

new **Horizons**

Vol 23 No 5

September/October 2019

addressing the important issues for today and tomorrow



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CGOM

Churches Of God Outreach Ministries

With around two thousand Christian denominations vying for your attention, it's easy to miss the important issues of life and religion. It's our hope that through *New Horizons* our readers will come to understand the true meaning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The Gospel was proclaimed by Jesus and by his apostles in terms clear to those who have 'ears to hear' - and recorded for us in the Scriptures. Over the centuries that truth has been buried, dug up, buried again. Our desire is to restore the simple apostolic message. We hope you will be excited by what the Scriptures reveal about life, and the horizons beyond.

Who We Are

The *Churches of God Outreach Ministries* is an international association of independent local assemblies - Christians who meet together for worship, instruction in the faith and fellowship. Each assembly is self-governing according to Bible principles, but co-operates through our Conference with other like-minded assemblies to work towards agreed evangelistic goals.

These goals are within the framework of the commission set for his church by Jesus: "...going, therefore, disciple all nations, baptising them...and teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19-20). He further commanded that we "...Shepherd...[and] feed my sheep".

To these ends we publish Bible-based literature—eg our bi-monthly Newsletter **OUTREACH, NEW HORIZONS** magazine, the **BIBLE BASICS** on-line home study course, and a 32-lesson **STUDY COURSE**.

The *Outreach Ministries* also supports a network of Independent fellowships and scattered brethren.

We cordially invite all independent fellowships of whatever size - and individuals - to associate with us in this worldwide ministry. Our *Statement of Beliefs* and a *Publications Catalogue* is available from any of our addresses or from our web site **www.cgom.org**. We are pleased to offer you, without charge, any of our publications.

New Horizons is published by the *Churches of God Outreach Ministries*, an association of independent churches, to make known the good news of the soon-coming Kingdom of God

It is distributed free on request, being a co-operative voluntary effort financed by the members and friends of the *Churches of God*. We also welcome the financial support of all who benefit from our publications and who wish to labour with us.

If you would like a copy of our *Statement of Beliefs* or a *Publications List* please request it from any of the addresses listed or go to our website: **www.cgom.org**

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new Horizons

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The material universe functions in accord with inexorable law. So, too, the moral universe

Space photography has focused our attention on the awesome beauty of our universe, with its billions of stars and galaxies in fascinating variety and colours. Yet throughout the far reaches of space all are subject to the same physical laws.

Down on Earth the same fundamental laws of physics apply: Relativity, Thermodynamics, Motion, Mass and Energy, Light—a complex tapestry woven in perfect harmony. Even the mysterious Quantum Mechanics is subject to the same physical laws. Scientists bow in awe before these interacting systems. Every technological advance must conform, or failure ensues, to their cost

Living Law

Nor can we forget *life*—all of it subject to law governing our very existence, and all governed by universal laws.

The incredible complexity of a living cell—subject to inexorable chemical law. Our innumerable interactions with the physical world—all subject to law. And not just the laws of physics and chemistry, for mankind, created in the very image of the Creator, is also subject to the *moral* law.

Divine Image

The entire animate creation derives from God and is, too, sub-

ject to the physical laws. Mankind, however, is unique and functions in accord with a raft of *moral* laws—laws as inexorable as the physical.

Unlike the animal creation mankind is created in the very *image* of our Creator (Genesis 1:27). Every aspect of our physical and mental existence was perfectly designed to live harmoniously with God, with self and with neighbour. It could be called ‘the *Law of Love*’. And that’s how it continued—but only for a limited time.

Sin Enters

Our first parents severed their personal face-to-face relationship

Beyond Law

with the Creator, who then provided mankind with a pattern of behaviour that summarized (for unregenerate mankind) the underlying principles of the *Law of Love*. It was later summarized in the ‘Ten Commandments’.

This understanding of a spiritual and moral law of life prevailed universally in some degree since creation. The moral law was passed on from our first

parents to succeeding generations, their substance reflected in the legal codes of nations—traceable through the historical records, notably the Hebrew Scriptures. The *Code of Hammurabi* is an early (c.1750BC—uncertain) written record.

