

THE CHRISTADELPHIAN TIDINGS

of the Kingdom of God

Vol. 75

March-April, 2012

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The CHRISTADELPHIAN TIDINGS of the Kingdom of God

Peter Hemingray, Editor

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

Tidings Publishing Committee: Joe Hill (Chairman), John C. Bilello, Peter A. Bilello, Steve Cheetham, Ken Curry, Randy Davenport, Clive Drepaul, Kevin Flatley, Ted Sleeper, Phil Snobelen, Ken Sommerville, Jeff Wallace.

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

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

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Subscriptions

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

The Truth of the Bible

Christian humility requires us to refrain from equating our interpretations with the inspired Bible... If, shortly after Paul's letters had been written, it was possible for them to seem "hard to be understood" in some places (2Pet 3:16), why need we feel ashamed to admit that we too have difficulties in these and other books? The profession of knowing all the answers is usually a very human kind of pride, and it can be maintained only by parading much human misinterpretation as divine wisdom.

Is the Bible true? Of course it is, but only in the sense that God intended it to be true. And since "truth" is no simple, self-explanatory quality, misunderstandings can easily arise from misinterpretation of Scripture.

Certain people have no sense of security unless they are able to have an infallible answer to every question. This is basically an attitude of the teens, while mature adults are able to acknowledge that not every question can be answered, and still to face life calmly.

Wilfred Lambert

Editorial

The Holy Kiss

“Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ send greetings” (Rom 16:16).

“Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace to all of you who are in Christ” (1Pet 5:14).

Introduction

Paul closes four of his epistles (Romans, 1st and 2nd Corinthians and 1st Thessalonians) with the same phrase *“Greet one another with an holy kiss”*. (Quite why Romans in the KJV has “salute” instead of “greet” I do not know: the Greek is the same.) And Peter closes his first epistle with a similar phrase, as noted above. So five times we are directed how to greet one another, but in a way that is somewhat rare, although not unknown, in our midst. So how are we to treat this injunction of Paul? As a reflection of an Eastern custom that has no equivalent in our day? As a command that ought to be followed: and if so, how and when?

Background

The Greek for “kiss” here is “philema,” derived from “phileo”, which is one of the two Greek words translated by love in the NT. The word “love” in 1st Peter is the other word: “agape” in the Greek. In the Septuagint, the Old Testament used by the recipients of Paul’s letters, the same Greek word is again commonly used for kiss. In the Bible, a kiss is commonly bestowed:

- On children by close relatives, and vice versa
- On spouses and others with an erotic or sexual implication
- As a sign of friendship between males
- As a sign of respect

So, as is the custom in the English speaking world, the only time adults of the opposite sex exchanges kisses in the OT was with some sort of sexual context. Although males exchange kisses, it is between relatives, close friends, or servant-master.

It is interesting that in the Greek Old Testament, the word for “kiss” is the Greek word phileo, or based upon it. This is true whether or not the kiss has a sexual connotation, for example in *“Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth: for thy love is better than wine”* (Song 1:2). This use of phileo is perhaps somewhat similar to that of the English word “love.” The meaning of this word depends greatly on the context: the love of a man for his wife differs greatly from the love of a dog for his owner, or, to use a somewhat profane example, the love of a sports fan for his team. It all depends on the context. A kiss in the Old Testament can be overtly sexual: or it can be a symbol of asexual friendship or respect.

The Holy Kiss as a commandment

Is the use of the “Holy Kiss” a direct commandment, in the same way we regard baptism and the memorial service? A few denominations do so regard it, but for most it has become classified along with fasting and foot washing, as a custom which is commanded to be treated as and when appropriate in our times. Feet washing, in a dusty country with a sandal the normal footwear, was as one of the most menial of all the offices that one person could perform towards another. As such it was selected by the Lord in illustration of that lesson of entire humility which he sought to teach his disciples. And fasting was never a direct commandment: its applicability to ourselves has been considered before.¹ In common with many such New Testament proscriptions, the “Holy Kiss” is a symbology we should regard, should observe, but its mode of observance will conform to the social environment in which we live.

The Holy Kiss

When Paul exhorted the members of the infant church to greet one another with a holy kiss his emphasis was upon the “holy”. Kissing was, in his day, the customary form of greeting between members of the same sex, and he commended it to the Christian community as the symbol of “brotherly” love. In most of the English speaking Christadelphian communities, a handshake at least used to be the usual greeting and it can, for the community of Christ, carry with it the warmth of brotherliness or sisterliness. There is no Scriptural reason why, if they prefer it, the sisters should not observe the same custom as the brethren, though it may be felt by some that a kiss is more sisterly.

Among especially the young, the hug has replaced any other form of salutation, and it is nice to see the young exchanging such greetings quite commonly, both female to female and, among those of close acquaintance, between both sexes. I have been the recipient of such welcoming hugs: of which more anon.

If you travel to France, you can perhaps see what is perhaps intended by the custom of the holy kiss, as acquaintances, close or not so close, exchange air kisses. (Although I could never work out how many kisses, and which side to start.)

It is of note that in the early church this “Holy Kiss” was exchanged after the memorial service, and the kiss was actually on the lips — but strictly brother to brother, sister to sister. Whether this is true in the times of Paul we cannot be certain, but there was great care taken to strip the gesture of any possible misunderstanding.

The symbol of the Holy Kiss is crucial to remember: it is most important that we are aware of this physical closeness in our hearts. There is a great danger that we formally greet our brethren and sisters without being truly concerned about their welfare. For example, we may greet them, ask them how they are, and then move off before they have answered us. We should be concerned about both their natural and their spiritual welfare. We should be aware, by becoming physically close, that we grow in spiritual closeness also, and this is the main point of the rite.

Present day application

The principle of the “Holy Kiss” is very clear: all are to extend a warm greeting to each other. The form of greeting might (and often should) be different between the sexes, among the young versus the old, and in different cultures around the world. The exuberance of the Caribbean is different from in the Northeast of America, which again differs from California. Some might exchange a warm hand-shake, some might exchange a hug, and some might exchange some form of kiss, whether a European air-kiss or a kiss on the cheek. But the effect is the same: some sort of physical contact gives a stronger sense of bonding, of true spiritual friendship, than a verbal exchange can. Fellowship is not merely the common sharing of the emblems, but it is a striving together in the common sense of unity, of community, of the sharing in the bonds of Christ. *“Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching”* (Heb 10:25). Assembling is not just a random assembly of disconnected individuals, but a vital part of the body of Christ. It is not homogeneous by any means, but it should be interconnected. As Paul says *“For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ”* (1Cor 12:12). The “body” is an interconnected whole, and the connections should not consist of merely inhabiting the same space, but of connections on a far deeper spiritual plane. This is strengthened by what is represented by the “Holy Kiss.” Any sort of physical touch greatly strengthens the connections.

There is however one aspect of the physical contact that should be mentioned, unfortunately. There have been quite a number of occasions in which the commandment for the “Holy Kiss” has been used in ways that, perhaps unintentionally, have given rise to a great deal of discomfort. Often it is young sisters being welcomed too warmly by certain brothers — so much so as to make avoidance the response. It is no accident that the early church confined the practice to between members of the same sex. In general, brothers should be prepared to accept some sort of contact from sisters, but not to offer it. Only if the contact is very clearly welcomed should it be repeated. In our present society, sexual harassment is a significant problem. No brother, however well respected (and it is often such brethren who are involved) should behave in such a way as to give rise to the least suspicion of any action that might cause discomfort. Appropriate contact strengthens the bonds of fellowship. Inappropriate contact does the opposite.

The “Holy Kiss” is intended to strengthen the bonds between fellow believers, and should never be used in such a way as to cause any suspicion or occasion for discomfort.

Peter Hemingray

Notes:

1. See, for example, “He was Hungry” in *The Tidings*, July 2010, p293.

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Exhortation

Entering the Kingdom

The apostle Paul equated paradise to the “third heaven” and the Lord Jesus made it even plainer that paradise is identical to the kingdom when he promised the repentant thief, in answer to the latter’s request “*Remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom*”, that he should be in paradise.

How, then can we enter into the kingdom? Jesus made three “except” statements in this regard, and we will find the necessary requirements when we examine each of these.

First, to Nicodemus, “*Except a man be born of water and the spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God*” (John 3:5). This is the basic or fundamental requirement. Sadly, by the close of the gospel narrative, Nicodemus had not responded, although we find him in at least two encouraging episodes. “*Doth our law judge any man, before it hear him and know what he doeth?*” (John 7:51). After the crucifixion, Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus...there came also Nicodemus (John 19:38-39). It would have been the ideal place to mention if Nicodemus had been a disciple! Do we not know people who have a high regard and sympathy for the cause of Christ, and yet hesitate to make the ultimate commitment? There can be no replacement for the command, “*Except a man be born of water and of the spirit*”. What may have hindered Nicodemus, “*a man of the Pharisees, a ruler of the Jews*”? (John 3:1). Apparently he had gone up the social ladder, from a “man” to a “ruler”. Was Pharisaic pride the stumbling block?

Second, Jesus taught his disciples, “*Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter the Kingdom*” (Matt 5:20). Two factors are indicated by this requirement: disciples must have a **degree** of righteousness, and this quality must not be a justification of self. Jesus on another occasion upbraided the Pharisees, “*Ye are they which justify yourselves before men*” (Luke 16:15). Ezekiel wrote of three notable men, Noah, Daniel and Job, “*who shall deliver their own souls by their righteousness*” (Ezek 14:14, 20). Peter highlights Noah, a preacher of righteousness (2Pet 2:5), and adds Lot to the list (v. 8). Daniel is described thus: “*he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him*” (Dan 6:4). “*Job ... [was] a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?*” (Job 1:8). Where do we stand against this backdrop? At our baptism, we “fulfilled all righteousness”, but have we been able to maintain a clean slate or have we developed, unwittingly, self-righteousness? Rom 6:13, 16, 18, 19, 20 should be of tremendous help in this post-baptismal process. How Judah must have been embarrassed by the undeniable evidence of his sin against his daughter-in-law! “And Judah acknowledged them, and said, “*She hath been more righteous than I*” (Genesis 38:26).

Finally Jesus told his disciples, “*Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom*” (Matt 18:3) at a time when they were

debating who is the greatest in the Kingdom! So, the emphasis here is **HUMILITY**: “Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the Kingdom.” (v 4). Little children do not bear grudges, and they operate on the basis of deep friendship being necessary in a communal setting. Is this how we behave? Many otherwise good kings lacked humility: “their hearts being lifted up” is a sad commentary of their downfall. But Jesus “*humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross*” (Phil 2:8).

At the cross, many one-way statements were made, such as “*he saved others, himself he cannot save!*” (Matt 27:42). But there was one significant dialogue, between a man who was dying for his own sins, “*and we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds*” (Luke 23:41) and one who was dying for the sins of others.

“*Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.*” And the response: “*Thou shalt be with me in paradise*” (Luke 23:42-43).

On what basis is the thief granted a place in the kingdom? Was he “*born of water and of the spirit*”? Did his “*righteousness exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees*”? Can it be said that he was “*converted and became as a little child*”? The whole country had come to John’s baptism (Luke 3:7, 10, 12, 14). Why not this man who knew Jesus and the certainty of the coming kingdom (“*Lord, come into thy Kingdom*”) ? Unlike most of the Pharisees who could not recognize Jesus of Nazareth, this man acknowledged that Jesus “*had done nothing amiss*”. What better example of “conversion” than when we can say we deserve death because of our sin and ask for forgiveness — “*Lord, remember me...*”

Clive Drepaul (Brooklyn, NY)

*We can't afford to win the gain that means another's loss;
We can't afford to miss the crown by stumbling at the cross.
We can't afford the heedless jest that robs us of a friend;
We can't afford the race that comes to tragic bitter end.*

*We can't afford to play with fire, or tempt a serpent's bite;
We can't afford to think that sin brings any true delight.
We can't afford with serious heed to treat the cynic's sneer,
We can't afford to wise men's words to turn a careless ear.*

*We can't afford for hate to give like hatred in return;
We can't afford to feed a flame and make it fiercer burn.
We can't afford to lose the soul for this world's fleeting breath;
We can't afford to barter life in mad exchange for death.*

*How blind are we apart from Thee, our great all-seeing LORD;
Oh, grant us light that we may know the things we can't afford.*

Anonymous

Bible Study

Creation's Gospel:

(5) The Early and Latter Rains of God's Word

Our Creator's obvious communication policy is one of intentional complexity. Images, visions, parables, dreams, complex rituals, allegorical miracles, four headed winged cherubim, a dragon with seven heads as well as a tail that sweeps one third of the universe's stars to our tiny planet, and seven thin cows devouring seven fat cows all serve to validate this extremely obvious divine communication policy. Our Creator hides Himself. He veils His thoughts. If we want to find our Creator we have to pursue Him through a mental obstacle course offering a distinct disadvantage to our naturally self-worshipping hearts. A circumcised heart is the only defense against the default, instinctive error of oversimplification that diverts our attention from divine glory to personal glory. Oversimplification of divine expressions is the foundational platform for all forms of apostasy.

Divinely insulting doctrinal errors

Jesus obediently maintained the educational policy of his Father, teaching the crowds exclusively through parables that he would explain to his disciples only privately. Jesus explains the divine policy of intentional complexity to his disciples. He explains that this educational procedure gives to those who have, and takes away from those who have not (Matt 13:10-15). The non-stop symbolism and layered, inter-related divine expressions of Scripture all have to be interpreted. The uncircumcised human heart will always interpret everything in a self-glorifying manner. This is why literally every form of false doctrine improperly exalts the flesh and degrades the Creator. Without exception, false doctrine is always divinely insulting. In order to witness a greater measure of the currently veiled glory of our Creator that will eventually saturate creation we need to respect that intentional complexity. Every issue has to fit together perfectly, symmetrically and interdependently with every other issue. We have to remember the rule of God manifestation: everything affects everything else because it is all interconnected.

Respecting this intentional complexity vaccinates us from the degrading nature of underestimating divine communications. There is always more to see and understand. The infinite mind of our Creator cannot be fully plumbed by the pitiful, finite minds of men. The first step in witnessing the divine glory in the things that have been made is recognizing we are nowhere near as smart as we think we are. We miss far more than we ever figure out.

Pondering the rain

What do we think when we look at the rain falling from the clouds of heaven? A linear thought process might prompt a response to avoid getting wet. A wider range of thought might include the effects on groundwater tables, the forest fire index, the value to our gardens, soil erosion, a greener lawn, slippery driving conditions,

possible flooding or simply the distressing cuteness of a smiling, muddy child. Perhaps we wonder about how that rain got up into the heavens to form the clouds, the accelerating temperature variance due to the rain and other meteorological considerations. All of these interconnections with the feature of rain have their basis in how divine truths and eternal principles are being subtly but powerfully projected by our Creator to for those who share His vision for creation.

The perfectly seamless application of the wide variety of creational metaphors spanning the more than millennium and a half development of the Bible is an unchallengeable validation of divine authorship. These consistent creational metaphors are multi-layered and interdependent, as we will see with the lesson of the rain. The subtlety of this underground river of thought is intended to veil its divine glory from all but those who have, while those who have not will suffer even greater blissful ignorance.

The water of the Word

The initial spiritual identification of rain is quite simple, as is the case with the dominant foundational creation metaphors saturating Scripture (clouds, air, dirt, rocks, mountains, heaven and earth, light, darkness, fire, ashes, blood, etc). Rain is a form of water, just as clouds, steam, snow, ice, rivers, oceans and lakes are forms of water. All of these creational variations of water share the same basic foundational spiritual identification with the Word of God, but with somewhat different spiritual applications corresponding to their creational distinctions. *“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish”* (Eph 5:25-27). We see that ‘rain’ has this same ‘word of God’ identification. *“Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth. My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass”* (Deut 32:1-2). *“For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it* (Isa 55:10-11).

