in you, but also what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what longing, what zeal, what punishment! At every point you have proved yourselves innocent in the matter. So although I wrote to you, it was not for the sake of the one who did the wrong, nor for the sake of the one who suffered the wrong, but in order that your earnestness for us might be revealed to you in the sight of God” (2Cor 7:8-12).

The ecclesia repented of its issues, but it seems they did not know how to go about returning to a relationship with Paul.

Injured parties

It is interesting to note that to their credit, unlike almost everyone today, they did not try to come up with their own way to appease Paul’s “anger”, or his authority as an apostle, which they had challenged many times. Reconciliation is not something we the offenders can do, or deserve. We can only receive it and accept it if offered. It is entirely dependent on the injured party to offer it or not.

Adam and Eve did not understand that and tried to reconcile by themselves. They desired to go back to the way things were, but they did not have that right. They had no idea how to go on until the Father clothed them and told them the method that by which He would bring mankind back to Himself.

Paul instructed the Corinthians as to what he desired of them: first to allow themselves to be reconciled to God, and then to himself.

“Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God” (Col 5:20).

“We have spoken freely to you, Corinthians; our heart is wide open. You are not restricted by us, but you are restricted in your own affections. In return (I speak as to children) widen your hearts also... Therefore go out from their midst, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; then I will welcome you, and I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to me, says the Lord Almighty” (2Cor 6:11-13, 17-18).

In order for this reconciliation to be effective, Paul tells them that they ought to behave as friends. If they believe that they have been forgiven and want to return to being friends again, it is necessary for them to act like and treat him as a friend. That's all there is to it.

“Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God. Make room in your hearts for us. We have wronged no one, we have corrupted no one, we have taken advantage of no one. I do not say this to condemn you, for I said before that you are in our hearts, to die together and to live together. I am acting with great boldness toward you; I have great pride in you; I am filled with comfort. In all our affliction, I am overflowing with joy” (2Cor 7:1-4).

It's somewhat incredible how uncomplicated and simple the way back to friendship with the Father is.

The example of Peter

As a further example of this, we can look to Peter. After denying Christ three times, he encountered the risen Jesus again, this time at the sea of Tiberias. So after the miraculous catch of fish:

“Jesus saith unto them, Come and dine. And none of the disciples durst ask him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord. Jesus then cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise. This is now the third time that Jesus shewed himself to his disciples, after that he was risen from the dead. So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep” (John 21:12-17).

And so, for the first time since his death, they all sat down and ate again. Peter and Jesus were reconciled.

Part of reconciliation from the Father and Christ's point of view, is that you have to act like you are a friend, you have to show the behaviors that a friend of God is expected to show. The Father, through Christ, has given us an offer of friendship. So the least we can do in return, is act like we want to be, and are, His friends.

Paul in his second letter to the Corinthian's held nothing against them. He was called a liar, a false apostle, abusing his authority, an embezzler of the donations given to him, and was accused of being uncaring of the Corinthians. Everything he gave them was thrown in his face. And it seems — that it was led by one person.

“Wherefore, though I wrote unto you, I did it not for his cause that had done the wrong, nor for his cause that suffered wrong, but that our care for you in the sight of God might appear unto you” (2Cor 7:12).

And Paul’s response was not only to forgive him, but to implore the ecclesia he had led into accusing and rejecting Paul to forgive any who had done so.

“For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears; not that ye should be grieved, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you. But if any have caused grief, he hath not grieved me, but in part: that I may not overcharge you all. Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many. So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm your love toward him. For to this end also did I write, that I might know the proof of you, whether ye be obedient in all things. To whom ye forgive any thing, I forgive also: for if I forgave any thing, to whom I forgave it, for your sakes forgave I it in the person of Christ;” (2Cor 2:4-10).

So when we remember our Lord and Savior, let us believe that we are reconciled. That we are restored to friendship with the Father through our friendship with the son.

“This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you” (John 15:12-15).

“And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God” (2Cor 5:18-20).

Caleb Plew (Avon, IN)

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

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1. Time doesn’t change the importance of reconciliation.
 2. Reconciliation doesn’t need a lot of time.
 3. Reconciliation follows regard for the prayer of our Lord Jesus, “that they may be one” (John 17:22).
 4. Reconciliation isn’t much of an issue where there is no preaching.

The Christadelphian Tidings, 2003 p. 338

Bible Mission

Pastoral Time in Panama

During July, the two ecclesias in Panama enjoyed several occasions of fellowship on both sides of the Isthmus. On Sunday, July 3rd the Panama City members met at the Colon Ecclesial Hall for a Remembrance Service and Bible Study, as well as a hot meal of ample traditional food. The welcomed addition for these combined events is the extra meeting room of equal size as the original hall — to help for the overflow attendance, plus it is very useful for Sunday School and layout for food tables. A total of 47 were present — 24 brethren and sisters, plus youth and children.

On Wednesday evening two public lectures were held at the Colon Hall with 15 members present, plus two visitors. We are pleased to report an 87 year-old woman (the mother of one of the Colon sister's) is receiving instruction for baptism. She had previously attended the Catholic Church, and now realizes she had been lied to and deceived all her life! She now attends as many ecclesial activities as she can.

Saturday, July 9th was a special day! Both ecclesias met at a former USA base — Fort Clayton — now called “Ciudad de Saber” (City of Knowledge), where multiple Universities have campuses. There are also many other organizations on the grounds, such as the Kiwanis — the two ecclesia's rented an outdoor pavilion from this group for the day. We enjoyed perfect weather and it was an ideal location for the two Bible studies, a picnic and a number of fun games. The games for all ages included a water balloon toss and musical chairs. The 50 of us present were also supplied with an abundance of BBQ food during the course of the day.

The second Sunday (July 10th) of our fraternal week we all met at the Panama City Hall — about 45 of us. Brother Tony Howell, former member of this ecclesia now living in the USA, gave the word of exhortation. He was visiting with his wife, Sis. Marcia, as were Bro. Clive and Sis. Christine Drepaul from the New York Brooklyn Ecclesia.

The study theme for the week was based on ‘The Purpose of the Ecclesia’ taken from articles in *The Christadelphian Magazine* in 2014 and 2015. Our studies were based on the above theme and delivered by Brothers Clive Drepaul and Don Luff. One of the many blessings at all these activities was the presence of lots of youth and children, plus a number of interested friends. There is active discussion to provide regular activities for this next generation of Christadelphians.

