

TIDINGS

Volume 85, Number 8, September 2022

THE TRUTH IN LATIN AMERICA

The CBMA shares some background of the Truth in Latin America and the opportunities before our community today.

Building faith in the
Christadelphian community.

TIDINGS

Volume 85, Number 8 / September, 2022



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THE TRUTH IN LATIN AMERICA

By Dave Jennings

IN previous issues, we briefly examined the growth of the Truth in Africa and the Philippines. Accepting the Truth in those regions has led to exponential growth in our community, and we are better because of it. In this issue, we will look southward to Latin America, where the story is quite different but represents an important opportunity for the Truth today. We are grateful to Bro. Dennis Paggi, Chairman of the CBMA, for his insights into the challenges and opportunities of Latin America.

Historical Background

Under the direction of the Papacy, the major powers of Europe launched the Crusades of the 11th-13th Centuries. They were, by most accounts, highly successful. They had seized control of parts of Turkey and Jerusalem from Islam. They created a chain of Crusader states and returned a massive bounty to Europe. But, by the late 1300s, Jerusalem had again come under the control of the Ottoman Turks, and much of the Church's influence was lost in the region.

By the late 1400s, Spain landed in Santo Domingo (now the Dominican Republic) and initiated a seismic influence on the people of Latin America. The people of the region bore no resemblance to the sophisticated and combative Moors the Crusaders had met. Anthropologists estimate there was a marked social and economic disparity between the European invaders and the indigenous society. Some estimate the region had only reached the sophistication and cultural development of the first Egyptian dynasty (3,000 BC). The Aztecs, Mayans, and the Inca lived in sedentary, agricultural communities, some of which were subject to more advanced cultural influences. But many others were nomadic and tended to be more primitive in culture and religion. Their religions incarnated traditional dualisms: day and night, sun and moon, good and evil, subject to an overarching, implacable fate. The amazing rapidity with which these cultures were destroyed resulted, at least in part, from the superiority of Spanish weaponry, the use of horses (which had disappeared in indigenous prehistory), and the annihilation of ancient beliefs and customs to impose a religion and form of life incomprehensible to the indigenous peoples.¹

The Spanish came not to explore and settle, but to exploit. Latin America was filled with mined and unmined gold. They would send this valued bounty back to Europe. It's estimated 90% of the gold in Europe's Catholic churches came from Latin America. As intermarriage occurred between

Spaniards and local indigenous peoples, the children (and generations afterwards) were classified as "mestizo," which means "mixed blood." These mixed people were considered well below the status of their pure-blooded Spaniard overseers. In the process, this robbed indigenous families of their culture and traditions. The non-valuation of the indigenous culture and religion led eventually to a region which lost its identity. The explorers forced the Catholic religion, along with its hierarchy, organization, and authority on them. They were given new names and an imposed cultural structure to live within.²

To this day, the influence of Spain and Portugal is deeply felt in Latin America. From a religious point of view, Catholicism has remained dominant for over 500 years. But the impact is more profound than religion itself, for the Church serves as their "replacement" heritage and an inextricable part of their culture.

Christianity in Latin America Today

Latin America represents 50% of all Catholics worldwide. The area remains critically important to the Catholic Church. While Catholicism is still dominant in Latin America, it has been declining for more than one hundred years. This has been influenced by a number of factors, to include the shift of most economic ties from Europe to the United States. The increased influence of the United States has also precipitated the growth of Protestantism in the region.

Dr. Gina A. Zuri wrote:

“Although the overall percentage of Christians changed little in Latin America over the 20th century, the internal composition of Christianity has changed significantly. Catholics remain the largest tradition, but Protestants (evangélicos) and Independents have been rapidly increasing their shares of Christianity in the continent. This includes Protestant denominations such as Presbyterians in Guatemala, Pentecostal groups such as the Assemblies of God in Brazil, and Independent Charismatic churches such as the Methodist Pentecostal Church and the Evangelical Pentecostal Church in Chile. Other Independent churches have also been growing rapidly, especially the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and Jehovah’s Witnesses in Brazil and Mexico.”³

Pentecostalism is now overwhelmingly anchored in Latin America rather than

the United States. In Brazil, for example, the Assemblies of God has 10 million to 12 million members, while the American Assemblies of God Church has 2 million to 3 million. So now, the Brazilian church is the big brother that views the American church as mission territory.⁴

So, while Catholicism was relatively unchallenged and stable for centuries in the region, the past decades have introduced dramatic changes. This is the opportunity of Latin America for Christadelphians.

Christadelphia in Latin America Today

We commend for your reading a valuable documentary on the development of the Truth in Latin America. Bro. Stanley Owen’s book, *“Into All the World”*⁵ is a very edifying work and should be considered a welcome addition to any Christadelphian bookshelf. Pages 279-317 document the work of many brothers and sisters in Latin America, dating back to the days of Bro. Robert Roberts.





Ecclesial members in Guatemala during May 2022 visit

Today there are nearly 270 brothers and sisters spread across Latin America. These believers have emerged from the dominant grip of Catholicism to commit to reading the Bible for themselves and embrace sound doctrine. Many walked away from the “security” of the Catholic system, which could be a safety net in future times of difficulty. These are true disciples, willing to pursue the gospel regardless of cost. Many of these brothers and sisters had been discouraged by membership in other churches because of their emphasis on soliciting money and the idea of easy salvation, as well as a lack of Bible study. Some have found the Truth while searching for a non-Trinitarian church. It is typical for family and friends of baptized members to be attracted through them, and those already-existing bonds strengthen the ecclesias.

The Truth has been growing in Mexico, Central, and South America since the late 1950s, when missionary families began residing in several countries. The Bible Mission’s commitment was to encourage and strengthen the

lives of those in the new ecclesias with preaching, pastoral, and welfare assistance. The largest ecclesias are located in Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, southern Mexico, and Panama. Much of the early growth came when resident missionary families lived in these countries, raising families and nurturing ecclesias. Panama, Ecuador, and El Salvador have ecclesias established in the most populated cities. Costa Rica and El Salvador consistently had resident missionaries from 1970-1990. Ecuador began flourishing with several different resident missionaries during 2002-2013. Panama had a number of resident missionaries until 2009. Efforts in southern Mexico began about ten years ago and resulted in the establishment of two ecclesias and nearly forty baptisms.

Currently, our mission workers support seventeen ecclesias. Besides the 270 baptized members, there are an estimated 150 Sunday School and CYC members. Prior to the pandemic, ecclesias annually performed about twenty-five baptisms in Latin America. Since the pandemic, with the inability



The Lima, Peru Eccleisa

to travel to those countries, there has been a significant decrease in baptisms. However, during this time, new virtual forms of preaching have been developed.

Today, fifteen countries across Latin America have ecclesias. Most of the preaching was historically executed through newspaper advertising and local campaigns. The predominant language spoken locally is Spanish, with the exception of Portuguese in Brazil. Many of our brothers and sisters live in isolation, often hundreds or thousands of miles from other believers. Developments in technology have recently enabled them to connect to their brothers and sisters via Skype, WhatsApp, and, more recently, Zoom. The unexpected benefit emerging from the pandemic has been the virtual connectivity across the region. It has also increased global connectivity, allowing members in many of these countries to connect for memorial services with ecclesias in the United States and other countries.

As is true in North America, Study Days and Bible Schools represent a very important opportunity for fellowship

in Latin America. Most ecclesias hold one or more Study Weekends each year, sometimes tied to a holiday weekend in their particular country. Both Costa Rica and El Salvador hold an annual Bible School weekend, roughly between Christmas and the New Year. This past year in El Salvador, with a group totaling 83, all classes were taught by Latin American brothers, and there were attendees from Chile, Bolivia, Argentina, Campeche Mexico, Honduras, and Guatemala.

Challenges

Latin America shares the everyday challenges of human nature. There has been some movement in the Western world away from Judeo-Christian thinking, especially any “fundamentalist” variety of it, of which our community is representative. There is increasing drift toward secularism, selfishness, towards mystical, eastern-style religious ideas and a turning away from what we would consider healthy spirituality. This tendency doesn’t affect the older population of Latin America but is beginning to become noticeable in the younger generation.

Though vaccinations are now readily available in many countries of Latin America, the after-effects of COVID-19 continue to be a challenge. A recent United Nations report by the Economic Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) headlined the general experience of too many in Latin America. They wrote, “Extreme poverty in Latin America rises to 86 million in 2021 due to the deepening of the social and health crisis prompted by the COVID-19 pandemic.”⁶

Brothers and sisters, interested friends, and the population in general, though hard-working, are living through more difficult economic times in Latin America than we in the comfort of North America can imagine. Basic survival for them means long work hours and thus limited opportunities and energy for contemplation of spiritual matters.

The Great Opportunity Before Us in Latin America

COVID-19 forced us (throughout the world) to learn different ways to connect and communicate. During the past two years, Bro. Kevin Hunter

has been active in modifying our correspondence course to become more interactive. We are learning techniques to target ads in areas of proven prior interest, and to focus on new locals in Latin America where it is felt there might be interest in God’s word. If you have training or expertise in internet marketing, or would like to join the postal course team, please contact us.

We hope, God willing, that missionaries will be needed in 2023 in areas like Lima, Perú, and Guatemala City, Guatemala, where small, somewhat struggling but viable ecclesias already exist. Sunday School teachers are needed in Jalisco Sur, Mexico. The Bible Mission provides Spanish language training during the first few months of missionary service. If you are interested in serving in Latin America, we anticipate there will be a place for you to serve in 2023.

Please contact us to start the conversation at contact@cbma.net.

Dave Jennings

¹ Dussel, Enrique D., *Historia de la iglesia en América Latina*, 3d ed. (Barcelona, 1974), translated into English as *History of the Church in Latin America* (Grand Rapids, MI., 1982).

² From a lecture given by Juan Carlos Valarezo, Professor of International Relations, Pontifical Catholic University of Ecuador, on June 9, 2022. Attended by Bro. Dennis Paggi

³ Zurl, Dr. Gina A., Christianity in Latin America, World Christian Encyclopedia, 3rd edition (Edinburgh University Press)

⁴ Esqueda, Octavio Javier, *Growth and impact of Pentecostalism in Latin America*, Christian Education Journal, Fall 2013.

⁵ Owen, Stanley, *Into All the World*, The Cromwell Press, Trowbridge, UK, 1998.

⁶ Annual Report Social Panorama of Latin America, ECLAC, *Extreme Poverty in the Region Rises to 86 Million in 2021 due to the Deepening of the Social and Health Crisis Prompted by the COVID-19 Pandemic*, January 2022.



STORYTELLING

By Robert Prins

MY mother sat down on the edge of my bed and tucked me in for the night. My brother and sister were in the same room, and we all waited eagerly for the story. What was it going to be this time? My mother had amazing adventures growing up. She told us about the time she fell out of a moving car when the door flew open as they rounded a corner, about the bull that fell into the creek, about sailing weekends away with my grandad and grandma, about exploring around the lake that all the local kids reckoned was so deep it was bottomless.

Many of my mother's stories were about the creek that ran through their property. She told us how she and my

aunties and uncle never drowned in the creek because my grandfather had told them, "If you ever drown in that creek, I'll give you the biggest hiding you'll ever have!" So, they never did. From a very young age, just from hearing that story, I learned to be very careful about playing around with water. I made sure I didn't drown! From her stories I also learned how to catch an eel in a creek with just a piece of string and bit of meat. I knew how to catch an eel long before I ever saw one.

My father used to tell us stories at bedtime too. He would make up adventure stories for us and often include our friends. We were the Famous Five, and in his stories, we

would solve crimes, stop thieves, have adventures, and always do what was right and good. My father's stories taught us that we can be heroes, that we can stand up for what is right, and that there is more to us than we ever thought possible. He probably didn't realize it at the time, but through his stories, he set us up with principles and ideals to motivate us to live up to our potential.

My parents could just easily have lectured my siblings and I, telling us to stand strong, always watch ourselves around water, and do what is right. Maybe they did. But it was the lessons we extracted from the stories that had the most impact on us. We didn't even realize those lessons were having an effect. Only after thinking back over them 40 years later, I realize what a powerful influence they were in my life. The power of the story is in the emotions and feelings it engenders. Facts hit the head, but emotions hit the heart. Emotions are far more powerful. Certainly, many of them are persuaded by logic, but when logic and emotion meet, they become an unstoppable force.

Take, for example, the time when an expert in the law asked Jesus, "*And who is my neighbour?*" (Luke 10:29 NIV). He and Jesus had just been talking about the greatest commandments: "*Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind; and Love your neighbour as yourself.*" (v. 27). But now, this expert in the law wanted to know who to count as his neighbour. Jesus could have gone

into legalistic detail, describing from the law exactly who his neighbor was. However, if he had done that, the expert in the law would have disagreed and the argument would still be debated today. Instead, faced with the question, "*And who is my neighbour?*" Jesus responded with, "Well, let me tell you a story..."

