

# THE CRISTADELPHIAN TIDINGS

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*of the Kingdom of God*

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## **The CHRISTADELPHIAN TIDINGS of the Kingdom of God**

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### ***A Mighty Flame: Love in the Bible* Book Publishing Location Clarification**

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*The Brantford Arranging Brethren*

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*George Booker*

## Editorial

### The Parable of April 15th

Our government long ago devised a method of collecting revenues from its citizens that involved their voluntary reporting of annual income. The date selected by law by which this reporting is to be completed is the 15th day of the fourth month of the following year.

Shortly after the end of every year, all across the land, millions of businesses and individuals who have paid out moneys to their workers or landlords or business associates begin to file information reports. Copies of these reports go to the central government itself, while other copies go to the recipients of the income.

It then becomes the responsibility of individuals to compile their own reports, from the information provided, of the income they have received during the previous year.

Other figures, called “deductions”, are provided to or compiled by taxpayers.

These deductions may be subtracted from the total income, so as to produce a new number, called “taxable income”. After further calculations, the individual is able to determine and to render to the government an amount of “income tax”.

Throughout the year, when money changes hands, the government (by various means) is able to appropriate portions of that money. This is called “withholding”. It is far-sighted in that the government, through the remainder of the year, is able to use this money that technically still belongs to the individual “taxpayer”. It is also clever in that the amount “withheld” during the year usually exceeds the amount actually owed by the taxpayer at the end of the year.

Thus, when the taxpayer files his report with the government, he can usually expect to receive back some paid-in surplus as a “refund”. And so the government — by a sort of enforced savings plan — guards against the taxpayer earning a lot of money during a year, owing a lot of taxes at the end of the same year, and having little or nothing left with which to pay.

But, invariably, every year many taxpayers wait until the 14th or even the 15th day of April to begin compiling their income and expenses for their annual report. This, despite the fact that — for most people — all the necessary information is available by the end of January, and when the tax return is filed they may expect to receive a refund check.

Just as Jesus took many of his parables from daily life, as he observed it all around him, so we also may find “parables” in our daily lives.

What is there about people that, having 75 days to perform a relatively simple task, they will wait 74 days, or even 74 days and 21 hours, and then try to perform

the same task under great pressure of time? The consequences: foolish errors that could have been easily avoided; frayed nerves; sleepless nights; late-evening rushes to the post office to beat the deadline; and delays in receiving refunds. Why do we so often make life more difficult than it need be?

The professional tax preparer sees such senseless procrastination close at hand, and multiplied a hundredfold. And he learns something about human nature: It is not pleasant to think about certain things, and many people do not think about them until they are absolutely forced to. This is silly, imprudent, and wasteful. And it happens all the time.

A “Peanuts” cartoon touches on this point. Linus — the thoughtful one! — is talking to Charlie Brown: “I seem to think too much about hard things! What do you do about that, Charlie?”

“When things are hard, I try not to think about them!”

Linus gives this a bit of thought: “That’s good. But what if you can’t help yourself?”

“Then I try harder not to think about them!”

Now Linus is baffled: “Okay, but what if you REALLY can’t stop thinking about REALLY hard things?”

Now it’s Charlie’s turn, for a moment at least, to think really hard (illustrated in the cartoon by seriously wrinkled eyebrows): “Well... when things are really, really hard to think about... well, then, I try really, really hard not to think about them!”

Linus finally throws his hands in the air and walks off: “I give up!”

It is a favorite fantasy of the little child that, if he closes his eyes, difficult or uncomfortable facts or circumstances will disappear. The adult knows that reality is not changed simply by his refusal to contemplate it. But sometimes, somewhere deep in his subconscious, he deludes himself into thinking like that “little child”.

There will be a time, a day, of ultimate reckoning, at the return of Jesus Christ (Acts 17:31). We do not know (in fact, we are told that we cannot know) the actual day. But we do know it is coming. It is coming as surely as next April 15th. (And, when it comes, it will negate the effect of all subsequent April 15ths!) Shall we wait until the very day itself and then rush around frantically, trying to tie up the loose ends of our lives? Or shall we use the available time... now... to prepare ourselves for the inevitable? And the right preparation... now... will make the inevitable so much more pleasant.

May the little “deadlines” of our lives remind us, as they roll around one by one, of the great “deadline” somewhere over the horizon.

Don’t wait until the last minute to prepare for the most important “accounting”

you will ever know.

## Exhortation

### When Donkeys Talk

When donkeys talk... it may pay to listen. Things are not always as they appear.

Who would have thought to give anyone that advice? And yet, in hindsight, we all know now what Balaam learned then... extremely important advice can come from a donkey.

But that was a unique incident in the history of the world and has never happened before or since, right? You and I are not likely to have a talking donkey in our experience.

Or are we?

The broader subject, of which Balaam's ass is just a specific example, is the matter of God communicating with us. God has not always found us to be an open, ready audience for His advice. He has used every method imaginable, and some practically unimaginable, to communicate with us. He has a reputation among us for working in mysterious ways. When He might have been expected in an earthquake, He spoke in a still, small voice. When He sent His Son to lead us back to Him — and to become the king of the world — He did so in a way devoid of all pomp and circumstance. Actually, He sent him to us in circumstances of poverty and relative obscurity: the baby destined to be king was born in a barn, and raised in a poor out-of-the-way village.

Just how difficult it is to reach us may be seen in Jesus' words:

*"Whereunto then shall I liken the men of this generation? And to what are they like? They are like children sitting in the market place, and calling one to another, and saying, We have piped unto you and you have not danced; we mourned to you and you have not wept" (Luke 7:31).*

In other words, nothing seems to work!

And God has been persistent. In fact, if He were not God, He might even be accused of nagging! The pages of the Bible are full of God's efforts to reach us: "Howbeit, I sent unto you all my prophets, rising early and sending them, saying, Oh, do not this abominable thing that I hate" (Jer. 44:4). Finally He sent His Son, and we know how we reacted to that. Many ordinary people agreed to murder him.

But not everyone in Jerusalem was a murderer, and we may think that, had we lived then, we would have been of that small number who listened to Jesus with open minds and open hearts. Even if we share the same nature as those who rejected him, we need not share the same fate. Nevertheless, we are susceptible to the same human tendency: refusing to listen, especially to what we do not want to hear.

## **The donkeys God sends us**

At first Balaam's donkey said nothing (Num. 22:24). It just stopped and refused to move forward. We can certainly understand how this would have been very frustrating. When our car won't start, we can understand how Balaam must have felt. Beating one's donkey — like slamming down the hood of the car — almost makes sense.

Should he have understood his donkey's actions as a warning from God not to proceed? Had not the angel just told him the night before to rise up and go with Balak's men this morning? But then, the night before that, God had told Balaam, "Thou shalt not go with them." On the surface it does seem like Balaam was getting some mixed signals.

But when we ask the next question we begin to understand Balaam's motive in this sad story, and we may be on the way to self-examination.

The question is: Having received a clear, unequivocal answer from God (Num. 22:12) that he should not go with Balak's men to curse Israel... why did Balaam ask the same question again?

Was it because he did not like the first answer? Was it because, deep down, Balaam really wanted to do what God did not want him to do?

Have you ever wanted to do something so much that you kept asking one person after another for "advice"... until you finally found someone who agreed with you? Then, of course, you followed *his* "advice"!

And of course we do not have to speculate about what was motivating Balaam. He was greedy (Jude 11). He wanted more than what he had. He wanted what Balak was offering. He was covetous — in effect, he worshiped the "idol" of money (Col. 3:5)!

## **What is the best way to reach you... or me?**

Whether we covet what we should not have, or want to do what we should not do, or persist in a self-destructive habit... how can God reach us to help us change? How can anyone reach us? Are we reachable?

Jesus' words — "We have piped unto you and you have not danced; we mourned to you and you have not wept" — suggest that God has tried, tries, and will continue to try every way possible to break through our natural resistance and reach us.

There are three principal ways in which God speaks to us (though He is not limited to these, as we know):

1. the Bible,
2. answered prayer, and
3. the brotherhood.

The Bible is the clearest voice because its words are fixed in print and act as a reliable guide, to which we can refer and which we can discuss with others. We can

reason logically about its message; we can consider all the evidence it provides. In doing so we may overcome our personal biases and tendencies, and get closer to what God is actually saying to us.

Answered prayer is extremely powerful to the one whose prayer has been answered, but another person might feel it is too subjective to be a useful indicator in his or her own life.

And now we come to the point of this message: God may speak to us through our brethren... through others... through our friends... our wives and husbands... our children.

We can agree wholeheartedly when Jesus speaks critically to his brethren, and when the New Testament writers write critically to the first-century ecclesias. But we have great difficulty when someone takes *us* aside and criticizes *our* actions.

The idea that God might be speaking to us through our brother (or our wife) is the furthest thing from our minds when we are being criticized. We jump so quickly into our knee-jerk defensive reactions. In fact, we may respond just like Balaam did: beating the messenger!

Sometimes we “kill the messenger” with a hot, angry outburst: “Who are *you* to tell me anything?”

Sometimes we “kill the messenger” with a cool, calculating, carefully-worded argument composed hours, or days, later — an attorney’s brief, sprinkled with sarcasm, and veiled attacks upon our “opponent”.

The question still remains: “How *can* we be reached?” If we are honest, we may say, “Well, please don’t criticize me in front of others.” Or, “don’t criticize me when I’ve just come home from a hard day at the office.” Or, “please wait until I’m feeling better.”

But the question is: “How *can* you be reached?”... not “How should you *not* be reached?” And the fact must be faced: some of us (many of us?) find it just about impossible to receive any constructive criticism whatsoever. That should tell us something about ourselves.

Perhaps, after careful, honest consideration we may come up with the way that we would find the least upsetting. (There will be almost no way to avoid all upset.) And in the self-examination we may realize two things:

- (1) that the problem is ours, that we have erected too many barriers, too many defense mechanisms, around ourselves; and
- (2) that the next time we are criticized, we should work just that much harder to soften our hearts, and to open our minds, and really *listen* to our critic.

This is not to suggest that 100% of all criticism is valid, nor that one should suspend one’s own judgment and be led here and there by every piece of advice one receives. But we should realize that most criticism has something of benefit in it.

Sometimes we act as if the world revolves around us. Very few people are staying up late at night trying to think of something to say just to upset us. When criticism does come, most likely the “messenger” has a point — whether well articulated or not, and whether he is the “best” to make it or not — and we do well to take heed.

Even if the critic *is* a “**donkey**” — and he well may be, one way or another — there may be merit in his “message”. And God may be using him to reach you... when all other “better” means have failed!

Besides, what does it hurt to listen patiently, and then think about it?

### On giving criticism

So far we have thought about how to receive criticism. Jesus says, “It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35). But criticism may be one of the few things that it is *not* more blessed to give than to receive!

Still, sometimes we do have the obligation to be critical... not overly much... but it must be done. Remembering the many “beams” in our own eyes should affect our attitude, but that alone should not be used to avoid our reasonable duties. There is an ancient principle in Leviticus 19:17 that actually equates failure to give criticism with hatred of one’s brother: “Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart; thou shalt surely rebuke thy neighbor, and not allow sin upon him.”

Common sense tells us that we should warn someone when we see him or her going down a dangerous path. Once when I was in Panama, I took a wrong turn down a street, and, fortunately, a merchant ran out of his store and told me not to go that way. I took his advice. But of course that was easy advice to take, and it contained no personal criticism. I had no burning desire to go down that particular street; and the danger was real, present, and fairly certain. I was not being told to change the direction of my life — away from a goal into which I had made large investments of time, money, and emotion.

How much more important is it to warn our brother or sister that the “road” they are traveling down may lead into spiritual danger, or even spiritual death! Better to speak up and be thought an “ass” for a while, than to feel — far longer — the guilt of knowing you should have said something but said nothing because it was easier.

*“The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy” (James 3:17).*

*Ken Sommerville (Simi Hills, CA)*

\* \* \* \* \*

About Balaam’s ass (Num 22:28) Robert Roberts wrote: “It was just as easy for God to impart the gift of utterance temporarily to a four-footed creature, as to endow some other creatures with it permanently who show no special aptitude

## Exposition

### Paul's Letter to the Ephesians: (3) Paul sends his greetings

In our contemporary world, it is usual for the writer of a letter to start with some such formula as "Dear..."; and to append his or her name at the end. This was not the custom in Paul's time. The writer then introduced himself immediately; thus, at the beginning of the letter to the Ephesians, we read: "Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus..." While this introduction served to authenticate the letter, the fact that it was normally borne by a trusted emissary, in this case Tychicus (6:21), meant the origin of the letter was known before it was read to the assembled ecclesia, for this appears to have been the practice (cf. Col. 4:16, 1 Thes. 5:27). The salutations which stand at the beginning of Paul's letters possess a special interest for they are in a sense a distillation, an epitome of his theology, and this we shall discover as we examine the first two verses of the letter.

Paul writes as an accredited apostle of Christ Jesus, "through the will of God" (v.1). It is accordingly not as an ordinary person that Paul is now communicating with his readers. In our studies of John 13-17 [*"The Way to the Father"*, May 2004 -Dec. 2005], we saw how the Lord Jesus was careful to stress the fact he was also an apostle, "one sent". His authority derived from the fact his Father had *sent* him into the world: "...I came forth and come from God; for neither have I come of myself, but he sent me" (John 8:42). Our Lord is thus supremely God's apostle, a fact recognized in Hebrews 3:1, where we are called upon to "consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, even Jesus". It was this fact, of being sent and commissioned by God, which established Jesus of Nazareth as God's apostle.

Now the Lord knew he would go to the Father and that others would be his accredited representatives after his ascent into heaven. It is for this reason that in those final words to the faithful eleven the Lord emphasises the role to be played by them during his absence with the Father: "As thou didst send me into the world, even so sent I them into the world" (John 17:18). The record in the Book of Acts shows how faithfully they discharged their apostleship. However, to the ranks of the Twelve one was added who was to be the apostle, the one sent to the Gentiles; it was he who received a special revelation on the Damascus road (Acts 9:1-19). Years later, in his defence before Agrippa, Paul refers to his experience, and quotes the words addressed to him by the Lord who would deliver his apostle from the people of Israel, and from the Gentiles to whom he was *sending* him (Acts 26:17). Earlier, in his words from the stairs of the tower of Antonia, he had referred to a subsequent and confirmatory revelation when the Lord Jesus had given him the reassurance: "Depart: for I will send thee forth far hence unto the Gentiles" (Acts 22:21).

At the opening of Ephesians, a letter which we know to have been intended for a number of ecclesias, we can understand why Paul would invoke the authority invested in him as a specially commissioned apostle to the Gentiles. He did not invariably mention his status as apostle in all his letters. Thus, in addressing himself to the Philippians, with whom he had the most cordial of relations, he is content to refer to himself and Timothy as “servants of Jesus Christ” (Phil. 1:1).<sup>1</sup>

We note in the salutation in the Ephesian letter, Paul mentions that, while he is indeed in a special sense the apostle of Jesus Christ, this is through the will of God. He thus brings himself in line, as he so often does, with the teaching of the Lord Jesus who, as we have reminded ourselves above, could commission the apostles with an authority he himself had received from his Father. None had greater love and reverence for the Lord Jesus than Paul himself, and yet he knew the Lord God was sovereign. Worthy of notice in this connection is the lyrical outburst at the end of Romans 11: “For of him, and through him, and unto him are all things. To him be the glory for ever. Amen.”

