

The Newsletter of the Churches of God, UK

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Matthew 28:19-20

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Churches Of God Outreach Ministries

KEEP THE FEAST! *Christian festivals it was divinely appointed.*

Christians - at least those in the affluent West - are used to feasting. Come December and we gear up for a time of 'festive cheer': *Christmas*. (Though I saw a decorated tree on a live tv news report in August!)

Few question what has come to be a celebration of the birth of Jesus. Few quibble with the idea of 'having a good time' in this darkest end of the year, and giving it a Christian spin.

Tabernacles

Fewer still professing Christians have brushed against *The Feast of Tabernacles*. If you have heard of it you likely associate it with Judaism. Yet it may surprise you to learn that this festival was diligently observed by Jesus, the apostles and indeed all first century Christians. Its roots can be traced to man's earliest beginning.

A *tabernacle*, in Bible usage, is simply a booth or tent, a temporary shelter. The Israelites were instructed to leave their homes, go to a central shrine, and there to build and live in one for *seven days* in the autumn. It may sound strange - but for them it was a reminder of their forty-year pilgrimage through the wilderness on leaving Egypt. And while at it God encouraged a time of feasting.

The festival was, of course, physical - and symbolic. Just like the various accoutrements that have developed around Christmas (tree, baubles, food, gifts *etc*) or Easter (hats, eggs, sunrise service). *Except that unlike modern*

Many Christians are in our time observing Tabernacles. Where personal circumstances permit they leave their homes and go to a 'temporary dwelling' - usually a B&B or hotel *etc* and meet together there, with services in hired premises.

Prudently, they leave aside sufficient finances throughout the year to enjoy the week and to share with others. It's a time of fellowship, instruction from God's Word, spiritual interaction - with enjoyable food, visits to local 'sights' and fun. And for a full seven days, with an extra-special day at the close.

Christian Symbolism

At heart, the festival portrays each individual's temporary earth-bound existence. We are born, we live, we die. And as a species we are only temporarily on earth in our physical form. For Christians it represents our spiritual pilgrimage following our conversion. We can also derive further significance from the position of this Festival in God's festive calendar.

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He prescribed seven annual 'holy convocations' (see Leviticus 23) - three in spring and in early summer, and four in the autumn, though two are seven-day affairs. Those early in the year deal with the Christian's personal relationship with Jesus Christ and our Father, while the later convocations encompass his plans for mankind.

First comes the *Feast of Trumpets* which relates to *[cont'd p.4*

WHY SEXUAL DISEASE?

Millions are affected - unnecessarily. Can we identify the cause?

Disease has stalked mankind from early times, and men and women - skilled and unskilled - have done their best to eliminate it. In recent years, however, a virtual epidemic of sexual disease sweeps Britain and other 'civilized' nations.

Cancer usually - sadly, not always - cuts down the *older* among us and is devastating to the whole family. Arthritis cripples - again usually the elderly. Other dread diseases tear us apart, and - rarely - pandemics erupt through whole continents.

But sexual diseases rip apart future generations. The 'silent killer' - chlamydia, for example, affects fertility - infecting young women and barring them from conceiving their heart's desire, their own 'flesh and blood' family. It is not unavoidable, nor is the cause a mystery.

Designed for Health

The human body is a miraculous piece of biological engineering. A twelve-week old foetus, for example, has 4,500 perfectly working parts, complete with all organs essential to life and able to dance around in the womb. At birth we have an immune system that wards off most noxious influences. And we are perfectly designed - mentally and physically - to propagate the human race, apart from the ravages of perverse genetic mutation.

The reason? God made it so. We are a product of divine design, our anatomy and physiology and psychology perfectly tailored to the world He created. And, like any machine or instrument or system, we function optimally when we conform to the innate design. And we don't make the rules!

Law and Life

It's commonly accepted - even among Christians - that divine Law is irrelevant to life. It's 'old hat', obsolete, outmoded, it is said. Yet that same Law with all its branches is the guardian of human health - not least sexual.

