

A Christian's True Identity: *How Do We Measure Up?*

Today many Christians are faced with a serious spiritual identity crisis. What is the standard that will show us who we are and where we are headed?

It was late in the 19th century when the prime minister of Britain, Benjamin Disraeli, was asked by Queen Victoria what his religion was. Although of Jewish background, his father had decided to embrace the Anglican faith. So when the Queen asked the question, Disraeli replied that he was that blank page between the Old and New Testaments.

For a committed Christian, such an answer, while diplomatic, falls short of what is expected. Those who want to follow Jesus Christ need to go further and show proof of their Christian identity.

What are the true signs that identify a person as a Christian, not merely in name, but in practice as well?

We all need to identify with something, and there is nothing better than to identify with something that isn't temporal, here today and gone tomorrow, like the withering grass. The patriarch Abraham and father of the faithful identified with something that was lasting, had firm foundations, 'whose builder and maker is God' (Hebrews 11:10).

Moses, once he found out who his people were, forsook the glory of Egypt and began to identify with his brethren and their suffering, 'for he endured as seeing Him who is invisible' (Hebrews 11:27). And so did many others in the Bible who accepted their calling by God to be something more lasting and more worthwhile than striving for the transitory things in life.

Identity crisis predicted

The Scriptures warn that before the return of Jesus Christ two condi-

tions would confuse the identity of a Christian.

Firstly, false teachers would arise with the intent of deceiving others into believing things that have no basis in God's Word. The apostle Paul cautions us: 'For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works' (2 Corinthians 11:13-15).

In other words, they give all the appearances of being teachers of righteousness. But on closer inspection when compared with the Bible, they are in fact teachers of the traditions of men, rather than preaching the truths of God as revealed in His Word (Mark 7:8-13).

Secondly, at the end of the age there would be sincere people who would be deceived in their religious beliefs. As Jesus clearly stated: 'For many will come in My name, saying, I am the Christ, and will deceive many' (Matthew 24:5).



RIGHT HON. BENJAMIN DISRAELI, M.P.

ArtToday

Our foremost identity

Should you identify with those who deceive or who are themselves deceived in believing and practising humanly devised doctrines, even though they outwardly acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah? Obviously not!

Jesus Christ promised that He would build His Church, and that it would never cease to exist (Matthew 16:18; 28:18-20). But where can you find it? How can you know whether a religious body teaches the truths of God or embraces the traditions of men?

The most important step for you to take is to identify yourself with the Bible – to read it and to study its content, rather than falling back on the course of passive action that all too many people take. They simply assume their church or denomination is teaching biblical truths without checking whether its teachings are really biblically based.

‘Prove all things, hold fast what is good’ (1 Thessalonians 5:21), the apostle Paul tells us. ‘Your word is truth,’ Christ stated (John 17:17). The prophet Isaiah was inspired to write in the eighth century BC: ‘The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever’ (Isaiah 40:8). Scripture is timeless in value and applicable for all occasions.

The Bible is readily available, translated into hundreds of languages. So there is no excuse not to study and compare the teachings of the Bible with those of a particular church denomination.

Notice Isaiah 45:19, which is addressed to the nation of Israel to whom God gave His teaching in Old Testament times. ‘I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth; I did not say to the seed of Jacob, “Seek Me in vain”; I, the LORD, speak righteousness, I declare things that are right.’

God doesn’t give permission to any individual or religious organisa-

tion to decide for themselves what is right and what is wrong, which doctrines to follow, which day of the week is holy, which religious festivals to celebrate or incorporate into the religious calendar.

A Christian’s identity must be with the inspired Word of God.

As the apostle Paul instructed Timothy, ‘Study to show yourself approved of God . . . rightly dividing the word of truth’ (2 Timothy 2:15, King James Version).

To help our readers to rightly divide the word of truth found in the pages of the Bible, we offer a free 12-lesson *Bible Study Course* which focuses on God’s revealed plan of salvation. It will give you a head start in finding out for yourself what the Bible really says.