The clouds, rain, rivers and seas of the Word

The identification of water as the spiritual projection of the Word of our Creator opens the door to an endless consideration of the extended parallels between the written Word of God (Bible) and the spoken Word of God (creation). We can pursue the source of the rain being the clouds of our Creator’s presence power and glory that shielded Israel from Pharaoh’s murderous cavalry at the edge of the Red Sea; led Israel in the wilderness; filled the wilderness tabernacle at its dedication and filled Solomon’s temple at its dedication; overshadowed Christ on the transfiguration mount and serves as the frame for the earthly exit and the triumphant return of Christ (coming with power and glory in the clouds of

heaven). We can pursue the application of the rivers and seas replenished by the pouring out of the rain that Scripturally represents the judgments of the word of God being both life and death. This is demonstrated in the flood waters that both destroyed the wicked and saved the righteous (1Pet 3:20); as well as the two seas in Israel projecting the opposing images of life and death, which are connected by the Jordan River. This illustrated the progression from life to death that reversed when the feet of the priests bearing the Ark stepped into those waters; and of course the baptismal waters that project the image of both death to the flesh and life to the spirit. We could also examine the relationship between the rain/word that germinates, nurtures and develops the earth's fruit bearing plantlife, and that Scripturally projects the enlightened who are expected to bear fruit to the divine Husbandman. There are many multi-layered avenues of consideration that are all interconnected both creationally and spiritually. Let's isolate just one of the many possible avenues to demonstrate the parallel layering of this spiritual/physical bond. This is the law of the early and the latter rains.

We will have to wait for the next commentary to begin to see the how the law of the early and latter rains weaves through divine policy, geographical design and specifically prophecy. We are currently living at the end of the period between the early and latter rains, anticipating the latter rains of the pouring out of God's Word from the heavens in its three applications: the spoken Word, the Word made flesh, and the Word in power.

Jim Dillingham (Granite State, NH)

A Different Type of Prayer

Heavenly Father, help us remember that the person who cut us off in traffic last night is a single mother who worked nine hours that day and was rushing home to cook dinner, help with homework, do the laundry, and spend a few precious moments with her children.

Help us to remember that the pierced, tattooed, disinterested young man who can't make change correctly is a worried 19-year-old college student, balancing his apprehension over final exams with his fear of not getting his student loans for next semester.

Remind us that the scary-looking person, begging for money in the same spot every day (who really ought to "get a job"), is a slave to addictions that we can only imagine in our worst nightmares.

Help us to remember that the old couple walking annoyingly slow through the store aisles and blocking our shopping progress are savoring this moment, knowing that, based on the biopsy report she got back last week, this will be the last year that they go shopping together.

Heavenly Father, help us to be slow to judge and quick to forgive.

Anonymous

Bible Study

The Creation Text: Studies in Early Genesis: (4) Confession

In Gen 3:11, God asks Adam, “*Did you eat of the tree that I commanded you not to eat of?*” If Adam confesses, God has a basis upon which to extend his forgiveness and mercy, and thus spare Adam’s life. If Adam fails to take responsibility for his misdeed, God will enforce the prescribed death sentence. The question gives Adam an opportunity for life and by itself is an act of mercy, showing how God invites confession.

The conventional view

Both Adam and Eve mention another party in their responses. The common view is that Adam and Eve evade responsibility for their sin: Adam blames Eve, and indirectly God; Eve straightforwardly blames the serpent. This reading, however, has many difficulties. Even authors who allow for some attempt at a confession believe that Adam and Eve temper their confessions with extenuating circumstances, and that they try to show that they are not fully responsible.

Below are some typical interpretations of this passage. This list could be twice as long, all stating the same general position:

“If,” he says, “Thou hadst not joined this woman to me, I would not have eaten.” Thus he again traces the sin he himself had committed back to God and accuses God of his own sin... In short, Adam does not want to acknowledge his sin; he wants to be regarded as pure and innocent.”¹

Adam sought to lay whatever blame he could on others. Whilst he did not deny that he had done wrong, he tried to convince the angel that it was not altogether his fault... Adam sought to shift some portion of blame on to both the woman and the God-given responsibility. Thus, he attempted a measure of self-justification.²

The man endeavors to lessen the gravity of his offence by emphasizing in the preface to his confession that it was not on his own, but on the woman’s, initiative that he committed the wrong... Possibly there is also to be noted an attempt on Adam’s part to exculpate himself by alluding to the fact that it was the LORD God Himself who *gave* the woman to be with him, as though to say: *Thou didst give* the woman to be with me, and *she gave* me of the fruit of the tree. This, too, is characteristically human: people are inclined to justify their conduct by pointing to the circumstances and fate that God has allotted to them in life.³

The repeated verb [gave] nicely catches the way the first man passes the buck, not only blaming the woman for giving him the fruit, but virtually blaming God for giving him the woman. She in turn of course blames the serpent.⁴

The garden of delight has become the garden of dread, and their newly found fear initiates a tragic sequence of blame. The woman is excoriated by the man for offering the fruit. The woman, in turn, blames the snake for deceiving her.⁵

The lame reply that he does make causes us to blush for him... It is a reply that in cowardly fashion refuses to admit plain guilt and in an entirely loveless fashion lays the blame for it all first on his wife and then by a wicked charge upon God himself. Evasion characterizes also the woman's attitude . . . She knows what she did was done of her own volition, yet she charges the serpent with it exclusively . . . by laying the blame upon the serpent she indirectly also charges the Creator for having let the creature cross her path.⁶

These writers accuse Adam and Eve of blame-shifting, cowardice, false accusation, self-justification, and unloving behavior. Their calumny against Adam and Eve is completely misplaced.

Adam's confession

By invoking other parties into their statements of confession, Adam and Eve are not shifting blame, but citing important elements detailing their personal failures. They give full and specific confessions. There is not a breath of an attempt to exonerate themselves by assigning any responsibility to God, woman, or serpent. Four lines of evidence support this reading:

1. Take the text as it is.

- Adam's reply to God's question comprised four truths:
- The woman
- you gave to be with me
- she gave me of the fruit
- and I did eat.

There was a woman, God gave the woman to Adam, the woman gave Adam the fruit, and Adam ate. That's exactly how the crime occurred. The plain reading of the text tells us that Adam tells the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. There are no verbal emphases in the text ("the *woman*, whom *you* gave me"), such as expressed by Cassuto (footnote above) and implied by just about everyone else. Neither can you assume that mentioning others amounts to shifting blame. The text, as it is, is a straightforward confession of the facts.

2. Would God have forgiven them if they had tried to shift the blame?

When you confess your sins to God, do you blame others or cite extenuating circumstances? Do you say, "Yes, I got angry, but only because . . ."? Of course you wouldn't allow that for yourself, and if you were God you know you wouldn't accept such excuses. We are supposed to rise above the temptations around us, period. James 1:13-15 is explicit here. Let no one blame circumstances, or the God who created or allowed those circumstances.

A confession that says the sinner fell victim to circumstances is only an acknowledgement that the person failed to overcome those circumstances. This is so fundamental to our Christian walk that it is inconceivable that in this primary instance of sin God would accept a plea for forgiveness grounded on extenuating circumstances.

3. Testimony of 1John 1:8-10

These three verses sandwich confession between two denials of sin. *“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness”* (v. 9 NIV). Contrasted with this are the claims of being without sin (v. 8) and not having sinned (v. 10). This says that if we fail to acknowledge our sins, or fail to acknowledge our sinful being, the truth is not in us and we make God out to be liar. We have no forgiveness if we fail to acknowledge our sinful condition.

God will not forgive them unless they come forward with a pure confession. The case is made yet stronger because while writing a general truth, John is also writing specifically with Adam and Eve and Cain in mind. Cain is cited explicitly in 3:12, and the letter abounds with references and allusions to early Genesis. Cain, as you remember, denied his murderous deed when God asked him about his brother’s whereabouts. John is saying Adam and Eve confessed and had their sins taken away. Cain didn’t confess, so he was exiled in an unforgiven state. John draws this contrast, virtually interpreting for us what Adam and Eve said.

4. Jesus’ prayer for his disciples

The prayer recorded in John 17 is well known, but its background might not be so well known. Jesus quotes from Genesis 2 and 3 at least a half-dozen times in his prayer, and positions his farewell message in the perspective of his role as the Second Adam.

The key phrase is the repeated “you gave me” or “you have given me” (vv. 2, 6, 6, 9, 24) that the Lord Jesus uses to describe his relationship to his disciples. He is not just alluding to, but quoting Genesis 3:12, the First Adam’s statement of his relationship to the first Eve, “the woman you gave me.” Just as Adam acknowledged God had given him Eve, so Jesus acknowledges that God gave him the disciples. In the context of John’s writings, from the beginning saturated with references to early Genesis, these “givens” lead our thinking back to the First Adam.

Jesus’ service on behalf of the disciples contrasts with Adam’s service on behalf of Eve. Extending the principle set out by Paul in Rom 5:14-21 and 1Cor 15:45-47, the Second Adam accomplished something that the First Adam didn’t. The table below lists the specifics of his ministry that Jesus cites in this prayer, and contrasts them with what Adam apparently failed to do in his stewardship.

JESUS John 17	ADAM Genesis
Manifested God's name to the disciples.	Eve did not use God's name (YHWH) in discourse with the serpent.
They have kept your word.	Eve made mistakes when quoting God's word.
Gave them the words God gave him.	Adam would have had to teach Eve God's word.
Kept them in your name and guarded them.	Keep and guard the garden.
Prayed for them.	No mention of this.
Keep them from the evil one.	Eve deceived by the serpent.

These references, plus others,⁷ to Genesis 2 and 3 leave no doubt that the Lord Jesus is telling the disciples that he has fulfilled the mission his Father set before him. By implication, Adam failed in these very points. He did not manifest God's name to Eve, for she did not use it when speaking with the serpent. John 17:12 quotes the two verbs of Adam's charge, to keep and guard the garden. Jesus did this; Adam did not. Eve did not know God's word well. Adam was not beside Eve when she needed him most, and when he came beside her, he partook of her sin as well.

Just as John 17 is a categorical statement of Jesus' victory, Gen 3:12 is Adam's catalogue of confession. The First Adam ruefully discloses how he failed in his service; the Second Adam reminds the Second Eve, the disciples, that he has fulfilled his mission to them. Adam's statement, brief as it is in keeping with the sparseness of early Genesis, is an ideal confession. He not only admits the fact of his transgression, but outlines the manner in which the transgression came to pass. He's not blaming Eve or God at all; quite the opposite, he's acknowledging his failure to them in fulfilling the special relationship that God provided.

Eve's Confession

After Adam's contrition, God turns to Eve. He questions Eve indirectly, asking her an open-ended question, not a sharp yes-no question as He had asked Adam about his eating. Instead of asking her if she had eaten, He asks, "What have you done?" This opens the way for her to slide away, for He doesn't pin her down. In view of her legalistic approach to the serpent's guile we might expect God to ask something like, "Did you take of the fruit of the tree and eat it?" God is on a different track and is not going to work on that issue with her.

The open-ended question is a test of her relationship to God and her husband. Here is where the blame-shifting hypothesis capsizes and sinks completely. If she wanted to go for the blame, she would have immediately fingered Adam, not the

serpent. It was Adam's failure to adequately teach her what God spoke to him that led to her sin, or so she could have made it out to be. She could have easily, and quite truthfully said, "If Adam had kept the serpent out of the garden, and if he had been there with me, and if he had taught me better what God had told him, I would not have eaten." All that would have been true.

God gave Eve the opportunity to blame Adam, and she didn't take it. She resolutely stood by her own failure, and admitted that she was no match for the serpent. Eve admits the stark truth: her own inability to filter out deception. "It's my fault, not his." What an absolute heroine, this fine woman.

In admitting that the serpent deceived her, she is simply admitting what we know anyway, that the human heart is deceitful above all things and is not to be trusted. The simple acknowledgement of the serpent's besting her lays open her contrition and awareness that in her vain attempt to become like God, she was utterly deceived. Deception, thy name is serpent.

Adam and Eve confess their sins, and much more. They protect each other, they stand up for each other, and trust in the mercy of their heavenly father. God, moved to compassion by their contrition, humility, and nobleness of character, forgives their sins. They live; they do not die then and there. Their answers to God, standing naked before him, put right on the spot, reveal that although they are flesh and blood humans, they know how to act when they fail.

With the defendants' pleas of guilt in hand, the judge pardons them. There will be no immediate punishment, for that would mean immediate death. There will, however, be a different world for Adam and Eve.

David Levin (Baltimore, MD)

Notes:

1. Martin Luther, *Luther's Works*, vol. 1, Genesis 1-5. (ed. Jaroslav Pelikan; St. Louis: Concordia 1958), p. 177.
2. H. P. Mansfield, *Christadelphian Expositor*, vol. 1. (West Beach, South Australia: Logos Publications, no date), pp. 75-76.
3. Umberto Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis*. Translated by Israel Abraham. (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1961), p. 157 (italics his).
4. Robert Alter, *Genesis: Translation and Commentary*. (New York: Norton, 1996), p. 13.
5. William P. Brown, *The Ethos of the Cosmos*. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), pp. 148-149.
6. H.C. Leupold, *Exposition of Genesis*. (Columbus, Ohio: Wartburg Press, 1942), pp. 158,160.
7. Other examples: granted authority (dominion), v. 2.; life/knowledge, v. 3. (cp. trees of life/knowledge of good and evil); completed the work (ct. Adam and Eve expelled from garden, worked outside); they may be one, vv. 11, 23 (cp. Gen 2:24).

*There is a 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.)*

Notice: The First Principles series of Articles on the Atonement by our Bro. Richard Morgan has been temporarily suspended because of his current incapacitation. They will resume in the next issue, God willing.

The Joy of Sunday Schooling

How Two Ecclesias Have Used Sunday School Resource Centers

The following reports are reprints of two short articles published several years ago in *The Joy of Sunday Schooling Journal*.¹ The reports tell how two ecclesias set up and used resource centers in their Sunday schools. The purposes served by Sunday school resource centers are as important today as they were then, even if the nature of some educational resources has changed. Notice the different ways the two ecclesias used their Sunday school resource centers.

Report 1

Our ecclesia has quite an extensive resource-library center. Perhaps a few ideas of what we have done may be helpful.

We have a lending library of about 300 books and tapes for children. The library is located in one of the Sunday school rooms. Each book and tape has a pocket and card, and the children sign their name each time they take something. They are allowed to take two things at a time: a book and tape/book or two books or two tape/books. There is a box for the signed cards to go in. There is a container for returned books. There is a box in which the librarian puts the signed cards in alphabetical order.

The books are arranged on the shelves according to level: primary and junior. The primary book shelf is organized by: (1) creation-nature books, (2) Old Testament books, (3) pop-up books, (4) New Testament books, and (5) books in a series. The junior book shelf is arranged in a similar way, omitting the pop-up books.

For the teachers we have the following resources located in another Sunday school room: (1) photocopy machine — a must! (2) filmstrip projector, filmstrips/tapes², and a portable wall screen (a large piece of white Bristol board can also be used); (3) large box of pictures and flashcard pictures (more on this below); (4) overhead projector and transparencies; e.g., Esther, Moses; (5) flannel graphs and flannel board; (6) slides — our filmstrip projector converts to a slide projector; (7) cardboard building blocks (look like bricks); (8) puzzles and games; (9) puppets; (10) craft books; (11) songbooks, and (12) miscellaneous teacher notes, guides, and activities.

Each teacher is free to borrow the resources. Most of them are not carded. They are returned when the teacher is finished using them.

The flashcard pictures³ are a nice addition to our teaching resources. Each package consists of between 11 and 30 cards, depending on the Bible story. The cards are 10" x 13" each and are in color. They tell the story of a Bible character. After the teacher has told the story using the cards, the cards can be mixed up and the

pupils can sequence them and retell the story. A lesson book comes with each set of cards. The cost varies depending on the set you buy.

Some may be interested in how we promote the use of the library by our Sunday school children. Three Sundays of the month the children, ages three to twelve, have their own closing exercises as a group downstairs while the adults and teenagers have their closing upstairs. We sing hymns from the children's hymn book (our own compilation), one class each week tells and/or shows what they have learned in class, we say the Lord's Prayer once a month and the other Sundays a brother gives a prayer. It is during this closing session that new library books are shown, new resources for the teachers are shared, and reminders are made to visit the library.