All is ultimately subject to God’s will, a truth which explains everything relating to the Lord Jesus. His mission is epitomised in the quotation of Psalm 40, quoted in Hebrews 10:7: “Then said I, Lo, I am come (in the roll of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God” (v. 7). The moving evidence of this lies in the anguished prayer of Gethsemane: “O my Father, if this cannot pass away, except I drink it, thy will be done” (Matt. 26:42). The prayer he has taught all his followers contains these words: “Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth” (Matt. 6:10).

We come now to consider the recipients of the letter; they are the saints who are also “the faithful in Christ Jesus” (NIV, NRSV, REB). The description of the believers as “saints” indicates the status conferred on all who, by faith and baptism, become members of God’s new society in Christ Jesus. Before the promulgation of the terms of the covenant God made with the Israelites in the wilderness,<sup>2</sup> the Lord God informed them that if they observed the conditions He was laying down they would be a special people.

These conditions need to be quoted in full, for they have a special bearing upon the nature of the new covenant and the conditions attaching to it:

*“Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me from among all peoples: for all the earth is mine: and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation” (Exod. 19:5,6).*

Underlying this passage is the basic notion of holiness, a people set apart for the express object of doing God’s will.

The echo of this fundamental passage is clear in Peter’s words as he addresses the followers of the Lord Jesus:

*“But ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people of God’s own possession, that ye may shew forth the excellencies of him who called you out of*

*darkness into his marvellous light” (1 Peter 2:9).*

It is thus that those who embrace the offer of salvation in the Lord Jesus inherit the privileges and responsibilities forfeited by Israel as the result of disobedience. Thereby the great prophecy of our Lord uttered shortly before his death was fulfilled:

*“Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken away from you, and shall be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof” (Matt. 21:43).*

All this is implied in the use of the term “saints” in the New Testament; it means that every follower of the Lord Jesus is not only to be separate from the world with its practices: he must also show forth God’s “excellencies”, producing the fruit of the spirit (Gal. 5:22). This calls for submission to God’s will in all circumstances. The promises inherent in the new covenant exceed by far those available to the Israelites in the wilderness. This requires total faithfulness, and Paul’s estimate of those he was addressing was that they were “faithful”.

We have two words in English — “belief” and “faith” — and while we have a verb corresponding to the first, “to believe”, we talk of “having faith” instead of “to faith” (as a verb). The Greek is simpler: *pistis* (faith), *pisteuo* (to have faith) and *pistos* (faithful); the relationship between the three is evident. When Paul describes his readers as “faithful” he is recognizing that their faith is active and productive. In our consideration of faith, we are encountering the first fundamental necessity in man’s relationship with God, and none was more convinced of this than the Apostle. As he declares: “For I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation... as it is written, But the righteous shall live by faith” (Rom. 1:16,17), a fundamental truth endorsed in resounding terms in Hebrews 11:6: “And without faith it is impossible to please God...” (RSV). [*See the Digression below: “The structure of the early section of Romans”.*]

It is this grace which Paul mentions in the second verse of his salutation: “Grace to you and peace from God and the Lord Jesus” (Eph. 1:2). The reflections in which we have already engaged in our brief consideration of the letter to the Romans have reminded us of the importance of grace. Here, in this second verse, grace is coupled with peace but this connection, too, has been anticipated in the earlier letter to the Romans: at the beginning of chapter 5 faith, peace with God and the access to divine grace through our faith are all brought before us (see vv. 1,2). “Peace” (Hebrew “shalom”) we know to be the conventional Jewish greeting; to this is now added the mention of God’s grace.

The associations of Biblical peace are rich and varied. The Old Testament had spoken of one who would be “the prince of peace” (Isa. 9:6), whose government would inaugurate an endless peace upon the throne of David (v. 7); Micah also speaks of the man of Bethlehem Ephrathah who would be the peace (5:5). While such passages prophesy the future benefits of the righteous reign of the Lord Jesus, his task at his first coming was to conquer sin, man’s deadliest enemy, thus removing in his person the enmity between God and man. About this we hope to write at greater length when we come to Ephesians 2. It must suffice for the

present to note that there Paul speaks of the one who is “our peace”.

When we ponder the blessings brought to the believer by the redemptive work of the Lord Jesus, we can see how appropriate was the salutation: “Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” Some of the lovely features of Paul’s letters are the terms he occasionally employs to describe the God he served and whose he was (cf. Acts 27:23). Thus in the letter to the Romans, he speaks of “the God of patience and comfort” (15:5), “the God of peace” (v. 33, and again in 16:20).

While our new life in the Lord can bring us peace, this experience does not come automatically. It is in the contemplation and cultivation of certain qualities that this peace can be found. So much Paul taught his beloved Philippians: first, he mentions the need for us to be free from anxiety, by using the resources of prayer with thankfulness (4:6,7). Then he rehearses the lovely things on which the mind should dwell; when this is done, and only then, will the God of peace be with us (vv. 8,9). Paul was doubtless familiar with his Lord’s words, with their invitation to come to him in order to find freedom from our anxieties (Matt. 11:28-30).

*(Next: God’s gracious purpose of redemption preceded the foundation of the world)*

Tom Barling  
(Teignmouth, England)

#### Footnotes:

1. The variations in Paul’s salutations are significant. We have noted that in addressing the Philippians he does not refer to his apostleship. This is the case also at the beginning of 1 Thessalonians and 2 Thessalonians and is an evidence of the affectionate relationship he had with these Macedonian believers. Likewise, in addressing Philemon, doubtless a convert of his, he does not invoke his apostleship. Where it is appropriate, and this is a token of Paul’s courtesy, he associates with himself others familiar to his readers: (a) 1 Corinthians 1:1, Sosthenes (see Acts 18:17); (b) 1 Thessalonians 1:1, Silvanus (Silas) and Timothy (see Acts 17:15); (c) 2 Thessalonians 1:1, Silvanus; and (d) Philemon 1, Timothy. It may surprise us that in his two letters to Timothy and Titus, two close associates, he introduces himself as an apostle; it is, however, his apostleship which establishes the authority of these instructions.
2. The book of the covenant must not be confused with the book of the law. The former is expressly mentioned in Exodus 24:7; the terms are set out in chapters 20-24. It was ratified by blood (see Exod. 24:4-7) and was thus a precursor of the new covenant in the blood of the Lord Jesus. The book of the law was more comprehensive, and a copy was lodged by the Levites at the side of the ark (Deut. 31:25,26). It was doubtless this ancient copy which was found in the renovation of the Temple in the days of Josiah, the reading of which had such a profound effect upon the king (2 Chron. 34:15-19).

#### Digression: The structure of the early section of Romans

The structure of the early section of the letter to the Romans is worthy of at least brief examination. After reminding the Jew he is no better than the Gentile (ch. 2:23,24), Paul establishes the universality of sin in 3:23: “For all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God.” But in the context of the same verse, Paul reminds his readers of “the righteousness of faith in Christ Jesus”, and in verse 24 he speaks of the believer “being justified freely by the grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus”. The association of faith and grace is worked out first in chapter 4 where the faith of Abraham (the spiritual father of all those who have faith — v.

11 — is highlighted ), and then in chapter 5 the efficacy of God's grace for the penitent sinner is declared. To the subject of grace we must presently return.

If the recipients of the letter are faithful, it is "in Christ Jesus". As in the case of our studies on John 13-17 we discovered the fundamental importance of that short word "in" (*en* in Greek), so now. The new life is no longer in Adam, our natural heritage, but in the Lord Jesus. So Paul reminded the Corinthians, many of whom had lost sight of the great truth: "Wherefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature (creation: NIV, NRSV): the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new" (2 Cor. 5:17). There is a passage of great elevation (the appropriate word surely) to describe the new life in the Lord Jesus in Colossians 3; verses 1-5 should resonate in our mind and heart constantly, for they remind us that our new life "is hid with Christ in God" (v. 3; see also Phil. 3:20).

So it was that Paul's readers were faithful in Christ Jesus, and it is this tribute

## **OPPORTUNITY TO TEACH**

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With love in Christ,

Bro. Greg Robinson, CHS Board

# Apologetics

## The Hard Questions: (24) Which God? The Exclusivity Issue: (8) A Lesson from Idolatry

*Early one August morning a man walked out into the tepid Atlantic waters. The low cloud cover merged horizonlessly into the ocean; in the pre-dawn dimness the man felt enveloped in a gray, damp, warm cocoon of nature. Low tide on a flat, shallow beach afforded him enough distance from the shoreline civilization that he could, if but briefly, experience the isolation of the sea. The man stood waist-deep in the water, leaning back slightly against the slow outward tide and the salt air breeze. He sensed only a murkiness of sight and sound, yet the movement of air and water testified to a presence of power and energy. The man considered how easily one could worship the created rather than the Creator, and then he prayed.*

In this article, I am going to make the unlikely apologetic move of explaining why idolatry makes sense. No, I do not recommend idolatry, but I do want us to understand that it isn't abject madness. Idolatry in the context of ancient Israel made perfect sense, and the Israelites incorporated idolatry into their worship. In so doing they violated their own needs for religious exclusivity, and they suffered accordingly. We do not have classical idolatry as a major issue in our day, and I don't think that anyone of our body who struggles with the exclusivity issue would extend their scope to include an idolater if one did come among us. We might have some doubts or questions at times as to just how much we need to know to delineate gospel truth, but no one would find themselves so open as to include a worshiper of a lifeless image.

What's the point, then, in including a rationale of idolatry in our series? I would cite a general and a specific reason. The general reason is that when we investigate the development of religious thought of any kind, we can better evaluate our position relative to other religious perspectives. Specifically, the case of idolatry provides an excellent contextual example of the way in which similar competing religious traditions (for so the Jews considered them) could be justified and incorporated into their worship. Today it is the variety of orthodox Christian denominations that can look similar to our form of worship, using largely the same vocabulary and forms of worship.

### Isn't Isaiah 44 clear and pointed?

Let's look at our primary text for this article, Isaiah 44:9-20. Isaiah recounts with disbelief how a man cuts down a tree, uses some of the wood to grill his meat, fashions an idol from the remainder of the wood, and then worships the idol. "Is

there not a lie in his right hand?” gasps the prophet (v. 20), scarcely able to believe what he has observed. The account takes the idolatry at face value, challenging us to believe people could be so naive, so primitive as to worship an object of their own artifice. The depiction of the idolater is not flattering. Adapting a phrase from Mark Twain, it is as if Isaiah wrote, “in matters of intellect, the difference between the idolater and the idol is not spacious.”<sup>1</sup>

Idolaters weren’t thick-browed primitives, however, despite the hubris of modern humanity to depict any prior civilization as mentally lacking, unsophisticated, and naive. Shall we say that the ancient Mediterranean world was intellectually wanting? Egypt? Greece? Rome? Assyria? Babylon? Advanced cultures all, full of art and invention. Ancient civilizations, far from being primitive and ignorant, were sophisticated seekers of religion. They differ from the modern world only in accumulated technology, not inherent civility or mental prowess. Idolatry existed alongside the monotheism that Isaiah preached.

People who lived in relatively non-technological societies also had much more intimate contact with nature than we do today. Their sensitivity to the power of nature was not dulled by technologies that made flight ordinary, turned night into day, stopped rivers, and eliminated plagues.<sup>2</sup> Today we live so isolated from nature that we often aren’t even aware of our distance from it. We have climate control, 24-hour schedules, worldwide instantaneous communication. We can go for weeks without seeing birds by day or the stars at night. We don’t know where our food comes from. Living with nature and using its bounties had a reality in ancient times that escapes us “civilized moderns.”

The ancients had sophisticated intelligence, a close contact with nature, and the same human passions as we do. How did idolatry develop from this? We will see that idolatry really isn’t very unbelievable at all; it’s just another extension of natural human thinking. That’s what Isaiah was really preaching against.

### How idolatry arises

As did the man in the opening vignette of this article, people have always observed power, energy, motion, and vastness in the natural world. The first step to idolatry is **observation**, specifically the awareness of the powers and regulative activities of nature. Observation, however, can also be the first step to appreciation of Deity as creator (Rom. 1:19,20; Psa. 19:1-6). Observation itself is neither idolatry nor faith; what we do with our observation makes the difference between worship and idolatry.

What powers do people observe in nature? Ocean waves and flowing rivers, weather features, volcanoes, earthquakes, migration and other animal instinct behavior, plant growth, the expanse of the firmament, reproduction, and seasonal changes might cover most of the list (consider God’s witness to Job in chapters 38-40). All these activities of nature inform observant minds that some power greater than themselves exists around them.

## Continuing the exploration

When one observes power in the natural world, it would be natural to want to have some personal connection to the power. Questions such as “How can I identify with this power? How can I make it part of my life?” would arise in the observer’s mind, especially in the past. When we today see the power of nature, we don’t covet it, as we have much of our own. Who needs the wind and the birds when you’ve got a 747? It does change our perspective. Societies in contact with nature would value nature’s powers much more than we do. People would observe forces far beyond human capabilities, forces that they depended on for life, forces that completely dominated their existence. They had meager ability to counter the forces of nature, so they had great incentive to want to get in on the power, to identify with it, to have a possibility of altering it for one’s good through worship of the God responsible for it.

The next step is the desire to identify with or participate in the power; we can call this personalization.

## A critical step

Once a person has observed nature, categorized the great powers and decided he or she “wants in,” the next step is “**How** do I get in?” This becomes a watershed question, because the first two steps are equally the pathway to faith as idolatry. Now we have come to the fork in the road, with a signpost that identifies the two ways of “faith” and “idolatry.” What is at stake is how we decide to seek identification with the powers around us. Will one seek the Creator or the created?

## The need for the concrete

Faith deals with the abstract and the ambiguous, but human nature desires the tangible and defined. In the great faith discourse in Hebrews we read that Moses endured by “seeing him who is invisible” (Heb. 11:27). This oxymoron perfectly describes the mind of faith: it sees the unseen. In contrast, the mind of flesh desires to make seen the unseen, to remove the ambiguity, to make it tangible and concrete. Thus, the next step to idolatry is **concretization**: making a concrete representation of the power.

A tangible depiction of an unseen power seemed appropriate. An incipient idolater could proclaim that a “depiction of the harvest” was merely a tribute to the god who made the seasons and gave power to the plants to grow and mature. But human nature quickly focuses on the tangible, and then the problems begin.

