

UNLIMITED

THE MAGAZINE

AN INHERITANCE BEYOND YOUR WILDEST DREAMS

Did you know that when Christ died he willed to you the most awesome inheritance ever? (page 10)



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YOU HAVE BEAUTIFUL FEET



Dear Friend, Feet aren't the most attractive parts of our bodies. They're sometimes dirty, smelly, and... well... just not nice. In middle-eastern culture, especially in Jesus' Palestine, feet, were considered dishonourable and disgusting. Of course they had open sandals, rocky and dusty roads, a lot of walking, and no podiatrists!

Just before Jesus was arrested, he was with his disciples in the upper room. The disciples refused to have Jesus touch their feet to wash them. Only slaves did that. Not only did they think Jesus was above that work, but they also had their own status to maintain.

Their society was all about status. If Jesus touched their feet, their world, and their position in it, turned upside down.

Matthew's gospel says that after the resurrection, when the disciples saw the risen Jesus, "[t]hey... grabbed his feet and worshipped him" (Matt 28:9).

What had changed? They understood that Christ had risen from the dead.

It's happened millions of times since then. People become convinced that Jesus lives, so they love what they once hated, and turn away from things they once loved. Their whole world is turned upside down, so now they see things right side up.

That's the good news: Jesus has died for our sins and risen again for our salvation. It is such great news that the writers of the Bible could say,

"How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!" (Romans 10:15).

In that culture, saying that was a huge deal! Today, I'm just so glad that Jesus loves the worst parts of me!

At GNU, we LOVE feet! The feet of sinners who come to Jesus, the feet of so many people who help spread the good news around the world. And although it might sound strange, we especially love your feet!

Through your gifts, prayers and support, the good news of Christ is being preached by GNU in places and ways it has never been preached before. More countries, more languages, more media; so more people are reached and more lives transformed! That's what God does through people with beautiful feet.

You have beautiful feet!
We thank God for them.

Grace and Peace

▼ **ELIEZER GONZALEZ**
Senior Pastor,
Good News
Unlimited



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EDITORIAL

The good news is so simple it can be understood by everyone. What is this good news? The good news, or gospel, teaches that you can't go to heaven because you have been a bad person, but God loved you so much he sent his Son to die for your sins so that you can now go to heaven.

Two thousand years ago Jesus, through his death on the Cross, paid the full price for all your sins, past present and future. There is nothing more to be paid. Ever. When Jesus cried out, "It is finished", the debt for all your sins was wiped out and the door to Paradise was opened for you (Matt. 27:50-51; Heb. 10:19-21).

Your salvation has been provided entirely and totally by the Lord himself. There is not a single thread of human devising in the garment of salvation that the Father places around your shoulders when you return to him. All you can do is accept or reject his free gift.

Remember the repentant felon who was crucified with Jesus? He had nothing to offer for his salvation. But when he asked Jesus for a place in his kingdom, Jesus replied, "You shall be with me in Paradise." That man was saved by faith alone in Jesus alone. It's the same with you.

Be very careful of anyone who comes to you with another gospel—a 'gospel' that says you have to do or be something in order to be saved. The false gospel corrupts Christ's sacrifice on the Cross, by adding to it the works of man; it contaminates the perfect divine provision with an imperfect human contribution.

A false gospel says that the gospel is more than just the story of what Jesus has done for us. A false gospel maintains that when Jesus proclaimed from the Cross, "It is finished," his work of redemption wasn't finished at all. A false gospel says that there

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Ritchie Way
Executive Editor



is more that either you or God must do if you are to get into heaven.

If you depend for salvation upon your new life in Jesus, you will never be certain of salvation. You can never live perfectly enough to be certain of a place in heaven. The Bible, however, clearly says, "Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life" right now (John 3:36).

In the parable of the prodigal son, the elder brother considered he was worthy of a place in his father's house because he lived a good life. But when his father begged him to come in and celebrate the return of his younger brother from life's pigsty, he refused to associate with such a blatant sinner. The immoral younger brother, on the other hand, who had repented of his sins, was welcomed back to the father's house even though he had nothing to offer.

There is a "Welcome home" for every sinner who repents of his sin and trusts God to accept him without condemnation. (See Luke 18:9-14.)

A MESSAGE FROM ELENNE FORD

Des' daughter and a board member of Good News Unlimited.

We appreciate so much the way that you have prayed for us, volunteered, and given us your financial support. In these ways you have expressed your faith in Christ and shared it with others.

In addition to this, some friends also choose to include Good News Unlimited in their will in the form of a bequest. Doing so ensures that some of the wealth they leave behind contributes directly to sharing the good news of Jesus Christ with a dying world through the ministry and mission of Good News Unlimited – creating a legacy that affects lives far into the future.

My father and Gill have left a bequest to Good News Unlimited for the preaching of the gospel. In fact, after bequests to the family, most of their estate will be given to Good News Unlimited. I am also making provision for Good News Unlimited in my will, and I know that other board members are doing the same.

If you would like more information explaining how to include Good News Unlimited in your will, please contact Eliezer at GNU on 0413 473 043 or admin on 02 4721 9051.



THE REAL REASON FOR UNBELIEF

Most readers of this magazine believe this world and all who are in it are here because of the power, wisdom and love of a personal Creator. But you know that most of your neighbours and many of your acquaintances, even friends, do not so believe. Their chosen option is chance, or they may use the name science gives--evolution.

The word 'evolution', of course, means more than one thing. Most of us believe in microevolution, for domestic breeding has proved that for centuries. We accept that there are innumerable species of dogs but we don't believe that dogs can become cats. That would be macroevolution.

Well, all of that is 'old hat', but what is not so universally known is that the chief reason for the spread of belief in macroevolution was not science, but the philosophy of naturalism. And the chief reason for affirming Darwinism in our day does not come from a comprehensive understanding of genetics, biology, geology or any other scientific discipline--it is the same reason as in the latter part of the 19th century.

