

THE CHRISTADELPHIAN TIDINGS

— of the Kingdom of God —

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The CHRISTADELPHIAN TIDINGS of the Kingdom of God

Peter Hemingray, Editor • George Booker, Associate Editor

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Violence is a descending spiral

The ultimate weakness of violence is that it is a descending spiral,

Begetting the very thing it seeks to destroy.

Instead of diminishing evil, it multiplies it.

Through violence you may murder the liar,

But you cannot murder the lie, nor establish the truth.

Through violence you may murder the hater,

But you do not murder hate.

In fact, violence merely increases hate.

So it goes.

Returning violence for violence multiplies violence,

Adding deeper darkness to a night already devoid of stars.

Darkness cannot drive out darkness.

Only light can do that.

Hate cannot drive out hate.

Only love can do that.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Editorial

Whose Writings Should I Use?

Clark Pinnock

Clark Pinnock died on August 15th last year, at the age of 73. Few of my readers will ever have heard of him, and fewer still will have known him. But I am one of those few, for while I was studying at Manchester University in England, he was also there. Although I was an engineering student, and he was studying under Professor FF Bruce, we both attended meeting of the Inter Faculty Christian Union. Perhaps not surprisingly, we came into some doctrinal discussions, particularly about the Trinity. As Clark was a post-graduate student of Theology, the discussions were somewhat intense: so much so that he suggested a public debate. There were several other Christadelphians involved in the discussions, and we agreed with his suggestion, but asked if we could nominate a representative.

So Bro. Alfred Norris and Clark Pinnock discussed The Trinity, with several hundred attending. It is the only such debate I have ever attended, and reminded me of the great debates of Bro. Roberts of old, or at least the transcripts of such. And as any who knew Bro. Alfred might realize, he more than held his own in the debate. If anyone could be said to have “won” such a debate, Bro. Alfred did. And so when I heard Clark Pinnock had died, my thoughts went back to those days, when my knowledge of the nature of Christ was greatly enhanced. Not only that, but I did take the opportunity while I was in Manchester to attend lectures on New Testament Christianity held by Professor Bruce, whose vast knowledge and respect for the Scriptures deeply impressed me. And I have also since kept myself aware of Clark’s writings, most of which I disagree with, but whose attitude toward the Scriptures and whose view of Biblical inspiration I find useful. FF Bruce’s works are prominent on my bookshelves — not just because I knew him, but because he is one of the best of the conservative New Testament scholars of his generation. Even so, one must be very careful with Professor Bruce’s writings, as with any non-Christadelphian source. His views on the Trinity and the role of women reflect views we cannot share.

So as I contemplated the death of one I briefly knew many years ago, I began to think of the ways we use the writings of others, especially the use of non-Christadelphian authors. (This is not to ignore the primacy of Christadelphian authors, but rather to address non-Christadelphian ones.)

Use of the Writings of Non-Christadelphians

There is a tendency in some sections of our community to discourage the use of the writings of non-Christadelphians. I must also say that our first priority when we study the Bible is to let the text interpret the text. In the vast majority of cases, the meaning of the passage is explained simply by looking elsewhere in the Bible, using cross-references and concordances. The use of alternative translations can also aid in this work. But in some cases, a deeper look into the historical or Bibli-

cal context is desired, and most will turn firstly to Christadelphian works. Many will also consult such works as those by Edersheim or Josephus, which are old standbys used by many. But what of the many modern commentators? There are those who will look at all non-Christadelphian sources with such suspicion as to never even consider looking at them. But this seems alien to both common sense and Christadelphian usage. Certainly both Robert Roberts and John Thomas were widely read, and used many sources in their writings. For example, in “Eureka” John Thomas surveys the whole field of the expositions of Revelation. He used some of their information, but dismissed them all as false.

One must, as I indicated above, use all non-Biblical sources with caution, especially those from non-Christadelphian authors. Almost none share our hope, and the majority of the recent commentators do not have the same view of Biblical inspiration as do Christadelphians. So the facts as discussed in these writings have to be carefully extracted from the opinions of the writers. In particular, we have to be careful not to believe all that is written, and to test everything by the Scriptures and by our knowledge of the Truth. Indeed, although much valuable information is available from non-Christadelphian sources, it all must be filtered through our knowledge of the inspiration and veracity of the Scriptures. Many modern commentaries are probably best used by those mature in the faith, although some are quite helpful to most. I might mention the Tyndale Commentaries, which are available from the Christadelphian Office, and the ones by William Barclay on the Synoptic Gospels — I have found these to be quite useful.

If we have to rely only on Christadelphian works, there are some books of the Bible that have a great abundance of material. The most obvious is Revelation — there are at least 14 commentaries available, and that section of my bookshelf is replete with quite a few of them. And in the Old Testament, both the Psalms and Job have quite a wealth of information. On the other hand, for some areas my shelves are quite lacking in Christadelphian works. Books on the Kings and Chronicles are almost non-existent, apart from a survey of the Kings by Michael Ashton. As far as I know, there is no stand-alone commentary on Ezra, likewise for the Gospel of Matthew, although of course Bro. Harry Whittaker covers this latter area in his “Gospels.”

The example of Paul

In some Bibles, you might glance in the marginal references — and find some quite unusual ones. Look at Acts 17:28 and you will find that Paul is quoting from the Greek writers Epimenides, Aratus and Cleanthes. And Epimenides comes up again in the citation about the Cretans in Titus 1:12. Of course, neither of these quotations are commenting on the Old Testament, but it shows the knowledge of Paul about the general writings of his era. (It is of more than passing interest that there are no direct quotations in the New Testament from what is known as the Old Testament Apocrypha, despite its presence in Catholic Bibles of our era.)

None of this directly proves that we should use sources other than the Scriptures in our studies, but it does show the breadth of Paul's reading. It also shows that Paul reached out to his audience using referents they were familiar with, an example

we should (and often do) use in talking to our friends and acquaintances. Also, I cannot leave the topic of Biblical references without mentioning that among the Dead Sea Scrolls were several commentaries on books of the Old Testament, including ones on Habakkuk, Micah, Zephaniah and the Psalms. Of course, none of these are mentioned in the New Testament, which is not surprising since the only method of distribution of writings was by laborious hand copying. Almost all except the very rich could only hope in vain to actually own any copies even of the Books of the Bible — and note how Paul asked for the Books and Parchments he owned (2Tim 4:13). Together with the cloak he also asked for, they must have represented the bulk of Paul's possessions — and certainly the most valuable.

The Misuse of Commentaries

It is all too easy, when asked to prepare a Bible class, or when engaged in Bible study about a passage, to simply reach for an available commentary and rely on that author's opinions. As I have mentioned above, this is not how one studies the Bible. In addition, in this issue of the "Tidings", and God Willing to be continued in the next, is a brief look at the "why" and "how" of Bible study.

I must admit I have been a little guilty of the "Bible Study by commentary" myself. While studying in Manchester, the Christadelphians at the university held a little study group on Galatians. So I went along to the university library, which was well stocked with commentaries because of its Religious Studies Department. Out of the dozen or so on Galatians, I borrowed several and attempted to make sense of them — but in the process I somewhat ignored the Biblical text. The result was that for many years my view of this book was more influenced by debates on its chronology and the location of the Galatian church than the essence of its message.

So, although these types of questions are of interest, they are not what we should focus on. Sometimes commentaries can help us tease out the most important message of a passage, but all too often they focus on the trees in the forest — or even on the twigs, while often ignoring the important message of the text. (And this is true of some Christadelphian commentaries as well.) I am sure at least some of you have been present at Bible classes where the method seems to be to find out where else in the Bible each Hebrew (or Greek) word was used, which is an exercise in the use of concordances, not Bible study.

Conclusion

We should be careful in how we use sources from outside of our community. But we should also be careful in how we use any commentary. Letting the Bible speak directly to us, and letting it interpret itself, is the bedrock of any study. And most of all, Bible Study by commentary is a great danger, especially in these days when one's shelves groan with such books.

Peter Hemingray

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

Exhortation

Wait

I would like to consider something that we all are doing. Something we are actually doing at this very moment. Something we pesky humans are not very good at doing. We are waiting. Some are waiting for it to rain. Some are waiting to take a trip. But most of all we are waiting on the return of the Lord Jesus. I will take a look at some examples of those who waited on the Lord, and also one who fell away during what should have been his wait for the Lord.

The Exodus

When God led the children of Israel out of Egypt, it was with mighty works and wonders. Exodus tells us how God remembered his covenant, and now he had come to deliver the children of Israel from the hand of Pharaoh. First of all, God did not just remember his covenant. It was not like we might say, "Oh, I forgot milk and bread: now I need to go back to the store." God never forgets. God was waiting. Waiting for what? God was waiting for the right leaders to come along that would do his bidding. He was waiting on Moses, Aaron, Miriam, Joshua, Caleb and all the others who would faithfully follow his commandments and directions. With each passing plague that touched Egypt, the faith of the children of Israel in God must have increased. It is in that show of faith that they placed the blood of the lamb on the door post of their homes that the destroying angel might pass over them. At this point the children of Israel were ready to faithfully follow God wherever he might lead them.

I really believe that they actually felt that way. At this time they were ready, willing and wanted to be faithful to do the will of God. But when they were lead to the Red sea with no visible way of escape, that faith began to slip away, and with the tests they faced in the wilderness that strong faith had all but disappeared. So it was in unbelief that they would not enter the land that God had promised to give them.

We might ask ourselves, "How could they have lost faith in God with all the miracles they witnessed"? We might also ask ourselves, "Would we have really done any better"? Maybe we would have, but maybe not. The Psalmist speaking of the exodus from Egypt, sums it up perfectly; *"Then believed they his words: they sang his praise. They soon forgot his words: they waited not for his counsel"* (Psa 106:12-13).

God could have led them out of Egypt a different way. God could have led them in a way that would have avoided all the distress they experienced in the wilderness. God was well aware of the problems and the hardships they would face along the way, and yet he led them into these difficult times. The Apostle Paul tells us in his letter to Timothy that these Scriptures are written and saved for our learning. So, what lesson has God recorded for us to learn? I think the Psalmist understood clearly what was being recorded for our learning. I think that is clearly indicated in the 13th verse we just read. *"They soon forgot his words: they waited not for his*

counsel.” It is left recorded for us, that when we are led into difficult time, we can hold fast to the faith that God has built in each of us. That we never forget his great deeds in the past and towards us, and as the Psalmist says, wait upon his counsel.

There are lots of examples of those who waited on the LORD. Far more than the few I will discuss here. As we do our daily reading of the Scripture, I challenge you to recognize those times when God reveals to us those who chose to wait on the Lord and not lose faith.

Waiting sometimes implies non-action; sometimes that is true, but it can also mean a time to reflect and prepare for whatever is the required action. The poet John Milton wrote a sonnet in 1655 the last line of which is often used to describe people in the military (although it was written of our service to our Maker). The line goes, “They also serve who only stand and wait.” No one would ever accuse the military of being a non-action group. The point of the line is that waiting is a time to ready oneself for the required duty, to be prepared and wait for directions on how to proceed. We are all soldiers of Christ and right now we are preparing ourselves spiritually for a life with Jesus as we await his return.

Joseph

We have the example of Joseph. In dreams God had promised him great things to come. I have little doubt that when Joseph left Jacob’s house that fateful morning to go and see how his brothers were getting along, that he did so with a light and happy heart. Genesis 37 tells us that Joseph was a young man of about seventeen years, just out on an errand for his father. There was no difference here than if we were to send one of our children on some sort of errand for us. But as we all know this was not to be just an errand. In the space of a few short days, this light-hearted young man was cast into chains and sold into slavery by his own brothers for twenty pieces of silver. I think it is a fairly easy picture to bring to mind, of this young man walking in the desert chained to other slaves. I am sure he would have had tears of fear and uncertainty on his cheeks. I am sure when he lay down at night that he would pray that God would deliver him. I don’t think it is too big a stretch to imagine the sense of desolation that Joseph must have felt. Yet, there is no record that a direct answer was ever given to Joseph.

When Joseph arrived in Egypt he was auctioned off and sold to Potiphar. He now lived in a strange land with a foreign language. How often, do you think, Joseph must have prayed in sorrow for his freedom? But still there was no answer from God. All that Joseph had to help him was the natural circumstances of each day. There are no outward miracles displayed in the life of Joseph, for all intent and purpose everything followed a very natural and normal pattern. But Joseph kept his faith alive. In all his sorrow and distress he knew that God was with him. He was positive and faithful that the God of his fathers had not forgotten him. He continued to believe those promises that God had made to him. He waited for God to act.

Most of us are familiar with how Joseph’s troubles became worse with the pressures that Potiphar’s wife placed on him. I have no doubt this was a great trial

and temptation to him, as Joseph had no wife of his own. But Scripture make it clear he was able to withstand this temptation of the flesh. Genesis 39, tells us that Joseph stated; *“How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?”* He had not forgotten what was expected of him by his God. To anyone unfamiliar with the story of Joseph’s life, you might think that with all this faith, surely God would now deliver Joseph from his trials. But as we know, this was not the case. The time was not right for God to intervene on Joseph’s behalf. Joseph was now thrown into prison.

Again, we can look to the Psalms for comments concerning Joseph which read, *“He sent a man before them, even Joseph, who was sold for a servant; Whose feet they hurt with fetters: he was laid in iron: Until the time that his word came: the word of the Lord tried him”* (Psa 105:17-19). In the first part of verse 19 it said, *“Until the time that his word came:”* Whose word? God’s word. Until the time when God said the time was right for Joseph. Joseph waited for God and God delivered him. We know that Joseph went on to become second in Egypt, second only to Pharaoh. Life can be like this for us brothers and sisters. We can have trials and difficulties springing up very naturally in our lives, or at least they appear very naturally. We may pray and seem to get no answer to our prayers. We may even begin to think that we are praying wrong or that we are praying for the wrong thing. But what we are really doing is learning to wait. Learning to do that thing that is so difficult at times for me.

