

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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All Things Bright and Beautiful

*All things bright and beautiful,
All creatures great and small,
All things wise and wonderful:
The Lord God made them all.*

*Each little flower that opens,
Each little bird that sings,
He made their glowing colors,
He made their tiny wings.*

*The purple-headed mountains,
The river running by,
The sunset and the morning
That brightens up the sky.*

*He gave us eyes to see them,
And lips that we might tell
How great is God Almighty,
Who has made all things well.*

Cecil F. Alexander

Editorial

The Situation in Ontario and Illinois

The background

As many must be aware, the brotherhood in Ontario is in something of a state of disruption. Much effort is being spent discussing, debating, and having meetings concerning the situation, which is undoubtedly detracting from time which could be spent in more spiritually profitable areas. Some ecclesias have split, with many groups and individuals moving between ecclesias because they were unhappy with the actions of the majority of their ecclesias. Some ecclesias have begun to refuse the emblems to members of ecclesias with whom they used to be associated. Furthermore, the problem has spread to Bible Schools and other gatherings, both within and outside the area. This disruption is beginning to affect the whole continent, with some ecclesias, thousands of miles away, agitating to decide on their responses to the situation. This is somewhat understandable, as little appears to be happening to resolve the situation, but is against the strong counsel of the pioneer brethren, and others, to let the local ecclesias handle the situation.¹

So what are the causes of this disruption? We can here only briefly summarize a complex situation.

- A group of Unamended ecclesias (4 in Ontario, 5 in Illinois) have been welcomed into fellowship by a group of 10 Amended ecclesias in Ontario, on the basis of a document called the UA08 (Unity Agreement 2008).
- The document is largely based on a previous document called the NASU (North American Statement of Understanding), which was created in 2003 to form the potential basis of a continent wide re-union of the two communities, the “Amended” and the “Unamended”. This was rejected by the majority of the Unamended, but accepted by a majority of those Amended Ecclesias who actually voted. Thus this non-binding preliminary vote, whatever its relevance to any subsequent re-union effort, showed clearly the divide between the two communities, and the continent-wide re-union effort was abandoned.
- The UA08 has been criticized by some for its ambiguity. It is disputed whether it is equivalent to “The Biblical Principles of the Truth, of which the BASF is a true statement”. (This phrasing is the one typically used by Amended gatherings and ecclesias as their basis of fellowship.)²
- The form the UA08 fellowship practice has taken has been criticized on two main counts
 - The UA08 Unamended ecclesias have continued to welcome into fellowship members of some (almost always pro-NASU) Unamended ecclesias which have not signed on to the UA08 agreement. (The UA08 Unamended ecclesias are, by agreement, not in fellowship with those anti-NASU, Andrewite, and Advocate Unamended ecclesias who have explicitly disassociated themselves from the UA08 Unamended ecclesias.)³

- These “UA08” Unamended have also not declared they are part of the larger Amended fellowship, nor have they been commended to, or welcomed by, most of the rest of the Amended ecclesias in North America.
- Some ecclesias in the area have strongly objected to both the document and the associated fellowship practice. They have taken steps to disassociate themselves from the UA08 Amended, not welcoming them into fellowship and taking steps to ensure that some joint activities, such as Bible Schools, follow the same exclusionary practice. This has begun to spread outside the area.
- Other ecclesias in the area have to date largely stood aside from this dispute, although this situation seems likely to change in the near future.
- Although the two main groups involved, the UA08 ecclesias in Ontario and a group of ecclesias known as “PTRU”⁴ ecclesias, have had a few meetings, of late these have devolved into exchanges of multi-page documents with no agreement at present in prospect.

More recently, the PTRU ecclesias have written letters to the committees of three Christadelphian magazines, *The Tidings* (NA), *The Christadelphian* (UK), and *The Lampstand* (AUS), appealing for help in mediating the dispute. As the UA08 ecclesias hold that the disagreement can be resolved locally, they did not agree for any mediation to take place. All three magazines have declined to become officially involved in any such mediation. However, they all agreed that the committee of *The Tidings* was in the best position to help with the situation, and some efforts have already been made in this direction. Note the committee can only consult, and perhaps in some cases advise, but we have no authority over any ecclesia or group of ecclesias. Ecclesial autonomy is to be preserved, subject only to the guidance of the local ecclesias and an appeal to the Scriptures when disputes arise. This guidance is based on the wise counsel of Bro. Robert Roberts to be found in the *Ecclesial Guide*, sections 41 and 42.

Future actions

In addition to any unofficial efforts which might take place, *The Tidings* Committee has agreed to try to help the situation in the following ways:

- We will communicate in the future some of the significant events concerning this situation. We have, up to present, considered the situation of local concern, which should be handled locally, but the spread of the disruption outside the area has led us to reconsider.
- We will present in this magazine a series of articles, starting next month, the first one summarizing the Biblical principles behind our fellowship practice. A previous more historical and practical article on a similar vein has had widespread acceptance; this article, entitled “Fellowship Practice of Central Ecclesias”, appeared in December 2008 and is available on *The Tidings* website (www.tidings.org).
- In subsequent issues, God willing, we intend to cover related topics such as:
 - Examples of past re-unions, to guide us as we consider the present situation.
 - How to handle situations of distant ecclesias, and perhaps their members,

whose actions or statements may have caused concern.

- The Biblical and practical basis of handling inter-ecclesial disputes.

The committee will also continue their un-official contacts with all the parties to the disputes, recognizing these contacts will inevitably be known to very few outside those directly involved. The time has long passed for formal presentations and the widespread dissemination of polemical material. By God's grace and with the correct Christ-like attitudes of all involved, we are confident that a way can be found to eliminate the disruption in the area, and heal the breaches that have developed. There will be few, if any, reports of such discussions, but it is hoped that the progress that has already been made will continue. It is encouraging that some proposals have already been put forward to handle the fusing of some of the groups in a way typical of past re-unions, and we can only pray that these efforts bear fruit.

We acknowledge that all things will be resolved by our Lord at the judgment seat, which we pray will soon come. We all desire to be part of the one body of Christ; as Paul says:

I therefore... beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all" (Eph 4:1-6).

*Peter Hemingray and Joe Hill,
on behalf of*

The Christadelphian Tidings Publishing Committee

Notes:

1. This topic will be dealt with further in an upcoming article.
2. Many ecclesias, both worldwide and on this continent, have ecclesial "Statements of Faith" which differ from the BASE, but are considered equivalent.
3. Unamended ecclesias that are signatories to the UA08 have declared their dissociation from such ecclesias: "A number of ecclesias have declared their rejection of NASU and of our ecclesias due to our support of NASU, finding the expressions on doctrinal issues fundamentally unacceptable. Accordingly, we are no longer in fellowship with these ecclesias... Should these withdrawing ecclesias seek fellowship with us at some future point, we would continue to view them as out of fellowship, thus requiring comprehensive discussions with them to satisfy ourselves that we are indeed walking together on a sound common scriptural basis" (<http://ua08.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/Unamended-UA08-Ecclesias-.pdf>).
4. PTRU (Proposal to Restore Unity) was a group of five ecclesias formed when the initial UA08 proposal was adopted by four Toronto area Amended ecclesias. They came up with a proposal called UA10, which was the same as the UA08 but with two additional clarifications. This was an attempt to reconcile the difficulties that then existed doctrinally, but its adoption was superseded by other problems.

**Letters to the editor can be sent to letters@tidings.org.
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

Choosing Your Attitude (and Your Life)

Eve's choice

The other day I was listening to the radio and a gentleman came on the line. He was relating a story about his wife. Apparently she was rather sick, possibly terminally ill. As the details spilled out, the part that caught my attention was how he dealt with it. As my mind drifted in contemplation of his plight, I put myself in his shoes, as tired, worn out from working all day, and coming home, to my wife asking me if she's going to make it through the next week. In the gentleman's words, you could hear the years of pain and sorrow in his voice. It was thick with his sorrows. Then the story changed. He said he couldn't be morose, he couldn't be down; his wife, his son — they looked to him for help and support every day, even after his long days. He said he would sit in his truck before going in the house, and maybe even cry, but he would come into that house, and he would put on a positive face, the good foot forward. His story got me thinking, he had it exactly right: We *choose* our attitude, and even more broadly, we *choose* our life. This is a thread that runs right off the pages of the Bible and into our lives.

Consider the first of these Biblical threads, concerning Adam and Eve.

"Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, 'Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden'?' And the woman said to the serpent, 'We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, "You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die." ' Then the serpent said to the woman, 'You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.' So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked" (Gen 3:1-7).

This story is very familiar to most everyone. We know it, as the title in my Bible says, as "The Temptation and Fall of Man." This is the first thread of the lesson God is trying to teach us. The serpent presents Eve with a *choice*, the choice of trusting God, or, as the Bible coyly notes, eating a fruit that was good for food, pleasant to the eyes, and could make you like God. I would surmise that Eve had thought about that fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil long before she ate it. Like placing a cookie jar on an ever higher shelf to remove the temptation, the woman had forbidden herself to even touch it. God's original instruction was simply just not to eat of it; He said nothing about not touching it. Eve, and then Adam, were given a choice, and they chose to disobey the command of their Creator.

Put yourself there for a second and then listen to James...

“each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death” (James 1:14-15).

The decision of Adam and Eve follow that exact pattern. They looked upon the fruit, drawn to its tasty-looking delightfulness. Their eyes now bright, you can imagine, whether with bated breath or with driven impulse, they hear the words of the serpent, stroking their ego, saying, “you’ll be like God” and thinking, “well it is tasty” and so they choose, they bite, and then the consequences followed:

“In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you are, and to dust you shall return” (Gen 3:19).

So, as Paul would say, and James would elaborate, the wages for those who choose sin is death.

Manasseh’s choice

The choices in the Bible are not always to continue in the path of fallen man. Man sometimes can go the opposite way. In the Chronicles of the Kings, we find the story of Manasseh, the son of Hezekiah. Hezekiah is always noted as one of the more faithful kings in the Old Testament. He did many good things in the eyes of God, and God helped him in the great battle with the Rabshakeh, Sennacherib and the Assyrians. But after him, came Manasseh. We read a summary of his reign:

“Manasseh was twelve years old when he became king, and he reigned fifty-five years in Jerusalem. But he did evil in the sight of the LORD, according to the abominations of the nations whom the LORD had cast out before the children of Israel” (2Chron 33:1-2).

The writer of the Chronicles make it pretty clear that Manasseh’s choice was to not follow in the way of his father Hezekiah, or in the ways of the LORD. In fact, he emphatically rejected them. The end result was that...

“Manasseh seduced Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to do more evil than the nations whom the LORD had destroyed before the children of Israel” (2Chron. 33:9).

As you would expect, his enemies came to him, and drew him out. He was in the deepest of hells, as the Assyrians “took Manasseh with hooks, bound him with bronze fetters, and carried him off to Babylon...and when he was in affliction...” (2Chron. 33:11).

He was in the hell of his choosing. At this point, it seems he finally came to his senses; desperation and plenty of time to contemplate the consequences of one’s choices will do that. So what does Manasseh do? What would you do?

“He (Manasseh) implored the LORD his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, and prayed to Him; and He received his entreaty, heard his supplication, and brought him back to Jerusalem into his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the LORD was God” (2Chron. 33:12-13).

The second thread we pull is that not all choices are of the Adam and Eve variety, the ones which end in sin. Some choices bring redemption, for that is how God created us. He created us with a choice. Manasseh is emblematic of that dichotomy; he made the choices that walked away from God, and in fact defied God to His very face in that he was worse than the people God kicked out of the land to make room for His chosen ones. In the end, though, Manasseh made the choice to come back to God.

In this thread we pulled, I think we see choices in our own lives. Like the original story we started with, the man in that story wasn't confronted with an easy choice. It may seem obvious, but obvious does not make easy.

Some other choices are not so obvious, even in Manasseh's case: Was it obvious he was going to choose God, when to do so he had to turn his back on how he had lived his entire life? It's like an alcoholic admitting to himself that he is the problem, it's not someone else's fault. Again, from the outside it can seem to be an obvious choice, even a simple one, but it's like teaching an old dog new tricks; it isn't easy, nor is it easy for someone to truly look into the mirror and strip away everything that they are, and turn away from it. But that's what Manasseh did.

Our choice

It is exactly what the New Testament writers are talking about when Nicodemus says to Jesus, *"How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?"* (John 3:4).

Life is full of choices, some seem simple, some innocuous, some difficult, some simply don't seem to have an easy answer.

We all face them each and every day. The Bible is full of stories of choices, but sometimes we gloss over them, and think to ourselves: Adam and Eve, how dumb can you be! You kind of messed that one up for everyone! Or, on the flip side, it may appear obvious that Jesus was going to give it up, all of it, for all of us, and with that I don't mean to understate the gravity of those decisions, but I am relating sometimes how we think. Maybe you scream at David for betraying his servant and taking his wife, or grumble at Peter for denying his best friend. And you swear, I would never do that to *my* best friend. And, most definitely, I wouldn't try to steal someone else's wife or husband...

