

# THE CRISTADELPHIAN TIDINGS

— of the Kingdom of God —

Vol. 74

August, 2011

No. 7

## Special Issue Preaching in the Americas

Preaching in the Americas — Introduction .....	315
Historical Introduction	
Preaching in the First Century, <i>Joe Hil</i> .....	316
The Preaching Methods of Our Early Brethren, <i>Peter Hemingray</i> ....	319
A History of Door-to-Door Gospel Campaigns, <i>Alvan Brittle</i> .....	323
The Ask Movement	
The Beginning, <i>jim Harper</i> .....	325
A Procedure for Teaching the Truth, <i>David Pride</i> .....	325
Great Lakes ASK, <i>Grant Abel</i> .....	326
Mid-Atlantic ASK, <i>Eloise Browder</i> .....	327
Preaching through Radio and Television	
Radio Outreach Starts, <i>Robert Lloyd</i> .....	328
“This is Your Bible” in California, <i>Doug Hawthorne</i> .....	329
Christadelphian Outreach on the East Coast, <i>Jeff and Ethel Wallace</i> .....	330
“This Is Your Bible” in New York City, <i>Joe Badlu</i> .....	332
Sunday School	
The Preaching Role of Our Sunday Schools, <i>Jim Harper</i> .....	333
Vacation Bible School, <i>Sandy McLeod</i> .....	336
Bible Seminars	
Reseda Ecclesia Seminar Process, <i>Carl Newth</i> .....	339
Bible Seminars: The Brampton Experience, <i>Dave and Marlene McKay</i> .....	343
“Learn to Read the Bible Effectively” Video Seminars, <i>Doug Hawthorne</i> .....	347
(Continued on Inside Front Cover)	

# The CHRISTADELPHIAN TIDINGS of the Kingdom of God

Peter Hemingray, Editor • George Booker, Associate Editor

The CHRISTADELPHIAN TIDINGS of the Kingdom of God (USPS 107-060) is published monthly by The Christadelphian Tidings, 643 Remuda Dr., Glendora, CA 91740-4581. PERIODICALS POSTAGE PAID at San Dimas, California. POSTMASTER: Return Service Requested to The Christadelphian Tidings, P.O. Box 530696, Livonia, MI 48153-0696.

Tidings Publishing Committee: Joe Hill (Chairman), John C. Bilello, Peter A. Bilello, Steve Cheetham, Ken Curry, Clive Drepaul, Mark Giordano, Tony Isaacs, Ted Sleeper, Phil Snobelen, Ken Sommerville, Jeff Wallace.

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Subscriptions and Finances: Rose Madge. Printing and Mailing: Brian McDonald. Web Master: Peter Bilello.

The Tidings is published on the 25th of the month for the month following. Items for publication must be received by the 5th of the month. Correspondence to the editor: Peter Hemingray, 3079 Kilburn Rd. W., Rochester Hills, MI 48306-2915, or by e-mail to [editor@tidings.org](mailto:editor@tidings.org). Publication of articles does not presume editorial endorsement except on matters of fundamental doctrine as set forth in the BASF. Letters to the editor will only be accepted via e-mail to [letterseditor@tidings.org](mailto:letterseditor@tidings.org). Please include your name, address, e-mail address, and contact phone numbers. Submissions under 300 words are encouraged - the magazine reserves the right to edit all submissions for length and clarity. Copyright 2010, Tidings Publishing Committee. Reproduction in whole, or in part, without permission is prohibited.

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## Subscriptions

**United States: \$24, Canada: \$32.** Checks payable to *The Tidings* and sent to P.O. Box 530696, Livonia, MI 48153-0696. Tax-deductible donations may be sent to the same address. Changes of address and other subscription matters to Rose Madge at the above address, or by e-mail to [rm\\_madge@yahoo.com](mailto:rm_madge@yahoo.com). **Australia: \$39.** Mail checks to Fran Caudery, 35 Jeffery Street, Blackburn, VIC 3130. **New Zealand: \$39.** Mail checks to John Beer, P.O. Box 559, Te Awamutu 3840. **South Africa: R150.** Mail checks to Anthony Oosthuizen, P.O. Box 50357, Durban 4062. **United Kingdom: £14.** Mail checks to Malcolm Cross, Grange Farm, East Cottingham, York YO42 4TB.

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## The Mission Experience

Looking Forward: The CBMA, *Ken Sommerville* ..... 348

Preaching in the Canadian Maritimes, *Cliff Baines* ..... 352

Domestic Missionary Work, *Wes Booker* ..... 353

History of Spanish Language Preaching in LA,

*Jim and Jean Hunter* ..... 355

Truth Corps, *Russ Patterson* ..... 359

## Personal Preaching

Bible in a Brown Bag, *Stan Isbell* ..... 361

An Appeal to College Students, *Ted Sleeper* ..... 364

Prison Preaching, *Marilyn Seagoe* ..... 365

## The Internet

This is Your Bible.com, *Mike LeDuke* ..... 367

A Tutor's Reflections, *Joy Jennings* ..... 370

## Preaching the Word in the Future

Every Disciple is a Missionary, *Ken Curry* ..... 371

The Future of Our Preaching, *David Jennings* ..... 373

Preaching Resources ..... 375

# Preaching in the Americas

## Introduction

Over the century and a half that has elapsed since the pioneering work of Bro. John Thomas, Christadelphians have carried on the commission of preaching the Truth to the communities we work and live in. In many ways, preaching has shaped our ecclesial culture. We are people who love the Word and it is not sufficient for us to keep it to ourselves. We are a body that seeks for others to embrace the Truth and to participate with us in the worship of the Almighty Father.

Preaching has provided an important platform for individuals and ecclesias to grow our faith. We've all experienced disappointing times where there has been little to no response, but also the exhilaration when someone understands and accepts the Truth. By the Lord's grace, it leads us to men and women that embrace the faith we share and they and their families become precious additions to our fellowship.

This special issue attempts to capture a few snapshots of preaching work by North Americans. In no way is it intended to be exhaustive. There are countless stories and resources that we were unable to capture in these few short pages. We are all aware of individuals that influenced us, that inspired us by their commitment to proclamation. Some were bold expounders of the Truth. Others were especially adept at speaking to friends, co-workers and neighbors.

While we make no attempt to cover all these wonderful stories, we do hope to “jumpstart” an ongoing forum for sharing information and resources about preaching. Following this special issue, the *Tidings Magazine* will be dedicating a special “**Preaching in North America**” section for future editions. Lord Willing, it will become a unique way to share information and resources on individual and ecclesial preaching work. We encourage our readers to write short articles that describe preaching work that you or your ecclesia are involved with that you feel could be of value for others to learn about.

We hope that you will enjoy this collection of articles. Perhaps you will be moved to try some of the ideas your brothers and sisters have employed. Whilst the Lord remains away, may each of us be lights that are brightly shining. May we “redeem the time” that remains to share this unparalleled message of hope with all who would hear. We all hope this special issue will not only inform us as to what has been done, but motivate us all to become even more personally involved in the vital work of preaching the Truth.

We would like to thank all our contributors, who gave of their time to tell some of the inspiring accounts of the many ways preaching has been accomplished by and for those on this continent.

*David Jennings and Jim Harper*  
Section Editors, Special Issue

# Historical Introduction

## Preaching in the First Century

Having inherited a name above every name, Jesus commissioned the apostles to preach and teach in all the world,

*“All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy [Spirit]: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen” (Matt 28:18-20).*

*“Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark 16:15-16).*

*“Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy [Spirit] is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8).*

### The practice

This last verse, Acts 1:8, foreshadows the fourfold structure of the book of Acts:

- 1) Acts 1-5: The twelve apostles, led by Peter and John, preach to Jews in Jerusalem.
- 2) Acts 6:1-9:31: The seven deacons (table servants), led by Stephen and Philip, preach to Jews, including those in Samaria.
- 3) Acts 9:32-12:24: Peter, now without the other apostles, preaches to Jews and the Gentile Cornelius and his household, all in Judaea.
- 4) Paul's Mission to the Gentiles (Acts 12:25-28:31), which also has a fourfold structure:
  - a) Acts 12:25-15:25: First Missionary Journey, to Asia Minor with Barnabas.
  - b) Acts 15:36-18:22: Second Missionary Journey, to Greece with Silas.
  - c) Acts 18:23-26:32: Third Missionary Journey, to Ephesus, etc., and trials after arriving back in Jerusalem.
  - d) Acts 27-28: To Rome, “the uttermost parts of the earth”.

Paul explains the division of labor between himself and Peter,

*“And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles... when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter; (For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:) And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of*

*fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision” (Gal 2:2, 7-9).*

Following the pattern set by Jesus, preachers in the first century were sent out “two by two” (Mark 6:7; Luke 10:1; Acts 11:30; 12:25; 13:2-4; 15:39-40; cf. Eccl 4:9-12).<sup>1</sup>

## **The Message**

The message was simple; they preached the gospel, “*the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ*” (Acts 8:12; 28:30-31). Depending on circumstances, the emphasis might be on one or the other of these essential topics: for example, during his ministry, Jesus “*preached the gospel of the kingdom*” (Matt 4:23; 9:35; 11:5; Mark 1:14; Luke 4:16-21); and when discussing the resurrection, Paul reminded the Corinthians that he had preached to them the gospel of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, according to the scriptures (1Cor 15:1-4).

Their preaching was based on the promises and prophecies of the Old Testament. During the 40 days between his resurrection and ascension, Jesus instructed the apostles:

*“These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high” (Luke 24:44-49).*

Fundamental ideas were foretold in the law (Acts 3:22-26; 7:2-44; etc.), the prophets (Acts 2:16-21; 7:48-50; 8:26-40; 13:34; etc.; cf. Luke 7:22-23), and the Psalms (Acts 2:25-28, 34-35; 4:25-28; 13:33, 35; etc.).

## **The Audience**

They tailored the message to their audiences. Peter’s Pentecost speech was directed precisely at his Jewish hearers (Acts 2:14-36); as a result, “*they were pricked in their hearts... then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day were added unto them about 3,000 souls*” (Acts 2:37-41). In Athens, Paul’s approach was ideal for the philosophizing Greek idolaters he was addressing (Acts 17:14-31). The reaction: some mocked, others wanted to hear more, and some believed (Acts 17:32-34). Paul summarizes his practice of adapting, of becoming all things to all people, in order to make the gospel most suitable to each, most likely to win them over:

*“For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might*

*gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you" (1Cor 9:19-23).*

## The results

Throughout the book of Acts, we are told that some people believed the gospel message and were baptized, becoming members of the fast-growing first century ecclesia. Others, on the other hand, rejected the message, mocked the preachers, and persecuted the ecclesias. Ironically, this persecution enabled the gospel to spread ever further throughout the rest of the world.

At the end of the first century, John recaps the success of the Jewish and Gentile missions. Concerning Jewish believers, he writes:

*"And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand **of all the tribes of the children of Israel**... [twelve thousand from each of the twelve tribes]" (Rev 7:4-8; cf. 14:1-5).*

And concerning Gentile believers, he writes:

*"After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, **of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues**, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands... And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to **every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people**, Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters" (Rev 7:9; 14:6-7; cf. Psa 96-98).*

## The lessons for us

These first century practices provide a model for our preaching today:

- We are commissioned to preach the gospel, as a community and as individuals. We are called to shine as lights in the world.
- We must preach to everyone everywhere, sowing the seed on all types of soil.
- Our message must focus on the Glad Tidings of the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ.
- We must be instructed in the Scriptures, prepared with a ready answer.
- We must adapt to the varying situations that arise, tailoring the message to our audience to maximize the possibility of winning them over, for the gospel's sake.
- We must take advantage of whatever circumstances we find ourselves in to preach to those around us.
- We must diligently plant and water; God will give the increase.

As we eagerly await our Lord's return from Heaven to bring the promised blessings of God's rule to the earth, we must continue in the work assigned to us, to love our

neighbors by preaching the gospel, that at least some of them may be saved. As long as Christ remains away, we must redeem the time, for “*The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us—ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance*” (2Pet 3:9).

Joe Hill (Austin Leander, TX)

#### Notes:

1. For more details on the importance of this practice, see “‘Two by Two’—‘Missionaries,’ money, and morality: Why Jesus sent out preachers two by two,” by George Booker, *Tidings*, December, 2008, pp. 549-558.

## The Preaching Methods of Our Early Brethren

### The earliest years

Before the advent of mechanized transport, and before the days of rapid communication, preaching was carried out in large part by travelling on horseback to the remote locations of potential converts. Thus was the early work of John Thomas, as he traveled around the Eastern Seaboard in the years 1835-1848. In these thirteen years, he must have given hundreds of lectures, many undoubtedly along the lines of one of the first<sup>1</sup>, which was published in 1833 and focused on the necessity and purpose of baptism. Of course, at this time he was a follower of Alexander Campbell, but he soon began developing his unique beliefs. He delivered this message, at least initially, from the pulpits of the congregations he lead in Baltimore, Philadelphia, and Richmond, as well as from other pulpits all over the mid-Atlantic states.

Soon his major method of spreading the gospel was his series of magazines: his first one, the *Apostolic Advocate*, was a Campbellite house organ for Virginia, but others followed with a more distinctive message, albeit a reduced circulation.

It was not until he went to the UK in 1848 that his methods extended much beyond church pulpits. Particularly in Glasgow, but in many other halls up and down England and Scotland, his lectures were widely advertised to the public, and drew large crowds to hear his message. This almost exclusively addressed the concerns of the day. The popular revolutions in France and across the continent dominated the headlines, and his lectures covered how they tied in to Bible prophecy. (Interesting how the revolutions in the Middle East are similarly dominating our headlines in 2011.) Newspaper accounts of his lectures survive, and although some elements of the gospel can be seen, the success of the lectures was undoubtedly the way they appealed to the concerns of the day.

One result of these lectures was the book *Elpis Israel*, which received a somewhat mixed reception at the time, probably because it included the kernel of his distinctive doctrinal message as well as the prophetic sections that were expected. But out of this work emerged the beginnings of the truth, particularly in Scotland and the British Midlands. One can demonstrate the vast majority of these early followers were either Campbellites, as above, or the remnants of the British followers of one William Miller. (Miller’s claim to fame — or was it notoriety — was his failed prediction of the return of Jesus in 1844.)

So the methods of John Thomas were

- Appeal to groups with some common grounds by visiting them
- Lecture at well publicized meetings
- Communicate to his followers and others through his magazines
- Write and lecture copiously on prophetic matters
- Debates were few, and almost non-existent after 1840

After John Thomas' return to the USA in 1850, he slowly developed a group of followers, largely by the method of reaching out to audiences in large meeting halls as a visiting lecturer. Such lectures were often well attended, as they formed a major source of "entertainment" in those days. By the time he died in 1871, his group of Christadelphians in North America probably numbered around 1,000, with many more in the UK — and that area was dominated by Robert Roberts.

As to other preaching methods, many were in use very early. In 1855, it was reported that "The Halifax brethren [in England] attached great importance to house and open air preaching" — and this was three years before Robert Roberts joined with them.

### **The preaching of Robert Roberts' time.**

A sample of the efforts of Robert Roberts seems appropriate. As recorded in his autobiography<sup>2</sup>

"About this time, there was a great stir in Birmingham, caused by an Irvingite<sup>3</sup> propagandist effort in the Town Hall, a large building capable of containing several thousands of people... The night was fine, and the crowd hanging about outside was large, and it was suggested the opportunity might be turned to account by holding an out-of-door meeting. A chair was fetched and placed in the square behind the hall, and one or two brethren went round among the crowd to tell them an overflow meeting would be held out there. The people accordingly repaired thither, and I mounted the chair and harangued them for the best part of an hour on the subject that was being spoken of inside. I received a fairly attentive hearing till I came to speak of the Pope, when the Roman Catholic element of the crowd became uncontrollably turbulent, and made a rush towards the speaker which was resisted for a time by the peaceably disposed of the people, but at last carried all before it, and compelled me to dismount. There might have been serious work but for two policemen who marched me off between them to the protection of a neighboring hotel, followed by a large crowd. The crowd stayed in front of the hotel and I escaped behind, and got quickly home."

One result of this was a second town Hall meeting, attended by almost 2,000, but which required a great deal of concern and struggle over its cost. But the Birmingham ecclesia was significantly increased by this one effort.

It was with the passing of John Thomas, and perhaps indeed before, that the organization and leadership had devolved upon Robert Roberts. Although largely



self-taught, he had a great command of the Bible and was very impressive in debate. He was for the next 30 years the primary public face of the growing Christadelphian movement, which grew rapidly under his guidance. So how was this accomplished? His methods of major outreach were quite simple: advertise a public address as widely as possible, and the public would normally attend in large numbers. We read very commonly of hundreds and sometimes thousands turning out for such topics as “The truth about Satan”, “Prophecies about the Middle East”, and “What the Bible says about baptism”. Roberts also set up the practice of Sunday evening lectures, which is still the way the majority of the ecclesias in the UK carry on their public proclamation. Roberts also engaged in major debates with such luminaries as Charles Bradlaugh, a prominent atheist. I believe, however, these latter activities contributed little to the growth of the ecclesias.

Much of the literature from the earliest days of Robert Roberts is still in print, but how much of it can be used in a public outreach today is debatable. In their day such pamphlets as “The Declaration” and others were circulated in large numbers. For example, from 1881 to 1921 at least 5,000 “Declarations” were published per year, with 116,000 being produced prior to the death of Roberts in 1898. I would note, however, that even in these times I know of several who have been convinced of the Truth of our message after reading *Christendom Astray*.