Report 2

Over the years as a Sunday school superintendent I have learned that there is no perfect curriculum (i.e., published set of Sunday school lessons). The material in one curriculum may be too involved for one teacher or not provide enough background material for another. Consequently, I decided to stock as much resource material as possible for our teachers to use, including various Christadelphian Sunday school curricula.

Our move in this direction began with a goal. After years of using one curriculum or another, we took a complete break from prepared curricula altogether. As a Sunday school we wanted to spend a year specifically on the teachings of Jesus and the apostles, a theme not covered in any one curriculum with the particular emphasis we wanted. Meeting this goal presented quite a challenge to us, since the lesson material was not contained in any one book. The teachers had to use a variety of Christadelphian publications for their material.

The need for a Sunday school resource library became clear. For us, this required the installation of some extra shelves in one of our classrooms. For a Sunday school without its own building, it might require the superintendent, a teacher, or an ecclesial member to make space available in a home. We have since gone back to using a planned program of studies for the Sunday school. In the process we continue to make modifications and to build an inventory of supplemental resources for our teachers to use.

Here are the vendors of four Sunday school lesson programs (curriculums) produced by the brotherhood. The information is current.

- Birmingham Central Sunday School Scheme, available from The Christadelphian Office: www.thechristadelphian.com. Click on SHOP and select PREACHING RESOURCES.
- Christadelphian Sunday School Union, UK, materials: www.cssu.org.uk. Some materials can be downloaded from web site. Orders from the USA should be placed on-line via website. Enquires to Karen Phillips, karencssuorders@yahoo.com; Canadian vendors are Peggy Handsaeme, edle@telusplanet.net, and Alan Ghent, aghent@mac.com.
- Australian Christadelphian Sunday School Union materials: www.acssu.org.au.

- Christadelphian Sunday School Association materials: www.cssa.asn.au. The North American vendor of CSSA materials are David and Jeffery Waye, (e-mail na_rep@cssa.asn.au or jwaye@currys.com.) Tel 905-891-7647.

Information about other educational materials and suggestions for Sunday school resource centers are invited. I will be happy to hear from you.

*Jim Harper (Meriden, CT)
sundayschool@tidings.org*

Notes:

1. Report 1 — Mary Jane Farrar, “The Sunday School Resource Center, What others are doing”, *The Joy of Sunday Schooling*, Winter, 1993, p.4. Report 2 — Gordon Dangerfield, “The Sunday School Resource Center, What others are doing”, *The Joy of Sunday Schooling*, Spring, 1993, p.12.
2. Of course, we would use and LCD projector instead of a filmstrip projector these days.
3. A Beka Book Flash-A-Card, Pensacola Christian College, Pensacola, FL 32523-9160. Go to abeka.com and search Flash-A-Card. Titles and prices are provided by grade level. Many of the picture cards are very good, but keep in mind that these are not Christadelphian products.

Youth Speaks

A Study in 1st Thessalonians

During the week of July 1-7th, 2012, the first California Christadelphian Youth Conference will be held in Ojai, CA, God willing. This camp is modeled after the Manitoulin Youth Conference and it is hoped that the week will be a time filled with much study and fellowship around the Word. The topic will be **“The Letters to the Thessalonians”** and it was thought that it would be helpful to publish a series of articles in the Tidings about those letters. Thus, the members of the Youth Conference committee have put together a series which will go through each chapter of the two letters — two chapters per month. May you find these articles to be uplifting, educational, and inspiring. Any further information about the Youth Conference may be found at www.californiayouthconference.com.

On behalf of the committee, Jason Hensley.

A Letter of Love and Faith — Introduction and 1st Thessalonians 1

Maybe we do not all always feel this way, but most Christadelphians are pretty happy with the general state of our individual ecclesias. Quite a few of us live in areas where we even have a choice of ecclesias to attend, so surely the one we do attend (for personal reasons, innocent or not) is, in our eyes, mostly good. In this initial exposition of the first chapter, it is my argument that the proper context of the letters to the Thessalonians is that of Paul's reaction to an ecclesia of remarkable faith and action. If we are curious about what God's words might be to our ecclesias, granting we are considering our ecclesia to be generally clean of any major faults, Thessalonians would be a pertinent letter to read. Paul has a simple,

powerful, repeated message in first Thessalonians, “*wait for his Son from heaven*” (1Thess 1:10). That this is, and should be, our principal focus is an encouraging message. A mature believer, and an established ecclesia should never let the promise of the return of Christ to the earth leave their minds.

Introduction to Thessalonian Ecclesia

Paul’s initial visit to Thessalonica took place during his second journey, in response to the Macedonian call of Acts 16: 9. Our record there of his stay in Thessalonica is fairly short at nine verses, and it seems his time there was also short at about three weeks. There was a synagogue in Thessalonica and “*And Paul went in, as was his custom (cp Acts 13:5), and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures,*” (Acts 17:2¹). This did not go over well with the local Jewish leaders though, who tried to attack Paul and sacked the house of Jason in the process. Paul is sent away immediately (Acts 17:10) and it seems plausible that some of these Jews continue to chase him through the next few chapters of Acts. Still, even in so short a period, we are told that “*...some of them [the Jews from the synagogue] were persuaded...and many of the Greeks and not a few of the leading women*” (Acts 17:4). Surely as Paul says in 1Thess 2:1, “*our coming to you was not in vain.*”

With this background of how little time Paul spent in Thessalonica, especially compared to some of the other ecclesias, his motivation for writing to them becomes clearer. Encouragement and further instruction in the Hope of the coming Kingdom of God was needed.

In writing this letter, Paul is also reacting to an encouraging report from Timothy. We read: “*But now that Timothy has come to us from you, and has brought us the good news of your faith and love...*” (1Thess 3:6). Timothy had been left in Berea (Acts 17:14), Paul’s next stop following Thessalonica, and is thought to have re-joined Paul in Corinth, which is thought to be where Paul writes 1st Thessalonians in about AD 52, with 2nd Thessalonians following six months later.

1 Thessalonians Chapter 1: You became an example to all

Paul begins the letter to the Thessalonians in his classic style, blessing with “*Grace to you and peace.*” in verse 1, as well as his admission that “*We give thanks to God always for all of you, constantly mentioning you in our prayers,*” in verse 2. But, beyond these fairly standard signatures for Paul, within the rest of the chapter we can see a true fondness for the Thessalonian ecclesia. The Thessalonian brothers and sisters must have been so well convicted of the gospel and practiced in their beliefs to cause Paul to glow so lovingly about them.

In verse 3 he remembers *their “work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope, in our Lord Jesus Christ.”* Initially it is a struggle to define a difference between “*work*” and “*labor*”, and the Greek definitions of the original words are not particularly enlightening. It is beautiful to pair the ideas of “*work*” and “*faith*” as they are often pitted against one another in our conversations about James and other writings. Paul describes the Thessalonians’ work coming from their faith, which shows them as true living works. “*Labor of Love*” is an idiom in our language today for a lifelong passion, which is a comfortable enough place to leave

that phrase in ascribing it to the ministry of the Thessalonians. “*Steadfastness of hope*” has to be one of the best combinations of descriptors for a group of believers’ hope. To have a hope that is unwavering and unflagging is a high goal. Psa 33:18, 22 show that a steadfast love is what the Lord shows us, and we should hope in it.

Verse 3 also has an interesting parallel to Hebrews chapter 6. “*Work of faith*” can be found in Heb 6:1, “*Therefore let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead **works and of faith** toward God.*” Then labor of love in verse 10, although here the word “work” is used: “*For God is not unjust so as to overlook your **work and the love** that you have shown for his name in serving the saints, as you still do.*” And then finally “*steadfastness of hope*” in verse 18 and again: “*so that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to **hold fast to the hope** set before us. We have this as a sure and **steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope** that enters into the inner place behind the curtain*” (Heb 6:19).

The gospel came to the Thessalonians “*not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction*” (1Thess 1:5) and the ecclesia “*became imitators of us and of the Lord*” (verse 6). Paul describes the ecclesia as becoming “*an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia*” in verse 7 and then again:

“For not only has the word of the Lord sounded forth from you in Macedonia and Achaia, but your faith in God has gone forth everywhere, so that we need not say anything”(1Thess 1:8).

What high praise Paul shows the Thessalonians with this introduction, truly a description of a group of Bible believers that we should strive to be like. The word we have translated as “*sounded*” in verse 8 is translated the same in almost all versions, but the root of it is “*echoed*” which is another commendation of the Thessalonian ecclesia. Paul describes them as echoing the word of the lord, giving the idea of a clear copy and no distortion with their own message. The ecclesia was imitators of God and echoed his word. Certainly an excellent model for us and our ecclesias to have.

Ecclesias and individuals from all around “*themselves report concerning... how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come*” (verse 9 and 10). The faith, love, and hope of the Thessalonian ecclesia as well as their imitation and echo of the character and word of our Lord was told to Paul by many believers and not only Timothy. In verse 10, with the first direct mention of the return of Jesus, Paul has also delivered his thesis statement for the letter. The return of Christ is the clear theme of 1st Thessalonians, mentioned directly in: 1:10; 2:10; 3:13; 4:13-17; and 5:1-4,23. It is also the theme in 2nd Thessalonians, mentioned throughout in the same way.

To focus on the return of Christ is the clear overriding point of this chapter and this letter. How true and good it is that we should always be looking forward to that time, and keeping our lives in context with the plan of our Almighty God.

By spending time looking up and looking forward we can even keep our minds from causing temporary problems for ourselves. To keep ourselves and our ecclesias focused on that glorious day we can find the comfort and peace of God. The Thessalonians were praised as examples to all the believers in their area, and then they were told to wait for the Lord. What higher calling can there be? As our Lord himself said: *“Straighten up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near”* (Luke 21:28). Wait for the Son from heaven. Wait for him, wait for him, wait for him.

Levi Gelineau, (Simi Hills, CA)

Notes:

1. All quotes are from the English Standard Version (ESV).

The Jewish Accusations — 1st Thessalonians 2

Paul was desperate to save the new ecclesia in Thessalonica from the railing attacks of the unbelieving Jews. Their willingness to stop at nothing to discredit him threatened the ecclesia's very survival. Because he was absent from Thessalonica and thus absent from the ecclesia, it was quite difficult for him to defend himself and the gospel of Jesus Christ which he taught. He was very careful to remind them how important it really is. He is telling them (and us) that the truth is so wonderful that it is worth fighting for; it is worth our every effort to protect and to strengthen it. We can see this example in Paul: not only did he teach the truth at every possibly moment, but he lived the truth to the best of his ability.

The apostle Paul in the second chapter of 1st Thessalonians is very careful to remind the believers in Thessalonica not only of his zeal and motive for his missionary work, but also of the extreme importance of the truth. Paul delineates how we must under no circumstances be deceived into thinking otherwise. At this particular time, Paul was having a great deal of trouble with the unbelieving Jews, who were doing whatever they could to stop the spreading of the truth. We can begin to see this hatred that the unbelieving Jews had towards Paul and his missionary work when they hired *“certain lewd fellows, of the baser sort”* to start an uproar in the city of Thessalonica so that they could seize Paul, and as they probably hoped, have him killed. However the leaders of Thessalonica, seeing no real threat in the accusations against Paul, but still seeking to calm the uproar, decided to ban him from the city for a certain period of time. The unbelieving Jews were not satisfied with this. After hearing that Paul had gone on to Berea, they followed him there, and had him driven out of that city as well (Acts 17:1-13).

Unfortunately, these Jews felt that driving Paul out of these cities was not enough, and they sought to discredit him, and therefore the message he was preaching, by spreading false accusations. Their goal was to destroy not only the truth, but also the apostle Paul himself. Paul in this chapter reminds the believers that they know that these accusations are not true. His accusers claimed that his teachings were based on “deceit” (v. 3) “uncleanness” (v. 3) “pleasing men” (v. 4) “flattering words” (v. 5) “cloaks of covetousness” (v. 5) seeking glory of men (v. 6) and that

he was “burdensome” to the ecclesia (v. 6). These adversaries of Paul even went as far as to forge letters to try to deceive the ecclesia (2Thess 2:1-2; 2Cor 11:26).

Paul’s defense of his character

The truth was much too precious to allow the unbelieving Jews to destroy and corrupt it with their false accusations, so Paul begins this chapter by defending the truth and himself from the charges that were made against him. He reminds those in Thessalonica of his actions and how they themselves can remember how he acted when he was among them. He points out in the first verse that his “*entrance in unto you...was not in vain.*” Strong’s defines this word ‘vain’ as “empty.” In other words he is saying that his work among them was successful and they have grown to be firm believers in the Gospel. This alone should be enough to prove to them that he was in no way trying to deceive them, and that he was sincere and genuine in his work (cp. Isa 45:18). He then continues to remind them how he was treated in Philippi. He was treated like a criminal, beaten, and imprisoned, but this did not discourage him. He still put all of his effort into preaching the truth, and being a good example to those around him. We can see the amount of effort that Paul typically gave: “*And I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling*” (1Cor 2:3). He had used all the energy that he had, and was constantly worrying about the welfare of his brothers and sisters.

In verse 4 Paul reminds them that he had been approved by God to be entrusted with the Gospel. This is the largest responsibility that could ever be put upon one’s shoulders. Paul is implying that since God had entrusted him with the gospel, that alone should disprove the accusation that he had some ulterior motive or deceitful practice. For it is “*God which trieth our hearts*” (Jer 17:10; 11:20). Now it is important to note here that Paul is not in any way “patting himself on the back” or bragging about his accomplishments. The reason that he is doing this is because he was afraid that his brothers and sisters were going to leave the truth, because of the false rumors the unbelieving Jews were spreading. He was afraid that the brethren would be coerced into their erroneous way of thinking. The purpose of Paul’s letter was to make them realize that the Jews are not genuine and that they are deceiving everyone. He is no way gloating or bragging about his accomplishments, but rather he is reminding them that what he taught them was the truth.

Paul also confronts the accusation that his preaching was for his own personal glory. Paul states in verse 6 that because he was an apostle of Christ, he could have easily used this to his own advantage, but he did not. The only glory Paul sought was that of God. Paul was so careful to avoid being glorified of men that he even did his best to not be “burdensome” to those around him. This word “burdensome” in the Greek has the meaning of “a weight”. Paul was “*labouring night and day*” so that he could support himself and not be a burden to his brothers and sisters (v. 9). He states that because they were apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ, and because they “*have sown...spiritual things, [would it be] a great thing if [they should] reap your carnal things?*” but he points out that they “*have not used this power; but suffer all things, lest [they] should hinder the gospel of Christ*” (1Cor 9:11-15). His only desire is to keep his brothers and sisters in the Thessalonian

ecclesia strong in the truth, and to be sure that they were not deceived by “the lie” being spread by the unbelieving Jews. Paul was ceaselessly teaching the gospel, and asking nothing in return (Matt 10:8). Paul’s way of teaching was quite unlike any of the preachers of his day, or of today, whose continual message is to include a vigorous appeal for funds. Rather they labored night and day “*because we would not be chargeable to any of you*” (v. 9).

The truth was so vital to Paul that he dedicated his entire life to it. He was able to live the gospel to the best of his ability. We must learn from Paul’s example, and live the truth. We must be sure that our lives can stand up to scrutiny. “*Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves*” (v. 10). People will not be convinced by those who are passionate teachers but are known to be dishonest. They will not give credence to those who break promises to their wives, to their children, to friends, employers or employees. Those who claim to offer light to them that are in darkness must not be groping in the darkness themselves (cp. Rom 2:17–22). Imagine now if Paul was found to be deceiving them, all his credibility would have been lost. His preaching would not have been credible had he not been living the life he was instructing others to live. We must, like Paul, make the truth the most important thing in our lives. We must live the truth.

