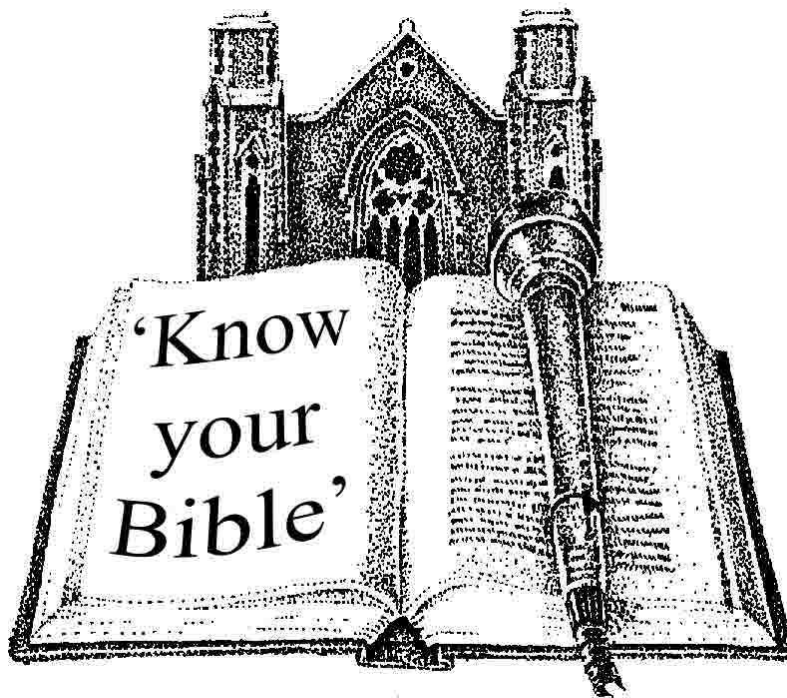


Living for Christ - today!

Study Notes by Stuart Olyott



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Living for Christ - today!

1. The world we live in

- away with nostalgia! - we are called to live for Christ **here** and **now**!

Today's world

- **Christian values no longer hold whole nations together. Why is this?**
- **materialism has become rampant.**
- **people live only for the present.**
- **they do not accept there is any absolute standard of right and wrong:**
 - public opinion decides what is 'right' - laws simply enshrine this (although the human conscience knows better than this).
 - 'law', then, is subject to constant change.
 - contradiction and tension become part of everyday life.
 - honesty and morality are disappearing - and where will this lead?
- **they believe the universe makes sense without God.**
 - evolution teaches that everything has arrived at its present form by accident.
 - this theory is against the evidence.
 - so God is shut out from all attempts to explain how life began and what it means.
 - the universe is believed to be just matter in motion - so what is there to do except to live for the present moment?
- **many people are actively engaged in breaking down biblical values.**
 - humanists believe all will be well as long as there is no place for God.
 - Christian values are openly attacked and scorned.
 - Mr and Mrs Average are ready prey for falsehoods because they have few, if any, convictions of their own.
 - there is nothing to aim for, nothing to live by.
 - 'what you want' is what matters - people are slaves to that idea.

Today's Christians

- most people around them do not believe, so everywhere we see Christians watering down their faith.
- they do not believe that God is absolutely sovereign. Creator and Controller of all.
- they do not believe in God's holiness, and so in His certain judgement.
- they do not believe that the message of the Cross is the most glorious news of all, meeting all human needs, well able to triumph today.
- they are generally weak, with little to say to today's world.

- **it is time to contemplate Jude 1:20-23:**

1. We are to be different, not similar ("But you, beloved ...").
2. We are to be stronger, not weaker ("...building yourselves up on your most holy faith...").
3. We are to be prayerful, not prayer less. ("praying in the Holy Spirit"),
4. We are to be obedient, not disobedient ("keep yourselves in the love of God": see John 14:21).
5. We are to be heavenly-minded, not earthly-minded ("looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life").
6. We are to advance, not retreat ("And on some have compassion, making a distinction; but others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment defiled by the flesh"),

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2. Mr Today's religion

- although he may not use the term, Mr Today's religion is humanism.
- humanism behaves as if the only thing that existed was the material universe - man is on his own; this life is all there is; death ends everything as far as we are concerned.
- the French Revolution brought this into Europe, and liberalism brought it into the churches.

Humanism is untrue

- it can survive only by declaring the Lord Jesus Christ mad or bad. His resurrection a myth, our experience of God an illusion.
- it has to close its eyes to the evidence.

Humanism is illogical

- for example:-
 1. it believes the human eye is an evolutionary accident - and what cannot be seen by that eye cannot be held to exist!
 2. it scorns faith and says that it is by observation that we learn about reality - and yet such observation is based on **believing** that what we see corresponds to reality!
And science makes general conclusions from a limited number of instances - it proceeds by **believing** that what is true of a few things is universally true.
 3. it says that man is responsible for his own life, and that of others but who to, in a purposeless universe where there are no standards except your own opinion?

Humanism is dangerous

- it can survive only where Christianity has been strong, and eventually becomes militant atheistical materialism, with all that means.
- it leads to tyranny - for example, criminals are not to be punished in proportion to what they deserve, but are 'sick' people who must undergo remedial treatment until they get 'better'.
- on a humanistic basis, what is there to stop a government eliminating people thought to be in the way - Jews, the weak, elderly, ill, deformed, mentally deficient, unborn...?
- if we are on our own, and this life is all, why not give ourselves to undisguised selfishness?

Humanism is smug

- it is rather pleased with itself, breathing a superior air.
- it tells you to fashion your life 'as a work of art' - but we cannot choose most events in our lives: accidents, illness, loss of skills, handicaps, poverty, old age.
- the humanist says we must "choose to **live**" - which is simplistic.

Humanism is unworkable

- it talks a lot about 'balance' and 'prudence' - you must not overdo it.
- it scorns self-denial, loving others as yourself, and all self-sacrifice - you cease to exist if you give your life for others, it says, and therefore you cannot live 'as a work of art'.
- it tells you to value yourself highly, to be self-regarding - but how can a society like that exist?
- in addition, humanism has no sense of thanksgiving, of forgiveness, of prayer, because there is no God outside of ourselves.

Humanism is hope-less

- your life has no ultimate purpose: you have no future.
- things are what they are by accident.
- all enjoyment, physical and emotional, comes ultimately through the body and, unfortunately, this must die and decay.
- this life is all there is - enjoy it while you can.

Humanism is transitional

- it is a half-way house to something else.
- when all that reflects Christianity in our society has gone, what then?
- humanism will be unable to hold back the floods of selfishness, greed, cruelty and tyranny which are pent up in the human heart.
- we shall see the bankruptcy of its belief that human nature can be refined and improved without any help from Outside.
- then either the tyranny of a dictator or the selfishness of a group will dominate the scene: humanism is the certain road to misery.

It is time to contemplate Matthew 9:35-38

1. we should see people as they really are, not as they appear to be.
2. we should pity them, not envy them (The gospel is so wonderful ;).
3. we should live and proclaim the Word among them, not ignore them.
4. we should pray for more labourers, not be content with the present.