There are really only two philosophies--naturalism and supernaturalism. The first has no place for God but enthrones chance in his place. The second affirms the reality of a personal Creator. If one believes in naturalism there are no real grounds for believing anything at all--let alone evolution. Why not? If our universe, our solar system and organic life on this planet evolved by chance, human brains are merely the result of whirling atoms, undirected and uncontrolled. C.S. Lewis and even some atheists have made that point. Even Darwin in his autobiography confesses his doubting confidence in his theories, which were begotten by an evolved brain.

Few of us ever guess the truth about this computer on our shoulders. Here are a few insights from Dr G. Simmonds in his splendid little book *What Darwin Didn't Know*:

Every bodily action is coordinated by conference calls between millions of neurons in the brain. Imagine a multinational corporation with 35 billion employees who stay in constant touch with each other and are capable of making trillions of decisions every millisecond (pp 90-91).



...it is vital to understand that unbelief is not the result of sound argument or reliable science. It is a choice because of a reference.

My favourite quotation comes from the discussion on genes by Dr Simmons on p 30:

How could a particle smaller than dust have enough knowledge to, as it were, multiply into a trillion-room skyscraper—and also know the color, shape, and size of every room, every worker who would ever be employed in it, and every speck of furniture, wiring and plumbing?

Keep in mind that our knowledge of the brain at this point of time is somewhat like the knowledge of the Pilgrim Fathers when they landed on the east coast of America and conjectured about the rest of the country. Epistemology (the study of our use of knowledge) tells us that we all begin our thinking by assuming that the brain's capacity for thought is reliable. All argumentation begins with axioms that are not provable. So even the scientist must live by faith. He has faith in his senses and his intellect as he measures, weighs, reflects and records.

The philosophy of naturalism assumes that no miracle (except the miracle of thought) is possible. The philosophy of supernaturalism, having granted the existence of a personal Creator, sees no problem in later miraculous actions by that same Being.

Why wander so deeply into philosophy? Because it is vital to understand that unbelief is not the result of sound argument or reliable science. It is a choice because of a preference. The Huxley brothers, Adous and Julian, quite bluntly said they wanted nothing to do with the idea of God because it would cramp their moral (chiefly sexual) activities.

People do not want a personal God to interfere with their lifestyle. They are afraid he will ask something of them they do not wish to relinquish. And he will. He asks for their surrender of selfishness, self-will and arrogance—all those things that will otherwise ruin their lives.

In Darwin's day most of his followers did not understand or even agree with his theories. (Famous historians like Himmelfarb and Gillespie emphasize this.) They only wanted his conclusion: there is no God; all came by chance. That is naturalism. Not until the 1940's, about eighty years after the publication of *On the Origin of Species*, did Evolution become widely accepted. (See Bill Bryson's *A Short History of Nearly Everything* p 350.) The forties were a time when everything was in flux, including religion, because of the catastrophe of World War 2.

Now observe how clear and precise Scripture is when it discusses the origin of unbelief:

This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed.

But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God (John 3:19-21).

What does all this mean today for us, living in the 21st century? It means that mere argument rarely wins an unbeliever. Christians are called to be witnesses, not lawyers. We are called to be "the light of the world" and "the salt of the earth". Only when our fellow sinners glimpse something different to themselves, something suggesting a mystery they desperately need, only then can the Holy Spirit work in the unbeliever and coax him or her towards the One who lived and died for them 2000 years ago.

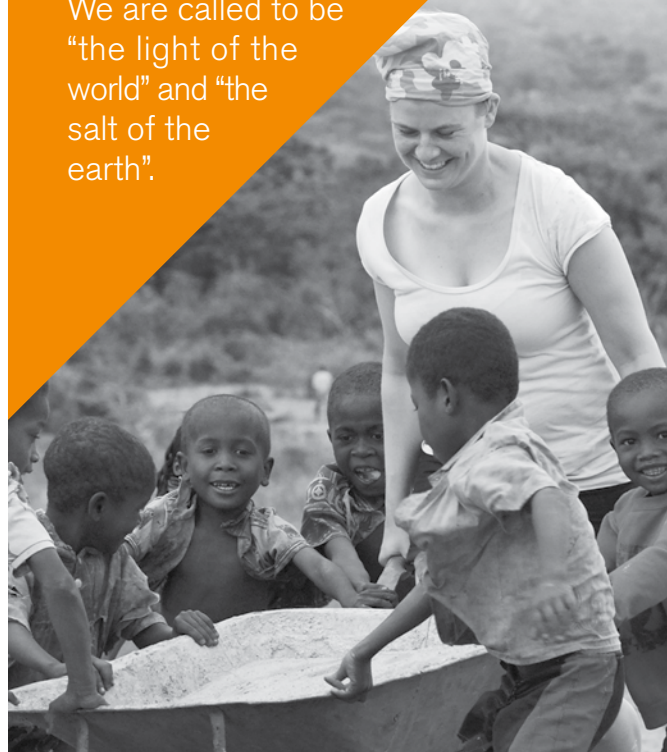
DES FORD

Founder, Good News Unlimited

Dr Desmond Ford is the founder of the Good News Unlimited, a transdenominational and international gospel ministry. He has been a teacher, minister and theologian for more than sixty years.



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AN INHERITANCE BEYOND YOUR WILDEST DREAMS



In August 2000, La Paz radio reported that a homeless man living on the streets of Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia, fled police who were bringing him news of a \$6-million inheritance. Tomas Martinez, 67, apparently thought the police were about to arrest him for his alcohol and drug habits. Bolivian newspapers spoke of him as a ‘new millionaire’ who paradoxically did not know his good fortune.

Eva Paole, who at the time was a retired Argentine maid, inherited a whopping \$40 million from her father whom she didn't know. Eva heard a rumour that she might be the daughter of baron Rufino Otero, who by then had passed away. She had always believed she was the daughter of her mother Josefa and her partner. Her mother took the secret of Eva's real father to her grave. But DNA tests showed she truly was the daughter of the powerful and wealthy baron.