Paul’s way of life

Beginning around verse 7, the apostle changes his perspective. He shifts his argument from defending himself from the false accusations that were brought against him, and goes even farther to remind them of his actions and attitude while he was among them. He was reminding them how important the truth was to him, and the continual effort that he put onto it so that those around him would believe as well. This would, in essence, remove any lingering feeling of distrust or deceit that the believers might have still held toward Paul. He explains how his attitude and manner of teaching them was like a mother feeding her baby; he would have laid down his life for the believers of Thessalonica if it was necessary. Paul reminds them that he was in essence feeding the young ecclesia of Thessalonica (Heb 5:12–14). There are numerous lessons that we can take from this. Paul is indicating that this is the way that the gospel is supposed to be given. This is the way that it was given from God (John 3:16; Isa 53:12; Gal 2:20). It must be given in love and with a sacrificial attitude, as a mother would feed her child. In addition to this, in verse 11 Paul describes himself as a father who “*exhorted and comforted and charged*” the brothers and sisters in Thessalonica to “*walk worthy of God*” (v. 11–12). Are not these the exact duties of a father? Should it not be his duty to instruct his children and to encourage them, to comfort them, and even to command them to “*walk worthy of God, who hath called [us] unto his kingdom and glory*” (v. 12).

Would Paul have had such concern for the believers and for the truth itself if his motives were impure? Absolutely not. We must learn when preaching and defending our faith that although we must have a thorough knowledge and understanding of Biblical teaching, it is vital that we also have a love for those who we hope will receive the Gospel of Christ. “*We were gentle among you, even as a nurse cher-*

isheth her children" (v. 7). "Ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children" (v. 11). Paul, and ourselves, had the responsibility of saving people. An attitude of loving-kindness and of genuine and sincere concern for people's needs is always more effective in disposing audiences in our favor. It is no use winning the argument if we lose the person.

Paul is so grateful to those in Thessalonica because they knew that Paul was teaching the truth when they heard it. And now Paul as both a mother and a father unto the ecclesia in Thessalonica, thanks God without ceasing because they received God's word "*not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe*" (v. 13). Paul not only tells us that we must never cease to thank God for what he has done on our behalf and on the behalf of others, but he is also telling us that the word of God has the ability to work in the lives of those who believe. It is God's word that provides us with the energy and influence to do that which is pleasing in His eyes. It is up to us to put in the effort as we see Paul did in verse 9 in that he was "*laboring night and day*". We must realize that it is through God and his word that we can get the motivation and will to "*do of his good pleasure*" (Phil 2:13).

Fellowship in persecution

In the final verses of this chapter Paul changes gears and reminds the believers of what his persecutors have done previously. The believers need to be constantly on their guard, for it is the persecutors' desire, to if it were possible, "*deceive the very elect*" (Matt 24:24). He reminds them that they have "*both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men: Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved*" (v. 15-16). He is ultimately saying that it was the unbelieving Jews who instigated the crucifixion of Christ, it was the unbelieving Jews who in times past instigated the death of the prophets, it was the unbelieving Jews that had pushed him out of Thessalonica, and finally that it was the unbelieving Jews who were continually attempting to prevent him from teaching to the Gentiles. This is not to say that Paul despised the Jews — by no means (Rom 9:1-4). He longed for the Jews to be saved, yet they would not have it. We can also notice, if we read carefully that the unbelieving Jews had even convinced the Gentiles to persecute the believers. "... *for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they [have] of the Jews*" (v. 14) This word "countrymen" means "ethnicity or race" — these were Gentiles that were persecuting them, and this fits perfectly with what Paul is saying here. The unbelieving Jews were instigators, and he seems to be warning them of this. In the latter half of verse 16, Paul reminds the believers that the judgment upon these Jews, who had been persecuting them for so long, was indeed coming. The time would come when their "*transgressions are come to a full*" (Dan 8:23; cp. Gen 15:16) and the instigators would be stopped.

A somewhat hidden element in this section that can very easily be overlooked is Paul's record of how the believers at Thessalonica came to the truth. How they went from being ignorant Gentiles, to becoming enlightened and with the hope of being found worthy in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. These steps are as follows:

- 1) “remember” {=to keep in mind},
- 2) “Ye [are] witnesses” {=to spectate},
- 3) “ye know” {=perceive, or know what must be done},
- 4) “ye received” {=to accept, associate with},
- 5) “ye received” {=take hold of, learn},
- 6) “ye became followers”,
- 7) “ye also have suffered” {to feel, or be affected by it},
- 8) “ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ” (v. 9,10,11,13,13,14,14,19).

They saw how Paul acted differently from those around him; they were able to witness how he really behaved himself. Next they realized what must be done on their part, and they accepted it and associated themselves with it. Then they learned about it and took hold of it and let it affect them. Finally they had the hope of being found in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ at his coming. We too must be careful to follow these last few steps as closely as we possibly can. We must truly accept and take hold of the truth and follow it every day of our lives, allowing it to affect our lives so that we can be found in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming. Finally, Paul expresses his great desire to see them again. He tells them that he still has this “agape” love for them, and that he would have returned to Thessalonica to be with them if “Satan”, or the unbelieving Jews (Acts 17:5-6,13), hadn’t hindered him. He concludes this chapter with words of encouragement to all those who are looking forward to Christ’s coming. He reminds them of the hope of being in the presence of the Man who will remove all persecutions and afflictions and oppressions. For this is our “*hope, and joy, and crown of rejoicing*”.

Seth Robinson (Thousand Oaks, CA)

Love people and use things; Don’t use people and love things

In society today many people put great value on their possessions. Things like the right shirts, jeans, or backpacks set the standard for social status in the schools. But people should respect others for their character and personality rather than for what they own. Also, some people will use others to gain a certain objective, Whether it is a campaign loan or an introduction to a best friend. Unfortunately people will always see others in a “what can you do for me” way.

Hopefully, in the future people will learn to love others for their companionship and their personality. Placing undue importance on material things weakens one’s ability to see the value of friendship. Personally I am ashamed that I place a value on my possessions. I don’t believe that I use people to gain more things. Once in a while things can be important, like your first report card or your great-grandmother’s picture, but real people can always bring more to your life than an inanimate thing.

Katie Stauffer

Reflections

Marriage Proverbs, Guidelines for a Happy Relationship (4) Guideline Number 3: Committing to a Relationship

As long as you both shall love

A few years back my wife and I attended a lovely garden wedding of a colleague where the young couple exchanged vows with the Minister ending his performance with the phrase “as long as you both shall love”. We looked at each other with expressions of dismay and disbelief. We were both thinking, virtually simultaneously, *did we really hear that right!* We remembered very well that when we took our wedding vows in 1959 the presiding brother ended with his prayerful blessing and the final words *as long as you both shall live*. This points out the dramatic change that has taken place in the philosophy that many young people enter into marriage in this 21st century. There was a time when marriage was viewed not only as a contract between a man and a woman, but also as a solemn vow taken before the Lord God. The teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ with regard to the sanctity of marriage were taken very seriously — “*So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate*” (Matt 19:6 ESV)

This view has virtually disappeared in our society. Some sociologists date it to the new freedoms granted woman that developed during WWII when so many found it necessary to work for the war effort. This created the start of a very different cultural stance on the permanence of marriage since women began to realize they could have independence and didn't have to rely on a man to support them. Others date it to the Vietnam War era and the whole flower child, free love, environment that was spawned by that debacle. There can be no question that the ubiquitous *so-called* middle age itch, that finds some men wanting fancy sports cars and a younger *trophy* wife, became a cliché precisely because it does frequently happen. The corresponding mid-life crisis for the married woman often coincides with the empty nest syndrome, where children are now grown and out of the home. They then, perhaps for the first time in years, turn around and look at their husbands and find a boring companion, several pants sizes larger than on their wedding day. They think of all their unfulfilled dreams that they imagine can only be accomplished by striking out on their own, or in the parlance of some social studies, by finding their own space sans husband. There are obviously many other reasons for a marriage to fail to last a lifetime; in fact it has been said that there are as many varied reasons¹ as there are couples that divorce. Regardless of how or when this decline in regarding marriage vows as a sacred lifelong commitment started to happen, it is clear that this behavior is progressively encroaching more and more into our own community. The prevailing culture, in general, has come to regard marriage as an open-ended contract between two people that can be terminated by either party whenever they might find themselves being no longer happy in the relationship.

The teaching of Christ

Personal happiness and self-fulfillment is not necessarily a bad thing, but when it is the only thing in a relationship one can be pretty sure disaster is pending. The idea of “me first” became so prevalent towards the end of the 20th century that a whole era that created that attitude became known as the “me” generation. We seem to still be living with that mantra being the guiding principle in how many people view their role in entering into a marriage. Contrast this to the teaching of Jesus Christ, *“If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet”* (John 13:14 ESV). As also in *“And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant”* (Matt 20:27 cf Mark 10:44). Consider also, the exhortation of the Apostle Paul *“Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful”* (1Cor 13:4,5 ESV). One could cite many other examples from the gospels and the epistles where it is very clear that the selfish emphasis on “me, me, me” is the antithesis of the New Testament message on how one should approach relationships and this must especially be the case for a marriage partnership. If both partners approaching a marriage would take the view that was espoused to the Philippians: *“Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves”* (Phil. 2:3), a whole different dynamic would occur. The emphasis would then be on pleasing one another rather than on only satisfying one’s self. We can gain some further insight on what kind of relationship we should aim for in entering into a marriage by looking at the ultimate example given in the Scriptures, that of the bridegroom’s, our Lord Jesus Christ, feelings towards his espoused bride, the Ecclesia of the living saints (Cp. Rev. 19:7 which presents us with this husband/wife metaphor).

Jesus Christ is the ultimate example of total commitment; if this were not the case then all hope for us would be lost. Can we honestly imagine Jesus forsaking us? The Apostle Paul certainly could not; consider what he told us *“...walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God”* (Eph 5:2 ESV, cf Heb 9:14, 10:10). Continuing in that chapter, the Apostle tells us that we should be *“submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ”* (v.21). The emphasis here is thus upon mutual submission to each other. Commitment cannot be a one-way street. I have observed over and over again that successful, happy marriages are ones in which both partners have total commitment to the relationship, to what at one time was styled “forsaking all others”. Can we imagine Christ being unfaithful to us? Hardly. Neither should one enter into a marriage with any less commitment than the vow one took at Baptism, which when properly understood was a promise that we would do our very best to serve our LORD God and follow in the footsteps of His son the Lord Jesus Christ as long as we should live.

A true marriage

One cannot leave the writings of Paul to the Ephesians without commenting on the fact that many modern Bible critics consider him to be a misogynist. These critics fasten their ire on v. 22 *“Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord”* and equate it as akin to slavery. What they overlook is the context of mu-

tual submission that precedes this passage. They also fail to properly interpret the verse that follows with respect to the proper attitude for the husband where the Apostle says: *“Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her”* (v. 25 *ESV*). If a husband treated a wife as Christ loved the Ecclesia and sacrificed himself for it then such a husband would indeed be a servant to his spouse. There is nothing one sided about the Apostle’s advice. The Holy Spirit inspired his words and we know that the Scriptures teach; *“... there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus”* (Gal 3:28 *ESV*). Successful couples are mutually committed to their relationship with all the emotional strength that they are capable of giving. I have observed that such couples have a liaison that can be best described as a mutual admiration society. As I once heard a Sister remark about a couple she particularly admired — such a husband and wife metaphorically act as if “they were joined at the hip”.

If one expects a lifelong relationship to glow with the same aura as one’s initial reactions to *falling in love*, then one is in for inevitable disappointment. Life has a way of throwing many roadblocks into a marriage that can cause it to crash. The only thing that is certain is uncertainty; as the years go by unexpected challenges will occur that can cause a crisis in the relationship. Events such as job losses, job transfers for either partner, piled up debts, children and child rearing conflicts, in-law problems, schooling failures, conflicting goals, serious illness, disappointed dreams, abusive behavior, addictions, flirtations and others too numerous to mention can all derail a marriage. The question arises, how can I know in advance if my partner will be committed as much to our relationship as I am and willing and able to work through any challenges to arrive at mutually compatible solutions? The answer is that it is difficult if not impossible to predict with absolute confidence the response of the partners in a marriage to difficult challenges that could possibly come years in the future. **BUT**, it is possible to assess the kind of emotional resources a potential partner may have within them for dealing with unforeseen problems. There are at least three key qualities that help a relationship survive or even thrive when faced with disruptive issues. They are: the degree of dedication, ability to find accommodations, and willingness to compromise.

Let’s consider briefly each of these three key qualities in terms of assessing a potential lifetime partner.

Too many people have such stars in their eyes when they fall in love that they fail to step back and impartially evaluate all the qualities of their potential mate. Even worse, they may even come to a realization about serious faults only to convince themselves that they can change him or her! Such changes rarely happen.

Observing that your prospective partner is dedicated to the Ecclesia is a good starting point for consideration. If baptismal vows before God, and our Lord Jesus, are not taken seriously why would one expect such a person to be dedicated to the vows taken to his or her spouse? If a person has trouble holding down a job, or being dependable and reliable in many big or even little ways, during the dating regime, why would they be better after marriage? Dedication to the relationship is critical to a happy marriage.

The ability to reach accommodation and compromise is also a must for success. It is almost impossible for two people to come into a relationship with such total compatibility that there is never any possible chance of future conflict (in spite of the implications of many Internet dating services that appear to guarantee perfect harmony). The major route to overcoming conflict is for the persons involved in a partnership to reach accommodation and compromise as situations arise. How does this work and what is the difference between accommodation and compromise? Basically accommodation means I don't like it, but I can live with it without making a fuss. Compromise means each partner going part way to reach a solution that is somewhere in between the extremes that either one envisaged when the conflicted issue arose. To cite a simple example – suppose the woman wants to go to an opera and the man prefers to go to a jazz concert. Neither really likes the other's taste, but one path to reach an accommodation would be something like – she being willing to attend his jazz concert while he agrees to going along with her to the opera (neither necessarily has to like or appreciate the accommodation they need only endure it without complaint and they may even learn to enjoy the experience). Compromise, given the same scenario, might go something like – forget the opera and the jazz concert, let's find something we both like, and in the end they might go to a movie or a play instead. This is, of course, only a rudimentary illustration; there are many other possible ways of reaching accommodation and compromise in various situations. The critical issue is that “...(love) does not insist on its own way” (1 Cor. 13:5 ESV) and if one finds that a prospective partner is often unwilling to accommodate or compromise with your wishes then that is a danger signal that should not be ignored.

Next: Having Realistic Expectations.

John C. Bilello (Ann Arbor, MI)

Notes:

1. We expect to consider other reasons for marriage breakdown in the course of these essays, and prayerfully hope to provide some guidance on possible healing remedies based on Scripture.

An Eager Spirit of Exploration

It goes without saying that [the reader of this book] will encounter an unconventional idea or two. I have never regarded it as my mission in life to tell my readers what they know already. Every scribe instructed unto the kingdom of God should have an abundant store from which to bring forth things new as well as old [Matt 13:52]. So one of the purposes behind this volume is to foster a more eager spirit of exploration in the pages of God's Word. The Bible contains such an abundant wealth of ideas that we can never hope to research it fully this side of the Second Coming.

Harry Whittaker,
Foreword, Bible Studies

Forgiveness (2)

As the last article (Feb. 2012) showed, forgiveness is important. Forgiveness is a basic feature of the Lord's longsuffering and merciful character. The Law of Moses provides blood-shedding sacrifices through which God promised to forgive Israel of their sins. In Solomon's prayer dedicating the temple, he repeatedly pleads for God to hear their prayers, and forgive them.

Forgiveness and the related topics of sin, confession, and repentance are fundamental to God's plan of salvation. In this article we look at Scriptural meanings for these ideas. Although studying the definitions of original Bible words is sometimes boring, we find great blessings behind the words surrounding forgiveness. Their meanings can encourage us; they give us hope.

The example of David

The first series of words comes from David's horrific sins relating to Bathsheba. David broke four of the Ten Commandments! God's forgiveness of David could well be the greatest example of personal sin and forgiveness.