Yes, we all know the story he told; it was the story of the Good Samaritan. A man was beaten up and left for dead. Two noble Jews who came past should have taken care of him, but for various reasons, they walked by and left him to die. Finally, a despised Samaritan came where he was and took care of the wounded man, going the extra mile to see him cared for. We have known the story since our Sunday School days. You have felt the emotions that go with it—the hurt, the rejection, the need, the pain, the guilt, the injustice, and the compassion. No doubt the expert in the law felt it all too. Then as Jesus finished the story, he asked the expert for his opinion. "*Which of these three do you think was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?*" (v. 36). The reluctant lawyer had to admit that it was "*the one who had mercy on him.*" (v 37). Then Jesus took the story to its highest level, saying, "*Go, and do likewise.*"

If it hadn't been for the story, the expert in the law would never have been convinced of the definition of a neighbor. He would never have had a change of heart or compassion toward people in need. His life, and the lives of countless others have been changed by the power of the story of the Good Samaritan.

Storytelling is so effective when it comes to teaching about God that Jesus used it all the time. We learn about his teaching that *“Jesus spoke all these things to the crowd in parables; he did not say anything to them without using a parable.”* (Matt 13:34). Those who were truly interested would make the effort to look beyond the story to the message behind it, but the story would remain to point the people toward God. Even now, the four gospels are essentially books of stories from which we grow to know Jesus.

Stories are much easier to listen to than a list of facts and they are easier to remember later. One of the greatest story tellers I remember from the many Bible Schools I have been to, was Bro. Bob Lloyd. All I need to do is remember a story he told, (the newspaper boy, the chauffeur interview, or his “don’t let the glow go” story) and the lessons come straight back from it. We find it easier to read a novel than to read a work of non-fiction. Again, if a novel grabs me I will read one in a matter of days, but a work of non-fiction—even a good one—can take months.

Storytelling has been a part of every culture since Adam and Eve had

children. It may have been Lamech who told the first work story when he got home from the office that fateful evening: *“I have killed a man for wounding me, a young man for injuring me.”* (Gen 4:23 NIV). Stories can be used to ingrain powerful lessons into the lives of both children and adults, as no doubt Lamech’s story put fear into anyone who heard it.

God took the tradition of storytelling and commanded Israel to use it to teach the next generation all about Him. Of course, He tells us to teach the facts as well, so let’s start there. Moses had just recited the Ten Commandments to Israel, when he said, *“These are the commands, decrees and laws the LORD your God directed me to teach you to observe in the land you are crossing the Jordan to possess, so that you, your children and their children after them may fear the LORD your God as long as you live.”* (Deut 6:1-2 NIV). Then he said, *“Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.”* (v. 7). That’s a lot of talking, and it doesn’t sound much like stories—but wait there’s more.



Moses continues,

In the future, when your son asks you, “What is the meaning of the stipulations, decrees and laws the LORD our God has commanded you?” tell him: “We were slaves of Pharaoh in Egypt, but the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand. Before our eyes the LORD sent miraculous signs and wonders great and terrible upon Egypt and Pharaoh and his whole household. But he brought us out from there to bring us in and give us the land he promised on oath to our forefathers.” (v. 20-23).

God was asking the Israelites to tell the story of what He had done for them so that the next generation would come to know Him. And then He gave them a word-for-word story to tell. Of course, reciting the story word for word would have been a minimum requirement, but anyone who had experienced what God had done in Egypt and through the wilderness could have expanded on the story to no end. Imagine the awed faces on the children as their parents tucked them into bed and told them stories of what God had done for them: Real-life miracles! Blood? Was it real blood? Did frogs jump into your bed, daddy? Did you see any fish when you went through the sea? Did you run? Was it scary? And the children would

fall asleep knowing the strength of the LORD, with confidence in their trust of Him, because of the stories they were told.

God knew the best way to help our children and grandchildren to get to know Him is through stories that describe His power, love, and faithfulness. Listen to what the psalmist had to say about it:

My people, hear my teaching; listen to the words of my mouth. I will open my mouth with a parable; I will utter hidden things, things from of old—things we have heard and known, things our ancestors have told us. We will not hide them from their descendants; we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the LORD, his power, and the wonders he has done. He decreed statutes for Jacob and established the law in Israel, which he commanded our ancestors to teach their children, so the next generation would know them, even the children yet to be born, and they in turn would tell their children. Then they would put their trust in God and would not forget his deeds but would keep his commands. They would not be like their ancestors—a stubborn and rebellious generation, whose hearts were not loyal to God, whose spirits were not faithful to him. (Psa 78:1-8 NIV).

God knew that the best way to help our children and grandchildren to get to know Him is through stories that describe His power, love, and faithfulness.

I realize you probably skipped through that long quote so you could get back to the story, so let me summarize it in a sentence: Listen to God so you can teach the next generation all the stories about Him so they will be faithful and put their hope in God.

Another psalmist describes a terrible time in his life when he was in total distress. When he had finished describing it, he said, *“Let this be written for a future generation, that a people not yet created may praise the LORD.”* (Psa 102:18 NIV). In other words, the story of the troubles the psalmist went through and his faith in God was to become a bedtime story for future generations. People were going to come to know God because of his story.

Psalm 145 encourages us to tell stories to our children about the glories of God’s kingdom. He says, *“One generation shall commend your works to another, they will tell of your mighty acts They will tell of the glory of your kingdom and speak of your might, so that all men may know of your mighty acts and the glorious splendour of your kingdom.”* (Psa 145:4, 11-12).

Not many people in the Bible did what Jesus did when, *“beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.”* (Luke 24:27 NIV). A lot of studies and background work must go on before we are able to teach that well! But That’s not what Jesus called us to do. As he gave his last instructions to the people around him before he was taken to heaven, he said, *“You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to*

the ends of the earth.” (Acts 1:8 NIV). A witness is someone who tells their story: “This is what I have seen,” or “Let me tell you what Jesus has done for me!” They are asking us to tell our own personal story of his influence on our lives. Our personal testimony is a great way of preaching, turning people to the Lord, and making a difference in the lives of our children.

People will always stop to listen to a story, but they are much less likely to listen when we lecture them or try to change their opinions! Jesus told us to tell our stories. Just look at the difference Legion made when Jesus told him to *“Go to your home and to your people and tell them what the Lord has done for you, that he had mercy on you.”* (Mark 5:19 NET). As Jesus left, the people were hostile against him, but when he returned later, after Legion had told them what God had done for him, the people came out in droves to meet him. (Mark 6:53-56). Legion’s story had done its work.

Every one of us has a story to tell. Stories are a powerful force for getting God’s truths into the hearts and minds of the people around us. Let’s use the power of stories to teach and inspire our children and grandchildren, to encourage and instruct fellow believers, to spread the word about the saving power and love of God to the people he puts in our lives. No one can resist a good story. Let’s use the stories God has given us to give him glory.

*Robert Prins,
(Pakuranga Ecclesia, Auckland, NZ)*



A NEED FOR SPIRITUAL STRENGTHENING

By Emmanuel Wachong Kum

The conflict in Cameroon in west-central Africa has forced brothers and sisters to take refuge in the bush as fighting continues in towns and villages. The following is taken from a longer piece, written by Bro. Emmanuel Wachong Kum, who labored to provide spiritual support to ecclesias that have not only faced physical hardship, but also challenges to their understanding of God's word. Given the awful trials they endured, some brothers and sisters had become weakened in their faith and distracted from the Truth by those who teach the existence of a malevolent devil, a Satan who is blamed for their suffering.¹

ISOLATED from ecclesias and mixing daily with those of different faiths, holding on to the Truth became very difficult. Basic doctrines were challenged, sometimes overtly. Witnessing to others became weak. Material prosperity was preferred over

the Truth. Disloyalty and selfishness grew from living under the pressure of such long-term conflict. As Jesus said, “the love of many will grow cold.” (Matt 24:12).²

The brothers and sisters gathered together, as a mother hen gathers her

chicks in the same neighborhood, in the bushes where they were taking refuge. After an appeal was made, and brothers and sisters worldwide supported them with sheets of corrugated iron with which they made semi-permanent shelters. Physically, they were safe, if not comfortable. In this common ground the seeds of rebuilding their ultimate trust in God were sown. It was made known to them that time will see the ultimate resolution of all the traumas which now afflict God's children. At the moment there are challenges to our safety and our faith.

For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known. (1 Cor 13:12).

Therefore, during Bible talks as well as exhortations, I regularly called on my brothers and sisters under the severe effects of the crisis, to remember how easy it was to be like the Jews at the time of Christ. They appeared to have a great zeal for God's word. They trusted the Old Testament writings as being inspired (John 5:45). They believed that by studying these Scriptures, they could have hope of eternal life (John 5:39). Every week they publicly read them (Acts 15:21).

New Testament Examples

Some of the Jews around Jesus closely studied these passages. However, they totally failed to grasp the real significance of these Scriptures. They failed to see how they pointed forward to Christ. Jesus told them plainly:

You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have

eternal life. For if you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote of me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words?" (John 5:39, 46-47).

We can imagine the Jews' indignation: "But we read the Bible! We do believe it!" But, because of their closed minds, truly they did not. They read, but they did not understand. They looked, but they did not see. There are truly none so blind as those who do not want to see. At all stages in our spiritual development, we must be on our guard against false teachers.

Another example used was of the people at Berea, who "*received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so.*" (Acts 17:11). For there to be a true response to the Gospel, there must be a mind sensitive to the Word, truly desiring to search the Scriptures on a personal level. This is something the preacher of the Gospel cannot necessarily bring about. We can only draw attention to the relevant Bible passages and pray our listeners are like the believers in Rome who were "*obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching.*" (Rom 6:17).

Those who stubbornly persist in the ways of the flesh will never be able to grasp the true message of the Gospel properly. They will end up "*having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power*" and "*always learning and never able to arrive at a knowledge of the truth.*" (2 Tim 3:5, 7). We will never understand what we do not want to. If we have no real love of righteousness, no true desire to bring our lives under God's control, we will never be able

to “arrive at a knowledge of the truth” despite all our Bible reading.

A Recipe for Self-Evaluation of Faith

After several tours in four different ecclesias, I realized how much the sheep needed to be tended and the flock needed to be fed. To do this, I gave every ecclesia a method for self-evaluation, ten ways to know whether you are hot, lukewarm or cold in the Gospel.

1. You find yourself in a disagreeable and hypercritical mood.
2. You begin to isolate yourself from meetings.
3. You begin to agitate against proposals for Bible study.
4. You begin to lack the virility to develop a more vigorous attitude of faith.
5. You allow domestic or business problems to divert you from ecclesial responsibilities.
6. You don't enthusiastically support the proclamation of the gospel.
7. You have no desire to remember God and have no will to pay heed to His wishes.
8. You have no interest in Bible reading and no desire to pray.
9. Sunday meetings and Breaking of Bread services are not attractive.
10. Your labor for the Truth is no longer

a yearning.

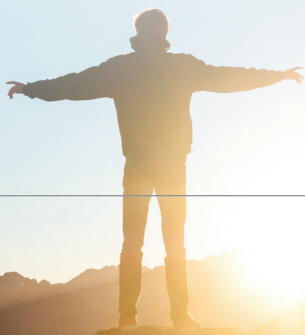
If this is true for you, then you might rightfully conclude your first principle doctrines have been significantly impacted by this fleshly world. Your faith is in jeopardy, and love and hope in God's ways and promises are at risk.

But All Is Not Lost

With God as our Almighty and gracious Father, all is not lost. As an answer to the sorry state described above, we need the proper intake of spiritual food. Jeremiah declared, “*Your words were found, and I ate them, and your words became to me a joy and the delight of my heart.*” (Jer 15:16). David wrote, “*How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!*” (Psa 119:103).

The writer to the Hebrews warned against too light of a diet.

For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food, for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child. But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil. (Heb 5:12-14).



But love for the Truth should not preclude our love for our fellows. I warned the brothers and sisters they must not be like the ecclesia in Ephesus and *“abandon the love they had at first.”* (Rev 2:1-4). The ecclesia in Ephesus would not *“bear with those who are evil,”* but their defense against *“those who call themselves apostles and are not”* had been done without agape love. If we are no longer motivated by love, the defense of the faith and our labor for Christ becomes meaningless. As Paul wrote, *“If I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.”* (1 Cor 13:2).

As a matter of prime importance, our enthusiasm for the Truth has to be aroused so together, as a group of believers motivated by love, faith, and hope, we can search and read the Scriptures and discover the hidden treasures in the Word to strengthen faith and love.

The True Hope

The focus of the true Christian hope is the coming Kingdom of God on earth. The Lord’s prayer shows this, *“Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”* (Matt 6:10). At Christ’s return, *“the kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever.”* (Rev 11:15) Then God’s will and desire will be completely and openly performed in this earth.

Our Father in heaven takes the

responsibility for the crisis that is continuing in Cameroon. He wants His almightiness to be known by people who still think that He has another rival in the affairs of the world which He created. He overtly says, *“I make well-being and create calamity.”* (Isa 45:5-7) Isn’t this proof enough to show that God’s purpose is to be made manifest in our lives?

