

THE CRISTADELPHIAN TIDINGS

— of the Kingdom of God —

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The CHRISTADELPHIAN TIDINGS of the Kingdom of God

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The "Immortal" Jew

"If the statistics are right, the Jews constitute one percent of the human race. This suggests a nebulous dim puff of stardust lost in the blaze of the Milky Way. Properly the Jew ought hardly to be heard of; but he is heard of, and has always been heard of. He is as prominent on the planet as any other people. His contributions to the world's list of great names in literature, science, art, music, finance, medicine and abstract learning are way out of proportion to the weakness of his numbers. He has made a marvelous fight in this world, in all the ages; and has done it with his hands tied behind him. The Egyptian, the Babylonian, the Persian rose, filled the planet with sound and splendor, then faded to dream-stuff and passed away. The Greek and Roman followed, and made a vast noise, and they are gone. Other peoples have sprung up and held their torch high for a time, but it burned out, and they sit in twilight now, or have vanished. The Jew saw them all, beat them all, and is now what he always was. All things are mortal but the Jew; all other forces pass, but he remains. What is the secret of his immortality?"

Mark Twain, Concerning the Jews, 1898.

Editorial

What I Don't Know

Solomon ben Judah (also known by his Arabic name, Suleiman ibn Jabirol) lived in Moorish Spain about a thousand years ago. Among the wise sayings attributed to him is this:

There are four types of men in this world:

1. *The man who knows, and knows that he knows; he is wise, so consult him.*
2. *The man who knows, but doesn't know that he knows; help him not to forget what he knows.*
3. *The man who knows not, and knows that he knows not; teach him.*
4. *Finally, there is the man who knows not but pretends that he knows; he is a fool, so avoid him.*

There is much wisdom in this Solomon's saying, as there is in those from the greater Solomon for whom he was named. The irony is that, in our lives, and perhaps at this very moment, any of us may fall into — not just one — but as many as all four of these categories... at the very same time!

How so? For one, the wisest of men or women (in any single endeavor or field) may be abysmally ignorant of certain other useful knowledge. The greatest philosopher, or professor, or physician may need, from time to time, the knowledge and expertise of the skilled plumber, or auto mechanic, or gardener. And it is a truly wise man who “knows that he knows not”, and is still willing to learn, or to appreciate and put to use the wisdom of others.

My father used to speak fondly of an older Christadelphian preacher who was very well educated — like Saul of Tarsus, both in secular and religious knowledge. But, for all his accomplishments, he was nevertheless genuinely interested in what any man or woman could tell him that he didn't know — whether it pertained to the Bible, or farming or food preparation.

Then, for another, there is the brother who knows a very great deal about the Bible, but cannot bring himself to admit that there is a single question for which he has no answer. Years ago, a brother was teaching at a Christadelphian Bible school, along with an older brother very well-known (and justly so) for his knowledge and speaking ability. During the course of a question-and-answer session, the younger brother replied to one question with a simple “I don't know”, whereupon the older brother stepped in and gave a long, though somewhat rambling and beside-the-point, “answer”.

Afterward, the older brother chastened the younger brother who “didn't know”, telling him in no uncertain terms: “**Never** say you don't know. If necessary, ignore the first question and pose a **different** question, and then answer **that one...** but **never** say you don't know!”

We might ask, ‘Why would a man who doesn’t know something... pretend he does?’ And the answer can scarcely be flattering.

But then we realize — if we are honest, I think — that there have been times when every one of us has pretended to know something he or she did not know — because of pride, convenience, desperation, fear, laziness, or some other reason yet.

But were we the better off for “knowing not” but pretending we knew? Or were we foolish in forfeiting the opportunity to learn something else?

This brings me to a piece of advice. (If it applies to you, very well. If it doesn’t, feel free to ignore it.) This advice has to do with the...

PAPATSQ

What is a PAPATSQ? (Pronounce this “pah-pats-cue”, by the way.)

It is simply this: **Proposed All-Purpose Answer To Speculative Questions...**

Do not be afraid to use as necessary. Life will go on even if you say (or write, or think) the following 15 times in a day.

Get ready.

Here it comes.

The PAPATSQ... is... drum roll... bugles...

“I don’t know.”

Try it. Savor each word individually. Practice it (in front of the mirror, perhaps) until the words flow smoothly.

You might use it first with family members, in the privacy of your own home.

Then, when you feel comfortable with that, try it out on good friends. (They may gasp at first, or laugh out loud, but don’t mind them; just keep at it.)

Finally, you’ll be ready to use it in public... at a Bible class, or with your brothers and sisters.

I know it’s tough in the beginning. But every journey of discovery begins with those three little words.

Why don’t we try a whisper first... very softly now: **“I don’t know.”**

There now... that didn’t hurt too much, did it?

“Knowing the Truth”

It is true we “know the Truth”, that is, the fundamentals of the gospel message. But it would be foolish to suppose that, having learned (or more likely been taught!) those fundamentals, we are thereby inoculated against ever believing anything that is untrue! Furthermore, if we appropriate to ourselves any merit in “knowing the Truth” — that is, if we suppose this elevates us above others, intellectually or morally or spiritually — then we may well develop a highly-inflated opinion of

ourselves. We might even come to think we need not examine, or re-examine, what we believe and why we believe it. That can be very dangerous.

Such an attitude of pride or arrogance may cause us to close our eyes and ears to other things our Lord would have us learn. The Pharisees of Jesus' day knew so very much about the Bible, but when Jesus came to enlighten them further (and in some very important areas, by the way, such as his Messiahship), they simply could not believe they were "blind" to anything worth knowing. "Are we blind too?" they asked. And Jesus replied to them,

"If you were [truly] blind, you would not be guilty of sin [for you would have the excuse of ignorance], but now that you claim you can see [all things?], your guilt remains" (John 9:40,41).

The irony is that the man born blind could see so much more, from the very moment his natural eyes were opened, than the Pharisees had ever seen with their perfectly good natural vision! And the outcome, wonderful for the one but tragically sad for the others, was this: the blind man *did* see, while those who *claimed* they could see remained in their own self-imposed darkness (v. 39).

But if we can continue to admit to ourselves, and to others, that we "don't know it all" — even after leaving the "world" behind, and even after many years in the Truth — then we may find new "doors" opening to us each and every day. And they will be "doors" to greater knowledge: whether knowledge of God, or of His purpose, or of the world around us, or even of ourselves (self-knowledge being one of the greatest gifts God can give us).

In Ezekiel's vision of the great Temple to come, he saw water coming out from under the threshold of the temple, and proceeding toward the east. And as he surveyed the stream, he saw that it was first "ankle-deep" (Ezek. 47:1-3), then "knee-deep", then "up to the waist" (v. 4), and finally "deep enough to swim in" (v. 5). So it is with the Word of God that, like a life-giving stream, flows out from His Temple! While it offers life to all who approach it, it has at the same time shallows where a little child may safely wade, and also depths where even a grown man will need to swim.

If we are afraid of the deeper water, then we will — like the little child — only splash about in the "safest" places. But if we venture into the "depths" of God's Word, we may learn so much more... provided we don't mind giving up our comfortable footing on the bottom — and provided we don't mind praying the prayer: 'Lord, I don't understand this; help me to understand better!'

What I don't know

Now, when we understand there are things we don't know, we are ready to be taught — and that is a wonderful thing. In fact, it may prove wonderful in either of two ways:

Firstly, as mentioned above, we may more readily learn something we didn't know before, and we'll be the better for learning it.

Secondly, and at least as importantly: we may recognize there are certain things

we don't know — certain things for which we cannot, or do not need to, devise good “answers”! Then we'll be the better for realizing the limitations of our knowledge.

I won't presume to speak for anyone else, but here begins a list of (a few of the) things I don't know! These are items, I believe, that fall into the second category above. Should I worry or despair that I *don't* know these things? Or can I learn something very worthwhile by coming to see what I really *don't* know?

I'll let you be the judge.

Details of as-yet-unfulfilled prophecies:

Now this item could go on to a great number of particulars, but I'll content myself with quoting a couple of passages here:

“No one knows about that day and hour [when the Kingdom of God will come], not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father” (Matt. 24:36; cp. Mark 13:32,33,35).

What is interesting is how many times this statement of Jesus is repeated, in his parables about the Second Coming and the Judgment for example (Matt. 24:42,44,50; 25:13), as well as in his last message to John (Rev. 3:3). One might almost conclude — on the basis of the number of passages alone — that this uncertainty about dates is *the* “first principle” of Bible prophecy!

“It is not for you to know the times or dates [when the kingdom will be restored to Israel, that] the Father has set by his own authority” (Acts 1:7; cp. Zech. 14:7).

Surely this is a case where the lesser is incorporated into the greater. If we do not know, now, the “day” nor the “hour” nor the “time” nor the “date” (“season” in KJV) when Christ will come... then we can hardly be expected to know the times (or the details, or the order) of the events that must (might? may?) happen as a run-up or immediate prelude to that Coming.

Of course we can, and ought to, have some general sense of the “signs of the times” in which we live. But what dangers might lurk in encouraging (in others as well as in ourselves) the feeling that we *ought* to know the whole itinerary of the LORD and His Son (an itinerary that, as stated above, the Father has set by His own authority). Worse yet, the feeling that we are unworthy disciples if we can't be absolutely sure about the precise order of events leading up to our Lord's return.

One thing we *do* know for sure: “We will all stand before God's judgment seat” (Rom. 14:10), “in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus” (2 Tim. 4:1), and there we will answer for how we have treated the least of Christ's brethren (Matt. 25:40,45).

Another thing we *do* know: the servant who thinks he has it all figured out, and believes that his master is staying away for a while yet, may think he has enough time “to beat his fellow servants and to eat and drink with drunkards”, and still

have time left over, when he is finished with all that, to prepare for his master's arrival. And such a servant may well be wrong (Matt. 24:48-51). How much better would he have been *not* to "know" when his master was coming, but to work steadily each day on the most positive and helpful enterprise he can think of, in a state of continual readiness for that great event.

As a matter of fact, I have come to see there are so many things I don't know, that I feel obliged — Lord willing — to continue this discussion next month.

George Booker

Bible Study

Careless talk can be dangerous!

Some people are known to possess a strong view on just about any subject, whatever it may be! One would never hear them say, "Sorry, I don't know much about that", or simply, "I don't know." Instead they just launch themselves into their response, without a moment's hesitation!

Obviously none of us would like to be viewed in such a way. If we knew that people thought we were like this then, no doubt, we would feel somewhat embarrassed. We therefore need to weigh up and evaluate what we say to each other — both in terms of the words we use and the manner in which we communicate them. The Book of Proverbs offers many constructive guidelines to assist us. Here are just a few to mull over in our minds:

- *Sometimes the wisest course of action is actually to remain silent (11:12; 17:27,28).* Patience and restraint are both key components of wisdom. A wise person knows enough to keep silent when there is nothing to say. Restraint in speech is a mark of true wisdom.
- *Talking about others — especially after being entrusted with something private and confidential — is wrong (11:13).* A faithful friend conceals a private matter but an unfaithful one reveals it. The unfaithful one gathers personal secrets and then acts as a gossip, going from house to house, spreading strictly confidential information (cp. 1 Tim. 5:13).
- *Often it's not so much what we say, but the manner in which we say it, that causes problems (15:1,2).* Words can achieve very noble ends. A wise person will use his words to strengthen, encourage, and edify — speaking "a word in season" (Isa. 50:4). Kind words, gentle expressions, delivered with compassion and understanding, can often defuse a heated, and potentially volatile, situation. For instance, the Ephraimites were appeased by Gideon's mild reply (Judg. 8) and David by Abigail's reverent manner (1 Sam. 25). But sneering, arrogant, and overbearing words can stir up a hornet's nest! Just think of the damage caused by the explosive words spoken by Nabal to David's servants, or Rehoboam to the people of Israel (1 Kings 12). Hence, these two different approaches can result in two very different outcomes!

- *Being a good listener is something we should all try hard to become (18:2).* Compulsive talkers never listen! They desire to publicly display their knowledge and understanding — to parade and showcase their talents — so that they may be thought of as being wise and intelligent. In reality, they merely expose themselves as arrogant and ignorant!
- *Our mouths can get us into trouble, so we need to watch what we say (18:6,7).* A mark of a fool is his contentious and aggressive character. A fool constantly goads others for a fight! A fool will even try to defend himself — attempting to preserve his tarnished reputation — but instead will end up uttering things that, frankly, should not be spoken! So he becomes further and further entangled. His foolish words will eventually destroy him, for every idle word spoken will be judged at the Judgment Seat by the Lord Jesus Christ (cp. Matt. 12:35).
- *Before an opinion is expressed we need to have all the facts at hand; otherwise, we will bring shame upon ourselves (18:13).* The fool is impatient. He interrupts before all the information has been presented, and then acts upon it in a rash and thoughtless way! He responds without weighing up the situation and thinking through the implications of his decided course of action. He ends up judging a particular brother or sister on a specific matter, or taking a certain line or viewpoint before being in possession of all the hard facts. The lesson is that we are to be “swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath” (Jam. 1:19).

So here we have a number of valuable guidelines on how we should speak and behave with each other. They will help to ensure that our spoken words are always “with grace” and “seasoned with salt” (Col. 4:6). Indeed, all our words are to be pure, wholesome and well balanced. This is to be our lifetime endeavour and aspiration. And if a situation ever arises that calls upon us to be silent, then we should be prepared to hold our tongue.

Stephen Whitehouse (Watford, UK)

Exhortation

Heating the Frog Slowly

As the story goes, if you attempt to drop a frog in a pot of boiling water it will hop out the minute it hits the water and feels the life-threatening temperature. But if you put the frog in the pot while the water is just at room temperature and raise the temperature gradually, then by the time the frog becomes aware that it has a serious problem it will be too late. The heat of the water will have sapped its strength to such a degree that it can no longer save itself.

Gradualization

What an example of the power of gradualization. The plight of the frog illustrates this phenomenon. It produces a very negative result — at least from the frog’s

perspective! However, the principle of gradualization can work for us as well as against us. Major changes occur in our lives little by little, and if they are slow enough, we do not even see them when they occur. True, if they are hurting us, we may not realize it. But, also true, if beneficial changes take only a little effort from us every day, then we do not mind too much. Nothing living remains status quo. We are growing weaker or stronger every day. This is an unavoidable factor in our lives. It is like the law of gravity.