Living for Christ - today:

3 Here we stand. We can do no other.

"Unless I am convicted of error by the testimony of Scripture or by manifest reasoning... I stand convicted by the Scriptures, to which I have appealed, and my conscience is taken captive by God's Word, I cannot and will not recant anything, for to act against our conscience is neither safe for us, nor open to us. On this I take my stand. I can do no other. God help me. Amen. [Martin Luther: Diet of Worms: 18th April 1521].

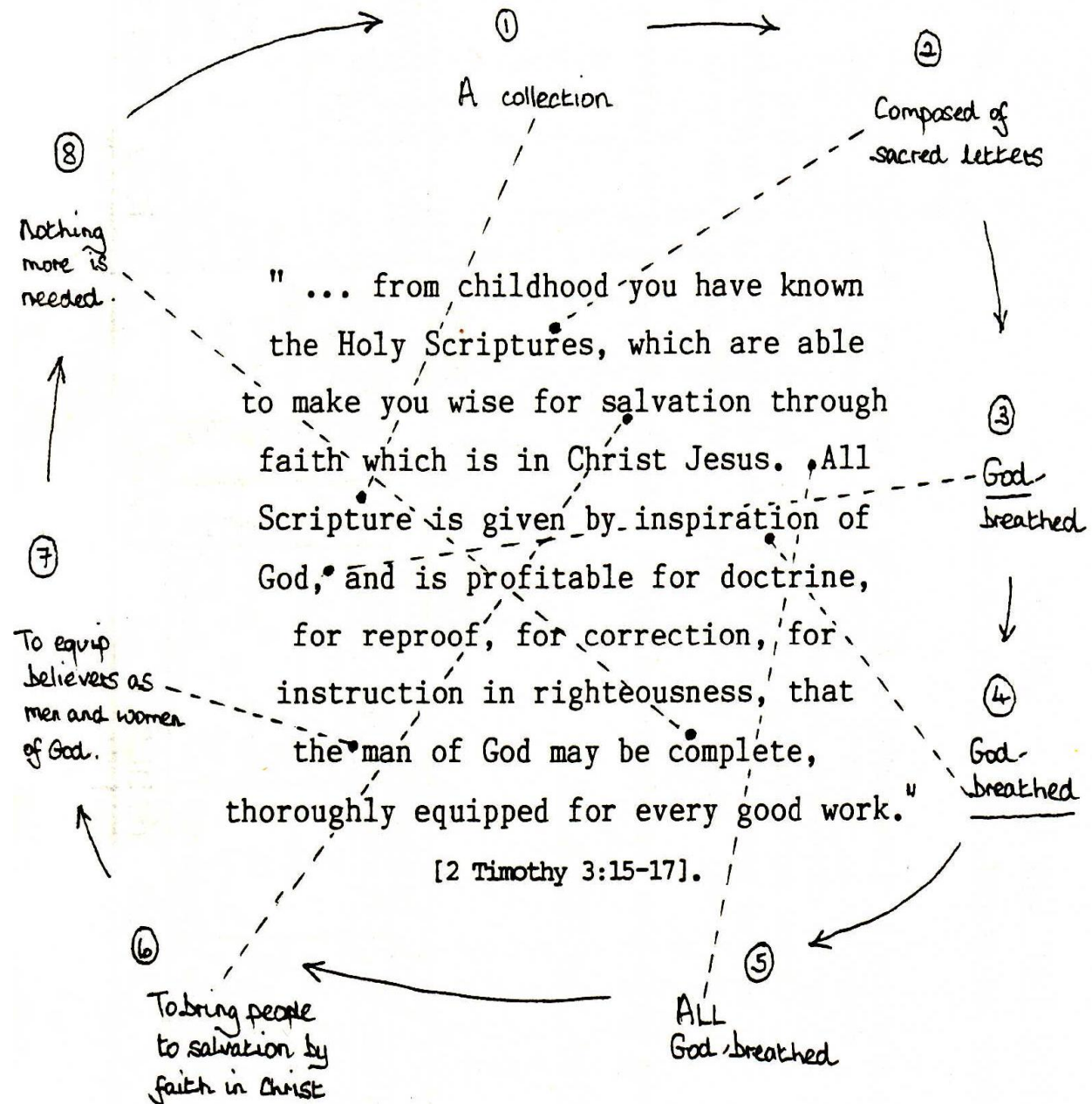
- these words also explain why we cannot adopt the humanism which surrounds us today.

1. What the Bible IS

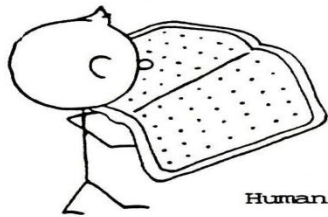
THE BIBLE AS A WHOLE

Old Testament					New Testament					
History 17		Poetry 5	Prophecy 17		O · T · L e e d s t o t h e	N · T · S t a r t s f r o m t h e	History 5	Pedagogy 21		Prophecy 1
5 <u>LAW</u> Genesis to Deuteron omy	12 <u>EXECUTIVE</u> Joshua to Esther	Job to Song of Solomon	5 <u>MAJOR</u> Isaiah to Daniel	12 <u>MINOR</u> Hosea to Malachi			Gospels and Acts	14 <u>PAULINE</u> <u>EPISTLES</u> Romans to Hebrews	7 <u>GENERAL</u> <u>EPISTLES</u> James to Jude	The Revelation
3600 Years							400Years		100 Years	

2. What the Bible says about its self.



3. Different views of the Bible



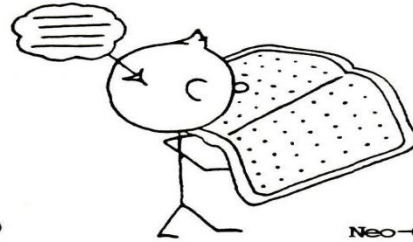
Humanism



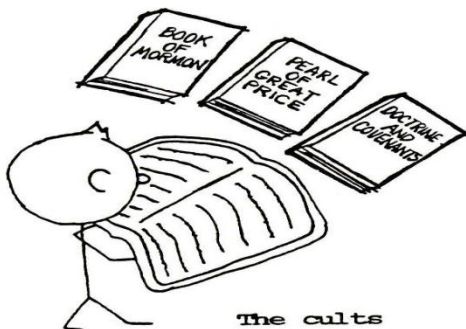
Roman Catholicism



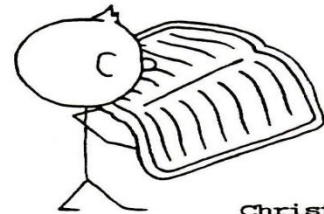
Liberalism ("Modernism")



Neo-Orthodoxy



The cults



Christian

Humanism = It's just an **ordinary book** not special to him.

Roman Catholicism = It's **all** Gods Word, **But** the RC church has to interpret and explains it to you. e.g. the Church comes between you and the Bible.

