

A Better Way to Govern

Apathy and a general mistrust of politicians have reduced voter turnout for the seats in the European Parliament. Why is there such a mistrust of government in Britain – and how should rulers rule?

In Europe as a whole, a record low of 43 percent of voters recently turned out to choose who would represent them in the European Parliament. In the United Kingdom, however, in spite of some urgent campaigning by political parties, the percentage poll was barely over 33 percent – 10 percent less than the European average (Sky News sources).

Certainly some are suspicious of the intentions of the architects of the new Europe. Others see eventual integration into Europe as the only way forward. So why are these feelings not expressed by voting for those who would champion their cause? Why is there so little involvement in this process in the UK?

Milking the taxpayers

In recent weeks, a series of revelations published in *The Daily Telegraph* about expense claims by members of Parliament from all parties incensed British voters. The public was shocked by the manner in which MPs were using 'the system' to benefit financially at their expense. Embattled taxpayers are also in the middle of a deep recession they feel was created by greedy banks who are not being held to account by the politicians.

Adrian Michaels explained in the 1 June edition of the *Telegraph* online, 'In the UK, the Westminster expenses scandal has laid bare and stoked the public's outrage.'

Crisis for the nation

The British government has all but nationalised some of the major banks. In this economic climate, it is not surprising that popular opinion put pressure on the government to try to reduce or eliminate large bonuses paid to executives whose risky decisions appear to have led to the collapse.

Now car manufacturers are hoping for billions of pounds to try to avert major job losses and the death of the motor industry, still one of the largest and most important manufacturing businesses in the United Kingdom. The British economy can hardly afford additional pressure, and soaring unemployment would be disastrous for any government.

On the other hand, small businesses are struggling to obtain bridging finance from the banks to survive cash-flow problems. Many consider small businesses to be the backbone of the British economy, yet the banks seem to have sealed their coffers, or at least made it very difficult to borrow.

What should we expect from our leaders?

The reputation of officials, leaders and parliamentary representatives has perhaps never been so poor. The editor of *Standpoint* magazine commented: '*Corruption and incompetence at home, cowardice and impotence abroad*: this is the ugly reflection over the eventful year since *Standpoint* was launched. So grave is the damage to the reputation of Parliament that the Queen herself is reported to have expressed her concern to the Prime Minister. The British body politic, once so widely imitated throughout the world, now resembles an empty husk, hollowed out by varieties of downmarket depravity . . .

'The domestic malaise makes itself felt overseas, too. *Never in recent memory has Britain's prestige stood lower than it does today*' (June 2009, emphasis added throughout).

A few decades ago, good character was an important ingredient in the make-up of a candidate for holding an office. However, when the media revolution in the 1960s thrust entertainers and sports personalities into the eyes of the public through television, film, music or print, the exposure gave

them sudden and broad influence. They may have been people with talent, but not necessarily admirable character qualities.

Qualities of good governance

For a nation to be successful and happy, leaders need to exemplify good qualities. As the proverb says: *'When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice; but when a wicked man rules, the people groan'* (Proverbs 29:2).

Jesus well knew the failings of rulers throughout history. He began training those who will replace them during the coming rule of the Kingdom of God on earth. The future King told His disciples: *'You know that the rulers in this world lord it over their people, and officials flaunt their authority over those under them. But among you it will be different. Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first among you must become your slave'* (Matthew 20:25-27, New Living Translation).

The apostle Paul described some of the qualities Jesus Christ looks for when appointing Church leaders. They must *'have a good reputation. They must not be bossy, quick-tempered, heavy drinkers, bullies, or dishonest in business. Instead, they must be friendly to strangers and enjoy doing good things. They must also be sensible, fair, pure and self-controlled'* (Titus 1:7-8, Contemporary English Version).

In addition, one of God's great principles from the Old Testament states that rulers must be governed by the same laws as those they rule. *'And it [the book of the law] shall be with him, and he shall read it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the LORD his God and be careful to observe all the words of this law and these statutes, that his heart may not be lifted above his brethren'* (Deuteronomy 17:19-20, NKJV).

