

THE CHRISTADELPHIAN TIDINGS

— of the Kingdom of God —

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Editorial — Fish and Its Symbol	483
Exhortation — Will your Faith get you into the Kingdom?, <i>James Hagler</i>	486
Bible Study: “As it was in the days of Noah”: (9) “Behold, the face of the ground was dry”, <i>Ryan Mutter</i>	491
Creations's Gospel: (1) Quoting Creation, <i>Jim Dillingham</i>	494
First Principles — The Atonement in Practice, <i>Richard Morgan</i>	497
The Joy of Sunday Schooling — Learning Together (2), <i>Michael Owen</i>	501
Youth Speaks — The Daughters of Zelophehad (1), <i>Jason Hensley</i>	503
Music in Worship — Hymns and Memories, <i>Ken and Joan Curry</i>	507
Reflections: Faith and Death, <i>George Booker</i>	510
Sanitizing the Heart — Isaiah 6,7, <i>Ken Camplin</i>	515
The Energizer Bunny of Christadelphia, <i>Brother Sparky</i>	516
When Man and Woman Play with Fire, <i>George Booker</i>	518
Bible Mission News — Jamaica; Trinidad and Tobago Bible School; St. Lucia Missionary Trip	519
News & Notices	526
Minute Meditation — Think Twice, Speak Once, <i>Robert J. Lloyd</i>	529
Coming Events	531

The CHRISTADELPHIAN TIDINGS of the Kingdom of God

Peter Hemingray, Editor

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Remember that You are Going to Die

This was part of a commencement address to Stanford University graduates in 2005. The speaker, Steve Jobs, had been diagnosed with an incurable pancreatic cancer.

Remembering that I'll be dead soon is the most important tool I've ever encountered to help me make the big choices in life. Because almost everything — all external expectations, all pride, all fear of embarrassment or failure — these things just fall away in the face of death, leaving only what is truly important. Remembering that you are going to die is the best way I know to avoid the trap of thinking you have something to lose. You are already naked. There is no reason not to follow your heart.

No one wants to die. Even people who want to go to heaven don't want to die to get there. And yet death is the destination we all share. No one has ever escaped it. And that is as it should be, because Death is very likely the single best invention of Life. It is Life's change agent. It clears out the old to make way for the new. Right now the new is you, but someday not too long from now, you will gradually become the old and be cleared away. Sorry to be so dramatic, but it is quite true. Your time is limited, so don't waste it living someone else's life.

"Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will depart. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; may the name of the LORD be praised" (Job 1:21).

Editorial

Fish and Its Symbol

I would be the first to admit I am no fisherman. Actually, when asked, I usually reply “I do not want to destroy my batting average.” For, you see, many years ago, standing on the shore of the Long Island sound, I made two casts of a borrowed rod and caught two fish. How can you beat that? So I have very rarely fished since. (I must explain there was a shoal of Blues (or bluefish) in a feeding frenzy where I cast my lure.) And this is my own only fish story — although I have heard many more, some of which were probably true.

And who can help being fascinated by fish? They are strange, blank-eyed, silent, enigmatic and slippery creatures from another world — hard to grasp both literally and figuratively. Theirs is a world hidden and dark and deep, so different from our dwelling in the transparent medium of air. Fish, in all their sizes and shapes, come to us as emissaries from beyond, ambassadors of another existence.

And there is something unique about fish. In Gen 7:14, Noah invites onto the ark *“every wild animal of every kind, and all domestic animals of every kind, and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, and every bird of every kind— every bird, every winged creature.”* And in Gen 8:17, after the flood has ceased, Noah and his family emerge from the ark with *“birds and animals and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”*

These passages and their wording, of course, mimic the account in Genesis of the creation of the world and all its creatures. That is, they mimic it with a single exception. Gen 1:20-23 notes the creation of birds and also of *“the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, of every kind, with which the waters swarm.”*

But on Noah’s ark there is no aquarium. Alone among “all flesh,” the fish are left to fend for themselves. While fish are not always spared the effects of God’s judgment in the Bible, they are uniquely equipped to survive the judgment of the flood. Under this judgment they not only survived but thrived.

So it is that in the earliest chapters of the Bible fish become a sign of salvation, able to pass through judgment unscathed. Later, in the tale of Jonah, a fish scoops up the embattled prophet and carries him to safety. So a fish bears another along to his salvation.

Fish in the Gospels

Fish are mentioned and given symbolic meaning several times in the Gospels. Several of Jesus’ twelve Apostles were fishermen. He commissions them with the words *“I will make you fishers of men”*.

At the feeding of the five thousand, a boy is brought to Jesus with *“five small loaves and two fish”*. The question is asked, *“But what are they, among so many?”* Jesus multiplies the loaves and fish to feed the multitude.

In Matt 13:47-50, the Parable of Drawing in the Net, Jesus compares God's decision on who will reign on earth, or be destroyed in the furnace of fire at the end of this dispensation, to fishers sorting out their catch, keeping the good fish and throwing the bad fish away.

In John 21:11, it is related that the disciples fished all night but caught nothing. Jesus instructed them to cast the nets on the other side of the boat, and they drew in 153 fish. (Thus generating a lasting controversy on the symbology of 153!)

Another use of fish in Christ's life may be found in the words of Matt 17:24-27, in which, upon being asked if his Teacher does not pay the temple (two-drachma) tax, Simon Peter answers, "Yes." Christ tells Peter to go to the water and cast a line. He says that a coin sufficient for the tax will be found in the fish's mouth. Peter does as told and finds the coin.

ICHTHYS

So the fishy resonances resound throughout scripture. Then they splash well beyond the pages of Scripture. The early church made the fish a symbol of baptism, implicitly recognizing how fish survive the waters of judgment. Soon enough, it was noticed in the Greek word for fish an acronym — ICHTHYS (ΙΧΘΥΣ) which is derived from:

- Iota (i) is the first letter of Iēsous (Ἰησοῦς), Greek for "Jesus".
- Chi (ch) is the first letter of Christos (Χριστός), Greek for "anointed".
- Theta (th) is the first letter of Theou (Θεοῦ), Greek for "God's", the genitive case of Θεός, Theos, Greek for "God".
- Ypsilon (y) is the first letter of (h)yios (Υἱός), Greek for "Son" (the initial "h" was pronounced in classical Greek but has long been silent).
- Sigma (s) is the first letter of sōter (Σωτήρ), Greek for "Savior".

Thus this becomes, **"Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior,"** which made Jesus himself represented by a fish. So in a figure, the fish becomes Jesus, the first-born of all creation, the Jonah-fish bearing all who hear and obey him to salvation. So it is that he whose body we partake of at our memorial service, in symbol he swallows us up, carrying us through chaotic seas to a distant realm we cannot attain on our own.

The Use of the Fish Symbol¹



The ICHTHYS is seen in 1st-century catacombs in Rome, and according to tradition, ancient Christians, during their persecution by the Roman Empire in the first few centuries after Christ, used the fish symbol to mark meeting places and tombs, or to distinguish friends from foes. When

a Christian met a stranger in the road, the Christian sometimes drew one arc of the simple fish outline in the dirt. If the stranger drew the other arc, both believers knew they were in good company. (It is not certain the use of the fish symbol is totally based on the acronym.) Its use died out after the so-called Catholic Church began to dominate the landscape under Emperor Constantine.

However, it would be no bad thing if, like the faithful of former days, we all carried constantly around in our minds this image of the fish, this word which spells it, and these saving truths which it symbolizes. They are the essential source of that peace which the world cannot give but which Jesus promised to “his own”. The inmost heart of the Christian Gospel is represented both in the personal name of Jesus and in the title sôter, Savior. This word appears in Luke’s record of the angelic announcement to the shepherds: *“Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.”* Savior from what? *“Thou shalt call his name Jesus”,* said the angel to Joseph, *“for he shall save his people from their sins”* (Luke 2:11; Matt. 1:21).

In the second title of the ICHTHYS symbolism, the word christos is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew mashiah, meaning “anointed”. Jesus is the Messiah, the anointed of God, foretold in the Old Testament as the one who should come in the fullness of God’s time to deliver and rule the people of God. To John in Patmos it was given to see in vision the fulfillment of this prophecy: *“The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever”* (Rev. 11:15). The preaching of Jesus as Christ, as Messiah, the Lord’s anointed, and of his coming again as king to reign over a renewed and purified earth — this also is central to the message of the Christian Gospel: *“These (things) are written”,* says John concerning the testimony of his Gospel, *“that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name”* (20:31).

This last quotation also gives to Jesus the third title associated with the word ICHTHYS: Son of God. This is the most striking of the titles which Jesus claimed for himself and which were given him by the early church. In it are involved two profound Christian truths. The first is the ultimate truth of all, that God, out of His love for men, gave His own true Son to be the means of their deliverance from sin: *“Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins”* (1John 4:10). The second truth involved in the title is the supreme status and absolute authority of the one who could justly claim it and be referred to by it.

The use of the fish symbol was revived, as far as I can tell, in the 1960’s, primarily in Evangelical circles. Thus you often see it on bumper stickers, and sometimes as a pendant — but rarely with the Greek letters included. Thus most people recognize it as a symbol of Christianity, but know nothing of its origin, or its use in the 1st Century Church. It is a pity that its association with a set of beliefs we cannot share inhibits its use among our body!

Peter Hemingray

Notes:

1. Some parts of this section are drawn from an article by Bro. Neville Smart In *The Christadelphian*, 1981, p 253

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Exhortation

Will your Faith get you into the Kingdom?

The basis of this exhortation came from the last time I had to teach Adult Sunday school, and we were studying Romans 8. The more learned here would say I had an epiphany that day, but in my lingo, the light bulb finally came on! This exhortation is based on Rom 8:31: “*if God is for us, who is against us?*” After studying this verse I finally understood what our friend Wilma in California believes. Wilma is 95 years old and ever since I have known her, she’s had this positive attitude that she is going to be in the kingdom. Now me, just being newly baptized when I met Wilma, I thought at that time there was no way I was worthy of the Kingdom. I felt the only thing I could say for sure was that I would be at the judgment seat because I was baptized, and that the only thing that would get me into the kingdom was God’s grace and mercy. I couldn’t understand how she could be so sure of herself. Now, almost 30 years later, I see the flaws in my thinking.

At Bible School I asked 18 people these questions :

- Will you be at the judgment seat? Yes or No.
- Will you be in the kingdom? Yes; No; Not sure, but hope so.

The answers were 18, ‘yes I will be at the judgment seat’; nine said ‘yes’ they would be in the kingdom and nine said ‘not sure but hoped to be’. The nine yes’s were from older people, or should I say, those who have been baptized longer.

By the way I also asked some little kids, six to ten years old or so, if they would be in the kingdom, and they all said ‘yes’! Doesn’t that remind you what Christ said in Mark 10:15: “*Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child will not enter it at all.*” So, we need to be like little children in our faith and belief. Kids believe what parents and Sunday school teachers tell them, almost a blind faith — they believe it when told they will be in the kingdom. Then at some point in their life they get baptized because they believe the promises of God. As we grow, the cares or lusts of the world start to encroach and our faith may wander or at least not continue to grow. We recognize that we can never be worthy of the kingdom, that it is only by His grace and mercy that we will be there. It’s those of us that aren’t sure but only hope they will be in the kingdom, you are the ones that I’m trying to encourage today and to reinforce the rest of us. As we age, we learn more about faith and it begins to grow but it took a long time for me. Here I am in my sixth decade, but the light bulb finally came on.

Our faith gets stronger when we truly start to believe God’s promises and here is one promise that I want you to memorize: “*Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom*”(Luke 12:32). Did you **hear** that? It is God’s **good pleasure** to give us the kingdom — we must believe that. We must trust in God and what He says so that we **know** that it is His good pleasure to give us the kingdom. That is what I never understood about our friend Wilma whom

I've known for 30 years. She was always so sure she would be in the kingdom and I couldn't understand how she could be so sure, but now I know...because **THE BIBLE TOLD HER SO**. Just like the children's song, "Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so". So let our faith be more like that of little children and believe in God's promises. If you believe them, you should feel sure that you will be in the kingdom. And I hope when I'm done here today that 18 of 18 would say, "YES, I'll see you there!"

So, we must have faith in the promises and believe them. *"The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance"*(2Pet 3:9). Faith is vital: *"And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him"*(Heb 11:6). It is also true that none of us will be in the Kingdom without God's mercy and grace but are we putting our faith in that alone? *"For by grace you have been saved **through** faith and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God"*(Eph 2:8). So, faith is vital but as James says in James 2:14: *"What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him?"* As we know, faith without works is dead. Therefore, I would submit that grace and mercy hang on our faith. Faith does not hang on grace and mercy. Let me say that again — faith does not depend on grace and mercy but grace and mercy depend on our faith. And if we truly have faith, the works will follow. So even if we have faith enough to be baptized but don't remain in Christ, if we leave the Truth and no longer believe the promises, faith won't get us grace and mercy. Our ultimate salvation of course is not guaranteed, there is no 'once saved, always saved'. There are conditions — we must remain faithful and obedient to God's will as we are told in Rom 2: 6-7 *"God will render to each person according to his deeds; to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, that is, eternal life."* We must remain 'in Christ' — that is to daily walk and try to be like him. Our faith should be creating positive changes in us knowing that we won't change overnight. Now we know, we are weak creatures of the dust and fail continually but as it says in Prov 24:16: *"a righteous man falls seven times, and rises again, but the wicked stumble in time of calamity."* That doesn't mean we can stumble **ONLY** seven times, the point here is to never give up. We will continue to fail as Paul said in Rom 7:19: *"For the good that I want, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want."* As long as we keep trying and never give up, God will keep his promises to us.

Back to faith...

Luke 18:8 says, *"when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?"* So, what is the definition of faith? Faith is the conviction of the truth of anything. In short, faith to us, is belief with the predominant idea of trust or confidence in God and in Christ.

