

THE CRISTADELPHIAN
TIDINGS
of the Kingdom of God

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The CHRISTADELPHIAN TIDINGS of the Kingdom of God

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The Trial of Faith

With his baptism the life of Jesus emerges in all its beauty. From now on he will always be with us, and we shall feel the strength of his presence, though our dim eyes may not see the fullness of his perfection, or our dull hearts perceive the depth of his communion with his Father. We shall see rough men growing into saints as they walk with him; we shall hear his words of instruction and comfort. We shall become conscious of his quiet confidence and healing power and know something of the peace of God. We shall learn the true meaning of love in ministration, in forbearance and in supreme sacrifice. And when at length we turn the last Gospel page we shall know that he is with us still. His invitation, "Come unto me... learn of me", echoes yet in the ears of all who will hear, growing louder with our greater need. The wisdom of his teaching is emphasized by the appalling disasters wrought by the wisdom of men, and the certainty and need of the Kingdom he taught grows clearer with the passing years as the kingdoms of men crumble into ruin. His touch has yet its ancient power, and meditating upon him and the source of his strength we can still find a peace and joy which contrasts strangely with the tumult and discord of the world.

Melva Purkis, *A Life of Jesus*

Editorial

Memorial Day

In the United States, Memorial Day is celebrated on the last Monday of May. It's interesting to observe, on a Memorial Day in this country, how much of patriotism is a call to remember. As Christadelphians, we also know something of memorials, and remembering.

Before I go further, I have to add this thought. It's well worth remembering the sacrifices so many men and women have made, over so many years, to insure the freedoms we enjoy in this country. Many made the ultimate sacrifice of which they were capable. There are similar observances in the countries of other folks who may read these words — Canada, England, Australia and elsewhere. (For example, the role of Memorial Day is filled in Canada by Victoria Day, which occurs either on May 24 or the last Monday before that date, placing it exactly one week before Memorial Day.) Even when we ask to be excused, on the grounds of enlightened conscience, from doing what those soldiers did out of their own sense of duty, we really should be grateful for what *they* willingly sacrificed, and the benefit *we* have reaped.

But there is a different side to the call to “Remember!” While it may have served a useful purpose in times past, and may serve such a purpose even today, on a national level, it is the kind of remembering that is, on a personal and spiritual level, very misguided.

I am speaking of the battle cries, which still ring down the corridors of history in this country:

- a. “Remember the Alamo!”: this call energized the Texans fighting for independence from Mexico.
- b. “Remember the Maine!”: the battle cry of a small (but significant) war, the Spanish-American War in Cuba, that propelled Teddy Roosevelt to fame and high office.
- c. Nearer to our day, the Day of Infamy, and the marching cry of the “Big One”, World War II: “Remember Pearl Harbor!”
- d. And, of course, “Remember 9/11!” No explanation needed.

Such remembering may inspire the soldier going into battle, and strengthen those going about their own supportive work on the home front. But at the same time it encourages, not so subtly, the cherishing of enmity, bitterness and even hatred toward other races of people and nations — because they are different, and on the wrong side of this or that conflict.

In this part of the country, there are plenty of people who cling to their memories (actually, by now their memories of their grandparents' memories) of what they still call the War Between the States, or the War of Northern Aggression (although

others call it, simply, the Civil War). And they cherish a sort of nostalgic, golden-glow institutional memory of the 19th-century Old South, before the hated Yankees of Sherman and Grant turned the cities and plantations of Virginia and Georgia into ashes and rubble.

This is just the sort of thing in which, as believers in Christ, we should have no part.

Robert E. Lee was the General of all the Armies of the Confederacy in the American Civil War. It is reliably reported of him that, while other officers around him typically referred to the Union Army as “those damned Yankees” or “the enemy” (or other descriptions far more derogatory), General Lee unfailingly called the armies that opposed him on the field “those people”, “those folks”, or “the men over there”.

It’s something to think about.

Then there is, for us in the miniaturized (but nonetheless very real) world of Christadelphia, not just a personalized holding on to grudges and enmities, but a sort of organizational remembering (of anger first, giving way to mere bitterness as time passes, and at last to a sort of lingering, dismissive coldness). It is the memory by which an ecclesia, or a fellowship group, or a subgroup of believers, holds on to its own version of “the way things were”:

- “Remember how that ecclesia treated Grandpa back in 1965. How can we ever trust them again?”
- “Remember how that Fellowship harbored brother Q, who taught the error of _____ (fill in the blank). How can we ever share the Memorials with them?”
- “Remember how *they* told *our* young people what they had to wear if they wanted to attend *their* CYC. Now where is *that* found in the Bible?”
- “Remember how *we* would break bread with them, but *they* wouldn’t break bread with us. How can we ever get past that?”

Barbara’s family was from Scotland, and the family’s crest (or coat of arms) boasted as its motto: “Nunquam obliviscar”.

“We never forget!”

But there are surely things that we can, and should, forget. It has been said that one of the best ways to have peace of mind is to cultivate a selective memory. Along with the love of God, and the perfect sacrifice of His Son, what else should we remember? What should we forget?

Remember others’	Forget others’
Good deeds	Foolishnesses
Wise words	Indiscretions
Small kindnesses	Hurtful comments
Words of encouragement	Supposed insults or slights

While some things are well worth remembering, other things should be forgotten. They should be forgiven too, insofar as it is in our power, and put behind us. But they definitely should not be wrapped up and preserved and filed away for future reference:

“When I became a man, I put away childish things” (1Cor 13:11).

To cling to such matters, such seemingly small things, is childish. Even small things can weigh us down. If we pack them up and carry them along in our mental luggage wherever we go, they will only eventually wear us out, and then destroy us — if not physically, then spiritually.

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God” (2Cor 5:17-20).

This is not a magic formula that will make everything right. Nor is it a “secret weapon” to solve all personal or ecclesial or fellowship problems with the snap of the fingers.

It is however part of the arsenal of the soldier of Christ, if not the worldly soldier. The same apostle who wrote of putting away childish things, and becoming a new creation, also said:

“Love keeps no record of wrongs” (1Cor 13:5).

Instead of ‘Remember the Alamo’, or ‘Remember Pearl Harbor’, or ‘Remember _____’ (Fill in the blank with your favorite old grudge) — how about “Semper obliviscar”?

“We always forget!”

George Booker

It is a false theory that we have “light within”; it is a false theory that we have intrinsic memory of Divine things; it is a false theory that knowledge once introduced into the mind is a permanent fixture there; and any line of action based upon these assumptions is certain to lead away from the path of life. Most men are more or less influenced by a false theory of this sort, and the effect is seen in the neglect of Bible reading, the neglect of meetings, the neglect of “the ordinances” as delivered by Paul at the command of Christ; and the effects of this neglect is spiritual death.

Steven Cox

Exhortation

God's Journey... or Ours? Jeremiah 41

It had been such a long night of terror and fear, but at least they were alive! Nebuchadnezzar had now withdrawn, leaving a small garrison for the protection of the people. Gedaliah, that godly grandson of Shaphan who read to Josiah the book of the Law found in the Temple, that son of righteous Ahikam who had befriended and protected Jeremiah, had been appointed as governor. So the dispersed of Judah slowly made their way back home. A peaceful life with abundance from the fruits of harvest awaited them, and all this under Nebuchadnezzar's protection! After so much horror, bloodshed, and terror, God had in His kindness turned from His wrath and left a blessing behind for the remnant.

How jarring, then, is Jeremiah 41 for those who contemplate the ways of God: When, at last, relief from great distress and trial is found and healing is beginning, the people are plunged, through no fault of their own, into an even more desperate crisis. We must ask, as we will several times more: why did, and why does, God allow things like this to happen? Why did He permit Ishmael, as agent of the King of Ammon with his plans to control the land, to succeed with his bloody plans? Why does God, just when we are beginning to find some stability and relief in our lives, plunge us even deeper into crisis? Ishmael's actions had now exposed the remnant to the renewed wrath of Nebuchadnezzar!

While we don't always have answers to God's work in our own circumstances, it is both very instructive and encouraging to watch God at work in this incident as He tries to teach His people a profoundly simple, yet vital lesson... *if only* they would heed His voice.

The divine crisis

In this time of crisis the people did a good thing: They sought out God through the prophet Jeremiah (Jer 42:1-6). On the surface their words manifested a wonderful trust in God: "that the LORD God may show us the way in which we should walk... whether it is good *or evil*, we will obey the voice of the LORD our God!" Isn't this what we too pledged on the day of our baptism? Isn't this what life in Christ is all about?

"And it happened after ten days..." (Jer 42:7). Ten days? Why? Surely God knew how precarious their situation was? The whole garrison of Chaldeans had been slaughtered! Could any action more thoroughly ensure the wrath of Nebuchadnezzar against this remnant? Would they not be in a much safer place under the protection of the King of Egypt, far away from the threat of both Babylon and their hostile neighbors?

It is something to marvel at — and learn from — how often God uses *time* to manifest what is really in our hearts, whether we truly believe and trust the power of the invisible God. Consider Abraham, and Sarah especially, as they awaited the fulfillment of God's promise of a child. Or Saul, waiting for Samuel to come to offer sacrifice. And, especially relevant for us today, consider the servants in the house and the ten virgins, all of whom had to deal with the passing of time in the purposeful delay of their Lord's return (Matt 24:48; 25:5). We need to think deeply about these portrayals of real life: Why *does* God cause us to wait?

The LORD's answer

In defiance of everything that was 'sensible and right' (the obvious protection of Egypt), God called them to face a frightening and uncertain future in His Land — indeed, a future full of risk to their very lives! Yet, if they were prepared to go *with Him*, He promised to protect them and deliver them and bless them (Jer 42:8-17,19).

“My soul, wait silently for God alone, for my hope is from Him. He only is my rock and my salvation; He is my defense; I shall not be moved... Trust in Him at all times, you people; Pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us” (Psa 62:5-6,8).

Isn't this the crux of the whole matter? Isn't this why God permitted these evil circumstances and made them wait? *Were they prepared to trust the invisible God and to stay with Him no matter what happened — good or evil?*

Isn't this too the question God puts before us in our lives? Just when we give up on God and work out for ourselves a 'reasonable' and 'sensible' course of action, God exposes the chosen course not only as wrong, but also damaging to us over the long term. God then directs us to another path, one full (to our minds) of risk and danger, and clearly 'foolish' by human standards. So what do we do? The answer to this question tells God much about what we really believe in our heart.

The people's answer

To these people, the decision to go to Egypt was so 'right', so 'sensible', so 'logical' — *surely* God must approve!

The reality, though, seems to be that they always intended to go to Egypt; all they really wanted from God was confirmation their decision was right (42:20).

When they received a “no” from God, they did what comes naturally when one's intent is opposed. They attacked the instrument that expressed the divine answer:

“You speak falsely! The LORD our God has not sent you to say, ‘Do not go to Egypt to dwell there’ ” (Jer 43:2).

Doesn't this ring true in our own experiences? Aren't we sometimes so convinced our way is right that we proceed to attack the source that would beg to differ? “Oh, Bro. Jeremiah doesn't know what he is talking about! What does *he* know about the Bible anyway? Why, look at the mess his life is in! Fine person to give

me advice!” Or perhaps: “The Bible doesn’t really mean what *you* say it means. I understand it differently.” And then we set off rashly on our own predetermined course.

Pondering God’s ways

So, we *do* need to ponder this simple incident well. Underlying these events is a simple and basic premise for all who seek God’s Kingdom: the journey to God’s Kingdom is *His*; therefore, the course of our life must necessarily be set *by Him* (Jer 42:3).

This means that both the good *and* the evil event are there by God’s overshadowing control, each event being used by His foreknowledge for our ultimate good.

Isn’t this what Peter was saying, when after speaking of the “fiery trials” they were to endure, he urged his brethren to “humble yourselves . . . under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you” (1Pet 5:6,7).

So here are the fundamental questions we each must answer:

- Do we *really* believe this journey and, therefore, the course of our lives, belongs to God?
- Are we prepared to submit to God’s mighty Hand in *all* the circumstances of our lives, even when they run counter to all human reasoning and open our lives to seemingly foolish and senseless risks?
- Are we prepared to submit to *all* the hardships and difficulties God deems necessary for our discipline and salvation?

In the end it can only be either life on our own, marking out our own path, or life with the Father and His Son. Happy is the man who learns this wisdom:

“Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths” (Prov 3:5,6).

Ted Sleeper (San Francisco Peninsula, CA)

Special Invitation

For some years, unity discussions have been taking place with Churches of God of the Abrahamic Faith. In the interest of promoting friendship and mutual understanding between our respective communities, we print the following invitation:

*You, your family and friends are invited to the
34th annual Church of God of the Abrahamic Faith Gathering
at Denison University in Granville, Ohio, July 20-26, 2009.*

Main Speakers:

Bro. John Downer — “Knowing the Father and the Son”

Bro. Steve Ross — “Gleaning from the Servants of God”

*Bro. John Bilello — “The Church of the Living God:
the Pillar and Ground of the Truth”*

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

Bible Study

To Speak Well of God: (2) To Speak Well of God?

I identify the central theme of Job as a lesson in speaking well of God, as He invariably finds ways to invite us towards salvation. This necessarily includes the concept of human suffering, too, because how we *truly* speak of God is only revealed under duress and not during times of ease, when we might easily speak well of God, or indeed of anything at all.

Partly my identification of this central theme comes from many readings and much meditation on the book. But there are also objective pointers in the text which may draw one to the same conclusion.

Characters in the Book of Job speaking about God

Both the first and last words spoken in the book are on the theme of how one speaks about God, neatly sandwiching the entire drama in the same encapsulated thought. The first words spoken are by Job:

“Early in the morning [Job] would sacrifice a burnt offering for each of [his children], thinking, ‘Perhaps my children have sinned and cursed God in their hearts’ ” (Job 1:5).

The central motivator to Job’s actions were how his children may have spoken, even privately in their hearts, about his God. This theme is duplicated in the very last words spoken in the book, uttered by God Himself:

*“After the LORD had said these things to Job, He said to Eliphaz the Temanite, ‘I am angry with you and your two friends, because **you have not spoken of me what is right**, as my servant Job has. So now take seven bulls and seven rams and go to my servant Job and sacrifice a burnt offering for yourselves. My servant Job will pray for you, and I will accept his prayer and not deal with you according to your folly. **You have not spoken of me what is right**, as my servant Job has’ ” (42:7-8).*

So the first and last spoken words of the drama concern how one speaks about God. God even *repeats* the statement concerning how one speaks about Him, highlighting this theme even more distinctly.