This is the story of all of us if we are unaware of the riches we have been left in Christ Jesus! Multitudes of lives ‘unlived’ because of mistaken identities—fear-driven fugitives like Tomas Martinez, sadly believing themselves to be victims rather than victors, and running away from their benefactor's fortune, oblivious of their true wealth.

Did you know that when Christ died, he willed to you the most awesome inheritance ever? Have you read your Benefactor's Will and Testament? Have you claimed what is rightfully yours? Or are you, like Tomas Martinez, behaving like a run-away pauper? All the while the King of the universe is looking for you, to share with you the wonderful news of your inheritance. Are you weary and suspicious of God, thinking he's coming to ‘get you’ to collect mounting debts, when in fact he is tracking you down to enrich your life beyond your wildest imagination? No need to run and hide. Let God announce the Good News to you.



Jesus left you a domain to rule,
a kingdom to be a part of and an
abundant life to live.

Jesus left you a domain to rule, a kingdom to be a part of and an abundant life to live. "In whom also we have obtained an inheritance" (Eph 1:11). You, in Christ, are an heir of Christ's kingdom. We know that you only get an inheritance when your benefactor dies, "...for while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom 5:8). "For where a will is involved, the death of the one who made it must be established" (Heb 9:16). Because of the death of Jesus on the Cross, the doors to the riches in glory have been flung open.

The Bible sometimes uses the word 'heir' to describe us as recipients of a gift from God (eg, Gal 4:7). This gift cannot be inherited by a code of behaviour or some outward spiritual rituals, lulling us into a false sense of belonging. We do not earn or deserve merit before God—we can only become heirs

“What a game changer! Everything his is yours, you are not a slave but a son, not a debtor but a daughter!

on the basis of God's free gift. "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God" (Eph 2:8).

A legalist has no knowledge of what he has been **gifted** for he does not work on the premise of a gift but on the basis of fear of the grim debt reaper. He feels disenfranchised, institutionalised, toil-worn and laden with drudgery; he's enslaved by an unnerving spiritual mortgage—a relentless taskmaster. This joyless servant hasn't read his Father's Will and Testament declaring, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and loaded down with burdens, and I will give you rest" (Matt 11:28). What a game changer! Everything his is yours; you are not a slave but a son, not a debtor but a daughter!

Jesus warns us that there is an enemy and a thief, who comes to steal the glorious inheritance left you when Christ died for you. "Be sober and alert. Your enemy the devil, like a roaring lion, is on the prowl looking for someone to devour" (1 Peter 1:8). Don't believe his lies and rumours that you are nothing but a beggar and a pauper without any fixed spiritual address. Spiritually speaking, your enemy would have you believe that you are destitute, joyless, powerless and that park benches and cardboard boxes are your abode. Don't believe him.

What exactly are some of the items in the Will of the Father for you in Christ Jesus? An abundant daily harvest of the fruit of the Spirit. A quality of life giving you wings over all the challenges of life. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control..." (Gal 5:22). These words are teaching you to recognize what is rightfully yours, and when these fruits are not present, to recognize the presence of the thief stealing your inheritance. Oust the thief from your mansion of life. Someone is sapping your contentment, your joy, your love, your peace, wanting to bankrupt your confidence in God. Jesus tells us that He has come to give us an abundant life.

What else is in your Father's Will? How about anxiety, worry and stress? Is that in your Father's Will? No? Are you absolutely sure? Perhaps you're thinking it might be in the fine print. Think again. Here's the long and the short of worry: "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Phil 5:6).

We have only just begun to explore why the Bible says "Rejoice in the Lord always...". It's an awesome privilege to know your true identity. Knowing your royal genealogy allows you to dream big and is truly good news unlimited.

▼ BILYANA DE SOTO

Friend of Good News Unlimited



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THE BIBLICAL TEACHING ON THE FATE OF THOSE WHO INTENTIONALLY AND PERSISTENTLY REJECT GOD'S SALVATION: PART ONE

This is a summary presentation of Biblical teaching that those who throughout this life intentionally and persistently reject God's kindness, forgiveness, and fellowship, however it was made known to them and regardless of when or where they lived, will in the age to come, 'die', 'perish,' and be 'destroyed' entirely and forever.

I have been asked for a concise summary of the case for the total, everlasting extinction of the wicked. The 'second death' involves an eternal graveyard around which we can no longer merrily whistle.

Jesus speaks of some people who "will go away to eternal punishment," and others "to eternal life" (Matt. 24:46). The question is not whether the wicked will suffer 'eternal punishment', but of what that punishment consists. Is it unending conscious torment, as most of the Christian Church has held since at least the time of Augustine, or might it be, as the Bible most often describes it, to die, perish, and to be destroyed—understanding those words in their most ordinary and literal meaning?

God alone is inherently immortal, the only being anywhere who does not depend on someone or something else for his own life and existence. To be cut off from God is to be separated from the only basis for existence. No one totally cut off from God can continue to exist. This truth is the meaning behind the label 'conditional immortality'.

My research found the Christian Church's doctrine of unending conscious torment to originate with Tertullian and other converted Greek philosophers who brought with them the Greek doctrines of the immortality of the soul. So if souls in hell are incapable of destruction, they must either be saved from hell or burn there forever.

A further approach to the subject involves a study of all of Scripture to see what it says about the end of the wicked. That is what I did in *The Fire That Consumes*, and it is what I summarize, incompletely, in these two papers.

To begin, I do not say that everyone in hell is instantly destroyed. I believe the Bible leaves room for degrees of judgment and we are told that God will judge fairly. I conclude that each person who goes to hell will suffer there whatever

conscious pain perfect divine justice requires, in a destructive process that culminates in total extinction.

