

The Fair Havens

Included in this issue of "The Fair Havens":

- an exhortation By Bro. A. D. Norris on the Fifth Commandment
- practical advice on assisting your seniors in their home
- ways to strengthen the faith of our elderly members
- the Foundation's terms of reference and guideline for senior accessible ecclesial renovations

HONOURING OUR ELDERS

This issue of "The Fair Havens" will focus on caring for our aged brothers, sisters and loved ones. This often involves sacrifice. It means taking care of another person's needs and not necessarily seeing an end in sight or being rewarded for your efforts. It may mean carving time out of your own limited personal schedule to provide needed care. Over time, you may feel the strain and stress of dealing with the challenges of the elderly. What motivates brothers and sisters to be care givers—to keep on caring? What will keep you from being disheartened and discouraged? What will help you persevere? Love goes a long way towards inspiring and motivating us to care for our elderly, but the key word is honour. In practice, honour is love in action. It testifies to the sincerity of our love. When we seek to honour our parents or other aged members of the ecclesia, God is honoured and care giving becomes a more gratifying experience. When we view our service from the perspective of serving Christ, it places our care giving on an entirely different plane. Paul exhorted us, "Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord" (*Colossians 3:23*).

Honour involves giving great respect and care to our elders—not grudgingly, but out of love for them and their concerns. Service that is done willingly with gentle words and empathy is a great comfort to an elder who may feel miserable. The Biblical mandate is clear; our aging loved ones are not to be ignored or neglected. In fact, Jesus affirms the responsibility of children to honour their parents by not denying service or relief to them (*Matthew 15:3-9*). Instead, we ought to give them a special place in our hearts and lives, treating them with love, gratefulness and deference; for when we honour our parents, and the elderly in our ecclesia, it speaks to our desire to honour our Heavenly Father. As Paul observed in Ephesians 6:1-3, honouring our parents comes with a promise.



Fairhaven House circa 1970s

— by Sis. Celia Sage

"Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honour your father and mother—which is the first commandment with a promise—that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth." This is part of God's plan for how families are to live. It is in our natural family—and by extension, our ecclesial family—that we learn to love, nurture and gain a sense of belonging. Our elders have given us much to be thankful for.

But how are we to fulfill our Biblical mandate to honour elderly loved ones? And what if your elder is not cooperative or grateful for your help? Commitment is required on our part to both our Heavenly Father and to our parents. Finding ways to honour our elders will grow out of our relationships with them and from the way they perceive our love and respect. Honour for some may mean sharing your home and offering financial support. For others, it will mean seeking support services, filling out health forms, and arranging for or providing transportation. For most it can mean sharing family contacts, maintaining their ecclesial interactions and having devotions with frail loved ones. Compassion is called for. Ask yourself, "What is the best way I can care for my elderly loved one?"

Think on These Things

*"Honour Thy Father and
Thy Mother"*

*The Ten Commandments
in the Twentieth Century.*

• *Bro. A.D. Norris (Abridged)*

To give honour to our parents, and to give honour to our God, are closely connected. Each of them involves the acknowledgement of an authority higher than ourselves, which may be the reason why this Commandment, one of only two positively-stated ones in the Ten, is coupled with the promise of blessing to those who keep it. It is called by Paul "the first commandment with promise" (*Ephesians 6:2; Exodus 20:12*). A people whose children are accustomed to honouring their parents will be well prepared to be God-fearing also, and thus to reap His blessings. But breakdown in the authority of either God or parents is likely to lead to dissolution of that of the other, and to that state of anarchy of which our century bears painful witness, which can ultimately only qualify for God's wrath (*Romans 1:30; 2 Timothy 3:2*).

Confining ourselves for the moment to temporal obligations, there is no doubt that the New Testament reaffirms the obligations established in the Old. The Lord Jesus comments caustically on those who made the word of God void by their traditions (*Mark 7:9-13*) by their use of the Qorban provisions to say, in effect, to their parents: "I am in no position to help you in your need, because I have dedicated my property to the service of God, and it is therefore not available to give away" while still continuing to enjoy all the use of it for themselves. This word of the Lord puts honour to one's parents on a much more practical level than mere respect or obedience, and paves the way for Paul's emphatic words, "If any widow have children or grandchildren, let them first ...requite their parents: for this is acceptable in the sight of God...but if any provideth not for his own...he hath denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever" (*1 Timothy 5:4-8*).

