

From Christadelphianism to Christianity

My decision to leave Christadelphianism did not come lightly. It took many years for everything to finally come to a head. I got sucked into this cult when I was a teenager when I didn't know any better, and was involved with them for 33 years of my life. During that course of time, I had made several close friends, and I knew many very nice people, especially from the first ecclesia. I still think about them every single day and I honestly wish I could have a relationship with them, but I can't. So now I'm starting over, and it will take a while before I can make close friends again.

While I was in the cult, the focus was more on academic, heady Bible knowledge, correct theology and study of prophecy, than on holy living or having a personal relationship with Christ. "Wrong" doctrine was reckoned as much a sin as an immoral lifestyle, and in some places was dealt with in the same way. "Status" of certain individuals came through intellectual superiority in absorbing and teaching complicated theological concepts, and often I found it boring to listen to them. I took part in looking up to them in order to fit in. But I could tell they were enjoying the spotlight, there was always this smug smile on their faces, and they seemed to be the most outspoken and opinionated about a lot of things. This was especially evident in Bible Schools, which were held during the summer months. Others, who were judged less intellectual, were generally left out in the cold. I was one of these people, and felt ostracised and could never measure up to the rest of them. It was this way in my second ecclesia more than the first.

A further major problem was too much focus on Christ's return and the Kingdom of the future age as the main content of the Gospel. The Christadelphians as a whole don't believe or accept the Rapture as part of prophecy. And if you don't believe in the concept of the Rapture, then you don't accept the graphic descriptions in the Revelation regarding the Antichrist and the Great Tribulation.

They don't have a clue, they just look down on it with contempt and think it's funny. There was little real understanding of the relevance of Jesus to simple daily living. There was a feeling of dissatisfaction with the religion, leaving some of us feeling defeated in life, and without peace, purpose, or hope. And I saw people I knew and liked drift away, some into a sinful lifestyle. The ecclesia had no Good News to offer this situation, no assurance of salvation, no promise of victory over sin; and no power to make it real. We had no answers for the desperate heart needs of the downtrodden, to whom Jesus turned with compassion, love and power in every opportunity.

There was a definite coldness and rigid legalism in the ecclesias, and a certain phoniness at Bible Schools. I never really enjoyed myself at those events, and decided to stop going to them when I got older. All I had to fall back on was cultic tradition and my own feeble, human efforts. And that won't give a person a prayer of a chance to make it eternally. It's a hopeless situation.

I have heard about many who have simply (and secretly) given up, too afraid or embarrassed to admit it, forced to remain in the system by family and peer group pressures, sitting on the fence not knowing what to do. My church peer group was anything but spiritual. Our most important activities revolved around evangelizing ourselves, over and over through endless conversations and Sunday School classes, that we alone had "THE TRUTH," although we didn't do a whole lot of evangelizing to the outside world.

Everyone else outside of Christadelphianism is a liar, apostate, corrupt, and all the rest. If that's true, then why do so many of these groups all claim the same thing? I always wondered that but never asked the question. The Christadelphian idea of the Gospel was preaching the Land of Canaan for the salvation of sinners, instead of preaching Jesus Christ and Him crucified. They don't believe you can have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ

and walk intimately with Him. That seems to be a foreign concept to them. But I have found it is a biblical one, because once you recognise the Atonement of Jesus as your substitute and accept Him as your personal saviour, the SIN ISSUE between Holy God and Sinful Man has been dealt with. Therefore, you become WASHED IN HIS BLOOD, which paves the way for a personal relationship and to be reconciled to Him. (Rev. 7:14; Romans 3:23-25; Titus 3:4-7) To me, this is a most precious gift, and unfortunately, one that the Christadelphians do not comprehend, though I earnestly wish they did.

In all my years as a Christadelphian, it was all head knowledge and church (cult) tradition. There was rarely, if ever, discussions on or the practice of compassion, forgiveness, love, healing, nurturing, helping, caring, etc.; though there were a few exceptions. That was considered a waste of time for the most part. Some of them seemed to use the Bible as a weapon to combat one another within the ecclesia and of course, those outside. I believe that comes from the “Us against them” Persecution Complex. They think everyone’s out to get them, and are so arrogant to think that only THEY have a monopoly on The Truth in the whole wide world, so they go on the defensive with outsiders.