During this crisis period, more than 45 men and women in the Benakuma area came to the understanding of the world, that its false religions are *“vanity upon vanity”* and that a devil or Satan does not bring about the troubles of men, but by man, or even by God himself (Job 42:11-12). They were baptized, and we are encouraging each other awaiting the establishment of God’s Kingdom on the earth.

*Emmanuel Wachong Kum, Cameroon
and Steve Jeffries, UK*



Bro. Emmanuel Wachong Kim

¹ This article first appeared in The Bible Missionary, April 2022, authored by Bro. Emmanuel Wachong Kum and Bro. Steve Jeffries, pages 23-25.

² All Scriptural citations are taken from the English Standard Version.

BEING A DISCIPLE OF CHRIST

By Clive Drepaul

THERE are at least eight people featured in the crucifixion account. We will consider these people, and the likelihood they would become disciples.

Two Roman Officials

Pilate repeatedly asserted, *"I find no fault in this man"* (Luke 23:4, John 19:4) and placed the superscription against the wishes of the Jewish authorities which read *"THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS."* (Matt 27:37). The second was a centurion presiding over the crucifixion, and witnessing the dramatic natural phenomena occurring in the wake of Jesus' death. He exclaimed, *"Truly this was the Son of God."* (v 54).

When Pilate saw Jesus was without fault, his handling of him demonstrated political expediency (Mark 15:10). There was no known conversion. Yet, when the Roman centurion witnessed

the death of Jesus, his response may have indicated that he accepted Jesus was not just any criminal, but that they had crucified the Son of God.

Two Jewish Officials

Jesus told Nicodemus, *"Except a man be born again he cannot see the Kingdom of God."* (John 3:3 KJV). Bro. Jake Bramhill, in the *Testimony Magazine* of April 2022, wrote a detailed study of Nicodemus. He traced the progression of Nicodemus from coming to Jesus to defending him to finally honoring him.

From this article, we are shown a gradual change in Nicodemus. The expectation is that, as the gospel account closes, he would have accepted the *"born again"* requirement to enter the Kingdom of which he was told earlier.

The second official was Joseph of Arimathaea, *"an honourable*

counsellor, which also waited for the kingdom of God, came and went in boldly unto Pilate and craved the body of Jesus." (Mark 15:43). Joseph believed and saw Jesus as the answer to entering the Kingdom. The two counsellors, emerging from the ambitious rivalry and corruption of the Sanhedrin politics, were united at the preparation and burial of Jesus, putting aside their previous fears.

Two Disciples

John was a well-known disciple, but we also contrast here Simon, who hailed from Cyrene, an ancient Greek colony in Libya. John was one of the earliest disciples, accepting the call by the Sea of Galilee, continuing faithfully and fearlessly to Golgotha until exiled to Patmos, there to receive "The Revelation."

Simon became a disciple later, after being forced to providentially share with Jesus the burden of bearing the heavy wooden cross. Two of his family members may be mentioned in the list of the ecclesia at Rome, though he may have fallen asleep in Christ by this time. Of Simon, we read, *"And they compel one Simon a Cyrenian, who passed by, coming out of the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to bear his cross."* (Mark 15:21). Why are these details given? Later Paul writes, *"Salute Rufus chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine."* (Rom 16:13). Alexander is not mentioned here, though he may have become a disciple and either not in Rome or deceased. Can we find here a remarkable story of a family's acceptance of Christ? Could it be that being placed in the position of helping Jesus to bear the cross led

to Simon and his family becoming believers?

The Two Malefactors

Of the two crucified along with Jesus, one is unrepentant, while the other repents and demonstrates exemplary belief in the basic elements of the Kingdom. (Luke 23:39-43).

What are the common threads in these eight examples?

1. Jesus is the King, the Son of God.
2. The Kingdom is about being born again.
3. We shouldn't entangle ourselves in the political aspirations of men that would distance us from our Lord.
4. That repentance is required for all men, whether a leader in Israel or a crucified criminal. God truly is *"no respecter of persons."* (Acts 10:34).

We can hardly leave the subject of becoming a disciple without disputing the reasons some of our acquaintances advance for not being baptized. Some claim God does not want them! But the Bible tells us, *"For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth."* (1 Tim 2:3-4). God works in mysterious ways. Some search diligently for truth, but others are unwittingly placed in the right position to be converted.

Those contemplating their own need for repentance and baptism are still in the Lord's hands. May we continue in prayer for them all.

*Clive Drepaal,
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A person in a dark swimsuit stands on a highly reflective surface, possibly a salt flat, during a sunset or sunrise. The person's reflection is clearly visible in the water. In the background, there are low mountains under a sky with soft, warm colors of orange, yellow, and blue. The title text is overlaid on this image.

THE PSALMS ARE FOR US: REFLECTIONS

By Jessica Gelineau

THE Psalms. What a gift God has given to us through this beautifully collected work. I have always been so curious to know the original tunes the Psalms were set to, particularly when a Psalm contains an interesting little preface such as Psalm 45, “*To the chief musician—Set to “The Lilies.”*” I suppose learning the original tunes will be another Kingdom activity we can look forward to. And perhaps the most musical among us will have the pleasure of participating in a grand performance of the original scores!

In addition to the fact that the musical notation system we use today originated long after the time of David and the Sons of Korah, perhaps God kept the mysterious original tunes within their historical age to inspire creativity within each new generation. Since no one can claim one “inspired tune” for a Psalm, we should feel free to come up with our own! The Psalms (and other parts of Scripture) have inspired musical compositions throughout centuries of history. These range from grand and masterful works such as Leonard Bernstein’s “*Chichester*

Psalms,” to simple children’s tunes made from one verse worth memorizing. Examples are those written by Seeds Family Worship enjoyed by my young daughter. And did you know that parts of Psalm 19, which C.S. Lewis referred to as “the greatest poem in the Psalter and one of the greatest lyrics in the world,”¹ have been set to music by the likes of Beethoven, Brahms, Haydn, and Handel?²

We may love singing the Psalms, but we can also just enjoy them as they come to us in Scripture, as poetry. What follows in this article is a collection of reflections written by Christadelphian sisters and brothers about the Psalms that speak most loudly in their own lives. Some are more reflective of the themes within certain Psalms, some share very personal connections to these Psalms, and some are messages to the reader about truths to be found and experienced through the lyrics or lines.

I suggest reading through the rest of this article with a Bible in hand. For ease of following along, I’ve arranged the reflections in numerical order. You might choose your favorite Bible—perhaps a version you’ve been familiar with since childhood—or, this time, you might pull up a version you haven’t

read as often and see if anything new jumps out at you. I’ve been reading the Christian Standard Bible (CSB) recently and have enjoyed how it brings in an element of freshness while preserving much of the language I love and am attached to. Even the slightest change in phrasing for a very familiar passage can help us stay awake to the living words of Scripture. We’ll start with a short walk through Psalm 23. I’ll go out on a limb and say most of us have learned this Psalm by heart. Because I committed it to memory long ago, it has been a handhold for me through the darkest valleys of my life. I’ll end the introduction on that note—with a plug for all of us to prioritize memorizing new Scriptures, at whatever age we are. It gets harder to do as we age, but once memorized, we have these words as a lamp to our feet and a light to our paths always and forever.

Psalm 23: *Philip Sweeny (Atlanta North Ecclesia, GA)*

The LORD (Yahweh), He who is who He is and He who will be who He will be, the definer of all, the creator of heaven and earth! He is our shepherd. We shall lack no good thing.

He gives us peace that passes understanding, comforting us in green pastures that we can't physically see. Even though the winds and waves roar, He leads us beside still waters.

He restores our souls, a true miracle.

He leads us in the paths of righteousness, a true mercy, for His great name's sake. Yea though we walk through the valley of the shadow of death we will fear no evil. Yes, we will be afraid at times, but Yahweh Himself will always provide peace in His presence. He will comfort us with both correction and renewal.

He anoints us with his spirit and provides overflowing blessings at the table of His Son!

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow us all the days of our lives, and He will bring us to His presence for evermore!

Psalm 27: *Patricia Herdoiza Hernandez (Washington DC Ecclesia)*

My favorite Psalm is Psalm 27. It speaks of not needing to be afraid of absolutely anything in this world since God is with us. How encouraging! The Psalm lists various scenarios in which we need not fear. My favorite part is toward the middle in verse 7 "*Hear O Yahweh, I cry with my voice, have mercy also upon me and answer me!*" This has become my favorite Psalm also because it makes me think of the travail of childbirth and how I cried out to God for help in both English and Spanish. Praise God, He got us through it! My husband Elías and I are proud parents to a healthy and happy five-year-old daughter named Camila. Lastly, Psalm 27 keeps us looking forward to our

ultimate hope and destiny, to live in the house of God forever. Amen!

Psalm 34: *Patty Chelius (Simi Hills Ecclesia, CA)*

The Psalms are a lifeline for me! So often, I need their wisdom and power in my life. There have been times that I have felt I couldn't survive without them. I have been in that dark pit of despair, that cave of darkness and hopelessness. And our dearly beloved David has been there as well. And he is here for you and me, encouraging us when we turn to the Psalms he wrote.

Choosing a favorite Psalm is difficult. So many Psalms can lift us up and get us through whatever we are experiencing in our lives. Psalm 34 is a particular source of strength for me. This Psalm is filled with hope, courage, instruction, and strength and is centered on the praise of our Heavenly Father. Verse 4 says, "*I sought the Lord, and he answered me and delivered me from all of my fears.*" Verse 6 states, "*This poor man cried, and the LORD heard him and saved him out of all his troubles.*" (ESV). The comfort comes from **believing** what David says in these verses. And that trust can be difficult for us at times. That is why we need to reach out to someone when we are in the dark caves. **Don't go through trials and doubts alone.** We were not meant to suffer by ourselves. Troubles, sorrows, and disappointments will come in our lives, but **don't give up!** God will get you through them, even when it seems so hopeless. Together we can work on finding the peace that comes from trusting in God.

Psalm 84: *Maggie Schlageter (Schooley's Mountain Unamended Ecclesia, NJ)*

I have always found great comfort in Psalm 84. We see a beautiful picture of the house of God with space for even the most inconsequential. He will provide for us.

From the beginning of the world, God has provided for His children. The Bible depicts a heavenly Father that provides food, companionship, and stability. He also provides famine, isolation, and unrest. And that contrast can feel uncomfortable. When you are in the midst of trials, it can be so easy to question where God is and miss His presence.

In Psalm 84:11, the psalmist refers to God as sun and shield. Thinking about nature, a plant needs sun to grow but at a certain point, too much sun becomes harmful. With too much sun, a plant can become scorched and dry out. On the other hand, a shield blocks out sunlight and provides shelter, but with too much shade, a plant won't get the sunlight it needs to grow. There is a time when the sun is good and when a shield is good, but these instances are not fixed or absolute. God has the perspective to provide for us the good we need and give opportunities for growth. *"He does not withhold the good from those who live with integrity."* (CSB).

Psalm 84 talks about dwelling with God and longing for closeness with Him. It's a beautiful reminder to me that inviting God into my everyday

life will shift perspective, change my actions and help me to see His presence on both days of sun and of a shield.

Psalm 87: *Levi Gelineau (Simi Hills Ecclesia, CA)*

Psalm 87:5 in the ESV reads, *"And of Zion it shall be said, 'This one and that one were born in her;' for the Most High himself will establish her."*

Psalm 87 has become more and more relevant to me each year since it first hit me in 2005, as part of the "Daniel" study at Manitoulin Youth Conference. I think belonging and identity, which can come from patriotism and nationalism, are things I deeply wanted at age 18 (in 2005) and things I would bet many of our young people

are looking for today. The whole Psalm calls for us as believers and citizens of God's future Kingdom to identify as being "born" in Zion. Many of us are "proud," to varying degrees, of where we are from, or our local foods or cultures, and that can be harmless fun. But our

real identity should be found in Zion.

"The Lord records as he registers the peoples, 'This one was born there.' Selah." (Psalm 87:6).

Psalm 91: *Kendra Smith (Simi Hills Ecclesia, CA)*

Psalm 91:1-6 reads,

One who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will lodge in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say to the LORD, 'My refuge and my fortress, My God, in whom I trust!' For it is He who rescues you from the net

*"He does not
withhold the
good from those
who live with
integrity."*

of the trapper and from the deadly plague. He will cover you with His pinions, and under His wings you may take refuge; His faithfulness is a shield and wall. You will not be afraid of the terror by night, or of the arrow that flies by day; of the plague that stalks in darkness, or of the destruction that devastates at noon. (NASB).

This passage has comforted me greatly over the last several years. There was a period in 2018 when my depression got very severe, and I was barely functioning beyond the basics of my daily routine. I was incapable of reaching out to people. But one day I read this passage, and it just resonated with me in a way nothing else could at the time. The idea that God would protect and shield us like the birds of prey protect their younglings may not speak to everyone, but for me was a

great comfort. The idea that I was being enfolded in a shadowy blanket of His love and protection was something that stayed with me as I fought my way back to a healthier place. Though it cannot be the only thing that you have in your toolkit, it was definitely one of the stronger tools I had at the time to work with. And then, over the last few years, the continuation of the passage reminded me that if it was His plan, we would make it through the times of “*pestilence*.” (KJV) As with previous struggles, the mental image of God hovering over us and covering us in a protective shadow or wing was such a strong image. It was increased by the need for a reassurance that we were not alone in our struggles even if physically we were isolated.

