

Alarm Bells Are Ringing

Sometimes an upsetting event stops you in your tracks and makes you review your Christian life.

I left the USA via Boston on Wednesday, February 3, bound for London for a three-week pastoral visit. The plane took off right on time and we landed at Heathrow at 7.20 am, slightly earlier than scheduled. The flight was flawless and all went well.

By prior arrangement, my colleague John Schroeder met me and we headed for my hotel. During that first day I did a few routine things locally such as going to the bank, the stationery store, and putting some credit on my mobile phone. Later that evening I joined my daughter for a dinner that she prepared for us. I had contacted my wife, Jane, to let her know that I had arrived safely. Apart from jet-lag, all was well with me and the world. Or so I thought . . .

Potential disaster

I finally went to bed at around 11 pm, having thanked God for my safe arrival. My normal body clock said it was 6 pm, but having been awake for many hours I was ready for sleep.

Then at 3.20 am the shrillest alarm I have heard in a long time woke everyone, and probably many in the surrounding houses. The fire alarm had been triggered. Quickly grabbing some essentials to survive, I put on my dress-

ing gown and headed for the hotel lobby. Within minutes, crowds of people had gathered and were hurried out to a very cold car park.

Some young guests had run down in just their pyjamas and their feet were



Paul and Jane Suckling

bare. It was cold and they went back inside the hotel to get paper towels from the bathroom to stand on. Several people started to smoke. Others had brought their car keys and climbed into their vehicles for warmth.

Finally, about an hour later, the screeching alarm stopped and the 'go back to bed' signal was authorised by the firemen. We returned to our hotel rooms very grateful that the trauma was suddenly over.

But now I was awake, and began to ponder the meaning of my life.

What if . . . ?

I lay there thinking what would have been next for me if life had all been over that night.

The resurrection to eternal life was my first thought. Yes, that's God's promise to every true Christian – His firstfruits (James 1:18; Romans 8:11, 23; 1 Corinthians 15:50-54) – a truly wonderful gift, provided we have met the requirements that God has laid down in Scripture. Eternal life is a gift that one cannot earn in any way by works that any human can do. We are saved by grace and not works (Ephesians 2:8-10). However, God does require real repentance of our personal sins, which He is willing to forgive through the sacrifice of Jesus our Saviour.

Christians accept the sacrifice of Christ, and then we covenant with God not to walk along the pathway of sin any longer. We reject Satan and all his works, since he was a murderer and a liar from the beginning (John 8:44). So all the wrong from the past has to stop, and we must now produce good works (Ephesians 4:10).

That's not so easy, as we still have our human nature to battle. Individually we know the temptations and challenges that come our way on a regular basis. But with the help of God's Holy Spirit –

given to us after repentance, water baptism and the laying on of hands of the ministry (Acts 2:38) – we can truly begin to walk in the way God asks of us.

A long Christian life

It has been nearly 50 years since I came to understand the truth about living the Christian life, and the awesome promise of everlasting life in God's Kingdom to follow. As these thoughts started to run through my mind, I asked myself: 'How am I doing?'

I had left my hotel room with almost nothing, and if I had expired that night I would have taken nothing with me to the grave. 'For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain that we can carry nothing out' (1 Timothy 6:7). All that would have been left between me and God was what I had done with the knowledge I had been given all those years ago.

As I lay there thinking about King David's words, 'What is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?' (Psalm 8:4), it crossed my mind that all that matters in the end is our personal relationship with our Creator!

Worshipping God in spirit and in truth

In John 4:23-24 Christ makes it abundantly clear what we should do. Please read these verses carefully. God clearly says He is looking for people to worship Him 'in spirit and in truth'. This passage means that my relationship with Him is a spiritual one based upon all that has been recorded in Scripture. It has been written down for me to read, understand and obey.

At the hotel, people began arriving back in the lobby fully dressed and carrying back-packs. I'm sure that they had brought with them all that mattered at that moment when the alarm rang.

