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Horizons

Vol 9 No 4

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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 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 52

July/August 2005

Our world is fraught with uncertainty. Whether health, family affairs, finances, work—none offer us the solid foundation of certainty. How can we thrive in an uncertain world?

Will I succumb to ill-health—or even die soon? Who will support me should I become incapacitated? Will I be safe at home and on the street? Can I stay married for a lifetime or will my partner be unfaithful and leave? Will I have healthy children? Do I face redundancy at work? Will I lose my home? Add on the uncertainty of a world in turmoil with its threats from both nature and human nature.

Prudence Needed...

In our Western world we needn't be destitute, even in face of State incompetence. Not even Government, however, is able to guarantee retirement comfort (except for themselves!).

But we must still live with uncertainty. The prudent look at their circumstances and take whatever steps are necessary to avoid catastrophe. They eat healthfully. They avoid noxious substances and destructive practices. They select carefully their life's partner ensuring shared values. There's no 'keeping up with the Joneses' or wild and frivolous overspending. Instead they work hard and personally provide for their future.

...but Anxiety Rules

Take a look at our world. It is dominated by a single all-powerful superpower, the United States of America

perhaps the most altruistic of nations. Yet America is increasingly subject to abuse from lesser entities. The invasion of Iraq, accompanied by Great Britain, has precipitated a wall of hate from Islamic terrorists and timid 'friends'. It's not unlikely that the invasion was stirred up by the Creator—just as He has done throughout history. But that doesn't mean He is pleased with America or Britain! Both nations have for two hundred years experienced untold abundance. Now, however, they ignore Him—both Government and people. So He removes the protective hedge built around us.

LIVING WITH UNCERTAINTY

Middle East in general? There's uncertainty.. Uncertainty that spills into personal lives, not only of the families involved but for all of us. How will oil-rich Middle Eastern nations respond? Will Iran go nuclear? Will Asian nations pull their financial prop of the US economy? And how will that affect us personally? Uncertainty.

Uncertainty, too, in matters of health, for none of us is guaranteed a life free from illness or accident. Modern technological medicine is amazing, but it is by no means infallible. Who knows when the 'Grim Reaper' will call by. Or some incapacitating illness or accident. We can financially

insure ourselves but that's no substitute. Again—*uncertainty*.

Then there is the family, for the ancient stability within a lifetime marriage is no longer. In the UK the average duration is but eleven years while one couple recently celebrated eighty years of marriage. The foundations have crumbled. A lifetime marriage is now merely one option in a sea of choice including sterile same-sex relationships and the single-parent option. Yet the facts clearly show mere co-habitation—living together without 'the piece of paper'—is usually prone to early collapse with children abandoned to single parenthood. Weird welfare provision, Government and societal undermining of the marriage institution and neglect of personal responsibility encourages feckless youth to procreate with dire social consequence for the nation.

The pinnacle of creation, mankind, is equated with amoral animals. Sexual promiscuity, also encouraged by Government in the UK, results in infertility, abortion and rampant STDs. More uncertainty.

What about 'church'? Surely here we can be sure—sure of personal satisfaction through faith here and now, and eternal security? No—not

so. The universal assault by pseudo-science and so-called liberalism on the very idea of a Creator God has undermined faith, increased doubt and launched a wave of secular uncertainty.

How, in such a world, can we build stability and certainty into our short

What will now happen in Iraq, and indeed the

A prudent man sees problems ahead and prepares. The thoughtless carry on and suffer the consequences
Proverbs 22:3

lifespan?

Psychology teaches belief in self, and certainly confidence in our talents and skills is an important ingredient. We search out—or should do—our inherited abilities and skills and nourish them through education, practice and experience, enabling us to foresee problems and nip them in the bud. Wise parents instil in their offspring a desire to succeed. Such life skills enable a degree of certainty.

