

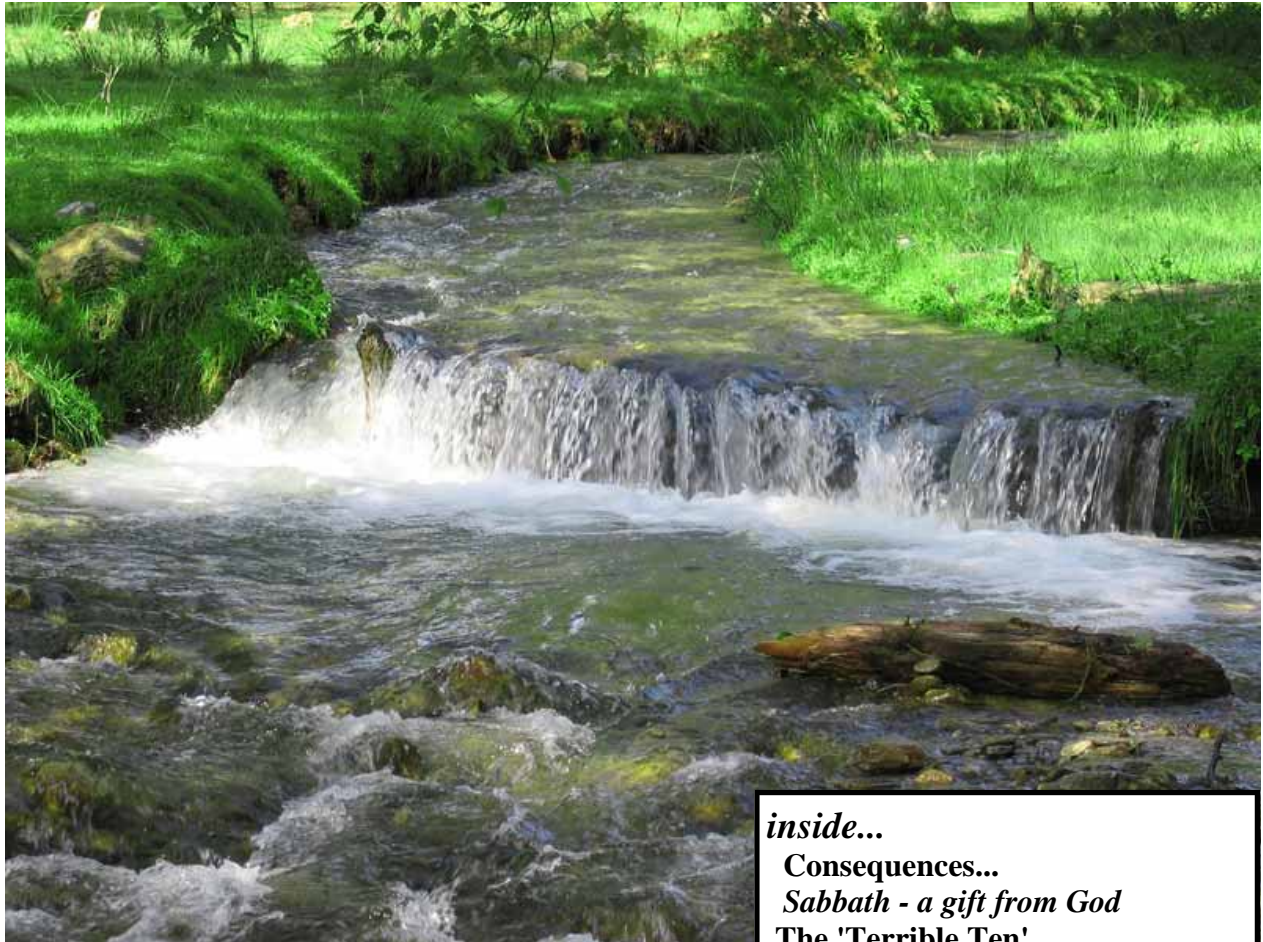
NEW

Horizons

Vol 12 No 3

May/June 2008

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 the clearest of terms - 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

the views expressed by the writers are not necessarily those of the Editor

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new Horizons

Issue No 69

May/June 2008

Why did that happen to me? It's a question we face all too often

That book of wisdom, Proverbs, has much practical advice. For example: *'When you see trouble coming, don't be stupid and walk right into it-- be smart and hide'* (Proverbs 22:3 CEV). Take evasive action!

