

Will Europe Move to Full Political Union?

On the last weekend of April, Chancellor Gerhard Schröder became Germany's third prominent public figure in less than a year to call for changes in the European Union's structure.

In May 2000, Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer had proposed a 'two-tiered EU' with a core of nations moving toward full political integration within a greater EU, and in a speech before the European Parliament in March, federal President Johannes Rau voiced his support for a strengthening of the parliament's legislative powers for the EU.

Mr. Schröder proposed a more centralised European Union with a clearer division of responsibilities between EU institutions and the national governments of its member states. Through its democratically elected representatives, the European Parliament would be given full budgetary control over all EU funds, including the often contentious agricultural subsidy budget, which makes up nearly half of the EU annual expenses.

In turn, the European Council of Ministers would become an 'upper chamber' of sorts in a new supra-parliamentary arrangement, representing national governments and working in tandem with the

European Parliament as the 'lower house'. The European Commission would retain its executive functions and see them strengthened in the new parliamentary arrangement.

By contrast, matters of purely national or local interest would be left to member states and/or their regional governments to decide. This issue is especially important for the governors of Germany's 16 federal states, who have viewed

'Only Germany can get things moving in the present condition of political disarray.'

Süddeutsche Zeitung

certain EU decisions as infringing upon their local jurisdiction.

Chancellor Schröder's desire for progress within the EU reflects Germany's long-standing commitment to Europe, supported for decades by all major political parties in Germany. In January, Mr. Schröder indicated that Germany would view full political integration within Europe as one of its major goals for the first decade of the new century.

Schröder proposal receives mixed reviews

As could be expected, the response within Germany was

generally positive, with the opposition parties in the Bundestag commenting favourably on the new initiative. An editorial in the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* urged Schröder to 'Take charge, Chancellor! If the Chancellor realises what he is undertaking with his proposal for a political Europe, he has a lot of courage. Then he also realises that only

Germany can get things moving in the present condition of political disarray. But Germany as Europe's saviour? That's not a

pleasant prospect for most Europeans or Germans. But that doesn't change anything, either – the Germans have to do it' (14 May 2001).

Other observers pointed out that Schröder's suggestions for EU reforms, like those of Foreign Minister Fischer nearly a year earlier, were not made in his official capacity as Germany's head of government. Instead, his outline is a proposed platform plank for discussion and ratification at the Social Democratic Party's (SPD) convention in November 2001. It is assured a

favourable reception, since Germany as the EU's most populous country would benefit the most by a strengthening of the European Parliament's powers.

Reaction within Europe to Schröder's ideas was mixed. Belgium's Prime Minister Verhofstadt described them as an 'enormous shot in the arm' for supporters of an ambitious path to European integration.

On a French state radio station, France's Minister for European Affairs, Moscovici, termed Schröder's initiative as 'unbalanced', and as being 'somewhat strongly influenced by the German spirit', 'very federalistic' and therefore unsuited as a basis for a compromise on Europe.

British reaction

A spokesman for Britain's Prime Minister Tony Blair commented that some of the ideas were acceptable, others were not. Even though the Labour government continues to express its desire to see Britain eventually join the European Monetary Union, a recent survey by *The Times* shows 73 percent of Britons are opposed to giving up their pound for the euro.

The *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* reported that 'the more often Europe is discussed in public, the more antagonistic sentiment [in Britain] threatens to become' (3 May 2001).

The reaction to Chancellor Schröder's proposals reflects the impasse that the European Union has reached. Several EU members are content with the status quo of an unwieldy economic community that offers financial and trade advantages without the need to sacrifice national sovereignty in key areas. Other EU members, including Germany, wish to see EU decision-making processes

streamlined to prevent the frequent last-minute 'bargains' reached to 'buy off' one or a minority of members – often the smaller EU countries – from using their single-vote veto power to prevent major agreements from being reached.

It is easy to say that one is for a 'European superpower' but against a 'European superstate', to quote the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*. In reality, those European politicians who use such language are often the same ones who complain about the growing unwieldiness of European institutions and processes. 'The truth is that a superpower also needs strong European institutions. As long as the EU is made up of more or less sovereign member states, all their efforts to be decisive and unified will be subject to national interests' (4 May 2001).

'Iron and clay' prophecy compared

Where in the Bible would we find reference to such events that are forming on today's world scene? How can we understand these events in a prophetic framework which helps us understand their real significance?

