



Leaving Home

1. Introduction

At the Christadelphian Care Group Annual Conference in October 1992 the theme was *Coping with change*. One of the eleven talks was by Sister Alison Newton on *Coping with the change of leaving home*. It was decided to make a more permanent record of the material available, after expansion and modification, to a wider audience.

The original notes made use of advice and comments from a survey of students and parents. In addition this booklet uses experience gained by Brother Malcolm Cross who was a tutor at the same higher education establishment where Alison had been a student.

Thanks are due to all who have helped in various ways to produce this booklet.

Although the information was primarily compiled for those who leave home for further study, it is hoped that anyone leaving home may find here something useful. Parents too might gain an insight into some of the problems encountered and benefits gained when their loved ones, by God's design, leave the family home.

Your fellow travellers on God's way

Alison Newton

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All Scripture quotations are from the ESV (English Standard Version)

3. What is change?



Times change and we change with them.

LIFE IS ABOUT SURVIVING IN A FRAGILE ENVIRONMENT WHERE THE ONLY CONSTANT THING IS CHANGE.....

CHANGE IS:

- to make or to become different
- to pass from one phase into another
- a fresh start
- it means the end of one thing and the beginning of another.

CHANGE CAN BE GOOD

BUT IT CAN BE BAD

depending on our feelings towards the situation.

We are continually experiencing change in our lives, some of which happens naturally or biologically (such as ageing).

Some changes occur which will cause few problems but others, like choosing a career, can cause conflict and stress.

Our attitude towards the problem is far more important than the problem itself. The key to a successful transition from one situation to another is in how we manage the process. Some view problems as “opportunities for solutions”.

4. How we react to change

People respond in different ways to the process of change. Their responses range from the

VERY NEGATIVE to the VERY POSITIVE

Some questions they will ask are:



One of the negative results of change will be in the various levels of stress that people go through, but positive results can be achieved with careful thought and action.

5. Leaving home expectations

PAST STUDENTS

- Expected others to cope with it better

- Expected to feel lonely and isolated
- Expected to further one's education, broaden horizons
- Expected to control own life, gain independence, become self-sufficient
- Expected to enjoy it
- Expected to find a quality of life that is varied, richer
- Wanted to be an excellent student (better than brothers or sisters)
- Wanted a sense of identity (not son or daughter of Brother X or Sister Y)
- Expected God to stand by; to become more involved in ecclesial life...
- Expected it to lead to baptism?

PARENTS

- Didn't know what to expect!
- Expected the new ecclesia to help and support and keep in contact with them (disappointed when they didn't)
- Expected to hear from their ADULT son/daughter regularly



6. Benefits of leaving home

- Independence - having to stand on your own feet
- You are in control of your life; you make all the decisions?
- More able to cope with yourself

- Develop an identity; the right to be who you want to be
- Learn to cope with all sorts of people (and their problems)?
- Develop a confidence you never knew you had
- Reflect on your family, revaluing them from a different perspective: perhaps with more appreciation and recognition of how much they mean to you.
- Begin to develop a new relationship with your parents, more like your best friends rather than parents
- Make lots of new friends
- Broaden your horizons
- Discover GOD /TRUTH /BIBLE for the first time
- Exciting /invigorating /educational
- Faith is tested - it needs to be in order for it to be strengthened
- Find out that surviving in the world is not as difficult as it seems, when God is on your side
- Fresh start.... new direction, new friends, new commitments

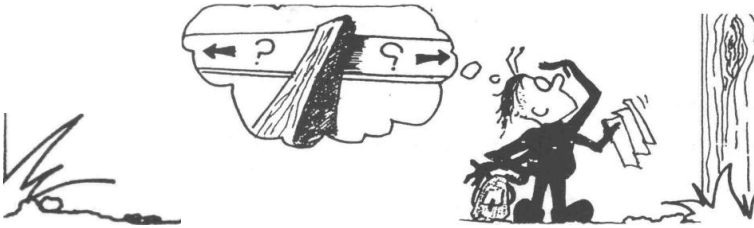
7. Personal emotions experienced

For some the stress they experienced was too painful to write down, but the responses we have received from some young people who have left home, and also from their parents, revealed the following feelings at various times:

PAST STUDENTS

- Totally deflated and inadequate, as if I have been cut off from the world through no fault of my own

- Loneliness; never felt this alone before or so insecure
- Low spirited (feeling 'down'), very small, very inadequate



- Lacking in confidence. Everyone around me is better or more secure than me and can cope better (or so it seems!)
- Intimidated
- A real testing time
- Sense of fear for being totally responsible for my own life. No one to blame anymore - not even the cat!
- Frustrated with the harshness, sordidness and un-Christian attitudes of the real world.

BUT FOR MANY

- The realisation for the first time that God's Way is the only solution to the desperate problems of the real world - therefore rejoice!

PARENTS

- Feeling of loss
- Miss their company, their friends; the house seems empty and quiet
- No involvement in their lives any more; a real letting go; loss of control; feel as if lost an arm and a leg
- Feeling of rejection, redundancy, emptiness; not important any

more

- Feeling of jealousy when someone else takes over their role of comfort/advice/help
- Concern about effect it will have on their brothers and sisters in the family.
- Feelings of helplessness at not being there to help when needed

TO HELP COPE.....

- Pray daily for your family



- Get involved with the activities of other young people. Invite students round to your home - great mutual benefit
- Re-establish your marriage. Do all those things together that you always promised yourselves but never had time for when the children were around -
- Keep contact regularly (once a week?) by letter, phone, email and text (but not every day!)

8. Effect on spiritual life

GREAT BENEFITS

- You see God's hand in your life
- Learn to TRUST GOD - TOTAL DEPENDENCY
- A chance to establish your beliefs right from the start with new

colleagues

- A new challenge
- Respect for who you are and what you stand for
- Perspective on the world changes
- Exposure to certain new aspects of life makes you realise men and women in Scripture have 'been there and done that' before you; then it gives you God's comments and alternatives
- If you establish initially the fact that you are a Christian, it can be spiritually exciting as long as you pray for confidence and allow GOD to work through you
- Your faith can be challenged at any time and it is to your advantage to search out the answers, in principle and in practice; it develops character
- You find a new SPIRITUAL FAMILY in the ecclesia and a sense of worldwide fellowship which is very exciting
- There is an opportunity to be involved in your new ecclesia, whether you are in Christ or not
- They don't know your warts and wrinkles!
- They don't see you as a "chip off the old block"!

SOME PROBLEMS

- Students like to stick together and student life is very alluring; if you don't mix with people initially then you don't make any friends. This may be a big problem in a city where there is not a large youth group or some young people of similar age and wavelength.
- If there is too much pressure from the ecclesia at the beginning for an unbaptised person, then it may cause them to give up contact.

- Students' views are generally liberal, often because they are expected to be
- Sports and societies often operate on a Sunday and therefore conflict with ecclesial events
- You meet challenges from other Christian students; your commitment to God's Way may come into question: eg the pull of very emotional worship, the promise of an instant power source to redirect your life, all this often backed by a good knowledge of the New Testament.

9. Practical problems

FINANCE A nightmare!?

- Government Loans and the cost of term fees will mean that the further you progress with studies the more in debt you can become.
- Student loans, debit cards, credit cards and cheap overdrafts are actively encouraged by all Banks and easily available leading to a possibility of uncontrolled debt. Banks are *wolves in sheep's clothing*. They are not your friends.
- Debt can be unavoidable for even the most careful/prudent student
- There are now no housing benefits/student benefits and it is becoming increasingly difficult to get student holiday jobs. Once accommodation has been paid for, there is little left for living!
- Parents can help here by easing the burden, but still allowing a sense of responsibility and not encouraging extravagance in your lifestyle

- Some helpful hints on budgeting are invaluable. However do try to give (cheerfully) to those in need regularly. The blessings from God greatly exceed all our contributions. "Give someone a fish and you feed him for a day; teach someone to fish and you feed them for a lifetime".