*Written by
CBMA Panama linkman, Don Luff
Submitted by Jan Berneau*

Panama — Sister Latina’s Story — at 90

The following is a reduced version of an article from The Bible Missionary, April, 2006 (No. 180 page 26) about Sister Latina Hawkins from the Colon, Panama Ecclesia — when she was 80. By the postscript at the bottom and by the attached photos, we are pleased to report that our sister is now 90.



Sis. Vanessa
Sobers, Bro. Luis
Sobers,
Sis. Latina
Hawkins
and Bro. David
Timm.

Sister Latina Hawkins was born on August 7, 1926, on the Island of San Andrés, which belongs to Colombia. If there is one word which describes Latina, it is ‘determination.’ Her father was a Roman Catholic, but she went to the Baptist church with her mother. Her uncle was a Baptist pastor and he taught Latina from the Bible from an early age. He would get the family up at 5 am to pray and read the Bible. Unfortunately, the fear of hell-fire and torment was part of his instruction. He told the children, “If you don’t behave, the devil will come for you and take you to hell.”

On the other hand her father insisted that she attend a Catholic Primary School on San Andres which, of course, was operated by priests and nuns. Once a week, all the children had to go to the chapel “to kneel in front of the little window to confess our sins to a priest. I refused to go. I could not confess my sins to no priest — he was just a man, not God. My father beat me twice because I would not go, but finally gave up because I wouldn’t give in.” Anyone who knows Sister Latina will know that she is indeed very determined. She went to the Catholic School for six years and after that to an Adventist School for two years, where teaching was from the Bible. She remembers that her favourite book was Daniel. When she was fourteen they wanted to baptize her but she would not because she didn’t agree with all their teachings.

Latina married, had two children and moved to Panama and the Colon area in 1951, to a place called Silver City (now Rainbow City) until 1962, when she moved into the city of Colon. During this period of time, she raised three more children who were not her own — they simply needed a mother and a home.

She told me that in the early 1970’s the Christadelphians moved into a building right next door to where she lived on Front Street. She would stand outside the door for the Sunday Memorial Service and Tuesday Bible Class and listen each week. Sister Trudy Gibson would come outside with her baby son Jay and Latina used to offer to watch him so that Trudy could go back into the meeting.

Brother Noel Gibson invited her to come in several times, but she told him, “I will make up my mind someday.” One Sunday in 1975, she did go in, and thereafter started attending all the meetings. She has never missed since, her husband was Catholic, but never stopped her from attending. He used to worship in the house, by kneeling down and praying to Saint Jude, until Latina showed him in the Bible that it was wrong to do that and he took the idol out of the house.

Sister Latina was baptized on September 2, 1976, in Gatun Lake. **The ecclesia is her life.** Her parents passed away years ago and she is the second youngest of thirteen brothers and sisters, though she is the only one still living and, moreover, the only one in the truth. In her own words, “**Christadelphians is my family, and my brothers and sisters.**” She remembers when there used to be about 50 brethren and sisters and she prays for more missionary help and for more members. She’s sad that so many people “just like churches with music and speaking in tongues — nothing serious anymore.”

Sister Latina — August 2016 — comments by Sister Nishla Neblett

On August 7, 2016, Sister Latina was thankful the Lord blessed her with a 90th birthday and happy to have peacefully celebrated it with her brothers and sisters in Christ — her family! As an elder, and the oldest member in the Colon Ecclesia, we see her as the “watchful eye” in the ecclesia. She always makes sure things are done in decent order.

For many years she contributed her time every Saturday to make sure the ecclesial hall was spotless for Sunday morning. It took a long time to convince Sister Latina to turn over the duties to other members. She continues to be observant, making certain the ecclesia is clean, the memorial table is presentable, and sisters are conducting themselves in an appropriate manner. Even though she is slower at times, she is grateful she can still move around and do for herself. She looks forward to the return of our Lord Jesus Christ and has the beautiful hope to be part of his kingdom.

CBMA Linkman, Don Luff

Visits to members and friends in South America

One of the challenges of the mission field is providing service to brethren and sisters and contacts in isolation. Email, telephone and Skype are a tremendous help in teaching, maintaining friendships and providing spiritual support. But even then, members need the lift provided by personal visits and it’s important to meet and talk personally with promising contacts as they grow in the Truth. With these factors in mind I was able in July and August to visit two brethren and two friends in South America.

Porto Alegre, southern Brazil

Bro. Emerson Acosta has long been a strong Christadelphian presence in his community in addition to his ubiquity on the internet. He and his family



Bro. Emerson Acosta with wife, Vivian, and daughter, Ellem.

are riding out the political and economic difficulties in the country. Emerson is an expert in workplace safety but with the downturn in construction he makes do as doorkeeper for a condominium complex. His wife Viviane works two shifts teaching mathematics and their children, Kevim and Ellem, hold down jobs while going to university. I was happy to see the family

installed in their new house, a great improvement from the small apartment they had been living in.

Emerson has such a warm and outgoing personality that, as he says, he has “a million friends” and is incessantly involved in discussions and debates with members of the religious groups which seem to proliferate in Brazil as nowhere else in the world. Indeed Emerson first heard of Christadelphians through reading the history of the church he attended as a youngster, which has Campbellite origins and continues to consider us cousins. We spent many delightful hours in conversation and Bible study and began weekly telephone Bible classes when I returned to the US. I was sorry to leave, but had to get to my next stop in Argentina, some 600 miles to the southwest.

Rosario, Argentina

Here I got to meet long-time postal student Ariel, his wife and some of his family members. In the course of our discussions in my hotel room and as he gave me a walking tour of the city we came to realize there wasn't yet a total meeting of the minds between him and our community. In addition, his association with us has provoked some unfortunate personal conflicts which he is trying to work out, but we have stayed in touch and hope to continue working on these issues.



Ariel and his wife, Rosario.