THE OLD TESTAMENT

Advocates of conscious unending torment often say that the Old Testament is silent on the subject of hell, and they are partially correct. The Old Testament does not use the word 'gehenna' and the traditional hell is nowhere to be found in it. On the other hand, the Old Testament regularly and graphically affirms the total destruction of the wicked, and it never hints at anything remotely resembling conscious unending torment.

Principles. Fifty Hebrew verbs and seventy metaphors and similes describe the final destiny of the unrepentant throughout the Old Testament. In every case, the picture is one of destruction, extinction and extermination.

The Psalms repeatedly say that the wicked will go down to death, their memory will perish and they will be as though they had never been (Ps 9; 21:4-10; 36:9-12; 49:8-20; 52:5-9; 59; 73; 92). Proverbs likewise warns that the wicked will pass away, be overthrown, be cut off, be no more, their lamp put out (Prov 2:21-22; 10:25; 12:7; 24:15-20).

The wicked will become like a pottery vessel broken to pieces (Ps 2:9), ashes trodden underfoot (Mal 4:3), smoke that vanishes (Ps 37:20), chaff carried away by the wind (1:4), a slug that melts (58:8), straw that is burned (Isa 1:31), thorns and stubble in the fire (33:12), wax that melts (Ps 68:2) or a dream that vanishes (73:20). Traditionalists deny that the wicked will ever become like any of those things, while they affirm that the wicked will become an everlasting spectacle made of indestructible material in an unending fire.

Prototypes. The historical books of the Bible show us actual examples of God's judgments against sin. When the first

HE NALLY D'S



world became too wicked to continue, God wiped every living creature outside the ark from the face of the earth (Gen 6:7; 7:4). This is a model, Scripture says, for the fiery judgment awaiting the lost at the eschaton (2 Pet 2:5; 3:3-7; Matt 24:38-39).

When Sodom became too sinful to endure, God rained down fire and brimstone (burning sulfur) from heaven, obliterating the entire wicked population and even the vegetation, in a moment so terrible the rest of the Bible memorialises it as an example and prototype of divine judgments within history and also at the end of the world (Gen 19:24-29; Deut 29:23; Isa 1:9; 13:19-22; Jer 49:18; 50:40; Lam 4:6; Amos 4:11; Zeph 2:9; Luke 17:28-33; 2 Pet 2:6; Jude 7, 23).

Prophecies. The prophets also speak of God's wrath against sinners. Details of actual judgments against cities and nations become later symbols for the ultimate divine visitation. These prophetic scenes provide much of the later vocabulary of judgment: fire and storm, tempest and darkness, wrath and corpses and worms (Zeph 1:14-18; Isa 66:16-24; Ezek 39:9-22; Dan 12:2).

APOCRYPHA

The apocryphal books of 1 Esdras, 3 Maccabees, 1 Baruch, Epistle of Jeremiah, Prayer of Manasseh and the additions to Daniel and Esther are silent on this subject. The books of Tobit, Sirach, Baruch, 1 and 2 Maccabees and the Wisdom of Solomon agree thoroughly with the Old Testament as they anticipate the total destruction of the wicked.

The first appearance of conscious unending torment in anything resembling biblical literature comes in the apocryphal book of Judith (16:17). There the Jewish heroine warns: "Woe to the nations that rise up against my race. The Lord Almighty will take vengeance on them in the Day of Judgment, to put fire and worms in their flesh. And they shall weep and feel their pain forever."

The 'fire' and 'worms' here come from Isa 66:24, but Judith completely changes Isaiah's picture. The prophet has unburied corpses; Judith has consciously-tortured people. Isaiah's fire

and worms destroy; Judith's simply torment. In Isaiah the fire and worms are external agents consuming their dead victims; in Judith they are internal agonies perpetually torturing from within. In Isaiah (and all the Old Testament) the victims are destroyed; in Judith they "feel their pain forever."

PSEUDEPIGRAPHIA

The testimony of the Pseudepigrapha (a growing list of Jewish and sometimes Christian-edited works, c. 200 B.C. - 100 A.D.) is even more mixed. Some of these works say the wicked will totally pass away (Sibylline Oracles, fragments of a Zadokite work, Psalms of Solomon, 4 Esdras). This is also the consistent witness of QL (Qumran Literature) throughout, so far as yet translated.

Other pseudepigraphal works are ambiguous on this point (Assumption of Moses, Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, Life of Adam and Eve). Others are inconsistent (Jubilees, 1 Enoch, 2 Baruch). And some anticipate the conscious unending pain of the traditionalist view (2 Enoch, 4 Maccabees), though some modern scholars do not even concede that much.

▼ EDWARD WILLIAM FUDGE

Friend of Good News Unlimited

*Edward Fudge is an American Christian theologian and lawyer, best known for his book *The Fire that Consumes*. This book, which argues against traditionalist Christian interpretations of hell, has been instrumental in helping many evangelicals reconsider their understandings of Biblical teachings on this issue. He has been called "one of the foremost scholars on hell" by the *Christian Post* and he is the subject of the 2012 independent film *Hell* and *Mr Fudge*.*

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MINISTERING IN OBSCURITY

A few months ago Good News Unlimited sent out gifts in tens of thousands to the far distant places of Africa, to people GNU will probably never hear from. Strange places and indeed to strangers, and yet GNU felt compelled to send these gifts. Printing tens of thousands of Dr Desmond Ford's book *Jesus Only* in Kenya—a remote place—and entrusting this jewel into the unfamiliar hands of strangers such as I, Pr Boaz in Kenya, Pr Topos, Honest, Moses and Immanuel in Uganda, Pr Ephron and Claire in Rwanda, Sammy and the many other hands in Belgium and Sweden: this was a leap of faith. It is humbling and yet empowering for us.

The gift of the book *Jesus Only* has done more than we can estimate. This book has created a snowball that keeps rolling

“ The gift of the book *Jesus Only* has done more than we can estimate. This book has created a snowball that keeps rolling on and on.

on and on. It is as if there is no place this book will not go. It is reaching the hands of the great and small, in high and low places; it speaks to all minds. It reinforces the value of ministering in obscurity.

