

THE CHRISTADELPHIAN TIDINGS

of the Kingdom of God

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The CHRISTADELPHIAN TIDINGS of the Kingdom of God

Peter Hemingray, Editor

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What is a Book Worth?

Anatoli Scharansky, a dissident Soviet Jew, kissed his wife goodbye as she left Russia for freedom in Israel. His parting words to her were, "I'll see you soon in Jerusalem." But Anatoli was detained and finally imprisoned. Their reunion in Jerusalem would not only be postponed, but it might never occur. During long years in Russian prisons and work camps Anatoli was stripped of his personal belongings. His only possession was a miniature copy of the Psalms. Once during his imprisonment, his refusal to release the book to the authorities cost him 130 days in solitary confinement.

Finally, twelve years after parting with his wife, he was offered freedom. In February 1986, as the world watched, Scharansky was allowed to walk away from Russian guards toward those who would take him to Jerusalem. But in the final moments of captivity, the guards tried again to confiscate the book of Psalms. Anatoli threw himself face down in the snow and refused to walk on to freedom without it. Those words had kept him alive during imprisonment. He would not go on to freedom without them.

Editorial

Grief

“But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope” (1 Thess 4:13).

Introduction

In my editorial last month, I talked about the bitterness that is sometimes unfortunately associated with personal bereavement and tragedies. But there is an associated problem that also sometimes occurs. Some ecclesial members have a surprising reaction to any expression of grief over the death of a loved one or brother or sister. It is, I have heard commented, improper to express deep grief over the departure of a loved one, because we have the hope of resurrection, unlike the erroneous hope of some of those around us. I believe this is unfortunate, and perhaps causes unnecessary stress in already difficult situations. I believe grief at the departure of a loved one does not preclude the recognition of the hope we share: we sorrow, but not as those who have no such hope.

Bereavement¹

The death of a loved one, whether it is that of a parent, child, spouse, or anyone you are close to, is a deeply traumatic event. It is almost as though you have lost a limb, in many cases, because over the course of time they have become such a part of one's life. In previous generations grief, prolonged grief, was expected, and widows in particular wore obvious mourning clothing. We can think of Sister Lasius, daughter of John Thomas, who wore widow's black all her long life after her brief marriage to Benjamin Lasius. Sister Jane Roberts, a strong, competent wife and help-meet of Robert Roberts, is also shown in such raiment in all the later pictures I have seen of her. Such is no longer expected today: there is no outward sign of the grief that almost always accompanies the loss of a spouse. But grief is still deeply felt, even though the obvious outward signs are no longer seen. So how is one to cope?

Grief is inevitable where there has been love and affection — the greater the love, the deeper the grief. It goes through many distressing phases before there is acceptance and healing. It takes time and cannot be hurried. The loss of a loved one has much in common with major surgery: a living part of ourselves has been cut off. There is a deep internal wound, pain, mental and physical shock and an exhausting weariness of mind and body, along with sensitive scars which leave their mark for life. The patterns of grief are at last being recognized by doctors and others who have to deal with the medical and social problems that so often arise, especially when it has been bottled up and suppressed. In fact, in the recent discussions in the USA surrounding the update of the standard work on the diagnosis and treatment of mental illnesses, grief is proposed to be included as

a recognized condition. Unfortunately, this can mean the prescribing of strong psychotic medicines, when all that is really needed is the comfort of our hope and the support of the brethren and sisters.

So how can we help? We should attend the funeral if at all possible. It is a great comfort to the bereaved to feel others around them at this time, sharing the service and helping through this difficult day by their presence. Some, having suffered the trauma of bereavement, avoid attending the funerals of others, fearing the opening of personal wounds — but in fact this seldom happens. If we have suffered a similar bereavement, we have to remember how glad we ourselves were to have support at this time. If we have been very deeply hurt ourselves it is very unlikely that we shall ever feel quite so upset again, but the understanding gained from our own painful experience will enable us to give the love, sympathy and support that is so badly needed at this time. And if we do weep with those that weep it does not matter, for it shows that we care.

The full impact of loss comes after the relatives and friends have all gone, and then it is that kindly emails, letters, visits and phone calls are most appreciated. The problems that face the bereaved do not just disappear in a week or two: most of them are just beginning and may go on for a very long time. Just one visit, letter or phone call or offer of help is seldom sufficient. Loneliness and grief do not vanish just because the bereaved person is back at the meetings and putting on a brave face.

Indeed most of us find it of very difficult to appreciate the depth of those who have lost a companion of many years. When it says “*the two will become one flesh*” (Matt 19:5), the depth of the feeling of loss is only made greater by the closeness of the bond. And even though death comes to all men, the death of a spouse is rarely really expected: we hope against hope, and expect medical miracles, even when the prognosis is poor.

The shattering effect of a death sometimes reduces faith to a low ebb. Death itself is a frightening experience. Doubts may torment or the love of God be questioned. Here we must try to be reassuring, using Scriptural examples, and in every way possible encourage them to maintain their faith and attendance at the various meetings of the ecclesia. The discipline of doing this, plus the participation in worship — even passively, and the loving fellowship of the brethren and sisters, will prove helpful and healing, though it will not happen all at once. Time lessens the impact, but deep grief can linger for a long time. The deeper the love between the two, the greater the impact of the loss.

Our hope

The sorrow we have, as Paul expresses, is not as others in the world around us.

“For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep” (1Thess 4:14).

So we have the hope of a future life in the Kingdom to come. We might not have the same type of grief, and we do not in general grieve for the lack of future hope of those who have died. But we do grieve for the lack of the companionship of the person. I know quite well my father had this hope, but I still grieve inside when

I think of him, even though he lived a long, fruitful and faithful life. To expect someone not to grieve for the loss of a loved one, and to comment critically when such grief is expressed, is most unhelpful in such a circumstance. We do have an imperative instead to help those in need, and it is clear that there is such a need in times of bereavement.

Death comes to all, and it is inevitable that we shall all experience some type of bereavement. Only some of us will feel the death of a spouse, but this is undoubtedly the most extreme form of a grief inducing experience. Grief might be “normal”, but is no less deeply felt. Some might seem to cope quite well, with little overt evidence of deep grief — but inside be feeling a sense of extreme hopelessness and loss of faith. Some might be very open in their grieving, but be strong in their faith. And some might be both openly grieving and experiencing a troublesome doubt about the love of God, as we mentioned above.

So how can we help ourselves, as opposed to help others cope with bereavement? Prayer is a vital part of any healing process, but it is very difficult to pray either when in a state of shock or in acute grief; the mind cannot concentrate. At this stage all we need to pray for is the strength to get through the immediate day, and if we limit our thinking and problems to the needs of that one day the strength is given. We do not need to plan ahead. The Lord Jesus tells us: *“Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof”* (Matt 6:34).

Conclusion

Grief, especially after bereavement, is a normal part of human experience. It might be helped by the hope we have, but we grieve for the loss of companionship, not for the loss of the hope of a future life. Indeed, we do not grieve quite as those who do not have hope, but we grieve nonetheless. We instead wait for the return of our Lord and Savior.

“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 4:17-18).

“And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away” (Rev 21:4).

Peter Hemingray

Notes:

1. Some of this material is based upon the helpful pamphlet by Sis. Joan Thomas: “Coping with Bereavement”.

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Please include your name, address, e-mail, and phone.**

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

Exhortation

The Way of Wisdom

I spend a fair amount of my day in traffic. This experience, no doubt shared by many readers of these words, has given rise to a useful analogy. We can call it the “road of life”.

Sometimes as we drive down this “road”, we come to dangerous intersections. Sometimes we refer to these as “forks in the road”. They are those moments where a choice we make or don’t make sets us on a course that could influence the rest of our journey. Do we stop or go? Turn right or left? Go ahead or turn back? Perhaps you feel like you are at a dangerous intersection right now in your life?

The Bible speaks about a divine resource we can utilize when we come to those intersections. It is called wisdom. Sometimes when we get to that fork in the road, or more plainly, a time of choosing, we will realize that we don’t have an answer, we don’t have wisdom.

“My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him” (James 1:2-5).

James begins with the various trials we encounter in life. These are the difficulties and afflictions that come our way. It is during a time of trial that we may become so deeply involved in it, we can’t see our way out. Maybe it’s because we don’t understand the cause of the trial or its purpose. At those times, we are confused, and feel acutely our shortage of wisdom. In verse 5, James addresses this situation directly, and in verses 6-8 he cautions,

“But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.”

Like forks in the road, life brings us choices, choices we don’t always see a clear answer to. In other words, life creates a demand for wisdom that we don’t always have.

What is wisdom?

There are various definitions of wisdom. Webster defines it as “the ability to make right use of knowledge”. My favorite is from dictionary.com: “knowledge of what is true or right coupled with just judgment as to action; sagacity, discernment, or insight”. It all sounds very intellectual.

There is an aspect of knowledge in wisdom. But it goes beyond that. Wisdom often involves the practical use of knowledge to deal with life’s ‘forks in the road’.

Wisdom, then, is the convergence of knowledge and skill that enables a person to make right choices at the fork in the road; more importantly, in our road to the Kingdom of God, the right choices that put us on the right path.

In Prov 1:7 we are told that the *“fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom”*. From a Biblical perspective, if a person does not know God who created all things, revealed truth, and established absolute values, then he cannot be wise. How could a person make right choices without knowing God and His truth? So, wisdom begins with the fear of the Lord, with a reverence that opens our ears to all God’s instruction and counsel.

The Need For Wisdom

To provide further clarity about wisdom, consider its opposite — foolishness. Indeed, Biblically, someone who is not wise, is a fool. Prov 1:7 contrasts the reverence and humility that marks the beginning of wisdom with the fool’s response to God: *“fools despise wisdom and instruction”*. The fool has no use for God’s instruction and in the end makes poor choices.

I can count many conundrums in my life, various forks, and forks that weren’t forks; sometimes you just don’t know what to do, because you don’t know the path that God wants you to follow. And these can be related to problems common to us all: financial problems, family problems, relationship problems, work problems. We really don’t always have clear answers at these intersections we come to in life.

But also think how many times have we thought we didn’t need help. As we often say, “I know what I’m doing”. The fool’s famous last words!

If we do not face up to our lack of wisdom, we will never ask for it. It is the arrogant person who thinks they never need counsel. It is the foolish person who refuses to admit his/her need for wisdom.

So when you face a situation you cannot figure out and you don’t know which way to turn or what to do or think, what do you do? James has the answer:

“If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind” (James 1:5-6).

Wisdom is a divine gift from the One who knows. You don’t get wisdom by living a long life or experiencing many different things. You get it from God.

So rather than trying to figure things out yourself, or seeking advice from the world around you, turn to the one who knows — *God*. For God will give you wisdom liberally. He knows how badly you need it. James says God will give us wisdom without reproach, that is, without finding fault or giving insult. God wants us to come to Him for wisdom. We should not be too embarrassed or too proud to ask. We will not be reproached or demeaned, as sometimes happens in the world.

But there is one thing more we need to learn from James. Up until now, I’ve painted a very positive picture, but James adds this warning:

“...for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord” (James 1:6-7).

What does this mean? It means what it says: Wisdom comes to those who ask in faith and do not doubt, but trust fully in the Lord.

To doubt means to be uncertain. The doubter is one who is uncertain of the Lord. This doubt could arise from an incomplete trust, from an incomplete love for God and His ways, from divided loyalties. The doubter is a wave of the sea tossed around by the wind, a vacillating Christian, one who cannot decide from one trial to the next whether they will really trust the Lord and follow His wisdom. Sadly, for this person, James adds, *“let not that man suppose he will receive anything from the Lord”*.

There is a country song that starts “God, I’m down here on my knees cause it’s the last place left to fall”. Interestingly, this song draws from a quote by Abraham Lincoln: “I have been driven many times to my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had nowhere else to go. My wisdom and that of all about me seemed insufficient for the day.”

There comes a time in our life when we have nowhere else to go, when those forks in the road have driven us to a place where we can’t find an answer, only more questions. All the wisdom we’ve acquired through our life just isn’t enough. At these times, think of Proverbs, and think of James. The beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Lord, and those who ask in faith *will* be given liberally of the wisdom of God.

“Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love him” (James 1:12).

Perhaps the real purpose of temptation, ultimately, is to teach us where to find true wisdom so that we may become *“perfect and complete, lacking nothing” (James 1:4).*

Nathan Sleeper (Glendale, AZ)

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).

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

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

Bible Study

Some Thoughts on Romans 5:12

“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:”

There is the potential that we may not see clearly what is meant in Romans 5:12 since the verse is not a complete sentence and the conclusion of the thought is interrupted by a parenthetical phrase which begins in Rom 5:13. If we read the whole sentence without the parenthetical phrase we get a better idea of Paul's point. The incomplete sentence in Rom 5:12 is completed in Rom 5:18 by the following:

“Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.”

We can now clearly see that Paul's argument concerns justification in Christ and the existence of the two federal heads, or representatives: (1) Adam [and Eve] who did sin with the result of his [their] being a dying creature and we, his offspring, inheriting this dying nature and all that it brings with it, including a propensity to sin and (2) Jesus in whom we can be justified to life by a “free gift”. After baptism, we continue our lives in both of these systems — we continue in Adam, but we are now in covenant relationship and in Christ. Then we look forward to being changed at the judgment seat. The Apostle Paul summed it up quite succinctly in 1Cor 15:21, 22: *“For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.”*

However, we might ask the question, what is the value in that little parenthetical phrase at the end of Rom 5:12: *“for that all have sinned”*. Being an engineer by academic background and 50 years of practice, cause and effect are fundamental, just an apple falls because of gravity. The first part of Rom 5:12 makes it plain that death *“passed upon all men”* because Adam sinned. In the RSV, it is stated slightly differently: *“death spread to all men”*. There is the cause and the effect — Adam sinned and as a consequence the sentence of death was placed upon him. We, being his natural offspring, inherit the dying nature and with it the propensity towards sin — just like Adam.

The little phrase at the end of the sentence still needs an explanation consistent with the facts. The fact is that all of Adam's offspring don't die because they sin — they are dying creatures even before their birth; dying is a natural part of our being from the moment of conception in the womb. In that sense then, all men die because of Adam's sin. So what does the phrase mean, *“...for that all have sinned”*?

We certainly cannot argue that all have not sinned, for all [with the single exception of our Lord Jesus Christ] have sinned: *“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;”* (Rom 3:23).