God's coming government

A time is coming soon when a

different type of government will rule: *'Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!"'* (Revelation 11:15).

Jesus Christ is calling some for training now to rule in the future with Him. *'Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection . . . they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years'* (Revelation 20:6).

We can learn and practise now the important characteristics that will motivate those who assist Christ during His millennial reign. We can receive and develop a different nature, generously given to us by God (see Acts 2:37-39). Learn more about this and your part in the future of humankind by downloading or requesting in print your free copies of *Transforming Your Life: The Process of Conversion* and *God's Holy Day Plan: The Promise of Hope for All Mankind*.

Peter Hawkins

The Promised Messiah Will Bring Us Good Government

The Hebrews understood that their Scriptures contained many prophecies of a divinely appointed ruler who would restore the glory and grandeur of the kingdom of Israel. For example, Isaiah 9:6-7 says: *'The government will be upon His shoulder . . . Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgement and justice from that time forward, even forever'* (emphasis added throughout).

Jeremiah 23:5-6 adds: *"Behold, the days are coming," says the LORD, "that I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; a King shall reign and prosper, and execute judgement and righteousness in the earth. In His days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell safely; now this is His name by which He will be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS."*

Jesus Christ declared that He was the Messiah (or *Anointed One*) at His trial. *'And the high priest stood up in the midst and asked Jesus, saying, "Do You answer nothing? What is it these men testify against You?" But He kept silent and answered nothing. Again the high priest asked Him, saying to Him, "Are You the Christ [Messiah], the Son of the Blessed?" Jesus said, "I am. And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of*

the Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven'" (Mark 14:60-62).

Jesus knew that He was born to reign as a king. When the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate, questioned Him before His crucifixion, Jesus said: *'My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here.'* Pilate asked Jesus if He were indeed a king. Jesus responded: *'You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth'* (John 18:36-37).

Peter also proclaimed the wonderful truth that Jesus was the Messiah: *'But those things which God foretold by the mouth of all His prophets, that the Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled. 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, and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began'* (Acts 3:18-21).

To learn much more, request our free booklet *Jesus Christ: The Real Story*.

Meeting Life's Challenges Through Faith

Young people can achieve success in today's world. Faith in God is the oft-forgotten key to overcoming difficult challenges at any age, particularly if they involve unbelieving authority figures.

We all have dreams in life. Our dreams serve to excite us and help us to look forward to and plan our future. But sometimes we have to face radical changes such as altered family circumstances like a parent's job change. Dreams can be modified as we respond to what are sometimes difficult and unexpected challenges.

We may be afraid, but God does not want us to worry, for He will provide just as He takes care of the birds of the air and all of creation (Matthew 6:25-32). Our Creator has also given us biblical examples that show how we can be successful – if we obey and have faith in Him.

Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego

The book of Daniel tells the story of a group of young men who were facing a challenge they could never have imagined before. They had been taken from their homes and families and placed in a foreign land where even the food was strange to them.

This is the story of four friends. From the Bible we know them as Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego. These young men were removed from their homes as the Babylonians conquered the nation of Judah (Daniel 1:1-6). But instead of becoming abject slaves with the rest of the captives, they were especially chosen, and probably forced, to enter a three-year training system in order to qualify for a select group of servants to directly serve the king of Babylon (verse 4).

This 'school' only selected the best and brightest young people, and then provided them with the best education available in the world at that time. They would have to learn vast amounts of information and have it available for instant recall. And if they succeeded, they would ultimately stand before the king.

They were forced to submit to a change of names, learn to speak a foreign language, and even told what to eat (verses 7-8).

The four friends quickly realised they had to work out how to be excused from eating foods contrary to their normal diet. (See our free booklet *What Does the Bible Teach About Clean and Unclean Meats?*) The leader of the school did not know how to handle their request. It seems he had never been faced with someone refusing to follow explicit instructions, and so he was understandably apprehensive. After all, if these students did not do well, he would be blamed.

