

What We Can't See Can Help Us!

*Every day invisible physical forces affect the way we live.
There are also unseen spiritual powers that can influence us for good.
Read on to find out how.*

As we go about our daily lives, we seldom consider how much evidence there is of powerful *unseen* energy all around us.

We cannot see the air we breathe, yet without it planes would not fly, tyres could not absorb the bumps on a road, and we could not fill our lungs with oxygen. For hundreds of years the movement of air has turned wind-mills to grind grain for bread. Today it is also increasingly used to generate electricity.

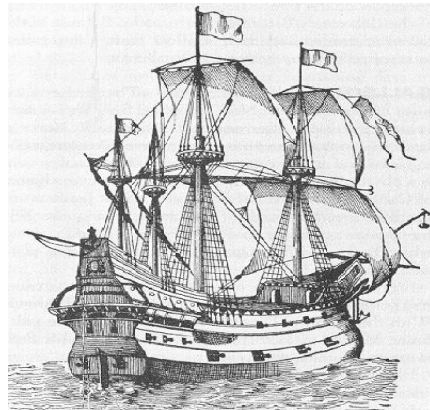
Electricity too is an invisible power. How many of our machines and gadgets depend upon the electron flow that we have never seen?

Motors spin at high speed in hair dryers, vacuum cleaners and power drills. Lights brighten our homes and streets – and computers distribute and display information around the world as never before in history. All this from a power we find hard to describe. Whether from wind, water, nuclear-power or coal-power generation, electricity flows to accomplish tasks set by designers of our modern conveniences and tools.

The effect of the non-physical

Our eyes are attuned to only a small segment of light frequencies. Other sophisticated electronic equipment can enable us to measure and detect additional physical qualities beyond man's visual capabilities.

It seems logical then that the spiritual realm would be even harder to detect!



Wind power has served man for millennia

Yet the Scriptures tell us that 'since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities – His eternal power and divine nature – have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse' (Romans 1:20, New International Version).

Jesus Christ has experienced both the physical and spiritual realm. Early in His ministry He stated that we are able to understand something of the spirit realm by noticing various effects, much as we detect the wind as it rushes through the trees: 'The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit' (John 3:8).

Qualities shown in our lives

Jesus Christ's life, recorded for us in the writings of the New Testament, helps us understand who the Father is, and how He reacts and behaves. He lived in Jesus through the power of the Spirit of God. The words Christ spoke and the works He performed, including miracles, healings and raising people from the dead, proved His divine nature and reliance on the Father (John 10:38; 14:10-11).

We are told that Jesus Christ reveals the Father to whoever He wishes (Matthew 11:27), and we should learn about Him by the way Jesus lived His

life as a human being.

‘If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love’ (John 15:10).

The apostle Peter wrote that Jesus lived, ‘leaving us an example, that [we] should follow His steps: ‘Who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth’ (1 Peter 2:21-22).

Christ can live in us today

After observing the annual Passover, the Church keeps the seven Days of Unleavened Bread, signifying that we should seek to leave sin behind and imitate Christ’s sinless life. In God’s calendar, these days precede the day of Pentecost, or Feast of Firstfruits, by about two months. To find when to observe the Feast of Firstfruits we are told to count seven Sabbaths from when the wave sheaf is offered.

Jesus Christ was the first to be raised from the dead to immortality. He was offered to God, like the wave sheaf, the day after the Sabbath that occurred during Unleavened Bread. This is on the first day of the week. Jesus was the first of the harvest of humanity to be glorified (John 20:11-19; Romans 8:29; Colossians 1:18).

As a result of Christ now being with the Father, we have the privilege of the Father’s and Christ’s continual presence in our lives through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (John 15:26, 16:7).

In John 14:23 Jesus made this plain: ‘Jesus answered and said to him, If a man loves me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come to him, and make our abode with him.’

Paul’s life confirmed this. ‘I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but *Christ lives in me*: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved

me, and gave himself for me’ (Galatians 2:20, emphasis added).

Fruit of the spirit

We become God’s spiritual children through a process: *repentance* (changing our lives to conform to God’s way of life); *water baptism* (an outward symbol of the death of the old self); and then the *laying on of hands* (a faithful minister asks God to unite His Holy Spirit with our minds).

