

outreach

The Newsletter of the Churches of God, UK

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

representing



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 a miserable story.

So 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 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'

WHERE WILL YOU BE

...a hundred years from now?

Virtually everyone will, of course, be dead. All six billion of us. But—where will you be?

Most Christians will reply, 'in heaven'. Muslims have their take on this— *p.2*

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. 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 delights in all that's perverse. It sees no wrong in practices that frustrate that divine plan: war, murder, abortion, homosexuality, adultery.

If you so desire, the Creator has a plan of life tailored personally for you. But the path isn't easy. *Ω*

**'It's the Economy'
...are you stupid?**

How does the economy affect national destiny? Request the May/June issue of **New Horizons**

Brookfield Shooting

We regret to announce that eight *Church of God* brethren, including the pastor and several of his family, were murdered during a recent Sabbath service. They are members of the *Living Church of God*.

The killer was a long-time member of that local assembly. He later took his own life. Police are not seeking anyone else.

Our thoughts are with the brethren affected and their families. The pastor's wife was critically injured.

Where Will You Be...? cont'd

Paradise. Hindus hope for renewed life on earth in a higher form. Atheists... well, who knows. Heaven by whatever name looks like it will be very crowded! But...*all of us will be dead*.

The Bible makes clear that no-one who 'professes Christ' will make heaven—not even the late Pope! Indeed Jesus himself doled out some hard words on the matter. Many who think they are 'saved' will, literally, wake up to find they weren't 'raptured' but are again in their human flesh! (*see p.3*)

Others, once faithful Christians, will have neglected 'so great salvation' and face divine judgment. They will have allowed the world to encroach on their spiritual life—life eternal sacrificed for short-term gain. Where will you be? Ω

Mr Sense—an obituary

Today we mourn the passing of a beloved old friend, Mr. Common Sense. Mr Sense had been with us for many years. No one knows for sure how old he was since his birth records were long ago lost in bureaucratic red tape. He will be remembered as having cultivated such value lessons as knowing when to come in out of the rain, why the early bird gets the worm and that life isn't always fair. Common Sense lived by simple, sound financial policies (don't spend more than you earn) and reliable parenting strategies (adults, not kids, are in charge).

His health began to rapidly deteriorate when well intentioned but overbearing regulations were set in place. Reports of a six-year-old boy charged with sexual harassment for kissing a classmate; teens suspended from school for using mouthwash after lunch; and a teacher fired for reprimanding an unruly student, only worsened his condition.

Mr. Sense declined even further when schools were required to get parental consent to administer aspirin to a student; but, could not inform the parents when a student became pregnant and wanted to have an abortion.

Finally, Common Sense lost the will to live as the Ten Commandments became contraband; churches became businesses; and criminals received better treatment than their victims.

Common Sense finally gave up the ghost after a woman failed to realize that a steaming cup of coffee was hot;

6000 years

The *Churches of God* have traditionally taught that God has a '7000-year plan'. That is, human civilisation would span seven thousand years, based on a seven-day 'prophetic week'. The first six thousand represent man's rule, while the seventh thousand is the 'millennium' - the hands-on reign of Jesus on earth. The latter is explicitly stated as being 'a thousand years' duration (Revelation 20:5).

Some question the maths. Clearly, based on Creation dated as 4004BC (Archbishop Ussher) we are now almost a decade overdue for the return of Jesus. How come?

Calculation of the time elapsed since Creation isn't simple. It could be that there has been a mis-count of the years. The Jews, for example, say that this year is the year of the world 5765. Some church groups believe the six thousand years isn't yet finished—though nearly.

Another explanation is the Bible parable implying that Jesus may 'delay his coming'. He is very patient, and on occasion delays His just judgment of human evil. However, *he will return*—and on time, the Father's time. Any attempts to pin-point a specific date for the return of Jesus is just silly. "...of that day and hour no one knows ... not even the angels in heaven, but My Father only" (Matthew 24:36).

It is also possible that the concept of six thousand-year 'days' is notional. It is nowhere explicitly stated in the Scriptures but it surely emphasizes that humanity is on notice that we won't survive as a species for ever—at least, not in the flesh.

A survey of 'the state of the world' isn't very encouraging. Violence increases on the world scale through terrorism and inter-nation conflict, at the local level through base human evil and through the physical violence of earth itself ('quakes *etc*). Yet bear in mind that awesome destructive events have happened. As in the days of Noah, mega-deaths will be needed to save the race.

