

# THE CHRISTADELPHIAN TIDINGS

— of the Kingdom of God —

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No. 5

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# The CHRISTADELPHIAN TIDINGS of the Kingdom of God

Peter Hemingray, Editor

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## ***"A land which the Lord thy God careth for"*** **(Deut 11:12)**

*This is an arresting description of the Holy Land, and the place it occupies in the world geographically and historically is equally remarkable. As to location, it is central. Granted the realization of completed civilization in all the other lands, with accompanying perfected means of intercommunication, it would be better suited than any other place on earth for the seat of worldwide government. Under such conditions, thither would the tribes go up easily; and in the intellectual and spiritual light of its capital city, all the nations of the earth might walk; and into it, send their glory and their honor. Its history is covered by the naming of three names. Abraham, Moses, Jesus; these three forming a sequence in the Divine movements therein.*

*It is the land for which God careth. He makes it fruitful or barren. That is its story in the past. There can be no doubt in the mind of the student of these Holy Writings that it will yet be the earthly center of the Kingdom of God. On the slopes of Olivet the feet of the King shall yet actually stand, and from the city of the great King, the law shall yet go forth, in obedience to which man shall realize the highest of life.*

G. Campbell Morgan

## Editorial

### Sadness — but Bitterness?

*“And she said unto them, Call me not Naomi, call me Mara: for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly<sup>1</sup> with me” (Ruth 1:20).*

#### Bitterness

All down through the ages, mankind has expressed bitterness when calamity befalls them. Naomi expressed such bitterness at the death of her husband and two sons. It is indeed hard to avoid such a reaction, whether the situation is one that impacts you personally or one you love. There is a natural reaction to look for the reason behind the situation, as did the disciples when they came across a blind man.

*“And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him” (John 9:1-3).*

The disciples had two explanations: personal sin or inherited sin, but in modern times other reasons often occur to us. Society tends to look to assign blame (and obtain monetary compensation) whenever bad things happen. I had an accident recently that resulted in a broken bone in my leg: my insurance company wanted to know where the accident happened, whether it was on a sidewalk or someone’s property — presumably to investigate the possibility of assigning blame and then obtaining compensation from the property owner.

Thus the natural reaction of sadness and grieving over illness or death has, all too often, been replaced by bitterness and then by blaming inadequacies in medical care. To the explanation of “sin” suggested by the disciples, a modern questioner would surely add “or was it the fault of the doctors?” Medical “miracles” are expected: we commonly refuse to accept a terminal diagnosis, and expect the doctors to treat patients even when any rational being would accept the situation — but we are not rational about death.

But is such a reaction Biblical? Was Naomi right to be bitter? In both cases above, good came out of disaster. Naomi became an ancestor to David, and to his greater son. And the blind man was cured. In fact, the reason for the blindness was made clear: *“that the works of God should be made manifest in him”*. It is hard to accept God’s will, even though we know that sickness and death is our inevitable lot. *“Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish” (Luke 13:4-5).* Repentance, belief in the truth, and baptism offer us the ultimate hope of resurrection, but brings no escape from sickness and death in this life.

It is very hard to accept that disease and death is a natural lot of mankind, common to all our race and an inevitable consequence of the sin of Adam, whose mortal nature we all inherit. It is also very difficult to accept that sometimes the purpose of God might require such illness as the blind man suffered. Disciples are not immune: sometimes indeed God sends us trials to prove our faith, as James tells us: *“Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance”* (James 1:2-3). And sometimes, perhaps, when our work, or that of someone else is done, we cannot second guess the purpose of our Heavenly Father. It is hard to accept, as we look as to whether we or anyone else could have prevented a sad outcome, but sometimes our work is done. *“And [Job] said, Naked came I out of my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD”* (Job 1:21).

### **Does God preserve Christadelphians?**

In any disaster in our days, wherever in the world it occurs, we are quick to check on the safety of any Christadelphians that might have been affected. The Christadelphian Internet sites are alive with information, and we are naturally often happy to know that all our brethren and sisters are safe — often followed by an outpouring of monetary help to assist with the material needs of the victims, and prayers and praises for the safety of those involved. There seems to be an implied belief that God protects His own from such disasters.

Indeed, there was an idea prevalent in the brotherhood early in WWII that God’s protection would be afforded to His children and that if we had faith we should be in some way immune from the effects of the bombing. One brother actually wrote a hymn called “London, night-bombers overhead”, based on Psa 91, to the effect that the Lord would preserve those who trusted in Him. “A thousand shall fall at thy right hand, and ten thousand at thy left, but it shall not come nigh thee...” was the implication, but events proved that in fact David’s dictum was nearer the truth — *“the sword devoureth one as well as another”*. For there were many casualties among Christadelphians from the bombings. There were many who were killed when their homes were blasted, and many who lost their homes and their health.<sup>2</sup>

The natural consequence is such feelings that, when automobile accidents take one of our own, or a similar fatal outcome is the result of some other episode, we wonder “what happened?” How could such a disaster strike a faithful Christadelphian? How can a person be struck down in their youth, or even middle age, before they have had an opportunity to serve God for any length of time? Is it something they did, or someone else did? And such we feel bitterness and look for some cause, some way to assign blame, some source to which we can assign bitterness.

### **Why does God allow pain and suffering?**

The easy answer is basically as follows:

- 1) God gave man free will, so that he would have the opportunity to love.
- 2) Man chose hatred rather than love, thus bringing suffering (much of which is man-made) into the world.

- 3) Death puts an end to both sin and suffering. It is God's way of wiping out of existence those who do not choose to love Him.
- 4) But there is a hope of life after death for those who do try to love God.

But there is a further aspect: there is a purpose to the life of everyone, whether it is obvious or not. All work to the greater glory of God, knowingly or not. Jesus knew his purpose, and accepted great suffering and death for it.

*"Fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. And have you completely forgotten this word of encouragement that addresses you as a father addresses his son? It says, 'My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, because the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and he chastens everyone he accepts as his son' " (Heb 12:2-6 NIV).*

Let us remember that, in our grief and sadness at the passing of one we love, we ought not to fall into bitterness, either at ones we might be inclined to blame or at the reality of death itself. There is a sure hope for those who endure to the end: eternal life, free of suffering, death, and sorrow that is our present lot. Despite what we might expect, as Solomon put it:

*"...the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all. For man also knoweth not his time: as the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare; so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them" (Eccl 9:11-12).*

Finally, "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice" (Eph 4:31).

*Peter Hemingray*

Postscript: after writing this, Bro. Bob Lloyd sent me his latest "Minute Meditation" for inclusion in this issue, which addresses a similar matter.

#### **Notes:**

1. The Hebrew word transliterated "Mara" means bitterness.
2. This paragraph is adapted from Bro. Len Richardson's book, *Sixty years a Christadelphian*.

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**Submissions under 300 words are encouraged  
— the magazine reserves the right to edit all submissions  
for length and clarity.**

## Exhortation

### A Flight to Massachusetts

#### The flight

For today's exhortation, I am going to ask you to remember your own experiences during any commercial flight these days.

When you take a flight, your baggage is subject to inspection, which might make us recall the episode in Genesis when Jacob and his family leave, but Laban and his men come after them. Laban demands he be allowed to inspect all of Jacob's stuff and all the stuff of his household, and unbeknownst to Jacob, Rachel has carried away her family's idols. This is an event full of drama... especially, if carrying some contraband... secretly stowed away. We need to be careful what stuff we are carrying around when it comes time to be inspected. The Psalmist implores:

*"Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts:  
And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting"* (Psa 139:23-24).

Jeremiah instructs the people of God: *"Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the LORD"* (Lam 3:40).

He also reminds us: *"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? I [The LORD] search[es] the heart, I [He will] try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings"* (Jer 17:9-10).

To begin our journey, to actually get on board, you need a boarding pass. Somewhat like baptism, which is needed to become "in Christ". Once on board, at least on Southwest Airlines, it is open seating, no first class, everyone is treated equally. Scripturally, in our life in the Truth, we too should not be a respecter of persons. That is to say, there is no class distinction, or at least there shouldn't be.

Next, one of the first things done as you ready to pull away from the gate: the flight attendant, who is familiar with the aircraft and the trip that you will be taking, provides you with instructions. Now, those that are frequent fliers have heard it all before, and by now are not listening to what is being said. Just look about you during the preflight instructions: most passengers do not bother to pay attention, let alone pull out the safety card and thoroughly inspect it. This card summarizes the flight attendant's pre-flight instructions. It has a list of instructions that we will now review.

#### **For your safety, follow instructions, and study the contents of this card**

Like this card, we have been given the Bible, which is full of instruction, yet few actually study the content of this card, especially, if a prior passenger has taken it for their sole possession. Likewise, God's Word is something that we should share with others. God's Word is not something we should hoard away like some precious

object, kept secret, safely locked away from prying eyes as if it were something that can be taken from us. Ironically, in this instance, the more we share the more we gain, and it is important that we pass on this life saving information to others. It should be shared and NOT something kept solely to ourselves. Paul instructs Timothy and us: *“Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine: continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee”* (1Tim 4:16). It’s important that we share God’s treasured Word. God’s Word is something that we are to search for as a hidden treasure and even be willing to sell all to acquire it — as if it were a pearl of great price. However, it is NOT something we should keep to ourselves, but something to share. Something that we should be sure we make available for other passengers on life’s journey.

### **Learn the location of ALL exits on this aircraft**

Now, if the aircraft were to represent the Ecclesia, being in the plane would be a good thing and during the flight whatever you do, you do NOT want to exit the airplane. You would want to be on board when arriving at the final destination. Anyone ever missed a flight? I’ve come close. It is a horrible feeling when the gangway door is shut and you wanted to be on the other side. We should be reminded of the parable of the 10 virgins: when the door was shut, no amount of knocking got it to open again. Now, if you miss a scheduled flight, it may be a hassle and costly inconvenience, but at least you can always catch another, eventually. With the impending return of Christ, this will NOT be the case.

If the airplane were to represent the World, in the event of a crash or pending emergency situation, looking for a way out would be the appropriate course of action. During the preflight instructions, you are told that you should look for the location of the nearest exit to where you are seated. During your travels, you should know the location of the nearest exit, remembering that it may be behind you (i.e. you may need to turn around), and you should have an exit strategy in advance of the need. We need to always look for and to find a way of escape. Paul tells us

*“Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it. Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry... The cup of blessing which we bless, Is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, Is it not the communion of the body of Christ?”* (1Cor 10:11-16).

We are all condemned to death if we do not find the way out of that condemnation. Being in Christ becomes our way of escape. We need to know where this door is and we need to know how to open it. If you are seated in a row that has a way of escape you take on a responsibility. A responsibility to make sure the exit is accessible, and also the responsibility to assist others so that they too can exit the stricken aircraft.

## Comply with all signs and placards

We are given warning signs, and plenty of safety instructions to which we are to comply. Comply is an interesting word... for our own safety and salvation, we need to comply! It is not enough to know; one must also do. You must understand the dangers and avoid doing something that not only puts your life in jeopardy, but also the lives of those around us. The card reads "Keep your seatbelt fastened while seated". This is especially important if there are unexpected bumps along the way. Many flights encounter turbulence as does our course in life. "In the event that the plane should encounter a loss of cabin pressure, oxygen masks will drop from the ceiling above." You are instructed to save yourself first, and then assist those with whom you might be traveling who require assistance. At first, this may sound somewhat selfish; however, is really also in the best interest of your loved ones who you may be need to assist. Although Scripturally, we should esteem our brethren better than ourselves, we need take the necessary action for procuring our own the salvation, and then we are better equipped to assist those that are also in need.

## Turn off all portable electronic devices before take-offs and landings

The next few items, which actually appear on the card, just go to show you how litigious our society has become.

"The following MAY BE operated at all times: **Electronic watches.**" We need to be aware of the time and the time is short, as the return of Christ is nearer now than when it was before. **Hearing aids.** I can just hear someone's defense now: "After the instruction to turn off all electronic devices, I did not hear any other instructions." Scripture warns us: "*those that have ears to hear, let them hear*", and "*Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.*" The last electronic device listed that can remain on: **Pacemakers.** Yes, it reminds us that the time to listen and the time to act is while our heart is still beating, for there is no consciousness in the sleep of death. But there will come a time at the return of Christ when the dead will arise, and at the judgment seat of Christ, we will be asked to give account of your actions, whether good or bad.

## In the event of an emergency evacuation, you are NOT to take your baggage with you

*"And he said unto the disciples, The days will come, when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, and ye shall not see it. And they shall say to you, See here; or, see there: go not after them, nor follow them. For as the lightning, that lighteneth out of the one part under heaven, shineth unto the other part under heaven; so shall also the Son of man be in his day. But first must he suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation. And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all. Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; [ When we consider the depravity occurring in Sodom and Gomorrah, we may be*



lulled into thinking that we are NOT headed to such destruction. Again if we are not careful, we too may do nothing more than eat, drink, buy, sell, plant, and build... to the exclusion of God in our lives.] *"But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed. In that day, he which shall be upon the housetop, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away: and he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back. Remember Lot's wife. [Remember that stuff should be left behind?] Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it"* (Luke 17:22-33).

