

The Newsletter of the Churches of God, UK

PO Box 2525
LINCOLN
LN5 7PF
England

Telephone: 01526 861217
e-mail: coguk@aol.com
web-site: www.cgom.org
Editor: James McBride

Regd Charity No 283358

September 2003

visit our web-site:

www.cgom.org

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

representing

CGOM
Churches Of God Outreach Ministries

ARE YOU BEING WATCHED?

Everywhere, it seems, there are CCTV cameras. 'Big Brother' is watching! In stores, out in the street, while driving, even on the beach - those cameras follow you with a baleful glare. We all have mixed feelings about such surveillance, and with identity cards in the offing we can't help but think in terms of 'the mark of the Beast'!

But what of the church? In some cults it feels like someone is forever breathing down your neck, with a restraining hand on your shoulder. Should we, as Christians, be 'under scrutiny'?

God, of course, has His eye on us: "*For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him*" (II Chronicles 16:9). And Jesus himself is not only with us but, with the Father, is *in* Christians by his Spirit - and right to the end of the age. But that, surely, is positive and to be welcomed.

What about *your* local church? The Scriptures, in fact, are clear that oversight is an essential part of the activity within the assembly. All too often this function is recognized - but abused. And it works in two directions.

Submit To One Another

The relationship of brethren to the assembly leadership could be described as 'voluntary acceptance'. In Hebrews we are told '*Obey your leaders*'. *Obey* (*Gk peitho*) implies a willing submission, having been persuaded. You don't 'leave your brains at the door'! We accept the guidance of our elders as 'overseers' - watchers over those in their charge and equipped by the Spirit to shepherd the flock. (See Acts 20:28) "*They are like men standing guard over your spiritual good, and they have great responsibility*" (Hebrews 13:17 *Phillips*).

Oversight, however, is a matter of service. This relationship is two-way traffic. Wrote Paul: "*By love serve one*

another" (Galatians 5:13). Peter adds: "*I appeal to the elders that are among you, shepherd God's flock that is with you, not because you have to but because with God you want to; not out of greed for gain, but eagerly; not lording it over your charges, but becoming examples to your flock*" (I Peter 5:1-3).

An orderly Spirit-led assembly, then, will be marked by a harmonious relationship between the brethren and the leadership.

Elders, Too

It would be arrogant for an elder to assume he knows all! He indeed provides leadership, guards against false teachers and false brethren, spiritually develops those in his charge, prepares them to serve the church - and ensures their spiritual gifts are developed and used. All too often, however, those same false teachers were once orthodox elders who let their imagination and their ambition run riot. *The overseers need oversight!*

Peter added: "*...all of you put on the service apron of humility toward each other*" (v.5). Elders are to be willing to learn from those they serve. And, *vitality*, to be willing to submit to experienced heads outside their own assembly (Proverbs 13:1).

Many leaders of independent groups bypass this concept. Submission to Jesus Christ is paramount, of course. But it's clear from the New Testament that all elders also subjected themselves to mature outside counsel. Then, it was the apostles and those men, like Timothy and Titus, who had Paul's trust. Today it is vital that the leadership are open to colleagues - '*iron sharpens iron*'. And a willingness to listen to their input - even their correction.

Associate!

To this end all independent assemblies should be allied to some form of 'association of independents'. Without this mutual submission it's all too easy for self-serving - even whacky - ideas to take hold. By contrast, those in a denomination - especially a hierarchy - are obliged to 'toe the party line' - however *[cont'd over*

FESTIVALS: Autumn 2003
Trumpets.....September 27
Atonement.....October 6
Tabernacles.....October 11-17
Closing Day.....October 18

Outreach Europe

The *Churches of God, UK* (COGUK) has at present a relatively minor role in the work of the churches of God here in Europe. However, we are unusual among the churches here, in that we are not a 'denomination'. COGUK is a co-ordinating body for any like-minded Sabbatarian independent assemblies who wish to expand their outreach and to work together in outreach to our people.