Imagine society's transformation if just one of those Laws were adhered to: '*You shall not commit adultery*'. That law - regarded today as perverse - stems from the very first divine institution, one enacted to protect mankind. It reads: '*It is not good that the man should be alone. I will make him a suitable helper, completing him*'.... *God took one of*

New Horizons - our bi-monthly addressing Christian living

Be sure to request a free subscription. The September/October issue contains:

God's End-time Plan
Eternity - *the closing of man's day*
The Pentecost Experience
Forgive - and be forgiven
The Roots of Sexual Disease
Does God Exist?: *a mini-study*

[Adam's] ribs...and from the rib God formed a woman and brought her to the man. Adam said, 'This is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh. She shall be called Woman because she was taken out of a man'. For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother and cling to his wife, and they shall become one flesh (Genesis 2:18-25).

Implied is the concept that a man and a woman are *exclusive to one another* as long as they live. Contrast that with our modern world. The main reason for all our horrendous sexual diseases? Promiscuity - the swapping of multiple sexual partners, whether or not within a formal marriage.

Origins of Disease

Disease isn't at source a divine infliction. Misuse your computer and it will as a result malfunction. Meddle with your computer's capabilities and you can generate a destructive 'virus' or 'worm' able to disrupt millions of other users. Such effects happen without Bill Gates programming them! Others have.

Here's the analogy. Personally ignore the Laws of health and you become ill. Manipulate the human - or animal or plant - genes and you may, just, precipitate an epidemic. Also, we are all affected adversely by environmental factors - the result of human interference.

Ancient Wisdom

The Bible term for all this meddling with nature is *sin*. Our first parents (take that as creation or evolution) overthrew the Creator's foundation Law of Life, precipitating a crisis from which we have not recovered. *And won't* - until all humanity finally comes, in his Millennial Kingdom, under the universal sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

The apostle Paul - writing of the early ages of man - neatly sums it up:

God gave them up in agreement with their inner cravings to such impurity as dishonoured their own bodies.... For this reason God abandoned them to shameful passions. Their women perverted natural functions for the unnatural, and similarly the men forsook their natural relationships with women and burned up with lust for one another, men committing shamelessness with men and so acquiring in their persons the penalty that was coming to them on account of their wrong behaviour
Romans 1:24-27

Our present morass is fuelled by perverse official Government policy, 'reality television', advertising, fashion and the precipitous decline in public moral standards

Inner city streets - and increasingly suburbia and rural areas - are nightly splattered with drink-laden youth, all too often resulting in unwanted pregnancies and foul destructive sexually transmitted disease. Send them on holiday and their libidos are unleashed in a sexual frenzy.

Divine Cure

None of this is simply twenty-first century. History is littered with nations in decline through immorality. Gibbon, for example, cites the marriage merry-go-round as a reason for Rome's fall. Let's look at another historical and more

accurate record - the Christian Bible.

A mass destruction of humanity happened nearly five thousand years ago. One of the factors was a form of sexual sin - that perennial failing of fallen man. *'God saw that human wickedness was growing out of bounds on earth, that the intention of all human thinking produced nothing but evil all day'* (Genesis 6:1-8).

Only one family retained its integrity. As for the rest: *'God looked at the earth and saw how degenerated it was; for all those living on the earth had perverted their way'* (v.12). All except that one family were wiped out and a new beginning made.

Fast forward a few centuries and we find another family with whom God can work: that of Abram, later called Abraham. Such was his piety that God selected him to be 'a father of many nations' through his son Isaac.

God had a secure homeland earmarked for Abraham and his progeny: Palestine. It was occupied by descendants of Canaan, the grandson of Ham - one of Noah's sons - and at that time controlled by the tribe of the iniquitous Amorites.

