

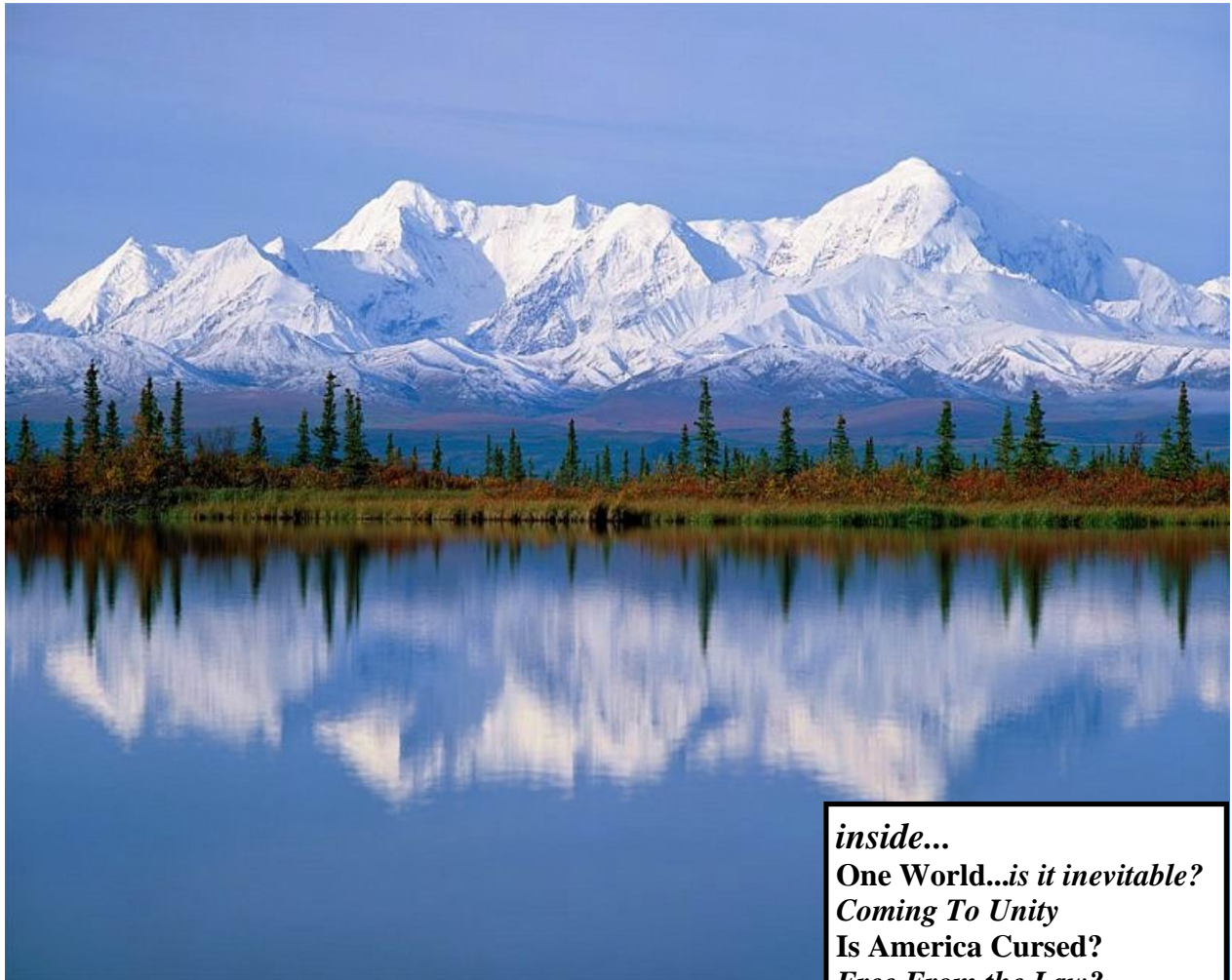
NEW

Horizons

Vol 10 No 1

January/February 2006

addressing the important issues for today and tomorrow



inside...

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Thursday July 7

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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 the clearest of terms - and
recorded for us in the Scrip-
tures. Over the centuries
that truth has been buried,
dug up, buried again. Our
desire is to restore the sim-
ple apostolic message. We
hope you will be excited
by what the Scriptures re-
veal about life, and the
horizons beyond**

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new Horizons

Issue No 55

January/February 2006

Globalism - is it a threat, or a promise of a better world?

Ever so slowly, but with seeming inevitability, our world creeps toward 'global solutions for global problems'. For some this is a move towards a world without conflict, a world of equality and a world of utopian perfection. Others fear globalism will lead to totalitarianism, the subjection of mankind to an elite cabal of dictatorial tyrants.

