

## The Feast of Tabernacles in Scotland A Picture Story

*Stirling, Scotland, was the site of our autumn Feast of Tabernacles in the British Isles. Historically, it was here, near Stirling, that some of the Scottish wars of independence were fought, and where monarchs ruled in regal splendour.*

*This Feast highlights the fact that in the future true Christians will assist Jesus Christ in ruling the nations for 1,000 years.*

*It will be a truly enjoyable time of peace and prosperity in direct contrast to today's war-weary world. Those who attend are privileged to enjoy a foretaste of this happy future in anticipation of its observation by all mankind.*



In the September/October issue of the British Supplement, we looked at some of the important spiritual lessons that benefit Christians who observe the Feast of Tabernacles. In this November/December edition we are highlighting some of the practical benefits of observing the Feast.

### The Feast in Stirling

Meetings and social events were held in one of the city's impressive public buildings, and the scenic backdrop was provided by the surrounding Ochil hills. Meeting together in an inspiring location to hear God's Word explained by the ministry (Nehemiah



Feast-goers gather outside the Albert Halls (top), where we met for services (bottom).

8:7-8) enhances the principal theme of the Feast of Tabernacles. This is in anticipation of the time when Jesus Christ will have returned to earth and is ruling as its King of kings and Lord of lords, creating an environment of

joy, peace and prosperity for all.

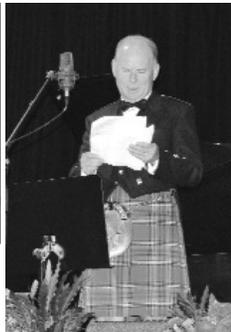
Over 200 people attended the Festival in Stirling. This picture story highlights their enjoyable experiences while observing the Feast in 2010. As you might expect, this eight-day period of rejoicing had a uniquely Scottish flavour.

A piper played before services on the Sabbath and Holy Days. Those of Scottish descent wore their kilts, and we enjoyed two evenings of Scottish dancing, the last one to the accompaniment of a full ceilidh band.

Historically, God gave a number of reasons for giving the Feast of Tabernacles to the ancient Israelites. One was for them to remember that they had been strangers and pilgrims on the earth. So they lived for seven days in temporary dwellings (Leviticus 23:43). In practice, with the additional festival on the eighth day, this can mean nine nights away from home. Often, extended family groups will stay together for the duration of the Festival, perhaps in a self-catering housing unit.

This increases the opportunities for Christian fellowship. Some who attended in Stirling came from Belgium, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden, and even as far away as the United States, Australia and Canada. Getting acquainted with or renewing old friendships with visitors from other countries is one of the distinct pleasures of observing the Feast.

This fellowship can have a dual benefit. It reminds Christians both



Top to bottom, the ceilidh (first 4 photos), seniors' tea, and curry evening.



Photos by Brian Richardson, Stefan Saxin, Steve Serfontein, Lori and Nathan Schroeder.

that we are all strangers and pilgrims on the earth (Hebrews 11:13), and also that God wants all nations to be a part of His eternal family.

Not only do family groups get together, but they also enjoy the company of friends they may not have seen since the last Feast of Tabernacles.

Special events are held for specific groups of people: this year senior citizens gathered for an afternoon tea; the young adults ran a party for the younger children; and teens and young adults got together for a curry dinner and then went ten-pin bowling. Activities for the whole group included the ceilidh.

### The Festival of Tabernacles: a special time of rejoicing

Another aspect was God's command to rejoice (Leviticus 23:39-43; Deuteronomy 16:13-15; Nehemiah 8:14-18). This is a wide-ranging decree, with many applications. Traditionally, as well as on the High Days and the weekly Sabbath, the United Church of God holds a daily service, usually in the morning. Most afternoons are free for enjoying historic sites, various local activities such as fishing, hiking or playing golf, or simply visiting with other feast-goers.