In many cases in the English language we can interchange “for” with “because”. But that is neither justifiable, nor does it give justice to the Greek in the case of Rom 5:12. The Greek word is defined as “a primary preposition; properly, meaning superimposition (of time, place, order, etc.), as a relation of distribution [with the genitive case], i.e. over, upon, etc.; of rest (with the det.) at, on, etc.; of direction (with the accusative case) towards, upon, etc.”¹ We can note that in no case in the Scriptures is the word translated “because”. So what is the meaning?

Bro L. G. Sargent gave this explanation:

“All suffer the consequences of one sin, yet it is no arbitrary sentence imposed by despotism, for all are sinners; heredity and environment combine, their inherent tendency finds opportunity, their impulses are stirred, and they sin. Not one could on his own account stand acceptably before the holiness of God. So ‘through the trespass of the one the many died’. No works of their own could gain life. Yet the gift of God surpassed the judgment of God, for it was by His act of grace that the One Man came as the second Adam, and reversed the effect of the first sin. This he did by ‘obedience even unto death’, so that as ‘through the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the one shall the many be made righteous’ ”.²

Later, the editor of The Christadelphian summarized it thus: “There is no unfairness here. *All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God*’ (Rom 3:23) and are therefore deserving of the death that inevitably awaits them”.³ Said another way, while it was our heredity that is the root cause of our dying nature, God is just in causing our dying condition in that we are inevitable sinners and therefore worthy of death.

There is a view prevalent in some quarters of our community that: “we do not die because Adam sinned...” But that simply defies the facts. We are dying creatures, part of a dying race, as a result of the sin of one man, our federal head, our representative, from whom all mankind has come. Like begets like.

Consider also the attendant proposition that is sometimes made, also based on Rom 5:12, which presumes that: “We die in Adam because we all sin.” But that is a reversal of cause and effect as stated in Rom 5:12 and goes against the laws of nature. When an embryo is in the womb it has inherent in it the dying nature, long before it has had the opportunity to sin. Even the Lord Jesus Christ was a dying creature, part of the federal system under Adam (born of a woman) and yet he was without sin.

I wonder also at the phrase, “*death passed upon all men*”. The passing has the context of death in motion, not dissimilar to the angel of death passing over the camp. It is often used in connection with walking, such as Jesus passing through Jericho in Luke 19:1. So it is like death coming over all men and settling upon them — death in motion.

Paul likens this to a sentence of death in 2Cor 1:9, 10: “*But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the*

dead: Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us;". Here Paul is stating that he and Timothy were fully aware that they were dying creatures and prone to sin and therefore put their trust not in themselves but on the righteous judge who would raise them up at the last day.

James E. Land (Los Angeles, CA)

Notes:

1. Biblesoft's New Exhaustive Strong's Numbers and Concordance with Expanded Greek-Hebrew Dictionary. Copyright © 1994, 2003, 2006 Biblesoft, Inc. and International Bible Translators, Inc.
2. "Some thoughts on Atonement", *Christadelphian* 1964 p 205.
3. "Christ Jesus Came Into The World To Save Sinners", *Christadelphian* 1987 p225.

Creation's Gospel

(8) The Waters of Judgment and Grace

Our considerations have noted the relationship between the word of God and water, as we contemplate how the features of creation project divine truths and principles. We observed how water can appear in a number of forms: rain, clouds, snow, rivers, seas, ice, steam, underground rivers, etc. We recognized the continuing Scriptural relationships between the clouds of heaven and the presence, power, glory and nature of our Creator. Falling from those clouds are the early and latter rains of our Creator's spoken word: the word made flesh and the word exercised in power. The next logical extension of this progressive theme would be to consider the bodies of water these rains and snows replenish.

These bodies of water present a consistent Scriptural relationship with the word of God in judgment, maintaining the seamless spiritual/creational theme of the water from the clouds through the rain and to the oceans, flood, seas and rivers. This judgment aspect, witnessed in these bodies of water, is focused in the diametrically opposed final judgment of life or death.

The saving and destroying flood waters of judgment

The flood waters of divine judgment, racing down from the collapsed upper firmament waters (Gen 1:6-8), submerged the continents (temporarily) deeper into the Earth's magma, delivering both death and life. The death aspect is quite obvious, eliminating perhaps two billion people. Peter references the life saving feature of the flood waters in his baptism parallel "...when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:" (1Pet 3:20-21). The same creational features of the water that drowned the many, buoyed up the ark of salvation above the destruction, saving the eight. Here, Peter confirms Paul's inspired statements that it is the resurrection of Christ that will save us, while the death of Christ has reconciled us (Rom 5:10). The flood waters brought death to the many rejecting our Creator's righteousness, and brought life to the few confirming our Creator's righteousness.

The dramatic events in the Red Sea confirm this pattern. The children of Israel walked between two massive walls of water, standing to attention, as they travelled across the dried sea bed (Exod 14:21-22). When the children of God exited from between the water walls, the sea collapsed upon the arrogantly foolish Egyptian cavalry, bringing death to these sons of men. This body of water meant death to the flesh and life to the spirit, just like the flood waters.

Life to death in Egypt but death to life in the wilderness

The first of the ten plagues in Egypt converted the life sustaining Nile waters into blood, presenting a progression from life to death. However, after travelling an appropriate three days into the wilderness without water, the wilderness ecclesia witnesses the reverse progression. The poisonous waters of Marah were converted to life sustaining water by the tree cut down and thrown into the death waters to make them living waters, a symbol of the coming Messiah. The environment of Egypt projects the body of water image of life being transformed to death. The isolated wilderness ecclesial environment projects the reverse image of water being transformed from death to life.

Sea of life and sea of death

Our Creator painted this lesson geographically in the Promised Land for the enlightened, those with seeing eyes. There are two seas. The Sea of Galilee is a sea of life. Crops grow along the shores. Birds fly overhead. Herds drink its water. Children play in the water. Fishermen harvest Galilee's bounty. The Dead Sea is appropriately the lowest point on the surface of our planet. These waters cannot sustain animal life or vegetation. No fish live in these waters. Cold, grey rocks line the water's edge. The few venturing into the waters will spend days desperately trying to remove the salt residue (personal experience). There is a sea of life and there is a sea of death in the Promised Land, that was so carefully crafted by our Creator to educate those bearing His name.

The life to death river reversal

The Jordan River appropriately progresses from the Sea of Life to the Sea of Death. This Creator's portrait of the progression of life under the curse of sin and death was reversed when the feet of the priests bearing the golden Christ-ark stepped into the river's flow. This happened across from Jericho, before the gaping mouth of the Dead Sea, voraciously swallowing the waters of life into its waters of death. The Jordan river waters unnaturally receded all the way back to the city of Adam (by Zaretan, meaning "distress"), depicting how the curse of mortality can be reversed through our Messiah for the faithful all the way back to the distress by Adam. Appropriately those bearing the divine name were commanded to wait about 2,000 cubits back from this scene, before following this ark. This projects how all those bearing the Creator's family name, into which we are baptized, will wait about 2,000 years from when our Messiah would first experience this reversal of the curse of mortality (Josh 3:4). The pattern is consistent. Bodies of water relate the theme of the word of God in the judgment of death to the flesh and life to the spirit.

The baptismal waters of death and life

This pattern is perfectly projected in the ritual of baptism. The two baptismal stages of death and resurrection project what Jesus explained to John the Baptist was the fulfillment of all righteousness (Matt 3:15). Since Jesus was only concerned about his Father's righteousness, we can easily understand that baptism projects all the right-ness of our Creator. Christ's baptism certainly had nothing to do with the forgiveness of his sins. He had no sins to be forgiven. It had nothing to do with erasing any imagined inherited guilt from Adam's sin, as that would declare our Creator to be unrighteous and a liar. Christ's baptism was all about his Father's righteousness, just like his death and his resurrection. Christ's voluntary burial in water is a declaration that our Creator's initial demand to Adam and Eve, that sin must mean death, is a perfectly right and just understanding. All of paganism and apostate Christianity refuses that declaration of divine righteousness, blasphemously maintaining that sin can be just as eternal as righteousness. Rising from the water burial of baptism declares the rest of our Creator's righteousness. Despite the right-ness of our Creator's judgment that sin requires death, He is also right in gracefully extending life even though we correctly deserve death due to sin. Our creator's grace is not a contradiction of his judgment. He is right in both the baptismal burial shadow and the baptismal resurrection shadow of His rightness. The baptismal bodies of water, the rivers and lakes and oceans and ponds and pools and tubs, all display this same theme of the word of God exercised in the judgment and the grace of death and life.

Our next commentary will further extend this progressive theme, to the water's spiritual/creational relationship to fruit bearing plant life, confirming even greater evidence of the breadth, height and depth of this relationship between the spoken word of God (creation) and the written word of God (Bible).

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The Joy of Sunday Schooling

The Questions We Ask

Part 2

Good questions are powerful educational tools. As teachers, they help us accomplish many things. We may ask a question to stimulate thinking or promote discussion. We may also ask questions to find out things about our students. What do our students know about a subject? Do they understand a principle? Do they recognize when a principle applies? Do they know how to apply a principle when they have the opportunity to do so? Can they accurately evaluate a situation and faithfully plot their own course of action?

Asking questions is not an end in itself. The questions we ask should be designed to move the educational process forward, and the answers we get from our students should help us know which way is forward.

A few years ago I was working with a group of young people at one of our Bible schools. I posed a “What would you do if ...?” question for them to consider and then gave them time to think about it and write down their answers. When I opened the class for discussion, it did not take long to find out that some of them would turn their dog loose on a home invader or even use a gun to protect themselves if they could.

These were not ‘the right answers’ to the question, but they were *very meaningful answers*. They pointed the way forward. We went on to talk about the Biblical principles involved in the situation and to consider some real life examples. It was clear, however, that a few of the young people needed a lot more remediation.

The experience underscored the point for me: meaningful questions and answers can drive the educational process.

Verbal and written questions

The Lord Jesus was a very spontaneous teacher. He never asked written questions or waited for written answers. His questions were always verbal and called for immediate verbal responses. Sometimes people dodged his questions (e.g., Mark 11:29-33) and sometimes they refused to answer him (e.g., Mark 3:4; 9:33-34), but the force of his questions was never lost on his listeners. Much of his effectiveness was due to the fact that the questions he asked were always relevant to the situation at hand, and he had an impeccable sense of time and place when it came to asking the right question. He also followed up with powerful teaching when the response to his questions — or lack of response — called for it.

Our educational settings are usually more structured and formal than this. On-the-spot verbal questions remain very important, but written questions are a mainstay of much of our teaching. Written questions are usually prepared in advance, so this gives us time to think about the goals that we want to address. Written questions need to be well thought out: we need to know why we are asking the questions we pose.

Preparing questions

There are several types of questions that we can ask our students, depending on the level of thinking that we want to engage. The different types of questions are designed to reveal different things about our students’ knowledge of the Truth, so let’s look at some in detail.

Information recall questions. What do our students know about the Bible? What is the Biblical knowledge base that they have to draw on as they face daily life? These are the kinds of things we want to find out when we ask *information recall questions*. Information recall questions require students to do such things as *tell, list, select, match, name, quote, sort, recite, define, indicate what, when, who, or how many*.

The questions are phrased accordingly, for example:

- How many apostles did Jesus have?
- What are the four different kinds of soil in the parable of The Sower?

Recall questions are among the easiest to answer but it is not always easy to gauge what the answers tell us about our students. Students quickly learn to give the right answers to questions whether they buy into them or not. Interestingly, when Jesus asked recall questions, it was never an end in itself. He used recall questions as a springboard to deeper lessons (e.g., Mark 8:19-21; 8:27-29). Of course, it is good to keep in mind that Jesus was also dealing with adults. Our immediate reason for asking recall questions may be different because, in Sunday school at least, we are working with children. One of our priorities is to help the children develop a good Biblical knowledge base.

Comprehension questions. How well do our students understand the Bible? Can they accurately explain the meaning of what they read in its pages? Do they recognize the godly significance of its principles? These are the kinds of things we can find out when we ask *comprehension questions*. There are two kinds of comprehension questions: one looks for the *interpretation* of information; the other looks for the ability to *transfer* information to new settings. *Interpretation* questions require students to *describe, explain, discuss, restate, tell in your own words, review, interpret, paraphrase, account for, outline, express how or why*.

For example:

- Tell what it means to honor your father and mother?
- Explain 2Tim 3:16-17 in your own words.

Questions that require a *transfer* of information ask students to do such things as *predict, project, propose, expand, contemplate, imagine*.

For example:

- Why do you want the kingdom of God to come?
- Do you think Jesus would run for public office if he were here today? Give reasons for your answer.

Comprehension questions can open the door for good follow up discussion. They commonly offer the kind of latitude that allows teacher and students to share a breadth of Biblical insights and learn from each other.

Application questions. At this point, we are interested in finding out if our students know what to do with their Bible knowledge. Understanding brings responsibility. *Application questions* can begin to tell us how well our students understand the Bible and buy into its principles of life. With application questions, we want our students to show the ability to do such things as *apply, adopt, relate, try, make use of, put into action, demonstrate, choose, solve*.

For example:

- List three ways that you can honor your father and mother this week.
- What does keeping the first commandment (Mark 12:28-30) mean to you?
- What would you do if ...?

Application questions can lead to real action. They have the potential to be more than questions on a page or topics of discussion in a classroom. After Jesus taught mercy in the parable of The Good Samaritan, he issued a challenge: “*Go and do*

likewise". Good application questions can provide an opportunity for teacher and students to put the principles of the Truth into practice.

Analysis questions. Can our students pick out the important details of a Bible passage? Do they recognize the Biblical principles that are involved and do they understand the implications that follow from them? These are some of the things we can find out with *analysis questions*. Analysis questions ask our students to *search for, examine, breakdown, identify, distinguish, compare, contrast, reason, and relate*.

For example:

- Where did Noah's faith come from? How did Noah show that he had faith? See Heb 11:7.
- How many life-changing decisions did the younger son make in the parable of The Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32)? Identify two of these decisions and tell the outcome of each one.

Jesus asked some simple but very penetrating analysis questions in the course of his teaching. Here are two: "*So which of these three do you think was neighbor to him who fell among thieves?*" (Luke 10:36) and "*Which of the two did the will of his father?*" (Matt 21:31). Notice from the context of each that Jesus did not think it was enough just to ask the question and get the right answer. In both instances he went on to drive home the implications that followed from the answer: the self-excusing person needed to show mercy to anyone in need and the self-righteous person needed to repent and believe the gospel.