We have a Bible illustration of how human nature perverts even God’s blessings: the bronze serpent (Num. 21:9). It was the tool Moses used to heal the plague upon Israel when they sinned by becoming impatient with God. God sent fiery serpents, but when the people of Israel looked upon the bronze serpent, they received healing. What became of the bronze serpent? Did the people take it merely as a token or representation of God’s great mercy? No, it eventually took on a life of its own. It became the object of worship, so much so that Hezekiah had to destroy it (2 Kings

18:4)! Because it was tangible, identifying with it was easy. Mercy is intangible; a bronze serpent is for real. In their desire for concretization, Israel lost the truth about mercy and forgiveness.

The need for something tangible — something visible, and concrete — turned the bronze serpent from a healer to a destroyer. It took on a life of its own and it became an object of worship. The attribution of power had made the fatal shift from Creator to created. The image became the means of access to the power itself: no symbol, no power. With this step, ritualization has occurred. Ultimately, belief in the tangible became the operative norm — not that the image itself had inherent power, but that it was the access to the power it represented.

### **The process concludes**

Thus, finally we have true idolatry: ritual worship of inanimate objects. Power observed became power desired. Power desired became power represented in concrete images. The images then became objects of worship in their own right. Power had fully shifted from the God of creation to the tangible representation of some aspect of the Creator's power. Now we have idolatry in the sense of Isaiah 44. The carver didn't worship the wood per se. He wasn't so stupid as to think the wood had power. He was following the human process of trying vainly to access the power of nature by making a representation of it. As bad as this is, however, the history of idolatry gets much worse.

### **Human attributes accrue**

Two more steps remain to explain the evils of idolatry: self-determination and immorality. We can use the golden calf incident (Exodus 32). With Moses apparently gone, the congregation lacked authoritative leadership and direction. They knew that they needed direction, and they chose to access it by building a golden calf, an image of some power they sensed. It, of course, lacked inherent power; therefore it became an ideal vehicle for self-determination. The Israelites were bent on returning to Egypt, so they made an image that would easily fit their own projections. They could hoist the image to their shoulders, and like the planchette on a Ouija board, "magically" direct their course back to Egypt. "The calf leads us back to Egypt," they would say, with the calf going nowhere but where they carried it! An inanimate object makes a perfect medium for self-determination. You can make it do what you want.

The other human attribute is the projection of fleshly vices into the object of worship. People easily decided that to have fertility, the ritual worship must include fornication. To have a great harvest, you had to have a great feast. To have the power on your side in war, you sacrificed humans. People simply enacted the attributes they desired, projecting upon the inanimate image the desires of their flesh. Rituals became orgies and who was going to dare stop this? Didn't it make perfect sense to ensure fertility and plentiful harvests by celebrating those activities with sex and food? And why not have an orgy even if your business is just getting back to Egypt? (Exod. 32:6,18).

The ultimate human projection upon idols came in the characters of the idols themselves. The idols came to stand for individual deities with human characteristics, including anger, vengeance, and lust, hence the human and semi-human forms of idols (Psa. 135:15-18). Appeasement became necessary, and ritual worship became the obvious way to appease an irascible God. People projected their worst characteristics onto blocks of wood and stone, both to revel in the debauchery and to satisfy the false deities with ritual human and animal sacrifice. What began as an observance of nature's power descended into projecting the basest of human characteristics onto images of wood and stone.

### **The sequence in summary**

The path to idolatry in the sense of psychosocial steps, not necessarily as a historical model, is summarized below (compare Paul's derision of idolatry in Romans 1:20-27):

1. Observance of power in nature.
2. Desire to identify with that power.
3. Desire to access that power.
4. Making material representations of that power.
5. Developing a ritual to access the power.
6. The images, having been ritualized, take on a life of their own.
7. Images become idols, inanimate objects that readily absorb human projections.
8. The idols take on human characteristics.
9. Ritual worship comes to include debauchery.
10. Debauchery being fun, the idols become gods who demanded such behavior for their ritual appeasement.

Reasonable, but inexcusable!

### **Did Ancient Israel incorporate idolatry?**

Of course they did; they had a huge exclusivity problem vis-à-vis idolatry. However, we need to put into context their lapses into idolatry. They lived under the terms of the old covenant, the Mosaic ritual system. Let's remind ourselves how easy it was for them to fail to distinguish idolatry from Mosaic worship. Both relied heavily on sacrifices, special days, feasts, material objects that represented God, sacred places, and a priesthood. However, the prophets and historians of Israel weren't buying any excuses; they only saw the bottom line, that idolatry meant worshiping another God.<sup>3</sup> They saw what lay behind the innocuous images, and they decried the abominable debauchery and reprehensibly immoral behavior that often accompanied idolatry. The prophets repeatedly warned against intrusions of idolatry; the warning of Isaiah 44 is hardly unique. Idols found their way into the temple (2 Chron. 33:7), as well as on the high places. Clearly, even the sophisticated monotheistic Israelite culture could look at an idolatrous worship scheme and regard it as compatible with the Mosaic program.

Can we guess some rationalizations that the Israelites used in order to accept Baal

or some totem in their midst? Religious discussion in Old Testament times might have sounded like this:

*“Baal, YHWH, what’s the difference? There’s only one God, regardless of what we call him. It doesn’t make any difference what people call God as long as they’re sincere in their worship.”*

*“The idol represents the powers of nature and detracts not from our worship of YHWH.”*

*“Who are we to say that YHWH is the only God? What if I was born in Assyria? I’d just worship whatever God I grew up with. We can’t claim to have the only avenue to God.”*

*“It is inconceivable that God should give us such great capability for sexual pleasure as a means of reproduction if he didn’t intend it also for ritual use.”*

*“I know some idol worshippers who are just as good people, if not better, than anyone in our city. They’re always nice, they wouldn’t hurt anyone, and they give to widows and the poor.”*

Does this have any bearing on today’s ecclesia? Idolaters don’t have much of a presence on the contemporary religious map, and even if a formally idolatrous organization were to appear in town, we wouldn’t likely consider them of “like precious faith.” Dispensing for now with the various applications of idolatry in the sense of the false gods of money, career, belongings, status, etc. — which are important exhortations but don’t bear directly on the question of exclusivity — we can still learn something. We learn that idolatry as a process led Israel to rationalize religious practices that ultimately destroyed their relationship to the one true God. Unless we can step into passages such as Isaiah 44 and see that *fleshly rationalization*, not *primitive stupidity*, created the idol, we will miss much of the dangers of false religion in our generation. A contemporary Christadelphian who doesn’t see much of a difference between the Truth and orthodox Christianity differs little from a non-discriminating Israelite who felt at ease with idol worship.

Ancient Israel had something very special: the revelation of a living God. Surrounding nations lived in the same creation and wanted to access the same God because they saw His power manifested in the natural world that surrounded them. They had forms of worship that seemed close enough to fit into the scheme of Israel’s religion. Because the Israelites didn’t know their own religion well enough, another one looked just the same.

Is spiritual Israel listening to the sad tale of idolatry?

*(Next: Christianity and mythology, and other concluding ideas on the exclusivity issue.)*

*David Levin (Baltimore, MD)*

#### Footnotes:

1. From a caustic essay criticizing James Fenimore Cooper’s writing, especially his characterization of Indians. Twain wrote, “...in matters of intellect, the difference between a Cooper Indian and the Indian that stands in front of the cigar-shop is not spacious.” “Fenimore Cooper’s Literary Offenses”, in *The Essays and Sketches of Mark Twain*. New York: Barnes & Noble, 1995.
2. Perhaps it was not until Rome, with its vast public works systems, that any society had some measure

## Bible Study

### Rightly Dividing the Word: (2) Respecting the Actual Words

of control against the vagaries of nature.

3. Joshua 23:6-8; 24:23; 1 Kings 18:18; 2 Chronicles 28:2,3; Jeremiah 5:19; Amos 8:14; and Micah 1:7.

Appreciating the Scriptures means more than simply believing they are true and inspired by the LORD. It means (Hos. 12:4) realizing that in the Bible God is speaking to us. These are not just words spoken to Abraham, to Moses, to Israel, and to the disciples of the Lord Jesus. They are God's words to us, "written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope" (Rom. 15:4).

The Apostle Paul quotes the law: "You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain." Then, he asks, "Is it oxen God is concerned about, or does He say it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written, that he who plows should plow in hope, and he who threshes in hope should be partaker of his hope" (1 Cor. 9:8-10).

It changes profoundly the way we think about the words of the Bible when we realize that it is not merely a source of facts and truths and rebuttals of errors, but that it was written "altogether for our sakes". In the Bible, God is speaking to us to touch our hearts with the knowledge of His caring about us. With what reverence and care, then, must we read and explain His words. Our goal must not be just to acquire knowledge, for knowledge alone "puffs up" (1 Cor. 8:1-3).

Rather, we must read the Bible carefully in order to know Him and His Son, so that we are drawn to the light of their love, and so that their love may be in us.

As noted in Article 1, we must ask, "What is the Bible actually saying?" and "What does the Bible mean by what it is saying?" That requires us to pay careful attention to the context in which the words are spoken. Individual Hebrew and Greek words in the Bible may have many shades of meaning. The proper meaning ought to be determined by the context in which the word is used. Furthermore, we must read sayings, verses, and longer passages — as well as individual words — with attention to their context, in order to know what God is saying to us and what He means.

Understanding the Bible's words to us in harmony with the context involves a number of considerations, depending on the particular passage. We need to know who is speaking, to whom the words were spoken, under what circumstances they were spoken, and why they were spoken. We need to understand the flow of thought in the whole passage in which a particular verse occurs, ignoring the chapter and verse divisions (which were added many centuries after the words were written).

Our understanding and explanations of a particular passage must be in harmony with teaching on that subject in the Bible as a whole. False teaching is often based on a single passage taken out of its immediate context, and interpreted in a manner contrary to plain teaching on the same subject elsewhere in the Bible.

In reading Old Testament passages and prophecies, we must take into account the way in which their meanings are enlarged and illuminated by the Lord Jesus and his apostles. Consider that:

- (a) Though it was often intimated, it was not fully revealed in the Old Testament that Gentiles would be fellow heirs of the promises with faithful Jews (Eph. 3:4-6).
- (b) The ten commandments spoken directly to Israel by God, Himself, are fully part of the teaching of the Lord Jesus. However, Jesus sets a higher standard of behaviour, a standard appropriate to a Lord who knows our hearts. This standard was higher than was possible in the civil law given to Israel through Moses, with its allowances for human hardness of heart and its human judges.

### “Search the Scriptures”

An illustration of the importance of knowing to whom words are being spoken is found in John 5:38-40. We sometimes quote the words of Jesus in John 5:39 to prove that we can obtain eternal life simply by searching the Old Testament scriptures. But there is so much more to this passage.

These words are part of a discourse by Jesus to Jews (in John, “the Jews” usually means the religious leaders, particularly the Pharisees and scribes). Jesus actually said to them, “You search the scriptures, for in *them* you *think* you have eternal life.”

In Jesus’ day, the Pharisees and scribes were a religious elite of about 5,000. Their elite status — along with their great knowledge of the Old Testament, and their traditions — assured them, wrongly, that they had eternal life. Yet Jesus says to them, in verse 38, “you do not have His word abiding in you, because whom He sent, Him you do not believe.” Jesus is saying to *them* that, despite their prodigious Bible knowledge, God’s word was not in their hearts. For, they did not believe Jesus, whom God had sent, and thus were not willing to come to him — despite the fact that these scriptures testified of him (v. 39).

These words of the Lord Jesus warn us that it is possible to search the scriptures, but — sadly — to remain unchanged in heart. Sadder yet, we may become proud of our knowledge and even arrogant toward others.

The Apostle Paul wrote (2 Tim. 3:15-17) of “the holy scriptures which are able to make [us] wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus”. These were the Old Testament scriptures that Timothy had known from childhood. Their purpose, their only real purpose, was (and is) to produce, in reader and listener, “faith which is in Christ Jesus”.

We should not be surprised by this, as we have been privileged to see so much of

God's revelation. But sometimes, as we read the Bible, we may act or speak arrogantly, proudly, or hatefully — as though, in all the time we have been reading, such a fundamental point has never dawned upon us! When this is so, then we have become “brothers” to the Pharisees.

### **Which son was “lost”?**

In Luke 15, Jesus tells the parables of the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost son (or sons). The context of these parables is very important in understanding them: “Then all the tax collectors and the sinners drew near to him (Jesus)... and the Pharisees and the scribes murmured, saying, ‘This man receives sinners and eats with them.’ So, he told them this parable” (vv. 1-3).

This demonstrates that, especially in the third parable (with its fullness of detail), Jesus is speaking (and appealing) to the Pharisees and scribes. Clearly, these religious zealots did not consider themselves to be “sinners” (as — to their minds — the tax collectors were).

In the third parable, the older of the two sons counted himself superior to his younger brother who had wandered away from the father. Wanting no association with him, the older son remained aloof and refused to share a meal with his younger brother even when he repented and returned to their father.

The older son corresponds to the Pharisees and scribes, who wanted no association with the tax collectors and other “sinners”. Furthermore, they thought that Jesus was contaminating himself by associating with them in any way. However, the Lord did not seek to join these men in sinful talk and activities. Rather, it was they who came to him — to hear him. Jesus’ words and inspiring company were what they wanted. Like a good shepherd to all his people whom he had come to save from their sins, Jesus spoke to them words of grace and truth that changed many of their lives.

Jesus didn’t worry about being contaminated by these sinners, any more than the thankful father worried about being contaminated by his wayward son who returned to him.

In the Luke 15 parables, Jesus was teaching the Pharisees (and us!) to make every effort to bring back those who fall away, and even to run to meet them when they seek to come back. And he is issuing a warning to those who cannot bring themselves to act in a welcoming way toward sinners who repent: he is warning them that they run the risk — like the older brother — of being “outside the house” when the “sinners” enjoy the meal of welcome and fellowship with the Father!

### **Certain “rich men”**

The parable about a “certain man [who] had two sons” in Luke 15 is followed in Luke 16 by parables about “a certain rich man who had a steward” and about a “certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen”. In Luke 16, we are told that Jesus spoke the parable about the first rich man to his disciples. This parable teaches important lessons about how disciples must use their money now to

ensure that their future with their Lord is certain. Then Jesus taught his disciples principles of faithfulness in the use of money, and he warned them against allowing desire for money to be their master instead of God.

Although the parable was spoken to Jesus' disciples, it was overheard by the Pharisees. Because they were lovers of money, they derided Jesus for this teaching (v. 14). So, after the first parable, Jesus spoke directly to them. He first rebuked them for seeking to justify their selfish, money-loving ways (v. 15). Then he showed how they broke the law shamefully by divorcing their wives in order to marry others (v. 18). He followed these blunt words by telling these Pharisees the parable about a certain rich man (who was, to put it bluntly, what they were already, or what they were striving to be) and a certain beggar.

This parable (Luke 16:19-31) gives a devastating picture of the future faced by these rich men because of their utter selfishness and disregard for the poor. It is helpful to know that the great majority of people in Galilee and Judea at that time were poor, that Greek ideas about an afterlife had infected Jewish thought, and the story of Lazarus was a well-known fable. A good Bible dictionary or commentary will provide this historical context. However, if we just explain away the misuse of the parable, we may miss the application of it to ourselves.

