

The 2000-Year-Old Church Jesus Built: *Then and Now*

A pervasive, clever counterfeit of the New Testament Church has taken centre stage. Within it, man-made traditions and pagan concepts abound – none of which were found in the first-century Church. Rather, the latter's beliefs and practices were based on the Hebrew Scriptures, the teachings of Jesus Christ and the inspired writings of His apostles. That Church has survived through the centuries.

After the early Church that Christ built, a rival religious organisation soon emerged, and with the passing of time established itself with a belief system that was at variance with that of the Bible.

It created its own dogma and was willing to accept modes of worship from non-Jewish and non-Christian sources. As such, it became a clever forgery of the true New Testament Church.

Early in the 4th century, the Roman emperor Constantine sanctioned the Roman Church as the official church throughout his empire. As the centuries rolled by, it set itself against those who refused to accept its dogma, confronting those who adhered to the Judaeo-Christian Bible rather than the dictates of the Roman Church.

Its pervasive influence spread all over Europe and beyond. Freedom of religion was not allowed. Religious material was confined to what it published. It forbade the translating of the Bible into the common language of the

people. Nor could the Latin Bible be read except by privileged members of the Roman Church.

Enter the Protestant Reformation

The Protestant Reformation in the 16th century changed all that. *Or did it really?* It's true that Bible reading was encouraged after centuries of suppression. And in due time it could be translated into the language of the indigenous people. Only by studying the Bible could the Roman Church be challenged – to see whether there was any biblical basis to its doctrines and practices.

God's Word then became the focus of the scholars' studies to find out what the Bible really said. It soon became clear that much of what that church taught had no biblical basis. As a consequence, the pope was no longer seen as the 'vicar of Christ on earth'.

The Virgin Mary was no longer worshipped, nor Catholic saints venerated by Protestants. Purgatory, the wait-

ing station for salvation, was no longer taught.

The Roman Sunday or biblical Sabbath?

But as a weekly rest day, most Protestants retained Sunday rather than the biblical Sabbath as the proper day of worship – in spite of the fact that the seventh-day Sabbath was changed to Sunday only by the authority of the Catholic Church. There is no biblical basis for observing the first day of the week as a weekly rest day. (For the Bible evidence, ask for our free booklet *Sunset to Sunset: God's Sabbath Rest.*)

This was also true of the yearly religious festivals of Christmas and Easter, both of which were brought into the Christian calendar by the Roman Church. These two festivals are not even mentioned in the Greek New Testament, the language in which it was written. (The King James Version mentions Easter in Acts 12:4, but this is a gross mistranslation, because the original Greek term is *pascha*, meaning

the Passover. The New King James Version and other modern versions correctly render it Passover.)

Celebrating the birth of Jesus on Christmas was introduced into the church calendar as late as the mid-fourth century, and Easter was substituted for the biblical Passover in the second century by Pope Victor I (AD 189-198).

The Quartodeciman Controversy

Earlier, Pope Sixtus I had initiated observing an earlier version of Easter. But the churches in Asia Minor had long kept the Christian Passover (1 Corinthians 5:7) at the very time the apostles observed it on the 14th of Abib (or Nisan), the Jewish calendar's first month – regardless of the day of the week on which the Passover fell. Polycarp, a disciple of the apostle John, firmly maintained that the traditional teaching of the New Testament Church should be continually adhered to.

Eusebius, an early church historian, had written about Polycrates who wrote a letter to Pope Victor I. *'We observe the exact day; neither adding, nor taking away'* (emphasis added throughout). Then in that letter Polycrates mentions the original New Testament apostles Philip and John who 'observed the fourteenth day of the Passover [Leviticus 23:5] according to the Gospel, deviating in no respect' (Life of Constantine, chapter 24).

But faithfully following the apostles regarding the Passover date resulted in mass excommunication and being declared anathema from the church. At the time of the Reformation, most Protestants were unwilling to reject the pagan religious festivals that the church at Rome had introduced. But a small minority were willing to worship God on those special days mandated by the Judaeo-Christian Bible.