Synthesis questions. If analysis looks at the component parts of Scripture, synthesis puts the parts together. How well do our students get the big picture? Can they draw Scripture together and begin to articulate its great principles? These are the kinds of things we want to find out when we ask *synthesis questions*. Synthesis questions require students to do such things as *collect, put together, organize, arrange, combine, plan, create, build, compose, formulate*.

For example:

- Act out the story of Cain and Abel.
- What are the key things that you would tell a friend who wants to know what you believe?
- Use a concordance and cross-references to identify at least ten Bible passages that tell us something about the state of the dead. Summarize your findings.
- Write a prayer about ... (an assigned topic).

Evaluation questions. How well do our students know the mind of God? Can they align their thinking with His? Does their value system reflect God's value system? *Evaluation questions* probe the heart that motivates the person. These are questions that ask our students to *evaluate, judge, decide, appraise, assess, weigh, prioritize, accept, reject, argue, defend, choose, tell if one should or should not*.

For example:

- Was it right or wrong for David to kill Goliath? Explain your answer.

- Write a prayer about ... (a topic of the student's choice).
- What are your views on abortion?
- Why would you accept a demanding job promotion that doubles your salary?
- Why would you turn down a demanding job promotion that doubles your salary?

Discipleship calls for constant evaluation of one's personal beliefs and way of life. The ability to do this well reflects a good understanding of the revealed will of God.

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Youth Speaks

2 Thessalonians 2 — Brethren, Stand Fast

As noted in earlier articles, when the apostle Paul brought the gospel to Thessalonica, the response from the majority of the Jews was far from pleasant. While some of them believed and while some of the Greeks were willing to come to the Truth, the Jews did not look on Paul's preaching favorably:

"But the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company, and set all the city on an uproar, and assaulted the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people" (Acts 17:5).

Paul's preaching brought about an assault on Jason's house — the Jews stormed in, looking for Paul and Silas. Eventually, the rulers of the city put down the tumult, but all throughout the new ecclesia's existence, the Jews (and even other Gentiles) continued to cause problems. In his first letter to the Thessalonians, the apostle alluded to these further persecutions (1Thess 2:14). Again, in the second epistle, Paul continued that same theme:

"So that we ourselves glory in you in the ecclesia of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure. Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer" (2Thess 1:4-5).

At the time that Paul penned the second epistle, he was able to write of the "persecutions and tribulations" that they were currently enduring! The troubles which they had suffered when Paul and Silas had first preached in the city had *never actually stopped*. Thus, the new ecclesia in Thessalonica had quite a treacherous road to the kingdom — not only did they have to watch for sin within their own minds, but they also had physical dangers around them. The prospect of leaving the faith and turning back to beliefs which were more accepted, would have been fairly tantalizing. Because of this possible temptation the apostle Paul continually focused on the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, all throughout both of his epistles. It was his major theme throughout his letters to these believers — it is mentioned

in every chapter in the first epistle (1:10; 2:19; 3:13; 4:14-17; 5:23) and in every chapter in the second (1:7-10; 2:1; 3:5). Despite all of the suffering and pain that they had to endure at the present time, the apostle reminded the Thessalonians that everything would change at the coming of the Lord. They were to set their eyes on the time that was to come, rather than thinking about the present troubles.

Yet unfortunately, it appears as though there was someone — most likely one of the Judaizers — who wanted to cause problems in the new ecclesia. He had noticed Paul's continual emphasis upon the coming of Christ and had sought to use that emphasis to sow falsehood within the ranks of the believers. Thus begins the second chapter of the second epistle.

The man of sin

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

The apostle had something extremely important to communicate to the believers — notice the phrase *“now we beseech you”* (cp. Phil 4:3; 1Thess 4:1; 1Thess 5:12). His command was for the brethren to stand strong with what they had been taught. Though someone was going around the ecclesia trying to create conflict by teaching that “the day of Christ is at hand” or that it had arrived, the believers were not to become involved. Paul urged them not to believe this new idea. Though he had constantly emphasized the coming of Christ and had used it to remind the brethren of the coming glory, *that day had not yet come* — and Paul could absolutely prove it.

The apostle had not had much time to preach and speak to the ecclesia in Thessalonica before he had been driven out by the Jews, but in the short time that he was there, he was able to speak to them about a blasphemous system that would stand against God. Referencing that previous teaching, the apostle reminded them that they had been taught that the Lord Jesus could not yet come until this system had been revealed:

“Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you I told you these things?” (2Thess 2:3-5).

Referring back to what he had taught them before, Paul reminded the brethren that the day of Christ could not possibly have come — because the man of sin had not been revealed. No “falling away” had created an entity that stood against all that is called God or that is worshipped. No “falling away” had even come close to creating something that would sit in a temple of God and claim to be God. The believers could look around them and see that there was *no Christian group* that could possibly fit these characteristics. It simply wasn't possible — because of

the rule of the Romans, no Christian group could even dream of having enough power to be exalted or to oppose things that are worshipped.

So the day of Christ could not yet have come — but, Paul still gave the believers hope. Though the day had not yet come, they could easily identify what it was that was preventing the man of sin from being revealed.

“And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time” (2Thess 2:6).

When the apostle wrote to them about the man of sin, the brethren *knew* exactly what it was that was holding back this “falling away” from being revealed — this was not something that Paul needed to tell them. For many of them, their minds likely would have flashed to the current Roman government. As long as pagan Caesars ruled over the empire, no Christian movement would be able to gain the power to become the man of sin. However, once that restraining force was removed — perhaps this falling away could take root. At least, according to the apostle, this was what would happen — when the restraining force was taken away, the man of sin would reveal itself:

“For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming” (2Thess 2:7-8).

Behind the scenes, the man of sin was already working — but it would only be revealed when the restraining power was taken away. Eventually, at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, this blasphemous system would be destroyed. It would have an existence that would last from the time of the apostle all the way to the coming of the Lord Jesus — but it would not truly come to power and fruition until paganism was removed.

Thus, while it could clearly be seen that the Lord would not come until the man of sin had been revealed (because Christ was going to destroy it!), the brethren would also have some type of prophetic sign for which they could look. They would look for the downfall of the pagan Roman system — knowing that when they saw it fall, then the man of sin would be uncovered.

Amazingly, that’s exactly what happened.

The revealing of the man of sin

In AD 324, the Roman empire was thrown into a civil war. There were two rulers of the empire — Constantine and Licinius. For a number of years, the two had worked together fairly well; however, as time passed, their religions began to clash. Constantine was a Christian. Licinius was a pagan. Together, in AD 313, they had passed the Edict of Milan — a document which granted religious toleration throughout all of the Roman domain. Nevertheless, in AD 320, Licinius began to renew his aggression towards the Christians, an act which Constantine took as a threat. The dissonance between the two men eventually culminated in the civil war of AD 324 — with Constantine and Christianity emerging as the victor.

From that time on (except during the reign of one emperor), paganism would be cast aside in the Roman empire. *The restraining power would be pushed away* — and just as Paul had written, the man of sin was revealed. In the place of paganism came Christianity; but it wasn't the Christianity of the apostles. It was a Christianity which had been twisted and which had lost essential elements of the true gospel which had once been preached by the Lord Jesus. It was a Christianity which was a *falling away* from what was true — and in fact, that falling away developed into something that perfectly fit all of the characteristics which were listed by the apostle Paul.

In Paul's description of the man of sin, he wrote that this iniquitous system would have all of the following characteristics:

- Christian origins (falling away) (v. 3)
- Oppositional attitude towards God (v. 4)
- Prideful and blasphemous spirit (v. 4)
- Ability to sit in a temple of God and proclaim to be God (v. 4)
- First century roots (v. 7)
- Restrained and later revealed (v. 6-8)
- Ability to perform signs and lying wonders (v. 9)

There are other characteristics, but for the purposes of this article, these are enough. Each of these attributes given by the apostle Paul fit perfectly with the system that emerged after the fall of paganism in the Roman Empire. When paganism was removed from the scene, Constantine's Christian empire opened the door for the Papacy and Catholicism to develop. This form of Christianity — or this *falling away* from true Christianity — falls nicely in line with each of the seven characteristics listed above. It has Christian origins. It has opposed God in burning translations of His Word and restricting its reading for hundreds of years. It has been full of pride, claiming that the Pope is the *Vicar of Christ* and the full representative of the Lord Jesus Christ on earth. It is headed by one man who sits in a *temple* and proclaims that he is God's mouthpiece. It traces its roots back to the first century. It was restrained, and later revealed at the time of Constantine. It claims to work miracles through folly such as transubstantiation, relic veneration, and worship of the saints.

All of the characteristics fit — and thus the prophesied “man of sin” is Catholicism led by the sinful man himself, the Pope. It was this system of which Paul warned the believers — telling them that the day of Christ would not come until it had been revealed. This man of sin would continue to reign, until one day, the Lord Jesus Christ would come and put an end to its haughty arrogance and iniquity.

Conclusion

All of this was written to the brethren for the purpose of encouraging them to be steadfast. Paul wanted them to recognize and realize that the idea that the Lord Jesus Christ had already come was utterly fallacious. They had not missed the second coming. Yet there was still more in his words to the brethren. Not only did this example prove to them that the ideas they had been hearing were incor-

rect, but they also served to warn the believers of something sinful and subtle that was coming. A falling away was already working amongst their ranks — and this was something which the brethren needed to firmly stand against. Unlike the followers of this apostasy, the believers in Thessalonica were encouraged to *love the Truth* (2 Thess 2:10) and continue steadfastly in what they had been taught (2Thess 2:15). By doing this, they would continue in the salvation to which they had been called (2Thess 2:13) — and we can do the same thing. The lesson to the brethren of the first century is the same lesson to us today. All around us, the man of sin and the harlot daughters of Protestantism are fully active and waging a war on the Truth. May we stand fast in what we have been taught. May we continue to love the Truth and do all that we can to wrestle against falsehood. May we treasure the understanding that we have been given and speak that gospel message with all whom we come in contact — sharing the opportunity for salvation and life everlasting. Amen.

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The Lord is Faithful — 2 Thessalonians 3

“Requesting prayers”

Paul begins the last chapter of 2 Thessalonians with a request to the Thessalonian Ecclesia, asking for their prayers — in hopes that the Word might spread rapidly abroad and that ultimately the Lord would be glorified. It is interesting to note, that in 1Thess 1:2 we find that Paul begins with letting the Thessalonians know that *“he had prayed for them”* and their spiritual well being. Now, here in 2Thess 3 Paul is appealing for *“their prayers”*.

What a wonderful example of who we should be praying for! We should pray for one another, remembering the words of James:

“Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective”
(James 5:16 NIV).

It is not always easy to pray for others as we might have difficulties in our own lives. But this is such an important aspect for us to develop in our spiritual walk and discipleship. It helps mold our hearts and minds to be more like Christ. When we pray for others, we are “putting to death” the selfish nature that comes so easily to us, and seeking the well-being of others.

Paul sought deliverance from unrighteous, ungodly, and faithless men. He requested prayers from the brethren, as he continued the preaching of the Word beyond Thessalonica. In 1Thess 2:14, we find that the Thessalonians suffered persecution from their own countrymen because of their faith in the gospel message. The brothers and sisters would be able to relate to his struggle and earnestly pray for Paul’s deliverance.

It is sad to read the sentence, *“all men have not faith”* (2Thess 3:2). One wishes that the faithless people today would just listen to the gospel message and have the Word change their hearts to believe on God’s Truth. It is also sad to think about

the **many** “who have received not the love of the truth,” (2Thess 2:10) but have been deceived by the man of sin. Nevertheless, we should rejoice that the Lord is faithful and we believe He will keep us from evil. As he says in 1Thess 3:13 — “to the end that he may establish your hearts unblameable in holiness before your God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints”. In John we have a great example of Christ keeping the disciples from evil:

“While I was with them in the world, I kept them in they name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled” (John 17:12).

It is also hard not to think back to the prayer Christ gave in Matt 6:13, “And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil...”.

Just like the Thessalonians, if we are doing and will continue to do the things which God has commanded us, then the Lord will direct our hearts into the patient waiting for Christ. It takes an active spiritual life. One cannot expect the Lord to direct our heart if our spiritual life is inactive. How could one expect to have their heart directed into the love of God or the patient waiting for Christ if we fail to follow the commandments of God?

“Withdraw from the disorderly brother”

Paul commands the Thessalonian Ecclesia to withdraw from any brother that walks disorderly, following not after the traditions taught by word or epistle (see 2Thess 2:15). Paul actually had already asked the Ecclesia to exhort the “unruly” back in 1Thess 5:14, which is the same word used in 2Thess 3:6 for “disorderly”. Paul finds need to bring this point up again in a whole section of verses here in chapter 3. Withdraw is a strong word, so what exactly does Paul mean when he says withdraw yourself from that brother? To add to that, how do the next few verses fit into this equation of withdrawing oneself?

“And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother” (2Thess 3:14-15).

How does one go about withdrawing oneself from someone who is “disorderly” and also admonishing him as a brother? It is interesting to note that the word “ashamed” means “to shame one or to be ashamed or to turn about”. The whole idea of having no company with the disorderly brother is so that he may be ashamed of his conduct and will turn back to living God’s commands. Through shame, this brother is to change his ways. And when we don’t have company with a brother because of their disorderly conduct, then we need to heed the words written in verse 15, “Yet do not regard him as an enemy, but warn him as a brother” (NIV). This is not always easy to do when a brother is perverting God’s ways, but we must find a way to warn that brother that their current disorderly conduct will lead to eternal death! Just as we saw written before, we are to have this type of attitude when we exhort the unruly:

“Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men. See that none

render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men” (1Thess 5:14-15).

“Lead by example”

Paul expected that the ecclesia would be able to follow his words regarding orderly behavior because he had sought to demonstrate that type of behavior himself:

“For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake” (1Thess 1:5).

Paul would expect orderly conduct from the Thessalonians because he had already spoken to them about how powerful their example has been to other areas. In 1Thess 1:7, Paul writes about how the Thessalonians are an example for the other ecclesias in Macedonia and Achaia. Continuing through verses 8 to 10, Paul writes that the example of the Thessalonians spread even *beyond* the regions of Macedonia and Achaia. This section proves how important an ecclesia’s actions and conduct are. It is incredible to think about how the example of one ecclesia would change the hearts of men and women who lived many miles away from Thessalonica.

Paul would have conducted himself properly knowing that his actions must match up with the words he was writing and preaching. Something for us to consider is that we can do as much, if not more, preaching by the way we conduct ourselves! It is vital that our actions match what we preach. Credibility can be lost quickly when someone notices that our actions are not in line with our preaching.