Faulty Solutions

Uncertainty, however, runs deeper. No era of human existence has been ‘perfect’, and mankind has always had to deal with the unexpected, for too much is beyond the control of any one of us. Sadly, many lack the essential foundation to deal with it. Some simply cave in and take their

**Cast all your anxiety upon him,
for he cares for you I Peter 5:7**

own life. Millions more live in a Prozac-induced stupor as they seek a chemical solution to depression and anxiety. Others seek solace through religious ritual or are sucked into a sect that offers certainty: protection from a coming ‘tribulation’, doctrines set in stone, a reclusive community, an unbending hierarchical structure.

Divine Remedy

But true religion can indeed provide that sought-after certainty. Not, however, assurance of a long and tranquil life or abundant health and material prosperity. Nor a guarantee of physical protection through all of life’s ups and downs. And certainly no promise that Christians won’t suffer persecution and martyrdom. Millions, perhaps, have down the centuries suffered and been mercilessly killed for their faith at the hand of individuals, of pseudo-Christians and other faiths, and of the State. So, the certainty of faith lies elsewhere.

Jesus, the Saviour of the world, ex-

Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what you shall put on. Is not the life more than food and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much better than they? Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? And why take you thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the [unconverted] seek:) for your heavenly Father knows that you have need of all these things. But seek you first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the [adversity] thereof

Matthew 6:25-34

perienced life in the raw, was widely despised and rejected in his generation—and today. He lived under the totalitarian Roman power. His expression of the true faith incurred the wrath of the religious authorities. He was tested by all those desires of the flesh to which any human is heir—yet without in any way succumbing to them. His message was: *despite life’s challenges ensure you have a sound foundation.* Build on rock, he

the Bible step-by-step...

You are invited to enroll for our

Bible Correspondence Course

In a series of lessons you are taken through the main Bible themes. There is no charge

Unsigned articles are by the Editor

says, not shifting sand. That ‘rock’ is the basic principles of living as embodied in his own life.

Don’t be anxious about the material in life. Just as with any wild creature, life will end, challenges will beset us—but in the meantime, says Jesus, ‘trust me, for I will provide your needs’. “Take heed” he said, “that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that you be not troubled: for all must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows” (Matthew 24:4-8). That describes our age!

But, says Jesus : ‘See that you be not troubled’

What to do

You can’t control every aspect of life, but you *can* introduce a degree of certainty:

- **Manage your health:** eat healthily, control your life-style, avoid noxious substances
- **Look after your finances:** live within your means, become debt-free as quickly as possible
- **Strive for betterment:** but be content with your circumstances
- **Avoid an information overload:** be aware of what’s going on in the world—but don’t be anxious about it
- **Align your life to God’s principles of living:** apply the Biblical Book of Proverbs
- **Nourish family life:** a stable family life within a binding marriage provides essential support; ensure shared material and spiritual values
- **Above all:** trust God; lay all your anxieties on a loving and caring heavenly Father Ω

There's a diversity of views about the nature of God in the various world faiths. How can He best be understood?

THE FAMILY OF GOD

Christianity proposes that 'God' is a 'trinity'. That is, God is composed of the Father, Jesus the Son, and the Holy Spirit. This idea has been established since the fourth century and any other concept is viewed as unorthodox. Indeed, Christians down the centuries have been murdered for opposing it.

Others within Christianity have proposed a variety of alternative views. Potentially the simplest—and perhaps the most accurate and satisfying—is that *God is a Family*, an idea richly supported in the Scriptures. In other words, 'God' is an inclusive term that embraces an increasing number of family members.

Family Origins

The human family is a divine concept modelled on the God Family. We are created by Him ('Elohim') *'in the likeness and image of God'* (Genesis 1:26). Alone in nature we humans have in embryo form the very nature of our Creator. We are not fish, not amphibians, not birds or animals. Never have been.

A man, according to the divine model for human relationships, is nourished by his parents. In maturity he leaves that family, becomes joined to his wife and together they have their own new family including a varying number of their offspring. This 'nuclear' family remains in close association with their wider extended family of parents and grandparents.

