

THE CHRISTADELPHIAN TIDINGS

of the Kingdom of God

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The CHRISTADELPHIAN TIDINGS of the Kingdom of God

Peter Hemingray, Editor

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"Get up!"

*I saw an expert skater once, performing on the ice,
and wondered how she learned to glide so gracefully and nice.
I asked her how she got her skill. She first began to frown,
Then smiled and said, "Why, I got up each time that I fell down."*

*I knew a great financier, whose riches were untold.
I marveled at his mighty nerve in taking chances bold.
Once, when we were alone, I asked the rich man of the town
The secret, and his answer was, "Get up whenever you fall down."*

*I heard a famous orator, whose ringing voice brought cheers,
And then, in soft and touching tones, evoked a flood of tears.
I asked this great man privately how I might win renown,
And, like the rest, he told me to get up when I fall down.*

*"He is a genius" is a phrase you often read and hear.
It means a man who plugs along with nerve to persevere.
You may be awkward at the start, and act just like a clown,
But if you want to win life's race, "Get up when you fall down!"*

Unknown

Editorial

Yahweh or LORD

“And as Esaias said before, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrha” (Rom 9:29).

Yahweh

Yahweh, the memorial name of God is nowhere to be found in the KJV of the Bible, although an old form, Jehovah, is to be found four times. In this, the vast majority of modern translations follow the same pattern: neither Jehovah nor Yahweh is to be found in the NIV, RSV, or ESV. However, almost all Christadelphians are very familiar with the term, because its use is very common in our community. This has been true from the earliest days. Starting in 1859, John Thomas wrote a series of articles which were later published as his study on God manifestation, *Phanerosis*. And on many occasions since then the meaning of the term, and its significance, has been expounded.

I do not intend to repeat this type of exposition, but the use of the term in our community. It has become common — almost universal in some ecclesias — for brethren when reading the Old Testament to substitute Yahweh wherever LORD occurs in the Old Testament

LORD

The memorial name of God customarily appears in the English versions as LORD. In the Hebrew the word behind this term is normally¹ originally represented by four consonants, YHWH, the “Tetragrammaton”. Very few vowels were included in the original text: the knowledge of pronunciation was passed on by tradition. Sometime around the sixth or seventh century A.D., a written vowel system was introduced known as the Masoretic System of Points (from the word “Massora” which means “tradition”). The consonantal text remained unchanged and the new vowel signs were not placed among the consonants but as tiny dots and dashes below or above them.

The Divine name presented a problem to the Masoretes because the Jews had for a long time regarded it with such awe that they would not utter it. So no one was absolutely certain how it should be pronounced and therefore what the original vowel sounds were. Nor did they wish that anyone should utter it. So they compromised by placing in the text the vowels of the Hebrew word Adonay with the consonants YHWH. Adonay is the word represented in the A.V. by “Lord” (‘ord’ in lowercase). The first “a” in Adonay is in Hebrew an “indistinct” vowel so we can see how the combination of YHWY consonants and Adonay vowels produced YeHoWaH or Jehovah. In their reading of the Scriptures to this day Jews still say the whole word Adonay when Yehowah appears in the text. Many scholars believe that the original pronunciation of YHWH was Yahweh, but this is by no means certain.

In the New Testament, in quotations from the Old, the Hebrew YHWH is invariably rendered as Kyrios, which perhaps indicates, through divine inspiration, a tradition established very early. Interestingly, in both Rom 9:29 and James 5:4, we have the term sabaoth, which in Romans is a translation of Isa 1:9, where the Hebrew is Yahweh Sabaoth (Lord of Hosts). So although Yahweh is translated by Kyrios, Greek for Lord, the Hebrew term Sabaoth is transliterated.

It might also be mentioned that in the Septuagint, the Greek Old Testament common in the first century, the word “Yahweh” nowhere occurs. Some have argued that this is because of early Christian influence, although there is no direct evidence of this I can see. So, for whatever reason, the early Christian Church never used the term “Yahweh”, preferring instead the Greek translation.

John Thomas never used the term Yahweh until he started studying the Divine Name in detail in 1859, when he commenced a series of articles entitled “The Mosaic and Nazarene Teaching Concerning God”, later issued as “Phanerosis”. Instead he had used “Jehovah”, starting from his earliest writings in 1834.

Present Day

Ever since I was baptized, I have heard many valuable expositions on the Divine Name, and indeed you can find well over 5,000 uses of the term in *The Christadelphian*, with no year missing at least one reference. Fifty years of *The Tidings* gives similar results, with well over 1,000 references. So the knowledge and awareness of the meaning of the Divine Name has been emphasized in our community since before the name “Christadelphian” was in use. But it was only in the late 1960’s that I remember first hearing the term used while reading the Old Testament. There was a great wave of enthusiasm that swept the UK at the time for the practice. I remember I had bought a copy of The Jerusalem Bible, mainly because as a Catholic Bible it contained the Apocrypha, which I was looking into at the time. But many noted quite approvingly of the fact that it often used the term “Yahweh” in the Old Testament. And thus the practice spread, with sometimes unfortunate consequences, at least in the UK.

By the late 1970’s, there were several ecclesias that had separated over this practice, some holding we ought to read the KJV as written, some holding that, out of respect for our Heavenly Father, we ought to use “Yahweh” for “LORD” where it occurs in the Old Testament. This area of dispute seems to have died down, but the tensions still survive. And in North America, a country now somewhat more traditional in Christadelphian ways than the UK, I would suspect that at least half the brethren will substitute “Yahweh” for LORD while reading the Old Testament and some will substitute “ecclesia” for church.

Yahweh

There are some quite powerful arguments for substituting Yahweh for LORD.

- Yahweh desires that all people “*know that his Name is LORD (Yahweh)*” (Jer 16:21), and we are privileged to have that great opportunity.
- The Name “Yahweh” is expressive of His purpose achieved through Jesus Christ. It means, at least in part, “He who will be manifested,” and thus ex-

presses the divine intention to recreate Himself in those who are 'like Him'.

- It is the importance and deep significance of the Name that delights those who so understand it, and who honor it in expression. It is the Name by which He has made Himself known in the original Scriptures.
- With the proliferation of so-called religions in our midst, it is important that we recognize that there is only one true god, who only is the creator of all things, and who has made known to us his name.

There are those who point out other aspects of this discussion:

- Neither in any manuscript of the New Testament, nor in the Greek version of the Old Testament, is there any hint of the use of the Hebrew name of our Heavenly Father.
- The reason for this has been much discussed. Whether the Greek speaking Christians, the majority audience of the New Testament, would not understand the meaning of the transliteration, or that the minority Jewish Christians would be offended, are only two of the many suggestions.
- It is only in the last generation of Christadelphians that this custom has arisen.
- The consistent advice of both *The Christadelphian* and *The Tidings* has been to counsel against insistence on the practice of substituting Yahweh for LORD in reading the Old Testament.
- All recognize the importance of emphasizing the vital importance of understanding the significance of the divine name, but this does not mean we should use the term is reading our modern translation of the Bible.

Conclusion

The arguments for and against the substituting Yahweh for LORD are, I believe, a matter of personal opinion. No-one would find any problem with emphasizing the meaning of the term LORD in expounding from the Old Testament, or in substituting Yahweh for LORD during such an exposition. And I have no problems with brethren who fell impelled to substitute the term when reading from the Bible at Memorial Service or during a Bible class. But I have concerns in two areas

- When we imply or state that those who do not follow the practice are in some way incorrect.
- When we follow the same practice when speaking to strangers, who know nothing of the background. So doing would tend to leave the impression of a cult, not a Bible-loving community.

Peter Hemingray

Notes:

1. In fact, 47 times in the KJV the Hebrew term translated by LORD is not Yahweh but YAH, as can be seen in the KJV at Psa 68:4, the only time it is transliterated as Jah. And four times we see Jehovah as a transliteration of YHWH. An interesting verse is Isa 26:4, where we have LORD Jehovah in the KJV, Hebrew Yah Yahweh.

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Exhortation

Eden

The Rivers of Eden

The early chapters of Genesis tell us how the world got to be the way it is. And woven into the accounts of God's creative work are details that may strike us as odd. When the Spirit takes up five verses of this tight narrative to tell us about what happened to the river after it left the garden, it may be useful to ask: Why do we need to know this?

Of course, the obvious answer is, so we can know where the garden was. However, I have seen several different analyses of this question based on the four rivers listed in Genesis 2, with basically three different conclusions: the garden was in (pick one), the Tigris-Euphrates delta in lower Babylonia, the highlands of central Turkey where the Tigris and Euphrates headwaters are very close, or even Jerusalem. There has been so much written on this subject with so little satisfying evidence that I think it's not really a useful question at this point. By way of illustrating the difficulty I'll just observe that the Genesis account describes the river dividing into four courses downstream of the garden. This is the kind of thing that happens in a river delta: the Nile delta is famous for its "seven streams", and the Tigris-Euphrates delta has similar features. But one of the four rivers, Hiddekel, is mentioned in relation to Assyria, which is far north of the delta. I think we have lost too much information over the centuries to understand this passage in a geographical sense. Nor do I believe the Scripture would have given so much space to this matter if it were simply about location.

So let's look at this passage from a different angle. What is described in Genesis 2 is, first of all, a river to water the garden: let us understand clearly that the purpose of the river is to water the garden. It is the provision of God, given to ensure that everything in the garden would live and thrive under the man's care. So, then, why do we need to know what happened to this river after it left the garden?

God who set up the garden also is the creator of the whole earth. He established the garden as a place for the man, who He created for dominion over the whole earth. The garden was not an end in itself: the careful description of the four rivers reminds us that the rest of God's creation also needed water. By His provision there was one source of water for the garden; it was more than adequate for the garden itself, so what remained watered a great portion of the land outside the garden.

In this great excess of God's provision were lessons for Adam as well as for us. First, God's provision for Adam and for the garden far exceeded anything needed for the purpose: He is not stingy provider, nor inclined to short-change us in our needs. Second, His generosity is not limited to those who are in His special care: *"the little dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their masters' table"* (Matt 15:27 NKJV). So the river, when it had done its job watering the garden, was given to the lands

outside the garden, to bring life there as well. The presence of the garden was of benefit to the parts of the world nearby, since the overflow of God's blessing fell on them. Third, Adam, looking out from the garden, would see a world not yet under his dominion, but fertile and promising: a world with dangers, a world untamed, but not lifeless or unrelentingly hostile. These same parts of the world were kept ready by God's blessing for the dominion of man, the more easily to be incorporated into the garden since they were already watered and fertile.

Expanding that last thought a bit, consider what Adam's role was in the garden. His assignment was "to tend and keep it." This too was of God's provision. And, as the man's abilities grew, he too would find he could do more than what God had told him to do: he could extend his care to the well-watered lands outside the garden. He was not assigned to do this, not directly, but if he knew of the four rivers, he would certainly understand the lesson: God does more than he really has to do; and He means for us to be like Him. And He meant from the beginning that man's dominion should extend over the whole of the earth. So the four rivers pointed in the direction man might follow, caring for a portion of the earth outside the garden.

One reason to think this is a good way to understand the passage is the mention of the treasures of Havilah. This appears to be a reference to the land later called Arabia. No one seems to know what bdellium is, but gold and onyx are used in the High Priest's vestments. That is, elements useful for the service of Yahweh. It is these that would come under the dominion of Adam were he to extend his care to the lands watered by the four rivers. That is, there are good things, things suitable for the service of God, outside the garden.

Adam was commanded to take care of the garden; and it would have been wrong for him to leave that task undone while seeking further dominion. But the divine commentary shows the potential advantage in expanding the garden when he should be able to do so. Again, there is nothing in Genesis 2 that directs Adam to do any such thing; but it does seem implicit in the record and in the overall purpose of God in making man.

The pattern we have seen is consistent with God's later revelation. In the Bible we see many instances of God's provision for His special people or their special place overflowing to the benefit of the world outside.

Rivers as Symbols

To use the symbol, in the days of Moses the river of the garden flowed with deliverance when God led His people out of Egypt: It flowed also to a mixed multitude of people who came with them.

In the days of Joshua the son of Nun, the river of the garden flowed with promises fulfilled for God's people: It flowed also to Rahab, who received her promise from the two spies, and to the Gibeonites, who won a promise by deceit.

The river of the garden flowed with redemption in the days of Boaz, the son of Salm-
on; it did not stop at the borders of the holy people, but went out also to redeem Ruth.

In the days of our Lord, the river flowed with the gospel of the Kingdom of God. It flowed first with the preaching of one man, then with 12, then with 70. It flowed through Galilee, then Judea; and it was not unknown outside those territories. The Syro-Phoenician woman came to him, the Roman centurion came to him, and certain Greek pilgrims approached his disciples at the end. The river flowed more abundantly after his resurrection, when 3000 answered the call to salvation in one day. It dispersed abroad, bringing life to the world. It gushed forth in Samaria, broke through in the household of Cornelius, and overflowed all its banks in the preaching of Paul and Barnabas and Silas.

The effect of this surplus of God's provision has been, time and again, not only to nourish and strengthen the garden, but to expand it by calling out of the nations people who would join themselves to the name of Yahweh. But there is more.

In the days of Jonah, the river of God flowed repentance and mercy for the people of Israel, but they did not respond. It flowed also to the men of Nineveh, who did respond and were spared. So the lands downstream can benefit from the provision of God even when the keepers of the garden do not. This happened again when the Jewish nation turned away the gospel of the kingdom: the river flowed on, and divided to all the gentiles as at this day. And it is certain that even where the gospel is poorly understood and the Father's will not obeyed, even in those wild lands outside the garden, the river has brought fertility and prosperity.

But the Jews, to whom the gospel came first, sought to dam up the flow — and they have as a result been left desolate, a desert. The prophets are emphatic in declaring Israel will be restored, that all her streams will be filled once more with the blessings of her God. In the kingdom, in the day when the gospel of the kingdom is fulfilled, Israel will once more be the garden of God.

No longer will Adam tend that garden, but the last Adam — a life-giving spirit. The river will flow out from below his throne. Zechariah says half the water will flow westward to the Mediterranean Sea and half will flow eastward to the Dead Sea; Ezekiel says it will render the Dead Sea a living sea, where fishermen will take their catch. And as true as this may be in the literal sense, surely it foretells the spirit of the day when the prophecy of Isaiah will be fulfilled.

"Do not remember the former things, nor consider the things of old. Behold, I will do a new thing, now it shall spring forth; shall you not know it? I will even make a road in the wilderness and rivers in the desert. The beast of the field will honor Me, The jackals and the ostriches, Because I give waters in the wilderness And rivers in the desert, To give drink to My people, My chosen. This people I have formed for Myself; They shall declare My praise" (Isa 43:18-21).