“Busy Bodies”

Paul sacrificed sleep to ensure that he was a model example, as well as not being a burden to others. He preached during the day and worked during the night. Not being a burden to others must have been a tiring task. It is hard to imagine Paul traveling around preaching and spreading the gospel message while supporting himself financially. But he did it! This is an element of Paul’s life I tend to look over — he found a way to support himself during his missionary travels. He did not rely upon the Thessalonians to provide for his living needs. Paul writes:

“For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: If a man will not work, he shall not eat” (2Thess 3:10).

It is a rule that Paul took seriously. He wanted to place no extra weight upon the ecclesia. No one could accuse him of being a burden because of the way he lived his life, *“laboring and traveling night and day”*.

When ecclesial issues arise it can cause stressful and difficult situations, but the issues must be handled in an appropriate manner. Paul finds himself addressing the issue of idleness —someone who could work but had chosen instead not to work. This matter was also addressed before, where Paul writes:

“And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you” (1Thess 4:11).

This must have been a matter of which Paul was concerned because he wants to remind the Thessalonians that idleness is no way to live your life. Paul addresses these members as “busy bodies,” which means “to busy one’s self about trifling, needless, useless matters” and the word is sometimes used for those who are nosy in other’s affairs. A busy body would burden the ecclesia because now someone has to support those members who have chosen not to work. The burden would go beyond just the physical needs that would be needed to support the idle. I can only imagine that this would cause strife between members whose personality had no tolerance for those who had chosen not to work. Paul continues on to “command and urge” (NIV) those idle members to “*settle down and earn the bread they eat*” (NIV).

“Be not weary in well doing”

Paul encourages those brothers and sisters who are living their life according to the commandments Paul had written to them. His request is for them to not become “weary in well doing”. The NIV says “*never tire of doing what is right*”. The margin for “weary” reads “be...or faint not,” and it is hard not to reference the words of Paul:

“For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God. For which cause we faint not; but through our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal”
(2Cor 4:15-18).

If the Thessalonians would hold fast to the commands and teaching of Paul while fainting not due to the afflictions suffered during the here and now, then they would have their hearts directed into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ (2Thess 3:5). It is this that we also hope for, having our hearts directed and having patience while we wait for Christ’s return. If we fight the good fight and faint not, while the outward man will perish, the inward man will be renewed day by day, and the eternal things which are currently unseen will eventually become a reality as we lay hold on eternal life at the second coming of our Lord.

David Clubb (Simi Hills, CA)

“Gideon... worshiped God. He returned to the camp and called out, ‘Get up! The LORD has given the Midianites into your hands’ ” (Jdgs 7:15).

Gideon’s 300 men had just witnessed more than 99% of their fellows sent away, and now they are told, ‘The battle is as good as won!’ Many years later, a greater than Gideon told his followers, “Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom” (Luke 12:32). And so we need not fear anything! We need not even fear being only a “little flock,” for “If God is for us, who can be against us?” (Rom 8:31).

George Booker

Reflections

Marriage Proverbs: Guidelines for a Happy Relationship

(7) Guideline #6: *“Hard work always pays off; mere talk puts no bread on the table” (Prov. 14:23 The MSG).*

Careers through the ages

Managing jobs and careers is a major challenge for any marriage in the modern world. From the time the New Testament was written till the period when the Christadelphian pioneer brethren wrote, the workplace environment had hardly changed. While it is difficult to get precise figures for the types of jobs and careers people pursued in Biblical lands in the first century A.D. most guesstimates presume that somewhere around 90% of the population were involved in agriculture and the remainder were in trade professions, or worked as government servants for their Roman masters, or served in the Legions. The Apostle Paul was a tentmaker as were his compatriots Priscilla and Aquila. Our Lord Jesus was a carpenter; Peter, Andrew, James and John were fishermen (and possibly also Philip); Matthew was in effect a Roman civil servant and Lydia in the luxury clothing business.¹

In a preindustrial agricultural and craft society husbands and wives, as well as their children, usually formed a self-contained economic unit. Women worked alongside their fathers, or later their husbands, and had work skills commensurate with careers that were fashioned by that milieu. Priscilla and Aquila worked side by side in their tent making profession. Jesus' craft he no doubt learned from working as an apprentice to Joseph, also a carpenter. The lessons learned as a carpenter were well remembered in some of Jesus' parables e.g. the mote and the beam, and the necessity for building a house on a firm foundation. Dorcas was a seamstress and I suggest, consistent with 1st century culture, that it was a profession she probably practiced with her husband and continued doing so after becoming a widow.² The nature of the workplace didn't change very much over the next 1800 years and I am familiar with this personally. My maternal grandfather and grandmother worked together in their own tailor shop throughout the 1930s during the Great Depression and my grandfather subsequently taught my mother how to be a seamstress. The change from primarily an ancient long-standing agricultural to an industrial society has tracked almost parallel to the lifetime so far of our own Christadelphian movement. The Table below illustrates the enormous change in the work environment from 1790 to the beginning of the 21st century.³

This vast change has important implications on the marriage relationship and has created challenging issues for husbands and wives that never could have been envisaged by earlier generations of Christadelphians. Perhaps only in the Amish community has the strain of the modern workplace changes, and their challenges upon the marriage relationship, been avoided.

Table 1 — Percent of workforce involved in Agriculture.

1790	85 to 90%
1870 ⁴	70 to 80%
1900	41.0%
1930	21.5%
1945	16.0%
1970	4.0%
2002	1.9%

The modern workplace

What specific challenges does the modern workplace put upon us? Many social commentators have indicated that the United States, and most other nations comprising what was formerly known as industrial societies, have actually entered a new economic phase dubbed the “post-industrial” age. In this new economic world jobs in manufacturing, agriculture, or crafts will provide severely limited chances for employment and what will matter instead will be information, creativity and technical skills. To prepare oneself for this new paradigm it is important for one to acquire as much education as one is capable of handling. I know that in my parents’ generation (pre-1940s) if you didn’t have a high school diploma your chances of gainful employment were greatly diminished, but if one was willing to work hard there were still a number of reasonable decently paying unskilled and semi-skilled factory jobs available. Post 1950s the need for at least a college bachelor’s degree became more and more the bottom line for having a chance at a lifelong gainful career. The number of college graduates in the United States in the year 2003 was 40,621,000, a 40% increase over the previous decade and this number continues to rise.⁵ This is a number that amounts to greater than 25.6% of the adult population compared with 2.7% of that population segment in 1910.⁶ These figures do not include those graduating from Community Colleges or other post-high school training programs.

Now it is entirely possible that some in our community still may be able to pursue work on the family farm, or in a family business, or be so clever they don’t need a college education to survive in the post-industrial society. After all some of our most successful business men in America, including the founders of Microsoft and Facebook, never graduated from college, but they are the exception not the rule. Too many marriages have floundered on the rocks of financial instability. Furthermore, if something unfortunate happens in a marriage, which causes one partner to exit the relationship, be it by divorce or sadly by death; if the remaining partner has no employable job skills the result can only be disastrous.

In entering a marriage it is important that both partners recognize the need for financial stability and this can only be achieved if both have a mature approach to what it takes to accomplish this goal. The words of Solomon provide us practi-

cal advice: *“The sluggard does not plow in the autumn; he will seek at harvest and have nothing”* (Prov 20:4 ESV). And also: *“The plans of the diligent lead surely to abundance, but everyone who is hasty comes only to poverty”* (Prov 21:5 ESV). The exhortation here is that planning for the future is something that the Word of God wants us to do. If one is to enter into the responsibilities of a marriage, and be further blessed perhaps with children, then one owes it to those in our care to be able to support them. There have been times in our community that some have felt that prophetic fulfillment was so clear that the second coming Lord Jesus eminent, and therefore there was no need to pursue an education or a career because soon enough we would be in the kingdom. I well remember that when I was preparing to go to college in the mid-1950s that the long yearned for establishment of the State of Israel, as an independent nation, had occurred only a few years earlier and this had created much eager anticipation that the Kingdom was near at hand. Several brethren advised me that I was perhaps wasting my time going to college: that it would only detract from my potential time to serve the Lord in those last days. Fortunately, my parents did not share this view; instead they encouraged me to get as much training as possible, being aware that we know *neither the day nor the hour that the Lord will come*.⁷ Therefore, *“Engage in business until I come”*.⁸ Furthermore, if I hadn’t obtained at least some further education beyond High School, I am certain no one would want to read anything written in the manner that I wrote when I was 17 years old!

In planning a job career it is essential that one have a passion in life to do something specific, and do it well, whether it is to be an artist, a salesmen, a professional, automobile mechanic, or whatever.⁹ Generally, if one is dedicated to doing something, one will be willing to do the hard work to do it admirably and undoubtedly success will follow. Solomon tells us: *“Hard work always pays off; mere talk puts no bread on the table”* (Prov 14:23 The MSG). If one finds that a prospective spouse is lazy, unfocused and unwilling to dedicate themselves to accomplishing sometimes even unpleasant tasks — that type of person is a risk to marry, period. These days one cannot guarantee lifetime employment in almost any company. Who would have thought that some of the largest most successful corporations in the world would go bankrupt in the 21st century. The first job I had out of college was with a long established utility company, which no longer even exists, and the research laboratory buildings and grounds where I worked were sold for real estate development a long time ago. This is one compelling reason, among others, that it is wise if both partners in a marriage have trained for some marketable job skills. My Dad was frequently out of work and if it hadn’t been for my mother’s skills as a seamstress, that put food on the table, we would have been street people, or even worse had to move in with relatives!

There is a caveat here that needs to be mentioned. Precisely because we do not know the day or hour of our Lord’s return, nor the hour of our own demise (which in effect is the instant of the Lord’s return for the departed individual) it is incumbent upon us not to neglect the work of the Lord at any stage of our lives. We should not sacrifice Christ on the altar of striving for material success. It is entirely possible to take the attitude “I am too busy trying to obtain an education

to have time right now to do any service for the Lord". This can unfortunately include neglecting to attend Bible classes and Memorial services. As life goes on this attitude can carry over to behavior, which says, "sorry, I have to develop my career first". This leads to the excuse that "my boss demands my time and I need to dedicate myself to moving up the career ladder", only to find as one moves up the ladder employment demands swallow more and more of one's time squeezing out the Truth. Finally in the twilight of one's lifetime one can take the view that you are too old to contribute much to the Ecclesia, and must leave it all to the younger generation. Thus, one can fritter away a whole lifetime being on the fringes of Ecclesial service, or doing it in such a shabby fashion that we are not giving it the time and energy it deserves or sadly, even neglecting it entirely. Balance is an important attribute in life and if one follows the destructive path I just outlined it would be a terrible example indeed to set for our children, and often puts an extreme emotional burden on the other spouse. In a marriage one needs not only to provide for the material wellbeing of our spouse and children (if so blessed), but also for their spiritual welfare as well.

Paul's letter to the Thessalonians (2Thess 3:6-12) provides us some insight into how the apostle viewed the role of work in the life of Christian. In fact he puts his exhortation in the form of a command and not a mere suggestion: "...*Keep away from any brother who is walking in idleness and not in accord with the tradition that you received from*" (v. 6 ESV). By tradition he meant his own example that he set for them while in their company: "...*you ought to imitate us, because we were not idle when we were with you, nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it, but with toil and labor we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you*" (v. 7, 8 ESV). Finally, the apostle puts the command quite bluntly: "...*If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat*" (v. 10 ESV).

This points out another obligation of a married couple, and that is the obligation to support the ecclesial family, and not be supported by it. There may be indeed times when interim welfare is needed to get a family by a difficult personal situation, but none should enter into a marriage (or be in a marriage) thinking they automatically can call upon the ecclesia to satisfy their material desires. The ecclesia is a community linked together by a common faith and hope, but not necessarily by uniform financial and social resources.

This has ever been the case, in the first century ecclesias had "Masters" and "slaves" as members of the same congregation (Cp. Philemon).¹⁰ Members of Caesar's household shared communion with brothers and sisters who were mere plebeians. Correspondently, in the household of faith we have members of every social and economic segment being part of the same shared communion. The ecclesia is not a social country club that restricts membership based on worldly social standards. But this diversity of social, economic and education demography makes it all too easy for a young married couple to look at what others have in terms of material comforts, that perhaps may have taken them a lifetime of hard work to achieve, and expect the same as it were, instantly. Thus placing economic demands upon the martial partnership that can lead to economic ruin and put the marriage in jeopardy of dissolution.

The antidote to the dilemma of needing to provide for our families, while at the same time being content to live within the limits of what a couple is individually capable of achieving, are spelled out by the wisdom of Jesus Christ. *“Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? ... Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you”* (Matt 6:25-33 ESV).

John C. Bilello (Ann Arbor, MI)

Next: *Children are a heritage from the LORD*

Notes:

1. Lydia (see Acts 16:14) “a seller of purple”. Rome, Egypt, and Persia all used purple as the imperial standard. Purple dyes were rare and expensive; only the rich had access to them. The purple colorants used came from different sources, most from the dye extraction from fish or insects. ... It took some 12,000 shellfish to extract 1.5 grams of the pure dye. Cited from: <http://pffc-online.com/mag/1348-paper-history-shellfish-royalty>
2. A fairly complete list of the various occupations mentioned in the Bible can be found at the website: <http://www.sundayschoolresources.com/jobsinthebible.htm>
3. Data taken from the “Economic Research Service”, United States Department of Agriculture. Interestingly data for 2007 from the United Nations shows approximately 1.9% of the population of the United Kingdom workforce was involved in agriculture and only slightly higher figures applied for France, Germany and Italy.
4. 1869 was the first year during which our Community fraternal magazine was entitled *The Christadelphian*.
5. Data from the National Science Foundation.
6. Data taken from: Digest of Education Statistics, 2001 published by the National Center for Education Statistics.
7. Cp. Matt 24:42-50
8. Luke 19:13 ESV — the AV says “occupy till I come” — the whole parable here is instructive.
9. The Bureau of Labor Statistics (see www.bls.gov) website has all sorts of relevant information on Job prospects and occupational outlooks for the coming years in the United States economy. A valuable information source for someone seeking to plan a career or change career direction.
10. And such was the case in the Christadelphian movement before the American Civil War.

Christ, who was to change the face and heart of the world, lived out his human life in a very small country. The traveler to Palestine, accustomed subconsciously to magnify everything connected with Jesus, is astonished to find how short are the distances and how insignificant the towns.

Capernaum and Nazareth are not more than a day's journey apart. The distance from Jericho to Jerusalem is barely thirty miles. A motorcar can easily cross Palestine from north to south in a day's journey; an airplane can fly from east to west in a quarter of an hour.