Yet we are all partakers of that flesh; we are Adam, we are Eve, we are Abraham, we are Rahab, we are David, we are Peter, we are even Manasseh. God made us flesh; he gave us free will; he gives us a choice. Just like the guy on the radio, who makes that choice every day to put on a brave face, a face of comfort, a face of happiness, even if it's not always what he feels inside, in the end, it is still our choice.

Going back to the choice of Manasseh, he repented and turned his back on his former self. Isn't that what baptism is all about it? God wants us to be like Jesus, and this leads to the choice to put off the old man — an easy phrase, that rolls off the tongue, but what it means, is making the choice to change our nature, to reject what we have been born into, and to choose something else. As Paul writes:

“What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin” (Rom 6:1-6).

In the end, just as it was in the beginning, it is our choice.

Nathan Sleeper (Glendale, AZ)

Bible Study

Creation's Gospel

(9) The Works Principle in Fruit Bearing Plant Life

I spent years growing up on my Grandfather's working farm. We grew vegetables, fruits, hay and chickens. The cows and horses were gone before I was born. While I didn't really appreciate the work when I was little, I have remembered it quite fondly for a number of decades since the final sweat was washed away. The farm had been in my family for quite a number of generations. Contrary to what my grandchildren may presume, we did have working tractors, bailing equipment, electricity and indoor plumbing. However, a great deal of the work was still done by hand. This was the timeframe when family farms were still dissolving into a completely different national commercial structure.

The three great harvest feasts

The former Egyptian slaves inherited an agricultural lifestyle in the promised land. The three great harvests were associated with three great feast weeks. The Feast of Unleavened Bread marked the barley and flax harvest. The Feast of Firstfruits (also known as the Feast of Weeks and Pentecost) identified the wheat harvest. The Feast of Tabernacles coincided with the vineyard harvest which was soon followed by the olive harvest. These three harvests/feasts parallel the three great judgments and harvests in the divine plan for creation. The first would be our Messiah. Death could not hold him. He was the first to be 'harvested' from creation to enjoy the divine nature of the Creator/Husbandman. At the beginning of the Millennial Kingdom our Messiah's family (expressed as his bride, his brothers and sisters as well as his children) will experience the second judgment and harvest event, fulfilling the laws of the Feast of the Firstfruits. Christ's wheat and tares parable (Matt 13:24-30, 36-43) depicts this stage in the divine plan, and is so appropriate because wheat was the specific harvest associated with the Feast of the

Firstfruits. This relationship is also confirmed by the fact that as Christ reconciled us at Passover (rising three days later) it was on Pentecost (Feast of the Firstfruits) that the 120 disciples were given the earnest of the promise (2Cor 5:5; Eph1:13-14) of immortalization in the divine powers of the Holy Spirit. That promise will be fulfilled in the antitypical Feast of the Firstfruits when the faithful inherit the divine nature at the second great harvest in the divine plan.

Fruit-bearing enlightened vs. Non-fruitbearing unenlightened

There are many, many avenues we could consider in the context of the enlightened being scripturally represented as fruit bearing plant life. The enlightened are represented as vineyards, fig trees, olive trees, wheat and barley. However, mankind in general is repeatedly represented as grass (Isa 40:6-8) and other vegetation that bears no fruit, such as briars and thorns (Num 33:55; Song 2:2; Psa 118:10-12, Nah 1:10). This theme extends subtly into many areas, such as the ram caught in a 'thicket' that Abraham offered instead of Isaac on Mt. Moriah, where Solomon's temple would eventually be erected. This ram represented Jesus of Nazareth, who would be caught in the 'thicket' of the Romans and divinely fruitless Jewish authorities in his sacrificial death. With our limited space let's examine this relationship between the enlightened and fruit bearing plantlife in the context of the seed.

The death and resurrection of the seed

Within the details of Paul's explanation of the resurrection to immortality, as opposed to the quite separate resurrection to judgment, the Apostle highlights how the lesson of the seed projects the principle and promise of resurrection. *"But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come? Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die: And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain"* (1Cor 15:35-37). Paul defines the concept of the resurrection to immortality that was being questioned by twisted Greek logic, as the lesson of the seed. The seed has to die for it to be reborn as a fruit bearing plant. That seed of truth and hope is planted in the cursed dust of the earth, given the water of the word and nutrients from heaven and earth to rise above the dust, straining for the heavens and eventually bearing fruit. We are the dust of the earth, from which we were made (Gen 3:19). Just as the earth has to be plowed before it is planted, so the seed of divine truth cannot grow to maturity in an uncircumcised heart (Jer 4:3-4). The lesson of the seed is a creational declaration of the principle of resurrection, which the serpent philosophy of immortal sinfulness cannot comprehend.

The promise and the exhortation of the seed

The promise of the seed is the principle of a resurrection harvest. The exhortation of the seed is the necessity to bear fruit to the glory of the great Husbandman, our Creator. This lesson of the seed also contradicts the popular serpent philosophy, which is of salvation without a behavioral response. While salvation is certainly a gift, we still have to avoid the instinctive presumption that only faith is necessary. We cannot separate works from faith, as works are the expressions of a living faith....

just as fruitfulness is the natural expression of the seed that progresses through its growth stages, surviving all the challenges of its promised fruitfulness. Therefore we will be judged according to our faith as it has been demonstrated in works (Rev 22:12; 20:13; Matt 16:27; Rom 2:6; 2Cor 5:10). Professed faith alone cannot save us. Without proven faith our judgment rejection is assured. It was exclusively the fourth seed category in Christ's parable of the sower that was acceptable. The seed eaten by birds off the unplowed ground, the seed burned in the shallow rocks, and the seed choked by weeds, all represented the enlightened, those who had received the seed of truth but were unfruitful and therefore divinely unacceptable. Isaiah's record of the song of his beloved depicted the vineyard of Yahweh that was carefully prepared but only yielded worthless wild grapes (Isa 5). Therefore that vineyard (Judah) would come to ruin. The creational exhortation of fruit bearing plant life is that we who have been made of dust and invested with the seed of divine truth must bear fruit to the glory of our heavenly Father... or perish forever. In fact, the promise of the seed has everything to do with the terms of divine accountability, which has been a contentious Christadelphian issue for over a century. The features of creation validate divine truths and principles.

There are a great many additional avenues for meditational consideration in this relationship between the creation features of plant life and divine truths, principles and exhortations. The primary point we are establishing is the greater measure of glory available to the enlightened, in witnessing how flawlessly our Creator prepared every microscopic and macroscopic feature of creation to project His truths and principles. Creation can be decoded with scripture to reveal how the physical and the spiritual are so perfectly matched in every layered and interdependent relationship. This is God manifestation. Everything fits together perfectly to reveal our Creator to the seeing eyes and hearing ears of the heart circumcised. Everything affects everything else.

In our next commentary we will examine how the scientific ignorance of this creational/spiritual relationship has endangered people's lives and degraded mankind's lifestyles for several thousand years.

Jim Dillingham (Granite State, NH)

Truth

The Greek word for truth, "aletheia", is derived from the verb "lanthano" which means 'to lie hidden' and is related to the Latin verb "lateo" from which we get 'latent'. The initial 'a' is a negative. So the word means 'unhidden', 'revealed'. It expresses the underlying reality that lies beneath the outward appearance, the inner meaning. A physical shape has no significance until we apply to it an idea, a concept, a word. A flat piece of wood, supported by wooden sticks is meaningless until we recognize a table — something to put things on. So the meaning of Scripture has no fundamental reality until we recognize the golden thread of God's purpose, consummated in Jesus.

This word "aletheia" has no verbal connection with our usual conception of truth as correct, accurate, verifiable by evidence. "Faith is... the evidence of things not seen" [Heb 11:1], and this truth is Jesus.

(Sheila Harris)

The Joy of Sunday Schooling

My Sunday School Project ... 6 years and counting!

Background

In Sunday school, with the help of my teacher, Sis. Jeanette LeDuke, I have been creating web pages outlining my Bible beliefs.¹ In September 2011, Sis. Jeanette and I started our sixth year of work on the project. Our mission has been to develop an effective way of showing my friends what I believe, as well as clarifying my own understanding of first principles. I should explain that because there are no other young people my age in our Kitchener-Waterloo ecclesia, I have been the only student in this class!

We started the project by making a list of first principles such as baptism, the kingdom of God, etc., and creating a web page for each subject. Our goal has been to put things as clearly and simply as possible, and to include an interactive quiz with each page so users can test their knowledge. Each Bible verse that is quoted has a hyperlink which, when clicked, shows the verse in the bottom right frame. We are also working to give each Bible character a link to a short “bio” that shows in the bottom left frame.



Technical details

Because Sis. Jeanette is experienced in HTML (hypertext markup language), we decided to make each page from scratch, using only HTML code rather than web development software. We used a simple frame set consisting of four frames (as shown above), one for the list of topics, one for the explanation of the topic, one for a brief biography of each Bible character mentioned, and one for the Bible verse hyperlinks. Each Bible verse is a file, and we currently have almost 300 verse files. Great care was taken in naming each file for easy access. For some verses we have bolded part of the text for greater clarity.

The pages

It took about four years to create our topic pages. Topics included are *The Bible*, *The Nature of God*, *The Creation of the World*, *The Garden of Eden*, *Abraham*, *God's promises*, and many more. We spent a lot of time experimenting with the order of the topics to make a logical sequence for users to follow.



The *Garden of Eden* page is shown above. In addition to telling the story of what happened in Eden, it covers important principles such as the lie of the serpent, the curse, the promise of redemption, the seed of the serpent, and the seed of the woman. All of these principles are backed up by Bible verses. Naturally, many pages cover similar topics and we have linked related pages to each other. We have tried to make each page look consistent in terms of fonts, layouts, colors and illustrations. An interesting problem has come up along the way: the more pages we make, the more we think there should be! Our page on “God’s Three Great Promises” was fairly brief. We didn’t want to fill this page with information about Abraham and David, so we ended up making separate pages for each of these characters. This year, we are working on pages about Moses and Elijah.

The Quizzes

We spent almost a year making the interactive quizzes for each page. The purpose of these multiple choice quizzes is to give users a chance to test their knowledge and see if they really understand the contents of the page. It took a long time to think up the questions for each quiz. The right answers were easy, but it was hard to think up wrong answers! We wanted to lead the users in the right direction without being flippant or irreverent.

To make the quizzes, we obtained a Java application online and adapted it for



our purposes. In addition to learning a great deal about first principles, I also learned basic web page design, as well as how to program in HTML and Java!

Benefits

I have really enjoyed creating the web pages to display my beliefs in a unique way. I have found the project extremely interesting, both in terms of the Bible study involved and learning how to design the pages. I have been able to summarize major Bible topics, realizing best of all that this knowledge will last a lifetime. As time goes on, I will be able to build on my knowledge and have inspiration for new topics that will challenge me to further study of God's word.

Credits

We used a lot of different source material to put the various pages together. For the hyperlinked Bible verses we decided to use the King James Version, although we sometimes include other versions for clarity. We simply copied and pasted the verses from E-Sword² into an HTML verse template we had designed.

Christadelphian sources, in no particular order, include the following:

- *Exploring the Bible*, A basic step-by-step Bible study course designed for everyone, published by Christadelphian Scripture Study Service.
- *Key To The Understanding Of The Scriptures*, by H. P. Mansfield.
- *Exploring the Psalms*, by Mark Vincent.
- *The Christadelphian Instructor*, by Robert Roberts.
- *Preparing for Baptism*, published by the Christadelphian Bible Mission.
- *Faith Alive!*, October, 2007, Issue 88, "Teach us to pray", published by the Christadelphian Office.
- "Basic Bible Principles: The Second Coming of Jesus Christ", published by *The Testimony Magazine*.
- "Basic Bible Principles: The Resurrection of Jesus Christ", published by *The Testimony Magazine*.
- "Basic Bible Principles: The Kingdom of God", published by *The Testimony Magazine*.
- *Understand the Bible, Work it out for yourself*, by Tecwyn Morgan.

Emily Robinson (Kitchener-Waterloo, ON)

Project-based learning such as Emily has carried out is very rewarding. I would be pleased to learn about other Sunday school projects that students have done. Contact me at sundayschool@tidings.org.

Jim Harper (Meriden, CT)

Notes:

1. Here is the web address for Emily's Sunday school project: <http://www.execulink.com/~ledukes/ERSS/MainPage.html>. Try it out with your Sunday school students or as a CYC activity. Share it with others. It is easy to navigate and highly educational. It works with Internet Explorer and Chrome, but not with Firefox.
2. E-Sword² is free Bible study software available online at <http://www.e-sword.net/>.

Reflections

Marriage Proverbs: Guidelines for a Happy Relationship (8) Guideline Number 7: “...*children are an heritage of the LORD*”(Psa 127:3)

Choosing children

There is an old adage that claimed: *children cement a marriage*. Indeed children are a heritage from the LORD and it was His intended plan from the very beginning that the family would be the foundation of society. After creating Adam and Eve they are commissioned to, “*Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth*” (Gen. 1:28 ESV). Before a couple gets married they should not fail to discuss how they feel about *being fruitful and multiplying*! Perhaps no other issue can affect the harmony of a marriage more than the decision whether or not to have children, and if so blessed, how to deal with them at every stage of life. Failing to carefully consider what children would mean to the marriage relationship could find the couple ending up with cement that crumbles rather than binds as the years go by.