We benefit greatly from this history because in addition to the outward storyline of his meltdown, we also get to "hear" David's thoughts. The Psalms give us the internal drama that makes this an excellent example of a terrible sin. David reflects:

"I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgression unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin" (Psa 32:5).

How much richer is David's vocabulary about sin than ours! When we mess up, even when we mess up big, we ask God to forgive our sin. That's the extent of our vocabulary. Not David. In this, we see the texture and depth of his confession. This instruction has a powerful impact on us. We learn how to talk to our heavenly Father about sin, how to confess our sins to Him, how to ask for His forgiveness, how to repent. We learn God's language for one of the most important conversations we need to have with Him, a conversation that recurs over and over again due to our sinful nature.

Definitions of sin

David uses three words, "sin", "iniquity", and "transgression". The first, "sin", means "missing the mark". At first, this might not sound so bad. Who can always throw a rock and knock the can off the post? Yet, it is bad; it is the essence of sin. Wishing so much to obey and seeing our utter failure as our actions whiz right past God's standards. The second word, "iniquity", means "crookedness". None of us considers ourselves a crook, or more to the meaning, perverse, but there it is. The third word, "transgression", means "rebellion". This is really making us squirm now. Am I rebelling? I'm a good kid, aren't I? But no, each of us has done it "my way" over "His way".

So we have three definitions and they are not pretty. Fortunately, herein starts the good news. Yes, we're each rotten. But quickly we move to the three definitions of

forgiveness that counter each one of these condemnations. Yes, all sins need God's help and rescue; and in every way, and we mean every way, God has a counter blessing. The blessing is in the texture and depth of His forgiveness.

Definitions of forgiveness

David begins this Psalm by declaring,

"Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit is no guile" (Psa 32:1-2).

Again, David uses three words, "forgive", "cover", and "not impute", to counter the three words for sin. The first word, "forgive", means "taken up and carried away". We can each come up with our own visual for this. For example, a man going fishing is on his way back to the marina and on the boat there are unused anchovies that are no longer needed for bait. For fun he throws the anchovies up at the seagulls chasing the boat. They dive bomb and, snatching them midair, disappear off to shore. Do you think the man will ever see those anchovies again? Well, those anchovies are like forgiven sins, taken away, never to be seen again!

The second word, "covered", means "concealed". Oh how David tried to conceal the first of his evil deeds. Oh how politicians try to cover up their corrupt deeds. Oh how each of us tries to cover up our sins. Ultimately, these efforts are to no avail. In the end, the truth will come out if we try to do the cover up ourselves. In contrast, when God forgives our sins, they are truly covered. Isn't that a huge relief? You don't have to do it yourself. God will do it for you, if you confess your sins to Him, repent, and ask for forgiveness.

The third phrase, "not impute", means "not think about, not consider". Our God is infinitely greater than any man: when He forgives our sins, He forgets they ever happened. David celebrates these blessings in another Psalm:

"He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us" (Psa 103:10-12).

This concept continues in the New Testament where the word "justify" is used of God's forgiveness as if the sins never happened at all. What a generous God!

I like to carry my own sins

God is so great and yet even in all this we like to carry our sins around for a while, even sometimes for a lifetime. There's the story of an old man in early America. He's walking down the cart path with a 50 pound sack of potatoes. A man in a horse-drawn cart comes along and offers him a ride. The old man climbs into the cart. As they go along, the driver sees that the old man is still holding the heavy sack on his shoulders. He asks the old man, "Why don't you drop the potatoes in the back of my cart?" The old man replies, "No, I don't want to make a bigger burden for your horse!" Isn't that ridiculous? Aren't we ridiculous? We carry our sins "righteously" we think, and the cart is there to drop them off. And no, it isn't

a bigger load on the horse! So, *“let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us” (Heb 12:1).*

Definitions of confession

Next, we'll look at two definitions of “confession”. The first is from the Old Testament: the Hebrew word “yadah” literally means “to hold out your hand” and can mean all sorts of things. One meaning is hiding stolen candy from the candy jar and your mommy telling you to reveal what you are hiding in your hand. A second is illustrated by the following word picture. Suppose you are walking through a jungle and you fall into a pit that is hidden by jungle leaves. You are deep in this pit and you panic, trying as you can to get out. But you can't! You try everything. You are desperate. Looking for roots, rocks, footholds, try as you might you cannot get out. Finally you give up; you cannot get out by yourself. Then in that moment of despair you lift up your hand towards God and His hand meets yours and He lifts you out. You have held out your hand to make peace with God and He extends His hand to meet yours.

The lesson is to stop trying to crawl out of the hole we are in, because God's hand is always within reach.

The second word is from the New Testament: the Greek word “homologeō” combines “homo” meaning “same” with “logeō” meaning “logic” to form the concept “to think the same”. It's that epiphany we have when we have messed up where we slap our forehead and say, “What was I thinking?” Finally, we agree with God and realize our thinking was flawed.

Confession pitfalls

Here are a couple examples where our confession thinking is not the same as God's. The first type is the “backhanded confession”. Have you heard something like this? A man says to his wife, “Honey, you're so pretty I don't even notice the 25 pounds you've put on!” How do you think that will go over? In the guise of a compliment it is really a jab, a big one. We must watch our confessions because they can go just like that. “Yes, God, I messed up, but they were so bad too.” “Yes, God, I went over the line, but they were teasing me.” “Yes, God, I was gossiping, but everyone was doing it.” Do these confessions sound ridiculous to you? We've all done them; sadly, we routinely catch ourselves doing them. Think three times before confessing to someone. The first two will likely have some backhandedness to them.

The other example of confession mis-thinking is that many confessions are not specific. If your son came to you with bruises and a broken steering wheel in his hand and said he's sorry, but that's it, how would you feel? You are going to be curious about what happened and demand some kind of explanation. Maybe we do well in our private prayers in this regard, but at least sometimes, perhaps when it's late and we're tired, we resort to a common non-specific line, “God, forgive me for all my sins.” Have we really “held out our hand” to God? In our public prayers, what kind of detail is in them? The public prayers of Nehemiah, Daniel, Ezra, and others were quite graphic in their confessions of the sins of Israel.

Definitions of repentance

There are three Bible words (two Hebrew and one Greek) for “repentance”. The order these are revealed in Scripture is likely an intended progression. The first word “nacham” means “to breath out, groan, lament”. It is a gasp, an emotional discharge because you are sorry. The second word “shuw” means “to turn back, go to the starting point”. A modern way of saying this is “a do-over”, or in golf terms, “a mulligan”. If a police officer has ever given you a warning instead of a ticket, you know the idea. After it happens you become a model citizen. You got a do-over and you learned your lesson. This is the idea. The third word “metanoeo” means “to think differently”.

If you put these three words together you get a complete picture of repentance, and it reflects all that we can do. The sigh is the emotional element, the turning back is the action element, and the changing our thinking is the intellectual element. In doing these three things, we mirror David’s repentance. Audit yourself to prove it.

A rich language

David’s phrases in Psalm 51 provide a rich vocabulary for penitence; the following phrases are taken from the KJV, NIV, The Message, and other translations:

“Have mercy upon me, O God... Wipe out my bad record... I know how bad I’ve been – my sins are staring me down... Against You, God, only have I sinned... Cleanse me with your forgiveness and I will be clean... Scrub me, and I will be whiter than the snow... Hide your face from my sins... Blot out my iniquity... Create in me a pure heart... Renew a steadfast character from the chaos in my life... Do not cast me from your presence... Or fail to breathe holiness in me... Restore in me the joy of your salvation... Grant me a willing spirit to sustain me... Save me from bloodguilt... Going through the motions doesn’t please you... A flawless performance doesn’t please you... You desire of me a broken spirit, a contrite heart.”

Conclusion

Sometimes we think there is some insidious checklist and if we don’t score 85% or higher then God will be displeased with us. So if you take all these definitions and see your deficiency, well, that’s what it’s all about. You do lack. Your confession, forgiveness of others, and repentance are not complete. Think of it this way. When your lovely child comes to you and is crying and full of remorse for something they’ve done, don’t you find yourself eager to comfort and encourage them? They will not say the perfect words; they will not restore the prized coffee mug to an unbroken state, but you will be forgiving them even before their inadequate words can be spoken. So much more is our heavenly Father eager to forgive us: *“Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him”* (Psa 103:13). Confession and repentance are the essential starting points for forgiveness. Give up on the do-it-yourself approach and hold out your hand to God. He will lift you up and fill in all that is lacking!

Next: We must forgive others

David Lloyd (Los Angeles Hispanic, CA) and Joe Hill (Austin Leander, TX)

One, But Not the Same; Bible Evidence for Gender Roles

(2) Teaching and Examples from the Old and New Testaments

This is the second in a four-part series; Part 1 was about understanding Biblical oneness and presented God's gender roles from creation, and Parts 3 and 4 will consider some of the most common objections to gender roles as taught in the Bible.

Male headship in the Old Testament

We've already seen (in last month's article) how the Law of Moses taught that men and women were equally responsible for sin and equally able to attain salvation. However, this shared responsibility between men and women was operated under the overarching spiritual leadership of men in a system designed by God. The following are just a few examples to show that God consistently placed men in positions of leadership and teaching under the Law:

- Before Israel was a nation, the blessing from God and the promises were passed down through the males in the family, usually the firstborn males. In the nation of Israel, the inheritance was passed down through sons (in the case of the daughters of Zelophehad who had no brothers, Moses told the daughters *according to the word of the LORD* that in order to receive their father's inheritance, they must marry men from their own tribe (Numb 36).
- The heads of each family in each tribe were always male (Numb 1:16). The princes over each tribe were always male. Wise men were chosen in the wilderness to judge among the people (Deut 1:13-15).
- Aaron and his sons were the priests of the congregation. This was a matter of lineage, and not a matter of who had the most priestly skill or merit. Note that this limited not only women in the congregation, it also limited anyone outside of Aaron's family; a man from Judah or Dan could become a judge, a prophet or a hero of the people, but he could not be a priest, not without disrupting God's order.
- The priests' role primarily involved overseeing religious service and teaching the congregation (Deut 20:2-3; 24:8; 2Kgs 17:27; 2Chron 15:3; Neh 8:8-9; Mic 3:11; Mal 2:7). There could never be a female priest without disobeying God's design.
- Although there were some female prophets and one female judge, all of the known authors of the Old Testament were men. As far as we can tell, God consistently chose to preserve His message to believers through men.
- Finally, God promised to bring redemption through a male child, God's only-begotten Son, who would follow the lineage of the male kings of Judah and sit on David's throne. This process required a faithful virgin, of course; but the King himself would be male.

Remember my disclaimer in "Part 1" of this article? I'm not seeking to show all of the ways women served God in the Old Testament — to do so would take an entire book. The list above does not exclude faithful women from having an im-

portant place in God's plan, but it does show that the job of leadership – especially in teaching – was carved out specifically for men. This isn't because men are said to be better suited for this job, but to draw believers' minds back to Adam and forward to Christ. Taking the total message of the Old Testament guidelines for religious service, it seems that the Hebrews were meant to see the roles given to Adam and Eve at creation as extending over the whole congregation and applying to all men and women.

Male headship in the New Testament

Wait a minute, you might be thinking ... the priestly system of the Law doesn't apply to believers in Christ! The specific roles of the Aaronic and Levitical priesthoods may have ceased, but the examples of male leadership in God's design do not stop with the book of Malachi. If they did – if this precedent was only visible in the Old Testament – we might have greater reason to question whether God still desires a difference in Brothers' and Sisters' roles today. However, this isn't the case. The overarching theme of male headship in the Old Testament continues in the examples and instructions given to the ecclesia of Christ.

Just like in the law, ecclesial hierarchy in the New Testament doesn't take away from the spiritual responsibility or salvation of Sisters – instead, it outlines a functional relationship that is meant to teach a spiritual lesson. Paul explains this hierarchy in 1Cor 11:3: *"But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God."* This verse outlines three separate relationships:

- 1) God is the head of Christ.
- 2) Christ is the head of "every man" (Christ's body; the saints).
- 3) Man is the head of the woman.

In this verse, we see that men and women are both under the headship of Christ, with all of us being a part of his body. However, there is also a way in which women in the ecclesia are under the headship of men. The word for head (Strong's #2776) can mean the literal head of a body, or can be metaphorical for anything supreme, chief, or prominent. It's easy to see how a physical head can represent leadership or prominence; the human head directs the body, and the body gives the head the ability to accomplish its purposes. The body would not be able to accomplish anything without the head, neither the head without the body — a point which Paul makes in 1Cor 11:11 by saying *"Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord"*. The physical head must care for the body by protecting its health and well-being, and must listen to the body in order to benefit from its help and to discern its needs. Finally, the head is the only part of the body that has a mouth; therefore, the head communicates for the body. This mini-parable alone isn't sufficient to describe the New Testament's teaching on this subject, but using Paul's imagery gives us insight into the mind of God, and how He sees the ecclesia. How does this work out practically? One way is that Brothers are specifically given the jobs of teaching and leadership over the ecclesia. We learn this from the New Testament's explicit instruction, and from the examples we have of the way the first century ecclesia operated.

1Tim 2:11-12 is one of the specific instructions on this subject: *“Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.”* To understand this passage, first we have to understand what is meant by women learning *“in silence”*. The word for *“silence”* (Strong’s #2271) doesn’t mean absolute silence, as when a person is muzzled or dumb — rather, it means quietness. To get a clearer picture of what kind of quietness is meant, we can look at another passage where the same word is used:

“For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies. Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread” (2Thess 3:11-12).

It doesn’t say that these busybodies are never to utter a single word — instead, they are to hold their tongues and keep their peace. This is not the same as being muzzled from speaking, but rather, making a conscious choice not to speak. In contrast, when you’re a teacher, your role is clearly to speak out, be heard, challenge, educate, and exhort an audience.

How should this quietness be exercised? The next verse tells us: *“But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence”* (1Tim 2:12). The way a Sister in Christ chooses quietness is by abstaining from both teaching and usurping authority. But is this saying that a woman may give no instruction at all, to anyone? The first two ideas in this phrase are parallel, meaning that the terms *“to teach”* and *“to usurp authority over”* both relate to the following phrase *“the man”*. Sisters are simply instructed not to teach or have authority over men in the ecclesia, but rather, to learn in quiet peace. In contrast, men in the New Testament ecclesias are never commanded not to teach women or their fellow men, but women in this verse are specifically asked to refrain from teaching men.

The word for *“teach”* here is *didasko* (Strong’s #1321), meaning *“to give instruction.”* There is nothing in the word *“teach”* that means anything other than *“teach”* — it is the common New Testament word for instruction. The word for *“usurp authority”*, *authenteo*, is said by Vine’s Expository Dictionary to mean *“to exercise authority on one’s own account, to domineer over...to usurp authority...to have dominion”*. This verb is translated *“to have authority”* in the NIV, and *“to exercise authority”* in the ESV. It is clear that teaching and leadership are being addressed, and all we have to do is look at the next time chapter to see what kind of authority Paul is referring to – 1 Timothy 3 contains instructions for ecclesial leaders, and specifies that a bishop must be *the husband of one wife*. This language tells us that positions of ecclesial authority were supposed to be held by men.

If we’re wondering how these instructions from Paul work out practically, the tense of the verb in these verses can give us some insight. Rather than using the Greek aorist tense, which means a simple event or happening, he used the present tense, meaning a condition or process. This sounds more complicated than it really is: for example, the Greek word *“to serve”* in the aorist tense means to serve on one particular occasion, whereas in the present tense it means *“to be a servant”*. Here’s an example of a passage where the distinction between the aorist and the present

tense is important: 1John 3:9, which says, “*Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin*”. If read in the aorist tense, it would seem to mean that if you commit a single act of sin, you are not born of God. However, John used the present tense in this verse, which takes on the meaning of being a continual sinner. The New American Standard Version translates this verse with more attention to the verb tense: “*No one who is born of God practices sin*”. In 1Tim 2, Paul used the Greek present tense when he said “*I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority*”. He was therefore not talking about incidental teaching, where a Sister might, in answering a question for example, convey a truth to a Brother. Sisters shouldn’t worry about disobeying Paul by accidentally teaching something; it’s just saying that the role or position of a teacher or leader in the ecclesia is not for Sisters.