There can be little doubt that the pooling of resources can work material benefit for our world. As 'many run to and fro' - easy travel, access to information at the touch of a button (sometimes!), imports of the rich variety of goods produced from earth's bounty - all combine to add 'spice' and variety to our lives. But there's a downside.

Technology blurs boundaries between sovereign nations. Missiles

can at the touch of a button be despatched thousands of miles with pinpoint accuracy. Nuclear explosions - remember Chernobyl - provoke mayhem and long-term suffering across continents. Industrial and domestic pollutants from around the globe affect all of us in our own back yards. Outbreaks of deadly disease are scattered worldwide by our fast-moving transport networks. And let's not forget the worldwide internet - a tool that scatters ideologies, and tutors and facilitates terrorists.

Not unrelated to technology is the upsurge in *terrorism*. Suicide mur-

derers emerge from nowhere (but usually from Islam) to cause mayhem, to scatter innocent body parts around hotels, tower blocks, trains and cafes.

Then there 's the *economy*. Vast trading blocs exert economic pressure on weak nations. World trade organizations impose tariffs affecting the daily life of all of us worldwide. Big Business dominates, absorbing smaller enterprises.

On the *political front* the United Nations Organization (it is not a government) stealthily extends its influence towards one-world government. A move is afoot to impose a UN levy on every barrel of oil, thus for the first time introducing a *world tax* on all who are dependent on the oil economy - pretty well all of us. Power blocs - such as the European Union - seek to amass

political, economic and military authority over hundreds

of millions.

Let's not forget, too, the attempts to introduce *religious unity*. Near enough two-thirds of mankind - Protestants and Catholics - are about ready to join forces under the auspices of the Roman Church. Efforts are exerted to fudge the boundaries between Christianity and Islam. A billion of Hindu belief worship 'gods many'. While *multi-culturalism* is promoted as the saviour - but a false saviour - of racial harmony. Even the supposedly Christian festival of Christmas - celebrating, in fact, the

'birth' of the sun god - is becoming universally observed.

The Reason Why

All such factors conspire to give an invisible push towards one world with a single global government. Given the problems that face us on a global scale it offers the most likely solution. It takes on an air of inevitability.

Of late, terrorism occupies the energies of our Western democratic governments. Control is presented as the only reasonable solution, a necessity.

In the UK, for example, Government is urgent to introduce universal identity cards. The British Prime Minister sought - forcefully but unsuccessfully - to legalize a ninety day detention without trial. The ancestral right of *habeas corpus* is, in Britain and in the United States (Guantanamo), trodden underfoot - presented as an anti-terrorist necessity. Britain has more CCTV surveillance than any other nation. 'The Englishman's home is his castle' summarized our right to privacy. Now the UK Government proposes to demand we 'pull up the drawbridge' to admit inspectors into our homes to assess our tax liability. Even freedom of expression is threatened.

Power and authority, increasingly, is removed from personal responsibility into Politbureau-style State control.

Pitfalls

We need, however, to embark on such practices with eyes wide open and with caution.

ONE WORLD...

...is it inevitable?

ID cards would, states the London *Times* newspaper, 'create one of the most far-reaching systems of government surveillance in the world'. And, says *The Guardian*, 'it will become impossible to make the smallest transaction without revealing your identity. The innocent, however, have much to hide; it is called a private life'.

Consider the words of the great British statesman, William Pitt: "Necessity is the plea for every infringement of human freedom. It is the argument of tyrants. It is the creed of slaves". It has been suggested that all revolutions end in reinforcement of the State. (Rather, in the hands of those who control the State.)

Whether from good intentions, or from blind ignorance or from evil intent such measures move us step-by-step towards a totalitarian State. The drive for efficient government tends towards dictatorship. Notes one author: "Lenin, Stalin, Mao...knew that when all power is vested in the State, and when those controlling the State can claim to act in the name of historical inevitability, then you have the recipe for totalitarianism" (Daily Mail).

The erosion of national sovereignty and the lust for power that dwells in unscrupulous leaders tends towards multi-national governments and ultimately to world government. How long before the 'United Nations' - now an assembly of sovereign states - becomes a 'World Government'?

The Predicted Outcome

It is alleged - by 'conspiracy theorists' - that there are dark and unseen forces patiently driving the momentum towards world government. The Bilderberger group, the CFR, the promoters of a 'United States of Europe', the New World Order, the Illuminati - such secretive bodies are, supposedly, manipulating national leaders and world events to that end.

Conspiracy or not, the outcome of such human plans are in the unseen hands of one who will ensure all 'goes to plan'. That outcome has been predicted millennia ago. And it is not pretty!