I realised that all I had brought along was the record of what today we would call my 'character'. It has been shaped by nearly 50 years of reading, studying, and learning about God's way of life for a human being, and then seeking to put it all into practice.

Only God knows how effectively I have cooperated with Him, struggling against my human nature and the pulls of the devil. But I can say that I have tried, and with the help of His Holy Spirit, I have made some progress. It's at times like this emergency alarm that we are brought up short and made to

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with our Creator!*

think about the real meaning of life.

The annual season of the Passover is also meant to help us evaluate our progress. We are encouraged by the Scriptures to 'examine ourselves' (2 Corinthians 13:5-7). For further understanding about the Passover, request or download our free booklet *God's Holy Day Plan: The Promise of Hope for All Mankind*.

Yielding to God's truth

Verse 8 makes very interesting reading: 'For we cannot do anything against the truth, but only for the truth.' The apostle Paul was committed to preserving and promoting God's truth. Do we live our lives for the truth? Those whom God has chosen to call in these last days before the return of Christ have a very serious responsibility.

Once baptised we become part of the body of Christ throughout this world. We must live in a way that demonstrates the fruit of our calling – relying on the Father who enabled us to come to Jesus Christ (John 6:44, 65) and continuing to serve our great God –

worshipping Him in spirit and in truth.

Frail and human as we all are, at the Passover we renew the covenant we made at baptism – and we determine yet again for another year to strive to fulfil our calling. A good passage to study is Philippians 3:13-4:1.

It's now 5:30 am, or half an hour past midnight back in the Boston area of the US. The hotel guests are stirring and traffic is beginning to move on the streets outside. I feel like going to sleep, but a new day to serve God is about to begin.

Wherever we are and whatever we are doing as we begin our next new day, let's serve God with a willing mind and a renewed heart – realising that the night is far spent and salvation is closer than when we first believed (Romans 13:11).

*Paul Suckling
Senior Pastor, UCG British Isles
(Adapted from an article
published in United News.)*

Why a Church?

God has a plan for bringing mankind to salvation in His Kingdom. Since creating Adam and Eve, He has worked with relatively small groups of people in various ways, but always with the same goal in mind.

With the coming of the promised Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth, the stage was set for a crucial step in God's plan of salvation. This phase involves our Creator working through a group of called-out people – the Church – who are converted, spiritually transformed by the Holy Spirit. They are chosen not only to receive salvation for themselves, but to carry out God's work for the ultimate benefit of all humanity.

To understand just how God has been working with this small, but specially chosen Christian army for the last 2,000 years – ask for our free booklet *The Church Jesus Built*.

Conversion

A Personal Perspective

Ignoring a relationship with God can leave a nagging emptiness in a person's life – a lack of purpose and a feeling of discontent. When the time is right God often uses this void to call a person to true Christianity. Consider the following experience of one young Church member.

My parents, who were members of God's Church, taught me about the Bible as I grew up. Fond memories include running around after Church with my friends or visiting other members' homes for dinner. I also remember accompanying my parents to Church socials and dances – definitely a highlight on the social calendar. As I grew into my teens, there was the privilege of attending summer camps in Bedfordshire and Cumbria. They were good times indeed.

When I reached 16, however, I decided that Church was not for me and I stopped attending. Although I continued to live at home, I went out 'into the world' to find my own path. I spent seven years not attending Church and not even thinking about obeying God.

During that time I remained in contact with the friends I had made as a child and as a teen, and while they were not my primary social circle, there was always a certain sense of belonging when I was with them. As a good friend stated, 'You can make new friends, but you can never make new friends that you grew up with.'

Perplexing personal discontent

Having left Church, I went about my business working and socialising, taking holidays, buying cars and enjoying life.

But I always had a nagging empty feeling gnawing away in the back of my mind. It was telling me that my life was missing something important. I concluded that my job was not fulfilling enough, so I changed jobs. This, however, didn't fix the problem.