This is explained further in our booklet *Transforming Your Life: The Process of Conversion*. Please write for a copy or download it.

The positive spiritual attributes that help us to live a Christian life then lead us in what was known in the apostles’ time as ‘The Way’. Contrary to the negative forces of an evil and self-centred

We have the privilege of the Father’s and Christ’s continual presence in our lives through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

society, Paul writes:

‘But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit’ (Galatians 5:22-25).

The power of the Holy Spirit is far greater than physical forces like gravity, wind or electricity. It does, however, work *with* us by leading us in the right direction. We are told that a true Christian is one led by this Spirit (Romans 8:9), and to be consistent with God’s mind, we must be obedient to Him to receive it (Acts 5:32).

When we meet family or friends who knew us before this transition, they may wonder why we do not go to the excesses we used to. Our lifestyle has

changed (1 Peter 4:4) and the transition is miraculous.

Forces for good

Let’s consider five benefits God gives us from His invisible power, the extension of His very nature:

Peace of mind that others cannot understand. When Jesus said that His peace would be with us, He said so at a time of great adversity just before His death (John 14:27). In the world His followers will have trouble, and yet still have peace of mind (16:33). That is a powerful positive force!

A love greater than human love. The love of God is spread through the Holy Spirit in us (Romans 5:5), and it is shown in action by our respect for God and others by keeping the commandments (1 John 5:3). This kind of love enables us even to love our enemies and do good to those who spitefully use us (Matthew 5:44). Consider the value and power of this attribute!

Understanding the Scriptures.

The word of God should not be interpreted through our own biased viewpoint (2 Peter 1:19-21). When we allow God’s Spirit to guide us, we can discern the very thoughts and intents of the heart (Hebrews 4:12).

Protection from evil. As a loving parent, God the Father is concerned about the development of His children. He will keep us from the evil one, the devil (2 Thessalonians 3:1-5; Jude 1:24). Satan looks for the weak Christian just as a lion looks for easy prey in the wild. Yet by using the power of God to resist evil, the devil will flee even from us mere mortals (James 4:7).

Kept safe until Christ returns. Knowing that the leader and head of the Church, Jesus Christ, has already overcome the world is very comforting. He also tells us through the apostles He trained that God has the unseen power to keep us safe until His return. The loving community known as the

(Continued on page 6)

Seeking Spiritual Solace

So many in Britain have lost sight of the God our nation once claimed to worship and have turned to superstitious beliefs and ancient practices

For a supposedly secular society, Britain retains some strange superstitious undercurrents. Most will be aware of the activities at Stonehenge during the summer solstice. Yet throughout the year, there are many other places where thousands of visitors seek solace and spiritual inspiration.

Pleas to powerless gods

Within a couple of miles or so of each other on the north coast of Cornwall are two such 'spiritual' places. Rocky Valley, between Tintagel and Boscastle, boasts two labyrinthine designs carved into a rock face, which may date from the Bronze Age. Here visitors have placed lighted candles, flowers and other objects into crevices in the surrounding rock, hung dream catchers and wind chimes in nearby trees, and tied pieces of fabric, messages and prayers to the bushes.

These attempts to communicate with a greater power show an ignorance of the true God and a lack of trust in those

who purport to represent Him. pool, then flows through a natural circular arch into a further pool several feet below. There, bushes along the river are similarly bedecked with ribbons, notes and prayers. However here visitors have also removed flat stones from the river, placed them on the rocky ledges, sometimes in piles and often having first written messages on them.

Described as one of the most spiritual places in Britain, it seems likely that Saint

Nectan, after who the glen is named, did not even exist and the name is in fact a 'Christianised' form of the Celtic water god Nechtan (Cornwall being a Celtic



Top: Part of the north coast of Cornwall, where Celtic superstition lives on

Above: Chimes and dream catchers

Left: Carved design on rock face

Bottom: Prayers and messages to traditional deities written on stones



who purport to represent Him.

This is echoed two miles or so upstream at Saint Nectan's Kieve (a little-used word meaning 'basin'), where the River Trevillet tumbles in a 60-foot high waterfall into a plunge



area of Britain).

The communications and messages left there (several relating very sad occurrences) certainly indicate that the authors had no idea that there is a real God, who stands ready to help all those who diligently seek Him.