In the hands of man, government has failed abysmally. Mankind, throughout six thousand years of recorded civilisation, has striven for a Utopian dream. But apart from a few intermittent decades of relative peace the dream has been a nightmare. It simply isn't within the ability of the human mind to sustain peace and prosperity - even within a single nation never mind a host of nations or the entire world of disunited nations.

That 'unseen hand' - the all-powerful Creator God - has given us a 'week' of millennia - six thousand years - to prove our willingness - and our ability - to rule by His perfect revealed Law. We have failed. Looking down the centuries He foresaw the inevitable end product of human government. Rather than rule His way - of harmonious co-operation - successive governments have perversely and bloodily competed, raped Earth's resources, greedily amassed personal wealth and trodden down and massacred the little people.

One World

Man's week is about over. But there's one more 'hour': the final roll of the dice is universal control of the world. That's where human leadership is heading. Democracy has failed to bring it to fruition, and wily politicians work subtly behind closed doors to introduce their nefarious

dream of control.

The apostle John in vision witnessed a final attempt at world domination. Swiftly on the world scene will arise an awe-inspiring atheistic military power that will gain authority over every race, every nation, every creed. It will be revered by all mankind. All who cling to a pure faith in the Creator, in Jesus Christ, will be subdued.

Itself anti-God, this entity will, however, be supported by a miracle-working universal religious power, resistance to its diktats being rewarded with death.

But the entire Satan-inspired system will exercise its power for a brief three and a half years. The 'Babylonian' destructive dictatorship will be crushed - by the return of the Lord, Jesus the Messiah.

New World Order

Human ineptitude will bring our planet to the brink of extinction. Divine intervention alone can save us. Only the application to government of divine wisdom can usher in the Utopia for which man cries out. Jesus will implement such a government - right here, on Planet Earth.

At his coming, those in whom dwells the Spirit of God will rise from the grave to reign with him over 'earth's huddled masses'. The sad remnant of men and women who survive the coming chaos will be nourished back to sanity.

They and their children will, under divine rule, learn the true principles that promote a productive and happy life. Successive generations will learn God's ways - and be prepared to live eternally.

Notice that all those who rule alongside Jesus in that thousand-year Kingdom have the Spirit of God dwelling in them in this life. When Jesus reigns, all mankind will be freed from the restraining influence of the spiritual forces that now blind us to the way of peace. That Spirit will indwell mankind freely. There will be one King, one faith, one government - one perfect world. Ω

here are some titles which further describe the coming 'new world order':

**The Law of Life
Millennium - fact and fiction
God's Grand Design
A Message of Hope**

They are available free from any of our addresses

**Jesus urged unity on his disciples.
How can we fulfill his prayer?**

Bill Faith

Before He was taken captive, interrogated and later crucified (John 17) we find recorded a prayer of Jesus. It must have been quite intent knowing that His life on this earth as a human being was about to end. In fact we read, *"And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. And His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground"* (Luke 22:44).

In that prayer, Jesus surely must have mentioned the things most prevalent in His mind. Indeed we find that one of His desires was that we would all be one. Jesus prayed, *"I do not pray for these alone [the disciples], but also for those who will believe Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they may also be one in Us..."* (John 17:20-21).

There are probably many reasons why Jesus was concerned about their unity. For one thing, He knew that they would stumble because of what was to happen to Him. In fact Jesus told His disciples after He had eaten His last Passover meal with them that, *"All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night, for it is written: 'I will strike the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered'"* (Matthew 26:31).

Surely as prophesied, several of the apostles returned to commercial fishing after His death for a short time; and of the thousands who had flocked to hear Him preach, only a handful gathered together on the following Day of Pentecost to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit when it was first given.

Jesus also knew human nature. He knew that just after the Passover meal that night that there had been,

"...rivalry among them as to which of them should be considered the greatest" (Luke 22:24). He also probably recalled the time when the mother of Zebedee's sons came to Him asking that her two sons, *"...may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on the left, in Your kingdom"* (Matthew 20:21).

Jesus also knew better than anyone the fruits of the flesh that would cause reason for concern: jealousies, contentions, selfish ambitions, dissensions, envy, revelries and the like (see Galatians 5:20-21).

As the New Testament testifies, the followers of Christ were not always unified. However, the letters from Paul as well as from the other apostles indicate the fact that they tried earnestly to unify the brethren.

Lessons

Paul explained to the church in Ephesus that Jesus Himself, *"...gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping [perfecting] of the saints for the work of the ministry, for the edifying [building up] of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith..."* (Ephesians 4:11-13).

We can learn from this that there is to be structure and order in the churches of God, the opposite of what Satan, the author of confusion, would have us. Paul further explained that the reason for having structure and order is so that we won't be, *"...tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine"* (v. 14).