Liberalism ("Modernism") = He thinks **some bits** of it are the word of God and some bits are not Gods Word. To him his own reason is more important than what Gods Word says for he uses his own reason to decide what is or is not Gods Word.

Neo-Orthodoxy = When a **verse strikes him** that's Gods Word at that moment and if it don't strike you it is not Gods Word to you.
"But God speaks through all the Verse even the ones you don't hear Him speak".

The cults = Gods Word **plus** other books which are important to him and tell him how to interpret the Bible (This man is a Mormon he sees the Bible through his other books. such as the "Book Of Mormon" or "Pearl Of Great Price" or "Doctrine and Covenants")

Christian = All Scripture is Gods book and we hear God speak through **every word**.

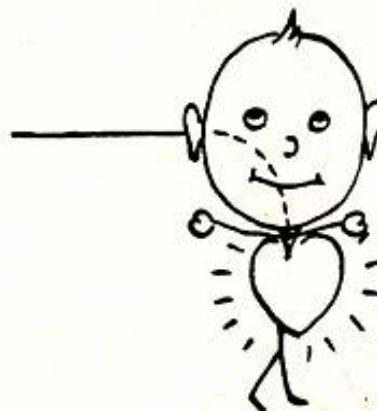
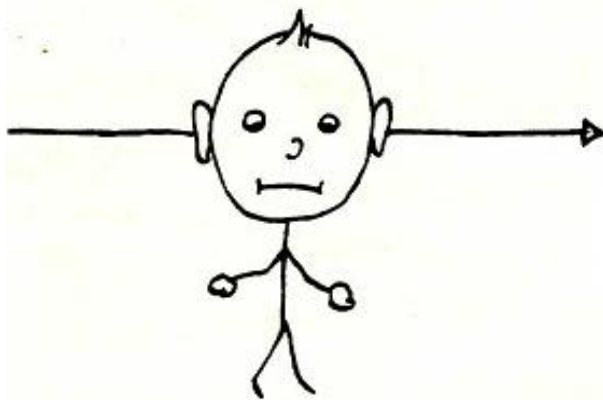
5. How we come to believe that the Bible is God's Word



"That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again'" [John 3:6-7].

" ... born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides for ever"
[1 Peter 1:23].

"The entrance of your words gives light;
It gives understanding to the simple."
[Psalm 119:130].



"The natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned ... But God has revealed them to us through his Spirit" [1 Cor.2:14,10].

Living for Christ - today!

4. Doing your own thing?

- we are called to live for Christ **here** and **now**!
- most people around us are humanists (no God: no life but this one: no right and wrong), but we cannot be like them, for we see that the Bible is God's Word.

Authority and honour - how Mr Today ticks

- God is an irrelevance: there is no such thing as a relationship with Him: there is therefore no such thing as submitting to Him and honouring Him.
- you are your own independent authority: no one has the **right** to tell you what to do, by virtue of a relationship he has with you.
- authority depends on being able to add a 'because plus', e.g. :
 - obey your teacher, not on the grounds that he **is** a teacher, but **because** he's a good one.
 - do what your parents say **because** they provide for you.
 - respect the government **because** it's doing well right now.
- you are **free** to do your own thing & under no obligation to obey anybody.
- in-built authority does not exist, for we are all **equal**.
- at times we must all submit to each other, for we are **brothers**.
- "Liberty! Equality! Fraternity!"

Authority and honour - what God's Word teaches

- God has created us in relationships.
- in each relationship somebody is responsible for others' well-being.
- these others have the obligation to recognise his authority and to submit to him.
- the Bible does not countenance:-
 - authoritarianism: exercising authority, but not with others' benefit in mind.
 - paternalism: exercising authority, yet putting the relationship in danger.
 - tyranny: exercising authority in an area not open to you.

Some examples:-

- (1) **God** has authority over us as Creator and Sustainer (and Redeemer): **we** respond with reverence, honour, submission and love.
We also submit to God's delegated authority in the following areas, knowing that we may be punished if we don't.
 - (2) **The family**: the husband must provide and care for his wife (Ephesians 5:25 -33) who must submit to him (Ephesians 5:22-24, 1 Peter 3:6). Parents care and provide for their children, who must obey them (Ephesians 6:1-4). As authority exists only where there is responsibility, this relationship changes as the children grow older.
 - (3) **The state**: the government is to advance the welfare of its citizens, maintaining justice and righteousness by the rule of law (Romans 13:1-7. 1 Peter 2:13-14) and producing conditions favourable to the spread and progress of godliness (1 Timothy 2:2). Citizens are to submit to government and to honour all who hold public office. Christians are to pray for all in authority (1 Timothy 2:1-2).
 - (4) **The church**: Christ's ministers have the care and oversight of His flock (Acts 20:28, 1 Peter 5:1-4), which is to esteem, love and obey them (1 Thessalonians 5:13, Hebrews 13:17).
- the same principles apply to the other relationships (teacher/pupil, employer/employee ...) in which God has placed us.
 - in practice, the biblical Christian submits to God-given authority on the sole grounds that that authority has spoken, without **any** "because plus".

Living for Christ - today!

5. Hanging and flogging?

- we are called to uphold the teachings of God's Word in today's society.
- this is true in the realm of **punishment**.

[1] Who may punish?

- God (Genesis 18:25. Psalms 96:13. Ecclesiastes 12:14, Romans 2:6, 16) and those delegated
- by Him (Romans 13:1).
- in the family, this is the father (Proverbs 3:12, Hebrews 12:7, 9).
- in the church, this is the leaders and gathered church (1 Corinthians 5:4-5.12).
- in the world, this is the state (Romans 13:1-7).
- no individual, as such, may take the law into his own hands.
- God's Word forbids vengeance and revenge (Leviticus 19:18, Proverbs 24:28-29, Matthew 5:38-42, Luke 9:51-56, Romans 12:17, 19).

[2] On what grounds?

- in God's Word, punishment is based on the concept of **justice** (Psalms 62:12, Proverbs 24:12).
- justice treats people as people.
- men and women have rights - rights which are due to them.
- each person is to receive his due - reward, or punishment (Romans 2:1-16).
- crime is disobedience to lawful authority.
- justice asks, "What does this crime **deserve**?"
- not even mercy or forgiveness can be shown until this is answered.
- punishment, then, is **retributive**: it is inflicted, primarily, not for the benefit of the criminal (cure: remedy), nor for the benefit of society (deterrent: public safety), but because justice indicates that the crime **deserves** punishment.
- the secondary questions (in brackets above) can be dealt with only when the primary question has been answered (e.g. Deuteronomy 17:13, 19:20).
- those who punish are instruments of God's anger against wrong (Romans 13:4).
- no-one has the right to act unless punishment is **deserved**.