In the more highly developed countries of the world, many (but definitely not all) disciples of the Lord today are comfortably well-off — a little like the “certain rich man”. However, the great majority of their brothers and sisters in the undeveloped countries of the world (although not all) are very poor — something like Lazarus. Unlike the “certain rich man” of Jesus' parable, we must be sensitive to the needs of our poor brethren; in our generosity we must be the Lord's answer to their cries.

These illustrations show the importance of the context in which Bible words are spoken, particularly who is being spoken to, and why, and in what circumstances.

The context is vitally important to our hearing what God and His Son are actually saying to us, and to understanding what their words mean in all their beauty and depth and power.

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*In the next article, God willing, we shall see how the flow of thought and reasoning in a Bible passage as a whole (ignoring chapter breaks) is essential to full understanding.*

*Bob Green (Brantford, ON)*

\* \* \* \* \*

*Let the stable still astonish: straw — dirt floor, dull eyes,  
Dusty flanks of donkeys, oxen; crumbling, crooked walls;  
No bed to carry that pain, and then, the child,  
Cloth-wrapped, laid to cry  
In a trough.*

*Who would have chosen this?*

*Who would have said: "Yes,*

*Let the King of all the earth be born here, in this place?"*

*TIDINGS — MARCH-APRIL 2007  
Who but the same God*

## Letters

### Global warming

Bro. David Ward has written, regarding “Global Warming, Commercialism, and Armageddon” (Jan., pp. 23-27) (*my interspersed comments are in italics: GB*): To take the current controversy about “global warming” as a fact is very misleading. It is not supported by all, even among scientists. It has happened before, and no one is certain whether the current “change” is permanent or just another cycle. To take the alarmist stance is not helpful...

*George replies (in italics): First of all, as to “global warming” being a “fact”, Bro. Owen did acknowledge in the article that “Some feel the scientific data is flawed, or at least incomplete at this time.”*

*Yours is an interesting implication, however: that we ought to wait until some idea or proposal is “supported by all” — whether scientists or politicians (or Bible students, for that matter) — before we can feel safe in considering it. However, I will say — at the very least — that the “theory” of global warming has received a considerable boost very recently, from the joining of leading U.S. corporations with environmental groups, together calling upon the federal government for improved emissions standards and controls. The corporations in the coalition include giants in mining, manufacturing, energy, and utilities.*

*This was followed, in short order, by President George W. Bush, long known as a friend to the oil industry, asking — in his State of the Union address — for a cut in gasoline use by 20 percent over the next decade, as well as tighter vehicle fuel efficiency standards.*

*Looking at this, it begins very much to look as though what might have been considered “alarmist” two years ago has now moved well into the mainstream, no matter the political party or the area of economic interest.*

If there is a change it could be that it is God who is doing it. He has always used the weather as a means of controlling man (e.g., Deut. 28:12,23; Lev. 26:4,19)...

*True enough. There are many Bible examples of mankind abusing or misusing God’s blessings in ways that bring down God’s judgments upon themselves: (a) those who neglected God’s rules about cleanliness and diet (even under the Law of Moses) suffered ill health; (b) those who flouted God’s standards of celibacy and monogamy often “received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion” (Rom. 1:27); and (c) those who, because of greed, would not let their fields lie fallow one year out of seven (Lev. 25:2-5) suffered poor crops and depleted soil.*

*Moreover, there are Bible precedents, as well, of man disregarding God’s laws and principles in such ways that — eventually — even climatic consequences resulted. Such consequences were seen, after the fact, as God’s punishments. One example — commonly cited by Christadelphians and other Bible students — is that the Ro-*

*man legions, in their war against the Jews, decimated the countryside of Palestine in the first century, actually deforesting whole regions (in the process disobeying Deut. 20:19). This led to grievous erosion of the soil, and was followed by actual climatic change in the region. As a result, the land of Israel became a desolation — as God had warned through His prophets that it would.*

There has to come a time when men's hearts are failing them for fear, and for looking after those things that are coming. This may be it. But let us not get into a tizzy about driving cars and having electric power...

*It seems to me that Bro. Owen is not particularly interested in persuading all of us to join environmental activist groups. Rather, he points out: "The global warming crisis is another sign of the times that presages the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. Fortunately, we know that Jesus will return before the earth is destroyed, and he will resolve the problem. He will restore this beautiful planet, in which God has placed His glory, to its former pristine condition."*

Regarding the references to spoiling the planet by extracting minerals and such: when God gave Canaan to Israel, one of the advantages He pointed out to them was that they could dig brass out of the hills, and the stones were iron (Deut. 8:9)...

*Yes, God commanded mankind to be fruitful and multiply, and to subdue the earth and rule over it (Gen. 1:28). But He surely intended that, in doing so, man would take reasonable precautions not to destroy the earth and its natural resources, but rather to preserve, protect, and develop them. This is at least implicit in all the Bible passages about "stewardship". Surely everyone will agree (just to pick one area) that some methods of mining and utilizing natural resources are healthier, safer, and generally better than others.*

These signs may well be a warning from God to the people of the world that He has had enough, and that those who recognise it may be willing to turn to Him. Such things do happen in times of great trouble.

*I couldn't agree more — no matter what we think about "global warming" *per se*.*

It is surely not our place to reiterate so-called scientific theories, but to see the signs of the times and try to interpret them in the light of our Bible knowledge. We may get them wrong (we have in the past), but it keeps our attention on the remedy instead of on the disaster.

*I agree: we may find, in the next few years, that the threat of "global warming" has been overstated by some. (For that matter, we may find that it has been understated by others!) Either way, we may see, in these matters, reason as well as opportunity to remind ourselves — and others — that our hope is not in man's proposed remedies, but that the only true remedy for the world's woes is the return of Christ.*

*George*

## Lake Victoria

I like the bit about Lake Victoria ["Global Warming", Jan., p. 27]. I have been

there four times while on CBM work in Uganda. From a natural — and engineering — point of view, I found it fascinating. It was a moving time standing at the “source” of the Nile (i.e., where it leaves the lake) and going back in time to Israel in Egypt. I got some amazing photos too. Man is going to suffer a lot more for his greed; collectively as well as individually! The window of opportunity to preach, and to offer salvation, is closing.

*Malcolm Cross (East Cottingham, York, UK)*

## **The 40-year generation?**

In his article “The Parable of the Fig Tree” (Feb., p. 85), Bro. Jim Robinson explores the generally accepted idea that a generation is represented by a timeframe of 40 years, based on (1) the time the Jews wandered in the desert and (2) Jesus’ prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem. He then says, “Other than these, there are no other numbers associated with the use of the term ‘generation’ in the Bible.”

I did come across a numerical reference associated with the term “generation” in Genesis 15:13-16. In verse 13, the Lord tells Abraham that his descendants will be enslaved in Egypt for a period of four hundred years. In verse 16, the Lord restates that they will return to the land in the fourth generation. I wonder if this should cause us to question the length of a generation.

Looking back at Numbers 14, I notice that God’s punishment — dying in the desert during the 40-year period — was restricted to those over 20 years old who had been unwilling to enter the Promised Land. Wouldn’t that mean that the generation of those who died in the wilderness was closer to 60 years (at least 20 years, plus the further period, up to 40 years, allowed to each individual). Also, since this is a punishment, wouldn’t it be likely to mean that their life spans were being cut short, and thus their “generations” artificially shortened?

In the Matthew account, Jesus seems to be telling the people that Jerusalem will be destroyed within their lifetimes, rather than defining a specific year. I wonder then if it is possible that a generation really refers to something like the collective lifetime of a people, which could stretch closer to a hundred years or so, rather than a specific number of 40?

*Sis. Jodee Webb (Toronto West, ON)*

*At the very end of his article Bro. Jim quoted Matthew 24:36: “But of that day and hour knoweth no [man], no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.” In doing so, he left us with a very important point: any scheme of prophetic interpretation that relies primarily on adding numbers and counting years to “predict” the future is flawed.*

*Our Saviour also said, in Acts 1:7, “It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority.”*

*It may well be that, in certain instances, adding years to come to a possible termina-*

*tion point has some merit — but only in the most general sense. Such a method, at best, can only confirm other, more meaningful “signs”. It can only suggest a period — **but not a particular year** — during which momentous events may occur.*

*And therein is our true exhortation: whether the “generation” of which Jesus spoke is of 40 years duration, or 60, or 100... and whether it commenced in 1948 or 1967 or some other relevant date... it does us absolutely no good to circle a date on the calendar. For surely, when we do so, we will find ourselves looking for an eraser! Or a new calendar!*

*Analyzing possible time periods may help us to realize that we are living **near** the time of the end. That is enough, and assuming anything more than that is presumption. Fixing dates on a calendar can be a snare: it can so easily imply that we are free to live our lives more or less as we please — and then scramble about and get ourselves “ready” at the last possible moment — as the clock approaches midnight!*

*But: (a) how can we know that the divine timetable might not be “sped up” (that’s exactly the point of “those days will be **shortened**” in Matt. 24:22), and catch us by surprise us just before we begin our final preparations? “Therefore keep watch, because you do **not** know the day or the hour” (Matt. 25:13).*

*And (b) how can any of us think we are guaranteed a life that extends to our planned “start-getting-ready” date, much less to the “date circled on the calendar”? “You fool! **This very night** your life will be demanded from you” (Luke 12:20)!*

George

## A dignified farewell

Dear Brother George,

Your readers might be interested in this correspondence involving my paternal grandfather, William Jones, shortly before his death. For forty years, he had served the Cardiff Ecclesia in South Wales in key roles. With grace, dignity, conviction and restraint, he brought that service to a close.

(Bro. S. G. Davies was the Chairman of the Arranging Board. Bro. Alf Smith was the Assistant Recording Brother.)

Philip Jones

\*\*\*\*\*

September 8, 1939

My dear Brother Davies:

Am not a little grateful for the assistance you and others have given to my fellow helper Brother A. Smith during the period of my incapacity.

As it has not been our Father’s good pleasure to bring to fruition the hope nursed three months ago for my recovery, I feel after much prayerful reflection that I must ask you to place before the brethren my resignation of the various offices

I hold.

You will appreciate that it is with a sorrowful heart and sincere regret that I take this course. My doctor's continued serious view of my condition leaves me with no alternative.

It may please our Father that I may yet be of some little service, though manifestly it is too much to expect that in this state it shall be anything calling for a measure of mental or physical vigour. So with gentle resignation I submit to His all-wise arrangement and say, "Thy will be done."

With earnest prayer that the work in Cardiff shall continue to prosper in the hands of His servants, I remain your companion in joyful anticipation of participating in the glories of the "morning without clouds."

W. Jones

\*\*\*\*\*

September 12, 1939

My dear Brother Jones:

I received your letter with the greatest sorrow, which was shared by all the brethren, not only because of your indisposition, but also the sad prospect of losing your co-operation, for the time being, in those activities you love so much. Good men are scarce today and pillars of Truth rarer.

We felt last night we could not receive your resignation in the usual formal way, and [hope] that you will be willing to let it rest on the table for the time being, as an indication that you will not wish your name to go forward at the tri-annual ballot in respect of the offices you have filled so acceptably for so many years.

In this matter we are not unmindful of your dear sister-wife who we all know has been such a source of blessing to you and yours. What more can I say than to use your own familiar phrase that the Father will bless you both with "the love that He to His does bear."

In these times more than ever I join in your joyful anticipation of the glories that are in store for all those who have loved and served the Master well.

With brotherly love, S. G. Davies

\*\*\*\*\*

September 19, 1939

My dear Brother Davies:

Thanks for yours of the 12th instant. Sister Jones and Self are deeply touched by its sweet message of love and goodwill and also by the thoughtful, considerate attitude adopted towards my resignation. These precious tokens of brotherly love and true fellowship will ever remain with us a treasured possession.

With every good wish, Your fellow labourer, W. Jones

*Dear Bro. Philip,*

*Thank you for sharing that. The exchange of letters reminds me of an old song: "Doesn't anybody stay together any more?" Forty years of service to the same ecclesia, in various capacities, is a testimonial all by itself. Then the resolution to continue with that service so long as there is ability, and health — along with the regret that there is not more that one might do — is an exhortation to us all.*

*The "morning without clouds" will surely reveal many such stories, but it is well for us all to think of them now.*

*"Then I heard a voice from heaven say, 'Write: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.' 'Yes,' says the Spirit, 'they will rest from their labor, for their deeds will follow them'" (Rev. 14:13).*

*George*

## Flash flood in a "wadi"

In Israel, as you might know, they have what is called a "wadi". That's a dry riverbed, and once in a while, when there is a lot of rain "upstream", these dry riverbeds become the scene of flash floods. I think here in Texas it's called an "arroyo" — I'm not sure there's a specific name for it in Australia.

*[Editor: In the Texas hill country, where I come from, nobody calls it an "arroyo" — it's quite simply "a dry creek bed" (or, with **proper** Texas pronunciation, "a drah crick bad").]*

This phenomenon of the flash flood in the wadi is referenced in the Bible in places like the following verses:

*"The torrents of destruction overwhelmed me" (Psa. 18:4).*

*"If the LORD had not been on our side... when men attacked us, when their anger flared against us, they would have swallowed us alive; the flood would have engulfed us, the torrent would have swept over us, the raging waters would have swept us away" (Psa. 124:1-5).*

*"The Name of the LORD comes from afar... His breath is like a rushing torrent, rising up to the neck" (Isa. 30:27,28).*

Another similar reference may be Judges 5:21, where the Kishon River is the scene of a flash flood.

The question is: although the Bible speaks of this, have you ever seen it actually happening? Now you can. Check out this link on the internet: <http://tinyurl.com/22j3f7>

The link should take you to a video of a flash flood on the Nahal Zin, about 35 miles south of Beersheba in the Negev. The video was recorded on a camera phone, so the quality is rather poor.

Michael McAllister (Austin South, TX)

*For those who can't get access to the video, it is **really impressive**. In the space of one minute, an essentially dry creek bed becomes a thundering, rushing, full-flowing torrent — while onlookers scream and scramble for higher ground.*

*The word for “torrent” in the passages above is “nachal” — the same word as used in the name for the modern wadi, “Nahal Zin”.*

*I have not seen such a flood come surging down a dry creek bed — usually because it has been raining “cats and dogs” where I was at the same time, and like any sensible person, I was staying indoors. But I have seen the results of that phenomenon shortly thereafter. Once, at a crossing of the Pedernales River near the old Christadelphian campground in Texas, I observed such a torrent. A river — really a stream — that was usually 10 to 20 feet wide... and could be crossed dry-footed by stepping across on small rocks... had become a raging flood more than 100 feet wide, sweeping along uprooted trees, brush, debris, and drowned livestock. After a few minutes, Barbara and I were urged by park rangers to retreat, because the road we had come in on was about to be swallowed up by the onrushing river.*

*Also, notice that Job 6:15-20 describes the wadi the other way around: Job compares his “friends” to such a “wadi”, but from the point of view of expecting water there, and then — during the dry season — finding none. In other words, Job looked for comfort and encouragement from his “friends”, but disappointingly... there was nothing.*

## Special Invitation

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

*You, your family and friends are invited to the  
32nd annual Church of God of the Abrahamic Faith Gathering  
at Denison University in Granville, Ohio, July 23-29, 2007.*

*The main speakers this year will be as follows:  
The Brothers Ross: “Five Brothers / Five Sisters”  
Timothy Whittaker: “Good King Hezekiah”  
Tony Isaacs: “The Spirit in Us”*

*Contact Brad Rek 330-609-6957, lisarek8@cs.com  
Information is available at [www.cgaf.org](http://www.cgaf.org)*

## Famous Last Words: (9) Melchizedek

Our last article looked at Abraham's last words to Lot. "Let there be no strife... for we are brethren" reminds us of the importance of unity in the brotherhood today. Anything less causes problems for individuals separated from the body of believers by division, and diminishes our effectiveness in witnessing to the public.