Occasionally in human history societies have followed this mode—as from time to time in ancient Israel. And outside the Western world, as in the Hindu faith, life-long marriage remains

the option of choice. Other areas are a basket case, notably Africa. Not far behind, however, are the 'Christian' nations. The duration of marriage in the UK, for example, averages eleven years, fifteen in the United States. Millions of children are fatherless, brought up by struggling single mothers.

And the consequences are clear for all to see—except perhaps for Government and the so-called liberal Establishment. For many, too many, the choice—even among Christians—is 'co-habitation'; but such relationships manage only on average two or three years. Increasingly, too, promiscuous young men and women—children, often—procreate like alley cats and leave the consequences to the tax-payer.

That's not the divine pattern. Society will benefit from the diligent application of the *Torah*, the divine instruction on this, as in other aspects of life

Let's explore the 'God Family'.

The Family of God

The notion accepted by Christian orthodoxy confines God to a closed Trinity, 'one in three and three in one'. The very terms used in Scripture—and by theologians—however, should indicate the *family* relationship of God: Father and Son. And then there are 'children of God', and we use the term 'mother church'. All are terms agreed as authentic throughout the varied sects of Christianity. It's the heart and core of the faith. *And I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.*

The family concept runs as a golden thread through Scripture. Humans are potentially children of the Creator God, the Father: *'For it became him [Jesus], for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory...'* (Hebrews 2:10).

Jesus is 'the Son of God' - and all true Christians are his brothers: *'For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brothers'* (Romans 8:29). Jesus, says Paul, is the firstborn, to be followed by multitudes (through resurrection) of transformed men and women

So there are indeed three aspects of the God Family: Father, Son—and the brethren of Jesus. How,

Pat Dennis 1946-2005

It's with great sadness that we announce to our readers the death of our CGOM elder from Coffeyville, Kansas—on May 19, suddenly from a massive stroke, aged 58.

Pat is survived by his wife Aletha and their children, Renee, Kim and Trevor—all married. And by his parents and brothers.

Pat Dennis is a much-loved 'founding father' of the *Outreach Ministries*, having laboured long at our beginning to hammer out our approach to the shape of CGOM and its approach to the concept of church. Since then he has served faithfully on various Committees and we have benefited from his wise advice and encouragement.

We extend our continuing love and support to the family.

then, did the erroneous idea of a 'Holy Ghost' slip into theology?

Holy Spirit

Clearly, the Scriptures ascribe a huge importance to the role of the holy Spirit ('Holy Ghost'). That Spirit is the extension throughout the universe of the divine persona, the divine mind. The Spirit is all-powerful, everywhere present, active in world affairs and in certain individuals. It is how God created and sustains and works throughout His creation: *'...the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters'* (Genesis 1:2).

By means of the Spirit the LORD has communicated with His prophets. And through the Spirit Jesus builds, guides and corrects the church. Through the apostle John Jesus says: *'He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches'* (Revelation 2:7, 11 etc).

The point is, the holy Spirit is God—just as we can each lay claim to our own human spirit or personality, while understanding that it is not a being separate from us.

The Vital Link

There's a further aspect of the work of the Spirit, one that links it to the Family of God. For it is only if we humans have the Spirit dwelling in us that we can be called 'Christian'.

. Wrote Paul: *'Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his'* (Romans 8:9). So, with the indwelling Spirit we are—right now—God's sons: *'...now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is'* (I John 3:2). That is, by virtue of the holy Spirit in us we are God's sons and daughters. We are a part, the

third part, of the divine Family . Since the first Christian Pentecost that part has been growing—growing as the Father calls and as men and women respond to that call.

But notice: *'... we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him'*. When Jesus Christ returns to Planet Earth, all individuals with the Spirit will burst the chains of mortality and enter into *'the glorious liberty of the Sons of God'*. No longer will

to become a child of the Father and a brother of Jesus we must have the Spirit

we be bound by the constraints imposed by the physical. For we will have become fully a part of the divine Family with all that entails.