In ages past the decision to have children was entirely left up to the natural course of things in a marriage. If blessed with offspring, mother and father dealt with it and raised them to adulthood whatever number came along. My father's mother, born in the 19th century, had twelve children, giving birth literally every couple of years until she was no longer fruitful. Having children or not for most of recorded history was not an option, it was a choice made for you by nature and the only way to avoid it was abstinence or physical limitation. In the overwhelmingly agrarian society that existed prior to the 20th century, a large number of children was an economic advantage in that they provided more labor for the farm. This increased labor pool, in effect, created the ability for increased output capable of feeding all. Also, in ages past, without society having any social net to protect the elderly from poverty, having children provided a haven for the aged family members. Needless to say all that has changed in our times.

A couple contemplating marriage should discuss thoroughly all the many issues regarding the role of children. It is wise not to make assumptions about what the other partner feels about the issue. Children profoundly change the marriage relationship in a myriad of ways. These can be difficult to deal with even if the couple believes that they are well suited to be parents. Many a marriage has floundered because the responsibilities associated with having and caring for children had never been fully appreciated. Some marriages have even failed because children could not be produced. This doesn't necessarily apply just to royalty requiring an heir apparent to the throne, but also to ordinary folks like us who can be terribly disappointed. So let's discuss some of the issues that need to be considered with respect to the role of children in a marriage relationship.

First, there is the question of whether or not the couple even wants children. Certainly this needs to be a joint decision and it should be one made prior to marriage, as it is not one easily revised once the couple is joined together in matrimony. Abraham and Sarah, as far as we can infer, had a very happy marriage for a very long time before they had any children. (Certainly Abraham regarded Sarah with great admiration as we can readily surmise from Gen 12:11, although they had no children at the time.) Priscilla and Aquila¹ do not appear to have had children. I think it is safe to assume they had a happy marriage, and their freedom to travel was probably entirely due to the fact that they had no close family ties to cause them concern. Thus they assisted greatly with planting the seed of the gospel. In many cases deciding not to have children is a wise choice depending on the ages and temperaments of potential partners. The ecclesia should respect those wishes without constant pestering. I cannot help but recalling that early in our marriage, when my wife and I were having some medical issues that were forestalling the ability for her to be pregnant — how hurtful some of the comments about when we were going to have children, when frankly it was no one's business but our own. It is wise that prospective marriage partners make a joint decision to have, or to not have, children prior to a wedding date. Furthermore, it is imperative that both partners fully agree that this decision can only be changed at some future time if both agree that the situation so warrants. Failing to do this and being presented with a surprise package clothed in diapers at some future time could possibly lead to resentment, and surely will end up with lack of trust.

Concerning children and their consequences

If a couple agrees that they want offspring then they should proceed to consider prior to the marriage some very important questions regarding children, such as:

- When to have children?
- How many may be desired?
- Have they given some serious thought to the financial implications of having children?
- Given consideration on how to guide and discipline² children?
- Considered how to share responsibilities in child rearing?
- What to do if it turns out to be impossible to have children?

The above list is not meant to be all-inclusive, but simply to serve as a guideline for some of the key issues I had found necessary to bear in mind, relative to my own personal experience and from time to time in counseling others.

Let us consider these points in turn. The simple, but hopefully an astute answer to points a) through c) above is: *When a couple can afford it!* But this isn't necessarily reality, as we shall soon see. The average cost to raise a child born in 2010 to the age of eighteen (in 2028) in the United States is \$226,920 according to U.S. Department of Agriculture figures.³ This of course is an average for the whole nation and varies somewhat geographically. To get a figure fine-tuned to your geographic location go to the calculator on the website in reference no. 3 below.⁴ The average cost figures for Canada are somewhat lower at \$182,190,⁵ but this is offset somewhat by the fact that average income is also lower there than in the United

States. Startlingly, the numbers from the United Kingdom are considerably higher than on this side of the Atlantic Ocean. The latest data in the United Kingdom indicate a cost equivalent to \$316, 962⁶ to raise a child from birth to twenty-one years old. The amount actually spent per child depends on total household income, simply because the more the parents earn the more the expectations. Thus a lower income family might spend less on bringing a child up to the age of eighteen, but the total percentage of their actual disposable income will unfortunately be higher, making a child even more difficult to afford. Since the North American cutoff age is eighteen in all these reports none of them consider the cost of funding in whole, or in part, either a college education or a wedding! Where does that leave us? When I told my mother one time, many years ago, that we would have children when we could afford it she wisely said to me that if that were the case then probably no one except the ultra-rich would ever have kids! There is a great deal of truth in that statement, but it is also true that an awareness of the actual costs should be abundantly clear, and that a married couple must be willing to make sacrifices in order to be good parents. Activities we did in the past, things we purchased, levels of comfort we previously took for granted, and vacations we formerly took and could easily afford (among other things) before having children, must of necessity be eliminated or greatly altered. Anyone contemplating having children needs to be aware of being willing to make such sacrifices without regret or there will surely be trouble lying ahead in the marriage. The Scriptural admonition of the Apostle Paul is particularly relevant when one reflects on how parents should willingly sacrifice for their children: “...I seek not what is yours but you. For children are not obligated to save up for their parents, but parents for their children” (2Cor 12:14 ESV).

The discipline of children

Aside from financial disagreements the next most critical issue that leads to serious conflicts in a marriage revolve around exactly how to discipline children. If the married couple does not have an agreed consistent plan for raising children, it not only will affect their own personal relationship, but also can cause undue harm to their children that will linger into their adult years. The Bible gives lots of advice on how to raise children, but this present essay will only be able to touch on them briefly. Nevertheless, some discussion is warranted here about disciplining children especially in the context of how it can affect marriage harmony.

Invariably we are conditioned by the culture in which we were raised. If our parents were strict disciplinarians, including spanking and other forms of physical punishment, then we will either follow the same pattern or reject it completely, sometimes vehemently so. Rarely does one follow some middle course. Often faithful Bible students will insist that Scriptures teach strict discipline for children that includes corporal punishment and the verse usually quoted to justify this is, “Whoever spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is diligent to discipline him” (Prov 13:24 ESV).⁷ If this is a couple’s idea of discipline then I ask you to think again. Compare the Proverbs verse just quoted with Psa 23:4 (ESV): “*Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.*” Now how can a rod and

staff comfort if it is an instrument of beating. Actually, the shepherd's rod and staff was never used to beat the sheep. There is a sheep farm near us and I have witnessed firsthand how the shepherd uses the rod to prod the sheep in the right direction when he wants to round them up into a pen. The rod and staff with the crook at the end are also used to extricate an animal, if he gets into trouble with a gopher hole or other obstacle that might entrap them. Thus, what Scriptures had in mind for disciplining a child is of a similar nature, i.e. firm discipline to nudge them in the right direction, but without any physical harm being used. To lend some further weight to this viewpoint we should also consider the words of the Apostle Paul to the ecclesias at Ephesus and Colossae: *"Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord"* (Eph.6: 4 ESV) and *"Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged"* (Col 3:20:21 ESV).

Also the State needs to be considered in deciding how we discipline our children. In 1979 Sweden outlawed spanking and beating of children in any form, backed up with prison terms for those who are repeated offenders. Since Sweden passed this legislation 30 other nations have followed suit through 2011⁸, including Israel (in 2000), which is governed by a fairly orthodox religious leadership who are quite conversant with the Old Testament Scriptures. Comparing the list of 31 nations having passed such child protective legislation with the 2010 ALS Diary finds that currently 20 of those countries have established Christadelphian Ecclesias and/or organized missionary efforts with brethren and sisters in residence. In the United States and Canada such legislation has not been passed, but there are many forces pushing for it to be done. In Canada, though specific parliamentary law is lacking, nevertheless the Canadian Supreme Court ruled in 2004 that a child could only be subject to reasonable corporal punishment by a parent or guardian if it can be shown that the child would benefit from that action. But the court also added that this did not apply to children younger than two or older than 12 years old where ordinary assault and battery laws would apply. The bottom line is that parents in the future who want to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, coupled with firm discipline, needs to think of more creative ways to impress the child with the need for correct behavior or they may well find themselves disobeying the child protective laws. (Ideas on how to do this will be discussed, Lord willing, in a subsequent article). I for one applaud this trend towards ending corporal punishment of children — I have observed that it often ends up teaching them that physical violence is the way to resolve disagreements rather than by *reasoning together*.

I assume that no one wants to bring up what is colloquially call a "spoiled brat" and to avoid this I suggest that discipline needs to be firm BUT loving. Both parents need to agree on the bounds of what is acceptable, and what is not, and this will be an ongoing process over the course of their married life. The thing that needs to be considered at the beginning, is that the couple will set themselves the task of discussing disciplinary measures as they arise and agreeing to not argue this out in front of the child. The strongest and best discipline parents can give a child is in

the example of the honest, caring, and considerate love that is visibly demonstrated every day in the way their mother and father treat each other! (*"The righteous who walks in his integrity — blessed are his children after him"* (Prov 20:7 ESV)).

(To be continued)

John C. Bilello (Ann Arbor, MI)

Notes:

1. Priscilla and Aquila — see: Acts 18, Rom 16, 1Cor 16 and 2Tim 4.
2. So there is no doubt what I mean by "discipline" i.e., training that corrects, molds, or perfects the mental faculties or moral character (Merriam-Webster dictionary).
3. USDA Report Release No. 0241.11, Washington, June 9, 2011.
4. <http://www.cnpp.usda.gov/calculatorintro.htm>
5. <http://canadianfinanceblog.com/>
6. Manchester Guardian, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/news>. The British data includes 3 more years through 21 years of age, but likewise excludes cost of any private education. Hence the figures there are roughly comparable to North America.
7. This verse is often cited in conjunction with Prov 19:18 which doesn't explicitly state for the child to be beaten with a rod. Also Prov 10:13 is also sometimes cited but this verse does not refer to children..
8. <http://www.endcorporalpunishment.org/pages/pdfs/reports/GlobalReport2011.pdf>. This report cites 31 nations have so far passed laws outlawing any form of corporal punishment of a child in the home, school or even if they are incarcerated and 22 additional nations are in the process of considering such legislation.

Forgiveness (6)

We've established that God has built into us the means to help us change our hearts from unforgiving to forgiving, if we have the "want to". This transforming ability is designed into our brains, ready for us, even now. Typically, however, we end up praying to God to change our heart, wishing to move on, but not experiencing the change. Did God answer "No"? Or, is there more to be done? We may think that God will miraculously give us amnesia regarding the terrible infraction against us and we will find immediate release from this death-grip of "unforgiveness". But is that how it actually works?

Remember from article #4 that forgiveness is a process. It's more like taking off a garment and putting on another, then taking off a garment, and putting on another. It's not a simple case of amnesia at all. The good news about the process is that just maybe, there's something crucial to be learned in what we might see as a tedious process. That might be why God doesn't grant an immediate and instantaneous release. Maybe spiritual health comes in the process more than the result.

The 24 activities of forgiveness presented in this article fall into four categories:

- 1) Activities to uncover our anger.
- 2) Activities to help us decide to forgive.
- 3) Activities to help us process our forgiveness.
- 4) Activities to release us from emotional pain.

To see the full list please go to the www.tidings.org website. This is not a "To do" list starting from the first activity and proceeding methodically down the list.

There are parts of this that feed together and some you return to over and over. The aim of this article is to broaden the awareness of our participation in this process. There is much that can be done.

Activities to uncover our anger

In order to forgive we need to be willing to examine the anger we have as a result of someone's unfairness to us. There are questions we will need to ask ourselves, and answer as honestly as we can without fear of condemnation, especially *self*-condemnation. The questions are probing and revealing and most helpful if we allow them to do their work. We may have hidden the truths about our hurt and anger under layers of rationalizations and emotional "stuff". After all, we have been taught that it's "sinful to carry anger". Some of the layers that are hiding the truth of our anger are about trying to live the Truth without actually engaging in truth. Because of our fear of sin we create shortcuts. Here are a few common ones. There are more that we can and do create, but these are the highlights:

- **DENIAL:** at first a healthy protection, but if not addressed, it can turn into an obstacle.
- **SUPPRESSION:** pushing thoughts about the event from consciousness; a false forgetting.
- **REPRESSION:** usually for major abuses; the brain can block things for you.
- **DISPLACEMENT:** transfers the anger to something or someone else, often in families; for example, anger at your father could transfer to anger at your husband.
- **REGRESSION:** engaging in behavior that is considered understandable in a child but is inappropriate for an adult.

Here are some questions to assist us in exploring and opening up our denial, suppression, repression, displacement, and regression. How have we avoided dealing with anger? Have we faced our anger? Am I afraid to expose my shame or guilt (my part in it)? Has our anger affected our faith? My health? Our prayers? Have I been obsessed with the injury or the offender? Do we compare our situation with that of the offender? (Sometimes we see the offender as leading a "charmed" life and we are saddled with all the suffering.) Has the injury caused a permanent change in my life? (Those trying to forgive before they have accepted and grieved permanent losses may find that they need to forgive again.) Has the injury changed our outlook on life?