The single testimony recorded from Job’s wife is also on the same theme:

“[Job’s] wife said to him, ‘Are you still holding on to your integrity? Curse¹ God and die!’ ” (2:9).

One might wonder why the participation of Job’s wife is just one spoken phrase. Some infer that Job’s wife abandoned Job, but this is well beyond what the text says. Perhaps a more charitable interpretation is that the drama is not attempting to show Job’s wife as wicked (after all, would a righteous and blameless man like Job have chosen a life partner so poorly?) but that this comment was the one contribution she made to the theme of how one speaks about God.²

One fascinating consequence of seeing the central theme of Job as how one speaks about God, is that this classifies the book of Job, quite literally, as ‘theology’.³ Job is often termed one of the ‘wisdom’ books of the Bible, and I have no disagreement with that classification. Theology is the words we use to speak about God. This helps my appreciation of what wisdom is: it suggests wise men speak well of God, as Job did. Sometimes as theological students we can get distracted by our pursuit of formulating correct doctrine (itself a worthy venture). We can fall into the trap of focusing on speaking well about *ourselves* because we feel we have correct doctrine (I fear this happens in my own community) and lose sight of the true central issue of theology, which is speaking well of God.

Expositors of the Book of Job speaking about God

There is massive irony in identifying “speaking well of God” as the central theme in Job. Job is the book of the Bible, more so than any other, that prompts readers to speak ill of Him!

Even the expositors who report their findings after diligent study, rather than cursory reading, often find themselves energized to speak against God rather than for Him. Many non-Christian expositors seem to revel in the opportunity to use the book of Job as an opportunity to speak ill of the Biblical God. Since the template of three counselors comes to the fore in the drama, I’ll present three examples of humanist scholars’ considered opinions of the God they observe in the book of Job.

First: Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961), the famous Swiss psychologist and psychiatrist. He declares the Joban drama demonstrates the moral superiority of man above God. He sees the arrangement between God and Satan in the prologue as God internally debating the character of Job because He genuinely doubts Job’s integrity, concluding:

“The reason He doubts Job is because He projects His own unfaithfulness upon a scapegoat.”⁴

Similarly, Gilbert Murray (1866-1957), an English scholar renowned for his critique of classic literature, describes the opening contract in this way:

“The book begins with a mythological setting in which the story is represented as the result of a sort of bet upon the part of Satan that, though Job while prosperous is perfectly pious, he can be made to ‘curse God’ if he is sufficiently tormented and afflicted. The Almighty enters into the spirit of this atrocious proposal, and every type of torment is showered upon the innocent man. It is like torturing your faithful dog to see if you can make him bite you.”⁵

Finally, the American humanist philosopher Paul Weiss (1901-2002) openly rants against the whole plotline and the nature of the God he sees therein:

“In outline the story is rather simple. A childishly conceived God, a child-like God in fact, boasts about Job to His angel Satan as a child might about a dog... With a callousness, with a brutality, with a violence hard to equal in any literature, secular or divine, God, just to make a petulant point,

proceeds to do almost everything the most villainous of beings could want... The inhumanity of the author (or of his God, if one prefers) has been almost matched by the insensitivity of those commentators who accept the prologue of the book of Job and do not feel a need to underscore an abhorrence of God's project and performance."⁶

Thus speak this triumvirate of celebrated thinkers and, while a disciple might be tempted to bristle at their invective, they are inevitable human reactions and ones from which any expositor of Job must not shrink to address.

Even the Christian expositors struggle to speak well of God in their appraisals of Job. They find it trivially easy to speak of God's supremacy and might, for obvious reasons, since the story of Job well demonstrates the totality of control God can have in a human life. But is that the best we can do? Will the evidence in the book of Job truly allow us no better? I do feel a tinge of concern when the book — and in particular God's speeches — are seen as solely demonstrating His superiority over man, rather than His care for him. Few expositors go beyond this level, at least from the text in Job. Many offer kinder thoughts on God once they incorporate the New Testament Scriptures into their analysis. Baird manages to offer the defensive support of God: "It is not that God hates Job. On the contrary, God cares for all, including Job."⁷ And Balchin describes God from Job as a conditional friend: "A Friend [to Job]? Certainly. And a friend to us too, if like the ultimate Job we confess our ignorance of His ways and rest instead in faith in His mercy."⁸

But even these seem hardly to form a pinnacle of praise. Should we conclude that, in all honesty, the text of Job does not give us sufficient reason to praise God? Or perhaps that to speak of His power is enough?

If we can go no further than to speak of God's omnipotence and supremacy, do we really speak well of God? God presents Himself in Scripture most commonly as a Father, which prompts those who are parents to consider by experiential comparison. Which father would be happy if the kindest thing any of his children ever said about him was merely that he was the one in control? A comment like: "My dad's word is law in the family. What he says for us children goes." This may reflect appropriate deference, but if the comments that the father received during the lifespan of his children never rose higher than this, would he truly be happy? And if not, why do we expect our Father to be pleased if we can say no better?

I find that the central plotline of the drama is one which enables us quite readily to speak well of God, without wresting the text, introducing extraneous ideas, or downplaying the intensity of Job's suffering. We will see God acting in a caring manner throughout, even though the price of the Satan's sin, exacted from the righteous man, is severe. God has a Supreme plan underway which all characters, and the careful observer, will ultimately applaud.

Job speaking about God

By contrast to so many who simply *read* of Job's hardships, Job himself, who had to actually endure them, manages to speak that which is right about God. We're

prompted to wonder: what exactly was that? Perhaps already we can identify the key features.

First, Job's God is inscrutable.

*"But if I go to the east, he is not there;
if I go to the west, I do not find him.
When he is at work in the north, I do not see him;
when he turns to the south, I catch no glimpse of him.
But he knows the way that I take;
when he has tested me, I will come forth as gold"* (23:8-10).

Job's God is unfathomable, yet Job also trusts He will not deliver injustice (although we will need to add caveats to that later).

By contrast the three counselors, whose pride I will suggest occupies the office of the Satan, have a reducible, predictable God whom they can confine according to their theology. As a result they see themselves as in a position to impart wisdom, not receive it.

Eliphaz the Temanite:

*"I myself have seen a fool taking root,
but suddenly his house was cursed.
His children are far from safety,
crushed in court without a defender..."* (5:3,4).

Bildad the Shuhite:

*"When your children sinned against him,
he gave them over to the penalty of their sin"* (8:4).

Zophar the Naamathite:

*"If you put away the sin that is in your hand
and allow no evil to dwell in your tent,
You will be secure, because there is hope;
you will look about you and take your rest in safety"* (11:14,18).

Job had questions about God; the three friends asserted they had all the answers. The inscrutability of God is actually a necessity to a genuine faith, for else we have simply brought God down from heaven and made Him one of us, by proclaiming we know His will and understand all the mechanisms by which He will effect it. This God must fail, for he is only ourselves, and we have centuries of social and environmental evidence of how hopeless we are at governing this planet. Atkinson comments:

"There is an unhelpful decisiveness in some aspects of Christian faith which gets in the way of meeting God in depth. There is an attempt to have everything buttoned up and secure. There is a defensive need to be sure. The book of Job, instead, brings us face to face with the living God, and invites us to live in his light with all our logical gaps, untidy edges and struggling faith." 9

We study Job in this work with genuine and unapologetic intention to gain as many answers as we can. But we do not intend to abandon humility. If we believe in a "God," then by definition not all of His qualities and strategies will fit inside our

minds. To think we can 'know God' is the epitome of the beast of human pride (a beast which will figure prominently in the analysis which follows) and repeats the fundamental sin of Eden in grasping at equality with our Maker (Gen 9:4).

The second key feature is that Job spoke of gifts from God even at time of loss. Job was never so small-minded in the appreciation of his experience of God that the only things he remembered were those that had most recently occurred. Thus, even directly after the impact of the complete series of disasters is brought upon him, he is able to reflect:

“Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble? In all this, Job did not sin in what he said” (2:10).

Amid the destruction of flocks and herds, the loss of life of his servants and even his children — even the complete debilitation of his own body, Job managed, from within the crumpled carnage of his life, to speak well of his God.

The question is: shall we?

John Pople (San Francisco Peninsula, CA)

Notes:

1. This verse draws special attention from Hebrew scholars. A group of scribes known as the Sopherim, working as early as the 4th century BC, apparently made a series of changes to the text out of supposed reverence for God. In Job 2:9 they changed “Curse God and die” to “Bless God and die,” which the Hebrew text contains to this day. [The Hebrew word in 2:9 is ‘barak,’ meaning ‘bless’ (J. Strong, “A Concise Dictionary of the words in the Hebrew Bible with their Renderings in the Authorized English Version,” in “Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance,” 1997, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI, USA, 24).] These “Emendations of the Sopherim,” were preserved by the later Masoretic stewards. I adopt the protocol favored by nearly all the translators, of overturning the Sopherim’s alteration and using the English phrase “Curse God and die” to return to the original.
2. As for her comment itself, I don’t believe she is recommending forsaking God; but rather desperately seeking any form of release for the husband she loves. I believe she spoke in a high state of emotion describing her love for Job in excess of her commitment to God. This is not a common view, but I believe this is where emotionally remote ‘armchair analysis’ of her commentary naturally leads to a condemnation of her, where a more empathetic view might not. Even if her hyperbole was not wise, and it was not, I believe her comment was made from a strong sense of loyalty to Job, and her own intense empathetic pain at his condition.
3. The Greek for ‘God’ is Θεός (Theos) and for ‘word’ is λόγος (logos), giving rise to the English word ‘theology’.
4. C. G. Jung, “Answer to Job,” 1952, in N. N. Glatzer, “The Dimensions of Job,” 1969, Schocken Books Inc., New York, NY, USA, 46.
5. G. Murray, “Aeschylus: The Creator of Tragedy,” 1960, in N. N. Glatzer, *Ibid*, 195.
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“The Book of Job is one of the most remarkable, not only in the Bible, but in all literature. As was said of Goliath’s sword — ‘There is none like it, none in ancient or modern literature’ (John Kitto).

History

Robert and Marian Stocks — Planting the Seeds



The Stocks Family, approximately 1896
David, Marian, Ruth, Hubert, Robert

Sharing the word of God with those around us has always been an important part of the spiritual lives of Christadelphians, and the desire to plant the seeds of the gospel was strongly felt by early California brothers and sisters. One nineteenth century Ventura County Christadelphian who felt this need even more keenly than her contemporaries was Sis. Marian Stocks. Years before moving to the county in the late 1890s, Marian was fervently preaching God's message of salvation to her family, friends, and neighbors.

Marian was making preparations to preach to one of her family members when she corresponded with the Christadelphian magazine for the first time in 1884. Writing from Brandon, ON, Canada, she requested a copy of Robert Roberts' book *The Twelve Lectures* (later known as *Christendom Astray*) to send to her grandfather. Marian, who was in her early twenties at the time, was born on December 13, 1861,¹ and was baptized in North Moorfield, Canada, in August 1880.² At the time she wrote to the magazine her name was Marian Seed, which was appropriate because planting the seed of God's word was so important to her.

Sis. Seed wrote to the Christadelphian magazine again in 1886 to announce her brother's baptism, and once more in 1887 requesting books and pamphlets to utilize in another preaching effort. Reaching out to others was obviously something she took very seriously as she always mentioned her preaching efforts in the letters she sent to the magazine. Marian was very conscientious about how she shared the gospel, saying she "didn't want to do anything that will bring reproach on Christ or his household."

Two years later, in 1889, a significant change occurred in Marian's life when she moved from Winnipeg, Canada, to Pomona, California, and became a member of the ecclesia there.³ She intended to stay in the area for a year before returning home. The return home to Canada would never occur, for it was in Pomona that she met her future husband, Bro. Robert Stocks.

Robert Stocks was born in Scotland in 1857⁴ and emigrated to Ventura County, California, around 1878 with his father, Bro. Alexander Stocks.⁵ Robert most likely came to California because his uncle, Bro. Robert Strathearn, was living near Santa Barbara at the time. Robert Strathearn's sister, Christine, who had apparently died by this time, was Robert Stocks' mother.

There isn't much information available about Bro. Stocks' life in California before he met Marian Seed, but two things do stand out: a shooting incident when he was in his twenties and the opening of his own business a few years later.

According to a newspaper report in 1884, Robert was shot in Ventura, California, by a man named Alois Albrecht. The man then committed suicide. This story was corroborated by one of Robert's descendents (Sis. Christie Stocks) who added that the man who shot him was a mentally challenged neighbor.⁶ About three years later, Robert Stocks opened a low-price vegetable business in Ventura.

In 1890, 32-year-old Robert Stocks became a brother in Christ,⁷ and three years later, Robert and Marian Seed were married. At the time of their wedding, the Stocks were members of the Pomona Ecclesia,⁸ but by 1895 they had moved to Ventura County and were living in the Long Canyon area of Penrose, northwest of present day Moorpark, California.⁹ In 1898 Marian wrote to the Christadelphian magazine from Penrose to announce that her sister in the flesh, Ethel Fuller, had become her sister in Christ. She also mentioned that Sis. Fuller lived 25 miles away, which put her "in isolation" because of the difficulty of travel in those days.

Isolation had not been an issue for the Stocks, however, as there were a couple of other Christadelphians living in their neighborhood at the time. The surnames of these early Ventura County brethren, like that of the Stocks, have continued on for many generations in the California Christadelphian community. Both of these neighbors, James Kerr Magill and Clement Seago, were originally from Texas and are good examples of the impact that Texas Christadelphians had on the growth of the Truth in California. Both of them were also connected to one of the most important preachers of the Truth in Texas Christadelphian history: Clement Oatman.

Clement Oatman was an amazing brother who spread the seeds of the gospel in the mid to late 1800s in the Texas Hill Country. It was there that Bro. Oatman gave a Bible talk in 1869 that led to the baptism of a couple in their thirties named Thomas and Martha Seago. Thomas and Martha were so moved by what Clement had shared with them that they later named one of their sons Clement Oatman Seago.

Clement Oatman's preaching also had a great effect on 34-year-old James Kerr (J.K.) Magill. J.K. was baptized in 1875, after attending an eight-day-long fra-

ternal meeting led by brother Oatman.¹⁰ J.K. Magill would later baptize the first members of another well-known California Christadelphian family, the Tunnells (James and Nancy) in Texas in 1882¹¹. A number of the Tunnells' descendants are Christadelphians today, and many of them live in Southern California.