This is the time He foretells, when God will provide once more the waters of life for His people; and He will provide in such abundance that the wild animals of the desert can share in it. And of course, following the figure, all the Gentiles will enjoy the blessings of the Kingdom. The effect of this provision of God is declared very plainly by Ezekiel:

“Thus says the Lord GOD: ‘On the day that I cleanse you from all your iniquities, I will also enable you to dwell in the cities, and the ruins shall be rebuilt. The desolate land shall be tilled instead of lying desolate in the sight of all who pass by. So they will say, “This land that was desolate has become like the garden of Eden; and the wasted, desolate, and ruined cities are now fortified and inhabited.” Then the nations which are left all around you shall know that I, the LORD, have rebuilt the ruined places and planted what was desolate. I, the LORD, have spoken it, and I will do it’ ” (Ezek. 36:33-36).

Remember the people I mentioned earlier: the mixed multitude that came out of Egypt with Moses, Rahab and the Gibeonites, and Ruth. In all these instances, people who were not part of the holy nation responded to the blessings they found flowing out of Eden. They looked upstream, as it were, to find God the source, and joined themselves to Israel. Micah foretells a time when this will be widely practiced:

“Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and peoples shall flow to it. Many nations shall come and say, ‘Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths. For out of Zion the law shall go forth, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem’ ” (Mic 4:1-2).

All this we have to cheer us as we look forward to the Lord’s coming. Until that day we continue under his care, sustained by the same gospel of the kingdom, by the same instruction in the ways of God that he taught so long ago, and by this remembrance in bread and wine. This is more than a meager sustenance: even today the river flows through this place with such depth and volume as to make this garden fertile and beautiful under the care of our Lord the gardener; and surely our God even today provides so much more than is needed here, to bless our neighbors and our communities around us. Let the gospel go forth liberally as we have been blessed; and pray for our neighbors that they also might recognize the blessings of that river and look upstream to find its source, our Father, and to become part of His garden.

Jim Seagoe (San Francisco Peninsula, CA)

It might help us to remember that the ones who sigh, and whose hearts melt, and who faint at the thought of the coming events are those who do not have God. So when we ourselves find our own lives hit this level of depression, we need to pull ourselves up in the knowledge that God loves us and desires that we share in eternity. It is those who have forgotten this who sigh and faint (Isa 13:7; Nah 2:10).

Peter Cresswell

There is now a Facebook page for the **Tidings**. Hosted by Bro. Levi Gelineau, it currently posts the Daily Readings along with some other comments. In future we hope to add relevant News and Notices, so please “Like” this page. (Bro. Levi can be contacted at leviandjessica@gmail.com.)

Bible Study

Creation's Gospel:

(6) The Early and the Later Rains (Part 2)

Our previous commentary highlighted the spiritual theme of water being the word of God. Just as there are many physical conditions of water (rain, clouds, ice, snow, rivers, oceans, fresh, brackish, etc.) so there are variations in the application of the word of God. Examples would be the spoken word of God (creation), the written word of God (Bible), the word made flesh (Christ), the word in judgment and the word exercised in power. We have chosen to focus our initial consideration of how the features of creation demonstrate divine truths and principles, by examining the law of the early and the latter rains. This law is presented as a key component of the careful geographical design of the Promised Land.

The rain law

Egyptian crops were watered by irrigation ditches. However, Israel's fruitfulness was dependent upon rain, just as Israel's spiritual fruitfulness was dependent upon accepting and processing the rain-like word of God.

"But the land, whither ye go to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys, and drinketh water of the rain of heaven: A land which the LORD thy God careth for: the eyes of the LORD thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year. And it shall come to pass, if ye shall hearken diligently unto my commandments which I command you this day, to love the LORD your God, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul, that I will give you the rain of your land in his due season, the first rain and the latter rain, that thou mayest gather in thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil. And I will send grass in thy fields for thy cattle, that thou mayest eat and be full. Take heed to yourselves, that your heart be not deceived, and ye turn aside, and serve other gods, and worship them; And then the LORD's wrath be kindled against you, and he shut up the heaven, that there be no rain, and that the land yield not her fruit; and lest ye perish quickly from off the good land which the LORD giveth you" (Deut 11:11-17).

Yahweh emphasized a direct connection between receiving the blessing of the first rain and the latter rain to Israel's responsiveness exclusively to God's word.

The heaven and earth witnesses

Interestingly, God invokes the two witnesses that He had appointed to be the ones to first 'put their hands' against the accused. This would be heaven and earth. "I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day" (Deut 4:26). "At the mouth of two witnesses, or three witnesses, shall he that is worthy of death be put to death; but at the mouth of one witness he shall not be put to death. The hands of the witnesses shall be first upon him to put him to death" (Deut 17:6-7). If Israel did not maintain

the word of God nationally then the hands of the two appointed witnesses (heaven and earth) would be the first against the accused. The early and latter rains would be withheld and the land would not yield its fruit and they would perish from the previously good land the Creator had given them.

The three early rains and the three latter rains

The bond between the early and the latter rains and the word of God extends through the divine plan in practice and prophecy. Just as there are three components to the molecular construction of water (H₂O), so there were three applications of the word of God poured out as the early rains. This took place two 'divine' days ago (2 millenniums, Psa 90:4; 2Pet 3:8) and the same three applications of God's word will be poured out as the latter rains in the very near future (the third divine day). These three 'word of God subdivisions' qualifying as the early and latter rains are (1) the spoken word of God (New Testament), (2) the word made flesh (Christ) and (3) the word in power (Holy Spirit gifts). The time between these early and latter outpourings is prophetically defined as a drought of the word of God, in perfect compliance with this Scriptural/creational pattern.

The early and latter rains of the word made flesh

This time frame between the early and latter rains is identified by Hosea.

"Come, and let us return unto the LORD: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up. After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight. Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the LORD: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth (Hos. 6:1-3).

The reviving and living after two days refers to the resurrection about 2,000 years after the ascension of our Messiah (after two days). We are told Yahweh would come to us as the rain, as the former and latter rain upon the earth. We are the 'earth' in this prophecy, as that is our composition. Adam was made of dirt. We are dust and to dust we shall return. Yahweh came to the enlightened through His son as the early rains, the planting rain. He will come again through Christ as the latter rain, the harvest rain. This is exactly what we were told to expect. James confirms this parallel in his exhortation for our faithful patience. *"Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain" (James 5:7).* Solomon employs a similar expression concerning the King's son. *"He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass: as showers that water the earth. In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth" (Psa 72:6-7).* Our Messiah will come down on the "mown" grass, referring to how Christ will circumcise the hearts of mankind by the educating fear of God by wielding the sword out of his mouth (commanding earthquakes, volcanoes, panic, flooding, etc). The fact that all flesh is grass was the testimony of John the Baptist as well as Peter (Isa 40:3-6; 1Pet 1:24).

The early and latter rains of the power of the word

We find the same early and latter rain context concerning the promise of the Holy Spirit gifts. Peter explains the miraculous multilingual gift at Pentacost (the Feast of the Firstfruits) by quoting Joel 2. In the context of the divine promise to pour His Spirit upon the sons and daughters of Israel is this phrase: *“rejoice in the LORD your God: for he hath given you the former rain moderately, and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain”* (Joel 2:23).

The drought of the word separating early from latter

There has to be an absence of rain between the early rains and the latter rains, to distinguish their early and latter status. The early rains mark the period at the beginning of the Ecclesial Age when Christ (the word made flesh) was commissioned by heaven, when the New Testament was written over a single generation and the Holy Spirit gifts were available for the two generations that Peter referenced in his promise (*unto you and your children... Acts 2:38-39*). Then the rains stopped. Christ left in a cloud to go to his Father, just like the natural/creational process of evaporation that replenishes the clouds. John's visions recorded in Revelation completed the written word of God. The Holy Spirit gifts only lasted for two generations, concluded by the unavailability of the Apostles hands and by the replacement of that which was perfect, the completed Bible (1Cor 13:8-10). The latter rains will come when Christ returns, when God ends His self-imposed silence and the miraculous power of the Holy Spirit is showered once more on men. The timeframe between the early and the latter rains is therefore prophesied as a drought of the word of God. *“Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD”* (Amos 8:11).¹ Micah confirms this period of divine silence (Micah 3:6-7) when the sun would go down on the prophets, when there would be no answer from God.

We can identify the time when the latter rains will fall from the clouds of the divine presence, with power and glory. We are told when our Creator will end His self-imposed silence. In the context of a very clear prophecy of the Millennial Kingdom Isaiah tells us: *“The LORD shall go forth as a mighty man, he shall stir up jealousy like a man of war: he shall cry, yea, roar; he shall prevail against his enemies. I have long time holden my peace; I have been still, and refrained myself: now will I cry like a travailing woman; I will destroy and devour at once”* (Isa 42:13-14). The latter rains of the spoken word of God, the word made flesh and the word in power (reflecting the three component molecular structure of water) will pour from heaven when our Heavenly Father dramatically ends His silence at the introduction of the Millennial Kingdom Age (the third ‘day’)... in the same manner as the early rains escorted the Ecclesial Age into the divine plan two ‘divine days’ ago

In our next commentary we will examine the application of the clouds in the context of divine communication patterns. This creation/spiritual bridge will offer greater understanding about the Day of Atonement, the transfiguration on the mount, being caught up in the clouds of heaven at the return of Christ, and the great cloud of witnesses encompassing us.

Notes:

1. Of course, another fulfillment of this prophesy is the silence of the word of God between the close of the Old Testament and the first coming of our Savior.

Bible Study

The Creation Text: Studies in Early Genesis (5) Consequences, Not Punishment

In the judgment narrative of Gen 3:14-19, God dismisses the serpent first, without questioning. The serpent is amoral and has no part in the trial. Its silence here reinforces the notion that it was primarily a representation of Eve's thinking. However, the judgment on the serpent, that Eve's seed would crush its head, gives the first clue to Adam and Eve, even before God speaks to them directly, that they will not die on this day. They will live to produce at least the offspring to fulfill the prophecy. So Adam and Eve cling to the hope that they will have at least one succeeding generation, awaiting what God will say to them. God first speaks to Eve, then Adam, and finally adds a summary declaration addressing the situation that their misbehavior has caused.

Their continued life implies the abrogation of "*in the day you eat of it you shall surely die.*" As obvious as it is to us, I don't think it was at all obvious to Adam and Eve that they wouldn't die that day, until God spoke to the serpent concerning their respective seeds. How do we then read 3:16-19? Are these particulars some kind of substitute for, or application, of the death sentence of 2:17? Are they some kind of gradual death? God does say to Adam that he will return to the dust. Do these travails constitute a carrying out of the death sentence?

By no means. Instead, there's an important frame shift: the details of God's proclamations to Eve and then to Adam are consequences, not punishment. They do not in any way fulfill God's stated punishment for their transgression; that would have been death. They live, but they live with consequences.

When God gave Adam and Eve the opportunity, they confessed, and God accepted their confession. Now add the idea of consequences. Even though God forgave them, transgression inevitably brings consequences. The details of Eve and Adam's ensuing lives do not answer to the sentence of death stated in 2:17. If that were so, their confession availed nothing. That is, if 3:16-19 is an expansion or fulfillment of 2:17, then Adam and Eve's confession meant nothing to God, for he meted out the same sentence anyway.

God pardons the sinners; as far as east is from west He puts away the iniquity of their sin. I find it beyond any argument that the initial episode of human transgression would lack the accompanying grace of God, and this must in turn be occasioned by a true repentance. Nonetheless, the consequences of their sin abide.

The concept of consequences

Suppose a husband commits the sin of adultery by having an affair. He has done something monstrously evil. He can repent, and his wife can forgive him. This will begin to heal the breach, but the trust between them has been shattered. Untrustworthy behavior destroys trust; this is a natural consequence of extra-marital affairs, and a major issue in the restoration of the marital bond.¹

Another example of having to live with the consequences of sin would be someone who abuses their body. If you are a drug user, you can repent, go clean, and pray for forgiveness. God will forgive you. However, you may have done permanent harm to your mental and physical health.

Biblical examples

The Bible has many examples of people who sinned, who were forgiven, and who nonetheless had to deal with the consequences of their misdeeds. The Apostle Paul recognized his forgiveness in Christ from his evil ways as a Pharisee and persecutor (Acts 22:19-20, 26: 9-11, 1Tim 1:13-14). Nonetheless, he seems to have carried an emotional burden of his past deeds (note present tense “am” used with “sinner” in 1Tim 1:15). The Samaritan woman (John 4) whom Jesus met and spoke with at Jacob’s well believed in his testimony (John 4:39-42), but she still had a complex and unsavory past, with multiple marriages. She had to live with whatever webs she had become entangled in. And what of the men at the cross for whom Jesus appealed, *“Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do”* (Luke 23:34)? If any of the people directly or indirectly responsible for the crucifixion later came to believe in Jesus, certainly they would obtain forgiveness, but would still live with a heavy conscience for what they had done to the Son of God.

The most extensive and instructive Bible case of consequences comes in the life of David. After Nathan the prophet rebuked him for his adultery with Bathsheba and his murder of Uriah her husband, Nathan announced (2Sam 12:10-12) to the rueful king that the sword would not depart from his house, that evil would rise against him from his own house, and that the child born to Bathsheba would *“surely die”* (same construction as in Gen 2:17).

David confessed, and God forgave him, but this did not cancel the prophecies of evil. David’s sin carried the natural consequences of family strife. He had blown apart Uriah’s family, and now, with Bathsheba added to his family, the inevitable strife ensued among his offspring. Besides Bathsheba’s infant who died, Amnon, Adonijah, and Absalom all were involved in family strife and also met untimely deaths. Bathsheba still bore the designation *“Uriah’s wife”* (2Sam 12:15) until after the child died and David completed his ceremonial and heartfelt repentance; then *“David comforted his wife, Bathsheba, and went in to her, and lay with her; and she bore a son, and he called his name Solomon”* (2Sam 12:24 RSV). God accorded David the privilege of having Bathsheba as his wife and the two of them bore Solomon, but the consequences of his sins, notably the rivalry between Solomon and Adonijah, and between Absalom and Amnon, plagued the house of David all the rest of his years.

God forgives, but we must live with the consequences of our choices.

God's abiding purpose with eve and adam

How do the particulars of verses 16-19 constitute consequences if they are not punishment? To get a satisfactory answer we need to ask another question: "What was God's purpose with Adam and Eve?" The key idea here is that God's purpose for Adam and Eve remained the same after they transgressed.

What did God intend for them when He created them male and female and placed them in the garden to till it and keep it? God wanted them to have a relationship with Him based on their understanding of who they were and who He was. From this they will learn faith, trust, appreciation, and love. Their sin doesn't divert God from this goal. In view of the fact they did think equality with God was a thing to be grasped,² God will now work differently with them. Instead of working primarily through the avenue of blessing to develop appreciation and love for him, God will now figuratively transport them from Gerizim to Ebal (Deut 11:29), and work primarily through hardship to inculcate their dependence on him. The details of verses 16-19 show that much of their new form of life carries over from Eden, but in very different circumstances.

God's purpose with Eve and Adam is the same purpose he has with us: to make disciples, to grow our faith and love, to teach us his absolute sovereignty that we might find our lives in him. We live in the post-Edenic world and have never experienced paradise. God uses both goodness and hardship to develop us.

Similarly, Adam and Eve need development. As a consequence of their disobedience they will not learn these attributes within the blessed confines of Eden. Their transgression doesn't change God's purpose for their lives, but it does change His method of achieving that end. As sinners potentially estranged from fellowship with their creator, they will find their way back through His grace in forgiveness and through the toil of life that will teach them the lesson they failed to learn, their limitations as human beings.