In Melchizedek we have one of the most intriguing Old Testament characters. Who was he? We are not told exactly; speculating would be inappropriate. Scripturally speaking he had no mother or father, and no beginning or ending. Commenting on his identity beyond this would spoil this beautiful type of the Messiah. The type goes even further when we realize that Melchizedek was the King of Salem (or peace), as well as the King of Righteousness (by the meaning of his name) and also the priest of the Most High God (Heb. 7:1-3).

Melchizedek's last (and in fact only) recorded words are: "Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth: And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand" (Gen. 14:19,20).

We see that Melchizedek "blessed" Abraham, and was therefore his superior (Heb. 7:7). Since Christ was to be a priest after the order of Melchizedek (Psa. 110:4), he could rightfully say, "Before Abraham was, I am" (John 8:58), not because he was chronologically before Abraham, but because he was his superior!

Then Scripture goes on to say that Melchizedek's (and thus Christ's) priesthood is superior to Aaron's Levitical priesthood. How could this be? Because:

1. Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek, and
2. Aaron, being in the loins of Abraham at that time, may also be said to have paid tithes to Melchizedek (see Heb. 7:4-11).

The Messiah was to be a "King-Priest" like Melchizedek, and therefore could not come from the tribe of Levi (Heb. 7:14). Jesus, of the tribe of Judah, will be king on David's throne, but also a priest after the order of Melchizedek. In him we can partake of bread and wine, receive blessings, and find opportunity to pay tithes (i.e., to give a sacrifice of praise).

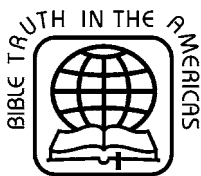
In Melchizedek's last words, he uses the title "Most High God", a rare title of God. This emphasizes his belief in the One True God, in contrast to pagan deities.

We see in Melchizedek's "Famous Last Words" a wonderful foreshadowing of Jesus Christ and his work on our behalf. Jesus is truly our King-Priest, able to reconcile us to the Most High God, and grant that we should reign with him in truth, peace and righteousness, in the Kingdom.

*"Thou art worthy... and hast made us kings and priests (literally, kingly priests) unto our God, and we shall reign on the earth" (Rev. 5:9,10).*

*(Next: Lot)*

*Chris Sales (Shelburne, ON)*



## Bible Mission News

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### Guadalajara, Mexico

It has become what one might call a ritual while we pack our cases for a mission visit. We need room for Bibles, books and papers. Carol will always remind me to make sure that the tie I select coordinates with my change of shirt. I dutifully attempt to make the match. Our time in Mexico was to be for seven weeks, from December through January.



**These three were all baptized the same day:  
Lorena Hernandez, Luis Ramirez and Mary Mejia.**

There is a young ecclesia of ten members in Guadalajara, Mexico. We have been blessed with the opportunity of making short visits and witnessing its growth, and we have some knowledge of the background to its formation. We easily think of tremendous dedication and sustained commitment when we consider gospel proclamation in this city. Our Heavenly Father is fully aware of the developments in Guadalajara and will bless their work according to His will.

Most of us have been members of established ecclesias from the day of our baptism. Everything is in place ensuring that all is done decently and in order. We know where we meet, and the day and the time. The meeting room doors will be open and someone there to greet us when we enter. We even know the names of the speakers and their subjects for this week, next week and possibly up to a year's time. We have

in hand planning for outreach programmes, pamphlets, publicity, venues and much more. Sometimes we do not even realize the amount of organization this takes. But we can be willing and prayerful participants.

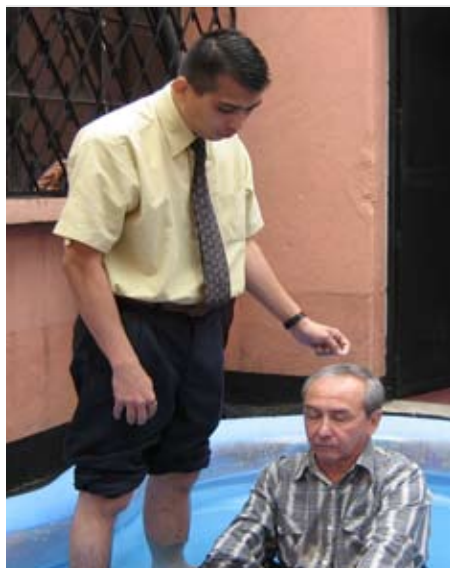
This small ecclesia in Guadalajara is feeling its way through all these things, learning to communicate with each other, working together and growing as the body of Christ. Five hundred contacts are on the correspondence course. (What a boost another mature Spanish-speaking couple would make.) The ecclesia's responsibilities are great, but the labourers are few. Now they have been asked to vacate their meeting room because the owner wishes to sell the property. They need our prayers as they open up a Bible center in another part of the city, and begin the process of reorganisation this involves.

And why mention the tie? A local sister noticed the tie and innocently commented: "Bill always wears the same tie! We'd like to buy him a new one." We dearly treasure moments like this. Our sister's concern was yet another expression of the love of the Guadalajara ecclesia towards us. In our life in Christ, even the smallest details in the ecclesia matter.

*Brother Bill and Sister Carol Rawson  
Guadalajara linkman: Don Luff*

## Guatemala

In November, Bro. Mike Moore and I traveled from Brantford (ON) to the beautiful country of Guatemala ("the land of eternal spring") to visit the small ecclesia in Guatemala City, the capital. We intended to encourage our brethren, who live in relative isolation, by supporting their preaching effort and sharing with them fellowship and exhortation. In the end, we were the ones who were encouraged and uplifted!



**The baptism of Bro. Jorge Lemus by Bro. Rene Castillo, from El Salvador**

The preaching activities consisted of a series of public lectures on both Saturday and Sunday afternoons. The topics covered were a summary of our great hope — the return of Christ, the resurrection, and the establishment of the kingdom of God. Two young couples traveled by bus (over 5 hours) from El Salvador to help in the conversations with the interested friends who were invited. As it turned out, it was good that they came — their presence and assistance were invaluable, since on the Sunday every Christadelphian in attendance was needed to speak with those that had come out to hear the gospel message.

The highlight of the trip was a baptismal interview with a contact who had been a regular attendee for over a year and a half. Jorge Lemus had encountered the truth through the Bible correspondence course and had first attended the ecclesia during a previous visit in 2005. From our first conversation on the Saturday, it was clear that he had spent the last year and a half studying the Scriptures and had developed a sincere desire to be baptized. The interview took place on Sunday afternoon after the public lectures. It was thrilling to listen for over two hours while Jorge explained with confidence and enthusiasm his beliefs to four Christadelphian brethren (one Guatemalan, two El Salvadorians and a Canadian). Bro. Jorge was baptized on December 17 by two brethren from El Salvador.

After four wonderful days with our brothers and sisters in Guatemala, Bro. Mike and I left feeling greatly uplifted by the events of the weekend. Though small in number, our brethren there are a great example of what ecclesial life is all about. Please remember to keep small isolated ecclesias, like the one in Guatemala, in your prayers.

*Dan Robinson  
Linkman for Guatemala*

## **A new website [www.cbma.net](http://www.cbma.net)**

CBMA / CBMC is pleased to announce a new website available, with up-to-date information on all our activities. Each month there will be a new article featuring a recent visit or activity just completed in the mission field.

There are sections on each of these topics:

1. A description of what is happening in each of the 42 ecclesias in 35 countries which are supported by the CBMA / CBMC.
2. What the “Faith at Work” program is all about, and how you can get involved.
3. A list of related resources, including links to the website for CBMA / CBMC photos of visits to mission fields and other activities, and to the “This is your Bible” website sponsored by CBM and CBMA / CBMC.
4. Information about the CBMA / CBMC organization itself, including: whom to contact if you are interested in short-term or long-term missionary work, or Truth Corps.
5. A section on the many ways you can become involved in various activities, and describing how to make online donations by either electronic check or credit card.

Please locate the website at [www.cbma.net](http://www.cbma.net) and mark it as one of your favorites.



## First Year Results for the “This Is Your Bible” Website

The website [www.thisisyourbible.com](http://www.thisisyourbible.com) is the worldwide internet presence of the CBM (UK) and the CBMA (CBM of the Americas). The site was activated fully in February of 2006. Over the course of the year we have been excited to see the positive response generated among our new students, and the wonderful support and assistance of our brothers and sisters. Indeed, the Lord has richly blessed this work.

By the end of December, 1058 individuals from 65 different countries established an account on the system. Of these, 704 are taking the Bible study courses available online or by post. The courses vary, depending on the area in which a student lives, and we also have links on our homepage to courses in French, Spanish, and Portuguese.

The remaining 354 students who created an account on the system downloaded material or ordered the free DVD advertised on the site, but did not sign up for a course.

During 2006, the site had 1.9 million “hits”, but that number is not as significant as the fact that 17,945 separate individuals accessed our site and downloaded 26.8 gigabytes of material. Imagine: close to 18,000 people have read our literature or signed up for courses over the past year! No other means of preaching has allowed us to reach so many over so short a time!

Since May, 421 DVDs have been distributed with two titles being offered: “The Middle East and Your Future” and “God’s Land of Promises For You”. These excellent DVDs have been made available to us at a very low cost. In 2007 we plan to offer two new titles currently in production, “Introducing Jesus” and “I Once Was Blind”.

We keep track of the number of times literature on the site is read or downloaded. Our primary sources of literature for online viewing are the CMPA pamphlet series and the CBM Basic Bible Teaching series. These booklets were accessed 12,782 times over the course of the year. This information might be of use to you if you are planning for your upcoming ecclesial lecture titles. The top five titles in 2006 were:

- The Middle East and Bible Prophecy (650 readers)
- The Kingdom of God on Earth (602 readers)
- The Sabbath (543 readers)
- After Death What? (539 readers)
- Baptism Matters (497 readers)

Another heavily used feature of the website was “Ask a Question About the Bible”. In total, 384 questions were submitted in 2006. Of these, 160 dealt with technical Bible study issues such as: “What date was Jesus born?” and “What information can you give me about the nameless woman of Shunem?” Another 111 questions focused on first-principle questions, while 101 asked about life issues such as marriage, sexuality, depression, etc. The remainder asked about Christadelphians in general.

Two features added in December were “Minute Meditations” — our first foray into

video and audio presentations on the site — and “Answers from the Question Box”. In that one month “Minute Meditations” was accessed 399 times and the “Answers...” feature 1,763 times. Clearly it was a good decision to implement these features!

We currently have 168 tutors volunteering their time to care for our many students around the world. However, we will be requiring the services of many more in the coming year, as we have plans to greatly enhance the profile of the system on the Internet.

Tutors are not involved in mailing out the site’s free offers such as DVDs, nor do they have to tackle the multitude of questions from the “Ask a Question” feature. The site coordinators, Bro. Peter Forbes (CBM UK) and Bro. Mike LeDuke (CBMA), manage those portions of the site. Tutors are asked only to manage the students in their care. Timely assistance from the site coordinators is available to tutors in regard to information about the system, or advice in dealing with students and their questions. Their contact information is provided at the end of this article.

So, why not sign up to be a “This Is Your Bible” tutor yourself? If you have even a minimal knowledge of how to navigate the internet, you can manage students on this system. One of our most active tutors is a 78-year-old grandmother who has taken on 17 students — some of whom are already close to finishing their course of studies online. One of her students is currently studying for baptism with his wife at an ecclesia close to his home. This hard-working grandmother is fond of saying, “If I can do it, anyone can do it!”

The key portion of the website is what we call the Student Management System (SMS). This allows the tutor to track students’ activities automatically as they either download materials or progress through their courses. There are two other unique features of the SMS. The system can be used by ecclesias as their own local database of students, and it can be easily instructed to assign automatically all students generated in a specific area to a particular set of tutors. An ecclesial coordinator has the ability to list all students and their tutors in the local area. Email lists can also be automatically generated both for students and tutors in a given area.

Lord willing, we plan to release many more upgrades in 2007, including individual ecclesial “websites” as sub-sites of “This Is Your Bible” and a much more modern “look and feel” to the site. We also plan to add more video content as well as “podcasts” of Bible talks and flash presentations of first-principle lectures.

The “This Is Your Bible” Project Director is Bro. David Jennings (Pomona, CA) (CBMA Council). The site manager and the coordinator of CBMA site activity is Bro. Mike LeDuke (Kitchener/Waterloo, ON). The CBM (UK) site activity coordinator is Bro. Peter Forbes (Glenfield, Leicester). The technical guru, behind the scenes, is Bro. Andrew Culver (Norfolk, VA).

For further information about the website or information on tutoring on the site, please contact Bro. Mike LeDuke at [mduke@gto.net](mailto:mduke@gto.net) or Bro. Peter Forbes at [peter@forbes31.freeseerve.co.uk](mailto:peter@forbes31.freeseerve.co.uk).

Do give the website a once-over at [www.thisisyourbible.com](http://www.thisisyourbible.com) and then write to either of the addresses above or to the site’s generic email ID, [yourbible@gto.net](mailto:yourbible@gto.net). We welcome your questions, comments, and suggestions — and especially your prayers — as we take every opportunity to witness to the world, on the eve of God’s impending judg-

## **Addresses for Bequests and Donations**

**for tax ID numbers please contact the editor**

**Christadelphian Bible Mission of the Americas (CBMA)** supports preaching work throughout the Caribbean and the Americas, Spanish Truth Corps, Domestic Truth Corps, etc. c/o Charles Brinkerhoff, 15925 La Ronda Cir., Hacienda Heights, CA 91745-4244.

**Christadelphian Bible Mission Canada (CBMC)** welcomes donations for Bible Mission activity, the *Tidings*, and bequests for similar causes. Box 55541, Unit 119, 15280 101 Ave., Surrey, BC, Canada, V3R 0J7.

**Christadelphian Save the Children Fund** provides Bible learning materials, personal items, and scholarships to needy mission areas. For details see: [www.christadelphianchildren.com](http://www.christadelphianchildren.com).

**Christadelphian Indian Children's Homes (CICH)** donations in US dollars can be sent to: CICH c/o David & Connie Stiles, 3 Blue Acre Rd., Middletown, CT 06457-5012.