The faithful Hungarians of Transylvania

Among the faithful were a group of Hungarians in Transylvania (presently Romania) who went all the way in restoring the true teachings of the Bible. Not only did they keep the seventh-day weekly Sabbath, but they also kept the biblical Passover and the seven annual Holy Days mandated in the Bible. Very much in the minority among mainstream Protestants, they rejected observing any days or festivals that originated in pagan or non-biblical religions.

Here is what the Chief Rabbi of Budapest said in 1894 in his exhaustive work, *The Sabbatarians of Transylvania* (1588-1623, by Dr Samuel Kohn, 1894, p8). *'There were also those who went one step further and decided to restore the original and true Christianity* in that they actually accepted and practiced Jewish religious customs and statutes, which the

Conditions prevalent in Europe shortly after the Reformation allowed a remnant of the apostolic Church to flourish.

Old Testament prescribes and which original Christianity observed as binding and only later discarded.'

Yet when the New Testament apostles died, a counterfeit church established itself and produced its own religious dogma, often borrowing concepts and festivals from pagan and other religions. This practice is called syncretism.

But the Sabbath keepers in Transylvania in the late 16th century (under the leadership of Andreas Eossi) based their religious beliefs on the Bible. That included the seven biblical festivals that the apostolic New Testament Church continued to keep. They refused to lean on other religions for their worship practices and put forward the following reasons for not following in the footsteps of the Roman Church:

'All the unbiblical festivals, of this there can be no doubt, originate with the Italians. As a witness to this fact we have in the papal city the pope himself. If you ask him, he will admit that his festivals don't originate with God, but with the popes . . . The Bible he is forced to proclaim as divinely inspired, yet his festivals are not found therein. And he will not deny that Rome invented them by human decree. Yet he himself [ie, his predecessors] used to keep – and there can be no doubt – the biblical Passover as mentioned in the Bible. It was Pope Victor [as Bishop of Rome ca. AD 196] who changed the Jewish festival [Passover] into another feast' (Kohn, pp 64-65).

'Instead of the Sabbath, they keep Sunday. Passover they have altered to Easter,' are the exact words of the Transylvanian Sabbath and Holy Day keepers (Kohn, p. 91). These Sabbath and Holy Day observers rejected the non-biblical traditions of both the Roman Church and the Jews. As Samuel Kohn stated: 'Such religious customs and ordinances of the Jews which were not

found in the "Lawbook" they avoided. They celebrated, for example, only those festivals mentioned in the Pentateuch [the first five books of the Bible], and rejected all other feast and fast days of the Jews' (p 117).

The apostolic Church emerges

The suitable conditions prevalent in Europe shortly after the Reformation allowed a remnant of the apostolic Church of God to flourish. The Church in Transylvania saw that the Bible became their prime authority on doctrines and moral behaviour, rejecting pagan days that originated with other religions.

They kept neither Christmas nor Easter, but their religious calendar had the annual festivals and Holy Days in

addition to the weekly seventh-day Sabbath.

These days depict to God's Church today the basic steps in God's plan of salvation. (To understand more about these annual festivals, write for our free booklet: *God's Holy Day Plan: The Promise of Hope for All Mankind*).

Samuel Kohn found in his research that these Sabbath and Holy Day keepers also kept the biblical health laws. This is what he wrote: 'They observed the Jewish health laws, as far as they were to be found in the Bible and abstained from animals described as unclean, as well as those who had died of sickness; neither did they eat blood. They also stressed that pork was not to be eaten' (p 117). (To learn more about biblical dietary laws, ask for our free booklet *What Does the Bible Say About Unclean Meats?*)

To whom is truth revealed?

The question as to why the vast majority of the Protestants did not come to the same understanding of what God taught in His Word is addressed by the true body of Christ with the following words: 'Buried lay the old teachings of Christ . . . But to us, the least of all, the most insignificant on the earth, to us the poor and despised ones, You have revealed it' (Kohn, p 71).