Law of Man

Following Adam’s sin mankind was set on a trajectory of lawlessness and self-destruction. Not many centuries passed before God had to intervene: ‘...*God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually*’ (Genesis 6:5). Mankind was all but wiped out, but one family remaining: ‘...[God] *spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly*’ (II Peter 2:5).

As human clan leaders soon discovered fallen mankind didn’t always live in harmony! Individual leaders devised their own legal systems—some draconian (eg Nimrod)—but all in some degree at their core reflected the original law of life.

It is recorded, for example, that the patriarch Abraham (c.2000BC) ‘...*obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws*’ (Genesis 26:5). A contemporary of his, the Canaanite king of Gerar was appalled that he was in danger of committing adultery with Abraham’s wife and therefore subject to the death penalty

“Egyptian law was based on the central cultural value of *ma’at* (harmony) which had been instituted at the beginning of time by the gods. In order to be at peace with oneself, one’s community, and the gods, all one had to do was live a life of consideration, mindfulness, and balance in accordance with *ma’at*.”

(ch 9:6, 20:6). This act breached the regulations God had placed on sexual relationships. A similar situation arose with both Abraham's grandson and great grandson (Joseph in Egypt). The Scriptures name these breaches of the primeval law as *sin*: '*...how then can I [Joseph] do this great wickedness, and sin against God?*' (Genesis 39:11ff).

When we transgress those laws there are inevitable negative consequences. The integrity of civilisation depends on man's willing submission to them.

The Law of Love

In the beginning, however, man's inner driving force was *love*. His behaviour flowed from 'clean hands and a pure heart', with no need for an external code of law. By his (then) spiritual nature he acted in accord with the divine will.

In response to a question about the Law, Jesus referred to this law of love. He answered him: '*... You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, You shall love your neighbour as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets*' (Matthew 22:37-40).

When God established the tribes of Israel as a nation (c.1500BC) He codified these laws of life, summarized as the Ten Commandments, placing them at the heart of their national Constitution and legal system (Exodus 20). It is a model for all current legislators and far superior to, for example, the Code of Hammurabi. The prophet Moses describes it so: '*...what nation is there so great, that has statutes and judg-*

ments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?' (Deuteronomy 4:8).

The Law of Life, the Ten Commandments and the various derived Statutes and Judgments, are not strictly 'religious', but the practical application of the *Law of Love* for unregenerate and sinful mankind—love for God (the first four commandments) and love for neighbour (the last six).

The empowering by the holy Spirit following our repentance and baptism begins to restore in us that Law of Love. As we actively allow the Spirit to increasingly influence our whole inner being and our behaviour—and as we suppress the 'works of the flesh'—we grow the 'fruit of the Spirit': '*...the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance [self-control]: against such there is no law*' (Galatians 5:22-23).

We won't, of course—in this life—attain to the perfection of our Saviour. But having covenanted our life to Jesus we become, there and then, a child of the Father: '*...now are we the sons of God, and it does not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him*' (1 John 3:2). We seek to emulate the divine characteristics—the Law of Love.

So great salvation is solely by His grace, and no amount of our law-keeping can earn that. As God's sons and daughters we willingly and joyfully are transformed by His Spirit to live in accord with His revealed way of life. Ω

A Pearl of Great Price

It would come as a shock to the recipient of a 'precious stone' only to find that in reality it is jewellers' paste (glass).

Sadly, that's what too many sincere Christians have been given from their church pulpit. The precious truth of real Christianity is found in the Christian Scriptures, the Bible—but it is rarely heard in the catechisms of the various denominations.

Take, for example, the annual round of festivals: the joy of Easter or the glitter and glamour of Christmas or the weekly observance of Sunday. All are close to the heart of every believer. Some would say that failing to embrace these and the other festivals excludes you from the faith.

Search the Scriptures, however, and you will find that these observances are mere 'ground glass', paste, and not the precious jewels you expected.

But God has presented His people with a 'pearl of great price', indeed a string of such pearls. They are clearly presented in the Scriptures, and were observed both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament—in ancient Israel and in the young Church. [see the calendar below for the autumn 2019 dates]. Ω

These festivals are explored in our free literature:

Why Do You Observe Sunday?