Asunción, Paraguay

This was my first trip to Paraguay, but a place about which I had long been curious. My main purpose was to spend some time with Pedro Galeano, a Paraguayan brother resident in Brazil, where I had always visited him previously. On this occasion I took advantage of his visiting his native country to get to know

his roots and extended family: he has 10 brothers and sisters plus nieces and nephews almost too numerous to count, many of them in university or starting out in their professions. But for me the most fascinating aspect of the family gatherings was the fact that though we all began speaking Spanish together, as more and more relatives arrived until a certain critical mass was



Bro. Pedro Galeano and niece.

achieved, all of a sudden I no longer understood what anyone was saying. They had all switched over to speaking Guaraní, the indigenous language which Paraguay alone in this hemisphere has managed to keep alive and to which the people naturally revert to in informal situations. I had tended to dismiss the accounts of Paraguay's maintaining its aboriginal language (in addition to Spanish) as somewhat similar to the efforts to revive Erse or Welsh in the British Isles, but in fact it is spoken by almost all citizens. Pedro and I got in several profitable sessions of Bible reading and study (in Spanish) and will establish a program of weekly phone classes, God willing, when he returns to his home in Brazil.

The other purpose of my going to Asunción was to meet a young man named Andrés, whom my wife Jean considers her best postal student of all time. He grew up in Argentina in a small but fervent offshoot of the Seventh-Day Adventist movement and worked in that church for a number of years. His wife Angela, a Paraguayan born and partly raised in Germany, was brought up a strict Mennonite. Andrés now works as a clinical psychologist, his wife is a civil engineer and they have a young daughter and son.

Fresh out of the seminary in his youth, Andrés discovered that his church had not originally been Trinitarian and began to ask why. This led to his becoming unpopular in his own circles and ever more determined to come to the truth of the matter. Then in 2007, when he was in the interior of Brazil giving a Bible class on Jesus' humanity, someone in the audience told him he was presenting the teaching of the Christadelphians, of whom he had never heard. Intrigued, he went to the Internet to check us out and requested the postal course, so that over the years he and his wife went through all the material we have in Spanish, returning their questionnaires without fail nor a wrong answer and, Jean adds, in beautiful handwriting! Two years ago they both formally renounced their previous religious associations with the avowed intention of becoming Christadelphians. Several hours of intense discussion I had with Andrés in Asunción (while Angela and the children were moving house in another part of the country) tended to confirm the genuineness of their present understanding of the gospel message and so if it is God's will, Jean and I hope to return to Paraguay soon to baptize them into the true faith in Jesus.

Written by Jim Hunter, CBMC Linkman

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

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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

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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.

ANN ARBOR, MI

We are thankful to announce the following baptisms so far this year from our Sunday School/CYC scholars: JOANNA GORE and OLIVIA BRINKERHOFF.

We welcome by way of transfer Bro. Bryon and Sis. Jen Wood from Denver, CO, and Bro. Charles Cintron from Orlando, FL. We commend by way of transfer to the following ecclesias: Sis. Jennifer Styles to Thousand Oaks, CA, Bro. Joe Sparacino to Esslingen, Germany, Bro. Dan Fine to Royal Oak, MI, Sis. Christy Michaels to the Milford, MI, and Bro. Adam Ifill to Pomona, CA.

We are sad to report the falling asleep of our Bro. Lindbergh Van Reuter in September. The brother of our Bro. John Bilello, Bro. James Bilello also passed away in a tragic boating accident in October (See Baltimore Intelligence). We pray the sleep of both these brethren will be short as we await our Lord's return and for comfort to those that mourn.

In addition to the many Detroit area combined ecclesial activities throughout the year, the Ann Arbor Ecclesia has also enjoyed our Winter/Spring Study Day on Bible Prophecy and Current Events with "Team Billington" from Brantford, ON, a combined memorial service with the Toledo, OH Ecclesia, a combined Bible Seminar with the Livonia, MI Ecclesia and we look forward to our Thanksgiving Gathering in November, God Willing, to be given by our Bro. Steve Davis from Boston, MA.

We also went "live" with our streaming video of our weekly memorial service and many viewers have enjoyed participating remotely on regular basis. This has been particularly timely as several of our members have been struggling with illness throughout the year and unable to attend in person. All are welcome to join our weekly service Sunday at 10am (EST) at the following link: www.biblereadings.com/annarbor/webstreaming.

Dan Styles

AUSTIN LEANDER, TX

Since our last reporting, we have been blessed by several baptisms of our Sunday school scholars. LUKE BANTA, brother of Sis. Andrea Banta and Sis. Amanda Banta Buck was baptized on May 25, 2014. We welcomed as a new sister, on December 23, 2015, SAVANNAH JACKSON, daughter of Bro. Will and Sis. Jacqueline Jackson. ANDREW BEARDEN, was baptized August 3, 2014, and MATTHEW BEARDEN was baptized May 1, 2016. They are the sons of Bro. Fred and Sis. Laura Bearden. We rejoice with our new brothers and sisters on their walk toward God's Kingdom.

We also rejoice with Sis. Amanda Buck, and husband, Thomas Buck in the birth of

their daughter, Hadley Johna Rae, born May 8, 2015.

We are saddened to report the sudden loss of Sis. Marti Hagler. Sis. Marti fell asleep October of 2015. Our prayers are with Bro. Jim Hagler. She is greatly missed by our ecclesia.

We are pleased to welcome by way of transfer, Bro. Mark and Sis. Janet Morss from the Houston West, TX Ecclesia, Bro. Rob and Sis. Jodee Webb from the Hamilton Greenaway, ON Ecclesia, Sis. Jeni Berry from the Houston Wilshire Ecclesia, and Sis. Betty Vogel from the Kouts, IN Ecclesia. We commend Sis. Tabitha Hall to the Sarasota, FL Ecclesia, and Bro. Matthew Bearden to the San Diego, CA Ecclesia.

We have enjoyed the fellowship of so many visiting brothers and sisters from other ecclesias from Texas and around the world, and thank the many brethren that have shared words of exhortation with us.

Paul Burkett

BALTIMORE, MD

We extend our sympathies to the extended family of Bro. James Bilello, 73, who was killed in a boating accident while fishing on Long Island Sound, on October 5, 2016. Bro. James was baptized on November 12, 1961, in the Jamaica, NY Ecclesia and was a founding member of the Suffolk County, NY Ecclesia, where he served over the years as Finance and Recording Brother. He was a member of the Floral Park, NY Ecclesia until it closed and was living in isolation in Bay Shore, New York when he fell asleep in the LORD. He leaves behind his daughter, Sis. Karen Lombardo, and his wife, Roxanne, in New York, and his older sibling, Bro. John Bilello along with his wife, Sis. Mary, his nephews, Brothers Peter and Matthew Bilello (all members of Ann Arbor, MI) and Bro. Andy Bilello (Baltimore, MD).