So what did Daniel and his friends do? Did they just demand their way, or did they give in and eat the king's food? No, Daniel and his friends had already established a good relationship with the servant who was over them and stood out as good students. They asked him to put their diet to the test. God backed them up and they appeared healthier than the other students after just 10 days.

Facing the fiery furnace

Next we see three of these friends facing a second and much more harrowing challenge. By this time they had

been promoted to positions of power in Babylon (Daniel 2:49). On this occasion they were being tested by a new law telling them to worship an idol the king had set up (Daniel 3:1-7). If they didn't worship this idol, then they would be burned alive in the fiery furnace.

How would you face this situation? I am sure this new law and the fierceness of their enemies, along with the king's response, must have given them great concern and apprehension about what to do next.

Yet they didn't pause, but gave an answer without wavering (Daniel 3:16-18). Even when the king confronted them, they did not hesitate. They knew what their answer had to be. Even knowing they might lose everything, the three firmly stated they would remain faithful to what they believed. They were fully aware that this decision could cost them their lives.

God miraculously intervened and spared them, and not even the hair on their heads was singed (verse 27).

Today's difficult challenges

How do these examples fit into your life today? Thankfully, there are few times in today's world when we are faced with a decision that could cost us our lives. But there are times when we all have to decide whether to follow what we believe. We may need to take a stand against a particular authority when it clashes with the laws of God.

Perhaps such challenges might include deciding not to work a shift on a Friday night in order to keep the

weekly Sabbath holy. Or we could be faced with having to ask a professor if we can take tests at different times because they conflict with the weekly Sabbath or one of the annual Holy Days. (For new readers who may not

Exercising true faith

But this man knew what God wanted him to do, so he informed his medical school that, to comply with his new faith, he would no longer be able to take his exams on Saturday. He offered to

rewarded their actions and their faith.

Preparing our faith

Faith is essential for success. Most of us want to obey God – to do the right thing. But often we have to make difficult choices. These choices are easier if we have prepared our faith. Have we taken the time to prove our sincerity, our integrity and our commitment to our teachers, or our boss, so that they will be more inclined to assist us? Have we decided that even if our requests are rejected, we will still obey God?

People should recognise us as being willing to go the extra mile. Anciently, Daniel and his friends were willing to step out on faith in order to prove they could survive without the king's food. The doctor in our day offered to take the tests early.

We know God wants us to be happy and successful. After all, we are His children and He only wants what is best for us. Daniel and his three friends became leaders in the Babylonian Empire. And you can achieve your potential, too. You may even be able to attend the most challenging universities, such as Oxford or Cambridge. You may become a successful business person or enter the civil service or one of the professions.

You don't have to compromise your lawful dreams and ambitions. If you demonstrate your faith in God, then you are already on the path to success. (To understand more, you may wish to request in print or download our free booklet *You Can Have Living Faith*.)

So how should we face the challenges that threaten to prevent us from attaining our goals? We can have faith that God is always there to help us to overcome difficult circumstances and succeed. For as our Creator promises: 'With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible' (Mark 10:27).

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Good Advice for Young People

Solomon advises someone starting out as a young adult to 'get your fields ready first'. In other words, take the steps that will put – and keep – food on your table. 'After that, build your house', he says.

Solomon here sums up our basic priorities in life as work before pleasure.

The modern equivalent would be to be sure you are well prepared to make a living before you start trying to enjoy an expensive lifestyle. Put in the hard work necessary to begin a career or business and get and keep well-paying jobs. Once your fields (or their economic equivalent) are ready – after you've gained the skills to provide for you and your future family – you can take time to build your house – to think about home and family.

In our time the thrust of that preparation to earn a living will be to obtain an appropriate education. In 2007 a study estimated that 'a university degree adds an average £160,000 to an individual's lifetime earnings compared to people whose education finished at A-level' (Reuters). A report later that year by the Institute of Education pointed out that while accounting and medical degrees are good money-earners, graduates in humanities and the arts may 'find that they are not able to earn enough to compensate for the amount that they paid for their university education' (Times Online).