- how different this is from many modern views!
- humanitarian ideas are basically cruel:
 - punishment is given on the grounds of deterrent or remedy.
 - people are treated in the way the **expert** thinks will be best for themselves or society.
 - you don't ask if the punishment is **fair**; only if it **effective**.
 - the idea of **desert** is gone.
 - in theory you might be arrested and subjected to 'curative' treatment whether you deserved it or not: and you might be kept locked up until you were 'cured' or no longer a 'threat'.
 - and what if grossly cruel punishments were found to be better deterrents? (Crucifixion ;). This was how it was until the gospel triumphed in the West.
- the Bible teaches that you must inflict upon the criminal what he
- **deserves** - but only that! - no more! (Exodus 21:23-25, Deuteronomy 19:21).

[3] What may they inflict?

- Fathers are to inflict verbal reproof and physical chastisement - according to what the child **deserves** (Proverbs 22:6, 15, Hebrews 12:5).
- Churches are to admonish (1 Thessalonians 5:12), suspend (2 Thessalonians 3:6) or excommunicate (1 Corinthians 5:4-5) - according to what the wandering person **deserves**.
- States are to exact restitution (Exodus 22:1-4, Proverbs 6:30-31), physical chastisement (Deuteronomy 25:2, Acts 16:37) or death (Genesis 9:5-6, Deuteronomy 21:22, Acts 25:11, Romans 13:4) - according to what the criminal **deserves**.
- when you understood this, you can also understand the gospel.
 - the cross is the ultimate punishment for sin and, at the same time, the decisive act of forgiveness.

Living for Christ - today:

6. Race

- this message is not about 'immigration', 'nation' or 'culture'.
- it is about race.

Racial prejudice

- this is still widespread in this country, especially against men and women who are black.
 - some legislation has been discriminatory.
 - there is very often discrimination in housing, jobs, etc...
 - black people are often discussed as if they were inferior.
 - people believe all sorts of fantasies about black people.
- many Christians are not exempt from racial prejudice.
 - some of the things we have already said apply to them.
 - many never give a thought to the social injustices in our land.
 - some have absorbed worldly attitudes, and are uneasy about black neighbours, black superiors; and oppose inter-racial marriage.
 - some associate 'black' with 'sin' - but see Isaiah 1:18, Revelation 12:3, 17:4

The Bible does **not** teach

- that Ham was cursed, and his descendants are to be subject to others. It was Canaanites who entered the curse, and it was fulfilled in Joshua 9:23.
- that races are to stick to certain areas. It says that the length of a **nation's** prosperity, and its boundaries, are in God's hands, not its own. Acts 17:26.
- that racial inter-marriage is wrong. There are several such marriages in the Bible, and they meet with God's approval. The bars to marriage are on spiritual grounds, not racial ones. 1 Corinthians 7:39. 2 Corinthians 6:14.

The Bible does teach

- every single person has the same dignity, rights and responsibilities, for all are made equally in the image of God. Genesis 1:26-27, 9:6, Proverbs 14:31, 17:5, James 3:9.
- all men and women are sinners. Romans 3:10-23, 5:12-21.
Same cultures and communities are more wicked than others, but it does not follow that any particular **race** is more sinful.
It is true that people who are discriminated against may react badly, but the blame is not to be put on their race, but on those who make race a cause for discrimination.
- all who are in Christ are **one**.
Ephesians 2:11-22. Galatians 3:28, Acts 10:34-35. Revelation 5:9-10, 7:9-10.
Race, background, status, ability, etc. do not come into it.
Every believer is equally a brother or sister in Christ.
Whoever or whatever he or she may be!

Some things to do

- get your thoughts on this subject from God's Word, not from the world. Other people's prejudices must never affect what you do. Galatians 2:14.
- implement Scripture's teaching in your own life and in church life. As a citizen, do what you can to bring a distinctive Christian savour into society. Matthew 5:13.
- be welcoming and helpful to the immigrant. Exodus 22:21, Leviticus 19:33-34, Deuteronomy 1:16-17.
- and see that the gospel is proclaimed to **all**. Matthew 28:18-20, Mark 16:15.

Living for Christ - today!

7. "Money, lovely money"

- never before has the ordinary Christian been so wealthy.
- what does the Word of God teach about money?

[1] It is right to have money and to use it

- Abraham did. Genesis 23:9, 16.
- David did. 1 Chronicles 21:24-25.
- Jeremiah did. Jeremiah 32:9.
- Jesus and the Twelve did. John 12:6, 13:27-30.
- godly women did. Luke 8:3.
- and how were Paul's constant journeyings on land and sea made possible, if no money changed hands?

[2] It is wrong to love money

- this is because the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, which leads to nothing but trouble, misery, sin. 1 Timothy 6:10.
- for example:-
 - family trouble. Proverbs 15:27.
 - frustration, Ecclesiastes 5:10, Isaiah 56:11.
 - theft. Joshua 7:21.
 - conceit and pride. Proverbs 18:23, 28:11. Jeremiah 9:23, 1 Timothy 6:17, James 2:6
 - injustice. Proverbs 28:20, Jeremiah 6:13, Acts 16:19, 24:26, 1 Samuel 8:2-3.
 - oppression. Genesis 31:41, Micah 2:2, James 5:4, Proverbs 1:10-19
 - forgetfulness of God. Deuteronomy 8:13-14, Amos 6:1-6, Luke 12:15-21.
 - scoffing at spiritual truths. Luke 16:13-14.
 - damnation!! Mark 10:17-27. James 5:1-6.
 - loss of spiritual judgement. 1 Timothy 3:3, 8, Titus 1:7, 1 Peter 5:2.
 - dead orthodoxy. Ezekiel 33:31.
 - apostasy. Mark 4:19, 1 Timothy 6:9-10, 2 Peter 2:15.
 - betrayal of Christ. Matthew 26:15-16.
- the Bible is not exaggerating, then, when it says that the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil!

[3] How to know if you love money

- do you think about it? Proverbs 23:7.
- do you talk about it? Matthew 12:34-35.
- do you like the idea of having lots of it? 1Timothy 6:9.
- do you like the idea of getting it without working for it? - this is one of the chief characteristics of the money-lovers condemned in the Bible. Proverbs 21:6, Jeremiah 17:11, Psalm 15:5 etc.
- do you shudder at the thought of getting steadily poorer, for the sake of others? 2 Corinthians 8:9.

[4] How **not to be a money-lover**

- kill off whatever encourages you to love money. Colossians 3:5.
- practise disciplined contentment. 1Timothy 6:6, 8, Hebrews 13:5.
- give thanks for all that God provides. Ecclesiastes 5:19, John 6:11, Acts 27:35.
- consider how uncertain riches are. Proverbs 23:5, 27:24, 1Timothy 6:17.
- think how foolish it is to be rich in this life only. Psalm 39:6, 49:10, Matthew 6:19, 16:26, 1Timothy 6:7.
- seek godliness - true riches! Proverbs 10:2, 11:4, 13:7, 15:6, 16-17, Matthew 9:19-21, 1 Timothy 6:6.
- handle money in the spirit of Matthew 22:39.
- give money away. Proverbs 11:24, Acts 20:35, Ephesians 4:28, 1 Timothy 6:18.