As the nature of the witness changed, so did both the type and variety of subjects. Of the 25 titles available in 1872, the majority were clearly designed for external use. By 1893, of the 50 available, only half were intended for internal use.

The growth of the Christadelphians in the UK was most impressive over the years 1864 to 1885, when around 5,000 new members were baptized, representing an annual growth of around 10%. The members were representative, at least by trade, of the population as a whole. The appeal appears to have been mainly to those individuals who, although lacking formal education, had a great thirst for knowledge. Thus they turned out in large numbers for the special lectures put on by the Christadelphians, and many were so convinced.

## **The mission field**

In those days, there was no Christadelphian Bible Mission (CBM) in any form, so spreading the gospel was strictly the result of personal initiative. Bro. Stanley Owen has summarized many of these efforts<sup>4</sup>, which were confined mainly to the period of 1870 to 1900. In that time, the gospel message flourished in many remote corners of the world, but in only a few cases did this last. In the Americas, you can find records of work in Peru as early as 1879, and an ecclesia in Argentina soon after, but only in Jamaica and British Guiana, now Guyana, did the Truth take hold and maintain the faith for the next half century or so. In both countries, when the CBM sent missionaries in the 1950’s, the ecclesias there had both dropped out of the knowledge of the rest of the brotherhood. Very little direct overseas mission work was recorded in the first half of the 20th century, although occasionally individuals emigrated to areas remote from other ecclesias, with no support, no literature other than in English, and no encouragement. It is not surprising there was little if any spread of the gospel overseas in this period.

Much has changed: there are now more Christadelphians in Malawi than in the Americas, and more on the African continent than in the UK, Australia, and North America combined.

## CC Walker



Charles Curwin Walker died in 1940. He was editor of the *Christadelphian* from 1898 to 1937. During his time the Christadelphians movement experienced slow growth, if any. Much effort was expended in coping with the divisions in the brotherhood. By the close of his editorship, the “Central” Fellowship was undoubtedly in the majority in the UK, but became the minority in both Australia and North America. The success of the public addresses appear to have declined, and there is no evidence of any significant efforts to change the normal mode of outreach. This was largely confined to evening lectures and leaflet distribution.

The only widely circulated magazine from those days that was used for public distribution (apart from the short lived *Good Company*) was the *Glad Tidings*. First issued in 1883, it was produced by what became known as the Suffolk Street movement, which limited its subscriptions.

Many will be aware of the CALS (Christadelphian Auxiliary Lecturing Society). You might be surprised to know it was officially started in 1903 in England. It was designed to supply speakers and funds to enable the gospel to be spread in areas where there were few, if any, Christadelphians, a function it still performs today. I can find no record of such an effort in North America until 1935, when a branch was formed in Hamilton, ON.<sup>5</sup>

In conclusion, the period of major outreach and growth of the Christadelphian movement was in the late nineteenth Century. This was primarily under the leadership of Robert Roberts until his death in 1898. Towards the end of his editorship, major doctrinal controversies caused internal turmoil, and much less growth. The preaching methods used remained essentially unchanged until around the appointment of John Carter as the new editor of *The Christadelphian*. Much changed during the period around WW2 — but that is another story.

*Peter Hemingray (Detroit Royal Oak, MI)*

### Notes:

1. *The Evangelist* by Walter Scott, Nov 1833, p 263.
2. *My Days and Ways*, p 161
3. Edward Irving (1879-1834) founded this movement, which became a Pentecostal denomination called the Catholic Apostolic Church
4. *Into All the World*, published 1999.
5. *The Christadelphian*, Vol. 72, 1935, p 383

## A History of Door-to-Door Gospel Campaigns

From the 1920s through the 1940s, many eastern U.S. ecclesias distributed leaflets in their neighborhoods advertising lectures. But it was not until the weekend of May 30, 1954, that the first planned inter-ecclesial door-to-door campaign was held in the eastern United States.

Bro. John Carter, Editor of *The Christadelphian* magazine, came to North America from Great Britain in the early 1950s to help promote reunion between the Central and Berean ecclesias. During his visits, Bro. Carter encouraged a group of us to organize teams of workers to go door to door with thousands of leaflets. He compared the work to the biological growth of a single cell: from one nucleus to two, from two to four, and so on until a colony of cells is created. He asked us to think of our work as “cells of truth”, multiplying and propagating Christadelphian Bible teaching.

At that time there was no organizing committee for this work. We had to find ecclesias that would host campaigners, pay for the printing of thousands of leaflets, and conduct the public lectures. Bro. Ernest Hardy had recently been transferred by his company from Springfield, Massachusetts, to Baltimore, Maryland. He was in virtual isolation, except for brother Andrew Eliason and some young members of the Link family. Bro. Hardy responded to our appeal, and we arranged for a small number of campaigners to work in the Baltimore area on the three-day, Memorial Day weekend of May 30, 1954.

Although we do not have a precise record of all who took part in the campaign, some of the workers were Bro. John and Sis. Mary Sommerville, Bre. Ernest Hardy, Bill Link, Sr., Wilbur and Al Brittle, and Sis. Edith Bailey.

In the years between 1954 and 1960, additional door-to-door campaigns were held in Moorestown, New Jersey; Meriden, Connecticut; Canton, Ohio, and again in Baltimore. For these efforts we welcomed more workers: Bro. Gene and Sis. Gertrude Turner, Bro. Don Lipfert, Sis. Marie and Sis. Ellen Forsythe, Bro. Doug Egles, Bro. Don Styles, as well as other local brothers and sisters.

Bro. Dennis and Sis. Faye Ford joined us at the Canton, Ohio, campaign. Bro. Ford's relentless zeal for preaching impressed all of us. Shortly after that, in the late 1950s, he went to work in Pittsburgh and continued to join us on campaigns in Pittsburgh and elsewhere. Frequently, Bro. Ford would take business trips from Pittsburgh to New York City, not far from where we lived. After each day's work he would come to our house for dinner, and many evenings were spent discussing future preaching activities. He would then catch a 10:30 P.M. flight back to Pittsburgh, ready for work the next day.

Besides door-to-door campaigning, Bro. Ford came up with the idea of placing Christadelphian ads in every county newspaper in the United States. The first ads were placed in newspapers in Ohio, and a good response was received from the Piketon area. In 1960, Bro. Gar Cooper, Jr. moved to Pittsburgh and joined Bro. Ford in the follow up work in Piketon. The effort involved weekend trips to Ohio

for several years. However, due to local church opposition and a locally oriented provincial outlook, no baptisms resulted.

On a rainy October day in 1961, Bro. Dennis and Sis. Faye were killed in a collision with a huge commercial truck. By God's blessing the lives of their two young children were spared. Their deaths and funeral were one of the saddest moments in the lives of many of us. We questioned why God had taken away from us the most zealous leader of our Gospel campaigns.

A period of less activity followed the loss of Bro. and Sis. Ford. Then we learned about the start of Truth Corps in California. Truth Corps offered to send teams of young people who were on summer vacation to work and stay in our ecclesias for weeks at a time. The teams were willing to do the same door-to-door campaigning work that had lapsed after the Fords' deaths. This faithful work has continued year after year, and a multitude of ecclesias have benefitted from these efforts. The pioneer work of Bro. Dennis and Sis. Faye Ford has been faithfully carried on by the Truth Corps. May it continue to prosper until the day of the Lord's return.

Our brief history may have some omissions, but God has an accurate record of all the Gospel campaigners that have served Him down through the years.

*W. Alvan Brittle (Washington, DC)*

## **Report of an Early U.S.A. Campaign<sup>1</sup>**

In the February [1956] issue an announcement was made of the first U.S. campaign held at Halethorpe, Maryland. Although results from our efforts were scanty, the spiritual benefits derived by these pioneer campaigners were of inestimable worth, in campaign experience as well as in establishing a further unity among the brethren.

Subsequently, two more campaigns have materialized, one at Moorestown, New Jersey, in November, 1955, where nine campaigners distributed over 2,000 leaflets, and the other at Orange, New Jersey, in March, 1956, when 16 campaigners combined efforts to distribute 3,000 pamphlets. The Moorestown campaign drew seven visitors to the evening lectures, but at Orange, one visitor came to hear.

Although our results have been meager, we are not deterred from trying again and again. Our aim is to spread the Truth so that many may have the opportunity to hear our message and see our glorious Light. Our greatest need now is for campaigners!

This undertaking is in its infancy, but a Gospel Campaign Committee has been organized, and we are anxious for all brethren to become aware of its existence and to offer their services as campaigners whenever possible to do so.

*The Gospel Campaign Committee*

Notes:

1. *The Christadelphian* : Volume 93, 1956, page 352

## The ASK Movement

*The Advancement of Scripture Knowledge movement that began in the 1960s marked a major step forward in inter-ecclesial outreach work in North America. Starting in New England, ASK rallied the local ecclesias for the purpose of preaching Bible truth, sometimes in new ways and often in new places.*

*Two factors have contributed significantly to ASK success when preaching has gone forward in new places. One has been the close proximity of an established ecclesia to carry on vital follow up work. The other has been the willingness of missionary minded brothers and sisters to move to new places and establish a Christadelphian presence on which to build.*

### The Beginning of ASK

In April, 1961, *The Christadelphian* magazine carried this news item:

*Perhaps the most significant news out of New England for 1960 and for many previous years, is the formation of a joint committee by the ecclesias here, named A.S.K. for the Advancement of Scripture Knowledge. The purpose of this committee is to expand the work of the ecclesias here into all of New England. ... We hope that others will be encouraged by the formation of this group to press their efforts into the great voids of the U.S.A.<sup>1</sup>*

The ASK name was quickly embraced by the brotherhood, and it came to be associated with a wide range of preaching initiatives, and additional “ASK Committees” appeared in several parts of North America. Some of the committees remain active and continue to carry out major preaching efforts in their respective areas.

While the ASK movement has not filled much of the ecclesial voids of New England or anywhere else in the past 50 years, it has produced some lasting results and it has fired much enthusiasm for preaching. The latter has been one of its strong points. One brother<sup>2</sup> put his finger on a vital reason for ASK’s success: The emphasis is in personal preaching, co-operation between workers in all stages of the scheme and the contagious enthusiasm of each individual.<sup>3</sup>

*Jim Harper (Meriden, CT)*

#### Notes:

1. *The Christadelphian*, Vol. 98, 1961, p.181.
2. Charles F. Samain, of the London, U.K., Streatham Ecclesia writing in 1967.
3. *The Christadelphian*, Vol. 104, 1967, p.278.

### A Procedure for Teaching the Truth. The 20-Lesson ASK Course

As the ASK movement grew in New England in the late 1960s, a steady stream of interested Bible students was generated. Many brothers and sisters wanted to teach the new contacts but were not sure how to go about it.

*A Procedure for Teaching the Truth* grew out of Bro. Albert Pride's desire to equip these brothers and sisters with the teaching tools that they needed. Capably assisted by Bro. Cyril Webb, Bro. Pride spent long hours working out the details of a 20-lesson course. What our brethren produced was both a course and a strategy for teaching the truth.

The 20-Lesson ASK Course covered first principles of Bible truth, starting in the Old Testament and proceeding into the New Testament. It was designed to prepare learners for a baptismal interview. The course also provided teachers with Bible marking notes that equipped them to teach the first principles to their students.

The first lesson was a well-designed ground breaker. It introduced God's purpose for creating man on earth and developed the theme of Numbers 14:21 — *"As truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD."* At the end of the lesson, the teacher introduced a chart depicting God's 7,000-year plan for mankind and asked permission to come again to elaborate the details of God's plan. The chart gave the student an incentive to continue his or her studies.

The procedure booklet for the ASK Course was prepared at Pride Offset Color Service in Rhode Island and printed by Wilson Graphics in Massachusetts, owned and operated by Bro. Donald Wilson. The finished product was widely distributed throughout the brotherhood in the United States and Canada.

Many brothers and sisters learned the truth through the ASK Course in the 1960s and 70s. The impact on the Cranston, RI, Ecclesia was dramatic. The ecclesia quickly doubled in size! Several contacts during those years were from the Westerly, Rhode Island, area, about 45 miles from Cranston. After baptism, the Westerly brothers and sisters became active members of the Cranston Ecclesia. It was their introduction to ecclesial life. Then, in 1973, they formed the nucleus of what is now the well-established Westerly, RI, Ecclesia. One of the original ASK goals of seeing ecclesias established in new places became a reality.

The ASK Course continues to be used in Cranston. It is also effectively used as a program of study in the Cranston CYC.

*David Pride (Cranston, RI)*

## **Great Lakes ASK**

Great Lakes ASK grew out of an existing branch of the Auxiliary Lecturing Society, centered in Brantford, Ontario, and representing ecclesias in southern Ontario and Detroit. The ASK name and logo were adopted in the late 1960s for their advertising value and as a method of ecclesial cooperation with New England.

Early on, Great Lakes ASK became a registered company in order to acquire property. Shortly afterward a pickup truck and exhibition trailer were purchased for preaching purposes. The trailer became widely known at the ASK Trailer. Promoting "God and His World", as a counterbalance to the 1968 World's Fair theme, "Man and His World", the ASK Trailer was used at fairs<sup>1</sup> and exhibitions across the continent for many years, well into the 1970s. The trailer featured a Christadelphian-guided visual tour of the Bible. Beautiful, back-lighted pictures

took the visitor from Creation to the Kingdom. The tour ended with an offer of a free correspondence course to anyone who wished to learn more about the Bible.

Eventually the focus shifted, and large campaigns were held in cities such as Windsor and Sudbury. Initially these campaigns had limited success. Because the nearest ecclesia was often far away, it was difficult to provide adequate follow up. The Ottawa campaign changed the way these campaigns were carried out. With ASK support, a missionary couple moved to Ottawa, and the campaign became a sustained effort. Helped by regular visits from other brethren as well, the Ottawa ecclesia has grown and continues to preach with ASK support.

Every year Great Lakes ASK sponsors a booth at the Canadian National Exhibition in Toronto. The CNE runs for 18 days in the summer and attracts well over a million visitors. Bro. Peter Wisniewski is always looking for volunteers to help with this large project. Beyond our local area, we support preaching efforts from Winnipeg in the west to the Atlantic Provinces in the east. ASK also stocks a large selection of literature which is available for any ecclesia to use.

The mission of Great Lakes ASK is threefold: first, to preach where no ecclesias exist; second, to help smaller ecclesias carry out gospel proclamation work, and, third, to provide a uniform banner under which any of our ecclesias can carry out the advancement of Scripture knowledge. We pray that our Heavenly Father will continue to bless us in this work of preaching the Gospel message.

*Grant Abel (Barrie, ON)*

**Notes:**

1. The New England ASK used the same ASK trailer from 1970 on at the “Big E”, the regional exposition in Massachusetts. This later evolved into a booth, which continued for many years, but was terminated around 1990 due to cost and staffing problems.

## **Mid-Atlantic ASK**

The Mid-Atlantic ASK Committee formed in 1983, representing ecclesias from the greater New York City area, New Jersey, eastern Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Washington, DC.<sup>1</sup> Mid-Atlantic ASK quickly developed its own outreach programs. These initially included a Bible Message Telephone Service that was used by several ecclesias, the coordination of preaching themes throughout the region, and the use of newspaper advertising, mass mailings, and mall displays as ways of advertising Bible truth to the public.

More recently, Mid-Atlantic ASK has sponsored Bible seminars, a Bible Quiz program, and experimented with cable television broadcasting in areas where there are no local ecclesias. A contact base of 2,400 people has been generated from these outreach efforts. Mid-Atlantic ASK is currently focused on effective follow up work with the contacts while also seeking to interact with other ASK Committees for the purpose of sharing and developing effective preaching ideas. Mid-Atlantic ASK can be contacted at bibleask@verizon.net.

*Eloise Browder (Moorestown, NJ)*

**Notes:**

1. *The Christadelphian*, Vol. 120, 1983, p.228; Vol.122, 1985, p.310.

## **Preaching through Radio and Television**

*The 20th Century brought about significant changes to the way many North Americans spent their discretionary time. Radio became an important source of information and entertainment in homes, offices and automobiles. Information that might have taken days or weeks to find its way into our homes, now became available in hours or minutes. In a very real way, it transformed the sharing of information and ideas — in both healthy and sometimes injurious ways!*

*When television began sweeping across the continent, the way many people spent their discretionary time again changed radically. The television generation of the 50's and 60's had far different expectations about accessing information and entertainment than prior generations. Through television, sometimes the news broke right before our eyes.*

*While Christadelphians were faced with how to deal with this intrusion into their own homes, it was clear that radio and television were here to stay. The people that were spending their discretionary time listening to the radio or watching their television were the same audience that we wanted to interest in the Truth.*

*Brethren looked carefully at these new “technologies” and realized that there might be a great opportunity to preach the word through them. The stories collected here are about some of the pioneering work that was done in radio and television by Christadelphians. While often they are stories from the past, they may provide important insights for preaching as new technologies for communications and entertainment continue to be developed.*

### **Radio Outreach Starts**

The Apostle Paul took every opportunity to preach. No doubt if he were alive today he would use all the modern technology available to spread the good news of the coming Kingdom to others.

Back when radio was coming into its own, the brotherhood in Southern California decided to use this medium to reach out to others with the saving message of the Bible. Bro. Edgar Round began giving regular radio addresses around 1930. A local station at the time wanted \$35.00 for a 15 minute program and \$65.00 for a 30 minute program. So we see that over eighty years ago our brethren were using radio to spread the gospel message.