Identifying with the true Church

Once you have studied the Bible, you will see a way of life and a set of beliefs which may radically differ from those you have been taught. You will see doctrinal beliefs that have little bearing on what is preached in nominal Christianity.

God’s Word will open your mind to different perspectives and show you His plan of salvation. Once you have studied the Holy Scriptures, you will begin to understand what God’s true Church will be teaching.

This equips you to take the next step – to find a body of people who believe what the Bible teaches and who base their lives on God’s Word. Once you have found the true Church, you will find the true Christian fellowship that reflects the teachings of God’s Word.

In truth, it is that obedient but still imperfect group of people, the spiritual body of Christ, with whom you should identify.

Attending Church

A Church congregation is the best environment to encourage us and help

us to fulfill our calling. Of course, it needs to be one where the teachings have a biblical foundation.

The messages given in the form of sermons, the hymns sung and the fellowship afterwards serve the purpose of strengthening the faith of the individuals attending, ‘till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ’ (Ephesians 4:13).

Sometimes people come in contact with the true Church through reading the literature it publishes, but then try to grow spiritually by opting to stay at home on the Sabbath rather than fellowshiping with others of like-minded beliefs. In the long run, that’s a big mistake.

Of course, for practical reasons like distance or ill health it’s not always possible to come together for collective worship on the biblical Sabbath day. But where there is an opportunity, we should come and honour God on the day He designated for worship. Remember that Jesus Christ is Lord of the Sabbath day (Mark 2:28).

Gerhard Marx

Publications That Will Help

The United Church of God publishes free booklets that undergird and support the message of this article. The first is *Sunset to Sunset: God’s Sabbath Rest*. It clearly shows which day is the true Christian Sabbath.

Secondly, we offer *The Church Jesus Built*, which explains what happened to the true body of Christ over the last 2,000 years. You’ll see that apostasy set in even in the first century while the apostle John was still alive.

Lastly, don’t forget to enrol in the free *Bible Study Course*.

Investing in the True Gospel

Jesus said, 'Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.'

Nationwide research was recently conducted in our schools about what our children felt was important. *The Daily Express* reported on the lifestyles that children most admire . . . Fame, fortune, football and pop music are 'the best things in the world. *God just about scrapes in at the number ten slot* behind nice food, seaside holidays, computer games, families and animals . . .' (emphasis added). This indicates that many parents may not have been teaching their children about the priority God should have in their lives.

What priority do we give God? One of the major goals of this Supplement is to inform our readers about the priority of preaching Christ's message, the gospel of the Kingdom of God.

Precious lives are being changed for the better as readers respond to the magazine articles, booklets and the *Bible Study Course*. The mailing list of *The Good News* has doubled within the last two years. New readers are emerging from the darkness of this world into the marvellous light of God's magnificent truth.

But without the personal prayers and financial support of our readers and co-workers in helping distribute *The Good News* and other publications throughout the British Isles, Scandinavia and continental Europe, the gospel publications could not go out in anywhere near the numbers that they currently do.

Financial needs of the Church

In addition to the publishing of Christ's gospel, financial support also makes possible our regular meeting halls, and sending out ministers and speakers for the edification of the congregations. As more people ask about attending our congregations, we diligently work to provide additional places for them to meet and fellowship.

From the earliest times, giving of tithes and offerings represented worship of God and gratitude for His blessings (Genesis 14:18-20; 28:20-22). Each of us can examine our own personal relationship with God by our generosity within our means.

We remember the widow praised by Jesus Christ because she did what she felt she could do. She would have been on a very restricted income, like many of our readers today.

Jesus Christ gave a number of illustrations showing that our handling of money is important in our preparation for the Kingdom of God. He stated that 'where your treasure is, there will your heart be also' (Matthew 6:19-21). If we are faithful in handling the money entrusted to us now, God will give us far greater responsibilities (Luke 16:10-11).

Three helpful booklets

Among our free booklets is one titled *Making Life Work*. An entire chapter is devoted to financial security. It is a companion to our other publication on monetary matters, *Managing Your Personal Finances*, which shows how to plan your finances and how to get out of debt.