God's Holy Days

Tabernacles—mankind in the flesh

available in print or on-line

Festivals 2019

Trumpets	September 30
Atonement	October 9
Tabernacles	October 14-20
Eighth Day	October 21

Are you reaping the many benefits of being an integral part of a local assembly?

When we come to the faith of Jesus Christ it can initially be a little scary. We are a 'new creature'. We are a 'babe' in Christ. And like all new-borns we are hungry—hungry to learn more about him. Hungry to somehow serve him. And hungry for some form of support.

We need to be nurtured in spirit. We need guidance—guidance to steer us to ever deeper understanding. Having cast aside on Jesus our burden of sin and committed to his service we crave to learn what he expects from us. A thousand questions assail us.

What is in store for me, now and eternally? What is my part in this mission for eternity? How should I worship God—has He given guidance? How in the face of hostility from friends and family can I remain faithful? Where can I learn pure doctrine, without charging down the deceitful pathway Jesus warned about? (There are many intent on deception!) And having found the right source [see side-bar] what should you expect?

Expectations

To visit a new congregation for the first time can be intimidating, especially if alone and you don't know anyone. So the right congregation will feel comfortable to you, the welcome warm and sincere—a 'family' environment.

There's a drawback when there are hundreds in attendance. The Bible pattern was for 'house churches'—the brethren meeting in private homes with no more than a dozen. This arrangement, the pattern for most *Outreach* congregations, allows you to have your questions answered and

any fears allayed.

We all face personal challenges, and mature brethren in the assembly can point the way to Bible solutions for them.

A typical assembly will begin a worship service with prayer or the singing of hymns and Psalms (songbooks provided!). It's a tradition for some groups to follow with a session (sometimes two—a short and a longer one) of teaching from the Scriptures by a competent teacher. The service lasts just over an hour, usually. In smaller home assemblies the pattern may be an interactive Bible study.

Outreach

Jesus commissioned his church to herald his message worldwide, and one focus of a local assembly will be a concern to share the precious message with friends and neighbours. As our understanding of Scripture grows any qualms should disappear! Brethren tend to be geographically scattered, so outreach may entail an 'open day' or a similar event for the local community.

Associated *CGOM* groups combine to support a more universal outreach programme, 'to all the world'—through support for the publication of booklets, *New Horizons* magazine etc, and for our church web-site. Qualified volunteers respond to mail generated from the internet, and mail any literature requests.

All brethren are encouraged to diligently pray for these fledgling activities, and as they grow in

Quotations from the Bible in New Horizons are from translations which clearly express the meaning in modern terms

When We Get Together

The Source

We come to faith down a wide variety of routes—from our private studies, from friends and neighbours, from various denominations with whom we may have associated. Christianity may not even be our religious background.

So—'what is truth?' Can't you derive all sorts of teachings from the Christian source book, the Bible? It can indeed be a complicated book, and the right guidance must be sought. Jesus warned there will be deceivers, apparently sincere folk who are themselves deceived, even some intent of syphoning your resources.

Some Bible teachings can be a bit tricky, so it's an idea to study one doctrine that is writ large in Scripture and to compare it with your current belief. I suggest you study the Bible teaching on when we should formally come together for worship, fellowship and instruction.

The *CGOM* booklet *Why Observe Sunday* provides background facts. **Ω**

confidence to participate in the local programme.

Your Part

In this small group environment brethren can better explore, develop and employ—for the benefit of all—the spiritual gifts imparted by the indwelling Spirit just after baptism by immersion.

The 'new creature in Christ', now part of God's Family, by regular attendance imbibes the 'pure milk of the word' to enable them to prepare to stand up—with support—to the world and its many distractions. **Ω**

Children ...*the best vocation*

Parental care for our children is the safeguard of our future

A potential 750,000 members of 'the next generation', in the United Kingdom, are conceived annually—though one in four (185,000 last year) never see the light of day—deliberately destroyed in the womb.

The death of a *desired* new-born, however, is agony for the parents. The infant has been carried for nine months in the mother's womb—a living part of her. Then gone—a perpetual memory. Happily, the vast majority live on, sometimes causing heartbreak but almost always a joy, certainly as a babe. Then what? Let's focus on those live births.