A motto: "Godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world and it is certain we can carry nothing out." (1Timothy 6:6-7)

A prayer: "Give me neither poverty nor riches - feed me with the food you prescribe for me; lest I be full and deny you, and say "Who is the Lord?" Or lest I be poor and steal, and profane the name of my God." (Proverbs 30:8-9).

Living for Christ - today:

8. "Till death us do part" (1)

- we are called to live for Christ **here** and **now**;
- most people around us are humanists (no God: no life but this one: no right and wrong), but we cannot be like them, for we see that the Bible is God's Word.
- we certainly cannot join them in devaluing **marriage**.

[1] Marriage is an ordinance of God

- God created humans male and female, and gave the gift of marriage even before the Fall (Genesis 1:27, 2:18-25: a 3-way relationship).
- The Lord Jesus Christ declared that men and women united in marriage are united by **God** (Matthew 19:4-6).

[2] It is to be a lifetime union of one man and one woman

- this is clear from the original institution (Genesis 2:18-25) and from the teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 19:3-10).
- marriage is for life: it is true that God's Word reluctantly permits divorce in certain circumstances (a subject we will look at next week), but all divorce and separation must be seen as contrary to what God really wants marriage to be.

[3] It is given for clear reasons

- for satisfying companionship and mutual help (Genesis 2:18).
- for the increase of the human race (Genesis 1:28).
- for the prevention of impurity (1 Corinthians 7:8-9).
- for the good of human society - the family is a tightly-knit social group which is the basic unit of authority, love, care and nurture - the Bible views anything which threatens the family as a serious crime.

[4] It is a gift which has certain restrictions

- it is lawful and honourable in all people (Hebrews 13:4).
- a Christian, however, may marry only a fellow-believer (1 Corinthians 7:39, 2 Corinthians 6:14-16a).
- nobody may marry anyone closer than a cousin, even if that relative is only a relative of your deceased partner (Leviticus 18:6-23, 20:10-21: these passages refer to permanent relationships, and not to the temporary ceremonies of the Jews - so they still apply).

[5] It is a gift which has certain rules

- i. It requires a public wedding ceremony.
 - being a covenant, and at the basis of society itself, it cannot be entered into just by private consent: the Bible consistently approves of weddings, and Jesus attended one (John 2:1-11).
 - it is unthinkable that there should be physical union of husband and wife before such a ceremony (Matthew 1:18-19).
 - ii. It sets up a new relationship.
 - it means leaving your parents and becoming one with your partner (Genesis 2:24), this new relationship having priority over all others.
 - iii. **Only** in marriage may sexual union take place.
 - this is so even if a couple must wait a long time (Genesis 29:15-30).
 - sexual union makes two people into **one** (1 Corinthians 6:15-20): it is to take place only between a man and women totally and exclusively committed to each other for life.
 - **any** departure from God's order is forbidden: it is also condemned.
 - (Exodus 20:14, Leviticus 18:20, 1 Corinthians 6:9, 18, Galatians 5:19-21, 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8, Hebrews 13:4, 2 Peter 2:6 ...).
-
- So sacred and holy is the marriage relationship that God uses it to picture Christ's relationship with His people (Ephesians 5:22-23).
 - True happiness lies in keeping God's Word (Psalm 1).
 - For those who have failed there is cleansing and forgiveness available through our Lord Jesus Christ (1 John 1:9).

Living for Christ - today:

9. "Till death us do part" (2)

- we have looked at marriage.
- we now come to see what God's Word teaches about **divorce**.
 - Separation = a couple still married living apart: not free to remarry. The Bible nowhere envisages legal separation as an alternative to divorce.
 - Divorce = the dissolution of the marriage bond, presupposing the right to remarry.

10 key points:

- (1) The marriage union is exclusive, publicly recognised, lifelong, and consummated by sexual intercourse (Genesis 2:24, Matthew 19:4-6). Dissolution is **always** a departure from what God intended, and what He wants marriage to be (Matthew 19:8).
- (2) **Death** dissolves the marriage contract (Romans 7:2-3).
- (3) In OT times, married people who had sex outside marriage were put to death (Leviticus 20:10-17). The marriage was thus over, and the innocent party free to remarry.
- (4) The Lord Jesus Christ has withdrawn the death penalty for this offence (John 8:3-11).
- (5) This does not mean that the innocent partner is now trapped in a situation of which OT people knew nothing - bound for life to an unfaithful partner. If he (she) wishes, he (she) **may** seek a divorce, and, after the divorce, **may** marry another, as if the offending partner were **dead** (Matthew 5:31-32, 19:9).

- (6) The same is true in the case of wilful, causeless, incurable desertion. The innocent, deserted partner is not bound in the institution of marriage where, to all intents and purposes, the other partner has '**died**' (1 Corinthians 7:10-16).
- (7) What these two permitted grounds of divorce have in common is the principle of **death**. Only where this same principle is clearly in operation may divorce be permitted on other grounds. Is the guilty partner '**dead**', or not? - that is the question. (Now see Genesis 9:5-6, Leviticus 24:10-16).
- (8) God, then, does not permit divorce on any grounds except the '**death**' of the guilty partner. But He **does** permit it on this ground, and the innocent partner may have a quiet conscience. Divorce for lesser reasons is forbidden. If, however, it is practised, in order to prevent even worse human suffering, it must be carefully and legally regulated (Deuteronomy 24:1-4, Matthew 19:7-8).
- (9) It follows, then, that the only divorces Christ's church may recognise are those which are in line with God's Word. Legal 'divorces' out of step with Scripture are, in fact, only separations. Those who 'remarry' after such a 'divorce' have committed adultery (Matthew 5:31-32. 19:9).
- (10) But it is gloriously true that 'if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new' (2 Corinthians 5:17). When we come to Christ we are given a new beginning. Repentance puts right what it **can**, but it can never unravel every strand and knot of our unconverted days. In Christ we start afresh; (1 Corinthians.6:9-11).

Living for Christ - today:

10. Two halves do not make one whole

- it is essential for Christians today to be clear about **homosexuality**.
- this subject must be handled firmly, compassionately, bluntly.

Here are the main points to grasp:

1. A homosexual is a person who engages in homosexual **acts**. He/she **behaves** in a certain way. We must keep our definition within the realm of **behaviour**. If we do, we will be kept from unkind and dangerous judgements.
2. There are many sorts of homosexuality and many causes. It proceeds on the self-centred assumption that sex is only for pleasurable experiences, and not for other-person-centred life-long relationship, in line with God's intention for us.
3. By and large, homosexuals are unhappy people. This should not surprise us, for it is a sin 'against nature' (Romans 1:26).
4. Attempts to 'cure' homosexuals are less and less favoured today, and almost all the therapy used is unacceptable to Bible- believing Christians (Philippians 4:8-9).
5. There is no room for self-righteousness in this area (Luke 18:11).
6. Homosexual acts are **sinful** acts, as the Bible's seven references to homosexuality make clear:-

i. Genesis 19:1-11
ii. Leviticus 18:22, 20:13
iii. Judges 19:22-25,

Romans 1:24-28
1 Corinthians 6:9-11
1 Timothy 1:8-11.