Another biblical name for this festival is the Feast of Ingathering (Exodus 23:16; 34:22). So its agricultural context highlights a final physical facet of the Feast. It occurred at the end of the farming year: barley and wheat had been harvested in spring, fruit and grapes had been gathered during the summer months and olives, mostly for oil, were picked in the autumn. In essence, the Feast of Tabernacles (or Ingathering) was a festival of thanks to God for the entire year's produce.



Rural communities would bring some of their produce to eat and drink during the Feast. Today we might enjoy a good meal with a fine wine during this time. However, the Feast is not a time for selfish indulgence or

greed. In Deuteronomy 16:14, God through Moses advised that everyone was to rejoice, even those who were poor, or widowed, or alone. This principle should inspire everyone to look out for those who may need help to truly enjoy the Feast. With an awareness of others' needs, it can be as simple as taking someone for a cup of coffee, or giving them a lift somewhere, or providing them with some groceries or a bottle of wine. Remember that Jesus Christ said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive' (Acts 20:35).

*David Fenney,  
Festival Co-Ordinator and pastor of  
Stirling, Scotland congregation*



Note: Next year's Feast of Tabernacles will be celebrated by the United Church of God in Winchester, Hampshire, from the evening of 12 October until 20 October inclusive.

Clockwise from above left: Notice at Scone Palace, hiking in the countryside, scenic Loch Lomond, going fishing, the William Wallace memorial.



## About the United Church of God

The Church has ministers and congregations throughout much of the world, including the United Kingdom and Ireland. We trace our origins to the Church Jesus founded. We seek to follow the same teachings, doctrines and practices established in the early first-century Church. Our mission is to proclaim the gospel of the coming Kingdom of God to the whole world as a witness and to teach all nations to observe what Christ commanded (Matthew 24:14; 28:18-20).

The Feast of Tabernacles is one of the seven annual festivals and Holy Days given by God to ancient Israel. They were kept by Jesus Christ, His apostles and the New Testament Church (Leviticus

23:39-43; John 7:1-14). The Festival of Tabernacles will be observed by all mankind during Christ's 1,000 year reign on earth (Zechariah 14:16-19; Revelation 20:4).

At that time, many biblical prophecies of an unprecedented time of peace and prosperity will be fulfilled (Isaiah 2:2-4; 11:1-9; 35:1-10). If you'd like to know more about the Feast of Tabernacles and the other annual festivals, you may wish to request in print or download our free booklet *God's Holy Day Plan: The Promise of Hope for All Mankind*.

To know more about the Church itself, ask for our free booklet entitled *This Is the United Church of God*.

# Is the Bible Only for 'Religious' People?

*Were the Holy Scriptures intended only for the Israelites and Christians?  
Or are they just for the religious minded in society?  
The Bible gives us a clear answer.*

In an increasingly secular world, many people pride themselves on expressing the view that they are not religious. They feel no need to read what they consider a purely religious book such as the Bible.

Actually the Word of God should serve as a spiritual handbook for humanity. Ultimately the Bible will be exactly that.

In the Pentateuch (five books of Moses), the first of the three divisions of the Hebrew Scriptures or Old Testament, there is instruction to 'live by every word of God.' But who is meant here? Only the Israelites? A closer look at the instruction in Deuteronomy 8:3 shows that this directive is that 'man shall not live by bread alone, but . . . by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD' (emphasis added throughout). Although this command was initially addressed to the Israelites, it is meant for all human beings, no matter their gender, ethnic group or religious background. Jesus Christ made that very clear by quoting this particular text from the Old Testament in response to the devil's temptations (see Matthew 4:4; Luke 4:4).

Knowing that humanity usually prefers to determine its own criteria for 'right' and 'wrong', Jesus spoke to religious leaders of His day, asking, 'Why do you teach for doctrine the commandments of men' instead of relying on the Word of God? (see Mark 7:8-13). The same question can be asked today.