J. K. Magill and Clement Seago ended up in Ventura County in 1897. Their journey to California began when several Texas Christadelphian families decided to move to the Washington Territory in the late 1800s (this was before Washington had become a state). In 1892, Bro. Magill was still living in Washington, but shortly after that moved to California, settling in Ventura County.¹² A prolific preacher of the gospel himself, Bro. Magill was back in Texas by 1898, where he became a traveling Christadelphian lecturer, and permanent chairman of the Annual Texas Fraternal Gathering.¹³

It was J.K. Magill who, in 1897, reported to the Christadelphian magazine the baptism of Clement Oatman Seago in Ventura County: "A few members of the household of faith scattered through Ventura County have been cheered and greatly encouraged by the addition of one to our number in the person of Clement O. Seago (22), son of brother and sister Seago [Thomas and Martha], now living in the state of Washington. He obeyed the requirements of the Gospel on May 9th, with the assistance of brother H.R. Brinkerhoff."

Clement Seago would have been a welcome addition to the small group of Christadelphians in Ventura County near the turn of the century. In correspondence in the 1901 Christadelphian magazine, Marian Stocks mentioned a fraternal gathering at Bro. and Sis. Henry Brinkerhoff's in Saticoy where eleven brothers and sisters were present. It's quite likely that this was nearly all of the Christadelphians in Ventura County at the time.

The following year, Bro. and Sis. Stocks met with Bro. and Sis. Brinkerhoff and Sis. Helen Shiells to remember Christ. Marian wrote that they "drove over to the home of our beloved sister Shiells, to break bread with her. She was 81 years old in October, and is one of Dr. Thomas's first converts in Scotland. She derived much comfort from our visit (as did we all), and desired me to write you about it." Sis. Fuller (Marian's sister) was now living nearby and was meeting with the Ventura County brothers and sisters each week.

These early Christadelphians of Ventura County were not content to keep the message of salvation to themselves. In 1903 they hosted the first organized Christadelphian preaching efforts in the county. Marian Stocks wrote that year to the Christadelphian magazine about the preaching work they were conducting in Santa Paula. The campaign was led by Bro. J.T. Irwin of Pomona, arguably California's most prolific Christadelphian sower of the seeds of the gospel. He was well known for giving lectures from a large tent that the Pomona Ecclesia had purchased for use in his preaching efforts. Sis. Stocks had this to say about the talks given: "The attendance of the alien at the four lectures was small, but we feel that we have, perhaps tardily, done our duty. As brother Irwin remarked, the table was spread, and we asked them to partake; but we could not compel them to eat. His visit, if it bear no other fruit, was of inestimable benefit to us all."

It's not surprising Marian connected the preaching effort with bearing fruit because the Stocks were living on a large ranch north of Moorpark at the time, where they grew and sold apricots. Even today, over 100 years later, the beautiful canyon they lived in is still entirely agricultural and filled with orange, lemon, and avocado trees.



Apricot pitters on the Stocks ranch about 1903. Note the early Ventura County Christadelphians in the photo. Future Christadelphians, David and Ruth Stocks (Robert and Marian's children) have been circled.

Marian wrote to the Christadelphian magazine in 1905, mentioning a new preaching effort in Ventura County. "We were able to get a hall, rent free, in Somis, a small village, six miles from our ranch, and Brother Irwin gave three lectures there... As we expected, the attendance of strangers was very meager; but those of us who could attend were much edified. Brother Irwin did not bring the Pomona ecclesia tent outfit this time — it is laid up for the winter — but brought his 'black-board' cloth, which he fastened up outside the one store in Somis, printing dates, subjects, and places in white chalk, and very beautifully he can do it." She also mentioned that their daughter, Ruth, was baptized at age 13. That same year her husband, Bro. Robert Stocks, "gave... a very acceptable and edifying address at the Lord's table"¹⁴ in Los Angeles.



The store where Bro. J.T. Irwin led a Ventura County Christadelphian preaching effort in Somis, CA, in 1905.

The Los Angeles Ecclesia was to be the new home of the Stocks family two years later when they left Ventura County in 1907. This marked the end of Christadelphians in Ventura county for about 70 years, as the only other Christadelphian in the county at the time, Helen Shiells, moved to Santa Barbara that same year. There would be no official Christadelphian presence in Ventura County again until the late 1970's when a small ecclesia was formed in the home of a brother and sister in Simi Valley. While that ecclesia only lasted for a few years, a small ecclesia was established in 1992 in Thousand Oaks which is still growing and thriving today. Two years later, the Mission Hills Ecclesia moved from the San Fernando Valley to Simi Valley, bringing a second Christadelphian presence (Simi Hills) to the county.

There were never more than about a dozen Christadelphians living in Ventura County in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Today there are ten times as many, and like the early Christadelphians of Ventura county, those who presently live there have a strong desire to spread the seeds of the true gospel. While the Stocks family's efforts to preach the Word in Ventura County did not meet with much success at the time, the Truth is prospering there today and bearing fruit for God. Now, just as then, Christ's brothers and sisters do their best to spread the seed, and rely on God to give the increase.

Gordon Hensley (Simi Hills, CA)

Notes:

1. California Death Index
2. Los Angeles Christadelphian Ecclesial records
3. 1889 Christadelphian Advocate Magazine
4. 1880 U.S. Census
5. 1851 Scotland Census
6. Sister Christie Stocks, 2007
7. Los Angeles Ecclesial History
8. 1893 Christadelphian Advocate Magazine
9. 1896 Christadelphian Advocate Magazine
10. Christadelphian Magazine, 1875
11. Christadelphian Magazine, 1882
12. Christadelphian Magazine, 1887, 1892, 1897
13. Christadelphian Magazine, 1898
14. Christadelphian Magazine, 1905

Coming hastily into a room, I almost knocked over a crystal hourglass. Fear lest I had, made me grieve as if I had broken it. But, alas! how much precious time have I cast away without any regret! The hourglass was only crystal, each hour a pearl; the first almost broken, the second lost outright; the one by accident, the other willfully. A better hourglass might be bought; but time lost once is lost forever. Thus we grieve more for toys than for treasure. Lord, give me an hourglass, not to be by me, but to be in me. Teach me to number my days (Psa 90:12). An hourglass to remind me, that I may apply my heart unto wisdom.

Thomas Fuller

Current Events

Global Financial Turmoil, Still

“You will lend to many nations but will borrow from none. You will rule over many nations but none will rule over you” (Deut 15:6). The promise to the nation of Israel was conditional upon their obedience.

The points we wish to draw from it: (1) When a nation is producing more than it consumes, it is able to lend to other nations. (2) This is advantageous in terms of the relationship between those nations. “The rich rule over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender” (Prov 22:7).

In a mere 20 years, the United States has gone from being the world’s #1 creditor nation to being the #1 debtor nation. And with its massive projected deficits, this is not about to change in the near future. When countries like Italy, Thailand, Poland, Turkey and Switzerland can each accumulate larger foreign exchange reserves than the United States, there is no doubt that the world is changing dramatically.

How did the USA switch so quickly from being the world’s leading lender to becoming its leading borrower? Let’s consider this from a historical perspective.

A historical perspective

During my lifetime, two wars have played significant roles in the rise and fall of empires. World War II accelerated the demise of the British Empire, the largest and most powerful the world has ever seen. It also terminated the ambitions of the rapidly emerging Third Reich. That war also marked the emergence of the American and Soviet empires, the latter in the traditional format, the former sometimes more subtle in the exercise of its global power.

Then came the Cold War, marking the epic struggle between these two superpowers. The eventual American triumph was rooted in its industrial and technological prowess. Those muscles had been strengthened during World War II.

For several subsequent decades, the USA manufactured goods with unsurpassed efficiency. They sold their products profitably to other countries. America lent money to other nations. American workers enjoyed a steadily rising standard of living, proportionate to their increasing productivity.

Then Asian countries started producing goods more efficiently. Americans purchased these products, sending cash to their new competitors. Products flowed from China to the USA. Dollars flowed from the USA to China.

China spends around 55% of that income, while saving about 45%. With these savings, China buys US Treasury Bonds. China is now America’s largest creditor. So the US regularly sends them even more dollars, in the form of interest payments. “The borrower is servant to the lender.”

The decline and fall of empires

During the past two decades, America's high standard of living was artificially sustained by excessive borrowing, by individuals, by corporations, and by governments. Government policies encouraged foolhardy lending practices by irresponsible financial institutions, in order to allow millions of imprudent Americans to purchase houses they could never, ever afford. And the house of cards eventually started to collapse.

One hundred years ago, the British were singing proudly, "Rule Britannia! Britannia rules the waves. Britons never, never, never shall be slaves!" They had long known the significance of, "You will rule over many nations but none will rule over you." But even their empire finally followed the path of all its predecessors.

In its place emerged the United States of America. But by the time the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center collapsed, US economic dominance had passed its peak. Now the federal government intends to raise its debt level to unprecedented heights. And the standard of living of many millions of Americans will inevitably drop. Let's put this prospect into personal perspective.

A personal perspective

World War II ended when I was six. From my childhood in South Wales, I have distinct wartime memories. Tragedy was not losing your house to foreclosure, but losing it to the Nazi bombing campaign. Tragedy was not having to move your family into more modest accommodation; it was losing them to enemy bombs.

Losing your job, losing your business, losing your house, going broke — such developments are not pleasant, but they are hardly the end of the world. Adjusting to a lower standard of living is not easy, but it does not kill us. And hopefully we come to realize that the important things in life involve relationships, principles, convictions, values and activities, not stuff.

An international perspective

Let's consider some international implications. "The borrower is servant to the lender." The principal lenders are now China, other emerging Asian powerhouses, and the Middle Eastern oil-producing countries. Their power and influence will rise; that of the United States will decline. Consequently, the very existence of the nation of Israel will one day be threatened to a degree we have not previously witnessed.

We have noted the role of two 20th century wars, one hot, one cold, in shaping world events. We know that, in the future, yet another war, a very hot one, will reshape the global power structure.

In Zechariah 14:2, we read of the divine intention to "gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle." For most of the past two millennia, this prediction would have nowhere near the potency it has today. Especially when we relate the term "all the nations" to the "United Nations." Prior to the 20th century, such a collective was unknown. So previously, this prediction would have lacked clear credibility.

At the United Nations, there is widespread animosity towards Israel. And little support, apart from that of the United States, its principal protector, humanly speaking.

Verse 12 suggests that nuclear warfare could be involved. “This is the plague with which the LORD will strike all the nations that fought against Jerusalem: Their flesh will rot while they are still standing on their feet, their eyes will rot in their sockets, and their tongues will rot in their mouths.”

The countries now possessing nuclear weapons include USA, Russia, China, UK, France, Israel, India and Pakistan. North Korea and Iran are moving in that direction. So any development that could reduce the ability, or the willingness, of the United States to continue to protect Israel is highly relevant.

“When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near” (Luke 21:28).

Philip Jones (Calgary, AB)



Youth

“Distractions”

A distraction, in the sense that I will be discussing, is any activity that interferes with or negatively affects our spiritual lives or those of our brethren and sisters around us. The activity itself does not necessarily have to be anything evil, but if it is taking time away from our spiritual duties or getting in the way of our relationship with God, it would be considered a distraction. This includes activities such as our occupation as well as recreational and leisure activities outside of work. What I’m hoping to show is that it is possible to transform things that would normally be considered distractions into integral parts of our spiritual lives. Things that could be detrimental to our spiritual growth can become positive ways to glorify God. I don’t expect that I’m going to be presenting anything groundbreaking, but I hope that at least some of you come away with something practical that may change your lives for the better, even if only in a small way.

Work

For the majority of us, our occupation is what takes up the single largest portion of our waking hours throughout most of our lives. After we are done with school, we go out and get a job, hopefully something we enjoy or at least can tolerate, and that pays us enough to live on and support our families. Then we spend eight hours a day doing that job until we move on to a different job or finally retire. Because of the way that human society is organized, at least one member of a family needs an income-earning job in order to survive. Our occupation is what gives us income with which to feed, clothe, and shelter ourselves and our family. That income is also used to support the ecclesia and help brethren and sisters who are in need. Work is a necessary part of our lives, and it is up to us whether

it is to be a distraction or a benefit to our spiritual lives. Solomon speaks about work in Ecclesiastes 2:10,11:

“Whatever my eyes desired I did not keep from them. I did not withhold my heart from any pleasure, for my heart rejoiced in all my labor; and this was my reward from all my labor. Then I looked on all the works that my hands had done, and on the labor in which I had toiled; and indeed all was vanity and grasping for the wind. There was no profit under the sun.”

And also in verse 24:

“Nothing is better for a man than that he should eat and drink, and that his soul should enjoy good in his labor. This also, I saw, was from the hand of God.”

These verses nicely present the duality of our working lives. At the end of the “day”, when we die, and are (we hope) raised to eternal life in the Kingdom, no worldly thing or accomplishment will matter. All of our money and possessions will be long gone. At the same time, work is a gift from the hand of God, and our soul does “enjoy good in our labor” when the fruits of our labor are manifested. When we work hard to complete a project and then get to see the results of our work, it gives us a sense of satisfaction.

Since we as Christadelphians do not have paid clergy, it is rare that our occupation is directly connected to our spiritual lives. Because of that fact, our occupation can be a serious distraction which, in the worst case, could even destroy our spiritual lives. There are people out there who allow their jobs to literally become their entire lives. Even when they are not at work, they spend the majority of their time thinking about work-related things, making calls, emailing, etc., and it consumes all of their spare time. I think we can all agree that this is not a healthy way to live, even if you are not a disciple of Christ, but especially if you are. Others are consumed with a lust for wealth, power, and personal gain, and will stop at nothing to climb to the top of the food chain, trampling anyone in their way. Obviously, I don’t think any of us here would fall into either of those categories, but we may have a less extreme version of one or both of these problems. Maybe our entire lives aren’t consumed by work, but instead we arrive at work late every day, complain and grudgingly do what we’re asked, or simply do the minimum amount required so that we don’t get fired. On the other end of the spectrum, maybe we work 50 or 60 hours a week and rarely get to spend time with our family and friends or our spiritual family, and our job becomes the most important part of our lives. In these cases, although work does not destroy our spiritual lives, it certainly has a negative effect, and can be considered a distraction.

Obviously, the type of job that we choose has a significant effect on this, and we all have to decide whether our choice of occupation will be beneficial or harmful to us, and whether it is something that a disciple of Christ should be doing. I’m not going to delve into that aspect of this discussion.