We now come to the emblems on the table before for us. With these emblems, we remember an individual who accomplished all this and much more. We remember the life, death, and the triumphant resurrection of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ. *"Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God"* (Heb 12:2). Until the long awaited coming of our now absent Lord, we must continue on life's journey that remains before for us. We pray God's blessings will sustain us on that journey yet ahead. May we seek His guidance ever and avail ourselves of the help provided, while assisting those, like us, that journey toward His kingdom. May we consider our ways, doing all to the honor and glory of our Heavenly Father. May we heed instructions warning words; especially when those instructions are placed there to both warn and save.

Mark Wade (West Houston, TX)

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## **Special Invitation**

*For some years, unity discussions have been taking place with Churches of God of the Abrahamic Faith. In the interest of promoting friendship and mutual understanding, 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](mailto:lisarek8@cs.com)  
Visit our website <http://abrahamicfaithgathering.org>

## Bible Study

### Creation's Gospel: (7) The Clouds of Heaven

Our continuing premise is how the spoken word of God (creation) is a veiled projection of divine truths and principles, the same truths and principles expressed in Scripture. Our consideration of the law and prophecies of the early and latter rains briefly referenced the identification of clouds as identifying the presence, power and glory of the Creator. This is a very basic understanding, as the evidence for this relationship saturates Scripture from Genesis to Revelation. The cloud was the frame for the divine covenant symbol of the rainbow. According to Moses, even the pagans recognized Yahweh's presence in the cloud pillar hovering over the Tabernacle that led Israel through the wilderness (Num 14:14). The divine presence in the cloud filled the Tabernacle and Solomon's temple at their dedications, being expressed as Yahweh's glory. The Heavenly Father speaks from the cloud at the transfiguration mount. Luke's account describes how the cloud enveloped all seven on that mount (Christ, Moses, Elijah, Peter, James, John and God). Jesus left earth for the right hand of his Father in a cloud (appropriately) and returns with power and glory in the 'clouds' of heaven. A cloud is the clothing of the rainbowed angel (immortalized saints) in Revelation 10, which is a snapshot of the atonement when the divine nature will cover the faithful with immortality (1Cor 15:51-54; 2Cor 5:1-4).

#### **Caught in the cloud and the air on the Transfiguration Mount**

This subtle consistency of the identification of clouds with the presence, power, nature and glory of our Creator invites us to examine the shadows of Scripture for its hidden light. Just as our Creator took light out of darkness (2Cor 4:6), so we are invited to draw light out of the shadow lessons of divine expressions, pursuing our Heavenly Father's image and likeness. We noted how the cloud from which Yahweh spoke on the mount of transfiguration fully embraced Christ, the living and the dead (Luke 9:34). Paul expresses this same image in his letter to the Thessalonians, a reference dramatically wrested by the serpent philosophy based religious orders of the flesh.

*"For the Lord himself 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: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words" (1Thess 4:16-18).*

The image on the transfiguration mount perfectly matches Paul's comments. Peter, James, John, Moses and Elijah were with Jesus in the air and in the mount and in the cloud. It was the promise of an immortal transfiguration for all those 'in' Christ when he returns with our heavenly reward to clothe the faithful with the

heavenly tabernacle made without hands (2Cor 5:1-4) and the eternal abiding places (mansions, John 14:1-3,23) prepared for us and what Paul calls our *citizenship* reserved in heaven (Phil 3:20-21). This is the reward Jesus will bring with him to give every man according as his work shall be (Rev 22:12). Meeting our Lord in the air and the clouds is the image of immortalization. This is why the faithful in Hebrews 11 are identified as a great *cloud* of witnesses (Heb 12:1). Along with the Thessalonian Ecclesia they await the awarding of the cloud nature promised on the Mount of Transfiguration when the living and the dead were caught up in the clouds and the air with Christ.

The cloud generated by the High Priest on the Day of Atonement to save his life confirms this promise of the cloud nature.

*"And he shall take a censer full of burning coals of fire from off the altar before the LORD, and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and bring it within the vail: And he shall put the incense upon the fire before the LORD, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy seat that is upon the testimony, **that he die not**" (Lev 16:12-13).*

This is the first of the three events inside the Most Holy on the Day of Atonement. These three events portray the three immortalization events in the divine plan: (1) Jesus Christ; (2) the extended family of the High Priest at the beginning of the millennial Kingdom and (3) the rest of the world at the end of the millennial Kingdom. These three immortalization events are shadowed for the exclusive witness of those with seeing eyes and hearing ears in other divine rituals, such as the three great feast weeks at the three primary harvest stages: Feast of Unleavened Bread: barley and flax; Feast of Weeks or Firstfruits: wheat; Feast of Tabernacles: vineyard.

### **Dust nature to cloud nature ... by fire**

The High Priest must first take two handfuls of incense into the Most Holy and toss the incense onto the flames to transfigure the dust into a cloud that covers the mercy seat, by the action of the fire. This is a detailed image of the atonement or immortalization of our Messiah. Incense was made by pulverizing four equal spice ingredients into a fine powder. Dust is, of course, a symbol of mortal nature as Adam was made from the dust of the earth and we are consigned back to that dust by the terms of the curse of sin and death. However, this is not just any dust. It is a sweet smelling dust, reflecting the divinely approvable behavior pattern of our Messiah before his transfiguration from dust to cloud through the fire. The four aromatic dust components in each hand of the High Priest parallel other double four salvation shadows. The four men and four women on the gopher wood ark of salvation, the two sets of four stone surfaces upon which the finger of God wrote the words of the covenant (10 commandments) and the two rows of four carcasses in Abram's heaven and earth covenant (Gen. 15), the foursquare altar with the four blood sacrifice categories (burnt, peace, sin and trespass), the outer and inner foursquare configuration of Israel surrounding the Tabernacle (political exterior and spiritual interior), and the four cherubim with four wings with the four wheels within four wheels. These all serve to present a divine pattern of doubled fours in the context of a salvation theme. These are only a few of the

many examples of this Scriptural pattern within a pattern.

The two handfuls of incense are converted by the fire into a cloud. The fire serves as the conversion process, presenting the image of the salvation of our Messiah through the suffering of his death. The transfiguration from aromatic dust to aromatic cloud portrays the change from cursed mortal nature to blessed immortal nature. Appropriately, this action saves the life of the High Priest on the Day of Atonement. This confirms our understanding that this first Day of Atonement ritual foreshadows the eternal saving of the life of the ultimate High Priest. This personal atonement of our Messiah is shadowed in other divine rituals, such as the atonement for the Christ-altar over seven days so that this altar might be used for the congregation (Exod 29:36-37). This creational cloud projection of the nature of our Creator is consistently presented throughout Scripture. These thoughts are merely a meditational seed offering the promise for a greater harvest, of witnessing a greater measure of divine glory reserved exclusively for seeing eyes and hearing ears.

Our next commentary will extend this water/word relationship to the spiritual application of bodies of water. This will hint at the immense depth and breadth of how Creation's gospel confirms divine truths and principles.

*Jim Dillingham (Granite State, NH)*

## **The Joy of Sunday Schooling**

### **The Questions We Ask**

#### **Part 1**

As teachers we ask many different kinds of questions. Some require our students to recall information; some require them to understand concepts; others require them to apply principles, and still others require them to exercise good judgment.

In the process of his teaching, Jesus asked all of these kinds of questions and more. Try this little exercise to see some of the kinds of questions that Jesus asked. Which of the following questions requires the learner to *recall* basic facts? Which ones require *comprehension*? Which one calls for immediate *application*, and which one is a vital *evaluation* (i.e., judgment) question?

And he said:

*"Are you also still without understanding? Do you not see that whatever goes into the mouth passes into the stomach and is expelled? ..." (Matt 15:16-18).<sup>1</sup>*

*"When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces did you take up?" (Mark 8:19).*

*"Who do the crowds say that I am?" ... "But who do you say that I am?" (Luke 9:18, 20).*

*“When he had washed their feet and put on his outer garments and resumed his place, he said to them, ‘Do you understand what I have done to you?’” (John 13:12, 15).*

It is not entirely easy to analyze these, is it? The questions that Jesus asked were sophisticated. The question from Mark’s Gospel is a *recall* question, and the first question from Luke’s Gospel requires *recall* as well. The question from John’s Gospel requires *comprehension* before disciples can put a demonstrated principle into practice (*application*). And, although it may seem like a very simple question for us to answer, the second question from Luke’s Gospel demands the very best *observation and evaluation* skills possible.

The point of this exercise is to recognize that Jesus asked questions that called for a wide range of thinking skills. In other words, Jesus required his ‘students’ to use their heads, and to use them to the very best of their abilities! Even when Jesus asked a simple recall question, the answer was never an end in itself. It was always a springboard to something more probing and profound as Mark 8:20-21 illustrates.

What is particularly important for us as Sunday school teachers is to recognize *why* Jesus asked the questions he did. What was he trying to accomplish when he asked a question? Often the answers to his questions are extremely simple: each of the questions above can be answered in one or two words! But the implications are life changing.

### **Never a pointless question**

Teachers ask a lot of questions, and Jesus was no exception. He was an absolute master of the questioning process. And he never asked a pointless question.

Look at the questions that Jesus posed in the Sermon on the Mount. His teaching method in this case was one of discourse, not dialogue, so his ‘students’ — his disciples, Matthew 5:1 — probably did not get to answer him directly. They had to remember the questions that he posed and ponder the answers for themselves. Reflective disciples do this!

Here are some of his Sermon questions. Answer them for yourself. Try answering each question in five words or less. It can be done!

- *“You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored?” (Matt 5:13).*
- *“Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?” (Matt 6:25).*
- *“Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?” (Matt 6:26).*
- *“Which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life?” (Matt 6:27).*
- *“But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?” (Matt 6:30).*

- “Why do you see the speck that is in your brother’s eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye?” (Matt 7:3).
- “You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles?” (Matt 7:16).<sup>2</sup>

Not one of the answers to these questions is an end in itself. What is the point of the Lord’s questions, then? It is the personal implications of the answers that matter. If you and I know that life is more than food and the body is more than clothing, why are diet and fashion so incredibly important to us, and what are we doing with our lives and our bodies?

If we are reflective disciples, our Lord’s questions lead us to contemplate the most fundamental things of life: what we are like, what God is like, our relationship to God; our priorities, trust, worry, self-(un)reliance.

And in the process of contemplation, we need to recognize our need to change. The point of the Lord’s questions is to make us better people before God; to make us better disciples of the Teacher.

*“A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher” (Luke 6:40).*

### **What is the point of the questions we ask?**

The education that Jesus provides is dynamic.

*“If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them” (John 13:17).*

By comparison, Western education can be very academic, all but detached from daily life in many instances. Most of us are products of Western education and we replicate it in our own teaching. Because of this, there is almost certainly room for us to re-examine the questions that we ask our Sunday school students and evaluate just how much they really contribute to the development of discipleship.

The value of the questions we ask is not measured so much by the ‘right answers’ as it is by their ability to change lives, the more so as our children grow up.

*Recall questions* are valuable and important as long as we understand that the answers are not an end in themselves. A recall question, at the moment it is asked, can measure a bit of current Bible knowledge. Bible knowledge is good, but at the end of the day it is what a person does with their Bible knowledge that matters. The nature of our questions needs to mature with our students; or, more precisely, we need to help our students mature with the questions we ask them.

Questions that require our students to articulate their understanding (*comprehension*) of Bible principles in their own words, and questions that ask them how they would personally apply Bible principles in a given situation (*application*) help move them along the road of discipleship. Beyond this, questions that encourage them to *willingly do discipleship* in some way or another can begin to move Sunday schooling out of the purely academic realm and into the dynamic, living realm of the Lord Jesus.

## Are we getting what we ask for?

Questions measure something. Good questions can give us useful insight into the knowledge and thinking of our students. But do the questions we ask always do this?

Years ago, I used a formal Sunday school curriculum with a class of teenage students. Each lesson had questions that went with it, and, week by week, it was my students' job to read an assigned lesson and write answers to the questions.

One of my young students was extremely conscientious about doing her Sunday school homework. She turned in pages of written work every week. But her answers to the questions were uncharacteristically eloquent. The reason for this was not hard to find. The questions that accompanied each lesson were always *fully answered* in the lesson itself. All a student had to do was find the right place in the lesson and copy out the answer — *in someone else's words*. My little girl had quite innocently caught on how to do this.

The lessons and questions were designed so that a student could work the system. If you got really good at it, it wasn't necessary to read the entire lesson in order to answer the questions. Answering questions was simply a process to be carried out, and doing homework was a job to accomplish; at least it was easy for my students to see it that way. As the teacher, I did not get a useful insight into the mind of my little girl, except, perhaps, to find out that she was pretty clever and that she seemed anxious to please me. It was the mind of *the lesson writer* that she was presenting to me, and there was no way for me to know, from her homework at least, whether she understood or agreed with it.