This ancient Church is simply paraphrasing what the apostle Paul wrote some 1500 years earlier: 'For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called. But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things that are mighty . . . that no flesh should glory in His presence' (1 Corinthians 1:26-29; compare Matthew 11:25).

There we have one of the basic reasons why those God-called members of the true Church understand, and others

among this world's intelligentsia don't. In the following chapter Paul continues to explain: 'But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory, which none of the

Throughout the centuries God has called people to a true understanding of His Word.

rulers of this age knew . . . but God has revealed them to us through His Spirit' (1 Corinthians 2:7-8, 10).

A divine calling

Throughout the centuries God has called people to a true understanding of His Word. And He continues to call individuals into His Church today. It is God the Father who does the calling (John 6:44, 65), but He expects a posi-

tive response from those He has given a true understanding of His Word. It should never be shelved.

God's Church today bases its beliefs and practices solely on God's Word – the Bible. None of its annual festivals have been borrowed from pagan, non-biblical religions. The days and feasts it keeps have a divine origin and are defined in the Bible as

'God's feasts' (Leviticus 23:2). The true Church has not observed the weekly Sabbath on the first day, Sunday, but instead kept the seventh day set aside as a rest day at Creation (Genesis 2:2).

To understand much more, request our free booklet *The Church Jesus Built*.

Gerhard Marx

What Happens After Death?

Margaret Thatcher was the longest serving British Prime Minister of the twentieth century (from 1979 to 1990) and the only woman ever to hold this office. Her struggles to deal with recession, high unemployment and inflexible unions led to much discontent and to her reputation as the 'Iron Lady'. On the other hand, what she saw as over-interference in people's lives by the state resulted in the privatisation and modernisation of industry and boosting the free market. Her decision to embark on the Falklands War proved successful and popular.

Thus her recent death evoked celebrations among some and deep sadness among others; the former being responsible for 'death songs'; the latter pointing out that her supposedly unpopular laws had not been repealed by succeeding governments.

However history views this one individual, and whether any per-

son is considered small or great, death eventually is the fate of us all. In the end we shall stand before the judgement seat of God to give account of our lives (Romans 14:10; 2 Corinthians 5:10).

But will some be consigned to an ever burning hell fire, while others bask for eternity in heaven? Contrary to what many believe, that is not what Scripture actually teaches. To discover from your Bible the truth about the fate of the dead, please download or request our free booklets *What Happens After Death?* and *Heaven and Hell – What Does the Bible Really Teach?*



The Seventh-Day Sabbath Part of Welsh History

Fresh research shows that the biblical Sabbath was kept far more widely in Britain than previously thought – especially in the Celtic countries.

Hay-on-Wye is a mecca for obtaining second-hand books. People come from all over the world to browse for and buy books on every conceivable topic. I have been an enthusiastic visitor to this Welsh border town many times in the last 35 years.

Imagine my astonishment when I read in Bryan W Ball’s fairly recent book that ‘a small seventh-day group appears to have survived at Hay until the 1730s’ (*The Seventh-Day Men*). The existence of other historic Sabbath-keeping groups have been confirmed in Wales, along with England.

‘There is sufficient evidence to conclude that the Saturday Sabbath was well established in the Welsh Marches south of Leominster and in the neighbouring parts of Wales from the mid-seventeenth century, if not earlier, and that it persisted in that region well into the eighteenth century. The evidence pertains primarily to the counties of Monmouthshire and Herefordshire, and to the district around Hay-on-Wye’ (Bryan Ball, emphasis added throughout).

Celtic Church history

In addition noted Celtic historian Peter Bereford Ellis makes a wide-ranging statement in his book *Celt and Saxon*: ‘The Celtic Sabbath (“day of repose”) was celebrated on a Saturday, the last day of the week and Jewish holy day’ (p 120). Mr Ellis is an historian, not a theologian with an axe to grind.