There can be no surer way to make them realize their limits than for God to introduce them to the world of woe.

David Levin (Baltimore, MD)

**This article is based on Study 40 from Bro. Levin's book
"The Creation Text", available from The Christadelphian Tidings
(http://tidings.org/book_order.htm).**

Notes:

1. In real life, there is no such person as an "innocent party"; marriage problems are systemic and healing goes in both directions. This is just a simplified example.
2. As opposed to the Lord Jesus, who "*did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped*" (Phil 2:6 RSV). This section of Philippians has several other allusions to early Genesis. The idea of equality reinforces the notion that equality was knowledge of situational good and evil, because they were supposed to be Godlike in their moral knowledge.

The Joy of Sunday Schooling

Developing a Sunday School Resource Center

Sunday schools nurture the spiritual growth of our children, and Sunday school teachers devote themselves to the success of the process. A good Sunday school resource center can help both the children and the teachers along the way.

Imagine what it would be like, at the end of a Sunday school lesson, for each child to select a related book or DVD or Bible game to take home and enjoy for a week. Sunday school would no longer be limited to an hour — or less! — on Sunday. It would go home with the child and continue to be his or her companion during the week to come!

Imagine what it would be like for a Sunday school teacher to be able to put his or her hands on a ready-to-use teaching resource or a learning activity that would help bring the week's lesson to life. It would be a boon to many who labor long and hard to teach the children.

These are some of the things that are possible when the Sunday school has a good resource center and everyone is tuned in to using it. It is an idea worth exploring with your Sunday school team, and if you already have a Sunday school resource center this might be a good time to review how it is working and how it can be made better.

Where to begin?

There is an obvious need to be practical and to set priorities in the development of a Sunday school resource center. A good way to start would be to gradually obtain a full range of Christadelphian Sunday school materials that can help teachers prepare week-to-week instruction.

There are several published Christadelphian Sunday school curriculums in use throughout the brotherhood. Among these are the Birmingham Central Sunday School Scheme, the Christadelphian Sunday School Union (CSSU, UK), the Christadelphian Sunday School Union (CSSU, Australia), and the Christadelphian Sunday School Association (CSSA, Australia) curriculums. All of these are comprehensive in the sense that they provide Old and New Testament lessons and a variety of instructional materials for all Sunday school ages, from pre-readers to young adults.

Regardless of the curriculum that your Sunday school uses for its calendar of lessons, ready access to the materials contained in all of these curriculums can be extremely useful for lesson planning purposes. The materials differ; they can meet a variety of teaching and learning needs. Reference copies of every book and activity in every Christadelphian Sunday school curriculum should therefore be near the top of a resource center shopping list.¹

The different curriculums contain from two to five years' worth of lessons, depending on the learning level (usually designated Kindergarten, Primary, etc.). This is actually helpful when it comes to funding a resource center. From a budgeting standpoint, purchase of the curricular materials can be spread out over a period of several years.

In any case, we are looking at a long-range commitment when we talk about developing and funding a Sunday school resource center. The center needs to be an ongoing priority if it is to flourish and fulfill its potential.

What else?

Other kinds of teaching resources can be kept in the center as well. Some are timeless: flannelgraphs, filmstrips, story books, pictures, puzzles, models, and arts and crafts materials. There are song books and collections of skits and plays. There are various kinds of DVDs and CDs and Bible software for computers. The list is almost endless. The key is to plan and prioritize with the needs of the Sunday school in mind. The resource center can also be a place to house a growing collection of ready-to-use Bible learning center activities for teachers to draw on from week to week. (See the February, 2012, Tidings article, "Using Bible Learning Centers".)

And by all means, build an inventory of things for the children to take home and enjoy using during the week.

Practical considerations

We have touched on the need to budget for resource center materials and to spread out the costs over a period of time. Given that ecclesias can often spend thousands of dollars on a single public preaching effort, it is reasonable to think that a well-planned annual budget for the resource center might meet with ecclesial approval, too. Sunday school, in reality, is a preaching mission within the ecclesia.

Housing the resource center is a consideration. If the ecclesia owns its own meeting hall, then a place needs to be found to put up some shelves or add some cabinets, preferably near the Sunday school area. If the ecclesia does not own its own hall, a more creative solution to the housing problem will be necessary, but don't give up on the idea. "Find a way" is always the alternative to the "no way" mindset.

And keep a good inventory of the resources that you have in the center. Know what you have and how to put your hands on everything. Computer spread sheets are a ready-made tool for this kind of housekeeping job. A carefully designed spreadsheet will allow teachers to see at a glance what is available for them to use or for the children to borrow and take home. Setting up and maintaining a database of resource center materials might be just the thing for a couple of older Sunday school students or CYC members to take on if they are looking for a meaningful way to begin serving the ecclesia.

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Notes:

1. Some Christadelphian Sunday school materials are now available online. Please see the websites listed in the March/April, 2012, Sunday school article.

Youth Speaks

The Return of Timothy — 1 Thessalonians 3

A little while ago, I was doing a study on the book of Revelation for a Sunday school mutual improvement class. Unfortunately, the study had become difficult — I was so frustrated, because in order to make heads or tails of the information, I needed to piece so many things from so many different places together! I didn't understand why the answer couldn't just be in one chapter or book; why did the themes bounce from one book to the next and why couldn't the study just be easier, right there in front of me? So, seeking to relieve my frustration, I talked to my father about it — who loves to study prophecy. He told me that if God had put everything in black and white terms and had made study easy, two things would happen. First, we would not have to try at all to figure out what God had in store for us, and we would not have to try and put in any effort to prove our commitment to being a Bible scholar. Our faith is a learning process — you make a mistake, learn from it and hopefully don't do it again. It is something that has to be developed and it *isn't* easy. We have to always be progressing in faith and love for our Heavenly Father and His plan. Second, if God had made His plan so easy to find, even God's enemies would know exactly what they were supposed to do and exactly what God's plan was to combat it — there would be no secrecy at all! The message wouldn't be something special. Thus, through faith and hard work we will be able to understand our purpose and, Lord willing, eternally serve our Father.

But what does this have to do with 1 Thessalonians 3? Well, just like how we have to study and really try to understand prophecy, the same is true for a study of Thessalonians. If we look deeper, in each chapter this book is a little hint or echo of our Lord Jesus Christ. There is always a type or a subtle hint of our Savior. Even if you just took a summary for each chapter, you could see that this is clearly about the return of our long awaited Groom.

As we do this little study, try to keep your mind on the excitement of Christ's return and how it is a reminder of our hope to come. It is very important that we replenish and stimulate our excitement for his coming and see that he is mentioned everywhere throughout God's word.

The sending of Timothy

In this chapter we have a young man sent to the Thessalonian ecclesia to bring tidings of their progress. This chapter can be separated in three sections: verses 1-6 are Timothy's mission, verses 7-10 are Timothy's encouraging report, and verses 11-13 are Paul's prayer for the Thessalonians. First, let's take a look at Timothy in verses one and two:

"Wherefore when we could no longer forbear, we thought it good to be left at Athens alone; and sent Timotheus, our brother, and minister of God, and our fellow laborer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you, and to comfort you concerning your faith" (1Thess 3:1-2).

This is the young man that was sent by Paul to the ecclesia to check up on them and bring them encouragement. Now the journey from Athens to Thessalonica was no easy journey to take. But even so, Timothy, just a young man, took on the journey of over 300 miles to bring peace to Paul and to prove himself as a servant of God. At first, these verses would seem fairly self-explanatory — but, as I have often heard, and many of us probably have, “Good Bible study equals good Bible reading. We must apply the facts, establish the principles, and apply the exhortation.” We have to ask questions — and if we don’t, what is the point? We have to engage with this book and try to understand the depth of what it is saying. So, what should we ask about in verse two? Well, there were at least two things which stood out to me in this verse. First, Paul called Timothy a minister and then second, a fellow laborer. This is actually quite significant. The meaning of “minister” is “servant” — it’s the Greek word “*diakonos*”, which literally means “one who waits on tables.” Perhaps this idea of a “servant” makes us think of someone:

“Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers” (Rom 15:8).

So, Christ was a “minister” or servant to the “circumcision”, or the Jews, to fulfill the plan and promises that God had made. This is our first echo of Christ — Timothy was sent to be a “servant,” just like Christ was. In addition, “minister” is also linked to an account in 1 Timothy, where it is translated as “deacon”:

*“Likewise **must** the deacons **be** grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being **found** blameless. Even so **must** their wives **be** grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things. Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. For they that have used the office of a deacon [to be an attendant, that is to wait upon mentally or as a host, friend or teacher, a “minister unto” — MH] well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness [all outspokenness, frankness, bluntness, confidence — MH] in the faith which is in Christ Jesus” (1Tim 3:8-13).*

By being this minister, we can see how Timothy was following the example of Christ by how he was a fellow laborer with Paul, and ultimately with Christ and our Heavenly Father. Continuing on in verse two from 1 Thessalonians 3, Paul had sent Timothy to establish the ecclesia and to comfort them in their faith. This word “establish” is “*sterizo*” and conveys the idea of supporting a building or bracing with a buttress. It seems to be the same idea as when Aaron and Hur supported Moses’ arms during the battle with Amalek (Exod 17:12). In other words, Paul wished to strengthen the ecclesia with encouragement from Timothy, and to confirm the new believers in their journey. Literally, Paul and the apostles were set at a sentry post by their commanding officer — the Lord Jesus — “*for the defense of the gospel*” (Phil 1:17) and Paul aimed to keep that post by making sure that the ecclesia had the support that they needed! Paul wanted to make sure

that his work with this ecclesia was not in vain, for he had labored greatly. We see this great labor in verses 4-5:

“For verily, when we were with you, we told you before that we should suffer tribulation; even as it came to pass, and ye know. For this cause, when I could no longer forbear, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter have tempted you, and our labour be in vain” (1Thess 3:4-5).

There are so many connections here to Christ and his mission at the second coming! Just as Paul sent Timothy as a “fellow laborer” to give a report of the ecclesia and to give them encouragement, God will do the same with Christ. In fact, the Lord referred to himself as a fellow worker with God. When Christ healed the lame man by the pool called Bethesda on the Sabbath, he had the following discourse with the Jews:

“And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the Sabbath day. But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work” (John 5:16-17).

Christ was a fellow laborer with God — when God worked, he worked. Thus, just as Timothy was a fellow laborer with Paul and was sent to the Thessalonian ecclesia, so will the Lord Jesus Christ one day be sent to our ecclesias. There are so many echoes in these verses if we only take the time to look!

Trials and tribulation

Lets turn the tables now and take a look at the more exhortational portion of this chapter. Verse 6-8 speaks about the good report that Timothy delivered to the apostle, and Paul’s reaction to that report:

“But now when Timotheus came from you unto us, and brought us good tidings of your faith and charity, and that ye have good remembrance of us always, desiring greatly to see us, as we also to see you: therefore, brethren, we were comforted over you in all our affliction and distress by your faith: for now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord” (1Thess 3:6-8).

Just for a minute think about what is being said here. It can be easy to just gloss over these words — that Timothy brought a good report — and keep reading. But think about what this would have meant to Paul. This was a group of people who had been Gentiles, living in the world, and they had completely changed their lives to follow the Truth! Yet despite this and despite all of the problems that they were having from the Jews in Thessalonica, they still kept their faith. Try to think about that situation:

Imagine you’re living in a city or amongst a group of people that does whatever they want, whenever they want — with no idea of the Truth. You lived out your life to the fullest, with no regard to what was right or wrong. You had block parties, barbecues, neighborhood outings, street football games — all of those “good” meaningless things that try fill a gap in your daily life. Then, things started to change. A man came to town and spoke of what God had in store for the human race. This plan wasn’t limited to a specific gender, or class or demographic. It was

for everyone who had an ear to listen to what was being said. He started off by introducing himself as a servant of God. He said things that others called “outlandish gibberish” about the Kingdom of God and your purpose in this life — but it didn’t sound like gibberish to you. Some people, including yourself, listened and become interested. Others simply mocked and persecuted the man. Nevertheless, this man still stood firm and continued preaching this “strange idea.” Finally, he was able to start formal gatherings and created a group of people — an ecclesia — who striving to do the work of the Lord. Needless to say, those who didn’t listen, took every opportunity to prey on those who were converted to the things of the Lord. They said things like “Where have you been, we are having a party over at Big Jinkin’s place tonight — skip that crazy guy’s stuff and have a little fun, it’s been too long.” Something like this was even said to you — but you replied by saying that all that stuff is wrong and you’d rather learn. After that, your old friends became frustrated with you and even started calling others around to poke fun at your new way of life. Not only so, but things had even become physically dangerous (Acts 17:5).

This is what Paul had brought upon these people. But did they falter? No. Instead, they took the remarks and games, like true servants, steadfast and immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord. They had such an amazing mentor — one who had also endured persecution and had even been removed from their city. They understood the reward was far greater than the pain and suffering of what they were enduring. This is a powerful example for us to remember in our times of distress. The Thessalonians were able to take the remarks and the persecution and still remain faithful and strong — and so can we!

Thus, the report which Timothy brought back was very exciting for Paul. He was so glad to hear that the Thessalonian ecclesia was still maintaining their faith and works in the Truth. The news quickly spread, provided ammunition and strength for Paul and other struggling Ecclesias in the area. Before he heard this news, Paul had been going through much tribulation and trials in the faith, and to hear this good news was very uplifting for him and his brothers. We can see Paul’s excitement in verse 9. He cannot thank God enough and is overjoyed with this “gift” of good news:

“For what thanks can we render to God again for you, for all the joy where-with we joy for your sakes before our God; night and day praying exceedingly that we might see your face, and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith?” (1Thess 3:9-10).

If there was anything lacking in this ecclesia, Paul wanted to correct it as soon as possible. Even though Timothy did bring such good news, there still were things that needed addressing. It is possible that some of the believers had been led astray by their own weaknesses, and Paul wanted to make sure that these problems were taken care of as soon as possible, in order to ensure that the ecclesia would prosper and grow. Paul probably knew, when he left, that there were still a few things that needed to be worked on but for the most part he was pleased with their progress and steadfast walk.

We have seen echoes of the Lord Jesus Christ, we have seen the willingness of Timothy to serve, we have seen the dedication of the Thessalonians as they sought to cling to the Truth, and now we will close by looking at the beauty of prayer and glory of the coming of Christ. This is the way in which the chapter ends — we have the excitement and uplifting reminder of the coming of Christ which will happen in the last days, ironically in the last verse. Paul and the apostles prayed ever so extensively, asking God for his guidance and strength, not only from themselves but that their work would not be in vain. We can see what a prayer like this might be like at the end of this energizing chapter:

“Now God himself and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way unto you. And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you: to the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints” (1Thess 3:11-13).

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An Exhortation to Godly Living — 1 Thessalonians 4

The necessity for daily obedience to God

Chapter four of Paul’s first letter to the ecclesia in Thessalonica begins with a sudden change in tone from the preceding chapters.

“Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more” (1Thess 4:1).

Paul is stressing the importance of daily service and obedience to God in every aspect of one’s life. He understands the dangers of the world that could threaten the new believers in the Truth. The standards and morals that they have been taught — which came from none other than the Lord Jesus Christ through Paul his apostle — are still vulnerable to the attacks from the world of unbelievers that surround them (both Jew and Gentile). The word for beseech here in verse 1 is the Greek word “*erotao*,” which means to ask or intreat. The word is also used in Acts 3:3 (RSV), “*Seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, he **asked** for alms*”

The word is used there by a beggar begging for alms — a man who was not merely requesting a few extra coins without urgency, but a man who was begging for what he knew to be his only opportunity for survival due to his circumstances. Paul uses this word again

*“Now we **beseech** you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand” (2Thess 2:1-2).*

In this instance, Paul’s desire is for the believers in Thessalonica not to lose faith, and remain obedient to God. He knew the urgency of this message and it was his desire that his fellow brethren and sisters heed his warning.

As brethren and sisters in the ecclesia we have the same responsibility to those new to the Truth in our ecclesias and surrounding areas that Paul had to the new believers in Thessalonica. If we are not upholding the standards of the Truth in our ecclesia, what will stop the world from creeping in and attacking those newer and possible weaker members in the Truth? Paul recognized this reality and we should likewise do the same.

Flee fornication; sexual purity.

In verse 3, Paul addresses the will of God towards his servants. The Greek word here for “will” is “*thelema*” which means purpose or resolve. This is an active purpose that God has for his servants. God’s purpose encompasses both salvation for mankind (1Tim 2:4) as well as specific and foreknown plans for his individual servants (Rom 1:10, 8:28). Not only is this the will of God but “even your sanctification.” The Greek here for sanctification is “*hagiasmos*” (purification, holiness) and comes from “*hagios*” which refers to the process of **becoming** holy. It is made clear to us here that holiness does not come just by being called to be a part of God’s plan with the earth, but with the accompaniment of effort from the believer.

Paul declares that the will of God is “*that ye should abstain from fornication.*” The Greek word for fornication is “*porneia*” and is the equivalent of the Hebrew “*zanah*” which refers to any licentious or sexual act. It is not enough to be pure in mind only. A pure mind requires a pure body. This is where verse 4 picks up: “*that every one of you should know how to possess his vessel.*” The word here for “vessel” is one that in the figurative sense refers to a person who is being used for a purpose by someone else (Acts 9:15). 1Pet 3:7 tells us that the wife is a “weaker vessel” than the husband. When considering 1Cor 7:2-5, it becomes clear that Paul’s message is that a man is to “possess his vessel (or wife) in sanctification (of himself) and honor (of and for his wife).” Any sexual desire of a man is to be directed towards his wife and no other (and vice versa). That is the standard God set in the beginning (Genesis 2:24) and it is the only acceptable standard. We must not be like the Gentiles who, through their behavior driven by “*the lust of concupiscence*” (verse 5), have separated themselves from God. A similar metaphor is to be found in Prov 5:15-18.

“*That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter*” (vs 6) or “that no man **cross his boundary** and **take advantage** of his brother in **the** matter at hand” as the Greek means, because “*the Lord is the avenger of all such.*” Christ at his return will have the divine wisdom and judgment necessary to avenge those who have wronged others by breaking God’s commands (2Thess 1:8 — notice the repeat of the phrase “*them that know not God*”).

It has been suggested by many that this letter was written in Corinth because it was known for its worldly vices; one of the most prominent being those of sexual nature addressed in this chapter. Paul would not have written to the believers in Thessalonica if these vices were not a realistic threat to them. The society surrounding Paul was so bad that many became acclimated to the vicious lifestyle that the citizens lived. Even the brethren and sisters living there would have felt little shock for the moral corruption that surrounded them. How similar is this society

to the one in which surrounds us today! We live in a time when even churches cannot decide what to call right or wrong. Humanism rules society and allows its members to decide on personal rights and wrongs based on their own standards with no regard for God's truth at all. The warning given here by Paul is just as applicable to us believers today as it was to the believers in Thessalonica in Paul's day.

Brotherly love

The believers have been exhorted on daily obedience to God (verses 1-2), purity (verses 3-8), and now brotherly love (verses 9-10). This is fitting, after all, as brotherly love is the foundation by which the believer can achieve a lifestyle of obedience and purity before God. Paul declares (to paraphrase) that the believers *"need not that I write unto you (as touching brotherly love): for ye are taught of God to love one another."* Paul is referring to God's example of love in giving His son as a sacrifice for mankind (1John 4:7-11). We are known as disciples of Christ if we display this love one to another (John 13:35). Paul mentions that the ecclesia in Thessalonica has displayed this love towards the surrounding ecclesias in Macedonia (verses 10 and 1:7,8) and yet he exhorts them to *"increase more and more."* There is always room for improvement by way of brotherly love for the saints in Christ because of the unapproachable example that he set for us. Although we can never be as perfect as the example that Christ has set, we must never stop striving to improve on our efforts.

"And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you: To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints" (1Thess 3:12,13).

Effect on non-believers

The next section of the chapter deals with the lifestyle of the believer. Paul's exhortation is that the believer *"study to be quiet, and to do your own business."* The NIV translates "study" as: "make it your ambition," the RSV reads "aspire" (this word is also used in Rom 15:20 — *"I have strived to preach the gospel"* and 2Cor 5:9 — *"labour that we may be accepted of him"*). It must be our **ambition** to *"lead a quiet life and mind your own business"* (NIV). This is the opposite of the lifestyle of the busybody addressed in 2Thess 3:11. There is no room for busybodies in the ecclesia of God; for those who meddle unnecessarily in ecclesial or personal affairs of others, but only for those who are ambitious to share the Truth.

Paul further exhorts the believers to *"work with your own hands."* This is in reference to physical labor, which was despised by the Greeks as it was regarded as slave work. Paul's attitude is quite the opposite (2:9, 1Cor 4:12, Eph 4:28). The lesson here is that we ought not to adopt the standards of the world, but to live only by God's standards. God's own son, after all, was a manual laborer (Mark 6:3).

"That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without." The Greek here is "walk in **good form**" not like those who walk **disorderly** from which we are to withdraw ourselves (2Thess 3:6). Paul is concerned here with the effect that the believers have on the surrounding unbelievers (cp. Col 4:5, 1Tim 3:7).

“Do all things without murmurings and disputings: That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world” (Phil 2:14-15).

“The dead in Christ shall rise”

“But I would not have you be ignorant, brethren:” This is a phrase often used by Paul (Rom 1:13, 11:25, 1Cor 10:1, 12:1, 2Cor 1:8) when his purpose is to correct a fallacy. The attached “brethren” shows Paul’s affection towards those to whom he is writing.

“Concerning them which are asleep,” although Paul is addressing the deceased, they are *“dead in Christ”* (vs16) which makes them so close to life that in God’s eyes they are merely sleeping, awaiting the return of His son. We are not told what question the brethren and sisters in the ecclesia at Thessalonica had that inspired Paul to address this subject, but he gives them explanation and comfort nonetheless.

He begins by encouraging the believers to not sorrow over their dead loved ones as the non-believers do. He reminds them of their belief that God raised Christ himself from the dead and how he will raise those who sleep in Christ as well in vs14 *“even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.”* This word “bring” in the Greek means to lead or to bring to the point of destination: that destination being the judgment seat of Christ. Paul’s comfort for the Thessalonians is that no experience of those living during the time of Christ’s return will be withheld from those who are asleep in Christ at his return. He explains that *“the Lord himself”* (that is Christ and none other) *“shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first,”* that is, before those believers who are still alive. They will be *“caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air”* (vs 17). The Greek for “caught up” is “harpazo” and signifies to be seized, to be caught away. So the believers will be conveyed from one place to another on the earth (Acts 8:39-40). One possible idea with this word “harpazo” is that there will be an almost instantaneous transport of the saints “in the air” (verse 17) to another place on the earth (the other place being the destination — the judgment seat of Christ).

This chapter concludes on an uplifting and comforting note for the Thessalonian ecclesia: *“so shall we ever be with the Lord.”* Ever with our Lord Jesus Christ on the earth assisting him in his future work of preaching the Truth, judging the nations of the earth, purging the world of any and all sinful things that occupy it so that *“all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD”* (Num 14:21).

“Wherefore,” Paul concludes, *“comfort one another with these words.”* Let us likewise, brethren and sisters, do the same. For we live in a time when we need it more than ever. For:

“He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly” Rev 22:20

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Reflections

Marriage Proverbs: Guidelines for a Happy Relationship (5) Guideline #4: Having Realistic Expectations

Marriage — a blending

Marriage is not only a union between two people: it is also a blending of two cultures. We may not realize how important this is in establishing a harmonious marriage. It has been said that in the first six months of a marriage the couple will bask in the euphoric afterglow of the honeymoon, but for the rest of their lives together reality will invariably set in. They will need to iron out all the potentially conflicting issues inherited from their upbringing that could tarnish their relationship. These kinks were always there, but generally the excitement of idealized, romantic love had kept them buried during courtship. One of the most important teachings on marriage occurs in the very beginning with the commandment that the Lord God gave to the first married couple, Adam and Eve: *“Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh”* (Gen 2:24).¹ The substance of this teaching is repeated four times in the New Testament (i.e., Matt 19:5, Mark 10:7, 1Cor 6:16 and Eph 5:31) emphasizing the importance that the Word of God attaches to this principle. It should be noted that the principle involved here emphatically doesn’t just apply to the male member of the relationship, as some have claimed, but applies to the female member too. This is true not only implicitly, but also explicitly as demonstrated by the words of the Psalmist David — *“Hear, O daughter, and consider, and incline your ear: forget your people and your father’s house”* (Psa 45:10). There are several critical concepts here, but for the purpose of the present discussion we will focus on the principle that a marriage constitutes a new blended relationship, requiring that the couple establish their own identity independent of the households in which they were raised. This doesn’t mean that the couple forsakes all social interactions with their parents, siblings, other relatives or prior friendships, but it does mean that they don’t let their past adversely interfere, directly or indirectly, with the working out of their new spousal relationship.

What do I mean by expectations acquired from one’s upbringing? Whether we are always cognizant of it or not, our future behavior is always built on our past experience. Sometimes that is very good and at other times it can lead to a great deal of heartache and sorrow. Each partner brings into a marriage a mental model, based on their rearing, of what his or her expectations are for a relationship to function happily. The diversity of relationships in which children are raised these days makes it a great challenge to even begin to define what is a “normal” childhood. This point is emphasized again and again in scholarly studies on marriage. With the divorce rate approaching 50% in North America, many children are brought up in single parent homes. Depending on who gets custody, and how effectively joint child rearing arrangements are shared, a youngster may reach adulthood

with no effective model for being a husband or wife. We could cite many other possible combinations of guardianship arrangements, but even if one grew up in what would nominally be described as a normal home environment, i.e. where one's mother and father were committed to a long-term marriage, potentially conflicting expectations will be implanted. We may feel that our parents raised us in a faultless manner; nevertheless our upbringing could never have been truly perfect — *“for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”* (Rom 3:23). The challenge is to bring to the new relationship, after leaving father and mother, the best of what we have observed and to discard the rest. Sounds simple — but we will find this is nearly impossible because we don't really have a clue on what is “best” and ought to be retained and what behaviors we grew up with that should be discarded. The only perfect model we will ever have for a relationship is to measure our behavior after the patterns set by our Lord Jesus Christ.

The practical example of affluence

Let's consider an important practical example of bringing unrealistic expectations into a marriage. Suppose one has been brought up in a fairly wealthy home where as a child you were hardly ever denied anything you wished to have. When you became a teenager you had your own credit card(s), a fancy automobile upon obtaining your driver's license, an iPhone, iPad, iPod and an iEverything as soon as they became available. Your closet overflowed with all sorts of garments and your numerous shoe fashions could have filled a railroad car, etc. When such a person marries someone with a less prosperous upbringing it can be extremely hard to match expectations to the reality of what is achievable. It can also work quite the other way around — someone brought up in rather meager circumstances may look at marriage as a road to riches that they were denied as a child, and place expectations on their spouse that cannot possibly be accomplished. Either way it has been found that financial conflicts rank very high among the reasons that married couples eventually split. In a recent survey taken in a cosmopolitan mid-west city money problems outranked infidelity and physical abuse as major causes leading to divorce.² The wedding vow “till death do us part” has become in the thoughts of many couples “till debt do us part”.

Many young people today expect to have immediately available all the accoutrements of life that their parent(s) worked for over an extended lifetime. To be fair to this generation, that is not really a new phenomenon; in a way it is engrained in the culture of America and has spread pretty much around the globe. In my generation, born in the Great Depression, it was not as difficult to expect to do as well as our parents, if not better than. Relating to my own upbringing, my parents did not have very much in the way of material wealth and neither did my grandparents for that matter. How can young couples resolve this problem of wanting and wanting beyond their ability to pay? Time and again I have seen young married couples get into huge credit card debt from spending for a plethora of things they just had to possess. Many years back when Mary and I had our first two children, I took a new job that paid about 50% less than I had been making working for the phone company; then unexpected medical bills hit us very hard. In no time we found ourselves with a large credit card debt that literally could have forced

us into bankruptcy. This had nothing to do with buying luxury items, but rather that we were not insured or prepared from past savings for unexpected medical bills that had arisen, and also from the burden of paying off education debts. We took some drastic measures, chief among them was to cut up all the credit cards and pay only in cash for whatever we needed. Helped by a consolidation loan we dug out of the debt over the next couple of years and never faced that problem again. Admittedly this was a drastic step and I don't recommend it for everyone, but it is something to consider. Another alternative is not to use credit cards at all if possible, to restrict spending to debit cards³ and cash. This way you can only spend what you actually have. We also got into the habit of making sure we only lived on at most 90% of our income (and sometimes even less) and putting that extra 10% (or more when possible) into our savings. This way we would have a cushion in the future to handle unexpected financial issues. Many financial advisors suggest that a couple should have at least enough savings to live for at least six months without external income to cushion against job losses or other possible financial pitfalls.

However, none of this financial advice works if one's desires outstrip the couple's ability to pay. A couple has to be able to wisely appreciate that what one wants is not the same thing as what one needs! It doesn't work if we come into a marriage and are not willing to believe in a vow, that we have taken our partner "for richer or poorer." One would be far better off coming into a marriage with the frame of mind that the Apostle Paul espoused to the Philippians: *"Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content"* (Phil 4:11). If we adopt this as our mantra rather than embracing the attitudes fostered by a very materialistic world, we would be better off in our relationships. The Apostle expounds on this point further in his letter to Timothy: *"Now there is great gain in godliness with contentment"* (1Tim 6:6) and *"But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content"* (1Tim 6:8). We can add to this advice by also recalling the words written to the Hebrews: *"Keep your life free from love of money, and content with what you have, for he has said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you' "* (Heb 13:5). These Scriptures provide a correct balance for us not to ignore, because the values that the world has for success are "material things" epitomized in the very satirical bumper sticker sometimes observed on very ostentatious luxury cars — "the one with the most toys wins". Wins what? Presumably, the envy of one's neighbors, but surely not the approval of our heavenly Father. The Lord God, on the other hand, values the things of the spirit. If our love for our spouse is predicated on the material wealth they can supply us then we have indeed lost sight of the fruits of the spirit which are: *"...love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires"* (Gal 5:22-24).

