

outreach

Festival Celebrations

The Newsletter of the Churches of God, UK

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

representing



Around the world thousands of Christians, in October, gathered to observe the Biblical *Festival of Tabernacles*. The festival is a week-long annual autumn* gathering of the people of God. It's a time of joyful worship, celebration, fellowship and intense Bible study. *Tabernacles* has probably been observed since man's earliest years on earth - even before Israel existed as a nation.

In the United Kingdom several *Churches of God* denominations observed the festival at various sites: *Global Church of God, United* and, *Church of God UK etc.* It was, too, observed worldwide - from the United States to Kenya, Nigeria, Australia, India and elsewhere. Our family this year were warmly welcomed at the *Global Church of God* site at Chatsworth House in Derbyshire. An idyllic pastoral setting enhanced a time of enjoyable fellowship and Bible teaching.

This is one of several annual gatherings observed by the early church in the time of the apostles. For Christians, the Bible nowhere authorizes any observances other than those outlined in Leviticus 23. The last century witnessed their revival among Christians.

**The timing of the Biblical festivals is based on the ancient calendar still preserved in Judaism. A calendar giving dates for 2005 is printed on p.4. Write to us for an article on the origins of this calendar. You may like to celebrate with us next year!*

...in the Ozarks

The annual *Feast of Tabernacles* was celebrated at the Lake of the Ozarks from September 30 through October 7, 2004. The *Mid-Missouri Church of God* hosted the eight-day festival at the Baymont Inn and Suites for about seventy persons of all ages, including seven college students. Messages and Bible studies were given by twelve different speakers, from locations ranging from Missouri, Iowa, and Wisconsin to British Columbia.

The theme this year was, "*Lord, Bind Us Together With Love*" which was also in the words of a praise and worship song sung throughout the Feast, and seemed to increase the warmth of the fellowship among brethren, families, and guests throughout, from the first holy day to the last.

At least 10 or 12 independent churches, Bible study groups, and home fellowship groups as well as organized and incorporated churches were represented. Activities included many meals together, a picnic in the park, a table games night, a pie and ice-cream social, a

sanctity of life seminar, special music at each service, a ladies' luncheon, a kids' round table, and a variety show.

At one service, Connie Griffith led us in a standing ovation of gratitude for a young U.S. soldier on two weeks' leave from duty in Iraq. Brian Beasley, a helicopter maintenance technician, attended services with the Johnny Collins family on October 2nd. God and His son Jesus Christ tabernacled with us through the power of the Holy Spirit each day.

Many prayers were offered and answered. On the last day two little children, Cameron Harmon and Jocelyn Harmon, received the traditional "Blessing of the little children."

submitted by Duke Schneider

*There's another Feast report
on page two*

Government ...cont'd from p.1

Evolutionary Odds

Even a cursory knowledge of the evolution of life on this planet makes clear that there is a vanishingly small probability of the same course of events being repeated elsewhere, at least in our neck of the cosmic woods. It would need the formation of a planet like ours at the right distance from a sun-like star with a suitable mix of atmospheric gases. Then the chemical processes that led to the emergence of DNA-based life would have to be repeated.

As we still don't know what those processes were, this is hard to assess. It has, however, been estimated that the simplest living cell requires at least 50 genes, and that the odds of exactly the same sequence of DNA needed for these genes emerging again is one in ten followed by 5.400 zeroes. Odds don't come much longer than this. *Robert Matthews, Sunday Telegraph*

[Ed: So, how did a man and a woman, with vastly more and complex genes, 'evolve' as contemporaries?]

LETTER FROM TANZANIA

I am one of scattered brethren in Tanzania who still hold fast to the truth. I recently organised those members who are without a leader, who originated from [Church.....] but decided to stop attending the church due to the changes in Doctrines. We are a small, but growing group with more coming back again to the faith. We need encouragement and both spiritual and material support from fellow believers like you. Of importance is any financial support to enable us pay for the assembly hall, and enable me to visit these brothers who most happens to be scattered.

In addition, I am translating some of the literatures that helped us to know the truth into Kiswahili - the national language. Most brothers do not speak English. I will need to print these literatures for their edification.

Pastor L

Note: *We receive many requests from overseas requesting association, Bibles, literature, etc- and sometimes finance. We are happy to receive such. It is CGOM policy to provide, within the limits of our resources, support such as literature and guidance.*

*We also welcome any fellowships, or groups of fellowships, to associate with the **Outreach Ministries**. Your input, spiritual insights and your prayers are appreciated, and we are*

The Feast...

...in California

God provided a wonderful Feast site at Konocti Harbor in Clear Lake, Northern California.

