

# outreach

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## The New Horizons Newsletter

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Matthew 28:19-20

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## A Sound Mind

I have often heard the expression ‘the world has gone mad’—and I’m increasingly inclined to agree. The base-line for the Christian, in whom is God’s Spirit, has to be the apostle Paul’s words to Timothy: ‘... God has not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind’ (II Timothy 1:7). It is a stable mind, a rational mind, an enquiring and curious mind, a mind in tune with God and His way.

We encounter this madness—amplified by the all-pervasive media—as it wells up on the occasion of a tragedy. Sentiment overflows, both for personal and national tragedies, in a riot of flowers—or in a riot of blood. Tears beget tears. Or it is an excuse for virtue-signalling or an opportunity to loot and burn and to attack authority as much as to express solidarity. Mass hysteria and faux anger grips large sections of the populace, often based on a faulty or incomplete understanding of the facts of the case. It is a reflection of our fragile human nature!

The recent worldwide demonstrations in the name of anti-racism are an example. If the Minneapolis policeman is proven in the courts to have had the intent to murder then he deserves the appropriate penalty. (It hasn’t, as of writing, been tested in court.) But the bandwagon of thoughtless and often violent condemnation, as ever, rolls on inexorably.

## Wise Counsel

The Lord’s guidance to Israel

reflects the fact that all of us by nature are self-absorbed: ‘...*Stop being angry and don't try to take revenge. I am the LORD, and I command you to love others as much as you love yourself*’ (Leviticus 19:18). It is only fragile self-restraint that curbs our intolerance of difference—whether of success or race or religion.

Our world has largely cut itself off from the Creator. A century ago the Christian faith (‘...*love your neighbor*’) positively influenced many more of us. Today, Christianity pays lip service to the God of the Bible while failing to do what He says. Addressing the Pharisees but applicable in general Jesus said: ‘...*This people [Israel] draws near to me with their mouth, and honours me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men*’ (Matthew 15:8-9). The traditional institutions (church, Sunday School, missions) that underpinned Christian society have been undermined and the rock-like foundations have crumbled.

In the context of the anti-racist protest, the wise words of King Solomon should have resonance with Bible believers: ‘...*when*

The slave trade is more complex than generally believed. Local tribal chiefs and Arab slave traders sold their compatriots by the million to all and sundry and to European traders—themselves the ‘children of their times’. Slavery has accompanied conquest from time immemorial. Yet it’s encouraging to see how many from ethnic minorities can rise to eminence in the modern world—perceived by many as hostile.

## Sound Mind...

they say, "Come on! Let's gang up and kill somebody, just for the fun of it! ... We'll take their valuables and fill our homes with stolen goods.... Don't follow anyone like that or do what they do'. That should ring bells as we view the wanton destruction of public and private property, personal injuries and attacks on law enforcement officers.

Wisdom, however, is at no level of society a mark of our age: '*...the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid*' (Isaiah 29:14). Having long ago abandoned any pretense to follow godly principles as a guide to government or personal life, the world reaps the fruit: '*...The fear of [respect for] the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding*' (Proverbs 9:10).

The prophet Isaiah (*ch 3*) paints a vivid prophetic image of our age. It stands as a red flag. Unless we take note our nations will go the way of Israel.

As we harmonize with the divine way our mind is tutored towards a sound mind, the image of God in us—the purpose for our existence (Genesis 1:27). Ω

### 2020 Festivals

Trumpets	September 19
Atonement	September 28
Tabernacles	October 3-9
Eighth Day	October 10

### Is God Colour-blind?

*You are invited to request this short article as a background to the present world disruption*

*or from our addresses or on-line*

## 'I Got It Wrong...'

How often do you hear that confession? And how often do you hear it from the pronouncements of church leadership? It is a rarity, though I have experienced it on a few occasions in my church fellowship.

The church of God (Sabbath observing) in all its branches is quite close on its doctrinal stance—differences are paper-thin, some would say. They are largely centred on organization or leader loyalty, though there are a few zealous mavericks who claim to have special understanding of a doctrine (or two).

*'...leaving the principles of the doctrine 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'* (Hebrews 6:1-2)

Most of us have our 'comfort zone'—a cosy resting place for our faith. We may have the odd dissenting thoughts about what we hear from the pulpit—but we usually let it pass. We get on with our Christian life, in our daily walk doing our best to reflect the life of our Saviour. We are content to fellowship in 'my' group each Sabbath or, if isolated, we get our spiritual nourishment from 'my' church *via* the internet or by videos *etc.* It works for us.