Moving forward to our time, we remember the ecclesias in Southern California were all pooling their resources to buy time on the local stations. Back in the 1950s, these resources were used to buy radio time to spread the word. The ecclesias asked for suggestions for a catchy title to attract attention and Bro Leslie Clarke came up with the phrase “This is your Bible” which caught on and has been used ever since. It has since also become the name of the Internet work that began in 2006.





In the early days Bro Maurice Stewart was an active supporter of this good work and he wrote and delivered many hundreds of talks about the Scriptures on local radio stations. One such station had the call letters of KWKW and was located in a small building on the outskirts of Pasadena, California. On many occasions he would ask me to go to the station and fill in for him when he was unable to deliver the talk on the radio. Back then the broadcasts were always live since recording

them for later use had not yet evolved.

The local ecclesias used to send representatives to meet at the home of Bro. Howard Brinkerhoff, who lived in Los Angeles, to plan and develop the programs and the follow up that was necessary to take care of those who would respond to our offers. Back in 1959 an ex-pastor of a church responded to the appeal and requested literature. Bro. John McConville called on him and he became very excited to find people who believed so much like he did. He had lost his job as a pastor because he no longer believed that the Bible taught heaven-going or the Trinity. He was so excited when he met Bro. McConville that he called his eldest son living in Sacramento, to tell him that he had found some who believed as he did. As a result of the “This is your Bible” broadcast and the follow-up work done, in due time the entire family was baptized into the saving name of the Lord. Their name is deCaussin and for many years after that the father used to come faithfully to the Howard Brinkerhoff home for meetings planning the work of “This is your Bible.”

“This is your Bible” radio broadcasts continued for many years and then moved to television: it had been preceded during the campaign of 1961 by a broadcast interview of Bro. H.P. Mansfield by Bro. Richard Stone. Once again, Bro Maurice Stewart was involved in the work on TV. Bro Stewart had a regular program out of Santa Maria in Central California for many years, starting in the mid-1960’s, and many brothers drove north to help him make tapes. Some of these were aired in Santa Maria and on many cable stations throughout California and eventually all across the nation.

Certainly the Lord has blessed the work of those who have labored so tirelessly to bring the Bible to life through the medium of radio and television using the theme of “This is Your Bible.” Our prayer is that the Lord will continue to bless the efforts of “This is your Bible” to take the saving message of the Gospel to a perishing world.

*Robert Lloyd (Verdugo Hills, CA)*

## **“This is Your Bible” in California**

Originating as a regular radio broadcast on Sunday mornings in Southern California in the mid-1930’s, the broadcast became known as the “This Is Your Bible” program in the 1950’s. In the 1970’s it was transitioned into a half hour TV program

on Sunday afternoons. Through the support of the Southern California ecclesias, the TV programs were produced, filmed and broadcast through an expensive process that involved renting a studio, hiring a director and professional staff.

With the advent of cable networks in the 1980's, the Radio-TV Committee of Southern California found a new and low cost way to carry on with television broadcasting by taking advantage of the Public Access channels and producing their own programs. After renting a TV studio for the day, a set was built, and a professional director led the five speakers through their sessions. The Public Access station enabled the committee to use free air time, but still the production costs were considerable for the studio equipment and hired staff.

Partnering with Bro. Jeff Wallace of the Boston ecclesia in the 1990's, a new approach was put together and taping sessions were set up to produce 26 programs each over a long weekend. The process was repeated in Houston, Pittsburgh, Detroit, Toronto, Boston and Los Angeles. By purchasing advanced editing equipment, now the programs could be assembled and edited at home instead of hiring an expensive studio to do it.

A few years later the Radio-TV Committee of Southern California changed its name to *the Christadelphian Preaching Committee of Southern California*. In the interest of cutting television production costs even further and yet retaining control over the finished product, the committee began using a studio at Rio Hondo College. By staffing the entire crew with Christadelphians, and utilizing Bro. Fred Reister as director, costs were dropped to the bare minimum. Bro. Fred has extensive experience working as the director for the Los Angeles ABC Eyewitness News team, and was able to train the crew to produce a very professional series of programs. Donations from the Southern California Ecclesias enabled the Committee to purchase a high quality editing system, studio camera, and other systems to minimize the costs associated with renting equipment and studios.

The Public Access cable channels are available for broadcasting "This Is Your Bible" programs throughout the United States. Please contact Bro. Bruce Andrews at [PapaAndy@juno.com](mailto:PapaAndy@juno.com) for details to enable you to participate.

These last days call for more effort on our part to interest our friends and neighbors into heeding Christ's call for repentance and salvation.

*Doug Hawthorne (Simi Hills, CA)*

## **Christadelphian Outreach on the East Coast**

Like a lot of preaching initiatives in the brotherhood, television broadcasting on the east coast became a reality through a combination of circumstances and willing brothers and sisters. The pioneering work of Bro. Maurice Stewart on the West Coast was ever an inspiration for us to make use of television as a way to preach the gospel. The expansion of cable television into urban areas and the resulting laws that made broadcasting rights free to the public removed a huge financial barrier that stood in our way.

And the right people came together to make it work. Brethren with a specific preaching project in mind; brethren with the ability to carry it out; brethren with the technical expertise to produce the programs; some private capital and some additional seed money from ASK; and a willing spirit: "Let's do this!" Half-hour interview programs were proposed; a room in a private home became the television studio; a few brethren were assembled, and two years' worth of videotaped programs were produced. It was in the 1980s, and the project that would become Christadelphian Outreach was under way.

The interview model for the programs required two brethren, a program host and a guest teacher, to converse with each other, Bible in hand, on a prearranged subject. The circle of brethren who became guest teachers quickly widened. Brethren began flying in from far and wide to spend long weekends in the homespun television studio, producing half-hour Bible programs. A weekend of work would produce as many as 26 programs, and the brethren involved went home with an enthusiasm for this kind of preaching. "This Is Your Bible" television programs began appearing on cable stations across North America. In due course, it became more practical to take the recording work to the participating brethren than it was to fly them all to one east coast location. Regional recording sessions began to take place across the United States and Canada. Brethren converged on nearby ecclesial centers for working weekends, and the local ecclesias rallied their resources to accommodate the work. The fellowship of a common preaching cause was invigorating for everybody. The activity continued until the late-1990s.

And then technology changed. Video tapes became obsolete. Some of the old equipment that was used for recording, editing, and duplicating the tapes broke down. New equipment was needed, not to replace the old but to support entirely new ways of producing and transmitting programs. Cost factors again became an issue, at least for those involved in the Christadelphian Outreach project.

Television viewing has also changed. The Internet and handheld mobile devices are quickly becoming the more popular way for people to access information. Does this mean that the time is now over for us to use television in our preaching work? Certainly not. Television remains a viable way for us to put the Christadelphian name and Bible message before the public, and there is every reason to think that it will continue to serve this purpose for some time to come. In addition, there is always a use for well produced programs in the internal preaching and Bible class programs of many ecclesias. It would be helpful if there were an organized source of such video programs, similar to the way audio programs are available on the Internet.

While some of us no longer have the means to produce television programs, thankfully, other brethren in other parts of the country are going forward with newer technologies. The brethren in southern California produce half-hour "This Is Your Bible" television programs in a DVD format. This format is very acceptable right now to many cable access providers. The brethren in New York City have also started their own television project, as seen below.

*Jeff and Ethel Wallace (Boston, MA)*

## “This Is Your Bible” in New York City

Encouraged by a cable television project run by Mid-Atlantic ASK, the New York City Preaching Committee decided in late 2000 to launch its own local television outreach program. The project has grown ever since.

Application was made for time on a free public access channel in Queens, NY (QPTV); half-hour videotaped programs were acquired from Christadelphian Outreach in New England, and “This Is Your Bible” was soon on the air. Public response was encouraging and the project expanded into Brooklyn and the Bronx.



At the end of 2001, QPTV announced that it would no longer accept videotapes. DVCAM cassettes would be required. With help from the Simi Hills Preaching Fund, a used DVCAM recorder was purchased and the necessary conversion of video programs began. Shortly afterward, two brothers from the South Ozone

Park Ecclesia pursued a 10-week video editing course at the Queens public access station. This qualified the brethren to use station equipment for recording and editing their own programs. Local production of TIYB programs began. The first 10 to 12-minutes are given over to a straight forward presentation of a Bible subject. One brother does the presenting work. The last 13 to 15-minutes follow an interview format in which the presenter and a moderator discuss the Bible subject under consideration. The rest of the half-hour time is used to promote local Bible classes, advertise the website ([www.thisisyourbible.info](http://www.thisisyourbible.info)), and offer free literature to the viewers. A 1-800 number with voice-mail messaging is provided for viewer response.

Local production has grown in sophistication. A permanent recording studio is now set up at the South Ozone Park ecclesial hall, and recording work has gone to three-camera production using video mixing techniques. A monthly production schedule is rigorously followed by the New York brethren and the television crew includes several dedicated CYC members.

The New York City TIYB programs can be viewed live stream on the Internet, Sundays at 11:30 PM, Eastern Time, on the BCAT website: **[www.bricartsmedia.org/community-media/bcat-tv-network](http://www.bricartsmedia.org/community-media/bcat-tv-network)**. A PowerPoint presentation of the NYC TIYB Video Studio is also available.

*Joe Badlu (South Ozone Park, NY)*

## Sunday School Work

*Christadelphian Sunday schools go back to the earliest days of the brotherhood. Sunday schooling is preaching. It is the sharing of God's message of salvation with the children in our midst. And Sunday school teachers are preachers of the gospel. By 1868, The Ambassador magazine (forerunner of The Christadelphian) was reporting the names of Sunday school students who were obeying the gospel and being baptized into Christ.*

*Most of our Sunday school children come from our own Christadelphian families, and across the brotherhood they represent thousands of lives – we would call them 'contacts' in almost any other setting! – ready and needing to be saved. Sunday school membership is their training ground for ecclesial membership as baptized brothers and sisters in Christ. The article on "The Preaching Role of Our Sunday Schools" draws attention to important aspects of this work.*

*As light-stands in the world, we can also reach out to children that live near our meeting places. The article on "Vacation Bible School" represents a splendid example, a very successful model, of this kind of outreach. One comes away with the realization that God does wonderful things through sisters and brothers who are dedicated to working with children. The opportunities are there for us.*

### The Preaching Role of Our Sunday Schools

Several years ago at a CYC weekend, the following question was put to a large group of young people: *What single thing has had the greatest spiritual influence in your life?*

Twenty-eight of the attendees said "Bible school". Six more named specific Bible school teachers. Of these thirty-four young people, half of them indicated that the Bible school experience had a bearing on their decision to be baptized. Nineteen other CYCers named a relative or ecclesial member as having the greatest spiritual influence in their lives. Ten of the 19 indicated that this personal relationship had a bearing on their decision to be baptized.

Sunday school hardly got a mention from the CYC members. This probably should not surprise us. It is the special events and the unique relationships in life rather than the routine ones that often make the biggest impression on us. And Sunday school can seem pretty routine. But please read on.

#### Some things to consider

At the end of last year a ten-point survey was sent out to nearly 100 ecclesias in the United States and Canada. Its purpose was to gather data on the preaching role of our Christadelphian Sunday schools in North America. Response to the survey was gratifying.<sup>1</sup> The ecclesias that responded represent a total membership of 1,600 brothers and sisters, with more than 500 unbaptized Sunday school children presently under their care and tutelage.

## Here are a few results of the survey.

It is conservative to say that over half the current members of the ecclesias in the United States and Canada have come from a Christadelphian Sunday school background. This is not to suggest that there is a predictable cause and effect relationship here. In many cases other factors probably played a role as well. For example, many of these brothers and sisters would have grown up in Christadelphian homes. But the connection between Sunday school *membership* and eventual ecclesial *membership*, by baptism into Christ, is too strong to ignore.

When asked what source or sources<sup>2</sup> ecclesial baptisms have come from in the past ten years, the following responses were given:

- 11 ecclesias said from Bible seminars;
- 36 ecclesias said from personal witnessing, and
- 33 ecclesias said from the Sunday school.

Under the “Other” category, respondents also identified the *This Is Your Bible* website ([thisisyourbible.com](http://thisisyourbible.com)), the use of a Bible correspondence course, and an English Bible reading course for immigrants as ways that new members came to know the Truth and be baptized into Christ.

On one survey that came back, personal witnessing and Sunday school were mentioned in a way that drew attention to a couple of important points. First, Sunday school teachers are personal witnesses to the Truth. Their influence on young people should not be underestimated. And second, when a Sunday school student begins to show spiritual promise, the teacher or someone else who is close to the student needs to be ready to step in and provide personalized instruction — further personal witnessing — that helps turn promise into reality.

Well over 90% of our Sunday school children come from Christadelphian homes. Clearly, the Sunday school tradition is strong amongst us. At the same time, it is instructive to know how children become members of the Sunday school when they *do not* come from Christadelphian homes.

The survey responses presented recurring themes. The child of a coworker-cum-Bible seminar participant now attends a Christadelphian Sunday school. The child of a neighbor that is taking personal Bible classes does likewise. Aunts, uncles, grandmas and grandpas bring young relations with them on Sunday morning. Kids bring other kids to Sunday school; boyfriends bring girlfriends and girlfriends bring boyfriends.

Our children can be missionaries to their friends and neighbors more than they might imagine: “I go to Sunday school every week. How would you like to come with me?” or “We’ve got this neat thing going on at Sunday school next Sunday. I’d like you to come with me.” There are brothers and sisters in our ecclesias today who can thank a once-upon-a-time young person for introducing them to Sunday school or CYC.

## Supporting the Sunday school

Whether we think of it this way or not, the Sunday school may be the biggest

ongoing preaching program that some ecclesias have. For this reason alone, ecclesial support of Sunday school should have a high priority. It is a manifestation of the missionary spirit that becomes part of us when we know and love the gospel of salvation.

Most ecclesias with school-age children provide the basic things necessary to run a Sunday school: a place to hold it, the funding to equip it, and the volunteers to staff it. These are essential givens. Ecclesias will do even more than this when they view Sunday school as a mission in their midst. The survey responses identified several additional ways that ecclesias support their Sunday schools and invest in the spiritual welfare of their children.

Adult Sunday school classes are well attended. The clear message to the children is that learning the ways of God is a lifelong process to be taken seriously. All the children's activities are well supported by the ecclesia. Interest is shown in the children, and their efforts are encouraged, aided, and rewarded.

Other services are provided for the children:

- Learning activities are provided for children during midweek Bible class time. In principle this is not unlike the adult Sunday school class. Sunday school is not just for children and Bible class is not just for adults.
- Whole-group learning projects are carried out during the summer. These involve adults and children working together on special projects that go beyond the regular Sunday school curriculum.
- Junior CYC programs complement Senior CYC programs. Ecclesias also host CYC events and make sure their children get to CYC events.
- Supplemental funding is provided to send Sunday school children to Bible school. The opening paragraphs of this article speak to the wisdom of this.

### **Forging relationships in the Truth**

The Truth that we teach our children is not just doctrinal. It is also relational. For our children to become effective members of the ecclesia, they need to grow in interdependence with others who value the Truth. The forging of strong spiritual relationships among the children and between the children and the rest of the ecclesia needs to be part of the Sunday school vision.

To this end, Sunday schools across the brotherhood carry out a lot of extra-curricular activities for their children. The surveys showed that the best of these have important characteristics:

- Children and adults work together on a Truth-related project or activity.
- The children are involved in serving others, not just being served or being entertained.
- Entertainment and recreational activities have a spiritual side to them.

The world offers all kinds of fun and games for children to enjoy, but only in a Christadelphian setting will our children find these united with the daily Bible readings or spiritual songs or prayer. Well planned extra-curricular activities honor the biblical foundations on which our relationships are built. They declare

to everyone, including any friends that our children may bring along, that our priorities are different and nobler than those of the rest of the world.

*Jim Harper (Meriden, CT)*

**Notes:**

1. Thanks to the many brothers and sisters that took time and effort to respond to the Sunday school survey.
2. In this context the term source means the educational setting in which new believers learn the Truth.

## Vacation Bible School

When I was a young girl, I remember going with my Dad to the Pomona Hall on a Monday morning during the summer to help with Vacation Bible School (VBS). My excitement grew the closer we got to the Hall. Who was going to be there from the neighborhood or our Sunday school? Would they want to learn more about God and choose to seek Him?

As I look back on that experience I don't remember who came, but it made an enormous impression on me. That seed stayed dormant within me for over 30 years, but in 1998 Sis. Kristy Robinson and I started talking and praying about having a VBS at the Simi Hills Ecclesia. As an ecclesia we had decided to have the Truth Corps come and help with the preaching in our community. Having the Truth Corps was a perfect opportunity to start having VBS. Kristy and I put together a proposal and presented it to the arranging brethren to have a VBS during the time Truth Corps was with us. They gave us the green light and we haven't looked back since. Since 1998, we have conducted VBS each summer in our ecclesia.



The two main objectives of VBS were both to expose the local community (both children and adults) to the teachings of God and also explain who the Christadelphians are. We would not measure success by “numbers” but by whether these two objectives were met. This proved to be critical as we developed the

program over the years. We would work at sowing as much seed as we could and allow God to grant the increase.

Taking on such a project requires us to use all the various talents we possess within an ecclesia. Whether your talent is in advertising, telling stories, carpentry/painting, coloring, cooking, computer, graphic arts, listening, phones, photography, photo copying, singing, sewing, teaching the adult class, or even wiping away a tear or giving a hug there — there is a place for all willing workers. Some would



be greeters, teachers, crafters and “foodies.” The CYC also made an important hands-on contribution with the school

The first year we had 35 kids — 34 from our own Sunday School and 1 from the community. We were so excited! By 2010, two-thirds of our attendees were from the community. We now teach an average of 80 children and have over 60 adult and CYC volunteers from two different ecclesias. Some volunteers help prior to the week of VBS, others during the week and then another group of individuals do post VBS communication. Annual planning of VBS has become easier due to a consistent format and an experienced ecclesia.