The prophet Daniel described an end-time union that will oppose Christ's return, a union apparently geographically within the confines of the former Roman Empire, the fourth great kingdom revealed to Nebuchadnezzar in his dream of a great human image in Daniel 2. That final union, pictured by the toes of the image, is composed partly of iron and partly of clay (Daniel 2:33). Clay and iron do not 'mix' well; they will not be the basis for a permanent union.

Some have wondered whether the miry clay and iron of the image's two feet could represent a throwback to the historical partition of the Roman Empire into eastern and western halves. Certainly the 12 Eastern European nations currently knocking on the EU's door of membership (who may be admitted as members before the end of the decade), represent a state of economic development lagging

Daniel described an end-time union that will oppose Christ's return.

well behind Western Europe's infrastructure.

However, the scenario that currently seems best suited to fit the description given by Daniel would be a greater Europe unified in an economic zone with limited political oversight – similar to the current EU. Within this trading block, a smaller core of nations could advance voluntarily toward greater political union, including voluntarily relinquishing sovereignty in key areas like national currency. If the 'core nations' were also the larger economic force within the entire economic zone, a clay and iron mix could easily be the result.

Even if many Europeans do not agree with the specifics of Chancellor Schröder's initiative, his proposal nevertheless reflects the dissatisfaction felt by many toward the current state of EU institutions. Whether his ideas will be implemented remains to be seen.

Schröder's comments, together with the earlier speeches by Messrs Fischer and Rau, do, however, send a clear signal concerning Germany's desire to see the word *political* added to the words *European Union*.

*Paul Kieffer, Editor
German language Good News*

Who Are the British?

The following is abridged from The World Tomorrow programme, the 15-minute radio broadcast produced and presented by David McDermott.

One of our responsibilities at *The World Tomorrow* is to warn our listeners of what is to happen in the time leading up to the return of Jesus Christ. We point to the problems, difficulties and dreadful situations that exist in society in general. We point to the reasons for those problems and focus upon the answers.

Recently former British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook (now Leader of the House of Commons) made statements to the effect that the British are not a race. Although this is controversial, he was absolutely correct in what he said.

So who are the British?

The most ancient settlers of the British Isles were the Celts. The Celts can be traced back through Europe to the area of the Balkans. A lot of Celtic mythology appears to be based on that of the Roman gods and also on Mithraism.

However it also contains elements of ancient Assyrian belief and practice. This indicates that the Celts originated south of the Balkans. Biblical accounts speak of a particular people who were invaded by the Assyrians under Shalmaneser and Sennacherib and taken captive. Eventually they moved into the area of Armenia, from whence they migrated north-westwards across Europe. We conclude from these and other historical facts that the Celts originated from the so-called lost ten tribes of Israel.

Following the Celts were the Romans who, after the first forays of Julius Caesar in 55 BC, conquered and then ruled much of Britain from approximately AD 40 to around AD 409. When they left, the Jutes, the Angles and the Saxons occupied the area now called England. Later there were various incursions by the Vikings, who settled in the north of the country, followed by the Danes, who settled large areas of central

The patriarch Joseph had two sons born to him in Egypt of his Egyptian wife, Asenath. Joseph was one of the 12 sons of Jacob, or 'Israel' as God renamed him. In Genesis 48, just before his death, Israel adopted these sons of Joseph as his own. He then blessed them and prophesied what their circumstances would be at 'the time of the end', before Jesus Christ comes to establish the Kingdom of God on this planet. Of Joseph's two sons,

Manasseh and Ephraim, he said that Manasseh would become a great nation, and Ephraim would become a company or commonwealth of nations.

Abraham was the grandfather of Israel, and great-grandfather of Joseph. God said to Abraham that his descendants would be blessed in physical terms and that through those descendants the world would benefit.

These promises are termed a 'covenant' or agreement. And again, this is referring to the latter days. The very time we are in now.

Of all the nations on earth today, it is the United States, Britain and some of the nations of Western Europe and Scandinavia which have most benefited the world. These are the very areas where we identify that the latter-day descendants of Abraham have settled.

There is no race as such that we can describe as the British. However

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and north-eastern England. Finally the Normans invaded the country. The Normans were descendants of Vikings who had earlier settled in northern France.

Much later came the French Huguenots – only about 100,000 of them – and in more recent times Jews, Indians, Pakistanis and people from the Caribbean and parts of Africa.

Since every nation is simply a family grown big, let's look back at some of the history of the family of Israel.

the very word British means ‘men of the covenant’ (‘brit’ in Hebrew means ‘covenant’). The company of nations was called the British Empire; later it was called the British Commonwealth, although today the word ‘British’ has been dropped from the title.