The credit card account is placed in the drawer - and forgotten. Consequence: added interest. You lock the keys in the car. Consequence: inconvenience and probably expense. Minor consequences these (usually!) - but the principle applies across life: our actions have consequences, good or bad. Not that we can avoid all that life throws at us, for *'...time and chance happens to all of us'*

More advice from Proverbs, personifying wisdom:

'Wisdom shouts in the streets wherever crowds gather. She shouts in the marketplaces and near the city gates as she says to the people, "How much longer will you enjoy being stupid fools? Won't you ever stop sneering and laughing at knowledge? Listen as I correct you and tell you what I think. You completely ignored me and refused to listen; you rejected my advice and paid no attention when I warned you. So when you are struck by some terrible disaster, or when trouble and distress surround you like a whirlwind, I will laugh and make fun. You will ask for my help, but I won't listen; you will search, but you won't find me. No, you would not learn, and you refused to respect the LORD. You rejected my advice and paid no attention when I warned you. Now you will eat the fruit of what you have done"'

(Proverbs 1:21-31 CEV)

So, we have dire Government warnings printed on our cigarette pack, but ignored by many young folk, and usually with the predicted consequence of a shortened life and a painful death. Or, we ignore warnings that concern our unhealthy excess food intake fuelling a coffin-full of ill-health. We accept lending institutions' offers of loans which all too often lead to default - accumulated unpayable interest, home repossession, debtor's prison. Young - and old - blinded by 'love' (or lust) engage in unsuitable relationships and 'repent at leisure' till divorce do them part (Proverbs 5:3-20). An indolent farmer won't reap a crop. Our

Consequences...

children (some) join 'gangs' - and acquire a criminal record (Proverbs 1:10-19). Then we wonder, 'why?'

All sane parents will do their utmost to *'...train up [their] child in the way he should go'* (Proverbs 22:6). Sadly, given appalling education systems and peer pressures the outcome isn't always what we would hope.

Life on the edge

On a global scale, too, there are consequences. Man was charged with 'dominion' (bring order) over all the earth - to *'...dress and keep'* it. Applying our common sense and observation and experiment we are to determine how, for our own well-being, to live in harmony with nature - for nature will always win. So we destroy forests, we over-fish the oceans, we pollute our atmosphere and mismanage our water resources, we ignore laws of health, we are profligate with energy. And we wonder why we're in a mess. Conse-

quences. Then there's economics. To maximize profit, lending institutions unwisely invest in loans for 'sub-prime' properties, concealing their stupidity by intricate insurance deals. Result? The world banking system teeters on the edge of self destruction. Government ignores basic 101 Economics and spend, spend, spend on hare-brained social welfare schemes. Individuals also, consumed by the desire for more, over-extend their resources and face bankruptcy and misery. Nations repeat the mistakes of the past, meddling in the affairs of other nations: *'...ignore the past - and you will re-live it'*. It's a lesson for all of us. *Consequences.*

What about 'nano-technology'? Have we explored the possible consequences? Or GM - genetically modified - plants, or human-animal embryos or human fertilization? And what of the long-term effects of the mass slaughter of infants in the womb? All have consequences for you, for me, for the nations, for mankind globally.

The apostle Paul - in the context of the Lord's Supper - gives advice we can apply generally: *'...if we discerned ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world'* (I Corinthians 11:). Take the advice how you will - our actions or inactions have inevitable consequences.

There's little the average Joe Public can do to affect the crass stupidity of Government. We can, however, take Solomon's advice: when you *'...see trouble coming, don't be stupid and*

walk right into it-- be smart and hide'.

Consequences, however, are not confined to our day-to-day life. Our future is at stake.

The Big Picture

All but a tiny percentage of earth's 6.5 billion believe in a 'god' of some kind. They pray, they attend festivals, they worship, they expect their god to be there for them, they contemplate, they believe in some form of after-life, they have their inspired writings. No less so among the two billion Christians. The Christian 'holy book', the Bible, is a *book of consequences*.

The Bible is clear that man, far from evolving, is on a downward spiral. Of course, knowledge has increased, earth's products have been exploited to our advantage. But six thousand years of civilisation have utterly failed to make us better people. Four and a half millennia ago man self-destructed. Only one family of eight survived. Noah, a '*...preacher of righteousness*' (II Peter 2:5), alone retained a pure relationship with the Creator, passing on that spiritual knowledge - the true faith - to his progeny. Succeeding generations learned from him the revealed path to success. Half a millennium later that knowledge - though diluted (Joshua 24:2) - still guided mankind.

In Abraham's time, for example, the Amorite people - though on a downward slide - would not merit God's judgment for another four centuries (Genesis 15:16). Canaanite tribes at the time had the righteous example and witness of Melchizedek, Priest-King of Salem, one of their city states (*ch* 14). They had, too, the example of Sodom and Gomorrah. But they didn't change their ways and experienced God's judgment when Israel drove them out of the Land.

Consequences for our actions are

- take stock of your life-style. If you have habits harmful to your health (drugs, tobacco, alcohol etc) - quit them
- *put your financial house in order; there's always a rainy day - live within your budget*
- make connections: '*...some friends don't help, but a true friend is closer than your own family*' (Proverbs 18:24)
- *nourish your spiritual side: '...man shall not live on bread alone, but on every Word of God'* (Luke 4:4)

The prophet Jonah was assigned by the LORD to warn the people of Nineveh of coming destruction as a consequence of their behaviour.