Don't know of one single person who did not say they loved it. One of the features that made for a great bonding experience was that the majority of people attending stayed on the resort property. It was the closeness that people liked.

We also had several social opportunities to maximize that environment: barbecues, two ice cream socials, a boat cruise, a family night (games & music), a Song Service to welcome in the Sabbath, Senior Bingo, a wine tour that included tastings at two wineries, and a Christian Art History Class. The last night we had a progressive dinner going to four different apartments, each decorated in a theme, that served a course of the dinner. We also had three Bible Studies: two by Lawrence Gregory and one by Virgil Velasquez.

Highest attendance at any service was 102, the lowest 59, with an average of 75.

The church paid for a cottage on the water at the resort - within walking distance to our meeting room for services. It was used as a hospitality suite. One male member lived there and provided coffee and breakfast treats every morning before services. It became a drop-in event that people really enjoyed.

Weather was outstanding with temperatures in the 80's daytime and 50's night time.

Our Feast overheads were projected at around \$7000 and our offerings covered that and will allow for a contribution to CGOM of \$500 or more.

submitted by Jeff Henderson 

You are invited to request the free articles:
Tabernacles - what it means for you
The Origins of the Calendar
God's Holy Days

strengthened by your sharing in our efforts for Jesus Christ. If you would like to associate please contact us at any of our addresses

Please note that we are not in a position to send financial help, but are happy to share our other resources. If your local effort is in a language other than English, you are welcome to translate any of our articles and studies. Be sure to check out the CGOM website: www.cgom.org

Idolatry...not just wood and stone

The gold standard for true worship, surely, must be God's own definition as revealed through His Word. Whatever your religion you aspire to worship the Deity in truth - however much you may personally fall short. Yet the average Christian - and, surprisingly, even religious leaders - assume they can form their own definition.

Apart from a few deranged folk who daily hear directly from God religious folk look to their Scriptures for guidance - the Bible, the Koran *etc.* That's where the divine will is canonized. The Christian Scriptures, for example, tell us: '*All scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for doctrine...*' (II Timothy 3:16). But do we believe it? Can we live by God's own standards?

Unchanging God

We can with total assurance rely on God. He is consistent. His character is the same yesterday, today and will be the same tomorrow, for the next millennium, for ever. What was sin yesterday is still sin. So - how for example did He deal with *idolatry*, which is, clearly, sinful?

Let's first define *idolatry*. An idol is a representation of the god in material form, and the spirit of the god was deemed to inhabit it. Using such images, then - however ignorantly - was not merely bowing before wood or stone but was worship of its indwelling god or spirit. Yet the apostle Paul wrote: '*What they sacrifice [to idols] they are offering to demons and not to God*' (I Corinthians 10:20). Idolatry was contrary to the Creator's instruction: '*You shall have no other gods before me*', and '*You shall not make for yourself an engraved image*' (Exodus 20:-45).

The Creator is revealed through but one form of religion. All others are false. His attitude to all these usurpers is clear: nothing, no-one, can substitute for His way. He has revealed how man is to worship Him and has laid down strict guidelines - emphasised in His model nation Israel by serious attached penalties.

Yet here's something curious. Islam, for example, claims that through Abraham it worships the same God as Jews and Christians. Indeed it's a generally accepted position. So how come such divergence in belief and practice, from both Judaism and Christianity?

Take the day for worship. Divine revelation says *the seventh day* of the week. Deliberate departure from this under Israel's divinely-appointed *Constitution* ('*the ministration of death*') incurred *death* for an individual. And when, later, the Sabbath came to be despised and disregarded by the nation in general -

just like today - God 'arranged' for its invasion and deportation to foreign countries. The day for His formal worship was clearly important to Him. Serious stuff.

Let's ask the question again - *does God change?* Why, for thousands of years ever since creation, would He insist on the *seventh-day* Sabbath and not the Islamic Friday? Or, indeed, change to the Christian Sunday? The seventh-day Sabbath is one of the signs - the major sign - that identify God. Any other observance no matter how hearty or sincere identifies some other god.

Protests, here, from Christians! For most it's okay for God to change His worship day, despite the evidence. The Sunday tradition - for tradition it is - goes back a long way. But you will not find Biblical support for it. It simply isn't in the Christian Bible. Yet the present Pope is reported as desirous that Sunday be written into any European Union *Constitution*. And he does have some influence worldwide!