That’s how it is. I was that way myself when I was a Christadelphian. It’s so typically cultic and I didn’t know any better. But we are instructed to be **gentle** in our dealings with people, and to give a reason for the hope that is in us. (1Pet. 3:15). I could see many of them were full of pride and arrogance, having no tolerance or compassion for anyone who might be struggling with personal difficulties or confusion over certain issues.

They laughed at and ridiculed outsiders with smug self-righteousness. There was no love or warmth, unless you were a member of a certain “class” or a family. Most of the ecclesia meetings are fairly small, and they mainly comprise of a few family clans and a few stragglers who didn’t fall into any of these categories. The majority of Christadelphians are born into it and a few are recruited or come into it through a member. Some marry into Christadelphianism. Almost every ecclesia that I know of has very strict rules concerning marriage.

No one should marry anyone unless he or she is a Christadelphian, and it doesn’t matter how bad or good the person is. I experienced this in my own life. In fact, my in-laws hated me simply because I was from an ecclesia they had a falling out with decades earlier! They refused to come to the wedding for that reason. The rule is, you must marry someone within your own cultic system no matter what; and anyone else is considered an outsider, an unbeliever, an alien to be treated with cynicism and suspicion.

Depending on the individual ecclesia, it may take YEARS before a person is accepted by the group, and they are never really accepted until the person relents or is indoctrinated and is baptised into the cult. So it makes for a very awkward and difficult situation at times. It is understandable that we should not be unequally yoked with unbelievers, but I believe Christadelphians take it to an extreme and make it a very rigid cultic practice. There is even strife and division in some ecclesias over this, and it’s becoming more of a problem.

What led to the decision to change was a long-time dissatisfaction of the group as a whole, and I knew there was something wrong so I had to find out what it was. I set out to do some investigating into doctrinal issues as well as look into the background of the founder. The Christadelphians couldn’t give me any satisfactory answers to the doctrinal questions I had (I know now it’s because they REALLY DON’T KNOW); and if I dared to ask the wrong questions, I would be pegged and marked as an “apostate” or worse.

The unwritten rule was “you don’t question the way we do things or the doctrines we believe”; if you do then you will be scorned, ridiculed or put on the defensive. I was fed up listening to and witnessing all the garbage about the division that exists between fellowships

as well as the constant gossiping, backstabbing and legalism within the individual ecclesia. I was also tired of the Pharisaical, contemptuous attitudes by some of the members who had dominant, egotistical personalities. It upset me and I felt like a victim (and I probably was), I figured there had to be a better faith than this, so I decided to distance myself from the whole thing and find out what I could on my own.

In the process of my personal research on Christadelphianism, I uncovered very revealing information, not only about the founder but all the doctrinal issues I had questions about for so long. First of all, I read several unfavourable articles about the founder, John Thomas, and about Christadelphians in general. One article in particular was written by an evangelist and journalist who knew him personally. It was a graphic report about his unstable and deceptive character, as well as about Robert Roberts, and was called "The History and Mystery of Christadelphianism". To read the article yourself, you can go to:

<http://www.netcomuk.co.uk/~pdover/histmyst.htm>.

When I read this article, it set off a whole bunch of red flags and alarm bells in my mind. How could I follow a system of beliefs invented by someone who is this deceptive and unreliable? Not to mention hostile, arrogant, combative and uncaring. How in the world could I be insane enough to put my ETERNITY into the hands of a dishonest, crafty person like this? This is a House of Cards! I also read several other articles that were anti-Christadelphian. Another one you can read as an example:
<http://www.caig.org.au/biblebase/christadel-grigg.htm>. **[link is dead]**

When I got to this point, I thought, "I need to look into this further and see what is going on". I was very disturbed by the content of those articles and started to really **question** who and what I was following. My eternity depended on it! That's when I came across a book in the Christian bookstore called, "Encyclopaedia of Cults and New Religions", by Drs. John Ankerberg and John Weldon, 1999, Harvest House Publishers.