Next, I decided that it was my car, so I changed that too. When neither of these worked, I considered trying a new

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relationship which unsurprisingly wasn't the solution either. This became a cycle that I called 'perpetual discontentment.' Nothing I did would satisfy that nagging feeling in my mind.

At age 23, one of those long-time Church friends contacted me and invited me to come along to an informal get-together that she was having for the young adults. I was working at the time and didn't really feel inclined to make the effort to drive for three hours to see them. But in the end I decided that I would go, so I packed a bag and my guitar and set off.

Why not attend Church?

On arriving, I was pleased to see many old acquaintances and some new

faces that I had not met before. I was able to spend two days with them before heading back to work. One conversation stuck in my mind. I had been discussing God with the friend who had invited me. She pointed out that I had a lot of knowledge and asked me 'Why is it you don't attend church?' I replied that it was because, although I believed in God, I didn't feel I had been 'called'.

That I hadn't been 'struck by lightning', and that it wasn't the life for me (although I admitted it could be something I might do later in life).

My friend looked exasperated and explained to me that I wasn't going to be

struck by lightning and that my calling was my knowledge. I knew, and to some degree understood, many biblical truths, including the monumental key which was that I believed God was a real living being. This conversation stuck in my mind and I thought about it on the long drive home.

The next day, the truth had dawned on me: Yes, I do believe in God. I believe in what the Bible tells us, so why is it that I continue to ignore His instructions to obey Him?

A pleasing change of direction

This was in August and I was aware that the biblically commanded Feast of Tabernacles was looming some seven

weeks later (Leviticus 23:33-36; John 7:1-14). I called my friend that very day and asked if she knew of anywhere I might stay if I could attend. She was delighted and suggested that I share a room with one of the other young men in a communal house. Next, I called my local pastor, explained my situation and asked if he would be happy for me to come along to services that Saturday (the weekly Sabbath day), which he said he was. From a conversation on Saturday night at the get-together, it was just seven days later that I was back attending Church and on the road to spiritual recovery.

This probably seems like a very quick about turn in the way I was living – and indeed, it was. However, what became clear to me as I attended Church and, more importantly, tried to bring my habits, behaviour and life back in line with God’s will, was that the gnawing empty feeling had gone away. I realised that the thing that had been missing in my life was God! The nagging in the back of my mind was His calling for me to change the way I was living.

It was not the enjoyable social occasions that I took part in as a child that were missing from my life. I had plenty of friends where I was. The thing that was missing from my life was an active relationship with God.

It was cutting Him out of my life by not praying, by not striving to obey Him, not worshipping Him in the way that He commands through presenting myself as ‘a living sacrifice’ (Romans 12:1) that was the problem. God made humankind for a purpose, that purpose being to obey Him completely in this life and receive eternal life in the Kingdom of God (see John 6:40). By failing to follow and obey God, I was overlooking the most important part and very purpose of my life!

An invitation willingly extended

That was a little over four years ago. Since then I have been baptised and have married the very friend who had told me that my calling was my knowledge. It is very clear to me looking back at the events that took place that God was working in my life to bring me to repentance and obedience to Him. I had not understood what being ‘called’ meant. I imagined being called as something like being struck by lightning. One day I would suddenly want to obey God. The truth about being called, however, is that if God calls you, it means He has extended a personal invitation to you. ‘For many are invited, but only a few are chosen’ (Matthew 22:14, Contemporary English Version).

It is up to those who receive this invitation to gratefully and willingly accept it and then take action. God had extended an invitation to me in that I learnt about God the Father, Jesus Christ and the Bible over the first 16 years of my life.

The nagging in the back of my mind was His calling for me to change the way I was living.

Once I reached 16, I decided that I did not want to accept that invitation and turned away. However, thankfully for me, God continued to work in my mind until I realised just how He had been working with me.