Our philosophy for teaching has developed throughout the years. Since everyone learns differently, we make sure we use as many different styles of learning as we can. Our program allows the children not only to listen to stories, but to act them out. We provide crafts which allow them to touch and feel. We sing, dance, play games, read, write and memorize — all in a span of three hours. Some have asked if we have a discipline problem — the answer is no. They’re too busy “doing”. We reward good behavior and ignore the bad.

In 2010 our theme was “Let’s Build an Ark” so we covered all the walls of the main hall with brown butcher paper and made it look like wood planks. It was soon transformed to look like the inside of Noah’s ark. We enlisted the help of a bearded brother who was willing to dress up. He became “Noah” and every morning came to visit the kids telling them the story of faith from his life.



Since the first year we have developed the program to provide a week of learning, focused on God’s people and how their character was developed through their daily lives. For example: Daniel helped us learn how to pray, Ruth and Naomi taught us how to love and have faith in God, Paul and Silas encouraged us to preach, Nicodemus demonstrated the courage to believe and Saul showed us we can turn our lives around to serve Him.

Our Friday night BBQ provides an opportunity for the kids to showcase the songs and the lessons they have learned throughout the week. The families of all the kids are encouraged to come for dinner and see their kids perform and listen to a short bible talk. A 15-20 minute talk reviews the lessons the kids have learned and relates it to God’s plan of salvation. Friday night’s BBQ has now grown into an evening of more than 200 people attending from the community and our ecclesia. It’s nice to see families returning year after year.

It is important to have a post-VBS plan of action as well. The Simi Hills and Verdugo Hills Ecclesias are active in a number of community service activities and outreach events. These include collection of items for community food banks and clothing for shelters, and renting booths at the local Farmers Market or Street Fair to pass out Bible Companions or advertise the upcoming seminars. We are also finding it is invaluable for preaching to have an active email address list. About half of our communication is done via the Internet.

Because numbers and percentages are not part of our measurement, we have been able to look more clearly at the bigger picture for the impact of VBS. VBS has introduced kids and adults to the Bible and has provided a forum to help our CYC members learn how to teach and pray. Then the next step for them is to become teachers and leaders. It has been a fantastic journey to watch our young mature into leaders within our ecclesia. Although we have not had anyone from the community come on a regular basis, we do have a community who knows who the Christadelphians are. But, who is to say the seeds sown are only for the community? It's been a safe place for our own members to bring a family member or friend participate in the ecclesia. Vacation Bible School has been a priceless opportunity to minister to inside and out of our ecclesia.

If you would like more information about VBS or are interested in getting information on teaching materials and resources, please feel free to contact Sis. Sandy at [sandramcleod@gmail.com](mailto:sandramcleod@gmail.com).

*Sandy McLeod (Simi Hills, CA)*

## **Multiple Methods: A Preaching Case Study**

The half-hour television program, "This Is Your Bible", aired every Friday evening on a local cable television station. At the end of each program, viewers were given a 1-800 number to call for free related Bible literature. One viewer was a man who was looking for a church that was biblically sound. He was interested and called in for the free literature. Prompt action on the part of local brethren put the literature into his hands the next week, along with a brochure advertising the imminent start-up of a *Learn to Read the Bible Effectively* seminar. There wasn't time to preregister for the seminar. Our television viewer walked in on the opening night with the brochure in his hand. Today he is our brother in Christ.

Our new brother — to say nothing of us! — benefited from a multifaceted preaching program. No single preaching strategy produced his baptism. Television got our Bible message out and made the Christadelphian name known to him. It provided an initial means of contact and a way for him to follow up on his interest. The literature offer and Bible seminar played vital parts. He attended the seminar and continued to attend follow-up Bible studies at the ecclesial hall; strong personal ties were forged with the ecclesia, and he began attending adult Sunday school and Memorial Service — all of these were parts of a multifaceted teaching and learning process. In the end God blessed an entire work, and the man who discovered us on television one Friday evening became a fellow heir of eternal life.

*A New England ecclesia*

## **Bible Seminars**

*One would be hard-pressed to find a single development in the past 25 years that has had more impact on ecclesial outreach than the Bible seminar programs. Initiated in 1992 in the North Industry Ecclesia (now Paris Avenue) in Ohio, the seminars have largely changed the frame of reference for many ecclesias about outreach possibilities in their communities.*

*During the years after 1992, with no real organization or formal structure, the concept of Bible seminars swept rapidly across North America. Ecclesias who found public lectures poorly attended despite persistent and faithful efforts, were looking for ways to connect with the general public. For many of us, the reception by the public of the "Learn to Read the Bible Effectively" seminar was incredible. Some ecclesias reported more than one hundred registrations for a single seminar offering. Follow-on classes were provided and our community has been greatly blessed by numerous baptisms directly from this work.*

*Over time, the seminar has been adapted and new courses developed to meet the interest of students. Many ecclesias have made the seminar an annual part of their preaching program, supplemented with a number of other important outreach activities. In a few cases, ecclesias have moved from the "special effort" concept to an ongoing, systematic process for teaching the Truth.*

*In the following two articles, you'll read of two ecclesial stories. Doubtless, there are many other ecclesias that have equally exciting results to share. In both cases, you'll read of how these ecclesias benefitted from the fruit of the seminars — to include new members and an exciting new focus on the First Principle Truths that we hold dear.*

### **Reseda Ecclesia Seminar Process**

In the Ecclesial Guide we are counseled that the objects of ecclesial operations are two-fold:

- 1) The edification of its individual constituents in the faith;
- 2) The exhibition of the light of Truth to 'those that are without'.

In keeping with this balance, it is suggested as we teach the Truth to keep in mind the long term effect: those who come to accept God's invitation and be baptized will become those who need to be edified as part of the ecclesial body.

The seminars are a great vehicle for us to spread the Good News in such a way that the world will actually listen. Years ago the world could be 'lectured' about the Word, but now they want to 'learn' about it. Although in the big picture these may mean the same, we are in different times which call for different measures to effectively communicate God's message "to make thee wise unto salvation".

Our ecclesia has been blessed with many baptisms from the seminars over the past 16 years. This has come from teaching that began with materials that were fuzzy, slanted on the page, and were a copy of a copy of a copy and no one knew where

the original was. This didn't seem to matter because the world was listening. This has progressed over the years to become PowerPoint high-tech colorful and appealing slides that are pleasing to look at. But with all this the consistent piece is brethren who understand their Bible, encourage questions from the students, and are enthusiastic about the message and of the great Hope they have. In addition, the seminar students come to understand that this message is something shared around the world by one community that has the same belief and conviction about it.

Our seminars start with an advertising effort sent out multiple times (usually four) prior to the seminar. This can be by leaflets in the newspaper, mailed flyers to specific zip codes or via public television, which is our latest means of advertising. The advertisement indicates the seminar is free for anyone who wants to "Learn To Read The Bible Effectively" and covers 12 weeks at the same time and place each week. It also includes a map, phone number to a real live person (one brother takes all the calls) and a registration form to mail in if they prefer not to call. Our location is our ecclesial hall, held on a consistent weeknight from 7:30 pm-9 pm.

### **Beginning Seminar.**



This starts with two instructors who are dressed to teach. One will cover 30 minutes of Bible background, history, reading tips, examples of what to look for, and tools available to help understand what the Bible is saying. The other instructor spends 60 minutes taking the class through one chapter per week from Genesis 1-12. This is almost verse by verse explaining what the Bible is saying and can include a

series of questions at the end of each chapter. This portion encourages comments and questions during the class. However, students are asked to keep only to the part of the Bible we have covered to that point and not to look ahead (they will have that opportunity in the future). At this point the instructor can show the gems hidden to the uninformed listener and his excitement for its message. After 12 weeks (give or take a week), we have now covered Creation, promises of the seed from Eden to Abraham and the hope that it comes with.

At the end of the 12 weeks we roll directly into the next section. In the past, however, we made the mistake of telling the students that this concludes the first portion and that we are moving to the next part and welcome them to stay. Having lost students from that approach (because they think it's finished), we now move seamlessly into the next phase without a break.

## Intermediate Seminar.



Using the foundation of Genesis already laid, we discuss the promises to David, the Devil, Satan, Baptism, Resurrection, One God, The Son, The Holy Spirit and explain all the first principal doctrines of God's Truth. The approach avoids "the Bible does not teach that..." but rather focuses on allowing the

Bible to speak for itself as the authority doing the instructing. This often causes comments and questions because of the student(s) who have a preconceived idea of each doctrine. This portion of the seminar is an opportunity for the instructor to take the students on a journey through other areas of the Bible to support the doctrines and principles they are learning. It is vitally important that the brother leading the seminar is sensitive to the fact that the students have other ideas and have not learned the Truth... yet. It is a process and patience (within reason) is key. It is also important that ecclesial members in the audience keep quiet and let the instructor teach! This intermediate portion can last 12 to 26 weeks depending on the instructor and the engagement of the students.

## Advanced Seminar.

Having the first principles now taught, this portion takes them through the baptismal questions. At our ecclesia we have approximately 250 questions with scriptural support for each question covered in detail. This portion may take 12-18 weeks, again depending on how engaged the students are in each class.

## One-On-One

At the conclusion of the advanced portion, we tell the students they need to decide if they want to be in God's kingdom and we set up a one-on-one class for those who are interested. This provides a venue for them to ask personal or "dumb" questions and voice their concerns about this new walk of life and what it entails.

We have ecclesial members who help with handouts, refreshments, recording and assisting students to "find that verse". We encourage our members to attend. The seminars are also a great way to help the young people as they prepare for baptism and for the members to refresh themselves on our first principle doctrines.

Another blessing of the seminars is that each instructor comes with his own personality, style and excitement to teach the Truth. Our seminar has developed by God's blessing with much prayer, just 'doing it', lessons learned, trial and error, sharing our experiences with each other and an enthusiasm to *"be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the Hope that is in you"*

(1Pet 3:15). It is always good to periodically measure the seminar with your own gauge to be sure it doesn't become the same old thing. Several years of this can create stagnation and some tend to lose the new excitement they once had. If this appears to be happening it might be time to consider changing it a bit.

Over the past 16 years of seminar work, our ecclesia has come from a six week "here's the Truth" approach to what is shown above, that can take more than one year. We have been blessed with 34 baptisms (that we can count) of which three have fallen upon stony ground or allowed the weeds to choke the Word. One has fallen asleep in Christ at the age of 101 just a few short years after baptism, truly an example of one invited to work in the vineyard in the last hour of the day.

As we rejoice with our members and their new found hope and embrace them as part of our family, they sometimes bring with them a culture of 'the old man' not easily left behind. In this situation, most of us find ourselves in uncharted territory as an ecclesia. At first glance this appears to be a negative thing but in the long run it is no different from long term members who struggle with the flesh. Whether new or existing, young or old, Jew or Greek, they should be approached with love and compassion but ultimately with God's Word doing the instructing. It is important to not ignore problems if they arise and to prevent groups to form within. We are all One Family in the Lord. The blood of Christ is thicker than ours and has called all of us out of this world to "be ye separate" which is easy to teach but not always easy to live.



With this transformation can be a change for the better. New members bring with them a perspective that can invigorate our ecclesia with different ideas, an excitement that is sometimes forgotten and a spirit of willingness. They also question some old traditions that may not be the best fit anymore (can be a good thing) and

overall they provide an objective eye like a child asking their parents... "why?"

Based on my experiences with the seminars, we should view the changes that come as a blessing that brings with it responsibility for us to nurture and admonish, edify and exhort, but most importantly to be an example to one another.

*Carl Newth (Reseda, CA)*

## Bible Seminars: The Brampton Experience

On September 19, 1995, the Brampton Ecclesia in Ontario began our first Seminar on *“Learn to Read the Bible Effectively.”* Through the grace of our Lord, a wonderful and exciting new experience in presenting the Word of God was suddenly opened up to us. From that point forward, we have been generously blessed by our Heavenly Father, not only in the opportunity to proclaim His Word, but in the Spiritual well-being, vitality, and fellowship it has engendered within our Ecclesia.

You might imagine our reaction when 128 individuals registered for the original seminar! Of those registered, 86 attended the first evening and 69 received graduation certificates on the sixth evening. Many of these were eager to gain further insight into God’s Word.

### The Seminar is Over: What’s Next?



It was obvious that something more must be done to accommodate the needs of these seminar students. As “babes” in their understanding of God’s true plan of hope, they were not yet ready for direct confrontation with the traditional doctrines which had been instilled in most of them. It was determined that another seminar was the most viable method of developing further association and encouraging growth in the Truth.

Ultimately, our Ecclesia was privileged to present to this group a series of four seminars. The initial 6 week course was followed by:

- The Book of Genesis (six week course),
- The Life of Christ (eight week course), and
- The Acts of the Apostles (eight week course).

There were 27 students who received graduation certificates from the 4th seminar. These graduates had been involved in 28 weeks of exposure to God’s Word and had been introduced to every one of our first principles. These principles were all presented in a positive manner, in Biblical terms, never as unsupported doctrine. Conversely, we never presented any negative concepts, such as, “we do not believe in the Trinity”, “there is no immortal soul”, etc. We simply encouraged them to form their own conclusions based on the Bible statements that were discussed. All of this was apart from home study discussions in which some participated, as the series developed, and which carried on at the conclusion of the seminars.

In September of 1996, this process was repeated with similar results. This time there were 147 registrations received, with 92 attending the first session. There were 28 students receiving certificates on the final evening of the 28th week. Many of these expressed interest in proceeding to home classes. Inasmuch as the group

from the first year was further along in their studies, this necessitated initiating a second evening each week.

We were blessed with 12 baptisms directly attributable to these first two seminars. Other participants in the home study classes expressed an interest in possibly following this lead. The two home classes from years one and two were then combined into one evening. Members of the 3rd year seminars were invited to join these classes. When we ran the seminar again the third year, we received another 105 registrations.

The pattern was established which we have followed for 15 years, during which approximately 1,200 respondents have expressed an interest in learning to "Learn to Read the Bible Effectively".

### **Is Small Better?**

Due to the number of registrations in 1995 and 1996, we had broken up the first course into three separate classes, feeling that 30 to 40 members constituted the ideal class size. We ran three simultaneous classes utilizing three teams of two presenters each.

The third year, we kept the whole group in one large room. Two teams of presenters were involved, alternating each week. This appeared to be more effective than breaking them up into smaller groups. There were more audience responses to questions during the early sessions than occurred in the two previous years. More participants stayed after the close of each evening to offer comments and ask questions. They broke into spontaneous applause at the end of the session. That was a first for us!

No one in our ecclesial experience had ever enjoyed such response or reactions in our years of public lectures and campaigns, which essentially produced zero response. Upon completion of the three years, a total of 249 neighbors in our local community, seeking understanding in God's word, had been exposed to some degree of Christadelphian outreach efforts.

A transition from seminars to home study with a very involved group of students was accomplished. There were no confrontations. They listened to us as trusted friends.

We tried some things that worked. We made some mistakes. In summarizing our experiences there are several points that should be emphasized.

### **Important Reminders**

Finally, apart from any other considerations, we emphasize three elements that we found to be essential to the presentation of these seminars. They are mutually-supportive in developing a bond with the students and the resulting spiritual excitement in the Ecclesia.

- 1) **Be true to your word.** The most singular common comment made by those who now freely discuss first principles with us, is that we gained their respect by staying true to our promise that we would not overtly attempt to convert



them. We never told them that their current beliefs were wrong, or that their Churches were wrong. We made no direct attack on their inherent belief in traditional false doctrine. Awareness of error developed of its own accord as true knowledge of the Word was established. By simply dwelling on what the Bible states, without presenting it as our doctrine, we were not engaged in argumentative confrontation. Those who were truly seeking God's will and word, began telling us where they had been wrong. Their Priests and Ministers did the arguing, and were shown as lacking in understanding in the light of God's Word. As respect grows, so grows trust. Among those who attend, we now discuss first principles of doctrine and truth as friends. Every brother and sister in our meeting is familiar with the advertisement through which the students were invited to attend. The promises made in this invitation are respected.

- 2) **Involvement.** We keep all the brethren and sisters of the Ecclesia informed and involved as the seminars progress. Weekly progress in our seminars is included in our Sunday morning announcements, coupled with a request for continuing prayer. Some of our members attend the classes as observers, with the understanding that they do not initiate confrontation or preach doctrine. As they see the students' eagerness and friendliness grow, such awareness generates: —
- 3) **Spiritual excitement.** As this infectious enthusiasm grows, so does the intensity of prayer for our Heavenly Father's support. Without His blessing, we accomplish nothing.

### **Why Not a Fifth Seminar?**

Initially, as the participants in these classes approached the conclusion of the 4th seminar in the series, we pondered this question. It was our opinion that prolonged formal class structure might simply lead to the concept of perpetual students. As eager as they were to absorb information, we feared the possibility of lulling them into a pattern of academic study. This could lead to a position of, in Paul's words, *"always learning, and never coming to the knowledge of the Truth"* (2Tim 3:7).

The "building blocks" were all in place. It was time to guide them toward commitment, and a sense of urgency in seeking a personal relationship with God through Christ.

We had gradually introduced an increasing emphasis on such commitment as the seminars progressed. By this time, the realization of Christ's return and a Kingdom on earth were established. By allowing the Bible to speak for itself, this had been revealed throughout the classes, without any confrontations on immortal souls, heavenly reward, punishment in hell, etc. The theme "Be Ready for Christ's return" was stressed in the presenter's dialogue throughout the "Acts" seminar, the final in these series.