I submit to you that the main controlling factor in our occupation’s effect on our spiritual lives is our attitude and the way that we behave in the workplace. No matter what job we choose, our attitude and motivation is the single biggest factor

controlling how it will affect us spiritually. If we go through our days in the office frustrated and angry, complain about tasks that we are given, and do just enough work so that we don't get fired, this will have a negative effect on our spiritual lives, our home lives, and even our health. Thankfully, God has given us some guidance on what our attitude should be and how we should behave in our jobs, through the words of His servant Paul in his letter to the Ephesians:

“Bondservants, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ; not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, with goodwill doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men, knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free. And you, masters, do the same things to them, giving up threatening, knowing that your own Master also is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him”. (Eph 6:5-9).

Although we would probably not consider ourselves bondservants and our bosses masters, the same principle certainly applies in each of our jobs. Instead of complaining about the tasks we are given, even if they are really boring or difficult, we should humbly accept them and work hard to complete them as we are asked. We should be honest and treat our coworkers with love and respect, attempting to emulate Christ and be an example to those around us. Our attitude at work may even inspire curiosity in one of our coworkers, which may lead to a discussion about our faith and possibly a new member of the body of Christ. The beautiful thing is that not only will our spiritual lives improve, but our overall happiness, health, and satisfaction with life will improve as well. This is yet another example of God's wisdom at work. What do you know? When we actually obey God and heed his wisdom, every aspect of our lives improves — amazing how that works! So, if we can strive to slowly change our attitude regarding work, and truly see it as another part of our service to God, than it will no longer be a distraction, but an expression of our faith and an integral part of our spiritual lives.

Recreation and leisure activities

Recreational activities are generally how we spend the time remaining after work, sleep, and family/ecclesial duties. Like work, these activities can be a distraction and a detriment to our spiritual lives. Unlike work, these are never activities that we are “required” to do to survive in this world. These are always optional activities, and so have the greatest potential for abuse. On the other side of the coin, God understands that we need rest and we need a break from work for our health and our sanity. We are not built to be able to work nonstop, and God certainly understands this. Even Jesus needed a rest from preaching and ministering to the people, as we read in the familiar story of the feeding of the five thousand:

“Then the apostles gathered to Jesus and told him all things, both what they had done and what they had taught. And he said to them, ‘Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while.’ For there were many coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat. So they departed to a deserted place in the boat by themselves” (Mark 6:30-32).

As you can see, Jesus and his disciples had been working so hard that they didn't

even have a chance to eat anything. They needed a break, as all of us do at one time or another. But, as we continue:

“But the multitudes saw them departing, and many knew him and ran there on foot from all the cities. They arrived before them and came together to him. And Jesus, when he came out, saw a great multitude and was moved with compassion for them, because they were like sheep not having a shepherd. So he began to teach them many things. When the day was now far spent, his disciples came to him and said, ‘This is a deserted place, and already the hour is late. Send them away, that they may go into the surrounding country and villages and buy themselves bread; for they have nothing to eat.’ But he answered and said to them, ‘You give them something to eat’ ” (vv 33-37).

I’m sure all of us know the rest of the story how Jesus miraculously feeds the crowd both with the earthly food of the loaves and fish, and the heavenly food of his Father’s Word. This portion of the account leads nicely into the next aspect of the point I’m trying to make. No matter how much Jesus and his disciples needed to rest at that particular time, Jesus did not put his own desires above those of the multitude who were desperately craving both physical and spiritual food. Likewise, our recreational activities should never take precedent over the needs of our brethren and sisters. Sometimes this means sacrificing our free time or not being able to do something we really want to do for the benefit of others. This is generally not an easy thing for most of us to do; I know it’s something that I struggle with. Staying home and watching TV is much easier than putting forth effort to help someone in need. We all like to have some time to ourselves, and this is certainly not wrong in and of itself. It’s when our own selfish desires cause us to neglect the needs of our families or our brethren and sisters that it becomes a problem.

One way to make this slightly easier and more practical is to change our attitude and motivation behind how we choose to spend our free time. This is similar to how we can transform our occupation into an integral part of our spiritual lives. All of us have different activities that we prefer to do during our spare time. Some of us enjoy art, some of us enjoy making or listening to music, some of us enjoy cooking or sewing or crafts, and some of us enjoy outdoor activities and sports, among many other things. None of these kinds of activities are wrong or bad in themselves, but they aren’t necessarily good either, depending on how we go about them and why we are doing them. If we always choose activities solely for our own gratification and our own benefit, then they can become a distraction and negatively impact our spiritual lives. However, the very same activities can also be used for the benefit of others, depending on our motivation behind them.

Let me try to give a few practical examples. If we enjoy creating artwork (painting, drawing, photography, sculpture), why not make a piece of artwork for a brother or a sister who is going through a difficult time in their life, to cheer them up and hopefully create an opportunity to open up communication between you and them. The same can be said for cooking; if there is someone in the ecclesia going through difficult financial or personal times, maybe you could take over your

specialty dinner entrée for them and their family. Or maybe if you are skilled with a sewing machine, make them a new set of blankets or a quilt for their home. If we enjoy making music, we should make music that will uplift and inspire others and thereby glorify God. If we enjoy outdoor activities and sports, we could invite someone who needs some company or is going through a tough time in their lives. Whatever we enjoy doing in our spare time, it has the potential to be used for good to help those around us.

As always, Jesus provides a fine example of transforming a recreational activity into a means of glorifying God. I won't read the verses, because we all know them quite well. It was when Jesus attended a wedding feast, clearly a recreational event, and at this feast, they ran out of wine. Jesus used the opportunity to perform a miracle which both had direct benefits at that particular event, and glorified God in the presence of all of the wedding guests. Clearly, this is not something that we are able to repeat exactly, as we are not given the gifts of the Holy Spirit; but the principle behind it and the example that Jesus provides is still relevant to our daily lives and the choices that we make about our recreational activities. In every aspect of Jesus' life, from his work as a carpenter to performing miracles at a wedding feast, he glorified God and put the needs of others before his own. There is no better evidence of this characteristic of our Savior than in the act of willingly laying down his life on the cross for our sins and our ultimate salvation. Let us be inspired to try to change our attitude regarding our occupation and our choices of recreational activities, so that they will no longer be a distraction to us, but will instead become an important and integral part of our spiritual lives.

Jonathan Sleeper (San Francisco Peninsula, CA)

The Fairhaven Christadelphian Charitable Foundation

Would your ecclesia have the resources to:

- Provide support to a family in which the primary bread winner is struck by a major medical crisis and is unable to work?
- Supplement the retirement home expenses of an elderly member with limited financial resources?
- Undertake limited ecclesial hall modifications to make your building more accessible for those with disabilities?
- Support Christadelphian refugee families beginning a new life in Canada?

Challenges such as these have been addressed by Canadian ecclesias who have partnered with Fairhaven. The Foundation's terms of reference are focused upon supporting health and welfare needs, where ecclesial resources are strained or insufficient. Although the primary responsibility to meet the welfare needs of our brothers, sisters and young people lies at the ecclesial level, the Foundation serves by supplementing, rather than supplanting this ecclesial role.

The foundation's genesis

Originally, Fairhaven House was a retirement residence in Toronto to provide

accommodation for elderly brothers and sisters in a Christ-centered environment. In 1957 a facility was purchased and accommodation was made available for 28 residents. Fairhaven House served the community well for over a quarter century. But changes in provincial legislation governing nursing homes, escalating costs, falling occupancy, and adverse changes in the neighbourhood prompted the directors to reconsider the viability of continuing operations and the home was sold in 1985.

It was decided that the proceeds from the sale would be used to provide ongoing care to our ecclesial community with a “seniors’ focus” under the auspices of a foundation. Government restrictions have prevented the foundation from assisting Christadelphians outside of Canada.

The Terms of Reference

Canadian ecclesias may request assistance from the foundation by following these guidelines:

- Only requests from arranging boards will be considered. An individual member of an ecclesia may not make a personal request to the foundation.
- Priority is to be given to the welfare needs of Christadelphian elderly, since this reflects the original purpose of Fairhaven House. If additional funds are available after meeting these needs, then more general needs of the Christadelphian community will be considered.
- Requests must be in writing and should document in confidence the need, the background, the amount of help required, and the amount of help being provided by the ecclesia.
- It is expected that the ecclesia requesting support will also provide funds to assist from its own resources. It is preferable, if possible, that ecclesias address emergency situations, and subsequently follow up with a request to the foundation. Generally, the ecclesia is encouraged to apply to the foundation for matching funds; however grants in excess of half of the ecclesial expenditure will be considered in special circumstances.

Requests may be sent to: The Fairhaven Christadelphian Charitable Foundation, c/o Bro. Alan Ghent, 519 Arrowhead Road, Mississauga, ON, L5H 1V5, or email aghent@mac.com.

An Appeal

Like many foundations, in a low interest rate environment, Fairhaven has seen falling revenue from investments, while experiencing an increase in disbursements. In order to guarantee the safety of the principal, the assets of the foundation remain in interest-bearing debt instruments that have relatively low yields. Over the past five years, grants totaling in excess of \$150,000 have been given to support our brethren, while the foundation’s pool of capital has decreased by over 11.5 percent. Assisting the ‘fatherless and widows in their affliction’ is the work of us all. Canadian tax receipted donations may be sent to Bro. Clive Daniel, 8583 Sansum Pk. Dr., N. Saanich, BC, V8L 4V7.

Archaeology

How Hezekiah's Tunnelers Met

The Biblical Archaeology Review for September-October 2008 discussed the latest findings (archaeological, historical, and scientific) regarding the famous Hezekiah's Tunnel. In part, the following summarizes portions of the original article by the magazine's editor, Hershel Shanks.

Hezekiah's Tunnel, which is visited often by tourists including many Christadelphians, is the longest tunnel ever built without intermediate man-made shafts at the time of its completion. It is more than 1,700 feet long (just about 1/3 of a mile). Any way one looks at it, Hezekiah's project is an extraordinary feat of construction, requiring engineers to create a tunnel going from one side of Jerusalem to the other. It starts at the Gihon Spring, Jerusalem's only natural source of water, and curves around to the Siloam Pool on the other side of the City of David [see the map on page 187].

Hezekiah built the tunnel in anticipation of a threatened siege of the city by the Assyrian ruler Sennacherib. The Gihon Spring lay outside the eastern city wall, near the floor of the Kidron Valley. In peacetime, Jerusalemites walked a few feet outside the city to get their water, something they could not easily do when the city came under siege. The tunnel rendered this concern moot when water became available inside the city.

The Bible describes Sennacherib's tactics quite dramatically. His messengers, though ostensibly sent to threaten Hezekiah directly, spoke openly to the people on the walls of Jerusalem. Hezekiah's representatives asked Sennacherib's men to speak in Aramaic (the diplomatic language of the day) instead of Hebrew so the people would not understand:

"Please, speak to your servants in Aramaic, for we understand it; do not speak to us in Judean in the hearing of the people on the wall" (2Kgs 18:26).

Sennacherib's envoys replied that it was precisely to the people on the wall that they wanted to speak.

So, among other preparations, Hezekiah built a tunnel to bring water into the soon-to-be-besieged city:

"When Hezekiah saw that Sennacherib had come, intent on making war on Jerusalem, he consulted with his officials and military staff about blocking off the water from the springs outside the city... It was Hezekiah who blocked the upper outlet of the Gihon spring and channeled the water down to the west side of the City of David" (2Chron 32:2,3,30; cp 2Kgs 20:20).

Whether because of the tunnel or a miracle (see 2Kgs 19:35), Sennacherib's siege was unsuccessful. Even he admitted this in what has become a famous cuneiform inscription, where the Assyrian monarch brags that he had Hezekiah cornered

in Jerusalem “like a bird in a cage”. However this is in direct contrast to other Assyrian conquests in which the king’s triumphs were laid out in shameless self-promotion. Quite in contrast, with Jerusalem, Sennacherib made no claim of capturing the “bird” or conquering the city, and seems content to put his stalemate in the best possible light.

The tunnel mystery

The construction of the tunnel has always been something of a mystery. Ever since Hezekiah’s Tunnel was discovered in the mid-19th century by the American explorer Edward Robinson, scholars have puzzled over how the two teams of tunnelers met. While digging from opposite ends of the city, and even considering an especially winding route, they still managed to meet in the middle.

We know that it was dug by two teams digging from opposite ends due to the famous Siloam Inscription that was carved in the tunnel wall and discovered in 1880. Describing how the two teams of tunnelers met, the inscription reads:

“This is the account of the breakthrough. While the laborers were still working with their picks, each toward the other, and while there were still three cubits to be broken through, the voice of each was heard [through the rock] calling to the other, because there was a *zdh* [split? crack? overlap? resonance?] in the rock to the south and to the north. And at the moment of the breakthrough, the laborers struck each toward the other, pick against pick. Then the water flowed from the spring to the pool for 1,200 cubits. And the height of the rock above the heads of the laborers was 100 cubits.”

If they were so smart, some ask, why didn’t they take a more direct route? A straight line would have produced a tunnel of about 1,050 feet. The route they took was 1,748 feet, about 700 extra feet, or 70% longer than necessary if it had been dug in a straight line.

What “trail” did they follow?

Between 1978 and 1982, Yigal Shiloh directed a major excavation of the City of David and its water systems. His staff included a geologist named Dan Gill from the Geological Survey of Israel who studied Hezekiah’s Tunnel. In the end, Gill adopted and expanded an explanation put forward as early as 1929 by an English architect named Henry Sulley, of some Christadelphian notoriety (*Quarterly Statement of Palestine Exploration Fund, 1929, p. 124*). This suggested explanation was that a small natural tunnel or stream preceded and guided the engineers who dug Hezekiah’s Tunnel. They simply enlarged what had been there before. Gill expanded this explanation with a study of the geology of the site. According to Gill’s 1994 *BAR* article, Hezekiah’s Tunnel was “fashioned essentially by skillful human enlargement of natural (karstic) dissolution channels”. These natural tunnels, or karstic dissolution channels, form by acidic waters percolating through the rock, which occurs where the water has easy access through the rock — that is, along fractures and joints. This widens the cracks, forming subterranean tunnels, chimneys and caves that could be followed by tunnelers quite easily.

A new study by Aryeh Shimron and Amos Frumkin, however, now proves this theory wrong and goes on to explain how the two teams of tunnelers really found each other.