The parable of the sower

Jesus Christ explains in a parable found in Mark 4:13-20 that the Word of God (hearing the truth about Him and the Bible), is like seed sown on the ground. Sometimes, the seed is taken away by Satan, as a bird might fly down and pick up the seed, devouring it.

Other times, the seed is received and understood, so it takes root and grows into a plant, but then deceitfulness, the appeal of the world’s vices and charisma choke the blossoming plant.

For a time, this is what happened to me, I allowed myself to turn from God



David and Hannah Elliott

and be immersed in the world. In the end, however, the seed that had been planted in me with God’s help grew taller than the weeds trying to choke it and I realised that my priority should be to obey God rather than trying to follow the way that ‘that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death’ (Proverbs 14:12; 16:25).

Life surely has its hardships from which nobody is exempt, but finally realising and coming to understand that God had a greater purpose for my existence was liberating. By following God’s laws found in the Bible, we are able to make the most of this life by living it in the way He designed it to be abundantly lived.

What is more, we can receive the gift of eternal life at the end of it. Can you imagine a better and more rewarding way to spend your lifetime?

David Elliott

Recommended Reading

To understand more about salvation, ask for our free booklet *The Road to Eternal Life*.

Truly Comprehending the Cross of Christ

The meaning of the cross of Christ can sometimes be difficult even for Christians to fully comprehend. Crucifixion was the last thing that His disciples wanted to see happen to their divine Leader, Jesus Christ. Yet it was the way that both we and they would be delivered from our sins.

It was Simon Peter who shrank from even considering the thought of crucifixion – being erroneously misled by the devil into trying to steer Christ away from that final path to Jerusalem (see Mark 8:31-33).

The apostle Paul wrote plainly of ‘the offense of the cross’ (Galatians 5:11). The cross of Christ tends to cause offense to unbelievers, and sometimes even to believers who misunderstand its real meaning in their lives.

Certainly the crucifixion of Christ was deeply offensive to Peter *before* he truly understood its purpose in making it possible for our sins to be forgiven.

Yet both Peter’s and Paul’s teaching on the sacrificial atonement of Christ to redeem us from our sins is absolutely essential. What they did *not* teach and we do *not* teach is that the cross of Christ itself in any way negates the law, including the one forbidding the use of carved images (such as crucifixes) expressed in the second commandment (Exodus 20:4-6; Deuteronomy 5:8-10).

The cross and the power of the gospel

Paul was sent ‘to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect, *for the message of the cross* is foolishness to those who are perishing, *but to us who are being saved it is the power of God*’ (1 Corinthians 1:17-18, empha-

sis added throughout). The cross has a definite message – and it projects spiritual power. Paul clearly associated the power of God with *the cross of Christ* (figuratively meaning the atonement for our sins).

The symbolism of Christ’s cross is an integral part of the gospel message. ‘For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation to everyone who believes . . .’

Paul clearly associated the power of God with the cross of Christ, figuratively meaning the atonement for our sins.

(Romans 1:16). The apostle to the Gentiles further explains: ‘For though He [Christ] was crucified in weakness, yet He [was resurrected and now] lives by the power of God. For we are also weak in Him, but we shall live with Him by the power of God toward you’ (2 Corinthians 13:4).

One scriptural passage explains and expounds another. Paul wrote: ‘I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live but Christ lives in Me [through the power of the Holy Spirit], and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith in [or ‘of’] the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me’ (Galatians 2:20). The Holy Spirit is the agency of God’s divine power. ‘For our gospel did not come unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit’ (1 Thessalonians 1:5).

The real meaning of the cross of Christ

Paul stated: ‘But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ’ (Galatians 6:14). Yet the original cross on which Christ was crucified no longer exists. ‘And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, *even the death of the cross*’ (Philippians 2:8).

The ‘cross of Christ’ is a metaphor for the atonement of our sins – *not* a physical icon to be used as an aid in worship.