We need to do a thoughtful — and often more thought-provoking — job with the questions we ask. The education of disciples calls for it.

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### Notes:

1. All references are from the ESV.
2. Here is how I answer these questions: Matt 5:13, It can't be; Matt 6:25, Yes; Matt 6:26, Yes; Matt 6:27, Nobody can; Matt 6:30, Yes; Matt 7:3, Because I am self-centered; Matt 7:16, No.

## Youth Speaks

### 1 Thessalonians 5 — A Time for Preparation

Paul concludes his first letter to the ecclesia of Thessalonica with words of strength to continue the struggle and persevere until the day of Christ's return. How appropriate that we can find the same exact lesson nearly two millennia later. Paul, believing in the possibility of the Son's return in his own lifetime (1Thess 4:15), would have made it his main ambition to encourage and lead as many to salvation as he could in the limited time he had. The letter to the Thessalonian ecclesia shows just that. How thrilling would it have been to receive a hand written letter from the Apostle Paul in which his prime purpose for writing was to zealously

remind them that the Lord's return was imminent! Paul stresses to the brothers and sisters the difference between a God-fearing individual and a world-serving one. He uses the analogy of light and darkness, an echo ringing throughout Scripture, of the seed of the woman warring against the seed of the serpent. Paul concludes his letter with instructions to the Thessalonians on how to remain upright and righteous in the last days.

The lesson is no different for us, who truly are only moments away from Christ's triumphant return where he will resurrect those of Thessalonica and all others who have fallen asleep in him, and after "*we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord*" will join with them for that glorious occasion. As we dive into the final chapter of Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians, let us bear in mind the application for us.

### **The return of the Son**

Paul begins the final chapter with words of irony and rebuke. Paul had spent much of his time teaching to them matters of prophecy and things concerning the coming of the Lord and that subject still occupies most of their time. He starts with the words *times* and *seasons*. Two fairly similar words in the Greek — *times* (*kronos*) and *seasons* (*kairos*). *Kronos* denotes an interval or length of time. *Kairos* on the other hand means a setting, and it's suitability for an event. In this context, he is referring to the length of time until the return of Christ, and what the times will be like. Christ had indeed already warned the 12 apostles at his ascension the fruitlessness of trying to calculate the exact moment (Acts 1:7). Paul goes on to rebuke the Thessalonians by saying "*ye have no need that I write unto you*". He had spent enough conversation on the topic of prophecy, and Paul tries to convey to the ecclesia that they needed to be more worried about their lives in the Truth than the exact time of Christ's arrival. He continues the discussion into the next verse where his emphasis is on the suddenness and unexpected nature of the return. Still speaking with a touch of irony, the apostle states, "*For yourselves know perfectly*". Indeed they did. As already stated, Paul emphasized enough on the subject in his visit, yet here they are still chasing a question without an achievable answer. Now, we can clearly see the problem with this, but it is important to take a step back and look at our lives. The same lesson that this ecclesia had to learn must be learned by us. We cannot obsess over insolvable riddles, and spend our time with figures and dates: instead our labor must be that of a patient servant. Let us look at the signs of the times for encouragement and motivation, but at the same time, sharpen each other and keep our lamps trimmed and full of oil for the time of which only our God in heaven knows, but which he will shortly reveal to His Son.

Paul refers to this day as the "*day of the Lord*" as we continue in the second verse. So many times does this phrase occur that it may have lost its power. It is a day that is almost here, a day in which Christ will come to this earth once more and begin the work of filling it with his Father's glory. This day, as Paul describes it, will come "*as a thief in the night*". Night is the time of slumber, a time of bewilderment and confusion, a time which people imagine as a time of "*peace and safety*". It is a time that Scripture always uses in context of servants who have been instructed to



watch. A thief strikes at night, when those who are not prepared will not see what the thief has done, until it is too late. It fits perfectly with those of us waiting. How many of us truly are prepared for Christ's return, how many of us, at the *day of the Lord*, will be ready and waiting? The words of Christ ring true: "*Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments*" (Rev 16:15). Paul was worried about the budding ecclesia in Thessalonica and was encouraging them to stay on the path toward the kingdom and not stray. When our lives get a little too comfortable, this is the time of danger, this is the time the apostle warns us of — it is a time similar to childbirth. An expectant mother does not know when labor may begin but she does know it is about to happen. The event is inevitable, and a mother who is ill-prepared is in great danger.

### **Walk in the light and be prepared**

The next set of verses is a reminder and a warning to the ecclesia of Thessalonica and to us to stay separate from the evils of this world, and be of the light. Scripture uses the examples of light and darkness over and over to demonstrate how that which is good is the complete opposite from that which is evil. Paul again brings in the analogy of the thief. He tells them that they should have no excuse to be caught by surprise in the night by the thief. He calls them "*the children of light, and the children of the day*," as opposed to children of the night who are of darkness and of whom the thief will overtake. Those who are of the night, find themselves all too often "asleep" or unprepared. This is the last position Paul wants this new ecclesia to find themselves in. Instead he instructs them to "*watch and be sober*". The word sober has a meaning of "to be in control of one's own self". The brothers and sisters were not in any way supposed to be drunk with intoxicating thoughts and actions of the world.

To defend against these things Paul goes on to say that those who have not fallen into darkness must put on "*the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation*". The breastplate and helmet were the two most important pieces of armor a soldier could wear. Protecting the head and the critical organs of the chest, a soldier with these pieces of armor had a much greater chance of victory.

In the same context, he gives the three vital characteristics and defenses of a soldier in Christ. "*Faith, hope, and love*," an echo from other Scriptures and also an echo from the beginning of this letter (1 Thess 1:3). Having put on faith, hope, and love, the soldier of Christ will escape the wrath to come and to rather "*obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ*"(v. 9). The gift of salvation is in no wise something that can be earned. As the apostle stresses here, it is a gift that was only made possible by the death of our Lord Jesus Christ. Paul ends this section with strengthening words of comfort. He states that it was because of this sacrifice that those who have died will join those who are alive, and together they will live with their Savior. Verse 11 concludes the section with words that ring just as true now as they did then: "*comfort yourselves together, and edify one another*". What encouraging words from Paul to us! Take comfort in the thought that Christ is nearly here. Strengthen and edify your brothers and sisters in these final days.

## Final remarks and responsibilities

Paul's final section of the letter is a list of instructions and responsibilities of which the new ecclesia needed to adhere to as they waited with great anticipation their Lord's return. Looking at verse 12 now, we have the apostle beseeching the brethren. He turns his emotions to a plea now, instead of a command. He begs the ecclesia to admire and support the brethren who lead them. Paul refers to these leaders as "laborers". They did have positions of leadership and power, but the ecclesia was to respect these people for their laboring in the truth. And through the support they were to give and their admonition and love, the laboring leaders would continue to labor and continue to serve the ecclesia.

As we move into verse 14, Paul begins his list of responsibilities. As his letter was coming to an end, he saved the most vital lessons for last. He wanted the ecclesia of Thessalonica to remember these duties and these responsibilities first and foremost. Just as we would finish a letter with the wrap-up comments to sum up what we had written, so Paul does the same. If they were to get anything from the letter, here is what would be most beneficial to themselves on their walk, and to their new ecclesia as they together waited for the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. The first duty in verse 14 states "*warn them that are unruly*". Unruly brothers and sisters would be counterproductive in the ecclesia. He warns them to counsel those brethren who try to halt the work, stir up trouble, or gossip one among one another. If the ecclesia was to progress, these brothers and sisters needed to be warned against this kind of action. "*Comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men*" or "comfort the fainthearted, support those who are struggling in the faith, and show patience toward all". Paul is trying to get the entire ecclesia involved in this building up of the spiritual household. Those who are new to the truth, those who have difficulties, or those who find certain beliefs confusing — these are the people whom Paul encourages the stronger members of the ecclesia to search out and comfort. Continuing into verse 15, Paul instructs the ecclesia that they don't repay evil for evil to any man, which included those not in the ecclesia. Verses 16-22 include some straightforward lessons for the brothers and sisters. "*Rejoice evermore.*" As this new ecclesia began growing, it was a time of great excitement. Paul warns them, though, that tough times lay ahead. Even through these tough times, they were told to rejoice. What a lesson for us! In our world today, rarely do things go the way we would like them to go, yet, these issues are insignificant in the grand view of things. "*Pray without ceasing.*" A servant of God must live his life as if he is God's presence at all times. To pray without ceasing is impossible, but the lesson is the same. We are always seen of God, and to lose communication with him is the same as straying in our walk. "*In everything give thanks.*" We often find ourselves neglecting to thank our Father enough. He has indeed given us every single thing. Paul here, though, is stressing the fact that not only are we supposed to give God thanks for the things we enjoy, but also for the things that cause us grief or trial. For these issues are the things that straighten us out and keep us in the way. "*Quench not the Spirit. Despise not prophesyings.*" In the ecclesial life in Paul's day, there were the apostles — and Paul himself — who had the power of the Holy Spirit and the gift of prophesying. Paul

urges them to stand up to those Pharisees, scribes, and elders who would want to ban such acts. Paul states that the Holy Spirit should not be quenched but rather respected. *“Prove all things.”* They were commanded to prove whether these Holy Spirit gifts were genuine or false. Many people may have tried to imitate these miracles and would have drawn away brethren from the Truth. The lesson can be tied to our lives as well. Search out the Scriptures for yourself. In these final days, we have to watch for the wolves in sheep’s clothing trying to take us away from the flock. *“Hold fast to that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil.”* Humanism is a deadly religion that is creeping into our ecclesias and threatening to violently rip them apart. We can witness this all around. Paul saw this coming in his time and it is certainly true in our time as well. We have been warned and instructed to hold fast to that which is right. Do not let the purity of the Truth slip away. Hold on to it and do not let this go. He goes so far as to say, stay away from **any** appearance of evil. Eternal life in service to our father is not something that should be toyed with.

## The conclusion

As Paul inserts the final words into his first letter to Thessalonica, he chooses his words with the utmost of care. Here is an ecclesia that is just learning and developing; these words from the apostle would be the very words of encouragement they needed to get through the rugged road ahead. *“The very God of peace;”* just as Paul opened his letter in verse 1, so he concludes it with *“peace”*. Knowing that a time of peace was promised to them that believe, the war in ourselves may more easily be won. *“And I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”* Here we have the spirit, soul, and body, all acting together. The spirit (*pneuma*) is the mind of the believer, the soul (*psuche*) is the individual and their personal psyche, and the body (*soma*) is the shell that contains our “soul” and our “mind”. It is the dust that makes up our carcass. Our entire being must remain holy until Christ returns. Christ will judge us according to how all three parts have acted. A servant will not be accepted into the Kingdom if his soul and body have somehow remained separate but his spirit has indulged in the immorality of the world. Our entire being must remain steadfast until the coming of His Kingdom.

Moving to verse 25, *“Brethren, pray for us”*. There is no argument against Paul being an extraordinary brother, but he, just as we all, needed strength and guidance in the remaining years of his life. Just as he no doubt prayed for every single ecclesia, so he asked for their prayers as well. *“Greet all the brethren with an holy kiss.”* A kiss is a deeper sign of appreciation. The brothers and sisters were now a family in their Lord. *“This epistle be read unto all the holy brethren.”* Paul included so many lessons in his letter. Lessons for the righteous, the unrighteous, the knowledgeable and the young, the dedicated and also the unmotivated. Having this letter read to all would put the brethren in the ecclesia on common grounds. They would have guidance for difficult situations — situations Paul knew would arise in the future. As these same situations arise in our ecclesias, may we also look to the Scriptures for the answers instead of our own personal beliefs or opinions or emotions. *“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.”* Nearly identical to the words

he began with, so he ends. The grace which has been granted each and every one of us, may we not take it for granted, but instead live our lives in accordance with the Word of God — so that in that day, *“we which are alive and remain”* may live and reign with our Lord Jesus Christ for the Kingdom age.

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## **Comfort in Christ’s Return — 2 Thessalonians 1**

### **Introduction to the Second Letter**

It’s often hard to imagine the physical persecution that the brothers and sisters of Paul’s day had to endure. Many parts of the world today live in places that foster freedom of religion and freedom to express it. That was not the case around AD 52-53, when this epistle was written. One of the main reasons that Paul penned this second epistle was to encourage the brothers and sisters to endure these trials and tribulations. Paul’s prayer was *“...that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of His goodness and the work of faith with power, that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ”* (2Thess 1:11-12).<sup>1</sup>

Paul also wanted to clear up any false expectations of the early coming of the Lord. The people of Thessalonica believed that Christ would return soon to establish the Kingdom on earth, which in turn would alleviate them from their sufferings. Paul did not want them to become discouraged when Christ’s return did not come as anticipated. These expectations stemmed from false teachers as Paul explained:

*“Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come. Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition...”* (2Thess 2:1-3).