Learning to be patient. Learning to wait and lean on God, who will in his time provide us with an answer. Maybe the answer will not come today or even tomorrow, but if we keep waiting for God faithfully, he will provide the answer or best course of action for us.

While Joseph was in Egypt, a grieving father was heartbroken in the land of Canaan. He was mourning the son he loved. God had told Jacob, *“I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.”* What a trial for Jacob, all those years of mourning for Joseph.

It would have been easy for God to send an angel to tell Jacob that everything was in control, and in control by God. He could have told him that Joseph was alive and safe. Jacob must have prayed often about his son. In his time God did give Jacob an answer, but until there came a famine in Canaan, Jacob had to wait.

This is the way life will be for us. This is the type of experiences needed to develop the new person in each of us to be like Christ Jesus. Faith must be tried and developed to become the true gold that it is. We all have our problems. We may sometimes feel cut off or desolate. We might even feel a little like we are not getting through to God. The times of our trials may require that this pressure, whatever it may be, must remain with us for a short time or a long time, but in the end God will reward our faithfulness and extend to us his graciousness.

As Jacob’s life was now unfolding in Egypt, he told Pharaoh, *“Few and evil have the days of the years of my life been”* (Gen 47:9). Years later when he had had time to consider his life and God’s dealing with him, Jacob saw things differently. In his last days he called for Joseph’s sons to bless them. We read:

“And he blessed Joseph, and said, God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my lifelong unto this day, The angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads: and let my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth” (Gen 48:15-16).

We can't really expect things to be much different for us, can we? We must always remember we cannot expect answers to our problems overnight. They might be answered overnight, but we cannot expect it. What we must remember is that we must wait on the LORD and His time to answer us. God has recorded these experiences for us. Why? So, we can see how life was and is and how God wants us to face it.

David

Let us consider another of God's servants who had to wait. This time to wait for punishment and not for comfort. David who was a man of strong faith even very early in his life. Who else could have faced the challenge of Goliath as David did? Not to mention the bear and lion. To David God promised great things. He was promised the throne and glory over Israel. God's promise was closer at hand when David went into the king's service. But this was not the appointed time because within a very short time, David was an outlaw. On the run, hunted by the king, his father-in-law. David could have thought, where now is God's promise, where now is His care for me? But as we know David did not feel that way. For seven long years he fled from the hand of Saul. But the time came when God lifted the pressure from David and kept His promise. The kingdom was in David's hands and it grew in strength. And then the pressure was on again. There was a battle, one of many in David's life. But to this battle David didn't go, and we know too the sad and bitter outcome of that battle.

It could have been avoided. God could have caused David not to go up on his housetop or he could have arranged Bathsheba's circumstances, so that she was not bathing at just that time. But he allowed the events to take their course. The sometimes sad results of the free will God has given us. God tells David of his punishment.

“Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun. For thou didst it secretly; but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun” (2Sam 12:11-12).

For many years David waited under the knowledge of this punishment, that he knew God would carry out, but not knowing when. Then came the punishment, the events seemed almost natural, through Amnon and Tamar. Then the murder of Amnon by Absalom was followed by Absalom's attempt to take control of the kingdom and to kill his father. David's love for his son Absalom can be seen in the last verse of 2 Samuel 18, when David had been told of the death of his rebellious son.

“And the king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept: and as he wept, thus he said, O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would to God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!” (2Sam18:33).

David I am sure felt the guilt of his transgressions long ago.

Some of us may have experienced the torment of heart, the nights of sorrow and sadness, anguish and desolation such as these that David experienced. We know that this is how life really is. We can feel crushed under the pressures of circumstance until we can barely stand it, just as David felt. But there is a reason for it. As hard as it may appear or feel, it can be and often is part of our development. It can be God’s way of helping us, forming us like David, to be brethren after God’s own heart as long as we keep faith and wait upon our God. David expresses the attitude that the experiences he encountered was designed to produce.

“And the king said unto Zadok, ‘Carry back the ark of God into the city: if I shall find favour in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again and show me both it and his habitation: But if he thus say, I have no delight in thee; behold here am I, let him do to me as seemeth good unto him’ ” (2Sam 15:25-26).

Here God found the real David, the real man. David came to realize that he just did not count, unless it was God who did the counting. That is a lesson, sometimes hard, that we all must learn and remember.

Judas

There is one last example, of someone who did not wait for God to do the counting. Judas acted for whatever reason: greed, or else a desire to force Jesus to bring about the establishment of the Kingdom of God. Judas was not prepared or willing to wait for what God wanted. So, like so many, he took matters into his own hands. We all know the results. Our Savior died once, but now lives forever. Judas lost his life also, but he also lost any hope of a future life with Christ. This might be our lot also, if we are unable to wait in faith upon the Lord.

Ourselves

Sometimes we think the pressures of this life are more than we can bear. But never let us forget, God has promised he would never put more on us than we can stand. And if we ever do begin to feel that we have more of a trial or pressure on us than we can stand, just remember what Job withstood: The loss of his children, the loss of his livestock, his property, his money and even his health. But never, never did he lose his faith in God. And he waited for God’s answer. Who here will ever be tried as Job was, hopefully none of us, but if God does, he will stand by us and see us through those times and trials. All he asks of us is to keep faith in him and wait for his counsel.

For some of us pressure is a constant everyday thing, while for others it is an on-again, off-again experience. No two trials are ever the same. Each trial we encounter requires us to come closer to our God, and to continually wait on his guidance and counseling. But one thing is certain: at different times in our lives we all come

under the pressure of trials. This is true whether it be a trial that affects all of us as a family, or each of individually. The special symbols of the Lord Jesus Christ are the bread and the wine. We pass them from hand to hand in remembrance of his sacrifice. When we are here or when we are away, let us always be mindful that we are awaiting his return. We must remember that he has given us certain task and responsibilities, one of which is to be waiting and watching for his return. We are being prepared now for an existence in eternity, for everlasting fellowship with Christ, with the Creator of Heaven and Earth, and with His holy angels. We are being prepared for a life which this world has no conception, nor does it have words to describe it. Finally, let me leave you with two thoughts: To wait patiently in all your trials. And always remember, *“If God be for us who can be against us.”* Let us always look for and wait for God’s counsel.

George Brown (Austin Leander, TX)

“Give me this mountain” (Joshua 14:12)

Caleb was now 85 years of age, and was still in possession of full vigor. He it was who, with Joshua, 45 years before, had seen the truth about the land, for he had not only seen the difficulties, he had seen God. The victory of his faith at Kadesh-Barnea had been that of a man who “wholly followed the LORD”. For 40 years he had shared the wanderings and discipline of those who had not shared his faith. For five years undoubtedly he had taken part in the conflict which had resulted in their coming into the land. During all that period he had never been uncertain of the issue. He had apparently occupied a comparatively quiet and obscure position among his people, while his friend Joshua had been called into the place of conspicuous and powerful leadership...

Caleb came while there was still much to be done; and urging his unabated vigor as constituting fitness for the work, he asked for a possession in the land, which would make stern demands upon him in order to make it his own. On that mountain the Anakim had dwelt; on it there had been great and fortified cities in the day when his faith had triumphed. They were still there, and he asked for the privilege of demonstrating and vindicating faith by works...

Joshua granted him the mountain he asked, and blessed him. In the history of Caleb three things are illustrated concerning faith. Faith sees and dares in the day of overwhelming difficulty. Faith waits patiently through delays caused by failure in others. Faith acts with courage in the day of opportunity.

G. Campbell Morgan

Bible Study

Leviticus and the Tabernacle (4)

At last we are ready to see the connection between Leviticus and the physical layout of the Tabernacle. Let's begin by reviewing a few things we have seen to this point.

The first article (December, 2010) highlighted that God repeats the elements of the Tabernacle and their arrangement seven times in the book of Exodus. He gives a detailed verbal blueprint in the "thou shalt make" section (Exod 25-30) and a near duplicate account of its execution in the "and he made" section (Exod 35:20-39:32). In addition, He gives five summaries (Exod 31:1-11; 35:1-19; 39:33-43; 40:1-16; 40:17-33), three in the last chapter and a half. With such emphasis, it is clear that God intends us to remember the layout of the Tabernacle.

The second article (January, 2011) showed that the Tabernacle was a portable continuation of the theophany on Mount Sinai. In both, God meets with His people. In both, the people, priests, and place are sanctified. In both, the LORD manifests Himself in a cloud of glory. Finally, in both, there are three zones of holiness and restricted access. The Outer Court corresponds to the base of the mount, to which the people have access, and where there is an altar for offerings to the LORD. The Holy Place, which only the priests can enter, corresponds to the location up the mount short of the summit, where Moses, Aaron, his sons, and the 70 elders saw God through the sapphire pavement under His feet. The Most Holy Place, to which only the High Priest was allowed to enter, corresponds to the summit, to which only Moses was allowed. The tables of the law that Moses received on Mount Sinai are kept in the Most Holy Place in the ark, reminding the children of Israel of their covenant relationship with the LORD: they are His people, and He is their God.

The third article (February, 2011) demonstrated that the Tabernacle was also a microcosm of Creation. God will dwell in the earth just as He dwelt in the Tabernacle. The glory of the LORD will fill the earth just as it filled the Tabernacle.

Moses called into the glory to receive instructions

As the LORD had commanded him, Moses rears up the Tabernacle on the first day of the first month (Exod 40:2, 17). Once Moses finishes the work (Exod 40:33), events proceed as they did on Mount Sinai.

Cloud of glory: *"Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle" (Exod 40:34) echoes "And Moses went up into the mount, and a cloud covered the mount. And the glory of the LORD abode upon mount Sinai" (Exod 24:15-16a).*

Delay: *"And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle" (Exod 40:35) parallels "and the cloud covered it six days" (Exod 24:16b).*

God calls Moses and speaks to him: “And the LORD called unto Moses, and spake unto him out of the tabernacle of the congregation, saying...” (Lev 1:1) echoes “and the seventh day he called unto Moses out of the midst of the cloud... And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying...” (Exod 24:16c; 25:1).

Instructions: Continuing these two parallel sequences of events, we see that the instructions that Moses records in the book of Leviticus parallel the instructions concerning the Tabernacle that Moses records in Exodus 25-40. This parallel is a first clue that Leviticus aligns with the Tabernacle.

A spatial mnemonic

The rest of this article and the next show that there is indeed a profound alignment between the two: the physical layout of the Tabernacle provides a spatial mnemonic for the literary structure of Leviticus. Figure 3 positions the chapters of Leviticus on the floor plan of the Tabernacle. This diagram is like the map of a museum with numbered stations identifying the various exhibits. Think of Moses as a guide leading the children of Israel through the Tabernacle and reciting the relevant laws at each station.

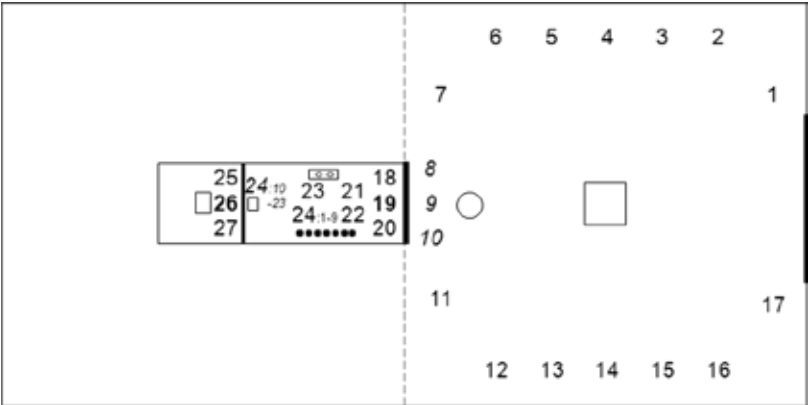


Figure 3. The chapters of Leviticus projected onto the floor plan of the Tabernacle; based on Mary Douglas, *Leviticus as Literature*, p. 223.

This projection of a literary structure onto a physical space is similar to the zodiac (“circle of animals”), which specifies a celestial coordinate system defined by twelve easily recognizable signs. Sailors used this spatial mnemonic to help them quickly determine their location on the earth (this was long before today’s satellite-based Global Positioning System). Similarly, because God has drilled into our heads the layout of the Tabernacle, aligning Leviticus with the Tabernacle makes it easier to remember His law.

As Figure 3 indicates, Leviticus 1-17 corresponds to the Outer Court, Leviticus 18-24 to the Holy Place, and Leviticus 25-27 to the Most Holy Place. I have found it useful to keep track of the number of times key ideas occur in each of these three sections; I use the notation (x, y, z) to indicate that a word or phrase occurs

x times in the first section (Lev 1-17), y times in the second (Lev 18-24), and z times in the third (Lev 25-27).

The Outer Court (Lev 1-17)

Leviticus 1-17 forms a circle around the Outer Court: “the altar (of burnt offering)” (83, 2, 0) and “the door of the tabernacle” (22, 1, 0) are repeated throughout.

Leviticus 1-7 describes the altar offerings — we should think of these chapters being recited on the north side of the court with the hearers’ eyes focused on the altar itself; when they hear of washing, bathing, or rinsing with water, they would think of the laver. These seven chapters are summarized at the end of this section:

“This is the law of the burnt offering [Lev 1; 6:8-13; 7:8], of the meat offering [Lev 2; 6:14-18; 7:9-10], and of the sin offering [Lev 4:1-5:13; 6:24-30], and of the trespass offering [Lev 5:14-6:7; 7:1-7], and of the consecrations, and of the sacrifice of the peace offerings [Lev 3; 7:11-21, 28-34]; which the LORD commanded Moses in mount Sinai, in the day that he commanded the children of Israel to offer their oblations unto the LORD, in the wilderness of Sinai” (Lev 7:37-38; cf. 6:9, 14, 25; 7:1, 11).

The allusions to Sinai remind us of the connections between the Tabernacle and the events on the mount.