Physical “hot water”

What happens to us if we gain one ounce a week starting at age 30? Two candy bars a week over our normal intake should just about do it. That is only one pound every 16 weeks. Who would notice? No one during the first few weeks, and a one-pound change from one weigh-in to another is not of concern in any event. And four pounds in one year would not raise any alarms. However, in five years we are up 20 pounds. By age 40 we are 40 pounds overweight, and you can do the math from there on. Clearly at some point we will change our eating habits, or our aging body will change them for us in the form of dietary changes mandated by diabetes, elevated cholesterol, high blood pressure, etc. We will either discipline ourselves, or we will be disciplined by events... but we will be disciplined.

In this sense discipline, like gradualization, is also a law that governs our existence like the law of gravity. (In fact, it may help us accept our responsibility for self-imposed discipline if we realize that, at the end of the day, we do not have any choice in the matter... we *will* be disciplined. Who would we rather have do it, ourselves or someone/something else?)

We can help ourselves gradually as well. “Bodily exercise profiteth *little*,” the apostle said (1 Tim. 4:8). But he did not say it does *not* profit. Its importance cannot be compared with spiritual exercise, and certainly we should not spend more time at a gym than we spend in service to our God. But a certain amount of it is important. And it needs to be done faithfully, little by little, but regularly. Nothing can completely stop the effects of mortality on our frames but we can, over the course of time, gradually affect our bodies very favorably if we exercise.

Financial “hot water”

The insidious effect of 18% interest on credit card debt is a classic example of gradualization. Quite a number of brothers and sisters have abused their credit card usage in the course of satisfying the desire to “have more”. When family troubles reach the point that they surface at the arranging board level, very often the problems are greatly exacerbated by “maxed-out” credit cards — with the family now owing \$20,000 to \$40,000 and being totally unable to make the payments. One does not have to be a mathematician to understand the numbers involved, but one does have to *want* to understand.

Interest of 18% on \$20,000 is \$3,600 a year — \$300 per month. If that is all you can pay towards your debt you will never, ever pay anything on the \$20,000 principal. You will be paying nothing but the interest for the rest of your life. The servant in Israel could, under the law, elect to become a lifetime slave in his

master's household, by having a hole bored in his ear (Exod. 21:5,6). Credit cards give us a modern opportunity to let Visa or MasterCard bore a hole in our ear and make us a servant for life!

And this all can happen to us gradually. Like the frog, by the time we recognize the seriousness of our plight, we can be in so deep that we cannot get out without extreme difficulty. (While we have little sympathy for losses credit companies incur because of their all-too-liberal lending policies, innocent vendors can be hurt as well.) Heeding the oft-repeated commands against covetousness, and implementing in our daily lives the Scriptural exhortations to be "diligent in business" and "consider the ant" and not be as the "slothful man", will keep us out of hot water.

But by gradually putting some money aside each year we can change our lives for the better. Someone once said, 'The poor man never can really comprehend the effects of compound interest.' What if we put that same \$300 per month (\$3,600 a year) in the bank — instead of in Visa's bank — they have enough! Let us say it earns 5% interest for 20 years. How much would we have? The answer is \$118,918. In 30 years, the sum would grow to \$239,180. In our bank! Results achieved gradually can help us as well as hurt us.

Spiritual "hot water"

Our real point, however, is how seriously we can be affected spiritually by the gradual deterioration of social values around us, and yet not realize it.

What did Balaam tell Balak and the Moabites to do in order to weaken Israel and render them helpless? He did not tell King Balak to attack Israel. He told him to seduce them with the daughters of Moab: "And the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab" (Num. 25:1). Fourteen hundred years later Balaam's doctrine was still being cited (Rev. 2:14) as an example of sin.

Seduction is leading astray, as from duty or right paths. It is persuasion away from principles, faith, or allegiance. Seduction describes *gradual* corruption. We are under continual attack, externally from the pervasive nature of the constant bombardment of the world's godless values, and internally from the dark side of our human nature that resonates all too well with the world's "music".

The insidious nature of these attacks can be seen when we step back and reflect upon the "agendas" being pushed by the entertainment industry. Heterosexual promiscuity is presented as accepted and normal — and the same holds for homosexual activity. Anything said against either is characterized as narrow-minded and bigoted, virtually a violation of all that is good and noble. When the Vietnam war ended and the prisoners came home — some of whom had been in the "Hanoi Hilton" for seven years — they were shocked at what they saw on the television sets in their living rooms, compared with the entertainment they remembered. But soon, like us, they no doubt became acclimated to the "temperature" of the water. It was simply too comfortable to bother trying to do anything about it.

Evolution is seductive. On a CYC outing, the guide — a whale "expert" — explained extensively how the whales had "evolved", as though it were proven science.

If someone had attempted to give an informative talk about whales that assumed the Biblical creation, some law would probably have been invoked to silence him. Evolution is not just presented in upfront ways but also by assuming premises that we, and more importantly our children, may not even realize.

True, few in this country would go so far as to say they do not believe in a God. But as our society gradually makes “God” just a little less relevant, and belief in Him just a little less meaningful every day, then — like a candle gradually flickering and finally burning out — God seemingly fades out and disappears. And when we, or our children, have our rebellious moments (and we do!), then the subtle idea of being less responsible to God can be very alluring.

Similarly, humanism is a philosophy that emphasizes reason, scientific inquiry, and human fulfillment in the natural world. Humanism downplays the importance of belief in God. This philosophy permeates the decisions of governments, and the school systems they oversee.

Tolerance is a characteristic we admire, generally. We Christadelphians live pleasant lives in North America — thanks to the “tolerant” attitude of the government and the people towards religious beliefs, even when those beliefs do not agree with the mainstream culture. When we contemplate what our lives would be like in a Muslim country, we wonder how we would continue to exist.

Tolerance, however, can be a double-edged sword. If we are not consciously aware of the culture of our times, indiscriminate tolerance can lead to indifference, and this in turn can result in skepticism. The Bible abounds with examples of God’s patience and mercy but not of His tolerance. He does not “tolerate” in the sense of condoning what is wrong. We are not God, and our kingdom is “not of this world,” so it is not for us to “take up arms” against everything in our society that ignores God and His standards. But we must be intolerant of these influences in our own lives and families, because their effect is that, left unchecked, they will gradually seduce us from the Truth!

It is no more possible for us to avoid this world and its influences completely than it is for the frog to stay out of water. But we can be careful about where we swim, and we can pay attention to the “temperature” of the water around us. After all, very few of us are picked up and forcefully exposed to seductive material. We do not hear of people being captured by criminals and forced to sit in front of a computer and watch pornography. Most of us pick the “pots” we swim in, all by ourselves.

It is odd how we Christadelphians tend to think we are not like the world around us. Yet when we come to know brethren from various parts of the world, we may begin to see a relationship between their lifestyles and the prevailing lifestyles of their country. And if we can pause for a moment of honest introspection, we may also see it in ourselves. Paul told Titus, “The Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies” (Tit. 1:12). Paul was not writing to the nation of Crete, but to Titus regarding the problems of the brethren on the island (vv. 5-13). It would be as if Paul were to write a letter to the North American brotherhood, saying, “Americans

are too materialistic, and materialism — like covetousness — is idolatry.” His point would be that we have the same problems. Our standards may be closer to the culture in which we live than we realize.

Conclusion

We are not frogs! We can make conscious decisions to grow, gradually, in spiritual things, and to help our families grow in the same way. Growing in grace and knowledge is primarily the responsibility of each brother as to himself first, to his wife and children next, and to his ecclesia also.

Every member of the family has his or her responsibilities as well. The mother may have most of the day-to-day responsibility for the children, but the father should consciously consider where his contribution may have its best effect.

Bible schools and study days and CYC activities are all very important. But there is no substitute for regularly investing, every day, a few minutes in our spiritual “bank account” — by reading God’s word. We see around us the spiritual dividends of these investments. We may contrast the Scriptural knowledge of children who have grown up in a culture of regular Bible reading, with those who have put little or nothing in that “bank”.

We do well to apply the principle of gradualization to the accumulation of spiritual assets. After all, regular investing is also a concept our materialistic culture advertises and promotes! Let us simply apply that concept to our spiritual lives.

Ken Sommerville (Simi Hills, CA)

Exposition

Paul’s Letter to the Ephesians: (8) Rescued by God’s grace in the Lord Jesus

The privilege which came to our notice at the conclusion of our previous study on Ephesians, and the awesome responsibility which accompanies it, both derive from the great truth that the disciples of our Lord form a part of his body. As his representatives, and agents, in their day and generation, they contribute to the full outworking of God’s purpose in His beloved Son. This key thought must ever be in mind as we endeavour to follow the Apostle’s teaching in the early part of chapter 2.

Dead in trespasses and sins

As we look at the RV of verse 1, we notice that “did he quicken” is in italics, indicating it is not a part of the Greek text. The NIV more faithfully renders the verse: “As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins.” Then, in verse 2, Paul enlarges on this concept, and the quickening process is not effectively expressed until verse 5, to which we shall come in due course. To bring out the

greatness of God's love and grace, Paul dwells first upon our unregenerate state. Before a disciple embraces the hope of life in the Lord Jesus, he or she is dead... dead in "trespasses and sins". It was a manner of life, brought out by the Biblical metaphor of 'walking'. This goes back a long way: Enoch walked with God, as did Noah (Gen. 5:24; 6:9). Moses asked Yahweh to reveal His ways to him (Exod. 33:13), in response to which Moses was granted the great theophany of Exodus 34. Rather than walking with God, we were literally the walking dead!

A life may be attended by all manner of exciting features, but, whatever its nature, if it is not lived in the Lord Jesus, there can be only one outcome: permanent death. As Isaiah states so comprehensively with regard to those who had exercised lordship over God's people: "The dead do not live; shades do not rise — because you have punished and destroyed them, and wiped out all memory of them" (26:14, NRSV). The psalmist similarly states: "Man that is in honour, and understandeth not, is like the beasts that perish" (Psa. 49:20). On one occasion the Lord said to a man who was seeking a pretext for not following him, "Leave the dead to bury their own dead; but go thou and publish abroad the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:60). This is what the Apostle is saying to the readers of his letter, for such had been their former condition: they had been effectively dead, since trespasses and sins had been their normal way of life (v. 2).

"The prince of the power of the air"

This was "according to the prince of the power of the air", an expression which sounds strange in our ears but one which was evidently current at the time. Thus Robinson comments: "Here again the Apostle adopts the language of his contemporaries. It was the general belief that through the Fall the whole world had been subject to evil spirits, who were dwelling in the air, and were under the control of Satan as their prince".¹ Is this then an accommodation to contemporary thought? There is certainly no other evidence that Paul looked favourably on such an idea. We remember the Lord himself referred to Beelzebub, without surely endorsing any idea that such a being existed (see Matt. 10:25; 12:24,27). Paul proceeds to give his own definition when he adds, "the spirit that now worketh in the sons of disobedience". The term he employs for "worketh" is the same that we have already encountered in 1:20, which gives us an idea of the power of sin, with its diversity of evil works. Regarding the expression "the prince of the power of the air", Paul, if he were writing today, might well have put the expression in inverted commas, to demonstrate he is quoting a current superstition.

The Lord himself stated to the Eleven that the prince of this world would assail him, but to no purpose (John 14:30; cf. 16:11). When we consider the circumstances of the trial and crucifixion of our Lord, we can see the force and relevance of the disciples' reaction in Acts 4:23-31, when Peter and John were released by the Sanhedrin. We note especially verse 26: "The kings of the earth set themselves in array, and the rulers were gathered against the Lord, and against his anointed." These were the evil spirits vanquished by our Lord; they ruled in society and resisted any opposition to their authority (see John 11:49-53). If the Lord threatened their authority, then he must go.

Furthermore, Paul himself comments on the spirit activating the sons of disobedience in 2:3: "Among whom we also all once lived in the lusts of our flesh, doing the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest." The divine wrath is no intemperate display of anger but God's displeasure with human sin and disobedience. The term "orge" is prominent in Romans; the first occurrence there gives a clue to its meaning: "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold down the truth in unrighteousness" (1:18). However, prevailing over His wrath is God's infinite mercy, as the Apostle shows in Ephesians 2:4,5: "But God, being rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead through our trespasses, quickened us together with Christ (by grace have ye been saved)." Thus, against the sombre background of the unredeemed sinner's desperate plight is the operation of God's prevailing mercy. Romans 5 speaks of the "abundance" of divine grace; here Paul uses the term "rich".

The riches of God's grace

Starting with verse 5, Paul, by a deliberate use of language, demonstrates how the richness of God's grace and mercy operates in those who have faith. We should not miss the fact he now uses "we", for he is ever aware of the grace extended to him personally (once more we recall 1 Tim. 1:12-14). Those who have faith are brought to life "together with Christ". Here we encounter the first of three verbs in which the Greek word "sun" (i.e., "together with") occurs, and this striking feature of Paul's vocabulary deserves our careful notice. It must be evident Paul is using these words to underline the total identity of the followers of the Lord Jesus with the Lord himself. Paul has already declared the church to be the body of the Lord: what happens to the one must also be experienced by the other. The same kind of vocabulary is observable in Romans 6. The word "sun" appears in Romans 6:8 singly, without being compounded with any other word: "But if we died with (sun) Christ..." In the case of the words in which we are now interested, we may render the sense by a simple device: we have been 'with-quicken'd', i.e., brought to life with him. Thus, when the Lord revived after his death, so (prospectively) did his followers, his body, revive along with him.

Then Paul makes a typical comment: "By grace have ye been saved." There are two key words in the Apostle's language of redemption: "grace" and "faith". The first cannot operate without the other: grace comes from God. We note especially in this connection the salutation in 2 Corinthians 1:1,2: "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort." This salutation in its fullness is conspicuous among the opening greetings of the Apostle (the other greetings have already been considered in an earlier article).

"With" Christ!

What is even more extraordinary is that the believer is associated not merely with the Lord's resurrection, but also with his elevation to heaven! Not merely "with-raised" (i.e., with Christ) but also "with-seated" in the heavens, in Christ Jesus (v. 6). If the thought is challenging, it is totally in keeping with Colossians 3:1-3;

the words are familiar, they confirm what Paul says in Ephesians: the present life of the disciple “is hid with Christ in God” (v. 3).