Palestine Defiled

Canaan had committed an obscene act on his grandfather, and the Amorites (off-spring of Canaan) had developed the same perverse habits. But God is patient, and He allowed them time to repent. But God could foresee the outcome: *"...the wickedness of the Amorites is not yet brim full"* (Genesis 15:16), He informed Abraham.

The extent of their evil behaviour was described to Israel as they were delivered from Egypt and before they entered Canaan. It included incest, sexual promiscuity, homosexual behaviour, bestiality. *"...you shall not behave as they behaved in the land of Egypt where you lived, nor as they do in the land of Canaan where I am taking you"* (Leviticus 18:1-5).

These, says God, were sexual practices in Egypt and in Canaan and *'rendered the country unclean'*. For this reason *'...the land will throw out you too [Israel], when you defile it, as it disgorged the nation that preceded you'* (vv.27-30)

*It's a solemn warning to our own
twenty-first century nations* **Ω**

UK Increases 2002-2003

Chlamydia	+ 9%
Gonorrhoea	- 3%
Syphilis	+ 28%
Herpes	- 2%
Genital Warts	+2%

*Chlamydia has tripled in less
than a decade to 90,000 in 2003
Total number seen in clinics + 37%*

Related articles are:

**Spend a Lifetime - Together
Reap a Destiny**

Mystery of Human Sexuality

*write for our catalogue of some forty
Bible-based free articles*

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You can also *e-mail* us at *coguk@aol.com* or at *cgom@cox.net*

"If you stay chaste until you marry. and then marry someone else who has never had sexual contact, not only will you have the most wonderful experience of doing the most intimate thing any couple can do for the first time with each other, but you will not bring a sexually transmitted disease to your wedding bed, and you will have almost no chance of infertility through an STD"
Christian Voice July 2004

A CHRISTIAN EUROPE?

The proposed *Constitution* for the enlarged 'United States of Europe' has been condemned for its omission of God's name and the lack of a commitment to Christian values. It wouldn't come amiss to ask what those values are. And to enquire whether or not God actually wants 'a Christian Europe'.

In the first place, the Creator God is sovereign - He *'sets up and puts down rulers and nations'* in accordance with His over-riding purpose for mankind. He at times allows evil to flourish - compare Saddam's reign of terror, or Stalin, or Mugabe. And kingdoms are overthrown at His behest. Despite man's puny effort, God is in absolute control.

Does God want nations to join together? There's only one source for the answer to that - the Christian Bible. Not unguided human reason. The desire for a united Europe goes back centuries. And indeed Bible prophecy alerts us to the coming - at the end-time - of a shaky short-lived but powerful combination of some European nations. A union that will wreak havoc on the planet. And, perhaps to the surprise of its present leadership, it will be driven by religion.

God, however, has laid down guidelines. Given our depraved human nature (our choice) He set mankind apart in families - families that grew into clans and tribes and nations. As long as each is content with its lot relative peace prevails. Try to unite them and sparks fly. (Our 'United Nations' is held together by hypocrisy, power-hunger and corruption.) But the time will come when nations *will* live side-by-side in harmony. That will be in the millennial Kingdom reigned over by Jesus Christ as King of kings. That time, clearly, has not yet come!

Divine Covenant

What, then, about those 'Christian values'? Since mankind abandoned God He has had a treaty (a covenant) with only one nation - ancient Israel. There was but one sign that He gave them as symbolic of that relationship - *the seventh-day Sabbath*. When they forsook the Sabbath it meant they had forsaken the one true God. That sign has not changed. It's a sign that has never been set aside and the one observed by Jesus, the apostles and the first Christians. And a mark of the church of God down the centuries. No way will Europe agree to that sign. If the Pope has his way it will be Sunday!

Nations will not in this age live together in peace. It's bad theology to promote anything but independence for each. **Ω**

AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL *...and not just America!*

America the Beautiful
or so you used to be.
Land of the Pilgrims' pride;
I'm glad they'll never see.