Some brethren, of course, feel more comfortable in a denominational church - and are no less Christian for that. We are all one Body in Christ. Each in our own way seeks to live out the Bible teaching as we perceive it.

Through our association with the *Outreach Ministries* (CGOM) we have a wider impact worldwide:

- COGUK contributes to the content of the CGOM web site (www.cgom.org)
- The flagship outreach magazine *New Horizons* is compiled here and sent to a sister church in the United States for printing. In return, they graciously send us, without charge, the copies we need for our UK mailing list. It is mainly through *New Horizons* that we seek to persuade towards Jesus Christ!
- *Bible Basics* study course is also prepared in the UK

However, our outreach is restrained within a very limited budget. Our plan is to expand the circulation over the next few years. Clearly, this means higher costs - postage, stationery, time, extra literature for those who respond *etc.* It also means we are dependent on our readers for support!

If you profit from our work and wish to see it expand we ask you to partner us by helping to provide the needed resources. We especially welcome the support of any small groups 'out there'. " *A three-fold cord is not quickly broken*" (Ecclesiastes 4:12)! Ω

WATCHING?....cont'd

heretical. As a part of 'one Body' all Christians are, in Christian love, to submit to one another. Ω

Back issues of **OUTREACH** may be viewed on our web site: www.cgom.org

coming soon...PEACE!

Iraq, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands, Zimbabwe, Congo, Chechnya, Afghanistan...wars and rumours of wars! But the world's conflicts are destined to end. *Peace will come*. And that's what is prophetically represented by the weekly Sabbath day - the seventh day of the week. It is mankind's 'day of rest' (Hebrews 4:1-11). John, in the book of Revelation, tells us it will last a thousand years - popularly known as 'the millennium' (*ch* 20:4-6).

Only then will we, under the guidance of the returned Messiah, Jesus, learn to live in perpetual warless peace. It is also a time of joy and healing. The blind will see, the deaf hear, the lame walk (*cp* Isaiah 11 and 12).

Our Temporary Existence

Civilisation is traceable for some six thousand years. It has been a time for man's best efforts to live harmoniously - but failing abjectly over time. To continue the analogy, we now live in 'man's week' - the six working days of the week representing these six thousand years. [Request the article *God's Grand Design*]

Life is short - an average seventy to eighty years here in the West, less elsewhere. Even in the millennium human life on earth will be limited. All of this 'seven thousand years' of transient existence is represented by the annual Biblical *Feast of Tabernacles* held in the autumn [*see Box*]. During the seven days of the festival Israel lived in 'booths' - temporary dwellings, symbolizing our frail temporary lives. We all 'fold our tents' and die!

Also represented by this seven day festival is that period *following* the millennium (*ch* 20:3) when Satan will be released from his restraints to again deceive willing mankind '*when the thousand years have expired*' (*vv*.5-10).

It is also the time, *after* the thousand years and after this Satanic rebellion, when 'the rest of the dead' will be resurrected for judgment (*vv*.5, 11-14). This is represented by the last - the seventh - day of Tabernacles (John 7:37f). It is also the time, finally, when all that is contrary to the divine will is to be consumed by fire (*v*.15).

Harvest Time

Tabernacles is also called the *Feast of Ingathering* (Exodus 23:16). During the seven thousand years God is calling out and choosing those who will 'inhabit eternity' with Him, an eternity symbolized by the *annual* Sabbath which follows immediately on the heels of Tabernacles. It is God's 'harvest', gathered in throughout the ages. [Request the free article *God's End Game*]

[God's special '*firstfruits* harvest' is represented by the *Feast of Pentecost* - the early summer wheat harvest. These, transformed to spirit, live through and reign with the Messiah during the millennium.]

Christians annually gather to observe this Festival of Tabernacles - a time of joyful fellowship and Biblical instruction. Contact us to locate a festival site near to you Ω

FINANCES (COGUK) - August 2003
INCOME.... £314 **OUTGOINGS**... £504