7. Distinctions must be made. Some are tempted but do not sin. Others **nurse** wickedness in their minds (Matthew 5:28) and glory in their shame. This defiance of God's law calls down His wrath (Romans 1:18). The glorious news is that they may be forgiven in Christ (1 Corinthians 6:9-11).
8. There is another vital distinction to make. Friendship and homo- sexuality are not the same thing at all (2 Samuel 1:26).
9. God's command to homosexuals is to quit. Now. For ever (Isaiah 1:16b. Mark 1:15). Laying hold of Hebrews 2:17-18, 4:15-16.
10. The pathway ahead is either to marry, or to live a chaste life **for Christ's sake**. All who have given up anything for Him will have their reward in this life, and, in the age to come, eternal life (Mark 10:28-30).

Living for Christ - today:

11. Feminism

- Feminism contends that there should be no distinction between men and women in the social order. It believes that if men did not dominate society; women would not suffer so much.
 - -politically, feminism demands equal pay, equal education and job opportunities, free contraception and abortion on demand, and child-care facilities for working mothers.
 - it also campaigns for refuges for battered wives, rape crisis centres and women's health clinics....
-
- as Bible-believing Christians in today's world, what are we to make of all this?

We should remember

1. **The character of God.** He is 'righteous in all His ways' (Psalm 145:17). All His dealings with us are on the basis of what is just, right, and fair. If our society inflicts injustices on women, we want to be alert to this, and active in putting things right.
2. **The creation order.** Man existed before woman. Woman was made for man. Eve had a role supportive of him, and a social position which was subject to him. And this was Paradise! Woman's problem, then, is not what feminists say it is. (Genesis 2:8-25, 1 Timothy 2:9-15).
3. **The fall and its effects.** Woman's griefs are a direct result of the fall. Sin and self-centredness entered the world. Where the physically strong put themselves first, the weak get a raw deal. Feminism ignores this root problem. Indeed, it is determined that women should be equal with men in the pursuit of selfish liberty! What kind of a solution is that? (Genesis 3:1-19).
4. **The blessings of redemption.** Men and women are equal in redemptive privilege (Galatians 3:28, 1 Peter 3:7). Sin's power is broken in them (Romans 6:1 - 8:17) and they now model their lives on their Lord, not selfishly making demands and oppressing others, but serving them, without counting the cost (Mark 10:45, Philippians 2:1-11).

5. **The high calling of motherhood.** Nothing crushes the cause of sin like godly childbearing and consecrated mothering. God's Word regards this calling with awe (Genesis 3:5, 20, 1 Timothy 2:15) while feminism abandons 'mere' motherhood to duplicate male labours. And so women come to despise their highest dignity and hope for lesser things.
6. **The place of women in the church.** Women may do almost anything in the church of Christ, so there is plenty of scope for service and fulfilment (Romans 16:1-3, 6, 13, 15,). But they may not overturn God's creation order. Headship is male (1 Corinthians 11:3). Women may not be elders or deacons, and may not teach or lead men (Acts 6:1-7, 1 Corinthians 11:1-16, 14:33-38, 1 Timothy 2:8-15, 3:1-13, Titus 1:5-9).
7. **The evidence of history.** The Scriptures teach that men and women are of exactly equal value, although they do not have the same role. Wherever the gospel has influenced the life of a nation it has elevated women and transformed the sense of relationship between the sexes. Any impartial study of cultures ancient and modern will bear this out. True women's liberation takes place at the Cross.

Living for Christ - today:

12. Abortion

Abortion is the killing of unborn boys and girls.

Can you answer these 3 questions?

[1] In the United Kingdom, how widespread is abortion?

[2] Why have Christians passively accepted this situation?

..... (a)

(b)

(c)

[3] What ideas have led to abortion becoming socially acceptable?

(a)

(b)

Some things to know

- The Bible teaches that the unborn child ("the foetus") is a person in the full sense :
Genesis 16:11 Amos 1:13
Exodus 21:22-25 Matthew 1:18-20
Psalm 139:13-16 Luke 1:35, 42-43.
- The Bible proclaims and affirms that human life is the most precious thing in God's creation. It is sacred.
Genesis 1:26-27, 9:1-7 John 1:14
Exodus 1:17. 20:13 Philippians 2:7-8
Deuteronomy 19:1-13 Romans 5:8
1 Corinthians 6:19, 5:42-44.
- Abortion, then, is a monstrous evil. 1

Some things to think about

- Nobody is killing the unborn child because he has done something wrong. They are killing him because they want to get rid of him.
- If we do nothing about the fate of the unborn or the defective newborn today, then there is no reason why our children should not propose us as candidates for euthanasia tomorrow.
- We must always be willing to struggle for what is right, even when it is clear we are not going to come out on top.

Some things to do

- **Pray:** "God does everything by prayer and nothing without it" (Wesley).
- **Educate:** Get to know the arguments and facts. Educate your family. Teach your children to be pro-child. Check what they are being taught at school. Show your friends that to be pro-child is right - it is the rational and compassionate stance. Monitor what the media are saying.
- **Act:** Be salt and light. Reject the myth of neutrality. Write to election candidates and ask them questions. Educate your M.P., giving him good reasons and solid evidence. Tell him you will be watching his voting record on pro-child issues. Make a fuss wherever else you can.
- **Care:** There are people on your path with an unwanted pregnancy, or raising a handicapped child, or looking after the infirm elderly. Help them. Contact doctors you know, and join either Life or the Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child to find out what else you can do.

Living for Christ - today:

13. Sunday

- British Sundays are changing rapidly, and more change is on the way,
- there is even confusion in the churches on how to react to this.
- what does the Bible teach about Sunday?

Ten foundation facts:

1. The **origin** of the Sabbath ("rest day") is clear. It is not a Jewish institution. It was instituted by God at creation (Genesis 2:1-3). It was made for **mankind** (Mark 2:27). Forgotten for a while, it was revived as freed Israel travelled from Egypt to Sinai (Exodus 16).
2. In the **Ten Commandments** which God wrote with His own finger, the 4th commandment deals with the Sabbath. It begins: "Remember ..." It is a positive command, the longest and most detailed of the Ten, linking the God ward and man ward aspects, the moral and ceremonial aspects, of the Law (Exodus 20:8-11, 31:18).
3. The Sabbath was important to our **Lord Jesus Christ**. His custom was to attend synagogue on that day (Luke.4:16). He came not to destroy the law but to fulfil it (Matthew 5:17-19), while rejecting man-made laws (Matthew 12:2). He taught that works of necessity and mercy could be done on that day (Matthew 12:9-14) and taught then Himself (Luke.4:31). He is Lord of the Sabbath: it is His day. (Mark 2:28).
4. The Lord of the Sabbath transferred it from the last to the **first day of the week**. He rose from the dead then (John 20:1-18), appeared to His disciples, (John 20:26) and poured out the Spirit (Acts 2:1). The apostles kept the first day of the week (Acts 20:7, 1 Corinthians 16:2). In the Greek, the name 'Sabbath' is applied to the first day (Matthew 28:1, Mark 16:2,9, Luke 24:1, John 20:1,19, Acts 20:7, 1 Corinthians 16:2). It soon became known as "the Lord's Day" (Revelation 1:10).
5. Throughout **church history** this is the day which has been observed as the Christian Sabbath. Christian martyrs were asked: "Do you keep the Lord's Day?" This is the day honoured by the Reformers and the men prominent in the great biblical revivals.