The Spirit has co-existed in the Father and in the Son since eternity. By virtue of the Spirit in us we participate in that eternity. In this life we, in co-operation with the Spirit, are building the divine character: *'But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord'* (II Corinthians 3:18). By the action of the Spirit in

us, in other words, we are transformed during our converted lifetime to reflect the very image of God as exemplified to us by Jesus.

The Way

The first step to become a Family member, then, is to receive the holy

God is calling individuals to share in the family relationship he has with His Son Jesus. For an insight into how you can be part of the divine Family you are invited to request the free articles:

What Do You Mean—'Repent'? and Coming To Baptism

Spirit. The apostle Peter explains how: *'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit'* (Acts 2:38). That is, change your mind and turn around your life. Jesus the Son is *'the way, the truth and the life'* and nobody can enter the Father's Family except through a saving faith in him, God's appointed Saviour . And no-one can come to Jesus Christ unless drawn to him by the Father (John 6:44).

Again we see the family analogy. Humanly, the father implants his 'seed' and a child is conceived. The heavenly Father implants His Spirit seed in selected human minds. A 'spiritual son' is begotten. Just as our first parents were instructed to *'...be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth'* (Genesis 1:28), so, too, God is 'reproducing after his kind'.

When we come to a knowledge that we are, through our thoughts and actions, an enemy of God and we desire to be reconciled with Him—then we must be 'born anew'.

Through the new birth we inherit unending life. Wrote Paul: *'But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwells in you'* (Romans 8:11).

Purpose of Life

And God's prescription? *'Repent and be baptized'*. That's how, following the laying on of hands, we receive the eternal Spirit that imparts eternal life, and gives us entrance to the Family of God.

We were created by a loving God who desires to share His glory with those He has created in His image and likeness. That's the whole purpose of human life.

Many thousands in the various churches of God are sharing in this vision. Contact us at any of our addresses if you would like to discuss your part. **Ω**

It's a sad day when a loved one dies. Will you meet again? Is there life after life? What really happens when you die?

Most adults have experienced the awful trauma of losing a loved one. An accident, a prolonged disease, or sudden illness blights the lives of the loved one's family and a wider circle of friends and colleagues. Tears well up in private and public grief. An awesome and unfillable gap breaches the orderliness of humdrum life. There's the gnawing pain of loss. Silence shrouds life's business.

Why? is often our first question. Why has this beloved person been taken? Death was so undeserved! Why, when so young? Why, when there was so much good being done? Why, when so beloved by all? The questions - seemingly unanswerable questions - crowd in thick and fast.

Less often asked is: *Where to?* Few like to pose that one!

It's easier when a dear one has led a godly life; easier when you can't find anyone who can in all honesty say a contrary word; when the life has glowed with joy and helpfulness and faithfulness and sound wisdom and encouragement; when life's winter follows a productive harvest of good deeds and love and generosity.

Then you can rejoice when the minister says that the loved one is "with the Lord" and is happier than conceivably possible. Then you feel you can say *Amen* when he tells you that the loved one is even now beholding the face of Jesus in heavenly splendour.

Infant Reward

But what if it's an infant who has barely drawn his first breath that's being lowered into the cold earth? Where are the good deeds to

praise? Where the life of ac-

complishment? Where the belief?

Or what if everyone knows the person of mature years has lived a life of selfishness, of greed, or miserliness? What if the individual was untrustworthy or an inveterate liar? Or a callous murderer or unrepentant child molester? Are you comfortable to hear such a person, beloved or not, "preached into heaven"?

Further, have you ever heard the preacher announce someone has reaped the fruit of an evil life and is even now screaming in agony in the flames of hell? In evangelical circles it's the only available alternative - yet, usually unannounced in the "respectable" funeral service!