**Williamsburg Christadelphian Foundation (WCF)** supports pastoral and preaching activities throughout the world. c/o Ray Pratt, P.O. Box 86, Deland, IL 61839-0086.

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

**Christadelphian Heritage College** donations may be sent to; Christadelphian Heritage College, c/o Brantford Ecclesia, 442 Dunsdon St., Brantford, ON, Canada, N3P 2B1.

**Christadelphian Tidings Publishing, Inc.** publishes this magazine and other works on the truth. P.O. Box 530696, Livonia, MI 48153-0696.

**Christadelphian Tape Library** records and distributes audio/video/DVD's and CD's of various Bible schools and study sessions. Reuben E. Washington, 196 E. Stearns St., Rahway, NJ 07065-4923. Phone: 732-381-4590. Fax: 732-499-8415. [christadelphiantapelibrary@verizon.net](mailto:christadelphiantapelibrary@verizon.net).

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

**Spanish language literature** is available at P.O. Box 947, Monrovia, CA 91017-0947. [jdhunter@gte.net](mailto:jdhunter@gte.net) 626-303-2222.

**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.

**Christadelphian Care-Line** provides a service for those who need fully confidential help with emotional and spiritual problems as well as family issues. 866-823-1039.

**Alcohol Help Line** provides a service for those who need fully confidential help overcoming alcohol dependency. 866-823-1039.

## News & Notices

### **BRANTFORD, ON**

It is with great joy we announce the baptisms of AUBREY RIDDLE and HANNAH RIDDLE, brother and sister in the flesh and now brother and sister in Christ, on January 3, 2007. Bro. Aubrey and Sis. Hannah are the children of Bro. Paul and Sis. Pauline of the Brantford ecclesia and have been Sunday school students for many years.

We lovingly commend Sis. Lisamarie Cromie who transfers to Hamilton Greenaway (ON), and pray she will be happy in her new ecclesia. Bro. Bob and Sis. Joy Jennings are now also members of Greenaway.

We are saddened to report that Sis. Melody Myers is no longer in fellowship.

*Jonathan Bowen*

### **DETROIT LIVONIA, MI**

Our ecclesia rejoiced in the baptism of SHAWN VANDENBERG on October 29, 2006, and we pray for God's blessing on his walk to the kingdom.

Bro. Curtis Brittle has transferred his membership to Norfolk (VA), and we commend him to the care of the brethren and sisters at Norfolk.

*Jeff Adams*

### **EAST TEXAS, TX**

By the grace of our Heavenly Father we are pleased to inform the brotherhood of the establishment of a new ecclesia in Texas.

With the blessing and support of our home ecclesias, Tulsa (OK) and Austin Leander (TX), members of this new lampstand will meet on the basis of the Birmingham Amended Statement of Faith. All who fellowship consistently on this basis are welcome.

This new lampstand will be known as the East Texas Christadelphian Ecclesia, meeting in various homes of brethren in our region. We encourage brethren visiting our area to join us in study of the Scriptures and in meeting around the table of our absent Lord.

God willing, our desire is to continue working in the truth with the fraternal community in Texas and worldwide.

Please address any correspondence to me at the following address: Garth Maier, P.O. Box 423, Tyler, TX 75710.

*Garth Maier*

### **GUATEMALA CITY, GUATEMALA**

It is with great joy that we report the baptism of JORGE LEMUS on December 17, 2006. Jorge came into contact with the truth through the Bible correspondence course

and has been a regular attendee at the ecclesia for the last year and a half. Bre. Manuel Fernández and René Castillo from neighboring El Salvador came to help perform the baptism and to provide words of exhortation. We pray for the Father's blessing upon Bro. Jorge as he journeys towards the kingdom, and we thank our God for another worker in the ecclesia.

*Dan Robinson*

## **KITCHENER/WATERLOO, ON**

We thank the following visiting brethren for their ministrations to us in the gospel in the past months: Steve Petrou and Kostya Krassavin (Toronto West, ON), and Dan Robinson (Brantford, ON).

We are happy to report that two new members have joined us recently. In February, Bro. Jonathan and Sis. Beth Abel transferred from Shelburne (ON) and Tulsa (OK) respectively. We thank God for this lovely young couple and we hope and pray that the fellowship we share, as we await the coming of our king, will be mutually edifying.

We are very sad to report that because of long absence from the table of the Lord, Sis. Jennifer Puim is no longer in fellowship. We pray that Sis. Jennifer will reconsider her position before the Master's return.

Preaching continues at a busy pace. Our monthly lecture at the local library continued to attract several visitors until the biting winter weather descended upon us. We have two follow-up classes underway on Genesis and the Acts. A total of six interested contacts are being led through these studies by Bre. Jonathan Abel, Mike LeDuke, Steve McKay and Jim Robinson. Several of our members are also becoming increasingly busy with internet students from the "This is Your Bible" website.

*Jim Robinson*

## **LONDON, ON**

Over the past several months we have had our share of joys and sorrows. On May 28, 2006, we rejoiced to witness the baptism of DENETTE ST. JULES, who came into contact with the truth through our Bro. Roger Walker. On September 16, 2006, they were united in marriage and we pray for God's rich blessing on their new life together.

With sadness we report the falling asleep of two of our longstanding elderly members: Sis. Frieda Donald on August 31, 2006, and Bro. Ray Butler on September 14, 2006. Bro. Ray and his wife, Sis. Beryl, who passed away in 2005, were founding members of our ecclesia. While ill health prevented Sis. Frieda and Bro. Ray from attending the meeting in recent times, they will nevertheless be sadly missed.

We thank Bro. Paul Styles (Detroit Livonia, MI) for his studies at our annual CYC gathering in May. In September, we held our annual fraternal gathering and are indebted to Bro. Peter King (Worcester, UK) for his ministrations and fellowship, along with his wife, Sis. Carole.

We welcome by transfer from St. John's (NF) Sis. Melissa Short; we look forward to her help and fellowship as we journey toward the kingdom. We shall, however, miss the fellowship of our Bro. John and Sis. Heather Scott who have transferred to Cambridge (ON); we pray that they will be happy in their new surroundings.

We are presently running two sets of seminars, one in London and the other in Sarnia;

the response has been very encouraging. On January 21, 2007, we rejoiced to witness the baptism of FRANK ANGUS. Frank originally came into contact with the truth through the “Learn to Read the Bible Effectively” seminars in Hamilton, and when work necessitated his move to London he continued his studies here.

Please note that the undersigned is now Recording Brother. Communications should be sent to him c/o P.O. Box 25651, London, ON N6C 6B3. He may also be reached by telephone at 519-666-1534 or by e-mail at colinmeaker@hotmail.com.

*Colin Meaker*

#### **MAY PEN, JAMAICA**

It is with joy that we report the baptisms on May 28, 2006, of DWIGHT and ZEPORIA BRYAN at Salt River in Clarendon. We pray that they may continue in their journey to the Kingdom of God.

*Melvin Gordon*

#### **MOULTON, AL**

Within the last six months, we have enjoyed the visits of the following: Bro. David and Sis. Joanne Haltom (Detroit Royal Oak, MI); Bro. Terry and Sis. Tammy Bell, Bro. Paul and Sis. Belinda Styles (Detroit Livonia, MI); and Bro. Troy and Sis. Annette Haltom (Grand Rapids, MI). We thank Bre. David, Terry, Paul, and Troy for their Bible studies and exhortations.

Also, we appreciated the devotion and work of the 2006 Truth Corps team, and other help provided by Detroit-area brethren and sisters. The primary work involved canvassing for the “Learn to Read the Bible Effectively” seminar and a follow-up seminar that lasted 12 sessions. There are two good prospects from those efforts.

Relatively close to our ecclesia there is a new sister in Christ, DEANNA REAGAN, who is an inmate in the Tennessee State Prison in Memphis. I was informed of her interest and correspondence course studies by Sis. Marilyn Seagoe (San Francisco Peninsula, CA). When I went to visit her the first time, I found Deanna to be very interested in God’s word, as well as quite knowledgeable of the first principles. After subsequent visits and discussions, she was baptized into Christ. I continue to see her about once a month for Bible studies. Deanna also has a cellmate that seems quite interested in hearing of the truths that Deanna is finding as her studies continue.

Our ecclesia was blessed with a baptism recently. JUNIOR KELLEY, a resident of a Florence, AL, nursing home and husband of Sis. Nell Kelley, was baptized into our Lord on January 16, 2007. We pray that he and Sis. Nell will walk that path that leads them into God’s kingdom. Due to physical disabilities they usually are unable to get to our meeting in Moulton, but I have been able to go to see them on a weekly basis for studies and breaking of bread. The first Sunday after Bro. Kelley’s baptism, the whole ecclesia met together in their room at the nursing home for Bible readings, talks, and the breaking of bread. We encourage any of you who are traveling in the area to come and see us. My phone number is 256-905-6592.

*Wes Booker*

#### **NANAIMO, BC**

Our thoughts, love and concern are with our Bro. Eric and Sis. Peggy Hoult, and their daughter Maggie, on the passing of Eric’s mother, our Sis. Joyce Margaret Hoult,

on December 30, 2006. Joyce had spent many years in the service of her Lord and Master. She was quietly diligent in the support of not only her own family, but the children of others. She always had a ready supply of goodies for the young ones who beat a path to her door between Sunday school and meeting when she and her late husband, Bro. George Hoult, lived in Simon Manor, the seniors' residence attached to the MacKenzie Road Hall in Victoria. Her character was forged in the cold, hard Canadian prairie, raised on a farm where winter temperatures frequently reached minus 30 degrees Celsius. Also grieving the loss of Joyce is Ivan McArthur of Vernon, BC, her twin brother in the flesh and her brother in the truth. Our Sis. Joyce suffered severe deterioration of her health in her final years, but after her trial she now awaits the resurrection and election to life eternal in the kingdom of our Lord.

We thank the many visiting brethren who support our ecclesia in exhortation and proclamation.

*Tom Alexander*

### **NEW WESTMINSTER, BC**

As a correction to our previous news, our fraternal gathering, for 2007 only, has been brought forward two weeks from our usual Easter weekend, and is planned for the weekend of March 24-25, 2007. We look forward to having Bro. Steven Hornhardt (Aust.) to lead the sessions on the theme "Come and See," an illustrated study of the seals of Revelation.

Sis. Yvonne Teel has relocated to the Vernon area, and we commend her to the love and fellowship of the Vernon Ecclesia.

*Art Bull*

### **OAHU, HAWAII**

A new sister, DIANA HAYES, was born into Christ at Kailua Beach, Oahu, Hawaii, at 11 am on February 4, 2007. She is the wife of the resident manager of our condominium project. I never really knew her until last August when she showed up at the hospital to deliver a plant to my hospitalized husband. For the past year, I have been sending out monthly "preaching letters" to about 50 non-Christadelphian friends and family. I added Diana's name to my "letter" list, and she began to ask questions. I invited her to sit in on our little memorial meetings, and she accepted and stayed on after the meetings to study with me. She was raised Roman Catholic and says that she never could believe the things they taught. She was so excited about the truth and absorbed it like a sponge. Ultimately she asked to be baptized.

Bro. Frank Musonda, stationed in Guam for his work, was coming through last weekend and agreed to hold her interview, baptize her as she was ready, and give the exhortation at our meeting of four. Diana's interview was thorough, beautiful and successful. You have never seen anyone so happy and excited about the Truth. Sis. Diana's address is: 1020 Aoloa Place, #101A, Kailua, HI 96734.

*Connie Wiedeman*

### **PORTLAND, OR**

We have been greatly blessed by our Heavenly Father since our last news. On October 22, 2005, we rejoiced in witnessing the baptisms of RAQUEL LEATHERS and JAMES LEATHERS, children of Bro. Dave and Sis. Marina. At the same time, TAYLOR

SPENCER of Jackson County Ecclesia was also baptized. His parents, Bro. Jon and Sis. Carrie, along with aunts, uncles and grandparents of Raquel, James and Taylor shared the special day with us.

More recently, we joyfully witnessed the baptism of ZOE LAUNCHBURY on January 6, 2007. Zoe's parents, Bro. John and Sis. Rachel, and all their extended family in the UK welcomed the news — along with all of us who rejoiced at Zoe's commitment.

We have welcomed by way of transfer Sis. Rhonda Miller and her children Michael and Stephanie (Verdugo Hills, CA), Bro. Luke Barratt and Sis. April Phillips (San Luis Obispo, CA), and Sis. Stacy Sue Stewart (Reseda, CA).

Along with many family members and friends we celebrated the marriage of Bro. Luke Barratt and Sis. April Phillips on September 9, 2006.

We thank all who have offered prayerful and financial support in the building of our ecclesial hall. We began meeting there late August, 2006, and now have permanent occupancy. The address is 8970 SW Murray Blvd, Beaverton, OR 97008. Memorial service is at 10 am and Sunday school at 11:30 am. We hope and pray that we can be a lightstand to our neighbors in this new location. Lord willing, we plan to host Truth Corps for two weeks during the summer of 2007 to help us meet and preach to our new neighbors.

*Jay Phillips*

#### **SANTA BARBARA, CA**

Recently, Bro. Gail Trent was hospitalized with heart troubles and is now at home on oxygen with a caregiver and hospice. Our prayers are with our brother, that he may be comforted in his time of need. Our Sis. Janell Walker continues her battle against liver and lung cancer; please keep her and Bro. Fred in your prayers. Our Sis. Beverly Woods also continues her trials with cancer. May God be with all our brethren and sisters and comfort them. We long for that day when there will be no more sickness or death, when all of these things will be swallowed up in victory at the return of our Lord Jesus Christ.

After a good confession of his faith, we are pleased to announce the baptism of BRET McDONALD on May 25, 2006. Bret was introduced to the truth by our Sis. Julie Gibson. He has been coming to Sunday school and meeting for a number of years. May Yahweh bless our new brother as he walks with us toward our Father's kingdom.

Once again this year, we had our annual Labor Day Picnic with many brethren, sisters and friends attending at the home of our Bro. John Seagoe. The presence of our Sis. Thelma Phillips and her family was a very special treat for this special occasion. It was our sister's last outing. The activities began with a talk by Bro. Tom Madsen (San Luis Obispo), and continued with great food and fellowship around the word.

We also thank the following brethren for ministering to our ecclesia with Bible classes and exhortations: Bre. Ron Stewart (Lompoc, CA); Chris Stickney, Jeff Gelineau, and Matt Walker (Simi Hills, CA); Michael Stickney, Max Wickham, and Owen Tunnell (San Diego, CA); Nathan Blanchard and Richard Brinkerhoff (Verdugo Hills, CA); Martin Norris (Yorkshire, UK); and Chris Atwood (Orange County, CA).

*Craig Stickney*

## SEATTLE, WA

We are very pleased to announce another baptism at our ecclesia. WENDY MINCHEZ was baptized into the saving name of Jesus on November 26, 2006. We pray for God's blessing on our new sister as she begins her journey to His kingdom.