But why *this* particular branch of the church of God? It may be the one with which we first fellowshiped, or the one we were born into, or a

personal choice—perhaps because of a massive breach of ethics or heretical teaching in a former branch. It may simply be personal taste.

But back to 'doctrine'. The first churches were far from doctrinally harmonious. Dissent was the norm—yet they were undoubtedly the 'church of God', and there was brotherly interchange between each independent local assembly. They were, however, encouraged to share a common platform of belief—the '*...faith once delivered*' (Hebrews 6:1-3), while dissent was only rarely a hanging offence ('disfellowship').

As in the apostolic era there is today a need to encourage the brethren to be tolerant of minor differences. Too often an idea grips an individual and they come to see it as 'essential for salvation'. It can come to disturb a whole assembly. *Bingo*—division!

Many fail to grasp that when we become a member of God's Family (*ie* the 'Kingdom of God') through God's indwelling Spirit we are thereby robed in the white garments of Christ's righteousness. We will still have our faults, our character weaknesses—even our sins (I John 1:8)—but our Father because of His boundless love for His Son and for His new 'sons and daughters' sees us through the prism of Christ's perfect holiness imputed to us. That understanding (I John 3:2) provides room for us to cease our worries about our standing before God and to strive daily to attain, with his ever-present help, to Jesus's perfection in accord with His perfect will. Ω

## Insight from Paul

*The apostle Paul's letters shed a bright light on our walk with God*

Paul, towards the end of his life in service to Christ, had to defend himself against those who accused him of 'abandoning Moses'. His response was unequivocal: '*...I have committed nothing against the people, or customs [Gk. ethos] of our fathers*' (Acts 28:17). Among those 'customs' was the observance of the divinely-appointed annual festivals. They are '*...the feasts [Heb. mo'ed—appointed times for worship] of the LORD*' (Leviticus 23:2). *God's* festivals, note, not concocted by Moses.

The observance of these days was in Paul's DNA, for he was '*...taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God*' (Acts 22:3). He was adept in both the 'law of Moses' (the written law) and the often spurious additions of the law's expositors (which he abandoned as a Christian).

During Paul's mission we find him continuing to follow this 'custom'. He was, for example, anxious to get to Jerusalem for *Pentecost* (God's 'feast of weeks' - Acts 20:16). He also takes note (ch 27:9) of the *Day of Atonement*—another of the festivals. A recurring theme of Paul's is that of 'firstfruits' (eg I Corinthians 15)—another of God's appointed observances. And to the Corinthian church he encourages the observance of the seven-day *Passover* festival, the *Feast of Unleavened Bread* (ch 5:6-8), a festival he also observed in Philippi (Acts 20:6). Nor was the autumn *Festival of Trumpets* far from his thoughts (as in I Thessalonians 4:16).

Two festivals on God's calendar round off the festival year: *Tabernacles* and the *Eighth Day*. They are linked in that the seven days of *Tabernacles* represents the thousand-year reign of Jesus and his joint-heirs over the remnant of mankind following the devastation of man's final tenancy of Earth, The *Eighth Day* marks the culmination of the divine plan for humanity when all in their graves are raised to life for a time of judgment. Paul echoes these festivals in his dissertation (Romans 9-11) about the fate of the long-dead families of Israel—restored as '*...life from the dead*' (ch 11:15). A remnant of Israel will also survive into the 'new world order' (the millennium—Jeremiah 31).

Aware of the prophetic significance of the festivals, Paul reminds us of the importance of their observance—a key to understand God's plan. Ω

## New Horizons

Recent issues of our magazine have succumbed to 'covid' postal delays and may not become available in print form. They are, however, posted on our website at

[www.cgom.org](http://www.cgom.org)

Please submit any questions or comments via e-mail to [coguk@aol.com](mailto:coguk@aol.com)

## Letter from England

Hello,

A huge tear has of late been ripped in the fabric of our 'democratic' nations. Massive change thrust on the populace without a well-thought-out plan in preparation is scary, for we expect our government to be ready for emergencies.

The present crisis will pass and all will revert to a sort of 'normal', but we must be prepared for more of the same—and worse. More than ever as faithful Christians we are cast on the bed-rock of trust in our heavenly Father and our Saviour.

The past few months have been devastating for some families and for many businesses, and there is a degree of inconvenience for most. But there is a somewhat sinister undercurrent that is disturbing. As I see it we are surreptitiously fast losing our hard-won freedoms. Not just the UK but worldwide. It reflects the globalist agenda heavily promoted by the elite, and by the Vatican in its quest for the so-called 'common good'.