So many have lost sight of the God our nation once claimed to worship and instead seem to be turning for comfort and solace to superstitious beliefs and ancient practices that have no foundation and can give no hope. To learn more about the true God and to prove for yourself whether or not He really exists, please request or download our free booklets *Who Is God?* and *Life's Ultimate Question: Does God Exist?*

Barbara Fenney

Understanding Forgiveness

The Holy Scriptures tell Christians that we should forgive, but how can we achieve this difficult task?

The 18th-century English poet Alexander Pope once said, 'To err is human; to forgive, divine.' Forgiveness is indeed one of the attributes of God and one which we, as Christians, should reflect. It is also a paradox in this world, in that holding onto grudges is often seen as a sign of strength. Yet Indian philosopher Mahatma Gandhi said: 'The weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is the attribute of the strong.'

In God the Father and Jesus Christ, we have the best example of how to forgive. In the prayer Christ gave as an outline, He prayed, 'Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors' (Matthew 6:12).

He explained to his disciples, 'If you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.'

This is further shown by the psalmist describing God's forgiveness of our sins, 'He does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us' (Psalm 103:10-12, NIV).

Wikipedia, the online encyclopedia, describes forgiveness as 'the process of concluding resentment, indignation or anger as a result of a perceived offense, difference or mistake, and/or ceasing to demand punishment or restitution.'

The Oxford English Dictionary defines forgiveness as 'to grant free

pardon and to give up all claim on account of an offence or debt'.

Benefits of forgiving others

So if we forgive others, God will forgive us. This understanding can bring great peace of mind. However, there are other benefits of forgiving someone who has caused us distress, loss or damage.

Alexandra Asseily, author of 'The

As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us

Garden of Forgiveness in Beirut' wrote, 'Forgiveness allows us to let go of the pain in the memory and if we let go of the pain in the memory we can have the memory but it does not control us. When memory controls us we are then the puppets of the past.'

Katherine M. Piderman, Ph.D, of the Mayo Clinic based in Arizona, Florida and Minnesota, is attributed with writing, 'There's no one definition of forgiveness. But in general, forgiveness is a decision to let go of resentments and thoughts of revenge. Forgiveness is the act of untying yourself from thoughts and feelings that bind you to the offence committed against you. This can reduce the power these feelings otherwise have over you so that you can live a freer and happier life in the present. Forgiveness can even lead to feelings of understanding, empathy and compassion for the one who hurt you' (Internet, 8 December 2007).

So forgiveness can lead to a greater understanding of the human condition, perhaps the kind of compassion that led to Christ's words on the cross: 'Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.' That empathy with us is necessary in Jesus Christ's role as our Intercessor with God the Father. 'Now that we know what we have – Jesus, this great High Priest with ready access to God – let's not let it slip through our fingers. We don't have a priest who is out of touch with our reality. He's been through weakness and testing, experienced it all – all but the sin. So let's walk right up to him and get what He is so ready to give. Take the mercy, accept the help (Hebrews 4:14-16, *The Message*).

Forgiveness is challenging

Vesela Simic in *The Challenge of Forgiveness* cites the work of Tom Farrow, a lecturer in psychiatric neuroimaging at the University of Sheffield, and Peter Woodruff, director of the Sheffield Cognition and Neuroimaging Laboratory. She writes: 'Their work reveals that whenever subjects chose to forgive, areas in the emotional limbic centre of the brain, similar to areas already mapped for empathy, were activated. When subjects were asked about the fairness of transgressions, however, they found it more difficult to forgive and the limbic brain was less active.'

The apostle James points out, 'Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom. But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast

and lie against the truth. This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic. For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, *willing to yield, full of mercy* and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. Now the fruit of righteousness is *sown in peace by those who make peace*' (James 3:13-18, emphasis added).

Forgiving an injustice, even quite an insignificant injustice, may not be an easy task. It is something the Christian needs to learn from Christ, who truly understands our weaknesses. 'In all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation [atonement] for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted' (Hebrews 2:17-18).

Not condoning

When God forgives us for not living up to His standards (Romans 3:23) this does not mean He condones sin. In the same way, one of the hardest aspects of forgiveness on the human level is for us to grasp that the effects of harsh words or angry behaviour do not suddenly become nullified. The forgiver does not condone the offence. This is particularly important when serious harm or damage has been committed. Forgiving is not the same as simply forgetting what happened. The act that hurt or offended someone may always remain a part of his or her life.

