

Christadelphians

BASIC NOTES

IDENTIFYING MARKS

- ◆ Arrange Bible Exhibitions
- ◆ Advertise telephone answering message.
- ◆ Monthly magazine entitled *The Christadelphian*
- ◆ Hold regular meetings concerning Israel and the End Times.

ORIGINS

Englishman, John Thomas joined Alexander Campbell's Church of Christ in USA but left because he felt they were neglecting many Bible doctrines. In 1844, he began a monthly magazine, *The Herald of the Future Age*. Returning to England in 1848 he published his ideas in, *Elpis Israel [The Hope of Israel]*. This work is still revered by many Christadelphians.

Each ecclesia or hall is independent, but the Birmingham Temperance Hall Fellowship was looked to for guidance at a very early age of the movement.

An early convert was Robert Roberts, baptised by Thomas in 1853, at the age of 14. Roberts wrote a series of pamphlets later published as, *Christendom Astray from the Bible*. After Thomas died in 1871, Roberts gradually became regarded as the leader. Roberts changed the title of a magazine he edited to *The Christadelphian*. Now with over 120 volumes it is regarded by many as the official mouthpiece of the organisation. There are also other publications today such as *The Testimony* and *Endeavour*. The latter often presents unorthodox views from the traditional viewpoint and is largely shunned by most Christadelphians.

There are no 'official' statistics available but as an estimate there are probably in Britain around 20,000 members mainly found within the West Midlands area. 50% would be traditional Christadelphians, 30% liberal and 20% are 'on-the-fence'.

MAIN BELIEFS

- Originally, they taught that GOD was a tangible person in whom all the powers of the Universe converge. Today however, they would say that God is a Spirit and has a located existence somewhere in the Universe. Man is incapable of understanding what God is because although located in heaven He is everywhere present by His spirit.
- JESUS CHRIST is not God but a manifestation of God by spirit power. He is described in John 1:1 as a Word and a word has no existence. He did not even receive the title of Christ until His baptism.
- The HOLY SPIRIT is not God but also they teach that he is not a person and that he is not at work in this age.
- THE TRINITY is a pagan doctrine invented in the 4th century.
- Originally, they did not fully believe that Christ bore our sins at Calvary. The idea that Christ took our punishment and paid our debts was seen as demoralising. Today most have moved away from this position but still feel that we need to earn our SALVATION in some way. This would especially mean that you would need an understanding of the Bible, be baptised and keep the commandments. Clearly no Christadelphian can have assurance of salvation as at any time, he or she can lose that hope of resurrection to eternal life on earth.
- Christ's RESURRECTION was a physical one and He has not changed since then.
- When man DIES he is dead and in the grave, unconscious and not knowing anything. Those who do not 'believe on' Jesus will simply cease to exist.
- Those who have believed will be resurrected on the earth with a tangible, incorruptible body that will not waste away or perish. Such ones will be used to preach the truth of God to the nations. During the millennium, only these 'resurrected ones' will be immortal those of the nations could still die but they can come into harmony with

God during the 1,000 years and they will not be destroyed. Those who refuse to accept the truth of God, still alive at the end of the 1,000 years will be destroyed.

- Man has no access to HEAVEN that is God's dwelling place and HELL does not exist.
- The Christadelphians will use the King James Bible but will take verses out of context to make them fit their own beliefs.

MAIN ACTIVITIES

- ◆ The spiritual life of a Christadelphian is based on head knowledge and obedience to the law. For instance, there can be no marriage to anyone outside his or her own system. This along with other breaking of rules can result in disfellowshipping, thus losing any hope of an eternal future. They must not serve in the armed forces, police force or a political party.
- ◆ Christadelphians will normally emphasise the disunities of Christendom but ignore the many splits within their movement. There are many schisms all operating under the banner of the Christadelphians, all claiming to be the only holder of the truth, and yet denying the others. Originally, Christadelphians would teach that they alone could be saved but today many would reluctantly accept that those in other Christian groups could also be saved.
- ◆ Their main forms of outreach would be advertising a telephone Bible Help Line in the local press. They also regularly hold in Town Halls etc., an excellent history of the Bible Exhibition. In both these outreaches, you will not know that they are Christadelphians until you obtain the address or literature at the end.
- ◆ Christadelphians will want to hold public debates with Christians to 'prove' that they hold the correct view of Scripture. You will see these advertised in the local press and libraries especially in the West Midlands area. This highlights the way that they will want to present with great skill their head knowledge of Scripture but unfortunately so often the love, grace and mercy of Christ have not touched their hearts and changed their lives.

COMPARISON CHART

EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANITY	CHRISTADELPHIANS
God the Father is omniscient and all powerful	<i>God is a Spirit who has a located existence somewhere in the Universe. Man cannot understand Him.</i>
Jesus Christ is eternal not created. He is part of the Godhead and is almighty.	<i>Jesus had no existence before he came to earth and is certainly not God. His title of Christ was received only at his baptism.</i>
The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Godhead.	<i>The Holy Spirit is not a person, nor God. He is not at work today at all.</i>
Salvation is a complete finished work that is a free gift - we cannot earn it.	<i>Salvation is not a free gift but needs to be worked for in some way or another. Especially we need to be baptised and keep the commandments.</i>
The Bible is God's unchanging inspired Word.	<i>They accept that the Bible is the inspired Word of God but take passages out of context to prove their doctrines.</i>
Man has an eternal spirit that goes back to God at death.	<i>There is nothing eternal within a man at death he ceases to exist.</i>
Death is both spiritual and literal and Hell is a literal place of eternal destruction away from God	<i>Death means you are in the grave not knowing anything and Hell does not exist.</i>
Christians are promised a resurrection body and are now new creatures in Christ	<i>Resurrection will be for those who have believed in Christ. It will be with a tangible body on the earth.</i>



24 Ormond Road Richmond Surrey TW10 6TH

Tel: 0870 770 3258 Fax: 0870 770 3259

Email: rt@reachouttrust.org

Web: <http://www.reachouttrust.org>