In fact, though this concern for one's parents was doubtless intended in the Old Testament too (*as shown by Joseph in Genesis 45:9-11*), it requires the New Testament to bring it out specifically, and make it plain how deep the word 'honour' goes. The same penetration into practical spheres of life is shown in the Lord Jesus' parable of the Two Sons (*Matthew 21:28-32*), where the son who said "I will not!", but afterwards repented and went, is accepted rather than his brother whose words were only lip service and he went not. It is significant that this parable should be used of our relationship to God, the heavenly Father of His children, to show that repentant publicans and harlots are more acceptable in His sight than self-righteous Pharisees.

Parents must be honoured in the Lord when they are fellow-believers; they must not be discarded as unworthy of honour when they are not. With the latter, while the believer has rightly decided that loyalty to parents must not override the duty to obey our Lord, there is a residual duty of honour to those who begat and bore us which must not be disregarded. Just as a believer is expected to obey the laws of his country, save only when they conflict with his duty to Christ, so must children in the faith honour their parents in the flesh, save only where to do so would be disloyal to their new-found Father in heaven.

The kind of counsel which Peter gives to the wives of unbelieving husbands, and Paul to those whose partners taken before the gospel was preached to them, though unbelieving, are willing to dwell with them (*1 Peter 3:1, 1 Corinthians 7:16*), must surely apply in its own sphere to this relationship also. If the unbelieving parent is honoured with all due honour, the likelihood is the greater that he or she may be won by the quiet manner of life of the child.

No doubt under the Law a man ceased to be under the jurisdiction of parents when he left father and mother to cleave to his wife (*Genesis 2:24*), if no sooner. Certainly a woman did so when she entered the home of her husband (*Numbers 30:3-9*). Yet, even so, the independence which that day seals does not permit emancipated children to despise the honoured guardians of their fledgling days.

The Scriptures enjoin an attitude of respect, indeed, towards elders in general which is in scant accord with the practice of our times. Younger people have the duty to "rise up before the hoary head", a duty matched in the New Testament by the command to "rebuke not an elder" (*Leviticus 19:32; 1 Timothy 5:1,19; 1 Peter 5:5*). If such respect is not to be indiscriminate, it is certainly to be present; and if ever it should become the duty of younger believers to differ from those more experienced in the faith (*or in the world*), it should be with regret and reluctance, and not in the spirit of rebellion.

The exhortation is particularly necessary when one sees men speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them (*Acts 20:30*), flattering susceptible youth into feelings of self-importance which respect neither parents nor elders, breaking up and subverting both homes and congregations.

The prime significance of this Commandment in our days is that it reinstates in the believer's life the concept of authority, a willingness to obey; and if ever we are disposed to chafe against being expected to do as we are told, or even as we are exhorted, the final answer to this resentment is to be found in the simple statement relating the Son, the all-powerful Lord Jesus Christ, to His Own Father: "The head of Christ is God" (*1 Corinthians 11:2-3*) observed throughout His life--past, present, and to come--by the One Who gave Himself as our example.

YEAR END FINANCIAL REPORT

Statement of Revenue Expenses And Fund Balance For The Year Ending March 31, 2002

REVENUE

Investment Income	26,248
Grants returned	0
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	26,248

EXPENSES

Grants	29,530
Professional fees	1,425
Administrative	1,074
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	32,029

NET INCOME (Loss)	(5,781)
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OPENING FUND BALANCE	507,829
CLOSING FUND BALANCE	502,048

IS YOUR ECCLESIAL HALL SENIOR ACCESSIBLE?

Managing the stairs at meeting can become increasingly more difficult for our senior members. If your ecclesia owns its own building, you may wish to consider making your hall more 'senior accessible' with the use of an access ramp, chair lift or elevator. To assist you in funding your renovation, the Fairhaven Foundation has adopted a guideline regarding building alterations to improve accessibility for seniors. Grants of 50% of the cost of the renovation up to a maximum of \$10,000 will be considered upon application to the Foundation, subject to annual limits of funds available.

HOW TO ENCOURAGE AND SUPPORT YOUR ELDER'S FAITH

"Those who are planted in the house of the Lord...shall still bear fruit in old age" (*Psalms 92:13-14*).

One area that provides room for continuing growth in the senior years is the spiritual realm. But too often elderly brothers and sisters encounter obstacles to participating in ecclesial life. Some are too feeble to attend meeting or to participate in activities with other believers.

As their friends fall asleep or move away, some may lose their connection with the ecclesia. Failing eyesight can make it hard to read the Bible and loss of hearing can make it hard to understand the exhortations. But like all believers, seniors need the fellowship and encouragement of other believers. Faith that is not nourished stagnates.