## Is the Sabbath only for the Jews?

The seventh-day Sabbath is one of the Ten Commandments. This fourth commandment is a vital part of God's Word (see Exodus 20:8-11; Deuteronomy 5:12-15). In the New Testament Jesus Christ tells His listeners the same thing. Many people believe the Sabbath to be a rest day for the Jews only. But Christ emphatically stated that '*the Sabbath was made for man*' (Mark 2:27). He is also Lord of the Sabbath day (Matthew 12:8). This weekly rest day is not just for the Jews, but for all humanity. It is God's ultimate intention that all people,

*'I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that you and your descendants may live' (Deuteronomy 6:4-5).*

whether they be 'religious' or not, should honour Him on the seventh day of the week by resting.

Ask yourself: Is physical rest once a week only beneficial for religious people? Is spiritual tuition from God's Word through personal study or collective worship on the seventh-day Sabbath only of value to the devout? Of course not. All of God's creation would benefit by ceasing from labour on the Sabbath day. (For further understanding, request or download our free booklet *Sunset to Sunset: God's Sabbath Rest.*)

That goes for all of the Ten Commandments. The laws God commanded the Israelites to observe were likewise

intended for all mankind. They were beneficial for the Israelites, so why would they not benefit others as well? The laws of God were codified so that all humanity would benefit by observing them.

Moses was commissioned to include the Ten Commandments and other laws God had given Israel in the Book of the Law (Deuteronomy 31:24-26). That way it would be passed on to future generations. The laws of God were to be perpetuated so that all of God's creation would benefit. This showed our Creator's will for future generations. Many other books inspired by God were written and compiled until the Scriptures were complete. The complete Bible is comprised of 66 books in all: 39 in the Hebrew Bible or Old Testament and 27 in the New Testament.

## The benefits of embracing God's law

Just before his death Moses gave the Israelites an ultimatum. They had it in their power to make a choice. 'I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; *therefore choose life, that you and your descendants may live*' (Deuteronomy 30:19). This was quite a challenge to the Israelites, as it is for us today.

In verses 9-10 of the same chapter we see that benefiting from the good and averting the evil is conditional on obedience to the laws of God. 'For the

LORD will . . . rejoice over you for good as He rejoiced over your fathers, if you obey the voice of the LORD your God, to keep His commandments and His statutes which are written in the Book of the Law, and *if you turn to the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.*’ This applies to everyone, not just the religious minded. God’s laws are to be universally applied throughout all generations. They are timeless. God is not a respecter of persons, nations, or races (Acts 10:28, 34-35; Galatians 3:28-29).

The Bible, both Old and New Testaments, makes it clear that keeping the commandments of God and expressing love for God go hand in glove. They are inseparable! Notice Deuteronomy 7:9: ‘Therefore know that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep His commandments.’ Compare this passage with 1 John 5:3. ‘For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.’

### **The application of God’s law in New Testament times**

We see that Jesus Christ continued the theme of the commandments to express love to God and neighbour. The two go together. When Jesus was asked by a lawyer in Jerusalem what he must do in order to inherit everlasting life, Christ answered: ‘You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: You shall love your neighbour as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and Prophets’ (Matthew 22:37-40). He quoted Deuteronomy 6:4-5 and Leviticus 19:18.

Notice that loving God and loving one’s neighbour are equated with the keeping of the laws and command-

ments. What Jesus is saying here is that the Ten Commandments are summed up by the two great commandments. How? First there are those which regulate man’s relationship to God (the first four). Secondly those that govern our conduct with our neighbour (the last six). By keeping all Ten Commandments we express love towards the Creator as well as to our fellow men and women.

Human beings are commanded to observe God’s laws. The result is the development of divine character in us. That is the ultimate purpose of God creating man in His image (Genesis 1:27). Just as Jesus reflected the character attributes of God Almighty (Hebrews

### ***Christ equated loving God and loving one’s neighbour with the keeping of the laws and commandments.***

1:1-3), so we are to follow Christ’s example. Jesus accomplished it perfectly, we imperfectly strive to be like our heavenly Father (Matthew 5:48). If there is a desire and effort to walk God’s way, His mercy will compensate for the times we falter and fail to live up to the divine standards (see 1 John 1:7-9).

### **The people of God**

In the book of Deuteronomy God proclaimed the children of Israel to be His special people. They were to be a model nation to show the world the blessings of God’s way of life. Everyone in the twelve tribes was included. No one was excepted.