1Cor 14:34-35 sheds further light on these instructions: “*Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience as also saith the law. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.*”

The word used for “speak” (Strong’s #2980) means the literal act of uttering words, and it is also the New Testament word used for “preaching”. These verses rule out taking on a teaching role in the ecclesia. So we don’t make the mistake of thinking that these verses are directed at just one group of disorderly women in Corinth, we can see the two uses of the phrase “*in the churches*” in verses 33 and 34, showing that Paul meant his instructions to be applied throughout all the ecclesias of Christ. If we’re wondering whether these are merely guidelines that we can pick and choose whether to follow, verse 37 makes it plain: “*If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord*”.

We base our Christadelphian practices on these “*commandments of the Lord*”, but we also see these principles reinforced by the way the first century ecclesia conducted itself. The following are just a few of many examples:

- Jesus had women ministering to him (Mark 15:41), but he designated 12 men as apostles and sent them out to preach (Luke 9:1-2).
- Jesus told his 12 disciples that they would sit on 12 thrones in His kingdom (Matt 19:27-28), continuing the leadership position they would take after his death. After the death of Judas, the twelfth apostle was also a man chosen by divine lot (Acts 1:24-26).
- When it came time to appoint an apostle to the Gentiles, Jesus appointed a man, Paul.
- Although women were undoubtedly involved in the workings of the ecclesias, and sometimes received mentions from Paul, his descriptions of bishops (or “overseers”) and elders showed that these roles were meant for men; they use male pronouns throughout and refer to the qualified men as *husbands* (1Tim 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9). We do not read of Sisters taking these roles.
- We consistently read in the book of Acts of men leading the Jerusalem Council, men standing up to speak and preach, men leading the committee for the

widows' ministration, men collecting and conveying the Jerusalem fund – the overwhelming evidence of Acts consistently places men in speaking and leadership roles (Acts 2:14-16; 4:34-37; 6:1-6; 11:30; and 13:1 to name a few).

- And finally, no New Testament book was penned by a Sister — God chose to leave His instructions on record for the future ecclesia through Brothers.

I'll re-state my disclaimer again: my purpose in this article is not to detail all of the ways in which a woman can serve the Body of Christ, except to say that apart from the roles involving teaching and leadership of men, the whole spectrum of service is open to her. For a Sister who wants to be involved in teaching of some sort, there are a myriad of options available, but one in particular stood out to me in my reading: women are specifically called to teach other women.

"The aged women likewise, that they be in behavior as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed" (Titus 2:3-5).

Older women are given a special vocation to teach younger women about self-control, purity, and what it means to be a Godly wife and mother. How many of us who are enthusiastic about speaking and teaching have pursued this particular Biblical calling to the very best of our abilities?

More than just a symbol

At the beginning of this article, I asked whether you know how to answer the question: "Why do we do it that way?" When researching this subject, I expected to find one or two New Testament passages that explain the Biblical, complementary roles of Brothers and Sisters, and I thought that this would be enough to summarize the Bible's position. Instead, what I found was a wealth of evidence in both the Old and New Testaments supporting God's design for male teaching and leadership, complemented by female help, submission and support. I learned why these roles are sometimes very difficult for us to perform; after all, our predecessors, Adam and Eve, failed to live up to them from the beginning of creation, and we share their nature. I learned that Biblical roles are a teaching device, and that we should be able to look at our ecclesias and see Christ and his Body in our Brothers and Sisters. By understanding and living our roles, we can learn what it would have been like in the Garden of Eden if Adam and Eve had worked together from the beginning.

Some of us may find that Biblical gender roles seem meaningless to us; after all, if men are no more spiritual, talented or intelligent than women, why would God want us to behave differently? Does He want us to have different roles just for the sake of ritual role-playing? When we make this complaint, we're forgetting a characteristic of our God: He loves symbolism. He uses symbols throughout the Bible to teach His children, and He doesn't want us to just observe them academically, from the sidelines: He asks us to jump in, to experience and engage in them personally. Think of all of the sacrifices, feasts and priestly responsibilities

contained in the Law, the powerful metaphor of baptism, and how every week, we take the bread and wine in symbolic remembrance of Christ's body and blood. The repetitive ritual of the breaking of bread isn't just empty role-playing for us — it's representation! God chose for us to be saved by the representative sacrifice of Christ, and representation and symbolism are an inescapable part of our lives as believers. In the same way, the symbols of head and body in the ecclesia are meant to draw our minds to Christ and teach us to obey him even when it is difficult. There is power in training ourselves to think like God, to truly love these symbols and to spend our lives participating in them.

It's never easy to go against the grain of our culture, or our nature. But that's exactly the kind of courage we need to cultivate. The world changes, but God's principles remain the same, which is why true believers all over the world and throughout time — from the 1st century ecclesia to the 21st century ecclesia — can meet together in fellowship. We believe in a God whose ways are higher than our ways, whose teachings transcend cultural barriers and withstand the test of time.

If it hasn't happened already, it probably will — someone will ask you, "Why do we do it that way?" Will you know how to answer?

Tara Laben (Baltimore, MD)



Letters

Dear Editor,

In the December, 2011 issue, Bro. Morgan comments on Paul's words in Romans 5:12: "*Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.*" Bro. Richard writes that all men die not because Adam sinned, but because each person is a sinner individually worthy of death (excepting, the Lord Jesus). Unfortunately, this completely reverses the overall point of Rom. 5:12-21.

Paul's exposition is that God has been consistent in His principles. As by **one** man — death; so by **one** man — life. Furthermore, elaborating: that as by **one** man — judgment, condemnation, sin reigning to death; so by **one** man — justification, righteousness, grace reigning to life.

The key word in these verses is "**one**" making the point of God working on the basis of, as Bro. John Carter terms it, "federal heads". God gives opportunity of "life" to "many" because of the obedience of the **one** man, Jesus Christ.

Every one of us has earned death "for that all have sinned". So in Romans 5:12 Paul both states the federal head principle and refutes (actually as a parenthetical statement) any idea that God has dealt unjustly with us as individuals.

A major reason Paul wrote Romans was to help the brethren answer Jewish challenges that he knew, from his own past experience, would be thrown at the ecclesia. We'd suggest one of these issues was the Jewish objection to the heart of

the gospel: **one** man's perfect obedience opened the way to life for many others. The Jews would argue each person must establish themselves personally righteous before God. Paul's response to this was that if one accepts that **one** man's sin lead to death for all! So it is perfectly consistent that **one** man's righteousness can lead to life for all."

Your brother in Christ
Don Styles (Ann Arbor, Michigan)

Reply:

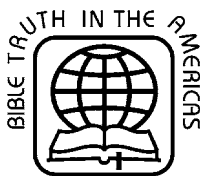
We do inherit from Adam our mortal state and the sentence of death that has come upon all mankind and so I do agree that Paul presents the federal head principle. But we do not die because Adam sinned otherwise we could charge God with being unrighteous for condemning everyone to death because someone else sinned — "the soul that sins it shall die". The way I read Romans 5:12 is that we die in Adam because we all sin, that is Adam represents us because he explains what we're all like. Even though babies die: if they had reached an age of maturity they would sin just like anyone else and so the sentence passed upon them would have been shown to be right. The weight of evidence is overwhelming that flesh causes sin and so all flesh dies as per the divine edict. So yes, we do inherit the sentence from Adam but it's because we are all sinners, not because we pay the price for Adam's sin. The extreme ideas that come from a misapplication of Romans 5 are things like "Original Sin" and "Substitution" needs to be put aside.

We also have to be aware that our Lord shared in our predicament. Being born of a woman under the law he came in the same flesh and blood nature as the rest of mankind and he showed on the cross that it was right that even a sinless man had to put the flesh to death. Eventually the flesh sins: it is the nature of the flesh to do such. Jesus was no different and he had to deal with sin at its source: the flesh. As a son of Adam he came under the same curse we are all born with, but with the important difference that he conquered sin, and subsequently death, by his complete repudiation of the flesh.

Your brother in Christ,
Richard Morgan (Book Road, Hamilton, ON)

"The explanation of Scripture is that the race as a whole is involved in the ruin brought about by the first head [i.e., Adam]; that a new head... a last Adam [i.e., Christ], has been raised up who has broken the entail [i.e., the inheritance of death from Adam]... that as men suffer the consequences of the first Adam's sin, they may share the last Adam's work of righteousness.

"A possible objection may be raised that it does not seem right that men should suffer the consequences of another man's wrongdoing. But leaving the Bible for a moment, is this not at any rate a fact in life? By heredity, the effects of evil lives are borne by generations who did not share in the wrong" (John Carter, Paul's Letter to the Romans).



Bible Mission News

Guatemala — “Day Zero” January 29, 2012

Guatemala is a bustling, busy city. In the middle of the maze of streets, buses, concrete buildings and shops of every specialty imaginable, there sits a little light stand, with its tiny flame burning steadily despite the darkness of the world around it.

The ecclesia in Guatemala is very young, and in its few years, has seen many ups and downs. Since its birth in 1995, with the baptism of one brother, the ecclesia has swelled to over 10 members, and then through death, the pull of the world, and discouragement, had dwindled down to three brothers. These three brothers have remained constant throughout the changing tides, and it seems that their patient continuance is bearing fruit.

Upon arrival in Guatemala City on Friday afternoon, we checked in quickly at our hotel, and headed to the hall to meet up with Bro. Jorge Trinidad, and Daniel Carlos Pelen, a young man hoping to be baptized. We spent over three hours with them, discussing the “things concerning the Kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ.” Daniel gave an excellent confession of his faith, quoting verse after verse of Scripture and reminding us that even in these dark days, there can be found a love of Scripture among the youth of the world. Yes, God-willing we would be witnessing the birth of another son of God at the end of the weekend!

Since there is no missionary presence in Guatemala at the moment, we try to ensure that the brethren receive a weekend visit a few times a year, either from neighbouring El Salvador, or from further abroad. Invitations to four public lectures (two on Saturday and two on Sunday) are mailed out to the many postal correspondence students. We were thrilled to have two brothers and a sister join us from El Salvador, to help with the events of the weekend. On Saturday afternoon, we held the first two public lectures, entitled “The angels which kept not their first estate”, and “The New Creation in Jesus Christ”. We had seven visitors in attendance — four of whom have been attending regularly for a long period of time. During the break in between classes, the hall echoed noisily with conversations in every corner of the building, centered around the Word of God. It is wonderful to see the excitement of those who are coming to an understanding of the Truth, after being taught fables their whole lives. Their enthusiasm bubbles over, and they nod excitedly during classes. It is definitely contagious!

On Sunday morning, during the memorial meeting, we joyfully witnessed the baptism of our new, young brother Daniel. He smiled all morning. He had taken the path to baptism very carefully and seriously and was rejoicing that the day of



his vow had arrived. We noticed that at the top of the page in his notebook in which he takes notes during classes, beside the date was written “Day Zero”. We ask that you join us in prayer for our Bro. Daniel, that he may be daily encouraged to continue in his new walk towards the kingdom.

The memorial service was followed by another two Bible classes. They were entitled “The

New Life in Christ”, and “Elijah and Elisha — Unlikely and Inseparable Companions”. This day, there were even more visitors in attendance, for a total of nine visitors! Again, the conversation was centered around the Word of God, and the beauty of the Truth. Two of the regular visitors, a married couple, have expressed their desire for baptism, and preparation is underway to that end, for the end of the year, God-willing.

After a few years of seeming ‘drought’ in the land, it is so encouraging to see that our Lord still is calling out a people for His name among the Guatemalans. We were reminded of how beneficial a missionary couple would be in this beautiful, historical city. One of my favourite hymns in the Spanish hymnbook, has these words as a refrain throughout the hymn (roughly translated into English!):

“Oh, Lord, there is much labour, and labourers are still needed. Give us light, fervent faith, and love; and labourers there will always be.”

Daniel and Ashley Robinson, CBMA representatives

A Visit to the Brethren in Lima, Perú

In 2009 I had travelled to Lima and met the first Christadelphians in Peru, brethren César Franklin and Julián Enríquez. I was very happy that now there were people in my native country who believed the same things I did and valued the word of God more than the things of this world. I met with them, their families and interested friends in a hotel in downtown Lima for a breaking of bread and a class on Psalms. We had a very nice time meditating on the Word.

Then in November of 2011 I made another trip to Peru and didn’t want to miss the chance to visit the Lima ecclesia. I found that there was now a third brother, Flavio Carmona. What great news! Although I was there for only a week, I was able to meet with the brethren on two occasions. The first time was on Sunday the 27th. My wife Megan, our children Paige and Owen and I met with César and Flavio at the latter’s house to break bread. I gave the exhortation, entitled “The Word and Its Challenge”, whose theme was that we should show the qualities of the Creator through our words and deeds. After the meeting we had refreshments and discussed the other places in the world where there were Christadelphians, there being a large map



of the world on the wall. We also talked about how Peru had changed in recent years. Afterwards I gave a talk on the rôle of prophecy today and news about the countries mentioned in Ezequiel 38. In short, as we are told in 2Pet 1:19, the prophetic word is sure and similar to a lamp shining in a dark place: it gives us hope and helps us to focus on what we

should be doing to ensure that we have a part in the coming Kingdom of God. We certainly had an encouraging day! I also discovered that the brethren met at Flavio's on Thursday evenings for a Bible class to help prepare Flavio's wife Gloria for baptism. More great news!

The second meeting was on the following Thursday, when I returned with a cousin of mine who is interested in the Bible. We met with César, Flavio, Gloria and their son Nahuel. (Brother Julián, whose wife Katia is also studying for baptism, was not able to be at the meetings because he had to work). That evening I gave a talk entitled "My Name is Legion",



pointing out the similarities between Isaiah 65 and Mark 5. The healing of the Gadarene demoniac symbolizes the sweeping changes which will be wrought on the earth when the kingdom of God is established (Isa 65:17-25) and illustrates the fact that after we have found the Truth and are baptized, we are clothed and come into our right mind (Mark 5:15; Gal 3:26-27). Finally, there was a reminder of the Lord Jesus Christ's call to announce to others what God has done for us: "Go home to your friends and tell them how much the Lord has done for you and how he has had mercy on you" (Mark 5:19). It was a very productive class with good questions and comments. Although it had been warm during the day (it was spring in Lima), the evening was chilly because of the wind. Since I was only wearing a short-sleeved shirt I lost my voice by the end of the evening and for the next few days. But what a great conversation we had!

Finally it was time to leave. The time had certainly gone by quickly. The visit to Lima was very pleasant and encouraging. My family and I took away some lovely memories of the brethren and their families. I pray that God will help them remain strong in the faith and will add more members to their little group.

Bro. Roberto Lara

Panama —The Red Devils Are Going!



Change is happening rapidly in Panama! The buses, affectionately known as “Red Devils”, which have been a means of transport throughout the capital and across the isthmus for over 50 years, are now being replaced by new air conditioned buses with provision for handicapped passengers.

Riding in one of these new buses is a far different experience from the past where loud music, coin-tap-

ping passengers, bold artwork both inside and out along with slogans often boasting the owner’s prowess, were part of a culture that is fast disappearing. Flying past the city towards the airport and seeing the high buildings reaching skyward is reminiscent of cities such as Miami, Florida.

Construction has now started on a subway system, a first in Central America. With all the changes happening in this hot tropical country which bridges the Americas, we can only wonder how the Truth will prosper in the rapidly expanding Panama City and the fast deteriorating city of Colon.