That 'good' includes the subsuming of the Protestant churches into the Roman—a centuries old agenda now fast reaching fruition. Using 'global warming' as a screen the Vatican is encouraging secular authorities to legislate the observance of Sunday as a day of rest/family/leisure.

For most people that's attractive, and the first day of the week is fast becoming observed in such a way—even in non-Christian religions. For Bible believers, however, it is a challenge—but *not* a dilemma. For *we* recognize that the day of worship we observe is a mark, a sign, that identifies the true Creator. The *seventh-day* Sabbath is the weekly memorial of God's powerful role in creation, in all that exists. It is *His* 'mark'.

With Rome calling the shots we can expect the return of mediaeval-style enforcement, and we must mentally prepare for that. Day-to-day our decisions must be guided by the Scriptures. Let's, with this in mind, be diligent to carefully assess the 'news' we are fed in the light of God's Word. *Cast all your cares on Him.*

James

## National Pride

The recent infantile behaviour by baying crowds of our fellow-citizens betrays a disturbing loss of pride in our nations (Britain and the USA). Search the planet and every nation has its secrets, its failings compared with often doubtful modern standards. *Apropos* the anti-racist demonstrations it is of note that slavery is still an almost universal challenge worldwide.

Around 2300BC the Creator invited a man to bear the torch for His way of life. Abraham accepted the challenge and received a promise of continued support. He would become the progenitor of a nation that would further God's plan for all mankind—Israel. For their Constitution God tailored His spiritual Law of life in a form suitable for sinful humanity.

### Model Nation

Ancient Israel failed in its assigned role as a model nation—but God's promises to Abraham were not abrogated. Israel's descendants came to dominate the world through the British Empire and later through the United States. Despite huge failings they infused the world with the values of law and order, education, transport, sanitation, a trusted civil service—and the underpinning foundation of the Christian faith.

Our history, however, has been one of relentless decline. The foundation values of the faith of Abraham as expressed through the teachings of Jesus Christ—the pillars that support civilised behaviour—have been whittled away and are easing our nations towards inevitable spiritual, civil and economic collapse.

### Inborn Trait

It's a fact of human nature that we humans are self-centred, and that civilized behaviour results from individual self-restraint fuelled by true values: *self-discipline, concern for others, respect*—generally no longer instilled at the parental knee. But these qualities are fragile, easily breached. Hence, hooligans rampage through our streets, knife crime escalates, hatred oozes from the ill-educated *and* the 'educated'.

God's solution is a supernatural infusion of His Spirit following a person's undivided commitment to His service. Those true values have deliberately been erased from the national curriculum. Our society needs the godly mind-set that is daily being nourished by God's Word.

*Otherwise, anarchy will follow.*

Ω

## Issues of 'Colour'

Every nation has its nicknames for those of a different racial extraction (probably best not to name them!). And, as the gene profile indicates, this despite the fact that under the skin we share almost all of our genes.

The apostle Paul sums up the discussion: '*...God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwells not in temples made with hands; Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he gives to all life, and breath, and all things; and has made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation*' (Acts 17:24-26).

All 'races', in other words, have descended from 'mitochondrial Eve'. We are 'one race', in effect., and our skin colour is determined by a cluster of *melanin-producing* genes. How we look results initially (botox *etc* excepted!) from our inherited gene pool.

### Life-style

Our lifestyle derives from our social status, our inherited culture, our family life, our education *etc*. It is these factors that spark division. Mix varied cultures from diverse backgrounds (not just 'racial' but social, sexual *etc*) and friction can—will—be generated. That is raw unrestrained human nature.

Ancient Israel's constitution welcomed incomers—but all were subject to the one law. All, for example, experienced the Sabbaths shut-down. All shared the nation's burdens. And every home-born Israelite was urged to treat strangers as they would a brother. Not, of course, that such laws—as in today's world—were universally obeyed, for human nature doesn't change. A fundamental transformation of our nature alone moves us individually toward such perfection.

But change *is* coming. The present world order is destined to be replaced by that perfect Constitution ministered to ancient Israel (Micah *ch* 4)—coupled with a spiritual transformation as God's Spirit becomes freely available to all mankind. Jesus Christ is coming, accompanied by his prepared brothers and sisters, to establish the rule of the everlasting Kingdom of God.

Distressing times lie ahead, and the faithful must bolster that faith by diligent observance of God's Way.

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