They listened to him. They changed. And the predicted doom was averted.

Basic Principles

Ignore the following foundation Biblical principles for life - and negative consequences are inevitable

- There is one God: JHVH
- He created everything
- He is imminent in creation
- There is but one faith
- Man is unique: don't cross species boundaries
- Care for the environment: '*dress and keep' it*
- There is but one race: mankind
- Discrimination: no respect of persons
- Treat others as you would be treated
- Marriage is a life-long commitment between one man and woman
- Promiscuity bears bad fruit
- Children have to be taught to behave
- Properly enforced Law is essential to our well-being
- Justice is even-handed

certain - even though God is '*...merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy*' (Psalm 103:8).

Divine Intervention

Abraham's descendants through Isaac - the people of Israel - inherited the material and spiritual promises unconditionally given by the LORD to the patriarch. They had a Constitution and a legal system that was a model for all mankind (Deuteronomy 4:8). They chose, however, the path of oppression and idolatry. The result? Eviction from their inheritance - the House of Judah for seventy years. The House of Israel - a separate entity - in the eighth century BC was exiled and has yet to return. Again - consequences.

Empires rise and fall - Greece, Rome, the mediaeval European Holy Roman Empire, the Islamic empire. Add to that the globe-girdling British Empire and Commonwealth - now reduced to a rump. Not random events or bad luck but the consequence of moral and spiritual decline.

For God - the God of the Christian Scriptures - is not 'hands off' but is involved in His creation, for '*...the most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomsoever he will*' (Daniel 4:25). No less so today than in Nebuchadnezzar's era. In part, the Creator's intervention in human affairs reflects human behaviour - consequences.

As with any complex instrument - your computer, for example - you function optimally when you conform to the Maker's *Instruction Manual*. Load a rogue program or a 'virus' on your computer and the system crashes or won't function properly. That 'rogue program', for us, is our rejection of divine revelation, the Maker's *Operating System*.

Prophetic Future

As with the Ninevites' response to Jonah's warning, you, me, our nation - and our world - face the challenge of change.

Mankind vainly struggles to 'get it
cont'd p.4

What if God gave you a very valuable gift, a tool that you could use to maintain your physical, spiritual and mental health? And what if you would neglect it?

Steve Kieler

The apostle Paul has a warning for us:

Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him

(Hebrews 2:1-3)

God's Gift

The Sabbath was the first gift to man and is even recorded in the Ten Commandments. Notice it is the only gift therein given. We know it was a gift because Jesus said in Mark 2:27: "...The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath." Obviously, God's greatest gift was his Son, but the Sabbath is the second greatest. Why so?

By way of explanation, let us interject a third gift. Woman was made for man (the third great gift). We could make some valid comparisons. The Sabbath was made for man's own good – and man needs a wife for his own good. Setting aside all jokes, I can think of two good comparative benefits:

- The Sabbath and a wife both balance a man's outlook on opposing viewpoints. Just as man and woman have two different perspectives so does mankind and God.
- They both show him that he is not the center-point of his environment. Marriage acts as an interlude in life; it gives the opportunity to talk, reflect, think, etc. So also, the Sabbath rest does the same between God and man.

Sabbath...a gift from God

A Separator

The Sabbath acts as a separator between the holy and the profane. This is a process the Bible calls sanctification. We must try to separate ourselves from the world. Watching world events, this is becoming more and more evident every day. (Acts 2:40) "And with many other words did He testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this evil generation"

This is not to imply that we must cut all ties with our friends or relatives but that we must not be partakers of the sins and ways of the world. View the day as a time to reacquire yourself with God's law. The violation of those laws brought death in the "Old Testament" - it still does - albeit not by the hands of man.

Seneca, a Roman Senator (4BC - 65AD) said: "... they (Sabbath keepers) lost the seventh part of their life in keeping their Sabbaths; and injured themselves by abstaining from the performance of many necessary things in such times". I think this reflects the attitude of the world toward the rest day. Moreover, I fear it is also often a temptation to us.

Failure to Sanctify

Here is recorded the miserable state of Jerusalem because of the just consequences of its sins.