This small compartment of the world, whose renown eclipses the magnitude of continents, is barely the size of the province of Brittany in France [or the state of Maryland in the United States].

Daniel Rops, Jesus and His Times, pp. 67,68

Forgiveness (5)

At this point, our series turns a corner. The previous articles established how vital and full of blessing it is to forgive someone. Now we begin to move into the realm of “how”. Sometimes we are totally convinced that we want to forgive someone, but if we have a humdinger of a forgiveness issue with us right now, we know exactly how big a challenge that can be. If we don’t have a forgiveness challenge at the moment, all we have to do is live a little longer. Opportunities are everywhere!

This article will begin discussing the concepts about and ways to adjust our thinking. The next article will offer 24 activities that we can use to help us with our process.

Is it necessary to change our thinking? Is it even possible? How is it done? This article will spend some time on the structure of the brain God created for us and how He has made provision for us to change physiologically.

The concept for changing our minds comes from the Holy Scriptures:

“And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Rom 12:2).

This shows that the mind *can* change, even renew! Also in the same vein:

“That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness” (Eph 4:22-24).

Only God could have created our minds in a way that would allow us to change them.

The putting off and the putting on, mentioned in the Ephesians passage above, is like changing our clothes. First, we take off a piece of clothing; this is where the lessons about confession and repentance come in. We have begun the process! Putting off things may not come easily but we can recognize that we wish to.

The mind

The human brain has 80 to 120 billion nerve cells called neurons. It is estimated that the human brain has a storage capacity of about 2.5 petabytes, comparable to a DVR storing three million hours of TV shows. It’s all run electrochemically, like a battery. The time it takes to communicate from cell to cell is 1/1,000 of a second. This feature has ramifications. For example, the brain thinks at about 1,250 words per minute, but we can only speak at 250 words per minute. We can think faster than we are able to put those thoughts into words: five times faster. This explains why our minds can easily wander while we are supposedly concentrating on what someone is saying. We are quite capable of thinking in between their words.

What does this mean? Let’s say we walk into meeting one day. Without being really fully aware, our eyes and brain are scanning the room and we are assessing

the following:

- Am I comfortable and confident around these people?
- Am I appropriately dressed in comparison?
- Do I know anybody here?
- Can I see the speaker from any seat?
- Where is the most comfortable place to sit?

On the surface, we aren't aware of all these calculations. What really happened is we walked into the room, glanced around and found a seat. We probably can't say for sure why we picked that seat, or even if there was a process. But there was a process and it had to do with data collected from every time we have ever walked into a meeting room.

We dwell on this to explain how each of us handles sin, stress, failures, tricky confrontations, and yes, thinking about offences and hurts we have experienced. We react from the sum total of earlier experiences. We very often don't stop to think, or even put the process into thoughts. It just happens.

Here's an example. Let's say when you were 13 you had your first crush on a boy who ended up making fun of your freckles in front of everyone in your class. You ran out of the room crying. Then, when you were 23, your boss made fun of your freckles in front of all your co-workers. You died a thousand deaths of embarrassment. So, now, years later, someone innocently tells you how adorable your freckles are. You immediately lash out at them in anger. Why would you do that? You have no idea. But here's the rub: every reaction, memory, and thought accumulates and works together to create our personality and develop our patterns of dealing with things. These are neuro-chemical patterns, deeply ingrained and they don't go away just because we were baptized. They are layered deep inside of the brain.

We can know that our reaction is inappropriate to our current situation, but adding an understanding of this cumulative, biochemical effect can go a long way towards helping us re-train, renew, and change our minds. Conversely, when we have been privileged to learn obedience to our Creator in our youth, we may have fewer "biochemical effects" busy creating inappropriate responses as we age.

All in all, this is a wonderful thing. It is why we can ride a bike many years after not doing it, without even thinking. The neural pathways for steering and pedaling while keeping our balance are right there with us. In that case, the neural pathways work for our benefit. When we are working on a forgiveness situation, praying fervently, trying to release rage and resentment, then lapsing and lashing out, or crying inexplicably, or waking up in the night with vengeful thoughts, our neural pathways are working against us, even though they're just doing the job they were "taught" to do. We wonder how to stop it. We might think only angels and saints must be able to cut through this evil, when the truth is, it's the human mind at work. We all are being taught the need to change our minds!

So, how is this done? God has actually built within us the ability to renew our minds. Brain cells do not touch. There are gaps between them. In the gap is a jelly-like substance called acetylcholine. Acetylcholine encourages cells to communicate

to each other across the gap. Acetylcholine has another function: it has a memory and it locks in patterns. It doesn't have a conscience. Whatever patterns we exercise the cells in, acetylcholine remembers them as if they are etched in our brains.

Behavior modification

For example, it's a neurochemical fact that someone can push our buttons: they can touch on a topic that has lots of "history" with us, that is, "patterns" established in our brain. We may cuss at them as an automatic response, without apparently thinking, a pattern that we have from the past as well. In addition, our pattern to justify our cussing at them is also embedded too. It's all subconscious, supersonically happening at 1,250 words per minute.

What can we do? These are some solutions people have shared:

- 1) "You can strive to obey blindly. Just do the unnatural thing since the 'flesh' is so engrained to tell us the opposite."
- 2) "Read the Word of God, know God better, and know yourself better. Sometimes knowing yourself better is to realize the speed of these neural pathways and use the old 'count to 10' to give your true intentions a chance to catch up with your natural inclinations."
- 3) "Build new patterns, hopefully stronger ones to thwart the old ones."

Actually all three of these ideas are "behavior modification" techniques and have been successfully used in programs for stopping smoking, overeating, etc.

Let's glance back at Rom 12:2 and the concept of putting off and on. Our Heavenly Father has given us a means to accomplish this. It is a chemical in the brain called Gamma-Aminobutyric acid (GABA). Basically, GABA: (1) counteracts acetylcholine and (2) sets up a detour to encourage a new path, though not instantly.

The actions of GABA are exciting in their importance. We are *not* doomed to constantly repeat patterns that inhibit our forgiving others, patterns of carrying grudges, or feeling hopeless to change! The ability to counteract these things and put off and then put on is built into the brains created for us. However, the function of GABA is not one of changing things immediately. In fact, it takes tedious work for the brain to build a new pathway for us. The blessing is that our minds are renewable! That which prevents growth and the healing of forgiveness can be purged. The chemicals are all in place to accomplish the task.

Here's an example of how such a process can work. There was a counselor who was teaching a man about this feature of the brain. The man came to him with a severe lust problem for women he would see on the street. He had recently become a Christian and discovered this habit was not going to go away just because of his new-found faith, as he had hoped. So, the counselor came up with this plan: the next time he saw a woman that he would normally lust after, he was to:

- 1) Look up to the sky (heaven).
- 2) Say almost audibly "O God, look what I am thinking, forgive me".
- 3) Bless her.
- 4) And look at his watch.

You can imagine the challenge to really doing this. But he was determined to overcome years of habit; to re-route the etchings of acetylcholine in his brain.

It worked! Eventually the God-given GABA took over, eroded the old pathway and let him replace it with the agreed upon alternative. Interestingly enough, years later when the former habit was long gone, whenever the man would see a pretty woman on the street he would instinctively look at his watch.

Cognitive therapy

This is the beginning of cognitive therapy. The world has learned that what the Bible has told us all along will help people change their thinking. Using the architecture of our minds to heal our unforgiving hearts is available and God-given.

To wrap this article up, here are some steps that lay out the use of cognitive therapy in the area of forgiveness:

- 1) It begins with **BROKENNESS!** (See Psa 34:18; 51:17; 147:3; Isa 57:15; 66:2.) This puts us in an inquiring mindset. We realize we cannot trust that we will find truth in how we naturally behave. Brokenness gives us a peek at the years and layers of developing neural pathways that are harmful to our faith, our family and friends, and ourselves.
- 2) Then comes **CONFESSION.** (See Psa 32:5; Prov 28:13; James 5:16; 1John 1:9.) This puts it on the table that the thinking we have etched in our minds has got to go. The prayers here are prayers of helplessness but knowing that God is greater than our weaknesses
- 3) Next, **REPENTANCE.** (See Luke 13:3, 5; 15:7, 10; 24:47; Acts 2:38; 3:19; Rom 2:4; 2Cor 7:8-10.) This is the “breathe out” and “sigh” (article #2) that gives us the will to change and the “turning back” and “thinking differently” that doesn’t magically change everything, but is the start back.
- 4) Thinking differently doesn’t make it so, at least not right away. This is a time of patience, of tedious re-training the patterns of our life. A time to repeatedly and with practice, **STOP THE PATHWAYS** even when they are so natural and “feel right”. We **DO THE RIGHT THING** anyway, trusting and praying to God that He will see us through it.

We can rest assured that over time, He will transform our minds:

“I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people” (Jer 31:33).

“A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them” (Ezek 36:26-27).

The next article will present 24 activities designed to be practiced in the re-training and renewing of our minds. Such activities can release us from the bondage of an unforgiving heart, by God’s grace.

David Lloyd (Simi Hills, CA) and Joe Hill (Austin Leander, TX)

Focusing on the Kingdom of God Everyday

Thinking about the Kingdom on a daily basis is something that I really struggle with. I pray and talk to God frequently and do my daily readings, but if my faith is in a great hope that is coming shouldn't I put more of a focus on thinking daily about what the Kingdom will be like? Everyone needs to have their own Kingdom vision. *"Where there is no vision the people perish"* (Prov 29:18). Each vision will be unique for each individual; there are some who are looking forward to being reunited with loved ones who have fallen asleep, or those who look forward to receiving a new body that will be raised imperishable. Yet our common uniting focus should be how Christ will be the King of the world and sin will be no longer. The ultimate promise of God being all in all will be finally fulfilled.

Paul desperately tries to convey with all his might to the Corinthians that if Christ was not raised then our hope is worthless and a lie. His tone and fervency confirm his enthusiasm for the future resurrection. *"If the dead are not raised at all, why are people baptized?"* (1Cor 15:29). The entire ethos of Paul's speech is that our hope is a certainty and we need to constantly remind ourselves of the need to *"press towards the mark of the high calling in Christ our Lord"* (Phil 3:14). The time and energy that goes into the menial things of this life should not come in between or outweigh our priority of focusing on the Kingdom. When things in life go contrary to what we had hoped (which they often do), we can stand still and think about the comfort of our faith. This indeed is a real, sure, and true realization that Christ is coming back to establish His Kingdom, and it is the gift and pleasure of God to give it to us.

Rather than getting frustrated and dwelling on the present troubles that the world presents, I try to think of how the world will be transformed, rejuvenated, and reformed at the coming of Christ. No longer will pollution and grey skies be seen all around us; they will be replaced by a new world that will be so glorious we won't even remember the old one. *"For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind"* (Isa 65:17). Themes of coming towards God's light are prevalent throughout Scripture. My mood is significantly changed by the simple addition of natural sunshine in my day. Isaiah tells us that *"the sun shall be no more your light by day, nor for brightness shall the moon give you light; but the Lord will be your everlasting light, and your God will be your glory"* (Isa 60:19). What a comfort to think that I won't have to rely on the sun to brighten my mood because the Lord will be my everlasting light!

We are given ample Scriptural examples of how we must conduct ourselves in order to train ourselves for the Kingdom. Psalms 146 is an excellent picture of how trust in princes is fleeting, and in them there is no salvation. This psalm shows us the things that God does: executing justice for the oppressed, giving food to the hungry, setting the prisoners free, protecting strangers, supporting the fatherless and widows. In the Kingdom, this work — God's work — will be our work as well. Are we preparing ourselves for that work now by doing what we can to bring comfort to the suffering, and security to the marginalized? When we engaged in this work — God's work — we do not only have an impact on those that we serve

directly: Jesus reminds us that *“even as you did to the least of these my brethren, you did it unto me”* (Matt 25:40). Are our actions helping us or hindering us from coming closer to the kingdom of God? When deciding on our mode of actions we should be thinking of the consequences, and whether or not they have a positive effect on molding our character to become more like Christ. The lives we are living now are merely a training ground for the lives that we will live when Christ returns. When training for a marathon, one does a lot of running as preparation for the event. It wouldn’t make sense to dedicate all your training time to building upper body strength if the event that you are competing in requires you to rely on your legs. Likewise, if we are training for an immortal life of service and glorifying God, it is by doing those very things that we can best prepare ourselves.

One of the simplest ways I have found to be helpful in reminding myself of the impending reality of the Kingdom of God is by saying it out loud. I thank Bro. Bob Lloyd for getting me to talk to myself: “I want to be in the Kingdom of God more than anything else in the world!” Hearing those few words out loud makes me realise that the Kingdom is coming, and it is real, and I want to be there. This concept is also present in the way that Jesus taught his disciples to pray: *“thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. For thine is the Kingdom, the power, and glory forever”* (Matt 6:10,13). That should be at the forefront of every prayer we give. The crux of our faith is the future, and how we act now affects us in the long term. I take refuge in knowing that my God made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them will keep His promise of sending His son to become the king of the world.

Another thing to think of is how we will be taken to the Kingdom. An angel who will look like any normal human will say “it is time, come follow me and I will show you to Christ”. Have we gone over what that moment will be like in our minds? Will our response be “yes, here I am ready and willing” or “just a second let me get my things in order, I’m not quite ready”? Matt 24:31 tells us *“and he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other”*. Visualizing this event in our minds will prepare us for when the actual event takes place. The band Mercy Me sums up the potential first impression we could have while meeting Christ in their song ‘I Can Only Imagine’. “Will I stand in your presence?/to my knees will I fall?/will I sing hallelujah?/will I be able to speak at all?” If we merely have a vague and cloudy idea of what meeting Christ will be like, it won’t do anything to make our vision a sure affirmation. It is a valuable exercise to really meditate upon Jesus’ coming return. Imagine what your first words will be like when the trumpet blows and the angel is there to guide you to Zion.

Little things will help us to fully realize what lies before us and help us on our walk towards the Kingdom. It is God’s gift and His pleasure to give us the Kingdom of Heaven. *“Surely I am coming soon,”* (Rev 22:20), as Jesus assures us. So as I go about my day I try to think about the Kingdom and what it means to take on the saving name of Jesus Christ. Each day we grow and can further improve ourselves in preparation for that coming day. Even so come Lord Jesus.

Kelty Campbell (Toronto West, ON)

Bro. Wilfred Lambert

(I knew Bro. Wilfred from long ago when I studied in Birmingham, and have met him occasionally since. His overwhelming knowledge of Hebrew and his deep appreciation for the Word left a deep impression. And which other Christadelphian has had his death recorded by a major obituary in the *London Times*? — The Editor).