With few young people in the two ecclesias on each side of the isthmus, both groups are aging and only two sisters remain from the early work done in preaching during the 60’s. The faithful example of those who make up the ecclesias in Panama City and Colon is a joy to experience, as I was privileged to do for a week over the New Year. Brother Ian and Sister Nishla Neblett provided their commercial banquet hall for a buffet breakfast followed by two Bible Studies which were well attended by the brothers and sisters in Colon. The day following, Sunday, almost all the brothers and sisters from Colon travelled in three vehicles to Panama City where we enjoyed fellowship at the Breaking of Bread, a lunch prepared by the sisters and a further Bible study. These times of fellowship are precious indeed and become a very joyous occasion for the two groups who are quite isolated from each other by the distance across the isthmus, and even in Panama City itself it is now progressively more difficult to get around due to the increase in traffic. For the brothers and sisters to visit each other requires a bus ride of up to two hours each way and this limits the amount of fellowship that they are able to have during the week.

Looking back over the thirty-nine years since my wife, Beth, and I first arrived in Panama for a four-and-a-half year stay, I marvel how quickly this country has changed. I also give thanks to our Heavenly Father and to He “who walks amidst the lampstands” that there remains a remnant, a small group in this small but vibrant country, who keep the faith. Our prayers are with them.

Gordon Dangerfield

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

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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.)

BEDFORD, NS

The Bedford Ecclesia held its annual Study Day on September 17, 2011. We are grateful to Bro. Jim Harper (Meriden, CT) for giving the talks on the theme, "Pentecost Revisited". We were happy to welcome Bro. Jim and Sis. Esther to Halifax for the weekend, along with several visitors from Sussex, NB as well as interested friends from Nova Scotia.

Since our last communication we have been blessed with visits from the following brothers and sisters.: Phil and Jan Baines, Cliff and Julia Baines, Paul and Marie Baines and family, Margaret Jones and family (Sussex, NB); Clyde and Evelyn Snobelen, Pat Williamson, Myra Lucke, Elizabeth Bennett (Victoria, BC); Jean Pearson (Kinver, UK); and Margaret Pearson (Mt. Waverly, Aust.).

Work continues with Bible seminar contacts and we enjoyed our annual summer barbeque with these friends at the home of Bro. Michael and Sis. Ruth Carr.

Our ecclesia is still actively seeking more members through relocations.

Stephen D. Snobelen

BRANTFORD, ON

We have benefited from the fellowship and ministrations of our Bre. Stephen Whitehouse (Hall Green, Birmingham, UK), and Carl Parry (Salisbury, Adelaide, AUS) during their visit for the 2011 Ontario Winter Bible School and thank them both for their positive ministrations in this area.

God willing, we look forward to our annual Little Disciples and Junior CYC Gathering at Camp Trillium (formally Apps Mill) on February 11, 2012, and Senior CYC Gathering to be held on March 3, 2012, commencing at 12:30 pm, with Bro Daniel Cadieux (Mississauga West, ON) speaking on the subject "Elisha: Power is Salvation".

Daniel Billington

BROOKLYN, NY

We rejoiced at the baptism of AKEEM DUESBURY, son of Bro. Ian and Sis. Wendy, having diligently gone through Sunday school, CYC, and a course of one-on-one instruction. The Duesbury's are originally from the Mocha-Arcadia Ecclesia in Guyana.

A new outreach group comprised of retirees from our meeting and neighboring South Ozone Park has commenced weekly outdoor preaching at various key locations in the metro area. So far, we have had three encouraging sessions in the downtown Brooklyn area and we have now moved to the Queens area.

We have had some visiting brothers and sisters over the past couple of weeks: Ronald Badlu (Sarasota, FL); Sis. Merle (Kingston, Jamaica); Jeremy Venn and Jamin McGrath (Queensland Aust.); and Bro. Gerald and Sis. Margaret from the UK. Our apologies if we left any one out.

Visitors are advised that our meeting has remain unchanged. Sunday Breaking of Bread is at 10:00am; Sunday school and workshop is at 12:15 pm and Wednesday Night mid-week Bible class is at 7:45 pm.

Clive Drepaul

CRANSTON, RI

We rejoiced with the angels in heaven as we witnessed the baptisms of NATHAN and JAMIE CLARK on Saturday evening, November 13, 2010. Bro. Nathan is the son of Bro. Chris and Sis. Bonnie Clark. On Sunday, May 8, 2011, BETHANY SOUCY, daughter of Bro. Gerard and Sis. Jane Soucy was baptized into the saving name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We have further cause for rejoicing with the parents, grandparents and great grandparents, and give thanks to our heavenly Father for our two new youngsters born just weeks apart in the ecclesia. A son, Harrison Edward Nevers was born October 6, 2011, to Bro. Morgan and Sis. Kayleigh Nevers. Also, a son, Renzio Daniel Virguetty was born October 15, 2011, to Bro. Dennis and Sis. Tiffany Virguetty.

Our CYC hosted their Annual Spring Bible Study Weekend May 13-15, 2011. Bro. Daryl Rose (Toronto West, ON) presented the study on "Parables". We enjoyed the visits of a good number of young people and brothers and sisters from New England and beyond.

Bro. Brandon Entwistle of our ecclesia is presently in Shanghai, China teaching English language at a literacy facility. He meets with a small ecclesia, presumably in Shanghai, made up of three sisters in Christ and an English brother who is also the interpreter. We miss Brandon's enthusiasm and dedication to service and are sure he brings these same qualities to the small ecclesia in China.

We thank the Wachusett, MA Ecclesia for hosting this year's New England Christadelphian Fraternal Gathering in October. Our public Bible talks on the theme, "The Bible: the Book for Today" continue. We thank the following Brethren who have presented the Bible talks and have also brought us the word of exhortation: Steve Smith, and Bob Corbeille (Granite State, NH); Jim Burns and Eric Pride (Westerly, RI); and Scott Nevers (Wachusett, MA).

The Learn To Read The Bible Effectively Seminar was discontinued for the summer months and has recently resumed with three of the six interested ladies returning.

Our sympathies are extended to Sis. Robin Rocha and her husband Jack and to their family on the death of their daughter Jennifer, 27 years of age. Jennifer battled the ravages of cancer for many years and finally succumbed to the disease.

The ecclesia held a New Year's Bible Study Weekend. We were very pleased to have Bro. Ryan King (Richmond Petersburg, VA) lead the classes on the theme, "Choose You This Day Whom You Will Serve." Our weekend began Friday, December 30, 2011, with a pre-New Years Eve dinner and the first Bible study followed by three classes Saturday, and concluding New Year's Day with the word of exhortation and the final class followed by a pot-luck luncheon. The weekend was very well attended.

Paul Haughton

ECHO LAKE, NJ

We commend our Sis. Jean Drepaul to the South Florida Ecclesia having moved into the area and we pray that she will be happy in her new ecclesia and surroundings.

We report that Bro. Cedric Joseph has removed himself from membership and is now therefore no longer in fellowship.

We have been pleased and privileged to have the company of a number of visiting brothers and sisters and we have welcomed them around the table of the Lord: Margan Packie, Virginia Packie, Carolyn Antonaccio, David and Maryann Jorgensen, and Mabel Knapp (Union, NJ); Ruthann Jorgensen (Rochester, NY); Matthew Link and Cornelius Kellet (Washington DC); Sandy and Janice Piskura (Meriden, CT); Steve and Cheryl McKay (Cambridge, ON); and Margaret Cummings (Moorestown, NJ).

Stewart Marsden

HONESDALE, PA

We were very happy to have had Bro. Steve Cheetham (Moorestown, NJ) visit us and give us a wonderful exhortation on January 22, 2012. We also had visitors; Denise Kowal and her daughter Rachel and her son Ryan, Jessica Lurvey and her daughter Morgan, and Lennis and Sarah Lubrano. Afterwards the sisters hosted a great luncheon with an Italian theme.

A dear brother in Malawi, Southern Africa has asked for prayers due to the fighting and hunger in that country. Prayers for all Christadelphians and for all people in that country would be appreciated.

Stephen J. DeMarco

JASONVILLE, IN

We are pleased to announce the baptism on January 14, 2012, of BRAYLON PERRY. We pray God's blessing will be with our new brother on his walk to the kingdom.

Ted Plew

LONDON, ON

We enjoyed the fellowship of Bro. Carl and Sis. Virginia Parry (Salisbury, AUS) over the New Year weekend. Bro. Carl led us in a study on "The Power of Prayer" and we thank him for his ministrations on our behalf.

Please note that the undersigned is now serving as Recording Brother. All correspondence should continue to be sent to P.O. Box 25651, London, ON, N6C 6B3 or to rbkidd@rogers.com. Tel. No. 519-690-0391.

Ron Kidd

ORLANDO, FL

The following visitors attended our meeting over the last few months: Phil and Jean Hale (Castleford, UK); Jim and Dorrie Dillingham, Moria McInturff, Eden McInturff, and Cassie Conover (Granite State, NH); Jonathan Nelson (Echo Lake, NJ); Julian and Sandra Baseley (Guilford, UK); Ron and Sue Walding (Spalding, UK); Maxine Hanson (Birmingham, UK); Alan and Nancy-Jean Markwith (Hamilton Ewen Road, ON); Alan and Sandra Walker (North Bay, ON); Leon Orr (FL); Jack and Louise Green (Ocala, FL); Stephen Lockyer (UK); Alan and Chris Mills (UK); and Brian and

Sharon Adams with Jacob, Abby and Caleb (Washington DC). Many thanks to those brothers who exhorted.

Randy Davenport

PITTSBURGH, PA

We thank our Bro. Ryan King (Petersburg, VA) for his excellent classes on the subject, "Choose You This Day Whom Ye Will Serve" presented at our CYC weekend in November. We are looking forward to our study weekend May 5-6, 2012, with Bro. Bill Link (Baltimore, MD) entitled, "Zechariah: The Lord Shall Yet Comfort Zion, and Shall Yet Choose Jerusalem."

We were pleased to welcome the following brothers and sisters: Kyle and Tyler Misko, Don and June Weingart, and Roger and Joy Snyder (Paris Avenue, OH); Valerie Ifill (Ann Arbor, MI); Andrew Fraser, and Zach Kemp (Washington DC); and Ian and André Nibloe (Caloundra, Aust.). We thank Bre. Ian Nibloe and Don Weingart for their encouraging words of exhortation.

Please note that the Recording Brother is now Bro. Len Budney. Please direct correspondence to him at pghecclesia@gmail.com, or by phone at 412-983-1970.

Len Budney

SUSSEX, NB

The Sussex Youth Camp is scheduled to be held May 18-20, 2012, with Bro. John Perks (Ottawa, ON) speaking on the subject, "Man's Wisdom versus God's Wisdom." To register for the Youth Camp please contact Sis. Marie Baines by email at: pandm6@hotmail.com or by postal address at: 140 Bryant Drive, Sussex, NB, Canada, E4E 5M9. Please include a \$25.00 deposit cheque.

Our Thanksgiving Gathering will be held on October 6-7, 2012, with speaker Bro. Bill Link (Baltimore, MD). Please note that our Memorial Services during July and August 2012, will commence at 10 am.

Cliff Baines

WASHINGTON DC

The Washington DC Ecclesia has enjoyed the visits of many brothers and sisters over the last several months. We thank the following brethren for their words of exhortation while visiting the DC Ecclesia: Jeff Gelineau (Semi Hills, CA); Jim Dillingham (Granite State, NH); John Woodward, Andy Bilello, and Allen Laben (Baltimore, MD); David King, (Richmond-Petersburg, VA); Michael Owen (Seaton, UK); John King (Brighton, Aust.); Jeff Smith (Simi Hills, CA); Craig McInturff (Shenandoah, VA); and Eric Pride (Westerly, RI).

We also report that Bro. Sandy and Sis. Janice Piskura moved back to CT in May and transferred their membership to the Meriden, CT Ecclesia. We shall miss them since they were very active in the ecclesia and always opened their home for many ecclesial activities. We pray that they will continue to grow in the Lord in their new ecclesia.

In June, Sis. Helen Gibson transferred to the West Houston, TX Ecclesia. We will miss her and were thankful for her pastoral help with our aging members. She had come to us from the Honesdale, PA Ecclesia.

Our heavenly Father has blessed the Washington DC Ecclesia with more future

additions to our Sunday school. On August 6, 2011, Rhys Patrick Amis was born to Bro. Andrew and Sis. Erin Amis, and on September 11, 2011, Cameron William Perry was born to Bro. Jon and Sis. Katy Perry.

In April 2011, we enjoyed fellowship with the members of the Baltimore, MD Ecclesia and many visitors to our Semi-annual Baltimore/Washington Gathering weekend. We would like to thank Bro. Jim Dillingham (Granite State, NH) who gave classes for the weekend on the subject of, "Speaking the language of God". In August 2011, we enjoyed a day of fellowship at Sandy Point State Park where we held our annual Sunday school picnic.

In November 2011, we had our annual family Bible camp at Camp Hashawha. We would like to thank Bro. Allen Laben (Baltimore, MD) who led us in a study on the epistle of James, "The Testing of your Faith and the Challenge of James".

We pray for God's care of our Sis. Abi Newth who left in November for a one year work assignment in China.

Please note that Bro. Robert Kling is the new recording brother for the Washington DC Ecclesia. All correspondence should be directed to his attention. We would like to thank Bro. Cory Crabill for his years of service as recording brother for the ecclesia.

Bob Kling

WORCESTER, MA

We thank our Bre. Steve Davis, Scott Hampton and Jim Sullivan (Boston, MA) for visiting and exhorting us during the last quarter. We have been blessed recently with the birth of a second son, Michael I. Page, to our Sis. Sarah and Kevin Page. Also, our Bro. Wayne Cortis and Sis. Anne Gauthier were wed recently. We pray our Lord will bless them all and keep us as we walk to the kingdom together.

Mark Fulmer

CHRISTADELPHIAN SENIORS' HOUSING

Rental accommodation for those fifty-five years and older is available in Simon Manor. We are accepting applications for future residents in our 11-unit building. All rooms are one bedroom and unfurnished for a low cost rental on a monthly basis. Included are free laundry facilities. Simon Manor is located behind the ecclesial hall in a single-story building. Residents must be able to care for themselves. Contact Bro. Bob Stodel, Simon Manor, 12-1431 Simon Road, Victoria, BC, Canada, V8X 3G9; 250-384-4456 or email rwstodel@telus.net.

For your holiday accommodation, Simon Manor has a one-bedroom, fully-furnished unit for rent at \$35 per night for up to two people with \$5 added for each additional person. There are special rates for long stays. The unit has twin beds in the bedroom and a double sofa bed in the living room. Contact us by mail Sis. Pat Williamson, 11-1431 Simon Road, Victoria, BC, Canada V8X 3G9; 250-721-4938; or email pwilliamson@telus.net.

Pat Williamson

Minute Meditation

How Do We React When Being Tried?

It is not what happens to us but how we react to what happens to us that makes or breaks us. William Arthur Ward observed, “In the face of unjust criticism we can become bitter or better; upset or understanding; hostile or humble; furious or forgiving.” In the face of any challenge, we can either rise to face it to the best of our abilities, with God’s help, or fall beneath it, succumbing to feelings of defeat, self-pity and anger. We cannot always control what happens to us, but we are responsible for how we react to what happens to us.

It is almost certain that sometime in our life we are going to be subjected to unjust criticism. Unjustness does not give us license to react in a sinful way to what others say or do to us. Consider how our Lord Jesus Christ faced this kind of treatment — he always reacted in the right way. Peter tells us, “when he was reviled, he reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously.” Paul also endured hardship and bad treatment: “Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling place; And labour, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it: Being defamed, we entreat: we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day.”

Notice that it was their own countrymen who mistreated both the Lord Jesus and Paul. The Jews did not like the gospel that Jesus and Paul preached, so they tried to shut them down any way they could. In our day when there are different opinions circulating in our community, it is possible some may try to shut down those with dissenting viewpoints rather than opening their Bibles and discussing the issues. Those of our own community may oppose us, but we do not have the right to retaliate and fight fire with fire. We must learn to put into practice those principles that both Jesus and Paul lived by and return good for evil. Reacting calmly can be difficult when we are being opposed for standing up for what we believe are true and right principles. Paul explains how when he was mistreated, “we were gentle among you, like a mother caring for her little children.” We need to remember that all of us are God’s children and to treat each other kindly, for Christ loves us all, died for us all, and is not willing that any perish but that all may come to repentance.