A third, *What Does the Bible Teach About Tithing?*, explains an oft-overlooked biblical key to obtaining God's personal help with your finances.

Taken together they all show that time and money put into the effort of preaching the gospel is indeed a very worthwhile investment. Please request all three.

Peter Hawkins
Regional Coordinator
United Church of God –
British Isles

Debt Versus Self-control

One troubling aspect of the darkness afflicting our age is the problem of enormous personal debt in the United Kingdom and many other countries. Current statistics are truly alarming! In the UK 'we owe £1 trillion and we can't afford the repayments,' wrote Liam Halligan, Channel 4 Economics Correspondent.

'British consumers have a serious dose of borrowing sickness,' he continued. Thousands are facing the loss of their homes to building societies and banks. And personal bankruptcies are approaching disturbing levels, especially with those in their twenties.

Friends or family, maybe even you yourself, may be experiencing difficult personal financial circumstances, perhaps compounded by the pressure to give expensive gifts this past holiday season. Few who observe it will have had a debt-free Christmas.

The Bible is a book about exercising and building godly character. In fact self-control is one of the fruits of God's Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22). When easy credit is available we should evaluate our real needs and avoid the debt trap.

Why Christ Was Transfigured

Three of Christ's disciples were given a special preview of the Kingdom of God, commonly known as the transfiguration. What does this mean for true Christians today?

Before and even after Christ's death, His disciples expected the Kingdom of God to be established during their lifetimes. Only the passage of time convinced them otherwise. He even gave them a parable to try to dissuade them from their sincere expectations. 'Now as they heard these things, He spoke another parable, because He was near Jerusalem and because *they thought the kingdom of God would appear immediately*' (Luke 19:11, emphasis added throughout).

Every generation of Christ's true followers has experienced the same hope and expectations the apostles did. At least some in each generation thought that the Kingdom would come in their lifetimes.

Certainly if you had lived in 14th-century Europe when a third of the population died of the Black Death, you could have been forgiven for thinking that Christ would have returned to this earth at that time. There is absolutely nothing wrong with holding on to this hope. The last generation of Christians who live to see Christ's return *will* be right!

Previews of coming attractions

An essential ingredient of going to the cinema is the showing of several trailers or brief previews of feature films to be shown at a later date. The transfiguration of Jesus Christ was, in a sense, a short preview of what is coming to this globe – the glorious Kingdom of God. Peter, James and John were the only disciples privileged to witness and to experience this unique preview.

These three undoubtedly didn't fully

grasp the perils ahead of them in their ministry. James, the brother of John, would be martyred early, and Peter would follow in his steps some 30 years later after enduring many severe trials of his faith. John would live to see the Church greatly shaken as many brethren were taken in by the insidious doctrine of gnosticism. At least one prominent leader took over a congregation – putting out the true members. Such troubles continue even in our day when some try to turn the Church away from the truth.

These apostles would need special encouragement to endure these and

'Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father' (Matthew 13:43).

other trials to the end of their lives. So Jesus Christ was transfigured before them to show a dramatic representation of His second coming and the Kingdom He will bring at that time.

The second coming

Christ warns us all that 'whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels' (Mark 8:38).

Then immediately after speaking of His second coming, Christ added: "Assuredly, I say to you that there are some standing here who will not taste death till they see the kingdom of God present with power." Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James and John and led them up on a high mountain apart by themselves; and *He was transfigured*

before them' (Mark 9:1-2).

The original Greek word for *transfigured* is *metamorphousthai*. It occurs only four times in the New Testament, and in the vernacular simply means, 'assumed a different form'. This Greek term implies change. We are familiar with the similar English word *metamorphosis* and know what it means.

Describing the transfiguration

Continue Mark's account: 'His clothes became shining, exceedingly white, like snow, such as no launderer on earth can whiten them' (verse 3).

Some among our readers may remember the old detergent adverts on TV promising our clothes would be 'whiter than white' if we would only use a particular product. The transfiguration really was whiter than white – purer than the driven snow, 'as white as the light,' as Matthew's parallel account adds.