On the practical side, it a good idea for a newly married couple to make out a budget and resolve to stick to it. The United States government may be able to print more money and raise the nation's debt limit to trillions and trillions of dollars, but the rest of us cannot do this if we let our personal finances get out of balance.

It is also wise to assess what things are really necessary at any point in our lives, and what things we think we need, only because advertising aimed at consumer passions has convinced us we ought to buy them. There are also many ways one can stretch a budget by taking advantage of many community resources such as Goodwill stores, Salvation Army resale places and others.⁴ Instead of buying on credit why not budget a need and only purchase it after one has saved the amount needed? And if you do use a credit card, for convenience, resolve to never charge more in any payment period than you can pay in full at the end of the month. This kind of thinking has always been the way our family has functioned since tearing up our credit cards 40 years ago and it has kept us on a sound basis.⁵ Most importantly it is based on sound Scriptural advice: “Owe no one anything” (Rom 13:8), which we would do well to heed.

Next: *Striving to be simpatico.*

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Notes:

1. All references are from the ESV.
2. USA Today, September 28, 2011. Article reported that 40.3% filed for divorce because of objections on “How spouse handles money”, 34% because of infidelity and only 12.7% for physical abuse.
3. They didn’t have “debit cards” in the 1960s.
4. A brief worksheet with suggestions on how to save money can be obtained by emailing letters@tidings.org with the heading “Money Saving Ideas”
5. Don’t want to leave the impression that we never again used Credit Cards. They can be a convenient way to consolidate bills, for use when traveling, and some credit cards provide travel credits or cash payback that can be useful. However, we have stuck to the practice of paying in full at the end of each monthly period, which is a practical means of not allowing debt to get out of hand.

Forgiveness (3)

If we confess our sins, the LORD is faithful to forgive us: “*If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness*” (1John 1:9). As the context in First John shows, there are two key points here. First, it is essential that we confess our sins: “*If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us... If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us*” (1John 1:8, 10). Second, we are forgiven through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ: “*If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin... And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world*” (1John 1:7; 2:1b-2).

On the first of these points, the last article reviewed the rich Bible language for sin, confession, and forgiveness. As to the second point, it is fundamental to our faith, as indicated by the following brief list of passages:

“*For this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many unto remission of sins*” (Matt 26:28 RVmg).

“*In whom [i.e., our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father’s beloved Son] we have*

redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace” (Eph 1:7; cf. Col 1:14).

“By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all... But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God... For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified... This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord... And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin” (Heb 10:10-18).

Our heavenly Father knows that we are sinful, and that no matter how much we want to please Him, we will sin. He knows we are weak creatures of the dust and that our nature will always get the best of us. Thankfully, He loves us nonetheless and provides for these inevitabilities. He has given His only begotten Son, that through his sacrifice we can be forgiven. If we believe in him and confess our sins, God is faithful to cleanse us of our iniquities.

This is only the beginning of the story. Because our Father and His Son have forgiven us, we must also forgive others!

The Lord’s prayer

Jesus highlights this principle in his lesson on prayer. When we pray for our sins to be forgiven, it is conditioned on us having forgiven those that have sinned against us: *“And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors” (Matt 6:12); “And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us” (Luke 11:4).* This concept of us, as God’s people, forgiving those indebted to us, and by analogy of us forgiving those who have sinned against us, is based on the Year of Release (Deut 15:1-11).¹

Jesus emphasizes the importance of this practice by making the point again immediately after his archetypical prayer: *“For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses” (Matt 6:14-15).*

He makes this connection between us praying and us forgiving in another setting: *“And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses” (Mark 11:25-26).*

The apostle Paul echoes this fundamental lesson several times:

“And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you” (Eph 4:32).

“Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye” (Col 3:12-13).

The parable of the unbelievably forgiving king

In yet another setting Jesus gives an extended exhortation on forgiveness, enough to fill a whole chapter in Matthew's gospel (Matt 18). He ends the talk with a parable (Matt 18:23-35), usually called "The Unforgiving Debtor" or "The Ungrateful Servant". We have chosen instead to put the emphasis on the king, who is willing to forgive a mind-boggling amount, assuming we are willing to reciprocate to those who have trespassed against us.

One of the king's servants is brought to him. This servant owes the king 10,000 talents, the wages from an eternity of lifetimes (a talent was 6,000 denarii, and a denarius was the daily wage of a laborer). In response to the king's negative verdict, the servant pleads for patience, making the impossible claim that he will pay off the debt in full. Moved with compassion, the king forgives the servant the entire debt.

What a wonderful story. If it had stopped here, we would have thought all ended well. Surely this servant would be on his very best behavior given the unexpected leniency of his lord. Surely he would treat others with the same spirit of kindness he had been shown.

Instead, this servant goes out and finds one of his fellow servants, who owes him 100 denarii (about four months' wages). Instead of showing mercy, he takes him by the throat and insists that he pays off the debt. Unable to pay, the fellow servant pleads for patience, making a perfectly reasonable claim that he will pay off the debt in full. Unlike the king, the servant refuses the plea bargain and has his fellow servant thrown into prison.

All the other servants are sorry to see this pitiful behavior, and go tell their lord what had happened. The king calls the servant to him, and says, "*O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: Shouldst not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee?*" (Matt 18:32-33). The king is furious, and delivers the servant to the tormentors.

Jesus summarizes the lesson of the parable with the same words we've seen above, "*So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not everyone his brother their trespasses*" (Matt 18:35).

The parable suggests there are three good reasons we should forgive others:

- 1) Joy — God has forgiven each of us a massive amount, so we should be thankful, and more than willing to forgive others the miniscule amount they owe us.
- 2) Duty — God's forgiveness of us is contingent on us forgiving others.
- 3) Guilt — If we don't forgive others, then God will have us thrown into the torture chamber to serve out our full term of pain and suffering.

The order here may be helpful too. It is best to forgive out of joy, but if we can't do that, then forgiving out of duty is next best, and if we still have trouble doing that, then at least we should forgive out of guilt if only to avoid being punished. We have a choice of motivation: being motivated by joy is most pleasant, whereas being motivated by guilt is least satisfying. We see the same point if we follow the money: being motivated by joy is associated with the largest, essentially un-

imaginable amount of money; by duty with a small, almost trivial amount; and by guilt with no money at all, just an impossible debt. These options correspond to ways to live the Truth: we can live a life of joy in response to God's generosity; or we can live a life of duty being driven by a list of onerous have-to's, or we can live out an unpleasant guilt-ridden existence. To paraphrase Joshua: As for me and my house, we will live by joy!

We must acknowledge the enormity of our own sins against our heavenly Father. If He was not gracious to us, none of us would have any hope at all. If He had not sent His Son we would be lost. If His Son had not willingly laid down his life for us, we would still be in our sins. The relief that comes from experiencing such love should provoke us to love one another, and prod us into forgiving anything bad that someone might do to us. This is what God expects. We are to reflect His forgiving character in our lives, just as His Son has reflected his Father's character. This is the joy of true heavenly fellowship.

The process of reconciliation

Earlier in this article, Jesus outlines a three-step process that we should follow in order to be reconciled with those who trespass against us:

"Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, [Step 1:] go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. [Step 2:] But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. [Step 3:] And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican. Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever [sins] ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever [sins] ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt 18:15-20).

Here we focus on the first phase of the process.² There are seven key ingredients to Jesus' command:

- 1) If there is a conflict
- 2) You
- 3) Go
- 4) To the person
- 5) In private
- 6) And discuss the problem
- 7) For the purpose of reconciliation

You must take action, rather than letting the hurt fester. You should not wait for the other person to come to you: you must go to them. You must not add fuel to the fire: do not assume the worse; impute good motives instead. Do not tell anyone else: you must go directly to the person, one-on-one, in private. It may have been a simple misunderstanding, an honest mistake, an unintended offense;

and even if it wasn't, you must give the person an opportunity to repent before taking it to anyone else. Your intent must be to reconcile. Give the person a way to save face, if necessary, to confess, to apologize, to repent, to make things right by you. In short, you must do everything you can to let them do everything they can to reconcile with you. (And do not think sending an e-mail substitutes for going to the person.)

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus teaches a similar lesson with the shoe on the other foot: *"Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift"* (Matt 5:23-24).

This is how we would want to be treated if we had trespassed against someone, so we should do the same to those who trespass against us.

How many times should we forgive?

In response to Jesus' teaching on the process of reconciling with those who have trespassed against us, Peter asks, *"Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?"* to which Jesus responds, *"I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven"* (Matt 18:21-22). In a similar exchange Jesus tells the disciples, *"Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him"* (Luke 17:3-4).

We are like Peter. We can agree that we might sometimes need to forgive others, but surely there is a limit to how much we should have to put up with. Seven times ought to be sufficient. But Jesus expects more: in one case, he says even if it gets up to 70 times 7; in the other, he says even if the trespasses occur 7 times in a single day.

The first of these contrasts with Lamech's boast of retribution: *"Because vengeance has been exacted seven times on Cain's behalf, on Lamech's it shall be seventy times seven"* (Gen 4:24 LXX, same Greek phrase). Jesus may also be alluding to Daniel's 70 weeks prophecy:

"Seventy weeks [i.e., seventy sevens] are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy" (Dan 9:24).

In short, there is no limit to how forgiving we must be. No wonder the apostles responded to our Lord's command, *"Increase our faith"* (Luke 17:5).

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Next article: Myths of forgiveness.

Notes:

1. For more information on this connection, see "Leviticus and the Tabernacle (9)," by Joe Hill, *Tidings*, October, 2011.
2. For a more in depth study of Matthew 18:15-20 and its context, see "Jesus' Instruction for the Ecclesia in Matthew", by Tim Young, *Tidings*, March-April, 2011.

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

(3) Some Common Objections to Biblical Gender Roles

This is Part 3 of a 4 part series about the role of Sisters in the ecclesia. This section will consider and respond to some common arguments against Biblical roles for men and women. The objections indicated below are not direct quotes from any particular sources; what I've done is paraphrase some of the opposition that I've read and heard about in the past. Section 4 will continue with further responses to common objections.

Objection: “Isn’t this article itself hypocritical? You say that women may not teach men, yet a Brother might read this article and learn from it!”

Response: This objection is an example of a “straw man” fallacy — misrepresenting your opponent’s position so that you can better argue against it. Scripture does not teach that a woman may never inform a man of anything he doesn’t already know! Paul’s words in 1Tim 2 are referring to Sisters taking on the roles of teacher or leader over Brothers, and 1Cor 14 shows us that Paul particularly applies these commands in relation to out-loud speaking and teaching during a gathering “*in the church*”. Following God’s instructions through Paul as best we can, we can say that it would be wrong for me to be a speaker at an ecclesial gathering and teach a class to my Brothers on this subject. However, we saw in our previous studies that Paul is not saying that a man may never learn from a woman at all. Bible examples such as Priscilla helping Aquila explain a matter to Apollos, and Abigail counseling David not to avenge himself against Nabal, show that a woman may certainly teach a man in proper circumstances.

Objection: “Jewish society was oppressive toward women; Jesus rebelled against this by treating women as equals.”

Response: Jewish society at the time of Jesus, inasmuch as it was a sinful, human society, may well have been oppressive toward women. This shouldn’t be surprising to us. In the Law, God established differing roles for men and women, but He has never condoned oppression or cruelty. Jesus fulfilled the intention of the Law by treating women as God would want them to be treated, and Sisters today can be encouraged by the example of the women who listened and ministered to Jesus during his ministry. However, although Jesus enjoyed close relationships with the women who ministered to him, when it came time to choose a group of leaders and teachers, he chose twelve male disciples whom he sent out to teach and perform miracles. After Jesus’ death, the early ecclesia followed the standard Jesus set by appointing men as ecclesial leaders and chose a man, Matthias, to fill the vacancy left by Judas’ death. Although Jesus taught against the prevailing sinful attitudes of men, he continued God’s model of complimentary gender roles with different job descriptions for men and women among his followers. If we truly want to follow his example, we must ask ourselves if we are willing to do as he did.

Objection: “Both men and women preached publicly when they received the Holy Spirit in Acts 2.”

Response: This objection assumes that women were present in the group that spoke in tongues in Acts chapter 2; however, there isn't any direct evidence in the chapter that women spoke at all. This is supposed by Peter's reference to Joel chapter 2, which refers to daughters and handmaidens receiving the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:17-18); however, the Day of Pentecost was only a partial fulfillment of Joel 2: 29, in which God also states: *"I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh"*. All flesh did not receive the Holy Spirit in Acts chapter 2; instead, it was only the disciples who were gathered together who received the Spirit.

Even if this assumption is true and there were female disciples among those who witnessed to the crowd on the Day of Pentecost, this is not inconsistent with Sisters' roles as taught in the rest of Scripture. We saw earlier in this article that the New Testament precedent for men taking on the speaking and leadership roles applies within the ecclesia. Examples such as Aquila and Priscilla preaching to Apollos together do not violate this precedent; Priscilla does not dominate in the record, and she clearly acted as Aquila's fitting helper for preaching the gospel. It seems that those who only knew John's baptism, such as Apollos, were re-baptized in the name of Jesus Christ (Acts 19:1-5), so Aquila and Priscilla can be thought of as working together with an unbaptized contact. The context of Paul's words in 1Tim 2:12, *"I suffer not a woman to teach"*, is his statement in the next chapter that, *"These things write I unto thee... that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God"* (1Tim 3:14-15). There is no Biblical command against Sisters helping teach those outside the Truth, as would have been the case if female believers publicly demonstrated the ability to speak in tongues to the multitude in Jerusalem. However, those who point to Acts 2 as proof that women in the ecclesia have a right to teach in the exact same way as men, seem to ignore the latter part of the chapter: when it comes time for someone to take the lead and address the whole group, it is not a woman, but Peter, standing up with the eleven (Acts 2:14) who does this; and once those in the multitude are baptized, it is said that *"they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine"*, that is, the teaching of the apostles (Acts 2:42). Acts chapter 2 reinforces, rather than contradicts, the Biblical model.

Objection: "In Acts 21, Philip's daughters prophesied."

Response: In the case of Philip's daughters, we are only told the following: *"We [Luke, Paul and his company] entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was one of the seven; and abode with him. And the same man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy"* (Acts 21:8-9). The argument from a "women's rights" perspective usually goes as follows:

- 1) Phillip's daughters prophesied.
- 2) Therefore, they must have prophesied in the congregation of believers.
- 3) Therefore, women are able to teach in the congregation of believers today.