Education is the single best investment you can make for your financial stability and earning power. As technology transforms our world, education will likely grow even more important with each coming year. At the same time the constant advancement of technology means that ongoing education – adding and developing skills – is also crucial.

be familiar with these biblical teachings or their importance for us today, we offer two free booklets: *Sunset to Sunset: God's Sabbath Rest* and *God's Holy Day Plan: The Promise of Hope for All Mankind*.)

It is often easier to just smile, not ask, and take the shift or the test – perhaps preferring to avoid making a teacher or boss angry about a request.

While I was thinking about the choices that Daniel's friends had to face, I spoke with a member of God's Church. He had come to understand the commandment to rest on the Saturday Sabbath while in medical school. As students today know, professors and administrators can be unsympathetic towards those who don't want to fall into line and do things just like everyone else.

take his tests early and went to each of his professors and deans individually – carefully explaining his circumstances. Still they told him he would fail and that it was not possible for him to continue in medical school.

So he stepped out on faith and didn't take his tests on the scheduled Saturday. When he returned to class on the following Monday, he was told to be there on Tuesday – to take the tests with ten other students. God had intervened on his behalf. He is now a doctor and remains a member of God's Church.

How did these men – Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego anciently, and this doctor today – serve God? They were diligent to do their part to resolve the situation by going above and beyond their duty, but they also demonstrated great faith in their God, who amply

Why We Must Preach and Teach the True Gospel

*What gospel did Jesus Christ and His apostles preach and teach?
The only reliable answer is found in the Bible.*

How important is it for the Church today to proclaim the same gospel that Jesus and the apostles taught? Historically, this issue presented itself rather forcefully to the apostle Paul early in His ministry. The letter to the Galatians was among his very earliest epistles, if not the first, and he may have written it as early as AD 48.

Paul had remonstrated with the Galatian churches: 'I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him [God the Father] who called you in the grace of Christ to a different gospel, which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the [true] gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed' (Galatians 1:6-8). That is pretty strong language from Paul's pen.

The crucial importance of preaching and teaching the one and only right gospel is self-evident from just this one biblical passage.

To be sure that we are pleasing God, we need to understand the essentials of the true gospel.

What gospel did Christ preach?

Matthew was one of the twelve original apostles. He wrote as one of the chief witnesses of Christ's life and teaching. 'Now Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching *the gospel of the kingdom*' (Matthew 4:23, emphasis added throughout). Later during His ministry 'Jesus went about all the cities and villages teaching

in their synagogues, preaching *the gospel of the kingdom*' (Matthew 9:35). Our free booklet is titled *The Gospel of the Kingdom*.

But what kingdom? Mark's gospel account supplies us with the full answer. 'Now after John [the Baptist] was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, *preaching*

God the Father is the ultimate author of the gospel, and He mediated it to humankind through His Son.

the gospel of the kingdom of God' (Mark 1:14). This kingdom is not an ethereal figment of human imagination. Its participants will rule planet earth under Christ in a time yet future.

Although it could be considered that the members of the true Christian Church constitute the kingdom of God *in embryo*, Jesus gave a parable to His disciples to correct their misguided impression that 'the kingdom of God would appear immediately' (Luke 19:11). Christ asks us to pray, 'Thy Kingdom come'.

The gospel actually constitutes the good news of God's coming kingdom, with Jesus Christ as its king. The word *gospel* actually means *good news*. Mark also calls it 'the gospel of Jesus Christ' (verse 1). Yet another New Testament passage terms it 'the gospel of God' (Romans 1:1). Sundry biblical passages describe it by various names, but it remains always the same one and only true gospel. God the Father is the ultimate author of the gospel and He mediated it to humankind through His Son.

Preaching and teaching this gospel

was always a very important priority in Jesus' mind. He told His disciples: 'Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also, *because for this purpose have I come*' (Mark 1:38). In principle, do we have His urgent attitude and approach to getting the gospel to the British Isles and to the nations of our modern world? Read Matthew 24:14 and Matthew 28:18-20.

