

The Newsletter of the Churches of God, UK

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

representing



Churches Of God Outreach Ministries

The King's Speech

No - that title isn't an error! Every year in the United Kingdom the Sovereign - now our Queen - appears before both Houses of Parliament to outline the Government's plans for the year ahead. (Though the Queen has now abdicated all responsibility for its content.)

Most politicians want to make a positive difference to their nation's welfare. Sadly, they are like a ship lying storm-tossed, rudderless and without a compass. For them there is no 'standard' for what is effective legislation.

The following is an outline of the *King's Speech* - what Jesus Christ might say in his 'State of the World' speech when he returns as King of all earthly rulers. In every instance listed his Plans are directly opposed to present and planned UK Government legislation.

request the free article:
*A Message of Hope
for the World of
Tomorrow*

Hope

Many Christians look forward to the 'Millennium' - the one-thousand year reign of the returned Messiah. It's a time of worldwide peace and prosperity, and the hope to which we cling. It's the desire of all sane men and women.

However, that sublime state will not happen with the wave of a magic wand. Indeed the preparation for it has been in hand since Creation!

Throughout the ages the LORD has been carefully selecting and preparing his 'government officials'. Most now rest in the sleep of death - but await a glorious resurrection to immortality - to reign with Christ (Revelation

20:5). The Christian Bible even names some, and defines what their role will be. [See the March/April issue of *New Horizons* magazine for a fuller explanation.]

Church and State

There's much ado in religious circles - even in secular Government - about the relationship between 'Church and State'. The concept is much misunderstood. In today's world, the faith of Jesus - Biblical Christianity - is *personal*. It impacts individuals with a message of love for God and love for neighbour. It works a change in human nature, in the heart. Its influence spreads through example and by the wide dissemination of the Scriptures - often by men and women who don't understand them! Many nations have, through two millennia, benefited from the gentleness of Biblical Christianity through these means - though it has by-passed much of the 'third world'.

But - despite the open invitation God extends to mankind to take part in His Plan, few are willing to pay the heavy personal price.

Until God's Kingdom comes the Bible is clear about the laws by which national Governments should rule. All mankind battles with *human nature*. It leads to all kinds of criminal behaviour, suicide bombings, personal and corporate greed, corruption at all levels of society, terrorism, tax-dodging, poverty, pollution - to name a few of mankind's ills.

King's Speech

Let's be clear. The mind of Christ - supposedly present in every true Christian - curbs the excesses of human nature. But that Spirit dwells in only a tiny fraction of *[cont'd p.3]*

TOTTING UP

God's 'blessing' is often defined in numbers. 'Our church has grown 30% a year since it started'. 'We had x thousand at our annual convention'. 'Our income has grown by twice what we budgeted'. 'We are bigger than you' *Etc.*

It's an encouragement, of course, to see increasing numbers. But does it necessarily imply 'God's blessing'? That 'we are more righteous than you' (implied) ?

Consider. Which Christian denomination has the largest number of members worldwide? Which is the fastest growing? (Answers on a postcard!) What if either group is teaching gross error? What if their doctrines reflect concepts openly condemned in the Christian Scriptures? What if the leadership is self-serving and abusive - psychologically, financially, emotionally or even physically - of the members?

Red Flag

Looking to increased numbers harbours potential dangers. Size has a tendency to determine the structure of a group. Usually a handful of brethren meeting together - the New Testament pattern - can get along reasonably well, informally, generally in agreement.

Multiply numbers, however, and groups - adhering to the same denomination - will all too often develop a hierarchy. Them and us. *Trouble*: politics, empire building, committees galore, bureaucracy, misappropriation - and wasting - of funds. So much easier, too, to spread false teaching in a tightly-structured organization.

Small Is Beautiful...usually

Could it be that the 'handful' are the truly blessed? If they are faithful to God's Word, open to correction from other faithful brethren, growing spiritually, pleased to actively share their faith with 'outsiders', and to co-operate with others - then Jesus may indeed be walking in their midst. Even if it's just the 'two or three gathered in his name' that he spoke about.