In Hebrews 13:7, 17 we read, *"Remember those who rule [lead] over you, who have spoken the*

Coming To Unity

word of God to you, whose faith follow..." and *"Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account..."* Again we see that there is to be structure, order and accountability in the church of God.

There were times when Paul even pleaded for unity in each church, such as in Ephesians 4:1-6 when he wrote, *"I...beseech you to have a walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all..."*

In his letter to the Philippians Paul wrote, *"Let us walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind"* (3:16). To have unity everyone must follow the same set of rules, or division is guaranteed.

As an example, it would be difficult if not impossible for Protestants, Catholics and Muslims to be in complete unity with each other. This is because they do not follow the same set of rules. Protestants claim to follow the written word of the Bible, while Muslims follow the writings of the Koran. Catholics claim first in priority the infallibility of the Pope, and secondly, the writings of the church fathers. Finally, third in priority, they follow the Bible. Since they each base their beliefs on different teachings they could never be in complete unity with each other.

Even within the same church it is important that everyone must follow the same rules if unity is to be had. As Paul exclaimed to the Corinthian

church (1:10), *"Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."* Like someone once said, "If you're a Ford dealer, you don't try to sell Chevrolets.

Jesus' prayer was that all those who would believe in Him would be one, as He and the Father are one, and that they may be one in them. How much was Jesus and the Father at one? Enough that Jesus was able to tell Philip, *"He who has seen Me has seen the Father..."* (John 14:9). Jesus and the Father are two separate beings; yet their thoughts, beliefs and way of life are so much alike that Jesus was able to make this statement.

Unfortunately, even though we are Christians there are times when we find ourselves at war with the Spirit. This can be a brutal reminder to us of what Jesus meant when He told His disciples, *"...The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak"* (Matthew 26:41). We must be careful not to quench the Spirit.

In I Corinthians 14:32 we are told that, *"The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets."* This is a reminder to us that God will not force His will upon us. He will lead us to make the right choices, but the final decision is ours. God gives us freedom of choice and we must be careful to make the right choices. If we are to have unity we must as Paul said, *"...walk worthy of the calling with which you were called."*

We are told that we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us. Those who have accepted Jesus Christ as their Savior and have been baptized have made a life-long commitment to God. They have committed their life to Him. And if we ever find ourselves being over-

whelmed and seeming to be falling short of our calling we need to remember how Paul must have felt when he said, *"...For I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He [Jesus] is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day"* (II Timothy 1:12). Although we may be weak, Christ in us is strong.

We know that God is love. So if we have God's Spirit, then we also should have love. Love can go a long way in uniting brethren. In fact the apostle John wrote, *"...He who loves God must love his brother also"* (I John 4:21).

With God's Spirit we have the power to become at one with Him and with each other. For we are told, *"For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled"* (II Corinthians 10:4-6).

If we can come to the point in our life when we can allow God's Spirit to work in us like this, then truly we will be at one with God and with each other. **Ω**

If you would like to counsel about any matter related to your Bible studies or to your personal challenges our elders are eager to be of service. They may be contacted through any of our offices

in strict confidence

DON'T DUMP!
When you have digested this issue of New Horizons - why not pass it on? Who knows who will find it helpful!

July 7...cont'd from p.8

is guiltless, and all have from time to time taken up the sword in the name of their chosen faith.

The True Faith

The faith of Jesus, however, is different. This era of world history is *not* his time. 'My Kingdom', he says, *'is not of this world'* (John 18:36). The Kingdom is indeed here and now—but only in the hearts and minds of selected and willing men and women. Their role is to witness to the message of Jesus, the Gospel, and to discipline themselves to become increasingly Christ-like in behaviour.

Jesus concluded his illustration: *"Do you think these victims were greater sinners than everyone else in Jerusalem?"* Clearly not. Jesus foresaw the awesome events some forty years in the future. The citizens of Jerusalem, unless they turned from their evil ways would experience the same result—death. It happened.

The word of Jesus for today and for every nation, for all mankind, is the same as his message to ancient Assyria through the prophet Jonah: *'let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands. Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not?'*

The Ninevites changed their violent ways. From the king to the lowly serfs they heeded God's prophet - and were spared destruction. Jesus said they would fare better in the Day of Judgment than his contemporaries. Because *'a greater than Jonah'* was calling for repentance.

It's a timeless message. Accidents will happen. States will oppress, torture, murder. Religionists will seek to promote their views by violent means. History warns that this human nature is frail, fickle. It can—will—turn violent when its purposes are frustrated, or when there's perceived advantage.

