

‘The Unknown God’ Is Alive Today!

The apostle Paul was troubled by the idolatry he saw in Athens. Lessons from his experiences almost 2,000 years ago are just as important for us today.

Many writers do not have the opportunity to visit historic places abroad that they are writing about. In carrying out my ministry, my wife Sonja and I visited Athens, Greece, late last year. It proved very inspiring to be present where the apostle Paul taught.

But let's return to the first century when Paul preached the gospel in Greece. To pick up the biblical account in context, he had left the city of Berea in a hurry. Brethren there knew that those who had come down from Thessalonica intended to disrupt Paul's teaching in the synagogue (Acts 17:13-14).

A number of Greek 'God-fearers', including some prominent men and women in Berea, realised that what Paul was teaching about Jesus was true. First converted to Judaism, they had checked the Scriptures and now believed the good news of the resurrected Christ (verse 11).

Whether by sea (verse 15) or over land, the journey to Athens would have taken several days. Paul had given instructions for Silas and Timothy to follow soon and meet him there.



The Acropolis of Athens seen between the remaining pillars of the temple of Olympian Zeus.

A city saturated with idolatry

Arriving for the first time in Athens, Paul was incensed by the number of idols in the city, seeing that people were 'given over' to them (verse 16). The Roman historian Pliny records that there were more than 3,000 public statues of deities, besides those in every porch and entrance of private homes.

High above the city, temples had dominated the skyline of Athens for nearly 500 years. The Parthenon was dedicated to Athena. Other temples honoured Zeus and a host of other gods and demigods.

What do we worship today?

The lives of the citizens of Athens were consumed with false beliefs, time-wasting superstitions and pagan ceremonies. People suffered from a total lack of understanding of the true God.

In this day and age, the mass media has created living idols. We call them celebrities.

The adoring public is treated to fan clubs, biographies and many other means of worship of its football heroes, rock or punk bands, film stars and TV presenters. The incredible sums of money paid to celebrities today often reflect the commercial value to supporting industries – match tickets, film memorabilia, magazine articles, and perhaps biggest of all, brand sponsorships.

Corner of Parthenon showing frieze of battle between mythical beings.





Under restoration on top of the Acropolis:
Temple of Athena Parthenon (or 'the Virgin').

Many children and adults know much more about their current heroes than about important biblical personalities whom God holds up as good examples. Most are also ignorant of God Himself.

The power of logic

As he waited for Silas and Timothy to arrive, every day Paul 'reasoned' with those in the local synagogue, as well as those in the large market place, or agora (verse 17). This took place under the shadow of the Acropolis high on the hill to the east. The market was the centre of Athenian life, with shops in the commercial section, and important public buildings nearby.

As people milled around, Paul would engage them in conversation. Reasoning was an accepted and popular pastime. The basis was logic, a process that was stressed in Greek schooling. Logic helped one to reason out and verify 'truth'. You had to prove your point of view.

Ancient philosophies still with us today

The two prevailing philosophies were those of the Epicureans and Stoics, popularised 330 years earlier by Epicurus (d. 270 BC) and Xeno (d. 265 BC).

Epicurus held that *pleasure was the chief goal in life*. Sound familiar to the popular thoughts of today? The pleasure most worth enjoying was 'a life of tranquillity free from pain, disturbing pas-

sions, superstitious fears, and anxiety about death' (Vol. 9, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*). He argued that the gods took no interest in the affairs of men.

Stoicism was named after the 'painted Stoa' (colonnade or portico) where Xeno taught in Athens. His teaching centred on *living harmoniously with nature*, and emphasised 'man's rational abilities and individual self-sufficiency' (ibid). Theologically he was pantheistic and thought of God as the 'world soul'. That too is reflected in many of today's popular beliefs.

Both philosophies were misguided ways to deal with life *without* the need for biblical revelation or the message and life of Jesus Christ.

Clashes of faith and logic

Paul was confronted by followers of these belief systems as he taught them about Jesus Christ and the resurrection (verse 18).

The essence of Paul's message was foolishness to these Greeks. To have a 'god' come down to earth, to die for those he had created, and then be resurrected was illogical to them.