I was kind of amazed that a detailed and descriptive write-up on the Christadelphians was included. So I started reading that chapter, and everything reported was completely accurate. It was confirmed in my mind, especially after reading History and Mystery, that this was surely a cult I was involved in for the last 33 years of my life, and I knew right then I HAD to make a change. We know that God condemns **all cults**, and they who practice anything cultic will never inherit the Kingdom of God...no matter how it is couched or repackaged to entice a person.

Many times cults fill various human needs, such as the need to belong; but the truth is, in my findings, cults are nothing but snake oil. So then what do I do now? I read the back section of the book called the Doctrinal Index, and that contains a complete presentation of the orthodox, historic Christian doctrine. What a breath of FRESH AIR! That was the ANSWER to so many questions I had for so long. It was completely different from all the nonsense and half-truth I had been taught to believe and accept as Gospel!

The following Sunday I was watching a program on television called "In Touch" with Dr. Charles Stanley. I was hanging on every word of his sermon, it was a message on salvation that God wanted me to hear. That day I prayed with him to accept Jesus Christ as my personal Lord and Saviour, recognising that I was a sinner in need of salvation and that He died in my place as payment for my sin. I asked Him to forgive me of all my sins and that I would repent and follow Him all the days of my life. I have never been the same since, and now I am a member of a Bible-believing, Evangelical church. Now I am a real disciple. A real servant of Jesus with a definite purpose for my life, instead of a victim of a **heretical and deceptive system**...not because I must of my own righteousness work for my salvation, but because of His Grace that He showed to me and His Grace ALONE.

I am extremely grateful for my salvation. People will either see this and understand, or they won't. I hope they do for their eternity's sake. But that's not my problem. I don't follow a dead religion anymore. I now follow the Risen Lord who has a personal interest in every detail of my life, and I have absolutely NO REGRETS for making my decision to change. I have a lot to look forward to. I know that.

For your information, the following list is an outline of my doctrinal beliefs and the supporting Scripture. This is taken from the Articles of Faith of my new church, Bethlehem Church Evangelical Free, Randolph, New Jersey. I believe these doctrines to be the true, historic doctrines of Christ. They are not the doctrines of some deceptive founder who was proud and egotistical, looking for victims.

1. **Article 1: Godhead**

- A. We believe in one God, eternally existing in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. (John 14:8-17,26; John 15:26; Isaiah 9:6; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Isaiah 42:8; Isaiah 45:15; Matt 28:19).

Trinity – One God in Three Persons

- A. The word "trinity" is not found in the Bible, but the concept is there. It is used to define the one true God revealed in the Bible as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God is one in His divine being or constitutional nature, and He exists eternally (Deut. 6:4; James 2:19). The divine essence is not equally divided; it is fully in each manifestation to maintain its unity, as in one in unity. All three are persons, each with a purpose and a ministry.

Trinity-Word Picture

- A. The Father is responsible for bringing men to salvation and for sending the Son and Holy Spirit. The Son is the mediator of salvation (Heb. 7:25; 8:6; 9:15-22) and the propitiation for our sins (1 John 1:7; 2:2; 4:9-10). The Holy Spirit regenerates man's heart for the purpose of eternal life (John 3:5-6).

Article 2: Scripture

- A. We believe the Scriptures, both the Old and New Testaments, are verbally inspired of God, inerrant in the original writings, and the supreme and final authority of faith and life. (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet 1:21; 1 Cor. 2:13).

Article 3: Jesus Christ

- A. We believe that Jesus Christ was begotten by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, and is true God and true man. (Matt 1:18-23; Luke 1:26-35; John 1:1-3; John 1:14; Hebrews 1:1-3; Col. 1:15; 2:9; Phil 2:5-11).

Born of the Holy Spirit Divine conception guarding His undiminished deity. **Virgin Birth** Providing His humanity, guaranteeing His sinless nature (2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 4:15-16) **His Person** "undiminished deity, perfect humanity, united in one person forever" (Ryrie, Charles C., *Basic Theology*, Wheaton, IL; Victor Books, 1986).