Leviticus 8-10 describes the consecration of Aaron and his sons, followed by the execution of Nadab and Abihu for offering strange fire. This is the first of two narratives in Leviticus; the second is the blasphemy and execution of the son of an Egyptian man and Israelite woman (Lev 24:10-23). These narratives break up the detailed legal material that makes up most of the book. Figure 3 indicates that we should think of these two narratives being recited, respectively, just outside the door of the Tabernacle and just outside the veil that separates the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place. In both episodes, sinners are executed, thus preventing them from entering the next zone of holiness. The law of equitable retribution (*lex talionis*, cf. Lev 24:15-22) is followed in both: in the first, the burners are burnt (Lev 10), and in the second, the curser is cursed (by being stoned).

Leviticus 11-17 contains the laws of purification. Figure 3 indicates that we should think of these as being recited on the south side of the court. These chapters include laws for food (Lev 11), childbirth (Lev 12), leprosy of the skin, garment, and house (Lev 13-14), and issues (Lev 15), as summarized at the ends of these chapters:

“This is the law of the beasts, and of the fowl, and of every living creature that moveth in the waters, and of every creature that creepeth upon the earth: to make a difference between the beast that may be eaten and the beast that may not be eaten” (Lev 11:46-47).

“This is the law for her that hath born a male or a female” (Lev 12:7).

“This is the law for all manner of plague of leprosy, and scall, and for the leprosy of a garment, and of a house, and for a rising, and for a scab, and for a bright spot; to teach when it is unclean, and when it is clean; this is the law of leprosy” (Lev 14:54-57; cf. 13:59; 14:2, 32).

“This is the law of him that hath an issue, and of him whose seed goeth from him, and is defiled therewith; and of her that is sick of her flowers, and of him that hath an issue, of the man, and of the woman, and of him that lieth with her that is unclean” (Lev 15:32-33).

What does all of this have to do with the Outer Court? This question has two answers. The first is simple, yet vital: the purification laws frequently include altar offerings, establishing the fundamental principle that cleansing requires the shedding of blood for forgiveness and atonement. This principle is summarized succinctly in Hebrews, *“The law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness” (Heb 9:22, TNIV).*

The second answer is perhaps more surprising: having the purity laws recited in the Outer Court across from the altar offerings encourages hearers to see a parallel between the altar offerings and themselves as individuals. For example, individuals were not allowed to eat blood, just as the blood of the sacrifices was not consumed on the altar, but sprinkled on the furniture of the Tabernacle and poured out beside the altar. This connection between individuals and the offerings forms the basis of several challenging exhortations in the New Testament: *“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service” (Rom 12:1)* and *“Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ” (1Pet 2:5).*

This parallel is also the basis for the importance of obedience over sacrifice:

“And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams” (1Sam 15:22).

“Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required. Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart” (Psa 40:6-8; cf. Heb 10:5-10).

“O Lord, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise. For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise” (Psa 51:15-17).

“For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings” (Hos 6:6; cf. Matt 9:13; 12:7).

Further, it underlies the idea of song and thanksgiving being compared to sacrifices:

שִׁיר
shiyṛ (song)

שׁוֹר
showr (ox)

“I will praise the name of God with a song <7892 shiyṛ>, and will magnify him with thanksgiving. This also shall please the LORD better than an ox <7794 showr> or bullock that hath horns and hoofs” (Psa 69:30-31; notice the pun based on the similarity of the Hebrew words for “song” and “ox”).

"Take with you words, and turn to the LORD: say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously: so will we render the calves of our lips" (Hos 14:2).

"By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name" (Heb 13:15).

Leviticus 16 records the laws for cleansing the high priest, the people, and the Tabernacle on the Day of Atonement. Much of the activity is to take place in the court at the altar and the laver. The path of the High Priest into the Most Holy Place within the veil and back out to the Outer Court is explicitly laid out.

Finally, **Leviticus 17** completes the circle:

*"What **man** soever there be of the house of Israel, that killeth an ox, or lamb, or goat, in the camp, or that killeth it out of the camp, and **bringeth** it not unto **the door of the tabernacle of the congregation**, to offer **an offering unto the LORD** ... Whatsoever **man** there be of the house of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among you, that offereth **a burnt offering or sacrifice**, and **bringeth** it not unto **the door of the tabernacle of the congregation**, to offer it unto the LORD" (Lev 17:2-4, 8-9).*

ties back to the opening chapter:

*"If any **man** of you **bring an offering unto the LORD**, ye shall **bring** your offering of the cattle, even of the herd, and of the flock. If his offering be **a burnt sacrifice** of the herd, let him offer a male without blemish; he shall offer it of his own voluntary will at **the door of the tabernacle of the congregation** before the LORD" (Lev 1:2-3).*

Leviticus 17 also repeats the law forbidding the eating of blood (Lev 17:10-14; cf. 3:17; 7:26-27), which is another signal that it is closing the loop on the earlier chapters.

The next article will continue into the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place sections of Leviticus.

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Special Invitation

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

You, your family and friends are invited to the

*36th annual Church of God of the Abrahamic Faith Gathering
at Denison University in Granville, Ohio, July 25-31, 2011.*

*Main Speakers: Bro. Ted Sleeper — "Meditations on Creation"
Bro. Tim Galbraith — "The Tabernacle: A Magic Mirror for Disciples"*

Bro. Ed Carpenter — "The Light of the Gospel"

Contact Bro. Brad Rek 330-609-6957 or lisarek8@cs.com

Visit our website <http://abrahamicfaithgathering.org>

Bible Study

“As it was in the days of Noah”: (3) The world of the ungodly

Antediluvians

The people who lived before the Flood are commonly called “antediluvians.” The word is a combination of the Latin prefix “ante,” which means “before” and the Latin word “diluvium,” which means “flood.” So, what were the antediluvians like?

They lived a long time. The average lifespan of Noah’s antediluvian ancestors, as listed in Genesis 5, was 907 years. (That average does not include Enoch, who was translated at the very “young” age of 365. That age is the equivalent of being about 30 in terms of today’s lifespan.)

Since the antediluvians lived such a long time, they were probably extremely accomplished people. In fact, as we noted in the previous article, the worldly achievements of the House of Cain are a point of emphasis in the Bible’s record of their lives. Consider what is written about Lamech’s son, Jubal, for example: *“His brother’s name was Jubal; he was the father of all those who play the lyre and pipe”* (Gen4:21, ESV). Notice how Jubal’s accomplishments are highlighted in this verse.

Imagine what a person could achieve with the number of years that the antediluvians were given. A person can become pretty good at playing an instrument if she devotes five or six years to it. But what if she had 900+ years? Today a person can become a medical doctor with around ten years of training. But what if that amount of time was just over one percent of his life? He would still have time for many additional pursuits and to learn so many more things. So, the antediluvians were probably very sophisticated as far as the wisdom of this world is concerned. Of course, for time devoted to an activity to have eternal value, it needs to be spent in service to God.

Population of Antediluvians

Another aspect of the antediluvians was that there were a lot of them. I used a population formula derived by a researcher named Henry Morris and estimated that there were around 610 million people living at the time of the Flood. (See Appendix.) In order to arrive at that figure, I had to guess the average number of children that an antediluvian family had. I assumed that they had an average of 10, but there is a whole range of numbers that is plausible. The Bible gives us only limited insight into the size of antediluvian families. The most information comes from the structure of the “generations of Adam” in Genesis 5. For each generation, the father is named, his firstborn son is given, and then the record states that he “begat sons and daughters.” (See Genesis 5:7, for example.) That implies that each family had a minimum of five children (i.e., the firstborn son, two more sons, and two daughters).

Alfred Rehwinkel, who has written a number of books on the Flood, relied on a completely different approach than the one that I used to estimate the pre-Flood population, and he arrived at a figure of 900 million.¹ The 18th century mathematician, William Whiston, estimated that there were 500 million people alive at the time of the Flood.²

Of course, it is not necessary for us to know the exact population of the world before the Flood. But it is very satisfying that a realistic estimate can be derived from looking at the information the Bible provides. The Bible is not a scientific textbook. But when it is examined logically, its narrative of events will be shown to be sound. Thus, it is worth noting that the pre-Flood population was probably considerable. It is certainly reasonable to believe that it was two to three times the current population of the United States. Yet almost all of those people with all of that time and all of those talents did not use them as God had intended. Peter refers to the time before the Flood when the antediluvians lived as *“the world of the ungodly”* (2Pet 2: 5).

Warnings

Most of the antediluvians had banished God from their thoughts. But God continued to exist despite the antediluvians best efforts to ignore Him. And their indifference towards His commandments did not negate them or excuse them from having to keep them. The same is true today. So, it is of the utmost importance that we keep society’s increasing lack of regard for God’s way from influencing our thinking and behavior.

God sent warnings to the antediluvians to urge them to change their ways. The first ones that are recorded came from Enoch and were given nearly 1,000 years before the Flood. The next warning is recorded in Genesis. It was given in response to the people of God choosing marriage partners based on physical appearance alone instead of a common commitment to the things of God: *“And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years”* (Gen 6:3).

There is some debate about the meaning of this passage. It has been suggested that God was stating his intention to limit the human lifespan to 120 years. However, that interpretation is not entirely supported by the text, and it is not in harmony with the record of subsequent events in the Bible. The descendants of Shem, who was one of Noah’s three sons, are listed in Genesis 11. They lived an average of 330 years. So, the human lifespan continued to be longer than 120 years after this prophecy was given.

What else could the passage mean? Let’s consider its different components. There is pretty strong agreement that the Hebrew word translated “strive” in the King James Version is better rendered “abide in.” That is how it is translated in the English Standard Version and the Revised Standard Version. That rendering is also supported by the Greek-language version of the passage in the Septuagint, which gives it as *“My Spirit shall certainly not remain among these men for ever, because they are flesh.”* So, God said that His spirit would not remain among the

antediluvians for ever. But what does that mean? Elihu characterizes death as the withdrawal of God's spirit: *"If he set his heart upon man, if he gather unto himself his spirit and his breath; All flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again unto dust"* (Job 34:14-15). So, God was expressing His intention to take away life (i.e., withdrew His spirit) from those who would not use it to give glory to Him.

The second half of the verse was a warning about the timing of this punishment that was coming to those who would not repent. William Tyndale translated it as *"Nevertheless I will give them yet space, an hundred and twenty years."* Enoch had given the fairly general prophecy that when his son, Methuselah, died, judgment would come. But the wickedness of man had increased, so God provided more specifics to convey a greater sense of urgency. He told people that they had 120 years to repent. Then disaster would strike those who refused.

Genesis 6: 3 is a powerful illustration of the character of God and His plan and purpose for His Creation. He shows incredible mercy towards us by giving us repeated opportunities to turn from the foolish thinking of our flesh. Yet He is unwavering in His requirements that we serve Him and obey His commandments. And if we refuse to submit to Him, we will perish.

If the message of Genesis 6: 3 had an impact, it did not last for long. Most people continued on with their lives and kept their focus on accomplishing their goals and enjoying themselves. And God was saddened by what was occurring: *"And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart"* (Gen 6:6). The Hebrew word *nacham*, which is translated "repented" in the King James Version, has a whole range of meanings. One of them is "to be sorry" or "to regret." The English Standard Version renders the passage as *"And the LORD was sorry that he had made man on the earth."* The verse continues by saying that man's behavior grieved God *"at his heart."*

We are told repeatedly that God feels strongly about us. We are assured that He knows us:

"Are not five sparrows sold for two copper coins? And not one of them is forgotten before God. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows" (Luke 12:6-7, NKJV).

And it is extremely moving to note that the Creator of the heavens and the earth responds with great feeling to our service to Him. God and the angels rejoice over the repentance of a sinner: *"Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth"* (Luke 15:10). And the joy that God will experience at the salvation of His people is expressed in terms of what is probably the most powerful emotion that a person is capable of experiencing. That is the feeling that a young man has on the day that he marries the person that he loves: *"For as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee: and as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee"* (Isa 62:5). God will share this joy with us if we are among His faithful followers: *"The LORD your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice*

over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing” (Zeph 3:17, ESV).

But just as God feels great joy when we choose to obey Him, He is also greatly saddened by our acts of disobedience. Therefore, we are urged not to “grieve” Him by the things that we do or say:

“Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you” (Eph 4:29-32).

Most of the antediluvians had no regard for God’s feelings. And what could have been a wonderful world was being wasted from God’s perspective. So, He stated His intent to undo Creation, as it were: *“And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them” (Gen 6:7).*

Noah, however, gave heed to God’s words. And in the next article, we will consider why it was written that *“Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD” (Gen 6: 8).*

Appendix

The population of the world before the Flood can be estimated using the following formula derived by Henry Morris:³

$$P_n = \frac{2[C^{n-x+1} - C^{x-1}]}{[C - 1]}$$

where P_n is the population in generation n , n is the number of generations that have occurred, x is the number of generations alive, and C is half the number of children in the family.⁴

Noah was the tenth generation from Adam. He had children that were old enough to have children. Include another generation since Noah was unusually old when he began to have children. Assume, therefore, that n is 13. Further, Assume x is 6 (i.e., Noah and three generations following; Methuselah and Lamech). Assume 10 children per family. Therefore, C equals 5. This yields a population of 610,351,563.

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Notes:

1. Alfred Rehwinkel. *The Flood: In the Light of the Bible, Geology, and Archaeology*, (Concordia, 1957).
2. William Whiston. *A New Theory of the Earth, From its Original, to the Consummation of All Things, Where the Creation of the World in Six Days, the Universal Deluge, And the General Conflagration, As laid down in the Holy Scriptures, Are Shewn to be perfectly agreeable to Reason and Philosophy*, (London: Benjamin Tooke, 1696).
3. Henry Morris. *The Biblical Basis for Modern Science*, Appendix 6, (Baker Book House; Grand Rapids, 1984).
4. For more information on this formula, see <http://www.ldolphin.org/popul.html>. Accessed November 14, 2010.