A comprehensive financial planner is included in section 15.

ACCOMMODATION

Having suitable house mates can help to make or break you, both in a physical and spiritual sense.

You can go into:

- Halls
- A student house

In either of these you can have a measure of isolation from other students, but it is possible to be drawn into a social group which takes you away from God. There is strong peer group pressure to conform to student standards. You know mud is dirty without rolling in it!

- You can live with a suitable brother and/or sister

This is very often cheaper and you get peace and quiet to do your work. (NB. Boundaries are best defined at the beginning of your stay.) The special bonds of fellowship can be very helpful indeed; this can also apply if you share a house with student brothers or sisters. It can open your eyes to the fact that all brethren and sisters face similar everyday problems to yours.

10. Lessons to be learned

- Learn to accept the change
- Learn that student life isn't all it's made out to be. The grass is NOT often greener over the fence; it is usually muddy brown!
- Learn that in life things don't often run smoothly nor to plan, and that in this situation it is better to face up to it (with prayer!) than to "run home" immediately.
- To say, "I am GOD's son/daughter now" is to transfer parenthood from your parents to God our Father

'The effective prayer of a righteous person has great power'
(James 5 v 16)

'I can do all things through him who strengthens me! (Phil 4 v 13)

- Learn to rely on God; discover His love and care
- Learn how important family really are (spiritual and natural)
- Learn how to cope with people, eg how NOT to be taken advantage of in your naïveté
- Learn never to longingly compare your old situation with the new one
- Freedom is the right to choose: saying "NO" is just as important as "YES" (remind colleagues of this if they try to pressure you to join in something that is not wise: don't they believe in freedom?)
- The abused body always "hits back" later.

"Bad company ruins good morals" (I Corinth 15 v 33)

- "The more selfish you are, the less happy you are"
- Daily spiritual food from God's Word is essential as is sustaining

yourself physically with wholesome food.

- Think positively; any trials experienced may be for character development

11. Advice from past students to those leaving home

- Do pray very hard about the decision
- Do pray about your choice of a new spiritual home
- Do be "wise as serpents: innocent as doves" (Mat 10 v 16)
- Do use the ALS Diary to make new contacts
- Use something like Facebook to keep in touch with your old friends
- Be aware of the dangers of "losing yourself" internet surfing or computer gaming. It can be so easy to be tempted to surf pornography. This is addictive. If you are there get help.
- NEVER leave home on bad terms, especially with parents, because it makes it very hard to go back when sometimes you desperately want to!
- Do pray about whatever is on your mind, everything that is causing you concern, ie Phil 4 v 6 - and the result? See verse 7!
- Do put your complete trust in God (Heb 11 v 6)
- Do take great care not to become selfish as you spend much more time on your own. Always think of others. In everything

"Whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them"
(Matt 7 v 12)

- Do keep in touch with those you leave behind; they are keen to know how you are getting on
- Do pray to God; it will help to remove any nervousness so that you

will be able to meet new people and make new friends more easily.

"Be strong and of good courage" (Josh 1 v 9)

- Do get in touch with any Christadelphian contacts you have; their prayers are essential and also extremely strengthening. The fellowship you can enjoy with them will be a source of comfort in difficult times as well as when things are going well.
- Don't pin all your hopes on getting away from home. Be prepared to make a go of things even if they don't work out the first time. Don't run back home at the first few obstacles - and there will be quite a few.
- Do make time to read God's Word each day. It is a continuous source of strength and guidance. "The mind grows on what it feeds on"
- Don't burn all your boats (ie, don't cut yourself off from the body of Christ - the believers)
- Don't be influenced by 'worldly' standards - you have to be in the world, but not to follow its selfish aims, eg HAVE FAITH: INFLUENCE OTHERS IN GOD'S WAY.
- Don't get into too much debt; discuss the problem with your parents and/or an experienced brother or sister BEFORE it begins to get out of hand.
- Be aware of the effect of feelings of guilt that we all experience when expectations are high. God's grace is not just adequate or sufficient - but abounding towards us.
- Do make the most of the experience to grow into a REAL man or woman in Christ.