Jessica Gelineau,
(Simi Hills Ecclesia, CA)

¹ C.S. Lewis, *Reflections on the Psalms* (New York, NY: Harcourt, Brace, and Company, 1958), 63.

² Titles and years of works featuring Psalm 19. *Die Himmel rühmen des Ewigen Ehre* (The Heavens Praise the Glory of the Eternal), Beethoven, 1803. *Die Himmel erzählen die Ehre Gottes* (The Heavens are Telling the Glory of God), Bach, 1723. *Die Schöpfung* (The Creation), Haydn, 1798. Messiah, Part II, Handel, 1741.



ABRAHAM: SEEING CHRIST'S DAY

By James McCann

MANY years ago, I heard the words of a song that moved me! This song, called “*A Legacy of Love*,” was written about a father who “showed his faith by how he lived it out.” But the song posed the question, “So what will be remembered of what he left behind? What will stand the test of time?”

As I had then recently become a dad, I began to ponder that question and think about what influence I wanted to have on my family. Many in the world strive to create a legacy or name that might live on, but ultimately what eternal benefit will material things, money, possessions or fame have on our children? If we can gain the whole world and lose our life, what profit is that to our families or us?

In the Bible, we are surrounded by many faithful family legacies. At first, they might seem small and insignificant, but they had an eternal impact not only on the people of their day but on generations to come. The powerful thing is that God recognizes and loves those who give their life to create a divine legacy.

One such example is Abraham. It is the Yahweh angel that said:

I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of Yahweh, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.” (Gen 18:19).

What an amazing statement concerning the man Abraham, spoken when yet the promised seed was still future.

In Deuteronomy 6:4-10, Moses picks this up to instruct the people in the Abrahamic legacy of loving Yahweh but teaching this “*diligently to thy children.*” But **how** was this legacy to be taught? Through the faithful actions of those parents, uncles, aunties, elders, mentors and friends who would “*talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.*”

The Apostle Paul, in Romans 4, speaks of the legacy of Abraham as being one of faith. Yet he speaks specifically in verse 12 about those: “*who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham.*” So, what is that faith to which Paul directs us, and why is it so important to our generation?

In John 8, Jesus expounds one of the key themes in the life of Abraham: “*Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad.*” (John 8:56). Abraham’s faith is about spiritual sight, not looking at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen (2 Cor 4:18). Our generation puts trust in the physical evidence we can see with our eyes, but Abraham’s faith was a spiritual sight of the unseen!

This theme immediately presents itself in the very first words spoken to Abram in Genesis 12. In the wonderful promise; “*Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will*

shew thee." The Hebrew word for "shew" is "ra-ah" (lit. "to see"). It occurs again in 12:7, twice, as "appeared." It is fascinating to follow this word through the Genesis account of Abram/Abraham's life. It is a challenge to see as God sees.

A contrast is established in Genesis 13:10 when it is used of Lot. Here Lot "lifted up his eyes and beheld all the plains of Jordan." The word "beheld" is also "ra-ah." Lot was also called to the promises, but from here, he separated from Abram, making a disastrous decision not to follow his spiritual sight, but to move to the lush surrounds of Sodom. Yet of Abram, we are told in 13:14, "Lift up your eyes and look" ("ra-ah".) Here Abraham looked at what yet he could not see, a land filled with his seed, his legacy, inhabiting it forever!

In Genesis 18:1-2, we again have Yahweh "appear" ("ra-ah") to Abraham, where he "lifted up his eyes" (key theme) and saw the angelic host and Yahweh angel. This chapter is the divine promise of a son, pointing forward to Christ (Gal 3:16). It is here the Godly character of Abraham is seen, and the divine commendation of his legacy (Gen 18:17-19).

Spiritual sight is not easy to develop, which is why God tested Abraham many times, to help produce such vision. One such example is in Genesis 21, which lays the foundation context for the greatest of such tests in Genesis 22.

Here in Genesis 21:9-10 it is Sarah who is to teach Abraham about spiritual sight. She looked on and "saw" ("ra-ah") Ishmael mocking Isaac, and she goes to Abraham with the advice that he must

be "cast out," and not inherit with her son. (see Gal 4:22-31). We know how **huge** this statement was, because it was "very grievous in Abraham's sight." The Hebrew for "sight" here is not "ra-ah," because Abraham was not viewing this scene in light of eternal principles, rather because of "his son." So, it is God who had to step in to correct his vision! The amazing thing about Sarah's words and spiritual sight is that Paul quotes them in Galatians 4:30 with this preface: "Nevertheless, what saith the scripture?"

The wonderful thing about Abraham is how he still obeyed God! Notice in Genesis 21:14 that "Abraham arose early." This shows how challenging this trial was for Abraham in overcoming temporal sight with spiritual sight. We confirm this by observing that the only other time this is said of Abraham is when he is asked by God to sacrifice his son of promise (Gen 22:3)! The connection between the two events is further observed by the opening line of Genesis 22, "After these things."

The ultimate test of spiritual sight is found in the events of the sacrifice of Isaac. Would Abraham trust God in faith when asked to do something that he could have, by human logic, rejected or refused? How could a loving God, who hates human sacrifice, ask such a thing? How can Isaac be the promised seed if he was to die? Would Abraham be able to see as God sees? This is the power of Genesis 22. Abraham was to be brought to see Christ's day and be glad.

We can picture the scene of Genesis 22:1-3. Anxious Abraham rises early, not able to sleep, troubled with what

God has asked of him, his mind churning with what God is trying to teach him. His head down, focused on the path ahead, solemnly leading on Isaac and his servants.

Continuing the narrative at verse 4, *“And **then**, on the third day he lifted up his eyes and **saw** (“ra-ah”) the place afar off.”* What an amazing statement! Abraham’s spiritual sight ignites as he suddenly **sees** God’s work. After three days of darkness, now Abraham *“saw Christ’s day.”* The *“third day”* is the day of resurrection (Matt 16:21). Now he saw what God was going to do—raise Isaac to life again.

The certainty of this is shown both in the context of Genesis 22, and from Paul’s words in Hebrews 11. Abraham himself immediately declares that Isaac and he would *“go away and worship and **come again** to you.”* (Gen 22:5). Paul expounds this in Hebrews 11:17-19: *“Abraham accounted God able to raise him up, even from the dead.”* Therefore, it was in this *“figure”* that Abraham did sacrifice Isaac, because in his mind he was certain he would go through with it in confidence of God raising him again!

The wonder of Paul’s words is that he calls Isaac Abraham’s *“only begotten son.”* This title of Christ (John 3:16, 18) being applied to Isaac, demonstrates the power and meaning behind the events of Genesis 22. Abraham, as the father, represents God. Isaac, the son, represents Jesus Christ. This highlights the meaning of the repetition in Genesis 22 of *“father”* and *“son.”* (22:6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 16).

The entire chapter now comes alive with allegory and import, showing the wonder of our Father, who knows the end from the beginning. It establishes a test that causes our hearts to rejoice as we **see** Christ’s day immersed throughout the chapter.

Yet Abraham, like us, can see *“afar off”* into the future, confident that God’s work in His Son is as good as done (Rom 4:17). Abraham was so confident in God that he lifted his hand to kill Isaac, by faith looking forward to Christ’s day, which it represented. In dying with Christ, he would be sure of being raised together with him (Rom 6).

Yet at the very moment he lifts the knife, the Yahweh angel interrupts the events (Gen 22:11). It is at this point that Abraham *“lifted up his eyes and **looked** (“ra-ah”).* (vs 13). He sees the ram of God’s providing *“behind him,”* for the mission and work of Christ preceded even creation. *“Before Abraham was, I am”* (John 8:58, 17:5, Col 1:15-20, Heb 1:1-4).

I love the language of Genesis 22:15 where it tells us the angel called *“the second time.”* It was the first time (vs 11) that the angel reveals the ram, signifying the first advent of Christ, who came as the sacrifice that *“taketh away the sin of the world.”* (John 1:29) But it is this *“second time”* that the angel proclaims the blessing of God that will be to *“all nations,”* pointing forward to the second advent of Christ, where he will possess the *“gate of his enemies.”* (Gen 22:17). Paul shows this to be the ultimate destruction of death in the

Kingdom Age (1 Cor 15:22-28). The certainty of this is sealed by God's own oath (Gen 22:16), which must be the very anchor of our souls (Heb 6:13-19).

How amazing is it that Abraham then calls that place, "*Yahweh Yireh*," which is made up of our key word "*ra-ah*," meaning "He who will be seen." Truly, in this mount it will be seen. So, Christ says; "*Abraham rejoiced to see my day, he saw it, and was glad.*" How his heart rejoiced to see the resurrection of his son Isaac pointing forward to the one who would conquer death and bring life and immortality to light.

This Abrahamic legacy is highlighted both in Genesis 22, and how this chapter is picked up in the gospel of John. In Genesis 22:20 we have the repetition of the chapter's opening statement: "*It came to pass after these things.*" What follows seems like a boring genealogy, but in fact, it is the first occurrence of a special person, Rebekah. Only after the death and resurrection of Isaac (Christ) are we introduced to his bride, the ecclesia (John 19:34-37, Gen 2:21-25).

These lofty themes converge beautifully in John 11, illustrating the Abrahamic legacy. Jesus received the message sent to him of the sickness of the one he "*loved*." (John 11:3, 5). Yet Jesus wanted to teach his disciples about Abrahamic faith, to **see** as God sees. Jesus knew his mission and how God was working behind the scenes already. (11:4, 40) Christ knew this was about resurrection (John 11:11, 15, 25-26) and said, "*I am glad* (same word as 8:56) *for your sakes.*" This is because he was going to help

them **see** the power of God, even over the grave. The repetition of the phrase "*I know*," in 11:22-27 are all the same word "*see*" from John 8:56!

How hard it must have been for Jesus to have deliberately waited two days (11:6), knowing that Lazarus would die, to illustrate this point to his disciples. How much patience and trust we also learn when we see why Christ delays these two thousand years before he returns to raise the dead. But he invites us also to "*Come and see*" (11:34), to develop Abrahamic faith and spiritual sight.

We enter not only into the depth of Christ bearing our burdens and carrying our sorrows, (11:33, 38) but also into his confidence in God, to reveal His glory so that all might "*see and believe.*" The record says that Christ "*lifted up his eyes*," (11:41) and cried out to the "*Father*" in prayer. Here, at the mouth of a cave (11:38), a place like where Abraham buried Sarah, Jesus, possessing the gate of his enemies, cried with a "*loud voice*," to call the dead to "*Come forth.*" (11:43).

Those who believe, and **see** the unseen are the legacy of Abraham. Those, who develop the faith of their father Abraham, will not look at the things our eyes can behold, rather the things that are eternal. To **see** as God sees. They see the evidence that God provides for faith is in His word, not the physical things our eyes behold. They are those that Christ said, "*shall hear the voice of the son of God, and they that hear shall live.*" (John 5:25).

James McCann,
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A portion of this article was shortened and we will be posting the complete content on social media next month. The additional content provides a number of examples that demonstrate how one could see Jesus Christ in the details of the Scriptures.

THE FUNDAMENTAL DOCTRINE OF CHRIST

By Richard Morgan

WHEN we think of first principles, we talk about fundamental things to our faith and religion. So, what is the most basic of all first principles, the foundation on which everything else gets built? The question answers itself. Paul wrote, *"For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ."* (1 Cor. 3:11), and Jesus himself likened listening and following his teachings to a house built on a rock (Luke 6:47-49). We call ourselves Christadelphians—that's our identity. We are brothers and sisters in Christ. We remember Christ

week by week in the bread and cup. It truly is second nature to understand that Christ is the rock on which the ecclesia and our faith are built.

However, one of the subtleties of false religion is how we can replace Christ with something else. It is easy to balk at such a statement and say, "I would never do that; Christ is at the center of my religion and life!" But let's think about how easily we can let Christ slip away and how we might call ourselves Christadelphian without truly having Christ as our foundation.

In my last article, we looked at how the children of Israel replaced their mediator at that time, Moses, with the golden calf. We considered how that points forward to replacing Christ with what Paul terms "*another Jesus*." (2 Cor. 11:4). But the replacement of the true Biblical Jesus with an invented one like the Trinitarian Jesus is just one way we can lose sight of Christ.

Think about the New Testament from a holistic point of view. The four gospels are all about Christ and his teachings, and the rest of the books follow suit. But they don't just talk about Christ. Many of the writings in the New Testament also speak about how the infant ecclesias were losing their grip on Christ and wanting to return to things like the ritualism of the Law of Moses. In Galatians, for example, Paul addresses the problem that faith in Christ was being replaced by dependence on the law. He likens a law-based religion to going back to slavery in Egypt. It wasn't just that they were slightly astray in their comprehension of first principle teachings; they had turned one hundred and eighty degrees and marched right back into the darkness. In essence, they had replaced Christ.