"How does the city sit solitary, that was full of people! how is she become as a widow! she that was great among the nations, and princess among the provinces, how is she become tributary! She weeps sore in the night, and her tears are on her cheeks: among all her lovers she has none to comfort her: all her friends have

Each quotation from the Bible in New Horizons is from the translation which most clearly expresses the original language

dealt treacherously with her, they are become her enemies. Judah is gone into captivity because of affliction, and because of great servitude: she dwells among the heathen, she finds no rest: all her persecutors overtook her between the straits. The ways of Zion do mourn, because none come to the solemn feasts: all her gates are desolate: her priests sigh, her virgins are afflicted, and she is in bitterness....Jerusalem remembered in the days of her affliction and of her miseries all her pleasant things that she had in the days of old, when her people fell into the hand of the enemy, and none did help her: the adversaries saw her, and did mock at her Sabbaths

Lamentations 1:1-7

Remember - the consequences of sin may fall on the individual as well as a nation. Later, in chapter 2, we see that God took His Sabbaths from the people:

"The Lord was as an enemy: He hath swallowed up Israel, He hath swallowed up all her palaces: He hath destroyed His strong holds, and hath increased in the daughter of Judah mourning and lamentation. And He hath violently taken away His tabernacle, as if it were of a garden: He hath destroyed His places of the assembly: the LORD hath caused the solemn feasts and Sabbaths to be forgotten in Zion, and hath despised in the indignation of His anger the king and the priest. The Lord hath cast off His altar, He hath abhorred His sanctuary, He hath given up into the hand of the enemy the walls of her palaces; they have made a noise in the house of the LORD, as in the day of a solemn feast"

Lamentations 2:5-7

Man trampled on God's Sabbaths, so, rightfully, God took that blessing from them. If you gave someone a valuable gift and they abused and defaced it, you would certainly take it back – if you had the power.

It is difficult to keep the Sabbath at first. We become so captivated by

our desires, our jobs and our frantic lives, it is hard to make a major life-style change even though we know, deep down, it is what we want. You can only understand the benefits of the Sabbath by experiencing it – by observing it. And that takes some practice; it is difficult to unlearn previous habits of working and enjoying worldly pleasures on the Sabbath.

Sabbath attitude:

Do we get so restless that we take on the attitude of Juvenal, A Roman Poet (60AD – 130AD)? Speaking of Jews, he said: *“To whom every seventh day was a blank, and formed not any part of their life.”*

Man is not too bright. The Boss – God – told him to take a break, but the man said *“I’d rather work to exhaustion.”*

Man’s attitude to the Sabbath - indeed to all of God’s law - is: *“I can’t work.”* What a difference it would make if we thought: *“I won’t work, seek my own pleasure, or speak my own words. I won’t give up this day that God has given me.”*

“Remember the Sabbath day”. It was made for man – for me:

Request the articles:

Delight in the Sabbath Why Do You Observe Sunday?

Consequences... cont’d right’, with gains and losses. We fail to recognize that while we may pay lip service to ‘God’ yet we can’t ignore His guidance. The designer of a successful product knows how it works. But if we don’t follow his instructions - breakdown.

That’s what has happened to us. We are ‘broken’. Jesus the Messiah has made full restoration available for all mankind through his sacrifice and the

“If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure on My holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the LORD, honorable; and shall honor Him, not doing your own ways, nor finding your own pleasure, nor speaking your own words: Then shall you delight yourself in the LORD; and I will cause you to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father: for the mouth of the LORD has spoken it” (Isaiah 58:13-14).

“Speaking your own words” does not refer to conversational speech. It means thinking your own thought, looking at things from your point of view.

The Sabbath is the time to focus on God’s thoughts, trying to apply His truths to your life. Sabbath is more than rest; it is refreshment. As the physical body actually regenerates - repairs itself - during rest, so is our spiritual condition regenerated. Be zealous for the Sabbath. After all, what’s not to like about the Sabbath? Take a break!

Figuring out which day is the real Sabbath is easy. Keeping it profitably is quite the more difficult - but the rewards are innumerable, grand, eternal. **Ω**

UNITY...cont’d from p.6

Organization

Any organization - including a church - needs structure. The imposition of an organizational structure - one size fits all - over multiple assemblies, however, induces structural tensions. When local sensitivities - for example, a different culture - are ignored the structure can fracture.

The apostolic model was for independent local assemblies mutually submissive and supportive of one another, and guided by the spoken or written Word - not by dictats from a distant headquarters.

Trivia

Unless there is a strong outward focus members will turn to trivia. Pews or no pews? Music or not? Green carpet or blue? Prayer meeting Wednesday or Tuesday? *Etc.* It’s not unknown for a member of an assembly to choose not to communicate with another member for years over a minor disagreement. Such trivia take on unwarranted importance - and division results.

Human Nature

We each have a nature inclined to self-protection, and a new Christian brings much ‘baggage’ to his chosen assembly, the journey to faith often a long one. The indwelling Spirit will modify - but doesn’t erase - it! The ‘fruits of the Spirit’ grow in the convert as we remove the obstacles to their growth.

So we can expect - as in the assemblies in the apostolic age - some turbulence and, ultimately, division. The ‘perfect church’ has never existed.