These Gospel friends are strangers to most of us, but they have poured all they could spare to make sure the Gospel reaches their fellow strangers such as me. I think of Des, whose pen has not stopped gliding on paper even at this old age to lay bare the treasures of the Gospel for all to see and know. I think of the price he has paid to stand tall for the Gospel, laboring in obscurity, making no headlines in popular newspapers and yet his work will live on, transforming and inspiring lives. Indeed every hand in GNU labors, not expecting to make popular news, and yet your labors have reached distant lands.

When I was in Uganda, I learnt that GNU magazine has been passing through the mailbox of Uganda's ministry of internal affairs before it reaches Pr Topos in the remotest place in Eastern Uganda. The secretary at the ministry of internal affairs always makes a photocopy of it for the office. I do not know why, but it is possible this magazine has spoken to someone or many.

I think of how the manuscript of *Jesus Only* inspired those who translated it into different languages. This work was a concerted effort of translators, correctors and readers. They are unknown, many of them had no experience in this kind of task, yet they performed as though they were experienced. They saw this work as theirs and gave their utmost.

One of the three translators of *Jesus Only* into Swahili told me how Pr. Boaz provided him and others a daily stipend for their meals while they did the translation. At one time, the message of the book touched him so much that he felt he should not work for payments. Pr. Boaz labored in obscurity, he never told me of the price he paid to get the book translated and I am sure he will not be comfortable reading this.

I am surprised by the way *Jesus Only* has created its own missionaries who, on their own, using the little resources they have, have been able to carry hundreds of books great distances to share them with people in different places.

I am surprised by the way *Jesus Only* has created its own missionaries who, on their own, using the little resources they have, have been able to carry hundreds of books great distances to share them with people in different places. Recently Claire in Rwanda told me of an experience when she stopped a man on a bicycle to tell him about *Jesus Only*. This man, who seemed to be in a hurry, asked her, "How much is the book?" "It is a gift for you," she responded. The man grabbed the book and took off. Then he stopped, reached out the book and opened it to read. As the man could not stop reading, Claire decided to go her way, wondering what made the man to stop! We may never know.

A Uganda army officer currently commanding a force guarding Mogadishu airport in Somalia has told me he needs *Jesus Only* and wants to share the book with his comrades. He told me of his great desire to have a regular supply of spiritual resources,

and I think the GNU magazine will be a constant help for him and his comrades. The days are coming when *Jesus Only* will be read by men of guns.

In the majority of places in Africa, most people have never used or even seen a computer, so we may never hear anything from them. This is not because they have no story to tell of how *Jesus Only* has touched their lives, but because they are limited. But there will come a day when strange places will be no more, when technological limitations will be breached and when all, small and great, rich and poor, will be summoned to meet the Lord in the air. We shall all have a VIP ticket to meet the One who loved us and gave himself for us all.

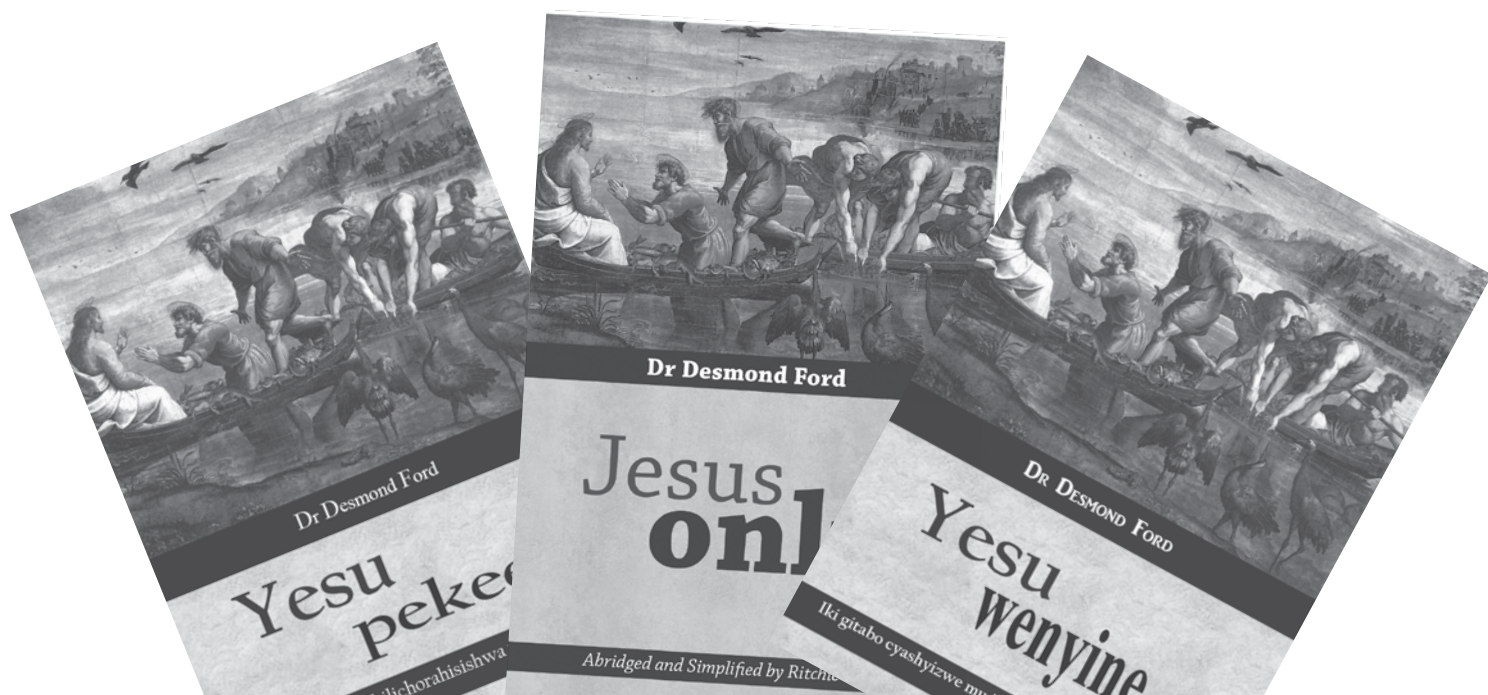
Then the villagers from the remotest places of Rwanda, Uganda and everywhere will wrap their hands around Des and say, "I received *Jesus Only*", and another will say "I received *Yesu Yekka*", and another "I received *Yesu Pekee*" and yet another "I received *Yesu Wenyine*" and then many will shout and say, "Des, Eli and all those who are making this work possible, we heard your voice, thank you for keeping strangers in your mind". And then a reply will be heard, "NO, we were not strangers, but brothers and sisters extending the borders of our King".