This is no more than what was told Saul of Tarsus on the Damascus Road: “I am Jesus whom thou persecutest” (Acts 9:5). The full force of this extraordinary statement may escape us because of its very simplicity. When the Lord completely identifies himself with his persecuted followers, he is no longer the carpenter from Nazareth, persecuted and finally crucified. No, he is the glorified Lord Jesus, to whom all power in heaven and on earth has been given. It is this one who so graciously identifies himself with his followers. The reflection is truly staggering but it lies at the heart of what Paul is endeavouring to bring home to his readers, readers of all ages, and to ourselves if we aspire to be true followers of our Lord.

We now look briefly at Romans 6: in verse 4, we are “with-buried” with the Lord, by virtue of our baptism into his death. Then in verse 5 we are “with-united” in a resurrection like his. Finally, in verse 6, “our old man”, that is, our former self, is “with-crucified” with our Lord. Briefly, our baptism as the seal of our faith and willing submission to God’s will makes us one with our Lord. However, for us the process is not complete; indeed, it is ongoing, and we need to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ (2 Pet. 3:18).

As we survey our contemporary world, we can fully appreciate that God’s work in Christ is by no means complete. As Paul dictated his letter, he looked forward to the ages yet to come, when God would reveal the riches of His grace towards the disciples — Paul includes himself in this. As always this was to be in Christ Jesus (v. 7). We note once more the concept of “riches”, the true and enduring riches. The theme of the call of the Gentiles comes up later in this chapter.

“By grace, through faith”

Then Paul picks up this term “grace” and makes one of his greatest and best known statements: “For by grace have ye been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves” (v. 8). Indeed, how true this is: what can we do either to save ourselves or the world in which we live? We freely acknowledge we are saved by God’s grace. This declaration is important, since the mention of divine grace means the initiative is God’s. Our response is faith, not merely an attitude of trust in our Father but the recognition we are called to a new life. Grace is not an ointment to be applied externally to the skin, but a power which should be active in us. The process of salvation is initiated by God and is experienced here and now. At the same time, it is also an ongoing process which calls for growth. In our unredeemed state, what can we do to save the world and ourselves? But, when we have become grateful and loving recipients of God’s grace, we can, as we have already discovered, contribute to God’s “fullness”, the outworking of His purpose in each succeeding generation.

Verse 9 underlines the truth of the previous verse: we are totally dependent upon God’s love and mercy. Paul often looked back on his earlier life as a very earnest and committed Pharisee, when he had sought righteousness by strict observance of the Law. One day, however, he had discovered that, in the process, he had be-

come a blasphemer, with blood on his hands. The term “works” speaks of human effort and achievement but the history of mankind, past and present, has shown how fallible men are.

God’s workmanship: a new creation

In verse 10 we see that God’s workmanship is in direct contrast to the works of men. In the Greek, the term for workmanship is “poieema”. In Romans 1:20, it is used to describe God’s handiwork in the creation. But as the physical universe can be ascribed only to God, so this is true of the new creation and this word “poieema”: “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus.” This is obviously the new creation, a recurring theme in Paul’s letters. There are notable passages in this connection:

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God...” (2 Cor. 5:17,18, NIV).

With this can be compared another passage:

“Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything; what counts is a new creation” (Gal. 6:15, NIV).

The new creation is as much the work of God as the old; mankind marred the image and it was not restored until the Lord Jesus came (see John 1:18; 14:9; 2 Cor. 4:4). This authentic image of the Father was perpetuated in the Son through his being raised from the dead and his becoming, in the eternal sense, the beginning of a new creation (cf. Rev. 1:5,18). This concept is clearly illustrated in Psalm 100:3:

“Know that the LORD is God. It is he who made us, and we are his” (NIV).

The time will come when there will be a new heavens and a new earth, the habitation of righteousness (Isa. 65:17; 2 Pet. 3:13). In the meantime, those who belong to the Lord Jesus have been created in Christ Jesus “for good works”, and this was God’s purpose from the beginning. His children must “walk” in them, reviving the figure in verse 2. In the Lord Jesus there is a new way of life, and this can be achieved only by a conscious following of the Lord’s own example.

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Note:

1. J.A. Robinson, *St. Paul’s Epistle to the Ephesians*, London, 1903, p. 49.

Bible Study

Rightly Dividing the Word: (7) An Open Mind is Essential

In this series of articles we have seen that “rightly dividing the word” depends on our hearing what God is actually saying to us in the Bible, as well as learning to

understand what He means. This requires of us careful attention to the meaning of particular words and to their context.

The meaning of Bible words is determined by the context in which they are used. Understanding their context is essential to understanding their meaning.

Context includes the flow of thought in a passage and the historical context in which the book was written. We need to ask questions such as, “When and in what historical context were these words first spoken?” “What did the words mean to the people who first heard them?”

Even in the New Testament, it is essential to read the gospels and the Acts first, so as to understand the letters and the Revelation. We must also try to get a general overview of an individual book in order to begin to understand passages in it. A good Bible dictionary or the book, *The 66 Books of the Bible*,¹ will help in this.

We cannot read the Bible casually, as we might a newspaper or magazine, and expect to really understand it. But we can come to understand what God is saying to us, *if* we read with prayerful, thoughtful care and attention to the context.

Fuller understanding comes over time through thought, the testing of that understanding in discussions with others, our experience as Jesus’ disciples, and reading or hearing helpful expositions. The Lord promises understanding to those who ask, seek, and knock (Matt. 7:7-11). He speaks for those with “ears to hear”, those eager to understand. The “measure” that we give to our hearing is the measure that will be returned to us, in greater comprehension (Mark 4:23-25).

We all come from different backgrounds, and we all have had different teachers and varied life experiences. Each of us hears in a unique way. We vary greatly in age and depth of knowledge. None of us is perfect in understanding, though we may be content at a comfortable plateau. Though we all rejoice in “one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God and father of all”, there is much diversity in our views.

That diversity is healthy and can contribute to spiritual growth in the Lord’s ecclesia, if we share our diverse views in a humble spirit. We must listen, think, question, and discuss with one another. The object of our Bible classes and discussions is not just to hear one person’s knowledge imparted. They must also help us to develop the ability to think through for ourselves what the Bible is actually saying to us and what it means.

We have strong Bible reasons for what we believe and may not, therefore, be very open-minded to alternative meanings of particular passages that challenge our previously-held opinions. We may simply read the Bible in search of proof texts to reinforce what we already believe — particularly if we are contending with those who have a different understanding. This is partly due to our reactionary attitude to false religions around us. We see harmful extremes and, humanly, we tend towards an opposite extreme.

Our understanding of how the Lord uses, today, the Holy Spirit power he has received from God is another area in which we might be narrow-minded. We

know that the Holy Spirit power of God comes into our hearts and minds through the inspired Scriptures. We know, too, that understanding the Scriptures does not depend on our first being given Holy Spirit power. So we may tend to limit how our Lord uses that power to touch, open, and change the minds of men and women in our day.

Yet the inspired psalmist prays, “Open my eyes, that I may see wondrous things from your word. Teach me, O LORD the way... Give me understanding... Make me walk in the path of your commandments... Incline my heart to your testimonies and not to covetousness... Turn away my eyes from looking at worthless things, and revive me in your way” (Psa. 119:18,33-37). Prayers like these are answered by the Lord through his Holy Spirit power helping us as we have asked, if our prayers express an honest desire.

“If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God — who gives to all liberally and without reproach...” (Jam. 1:5-8). Yes, we have the “Spirit word” in the Bible, and through it a wonderful source of knowledge and spiritual instruction. Still, we are constantly making decisions in our lives that require wisdom in applying this knowledge and instruction. This is why we find the Apostle Paul praying that help from the Spirit be given to faithful saints in Ephesus (Eph. 1:15-21; 3:14-19) and Philippi (Phil. 1:9-11) and Colosse (Col. 1:9-12). These faithful saints had the gospel and inspired writings, but they still needed the help of God and His Son to have spiritual wisdom, understanding, enlightened eyes, and discernment — and to be strengthened with power in the inner man.

In our preaching of the gospel, we are “God’s fellow workers”. We try to serve as Paul and others did. We may be great preachers through whom others believe. Yet, it is only “as the Lord gives to every man”. “God gave the increase” to the preaching of Paul and Apollos in Corinth. Even today it is not our eloquence or powers of persuasion that give the increase, but rather it is “God who gives the increase” by His spirit power to our “planting and watering” (1 Cor. 3:4-11).

An illustration of how the Lord does this is found in Acts 16:14. There we read that “the Lord opened [Lydia’s] heart to heed the things spoken by Paul.” It is written that “the king’s heart is in the hand of the LORD; like the rivers of water; He turns it wherever He wishes” (Prov. 21:1). That truth was taught to King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon (Dan. 4).

It is a Scriptural truth that men and women are no longer given gifts of Spirit power to prophesy, teach, perform miracles, or speak in foreign languages — as they were in the first century and in the days of Moses, Elijah, and Elisha. However, even if we mortals have no such powers ourselves, we cannot and should not try to limit in any way just how God and the Lord Jesus continue to use their wondrous Spirit powers in our time. That they do so to help us in understanding, wisdom, and faith, to give increase to our preaching, and to shape world events is certain. For that gracious help, we rejoice in thanksgiving.

An example of “stretching a point” or taking words out of context — to prove what we believe — is our frequent misuse of Jesus’ words in Mark 7:15-23. It is

right that we should wish to show that we can't blame our sins on an external, supernatural tempter, and that what defiles us in God's eyes are our own evil thoughts which result in sinful deeds and pride. However, it is going too far to use this passage to say that all our temptations to sin come from within, and none from an external source — as our teachers sometimes do.

Consider the context. Jesus is teaching here about what we eat. He is answering the Pharisees' criticism of his disciples for eating with unwashed hands (defiled, according to their tradition). Nothing that we eat can defile us, Jesus says, because it does not enter our mind. However, there are many things that do enter our minds from without which can defile us in God's eyes by appealing to our lusts and pride: various entertainments, the internet, advertising, worldly books, magazines, newspapers, worldly conversation, gossip, and false teaching.

These all have the potential to adversely affect our minds. Drugs and alcohol also have the potential to enslave us. There are many people in the Bible who succumbed to external temptations that appealed to their desires and so enticed them, as James says (1:13-15). Examples are Eve and Adam, Judah, Balaam, and David.

These examples of Bible teaching about the Holy Spirit, and about what defiles, are intended as a gentle admonition to use the words of God with care and respect for their context. We often hear talks in which many individual verses or just phrases from verses, out of different Bible books, are read or screened — often without attention to their context, which determines their meaning. We seem to be losing, in our zealous use of Scripture to prove our point, the essential gift of explaining the meaning of Bible teaching in its full context.

Brothers and sisters, this ought not to be. We must not treat the Bible as a mere collection of proof texts in support of our beliefs. It is the revelation of the mind and purpose of our Creator. This is His revelation to us. It reaches its perfection in His making known to us the mind and life of our Lord Jesus Christ. Its purpose is to teach us to truly know our God and His Son, so that we are drawn to them in faith and love (John 6:44,45). Sound knowledge of Bible truth gives us this, if it does not make us proud or complacent or condescending to others. God Himself, and our being made in His image, is the ultimate truth. His Son is the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6-11).

Like the inspired Bible writer, John, let us not speak of “having the truth”, but of knowing Him who is true and of being in Him who is true, in His Son, Jesus Christ (1 John 5:20). May that be the object of our efforts to rightly divide His precious Word.

Bob Green (Cambridge, ON)

(Concluded)

Note:

1. *The 66 Books of the Bible*, by Bro. Norman Owen, published by *The Christadelphian* in 1997, is based on articles published in *The Glad Tidings*. It is beautifully illustrated, indexed with many added details, and provides a very helpful, instructive introduction to each book of the Bible.

Bible Study

Little Words that Mean a Lot (1) Prologue

“He who rejects me, and does not receive my words, has that which judges him — the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day” (John 12:48, NKJV).

The fact that the “words” that we speak will judge us “in the last day” is surely a frightening thought. There is great power in the words that we utter, for we know that “out of the same mouth come praise and cursing” (James 3:10, NKJV). Counter to this fearful admonition is the comforting thought that proper use of our words can be spiritually uplifting: “A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver” (Prov. 25:11, NKJV). Words provide the path for us to learn the Truth and set us on the way to salvation. On the other hand, words spoken in ignorance of God’s way, or in hateful anger, can lead us down the “broad road that leads to destruction”. Every time we speak there can be huge consequences; a few little words that we utter can commend or condemn us!

That we must be extremely careful about our use of language is surely more or less apparent to every one of us. It is equally unmistakable that our ultimate salvation is tied up in the utterances that come out of our mouths: “Not what goes into the mouth defiles a man; but what comes out of the mouth, this defiles a man” (Matt. 15:11, NKJV).

But what is not so obvious is: In what language are we to define the meaning of our words? Is the Bible strictly talking about only the original text languages? Does the Bible mean that only those who can read and comprehend ancient Hebrew, Greek and Aramaic can truly understand what God intends for us to express? There are many who think that this is the case. I once got into a debate with a clergyman who insisted that only one who had studied ancient Biblical languages was qualified to interpret and teach Scripture. He felt it was beneath his dignity to carry the debate any further when he starting losing his ground based on my quotations from the King James Bible.

Some in our own community rely heavily on interpreting their views based on their studies from Biblical concordances such as Strong’s or Young’s. While these are certainly powerful aids to help us more fully comprehend the word of God, surely we must also realize that a period of some 1800 years had passed from the age of the apostles till Strong’s. Nevertheless, while early believers did not have this resource they still needed to choose their speech and base their understanding of the Word of God in accordance with the Scriptures.

The Reformation made the Scriptures readily available in the vernacular. There can be no doubt that the King James Bible (also commonly known as the Authorized Version) had a profound effect on spreading the Word of God to the common

people further and wider than ever before. It has often been said that the KJV is the only book written by a committee that has made sense! However, it is also no secret that the English language has changed immensely since the KJV was first issued in 1611. I personally don't know anyone who speaks English the way it is written in the KJV. Modern English has become the most expressive and most complex language in the world — and also the one language almost uniformly spoken and understood by educated people throughout the world. The complexity of the English language and its diversity is amply demonstrated by noting the following quotation:

The statistics of English are astonishing. Of all the world's languages (which now number some 2,700), it is arguably the richest in vocabulary. The compendious Oxford English Dictionary lists about 500,000 words; and a further half-million technical and scientific terms remain uncatalogued. According to traditional estimates, neighboring German has a vocabulary of about 185,000 and French fewer than 100,000, including such Franglais as le snacque-barre and le hit-parade.¹

This poses the question: if a few little words can condemn, or commend us, how do we really define words so we know exactly what they mean? A corollary to this question must be evident from the quote above, namely that words don't always map one to one in translating from one language to another. How then do we make sure that we are truly understanding and expressing correct thoughts? Let us consider some of the issues that are involved in exactly defining the meaning of a word:

- (a) Language is not a static thing. The meaning of a word can evolve and can connote something very different today from what it meant in 1611. In short, the meaning of a word can change with time.
- (b) A word might still exist in a scholarly dictionary, but become archaic. Hence its meaning is no longer understood by most people.
- (c) The word(s) used to describe something may be very different, even in the same language, depending on local idiom. In short, the same word might define something very different in Vancouver than it does in Ann Arbor.
- (d) As we have alluded to previously: in translating from one language to another it may be extremely difficult to find an exactly equivalent meaning for a particular word.