Matthew's Gospel also reveals something else exceedingly important about the transfiguration. '*His face shone like the sun*' (Matthew 17:2). John would later see Christ in a vision and describe His facial appearance as 'like the sun shining in its strength' (Revelation 1:16).

Other biblical passages tell us that this is the ultimate potential of every true Christian – those who have God's Holy Spirit within them (Romans 8:9). The prophet Daniel confirms that 'those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament. And those who turn many to *righteousness* [ie, keeping God's commandments, Psalm 119:172] like the stars forever and ever' (Daniel 12:3; compare 1 Corinthians 15:41-43).

Jesus Christ adds: *‘Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear’* (Matthew 13:43). It takes spiritual insight to truly grasp the real meaning of these passages. Humanly, this knowledge is beyond our five senses. The world simply cannot understand these things, and it does not believe what the Bible says about them. Only those guided by the Holy Spirit can truly comprehend spiritual matters (see 1 Corinthians 2:11-15).

Moses and Elijah

The next verse in Mark’s account introduces two great Hebrew prophets into the story. ‘And Elijah appeared to them with Moses, and they were talking with Jesus’ (Mark 9:4). It is very important to read all three Gospel accounts that mention the transfiguration. Luke reveals two more vital bits of knowledge about Moses and Elijah.

‘And behold two men talked with Him [Jesus], who were Moses and Elijah, *who appeared in glory* and spoke of His decease which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem’ (Luke 9:30-31). Even though the vision was of a time then far in the future, when these men will have been resurrected into the Kingdom of God, they spoke about the sacrifice of Christ for the forgiveness of our sins. This conversation underscores the eternal significance of Christ’s death.

Both Moses and Elijah appeared ‘in glory’ just as Jesus did. This showed what they will look like in the Kingdom of God. Remember what was said about Jesus as a man, even though He was God in the flesh. ‘The Holy Spirit was not yet given, because *Jesus was not yet glorified*’ (John 7:39).

Later, just before His crucifixion, He asked God the Father, ‘And now,

O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was’ (John 17:5). (To understand the significance of this passage, please request our free booklet *Who Is God?*)

The Father answered this prayer when He raised Christ from the dead. After His resurrection Jesus told His disciples: ‘Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?’ (Luke 24:26.) True Christians also have this glorious destiny as the apostle Paul explained: ‘For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body’ (Philip-

Elijah” – because he did not know what to say, for they were greatly afraid’ (Mark 9:5).

Fear was the natural, understandable reaction of the righteous patriarchs, prophets and apostles when they got very close to the glorious realm of God. It is a dimension completely foreign to our normal experience as human beings. It took Ezekiel a good while to recover from his first encounter with God’s glory.

Peter did not realise what he was saying (Luke 9:33), but God may have guided his seemingly unconnected suggestion. A tabernacle is a dwelling place, and one of God’s commanded festivals is the Feast of Tabernacles. The *ultimate* meaning of this Christian observance is that our physical lives are temporary and that our permanent

destiny will be in the Kingdom of God.

We will be with Jesus Christ as He rules on earth for 1,000 years (Revelation 5:10; 20:4-6) followed by the Great White Throne Judgement period. Then on beyond, all humanity, now glorified, will spend eternity dwelling with the Father and the Son. The New Jerusalem, the City of God, will come down to the earth from heaven (Revelation 3:12; 21:2).

‘Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men [mankind, gender inclusive], and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God [the Father] Himself will be with them and be their God’ (Revelation 21:3). This city will need no temple because ‘the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb [Christ] are its temple’ (verse 22).

A voice from heaven

Continue with Mark: ‘And a cloud came and overshadowed them, and a voice came out of the cloud, saying “This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!”’ (verse 7). The Father was confirming the deity of Christ and His ministry to the chief disciples.