Born With Purpose

Gaze on that new-born 'bundle of joy' and you envisage—*what?* Certainly you picture health and happiness for the infant, success in one field of endeavour or another. A great artist or musician or scientist. Some might even see a future politician!

But what of the precious formative months and years? Which child guru do you follow? Or, is folklore best—the way grandmother recommends? There's a supermarket of ideas of child-rearing out there. Yet every sane new parent knows guidance is necessary; children cannot simply be left to their own devices.

The excitement of watching your child grow is almost unbearable. That first toothless smile. The first crawl, the first mumbling of 'mama' and 'dada' or 'papa', the first stumbling attempt to walk. The aware parent doesn't want to miss those unrepeatable mile-

stones—events often accompanied by joyful parental tears. But those days end, and life marches on.

The Next Generation

The Bible has a curious expression: '*Better the day of one's death than the day of one's birth*'. Few of us achieve much in the first couple of decades of life. It's a time of preparation. It's a time for laying the foundation on which is built your contribution to civilization. You are not remembered - unless by the parent - for being born but for your legacy. Beyond your genetic inheritance you don't, in your early years, contribute much to that foundation. *But your parents do.*

The most important job is not that of the President or the Queen or a brilliant scientist or top military commander. The most important job is to *prepare the next generation.*

In those early years you instil the habits for a lifetime. Why you don't torture the cat or pull the legs off a frog. How to deal with anger and disappointment, and to interact with your peers. What's right, what's wrong (*your values*). What is greed and how to share. When not to interrupt a conversation. Patience. Grooming. Good eating habits. Consideration and respect for others. Self-respect, too. Together with self-discipline and personal responsibility. All essential for a civilized and successful human being who can positively contribute to society. And all must be *taught*—largely by direct parental example.

That, in part, is a road-map for every new-born—and the parents are responsible to instil those fundamental values. The alternative is wild growth—a tree unpruned and grotesquely distorted.

Cuckoo's Nest

It has been said that the best experience, sometimes, is someone else's experience. And there are plenty of horror stories to learn from. Our media highlights the abuse, the neglect, the teen and pre-teen knife and moped gangs, the promiscuity. Talking heads express their abhorrence of feckless parenting. Government imposes law upon law. And then 'respectable parents' hypocritically dump their precious offspring on strangers—and not always from 'economic necessity'.

Birds in general lay their eggs—and then jealously guard their young. Most other creatures follow suit. Yet human infants barely dry from the womb are farmed out for a price. They crawl the nursery floor along with a dozen other squalling infants and toddlers. Staff, often half-trained, are at their wit's end seeking to control the noisy mayhem. Older 'inmates' run wild, learn to swear and spout street talk, add new 'naughtiness' to their own, pick up every snuffle and tummy bug.

Can you be sure that what you are told about the 'high quality of service' is what actually happens when you have left for your workplace? And, above all, that the staff will reflect your personal values? 'Group socialization' has a powerful effect on behaviour—indeed, is considered by some psychologists to be more powerful than either nature or parental influence. Nursery behaviour will tend towards the lowest common denominator.

Increasingly, psychologists emphasise the need for continuity of care. And care that is best provided in the home and jointly by the child's mother *and* father. Many experts believe the increase in childhood dysfunction and mental ill-health arises from deviation from this norm.

In the United Kingdom nearly seventy percent of working women are mothers of younger children. Financial pressures—and, too often, the career ladder—drive many out of the home and into the work place. To keep the bills under control often needs a double wage—especially when that wage is, for both, the minimum. We might ask why that's the case.

A major cause - spell that 'curse' - is the UK Government's appalling ideology of encouraging mothers into work in the name of sexual equality and liberation, and 'helping the economy'. Generous tax-funded financial support for nursery fees is one such measure—driving up public expenditure and necessitating increased taxation. And that's more pressure on the family finances. The need for a second income is understandable. Or, if you are a single parent, the need for an income. (Here, too, we might ask *why* that situation has arisen.)

Concern for your child's well-being should drive a family to exert every effort to care for their children at home—despite the cost in lowered material standards. It's a calamity that Government and society in general undermines what has been the safe and proven human experience from the beginning.

Teach At Home

The foundation principles of life

are laid in the home, and as stated, direct parental example is the key. Sound training is not, of course, a guarantee your child will never trouble you. (Peer pressure is powerful.)