One of the serious objections to the karstic-dissolution-channel theory is simply the meeting point of the tunnelers. On either side of the point where the tunnels collide, there are several twists and turns in various directions that start about a hundred feet from the meeting point. Just as you can read in the Siloam Inscription, these abortive tunnels seem to show the efforts of each group to find the other.

Gill addresses these false tunnels by suggesting that the original water channels may have forked at these points and the tunnelers took the wrong fork, only to quickly discover their mistake. Alternatively, he also suggested that the false tunnels may have been intentionally created to allow two-way traffic for maintenance personnel who would periodically clean the channel of debris.

While possible in a theoretical sense, these explanations seem a bit of a stretch. If the tunnelers really had been following a dissolution channel created by flowing water, why did they have so much trouble finding each other when they were only a hundred feet apart? Why would these side channels all coincidentally occur on both sides of the tunnel at the exact spot of the meeting, while not occurring elsewhere? Would the proposed maintenance tunnels only have been necessary at the point of meeting and nowhere else?

Shimron and Frumkin's article adds scientific weight to these logical, but not totally provable, objections. Shimron mapped the direction of hundreds of geological joints and fractures that cut across the ceiling and walls of the tunnel and came to a simple conclusion. Karstic voids should form parallel along a single fissure, or a group of such fissures. Therefore, Hezekiah's tunnel cannot originally have been following a karstic-formed geological feature because it runs effectively perpendicular to these natural tunnels.

Shimron also studied the plasters and natural sedimentary deposits in the tunnel. There were four different kinds of plaster in the tunnel. The oldest plaster was succeeded by Byzantine plaster, next by a Mameluke-period plaster, and finally by a plaster applied in the early 20th century. Sedimentary deposits laid down from running water (tufa) and water seeping through tunnel walls (flowstone, a kind of stalactite attached to tunnel walls) also occur along various segments of the tunnel. Patches of the oldest plaster were preserved beneath flowstone, which turned out to be a critical finding.

Cores that were collected along the length of the tunnel floor revealed that tufa and siltstone covered all the plaster layers but were never found beneath the oldest plaster. This demonstrated that there was no percolating water and, most likely, no original channel that was widened by Hezekiah's tunnelers. Had there been a karstic channel which served as a guide, sediments (such as those that covered the plaster) would have been deposited from the running water and would have been found beneath even the oldest plaster. The absence of these sedimentary

deposits also shows that the ancient plaster was applied soon after the tunnel was dug, before the natural sedimentation process caused by the flow of water through the tunnel could begin.

You might ask, “What if the stream along the karstic tunnel was only a trickle? What if the drill cores missed this narrow stream? What if tunnel construction removed all trace of the original channel?” The new study has an answer: Frumkin examined more than a thousand karstic cave passages in and around Jerusalem. He found that the cross-section of these passages is, on average, larger than the width of Hezekiah’s Tunnel. Based on these studies, Shimron and Frumkin conclude that “total obliteration of a [karstic] conduit by the narrow Siloam Tunnel is virtually impossible.”

The teams meet

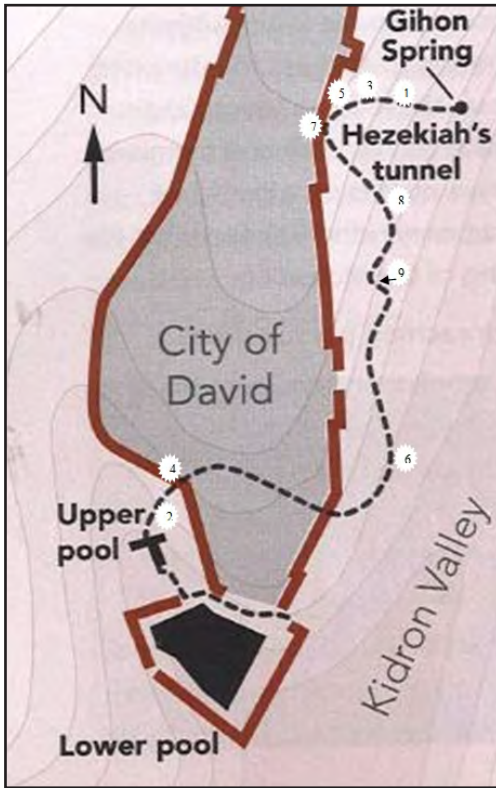
But the question that started all this speculation and scientific research remains unanswered: How did the two teams of tunnelers manage to meet after wandering around so widely? Shimron and Frumkin suggest that the tunnelers were guided by communications from the surface; specifically by hammering on the bedrock. Experiments conducted by Shimron and Frumkin showed that tapping with a hammer on the bedrock above the tunnel was effective up to 50 feet below the surface and could still be detected up to 80 feet. In short, “Acoustic messages between tunnel and surface must have been the dominant technique which controlled the complex proceeding underneath.” (Acoustic communication has been used for centuries as the method for locating people trapped in mines and earthquake collapses.)

Shimron and Frumkin found the shift in direction taken by the two teams of tunnelers somewhat puzzling. Apparently, the final course of the tunnel was not constructed as initially planned by Hezekiah’s engineers. The section that started on the northern end of the city shifts from a generally western direction to a southern one, while the southern portion of the tunnel moves from a generally eastward to a northern one. Shimron and Frumkin speculate that when the tunnelers got to the middle of the hill and found themselves beneath some 160 feet of stone, they realized that they were well beyond the range of sound communication. It would have become clear to the engineers that a meeting of the two teams would become difficult, if not impossible, under these conditions. The two authors theorize that a decision must have been made to change the course of each segment and shift the direction to where the depth of stone is shallow and where surface-to-underground communication would be feasible.

In light of the information presented by Shimron and Frumkin, the final piece of the puzzle of how the tunnel was constructed might be found simply by rereading the Siloam Inscription. If, as has been suggested, Hezekiah’s engineers used acoustic sounding to guide the tunnelers then the frequently ignored final sentence of the inscription provides a final bit of evidence: “And the height of the rock above the heads of the laborers was 100 cubits.” In light of the idea of acoustic sounding, this last sentence indicates that the engineers were well aware of the height of the rock above the tunnel at various points in its progression. And it could explain

the last few abortive attempts by the tunnelers to find each other. Confused by the sounds of the other miners and lack of easy communication with the surface (since 100 cubits is well beyond the easy range of acoustic sounding), it took the tunnelers a few attempts to find each other. But when they did, we have the final few lines of the inscription to describe the event: “And at the moment of the breakthrough, the laborers struck each toward the other, pick against pick. Then the water flowed from the spring to the pool for 1,200 cubits.”

Adam Booker (Austin Leander, TX)



Hezekiah's Tunnel

It is suggested that the original intent of the two teams of tunnelers was to go from Point 4 to Point 7, and from Point 7 to Point 4, respectively. Here's what may have happened:

1. The north team, starting from the Gihon Spring, heads west in a slightly downhill grade (while the land surface rises above it).
2. The south team, starting from the Siloam Pool, crosses east under the peak of the City of David, hoping to run northward on the east side of the ridge.
3. The north team loses acoustic sound from above, and decides to alter course and head south.
4. Likewise, the south team, intending to head north, realizes they will lose acoustic sound like the north team has. So they decide to change course, to the southeast, until they can hear the overhead tapping again.
5. The north team intends to head due south.
6. The south team is redirected toward the north to meet the other team.
7. The north team makes a slight course correction because of the location of the south team.
8. At this point, the north team can be heard again by acoustic sounding.
9. Both teams must make final adjustments, based on their own underground acoustic sounding, so as to intersect.



Bible Mission News

Good News from Latin America

What an exciting way to start out the New Year — three new baptisms — one in Columbia and two in Campeche, Mexico!

Colombia

Bro. Jim Hunter reports from his recent trip that on Monday, February 16, 2009, he baptized our new Bro. Adelson Rodriguez Gonzalez in the swimming pool of the Hotel CasaBlanca in Cucuta, Colombia. This is a small city in the northeastern sector of the country, on the border with Venezuela.

Bro. Adelson came into contact with us in June of 2005. Twenty years previously he had left the Catholic Church, studied three years in an Assemblies of God seminary, and was appointed a pastor and then ordained as a minister. He was very active in the church in Colombia and Venezuela; however, he was troubled by some of its practices and was uncomfortable with the idea of a Triune God. So he did a web search for the word Biblia, came upon the Christadelphian web site, labiblia.com, and learned the Truth from the material on the site, the Bible correspondence course and email. More recently Bro. Jim gave him a series of review classes by telephone, to bring him as close as possible to baptism before actually coming to Columbia to perform the immersion.

Bro. Adelson is 61, has been married 38 years and has three grown children and five grandchildren. On Sunday (yesterday) afternoon, after lunch at Adelson's house, Bro. Jim was asked to give a presentation on who the Christadelphians are and what we believe to his wife and children and several other family members. God willing, four of those present will soon begin studying the postal course under Bro. Adelson's tutelage.

Mexico

Bro. Bill and Sis. Carol Rawson have been in Mexico this year for about six weeks, assisting in three cities — Merida, Campeche and Guadalajara. They were thrilled to let us know about the baptisms of our new Bro. Jorge Rodolfo Garcia Lopez (47) and his wife, Sis. Damaris Abigail Cuevas Cahuich (42) on Feb. 7, 2009, in the Gulf of Mexico at Playa Bonita, Lerma, Campeche.

Bro. Hector and Sis. Linda (Farias Salazar) travelled from Merida to give their support and came back to the house for a meal, readings and hymns. Bro. Hector came prepared to help with the baptism, which was useful as the sea was quite rough. We had a lovely time of fellowship which gave opportunity for the newly

baptized to get to know Bro. Hector and Sis. Linda. The camera malfunctioned at the vital moment but we hope when we get to Guadalajara we can download the few pictures we managed to take.

*Sis. Jan Berneau
CBMA/CBMC Publicity*



**Bro. Adelson Rodriguez (with glasses)
and his close and extended family**

Costa Rica — A Beautiful Country with a Hospitable Ecclesia!

The ecclesia in Costa Rica continues to mature in several ways. It was about 18 months since the last visit with the ecclesia and it was like returning home. After being delayed in Ecuador due to the fact that we didn't have recent yellow fever vaccinations, we arrived in Costa Rica on Thursday, February 26, 2009, for four days of study and fellowship. We were met at the airport by Bro. Francisco and Sis. Gladys Ramirez, (and two of their grandchildren) who were our hosts during our stay.

The Costa Rican ecclesia of 50 members has met in its own building for over 20 years in the town of Santa Barbara, east of San Jose, the country's capital. The property was purchased by funds donated to the CBMA, and the hall was built by members. The ecclesia keeps the hall in excellent condition; during 2008 they replaced the ceramic tile flooring and refurbished all the main meeting room's fluorescent lighting. The shiny tiles and bright lighting, along with ample windows, provide a very good setting for reading and study.

During our stay in Costa Rica, we supplemented the ecclesia's activities with a sisters' class, a study with the Senior C.Y.C., two dedicated Bible classes, a public lecture, and of course we remembered our Lord in the appointed way. One of the most heart warming moments was listening to brothers giving very Scriptural based prayers and including appeals for the brotherhood worldwide in these last days. Whether in English or Spanish, as we see the uncertain global situation, the appeals are the same — that our Father helps us to remain faithful to the end.

The sisters' support of all activities and hospitality in providing food and drink on four occasions made for a very welcoming and warm environment, not only for ourselves, but for a number of regular visitors, plus children and adolescents. For several of the studies the ecclesial hall was almost full.

The normal public lecture time is after the Sunday morning Breaking of Bread, while Sunday School is being held. There is no activity Sunday evening — one reason being that school for children starts at 7 a.m. An extra study was scheduled for Sunday afternoon at 5 p.m. on "The Myth of the Fallen Angel". We didn't expect a large attendance (some brethren had also gone to an interested friends class in another town), but we were all pleasantly surprised when over 40 members and family enjoyed two-plus hours together!

One other piece of good news about this ecclesia is that several teens and adults are preparing for baptism. May God continue to bind the members and families of this ecclesia together to His honor and glory.

*Don & Miriam Luff,
CBMA Representatives*



Members of the Costa Rican Ecclesia, CYC and children.

Ecuador — Second Annual Bible Camp

The ecclesia in Quito, Ecuador, enjoyed its second annual “Convivencia” (Bible Camp) for four days, from Saturday, February 21, to Tuesday, February 24, 2009. The ecclesia took advantage of a national country holiday “Carnaval”, when most of the members and regular visitors at ecclesial meetings could attend. Saturday morning about 9 a.m. a large bus picked up a number of members and their families, as well as friends at the ecclesial hall in Quito and started on a journey of more than three hours, picking up others along the way. The Bible Camp was held in Ambuqui at an inn which is at a lower elevation than Quito, so it was warmer, yet dry. The facility has clean rooms, good food and a very adequate meeting room, plus a decent outdoor pool.



Attendees of the second annual Convivencia

Over half of the 24-member ecclesia attended the four days of fellowship around the Word. Of the more than 40 who attended, seven were friends who regularly attend ecclesial activities, as well as a number of children and teens, along with three brothers from La Paz, Bolivia. Bro. Sam Alexander and Bro. Paul Herbert from New Zealand are assisting ecclesial activities in La Paz; they travelled with Bolivian brother Freddie Monrroy to Quito for a week with the ecclesia. They traveled 27 hours by bus from La Paz to Lima, and then by plane from Lima to Quito for two hours.

The study theme for the Camp was “Living the Truth at Home and in the Ecclesia.” Reviewing the Biblical principles of marriage, how to be one in the Lord, how to find a spouse, raising children, and adolescence were some of the subjects dealt with. There was good participation during the study sessions, as well as presentations Monday afternoon by the children and youths — one was about Jesus before Pilate and the other was about the Parable of the Ten Virgins. One of the many

activities enjoyed by all was a birthday celebration for the speaker including a huge cake — enough for all! The thoughtfulness of members, teens and children was much appreciated!

One of the other pieces of good news about the Quito ecclesia is that as of January, 2009, the members found and relocated to another rental location for meeting. The owner of the last meeting place would not maintain the building which was suffering from rain damage. The new location (a large two-story house) is centrally located to bus routes, well-maintained, and for the same monthly rental as the previous building. The members are very happy and feel blessed after looking for a long time for an alternate meeting place.

We very much enjoyed the fellowship and hospitality of all who attended the conference. It is so heart-warming to be able to travel to any other ecclesia, where members speak another language, and yet within minutes of meeting and conversing with any of them, feel a oneness due to our common love and hope in the Truth.