What can be done to strengthen an elder's faith? As care givers, we have a special opportunity to demonstrate the love of God. Our sensitivity to our aging loved one's spiritual needs can give comfort and stability in a time of change and uncertainty. Looking up to our elders spiritually can strengthen their sense of self worth. In spite of changes, losses, and chronic health conditions, elderly brothers and sisters can continue to cultivate their relationship with the Father and the Son.

Paul set forth the proper mind set. "Therefore, we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day... For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all" (*2 Corinthians 4:16-17 NIV*).

Ask your aged loved ones how the Lord has been faithful in leading them through life. When did they encounter trials that tested their faith? In what way did God comfort or provide for them and their loved ones? Do your elders have a favourite verse from the Bible that carries special meaning? What is their favourite hymn? Encourage your loved ones to tell their life story-- not only to you but to the next generation as well. This in turn will give those children a sense of connectedness with the past, and encourage them to share in our future hope.

Address practical needs. If poor eyesight keeps your elder from driving to meeting, offer to arrange transportation. Decreasing mental capacities can make Sunday morning an overwhelming or negative experience for some seniors. Research shows that people with dementia may experience too much stimulation from attending religious services. Many people in this situation may find it less stressful to listen to a recorded service.

An ecclesia can learn much from the spiritual maturity, wisdom and humility of older, seasoned believers. In fact older members play a key role in the life of a healthy ecclesia. "Since my youth, O God, you have taught me, and to this day I declare your marvelous deeds. Even when I am old and gray, do not forsake me, O God, till I declare your power to the next generation, your might to all who are to come." (*Psalms 71:17-18 NIV*).

The contribution elderly members can make to the body of Christ is considerable. Their depth of experience and a lifetime of answered prayers can serve as a powerful witness to younger believers. When they say, "Great is Thy Faithfulness" they speak from experience.

Some people are not as extroverted as others, but even quiet individuals might share their faith or personal testimony in the course of conversation. One well placed comment from an elderly believer can have a profound impact on grandchildren or Sunday School students. When seniors are able to give an honest recounting of their life and share their experiences of God's faithfulness, it adds meaning to their own lives and leaves a spiritual legacy for others to follow.

Elderly brothers and sisters, with years of real-world experience and a wealth of wisdom, possess a mature perspective that only comes with age. Seniors have much to offer as counsellors, volunteers and resource persons. If your elder has been serving in the ecclesia in some capacity, encourage them to continue. If elders are too ill or frail, they may be able to serve others through prayer and their steadfast example.

Many older persons including those who are not able to attend meeting regularly find prayer a significant part of their spiritual life. "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." (*James 5:16*) The brethren preaching in the Third World and Eastern Europe would all welcome prayers offered on their behalf.

WHAT CAN OUR ECCLESIAS DO TO HELP OUR ELDERLY MEMBERS?

- The ecclesia can provide a vital role in caring for people who are "shut in" and can't attend the service. Volunteer brethren can provide a memorial service at the elder's home. Older members can be remembered with cards and calls. Young people can plan visits. This not only makes the older people feel special, but it also makes the younger people aware of their presence.
- Transportation issues are often the reason that older members do not attend more frequently. By being offered rides to services and related events, our older members will have more opportunity to participate.
- Many older members who live in their own homes may find simple maintenance a challenge and an increasing expense. By designating one Saturday in the spring and again in the fall, our young people can serve by washing windows, repairing fences, raking leaves and flipping mattresses. Not only would our elderly brothers and sisters be encouraged by the worthwhile service of the younger generation, but the teenagers benefit by doing something helpful for their elders.
- Ecclesial "Caring" or Welfare groups can provide an important connection to elderly members on a regular basis. Telephone networks can insure that elderly members are kept in touch. A simple call to say hello, to ask about any health concerns and to chat a bit can provide our elderly members with a sense of security, knowing someone cared enough to check on them.
- Taped exhortations, ecclesial magazine subscriptions, Christadelphian books and videotapes can all help to supplement our elders' spiritual development. The Bible is available on both audio cassette and CD. This may be a welcome addition, as decreasing vision becomes an issue.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

How can the Fairhaven Christadelphian Charitable Foundation be of assistance to your ecclesia? Are there health and welfare needs in your meeting that require attention, but ecclesial resources are strained or insufficient? The Foundation, operating under the applicable government regulations, may provide grants only to registered charities in Canada. We disperse a certain percentage of our investment income each year, based upon a regulatory formula.