Only at the return of Jesus the Messiah as King of kings and Lord of lords—in control of politics and religion—will the horrors of suicidal murderers and killers of any and every faith be erased from the planet.

And God's time is near.

Ω

IS AMERICA CURSED?

...a personal view

Bruce Porteous

I have just returned from visiting the USA after being in Europe over the last month. What I find in visiting the USA both shocked and alarmed me. I found a nation continuing to sleep-walk towards its own destruction.

The American people have increasingly become “dumbed down” through their media – they are becoming polarized with extremists on both the left and right proclaiming messages of hate and intolerance. Yet the media fails to inform Americans the peril their country is now in – there is a total lack of awareness of the dangers that lie ahead. People fail to grasp on the realities of the economic, political and environmental world which the USA must now co-exist in. There appears to be a total lack of leadership or understanding in solving America’s or the world’s problems.

One of the tragedies resulting from the “brain-washing” of the American people is in deceiving them that they are the greatest nation of earth, that their way of life is the model all nations should follow. The leadership claims that democracy is the form of government all nations should adopt. America is the “land of freedom”, yet the majority of Americans are under bondage to an economic system that has enslaved them.

Yet many America’s continue to deceive themselves into believing that God is blessing America. While they continue to sing “*God Bless America*” it is becoming increasingly clear that God is no longer blessing America. Rather, America is now being cursed because of its sins.

Why would God curse America when it still proclaims to be a Chris-

tian nation? Clearly God has blessed America in the past – why should these blessing

now be withdrawn and the nation cursed?

The reason why America is cursed is because of the rejection of the legal code given to us by God through the Bible on how we are to live our lives, and be governed.

Let’s look at some of the reasons how and why America is being cursed today, which will shortly lead to its destruction.

- **War.** The debacle in Iraq is a direct result of the nation relying on its own military might and trying to resolve international problems through force, rather than having the faith to trust God to defend them, as He promised if we keep His commandments. It will eventually result in the defeat of the USA, followed by its economic collapse.
- **Economics.** Why has what once was the world’s richest nation now become the world’s greatest debtor nation? America is now totally dependent on attracting capital from its former enemies to prevent its economy collapsing. When America’s former enemies are no longer prepared to lend the money to sustain the American economy - that will be the time its economy will collapse.
- **Environment.** Clearly the USA is now suffering the direct consequences of the break-down of the global environment. No other nation has squandered its non-renewable resources as America has done. The rejection of environmental laws God has given mankind has directly resulted in the ecological disaster our planet now faces. Yet America’s leaders continue to live in denial that these problems exist, because the changes needed to be made would not be acceptable economically or

politically. Yet unless these changes are made, natural disasters such as the recent hurricanes will continue to increase.

• **Law and Order.** Continued breakdown of moral standards and growth in the influence of drugs has resulted in an exploding prison population, and growth is most types of crime. I was shocked to experience people being physically attacked and beaten while in the center of San Francisco in broad daylight when visiting this city.

• **Care for the needy.** I was amazed to see the numbers of homeless living on the streets in the USA. For a nation that has so much wealth, it is a shock to see so many poor people begging in the streets. This one does not see in Europe or New Zealand. There is something wrong with a society that does not provide care for those less fortunate.

• **Division within.** The opposition to the Iraqi War is now gaining momentum, with public demonstrations against the occupation of Iraq throughout the USA. Unfortunately, the American people were lied to by their leaders, supported by the populist media (such as Fox News) and the Christian-right into supporting the invasion of Iraq in 2003. They have now come to realize how they were deceived. To withdraw the American forces from Iraq now would be an even worse disaster for the country than the illegal invasion was in the first place.

• **Cost of living** As inflation increases, and real incomes decline, many people are now struggling to exist. Increasing interest rates place additional burdens on the American consumer and on industry. The standard of living will steadily decline as the national and consumer debts grow – a greater percentage of income is being required to service these debts, reducing disposable income. Taxation will continue to increase as the govern- *cont'd p.8*

Are Christians 'free from the Law'?

"Free from the Law, Oh happy condition" goes the popular hymn. Really?

Around the world prisons are stuffed with – law-breakers. These men, women and children are guilty of murder, rape, embezzlement, burglary, thieving, mugging, parent and child abuse, perjury – the whole range of offences prohibited by the laws of their nation. It would be stretching things to imagine they are in a happy condition!

The hymn, of course, refers to the *Law of God*, specifically to the Ten Commandments. What do they prohibit? Murder, rape, embezzlement, mugging, abuse, perjury – in principle, every law that is essential for an ordered society. So, what's wrong with the 'terrible ten'? Why would you be 'happy' to be free of the divine instruction? There has to be a reason why good 'law-abiding' Christians have such virulent animosity towards God's revealed Laws.