Now, Heb.11:1 says: *"Now faith is being sure of what we hope for, being convinced of what we do not see"*.

So do you have faith enough to get you in the Kingdom? Faith in what? Faith in the promises of God?

I know you believe the Bible is the Word of God. I know you believe and have faith that there is a God for Isa.45:5 says: *"I am the LORD, and there is no other; besides me there is no god."*

I know you believe that the Lord Jesus Christ is the son of God. For Matt. 3:17 says *"And a voice from heaven said, 'This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.'"*

I know you believe that Jesus died for our sins and was raised from the dead. It is my feeling that this is the very core of our beliefs: THAT THE LORD JESUS CHRIST WAS CRUCIFIED AND WAS RAISED FROM THE DEAD!! Paul says, *"that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you shall be saved; for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. For the Scripture says, 'Whoever believes in him will not be disappointed' "* Rom 10:9-11. For with the heart one believes and thus has righteousness and with the mouth one confesses and thus has salvation. And Jesus' resurrection is our guarantee, for by it he *"confirms the promises made unto the fathers"* (Rom. 15:8). This one fact gives us complete certainty and overcomes doubt! Do you believe we will be like him? That is, we will be raised and in the kingdom? Because if you do, you already believe you'll be in the kingdom. I know you don't believe there is a devil that makes you do things that you do not want to do. And you do not believe in an immortal soul. And I know you believe that Jesus Christ will return to earth and establish God's Kingdom here on earth. But, will you be there? We know we are responsible for our actions and will have to give account of what we have done. I know that you believe that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were the fathers of the Jewish Nation, and that the promises given to them have an effect on us today. And that God brought them out of a place of sin (Egypt) by great signs and miracles. I know you believe in the good news and tidings of the Bible. And if you believe all these things, you are surely responsible.

If you believe all these things you have faith enough already in the promises. So if you are not baptized and believe all these things, I say again if you believe all these things and are not baptized, I have just one question, WHY? We are already in the end times and Christ is at the door. The lights are on, but are you home? But if you believe all these things and are baptized you DO have enough faith and may just not realize it yet. If you are baptized and believe in the promises that God has given us, in His word, you WILL be in the kingdom. Who wouldn't want to be in a place of no more sorrow or suffering or pain?

Faith and a Baseball

So let us liken our faith to a baseball. Do you how a baseball is made, what it looks like on the inside? First of all it has a center core, then many wrappings of string, and then a covering to protect everything inside.

Now, if we have the beliefs and the faith I have spoken of, then that is the core of the ball. If that is true, then the first wrapping around the core is represented by our baptism. Baptism confirms our faith, but can faith and baptism by itself get

us into the kingdom? NO. Now we have to wrap our faith with works. What are works? Contributing to the needs of others, both with material goods and with physical helps like mowing the lawn or cleaning the house, but we also need to give spiritual help where needed. Sometimes that is just an encouraging phone call. Should we do this only to people in our fellowship? No, we are told to help the lost sheep and the stranger. We need to help the sick, the lame, the poor, the mentally ill, the spiritually ill. Let us make as many wraps of these things as we can around our faith, don't be self-centered and think only of ourselves for that would take away many wraps of good works. Now let us wrap our belief and faith in prayer. NO — let's wrap our faith in lots of prayer, knowing that it must be in harmony with the will of God to be effective.

We need to also apply lots of wraps of love and forgiveness around our faith, knowing that as we forgive, our Heavenly Father will forgive us. God's way of forgiveness is a refusal to punish; it is a denial of revenge of on His part, except for disobedience. Paul says, *"It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all. Yet for this reason I found mercy, so that in me as the foremost sinner, Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience as an example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life"* (1Tim 1:15-16).

Peter says it better than I can. He has a whole list of things we should be wrapping around our faith. He is talking to those who have been called into the knowledge of God, and our Savior, Jesus Christ. To paraphrase his words from 2Pet 1:4: He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by the promises, if you have faith, you may be partakers in the promises of the kingdom.

Now here are the wraps: if we apply our efforts to moral excellence, knowledge (studying the word), self-control, perseverance (don't ever give up), godliness, brotherly kindness and love — lots of love to all people. Love for all starting with God and Christ. For if you are working on these things and improving, no matter how little, you will be moving forward to the kingdom.

Again, to paraphrase 2Pet 1:10, Therefore, people, be all the more sure about his calling and choosing of you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never fail completely. We are also told: *"for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you"* (2Pet 1:11)

So what will save us? Grace, hope, belief, baptism, knowing the gospel, the blood of Christ, faith, works, and patient endurance. Christ shares our trials and understands our weaknesses. So live in hope and be assured that whatever trials we have are from God for our ultimate benefit.

God has taken all the steps necessary for our salvation. We are sons, and heirs. Nothing stands between us and eternal glory except our own loss of faith; not our sins for they are forgiven. Fear not little flock, there is no limit to God's grace. If God gave us His only begotten Son, how could He possibly hold back anything?

Now that we have all the string wrapped on the core, we need to put the protec-

tive covering on the ball. We find comfort from the words of Paul in Ephesians, where he says:

“Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of his might. Put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore, take up the full armor of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming missiles of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints” (Eph 6:10-18).

Just never give up.

So now you have all the equipment, the promises, so that when you get knocked out of bounds, like a foul ball, you can always get back in play. For this is what Christ has done for us, to give us a way to get back into fellowship with God — Christ had faith, Christ did the works, Christ believed the promises of God. Christ died and was resurrected in newness of life and we shall be like Him. Here in the bread and the wine are the promises from God. Do you have faith and do you believe in the promises? I will see you in the kingdom. If God is for us, who can be against us?

James Hagler (Austin Leander, TX)

Notes:

1. All references are from the NASB

God's servants may have to undertake tasks involving a lot of tedium, patiently carrying out responsibilities less than entirely pleasant, regularly doing things they would much rather not have to be involved in. Preparing for a Sunday school class week after week, leading a Bible study year by year, visiting shut-ins steadily as time goes by, patiently shaping the behavior of and caring for children as the years come and go, laboring to bring about social change; these sorts of things are hardly always enjoyable.

Faithfulness involves sticking to tasks where the reward cannot necessarily be experienced right away. Loyal Christian servants may not see in this life the rewards of their steady labors, but we carry on because God's work is never done in vain, no matter how hard it may be (1Cor 15:58).

Douglas Stuart, Communicator's Commentary: Ezekiel

Bible Study

“As it was in the days of Noah” (9) “Behold, the face of the ground was dry”

In the previous article in this series, we considered the day that the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat. The tops of the mountains became visible 73 days after the ark came to a rest (Gen 8: 5); 40 days later Noah decided to find out what the ground outside the ark was like (Gen 8: 6). So, he opened the window of the ark and released a raven out into the world (Gen 8: 6).

The raven left and never came back into the ark. The Septuagint renders Gen 8: 7 as *“And he sent forth a raven; and it went forth and returned not until the water was dried from off the earth.”* The raven found the outside world to its liking.

Noah also released a dove (Gen 8: 8). Verse 9 says that it *“found no rest for the sole of her foot.”* There was still water everywhere, so the dove returned back to the ark. As it returned, Noah reached forth his hand, took it, and brought it back inside (Gen 8: 9).

Noah sent the dove out again seven days later. It stayed out longer and returned to him in the evening. When it came back, it brought a sprig from an olive tree in its mouth (Gen 8: 11). So, Noah could tell that the waters were receding enough for life to return to the world. In fact, when he released the dove again seven days later, it did not return at all (Gen 8: 12).

A reasonable course of action

From a natural perspective, what Noah did by sending out those birds made a lot of sense. Ravens can survive in a pretty harsh environment. Remember that the ravens were alive and well during the famine in Israel in Elijah's day. God used them to feed him: *“And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word And the word of the Lord came unto him, saying, Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan...And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening; and he drank of the brook”* (1Kgs 17:1-6). Ravens feed on corpses, and there would have been plenty of those around after the Flood: *“The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it”* (Prov 30:17). Noah probably figured that if any animal could survive outside of the ark, it would be the raven. So, when he released it, and the raven thrived, Noah knew that the world could support the hardiest forms of life.

But that did not mean that the outside world was suitable for other kinds of life. So, he released a dove to get a sense of whether more delicate creatures could survive. The dove is a gentle bird: *“Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves”* (Matt 10:16). They

also do not like filth. The Song of Solomon repeatedly equates being undefiled with being like a dove: *“I sleep, but my heart waketh: it is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, saying, Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled: for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night”* (Song 5:2). So, Noah did not remove the ark’s covering until he knew that the dove could survive outside of the ark (cf. Gen 8: 12, 13).

Spiritual lessons

The way these animals are used in other contexts in Scripture suggests that there are probably spiritual lessons that can be learned by also viewing this section of the Bible as a series of parables. The raven has negative connotations. The word that God uses to describe the wanderings of the raven in Job 38 is also frequently used for committing sin (Job 38: 41). And the raven was an unclean bird under the Law (Leviticus 11: 13, 15). In Gen 8, the raven left the ark and never came back. It preferred the muck and grime of the world to the company of those inside the ark. Perhaps God is teaching that those who would rather spend time in the world than associate with those who have embraced the hope that He has offered are unclean in His sight.

The dove was a clean bird, and it was used in sacrifices under the Law (Lev 1: 14). When Christ emerged from his baptism, the Spirit of God descended on him like a dove (Matt 3: 16). And the dove is used throughout Song of Solomon to represent the redeemed who will comprise the Bride of Christ.¹

The dove disliked the filth of the world outside of the ark. So, even though it left the ark, it returned because it found nothing better. And when Noah saw that it was coming back, he reached out and brought it inside. This vignette could be an illustration of God’s mercy and love. Just as in the parable of the prodigal son, the message could be that the Father is watching for the return of those who have left and have discovered that the outside world has nothing of value to offer. Indeed, not only is He looking out for their return, but as they approach, He reaches out to draw them back to the security and fellowship of salvation in Christ.

The dove was later released again. It was sent forth to find out about developments on the earth, and it returned in the evening with an olive sprig. Darkness tends to represent the times of the Gentiles in which we are now living in the symbolism of the Bible. The olive tree represents Israel (Hosea 14: 6). Perhaps, therefore, the dove returning to the ark in the evening with the olive sprig represents believers sharing news of signs related to Israel with one another as we await the developments that are coming on the earth. Regardless of whether or not what the dove did is intended to have that interpretation, however, we know that believers should encourage one another with reminders that change is coming on the earth.

And the dove’s return with the olive sprig was a portent of change. Noah removed the covering of the ark not long thereafter in anticipation of exiting the ark (Gen 8: 13).²

The first day of the first month

On the first day of the first month of the 601st year of his life, Noah removed the

covering of the ark (Gen 8: 13). Under the religious calendar, that date is the first day of the seventh month. It was commemorated under the Law of Moses by the blowing of trumpets and the observation of a Sabbath: *"Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, In the seventh month, in the first day of the month, shall ye have a sabbath, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, an holy convocation. Ye shall do no servile work therein: but ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord"* (Lev 23:24-25). This date continues to be celebrated by Jewish people. It is known as Rosh Hashanah. It is the start of a new year according to the Jewish secular calendar.

And the text makes it clear that Noah, his family, and the animals were embarking on a new start. The old, sinful world had been washed away. They were part of a new creation, as it were.

And they intended for the new creation to be founded on obedience to God, even when it meant having to sacrifice of themselves. After Noah removed the covering of the ark, he was able to see the outside world. Gen 8:13 states that he looked *"and, behold, the face of the ground was dry."* But he did not leave the ark because God had not told him to do so.

At that point, Noah, his family, and all of the animals had been in the ark for nearly a year. They must have been itching to get out, and they could see dry land all around them. But they waited in the ark for 56 more days until God directed them to leave (cf. Gen 8: 15, 18).

God was not being cruel by keeping them in the ark during that time. It is often the case that what we perceive and what reality actually is are two different things. Although the ground appeared dry to Noah, God knew that the earth had not yet recovered enough to support them. The Hebrew word translated "dry" in verse 13 means "to be waste or desolate." God did not want them to venture forth into a wasteland, so He caused them to wait. The Hebrew word used for "dried" in verse 14 means "to make dry." Once the earth had reached that state, God told Noah that it was time for them to exit the ark.

This section of Scripture is a good reminder that we need to trust God and not our own instincts when it comes to making decisions. It also shows how important having the right perspective is. During the time in which the covering was off the ark but Noah was still kept inside of it, he could have complained that God was being harsh by letting him see the drying ground but not permitting him to walk around outside. Alternatively, he could have trusted that God was trying to keep him safe, and he could have been filled with joy at the prospect of his soon release, which was indicated by the changes he would have seen in the earth as the days passed. It was all a matter of perspective. Having the right perspective can make our lives more satisfying, and it can help us to be more pleasing to God. Noah's actions demonstrated that he had the right perspective when he and his family exited the ark, as we will see in the next article in this series.

Ryan Mutter (Baltimore, MD)

Notes:

1. See Song of Solomon 1: 5; 2: 14; 4: 1; 5: 2, and 6: 9.
2. The covering was removed 43 days later.

Bible Study

Creation's Gospel (1) Quoting Creation

Our Creator still veils His incredible glory. He waits patiently and silently for the appointed time for His unveiling, when the blindness of our global societies, produced by personal glorification, will no longer be tolerated. The prophecies of the Creator's silence will be fulfilled when He roars like a charging soldier and screams out like a birthing mother. *"The LORD shall go forth as a mighty man, he shall stir up jealousy like a man of war: he shall cry, yea, roar; he shall prevail against his enemies. I have long time holden my peace; I have been still, and refrained myself: now will I cry like a travailing woman; I will destroy and devour at once"* (Isaiah 42:13-14). This will mark the fulfillment of the prophecies of the extended divine silence presented by Amos and Micah.

