

outreach

Managing the Crunch

The Newsletter of the Churches of God, UK

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providing
leadership
information and
Biblical teaching
Matthew 28:19-20

representing

Churches Of God Outreach Ministries

By all accounts we face a fairly torrid and challenging time for the next few years. Governmental, financial and personal irresponsibility over many years has 'landed us in the soup'.

Surveys have indicated that for church people—as for others—the effect on the pocket has naturally led to financial belt tightening. (Charities are experiencing a downturn in income.) Jobs have been lost (a half million in November alone in the USA). Those reliant on income from savings and on fixed incomes have been particularly hard hit. Pension funds, too, have been devastated.

Trust Me

It's a time like this that our trust in the Eternal God is tested. Sadly, in the good times we tend to take Him for granted! He, of course, never changes no matter how fickle may burn our trust in Him.

Addressing scattered Christians the apostle Peter wrote: *'...Be humble in the presence of God's mighty power, and he will honor you when the time comes. God cares for you, so turn all your worries over to him'* (I Peter 5:6-7).

That echoes what Jesus said: *'...Don't worry and ask yourselves, "Will we have anything to eat? Will we have anything to drink? Will we have any clothes to wear?" Only people who don't know God are always worrying*

End of the World?

The 'prophets of doom' are on the prowl! To my knowledge none of them have a perfect predictive track record, so the LORD said *'don't fear them'*. (Deuteronomy 18:22). That's what is required of a true prophet.

But that doesn't mean one or more won't at some time burst on the scene. God has set a time limit on human incompetence, and when it is expiring He will give plenty of warning—by the 'signs of the times' or by infallible prophets who exercise divine powers.

But is this 'it'? The short answer: *'...no-one knows'*. For we have throughout the last two millennia been through similar times of 'distress among nations'.

That awesome day *will come*—in God's time and when mankind reaches the end of its tether, and can no longer sustain life (Matthew 24:4-13).

It is for each of us to watch, to be alert, to avoid complacency. And to be spiritually prepared.

about such things. Your Father in heaven knows that you need all of these...Don't worry about tomorrow. It will take care of itself' (Matthew 6:25-34).

So—'Trust Me'!

Stay Close

Our first century predecessors in the faith were no strangers to privation. It was a dangerous world and public services were inadequate, with serious disease outbreaks that swept away many. Food shortages,

too, were common.

It has been suggested that Christians, though equally affected, fared better than most. They were a close community and shared their resources—not only with one another but with their needy neighbours.. It is an example for us.

Recall that we are counselled ‘... *We should keep on encouraging each other to be thoughtful and to do helpful things. Some people have gotten out of the habit of meeting but we must not do that. We should keep on encouraging each other, especially since you know that the day of the Lord's coming is getting closer*’ (Hebrews 10:24-25).

Even though scattered, isolated even, brethren (especially in such times as these) ought to build our ‘support network’ with other brethren—by letter, phone, internet; and where possible by direct face-to-face contact.—especially when a fellowship is available within reach.

One Another

The apostle Paul, especially, counselled this kind of interaction between the brethren. Note his words:

- Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love
- *Be of the same mind one toward another*
- Owe no man any thing, but to love one another
- *Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling block or an occasion to fall in his brother's way*
- Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ
- *With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love*
- be kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven you
- *the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men*
- comfort yourselves together, and edify one another
- *Grudge not one against another, brethren*
- love one another with a pure heart fervently
- be of one mind, having compassion one of

FESTIVALS 2009

Lord's Supper	April 7 (Tues evg)
Unleavened Bread	April 9*-15
Pentecost	May 31*
Trumpets	September 19*
Atonement	September 28*
Tabernacles	October 3*-9
Eighth Day	October 10*

* begin previous evening at sunset

calling all readers of...

New Horizons

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

Do you know anyone who might have an interest in this work? Anyone who might be struggling with their faith, with life, with their understanding of the Christian Scriptures?

***New Horizons* may be an answer**

*We simply ask that you pass on your copy of **New Horizons**—when you have read it, of course! Or just lend it, and encourage your friend to subscribe (as you know, there is no charge)*

Or, if you want to pass on a ‘gift subscription’ send us their mailing address.

No-one will otherwise contact them unless they contact us

another; love as brethren

Paul's counsel to the church is no less vital in the twenty-first century than in the first century. The Christian church is in disarray. Healing and change will come only through the intimate interaction of the brethren. In hard times, especially, we must lay aside sectarian differences and be ready to selflessly serve one another.

But above all, let's place our trust for every need in the hands of our loving Father, committing ourselves to His service . Ω

The Old, Old Story

The Christian faith has constantly been under siege. From its inception there have been disputes, heresies, counter-heresies. But it has survived. And one pillar of its survival is ‘The Book’. That book is the *Christian Bible*—the Old and New Testaments.

The first Christians, of course, didn’t have what we call ‘the New Testament’, with its twenty-seven individual ‘books’. In circulation were a number of letters—‘epistles’—mostly from the apostle Paul. For thirty years or so the apostles were active. Their recollections and those of numerous eye-witnesses also were doing the rounds of the churches, with at least ‘part-gospels’.

Multiple copies were made in different languages (Arabic, Greek, Ethiopian *etc*) which accounts for minor variations in the text. A letter or gospel account would be read out and copied over and over again. There may have been ‘copyist error’ but the substance was preserved intact. It was from these that consensus approved the ‘canon’—the authentic record of the life and teaching of Jesus and the apostles.