Wilfred Lambert, a lifelong Christadelphian and internationally respected Assyriologist, was famed for his unrivaled mastery of the cuneiform literatures.

As Professor of Assyriology at Birmingham University, England, he was the consummate scholar of Ancient Near East languages and cultures, especially ancient Mesopotamian cuneiform. Over a long lifetime as an academic and writer, he left a rich heritage of monumental contributions in many aspects of his chosen field.

His pioneering studies in these ancient languages encouraged and supported modern Old Testament scholars in understanding more fully the texts with which they worked, and undoubtedly helped to improve their translations considerably.

Christadelphian roots

Wilfred George Lambert lived in Birmingham, England, for most of his life. He was born in 1926 into a Christadelphian family, was baptized at Birmingham Central Christadelphian Ecclesia, and retained a strong Christadelphian faith all his life. He later wrote that he had gained much early intellectual stimulation from reading his Bible at home and in the local Christadelphian Sunday school where he had outstanding teachers.

In later years he confided that he knew exactly what had drawn him into Assyriology. His parents had taken him as a boy to hear Sir Leonard Woolley lecture in Birmingham on the excavations at Ur of the Chaldees. The young boy was captivated, and his life's work unfolded before him.

Education and professional work

Wilfred attended Cambridge University, earning two degrees: Classics in 1943-1945, and Oriental languages — Hebrew and Aramaic, Rabbinic Hebrew, and Akkadian (ancient Babylonian and Assyrian) — in 1948-1950.

The interval in his university studies, between 1945 and 1948, was spent in national service at a horticultural nursery near Birmingham. In lieu of military service, he supervised prisoners of war who worked there. Graduating from Cambridge University in 1950, he spent the next four years teaching the classics. During this time he perfected his knowledge of Akkadian and Sumerian, reading and copying cuneiform inscriptions in the British Museum whenever he could.

He made extraordinary progress as a scholar and was appointed lecturer in the Department of Near Eastern Studies, University of Toronto, from 1955 to 1959,

and then associate professor (and chairman) of the Oriental Seminary, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, from 1959 to 1964. Wherever he relocated, Bro. Lambert always transferred his membership to a local Christadelphian ecclesia, so he could be involved there.

During these years he completed what was to be his most important published work, *Babylonian Wisdom Literature* (1960, and reprinted). This milestone in Assyriological studies encompassed all that was characteristic in his work: extraordinary facility with cuneiform script, great command of Babylonian grammar and syntax, and wonderful insight for extracting meaning from fragments of the world's most ancient literature. At the time the great modern dictionaries of Akkadian were in their infancy, and his translation of the most difficult literary compositions involved groundbreaking research. His work established new readings and meanings that were soon taken for granted.

Prof. Lambert's standard publications, insights, and references fill practically every page of the 21-volume *Chicago Assyrian Dictionary*, begun in 1921 and completed 90 years later. Less apparent is what lay behind that work. During those decades he corrected draft pages of his colleagues' and students' work with notes in red such as "No! Please see me later!" His comments on others' work, even when critical, were always invitations; in effect, 'Let me show you what you missed.'

In 1969 he published, with A.R. Millard, *Atra-hasis: the Babylonian Story of the Flood*. This became a second classic which presented his work in an accessible and reliable form to non-Assyriologists, a readership he acknowledged in all his writings.

These works were followed by numerous articles and reviews. Bro. Wilfred wrote importantly on a wide spectrum of textual matters, spanning the languages and the three millennia of sources with tireless application and understanding. As with the dictionary, his knowledge laid the foundation for many publications by other authors, and his selfless correction of others' work filled train journeys and leisure time throughout his life.

An extraordinary discovery

Bro. Lambert's ability as a cuneiformist was, quite simply, unchallenged. The British Museum regularly turned to him for help with cataloguing clay tablets. His knowledge of the entire span of cuneiform literature often enabled him to identify the smallest fragment. His record of 'joins', that is, identifying fragments which belonged together — like ancient jigsaw puzzles — was without equal.

In recent years he worked with the British Museum on its Catalogue of the Western Asiatic Seals Project. Among other matters, he helped the museum shed light on the origins of the famous Cyrus Cylinder, which is often described as containing the world's first 'Declaration of Human Rights.' Among other matters, and according to some interpretations, the Cyrus Cylinder authorized the return of deported peoples to their homelands and implied that there should be freedom of religious expression throughout the empire.

This inscribed clay cylinder, broken into several fragments, had been discovered in an 1879 excavation in ancient Babylon, in what is now modern Iraq. The declaration was in Akkadian cuneiform script in the name of Cyrus the Great after his conquest of Babylon in 539 BC.

In 2009 Bro. Lambert examined two small clay fragments of another, apparently unrelated, cuneiform tablet from a second site near Babylon, which had been in the museum's collection since 1881. For over 120 years the significance of these fragments was not recognized; they had been thought simply to be part of a building inscription. However, Bro. Lambert — working with Irving Finkel of the British Museum's Middle East department — established that the pieces came from a tablet that had been inscribed with exactly the same text as the Cyrus Cylinder.

This remarkable discovery lends fresh support to suggestions that the “declaration” was probably an imperial decree that was distributed around Cyrus's empire, and which the author of the Book of Ezra may have consulted when writing about the king (Ezra 1:1-4; cf 2Chron 36:23).

Professor and teacher

During his lifetime, Bro. Wilfred undoubtedly read more cuneiform tablets than any other person since the script was deciphered. The ancient scribal mind was familiar to him. His students say that to read any text alongside him was simply inspiring. In 1964 he was appointed lecturer at the University of Birmingham, and during the many years before his retirement in 1993 he was promoted to senior lecturer and eventually Professor of Assyriology. In his inaugural lecture, “Cuneiform Scholars Ancient and Modern”, he enlarged with memorable humor on perhaps his two favorite subjects at once. After 1993 he was Emeritus Professor but continued to teach until very recently.

Bro. Lambert was a model of clarity as teacher and lecturer, well aware of the importance of elocution for non-English listeners, and his style of delivery at many conferences and gatherings was quite effective. As a speaker, he never put people to sleep. He also lectured, taught classes, and wrote materials on Bible subjects for Christadelphian audiences in and around Birmingham, particularly on subjects involving his academic specialties.

Honors followed as his publications circulated and his reputation grew. He was elected a Fellow of the British Academy in 1971. From 1977 to 1978 he was visiting instructor at the University of Paris, and in 1978 he was made Honorary Professor of that university. He was president of the Society of Old Testament Studies in 1984. For many years he had worked on major volumes on the Babylonian creation story and on the ancient lists of Sumerian and Babylonian gods. It is expected that both these works will be published in the near future. The whole of his working life was devoted to cuneiform studies and the world of antiquity, to an extent that is rarely possible in the modern world. He gave generously of his time and expertise to fellow Old Testament students, and was always happy to identify objects and inscriptions for collectors and private enthusiasts.

He never married, and certainly indicated that austere scholarly pursuits were the course to which any young Assyriologist should commit himself. While maintaining an impersonal detachment from students and colleagues, he inspired respect and affection in his disciples. In 2000 students and close colleagues collaborated on *Wisdom, Gods and Literature*, a volume of papers in his honor. The three subjects in the title were carefully chosen and arranged in order so as to coincide with his initials, W.G.L.

A brother in Christ

Despite his scholarly detachment, Bro. Wilfred was a lively storyteller and an enjoyable conversationalist. He always had something interesting to contribute, whatever the topic, in a unique and instructive way. He was an excellent pianist and organist, well able to accompany a “Messiah” performance. He played his piano for relaxation to the exclusion of most other domestic comforts. For many years, he was permanent organist at the Birmingham Central Ecclesia.

In addition, Bro. Wilfred was for some time the Chairman of the Arranging Brothers in Birmingham Central. The last recording brother of Birmingham Central (which closed in 2008) writes: “His insights as a speaker were memorable, his clarity of thought and exposition being underpinned by a wealth of information relating to Biblical content that he had accumulated during his lifetime. His capabilities, clear thinking, and seemingly unerring insight for what is right and just will be sadly missed.”

The recording brother of Birmingham West Ecclesia, where Bro. Lambert was a member in his last years, writes: “Although he favored reform of some aspects of our community, our brother remained a faithful member of it for nearly 70 years. A week before he fell asleep in Christ, aware that his life was drawing to a close, he said, ‘I look forward to seeing you before long.’ ”

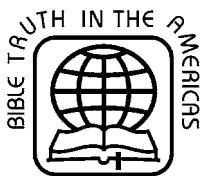
Bro. Wilfred was predeceased by his older sister Muriel and otherwise had no close natural family to mourn him. He is deeply lamented by his fellow Christadelphians in Birmingham. For the world’s Assyriologists, and his own circle of students, his loss is irreparable.

Professor Wilfred G. Lambert, Assyriologist and our brother in Christ, was born on February 26, 1926. He died on November 9, 2011, aged 85. His funeral took place in the West Birmingham Christadelphian Hall.

George Booker (Austin Leander, TX)

Note: The above is excerpted from obituaries in several English newspapers, the Wikipedia article on Wilfred Lambert, and news from English Christadelphian ecclesias. It was delayed in appearing in *The Tidings* due to pressure on space.

“The last and highest result of prayer is not the securing of this or that gift, the avoiding of this or that danger. The last and highest result of prayer is the knowledge of God and, by that knowledge, the transformation of human character and of the world” (George John Blewett).



Bible Mission News

Baptism in Costa Rica



Baptism of Bro. Geofredy Gonzalez Araya by Brethren Ronald Santamaria Barrantes and Wilberth Herrera Arroyo.

Bro. Douglas, the Recording Brother from Santa Barbara, Costa Rica wrote to share good news from their ecclesia. Bro. Geofredy González Araya, 44, was baptized on March 25, 2012, after studying the Bible patiently for more than a year. His wife, Sis. Evelyn Vargas Salazar, was baptized nine years ago and they have a nine year-old daughter, Daniela. Sis. Evelyn is the daughter of Sis. Hortensia Salazar and cousin of Sis. Marisol Araya Salazar.

Bro. Geofredy works in the area of telecommunications with the Costa Rican power company ICE and we have confidence that he will be an effective worker in the ecclesia as well.

The baptism was carried out in a small river near Santa Bárbara; we thank God that in this part of the world there are still rivers pure enough to be used for this purpose. In effect, we held a fraternal day for the whole ecclesia, with visiting brethren from the city of Grecia in the province of Alajuela as well as a Canadian family, Bro. Duncan and Sis. Gillian Kenzie and their daughter Lydia. We all shared in the fellowship of a delicious lunch prepared by the sisters of the ecclesia. As can be seen, by the mercy of God the ecclesia continues to soldier on.



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

**Bro. Duncan, Bro. Geofredy, Sis. Evelyn,
Sis. Gillian and Lydia**

Good News from Jamaica — May 2012

Bro. Don Luff shares his experiences from his trip in May to Jamaica:

Last year, the CBMJ started scheduling Mutual Improvement (MI) Days again in the Annual Calendar of Events for the Jamaican ecclesias. On May 12, 2012, another MI Day was held at the May Pen Ecclesial Hall. It started at about 11 a.m. and ended at 3 p.m. Approximately 40 brothers and sisters of all ages were in attendance, from a number of ecclesias across the Island.



Most of those attending the MI Day in front of the May Pen Hall

There was a common chairman for the day, while individual ecclesias were responsible for 20 minute mini-meeting segments — each with a presider, hymn, reading and a 10 minute talk. Each segment was followed by constructive comments for improvement or commendation for a job well-done. In the April issue of this magazine, we reported that the Port Maria Ecclesia had not been able to meet regularly for various reasons. We are happy to report that this ecclesia took care of the first segment during the MI Day. Bro. Jason Henry presided and Bro. Harold Campbell presented an excellent 10 minute talk on “Tribulation” — something the ecclesia had indeed experienced! Interspersed between the segments, there were also selected readings from a previously prepared mini-binder (duotang) of notes — guidelines on mutual improvement classes, suggestions regarding presiding, tips on good public Bible reading and specifics on the purpose of an exhortation. Bro. Harry Tennant’s book entitled “Ye Servants of the Lord” was one of the resources that was made available. About 20 copies were obtained from Christadelphian used book sources in the Brotherhood. A display table was also set out with samples of 12 different books and booklets such as — Women of the Bible, Principles and Proverbs, 66 Books of the Bible, Notes on the Apocalypse and The Christadelphian Instructor. There was a sign-up sheet for each sample for those who wanted copies — this became a busy place as the day went by! It was

generally felt to be a profitable day, and that more would be beneficial — several times a year.



Our two new sisters, Sis. Doreen Richards on the left and Sis. Sherine Torres on the right. They were two very happy women!

The next day, Sunday May 13th, was a spiritual blessing for the Jamaican ecclesias. Members of the Spanish Town Ecclesia joined the May Pen Ecclesia for a double baptism. Two women who had been preparing for some time — Doreen Richards and Sherine Torres were baptized in the Salt River. (Sis. Doreen is one of four generations of the same family attending May Pen. Her mother is Sis. Rebecca Smikle, and her daughter is baptized and her granddaughter attends Sunday School.) At 8:30 a.m. — members, youths and children boarded a minibus and several cars to travel 45 minutes to witness their confession of faith and baptisms. We returned to the May Pen Hall for the extending of the right hand of fellowship and Remembrance Service — about 50 were in attendances — members, family and friends. This was followed by refreshments and a special activity for all the mothers — about 18. Cards were presented to mothers, grandmothers and great-grandmothers — along with comments and big hugs from family members. It was an enjoyable day and a boost for the ecclesia.

During the course of the two days of activities, we were pleased at the spiritual decorum and propriety that was followed by those organizing the activities. On Sunday — full-length baptismal gowns were used, Romans chapter 6 was read and there was a prayer prior to the baptisms — and a number of hymns were sung after the baptisms. It was a full baptismal service right by the edge of the river, with by-standers looking on quietly — a good witness. I was to exhort later, but during the baptisms by the river, I did not wear a tie. After returning to the recording brother's home, on the way to the May Pen Hall for the Remembrance Service — he told me that I needed to wear a tie in order to exhort at May Pen! I had a tie in my book bag and always wear one. The little brotherly nudge made me feel good!