Several years later Paul would write to a congregation in Corinth about this clash of beliefs. 'In the wisdom of God

preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness' (1 Corinthians 1:21-23).

The message that God's Church proclaims today is the same as Paul taught then. And much of modern society regards it as foolish.

From an evolutionary point of view, which is the predominant philosophy of today, there is no provable scientific reason to believe the gospel. Evolution is now the 'saviour' through natural selection.

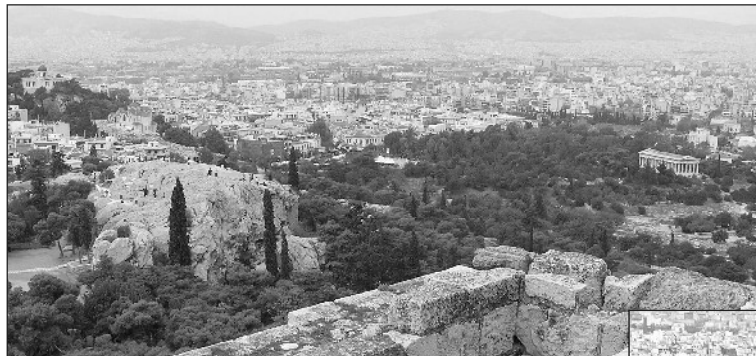
The essence of Paul's message was foolishness to these Greeks. To have a 'god' come down to earth to die for those He had created, and then be resurrected, was illogical to them.

Paul's 'new' ideas

Why is there is no mention of a Church of God congregation in Athens? Possibly it is due to a ban that appears to have been put on Paul's preaching.

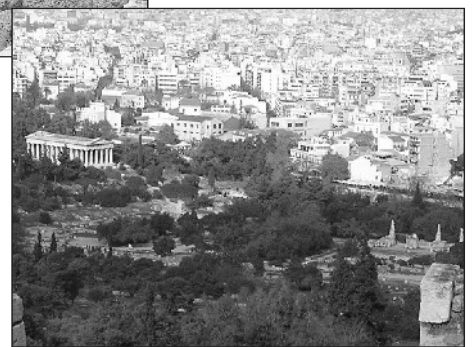
He was categorised as a babbler. Originally this word referred to a bird picking seeds, and it came to mean a scrap collector, or peddler of bits and pieces of others' ideas. What he said didn't fit into a neat pigeonhole.

But the dangerous accusation was that he was a 'proclaimer of foreign gods'. If this was



Above: Looking down from the Acropolis to Mars Hill (left) and the Agora, or market place (right).

Right: Closeup of the market place where Paul taught.



the world by wisdom knew not God, [so] it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.

'For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: But we



Altar to the 'Unknown God' in Istanbul museum.

found to be so in the judgement of the cultural court (the Areopagus, or 'council of Ares' – the Greek version of Mars) one could be banned from speaking publicly.

'For you are bringing

some strange things to our ears. Therefore we want to know what these things mean' (verse 20).

Athenians loved a good debate about new things. In fact, they always liked to hear whatever the latest concepts were. Cleon, a fifth-century-BC politician and general, said of his fellow Athenians, 'You are the best people at being deceived by something new that is said' (Thucydides, *History*, 2.38.5).

All we need to do is look in our bookshops today to see the modern parallel. Each generation sees new ideas brought forward about alternative lifestyles, seldom with reference to the Bible, God's handbook for living.

In the Areopagus Paul taught the Greeks gathered there the following points:

- He proclaimed an 'Unknown God' to those present – his approach to them was a lesson to us.
- He complimented them on being very concerned with the divine (verse 22).
- He used quotes from their own writers to get the truth of God across.

Paul travelled from Athens to Corinth where he was joined by Silas and Timothy.



• Though there were many impressive temples around them, the Creator God does not dwell in physical buildings (verse 24 is quoted from Euripides).

• Paul challenged the idea that we can worship Him by building great structures made by man's hands (verse 25).

• He countered the mythical idea that Athenians were higher men because they came from the soil of Attica. We are all of one blood (verse 26).