Jesus' Instruction for the Ecclesia in Matthew

Introduction

One primary purpose of the gospel records is to furnish us with how Jesus overcame temptation and sin, in order to ultimately “*save his people from their sins*” (Matt 1:21). Besides that, Jesus gives us vignettes of a time afterwards where many people would come to believe and be saved through the words of the Apostles (John 17:20-21). Yet, even in this it would be the Lord Jesus who would work through his believers (John 10:16). The principle verse in this regards is

*“And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock **I will build my church**; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matt 16:18).*

The Lord Jesus reveals that the events in the Acts would be a very personal and intimate expression of his work to build his church. This word church in the Greek is “ecclesia” meaning, “an assembly of called ones”.¹ This is the first use of the word ecclesia in the New Testament, and surprisingly its only other usage in the Gospels is Matthew 18:17. Based on this scarcity, we would assert that Matthew 18 is Jesus’ core teaching for us concerning how to govern and conduct ourselves in his ecclesia.

Of course, there are many principles in Jesus’ teachings that apply to ecclesial life, but we are searching to find any direct guidance for ecclesial practice and administration. The intent of this study is to draw any practical value we can from Matthew 16:18-19 and 18:15-20. We will see that his teaching is not new but is based on an Old Testament foundation. These echoes will further elaborate the intent of his instruction. We will also explore the enigmatic statement that links the two passages together — “*Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven*” (Matt 18:18)

The Context of Matthew 18

Matthew 18 is a complete discourse that Jesus gives to his disciples (v. 1). In the middle of this is the mention of the future ecclesia (v. 17). Any consideration must include the overall context of the chapter. As many commentators draw out, the main thrust of the chapter is the restoration and forgiveness of those offended.

- V. 6: “whoso shall offend one of these little ones...”
- V. 12-14: “the parable of the lost sheep”
- V. 21-22: “Peter’s question about how many times to forgive”
- V. 23-35: “the parable of the unforgiving servant”

The key verse would seem to be verse 11, “*For the son of man is come to save that which was lost.*” The implication is that this should be our purpose too.

That being said, there is also an aspect of “cutting off” those that do offend. In this context, it would seem that verse 7-9 could also apply to the ecclesia,

“Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh! Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee: it is better

for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire.”

Could this also be referring to disfellowship in the body of Christ? The members and body are the same words used of the ecclesia in 1 Corinthians 12; Romans 12:4-5 and James 3:2, 6. “Cut off” is the phrase used for excommunication under the law (e.g., Lev 20:17, 18). Cutting off members from the ecclesia is sometimes a necessary, if unsavory, task but, as this chapter indicates, the purpose behind it is twofold. It is firstly for drawing repentance from the offender, and secondly for the safety of the little ones — the ecclesia.

Matthew 18:15

It is in this context that Jesus says,

“Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.”

The only motive for this confrontation is love. If the intent is to seek after that which is lost then it cannot be done out of spite, anger, revenge or malice. Jesus’ teaching seems to have a direct connection from Leviticus,

“Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him. Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the LORD” (Lev 19:17-18).

One of the greatest of commandments “*thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself*” (Matt 22:39) is built on the principle of reproving the sins of your brother. The phrase “*not suffer sin upon him*” is an obscure Hebrew phrase. Most modern translations have something like the NET translation, “*You must surely reprove your fellow citizen so that you do not incur sin on account of him.*”²² The implication is that you sin if you do not call out the sin in the manner Jesus prescribes in Matthew 18. To ignore it is wrong.

The beautiful principles of our Lord Jesus are the best way to deal with transgressions. This teaching is in Proverbs 10:12, “*Hatred stirreth up strifes: but love covereth all sins*” (Peter quotes this in 1 Peter 4:8). There is another like it: “*He that covereth a transgression seeketh love; but he that repeateth a matter separateth very friends*” (Prov 17:9).

To cover a transgression does not mean to sweep it under the rug and forget about it, for the Proverbs state repeatedly that sins have to be openly confessed to be forgiven. The true meaning of the proverb is in Matthew 18. This is how love handles transgressions. Hate would broadcast your brother’s sins to others that do not need to be involved. Love covers them over. It is between you, them and God: these are the only parties that really need to know. Many bad feelings and unnecessary hurts are caused when we do not follow this pattern set out by Christ in Matthew 18. (See also James 5:20).

Matthew 18:16

In the case of a brother’s transgression being real and he is unrelenting to your reproof, Jesus prescribes the next step,

“But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.”

This is a quote taken directly from Deuteronomy 19:15. That Jesus would quote the words directly from the Law of Moses is very interesting. Of course, we know the Law to be just and good with many principles that would later be adopted by the Apostles as recorded in Acts. Jesus directly draws our attention to the context of this passage:

*“One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that he sinneth: **at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established.** If a false witness rise up against any man to testify against him that which is wrong; Then both the men, between whom the controversy is, shall stand before the LORD, before the priests and the judges, which shall be in those days; And the judges shall make diligent inquisition: and, behold, if the witness be a false witness, and hath testified falsely against his brother; Then shall ye do unto him, as he had thought to have done unto his brother: so shalt thou put the evil away from among you. And those which remain shall hear, and fear, and shall henceforth commit no more any such evil among you” (Deut 19:15-20).*

Under Jesus’ new direction, the cause is brought before the ecclesia rather than the priests and judges of the day.

There are unmistakable parallels of Deuteronomy 19:15-21 to personal cases in Deuteronomy 17:2-7 and community relations in Deuteronomy 13:12-18. The table below shows the key connections while also showing the New Testament passages that also take up these concepts. It proves that this aspect of the law was a principle that was well established and acted upon in the early ecclesia.

Deuteronomy	19:15-21	17:2-13	13:6-18	New Testament
if thou shalt hear in the city gates		v. 2, 4, 8	v. 12	
2 or 3 witness	v. 15	v. 6	N/A	2Cor 13:1; 1Tim 5:19; Heb. 10:28
brought before judges	v. 17	v. 8-9		
diligent search	v. 18	v. 4	v. 14	
Hands of witness first		v. 7	v. 9	
put away the evil	v. 19	v. 7, 12	v. 5	1Cor 5:13
learn to fear	v. 20	v. 13	v. 11	1Tim 5:20 (cf. Acts 5:5,11; 19:17)

There are some key lessons to learn from these passages.

The phrase “*if thou shalt hear*” shows us that problems are to be dealt with only when brought to your attention. There is to be no seeking out false teachings based upon suspicions. The person or city does have a responsibility if it is brought to their attention. It teaches us that problems in fellowship are to be dealt with actively and not passively.

Any problem that comes to your attention should only be given serious consideration if given by two or three witnesses. Individual accusations should be suspect, especially if not following the course of Jesus in Matthew 18.

Those involved in the matter are to make “diligent inquisition”. They must resist every natural impulse for a quick and hasty decision based on human biases. Both sides of the case need to be thoroughly investigated. This was necessary under the law because the final judgment was often death, but the cause is just as serious by the ecclesia for it is a matter of life eternal (see Heb 10:28-29).

The ultimate purpose is to “*put away evil*” from among the ecclesia, but also it serves as an example for others so that they may “*learn and fear*”. There is a fine balance between being lenient and forgiving on one hand, and readiness to make an example of blatant sinners so others in the ecclesia learn to fear. The “fear” spoken of must be the fear of God (e.g. Lev 19:14, 32; 25:17) as the judgment was God’s (Deut 1:17).

The cities of Israel were autonomous in that they judged within their gates (Deut 17:2) yet this did not absolve them of dealing with problems in other cities (Deut 13:12; see also Josh 22:10-34). So it is in our day. Ecclesias have autonomy to deal with their own matters yet they also have to be ready to judge serious problems in other ecclesias if they should hear about it. Practically, this could only mean, as it did in Israel, that one ecclesia deals with another ecclesia only in their own local area, and not half way around the world.

Matthew 18:17

In the Old Testament those who had a dispute stood before the priests and judges. Under Jesus’ new commandment, the case would now go to the ecclesia. It has the final say in matters of fellowship.

“And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican.”

The treatment for someone who rejected the ecclesial ruling was to treat them as a heathen and a publican. Jesus did not have kind words for heathens (Matt 6:7) or publicans (Matt 5:46), yet when they were willing to listen Jesus was there to teach them (Luke 15:1 — see the following parable at v. 4ff; 18:13; 19:2). There is a tendency to treat a disfellowshipped brother or sister as the Pharisees did to publicans and sinners, but Jesus’ methods were wholly different. As the context of Matthew 18 suggests, we should be seeking for every opportunity to bring the lost sheep back into the fold.

Matthew 18:18

The importance of the ecclesial decision comes in the next enigmatic yet powerful verse,

“Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”³

Jesus conferred upon Peter the exact same phrase in Matthew 16:19. So, in the only two places the word ecclesia is used in the Gospels it is married with this saying. We can conclude then that this was not Peter’s alone but collectively for the whole ecclesia.

In Matthew 16:19, Peter is given the “keys of the kingdom of heaven”. The keys represent a certain knowledge or power to open and close. It is an allusion to Isaiah 22:22⁴,

“And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open.”

This is a similar phraseology to “binding” and “loosing”. The context of Isaiah is about Eliakim, a servant in Hezekiah’s time, who undoubtedly is a Messianic type. The keys are meant to symbolize somebody who has authority. In Old Testament times this would be the priest, judges and elders of the people. It was something the authorities of Jesus’ time had neglected and abused (Luke 11:52; Matt 23:13). These keys were now given to the apostle Peter and the ecclesia.

But what does the phrase really mean? How does an ecclesia “bind” and “loose”? Can we do it in this day and age? The answers to these questions start in John 20:23,

“Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained.”

It is hard to escape the similar cadence of words that Jesus uses here. This was said to his disciples and not just the apostles. Does the “binding” and “loosing” have something to do with the forgiveness of sins? We shall see that it does.

Matthew 18:19

The next verse in Matthew 18:19 must be a further elaboration on verse 18 as Jesus says “Again I say to you” and then uses the words “heaven” and “earth” again.

“Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.”

What is it that we are to be asking for? When Jesus mentions “anything” does he mean “everything” or does it still have to be in accordance with the will of God (John 15:7, 16; James 4:3; 1John 3:22)? A similar phrase is said in Matthew 21:22 and the parallel account in Mark connects it with the forgiveness of sins.

“Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them. And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven

may forgive you your trespasses. But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses” (Mark 11:24-26).

This is very interesting as the passage leads us once again to the forgiveness of sins just as we have all ready seen in John 20:23. Apparently, Peter understood this as he continues in Matthew 18:21ff to ask how many times we should forgive our brother (cf. v. 35 with Mark 11:25-26). The apostle John ties the same thoughts together:

“And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him” (1John 5:14-15).

This is exactly the same phrasing that Jesus used in Matthew 18:19 and Mark 11:24. Is it any wonder then that the next verse in the epistle sounds exactly like Matthew 18?

“If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it” (1John 5:16).

The sin unto death is the lawless unrepentant sin (1John 3:4). The sin not unto death are confessed sins (1John 1:9). The “anything that we shall ask” (Matt 18:19) then is anything according to the will of God (1John 5:14) or what he is willing to do.⁵ The “binding” and “loosing” has to do with forgiveness of sins. Whatsoever we forgive on earth then God will forgive us and, vice versa, whatsoever we do not forgive then God will not forgive us (Matt 6:14-15).⁶

Matthew 18:20

This section concludes with Jesus saying,

“For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.”

The “two or three” must refer back to the two or three witness of verse 16. This would suggest that the original witnesses are the responsible ones, who should either judge against or pray for forgiveness of the brother. Jesus reiterates that as he would build his church (Matt 16:18) he promises us through judgment or repentance he will be there.

In the case of the Corinthians Paul seems to have a sense of this. The word “gathered” is *sunago* (G4863) which is in

*“For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed, In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are **gathered** together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus” (1Cor 5:3-5).*

This is the passage where Paul pleads with the Corinthians to put away (v. 13) a brother who had committed an egregious sin in marrying his father’s wife. Paul

is saying he is judging as if he were present as a witness along with the presence or power of the Lord Jesus Christ. This follows with the promise of Jesus that he would be in the “midst of them”.

Of course, Paul was saying this with all the proper motives. It was so that the offender might be saved “in the day of the Lord Jesus.” Paul would have been ever looking for some sign of repentance and restoration. This comes in 2 Corinthians,

“Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many. So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm your love toward him” (2Cor 2:6-8).

It is very appropriate that in the following verses Paul uses the language of forgiveness in an echo to the “binding” and “loosing” of Matthew 18.

“To whom ye forgive anything, I forgive also: for if I forgave anything, to whom I forgave it, for your sakes forgave I it in the person of Christ” (2Cor 2:10).

A further connection is established in that he forgave it “*in the person (or presence) of Christ*”. Thus he always felt in judgment or forgiveness that Christ was in the midst.

Conclusion

In typical fashion, Jesus has given us much teaching in a few verses. Firstly, we’ve seen a very wise and practical approach to problems. By following this, it decreases the need to escalate matters out of hand. Jesus firmly cements the fact that love is the chief motivator for restoration and healing. Secondly, there has been established a clear Old Testament connection, which has shown an individual and community based application relevant to Matthew 18. In the Old Testament, it was the priests and elders, but now it is the ecclesia which has the final say in determining fellowship. Finally, the matter of “binding” and “loosing” has been shown to apply to forgiveness, and is wholly applicable to our day and age.

Tim Young (Cambridge, ON)

Notes:

1. See “Ekklesia – The Church of God” in *New Testament Words*, William Barclay, pp. 68-72
2. The NET Bible footnote says, “*Heb ‘and you will not lift up on him sin.’ The meaning of the line is somewhat obscure. It means either (1) that one should rebuke one’s neighbor when he sins lest one also becomes guilty, which is the way it is rendered here (see NIV, NRSV, NEB, JB; see also B. A. Levine, *Leviticus* [JPSTC], 129-30, and J. E. Hartley, *Leviticus* [WBC], 303, and the discussion on pp. 316-17), or (2) one may rebuke one’s neighbor without incurring sin just as long as he does not hate him in his heart (see the first part of the verse; cf. NASB, NAB).*”
3. The NASB (also NET) has, “*Truly I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven.*” I’m not sure if this helps us interpret the passage any better.
4. See also Rev 3:7-8
5. See HAW, “Seven Short Epistles”
6. Could James 5:14-16 also have an application in this case?