The overall message of the second epistle is to encourage the brothers and sisters with the second coming of Christ. Paul reminds them of the victory that will take place when this happens and the reward that accompanies it for those who have suffered righteously in Christ’s name. Paul encourages them to be patient in 2Thess 3:5: *“Now may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the patience of Christ”*.

As we await the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, let us remain focused on the reward and patiently endure to the end.

### **Focusing on the return of Christ**

Paul begins the second epistle in identical fashion to the first epistle. Paul, Silvanus and Timothy had originally brought the gospel to Thessalonica and now address the ecclesia a second time. Paul said:

*“We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers, remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love,*

*and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father” (1Thess 1:2-3).*

There is very little difference to the commendation he gives here:

*“We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is fitting, because your faith grows exceedingly, and the love of every one of you all abounds toward each other, so that we ourselves boast of you among the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that you endure” (2Thess 1:3-4).*

Notice that Paul emphasizes that the brothers and sisters were doing well at continuing to grow in the aspects of love, patience and faith. Their faith continued to grow and because of that, other aspects of their worship flourished as well. Faith must be alive and active before it can grow. Paul had previously conveyed that he wanted to return to them and strengthen their faith (1Thess 3:10), but was now grateful that their faith had grown in his absence. This faith, coupled with patience, was used by the Thessalonians to endure persecutions and tribulations.

Paul continues to acknowledge their answer to his prayer when he commends them for the love that abounded toward each other. Paul says, *“And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all, just as we do to you, so that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints” (1Thess 3:12-13).* The word for “love” in this case is “*agape*,” which is self-sacrificing love. This is the type of love that our Lord Jesus Christ demonstrated when he hung on the tree as our Passover lamb. For this, the Thessalonians were praised by Paul.

It’s often a mistaken principle in the world around us that persecutions and tribulations show God’s apathy or lack of love. Even within our own mind we can see this thinking. Often times we go through a trial and think “how can God let this happen?” In reality, we’re told that God does this so that we might be drawn closer to Him.

*“...My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; For whom the Lord loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives. If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons” (Heb 12:5-8).*

Indeed, this is exactly what the Thessalonians were able to accomplish through their trials. They allowed themselves to be as sons and daughters to God and to remain focused on the imperishable crown that awaited them.

In the following verses, Paul describes for them the divine judgment that would occur at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul reveals to them that when Christ returns, that he will punish those who have brought trouble onto the believers. Paul delivers the same message: *“Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, ‘Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,’ says the Lord” (Rom 12:19).* Later in Romans 12, Paul encourages them to love their enemies, to

provide physical refreshment to them and to overcome evil with good. By doing so, they would lift themselves higher than those around them and would be able to focus on the reward that awaited their patient enduring.

Paul describes the judgment on these ungodly men and women who persecuted the believers in verses 8-10. Paul says in verse 9, *“These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power...”*. With much anticipation the Thessalonians waited for the second coming of the Lord Jesus as we do today. But with this expectation of his return, they prepared in a way so that this judgment would not be their fate. Their faith grew, their love for one another grew and their patience abounded in tribulations. They were able to put on the collective fruit of the spirit: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Let this be a lesson to us as we live in a period where the world is continuously trying to pull us away from the commands of God to a lifestyle that will soon be destroyed with everlasting destruction.

On the contrary, Paul describes the divine glory on those who obey God’s commands as sons and daughters (2Thess 1:10). The apostle John does the same.

*“Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure” (1John 3:2-3).*

If it is our hope to be made like Christ at his coming. We too need to be purifying ourselves in these last days. We too must be using our time now to serve the Lord, to bring honor and glory to his name like the Thessalonians did. Paul was able to boast of them to other ecclesias as an example of brothers and sisters who endured trial and tribulation faithfully. Their faith grew in a very trying time period, where men and women were physically persecuting them for what they believed. We have been given plenty of opportunity to express our love for God in the way that we live. Can we say that others boast because of our faith?

Paul ends the chapter with a prayer. He says: *“Therefore we also pray always for you that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of His goodness and the work of faith with power, that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ” (2Thess 1:11-12).* These men and women had already attained much in their walks toward God’s Kingdom, but there was still room for improvement and growth. We know that it is only through the mercy of our Heavenly Father that we are to be granted a place in that Kingdom age, but we need to be doing our part now. Just as the Thessalonians were praised for their continuation of Paul’s instruction in the first epistle, we too need to be growing in faith as we continue to be instructed by God’s word.

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#### Notes:

1. All Scripture quotations are from the New King James Version unless otherwise noted.

## Reflections

### Marriage Proverbs: Guidelines for a Happy Relationship (6) Guidleline #5: Becoming *Simpatico*

It has been said that marriage in this era is regarded as a relationship where one deserves to *find* love rather than a path for *giving* love.<sup>1</sup> When this expectation is not fulfilled to one's satisfaction, many men and women feel justified in walking out on the relationship. Needless to say these days, a significant number of men and women simply co-habitat and never bother to marry legally, which makes splitting up even easier, since a permanent sense of commitment is lacking from the inception of the liaison. This is a reflection on what we have already discussed namely, the emphasis that our society places on self-fulfillment: its all about *me*. The institution of marriage is a God given plan and was intended from the very beginning to be between one man and one woman, *for life*. Hence, when one walks out on a marriage, or enters into a promiscuous relationship without any lifelong commitment intended — then the commandment of the Lord God is being broken.

*“He (Jesus) said to them, “Because of your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so.” (Matt 19:8, see also Mark 10:5).<sup>2</sup>*

And Jesus went on to explain why divorce is so serious:

*“And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery.” (v. 19). A clear case of breaking the commandment: “You shall not commit adultery” (Exod 20:14).*

Sad to say that of all of God's commandments, the one on the sanctity of marriage is the one most frequently broken by a vast number of people in our society.<sup>3</sup> If we accept the approximately 50% divorce rate as a reality, then just imagine what America would be like if the same rate of disobedience to the Lord's commands applied to the commandments “*You shall not murder*” (Exod 20:13) or “*You shall not steal*” (Exod 20:15). Try to visualize a situation where half the people in America were murderers, or thieves; even in some of the most dangerous places in the world such drastic numbers don't apply. The consequences of ignoring the commandment on marriage being a lifelong commitment have had an insidious effect on our whole society in terms of the social consequences. This result has created a whole generation of damaged lives, and a multitude of dysfunctional children. God gave the commandment on marriage not just for the sake of individual couples, but also as a bulwark to bolster the whole fabric of society. No one can doubt that when a marriage breaks down in our own community the consequences not only affects the pair involved, but often also the whole Ecclesial world far and near.

Surprisingly, in one recent survey noted in a previous article,<sup>4</sup> the most frequently cited reasons for seeking divorce were: “Growing Apart” cited by 55% and “Unable to Talk Together” by 52.7% of the respondents. This can compared with:

“Drug and Alcohol Problems” 22.3% and “Physical Violence” 12.7%. While the latter two reasons present extreme difficulties in a relationship<sup>5</sup> it would seem that the first two cited should be more amenable to a cure. Nevertheless, this is hardly trivial, because it has been my observation that these two most often cited reasons build up over many years. By the time the rupture in the marriage occurs, the chasm between the partners will often have grown so deep and wide that it is almost impossible to crossover and reach an accommodation. The best measure to prevent failure in the long term is to develop effective communication from the very beginning, starting during the courtship phase and, as occasions arise, being willing to do hard committed work to preserve the relationship throughout the entire course of a married lifetime. *Simpatico* is the word I will use for describing a close marital bond where open effective communication is the rule in the relationship and not the exception.

What do I mean by a couple being *simpatico*? The word obviously has been picked up from the Italian language, but without quite catching the full shade of meaning attached to it in that culture. The primary meaning is not “sympathy” as some English dictionary sources imply. Perhaps the best way to understand what this word represents in terms of marriage I will refer to a Scriptural definition rather than one from a language dictionary. Consider the following passages:

*“I am my beloved’s and my beloved is mine” and “I am my beloved’s, and his desire is for me” (Song 6:3, 7:10).*

*“However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband” (Eph 5:33).*

It is all about mutual admiration, respect, companionship and friendship, or as sometimes poetically stated: *two hearts beating as one*. To develop and maintain such a close relationship in a marriage takes continual attention spread over a lifetime. The key to success is open communication. Other things that go into being *simpatico* are kindness, consideration, gentleness, forgiveness and recalling and practicing the same relationship standards that you both had when you were courting. Little things like remembering birthdays, anniversaries etc., and sometimes just bringing flowers or chocolates for her for no reason at all — except wanting to please her and showing appreciation. On her part it may involve preparing a special meal<sup>6</sup> or planning a weekend getaway for the two of you — such efforts are an integral part of being *simpatico*.

If effective communication is the key what does it unlock? We are all a product of our upbringing and all of us carry baggage into a marriage; some of it bright and shiny and other packages tarnished and dented. The lock is the one on the door to our inner most thoughts; that part of us which we often find so hard to share with another. Behind that door we concealed the baggage that carries our childhood fears, bad habits and inherited traits, good or bad. Consider the following Scripture:

*“That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate” (1Tim 6:18 KJV: see also Heb 13:16).*

The ESV renders the last part of this verse as “...ready to share”, since the original



Greek word for being communicative has a sense of one being a “*sharer, companion, partner*”.<sup>7</sup> Thus, the Apostle is exhorting us to doing good, being generous and willing to share what we have. What better way to put this into effect, first and foremost, than in a marriage? Doing this goes a long way to being *simpatico*. The things that need to be shared above all else are our thoughts, feelings, foibles, concerns, dreams, hopes and promises. It is unfortunate that so often we may feel our partner should know something — as if by osmosis! My observation is that my wife is far more sensitive to things and can catch on to a need or desire without a word being spoken between us. While I am often a clod! Maybe this is just us, but I have a feeling from long observation of other married couples that this may be a more general phenomenon; namely, women are often more sensitive and men often oblivious to the emotions and needs of their spouse. Obviously, there are probably many exceptions to these general conclusions, nevertheless I am fairly certain that if this were true in a relationship then it would behoove the wife to be more explicit in her wants and needs and the husband should train himself to actually listen!

Some very sound advice was given to the Ephesians: “*Let no corrupt communication [“talk” in the ESV] proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers*” (Eph 4:29 KJV). Communication can rarely be effective when the volume level between married partners exceeds the power of a Verdi triumphal chorus, or when it awakens half the neighborhood. Learning to “fair fight”, as most marriage literature describes it, can contribute immensely to solving conflicts without undue emotional distress. Here is where the Apostle’s advice about communication “...*that it may give grace to those who hear*” (Eph. 4:29) really comes into play. When an issue comes up that can lead to potential conflict, sometimes the best way to discuss it is to sit down with cups of coffee, or tea and a biscuit or two, and let your partner speak without interrupting. Furthermore, it doesn’t necessarily follow that if you are right, in the absolute sense of the word, or even if you think your way is more logical, it does not automatically make it a better spiritual solution. Recall, “*love does not insist on its own way*”<sup>8</sup> and rarely is there a perfect resolution to a problem anyway. Sometimes good enough *is enough!* This verse also highlights another aspect of becoming *simpatico* using our speech to edify, i.e. build up our partner not tear them down. There is nothing sadder than overhearing a couple verbally stab at each other with their tongues. Using the expression “you always do that” is another non-starter and reminding your partner of all their other faults that are not germane to the issue at hand will get one nowhere fast.

It is unrealistic to expect any marriage to sail along forever without hitting some rough waters from time to time. Conflict is part of our nature<sup>9</sup> and we need to recognize that, when this happens, we must not try to resolve it by destroying the character and ego of our partner. Only a person who has completely given up their own identity would be able to give in to every conflict that may arise in the course of two people living together. That’s a form of abuse and a subject for another article. One of the underlying reasons for conflict naturally comes from different relationship experiences we had while growing up. To cite a simple ex-

ample, I personally was brought up in rather small city apartment with a mother who was an obsessive *neatnik*. If I didn't clean up my desk before going to bed and forgot to put my homework away in my school bag I would wake to find that it had disappeared down the hallway incinerator. I remember vividly one teacher scoffing at that and telling me I needed a better excuse such as 'the dog ate it'. Of course I didn't have a dog, but the teacher relented his approbation after meeting my mother on open school night! Hence, I resolved when I went away to college that I would absolutely have the sloppiest room on campus. Now carry this over to my married life — what do I do but marry a nurse who is an obsessive-compulsive *neatnik*. (I guess it goes with her profession). No doubt I love her because she is a lot like my mother — including being a neatnik, though of course I didn't really realize that until after we were married for a while. Now this was a situation ripe for conflict and to be frank it does rear its head from time to time even after 52 plus years of marriage. But we both, more or less, reached an accommodation on this issue 51½ years ago (approximately) by Mary agreeing to stay away from my study area and me trying to remember to pick up all the stuff I seem to discard around the rest of the house (books, socks, newspapers, mail, notepaper, etc.).