12. The role of the Ecclesia

The Christadelphian community is known for its very special loving bond between brethren and sisters. Many young people have said that the fellowship offered has 'kept them going' when they have felt lonely and homesick. Often their loss of security and 'home comforts' is substituted by the new ecclesial family.

THE BODY OF CHRIST

- Thought and prayer for young people
- Eyes that spot problems
- Ears to listen to problems of young people -really listen with understanding
- Words of comfort and of wisdom
- Open loving arms - (hugs are helpful)
- Hearts that care in practical ways
- Feed that hungry student!
- Offer transport to meetings -help students' feet to continue on right paths
- Guide students' feet in the way of life by wise example



SOME POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Make sure the ecclesia welcomes young people, both baptised AND unbaptised (If they have made the effort to make contact, everything should be done to give them an open door)
- Make sure a couple (or more than one couple) in the ecclesia is assigned to look after the young people, involving others as much as possible

- Make sure there is an ever open door for young people should they need to chat, discuss problems or just need a break
- Make sure they are looked after - not only on Sundays!
- Make sure there is a non-judgmental approach towards them, especially if they come across as not conforming to the 'Christadelphian image'. Remember that God looks on the heart and not on the outward appearance and a word of criticism may drive them away for ever.

"I went to the local Bible Class straight from lectures without time to change as there was a long bus journey. The first word to me as I entered the hall for the first time was that I should not be wearing trousers. I never went to a Christadelphian meeting again!"

IN DOING THE ABOVE ALSO REMEMBER...

Is your life governed by rules or principles?

Christ did not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. (Luke 5v32)

The overseer of the church must be hospitable... (I Tim 3v2)

Do good to everyone especially to those who are of the household of faith. (Gal 6v10)

If anyone does not provide for his relatives...he is worse than an unbeliever (I Tim 5v8)

If one of you says to him, "Go in peace be warmed and filled without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? (James 2v16)

Paul said that his aim was "to know Christ and the power of His resurrection" (Phil 3v10)

MORE USEFUL INFORMATION FROM GOD

"Now the Lord said to Abraham, "Go from your country, your kindred and your father's house and go to the land that I will show you..... and I will bless you"

Genesis chapter 12 v 1

Proverbs, especially chapters 3 and 4 (and 5, 6 and 7 for young men!)

"Remember also your creator in the days of your youth before the evil days come....."

Ecclesiastes chapter 12

Psalms (in times of stress and distress as well as joy and rejoicing)

"Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body"

I Corinthians chapter 6 v 18

"Let no one despise you for your youth but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity."

I Timothy chapter 4 v 12

"And we know that for those who love God, all things work together for the good for those who have been called according to His purpose"

Romans chapter 8 v 28

"No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.

1 Cor 10:13

FINALLY....

"Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things will be added to you"

Matthew chapter 6 v 33

13. Some helpful rules for reducing stress

- Get your priorities right - sort out what really matters in your life
- Plan ahead and try to anticipate how to get round difficulties
- Share your worries with family or friends whenever possible
- Stay sober; 'drowning your sorrows' will not help you!
- Seek information, help and advice early, even though it takes an effort
- Try to develop a social network or circle of friends
- Make time for hobbies and interests
- Eat good wholesome food
- Lead a regular life-style
- Give yourself treats and rewards for positive actions, attitudes and thoughts
- Don't regard difficulties as personal failings or failures; they are challenges to improve your ingenuity and stamina