What is the Purpose of Bible Study?

“What is the purpose of Bible study?” That’s an interesting question, isn’t it? Because at first it seems like there would be such an obvious answer. Yet, as we stop to ponder it, we see that there might be several arguable answers. One person might answer that studying the Bible is a way in which we serve God, and that therefore, Bible study itself is a righteous thing. Another might reply that we study the Bible in order to prove that our beliefs are true, and that the beliefs of other religions are false. Others might argue that Bible study is all about finding solutions to our everyday problems. Still others might contend that it’s a combination of these things. What we are going to see in our short study on this subject, is that the purpose of Bible study is actually all of these things and yet none of these things, all at the same time. Although these responses are certainly partially correct, they fail to truly get at the heart of the answer. What we hope to do in this article is to peel back the layers and really get at the crucial root answer of our original question: “What is the purpose of Bible study?”

Our devilish little human minds...

If we are going to talk about studying the Bible, the first thing we need to talk about is our thoughts. This is going to seem a little off track at first, but trust me, there’s a spiritual GPS keeping us on the right path. To begin, let’s examine some familiar words of the Lord Jesus:

“For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man” (Mark 7:21-23).

These verses are pretty convenient because they are so cut and dried. There is no other way to put it — we humans have evil hearts, and a bunch of bad stuff comes out of those hearts. Horrible things. You watch the news and hear about a murder? That came from the heart. Read about a greedy, embezzling banker? Yes, that came from the heart. All of the disgusting things we hear on the news every day, and all the awful things that we ourselves have done and are ashamed of, come from our fleshly, human hearts.

We know this. We know that our hearts are deceitful. We know that we think and do evil things all the time. We know that there is a raging war of the spirit versus the flesh inside of us. The real question is — what does this have to do with Bible study? To answer this question let’s look at Isaiah. I am quoting the verses, and will continue to do so throughout, however, I recommend that you turn them up in your own Bible so that they become more familiar to you.

“Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and

let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts” (Isa 55:6-9).

We already examined how our own thoughts are impure, dark, and full of evil. God calls us to forsake our crooked ways and to forsake our fleshly thoughts and to instead turn to His thoughts! God’s thoughts are not our thoughts. As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are God’s thoughts higher than ours. That is to say, God’s thoughts are on a totally different plane than ours. This is a simple point, yet one of the most profound in the entirety of Scripture. It shows us that all evil comes from our own thoughts, and that all righteousness comes from God’s thoughts.

Following Directions

There is a perfect Biblical example of this principle in the story of Cain and Abel. We all know the story: Cain offered “the fruit of the ground,” which was unacceptable to God, and Abel offered a lamb, which was acceptable to God. Both offered an offering, why couldn’t God just accept both? The answer is that one offering was based on God’s thoughts, but the other offering was based on man’s thoughts. Let me explain. If we refer back to the preceding chapter of the Bible, we remember that Adam and Eve attempted to cover themselves with fig leaves. God found this covering to be unacceptable and gave them animal skin coverings instead. Wait a second... doesn’t this sound an awful lot like the two offerings of Cain and Abel? Just like the plant covering wasn’t acceptable, so Cain’s plant offering wasn’t acceptable either. God had already set up a principle for Adam and Eve that they surely would have taught their children; however, Cain decided to ignore what he had been taught. Because Cain ignored Godly principles, he didn’t know how to serve God correctly.

In light of this point it becomes quite apparent why Bible study is so crucial — because looking into the Word of God is the only way that we’ll know what is God’s way. It’s a look into the mind of God! Reading the Scriptures allows us to, as we read earlier in Isaiah 55, forsake our lowly, earthly plane of human thoughts and ascend to the higher, heavenly plane of God’s thoughts. If we neglect the reading and the pondering of the Scripture then we are only left with our own, sinful, dying ways. The familiar passage of Proverbs 3:5-6 is very relevant: “*Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.*” Perhaps the most critical phrase in that verse is, “*and lean not unto thine own understanding.*” Anytime we listen to music, travel, eat, drink, choose a home, think about the future, make decisions or anything else, we can either lean on God’s understanding or on our own understanding. Cain ignored God’s way and leaned on his own thinking. In the same way, when we do any of these things without the influence of the Scriptures, we lean on our own understanding rather than God’s. Therefore, if we want to “*trust in the LORD*” with all our heart, it is imperative that we are careful to study His divine Word.

But I'm not good at studying!

A common misconception — a misconception that I used to have as well — is that there are a select few people who are intelligent enough to do Bible study, and it's appropriate for us to just leave it up to those people. It may surprise you to read this, but Bible study is not only for intellectuals. It's not just for the academic, scholarly, intelligent, smart people. Bible study is for everyone. Let's check out a passage in the book of Deuteronomy. This is Moses speaking God's words:

"And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates" (Deut 6:6-9).

God's words weren't just for the priests. They weren't just for the scribes either. They weren't even just for the adults; they were for the children too! In fact, just one chapter earlier, it says, *"And Moses called all Israel, and said unto them..."* (Deut 5:1). Moses was speaking to all of Israel. God wants all of us to think on His Word, and He wants all of us to think about it all the time: when we lie down, when we get up, when we hang out together, and even to put His Word on our "doorposts" and "gates"! In modern day terms, that's just like when we go into our fellow Christadelphians' homes and see that they have verses hanging on the wall.

If we remember our point from earlier, God's thoughts are way above and beyond our own. Doesn't it make sense that God would want everyone to be able to know His thoughts? That He would want everyone to be able to come to Him? Of course it does! God is a merciful, loving, God and it is His will that everyone should come to Him.

Bible "study" is a bad word...

Ok, I'm kidding, it's actually not a bad word at all. However, I do think that our common understanding of the word "study" has some unfortunate effects on the way we think about meditation on God's Word. It tends to make us associate "Bible study" with a scholarly, scribe sort of person — sitting at a large wooden desk piled high with books, concordances, notes, and the like. Although this is an important part of Bible study, it isn't the only part of it. We often feel that we have to specifically be an intellectual person to study the Bible, when really we know that God wants all of us to think on His Book. The word "study" sounds very academic, and tends to make us think of universities and schools. As we already discussed, Bible study is not only about academics, but it's about knowing the mind of the Father. So when we use the word "study," we should be careful to realize that we aren't necessarily talking about getting out Hebrew scrolls, but we can simply be speaking of the reading or thinking about God's Word. Therefore, in addition to the term "Bible study" I will also use the phrase "Bible meditation." This will help us keep in mind that "study" of the Scriptures is not an academic exercise, but rather it is a way for us to learn God's thoughts and make them our own.

Conclusion

To sum everything up, we began by looking at how gross and fleshly our own thoughts are. We then examined how God's thoughts are pure, and elevated far above our own. Next we considered that the only way to get God's thoughts to be our thoughts is to meditate on His Word. Through meditation on the Scripture, we can learn the correct way to serve the Father, what His mind and will are, and then can make our minds conform to His as much as possible. We then looked at how God doesn't just want a select group of people meditating on His Word, but rather that He wants everybody to come and examine it. Finally, we looked at the suggestion that "Bible meditation" is a more appropriate term for "Bible study" because it sheds the associated ideas of textbooks and schools, and is also more Biblical. We therefore see that Bible meditation isn't drudgery, but really it's a beautiful action we can take as humble children — that we might know more fully the love of our gracious Father.

In this article we have examined the "why" of Bible meditation, and in our next article we look forward to answering the "what" and "how" of it. What exactly is Bible meditation, and how does one go about doing it? With that little tidbit to whet your spiritual appetite, I bid you farewell. God bless!

With much love in Christ to all of God's children who read this,

Jeff Lange (Norfolk, VA)

The Joy of Sunday Schooling

What's the Goal? Part 2

God's truth is revealed truth. To learn it is to be informed by God. It is also to be transformed by Him. This is what life is about, and it is what God has sent His word to accomplish in us. Learning God's truth is cultivating godliness in mind and manners.

In keeping with this, a set of **information goals** for Sunday school teaching was defined in last month's article.¹ Our children need to learn about Bible contents, God, Christ, man, the ecclesia, doctrine, and God's commandments.²

The acquisition of Bible knowledge changes our children. As they learn the revealed things of God, they are never exactly the same again. But knowledge by itself is not everything. What our Sunday school children do with the knowledge they acquire determines how they develop in the likeness of God.

"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; all those who practice it have a good understanding. His praise endures forever!" (Psa 111:10)³.

Letting God's truth live in us is vital. In keeping with this, we also identified a set of **transformation goals** for Sunday schooling.¹ Starting with the acquisition of Bible knowledge, we look for our children to make positive changes along all of

these lines: Knowledge, attitudes, effective thinking, relationship with God and Christ, relationship with others, and personal life practices.²

Focusing on Sunday school goals

By themselves the two lists of goals are pretty academic. As Sunday school teachers we can easily give assent to them and move on, all but ignoring them under the constant pressure of getting lessons ready every week. It is helpful, I believe, to place the two sets of goals against each other and get into the habit of thinking how they relate to each other. A two-dimensional array — the educational goal grid — encourages this kind of thinking. It also helps us identify essential things to build into our lessons.

Educational Goals		TRANSFORMATION					
I N F O R M A T I O N		Knowledge	Attitudes	Effective thinking	Relationship to God, Christ	Relationship to others	Personal life practices
	Bible contents						
	God						
	Christ						
	Man						
	The Ecclesia						
	Doctrines						
	Commandments						

Every blank space on the goal grid invites us to ask how an information goal impacts on a transformation goal. How, for example, does our knowledge of Christ affect our attitude toward him and toward others? How should it change the way we think and make decisions? How should our knowledge of Christ also affect our relationship with God and our relationship with others around us? How should it change our private and public lives?

In other words, how should our knowledge of Christ change us as persons? And are we willing to change? Transfiguration is an essential aspect of salvation.

It is not just Sunday school teachers that need to think about questions like these. The children also need to think about them. They need to learn what to do with the information they are taught in Sunday school. And they need to begin identifying the opportunities they have in life to put the lessons into practice.

Framing goal-based questions

Take a good look at the questions that we ask our children in any Sunday school lesson. How many of them are **information questions**; simple matters of recall, perhaps requiring the child to restate what he or she has been told? These are important questions. Properly framed, the answers can tell us whether or not a foundation of knowledge has been laid. But we must not assume because a foundation is in place that the house will build itself. We need to ask **transformation questions** as well.

Transformation questions are different from information questions, so this point needs to be developed more fully. To do this, it will be helpful to work within the framework of a Sunday school lesson.

Feeding the 5,000.

We will take Christ's feeding of the 5,000 as the Sunday school lesson, and choose **knowledge of Christ** as the primary information goal for our children. Beyond this, we will build on the children's knowledge of Christ and take them into areas of personal transformation. Let's start with the story.

"The apostles returned to Jesus and told him all that they had done and taught. And he said to them, 'Come away by yourselves to a desolate place and rest a while.' For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. And they went away in the boat to a desolate place by themselves. Now many saw them going and recognized them, and they ran there on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them. When he went ashore he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. And he began to teach them many things. And when it grew late, his disciples came to him and said, 'This is a desolate place, and the hour is now late. Send them away to go into the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat.' But he answered them, 'You give them something to eat.' And they said to him, 'Shall we go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread and give it to them to eat?' And he said to them, 'How many loaves do you have? Go and see.' And when they had found out, they said, 'Five, and two fish.' Then he commanded them all to sit down in groups on the green grass. So they sat down in groups, by hundreds and by fifties. And taking the five loaves and the two fish he looked up to heaven and said a blessing and broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples to set before the people. And he divided the two fish among them all. And they all ate and were satisfied. And they took up twelve baskets full of broken pieces and of the fish. And those who ate the loaves were five thousand men" (Mark 6:30-44).

Now that we have the story, we need to be sure to address the information goal we have set for the children. In this case, it is **knowledge of Christ**.

To simply tell the story to our children is to enhance their **knowledge of Bible contents**. It is to help them acquire valuable Bible literacy. This is a legitimate information goal, but it is *not* the goal that we set for this Sunday school lesson.

Telling the story of the 5,000 fits in the upper left-hand corner of the goal grid; it does *not* specifically focus on knowing Christ.

If we go a step farther and interpret the story for our children – that is, tell them what the feeding of the 5,000 means – we will probably add **knowledge of Bible doctrine** to their **knowledge of Bible contents**. This, too, is a legitimate information goal, but it still does *not* have the focus that we want.

Let's go back to the story of the 5,000, therefore, and focus on Christ. What can the children learn about Jesus as a person from this story? What is revealed about him? Here are some questions that focus on the **knowledge of Christ**:

- What did Jesus do in this story that no other person could have done? What does this tell us about him?
- What did Jesus do that we can also do? What does this tell us about him?
- Identify details in the story that reveal the kinds of **attitudes** that Jesus had toward life and people?
- What **decisions** did Jesus make in this story? Could he have made different decisions than these? What does this tell us about him?
- What does the story tell us about the **relationship** that Jesus had **with God**?
- What does the story tell us about the **relationship** Jesus had **with his disciples**?
- What does the story tell us about the **relationship** Jesus **had with the ordinary people** of this world?
- What **characteristics** of Jesus are familiar to you in this story because he shows the same characteristics elsewhere in the Gospels?

Once the children know something about Christ from the 5,000 story, we need to turn the spotlight on them. What are the implications of Christ for our children? This is where we can begin to frame useful transformation questions. Here are a few to consider. You might well want to frame a different set of questions for your children.

- Would you like to have Jesus as a friend? Why? How does Jesus become your friend?
- Would you make the same **decisions** that Jesus did under similar circumstances? For example, would you give up your desire for “rest and leisure” to meet the demands of someone else? What would it require of you to do this?
- Would you like to have the kind of **relationship with God** that Jesus had? How do people like us begin to develop a good relationship with God? How can we help each other in the process?
- What is one specific thing that you can do in the week to come to show “compassion” on others **like Jesus** did when he fed the 5,000? Let's pray together that God will help you do it.