Being ‘special people’ wasn’t limited to only the devout with a ‘religious’ inclination. But being special meant that they had to do something. Notice: ‘Also today, the LORD has proclaimed you to be His special people, just as He promised you, *that you should keep all His commandments*’ (Deuteronomy 26:18).

We see that the people of God in Old Testament times had to observe His commandments in order to remain special.

Why would God then tell His people in New Testament times that the commandments are done away, as some believe? Since God required obedience to His law in ancient times, it makes sense for Him to expect obedience from His people in the time of Christ and His apostles.

The apostle Paul, often misunderstood (see 2 Peter 3:15-16), had no problem with God’s law. He clearly stated: ‘Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good’ (Romans 7:12).

Yet it was clear in Paul’s mind that the keeping of the laws of God doesn’t provide us with salvation, seeing that we all have sinned (Romans 3:23). It’s the shed blood of Jesus Christ which atones for our sins once we truly repent and accept Him as personal Saviour. His death reconciles us to God and, coupled with His mercy, opens the door for everlasting life in the Kingdom of God (2 Corinthians 5:17:21; Romans 5:8-10). Nonetheless, there wasn’t any doubt in Paul’s mind about the necessity of basing our lives on God’s laws and commandments. He stated, ‘Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing, *but keeping the commandments of God is what matters*’ (1 Corinthians 7:19).

### **The importance of the Bible**

The Bible remains God’s instruction book for man to show us how to live a morally upright life. It should be required reading for everyone, not just ‘religious minded’ people. Just as the offer of salvation is given to every human being, so is man’s obligation to ‘live by every word of God.’

Why not study this spiritual guidebook more thoroughly by enrolling in our free 12-lesson *Bible Study Course*? This is an important step towards equipping yourself with a greater understanding of God’s plan and purpose for you personally – and for your nation and the world in general.

*Gerhard Marx*

# When Will the End Come?

*The intensity and frequency of tragic world and national events rightly concern our readers. Recently we witnessed more terrorist activity in Europe with a number of parcel bombs. Many wonder where we are now in the overall prophetic framework. When will this age of man draw to a close?*

**W**e received the following questions in our British office in Chalfont St Giles. A reader residing in Merseyside asked, 'How can you stipulate that it [the end of this age] is 'soon-coming'? Is it simply by reading the current trends? Or is there a Jewish calendar [indicating the time of the end]? I would deeply appreciate advice on this, if at all possible.'

God's people have posed similar questions down through the ages. For instance, the prophet Daniel asked about the time factor. When he heard an angelic revelation about the end time, he said: 'Although I heard, I did not understand. Then I said, "My lord what shall be the end of these things?"' And he said, "Go your way, Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed *till the time of the end*" (Daniel 12:8-9, emphasis added throughout).

## What Christ revealed

Throughout his ministry on earth and just before His ascension, Jesus Christ indicated what we should be

looking for and focusing on. One particular place was in the Olivet Prophecy in response to His apostle's questions. 'Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately saying, "Tell us when will these things be? And what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?"' (Matthew 24:3).

Earlier Christ had given a parable 'because they [erroneously] thought the Kingdom of God would immediately appear' (Luke 19:11). The disciples simply did not fully grasp this explanation because just before His ascension into heaven, they asked: 'Lord, will you at this time restore the Kingdom to Israel?' (Acts 1:6).

For a long time during their ministries, the apostles anticipated Christ's coming within their own lifetime. But just prior to His martyrdom the apostle Peter had come to consider a more realistic time factor. Inspired from above, he shared this overall perspective with first-century Church members and with us today. 'Do not forget this one thing,

that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day' (2 Peter 3:8). God does not view time as we humans do. His perspective is much more realistic.

## Has the time of the signs arrived?

Now that some 2,000 years have passed since Christ's first coming, it certainly appears that we are now finally living in the time of the end. Our age is replete with many disturbing signs indicating that this age of man may be drawing to a close. What Bible translator James Moffatt labelled the 'Crisis at the Close' may on the horizon.