A Holy Law

Jesus, after all, told his disciples: *"Do not think I am come to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill"* (Matthew 5:17). He perfectly obeyed those laws throughout his life. Indeed, half a century later he inspired his apostle John to write, *"Sin is the transgression of the Law"* (I John 3:4).

The apostle Paul, too, had a different perspective from much of modern Christianity. He wrote, *"...the law is holy and the commandment holy and just and good"* (Romans 7:12). 'Holy' is a practical word meaning it is set apart for a good use, usually a divine use.

Like all good Jews Paul understood that the laws of the Old Testament

are universal principles for the proper regulation of society. They are the framework within which God created mankind. When we are in harmony with them life works much more smoothly. To Timothy Paul wrote:

I know that the law is an excellent thing, if a man makes a lawful use of it; that is, if he understands that law is not enacted for upright people but for the lawless and disorderly, the godless and sinful, the ignorant and profane, people who kill their fathers and mothers, murderers, the immoral, men who practice sodomy, men who enslave others, liars, perjurers, or anything that is contrary to sound teaching as measured by the glorious good news of the blessed God (I Timothy 1:8-11)

Our traffic laws are man-made, yet we transgress them at our peril. But they are based on the principle of the divine Law – and of sound human reason – that you *'love your neighbour as yourself'*. Incidentally, Jesus quoted this from the *Old Testament* – Leviticus 19:18. It is, therefore, pretty stupid to claim 'the Law is done away'. Again – there has to be a good reason for sensible Christians to make such a claim.

The Law Misused

The apostles even in their day encountered false teachings about the Law of God. Paul battled with those who saw it as the way to eternal life. Some wanted to force Christianity into the mould of a formal Judaism that had largely sunk into a legalistic blind obedience to a written law and its oral interpretation.

In Jerusalem he confronted these men from 'the sect of the Pharisees' who demanded that for salvation converts must be circumcized and keep the Law of Moses (Acts 15:1-5). He understood that the true belief expressed from the beginning was based on God's mercy and grace. Citing the faith of Abraham he says to the Galatian Christians: *"...did you*

receive the Spirit by the works of the law – or by the hearing of faith?" (ch 3:1-9). No-one, he con-

tinues, can be justified – made right with God – by what we do.

As we're told in the Old Testament book of Genesis: *"Abraham believed God and it was counted to him for righteousness"* (ch 15:6). Abraham – a man who comprehensively *'obeyed my voice and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes and my law'* (26:5) – was 'saved by grace'. Indeed, as Hebrews 11 graphically explains, all God's stalwarts through time lived out their lives *by faith* and *not* by their works.

The Mind of God

Only through that freely-given divine gift, the sacrifice of Jesus, is salvation possible. No-one can enter God's Kingdom by means of a lifetime of good works or keeping of laws – divine or man-made. Only the sacrifice of our Saviour, individually applied in faith upon repentance, will suffice. By acceptance of that sacrifice we become the children of God and embark on a life-time walk to perfection.

We were created to be in God's image, to develop His mind – a mind which expresses itself as pure love of God and of neighbour. The Law, as summarized in the Ten Commandments, reflects the mind of God for humanity.

Request, free:

The Law of Life

The incredible purpose God has for man of eternal life as sons and daughters of the Almighty God (II Corinthians 6:18) cannot be bought or earned by anything we do – not by keeping the Law, not by acts of mercy, not by self-denial. It is by grace we are saved and not by our works (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Elsewhere (I Corinthians 13) Paul pinpoints the key ingredient: *love* – a heart that is being transformed into

the divine image through willing submission to our Creator. God's nature is love, and that's the image into which He is shaping each of His children through life's experience. As long as we are 'in denial' regarding the Law of God we are 'carnal', wrote Paul – *ie* devoid of the Spirit of God: "...the carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the Law of God" (Romans 8:7f).

Lawless Christianity

Peter and John tackled the role of law, too - but from another angle. They illuminate the background of the modern mainstream Christian opposition to God' Law.

John, towards the end of the first century, laid out his stall: "*He who says 'I know him' and keeps not his commandments is a liar and the truth is not in him*" (I John 2:4). Strong words. However you may understand '*his commandments*', it's clear from this that 'grace' certainly isn't enough!

John faced an overwhelming surge of gnostic philosophy that engulfed the entire civilised world and threatened the entire church of God. At the heart of this philosophy was the exaltation of the better, 'spiritual', side of human nature. The 'immortal soul' in man, according to this philosophy, is innately good and doesn't need to be informed by external guidance.

In the church the notion led to a rejection of any constraint to obey the Laws of God as presented in the Old Testament. Christ, went the argument, has kept it for you. It was a slippery slope which led to an 'anything goes' attitude to the faith.