‘As many as desire to make a good showing in the flesh, these would compel you [Gentiles] to be circumcised, *only that they may not suffer for the cross of Christ*’ (Galatians 6:12). One cannot rightly suffer for a physical icon. A number of early Jewish Christians apparently trusted more in physical circumcision than in Christ’s sacrificial death. Some first-century believers did *not* wish to suffer as Christians, which is our common lot. Yet Paul clearly stated that ‘if we suffer, we shall also reign with Him [Christ] (2 Timothy 2:12, KJV).

The cross of Christ: an instrument of peace

Paul wrote: ‘Therefore, having been justified by faith, *we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ*’ (Romans 5:1). But how?

We should add that peace with God can never be understood as appeasement. It only comes at a very steep price – the shed blood of the sinless Jesus Christ. ‘And by Him [Christ] to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, *having made peace through the blood of His cross*’ (Colossians 1:20).

Only the sacrifice of Christ can satisfy God’s terms and conditions. God will not compromise with His spiritual law. We have to repent and obey it implicitly (John 15:14; 1 John 5:2-3). Jesus kept His Father’s commandments, setting us an example for all time (John 15:10).

But humanly we simply cannot effectively keep God’s law until we have *first* been fully forgiven for our sins, our past transgressions of God’s holy, spiritual law, and received His

Holy Spirit (Romans 7:12; 1 John 3:4; James 2:9).

People ridden by guilt find it very difficult to really obey God and truly submit to His divine will.

Our guilty consciences cleansed from sin

Old Testament ordinances, gifts and sacrifices could not make people perfect who performed the service ‘in regard to the conscience’ (Hebrews 9:9). But Christ’s atonement can! ‘How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, *cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God*’ (verse 14).

After we have been forgiven and washed clean from our sins firstly by Christ’s blood and secondly symbolically in the baptismal waters, ‘let us draw near with a true heart in full

assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience [by His blood] and our bodies washed with pure water’ (Hebrews 10:22).

The apostle John expressed deep appreciation ‘To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood’ (Revelation 1:5). When Paul was being converted, Ananias asked him: ‘And now why are you waiting? *Arise and be baptised, and wash your sins away*, calling on the name of the Lord’ (Acts 22:16). It takes both the blood and the water (1 John 5:8).

In explaining the salvation process, our free booklet about *Transforming Your Life* brings together repentance, forgiveness, water baptism, the Holy Spirit, and most important of all, the role of the blood of Christ’s cross (the atonement). Request or download your copy today.

John Ross Schroeder

Roman Forms of Crucifixion

Crucifixion wasn’t always carried out the way we’ve seen it typically depicted in paintings and pictures. In fact, a victim of crucifixion wasn’t likely to be nailed through the hands, since their structure cannot support the weight of a human body. Most likely, victims were nailed through the wrist or, in some instances, had their arms tied rather than being nailed.

Nor were victims always crucified on the kind of cross typically shown in depictions of Christ’s crucifixion. Note what *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* says in its article on crucifixion: ‘At times the cross was only one vertical stake. Frequently, however, there was a cross-piece attached either at the top to give the shape of a “T” (crux commissa) or just below the top, as in the form most familiar in Christian symbolism (crux immissa). . .

‘Executioners could vary the form of punishment, as [Roman historian] Seneca the Younger indicates: “I see crosses there, not just of one kind but made in many different ways: some have their victims with head down to the ground . . . others stretch out their arms on the [cross-piece] . . .”

‘In his account of what happened to Jewish refugees from Jerusalem [in the Jewish war of A.D. 67-70], [first-century historian] Josephus also lets us see that there was no fixed pattern for crucifying people. Much depended on the sadistic ingenuity of the moment’ (David Noel Freedman, editor-in-chief, 1992, Vol. 1, pp. 1208-1209).