People are of various origins, but as citizens of Britain they share in the blessings God promised Abraham that his descendants would bring to the world. To be British is also to share in particular cultural views and certain values. An example of this would be the view that Britain has a responsibility to serve others and to respect other people’s liberty and freedom. It also acknowledges the right of others to live in peace and not be oppressed by dictators and totalitarian regimes.

For some 500 years Britain has striven to prevent any one nation from dominating the continent of Europe. In bygone days, Britain

was highly successful in this continental venture – but not anymore, in the sense that it is now part and parcel of the European Union and virtually helpless to act unilaterally.

Bible prophecy predicts troubled times ahead. If you want to study further into the origins and the prophesied future of America, Britain and the Commonwealth, and the Northwest European nations of today, write for our free 48-page, full-colour brochure The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy.

Europe is coming together, with a renewed, revitalised and unified Germany at the forefront, with all the potential for a dangerous dictatorship, as already witnessed

in two World Wars. And this time there appears to be little that Britain can do about it.

The Bible refers to ‘The Great Tribulation’ and ‘time of Jacob’s trouble’, affecting Jacob’s descendants today. Why this trouble? Because we have trodden underfoot the laws, commandments and Sabbaths of Almighty God and ridiculed Him by promoting atheism and evolution in our lands.

Nationally we could change and alter our course and direction, but regardless of what the country does, individually we can change direction, obeying and trusting the Creator God, and heeding His warnings. Those who do will be blessed as a result.

And beyond the troubled times ahead, government will soon be taken out of the hands of mankind and placed where it belongs, with Jesus Christ as Ruler and King, the firstborn Son of God Almighty!

Original script by John Jewell

The Gospel to the Isle of Man

The Isle of Man lies in the Irish Sea, midway between the coasts of England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland. It offers a wide variety of beautiful scenery from moorland, wooded glens, and palm-fringed ponds, to a central mountain range with valleys leading down to rocky cliffs and sheltered bays. Its 1000-year-old parliament is the oldest continuous parliament in the world. The island’s democratically elected government exercises full control of internal affairs and territorial waters.

Vikings from Scandinavia as well as Celtic, Scottish and Irish arrivals have shaped its long and colourful history. It is definitely associated with the spread of Celtic Christianity, which generally held to biblical ideals until the later influence of the Roman church. A higher percentage of the Isle’s approximately 72,000 inhabitants has been receptive to the true gospel than in most other areas of comparable population.

The United Church of God has a congregation in Ramsey. Its members have been very active in carrying

out Christ’s commission to publish the gospel (Matthew 28:18-20), particularly in the past two years. Ten adverts have been placed in local newspapers, offering *The Good News* and promoting *The World Tomorrow* radio programme, which is broadcast on the Isle from Manx Radio (see log on page 3).

The church regularly receives visiting speakers from Britain. (Readers throughout the British Isles have asked if the United Church of God has representatives or congregations in their local areas. The answer is, although we are relatively small and do not blanket the British Isles, United does have representatives who are available to talk with you either in your home, or if you wish, at a nearby site convenient to you.)

If you find yourself in the Isle of Man, you are certainly welcome to attend our church services. To contact us for details, please consult the box at the bottom of page 7.

*Paul Spenser, Chairman
United Church of God, Isle of Man*



Are You Missing Out on Something?

*If you're like most people, you may have a vague feeling
that there must be more to life than meets the eye.
Discover how you can find the missing ingredient in your life.*

We all know the feeling of being left out – not invited to a party, ignored by our peers or shunned by the ‘in’ crowd. Maybe we haven’t been able to afford a holiday this year, or perhaps we’ve never achieved that big career break.

Seniors may remember George Morgan’s popular hit, ‘Oh, How Close We Were, Almost’. We can identify with being close, but still not quite there – always managing to come up just that little bit short.

Yet we’re usually resilient. We get over the slights and learn to live with our longings.

An unsatisfied lot

But no matter how comfortably we seem situated, we often want to be somewhere else doing something different. An actor was so unsatisfied with his lot in life that it was said he didn’t want to be anywhere. Others long to be somewhere over the rainbow. Another time. Another job. Another place. Maybe even another marriage partner. The grass is always greener just over the horizon. We want we know not what. The wisest of the ancients, King Solomon, observed: ‘The eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing’ (Ecclesiastes 1:8).