Note to Good News readers in Sweden and other Scandinavian countries

We now have a post office box in Sweden! Now you can ask your questions or request literature by writing in Swedish and we will try to fulfil your requests locally. Two or three of our publications are already being translated into Swedish and will be available in a few months. If there is sufficient interest locally, we may start a home video group meeting on the Sabbath. Our contact details are:

Guds Enade Kyrka
P.O. Box 3535
111 74 Stockholm
Sweden
E-mail: sverige@ucg.org
Fax 0142 10340

pians 3:20-21; compare 1 Corinthians 15:44-49). This will occur at the second coming of Jesus Christ.

The significance of the tabernacles

Pick up the story again in Mark’s account: ‘Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, “Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses and one for

The apostle Peter never forgot this incredible experience. ‘For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we [Peter, James and John] made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were *eyewitnesses of His majesty*. For He received from God the Father honour and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: “This is My beloved Son . . .” And we heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain. And so we have the prophetic word confirmed’ (2 Peter 1:16-19).

None of the transfiguration accounts say that the Father actually spoke these words Himself. They all refer to ‘a voice’. Jesus had clearly stated: ‘And the Father Himself, who sent Me, has testified of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His form’ (John 5:37). We can only surmise that it was an angelic voice speaking directly on behalf of the Father, repeating His words verbatim.

We conclude the story itself with Matthew’s account. ‘As they came down from the mountain, Jesus commanded them saying, “Tell *the vision* to no one until the Son of Man is risen from the dead”’ (Matthew 17:9).

Note that it was a *vision*, that is, not materially real. Some mistakenly point to these accounts, attempting to prove that Moses and Elijah were in heaven. They overlook Christ’s explanation that what the disciples saw was a vision of a future reality.

Although this was only a prophetic vision of the coming Kingdom of God (not yet the full reality), it was still a very real experience. Peter, James and John walked through all the circumstances and actually heard a voice from heaven. They both saw and heard something from another dimension.

Partakers of the divine nature

We human beings have to bridge the gap between our humanity and the

Kingdom of God. Becoming converted by receiving God’s Holy Spirit is the only way to accomplish this – the only route to possessing everlasting life in the Kingdom. The apostle Peter told His listeners (and us today) to repent and be baptised and then they would receive the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:37-39). (To understand more fully, please request our free booklets *The Road to Eternal Life* and *Transforming Your Life: The Process of Conversion*.)

When that actually occurs, Jesus’ encouraging words in John 5:24 can be fulfilled. ‘Most assuredly I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him [the Father] who sent Me *has everlasting life*, and shall not come into judgement, but has passed from death into life.’

Having God’s Holy Spirit is our assurance of eternal life in a spirit body to come, for ‘flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God’ (1 Corinthians 15:50). Our fleshly bodies must be transformed. Clearly a transformation takes place when we are truly converted during this human life. Peter also said: ‘*Repent therefore and be converted*, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord’ (Acts 3:19).

Again, when that happens and we are baptised (Mark 16:16), we have a very strong assurance of eternal life in the Kingdom of God. The apostle John wrote: ‘This is the testimony: that God has given us [Christians] eternal life, and this life is in His Son. *He who has the Son has life*’ (1 John 5:11-12).

Just as when a child is conceived, given normal circumstances and a reasonably healthy pregnancy, a baby is going to be born. Sometimes things go wrong and the baby tragically dies before birth. That can happen spiritually too. The apostle Paul said that he disciplined his body lest after having preached to others, he should become a castaway (1 Corinthians 9:27).

But he didn’t fall away, and neither will we if we are truly converted and submit to God’s will. The Father and our High Priest Jesus Christ are always there to help us over the rough spots!

Attaining the Kingdom and the family of God is the real meaning of the transfiguration – an encouraging preview of what we will be like in that Kingdom.

John Ross Schroeder

An Unfinished Species

Human beings in the flesh are incomplete, an unfinished species. However, everlasting life is ours if we become converted and continually go before the throne of grace to seek the spiritual help we desperately need. Our Advocate and High Priest is always there to help us when we stumble or fall on the way (1 John 1:7-9; 2:1-2). No human being can attain salvation without the continued application of God’s grace through Christ’s atoning sacrifice.