God brought to earth the gift of Jesus and he too, labored in obscurity until the climactic moment when he headed to Calvary to save us. He may have not made headlines in those days, but he is the man that nobody is able to ignore if we are honest. And because of him, many have put comfort aside to extend the kingdom of God into places we have never been. God keep us rejoicing while we labour in obscurity.

DAVID KAYUMBA

GNU Euro-African Evangelism Coordinator

Pr David Kayumba is GNU's Euro-African Evangelism Coordinator. David completed his theological training in Uganda. Today David lives in Brussels with his wife Ellen and son Kaije. He coordinates GNU's work in Europe and Africa through a network of volunteers, and he travels frequently in the region to share the good news of Jesus Christ.



IS THE PROSPERITY G

PART 3*

Since this is a series of articles, some people who have read the first or second parts of this series may be wondering whether there are any blessings at all in the gospel of Jesus Christ. This is especially true if you have been told that if you follow and obey the gospel, all of your sicknesses will be healed in this life, you will have a great financial situation and will be able to have whatever you want. So, if those things are not true, is it worth following Jesus?

Is Your Hut Burning?

There's a story about the only survivor of a shipwreck who was washed up on a small, uninhabited island. He prayed feverishly for God to rescue him. Every day he scanned the horizon in vain. Exhausted, he eventually managed to build a little hut out of driftwood.

One day, after scavenging for food, he arrived home to find his little hut in flames, with smoke rolling up to the sky. He was stunned with disbelief, grief and anger. He cried out, "God! How could you do this to me?"

Early the next day, he was awakened by the sound of a ship approaching the island. He was finally rescued. "How did you know I was here?" he asked his rescuers. "We saw your smoke signal," they replied.

When we pray to Jesus, are we praying for a larger hut, or are we praying to be rescued?

The Number One Blessing of the Gospel

The Bible tells us that the number one blessing of the gospel is the personal presence of Christ in our lives through the Holy Spirit. Jesus said, "surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Matt 28:20). He also explained that he would not leave his disciples as orphans; he said, "I will come to you" (John 14:18), and that this would be through the "advocate" who would be sent to "help you and be with you forever—the Spirit of Truth" (vv16, 17). Paul calls the Holy Spirit, "the Spirit of Christ" (Rom 8:9).

What a privilege to have the presence of Jesus Christ in our lives! That is a blessing that is worth more than all the gold and

silver in the world. It is a blessing that answers every doubt, makes our feet tread securely in this life and turns every tear of sadness to one of joy! And it is only possible because we are "accepted in the Beloved" through the richness of the grace of God demonstrated through our redemption through the blood of Christ—the forgiveness of our sins (Eph:6–7).

Living in Freedom

Where the King is, there also is the rule of the Kingdom of God—his own attributes. And so, "the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control" (Gal 5:22–23). We can experience these blessings in the good times and in the bad, not because we are exempt from the chaos of this world, but because we have been transformed by the renewing of our minds (Rom 12:2). So we live in freedom from the tyranny of the 'powers of this world'.

* In Parts 1 and 2 of this series I discussed whether there are Biblical models for those who believe the prosperity gospel, and identified the god of the prosperity gospel.



OSPEL GOOD NEWS?

Content in Every Situation

For this reason Paul can say that he is content “in any and every situation” (Phil 4:12). He can also say, “Rejoice in the Lord always” (Phil 4:4)—in every situation. We have the verdict of the last judgment in our favour (1 John 4:17), and we have already been given eternal life (John 11:26) as we await glorification. We have been given power through Christ over every enemy—even death itself (1 Cor 5:56)!



Quite simply, we learn to live by faith – the faith that waits upon God and does not try to coerce him.

Content in the Will of God

We can trust that whatever others have meant for evil towards us, God will turn around so that it ultimately works for our good. The Christian can say: “Outside of the will of God, there’s nothing I want, and in the will of God there’s nothing I fear.” (A.W. Tozer) We don’t fight against God’s will, nor try to manipulate it to our apparent physical or temporal advantage. Instead we learn, with Paul, to “give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus” (1 Thess 5:18). Quite simply, we learn to live by faith – the faith that waits upon God and does not try to coerce him.

Although today we may know only in part, we know that one day we will understand fully (1 Cor 13:12). On that day, when we see Jesus face to face, we will understand how every prayer we ever prayed was answered, every hope fulfilled and every joy perfected.

Complete Joy

While life in the Kingdom here on earth gets better and better because we walk with God, through the powerful eyes of faith, we also have eternity in the Kingdom of Glory to look forward to.

Christ has told us all these things “so that [his] joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete (1 John 15:11). The blessings of the gospel are full and complete. Considering where you have been called from, and your destiny in Christ, what more could you wish for?

The Bottom Line

Here is the bottom line. God may choose for you that you should always live on a very tight budget, without a bigger car or a house or a boat. To your grief, and in spite of your prayers, your children may end up rejecting the God you love. God may even allow you to contract a terrible disease and not be healed this side of eternity.

I once heard a humble follower of Jesus by the name of Steve Frost say that, “If Calvary teaches us anything, it must teach us that you can die trusting.” And for the sake of the Kingdom of God, it will always be worth it.