• The true God controls and determines times and boundaries for mankind, in contrast to the philosophy of deism, where the gods have no interest in human affairs.

• God is concerned for us and wants us to seek Him (verse 28) and Paul



Sabbath lunch with the Moschidis family.

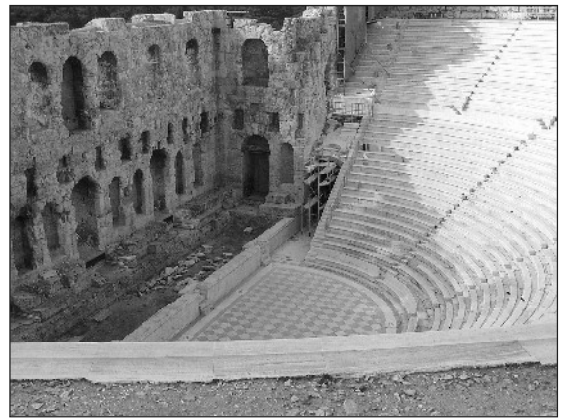
quoted Epimenides (ca 600 BC) and Aratus (ca 315-240 BC) who corroborate God's intentions.

• Verses 29-31 are the essence of the gospel of the Kingdom of God, showing we should worship God in spirit and truth, repenting of our ways, and expecting the judgement of the world by Jesus Christ.

• God verified that this would be so by resurrecting Jesus from the dead.

If Paul had talked about the immortality of the soul, he would have been accepted by all but the Epicureans. While the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead was the proof that logic required, it was foolishness to most of the members of the Areopagus.

God did, however, open the minds of a few of his listeners,



Theatre of Dionysus seated 17,000 people for Greek plays for 500 years before Paul's time.

one of whom, Dionysius, was a member of the council. Another prominent person was a lady named Damaris (verse 34).

Our personal visit

My wife Sonja and I enjoyed our visit to Athens, spending time with the Moschidis family in Sabbath fellowship.

But while awed by the size of the ancient monuments still standing around us after thousands of years, it was obvious that earthquakes and invasions had taken their toll on these man-made monoliths.

When we understand that we Christians are the temple that God is building (1 Corinthians 6:19-20), we realise that He always oversees His own building projects. Jesus Christ is Head of the Church and the foundation on which it is constructed (Ephesians 1:22-23; 1 Corinthians 3:10).

It gives true Christians great confidence that whatever He builds will be for eternity. Always a habitation for God's spirit. Always honouring the Father and Son for the great plan they have for humanity. We will be inhabiting the great city of God (Hebrews 11:10).

Peter Hawkins

Recommended Reading

For more information on what God is building in us, write for our free publication *Transforming Your Life*, or download it at www.gnmagazine.org/booklets/TL.

The Restoration That Really Counts

In September 2008, Salisbury Cathedral celebrated 750 years since its consecration in the reign of Henry III. In 1966 a major programme of restoration work began that continues to this day. But there is a more important spiritual restoration God makes available to those He is calling to salvation in this present age.

Henry III was a child when he was crowned King of England in Gloucester Cathedral in AD 1216, although during his early years England was ruled by a regent. He was the son of King John, whose reign had been disastrous both financially and in his relationship with the English nobility and church.

In 1220, during his regency period, work began on building a new cathedral next to the River Avon in Salisbury, a short distance from where the old, much smaller, Norman cathedral had been built.

It was completed in just 38 years, well within Henry's lifetime. (The 404-foot-high spire is a later addition). In September last year, Salisbury Cathedral commemorated its 750th anniversary. The ongoing programme of restoration work aims to return the building to its former architectural glory and is planned to continue for some time yet as funds become available.

Restoration: the spiritual dimension

The question of restoration is an important one to consider, especially from the biblical perspective. There is a more important aspect to restoration that Jesus Christ referred to in regard to

another magnificent building, the Temple in Jerusalem (see Mark 13:1-2). His disciples were so impressed with the glory of this physical edifice that they forgot its purpose. Jesus stressed the spiritual dimension of the temple rather than its physical splendour. The temple was important to Christ as well, seeing that He called it the House of God when He chased the moneychangers out (see Matthew 21:12).