"Behold, the days come, saith the LORD GOD, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD: And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the LORD, and shall not find it" (Amos 8:11-12). "Therefore night shall be unto you, that ye shall not have a vision; and it shall be dark unto you, that ye shall not divine; and the sun shall go down over the prophets, and the day shall be dark over them. Then shall the seers be ashamed, and the diviners confounded: yea, they shall all cover their lips; for there is no answer of God" (Micah 3:6-7).

It is highly significant that this extended time of divine silence is expressed as both darkness, and as a famine caused by lack of rain. Let's file this in our short term memory for future meditative consideration.

The Transition into the Age of Divine Silence

This self-imposed silence began after that second generation of believers had died off, who were promised and then awarded the Holy Spirit power at Pentecost. There were no more Apostles to place their hands on the faithful, to give them the capacity to host divine power for miraculous preaching. *That which is perfect* had eliminated the need for *that which was in part*. The completed Bible eliminated the new Ecclesial Age's dependence on the Spirit gifts... just as a newborn matures beyond its dependence on mother's milk. *"Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things"* (1Cor 13:8-11). It was certainly impressive to witness the instant healing of the diseased and crippled, to

witness the dead returning to life or a brother or sister instantly communicating the gospel in every language. However, this power had a very limited application. Its purpose was to validate a transition from one divine age to the next. To go from the laws of the Kingdom of God established at Sinai, to the laws and rituals of the Ecclesial Age initiated at Jerusalem. Maturity requires the putting away the childish dependence upon the temporary displays of power. We need to progress into thoughtful consideration of the eternal divine principles, to be discovered in the fully mature word of God as revealed in the Scriptures.

The completed Bible is where the glory of the Creator was now to be veiled. This is also where that glory can currently be discovered, witnessed and appreciated. Incredible divine glory is hidden in plain sight in the most popular book on our planet, yet it is invisible to the masses of humanity. The hidden power in this book reduces the entire nuclear arsenal of the United States to the equivalence of cap pistols. The eternal truths and principles of this Holy book are shielded, as greater degrees of Holiness always have had protective barriers. Our Heavenly Father refuses to be approached casually or disrespectfully. This particular holiness barrier (the intentional complexity of divine expressions) is reinforced by the natural arrogance of the fleshly mind. The metaphors, similes, parables, and prophecies of scripture must be interpreted. Any interpretation attempt which is filtered through a spiritually uncircumcised heart will always result in conclusions that are both degrading to God, and exalting of the flesh. This is why all false doctrines (without a single exception) share these two features: God degrading and flesh exalting. The glory of our Creator is currently available for witness, inspiration and experience. This is found within the carefully chosen words of the Bible, which are beyond the comprehension of the self-possessed. And this glory will eventually cover the earth, as the waters cover the sea

Creation Quotes

Our intention is to consider one theme of that incredible divine glory, which is veiled from the multitudes of self-worshippers covering the globe. This is the expression of divine principles projected in infinite ways through the creation... creation's gospel.

The legitimacy of this consideration is validated throughout Scripture. Jesus himself invites us to explore how the features of creation project divine principles. Jesus quotes creation as proof that we must love our enemies and do good to those who abuse us. *"But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust"* (Matt 5:44-45). According to the Creator's son, sunshine and rain were designed by his Father to teach divine principles... at least to those with seeing eyes and hearing ears. Obviously Jesus harbored no delusions about a slow, progressive evolution into complex interdependence from a state of simple chaos, which despises the Creator. Paul also references creation to demonstrate divine principles. He offers the interdependent parts of the human body as evidence for

valuing and nurturing of every member of the Ecclesial body (1Cor 12; Rom 12). Paul references the lesson of the seed to demonstrate the correct understandings of resurrection (1Cor 15:35-38). Validations abound for this meditational avenue.

In the course of twelve commentaries we will investigate this scriptural theme of the features of creation, and how these flawlessly project the divine truths and principles of our Intelligent Designer. This meditative avenue will draw back the veil ever so slightly, to witness just a small measure of the divine glory that will eventually saturate creation as completely as the waters cover the sea. The key to witnessing this glory is the Truth. Doctrinal distortions create an impenetrable barrier through which no glory can be seen.

Jim Dillingham (Granite State, NH)

Creation, and the Battle for the Mind of Man

The God who formed man is the same God who reforms man... And in the miracle of regeneration, He gives man the opportunity to be restored to Him. But what is a miracle? Arthur Custance gives this clear definition: "I believe that miracles are occasions upon which God suspends or supersedes or accelerates or in some way modifies the natural order so that an event occurs which is entirely exceptional. A miracle then, according to this view, would be an indication that God is interfering in the natural order by an act of will because it pleases Him to do so."

It is the God of miracles who created the unfriendly porcupine, which can carry up to thirty thousand quills with which it repels its predators. Though exclusively a defensive animal, the porcupine is a killer since a fox or timber wolf might die of starvation, unable to eat because of the quills in its mouth. It is said that only one North American animal can kill a porcupine with impunity — a large member of the weasel family called the "fisher", which has developed a knack of flipping porcupines over on their backs and attacking the unprotected underside. Why should one creature alone be able to do this? It is one of the mysteries in the endless fascination of the God of creation.

The flight of wild geese is a study in aerodynamics. The leader of the "V" formation breaks trail through the air, and each bird thereafter gains "lift" from the updraft created by the wing action of the one in front of it. Being the leader is not easy, and that is why one can see the birds change the lead position periodically, as if by prearrangement. It all works so smoothly that spectators rarely stop to ponder what a remarkable system it is.

It is the God of the porcupine, the weasel, and the geese who seeks to transform the mind of man so that through the haze of sin which surrounds him he can see again the purity of the Creator.

Kenneth O. Gangel (Bibliotheca Sacra, 137:546, p. 168)

First Principles

The Atonement in Practice

If you've read this far, well done. For many people the word "atonement" evokes thoughts of controversy, arguments about words, complicated terminology, or just plain boredom. But it shouldn't be like that, because the Atonement is all about the means of our salvation in our Lord Jesus Christ. The Atonement is a very practical topic, with meaning in every facet of our lives. But perhaps you are one of those turned off by the subject. You can't get your head around Paul's arguments in Romans. You observe brethren arguing about it and even dividing over things you think shouldn't make that much difference. Does any of that stuff have any real meaning in our daily lives? Well let's analyze this topic, but from a different angle. This series of articles isn't going to be an in-depth exegesis of Romans or Hebrews. It's not going to go deeply into the Law and try to understand the types and contrasts with the sacrifice of Christ. Instead we're going to look at how the Atonement was a living doctrine in the lives of people like Abraham and David. That's because the Atonement is ultimately about life, about living as a son or daughter of God.

But first of all, as if to contradict what I just said, let's have a look at Romans, Galatians and Hebrews, the three main books of the New Testament that delve into the Atonement. Did you know that these three epistles can all be summarized in just seven words found in one of the most obscure Old Testament books? If you were given the task of coming up with just one seven-word sentence to describe the atonement in practice, what would it be? Well let's see what Habakkuk had to say:

*"Behold, his soul is puffed up; it is not upright within him, but **the righteous shall live by his faith**" (Hab 2:4).*

The righteous shall live by his faith. That's it; that's the atonement in practice in a nutshell and the background to the three great treatises on the Atonement in the New Testament. Before we look at how this verse is used in those three epistles let's first consider what the phrase really means, on a practical level, in this context. In fact the practical nature of the phrase in Habakkuk's day was truly a matter of life and death rising far above any theoretical meaning that we might attach to it.

Habakkuk's prophecy was a warning to the people of his day that they were about to be recipients of God's judgment for their iniquity. The judgment would come at the hands of the Chaldeans mainly because of a problem that had arisen in the land:

"Why do you make me see iniquity, and why do you idly look at wrong? Destruction and violence are before me; strife and contention arise. So the law is paralysed, and justice never goes forth. For the wicked surround the righteous; so justice goes forth perverted" (Hab 1:3-4).

There were two groups of people antagonistic to each other in Habakkuk's day; the righteous and the wicked. This of course was not just true then but has been

true since the beginning and is still true now. This antagonism is one of the keys to understanding the practical nature of the Atonement. The history of the world from the Bible reader's point of view is about the conflict between righteousness and unrighteousness. This is true from the time that God said he would put enmity between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman (Gen 3:15). I'm going to analyze several examples of these conflicts in this series, for instance between Cain and Abel, as well as Saul and David. The death of Christ is about abolishing one sort of person — the unrighteous, and encouraging the other — the righteous.

Coming back to Habakkuk the unrighteous were those who through destruction, violence, strife and contention, paralysed the law so that there was only injustice. A righteous person is someone who establishes true justice. Someone who defends the fatherless and widow, someone who is a person of integrity (Hab 2:4 NET), someone like Christ, someone like God (Psa 82:3-4, 6). In fact being like God is one of the central tenets of the Atonement (we'll see this in the example of Abel) and shows the strong link between the sacrifice of Christ and God manifestation. Habakkuk himself goes on to record *"for the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD as the waters cover the sea"* (Hab 2:14), or that God's righteousness and justice will be established in all the earth when Christ rules on David's throne. This righteousness was demonstrated at the cross of Christ (Rom 3:21-25) and it's people who demonstrate this righteousness in their lives who will, as the prophet says *"live by their faith."*

Habakkuk's message to the righteous

So what was Habakkuk's message to the righteous? They were the ones at the receiving end of the unrighteous and so God was giving them a way of escape from the justice he was meting out on those who paralysed the law. That's because God is righteous, or just. Ezekiel tells us *"the soul who sins shall die"* (Ezek 18:4ff) and the Bible is the story of God's righteousness and justice in how he deals with men and women. Habakkuk was told by God to warn the people about the impending invasion of the Chaldeans:

"I will take my stand at my watchpost and station myself on the tower, and look out to see what he will say to me, and what I will answer concerning my complaint. And the LORD answered me: 'Write the vision; make it plain on tablets, so he may run who reads it. For still the vision awaits its appointed time; it hastens to the end—it will not lie. If it seems slow, wait for it; it will surely come; it will not delay. Behold, his soul is puffed up; it is not upright within him, but the righteous shall live by his faith'" (Hab 2:1-4).

The people in Habakkuk's day had a simple choice. They could listen to God or turn away from him. This is another vital part of the Atonement puzzle; do we listen to God? But more than that, do we trust God? That's what faith is, trusting that what God say is true. And more than that, true faith is trusting what God says is true and doing something about it. The Atonement is about listening to God and obeying him. But not in the sense of reading a list of commandments and ticking them off one by one. That's false religion and the Atonement is about changing us from people of law to people of principle-based faith. And the prin-

ciple in Habakkuk was a simple one: the Chaldeans were coming and the people were being warned to flee!

The righteous would live by his faith. Habakkuk was told to “*write the vision; make it plain on tablets*” and the reason for this was “*so he may run who reads it.*” Another way of saying this is “*faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ*” (Rom 10:17). Do you react when you read the Bible? What if the Chaldeans were coming? Would you react then? If you saw Habakkuk’s message clearly written on tablets would you run when you read it? If you had *faith* then of course you would. You would believe what God had said and you would run, and you would live. This is what it means to be righteous, to trust that what God says is true and to act on it.

What has God said to us? He’s said that judgment is coming, and He has set a day for it (Acts 17:31). Do we believe Him? The righteous shall live by his faith and the cross of Christ demonstrates the righteousness of God and that we should trust in Him and not in anything else (Prov 3:5-6). When Jesus hung on the cross what could he trust in? In a short while he would cease to exist. He couldn’t trust in the flesh; it was nailed to a cross. He couldn’t trust in man, for even his own closest friends had forsaken him (Matt 26:56). There was only one person he could trust in and that was God. The death of our Lord is the supreme example of the righteous living by faith, for even in the act of dying he trusted what God had made plain upon tablets.

Romans, Hebrews, Galatians

Now let’s look at how Romans, Hebrews and Galatians take up the story. Each of these epistles quotes Hab 2:4 and the phrase “*the righteous shall live by his faith*” becomes the central theme. But each epistle is different and that’s because each writer is putting emphasis on a different word.

In Romans the apostle Paul is keen to stress that “the **righteous** shall live by faith.” Righteousness is the key word in Romans and Paul begins with showing that both Gentile (Rom 1) and Jew (Rom 2) are unrighteous because of their sin (Rom 3:23).

Let’s have a quick look at Rom 3 because here Paul uses an analogy we can all understand, that of a courtroom scene. The chapter begins with God himself being brought before the judge. Throughout history men and women have accused God of injustice. But as Ezek 18:4 says “*the soul that sins shall die*” and God has demonstrated throughout Scripture that he is fair and just in all his ways (Ezek 33). So the conclusion is “*let God be true though everyone were a liar, as it is written, ‘That you may be justified in your words, and prevail when you are judged’*” (Rom 3:4). Those are words taken from David’s Psalm 51 which he wrote after his sin with Bathsheba and when he came to a full realization of God’s righteousness and his own iniquity. When we come to the cross of Christ we have to say “God is right and I am wrong”.

The rest of Romans 3 is about man being brought before the judge with the accusation that he is unrighteous because of sin. The evidence is overwhelming (verses 10-18) and the verdict is guilty as charged (verse 19-20). But Paul ends

this courtroom scene with God acquitting the faithful because of his grace (verses 21-24). And that is *justification*: declaring someone innocent despite their guilt. Why? Because of their faith, and God can work with someone who demonstrates faith and that faith can produce true righteousness.