But if someone asks when in terms of the exact day, month and year, we can only repeat Christ's reply to His first-century apostles. 'It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority' (Acts 1:7). Their chief concern was to be preaching the true gospel (verse 8). When Christ does return, His servants should still be found doing the work of God, as world conditions permit (Matthew 24:44-46).

Yet, on balance, proper anticipation remains natural to true Christians. After all Christ Himself instructed us to regularly pray 'Thy Kingdom Come.' That is one reason why we sometimes use the phrase 'soon-coming.' It conveys a sense of urgency in getting the job done. Certainly our biblical brief includes a serious warning message to the nations of this world about the tragic events that must occur before the return of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ to this suffering planet (Matthew 24:14).

## The Hebrew Calendar and the End Time

Although the Jewish people were used by God to preserve the Old Testament (Romans 3:1-2), we do not find the origins of the Hebrew calendar in the Bible. It is introduced in the Old Testament Scriptures as a given. Yet its very existence enables the Church to observe God's annual Holy Days and festivals at the times appointed by our Creator (Leviticus 23:4).

But Bible chronology itself indicates that nearly 6,000 years have elapsed since the creation of our first parents, Adam and Eve. Given a 7,000 year plan including Christ's 1,000 year reign on earth, this may well be another indication that we are indeed living in the time of the end.

## Why we preach and publish on prophecy

Why do we publish a magazine, *World News & Prophecy*, mostly devoted to world events in the light of Bible prophecy? Precisely because a prophetic message remains a vital part of our mission to the world. Why would we print and post a booklet almost exclusively devoted to an analysis of what would be occurring during the end time? For the same reason *Are We Living in the Time of the End?* remains one booklet in our literature library that we advertise to the general public from time to time.

If readers carefully read and study its contents, they will come to have a much better grasp and perspective of the elusive time factor. The reader's questions posed at the beginning of this article are addressed from a wide variety of biblical, historical and prophetic viewpoints, amply supported by many scriptural passages. The 48-page booklet packs lots of information about the telltale signs we should all be looking for. Ask for in print or download your free copy of *Are We Living in the Time of the End?*

John Ross Schroeder

# What Can We Do?

In light of the many prophecies about the end of this age, what can we do? What should we all do?

When informed about a recent grisly tragedy, Jesus Christ responded by saying to those around Him: 'Do you suppose that these [men] were worse sinners than all other[s], because they suffered such things? I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish' (Luke 13:2-3).

Understand the gravity of straightening out our relationship with our Creator. God 'now commands all men everywhere to repent' (Acts 17:30). We must turn from our ways, which are bringing the world to the brink of disaster, and turn to our Creator.

Prove the Bible is God's Word. Find out where He is working, and see how He may be leading you to become more involved. To begin, download or request our free booklets *Is the Bible True?* and *How to Understand the Bible*.

Study the prophecies of the Bible and how they relate to national and

world trends. Request our other booklets on prophecy and our free *World News & Prophecy* magazine to better understand what God reveals about current events and His coming Kingdom. Jesus tells us: 'When you shall see all these things, recognise that He is near, right at the door' (Matthew 24:33, NASB).

It is now 'high time to awake out of sleep' (Romans 13:11). Enrol in our free *Bible Study Course*. Its easy-to-follow lessons will take you through the major themes and teachings of the Bible.

Most important, consider and follow God's words in Isaiah 55:6-7: 'Seek the Lord while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the Lord, and He will have mercy on him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon'. You can learn more about what this means from our booklet *Transforming Your Life: The Process of Conversion*.

## Science and the Time of the End

Scientists reflect considerable concern about the troubled age in which we live. Michael Moyer, a staff editor of *Scientific American*, stated: 'We all believe that we live in an exceptional time, perhaps even a critical moment in the history of the [human] species' (September 2010, p. 22). This magazine about science devoted much of the September issue to 'the theme of endings'.

Astronomer Royal Martin Rees believes that 'a biological catastrophe – accidental or intentional' – may kill at

least one million people by 2020. Michael Moyer observed that 'imagining the end of the world makes us feel special.'