But John was blunt. *Sin*, he said, *is lawlessness* (I John 3:4). And if you want to abide in Christ then you do

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www.cgom.org*

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 quarterly *Newsletter*, *Fountain of Life*, a bi-monthly outreach magazine *New Horizons*, the *Bible Basics* home study course). The *Outreach Ministries* also supports a network of independent fellowships and scattered brethren.

We cordially invite all independent fellowships of whatever size - or individuals - to associate with us in this worldwide ministry. Our *Statement of Beliefs* and a *Publications Catalogue* is available from any of our addresses.

We are pleased to offer you, without charge, any of our publications.

not commit sin, you are committed to a life of obedience to the divine Law. Indeed this lawless attitude is Satanic, he says (v.8). It's the very attitude Jesus came to destroy.

Heretical Tradition

Peter warned of false teachers bringing '*destructive heresies*' into the church of God. They would by

Unsigned articles are by the Editor

their behaviour scorn the foundation principle that Jesus 'owned' them (II Peter 2:1), that they were in effect his 'slaves'.

They presumptuously assumed they could go beyond his teachings and add their own humanly-devised fables 'as the Spirit led them'. As John commented: "*Whoever transgresses and doesn't remain in Christ's doctrine doesn't have God. He that remains in Christ's teachings has both the Father and the Son*" (II John 9). Now that's a frightening thought! Yet most Christian denominations have substituted their own traditional beliefs for the teaching of Jesus.

Where Do You Stand?

What about *your* 'Christian' practice? Where, for example, did Jesus authorize your 'holy days'? James in his letter states that if we are breaking just one of God's Laws we're guilty of all and are thus lawless sinners. You may not be committing adultery—though many who claim to be Christians are. But what about the commandment which perhaps in God's eyes carries most weight, the seventh-day Sabbath - the sign of the covenant He makes with His people?

Is it logic to pick and choose which commandment you will obey? Perhaps this is why the vast majority of Christians reject the Ten Commandments, but 'voluntarily' bring back nine of them! Yet James – having just cited two of the divine commandments (v.11) - also warned that the only verifiable expression of our faith is our actions, our '*works*', how we live (James 2:17-26), our willing submission to the divine Law.

By contrast, our 'happy condition' as Christians is expressed by the inspired Psalmist: "*Happy is the man...[whose] delight is in the Law of God, and in his Law does he meditate day and night*" (Psalm 1). Ω

*Feel free to encourage your friends
and acquaintances to read
New Horizons*

Thursday, July 7 2005... *what a day!*

In an echo of the thirty years of IRA terrorism, the peace of early-morning London was shattered by four deadly terrorist bombs. The lives of fifty-two men and women callously and indiscriminately wiped out, with over seven hundred injured, many seriously.

As with '9/11' in New York, Londoners immediately stoically faced the fear and the danger: helping the maimed, dealing with the lack of homeward transport, confronting their fears—and, next day, returning to their workplace, many using that same No 30 bus route on which 13 died.

Confronting the enemy face-to-face is one matter. But the twisted mentality of wicked men who hide in their anonymity blows the mind of every right-thinking man and woman of any race, any religion.

Blame?

The murderous killers have been identified as British-born Muslims of Pakistani origin, and parallels with the Madrid bombing are drawn. But any freedom-loving nation is at risk from terrorists hell-bent on causing mayhem to satisfy their evil desires and promote their perverse ideology. The hunt continues, even now, for the 'master mind'—possibly from the Middle East—who recruited the young killers.

Jesus drew on two contemporary news events to illustrate a vital lesson. In one incident, a building collapsed with multiple deaths resulting. The other was State terrorism of a despised religion in which worshippers were slaughtered and their blood mixed with their sacrificial offerings in the Sanctuary.

Then there's the example of Jesus himself—killed by religious fanatics called Pharisees and Sadducees. Men who supposedly served a loving and merciful God but whose fanaticism drove them to incite murder.

Worse sinners, these? Not so. This is our

America...cont'd from p.5

ments struggle with increasing domestic and military expenditure.

- **Defence** The 'War against Terrorism' has placed a considerable burden on the domestic economy, with little to show for it. For a visitor to the USA today one feels like one is entering the Soviet Union in the days of the Cold War. While Homeland Security is costing the American taxpayer billions of dollars, the military is being starved of resources for the equipment required to defend America.
- **Production.** America became great through exporting its goods, technology and services to the world. This ability of America to produce and export competitively is being under-mined, as more resources are being diverted into defense and the military. While Japan and Germany (both high-cost producing countries) continue to competitively increase their exports, American industry is no longer able to compete internationally.

world. This is human nature in the raw, sometimes garbed in the cloak of religion. Undercover and cowardly murderers of the innocent abound.