If we understand Philip's daughters in the context of the general New Testament teaching about the role of women, we can stop this speculative argument before it even reaches point 2. Paul writes in 1Cor 14:34, *"Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak"*. If the daughters of Philip

were faithful to the Spirit-inspired teaching of Paul, they would have obeyed these words and not spoken or prophesied in the church. However, Paul also lays down a different set of guidelines for at home (1Cor 14:35), in which a woman may freely speak and ask questions; if we know that Philip's daughters prophesied, and that they were obedient to the teachings of Paul, we can reasonably conclude that they prophesied at home, where such activity was not at all improper. In fact, the verses describing Philip's daughters support this conclusion by telling us that Paul and his company entered into the house of Phillip and abode with him; it makes sense that in this setting they observed the gift of prophecy in his four daughters.

Objection: “The Jerusalem Council established which elements of the Law were to be obeyed by the Gentile church; it did not establish that women need to be silent in obedience to the Law.”

Response: The answer to this objection is quite simple: the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15) only dealt with those matters that were in dispute at the time. The interesting thing about this objection is that it admits that the Law did establish different roles for men and women. There are many principles and aspects of the Law that were carried forward into the lives of the New Testament ecclesia, but which are not mentioned in Acts 15. Marriage outside of the faith, for example, was clearly marked as sinful by the Law, but not mentioned whatsoever by the Jerusalem Council. Clearly, this does not mean that we are to then dismiss it as an aspect of the Law that was not carried over into our lives in Christ. The fact that marriage outside of the faith is commanded against elsewhere in the New Testament confirms this. When a commandment or principle found in the Law is repeated or reinforced in the New Testament, we generally consider it applicable to our lives today, and we saw earlier in this article that the Mosaic model of teaching and leadership for men is indeed reinforced in the New Testament.

Additionally, as is consistent with the examples throughout Acts, the Jerusalem Council was convened by Brothers (Acts 15:6), the speakers there were Brothers (Peter, Barnabas, Paul, and James), and two men who were chief men among the brethren were chosen to travel delivering the Council's decision to the churches (Acts 15:22). Although Sisters may have been present at some point during the Council (which one might guess from the words with the whole church used in verse 22), there is no indication that they exercised a speaking or leadership role in the proceedings. This story reinforces the New Testament model.

Objection: “Paul couldn't have meant for his instructions to apply for all believers, since in 1 Corinthians 14 he says for women to ask their husbands at home — where does this leave unmarried women?”

Response: Paul may not have mentioned single women specifically in 1Cor 14:35, because his primary concern in this chapter isn't to thoroughly cover every conceivable family situation; rather, he is describing proper behavior in ecclesial meetings. His main point is to make a distinction between at home, where it is appropriate for a woman to speak, and in the church, where it is not. Married women could of course talk with their husbands at home, but single women aren't necessarily left out of this verse. The word for “husbands” in this verse, *aner*, is

translated “man” or “men” 156 times in the New Testament, and “husbands” only 50 times. Paul might very well be telling all women to ask their [men] at home, which would apply to wives, daughters, and single women all talking with their male family members. The important point here is that Paul is highlighting the environment in which the speaking is taking place: in the church is not the time for a woman to speak, but any woman, married or single, may freely discuss and ask questions about the Scriptures in a home environment.

Objection: “God wants us to use our gifts; why should educated women with a gift for speaking and leading be kept away from the podium on Sunday morning?”

Response: Does the Bible tell us that education, professional credentials, and natural skills are the prerequisites for teaching and leading the ecclesia? It’s the world that chooses leaders and teachers based on earthly qualities. God doesn’t think this way: “*man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart*” (1Sam 16:7). Moses, for instance, asked God to send someone else as he was slow of speech, but God said, “*I will be with thy mouth*” (Exod 4:12). However, this being said, what would God want women to do with the gifts and talents that He gave them in the first place? Who is in charge of how those gifts should be used? Consider Paul’s instructions to the first century ecclesia: “*Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge. If any thing be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace. For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted. And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets*” (1Cor 14:29-32).

The prophets were expected to exercise self-control in the use of their gifts. For example, a person who was given a prophecy and stood to speak it, was required to stop if another prophecy came to someone else. This means that God could give someone a prophecy that was not meant to be spoken in that setting. 1Cor 14:27 shows us that the same was true for those with the gift of tongues; the fourth person with a tongue was not permitted to speak it, even though their gift was also from God! Furthermore, if no interpreter was present, no one was permitted to use the gift of tongues at all! This principle of the gifts being subject to the prophets would also apply to gifted women, who were instructed to be silent in the ecclesia. Women would be able to control their gift and remain silent in this particular setting, while exercising their gift more freely in other venues.

The Bible also shows that possession of the Holy Spirit doesn’t allow an individual to override God’s hierarchy. Num 27:18-21, for example, shows that even though Joshua was a man in whom is the spirit, he was still subject to Eleazar, God’s appointed priest. Similarly, Aaron and Miriam contested Moses’ appointment to headship over the congregation by pointing out that they, too, were vessels for God’s words: “*Hath the LORD indeed spoken only by Moses? hath he not spoken also by us*” (Num 12:2)? In response to this, God struck Miriam with leprosy, only to heal her in response to the prayers of Moses; God thus affirmed that His established hierarchy was to be followed regardless of the possession of the Spirit. If this was so with the Holy Spirit gifts, it is surely true today when we consider

our own natural talents and gifts. Just because a particular Brother has a gift for leadership doesn't mean that he is supposed to be the one in charge of the ecclesia. In fact, the New Testament states very clearly that there are qualifications to be followed for ecclesial leadership, such as ruling your household well and not being a novice in the faith (1Tim 3:4-6). Similarly, just because a woman has a gift for teaching, it does not follow that she can exercise it independently of the Bible's limits on where and when it is appropriate for a woman to teach. We must all limit ourselves, our talents and our desires, to bring them into obedience to God's word; ecclesial roles are just one small part of that.

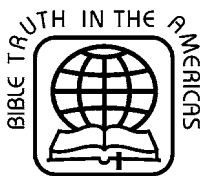
I also believe that a Sister who makes this objection is sadly limiting her definition of teaching and leadership. There are many ways in which a Sister can exercise a natural talent for teaching and shepherding, and a truly creative and enthusiastic Sister can find countless avenues to serve God with her skills while staying within His limits. To single out the podium as the one place where she wants to serve is showing a bias; somehow, she must think that the podium is the most important place in the ecclesia, and has decided she must have the one role denied to her by Scripture. I see this as an unfortunate loss of her talents and energy in other areas, and I would encourage my Sisters who find themselves in this position to really search their hearts and motivations for serving God.

Objection: The word “Brethren” in 1Cor 14 means “Brothers and Sisters”; therefore, verse 26, *“How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation,”* tells us that both Brothers and Sisters were sharing doctrines, tongues, revelations, etc. at ecclesial meetings.

Response: In many places in the New Testament, the word Brethren can refer to both men and women; other times, it refers solely to men in the ecclesia, as in 1Cor 7:29 and 9:5. Which is it in 1Cor 14? The readers of this chapter are called “Brethren” or “you” by Paul, using second-person pronouns; however, the pronouns change to the third-person “they” in the section about women, verses 34 and 35. If the Sisters were included in the term Brethren, why didn't Paul write directly to them? If, on the other hand, Paul is primarily addressing men in the ecclesia throughout the chapter, the pronoun shift makes sense, as does the phrase “your women” in verse 34. The context indicates that women are being written about, rather than addressed directly.

However, let's suppose that Sisters were indeed included in the word Brethren in 1Cor 14. Their inclusion would parallel the case of a Brother with the gift of tongues. In verse 28, the tongue speaker is told that if there is no interpreter present, he must keep silence in spite of his gift. The same goes for the prophets — if a revelation came to another, the first prophet would have to stop (vs 30). It may sound strange that God would give a prophet a prophecy that he was not free to deliver, but according to this chapter it certainly happened! The same would hold true for women in the ecclesia, who learn in verses 34-35 that they are not supposed to take a speaking position in ecclesial meetings. Instead, like the male prophets who had to remain silent, Sisters can “speak to [themselves], and to God (verse 28).”

Tara Laben (Baltimore, MD)



Bible Mission News

Baptisms in Lima, Perú

Bro. Jim Hunter (Linkman for Peru) shares that on February 19th, he had the pleasure of baptizing two new sisters in Lima. The satisfaction was compounded by their being not only the first sisters in the meeting but also the wives of brethren, so that there are now two complete families in the little ecclesia. Gloria Marcos is the wife of Bro. Flavio Carmona, while Katia Rivas is married to Bro. Julián Enríquez. Shortly after the baptisms, carried out in a wading pool in the back yard of Flavio and Gloria's house, our two new sisters were received into fellowship in a particularly joyous memorial service presided over by Rec. Bro. César Franklin.

To add a little spice to the occasion, Katia was 8 1/2 months pregnant, giving rise to the somewhat anxious hope that the day of her rebirth in Christ would come around before the birth of the new member of the family! But by God's grace all went well with the rebirths, and exactly two weeks later, on Sunday, March 4th, the happiness was completed when Sis. Katia gave birth to a healthy little girl, a welcome little sister to her and Julián's two young sons. We pray that our Father in heaven may continue to bless, strengthen and prosper the Lima Ecclesia to his honour and glory.

In the photo, from left to right appear all five members of the Lima Ecclesia: Julián and Katia, Gloria, her husband Flavio and César. Also in the picture is Nahuel, 10-year-old son of Flavio and Gloria and a very good little Bible student in his own right!



Lima, Peru Ecclesia

*Submitted by
Sis. Jan Berneau
CBMA/CBMC
Publicity*

El Salvador Bible School 2011: Sharing fellowship as if we were in the kingdom of God

Bro. Manuel and Sis. Silvia Fernández (recording Brother for the San Salvador ecclesia and his wife) share their memories of the year end Bible School in El Salvador.

At our 2011 Bible school the ecclesias of El Salvador were united with the special guests who had come to bring us messages, encouraging us to prepare patiently and faithfully for the coming of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus. We left for the school on the morning of Friday, Dec. 30, looking forward with joy to spending some unforgettable moments disconnected from the stress and discouragement of our everyday lives in the world. In all, 102 of us made the annual pilgrimage to the pine-covered hills near our country's northern border.



The brethren's group; class given on "Prayer" by Bro. Ed Binch

We were overjoyed to have Bro. Ed and Sis. Beth Binch with us, who have spent so much of their lives helping the ecclesias in El Salvador. Bro. Ed gave several classes on the subject "King Jehoshaphat and his zeal for the ways of the Lord." The talks were very edifying in reminding us that in every moment of our lives we need to keep in close communion with God through prayer so we don't lose sight of our goal. When we make mistakes it is because we have decided to shut him out of our lives without realizing that He knows all our thoughts, making our sins all the more serious. We saw this in the example of Jehoshaphat, who was zealous in his service to God but on one occasion was more concerned to be accepted in the eyes of men than in the sight of God.

It was a pleasure to have with us our new brother Carlos Santana of the Canary Islands, who had flown to El Salvador at end of October to be baptized after studying the Bible online and by email, particularly with Bro. Bill Rawson. Bro. Carlos has since returned home, where he is beginning to spread the knowledge of the true gospel. As usual there was a good contingent of members and friends from the neighbouring country of Guatemala. In addition, we were happy to have with us Bro. Jim and Sis. Jean Hunter. Without them, this event would not be the same

because they strengthen us with their words and encourage our young people to make wise decisions at crucial points in their lives. Sis. Jean also gave a class to the women, from which we derived encouragement to continue awaiting the coming of our Lord Jesus. Our children and young people made a special effort to make this a particularly happy school. For many people in the world the year-end holidays furnish an opportunity to live it up with friends and relatives, whereas for us it was an incomparable opportunity to spend time in close companionship with those of like precious faith who praise and fear the Lord, calling on His name.



Sis. Jean Hunter and the class of 27 young people.

We were specially touched by the example of little Lea Castillo, 11, daughter of Bro. René and Sis. Crissia Castillo. Lea arrived at the school full of joy despite feeling pain her abdomen. An analgesic eased the discomfort and she soldiered on, participating in the skits and other childrens' presentations. However to the dismay of us all, by Sunday morning the pain had become unbearable and her parents had to take her on the 2-hour drive down the mountain to hospital in San Salvador. Lea's greatest concern was missing the Sunday-school prize-giving,



**The 11-14
year old
class**



The 6-8 year old class.

so as she was leaving we held a mini-ceremony, cheering and clapping as we gave her her prize. Upon arriving at the hospital Lea received emergency surgery for a burst appendix. We are grateful that the infection had not had a chance to spread, so that despite some anxious moments she was soon back on her feet. However our prayers had to continue, because shortly after the school Bro. Neftalí Espinoza had a motorcycle accident on

the highway en route to his home in Sonsonate. Fortunately God was watching over him as well, so that while he suffered a fractured collarbone and some torn muscles he is recovering at home. Though he will have to miss several months' work he continues to preach to all those he comes in contact with, as has always been his practice.

We are all impatient to get to the end of the present year so that we may enjoy another school, if the kingdom doesn't come first. *"We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers; Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father" (1Thess 1:2-3).*

*Submitted by Sis. Jan Berneau
CBMA/CBMC Publicity*

Memories from 2011 Year End Bible School at Kendal, Jamaica

Sis. Gerzel Gordon, from the May Pen Ecclesia in Jamaica, shares the following memories of the year end.

Bible School in Jamaica. On Friday, December 30, 2011, brethren and sisters from across the island, gathered together at the Kendal Camp, to begin our Year End Bible School. Bro. Marlon Jackson happily welcomed everyone and prayed God's richest blessings would be on us, giving us open minds to learn more from His precious Word and that the fellowship over the weekend would bring us closer to God. The bowls of soup were quite appropriate and enjoyable at this time.

Saturday's activities started at 6:00 am with devotion. After breakfast, Bro. Patrick Johnson led the first session of his two part studies on, "I am the Good Shepherd". He expounded on how Jesus is the Good Shepherd and through him alone, salvation is made possible. He further developed his talk on how the Shepherd leads his own sheep, protects them from robbers, helps the wandering sheep from trespassing, searches for the strayed sheep and brings them back where they belong.

Christ calls his sheep by name, thus giving them confidence and affection that they follow him, while they refuse to follow any other. The leaders in the ecclesia are all shepherds, under Christ, the Chief shepherd, appointed to tend the flock of God.

“The meek shall inherit the earth”, was done by Bro. Keith Kinlocke. His point of emphasis was that being meek is closely tied to humility. The meek endures provocation, however unjust it may be, for he knows that the suffering will help him gain more strength in the Lord. Meekness, being one of God’s characteristics, is a requirement in our lives, if we are to be true servants of God. Meekness is the epitome of righteousness, as pride is the epitome of wickedness.

In Bro. Stanley Frazer’s studies on “Lessons from Samson and Delilah”, it was made clear that Samson’s lust defeated him. He had not taken God’s requirement seriously. Samson lost his marvelous strength, when God left him. His strength returned when he prayed to God and God answered him. Samson’s name is listed among the great men of faith in the Bible. God is a merciful Father, who forgives our weaknesses and short comings, as long as we turn to Him in prayer.