However, many of the conditions Jesus predicted as preceding his return are indeed all around us in this early twenty-first century (*see Matthew 24*). Jesus predicted a time of awesome turbulence in world affairs. Addressing the churches in Asia he warned: '*Be victorious, prevail, conquer*'. Whatever happens we must 'remain faithful to him and to his Word.' Ω

Request, free: *The Time of the Signs*

she spilled a bit in her lap, and was awarded a huge financial settlement.

Common Sense was preceded in death by his parents, Truth and Trust, his wife Discretion; his daughter, Responsibility; and his son, Reason. He is survived by two stepbrothers; My Rights and Ima Whiner. Not many attended his funeral because so few realized he was gone. If you still remember him, pass this on; if not, join the majority and do nothing. Anon Ω

The Secret Rapture Fraud

The *Secret Rapture* is one of the great religious frauds perpetrated on the world. The concept was created by the Roman Catholic Jesuits and foisted on the Protestant Church by collaborating ministers over the past 500 years. Its intent is to mask the identity of the Roman Catholic Church and confuse the public about the return of Jesus Christ to earth, the first Resurrection and the establishment of the Kingdom of God on the Earth.

Jesus Christ will come back to the Earth visibly, loudly, and completely victorious—in *one* return, not two. The Rapturists say one coming of Jesus is in secret to snatch the best Christians away, and then later—after seven years—to appear again for the rest.

Do not be fooled by this false doctrine promoted by the merchandisers (sellers) of books, movies and videos, by deceived ministers profiting at your expense.

The ‘Secret Rapture’ is a fraud, a deception, a lie—invented by men. The Resurrection of all righteous believers, dead and living, at Jesus Christ’s return, visibly, mightily, publicly, with an Earth-shaking Government *after* the Great Tribulation period is the true doctrine presented by the Word of God. It will finally destroy the Anti-Christ and Beast system.

Lawrence Gregory

Read:

Matthew . 24:29-31,
and 40-41
Matthew 13:36-43
Acts 1:9-11
Revelation 1:7
I Thess 4:13-18
I Cor. 15:50-54;
Revelation 19-20

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 co-operation 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 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 brethren) and from supporting individuals.

A series of *Guidelines* is available with suggestions for day-to-day running of the assembly. They cover such topics as baptism, finance, ethics, leader appointment, funerals *etc.*

These *Guidelines* and a variety of supportive articles are also posted on the *CGOM* website:
www.cgom.org

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.

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 to associate. Ω

‘Love’ defined

Love, usually, is seen as a mushy sentimental attachment to something—chocolate, maybe, or sport. It’s a sentiment that can readily be cast aside to be replaced by a ‘new love’. Relationships based on it are just as easily discarded—as witnessed by the volume of divorces and other broken relationships. Even, sadly, among Christians.

In fact, the definition of true Christian love is simple—but difficult for morally weak humanity to implement. It applies in the secular and in the religious life.

Simply, love is *total commitment—materially, emotionally, spiritually*. That’s the meaning of *agape*. That is at the heart of the Christian faith. Total commitment both to, in the first place, God, and then to neighbour, defined as anyone we encounter who needs our help. That’s the Law.

But ‘obeying the Law’ isn’t enough. Many of the contemporaries of Jesus were diligent law-keepers—but they still needed the added ingredient of love, *agape*. Said Jesus: “*Love the Lord your God with all your heart and soul and strength, and your neighbour as yourself*”. The indwelling Spirit *cont’d p.4*

Request our
Statement of Beliefs

WANTED—evangelists

Plant a seed—and up pops a leek or a cucumber or some other plant. Maybe a stalk of wheat. To bring it to maturity the planted seed needs attention: decent fertile soil, ample water, protection from predators. Neglect it and it self-destructs.

Note that you need a ‘live’ seed, one that has built-in vitality—vitality that *God* has first placed there. It’s that innate vitality that with adequate attention and in well-prepared soil, produces the fruit, the increase from one ear of wheat to many.

The mission of the apostles was to ‘plant’ the divine seed. Paul for one suffered incredible hardship, resisted fierce opponents risked his life—all to plant God’s transforming message, the divine spark, in all the world.