Andy Bilello

(A similar note was received from the Ann Arbor Ecclesia)

BEDFORD, NS

The undersigned is now Recording Brother of the Bedford Ecclesia, and we thank Bro. Dale Crawford for his previous term in this position. He has left me a big task to live up to. In June and July we were blessed with visits from the following Brethren and Sisters: Frank and Dorothy Abel (Hamilton Book Road, ON); Marilyn Creer (Greenaway, ON); Andrew and Esther Lower and family (Bournemouth Central, UK).

We are also pleased to report the baptism of CAROL-ANN STEWART on July 30, 2016. Carol-Ann had been attending our seminars and Bible classes over the last two years, and became convinced that we were reflecting the original Gospel as taught by Jesus and the apostles. She then saw the need to forsake all other attractions and ideas so as to join us in our walk towards God's kingdom.

During the weekend of 17th and 18th of September, we were pleased to have the company of Bro. Dev Ramcharan (Toronto Church Street, ON), who spoke to us on the subject of "I Will Arise and Shake Myself" — A Life of Samson." We thank Bro. Dev for visiting and for his talks. Over the course of that weekend we enjoyed the company also of Bro. Cliff and Sis. Julia Baines, Bro. Paul Baines, and Bro. Brad and Sis. Deb Goodwin (Sussex, NB), and Sis. Hannah Young (Houston North, TX). We

thank all our visitors from near and far. We find that visits from out of town are few and far between. If you are thinking of visiting, please contact us for meeting places and times (email kiwijohn47@hotmail.com). We would love to see you!

John Ching

BROOKLYN, NY

We rejoiced at the baptism of INDERA CASTILLO, a young lady who has attended meetings for a while and also received first principles instruction. We have also been blessed with two new babies: Analia, daughter of Bro. Dillon and Sis. Anastacia Gittens, and Zia, daughter of Bro. Gideon and Sis. Asha Drepaul.

Our outreach has been given a boost by the “Jesus is King” 2016 preaching kit, a gift from Simi Hills Ecclesia in California. The meeting room was given an interior facelift, and we added a pavilion at the back. We ‘adopted’ ecclesias in Panama and Barbados, to help them with sending regular community magazines. We are also grateful for the two visits of Bro. Selvin Sawyers and family of the Union, NJ Ecclesia. We place on record our gratitude to Bro. Selvin for his uplifting words of exhortation, and insightful workshop leadership.

Clive Drepaul

CHAMPAIGN COUNTY, IL

The Lord has again provided the growth we pray for as we sow and water. Our new brother, THOMAS JACKSON, was baptized on June 11, 2016. He has attended classes at our Bible Education Center for almost three years. We continue to offer four classes a week at the BEC, many of them led by remote teachers from all over North America, using internet-based video conferencing tools. The same tools permit remote students to participate in the classes. We are also blessed to have the help of on-site guest volunteers from near and far. We encourage you to consider being a volunteer yourself!

And we are grateful we continue to have the support of guest speakers on Sundays, from other ecclesias in Illinois, and beyond. We thank brethren Jonathan Smith, Anthony Green, John Fischer, Guy Grant, and Steve Johnson (Bloomington, IL); Russ Johnson, Dan Richard, and Trent Johnson (Chicago, IL); Randy Kniffen (Marion, IL); and John Bilello (Ann Arbor, MI).

In August we hosted our fourth annual women’s study weekend. The instructor this year was Sis. Cathie Moynihan from Guelph, ON, who spoke on “Running the Race.” Last December, we were blessed to have our first baby born in the ecclesia: Isabella Smith, daughter of Sis. Emilee Smith and her husband Luke. We look forward to the second this coming January, expected by Sis. Abigail Richard and husband Bro. Nathan.

See our web site (BibleEducationCenter.org) for information on our classes and other activities. If you would like information about volunteering, or about attending classes remotely, you can email us from the site.

Paul Zilmer

CHICAGO, IL

The Chicago meeting is pleased to announce two recent baptisms. ISAYA EBENGO, 18, was baptized this August after attending Operation Onesimus for the second time this summer. Isaya is originally from Congo, and his large family has a history

of survival as refugees, eventually meeting Christadelphians in Pretoria, South Africa. His adopted father, Bro. Ramazani Emema, was baptized by Bro. Lucas Scheepers and the family moved to the Chicago area three years ago. Isaya has been a great example to our young people especially. Separately, RACHEL STULL, 20, was baptized by her father, Bro. Mike Stull, in October. Rachel grew up in our Sunday school and increased her faith in her college years. She has been a delight to watch and noted how encouraged she was when Isaya was baptized and made a very public confession to all around him. Rachel continues her college out of state, but returns during breaks and when able.

Since our last announcement we have welcomed Bro. Robert and Sis. Marta Marzoughi and their two children, all originally from Iran and living in Sri Lanka. They initially were located as refugees in Kansas City, but moved to Chicago this summer due to work, and because they knew our Bro. Milad and Masih well from Iran. They have been an enthusiastic addition to our meeting and attend all possible classes and meetings. We also received another Congolese family, Bro. Djuma Wilondja, wife and three children, who were living in Orlando until October. Djuma was connected to Bro. Ramazani in Africa and was the one who initially led him to Christadelphians in South Africa.

Needless to say, we are nearly overwhelmed with over 30 former refugees who attend our meeting each week. Our services have an entirely new flavor with a truly international element. We thank God for his amazing surprises and provisions each day!

Dan Richard

CRANSTON, RI

The Cranston Ecclesia has some wonderful news. REBEKAH ENTWISTLE daughter of Bro. Ray and Sis. Lori Entwistle, along with JEREMY O'NEILL and NICOLE O'NEILL, son and daughter of Bro. Steven and Sis. Patricia O'Neill gave a wonderful confession of their faith and have been baptized into the saving name of our Lord Jesus Christ. As a result of these baptisms we've had more visitors than can be named. However we thank Bro. Aaron MacAdams from the Worcester, MA Ecclesia and Bro. Jason Dineen from the Abington, MA Ecclesia for delivering words of exhortation.