Bryan W. Ball’s *The Seventh-Day Men*, mentioned above, is a comprehensive work and a compendium of fairly recent research on the seventh-day Sabbath in Wales and England. Wales is a Celtic nation and principal-ity where many early Celtic congrega-tions emphasised the Hebrew Scriptures in a way not normally done in mainstream churches today.

As churchman Leslie Hardinge carefully explained: ‘The rules of the Old Testament which shaped the theo-c-racy of Israel were followed by the Celts as a natural consequence of their view of biblical authority . . . The laws defining clean and unclean animals which might or might not be used as food [according to Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14]...as well as the pay-ment of tithes...all were thought neces-sary’ (*The Celtic Church in Britain*, p. 202).

Great respect was accorded to the Hebrew part of the Judaeo/Christian Bible, as Mr Hardinge further explained: ‘While grace was held to be vital to salvation, man also had his part to play in obeying God’s Commandments, so the Atonement procured by Christ might become effective in the Christian’s personal experience. The observance of the Sabbath of the Old Testament was a natural outgrowth of this tenet.

‘The seventh day was kept from sunset Friday until sunset on Saturday . . . There was no Sabbatizing on

Sunday during the Celtic period’ (p 202).

Keeping the Sabbath today

The United Church of God traces its recent history through seventh-day groups in the United States, particularly in New England and the Pacific Northwest, and in bygone centuries back to Great Britain and continental Europe.

Some of our readers may wonder why relatively small groups of Christians throughout the world still insist on keeping the Saturday Sabbath. What is its attraction? Why should these people go against the grain and swim upstream when the vast majority of churchgoers are apparently content to observe Sunday – a day of rest not officially sanctioned until the time of Constantine the Great in the fourth century AD?

The United Church of God has published a 64-page booklet that embraces the biblical evidence and addresses the most common questions about observing the seventh-day Sabbath. Entitled *Sunset to Sunset: God’s Sabbath Rest*, this comprehen-sive publication covers the subject from Genesis to Revelation. Please down-load or ask for a free copy in print.

*John Ross Schroeder,
Researched by the author at
the National Library of Wales
in Aberystwyth*

LOVE: The First Fruit of the Holy Spirit

The annual one-day Festival of Pentecost pictures the coming of the Holy Spirit, making the New Testament Church a profound reality. How important is this fruit of the Spirit in your life?

When God's Holy Spirit is really at work in your life, amazing things begin to happen. Your whole existence blossoms and bears beautiful fruit. The most wonderful fruit of all is the giving and receiving of true love.

People long to love and be loved. Consider the countless love stories, songs and poems that have been written. Romanticists sing the praises of love, as in the song 'Love Is a Many-Splendored Thing.' It seems the world is in love with love, but most often not the kind of love that flows from God Himself.

The love of God

The word *love* can mean many things, as demonstrated by numerous dictionary definitions. We find many kinds of love in the Bible as well. Love usually embraces strong feelings that are important. God wants us to really feel love for Him and for others. Yet our Creator also wants us to experience an even greater love that transcends human emotions.

Many people go through life receiving very little human love. However, God's plan is for every person to eventually experience His love so fully that each one can honestly say, 'My cup runneth over with love.'

Ironically, when people are desperately trying to understand the 'mystery of love,' they seldom read the greatest book ever written about relationships, the Holy Bible. If you study it, you will learn far more about love than we can

cover in this article.

The Bible reveals how we can experience love for God and love for people that far exceeds mere human capability. This highest and purest form is God's divine love that He offers to share with us.

In fact, love summarises and epitomises the ultimate nature of God. 'He who does not love does not know God, for God is love' (1 John 4:8, emphasis added throughout).

God wants to transform us so that our character is defined by love. Our Creator's desire is to share everything with others in His divine family. So He is creating 'sons and daughters' for His expanding family (2 Corinthians 6:18).

Even before creation, God the Father and the One who became Jesus Christ knew that to transform human beings spiritually and bring them into the Kingdom of God, Christ would have to sacrifice His life for humanity's sins (Hebrews 10:12; Revelation 13:8). 'For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life' (John 3:16). That greatest-ever demonstration of godly love was the ultimate sacrifice God and Christ made for us.