But of much more importance to Him was what was taught inside its walls. The spiritual message emanating from the Holy Scriptures is what counted and had lasting value rather than the external glory. Does the message you hear inside any cathedral or church match or even surpass the architectural glory of the building itself? It ought to!

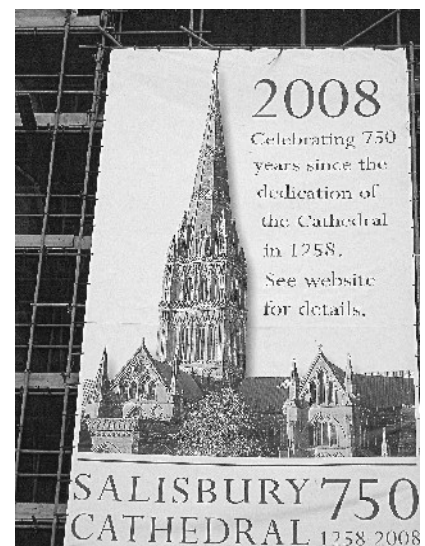
The Bible makes it plain that the restoration of the heart of a person is more important than the physical restoration of ancient buildings. God's Word has a great deal to say about the internal restoration of the individual, called repentance – the acknowledgment of one's sins before the Creator. Jesus preached repentance (Matthew 4:17). The question then is, does the message heard inside church affect the person to look at his or her life in a reflective

way? The prophet Isaiah shows that God takes a great interest in a person who approaches God humbly with a repentant attitude.

Notice Isaiah 66:2: 'To this one will I look, even to him who is poor and of a contrite heart and who trembles at My Word.' God hears those who allow His Word to be authoritative in their worship and who base their beliefs on the Holy Scriptures 'Your word is truth,' Jesus clearly stated, and 'Those who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth' (John 4:24).

Does the church you attend teach the truth of God or does it follow the traditions of men? Christ warned us to look to God's Word for guidance and truth rather than the traditions of men (see Mark 7:8-13).

God hears those who base their beliefs on the Holy Scriptures.



During the Protestant Reformation, a partial restoration of biblical knowledge occurred. But just how deep was that restoration? Were the old erroneous traditions of the mainstream church discarded, or merely adjusted? Do you hear the true message of salvation in the church building where you attend?

Check the Scriptures

How can you tell? There is only one way. Read the Bible without preconceived ideas and biases. Don't necessarily believe what you hear in church services, but search out the truth in the Scriptures as the Bereans did (Acts 17:11).

Consider one prime example: Does collective worship in the churches in Christendom take place on the day that the Creator set apart at the time mankind was created? Notice that the Sabbath was mentioned as early as Genesis after the creation of man: 'God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it . . .' **The seventh day was set apart and made holy.** Some claim that Jesus and His disciples later made Sunday holy

some 4,000 years later. That is no more than an assumption.

There is no New Testament Scripture that shows that Christ and the apostles sanctioned the first day of the week for worship. There would have been an uproar among first-century Judaism if the apostle Paul, a 'Hebrew of the Hebrews', as he described himself (Philippians 3:5), had been instrumental in rejecting the seventh-day Sabbath as the proper day on which to worship.

Notice Paul's defence before Festus, Rome's administrator in Judea. 'Neither against the law of the Jews, neither against the temple, nor yet against Caesar have I offended anything at all' (Acts 25:8).

The first five books of the Hebrew Scriptures (the Old Testament) are called the Law, and in that part of the Bible the Ten Commandments are highlighted (Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5). The Sabbath commandment is one of the Ten.

The apostle Paul was telling Festus that he had not offended the divine directives in the Law. Had he not been

keeping the Sabbath holy or had he preached that the Sabbath was done away in Christ, the Jews would have accused him specifically of discarding the Sabbath, which they didn't. In fact, in one of his letters the apostle Paul clearly affirms his belief in the Sabbath when he stated, 'Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing, *but keeping the commandments of God is what matters*' (1 Corinthians 7:19, emphasis added).