Whatever we do in life, it’s never quite enough. An undefinable something anxiously and restlessly tugs at our natures. We may turn to drugs or too much alcohol, only to find they only bring a temporary respite, often followed by a huge kickback. Ours is an anxious and lonely planet for many people.

Reality often doesn’t meet our expectations. British columnist James Hawes observed: ‘Most of us spend many of our days, and the odd sleepless Sunday night, in a mixture of vague dissatisfaction with our work and pay, niggling worries about our relationships and health, and low-level fear about our jobs and mortgages’ (*The Independent*).

Besides our material desires, we have other longings as well. We yearn for something infinitely more satisfying. We have needs that can be described only as spiritual – intangible yet real cravings that nag at our natures. Solomon also wrote that God ‘has put eternity in our hearts’ (Ecclesiastes 3:11, King James Version). Perhaps that explains why some of us attempt to seek out a Shangri-La or fountain of youth, something in the great somewhere that will forever satisfy our unfulfilled longings.

Shake hands if you feel this way. Such feelings are common to all of us.

The human condition

Most of us know we’re missing out on something. This is intrinsic to what some philosophers have called the human condition. Whole areas of understanding are foreign to our life experiences. Essential spiritual knowledge that would assist us in our restless quest for some kind of immortality eludes us.

Our world isn’t exactly ideal. We have to make our way in a society whose standards are anywhere from slipping to nearly nonexistent. Our lives often breed dissatisfaction. As the late author

Norman Cousins so aptly expressed it: ‘Much of our ache and brooding are the results of our difficulty in using ourselves fully. We perform compartmentalised tasks in a compartmentalised world. We are reined in – physically, socially, spiritually. Only rarely *do we have a sense of fulfilling ourselves through total contact with a total challenge*’ (*Human Options*, 1981, p. 101, emphasis added).

Yet God does not want human beings, whom He made in His own image, to be dissatisfied for the rest of their lives. He says to the dissatisfied of all generations: ‘Come for water, all who are thirsty; though you have no money, come, buy grain and eat; come, buy wine and milk, not for money, not for a price. Why spend your money for what is not food, your earnings on what fails to satisfy? Listen to me and you will fare well, you will enjoy the fat of the land. *Come to me and listen to my words, hear me and you will have life*’ (Isaiah 55:1-3, Revised English Bible). We were born not only to look for, but eventually to find, the pearl of great price (Matthew 13:45-46).

Envisioning the future

Some have found the spiritual answers to the human dilemma. Jesus Christ once said to His disciples, ‘Many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it’ (Matthew 13:17).

Yet the prophets of whom Jesus Christ spoke sensed an inkling of the golden age to come. They knew

the One who would ultimately bring it about. They spoke of Him in their prophecies. However faintly they grasped the full reality, they knew Someone would come to humanity whose mission would finally culminate with that great city 'whose builder and maker is God' (Hebrews 11:10). Plainly the Spirit of Christ was in these Hebrew prophets (1 Peter 1:11).

Later Jesus Christ said to His disciples: 'It has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them [the whole multitude] it has not been given' (Matthew 13:11).

God's plan for everybody

God follows a timetable. He is seldom in as great a hurry as we are. His plan calls for doors of understanding to be opened a little at a time – initially only to a small flock which the Bible terms the firstfruits, then in a future age to come to the entire inhabited world, finally culminating in the removal of spiritual blindness from all who have ever lived.

But how do you fit into this providential plan?

Presently you are a part of a growing family of readers who, for the most part, are seeking answers about 'the good news', or the gospel message Jesus brought. Therefore it could be that God is inviting you to become a part of His glorious Kingdom – with the wonderful opportunity to receive as a gift an indescribable taste of 'the powers of the age to come' (Hebrews 6:5).

Today many are caught up in secular activities. They show little interest in the things of God – and may have to wait for their spiritual opportunities until a later, better

age. But, as the writer of the book of Hebrews said in a different context, we are confident of better things concerning you (verse 9).

An invitation to the Kingdom

The timing of a person's calling to salvation is, of course, God's choice. We on *The Good News*

It could be that God is inviting you to become a part of His Kingdom.

staff cannot open your mind or call you to Him. That is strictly God's business (John 6:44, 65) and far beyond our limited powers. But we are asked to make spiritual knowledge readily and freely available to help sincere inquirers find the truth of God.