Babies piled in dumpsters,
Abortion on demand,
Oh, sweet land of liberty,
your house is on the sand.

Our children wander aimlessly
poisoned by cocaine,
Choosing to indulge their lusts,
when God has said abstain.

From sea to shining sea,
our Nation turns away
From the teaching of God's love
and a need to always pray.

We've kept God in our temples,
how callous we have grown.
When earth is but His footstool,
and Heaven is His throne.

We've voted in a government
that's rotting at the core,
Appointing Godless Judges
who throw reason out the door,

Too soft to place a killer
in a well deserved tomb,
But brave enough to kill a baby
before he leaves the womb.

You think that God's not angry,
that our land's a moral slum?
How much longer will He wait
before His judgment comes?

How are we to face our God,
from Whom we cannot hide?
What then is left for us to do,
but stem this evil tide?

If we who are His children,
will humbly turn and pray;
Seek His holy face
and mend our evil way:

Then God will hear from Heaven
and forgive us of our sins,
He'll heal our sickly land
and those who live within.

But, America the Beautiful,
if you don't - then you will see,
A sad but Holy God
withdraw His hand from Thee.
Judge Roy Moore

*The Judge was stripped of his Judgeship for
having the Ten Commandments displayed
in his courtroom*

*On average there are in the UK some 180,000
recorded abortions annually
In the USA each year about 3,000,000 teens
contract sexual diseases*

Keep the Feast!... cont'd from p.1

God's prophetic judgments on rebellious mankind just prior to Christ's return from Heaven as King of kings. Next is the *Day of Atonement* - man's final reconciliation to God through Jesus.

Then comes *Tabernacles* - his thousand year reign over the physical survivors - and their descendants - of the terrible end-time events. Peace - true and lasting peace, at last, for warring mankind. Surely something to excitedly anticipate, to annually celebrate.

The *Last Day* of the seven days of *Tabernacles* is the great second resurrection - when all those in their graves from man's beginning are raised for their first opportunity to become part of the Kingdom and Family of God through acceptance of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. [Request the free article: ***When Someone Dies***]

Tabernacles is immediately followed - an 'eighth day' - by perhaps the most exciting festival of all - a 'closing day'. It marks the final part of this epoch of the divine Plan - *Eternity*. Then all those 'written in the *Lamb's Book of Life*' will work with The Father and with Jesus Christ in the next phase of their Plan.

Brethren associated with the *Churches of God Outreach Ministries* and other festival-observing groups observe these days at locations around the world. Ω

***If you would like to take part in
Tabernacles, or if this article raises any
questions for you, write to us
for a location guide or for a personal reply***

MIRACLES!

"There are, within the miniscule thumbnail-sized 12-week old human foetus some 4,500 miniaturized parts: a full-stop sized heart, brain, spinal cord, fully wired to the tips of its minute fingers; stomach, pancreas and colon; kidneys and genitalia - it's all there. From then on the foetus just grows and grows uniformly and symmetrically. Those dot-like eyes enlarge 10,000-fold while still maintaining precisely the proportions necessary to focus that first image of the external world"
Sunday Telegraph

CGOM: January-June 2004

summary

Despite our small resources - personnel and finances - *CGOM* continues to provide a positive service to our growing mailing list.

E-Mail requests: 310
Donations: \$22,290
Web article requests: 61
[each of these requests is for an average of four articles]

Our main outreach activities continue to thrive: the website, the Study Course, and *New Horizons* magazine. Besides requests *via* the website, many booklets and articles are requested *via* 'snail mail'. We appreciate and thank you for your continuing generous support.

For January-June, e-mail contacts are double the total for the whole of 2003

Autumn Festivals 2004

Trumpets: September 16
Atonement: September 25
Tabernacles: Sept 30-Oct 6
Closing Day: October 7
each begins at sunset the previous evening

FINANCES (COGUK): July-August 2004
INCOME.... £486 OUTGOINGS... £ 598