The Memorial Service started at 10:30 pm, Saturday night. Bro. Keith Kinlocke exhorted us not to send the wrong signal in our words and actions, as this can cause our downfall. Be true and honest in what we say and do. At 12:00 midnight was the Dedication Prayer. At the end of the service there were the usual hugs and kisses among brethren and sisters. This is always a touching experience.

Later in the day, the speakers for the weekend summed up their studies. All deliberations were interesting and inspiring. There is always a sad feeling when it is time for farewell. It was the time for the cars and buses to go down the hill, one behind the other, on our homeward journey. It was indeed an enjoyable weekend of praise and worship to our Heavenly Father.

*Submitted by Sis. Jan Berneau
CBMA/CBMC Publicity*



Jamaican Year End Bible School

Have you read these *Tidings* books?

Bible and Science: Design vs. Chance by John C. Bilello

The concept that the Universe, and all that is in it, came about by chance is counter to Bible teaching. God is the author of both the Bible and nature. \$13.34 US (Hardcover, 254 pages, 2005)

Essays to Believers

by Don Styles

A set of essays on practical Christian living and is suitable for individual meditation as well as group Bible study. \$8.00 US (208 pages, 2007)

My Journey in Faith

by Ronald P. Hicks

A brother shares his life experience in the Truth with Christadelphians around the world, and the joy of mission work. \$10.00 US (372 pages, 2010)

How to Order

Online — www.tidings.org (Go to Books). E-mail — books@tidings.org Mail — Tidings Books, 11659 Caves Road, Chesterland, OH 44026 Shipping & handling costs extra. Make checks payable to *The Christadelphian Tidings*.

The Creation Text: Studies in Early Genesis

by David P. Levin

Forty-nine studies offer fresh insights into early Genesis by examining the text and structure of chapters 1 to 5. \$12.00 US (364 pages, 2011)

The Whole Armor of God

by Ryan Mutter

This story takes place nearly 3,000 years ago, but the spiritual challenges are familiar to today's young people. \$6.00 US (110 pages, 2011)

Understanding the Bible

by A.D. Norris

A classic Christadelphian book useful in preaching work, and especially suitable for those who want to learn to read the Bible effectively. \$5.00 (152 pages, 2007)

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>*

News & Notices

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

BOSTON, MA

Once again it is with sadness that we announce the passing of two more of our beloved sisters in Christ. On February 5, 2012, Sis. Henrietta (Penny) Caddell fell asleep in Christ one day short of her ninety first birthday, and on February 16, 2012, our Sis. Pauline Kunan passed away at age eighty nine. Both sisters now rest peacefully awaiting the Lord's call to life again at his return.

We would like to thank our Bro. John Mannell from the Mississauga West, ON Ecclesia for leading our Sunday school class as well as offering up the word of exhortation on January 1, 2012.

Jim Sullivan

BRANTFORD, ON

On February 11, 2012, we enjoyed another very successful Little Disciples and Junior CYC Gathering at Camp Trillium on the theme, "David: Boy of Faith," with over 250 adults and children from Pre-K to grade 7 attending, and bringing many cumulative hours on workbooks and Bible marking to a climax! We also had a great Senior CYC Gathering on March 3, 2012, on the theme, "Elisha: Power is Salvation" and we thank Bro. Daniel Cadieux (Mississauga West, ON) for his exposition and ministrations over the weekend.

We recently held a series of three special lectures that were advertised in the newspaper and held at a local high school dealing with atheism, the promise of a kingdom, and events in Israel. We pray that this witness, shining forth the light of gospel truth in this area, will find receptive hearts to the honour of the Father.

We look forward to our upcoming Family Study Weekend to be held April 21-22, 2012, with our Bro. Stephen Palmer (Cardiff, UK) speaking.

We commend our Sis. Ona Lawton to the Barrie, ON Ecclesia and pray the Father will be with her and support her for the truth's sake. We will all very much miss our sister's wonderful, loving and cheerful spirit. We also transfer our Bro. Philip and Sis. Sharon Krakar to the love and care of the Cambridge, ON Ecclesia, and will miss them and pray that they enjoy fellowship with their family there.

Daniel Billington

CALGARY, AB

Since we last wrote there have been numerous changes in our ecclesia. In June 2011 we laid to rest our Sis. Bertha Hobkirk, aged 102. She joined the Calgary Ecclesia in 1993 from another fellowship and was an active member with her husband, the late Bro. Bill. Lately she was unable to attend due to infirmity. We wait, in hope, the day of resurrection.

We commend, in love, Sis. Aviva Mindorff to the care of the Vernon Okanagan Central Ecclesia. On 1st April 2012 we rejoiced with Bro. Igor and Sis. Natasha Boiko in the

baptism of their younger son MICHAEL BOIKO. We pray for God's blessing on Bro. Michael as we journey together towards the kingdom.

Following a change in employment we welcome, from Ontario, Bro. Peter and Sis. Chesed Jennings. They will be living some distance from Calgary and will meet with other Brethren and Sisters in southern Alberta regularly and at Calgary occasionally. We pray they will be happy amongst us.

The Calgary/Edmonton fraternal gathering will be held in Calgary October 6-7, 2012, God willing. Our speaker is Bro. David Green, Sussex, New Brunswick. His subject is "The Spirit of God". Further details will be notified nearer the time.

John Fairhurst

ECHO LAKE, NJ

We thank our Bro. Ron Kidd for his recent study weekend. We had a good number of brothers and sisters in attendance.

We sorrow with our Sis. Flo DiSilvestro in the loss of her brother, Robert Kennedy, and our Sis. Vittoria Marsden in the falling asleep of her mother, Sis. Mildred Leake of the Torquay, UK Ecclesia. The steadfast hope that we have of the resurrection and the kingdom of God enable us not to sorrow as others that have no hope. We also thank the staff of the Bethesda Christadelphian Care Home for their loving care of Sis. Mildred during her time at the home. Bro. Stewart and Sis. Vittoria Marsden wish to thank all brothers and sisters for their generous contributions toward the Bethesda Christadelphian Care Home in lieu of flowers in the falling asleep of Sis. Mildred Leake.

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 including: Margan Packie, Virginia Packie, Carolyn Antonaccio, David and Maryann Jorgensen (Union, NJ); Mike Davie (Cranston, RI); Sarah Telles (Norfolk, VA); Ron and Barbara Kidd (London, ON); and Patty Robinson (Hamilton Book Road, ON).

The Echo Lake Fall Study Weekend is scheduled, Lord willing, for October 13-14, 2012. The speaker is Bro. Richard Morgan (Hamilton Book Road, ON) and his subject is, "Promises of the Kingdom".

Stewart Marsden

GRANITE STATE, NH

There have been many exciting changes for our ecclesia as of late, but first and foremost we are delighted to announce the baptism of KATIE RAND on February 19, 2012. Sis. Katie is the daughter of Bro. Chris and Sis. Debbie Rand. It is always such a joyful occasion to witness the humble submission of one's life to the service of the Lord, and we pray that Yahweh will continue to bless our new sister and keep her in His way as she travels life's road to His kingdom.

We have also been blessed recently with a hall of our own after thirty plus years of renting and meeting in homes. We greatly rejoice in the opportunities that our new, albeit "temporary" home, "even so come Lord Jesus," will provide us as it is located in a very central spot in the community. Activities in the downtown area throughout the summer and fall last year gave us occasions for outreach work even before we were moved into the hall, and our reception by the town has been wonderful! We have recently begun meeting in the lower floor of the hall and look forward to moving upstairs very soon as the weather improves. We have all enjoyed and benefited from

the work that we have accomplished together in getting the building into shape as it needed a bit of updating before we could move in. We are so very thankful for the help that we have received from our brothers and sisters in the faith and it is a great blessing to have a place where we can get together whenever we like and stay as long as we like to share in warm fellowship with our brothers and sisters.

Steve Smith

HONESDALE, PA

Bro. Steve Cheetham (Moorestow, NJ) visited us on March 11, 2012, and gave us an excellent exhortation. Afterward the sisters provided a wonderful luncheon. We were glad to have the following visitors attend our services during March: Jeremy Jeffery, Decio. Olivia DeCarvalho, Jim Melody and Nancy Ryan. We were pleased to have a history lesson by Sis. Esther Dunn on the history of our ecclesia based upon the compilation of news from the Christadelphian magazine from 1890 by Bro. Jim Harper. Next year is the fiftieth anniversary of the first service in our current chapel so this was a good start for next year's celebration.

We also mailed our old, but still useful, hymnals and Bibles to the CBMA to be forwarded by them where needed in this world. We mailed a box of small plastic tabs or bread ties to Sis. Marie Washington of the Echo Lake Ecclesia to help purchase wheelchairs in Africa for the needy.

Stephen J. DeMarco

LONDON, ON

The London Ecclesia will be hosting a study day on June 23, 2012, God willing. Our speaker is Bro. Peter Forbes (Glenfield, UK). The subject will be, "Making the Psalms Live", and classes will commence at 11 am. Lunch will be provided.

Ron Kidd

OLYMPIA, WA

Olympia has a new recording brother. Please direct all future communication to: Bro. Casey K. Caronna, 1024 Boundary St., Olympia, WA, 98501. He may be reached by phone at 360 943 0643, or by email at casey.caronna@gmail.com.

Larry Weiss

PITTSBURGH, PA

We are very pleased to announce the transfer from the Portland, OR Ecclesia of Bro. Stephen and Sis. Kristy Robinson and family. They are a welcome addition to our ecclesia.

It was good to have the following brothers and sisters visiting our ecclesia: Chris and Rebecca Stilwell and family, Tyler Misko, and Bob and Linda Scott (Paris Ave., OH); and Linda Hibbs (Victoria, B.C.). We thank Bro. Bob Scott for his encouraging words of exhortation.

We are looking forward to our study weekend on May 5-6, 2012. Bro. Bill Link will speak on the topic, "The Lord Shall Yet Comfort Zion." All are welcome to attend. Please let us know you are coming by calling or texting Bro. Len Budney at 412-983-1970, or sending an email to pghecclesia@gmail.com.

Len Budney

POMONA, CA

Since our last report we have witnessed the baptisms of three new brothers in our ecclesia. FORREST BRINKERHOFF, the eldest son of Bro. Bobby and Sis. Kim Brinkerhoff was baptized on June 26, 2010, SEAN ATWOOD the son of Sis. Kathie Atwood and grandson of Bro. Stan and Sis. Eunice Newton was baptized on December 10, 2010, and RICHARD BRINKERHOFF, who is also the son of Bro. Bobby and Sis. Kim Brinkerhoff, was baptized on February 11, 2012.

On June 10, 2011, we rejoiced with Sis. Janet Davidson of our ecclesia and Bro. Jim Collister of the Verdugo Hills, CA Ecclesia as they were united in marriage at our Ecclesial Hall in the presence of a large number of witnesses. We wish them well on their journey toward the Kingdom together.

It is a pleasure to announce the following additions to our Sunday school. Robyn Cadieux was born to Bro. Paul and Sis. Jasmine Cadieux on July 9, 2010, and Adalia Vaughn was born to Bro. Ryan and Sis. Jerusha Vaughn on October 22, 2011.

We have lost several of our elder members recently. Bro. Jim Edgerly died while at his home in Montana on June 25, 2010, and Bro. Bob LeVea died while travelling to New York to visit his family on August 11, 2010. Sis. Nancy Clarke passed away on February 6, 2011. Sis. Nancy was a long-time member of this Ecclesia, having grown up in our Sunday School, and having married her husband of many years, Bro. Arthur Clarke, here in our Ecclesial Hall. They now await the call of the Master together. We have also, more recently, lost Bro. John Hensley, on July 10, 2011, and Bro. Everett Malone on January 3, 2012. Sis. Nancy, Bro. John, and Bro. Everett all leave behind large families, many of whom follow their examples of faithfulness.

Our number has been increased by the addition of several new members by transfer from other ecclesias. Sis. Stephanie Higham transferred her membership from the Verdugo Hills, CA Ecclesia on November 7, 2010, and Sis. Christi Haltom transferred her membership from the Detroit Royal Oak, MI Ecclesia on the same date. We have also gained by transfer Bro. Julius Ngong, who was formerly a member of the Douala, Cameroon Ecclesia, on January 9, 2011. Bro. Julius also brings with him his wife Florence, who attends regularly. Bro. David and Sis. Joanna Haltom, and Bro. Ryan and Sis. Jerusha Vaughn transferred their membership to Pomona from the Detroit Royal Oak, MI Ecclesia on August 28, 2011, and Bro. Jim Collister transferred from the Verdugo Hills, CA Ecclesia on September 25, 2011.

We have lost by transfer Sis. Joy Wilson who transferred to the Verdugo Hills, CA Ecclesia on September 19, 2010, and Sis. Debbie Hensley who transferred to the Houston West, TX Ecclesia on June 22, 2011. We know that they will be great assets to the brothers and sisters in their new ecclesial homes. Finally, we must report that Sis. Cindy LaFavor, Bro. Justin Davidson, Bro. Daniel Padilla, and Sis. Allysha Richardson are no longer in fellowship with us.

Brian E. McDonald.

SANTA BARBARA, CA

It has been over a year since we reported the activities of the Santa Barbara Ecclesia. The Santa Barbara Ecclesia continues to maintain a strong and active light stand in our community with seven visitors attending Sunday School and Bible Classes in our ecclesial hall. We are thankful that God continues to call out a people for his name and that we are able to respond to the call. Keep our students in your prayers as they actively study the Scriptures or Truth.

It is with sadness that we report the death of our Sister Jeanette Bailey, the mother of our Fred Walker of the Santa Barbara Ecclesia and Ann Loftis of the Pomona CA Ecclesia. After many faithful years of service in the Truth, Jeanette was laid to rest on January 15th, 2012 at the age of 95 in Pomona, California . May her sleep be short when "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."

Out of 27 members, we have four Brethren and Sisters over the age of 90 with the eldest, Wilma Hirst celebrating her 96th birthday this year and six brethren and sisters over the age of 87. We thank God for strengthening our elder brethren and sisters. They are such an example to our ecclesia of faithfulness to the service of God in these last days of Gentile times. They are the faithful attendees to Bible class, Sunday School and Memorial Service as well as all ecclesial functions. May Yahweh continue to bless them and our ecclesia as we continue to put forth His Gospel message and await the return of His son.

In September we once again celebrated our annual Labor Day Picnic in the back yard of our John Seagoe's home. After a word of encouragement from God's Word, we had a wonderful day of fellowship, food and fun with brethren and sisters of like precious faith from near and far. We look forward to this years Labor Day Picnic to be held on Saturday September 1st. If you are in the area, join our ecclesia for this day of Fellowship and Food with those of like precious faith around the Word of God.