The Creator informed our first parents that the consequence of their sin would be : “...*in sorrow shall you bring forth children*” If, however, you prepare yourself the chance of success increases. Vandalism, anti-social behaviour, week-end wasters, drug taking—and teenage problems—are less likely when these principles have been actively taught and encour-

'the fashionable modernist determination to ignore the importance of motherhood has helped to create emotionally inadequate, bewildered and angry young people who vent their distress in violence and abuse, or slide into depression and self-harm

'Children who have never known genuine unconditional love, who have been brought up in a home without boundaries or discipline, who have no experience of nurturing relationships, who have been psychologically abandoned by their mother since their earliest years, will invariably grow into emotionally broken adults'

Melanie Gill, child psychologist

aged and exemplified in the home. Sadly, in all levels of society they are neglected. Few of us grow up in the perfect home.

Blessed is the mother who can confidently expect her chosen nursery to be as effective in accomplishing these challenges as

well as she personally could. On your way to work, plonk your three-month old baby—and he or she is still a baby—in a nursery. It's not unusual, believe it or not! Will the staff, however skilled and dedicated, duplicate your expertise, your compassion, your capacity to comfort—your maternal instincts? Will they consistently instil those vital spiritual values you desire for your precious child?

What's Most Important

It's possible, of course, that 'financial pressure' is self-imposed. So—a few questions. *Why* do you need extra income? Do your 'basic living costs' include expensive purchases—new car, jewellery and cosmetics, HD television, luxury foreign holidays, keeping up with fashion? Is your home beyond adequate? *Etc.* Are you a shopaholic? Perhaps wrapped up in the 'good life'? The Bible pinpoints excess desire for the material as a cause of poverty: '*You should not covet*'. Greed, avarice, acquisition - they are a curse of our era. But poverty may also be measured in terms of how your child is raised.

Another 'reason' for leaving your child in a nursery is career. *Career* becomes 'the dominant driving force and your personal care for your child is secondary. A sense of guilt is often reported as a mother deposits her child at the nursery—especially the worry if there are possible signs of impending sickness. It's very much '*...you can't serve two masters*'. Which, to you, is most important?

The most important, indeed the best, career of all is that of personally training your own flesh and blood to become a civilized, well-adjusted teen *cont'd p.8*

STUDY THE WORD
Be sure to enroll for our free 32-lesson Study Course. It's a key to what is for many a 'Book of Mystery'

unsigned articles are by the Editor

Christianity 101

what do Christians believe?

Grow In Grace

Convinced that God is real and has a place for us in His Kingdom, we committed to His service through Jesus Christ. *What now?*

Having made this life-time commitment to walk with Christ we are what the apostle Peter calls ‘*a new-born babe in Christ*’ (I Peter 2:2). *And vulnerable.*

Jesus warned his hearers that they were embarked on a difficult journey: ‘*...the gate to life is very narrow. The road that leads there is so hard to follow that only a few people find it*’ (Matthew 7:14).

Don’t Stumble

There are deadly pitfalls. Addressing the crowds who gathered to hear him (Matthew 13), Jesus used the analogy of the farmer sowing seed to highlight several. Some people, he said, are spiritually deaf; they hear his message but it goes over their head, for we live in a world corrupted by demonic forces: ‘*...the god of this age has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, so that they would not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God*’ (II Corinthians 4:4).

Sadly, some—having committed to Christ—stumble over what Jesus calls ‘*the cares of this world*’. It could be opposition from friends or family, or work and financial challenges. Such ‘rocks’ we have to pick our way around.

Grow in Grace

You, however, have turned your life around, been baptized, and now have the gift of the Spirit. You have what it takes to gain eternal life.

But you are a ‘babe’ and you must grow. As a baby desires the nourishment it gets from its mother’s milk so the new Christian seeks what the apostle Peter calls ‘*...the milk of the word*’ (I Peter 2:2).

Elsewhere the apostle urges us to

‘*...grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ*’ (II Peter 3:18). The more we know and understand and emulate the inestimable spiritual qualities of our Saviour the more secure we are in him. To the Colossian Christians Paul writes: ‘*...in whom [Jesus] all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden. I say this in order that no one will deceive you with persuasive speech*’ (ch 2:3-4). There are indeed many intent on deception!