These questions address transformation goals. With **older** Sunday school children you could occupy a full class period or more discussing a set of questions like these. They are pretty intense! Given the length of time we usually have for Sunday school, we have to be realistic. One or two well-chosen transformation questions are probably all that can be handled on a given day.

And, of course, the questions that we ask need to be designed with the children in mind. I tend to think in terms of older children because I worked with teenagers all my teaching life. Ultimately, as the teacher, you have to decide what goal-based questions are appropriate for your class of Sunday school children.

Jim Harper (Meriden, CT)

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Notes:

1. See "What's the Goal – Part 1" in last month's issue of The Tidings.
2. Develop your own set of goals. You may also want to think about the order in which you sequence your goals
3. All references are from the ESV.

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What's in our Hymn Book?

There is a lot of interesting information in the green Christadelphian Hymn Book (2002) about the hymns we commonly sing. The hymn book has the lovely inscription on the front cover "Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs". We are told to be filled with the attitude of Christ, *"Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father"* (Eph 5:19-20).

We are encouraged to use the psalms, hymns and spiritual songs contained in our hymn book to teach and give thanks to God.

"Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God. Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through him to God the Father" (Col 3:16-17).

Playing a hymn and thinking about the words, even at times when I do not feel like doing it, helps me do what Peter says when he admonishes us to **REMEMBER**. To remember God's promises, blessings, and the joy that is set before us. *"Therefore, I will always be ready to remind you of these things, even though you already know them, and have been established in the truth which is present with you"* (2Pet 1:12).

Here are some ways to bring even more value and meaning when we sing the magnificent songs in our hymn book.

- 1) **Read the hymn.** Sometimes the words used in a hymn are difficult to understand because we don't know the meaning of the word. After I get the tune it's necessary to understand what is being sung. The songs are poetry, and sometimes the way the lines are written so they can rhyme, or fit the music, can be confusing. When I encounter a word or a phrase I don't understand in a hymn I find out what it means and write down the meaning beside it (yes, in the hymn book!). Examples:
 - a) Hymn 14, v. 2 – “affiance”: it means trust, confidence, reliance
 - b) Hymn 310, v.2 – “Robes whose lustre...” (or luster in the U.S.). It means the “quality of shining by reflecting light”!!
- 2) **Echo...echo....** We are told to be aware of echoes in the Word as we read the Bible. Many of the hymns chosen for the Christadelphian hymn book teach various principles from the Scriptures. I have several of my hymns “Bible-marked” as I read phrases that remind me of a verse here and there. Years ago a brother gave a fantastic exhortation on Hymn 361, doing echoes for almost every line to an event in the Bible. Now that hymn really means something to me and I can sing it with more understanding and fervor (okay, enthusiasm). Examples:
 - a) Hymn 435 “God be with you...”. Where did that phrase about God's wings come from? Ruth 2:12 is one echo, or Psalm 36:7. See if you can find more!
 - b) How about Hymn 340: the phrase in verse 1 about “with Christ in the vessel” immediately brings to mind Matthew 14:23-33. In the second verse, the broken cisterns come from Jeremiah 2:13, which we almost need to read to understand what the hymn's author has in mind. And then in verse 3, we all know the passage about tribulation is from Acts 14:22.
 - c) Finally: Hymn 347, verse 5: where does the phrase “thrice holy is the Lord” come from? Read Isaiah 6:3 to see if that's the “echo”. Page 651 of our hymn book starts an Index of Scriptural References that is looking at “echoes” from the other direction. You know a Bible passage and want to see if there is a hymn in our hymn book for it.
- 3) **Written by whom?** How can you tell if the words were written or the music composed by a Christadelphian? On page 630 (in both the standard and pocket size!) is an index called “Source Details Listed by Hymn Number.” The introduction on that page informs us that, “An asterisk * indicates Christadelphian sources.” So what I have done is write by the hymn the name of the Christadelphian author of either the music or words or both. When I see that the hymn is written by a Christadelphian that hymn means even more to me when I sing it.
- 4) **Tunes.** When I don't know the tune to a hymn, but I love the words, what do I do? Well, I do some mixing and matching. On page 642 the hymn book starts listing the Alphabetical Index of Tunes. Right after that, starting on page 646, the “Metrical Index of Tunes” is given. What are these used for? When you look at each hymn, at the top of the hymn, above the music, is the name of the music, and often, the “metrical” tune. The name for the music of the tune usually has an interesting history. For example, “Darwall's 148th”, the

tune as was used for hymn 73, is based on Psalm 148. The metrical tune is the beat, or rhythm of the tune. If you see a hymn with the metrical tune of 88.86, you can find that the words to another hymn with the same metrical tune and it will go with that original tune. Another example: you can sing the words to hymn 431 (88.86 metre) to the tune of hymn 405 (also 88.86 metre). On pages 646-647 you can also see by the headings what S.M., D.S.M., C.M., D.C.M., and L.M. mean!

- 5) **First Lines.** When asked “what is your favorite hymn?” we may answer, “Oh, the hymn starts with ‘Joy cometh...’ ” but you can’t remember the number of it! You can find the hymn number on Page 655 where hymns are listed alphabetically by their first line. Also, if you are searching for a particular theme, such as joy, or “holy”, there is a simple concordance available for your computer for the hymn book. (see <http://www.christadelphianmusic.org/info/index.html> for all this information and more!)
- 6) **Prayers and Praise.** It is sad to hear mournfulness in people’s voices when they are singing of the joy of being in the kingdom! Feel the emotions of the phrases being sung. Smile with joy when singing of rejoicing!! One favorite hymn that is a good example of various emotions is Hymn 135. We usually sing Verse 5 with emotion. We know to sing loud the two lines in Verse 5, “let sense be dumb, let flesh retire, Speak through the earthquake, wind and fire,” and then go down to practically a whisper when singing the last two lines, “O still small voice of calm!” But what about the rest of that hymn? Verse three speaks of “rest,” and “calm,” and “silence”. Do we sing that verse that way? In verse four the first two lines are about being quiet, while the 3rd and 4th lines are louder, while the last two lines are peaceful and quieter. Do we sing it that way with feeling, meditating on the words as we sing?? It is helpful to prepare our songs of praise by reading over the hymn words, quietly and reflectively, thinking about the author’s words and their meaning.

All these are ways to help us to better give our God sacrifices of praise. As stated in Hebrews 13:15, “*Through him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name*”.

Maritta Terrell (Austin Leander, TX)

I admonish every pious Christian that he take not offence at the plain, unvarnished manner of speech of the Bible. Let him reflect that what may seem trivial and commonplace to him, emanates from the high majesty, power and wisdom of God.

The Bible is the book that makes fools of the wise of this world; it is only understood by the plain and simple-hearted. Esteem this book as the precious fountain that can never be exhausted. In it thou findest the swaddling-clothes and the manger whither the angels directed the poor, simple shepherds; they seem poor and base, but dear and precious is the treasure that lies therein.

Martin Luther

Reflections

Faith to Move Mountains

“Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance” (John 20:1, NIV).

Was ever a mountain so “large” as the great stone which sealed Christ’s tomb? Truly, as miracles go, no miracle has been or could be so great as the one that caused this “very large” (Mark 16:4, NIV) stone to be removed, and thus proclaimed Christ’s tomb to be open, forevermore.

Jesus had told his followers,

“I tell you the truth, if anyone says to this mountain, ‘Go, throw yourself into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says will happen, it will be done for him” (Mark 11:23, NIV).

Of course, we have trouble with moving literal mountains, even as we have trouble explaining this passage.

But seen from a spiritual perspective, isn’t the greatest “mountain” of difficulty, which no man can move, the figurative “mountains” of death and the grave? Engineers with bulldozers and explosives can move even literal mountains. But who among them can move the mountainous “stone” that covers the grave? Not a one!

Even the disciples of Jesus could not move such a stone from the mouth of his sepulcher, not at that time; they were weeping in sorrow, and hiding in fear. It was the faith of Jesus alone — though he was dead and unconscious in the tomb — that moved the hand of the angels of God, who in turn rolled back the stone. It may be said that the greatest miracle that Jesus ever performed was this: the blood of this wholly righteous man cried out from the depths of the earth, and the Father heard!

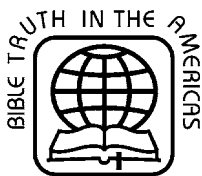
Do we, today, have faith to move mountains? The answer, I believe, is really another question: ‘Do we have faith that the greatest “mountain” has already been moved?’

“Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours” (Mark 11:24, NIV).

Our faith ought to be, not just a prospective, but also a retrospective faith: we look backward, and ask, ‘Do I really believe that the “mountain” has been moved?’ If we truly believe that, then — it is absolutely sure and certain — all things are possible for us!

George Booker (Austin Leander, TX)

*“The Bible is like a mine;
its jewels are not to be picked up on the roadside” (Selected).*



Bible Mission News

El Salvador Bible School

In the pine forest of northern El Salvador about 130 brethren and sisters, young people and children came together in December for the annual El Salvador Bible school. Besides 19 visitors from Costa Rica and five from neighboring Guatemala, there were nine young people from New Zealand and three Canadians. The Kiwis really added to the international flavor of the camp and many friendships were made or renewed (Bro. Brydyn and Sis. Yaana Melles lived in El Salvador and Guatemala when they were younger).



The El Salvador Bible School

The main speaker was Bro. Douglas Vanegas, a Salvadoran brother who lives in Costa Rica, on the theme of “Learning from the Prophets”. He helped us to realize that we are all potential prophets charged with taking God’s Word to the world. The teen class (with 33 students!) was on “Lessons from the Wilderness” and there were two more classes for the younger children, one given as usual by Bro. Jeff Hibbs of Victoria.

The traditional Bible competition between the Sheep and the Goats was held with much enthusiasm and noise. It was wonderful to see the love for learning the Scriptures.

Saturday evening was set aside for presentations by the different youth groups. The Costa Rican young people showed a video they had prepared on the importance

of forgiveness. The Kiwis sang and enacted a couple of Maori songs, a new and exotic experience for the rest of us, while the Salvadoran young people presented the story of David and Goliath with the 9-foot Philistine (Bro. Manuel Fernández inside!) stomping around and terrifying Israelite soldiers. The final event was an Israeli folk dance choreographed by Sis. Magdalena Ventura and featuring 30 costumed children and teenagers holding candles — very exciting! The night ended with a hymn-sing around a bonfire, coinciding with our annual blood donation to the local mosquito population.

On Sunday afternoon, after the breaking of bread and the final class, there was distribution of prizes to all the children and teens. It was heartwarming to see the grinning youngsters, about 50 in all, being cheered by the audience as each received his gift.

May God continue to bless the ecclesias in Central America as we walk together to His kingdom. A special thank-you to all those who support the preaching south of the border. Your help is sincerely appreciated by the brothers and sisters who are working to establish and nurture ecclesias in these faraway places.

Submitted by Jim and Jean Hunter

Trinidad and Tobago

Enduring to the End and Attending to the Young

Once again I was encouraged spiritually as I visited the four ecclesias in Trinidad and Tobago. Whether a small ecclesia meeting in a home or a “larger” ecclesia meeting in its own hall, we have brethren in T&T that are pressing on toward the mark of their high calling. They are diligent in their preaching of the Word through radio programs, seminars, and personal contacts. Every year preaching efforts are part of the regular budget, not just special efforts in certain years or months as it is in some North American ecclesias.

Their efforts with the children and young people are ongoing as well no matter how few or how many are found in their midst. I was particularly impressed with one ecclesia’s efforts in the neighborhood of their hall. It was my pleasure to witness the year end Sunday School program. The recitations, singing, and skits were a joy to behold, but here was the most amazing aspect of the day. The 18 or so young people who participated were all from the neighborhood except two of the youngest, who were children of ecclesial members! And, the ages ranged from 4 to 18!

Two of the teenagers have attended youth camp in T&T and seem quite connected to the other Christadelphian youth of the islands. One of the little girls, an eight year old from the neighborhood, sheds tears if her mom does not send her to Sunday School! Her mom did step up on this day. She made sure that little Erica and her younger siblings made it to the year-end program on the same day that her mother-in-law passed away!

One entry on the program was listed as a “Surprise”. The surprise was a skit (The Parable of the Unmerciful Servant) put on by the adults. You see, the teens had complained during rehearsals that they were providing all of the “entertainment”

(teens can be the same no matter where they live), so the adults secretly practiced a skit of their own. The teens and children loved it, of course, just as students at school enjoy seeing their teachers “perform”. The adults confided in me that they enjoyed the fellowship with their peers during the rehearsals for their part in the program.

Who was leading all of these participants and teaching the youngsters throughout the Sunday School year? Essentially, the job rested on the shoulders of one brother and two sisters in a ecclesia where there is an aging membership and only two exhorting brethren! It is a proactive and consistent effort on the part of this little meeting which, God willing, will reap benefits down the road. Needless to say, I was blown away, and came home with some good ideas for our own Sunday School.

I was also pleased to meet and welcome to the brotherhood most of the young people who put on the saving name of Christ this past year. There were eight baptisms in Trinidad and Tobago in 2010 and seven of the eight were young people!

While there was much I gained from this second trip, I also learned, once again, that the brothers and sisters are struggling with the issues of these last days that we live in. Strained relationships, employment challenges, and the lure of the world are all part of what our brethren are facing. In that regard their experience is not too different from ours further north. They will be in our prayers as we are in theirs. May we all endure to the end and continue to encourage our young people and others in the time that remains before our Lord’s return. And may our prayer for His return, be answered soon.

Submitted by Bro. Brad Butts, Linkman for Trinidad & Tobago

**Photos of the Marabella
Sunday School/CYC year
end program,
Trinidad and Tobago**

**The whole group of young
people, most of whom
are children from the
neighborhood around
the hall!**



**Helping the crippled man to the
temple gates, who would soon be
healed by Peter.**



The Senoir CYC (Teens)



The younger children (Erica, who sheds tears when she can't come to Sunday school, long dress in front row)

News from the Guyana Ecclesias for 2010

In February, Mr. JAMES CUPERTINO put on the saving name of the Lord, Bro. Derek Sohan of the Kilcoy Ecclesia fell asleep, and Sis. Esther Worrell returned home to Canada from her visit to Guyana. In March, Bro. Vernon Yearwood of the New Amsterdam Ecclesia fell asleep. He was 95 years old and the last of the early generation of Christadelphians. We pray we will meet again when our Lord returns.