We rejoice also with our Bro. Pete and Sis. Jo Jones in the birth of their third child, Edward Frank Jones, on October 2, 2006. We pray for God's blessing on the youngest member of our ecclesial family as we seek to raise him up in the way of the Lord.

God willing, our annual fraternal gathering will be held May 26-27, 2007 at the Edmonds Home School Center, Edmonds, WA. Our speaker is our Bro. Bob Lloyd, Verdugo Hills, CA, and he will be leading our study on the theme, "The Way of Life." We extend a very warm welcome to any who are able to join us. To the extent possible, accommodation will be with brethren and sisters. Contact Bro. Tony Ball at: 425-397-6344 or by e-mail at: ball@hotmail.com.

*Tony Ball*

## SIMI HILLS, CA

It has been two years since our last correspondence and we have much to share.

Most importantly, we are happy to welcome three more to the saving grace of God. VIRGINIA SISCO, daughter of Bro. Rick and Sis. Denise Sisco, was baptized on January 1, 2005; KENDRA SMITH, daughter of Bro. Geoff and Sis. Brenda Lee Smith, was baptized on March 18, 2005; and JAN HUTAK was baptized on March 5, 2006. In addition to the baptisms, we are happy to welcome by way of transfer: Sis. Heather Kelso (Verdugo Hills, CA); Bro. James Brown (Seattle, WA); Bro. Tom Vlachos (Thousand Oaks, CA); and Sis. Colleen Uiga (San Diego, CA). Our prayers are with all our new brethren and sisters for a profitable walk together with us.

Sadly, we had to say goodbye to several members who transferred to other ecclesias: Bro. Kelly and Sis. Kristy Robinson and family (Verdugo Hills, CA); Bro. David and Sis. Judy Gadberry, Bro. Carmelo and Sis. Amy Montalbo and family, and Sis. Elanie Jennings (West Houston, TX); Bro. Dave and Sis. Mert de Caussin and Bro. Brad de Caussin (Glendale, AZ); and Sis. Donna Jennings (Toronto, ON). We pray for the best for them in their new homes.

In March, 2005, we were saddened by the death of Bro. Arthur Greene, husband of our Sis. Doreen Greene. As Arthur joined our ecclesia late in life, and in the throes of Alzheimer's, many of us did not get to know him well, but Sis. Doreen's love and devotion was a testament to all of us. We look forward to truly meeting him in the kingdom of our Lord.

We have had many visiting brothers and sisters in the past two years, and have enjoyed the words of exhortation shared by the following brethren: Tim Young (Brantford, ON); David Jennings (Pomona, CA); John Pople (San Francisco Peninsula, CA); Jeff Ramirez, Josh Sommerville, and David Collister (Verdugo Hills, CA); Craig Stickney (Santa Barbara, CA); Steve Stewart (San Diego, CA); Mark Giordano (Norfolk, VA); Harley Young (Seattle, WA); Gary Cousens (Cambridge, ON); and John Bilello (Ann Arbor, MI). In addition we thank Bro. Gary Cousens for his ecclesial seminar on "Conflict Resolution" and Bro. John Bilello for his seminar on "Christadelphian Traditions."

## THOUSAND OAKS, CA

During the past few months we have been pleased to welcome many brethren and sisters from our neighboring California ecclesias. In addition, we welcomed from afar Sis. Lisa McCorrie (Birmingham, UK); Bro. Lou Pokol (Williamsville, NY); Bro. Dave and Sis. Nicole Wisniewski (Brantford, ON); Bro. Steve Pursell (Rogue Valley, OR); Sis. Suzy Mason (San Francisco Peninsula, CA); Bro. Alan Harrison (Rockhampton, Queensland, Aust.); Bro. Chris and Sis. Martha Sales (Shelburne, ON); and Bro. Jared and Sis. Kim Vetkos and Sis. Pam Cipriotti (S. Yosemite).

Our thanks go out to Bre. Dave Wisniewski and Paul Norwood (Reseda, CA); Brad Styles (Simi Valley, CA); Richard Yung (Reseda, CA); and Lou Pokol (Williamsville, NY) for their exhortations and afternoon classes.

Our special thanks go to Bro. Chris Sales for leading us in our annual study weekend, January 13-14, 2007, with a study of “Idols in the 21st Century” as well as the following Sunday exhortation. We had another great weekend and a wonderful day around God’s word.

We also thank our Bro. Alan Harrison for coming and spending some time in helping with many items at our Heritage School which continues on now into its third year.

We are pleased to announce that our Bro. Jimmy and Sis. Katie Glover had their second healthy little boy, Austin William, who was born on October 4, 2006.

*Tom Graham*

## TORONTO EAST, ON

With thankful hearts we come to the end of 2006 having, individually and ecclesially, experienced many blessings throughout the year. This year the ecclesial hall marked 50 years of service to the brotherhood and outreach in the neighborhood. We thank our Heavenly Father and the many members, now asleep in Christ, for their foresight and labors to build and maintain this lightstand.

We rejoice in the baptisms of three of our Sunday school scholars, KATIE DAWES, on April 23, 2006, JULIE DAWES and BETHANY CARRICK, on November 5, 2006. We pray for God’s blessing on our three new sisters as we walk together toward the kingdom.

The ecclesia was greatly saddened by the loss of Sis. Ruby Holland on February 19, 2006. Sis. Ruby had been a wonderful sister in Christ both in Toronto, ON, and her country of birth, Guyana. May her sleep in Christ be a short one.

Along with Bro. Steve and Sis. Marie-Lynn Curry, we are thankful for the safe arrival of another son, Alex Curry, born April 5, 2006.

Along with many visitors, we enjoyed a study day led by Bro. Ron Kidd, London, ON, on March 25-26, 2006. Bro. Ron’s subject was “Melchizedek —King of Salem and Priest of God”.

On September 30, 2006, we sponsored a seminar on “Moral Challenges Facing Our Young People, and How We Can Help”, led by Bro. David Perry (Manhattan, NY). Bro. David took 40 brethren and sisters through the results of the CYC Survey Project,

concluding with a panel discussion.

We hosted the annual “Run for the Everlasting Cure” on November 25, 2006, in which more than 80 brethren, sisters, teens and children from numerous ecclesias across the Toronto area joined us. Bro. Alex Browning spoke on “Suffering and the Divine Perspective”. The highlight of the day was the specific prayers offered by various brethren on behalf of those suffering with cancer and other serious illnesses. After the five-kilometre run/walk, we signed T-shirts and prepared four scrapbooks. We continued to enjoy fellowship over a pizza dinner, and then concluded the day’s activities with bowling.

We enjoyed the fellowship of Bro. David Kershaw who visited with us for ten months. He has now returned to his home in Adelaide, Aust.

We also enjoyed the fellowship of many brethren and sisters throughout the year, and especially thank the following brethren for their encouraging words of exhortation: Jim Barton (Elgin, ON); Rhe Desjardins and Matt Trowell (Mississauga West, ON); Jim Robinson and Mike LeDuke (Kitchener/Waterloo, ON); Colin Badger and Tom Wilson (Cambridge, ON); Tom Thorp (Hamilton Greenaway, ON); Mark Carr (Toronto West, ON); Al Hussey (Niagara, ON); Ian Macfarlane (Hamilton Ewen Road, ON); Wayne Coutu (Orangeville, ON); and Jonathan Bowen (Brantford, ON).

*Ken Curry*

## **TORONTO WEST, ON**

We have two years worth of news to report, the most important of which is to announce with great joy the following eleven baptisms which have taken place in this period. In 2005: on February 6, SARAH WATERS, the daughter of Bro. Bill and Sis. Jane Waters; on July 10, NICK ELLIOTT, the son of Bro. Lee and Sis. Jody Elliott; and on August 28, LEANNE FIDAN the daughter of Bro. Gordon and Sis. Beth Dangerfield, Victoria, BC. In 2006: on January 22, ABIGAIL RAYNER, the daughter of Bro. George and Sis. Lori Rayner; on August 13, LAURA DULIS, the daughter of Bro. Peter and Sis. Susan Dulis, and GRACE RAMCHARAN, the daughter of Bro. Dev and Sis. Rose Ramcharan; on August 20, DOLLY URGELLES, an attendee at the “Learn to Read Your Bible” seminars; on September 3, WILLIAM NEWTON; on November 1, HANNAH ELLIOTT, the daughter of Bro. Lee and Sis. Jody Elliott; on November 5, ANTONIO BECKFORD; and on December 11, MEL DELISA. We thank our Father for these many blessings and pray that God will guide their service to Him.

We welcome by transfer Bro. Christopher Damaso (Mailag, Philippines); Bro. Bob and Sis. Edna Mae Dunford, Bro. Martin and Sis. Connie Rose, Bro. Darryl Rose and Bro. Daniel Rose (Brampton, ON); Bro. Al Hack, and Bro. David and Sis. Trudy Perks (Barrie, ON); Sis. Elmira and Sis. Armita Maali, Bro. Babak and Sis. Mona Pakdel (Iran); Bro. Dan and Sis. Susan Norman (Sussex, NB); and Sis. Jodee Bailey (Austin South, TX) — who was joined to Bro. Robert Webb in marriage on May 6, 2006. We commend Sis. Karin Wu to the care of the Toronto (Church Street), ON Ecclesia following her marriage on August 12, 2006 to Bro. Kevin Hill.

*Mark Carr*

## **Correction, East Coast Directory**

The East Coast directory has an error on page 61. The mailing address of the Hamilton Ancaster Ecclesia should be: Hamilton Ancaster Christadelphian Ecclesia, 289 E. 31st St., Hamilton, ON L8V 3P9.

If anyone needs more copies of this directory, they can contact me at my e-mail address: paul@brokaw.ca.

*Paul Brokaw*

### **Holiday Unit in Victoria, BC**

Available year-round, a one-bedroom unit fully furnished, that can accommodate up to four. It is located in the seniors' housing behind the ecclesial hall. Rents are from \$30 to \$45 per night with special rates for two weeks or longer. We are also accepting applications for future permanent residents, 55 years and older. All units are unfurnished and residents must be able to care for themselves. Contact Sis. Pat Williamson at 250-721-4938 or by e-mail at pwilliamson@telus.net.

### **Manitoulin Bible Camp**

God willing, the Christadelphian Bible Camp on Manitoulin Island will be held July 28-August 4, 2007. This year's theme is, "I am the Light of the World" and the speakers will be Bro. Jeff Johnson (Glenlock, Aust.), speaking on the subject, "We Are All One in Christ Jesus"; and Bro. Martin Webster (Kitchener/Waterloo, ON), speaking on "Discourses in the Gospel of John". Anyone wishing more information should contact Bro. Alex Browning, registrar, at jabrowning@rogers.com or by phone at 416-284-0290.

*Alex Browning*

### **North American Sunday School Association**

God willing, in September, 2007, the CSSA in North America will commence its twenty-seventh year of operation. All Sunday schools or those in isolation are invited to participate in this program. We will be studying Stage 5, considering the Acts of the Apostles. The CSSA provides study notes, projects and worksheets. All are invited to participate in whole or in part. We contemplate our privilege and responsibility to raise our children, the heritage of the LORD, to fear Him, to love Him, and to walk according to His ways. For further information, contact Bro Phil Wilton, 57 Woodfern Dr., Scarborough, ON, M1K 2L4 or by e-mail at cssabooks@yahoo.ca.

Thank you for your support in this matter. Take care and God bless.

*Phil and Barb Wilton*

### **Vancouver Island Bible Camp**

God willing, the annual Vancouver Island Bible Camp will be held August 25-31, 2007.

For this 25th anniversary of our annual VIBC, the Saanich Peninsula, BC Ecclesia invites you all to Camp Pringle, Shawnigan Lake, Vancouver Island. If God wills, and the Lord remains away, we hope to have a week of fellowship around God's word, building spiritual family bonds and being strengthened in faith, hope and love.

Our speakers are: Bro. Peter King, speaking on "Studies in John's Gospel"; Bro. John Launchbury, speaking on "Principles of Salvation"; Bro. John Pople, speaking on "In

the Beginning”; and Bro. Peter Niven, speaking on “Singing and Praise”. Teen classes will be led by Bro. Peter King on “Parables and Miracles”; Bro. John Launchbury on “Principles of Salvation”; and Bro. John Pople on “In the Beginning”.

There will be classes, concurrent with the adult and teen classes, for the children. The classes are held in the mornings, the afternoons being free for fellowship and recreational activities. A Bible reading session is scheduled before supper. After supper, the evening sessions, Sunday to Wednesday, will be Bro. Peter Niven’s interactive series. Thursday evening is usually the Talent Night. A devotional for the teens is held every evening before lights out. Delicious meals are served buffet style in the dining room or at the BBQ.

As this is the 25th anniversary of VIBC, if anyone has photos or reminiscences they would like to share, please let me know in advance.

Camp Pringle is situated on a property on Shawnigan Lake, just north of Victoria, BC. The accommodations are rustic: huts, and rooms in older, as well as more modern, buildings. There is also limited space for RVs without hookup, but with power if you bring an extension cord. There is a campfire spot and water activities at the lake in the afternoon. Other activities include volleyball, games, and walks. The camp’s website is [www.camppringle.com](http://www.camppringle.com). A map is available on the website.

To find B&Bs in the area, view the following websites:

[www.vancouverislandaccommodations.com/scowichan/accom.htm#hotels](http://www.vancouverislandaccommodations.com/scowichan/accom.htm#hotels),  
[www.southcowichanchamber.org/touristinfo2.html](http://www.southcowichanchamber.org/touristinfo2.html) or  
[www.southvanislebnb.com/members.php](http://www.southvanislebnb.com/members.php).

As it is summer holiday season, these may book up early. The registrar is Sis. Wendy Johnsen at [wendyjohnsen@yahoo.ca](mailto:wendyjohnsen@yahoo.ca); or by mail at #7-3855-9th Ave, Port Alberni, BC, V9Y 4T9; or by telephone 250-724-0501, or fax 250-723-9321.

“For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefa-

## **Minute Meditation**

### **Are We Willing?**

Someone once said, “When it comes to helping others, some people stop at nothing.”

Do we jump in to help when needed? Doing nothing can never be right. James tells us, “Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.” Jesus commends the actions of those who, “when I was hungry, ...gave me food.” We need to do more than just think of others, we need to act, to do them

good, to be known for our kindness to others, as Solomon reminds us, “Even a child is known by his actions, by whether his conduct is pure and right.” Nehemiah over and over asked God to remember him for good.

Although nothing is impossible with God, even God cannot remember the good things that we have not done. Just what is it that we are doing that God is going to remember? Do we get up every day and serve our Lord by going about doing for others, or are we so wrapped up with ourselves that we never think to help anyone else?

Many years ago a dear brother giving a fraternal address said, “One characteristic of Christadelphians is that they are all most willing.” After a pause, while the audience recovered from this unexpected accolade, he explained, “Some are willing to do all the work, and the rest are willing to let them.”

Into which of these two groups do we belong? Do we serve, or are we among those who wait around for someone to serve us? Peter tells us to “gird ourselves with humility, to serve one another.” Paul tells us, “You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love.”