I will illustrate what I mean for each of these issues with some specific examples.

“Evolving” words

Consider the word “barbarian”. As used by first century Jews, it generally meant anyone not a Jew, although civilized Greeks were sometimes considered separately. Good examples of this are the way the apostle used this word in Acts 28:4, Romans 1:14, and 1 Corinthians 14:11. The NIV chooses to avoid the word “barbarian” in all these cases, but retains it in Colossians 3:11, where no doubt the translators felt the sense was equivalent to the modern way we would use it in

North America. The modern definition of “barbarian” is generally considered to be “one who is an extremely aggressive or violent person”. The word “barbarian” is also sometimes used as a slang expression describing an uncultured, uncouth person. Hence, while the KJV on occasion equates “barbarian” to foreigner, we would be extremely tactless to use the word in that sense today.

Another example is the use of the word “intercourse”, which we find sometimes in the writings of our 19th century brethren. In the 19th century the primary (and almost exclusive) meaning of this word was: communication or exchanges between people or groups, especially “conversation or social activity”.² Obviously, I hardly need to point out that this is not the primary meaning today. Sometimes reading 19th century literature, where this word is used, can lead to acute embarrassment where none was intended.

Archaic words

A few years ago I was conducting a baptism interview of a young lady who had grown up in our Sunday school. She was quite an accomplished young person. She was (and still is) a dedicated Bible student and well read in the Truth, as well as at the top of her class at the university. I asked her to briefly describe how our Lord Jesus Christ was a “propitiation” for our sins? A puzzled look came over her face and she turned to me and said, “I have no idea what you mean by propitiation!” The word simply wasn’t part of her vocabulary, nor is it for most people in America. When was the last time you heard that word in common speech, or even from the platform? I recently asked 25 brothers and sisters at random (not all in my own ecclesia) and only two (a brother and sister in their seventh decade) were able to define it correctly.

Apparently the NIV translators agree that the word is archaic; they have used alternate language in all three places that it appears in the KJV.³ The NKJV on the other hand retains “propitiation” in all three instances. Ironically, most of the brothers and sisters that I queried used the NKJV or KJV, but still didn’t know what the word meant — in fact, a significant sample (about half) thought the word wasn’t in the Bible. This points out something else about archaic words; namely, if a word isn’t in common usage then our retentive memory isn’t reinforced by repetition. Thus, retaining knowledge of it fades quickly even when we may have read the word occasionally in our Bible studies. This is especially true for a word such as “propitiation”, which appears only three times in the New Testament.

Another archaic word that is a challenge to define, as well as to pronounce, is “concupiscence”. This word also appears only three times⁴ in the KJV. There is no minority opinion in this case, with both the NIV and NKJV omitting this word. Strong’s defines the word as “a longing (especially for what is forbidden)”; an American English dictionary defines the word as “powerful feelings of physical desire”.⁵ But neither the Strong’s nor the common dictionary tell us what the object of that desire was all about. We might suspect that it has to do with sexual immorality, but at least in one case (Col. 3:5) fornication is already mentioned separately in the same verse. Hence, either the translators were being redundant or “concupiscence” means something other than illicit sexual desire.

In the cases of “propitiation” and “concupiscence” we find ourselves dealing with archaic words that only appear a few times, but there are other cases where the translators, in updating the English of the 17th-century King James Version to the late 20th-century American version, had far more numerous challenges. Take the words “transgress” and its derivatives “transgression” and “transgressions”. These appear 14, 50 and 47 times, respectively, in the KJV. But they are entirely omitted in the NIV. Finally, the word “wrath” appears an astounding 194 times in the AV, but not once in the NIV.

“Fornication” is another archaic word that is difficult to translate. It appears 32 times in the KJV, but is entirely absent in the NIV translation. It is a difficult word to fathom at times since it can refer to a number of different ideas ranging from general sexual immorality, to promiscuity, adultery or homosexuality. It is a word however, that once led someone to an interest in Christ. I was teaching a particularly unruly class at school one day, many years ago. In my frustration I finally blurted out to the class something to the effect that *they didn't seem very interested in physics, and that fornication seemed to be the only thing on their minds*. This appeared to draw nothing but blank expressions from the class, so I dismissed them with the hope that things would be better the next session. But after class one of the students lingered behind and came up to ask me if I was a Bible student. I replied yes and asked what led him to ask such a question. He quickly replied, *“Because only a Bible student would know the word ‘fornication’!”* This led to a discussion on the Bible and an invitation to attend our ecclesial Bible class, which he did for the next couple of years until he graduated. This was more than 30 years ago; I doubt such word recognition on the part of a young person would be the same today.⁶

These few examples should suffice to illustrate how words eventually disappear from common usage and become archaic. Nevertheless, the ideas expressed by such words have to be replaced by translators — while at the same time somehow not destroying the sense of the text.

Idiomatic expressions

These are words or phrases that have different meanings, even in the same language, depending on the cultural connections. For example, an Englishman faced with a tough situation might describe it with the cricket expression “a sticky wicket” (at least I think that's what he might mean!) — while an American might describe the same situation with a baseball expression, such as “two outs in the bottom of the ninth”.

Then again, a can of fizzy beverage is a “soda” on the east coast of the USA, but “pop” in the Midwest. When we lived in Italy I was constantly making idiomatic errors, having learned my Italian from textbooks and not from the street language of Milan where we were living. I found out that using the word “automobile” to retrieve your vehicle from a parking lot attendant would produce nothing but a blank look. To a Milanese an automobile was “una machina”, and that doesn't literally translate as “a machine” either! The meaning of “machina” in Milan can only be appreciated if you can also envision the passion with which the word is

spoken. To a Milanese an automobile was (and probably still is) an extension of his soul.

Now what about the Bible? There are a number of idiomatic expressions that sometimes give us fits if we are not steeped in the whole counsel of God's Word. Taking such idiomatic expressions out of context can cause great misunderstanding. Two examples that come to mind are Genesis 4:7 ("sin is crouching at your door") and, of course, the first few verses of the Gospel of John ("in the beginning"). We should not take either of these passages literally, or else we will end up not really appreciating their meaning.

Finding exact equivalents

Lastly, comes the challenge of finding the exact meaning of a word in translating from one language to another. English is probably the world's most expressive language, with many shades of meaning possible for various ideas. Yet there are times when this is not true, and trying to map the text from an ancient language to English leaves the translator with a perplexing shortage of words to express the idea. Two examples of this readily come to mind. The first is the various names of God in the Hebrew of the Old Testament: when translated into English they lose some of their subtlety. The KJV at least gave the reader a clue to the beauty and majesty of the original by using various spelling devices, i.e., "LORD" (all capitals) for "YHWH", "God" for "El", and so on. Modern English versions of the Old Testament have progressively obscured these shades of meaning and often leave the reader virtually ignorant of the variations in the original.

A second example is the English word "love". "Love" is used to interpret three different Greek words. Apparently, just as it is said that Eskimos have numerous words for "snow" (something essential to their culture), likewise Mediterranean people seem to have more words for expressing different forms of passion (something apparently not so readily embraced in the colder climes of northern Europe). In Greek three words express various shades of passion, and these are all wrapped up in the one English word "love". The Greeks use the word "eros" to express erotic love, "phileo" to mean friendship (found in "Philadelphia", meaning brotherly love), and finally "agape", which best translates as deep spiritual love. When more than one of these Greek words appears in the same narrative we sometimes have difficulty deciphering the exact meaning of the text. A good example of this is the dialogue in the Gospel of John (John 21:15-17), where Jesus asks Peter if he loves ("agape") him and Peter keeps answering him that he does love ("phileo") him. The subtle difference in the Greek text is completely lost in the English translation.

Conclusion

Given all these issues about finding the exact meaning of Scriptural words, how then does the Bible convey God's Truth irrespective of time, culture, and language of translation? Do we really need to be specialists in ancient Hebrew, Greek and Aramaic, as the clergy of some orthodox religions claim, in order to properly understand the Word? In the course of this study we will show emphatically that

this is **not** the case. The basic principles necessary for our salvation are expressed as conceptual ideas illustrated by various literary forms ranging from history, to biography, poetry, prophecy, and dramatic narrative. This means that, in the end, we can truly understand the things necessary for our salvation regardless of what language we happen to know, or what time in history we were born, or what are our cultural circumstances. We intend to show that ***little words can mean a lot!***

John C. Bilello (Ann Arbor, MI)

Notes:

1. Robert McCrum, William Cran, and Robert MacNeil, *The Story of English*. New York: Penguin, 1992.
2. *Encarta World English Dictionary*, 1999 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved. Developed for Microsoft by Bloomsbury Publishing Place.
3. Romans 3:25 (“sacrifice of atonement”); 1 John 2:2 and 4:10 (“atoning sacrifice”).
4. Romans 7:8; Colossians 3:5; 1 Thessalonians 4:5.
5. *Encarta World English Dictionary*.
6. However, the word “fornication” is not totally unknown to our decadent western world. We have just noticed an advertisement for a new cable TV series, premiering this summer, entitled... “Californication”! Surely a “sign of the times”, and a warning: Editor.

Difficult Words in the King James Version

*Words have their histories, like men. Like them, they live and die. A word that meant one thing may, hundreds of years afterwards, mean something very different. A word may, at last, cease to be used at all. In the King James Version (that first appeared in 1611) there are many words that now, after the lapse of almost 400 years, have changed their meanings or have altogether gone out of common use. Others have **somewhat** changed their meanings. The following are some old-fashioned and difficult words to be found in the King James Version, with their present-day meaning:*

- “Abomination”: An object that is disgusting or contemptible, particularly an idol.
- “Acquit”: To hold guiltless.
- “Ague”: A fever.
- “Alleluia”: Praise the LORD!
- “Ambassage”: The same word is translated “message” in Luke 19:14.
- “Apothecary”: One who makes perfumes or ointments.
- “Asswaged”: Sank down, subsided.
- “Astonied”: Astonished, or surprised.
- “Audience”: The Hebrew word means the ear. Abraham spoke in the ear of the children of Heth; we might say “in the hearing of”. “To give audience” means to listen.
- “Barbarian”: An alien or foreigner.
- “Barbarous”: Foreign.
- “Baser”: “Certain lewd fellows of the baser sort” (Acts 17:5); that is, wicked men who hung about the market place; vile men of the rabble.
- “Bewrayeth”: Betrays.
- “Bishoprick”: Guardianship; the office of a bishop, or overseer.

- “Breeches”: Pants, or trousers.
- “Brutish”: Stupid.
- “Buffet”: To strike with a clenched fist.
- “By and by”: At once, immediately.
- “Carriage”: That which is carried: baggage. We now say luggage.
- “Casement”: Window.
- “Chapter”: The head or top of a column.
- “Charger”: Dish, bowl, or plate in the OT (Num. 7), where silver “chargers” are mentioned. But in the NT (Matt. 14; Mark 6) the Greek word “pinax” means platter
- “To be at charges”: To be responsible for paying.
- “Cleanness of teeth”: Famine.
- “Cockle”: A weed resembling wheat (Job 31:40).
- “Contemn”: To despise or mock.
- “Convert”: To turn again.
- “Coulter”: Iron agricultural tool.
- “Dam”: A mother.
- “Divers”: Diverse, different, or varied.
- “Effectual”: Effective.
- “Emerods”: Tumors; hemorrhoids.
- “Ensample”: Example.
- “Ensue”: Pursue (1 Pet. 3:11).
- “Eschew”: Avoid; turn aside.
- “Espy”: See, behold.
- “Exactor”: Overseer.
- “Fain”: Gladly.
- “Fens”: Marshes (Job 40:21).
- “Fetch a compass”: To make a circuit.
- “Fillets”: Curtain rods placed between columns (Exod. 27:10).
- “Fitches”: A kind of grain.
- “Flagon”: Bottle; vessel.
- “Fuller”: Launderer; one who washes clothes.
- “Garner”: Granary, barn.
- “Gin”: Snare or noose.
- “Graven”: Engraved.
- “Grisled”: Spotted or speckled.
- “Hart”: Deer.
- “Hireling”: A day laborer, or contract laborer.
- “Hoary”: White.
- “Incontinent”: Unbridled; uncontrollable.
- “Inditing”: Overflowing, boiling over.
- “Inordinate”: Without restraint; immoderate.
- “Instant”: Insistent, steadfast, urgent.
- “Jot, Yod”: The smallest Hebrew letter. Equivalent to “iota” in the Greek. Both correspond roughly to the English letter “I”, but the “yod” is often transliterated “J” in our Bible. The names Jerusalem, Jesus, Isaac, Isaiah, Judah, Israel, John, James, Jacob, etc., all began with this letter.
- “Kine”: Cows, cattle.
- “Knop”: An old way of writing “knob”. In connection with the tabernacle, the knops were carved imitations of the buds of flowers.
- “Lade”: Burden, load.
- “Latchet”: The thong attaching the sandal to the foot.
- “Laver”: Washbasin.
- “Lees”: Sediment.
- “Let”: In a few passages only, it means ‘hindered’ (Exod. 5:4; Isa. 43:13; Rom. 1:13; 2 Thes. 2:7).
- “Lewdness”: Villainy, wickedness, crime.
- “Liketh”: Pleases.
- “Listeth”: Chooses.