Although He created us as physical, flesh-and-blood beings, God made us with the potential of ultimately becoming spirit as He is spirit. The Bible says so. Paul continues: ‘And so it is written, “The first man Adam became a living being.” The last Adam [Christ] became a life-giving spirit . . . The first man was of the earth, made of dust; the second Man [Christ] is the Lord from heaven . . . And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man’ (1 Corinthians 15:45-49).

If we are duly baptised and converted and then continue to grow in grace and knowledge, enduring in faith to the end, God will perform the final step through our resurrection to everlasting life. Paul explains: ‘For since by man [Adam] came death, by Man [Christ] also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive’ (verses 21-22).

Questions & Answers

Q Does the United Church of God consider men like William Tyndale, Martin Luther and John Calvin to have been true Christians?

D T, Lancashire

A There have been many very devout people, men and women through the ages whom we may admire for their sacrifices, tenacity and desire to serve God as far as they understood. The term 'Christian' today is, however, applied loosely in the media to anyone who believes that Jesus Christ is their Saviour. Some may even make dramatic changes in their lives or go through tremendous hardships for what they believe to be true.

Being called a Christian does not mean a person does what Jesus says should be done, or that he or she believes the same things Jesus clearly taught. He said to one group following Him, 'Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord', and do not the things that I say?' (Luke 6:46). Jesus said that truly following Him involves positive action.

He was even more outspoken when stating in Matthew 7:21, 'Not every one that says unto me, 'Lord, Lord', shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father in heaven.' So doing the will of the Father is also a requirement for any *true* Christian. No one can be Christ's if he does not have the Spirit of God dwelling in him (Romans 8:9), *and that Spirit is only*

given to those who obey Him (Acts 5:29, 32).

The love of God [Greek, *agape*] is actually expressed to God and His children by the keeping of the commandments (1 John 5:2-3). And in Matthew 22:36-40 Jesus Christ quotes from Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18 when He gives 'the two great commandments', which summarise the two parts of the Ten Commandments. Yet many who wish to be called Christians reject one or more of the Ten Commandments.

We may speculate on the destiny of historical figures based on our biblical understanding, but we don't have all the facts. We are often separated by centuries from such people. Some of the reports that survive may even have been written by their enemies or those who disparage their way of life.

For this reason we are not in a position to say whether someone was a Christian, ie, obeying God and with the Spirit of God residing in them. We are not their judges. The Bible says that God is the judge of all men (Hebrews 12:23).

Does this then mean that we believe the devout people you mentioned are lost? No, we don't. It is more likely that they were at least partially 'deceived' or 'blinded' to all of God's truths.

Most of the world is unaware of the plan that God has to bring all of humanity into His family. Many today have a very incomplete understanding of God's mercy and grace.

We are told that the only name by which we can be saved is the name of

Jesus Christ (Acts 4:12), so what of the millions who died before He was born? Many of these would have been considered 'good people' within their society and its values. It would be strange for One who says He is not a respecter of persons (Acts 10:34) if He were not to consider them for His kingdom. After all, He wants all men to be saved (1 Timothy 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9).

If we wander from what the Word of God teaches, we are left to make judgements that may seem right to our human reasoning, but have no basis in fact. In the Garden of Eden Eve made a major, life-altering decision based on Satan's unreliable evidence rather than what God had said. Mankind has been using his own methods of reasoning ever since.

The plan God has for bringing all humanity to Him is revealed through the keeping of the Holy Days which God instituted. If you have not read our booklet *God's Holy Day Plan: The Promise of Hope for All Mankind*, please ask for your free copy.

It goes through the Scriptures from the time of Jesus Christ's sacrifice to the redemption of mankind as a whole. Paul tells us that Jesus Christ will bring the vast majority of all humanity into God's Kingdom and will then deliver all up to the Father (1 Corinthians 15:22-24).

Although we respect the important example of devout people (particularly men like Tyndale and Luther for their role in translating the Scriptures), it is God's view which really matters.