The benefits of knowledge about the age to come are both spiritual and material. God understands we have physical needs, and it is right to seek what we require in an honest and godly manner. Consider the example of Jabez, from the line and family of Judah. The Bible says he 'was more honorable than his brothers' (1 Chronicles 4:9).

The Hebrew Scriptures tell us little about his life, but we should take careful note of what God has chosen to reveal. 'Jabez called on the God of Israel saying, "Oh, that you would bless me indeed, and enlarge my territory, that Your hand would be with me, and that You would keep me from evil, that I may not cause pain".'

Clearly, Jabez was an honourable man, and God granted him what he requested (verse 10).

A leper implored Jesus, 'Lord, if You are willing, You can make me

clean.' Christ's simple, direct answer was, 'I am willing; be cleansed' (Matthew 8:2-3).

Elsewhere in the Gospels He said, 'I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly' (John 10:10). He also told us of spiritual principles we must put first in our lives: 'But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things [material necessities] shall be added to you' (Matthew 6:33). God is more than willing to extend His helping hand – often in wonderful ways beyond our human understanding.

Answers are available

The wise founder of a religious college once said to an eager group of students: 'This college is a gold mine, but you'll have to dig for the precious spiritual knowledge.' The Creator wants us to discover His truth. A kind of partnership exists between God and man. 'Seek, and you shall find,' said Jesus Christ. He also said, 'Ask, and it will be given to you' (Matthew 7:7).

The One who made us is more than willing to impart His wondrous truth to the privileged men and women He is calling. Through the prophet Jeremiah He tells us: 'These are the words of the LORD who made the earth, who formed and established it; the LORD is his name. *If you call to me I shall answer, and tell you great and mysterious things* of which you are still unaware' (Jeremiah 33:2-3, Revised English Bible).

John Ross Schroeder

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Further discussion of this vital subject is available by requesting our free booklets The Gospel of the Kingdom and Transforming Your Life.

Questions & Answers

Q Thank you for sending me your booklet entitled *Fundamental Beliefs*. I was intrigued by the statement on page 4 where you write, 'The Holy Spirit of God is not identified as the third person of the Trinity, but is consistently described as the power of God.' What am I to infer from this statement?

A C, Redruth, Cornwall

A The truth is that the New Testament does *not* teach the Trinity. Even liberal Bible scholars with no particular axe to grind have a strong inkling of this truth. Take *The Oxford Companion to the Bible* (1993), edited by Bruce Metzger and Michael Coogan. Its opening words under the entry 'Trinity' (pages 782-783) are very telling.

'Because the Trinity is such an important part of *later Christian doctrine*, it is striking that the term does not appear in the New Testament. Likewise, the developed concept of three coequal partners in the Godhead found in *later creedal formulations* cannot be clearly detected within the confines of the [New Testament] canon' (Oxford University Press, London & New York, 1993, emphasis added).

Some Bible translators of past ages distorted the text to try to prove the Trinity true. 1 John 5:7-8 is a case in point. It now reads in the King James or Authorised Version (KJV or AV): 'For there are three that bear record in heaven, *the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit and the water, and the blood.*' The words in

italics are simply not a part of the original New Testament manuscripts.

Nearly all Bible commentaries tell us that this is a spurious addition or gloss to the biblical text. Consider the words of *The New Bible Commentary Revised*: 'Notice that AV includes additional material at this point. But the words are clearly a gloss and are rightly excluded by RSV even from its margins' (Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1970, p. 1269). 1 John 5:7 in the Revised Standard Version (RSV) correctly renders verse 7: 'And the Spirit is the witness because the Spirit is the truth.'

The Holy Spirit is spoken of in many ways that demonstrate that it is not a divine person. For example, it is referred to as a gift (Acts 2:38; 1 Timothy 4:14). We are told that the Holy Spirit can be quenched (1 Thessalonians 5:19), that it can be poured out (Acts 2:17), and that we are baptised with it (Matthew 3:11). The Holy Spirit must be stirred up within us (2 Timothy 1:6), and it also renews us (Titus 3:5). These are certainly *not* attributes of a person.

In contrast to God the Father and Jesus Christ, who are consistently compared to human beings in their form and shape, the Holy Spirit is just as consistently represented in a completely different manner.

It is described as appearing like 'tongues of fire' (Acts 2:3), and Christ also compared the Holy Spirit to 'living waters' (John 7:37-39).

If God were a Trinity, surely the apostle Paul, who recorded many of the theological underpinnings of the early Church, would have comprehended and taught this

understanding. Yet we find no such concept in His writings.