Regarding simple injuries to us at the hand of another, this section could be very easy to work with and through. But in the course of our lives there will be times we find we are seething with anger, and are not able to appropriately focus on it to get to who or how to forgive. Sometimes we can't even recognize that there's a deficit that forgiving would fill.

Activities to help us decide to forgive

This is not too different from when we decided to get baptized. Something, an inciting awareness, prompted us to take the step. The reason for baptism could have been a misfortune that came upon us and we could see the Truth in contrast;

or maybe we realized Jesus is coming back soon and we didn't want to miss out. Such awakenings or combinations help push us along towards a good direction. Correspondingly, if we have discovered or recognized our anger, here are some ideas that could help push us along:

- 1) Draw from a change of heart, a "conversion", or new insights revealing that what we have been doing isn't working.
- 2) Entertain the thought that forgiveness is the solution.
- 3) Make a commitment to God to forgive the offender.

Our previous article talked about brokenness. An unforgiving heart is bad for our health! If we allow ourselves to feel the brokenness and how unsatisfactory the current situation is, we will be driven to the next activities. For most of us, making a commitment to change helps us actually move toward accomplishing change, even changing our minds. An excellent way to commit is to write it down on a piece of paper: "On (today) I commit to forgive _____". Writing it down is amazingly helpful!

Activities to help us process our Forgiveness

It would be easy to think that the job is done now, but on difficult forgiveness issues the work starts now. Certainly some of the activities would be to ask God to assist, making sure we really want to forgive. Another powerful idea is to pray for the offender, making sure to use their name. Let's now explore another major activity: "reframing".

Reframing is changing our perspective through role-taking. We reframe when we view the wrongdoer in context. Reframing is a Biblical concept. We are asked to view things differently from their natural context. To see ourselves as God sees us, we need to look through the frame of Scripture. To see other people, it's the same. The incidents in our lives, good and bad, are better viewed in the frame of Scripture. It's just like looking at a picture in a frame. The frame tells you what to notice. God's frame will tell you to notice different things.

Here are some examples: Matt 5:11-12 speaks of persecution but it reframes it to joy and reward. James 1:2-4 speaks of trials but reframes them to joy, patience, and perfection. 1Cor 15:54-57 speaks of death but reframes it to victory.

Gen 50:17-21 is a prime example of reframing. In verse 17 Joseph's brothers are imploring Joseph to forgive them for the despicable way they treated him. How does Joseph forgive them? Joseph says, *"But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive"* (vs. 20). Joseph is reframing the smaller picture of betrayal, near-murder, and rejection to a bigger picture of the salvation of a family from starvation and ruin. Did Joseph figure this out as the events were happening? It took years and much suffering as the reframing process developed in his understanding, but reframing was the way he was able to forgive.

Understanding the forces that drive offenders is an important step in the reframing and forgiveness process. Here are some questions to help us reframe our perception of our offender:

- 1) What was it like for the offender as they were growing up?
- 2) What was it like for the offender at the time of the offense? (Not condoning, just understanding.)
- 3) Can we see them as a member of the human community or ecclesia?
- 4) Are we able to tell the story of our relationship in a broader sense than the offence? (What were they like in good times? Was it all bad? Did the person ever show good judgment?) Sometimes looking through old photo albums will help broaden our view beyond the offence.

The poet, Longfellow, wrote: "If we could read the secret history of our enemies, we would find in each person's life sorrow and suffering enough to disarm all hostility." Seeking empathy and compassion toward the offender goes hand in hand with reframing.

Another activity is to release our thoughts from the injury for longer blocks of time. An injury can become an obsession, or worse yet, our identity.

Bearing and accepting the pain releases you to heal. Given a serious injury, our bodies go into shock; a way of numbing and protecting us from the pain. However, being in shock is medically dangerous and definitely not a permanent solution. Accepting pain is to stop hiding from it. We discover that we can handle the pain, and then it lessens. As we become stronger we don't have to transfer the pain to someone else. Accepting pain is a gift to those around us who have been uninvolved in the incident of hurt.

As this process continues we can do a few other activities. One is to speak to others in a kindly manner about the person who has done us an injustice; even more, to give a moral gift to the offender. In 2006 some Amish families experienced the horrible tragedy of a man killing five young girls. The community of the murdered girls was able to offer meals and financial aid to the widow of the killer, who had committed suicide after the shootings. It's possible our offender has since died and then what can we do? It may be just to put their picture back up in our house or to visit their grave. The gift we decide upon will benefit us more than anyone else.

Activities to release us from emotional pain

This last section helps provide us with the ability to find meaning in the suffering and forgiveness process. It is well documented that many survivors of the concentration camps looked for a higher meaning in their suffering, and those who found it, fared better, at least emotionally, than those who lost hope. Another useful perspective-changer is to realize that we need God's forgiveness and the forgiveness of others, too; and that God has indeed, amply forgiven us.

We know there is strength in having partners in faith, in supportive ecclesias and with understanding family members. In our suffering there is also a community of like-sufferers. We will discover that we are not alone in this.

We can realize that we may have a new purpose in life because of our injury. Certainly in the earlier example of Joseph and his brothers the purpose of rescuing his family from famine came through loud and clear to him.

A final activity in this section, as we do our forgiveness work, is for us to become more and more aware of the decreased negative effect and the increased positive effect that this important work creates in our lives. This applies particularly to our experience of the offender but also to our own internal emotional release.

Interestingly, if you read books on forgiveness the activities we've discussed show up in all sorts of ways. For example, if you were to take Eph 4:31-32 you can find seven of these activities right there. Be sure to get the whole list from the website. These activities are not added burdens to our lives but actually burden-lifters. Let's enjoy the progress.

Seven steps towards forgiveness

Sis. Robyn Henry of Australia lists what she calls seven steps to move towards forgiveness. Sis. Henry's wording is very helpful and serves as a refreshing conclusion to this discussion:

- 1) Forget about the matter some of the time.
- 2) Do not actively wish the other person harm.
- 3) Let go of the idea that your suffering is touching the other human being or teaching them a lesson.
- 4) Come into the present. Think more about your feelings and needs and those of others close to you.
- 5) Feel that you can be patient with yourself.
- 6) Pray — be honest with God.
- 7) You cannot do it by yourself!

Next: Forgiveness as a key to healing communities.

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

Note that the Minute Meditation this month is on the same theme, quite by coincidence!

Examining the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints Part 3

Joseph Smith

Joseph Smith was not without opposition from within the newly formed Mormon church. His brother, Hyrum, also a "witness" of the Book of Mormon, began to baptize and confirm new members. The same was true of Oliver Cowdery. The two men had attempted to exercise independent authority. Joseph Smith's response was swift he proclaimed himself a prophet with exclusive communications with the Almighty Father and Jesus Christ.

At this time Joseph Smith dispatched Oliver Cowdery to Missouri in search of what he was convinced had to be the site of the New Jerusalem. The location of Independence was chosen and later abandoned by the church. The second part of Cowdery's mission was to expand the church membership, specifically targeting the American Indians. A man by the name of Sidney Rigdon¹, a minister of the "Disciples of Christ" church made the acquaintance of Oliver Cowdery at

this time. As a result of being converted, Rigdon and his congregation joined the Mormons, doubling the size of the church membership. Smith would also dictate another “lost” book of Enoch, stating that the biblical figure had established a city so righteous that God had taken it to heaven.

Pressure and opposition continued to grow in New York State so Joseph Smith told the congregation that the saints must relocate to Kirkland, Ohio. He promised Rigdon, now second in charge, that the executive body would receive “spiritual gifts” when they arrived. During the first days in Kirkland, and by his own authority, Smith “endowed” his top followers with the Melchizedek priesthood. He declared that while still in New York, the apostles Peter, James, and John had appeared to him shortly after John the Baptist and conferred the high priesthood upon him. The Aaronic priesthood gave the authority to baptize, but only those brethren with the Melchizedek authority could perform “higher” ceremonies like marriage. This is because marriage in the Mormon church includes a sealing ceremony after the vows are exchanged, binding the couple for “time and eternity”. So “till death do us part” is no longer applicable. Procreation continues in the new kingdom for worthy couples. This ceremony can only be held in a Mormon temple. It is signified at the time of its initiation with the couple kneeling and facing each other, with a mirror behind each person. The mirrors reflect into each other signifying eternity.

Joseph Smith tried to establish the church in Missouri but bitter opposition prevented his endeavours. Also, the governor’s office did not offer him their cooperation or support. Smith returned to Ohio to oversee the building of the Kirkland Temple. He set up a church bank to fund the project, coercing monies from the followers by offering them bank notes which they bought as a religious duty. At the 1836 dedication of the temple, the new church was deeply in debt. Many of the members abandoned Smith because of pressure from creditors and the “prophet” was arrested and charged with bank fraud.

Joseph Smith then fled by night to Missouri. He and his followers established the town of Far West. There was much anti-Mormon sentiment throughout the state which led to mob attacks and acts of violence by vigilantes. The Mormons would then decide to become more militant, “establishing the faith by the sword”, in the words of Joseph Smith. The result of this policy would lead to war with the state militia in the Battle of Crooked Creek after a Mormon initiated attack. The governor then ordered the extermination of all Mormons, citing them as a threat to the security of the American people. Before the order was issued however, more mob attacks rendered eighteen Mormons killed. The church surrendered and the war ended. Joseph Smith was imprisoned awaiting trial for treason along with Sidney Rigdon and other prominent leader of the group. The relationship between the two men became strained, creating a vacuum within which Brigham Young rose to prominence by defending Smith. All escaped custody on the way to trial and fled to Illinois where they then encouraged the membership to settle. Smith sent Rigdon and Young to Europe where they gained many converts, mainly the poor who then emigrated to the United States. A few wealthy converts joined as well. One of renown was Dr. John Bennett who was Illinois’ quartermaster. Using his influence and connections he obtained a charter for the new found city

of Nauvoo (Hebrew meaning “to be beautiful”). Joseph Smith also gained a legal ruling preventing his extradition to Missouri. He had established the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, still in situ today. In Nauvoo, Smith instituted baptisms for the dead and the building of the temple began. For the women he established the Relief Society wherein the sisterhood would be of service to the congregation. He promised them the keys of heaven for their efforts.

In 1843 Smith petitioned the US congress to declare Nauvoo an independent territory with the privilege of calling on federal troops in the event of needful defence. He also lobbied Presidential Candidates from all parties asking for their pledge to protect Mormons. When they would not commit he announced his own candidacy. He was actively practising polygamy at this time as were many followers. He had had a “revelation” that in the kingdom righteous men would have many wives in order to propagate new earths, given as a reward to the faithful by God himself.

In March of 1844 Smith organized the “Council of Fifty”, to determine which laws should and should not be obeyed by Mormons. He also designated that more settlements be established in north and south western states which were, at the time, beyond government rule. This was a foreshadowing of world government; a creating of a theocracy to usher in the Millennial kingdom age. The Millennial Monarchy would see Joseph Smith as King, Priest, and Prophet. This would be enacted by the Council of Fifty.

Later that spring a serious conflict developed between Smith and about six of his leading counterparts. They claimed that Smith had proposed marriage to their wives. They also differed in their economic views for the city of Nauvoo and how it should be managed. Smith ex-communicated them as he thought they were plotting against his life. They began a competing church and secured indictments against him for polygamy and other crimes. The newspaper published this, calling for church reform. It declared Smith’s “Doctrine of Many Gods” as apostate. Indeed, Joseph Smith believed, as do Mormons today, that the Heavenly Father was once a man; mortal upon the earth, but who, through his acquisition of knowledge, rose to the situation of a Deity which he is today. It is thought that all men can achieve this if they live according to Mormon doctrine without wavering. Acceptance of the “divinely appointed” dictates of the current “prophet” ensures this.

There are three degrees of glory in the after-life; the celestial (the highest) the terrestrial (2nd) and the telestial (3rd). After this there is only outer darkness. It is only in the celestial kingdom that one can obtain “God” status. All designations are subject to the judgement of Christ. Entrance to the celestial kingdom is only for those married and sealed in a temple.

Smith had the Nauvoo newspaper destroyed after its articles on him appeared. This incited a riot by the non-Mormons, and Smith declared martial law. He activated the Mormon militia, causing Illinois to mobilize a small group of its own militia. The governor threatened to bring in more soldiers, and Smith fled across the Mississippi River. He returned and surrendered to the state. He was jailed for inciting a riot, but while incarcerated the charges escalated to treason against Illinois. On June 27, 1844 an angry mob stormed the jail. Joseph Smith and his

brother Hyrum were both shot. Hyrum died instantly. Trying to escape through a window, the “prophet” fell to his death after taking many bullets to his body. As he fell he was quoted as crying, “O Lord My God!”

After Joseph Smith

The present day Mormon church has become a huge building project with temples increasing in number globally. It is the writer’s opinion that the fallacy that is the Mormon church is evident, in that over three thousand of Joseph Smith’s “revelations” have either been abandoned or changed since his death. The church has its own publishing company under the name of Deseret Press, its own Children’s Aid Society to ensure Mormon placement of LDS orphans, farms and food warehouses, along with its own Welfare Program. It is one of the fastest growing and most prosperous churches in the world today.