Likewise, the Book of Hebrews isn't about nudging the ecclesia back to a more balanced understanding. They had left Christ and had to be reminded of the superiority of Christ over the rituals of the Old Covenant and its

priesthood. The writer terms their rejection of Christ as "*diverse and strange teachings*." (Heb. 13:9). He's not talking about the Trinity or immortal souls here; he's talking about ritualism as a religious mindset that pushes Christ out of our hearts.

We might look at the problems in Galatia and those addressed in Hebrews as irrelevant to us. We never were under the Old Covenant, so we aren't attracted to its rituals. We could look at these books from the angle of more generalized ritualism and apply the lessons to our twenty-first-century attraction to formal religion. Instead, we will look at the topic Paul delves into in his epistle to the Colossians. It's a helpful letter because not only does Paul allude to the same ritualistic mindset mentioned in Galatians and Hebrews, but he widens the net for us, so we don't have to go down the route of spiritualizing the Old Covenant to apply it to our own lives.

One of the elements of the Book of Colossians that expositors wrestle with is what exactly was it that Paul was tackling? For instance, he seems to be talking about ritualism in chapter 2, but there are also all kinds of connections with the ideas found in Gnosticism. However, Gnosticism didn't fully manifest itself as a formal movement until the 2nd century. Its seeds may have been sown when Paul wrote the epistle, but it is unlikely he was tackling the movement per se. It is

more likely he was dealing with several ideas, including the roots of gnostic thinking, Jewish mysticism, and other philosophies, all of which had one thing in common: they threatened to lead the Colossian brothers and sisters away from Christ.

As you read through Colossians, notice how much emphasis Paul places on Christ. For instance, at the end of the first chapter, Paul talks about *"the mystery hidden for ages and generations."* (v26). To the Colossian reader, getting mixed up in things like Jewish mysticism, the idea of mystery was attractive. But Paul explains what he's talking about in the next verse, *"God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory."* That's it! That's the mystery, Christ in us.

Ignoring the chapter division, Paul carries on with the same theme. He wants his readers *"to reach all the riches of the full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God's mystery, which is Christ."* (v2). Notice the emphasis and the all-encompassing nature of the doctrine of Christ. He leaves no room for the various ideas that had attracted them. Instead, in

Christ, *"are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge,"* (v3), so that some of the treasures can be mixed and matched with other ideas. Christ is everything.

He then goes on to tell his readers that he writes these things *"that no one may delude you with plausible arguments."* (v4) and *"See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ."* (v8). Whatever philosophies and human traditions were extant when Paul wrote, they all had to be dismissed in favor of Christ.

So foundational is the doctrine of Christ that Paul goes right back to the beginning of the Bible to make his point. The teaching of Christ wasn't a new thing—it was a mystery hidden away in the Old Testament and now revealed in the New. Look at Paul's language in chapter 1, where he describes Christ as *"the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation."* (v15). The allusions to Genesis 1 are evident. When God caused perhaps the most fundamental of all verses in the Bible, Genesis 1:26, to be written, he was thinking about his son, the Christ.

It's worth returning to the previous series of articles where we discussed the Trinitarian Jesus with the true Biblical one. This passage in Colossians is a favorite of Trinitarians, especially the next verse, *"For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him."* It sounds very much like Jesus is the creator mentioned in Genesis.

However, what we have here is an example of how the Biblical Jesus gets replaced with the philosophies and traditions of men. A mistake Trinitarian expositors make is misunderstanding how the New Testament uses the Old. Who is the *"man"* made in God's image in Genesis 1:26? We know the answer because the next couple of chapters tells his story—it's talking about Adam and Eve. Nobody will ever say that Adam really was Christ. In fact, in passages like Romans 5 and 1 Corinthians 15, the New Testament goes out of its way to contrast Christ with the Adam of Genesis. We have an example of what the New Testament repeatedly does, using the Old Testament typologically. Yes, Genesis 1:26 is ultimately about Christ, as Paul says in Colossians. But initially, it wasn't about Christ at all—it was about Adam and Eve. It was only about Christ typologically.

And in the same way that Jesus isn't the one being created in Genesis 1, neither is he the creator of Genesis 1. Colossians isn't even talking about the Genesis creation in any case because instead of animals, the created things are *"thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities."* Paul's concern is the New Creation in

Christ, but he typologically uses the fundamental passage in Genesis 1 to get his point's importance across to his readers.

There is some irony in how Trinitarian expositors treat references to Christ in the Old Testament. We're talking in this article about how we can replace Christ with different ideas, something that the early church fathers did by looking at their concept of Christ through the lens of classical philosophy. But, to fit their Christ back into the Bible in a great feat of eisegesis, they end up replacing the Biblical Christ with a version of their own, but they replace the teaching of the Old Testament too in the process. Manifestations of God, like the angel in the burning bush, now become "Christophanies," and the point of the Bible is missed.

Leaving aside Trinitarian dogma, let's apply the lesson to ourselves. We haven't replaced Christ in a theological sense, but can we replace him in other ways?

Later in Colossians 2, Paul writes:

If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the world, why, as if you were still alive in the world, do you submit to regulations—"Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch" (referring to things that all perish as they are used)—according to human precepts and teachings? (Col 2:20-22).

That passage is readily identifiable with the legalism of Jewish ritualism mentioned in places like Galatians and Hebrews. But I don't think we should limit it to Jewish Christians and their first-century concerns. That's especially

the case because Paul was writing to a Gentile ecclesia. While there may be other hints at Jewish rituals (he mentions circumcision in the same chapter, for example), his spectrum is broader, as mentioned earlier.

Notice what Paul says in the passage just cited. In Christ, they should have died to the *"elemental spirits of the world,"* which he says are regulations like banning people from handling, tasting, and touching certain things. He says that sort of thing is nothing more than human precepts and teachings. He then acknowledges that they *"have indeed an appearance of wisdom."* (v23). We can see his point. Having rules and regulations like that will help people with their moral living. But then Paul says, *"but they are of no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh."* (v23). Notice the strength of the language used by Paul. He doesn't leave the door ajar for these ideas. They were of no value and should have died when they embraced Christ.

Why are they of no value? Because they're the kind of thing that replaces Christ. Can we do the same thing? Most assuredly, yes. It could be how we tend to overregulate our religion, emphasizing form, dress codes, and doing everything *"decently and in order."* Hence, while we might proclaim Christ, he is an afterthought because we're determined to get Sunday morning "right." Or it might be something more subtle like the very concept of first principle doctrines. What could be more right than making sure we understand doctrine correctly and reject teachings that come from the

philosophies of man? Isn't that what Paul is talking about in Colossians, in any case? But we can lose Christ in our zeal to defend what we call "The Truth" and point the finger at Christendom astray.

But coming back to the regulations mentioned by Paul in Colossians, it seems that the fundamental problem we have in replacing Christ with other philosophies comes down to the question of faith. Faith is *"the conviction of things not seen."* (Heb. 11:1). We can't see Christ just like the children of Israel couldn't see Moses. But they could see the golden calf. And we can see things like a well-oiled Breaking of Bread service, our statement of faith, and regulations to live by. We can quantify and measure our righteousness by these things, but we negate faith and replace Christ. Faith tells us that having Christ in the center of our lives works. All these other things don't work even though they have a show of wisdom about them. So, whether it's ritualism or Reiki, conformity or crystals, Neoplatonism or Gnosticism, or any other tangible ideas and philosophies we use to regulate our thinking and behavior, let's remember that these things tend to remove Christ from our lives.

The doctrine of Christ is the most foundational of all. He's the reason why we call ourselves Christadelphians. And the power of a Christ-centered life is the only answer to life's most fundamental questions.

*Richard Morgan,
(Simi Hills Ecclesia, CA)*

FRATERNAL WEEKEND IN GUATEMALA

By Jim Hunter

AFTER losing their hall during the pandemic, the Ecclesia was overjoyed to get together for a long weekend with a group of brothers and sisters visiting from El Salvador and Honduras. Everyone said it felt like a mini-Bible school. Nearly all the Guatemalan brothers and sisters attended, along with ten or so family members, and interested friends. There were also five children, bringing the total attendees to about thirty.

Brothers and sisters from El Salvador made the five-hour bus trip to Guatemala City. On Thursday and Friday, they met several of the brothers and sisters. On Saturday they met in a park with covered patios designed for

gatherings. Bro. Jaime Mate gave two classes to the adults on “Walking to the Promised Land.” Bro. Alejandro Alfaro gave classes to the young people on “Joshua—a New Generation.” Sis. Marcela Lela gave the children’s classes.

On Sunday morning, the group met again at the park for the Breaking of Bread. All felt tremendously uplifted by the weekend, and it is hoped to hold another in the not-too-distant future, God willing. In the meantime, until they can find a new hall, the Guatemalan brothers and sisters Break Bread via ZOOM with the Los Angeles Hispanic Ecclesia on Sunday afternoons.

*Jim Hunter,
(CBMA)*



GUYANA NEW MARKET STREET SUNDAY SCHOOL

By David Andrews

DURING March 2021, recently baptized Bro. Primal Accra raised with Bro. David Andrews the possibility of commencing a Sunday School at his home premises, New Market St. Georgetown, and asked for the blessing of the Georgetown Ecclesia. He explained that some parents who shared the residence had approached him on this matter, with a view of occupying their children's time during Sunday afternoons.

The Arranging Brethren, along with the Sunday School Superintendent, gave the green light. What may be considered semi-formal classes, started on April 4, 2021. One year later, these

sessions are still alive and active, though not held every Sunday due to personal time constraints of Bro. Primal. Thirty-one sessions have thus far been held.

The Georgetown Ecclesia welcomes this effort by Bro. Primal, and renders some assistance in the form of Sunday School materials and refreshments. We all give thanks to our Heavenly Father for this opportunity of planting the seed in the minds of these young ones, and pray that the effort will be greatly blessed in producing interest of the parents as well in due course. May Bro. Primal also be encouraged to continue in this zealous effort.

*David Andrews,
(CBMC, Guyana)*



*Bro. Primal and
some Sunday
School Scholars*

BARBADOS

By Ian MacFarlane

THE ecclesia in Barbados held their annual Fraternal Gathering on April 15 -18, 2022. Overseas visitors this year included Bro. Larry and Sis. Karon Deakin from Venice, Florida, as well as the CBMC link couple Bro. Ian and Sis. Judy Macfarlane from Hamilton, Canada. After a year of enduring COVID-19 restrictions, the Fraternal provided a wonderful opportunity for everyone to fellowship together at the ecclesial Hall.

The study weekend consisted of six classes, including an exhortation, centered around the theme of “Absalom: The Stealer of Hearts.” In addition, a special lecture was advertised for the Sunday afternoon, entitled “What will Cause Russia to Invade the Middle East?” This lecture was advertised in the *Barbados Sunday Sun* newspaper and resulted in two visitors attending.

One of the visitors was a Doctor of Divinity, who has two Churches on the island, as well as owning and operating a Bible store. The other visitor originally lived in Scarborough, Canada, before moving back and settling in Barbados. She enjoyed the lecture on Sunday, and even attended the next day for the final class on the Absalom series.

After each class, a lively session of questions and answers took place, with brothers and sisters participating.

All the classes were broadcast on the web, thanks to the work of Bro. Jonathan Ramlochan, who operated the technical equipment. CBMC was able to assist in providing the necessary components so that the ecclesia now has the capability to broadcast. This permits those unable to attend to review talks that have been broadcast online.

Following the Memorial Service on Sunday, an ecclesial lunch was held for all members at the Hall. It was a delightful meal, but even more special was the fellowship and conversation that took place.

The Barbados Ecclesia is blessed to have a number of very good Bible students who love the word and are excited by it. The current membership of the Bank Hall Street ecclesia is 25, and their recording brother is Bro. Anthony Hunte. Within the last 6 months, a young sister, Hannah Stanford, was baptized, and this has added some much-needed youth to the ecclesia.

Barbados, as a country, has recently chosen to leave the British Commonwealth and become a Republic. Their economy is still heavily reliant on the tourism industry, and the pandemic has been extremely difficult for the island from an economic perspective. As COVID-19 entry restrictions begin to ease up, this is expected to help the local economy.