How our literature is funded

The United Church of God – British Isles is registered as a charity in England and Wales (number 1079192). The publication of this Supplement and other literature is funded by the generosity of members of the Church, co-workers and our readers. Following Jesus Christ's instruction (Matthew 10:8), it is supplied free of charge so that His message can be made available to all. We are grateful to those who assist financially in the work done by *The Good News*. Donations may be sent to: The United Church of God, PO Box 705, WATFORD WD19 6FZ, United Kingdom.



Letters From Our Readers

The Good News and the Supplement

I like the magazine for relating current affairs in simple language from a biblical viewpoint. The Supplement in particular is my real comprehensible news source telling what is happening in the EU, as well as 'World News and Trends' in *The Good News* magazine itself.

Mrs D J C, Walsall

Thank you for *The Good News*, *Vertical Thought* and *World News & Prophecy*, which I received regularly in 2005. I also want to thank you for the extra materials I received from the United Church of God. With the help of these and of course the studies and the articles, my faith in Jesus Christ grew a lot. I now manage to understand in perspective the plan of God for humankind and His Church.

P G, Romania

God bless you all at *The Good News*. I have enjoyed subscribing and would love to have another year's free subscription. I will send a donation to you soon for your ministry and the magazine.

V P, London

Response to co-worker letter

Thank you for your recent letter offering the publications *Making Life Work* and *Managing Your Finances*. I already have these, but would like to take the opportunity of commenting on your last *Good News* magazine. I think it is probably the best of all those I have received from you since I first started getting the publication. These magazines really do put the present day world situations into perspective and it is a real privilege to be able to understand the

real unvarnished truth behind today's news.

Realising the importance of this information reaching as many people as possible and the fact that it all costs money, would you accept my small contribution to your work? It is not a lot as I am an OAP, but I shall endeavour to make a regular contribution when I can afford it. I am in the process of going through the *Bible Study Course* which I also find a great help.

C S, Northampton

Why worship on Saturday?

Your publications have been a breath of fresh air and truth in these troubled times. Thank you for walking the narrow path and not compromising the truth. But please tell me why we must worship on Saturday.

M H, Aylesbury

- *Because the Bible tells us that the seventh day is the true Christian Sabbath. For all the biblical evidence, please request our free booklet Sunset to Sunset: God's Sabbath Rest.*

Why the differences?

Thank you for sending me copies of your magazine. I have found many of your articles very interesting. However, I would like you to stop sending me the magazines in the future. I find that you seem to focus too much on the differences between yourself and other Christian denominations rather than on trying to work with others to spread the good news about Jesus.

Mrs M J, Hampshire

- *The lead article in this issue of the Supplement illustrates the dangers of a false Christianity that teaches humanly devised doctrines rather than the truth of the Bible. Please read it very care-*

fully as well as requesting our free booklet The Church Jesus Built.

Bible Study Course

I enjoy very much doing your structured *Bible Study Course*. So far so good. I have passed both number 1 and number 2 test cards. These lessons and the booklets will be handy for future reference as I am currently studying the Bible at university.

K M, Glasgow

I enjoy reading *The Good News* and booklets I've been receiving up to now. I like the *Bible Study Course*, although some questions I don't get right. But that's what these studies are all about, finding out about things I didn't know previously. Who or what is the Holy Ghost? I've always wondered.

Mrs L F T, Bolton

- *The term 'Holy Ghost' is not a correct translation in modern English. The Holy Spirit is not a ghost. It is the power that God uses to work His wonders not only on this earth, but also throughout the whole universe. To understand further, please request our free booklet Who Is God? It contains two chapters on the Holy Spirit.*

I have been going through the *Bible Study Course* and I realise it has broadened my knowledge and understanding of the Word of God. I would like to know if there is a diploma or certificate for the course.

T A, Leeds

- *We are pleased to confirm each student's efforts by sending a certificate upon completion of all 12 lessons. We would also be glad to enrol any readers who would like to study the Bible in a systematic manner.*