- “Lively”: Living.
- “Lucre”: Gain.
- “Mansion”: Abiding place.
- “Mattock”: Hoe; spade.
- “Maul”: A club (Prov. 25:18).
- “Meat”: Food of any kind. In the RV the words “meal offering” have been substituted for meat offering. This expresses the sense better.
- “Meet”: Sometimes this means: agreeable, fit, proper.
- “Mess”: Portion. (Soldiers were once — and still? — served meals at the “mess hall”).
- “Mete”: To measure.
- “Meteyard”: The English means to measure by the yard, or a yard measure. The Hebrew (Lev. 19:35) is best translated by the word “measure” only.
- “Minish”: Diminish.
- “Minister”: Servant.
- “Mite”: A very small coin.
- “Mote”: A minute particle of dust; a speck (Matt. 7:3).
- “Mufflers”: Veils (Isa. 3:19).
- “Murrain”: Pestilence, plague.
- “Necromancer”: One who inquires of the dead, a “medium”.
- “Neesings”: Sneezing (Job 41:18).
- “Nether”: Lower.
- “Nethermost”: Lowest.
- “Not a whit”: Not the least bit.
- “Occupy”: To do business, to trade.
- “Occupiers”: Traders.
- “Offence”: In many places, a stumbling block, “skandalon” (the original of our word “scandal”).
- “Offscouring”: Scum; filth.
- “Ouches”: Sockets; settings for gems.
- “Overlived”: Outlived.
- “Paps”: Breasts.
- “Paramours”: Lovers.
- “Peradventure”: Perhaps; it may be.
- “Pilled”: Peeled, or stripped of skin or bark.
- “Poll”: To cut hair.
- “Potsherd”: A piece of broken pottery.
- “Pottage”: That which is prepared in a pot.
- “Prating”: Babbling, chattering.
- “Presbytery”: An assembly of elders.
- “Presently”: In the present moment; now.
- “Printed”: Engraved, “inscribed” (RV).
- “Privy”: Aware of (sometimes).
- “Proper”: Goodly, comely.
- “Proselyte”: “One who has come to”, therefore a convert to Judaism.
- “Provender”: Food for livestock or cattle.
- “Provoked”: Stirred up, stimulated, encouraged.
- “Quick”: Alive.
- “Quicken”: To make alive.
- “Quit”: Behave, act.
- “Ranges”: Ranks in 2 Kings 11:8.
- “Rank”: Fat in Genesis 41:5-7.
- “Ravin”: Plunder.
- “Reins”: The kidneys, regarded as the seat of joy, pain, etc.
- “Reprobate”: Refuse.
- “Rereward”: Towards the rear; rear guard.
- “Ringstraked”: Streaked with rings.
- “Riotous”: Gluttonous.
- “Satyr”: Male goat.
- “Scall”: An eruption on the head or face.

- “Scrabbled”: Scrawled, or scratched (1 Sam. 21:13).
- “Scrip”: A small bag or wallet.
- “Seethe”: To boil.
- “Sherd”: A shred, potsherd, or broken piece of pottery.
- “Silverlings”: Pieces of silver.
- “Sith”: Since.
- “Sleight”: Trickery, deceit.
- “Slow bellies”: Idle gluttons.
- “Sod, sodden”: Boil, boiled.
- “Sottish”: Foolish.
- “Staggered”: “Wavered” (RV).
- “Stomacher”: Robe (Isa. 3:24).
- “Strawed”: Strewed, scattered.
- “Surfeiting”: Intoxication, overindulgence.
- “Taches”: Hooks, fasteners.
- “Tables”: Writing tablets covered with wax.
- “Tabret”: A small tambourine.
- “Tell”: To number, count.
- “Temperance”: Self-control.
- “Tempt”: To test, try, put to the proof.
- “Tetrarch”: Ruler over a fourth part.
- “Thought”: “Anxiety” in Matthew 6:25.
- “Tire”: Turban; head ornament.
- “Tired”: Adorned with a turban or headdress; attired.
- “Tittle”: The very small mark or “point” added to one Hebrew letter to distinguish it from another.
- “Torment”: To torture.
- “Trow”: To think, imagine.
- “Trump”: Trumpet.
- “Twain”: An old form from the Anglo-Saxon “twegen”, meaning “two”; hence the Scotch “twa”, and the English “twainty” or twenty.
- “Unction”: Anointing.
- “Unperfect”: Imperfect.
- “Untoward”: Not toward; that is, inclined in the opposite direction.
- “Utter”: Outer (sometimes).
- “Vagabond”: A wanderer.
- “Vile”: Worthless.
- “Ward”: Prison; custody.
- “Ware”: Aware.
- “Wax”: Grow, increase.
- “Wen”: A running sore.
- “Whet”: Sharpen.
- “Whit”: A little bit, a small particle. “Every whit”, wholly. “Not a whit”, not at all.
- “Wilily”: Craftily.
- “Wimples”: Cloaks (Isa. 3:22).
- “Wise”: Way. “On this wise”, in this way.
- “Wist”: Knew.
- “Wit”: To know.
- “Withs”: Cords, ropes (Judg. 16).
- “Wot”: Knew.
- “Wroth”: Angry, wrathful.
- “Yokefellow”: Fellow-laborer.

(Selected, and adapted)

“The work of translating the Bible presents special difficulties. Since the Scriptures are a source of information and inspiration, Bible translations must be accurate as well as felicitous. They must be suitable for rapid scanning as well as for detailed study, and suitable for reading aloud to large and small audiences. Ideally, they should be intelligible and even inviting to readers of all ages, of all degrees of education, and of almost all levels of intelligence. Such an ideal is, of course, virtually impossible to attain” (Bruce Metzger).

Letters

“Greater lov’d ye canna’ be!”

Dear Bro. George,

I think you should appoint me as your Scottish editor! Your title of the golfing piece [July issue] would be better rendered, “Will ye no’ come back again?... greater *loo’ed* ye cannae be...”

For all that, I enjoy the magazine very much! God bless!

Bro. Hamilton Wilson
(Glasgow Kelvin, Scotland)

Dear Bro. Hamilton,

Ach mon... wud na’ tha greet Robbie Burns hae sed, “For a’ that...” — no’ “For all that”?

Ne’erth’less, good point. Your editor this side of the Atlantic is a southern boy — much like Bobby Jones himself (he was a Georgian, and I’m, as you may have guessed, a Texan). Y’all may recognize that, to a Texan, even the northern United States presents a linguistic challenge. Canada is another challenge yet — and then England is surely a further challenge of the third order.

That leaves the spoken word of the Scots as a linguistic conundrum of at least the fourth degree of difficulty.

Never mind Hebrew and Greek: we native speakers of that variegated tongue known as “English” have more than enou’ on our plate, just trying to understand one another!

George

“Decently and in order”

Dear Bro. George,

Thank you for all the time you put into the *Tidings*, and for all the interesting articles you have provided us.

In response to the May editorial entitled “Decently and in order”: I am unclear as to the connection between God meeting with man in the tabernacle/temple of the Old Testament, and the memorial meeting that was instituted in the New Testament to remember our Lord’s death and resurrection.

It is my understanding that, through Jesus’ death, the Holy of Holies was opened up to all believers, and we now enjoy ongoing and open fellowship with the Father and the Son at any time and in any place.

I can’t think of where in Scripture the breaking of bread is considered to be our specific time to fellowship with our Father. Remember Jesus’ sacrifice, yes, and

praise and worship our Father, but my understanding is that our fellowship is always there. This is why we don't carry our sins with us all week to be forgiven at the breaking of bread. Rather, this is an ongoing everyday process.

I don't think that the Mosaic mode of worship of the Old Testament can really be transposed onto our remembrance service of our Saviour.

As an aside, I would also like to comment on the state of mind necessary for the memorial meeting. I do agree that it is important to give our best, but as a mother of two young children, sometimes it is nigh on impossible to be mentally calm and focused when the emblems are passed around. We do our best to maintain peace and quiet, and this often absorbs us entirely. For this reason, I praise God that my access to Him is open at any time and not just on Sunday morning.

Sincerely,
Rachel Perrott

Dear Sis. Rachel,

Thanks for your letter.

The connection I sought to make was with the words themselves — “decently and in order”. Seeking out the Hebrew equivalent for the Greek “setting in order” (1 Cor. 14:40) led to the detailed descriptions of the numerous features in the Old Testament worship of Yahweh. But I did not mean to imply that there was an exact correlation between the tabernacle/temple worship and the Memorial Meeting. Nevertheless, there are surely points of comparison. For example, in the tabernacle worship, man might come into the presence of God through offered sacrifice; likewise, the sacrifice of Jesus Christ makes it possible for us to come into the presence of God today.

*As there are points of comparison, so — as you say — there are points of contrast. Even though the Memorial Meeting is a very important service, it is not the **only** time one may approach God, or seek forgiveness of sins. But it is — because of its being commanded, and because of its regular repetition in our ecclesial life — a very special time, and one that ought not to be neglected, if it is at all possible to attend and participate.*

Some differences of opinion fall into the category of an “either-or” discussion. But I don't think this is one of those. This is more of a “not only — but also” discussion. In other words, we do not have to choose between coming into God's presence at the Memorial Meeting, or not coming at all. Instead, we may not only beseech His forgiveness at the breaking of bread, along with our brothers and sisters, and in generally quiet meditation; but we may also seek His blessing morning and evening, in a bustling household or a secluded park. God is always there.

However, for most of us, and for most of the time, the Memorial Meeting is the best place (even if not the only place!) to approach the Throne of Grace. And, considering the Old Testament examples cited, it is surely a more effective “meeting place” when Paul's advice (“decently and in order”) is followed — as much as is reasonable.

George

Current Events

News from the Promised Land

The Old City of Jerusalem, 40 years later

Four decades after the battle that liberated the Old City of Jerusalem during the Six Days War, Israeli leaders still refer glowingly to Jerusalem as the “eternal, undivided capital” of the Jewish state. But the motto is accurate only as myth. Even as they celebrated the 40th anniversary of the war, a growing number of Israelis are voicing the once unthinkable: Jerusalem may never truly be united. The city is now Israel’s poorest metropolis; ambitious young people prefer making their living in the country’s high-tech corridor along the Mediterranean. A tremendous gap in the standard of living divides Jerusalem’s Arabs and Jews, who only rarely mix. A concrete barrier cuts through the city, locking more than 50,000 East Jerusalemites outside the wall. Not a single foreign nation keeps its embassy there anymore. “The story of Jerusalem is a story of decay and deterioration,” says historian Tom Segev. “All these dreams of 1967 were actually illusions.”

Overall, roughly 300,000 Jews have left the city since 1967. According to a demographic study released in June by the Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies, 17,200 people left Jerusalem last year, while only 10,900 moved in. With Arab birthrates rising faster than Jewish ones, demographers predict the Jewish-to-Arab ratio in the city will be roughly even within 20 years.

Both the rising violence and the demographic trends led Israel to construct the long, winding barrier that now surrounds and divides Jerusalem. Yet the wall creates new problems. According to a Red Cross report, the Israeli government has shown a “general disregard” for Palestinian human rights by carving out “isolated Palestinian enclaves” in the city. The demographic realities, combined with the resentment created by the wall, are “like a small atomic device,” says Jerusalem rights lawyer Danny Seidemann. “It can blow up at any minute,” adds Segev.

“I am going to make Jerusalem a cup that sends all the surrounding peoples reeling... When all the nations of the earth are gathered against her, I will make Jerusalem an immovable rock for all the nations. All who try to move it will injure themselves” (Zech. 12:2,3).

Faking antiquities

(Jerusalem, May 2007) Testimony in a Jerusalem district courtroom is giving a rare glimpse into the shadowy world of Biblical antiquities.

Three of Israel’s most respected experts in ancient archeological treasures are on trial, charged with 18 counts of fraud, receiving money through deception, damaging antiquities, and other violations of Israeli antiquities laws.

The defendants are accused of faking a range of artifacts, including the burial box of Jesus' brother, a wine decanter used in Solomon's Temple, and ancient seal impressions and inscriptions — some of which were sold for hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Since the trial began in September 2005, witnesses have described furtive encounters with Arab grave-robbers, international smuggling, and large transactions based on a handshake. Lawyers involved in the case expect court proceedings to continue for at least another year.

Oded Golan, the first accused, came to worldwide attention in 2002 as the man behind a sensational discovery that rocked the world of Biblical antiquities: a first-century stone ossuary, or burial box, with an ancient Hebrew inscription identifying it as the last resting place of "James, son of Joseph, brother of Jesus."

The ossuary was exhibited in Toronto and hailed by scholars as the first physical link ever discovered to the family of Jesus. But when the two-foot long limestone box returned to Israel in March 2003, it was seized by the Israel Antiquities Authority and submitted to a committee of experts to determine its authenticity.

Meanwhile, the Antiquities Authority was already investigating Golan in connection with another item, the Joash stone. This was a black stone tablet with an ancient Hebrew inscription that appeared to record the renovation of Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem by King Joash in the ninth century BC. If genuine, it would be the first physical evidence of the temple ever recovered.

The committee of experts was asked to rule on both items and in 2003 announced that both were modern fakes. Golan was arrested on suspicion of violating Israel's antiquities laws and repeatedly interrogated while police raided his apartment and two other properties in Tel Aviv. There they seized a range of tools and materials that they said could be used to fake ancient artifacts.

In 2004 the Israeli police indicted Golan and two others. Charges against the two others were later dropped. Shuka Dorfman, director of the Israel Antiquities Authority, described the charges against Golan and his alleged colleagues as "the tip of the iceberg." "These forgeries have worldwide repercussions," he said. "They were an attempt to change the history of the Jewish and Christian people."

Shaul Naim, head of the two-year police investigation, said: "This was fraud of a sophistication and expertise which was previously unknown. They took authentic items and added inscriptions to make them worth millions."

Naim said forgers managed to fake inscriptions, decorations, and even the patina (the thin sediment created over centuries by moisture collecting on the items). "We believe that there are many more items in museums and collections around the world which are yet to be identified," he said.

Golan rejects all the charges against him and accuses the Israeli authorities of a witch-hunt, insisting that all the items are genuine.

"There is not one grain of truth in the fantastic allegations relating to me," Golan said in an interview.

Committee protests dig at Temple Mount

The Waqf Muslim religious trust is digging a ditch from the northern side of the Temple Mount compound to the Dome of the Rock as a prelude to infrastructure work in the area, generating protests from archaeologists.

The dig has been approved by the police, but the Israel Antiquities Authority declined to respond to the Waqf's excavations and would not comment on whether one of its archaeologists had approved the move.

The Committee for the Prevention of Destruction of Antiquities on the Temple Mount, a political group comprised of archaeologists and intellectuals, criticized the use of a tractor for excavation at the Temple Mount "without real, professional and careful archaeological supervision involving meticulous documentation."