The apostle Paul firmly stated: 'If I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for the necessity is laid upon me; yes, *woe to me if I do not preach the gospel*' (1 Corinthians 9:16).

What gospel did Christ's apostles preach?

Luke tells us that Paul and Barnabus preached the gospel in Lystra and Derbe (Acts 14:20-21). Then at the conference of elders at Jerusalem the apostle Peter explained that God initially determined that 'by my mouth the Gentiles *should hear the word of the gospel* and believe' (Acts 15:7). Later Luke relates that Paul saw a vision from God and rightly concluded, '*that the Lord had called us to preach the gospel*' to the Macedonians (Acts 16:10).

In the last two verses of the book of Acts, Luke sums up Paul's most recent activities at that time. 'Then Paul dwelt two whole years in his own rented house, and received all who came to Him, *preaching the kingdom of God and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ* with all confidence, no man forbidding him' (Acts 28:30-31).

At this juncture we should consider a major teaching that is an important

part of the true gospel message. Let's ask this question: How important is Jesus Christ as our Saviour to the gospel? The apostle Paul addresses this vital issue in the plainest of words.

'Moreover, brethren, *I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, by which you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you – unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that he was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures*' (1 Corinthians 15:1-4).

This passage highlights the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, through which we receive the forgiveness of sins – a major aspect of the gospel message. Christ's resurrection from the dead stands tall in that same category of importance.

The gospel includes the word of God

Luke brings to our attention an important principle concerning the gospel. 'When they [Peter and John] *had testified and preached the word of the Lord, they returned to Jerusalem, preaching the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans*' (Acts 8:25). This passage clearly indicates that the word of the Lord and the gospel are deeply intertwined and interconnected. This should go without saying, but we human beings sometimes overlook the obvious.

Other biblical passages support this basic theme in terms of what Christ's original apostles actually preached. Various points were emphasised according to the needs of the time. For instance, 'With great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus' (Acts 4:33). They also 'spoke the word of God with boldness' (verse 31).

In truth, major foundational points of the gospel were initially expressed in

the Old Testament or 'holy scriptures' (2 Timothy 3:15). When Paul and Barnabus journeyed to Antioch and attended the synagogue on the Sabbath, they were invited to speak to that congregation (Acts 13:14-15).

Paul was the chief speaker. He began his 'word of exhortation' with a summary account of several key events recorded in the Hebrew Bible. And then he summarised the story of the sacrifice, death

The Kingdom in the Gospels

The *Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible* says this about the Kingdom of God:

'The word "kingdom" is found fifty-five times in Matthew; twenty times in Mark, forty-six times in Luke and five times in John. When allowance is made for the use of the word to refer to secular kingdoms and for parallel verses of the same sayings of Jesus, the phrase "the Kingdom of God" and equivalent expressions (e.g., "Kingdom of heaven", "his kingdom") occur about eighty times . . . These statistics show the great importance of the concept in the teachings of Jesus . . . There can, therefore, be little doubt that the phrase "the Kingdom of God" expresses the main theme of His teaching' (Vol. III, 1976, p. 804).

and resurrection of Jesus Christ, undergirded by two quotations about Christ from the book of Psalms and one from Isaiah.

Then the Gentiles 'begged that these words might be preached to them the next Sabbath' (verse 42). Verse 43 reveals that Paul and Barnabus persuaded both Jews and Gentiles in Antioch 'to continue in the grace of God'. Then verse 44 states that 'the next Sabbath almost the whole city came together *to hear the word of God.*'

In his final letter just before his martyrdom, Paul charged Timothy to '*preach the word*' (2 Timothy 4:1-2). The word of God and the gospel are largely synonymous, for the gospel message is also found in the Old Testament. A considerable number of

prophecies foretell Christ's death (see Isaiah 53), and His return as King ruling over a transformed earth (see Micah 4:2-4; Zechariah 14:3-4).