This past year we welcomed around the table of the Lord the following brethren and sisters: Jason and Ruth Hensley, David and Erin Clubb, Chris and Kathleen Stickney, Erik Sternad, Ken and Bonnie Sommerville, Geoff and Brenda Lee Smith, Aidan Smith (Simi Hills); Tony Banks, Linda Davis, Bryan and Harmonie Blanchard, Nathan and Janee Blanchard, Al and Teri Carlson, (Verdugo Hills); Ron and Shirley Stewart, Steve and Kathy Settle, Ron and Melody Magness (Lompoc); Sid Wattles (North County); Michael and Myra Stickney, Jane, Hannah and Emily Tunnell, Becky Nagel, Steve and Susie Stewart, Sherri Luskin, Roger and Janya Schlottman (San Diego); Jim and Marilyn Seagoe, Jerry and Wendy Hirst (San Francisco); Lolita Van Merlo (Pomona); Jim and Marilyn Land (Los Angeles); Jon and Carrie Spencer, Taylor Spencer, Larry and Kathleen King (Jackson County, OR); Dave and Becky Seagoe, Denise Main (Olympia, WA); Ken Smith, Marin and Joan Norris (UK); Nigel Fletcher (Australia).

We would like to thank the following Brethren for ministering to our ecclesia with Bible classes and the word of exhortation: Ron Stewart, Jason Hensley, David Club, Michael Stickney, Chris Stickney, Geoff Smith, Ken Sommerville, Jim Land, Taylor Spencer, Erik Sternad, Jim Seagoe, Ken Smith, Nigel Fletcher, Jerry Hirst, Martin Norris. and Roger Schlottman.

If you are ever heading up the California Coast, be sure and stop in the beautiful little coastal town of Santa Barbara and enjoy fellowship around the word with our ecclesia. It is our prayer, if Christ remains away, that you like Santa Barbara so much you will want to stay. Our fervent prayer is that our Lord and Savior will return soon to establish his Fathers Kingdom on this earth and all or plans are interrupted by that great and glorious day.....even so come Lord Jesus.

Craig Stickney

SOUTHERN NEW HAMPSHIRE, NH

It is with great joy we note that PHILIP QUINDAZZI, son of our Sis. Zoe Ilaqua, was baptized into the saving name of Jesus Christ on February 11, 2012. Our new brother was immersed by his grandfather, Bro. Terry Fearn, of the Vancouver, BC Ecclesia. Bro. Terry brought us the exhortation on Sunday. Our thanks to the Worcester, MA Ecclesia for the use of their hall and for their hospitality in hosting the baptism.

Please note that I have been elected to serve as Recording Brother. Please address all written correspondence to me at P.O. Box 358, Hollis, NH 08049. I may also be reached by e-mail at cubshaw@verizon.net.

Frank Conahan

ST. LUCIA

Since last reporting there has been a lot of activity at the St. Lucia ecclesia. In November 2011, Bro. Peter and Sis. Margaret Stonell (Hamilton Greenaway) spent one month here and supported our activities in preaching and exhorting the members.

In January and February Bro. Martin and Sis. Lois Webster (Kitchener-Waterloo) came down for seven weeks. During those seven weeks Bro. Mike LeDuke (Kitchener-Waterloo) came for nearly three weeks. During their stay, lunchtime classes were organized at the ecclesial hall and we were encouraged by the response from the public. A number of new contacts came and we started to study the Acts of the Apostles. The format was informal with questions invited from those who attended. During those weeks several series of lectures were held with attendance from interested friends numbering from four to 14. After each lecture questions were invited and on some occasions the question period lasted for as long as 30 minutes.

In the middle of February Bro. Jim and Sis. Anne Barton (Kingston, Jamaica) came for three weeks, and their assistance in preaching and ecclesial support was much appreciated. Bro. Jim had prepared an excellent 70 page booklet on the Apocalypse and used this as the basis of discussion at the ecclesial Bible class and the midday classes referred to above.

We were delighted to have the company of Bro. and Sis. Philip Weatherall (Daventry, UK) and Bro. and Sis. Daniel Harrison (Northampton, UK) who came to St. Lucia on holiday and made a most valuable contribution to our preaching work and helping the ecclesia with pastoral support. Bro. Cliff and Sis. Julia Baines (Sussex, NB) came for three weeks in March. The lunch time classes were continued as well as another series of lectures.

An ecclesial outing was held on Feb 22, 2012, a holiday in St. Lucia, to Pigeon Island. It was thoroughly enjoyed by the local brothers and sisters as well as all the visitors. Any brothers or sisters able to spend a holiday in St. Lucia and attend the memorial service would be most welcome.

Martin Webster

EARLY ISSUES OF THE TIDINGS MAGAZINE NEEDED

We are attempting to create a complete archive of the *Tidings Magazine* going all the way back to the very first issue. We have a fairly complete archive from January, 1958 forward, but unfortunately prior to that we have very little in our possession. We would like to compile a record of the first 19 years of the publication to whatever extent it is still possible.

The magazine got its start in February of 1939 as the Pomona Christadelphian Sunday School newsletter. The title for the first half of 1939 was “*The Junior Berean*”, but this title was changed to “*The Junior Christadelphian*” in the latter part of 1939. It continued to be published under that name through the May, 1956 issue, at which time the current title of “*The Christadelphian Tidings of the Kingdom of God*” was chosen.

We would be happy to receive copies of any of the above titles, from the first issue in February, 1939 through the December, 1957 issue. We will be scanning the originals and would be happy to return them to you if you so desire. Any copies that you have may be sent to: McDonald Printing Services, P.O. Box 400, San Dimas, CA 91773-0400.

Brian E. McDonald

WASHINGTON DC MUSIC STUDY WEEKEND

God willing, the Washington DC Ecclesia will be hosting a special study weekend October 5-7, 2012. The theme of the weekend will be, “Make The Voice Of His Praise To Be Heard!” and will be led by Bro. Phil Munday (Bournemouth Winton, UK). Bro. Phil was involved in the preparation of the 2002 edition of the Christadelphian Hymn Book, and composed Hymn 100. He has been a music teacher in the UK and in Kenya where he directed the Kenya Conservatoire of Music, and conducted the Nairobi Orchestra. Before retiring, he was the Director of Examinations for the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music in the UK. Please join us for an uplifting weekend of studies, song, and praise, based around glorifying God in our music. For further information please contact Bro. David Perry at dperry1@gmail.com.

Bob Kling

The attraction of “tells”

Note: A “tell”, or “tel”, is an archaeological mound created by human occupation and abandonment of a geographical site over many centuries. A classic tell looks like a small hill with sloping sides and a plateau on the top.

Tells have attractions for archaeologists quite comparable to the enticements leading on a young lover. Tells are old or young; display a degree of beauty, sophistication, and wealth; and have a distinctive shape and measurements; a more or less interesting past with greater or lesser capability of communicating it; varying accessibility; and varying prospects for the archaeological marriage. However, the archaeologist’s set of values may differ from those of the customary young lover. The British mystery writer Agatha Christie is reported to have said of her archaeologist husband, Max Mallowan, “It’s great to be married to an archaeologist. The older I get, the more he appreciates me.”

Paul W. Lapp, Director
American School of Oriental Research in Jerusalem

Minute Meditation

Wait before Worrying

Charles Spurgeon recognized the draining effect worry can have on our daily life: “Anxiety does not empty tomorrow of its sorrow, but only empties today of its strength.” We function less effectively when we are consumed with worry. How realistic are the concerns that sometimes overwhelm us? Winston Churchill, a man who saw his share of trouble as the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom during World War II, once observed, “When I look back on all these worries, I remember the story of the old man who said on his deathbed that he had had a lot of trouble in his life, most of which had never happened.” How many of our worries fail to materialize? We worry, for example, that the plane we are on will crash — and then it lands safely.

Most of us realize the harm that worry does to the body, but most of us do it anyway. Here is a technique that can help us break the worry habit: Wait before worrying. Keep in mind that the average worrier is 92% inefficient — only 8% of what anyone worries about ever comes true. There is the humorous story about the fellow who was so full of worries that when he found something new to worry about he would say, “I have too many worries right now — it will be six months before I will have time to worry about this one.”

Unfortunately, we live in such a fast paced society that if we get a new worry it goes right to the top of the heap and we immediately begin to worry about it. We need to learn to wait. Wait before worrying. It is not easy, but it is right. Often, time alone solves the thing that had us worrying. Suppose someone is not home at the scheduled time. While we are waiting, before worrying, the person shows up.

What should we do while we are waiting before worrying? Turn the new worry over to the Lord. Tell Him all about it. My favorite verse on this subject is Paul's advice to those who lived in Phillipi. He told them, “Don't worry over anything whatever. Tell God every detail of your needs in earnest and thankful prayer and the peace of God which transcends human understanding, will keep constant guard over your hearts and minds as they rest in Christ Jesus.” [Phillips translation]

Once the problem is turned over to God, it is foolish then to worry about it. After all, the problem is now given to God. Trust God with the worry. God is bigger than any problem we will ever have to face. If we take it back from Him and worry, it means that we really have not turned it over to Him in the first place.

King Hezekiah is an example of how to follow the instructions that Paul gave to the Philippians. Hezekiah received a terrible letter from the Assyrian King Sennacherib threatening to destroy him and all the people with him in Jerusalem. “Hezekiah received the letter of the hand of the messengers, and read it: and Hezekiah went up into the house of the LORD, and spread it before the LORD.” Then Hezekiah told God every detail of his needs. “And Hezekiah prayed before the LORD, and said, LORD, bow down thine ear, and hear: open, LORD, thine eyes, and see:

and hear the words of Sennacherib, which hath sent him to reproach the living God...O LORD our God, I beseech thee, save thou us out of his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou art the LORD God, even thou only.”

And what was God’s response? “Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, That which thou hast prayed to me against Sennacherib king of Assyria I have heard. For I will defend this city, to save it, for mine own sake, and for my servant David’s sake... And it came to pass that night, that the angel of the LORD went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand:”

Hezekiah trusted God with his worry. He told God his needs, and the LORD answered his prayer. God will also answer our prayer. The answer may not be as spectacular an answer as King Hezekiah received, but the God that heard his prayer is the very same God to whom we pray.

When we face trouble in life, let us learn to wait before worrying. Let us wait on the Lord by turning our worries over to our God. We know from Scriptures that God is a rewarder of those that diligently seek Him. We need to trust God and believe in what He can do, as Paul tells us, “Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.”

Robert J. Lloyd

Coming Events (Lord Willing)

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

MAY 2012

5-6 Pittsburgh, PA Study Weekend. Bro. Bill Link (Baltimore, MD) speaking on the topic “Zechariah: The Lord shall yet comfort Zion, and shall yet choose Jerusalem.” Contact Bro. Len Budney at (412) 983-1970 or pghecclesia@gmail.com.

11-13 Vancouver Island Sisters’ Weekend endorsed by the Nanaimo, BC Ecclesia. The location is Beach Acres Resort, near Parksville, BC 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 Rd., Nanaimo, BC V9V 1A8, or e-mail yvonne2001@shaw.ca.

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

19-20 Prince George, BC Fraternal Gathering. Speaker: Bro. David Lloyd (Simi Hills, 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, NY Hall. 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, Double \$288, Triple \$258 per person. Make check payable to "New York Christadelphian". Mail to Sis. Averil Ferguson, 814A Tilden St., Apt. 5B, Bronx, NY, 10467. Contact Sis. Averil Ferguson (718) 881-8705 or e-mail averilpsm23@juno.com.

23 London, ON Study day. Our speaker is Bro. Peter Forbes (Glenfield, UK). The subject will be, "Making the Psalms Live", and classes will commence at 11 am. Lunch will be provided.

24-30 California Christadelphian Kids Camp. Children 9-16. Teachers are Bro. Jim Cowie (Wilston, Australia) and Bro. Dev Ramcharan (Toronto West, ON). Our theme is "Elisha". Cost is \$125 before February 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, Australia): "Epistle to James — Be Ye Doers of the Word" (adults) and "How Judge Ye? — Case Studies Based on the Law of Moses" (teens). Information on website www.christadelphians.net/macbs.

JULY 2012

1-7 California Youth Conference at Ojai, CA. An exciting week 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 (Wilston, Australia). Contact www.youthconferencecalifornia.com or Bro. Jason Hensley jason@speakingofhisglory.com.

4-9 Calaveras Family Bible Camp Calaveras Big Trees State Park, Arnold, CA. Classes will be given by Bro. David Haltom (Pomona, CA) on the topic "The Reality of Discipleship". Contact Bro. Brian McDonald at 626-335-3787 or bmcDonald@mcDonald-printing.com.

8-14 Southwest Christadelphian Bible School at Schreiner University, Kerrville, TX. The teachers are Bro. David Jennings (Pomona, CA): "Scriptural Discipline" adults, and "The Fundamentals of Bible Prophecy" teens; Bro. Stephen Mansfield (Golden Grove, Australia): "1 Corinthians" adults, and "Ephesians" teens; Bro. Carl Parry (Salisbury, Australia): "The Power of Prayer" adults, and "How Judge Ye?" teens. Contact Bro. Shannon Strickland shannonjejh@att.net. Registration forms are on our website: www.swcbs.com.

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.

14-22 Eastern Bible School Connecticut College, New London, CT. Theme: "Thy Kingdom Come". Bro. Jim Cowie (Wilston, Australia): "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.

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 (Baltimore, MD): "The Life of Timothy"; Bro. Jim Cowie (Wilston, Australia): "The King's Manifesto for Life". For registration information, contact Bro. Mike Livermore, 24970 Woodridge Dr., Apt. 108, Farmington Hills, MI 48335, 248-462-5740, e-mail: mike.live@gmail.com or visit www.midwestbibleschool.com.

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

28-Aug 4 Christadelphian Bible Camp Manitoulin Island, ON The theme is "Be Ye Transformed By the Renewing of Your Mind" The speakers will be Bro. Con Mitsos (Woodville, Australia) on the subject "Josiah the Great Reformer" and Bro. Roger Long (Grosvenor Road, 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 416-284-0290.

29-Aug 4 Rogue River Bible School at Union Creek, OR. Speakers are Bro. Stephen 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.

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 (Saanich Peninsula, BC): "21st Century Discipleship"; Bro. Marco Dondero (San Francisco Peninsula, 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 Road, ON): "The Temptations of Christ"; Bro. Steve Hornhardt (Australia): "Come and See! Witnessing for Christ"; Bro. Tim Osborn (Vernon Okanagan, 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 (Washington, DC): "Ezekiel — Son of Man"; Bro. Ian Dangerfield (Australia): "Crucified and Risen With Christ"; Bro. Nathan Badger (Cambridge, ON): "Micah — To Do Justly, to Love Mercy, and to Walk Humbly Before

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Your God". Contact information Sis. Yvonne Rosenau, 6274 Dover Rd., Nanaimo, BC V9V 1A8. Phone: 250-758-4569 e-mail: yvonne2001@shaw.ca website: www.vibiblecamp.com.

SEPTEMBER 2012

9-14 Adult Study Week at Wildwood Manor Ranch in Ballinafad, ON. The week consists of daily interactive Bible study, taken from 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, Australia) 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).

5-7 Washington, DC Music Study weekend. Theme: "Make the Voice of His Praise to be Heard!". Study leader will be Bro. Phil Munday (Bournemouth Winton, UK). Please join us for an uplifting weekend of studies, song, and praise, based around glorifying God in our music. Contact Bro. David Perry dperry1@gmail.com.

13-14 Echo Lake, NJ Fall Study weekend. The speaker is Bro. Richard Morgan (Hamilton Book Road, ON) and his subject is "Promises of the Kingdom".