A collection of Joseph Smith’s revelations comprise the publication known as the “Doctrine and Covenants”, which also contains the “Word of Wisdom. “ An example of one of its statements is that hot drinks are not for the body. Smith interpreted this to mean coffee and tea. Therefore Mormons do not partake of these. If they are caught, it is cause for a bishop to revoke a temple recommendation — a slip of paper issued and shown at the temple doors that allows a worthy Mormon entrance. One cannot enter into the celestial kingdom if, at the time of their death, you do not have a temple recommendation slip.

The Mormons also believe that others may have the gift of being a seer. A “patriarchal blessing” is given by a designated member of the church. He is predictably called a patriarch. There is one for each region or “stake”. A stake is a group of “wards” in an area. A ward is a single congregation. The patriarch tells about a member’s life; what has been, and what is to come, supposedly. By gift of divine inspiration they are able to know these things.

All Mormon males aged nineteen are expected, but not forced, to go on a two year mission for the church at their own expense. Therefore, along with tithing ten percent of any and all earnings, boys save from an early age for their mission. They are sent out in twos all over the world to spread the doctrine of Joseph Smith. They are told what to wear, how to wear their hair, what curfew they must abide by, and what time to rise in the morning. Non-compliance with the rules can result in the missionary being sent home to sure disgrace and whispers. One can see the pressure to conform throughout the church. It is a form of control by which children are indoctrinated and trained.

Many of the members of the church follow blindly not knowing the deeper doctrines of the church, such as mentioned in this article. They are told not to question that which is divinely appointed. I was excommunicated in 1996 because I would not comply with what I saw as inaccurate hypocrisy. When I was a Mormon, I was taught that no one had done more for the salvation of mankind than Joseph Smith, save Jesus Christ himself. I say, Outrageous!

The main LDS church no longer sanctions polygamy in this life, but believes it to be a part of the next. The reason is that the laws of the land are now something to

be obeyed. Members are taught to obey kings, magistrates, etc. They are not above political ambition as can be clearly seen with the current Republican Presidential Nominee being a Mormon.

Mary St.Onge (Hamilton Book Rd, ON)

Note: this article follows after previous ones in the series, January and February 2012, but was deferred by the press of other series.

Notes:

1. Sidney Rigdon was one of those who was discussed by John Thomas in his contacts with the Mormons in the 1850's: see "John Thomas, His Friends and His Faith", Chapter 11.

9-11-01

It was, in many ways, a typical start to a working Tuesday. The sky was blue, it was a beautiful late summer morning and everything appeared to be business as usual. On this busy, bustling day in a city so large its citizens often think of it as the center of the universe, the day began as so many others before it. The early morning rituals of newspapers and coffees, breakfasts on the run and finding seats on one of the world's busiest commuter transit systems would, by day's end, witness events that would leave an impact that still reverberates to this day.

Two days earlier, however, an incident as apparently trivial as an 'accidental' moment of thoughtlessness triggered another event which few would ever see, let alone appreciate. You see, a lady (we'll call her Abby) was coming down her basement stairs and slipped on a hairbrush someone in her household had inadvertently left there. The resultant fall was so hard that she fractured her ankle. The trip back from the hospital emergency was on crutches, wearing a cast. She was told to keep off her feet for several days. The angry frustration toward the unknown family culprit only grew as she had to miss her important business appointment at 9:30 a.m. on the 11th.

That same day, someone else who normally was never late for work, stopped off for a coffee but headed back home in apparent need of something forgotten. She never returned to the same work place again.

Not long after this, a third lady was ordered off the train she was taking to work, only to emerge outdoors to watch the horrific events that were unfolding in the skyline above.

That morning, a photocopy technician awoke knowing that his workload was going to be a light one that day. He decided to take a sick day. Just as he was calling his boss, he was told to immediately turn on the TV and watch what was happening to the building where he was scheduled to work.

Somewhere, over the skies to the north in Canada, American air traffic was diverted to its airports for emergency landings. A scared mother and wife was told that her pilot husband would not be able to return to her until it was safe to do so. North America was gripped in shock and fear. The days of security of homeland protection from air attack had now come to an end.

2,977 victims' lives were claimed that fateful day, 11 years ago, but one whose story has not completely been told. It has been estimated that up to 19,000 people were in the Twin Towers that morning on September 11th, 2001 and that, at any given time, 100,000 could have been working at the World Trade Center. What the world saw that eventful day cannot be diminished as to its horror, fear and sadness. Many suffered loss of life while others still grieve the victims they loved. There, but for the Grace of God, would we have gone, the way of all flesh...and how tragic that mankind still dies in brutal, horrific, wasteful and unnecessary circumstances. But, let mankind take heed of this: That although this attack was not diverted, our God saw fit to have allowed for the rescue and evacuation of 1,000s upon 1,000s from this tragedy! May the many survivors praise Him for this!

...and, especially for us, let the unknown story of those mentioned above still elicit a spark of encouragement for them who are His, called according to His purpose. For, you see, these are the first-hand accounts of our sisters and brothers in Christ who had no way of knowing beforehand the events that were to take place, and were oblivious to the shadow of the unforeseen Hand of Providence in their lives. Many are the plans in the minds of men, but it's God who will direct as He sees fit. What to most who have observed this event in history would consider barely a footnote, we see as the invisible hand behind the scenes protecting and guiding us in His love. He is still at work in our lives, brethren and sisters, watching over us even when we're not aware. Let this provoke our hearts to witness evermore, so to the fact that our God is an Awesome God, Who is able to perform more than we ask or think of Him.

Let this be an opportunity to be renewed in thanksgiving to our Heavenly Father for His steadfast love, no matter the circumstances, and put in perspective what we consider to be of such importance in our fellowship. Let us look for Him in each day's journey and rejoice in another day of life. He hasn't lost sight of us and it is our solemn duty to remind each other that God is active and wants to be part of our lives. He tells us that He will be found of those who seek for Him with all their hearts. Let us give thanks for all He has given and continues to give.

Much has happened since that day, 11 years ago: the collapse of governments, the instability of western economies, the capture and execution of 9/11's master-mind, the escalation of anti-Israeli sentiments. We are on the verge of Christ's return. Let us further be impressed with the need to keep our garments clean, to witness to this ever-dying world of our God, who has done marvelous things for us, and to encourage our brethren and sisters that our King will come!

Post Script: The first time this talk was given, a visiting seminar student in the audience related afterwards, that he had been living in New York during the time of the destruction of the WTC. He had planned a visit to the towers the day of the bombing, but was told by his employer that he couldn't get the time off until the week after. Originally from Mexico, he moved to Toronto several years after this incident, came to our "Learn to Read the Bible" seminars and within a few months of this exhortation was baptized.

Peter Wisniewski (Church Street Ecclesia, Toronto, ON)

A Christadelphian Visits Qatar

Through a combination of circumstances, the author found himself in Qatar. Following are his observations and matters learned from discussions there.

As a long-time resident of Jamaica, I found articles in recent issues of *The Tidings* on Islam to be interesting and, in some cases, enlightening. As I am sure most readers know, there are several former Muslims in many of the Caribbean ecclesias, and even a few in North American ecclesias.

I found the review very helpful during a visit to the Sunni/Wahhabi Gulf state of Qatar. Within the Manhattan-like skyline and among the three million autos on the streets of the capital, Doha, I shared fellowship with a Christadelphian who is a Qatari national and is in the service of His Eminence Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim bin Jabar Al Thani, a member of the royal family. Qatar is an absolute monarchy under Shari'a law. As a result there is no problem of theft. We experienced this for ourselves as we left an expensive camera (not mine) in a busy restaurant. The manager later told us that no one dare touch it, as if found with it, he would lose his right hand (left if left-handed).

I would like to add a few things which I learned about Islam while in Qatar as a rather late postscript to the series in *The Tidings*.

A multitude of wives

Muhammad said, "There is no celibacy in Islam", and for healthy males marriage is obligatory. Everybody "knows" that Muslims can have up to four wives simultaneously, as well as concubines. This is custom, but it is not law. Many wealthy Qataris (and today there are thousands of them, due to our thirst for fuel) have many more than four, as well as concubines, mainly obtained from poor non-Muslim societies. This is permissible because Mohammad had at least twelve wives, plus an unknown number of slave girls. After his first wife died, he had a rather bizarre habit of marrying as many widows of his dead enemies as he could get inside his house in Medina.

The attire of the women

It is often suggested in the west that veiling of women is Arab custom and not original Islamic law. This is not so. The Quran lists those who are allowed to look on a "believing Muslim woman" unveiled. I asked why so many concubines went around, even in the market, unveiled, and in the home much less than unveiled. I was told that they were "unbelieving women". Some of the concubines had stunningly beautiful, gentle faces, and wonderful eyes.

It seemed to me that many wealthy Qataris were trying to show off and impress. I noticed, especially in upper class circles, beneath the *chadoors* and *burkas* an almost incredible collection of jewelry on the women.

I was also amazed at the fantastic amounts of gold, diamonds and precious jewels on display in the open-air souks (markets), a certain temptation to thieves. But then I was reminded again that there is Shari'a law! Another thing did surprise

me a little. However many wives and girls a man had, they seemed happy, holding hands in public, and laughing naturally. There seemed to be, at least on the surface, little of the jealousy that marred the life of Jacob through his multiple partners.

Religious controversies

I acquired many insights into Muslim theology, and some debates on theological issues proved in discussion to be very close to unresolved and non-fundamental issues that have troubled the Christadelphians brotherhood for 150 years and more. One of the most bitter in Islam is the doctrine of contamination and guilt by association. Should we expel sinners from the elect in order to maintain the “purity of the truth” (the same phrases appear regularly!). Must we “come out and be separate” in every aspect of life and worship, and use the church (or mosque) as a road block rather than a gate to the sheepfold? Or does it mean a *moral* separation from “the world” and its temptations to sin, while still living in it? Muslims, like Christians, have disputed over this for centuries.

Because the faithful who are destined to Paradise must be kept pure and separate, the Kharijites withdrew from other Shi’ites, and have a fellowship restricted to the just and the holy. On the other hand the Mu’tazila believe that a sinner is neither a believer nor an unbeliever and that only Allah (God) can decide what his fate will be.

Muslim Statement of Faith

The Muslims’ principal statement of faith, the Creed of al-Ash’ari, is more dogmatic than I imagined on three points that rarely emerged in private discussions. It commits believers to:

- After death, the “supernatural beings” Munkar and Nakir “interrogate the dead in their tombs”. Since one Muslim dies every two seconds, the two beings are kept very busy or there is a heavy backlog (Clause 45).¹
- A very supernatural Shatan (Satan). “Satan whispers to people, makes them doubt and makes them mad” (Clause 51).
- An extraordinarily ‘high’ concept of the absolute sovereignty of God that makes even an arch-Calvinist seem liberal. A person has no power to do anything or not do anything. “There is no creator except God. The evil actions of human beings are created by God. The good works of human beings are created by God. Human beings are not able to create anything” (Clause 16).

Really, how extreme can human beings become?

Purity of the faith

Discussion with Sahhabis was fascinating to me because they constantly emphasize the need to “return to the original purity of the word of Allah and original Islam”, and they talk about “the pioneers” (that’s the term they use). To them, going back to the original means ever harsher and harsher laws and punishments for apostasy. Pulling up the weeds and attacking Shatan (Satan, Americans and Europeans ²) is the main occupation of most Wahhabi Imams.

The endless feuding between Qadarites and Jbrites over pre-destination and free-will, and the eternal arguments between Hanbalites and Sufis over amendments to the fifty or so clauses in the Constitution of Medina and the Sunni statement of faith and styles of worship (whether to worship in solemnity and reverence or with joy and jubilation), are both extraordinary close parallels to disputes “to no profit” among ourselves. (Not so long ago, in the UK, I visited an ecclesia only to find that it was in the “no organs fellowship” about which I was totally ignorant.)

An Islamic campaign

An interesting final note is in regard to the Muslims handing out tracts in the various shopping malls. They seemed quite knowledgeable about the problems in the various Christian denominations and were ready to discuss on various topics. I was struck with their joyful and humble attitude that we could take as an example to ourselves. Somehow they seemed to know about Christadelphians and noted that “you can’t win unless you’re united”. Where did they get that from?

Alan Eyre (Oxford, UK)

Notes:

1. It must be acknowledged that it is a similar conceptual problem which led many early Christadelphians, and some today, to envisage a forty year period for “the quick and the dead” to be judged in Sinai in “the Last Day”.
2. Unlike the Sunnis, many Shi’ites conceptualize Satan much as we do. The Americans are Satan, and not just the agents of a supernatural Satan.

Affliction in God’s Plan

Though heaven and earth appear to be against us, let us not falter for a single moment in our confidence in God. That we are defamed, ill-treated, impoverished, bereaved, or laid low by disease is no evidence that God’s lovingkindness has forsaken us.

Affliction does not exclude divine favor. This truth is enforced throughout the Word.

Look at the demonstration afforded by the history of the apostle Paul alone. Neither his faithfulness nor Christ’s love for him admit of question. “I have fought a good fight” (2Tim 4:7) was the apostle’s last confession. And can it be denied?