ELIEZER GONZALEZ

Senior Pastor,
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Eliezer Gonzalez is the Senior Pastor and CEO of Good News Unlimited. He is an international speaker and author, and is simply passionate about the gospel of Jesus Christ. Eliezer has done a bit of study in theology and also in early Christian history. He lives on the sunny Gold Coast in Australia, with his astonishingly beautiful wife Ana, two teenage children whom he never, ever embarrasses, and a crazy dog called Theo.



THE SECRET TO BIB

“And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me” (John 12:32).

Martin Luther stated: “No man understands the scriptures, unless he be acquainted with the Cross.” John Stott, the world famous pastor and Bible scholar, wrote emphatically “I could never myself believe in God, if it were not for the Cross.” Why is the Cross of Christ central to the Christian message?

The Mission of Christ was to go to the Cross

Jesus revealed to Nicodemus the ultimate mission of his life when he said, “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:14-15). He again alludes to his mission when he proclaims: “When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things” (John 8:28). Jesus was teaching us that he was born to go to the Cross and die for the sins of humanity.

The angel who foretold the birth of Christ to Joseph prophesied his mission: “And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21). Jesus was the Lamb of God who would shed his blood as a final sacrifice. The Cross was central to Jesus’ ministry, and our mission as representatives of Christ should be to point people to the Cross of Christ as the power of God to save a lost world.

The Cross is the Power of God for Salvation

When the religious leaders tried to trap Jesus with a question regarding the resurrection, he replied, “Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God” (Matthews 22:9). Jesus was telling them that they were allowing trivial matters to keep them sidetracked, missing the purpose of the Bible—to proclaim the power of God.

This was a common problem even among early Christians. Paul counseled Timothy about those who had a form of Godliness but were denying its power: “For the preaching of the Cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God” (1 Corinthians 1:18). There is no Christianity without the crucified Christ and no power for salvation without the Cross.

The entire Bible proclaims the power of God as manifested in the Cross. This is what Jesus meant when he said, “... I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.” The power of the Cross not only saves us from sin, it is also the message God uses to draw people to himself.

Preaching the Cross is the Secret to Biblical Evangelism

In John 12:32 we find the secret of drawing people to Jesus. First, we must understand the message of the Cross. Jesus lived a perfect life and bore the punishment of God for our sins. His life stands in place of ours in the final judgment, and we are declared perfectly righteous, as we are clothed in the merits of our crucified Saviour. Second, our job is to proclaim this message to the world. As we point people to the Cross, Christ will draw his people to himself. The love that sent Jesus to suffer and die for our sins has the power to soften the hardest hearts. Those who hear this message will be drawn to the one who gave his life as ransom for many (Mark 10:45).

The apostle Paul understood the importance of the Cross: “For I determined not to know any thing among you, save



The cross was central to Jesus’ ministry, and our mission as representatives of Christ should be to point people to the cross of Christ as the power of God to save a lost world.

LICAL EVANGELISM

“There is no Christianity without the crucified Christ and no power for salvation without the Cross.

Jesus Christ, and him crucified” (1 Corinthians 2:2), and “God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world” (Galatians 6:14). Paul, one of the greatest evangelists of all time, put the Cross at the center of everything that he preached.

Thomas Chalmers, the great Scottish minister, found that all of his sermons about duty and morals made little difference in the lives of his congregation, but he witnessed the largest change in their lifestyle when he began pointing people to Christ's death on the Cross. There is a magnetic power in the self-sacrificing love of Jesus that invites people into a relationship with him.

David Brainerd, the great apostle to the Indians, wrote: “I never go away from Jesus and him crucified, and I found when my people were gripped by this great evangelical doctrine of Christ and him crucified, I had no need to give them instructions about morality ... one followed—a sure and inevitable fruit of—the other.”

Worthy is the Lamb who was Slain

Jesus was born to be the final sacrifice for our sins. He took the punishment that we deserve so we may have eternal life. He understands what it means to suffer as a human being who was mocked, beaten, and crucified. “God provided his

love on the Cross. When Christ hung, bled, and died, it was God saying to the world ‘I love you’ (Graham, 2013, p 14). The power of Christ's love draws the sinner into his arms of mercy and compassion. Now we may have peace with God and the assurance of eternal life. The message of the Cross is the power of God for salvation, the central message of the Bible and the secret to successful evangelism. As representatives of Christ we must point people to the Cross of Calvary.

Proclaim this message of the Cross throughout the world, “Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing” (Revelation 5:12).

STEPHEN BEAGLES

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Stephen Beagles is a Christian writer living in San Antonio, Texas. He writes for his own ministry website, and provides social media content for Good News Unlimited. He is dedicated to proclaiming the essentials of the Christian faith and to placing the good news of salvation at the center of every message.

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*All Scripture is taken from the King James Version of the Holy Bible.



SMILE YOUR WAY TO BETTER HEALTH

Can a smile make you well? Can a frown make you sick? Maybe.

If we feel physically unwell, this is likely to affect our moods and emotions. But does it work the other way? Can our thoughts and emotions affect our physical health? The evidence increasingly says, "Yes"!

Many of us were taught that our health is largely determined by our DNA. Inheriting good genes meant we would enjoy good health. If we weren't so fortunate, we would very likely develop health problems, perhaps even at a young age.

Recently, a new field called epigenetics has burst on the scene. It describes how our environment can switch certain genes 'on' and others 'off'. If we are exposed to a good environment, e.g. good nutrition, fresh water and exercise, the 'bad' genes can be switched off, and the 'good' ones activated. The reverse is also true. Just because our mother may have had cancer, or our father heart disease, this does not mean that we are destined to get these diseases. Our DNA is not our destiny. We have a huge influence on how it is expressed.

Significantly, our thoughts and emotions also directly influence the expression of our genes. If we experience and express

positive emotions, healthy genes are activated and unhealthy genes suppressed. Of course, the opposite will happen with negative emotions.