Bro. Raymond and Sis. Elizabeth Calise and Sis. Janel Choquet have transferred membership. We commend them into the care of the Boston, MA Ecclesia.

Jeff Wallace

ECHO LAKE, NJ

We have been pleased and blessed to have the following activities and visits from several brothers and sisters during the last few months for which we truly thank our Heavenly Father for their presence; among these Brethren and Sisters were Cornelius Kellett and his daughter Deborah Kellett (Washington, DC); Sharon Isaacs (Atlanta Area, GA); Dev Ramcharan (Toronto Church Street, ON) who gave a stirring weekend study on "A life of Samson"; David Birchall (London, ON) who gave an exhortation on "Excellence" and Louise Birchall who is the coordinator of the Save the Children campaign; Matthew and Ruth Link who have just transferred their membership from the Washington, DC Ecclesia to Echo Lake; Margaret Ann Packie

and Carolyn Antonaccio (Union, NJ); and Ron and Patti Kidd (Book Road, ON). Bro. Ron gave an exhortation on “Sarah, the mother of nations”. Bro. Tom Cannon from the Abington, MA Ecclesia gave an exhortation on Psalm 144.

We also welcomed our sister, Jean Drepaul who visited us for several months from the South Florida Ecclesia during the summer months and has now returned to her home ecclesia for the winter months.

Our sister Julianna Joseph is spending the entire fall and winter months in the South Florida Christadelphian Ecclesia as having been suggested by her physician because of health reasons, and will return in the Spring, God willing, to Echo Lake.

We also welcome a young sister who has just moved here from the Caribbean Islands by the name of Audra Small. She is a blood sister of our brother Nigel Small, who has been a very active brother of the Echo Lake Ecclesia for many years. We also welcomed Sister Borgette Charles, who has become a frequent visitor from Albany New York where she lives in isolation. She is the mother of our own brother Keon Charles.

We also would like to inform the brotherhood of the falling asleep of our sister Edith Coleman, who departed on Sunday, October 23rd. She lived to be 104 years of age. She had been a member of the Christadelphians ever since she graduated from the Sunday school at about age 18. She was confined to the nursing home at age 103. She joins her husband (Oliver Coleman) at the Mausoleum in the Beth Israel Cemetery; he fell asleep in Christ some 20 years prior to her death. Sister Edith was a faithful attendee at the meeting and took to such duties as playing the organ each and every Sunday until poor health overtook her about 15 years ago.

We also ask for your prayers for our Sister Jean Link who is undergoing “chemo therapy” on a daily basis regarding the cancer that is being destroyed in her system at the Sloan Kettering Hospital where she travels every day, back and forth to New York for treatment.

Reuben Washington

GRANITE STATE, NH

We are very happy to announce the recent baptism of LEAH ANDREWS, daughter of Bro. Bill and Sis. Kelly Ellison of the Westerly, RI Ecclesia. Sister Leah and her family moved into our area a couple years ago and have joined us nearly every Sunday since. We were very excited to witness Leah putting on the saving Name of our Lord Jesus Christ on Sunday, October 30th. How encouraging it is to see the hand of God bringing yet another of Adam’s race into His service with the bright hope of the coming age before her! May the Lord bless her in her new life and may He always guide her steps on the path that will lead her, by His grace, into His Kingdom!

We are very pleased to announce that Brother Patrick and Sister Carol Brown have transferred into our ecclesia from the Largo, FL Ecclesia. We are happy and excited to welcome our brother and sister and have already been inspired by their “can-do” attitude toward service in the Master’s Name. We look forward to loving fellowship and service together as we wait for our Lord’s return.

We are also pleased to share that we have been blessed by the recent arrival of several families from Tanzania, Africa. They were relocated from Africa to nearby Concord, New Hampshire and have been coming to meeting and studying God’s Word with us on a regular basis. Transitioning into this new situation has been quite a challenge

for them especially with the difficulty of having to learn a new language; but the Word, which was introduced to them in Tanzania has created a strong connection helping us all to overcome the differences of our cultures. The opportunity that we have been given to help these families to continue in their study of the Word has been a real blessing for our ecclesia, and we pray that Yahweh will continue to be with them to bless and guide.

Steve Smith

KITCHENER WATERLOO, ON

We are very pleased to welcome as a member of the Kitchener Waterloo Ecclesia Bro. Andrew and Sis. Donna Webb from the Toronto East, ON Ecclesia. We look forward to their company and contribution to the ecclesia as we await the Lord's return to set up the Kingdom of God.

We are sorry to lose by transfer to the Brantford, ON Ecclesia Bro. Fred and Sis. Pat Bouttell. We will miss their company and thank them for their work during the years they have been members of the ecclesia. After a summer break we have resumed weekly seminars, with some interested friends attending regularly.

Martin J Webster

LOS ANGELES, CA

This is the first time in a long time that we have reported news from the Los Angeles Ecclesia, but I thought that we should on occasion provide news for the magazines.

The Los Angeles Christadelphian Ecclesia began reporting its intelligence in *The Christadelphian* in 1904. While we moved from the city of Los Angeles into the city of Bell in 1952 and into our current location in Santa Fe Springs, CA in 1980, we are still in the county of Los Angeles and retain the original name of the Los Angeles Ecclesia. Our meeting place is 22 miles from LAX.

We currently have 61 baptized in the meeting; having added by transfer recently Bro. Luke Banta of Austin Leander, TX and Bro. Bob Llamas is back from Coachella Valley, CA. We are pleased that Bro. and Sis. Martin and Lanette Banford with their two children have returned from their month-long visit to the Sales, UK Ecclesia. Our Sunday school continues to grow with five who are three and under. However, most of CYC age are away at university or in other pursuits. Recently, Rhys Richter was added to our Sunday school list. Our associate list continues to grow with elderly moving to other areas. Sis. Connie Wiedeman has moved to Apple Valley with her daughter. Sis. Opal Broyles, who is now 102 is living in Lemoore, CA, near her daughter. We have three on the associate list in the Hawaiian Islands.