Jesus had some disturbing words. In the 'sermon on the mount' he warned (Matthew 7:15) against false teachers. Then he adds: '*Not everyone who says to me 'Lord, Lord' shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father in heaven*' (v.21). Could you, unknowingly, be an idolater? What is God's will? You will read about that in the Scriptures - notably, as Timothy points out, in the Old Testament (II Timothy 3:16).

Study the Scriptures - carefully.

Many and various are the arguments forwarded to establish from the Scriptures that Sunday is the divinely-appointed day for formal worship.

For a survey of all the relevant texts you are invited to request and study:

Why observe Sunday?

also

Sunday is Coming

Young Challenge

A consultation heard that just 78 candidates in their 20s were recommended for paid ministry in the Church of England last year, a 61 per cent fall since 1983. In a week when The Times iGeneration survey found that over half Britain's 18- to 30-year-olds have not attended a religious service apart from the traditional "rites of passage", the consultation heard that ageing clergy are "modelling a Church where there is no place for the young". A clear challenge also came in the iGeneration survey revelation that 53 per cent of the age group believed in an afterlife and a further ten per cent see it as a possibility.

A Christian - and Single?

Be sure to read this article, coming in the November/December issue of *New Horizons* - available from any of our addresses or on the CGOM web-site:

www.cgom.org

CGOM Letter

Dear Brothers and Sisters in the faith: What are you hoping for? Financial freedom? A relaxing vacation? A happy family? These are at the top of many wish lists because so many people are in debt, stressed out, and experiencing relationship problems. We have an amazing opportunity to point these friends and family members to the only true source of freedom, peace and happiness.

Think about the people you know who could use a little hope in their lives. What can you do to share a little of the hope which lies in you?

Churches of God Outreach Ministries is here to help you share that hope. With this letter we offer you the opportunity to request our free article, "**Born With a Purpose.**" This short, two page article is full of encouraging scriptures and provides enough information to entice a non-Bible student to learn more. Even if you are uncomfortable putting your faith into words, this article will make it easy to help others find hope and encouragement in God's plan for them.

"Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knows us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it does not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that has this hope in him purifies himself, even as he is pure." (KJV I John 3:1-3)

Churches of God Outreach Ministries

If you have queries or comments arising from any CGOM publications feel free to contact any of our addresses - by letter or e-mail

CALENDAR FOR 2005

Lord's Supper	April 23*
Unleavened Bread	April 24*-30*
Pentecost	June 12*
Trumpets	October 4*
Atonement	October 13*
Tabernacles	October 18*-24
Closing Day	October 25*

* Each holy convocation begins the previous evening at sundown

Christmas Is Coming

Most who profess Christianity would be appalled to miss the annual Christmas celebrations. It is fast becoming a universal festival observed even by many non-Christians. Yet isn't it quite strange?

Candles are lit. Trees are carried into homes and churches, decorated with lights and shiny baubles and angels. An old bearded man in a red suit comes, cleanly, down chimneys across the world - and all in one night - to distribute toys to 'good' children. Lies are peddled to the young. Families gather to overindulge in a huge feast with many ending up drunk, ill - and dead. Wallets are raided for the needy - usually for the first time since last Christmas. Sentimentality reigns. Strange indeed.

And this is Christianity?

Well - *no*. You won't find a word of this associated with a Christian festival in the only source for the faith, the Bible. That source, however, does outline a round of divinely-appointed annual festivals which truly honour Jesus Christ, and at appropriate times of the year. Ω

For a guide to these festivals request the free booklets: ***God's Holy Days*** and ***The Truth about Christmas***

Internet Access

Many readers of *New Horizons* now have access to the 'world wide web'. You are invited to visit the **CGOM** website at

www.cgom.org

Dozens of past articles from this magazine, and many of our other publications and services may be viewed there - or downloaded to your printer. You can also e-mail us at coguk@aol.com or at cgom@cox.net

Bible Basics

The *Churches of God Outreach Ministries* publish an internet Bible home study course. If you would like to study with us check it out at **www.cgom.org**

The introductory lesson gives some hints about how to study the Bible. We are pleased to reply to any questions arising from any of our publications.

Hallowe'en...harmless fun?

"A Christian and pagan festival held on the evening of October 31 when spirits of the dead are supposed to return to their former homes and witches and demons are abroad at night. This was the last day of the Celtic and Anglo-Saxon year, and many Hallowe'en customs have their origin in pagan ceremonies"

Dictionary of Beliefs and Religion

Consider researching this pre-Christian practice before you indulge next year. It celebrates the 'lord of the dead', Satan. Request the introductory booklet: **Where Did Hallowe'en Come From?**

FINANCES (COGUK) - Sept/October 2004
INCOME.... £560 OUTGOINGS... £648