About the seventh night of this seminar, we introduced the possibility of holding "Be Ready" classes in the home. These are dedicated to discussion of what is personally involved, based on Scripture, in being prepared for Christ's return. In subsequent years, not every student who completed all four seminars attended

these classes which began three weeks later. Those who did attend had reached a level of association with us that they were prepared to listen and discuss first principles as friends.

Discussions with friends have always been a productive means of presenting the first principles of the Gospel. It is, indeed, a thrilling experience to have such conversations with a whole group. It is exciting to witness the pleasure of these students when one of their number makes the decision to be baptized, even if they themselves have not yet reached such understanding and commitment.

These classes have been maintained consistently over the years. It is essentially from this group that baptisms develop. Many of those who have been baptized as a result of this effort continue to attend these weekly in-home classes, providing support and encouragement to those who have not yet reached this decision.

During this past summer an average of 10-12 students were attending these open discussions on First Principles, two of whom have expressed interest in private and personal classes in preparation for baptism. To date, 24 searching hearts have been baptized as a direct result of contact through these 14 years of Seminars. At the present time, brethren and sisters who came to an understanding in God's Word through the Seminars constitute 42% of our membership. They come from a variety of backgrounds and denominations. Two had been in the Salvation Army. One was a Buddhist who, initially, simply wanted to learn more about Jesus Christ, who from what she had heard must have been "a really good man." One woman left the Seminars, but returned when she thought about the fact that her Anglican Church extended the Memorials to children who had no understanding of God's Word. Another questioned her Priest about what the Bible said. His directive to ignore the Bible and listen to him motivated her decision to baptism.

At present we have begun our 15th consecutive year of Seminars. Recently, 89 registrants responded to the two ads we placed in the local community newspaper. As long as the Lord continues to bless our ecclesia with such exciting response and experience, we would be delinquent in discontinuing this form of presenting His Word and His Hope to an increasingly unsettled and uncertain world.

### **Has the Seminar approach run its course?**

As a footnote, we must acknowledge the positive effect that these Seminars, and the resulting baptisms, have had upon our Ecclesial family. The enthusiasm of our new members provides an infectious hunger for fellowship and the desire to share this "new and wondrous treasure" with families, working associates, and neighbors. Their intense appreciation of the wonder of the Gospel, formerly unknown to them, provokes us to the excitement of sharing in the joy of Angels over sinners who repent. This joy is infectious. May God Bless us all in our efforts to plant the seed of His Word.

We do not believe the Seminar approach is becoming obsolete in any way. As the continuing results show, sessions continue to draw much interest, some by God's grace result in new and vibrant members.

*Dave and Marlene McKay (Brampton, ON)*

## **“Learn to Read the Bible Effectively” Video Seminars**

In 2009, working together with Christadelphian Bible Mission of the Americas [CBMA], an ambitious project was put together to professionally produce a 16 session series of *‘Learn to Read the Bible Effectively Seminars’*. A studio set was built inside the hall of the Los Angeles ecclesia using commercial lighting, audio, five cameras, and even a fully functional director’s Control Room. After a training shoot was launched and completed, 50 volunteers were brought in to serve as a live audience and 16 sessions were recorded in two days. The director and the four engineers in the Control Room directed the various cameramen, inserted Power Point slides to be shown on stage on a wall mounted LCD television, controlled the audio, and inserted prepared video shots to blend it all together and enhance the quality of the programs.

Once the final editing was completed last year, the series was made available on DVDs to enable those brethren and sisters in smaller ecclesias to participate in their own *‘Learn to Read the Bible Effectively’* Seminars. This exciting series can be presented on a laptop computer that is connected to a projector for a large audience presentation, or connected to a large screen TV for a smaller audience, or shown on the laptop for a one-on-one class. The DVD set comes with a series of questions for the guests to retain more of the presented information.

If this *‘Learn to Read the Bible Effectively’* seminar DVD series can be of help to you, please e-mail [Cindy.and.Doug@Juno.com](mailto:Cindy.and.Doug@Juno.com) for details, with a suggested donation of \$17.50 USD for each set.

The CBMA plans to present this series on its website [www.ThisIsYourBible.com](http://www.ThisIsYourBible.com) and use it to interact with web viewers to engage them with questions on the presentations. What a marvelous opportunity this will be for brethren and sisters wherever in the world they are to participate in the preaching efforts that can now be undertaken with these wonderful new tools.

*Doug Hawthorne (Simi Hills, CA)*

### **Origin of Bible Seminars**

In the fall of 1992, 10,000 attractive 4-page folders were mailed directly to homes in an area of Canton, Ohio. Recipients were invited to attend a free seminar in a local community center where, during six weekly 1½ hour sessions, they would learn to read the Bible more effectively. By our standards, the response was overwhelming; 120 people responded, 105 of whom registered for the seminar. Bro. Randall Coy and Bro. Dave Noble of the North Industry, OH Ecclesia were presented with an unusual problem. The rented facility could hold only 40 people, much too small for the number of interested friends. The solution was to run two seminars in the fall and one in the winter with each being attended by about 35 people. Each person received, free of charge, a three-ring binder containing 160-pages of easy-to-read, professional-quality study notes, copies of about 20 charts and diagrams and two full-color historical charts. In addition, many overheads were used.

*From The Tidings, July 1973, p 291*

## The Mission Experience

*While the Bible Mission story told here is primarily about work in Central America, South America and the Caribbean, there can be no doubt that Mission work has had a significant impact on the North American brotherhood. Bible Mission has changed many lives in North America. While programs such as Truth Corps and Domestic Mission are primarily programs that have been on North American soil, they have provided an invaluable platform of spiritual development for our young people. Bible Mission work has encouraged us to think bigger, to view our "community" for preaching as much larger than our own neighborhood.*

*The Tidings Magazine regularly includes a section on "Bible Mission News" which highlights a few of the exciting developments of Bible Mission work. The following articles provide a summary of some of this work. The Christadelphian Bible Mission of the Americas (CBMA/CBMC) encourages you to become more aware of Bible Mission programs and to get personally involved in one of the multitude of ways that serve this invaluable work.*

### Looking Forward: The CBMA

What will the future work of the Christadelphian Bible Mission (CBMA) be like? And how will our past and our present affect our future? We all pray that our Lord will return and we will be able to preach under the conditions described in the Bible: a period when everyone will know the Lord and sin will be held in check. But until that time we need to press on from where we are today.

First, why is it that so many people don't enjoy history? It explains so much about the present and can spare us from repeating many of our past mistakes in our future. It explains why we are, who we are, why we are where we are, when we came to be where we are. In large measure it accurately defines what we are about. So, how do we see mission work changing in the near future?

Rather than assume anyone is interested we will seek to establish the need for our Bible missions. We will try and make digesting some facts about our past and present a little more palatable by framing the information in a Q & A format.

### WHY the Two Organizations (CBMA and CBMC)?

The Christadelphian Bible Mission of America (CBMA) and the Christadelphian Bible Mission of Canada (CBMC) are the two committees responsible to the brethren in North America. They work in tandem to provide the guidance, continuity and resources necessary to enable preaching, pastoral and welfare work to be done in Latin America and the Caribbean. Both organizations are approved to receive donations that are tax deductible to the donors. They meet frequently via conference calls and periodically in person to discuss bible mission needs and opportunities.

Christadelphian ecclesial activities are predominantly internal in nature, not external. Most ecclesial duties are primarily directed toward serving our own ecclesia's

needs. Our work in preaching to the public, our community services and welfare needs, are all probably less than 10% of our efforts for the Truth.

There are many legitimate reasons for this. Today Christadelphians are the product of the few individuals who responded 150 years ago (pardon the history) to the Scripturally-based call of one man to come out from the rest of apostate Christianity. We were called to separate ourselves from the institutions that make up this world. We were to do this without any professional, formally educated, full-time help. Therefore, it is totally reasonable to expect that, given those parameters, the vast majority of our volunteer efforts and our donations are going to be spent maintaining our basic ecclesial functions. This does not leave much time for preaching to the public. It leaves almost no time and resources to commit the ecclesia to mission work outside our immediate areas.

In addition to this, mission work relies on a number of external factors. The region cannot be at war. Transportation and communication must be safe and affordable. Language differences must be accommodated. We have to be able to pool together sufficient resources to enable volunteers to go and do the work. Most importantly, a few brethren and sisters have to feel that there is an imperative to preach the gospel to those who are strangers to the covenants and aliens from the commonwealth of God.

That is why we have the CBMA and CBMC organizations. We need them. It requires a long-term, concentrated effort for an internally-oriented culture to begin to be more externally focused.

It also takes a long term commitment to bring the Truth to a new area and start up a functioning ecclesia. Unlike a short-term campaign, which can be put on for a weekend or a week by an established ecclesia, when we are in the mission field we are starting from scratch in a foreign location. It is important that we be committed for the long haul.

### **WHEN did the CBMA begin?**

Our brethren in England (CBMUK) had been actively involved in overseas preaching work since shortly after WWII. International travel had again become possible. They set up a formal organization sponsored by the brotherhood in the U.K. They began placing advertisements offering correspondence courses in newspapers in various parts of the world and sending volunteer brethren to follow up with interested contacts. The world is a big place and the more workers the better. They saw in Southern California a cluster of ecclesias that might supply the nucleus of a Bible Mission organization to further the work. When they made their suggestion, a number of brethren agreed to form a committee, draw up a constitution, and submit it to the brethren in the West for their response. The ecclesias enthusiastically approved this project on May 4, 1968, and dedicated Bible mission work began in the Americas.

Originally the organization was called the Pacific Coast Christadelphian Bible Mission and it envisioned drawing on the brethren west of the Mississippi River for support and providing preaching work in Central America. South America

and the Caribbean would continue to be overseen by the CBMUK for preaching work and the eastern part of North America would continue to support those areas through the CBMUK.

There was one ecclesia in Colon, Panama at that time that had been started by Bro. Noel and Sis. Trudy Gibson who lived and worked in the Panama Canal Zone with their six children. The annual budget of the CBMUK for this work was \$3,000 and we had no idea initially if we would be able to raise that amount of money.

### **WHERE did outreach begin with the CBMA?**

Initially, our first work naturally was in Colon, Panama. Soon afterwards, an ecclesia was formed in Panama City, Panama. From there the work moved north and an ecclesia was formed in Costa Rica. Later, ecclesias were established in El Salvador, Guatemala and Guadalajara, Mexico. The CBMUK then asked us to take over responsibility for South America. There are now ecclesias in Ecuador, Bolivia, Argentina, Chile, and baptized brethren in many other countries where no formal ecclesias have been set up as yet.

In 1999 CBMUK asked us to take responsibility for helping the Caribbean ecclesias and to represent all of the brethren in North America. Brethren in our eastern ecclesias had a long history of assisting the Caribbean brotherhood and the region readily agreed to continue to serve in these areas. In the Caribbean, there are 28 ecclesias and a total of 405 brethren on the various islands.

Therefore, our North American brotherhood is currently assisting 45 ecclesias, 685 brothers and sisters, with 385 Sunday School students in Latin America and the Caribbean.

### **WHAT do Bible mission workers actually do?**

Here are a few descriptions of various aspects of current Bible mission work.

**Correspondence tutors:** This is how one can become a missionary and never leave your own home. Correspondence course tutors serve students around the world by providing tutoring and coaching as they work through correspondence courses. Once a strong relationship is formed, many tutors will connect the student with Christadelphians near the student's home. This has resulted in many baptisms over the recent years. Additionally, tutors who become linked to outreach in specific countries may place advertisements, correspond with students, make phone calls and coordinate with visits by missionaries and link brethren.

**Missionaries in residence:** These brethren and sisters move to a country, find a place to live, learn the language, hold meetings in hotels, teach the truth, baptize new brethren, rent a meeting room, organize an ecclesia, teach Sunday School and generally perform all the jobs usual to a Christadelphian ecclesia.

**Link brethren:** Assist established ecclesias via regular visits, correspondence and phone calls. Arrange for speakers for Bible gatherings. They may exhort, teach classes, visit the homes of members and act as interface between the brotherhood in North America and the mission ecclesia.

**Speakers:** They often teach at Bible schools and other gatherings overseas, in many ways similar to what would be done in North America.

**Short term volunteers:** Assist with special preaching efforts, campaigns etc.

### **CBMA/CMBC Councils**

As far as the CBMA/CMBC Councils are concerned, we all wear at least two hats. One role we all have is to give advice and consent via participation in the regular meetings.

Each member usually has one or more specific responsibilities as well, such as:

- Chairman: Organize the meetings and follow up as required.
- Secretary: Maintain official records. Process elections. Minutes.
- Finance: Deposit donations, disburse as required to missionaries.
- Coordinate Latin America activities
- Coordinate Caribbean activities
- Truth Corps program
- “This is Your Bible” website project
- Publicity: Newsletters, Magazine articles, Annual report to brotherhood, special presentations.

### **HOW will mission work be done In the future?**

While we do not know exactly how things will change, we know that change will occur. The Apostle Paul preached in synagogues and on Mars Hill. He traveled under extreme conditions of hardship and peril. Today we fly in ease and comfort. Paul adapted his presentation of the gospel to the times and conditions in which he found himself: *“I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some”* (1 Cor 9:22).

We have seen huge changes during the last 40 years. Today hand billing, newspaper advertisements and hard copy correspondence are being supplemented by Internet contacts, e-mail tutoring, intercontinental telephone baptismal instruction via Skype, and frequent phone calls. Some of these methods were simply not in existence or were cost prohibitive a few years ago.

CBMA/CMBC are making concentrated efforts during 2011 and 2012 to explore new avenues of communication and to make mission work available to many more brethren. While continuing the methods that have worked in the past, we want to initiate projects that can profitably utilize short term volunteers by having follow up visits overseas on a regular basis. The website “This Is Your Bible” is introducing the truth via pamphlets and correspondence courses that provide opportunities for brethren and sisters to teach the Truth from home. We look forward to having “Tutor Tours”. Imagine going on a one or two week visit to mission areas with an experienced missionary and having the opportunity to meet some of your correspondence students who will be attending a lecture!

We are determined to be as open-minded towards the future as we can be. We need to review techniques and methodology while conserving and teaching the

fundamental principles of our faith. At the end of the day, it will still almost always come down to two people talking one-on-one about the gospel.

Whether we are on the front line or serving at home to make all this possible, it is wonderful to think that in the soon coming Kingdom of God there will be men and women who will live forever and we were part of it all. We cannot cure all the ills of the world, but we have not been asked to do that. We've been challenged to just do what we can to preach the Word.

*Ken Sommerville (Simi Hills, CA)*

## **Preaching in the Canadian Maritimes**

The Christadelphian population in the Maritimes after the Second World War was very scattered. In Nova Scotia there were a few in the Halifax, Stewiacke, and Sydney areas. New Brunswick had ecclesias in both Moncton and Saint John, with a small group in the Fredericton and Hatfield's Point areas. Later there was one brother on Prince Edward Island, and a few years after that his wife became a sister. Sadly there are no longer any brethren and sisters on PEI.

One thousand miles to the east, St. John's, Newfoundland, was expanding. There were two campaigns in the area, assisted by brethren and sisters from Ontario, the Atlantic Provinces and the United Kingdom.

As a result of attending a Christadelphian Bible Mission Conference in Nottingham, England, in the early 1970's, and hearing uplifting reports of the work in Africa, Bro. Cliff and Sis. Julia Baines responded to an appeal for assistance from the three sisters that were left in Moncton. Cliff and Julia committed initially to two years, to help with the preaching in the Moncton area. They soon found that it is mainly personal contact that produces results.

Slowly a central core was formed in the mid-1970's, in Sussex, New Brunswick, equidistant from Fredericton, Saint John and Moncton. A monthly gathering of the brethren and sisters in New Brunswick was instituted in June, 1975, and has continued from that date. This augments the various activities in and around Sussex. For many years, the Canadian Thanksgiving, in October, has been the time for annual fellowship with brethren and sisters from the Maritime Provinces. It now often includes brethren and sisters from Ontario, the New England States and the UK, for which we are very thankful. This is a real treat for us, as we are isolated from each other by many miles.

We have been helped by the ASK Great Lakes which has provided a speaker from Ontario once a year, usually for our Bible Study weekend in April/May. This has always been a springtime "pick-us-up" after the long hard winters of Eastern Canada.

Gradually changes have taken place in the Maritimes, with brethren and sisters from Ontario and further West relocating to the Sussex area. This has also happened in the Halifax, Nova Scotia, area. Recently retired brethren and sisters as well as younger families have moved east to help with the work.



Having seen the successes of ASK Great Lakes in Ontario, it was felt that an Atlantic ASK would be of help here, improving communications among the isolated ecclesias in Newfoundland, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. The ASKA was formed in May, 2006, with “the intention of coordinating the activities of and assisting the local ecclesias with the resources needed to preach the good news of the Kingdom of God in the Atlantic Provinces, and to support ecclesias and isolated brethren and sisters by promoting or coordinating activities for fellowship, edification and learning in the Word of God.”

In the short time that ASKA has been in existence, the Halifax brethren and sisters have benefited from a campaign in their area; Sussex has been helped with financing seminars, the latest being the “Give Your Life a New Perspective” seminar from Britain; and Halifax is producing a new seminar series which is based on the premise, “we need to simplify our approach, many people don’t even know what a Bible is”. The new series is entitled, “Keys to Success: Helping You to Understand the Bible”. It is a 38-week program, consisting of five modular series of sequential courses designed to incorporate adult learning principles. To date, the first six-week series, focusing on the inspiration of the Bible, has been delivered in Bedford, Nova Scotia, and has been very well received.