Obviously, more serious issues can arise, and perhaps the worse is disagreements on how to handle the finances. Again accommodation and compromise are important. A couple that knows how to sit down and have effective communication about money matters can get through financial pitfalls — the alternative is often endless bickering that can end in the failure of the marriage. In the course of time, with patience and open discussion, the pair may find that one of the partners is far better at managing finances than the other — then it makes sense for that partner to be the primary planner and bill payer. In other marriages sharing responsibilities is the agreed mode, and the task of managing finances is a joint venture with various fiscal objectives divvied up according to interest and convenience (e.g. You take care of all the household bills, I'll take care of travel, taxes, savings, etc.). **Ultimately the most important decision that a couple has to make is to agree to live within their means (and this bears repeating again and again). Recall the injunction of the Apostle Paul:**

*“Keep your life free from love of money, **and be content with what you have**, for he has said, ‘I will never leave you nor forsake you’” (Heb 13:5 also Phil 4:11 and 1Tim 6:6, 8).*

Some final thoughts on learning to be *simpatico* need to be said about what to do when an issue becomes so emotionally important to us that we get very angry. This is not the ideal, but I would indeed be extremely surprised if there is a marriage anywhere that never had a disruptive issue. The apostle recognized that “anger” is part of the human condition when he told the Ephesians: “*Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger*” (Eph 4:26).

However, our Brother Paul also pointed out that there is a difference between being “angry” and having it lead to “sin”. While we might get our emotions riled up, a *simpatico* person doesn't forget his or her love and commitment to the relationship. It is certainly not permissible to allow anger to lead to abusive behavior,

be it physical or verbal. Sticking to the issue at any volume level is far better than remaining silent, and considering the Apostle Paul's words about not letting the sun go down is very sage advice. The longer a divisive issue festers usually the worse the potential outcome. Sometimes the early intervention of a mediator may help resolve the issue. We will have more to say about conflict resolution and the role of the ecclesia in marriage counseling in later articles. But for the present it should be sufficient to say that third party intervention at an early date may be profitable if it is evident to a couple that an issue(s) has reached an impasse that can bring great harm to their relationship.

Next: "...a wise man listens to advice."

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#### Notes:

1. Fromm, E., *The Art of Loving*, Harper and Row, New York, 1956.
2. All references are from the ESV, except as noted.
3. There is no intent here to take a position that divorce should never happen under any circumstances. What is laid out here is the ideal.
4. USA Today, September 28, 2011.
5. The issues of addictions and physical violence will be treated in a later article.
6. No intent here to be gender stereotyped here, because in our household I do the cooking and would be more likely to prepare the "special" meal (which would involve any of her favorite Pasta dishes, for example!).
7. See Strong's number 02844.
8. 1Cor 13:5.
9. Rom 7:19.

## Forgiveness (4)

The previous article in this series<sup>1</sup> established that we must forgive; for example:

*"And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors... 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 6:12, 14-15).

This article looks at some common objections we may harbor about forgiveness. Whether or not forgiveness is in play in our lives propels us toward either life or death. Forgiveness practiced in our lives will even guide us to abundant life right now. Forgiveness unpracticed can even, right now, be a living death. "First principles" have been described as doctrines that concern matters of life and death — very important to get right — or else. Although not listed in the articles of the Statement of Faith, the concept and practice of forgiveness appears, from the Bible record, to be so close to the heart and intent of God for us that it really should be a top-of-the-list first principle.

In the spirit of living forgiveness, though, it is important to acknowledge that anybody can be easily confused about forgiveness. After all, forgiveness is God's idea. We aren't Him and we do get confused. For example, one common misconception is that forgiveness can be blocked by insurmountable obstacles.

## Forgiveness versus reconciliation

A general description of forgiveness myths would include the following misconceptions:

- 1) there are some situations where forgiveness is really not mandated; and
- 2) something has to happen first before we can forgive.

Let's remember the definition of forgiveness. In an earlier article<sup>2</sup> we saw that the Biblical meaning of forgiveness is "taken up and carried away"; for example:

*"Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy. He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea" (Mic 7:18-19).*

Are you ready for the clinical definition of forgiving? Here goes:

"People, upon rationally determining that they have been unfairly treated, forgive when they willfully abandon resentment and related responses (to which they have a right), and endeavor to respond to the wrongdoer based on the moral principle of beneficence, which may include compassion, unconditional worth, generosity, and moral love (to which the wrongdoer, by nature of the hurtful act or acts, has no right)."

Phew, that was long. Here's a more concise version: "giving up my right to hurt you for hurting me." It is useful to revisit these definitions because forgiving someone does not require anything of anyone else or anything external to happen. It is all about you. You do not need cooperation from anyone to do this.

This is the first big point: *Reconciliation* does indeed take two to pull off. In contrast, *forgiveness* just takes you.

These concepts are easily confused. We often get reconciliation and forgiveness all mixed up. When we practice forgiveness, we may well end up unable to reconcile, but, if we mix them up we can end up blocking out the option of forgiving. How would you like it if your adversary said this to you: "I'm going to make you disobey God because I am not going to be sorry for what I did, apologize to you or give you any slack. In fact, I'll hurt you more, and so you will not be able to forgive me and you will be toast at the Judgment Seat"? This is a nearly perfect example of where reconciliation probably should never occur, but should that prevent you from forgiving them? Some people have been awfully, genuinely cruel to us. Forgiving them is essential whether or not reconciliation is an option. The truth is you are not commanded to complete a successful reconciliation. In fact, forgiving may not include reconciling with the person. (More on reconciliation later; it really is another subject.)

This article does not want to deprive you of the lovely effects that forgiveness will serve up to you in even the most toxic and destructive situations. Willfully abandoning resentment and all the venom it poisons us with is the best spiritual goal in such cases. Carrie Fisher said it powerfully: "Resentment is like drinking poison

and waiting for the other person to die”. Forgiving others is being nice to yourself.

## **Myths of forgiveness**

Here are a few additional myths in this category:<sup>3</sup>

Myth: If they do not repent, I should not forgive.

Myth: Forgiving will not make the other person change their behavior; therefore it is a waste of time. I want them to change and apologize before I forgive them.

You can see, there is nothing in any definition that requires something of the offender. These are myths!

Is there anything else the offender can do to thwart you forgiving them? What if they are dead? Is it now impossible to forgive them? Of course not. Is it possible not even to know who the person is? Let’s say someone breaks into your home and steals an heirloom of your mother. This violation could fill the calmest person with rage. You don’t even know who they are! Yes, you can forgive them too.

So please, do not let externals keep you from this God-like trait of forgiving!

## **Forgiving does not imply forgetting**

Another mythical area alluded to earlier is that to forgive is to pretend it never happened. Here are a few such myths from the full list you can get on the website:

Myth: Forgiveness means rebuilding the relationship.

Myth: Forgiving someone means allowing them to hurt you over and over.

Myth: Forgiveness requires release from consequences.

Myth: Forgiving is ignoring sin.

Myth: The result of forgiveness is we can now trust the offender.

There are more; this is just a sample from the list. Forgiving is actually learning. The clinical definition mentions “moral love.” Is not this the essence of *agape* love? It is a thought-driven love from which pleasant emotions can flow; it is not an emotion or erotic-driven response. Giving up my right to hurt you for hurting me does not mean I put myself in a spot to endlessly see the violation continue.

From its core meaning of “taking up and carrying away”, “forgiving” is engaging in a process of regarding the violation less and less over time, and at the same time regarding the offender apart from their offence. If the offender is in your face repeating the offence, you will not be regarding the violation less and less nor will you be able to regard the offender apart from their offence. Consent for repetition of the offence will not be helping you or the offender.

Here’s a verse to help:

*“Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Phil 3:13-14).*

At first glance one could think Paul was telling us to forgive and forget. Does it say to forget what happened? This verse is saying something more complete than that: move forward and leave the other things behind. This is the same exhortation we find in letter to the Hebrews:

*“Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Heb 12:1-2).*

You need to leave some things behind in order to move forward. Leaving things behind does not imply being passive or victim-like. Rather, it is actively moving on to the high calling, factoring in enough of the past so you do not go that way again. Amnesia doesn't teach anything, but processing things that happen does. If you have not changed your focus from rage, resentment, and hurt to free yourself to go in another direction, then moving forward is hard, if not impossible. Suggestions on ways to learn from the past and move happily forward are scheduled for a later article in this series.

### **Forgiving does not imply approving bad behavior**

In this same vein, sometimes we think that forgiving someone is being weak and wimpy, or letting them get away with it. Here are some myths in this area:

Myth: If I forgave, I'd be letting that person off the hook.

Myth: Offering forgiveness implies that what the other person did was OK.

Myth: Forgiveness is a sign of weakness.

These fallacies are easy to identify as myths until we are personally in a forgiveness situation. Then the myth turns real and we don't think that person deserves our forgiveness. In the pain of our own hurt it seems so unfair that not only did we suffer the violation, now it seems, we have to suffer through forgiving them. Why do I have to do all the work? To snap us out of such poor thinking, we only need to thank God that He does not treat us that way. Yes, this is your time to be good to yourself and learn about God's character. Yes, it isn't fair, but it is mercy, mercy to you! Yes, it pleases God when we turn to Him in our suffering. He is the Great Character Surgeon and Healer.

### **Forgiving is a process**

Here are a few myths to finish with:

Myth: Forgiveness is merely an act or a decision.

Myth: Forgiveness is always easy.

Myth: Forgiveness can't be repeated.

Myth: I only need to forgive someone once. Any future negative feelings are to be ignored.

The answer to these misconceptions is: forgiveness is a process.

*“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).*

Oh yes, someone steps on your toe and they say they are sorry and you hug and all is forgotten. But when speaking of offences that are bigger than that, it is going to be work, prayer, work, prayer to forgive them. You may have it all processed out of your life and then by chance you see them drive by in their car and wham, it all comes crashing back. A reaction is to beat yourself up and feel like a failure, but remember it’s a process and you are doing really well *“reaching forth unto those things which are before” (Phil 3:13)*. So now the violation is in front of you again. This is the good news: you will find it easier to recuperate the ground lost because you have already done the work.

## Conclusion

This topic is in reality a positive exhortation because the result of fighting through the myths of forgiveness is to emerge from life’s trials into freedom. These myths grip us and wrestle us to the ground. Life in Christ, in which we are encouraged to turn over the hurts and burdens to the one who bore all sins, is liberating. It is giving up some rights, especially the right to hurt someone who has hurt you. But it is also God pardoning our death penalty for sin to grant us His awesome Kingdom and a victorious life even now. Myths: No! Be good to yourself: Yes!

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Next article: Cognitive therapy.

### Notes:

1. “Forgiveness (3),” *Tidings*, May, 2012.
2. “Forgiveness (2),” *Tidings*, March-April, 2012.
3. A more complete list of forgiveness myths is available on the *Tidings* website ([www.tidings.org](http://www.tidings.org)).

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

### (4) Some Common Objections to Biblical Gender Roles

This is the final part in a series of articles about the role of sisters in the ecclesia. This section will continue to 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.

**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 women are being written about, rather than addressed directly.

However, for the sake of argument, 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 (verse 30). It may sound strange that God would give a prophet a prophecy that he was not free to deliver at that time, 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 speak in ecclesial meetings at all. Instead, like the male prophets who had to remain silent, sisters can “*speak to [themselves], and to God*”(verse 28).

**Objection: Since the Greek words “*aner*” and “*gyne*” can be translated husband/man or wife/woman depending on context, we can assume that when 1Tim 2:11-12 talks about women being in “subjection”, it is referring to wives being subject to their husbands, and not about all women in the ecclesia being forbidden to teach all men.**

Response: This objection claims that because the Greek words for “man” and “woman” can sometimes mean “husband” and “wife”, the verses about men and women in the ecclesia are actually referring to the relationship between married couples. However, it’s difficult to spin these verses like that, because the primary meanings of “*aner*” and “*gyne*” are a simple reference to being male or female. You can’t just assign an alternate meaning to a word that easily, especially since many unmarried men are referred to in the New Testament using the word “*aner*”, including both Elijah and Jesus.

How do we know, then, when these words should be translated as husband and wife? The context tells us! When Paul is talking about submission in marriage and family relationships, he makes that clear: for example, he references the husband and wife being “one flesh” in Eph 5:31, and speaks of husbands and wives alongside children and parents in Col 3:18-20. In contrast, the context of 1Tim 2 shows that Paul is speaking about all men and women in the ecclesia, and not just husbands and wives. After all, husbands are not the only men who lift up their hands in prayer (1Tim 2:8), and wives are not the only women who dress modestly (1Tim 2:9). The context denies that Paul is writing solely about married relationships in this chapter.