Being 'small', however, isn't necessarily a virtue. A small independent fellowship, lacking in God's Spirit, can become just as sterile as a large denomination. It can, on the other hand, actively 'propagate' itself through church-planting. That is, the founding and support of a similar group elsewhere when numbers and other circumstances warrant it.

The *Churches of God Outreach Ministries* are available to assist any such small groups. *Call us!* Ω

FINANCES (COGUK) - Oct-Dec 2003
INCOME.... £805 OUTGOINGS... £1038

Apology

Apologies to those readers awaiting literature or replies to their letters. I hope to catch up in the next week or so.

Spirit of Christmas

Did it, during the past few weeks, perhaps cross your mind that the 'spirit of Christmas' wasn't God's Spirit? That the festivities had somehow become detached from Christ? That the 'spend, spend, spend' orgy somehow doesn't fit with Jesus. That the cult of greed instilled by media and by parents in their children runs counter to the Christian ethic?

Search the Scriptures and you don't find such associated with the birth of Jesus. Indeed the 'spirit of Christmas' as we know it tears at the heart of the Christian ethic. Nor did Jesus enter the world smack in the middle of an ancient festival to the sun god. Though he would certainly have recognized that festival (the Saturnalia) if he had been on a visit to Rome towards the end of December.

Forget It?

Christmas is now behind us for another year - except for the bills. Should you just forget it? Or should you perhaps spend time checking out if it is a festival you should, as a Christian, be observing? You will search the Bible in vain for evidence that Jesus, the apostles and the early Christians observed the festival.

Instead they are recorded as observing the age-old (even then) festivals appointed by the LORD - as outlined in Leviticus 23. The prophetic Scriptures point out that these same festivals will be observed - *by all mankind* - after Jesus returns. To be faithful to the Christian Bible you should be observing them *now*. Far from being a burden they are a time of joyful celebration. Ω

For more on these divinely appointed days you are invited to request the free booklet *God's Holy Days*.
 Also the article *God's End Game*

Bible Festivals for 2004

Lord's Supper ... After sunset April 4
Passover/Unleavened Bread ... April 6-12
Pentecost ... May 30
Day of Trumpets ... September 16
Atonement ... September 25
Tabernacles ... September 30 - October 6
Closing Day ... October 7

Each begins at sunset the evening before these dates

check out these web-sites!

www.cgom.org
www.churchofgodsa.com

There are links to useful Bible tools, listings of churches to visit, comment on current affairs. And numerous Bible-based articles, back issues of *New Horizons* and *Outreach*, *Bible Basics* study course

The King's Speech... *cont'd*

humanity. All the rest need *law!*

The King's Speech will contain legislation that will address all human ills - *once and for all!* And these laws are precisely the laws all national Governments, for the peace and prosperity of their citizens, should be applying *now*. They are the true standard which when applied - rigorously but with mercy - will curb the excesses of human nature at this time. These laws are eternal!

True Morality

A culture has evolved, especially in the 'Christian West', which seeks to fuse the teachings of Jesus Christ with carnal, self-seeking humanity. *It doesn't work*. However desirable his teachings are they cannot simply be applied universally, for they demand a *change of heart*. 'Love your neighbour' is a great principle - until he crosses you!

So until that day of Christ comes, mankind must be subject to Law. 'Law', said the apostle Paul, 'is for the law-breaker'. Which implies there is a body of Law, a standard to live by. On this our governments are confused, basing legislation on transient human imagination.

"*Woe to those who devise iniquity [lawlessness]*", says God - to all peoples - through the prophet Micah (2:1). Micah's words are rooted in the state of the two nations of Israel in his time, the eighth century before Christ. But they are a clear reflection of the 'enlightened' world of century twenty-one: corrupt business practice, immorality, idolatry, collusion between Government and its 'cronies', burdensome taxation.

