



## Christadelphian Sunday School Union Spring Newsletter 2025

### Editorial:

## Who are your CSSU?

We loved getting feedback after our most recent newsletter about Christadelphian Sunday Schools in different parts of the world. We are pleased you enjoyed our slightly more unusual content and it would be good to think one or two of you might be thinking of sharing these children's experiences with your own Sunday Schools. You might even choose to tell one of the stories as part of opening or closing a session.

This time we'd like to re-acquaint you with the nature and purpose of the Christadelphian Sunday School Union itself and some of the work that is going on.

Although mainly known and used for the production of Sunday School lesson materials for teachers and students, the CSSU also produces regular magazines, publishes books by Christadelphian authors for a young audience and prize materials such as card games.

We also started this newsletter three years ago in order to facilitate more communication between the committee and Sunday Schools - we wanted an easy way to share

*Just as a body, though one, has many parts but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. Now you are the body of Christ and each one of you is a part of it. 1Cor 12:12, 27*

our new developments, but also a platform to share best practice and ideas between Sunday Schools.

We are always looking for stories, so if you've had a great outing, used our materials for a lesson that worked really well or had a completely new idea that you think other teachers might benefit from knowing about, please submit them for future editions!

Read on to learn more about the work of CSSU, and how to help shape its future.

**Ali Bakai & Caz Parsons, Editors**



# Who are the committee and what do they do?

On our first page you will see the lovely smiling faces of the CSSU committee. Below I will introduce each member and explain a bit about their role.

## **Sis Alison Bakai** *Secretary and newsletter co-editor*

Ali keeps us all on track for our regular online committee meetings and records the minutes - an essential but mainly hidden job! She also writes the editorial and collates content for the newsletter with sister Caz.

## **Sis Caz Parsons** *Newsletter co-editor & communications*

Caz collates the newsletter with Ali B, sends out email communications to our subscribers and handles our social media output.

## **Bro Mark Duckworth** *Chair*

Keeps our meetings on track, produces the annual report and represents CSSU externally by liaising with other Christadelphian bodies. He also helps to coordinate overseas supply of magazines.

## **Sis Jennie MacMillan** *Magazines secretary*

Coordinates orders and receives payments for magazines.

## **Sis Elisabeth (Wiz) Launchbury** *Ballot Officer*

Runs election of committee members and ensures ballot is carried out properly.

## **Bro Ali MacDonald** *Design*

Makes everything the CSSU produces look good; produces cover artwork and Newsletter formatting.

## **Sis Christine Walker** *Schools secretary*

Christine communicates with Sunday schools, sends out physical orders and keeps an eye on stock levels so she can order updates and reprinting of materials.

## **Bro Andrew Walker**

Andrew is single handedly responsible for creating and maintaining our current website, keeps track of committee IT requirements and also looks after printing.

## **Bro Ben Willey** *Treasurer*

Ben manages the finances of the Union, which includes preparing financial information for the CSSU trustees, delivering annual accounts to the Charities Commission & chasing unpaid bills!

## **Sis Anna MacDonald**

Helps with proofreading, screening and recording the Annual Teachers' Forum and is a great source of new project ideas, including creating Farsi teaching resources.

We are always looking for fresh faces on the committee

- especially those with experience of producing learning materials, digital communications and design. The commitment is not onerous but essential to keep our contributions relevant for the students of the future.

Alternatively, if you feel able to help on an ad hoc basis for short-term projects such as proof-reading or illustrating new materials, drop us a line about temporary opportunities to support our work.



## What is the CSSU? A look back in time...

It may surprise you to know that it all began back in 1907. At that time apparently, ecclesias made financial contributions based on the number of scholars in their school, and after some rather complex calculations the largest school, Erdington (64 scholars) contributed 7 shillings a year, while Cardiff, with 20 children, contributed 2 shillings and 8 pence!! The number of affiliated schools grew year by year: in 1912 there were 23 in Britain, teaching 640 children, as well as three in Canada and one in what is now known as Guyana, where 70 scholars regularly attended.

In 1933 the syllabus was born; a plan of consecutive lessons covering six years for the Intermediate and Senior age groups, and also a three-year plan for younger children. Formal examinations were held annually and league tables produced!! In 1924, Corby ecclesia (long-since closed), topped the table with an astonishing 96.5% - slightly less surprising when you learn they had only two scholars.

In 2003, regular 'Quiz weeks' replaced the exams, and students everywhere breathed a sigh of relief!

Ever since then there has been a continuous effort to provide the very best lesson materials for our children and young people in a changing and increasingly challenging world, and the CSSU now offers 82 different publications to meet the needs of children from the ages of four to twenty.

All of the lesson materials and some of the other resources are free to download, as well as hard copies to purchase.

*Thanks to brother Andrew Walker for supplying most of this information.*

# What do the CSSU do?

## Lesson materials

You are probably familiar with our teaching notes and student's workbooks, which provide a syllabus that informs and guides the teaching of children from 3 to around 16 years old. These materials are updated on a cyclical basis prior to a new print run and as well as paper copies for purchase, are freely available to download from our website (especially useful at 9pm on a Saturday night!!)

We also stock prize labels and support materials for youth leaders such as Flying Starts with multi-age starter activities, and the The Youth Leader's Handbook - which gives guidance on setting up a Sunday School or CYC from scratch, or running youth events such as Holiday clubs or camps.

## Reading books/prize materials

Some of you may have given our books as prizes or even read them yourselves. We have a wide range such as the long-running Dan's Diary for older primary children, but there have also been more contemporary releases in recent years aimed at teenagers, such as Hannah Hayles's popular series of Old Testament character stories and the comic-style Wonderful Years and Whistle-Stop Gospel.