In case we were still uncertain, we have strong Biblical evidence that God's hierarchy for men and women is applicable to the whole ecclesia. 1Cor 11:3 lays out this hierarchy by saying that *"the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God"*. Could he be speaking only of husbands being the head over their wives? No, he's speaking about *"every man"* (verse 3), not just married ones; and the context says that *"even so is the man also by the woman"* (verse 12), which Young's literal translation reads as *"through the woman"* and the NASB reads as *"the man has his birth through the woman"*. This is, of course, only true if we're talking about mankind and womankind in general, since the wife does not give birth to her husband! Paul must be speaking of mankind and womankind, applying the hierarchy of men and women to the entire ecclesia.

**Objection: The word "speak" in 1Cor 14:34 is *laleo*, which means to babble; women are not being forbidden to speak, but to chatter idly.**

Response: To learn what sort of speaking Paul means by using *laleo*, all we have to do is ask the context — and we have plenty of other uses of that word in the chapter surrounding verse 34! Paul uses *laleo* for "speak" throughout 1Cor 14 for tongue-speaking and prophesying, saying things like *"he that prophesieth speaketh [laleo]"* (verse 3) and *"he that speaketh [laleo] in an unknown tongue"* (verse 4). He then finishes it up in verse 34 with *"it is not permitted unto them to speak [laleo]"*, referring to women in the meeting. The suggested, disparaging use of the word *laleo* does not occur at all in the New Testament.

**Objection: It is so important to us as Christadelphians to preach, and in this day and age, when women and men are seen as absolute equals, holding women back in the ecclesia can be a hindrance to the Gospel.**

Response: We all know the truth of Matt 7:13-14:

*"Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."*

Even so, to see someone lose interest in the Truth, or fall away, because of one of our Christadelphian practices is always a source of grief. I have personally known unbaptized contacts, and baptized brothers and sisters, who left the ecclesia because of our belief that we should not marry outside of the Truth, fellowship with other Christian groups, serve in the military, and pay full-time ministers. People I know have rejected the Truth because we do not believe in universal salvation, or that children should give public prayers during memorial service, or that a Baptist should not join the ecclesia without first being re-baptized. Those who leave the faith have all sorts of reasons that have to do with some of our practices being unpalatable to them. However, the question weighing heavily on us should not be how we can make our beliefs more palatable, but how we can closer reflect the Truth. Then we need to learn how to teach the Truth more effectively, so that our hearers understand that our roles for men and women aren't just our personal

preferences, or a take-it-or-leave-it part of Christadelphian culture, but a product of the Bible itself. If we evaluated our teachings based upon which ones were most likely to increase the ecclesia, couldn't it similarly be argued that abolishing gender distinctions in the ecclesia could result in a falling away? No matter what the world thinks, we must obey God. Paul's closing thoughts in 1Cor 14:36-38 seem appropriate to this question:

*"What? came the word of God out from you? or came it unto you only? If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord. But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant."*

**Objection:** There are only two New Testament passages that seem to suggest that women should not teach or speak in ecclesial meetings, while there is the equivalent of a couple of chapters' worth of examples suggesting that women did indeed speak and teach. Shouldn't we listen to the side with the greatest evidence?

Exactly how many times does a commandment need to appear in the New Testament for it to be valid? A single occurrence of a truth doesn't lessen its importance. If 1Tim 2 and 1Cor 14 were the only places where the role of women in the ecclesia was spelled out for us, we would still be required to obey them as "*the commandments of the Lord*" (1Cor 14:37). However, as we saw in the preceding articles, there is a wealth of Bible evidence that God intends different roles for male and female believers, and the Old and New Testaments are consistent on this subject. So where are the supposed "couple of chapters' worth of examples" that would seem to contradict the clear meaning of Paul's words about sisters? Here are some of the examples that have been said to "prove" that women and men should have no distinction in roles:

**Priscilla:** In Acts 18:24-26, there is little doubt that Apollos learned from Priscilla. Luke tells us that Apollos was **already** "*mighty in the scriptures*", "*instructed in the way of the Lord*", and "*taught diligently the things of the Lord*"; however, he had a gap in his knowledge regarding baptism. Both Aquila and his wife Priscilla "*took him unto them*" and explained this matter to him "*more perfectly*". Priscilla did not act alone, and this was not a public act of teaching or leading the church. Nowhere does it say that Priscilla did most of the explaining. Some have suggested that because Priscilla's name is sometimes listed first when the couple is mentioned, this means that she was the more talkative or active of the couple; however, this is speculation at best, since her name is listed first in only three of the six places where the couple is mentioned. Aquila is also named first in their encounter with Apollos, so this makes it difficult to assign a definite meaning to the order of their names. This example illustrates that there is nothing morally wrong about a man learning something from a woman, but it is not an example of a woman as a teacher and leader of the first century ecclesia.

**Phoebe:** In Rom 16:1, Phoebe is described as a "*servant of the church which is at Cenchrea*". The Greek word for "servant" is *diakonos*, the same word used for "deacon" three times in Paul's writing describing the ecclesial position of a dea-

con; the other 28 times this word is used in the New Testament, it is translated “servant” or “minister”. Clearly, both men and women may function as servants of the ecclesia! Even if Paul was referring to Phoebe as a “deacon”, there is nothing in the role of a deacon that implies eldership, leadership, or even teaching. This example doesn’t prove anything other than how vital the service of sisters is to the household of God.

**Junias:** Paul says in Rom 16:7 that Andronicus and Junias were “*of note among the apostles*”. Opinion is divided among Greek scholars as to whether “Junias” is a male or female name, but feminists have seized upon the possibility that Paul may be referring to a female apostle. However, it is not at all unmistakable that Junias was necessarily a woman; and even if so, Junias was not even necessarily an apostle! The Greek word for “among” is a preposition translated “by” 163 times in the New Testament and “among” 117 times; Paul may have been saying that Junias was of note *by* the apostles, not *among* them. Even if Junias was indeed a woman, this could simply mean that Andronicus was an apostle and Junias was his wife, as Paul says, “*Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas?*” (1Cor 9:5). This highly speculative example of a person who only *might* have been a woman and only *might* have been an apostle doesn’t do much to conclusively prove a feminist interpretation.

**Jezebel:** Surprisingly enough, Jezebel of Rev 2:20-23 is actually cited as New Testament proof that women were teachers in the first century ecclesia. Firstly, just because a person had the gift of prophecy does not automatically mean that person was a teacher. But more compellingly, Jezebel’s ecclesia is not a positive example of the way things should be done in the household of God, as they tolerated her promoting fornication! This example shows us nothing about the way Christ intended his body to operate.

Similarly, those who want to erase gender distinctions in the ecclesia often champion Miriam, Deborah and Huldah as examples of women who had leadership roles over men in the Old Testament. It is suggested that there is a great number of examples like this, but this is simply not true, as to list these three women is to nearly mention them all: just three, over the entire Old Testament period! Deborah spoke a personal prophecy to Barak encouraging him to lead, Huldah delivered God’s message for the king from her own home, and Miriam led the women in her prophetic song; these are not the clear, unmistakable portraits of female authority that the feminist viewpoint makes them out to be. As we saw above, the case for women as leaders and teachers over men in the New Testament is just as weak; a mere handful of examples outfitted with much speculation, amid an entire New Testament picture of men as the heads in their families and ecclesias. The evidence of role distinctions between men and women stands firm.

**Objection:** 1) 1Tim 2:11-12 is addressing a Gnostic heresy which stated that women are superior to men. The verses do not really say that women should not teach or exercise authority over men, but that they should not teach false doctrine. 2) The statement about women being silent in 1Cor 14:34-35 applies not to all women, but to women who are immature in the Truth; it’s address-

**ing a specific group of disorderly women and telling them not speak if they're going to disrupt ecclesial activity.**

Response: There were undoubtedly particular issues of false doctrine and disorder that plagued the first century ecclesia at the time of Paul's writing. However, Paul does not present his teaching about women's roles as being conditional on the circumstances in which they were written. In fact, he does the opposite — when saying that women should not teach men in the ecclesia in 1Tim 2:11-12, he links his teaching all the way back to Adam and Eve and the situation in the Garden of Eden. Lest we think that his words only applied because of the times he was writing in, he connects gender roles with creation and makes them binding on all mankind and womankind who would follow after Christ!

The clearest answer to the above objections is simply that *this is not what the verses say*. These Scriptures make clear, general statements about men and women in the ecclesia, with none of the qualifications that the objectors would like to see stated outright. Arguments against differing roles for men and women usually try to find alternate explanations to show that these verses somehow don't mean what they say. Thus, the Word of God which simply says: "*It is a shame for women to speak in the church*", becomes the words of man, saying: "It was a shame for a particular group of women who were new to the Truth and being rowdy during meeting; they have the right to speak and teach in the church, but not if they're going to be loud and rude". The Word of God, which simply says: "*I suffer not a women to teach*", becomes: "I suffer not a few specific women to teach: those who preach the heresy of Gnosticism and woman's supremacy over man. Women are free to teach, as long as they don't teach false doctrine about those particular subjects."

When God's words have to be so supplemented with man's words in order to be understood, it begs the question of whether we really trust the Bible. Are we allowing ourselves to take the clear teaching of the Bible at face value, or do our preconceived ideas and desires force us to find some other way to read these verses? It seems that because the plain meaning of these verses is not supportive of the world's standard of gender equality, therefore they must mean something else. These objections also ignore the overarching theme of male teaching and leadership throughout the Bible, evidence so great that it cannot simply be explained away. We would be wise to question interpretations that do not allow us to take the practical examples, or the instructive teachings of Scripture at face value without adding our own interpretation.

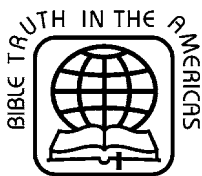
Are we truly committed to following the example of the New Testament ecclesia? The answer will lie in whether we are willing to seek and follow what Scripture says about how we ought to conduct ourselves in the house of God.

*(Concluded)*

*Tara Laben (Baltimore, MD)*

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*"Experience is the hardest teacher. She gives the test first and the lesson later"*  
*(Dan Quisenberry).*



## Bible Mission News

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### Jamaican Warmth

*This article was written by Bro. Charlie Link, Jr. (Moorestown, NJ) who shares his experience in a short trip accompanying the Luffs to Jamaica.*



**Bro. Arthurs with Bro. and Sis. Luff**

Leaving Philadelphia it was nine below freezing and arriving in Jamaica at 9:25 am, February 21st, it was a tropical 80ish. Met Bro. Ray Arthurs (Broughton Ecclesia), along with Bro. Don Luff and his Sister-wife Miriam (Brantford, ON Ecclesia, CBMC Representatives). Bro. Ray, dodging numerous pot holes, drove us to his tourist villa and home in Negril with beach and turquoise ocean. We, including the vacationing Sis. Claudette White (S. Ozone Park, NYC Ecclesia), shared in the daily Bible readings.

Years ago, Bro. Ray ventured alone to England at age 16, heard a Christadelphian lecture and a few years later was baptized. Bro. Ray gives every Bible class and exhortation at his ecclesia. He was provided with a website and other printed materials. Bro. Mathew Williams (Harvey River Ecclesia) is the sole speaker at his ecclesia. There are more sisters in Jamaica than brothers, and the few speaking brethren are appreciative of any effort to relieve the load. Additionally, many roads are in need of major repair. Bro. Patrick Johnson (May Pen Ecclesia), provided transportation to a number of locations. Regarding the pot holes he half-joked, “You need a PhD to drive here”.

At the February 22, 2012, Fraternal Gathering at the Broughton Ecclesia, Bro. Don Luff delivered the exhortation. Bre. Don and Keith Kinlocke (Spanish Town Ecclesia, CBMJ Chairman) also gave talks that led to lively group discussions. Without Christadelphian parents, a Sunday School scholar named Anita traveled from the Port Maria Ecclesia, along with others on a mini-bus, to attend the 10:30 am gathering over four hours away — such was her hunger to hear God’s Word. Sis. Kay Brown (Broughton Ecclesia) was one of the sisters preparing lunch despite a serious medical condition and we pray she may have a full recovery. One observation of our Jamaican brethren was the joyful, exuberant, outstanding singing both at the Fraternal Gathering and at the individual ecclesias — all without organ or piano.

Bro. and Sis. Luff, despite strict air travel baggage restrictions, managed to squeeze in 22 pairs of kids shoes, school supplies, eye glasses, kids clothing, back packs, Sunday school supplies, hymn books, large print Bibles and *Wrested Scriptures* for our Jamaican brethren.



**Fraternal Gathering at Broughton**

At Round Hill there was hospitality from a number of members like Sisters Sonia Blair, Sasheeka Elliott and Delores Chambers. The speaking Bre. Leecroft Blair, Marlon Jackson, and others provided many helpful comments as they introduced me to the Jamaican style of interactive participatory Bible classes. These two brethren, relatively young in the Truth, prepare every Bible class, exhortation and mutual improvement class for an ecclesia of about 20. Sis. Ronique Elliott and others



**Bible class at Round Hill**

provided Godly conversation, friendship, information and humor on the bus ride from the Fraternal. A 17 year-old Sis. Sasheeka showed selflessness, a spiritual maturity well beyond her years, and she led a pastoral care visit to Sis Sislyn Wilkie who is cared for by her daughter Sis. Izone Elliott. As requested, the first Bible class was on Genesis 37-42 with handouts dispensed. Notes on Esther were provided due to time constraints and a shorter alternative Bible class was given with website information

to assist future classes. Handshakes, hugs, kisses and high fives were received from everyone upon departure.