ASKA presently conducts two annual meetings via the “Elluminate” conferencing system, where ideas, news and plans are exchanged among its three member ecclesias. Some exploratory work is presently being done on PEI with newspaper advertisements promoting the “This is Your Bible” website (*thisisyourbible.com*), and further work is also being planned for one of the major cities in the New Brunswick area. In addition to the positive fellowship benefits from our meetings, ASKA has brought together the combined financial resources of its members to greatly assist each other in the costs associated with our outreach programs.

The seminar approach certainly seems to be working well. Halifax has been blessed with a baptism as a result, and St John’s, Newfoundland, also continues to run seminars. It is anticipated that the seminars will be taken to some of the adjacent towns now that there is more support for such activities.

*Cliff Baines (Sussex, NB)*

## **Domestic Missionary Work**

I took an early retirement in 2003, from a career of teaching in the public school system. By the following year, I was ready to volunteer my time to doing some kind of domestic preaching work. When checking into how to go about doing this by talking to members of the CBMA, they directed me to get in touch with brethren on the east coast of the U.S. who had many names and addresses of contacts through the A.S.K. (Advancement of Scriptural Knowledge) program. I got started by driving to Washington, D.C. and then spent the next four months going to various ecclesias on the east coast (I was at Echo Lake, N.J., on two different occasions). I stayed with a Christadelphian family each time and basically went out twice a day to look up contacts with the intent of talking to them and inviting them to a Bible class at the local ecclesia. Around half of the time there

was a brother or sister who volunteered to go with me and direct me as to how to get to our destination — as well as assisting me in the preaching part. When that happened — for obvious reasons — it was a much better method than my “going it alone” (without GPS!). It was a wonderful experience to meet so many brothers and sisters and to view their willingness to provide for my needs as I tried to help their ecclesia. I never sensed any feeling of intrusion — although I must have interrupted plenty of schedules!



During a portion of my travels, I ended up traveling throughout West Virginia where Sis. Jean Cheetham of Moorestown, N.J. (the secretary of the Atlantic Coast A.S.K. Program) had corresponded with a number of contacts. There was one contact in the central part — Montgomery — that was so interested that I ended up going back to see her on several occasions. She was

eventually baptized into Christ about a year later. That was, one could say, the tangible success story. But there was always a very good and satisfying feeling of “planting and watering” while knowing that it was God’s work to “give the increase”.

Before arriving at my first stop in Washington, D.C., I had gone from my home in Austin to northwest Alabama to meet with a very small group of brethren (three sisters in Christ and one man, the husband of one of the sisters, who was shortly thereafter baptized) at the request of a Christadelphian sister from Detroit who was related to all. I had gotten reacquainted with her at a Bible School earlier that year. On my way back to Texas at the completion of my Northern tour, I went to Alabama again and met with a brother from Detroit (Livonia) whose ecclesia supported the Alabama brethren and a brother from the CBMA to work out the details of my moving there. Soon after I got home and worked out some things there, I moved to Alabama in January 2005 and stayed through June 2007. It was a very rewarding experience since the “running” of the ecclesia was basically my responsibility. We did have four baptisms during the time I was there — all members of the original family by blood or by marriage. We tried any number of preaching activities during that time including two occasions — in different towns — of sponsoring the “Learn to Read the Bible Effectively” seminar and two consecutive summers where Truth Corps came and stayed for around two weeks. We did much door-to-door work to invite people to various Bible talks by visiting brethren. I finally left to return to Austin only when a married Christadelphian couple from Michigan agreed to come and take my place.

What did I learn from these experiences? Though it may sound like a cliché, it really isn’t — I learned to put my trust in God and to truly believe that He was

with me and my brothers and sisters in Christ and would, in whatever was He saw fit, bless our efforts. Through both positive and negative experiences, I saw the benefit of what Jesus did in sending out his apostles two by two. In every way imaginable, going with a partner beats going alone. I also tried very hard to not impose my views on the local ecclesia but to listen to what they had to say and go about this work in the way that they wanted. The majority of the time, they were very open and willing to go about things in the way I suggested, but if they had other ideas, I was fine in doing it their way.

I believe it should be possible to enlist a couple of young brothers to do a similar thing to what I did. They would need to find a geographical area willing to sponsor them — say California or Ontario or Florida — where there were a number of ecclesias not too far from each other. They would need a car of their own (as I had); a goal — to look up contacts (e.g., from [www.thisisyourbible.com](http://www.thisisyourbible.com)), try to talk to them (using the Truth Corps flip-chart presentation would be one way) and invite them to a local Bible class, seminar, etc.; and a group of ecclesias who were willing to house them and take care of their needs and help in any way they needed. As Jesus told his disciples, *“The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest”* (Luke 10:2 ESV).

Wes Booker (Austin South, TX)

## History of Spanish Language Preaching in Los Angeles

### The Beginning

On arriving in Los Angeles in the spring of 1998 the first thing we did was to begin placing advertisements in the Spanish-language daily newspaper *La Opinión*, offering the Bible course by correspondence. Several small weekly papers were also tried, but they produced little response. Subsequently we discovered a Spanish-language PennySaver-type magazine which gave cost-effective results, and for years we used it almost exclusively. But since the beginning of 2010 most advertising has been done using Google ads placed by the CBMA's guru in this field, Bro. Robert Alderson. At present this appears to be the most economical means of reaching people interested in studying the Bible.

Going back to 1998, the next step was to begin producing postal courses and Bible literature. Most material is produced using a leased photocopier and manually folding and stapling, on an as-needed basis. This work could have been contracted out to a commercial printer, but it would have had a much higher initial cost and would present problems of storage and spoilage. We do use a commercial printer for a small number of high-demand titles.

By September 1998 there were about 300 people receiving the postal course — a reasonable number to begin inviting out to talks. One of the problems in LA is the size of the city and the limitations of public transport. We were unsure where to establish a meeting place, and so for the first six months we hung up a map of greater LA and put pins in all the places where the contacts lived. Unfortunately

that didn't resolve the problem — the whole area had pins in it! It had been suggested that the greatest density of Hispanics was in East LA and that we should set up there, but strangely enough, little interest has ever come from that area. In the end we concluded that the Koreatown, west of downtown, was the approximate "centre of gravity," so to speak, of the areas where most contacts lived.

We sent out invitations to a series of six talks in a modest hotel and were encouraged by the 20 or so visitors who came out. Several of them were subsequently baptized. Sis. Vera Ifill, who lives in the area, began looking for rental premises and found a very nice storefront with ample parking and good bus service. Once the hall was ready we began to offer regular Bible classes and lectures there. At the time we were still members of the Los Angeles Ecclesia, so we attended that ecclesia on Sunday mornings and offered Spanish-language Bible talks in Koreatown at 3 PM. Sis. Vera always went with us and gave a Sunday School class (in English) to the smallest children who came — Vera being 85 at the time!

We have always encouraged people to bring their children to all the meetings and, except for the breaking of bread, the children have their own classes at the same time as the adults. This is important in developing a habit of attendance as well as allowing both parents to attend classes undisturbed.

A weekly Bible class was scheduled on Thursday evenings and shortly afterwards a Saturday-afternoon class was also instituted to attract some of our contacts who were Seventh-Day Adventists. A good number of these, members of an extended family, were later baptized. Both Bible classes continue to the present day. For a while we offered a Tuesday-night class at the LA Ecclesial hall in Santa Fe Springs, but it was suspended after a few weeks for lack of attendance, even though many contacts lived in the area. Attendance was initially quite small at the weekday classes in Koreatown, but Sundays usually brought a nice turnout — 10 to 15 adult visitors. Within about a year two contacts began studying for baptism.

One thing to be conscious of is that taking people out of the world or another church means completely changing their way of thinking. Most have little understanding of the Bible even if they have been attending a church. This means that preparation for baptism must be very thorough; trying to rush things will only mean problems further down the road. (We usually take about a year to do baptismal classes, unless the person has already been attending for a long time.) Another caution: the fact that a contact has done all the Bible courses and answered well is no indication that he has understood or embraced the teaching. Contacts who have completed all the postal courses — which are very clear about basic teachings — often admit that they don't really believe what they have studied even if they have understood it. Some people like to do courses and will put down the answer expected of them just to get a good grade on their questionnaires.

## **First Results**

The first two baptisms took place in the spring of 2000, and so a breaking of bread was added to the Sunday-afternoon schedule. But after a few more baptisms the LA Hispanic members requested that Sunday meetings be held in the morning,

and so the breaking of bread was rescheduled for 10:00 AM, followed by the public lecture at 11:30. Sunday school is held at the same time as the lecture, so visitors can bring their children. During the Thursday-night Bible class we offer two concurrent classes, one for teenagers and another for younger children, while on Saturday afternoons there is just one class for kids of all ages. There is also CYC class on Monday evenings. Usually there are weekly personal baptismal classes as well. Adult classes are given in Spanish; those for young people and children are usually in English since the children are being schooled in English even though they speak Spanish at home. But the teachers sometimes switch to Spanish if there is a new student who has recently arrived in the country and hasn't yet picked up English.

Years ago a couple of billing efforts were carried out in the area of the LA Hispanic hall with the welcome help of young people from nearby ecclesias. This produced two baptisms. But the main preaching method has always been the same: advertising the Bible course and inviting the postal contacts out to meetings. The best way to identify a serious contact is to see if he is willing to show up to a meeting. We discovered that even when we did look people up and even gave them classes in their homes, this rarely translated into their making the effort to come out to meetings (remembering that our focus is on building ecclesias).



### **Present Day**

There have now been 29 baptisms into the LA Hispanic Ecclesia. Three members have since fallen asleep, four have moved out of the area but keep in touch and one no longer attends. So including ourselves there are 23 active members in the local meeting, a harmonious little congregation.

More than 760 different people (including children — some of whom have now been baptized) have attended meetings since the beginning. Because of our favourable location there have been lots of walk-ins, and in fact four of our members are the result of coming in off the street. About 4,500 people have received the Bible course in the greater LA area.

We have a very nice storefront on a busy street. The main room is furnished with a whiteboard and tables to help create a learning environment. Coffee and light refreshments are set out at the beginning of every class. After the Sunday lecture we serve a light lunch, which encourages the visitors to stay around chatting. The sisters take turns bringing the food, and we get an amazing variety of menus —

often including hot peppers for the Mexican members! Baptismal classes are often held after the Sunday lunch or before the Thursday or Saturday Bible classes. To promote fellowship we have family days several times a year. For example, on Thanksgiving we have a brunch together or even a full turkey dinner. On July 4th we either go to the home of Bro. Manny and Sis. Celina Cervantes for swimming and a barbecue or use the LA ecclesial hall for games and a barbecue. Since we are intended to be a family, we celebrate together as a family. Every month there is a cake at the meeting for everyone celebrating a birthday that month (though I think we once offended a JW contact who came and saw the cake!). The sisters occasionally get together to have lunch at a nice restaurant, which is fun.

## **Factors to consider for Spanish-language outreach**

### **1. Distance**

In any big American city the Hispanic population will probably tend to be widely dispersed. Here in Los Angeles they are spread all over the downtown area and the suburbs. Since many do not have their own vehicle, public transportation is an issue. For example, we have many contacts in Anaheim and Santa Ana (30 to 40 miles from our hall), but we have never had a visitor from those areas.

In an effort to try to reach other areas of greater LA we once held a lecture series at the Reseda ecclesial hall but got no visitors from the area. The same thing was tried using the LA ecclesial hall, but again, no-one from the area showed up. This has not been done recently.

### **2. Advertising**

For years newspaper ads were the main form of advertising in most countries of Latin America and here in LA as well, but rising costs combined with restricted budgets have become a deterring factor. Since 2009 targeted Google ads have been used in many areas of Latin America, but we are still trying to assess the quality of the contacts. In Los Angeles 190 contacts have come in from Google ads, but very few of these students have actually answered the course and only four of them have come out to a meeting. Since coming out to meetings is the bottom-line definition of what makes a “good” contact, we are still trying to work out the pros and cons of Internet advertising. It produces new contacts much more inexpensively than print advertising, but it is hard to know how serious they are. It is easier to click on a link and type a few words than to make a telephone call or fill out a coupon and mail it in.

### **3. The importance of stable leadership for a reasonably long time**

Having a missionary brother or couple on the ground for several years has played an important role in the success of CBMA outreach in Latin America. In the early years in El Salvador, an Evangelical pastor told us, “The lovely sisters are great, but until you convert a capable young man who can teach and lead, you will not have an independent church.” That has certainly been our experience. Just baptising a brother doesn’t mean that he is capable of giving classes or mature enough to be an ecclesial leader. A lecturing brother must be able not only to present our teach-

ings clearly but also answer difficult questions from visitors. Even in the best-case scenario, that of baptizing a capable young man early on in the effort, it can take years for these skills to develop enough for the ecclesia to become independent.

#### **4. Immigrant contacts**

Most Hispanic members and contacts in the US are fairly recent immigrants. They have come to this country to improve their economic situation and provide better opportunities for their children, and so the struggle to achieve these aims is an important factor in their lives. In addition, many are sending money back to their home countries to support family members there. They often work long hours for low wages. Work schedules that include changing shifts and weekends can be challenging to regular ecclesial attendance.

#### **5. Language**

Of the older members in our ecclesia only two speak English well, even though some have lived here for many years. Their work schedules and family duties have left them little time to attend English classes. Some of our members work in Korean businesses and end up speaking more Korean than English!

It is impractical to expect older Latinos to learn English. Few of our converts that began attending as adults will learn the language well. So if we begin preaching in Spanish in an area we must continue to provide a Spanish-speaking ecclesial environment; in the main it will be difficult to successfully incorporate Hispanic contacts into English-speaking ecclesias.

On the other hand, their children all speak English and prefer it to Spanish. It is uncertain at this stage how this will work out in the future of the LA Hispanic Ecclesia. The kids tend to zone-out during the breaking of bread (maybe kids do that anyways!), closing their ears to the Spanish. On the other hand, we encourage our young people to take part in regional CYC activities and Bible schools in the hope that they will become integrated into the wider ecclesial world.

*Jim and Jean Hunter (LA Hispanic, CA)*

### **Truth Corps**

Truth Corps began in 1970 when a four person team went to Panama and has continued to be a moving experience for many brothers and sisters ever since. My first experience was with a visit of team of five much younger brothers and sisters to Panama. I was involved with Truth Corps for the next twenty years. Since that time, Truth Corps teams have visited ecclesias in Canada and the US as well as Panama, Jamaica and Mexico. I don't know how many ecclesias have hosted Truth Corps since 1970, but without doubt they have benefitted from their experience. Of the hundreds of brothers and sisters who have gone on Truth Corps, many have had their lives greatly impacted from their experience. Truth Corps continues to benefit ecclesias and Christadelphian youth to this day.

Truth Corps began as a program to support ecclesias in their preaching efforts

and it has done that. But it helped more than in the immediate preaching support; it increased the focus of the ecclesia on preaching and reaching out to their local communities. In addition, an unexpected benefit of Truth Corps has been in the spiritual growth of the team members. A brother mentioned to me, that after observing a Truth Corps team member upon his return, it seemed to cause five years of spiritual growth in him during that summer. When the members returned from their Truth Corps experience, they were different. They had spent a summer living in close contact with others, sharing in the household duties and putting up with inconveniences in a crowded house, and spending a good part of each day in generating and visiting contacts with the standard Truth Corps flip-chart presentation and other kinds of preaching activities. Add to this the close and intimate discussion of their experiences together as a team. While this was a new experience for them, it motivated them to undertake new and different activities when they returned to their home ecclesias. This is the long term effect of Truth Corps. Local CYC's began to take on new dimensions, new leadership emerged, more young teachers began to shine, and prayers became more focused and meaningful. Preaching activities became a bigger part of ecclesial life. Many former Truth Corps team members have become more involved in ecclesial work. More than a few have become recording brothers of their ecclesia. It is not unusual for former Truth Corps members to be teachers at Bible Schools.

In my sixty plus years in the Truth, I have seen two events that have profoundly affected the brotherhood. One is the establishment of Bible Schools and the other is the Truth Corps. I have been richly blessed to be a part of the latter.

*Russ Patterson (Verdugo Hills, CA)*



**Above:**  
Truth Corps 2006,  
Victoria, BC

**Below:**  
Truth Corps 1972, Panama  
First row: Peggy Lloyd,  
Mark Patterson, Jane  
Samuel  
Back row: Bob Lloyd, Betty  
Patterson, Russell Patter-  
son, Brian McLeod, Ernie  
Hoare, Stan Wilkinson,  
Linda Wilkinson





## Personal Preaching

*There is almost no limit to the number of ways we can become missionaries as individual brothers and sisters in Christ. The story is told of a sister who, some 55 years ago, regularly left pamphlets on the seat of her commuter bus when she went to work. God saw to it that one of her pamphlets fell into the right hands and the direction of literally thousands of lives was changed as a result.<sup>1</sup> Any of us can do little things like this almost anytime and anywhere!*

*Some brothers and sisters have a wonderful knack for talking with friends or coworkers. Looking back over the history of many ecclesias, this brother or that sister came into the truth because a Christadelphian shared his or her faith with them at home or in school or in the work place.*

*Still others have taken hold of unique opportunities to reach out to people in need of new lives. In the articles that follow we have three diverse and impressive stories of ways that brothers and sisters have let their light shine forth in a personal way, and brought glory to God in the process.*

### Bible in a Brown Bag

Introducing and teaching the True Gospel to others in the workplace has enabled me to garner a number of ideas over thirty-three and a half years of employment at two different jobs. Everybody considers lunchtime to be “their own time”. I discovered that showing God’s love for my fellow employees was a big factor in getting them to give up this time and respond to my invitations to study the Bible together. It was important for me to give them due respect, regardless of the amount of Bible understanding they had. It was also important for me to help them gain an image of the person they could become in the future, both in terms of their faith and their walk before God.