*Don & Miriam Luff,
CBMA Representatives*

Guatemala — How I was introduced to the Christadelphians



Bro. Jorge Trinidad

After approximately eight years as an active member of an evangelical church, I served as a volunteer missionary for two years and six months. Seeing the different cultures of Europe, Africa and part of the Caribbean had a great impact on me. I thought that doing this was the correct thing according to what I believed was right for my life. The experience was very broad and made me understand the problems that mankind faces by his own doing and what God asks us to do. At the time, I was far from understanding this, and I believe it was my indoctrination in evangelical teachings that made me understand the “True God” and His ways. Despite this, my love for God continued to

grow, because He never abandoned me even though I was sincerely and completely wrong in my relationship with Him.

I arrived back at home in Guatemala in the middle of the 1990s with many expectations of what God had accomplished in my life and with more self-security. Previously I had experienced big problems with feelings of inferiority as in my inability to accomplish much in life and even less for God. But after I realized how wrong I was, God showed me the path to follow and how to serve Him despite my wrong doctrines.

I had problems with the ecclesiastical leaders because I did not tithe. They did not see me as a human being, but rather a rebel who did not do the will of the leaders. The only thing that interested them was the money, not a person searching for the Truth of the Scriptures. This seemed to me contradictory to Bible teaching! Despite the fact that I was condemned by many of the members, God never abandoned me, and I was able to come through. I left the evangelical church.

A year passed, during which I meditated and realized that what man does or does not do in his life is not God's fault. I realized I had to seek Him. I looked through a newspaper that was at my workplace, and found a mail-in coupon that said "Do you understand what you're reading?" This question caught my attention. It was important for me to answer this question for myself, especially since I felt I understood my Bible.

I sent away the coupon. I received the correspondence Bible courses, and later I received an invitation by mail to visit the Christadelphian church to hear public lectures every Sunday, on different topics. The talks would be given by Douglas Vanegas, a brother who currently lives with his family in Costa Rica.

And so began the new story in the life of a search for Bible Truth. I arrived at the ecclesial hall, and the important Bible topics hit me really deeply. For example: "After Death, What?" It made quite an impression on me, a former evangelical, learning that I would not go to heaven when I died, but that if I had an understanding of God and His Son, I would have to wait until the resurrection. The explanation of Bro. Douglas was conclusive; nowhere in the Bible did it say that I would go to heaven when I died.

These Bible truths also had repercussions in my family life, because they told me that I had been "brainwashed". What had happened to the missionary who was convicted in his beliefs? Was I crazy? How is it possible that there is no Devil? Some mocked me, and it was not easy in the beginning. Knowing my many years as an evangelical, they couldn't believe that only now I was beginning to understand Bible Truth. But to me these new teachings seemed revolutionary and contrary to all the established doctrines of my country Guatemala, not to mention the rest of Latin America.

It was a constant battle, but I continued to attend the Bible studies. I heard talks from brothers from Canada, the USA and El Salvador, and finally the time had come to confirm my belief in the Truth of the Bible. I was baptized on Sunday, February 27, 2000.

Today I am an active member of a small group of brothers that meet every Sunday in the Western part of the city of Guatemala. We persevere in this Truth that many are searching for, but only a few find, because God knows our hearts, and especially our intentions. "So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy" (Rom 9:16).

*Bro. Jorge Trinidad
Guatemala*

Haiti — A Visit with Brother Kenson Fortuné

The country of Haiti is the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, and has been described as one of the poorest countries of the world. Until recently it has been devoid of any treasure at all. About eight years ago, treasure was discovered, and examined closely. Four years ago, Kenson Fortuné was born into the saving name of the Lord Jesus Christ. He could now be described as the richest man in Haiti, as he has discovered the pearl of great price. (See the article in *The Tidings*, January 2005, pp. 40,41)

We have been corresponding with Bro. Kenson all of these years, and we finally had the opportunity and pleasure of visiting Haiti to spend a number of days around the first weekend in February with our brother.

We have visited a few different places, and despite its poverty, Haiti was a particularly beautiful country. Rugged mountains fill the island, surrounded by blue ocean waters. The city of Port-au-Prince stretches out around the large bay, with houses upon houses built into the hills and lowlands. It struck us immediately how plain the houses looked compared to the Central American countries we have seen. Instead of the usual mishmash of turquoise, orange, pink, green and yellow homes we are used to seeing, the houses were almost all bleak and gray. (We later learned that a house in Haiti, once it is painted on the outside, is considered complete, and from then on is taxed. As long as the home remains unpainted, it is considered incomplete, and safe from taxation. This explains the lack of color in Port-au-Prince.)

It was with great joy that we met Bro. Kenson at the airport. He was holding up a sign labeled “Christadelphian”. Bro. Kenson had very wisely hired a friend to be a driver for us for the weekend. It was such a relief to have a reliable driver and escort for the weekend. We never felt unsafe.

After we quickly checked into our hotel, Bro. Kenson brought us to his home to meet his family (after a quick phone call to see if there was electricity that evening or not — we take many things for granted in Canada). We were anxious to meet our brother’s family. Bro. Kenson’s father is a carpenter, who also happens to be a Pentecostal pastor to a small church of about 30 members. Ever since Kenson learned the truth and stopped attending the family’s church, his family has regarded him as a heretic. It was helpful for them to finally meet us, and to see that Bro. Kenson was not simply inventing his new faith! With this pressure, as well as the struggle of daily life, our brother has remained steadfast. We were very impressed with Bro. Kenson, as well as his family. His three-year-old daughter Kensiah accompanied us on most of our touring of the beautiful country. Bro. Kenson’s family was extremely welcoming and kind. It is so sad to see that they do not see the Truth of the Bible as Kenson has seen it.

It was quite a surprise when upon arrival to meet the family, Dan was asked by Kenson’s father to preach in his church on the Sunday! Dan accepted with some hesitation, realizing that here would be an opportunity to impart a small bit of

Truth to the little congregation. He spoke about the purpose of God with the earth (Num 14:21), and the wonderful hope we have for the future; that we have an opportunity to fulfill this purpose of God by manifesting His character now, and then hopefully in the Kingdom, eternally and perfectly.

That evening we spent a few hours with our brother, sharing a breaking of bread service (only his second shared with others in four years!), and enjoying the Bible readings and much discussion.



**From left to right: Bro. Dan Robinson, Bro. Kenson Fortuné,
Bro. Kenson's brother Samuel, our driver (Eric),
In front: Kensiah (Bro. Kenson's daughter)**

Bro. Kenson has struggled with being alone in his faith in Haiti. He is in touch with some of his worldwide Christadelphian family, but always appreciates emails and letters. Bro. Kenson is fluent in English, and of course French and Creole. Bro. Kenson would also love a visit, if that is possible. Email luffs@sympatico.ca for information. The general view of Haiti is that it is an unsafe area to visit. We did not find this on our short stay, though we took precautions. We did not venture out alone, and were thankful to have a driver and, of course, our brother with us at all times. Everyone we met was extremely kind and helpful.

May our Heavenly Father continue to be with our brother in his lonely walk, and may our Lord come soon, so that we may all be reunited eternally in Jerusalem!

*Dan and Ashley Robinson
CBMA Representatives*

St. Lucia — A Week in the Lives of Missionaries

Bro. Martin Webster writes of his recent visit to St. Lucia in the Caribbean.

As soon as we had settled in we went into the capital Kingstown (the guest house we stayed at was a 15-minute bus ride away). We started to hand out the 2,500 leaflets we had which advertised the five lectures planned for February 9 to 13. It is not difficult handing out leaflets down here, just stand in a busy street and hand them to people as they pass by.

We managed to get interviews at four radio stations and have an advertisement on the one television station in St. Vincent. To get one interview we had a long walk to the radio station which was at the top of a 200 meter hill!

The first lecture, given by Martin, was entitled “Israel in Bible Prophecy”, and was attended by 21 people. At the other lectures attendance was down significantly. But there were about six or seven who attended every evening.

The fields are white!

Several of those who attended the lectures said that they were impressed with the exposition of the Bible they heard. They asked about baptism (one of the titles was “How to be buried in water and come out alive”), and follow-up discussions are needed to develop the seed of the word that has been planted. What is urgently needed is for a couple to come for a year or two and build on the work already started here.

*With love in the Lord,
Martin*

Caribbean Christadelphian Youth Camp August 8-15, 2009

The site of this year’s camp is Kuru Kuru Training Centre, Guyana, a large, spacious site in a rural location, approximately 20 miles (a half-hour drive) from the airport.

The main speakers and subjects for this camp are:
Bro. Tyrone Smart — “Nehemiah, A Man For All Times”
Bro. Gideon Drepaul — “Sexual Temptation”
We are expecting over 150 campers!

A camp program will soon be advertised here, so keep a close look out for it!

Planning information:
Camp fees are US \$60,
arrival day is August 8, and departure day is August 15.
Travel details should be emailed to
Bro. Jerrold Joseph at jj_joseph56@yahoo.com.

Addresses for Bequests and Donations (For tax ID numbers please contact the Editor)

Christadelphian Bible Mission of the Americas (CBMA) supports preaching work throughout the Americas, Domestic Truth Corps, etc. Visit www.cbma.net for an update on current activities as well as to make US dollar online donations. Donations by check should be sent c/o Charles Brinkerhoff, 15925 La Ronda Cir., Hacienda Heights, CA 91745-4244

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

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

CBMA Overseas Book Service welcomes gifts of used Bibles, reference books, and Christadelphian books. Please contact Jan Berneau, 1221 N. Whitnall Hwy., Burbank, CA 91505-2110.

Phone: 818-842-2868
jberneau@earthlink.net

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

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

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

Christadelphian Heritage College
Donations may be sent to Christadelphian Heritage College, c/o Brantford Ecclesia, 442 Dunsdon St., Brantford, ON, Canada, N3P 2B1

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

Christadelphian Indian Children's Homes (CICH) donations in US dollars can be sent to CICH, c/o David & Connie Stiles, 3 Blue Acre Rd., Middletown, CT 06457-5012

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

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

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

Christadelphian Care Line provides a service for those who need fully confidential help with emotional and spiritual problems as well as family issues. We now have Canadian charitable status. 866-823-1039

Alcohol Help Line provides a service for those who need fully confidential help overcoming alcohol dependency. 866-823-1039

News & Notices

CALGARY, AB

Following discussions with Sis. Glenda Philip, we are pleased to welcome her into fellowship with the Calgary Central Christadelphian Ecclesia. Sis. Glenda was formerly a member of the Berean fellowship. We pray that she will be happy amongst us as we journey together to God's kingdom.

We transfer Bro. Caleb Coish, in love, to the Aberfoyle Park Ecclesia in Adelaide, Aust., following his marriage to Sis. Elly.

John Fairhurst

EDMONTON, AB

We have recently enjoyed the company of Bro. Warwick and Sis. Priscilla Rosser (Riverwood, Sydney AU); Sis. Fiona Bosly (Kedron Brook, Queensland AU); Bro. Paul and Sis. Cindy Aback and family (Calgary, AB); and Bro. Craig Stickney (Santa Barbara, CA). We especially thank these brothers for their words of exhortation.

The Edmonton-Calgary Fraternal will be held this year in Edmonton on the Thanksgiving weekend of October 10-11, 2009. Bro. John Bilello (Ann Arbor, MI) will lead the weekend on the theme, "The Bible Vs. Evolution". Children's classes will be offered to those under 12. We look forward to an uplifting weekend. Please contact Bro. Jerome or Sis. Coralie Toronchuk by phone at: 1-780-453-1412; or by email at: jeromet@telusplanet.net.

Jerome Toronchuk

GEORGETOWN, GUYANA

The Georgetown Ecclesia bade farewell to three members: Sis. Borgette Charles, her daughter Sis. Keena, and son Bro. Keon, who immigrated to the USA in December/January along with a younger brother and their husband and father. They were very involved in ecclesial activities and will be sorely missed. We welcomed Sis. June Neblett (Canada) who visited on a short holiday in February.

We received with sadness news of the falling asleep of Bro. Colin Badger. We fondly remember his last visit here, when he was present to celebrate Sis. Amy Washington's one hundredth birthday with us. We welcomed back Sis. Alicia Rampersaud, who after her recent baptism in St Lucia has returned to Guyana for a while.

In March, we celebrated the baptism of LAWRENCE DE FREITAS. Bro. De Freitas has been a regular visitor at our Sunday morning memorial services. We wish him every encouragement in his walk in Christ.

Anthony Semple

MAY PEN, JAMAICA

We are delighted to report the baptism of SHANEIKA HOWARD and MACELL DUNN. We pray for our Father's blessing on our two new sisters' lives in Christ.

Melvin Gordon

NORTH BATTLEFORD, SK

We truly have been blessed as we have seen this area of the vineyard growing. Since our last report, Sis. Cheri Webb has joined fellowship with us, and her husband CHRIS WEBB was baptized July 16, 2008, after a good confession of his faith. Bro. Theo and Sis. Joy Readman have moved here from Edmonton, AB. We welcomed back Bro. Andrew, Sis. Marie and Sis. Kirsten Jackson when they moved from Maple Ridge, BC. Bro. Dan Leadbetter and Sis. Natasha Jackson were joined in marriage last year and they have now made North Battleford their home. Bro. Nathan and Sister Crystal Bartholomew have moved here from Kamloops, BC. Bro. James, Sis. Charlene Bowan with their children Hanna, Naomi and Joseph have moved here from Ontario.

Bro. Andrew and Sis. Marie's daughter Tiffany and her two children, Mason and Kohen, and Sis. Cheri Webb's daughter Crystal and Crystal's daughter Marissa have been attending ecclesial functions. Lee Osborne has also moved to work in Saskatchewan from Colorado and has been attending on a regular basis. We look forward to mutual support as all walk Zionwards together.

We have been blessed with brothers and sisters from all across North America and are thankful for their support. Many of the visiting brethren have exhorted for us and last summer Bro. Bernard Burt from England led our study weekend that we share with the Saskatoon Ecclesia. Bro. Skip Bartholomew from Vernon, BC, gave a couple of lectures this spring and we are thankful for the interested friends that attended. We have also led a number of Bible seminars that have brought some interested friends to us. It is exciting to see God's calling go out.

Bro. Paul Sargent

ORANGEVILLE, ON

Please be advised that Bro. Walter Lovato has assumed the responsibilities of secretary for the Orangeville Ecclesia. Correspondence can be sent to him by email at wlovato@yahoo.ca; by mail at 305 Longbow Street, Shelburne, Ontario, L0N 1S4; or by telephone at 519-925-6634.