Serving involves doing. If even a little child is known by his actions, what actions are we known for doing? Wayne Dyer once said, “If you are what you do, then when you don’t, you aren’t.” Using this definition, there are a lot of people who simply aren’t because they are not doing anything.

We dare not be idle. We have to be doers of the word and not hearers only. We have to work out our salvation, and that means doing things. What are we doing for the Lord? We show our love for our Lord by the things we do for some of His other children.

We all remember what Jesus did just before he went to be crucified. After the supper was ended we are told that he washed his disciple’s feet. The record goes on to say, “When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. ‘Do you understand what I have done for you?’ he asked them. ‘You call me “Teacher” and “Lord,” and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.’”

What he did involved no money, but it was a powerful demonstration of how our Lord was willing to serve by getting down on his own hands and knees to wash the disciples’ feet. He must have meant what he said, yet how many of us take the lesson to heart and actually look for ways we can serve each other in the simple things of life? It is the Lord Jesus who tells us, “And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is my disciple, I tell you the truth, he will certainly not lose his reward.”

Every day we have the opportunity to do something for others. At the end of the day can we recall what things we have done for someone else simply because we love Jesus and are trying to follow his example? If at the end of each day we cannot recall a single act we did for others, we need to realize that the Lord also will not remember us for all those good things we did not do.

It is not complicated. We simply show love by doing. The word love means nothing in tennis, but it means everything to us. Love is the greatest thing in the world, but it must be active, as John exhorts us, “Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth.”

Robert J. Lloyd

*Bro. Bob Lloyd (Verdugo Hills, CA) had surgery in early February, which successfully removed a tumor from his left femur. Thankfully, the tumor has proven to be benign. However, tests at the time revealed a blockage in Bro. Bob's heart. He was then transferred to an ICU, after which preparations were made for surgery: a triple bypass. The surgery has proven successful again, but there will of course be some significant rest and recovery time. Bro. Bob is 80 years old.*

*We pray for God's blessing upon our brother.*

*We look forward to Bro. Bob continuing to provide to The Tidings his trademark “Minute Meditations”. In the meantime, assuming he is away for a little while, we are accepting requests (first come, first served) for potential “reruns” of past favorites of “Minute Meditations” each month.*

*We wish you all the best, Bro. Bob!*

## Coming Events (Lord Willing)

### MARCH

**24,25 New Westminster, BC** Fraternal gathering. Bro. Steven Hornhardt (Australia): “Come and See: The Seals of Revelation”. Contact Bro. Art Bull [quantum-space@shaw.ca](mailto:quantum-space@shaw.ca)

**24 Toronto East, ON** Ecclesial study day. Saturday 1 to 6 pm. Bro. Jim Styles (Livonia, MI): three talks plus dinner. Contact Bro. David Willoughby 905-427-3756

### APRIL

**6-8 Wichita Falls, TX** Annual Spring Gathering. Texas Christadelphian Camp and Conference Center, Freestone, TX (near Buffalo, TX). Bro. David Jennings (Pomona, CA). Contact Bre. Larry Beutel 940-592-9418 or John Clubb [jclubb4081@aol.com](mailto:jclubb4081@aol.com)

**6-9 Kilcoy, Guyana Bible School.** Bre. Ted Hodge: "The Only Thing that Counts"; Bro. Clive Drepaul: "The Truth of the Fourth Beast". The school will incorporate a preaching campaign, extending to April 12. Contact Bro. Ted Sleeper [tsleeper@rcn.com](mailto:tsleeper@rcn.com)

**7-14 Florida Bible School,** Bradenton, FL. Bre. Jeff Gelineau (Simi Hills, CA), Tec Morgan (UK), John Pople (San Francisco Peninsula, CA). Contact Bro. Norm Luff 579-754-1251 [normluff@yahoo.ca](mailto:normluff@yahoo.ca). Registration Sis. Diane Jennings 727-528-1886 [mikejenn@ffn.com](mailto:mikejenn@ffn.com)

**14,15 Victoria, BC** Study weekend. Bro. Steven Hornhardt (Australia): "In Expectation of Messiah". Contact Sis. Pat Williamson 250-721-4938 [pwilliamson@telus.net](mailto:pwilliamson@telus.net)

**14,15 Richmond, VA** Petersburg Fraternal Gathering, Bro. Dev Ramcharan (Toronto West, ON): "Nehemiah: The People had a Mind to Work". Contact Bro. Dave Kerr [gr8eats@comcast.net](mailto:gr8eats@comcast.net) 804-360-5299

**28 Shelburne, ON** Spring Study day. Bro. Matt Trowell (Mississauga, ON): "One Day in the Kingdom of God". 11:15 am. Lunch and dinner provided. Contact Bro. James or Sis. Laura Pearce 519-925-1075 [jlpearce@sympatico.ca](mailto:jlpearce@sympatico.ca)

**28,29 Washington, DC** Study day and Baltimore/Washington gathering. Bro. Mark Vincent (Boston, MA): "What's the point? (The message of Ecclesiastes)". Contact Bro. Bob Kling [rkling@computer.org](mailto:rkling@computer.org)

## MAY

**5 Brantford, ON** Great Lakes Christadelphian Young People gathering and Adult Study day. Adult classes: "The Seven Seals, Trumpets, Vials and Thunders of the Apocalypse". Beginning 10:15 am; supper at 5 pm. Contact Bro. Gary and Sis. Janet Suntz 905-573-3539 or [garyjanet@cogeco.ca](mailto:garyjanet@cogeco.ca)

**11-13 Nanaimo, BC** Vancouver Island Sisters' weekend, Beach Acres Resort, Parksville, Vancouver Island, BC. Sis. Yvonne Rosenau (Nanaimo, BC): "My Strength is Made Perfect in Weakness". Contact Sis. Beth Dangerfield, 1155 Ranger Place, Victoria, BC V8X 3P5 [gdanger@shaw.ca](mailto:gdanger@shaw.ca) 250-479-8422

**18-20 Cachuma Lake, CA** Men's weekend. "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord: Making your home a spiritual retreat". Contact Bro. David Lloyd 818-352-6486 [davidrlloyd@earthlink.net](mailto:davidrlloyd@earthlink.net)

**18-20 Hartford City, IN** Fraternal gathering, Lake Placid Retreat. Bro. Paul Billington (Brantford, ON): "Signs of the Times". Contact Bro. Jerry Asbury 618-288-5023 [JerryandDot1@cs.com](mailto:JerryandDot1@cs.com)

**19,20 Prince George, BC** Fraternal gathering. Bro. Ron Hicks (Washington, DC): "Biblical Examples of Personal Sacrifice". Contact Bro. Ken Loveridge [loveridgeken@shaw.ca](mailto:loveridgeken@shaw.ca)

**19,20 Echo Lake, NJ** Mid-Atlantic gathering, Cherry Hill, NJ. Bro. John Pople (San Francisco Peninsula, CA): "Road to Atonement". Contact Bro. Jonathan Link 973-633-8534 [jonlink@optonline.net](mailto:jonlink@optonline.net)

**25-27 New York Metropolitan** Sisters' retreat. Pocono Manor, Pocono, PA. Sis. Gerry Ann Lloyd (Simi Hills, CA): "Facing Today's Challenges / Dilemmas". For complete information and registration contact Sis. Averil Ferguson 718-881-8705 [averilpsm23@juno.com](mailto:averilpsm23@juno.com)

**26,27 Baltimore, MD** Study day. Bro. Dev Ramcharan (Toronto West, ON): "The Life of Jacob". Saturday classes begin 1 pm; supper served. Sunday 5th class at 9:45, and memorial service at 11. Lunch served. Afternoon lecture 2 pm. Contact Bro. Andy Bilello 410-692-9855

**26,27 Seattle, WA** Fraternal gathering and study weekend. Edmonds Home School Center, Edmonds, WA. Bro. Bob Lloyd (Verdugo Hills, CA): "The Way of Life". Contact Bro. Tony Ball 425-397-6344 at [t\\_ball@hotmail.com](mailto:t_ball@hotmail.com)

**26,27 Sussex, NB** Study weekend. Bro. George Jackson (Toronto East, ON): "God's Striking Revelation of His Son: A Study in Hebrews". Contact Bro. Brad Goodwin 506-433-6681 [braddeb@nb.sympatico.ca](mailto:braddeb@nb.sympatico.ca)

## **JUNE**

**16,17 New York Fraternal.** South Ozone Park Hall. Contact Bro. Gideon Drepaal [yerubbaal@yahoo.com](mailto:yerubbaal@yahoo.com)

**24-30 Rocky Mountain Bible School** Glenwood Springs, CO. Bro. Ron Hicks (Washington, DC): "The Exodus"; Bro. David Lloyd (Simi Hills, CA): "Forgiveness"; Bro. Mark O'Grady (Wellington Tawa, NZ): "Phanerosis". Registration forms at [www.denverchristadelphians.org](http://www.denverchristadelphians.org)

**30-July 5 Terra Nova Bible School,** Terra Nova Park, NF. Bro. Jeff Johnson (Australia): "Be Ye Transformed"; Bro. Jim Harper (Meriden, CT): "Meditations on the Ministry of Our Lord". Information and registration at [terranovabibleschool.com](http://terranovabibleschool.com). Contact Bro. Gary Hynes, 32 First Street, Mount Pearl, NF, Canada A1N 1X8 phone 709-747-2750 [info@terranovabibleschool.com](mailto:info@terranovabibleschool.com)

**30-July 8 Mid-Atlantic Bible School,** Shippensburg, PA. Bro. Ron Hicks (Washington, DC): "Exodus — Escape from Bondage" (adults), and "Preparing to Preach" (teens); Bro. Mark O'Grady (Wellington Tawa, NZ): "All the Tithe is Holy" (adults), and "Genesis 1" (teens); Bro. Nigel Patterson (Newquay, UK): "The Letter to the Christadelphians (Studies in Colossians)" (adults), and "Daring to be Different" (teens). Contact Bro. Jeff Livermore, PO Box 135, Novi, MI 48376. Forms at [www.christadelphians.net/MACBS](http://www.christadelphians.net/MACBS). Information from [MACBSRegistrar@hotmail.com](mailto:MACBSRegistrar@hotmail.com)

## **JULY**

**8-14 Southwest Bible School,** Schreiner University, Kerrville, TX. Bro. Tec Morgan (Birmingham, UK): "Romans: The Gospel of Salvation" (adults), and "Prophets After the Exile" (teens); Bro. Nigel Patterson (Newquay, UK): "David: From Sheepfold to Palace" (adults), and "Daring to be Different" (teens); Bro. David Styles (Shelburne, ON): "The Ecclesia of the Living God: The Pillar and Ground of the Truth" (adults), and "Does It Really Matter What We Believe?" (teens). Contact Bro. Joe Hill, 11110 South Bay Lane, Austin, TX 78739-1580; [joehill@io.com](mailto:joehill@io.com); information at [www.planofgod.org](http://www.planofgod.org)

**14-20 The NEW Manitoulin Family Bible Camp** Manitoulin Island, ON. Bro. Ted Hodge, Jr. (Orangeville, ON): "Challenges of the Lord"; Bro. Bill Link, Jr. (Baltimore, MD): "Job — The Spirit of a Just Man Made Perfect". Contact Bro. Mike Moore 519-756-0175 [michael.l.moore@rogers.com](mailto:michael.l.moore@rogers.com)

**14-22 Eastern Bible School,** Ascutney Mountain Resort, Brownsville, VT. Bro. Mark Giordano (Norfolk, VA): "Wonders of the Kingdom"; Bro. Richard Morgan (Saanich Peninsula, BC): "The Two Sauls"; Bro. Michael Hughes (Hamilton, NZ): "The Message of the Miracles". Contact Bro. Peter Dixon [peter@tecbs.org](mailto:peter@tecbs.org)

**22-28 Pacific Coast Bible School,** Idyllwild, CA. Bro. Matthew Blewett (Durban, South Africa): "Finding Faith"; Bro. Kitson Reid (Birmingham, UK): "The Hand of God in our Lives"; and Bro. Ted Sleeper (San Francisco, CA): "That I Might Know Him". Contact Bro. Jeff Gelineau, 567 Astorian Drive, Simi Valley, CA 93065 [mail@gelineau.org](mailto:mail@gelineau.org) or Bro. Gary Patterson [garypatterson@hotmail.com](mailto:garypatterson@hotmail.com) or visit our website at [www.californiabibleschool.org](http://www.californiabibleschool.org)

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**21-29 Midwest Bible School**, Hanover College, IN. Bro. Peter Forbes (UK): "Romans: The Gospel in a Nutshell"; Bro. Dev Ramcharan (Toronto West, ON): "Titus"; Bro. Roger Lewis (NZ): "The Sign of the Prophet Jonah". Contact Bro. Lee Livermore, 7323D Chapel Villas Lane, Indianapolis, IN 46214, 317-271-1568, e-mail llivermore@hotmail.com

**28 - August 4 Manitoulin Bible Camp** Theme: "I am the Light of the World". Bro. Jeff Johnson (Glenlock, Australia): "We are all one in Christ Jesus"; Bro. Martin Webster (Kitchener/Waterloo, ON): "Discourses in the Gospel of John". Contact Bro. Alex Browning jabrowning@rogers.com 416-284-0290

## **AUGUST**

**11-17 Niagara Falls Bible School** St. Catherines, ON. Bro. John Roberts (UK), Mick Roberts (UK), Mike LeDuke (Ontario). For information please contact Bro. David Brierley 416-236-5295 David.Brierley@sympatico.ca

**12-18 Ojai, CA Kids Camp**, Camp Arnaz for Christadelphian children ages 9-16. Bro. Jim Cowie (Australia) and David Wisniewski (Ontario, Canada). kidscampcalifornia.com or Bro. Tom Graham tom@bigbrand.com

**25-31 Vancouver Island Bible Camp** Camp Pringle, Shawnigan Lake, Vancouver Island, BC. Bro. Peter King (Worcester, UK): "Studies in John's Gospel"; Bro. John Launchbury (Portland, OR): "Principles of Salvation"; Bro. John Pople (San Francisco Peninsula, CA): "In the Beginning"; Bro. Peter Niven: "Singing and Praise". Contact Sis. Wendy Johnsen 250-724-0501 wendyjohnsen@yahoo.ca

## **SEPTEMBER**

**9-14 Adult Study Week.** The Bible school with a difference! Wildwood Manor, Ballinafad, ON. Topic: Zechariah 1-7. For information about the workbook or to register please contact Bro. Bob and Sis. Joy Jennings bobnjoy@vif.com 519-754-0902 or Bro. Martin and Sis. Lois Webster mjwebster@vif.com 519-442-0544

## **OCTOBER**

**6 Brantford, ON** Thanksgiving Fraternal Gathering, Copetown Community Centre. Bro. Brian Luke (Brighton, Australia): "The Last Days of the Apostle Paul". 12:30 to 5 pm, three talks and dinner. Contact Bro. Mike Moore 519-756-0175 michael.l.moore@rogers.com