Study God's Word personally

Only by a diligent study of the Bible can you ascertain whether or not the message you hear in whatever church edifice you attend is Bible-based. It is God's Word, not the traditions of men, which should be the foundation of what Christians believe and practice.

To help you find out what is Bible-based truth as distinguished from mere human tradition, why not enrol in our free *Bible Study Course*? Each of the 12 lessons explains a major Bible teaching. It is easy to understand and follow.

The cathedrals that we are familiar with were built with great architectural splendour.

Many have seen a glorious architectural restoration. But at the end of the day you need to ask yourself: Have they been restored spiritually according to God's Word? Or are many of the erroneous church doctrines still taught within their walls?

Don't listen to others. Find out for yourself. It is your responsibility before God.

Gerhard Marx

Which Day is the Sabbath?

Since most churches observe Sunday as their day of rest and worship, many people assume that Sunday is the Sabbath.

The fourth commandment states: 'Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labour and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God. In it you shall do no work . . .' (Exodus 20:8-10).

God commanded that the seventh day be observed as the Sabbath. A glance at almost any dictionary or encyclopedia will show you that *Saturday* is the seventh day of the week, while Sunday is the *first* day of the week. The seventh day according to

God's calendar is – and always has been – the Sabbath day.

Although man has modified calendars through the centuries, the seven-day weekly cycle has remained intact throughout history. The days of the week have always remained in their proper order, with Sunday as the first day of the week and Saturday as the seventh.

'The oracles of God' – His divine words and instructions – were entrusted to the Jewish people (Romans 3:1-2), and they have preserved the knowledge of the seventh-day Sabbath faithfully since well before Christ's time to this day.

Ask for our free booklet *Sunset to Sunset: God's Sabbath Rest*.

Recommended Reading

The United Church of God has published a free booklet about how to study God's Word. Request *How to Understand the Bible* by return mail or download it from our website.

Are Children Born to Believe in God?

Recently a senior researcher at Oxford University's Centre for Anthropology and Mind made some startling statements regarding children. In an interview on BBC Radio 4, Dr Justin Barrett said: 'The preponderance of scientific evidence for the past 10 years or so has shown that a lot more seems to be built into the natural development of children's minds than we once thought, *including a predisposition to see the natural world as designed and purposeful and that some kind of intelligent being is behind that purpose*' (quoted in *The Daily Telegraph*, November 25, emphasis added throughout).

Dr. Barrett indicated that very young people naturally believe in God as a Supreme Being. He further observed that 'children's normally and naturally developing minds make them prone to believe in divine creation and intelligent design. *In contrast evolution is unnatural for human minds; relatively difficult to believe*' (*Telegraph.co.uk*, November 24).

Hard wired to believe?

In reporting on this rather astonishing development in the scientific world of Oxford University, Martin Beckford

(religious affairs correspondent for *The Daily Telegraph*, November 25) wrote that 'Children are "born believers" in God and do not simply acquire religious ideas through indoctrination, according to an academic [referring to Justin Barrett]' Dr Barrett also said that 'If we threw a handful [of children] on an island and they raised themselves, I think they would believe in God' (ibid).

Undoubtedly Dr Barrett's observations will not be well-received by fellow academics and scientists steeped in the evolutionary viewpoint. After all, how could Darwinian evolution account for human beings having an inborn propensity to believe in a divine Creator?

Nonetheless, his findings raise the important issue of adult responsibility in teaching young people truth. The God who created human beings in His own image (Genesis 1:26-27) will hold both parents and teachers responsible for what they teach children (Deuteronomy 6:6-7; Proverbs 22:6).

Should it be divine creation or evolution? Many may not understand that Darwinian evolution is still unproven theory – and really not established fact. (For a comprehensive study of this important question, request or download

our free booklet *Creation or Evolution: Does It Really Matter What You Believe?*)

Children on the right track

The Bible uses very young children as symbolic of those who readily accept the creation account and who anticipate the Kingdom of God during this age of man. King David once wrote: 'O LORD, our Lord . . . who have set your glory above the heavens! Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants You have ordained strength . . . I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers' (Psalm 8:1-3). Nearly a millennium later Jesus Christ exclaimed: 'Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God' (Luke 18:16).