Just prior to his own martyrdom, Peter reminded his readers about 'the words which were spoken before by the Holy Prophets [the Old Testament], and the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ [the New Testament]'

(2 Peter 3:1-2). After Paul's death, some of his letters apparently had been collected, and Peter definitely considered them a part of Scripture (verses 15-16).

Treasuring the true gospel

The early first-century Church was told to hold fast to the true gospel. Paul wrote: 'Therefore brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught whether by word or our epistle' (2 Thessalonians 2:15). Every minister of Jesus Christ is expected to be 'holding fast to the faithful word as he has been taught' (Titus 1:9). Elders

are not to falsify or depart from the teachings of the true gospel.

There is so much more to understand about the gospel. That's why the United Church of God has prepared and published a free digest-size booklet titled *The Gospel of the Kingdom*. After the introduction, the chapter titles include 'The Good News of the Kingdom of God', 'The Promise of a Coming Kingdom' and the 'Gospel of Jesus Christ: Salvation in the Kingdom'. A number of sidebars, addressing relevant questions from our readers, punctuate the main text.

Be sure to request in print or download our free booklet entitled *The Gospel of the Kingdom*. At the same time, why not ask for *Jesus Christ: The Real Story* as well?

John Ross Schroeder

Questions & Answers

Q Why are we as Christians not more assertive in coming forward to speak and confess our Lord Jesus? I'm guilty and my heart hurts.

C S, Greenford

A The Psalms are replete with praise of God's marvellous deeds. In these inspired writings we have examples of publicly proclaiming the wonderful things God the Father and Jesus Christ have done for us. God's amazing love and compassion in a Christian's life now, and in the promised future of God's Kingdom, may fill us with such enthusiasm that we want to go out and tell everyone in the British Isles about it.

How and when to 'speak and confess our Lord Jesus' in a secular, unheeding and potentially hostile society can be a frustrating conundrum to a Christian. It may be partly this uncertainty that renders us less assertive in proclaiming Christ's way of life.

However, there are other important principles that merit our serious consideration.

Firstly, we should understand that our lives, deeds, behaviours and even our thoughts (2 Corinthians 10:5) should be in accordance with God's way. To confess Christ in one breath and deny him in the way we live would be hypocrisy (Titus 1:16). And far from bringing honour to Christ and to God our Father, it would instead dishonour them both.

Our actions speak louder than our words. We should be bringing light and praise to God and His Son without unduly drawing attention to ourselves (Matthew 5:14-16). In our place of work or other spheres of influence, colleagues should see that Christians are different, having a clear set of moral values and high standards. They should know that we are Christians without us preaching to them.

Often people feel uncomfortable around those known to hold strong religious beliefs, afraid they may try to impose those beliefs, which, however well-intentioned, could cause embarrassment. Being *quietly assertive* about our beliefs in God and Jesus Christ may work wonders. We should not compromise with sin, but we are to avoid being judgmental, critical or self-righteous.

When discussing Christ with others, we should be aware of our audience. Some will only mock Christ, whatever is said. To try to confess how Christ has worked in us to such a person would probably come in the category of 'casting pearls before swine' (Matthew 7:6). Not that we should consider such people to actually be 'swine' – Jesus was using a strong metaphor to indicate that unbelievers would not recognise the value of God's Word and His truth.

The apostle Peter adds this advice: 'Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts. And be ready always *to give an answer to every man [or woman] that asks you a reason for the hope that is in you*

with meekness and fear' (1 Peter 3:15, emphasis added throughout). The apostle Paul also advised on how to converse with others: 'Be wise in your dealings with outsiders, but use your opportunities to the full. Let your words always be gracious, never insipid; *learn how best to respond to each person you meet*' (Colossians 4:5-6, Revised English Bible).

We should understand what Jesus Christ said as well as what He did (Acts 3:22-23). His message and teaching are often misunderstood. Even Christ Himself spoke in parables so the listeners would not understand (Matthew 13:10-11). It can take a long time to really comprehend the truth and it also requires the miracle of God's calling (John 6:44). As Christians we are all to grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ (2 Peter 3:18). Representing Christ and His teachings accurately is an important aspect of our Christian exemplar.