- A. Philippians 2:6-9 – A view of both natures
B. *Incarnatio* (Latin) – Being or taking flesh (John 1:14; Phil. 2:6-7; 1 John 3:5-8; Heb. 4:14-16; Rom. 6:7-12).
C. Humanity – felt pain, suffered, got tired, wept (John 11:35; 19:1-6, 28-30)
D. John 17 – Divine and human natures retained now in heaven (John 20:1-9; Acts 1:9-11)
E. Prophet, Priest, and King – Acts 3:22-24; John 4:44, 8:26; Heb. 5:1-7; 7:1-3; Isaiah 9:7; Luke 1:32-33; Matt. 2:2; 27:11
F. Hypostatic Union – Term used to describe Christ's two natures, which are separate and distinct.

Article 4: Man and Sin

- A. We believe that man was created in the image of God, that he sinned, incurring not only physical death, but also spiritual death (which is separation from God); and that all are sinners in thought, word and deed. (Gen. 1:27; Eph. 2:1,5; Romans 5:12; Romans 3:23).
B. Created in the Image of God – Character and Capacity
i. Heart – Emotional
ii. Mind – Intellectual
iii. Will – Volitional
iv. *Tselem* and *demuth* (Hebrew, Gen. 1:26-27; 5:3) – Imply unique reflection of God, possessing life, morality, intelligence, will, holiness, and the character of God (communicable attributes).
v. *Eikon* (Greek, 1 Cor. 11:7) and *homoiosis* (Greek, James 3:9) – reflection and likeness.

- C. Fell in Sin
 - i. Transgression of the Law
 - ii. “Anything contrary to the character of God” (Ryrie) – this definition is all-inclusive.
- D. Sin Nature
 - i. Personal capacity to do all things, good or bad, none of which commends us to God.
- E. Depravity
 - i. The inability of man to act in such a way as to merit favour from God. (Ps. 103; Eph. 2:1; Rom. 3:23; Prov. 14:12)

Article 5: Salvation: Justification

- A. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures, as a representative and substitutionary sacrifice that we might be justified by His blood.” (1 Cor 15:3; 1 Tim 1:15; 2 Cor 5:21; Romans 5:8,9).
- B. Definition
 - i. The divine act in which God declares a believing sinner to be righteous because of the work of Christ at Calvary.
- C. Christ Died for Our Sins
 - i. Sinless for the sinful (2 Cor. 5:17)
 - ii. In our place (substitutionary)
 - iii. To satisfy God’s justice – satisfaction of the wrath of God through the atoning sacrifice and blood of Jesus Christ (1 Jn. 2:2; Rom. 3:25; Heb. 2:17; 1 Jn 4:10).
- D. Propitiation = Satisfaction of the wrath of God through the atoning sacrifice and blood of Jesus Christ. (1 Jn. 2:2; Rom. 3:25; Heb 2:17; 1 Jn. 4:10). His death is the payment for **our wrongdoing before God** (Heb. 9:15-16).
- E. Reconciliation = The result of the work of Christ and His atoning sacrifice, by which our relationship with God is restored. We no longer are separated from our Creator by sin and death (Rom 5:10; Matt. 5:44; 2 Cor. 5:17-20), when we place our trust in Christ.
- F. Calvary’s Cross: The Only Effective Means of Payment

Article 6: Salvation: Regeneration (New Birth)

- A. We believe that all who receive by faith the Lord Jesus Christ are born again of the Holy Spirit, and thereby become the children of God. (John 1:12,13; 1 Pet. 1:23; Romans 8:14).
- B. **Definition**
 - ii. The change of our moral and spiritual nature by the work of the Holy Spirit. The divine work through the Holy Spirit that brings new life to the sinner.
- C. **By Faith** – Romans 10:9-10; Titus 3:5; 1 Cor. 6:11
 - iii. Believe
 - iv. Receive
- D. **Through the Spirit** – John 3:3-7
- E. **Adoption into the Family** – New name, new family, new life, new nature, new home, new responsibilities (2 Cor. 5:17; 1 Jn 2:29; Eph. 1:1-14; John 1:12).