In his report on Dr. Barrett's findings, *Daily Telegraph* correspondent Martin Beckford wrote about children assuming 'that everything in the world was created with a purpose'. This assumption is true! To understand about God's plan and purpose in creating human beings as well as the entire universe, request or download our free booklets *What Is Your Destiny?* and *Life's Ultimate Question: Does God Exist?*

John Ross Schroeder

The Blessing of Little Children

During the course of His ministry Jesus Christ blessed infants and small children personally. Elders in the United Church of God have traditionally followed Christ's example in asking God's blessing.

This Sabbath ceremony has a long history in God's Church. Herbert W Armstrong (1892-1986) set the precedent for the current practice. Generally speaking, this traditional ceremony is conducted in the local Church congregations shortly after the autumn Festival of Tabernacles, although some families have preferred a private blessing at home with family members and special friends.

Matthew 19:13-15 sums up the ceremony. 'Little children

were brought to Him that He might put His hands on them and pray, but His disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven." And He laid His hands on them and prayed.'

Today the presiding elder(s) will thank God for each child, asking for His angelic protection from serious injuries or accidents. He will also ask that he or she would grow up to be a Christian and that the parents would seek the Creator's blessing and guidance in child rearing.

(If you would like more information about this little-understood ceremony, please write, email or telephone our Church office in the United Kingdom.)

Questions & Answers

Q Does the prayer of 1 Timothy 4:4-5 bless unclean meats and render them good for food?

A M, Internet

A This passage states: 'For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving. For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer' (1 Timothy 4:4-5).

The wider context in this book's introduction, along with the apostle Paul's concluding remarks, will help us to properly understand this particular passage's message and intent.

In the first chapter Paul tells Timothy: 'As I urged you when I went into Macedonia – *remain in Ephesus* that you may charge some that they teach no other doctrine, *nor give heed to fables* and endless genealogies, which cause disputes rather than godly edification which is in faith.

'Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith, from which some having strayed *have turned aside to idle talk*' (1 Timothy 1:3-6, emphasis added throughout). Paul then concludes this letter by writing: 'O Timothy! Guard what is committed to your trust [the truth of God], *avoiding the profane and idle babblings* and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge – by professing it some have *strayed concerning the faith*' (1 Timothy 6:20-21).

The message of these false teachers in Ephesus (whose presence was previously predicted by Paul in Acts 20: 29-30) did *not* consist of adherence to God's law, but instead to fables, idle talk, profane and vain babblings.

Part of their focus was to forbid practices that God's law clearly upholds in the Bible. The more immediate context of chapter four further explains: 'Now the [Holy] Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons [not God's law], speaking lies in hypocrisy, *having their conscience seared with a hot iron*, forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know *the truth*' (1 Timothy 4:1-3).

You sear your conscience when you continually do things you know are wrong. You have a clear conscience when you know you are acting according to the teachings of the Bible (1 Timothy 1:5).

Lawful marriage between men and women is commended by God in His Word from the early chapters of Genesis on through the pages of the New Testament. Also God has created many foods we may lawfully eat, including various meats, fish and fowl.

However, in two complementary biblical chapters (Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14) our Creator imparts

important instructions about certain animals, sea foods and unclean birds humans should not eat. But in both of these chapters God *first* explains the characteristics of those creatures that may lawfully be eaten.

These clean meats should be received with thanksgiving by those *who believe and know the truth*' (1 Timothy 4:3). But what is biblical truth? John 17:17 clearly states: 'Your word is truth'. Further: 'Your law is truth' (Psalm 119:142). Those lawful foods that God commends in the Bible are '*sanctified* [or 'set apart'] by the word of God and prayer' (verse 5).

True Christians eat the meat, fish and fowl that God tells us in His word are good for human beings. First they pray for the Creator's blessing on these particular foods, thanking Him before a meal.

In no way does 1 Timothy 4:4-5 sanction the eating of unclean meats.