In the process I have had the wonderful privilege of seeing God’s hand at work, not only on the hearts of my fellow employees but also upon those of my superiors, outside vendors, service people, and the spouses and families of those in my lunchtime classes. This has bolstered my own personal faith and encouraged me to continue to speak of these things to almost everyone I meet.

Some of us are indeed more extroverted in our personalities than others. Let me just say that having the Truth will enable anyone who really wants to share their faith with others to grow and develop the ability to do so. Prayer, preparation, practice and preaching are four pillars which will hold up even the most frightened individual.

I began by asking God to bring me to cross the paths of others who would be interested in learning the Truth. I tried to assure Him that I was willing to give up my lunch hours at work as well as evenings away from home and family, but to balance this with the needs of my wife and four young children.

The first fellow employee I presented the Truth to was never baptized. But his questions enabled me to develop my presentation of first principles. I marked up a small pocket-size Bible with verses from Index Rerum<sup>2</sup> and used these in my first attempts to teach. I met many others on and off the job during those initial years and recall the baptism of the first person whom I tutored completely through the first principles. I was so excited the night he was immersed that I thought my heart would explode! You will miss this thrill if you decide to leave the preaching of the Gospel to others.

And why do we do it? It is for God's glory. It is for the salvation of others. It is to express our personal thankfulness to Jesus. There is a vacuum in the lives of others, longing to be filled. We have what they want and what they need to become truly living beings.

I changed jobs in June of 1977. I took a new job as a geology draftsman in Houston, Texas. This gave me a wonderful opportunity to build on what I had learned and to introduce the Truth to others in a new environment. I decided to take my time, be prayerful, and start by being more of a listener. I would not charge in with trumpets sounding, drums rattling and saber drawn. I proceeded to take the first three months to get to know everyone on a personal basis. I went into their offices in an unobtrusive way and deliberately avoided getting drawn into conversation about the Bible. I listened to what they wanted to talk about, and I got to know them and what they felt was important in life.

At the end of those three months, I planned my first lunch hour presentation. Let me add that it is important to secure a supervisor's or manager's approval before attempting to use company resources. I found management to be very supportive.

I placed a big chart of "God's 7,000 Year Plan for the Earth"<sup>3</sup> on the wall of a large light-table room at the back of our drafting department. Then I went around and invited everybody in the drafting department to a presentation of "The Plan." To my surprise everyone, including my supervisor, showed up and seemed to enjoy it. We hardly had enough room for everyone! Over the next couple years we regularly had four or five people in first principles classes that were held at least three times a week. People from other departments would hear of the class and ask if they could join us. They were always welcome.

On one occasion Bro. Charles and Sis. Edna Scott of the Richmond, VA, Ecclesia were visiting us with their son, Bro. Isaac, now of the Orlando, FL, Ecclesia. Bro. and Sis. Scott loved teaching the Truth to others as much as Sis. Windy and I did. I asked Bro. Charles if he would like to come and teach the class at my workplace. He got so excited! I went to my Division Manager — four levels up the administration pyramid! — and asked if we could use his conference room for the lunch hour presentation. He was happy to oblige us. Imagine everyone walking into a room with a beautiful, twenty-foot conference table and high-backed, rocking, leather chairs. It had overhead projector, automatic screen, and all the amenities of a corporate meeting place. But all of this paled to insignificance against the splendor of the Kingdom vision that dear Bro. Charles presented to us that day.

As technology went digital so did our presentations, and we were always afforded the use of conference room equipment. This had an exceptional impact on one occasion when we had scheduled a special “Prophecy Day” presentation. As we were setting up the equipment, the President of the United States announced the invasion of Kuwait. It was the start of the Gulf War. Imagine it again. At one end of the conference room was a dual, floor-to-ceiling, wall-to-wall projection screen. On the right screen we projected our PowerPoint presentation, while the left screen was displaying live CNN video of “Desert Storm”. What a memory for those of us who were privileged to be part of God’s greater work of manifesting Himself to men and women in the workplace!

Over the course of one’s career, opportunities present themselves for promotion into managerial positions. A brother or sister in Christ, who has become established in the ranks of a company as a “teacher of the Gospel” needs to stop and weigh these opportunities carefully and prayerfully. I received two such offers over a period of thirty years. I felt, however, that I was already employed in the greatest work any man or woman could ever hope to be engaged in. No amount of salary increase, prestige, or added authority could enhance the position I already had. In fact, the possibility existed that such advancements could interfere with the wonderful work that was being done, not just through me but now also through those who had become my brethren in the Lord and fellow laborers in the “Corporate Vineyard”. I decided to decline both offers of promotion.

There is no way in this brief article that I can share with you all the important ideas I have come to recognize over the years, so feel free to contact me. My e-mail address is *stanisbell@gmail.com*.

Finally, may we all recognize our position in the Body of Christ as Bro. Thomas states it in *Elpis Israel*:

“To this ‘one body’, energized by the ‘one spirit’, and ‘perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment’, and styled ‘THE BRIDE’ — is committed the work of making known ‘the manifold wisdom of God’, as contained in the word; and of inviting the world to be reconciled to God. No member of this body is exempt from the obligation of co-operating in this work. It is the duty and privilege of every one in his own sphere to endeavor to turn men to righteousness; for there is no distinction of ‘clergy’ and ‘laity’ in the family of God.” <sup>4</sup>

*Stan Isbell (North Houston, TX)*

#### Notes:

1. See *Into all the World*, by Bro. Stanley Owen, p.222ff.
2. R. C. Bingley, *Index Rerum – A Ready Reference on Biblical Subjects*.
3. “God’s 7,000 Year Plan” adapted by Bro. Howard Phillips from the ASK 20-lesson teaching procedure.
4. John Thomas, *Elpis Israel*, Fourteenth Edition – Revised, 1958, pp.159-60.

## An Appeal to College Students

“Make sure they know who you are! Put your Bible books on your bookshelf. And don’t forget to read your Bible regularly!” I did as Bro. Harry Whittaker instructed, and never regretted it. Yes, my college roommate thought I was a bit weird, but my bookshelf now provided a constant reminder about what was important in my life. The habit of daily Bible reading I determined to put into practice paid handsome dividends.



It is interesting how making such a simple statement can set the course of one’s life. When I suggested having a Bible class with some who were attracted to my interest in the Bible, there was a ready response. This first attempt at a Bible class didn’t last long, but my

love for reading and talking about the Bible did become known by many. I was affectionately called the “Bible Thumper” by one student. (Disclaimer: This name really arose because of my habit of taking several steps at a time up the wooden stairs to my dorm room.)

It is strange how things worked out. The student who gave me my ‘handle’, also was friends with a Catholic named Paul in another part of the dorm. He told him that he ought to come talk with me about the Bible. And that was the beginning of an incredible experience watching God at work!

Paul, it turns out, had come to the university from a seminary where he had been training to be a priest. He had one unique conviction that set him apart from most Catholics: he strongly believed the Bible was the final source of belief, not the Pope. As we talked about Bible teaching, Paul began to see for himself what was written. It took a summer of contemplation and soul-searching, but his heart was convinced. With real joy at the amazing, transforming work of God, I was privileged to witness Paul’s baptism the following spring.

Paul and I started doing the Bible readings together each night in his dorm room. What started out with just the two of us began to spread. With absolute amazement I watched others begin to fill his room, and later the room of my future wife, night after night just to read and discuss God’s Word. Didn’t they have homework? And in all of this, while I commented about what we read, it was God who really did the talking. It was truly a humbling experience to watch Him at work.

As interest in the message of the Bible grew among some of these students, a weekly Bible class was set up to teach the Gospel in a systematic and compelling way. I grew personally from this effort, always thankful for the written works of other brethren who helped me in this process. Bro. Harry was also a constant source of encouragement. I mention this that older brethren might realize just how important they can be in the life of a young person seeking to share the Bible with others in a university environment. Harry's understanding and support carried me through many times of discouragement.

By the grace of God I was able to continue this preaching work immediately after graduating from the university by obtaining employment in the same area (my alternative service as a conscientious objector). In all, I was privileged to witness over 11 young people decide to follow the Lord Jesus through the waters of baptism. Over the intervening years, I have been privileged to see the Faith grow and mature in some of these, and now in their children, zealous and eager for the ways of God like their parents.

I learned an important lesson from this experience: God doesn't need great people with fantastic preaching or teaching abilities (which I definitely did not have); He needs ordinary people, ones who are willing to give themselves to Him in whatever capacity or service they can. God can fill in all that we know is missing in ourselves to accomplish wonderful things!

You do need courage, though, as you need to mark out from the very beginning what you believe to be most important in your life. This means facing possible embarrassment, being identified as one of those "religious" types, and perhaps finding that some may not consider your company very interesting. But on the other side, those who do have a religious bent or curiosity will be drawn by God in your direction. That is how God works.

My advice to young people going to college or embarking on a career: Don't forget Bro. Harry's advice. Unashamedly, let the people around you know who you *really* are in your love and devotion to God, His Son, and His precious Words of Life. You will never regret it.

*Ted Sleeper (San Francisco Peninsula, CA)*

## **Prison Preaching**

Prisons are among the darkest places on earth, spiritually speaking. Inmates are held without most of the basic amenities and freedoms most people take for granted: they wear what the prison tells them to wear, eat what the prison serves, associate with whom the prison permits and at times the prison allows. They are often subject to indignities by the guards and other inmates, and cannot object without fear of further punishment. For the most part there is good reason for the restrictions. Inmates are in prison because of murder, other violent crimes, theft, fraud or various drug offenses. And of course the neighbors and companions of each felon are other felons. It is a very dark place.

Nevertheless, into such darkness the light of the Gospel can and does shine. As Paul reminded the Corinthians, “*such were some of you.*” That is, even people who have done terrible things can respond to the Gospel, repent and obey Christ.

Prison authorities generally encourage inmates to take courses as an aid to rehabilitation. We know that God’s Word is a living message that can change people’s lives. We know all scripture is inspired by God and profitable for many things: this can help with the rehabilitation of prisoners too.

If you know of someone in prison, it is good to invite them to learn of God’s Word. To do this you will need a plan. Preaching to prisoners is not something you take lightly. Some of these people are truly seeking God. When the inmate goes to the Chapel and listens to the Chaplain he or she will not hear the Truth. The inmate truly sits in darkness unless he or she receives the light of the Gospel message. We know that only God knows the hearts and minds of man. He sends His angels forth to do His will and call those who will respond. Some inmates take many Bible courses and some have never owned a Bible in their life. Many come to realize that they do need God in their life as they see how wicked the prison is (without God) and want out.

When writing to an inmate have a good Bible study plan ready to use. Inmates do not have access to the Internet or e-mail, so all correspondence is done through the mail. Do NOT use a residential address, but use a P. O. Box. When you write to an inmate remember you are an ambassador to Christ and so you are writing in the capacity of him for their rehabilitation. You are not to be just a pen pal, so every letter you write will contain some references to the Gospel message. Sure, you can get to know the inmate because one day you hope to have him/her as a brother/sister in Christ. You have to gain their trust and confidence. The inmates do receive other Bible courses, but the Christadelphians are people who love God’s Word and are able to give Scriptural references to back up what we say and believe. Many inmates like this. We find that when an inmate focuses on God’s Word, it uplifts and elevates him or her out of the depression of the prison. It does change their life when they read God’s Word and apply it in their lives.

An example is Isiah, in the Correctional Training Facility at Soledad. Eight years ago, when he was in the County Jail, he completed a Bible course, but didn’t really take it to heart. Then he was sent to the San Quentin State Prison in California and the shock of prison life set in. He did another Bible course and this time took it very seriously. Now Isiah is sending in 13 to 23 Bible questions from the daily Bible readings with each letter. He also shares the Scriptures with another inmate when he can meet with him.

We are pleased to report that this work has led to several baptisms. Bro. Kenneth, who remains an inmate at Soledad, as well as Sis. Deanna and Bros. Julio and William who have since been released.

For more information about prison preaching and the precautions to take, contact the author at [Sunshine95051@comcast.net](mailto:Sunshine95051@comcast.net).

*Marilyn Seagoe (San Francisco Peninsula, CA)*

# The Internet

*We have discussed above<sup>1</sup> some of the pioneering work in radio and television that used emerging technologies of their day. The Internet, in many ways, has transformed the access of information far beyond radio and television. Information is available in an instant. Communities of people participate “virtually,” often transcending geographic, cultural and language barriers that would have previously limited interaction.*

*Indeed, while the Internet, like radio and television, can represent a significant danger spiritually, it is also progressively the place where people are spending their discretionary time. Just as the Apostle Paul travelled the Roman roads of commerce to preach the gospel, so the Internet is a commercial tool that can facilitate the effective dissemination of the Truth. Indeed, Internet preaching is a huge global opportunity for Christadelphians. While the web takes the Truth into the communities we live and work in, it also goes to places around the world we could otherwise have never reached.*

*The two following articles summarize the preaching work being done through ThisIsYourBible.com — a preaching website that is dedicated to teaching first principle truths. Since January 2006, this North-American developed website has remarkably connected with students in all part so the world. Today, it is in a partnership with other regional Bible Mission groups that provides an improved method for attracting and following up with students around the world. Indeed, many baptisms have occurred when students work with a tutor and are later connected with a Christadelphian in their area.*

*The second article is about the experience of one of the more experienced tutors, Sis. Joy Jennings. She will describe the work she does and the enjoyment she has experienced by doing it. We would like to encourage you to consider being a tutor for ThisIsYourBible.com. It is a wonderful way to work with men and women that have a sincere desire to learn the Truth and need someone who will guide and coach them with their studies.*

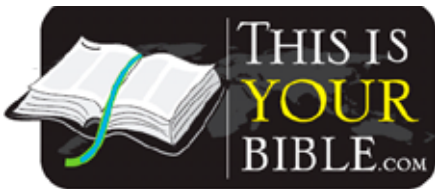
## Notes:

1. “This is Your Bible” in California

## This is Your Bible.com

Think back to the year 2006. From January 2006 until now, how many people has your ecclesia’s preaching efforts been able to reach? Include in your calculations special efforts, lectures, seminars, county fairs, etc. Of all these people, how many have signed

your guest book and given you their personal contact information? Compare that number, whatever it might be, with the results obtained by preaching on the Internet through [www.thisisyourbible.com](http://www.thisisyourbible.com) (TIYB).



To date, over 18,000 men and women have registered with us since January of 2006. Of these, over 3,000 are currently active on the site. Since 2006, the site has been visited over 500,000 times. About 60% of these visits originate in North America and the Caribbean, although we have many students in Europe, Africa, and Asia/Pacific as well.

The backbone of TIYB is the 716 brothers and sisters from around the world who are actively engaged in the work of corresponding with these students. Some tutors have chosen to make this a major part of their personal outreach work. For example, Sis. Joy Jennings of the Greenaway Ecclesia in Hamilton, Ontario, has currently over 300 students on her list. Only a relatively small percentage of her students are active, but it is enough to keep her busy! Sis. Dolores Fisher, of the Pomona, California meeting, has persevered as a self-described computer illiterate to become a diligent and effective tutor on the system. As she told me once, "If I can do it, anyone can do it!" Both sisters have experienced the wonderful blessing of students with whom they have worked and encouraged in their lessons being baptized. Indeed, baptisms associated with the website have taken place in such diverse locations as Russia, Malta, South Africa, Texas, Ontario, Nova Scotia, Thailand and the Philippines! We are aware of over 30 baptisms which can be directly related to the *thisisyourbible.com* website. There are almost certainly many more in which the website played a supportive role.

We must emphasize that we are not playing a numbers game with baptisms. While we are greatly encouraged by news of baptisms, our mandate is to preach the Truth, plant the seed and leave the increase to our Heavenly Father. When good and honest hearts respond in faith, we rejoice with the angels in heaven. Having said that, we must be clear that our primary objective is to link students with tutors and through tutors to ecclesias. As the momentum of the site builds, through the blessing of our Lord, we can expect more baptisms to follow.

The charter for TIYB is primarily focused on teaching first principle Truths. The content on the site is multi-faceted. We offer Bible courses online and by regular mail. We have a literature library consisting of most of our best known booklets. Many of the booklets in the website's library section have been accessed over 10,000 times each. Topics that fall into this category are not surprising: the Trinity, Sabbath, Politics, Angels, Inspiration, the Devil and Demons, the Kingdom, Prayer, Israel, Life after Death and the list goes on. The top two pieces of literature accessed since 2008? "One Bible Many Churches, Why?" and "Heaven and Hell," each being accessed more than 13,000 times! To those of us familiar with more traditional methods of preaching, these numbers are staggering. However, according to Bro. Duncan Kenzie, the Christadelphian Bible Mission of the Americas leader of the website, in the near future, when we implement more advanced techniques to attract visitors, we expect these numbers will increase many times over!

Besides courses and literature, visitors to the site may:

- Order a free DVD (thousands of which have been distributed).
- Access other video and audio content online including "Introducing Jesus",



- Hear “Minute Meditations” read by brothers and sisters, and hymns and songs produced by Christadelphian choirs.
- Have their questions about the Bible answered within 24 hours of submitting them.