But the scientific imagination has little room for God. He has pretty much been left out of the picture. Many scientists (though not by any means all) reject biblical revelation and freely embrace the theory of evolution. Most, probably, have not read our booklets (available free on request), *Life's Ultimate Question: Does God Exist?* and *Creation or Evolution: Does It Really Matter What You Believe?*

### ***How our literature is funded***

The United Church of God – British Isles is registered as a charity in England and Wales (number 1079192), and in Ireland (CHY17954). 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: United Church of God, PO Box 705, WATFORD WD19 6FZ, United Kingdom, or donated online at [www.ucg.org.uk/donate.html](http://www.ucg.org.uk/donate.html) through Paypal or Charity Choice.



# Letters From Our Readers

## **The Good News**

I have just received your magazine called *The Good News* and the British Supplement. I have found them both a joy to read. Your teaching has been of a high standard. You are scriptural to a tee. I have been also asked to consider if I would like my subscription to *The Good News* and the British Supplement to be renewed. I do want to continue receiving them.

*J M F, Taunton, Somerset*

I very much enjoy the well-written and scholarly articles in this magazine. Although not a committed Christian, I find myself in agreement with most of the contents. I also like the unashamedly conservative tone.

*M F, Liverpool*

Thank you for my recent copies of *The Good News* magazine. I so enjoy them. As an Adventist I still find that I am learning anew from the booklets I received from you. I know that I did not just accidentally come across your web site.

*D R, Newport, South Wales*

I find your *Good News* magazine very encouraging. Every day I pray that the Lord would return soon! Why is it that most churches do not seem interested, or preach about the second coming? Of all the Christians I know there is only a handful who see things the way I do, and obviously you do too. Please continue sending me your magazine.

*S A, Leicester*

## **Which church is correct?**

During the current year I have resigned my long-term membership of the Church of England due to the

Archbishop of Canterbury's statements and addresses. I and many other Christians believe these are contrary to the Bible's teachings.

*D A S, Wokingham*

Could you tell me what happened to the Church of the early apostles? What about Roman Catholics? Is Protestant theology different from what is written in the Bible?

*D A, Telford*

• *Your questions are answered in our free booklets The Church Jesus Built and The New Covenant: Does It Abolish God's Law?*

## **Bible Study Course**

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to read and study the Bible. I was born into a Christian home and have always loved God. But I always have felt that I don't really know God at all. In the last few years I have felt the urge to know Him more, and after the death of a friend, who was my mentor and confidant, I've felt the need to grow closer to Jesus. I will be grateful for any help in my spiritual journey.

*S H, Chatham*

• *We recommend that you request our two free booklets Jesus Christ: The Real Story and Who Is God?*

I thank God so very much that I participated in the *Bible Study Course*. It has been so prolific and profound. The lesson 'Why Does God Allow Suffering?' came so timely because this is the one of the questions people confront me with whenever I am out for evangelism. While I settled down to research it, the course lesson came, and

the enlightenment is so overwhelming.

*U I, Manchester*

Thank you so much for your help in answering my questions on the final twelfth lesson. I have found it a challenge all the same, maybe because it's all so new to me. The local Baptist Free Church which I attend lays no great emphasis on these special Holy Days, although keeping them must be of great benefit to your members.

*A M, Worthing*

• *Please request and read our free booklet God's Holy Day Plan: The Promise of Hope for All Mankind, and also see the lead article in this issue.*

## **Spreading the true gospel**

Thank you for your *Good News* magazine and the *Bible Study Course*. I am overwhelmed with how much knowledge these have given me in the past few weeks. I am enjoying the Word of God and have purchased my own Bible to read all the passages that you recommend. I would like to set up a standing order from my bank account to offer a monthly donation to your good works. Can you help with the bank details so that I may do this?

*N S, Bristol*

• *We have posted the necessary details to set up a standing order. Readers who also wish to donate have other options like, for instance, a cheque or postal order (made out to the United Church of God). Our literature is all free, but we do accept tithes and freewill offerings so that those who cannot contribute receive the true gospel as well.*