- Don't be too hard on yourself - try to keep things in proportion
- Get to know yourself better - improve your defences and strengthen your weak points
- Don't bottle things up or sit all night brooding - think realistically about problems and decide to take some appropriate action; if necessary distract yourself in some pleasant way.
- Don't be reluctant to seek medical help if you are worried about your health.
- Remember that there are many people who have faced similar circumstances and have dealt with them successfully, with or without the help of others.
- There are always people who are willing and able to help, whatever the problem - don't be unwilling to benefit from their experience, eg the Christadelphian Support Network (Care Group) or the Samaritans
- Do have some fun!
- Humour is a good antidote to difficult situations!
- Not only is it important to be understood: it is just as important not to be misunderstood!



- Don't over-commit yourself - learn to say "NO" .
- Do have faith in God, yourself and others.
- Do take one day a week to relax away from work (meeting with

brothers and sisters is part of this)

- Do have at least one relaxing holiday each year - it doesn't have to be expensive. Campaigns can offer an inexpensive holiday working for the Lord.
- Do offer support to others
- Do remember the good things that happen each day - count your many blessings.
- Do take a few moments to look at the world around you, especially creation.
- Do be prepared to be flexible, to change and to adapt
- Exercise regularly.
- "Keep your face to the sun (SON) and the shadows will fall behind you.

14. Further Sources of Information

- Accommodation Officers at all colleges and universities offer a wide range of information.
- Student Unions at all colleges and universities offer a wide variety of help for those with problems, eg 'niteline'.
- 'Moving into Isolation' by Eric Taunton – a booklet produced by the Christadelphian Isolation League.
- 'The Gospel and Sex' by Dr John Allfree and Harry Tennant - a booklet in the series 'Living the Christian Gospel' from the Christadelphian Office.
- "Sex and the Bible Believer" available from Chrusian Press 16 St David's Drive, Quinton, Birmingham B32 1QS or from CSN website
- 'Modern Medicine and the Bible' by Dr Alan Fowler from High View,

Litchard Rise, Bridgend, CF31 1QJ

- "The Bible and Medicine" by Dr John Hellowell. A booklet available from the ALS, Freepost MID 30912 Birmingham B27 6BR.
- "Way Ahead". A family magazine that deals with issues relevant to our society available from Paul and Faith Boyd, 17 Rushfield Road, WARE. Herts, SG12 7JH
- "Faith Alive", a magazine for young people from the Christadelphian Office.
- The Christadelphian Support Network National (previously known as the Care Group). Phone Help Line **0845 11 300 72** and Email help@chsn.org.uk. Booklets available on subjects such as Bereavement, Dealing with Depression, The Perils of Drug and Alcohol Abuse. See web site www.chsn.org.uk

15. Financial Planner

For general use and not just for students! We suggest you work out your total income and expenses to either a monthly or weekly basis. If your outgoings exceed your income seek help from your family or brothers and sisters who can help you budget. Avoid the use of credit cards.

Expenses	Weekly/Monthly
Regular Bills:	
Council Tax	
Electricity	
Gas	
Rent/Mortgage Payments	
Water Rates	
Telephone	
TV Licence	
Other rental	
House insurance	
Motor Insurance	
Bank Charges	
Service Charges	
Interest Paid	
Cash Withdrawals	
Clothing	
Charity Donations and Gifts	
Education	
Books	
Fees	
Food and groceries	
Dining Out	
Subscriptions	

Holidays	
Accommodation	
Travel	
Leisure	
Loans Repayments	
Credit Card	
Hire Purchase	
Travel Expenses	
Car Maintenance	
Petrol	
Rail/Bus fares	
Miscellaneous	
Total	
Income	
Wages and Salary net of tax	
Overtime Bonus and Commission	
Other Income	
Income support	
Unemployment Benefit	
Investment Income	
Total	
Surplus/Over spend?	

DEBTS	
Mortgage	
Student Loans	
Bank Loans	
Bank Overdraft	
Loans from others	
Credit Cards	