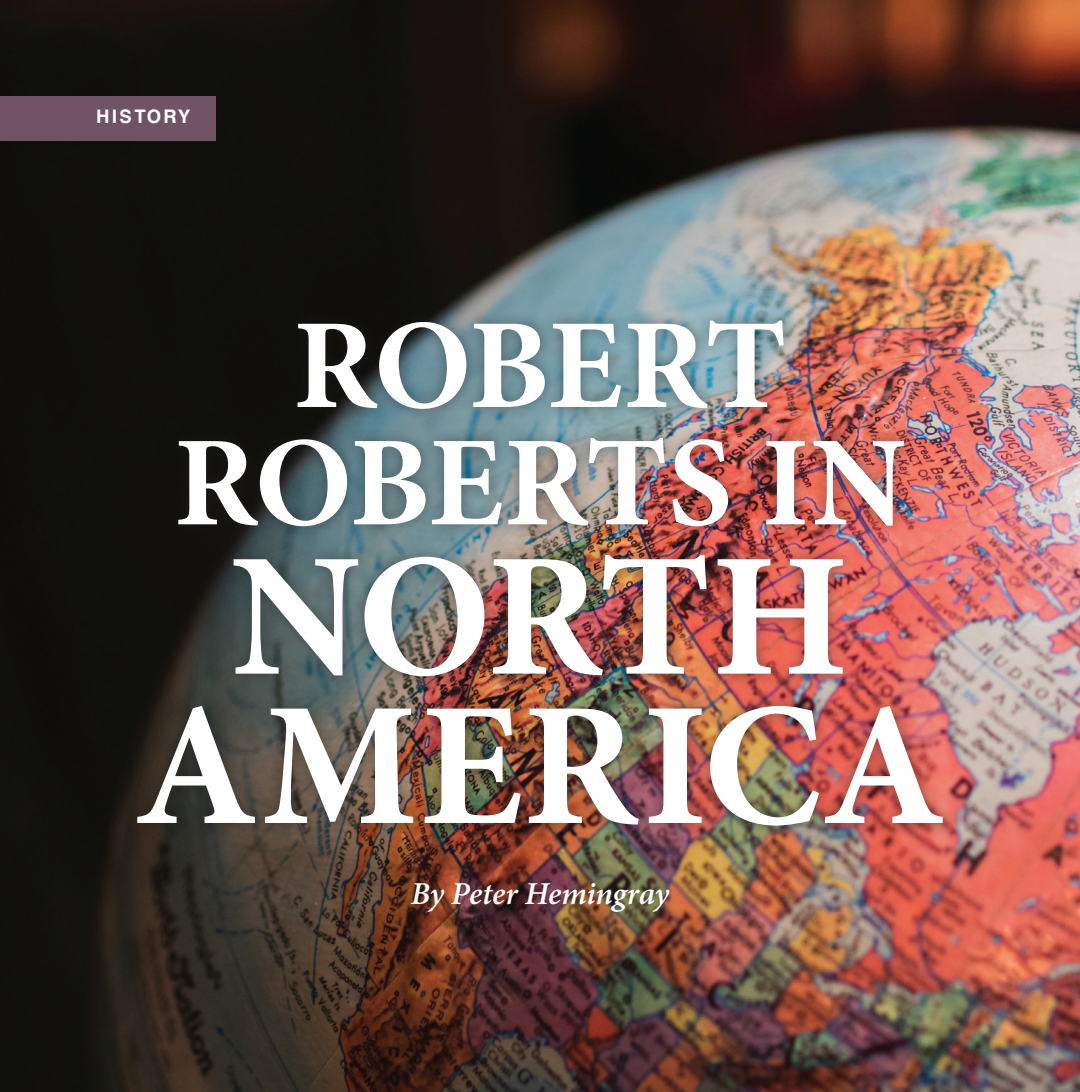
During our stay, on top of the wonderful fellowship we enjoyed with the ecclesia at the Hall, we had the opportunity to visit with many members at their

homes or enjoyed fellowship with them at our apartment. This included Bro. Narine and Sis. Amina Ramlochan, and their son Jonathan; Bro. Oral Sanford and his daughter Sis. Hannah; the Hunte family (including being able to be spectators at Sierra Hunte's track meet). We also visited one of the senior members of the ecclesia with incredible Bible knowledge, Sis. Murl Marshall. Sis. Murl is a treat to visit and loves to talk about the Word. We also spent time with Sis. Daphne DeBeauville, a gardener extraordinaire, who loves a visit, as she too is enthused by the Word. Sis. Daphne is driven to meeting by her lovely daughter, Deserie, which is quite helpful.

Overall, it was a spiritually uplifting week for us all as we gathered around God's Word. If you are planning to visit Barbados, please let Bro. Anthony or me know, as visitors are welcome, and discussion around the Word of God is always appreciated.

*Ian MacFarlane,
(CBMC Link for Barbados)*





ROBERT ROBERTS IN NORTH AMERICA

By Peter Hemingray

FEW know that Robert Roberts, the first Editor of *The Christadelphian*, and the source of much of our original literature, was on the continent seven times from 1871 to 1898. He crisscrossed west to east, north to Nova Scotia, and south to Virginia.

Robert Roberts first visited North America in 1871 in connection with the sad death of John Thomas. He arrived on April 19, and left on July 8, three months less a few days. It must have

been a sad time, but perhaps a little uplifting, as he visited twenty-eight ecclesias, and was warmly welcomed by all.

Robert Roberts next visited North America four times in under two years, 1887-88, primarily for purposes associated with the ill-fated sugar project (described below). But he also spent time, particularly in the summer of 1888, visiting ecclesias in the USA and Canada. His other visits also

briefly involved interactions with the Christadelphians in North America, such as a trip across the continent in 1896, and when he called in to San Francisco in September 1898, where he unfortunately died of a heart attack. The first two visits were at a time when he was looking forward to a great financial boost to his efforts to spread the gospel. The last two were in the shadow of a catastrophe.

The two visits in 1896 and 1898 were on his way back to England from Australia. The last being tragically cut short by his death.

We will cover the middle four visits, and the one in 1896. I have described the visit of 1871 before, in *The Tidings* for March 2021 (p. 24). And the accounts of the events in San Francisco surrounding his death on the morning of September 23, 1898, have been dealt with much elsewhere, including in *The Tidings*¹ so we will pass by this sad event.

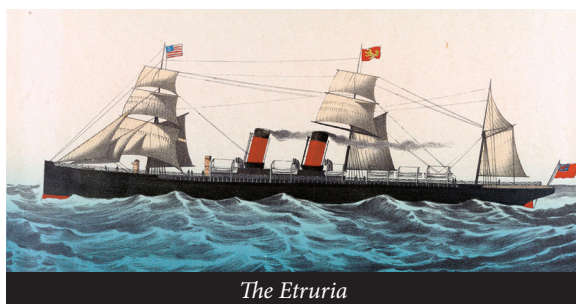
1887 Brief Visit

Roberts made a very brief visit in 1887. He arrived on December 4 in New York on the ship “Etruria,” and left on December 10. He was quite coy about the reason: “Having occasion to run over to New York, in connection with the proposed enlargement of *The Christadelphian*.”

He then described the journey, over the space of almost 12,000 words, but the only evidence of the real purpose is the following paragraph:

“I was introduced to... Professor Friend, who has discovered a method of applying electricity in the refining of sugar, with results that will be a surprise everywhere when they become known, as they are on the point of doing, through a factory which has been in process of equipment for a considerable time past, and now nearly finished. An inspection of this factory was one of the incidents of the week.”²

His connection with this activity had started via James Robertson, who had been a well-known brother in Liverpool, England, undoubtedly well acquainted with Roberts. According to the various newspaper reports, Mr. Friend came to Liverpool around 1883, looking for funds for his process. Robertson invested quite heavily, it is said, and in March 1884 he became secretary of the “Electric Sugar Refining Company,” and ultimately received about 1,000 shares of the 10,000 issued. He sold these shares to fund the company, and promoted the company quite heavily, especially among those of his acquaintance in Liverpool. Naturally, Roberts became aware of this, and also promoted the enterprise,



apparently quite strongly from 1886.³ In December 1887, after rumors spread that the claims being made were false, Robert Roberts went to verify the process in New York, although he only mentioned the purpose briefly as we described above.

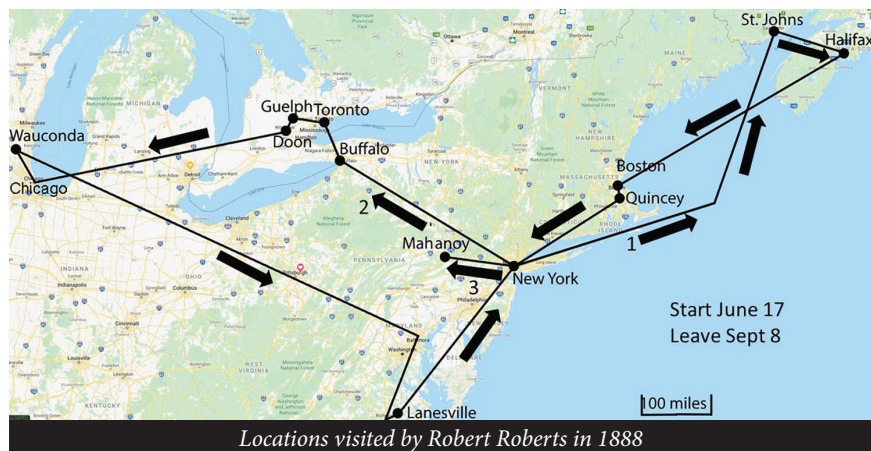
He half-promised a return visit, when he would visit the ecclesias, and this he did six months later.

1888 Sugar—But Also Ecclesial Visits⁴

He fulfilled his half-promise and made quite an extensive visit, from June to September 1888. He arrived with his wife, Jane, in New York on June 17th at the height of an American summer and was welcomed by Robertson, who we will frequently see in this account. This must have been quite a happy visit. He was with his wife, and he was warmly welcomed everywhere. England and the USA were prosperous, and most of the world was at peace. The main reason for his visit, the sugar refining company, meant that he thought he was about to receive considerable funds for his magazine, the community, and the

colonization of Israel by the Jews. This appeared to be common knowledge, for we find the following quote from a local newspaper of his lecture the following Sunday:

“Money is being gathered in for this future home of the sainted few, both in America and Great Britain. There is likewise a gigantic business undertaking now being projected in this country by one of their leading Liverpool members, Mr. J. U. Robertson, viz.: the Electric Sugar Refining Company, whose offices are at 69, Wall Street, New York, and whose works are being developed at Brooklyn. The wonderful invention whereby sugar can be refined in about two hours from the coarsest brown to the purest crystallized white may be an inspired one likewise, but it is anticipated that the profits will not be less than one hundred per cent. It is being whispered about that a large portion of the profits to be derived from this inspired sugar refinery will be devoted



to the building of this temple after the plans of Henry Sully and description of the inspired dreamer, Robert Roberts."⁵

By then its promoter, Henry Friend, had died and the subterfuge was carried on by William Howard. It seems clear Robertson had no knowledge of the fraudulent nature of this activity, although he promoted it heavily. It is unknown whether he later lost money in the debacle.

Roberts and his wife then travelled extensively in both Canada and the USA. When he arrived in New York City, he spent two weeks there and then left for a visit to St John, Newfoundland and Halifax, called in at Boston on the way back to New York City. It appears this excursion was pre-arranged, but when news of his presence spread, he was invited to several ecclesias, including two fraternals. He intended more visits, but the trip was abbreviated because of his fatigue, and he skipped all after Chicago except Lanesville and returned to New York City to recuperate, briefly going to Mahanoy later.

You can see from the map on the previous page that there were actually two trips after the initial journey North, all beginning and ending in New York City. Unlike in the previous trip in 1871, he included few details of the ecclesial membership on this occasion. It is clear many of the visits were designed to heal the problems that existed in many of the ecclesias, only some being successful. After his visits, he spent two weeks in New York City further promoting the sugar enterprise.

In his notes in *The Christadelphian* of the time, he strongly objected to the criticisms of this endeavor, "that the absurd and utterly baseless calumnies of those who are eager to 'take up a reproach against their neighbour' might be dispelled by the logic of facts." After all, he had witnessed a (seeming) demonstration of the process.



New York/New Jersey. Robert and Jane Roberts were here on four occasions: at the start and end of their visit, briefly after their first trip, and then again just before their local visit to Mahanoy. When they finally arrived back in the City, they returned to the home of Bro Robertson and apart from sugar activities, attempted to help a split over the strange topic of the use of the lot for selecting a permanent ecclesial leader. A little ecclesia on Staten Island, New York, to which the daughter of John Thomas belonged, was established on that basis. He was apparently successful.

CHRISTADELPHIAN BIBLE LECTURES are delivered in Chandler Hall, 18 Essex st., 10.45 a. m. Subject, "The Kingdom of God, is it in Heaven or on the Earth?" 7.30 p. m., subject, "The Millennium." All welcome; no collections.

Lecture in Boston

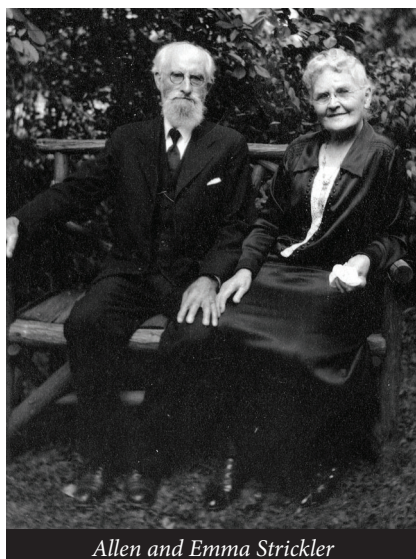
St. John and Halifax. These two isolated ecclesias were established by John Thomas in 1851. It took Robert Roberts two and a half days to get there, another day to get to Halifax, and then he was faced with a 700-mile train journey to Boston, his next ecclesia. Two lectures in St. John were given to reasonable audiences, with an ecclesia of reasonable size, 30-40. Halifax was even more remote, with a tiny ecclesia of nine, reduced by disputations since the times of John Thomas, and a visit of only 24 hours. Quite why Robert Roberts made the considerable effort to visit these remote ecclesias is unknown, perhaps because St. John was the birthplace of Robertson, who clearly arranged for this visit to North America. (St. John had been a large prosperous ship building city of perhaps 300,000 in 1870, but was beginning its long decline to around 70,000 today, but there are still around 70 members in the area. Halifax was a British garrison city of perhaps 400,000 in 1888. It still is a large city, but only with a few members.)