“In stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a day and a night have I been in the deep, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils among false brethren, in hunger and thirst, in cold and nakedness... reviled, defamed, made as the filth of the world, the outscouring of all things” (2Cor 11:23-27; 1Cor 4:13).

With such an experience in view, let us not grow weary nor “faint in our minds”... but rather “lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees” (Heb 12:3, 12).

A.T. Jannaway

Book Review

History of the Washington DC Christadelphian Ecclesia by Ronald Hicks

This little book is a surprising gem. Meticulously researched and well-illustrated, it is not only a history (in much detail) of the ecclesia and its members, but is an account of one of the most complex fellowship histories any ecclesia could have. Founded in the 1850's by followers of John Thomas, we read of its near demise in the American Civil war, and its revival amid frequent visits by John Thomas, these due at least partially to the presence in Washington at one time or another of his father and three of his siblings. Many prominent Christadelphians also visited the city, so among the stories of its members we have brief glimpses such brethren as Robert Roberts, Robert Ashcroft, and Henry Sulley.

But the most interesting story to me is the way the little ecclesia fell into the fold of firstly Thomas Williams, and so joined what we would now call the Unamended fellowship. It then aligned with AH Zilmer (of the Faith Fellowship), for which it was disfellowshipped by the larger Unamended group. The tiny little group it was joined with then only consisted of the Baltimore "Faith" Ecclesia, a group in Richmond, and the Bethany Ecclesia in rural Virginia. It also shared some fellowship at one time with Robert Huggins, a former Christadelphian who was pastor of the CGAF church in Cleveland. Finally, it joined the Amended fellowship in 1954. (The Faith Fellowships' only remnant is now the First Christadelphian Church of Catonsville, near Baltimore).

Many other prominent Christadelphians have passed through the city, so it is not just an account of the local ecclesia, but a microcosm on the community, written in a thoroughly engaging way.

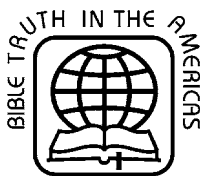
Peter Hemingray

The book can be obtained from the Author, 4909 Newport Ave, Bethesda, MD 20816 (ronaldphicks@prodigy.net). Price \$8 US including Postage in North America.

"And if I perish, I perish" (Esth 4:16)

The story of Esther is an exciting drama to read, especially the events which followed her words here. The lesson for us is that there is always at least one pivotal point in everyone's life, a crossroads where we must choose a pathway, leading to a decision which becomes a life-changing event. To make no decision at all is itself a decision! It is a decision to go along with whatever life offers, with no specific destination in view. From a spiritual point of view that is what the great majority are doing, refusing to decide whether there is a God or not. If they have no time for God, then God will have no time for them. The day will come when that really matters, in fact, when nothing else matters at all.

(David Caudery)



Bible Mission News

Link Visit to Guyana 2012 by Bro. Ted and Dolores Sleeper

Part 1: Bible School

We arrived on the shores of Guyana in time for the annual Bible School hosted this year by the Eccles Ecclesia. When the presiding brother for the day acknowledged us, he welcomed us home again. For us Guyana is like a second home. We grew up there spiritually. We have watched a generation depart and welcomed a new generation. (We have memories and stories of brothers and sisters that are largely unknown to many of the young people in Guyana.) So, we took our seats among our brethren once again.

Bible School

The school was supported by all six Guyana ecclesias, with the majority from the three Demerara ecclesias, as they are close by. The Bible school speakers were bre. Clive Drepaul (Brooklyn, NY) and Ian Neblett (Panama). The classes were well received and thought provoking. Both brothers were accompanied by their wives: sisters Christine and Nishla. Sis. Nishla also gave a Sisters' class, which we all enjoyed.



At the Bible School in the Eccles Hall



Sisters preparing the lunch for the Bible School

The flow of the Bible School was disrupted a bit Saturday afternoon as many drove out to a village on the East coast of the Demerara river to attend a memorial service. The service was held underneath the family home of young Sis. Shellana Baynes who was baptized less than two years ago. Her sudden death was devastating to her fiancé Bro. Rayon. We squeezed under tarps, strung over the yard, heavy with rain and scattered with streams of water bursting through small

holes. Between crouching as the weight of the water reduced the height clearance of the tarp and dodging the streams of water pouring through, we wondered if the tarp would give way under the weight of the water! It was heart wrenching to see the grief etched in the faces around us, but most especially of our dear Bro. Rayon.

As we made the return trip to Georgetown, we were amazed to see waves breaching the sea wall and flooding one side of the road, blocking the flow of traffic. Georgetown is about nine feet below sea level and at the mercy of the ancient Dutch sea wall.

The Sunday schools had agreed that each would prepare the parable of the sower to present at the Bible school. The presentations were creative and unique. Ruimveldt was the most inspirational. This Sunday school is not an ecclesial Sunday school, but comes solely from outreach in a very poor area of Georgetown. Just over 20 children participated with the encouragement of their Sunday school teachers. It was delightful to see the earnestness of all the children from all of the Sunday schools.



The Ruimveldt Sunday school children during their presentation.

Another special activity was open-air talks given on three evenings of the Bible school. These were public outreach talks given from the front yard and veranda of Bro. Berry and Sis. Elaine Williams' home using very loud speakers to penetrate the surrounding homes with the Gospel message. Having learned from many years in Guyana to expect the unexpected, one of the nights we were driven to the shelter of the veranda of the house due to rain falling and another night, in the midst of

the first talk, the next-door neighbor blasted her *louder* speakers with music to celebrate her husband's birthday. Ted begged her to turn it down for an hour so we could continue, which thankfully, she agreed to do. The last night a neighbor lingered in conversation with one of the speakers for nearly an hour after the final talk. This gave everyone a boost of encouragement.

Part 2: Berbice

Travel to Berbice

Since the opening of a floating bridge across the Berbice River, travel time to Berbice has been reduced to a little less than two hours, unless, of course, you happen to travel when the bridge is open to river traffic and closed to vehicles. Then your travel time easily is doubled.

New Amsterdam

Each year we are so thankful to stay with our widowed sister, Bibi Rupenarine (nee Hakh), who was finishing high school when we first came to Guyana. She is an amazing example of steadfastness, despite hardship, discouragement, persecution and tragedy. We admire and respect her for her devoted service to our Lord. May God continue to strengthen her.



Sis. Neisha Hanif
1931-2012

We once again convened at Sis. Neisha Hanif's daughter's home for our annual Breaking of Bread with Sis. Neisha. She has been housebound for more than eight years. Under the care of her daughter Sis. Annie, Sis. Neisha looked contented and better than she has in years. Hence, much to our great shock, we received a message a month later that she had died suddenly. She now is indeed at peace awaiting the resurrection.

In Guyana we also learn patience and flexibility. While heavy rains delayed us starting our day of visiting, they also forced home a couple of brothers that otherwise

would have been working! We very much enjoy seeing the children of our brothers and sisters as they grow up. We have watched them change from toddlers to questioning young adults searching for answers and challenging the foundations of their beliefs. We pray that as they emerge from this their spiritual foundation will be stronger because of it.

In Berbice, unlike Demerara, many of the sisters are at home



New Amsterdam Bible class

caring for their children and keeping the home without the benefit of the many conveniences we have to lessen the labor and time involved. Our brothers and sisters labor to provide for their families in many different ways; they are cane-cutters, civil servants, nurses, teachers, supervisors, farmers, market vendors, shop keepers, etc.

Plegt Anker

We journeyed the 20 miles to Plegt Anker in just under three hours, part way with taxi, part walking, and the final leg in our Bro. Sam's vehicle. The changes at the Plegt Anker

farm there were nothing short of amazing! We were delighted to meet Oris and Shinele Chisholm, now residing at the Hammond's former residence and caretaking and farming the property. Last year, the house was occupied by more than 200 marabunta nests (a wasp with a nasty, painful sting), bats and wood ants (termites). One year later the vermin were virtually gone and evidence of agricultural production visible. The results of the dedicated hard work and perseverance of these two are a wonderful testimony to what these two have done, while attending to the needs of their five month-old son! Oris was raised in the Plegt Anker Sunday school, as were many of his many relatives. As a teen he left the area 'seeking his fortune' and this last year returned to his roots and his home. Praise and thanks



Newly baptized Bro. Oris and Sis. Shinele with son Junior.



Rasheed family (minus daughter Sarah) at their shop under their home.

be to God, he and his wife were both baptized the end of May! That will swell the number of brothers in the ecclesia to four!

Their residence is in a state of some disrepair and in need of structural and safety improvements so that they can remain there for the long term. Parts of the floor and exterior walls on the weather side are so rotted that they have stuffed newspapers in the gap. They are a delightful and hardworking couple who have brought encouragement to the isolated and struggling ecclesia in Plegt Anker.

Kilcoy

Kilcoy is now the most thriving ecclesia in Berbice. When we first came to Guyana in 1971, it was considered a satellite of New Amsterdam. In the mid-80s it boasted a membership of over 40 brothers and sisters and a large Sunday school and active CYC. Then immigration to Canada opened and most of the former members now attend various Canadian ecclesias. By the grace of God, they have slowly recovered over the last 10 years, creeping up in membership to about 16. The warm-hearted and welcoming spirit of Kilcoy continues. Sis. Seerojnie, Sis. Leah and Bro. Charlie are the only ones left from the original members. Sis. Seerojnie and her husband,

Lenny, open their home to us every year. Lenny's mother was a member of the ecclesia before her sudden death from cancer about 15 years ago. They are a delightful couple with whom we enjoy many Bible conversations each year.

The oldest daughter of the Ndjelekulu family was married last December and the next daughter lives in Georgetown while attending the University of Guyana. The remaining family of five has settled comfortably in Kilcoy and finally lives without the fear of expulsion; they are now all naturalized residents of Guyana, although their original home was the Congo. It is astounding to consider all the Africans scattered throughout the world, displaced by the violence and warfare that continues to ravage Africa. Some of these are our brothers and sister many who learned the Gospel in refuge camps.



Sisters' class at joint Berbice service.

Each year as we depart Guyana, we consider the spiritual encouragement and brotherly love we receive from our brothers and sisters there. We feel inadequate and undeserving and yet so richly blessed. If there are any among you who could spend a month, or better a year, away from home, the brothers and sisters in Guyana would greatly appreciate your ministrations. And, we can say confidently from personal experience,

you will return home to your ecclesia with far more than you ever were able to give!

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

Baptism in Santiago de Chile

The small ecclesia in Chile has been through its ups and downs over the last few years, however, the last week of May 2012 has been one of great encouragement. After several challenging days tracking down a suitable body of water in the deepening Chilean winter, and coordinating everyone's movements, Bro. Cristian Ivan Zamora Castañeda was baptised into the saving name of Jesus Christ.

Cristian is very familiar with the Bible, having spent much of his life a Jehovah's Witness. However the questions that mounted over the years were increasingly met with ultimatum rather than answer and for three or four years Cristian continued with a strong faith, but with unanswered questions and without brothers and sisters with whom he could regularly meet.

It is positive to note that Cristian's first contact with the Truth was through a Facebook group. Although not a universally embraced medium, on this occasion

it served as the vehicle which linked our new brother with those who led him through his study of the true Gospel.

The active members in Chile now number five, with three living in Santiago and two in the southern city of Temuco. The brethren in Santiago meet in a small rented office and are accompanied by three serious students, who — as can be seen in the accompanying photo, our new brother Cristian at the right — make up a group that generates a warm environment of mutual appreciation of God's word in this city, which at this time of year can be a pretty cold place.

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



**Santiago Ecclesia,
our new brother Cristian
is the tall man standing
to the right in the photo.
Sis. Christian Alderson is
beside him.**

The Truth in El Salvador

Bro. Doug Hawthorne from the Simi Hills, California ecclesia shares the following information about his recent trip to El Salvador.

After expressing an interest to participate in a CBMA mission effort to Central America, I was connected with Bro. Don Luff of Brantford, Ontario, and he gently encouraged me in the weeks ahead of the planned visit in late May. I prepared three classes using PowerPoint in English, and set about to translate them to Spanish using Google, as it had been over 50 years since I took Spanish in High School and I was a bit rusty. I found that using Google was far from successful, as it had trouble translating the incomplete sentences in my 'bullet points' of the presentation. Google translated the Catholic Pope as 'El Papa Frite', or in other words, the big French fry. A better plan was to engage my colleagues at work, most of whom were from Central America originally. They were very helpful and showed interest especially in the "Mark of the Beast" presentation.

On landing in San Salvador, I was greeted by an exuberant Bro. Manuel and Sis. Sylvia Fernandez. The warm hugs and welcome was quite indicative of the reception that we would soon receive from the members of the three ecclesias we planned to visit over the next few days. Bro. Don joined us in the airport and we set off to San Salvador to stay at the home of Bro. Manuel and Sis. Sylvia.

Saturday we traveled to the Sonsonate Ecclesia, where about 30 members including children, were delighted to see us. Many of them spoke better English than I could



Bro. Doug being met at the airport by Bro. Manuel and Sis. Sylvia Fernandez

Bro. Don helped me present the class on “The Crossing of the Red Sea”, and we were able to show a probable crossing point by Israel of the Gulf of Aqaba capped with a mini-video of divers locating coral encrusted structures of chariot wheels and axles. The Ecclesia managed with my feeble Spanish, which was interpreted by Bro. Don, who also presented a Bible Study of the “Vineyard of the Lord”. The day finished up with a hot meal and warm fellowship together.