As we immerse ourselves in God’s Word—and interact with it—we are being transformed into his likeness. Peter again: ‘*...as newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that you may grow thereby*’.

Knowledge that Counts

This—an increasing understanding of our riches in Christ—is the essential ‘knowledge’ for which we must strive. However, there are other foundation teachings that cannot be neglected and on which we build faith. In Hebrews we are warned to ‘*...[leave] the principles of the doctrine [logos] of Christ, let us go on unto perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. and this will we do, if God permit*’ (ch 6:1-3).

In other words, these listed foundation teachings are the package we understand and accept by the time we are baptized. They are the *logos*, the underpinning of our faith. When at our baptism we enter into a covenant with Him through Jesus we agree to abide by His guidance as detailed in the Scriptures. We renew the covenant year by year in our observance of the Lord’s Supper.

The depths of the riches available to us in Christ, our knowledge of him, is endless. We must daily grow in this precious grace

Ω

Preventive ‘Medicine’

Better, surely, to prevent a disease than to cure it—even the pharma companies get in on the act with their lucrative vaccines. Indeed the UK government is under pressure to begin mass vaccination of males from twelve to twenty-five for HPV – a major cause of cervical cancer.

Males? No they don’t have a cervix, but the disease is a sexually transmitted one and it is assumed, rightly in the modern world, that young men will be sexually active from a quite young age. Then there’s HIV, another sexually transmitted destructive virus. Homosexual men can now, with medication, be as permissive as usual but without fear of infection.

Godly Guidance

The Christian God promotes prevention. ‘*...It’s good not to touch a woman*’, writes the apostle Paul. But ‘*...marriage is honourable in all*’ it is stated. Faithful life-long marriage is a clear preventative to STDs! And wouldn’t the same advisory end the appalling deaths of 170,000 pre-born children every year in this country, two million worldwide? Also, don’t adopt a homosexual lifestyle, male or female, said the Creator. Financial chaos? ‘*...don’t get into debt*’, He advises. Want to stay out of jail? ‘*...obey the constituted authorities*’ for God has so appointed them. Is alcohol a problem for you? ‘*...be not drunk with wine*’.

It would be sensible also to heed the Creator’s guidance on the kinds of flesh we consume (Leviticus 11, for example). After all, He created them—and us - with purpose.

Prevention trumps all!

Ω

Britain's Glorious Destiny

A leader of nations. A pioneer in health care. Blazing the way in the reconstruction of mankind's habitations. A beacon shining brightly as an example to all nations—in family relations, in ethical business, in care of the environment, in true religion. Renowned worldwide for its unenviable legal system. A bed-rock of world peace among nations. This is Britain's utopian *future*.

A pipe dream? A stretch of the imagination too far? Unattainable? Not so—for this is the future mapped out for our nation by the Creator.

Bleak Future

The current dysfunctional and chaotic state of our UK government doesn't bode well for such a time. The squabbling, the egoism, the scramble for high office by men and women who fail *Government 101*. Where status and self promotion trumps public service. Clearly this is not the way to achieve such high-minded goals.

Having embraced democracy our leaders abandon its basic principles. Their encounter with truth is brief, as manifest by the failure to honour their political manifesto and referendum promises. They are flotsam and jetsam tossed on a sea of indecision. And the nation pays the inevitable price. They may exist comfortably in their 'Westminster bubble'—but their antics cause the public to seethe with anger, to battle with anxiety and depression.

The nation is on a pathway to oblivion. The challenge *isn't* the economy—which is presently fine. It is moral and spiritual. Led by the media, the populace increasingly embraces smut and

violence—an encouragement to society's low life (eg Psalm 12:8). The wrangling over Brexit is confusing. The immediate future is far from rosy and will end in national humiliation at the hands of our enemies—and a descent into chaos. It's unlikely the recent change of Prime Minister will turn the tide.

Glorious Future

Happily, that is not the end. The Scriptures tell us that in the wake of our defeat and coming global dispersal Jesus Christ will return to regather us—his people—from wherever we are scattered. A humbled people will be restored to a position of positive global influence alongside our fellow Israelites and in harmony with our erstwhile enemies. It will fulfill our predicted role as a model nation, a blessing to all.