Our outreach effort continues with a lecture on "Jesus for King in 2016", on the eve of the presidential elections; being part of a Southern California coordinated effort. We were happy to have Sis. Sue Armstrong visiting from the Detroit Royal Oak, MI meeting with her children who live locally to us. We continue to welcome visiting speakers once each month. We were privileged to have Bro. Jason Hensley (Simi Hills, CA) give his excellent and heart-warming talk on the Kindertransport and his project "Part of the Family" which is now in book form and available from Amazon. Until next summer, we have returned to our regular meeting time of 11:00 am, with Sunday school at 9:30 am.

James E Land

PITTSBURGH, PA

On April 3, 2016, Bro. Zach Kemp's membership was transferred to our ecclesia from the Northern Virginia Ecclesia. We enjoyed a study weekend presented by Bro. Paul Prater on April 30th and May 1st on the subject of "The Seven Abominations in Proverbs 6."

On July 30th, we witnessed the beautiful wedding of Bro. Zach Kemp and Sis. Rebecca Pommer. We pray for God's blessing on their life together and on their service to our Lord.

Bro. Troy Davis, who lives in isolation in Erie, PA, is now a member of our ecclesia. Our brethren have been keeping in touch with him faithfully. We welcome Bro. Peter and Sis. Pat Hemingray into our ecclesia by transfer from the Royal Oak, MI Ecclesia. It is wonderful to have their help in our service to our Master.

We thank brethren Tim Bailey (Enfield, Adelaide, Australia) and Roger Snyder for their encouraging words of exhortation.

David Pommer

SAN FRANCISCO PENINSULA, CA

Our ecclesia continues to thank our Heavenly Father for the many blessings He continues to bestow on us.

With great sadness we report the falling asleep of our Bro. Richard Naylor on February 1, 2015. Richard was originally from Little Rock, Arkansas. He suffered from progressive and crippling rheumatoid arthritis for some 20 years. His physical condition had become so wretched that his death brought a merciful end to his suffering. On February 11 we were shocked when our beloved Bro. Robert Sleeper also fell asleep. He had been diagnosed with stomach cancer just over a year before, was treated for it, but it recurred. We thought he had several months, but that was not God's plan.

As we mourned the loss of these two brothers, our merciful Father, over the next months came Sis. Beth De Souza from Baltimore, MD Ecclesia with her husband, Malcolm, and two adorable daughters. We had Bro. Phil and Sis. Bonnie Gilmore from Australia and their two lovely children with us on a six-month work contract. Lauren Land and Ryan Riba from southern California moved here for school. Lauren is still in school and Ryan is now working in his field.

Sis. Sierra Gaston moved from Mendocino, CA to finish her degree in our area, so she has been a faithful attendee since Fall 2012. She finished her schooling and is now working in the area with an energized start up. She is very talented artistically. We enjoy having her with us.

Bro. James Robinson (Book Road, ON), after spending a work-study year here, returned home for his final university year, then returned here to work. He is a real powerhouse of enthusiasm and has done a tremendous job revitalizing our young adult CYC. He loves being involved with VBS each June. He has been with us for nearly four years now.

Bro. Ben Gallagher transferred to our ecclesia from Sacramento, CA in October 2013. He has continued to be an enthusiastic and dedicated hard worker and real asset to our ecclesia.

In the summer of 2015 our Sis. Keren Robertson was finally joined by her husband, Bro. David Dawson-Bowman and his daughter, Sis. Rebecca Dawson-Bowman. Since he is from the Glasgow Ecclesia in Scotland, it was a bit of a wait for him to get through immigration. He is now settled here and going to community college with Rebecca. Meanwhile, his oldest daughter, Sis. Naomi, who was able to immigrate nearly a year ahead of him, has just started at USC in southern CA where she is pursuing a graduate degree in Occupational Therapy. We now see her on occasional weekends, but she plans to resettle back here in a year when her schooling is finished. Keren and David have bought a house here so they are definitely settled in our ecclesia. The whole family makes a lovely addition.

We enjoy the company and support of our regular visitors, Lisa Volkman, Mike and Sharlene Crader and Martha Frisby. All of these attended our LTRTB Effectively seminar in February 2016 although they each had a connection with us prior to that.

We are blessed by the addition of all these brothers and sisters and young adults and look forward to their continuing contributions to our ecclesia.

Dolores Sleeper

SUSSEX, NB

Sis. Emily Baines has moved to England recently and her membership has been transferred to the Rugby Christadelphian Ecclesia. She will be missed by all her Brethren and Sisters in Sussex and love and care for her has been commended to her new home ecclesia.

Paul Baines

WASHINGTON, DC

The Washington DC Ecclesia has enjoyed the visits of many Brothers and Sisters since our last intelligence and wish to thank the following brethren for their words of exhortation: John Woodward, Andy Bilello, John Handy and Allen Laben (Baltimore, MD); David Fertig, Mike Kemp and Lee Huff (Northern Virginia, VA); Phil Snobelen (Vancouver, BC), Matt Colby (Hamilton Book Road, ON), Paul Gaitanis (Richmond Petersburg, VA), Tony Moore (Barnet, UK), Mark Giordano (Norfolk, VA), Dafydd Jenkins (Cardiff — Museum Place, UK), Manny Schiavone (Enfield, AUS) and Tim Galbraith (Hyderabad, India).

We wish to thank Bro. Stephen Whitehouse (Hall Green) for his study weekend in October 2015 on “Jesus a High Priest after the Order of Melchizedek.”

In November we had our Family Bible Weekend at Camp Hashawha with Bro. Ryan King on the topic “Jeremiah and His Friends.” God willing this year’s camp will be Nov 18-20, 2016, and Bro. Dennis Bevans (Baltimore, MD) will be our speaker on the topic “1 Peter: Love Learned By Experience”. In December we welcomed the CBMA/CBMC who had their yearly meeting here and in Baltimore. We had opportunity to sit in on their planning meetings and wish to thank all who labor and work to proclaim the Gospel message in North America and around the world.

In February 2016 we received a letter from the Ozone Park, NJ Ecclesia commending Bro. Nathan Rupenarine to the Washington, DC ecclesia. We are pleased to welcome him to Washington. In April we enjoyed fellowship with the members of the Baltimore ecclesia when we hosted our Semi-annual Baltimore/Washington Gathering and Study Day. We would like to thank Bro. Jonathan Bowen of the

Brantford, ON Ecclesia for his words of exhortation and talks on “Preparing for Armageddon”.