A new love that Jesus Christ taught

What was new about the love Jesus Christ taught? The two 'great commandments' Jesus emphasised were not new in every sense. Contrary to what many think, the Old Testament is

full of teachings about love. But Christ taught a whole new level of love and set a never-before-seen example.

A man asked Him which was 'the great commandment in the law' (Matthew 22:36). Jesus answered: 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind' (verse 37). Jesus quoted from Deuteronomy 6:4-9.

Then He went beyond what was asked, saying: 'And the second is like it: "You shall love your neighbour as yourself"' (Matthew 22:39). Christ quoted Leviticus 19:18, coupling it with Deuteronomy 6:5. He raised 'Love your neighbour' to a much higher level of importance.

Christ also expanded the concept of 'Who is my neighbour?' (Luke 10:29). The parable of the Good Samaritan shows that God wants us to regard everyone as a 'neighbour.' We are to be neighbourly to all people, regardless of race, nationality or social class (verses 30-37).

Nowhere does the Old Testament say, 'Hate your enemy,' yet that saying had become traditional thinking by Jesus' day (Matthew 5:43). Christ then shocked everyone by saying the opposite: 'But I say to you, *love your enemies*, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you' (verse 44). This was a revolutionary 'hard saying,' completely contrary to human nature.

The Golden Rule

Love has more to do with what we

do than what we think or feel. For example, consider the Golden Rule (Matthew 7:12), usually paraphrased as ‘Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.’ Works can be more important than words. What we do is an extremely important part of how we treat people (James 2:22-26).

This emphasis on action is highlighted by Jesus’ choice of Greek words. Usually Christ used the Greek word *agape* for love, which implies determined effort to show love to God and man.

Understanding the word *hate* helps us to comprehend the meaning of love. Both usually emphasise action. Treating someone badly is equated with hate and treating someone well is equated with love. Therefore, when Jesus said, ‘Love one another,’ He meant for us to show love when it is not easy – even when the other person is not appreciative or responsive. When Paul wrote, ‘Husbands, love your wives’ (Ephesians 5:25), He meant that we should treat our wives lovingly all the time, even when we don’t feel like it.

Christ’s perfect example of love

Christ said: ‘A new command I give you: Love one another.’ (John 13:34, NIV).

Christ’s teachings about love set the highest standards ever (Luke 6:27-38). And He backed them up with His perfect example, showing a love greater than the world had ever seen.

Consider how Christ was willing to sacrifice His heavenly glory to be incarnated as a mere human being (Philippians 2:5-11).

He continually ‘went about doing good’ as a humble servant – teaching, encouraging, healing the sick, comforting the oppressed (Acts 10:38; Matthew 8:1-17). He ‘did not come to be served, but to serve’ (Matthew 20:28).

Christ said: ‘Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s

life for his friends’ (John 15:13).

During His humanity He laid down His time and energy continually, and then afterwards laid down His very life for everyone (John 12:32). Christ was willing to go through the most terrible suffering and death – for each and every one of us. His teachings and example show that *godly love entails a deep outgoing concern* for and generous giving to others. It is a continual willingness to assist others. It is the opposite of selfishness and self-centredness.

Learn to love as God does

We can learn how to love by following the Bible’s examples, teachings and laws. ‘*For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments.* And His commandments are not burdensome’ (1 John 5:3). God showed His love to us by giving us His perfect laws. We show our love for God by obeying those laws.

We can also learn godly love by being in fellowship with other believers in God’s Church, showing a special love for each other (1 John 3:14-18).

Christ made it clear that we show our love for God by acts of mercy and service to His other children. He said: ‘Inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, *you did it to Me*’ (Matthew 25:4).

Love as the first fruit of God’s Spirit

Our human efforts alone can never consistently produce godly love. Yet people can have divine love toward God and others *if they have God’s Spirit*. The apostle Paul called it ‘the love that comes from the Holy Spirit’ (Romans 15:30, Contemporary English Version). God’s Spirit produces power, love and a sound mind (2 Timothy 1:7).