Request or download our free booklet *What Does the Bible Teach About Clean and Unclean Meats?* This publication also contains more information concerning 1 Timothy 4:1-5 on page 12, as well as expounding many other aspects of this overall subject in a clear and comprehensive manner.

If you have questions or comments about the application of biblical food laws, write to *The Good News* office in the United Kingdom: P O Box 705, Watford, Herts WD19 6FZ.

How our literature is funded

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Letters From Our Readers

The Good News

Thank you so much for your welcome magazines and newsletters. I've been watching sermons on your Web sites and I really do appreciate them, as I can't get to Church services. [See www.ucg.org.] It is lovely to be able to hear a sermon whenever I wish, because sometimes I feel very cut off from the source of spiritual good.

Reader in England

- *We appreciate your need for fellowship with others and pray that God will make it possible in due time. But it is to our Creator we must ultimately look. 'Truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ' (1 John 1:3). You may wish to ask for our free reprint articles about prayer and the booklet You Can Have Living Faith.*

Readers appreciate booklets

Thank you for the booklets that I have received. I very much appreciate the teaching on prophecy. This is an area of study so rejected by the established churches. I have always believed that good Bible teaching would fill the churches. Please find enclosed a small donation towards your good work.

G P, Bangor, North Wales

Thank you very much for sending me booklets which have given me much food for thought. Whereas I do have a fairly good understanding of the Bible relating to current events, I find your literature very clear to understand, especially the booklet on *The Middle East in Bible Prophecy*. The section on the coming of Islam is fascinatingly portrayed and so easy to understand. You have fired my interest in the Bible in a big way, so many thanks for that.

I would appreciate further literature to be sent to me, and look forward to more booklets with great interest.

Mrs M E, Cornwall

- *Thank you! We are posting several booklets to you by return mail.*

I have found your booklets very useful. They are excellent teachings. My scope of knowledge about the Bible is widening and my faith in Christ has grown. If you have a magazine, I would appreciate it if you would begin sending it to me. Thanks for the location [of Church services]. I will try to get to Edinburgh in the near future.

R A, Glasgow

- *You are now on The Good News mailing list.*

A world without war?

As we observed the two-minute silence on November 11, 2008, one fellow worker said that he was not interested in this day. I heard other fellow workers talking about him being disrespectful to the soldiers who fought and killed soldiers of other countries and who were later killed themselves. If people were really Christian, these world wars would have never happened.

H G, Market Harborough

- *On one level we should deeply respect and remember those who have given their lives to protect our national security. Yet on another level, God Himself has endured murder and killing since the time Cain killed Abel. Only our Creator can bring war to an end in the human realm. God guarantees in His Word that He will (Isaiah 2:4).*

Bible Study Course

A long time ago I walked away from Christianity because every denomination was, as far as I could see, 'Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men' (Matthew 15:9). However, two years ago I knew in my heart that the Bible

was the Word of God. I have read it and prayed every day since. Your *Bible Study Course* has been a real blessing and I would recommend it to any one who wants a deeper understanding of God's plan for mankind.

J A, Lisburn, Northern Ireland

Earlier in 2008 I began attending the United Church of God services [in Sheffield]. I also had started reading *The Good News* and the booklets. Now I have completed 12 lessons of the *Bible Study Course*. I have learned to understand more of God's Word and what it is saying to me.

S N, Bradford

The Feast of Tabernacles

I do hope that you all had as profitable a Feast as I had. The CD of the Feast in Australia, 2007, was excellent. It has given me a lot of things to work on in the coming year. Many thanks for the DVD of the Feast film [played in Stirling, Scotland and other sites around the world in 2008]. It is fascinating to be reminded of our history in this way.

C S, Peterborough

How ministry funded?

I stumbled on your website during one of my searches about God. I am excited that there is an organisation out there offering, free of charge, God's Word and teachings to make many things in Scripture clearer and simpler. God richly bless all your hard work. I am keen to know how this ministry is funded. Can individuals partner with you, give money and resources to encourage the Work that you do?

Reader on Internet

- *They certainly can! The full explanation is provided on the bottom of page 7.*