In Hebrews the writer emphasizes “*my righteous one shall **live** by faith*” (Heb 10:38). The book of Hebrews is about the contrast between the old covenant, connected with the Law of Moses and its rituals, and the new covenant in Christ. The problem is that ritualistic religion can’t bring life. It can’t bring life now because it’s meaningless outside of a religious setting, and it can’t bring eternal life. Under the Law of Moses someone could offer a burnt offering, representing their dedication to God, but live a life of sin. We can partake of the bread and cup and do the same thing. Or we can have a theoretical understand of the Atonement, that it’s all about dealing with some legal issue for instance, and forget that Jesus said “*take up his cross daily and follow me*” (Luke 9:23). That’s why the epistle of Hebrews ends with what true living is all about. It’s about righteous people living *by faith*. Hebrews 11 follows the quotation from Habakkuk with a list of men and women who lived by faith, and not only that but their faith was about living beyond death according to the promises God had made. Again we come to the supreme example of living by faith in the person of Jesus Christ, who upon the cross demonstrated his trust that there was life beyond the grave.

Finally we come to Galatians where Paul emphasizes “*the righteous shall live by **faith***” (Gal 3:11). Paul wants to emphasize faith because the Galatians wanted to return to the philosophy of salvation by law. All the way through the chapter Paul contrasts law with faith. He’s talking more about the principle of law rather than the Law of Moses itself (although he does use that as the obvious example) and the lesson for us is that life is not about following a list of rules. That can’t produce in us true righteousness, which is what God wants. It can’t produce people with an attitude and character which avoids destruction, violence, strife and contention. Someone basing their righteousness on law can be the most divisive, hateful person and yet keep the letter of the law. Once more we are brought to the cross of Christ, a man murdered by those who based their religion on law. What our Lord did on the cross was make an open show of where law-based religion leads (Col 2:15) and this will be one of the central themes of our continuing study in practising the Atonement. It’s about changing us from natural brute beasts to sons and daughters of the living God.

Richard Morgan (Hamilton Book Rd, ON)

Tidings on Facebook

*There is now a Facebook page for the **Tidings**. Hosted by Bro. Levi Gelineau, it currently posts the Daily Readings along with some other comments. In future we hope to add relevant News and Notices, so please “Friend” this page. (Bro. Levi can be contacted at leviandjessica@gmail.com.) [And if you have no idea what I am talking about — do not worry!]*

The Joy of Sunday Schooling

Learning Together – Part 2

Repetition

Repetition plays an essential part in the learning program of the Almighty. The Law provided an annual cycle of events which repeated year by year. The rituals of the tabernacle and the personal devotions of the faithful Israelite were repeated day after day. Jesus often made the same points in his teaching, illustrated in different ways. The weekly Breaking of Bread is needed to constantly remind us of the basis of our salvation. The apostles were given the Holy Spirit to help them remember and repeat what the Lord had taught.

The rituals of Sunday school are an important part of repeated patterns of learning: the Superintendent's opening, the hymn, the prayer, the weekly repetition of memorized Bible passages. The learning disabled child will feel secure with these rituals. They will need to feel part of them — even to having a proof like the others, adapted where necessary and learned with the support of parents.

Success is vital. We all make progress when rewarded by success. The dolphins and whales at Sea World know they will get a bucketful of fish and a lot of fuss from their trainers as soon as they have performed well. Human beings are no different. So the tasks we set must be within the capability of the child. Their successful performance needs positive reinforcement with smiles, congratulations, the accolade of the rest of the class, sometimes even a small gift.

Every little thing the disabled child has learned to do will need to be repeated again and again, and with constant encouragement — like all of us need! Stories learned, facts mastered, proofs memorized — all will need to be reinforced again and again. “Catch them doing it well” is a good motto for progress in learning as well as behavior. But we must not be discouraged by limited progress. We shall learn to be pleased by even the smallest achievement. And don't forget to tell the parents. They, too, need every bit of encouragement.

Visual aids and activities

The Bible reveals to us how extensively visual aids feature in the education of God's people. Pictures, models, reference to the students' everyday experience, will all bring alive the printed word of the Bible and make it the living Word of God. Some teachers have a marvelous gift for dreaming up simple models that can easily be cut out and assembled in the short time available in the lesson. Many of us depend on the activity sheets and suggestions accompanying some of the best Christadelphian Sunday school programs.

Our experience is that these give a great sense of achievement and pleasure to children with limited capability and provide a means of recalling the lesson and reinforcing it in the home.

I do and I remember

Our own disabled child, Amy, recalls more easily almost than any other Bible stories those she has acted. Of course, many Sunday school classes meet in cramped space where acting is difficult, but it is surprising what can be done in a simple way with many Bible stories. She also responds well to music and enjoys greatly listening to taped Sunday school hymns.

Often Sunday schools will put on a small play for a special occasion. These involve a lot of time and effort, but how well they are remembered, particularly by all who take part. This serves to emphasize the value of choosing good scripturally based plays. All children can get a great deal out of being given a part in a larger enterprise, not least one which involves understanding and supporting those with special needs. In a practical way they will learn about family responsibility, about grace in action.

And they may come to understand that we are all needing to be helped to cope with our imperfections. Sometimes in our family we wonder if Amy isn't managing this better than any of us! We often think she has taught us more than we have taught her!

So it is that through those experiences and opportunities we least look for, the Lord develops in us the qualities and skills needed for his Kingdom.

Michael Owen (Seaton, UK)

Sunday school resources coming soon on the Tidings website:
<http://www.tidings.org/>. Can you help preview Sunday school materials before they are posted on the web? Please contact Bro. Jim Harper at sundayschool@tidings.org.

George Booker

Those who are sharp eyed might have noticed that the name of George Booker has disappeared from the inside front cover. This event should not pass without notice, because Bro. George has contributed in many ways to the Christadelphian Tidings. This is in addition to the multitude of books, articles, and commentaries he has written, most of which are available on his website, which is to be found at www.christadelphianbooks.org/agora.

It is by his choice that George's name has been removed, but he has, I am glad to say, agreed to continue to both supply the "fillers" scattered throughout the magazine, and to continue to supply the magazine with his insightful pieces of Bible Study and Reflection. He felt that his role as "Assistant Editor" had been fulfilled with the transition to my own editorship, but I must express my heartfelt gratitude to his guidance as I took over the reins that Bro. George had so ably held in his period as Editor. He set the direction and framework for the magazine, and greatly assisted in the transition.

Thank you indeed, Bro. George.

Peter Hemingray

Youth Speaks

The Daughters of Zelophehad (1)

The Story of the Daughters

In the entire account of the forty years of wilderness wanderings, the divine narrative only contains a few select stories. The children of Israel had fled from Egypt, arrived at the Promised Land and sent in the twelve spies. After the unfavorable report from the spies, the nation spurned the land which Yahweh would give to them and sought to return back to the land of Egypt. As a result of their unbelief, God pledged that the faithless generation would wander in the wilderness for forty years, until everyone above twenty years old had perished — all except a few. Their children would then be allowed to enter into the land and receive the inheritance which their parents had lost.

The historical account of the wilderness wanderings begins in Numbers 15, just after God had pronounced the curse on the unbelieving generation. The account continues all the way until the end of the book of Numbers, in chapter 36. Those 16 chapters span 40 years of history and events. Some of them contain new laws and others contain stories. Yet one of the most intriguing things about these chapters is that in the limited amount of space devoted to this period, the story of the daughters of Zelophehad isn't only mentioned once, but twice!

Our God thought this to be such an important story that out of all of the other incidents that happened in those forty years, He chose to have this mentioned multiple times. Yet this is not the only characteristic of the daughters' story which denotes its importance. In addition to its inclusion and references in the book of Numbers, their story seems to be the only event in Israel's history which caused the law of Moses to be amended multiple times! God specifically changed His law twice because of this incident — first in Numbers 27 and then again in Numbers 36.

Thus, the tale of the daughters of Zelophehad has special significance for us. God has marked it out as something that comes up twice in a section of time that has relatively sparse history, and it is also an event which was so important, that God changed the law of Moses twice to fit with the circumstances.

As we look at the story of these five daughters, we will see the characteristics that made them so precious and significant in God's sight — they loved their inheritance. For our first article, we will get to know the daughters themselves — their background and their understanding of Scripture. In the next article, we will note the importance of the inheritance in ancient Israel. Finally, in the third article, we will see the end of their story; God rewarded their love for His land. In all of this we will see the importance for each of us to cherish and steadfastly desire the inheritance which our Father has offered to us.

Family Tree

The story of the daughters begins in Numbers 26. Moses was to take a census of the people — this is the first place in which the daughters are mentioned.

“And it came to pass after the plague, that the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest, saying, Take the sum of all the congregation of the children of Israel, from twenty years old and upward, throughout their fathers’ house, all that are able to go to war in Israel” (Num 26:1-2).

The time of the wilderness wanderings was now nearing its end, and Yahweh called Moses to take a new count of the people — only those twenty years old and above would be counted. This would be the group of people who would inherit the promised land.

“And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Unto these the land shall be divided for an inheritance according to the number of names” (Num 26:52-53).

All of those who were numbered would receive an inheritance. One of the men counted was a man named Hephher, he was of the sons of Manasseh.

*“Of the sons of Manasseh: of Machir, the family of the Machirites: and Machir begat Gilead: of Gilead come the family of the Gileadites. These are the sons of Gilead...and of Shemida, the family of the Shemidaites: **and of Hephher, the family of the Hephherites.** And Zelophehad the son of Hephher had no sons, but daughters: and the names of the daughters of Zelophehad were Mahlah, and Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah” (Num 26:29-30, 32-33).*

Just to get the family tree in your mind, Joseph was the father of Manassah, Manassah begat Machir, Machir begat Gilead, Gilead was the father of Hephher, and Hephher was the father of Zelophehad. This genealogy is confirmed again:

“Then came the daughters of Zelophehad, the son of Hephher, the son of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, of the families of Manasseh the son of Joseph: and these are the names of his daughters; Mahlah, Noah, and Hoglah, and Milcah, and Tirzah” (Num 27:1).

Since Hephher’s family was part of the censuses in Numbers 26, the children of Hephher were supposed to receive a portion of Manassah’s inheritance. Part of the land would be parsed out to them, according to this numbering. Yet there was a problem. It would appear that Hephher had only one son — and that son, Zelophehad, was dead. There was no one to inherit his portion in the land — under the law, the land was not passed down to daughters.

As the census went throughout the camp, the daughters of Zelophehad suddenly realized the problem.

Petition to Moses

And so they came to Moses, which was no easy task. According to Exodus 18, Moses had trained up groups of judges to make decisions in matters so that he would not have to. He had judges over hundreds and judges over thousands. It would

seem as though the daughters would have to go through each of these levels until they could come to Moses and the princes — which demonstrates their resolve. The matter of this inheritance was something that was extremely important to them and they would not be deterred from speaking to Moses about it.

“And they stood before Moses, and before Eleazar the priest, and before the princes of all the congregation, by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, saying, Our father died in the wilderness, and he was not in the company of them that gathered themselves together against the LORD in the company of Korah; but died in his own sin, and had no sons” (Num 27:2-3).

Zelophehad’s Death

As they stood before Moses and Eleazar and the rulers of Israel, they declared to them that their father had died in the wilderness — not with a rebellious spirit, like Korah, but had simply died in his own sin.

Zelophehad doesn’t seem to be one of the previous generation who had died in the wilderness because of unbelief, but rather one who died of natural causes. Keep in mind that he was the son of Hepher, mentioned in Numbers 26 as one of those who should inherit the land. He had five, young, unmarried daughters, probably putting him at a fairly young age — young enough to have not fallen into condemnation with the generation before his own.

In addition, look at what the daughters ask in connection with their statement:

“Why should the name of our father be done away from among his family, because he hath no son? Give unto us therefore a possession among the brethren of our father” (Num 27:4).

The purpose of the daughters explaining the death and lack of rebellion in their father was to show that his name was worthy of keeping in the remembrance of Israel! “Why should the name of our father be done away from among his family?” They were seeking to prove Zelophehad’s righteousness by distancing him from Korah’s rebellion and seeking to show that he died of natural causes — therefore he was not able to inherit his land, and as a result, the family name would be forgotten.

The Wisdom of the Daughters

This was not what they wanted to have happen. These sisters cared about their family and cared about their inheritance. They understood the significance of the inheritance (which we will explore in the next article). Despite their youth, they had great spiritual insight. These were sisters who knew God’s principles and understood the meaning behind His law! Just look again at the words that they spoke to Moses:

*“Our father died in the wilderness, and he was not in the company of them that gathered themselves together **against the LORD** in the company of Korah; but died in his own sin, and had no sons” (Num 27:3).*

Notice that the daughters of Zelophehad said that Korah’s rebellion was specifically directed against Yahweh Himself! They didn’t say, “the company that gathered

themselves together against Moses and Aaron,” but they markedly said “the company that gathered themselves together against the LORD.” Their understanding was a massive contrast to the reaction that most of the congregation had after Korah, Dathan, and Abiram died:

*“But on the morrow all the congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron, saying, **Ye have killed the people of the LORD.** And it came to pass, when the congregation was gathered against Moses and against Aaron, that they looked toward the tabernacle of the congregation: and, behold, the cloud covered it, and the glory of the LORD appeared” (Num 16:41-42).*

The next day after the death of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, the people actually gathered against Moses and Aaron — accusing them of killing Yahweh’s servants! The daughters of Zelophehad had much more spiritual insight than this. They were able to recognize that the rebellion of Korah was misguided and an actual rebellion against God. Thus, their thinking lines up exactly with that of the Father.

*“And the sons of Eliab; Nemuel, and Dathan, and Abiram. This is that Dathan and Abiram, which were famous in the congregation, who strove against Moses and against Aaron in the company of Korah, **when they strove against the LORD**” (Num 26:9).*

Scripture clearly shows against whom Korah fought. Yet in addition to recognizing this, the daughters also understood that death is a normal occurrence for humanity $\frac{3}{4}$ but it happens because of our sin:

“But died in his own sin, and had no sons” (Num 27:3).

They were able to see that it was sin that brought about their father’s death. They understood that death from sin was the normal condition for humanity.