In June we hosted our annual CYC camping and canoe trip with families from a number of ecclesias attending. We wish to thank Bro. Craig and Sis. Diane McInturff of the Shenandoah, VA Ecclesia for all their help in making it a success.

In August Bro. Matt and Sis. Ruth Link transferred their membership to the Echo Lake, NJ Ecclesia when Bro. Matt accepted a new job in NYC. They will be greatly missed as they were both very active in the ecclesia. We commend them to our brothers and sisters in Echo Lake.

It has been a little more than a year since Bro. Roberto Lara was stricken with a rare form of cancer that require the amputation of his right foot(lower part of right leg). We are delighted to report he has now been fitted with a prosthetic and recent tests show he is cancer free. We thank our heavenly Father who has heard our prayers. We wish to thank all those who prayed on his behalf and provided support during this trial. We ask all to continue your prayers on his behalf as he adjusts to his new life.

Bro. Roberto Lara has been appointed the new recording brother of the Washington, DC Ecclesia. All future mailings to this ecclesia should be addressed to: Washington Ecclesia, C/O Roberto Lara, Recording Brother, 9240 Riggs Road, Adelphi, MD 20783.

Bob Kling

WICHITA FALLS, TX

Greetings in our one of life in Christ.

Since last reporting our ecclesial news we have welcomed the following Brethren and Sisters around the table of our absent Lord: Stan Newton (Pomona, CA); Emily Tunnell (San Diego County, CA); Ed Newton (Verdugo Hills, CA); Sylvia Clubb (Royal Oak, MI); Cheryl Kitch and Sandra Maggart (Albuquerque, NM); Verghese Kurien, and Thiruvella Kerala (India); Tyler Cherry and Aaron Cherry (Houston West, TX); Jeanna McLaughlin (Abilene, TX); Miah Hefner, and David Ishman (Austin Leander, TX); Daniel and Malinda Beutel (Tulsa/Joplin, MO); Ronnie and Kristen Hefner, Brandon Hefner, David Phillips (Houston North, TX); and Peter Trotter, Jacob Matthew, Antonio and Marcia Howell, Michelle Massip, Tabby Evans (Dallas, TX). We thank Brethren V Kurien, B Hefner, E Newton, A Cherry, D Ishman, D Phillips, P Trotter, R Hefner and A Howell for their words of comfort and exhortation.

Plans are underway for our annual Spring Gathering, “God Willing” over the weekend of April 14th - 16th, 2017. We are pleased to announce Bro. Paul Billington, Brantford, ON will be our class leader and his theme for the weekend is “The restitution of all things.” We hope many are able to join us at the T4C camp as we consider the things concerning our Lord’s return.

John A Clubb

NOTICE

The news this month is quite extensive. This is because the delay in printing the magazine has resulted in a delay of publishing Intelligence, for which we apologize. Although this magazine is “November”, which would normally include no intelligence submitted after October 5th, this issue includes items submitted through November 20th.

Thoughts on the Way

The Devil, You Say!

Before the afternoon Bible class, about the “Devil” and “Satan”, some of us had a lunch-time discussion about the derivation of “deviled”, as in “**deviled eggs**” and “**deviled ham**”. So I went to the #1 research tool on the planet, Wikipedia! The best evidence I could find said the term “deviled” was a culinary term that began in the 1800s, to describe hot spiced dishes. The term presumably refers to the devil and the heat of “hell”, since anything with peppers and the like is, in effect, as “hot as hell”! (This is cited generally from *The Oxford Companion to Food*.)

So while I was at it...

“Devil’s food cake”: this name seems to have been developed as a contrast to the already common “angel’s food cake”. This white sponge cake was presumably named “angel’s food” because it was so light and airy, like a cloud — and, of course, that’s where angels were supposed to hang out, floating around on clouds strumming their harps. So the rich chocolate cake — being dark and dense instead of light and airy, and thus the opposite of “angel’s food” — was naturally called “devil’s food.”

A similar cake, the red velvet cake, was closely linked to a devil’s food cake, and in some early 20th century cookbooks the two names were used interchangeably. The name came originally from the reddish tint left by the natural cocoa color, but later the red color was achieved by adding red dyes (before those were found to be harmful). Today, we have Dutch-processed cocoa available to us that improves the chocolate taste as well as giving a deeper and darker, almost black, color. Possibly, both the dark color and the bright red color suggested the “devil” to some cooks. This red velvet cake was sometimes called “red devil’s food.”

Incidentally, my grandmother, a lifelong Christadelphian, felt ladies should never wear **red dresses** because of Rev 17:4:

“The woman [the great prostitute: cp v 1] was dressed in purple and scarlet... She held a golden cup in her hand, filled with abominable things and the filth of her adulteries.”

But on the other hand, there’s an old song warning about the “devil with the blue dress on.” So who’s to say? If we’ve learned anything about the real “devil”, we know that he, or she, or it, comes in many dresses, many suits, and many other disguises!

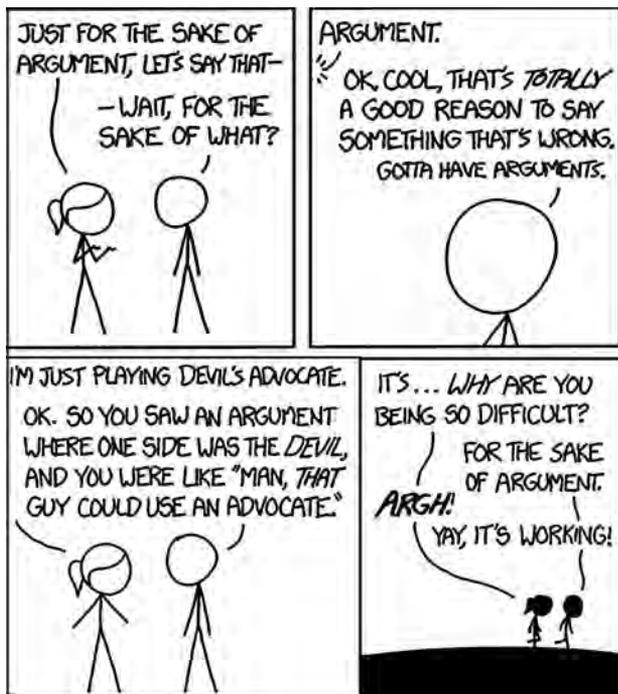
Then there is the old saying, “**The devil is in the details.**” Where did that come from? The saying is at least 150 years old, and cannot be attributed to any single source. It expresses the idea that problems and difficulties are often hidden from plain view, and any new undertaking or purchase or relationship ought to be approached carefully. What appears very attractive at first sight may soon

reveal previously unseen flaws or pitfalls. So read the contract or agreement carefully. Have an expert give your “dream house” the once-over (or the twice-over) before you make an offer. Take time to observe your intended spouse in various settings and circumstances before you tie the knot. Think long and hard before committing yourself to a long-term payment plan for something you don’t really need. What you can’t live without now may saddle you with a debt you can’t live with later!