Clearly the work of evangelism is vital to the spiritual growth of the church at large. All Christians, of course, are to bear witness to the faith—by what we say, how we act, how firmly we hold fast to the truths of the divine Word in face of temptation and opposition from every source.

But evangelism is also a speciality taking many forms. Jesus commissioned the Twelve as the first—after himself!—evangelists, and their ‘job description’ is outlined by him and recorded in Luke 9:1-6.

The specialist role of evangelist is a *function* of some few brethren—not an exalted ‘rank’ as used in some church denominations. Individual brethren equipped with appropriate spiritual and natural gifts launch out in faith to evangelize—to ‘plant the Word’, the true divine seed, the Good News of the Kingdom of God.

The term itself (Gk. *euangelizo*) sums up this function as someone who ‘proclaims the good news’ of the Gospel to the world—exemplified by the activities of the apostle. The term is used over fifty times—applied to the outreach activity of Jesus, of the apostles and of all those who disseminate the Gospel (Gk. *euangelion*) message.

Wanted

Paul, however, didn’t labour alone in the Gospel. Although he was given apostolic authority (he had a special commission because of direct contact with Jesus) others—Timothy, for example, or Philip—worked with him in his mission. They were ‘evangelists’, dedicated to the task.

The young evangelist Timothy, Paul’s well-liked co-worker and a third-generation believer, was a ‘man of faith’ and well-versed in the Scriptures. He ‘trailed’ the apostle, travelling to organize and establish the new brethren into assemblies and to advise on leadership. For a time he took care of the Ephesian churches. He was also urged by Paul to combat false teachers. All in all a vital and onerous task, and one largely neglected within the Churches of God.

Are there any brethren out there willing—and prepared—to step out on such a mission? Ω

“Habemus Papa”

Pope number 265 has arrived, the 78-yr old Joseph Ratzinger from Bavaria. Despite his twenty-year defence of the teachings of John Paul II no-one knows what direction he will take the Roman Church. Nor what impact he will have on world affairs.

What is significant is the obsequious worldwide attention accorded to both the life and death of the previous Pope and to the inauguration of Benedict XVI. The public profile of the Papacy has in many eyes been greatly enhanced, positively. It is still a significant and influential world power controlling one in six of mankind.

And given the conservative Papal stance on abortion, homosexuality, euthanasia, fidelity in marriage *etc* it is highly regarded by many—in opposition to the ‘liberal elite’ who scream blue murder at the late Pope’s stance on such issues. The Papacy’s approach to such matters is quite Biblical, and should be lauded by brethren in the church of God!

Should Pope Benedict adhere to this approach and also to his assertion that Rome exclusively represents the ‘true faith of Jesus Christ’ - thus marginalising the Protestant churches—there may be trouble ahead for ecumenism.

Rome is the Western ‘head’ of the worldwide Babylonian religion. It features significantly in Bible prophecies concerning the ‘end time’. How the plans of the Vatican now unfold will be worth watching. Read the article *Babylon—fountain of error* in the May/June issue of *New Horizons!* Ω

LOVE...cont’d

of God in the Christian enables it.

What normally passes for ‘*Christian love*’ is construed, usually, as ‘doing good’ - though this is shared by devotees of all the world faiths. But the apostle Paul—in the ‘love chapter’, I Corinthians 13—scuppered the notion that *agape* love is equated with simply doing ‘good works’. Not even martyrdom, he says, or feeding the poor, is ‘good’ without this kind of total commitment. For Christians, ‘good works’ stems from and accompanies this kind of love. It springs from a heart dedicated to Jesus Christ.

Romantic love is important, but it isn’t *agape*. Love for a husband or wife, whether among church brethren or in the secular world, demands total lifetime commitment—‘*for better or worse, in sickness and in health, till death parts*’. Failure to recognize this results in our spiralling divorce rate, unhappy relationships and dysfunctional family life.

From the heart we totally commit to God’s requirements as clearly defined in Scripture: How does He say we should behave—to brethren and to neighbours? When and how does He instruct we approach Him? These are required externals. What makes a difference, what makes a ‘Christian’, is that the divine love resides internally.

And that comes from the transformation wrought, through conversion, by the indwelling Spirit of God. Ω

FINANCES (COGUK) - January-April ‘05
INCOME: £1500 OUTGOINGS: £1610