But forgiveness can lessen its grip on us and help us focus on other positive parts of our life. Forgiveness also does not mean that responsibility for hurting someone is ignored. We, as God does, can forgive someone without excusing the act.

Our sins against one another do not

exact a penalty as great as the price that was paid by Christ so that we could be forgiven of our own sins: 'You were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot' (1 Peter 1:18-19).

'In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace' (Ephesians 1:7).

The one who forgives should pray for an offender, 'love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you' (Matthew 5:44). And if *we* have

Love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you

offended, we should pray for and, if appropriate, make reparations to one we have hurt.

The process of forgiving

As with many aspects of Christian life, forgiveness is a growth process, one from which we learn.

Dr Robert Enright of the International Forgiveness Institute, gives four major phases that lead to forgiveness.

'(1) *The uncovering phase*: the one offended feels and explores the pain, which can eventually be recognised as limited.

'(2) *The decision phase*: the option to forgive is considered.

'(3) *The work phase*: the entire context of the hurtful situation is rephrased. This often leads to empathy and compassion and involves acceptance and absorption of the pain.

'(4) *The final phase*: this occurs when the individual experiences healing and realises forgiveness.'

The apostle Paul, writing to the Church at Colosse, instructed: 'Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do' (Colossians 3:12-13).

How often should we forgive someone, or hope for Christian forgiveness?

When Simon Peter asked Christ, 'How often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?' Christ replied, 'up to seventy times seven' (Matthew 18:21-22).

Christ expresses the same sentiment in Luke 17:4, 'If he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times in a day returns to you, saying, "I repent," you shall forgive him.'

Modern psychology concurs with this.

According to Dr Frederick Luskin, forgiveness does not *require* reconciliation before it is given; it is not about forgetting or condoning an unkind act. Rather, '*forgiveness means that unkindness stops with you.*' He also says that forgiveness is not a one-time response: 'It's about becoming a forgiving person.'

We might ask, 'How often will God forgive us?' None of us would want God to stop at 'seventy times seven' but to forgive us every time we slip up and sin during our walk as Christians.

Paul encourages us all: 'Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God' (Ephesians 5:1-2).

Learning to forgive

Forgiveness is a commitment to a process of change. Depending on the seriousness of the offense, it can be difficult and it can take time. Everyone moves toward forgiveness a little differ-

ently. One starting point is to recognise the value of forgiveness and its importance in our lives at a given time.

Another is to reflect on the facts of the situation, such as how we have reacted and how this combination has affected our lives, our health and our well-being. Then, as we are ready, we can actively choose to forgive the one who has seriously offended us.

In this way, we move away from our role as a victim and release ourselves, with God's help, from the control and power the offence has had over us in our lives.

Forgiveness also means that we change old patterns of beliefs and actions that are driven by bitterness. As we let go of grudges, we will no longer define our lives by how we have been hurt. Instead we should find ways to be compassionate and full of understanding. Galatians 5:22-26 lists the fruit of the Spirit, and some can be hindered by the bitterness of being unforgiving.

A Christian duty

It is our duty as Christians to learn to forgive. More important, by practising forgiveness we become more like our Father. Remember, we may call on

God at any time for His help to assist us to forgive.

We also know there is a higher authority who will one day handle any injustices we may have experienced along the way. In the end, if we do not forgive someone, by our bitterness and anger we may end up hurting others close to us. Especially we hurt ourselves. Rarely are we hurting the one we consider to be the offender.

One day God will send Jesus Christ back to correct this society and remove all injustice. Sinners will need to repent. In the meantime, while we may be hurt by the words and actions of the unconverted and sometimes the converted, Christ gave the apostle John a wonderful vision of a future age.

'God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away. Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful"' (Revelation 21:4-5).

Such a glorious future will be ours if, as a part of our Christian growth, we can learn to forgive as our Father in heaven does.