Steve Hodge

SAN FRANCISCO, CA

We have enjoyed visiting speakers from the San Francisco Peninsula Ecclesia. Our sincere thanks to Bre. Robert Sleeper, Jason Fish, and John Pople. JULIO DIAZ was baptized into the saving name of Jesus Christ August 23, 2008.

Paul Campbell

SAN FRANCISCO PENINSULA, CA

We have completed the purchase of a hall and are working on some repairs and upgrades before moving in. God willing, we'll begin meeting there no later than June 14, 2009. Please note the address of our new location: 1536 James Avenue, Redwood City, CA, 94062. Many thanks to our brethren around the world who have supported us in this effort.

We are pleased to receive Bro. Luke Burow by transfer from Brisbane, Qld. Bro. Tom and Sis. Edith Gover, formerly of the Garfield, NJ, Ecclesia, have moved here also, and joined with us. Bro. Ryan Eustis has relocated to San Diego; we commend him in love to the brethren there.

With sorrow we report that our brother, Don Robinson, suffered a massive heart attack on August 22, 2008, and died during the night. May the Lord remember him at his coming.

Bro. Joshua and Sis. Linda Gallagher increased their family with the adoption of Noah, a little 2 yr old boy from China. Our newest Sunday school member, Kai, was born to Bro. Ben and Sis. Lis Dondero on January 19, 2009.

We hosted our Annual Fraternal Gathering on October 12, 2008. Bro. David Jennings led Sunday school and exhorted on "Building the House of God". We held our annual Study Weekend on January 17-18, 2009. Bro. Kurt Ruhland, presented a study on "The Children of Lot." Many brethren from around Northern California joined us for both these occasions.

Jim Seagoe

SEATTLE, WA

We thank our heavenly Father for the continued growth of our ecclesia, as with great joy we announce the safe arrival of six new babies in the last few months. On June 8, 2008, Riley Elizabeth was born to our Bro. Steven and Sis. Kristen Hemingray; on July 21, 2008, Levi Gabriel was born to our Bro. Chris and Sis. Jessica Ditto; on August 30, 2008, Junea Lynn was born to our Bro. Dan and Sis. Lindsey Bleichner; on October 4, 2008, Asaph Sievert was born to our Bro. Graeme and Sis. Thamar Alexander and Howa Matesso was born to our Bro. Matesso Ikola and his wife, Adela; and on February 7, 2009, Jonathan Frederick was born to our Bro. David and Sis. Wendy Jahns. All of our newborns and their parents are well, and we thank our Heavenly Father for keeping them all safe.

We welcome by transfer our Bro. Andy and Sis. Cheryl Delin and their son, Charlie, from the Mitcham Hills Ecclesia in South Australia and Sis. Naomi Boswell from the Norfolk, VA, Ecclesia. We pray that our heavenly Father will bless them as they settle in the Seattle area.

We would like to announce our upcoming annual fraternal gathering, to be held God willing, May 23-24, 2009, at the Edmonds Home School Center, Edmonds, WA. Our speaker is our Bro. Michael Ashton (Shirley, UK) and he will be leading our study on the theme, "The Tabernacle of David." We extend a very warm welcome to any who are able to join us. To the extent possible, accommodation will be with brethren and sisters. Further information is provided in the "Coming Events" section of the magazine.

Tony Ball

ST. LUCIA

During October and November 2008, we have been delighted to have the company of Bro. Bob and Sis. Diana Stodel. During their stay much preaching was done in the form of personal contact follow-up, and lectures in the library. We have been encouraged by the work done by Bro. Bob and Sis. Diana.

On November 30, 2008, we were delighted to witness the baptism of ALICIA RAMPERSAUD and to receive her into fellowship at the memorial service later in the morning. We pray that she will be strong in her walk to the Kingdom.

During January and February, Bro. Martin and Sis. Lois Webster (Kitchener-Waterloo, ON) and Bro. Norm and Sis. Juana Smith (Brampton, ON) were with us. They provided

a great deal of support to our annual crusade in Castries and Anse-La-Raye. The lectures were well attended and each evening there were plenty of questions during the discussion period. As a result of questions in the Castries lectures, it was decided to hold three additional lectures on the topic of the "Pre-existence of Christ". Bro. Norm took two of the lectures and Bro. Martin took one. Three members of the St. Lucia Ecclesia gave lectures, Bre. Mark David, Eddie Anthony and Andre George.

In the first two weeks in February Bre. Andre George and Martin Webster went to the neighboring island of St. Vincent and gave five lectures. Attendance was good, and a number of promising contacts were established.

We have been very glad to have Bro. Mark and Sis. Handley (Maidenhead, UK) and Bro. Keith and Sis. Sue McEvoy (Halifax, NS). We were greatly encouraged by the exhortations given by Bre. Bob Stodel, Keith McEvoy, Norm Smith and Martin Webster. Bro. Adrian David and Sis. Alicia Rampersaud have returned to Guyana for a short time.

Mark David

THOUSAND OAKS, CA

During the past few months we have been pleased to welcome many brothers and sisters from our neighboring California ecclesias. In addition, we welcomed from afar: Bro. Jerry Michaud, Bro. Jared and Sis. Kim Vetkos, Bro. Tony and Sis. Pam Cipriotti (S. Yosemite, CA); Bro. Dan and Sis Ashley Robinson (Brantford, ON); Bro. Dan and Sis. Jennie Carroll (Oak Grove, LA); Sis. Bev Barling (Vernon, BC); Sis. Suzy Mason (San Francisco, CA); and Bro. Matt Bittinger (Bozeman, MT).

Our thanks go out to Bro. Dan Robinson and Bro. Jim Glover (Reseda, CA) for their exhortations. We also thank Bro. Ed Pecson (San Luis Obispo, CA); Bro Craig Stickney (Santa Barbara, CA); Bro. David Cooper (Pomona, CA); and Bro. Bob Lloyd (Verdugo Hills, CA) for their exhortations and afternoon classes. More thanks go out to Bro. Jim Cowie (AU) for his weeknight Bible class. Special thanks go out to Bro. Dennis Bevans (Reseda, CA) and Bro. Jim Styles (Detroit, MI) for their efforts in leading our annual Kids' Camp on Abraham. Thank you also to Bro. David Jennings (Pomona, CA) for speaking at our annual "Day With the Word", on the topic of "David", and delivering the Sunday School class and exhortation on the Sunday. Both events were very well attended and well received by those in attendance.

We are very happy to report that, following a good confession of their faith, DEAN PILE and JUDY BROSCO, who both came to us through the seminars, were baptized into the saving name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Bro. Dean was baptized on July 19, 2008, and Sis. Judy was baptized on January 24, 2009. We look forward to our journey together to the Kingdom of God with our new brother and sister.

We are also pleased to report that Bro. Jared and Sis. Kim Vetkos have transferred back to our ecclesia after five years with the S. Yosemite, CA Ecclesia. Bro. Jerry Michaud has transferred to our ecclesia from S. Yosemite. We welcome them all and we are looking forward to working with them as we walk together to the Kingdom of God.

On the other hand, we are sorry to have to report that we have lost, due to moving from our area, Bro. Ken Sterling to Detroit Livonia, MI and Bro. Henry and Sis. Sharon Wisniewski to Grants Pass, OR. We commend our brothers and sister to their new ecclesias.

Tom Graham

VERNON, BC

We are pleased to welcome by transfer Bro. John and Sis. Jessica Gareau and their children Rachel, Kate and Luke from the Victoria, BC, Ecclesia. We also welcome by transfer from the Niagara, ON, Ecclesia, our Sis. Chesed Mindorff. We are delighted to be gaining these enthusiastic young people and pray we might benefit each other as we walk together on the road to the coming Kingdom.

Sis. Karen Erickson and her husband Monte welcomed a son Joel Aiden on February 28, 2009, their third child. Our ecclesia has been abundantly blessed with the numbers of small children in our midst, and we are most thankful for the blessings of these young ones. May they all grow to love our God and the truth He has preserved for us.

David Zantingh

WACHUSETT, MA

We are happy to have Bro. Scott and Sis. Cindy Nevers join our ecclesia by way of transfer from the Meriden, CT, Ecclesia; we look forward to their association with us on the shared path to the Kingdom. Our Bro. Mark Millard has transferred his membership to the Tulsa, OK, Ecclesia, a move made necessary due to an employment opportunity. His wife, Sis. Donna Millard, will remain in this area until their home is sold and will expect to join her husband soon. We wish them Godspeed in their new endeavor.

Wesley Trow

WORCESTER, MA

We ask our brothers and sisters to pray with us for our Sis. Elisabeth Wells, daughter of Bro. Les and Sis. Suzanne Wilkinson, as she continues her treatment for the cancer that continues to spread. Her spirits are high and she continues steadfast in attendance to meeting and in giving glory to God and love to her two young children, Robert and baby Samuel. Bro. John, her husband, has been a model of love and tireless strength in the Lord during this difficult time. May the Lord be merciful to his handmaid and heal her, that she and her loved ones will not suffer.

We wish the brethren to know that last year our Sis. Sarah Wilkinson married a gentleman, Kevin Page, who is not a baptized member. We have had much prayer and discussion with Sis. Sarah and we are firmly convinced that she understands the implications and is honestly repentant. We have concluded that she will remain in fellowship. Kevin, whom she has known since grade school, is very supportive of Sis. Sarah's commitment to God. He attends meeting and ecclesial functions frequently. The Scriptures say that the unbeliever is sanctified by the believer, and we pray for the day when he too will seek the waters of baptism into our Lord Jesus' saving grace. May our Father watch over them as they walk together in their new life.

M. Fulmer

Christadelphian Sunday School Association for North America

God willing, in September 2009, the CSSA will be studying Stage 2, The Wilderness Wanderings up to the time of the Kings. All Sunday schools or those in isolation are invited to participate in this program. The CSSA provides study notes, projects and worksheets. We contemplate our privilege and responsibility to raise our children, the heritage of the LORD, to fear Him, to love Him and to walk according to His ways. Commencing with Stage 2 material David and Jennifer Waye will be taking

care of the distribution. For information please contact them by mail at 3220 Galbraith Dr., Mississauga, ON, Canada, L5L 4L7; or by phone 905 569-7647 or email cssabooks@yahoo.ca.

Thank you for your support in this matter. Take care and God bless.

Phil and Barb Wilton

Music for Meetings

Don't have a musician in your ecclesia? Then these CDs are for you! We now have four CDs available in a format to sing along with and play for Memorial Service or any other ecclesial function as desired. They are designed to be used separately or in combination with each other. Almost all of them are played on the piano and some may include instrumentals, e.g., strings and organ.

Each CD has three categories of music:

1. Preludes/postludes: 2 on CD 1 and five or six on CDs 2-4, with their times;
2. Memorial Hymns suitable for the Breaking of Bread: five or six on each CD;
3. Hymns for praise, worship, exhortations, and those suitable for openings, closings, etc.: twelve on CD 1 and 20 to 22 on CDs 2-4.

Except for the preludes and postludes, each hymn has an introduction, before the appropriate number of verses to be sung are played.

They are available for \$6.00 US from the ChristadelphianTapeLibrary@verizon.net, or may be ordered by phone at: 732-381-4590. Orders may also be faxed to 732-499-8415.

Victoria, BC, home for rent

A family from Victoria, British Columbia, is temporarily relocating to Australia for one year and is looking to rent their five-bedroom, three-bath home (on five acres) beginning September 1, 2009. We are hoping to find people to look after our two dogs and cats for a reduced rent. It is about 25 minutes away from the Victoria ecclesial hall. If any brother or sister is interested in more details, please send Bro. Mike McStravick an email at mmcstravick@shaw.ca.

No man is an island

No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main. If a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if a promontory were, as well as if a manor of thy friend's or of thine own were. Any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind; and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee.

John Donne

Minute Meditation

Does ego stand for “Edging God Out?”

“Ego has a voracious appetite; the more you feed it, the hungrier it gets.”

Nathaniel Bronner, Jr.

Someone once said that the letters in the word ego stand for “Edging God Out.” Ego and pride are considered virtues by many in the world today. People are advised, “Be proud of yourself” or “Take pride in your work.” The slovenly are asked, “Where is your pride?” Calling someone “a proud man” is considered a compliment. However, the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God, and pride has no place in the lives of those who are striving to be like Jesus.

Without a doubt the Lord Jesus Christ was the greatest man who ever lived, and yet he described himself as meek and lowly in heart, or, as the NIV says, gentle and humble. Paul advises believers, “Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering.”

Often pride and arrogance are found in those who are least qualified to exhibit these traits. The fellow with the smallest mind is the one who is usually most willing to give someone a piece of it. There is a saying that a man wrapped up in himself makes a very small package. Some might ask, isn't some pride a good thing? The reason we should not be proud is because whatever we have has been given to us by our Heavenly Father. Paul asks, “For who makes you different from anyone else? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as though you did not?” Our life, abilities, looks and health are all gifts from God. How can we be puffed up, proud and filled with ego for something that has been given to us? Since what we possess is really only being lent to us by our Heavenly Father to see what we do with His good gifts, then we should thank Him for what we have and try to use it to bring glory and honor to His name.

Proverbs tells us that first on the list of the things that God hates is a proud look. Why is a little pride so bad? The Psalmist explains, “The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God. God is not in all his thoughts.” If we are proud of ourselves, then we are not thinking about God, thanking Him for what He has given us, or giving Him the glory for our accomplishments. We are shutting God out of our lives. The wise man Solomon said, “The fear of the LORD is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate.” He also said, “When pride cometh, then cometh shame: but with the lowly is wisdom.” Pride should have no place in our lives. Proverbs tells us, “Everyone that is proud in heart is an abomination to the LORD.” If the Lord Jesus was not proud, and he was a man who had more to boast about than any man who ever lived, we should certainly not boast. But rather thank God for what we have and try to use the gifts He has given to us to serve Him.

Today young people are very conscious of what they wear. Peter gives all of us good advice on this subject when he says, "All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, 'God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.' Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that He may lift you up in due time."

Having God in our thoughts will make us humble and thankful, but never proud or boastful. We need to realize, as Job tells us, that the LORD gives and He takes away, and blessed is His name. Everything we have comes from God. David, a man after God's own heart, prayed, "Now, our God, we give you thanks, and praise your glorious name. But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to give as generously as this? Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand." Let us be thankful to God for all He has given us. Let us recognize ego and pride as evils to be avoided, for as Solomon said, "When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom."

