

outreach

The Newsletter of the Churches of God, UK

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www.cgom.org

providing
leadership,
information and
Biblical teaching.
Matthew 28:19-20

representing

CGOM
Churches Of God Outreach Ministries

GO IT ALONE!

Businesses usually begin small. The renowned Marks and Spencer, for example, began as a street market stall. But it didn't stay that way, and is now famous in many nations.

An achievement like that needs a large dose of the 'entrepreneurial spirit'. It needs true grit, commitment, vision, determination. It can withstand ups and downs, success and reversal. A further ingredient is to grasp an unoccupied 'market niche'.

Scattered

There's a lesson here for those Christians who are 'scattered', and who lack opportunity for regular fellowship with other like-minded Christians. And that opens up a 'market niche'!

Some of the first Christians faced the same challenge. Take, for example, the encounter Jesus had with a woman at Sychar in Samaria (John 4). She believed - and was an instrument in bringing many of her neighbours to faith. Also consider the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8). He encountered Philip (one of the brethren scattered from Jerusalem because of persecution) who instructed him in the faith, baptized him - and sent him on his way far south. Likely, from this lone Christian the Ethiopian church blossomed.

Then there are the other brethren scattered nationwide by the persecution Paul initiated. We are told they '*went everywhere preaching the Word*' (Acts 8:4). No wonder the Gospel spread like wildfire!

Confess!

It's a bit scary to express your faith to

friends and neighbours, much as you would like to do so. And especially so if you have been schooled to believe that this is 'a job for the minister'. In fact, personally passing on the message of Jesus to others is a significant way for every Christian to spread the Good News. In other words, to *evangelize*. You don't need permission!

The people of God are scattered nationwide - even worldwide. Too many of us, however, are mute. Let's be like Paul who was bold to say '*I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ*'.

Spirit Power

By definition God's Spirit works in every Christian. And it's by means of the Spirit that God does His work. Records the prophet Zechariah: "*Not by might and not by power, but by My Spirit says the LORD of Hosts*" (ch 4:6). God, if we will, can work through each of us. Money isn't an object. A powerful organization is unnecessary. A plush HQ is a barrier.

The apostle Peter urges us to '*be always ready to give a logical reply to everyone who asks you for a reason of the hope that is within you; but do it gently and respectfully*' (I Peter 3:15). So, when

conversing with others make it plain that you are a follower of Jesus - and be well armed with an understanding of God's Word. Study it. Get sound explanatory literature. Who knows whether - or when - the seed will germinate. But keep on sowing!

Your 'reward' may be a new fellowship of God's people - where you are. Recapture the entrepreneurial spirit of the early church! ف

request the free article:
ALWAYS USE MILK
- on personal evangelism -

COMMITTEE RULES?

Committees earn a bad name - self-serving, convoluted, bureaucratic. In business, they can beget top-heavy management - and often bad decisions. A camel, it is said, is a horse designed by a committee! Faced with a problem the Board appoints a committee, or a Committee appoints a sub-committee. Often it's a way for a problem to be 'kicked into the long grass' - and forgotten.

However, without a band of committed men and women to focus on a problem nothing may be achieved. There's virtue in 'a multitude of counsel', while decision-making is slowed when, in the name of democracy, *large* numbers are involved in the process.

The *Outreach Ministries (CGOM)* has five committees (Outreach, Member Services, Finance, Marketing, Research). What is their function? Primarily, they do *not* 'rule'. All those local assemblies who choose to associate with us are totally independent self-governing bodies. They have come to the conclusion, however, that their work can be enhanced through co-operation with other like-minded assemblies. So, when the brethren in these assemblies agree to a joint project, the wheels are set in motion and oiled by the 'umbrella' organization, *CGOM*.. (Examples of such projects are the *CGOM* web-site, advertising, Festival sites, *New Horizons* magazine, *Bible Basics* study course.)

The *CGOM* committees do not hand down or impose rules and regulations or doctrinal change or financial strictures. They facilitate and co-ordinate the agreed projects using the human resources of those assemblies taking part. The committee Chairs are in regular touch between our annual Conferences - by e-mail, phone, tele-conferences - to move forward the various activities.

A structure like this avoids the perils of 'one man rule'. Or, rule by committee. Independent local assemblies organize themselves. They volunteer their support for specific *CGOM* projects. These projects are overseen by the appropriate standing committees. *You are invited to work with us!*

Saddam Insight

The head of Iraqi state television, Saad al-Bazzaz: "By the end I think Sadaam genuinely believed he was a demi-god., and that twenty-five million Iraqis were lower forms of human being. He believed he enjoyed divine protection and that God had saved him many times in his life. That's why he felt he had been chosen to be more than just President of Iraq - to rule beyond Iraq's borders and to face down the imperialism of the West". *The Independent*

check out this excellent web-site!
www.churchofgodsa.com

WHO GETS HURT?

When a brother or sister in your assembly (or in your denomination) 'hits the headlines' for what is perceived as misbehaviour - who suffers? Worse, what if it is someone of high profile - the elder or pastor or an evangelist?

Certainly there ought to be the exercise within the assembly of some form of discipline. That's Biblical. (Though many Christians today avoid discipline by not embedding themselves in a particular assembly. They are wanderers!) But the exercise of internal discipline doesn't stop the embarrassment, and shame that can linger for years.

The pain touches all the brethren personally. The public spiritual activity of the assembly is hindered. The offending brother's family, too, is hurt by adverse media publicity. The misbehaviour - the *sin* - even if repented, is indelibly stamped on the individual by brethren and by those outside the church, and ever after hindering any ministry he pursues.

But these are not the worst effects. For the church of God is the Body of Christ. And our Saviour is smeared with the same filth. It is *His name* that is dragged in the dirt. Each member of that Body - and especially its leadership - represents Him. So, how does God deal with those who defile His name, His character, by their behaviour?

God does not overlook the defilement of His holy name. Ancient Israel, exiled from God's Land because of sin, continue to besmirch the Lord's name in all the nations among whom they are dispersed (Ezekiel 36:20-23). They face, as a result, a time of distress (Jacob's Trouble' - Jeremiah 30:5-8).

All Christians sin, and when we become aware of it we must repent. Wrote John: "*If we confess our sins he is so faithful and just as to forgive us our sins*" (I John 1:9). The sacrifice of Jesus can cover just about any sin - once there's true repentance. But that's not where God's part ends. The apostle continues "*...and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness*".

As with ancient Israel, a process of cleansing begins for the repentant Christian (I Corinthians 5:1-5). Our merciful and loving Father corrects us - but always within the bounds of what we can endure (I Corinthians 10:13). ف

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INCOME.... £260 OUTGOINGS... £ 173