David Payne

Forgiveness and Health

Researchers have recently become interested in studying the effects on health of being unforgiving and being forgiving. Evidence is mounting that holding on to grudges and bitterness results in long-term health problems. Forgiveness, on the other hand, offers numerous benefits, including:

- Lower blood pressure
- Stress reduction
- Lower heart rate
- Fewer depression symptoms
- Fewer anxiety symptoms
- Less hostility
- Better anger-management skills
- Lower risk of alcohol/substance abuse
- Reduction in chronic pain
- More friendships
- Healthier relationships
- Greater religious/spiritual wellbeing
- Improved psychological wellbeing

Clearly there are significant physical benefits to having a forgiving nature. It is even more important from a spiritual point of view. Be sure to request or download *Transforming Your Life: The Process of Conversion*.

What You Can't See

(Continued from page 2)

Church, although consisting of converted yet fallible men and women, is protected and guided by Him. Jesus' own half-brother Jude wrote: 'Offer praise to God our Saviour because of our Lord Jesus Christ! Only God can keep you from falling and make you pure and joyful in his glorious presence. Before time began and now and forevermore, God is worthy of glory, honour, power, and authority. Amen' (Jude 1:24-25 CEV).

Invisible but effective

Many effects of God's spiritual power in us are evidenced through actions done while only God watches.

Jesus used the example of giving

alms or offerings to God (Matthew 6:1-6). We are not to seek the praise of men as did the Pharisees. And sometimes the smallest offering is actually the greatest. Christ recognised and ensured that the widow's offering to God was recorded for us as a lesson. It was greater proportionately than the funds deposited by rich men (Mark 12:42-44).

Such works may often be unrecognised for now, performed using the power of an invisible force for good (God's Spirit) but in the future they will be revealed as an example for humanity to learn from.

Then the power of God's Spirit to enable us to become like Christ will be

revealed in us by the first resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:23, 50-54; Philipians 3:20-21; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17). The Father and the Son await our transition to be like Christ in glory (1 John 3:1-2).

How helpful it is that we are given spiritual power to examine ourselves and our own conduct! There are indeed invisible forces like the wind that evidence physical power. The behaviour of true Christians, however, should be evidence of a far greater power. It is working in the world for the good of all humanity as God prepares us as His Church!

Peter Hawkins

Questions & Answers

Q How important is it to attend Church?

B H, Seaton

A The New Testament encourages Christians to assemble together regularly. One epistle specifically tells us: 'Let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching' (Hebrews 10:24-25).

The Old Testament expresses the same thought in the form of the command: 'Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of solemn rest, a holy convocation [or 'commanded assembly,' New International Version]. You shall do no work on it; it is the Sabbath of the Lord in all your dwellings' (Leviticus 23:3).

Observing God's Sabbath is one of the most basic beliefs – so fundamental that it is enshrined as one of the Ten Commandments. (Download or write for our free booklet *Sunset to Sunset: God's Sabbath Rest*.)

The Bible makes it clear that God's Church keeps His law. It is described prophetically as a group of people 'who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ' (Revelation 12:17). You may wish to ask for our free booklet *Fundamental*

Beliefs of the United Church of God.

We should understand that the Church is *not* a building. The glossary of the Translator's New Testament plainly tells us: "'Church' in NT never means 'building'. It always represents either a group of committed Christians in any given locality [who] met to practice their religion, or the totality of these groups scattered throughout the world' (pp. 557-558).

The apostle Paul defines the Church as simply 'the body of Christ' (1 Corinthians 12:12, 27). It is a spiritual organism, not a physical edifice or organisation. Members of the Church went to the building where they met, or a congregation met in someone's house if the numbers were small (Romans 16:5; 1 Corinthians 1:19).

By way of an analogy, Paul likens the Church to the parts of the human body (1 Corinthians 12:12-27). He shows how each part is dependent on the others. 'By one Spirit [the Holy Spirit] we were all baptised into one body.'

This mutual care for one another is biblical. The apostle Paul urged the Corinthian members to 'have the same care one for another' (1 Corinthians 12:25). Yet it should always be remembered that our relationships with other members of the Church begin and end in our fellowship with God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ (1 John 1:3, 7).

We have fellowship with each other only in and through our spiritual relationship with the Father and Jesus Christ.

The first four of the Ten Commandments express our love for God, the last six our love for humankind. The apostle John points out the folly of trying to have one without the other (1 John 4:20).

Expressing proper love for the membership of the Church is an awesome responsibility. Jesus Christ, the founder of the Christian Church (Matthew 16:18), did say: 'By this shall all men know that you are My disciples, that you have love one for another' (John 13:35). It is of utmost importance that we extend warmth and friendliness to other members of the spiritual Body, especially to visitors and new members.