The path to harmony devolves on the whole membership of a denomination or a local assembly. Wrote Peter: *‘...be clothed with humility’*.

Identify - and deal now - with the divisive factors apparent in your assembly - starting with yourself! **Ω**

Request the article:

What Do You Mean - ‘Repent’?

Presidential hopeful Mike Huckabee reportedly suggested that the US Constitution be amended to conform to the Bible. Unsurprisingly, ex-Roman Catholic Bill Maher (on the Larry King show) derides this - saying, the Bible is '*an old book of Jewish fairy stories*'. He really is a comedian.

Mr. Maher may have abandoned his childhood faith - which teaches the Biblical Commandments. But is he thinking logically? Are the Commandments obsolete? Are they an offence to atheists - as has been claimed? Would we be better off without them?

But why so much opposition to this body of law? Is it indeed 'religious'?

The Ten Commandments, of course, are in the Bible - listed, for example, in Exodus chapter twenty. Most in our western society have heard of them. And as they are termed 'commandments' few obey them!

But just because they are in a religious book, are they merely religious? Can even secular society at large just ignore them? If we are of a faith that doesn't use the Bible should we be any less governed by "the Terrible Ten"?

Lawless Consequences

Even a superficial look at this concise body of law must stir some measure of agreement - whatever our religious faith, or lack of it. Consider these examples.

Would you, for example, quarrel with '*You shall not steal*'? All of us do our best to protect our personal property. We spend multiple millions on security! If this law were removed from the nation's statute book there would be massive insurrection.

Then there's '*Don't covet*'. If it were not human nature to covet another's possessions or to indulge in conspicuous spending', look at the cost

The 'Terrible Ten'...are the Ten Commandments religious?

savings! So - is this a "religious law"?

Then there's the instruction '*Do no murder*'. What would your reaction be to the abolition of this law? Is it 'religious'? And what about the commandment that forbids perjury ('*false witness*')? How much more smoothly would our justice system run if nobody lied in court - or received the just Biblical punishment if they did so! Again - is it "religious"?

How many husbands and wives have longed for a strengthening of another of those 'obsolete Bible laws': '*Don't commit adultery*'? Vast heartache would be saved if wife-swapping, secret trysts, open adultery and all forms of sexual aberration were outlawed - and dealt with. Imagine the huge benefits to society: divorce would plummet, one-parent children would be rare, lawyers would diminish, sex diseases reduced, billions of pounds redirected to productive use.

Then there's that law the breaking of which has caused endless heartache: '*Honour your father and your mother*' with its direct promise that if this instruction were honoured the nation would thrive. Today? The elderly are despised and often abused, abandoned, murdered - even by their own children!

But what of the *first four* commandments? How do they relate to a secular society?

The Sovereign Creator

These four say: No gods before the Lord. No images or worship of other gods. No distortion of the divinely-revealed religious practices and form of worship. No violation of the seventh day Sabbath. Surely this is *religion*? Only if you don't believe there's a Creator God! With Him, religion and life - the nitty-gritty of day-to-day affairs - are intertwined. A whole, seamless.

Imagine if all mankind followed these instructions! Doesn't religion defile our world? Doesn't it disrupt community relationships? If all were united under the one God - the JHVH of the Christian Bible whose instructions these four Commandments are; wouldn't that stop fanaticism in its tracks?

Look at the destructive effects of the clash between diverse religions within a nation. India, Indonesia, Pakistan, Nigeria - and increasingly our western democracies - are rent by religious disharmony. Unity of belief - if it is God's revealed faith - unifies a nation. (Wherever a false religion is imposed on a nation it becomes totalitarian.)

Failing to recognize His sole authority, His sovereignty - as outlined in the first four Commandments - over every aspect of our being destroys the individual, the family, the nation - and ultimately the world.

Operating Manual

All ten Commandments originated when man was first created. They are the basis of the 'Manufacturer's Operating Manual'. We were *cont'd p.8*

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unsigned articles are by the Editor

Church Unity

...a shattered dream?

Christians long for a utopian time when 'all will be one'. Why hasn't it materialized? Why do churches divide?

Jesus himself on the evening preceding his death prayed for his disciples '*...that they may be one*', and various Christian bodies have formed to promote this worthy aim. What, then, has hindered 'one church'? Why are there so many denominations, thousands of independent groups? Why, indeed, do churches 'splinter'?

No denomination is immune to 'splits'. Baptist, Roman Catholic, Anglican, Church of God - all divide as members become disillusioned, turned off. Often a new branch sprouts. And that branch, likely, bears much the same divisive fruit.

Let's look at some factors promoting division. Address these in the assembly and peace may break out!