These were remarkable sisters. They had a deep understanding and perception of things that many at that time did not grasp — partly because of the teaching passed down by Joseph (as will be seen in the next article), but no doubt partly because they wanted to know and understand, so they sought out answers.

This is a powerful example for our young sisters. As you graduate from youth circle and Sunday School, don’t let your reading of the Word stop! Sometimes it can be easy to think that only the brothers need to spend time in Scripture every day. Yet it isn’t just for the brothers to understand God’s Word. It’s true that the brothers are the ones who speak and teach the ecclesia, but the sisters as well are responsible for teaching the other sisters, being an example to the children, and having a spiritually focused attitude throughout the day. Both the brother and the sister are capable of understanding the divine principles and the divine record. Both are responsible for their knowledge and the conduct that develops from that knowledge.

These sisters understood Yahweh’s principles and as a result they could see the true depth in the things that they were commanded. It was this understanding which led them to recognize the powerful meaning behind the inheritance and

which motivated them to strive to receive the inheritance themselves. In the next article, we too will comb through the Word of God and will reveal the significance behind the inheritance in the Promised Land.

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Music in Worship

Hymns and Memories

Many of us treasure particular hymns because they generate special memories of past events or situations. Stories of these memories can be very interesting as they draw on a vast range of experiences from different cultures and languages. In the reflections that follow we are taken, in thought, to England, Canada and Nigeria. God's precious Word is central to each of these reflections as people in different parts of the world sing the same hymns with joy and vivid memories of important links with their life in the Truth.

Reflection 1: Hymn 218 — “Loving Shepherd of thy sheep”

Our family has many fond memories of Hymn 218, “Loving Shepherd of thy sheep”. Whenever we sing this hymn reminisces and loving thoughts are triggered. Our memories go back many decades in time. We are now in our seventies and this hymn was the favorite hymn of my husband's grandmother. She was a member of the Clowne Ecclesia in England and she requested that this hymn be played each Sunday. The organists obliged her and the hymn was played at each Sunday meeting. Because she enjoyed this hymn so much and never tired of hearing it, and because it reminded others of her faith in the work of her “Loving Shepherd”, it was played at her funeral when she fell asleep in the Lord in her late 80s.

In addition to recalling this hymn in relation to his grandmother, my husband also associates this hymn with his experiences working with sheep during the Second World War in England while doing alternative service. He was a conscientious objector and was assigned to work on a farm. During the course of his tenure of farming, he had many experiences with sheep and had the opportunity to closely observe their habits. He found that once sheep got to know and trust their masters, they would heedlessly and trustingly follow them anywhere. Their trust grew to such an extent that when the mother gave birth to a lamb she would bring the baby lamb to you, to proudly show off her offspring. He observed the need of all sheep for safe guidance and the constant care of a caring shepherd. The first two lines of hymn 218 — “Loving Shepherd of thy sheep, Keep thy lambs, in safety keep” — came to have particular meaning and special value for him as he observed the habits of sheep in their daily life.

Reflection 2: Hymn 218 — “Loving Shepherd of thy sheep” Part 2

Hymn 218 has fond memories for our family. This hymn was sung during a presentation at the Toronto Easter Gathering when Bro. Alan Hayward from England was the guest speaker. He gave a Saturday evening program entitled “Desert Island

Hymns”. He introduced us to hymns that had special memories for him and that he would take with him to a desert island if he could only take a limited number of hymns. The reason this hymn was so special to Bro. Alan was that it was sung at his wedding.

When our daughter and son-in-law were preparing for their marriage ceremony we requested everyone sing hymn 218. They granted our request and our memories of Bro. Alan Hayward were triggered, as well as the special meaning for our dear children, when we sang hymn 218. The last verse, requesting teaching and safe keeping in God’s way for the two people who were embarking on their new life together, was very appropriate for their wedding service. “Loving Shepherd, ever near; Teach thy lambs thy voice to hear: Suffer not their steps to stray, From the strait and narrow way.” What a wonderful petition to make on behalf of a newly married couple. How important it is for them and us to remember the loving shepherd care we receive each day.

Reflection 3: Hymn 221 — “Was it for me thy flesh was wounded sore”

When I learned the Truth in 1985, I lived on the 24th floor of an apartment building in Toronto, and had a view of most of the city. I used to stand on the balcony and wonder why God would choose me to call out of all those people. A few years later Bro. Harry Tennant was giving the classes at a Bible School I went to, and he gave a vivid description of the crucifixion. He told how Christ would have had the “crown” of thorns slammed on his head, be whipped with pieces of bone embedded in the lashes, how he was impaled on the cross and the cross being lifted up and slammed into the ground. Yet Christ endured not only the pain, but the taunts as well. Then Bro. Harry Tennant said, “If you were the ONLY person in the history of the world to come to God, Christ would have done that for you.” I was shaken and cried, “not for me Lord, not that.”

A few years later I moved to Barrie and began learning to play the piano, as we had no organist. As my ability improved, I wanted to learn a hymn I’d never heard before, and came across Hymn 221. I shook as I read these profound words, “Was it for me thy flesh was wounded sore, thy body lifted high on Cross of shame? Was it for me the King of Glory bore so meek the scourge and ruthless men’s defame?” Bro. Tennant’s vivid description came flooding back to me. “Was there no way for any man to live but thou must die, no joy but through thy grief? Is sin so dark that God cannot forgive save through thy sacrifice, and our belief?” That feeling of “not for me Lord, not this” overwhelmed me again.

As I began to learn how to play the music, I realized the music and words complement each other. Shivers still come over me every time I play this hymn, thinking of what Christ went through for me. “Lord, let me learn thy sorrow, mark thy pain, that no more heedless through the world I roam, but come to take the pardon thou didst gain, and find within thy fold, eternal home.” I pray that I may be ever mindful of this, that I might never take the agony out of the sacrifice he made for me.

Reflection 4: Hymn 369 — “O For a thousand tongues to sing”

I cannot sing Hymn Number 369 — “O For a thousand tongues to sing” — without thinking of our brothers and sisters in Nigeria. In my head I hear the distinctive sound of the Nigerian style of hymn singing. I was not familiar with this hymn before Steve and I and our daughter Rachel went to Nigeria to make a videotape about our brothers and sisters there, as part of a series on Christadelphians around the world. Hymn 369 inspired the title of the video, “A Thousand Tongues to Sing”.

A hallmark of Nigerian Christadelphians is the spontaneous singing of hymns in any circumstances where believers are together. They break out in song without hesitation at every opportunity that presents itself, whether in transit in a vehicle, walking, waiting or when open-air preaching. They sing in harmony and with gusto! They have a repertoire of hymns that are sung from memory, of which the most prominent seems to be “O for a thousand tongues to sing”. We heard them sing this one repeatedly and I began to identify them with this hymn.

When I looked at the words to Hymn 369, I was struck by their appropriateness to the believers in Nigeria. It is a hymn about preaching and this is a high priority to them. They held several open-air preaching sessions while we were there, all beginning with the singing of hymns to draw a crowd. Verse three of this hymn particularly resonates with their efforts to reach out to others in their situation with the message of salvation.

*“He speaks — and, listening to his voice,
New life the dead receive.
New life the dead receive.
The mournful, broken hearts rejoice,
The humble poor believe.”*

I found it interesting that Nigerian Christadelphians numbered about a thousand when we were there in 2001. And it appears that many of these thousand tongues are very actively singing praises to God! This hymn calls for “a thousand tongues to sing my great Redeemer’s praise”. And it asks, “My gracious Master and my Lord, assist me to proclaim, to spread through all the earth abroad the honors of the Name.” I see the Nigerians very much attuned to the meaning of these words when they sing them. And I cannot help but think of our Nigerian brothers and sisters, and their example to us whenever I sing this hymn.

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Note: Additional hymns that are favorites or trigger special memories for you are invited for future publications. Please send comments to Ken and Joan Curry at krcurry@sympatico.ca.

*I sing because I'm happy, I sing because I'm free,
For His eye is on the sparrow, and I know he watches me.
Civilla D. Martin*

*“A bird does not sing because it has an answer. It sings because it has a song”
(Chinese proverb).*

Reflections

Faith and Death

If you please, I'd like you to start by answering one very simple question. Don't hesitate. Don't analyze. Just answer as quickly as you can, with the first thing that comes to mind:

Fill in the blank: "*I believe in _____.*"

Please remember your answer; you might want to think about it later, and consider what if anything your answer tells you.

Faith...

What is faith? A set of principles? Yes, in one sense, faith can mean a set of fundamental principles. Sometimes we call these "The First Principles". They are the Bible beliefs which, together, explain and express the object of faith: i.e., that in which we believe. We may call it "*the* faith".

The Greek "*pistis*" is a noun which means faith, belief, trust.

What is *our* faith? Is it our own set of principles, possibly distinct in some degree from our brother's or sister's personal beliefs? Or should we define "faith" in a very different way? Is faith the personal ability or capacity of each individual which enables him or her to truly believe?

The Greek "*pisteuo*" is the verb form of the noun "*pistis*". This word refers to the action of believing, putting one's faith in, or trusting someone or something.

In Bible terms, there is no difference between faith and belief, as nouns. And there is no difference between the verbs: "to have faith in" or "to believe". Though "faith" and "belief" are distinct words in English, there is no distinction at all in Greek.

How seriously do we hold "The First Principles"? What are they worth to us? Is every one of equal value to us? What would we give up for them? Do we truly have faith in "*the* faith"? Do we truly believe in our set of beliefs? Do we put more stress on *what* we believe than on *how committed* we are to our beliefs?

Our faith (or belief) cannot be in words or ideas, at least not by themselves. Words printed on paper, or on a computer screen, or spoken in conversation, are not something to believe in. The real belief, or faith, must be in the being, whether human or divine, who has by some means communicated ideas, or made promises, to us. In short, we must have faith — we must believe — in God and His Son. Any faith, belief, or trust in any ordinary man or men, or in any mere idea by itself, will prove to be an illusion.

Or is faith a subjective thing? That is, our own individual "faith" in God, and in His purpose and promises. Our personal ability or capacity to trust in God and in what He has said.

To put it this way reminds us of the man in Mark 9, who asks Jesus to heal his son. The man tells Jesus that his son has been afflicted with an illness which sounds like epilepsy, an illness that brings on terrible seizures and convulsions. Then he says, almost as if he has no real hope: “**But if you can do anything, take pity on us and help us**” (v 22).

“**If I can!**” says Jesus, putting great stress on the word “**if**”. He seems to say, “Do you *doubt* that I can do this?” Then the Lord adds: “*Everything is possible for him who believes*” (v 23).

Immediately the boy’s father exclaimed:

“*I do believe [‘pisteuo’]; help me overcome my unbelief [‘apistis’: literally, ‘not faith’, i.e., a lack of faith]” (v 24).¹*

The man seems to say — and Jesus doesn’t dispute the idea — that it is possible to believe and *not* believe at the same time. It is possible to *have* faith and to *lack* faith at the same time.

This passage describes a subjective faith, a faith or belief unique to each individual. A changeable measure of the ability to believe. A changeable degree of spiritual strength to hold on to, or to trust in, anything or anyone. Going up and down like the daily temperature.

To think of faith or belief in this way is to ask other questions:

- Where does such an ability — the ability to believe or trust — come from?
- Do we generate it all on our own?
- Or is it a gift from someone else?
- Does it come from our parents?
- Or our teachers?
- Or from the printed Bible?
- Does it come from God? Do we find faith all at once, Or do we develop faith bit by bit, like we accumulate knowledge of a school subject, or experience in a profession?

Other questions:

- Is it better to have a *half-hearted* faith in *the* perfect “faith” (meaning: the perfect set of Bible principles)?
- Or is it better to have a *wholehearted* faith in what is perhaps a slightly less than perfect set of Bible principles?
- And maybe a third question to follow the first two: Is it wrong even to ask such questions?

I’m *not* going to give you definite answers to these questions. But I *am* asking these soul-searching questions, and I *am* going to challenge you to consider certain scenes/pictures/ideas while trying to wrestle with such questions.

There is also a third distinct aspect of faith, as defined in the Greek of the New Testament. I’ll put it this way: *If I have faith in Jesus, does he have a right to put faith in me? If I trust him, can he expect to trust me?*

We have thought about God and His Son as objects of our trust. And we have thought about the individual's capacity to "believe", and to hold on to that trust, in them, through various trials of life. Now the third aspect of faith is this: Even allowing for my weaknesses, and inevitable failures, can Christ expect that I will be "faithful" to him?

The third Greek word, related to the first two, is "pistos". It is an adjective, a descriptive word meaning: faithful, trustworthy, reliable. It occurs in these passages, among others:

"His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful ['pistos'] servant! You have been faithful ['pistos'] with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!' " (Matt 25:21, and other verses also).

"Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful ['pistos'] in prayer" (Rom 12:12).

"Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove [themselves] faithful ['pistos']" (1Cor 4:2).

We can summarize at this point. We can now say that "faith" has at least three aspects:

- The person or idea in which we choose to place our faith;
- The ability of each person, or the gift given to each person, even to *have* faith at all; and finally,
- The need for each person to be *faithful*, or to show *faithfulness*.

...And death

So now we are entering into the area where we might say to one another, and certainly to ourselves: "Now this is getting *personal*!"

Does the New Testament command us to **"be faithful"**? The answer is: 'Yes, it does, but only one time!' (This is true, whether we use the NIV, the RSV or the KJV: it's only one time.)

Where is the passage? And what does it say?

It is in Christ's message to the ecclesias in Rev 2:10:

*"Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. I tell you, the devil [i.e., the Roman authorities] will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days. **Be faithful** unto death, and I will give you the crown of life."*

Jesus says, 'Be faithful. Start now. Expect that you will suffer, one way or another along the way. It's alright — I suffered too. Continue to be faithful until you die. That's alright too: I was faithful, and then I died. You wouldn't want it any other way, would you? Do that — that's all! — and I promise you that I will give you a crown of eternal life.'