The ecclesia at Sonsonate

On Sunday, many of the members of the Sonsonate and Usulután Ecclesias joined us at the San Salvador Ecclesial Hall for Memorial Service. There were about 120 Bre. and Sis. including a goodly number of children. All of the people were quite warm and friendly and the bonding together of brothers and sisters in the one faith is something that is quite exhilarating to experience. It certainly helps to build one’s faith in the Lord, and demonstrates the fact that we are truly one family.

On Tuesday we visited the Usulután Ecclesia located about two hours to the south. Set in a small community replete with chickens and dogs, we found a very faithful group who had labored together for more than a week prior to our arrival. Originally a small house, the hall was transformed with a new concrete floor, fresh paint inside and outside, a new electrical service, and then a podium and benches were added. Outside, a new patio cover and sanitary facilities had been completed.

We were told that all of the members had participated in readying the hall for this special day. Oven baked chicken and rice were prepared in the outdoor brick oven, and was enjoyed by all. Bro. Don presented the “Christadelphians: Who are We and What do We Believe?” and I presented the “Mark of the Beast”. The classes were well received and the warm fellowship continued long after it turned dark. Bro. Julio Garcia expressed everyone’s thanks to the CBMA for its generosity in helping with the hall refurbishing. His closing prayer was filled with thanksgiving and tearful emotions, and it touched every heart.



Yes, the Truth is quite alive in El Salvador, and what a wonderful experience it was.

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

**The Usulután
Ecclesia**

The Road to Panama

Bro. Doug Hawthorne continued his trip from El Salvador to Panama — and these are his thoughts from this experience.

Flying from El Salvador to Panama City, Bro. Don Luff and I were met by Bro. Luis Sobles of the Colón Ecclesia. The weather in tropical Panama was a bit rainy and saturated with high humidity, and quite different from the climate of California. Yet again the warm greetings of a brother in the one faith melts those differences, and we were welcomed into his and Sis. Vanessa’s home.



On Thursday, Bro. Luis took me to the Gatun Locks of the Panama Canal and we watched the tugs ready the ships to pass through the locks built in 1913. Six locomotives pull the ship ever so carefully through the locks as the ships move from the level of Gatun Lake down 87 feet to sea level. So tight is the clearance on either side that the huge ships are only 12-15 inches from the walls.

For this trip, the Colón Ecclesia had

planned a special effort on Saturday featuring four classes. The activity was promoted in several ways, including placing 50 posters into local businesses, distributing 500 handbills, radio announcements, newspaper ads, and guests that were personally invited. Distributing the handbills along the main street in town on Friday, we found that passersby were eager to take the handbills and all were distributed in less than an hour. An air-conditioned Banquet Hall had been secured, and Saturday morning all of the members of the Colón Ecclesia were readying the facility for the classes. Apparently true to the custom of Panamanians, no guests were in attendance at the 11:00 AM start time. By 11:45, however, the first wave had arrived, and guests were streaming in all day until there were 25 visitors, and 13 of their children. That was double the size of the 12 members, and 6 of their children.

There were three classes on “The Messiah” given by Bro. Don and I wound up the day with the PowerPoint presentation “The Crossing of the Red Sea”. The guests had so bonded with the members that they willingly participated in the group photo afterwards. Unlike guests to our own ecclesia in Simi Hills, California, this group found the literature table especially interesting and every piece of the 200 or so pamphlets sent down by Bro. and Sis. Jim and Jean Hunter were taken. Six of the guests returned on Sunday for Memorial Service, and stayed for the presentation on “The Miracle of Israel”. In our home ecclesia, guests are often quiet and reserved but here in Colón, the guests were talkative, participated in the activities, joined



in the group picture, and actually made the day an enjoyable one for everyone.

Sunday night we moved to Gamboa and visited Bro. and Sis. Jay and Llori Gibson of the Panama City Ecclesia whose home is on the edge of Gatun Lake. We shared the classes with them, and the next day we watched the myriad of ships pass by just a stone's throw from their patio. As our trip drew to a close, I thought of how wonderful it is to share fellowship with brethren and sisters I had not known before, but now have fond memories of, and wish us all to be together in the kingdom.

Addresses for Bequests and Donations

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

News & Notices

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

BOSTON, MA

It is with sadness that we announce the passing of Bro. Bill Caddell on June 26, 2012 at age 94. Bro. Bill was a long time member of the Boston Ecclesia. He was a devoted and loving brother, and his wisdom and kind-hearted spirit will be sorely missed.

With joy, however, we announce the baptism of PETER DAVIS. Peter is the son of Bro. Steve and Sis. Sandy Davis. He was baptized into the saving name of Jesus Christ on May 27, 2012. May the Lord be with him on his walk to the kingdom.

On the weekend of March 31-April 1, 2012 we held our 21st annual Spring study weekend. We'd like to thank Bro. Jason Cicero (Meriden, CT) for his efforts in leading us in the study of Galatians.

In addition, we'd like to thank Bre. Trevor Bingham (Mississauga West, ON), Paul Melanson (Southern NH), Steve Stewart (San Diego, CA), Jim Dillingham (Granite State, NH) and Tom Robideau (Worcester, MA) for their recent exhortations on our behalf.

Jim Sullivan

ECHO LAKE, NJ

We sincerely thank our Bre. James Mansfield (Enfield, Aust.), Peter Forbes (Glenfield, UK), and Steve Cheetham (Moorestown, NJ) for their words of exhortation on their recent visits.

Our summer schedule finishes September 9, 2012, and on September 16, 2012, the Sunday school recommences at 10.00 am and the Memorial Service at 11.00 am.

We have been pleased and privileged to have the company of a number of visiting brothers and sisters and we have welcomed them around the table of the Lord including: Margan Packie, Virginia Packie, Carolyn Antonaccio, David and Maryann Jorgensen (Union, NJ); James and Glenys Mansfield, Jeff and Leah and Nick Hanns (Enfield Aust.); Curtis Brittle (Cranston, RI); Matthew Link (Washington DC); Seon Levius (Barbados); Tom and Sally Davis (Pomona, CA); Peter and Norma Forbes (Glenfield, UK); and Steve Cheetham (Moorestown, NJ).

Stewart Marsden

JASONVILLE, IN

We are very happy to report the baptism on July 12, 2012, of MICAH RANDOLPH HATCH, son of Bro. Jordan and Sis. Susan Hatch, brother to Sis. Holly and Kayte Hatch, and grandson of Bro. Ted and Sis. Lois Plew. We pray for the Lord's support for him on his walk toward the kingdom.

Ted Plew

KAMLOOPS, BC

God's ecclesia here in Kamloops has had a busy year. We are situated in the interior of British Columbia, near the junction of three highways and therefore we see many visitors throughout the year. We find this a great blessing from our heavenly Father as we are a small ecclesia of 19 members.

We were very excited to have Bro. Chris and Sis. Naomi Winter transferred back with us from the Victoria Ecclesia in March of 2011. They left here for Victoria, BC for a two year sojourn. We welcome them and their boys, Marcus and Micah. We thank our Lord for this active and committed family in our ecclesia.

We rejoiced in the birth of Olivia Lauren to Bro. Jesse and Sis. Lori Fletcher on October 29, 2011. We pray that God will help our ecclesia in assisting Jesse and Lori raise her as a godly seed.

We thank God for the provision of many brothers to minister unto us in these last days before our Lord's return. We thank Bre. Graeme Osborn, Skip Bartholomew, Jason Knorr, Joshua Bartholomew (Okanagan Central, BC); Clement Hart (Maple Ridge, BC); Bill Hlina, Mark Higgs (Vernon, BC); Wesley Butler, Greg Bennett (Victoria, BC); and Colin Hollamby (Wakerie, South Aust.). Their studies have encouraged us as we walk toward God's kingdom.

In September of 2011 our ecclesia hosted a three day bible exhibition to commemorate the Four Hundredth anniversary of the King James Bible. We were able to obtain the exhibition that resides with the Victoria Ecclesia. Bro. Greg Bennett, and Bro. Malcolm Shrimpton with his sister wife, Josie, brought the Bibles from Victoria and were a great asset in setting up the display in the space we had secured for the exhibition. We were able to house the exhibition in an empty store in a local mall at no cost. The manager of the mall was very excited to have us use the space. Bro. Malcolm spent an evening with our ecclesia 'prepping' us to lead visitors through the history of King James Bible. We designed and printed a glossy four colour, two page advertising sheet which was sent to thirty thousand homes in Kamloops. We were so pleased to discover that the local library was having a book sale at the same mall the same weekend and we feel that many book lovers came to our store front because of it.

We advertised the Bible Exhibition as well as the Learn to Read the Bible Effectively classes in our brochure. We had about three hundred go through our exhibition over a three day period, Thursday to Saturday. Amazingly we reconnected with people who had attended a Christadelphian Sunday school or lectures years ago! It was a stimulating and spiritually uplifting three days for all who were able to spend some time with the display and talking to visitors. We had five attendants start our LTRTBE classes, who had not been to the exhibition! Two attendants came right through to the end and felt they had learned so much. They were so pleased that they insisted on providing the tea for the last evening for us! They wanted to thank us for all they had learned and enjoyed. They are not attending our gospel proclamation at this point but are on our mailing list for an invitation to future gospel proclamation activities we offer.

Our ecclesia was richly blessed by the whole special effort of the bible exhibition. We thank our Heavenly Father for the opportunities He gives us to proclaim the Gospel of Salvation which has the power to save.

Pam Fletcher

KITCHENER-WATERLOO, ON

We are very happy to report the baptism of EMILY ANN ROBINSON on Sunday, July 22, 2012. Emily is the younger daughter of Bro. Ed and Sis. Helen Robinson. Emily had been assigned to schools at Kitchener-Waterloo since her family joined the major about 12 years ago.

We rented a public swimming pool for the occasion and more than fifty brothers, sisters and friends attended the event. The reading was taken from 1 Peter 1, and the address was on the theme of being “born again” and the significance of a new life in Jesus Christ. The unaccompanied singing of hymn number 333 immediately before the baptism was lovely. Following the baptism the memorial service was held at our usual venue when Bro. Mike LeDuke gave an exhortation that was encouraging to Emily and all those who attended. We pray that God’s blessing will be upon Emily in her new life.

Martin Webster

LONDON, ON

During June and July, we enjoyed a visit from Bro. Peter and Sis. Norma Forbes (Glenfield, UK). Bro. Peter was scheduled to give a study day but unfortunately was delayed due to travel problems. He did however give several talks during his stay and we thank him for his ministrations, which were of great spiritual benefit to our ecclesia.

In accordance with her request, we have transferred Sis. Lois Vandenberg to the Brampton, ON Ecclesia. Sis. Lois has been a faithful member of the London ecclesia since her baptism in 1973 and we are very sorry to lose her. We also transfer Sis. Marley Higham-Elliott to the Toronto West, ON Ecclesia and commend her in love to her new ecclesia.

We are looking forward to our annual Fraternal Gathering on September 15, 2012, when Bro. Frank Abel will be speaking on, “God Manifestation”.

Ron Kidd

NORTHERN VIRGINIA, VA

The Northern Virginia Christadelphian Ecclesia celebrated its first year of regular meetings in April 2012. We thank God for his continued blessings upon His ecclesia in Northern Virginia and worldwide.

We have been blessed with visits by Bro. Andrew and Sis. Erin Amis and family, and Sis. Heather Locke (Washington DC); Bro. Tom and Sis. Leslie Colby, Bro. Matt and Sis. Carmel Colby, and Bro. Luke and Sis. Laura Colby (Hamilton Book Road, ON). We thank Bro. Andrew for his words of exhortation.

We are extremely pleased to welcome by way of transfer Sis. Elizabeth Huff formerly of the Sarasota, FL meeting; Bro. Jason and Sis. Stephanie Fertig, formerly of the Washington DC meeting; and Bro. Noah Bradburn, formerly of the Shenandoah, VA meeting.

The Northern Virginia Ecclesia has decided to begin our meetings at a new time. Our Sunday School will begin at 9:30 am, and our Memorial Service will start at 10:30 am. Everyone wishing to visit with the Northern Virginia Ecclesia can contact

us through our ecclesial email at: nva.ecclesia@gmail.com, or call Bro. David Fertig at: 703-644-6311.

David Fertig

OTTAWA, ON

Over the past year the Ottawa Ecclesia has welcomed brothers and sisters from various Ontario ecclesias, as well as Oman and Jamaica. We were sorry to lose two members by transfer: Sis. Elaine Easson to Vancouver, and Sis. Lesley Hagar and family to Cambridge. We commend them in love to their new ecclesial homes.

We thank Bro. David Levin (Baltimore, MD) for thought provoking studies on the early chapters of Genesis, based on his book *The Creation Text*. During his May 26-27, 2012, study weekend, we benefitted from the fellowship of many visiting brothers and sisters; in addition, a number of interested friends attended.