Through His prophets, God - who still has 'hands on' His Creation - warns of the consequences. Change your ways, He says. Live by My Laws. Or I will remove your prosperity and send you national destruction and exile. Ancient Israel had crossed the line - they were beyond redemption unless subjected to suffering. Have the Western democracies, too, passed that point? Ω

Where Governments go wrong

The Family

marriage, co-habitation, care of children, same sex liaisons, abortion, divorce

Justice

law enforcement, prisons, legislation

Social

welfare, debt, poverty, consumerism

International Relations

treaties, sovereignty, foreign wars, the arms trade

Health

drugs, tobacco, alcohol, food, hygiene, sex

Government

self-serving bureaucracy, oppression by taxation and political correctness

Religion

multi-cultural agenda

Who Rules?

So, Saddam is in custody. It's just possible that the troubled Middle East will - for a time - settle down. Certainly his removal is a huge relief for most of the people of Iraq who even now - despite the continuing civil unrest - have under the guidance of the Coalition been introduced to a freedom not experienced in three decades of tyranny.

Saddam Hussein pictured himself as the modern successor of ancient King Nebuchadnezzar who anciently reigned over what is now Iraq but whose empire stretched to the Atlantic coast (Daniel 4:22). Saddam's final ignominious bolt-hole appearance is a reflection of that ancient deposed King's plight following seven years living like an animal (*ch* 4:32-33).

The Babylonian King's fall wasn't a natural event. He was wicked, despotic and idolatrous, certainly, and he deserved his fate - but it was the Supreme Creator who dictated events. God gave the King a prophetic dream which provided him with an opportunity to change his ways. He didn't. A year later his arrogance and vanity caught up with him and for seven years he roamed like a wild animal, driven beyond civilised society.

What happened to Nebuchadnezzar - and to Saddam - is a warning to all in positions of national leadership in the twenty-first century. *God rules!* All leaders have to learn that "*...the Most High rules the kingdom of men - and gives it to whom He wills*" (v.25). Perhaps if we can grasp that eternal principle it will make sense of what happens in the contemporary world!

Nebuchadnezzar's throne was restored to him when he came to his senses and grasped the principle that *his power was delegated to him by God*. It's a lesson of which our own leaders must - for all our sakes - be constantly aware. Ω

What's Wrong With This...?

- a man and a woman are married 'till death us do part'
- divorce is a rare option and carefully regulated
- children have, normally, but four grandparents
- sexual relations are confined to life-long marriage
- adultery and sex outside marriage are outside the Law, and punishable
- these are norms, supported by secular legislation

...or This?

- burglars and fraudsters re-pay the victim in full for their crime, with due compensation (from their own pocket)
- so, too, those who damage property
- the cost of care to an injured person is paid for in full by the one who caused it
- prison for such is simply while on remand; courts assess equivalent punishment
- usury, extortion and bribery are punishable, especially in officialdom
- a verdict of manslaughter is penalized by compensation and restriction of movement, not necessarily in prison
- a verdict of wilful murder, rape or abduction is penalized by well-deserved death
- a perjurer receives the same penalty as the victim
- the legal process is swift, sure - and delivered with mercy when appropriate

Governments tend to initiate policies contrary to all these Biblical principles

STATE OF THE NATION

Britain - and much of the world - has been tuned in to the trial of Ian Huntley for the horrific murder of two ten-year old girls some sixteen months ago. He has been sentenced to 'life imprisonment' - perhaps fifty years. Our justice system, dictated by the European Union, forbids what most Britons want and see as appropriate - *execution*. Instead, for the next half-century he will, if he survives into his 80s, drain the national treasury of many millions of pounds and be a focus for dissent, as with the notorious 'Moors murderers'.

The trial has turned over a 'stone' under which a foul stratum of society crawls in moral darkness. Huntley and his girl-friend (jailed for lying to protect him) murdered in the quiet small town of Soham. But the seeds of their evil were sown miles away in the fishing town of Grimsby, where the pair grew up.

There Huntley raped and had under-age sex with numerous local children. Maxine Carr, his girl-friend, reportedly was free with her sexual favours. But Grimsby is not unique. Every city and town has fallen to a shameful promiscuous laxity of moral behaviour. It's a foul stream that has leeches into every nook and cranny of the nation, led by those in the public eye.