To date, close to 15,000 questions about the Bible have been asked and answered since TIYB first started in 2006. Many of these questions are saved for visitor reference in the site’s “Answers from the Question Box” feature. Since the site’s inception in 2006, this feature has been accessed more than 60,000 times! One of our most popular features is the monthly survey question. So far there have been 6,151 responses to this month’s question, “Is correct doctrine important?” Respondents are directed to an appropriate piece of literature; in this case, “One Bible Many Churches, Why?” Visitors may use a “Contact Us” feature to find an ecclesia near them — almost every ecclesia in the world is listed there.

An ecclesia may also create, or have created for it, an ecclesial webpage which will be visible on the site. This will be helpful for posting details of location – including an interactive Google Map – times of meetings and advertising for special events complete with graphics. Here is a link to a sample page for the Toronto West Ecclesia: [www.thisisyourbible.com/toronto\\_west](http://www.thisisyourbible.com/toronto_west). Someone from your meeting may be given authority on the site to update your ecclesia’s webpage or you can send an email to me as the site administrator and I will be happy to update it for you. You can also use the direct link to your ecclesia’s webpage in your advertising. So Toronto West could advertise their webpage, instead of generically advertising the website itself.

Another major benefit of the site enjoyed by many ecclesias is that of the “Ecclesial Manager” function. This resource may be set-up to receive all students from a specified area and either manually transfer them to team members or have the transfer take place automatically. The Manager may check the progress of local students and the status of team tutors to ensure that no promising students are being overlooked or neglected.

There is a key communications benefit with this feature. All students or tutors in the zone of control of an Ecclesial Manager may be notified of upcoming events, literally at the touch of a button. No laborious entry of IDs required. This is all made possible by the Student Management System through which every Tutor has a detailed record of every activity on the website of each student in his or her care. Some of these records can be quite long as enthusiastic students read our material, order DVDs, and complete lessons!

We have plans for some radically-new developments on the site which we plan to implement, God willing, before the end of 2011. There will be much more emphasis on audio/video presentations, a new, more thought-provoking follow-up course to our current basic courseware, a multi-media correspondence course designed around “Learn to Read the Bible Effectively”, and a brand new look and feel to the site itself, which will raise its profile on the Internet and attract a much larger audience. As these new plans unfold by God’s grace, we are going to need more help! We need more tutors, Ecclesial Managers, webpage reps and perhaps some

roles we haven't thought of yet. How can you help and where can you go for more information? Call or Email me: [yourbible@gto.net](mailto:yourbible@gto.net) or (519.574.6014).

My role is to provide daily support to users of the system, be they individual Tutors, Ecclesial Managers, or ecclesial webpage reps. I will be more than happy to give or arrange for presentations to Ecclesias, provide training documentation, advertising templates, and [thisisyourbible.com](http://thisisyourbible.com) business cards for distribution. I am also available to consult with you regarding the use of the system in personal and ecclesial witness. There are plenty of resources to answer questions and help you with difficult students and assist with technical issues.

To join the TIYB family, it is a simple matter of going to the website, clicking on the "Tutors" tab at the left of the screen and registering. All potential tutors are checked to ensure that they are members in good standing of a recognized ecclesia. If you are young in the Truth and are keen to witness but unsure of your ability, this is the perfect method for you to build your confidence with lots of backup and support. If you are retired, what a wonderful way of using your free time! If you are leading busy lives already but still feel the need to witness, this is the perfect method for you — you set the pace and can limit your number of students to that which you are comfortable with.

What other medium can allow us to bring the Truth to a world in darkness? We have individuals visiting the site from over 140 different countries. Paul's words in Romans are being fulfilled in new ways through this exciting technology.

*"So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes by the preaching of Christ. But I ask, have they not heard? Indeed they have; for 'Their voice has gone out to all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world' "*  
(Rom 10:17-18 RSV).

Will you and your ecclesia join with us in this great work?

*Mike LeDuke ( Kitchener-Waterloo, ON)*

## A Tutor's Reflections

I began my work as a tutor on the TIYB web site in 2006. As a senior sister with many years of experience teaching Sunday school, Isolation League Sunday School, and as part of the CBM Zimbabwe team, I saw tutoring on the web as an opportunity to contribute to the work of preaching. What an experience it has been!

Five years and 800 plus contacts and students since then, from up and down the east coast of the United States and across Canada, I have been humbled by the messages from those who without exception want "to know their Bible better". These messages from a small percentage of my long list are what keep me going to my computer every day to check on new students and respond to submitted questions from established students. The Internet can be a very impersonal medium for sharing God's Word, but once in a while there will be an emotional connection with a student who is hungry to learn. Like my student, Helen, in Minnesota, who got up at 4:30 AM every morning, before going to work, to read and submit her

next lesson and then send a message — “I love you, Joy!” — when she had completed the final lesson. This student was connected with the brothers and sisters in Minnesota. Or the postal student who sent a letter and her picture with thanks for “opening the Bible” for her; and the mother who read her daughter’s postal lessons and sent a note asking for lessons, too. The eager few keep me from being discouraged by the many that register and then never continue, or the countless postal students who never respond to lessons coming to them by mail.

My routine is simple. Each student is sent a WELCOME email letter when they register on the site. The letter encourages them to explore the web site, and briefly reviews all the interesting options available to them. I conclude the letter by introducing myself as their contact and Bible study partner. For the online students, each time a lesson is submitted a personal letter is sent commenting on their answers. The Online Bible<sup>1</sup> and my husband, Bro. Bob, have helped me handle the tricky and challenging questions. Reading the Bible daily, looking up references, and reading the chapters for each lesson are always emphasized. Postal students receive a cover letter with their first set of three lessons, again encouraging them to read their Bibles. For those few who complete the course, either online or by mail, a letter is sent outlining options for continuing their studies. Options include: contact with the nearest Christadelphians, a review of other available Christadelphian web sites, or the 40 lesson CBM postal course and a copy of Bro. Maher’s book *Understand the Bible: Work it Out for Yourself*.

I tell myself that in a very small way I am “sowing the seed”. I am thankful that God has given me the experience and spiritual training to do this work. I pray for His blessing.

*Joy Jennings (Hamilton Greenaway, ON)*

**Notes:**

1. See [www.onlinebible.net](http://www.onlinebible.net) for this free Bible software program

## **Preaching the Word in the Future**

### **Every Disciple is a Missionary**

When Jesus was in the country of the Gadarenes, he encountered a man with an unclean spirit whose name was Legion (Mark 5:1-20). Legion lived among tombs in a graveyard and was feared by all who knew him. He could not be restrained by chains because of his great strength. In desperation he cried and hollered throughout day and night and sometimes cut his own skin with stones. Legion’s *human situation* was horrific.

#### **Jesus takes pity**

It was this man that Jesus chose to heal with the dramatic words, “*Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit.*” There follows an astounding statement describing the outcome of the miracle. People who knew Legion came “*and saw him that was*

*possessed with the devil, and had the legion, sitting and clothed and in his right mind: and they were afraid.*” Their fear is not a surprising response, for Legion was a man they knew to be dangerous. To now find him in a state of normalcy would immediately raise questions about his behavior and whether his healing was real and permanent. Related to this was the fact that 2,000 swine had run headlong down a steep place into the sea and drowned. The whole situation was shocking and unprecedented to all who witnessed the events.

### **Legion wants the company of Jesus**

Not unexpectedly, Legion requested that he might stay with Jesus. His thankfulness and gratitude led to a devotion that made him want to remain in the company of the man who demonstrated such power, compassion, and personal healing. Jesus’s response is surprising. He said to Legion, *“Go home to thy friends and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee”* (Mark 5:19). This task was not as easy as it might at first seem. Legion was well known and feared by all who were familiar with his condition. There would be those who would still be afraid of him. Many who knew his past would want to distance themselves from him. Children would be taken from his company, and he would generally be unwelcome because of his previous unpredictable and violent behavior.

### **Legion becomes a missionary**

However, Legion did exactly what the Lord commanded him to do. *“And he departed and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him: and all men did marvel”* (Mark 5:20). After his miraculous healing, Legion went back to his home, to the people who knew him well and to his friends. He declared what Jesus had done to change him from a man with serious mental instability to a calm, rational, stable individual. This would not have been easy to do, nor would it have been easy for his family and friends to hear. It took courage and persistence which sprang from Legion’s conviction in *“Jesus, Son of the most high God”* and in the God-given healing power of Jesus.

Legion became a missionary — a missionary to his own family and friends. He was not trained or unusually skilled for the task, yet he was very effective at it. “All men did marvel” at his exciting report. Through his convincing words and by the witness of his restored physical and mental abilities, Legion accomplished exactly what Jesus intended when he sent him back to his home and friends. His message and changed life demonstrated that Jesus was a man sent from God.

### **We are all missionaries**

It is in this sense that we are all missionaries, even when we stay at home. We may never go to a distant land, but we all have a similar responsibility to *“go home to thy friends and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee.”* God’s saving truth has touched our hearts and we have become new men and women, spared from a desperate and hopeless situation, now with new purpose, having experienced the compassion of the Lord. It is not always easy for us to go back to those we know best and who have known us in

the past, to declare to them that we are a new person — that we are the Lord's disciple. It takes courage and conviction as it did for Legion.

### **Preaching locally**

The concept of preaching within our local circumstances is stated by Jesus in the simple declaration, *"Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel but on a candlestick and it giveth light to all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven"* (Matt 6:14-16). What Jesus expresses here, in principle, was demonstrated in the actions of Legion.

So every disciple is a missionary. Some travel great distances to other countries. Some learn a new language to enable them to communicate with people in another tongue. Most of us need go no further than the house next door or the people living upstairs. Darkness is everywhere, and disciples have the opportunity and responsibility to share the light and love of the Lord. *"The spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely"* (Rev 22:17).

*Ken Curry (Toronto East, ON)*

## **The Future of Our Preaching**

We'd like to begin by thanking all of the contributors to this special issue. It is apparent that the Lord has greatly blessed our household, providing an open window for us to share the Living Word. The enthusiasm and "vision" of our brothers and sisters have assisted countless men and women to the Truth and changed their lives forever. For all those who tirelessly knocked on doors, who provided public talks when there was little support or interest, who led exciting Bible seminars and provided radio and television messages — we say thank you! Many thanks to those who spoke a "word in season" to the neighbor across the fence or over a supper table. Some of us reading these articles are here because you cared.

### **New Methods**

Our personal experience has been that Christadelphians are not the first to change methods of preaching. We are not the first to be on the radio or to offer public Bible seminars. But, what has been seen is that there is great value in trying new and different approaches — to listening to ideas from our brothers and sisters and young people. In our own ecclesia, for many years, there was a lament that nobody in our community was interested in the Bible. We often felt that we live in a "dark and degenerate age" and our preaching is primarily a witness to a world that seems to have no time for God. I felt this way myself after countless "public lectures" that resulted in few, if any visitors. But, when a new method was introduced (Bible seminars), suddenly we found that our view had been more influenced by our own ineffective presentation of the Truth. Seminars have changed my expectations and have brought about more baptisms than any other outreach I am aware of. But,

seminars are not the end all. There will be new frontiers, new presentation and communications forums yet to come. The Internet has opened our eyes to a world with few limits. Thirty years ago, our brethren would never have dreamed that the Truth could be made available in every major city and small hamlet and tribal village in the world. With all the difficulties and unfortunate pollution technology has produced in our world, one can also be thankful that we also live in an age where we can preach the Gospel to literally billions of people.

While it is clear from the Word that in the Last Days there will be scoffing about the claims of the Bible and many who will abandon their faith, we also see around us today a world looking for answers. They are not finding them in the institutions they are turning to. Our view is that there has never been a more fertile time to preach. People are hearing “comic book” interpretations of prophecy. They are fed illogical and unsound sermons from their church leaders. They are beginning to read their own Bibles and are frankly quite confused as they try to make sense of what they should believe. They lack the necessary foundational platforms that the Truth requires. When they are exposed to Truth and that platform and structure exists, things fit together and make sense. These men and women are in need of “some man to guide” them.

### **The Future**

So, what might we predict about the “**future of preaching?**” As we in the world are surrounded by threats and violence, the upheaval of the nations, many are wondering where this is all headed. Bible prophecy, grounded in the promises to Abraham, but relevant to today’s headlines, will remain attractive. Bible prophecy is not our fundamental message — the message of salvation and the Kingdom is. But, we must speak to the area of interest first. Use Bible Prophecy as a means to set down the fundamental teachings they must first know. It is the context, the foundation of all Bible Prophecy.

We are seeing major shifts in media and communications. Newspaper advertising will likely not remain the faithful friend of past campaigns. We will need to harness new methods of reaching out to people, to participate in new networks where people are spending discretionary time. The focus for Christadelphians will need to be how we can use these technologies without compromising who we are or what we teach. Our focus must change from being “speakers” to leading “learning.” How can I use the briefest of time to best help this person learn the importance of the Scriptural fundamental? We are blessed with many great “lecturers” in Christadelphia. In the future, lecturing opportunities will be few, but teaching opportunities will abound.

### **Our Ecclesias**

The future of preaching is tightly connected to the very future of our ecclesias. Bro. Roberts’ words about the purpose for our ecclesias, more than a hundred years ago, still is completely valid. Ecclesias exist to provide edification of members AND outreach to our communities. When these two are imbalanced, the health of the ecclesia is impacted. Ecclesias that have strong efforts in both areas see growth of

their members, but are constantly reminded of the beauty and excitement of the first principles. Such ecclesias are often blessed with new members, new Sunday school and CYC members. These center and ground ecclesias and the enthusiasm this creates is contagious. With the diversity of preaching opportunities available today, each ecclesia must be able to find outreach that fits their resources and capabilities. The Lord will bless our work!

So, this final article assumes that there will continue to be a willing spirit among our ecclesias. It assumes that we will remain as thirsty for the Lord's return and excited about the Kingdom as our forefathers have been. We believe that new ideas will surface and new ways to connect with hearers will be found. Clearly the question before us is whether we are prepared now? Are we preparing our youth for the work before us? Are we properly including young brothers and sisters in outreach work? Are we listening to new ideas? Are we fundamentally sound regarding the first principles and the frequent wrested Scriptures? Is Bible study and preparation core to our ecclesias and embraced in our personal lives? In the last days, will there be a faithful witness of the Truth in our communities?

The key to preaching in the future is NOT going to be technology. It will be our willingness to be beacons of truth, to provide sound Bible instruction and insight. As we've seen, brothers and sisters have been resilient innovators, laboring because they believed in what they were doing. We do not receive our ideas or direction from a central body. Rather, each of us, and our ecclesias, are fully empowered to be creative and have a sincere passion for our local communities. It fundamentally is our **message** that is important. May God be praised that He has presented us with this "*pearl of great price*." May the Lord bless you and future generations of workers until the glorious day of his coming!

*Dave Jennings (Pomona, CA)*

## **Preaching Resources and Contact Information**

### **Internet**

"This Is Your Bible" website, ecclesial webpage, and Google ad inquiries: Bro. Mike LeDuke, [yourbible@go.net](mailto:yourbible@go.net). "This Is Your Bible", CBMA/CBMC preaching website: [www.thisisyourbible.com](http://www.thisisyourbible.com).

### **Literature**

Great Lakes ASK literature agent: Bro. Bob Davies, 289 E. 31st St, Hamilton, ON, L8V 3P9, Tel. 905-385-7339.

A Procedure for Teaching the Truth: Bro. Stan Isbell, [stanisbell@gmail.com](mailto:stanisbell@gmail.com).

### **Mission Work**

CBMA Chairman: Bro. Phil Snobelen, [philsnobelen@shaw.ca](mailto:philsnobelen@shaw.ca).

CBMC Chairman: Bro. Don Luff, [luffs@sympatico.ca](mailto:luffs@sympatico.ca).

Domestic missionary inquiries: Bro. Dave Jennings at [djennings@cox.net](mailto:djennings@cox.net).

Truth Corps inquiries: Bro. Brad Butts, [wbbutts@comcast.net](http://wbbutts@comcast.net).

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### **Personal Preaching**

Preaching in the workplace inquiries and PowerPoint presentations: Bro. Stan Isbell, *stanisbell@gmail.com*.

Prison ministry inquiries: Sis. Marilyn Seagoe, *Sunshine95051@comcast.net*.

### **Seminars**

General inquiries: Bro. David McKay, *davemarlene@rogers.com*; Bro. Carl Newth, *crn2008@hotmail.com*.

“Learn to Read the Bible Effectively” seminar, 16-session DVD series, \$17.50 (U.S.): Bro. Doug Hawthorne, *Cindy.and.Doug@Juno.com*.

### **Sunday School**

General inquiries: Bro. Jim Harper, *sundayschool@tidings.org*.

Vacation Bible School inquiries: Sis. Sandy McLeod, *sandramcleod@gmail.com*.

### **Television**

“This Is Your Bible”, half-hour programs for public access broadcasting, DVD format: Bro. Bruce Andrews, *papaandy@juno.com*.

“This Is Your Bible” NYC television project: Bro. Joe Badlu, *jbadlu@aol.com*.

### **Other Contact Brethren**

Canadian National Exhibition: Bro. Peter Wisniowski, *peteresa@hotmail.com*.

Great Lakes ASK: Bro. Grant Abel, *ghabel@rogers.com*.

Mid-Atlantic ASK: E-mail *bibleask@verizon.net*.

Simi Hills Fund: Bro. Ken Sommerville, *ksommerville@unitedagencies.com*.

### **Preaching Resource Websites**

Adelphosweb, *www.adelphosweb.com*.

Christadelphian Preaching Resource Center: *www.cprc.info*.

ALS Preaching Website – *www.christadelphianals.org* (login: see ALS diary).