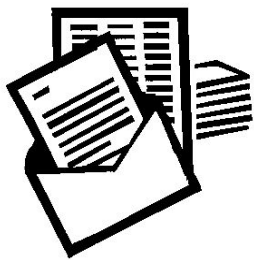
The Church is a subject well worth studying in much greater detail. That is why the United Church of God has published an extensively researched booklet simply titled *The Church Jesus Built*.

Also, to understand the message Jesus taught, and which He commanded His Church to proclaim, please request your free copy of *The Gospel of the Kingdom*. The four booklets advertised in this column are all available free of charge by writing to our UK office at P O Box 705, Watford WD19 6UT.

A word of qualification: If you want to attend one of our Sabbath services but find that you live too far away, we can send out sermons on DVD and audio MP3 CDs to help in these circumstances. Beginning in the next few months, we are also hoping to provide live services over the Internet for those with broadband access.

How our literature is funded

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Letters From Our Readers

'Alarm Bells Are Ringing!'

When I read The British & European Supplement to *The Good News* on the topic of 'Alarm Bells Are Ringing!' by Paul Suckling, it reminds me to live every day as if it were my last day alive on the planet.

J A, Milton Keynes

The Good News

The Good News magazines are very enlightening. I am grateful to God for this service to humanity, in drawing our attention to the God who created and controls everything. It will be to our benefit to pay attention to the messages in your magazines and booklets.

S A, Norbury, London

Thank you for the March/April edition of *The Good News*. I am finding this publication very informative and easy to understand. I enclose a donation.

P M C, Halesowen

God Almighty will continue to bless you, guide you and uplift you spiritually as you continue to reach out to people with *The Good News*. I am richly blessed by it and so is anyone who comes into contact with it.

A I, Camberwell

Thank you for sending me a copy of *The Good News*. I am enjoying reading articles on practical aspects of living as a Christian in today's multifaith and increasingly corrupt society. Prophecy also seems to be a neglected area in so many churches, including mine.

J W, Leicester

Questions about the Church

How do I find a Church that lives and shares in God's annual Holy Days?

S L, London

I became a Christian in 1995, but did not know the truth about keeping God's commandments and was not taught this truth in church. I discovered on the Internet that God did not do away with His law, and that one shows love to God by obedience to His laws. I desire fellowship, but I am really unsure about going to church. Church-goers do not even know the Word, just as I did not know it. I really want to be around believers that live what God actually teaches, learn about His feasts and keep His commandments. I have emailed the nearest United Church of God congregation, which is in London. Can you help me?

T B, Internet

• *We appreciate receiving queries of this kind. First, the United Church of God observes all of the biblical Holy Days and annual festivals as described in both the Old and New Testaments. Our free booklet God's Holy Day Plan: The Promise of Hope for All Mankind explains how to keep each one of God's festivals. A description of the Church itself can be obtained by asking for another free booklet, This Is the United Church of God.*

We have responded to the first reader by posting the appropriate literature and to the second by an email. If readers have further questions of this nature, please feel free to telephone our office at 01494 875003.

Bible Study Course

Thank you very much for the good work. I am getting a lot of help from these Bible lessons. I enclose a small donation towards your wonderful work. Pray for me that God will give me knowledge and understanding of His words, so that one day I will be a blessing to others.

M A, Northampton

• *We are praying that you will receive this understanding.*

I have read the Bible all my life, but now with so much more understanding. I love the *Bible Study Course*, your booklets and magazines. I feel excited by the Bible and its prophecies for the future.

A H, Bourne

Thank you so much. This course is helping me more than anything. It is clearing up a lot of things I didn't know or understand. I feel like I can really start to reach God and talk to Him where before I felt cut off. This is a brilliant study.

C R, Stalybridge

Grateful to God's Church

We all wish to be in the future Kingdom to come as sons and daughters of God the Father Almighty. Once again I greet you in joy and happiness and hope you are all well and in good spirits. This time I would like to send my great and heartfelt thanks to all who have prayed for me, and given their love and support [in anticipation of an operation] . . . I hope to answer those who have given a return address. This is early to be sending an offering for Pentecost, but I'm enclosing a cheque.

J H W-G, Isle of Man