We really enjoyed the hospitality of members in their homes, as well as another Breaking of Bread Service on Tuesday, May 15th, with some members of the Port Maria Ecclesia. We met with four members of this ecclesia for about five hours — we enjoyed fellowship through the daily Bible readings, an exhortation on the theme of “This do in remembrance of me”, the emblems and a meal together. We gave Bro. Harold Campbell a second edition copy of “Further Seasons of Comfort” by Bro. Robert Roberts — he looked at it and said “This is a book that has been published with care!” Years ago he worked in bindery — the book's spine was showing its age and he said he would put some binding tape on it. He likes to read and will use the exhortations in this book as a basis for his Sunday morning

thoughts. We plan on sending him more books on the Truth. It was a good week in Jamaica!

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

The Truth in Barbados

In July 1892, Bro. Blenman was able to report in the *Christadelphian Magazine*: “I am pleased to announce that an ecclesia has been formed on the Island of Barbados, my native land.” During the previous year, about nine or ten immersions had taken place, mainly through the zealous efforts of Bro. James Hepburn, a Scot by birth, who had arrived in Barbados.”



From that time the Truth has been preached to many and maintained by faithful brethren and sisters up to the present. Sis. Murl Marshall (shown here with Sisters Linda Ghent and Janet Darley during their November 2011 visit), one of those faithful ones, was baptized at Huddersfield ecclesia in 1961. During her time in the U.K.

Sis. Murl was actively involved in Sunday School work until she returned home to Barbados in 1973. Her love of teaching children has continued in Barbados as Sis. Murl travelled near and far throughout the island to collect children for Sunday School and teach them saving principles of the Truth in her forthright and bubbling way.

Many of Murl's students have been baptized into Christ over the years. Bro. Joel and Sis. Heather Caine, shown here with their granddaughter, have been long time ecclesial stalwarts. Sis. Heather was taught the truth by our beloved Sis. Murl.



An ecclesial lunch during our visit was catered by our Sisters including Judy Rose and Amina Ramlochan. We enjoyed a feast of macaroni pie, breadfruit and chicken in our fellowship meal together.

The following appeared in the *Christadelphian* in 1973: “We were pleased to welcome Bro. and Sis. Prewer from Tobago last month whom we thank for his exhortation on April 15 and for the evening address at our special



dedication meeting on moving into our new hall. Over 70 people attended this meeting of which about 45 were visitors.” Plans are in place for a special 40th anniversary celebration of the hall opening next April, God willing.

The meeting place, as seen, is home to many

ecclesial activities. During our visit visitors and brethren and sisters attended a campaign lecture on the Trinity, Studies on Ezekiel’s temple, a regular CYC class for our young people and an ecclesial luncheon.



Our CYC students enjoyed portraying features of the Life of Joseph. They focused on the need to be separate from the world as did Joseph during his life of suffering and trial in Egypt.

Home study classes, like this one at the home of Bro. John and Sis. Christina Bancroft are always part of a visit to Barbados.

During the Easter holidays, there is the annual Barbados Bible School. Bro. Dev Ramcharan from Canada led the school this year to encourage the ecclesia.



‘Bajans’ love their Bibles. Typically, every verse a Christadelphian begins quoting to a friend is finished by the friend. Churches of many denominations around the island are filled on Wednesday and Sundays. Often a grocery store clerk is sitting reading her Bible while awaiting the next customer.

Because of this interest in the Bible, leafleting and preaching in various centers including the Nelson Square in Bridgetown is a great pleasure. Many friends there were introduced to the www.thisisyourbible.com correspondence course. There are over 600 contacts in Barbados. Most are happy with their Church but want to learn more about the Word. Our continual prayer is that some will be moved by hearing the Word and seek out the Truth of Scripture to the Glory of God in heaven.

We ask that you keep our beloved brethren in your prayers as they contend earnestly for the Truth once delivered to the saints. Since 1892, the light stand has been burning brightly in Barbados. We pray that will continue until our Lord's long desired return.

*Submitted by Sis. Jan Berneau
CBMA.CMBC Publicity*

Have you read these *Tidings* books?

Bible and Science: Design vs.

Chance by John C. Bilello

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

Essays to Believers

by Don Styles

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

My Journey in Faith

by Ronald P. Hicks

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

The Creation Text: Studies in Early Genesis

by David P. Levin

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

The Whole Armor of God

by Ryan Mutter

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

Understanding the Bible

by A.D. Norris

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

How to Order

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

News & Notices

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

BARRIE, ON

Since our last correspondence, the Barrie Ecclesia rejoiced with our Bro. Tom Woegerer on the occasion of the baptism of his wife, WENDY WOEGERER on January 2, 2011. May God bless her on her walk toward the kingdom.

We also rejoice with our Bro. Tom and Sis. Wendy in the birth of their first child, Tobias, born February 17, 2012. We pray God will bless their new family.

We have received by transfer Sis. Ona Lawton from the Brantford, ON Ecclesia, and Sis. Margo Maier from the Niagara, ON Ecclesia. Bro. Tim Conrod has been transferred to the North Bay, ON Ecclesia where we pray he will be strengthened by his brothers and sisters there.

God willing, the Barrie Ecclesia will hold its Fall study day on Saturday, October 20, 2012. The theme for the day is, "Modern Challenges for 21st Century Disciples". Subtitles will be "In the world", "In the State", and "In the Ecclesia". For information contact Bro. Bruce Abelby by phone 519-925-5297 or email bnb69abel@hotmail.com.

Grant Abel

BEDFORD, NS

We are pleased to welcome as members of our ecclesia Bro. John and Sis. Sair Ching. Bro. John has been living in the area for several years and has been a regular attendee for some time now. After her immigration paperwork was finalised, Sis. Sair has joined us from the Newquay Ecclesia in England. John and Sair were united in marriage last year here in Halifax, NS. We look forward to serving with them as we await our Lord's return. Their transfer brings our membership to 19.

Since our last communication, we were pleased to welcome visiting brothers and sisters from various places, including: Paul and Marie Baines and family (Sussex, NB); and Joan Bennett (Victoria, BC).

Our annual study day will be held, Lord willing, on September 15, 2012. Bro. John Mannell (Mississauga West, ON) will be speaking on the theme, "Galatians". All are most welcome. Please contact Julia Snobelen by email thesnobelens@hotmail.com.

Steve Snobelen

BRANTFORD, ON

We are happy to report that after a satisfactory interview the ecclesia has welcomed Sis. Judy Barclay back into fellowship. We pray the Father will continue to be with our Sis. Judy and husband, Phil, as we prepare for the coming of our Lord.

Our Camp Kumah Senior CYC weekend for ages 13 and up will be held in Brantford from August 31-September 2, 2012, with Bro. Darryl Rose (Toronto West, ON) leading studies on the theme, "The Glory of God." Cost for the weekend is \$20. If financial assistance is required, please let us know. For more information and registration forms please contact Bro. David Billington by email dave@visualhabitat.com.

Please note that our Sunday meeting times will follow our summer schedule for the months of July and August with memorial meeting at 10:00 am.

Daniel Billington

ECHO LAKE, NJ

We are pleased to report that on April 29, 2012, ELLEN DAY, the wife of our Bro. Mike Day, was baptized into Christ. We are continually thankful to our heavenly Father for bringing yet another into His covenant and adding to our numbers here at Echo Lake. We pray that Sis. Ellen will be happy amongst us as we travel the road together and await the coming of our king.

We have been pleased and privileged to have the company of a number of visiting brothers and sisters and we have welcomed them around the table of the Lord: Margan Packie, Virginia Packie, Carolyn Antonaccio, and David and Maryann Jorgensen (Union, NJ); Dave and Louise Birchall (London, ON); Joel and Amy Robinson (Hamilton Book Road, ON); and Ruthann Jorgensen (Rochester, NY).

Stewart Marsden

GRANITE STATE, NH

With heavy hearts we announce the falling asleep in Christ of our dear Bro. Gil Riley early on the morning of May 11, 2011. It is difficult to convey in words the depth of the love that Bro. Gil had for the truth or how he inspired the lives of so many brothers and sisters over the years. He spent years preaching and teaching with an enthusiasm and devotion that is seldom witnessed. Bro. Gil was baptized at the Cranston, RI Ecclesia on June 24, 1961, and for all of these years he was constant in his service to the Lord, especially in the New England area. He was a founding member of two ecclesias in New England, the Westerly, RI Ecclesia and the Merrimack, NH Ecclesia, now known as the Granite State, NH Ecclesia. He was very active in his ecclesia as well as in the greater Christadelphian community. He served on several committees. One of his favorites was the New England Advancement of Scriptural Knowledge committee, as the work of spreading the Gospel was ever near and dear to his heart.

The home of Bro. Gil and his sister-wife, Lois, was always a true haven of spiritual comfort, not only for those who lived in the ecclesias that Bro. Gil and Sis. Lois were members of, but also for travelers from all over the world. Many late evenings and early mornings were spent in quiet conversation around the dining room table sharing in the deep things of the word with brothers and sisters from Australia, the UK, Canada and many other places. Bro. Gil's faith was always rock solid and he so loved to talk about the covenants of God, the hope of Israel, and the coming kingdom on earth. Though we are truly saddened because we miss our dear brother, we know that his sleep in the Lord will be short as Christ is at the door. How incredibly thrilled he will be to finally see his Lord and Master and how excited he will be to meet Abraham, for Bro. Gil spoke so often about Abraham and the promises with the kind of passion that only true faith can inspire.

"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).

However, not all of our news is sad. We are very happy to announce the recent baptism

of another of our Sunday school students. CASSIE CONOVER, the eldest daughter of Bro. Dave and Sis. Kim Conover, put on the saving Name of our Lord Jesus Christ on Saturday, May 26, 2012. How uplifting it is for us to witness yet another of Adam's race give herself to the service of Yahweh in the hope of the coming Age! May the Lord bless her in her new life. May He always guide her steps on the path that will lead her, by His grace, into the kingdom!

Steve Smith

HAMILTON GREENAWAY, ON

It is with sadness that we report the falling asleep in the Lord of our Bro. Dennis Hominuck. Bro. Dennis will be missed by all of us here at Greenaway and our thoughts are with his family in this time of loss. We rejoice that he died in the hope of the resurrection.

Tom Thorp

HONESDALE, PA

Bro. Dave and Sis. Connie Stiles visited our meeting on May 27, 2012, from the Meriden, CT, Ecclesia and Bro. Dave gave us an excellent exhortation and Bible study. Bro. Steve and Sis. Chris Cheetham visited our meeting from the Moorestown, NJ, ecclesia on June 3, 2012, and Bro. Steve gave us an excellent exhortation followed by a great luncheon put on by our chief sisters. Denise and Mike Kowal, and their children, Rachel and Ryan, also visited us.

We sent more plastic bread tabs to Sis. Marie Washington at the Echo Lake, NJ Ecclesia to be used for wheelchairs for the needy in South Africa.

Stephen J. DeMarco

PITTSBURGH, PA

We are pleased to announce the baptism of ELIZABETH TELLES, daughter of Sis. Jennifer Bekhit and Bro. Fred Telles, and granddaughter of Bro. Bob and Sis. Mary Jane Pommer on April 15, 2012. May the Lord guide her as she journeys to the kingdom with us.

We enjoyed visits from the following brothers and sisters: Richard and Esther Morgan and family (Hamilton Book Road, ON); Sarah Telles (Cranston, RI); Roger and Joy Snyder, and Everett and Amanda Muniz and family (Paris Avenue, OH); Kevin and Melinda Flatley (Columbus, OH); and Steven and Kristen Hemingray (Seattle, WA).

Bro. Bill Link's classes on Zechariah for our May 5-6, 2012, weekend were very much appreciated. We were blessed with the attendance of many brothers and sisters from Paris Avenue, OH, Hamilton Book Road, ON and Toronto East, ON. We thank Bre. Link and Flatley for their encouraging words of exhortation.

Len Budney

THOUSAND OAKS, CA

During the past few months we have been pleased to welcome many brothers and sisters from our neighboring California ecclesias. In addition, we welcomed the following brothers and sisters from afar: Henry and Sharon Wisniewski (Rogue Valley, OR); Jack and Shirley Robinson (Kitchener/Waterloo, ON); Jim Vetkos (Grants Pass, OR); Coleen Uiga (Norfolk, VA); Tim and Sarah Osborn (Okanagan, BC); Frank Abel (Hamilton Book Road, ON); and Belinda Styles (Detroit Livonia, MI).

Our thanks go out to Bro. Tony Fratello (Reseda, CA) for his exhortation and afternoon class and to Bre. Henry Wisniewski (Rogue Valley, OR) and Jim Glover of (Reseda, CA) for their exhortations. We also thank our Bro. Tim Osborn for leading our study weekend and “Day with the Word” on the subject of, “The Jubilee”. We also held a special weekend series on, “Family Life in the Lord,” designed to strengthen our ecclesia and Bro. Frank Abel graciously came and led us in these studies. We really appreciate our brethren speaking for us on these occasions as we endeavor to be ready for our master when he returns.

We are very pleased to note that we had an addition to our ecclesial family with the baptism into Christ of REBECCA DECAUSSIN on December 9, 2011. Sis. Rebecca is the daughter of our Bro. Rodney deCaussin (Simi Hills, CA) and we look forward to the strength we can derive from her as we journey together to the kingdom of God.

We also had two additions to our natural ecclesial family as our Bro. James and Sis. Kristen Styles became parents of Naomi Kay on Feb. 24, 2012, and Bro. Jimmy and Sis. Katie Glover welcomed Joseph Cameron into their family on April 12, 2012. Our future Sunday school population continues to grow and we are quite thrilled to have these little ones in our midst.

Tom Graham

MIDWEST CHRISTADELPHIAN YOUNG COUPLES WEEKEND

God willing, on October 5-7, 2012, there will be a young couples weekend held with the intent of helping young couples find balance between family, ecclesia, work, etc., with additional focus on raising a Godly family, and relationships with extended family. To help couples get the most out of the weekend and prepare for group discussions, we’ve provided a short workbook which is available on the website.

The cost of the weekend will be \$390.00 f(US) per couple. A \$150 deposit per couple is required when registering. A discounted rate is available for those wishing to arrive a day early or stay a day longer. Activities available are: bike rental, basketball, hiking, tennis, driving range board games and much more!

For questions and registration please call Sis. Annalee Cooper at: 330-904-3938 or go to registration@mcycw.com.

Annalee Cooper

THE HALIFAX PROJECT

It has been some time since we provided our last update on the efforts of the Halifax Project. It is the tenth anniversary of this project to create a viable, full-service ecclesia in Nova Scotia, and we thought it was time for an update. Since our last report our ecclesia has seen further growth, with two new members through relocation and one from a baptism. Our membership is now approaching twenty. We are grateful to our Heavenly Father for this growth, which has given us a much more vibrant and active light stand than when my family arrived from England in June 2001 to an ecclesia of only two active members.