In a small ecclesia such as ours, long-term visitors make a big difference. Sis. Hannah Riddle (Brantford, ON) has been completing her university studies here. Bro. Aubry Riddle (Brantford, ON) joined us for a college work term this spring. Bro. Dan LeDuke (Kitchener/Waterloo, ON) has been working in Ottawa for several months.

Charles Archard

PARIS AVENUE, OH

The members of the Paris Avenue, OH Ecclesia have enjoyed fellowship with brothers and sisters from other ecclesias during the first semester of 2012. Words of exhortation were given by Bre. Dave Pommer and Fred Telles (Pittsburgh, PA). Bro. Larry Cooper (Seattle, WA) gave us a Wednesday Night Bible Class on the topic of, "Forgiveness".

For our Spring 2012 study weekend we were led in classes dealing with, "Government in Exile." Our speaker was Bro. Ken Langston (Denver, CO). Visitors attended from Indiana, Michigan, Virginia, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Colorado and several provinces in Canada.

We rejoice in the birth of Nora Gail Canady to Sis. Pauli and Bro. Jordan Canady on June 18, 2012.

Upcoming events this year, Lord willing, will be our Fall Study Weekend on September 15-16, 2012, with Bro. Matt Norton (Lismore, NSW, Aust.). His topic will be, "The Return of Christ". Bro. Stan Isbell (North Houston, TX) is scheduled for our Fall Study Weekend in 2013 if our Lord and Master has not returned.

For further information on either of these study weekends, contact Bro. Everett Muniz by phone at: 330-497-2811; or by email at: everettmuniz@gmail.com.

Jack Vogelgesang

ROGUE VALLEY, OR

With great joy, we announce the baptisms into the saving name of Jesus Christ, of MARTHA SUGGS, daughter of Sis. Karen Suggs, and of JESSICA YOSHIDA, the daughter of Bro. Randy and Sis. Susanna Yoshida. We also welcome by transfer to our ecclesia, Sis. Laura Griffith and her son, Bro. Ross Griffith from our sister ecclesia in this area: Jackson County, OR.

We thank the following brethren for their ministrations with study days over the last year: Bro. Frank Able (Book Road, ON) on, "The 400th Anniversary of the King

James Bible”; Bro. Jim Cowie (Brisbane, Aust.) on, “How God Deals with the Jacob in all of Us”; Bro. Bob Lloyd on, “If God be for Us” (Verdugo Hills, CA); Bro. Jonathan Wisniewski (Thousand Oaks, CA) on, “The Memorial Emblems”; and Bro. John McConville (Reseda, CA) on, “Introduction to Isaiah”.

Presently, our ecclesia is making preparations for the Rogue River Bible School being held at the end of July, with Bre. David Jennings (Pomona, CA), Jim Cowie, and Stephen Mansfield (Adelaide, Australia). It should be noted that the Recording Brother for our ecclesia is Bro. Randy Yoshida, and all correspondence should be sent to him.

Henry Wisniewski

SHELburne, ON

It has been a busy 12 months for the Shelburne Ecclesia. We are continuing with a weekly Bible Reading seminar for our young people and their friends, held in the local public library. Other activities for our young people have included our annual Sunday school entertainment and picnic, held jointly with the Orangeville Ecclesia.

We have been very happy to welcome via transfer Bro. Joe and Sis. Kate Abel from Orangeville, along with their children Kyla, Kailyn, Serenity and Ember. Also Bro. Ben and Sis. Lydia Abel have joined us from North Bay, along with their daughter Ellie.

We have also been blessed with two recent baptisms. JOSEPH DAVIN is the son of Bro. Jim and Sis. Ruth Anne Davin, and KURTIS RUNGE is the son of Bro. Gerhard and Sis. Carolyn Runge. Both young men have grown up in our CYC and Sunday school programs since their parents accepted the truth after attending the “Learn to Read the Bible Effectively Seminars” held locally by our ecclesia over a decade ago. It has been a real blessing and source of encouragement for our ecclesia to see this next generation take on the saving name of Christ. Both Joe and Kurtis gave excellent confessions of faith and wrote beautiful letters to the ecclesia requesting baptism.

Chris Sales

WASHINGTON MUSIC STUDY DAY — BRO. PHIL MUNDEY MAKE THE VOICE OF HIS PRAISE TO BE HEARD!

October 5-7, 2012 Please join us for an uplifting weekend of studies, song, and praise, based around glorifying God in our music. Study leader will be Bro. Phil Munday (Bournemouth Winton, UK). Bro. Phil was involved in the preparation of the 2002 edition of the Christadelphian Hymn Book, as can be seen in the preface. He has been a music teacher in the UK and in Kenya where he directed the Kenya Conservatoire of Music, and conducted the Nairobi Orchestra. Before retiring he was the Director of Examinations for the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music in the UK.

The schedule for the weekend is:

FRIDAY Oct 5 (Venue: Baltimore Ecclesial Hall) 7:30 pm

SATURDAY Oct 6 (Venue: Washington D.C. Ecclesial Chapel) 1 pm – 7:30 pm

SUNDAY Oct 7 (Venue: Washington D.C. Ecclesial Chapel) 9:30 am – 3 pm

WEDNESDAY Oct 10 (Venue: Washington D.C. Ecclesial Chapel) 7:45 pm

There is no cost to attend, but please register by contacting Bro. David Perry, dperry1@gmail.com or 410-303-8632.

Minute Meditation

Can we be angry without sinning?

“Speak when you are angry and you will make the best speech you will ever regret,” observed Ambrose Bierce. Our anger can certainly lead us astray.

Remember what happened when a man known for his meekness became exasperated and angry with the children of Israel? In the heat of the moment he spoke — and regretted his words ever after. We read in the Psalms that: “They angered him also at the waters of strife, so that it went ill with Moses for their sakes: because they provoked his spirit, so that he spake unadvisedly with his lips.” As a result, Moses died before Joshua led into the Promised Land the people he had faithfully shepherded for 40 years.

Moses in his own words tells us about it: “But the LORD was wroth with me for your sakes, and would not hear me: and the LORD said unto me, Let it suffice thee; speak no more unto me of this matter. Get thee up into the top of Pisgah, and lift up thine eyes westward, and northward, and southward, and eastward, and behold it [the land of Israel] with thine eyes: for thou shalt not go over this Jordan.” Moses, the man privileged to speak with God “mouth to mouth,” had sinned so grievously that he was forbidden to enter the land and was to stop pleading with God about it. Instead, God allowed Moses to view the land from the top of a nearby mountain.

Moses was patiently self-controlled throughout most of his life, but in a moment of anger he sinned and lost the privilege of entering the Promised Land. His example is a warning to us. How often has our anger gotten out of hand and we have said or done something that we may regret for the rest of our lives?

Paul told the Ephesians, “Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice.” To the Colossians he wrote, “But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips.” We need to overcome our feelings of animosity or vengefulness towards others, humbly accept that God is guiding our lives, and strive to show forth a Christ-like attitude.

Lyman Abbot offers good advice when he suggests: “Do not teach your children never to be angry; teach them how to be angry.” Everyone get angry at times. We may not be able to prevent it, but there is a secret, which is to control our anger and not do anything in haste when angry. This advice is usually easier said than done. The old adage of counting to ten will help, and sometimes we should count to 100 or even 1000. Before lashing out, just walk away and try to get those angry feelings under control before risking speech or action. We tell children, “Do not hit; use your words”. However, our words need to be carefully chosen, as Moses learned. The Psalmist says: “In your anger do not sin, when you are on your beds, search your hearts and be silent.”

Often people who say or do wrong things when they are angry justify their actions by saying, “But I was angry,” as if it is okay because of their anger. The lesson of Moses teaches us that being angry does not make right anything we say. We are responsible for our words and actions even when angry. Solomon observes: “A fool gives full vent to his anger, but a wise man keeps himself under control.”

Is it a sin to become angry? No, it is not a sin to be angry, but it is wrong to commit sin when we are angry. Paul advises, “Be ye angry, and sin not”. The Psalmist tells us that “God is angry with the wicked every day”. Lot was vexed with the filthy conversation of the people in Sodom. Our anger may be justified, but that is not a license to sin.

It is what we do while we are angry that can be the problem. There are times when anger should spur us to action. Lot should have acted on his anger towards the corrupt men of Sodom by removing his family from that toxic environment. God was angry with Israel for their idolatry, and when they would not change in spite of many warnings from prophets, God removed them from the land. Jesus was angry with the moneychangers in the temple and he drove them out. A controlled, thoughtful, Christ-like response to anger is the right thing to do.

The problem is when anger spurs us to wrong action. Cain slew his brother Abel. Joseph’s brethren plotted to kill him. Moses spoke unadvisedly. Daniel’s enemies schemed to get him thrown to the lions. When we are provoked or treated unjustly, we are tempted to retaliate. We need to remember our Lord who opened not his mouth when reviled, and who asked God to forgive those who were crucifying him. Paul reminds us that vengeance belongs to the LORD, and He will repay.

When anger grabs us, we must let it go and turn it over to God. It is not good to nurse our anger. Paul advises, “Let not the sun go down upon your wrath,” which means we should not keep angry thoughts churning when we go to bed. As one philosopher observed: “Holding on to anger is like grasping a hot coal with the intent of throwing it at someone else; you are the one who gets burned.”

When we feel provoked, let us remember the words of Peter: “Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously.”

Robert J. Lloyd

The deserving man

The man deserving the name is one whose thoughts and exertions are for others, rather than himself; whose high purpose is adopted on high principles, and never abandoned while heaven or earth afford the means of accomplishing it. He is one who will neither seek an indirect advantage by a specious word, nor take an evil path to secure a good purpose.

Walter Scott

Coming Events (Lord Willing)

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

SEPTEMBER 2012

- 1-2 Victoria, BC** Fraternal Gathering. "The Scribes and Pharisees: Were Their Problems Our Problems?" by Bro. Ron Hicks (Washington DC). Contact csnobelen@csll.ca.
- 8 Hamilton Greenaway, ON** Fraternal Picnic will be held at Wildwood Manor Ranch in Georgetown, ON, at 2:00pm. Bro. John Mannell (Mississauga West, ON) will be speaking on the topic, "Who is My Neighbour? — Lessons from the Parable of the Good Samaritan". A picnic supper will be held at 5:00pm.
- 9-14 Adult Study Week** at Wildwood Manor Ranch in Ballinafad, ON. The week consists of daily interactive Bible study, taken from the last week of Christ's life. Workbooks will be available. Participants may use their own camping equipment, or the covered wagons on site. There are also motels available nearby. The facilities used are provided by Sis. Annette Milne. All meals will be provided. Contact Bro. Jack Robinson jcrobins@worldchat.com or Bro. Peter Stonell peter.maggiestonell@gmail.com.
- 15 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.
- 15 London, ON** 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.mcycw.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. Friday evening, 7:30pm, Baltimore hall. Saturday and Sunday, Washington DC ecclesial chapel. Contact Bro. David Perry dperry1@gmail.com 410-303-8632.
- 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.
- 27 New England Little Disciples Gathering** a day of Bible study and activities on Peter for children Pre-K to 7th Grade. Location is Barton Center, N. Oxford, MA. Contact www.nelittledisciples.com email nelittledisciples@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 Largo/Orlando/Sarasota, FL** Study Weekend. Speaker Bro. Stan Isbell (North Houston, TX). Theme: "As A Man Thinketh In His Heart." Lunch will be provided both Saturday and Sunday. Contact: Bro. Walt Dodrill/Largo at waltdodrill@msn.com or call 727-410-0896.
- 10-11 Pittsburgh, PA** CYC Study Weekend. Bro. Everett Muniz (Paris Ave, OH) will be speaking on "Holy Living in Perilous Times". Contact Sis. Becca Pommer at (724) 757-8582 or pghecclesia@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.
- 23-25 Washington, DC** Family Bible Study weekend at Camp Hashawha, Westminster, MD. Bro. Richard Morgan (Hamilton Book Road, ON) is scheduled to lead us in classes entitled "The Pattern of the Tabernacle". Contact: Bro. Robert Kling, 301-498-5245, rkling@acm.org for additional information.

FEBRUARY 2013

- 24-Mar 1 Palm Springs Bible School.** The speakers at this year's school will be Bro. Stephen Palmer (Cardiff, Wales) and Bro. Ted Sleeper (San Francisco Peninsula, CA). The school offers a wonderful environment for the mature adult to study God's Word and enjoy the fellowship of other brethren and sisters. To register, please contact Bro. Jeff Gelineau at Register@christadelphianbibleschool.org or visit our website www.californiabibleschool.org.

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Poetry

“It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him:. If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us: If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself” (2Tim 2:11-13).

“Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus” (Acts 4:13).

*Our lives are not our own,
We gave them, Lord to thee,
When in your name we were baptized
From sin you set us free*

*Help us to live in you
And crucify our pride
And dedicate ourselves to you
Who for our healing died*

*Help us to live in you
Enduring to the end
That in our lives the world may see
Our Master and our Friend*

*Help us to live in you
In nothing you deny
That those who see our steadfast lives
May know the reason why*

*Help us to live in you
And always faithful be
That in the day of your return
Yourself in us you'll see*

Margaret Stoneel (Hamilton, Greenaway ecclesia)