In April, the Georgetown Ecclesia hosted the 39th Annual Guyana Bible School over the Easter weekend. The theme, “Thy Kingdom Come”, was shared by Bre. Tim Young and Mark Giordano. The Bible School was well attended by local and overseas brethren, including Bro. Joe and Sis. Vee Baldu (NY, USA), Bro. Clive and Sis. Christine Drepaul (NY, USA), Bro. Lennox Prashad (Canada) and Sis. Yvonne Horton (NY, USA).

In May, we bade farewell to Sis. Kamice Bailey who migrated to the USA. A Sisters Seminar was hosted by the Georgetown Ecclesia with the theme ‘Bearing the Yoke in Youth’. In June, we welcomed Bro. Ted and Sis. Dolores Sleeper (CA, USA) and Bro. David Worrell (Canada) around the table of our Lord.

In July, we gathered at the Eccles Ecclesia for the annual fraternal gathering and celebrated the baptism of Ms. SHELLANA BAYNES. In August, we welcomed Sis. Vaulda Caesar (Bahamas), and many of us participated in the annual youth camp at Plegt Anker (August 14-21). We also welcomed Bro. Tyrone and Sis. Carol Smartt (NY, USA) on their brief visit to Guyana due to a family loss. In September, we welcomed Bro. Andy Bradshaw (UK).

In December we welcomed Bro. David Andrews who has relocated to Guyana from Trinidad to help support the outreach, the youth, and baptismal instructional work among the six ecclesias. His return is expected to be a huge benefit to our ecclesias. His wife, Sis. Joan (Trinidad) joined him at the end of December.

Bro Anthony Semple

Addresses for Bequests and Donations

Christadelphian Bible Mission of the Americas (CBMA) supports preaching work throughout the Americas, Truth Corps, etc. Visit www.cbma.net for current activities as well as to make US dollar donations. Donations by check should be sent c/o Jeff Gelineau, 567 Astorian Dr., Simi Valley, CA 93065-5941, or contact jeffandkellie@gelineau.org

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

Williamsburg Christadelphian Foundation (WCF) supports pastoral and preaching activities throughout the world. c/o Ray Pratt, P.O. Box 88, Deland, IL 61839-0086. Website: wcfoundation.org

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

Christadelphian Tidings Publishing Committee publishes this magazine and other works on the Truth. P.O. Box 530696, Livonia, MI 48153-0696, www.tidings.org

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

Fairhaven Christadelphian Charitable Foundation provides assistance to Canadian ecclesias dealing with the health and welfare issues of senior members. Donations can be sent c/o Clive Daniel, 8583 Sansum Park Drive, North Saanich, BC, V8L 4V7, Canada

Agape in Action provides help for Christadelphian families and children living in extreme poverty. Donations may be sent to 39 Manor Park Crescent, Guelph, ON, Canada, N1G 1A2. 519-837-9094.
Email: agapeinaction@rogers.com
Website: www.agapeinaction.com

Christadelphian Save the Children Fund provides Bible learning materials, personal items, and scholarships to needy mission areas.
www.christadelphianchildren.com

Christadelphian Meal a Day Fund of the Americas funds projects to support those in need in North and South America and the Caribbean. www.cmadfa.com

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

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

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

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

Spanish language literature is available at P.O. Box 947, Monrovia, CA 91017-0947. 626-303-2222, email: jdhunter@gte.net

Christadelphian Care Line fully confidential help with emotional and spiritual problems as well as family issues. 866-823-1039

Alcohol Help Line fully confidential help for overcoming alcohol dependency. 866-823-1039

News & Notices

(Please send in news and notices by the 5th of the preceding month;
please include full name of ecclesia and recording brother.)

AVON, IN

The Avon Ecclesia has much to report. Our small meeting has been blessed with a number of baptisms. On August 15, 2009, our HOLLY HATCH, daughter of Bro. Jordan and Sis. Susan Hatch was immersed. CALEB PLEW, the son of Bro. Sam and Sis. Cassandra Plew took on the saving name of Christ on January 23, 2010. MARJORIE BINCH, the daughter of Bro. Ed and Sis. Beth Binch was baptized on April 28, 2010. Late last year on December 11, 2010, LUKE BROWN, the son of Bro. Dean and Sis. Marcia Brown joined our group of believers through the waters of baptism. We rejoice to see our young people so eager to walk together with us toward the kingdom.

We also welcome by transfer our Bro. Jon Mumaw and Sis. Susan Williams, both of the Kouts Ecclesia, to our meeting. Bro. Jon married our Sis. Katy Wuthrick.

On the sadder side of the news, the Avon Ecclesia lost three beloved members in 2010. On January 2, 2010, our Bro. Jim Davis, Sr. fell asleep in the Lord. On March 28, 2010, our Sis. Patty Jones passed away after a long struggle with dementia. With her exuberant and outgoing personality, Sis. Patty was well loved by so many that she embraced throughout her life in the truth. On June 2, 2010, our Sis. Margaret Evans fell asleep and is waiting peacefully for Christ's return.

The undersigned is the new recording brother. Please address correspondence to 10919 Olivia Court, Indianapolis, IN 46234; or email llivermore@hotmail.com; or phone 317-602-6611.

Lee Livermore

BRANTFORD

Much has happened within the Brantford Ecclesia since our last update. On December 19, 2010, Bro. John Easton of our light stand was joined in the Lord to Sis. Natalie Bruce from the North Houston Ecclesia. Returning to Brantford, Sis. Natalie was welcomed as a member of our ecclesia on January 16, 2011, and we had the opportunity to also welcome their son Nicolas to our Sunday school and CYC. We pray that our heavenly Father will bless this new family.

On January 2, 2011, we were reminded of the frailty of our mortal frame with the unexpected falling asleep of our Bro. David Casson. We were, by God's mercy, able to share the feast of remembrance with him hours before he gave up the spirit. A long time member of both the Brantford and the Barrie Ecclesias, his gentle spirit and love for rendering praise to our God through music will be deeply treasured. May the time of our separation be short, dear brother.

On January 12, 2011, Bro. Lloyd and Sis. Joan Newth celebrated their sixty-fifth wedding anniversary. We thank our heavenly Father for their example of steadfastness. Our ecclesia has truly been enriched with the blessing of having this faithful and compassionate father and mother in this encampment of spiritual Israel.

On January 24, 2011, our ecclesial family rejoiced with the safe arrival of a son, Jonadab Roy, to Bro. Tim and Sis. Hadassah Styles. May our Lord bless this young family as they nurture His precious heritage.

On October 8, 2011, God willing, we look forward to having Bro. Roger Long speak at the Thanksgiving gathering, which will be hosted at the Copetown Community Centre. Further details will be provided later in the year.

Michael Moore

ECHO LAKE, NJ

We are pleased to report that we have begun our next round of Bible Seminars. They are proceeding well with a number of interested people attending.

We sorrow with members of the Union Ecclesia in the falling asleep of our Sis. Elizabeth Packie.

We have been pleased and privileged to have the company of a number of visiting brothers and sisters and we have welcomed them around the table of the Lord: Eric and Bernice Hall (Manhattan, NY); Margan Packie, Virginia Packie, Carolyn Antonaccio, David and Maryann Jorgensen (Union, NJ); Tom and Sally Davies (Pomona, CA); Jeremy and Naamah Newth (Perth, Aust.); Keon Charles (Georgetown, Guyana); Phil Taylor (Boronia, Melbourne, Aust.).

Stewart Marsden

GLENDALE, AZ

We rejoice greatly with our new brother, BRIAN BAILEY, who was baptized on January 23, 2011. Brian has studied with us in Glendale, asking many penetrating questions, as well studying online on the "This Is Your Bible" website with Bro. David Jennings (Pomona, CA). We pray that God will continue to bless him and his studies of the Bible.

We are also very happy to report the birth of Claire Marie DeCaussin on January 11, 2011. Claire is the second child of Bro. Brad and Sis. Sarah DeCaussin, and younger sister of Jack. We ask that God will continue to watch over this wonderful young family.

We would like to thank Bro. Ted Sleeper (San Francisco Peninsula, CA) for his talks at our Study weekend in January. We were also happy that his wife, Sis. Delores, was able to be with us as well.

We have been pleased to have visiting with us Sis. Peggy Hoult (Comox County, BC) and Sis Myra Lucke (Victoria, BC) and Bro. Jim Seagoe (San Francisco Peninsula, CA).

For those wishing to visit the Glendale, AZ Christadelphian Ecclesia, please check our ecclesial website: www.azchristadelphians.com, in which is our current schedule, location (which sometimes changes) and upcoming events.

We have received a letter of resignation from Bro. Stephen Smith.

Matthew D. Smith

PRINCE GEORGE, BC

We look forward to our annual fraternal gathering on May 21-22, 2011. Our speaker this year is Bro. Ted Sleeper (San Francisco Peninsula, CA). The theme is, "Meditations on Creation". We extend a warm welcome to any who are planning to attend. Please contact Bro. Rod Massey at 1masseyrd@gmail.com for accommodations during the fraternal weekend.

We welcome into fellowship Bro. Eric and Sis. Lisa Evans who have transferred from Nanaimo, BC.

We have enjoyed the ministrations of visiting brethren: Jim Cowie, Theo Readman, Malcolm Shrimpton, Dev Ramcharan, Daryl Wiens, Stephen Bartholomew, Terry Houghton, Eric Evans, Bill Hlina, Martin Webster, and John Gareau.

Rod Massey

SHENANDOAH VALLEY, VA

It has been a while since we have updated the news for the Shenandoah Valley Ecclesia located in Star Tannery, VA near Winchester. We encourage visitors. Please call for information from Bro. Craig McInturff at 540-877-3178.

In January 2009, our Bro. E. F. "Whitey" Sauer sold his house in Mountain Falls Park, VA and moved to Sun City, AZ. He was a founding member of this ecclesia along with his sister/wife Nancy, and Bro. Tom and Sis. Leslie Colby. He has transferred his membership to the Glendale, AZ Ecclesia. May God continue to care for our brother.

We have grown by way of transfer and baptisms. On August 29, 2009, JACLYNN DIANE JENSEN, and on July 25, 2010, JULIA DAVISON ARIEL JENSEN were immersed. These are the daughters of Bro. Jeffrey and Sis. Ruth Jensen. August 1, 2010, MICHELLE COLVIN was baptized. Sis. Michelle and her daughter are a helpful and bright addition to our spiritual family. Michelle's daughter, Melissa, is one of the children that ride Bro. Craig's school bus. This just goes to show that we can all preach everywhere God puts us to serve. Melissa is a nice addition to our Sunday school.

On October 10, 2010, by way of transfer, Bro. Noah Bradburn changed ecclesial membership from the Washington DC Ecclesia to our meeting. We are pleased to have Bro. Noah to help fill our ranks and give tender and uplifting words of exhortation.

We continue to have a close relationship with the Washington DC Ecclesia and they lovingly continue to send a brother every month to give us words of exhortation. We are very appreciative. Therefore we have many visitors, too numerous to write. Thank you to all who have come.

David Anderson

UNION, NJ

Our Sis. Elizibeth Packie fell asleep in Christ on January 4, 2011, at the age of ninety-nine. Sis. Elizibeth was baptized in 1933 at the Jersey City, NJ Ecclesia. She was the caring wife of Bro. Montel Packie who fell asleep in 1994. Sis. Elizibeth will be missed and remembered for her good words to all, her dedication and her positive attitude. Our condolences to her three nieces, Sis. Virginia Packie, Sis. Margret Packie and Sis. Carolyn Antonaccio all of the Union, NJ Ecclesia and also to her sons, Kenneth and Robert Packie.

David Jorgensen

VERNON, BC

It has been some time since we have updated our ecclesial news. In December of 2009, our Bro. Mark and Sis. Kayla Higgs welcomed a son, Shane, into their young family. We welcomed via transfer from Okanagan Central our Sis. Tamar Goltz. Our sister is a wonderful addition to our midst, however has been away for the past several months staying with family in the U.S.

The duties of recording brother are now the responsibility of Bro. Ben Cawston — he may be contacted at ben_cawston@yahoo.ca.

David Zantingh

KNOW QUESTIONS ON THE BIBLE

The book *Know Questions on The Bible* by Aquila N. Priscilla is now available for purchase directly from the Lulu Press or from Bro. Tom Graham in the USA.

The following informative note is found on the first page of this book, “It was many years ago that a young family was eager to have discussion after doing their Bible reading together each night. As a result they took time preparing questions to ask each other on the chapters that they had read. Soon there were many other moms, dads and older brothers and sisters involved. All were eager to learn from God’s word and delighted in the law of the LORD.” (Psalm 1:2)

Know Questions on The Bible contains questions on every day’s Bible readings, made up and answered by many Christadelphians. The fruit of their labours can be yours for \$19.95 US for the soft covered version.

A perusal of the following web page will describe the book as well as provide several sample pages for one to view. Just type the following web address in the browser window: <http://stores.lulu.com/store.php?fAcctID=18046759>.

An early version of “Know Questions” was produced in 12 monthly issues in the late 1980’s. Now the complete revised series is available in this single volume of 581 pages. For more information contact the editors at postphosprod@hotmail.com.

Jack and Shirley Robinson

SOCIAL NETWORKING

The Australasian Bible Mission is concerned at the growing presence of Mission activity appearing on Facebook and other social media.

We are aware that the Internal Security Organizations, of some countries in which we work are accessing the social networking media to seek out information on local brethren and sisters and contacts. This was highlighted earlier this year when a photograph and information of a local brother was posted on Facebook by a fieldworker returning home. This information was accessed by the Internal Security of the country concerned and created considerable difficulties for the local brother.