Speaking for the committee on July 10, archaeologist Eilat Mazar said, "There is disappointment at the turning of a blind eye and the ongoing contempt for the tremendous archaeological importance of the Temple Mount."

At the beginning of the year, Israeli excavations near the Temple Mount, part of a plan to rebuild the Mugrabi bridge walkway, near the Robinson Arch, led to violent protests from Arabs in Israel and around the world.

The Pharaohs' Fortress

The largest known fortress from the days of the pharaohs has been unearthed near the Suez Canal, archaeologists announced in August.

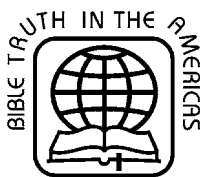
The massive fortress, discovered at a site called Tell-Huba, includes the graves of soldiers and horses and once featured a giant water-filled moat, scientists said.

The discovery dates back to ancient Egypt's struggle to reconquer the northern Sinai Peninsula from an occupying force known as the Hyksos. The campaign against the Hyksos was depicted in etchings on the ancient walls of the Karnak Temple, 450 miles south of Cairo.

Archaeologists said the new find shows those stone-chiseled tales to be surprisingly accurate. "The bones of humans and horses found in the area attest dramatically to the reality of such battles," said Zahi Hawass, director general of Egypt's Supreme Council for Antiquities. "Previously, the area was known only from depictions in temples elsewhere in Egypt. We had no firsthand evidence of what was happening there during the period of the pharaohs."

The discovery was part of a broader effort called the North Sinai Archaeological Project, which was started in 1991 to identify and protect archaeological sites that were threatened by an industrial agriculture project.

The fort, called Fort Tjaru (or Tharo), was unearthed by a team led by Abdul Maqsood of the antiquities council. The fort dates from the 18th and 19th Dynasties (estimated as somewhere between 1560 to 1081 BC).



Bible Mission News

Truth Corps 2007 Vacation Bible School Activity

With the encouragement and aid of the Portland, OR, Ecclesia, the Truth Corps was invited to participate in a Vacation Bible School for children aged five to twelve. The School ran for a period of five days during the second week of the team's stay in Portland.

The theme that was selected was "Bible Heroes". The first step was to select the Bible characters to be used for the classes each day from the list presented to the team. Truth Corps members volunteered to present the lessons, organize the games, and do the crafts.

Then the timeline for the week was established, using the volunteers associated with the particular activities.

The morning began with registration, where we ensured that the parents identified themselves and provided names of those who would be picking up their children. After registration on the first day, we established some ground rules for the children. These were written on a large sheet of paper and hung on the wall, so that they could be reviewed at any time.

The daily program consisted of a 45-minute Bible story and worksheets. This was followed by a short snack break. The groups then split for outside games and inside craft activities, lasting for 30 minutes. The crafts were based upon the Bible story for the day and, where possible, the theme was also incorporated into the games.

The last period of the morning for all groups was devoted to practicing for a play. This lasted for approximately thirty minutes.

Several families came to the VBS who had had no previous contact with Christadelphians. We were very pleased to have the children return each day eager to participate in the activities. This was a testimony to the enthusiasm and hard work of the Truth Corps.

The highlight of the week came on Friday evening, when a carnival and potluck was held. The ecclesia handled all the food requirements, and the Truth Corps organized the games and the play that was presented at the end of the evening. Several of the games were based upon the Bible characters considered during the week. This included "pin the hair on Samson", throwing beanbags at Goliath, a pie-eating contest, and face painting.

The Portland Ecclesia had a number of costumes that were used to present a full dress-up play based on the story of Elijah on Mount Carmel, complete with a fiery altar.

Although it was difficult to obtain an accurate head count, it was estimated that at least 60 adults, together with children, attended. It was exciting to note that several of the visiting parents contributed food for the potluck and stayed for the whole program.

In all, the Vacation Bible School appeared to be a great success, as well as spiritually uplifting for all who participated. The undersigned would be happy to forward a copy of the VBS schedule to anyone who is interested.

*Bro. Bob and Sis. Diana Stodel
rwstodel@direct.ca*



2007 Truth Corps members and their team leaders:

Back: Brad Butts, Myra Luckey, Diana Stodel, Bob Stodel

Middle: Nathan Crawford, Becky Hill, James Robinson, Amanda Baines

Front: Katie Schlageter, Ethan Bearden, Sarah Bennett, Jeff Lange

“My Experiences”: Truth Corps 2007

During their stay at the Idyllwild Bible School at the end of July, we asked this year's Truth Corps members what Truth Corps has meant to them. They have been involved in a Vacation Bible School in Portland, OR, and contact follow-up and preaching efforts in Verdugo Hills, CA; Ozone Park, NY; and Westerly, RI.

Here are their comments, which we hope will inspire more young people to volunteer for next year's team(s), more ecclesias to think about ways to use these enthusiastic young people, and more volunteer leaders to work with them.

“Truth Corps has changed my perspective on what it really means to be God’s servant. Service involves the big things like preaching, the little things like pulling weeds, and the completely unnoticed things like keeping your mouth shut at the proper time. It’s done both when knocking on doors and when sitting beside people in airplanes, when standing on stage and talking at midnight. Truth Corps has meant I understand that being a servant to God consumes your life” (Bro. James Robinson — Hamilton, ON).

“Truth Corps has been an amazing experience so far. I have grown so much spiritually thanks to the remarkable fellowship I’ve been blessed with, within the team and the ecclesias we’ve visited” (Sis. Katie Schlageter — Westerly, RI).

“Truth Corps has meant many things to me. It strengthens your inner character and causes you to create bonds with people young and old. It gives you a new appreciation for God’s Word. Ultimately, it bolsters your faith in God and your reliance on Him” (Bro. Nathan Crawford — Bedford, NS).

“Truth Corps has truly been a gift from God. Every activity you do is focused on the Lord, and really helps you to think more like Christ. It has helped me refocus my life, strengthen my trust in God, and make some really awesome friends. Truth Corps has caused me to look for the prize ahead, the Kingdom. I can’t wait until that day when we will never be separated from our spiritual family” (Bro. Jeff Lange — Norfolk, VA).

“Truth Corps has been one of the greatest experiences of my life. For years I was afraid to go out and preach, but after the first couple of days in Truth Corps I am now excited to go out and preach. I have also formed bonds with people I have met, and I love spending time with all of those on the team. Personally, I have also grown spiritually. I have spent the last month focused entirely on God, and it has helped me tremendously in the focus with which I now see my life” (Sis. Becky Hill — Austin Leander, TX).

“Truth Corps gave me real enthusiasm to preach the good news of the Kingdom, because it helped me to appreciate how exciting the promise of the Kingdom is to those who only see the hopelessness of the world today” (Sis. Sarah Bennett — Victoria, BC).

“Truth Corps has been an amazing experience for me because I have been able to bond with seven young people, close to my own age, as well as two more experienced leaders so far. I have learned many things that I never could imagine, like actually being able to talk about the Word of God to complete strangers. I’ve also learned that many personalities and opinions can work together. We have become a family, and this experience has brought us so much closer to each one. Each person has changed my life for the better” (Sis. Amanda Baines — Sussex, NB).

“It is love, friendship, bonding — a summer of leaving the pains and sorrows of the world and giving it to God, in his service. It is doing something right in my life. It is the greatest experience in my life thus far” (Bro. Ethan Bearden — Austin Leander, TX).

The ecclesias, and all who have met the Truth Corps and participated in various activities with them, thank them all for taking their summer to work with us.

Sis. Jan Berneau, CBMA Publicity



Past and present Truth Corps members at 2007 Idyllwild Bible School

Thisisyourbible.com Website

This month's update on the website brings more good news. The featured question of the month during July was "What do you think about the Bible?" Over **600** people responded, and **466** replied that they believed the Bible is the infallible word of God. Then **323** people took the time to download a pamphlet on the divine origin of the Bible. That pamphlet is only a part of the **2,769** pamphlets that were accessed in July.

During the month there were also **170** questions submitted. These kept Brothers Mike LeDuke and Peter Forbes very busy. The questions generally fall into one of four categories: Bible study, life issues, first principles, and questions about Christadelphians.

Around the middle of July, we were pleased to hear of another baptism as a result of the Thisisyourbible.com website. Bro. Francis Muleso was baptized in South Africa. We think he attended seminars but dropped off, and then discovered the website and started asking questions. He was also sent the DVD but didn't do the correspondence course. Bro. Mike LeDuke answered his questions, and encouraged him to be baptized, as his knowledge level seemed to be quite good — while Bro. Peter Forbes tipped off the local South African CBM to follow up regarding the baptism. We have included a couple of pictures of our new brother.



Baptism of Bro. Francis Muleso in South Africa

Next month we'll follow another couple who were baptized this year. We marvel at how God continues to call those who are looking for the way.

Want to help?

- Visit the website, to find out what it's all about (www.thisisyourbible.com)
- Become an online tutor
- Hand out the business cards available in your ecclesia — let us know if you need more
- Advertise the website in your local newspaper, or as a link on your ecclesia's website

Jan Berneau

A Visit to Costa Rica, and A Wedding in Panama

The ecclesial circumstances and preaching initiatives vary greatly in Latin America. During the month of July we were able to visit two countries in Central America — Costa Rica and Panama — where ecclesias have existed for many years.

Miriam and I arrived at the airport in Alajuela, Costa Rica, on Saturday afternoon, July 14. There we were met by brother Francisco Ramirez. Afterward, his wife (Sis. Gladys), one of their daughters (Ana Leonor), and their granddaughter (Elizabeth) greeted us when we arrived at their home.

The ecclesia in Santa Barbara organized a special Bible class that evening, and there was almost full attendance by members, plus a number of teens and children. The class included lessons from the life of Phinehas, and especially Numbers 25 — the need for decisive action in crisis situations.

Bro. Luke and Sis. Jessica Moss, from the Morecambe Ecclesia, UK, joined us for the trip, arriving Saturday evening. They wanted to gain firsthand exposure to the ecclesial situations in Latin America. They both have some Spanish language abilities, and hope to improve their use of the language.

We were involved with a full day of activities on Sunday — breaking of bread, Sunday school, special CYC in the afternoon, and an advertised special lecture in the evening. The exhortation subject was “A Sound Mind”, the CYC topic was “Friendships”, and the lecture title was “Is Jesus God or the Son of God?” There was good attendance all day (see accompanying photo), along with refreshments and a delicious noon meal! Monday and Tuesday were spent visiting families and discussing a host of ecclesial matters.

On Wednesday, July 18, we moved to Panama, arriving about mid-day. This was a special week for the Colon ecclesia, since Bro. Luis and Sis. Vanessa Sobers were taking care of final preparations for their daughter’s wedding. On Saturday, July 21, Sis. Nishla Sobers married Bro. Ian Neblett (Toronto East, ON), whose family was originally from Guyana.

During the Wednesday afternoon, the four of us took the almost two-hour bus ride across the isthmus from Panama City to Colon for the Colon Ecclesia’s Bible class. Due to the wedding, there were brothers and sisters arriving that week from different parts of North America. Bro. Clive and Sis. Christine Drepaul from New York attended the Colon Bible class as well. Bro. Clive and I both gave shortened Bible class talks for the members and visitors.

Bro. Ken Curry, from the Toronto East Ecclesia, led the wedding service. It was very uplifting to see two young people, from different parts of the world, become one together in the Lord. Their first day together on Sunday was partly spent with the Panama City Ecclesia at the Remembrance Service, luncheon and special lecture! We also attended the Panama City Ecclesia on Sunday, as did many other visitors from the wedding, which really boosted the ecclesia’s numbers. The hall was almost full!

On an average the ecclesial attendance on Sunday is around eight, so the members really appreciated the support, and welcomed us warmly in fellowship, along with a nice meal between the breaking of bread and the lecture! Miriam and I returned to Ontario on Monday, July 23, while Luke and Jessica stayed a few extra days to visit the ecclesia and see some more of Panama.

The ecclesia in Costa Rica and the two ecclesias in Panama appreciate visits very much. They welcome, in particular, Spanish-speaking brethren. The Colon and Panama City ecclesias have only three speaking brethren in each ecclesia. If you are interested in helping in this regard, please contact the undersigned in order to coordinate scheduled visits.

Don Luff
CBMA Linkman,
Panama



**The Costa Rica ecclesia with visitors
Sis. Miriam and Bro. Don Luff,
and Sis. Jessica and Bro. Luke Moss**

"Risk is an essential part of redemption — an essential element of the Christian Gospel. The old story about Jesus at heaven's gate has a ring of truth to it: After his ascension, Jesus comes with the clouds of heaven and arrives at heaven's gate, where he is met by an angel. The angel looks down at the fledgling pre-Pentecost Church and asks,

'What will you do if it doesn't work out?'

Jesus replies,

'I have no other plan.'

*The salvation of the whole world rests precariously at that moment in the hands of a few dozen frightened men and women whose track record is less than encouraging. It is a risky endeavor but one God [along with His Son] is willing to take. Human freedom inevitably involves risk, just as it inevitably involves gradual change and learning (and even a lot of mistakes) rather than instant perfection, but the risk is worth it" (Francis Bridger, **A Charmed Life**, p. 100).*

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 Americas, Domestic Truth Corps, etc. Visit www.cbma.net for an update on current activities as well as to make US dollar on-line donations. Donations by check should be sent c/o Charles Brinkerhoff, 15925 La Ronda Cir., Hacienda Heights, CA 91745-4244.

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

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.

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

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.

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

Spanish language literature is available at P.O. Box 947, Monrovia, CA 91017-0947. 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.

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.

News & Notices

AUSTIN LEANDER, TX

Since our last reporting in June 2006, we have had many visitors from Texas ecclesias. From outside the state, we have had the following visitors: Bro. Dan and Sis. Janet McDonald, and Bro. Aaron McDonald (North Industry, OH), Bro. Philip Morgan (Wanatah, IN), Bro. Ian Prentis (Bedford, UK), Bro. David and Sis. Shawn Bell, and Sis. Pauline Horninger (Detroit Milford Road, MI), Sis. Joanne Haltom (Detroit Royal Oak, MI), Bro. Eldon and Sis. Em Roscoe (Los Angeles, CA), Sis. Pat Sanchez, Sis. Tiffany Bevans, and Sis. Tina Hall (Reseda, CA). We also thank the following brethren for their exhortations: David Styles (Shelburne, ON), Rick Hollenbeck, Sr. (Abilene, TX), Jorge Garcia (Houston Wilshire, TX), Mark Wade (West Houston, TX), and George Booker (Austin South, TX).