Paul advises young Timothy to “avoid foolish and ignorant disputes, knowing that they generate strife.” When there is strife, Paul’s approach is that “A servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will.”

When we fear that some in our midst are attempting to weaken or nullify our es-

sential first principle doctrines, it is right and proper to resist, but we must do so trying to redeem those in error. Paul knew that there will be those who oppose the Truth in every age. We should follow the approach that Paul told Timothy: we need to be gentle; we need to correct those who are in opposition that they may come to their senses, we need to keep on loving them even when we fear that they are going astray, and we need to pray for their recovery. Some may want to rush a quick fix to correct a problem, but patience takes time, and Paul advises us to be patient with our brethren, gently trying to help them to come to their senses, praying that God will grant them repentance.

There is no doubt that our community is being tried in these last days, and we must follow the example of Jesus and Paul and try to find the more excellent way. Jesus did speak up against the scribes and Pharisees who refused to hear his words and did not follow the law they claimed to uphold. But Jesus was so kind and patient with his little band of followers even as they quarreled among themselves as to which was the greatest. He simply got down on his hands and knees and washed their feet, even the feet of Judas Iscariot who had already decided to betray him. Jesus loved his disciples and worked with them to help them learn. He knew they were not perfect. Before it happened, Jesus prayed for Peter knowing that Peter was going to deny that he even knew his master.

Let us pray for each other. Let us willingly open our Bibles and search the Scriptures together, looking for the Truth that we may be one in spirit and understanding. Knowing that setbacks are likely, let us be willing to spend the time to be patient with one another; as our Lord is long-suffering towards us, may we be long-suffering with each other. Let us pray that the Lord will bless us and give us an answer of peace.

Robert J. Lloyd

Special Invitation

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

*You, your family and friends are invited to the
37th annual Church of God of the Abrahamic Faith Gathering
at Denison University in Granville, Ohio, July 23-29, 2012.*

*Main Speakers are Bro. Mark Whittaker (UK) — "Getting to Know Ezekiel";
Bro. Bill Link, Jr. (Baltimore, MD) — "Let This Mind Be in You: A Study of
Paul's letter to the Philippians"; and Bro. Roger Titman (Cleveland, OH) —
"James, Paul and the Jerusalem Council";*

*Special week-long evening series by Bro. John Bilello (Ann Arbor, MI) —
"In the Beginning, God Created"*

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

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

Coming Events (Lord Willing)

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

MARCH 2012

- 3 Brantford, ON** Senior CYC Gathering and basketball challenge with Bro. Daniel Cadieux (Mississauga West, ON): "Elisha: Power is Salvation." See www.brantfordcyc.com.
- 10-11 Echo Lake, NJ** Spring Study Weekend. Speaker: Bro Ron Kidd (London, ON). The theme will be "As it was in the days of Noah".
- 10-11 Paris Avenue, OH** Study Weekend. Bro. Nathan Badger (Cambridge, ON) speaking on the topic "Nehemiah — Building God's Wall, Building Godly Character."
- 24 Victoria, BC** Spring Study Weekend. Bro. Shawn Snobelen (Hamilton Book Road, ON) on "Lessons From The Sower" Contact Clyde Snobelen at csnobelen@csll.ca.
- 30-April 1 Men in the Truth Camping Weekend** at Lake Cachuma, CA. "How to be a Man of Courage" Leading your wife, disciplining your children, strengthening the brotherhood, and preaching to the world, when you'd really rather sit back and let someone else do it. Contact: Bro. David Lloyd davidrloyd@earthlink.net 818-352-6486.
- 31-April 1 Boston, MA** 21st Annual Spring Study Weekend. Boston Ecclesia, 48 Freeman Street, Stoughton, MA. Bro. Jason Cicero (Meriden, CT): "Stand Fast in the Liberty of the Gospel" — A Study of Paul's letter to the Galatians. Registration and coffee at 1:30PM Saturday. Classes begin at 2:00PM with three classes in the afternoon followed by dinner (provided), then one class on Sunday morning at 9:30AM followed by Memorial Service. Contact Bro. Jim Sullivan at 781-837-8865 or jimsulliv@aol.com.

APRIL 2012

- 6-9 Guyana Bible School** Eccles Hall. Speakers Bre. Clive Drepaul (New York) and Ian Neblett (Panama). Contact Bro. David Andrews bryannevis@hotmail.com.
- 6-8 Pacific Northwest CYC Easter Conference** at Camp Pringle, Shawnigan Lake BC. Bro. Richard Morgan (Hamilton Book Rd, ON) will lead the classes. Contact Bro. Dave Higgs daveandkess@gmail.com.
- 6-8 Toronto, ON** Fraternal Gathering at Silverthorn Collegiate, 291 Mill Rd., Toronto, ON. Speaker is Bro. Mark Vincent (UK). Contact: Bro. Peter Dulis pdulis@rogers.com.
- 7 New England Little Disciples Gathering** at Barton Center, N. Oxford, MA. A day of Bible study and activities for children Pre-K to 7th Grade. See our website www.nelittledisciples.com or contact Sis. Tammy Rundle nelittledisciples@hotmail.com or 781-829-4410.
- 7-8 New Westminster, BC** Fraternal Gathering. Theme: "The Empty Chair — 2 Corinthians". Bro. Horace ("Mac") MacPherson (Victoria, BC) is to lead the sessions.
- 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). Full details and on-line registration are available at the website www.adelaide2012.com.

21-22 Baltimore/Washington Gathering and Study day at Washington Christadelphian Ecclesia, 9240 Riggs Road, Adelphi, MD. Speaker Bro. Nigel Small (Echo Lake, NJ): "Joseph — Saviour of the World". Study day, Sat. begins at 1pm. Gathering, Sun. begins at 10:30am. Contact Bro. Bob Kling 301-498-5245 or rkling@acm.org.

21-22 Sussex, NB, Spring study weekend. Bro. Tim Young (Cambridge, ON) will lead us in a study of Hosea.

21 The Canadian Christadelphian Caring Network's Annual Seminar "Faith Challenges: Caring Strategies for our Spiritual Life". Speaker: Bro Jeff Gelineau (Simi Hills, CA). Site: Copetown Community Centre, Copetown, Ontario.

MAY 2012

11-13 Vancouver Island Sisters' Weekend, endorsed by the Nanaimo Ecclesia. The location is Beach Acres Resort, near Parksville, B.C. on Vancouver Island. The study leader is Sis. Jane Tunnell (San Diego, CA): "You Faithful Women of the Last Days". (Non refundable deposit required by April 1, 2012.) Further details contact Sis. Yvonne Rosenau, 6274 Dover Road, Nanaimo, BC V9V 1A8, or email yvonne2001@shaw.ca.

18-20 Sussex, NB Sussex Youth Camp. Speaker: Bro. John Perks (Ottawa): "Man's wisdom vs God's wisdom". To register contact Sis. Marie Baines, pandm6@hotmail.com or 140 Bryant Drive, Sussex, NB, E4E 5M9, Canada with a \$25.00 deposit check.

19-20 Prince George, BC Fraternal Gathering. Speaker: Bro. David Lloyd (Los Angeles Hispanic, CA). Theme: "Spiritual Muscle for Five Big Mistakes". Contact: Bro. Rod Massey 1masseyrd@gmail.com.

26 Ottawa, ON Eastern Ontario Study Day. Bro. David Levin (Baltimore, MD): "Early Genesis: the Forest, the Trees, the Weeds, the Deeds". Contact Sis. Ethel Archard elpis@sympatico.ca.

JUNE 2012

2-3 NY Fraternal Gathering at the South Ozone Park Hall, NY. Bro. John Pople has agreed to speak on Solomon and Delilah. Contact: Bro. Ben Drepaul yerubbaal@yahoo.com or (718) 847-9638.

8-10 New York Sisters' Retreat at The Inn, Pocono Manor, Pocono, PA. Teacher: Sis. Nancy Brinkerhoff (Denver, CO) : "Problems and Prayers". Registration deadline is April 15. Space is limited register early with 50% deposit. Entire weekend cost: Single \$376, Dbl \$288, Trp \$258 per person. Make check payable to "New York Christadelphian". Mail to Sis. Averil Ferguson, 814A Tilden Street # 5B, Bronx, New York, 10467. Contact Sis. Averil Ferguson (718) 881-8705 or email averilpsm23@juno.com.

24-30 California Christadelphian Kids Camp. Children 9-16. Teachers are Bro. Jim Cowie (AUS) and Bro. Dev Ramcharran (ON). Our theme is "Elisha". Cost is \$125 before Feb. 29, and \$150 afterwards. Register at www.kidscampcalifornia.com. Contact Bro. Tom Graham at tom@bigbrand.com.

30-July 8 Mid-Atlantic Christadelphian Bible School at Shippensburg University in Shippensburg, PA. Theme "Search me, O God, and know my heart" (Psa 139:23). Youth theme "I will Praise Thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made". Bro. Andrew Bramhill (Bracknell, UK): "The Lord Raised up Judges" (adults) and "Paul's Powerful Preaching" (teens); Bro. Jim Harper (Meriden, CT): "Meditations on the Ministry of Our Lord" (adults) and "What would you do?" (teens); Bro. Carl Parry (Salisbury Adelaide, South Australia): "Epistle to James — Be Ye Doers of the Word" (adults) and "How

judge ye? — Case studies based on Law of Moses" (teens). Information on website www.christadelphians.net/MACBS.

JULY 2012

1-7 California Youth Conference at Ojai, CA. An exciting week long of study and fellowship for ages 17 (or baptized) and up. The theme is Paul's Letters to the Thessalonians. The speaker will be Bro. Jim Cowie. Contact www.youthconferencecalifornia.com or Bro. Jason Hensley jason@speakingofhisglory.com.

8-14 Southwest Christadelphian Bible School at Schreiner University, Kerrville, Texas. The teachers are Bro. David Jennings (Pomona, CA, USA): "Scriptural Discipline" adults and "The Fundamentals of Bible Prophecy" teens; Bro. Stephen Mansfield (Golden Grove, Adelaide, AU): "1 Corinthians" adults, and "Ephesians" teens; Bro. Carl Parry (Salisbury, Adelaide, AU): "The Power of Prayer" adults, and "How Judge Ye" teens. Contact Bro. Shannon Strickland Shannonjeh@att.net. Reg. forms will be on our site soon: <http://www.planofgod.org/swcbs/swcbs.htm>

14-22 Eastern Bible School. Connecticut College, New London CT; Theme: "Thy Kingdom Come". Bro. Jim Cowie (Wilston, Brisbane, AUS) – "Events Subsequent to the Return of Christ" (adults) and "Cameos of the Kingdom" (teens); Bro. Jeff Gelineau (Simi Hills CA): "A Journey with Purpose" (adults) and "The Road Ahead" (teens); Bro. Nathan Badger (Cambridge, ON): "Micah: To Do Justly, To Love Mercy, and to Walk Humbly Before Your God" (adults) and "Is He Not The God of Gentiles also?" (teens). Contact Sis. Cindy Nevers at P.O. Box 296, Auburn, MA 01501 or cindy.nevers@tecbs.org or visit our website at www.tecbs.org.

14-21 Manitoulin Family Bible Camp on Manitoulin Island. The speakers for 2012 are Bro. Simon O'Grady (Tawa, New Zealand) and Bro. James Flint (Cambridge, ON). Speaker topics will be posted to our website later, www.manitoulinfamilycamp.com.

21-29 Midwest Bible School will be held at Hanover College, Hanover, IN. Speakers and their topics are Bro. Mark Vincent (UK): "Things Done Twice — God's Hand in the Life of Joseph"; Bro. Ryan Mutter (MD): "The Life of Timothy"; Bro. Jim Cowie (AUS): "The King's Manifesto for Life". For registration information, contact Bro. Mike Livermore, 24970 Woodridge Drive, Apt. 108, Farmington Hills, MI 48335, 248.462.5740, email: mike.live@gmail.com or visit www.midwestbibleschool.com.

22-28 Pacific Coast Christadelphian Bible School, Idyllwild, California. Speakers Bro. Joe Miles (UK): "Lessons of Elijah"; Bro. Stephen Mansfield (AUS): "Esther: A Time to Speak"; Bro. Chris Sales (ON); "Parables Unique to the Gospel of Luke". Contact Jeff Gelineau, 567 Astorian Drive, Simi Valley, CA 93065 Email: mail@gelineau.org. Register at www.californiabibleschool.org.

28-Aug 4 Christadelphian Bible Camp, Manitoulin Island. The theme is "Be ye Transformed by the Renewing of Your Mind" The speakers will be Bro. Con Mitsos (Woodville, South Australia) on the subject "Josiah The Great Reformer" and Bro. Roger Long (Grosvenor Rd, Coventry, UK) on the subject "From Upper Room to Resurrection". More details on website www.christadelphianbiblecamp.ca. For registration, contact Bro. Alex Browning at jabrowning@rogers.com or 1-416-284-0290.

29- Aug 4 Rogue River Bible School at Union Creek, OR. Speakers are Bro. Steve Mansfield: "Peter, The Fragile Stone that Became an Immovable Rock"; Bro. David Jennings: "Scriptural Discipline"; Bro. Jim Cowie: "The Prophecy of Zephaniah". Contact: Sis. Liz Posey RobandLizPosey@gmail.com

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29-4 Aug Western Christadelphian Bible School at Menucha Camp near Portland, OR. Speakers are Bro. Darren Guy (Halifax, UK): "Wrestling with Jacob"; Bro. Duncan Kenzie (N. Saanich, BC): "Twenty-First Century Discipleship"; Bro. Marco Dondero (San Mateo, CA): "The Prism of Judgement and Wisdom's Rainbow". Website www.menuchabibleschool.org, contact Sis. Jane Szabo, registrar, 541-563-4726.

AUGUST 2012

11-17 Niagara Falls Bible School. Theme: "Whatever you do — Work as unto the Lord". Contact Bruce and Barb Abel at 519-925-5297 or at bnb69abel@hotmail.ca.

18-24 Winfield Bible School the Easter Seal Camp in Winfield. The Theme: "That we may know him and the power of his resurrection". The Speakers Bro. Richard Morgan (Hamilton Book Rd, ON): "The Temptations of Christ"; Bro. Steve Hornhardt (AUS): "Come and See! Witnessing for Christ"; Bro. Tim Osborn (BC): "Blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus".

25-31 Vancouver Island Bible Camp at Camp Pringle on beautiful Shawnigan Lake. Speakers are Bro. Ron Hicks (USA): "Ezekiel — Son of Man"; Bro. Ian Dangerfield (AUS): "Crucified and Risen with Christ"; Bro. Nathan Badger (ON): "Micah — To do Justly, To love Mercy, and To Walk Humbly Before your God". Contact information (Sis) Yvonne Rosenau, 6274 Dover Road, Nanaimo, BC, V9V 1A8, Canada. Phone: 250 758-4569. Email: yvonne2001@shaw.ca. Website: www.vibiblecamp.com.

SEPTEMBER 2012

9-14 Adult Study Week at Wildwood Manor Ranch in Ballinafad. The week consists of daily interactive Bible Study, taken from the The Last Week of Christ's Life. Workbooks will be available. Participants may use their own camping equipment, or the covered wagons on site. There are also motels available nearby. The facilities used are provided by Sis. Annette Milne. All meals will be provided. Contact Bro Jack Robinson jcrobins@worldchat.com or Bro. Peter Stonell peter.maggiestonell@gmail.com.

15-16 Paris Avenue, OH Fall Study weekend. Bro. Matt Norton (Lismore, NSW AUS) will be speaking on "The Return of Christ".

OCTOBER 2012

6-7 Atlanta Area, GA Fraternal Gathering. Speaker Bro. Nathan Badger (Cambridge, ON).

6-7 Sussex, NB Thanksgiving Gathering. Speaker Bro. Bill Link (Baltimore, MD).

6-7 Washington, DC Music related study weekend led by Bro. Philip Munday.