**Visiting at the Gordon's**

Bro. Melvin and his Sister-wife Gerzel Gordon (May Pen Ecclesia) invited Bro. and Sis. Luff and Bro. Link into their home and looked after us in every way. Sis. Gerzel was an educator who also taught the Truth and was helpful in the founding of the May Pen Ecclesia. With God's help she accomplished this without going beyond the Biblical parameters of what a sister's conduct should be. During our stay she led pas-

toral care visits and we even sampled the famous Jamaican "juicy beef". Sis. Annette Johnson (May Pen Ecclesia, CBMJ Secretary) coordinated the itineraries. The Bible class on Acts 27-28 involved interactive participation. Materials photocopied for Round Hill were also dispensed to May Pen members. With time to interact, I felt bonded to this family as if we had been close friends for many years. There were unexpected parting gifts from the "May Penites".

An exhortation was delivered at Broughton on "Nehemiah as a type of Christ" and afterward the speaker was hugged by every single member. It wasn't an atypical greeting, this is how they treat any speaker. No need to wonder if there is a lot of love in Jamaica. The climate is warm and so is the brotherhood.

Sis. Gerzel expressed the need for at least one and preferably two full time missionaries (ideally husband and wife teams) to help bolster the ecclesias. Similarly, Bro. Ray expressed the need for more capable brethren to instill spiritual growth and with the interest, stronger discipleship. It is clear our brethren in Jamaica want, need and deserve support.

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

## **Five Baptisms in Guadalajara**

It is with great joy that we announce five baptisms in Guadalajara on March 18, 2012. Each candidate gave a very clear confession of the hope we share and of their commitment to a new life in Christ.

*Esperanza Ortega Ibarra* came to us from a Christian church, looking for more diligent Bible Study. She always had problems with the popular doctrines of Satan and the Trinity. Her studies with us put all the puzzle pieces in place for her and she is quite overjoyed to now be a member. She has already been an active participant in the ecclesia and will be of great help in Guadalajara where there are only a few

sisters. Sis. Esperanza has four sons: Jonathan, Josue, Daniel and Cristian. Three of her sons and her mother, Luz, attended the baptism. The two younger sons and Luz are attending classes with her.

*Oscar Villezca Rivera* has been studying in the Bible Center for more than 16 months. He first came and quietly read our literature while seated in the foyer out front. He would come several times a week and read for hours, one pamphlet after another. Finally he was willing to come inside and do the Bible readings with us, and later attended classes. When he finally began to talk with us some eight months later, it was clear that he understood clearly what he was reading and was convinced that we were teaching Biblically. A couple of months ago he began to talk about baptism. We did formal studies with him to make sure that he was not lacking in any aspect, and to make sure he understood the commitment and change he was undertaking. He has already become quite helpful in the distribution of flyers for the Bible Center.

*Efren Becerra Bue* has been studying with us for a year. He has three grown children. He has found great joy in coming to know the Scriptures and knows he has much still to learn and grow.

*Jose Antonio Espita* was attending our ecclesia in Guadalajara when he was 15-16 years old. He had since relocated to Tijuana, where he has resided for the past five years. Currently he is visiting his family in Guanajuato from whom he had been estranged for the past 16 years and just recently reunited. He will be an associate member of our ecclesia.

*Yolanda del Carmen Estrada Orosco* lives in Tijuana with her two daughters, Madison and Allison. She too will be an associate member of our ecclesia.

The Bible Center in Guadalajara remains open Monday through Saturday from 10 am until 6 pm. We have three mid-week Bible studies: Wed 11 am, Thurs 7:30 pm, and Saturday 4:30 pm. Sunday we have the Memorial Service at 11 am and a Bible study at 12:30 pm. We do the Bible readings publically on Monday through Saturday at 3 pm, with several from the neighborhood attending regularly. This schedule allows for both formal and private classes which conform to the schedule of individuals. We have been averaging between 25-40 non-baptized people in study classes each month. We have several who are eagerly pursuing classes for

baptism and, Lord Willing, we will be welcoming them into fellowship soon.

We continue to thank the Lord for his great blessings on our work in Guadalajara. Please remember us in your prayers.

*Sis. Cynthia Paiva*







**Lots of hugs for the new brothers and sisters.**



## **Another new Sister in Guadalajara!**

It is with great joy we announce the baptism of *Andrea Barbara Leon Mitchell* on April 22, 2012. More than 40 were gathered in the home of Sis. Cynthia Paiva to celebrate her resurrection to a new life. Andrea has been studying in the Bible Center in Guadalajara since December 2010. The past six months she has been the roommate of Sis. Sarah Cheetham from New Jersey. Andrea is in her early 20's and came without any Bible knowledge. She was a keen student from the beginning. She works and attends classes at the university, yet makes time to come to the readings and personal classes several times a week. She has been transforming her life during the past year and a half of study and often preaches to her friends through action and word. Her parents, her boyfriend, and her boyfriend's parents were all in attendance at the baptism, and commented on their support for her in her new walk. Her boyfriend and his best friend are also studying with us. Sis. Andrea has a very joyous personality and a serving spirit, and will surely be a very positive member of the ecclesia in Guadalajara. Angels rejoice with us!

We feel greatly blessed in Guadalajara with the recent baptisms. Last summer, there were so few sisters in the meeting and almost all of the new students were men.



However, we are very pleased to say that this is the second sister to be baptized in the past couple of months and there appear to be others who may nearing such a commitment.

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

## Addresses for Bequests and Donations

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

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

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

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

**Christadelphian Tidings Publishing Committee** publishes this magazine and other works on the Truth. P.O. Box 530696, Livonia, MI 48153-0696, [www.tidings.org](http://www.tidings.org)

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

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

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

**Christadelphian Save the Children Fund** provides Bible learning materials, personal items, and scholarships to needy mission areas.  
[www.christadelphianchildren.com](http://www.christadelphianchildren.com)

**Christadelphian Meal a Day Fund of the Americas** funds projects to support those in need in North and South America and the Caribbean. [www.cmadfa.com](http://www.cmadfa.com)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## News & Notices

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

### **AUSTIN LEANDER, TX**

We rejoice in being able to report the birth of Miriam Booker, daughter of Bro. Adam and Sis. Wallesha Booker, and first grandchild of Bro. George and Sis. Barbara Booker.

We also rejoice with Bro. Ethan Bearden and Sis. Nicole Nevers, and their parents — Bro. Fred and Sis. Laura Bearden and Bro. Scott and Sis. Cindy Nevers (Wachusett, MA) — in their marriage, December 23, 2012, in Massachusetts. A reception was held in our hall in January.

We are also pleased to report that Bro. Kevin Aardal is back in fellowship and commended to the Los Angeles, CA Ecclesia.

We are saddened to report the falling asleep of Bro. George Brown in October. Our prayers are with Sis. Susan Brown in her loss, as well as ours.

In November we had our annual fall fraternal gathering at the HEB camp. Bro. Nathan Badger delivered classes on, “Jacob”. We thank him for his classes and were pleased that his mom Sis. Cathy Badger was able to join him.

In February, we also had a Sisters’ Study Day on the topic, “Having a Mary Heart in a Martha World”, and thank all those who helped and attended.

We welcomed the following brothers and sisters from other states or countries: Michael and Vanessa Floyd, James Floyd, and Bonnie Floyd (Port Elizabeth, S. Africa); Marion Clayton (Brantford, ON); Claude and Debbie Mindorff (Calgary, AB), Blanche Wallace (Freehill, Jamaica); Rose Madge (Milford Road, MI); Scott and Cindy Nevers, Judith Nevers (Wachusett, MA); Kait Nevers (Cranston, RI); and Alton Stuchlik (Ann Arbor, MI). We wish to thank Bre. Claude Mindorff, Alton Stuchlik, Paul Wade, and Mark Wade for their words of exhortation.

*Fred Bearden*

### **AVON, IN**

Our ecclesia has been blessed once again. On March 17, 2012, SASHA PLEW, daughter of Bro. Sam and Sis. Cassandra Plew, was baptized into the saving grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. We are very grateful to our heavenly Father to see so many of our young people ask for baptism.

We also rejoice with our Bro. Paul and Sis. Erin Sparacino in the birth of their firstborn daughter, Gabriella Elisabeth Sparacino on February 2, 2012. Gabriella is doing well and growing fast!

We have enjoyed visits from many other Christadelphians over the past months. We also appreciate that Bro. Joe Hill (Austin Leander, TX) and Bro. Bill Folkerts provided us with words of exhortation.

*Lee Livermore*

## **BRANTFORD , ON**

In April we enjoyed a very helpful and uplifting series of studies at our annual family study weekend given by our Bro. Stephen Palmer (Cardiff, UK) on the theme, “Judgment, Mercy and Faith,” taken from Deuteronomy. We are very appreciative of our brother’s time and effort. MP3 recordings of the classes are available from [www.brantfordchristadelphians.com](http://www.brantfordchristadelphians.com).

God willing the Brantford Prophecy Day will be held on September 22, 2012, with our Bro Matt Norton (Lismore, Aust.) speaking on the theme, “Revelation Examined and Explained.”

*Daniel Billington*

## **HAMILTON GREENAWAY, ON**

We are saddened by the falling asleep in the Lord of our Bro. Norman Brimer, this past February, in his ninety-eighth year. Bro. Norman was baptized at the Greenaway Ecclesia at age eighteen and had served this ecclesia as Recording Brother, Sunday School Superintendant, Arranging Brother, Exhorter and Presider. He longed for the return of his Lord with a passion and was so thankful that he had been called out of darkness into the marvellous light of the Gospel. He died in the hope of the resurrection from the dead made possible by his saviour the Lord Jesus Christ. He will be missed by his children and their families and all of his brothers and sisters at Greenaway.

The Greenaway Fraternal Picnic will be held at Wildwood Manor Ranch in Georgetown, ON, on Saturday, September 8, 2012, at 2:00pm. Bro. John Mannell (Mississauga West, ON) will be speaking on the topic, “Who is My Neighbour? — Lessons from the Parable of the Good Samaritan”. A picnic supper will be held at 5:00pm.

*Tom Thorp*

## **HONESDALE, NY**

We took our congregation’s annual Easter picture in front of our chapel. Everyone was smartly dressed.



On April 29, 2012, we hosted a luncheon with theme, “Chicken and Biscuits”. The sisters, chefs all, presented a wonderful lunch. We had the following visitors; Kirsten Frisbie, Jeremy Jeffery, and Pat Seipp.

*Stephen J. DeMarco*

## **SAANICH PENINSULA, BC**

Sis. Terri-Ann Malczewski has transferred her membership to the Fort St. James Ecclesia, and we commend her to the love and care of the brothers and sisters in Fort St. James and northern BC. Bro. Tim and Sis. Rebecca French, along with their children Caleb and Ethan, have moved back to the Shaftesbury Rd Ecclesia in Sydney, Aust. and will also be missed. Bro. Malcolm and Sis. Josie Shrimpton have transferred their membership from the Victoria Ecclesia and we are delighted to have them with us.

We’d like to thank Bro. David Lawrence (Prince George, BC) for his thoughts and efforts at our February study day weekend. We likewise express our gratitude for the efforts over the last year of Bre. Geoff Higgs, Peter Lawrence, Matthew Bennett, Matt Neville, John Pillion and Mark Snobelen (Victoria, BC), and Bre. Caleb Lawrence and Simon Snobelen (Vancouver, BC).

Additionally we have been blessed with some new babies including: Zoe Dangerfield born to Bro. Mark and Sis. Kayla; Elias Kenzie, born to Bro. Austen and Sis. Crystal; and Zion Hunter, born to Bro. Marc and Sis. Melissa.

*Marc Hunter*

## **SOUTHERN NEW HAMPSHIRE, NH**

It was with great joy we note that MICAH QUINDAZZI, son of our Sis. Zoe Ilaqua and brother of Bro. Philip Quindazzi, was baptized into the saving name of Jesus Christ on May 5, 2012. Our new brother was immersed by his grandfather, Bro. Terry Fearn (Vancouver, BC). Bro. Terry brought us the exhortation on Sunday. Our thanks to the Worcester, MA Ecclesia for the use of their hall and their hospitality in hosting the baptism.

*Frank Conahan*

## **SUSSEX, NB**

With great joy we announce the baptism of ALYSSA MARIE BAINES, oldest daughter of Bro. Paul and Sis. Marie Baines, on April 22, 2012. This happy occasion was witnessed by visitors from Bedford, NS, and Ontario, along with members of the Sussex, BC Ecclesia, as it was our Spring study weekend.