Robert J. Lloyd

It has been said that you can measure a man by what it takes to swell his head. Those who get the big head are not wise... If it has that effect upon us we are indeed foolish. Solomon tells us "In the mouth of the foolish is a rod of pride: but the lips of the wise shall preserve them."

Robert J. Lloyd

Coming Events (Lord Willing)

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

MAY 2009

1-3 Central Coast Women's Weekend, Cambria, CA. Sis. Jane Tunnell (San Diego, CA): "My Husband, My Lord" (Theme: Preparing ourselves as the Bride of Christ). Sunday memorial meeting conducted by No. Co. SLO Ecclesia. Contact: Sis. Ann Crouse 805-239-3517 or RoanCrouse@aol.com. Cost \$150; \$50 non-refundable reservation; enrollment due by January 15, and may be limited to 40

1-3 Vancouver Island Sisters' Weekend. Beach Acres Resort. Sis. Maritta Terrell (Austin Leander, TX): "Having a Mary Heart in a Martha World." Contact: Sis. Eileen Henthorn, 19-1950 Cultra Ave., Saanichton, BC V8M 1E3, or Sis. Yvonne Rosenau yvonne2001@shaw.ca. Cost \$180; \$90 non-refundable reservation

15-17 Sussex, NB, Young People's Weekend Circle Square Ranch. Bro. John Mark Ghent: "Friendship: A Study of David and Jonathan". Ages 12 to 20, limited space available. Cost is \$75. Registration information sussexspringcamp@live.ca or write Sis. Marie Baines, 140 Bryant Drive, Sussex, NB E4E 5M9 or 506-433-5254

16-17 Prince George, BC Fraternal Gathering. Bro. Anthony Oosthuizen (Durban, SA): "The King's Manifesto." Contact Bro. Rod Massey masseyrd@telus.net

16 Moorestown NJ Study Day, Moorestown, NJ Ecclesial hall, 1:00 pm. Bro. Matt Link (Washington, DC): "Galatians". Contact Bro. David Cheetham 856-273-3654 Dnacheetham@aol.com

17 Mid-Atlantic Fraternal Gathering Clarion Hotel, Cherry Hill, NJ, 10:30 am. Bro. Matt Link (Washington, DC). Contact Bro. David Cheetham Dnacheetham@aol.com 856-273-3654

23-24 Seattle, WA Annual Fraternal Gathering and Study Weekend. Bro. Michael Ashton (Shirley, UK): "The Tabernacle of David." Contact Bro. Tony Ball tony.ball@medpro.com or 425-397-6344

29-31 New York Metropolitan Sisters' Retreat Weekend Pocono Manor, Pocono, PA. Sis. Cynthia (Cindy) Paiva (Guadalajara, Mexico): "Tough Love" — Loving when the loving gets tough. Space is limited; register early. For complete information and registration, contact Sis. Averil Ferguson 718-881-8705 averilpsm23@juno.com

30-31 Baltimore, MD Study Weekend. Bro. Ryan King: "The Psalms of Refuge" (Sons of Korah and their Psalms: 42-49, 84-85) Saturday 2 pm., supper served. Sunday 9:45 am., Memorial Service 11 am., lunch served, afternoon lecture: "The Middle East Crisis". Contact Bro. Andy Bilello 410-357-4612

JUNE 2009

6-7 NY Fraternal Weekend Speaker: Bro. Christian Russell. Contact Bro. Ben Drepaul (718) 847-9638 or yerubbaal@yahoo.com

12-14 Echo Lake, NJ Study weekend for CYC. Bro. Ryan Mutter (Baltimore, MD): "Building Godly Relationships." Contact Bro. Dan Jorgensen Dan_jorg@yahoo.com or 201-463-5140

13 Victoria, BC Study weekend. Bro. Anthony Oosthuizen (Durban, SA): "Faithful Hearts and Lives." Contact Bro. Clyde Snobelen anthony@csl.ca

13-14 Simi Valley Study day. Bro. John Pople (San Francisco Peninsula, CA): "Beyond the Cross". Three classes starting at 9:00 am. Includes lunch. Sunday school and exhortation on Sunday. Contact Bro. Gordon Hensley threehensleys@sbcglobal.net

21-27 Rocky Mountain Bible School Glenwood Springs, CO. Bro. Peter King (Worcester, UK): "Moses in the Fourth Gospel"; Bro. Roger Lewis (Christchurch, NZ): "Philip the Evangelist"; Bro. Jim Livermore (Ann Arbor, MI): "That the Works of God May Be Revealed". Contact www.denverchristadelphians.org

27 - July 3 Terra Nova Bible School Newfoundland, Canada. Bro. Mark Giordano (Norfolk, VA): "Prophetic Images", and Bro. Chris Sales (Shelburne, ON): "King Josiah: the Young Reformer". Online registration and full details at www.terr NOVAbibleschool.com or call Bro. Gary Hynes 709-747-2750

JULY 2009

3-6 Central Saskatchewan Shekinah Study Weekend. Bro. Jim Cowie (Brisbane, Australia): "The King's Manifesto of Life". For information/registration contact Sis. Laura Jackson, RR#1 Stn. Main, North Battleford, SK, 306-246-4808 or t.jackson@sasktel.net

5-11 Southwest Bible School Schreiner University, Kerrville, TX. Bre. Frank Abel (Shelburne, ON); Mark Vincent (Boston, MA); Anthony Whitehorn (Maidenhead, UK). Registration information available at www.planofgod.org or contact Bro. Fred Bearden, 2204 Downing Lane, Leander, TX 78641 or 512-259-4631

- 11-18 Manitoulin Island** Family Bible Camp. Bro. Bob Lloyd (Verdugo Hills, CA): "We Would See Jesus"; Bro. Jay Mayock (Hamilton Book Road, ON): adults "Mine Eyes Have Seen the King" and teens: "Challenges For Young People in the Truth." Contact Bro. Rick Sales ersales@xplornet.com or by phone, after April 20, at 519-925-6847
- 15-19 Guyana Campaign** New Amsterdam Hall. Five nights of Gospel proclamation on the theme, "The True Gospel Explained". Followed by a weekly "Learn to Read the Bible Effectively Seminar", Wednesdays: July 22nd, 29th, and August 6th. Same venue. Please contact Bro. Ted Sleeper or Joe Badlu jbadlu@aol.com
- 18-26 Eastern Bible School** Connecticut College, New London, CT. Bro. Dev Ramcharan (Toronto West, ON): "My Heart is Inditing a Good Matter (The Lord in the Psalms)"; teens: "Galatians"; Bro. Peter King (Worcester, UK): "Studies in the Gospel of John"; teens: "The Joy of Bible Study"; Bro. Mark Vincent (Boston, MA): "Suffering: Man's Problem/God's Problem"; teens: "Marriage and Relationships: God's Way". For registration information contact Sis. Cindy Nevers, cindy.nevers@tecbs.org or registration@tecbs.org.
- 19-25 Pacific Coast Bible School** Idyllwild, CA. Bro. Michael Ashton (Shirley, UK): "John the Baptist"; Bro. Matt Norton (Lismore, NSW): "The Life of Lot"; Bro. Gary Cousens (Cambridge, ON): "James". Contact Bro. Jeff Gelineau mail@gelineau.org or 567 Astorian Drive, Simi Valley, CA 93065, or Bro. Gary Patterson garympatterson@hotmail.com, or visit www.californiabibleschool.org
- 25-31 Manitoulin Island** Christadelphian Bible Camp. Theme: "All the Earth Shall Be Filled with his Glory". Speakers: Bro. Michael Ashton (Birmingham, UK): "Turning the World Upside Down: A Study in the Acts of the Apostles", and Bro. Ted Sleeper (San Francisco Peninsula, CA): "Meditations on Creation". Contact Bro. Alex Browning, registrar at jabrowning@rogers.com or 416-284-0290
- 25 - August 2 Midwest Bible School** Hanover College, Hanover, IN. Bro. Matthew Blewett (South Africa): "On the Road with the Ark"; Bro. Bill Link, Jr. (Baltimore, MD): "Job: The Spirit of a Just Man Made Perfect"; Bro. Matt Norton (Australia): "The Return of Christ". Contact Bro. Mike Livermore, 44943 Yorkshire Drive, Novi, MI 48375 248-462-5740 mike.live@gmail.com or visit www.midwestbibleschool.com

AUGUST 2009

- 8-14 Niagara Falls Bible School** Brock University Campus, Ontario. Adult classes: Bro. David Lloyd (Simi Hills, CA): "Spiritual Finances — Lessons from Scripture about Money"; Bro. David Smith (Sunderland, UK): "The Family in Genesis". Teens: Bro. Lloyd: "Lessons from Daniel"; Bro. Smith: "The Moral Maze — Finding a Way Through". To register and for information see www.nfcbcs.com or contact Bro. David Brierley david.brierley@sympatico.ca or 416-236-5295
- 8-15 Guyana** Caribbean Youth Camp. Speakers: Bro. Gideon Drepaul and Bro. Tyrone Smartt. For more info contact Bro. Jerrold Joseph jj_joseph56@yahoo.com or Bro. Ted Sleeper tsleeper@astound.net
- 29-4 Sept. Vancouver Island** Bible Camp. Camp Pringle, Shawnigan Lake. Adult speakers: Bro. Mark Giordano (USA): "The Kingdom of God Applied"; Bro. Erik Sternad (USA): "Elijah — a man like us"; Bro. Tecwyn Morgan (UK): "Malachi My Messenger"; Teen speakers: Bro. Dave Garnand (USA): "Jesus' Challenge to You and Me", Bro. Giordano: "The Earth Series — Bible Apologetics", Bro. Morgan: "Paul the Preacher — From First to Last". Registrar Sis. Wendy Johnsen, #7-3855-9th Ave, Port Alberni, BC, V9Y 4T9, Canada; wendyjohansen@yahoo.ca, 250-724-0501, fax: 250-723-9321

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SEPTEMBER 2009

5-6 Victoria, BC Fraternal Gathering. Bro. Tecwyn Morgan. Contact Bro. Clyde Snobelen tec@csll.ca

12 Hamilton Greenaway, ON Fraternal Gathering. Wildwood Manor Ranch, Georgetown, ON. Bro. Mark Carr (Toronto West, ON): Joseph — I Seek My Brethren". 2:00 pm, picnic supper at 5:00 pm.

13-18 Adult Study Week — The Bible School with a Difference! Wildwood Manor Ranch, Ballinafad, ON. Topic of Study: The Life and Ministry of Jesus Christ, Part #1. For information about the workbook or to register please contact Bro. Bob and Sis. Joy Jennings, 6 Stodola Drive, Brantford ON N3R 6J5 (bobnjoy@vif.com) 519-754-0902, or Bro. Martin and Sis. Lois Webster, 63 Bradbury Crescent, Paris ON N3L 4E2 (mjwebster@vif.com) 519-442-0544

18-20 Bozeman, MT Fall Fraternal. Bro. Garth Maier (East Texas, TX): "Signs of John's Gospel". Contact Bro. Steve Faver (406) 388-3314, sfaver@unitedagencies.com

19,20 ParisAvenue, OH. Study Weekend

OCTOBER 2009

10-11 Edmonton, AB. Edmonton-Calgary Fraternal. Bro. John Bilello (Ann Arbor, MI): "The Bible Vs. Evolution". Children's classes will be offered. Please contact Bro. Jerome or Sis. Coralie Toronchuk at 780-453-1412 or jeromet@telusplanet.net

17-18 Lompoc Valley, CA. 35th Annual Study Weekend. Lompoc Grande Hall 435 North "G" Street, Lompoc, CA. Study Leaders: Bre. Ron Kidd (ON) and Paul Billington (ON): "Days Of Creation, Confirming Our Faith In God's Word". Please send a \$25.00 registration fee to Ron Stewart, 275 Oakwood Circle, Lompoc, CA 93436. (805) 733-5577. Limited Seating. Please register early.

NOVEMBER 2009

7-8 Victoria, BC Fall study weekend. Bro. Andrew Jackson (North Battleford, SK): "Peter — A Brother Transformed". Contact Bro. Clyde Snobelen andrew@csll.ca

13-15 Brother's Weekend. Organized by the Kitchener-Waterloo Ecclesia, ON

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History

John and Elizabeth Reith



John Reith as he looked in 1877, a few years before his baptism into Christ

Few tragedies are as hard to understand as the death of a vibrant young person. But the hand of God can move in our lives in ways we might not expect or even desire, and it has the power to bring salvation through circumstances like sickness and death that to us might seem senseless. Such was the case in the baptisms of John and Elizabeth Reith, early Ventura County Christadelphians who were brought to see God's truth by the death of an enthusiastic 27-year-old brother named John M. Armstrong.

The story actually begins in Scotland where, at age 18, John Armstrong was baptized in Glasgow on October 3, 1875.¹ Eight years later, Bro. Armstrong emigrated to Santa Barbara because, like many before him, he was hoping the warm Southern California climate would have a positive effect on his failing health.² As he left Edinburgh and steamed to America, Bro. Armstrong would already have been well acquainted with several brothers and sisters living in the Santa Barbara area, particularly Robert Strathearn and Helen Shiells. In fact, Sis. Shiells was John Armstrong's aunt.³

The exact details of what happened after John Armstrong reached Santa Barbara have been lost, but his arrival would result in the baptisms of John and Elizabeth Reith in 1884. Apparently young John Armstrong was quite sick when he arrived in America, for he died the following year. Before his death, Sis. Shiells lovingly cared for her ill nephew, as reported by Sis. E.B. Cornwall over 20 years later in the 1908 *Christadelphian* as she spoke of Sis. Shiells' "large-heartedness to all, especially brethren and sisters, and those of her home country, who came here in search of health, she tenderly nursed, among whom was her nephew, our dearly-loved brother John Armstrong..."

Helen Shiells apparently recruited the help of Elizabeth Reith, a resident of nearby Ojai, California, to help her take care of Bro. Armstrong. Why Elizabeth came to be his nurse is a mystery, but as his own life was ending, Bro. Armstrong brought life to her and her husband John. Robert Strathearn had the following to say about this on the occasion of John and Elizabeth Reith's baptisms: "Sis. Reith was one of those who ministered to the comfort of our beloved brother Armstrong during his illness. He, in return, helped them to the possession of the pearl of great price. He greatly desired their salvation, so you see his labour in coming to this far-off land has not been in vain."⁴