To the Galatians Paul wrote that: ‘the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering [patient endurance], kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gen-

tleness, self-control’ (Galatians 5:22-23). Love tops the list, encompassing all the other fruits of the Spirit that follow.

The key scriptural passage showing us how to attain God’s Spirit is Acts 2:38: ‘Repent, and let every one of you be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission [forgiveness] of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.’

At conversion we begin with a little love, but God leads us to keep growing in love.

God offers us a continual supply of His limitless love by His Holy Spirit. He fills our wells so that we have plenty to give to thirsty people. Christ’s love is like a river that will flow through us (John 7:38).

The more you give love, the more you will have. The more you love others, the more you will be loved.

Love in a world marked by hate

At the time of the end Christians would have to live in a world of far too much hatred (see Romans 1:28-32; 2 Timothy 3:1-7).

Yet Christians can swim upstream against this world’s influence. Christ said that He had overcome the world. So each true Christian can be a light of love in the midst of spiritual darkness. All true love ultimately comes from God: ‘We love Him because He first loved us’ (1 John 4:19).

God’s calling is like a sincere marriage proposal. It is up to us to respond to this calling by humbly submitting and committing ourselves to Christ. If we do, God will fill us with His love. When God’s people are led by His Holy Spirit, it produces abundant spiritual fruit, the first of which is love (Romans 8:14; 1 Corinthians 13:4-8).

*Don Hooser, elder,
Article adapted from
The Good News, 2008*



We can comprehend Genesis 1:26 much better in the light of some of the writings of the apostle John. He begins his gospel of Jesus Christ by stating: ‘In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning

with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made’ (John 1:1-3). Later in his first epistle, John adds to our understanding: ‘That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched – this we proclaim concerning the Word of life’ (1 John 1:1, NIV). Here Jesus Christ, being that same ‘Word’ of John’s Gospel account, is called ‘the Word of life.’

Q Can you please explain who the ‘Us’ refers to in Genesis 1:26?

M T, Limerick, Ireland

A God reveals Himself through His Word. The Creator wants men and women to understand Him as He reveals Himself in the Holy Scriptures. It’s important that we carefully consider this truth.

In the Bible’s first book we find a vital point regarding God’s nature. Genesis 1 records many creative acts of God before He created mankind. But notice verse 26: ‘Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness.”’

Nowhere in the previous verses of Genesis did God use this phrase, ‘Let Us . . .’ Why does Genesis now use this plural expression? Why have Bible translators down through the centuries understood that the plural was necessary in this verse?

Who is the *Us* mentioned here, and why is the plural *Our* also used twice in this sentence? Throughout Genesis one the Hebrew word translated ‘God’ is *Elohim*, a plural noun denoting more than one entity. Why did our Creator purposefully use these plural expressions? Is God more than one person? Who and what is God? How can we understand?

with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made’ (John 1:1-3).

If you are with someone, then you are other than and distinct from that person. John clearly describes two divine beings in this passage.

In one sense we could refer to John 1:1 as the real beginning of the Bible.

Is God more than one person? Who and what is God? How can we understand?

It describes the nature of God as Creator even before the beginning depicted in Genesis 1:1. As *The New Bible Commentary: Revised* states, ‘John’s distinctive contribution is to show that before the Creation the Word existed’ (1970, p. 930).

Consider carefully the context of this crucial chapter of John’s gospel. Verse 14 explains exactly who this Word actually became: ‘And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.’ The Word was conceived in the flesh as a physical human being – Jesus Christ. Although fully human, Christ perfectly reflected God’s divine character.

Here, then, we have two great Personages, two uncreated, eternal beings – God the Father and the Word, both divine – presiding over the cre-

ation. As the late British theologian F F Bruce commented on the opening passages of the Gospel of John: ‘The Personal Word is uncreated, not only enjoying the divine companionship, but sharing the divine essence’ (*The Message of the New Testament*, 1972, p. 105). This Word was and is God along with the Father.