Doctrinal Dissent

Much ecumenical effort tends toward the lowest common denominator: *what is acceptable to all sides?* This is so, not least in 'doctrine'. Herein is, it seems, one immovable obstacle: *what 'doctrinal statement' can we all agree?* After all, '*...Your word is truth*', said Jesus, and surely that should be our goal. But is there one true unalterable faith? What, indeed, is 'truth'?

This concept - a 'perfect' doctrinal position - is a prime source of division. The Bible can be a difficult book, and even theologians - from fundamentalist to High Church - fail to fully fathom its depths.

There are clear 'truths' that are fundamental to the Christian faith - but not as many as is often assumed! In particular, prophetic interpretation is an ever-changing kaleidoscope!

The New Testament is clear (*cp* the seven churches in Revelation 2-3, or at Corinth) that you can be a true Christian yet be part of a dysfunctional local assembly which varies from 'the assembly next door' - and still be 'church of God'. (The 'church', of course, is a spiritual organism. Any visible organization includes both 'converted' and 'unconverted'.)

Brethren align behind a particular pet 'truth' - and split when their view is threatened. Deviate from it for one

split second and - well, you are not part of 'us'. But *tolerance in grey areas* does much to oil the wheels of harmony and unity. And there *are* areas of 'grey' in our understanding of the Scriptures.

Elitism

'All men are created equal' - but in church some are more equal than others! The false dichotomy between 'ministry' and 'laity' is an irritant that forces division. The Bible doesn't recognize 'clergy' as today understood. The *kleros* are God's 'heritage', His flock - the brethren (I Peter 3:5). All Christians are '*...one in Christ*', though some are equipped by the holy Spirit to serve as leaders (Acts 20:28). Failure to accept the leadership or an oppressive leadership are sources of division.

Jesus made clear that a domineering 'lordship' was not the way to lead his church (Mark 10:42). It simply leads to fragmentation.

Authority

Linked with elitism is the unwarranted exercise of oppressive authority - authoritarianism. An inner coterie of leadership abandons for personal gain the concept of total Christ-like service - whether for personal power, prestige and control or for mammon (*see* III John: 9, I Timothy 6:5).

Such oppression - imposition of unnecessary rules, imposed doctrinal conformity - incites a sullen, silent membership to rebellion and schism. The apostolic church was 'open', and there was space in the public assemblies for '*...the unlearned and unbelievers*' (I Corinthians 14:23). Believers should be aware of the freedom of expression in the apostolic church.

Especially with autocratic leadership, a 'word from the top' can impose false teaching on an entire denomination or assembly. In such a form of governance the 'flock' tend to be cowed - inwardly seething and ready to run.

Legalism

The Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are a unified whole, the latter modified by the former. In Israel the 'Law' - an essential for any stable society - was visibly enforced by an even-handed justice system.

For the Christian in whom dwells the divine Spirit the Law is inward, in the mind - voluntarily submitted to, with an eternal reward. Suppress conscience and dissent erupts (Romans 14). *cont'd p.4*

Request the free articles:
The Small Church and The Knowledge That Counts

By Dan White

Teach Your Child at Home

[Dan White and his family operate *Homeschool Helpers*, which encourages Christian homeschooling

Christians have long been concerned about US public schools. The courts have ruled that evolution must be taught in the schools, and that prayer, the Bible and the Ten Commandments are excluded. Now the courts are ruling that sodomy must be allowed in the schools.

In Boyd County, Kentucky, around Ashland, the school district did not want to allow a Gay Straight Alliance Club in their schools. When the ACLU sued, a federal judge decreed that not only did they have to allow homosexuality in the schools, but that every teacher and every student in the school district had to be taught to accept it. Students and teachers could not opt out.

This set an enormous precedent for all school districts across America. In Forsyth, Missouri, school officials did not want to allow a Gay Straight Alliance club in their school. One student searched on the internet and found the legal precedents set by the courts, and thereby forced that school in that small town to accept the GSA club.

What does a GSA club do? A science club discusses science and has science projects. A music club talks about music and conducts performances. What does a Gay Straight Alliance Club do? What do these high school kids, who should wait until marriage between a man and a woman for sexual activity, do in a GSA extra curricular activity?

One 'manual' - distributed at a public school function in the Boston area - discusses practices that are alien to all Christian moral teachings. It also listed local bars and hangouts to pursue such activity.

Because the government 'public' schools have been taken over by 'liberal' views, more and more Chris-

tians are leaving them. The Southern Baptists are talking about setting up a nationwide school system.

For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret.

'But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever makes manifest is light. Wherefore he says, Awake you that sleep, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light. See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

Wherefore be you not unwise, but understanding what [is] the will of the Lord (Ephesians 5:13-17, See also Romans 1:26-27)

Homeschooling, which has been growing at about 15% per year for the past three decades, is having an upsurge. Even those Christian parents who have embraced evolution, no prayer, no Bible and no Ten Commandments are now repulsed by sodomy in the schools. They feel a strong need to stop the homosexual indoctrination of their children.