Article 7: Salvation: Sanctification

- A. We believe that salvation is **entirely and only by grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ**, that no works of any description can in any degree contribute to our salvation; but, on the other hand, that good works are expected of those who have been born again. (Eph. 2:8-10; Titus 3: 5-8.)
- B. **Definition** – That process by which we are set apart to God and made Christlike through our continuous pursuit of holiness and purity. (1 Thess. 3:12-13; 4: 3-5; 5:23-24; 2 Cor. 3:18; 2 Cor. 7:1).
- C. **Grace** – the application of the work of Calvary to the believing sinner.
- D. **Works** – the response of gratitude from the life of the redeemed. (Eph. 2:10; Jas 2:14-18)
- E. **Sanctification**
 - i. Positional – where we are in Christ (Saints)
 - ii. Progressive – How it happens (continued obedience to Christ)
 - iii. Ultimate – The final result (glorification with Christ)
- F. **Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:1,16)**
- G. “The whole of life beyond surrender is an aspiration to unbroken communion with God” (Oswald Chambers, *My Utmost for His Highest*, New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1935, p. 257).
- H. “Holiness...consists of that internal change or renovation of our souls whereby our minds, affections, and wills are brought into harmony with God”, (A.W. Pink, *The Doctrine of Salvation*, Swengel, Pennsylvania; Bible Truth Depot, 1955, p. 25).

- I. Added comment: you cannot effectively live the Christian life without the counsel, teaching, guidance, conviction, and help of the Holy Spirit. (John 14:26; John 16:13; Matt 3:11; Acts 8:15; 9:17; 1 Cor. 12:13; Luke 11:13)

Article 8: Assurance

- A. We believe that all who have been saved are kept by God's power and are thus secure in Christ forever. We further believe it is the privilege of believers to rejoice in the assurance of their salvation through the testimony of God's Word, which, however, clearly forbids the use of Christian liberty as an occasion to the flesh. (John 6:37-40; John 10:27-30; Romans 8:1,38-39; 1 Cor. 1:4-9; Heb. 6:17-20; 1 Pet. 1:5; Romans 13:13-14; Gal. 5:13; Titus 2:11-15).
- B. **Salvation a Certainty**
- i. Phil 1:6 – He who began a good work
 - ii. John 10:27-30
 - iii. “It is finished” – John 19:30
 - iv. “Once for all” – Romans 6:10; Heb. 7:27; 9:12, 26; 10:2,10; 1 Pet 3:18
- C. **Security**
- i. Not based on anything (Eph. 2:8-9)
 - ii. Phil. 2:13 – “for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.”
 - iii. Titus 3:5 – not my works, but His mercy.
- D. **Liberty, Not License** – 1 Cor. 3:1-4; Eph. 4:24-5:1; Gal. 5:18; Phil. 2:12-13
- i. **All to His glory**
 - ii. **Accountable to His review** – 2 Cor. 5:10; Romans 13:13-14; 1 Cor. 10:30-31; 11:1

Article 9: Resurrection of Christ

- A. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ rose from the dead in the body in which He was crucified, that He ascended into heaven, and that He lives in heaven today in the same body in which He rose from the grave.” (1 Cor. 15:1-8; 12:20; 30-32; 54-58; Luke 24:30-46; John 11:25-26; 20:19,20; Acts 1:9).
- B. Acts 1:3a says, “After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive” (NIV). The Greek word translated “convincing proofs” is used in logic to mean “demonstrative proof” and in medical language to mean “demonstrative evidence”. It means “to prove by sure signs”. (See Phil. 3:10-11)
- C. Physical Reality, Not Mystical Event – Bodily; same body now glorified (John 20:19-20)
- D. Eternal in the Heavens – at God's right hand (Heb. 10:12; 12:2b)
- E. Fulfilled Old Testament prophecy (Psalm 16:8-11)
- F. Predicted by Jesus (Mark 8:31; 9:9,31)
- G. Destroyed the hold that Satan had over sin and death (1 Cor. 15:12-24; Col. 2:15)
- H. Confirms Jesus as Lord and Saviour (John 4:25-26; 10:36)
- I. Allowed the Holy Spirit to be sent (Acts 2:32-33; Rom. 8:9-11)
- J. Proof of the coming judgement (Acts 17:31; 10:40-42)