Faiths of Violence

It is foolish and short-sighted simply to blame a particular faith—in this case Islam, the birth of which was bathed in blood.

Certainly that religion, especially the Wah'habi faction that rules and dominates Saudi Arabia, which spawned Osama bin Laden and from where came most of the New York and Washington killers, has indeed been the seed-bed of most modern worldwide terrorism. We could cite the early WTC bombs, Bali, Sudan, Kashmir, Nigeria, Afghanistan, New York, Baghdad, Madrid, London—and now Turkey again. A noted Saudi commentator, Abdul Rachman al Rached, writes in a Saudi paper: '*...most perpetrators of suicide operations in buses, schools and residential buildings around*

- **Health.** Anyone visiting the USA is amazed with the number of over-weight people. Clearly something is wrong with the American diet. Maybe it is the hormones used in producing meat that is partly responsible. Where you have a society driven by greed, producing food for maximum profit, regardless of the consequences to the consumer, the result are a people often eating themselves to death, always lusting for more, and never satisfied.

The Coming Collapse

The decline and coming collapse of the American Empire will be sudden and dramatic. It will reduce the USA to a land of poverty – its people will face horrendous tribulation. There will be total economic collapse. Money will become worthless. There will be a complete break-down in law and order – anarchy will reign. There will be wide-spread famine and disaster. Millions will die. What was once the richest country in the world will, soon, become among the poorest. Ω

the world for the past ten years have been Muslims'.

Cast back a generation, however, and the Republican movement in Ireland, responsible during thirty years of terror for over three thousand violent deaths, was rooted in the centuries-old Roman Catholic desire for a united Catholic Ireland. It's an ongoing struggle, too often supported by ignorance of the motives on both sides of the Atlantic.

Back a few centuries more and Christianity—both Protestant and Catholic—was the prime mover in worldwide slaughter, mitigated and suppressed by the rise in 17th century Europe of the Enlightenment, secular humanism and the democratic ideal. And by the benign rise of Methodism in eighteenth century England

Christianity, it seems, has been as guilty as Islam. In fact no world faith—Hindu, Buddhist, Islam, Christianity *cont'd p.4*

MiniStudy

Is There 'One Faith'?

"...let it be known to all of you, and to all the people of Israel, that in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, in this name this one stands before you whole. This is the Stone counted worthless by you the builders, the one who has come to be into the Head of the Corner; and there is salvation in no other One, for neither is there any other name under Heaven having been given among men by which we must be saved" Acts 4:10-12

To make such an exclusive claim could be understood as sheer arrogance! Yet it was made by that giant of early Christianity, the apostle Peter. He had been intensively trained by Jesus the Messiah, and his words reflect the very mind and word of God.

'No other name....' That's the key, for Jesus was the image of the Father God, and bore His Name. What does the claim mean? Simply that there is but one God, the Creator of all that is, and who has made from one man all people on our planet. As Sovereign He dictates what form religion takes. Any fundamental deviation from His revelation is *a different religion*.

- the apostle Paul recognizes that there are '*...many gods*' (I Corinthians 8:5) That is, there are in the world a variety of competing religions each committed to one or more gods. Apart from the 'major' world religions (Judaism, Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism) there are countless minors
- but the apostle recognizes the logical conclusion that there can be *only one*. To be 'God' implies sovereignty, uniqueness, awesome power and authority
- Jews, Muslims, Christians - together comprising two-thirds of humanity - claim to worship the same God. And they do indeed share some beliefs and traditions: for example, God is one, the soul survives death, heaven or hell on death. Yet they are, clearly, vastly different. Take the weekly day of worship: for Jews it is Saturday, Friday for Islam, Sunday for Christians. Islam has its own Scriptures, the Koran, while Judaism rejects the Christian New Testament
- within each faith there is sectarian division - Orthodox and Reform, Sunni and Shi'ite, Roman Catholic and Protestant. And the kaleidoscope of beliefs within Protestantism beggars belief. All reflecting the mind of the Sovereign and unchanging God? Not likely
- the question arises: *Is the one God the author of all these different teachings?* After all, He claims that He doesn't change
- it should not be a surprise to learn that since man was created JHVH, Jehovah God, has consistently insisted on one core body of doctrine. Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham - all the faithful down the millennia have embraced it. In a different age, for example, God protected His revealed Day of Rest, the seventh-day Sabbath, by the penalty of death. It's the sign of the covenant God makes with us
- Christianity alone - *in so far as it is faithful to the Scriptures* - is rooted in the faith revealed by God to Israel

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