6. The Lord's Day **speaks** of the Holy Trinity: the Father (creation), 'the Son (resurrection), the Holy Spirit (Pentecost). It speaks of the spiritual rest enjoyed by the believer (Hebrews 4). The 8th day suggests a new beginning, and so it also speaks of the perpetual rest to come in heaven.
7. It is **immoral** not to keep the Lord's Day. The 4th commandment has never been withdrawn and never will be (Matthew 5:18). To break one point of the law is to be guilty of all (James 2:10). The violation of the Sabbath brings the judgement of God (Nehemiah 13:15-22).
8. The Sabbath is a **day of joy** and gladness (Psalms 118:24, 122:1). God's Word calls it 'a delight' (Isaiah 58:13). God gave it to be a blessing to us all, (Mark 2:27-28). Speaking of the gospel age, Isaiah says: "Blessed is the man ... who keeps from defiling the Sabbath" (Isaiah 56:2).
9. The **blessings** of the Sabbath are there for all to see: it reminds fallen men and women that there is a God whom they should worship; it gives believers the opportunity to gather round the Word, and thus sustains their spiritual life; it provides opportunities for gospel witness; it strengthens family ties; it safeguards the interest of workers; it permits a whole nation to rest; it promotes health.....
10. In the Old Testament godly men **contended** for the Sabbath (Moses, Amos, Hosea, Nehemiah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel). What is stopping us doing the same?

Living for Christ - today:

14. False teachers

- our day is a day of cults and sects, mixed denominations, the ecumenical movement, the resurgence of Rome, multi-faith services, etc ...
- we shall live well enough for Christ in this situation if we remember three things :-

[1] There is such a thing as the faith

- there is such a thing as the faith - a body of truth to be held, a deposit to be guarded.
Galatians 1:23
Ephesians 4:5
Philippians 1:27
1 Timothy 4:1, 5:8. 6:20-21
Jude 1:3.
- the gospel, then, can be clearly defined - there is such a thing as **sound doctrine** (hence the historic confessions and catechisms).
Romans 6:17, 16:17-20
Galatians 1:6-10.
1 Timothy 1:10
2 Timothy 1:13. 4:3
Titus 1:9, 2:1.
- the **Word of God** alone is sufficient to make these definitions.
John 17:17, Romans 16:25-27, 2 Timothy 3:16-17.

[2] There are such people as false teachers

- a. they will show up in our churches.
- b. they are astray in both doctrine and life.
- c. their methods are deceitful.
- d. their teaching is ruinous.

Romans 16:17-18,	2 Timothy 3:1-9,	Titus 1:9-16.
2 Peter 2:1-3,	2 John 1:7-11,	Jude 1:3-4.

[3] God's Word tells us what to do with false teachers

- watch out for them. Romans 16:17, 1 John 4:1.
 - have nothing to do with them. 2 Timothy 3:5, 2 John 1:10-11
 - speak straight to them (the special responsibility of church officers).
2 Timothy 2:14, Titus 1:9-11.
 - if they stay as they are, excommunicate them.
Galatians 1:6-10, Titus 3:9-11.
-
- this teaching answers our questions about what to do with the sects, Rome, the ecumenical movement, cooperative evangelism ...
 - but what am I to do if I am a faithful believer in an unfaithful church? What are we to do if we are a faithful church in a denomination which tolerates false teaching?
 - 2 Corinthians 6:14 - 7:1 gives the answer:
 - who loves the gospel enough to put this teaching into practice???

Living for Christ - today:

15. Worldliness

The world

To understand the term 'worldliness' we must first understand that the Word of God uses the word 'world' in a number of different ways:

- heaven-and-earth together, the created universe. Acts 17:24.
- the created world visible to mankind. Romans 1:20.
- the world of people, the inhabited earth. John 3:16.
- the world of ungodly people as controlled by Satan. 1 John 5:19.
- 'Worldliness' is to do with this last use of the word 'world'.

The world of ungodly people, controlled by Satan

- this world is pervaded by a spirit of its own. 1 Corinthians 2:12.
- it does not know God. 1 Corinthians 1:21.
- it is self-centred, not God-centred - attracted, not by godliness, but by what is appealing to the physical senses. 1 John 2:16.
- where it has religion, it is a question of externals - rules, rites, asceticism. Galatians 4:8-10, Colossians 2:20-23.
- the world listens to anyone who has a religion like that. 1 John 4:5.
- the ruler of this world is the devil, whom the Lord Jesus Christ defeated at His cross. John 14:30, 12:31-32, 16:11.
- worldliness, then, is a certain sort of mind-set. Romans 12:2.
- those who have this mind-set, however much they may claim to be Christians, are, in fact, unconverted. 1 John 2:15-17, James 4:4.

The Christian and the world

- out of this world, the Father has given a people to His Son. John 17:6.
- Christ reveals Himself to these people, not to the world. John 14:22.
- for these people, the Lord Jesus Christ intercedes. John 17:9.
- they are commanded to be unlike the world. Romans 12:1-2.
- they are not overcome by it, but overcome it. 1 John 5:3-5.
- the world hates and hurts believers, but they go on cheerfully in their Christian life. John 16:33, 17:14, 1 John 3:13.
- they refuse to be the world's friends, humbly looking to the Lord for grace. James 4:4-6.
- they do not retreat from the world, but live holy lives in it, and bring light to it. John 17:15-18, Matthew 5:14, 13:38, Mark 16:15.
- they constantly look forward to the last day and the joys of eternity. Romans 8:21, 1 Corinthians 15:28, Revelation 11:15.

Dr Jortin's tests for finding out if you are worldly

1. For profit or pleasure, would you be willing to disobey God's Word?
2. Over which do you take the most trouble - this life, or the next?
3. Can you be content, patient and resigned, when things are going badly?
4. Do you find it hard to part with something you possess, even when you know it will benefit someone else?
5. Are you ever envious of those who have more than you do? Or of those who are more valued than you are?
6. Do you value others by the position they have or the things they own?
7. When you have what you want, do you become proud and boastful?
8. Do you ever miss an opportunity to enjoy the good things of this life?
9. Do you consider that you're not too bad, because there are others who are worse than you?

Living for Christ - today:

16 Signs and wonders

- a particular error we have to face today is that of the 'Signs and Wonders' movement revolving round John Winter, Jack Deere, Paul Cain and 'Vineyard Ministries', whose ideas are spreading rapidly.