Every word of the selection, however, was carefully compared with what we know as ‘the Old Testament’ or ‘the Hebrew Scriptures’. Anything in conflict was discarded, for these Scriptures had the imprimatur of Jesus himself: ‘...*Jesus then explained everything written about himself in the Scriptures, beginning with the Law of Moses and the Books of the Prophets*’ (Luke 24:27 CEV).

No less should *we* now pay attention to the Scriptures, God’s revelation to mankind.

Hear Him

Jesus once had a confrontation with the Pharisees about this. He said: ‘...*He who is a child of God listens to God’s words. You do not listen to them: and why? It is because you are not God’s children*’ (John 8:47 Weymouth). Later he adds: ‘...*when he has led out all of his sheep, he walks in front of them, and they follow, because they know his voice. The sheep will not follow strangers. They don’t recognize a stranger’s voice, and they run away*’ (ch 10:4-5 CEV).

Many who profess the Christian faith simply fail

in this test. Their reading of the Scriptures—both Old Testament and New—is superficial, and the divine Word falls on deaf ears. Yet Jesus said: ‘...*God blesses those people who want to obey him more than to eat or drink*’ (Matthew 5:6 CEV).

We may ‘believe on’ Jesus—but unless we listen actively and *do* what he teaches us through the Scriptures (not tradition) we clearly are not children of the Father. (I may *believe* a coach will take me to London—but to arrive there I have to climb on board, and stay on board!)

Tradition Addiction

Much Christian belief is unsupported by the Scriptures—tradition, in other words. As with the choice of texts for the New Testament canon, *all of Scripture* is the gold standard for any teaching. Such doctrines as man’s nature, the divinely-revealed times of worship, the role of Law and the nature of grace—crystal clear in the Bible to any who seek for truth—these have been supplanted by teachings derived from non-Christian faiths.

Those words of Jesus to the Pharisees (John 8:47) ought to stop us in our tracks. Are we listening? Do we sincerely want to understand? Or, are we addicted to tradition?

The complete Scriptures are widely available in some 250 languages—and portions in many more. They are a ‘call’ to those who can access them: ‘...*the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him*’ (II Chronicles 16:9). Respond to His Word and God draws you towards Jesus. Shut your ears to it and His truth remains hidden. As God said through Jeremiah: ‘...*And you shall seek me, and find me, when you shall search for me with all your heart*’ (ch 29:13).

But this doesn’t mean that God’s Word is of no effect. Read it. Study it. Absorb it. Even if you hang on to your church’s traditions yet neglect to obey the Bible teachings—the Word will still, as with the Israelites, influence you for good.

Commit yourself, free from tradition, to obey God’s revelation, however, and you are close to the Kingdom. Ω

How To Raise a Crook

Houston Police Dept

- Begin from infancy to give the child all he wants. This way he will grow up to believe the world owes him a living
- When he picks up bad words—laugh at him. This will make him think he's cute. It will also encourage him to pick up even cuter phrases that will shock and embarrass you later
- Never give him any spiritual training. Wait until he is twenty-one and let him decide for himself
- Avoid the use of the word 'wrong' so he won't develop a guilt complex. Then, later, when he is arrested for stealing a car he will believe that society is against him and he is being persecuted
- Always pick up anything he leaves lying around - books, shoes, clothing. Do everything for him so he will be experienced in shirking responsibility
- Let him read any printed material he can get his hands on. Don't monitor his computer usage. The silverware and glasses must be sterilized but the child's mind can feed on garbage
- Quarrel frequently in the presence of your children. That way they won't be too shocked when the home is broken up
- Give him all the spending money he wants. Never let him earn his own.
- Satisfy his every craving for food, drink and comfort. Denial may lead to harmful frustrations
- Take his part against the neighbours, teachers, police. They are all prejudiced against your child
- Then when he gets into real trouble, apologize for yourself saying, 'I never could do anything with him'

Prepare for a life of grief—you will have it

From: The Ozark Newsletter

Request: *Children: the Best Job* and
University of the Home

FINANCES (COGUK) - Nov/Dec 2008
INCOME.... £61 OUTGOINGS... £369

YOUR SUPPORT

As another calendar year ends here is a brief update on our work.

You may have observed that *COGUK* is run on a 'shoestring' budget, so we are appreciative of the financial support received. Thanks is also due to those readers who send anonymously, and a big thanks to our brethren in Blackwell, Oklahoma for their regular contributions.

It's our policy—unlike our national Treasury!—to stay within budget, which has led to much of our output being routed through the Internet. *OUTREACH*, for example, is mailed only occasionally to street addresses, depending on finances. But it is also sent worldwide to over 500 internet addresses, only a few of whom are mailed printed copies, or have had any long-term connection with any of the *Churches of God*. Other web sites also link to it, extending the readership potential. Additionally, none of the ministry receives a salary, with, in the USA, costs paid only for accountancy *etc*.

New Horizons currently has limited printed distribution—about 300 here in the UK, with 2000+ in the USA. But it is also on the *CGOM* website, and is available there to read or download, as are well over a hundred reprint articles. It is with regret that we have not of late been able to serve overseas enquirers—largely due to unmanageable postal costs.

In times of uncertainty it's not surprising that we turn to matters spiritual. We would encourage our readers to carefully investigate the Christian Scriptures for guidance. And while we don't claim to 'have all the answers' yet we can draw on the wisdom of many long-time believers to help you to investigate the true Christian faith.

So, feel free to contact us with your queries. Your comments, too, are always welcome. And don't hesitate to access our website (www.cgom.org) to read or request print copies of our publications. Or, contact us direct at coguk@aol.com. If you don't yet subscribe (no charge) to *New Horizons* you are invited to do so.

Thanks again for your support during the year now passing.