Then there are the in-betweens - most of us. We've done a bit of good. And there's been a dash of courage, a flash of generosity, a streak of loyalty... But no claim to be a "born again Christian." No profession - in a long lifetime - of faith in Christ as Saviour and Lord. And probably lots of activities we would rather our friends didn't know about! What of these folk? Where are they after death?

Failed Missionaries

How about the countless billions who have lived, have done good works, and have died - and the missionary didn't reach them in time to tell them salvation comes only through Jesus Christ? Where are they? After all, they never had a chance to accept or to reject salvation! Yet the Scriptures inform us that God wants all mankind to come to repentance.

And can we really believe that a loved one whom we believe to be in heaven can't see the agonies of those in "hell"? Can't hear the screams of pain? Has forgotten that a

When Someone Dies

loving spouse (or an innocent infant son or daughter) never "accepted Jesus" - and, supposedly, went to the other place? Where is the untrammelled joy in that?

And can we believe that our omnipotent and totally loving Father in heaven can ignore their cries? Can permit them to suffer throughout all eternity? (Imagine holding a loved one's hand in a match-flame until it expires - and that's only a few seconds!)

Certainly God is also a just God, a righteous God. But am I more righteous than Him? After all, I give my children more than one chance to "get it right"! Do you give up when your child fails to walk at his first attempt? Perhaps some of us never will get it right in this life, but does that mean we are fit only to burn for ever and ever?

Surely God has infinitely more patience, more love!

Source of Belief

These are logical questions and situations. They are questions that most of us don't face - won't face! Yet they are questions that are firmly and clearly addressed in that source of Christian belief - the Bible.

The fact is, even for most Christians, much of our belief about death and the hereafter doesn't come from the Word of God. They are unproven hand-me-down ideas from childhood. Yet, for Christians, the Bible is supposed to be the sole source of our belief. And what we find there - if we are indeed willing to take an unbiased look at it - is infinitely more satisfying than the concepts outlined earlier in this article.

So let's take a look at the clear Bible

teachings. Recall what Jesus said: *Man must live by every word of God!* As Christians we must be willing to see what God is saying to us. And - dare I say it - not simply accept unquestioningly the powerful assertions of a minister (however well-liked, however charismatic, however caring and sympathetic) at a funeral oration

There are some clear and simple Bible statements we need to examine and reconcile:

- *God only has immortality* (1 Timothy 6:16)
- *There is a spirit in man* (Job 32:8)
- *The spirit returns to God* (Ecclesiastes 12:7)
- *The dead know nothing; the memory of them is lost* (Ecclesiastes 9:5)
- *All in Christ shall be made alive* (1 Corinthians 15:52)
- They shall be made alive at the “*last trump*” (1 Corinthians 15:52).

The rest of the dead will live again at the end of the thousand

These statement demands a complete article! They can be supported by a whole body of Scripture. However, it can readily be seen - since we are looking only to the Scriptures to inform us of God’s teachings - that when that beloved one dies, the human spirit is safe with God until the resurrection, when consciousness will be revived.

Rest in Peace

What does all this mean? Simply that when someone dies - whether they were good or bad, righteous or unrighteous, child or senior citizen, Christian or Hindu or animist, born-again or not - whatever their status, they will, when they die, remain at rest until the time of their resurrection to life.

The Bible leaves no doubt as to

when these resurrections (the Bible mentions several) take place. Paul tells us it is “*every man in his own order*” (1 Corinthians 15:23).

He tells us that Jesus was the first to be resurrected in this sense. Then there’s a “pause” until His return - an event now imminent! It is at this specific point in time (the return of Christ) - represented in Bible prophecy as the “*last [seventh] trumpet*” - that the dead in Christ arise from the grave, their spirit united with a resurrected body.

Notice Paul’s words: “*For the* **Request free: Keys to Revelation**

trumpet shall sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and this mortal nature must [at this point in time] put on immortality” (verses 52-53). That’s the time gloriously celebrated in the famed Handel’s Messiah! The spirit of every righteous person since Adam has - according to Scripture - been preserved in God’s care since death, and will remain in His care until the resurrection.