We welcome to our ecclesia Sis. Edith Scott, who has been in isolation in Tennessee. We welcome, by transfer from Austin South Ecclesia, Bro. George and Sis. Barbara Booker, and Bro. Adam Booker.

WE also welcome, by transfer from Austin South, Bro. CHRIS and Sis. ALICE MATTHIESEN — who were only very recently baptized there (February 4 and March 4, respectively). The Matthiesens' children, Kayla and Nathan, will also be a welcome addition to our Sunday school.

It is with great joy we have welcomed the following back into fellowship: Sis. Audrey Carlin, Sis. Anita Roberts, and Bro. Lyndell and Sis. Lisa Lucas.

In June Bro. James and Sis. Kristie Blattner were blessed with a daughter, Rylee. Also in June, Bro. Mack and Sis. Lori Lucas celebrated their fiftieth wedding anniversary with a luncheon at our ecclesial hall.

We enjoyed a fall fraternal gathering in December with classes led by Bro. Dean Bailey (Vernon, BC). We were pleased that Sis. Andrea and their daughters were able to accompany him as well.

In March, our ecclesia hosted its spring break youth weekend at T4C. We thank Bre. Jorge Garcia and Kevin Daniels for leading the classes.

Bro. Ethan Bearden and Sis. Becky Hill had the benefit of spending their summer on Truth Corps. We welcome them home after this very beneficial time.

Fred Bearden

BARRIE, ON

Since our last news, the Barrie Ecclesia has been blessed with the baptisms of DAVE and LIZ YEAMAN on September 4, 2004. We rejoice with Bro. Kevin and Sis. Kim Cooper in the births of their two daughters, Annie, August 18, 2004, and Willow, May 21, 2006. We pray that God will bless them, and watch over our new additions to our ecclesia.

The following members have transferred here: Bro. Grant and Sis. Hannah Abel (from Shelburne, ON); Bro. Mike and Sis. Carol Norman (Toronto Church St., ON); and Sis. Sandra Galyish and Sis. Virginia Gould (Port Elgin, ON).

Bro. Dave and Sis. Trudy Perks and Bro. Al Hack have transferred to Toronto West. Bro. Reid and Sis. Pat Ferguson, Bro. Jason Grant, Bro. Aaron Grant, and Sis. Thelma Himmer have transferred to Orangeville. Sis. Muriel Drew and Sis. Margaret Knight have transferred to Peterborough.

We are very excited about receiving ASK support to run the 2008 long-term campaign in the Orillia area. We will be hosting an ecclesial open house on September 22 for interested friends and neighbors, and we welcome anyone who would like to stop by. Our ecclesial sign on Highway 11 is seen by an average of 35,000 vehicles daily, and we continue to post weekly messages to stimulate minds. We remind everyone of our close proximity to Highway 11 and Cottage Country, and welcome any brethren and sisters who are able to visit us.

We have had numerous visitors during the past months. We extend our thanks to all who have visited us, and to the brethren who have exhorted us.

We thank Bro. Walter Perks for serving as recording brother for the past decade. The undersigned is now the recording brother. Please forward all correspondence to 2609 Grand Tamarack Crescent, R.R. #3, Orillia, ON L3V 6H3, or email gabel@rogers.com.

Grant Abel

BEDFORD, NS

Recent visitors have been Bro. David Pearce, Bro. Ken and Sis. Wendy Dickson (Sussex, NB); Bro. Stephen and Sis. Joan Bennett (Victoria, BC); and Sis. Vanessa Thomson (Halifax, NS). You are cordially invited to our study day with Bro. Brian Luke (Adelaide Brighton, AU), Saturday, October 20, 2007, 1:30 pm to 7 pm (supper included) at Grand Lake Community Centre, Oakfield, NS. Contact Bro. Michael Carr 902-820-2532, email buxtoncarr@hotmail.com. The street number for the undersigned is now 31 Borden Street.

Ronald A. A. Hill

BRANTFORD, ON

We commend by transfer Bro. Bob and Sis. Kathy Green to the Cambridge, ON, Ecclesia as of July 29, 2007, as members in good standing. They have been members of the Brantford Ecclesia for many years and will be missed. We hope their continuing sojourn will be fruitful with the Cambridge brethren.

We remind brothers and sisters that the Brantford Thanksgiving Fraternal Gathering will be held October 6, 2007, at the Copetown Community Centre, starting at 12:30 pm. Bro. Brian Luke is to speak on "The Last Days of the Apostle Paul". For details contact Bro. Mike Moore at michael.l.moore@roger.com.

Don Luff

CALGARY, AB

Sis. Cheryl Lario has requested that her ecclesial membership be transferred to the Kamloops ecclesia. We commend her in love to the brethren and sisters there, and thank her for her help and company in the years she attended the Calgary meeting.

We wish to inform everyone that, God willing, we are moving to a new meeting hall effective September 16. The new address is Southwood Community Centre, 11 Sackville Drive SW, T2B 0T7, Calgary, AB.

If you have plans to visit us here, please give one of our members a call for directions to the new hall.

Paul Aback

COLON, PANAMA

We are pleased to report that on Saturday, July 21, Sis. Nishla Sobers of the Colon Ecclesia was united in marriage in Panama to Bro. Ian Neblett of the Toronto East, ON, Ecclesia. Nishla is the daughter of Bro. Luis and Sis. Vanessa Sobers of the Colon Ecclesia. Bro. Hamilton and Sis. June Neblett are Ian's parents who live in the Toronto area, although originally from Guyana. We pray for God's richest blessings on their life together as members of the Toronto East Ecclesia. Both the Colon and Panama City ecclesias are grateful for the many visiting brothers and sisters from different parts of the Western Hemisphere who attended both ecclesias.

Don Luff

ECHO LAKE, NJ

We rejoice in the baptism of ZACHERY NELSON on July 28, 2007. Zachery, the son of Bro. David and Sis. Laurie Nelson, was baptized by his grandfather, Bro. George Faust. We wish our Bro. Zachery God's blessing on his walk to the kingdom.

We are very pleased to welcome by transfer Sis. Sarah DiLiberto from Randolph, NJ, and Bro. Michael Robinson from Kitchener/Waterloo, ON. We look forward to our time together.

We have recently enjoyed the fellowship of the following visitors: Sis. Mildred Leake (Torquay, UK); Sis. Pamela Herring (Bogalusa, LA); Sis. Edith Machado (Southern NH); Sis. Charlotte Wilson (Adelaide, AU); Bro. Clem and Sis. Kay Wigzell (Enfield, AU); Bro. Jim and Sis. Patty Robinson (Kitchener/Waterloo, ON); and Bro. Matthew Link (Washington, DC). We thank Bro. Clem Wigzell for his words of exhortation.

David Link

HAMILTON GREENAWAY, ON

The brothers and sisters of Greenaway mourn the loss of our Bro. Richard Spiers, who fell asleep in the Lord this past July. He will be well remembered for his insightful exhortations, a cheerful sense of humor, and his faithful playing of the organ for many years. We pray for our heavenly Father's blessing of comfort and consolation for Sis. Beryl, daughter Kay, and family. May the Master return soon to raise his own who now sleep in the dust of the earth.

Tom Thorp

MOORESTOWN, NJ

With sadness we report the falling asleep in Christ of our Sis. Bessie Cummins on September 26, 2006, at the age of 84. Sis. Bessie was baptized into the saving name of Christ in December 1939, and had been a member of our ecclesia since that time. On March 28, 2007 our Sis. Dorothy Binch, mother of our Sis. Kathy Roesch and Bro. Ed Binch of Avon, IN, fell asleep in Christ. Sis. Dot was a quiet yet very faithful member who enjoyed spending time with our young people. We will miss both of our sisters as they await the Lord's coming.

We joyfully report the baptisms of RAY and JANICE O'HARA on November 12, 2006. A neighbor — with whom we were having a weekly Bible class — invited them to

join our discussion. The original contact has since gone on another path. However, we see how God has used His outstretched hand to gather in this couple to His flock. Sis. Jan is confined to a wheelchair and has overcome several obstacles in coming to our hall, which is less than ideal for handicapped access. We plan to make several improvements to make our 100-year-old building better suited to her needs.

We are also happy to report the baptism of MARY LYNN CHEETHAM on February 11. She is the youngest daughter of our Bro. Rick and Sis. Lynn Cheetham. We are encouraged by these recent baptisms as we look to bring in the harvest prior to the return of our Lord.

We welcome by transfer from the Enugu Ecclesia in Nigeria, our Bro. Jachin Chukwuani.

On August 3, our Bro. Dan Langston, formerly of the West Houston, TX, Ecclesia, and Sis. Kimberley Cheetham, the youngest daughter of our Bro. Dave and Sis. Ann Cheetham, were united in marriage. We pray that God will bless their walk together toward the kingdom.

In November 2006 we had our annual CYC weekend, with classes led by Bro. Matthew Colby and Bro. Levi Gelineau. About 130 CYC members attended, as we maximized our hall capacity. It was a great weekend for our young people to share. In May 2007, Bro. John Pople (San Francisco, CA) led our study day and Sunday Mid-Atlantic Fraternal Gathering. We thank these brethren for their wonderful words to us. We also thank the numerous visitors who have joined us over the last year, and welcome all who are in the Philadelphia area to spend time with us.

Our meeting has been involved in several preaching activities since our last news. In the fall we had a free car wash for anyone driving by our hall. The vehicle occupants were invited to get out of the cars for refreshments. During this time we were able to introduce ourselves, discuss our faith, and distribute leaflets. We also had a spring Bible seminar series and follow-up classes. We are hopeful our efforts will be fruitful in proclaiming the gospel message.

We have also had several ecclesial activities, such as touring a full-size re-creation of the Mosaic Tabernacle in Lancaster, PA, viewing the Egyptian King Tut exhibit in Philadelphia, pumpkin picking in the fall, and our spring Sunday school picnic. Spending fellowship time together outside the hall has been a blessing.

Rick Cheetham

PORT MARIA, JAMAICA

For four consecutive evenings in June, our ecclesia sponsored a Marriage and Family Life seminar. We hosted it in the ballroom of the Casa Maria Hotel, the largest in our area. With the assistance of a team of five brothers and sisters from the USA and well-prepared notes, the Bible teaching on the topic was powerfully presented and discussed. The response from the public was most encouraging. The formal proceedings closed at 9 pm every night, but some participants were always deep in discussion with us until about 10:30. On the last night we even ran out of chairs, and a few had to stand for a time. This venture in witness has brought us into contact with around 30 new friends hungry for guidance from the Word of God.

Dorothy Isaacs

SAANICH PENINSULA, BC

We have enjoyed a wonderful year in our ecclesia here on Vancouver Island. We have two new healthy and happy babies to announce. On November 1, 2006, Bro. Kevin and Sis. Rebekah Hunter were blessed with a baby girl, Skyler Rowan. On January 11, 2007, Bro. Richard and Sis. Esther Morgan were blessed with a baby girl, Megan Suzanne. We are grateful to our Heavenly Father for these two gorgeous little blessings.

People of all ages from our ecclesia and our sister ecclesia, Victoria, came out to support the annual “Run for the Everlasting Cure”, November 25, 2006. It was a very moving experience, joining together in prayer for those who suffer in our midst, locally and worldwide. We were so reminded of our greatest desire and need of the return of our Saviour, when all tears will be wiped away and sorrow and pain will be no more. We were able to pray for a number of our own relatives, friends and members as well as those for whom ecclesias worldwide were praying. The rain and snow held off, the sun shone, and we were able to enjoy a lovely 5 km run/walk around the waterfront — with vistas of Mount Baker in Washington and the little islands to the east of us. As we walked or ran, each of us thought of someone for whom we prayed, who struggled just to get through the day, who was undergoing cancer treatment, or who was waiting for a diagnosis. We were all struck by the majesty of our God, and the need to give our burdens to Him. To end the morning, we met together at the hall, shared in some refreshments and signed get-well cards.

Many ecclesias all over the world shared in this event — many in Canada, and in the USA as well as England, Africa, India, Australia, New Zealand, Ecuador, and El Salvador... just to name a few.

We are a bit behind in posting photos from 2006, but we hope to update it soon. If you have some photos from your event that you would like included on our website — www.christadelphia.org/rftec/ — please contact Kevin and Rebekah Hunter at bible@christadelphia.org.

We thoroughly enjoyed our ecclesial study day in February, led by Bro. John Mannell (Toronto West, ON) on the topic of “Behaviour in the House of God: A Study of 1 Timothy”. John gave us three very stimulating and thought-provoking classes, an adult Sunday school class, and an exhortation over the weekend. We were able to enjoy the fellowship of many from surrounding ecclesias. We especially thank his wife, Sis. Eleanor, and their young children for lending him to us over the weekend of study, and we hope that they are all able to come as a family the next time.

We are very pleased to announce that MARK DANGERFIELD, son of Bro. Gordon and Sis. Beth Dangerfield (Victoria, BC), was baptized into the saving name of our Lord Jesus Christ on December 24, 2006.

Furthermore, on July 31, 2007, at the Western Bible School (Menucha), we were delighted to hear a wonderful confession of faith from CHLOE KENZIE. Chloe has grown up in our Sunday school and has been considering baptism for some time now. She has followed in the footsteps of her Saviour in being immersed in the waters of baptism for the remission of sins.

We also are pleased to announce that we have a wedding to look forward to, as Sis. Kayla Fredrickson and Bro. Mark Dangerfield have announced their plans to marry, God willing, this coming September. We ask God's blessings on them both as they make this important commitment and pray that we are able to support them spiritually, in the years to come before our Saviour returns.

After more than three years away in Qatar, we are very happy to have Bro. Austen and Sis. Crystal Kenzie return to us. They have been living and working in Qatar and have just relocated to the island. They quickly settled in again and now we can't imagine our ecclesia without them, though the small ecclesia in Qatar must surely miss them.

God willing, we will be sending off, with prayers for God's guidance, Bro. Kevin and Sis. Rebekah Hunter and family as they return to Quito, Ecuador, later this summer. They hope to fulfill another year or two of missionary support to the ecclesia there.

We have a couple of upcoming events: the Vancouver Island Bible Camp held the last week in August and the Victoria Fraternal the first weekend in September. Bre. Peter King (Worcester, UK), John Pople (San Francisco Peninsula, CA), John Launchbury (Portland, OR) and Peter Niven (New Zealand) will be leading the studies at the Bible school. We invite all to attend and share in fellowship and study of God's word.