Somehow, "faith" and "death" seem to go hand in hand, don't they? The young

person decides to be baptized, and we read for him or her (and one more time for ourselves):

"Don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection... Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus" (Rom 6: 3-11).

We take a young person, with plans and hopes for the future, and seemingly with everything to live for, with years and years of life ahead, and we talk about crucifixion, death and burial. And I wonder sometimes how real these concepts are to us, especially when we are quite young. The young especially (though they are not the only ones!) may think they have the luxury of just about all the time in the world. But they don't necessarily. No one does.

Should it be surprising, even for the young person who accepts Christ in baptism, that we should speak of death and burial? When the baby Jesus was brought by his mother and Joseph to the Temple for the first time, the old man Simeon came forth and by inspiration blessed the baby. Then he turned to the young mother, and told her, *"And a sword shall pierce your own soul (or life) also"* (Luke 2:35). It seems almost casual, as though it were perfectly natural and reasonable: 'For this child, as well as for you the mother, there will be the sword of death. Know that for a certainty!'

The circumcision of Jesus on the eighth day and the sacrifices on the fortieth day, with their bloodshed, were previews of the scourge, the thorns, the cross, and the spear. These were pains felt keenly by the young mother Mary as she came to see more and more of her son's mission.

Every mother knows that her child is born to die one day. Like it or not, there is a "sword" for each of us. We all bear our "crosses" every day, as we carry about these bodies doomed to death. We may, however, all choose what "death" we will die — either eternal death or the "death" of our ambitions and desires in this world:

"Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it" (Matt 10:39).

For each of us who seek to walk in Christ's steps, salvation is on the other side of suffering -- whether it be a brief and fiery trial, or long years of temptation and waiting. We cannot step around the sword or leap over the flames; we must walk straight forward, and Christ will walk with us.

Whatever else our faith is, it centers upon the cross, the place of an excruciatingly painful and humiliating death. The man who died on the cross was raised from the dead, and he now offers us... literally everything in the world! But he tells us

that we must “be faithful unto death”. He tells us that we must deny ourselves, and that each of us must take up our cross and follow him (Matt 16:24).

The Christian writer, A.W. Tozer, says: “The cross is the symbol of death. It stands for the abrupt, violent end of the human being. The man in Roman times who took up his cross and started down the road had already said goodbye to his friends. He was not coming back. He was not going out to have his life redirected. He was going out to have it ended. The cross made no compromise, modified nothing, spared nothing. It slew all of the man completely and for good. It did not try to keep on good terms with its victim. it struck swift and hard and when it had finished its work the man was no more... In coming to Christ we do not bring our life up on to a higher plane. We leave it at a cross. The grain of wheat must fall into the ground and die. That is the beginning of the gospel.”

What does it mean to “be faithful unto death”?

On Sept. 11, 2001, the Twin Towers of New York were struck by great planes filled with jet fuel, which exploded and fatally weakened the buildings. As clouds poured out of the towers and engulfed the center of the city, many thousands of people fled the scene, covered with ash and struggling for breath as they ran or stumbled away. But a few hundred men and women — police and emergency services and fire department — rushed **toward** the conflagration, and into mortal danger. Some of them did not come out alive. It was, simply put, their job.

“Be faithful unto death”

The writer to the Hebrews describes many nameless men and women who were “faithful unto death”, who were in fact faithful in the face of imminent death: “What more shall I say?” he wrote.

“Others were tortured and refused to be released, so that they might gain a better resurrection. Some faced jeers and flogging, while still others were chained and put in prison. They were stoned; they were sawed in two; they were put to death by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goat-skins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated — the world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains, and in caves and holes in the ground” (11:35-38). “These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off” (v 13).

“Be faithful unto death”

The young Jewish bride of a king realizes that she has been put in her position, close to great power, so as to be able to intercede on behalf of God’s people. But she also understands that to speak out will endanger her own life. Esther asks for prayers and fasting as a preparation, and vows that after three days she will approach the king, “even though it is against the law.” She adds: “*And if I perish, I perish*” (Esth 4:16).

“Be faithful unto death...”

“For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he

*broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, **you proclaim the Lord's death** until he comes" (1Cor 11:23-26).*

We conclude with another little quiz. So again, please answer one very simple question. No need to hurry this time. Take all the time you need, and think about your answer. The question is:

What, in *YOUR* life, is worth dying for?

George Booker (Austin Leander, TX)

Notes:

1. Many Quotations are from the NIV

Sanitizing the Heart — Isaiah 6, 7

If you work as a supervisor or manager in the food service industry you are often expected to take a class to become certified in Food Safety and Sanitation. It is in this class that you get to learn about all those food borne illnesses that can either make you sick or kill you. You learn about Botulism, Salmonella, E-coli and the ever prevalent *Campylobacter* (which is actually the most common form of food poisoning but nobody's ever heard of it because it doesn't make you all that sick). There is an interesting irony that occurs when you take a food sanitation class, and that is that it can make you paranoid about food. It's ironic because food is the thing that sustains life; yet after hearing about all the various bacteria that are so prevalent in our food, you feel like you never want to eat again!

Now there are some golden rules for cleanliness in food preparation. The first rule is that there is a difference between being clean and being sanitary, and you have to understand the difference in order to understand the sanitation process. Clean is the removal of dirt; sanitary is the elimination of bacteria. In the food industry, you clean with soap and water and you sanitize with heat.

It is easy to recognize the spiritual metaphor. We are cleaned by the waters of baptism. Baptism is a symbol of our willingness to accept Jesus as our savior. So through baptism we are made clean, but that doesn't make us sanitary. In scripture 'sanitary' relates to being pure or perfect. Now, we know that Jesus was clean because he did no sin. But we also know that he was not perfect, not naturally anyway, because the book of Hebrews tells us that he *"...learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And **being made perfect**, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him"* (Heb 5:8-9). Likewise, even though we are made clean through baptism, there is still a purification process that needs to take place. Jesus, speaking to Nicodemus, explained the process this way: firstly *"Verily, verily I say unto thee except a man be born again he cannot **see** the kingdom of God"* and then *"Verily, verily I say unto thee except a man be born of **water and spirit** he cannot **enter in** to the kingdom of God"* (John 3:3,5). Jesus was

showing that spiritual purification is a twofold process; just because someone is clean doesn't mean that they are pure.

There is a second rule in the food preparation process which is: something cannot be sanitized until it is clean. You have to clean it first before you can sanitize it. So if you are working in a kitchen and you spray a dirty surface with only hot water; then that item is neither clean nor sanitary. It may look clean and because it's hot you may think it's sanitary but it's neither. The bacteria actually hides beneath the dirt, the hot water may get rid of the visible dirt but it won't get rid of the dirt you can't see. You have to wash it first, then you can sanitize it. Likewise, Jesus says you have to be born of water first, and then the spirit, in order to enter into the kingdom of heaven. We are washed by the waters of baptism; then we are purified by the Holy Spirit. You have to be clean before you can be sanitized.

Likewise, sometimes we can appear to be clean when we are not. We can sometimes become so wrapped up in becoming sanitary (or pure) that we forget from where we were made clean. We forget that we were once dirty and repented of our sins, acknowledging through baptism that we are only made clean by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. When we forget this fundamental truth about ourselves, then we are no longer clean and we are incapable of being sanitized. In his letter to the church at Ephesus in Revelation, Jesus called this forgetting your 'first love' and reminds them to *"Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent"* (Rev:2:5 NKJV).

Peter also reminds us never to forget how we were made clean with these words: *"Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed"* (2Pet 2:24). We were once unclean, but now through Christ we are made clean so that we might be purified even as Christ was purified. Or as Jesus put it *"Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect"* (Matt 5:48).

Ken Camplin (Southern Highlands Ecclesia, NSW, AUS)

The Energizer Bunny of Christadelphia

Here I go again... got the suitcase packed, got the computer packed in the brief case, have proper ID for the airport, the plane ticket has my boarding pass already attached, the cell phone is powered up. If I take the back roads I can make it to the airport with enough time to park the car in the long-term lot and still get into the terminal. Maybe once I clear the check points I can grab a bite to eat and, oh yes, a bottle of water, since my ticket clearly states that no refreshments will be served. And while I wait between flights, I should have some time to review various notes.

Good thing I was able to see the kids off to school this morning and to kiss the wife goodbye before leaving for the office and then the airport. I must take her along on one of these trips. She'd love the change of pace.

Well, it's only one week away from home. My boss has me teaching two classes each morning at the local office, and each afternoon I'll be meeting with company reps from all over the world. Lunches and dinners will allow some networking time, and then maybe I can retreat to my hotel room for some time on emails, phone calls (must remember what time zone I'll be in), and grab a few minutes to review my presentations for the next morning.

Not too bad a schedule really, but I truly haven't been feeling great lately... a little run down. Hope I'm not coming down with the flu that was going round at the office and the ecclesia. These days there are pills for everything and surely the wife packed something for all possibilities. She takes such good care of me.

Yes, God willing, it won't be a tough week. But I was totally caught off guard by the phone call from the recording brother of one of the ecclesias in the city where I'll be visiting. He had heard, thanks to the Christadelphian grapevine, that I'd be "in the neighborhood" for some work. He was wondering if I'd mind doing some Bible studies for them... not too much, since it is such short notice. What can a brother say to such a simple request? "No" is seldom an option, it seems. So, I said "yes". But I was shocked with last night's email from him, detailing the weekend program. But I've already said I could do the studies, and I do have my conference assignment fairly well organized. I feel certain the boss won't mind my using the business trip for "church" time as well. He's always cared for family and church values.

Okay, so the plan went from a couple of Bible classes to seven talks over two days, but there will be some breaks for tea, coffee, socializing and oh, yes, a "pot luck" meal or two. Mustn't forget the add-on Wednesday Bible class — the scheduled brother just didn't have time to prepare. I really hope I'm not getting sick... I've felt a little run down lately. Now if only I can get rides to and from the hotel and the hall. Did I leave a copy of my schedule and contact information for both the job and the ecclesia with the wife? Oh, well, she'll be busy enough with the kids and the ecclesia. She'll understand. She really is a "super Mom" and wife... and I need to tell her that more often.

Traffic is light, airport is in sight... all is going well... parking lot is not yet full... airport terminal not extra busy... all going well... cleared the check points and have found my gate... all going well... sure hope I'm not getting sick... have felt a little run down lately... I'll just skip a meal and drink plenty of fluids...

Flights were smooth and on time, luggage also arrived, weather is good and I caught up on office work. Another airport, another city, another hotel... but more importantly: another ecclesia. Yes, another home away from home. A home where I will be made welcome and will, hopefully, bring some spiritual comfort and renewal to my brothers and sisters.

Sure hope I'm not getting sick... I've been feeling a little rundown lately.

Brother Sparky

"Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth" (Psa 46:10).

When Man and Woman Play with Fire

“Can a man scoop fire into his lap without his clothes being burned?” (Prov 6:27, NIV).

The context of this verse is to be found earlier: *“My son, keep your father’s command and do not forsake your mother’s teaching... For this command is a lamp, this teaching is a light, and correction and instruction are the way to life, keeping you from your neighbor’s wife, from the smooth talk of a wayward woman” (Prov 26: 20-24).* It shows the way to avoid the temptations of immoral women, the attractions of a wayward wife, and/or the prostitute is to follow the teaching of your parents. To follow their instructions is the way to observe true Godly morality, and the passage warns against the temptations with playing with the fire of passion.

The “lap” (“bosom”: KJV) of verse 27 (Hebrew “cheq”) is the place in which one holds or cradles a loved one, the center of affection. The ESV puts it “next to his chest.”

There is an elaborate three-part pun in this verse, one part being implied. This is very common in the Bible, particularly in the Old Testament: it has been estimated there are at least 300 deliberate “puns”, or more properly word plays, in the Hebrew of Isaiah alone.

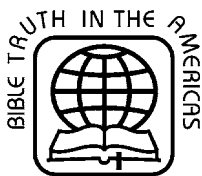
The Hebrew for man here is “iysh”, and for “fire” it is “esh”. In fact the two Hebrew words for man (אִישׁ) and fire (אֵשׁ) are adjacent in the text, and differ only in the vowel pointing. Then there is the implied part, since this word does not occur in this verse: the Hebrew for woman is “ishah”. This pun provides the opportunity for an interesting example of rabbinical teaching by clever word-play. According to the NET Notes, “A passage like this probably inspired Rabbi Gamaliel’s little explanation that what binds a man and a woman together in a holy marriage is Y (yod) and H (he), the two main letters of the holy name Yah. But if the Lord is removed from the relationship, that is, if these two letters are removed, all that is left is the ‘esh’ — the fire of passion. Since Gamaliel was the teacher of Paul, this may have influenced Paul’s advice that it was better to marry than to burn [1Cor 7:9].”

A bit more clarification may be helpful here, for the most of you who are not altogether familiar with the Hebrew. If the “yod” were removed, the “man” (Hebrew “iysh”) would become the Hebrew word “esh”, or “fire”. And if the Hebrew letter “he” were removed, the “woman” (Hebrew “ishah”) would become the same Hebrew word “esh”, or “fire”.

The marital sexual relationship finds its true meaning and purpose in being centered upon the love of the LORD, Yahweh. But if this is not the case, then, the rabbis would say, there is nothing left but “fire”. Perhaps even fire twice over:

- 1) for the man and woman now, only the “fire” of a consuming lust or passion, and
- 2) for them later, only the “fire” of eternal destruction.

George Booker (Austin Leander, TX)



Bible Mission News

Challenges in Jamaica — 2011

As the countries in many regions of the world struggle with economic woes including rising debt loads, these factors have a negative impact on their infrastructure. Road maintenance, public services such as safe drinking water and electricity to homes, along with health care are some of the first things to be affected.