Although still small compared to many ecclesias, we have a very high participation rate. For instance, we have eight brethren who carry out platform duties and five organists. In addition to the weekly breaking of bread service, we have a Sunday school and a weekly Bible class. We also run a monthly CYC and regularly hold other activities. Since 2003, we have been able to hold an annual study day in the autumn. This complements the annual Thanksgiving Fraternal and spring study days held in

Sussex, NB, which is just over three hours away by car. Our ecclesia has been able to run five Bible seminar series since 2002, along with two campaigns with help from outside the province, and has hosted Truth Corps.

We have a small number of interested friends and one baptism has come through the Bible seminars. Preaching activities are coordinated in part through Advancement of Scriptural Knowledge Atlantic, which includes the ecclesias at St John's, NF; Sussex, NB; and our own ecclesia here in Halifax, NS. Despite the blessings of growth and regular ecclesial activities, we believe our ecclesia is still not as effective as it could be. First, our preaching work would benefit from a greater number of willing hands. Second, additional members would help us to expand our activities, including those of a more social nature. Although our baptised membership ranges from teenagers to those in their seventies, along with three children, there is a special need for young families with children. We have also found that many local people here shy away from churches with small congregations. Having a larger ecclesia with more activities including, we hope, more public proclamation, would help us in our outreach efforts.

Thus, we would like to send out another appeal to brothers and sisters who might be interested in relocating to this part of the Lord's vineyard. Halifax is the largest city in Atlantic Canada, with a population of around 350,000. Halifax has a vibrant and diverse economy, thanks to Halifax being the capital of the province, home to the Atlantic Fleet of the Canadian Navy, a financial center for the Maritimes and the location of five universities, including Dalhousie, which is the largest in Canada east of Quebec. There is also a growing high-tech sector, with Research in Motion, makers of the Blackberry device, recently setting up a significant center of operations in Halifax and employing over 1000 people. The Nova Scotia government is actively seeking immigrants. Those looking for work are encouraged to contact the undersigned for more information about job prospects here. One member of our ecclesia is employed by the provincial government in trades and training and would be happy to offer expert advice on those sections of the job market that come under his purview.

Young people planning on attending university are encouraged to consider one of the universities in Halifax. Between these universities, all the major disciplines are covered, including the Arts, the Sciences, Engineering, Medicine, Dentistry and Architecture. One brother teaches at one of the universities and there are currently three baptised young people enrolled at or affiliated with Dalhousie. This, in addition to our ecclesia and its regular activities, means that a young person would not have to go it alone.

With the largest International airport in the region, Halifax is well connected, with multiple daily, direct flights to Toronto, Montreal and Ottawa, as well as direct flights to several major U.S. cities, including Boston, New York City, Washington, DC and Philadelphia. A daily, direct flight flies to London, England, which is only four time zones and a 5.5-hour flight away from Halifax.

Nova Scotia is a great place to live, work, raise a family or retire. Real estate prices are still reasonable, Halifax has a state-of-the-art hospital system, people are friendly, the highways are not clogged with traffic and it is impossible to be more than a 30-minute drive from the ocean. In addition to the ubiquitous ocean, Nova Scotia has farmland, forests, rivers, lakes, rolling hills and even skiing in the winter months. Other attractions are the Bay of Fundy with its high tides, Cape Breton Island with its Scottish culture, and the nearby province of Prince Edward Island not to mention New Brunswick, which has a vibrant ecclesia in Sussex with whom we have regular fellowship.

It is common for Christadelphians to congregate in areas where there are large numbers of ecclesias, such as Southern Ontario, Birmingham, England and Sydney, Australia. Virtually all the members of the Halifax ecclesia come from large Christadelphian centers and know the attractions these centers have for ecclesial life. However, this is not always to our credit. The simple truth is that if we all lived in these large Christadelphian centers, the Gospel would not spread throughout the world. We need to look outward as well as inward. God needs willing hands outside as well as inside these Christadelphian centers. Thus, we encourage those with a pioneering spirit, or perhaps those who are interested in getting away from the stress and strain of areas with larger populations, to consider relocating to Nova Scotia to help us carry out the mandate of creating a strong light stand in this part of the world. Rest assured, your presence would be appreciated and you would be put to good use! Anyone who has thought of doing missionary work, but has hesitated due to financial reasons or the requirement to learn a new language, can come to a place like Halifax and do missionary work right in North America! To paraphrase Acts 16:9, “come over to Halifax and help us!”

We are writing this letter on the tenth anniversary of arriving here on June 22, 2001. At the time, we had two young girls and I was coming to take up a teaching job at one of the universities here. God blessed us with two more children here in Nova Scotia, and our eldest is now a sister in Christ. Ten years on we are very grateful for how much God has blessed us and we hope that our growing ecclesia will continue to serve as an effective witness in this province of almost one million, most of whom have never heard of the Christadelphians.

For more information about Halifax and Nova Scotia, including a link to a government site that allows people to do an online test to see if they would have a good chance of being accepted as an immigrant to Canada, see: http://www.christadelphians.*ns.ca/relocate/ (<<http://www.christadelphians.ns.ca/relocate/>> (remove the last word to see our ecclesial website).

We would be happy to answer questions any brother or sister may have about our ecclesia, life in Nova Scotia or employment opportunities in this region. Please send messages to: snobelen@dal.ca.

Stephen and Julie Snobelen

In society today many people put great value on their possessions. Things like the right shirts, jeans or backpacks set the standard for social status in the schools. But people should respect others for their character and personality rather than for what they own. Also, some people will use others to gain a certain objective, whether it is a loan or an introduction to a friend. Unfortunately, people will always see others in a “What can you do for me?” way. Hopefully, in the future people will learn to love others for their companionship and their personality. Placing undue importance on material things weakens one’s ability to see the value of friendship. Personally I am ashamed that I place a value on my possessions. I don’t believe that I use people to gain more things. Once in a while things can be important, like your first report card or your great grandmother’s picture, but real people can always bring more to your life than an inanimate thing.

Katie Stauffer

Minute Meditation

I was wrong

John Maxwell wisely observed, “A person must be big enough to admit mistakes, smart enough to profit from them, and strong enough to correct them.”

Who doesn’t make mistakes? The Apostle Paul was quoting the Psalms when he said, “As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one,” which means that all of us have made mistakes. Yet there are some who will never admit to a mistake, which implies that they certainly are not smart enough to profit from it or strong enough to correct it, according to Maxwell.

We all make mistakes. Are we big enough to admit them? Unforgiven mistakes can keep us out of the Kingdom, so the price for refusing to admit to them is huge. The first thing that we need to do is recognize what we have done and confess. We certainly should confess in prayer to our Heavenly Father, as John advises us when he says: “If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” John uses that big little word “if,” which means serious consequences if we do not confess. No confession means we are not forgiven, we are not cleansed from our unrighteousness, and, as well, we are not profiting from learning from our mistakes or working on correcting them.

We also need to confess our sins to others. James tells us, “Confess your faults one to another and pray one for another that ye may be healed”. We are to help bear one another’s burdens, as Paul tells the Galatians, and by confessing our sins and praying for one another, we strengthen each other on the way of life.

We particularly need to confess to someone whom we have wronged. There are twelve words that can work wonders in our relationship with others as well as with our Heavenly Father. They are: “I was wrong. I am sorry. Please forgive me. I love you.” We mentioned these words in a talk given overseas some years ago, and afterwards a sister came up with tears in her eyes and said that she had been married for 25 years and not once had her husband ever said he was wrong, or was sorry, or asked to be forgiven. Either she was married to a remarkable fellow, or he has a problem and is not big enough to admit to his mistakes. We do hope he told her during those past 25 years that he loved her.

Once we confess, the next step is to learn lessons from our mistakes so we do not keep repeating them. Merely mouthing the words, “Forgive us our trespasses” is not enough. There is a problem if we continually repeat the same mistake. However, we all have this body of death that is prone to sin, and, as Paul admitted with horror, at times the good he should do he did not do, and the evil that he did not want to do, he did. We must, from the heart, confess when there is something that we should not keep on doing, ask for God’s help in resisting, and then take appropriate action to increase our resistance. We need to think carefully about what we can do differently so that we can avoid that mistake, and we must resolve ourselves to do it.

Resisting takes strength. The third point that John Maxwell made was to be strong enough to correct our mistakes. Once we have truly asked to be forgiven we must deliberately take steps to avoid making the same mistake again. These steps may involve physical action such as fleeing in the opposite direction. Joseph ran from Potiphar's wife when she tried to seduce him. Paul exhorted young Timothy to "Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart". Too often we tell sin, "Go away closer". A gambler finding himself near a casino may think that he won't go inside, but soon may find himself in the door, sitting on a stool, "just to look around," but getting as close as possible to the sin he wants to avoid.

Job said, "I made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a girl". Jesus tells us that we can be guilty of adultery just by thinking suggestive thoughts. Job's method to avoid this temptation was by deciding not to look. We need to examine the circumstances that lead to the sin we have asked to be forgiven for, and then avoid repeating it by choosing to stay away from whatever might tempt us to do it. We may need to restrict places we go, stop associating with certain people, censor what we read, or change our habits, so that we can avoid those temptations that we find hard to resist. We must learn from the mistakes we have made and find the strength to avoid them in the future or they will be the undoing of us spiritually.

Jesus tells us that "He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son". There is a glorious future awaiting us if we are willing to make the effort now to live faithful lives pleasing to our heavenly Father. We take comfort in the promise that: "There hath no temptation taken us 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."

We can overcome with God's help, and God will not try us beyond our ability to resist. Let us then draw on this God given strength and triumph over the temptations we face. Let us confess our faults, learn from our mistakes, correct them with all our hearts, and thank God for the salvation and forgiveness he has brought us through the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ. Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift!

Robert J. Lloyd

Coming Events (Lord Willing)

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

JUNE 2012

30-July 8 Mid-Atlantic Christadelphian Bible School at Shippensburg University in Shippensburg, PA. Theme "Search me, O God, and know my heart" (Psa 139:23). Youth theme "I will Praise Thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made". Bro. Andrew Bramhill (Bracknell, UK): "The Lord Raised Up Judges" (adults) and "Paul's Powerful

Preaching" (teens); Bro. Jim Harper (Meriden, CT): "Meditations on the Ministry of Our Lord" (adults) and "What Would You Do?" (teens); Bro. Carl Parry (Salisbury, Australia): "Epistle to James — Be Ye Doers of the Word" (adults) and "How Judge Ye? — Case Studies Based on the Law of Moses" (teens). Information on website www.christadelphians.net/macbs.

JULY 2012

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

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

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

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

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

21-29 Midwest Bible School will be held at Hanover College, Hanover, IN. Speakers and their topics are Bro. Mark Vincent (UK): "Things Done Twice — God's Hand in the Life of Joseph"; Bro. Ryan Mutter (Baltimore, MD): "The Life of Timothy"; Bro. Jim Cowie (Wilston, Australia): "The King's Manifesto for Life". For registration information, contact Bro. Mike Livermore, 24970 Woodridge Dr., Apt. 108, Farmington Hills, MI 48335, 248-462-5740, e-mail: mike.live@gmail.com or visit www.midwestbibleschool.com.

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

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

details on website www.christadelphianbiblecamp.ca. For registration, contact Bro. Alex Browning at jabrowning@rogers.com or 416-284-0290.

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

29-4 Aug Western Christadelphian Bible School at Menucha Camp near Portland, OR. Speakers are Bro. Darren Guy (Halifax, UK): "Wrestling With Jacob"; Bro. Duncan Kenzie (Saanich Peninsula, BC): "21st Century Discipleship"; Bro. Marco Dondero (San Francisco Peninsula, CA): "The Prism of Judgement and Wisdom's Rainbow". Website www.menuchabibleschool.org. Contact Sis. Jane Szabo, registrar, 541-563-4726.

AUGUST 2012

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

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

25-31 Vancouver Island Bible Camp at Camp Pringle on beautiful Shawnigan Lake. Speakers are Bro. Ron Hicks (Washington, DC): "Ezekiel — Son of Man"; Bro. Ian Dangerfield (Australia): "Crucified and Risen With Christ"; Bro. Nathan Badger (Cambridge, ON): "Micah — To Do Justly, to Love Mercy, and to Walk Humbly Before Your God". Contact Sis. Yvonne Rosenau, 6274 Dover Rd., Nanaimo, BC V9V 1A8. Phone: 250-758-4569 e-mail: yvonne2001@shaw.ca website: www.vibiblecamp.com.

31-Sept 2 Brantford, ON Camp Kumah Senior CYC weekend for ages 13 and up. Bro. Darryl Rose (Toronto West, ON) will lead studies on the theme, "The Glory of God." Cost for the weekend is \$20. If financial assistance is required, please let us know. Contact Bro. David Billington dave@visualhabitat.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@csl.ca.

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 jrobins@worldchat.com or Bro. Peter Stonell peter.maggiestonell@gmail.com.

15 Bedford, NS Study day. Bro. John Mannell (Mississauga West, ON) will be speaking on the theme, "Galatians". Please contact Julia Snobelen thesnobelens@hotmail.com for more information.

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

15 London, Ontario Study Day. The speaker will be Bro. Frank Abel and his topic is: "God Manifestation". There will be three classes, the first class commencing at 11 a.m. Lunch will be provided.

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

5-7 Midwest Christadelphian Young Couples Weekend will be held at the Garland Resort in Michigan. The purpose of the weekend is to help couples grow and develop in the Truth by drawing on the wisdom, comfort and encouragement of the Scriptures. The content of the weekend is geared toward finding balance between family, ecclesia, work etc., with additional focus on raising a godly family and relationships with extended family. There is an informational power point presentation available for download on www.mcywcw.com. Contact Annalee Cooper registration@mcycw.com

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.

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).

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".

20 Barrie, ON Fall Study day. The theme is, "Modern Challenges for 21st Century Disciples". Subtitles will be "In the world", "In the State", and "In the Ecclesia". For more information please contact Bro. Bruce Abelby 519-925-5297 or bnb69abel@hotmail.com.

NOVEMBER 2012

9-11 Brothers' Weekend at Hidden Acres, New Hamburg, ON. An excellent opportunity to stimulate faith and build brotherly love through which our families and ecclesias can be strengthened; all for the glory of God. Bro Ron Hicks (Washington DC). Theme: "Get Wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding." For information Bro Nathan Badger 519-568-7830 or email natejbadger@gmail.com.

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@csll.ca.