Such a prophetic scenario (national destruction and restoration), however, can be averted only if we turn our backs on our deeply-entrenched national sin, and return to our Creator. **Ω**

Call ...continued

associated congregations must become a spiritual dynamo driving forward our mission as the church of god.

We have a mission. Each of us has been gifted by the holy Spirit to accomplish a task, and provided with talents necessary to contribute to that mission. If we don't individually use our talents and direct them in the service of our high calling our effectiveness is curtailed. Both locally—each in their area—and together. There's work to be done.

Someone near you is waiting to hear our voice! **Ω**

A Call To Arms

The 'church of God', you may be surprised to hear, was alive and well with the patriarch Abraham over three millennia ago. Paul notes: '*...if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise*' (Galatians 3:29).

Through his 'one seed', Jesus, we are heirs of the Father. The good news message was previewed to Abraham through God's promise that his seed would bless all nations. Down the centuries the faithful have participated in that promise as we become joined to the 'Israel of God'.

In this great ocean of the faithful, the *Outreach Ministries* is but a mere spoonful, having existed as a ministry for just a score or so of years. A scion of a church of God tradition stemming from the mid-nineteenth century, we believe we have much to contribute to our 'siblings' - other churches from the same root. And indeed to others of similar belief.

As goes the saying, '*A journey of a thousand miles begins with a step*', and so far we have put down a marker for the concept of interdependence and co-operation by the various churches of God. That's a pattern first established by the infant church in the first century. In our uncertain times, as then, it is prudent to avoid a visible corporate profile.

CGOM has yet to make an appreciable impact. It's so true that 'old habits die hard' and for us to succeed in our outreach efforts we must first look inwards to our own ranks. An independent congregation—just like a 'corporate church!—tends to 'settle on its heels', to become complacent and cosy, inward-looking and concerned more about appearances than heralding the good news. Each of our *previous column*

Respect!

You wouldn't think that (now proven to be not so wise) *homo sapiens* was created in the very *image* of our Creator. The media, in print and on screen, bears witness to the prevalence of widespread disruptive public behaviour. As of now the general populace—your neighbour, for example—behaves in a reasonably civilised and helpful manner. Increasingly, however, youthful exuberance spirals downward to disrespect.

Town centres on a weekend witness alcohol-fuelled assaults on the emergency services as they battle to maintain order or assist with the drunk or the injured. Young women vie with 'men' in an affront to human dignity. Stand at the school gates as pupils disgorge and you hear an awesome mix of foul-mouthed distortion of our language.

Scale up to the adult world and it's reported that 30% of us no longer trust or respect the police. Respect for the elderly by children, by the 'sandwich generation', by our government is in incredibly short supply. Britain's health and social care services relegate the elderly to the back of the queue. Classroom learning is disrupted by unruly and undisciplined children. And whatever your view of abortion surely the disrespect shown to the unborn—about 170,000 'executions' each year in the UK fuelled by rampant promiscuity and greed—is a national scandal.

In the reverse of its meaning, '*Respect*' has become a watchword by lawless youngsters roaming the streets with machetes Na an armoury of lethal weapons, and sensitive to every perceived wrong glance.

Cause and Effect

Respect is *learned* behaviour. It must be implanted as a life pattern from earliest years and sustained throughout childhood. It begins with potty training! (Teachers are often having to change the nappies of five-year olds.) It can be taught by teaching how to properly use a knife and fork around the home dinner table. It can

be taught by appropriate sanctions for misbehaviour (kicking, insults, swearing etc). It can be taught by disciplining a child to write a 'thank you' note or to tidy their room.

Society Accountable

Clearly, one answer, and an essential answer, to the decline in respect lies largely in the home with the family, with the parents. It lies in inculcating spiritual values from an early age. Nor must we neglect the part played by those on the public stage—parliamentarians, so-called comedien(ne)s, authors, the media; all in a position of influence and who set the pattern especially for the young—all too often the promotion of a godless and crass world-view.

It lies, too, in valuing our origin as a divine creation potentially destined for an eternity of service in harmony with our Creator: '*...Eye has not seen, and ear has not heard, nor has it risen up into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for those that love Him*' (I Corinthians 2:9). We are not the product of blind chance and therefore existing without moral responsibility.