During our visit to Jamaica in July, ecclesial members readily drove us from one meeting hall to another, only to be faced with varied road conditions. Parts of our journey were travelled on very smooth highways, but when using secondary and rural roads we encountered sections full of pot-holes. Some brethren knew the pot-hole locations by memory — and few even had their own names! Jamaicans accept these challenges cheerfully (and with exceptional driving skills), while their vehicles certainly suffer the consequences of these rough conditions.

The larger cities and towns usually have reasonable water and electrical supplies but water is sometimes shut off for extended periods of time during the dry season and electricity can be turned off with no notice for several hours at a time. However, as in many countries today, storage reservoirs can be seen on rooftops to provide a consistent supply of water and stand-by generators are used to power places like grocery stores and hospitals. The situation outside of cities can be quite different. For example, in the rural areas of the Free Hill Ecclesia, I was told that there had been no municipal water supply for some homes for 15 to 20 years. The underground pipe kept breaking, so they decided to stop repairing it due to lack of funds!

One of the biggest challenges facing the Jamaican brotherhood though is the lack of brothers. In the 11 ecclesias with regularly scheduled weekly activities, the number of brethren per ecclesia who minister the Word ranges from one to five. In several ecclesias, one or two brethren share the load on behalf of 10 or 12 sisters. It is evident though, that the sisters serve the ecclesias in a manner which cannot be underestimated: examples like Phebe in Romans 16:1-2 or Tabitha in Acts 9:36-41 are present in the Jamaican Brotherhood. During our stay we were involved with a three-day special effort at the Free Hill Ecclesia — three evenings of special lectures were held at the ecclesial hall, and at one lecture there were 10 adults and 10 children and teens present, with good audience participation during the talk. Brethren Malchus Wallace and Martin Shirley provide the leadership for this ecclesia. Brother Martin is giving baptismal instruction to a few of the young men, so there is hope of more brothers for the future. The accompanying photo in front of the Free Hill Ecclesial Hall includes some of the members, friends and

youth who were in attendance at the Remembrance Service on Sunday, July 24th. Our week-long stay was organized by Sister Annette Johnson (secretary of the CBMJ) and we visited the Free Hill, May Pen and Broughton Ecclesias, as well as meeting isolated members in several areas like Norwood.



Bro. Martin Shirley on the left, Bro. Malchus Wallace on the right, Sis. Simone Wallace in the center (younger woman — the older woman with a hat on is not a sister) and Sis. Jessie Jones in the doorway behind the young woman with no hat.

Our appeal to the brotherhood is for brothers, in particular, to consider visiting Jamaica and other Caribbean Ecclesias for short term support — ministering the Word by providing preaching and pastoral assistance. Long-term support is also needed. Your service and encouragement will be greeted with brotherly hospitality. The appeal to Our Heavenly Father is to strengthen their Faith in these last days, in a very troubled world.

Enquires to the CBMC can be directed to Phil Snobelen at philsnobelen@shaw.ca or Don Luff at luffs@sympatico.ca or CBMC, Box 55541, Unit 119, 15280 101 Avenue, Surrey, BC V3R 0J7, Canada. Information can also be obtained from Sis. Annette Johnson, 866 Uranium Way, Mineral Heights, May Pen PO, Clarendon, Jamaica, W.I.

Bro. Don Luff, CBMC

"I cannot call riches anything but the baggage of virtue. The Roman word is better — impedimenta. For as the baggage is to an army, so are riches to virtue. It cannot be spared or left behind, but it hinders the march. Yea, and the care of it sometimes loses or disturbs the victory. Of great riches there is no real use, except it be in the distribution; the rest is but conceit" (Francis Bacon).

Trinidad and Tobago Bible School

It had been about a year and a half since Sis. Ruth and I had been asked to go down to Trinidad and Tobago. Now, I was leading the two of us through the airport in Port of Spain with an old “Christadelphian” magazine in my hand, looking for someone else with something similar in their hands. It wasn’t long before we saw them.

We were met at the airport by a local brother and his son — Bro. Raj and Bro. Anil Gobin, members of the Marabella Ecclesia. As we stepped into Bro. Anil’s car, our stay in Trinidad and Tobago began. We were to be on the islands for two weeks. The first week would be spent at a Bible school in Marabella and the second week at a youth camp in Gran Couva. Many memories were made, but we will focus on two major things — the notebooks of the teens at the youth camp and the fellowship with the brethren.



A group of young people at the youth camp preparing answers for questions about the classes.

Near the end of our trip, I sat looking down at the notebooks in my hands — all belonging to the teenage campers who had attended the week long youth camp. The notebooks contained their notes on my classes and Bro. Clive Drepaul’s classes — and the notes were stunning. I had spoken on Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and Bro. Clive had spoken about Spiritual Lessons from Natural Formations. Going through the notes, it could be seen that the campers understood the classes and picked up on the lessons. Each day, after the classes were over, the teens

would get together in groups and answer questions relating to what they had heard that day — using their notes for support. They aptly answered all of the questions and demonstrated their understanding of the material. These notebooks that I held in my hands were quite well done.

My task was then a bit difficult. The campers had all been told that at the end of the week they would turn in their notebooks — and the neatest, most accurate book would be chosen. I had to decide which book best met these qualifications. This whole idea of taking notes and turning in the notebook for grading was almost entirely foreign to me — but after looking at the work done by the teenagers, I could see the value in the exercise. This was quite an awesome experience, and quite special to be able to see what the teens had learned throughout the week.

That term, “special” seemed to characterize our time in Trinidad and Tobago. Our time spent with the brethren around the Word was precious. To be able to go to another country, be enveloped by a completely different culture, and be



The entire group at the youth camp.

surrounded by tens of people whom you have never met — yet still feel at home is something incredibly special. Through the Truth as it is in Christ, we have a family that spans national borders, races, and cultures. It isn't barred by prejudices or social status. We are brothers and sisters in the Hope of Israel — and we could feel that relationship with them, even if we were simply there for a few weeks. It is my hope that you too will one day have the opportunity to share in fellowship with your family in Trinidad and Tobago — it truly was an extraordinary time.

Bro. Jason Hensley; Simi Hills, CA



**Bro. David Edwards and
Sis. Tamika Campbell on
one of the mornings at the
Bible School**

*O Lord, where'er Thy people meet,
There they behold Thy mercy seat;
Where'er they seek Thee Thou art found,
And every place is hallowed ground.*

*Lord, we are few, but Thou art near;
Nor short Thine arm, nor deaf Thine ear;
O rend the heavens, come quickly down,
And make a thousand hearts Thine own!*

William Cowper

St. Lucia Missionary Trip

26-Aug-11 to 16-Sep-11

St Lucia — land of promise

No sooner had Joan and I emerged from the arrivals area at Vigie, the little municipal Airport on the northern end of Castries, St Lucia, when we spied the tall stately figure of our beloved friend and Brother, Andre George, one of the many active members in the lone ecclesia of about eight Brethren and five Sisters. Faithful as ever, Andre was on time to greet us on arrival for our second visit in two years. Very shortly thereafter, we were also happy to see Bro. Eddie Anthony appear with his vehicle and together they saw us safely off at the Mission House in Sans Souci, less than two miles away.

St Lucia is a beautiful island in the Eastern Caribbean chain and is noted not only for the hospitality of its 175,000 or so citizens but also for its spectacular mountainous views including the world famous twin Pitons peaks in the south, and sulphur springs. A land that hungers for the gospel of the coming Kingdom of Christ, it is over 70% Roman Catholic, and carries prime vacancies for laborers who are willing to settle among the Brethren for a few years to lend the necessary guidance and support this little Olive tree.



Wedding treat!

Our short stay began with a treat! On 3rd September our dear Bro. Mark David and Sis. Alicia Rampersaud were joined together in holy matrimony during a brief but lovely ceremony at the Ecclesial Hall in Castries. (See adjoining photo of the beaming Bride and Groom). Bro David Andrews was privileged to preside over the ceremony and give the address before a small but packed Hall of Brethren, friends, and well wishers.

Fellowship and Bible Study

We spent three Sundays on the island and thus had opportunity to share fellowship with all the Brethren.

We invited all to visit us at the Mission House any day of the week for Bible Readings and discussions. Three study classes were planned and held at the Mission House in addition to a class designed especially for serving Brethren. During the latter we were able to discuss a number of Biblical queries as well as suggestions for the development of the ecclesia as a whole.

Public Lectures

Six Bible presentations were made by Bro. David at the Ecclesial Hall — mostly pertaining to Israel and the coming Kingdom of God. Many flyers were prepared and distributed but the public response was rather disappointing in terms of numbers. Keen interest in the topics were nevertheless shown by the few that came, judging by the questions they asked afterward. Maybe for public lectures we could give consideration to making greater use of the public media and perhaps

try to acquire a more central venue as we did on previous occasions, such as the Public Library.

Contacts

We were once again able to visit and hold Bible discussions with the Lambert family, a long standing home of the Christadelphians who greatly assisted our accommodation in the formative years of the Castries Ecclesia. Their love for the Word of God is no doubt genuine and our visiting Brethren are always welcome into their home to share it with them.

We also paid two visits to Vieux Fort, together with Andre, and held discussion with Ms. Shauna Joseph a young kindergarten teacher who has been a contact for some time. She invited her friends over and together we delved into the Bible for answers to pressing questions in their spiritual lives. We left a few copies of Bible Basics and encouraged them to do the course in Bible first principles.

Some observations

Notwithstanding our few disappointments we must admit our joy in being allowed once again to share in the work in this part of our Lord's vineyard. We insist that St Lucia has potential and should be vigorously pursued. We left with a few suggestions that may help in giving added impetus to the work being done there, such as:

1. **A resident missionary** Castries needs the presence of an experienced couple who is prepared to settle and work among the Brethren long-term and withstand the rigors of Caribbean society. This should be a couple who preferably would be employed within the community on a long term basis **with no immediate plans to leave** (a minimum stay of five years is suggested)
2. **Mutual Improvement Class** This would serve to build the serving capacity of the local Brethren and help them to foster a deeper understanding of the time tested methods and traditions of the Brotherhood and add confidence to their spirit in terms of interacting with the public and conducting a variety of meetings.
3. **Mid-week Bible Class** The Brethren and Sisters need to get together on a regular basis to listen to presentations from among themselves — to give place of permanence to the first principles which define us as a special people.
4. **Youth Work** If only we could get a youth group started (or even a Sunday School). This would eventually pull the parents and relatives out to meetings or at least kindle interest. It is also a way of investing in the community by combating immoral influences among the young, something I believe even the government appreciates (and prefers) as practical religion. They all recognize the value of their youth and the world is fighting a losing battle.

We pray that the Lord of the Harvest send laborers into His vineyard. We sincerely appreciate this opportunity to share, if but a few days, in the work in beautiful St Lucia.

Submitted by Bro. David and Sis. Joan Andrews

Addresses for Bequests and Donations

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Agape in Action provides help for Christadelphian families and children living in extreme poverty. Donations may be sent to 39 Manor Park Crescent, Guelph, ON, Canada, N1G 1A2 or 521 Valmont Dr., Monrovia, CA 91016 or via website www.agapeinaction.com
Email: agapeinaction@rogers.com

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

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

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

Christadelphian Indian Children's Homes (CICH) donations in US dollars can be sent to CICH, c/o David & Connie Stiles, 3 Blue Acre Rd., Middletown, CT 06457. For info email daconstiles@att.net

Karolyn Andrews Memorial Fund (KAMF) provides help in cases where brethren or families have been victims of persecution because of their faith. Checks in any currency to KAMF, c/o P.O. Box 87371, Canton, MI 48187-0371

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

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

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

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

News & Notices

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

AUSTIN LEANDER, TX

We rejoice and are pleased to report the baptism of AMANDA BUCK, on April 3, 2011. She is the daughter of Bro. John Banta and Sis. Kim Trevino.

We are indeed blessed with the transfer of four brethren from the North Houston Ecclesia, who have moved to the Austin area. They are Bro. Rick and Sis. Cindy Hackett and Bro. Brad and Sis. Anne Bennett. We know they will be an encouragement and strength to our light stand.

It is with great sadness that we announce that our Bro. Chris Matthiesen has moved to West Virginia. Bro. Chris has been a strong asset to our ecclesia and we will miss his words of wisdom and encouragement. He will be a great asset to his new ecclesia. We also announce that both Bro. Bryan Berry and Sis. Kim Banta Trevino are no longer in fellowship.

On November 11-13, 2011, we will again be hosting the Fall Fraternal Gathering at the HEB Camp, near Leakey, TX. This year we have Bro. Nathan Badger (Cambridge, ON) leading classes titled, "Jacob: In His Strength, He Struggled with God."

We have welcomed the following brethren and sisters from other states and countries: Scott and Cindy Nevers (Wachussett, MA); Charlotte Kirsch (San Francisco Peninsula, CA); David and Janet Riley (Bournemouth, UK); Dan and Janet McDonald (Paris Avenue, OH); Julie Anderson and Linda Putnick (Milford Road, MI); and Mark O'Grady (Tawa, New Zealand). We wish to thank Bre. Scott Nevers and Mark O'Grady for their encouraging words of exhortation and also thank Bro. Mark for his weeknight class.

George Brown

EDMONTON, AB

We commend our Bro. Roly and Sis. Sharon Pretty to the New Westminster, BC Ecclesia and our Sis. Linda Ikle to the London, ON Ecclesia. We will miss their fellowship and service but at the same time we know they will be a great asset to their new ecclesias.

Our Meeting has been greatly enriched by the fellowship of the brothers and sisters who have stopped and visited with us over the past while. In particular, we would like to acknowledge Bre. Paul Aback (Calgary, AB.); Jim Cowie (Brisbane, Aust.); John Fletcher (Kamloops, BC); Theo Readman and Nathan Bartholomew (North Battleford, SK); and Stephen Pitts-Francis (Earling London, UK). We are thankful for the ministrations of these brethren.