Sleep of Death

But they have not been conscious of the passage of time! Nearly six thousand years in some cases! Yet - get this - in their consciousness the righteous will at the moment of their deaths seem to be instantly alive and with Jesus Christ.

The intervening millennia will appear to have been obliterated - just like the effects of an anaesthetic! But what about unbelievers?

What of the “Heathen”?

The Bible clearly informs us that all mankind is to enjoy this rest. Their human spirit, too, is preserved by God. Whether a righteous Abraham or Paul, or an “ignorant savage,” or the average unconverted man-in-the-street - all will remain in the grave oblivious of the passage of

time until their resurrection.

Jesus took time to instruct the Jews in this very matter. He told them: “*The hour is coming when all that are in the tombs will hear His [the Son’s] voice and come forth, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgement*” (John 5:28-29).

This same author (John), in fact, tells us when these two events will occur. He writes: “*they [martyrs] came to life again [were resurrected] and reigned with Christ for a thousand years*” (Revelation 20:4). This is in perfect harmony with Paul’s statement that “the dead in Christ” (together with Christians then living) will become immortal at Christ’s coming, at the last trumpet sound.

Thus, in one instant the whole universe will burst in joy as the family of God is resurrected to be with Christ! It is at that time - the Second Coming of Christ - that our beloved “dead in Christ” will receive their just reward (Revelation 11:18). And the rest of mankind?

John enlightens us: “*The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years [the Millennium] were at an end*” (verse 5). Isn’t that clear!

A Second Resurrection!

If we really want to believe what God tells us in His word we can’t escape the conclusion that at least two resurrections - separated by one thousand years - lie ahead of us. The first for God’s own chosen people, the second for the rest of mankind.

[In his book *The Scripture Testimony to the Messiah*, John Pye Smith mentions ancient authors showing that this concept of a “second resurrection” for “*all the*

rest of mankind” was agreed by the ancient Rabbinical writings.] *small and great, stand [resurrected] before God; and the books [of the Bible] were opened; and another*

In this “second resurrection” those whom God has never called in this life - the good, the bad, the indifferent - will be *book was opened which is the Book of Life; and the dead [now resurrected] were judged out of those things which were writ-*

restored to physical flesh and blood life.

In their former existence, Satan had successfully blinded and

deceived them (Revelation 12:9; II Corinthians 4:4). But with this evil rebel safely out of the way for ever (Revelation 20:10), they will (just like Christians now) be judged out of the things written in the Scriptures. Then the Book of Life will be opened - sufficient evidence that God’s grace for salvation will be freely available for them!

God’s grace for salvation will become freely available for all mankind from every age

ten in the books according to their works” (Revelation 20:12).

In other words, all women and men and children who have never heard of Jesus Christ or who were not during their lifetime specifically called by God (read, for example, John 6:65) will at that time have their very first real opportunity to be converted and to receive the Spirit of God.

An End to Evil

Note again the word given to the apostle John: “*And I saw the dead,* Only after this final grand chance of salvation will “all hell break

loose” in the evangelical use of the term! For all those who fail to then repent will suffer “the second death” in a hell-fire that is so fervently hot it will completely obliterate the remaining evil on earth (Revelation 20:14-15; 21:8), ushering in a “*new heavens and a new earth*”.

In God’s grand design for mankind, every man, woman, and child ever born in whatever age, in whatever part of the world, and no matter what their religion or their life-style, will be given - in God’s good time - the glorious opportunity to freely choose life for all eternity.

What a beautiful and complete and fair plan! It makes sense of the mystery about the death of our loved ones! It ends the widespread speculation about life after death. **Ω**

CGOM—not a church

Unusually though not uniquely, the *Churches of God Outreach Ministries* (CGOM) is not ‘a church’. That is, we are not a single denomination with a leadership which gives direction to any number of subsidiary local affiliated churches.