The Roman historian Seneca, describing the horror of crucifixion, mentioned ‘the accursed tree’. This reference is strongly reminiscent of Peter’s words when he speaks of Jesus, ‘who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree’ (1 Peter 2:24; compare Acts 5:30).

Shape of the cross not spelled out

The word translated ‘cross’ in the New Testament is the Greek word *stauros*, which ‘denotes, primarily, “an upright pale or stake”’ (*Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, 1985, ‘Cross, Crucify’).

‘Both the noun and the verb *stauroo*, “to fasten to a stake or pale,” are originally to be distinguished from the ecclesiastical form of a two beamed “cross”’ (ibid).

The Bible contains no specific description of the *stauros* on which Jesus died. The word *stauros* was used in non-biblical writings of the time to refer to pieces of wood of various shapes, with and without crosspieces. If it were important that we know its exact shape, the gospel writers could have easily provided us that information – yet none of them do. What is important for us to know is the willing sacrifice Jesus made of His own life for the forgiveness of our sins.

For a more complete study of the nature of the cross itself, request or download our free booklet *Jesus Christ: The Real Story*.

Questions & Answers

Q Did humankind know about God before God called Abraham? Did Adam pass on his relationship about himself and God before the fall, the first human sin? Was mankind then left to its own devices during this early period?

D A, Telford

A Roughly the first 2,000 years of human history are revealed in the first 11 chapters of the Bible. We need to look into these chapters which chronicle the years before Abraham came on the scene to properly address your questions.

The foundational laws of God, which regulate how we should live, already existed even at the time of the creation of man. By Adam and Eve stealing, coveting, putting another god before their Creator – covetousness is idolatry (Colossians 3:5) – and dishonouring their only Parent, they broke four of the Ten Commandments directly and most of them in principle (see James 2:10-11).

The fact that Adam and Eve hid themselves in the Garden when they heard God nearby shows that they knew they had done wrong (Genesis 3:8-10). In verse 22 we read that Adam and Eve knew the difference between good and evil.

God expected our first parents to be obedient to His commands. So a moral yardstick, a divine code of behaviour, already existed well before both Abraham and Moses.

Recall that as the centuries rolled by, man's ever-increasing rebellion against

God's moral code resulted in His decision to bring the great flood on an incredibly wicked humanity. Man's evil character is described in the following words: 'Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continuously' (Genesis 6:5).

God would not have sat in judgement of the evil conduct of pre-flood men and women had He not *first* provided them with a sound moral standard of behaviour. One cannot break a law that doesn't exist (Romans 4:15). Remember Noah was a 'preacher of righteousness' (2 Peter 2:5). Who did this righteous man preach to? Clearly he warned his contemporaries about where their wicked conduct would inevitably lead them.

Genuine morality is based on the Ten Commandments. They are divided into the two Commandments that Jesus referred to – love towards God and love towards our neighbours (Matthew 22:37-40).

As a perfect whole, these commandments make up the basic moral code by which all mankind should live. In the Garden of Eden God gave Adam and Eve instructions. But they refused to obey their Creator as they ate the forbidden fruit. Their rebellion against God constituted sin, which is defined as the transgression of God's commandments. 'Whoever commits sin commits also lawlessness, and *sin is lawlessness*' (1 John 3:4, emphasis added throughout). Also: 'You commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors' (James 2:9).

We have no evidence that the Ten Commandments and the rest of God's laws mentioned in the Pentateuch were officially codified in a law book until the time of Moses (Deuteronomy 31:24-26). These laws, however, already existed from the time of creation. God Himself stated that '*Abraham obeyed My voice, and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes and My laws*' (Genesis 26:5). This obedient patriarch, lived a number of centuries before the time of the Exodus – long *before* God's laws were codified for Israel at Sinai.

The Hebrew prophet Jeremiah clearly understood that 'the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man who walks to direct his steps [in a moral manner]. O LORD, *correct me*, but with justice; not in Your anger, lest you bring me to nothing' (Jeremiah 10:23-24).