The 'Signs and Wonders' message

1. There is more to the gospel than justification by faith. It includes the realm of deliverance - exorcism of demons, and healing. This has been forgotten. Too many Christians remain demonized, or ill.
2. There is a distinction between 'evangelism' and 'power evangelism'. Evangelicals have become powerless because they fail to pray for and claim the signs and wonders of the kingdom seen in our Lord Jesus Christ and His apostles.
3. God speaks to us today, outside and beyond the Scriptures, by means of 'prophecy' and 'words of knowledge'. 'Message time' and 'ministry time' are not the same thing. 'Ministry time' is 'the direct communication of God through the Spirit'.

Some facts

1. The Signs and Wonders movement does not 'complete' the gospel. It **forgets** it. Galatians 6:14 would not describe this movement – not by any stretch of the imagination:
2. The movement, on its own admission, is not seeing much in the way of miracles (Down's syndrome, 0.5% and partial: blindness, mostly caused by accidents, 3-8%; the rest are psychosomatic, trivial, or difficult to document medically). How unlike Christ and His apostles; It can be seriously doubted that any miraculous healings are taking place at all. Now see Matthew 12:15, Luke 6:19, 9:11, Acts 5:14-16, 28:8-9;
3. The movement declares that the 'doctrine that teaches God no longer speaks to us except through the written word ... is demonic' (Jack Deere). It also teaches that 70% accuracy is a pretty reasonable strike rate for 'words from the Lord'. Now see Ezekiel 13:1-9. Who wants to live with God's wrath falling on 30% of what is said??

Some texts to think about

1. 1 Corinthians 15:1-4.
2. 1 Corinthians 1:17 - 2:5.
3. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 Revelation 22:18-21.

To know more

John Wimber: Friend or Foe? Australian Anglican Evangelicals look at what was done and said by John Wimber and his team during their visit to Australia in 1990. 40pp. Available from St Matthias Press.

Signs and Wonders and Evangelicals edited by Robert Doyle, More Australian Anglican Evangelicals give a Scriptural evaluation of John Wimber's teaching. 130pp. Published by Fabel Distributors C.C.,

Living for Christ - today:

17. Lifestyle (1)

- the life style of many believers is selfish, extravagant, materialistic and socially conforming.
- yet all the time God gives them the command and promise of Romans 12:2:

[1] Some general principles

- a wide spectrum of life styles is found in Scripture, from Solomon (1 Kings 10:7) to Amos (Amos 7:14), from Abraham (Genesis 13:2) and Philemon to the penniless widow (Luke 21:1-4). Some are told to give away their riches (Matthew 19:21) while others keep them and use them (Luke 7:1-5). Jesus himself lived very simply - supported by others.
- the universal rules which apply to all are found in :
 - Matthew 22:37-40
 - Luke 12:22, 31.
 - Luke 12:48
- Jesus never hid the fact that a comfortable life style is an enormous spiritual danger (Matthew 6:24, Mark 10:23-25, Luke 8:14).
- it is certainly time for a sincere, honest, open-minded, down-to-earth look at our lifestyle - in the light of God's Word.

[2] Some particular areas

Food

- the Old Testament has a lot to say about feasts - God-centred public holidays, with an emphasis on freewill offerings and eating together with no one left out (e.g. Deuteronomy 16:9-17).
- these feasts were still in operation during Jesus' ministry - and He also went to other special meals (e.g. John 2:2, Matthew 9:10, Luke 10:38-42)
- God has given us food to enjoy (Acts 14:17), but intends us to eat it at **meals** - social occasions drawing people together in fellowship and gratitude around a table prepared with imaginative care (cf. the vast majority of biblical references to eating, and to tables: Acts 2:46, 1 Corinthians 5:11, 11:33).
- in doing so, we must not give in to either excess (Luke 21:34, Romans 13:13, - 1 Peter 4:3) or waste (John 6:12-13).
- and sometimes we must fast
(Matthew 6:16-18, 9:15, Acts 14:23, 1 Corinthians 7:5).

Clothes

- we live in a world of 'in' styles, fashion-consciousness, 'What shall I wear?', boutiques and chain-stores, despite some attempts to hold back this flood.
- God's Word does some plain speaking about clothing :
 - it is a divine ordinance to cover our shame (Genesis 3:21).
 - men's and women's styles are to be visibly different (Deuteronomy 22:5).
 - it may well be colourful and well made (Proverbs 31:22, Acts 9:39).
 - but character, not fashion, is what must interest us (1 Peter 3:3-4).
 - we are not to lose any sleep over this subject (Matthew 6:25-34).
 - but we are to be passionately interested in clothing others (Matthew 25:36, 43, James 2:14-17).
 - and the clothes others wear are not in any way to affect the way we behave towards them (James 2:1-4).

to be continued

Living for Christ - today:

18. Lifestyle (2)

- we have seen that God's Word permits a wide spectrum of life styles, all of which are to express our love for Him and for others. This is true in the areas of food and clothes, and in the areas of.....

Holidays and cars

- these two items dominate the average family budget.
- in ancient Israel, holidays were God-centred - Sabbath: festivals.
- Jesus recognised that we sometimes need to 'get away from it all' (Mark 6:31, Matthew 14:13).
- the key point is that in Scripture people were able to define what their 'time-off was for; what was its purpose.
- this is precisely the question which even many Christians are not facing today, and are therefore choosing/spending/acting badly in this area.
- in the same way, few people, even Christians, ask why they need a car.
- is it an unmixed blessing? is it an absolute necessity?
- in what ways has it helped family/church life? Has it hindered it? These questions must be faced (see Luke 8:21, 1 Timothy 5:8).
- what criteria should decide what car I buy and run? What bearing do these texts have on the subject? - Genesis 1:28, 1 Chronicles 29-14, Philippians.2:4?
- should other forms of transport be considered? - 1 Timothy 4:8, 1 Corinthians 6:19.
- and let's face the fact that certain believers should not drive at all: (Matthew 5:30, Romans 13:1-2).

Home and furnishings

- this is where the world puts it stress. Are we going to be socially conforming, or go God's better way? (Romans 12:1-2).
- the stress in God's Word is on God-honouring, wholesome family life (see, for example, Ephesians 5-22 - 6:9, Colossians.3:18 - 4:1).
- its other stress is on hospitality (Romans 12:13, 1 Timothy 3:2, 1 Peter 4:9-10).
- home and furnishings are only tools to do God's will in these areas.
- our creative skills can be used here to the full.
- other texts to consider are – Luke 12:15, 29-34. Hebrews 13:14, Haggai 1:4, 9.

Work and leisure

- God has appointed us to be -creative caretakers' of His world (Genesis 1:26-28, 2:15).
- we are to do this by a clear pattern of work and rest (Exodus 20:8-11, Psalm 104:19-23).
- our modern world, forgetting this, is work-shy and leisure-sick.
- even Christians are falling into non-organic depression and boredom.
- it is time to take seriously - 1
Corinthians 10:31. Colossians.3:17, Ephesians 5:16, 2 Thessalonians .3:10.

**Only one life -
'It will soon be past:
Only what's done for Jesus
Will last.**