Bro. John Bilello (Ann Arbor, MI) lead our last fraternal gathering and gave some great classes on his theme "The Bible vs. Evolution." For all who attended, Bro. John gave us much to think about.

This year in October, we are looking forward to Bro. Nathan Badger (Cambridge, ON) leading our Calgary/ Edmonton Thanksgiving Fraternal here in Edmonton.

We are continuing to enjoy the time Bro. Patrick Smidt (Cambridge, ON) is spending here in Edmonton on his work assignment. He has been a really big help to our little ecclesia.

Jerome Toronchuk

PITTSBURGH, PA

We would like to thank Bro. Daniel Osborn for his excellent classes on, “Jehoshaphat” as well as the music class he presented Saturday evening for our CYC November, 2010 weekend. We are grateful for the song “Lifted Up in Thy Ways” that our Bro. Dan prepared to assist us in our worship.

The Pittsburgh ecclesia has appreciated the help of several brethren who have given us words of exhortation. They include the following: Bre. Tim Cooper, Dan McDonald, Kevin Flatley, Kyle Misko and Jack Vogelgesang.

Our heavenly Father has blessed our ecclesia with a new life. We rejoice with Bro. Tim and Sis. Holly Pommer in the birth of their firstborn son, Ethan Jacob, on May 11, 2011.

Bro. Richard Morgan led our study weekend in May on “The Temptations of Christ”. We thank him for his helpful exposition.

We have been uplifted and encouraged with many visitors this past year. Our two gatherings were graced with those of like precious faith from Canada, Florida, Virginia, Ohio, Michigan, Washington DC, and Telford, PA. Other visiting brothers and sisters include: Peter and Margaret Stonell (Hamilton Greenaway, ON); Jim and Anne Barton (Kingston, ON); David Bennett (Salem Heights, IN); Kevin and Melinda Flatley (Columbus, OH); Derek Elder, Kyle Misko, Tyler Misko, Greg Misko, Jr., Tim and Annalee Cooper, Dan and Janet McDonald, and Roger and Joy Snyder (Paris Avenue, OH); Joe Sparacino and Valerie Ifill (Ann Arbor, MI); Mary Sparacino and Joe Sparacino (Kouts, IN); Coleen Uiga and Sarah Telles (Norfolk, VA); Jonathan and Charlene Bowen, Shaphan Bowen, Soshanna and Josiah Bowen (Brantford, ON); Dalis Bediako and Maria Bediako, and Shawn and Padma Auger (North Bay, ON); Michael Davey (Cranston, RI); and Tim Young (Cambridge, ON).

We report Bro. Joel Ifill has removed himself from fellowship. We continue to pray for him in his time of need and encourage him to make sound spiritual decisions about his lifestyle and his commitment as a follower of Christ.

On August 28, 2011, our ecclesia rejoiced in the baptism of JONATHAN SCHWIEGER, husband of Sis. Vanessa Schwieger. He has already proven to be a worker in God’s vineyard. May the Lord bless and guide him toward His coming kingdom.

We are happy to announce that Sis. Jennifer (Pommer) Bekhit has been welcomed back into fellowship around the table of our Lord.

We are looking forward to our CYC weekend scheduled for November 12-13, 2011, with Bro. Ryan King (Richmond Petersburg, VA). His subject will be, “Choose You This Day Whom Ye Will Serve”.

Our “Learn to Read the Bible Effectively” Bible seminar began September 29, 2011. We pray that Yahweh will call those who have “eyes to see and ears to hear” for we know that He desires all to be saved and to come to the knowledge of His truth.

Bill Folkerts

PIANO MUSIC CD AVAILABLE

A new multi-purpose CD called, “A New Beginning,” is available for purchase. Funds from the purchase of this CD will help Agape in Action and welfare funds for CBM, CBMA and CBMC. This lovely music may help you meditate upon God’s word, or assist you in relaxing after a busy day. Brothers, sisters and children will benefit from your purchase, as well as your own spiritual and physical wellbeing. “A New Beginning” is a good way to help you achieve all these worthwhile ends. For more information please contact Bro. Cliff and Sis. Julia Baines by mail at: 97 Fourth Street, Sussex Corner, NB. Canada, E4G 1G7; by email at: christad@nbnet.nb.ca; or by phone at: 506-433-1728. Thank you for your help.

Cliff and Julia Baines

Striving

*I cannot think why Christ, my Lord,
Should take account of one like me
And yet, according to his Word,
He came to set us sinners free.*

*Free from shackles due to sin,
I should no more in bondage be,
But still I cannot shake its claims;
It still retains its hold on me.*

*With my whole heart I long to serve,
And in my life my Savior see,
And yet below the surface stirs
A lust that strives with constancy.*

*But God, our Father, knows our frame,
And for this world He did provide
A Saviour, His beloved Son,
Who for our sins was crucified.*

*So now, with grateful, contrite heart
I'll walk with Jesus as my guide,
Oh may he see himself in me,
And in that day be satisfied*

*Maggie Stonell
(Hamilton Book Road, ON)*

Minute Meditation

Think Twice, Speak Once

Calvin Coolidge, known as a man of few words, once remarked, “I have noticed that nothing I never said ever did me any harm.” Our words can get us into trouble. When we bite our tongue, we can save ourselves grief. Too often we react before we think, blurting out words that may be offensive or insulting or make us look like a fool. Just as a carpenter learns to “measure twice, cut once” because once a piece of wood is cut it cannot be uncut, so we should learn to think twice, speak once. James advises, “My dear brothers. Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry,” and then warns us that our religion is vain and we are deceiving ourselves if we do not bridle our tongues.

In many circumstances, as Calvin Coolidge discovered, it is better to say nothing. Solomon said, “Even a fool is thought wise if he keeps silent, and discerning if he holds his tongue.” Solomon’s words inspired Abraham Lincoln to say, “It is better to remain silent and be thought a fool than to open the mouth and remove all doubt.” Often we do not fully understand a situation and jump to conclusions. We need to be patient, willing to do more listening and less telling others what we think, willing to wait before interfering, to be helpful and forgiving rather than judgmental. A children’s poem by Edward H. Richards reads, “The wise old owl lived in an oak; The more he saw the less he spoke; The less he spoke the more he heard: Why can’t we all be like that bird?”

It is sad to think that many will be kept out of the kingdom because of what they have said. Jesus warns us, “O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.” This warning should make each of us very careful of what we say. To think that we will have to answer to the judge of all the earth for every word that has come out of our mouth is frightening. We are so very thankful for the forgiveness offered by our gracious God, for without forgiveness certainly no one could be saved.

Nowadays, the speed of communication by email and websites presents new dangers that we must take seriously. More than ever before our words can get us into trouble. Postings travel to thousands of people at lightning speed. Somehow, it is easier to be insulting from afar, and terrible things have been written that probably never would have been spoken to someone in person. Once the send button is activated, the message is out on the web and we cannot retract it. Think twice, send once. No matter how strongly we may feel about issues that are swirling around us, we must remember that God is not willing that any should perish

and wants all to come to repentance. To avoid offending those who may be weak in faith, we must examine each message carefully, asking ourselves, would Jesus have used these words in this situation, and are we being kind as well as truthful? The apostle Paul advised Timothy when dealing with those in error, to “speak in a gentle tone when correcting the errors of opponents, in the hope that God will at last give them repentance, for them to come to a full knowledge of the truth.”

May our words be few and well thought out, whether spoken, written, or sent out electronically. We should all be praying the prayer that David prayed when he said, “Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer.”

Robert J. Lloyd

“Every bush a burning bush, and all ground holy ground”

The Dutch theologian, preacher, politician, and cultural critic, Abraham Kuyper, coined the above phrase. To Kuyper, this present world is the Christian's home — not just ultimately, but really and presently. One could even say that Kuyper was consumed with this vision of life. Listen to him again: “There is not a single square inch of the whole of human existence over which the risen Christ, who alone is Sovereign, does not say, ‘That is mine!’ ”

There is a priestly activity involved in the believer's use of the everyday blessings of this creation. Because he receives these gifts of God with thanksgiving and in the knowledge that they have come from Him, even these common things become holy. It is consecrated (sanctified) by the Word of God and prayer. Just as the Levitical priesthood consecrated the various offerings and sacrifices by prayer and the command of God under the old covenant, so this new covenant priesthood does the same with “everything created by God” (1Tim 4:4; cf 1Pet 2:5; Heb 13:15; Rom 12:1,2; 14:6). In this manner “every bush becomes a burning bush, and all ground, holy ground.”

Under the call of grace, every Christian is a priest, a part of the larger Christian priesthood, and therefore he is engaged in the priestly activity of sanctifying the whole of life, even in its “common garden variety” aspects, to the Creator-Redeemer God.

What a wonderful door to life is opened with this truth! I am now free to live, free to obey, free to use this world, free to give thanks to the Giver of every good and perfect gift. I am, in a word, free to be human in the fullest sense of the word! So, while we look for a new heaven and earth where righteousness dwells, we live out the days of our pilgrimage in training and anticipation of this, and we live as priests, acknowledging God in the whole of our existence. This is life indeed! This is the promise that Paul speaks of when he says, “Godliness is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come” (1Tim 4:8).

Thomas N. Smith (Reformation and Revival, 7:3; pp. 34-36)

Coming Events (Lord Willing)

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

NOVEMBER 2011

5-6 Kouts, IN Fall Study Weekend at Woodland Park Community Center, 2100 Willowcreek Road beginning at 10:00 AM. Bro. Bill Link, Jr. (Baltimore,MD), Theme: "The Epistle Of Jude: 'It was needful for me to write and exhort you'" Please contact Bro. Joe Bennett at (219)762-2704 or jkb8275@comcast.net.

5-6 Victoria, BC Fall Study Day. The theme for the weekend will be "Turning Points" and our Bro. David Lawrence from the Prince George Ecclesia will lead the study. Contact Bro. Clyde Snobelen at csnobelen@csll.ca.

11-13 Austin Leander, TX Study weekend at the HEB Camp near Leakey, TX. Bro. Nathan Badger (Cambridge, ON) will be speaking on "Jacob: In His Strength, He Struggled with God". To register email Sis. Maritta Terrell, mt-ct@swbell.net.

11-13 6th Annual Brothers' Weekend, New Hamburg, ON. Trust and Prayer ("Trust in Him at all times, Pour our your hearts to Him" Psa 62:8). Bro. Steve Davis (Boston, MA); Bro. Alan Markwith (Hamilton, ON). Contact Bro. Nathan Badger 519-568-7830 natejbadger@gmail.com.

12-13 Pittsburgh, PA CYC Study Weekend. Our speaker will be Bro. Ryan King (Westerly, RI). The subject will be "Choose You This Day Whom Ye Will Serve". Contact Bro. Bob or Sis. Rebecca Pommer, 518 Donahue Lane, Tarentum, PA 15084. Phone: (724)224-7363; e-mail: pghecclesia@gmail.com.

12-13 Sarasota, Largo and Orlando, FL, Study weekend. Bro. Phil Prater (Paris Ave., OH) will lead a study in "The Seven Abominations" based on Proverbs 6:16-19. Contact Bro. James Wilkinson at 239-849-3301 jameslwilkinson@hotmail.com.

25-27 Washington, DC Family Bible Study Weekend at Camp Hashawha, Westminster, MD. Bro. Allen Laben (Baltimore, MD): "The Testing of Your Faith: The Challenge of James". Contact: Robert Kling, 301-498-5245, rkling@acm.org for additional information.

DECEMBER 2011

24-30 Third Ontario Winter Bible School, Best Western Highland Inn, Midland, ON, Canada. Theme: "The Faith that Works by Love". Bro. Carl Parry (Salisbury, Adelaide, AUS): "Jehoshaphat - The King who sought Yahweh with all his heart" and "The Spirit of the Law" (teens); Bro. Stephen Whitehouse (Rugby, UK): "The Message of Nehemiah: Faith in the Face of Adversity" and "Building on the Walls with Nehemiah" (teens); Bro. Jay Mayock, (Hamilton Book Rd, ON): "Loving our Neighbour: A Study of the Second Great Commandment" and "Reasons to Believe" (teens). Contact Sis. Barbara or Bro. Ron Kidd Apt.510, 110 Belmont Drive, London, ON, Canada N6J 4W3 (Tel: 519-690-0391; e-mail: rbkidd@rogers.com; or visit our website: www.ontariowinterbibleschool.com).

JANUARY 2012

28 San Diego County, CA Annual Study Day, beginning at 9:30am. Bro. Bill Rawson (Exeter, UK) will be speaking on "Lessons from the Wilderness". Lunch will be provided. Contact: Bro. Kent Ellis, 619 818-6701 or ellisk@san.rr.com.

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FEBRUARY 2012

6-March 2 Palm Springs Bible School. The speakers at this year's school will be Bro. Joni Mannell (Birmingham, UK) and Bro. Jim Styles (Simi Valley, CA). The School offers a wonderful environment for the mature adult to study God's Word and enjoy the fellowship of other brethren and sisters. To register, please contact Jeff Gelineau at Register@christadelphianbibleschool.org Or visit our website www.californiabibleschool.org

APRIL 2012

8-15 Australian Christadelphian Conference, Adelaide, Australia. Theme: "Lift Up Your Heads". Speakers Bro. Tec Morgan (Washwood Heath, UK): *The Exodus Deliverance* (adults) and *Ecclesiastes – Making Sense of Life* (youth); and Bro Chris Sales (Shelburne, ON): *Pictures of Redemption* (adult) and *Parables from Luke* (youth). The main studies which will be complemented by a range of other meetings and activities. Full details and on-line registration are available at the website www.adelaide2012.com.