In the overall plan of God, repentance, mercy and forgiveness all play a major part in travelling the road to salvation and man's quest for eternal life. All have sinned and have fallen short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). Yet even when we as repentant sinners fail to live up to the high moral standards that God the Father has set for humankind, we can rely upon Jesus Christ our High Priest to intercede on our behalf, enabling the Father to forgive us (Hebrews 4:14-16; I John 1:7-9).

Pages 28 and 29 of our comprehensive booklet *The New Covenant: Does It Abolish God's Law?* show that each one of the Ten Commandments existed prior to the time of Moses. Request or download your free copy.

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Letters From Our Readers

'Join the Resistance!'

Thank you so much for the DVDs and MP3s. I thought your article in the January/February Supplement was great. Our government people should each receive a copy.

D H H, Basingstoke

Readers appreciate Church literature

Thank you for the magazine and the booklets you've been sending to me. I appreciate the spiritual food you are giving to me so generously. I've been reading every word intensely and I've gained tremendously from all your publications.

J A A, Manchester

Many thanks for the booklets and the magazine. They are really interesting and very informative. I have only recently become a Christian and started to read the Bible. These booklets and information on your web site will really assist me and help to build my Christian faith – making me a stronger and wiser Christian.

D C, Nottingham

A friend loaned me your booklet *Who Is God?* It is excellently produced, easy to understand and well written. That's why I am requesting more items of literature plus an enquiry about any booklets on courtship or finding a marriage partner.

M B, Llandysul, Wales

• *We have posted Marriage and Family: The Missing Dimension and Making Life Work. Both booklets highlight biblical guidelines about dating and marriage.*

Current events

Thank you so much for your coverage of current events and how they relate to the return of our precious Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. May God bless you for your diligence and may He guide you throughout the year. I continue to learn through your publications.

Mrs S B, London

Bible Study Course

Your first lesson is very informative. It makes me look at the Bible as a God-breathed book, the Words of God. I had always wondered why we have this old book. But now I have learnt that human life is the same throughout the ages and that all these biblical stories are for us all to learn from. 2 Timothy 3:16 tells us they are for our reproof and correction.

H M B, Bilston

Which church; which day?

The only church that can claim its history back to the first century is the Roman Catholic Church, which faithfully follows the teachings of the Bible and carries on the true apostolic church.

P L, Internet

• *The accuracy of your declaration depends entirely on whether or not the Roman church really bases its teachings on the Holy Bible (both Old and New Testaments) or church tradition. To find out, our readers should request or download the free booklets The Church Jesus Built and Is the Bible True?*

With so many different religions [denominations] which interpret the Bible in different ways, could I please ask how can we know for sure if we are following the correct path? Are Sabbath

days really that important? If so, how can we be sure which day is the weekly Sabbath?

S S, Uxbridge

• *God commanded that the seventh day be observed as the Sabbath (Exodus 20:8-10). Almost any dictionary, encyclopaedia or calendar will show that Saturday is the seventh day of the week, while Sunday is the first day of the week. Although man has modified calendars throughout the centuries, the seven-day weekly cycle has remained intact throughout history. To understand much more, ask for or download our free booklet Sunset to Sunset: God's Sabbath Rest.*

Suffering from a serious illness

Thank you so much for your literature. I suffer from primary progressive multiple sclerosis. Unfortunately, I am only on benefits after 20 years being a nursing sister. Your booklets are really helping me to understand what's really going on in this world as foretold in the Bible. May God bless you for all your good works.

M W, Filey

• *You have the heartfelt prayers of our ministry and our editorial staff.*

Spreading the gospel

I am enclosing a cheque for my offerings. Thank you so much for sending the two new booklets, the CDs, DVDs and of course *The Good News* and other reading material. I have lots of comments and questions, but will write them separately or you will never get this cheque. I continue to pray for you all, for God's guidance and protection and for more workers for the harvest.

C S, Spalding