Paul's standard greeting in his letters to the churches, as well as to individuals, is 'Grace to you and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ'. There is no mention of the Holy Spirit.

This same greeting, with only minor variations, appears in every epistle that bears Paul's name: Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:3; 2 Corinthians 1:2, etc. The Holy Spirit is *always* left out of these greetings – an unbelievable oversight if it were indeed a person coequal with God and Christ.

Paul clearly states that 'there is one God, the Father...and one Lord Jesus Christ' (1 Corinthians 8:6). He makes no mention of the Holy Spirit as a divine person.

Neither did Jesus Christ speak of the Holy Spirit as a divine third person; instead He spoke in numerous passages only of the relationship between Himself and God the Father (Matthew 26:39; Mark 13:32; 15:34; John 5:18, 22, etc.).

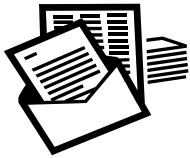
Clearly the Holy Spirit is the divine power and pervasive influence of God – and according to the Bible, *not* part of a Trinity.

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Letters From Our Readers

Prophetic events in Central Europe

The May/June issue of *The Good News* certainly exemplified this exciting heating up in the power of Christ's appeal to readers to wake up and realise the proof of God's prophetic ability. Events are now unfolding which He graphically described thousands of years in advance. He urges us all to repent while we yet have a diminishing window of opportunity in time. You can almost hear the ominous ticking of the end-time clock become louder as political leaders engage in frenzied lobbying and pressuring to push forward the preparation of the most powerful, monstrous military machine ever yet devised by the minds of men – obsessed with a futile belief in their own ability to solve world problems.

N J, North Wales

Now broadcasting to Northern Ireland

Just a quick note to say that we have already had many positive calls and comments to our station *Gospel 846 am* about your programmes last weekend. And our audiences love your promos too.

S M, Northern Ireland

- Please see our radio log on page 3 for details of *The World Tomorrow*.

The British and European Supplement

I am a military observer for the United Nations Mission of Observers in Prevlaka at Croatia. For the first time I got the British and European Supplement of *The Good News*. I am highly impressed and delighted with the standard of your *Good News*. Normally religious matter is

a little tricky and clumsy to the general public. However, your magazines publish these religious matters in a clear and understanding way. Your ways of presentation have created an incredible desire to read more and more.

Lt Cdr M R, Croatia

Thank you for the copy of the March/April *Good News* magazine, in particular the British and European Supplement. I would very much like further information and the opportunity to study the Bible through your *Bible Study Course*. I became a Christian five years ago and find I am continually searching for answers, information and direction. *Mrs M J L, Hants*

Does God Exist?

On the cover of your magazine you subtitle it 'A Magazine of Understanding'. You then go on – on the back page – to question the faith of others, using such phrases as 'ancient fertility goddess' and 'false gods'. I interpret 'understanding' to mean a respect for other people's beliefs and preferences as long as they do no harm. You do not seem to use the word in the same way. Will you please provide me with conclusive evidence that your God exists?

D S, Devon

- Our free booklet *Holidays or Holy Days? shows that the erroneous concepts of ancient fertility goddesses and false gods have done immeasurable harm to mankind. Also our two free brochures entitled Life's Ultimate Question: Does God Exist? and Creation or Evolution: Does It Really Matter What You Believe? have both been mailed to you.*

Please could you send us a copy of *Does God Exist?* We felt it would be a help to our 13-year-old son as well as us.

Mr & Mrs C J S, Southampton

Reader from Sweden

My intention when I saw your advertisement in the January *Reader's Digest* was to improve my English. But likewise I seek to understand the contents. Please send me the next copy of *The Good News*. *L K, Sweden*

Seeks spiritual help

Since I moved to England a year ago my relationship with God really has gone from strength to strength. Discovering your magazine has had a lot to do with that development. The more I discover and learn, the more excited I get. The only problem is I've got no one to share that excitement with. Nobody wants to hear it. I can't understand why no one wants to get to know God. It's so sad. I really feel like I'm a sheep among wolves, not that I'm scared, because I've got the power of God on my side. I need to find a study group or something. *J B, Gosforth*

- *Jesus Christ said: 'Do not fear, little flock, for it's your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom' (Luke 12:32). There are always at least a few people who are interested in the things of God. Scripture calls them the firstfruits. One thing that might help is to enrol in the free Bible Study Course. But we fully understand and empathize with your need to fellowship with others. Please see the conclusion of the article on page 4 about the Isle of Man.*