Our request is that brethren and sisters should be circumspect about what is placed on Facebook and other social media websites, and that no information about our work should be exhibited at all in respect to countries such as Vietnam, China, Pakistan etc., which disapprove of evangelization.

Sincerely your brother, Australasian CBM
Keith Pearson

Note: this concern also applies to any Muslim country in the world, as well as such areas as China.

Minute Meditation

Doing Acts of Kindness Every Day

Charles Hummell once said, “The past cannot be regained, although we can learn from it; the future is not yet ours even though we must plan for it ... Time is now. We have only today.”

Far too many people waste their time living in the past or worrying about the future. We actually have only today to live, and it is foolish to spend that time preoccupied with the past, which we cannot regain, or fearing the future, over which we have little control. We need to appreciate the gift of today and use it wisely, remembering the Psalmist’s words, “This is the day which the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it.”

Our Lord gives us wise advice when he says, “Do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”

How should we spend our time each day? So many folks never think ahead and just stumble through the day letting the surrounding circumstances guide their actions. Wouldn’t it be wonderful if each of us every morning before getting out of bed asked ourselves, What can I do today that will help someone else? Instead of thinking of ourselves, if we would try to dedicate each day to serving others, how much happier not only would we be, but also those who benefit from our thoughtfulness.

Certainly our Lord was constantly thinking of the needs of others. Jesus himself went forty days without food, but when he preached to the multitude, he was so concerned that folks might faint if they were not fed that he provided food, even though they had only missed a meal or two. He had compassion for the multitudes that followed after him even when he was desperate for solitude in the wilderness after the shock of the death of John the Baptist. When he was being arrested by the mob, he healed the man whose ear Peter had chopped off, and then negotiated so that all his disciples could escape. Paul tells us to follow his example, saying, “We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves. Each of us should please his neighbor for his good, to build him up. For even Christ did not please himself.”

Thinking of others does not necessarily require us to do great spectacular deeds. No, often a little action, that helps someone when needed, is sufficient. Jesus gives the example of a drink of water, saying, “And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is my disciple, I tell you the truth, he will certainly not lose his reward.”

How often do we think about what simple acts of kindness we might be able to do that will help someone along who might need it? If we ask ourselves this question every morning before arising, will it make a difference in what we do during the day? Stephen Covey once said, “How different our lives are when we really know what is deeply important to us, and keeping that picture in mind, we manage ourselves each day to be and to do what really matters most.” Jesus never lost sight of his purpose. He said that the Son of man came not to be ministered to but to minister and told his disciples that anyone who wants to be the greatest must serve others. We need to serve by filling each day with acts of kindness to others. When we are so busy serving our Lord, we actually will not have time to worry about the past or fear the future.

Sometimes an act of kindness can be misunderstood. There is the story of a mother who asks her daughter to check on an elderly neighbor. She says to the little girl, “Go next door and see how old Mrs. Jones is today.” The girl comes running back a little frightened having done just as her mother asked. The neighbor’s response? It is none of their business how old she is today!

The story is humorous, but the point is, we should not hesitate to be kind even though our efforts may be misinterpreted. A little misunderstanding can be quickly corrected, and no doubt in this case after hearing the explanation, the neighbor would appreciate the mother’s thoughtfulness.

Jesus tells us what he will say to the righteous when he judges them: “For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.” The righteous reply that they do not remember having done these things for Jesus, but Jesus explains, “The King will reply, ‘I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.’”

Let us resolve to fill our days doing kind things for others so that the Lord will say to us, “Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.”

Robert J. Lloyd

Coming Events (Lord Willing)

**(Please send in notices at least two months before the date of the event.
Three months is preferable.)**

MARCH 2011

5 Brantford, ON Senior CYC Gathering. Theme: “Jehoshaphat — Lifted Up in the Ways of the Lord”

5 Victoria, BC Spring Study Weekend. Bro. John Hellawell, “David: Shepherd, Soldier, Sinner, Sovereign”. Contact Bro. Clyde Snobelen csnobelen@csll.ca 250-652-3318

12-13 Paris Avenue, OH Spring Study Weekend with our speaker Bro. Ryan Mutter (Baltimore, MD). His topic is the life of Gideon. Contact coordinator Bro. Everett Muniz, everettmuniz@gmail.com or phone 330-497-2811

19-20 Lompoc, CA Annual Bible Study weekend. Subject: "Male and Female, Yet Heirs Together" Study Leaders: Bro. Brian Luke (Adelaide, AUS) and Bro. Jason Hensley (Simi Valley, CA). Limited Seating! To register, please notify Bro. Ron Stewart, 275 Oakwood Circle, Lompoc, CA 93436, (805) 733-5577, rmsmstewart@aol.com

26 Caring Network of Canada Seminar Clarkson Community Centre, Mississauga, ON. Speaker: Bro. Bill Link (Baltimore, MD). Topic: "Maintaining Balance in Times of Disagreement". For information or to register, contact seminar@caringnetwork.ca

APRIL 2011

3 Boston, MA 20th Annual Spring Study Day. Boston Ecclesia, 48 Freeman St., Stoughton, MA. Bro. John Pople (San Francisco Peninsula, CA). Registration 12:30 p.m., classes begin this year at 1 p.m. For more information contact Bro. Jim Sullivan at 781-837-8865 or jimsulliv@aol.com

9-10 Sussex, NB Study Day. Our speaker will be Bro. John Perks (Ottawa, ON). His theme will be, "Lessons from First Thessalonians"

15-17 Men in the Truth Campout Lake Cachuma, CA. "A Godly Workout — Beefing Up Your Spirituality". Contact David Lloyd davidrlloyd@earthlink.net 818-352-6486

16-17 Baltimore/Washington Gathering and Study day. Washington Christadelphian Ecclesia, 9240 Riggs Road, Adelphi, MD 20783. Speaker: Bro. Jim Dillingham. Study day, Saturday, 1pm, topic: "Speaking the Language of God". Gathering, Sunday, 10:30am. For information contact Bro. Bob Kling 301-498-5245 or rkling@acm.org

21-24 Annual Pacific Northwest CYC Conference Shawnigan Lake, BC. For further information please contact Bro. Clyde Snobelen cyc@csl.ca 250-652-3318

22-24 Wichita Falls, TX Spring Gathering. T4C Camp, Freestone, TX. Speaker Bro. Jim Cowie (Wilston, Brisbane, Australia). Topic will be "The King's Manifesto For Life — Matthew 5-7". Contact Bro. John A. Clubb jclubb4081@aol.com

23 Boston, MA Third Annual New England Little Disciples Spring Gathering. Barton Center, Oxford, MA. The topic is "Samuel" for ages 3-11. Registration and more information at nelittledisciples.com or Sis Tammy Rundle 781 829 4410

23-24 New Westminster, BC Fraternal Gathering. Bro. Don Pearce (Rugby, UK) will lead our study on Easter weekend. Topic: "Events at the Time of the End"

30 - May 1 Pittsburgh, PA Study Day. Our speaker will be Bro. Richard Morgan (Hamilton Book Road, ON). The subject will be "The Temptations of Christ" — a look at the three periods of great temptation in Christ's life with an extended look at the transfiguration which helped strengthen him to overcome. Contact Bro. Bill Folkerts (724) 265-3272 or willfol@gmail.com or pghecclesia@gmail.com

MAY 2011

6-8 Vancouver, BC Sisters' Weekend. Beach Acres Resort, near Parksville, BC. Sis. Jennifer Daniel: "Compassion Fatigue". Cost \$180. Deposit no later than March 1. Send registration to Sis. Yvonne Rosenau, 6277 Dover Road, Nanaimo, BC, V9V 1A8. For further information contact Sis. Shonna Malczewski at shonna.malczewski@gmail.com

20-22 Sussex, NB Youth Spring Camp. Speaker: Bro. Jay Mayock (Book Road, ON). Topic: "Landscape Parables of the Bible". For ages 12 and over. Registration: Sis. Marie Baines 506- 433-5254 sussexspringcamp@live.ca

21-22 Prince George, BC Fraternal Gathering. Speaker: Bro. Ted Sleeper. Theme: "Meditations on Creation". Contact: Bro. Rod Massey 1masseyrd@gmail.com

JUNE 2011

3-5 Meriden, CT Spring Study Weekend. Bro. Cliff Baines (Sussex, NB). Theme: "Practical Principles in Peter". Contact Bro. Stephen Harper 203-440-0504, sharper.rn.ocn@att.net.

10-12 New York Sister's Retreat. Split Rock Resort and Golf Culb, PA. Speaker will be Sis. Letisha Blair-Lamour of Mt. Pleasant Ecclesia, Jamaica, West Indies. The topic will be "Being Born of the Spirit" on Christian Living. Registration deadline is April 15. Space is limited so please register early with 50% deposit. Cost of weekend is \$286.50 per person. Please make checks payable to "NY Metropolitan Sisters' Retreat". Mail to Sis. Averil Ferguson, 814A Tilden Street#5B, Bronx, New York, 10467. For information, contact Sis Averil Ferguson 718-881-8705 or averilpsm23@juno.com

19-25 California Christadelphian Kids Camp for ages 9-16. Held at our same location in Ojai, CA. Speakers this year will be brethren Ken Styles and David Wisniewski and they will be leading us in a study of Elijah. Contact Bro. Tom Graham at tom@bigbrand.com

19-25 Rocky Mountain Bible School Glenwood Springs, CO. Speakers Bro. Mark Vincent: "The Quest for Meaning in Ecclesiastes"; Bro. Dennis Paggi: "The Miracles, Wonders, and Signs of Jesus Christ"; Bro. Simon O'Grady: "Knowing our Lord Jesus Christ, His Name and Titles". Contact information provided at www.denverchristadelphians.org or contact Bro. Josh Livermore at 303-288-3966

30-July 5 Calaveras Family Bible Camp Calaveras Big Trees State Park, Arnold, CA. Classes will be given by Bro. Jason Hensley on the topic "The One Who Made Israel to Sin". For more information, please contact Bro. Brian McDonald at 626-335-3787 or bmcdonald@mcdonald-printing.com

JULY 2011

2-10 Mid-Atlantic Bible School Shippensburg, PA. The theme this year is "O Taste and See that the Lord is Good" – Psalm 34:8. The Youth Program theme will be "Occupations in Scripture". The speakers are Bro. Garth Maier (East Texas, TX): "The Gospel in the Law and Prophets" to the adults and "The Truth Affirmed" to the teens; Bro. Simon O'Grady (Tawa, New Zealand): "Knowing our Lord, Jesus Christ, His Name and Titles" to the adults and "Daniel and His Story" to the teens; Bro. Michael Owen (Seaton, UK): "Christ-Centered Families in the 21st Century" to the adults and "Finding the Joy of the Truth" to the teens. Registration forms on website <http://www.christadelphians.net/macbs>

10-16 Southwest Bible School will be held at Schreiner University, Kerrville, TX. Speakers are Bro. Mark O'Grady (Tawa, New Zealand): "Revelation — Exhortations from the Apocalypse", Teen class: "Encounters with a Risen Lord"; Bro. Stephen Palmer (Cardiff, Wales): "Ezra and Nehemiah"; Teen class: "David and Solomon"; Bro. David Lloyd (Simi Hills, CA): "Spiritual Muscle for the Five Big Mistakes"; Teen class: "Lessons from Daniel". Registration information at www.swcbs.org or by contacting Bro. John Clubb at (940) 636-0412; jclubb4081@aol.com; 1612 Douglas, Iowa Park, TX 76367

16-24 Eastern Bible School Connecticut College, New London, CT. Theme: "Set Your Minds on Things Above". Bro. Roger Lewis (Christchurch, New Zealand): "The Four

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Faces of Christ in the Gospels"; Bro. Chris Sales (Shelburne, ON): "Idolatry in the 21st Century"; Bro. Jay Mayock (Hamilton Book Road, ON): "The Re-Creation of Zion". For registration information contact Sis. Cindy Nevers, P.O. Box 296, Auburn, MA 01501, or cindy.nevers@tecbs.org or visit our website www.tecbs.org

23-31 Midwest Bible School. Hanover College, Hanover, IN. Speakers and their topics are Bro. Ed Binch (Avon, IN): "Jehoshaphat: Being Saved by God's Grace"; Bro. Jim Styles (Simi Hills, CA): "The Angels of God"; Bro. Roger Lewis (Christchurch North, N.Z.): "The Current Work and Role of Christ". Contact Bro. Mike Livermore, 24970 Woodridge Drive, Apt. 108, Farmington Hills, MI 48335, 248-462-5740, mike.live@gmail.com or visit www.midwestbibleschool.com

AUGUST 2011

20-26 Winfield Bible School Theme: "That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in You." Bro. Stan Isbell (Houston North, TX): "The House of Prayer for All Nations"; Bro. Shane Kirkwood (Australia): "Philippians: Shine as Lights"; Bro. Jim Styles (Simi Hills, CA): "Hebrews: The Power of Faith in Jesus Christ". Registration: Bro. Don Zantingh 250-545-5988 donzantingh@hotmail.com Accommodation: Bro. Harold Cawston 250-478-0343 h_jcawston@shaw.ca

27-2 September Vancouver Island Bible Camp Camp Pringle, 2520 West Shawnigan Lake Road, Shawnigan, BC. Our speakers are Bro. Shane Kirkwood: "Encounters with the Master"; Bro. Stan Isbell: "Godly Mariners and Ships on the Sea – Lessons from the Bible of Men, Their Ships and the Sea"; Bro. Bill Link: "The Lord Shall Yet Comfort Zion – God's steadfast purpose in Zechariah". Contact information www.vibiblecamp.com or Sharon Enns ennsranch@telus.net or 1-250-338-4812

OCTOBER 2011

8 Brantford, ON Thanksgiving gathering. Copetown Community Centre. Speaker will be Bro. Roger Long.

APRIL 2012

8-15 Australian Christadelphian Conference Adelaide, Australia. Theme: "Lift Up Your Heads". Speakers Bro. Tec Morgan (Washwood Heath, UK) and Bro. Chris Sales (Shelburne, ON). Please note the year **2012**