In contrast, *CGOM* is an ‘umbrella’ for any number of like-minded independent assemblies who would like to extend their outreach through cooperation with other independent assemblies. To this end we support through the means of literature, speakers, festival organization, home visits where feasible *etc.*

CGOM, for example, does not dictate doctrine. There is a basic *Statement of Beliefs* which is voluntarily agreed to by associating assemblies. Nor is there any interference in any aspect of the day-to-day operation of the assemblies. They are quite independent, though encouraged to interact with other assemblies.

Joint outreach activity by any means—*eg* through *New Horizons*

magazine, outreach projects, overseas mission—is financed by voluntary donations from assemblies (agreed by the local brethren) and from supporting individuals.

Local leadership is appointed locally, through Spirit-led elders. They are of the brethren and not parachuted in’ from a distant headquarters, and are responsible only to Jesus Christ and to their congregation.

A series of *Guidelines* is available with suggestions for the day-to-day work of the assembly. They cover such topics as baptism, finance, ethics, leader appointment, funerals *etc.* The *Guidelines* may be viewed and downloaded from the *CGOM* website: www.cgom.org

The *Churches of God UK* shares the same beliefs and structure, and is the British/European arm of the *Outreach Ministries*.

Independent fellowships of whatever size, and individuals, are welcome, and are invited to associate **Ω**

Everybody... *cont’d from p.8*

translated as *sin*. *Sin* is missing the mark—an archery term—and ‘*falling short of the glory of God*’. And we all do it.

Defined

We sin, then, when we fail to respect the elderly. We sin when we have sexual relationships outside marriage. We sin when we cheat on our taxes or steal, or lie or commit perjury, or injure someone. We sin when we hate or cheat or lust after another’s possessions. Is anyone left out?

Above all we sin when we worship other than the Creator God as portrayed in the Bible. We sin when we put anything before Him or in His place. We sin when we observe any religious days other than those He has prescribed from the beginning.

The Remedy

There is but one sway any of can take if we want to make this life worthwhile and if we desire to live forever. We must turn to the lifestyle prescribed in the Manual—and then seek the forgiveness God offers through the sacrifice of His Son, Jesus. *There is no other way.* **Ω**

request the related articles:

**What Do You Mean—’Repent’?
Should You Be Baptized?**

Born with Purpose

With over six billion *homo sapiens* populating our planet, the death—or life—of one individual doesn't seem of great significance. Millions die, millions are born, daily. So it's easy to think there's not much point to our existence.

If, as is widely believed, we are simply the end-product of a chance and random concoction of DNA—then we are born, we live, we die. No hope. End of all too often a miserable story.

So, given this scenario, it's okay to indiscriminately wipe out multiple millions before they see the light of day. [In the USA there have been an estimated 30 million abortions since the 60's. In the UK there are around 180,000 each year.] It's then okay to commit, as did Hitler, genocide, wipe out the disabled. Or the multi-millions more worked to death by Stalin. Your moral views are your own responsibility, tempered only by the law of the land. And there's *no eternity*. No purgatory, no hell—and *no heaven*. Mere extinction. That's evolution for you.

But consider—that DNA didn't materialize from thin air, and certainly not from nothing. But because of the onslaught of godless pseudo-science most 'westerners' are sold on the comic-cut notion that organic forms developed suddenly from nothing, and through a billion years of 'evolution' arrived at what is considered the pinnacle of nature. *homo sapiens*, mankind.

Human Potential

No—a Supreme Intelligence created man, and in His own image. We have, in embryo form, His characteristics—we think, we plan, we accomplish, we imagine a future, we have emotions, admire beauty, we love, we experience joy. And for what

reason?

The divine purpose is that each one of us can become

like Him—not only in our character but also formed from the same substance. That is, *Spirit*. Equipped to live eternally and free from the restraints of the flesh.

To this end God told our first parents: "...*be fruitful and multiply*".