What can a Christian parent do?

Pulling out of the public schools is not difficult. About one in every ten students in America does not attend a government school and this trend toward academic freedom is accelerating. A Christian parent has the choice of a local Christian school or homeschooling.

Most non-Catholic Christian schools are small. Typically they are run by conservative Baptist type churches. Sabbatarians will have certain differences in practice from these churches, such as days of observance, but these usually do not present a large problem. Far better to have a child excused from drawing names at Christmas than to have them exposed to drugs, obscenities, fornication and sodomy in the public schools. Tuition at these schools

usually runs several hundred dollars per month per student, far less than the thousand dollars per month per student in taxes spent at the public schools, but still a challenge for most family budgets.

Homeschooling is love tutoring. The biggest factor in education is motivation. The government spends mountains of money on huge factory type schools, yet do an abysmal job teaching the students. Love motivates. Institutions cannot love. Christian parents do. The biggest reason that homeschooling excels above all other education methods is the love between the parent tutor and the child student.

Make no mistake about it. Homeschooling is the epitome of excellence in education. In student testing, the order of scoring is homeschools, private schools, and, last of all, public schools.

- Public schoolers average in the 50th percentile on standardized tests, while homeschoolers average in the 80th percentile
- Homeschoolers typically score several grade levels above their public school counterparts of the same age
- The longer the students are homeschooled, the greater this difference becomes
- Numerically, homeschoolers should win a national spelling bee or national geography bee about once every thirty years, but they win them much more often
- Contrary to popular belief, homeschool graduates have shown that they have the best social development. Love and Christian teaching has its fruits
- Homeschool graduates are far more likely to participate in civic affairs or to help with social groups, such as church youth or scouting
- About 90% of them go to church at least once a week
- The worst possible education is to push the student away from Christ

cont'd p.8

Terrible Ten... cont'd from p.5

created by God with a specific physical, mental and psychological profile. His Law (Heb *torah* = instruction) was the optimum way for us to live out our lives.

God's Law is not "religious"! In reality there's no conflict whatsoever between law and true religion. Yet our nation's leaders show a strong distaste for it. And perhaps surprisingly many of our *religious* leaders are intent on doing away with the divine Law!

So - no religious bias in any of these laws. Just plain common sense. Just sound regulation of human society. Indeed that's what 'The Ten' are. These Laws were imparted to humanity at our very beginning. Observe them and we will live in peaceful harmony. Transgress them and we get hurt, because we are designed to function best as we live within them.

Plan B

Adam - mankind - chose a different path. Before long he began to walk his own way - a downward path we have ever since followed. With disastrous results. Happily, our merciful Creator has a 'Plan B'.

CALLING ALL INTERNET USERS!

The *Outreach Ministries* website lists over a hundred Bible-based articles which address issues frequently on the minds of Christians. You may download any, or request print copies. There is, too, a section of on-line audio sermons, links to associated groups, back issues of *New Horizons* and an on-line magazine for our younger readers.

www.cgom.org

God foresaw human unwillingness to follow the Manual. The 'egg was scrambled' and could not be restored by human ingenuity! Only a divine plan could reconcile us to our Creator. It was a plan made ready even before man was created.

Why on earth, then, are these practical laws - perfectly designed to regulate society - so opposed!

The End of Civilisation

Today we face the end of human civilisation. Man has ignored the Manual and cocked a snook at the Maker. The "machine" is disintegrating and is ready for the scrap-heap. Until the time that the United Nations, the Taliban, the Northern Alliance, our various national governments, our Local Councils, our families base our laws on the Ten Commandments society will continue to decay - and will experience serious consequences.

But if you personally base your life on this Law you will avoid much of what life throws at all of us.

For the Ten Commandments define *sin* - again, not in truth a "religious" word! Sin is the transgression of what the apostle Paul called "*the holy and just and good*" Law of God (Romans 7:12). It is 'missing the mark' of sane behaviour.

But sin simply refers to all that's wrong with individuals and society. Ignore God's Law, destroy it or disobey it - the end result, ultimately, is the same - death. Death for every society, every culture, and for every one of our readers. Ω

Write for our free articles:
What Do You Mean - "Repent"?
and
Coming To Baptism.
They clearly direct you to the narrow road to abundant life - now, and for all eternity

Homeschool...cont'd

- The best possible education is to point the student to Christ
- About four out of five public school students from Christian families turn away from Christ themselves as adults. That trend is reversed with Christian homeschooling
- Research indicates that only 15% of public school graduates believe in Christ. Of homeschool graduates, 94% are believers

If a Christian parent does nothing - neither uses a Christian school nor a homeschool - then that is exactly what the left leaning politicians want. Leave your kids in their hands and they will mostly become their kids. Most church congregations confirm this: a lot of thin, gray heads, but few young bushy heads.