Please mark November 24, 2007, on your calendars. God willing, this is the annual "Run for the Everlasting Cure", an ecclesial prayer and 5 km Run/Walk for those suffering in our midst from cancer or other such diseases. Please think about supporting this event as an ecclesia or CYC; your prayers are needed.

David Snobelen

TREASURE COAST, FL

With a mixture of sadness and hope, we announce the falling asleep of our Bro. Linwood Carhart, of Stuart, FL, who passed away on August 10. He is survived by his wife of 12 years, Sis. Carolyn Carhart, and predeceased by his first wife and the mother of his children, Sis. Norma Boyd Carhart. He also leaves to cherish his memory his daughters, Sis. Kay Carhart and Sis. Laura Morgan, with her family, of the Richmond, VA, Chapel Ecclesia, and his stepson, Bro. Greg Wrobel and his family of the Atlanta Area ecclesia.

Linwood was a member of the Norfolk, VA, Ecclesia for most of his life, until moving to Florida 12 years ago. While in Virginia, he participated in the ecclesia, served the Williamsburg Christadelphian Foundation, and worked with the Virginia Youth Camp. He was also an active brother in the Treasure Coast Ecclesia, and for many years was the sole speaker.

Contact information for his family: Carolyn Carhart, 8780 SW Fishermans Wharf Drive, Stuart, FL 34997; Kay Carhart, 8404 Bronwood Road, Richmond, VA 23229, kaycarhart@yahoo.com; Laura Carhart Morgan, 1607 Swansbury Drive, Richmond, VA 23238, laura.morgan@capitalone.com; and Greg and Vicki Wrobel, 5090 Victoria Park Drive, Loganville, GA, gjwrobel@yahoo.com.

VICTORIA, BC

Sadly, we report that two of our elderly sisters fell asleep in Christ recently. Sis. Sherole Varnel came to the truth late in her life and suffered from ill health and was confined to home over much of the time she was with us. She was 83 years old. Sis. Connie Jones was married to Bro. Ken for 67 years, passing from us April 9, 2007, just shy of her 93rd birthday. She was baptized August 31, 1952, at the Church Street Ecclesia in Toronto. Bro. Ken and Sis. Connie moved to Victoria in December 1996. Sis. Connie will long be remembered for her quiet, caring example of faith and love. We are thankful that our sisters died in the hope of the glorious coming kingdom.

We have commended Sis. Nyssa Hracs to the Saanich Peninsula Ecclesia on May 7,

2006, and Sis Cathy Hlina to the Vernon Ecclesia on July 20, 2007.

We welcomed Bro. Ben Cawston back into fellowship on April 15, 2007. The last few months have seen some of our members move away and a few members join us in Victoria. We said goodbye to Bro. Jonathan and Sis. Beth Lawrence on May 1, 2007 (transferring to Prince George) and to Bro. Ben and Sis. Helen Cawston on June 24, 2007 (transferring to Vernon). We are confident that these two couples and their children will be appreciated in their new ecclesias.

We welcomed Bro. Clive and Sis. Jennifer Daniel by transfer from Vancouver on December 24, 2006, Sis. Becky Brown by transfer from New Westminster April 29, 2007, and Bro. Ivan and Sis. Bertha McArthur by transfer from Vernon June 24, 2007. We also welcome Bro. Art and Sis. Sharon Wood who transferred from Vancouver July 15, 2007.

We are very happy to announce the marriages of Bro. Andrew Dixon and Sis. Rebekah Hutchison on June 2, 2007, and Bro. David Higgs and Sis. Kessia Bennett on June 9, 2007. We pray that they will be richly blessed in their lives together.

We are saddened to report that the following are no longer in fellowship: Sis. Angii Gunville as of March 25, 2007; Bro. James Parrott as of December 17, 2006; and Bro. Joe Myren as of January 14, 2007. We pray for a change in direction and their return to fellowship.

Thanks to Bro. John Pople for speaking at our March 9-11, 2007, study weekend on "Road to Atonement", and Bro. Stephen Hornhardt for his talks at our April 14-15, 2007, study weekend on "In Expectation of Messiah", and also at the CYC conference in April.

Our annual fraternal gathering is planned for August 31 through September 2, 2007, when Bro. Peter King will be speaking on "Isaiah — Prince of Prophets". We are also planning a study weekend for November 10-11, 2007. The speaker will be Bro. Christian Russell (Verdugo Hills, CA); his topic is unconfirmed at this time.

Our new recording brother is Clyde Snobelen, email csnobelen@csll.ca and phone 250-652-3318. All correspondence should now be directed to his attention.

Art Hibbs

Texas Youth Conference

Preparations are underway for the third annual Texas Youth Conference (TYC) — to be held, Lord willing, December 29 through January 5. The study subject will be Philippians. You may register by going to www.t4c.net and clicking on the TYC link.

"Fellowship is friendly association for the promotion of a common object — with more or less of the imperfection belonging to all mortal life. To say that every man in that fellowship is responsible for every infirmity of judgment that may exist in the association is an extreme to which no man of sound judgment can lend himself. There will be flawless fellowship in the perfect state. Perhaps it is the admiration of this in prospect that leads some to insist upon it now. But it is none the less a mistake. This is a mixed and preparatory state in which much has to be put with when the true principles are professed" (Robert Roberts).

Minute Meditation

Fired with Enthusiasm

“If you aren’t fired with enthusiasm, you will be fired with enthusiasm,” Vince Lombardi once said. Vince Lombardi was a famous football coach who was passionate about his game, and demanded that his players share his zeal and enthusiasm. Any player who didn’t play his heart out for the team did not last long.

It is interesting that the word enthusiasm comes from two Greek words, “en” (which is our word “in”) and “theos” (the Greek word for “God”). So to be enthusiastic means to have God inside. We who believe in God have every reason to be enthusiastic because of the wonderful hope that God has given us. The question is, just how fired with enthusiasm are we? Are we excited about the Truth, about our hope of being granted an immortal body in the Kingdom of God, and about our belief in the soon coming of our Lord? If these things do not fill us with enthusiasm, what would it take for us be fired up for the Truth? It is sobering to think that if a human employer would fire us for lack of enthusiasm, what about our Heavenly Employer?

We live in a world that is growing more and more desperate. The Bible forecasts a time when “men’s hearts [will be] failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth,” and we can see how accurately this description applies to our age. Men who are in the know understand how precarious is the situation our world is in. Mankind now has the ability to destroy the human race off the face of the earth. Global warming threatens to submerge coastal regions and islands as the polar icecaps melt; although the problem is being discussed in high places, it is mostly all talk with little effective action being taken. Hatred and violence are increasing, especially hatred of the Jews. The president of Iran has denied that the Holocaust ever happened and has vowed to wipe Israel off the map. There is no doubt that the morals of the world are sinking to the levels of the days of Noah, and of Sodom and Gomorrah. Truly this wicked world is ripe for destruction. As Jesus points out in Luke, it is a time of distress of nations, with no way out.

Jesus tells us about the days in which we are now living: “The nations are angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth.” If it were not for our hope, we could be filled with doom and gloom, but because we know that the Lord will destroy those who would destroy the earth, we have a hope that the world does not have. Once baptized, we have been purchased, says Peter, by the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. Now we belong to him and he is our commander-in-chief and our Lord. Not only is he taking care of us now, but also he is preparing us for positions of responsibility in the future age — when we will inherit the promises and reign with him in the

kingdom prepared for us from the foundation of the world. Are we excited about the future, when the earth will be filled with the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea? We should be filled with enthusiasm because we have so much to be enthusiastic about.

Enthusiasm is contagious. Are we a carrier? Are we spreading our enthusiasm for the Truth to all around us? We have so much to be thankful for. Jeremiah described the fire that was in his heart this way: "If I say, 'I will not mention him, or speak any more in his name,' there is in my heart as it were a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I am weary with holding it in, and I cannot." Knowing what we know, and seeing how events are right on track for the Lord's return, how can we not enthusiastically share our hope with others? We know that the Lord will bring peace and righteousness to this troubled wicked world in which we now live.

We don't have much more time to show the world and our Lord just how enthusiastic we are about the Truth and the things that are about to take place. On Vince Lombardi's team, those who lacked enthusiasm were in danger of being fired. We belong to Christ, and we want to stay on his team. Let us fill ourselves with the true meaning of enthusiasm — God within! Just as Jeremiah could not hold God's message in, let us share our hope with our friends and neighbors. We know that "the Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." Let us reach out to those outside and share the gospel with them so that they can repent and not perish.

Like Jeremiah, we should have in our hearts a fire burning so hot that we cannot contain our enthusiasm. Then we will share our hope of the kingdom with others. Let us enthusiastically spread the message to all we meet, hoping that we will infect them with the same excitement that we feel about the return of our Lord. He will make right all the things that are wrong in this world. "Even so, come, Lord Jesus!"

Robert J. Lloyd

Coming Events (Lord Willing)

SEPTEMBER

8 Hamilton (Greenaway) Fraternal gathering, Wildwood, Georgetown, ON. Bro. Ken Curry (Toronto East, ON): "The Challenge of Holiness — What Does God Require?" Starting at 2 pm; bring your own picnic meal for supper at 4:30 pm.

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

12-16 London West, ON Fraternal gathering week. Bro. Nigel Patterson (Newquay, UK): "Ecclesiastes — Wisdom for Today". Programs will follow. For further information contact Bro. Dave Birchall 519-668-7081 dalefinacial@rogers.com

15,16 Washington, DC Study weekend. Bro. Steve Petrou (Toronto West, ON): "It's All Greek to Me — Lessons from Biblical Greek". 9240 Riggs Road, Adelphi, MD. Saturday 1 pm, Sunday 9:30 am. Contact Bro. Bob Kling rkling@computer.org 301-498-5245

28-30 Bozeman, MT Study weekend. Bro. Dennis Paggi (Verdugo Hills, CA): "The Potter and the Clay: God's Hand in the Lives of Believers". Contact Bro. Steve Faver 406-388-3314 sfaver@unitedagencies.com

OCTOBER

5-7 Vancouver, BC Fraternal gathering, Surrey Ecclesial Hall. Bro. Paul Billington (Brantford, ON): "Remember the Covenant". Contact Bro. Dan Orsetti dorsetti@telus.net 604-514-4704

6 Brantford, ON Thanksgiving Fraternal Gathering, Copetown Community Centre. Bro. Brian Luke (Adelaide 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

6,7 Petersburg, VA Young people's gathering. Bro. Chris Sales (Shelburne, ON): "Joseph"

6,7 Regional Bible prophecy study weekend New England. Bro. Roger Lewis (Christchurch, NZ): "From Eden Lost to Eden Restored: The Amazing Framework of God's Prophetic Purpose". Contact Bro. Joshua McInturff joshandtiff@gsinet.net 603-774-6237

6,7 Edmonton/Calgary Thanksgiving fraternal, Edmonton, AB. Bro. Dana Kohlman (Calgary, AB). Contact Sis. Linda Ikle 780-406-2920 likle@telus.net or Bro. Jerome Toronchuk jeromet@telusplanet.net 780-453-1412

6,7 Atlanta, GA Fraternal. Bro. Joseph Fordham (Arlington, VA): "Building Your Spiritual House". Contact Bro. Carlos Carter atlantaecclasia@hotmail.com 770-465-8915

6,7 Sussex, NB Thanksgiving fraternal. Bro. Ken Styles (Detroit Royal Oak, MI): "Godly Love"

12-14 Ventura, CA Sisters' retreat. Sis. Wendy Johnsen (Nanaimo, BC). Contact Sis. Bonnie Sommerville kenandbonnie@simihills.org 19111 Kinzie St., Northridge, CA 91324. Registration deposit for \$50 non-refundable

13,14 Regional Bible prophecy study weekend New Jersey/New York. Same as last week (above). Contact Bro. Jonathan Link jonlink@optonline.net 973-633-8534

20 Bedford, NS Study day on prophecy. Bro. Brian Luke (Adelaide Brighton, AU). Grand Lake, Oakfield Community Hall, NS 1:30-7:00 pm (supper included). Contact Bro. Michael Carr 902-820-2532 buxtoncarr@hotmail.com

20,21 Pittsburgh, PA CYC study weekend. Bro. Jay Mayock (Hamilton Ewen Road, ON): "Into the Land of Promise: Lessons from the Children of Israel". Contact Sis. Sarah Telles 724-334-2333 sarah.telles@gmail.com

20,21 Regional Bible prophecy study weekend Williamsburg, VA. Same as last week (above). Contact Bro. Jordan Canady jordancanady5@hotmail.com 804-365-8512

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26-28 Camp Kawartha Kawartha Lakes, ON. Senior CYC young people's weekend. Bro. Ryan Mutter (Baltimore, MD): "James". Contact Bro. Darryl Rose darrylrose@rogers.com

NOVEMBER

3,4 Kouts, IN Fraternal gathering, Woodland Community Center, Portage, IN. Bro. Jim Harper (Meriden, CT): "Men Who Changed the Church". Contact Bro. Joe Bennett 219-762-2704 purepro18@aol.com

9-11 New England Bible Study Weekend Barton Center, North Oxford, MA. Bro. Ron Kidd (London, ON): "Out of Weakness Made Strong: A Study in the Life of Samson". Contact Bro. Craig Nevers craignev@cox.net or Sis. Judith Nevers jnevers@verizon.net

10,11 Largo and Sarasota, FL Study weekend, Largo Ecclesial Hall in Largo, FL. Bro. Ken Curry (Toronto East, ON): "Seven Key Events in the Life of Jesus". Contact Bro. Walt Dodrill waltodrill@msn.com 727-528-1197

10,11 Tulsa/Joplin, OK Bible study weekend. Bro. Roger Long (UK).

13-18 Galilee Bible School Kibbutz Ma'agan, Israel. Bre. David Lloyd (Simi Hills, CA) and Don Pearce (Rugby, UK): "Walking in the Footsteps of the Master". Contact Sis. Betty Lou Lewis Liat727@aol.com 727-744-1872

23-25 Camp Hashawha Westminster, MD. Family Bible study weekend. Bro. Steve Cheetham (Moorestown, NJ): "Lessons for Future Kings: Life Lessons from the Kings of Israel". Contact Bro. Bob Kling rkling@computer.org 301-498-5245