It is an interesting exercise to read through the book of Acts and see how the apostles interacted with those they met. Often they first approached those who already had a belief in God.

A Christian should pray for wisdom before speaking about Christ and His way of life to others (James 1:5). While desiring to bring praise and glory to God and His Son, we may inadvertently do the opposite. We should prudently represent God's way of life in all our words and our actions.

How our literature is funded

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Letters From Our Readers

The end time

I received *The Good News* today. Whether this present depression and downturn signals Jesus Christ's return, no one knows. Some of us have been through redundancies, high mortgages, food rationing and saw air skirmishes in the Battle of Britain. This looks the worst yet. A lot of the present troubles have been brought on by man breaking the law and spending more than he earns. I believe it will be a little longer before our King returns. There are a few more world actions yet to take place.

G F, Eastleigh

- *The free booklet Are We Living in the Time of the End? may prove helpful to our readership.*

The Good News

Thanks for sending me *The Good News*. The information is so useful. To apply the Bible to this present age is very hard, but *The Good News* has helped me a lot. It took serious thinking and a long period of meditation before I could see the way to apply these truths. The technique has helped me dig beneath the surface of a seemingly outdated story in the Bible to the very up-to-date principles I have to know and live by.

J A A, Ilford

I certainly would not like to be without my copy of *The Good News*. It keeps my thoughts on God's word. Please find enclosed a small donation.

M-R G, Bolton

Why cancel your subscription?

Thank you for your booklets. They have shown me the way forward and opened many of the Scriptures that were previously hard to understand. I pray the

Lord will pour out his favour upon your ministry and all the brothers and sisters involved in it. I truly believe that our Lord brought your ministry to my attention in answer to a specific question. Now that I have that answer, there's no need to send further copies of your magazine to me. They are important elsewhere – where others will benefit from *The Good News*.

R P, Southampton

- *Thank you for your kind comments about our magazine. We are glad that you received an answer to a specific question you had. Is it possible that God may have used that particular question to draw you to our ministry in order for you to discover other important truths? Our free publication, Transforming Your Life, has helped many others.*

The Church in Ghana

I enjoyed reading the Supplement article on 'The Work of God in Ghana'. It was inspirational!

Mrs S C, Salford

The Sabbath or Sunday?

I am ever so grateful for all *The Good News* information that I have received. It has truly been an eye-opener and I can't get enough. Up until a few months ago I was a Sunday worshipper and have stopped going on Sunday. I came across your information purely by accident.

Miss P B, London

- *Our reader may be referring to the free booklet Sunset to Sunset: God's Sabbath Rest.*

Bible Study Course

The *Bible Study Course* has opened up not just new information, but revelation to me. In doing the course I have to read and study in a more constructive

way. I find this is all good as it is building up my faith and knowledge.

R D, Carrickfergus, Northern Ireland

This course was a huge eye-opener for me. Going through the lessons has encouraged me enormously to grow closer to God. It brought out many new points and things I would have wanted answered. This course has also helped increase my biblical knowledge, which has helped prepare me for ABC.

J S, Ashford, Kent

- *ABC stands for the Ambassador Bible Center, located stateside in Cincinnati, Ohio – sponsored by the United Church of God, an International Association. Intensive instruction in the Bible and Church doctrine is given for a period of nine months. For more information, please view our ABC website: <http://abc.ucg.org>.*

Spreading the gospel message

Please accept the enclosed cheque to help in the work in His service. I am still discussing the gospel of the kingdom with the leadership [of my church]. I have had no success as of yet, but will persevere for some more time to give an opportunity for some 'green shoots' to appear somewhere.

A J, Merseyside

I would like to arrange a direct debit scheme to support your charity. It's fantastic and such a help.

G G, North Shields

- *We have posted the account details. Other readers interested in contributing to the gospel message by this method should write to Box 705, Watford WD19 6FZ. Our sincere thanks to all of our co-workers and donors for their loyal support.*