At *Homeschool Helpers*, we encourage Christian parents to give their beloved children an education based on Christ. Engraved on a building at a College in Pasadena was the dictum, "*The word of God is the foundation of all knowledge.*" Remove this foundation and you have a misguided education and a misguided life. Build on this foundation and you have the best education for your children. Ω

Their website is
www.homeschool-helpers.info

Note: In the USA, a 'public school' is the State school system, while in the UK a 'public school' is private

[Recent legislation in California - opposed by the Governor, and being challenged - has implied that children being taught at home must be taught by someone with a recognized teaching qualification]

MiniStudy**The Day of Pentecost**

'And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place' (Acts 2:1)

Often seen as the 'birthday' of the Christian Church, Pentecost is celebrated worldwide by all denominations.

- The *Day of Pentecost* is one of the annual festivals which the LORD introduced to the Israelites to be observed when they entered the 'Promised Land' (Leviticus 23:10) following their miraculous deliverance from Egyptian slavery. It has, too, vital Christian significance
- It was a celebration of the end of the seven week wheat harvest (Exodus 34:22) and an annual holy convocation (Leviticus 23:21) also called the *Day of the Firstfruits*' (Number 28:26) and the *Feast of Weeks* (Deuteronomy 16:10).
- The festival is related to the giving of the Law on Sinai. It was on that day the Israelites covenanted to serve the LORD faithfully: *'...if you will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then you shall be my own possession from among all peoples: for all the earth is mine: and you shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation'* (Exodus 19:5-6). The divine Law outlines the terms of the Covenant. They accepted the terms wholeheartedly (v.8)
- The Twelve apostles were taught by Jesus during the six weeks following His resurrection - the 'Pentecost harvest period'. Far from abandoning the Feast days they were, on His instructions (Acts 1:4), assembled on the *Day of Pentecost*. They were, for the next ten days, to stay in Jerusalem to *'...wait for the promise of the Father'* when they would be *'...clothed with power from on High'* (Luke 24:49). That promise was the indwelling divine Spirit (John 7:39) who would empower them to carry on the mission of Jesus
- Previous to the outpouring of the Spirit on Pentecost the disciples had been given a 'foretaste' of the Spirit (in a way similar to that of the prophets - II Peter 1:21, John 20:22). At Pentecost they were empowered by the Spirit coming upon and indwelling them. It was a partial fulfilment of the prophecy through the prophet Joel (Acts 2:16-21), the complete fulfilment of which is yet future
- Only if we have the indwelling Spirit of God are we Christians: *'...but you are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell [resides, as in a house] in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his* (Romans 8:9). To be part of the divine Family, the Kingdom of God, we must *'...Repent and be baptized, each of you on the name of Jesus Christ to remission of sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit'* (Acts 2:38)
- Jesus - in the 'sermon on the Mount' - had emphasized the validity of the Law, thus linking it with Pentecost: *'...Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets: I came not to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law, till all things be accomplished. For I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven'* (Matthew 5:17-20). The Law was given to Israel on Pentecost (Exodus 19)
- At Sinai, the Law was written on stone (Deuteronomy 27:8). Jeremiah previews the new covenant relationship between the indwelling Spirit and the Law: *'...this shall be the covenant that I will cut with the house of Israel: After those days, declares Jehovah, I will put My Law in their inward parts, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people'* (ch 31:33). That new Covenant was 'cut' on that first Christian *Day of Pentecost*. On that occasion the risen, glorified Christ through the Spirit came to dwell in His people: *'...I am with you always, even unto the end of the world'* (Matthew 28:20)

Pentecost 2008 is Sunday June 8

- Christians are recognized by the *sign* of the Covenant - the Sabbath - which was inaugurated at Creation, observed by the faithful throughout the millennia, and also by Jesus, the apostles and the early church of God (Genesis 2:3, Exodus 31:13-17). Every committed Christian willingly patterns his or her life in accordance with that *'holy, just and good'* law (Romans 7:12). In no way does its observance bring salvation. The Law, however, is the foundation pattern for holy living. It is with the help of the indwelling Spirit that we can approximate to the perfect Law-abiding life of Jesus
- Jesus' first public sermon (after his baptism, temptation and some months establishing a reputation) proclaimed his Messiahship on *'the day of the Sabbaths'* (Luke 4:16) - *Pentecost, the Feast of Weeks*. In his message at Nazareth - powered by the holy Spirit - he outlined the purpose of his mission (vv. 18-19). Identified as the Messiah by his works, his mission is to evangelize, to give liberty to those enslaved by sin, to encourage the contrite. This same message the apostles, energized by the Spirit on Pentecost, continued to proclaim. It is the message of the church until he comes again - this time for *'...the day of God's vengeance'* (Isaiah 61:2)

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