Boston. This ecclesia, tiny in the early days, had about 75 members this year, which probably made it the largest ecclesia in North America. The Roberts spent a week there, giving the regular Sunday lecture in a low-ceiling hall up three flights of stairs in the heat, and a lecture in nearby Quincy, now simply a suburb of Boston. On July 4,

Independence Day, the ecclesia went on an excursion to Worcester with the ecclesia there, about forty miles west, but fatigue made for his absence, not surprising with all the travel. So on to New York City.

Buffalo. This was "only" four hundred miles from New York City, so only a day, and there the Roberts stayed at the home of A. D. (Allen Darius) Strickler, then forty-two, who was to figure in Christadelphian affairs decades later. After a fraternal there and a visit to the nearby Niagara Falls, it was on to Toronto.

Toronto. This ecclesia had undergone a tumultuous time from its origins about 30 years before and at the time, was split into two ecclesias over the



Allen and Emma Strickler

topic of immortal emergence, but the two were persuaded to unite, with very few exceptions so this was a successful visit. (There were about 50-60 Christadelphians in the city.) Then on to Guelph, a mere fifty miles away, an ecclesia which still exists.

Guelph. This was a thriving small town, with an ecclesia that Roberts had visited in 1871, which had at the time about ten members. He delivered two lectures, which were well attended, and enjoyed meeting some he had long known, including one C.H. Evans, who he had met in Birmingham some years ago. So, only twenty-five miles on to Doon.

Doon. This small village, now a suburb of Kitchener, had an ecclesia of 50-60 members out of only about six hundred inhabitants, so it was the largest local congregation. Two lectures, attended by about 200, were delivered and much discussion with the local members was had before departure for one of the two main stops on his travels, a gathering for a week at Wauconda, about 50 miles north-west of Chicago, nearly 600 miles from Doon: 15 hours by rail, an overnight stay in Chicago and arriving at his destination late on Sunday—deliberately so, to avoid having to speak throughout that day.

Wauconda. Situated on the shores of the beautiful local lake, where the area fraternal was held from 1879 until 1891. Robert Ashcroft visited in 1882, shortly before his *“Exegetist”* magazine started what became known as the “Partial Inspiration” division of 1885. The activities were held from

Saturday to Monday, and Roberts had to recover his strength before he could give addresses on Sunday night and Monday night under a tent to an audience of about seventy. Thomas Williams was one of the main speakers, and he met with Roberts for the first time since he and John Thomas were delivering a series of lectures in 1869 in Mumbles, Wales, just before Williams emigrated. The lecture he delivered, the only one recorded is to be found in *The Advocate*, October 1888, with a title of “When is Christ Coming?” He starts: “It is not usual for a lecturer to diminish the importance of his subject,” and goes



on how it was important to be prepared for the return of Christ at any time. It was an interesting “hook,” as it were. So, on Tuesday, the Roberts were off back to Chicago.

Chicago. The purpose of this visit was to deliver a well-publicized address, and according to the account in the local newspaper, the discussion had to be allowed on his subject, “Christ, the Future King of the World,” and the reports in the newspaper and *The Christadelphian* both agree that

the discussion was antagonistic and prolonged. So, on to Virginia, over 1,000 miles away, which took two days and two nights to cover, and a Sunday in Richmond, where the ecclesial situation had become so uncertain a visit was not suitable.

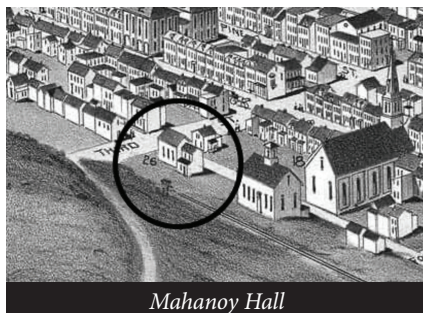
Lanesville. This week-long gathering, the first of many, was actually held at a church in Lester Manor, which, like Lanesville, has almost disappeared off the map. There were two local ecclesias, which were violently at odds. Both met at the Lanesville Church, but at separate times on Sunday. The problems had been broadcast not only in the magazines but in pamphlets, and this had also caused a rift between Thomas Williams and Robert Roberts. Fortunately, the differences were mostly resolved at this gathering, and Roberts wrote of the agreement at Lanesville:

“This result, and your manifest faithfulness to the truth as a whole, has removed obstacles to co-operation, and made me feel that we can, with advantage to the truth, work together in a common endeavor to uphold the honor and supremacy of the Holy Scriptures in this cloudy and dark day.”

So, Roberts gave several lectures to the throng of almost three hundred. These numbers involved much volunteer effort, for there were no dwellings nearby, so everything had to be improvised.

Mahanoy. After Lanesville, this was the only tour, as the fatigue of Robert Roberts forced the cancelation of all except this almost local visit. At the time, this mining town had around 10,000 inhabitants (now down to only about 1,000), and the Christadelphian Hall is shown on a map of 1889. There were about twenty-five Christadelphians there, a group owing their existence largely due to the work of William Brittle. Roberts struggled through four lectures, and the Roberts returned to New York City and left for home a few weeks later on September 8, after a visit of three months less a week.

*Peter Hemingray,
(Pittsburgh Ecclesia, PA)*



Lord willing, this article will be completed in the October edition. It will include the January 1889 unfolding of the sugar disaster and the 1896 return trip from Australia. You can read part two online now at tidings.org.

¹ *The Tidings*, 2013, pp 498, 556.

² *The Christadelphian*, 1888 p. 41

³ The involvement of Robert Roberts was described, and criticized, in the *Fraternal Visitor* for Dec. 1886

⁴ *The Christadelphian*, 1888, p. 543, 693 is the main source, along with *The Advocate* for 1888.

⁵ Quoted in *The Christadelphian*, 1888, p. 497

Thoughts on the Way A Little Child

"An argument started among the disciples as to which of them would be the greatest. Jesus, knowing their thoughts, took a little child and had him stand beside him. Then he said to them, 'Whoever welcomes this little child in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. For he who is least among you all—he is the greatest.'" (Luke 9:46-48 NIV).

"People were bringing little children to Jesus to have him touch them, but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, 'Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.' And he took the children in his arms, put his hands on them and blessed them." (Mark 10:13-16 NIV).

SISTER Karen Hutchinson, of Austin, age 63, died on May 11. I know that she would be embarrassed to hear what I am about to say, but since she can't hear it, I feel free to speak.

In the incidents described above, Jesus and his disciples were dealing with actual children and not adults. But when Jesus tells his disciples—and us—that we adults must receive the kingdom like a little child (Mark 10:15), then we need to pay attention! Then we need to figure out how we, as grown-ups, must become like little children again.

How An Adult Becomes a Little Child Again

Karen Hutchinson is, to me, the best example of what Jesus meant by *"a little child."* I certainly don't mean that Karen was a little child intellectually—not at all. She studied and earned a degree in history from Texas State University and worked as a librarian for many years with the Central Austin Public Library. I believe that Sis. Karen was

"a little child" in the best way, the way that Jesus described. Karen was patient, kind, cheerful, thoughtful, trusting, and caring. In fact, she demonstrated practically all the characteristics of love that were enumerated by the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 13.

To put it simply, she was sweet! That is a word that isn't often used today to describe adults, and that's too bad, because the world would be a better place if we had more "sweet" people like Karen.

"Sweet" people don't carry grudges, and they don't criticize or pass judgment upon others. Karen didn't carry grudges, so far as I know. I doubt that she ever judged anyone. "Sweet" people don't get angry with others. I doubt that Karen was ever really angry with anyone—and if she were, it was certainly not for long.

We just read about Christ's disciples. They were good men, righteous men, men who laid down their lives for others—and that's all to the good for

them. But they had to learn a lot of things as they followed Jesus from place to place, observing him and helping him in his work.

For one thing, the disciples had to learn that they should never compare themselves to one another:

We do not dare to classify or compare ourselves with some who commend themselves. When they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are not wise. (2 Cor 10:12 NIV).

Of course, the disciples should never have been arguing about who would be the greatest in the kingdom! I am sure they learned these lessons from Christ eventually, but Karen seemed to understand that teaching of Jesus from the start. She never pushed herself forward. She was always there, in the background, doing something to help when she could but never trying to call attention to herself.

For a second thing, Christ's disciples also had to learn that, to Jesus, the "little children" (those who were truly two years old, or six, or ten) were some of the most important people in the world and definitely should not be ignored. Jesus **wanted** to spend time with the little children. To put it simply, he loved them, and they loved him.

Karen loved cats and koalas, but she especially loved children. Although she had no children of her own, she found it easy to love any child. Jesus said that the Kingdom of God belongs to people like Karen.

From Karen, we can learn other lessons. Karen was modest. From her, we can learn that it's more important to spend time with little children, to hold them and play with them. It is more important than trying to dominate a conversation, or enhance your own reputation, or promote your own agenda.

One other thing: Karen hugged everyone. That was an obsession for



her. She loved people, and she wanted to be near them and with them.

Furthermore, Karen did not want people to go to any trouble on her account. Her brother David (aka "Scotty") said he thought Karen would not want anyone to feel obliged to dress up for her funeral. So, most of us who heard this followed that suggestion.

Karen was a baseball fan. She rooted for the Los Angeles Dodgers, and she was buried wearing her favorite Dodgers jersey.

Karen went through months of suffering in hospitals and rehab centers, but she did not complain. Until the end, she bravely put up with all her treatments. However, she did complain about one thing: the fact that, toward the end, she was unable to do her daily Bible readings.

We are grateful now that Karen has found rest and peace. We pray that her sleep will not last long and that an angel will always watch over her resting place.

We also pray that soon the angel will gently wake her up—along with her mother, her grandparents, and other family members buried in that little country cemetery in Rockdale, Texas, where Karen grew up. Then she will find a new and glorious dawn, a young and healthy body, and a special home in God's Kingdom.

And then she will hear the voice of our Lord Jesus Christ:

**She loved people,
and she wanted to
be near them and
with them.**

Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take ["receive"] your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. (Matt 25:34 NIV).

The Kingdom of Little Children

It will be a wonderful kingdom. In fact, it will be a kingdom of "little children!" Isaiah wrote about Jesus Christ and the Kingdom which he will establish when he returns to this earth:

He [Christ] will not judge by what he sees with his eyes, or decide by what he hears with his ears; but with righteousness he will judge [or "defend"] the needy, with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth. Righteousness will be his belt and faithfulness the sash around his waist. The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them. The

cow will feed with the bear, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox. The infant will play near the hole [or "pit"] of the cobra, and the young child will put his hand into the viper's nest. They

will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea. (Isa 11:3-9 NIV).

*George Booker,
(Austin Leander Ecclesia, TX)*

TIDINGS PUBLISHING

The Christadelphian Tidings is renewing its approach to publishing of non-magazine content (books, booklets, pamphlets). We need to develop a team of brothers and sisters interested in supporting the publishing process. Therefore, we are looking for people to join our publishing team.

Publishing team members work with writers throughout the editing process to develop published content. Some tasks are:

- Editing content,
- Proofreading,
- Creating Illustrations and graphic design,
- Creating awareness of published work,
- Recording audio versions,
- Translating

To join the publishing team, we ask that you please complete the form found online at:

mytidings.org/9vv

This form will help us to get to know a bit about your background and how you would like to help. After you submit your form, someone from the Publishing Team will contact you to discuss next steps.

Thank you for considering serving in this manner.

*Shawn Moynihan,
(Tidings Publications)*

SOUTH AFRICAN CHRISTADELPHIAN SUMMER BIBLE SCHOOL

DONATIONS NEEDED

The South African Christadelphian Summer Bible School has been held in South Africa since 1982. Brothers and sisters from all walks of life, different parts of the country, and visitors from outside South Africa attend. The school averages about 100 participants, making for a very intimate school, where everyone gets to know one another. The balance of the program allows time for fraternal discussion on an impromptu basis. Many of the attendees that come from developing ecclesias are unemployed or underemployed, and would not be able to afford to attend the Bible School were it not for the sponsorship program we have run for the last few years. About 60% of our attendees are sponsored. This is currently the only Bible School running within South Africa.

We are appealing to generous brothers and sisters to help with providing Bible School “sponsorships.” The financial need is close to \$10,000 (USD). Donations may be made through the *Tidings Magazine*, with earmarked donations for the **SA Bible School**. For planning purposes, one scholarship runs about \$150 (USD).