Article 10: His Return

- A. We believe in the personal, imminent, pre-millennial return of the Lord Jesus Christ; first, at the rapture, to catch up unto Himself all believers, both resurrected and those who are alive at His coming, to Heaven; and then, with His saints to establish His millennial Kingdom. We further believe that the Scriptures strongly imply that the rapture will precede the Great Tribulation. (John 14:3; Acts 1:11; 1 Thes. 4:13-18; 1 Thes. 3:13; 1 Thes. 1:10; 1 Thes. 5:9; Jude 14; Rev. 3:10; Titus 2:11-14; Zech. 14:4-11; Daniel 12:1; Matt. 24:21,29-30)
- B. Personal – He will physically come back (Acts 1:11)
- C. Imminent – At any moment (1 Thes. 5). Not dependent on the fulfillment of any event.
- D. Pre-Millennial – Before the millennial rule of Jesus Christ (Rev. 20:1-6)
- E. Pre-Tribulational
- F. Before the Tribulation
- G. Revelation 3:10 – Keep from
- H. 1 Thess. 5:9-11 – encourage one another

Article 11: Rewards and Judgement

- A. *Not for sin – the Cross took care of that!*
- B. *Regarding service, gain or loss*
- C. *Great White Throne – Rev. 20:11-15; John 5:22, 26-29*
- D. *Book of Life*
- E. *Book of Deeds*
- F. *Lake of Fire (Second Death)*
- G. *The books are evidence against unbelievers, revealing their deeds of unrighteousness as well as proof of their unbelief.*

Article 12: Ordinances

- A. *We believe that the Lord has ordained for this period of grace the ordinances of Believer's Baptism by immersion and the Lord's Supper.*" (Matt. 28:19; Acts 8: 36-38; Acts. 18:8; Luke 22:19-20; 1 Cor. 11:23-26).
- B. *Definition - "An outward rite prescribed by Christ to be performed by the church"* (Ryrie).
- C. *Baptism – Matt. 3:15-17; 28:18-20; Romans 6:1-6*
- D. *External declaration of an internal decision*
- E. *Identification or association with a message; ie., the Gospel (Matt. 28:19)*
- F. *Public declaration of faith in Jesus Christ*
- G. *It has nothing to do with salvation. You are only regenerated through Faith in Jesus' blood; not by baptism.*
- H. *Lord's Supper – a memorial of what Christ did to redeem us (1 Cor. 11:23-26; Acts 4:42-47; Heb. 9:28, 10:14*

Article 13: Body of Christ

- A. We believe in the One True Church composed of all who have been born again through faith in Christ Jesus, and only of such; that the church is the body of Christ, all members being united by the Holy Spirit to Him who is the Head, and to each other." (1 Cor. 12:12-13; Matt. 16:18; Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:22-23; Eph. 4:15,16,25)
- B. Universal
- C. Basis: Faith in Christ alone (John 14:6; Eph. 4:4-6)
- D. Energizer: The Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:13)
- E. Unified: Fit together (Eph. 4:15-16)
- F. Local: Its Purpose
- G. To glorify God
- H. To evangelise
- I. To produce holy Christians
- J. To care for its own
- K. To do good in the world
- L. Word Pictures of the Church
- M. Bride of Christ (Eph. 5:22ff)
- N. Body of Christ (Romans 12:4-5; 1 Cor. 12:12-30; Col. 1:18)
- O. *Ecclesia* (assemble or called together) (Eph. 1:22-23; Matt. 16:18)

Conclusion It is my earnest hope and desire that those of you who follow the Christadelphian religion, especially, will see yourselves in my testimony and will have the courage to face the truth to make a change for the better. If you've been sitting on the fence or disenchanted with the whole thing and wondering what to do – take heart, it can be done. Which is better, following some twisted, dead religion that was founded by a deceptive and now-dead man, or following the Living, Eternal Lord of Life based on the Holy Bible ALONE? For me, I will choose to follow the Lord and ONLY Him. No one else cuts it.

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