John wrote that the Word, who was with God from the beginning, lived among them in the human flesh.

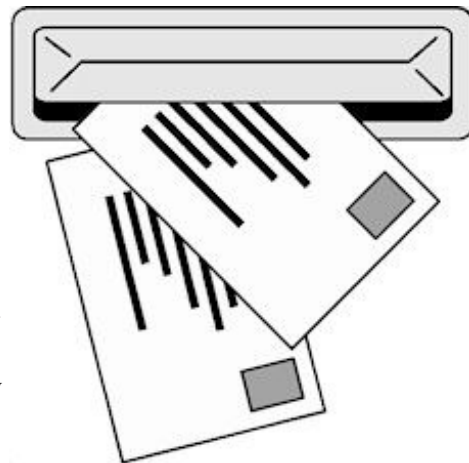
Although He was born a physical human being, the disciples actually saw, touched, conversed with and listened to the One who was and is a member of the divine family

(Hebrews 13:8).

John continues: ‘The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us’ (verse 2, NIV). ‘The Word of life’ in 1 John 1:1 is called ‘the eternal life’ in verse 2. John goes on to say: ‘We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ’ (verse 3, NIV). The Holy Scriptures reveal that God the Father and Jesus Christ form a divine family.

So the *Us* in Genesis 1:26 refers to God the Father and to His Son Jesus Christ. To understand more about the Godhead, request our free booklets *Jesus Christ: The Real Story* and *Who Is God?*

Letters from our readers



The Good News

The Good News is truly a help in these times – it gives answers I cannot find anywhere else. Fine writers and first-class articles bring hope of Jesus' return in glory, hopefully very soon!

M L W, Clacton-on-Sea

Your articles in *The Good News* together with my Bible studies are the only things that give me hope in this corrupt world in which we live.

Mr V H T, Langport

Please renew my subscription. May I say that there are many issues covered in *The Good News* that would not be mentioned from the pulpit – and in particular anything to do with Israel? Thank you for your commitment and investment.

J W, Newport, South Wales

Your magazine always gives food for thought. I struggle with some of your doctrine, but also get biblical and spiritual nourishment from many of your articles.

S S, Gillingham

• *We appreciate your balanced attitude and you can always do what the Bereans did: 'They received the word with all readiness and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so' (Acts 17:11).*

Booklets helpful to readers

I so look forward to receiving your booklets and I learn so much from them. They explain the Scriptures very clearly in a way that I can relate and remember them. Thank you for keeping up the valuable work which is needed by many – a very worthy mission in spreading His word.

Miss E W, Romford

Thank you for the production of material of such a consistently high standard. I am, thanks to you, building up a valuable resource library to share with others and open up the Kingdom.

S M, York

Thank you for the booklets. I am building up a good collection to read and re-read.

Mrs M K, Londonderry

I have requested the booklet *God's Holy Day Plan*. Please explain exactly what one has to do on each of these annual Holy Days.

H K, Ashford

• *The basic information is in the last chapter of God's Holy Day Plan: The Promise of Hope for All Mankind.*

Bible Study Course

I am so elated and joyous in the readings of these booklets. Studying the *Bible Study Course* has enlightened and given me a deeper understanding

of God's word. These awesome powerful tools have also given me knowledge I really didn't know and was not aware of. Amazing!

D S M, Hounslow

I have come to the end of the *Bible Study Course* and I would like to thank the ministry and staff for providing this important opportunity to be taught the truth of God's Word in a way that is easy to understand. I recommend it to anyone who is sincerely seeking to know God and His will for their lives.

C M, Leighlinbridge, Ireland

Thank you for sending me Lesson 12 of the *Bible Study Course* which arrived in this morning's post. I live in County Cork, S Ireland. I will return the form with a request for some literature soon.

D O M, County Cork, Ireland

Helping spread the Gospel

Please accept my tithe cheque to help the United Church of God to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom of God. Many thanks.

P C, London

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