Donate electronically at www.tidings.org/donate, or send checks to Christadelphian Tidings, Jeff Gelineau, 567 Astorian Drive, Simi Valley, CA 93065.



Editor's note:

The following progress report on unity developments in North America has been written in conjunction with *The Christadelphian* Magazine, for whose assistance we are grateful. The report also appears in September's issue of *The Christadelphian*.

the
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THE CHRISTADELPHIAN
TIDINGS
OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

UNITY DISCUSSIONS IN NORTH AMERICA

In a divided world we come to realize more than ever how important it is for us to live together in unity. God is one¹ and one of the great prayers of our Lord Jesus on the eve of his death was:

“I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in me, and I in You; that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that You sent me.”
(John 17:20,21)²

Readers will be familiar with many other such passages, urging us to live together in unity of mind, written especially when there were divisions or disagreements in early ecclesias:

“Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment,” (1 Corinthians 1:10)³

Attempt at Agreement

With these, and numerous other Scriptures in mind, many attempts have been made to bring together the Amended and Unamended fellowships in North America, some of which have been successful at least in part, but none of which have secured a full continental reunion. Over the last five years another endeavor has been made, this time by the General Committee for the Midwest Amended Ecclesias (the GC) who have been working with the Unity Communications Committee for the Commending and Commended Ecclesias of Ontario and Illinois⁴ (the UCC). Good progress has been made.

In October 2015 the GC ecclesias put together a unity document which they considered to cover all the aspects, both about doctrine and fellowship, which they considered necessary as a basis for a workable unity between Amended and Unamended ecclesias. After discussion with interested parties, it was approved by the GC and other Amended ecclesias in Southern Ontario in February 2016. During the next two years that document was refined, in consultation with the UCC brethren, and was finally agreed in June 2018, to be known thereafter as the Final Agreement 2018 (FA2018). That Agreement was also reviewed and endorsed by three magazines, *Tidings*, *Lampstand* and *The Christadelphian*.

It represents a big step forward and one for which everyone has cause to be grateful, under the good hand of God. It addresses and clarifies key doctrinal issues, explains that inter-ecclesial fellowship between accepting ecclesias will be on the basis of the BASF, and deals with the most difficult issue there has been over this whole process, namely the fellowship arrangements that will hereafter apply.

That Agreement is so important, and is such an indication of excellent progress made between brethren, that it is included here in full, after which this article will explain the issues that still need to be resolved to achieve the long-desired unity.

2018 Final Agreement

The ecclesias represented by the Midwest General Committee (GC) and the Unity Communication Committee (UCC) are eager to achieve a comprehensive unity that is recognized throughout the brotherhood. Many documents have been exchanged during the reunion process in and around Ontario and the Midwest (including the NASU, UA08 and the CL)⁵ and many spoken and written assurances have been given over the years. This 2018 *Final Agreement* invites Unamended ecclesias to signify their agreement in a way that can be commended to the Christadelphian Central fellowship throughout the world.

Doctrinal Assurances

We agree that the doctrines to be believed and taught by us, without reservation, are the First Principles of the One Faith as revealed in the Scriptures, of which the Birmingham Amended Statement of Faith (with positive and negative clauses, and the Commandments of Christ) gives a true definition.⁶

Acceptance of this basis would not preclude the use of any other statement of faith by an ecclesia (including the Birmingham Unamended Statement of Faith), provided it is in harmony with the above declaration and in light of the following doctrinal clarifications:

- We believe that God holds liable to resurrectional judgment those who know the revealed will of God and have been called upon to submit to it when their circumstances are such to leave them without excuse for refusal. We recognize that God will judge all rejecters of His truth, whether baptized or unbaptized, according to their deserts, as His own principles of wisdom and justice dictate, the degree of light which leads to their accountability to resurrection and judgment being known only to the all righteous Judge Himself.⁷
- We reject the idea that a man is guilty for Adam's sin and must receive some kind of forgiveness or removal of this through baptism. We reject the

teaching that there is any legal condition or impediment which restricts God from raising and judging someone who is not baptized. We affirm that Clauses 3-12 and 16, in the BASF, including the related doctrines to be rejected (4, 5, 27, 30 and 31) are sound and sufficient expressions of what the Bible teaches about man's nature.

Fellowship Assurance

The following assurance is given on the understanding that it might not be achievable immediately, as explained below:

We agree our fellowship at the Memorial table of the Lord will be with Christadelphian Ecclesias in the Central fellowship, and with Unamended Ecclesias in North America who subscribe to this 2018 Final Agreement and honor it in the way they practice fellowship.

Fellowship Practice

In practice, fellowship will be ecclesially-based between members of both the current Central ecclesias and those Unamended ecclesias who formally indicate acceptance of this Agreement. Inter-ecclesial fellowship in the resulting united community will be on the basis of the BASF. By giving these assurances and observing the historical basis for ecclesial and personal conduct as outlined in The Ecclesial Guide, Unamended ecclesias will be joyfully welcomed and commended for recognition as members of the brotherhood worldwide

We rejoice at the opportunity to reach out to interested Unamended ecclesias, encouraging them to participate in unity on this mutually agreed and scripturally sound basis. It is recognized that some time will be required to accomplish this endeavor. The GC & UCC are committed to working together to define a plan for reaching out to those Unamended ecclesias. It is agreed that three years (or sooner) is a reasonable period of time for like-minded ecclesias to deliberate their decisions. During this three-year outreach period, it is understood that those Unamended ecclesias who have accepted this Agreement may choose to continue to fellowship with Unamended ecclesias that are open to unity discussions (i.e. like-minded ecclesias). At the end of this three-year period, fellowship with Unamended Ecclesias will be practiced on the basis defined in this Agreement. We pray that those Unamended Ecclesias who have not chosen to participate in this Agreement at that time will reconsider and join us in fellowship, uniting the body of our Lord. The Spirit of Christ will be applied in the outworking of these plans, all subject to God's will.

CGAF

Our common desire is to include CGAF Churches in the Unity effort. This 2018 Final Agreement will facilitate CGAF Churches proceeding on the basis of the

2010 invitation to fellowship from the Midwest Amended Ecclesias⁸, with a similar outreach and timeframe for their community.

Publication

We invite Unamended ecclesias to consider this 2018 Final Agreement and to signify their acceptance in writing to the Joint GC/UCC Outreach Committee.⁹ A status report of the Unity effort will be provided on a semi-annual basis. As Unamended ecclesias signify their acceptance, and implement the fellowship assurances, appropriate arrangements will be made to notify the magazines. This will enable ecclesias in North America and worldwide to extend fellowship to these ecclesias.

Sincerely your brethren in the Lord,

(Please note that the signature sections are still developing)

The Reaction

There is no suggestion that all Unamended ecclesias would accept the FA2018's form or words. But after discussion, it appeared likely that many from both fellowships were inclined to do so to varying degrees. A number of Unamended ecclesias were willing to consider this as a basis for unity, including those who have previously been participants in the 2014 process to commend Unamended ecclesias into the Central fellowship.¹⁰ While the Amended ecclesias comprising the GC have accepted the FA2018 as a basis for unity, at present no Commending Amended or Commended ecclesias have fully accepted the Agreement because of the outstanding fellowship issues outlined below. Consequently, some uncertainty exists about the general level of acceptance.

The Doctrinal Assurances in the FA2018 are a step forward by making it clear that the unity will be based upon the First Principles revealed in the Scriptures, of which the BASF provides a true definition. An excerpt from the Central/Suffolk Street Reunion document was duplicated in the FA2018 to demonstrate that, as in the past, here was a mutually agreed understanding that would enable both groups to come together.

The Fellowship Practice section is proving harder to resolve. Historically there has been a difference of approach between the two fellowships. At the table of the Lord, Amended ecclesias have accepted into fellowship members who are in good standing in other Amended ecclesias. Unamended ecclesias have accepted members whom they consider to be of like mind with them, without regard to which Christadelphian fellowship they belong. This may also include members of the CGAF churches. They take the view that it would be against their conscience in Christ to deny the emblems to brothers and sisters whom they believe share the One Faith.

Of course, there will be no difficulty fellowshiping members of those ecclesias which accept the FA2018. Members of those ecclesias will thereafter be able to share fellowship with those that were formerly Unamended, but which are now part of the expanded united community. The difficulty comes with members from non-accepting Unamended ecclesias, including those that are either strongly opposed to the new arrangements or have not yet made any decision. There will be members of those ecclesias, including family members, who have a long-standing practice of visiting ecclesias where they have been accustomed to break bread. How frequent or rare these occurrences are will be determined by the results of the outreach program described in the FA2018. These questions highlight a sensitivity that has not yet been resolved and which is the subject of ongoing discussion.

The FA2018 tries to cope with this difficulty in two ways. First, it specifies a three-year period during which an accepting ecclesia can reach out to other ecclesias who are inclined to join in the initiative. Second, it specifies that at the end of this period fellowship would cease between other Unamended ecclesias who were unwilling to unite on this basis. This has been the sticking point for three reasons.

1. It could be that there are reasons why a like-minded ecclesia cannot come on board within the prescribed three years, not for doctrinal reasons but because of other things that are happening in that ecclesia. It is expected that such situations will be rare, and the two parties have already expressed a willingness to work with such ecclesias to mitigate their concerns and consider their circumstances with a view to resolving them within a reasonable period of time.
2. If a particular visitor is known to the ecclesia, is in good standing and is of known sound doctrine, it seems wrong to the Unamended participants in the FA2018 to refuse to share the emblems with such individuals. But it seems that this is a fairly rare occurrence, given that a number of Unamended ecclesias have already separated themselves from the commended ecclesias. Committed ecclesias have made it clear that they would not resume fellowship with such ecclesias whilst there are doctrinal differences.
3. The main obstacle will arise for Unamended ecclesias that reject the FA2018. At this time, the community represented by the UCC are finding it difficult to consider changing their fellowship practices with occasional visitors who accept the One Faith but come from ecclesias which are not yet participating in the FA2018 unity process.

If there is a will to make this work, and if trust exists between everyone involved, these issues should not be insurmountable. The GC and UCC will be helping with the roll-out of this Agreement and can use their judgment in resolving the first of these two problems.

1. The three-year period is designed to encourage ecclesias to reach out, and to help uncertain ecclesias to conclude their deliberations, but there may well be certain issues that delay acceptance. It is just as important to ensure that an exceptional case does not become the norm, or the process of transition will never end.
2. The second issue is the sort of thing that ecclesias have to deal with on an ongoing basis, where they have to use their judgment to deal with occasional issues.¹¹ If any decisions taken are seen as exceptional, and as long as we all trust one another to make sensible and appropriate decisions, it should also be possible to work through that issue. The third obstacle may resolve itself as Unamended ecclesias accept the FA2018 and the circle of fellowship expands as a consequence of that process.

Where We Are Now

We have much to thank God for as the search continues to achieve unity among ecclesias and brothers and sisters. We encourage discussions to resume, and this article is designed to explain to members of both fellowships what has taken place and what remains to be achieved.

We anticipate there will be meetings held in several ecclesias to talk these issues through and to answer unresolved concerns. It is our prayer that with God's help the community in North America might draw closer together in the unity of the faith as we await the imminent arrival of our Lord and Savior. Everything that has been, and is being, done is proceeding in the spirit of Christ and is subject to the will of our heavenly Father.

¹ Or, as *The Declaration* expresses it "God is a Unity"

² All Scriptural quotations are taken from the *New King James Version*.

³ See also Rom 12:16; 14:19; 15:5,6; 2 Cor 13:11; Eph 4:3; Phil 1:27; 2:2; 1 Pet 3:8.

⁴ That long description refers to the last attempt made to establish unity in 2014 when 12 Amended and 10 Unamended ecclesias came together (the "commending" and the "commended" and a measure of agreement was established, on a basis which was not wholly accepted by other Amended ecclesias, which somewhat complicated the situation.

⁵ NASU (North American Statement of Understanding 2003), UA08 (Unity Agreement 2008), CL (Commendation Letter, September 3, 2014)

⁶ Excerpt from 1956 Central/Suffolk Street Reunion document: *A Final Statement Defining the Basis for Future Co-operation between Central and Suffolk Street Fellowships*

⁷ This sentence is taken verbatim from paragraph 6 of a letter written by Bro. Cyril Cooper to Bro. John Carter on February 10, 1956, which was used as a basis for the 1956 Central / Suffolk Street Reunion document, referred to in Footnote 6.

⁸ July 19, 2010 Letter to CGAF Brethren from Midwest Central Ecclesias

⁹ This is a Committee formed from representatives of the GC and UCC.

¹⁰ This was the attempt when about a dozen Amended ecclesias commended a similar number of Unamended ecclesias to the Central fellowship. Not all Central fellowship ecclesias accepted the commendation as they felt that the basis of the agreement was inadequate. The FA2018 seeks to remedy that situation.

¹¹ These matters would be decided by the local ecclesia, guided by the principles in *The Ecclesial Guide* and as practiced within the Central community. Such fellowship decisions will respect the integrity of the One Body by upholding the doctrinal principles of the Final Agreement and the fellowship practices of the Central community.

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"Storytelling"

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