We thank Bro. Tim Young (Cambridge, ON) for his studies on “Hosea”, and Bro. John Pople (San Francisco Peninsula, CA) for his studies on “Enoch and Jacob” as well as his exhortation, given as part of the WCF directors conference which was held recently in Sussex.

We also welcomed the following visiting brothers and sisters: Sherry Young, Tom and Vivian Thorp (Greenaway, ON); Steve Davis (Boston, MA); Alan Ghent (Toronto, ON); Steve and Julie, and Jerushah Snobelen, and Ken and Wendy Dickson (Bedford, NS); and Brandon Ridgeway (NL) during April.

In July and August our Memorial service will be at 10 am.

*Cliff Baines*

## **TORONTO CHURCH STREET, ON**

We are saddened to report that Bro. James Struthers fell asleep in the Lord on April 10, 2011, in his 93rd year. Our sympathies are extended to his children and grandchildren. Also we are saddened to report that Sis. Isobel Stuppard also fell asleep in the Lord on May 19, 2011, in her 88th year. Our sympathies are extended to her extended family. Both our brother and sister were long time members of our ecclesia and demonstrated a good example to us of dedication to the things concerning the kingdom of God, being active participants in the ecclesia until age and illness forced them into retirement homes. Bro. Jim was baptized on March 29, 1939, and Sis. Isobel was baptized on April 4, 1954. We look forward to the great day when we will be able to rejoice together with them once again in the kingdom of God.

We are pleased to report the following baptisms into the saving Name of Jesus Christ: on August 14, 2011, ALOYSIUS GROOTHUIS (Louie), father of Bro. Luke Groothuis; and on March 25, 2012, LUCIANO RAMOS. Both Bro. Louie and Bro. Luciano were students at our Learn to read the Bible effectively seminars. We are pleased to report the marriage of Bro. Michael Narjes to Sis. Madison McNutt (Paris Ave, OH) on May 7, 2010. We pray that the Lord will continue to be a guide to them as they travel together toward the kingdom of God.

The following brothers and sisters have chosen to transfer to other ecclesias and we wish them well in their new ecclesial homes: Nima and Feng Panahi to the Toronto-East Ecclesia on September 14, 2011; Michael Narjes to the Paris Ave, OH Ecclesia on October 14, 2011; Kelly Campbell to the Toronto West Ecclesia on January 2, 2011; Michael Payne to the Esslingen, Germany Ecclesia on October 15, 2010; Diane Hills to the Victoria, BC Ecclesia on September 6, 2010; and Cheryl Thackoorie to the Hamilton McNab Ecclesia on September 1, 2010. We welcome by transfer from the Kingston, Jamaica Ecclesia on March 20, 2011, Sis. Rosie Wright, who has decided to spend the summers in the Toronto area and the winters in Jamaica.

The exhibit and lectures related to the 400 year anniversary of the King James Bible that was presented in September 2011 by the Toronto area ecclesias, was well supported during the weekend by brothers and sisters who were able to assist over one hundred visitors through the exhibit proclaiming the word of God. Special thanks are offered to all who assisted with this inter-ecclesial activity and especially to the Billington family (Brantford, ON Ecclesia) without whose support and assistance, this proclamation would not have been possible.

We wish to thank all the brothers who have assisted our ecclesia with exhortations, lectures and Bible classes over the past several months. We also wish to thank the brothers and sisters who have assisted at our Memorial service with playing the organ. The ecclesia is most appreciative of their labour in the Lord for us. The undersigned has assumed the position of Recording Brother for the ecclesia. Please direct all correspondence to Bro. William Perks at either the ecclesial mailing address or electronically to [bill\\_perks@rogers.com](mailto:bill_perks@rogers.com).

*William Perks*

## **VICTORIA, BC**

We are pleased to welcome two new members by transfer. Sis. Leanne Fidan comes to us from Brampton, ON; and Bro. Jeremy Foster comes to us from Hamilton McNab, ON. Bro. Shawn Snobelen (Hamilton Book Road, ON) lead our well attended Spring Study Day on the theme, "Lessons from the Sower". Bro. Richard Morgan (Hamilton

Book Road, ON) presented a lecture entitled, “The Extraordinary Power of the Word of God” following the CYC Conference.

Bro. Stephen Snobelen (Halifax, NS) presented a special lecture on “The KJB: Reflections on an Anniversary.” We had the opportunity to display our recently acquired facsimile copy and 400 Year Anniversary copy of the KJV. This volume came with an original leaf displaying Isaiah chapters eighteen to twenty. These will be added to our growing Bible collection.

Visitors continue to be a blessing. We have welcomed many since our last posting including members from Comox Valley, Nanaimo, New Westminster, Saanich Peninsula, Kamloops, Maple Ridge, Vancouver, and Vernon in BC; London, and Hamilton Book Road ON; and Coventry, UK.

Our Fraternal Gathering will be held again this year on the Labor Day weekend, September 1, 2012. We will be pleased to have Bro. Ron Hicks leading the discussions. His topic will be, “The Scribes and Pharisees: Were Their Problems Our Problems?”

Our Fall Study Weekend will be held on November 10-11, 2012. We have three speakers presenting on the theme, “Defining the Household Today.” They are Bre. Wesley Butler and Simon Snobelen (Vancouver, BC) and Bro. Marc Hunter (Saanich Peninsula, BC).

For further information please contact the undersigned at: csnobelen@csll.ca.

*Clyde Snobelen*

## **WICHITA FALLS, TX**

Since last reporting our ecclesial news we have welcomed around the Table of our absent Lord the following brothers and sisters: Linda Jones, Rachel Newton (Los Angeles, Ca); David and Erin Clubb (Simi Hills, Ca); Ed Newton (Verdugo Hills, Ca); Jeanna Wolfe (Dallas, TX); Tyler Cherry (West Houston, TX); Pearce and Holly Prater (North Houston, TX). We thank Bre. David Clubb, Ed Newton and Pearce Prater for their words of comfort and exhortation.

Over the weekend of April 6-8, 2012, we held our annual Spring Gathering at the T4C Camp in Freestone, TX. Our class leader was Bro. Jonathan Bowen (Brantford, ON). Our brother's theme for the weekend was, “The Sun of Righteousness Will Arise.” We were pleased that Sis. Charlene, Bro. Shaphan, Shoshanna and Josiah were able to make the trip. We thank our brother for his efforts to stir up our minds in anticipation of Christ's return. Certainly there are better things in store for God's creation and may the necessary changes take place under the guidance of the Lord Jesus Christ!

*John A. Clubb*

## **THE CHRISTADELPHIAN TIDINGS ON FACEBOOK**

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

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*To a servant standing by his bed as he lay dying, Sir Walter Scott requested, “Bring me the Book.” “Sir,” replied the servant, “Which one? There are thousands of books in the library.” Scott answered, “There is only one, the Book. Bring me the Bible.”*

## **Minute Meditation**

### **When the Answer to Prayer is “No”**

James tells us that “The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.”

There is no one who was more righteous than our Lord Jesus Christ. And there is no one who prayed to his Heavenly Father more fervently than did the Lord Jesus Christ that night when he was in the garden waiting to be arrested, tortured and crucified. Luke tells us that “being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground”.

Yet we know that the answer to his prayer to his Heavenly Father was “no”. We read in Matthew that he pleaded, “O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me.” Before he had even finished speaking, realizing what his Father’s response would be, he added, “nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt”. He knew that all things are possible to God and that God would hear his plea, but he knew what God wanted and was willing to surrender himself and accept his Father’s will. How thankful we are that he overcame!

God hears prayers, and God answers prayers, but, as with those prayers of Jesus, when we pray, His answer is not necessarily the answer we want. He sometimes says “no” to our prayers. Do we sometimes say “no” to our own prayers? In the Lord’s Prayer, Jesus tells us to pray, “lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil”. In a hymn we sing, “Help us this and every day to live more nearly as we pray”. We pray to God, asking Him to deliver us from temptation, and then we go out and say to the temptation, “Go away closer”. We do not flee from temptation as we should. We approach as close as possible, sometimes examine what we desire from various aspects, and, before we know it, we have fallen into the very temptation we have asked God to deliver us from.

We do not fool Him when we do this. Are we fooling ourselves? How thankful we are for forgiveness! Our God is a loving merciful God who is compassionate towards those that love Him and seek to serve Him. Peter was forgiven for his three denials of his Lord, Paul was forgiven for persecuting Christians, and David was forgiven for adultery and murder. God is also willing to forgive us, and we need to fervently pray for forgiveness every day.

We can take comfort in the assurance that “There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that we may be able to bear it.” When we are being tempted, the Lord knows that we can resist it because He will not give us a temptation beyond our ability to resist. We sin when we do not draw upon that strength to resist.

James tells us “Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts”. We can understand when we ask amiss, but many times we do

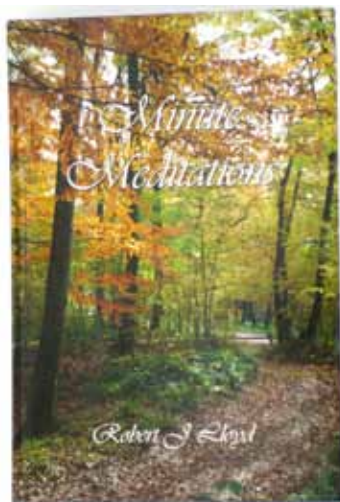


pray fervently for what we believe is a good cause, and those prayers, just like the Lord's, are also sometimes answered with a "no".

We have all prayed that someone seriously ill would recover, and then the person dies. It was God's will, and He does know best, but sometimes we are so full of sorrow that we have a hard time accepting that. We know that we need always to accept His answer as the best even when we do not understand it. We read in the Psalms that "he giveth his beloved sleep". Often when our prayers are not answered as we wanted them to be, we can, over time, look back and see the wisdom of the Father that it really was for the best. Some things will not be made clear to us until we are in the Kingdom with His dear son.

We are thankful that our Heavenly Father really does care for us and that He has promised that all things will work together for our good. The goodness that God has planned surely is our ultimate goal, so we continue to pray fervently for what we believe would be best and then, with our Lord, we say, "not my will but thine be done".

*Robert J. Lloyd*



### **Coming Soon!** **Minute Meditations** **10th edition**

*The new tenth edition of Minute Meditations has 30 meditations that are not found in the previous edition.*

*The new book will be available in the US from the normal distributors for \$11.00 plus shipping.*

## **Coming Events (Lord Willing)**

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

### **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 Drepaual 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 was April 15. 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](mailto: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](http://www.kidscampcalifornia.com). Contact Bro. Tom Graham at [tom@bigbrand.com](mailto: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](http://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](http://www.youthconferencecalifornia.com) or Bro. Jason Hensley [jason@speakingofhisglory.com](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:shannonjejh@att.net). Registration forms are on our website: [www.swcbs.com](http://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](http://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](mailto:cindy.nevers@tecbs.org) or visit our website at [www.tecbs.org](http://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](mailto:mike.live@gmail.com) or visit [www.midwestbibleschool.com](http://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](mailto:mail@gelineau.org). Register at [www.californiabibleschool.org](http://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](http://www.christadelphianbiblecamp.ca). For registration, contact Bro. Alex Browning at [jabrowning@rogers.com](mailto: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](mailto: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.menchabibleschool.org](http://www.menchabibleschool.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](mailto: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 Your God". Contact Sis. Yvonne Rosenau, 6274 Dover Rd., Nanaimo, BC V9V 1A8. Phone: 250-758-4569 e-mail: [yvonne2001@shaw.ca](mailto:yvonne2001@shaw.ca) website: [www.vibiblecamp.com](http://www.vibiblecamp.com).

## SEPTEMBER 2012

**1-2 Victoria, BC** Fraternal Gathering. "The Scribes and Pharisees: Were Their Problems Our Problems?" by Bro. Ron Hicks (Washington DC). Contact [csnobelen@csll.ca](mailto:csnobelen@csll.ca).

## **The CHRISTADELPHIAN TIDINGS of the Kingdom of God (USPS 107-060)**

Periodicals postage paid at Glendora, California and at additional mailing offices.

Send address corrections to: The Tidings • P.O. Box 530696 • Livonia, MI 48153-0696

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**8 Hamilton Greenaway, ON** Fraternal Picnic will be held at Wildwood Manor Ranch in Georgetown, ON, at 2:00pm. Bro. John Mannell (Mississauga West, ON) will be speaking on the topic, "Who is My Neighbour? — Lessons from the Parable of the Good Samaritan". A picnic supper will be held at 5:00pm.

**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".

**22 Brantford, ON** Prophecy Day will be held this year with our Bro Matt Norton (Lismore, Aust.) speaking on the theme "Revelation Examined & Explained."

### **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".

### **November 2012**

**10-11 Victoria, BC** Fall Study Weekend. "Defining the Household" by Bro. Wesley Butler (Vancouver, BC), Bro. Marc Hunter (Saanich Peninsula, BC), and Bro. Simon Snobelen (Vancouver, BC). For further information contact csnobelen@csl.ca