Ecclesias in Canada may request assistance from the Foundation by following these guidelines:

Only requests from Arranging Boards can 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 health and welfare needs of the Christadelphian community will be considered; after that, health and welfare needs of the community at large. 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 then subsequently follow up with a request to the Foundation. The Board of the Foundation will consider requests at its semi-annual meetings in March and September each year. Emergency requests will also be addressed as expediently as possible.

Requests may be sent to:

The Fairhaven Christadelphian Foundation
c/o Sister Penny Keeting, Secretary
728 Church Street, Toronto, ON, M4W 2M6

It is important to appreciate that the primary responsibility to meet the welfare needs of our brothers, sisters and young people lies at the ecclesial level, and consequently the Foundation's role is to supplement rather than supplant this ecclesial responsibility. We encourage ecclesias to be actively aware of situations where there is a need, extend help, and then approach the Foundation as a funding partner.

*The
Fair
Havens*

The Fairhaven Christadelphian
Charitable Foundation
c/o Sister Penny Keeting
Secretary
728 Church Street
Toronto, ON, M4W 2M6

DIRECTORS

Bro. Brent Curry
Bro. Clive Daniel, Treasurer
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Sis. Penny Keeting, Secretary
Sis. Marie Klien
Bro. Ian McPhee
Bro. Tom Thorp

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HELPING YOUR ELDER REMAIN AT HOME

"But if a widow has children or grandchildren, these should learn first of all to put their religion into practice by caring for their own family and so repaying their parents and grandparents for this is pleasing to God" (1 Timothy 5:4 NIV).

Despite the health problems that accompany old age most seniors prefer to grow old at home, where they feel most comfortable. Nothing is quite as devastating to seniors as realizing they are losing their independence. Although nursing homes used to be the option of choice for elderly members, they may not be the most appropriate or the most cost effective for seniors who need less care. In-home and community-based long term care services are becoming more available to help your aging loved ones remain in their own home.

Many older brothers and sisters who own a home face special challenges. As they become older and more frail, they may need help in maintaining and repairing their home, such as installing grab bars in bathrooms or ramps at doorways. They may need rides to their physician or dentist. Some will need help with personal care. They may need hot meals and groceries delivered to their home. These are just a few of the issues which may need to be addressed.

MAKING THE HOME SAFE

With decreased mobility, hearing loss and diminished eyesight, the elderly are going to face potential problems that would not be a concern to most younger people. Oft times some minor changes can make life much easier

- Install ramps over door sills or remove sills altogether for wheelchair accessibility
- Elevate toilet seats
- Replace round faucets and doorknobs with lever action closures
- Install handrails on both sides of stairs or hallways
- Install grab bars in the bathroom by the toilet, bathtub and shower stall
- Equip bathtubs and shower stalls with non-skid mats
- Lower the setting on the hot water heater to 'low' to reduce the chance of scalding
- Install night lights in bedrooms and hallways
- Make sure a telephone and lamp are within reach of the bed

- Remove area rugs and runners that slide. Use rugs with slip resistant backing
- Post emergency phone numbers on or near the phone
- Insure the smoke and CO detectors are working
- Obtain a small fire extinguisher and teach your elder how to use it
- Remove towels from the stove
- Make sure the chimney is clean
- Replace heavy dishes and glasses with lightweight nonbreakable dish ware
- Review personal safety measures—door and window locks, motion activated outdoor lighting, and security system

For more details on how to provide a safe environment, read Elder Design: Designing and Furnishing A Home for Your Later Years by Rosemary Bakker (Penguin Books, 1997).

STAYING CONNECTED

Loneliness can be seriously debilitating for an elderly person, particularly if they live alone. Make a concerted effort to visit regularly. When visits are regular, the elder often relaxes and waits more patiently until the next scheduled visit. Offer to help out with any chores that need doing, or simply sit down to chat. What elderly parents may want from their adult children more than any assistance or advice is close contact. If your family has never been a touching family, see if you can break the pattern. Give your aging loved one a hug when you arrive and when you leave. All of us need the touch of people who love us.

If you live out of town, seek out a brother or sister in your parent's ecclesia who will agree to keep an eye on your parent and give you regular updates. Make contact with the local senior centre or adult day care centre for activities tailored to the elderly. Talk often by phone, send letters, family photos, and give gifts to show your love.

Log on to "www.aarp.org" a web site that provides a wide range of educational resources describing ways elderly people can enhance their ability to continue living independently.