Transformed

As Christians we have been called to be ambassadors of a new way of life '*...Don't be like the people of this world, but let God change the way you think. Then you will know how to do everything that is good and pleasing to him;* (Romans 12:2 CEV).

As we yield to the inner working of the Spirit we are transformed more closely to the likeness of Jesus Christ, and called to be a light in a darkening world.

We are, in other words, selected by the Father to live lives that are in marked contrast to that of the world. We are to be 'holy', separate. We are to respect the divinely-established institutions as an example to all—and especially an example for our own family. **Ω**

Children... from p.5

and a civilized adult. That takes time and patience and self-education. It takes intense focused effort. It takes, for most of us, personal sacrifice, co-operation and a sharing between husband and wife, for both are essential partners in this momentous challenge.

Although it will at times be exhausting, caring for a young child need not be a banal mind-numbing passing of time at home. With proper forethought it can be a rewarding, even exciting, joyful experience - with some tears.

It's the most important career on earth—a vocation—for most parents. And the key to all our futures. **Ω**

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MiniStudy

Sabbath—the day to remember

Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shall you labour, and do all your work; but the seventh day is a sabbath unto the LORD thy God, in it you shall not do any manner of work, you, nor thy son, nor your daughter, nor your man-servant, nor your maid-servant, nor your cattle, nor the stranger that is within your gates; for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested on the seventh day; wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it (Exodus 20:8-11)

Any Bible scholar worth his salt knows that the weekly Sabbath of the Christian Scriptures is not Sunday but Saturday. Even Roman Catholic scholars will agree, though claiming that the Roman Church had—contrary to Scripture—divine authority to change it. So how should we observe this special day, a day appointed at creation for the benefit of all mankind?

- First, the ‘day’ itself is observed from sundown on Friday to sundown Saturday. This is, in Bible terms, the *seventh* day of the week. It is a day that has remained in unbroken sequence since the beginning of time
- Sabbath is a time designated by the Creator as ‘holy’. That is, it is a day to be carefully distinguished from the other six days
- It is a day for physical joy and refreshment. We ‘rest from our labours’, our regular day-to-day business activity. It is well-known that mankind needs this regular recurring pause in our busy schedule. The Sabbath puts our acquisitive lives in perspective
- But Sabbath is especially a time for refreshment of the human spirit. It is a time to burnish our relationship with our heavenly Father and our Saviour through prayer and meditation on His Word. And a time to cement our relationships with our families and our brothers and sisters in Christ. It is also a time to assemble for instruction from competent teachers
- The seventh-day Sabbath is a sign of our covenant, made at our baptism, with our God. It is a perpetual sign given by the LORD at creation, and identifies the people of God—a sign that has defined, and on occasion cost the lives of, obedient saints down the ages
- The *weekly Sabbath* and the *Day of Atonement* were, at their inception, the only holy days designated in Scripture as full ‘Sabbaths’. That is, no secular work not of a humanitarian nature should be done, and chores minimized. The other holy days are also for fellowship, instruction and physical enjoyment. No ‘*servile work*’ (*ie* paid or enforced work) is done. The term ‘*servile*’ is nowhere associated with the weekly Sabbath or the Day of Atonement

In sum, the seventh-day Sabbath, for Christians, is not a burdensome chore but a welcome break from the daily grind, a pause in our daily lives that brings rich reward. It is not a complex system of ‘dos and don’ts’ but a willing personal expression of our submission to our Creator God and our Saviour, and of our liberty in Christ. Each of us is free to observe it within the parameters outlined in the Scriptures

Ω

read:

Delight in the Sabbath
www.cgom.org

read...

Get Ready for Sunday
www.cgom.org

Are you unable to attend Sabbath services in your area?

The following CGOM Associate Churches offer live streaming of their regular Sabbath services!

*Tulsa Church of God, Tulsa, OK — 1:00 p.m. CST
www.tulsachurchofgod.net — www.tulsachurchofgod.org*

*Church of God, New Mexico, — 1:30 p.m. MST
www.cognm.org*

The above also offer online access to past sermon presentations.

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