Cause and Effect

It's a fallacy to assume 'it was better in the old days'. It wasn't, apart from a few decades in the twentieth century. Then, society - perhaps chastened by wars and with religion given a higher profile - there was more respect for moral values. Children were disciplined at home and in school - and many, with their parents, were further positively influenced by Sunday School and church attendance.

What has changed? Police, for one thing, now give sexual 'misdemeanours' low priority, reflecting the widespread public attitude that anything goes, and fearful of transgressing 'human rights'. Serious under-age sex - even rape - is lightly dealt with. This, aided and abetted by parents who themselves lack moral backbone. Lacking parental discipline and stable two-parent (and married) families - and abetted by corrupt Government - young children are free to enact the sexual morals of alley-cats.

Those parents sane enough to link promiscuous behaviour with teen pregnancy, rape, sexually transmitted disease, infertility *etc* fight a losing battle. For 'pop idols' spout lewd filth into willing ears. Television - even the 'respectable' channels - openly and graphically portrays what should be confined to the bedroom and only between adult married partners. Education is riddled with perverted psychological theories. And the nation at large is adrift without sensible moral standards.

A Pure Fountain

The 'Establishment' - Government, science, education and not least much of the Christian church - has abandoned the 'Maker's Instruction Manual', the Christian Bible. Feeding on the poisonous diet of evolutionary theory, they have diminished to the status of an amoral animal the precious jewel of God's Creation - mankind.

Arrogantly rejecting the God of the Bible, our law-makers substitute their own flawed theories based on the flimsy

OUTREACH

To provide more flexibility with our mailings and perhaps to reduce costs, **OUTREACH** will for the foreseeable future be mailed every two months, alternatively with *New Horizons*. It will, however, be double size, with four pages

platform of human 'wisdom'. It hasn't worked - not for the past six thousand years of civilisation. *And it never will.*

Our Creator knows exactly how any nation should live in this world for optimum health and success. He has revealed that way in the Scriptures, summed up in the 'Ten Commandments'. Every deviation has adverse consequences, not least in the matter of human sexuality. The Bible certainly details the only way mankind can live for ever - the 'religious' element. But it is, too, the guide to daily living. It is the fountain of pure practical wisdom. It is the manual which should be on the desk and by the bedside of every politician, and a guide to every piece of legislation.

Until Government discards its perverse one-eyed humanist perspective we will continue to suffer the foul activities of the all-too-many Huntleys and Carrs who stalk our streets and molest and kill our children. **Ω**

New Horizons

- What is important in your life?
- *Are you concerned about the moral welfare of your children?*
- Does life have a purpose?
- *Worried about your finances?*
- What happens when you die?
- *Is there a fiery hell?*
- Does it matter how we behave?
- *Does God speak to us today?*

These are some of the many questions that bother us. They are all addressed in our bi-monthly magazine *New Horizons*. The articles are short, readable and to the point. Distributed as of now in sixty-five nations it is always *free* to our readers, supported as it is by friends of the *Outreach Ministries* worldwide.

You are invited to ask, without obligation, for a subscription. No-one will call on you unless you request it, and you may cancel anytime. You are, too, welcome to comment on or ask us questions about the issues discussed, or other Bible - or personal - matters

Some Recent Articles in New Horizons

- ◆ *God's End Game*
- ◆ *Human Sexuality*
- ◆ *Reap a Destiny*
- ◆ *Will You Live Again?*
- ◆ *Why Bother With Church?*
- ◆ *6000 Years of Christianity*
- ◆ *Delight in the Sabbath*
- ◆ *University of the Home*
- ◆ *Nations in Decline*

All are available, free of any charge, from Lincoln. Also from the United States by e-mail: information@cgom.org

To Avoid Confusion...

After we registered the name *Churches of God, UK* with the Charity Commissioners, a sister organization called themselves *Church of God UK*. This has confused some! The extra *s* in *Churches* in our name highlights that we are an association of independent local churches and not a single denomination answering to a church headquarters.

Addressing your valued donations (cheques *etc*) to **Churches of God, UK** will save confusion at our Bank! Thanks.