



Churches Of God Outreach Ministries
People working together to proclaim the Gospel

"The Churches of God Outreach Ministries provides leadership, information, and biblical teaching in spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Matthew 28:19-20"

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Who, then, can be saved?

Relatively few in our world are willing to give their all to the way pioneered by Jesus Christ. Why?

by James McBride

The Gospel message has been proclaimed, in one form or another, since the time of Jesus Christ—nearly two thousand years. Since then, generations have come and gone. Yet few in any one generation have embraced its precepts. Even the apostolic evangelism, preached with power and with accompanying miracles and signs, while reaching multitudes, yet failed to convert but relatively few of their own generation.

Today, those professing to be Christian are still a minority—at best one in three of mankind. These two billion subscribe to a wide range of often quite bizarre beliefs. Take the name 'Jesus' and, it seems, you can add on any weird and crackpot notion the mind can envisage—and call it 'Christian'. The result—'Christianism' rather than the message brought by Jesus, true Christianity.

The Business of Faith

Jesus tells us he came to reveal the Father. Since the Father is the Supreme Creator and prime mover of the Universe and all it contains He can be considered as the 'Founder-Chairman' of His enterprise, with Jesus as the CEO, the 'Chief Executive Officer'. As such it can safely be assumed that the 'Company' was formed with a specific purpose.

To continue the analogy—such a vast project demands a careful choice of personnel. A recent TV series, *The Apprentice*, highlighted the careful selection needed for even a limited human business. In the series Sir Alan Sugar of Amstrad personally and carefully selected his key personnel.

Grand Design

Can we expect anything less from the Father, the prime mover of all that is?

God's grand design is no short-term, slapdash project but

one that embraces millennia. It is no money-grabbing exploitation of its 'workers' but motivated by their present and future welfare.

The divine plan has been consistent in purpose from its inception. It is endlessly expanding by the day, and the current personnel are delegated the responsibility of recruiting others with the same stringent selection procedure. Indeed that recruitment is a major plank in God's business—a people business.

Lost Cause

In general, Christians assume that God's purpose is to 'save the world'. He is engaged in a desperate struggle to keep His human creation out of the hands of Satan, and saved into Heaven. The hope is that by means of our evangelistic effort God will 'win'.

Sadly, according to this scenario billions have, down the millennia, already been 'lost'. Though not the religiously correct thing in modern Christianity, these 'lost' languish in eternal fire, endlessly burning but not burning up.

Given such failure, in human business terms God (the Chairman) and His CEO should be sacked by the shareholders! And, of course, many have indeed shunted Him into limbo.

God, however, is not doddery, not a failure. He is the all-powerful Creator and Ruler of all that is. In the far reaches of past eternity He conceived a plan and is carefully nurturing it to fruition.

First came the physical Universe—the 'canvas' on which to paint His magnificent design. The jewel in the crown of that material creation was planet Earth. Then on the Earth He formed the pinnacle of Creation—mankind, male and female.

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Perfectly designed, perfectly formed they were to assume church, and he oversees its activities—despite appearances! headship and authority over the physical creation:

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moves upon the earth Genesis 1:26ff.

Godly Offspring

Why ‘*male and female*’? Because only through procreation by a man and a woman would the divine purpose be fulfilled. It’s a theme that pervades the entirety of Scripture.

Our first parents could have chosen—God gave them the freedom and ability to choose—to live forever, producing godly offspring for the Creator. It was not to be. They failed to follow the divine Manual and their innocence ended. They had chosen death.

God’s plan was—*is*—to generate a family of beings in His image. Not a family of robots but men and women who choose to follow Him, willing to experience all that life throws at them but who remain faithful until death to the divine will as revealed in the Christian Scriptures.

Consequences

The choice made by our first parents was devastating for them and for their progeny. Without the continuing divine presence they—we—have forfeited the opportunity to live forever. Without the divine Manual—still available for all—the human race ‘*grows worse and worse*’ generation by generation.

Indeed at times we, the human race, became so depraved that the only chance of survival was to eliminate all but the godly. It happened in the time of Noah. It happened at Sodom and Gomorrah. It happened with the Amorite nation.

A Unique Divine Calling

Indeed the time came when God said to the Israelites: ‘*...you only have I known of all the families of the earth*’. Because of Abraham’s unique choice, his willingness to submit to his Creator, he and his descendants were selected to be God’s representative nation through which He would work out His purpose. At Sinai they committed to follow Him: ‘*All that the LORD has said we will do, and be obedient*’ they said. (Exodus 24:7).

They failed. Responsibility to forward the divine plan passed to those who submit—‘*are obedient*’—to the divine will, expressed solely through faith in God’s Son, Jesus the Messiah. He is committed to support them, they are his

Our Choice

Since mankind’s beginnings the fulfilment of God’s plan for us has been a combination of His invitation and our human choice. The invitation is there wherever the Word of God effectively reaches. As recorded by Isaiah: “*So shall My word be that goes forth out of My mouth: it shall not return unto Me void, except it accomplish that which I please, and make the thing whereto I sent it prosper*” (Isaiah 55:11).

That Word has been published almost worldwide through a billion Bibles and Bible portions and in at least half the world’s languages, and through innumerable media and missionary activities. But throughout history, only a few fully respond.

God the Father (‘*No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him*: John 6:44) chooses and calls those who are likely to be prepared through personal circumstance—not those satiated by personal prestige, the wealthy, the worldly wise, the powerful etc. Wrote the apostle Paul:

For you see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called. But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, and things which are not, to bring to nothing things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence”
(I Corinthians 1:26-29)

Those who hear and respond to the divine call are led to full acceptance of the divine message as personified in Jesus. He said: “*It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that has heard, and has learned of the Father, comes unto me*’ (John 6:45).

The ultimate purpose of the human race is to finally be reconciled to the Father, to become a part of His divine Family. And, as Jesus said: ‘*No-one comes to the Father except through me*’. Nothing but the word of truth revealed in the Christian Bible can substitute—no other faith, and no deviant interpretation of the basics of the faith.

Be Baptized

Many, perhaps millions, encounter Jesus. They learn of his life, his achievements, the way of life he taught and exemplified. They adopt much of what he taught. Their behaviour may well be transformed by the experience. Until, that is, his ‘hard sayings’ are encountered.

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That's when many turn aside, while retaining the externals. Perhaps through their childhood instruction. Perhaps through the traditions with which they grew up. Perhaps through persuasive teaching from the pulpit—'*broken cisterns that can hold no water*'. For whatever reason they may turn aside, a 'blindness', a veil, falls over their spiritual eyes.

However, those convicted of their sin, their alienation from the Father, who pass through 'the door' (who come to Jesus) become his disciples. They embark on a journey of spiritual discovery.

As part of the 'package' Jesus presents to us, those who respond will be immersed in water—symbolic of the death of our 'old man', our human nature—and have hands laid upon them to be given the indwelling Spirit of the Father. Thus is eternity implanted in the human heart. They become brothers and sisters in the ever-living Family of God.

Are you willing to commit fully to this Way?
Ready to 'follow the Lamb wherever he goes'?
Then, request the free article:

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