From the moment of conception that is our potential. God's appointment is that we procreate, and that what is conceived grows in the womb to maturity, develops to godly adulthood,

commits to a life-long fruitful marriage. Only *sin* mars that awesome purpose.

This sinful nature of ours, shared by all mankind, delights in all that's perverse. It sees no wrong in practices that frustrate that divine plan: war, murder, abortion, homosexuality, adultery. The sole exception is the single—and celibate—state.

If you so desire, the Creator has a plan of life tailored personally for you.

But the path isn't easy. Ω

Everyone Does It...

It unites all mankind. It's It clings tenaciously to the very depths of our being. It's unlikely a day will pass without you doing it. But each defines it as they will.

It isn't a matter to be taken lightly—and certainly God doesn't. It affects the course of your life from the moment of birth. And until it is dealt with you will suffer consequences.

Man was created as a mature, functioning, articulate adult. And just like any specialized instrument he (and she) was accompanied by an 'instruction manual'. Failure to live in accordance with its precepts would result in malfunction, with the possibility of total destruction.

Read the Manual

Our first parents, had they 'followed the Manual', would have lived forever, physical as they were created. Day by day, however, every one of us in differing ways fails to perfectly follow the manual. As a species we thus chip away at this thing called life.

Fail to implement any of the principles in the Manual—physical, emo-

tional, spiritual—and you are a step nearer physical death. It accounts for much of the world's sickness and disease, the criminality, the social disruption, the poverty.

Should we be surprised at this, when we have thrown away the Manual? (Yet it has been estimated that there are six billion in printed form on the planet!) The Manual—it is the Christian Bible—instructs on health and hygiene and healing, on human relationships, on crime and justice. It is a guide for families, on child-rearing, on marriage and on sex. Follow it and our world will be a better place.

The Bible, the record of the Creator's guidance for living, also warns us of the consequences of

'missing the mark'. Since our first parents, encouraged by the Adversary to the divine

plan, chose human reason rather than revelation, every child born has lacked the ingredient essential to life—God's Spirit.

That means, however long or short the lifespan, there's no prospect of living beyond the grave. To 'miss the mark' is in Bible language

read:

The Law of Life

free, from our addresses

Mini-study**Why Marriage?**

“And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him... And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made He a woman, and brought her to the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they shall be one flesh” (Genesis 2:18, 22-24).

Marriage is being replaced with a myriad of lifestyles. And, with today’s dismal record of marriage failures, it is understandable. If the odds of success were less than 50%, would you make an investment or fly a plane? Over 50% of marriages end in divorce. An estimated 65% of men are in affairs, and 40% of women.

Does that make marriage a risky venture? No wonder 9.7 million people in the USA are cohabiting (sinning). We are a product of our upbringing and society. If we keep doing what we’re doing, we’ll keep getting what we’ve got, only worse. Can the institution of marriage be fixed? How can you beat the odds? — *“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because you have rejected knowledge, I will also reject you...” (Hosea 4:6 KJV).* We need to know “Why Marriage?”

- man and woman were created with specific instructions : *“ 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:...” (Genesis 1:27-28)* Woman was created as a counterpart to man, not in an adversarial role but as an aid and companion (Gen 2:18 *above*). They were made to balance and complement each other
- specific instructions are given to each:
 - 1 *to the woman:* (Ephesians 5:22-33) *“Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and He is the savior of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing”*
 - 2 *to the man:* {Eph 5: 25} *“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it; That he might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loves his wife loves himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourishes and cherishes it, even as the Lord the church: For we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband”*
- the parents are to teach children about God and marriage! (Deuteronomy 11:19) *“And ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sits in your house, and when thou walk by the way, when thou lie down, and when thou rise up.”* This is a grave responsibility, but too often ignored
- the Biblical instruction therefore remains: *“That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honor;” (1 Thessalonians 4:4).* *“Should know how”* indicates an effort must be put forth to understand the purpose of marriage and its rules. Would anyone enter into such an important contract without good advice, counsel, knowledge, and wisdom?

Steve Kieler

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