If you know a child who enjoyed reading these, why not ask them to submit a review to the next newsletter?

We have also produced a couple of card games, Bible Top Trumps and Happy Bible Families (created by the young people of Reading ecclesia), which make great holiday games or stocking fillers.

These and other materials are available from our website and some are stocked by the Christadelphian Office.

## Magazines

We oversee and fund the production of magazines for children mainly in this country but also in some CBM-supported countries too. These began back in 1906 with snappily-titled The Young Folks' Magazine.

We are so grateful to the hard-working editors of all 3 magazines – Anne Botten (My Sunday School Magazine), Claire and Joel Galilee and Phoebe Genders (Bible Explorers) and Becky Lewis and Julie Snowbelen (The Word). They offer age-appropriate articles and activities to cement and augment Sunday School or family spiritual teaching in a fun way.

From our own experience, we are conscious that often children need encouragement to read the magazines and participate in any competitions. Please do try to think of ways to use them in your Sunday Schools so we can all benefit from their varied approaches. If you don't read them yourselves already, you may be pleasantly surprised at the material covered.

Any feedback from you as teachers or from the children about these magazines is always appreciated by CSSU and especially the editors themselves.

## Safeguarding support

An important aspect of our work is in helping ecclesias provide good, up to date safeguarding policies and encouraging brothers and sisters to be DBS checked. Further in the newsletter is a section dedicated to explaining how vital this is.

## Website

Since the original website was set up by Andrew Walker in 1995 it has been an essential access point for most of our resources above; it also holds a library of plays for Sunday School events. Having been managed faithfully by brother Andrew ever since, we have been working for some time to revamp it and ensure it is future-proofed.

Jered Bolton from Bristol Downend has been working on this and the changeover is due to take place very soon, hopefully seamlessly. We trust you will find any differences beneficial but we do of course welcome any feedback from you, positive or negative, so we can make it work well for all of us.

## Newsletter

Over the last 3 years, we have been sending out newsletters like this one, with the aim being to inform teachers about CSSU matters, but also to encourage the sharing of ideas either through this newsletter or directly, or between one Sunday School and another, especially if schools are physically close or if smaller ones could benefit from the support of larger ones. It is this we hope to address in our next Teachers' Forum.

## Teachers Forum

The first CSSU Annual Conference was held in 1921 and became a regular event, providing a valuable opportunity for teachers to learn from each other and to comment on the future direction of CSSU work.

With gradual falling attendance and then the Covid pandemic of 2020 it has been held online as the Teachers' Forum and AGM. Talks are provided aimed at various ages and the discussion time can be a really uplifting way to support each other in the challenges of teaching our young people in the current age.

If you have missed them, all talks from the past 3 years are available as recordings and can be useful for teacher training sessions or personal inspiration! Contact sis Caz if you'd like access to these.

If you have been before, do spread the word and if you have not been able to attend, then why not put 4th October 2025 in your diary - we would love to see you there for the first time!



# News from the CSSU

## New Website!

We are hoping for our new site, to be launched soon, God willing. The current one was built 20 years ago and is showing its age.

Much of the new site should look like the current one, and downloading lessons etc. will be as easy as it is now. But there are some improvements that we hope you will like, which should make life easier for us all.

Registering and logging in will be simpler, and payment will now be taken at the time of ordering, removing the need for paper invoicing. We will continue to provide books free of charge where they are supporting the preaching work of the CBM, and to give discounts in other cases to support our community at large. We have also reintroduced a suggested cost for the magazines which have been free for some years.

Hopefully you will experience an improved service from the new site, but do feed back to us anything good or bad!



## Safeguarding reminder

With the Church of England hierarchy yet again in the news recently regarding safeguarding failures, we thought it was timely to remind our readers of why safeguarding really matters.

### It protects the vulnerable in our community

Protection of those who cannot protect themselves, is a theme which runs through scripture like the lettering in a stick of rock.

Learn to do good, seek justice, rebuke the oppressor, defend the fatherless, plead for the widow...Isaiah 1:17

He will bring justice to the poor of the people; He will save the children of the needy, and will break in pieces the oppressor... Psalm 72:4

### It shows others that we care for the vulnerable

A child protection policy contains a number of measures that show all parents that we will do our best to ensure the safety of their children. Paul advised that those who perform roles in the ecclesia must be well regarded, even by non-members.

They must have a good report of them that are without... 1 Timothy 3v7

### It means we are caring for all the vulnerable as much as we would want to be cared for ourselves

This means applying Christ's principle of doing for others what we would like them to do for us.

So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you... Matthew 7:12

### What should our ecclesia be doing?

- Ensure that we have a child protection and vulnerable adult policy
- Appoint a DSL (designated safeguarding lead) and ensure all members and children know who that person is
- Check the CSN website (Christadelphian Support Network) for latest advice and policy templates on protecting the vulnerable
- Keep reviewing and updating our safeguarding measures

Image from Bibleelements.com

[illegible]

1. Print them, cut them up and insert each into a balloon before blowing it up.
2. Release the balloons around the room
3. Ask the children to catch them, burst them and stick/pin the words onto a board
4. Pick a word at a time, find where it occurs and discuss the context

In our efforts to get to know your needs better, please take a few minutes to complete our Survey of UK Sunday Schools. The results will be revealed and discussed at the Teachers' Forum in October!

A stylized illustration of a laptop screen. The screen is blue and displays a white checklist with three items. The first item is a circle with a blue checkmark inside, followed by a horizontal line. The second and third items are empty circles followed by horizontal lines. The laptop is dark grey.



# We LOVE your contributions!

[www.cssu.org.uk](http://www.cssu.org.uk) [www.facebook.com/CSSU.SundaySchool](https://www.facebook.com/CSSU.SundaySchool) - @christadelphian\_ss