One more and then I promise to quit.

“Devil’s advocate”: In common usage, this describes someone who takes a position simply for the sake of argument, or in an effort to test the quality of the original argument and possibly identify its weaknesses. But how did the term originate? During the Catholic Church’s canonization process (that is, the process by which the Church determines the fitness of nominees to become “saints”), the devil’s advocate is a church lawyer appointed to argue against the canonization of the candidate. His job is to act as a sort of prosecuting attorney, taking a critical view of the candidate’s character and accomplishments, and arguing against any “miracles” which the would-be saint is alleged to have performed.

George Booker



With thanks to xkcd.com

Coming Events (Lord Willing)

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

NOVEMBER, 2016

4-6 Pittsburgh, PA CYC Study Weekend. Our speaker will be Bro. Jesse Adair (Hamilton Book Road, ON). His subject will be "Jonah." Travelers' lunch will be provided at noon and classes will begin at 1:00pm. Please contact Bro. Jonathan and Sis. Vanessa Schwieger at schwiegs@aol.com or (412) 781-1826 for more information.

4-6 Women at the Well Retreat, Palm Springs, CA. Sis. Maritta Terrell (Austin Leander, TX) will be leading our classes on the topic of 'Renewing Your Heart and Mind'. Sponsored by the Simi Hills, CA Ecclesia. For information regarding the weekend contact Sisters Sandy McLeod sandraracleod@gmail.com or Denise Sisco denisesisco@outlook.com. For registration contact Sis. Bonnie Sommerville kenandbonnie@simihills.org.

11-13 Ontario Brothers' Weekend Hidden Acres Camp, New Hamburg, ON. Speaker and Topic TBA soon. Please contact Bro. Nathan Badger for further details (natejbadger@gmail.com), or view our website: <http://christadelphianbroswknd.org/>.

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 "1 Peter: Love Learned by Experience." Contact Bro. Ken Green, 443-497-3497 or e-mail at Hashawha@gmail.com for additional information. Forms available at hopeofthekingdom.com. **Please note this is a week earlier than previous years when it was the Thanksgiving weekend.**

18-20 Victoria, BC Fall Study Weekend Bro. Mark Carr will be our speaker. His topic will be "Samson — My strength made perfect in weakness." Contact Bro. Clyde Snobelen at victoria@csl.ca.

DECEMBER, 2016

24-30 Ontario Winter Bible School, The Best Western Highland Inn & Conference Center, Midland, ON. Speakers: Bro. Matt Davies (Nottingham, UK) adults: "Moses the man of God" and young people: "Inspirational young people"; Bro. Ron Cowie (East Torrens, South Australia) adults: "Walking with God in Challenging Times" and young people: "Why We are Different"; and Bro. Matt Colby (Hamilton Book Rd, ON) adults: "The Sons of Korah" and young people: "Reasons to Believe." Registration information and other details are available from our website www.ontariowinterbibleschool.com.

FEBRUARY, 2017

18-19 Saanich Peninsula, BC Annual study weekend. Speaker: Bro. David Levin. Subject: "Resurrection." Contact: Bro. Duncan Kenzie 250-655-3228, or djkenzie@gmail.com, for more details.

MARCH, 2017

18-19 Baltimore, MD Spring study weekend. Speaker: Bro. Ted Sleeper (San Francisco Peninsula, CA). Bro. Ted's topic is: "The King's Highway", an in depth study of themes and lessons from Jesus' sermon on the mount. Start time for Saturday classes TBD. Classes resume on Sunday at 9:30 am, and Memorial service at 11:00 am. Lunch to follow. Afternoon public lecture TBD. For information: Sis. Carol Link at linkgang87@gmail.com.

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APRIL, 2017

13-16 Victoria, BC CYC Conference Bro. Stephen Macfarlane will be speaking. The subject will be “Samuel — Strengthening Relationships.” Contact Bro. Clyde Snobelen at victoria@csl.ca .

14-16 Wichita Falls, TX Spring Gathering at the T4C camp, Freestone, TX. We are pleased to announce Bro. Paul Billington (Brantford, ON) will be our class leader and his theme for the weekend is “The Restitution of All Things”. We hope many are able to join us at the T4C camp as we consider the things concerning our Lord’s return. For registration contact Bro. Larry Beutel, at lbeutel@alsco.com

MAY, 2017

19-21 Southern California Men’s Weekend, Cachuma Lake Camp Ground. Come join us for a camping weekend around God’s Word. Studies will be lead by Bro. Dev Ramcharan on “David — Model Man of God”. All meals provided, donations accepted at the weekend. Levi Gelineau leviandjessica@gmail.com or Gordon Hensley simi.rosa.hens@gmail.com.

JULY, 2017

1-8 Great Lakes Bible School at Lakeland University in Plymouth WI, located near Sheboygan, WI. The website for registration is glcbs.org. The teachers and theme verse have not yet been finalized. Registrar: Sis. Lydia Johnson at lydia.johnson@glcbs.org.

15-23 Midwest Bible School will be held at Trine University, Angola, IN. Our speakers are: Bro. Ron Cowie (AUS) on “Jesus The Master Teacher”, Bro. Roger Lewis (NZ) on “Who Was The Nameless Man Of God?” and Bro. Jay Mayock (CA) on “All in All (Psalm 8).” For registration information, contact Bro. Mike Livermore, 44943 Yorkshire Drive, Novi, MI 48375, 248.462.5740, E-mail: mike.live@gmail.com or visit www.midwestbibleschool.com.