Scripture emphasises the importance of positive emotions:

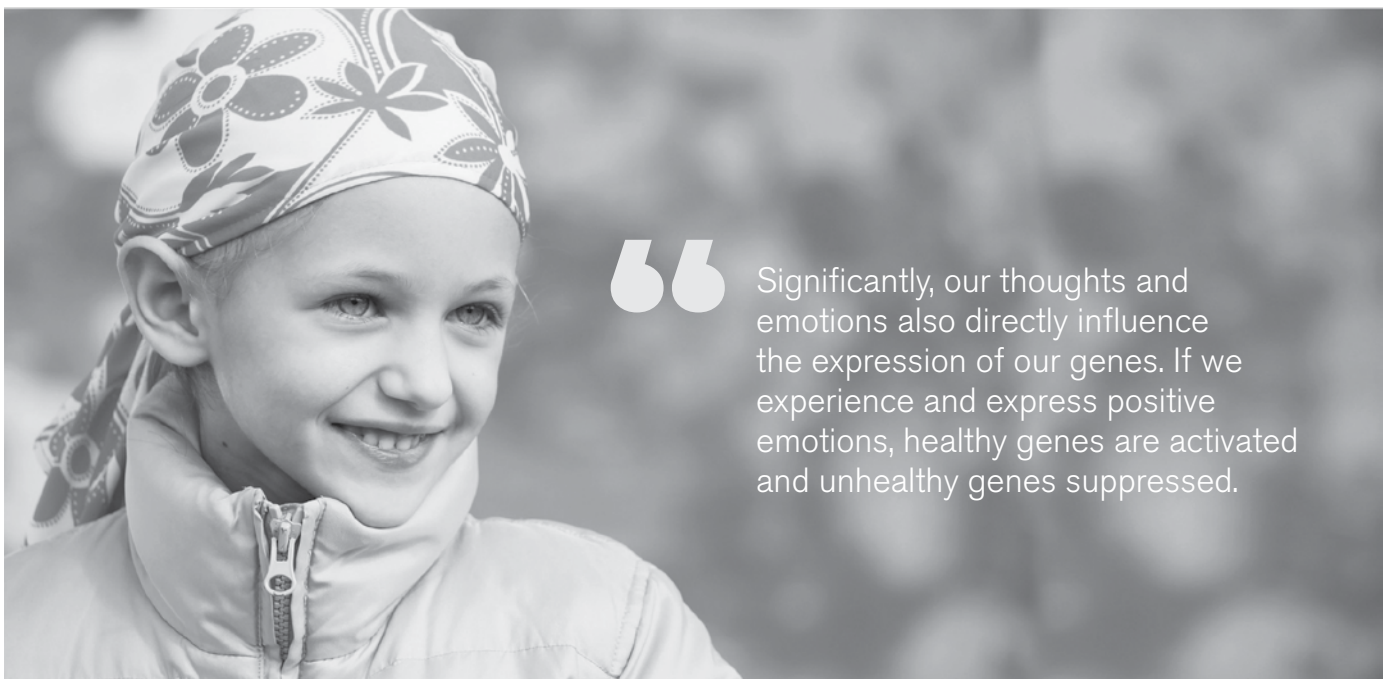
*... the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control...
"(Galations 5:22-23 ESV)... "whatever is true ... honourable ... just ... pure ... lovely ... commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things" (Philippians 4:8 ESV).*

Scripture, of course, has it right – we are better off with a smile!

▼ DR PHILIP RODIONOFF

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Philip Rodionoff is a medical doctor who has a special interest in nutritional and preventive medicine. He also holds a Master's degree in Religion and has presented in many parts of the world on evidences for the Christian faith. He is the co-author of the Davinci Decode. He is happily married with three children and lives on the Gold Coast in Australia.



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LETTERS *from our readers*

GNU is a meeting of minds from a wide range of church affiliations and therefore opinions expressed in our articles may differ from that of our readers. Recognising that opinions can differ and we all have much to learn and unlearn, we encourage our readers to participate in this forum.



Thank you for the videos!

Dear Unlimited,

Thank you SO MUCH for making the weekly GNU talks available on video so we can watch them at any time. I can project them from my iPad to my TV through Apple TV and Airplay. It's wonderful to have such uplifting talks. Good teaching is difficult to find these days. You have some of the best teaching available anywhere. These talks feed both mind and soul at the same time.

T.D.

Dear T.

Your affirmation is really appreciated. Thank you. And what wonderful technology it is that enables you to watch them on your television.



Jesus' last Lesson

Dear Ritchie,

In Acts 1:3 it says that Jesus, between his resurrection and ascension, "appeared to [the apostles] over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God". My question is this: where in the Bible are these crucial teachings about the kingdom of God?

J. S.

Dear J.

The only thing I can be certain of is that no teaching essential to our salvation would have been left out of the Bible. It is unlikely, therefore, that Jesus would have introduced any new understandings about the kingdom. Instead he may have focused on reinforcing his past teachings on the nature of his kingdom and in correcting any misunderstandings about it.



Our Millennial Home

Hi Ritchie,

I enjoyed reading your book, *Trimillennialism*, and was impressed that my old friend and brother in Jesus could produce such an interesting treatise.

I have reservations, however, about your presentation of what and where is Heaven. Where did Enoch, Moses and Elijah go? Elijah was taken up in a chariot. Jesus ascended in front of many witnesses, who were told that he would come in like manner, which would seem to be fulfilled in Rev 19.

Thanks for giving me such delightful mental stimulus.

God bless,

I. R.

Hi I.

Thanks for your response. I appreciate it.

With regard to your question about the existence of a place called Heaven, I did not dispute the fact that Heaven exists outside of planet Earth. In this book, I stated that "Heaven exists wherever Jesus reigns, whether on planet Earth or beyond it" (p 34). You rightly query, 'if it didn't, where did Moses, Elijah and Jesus go?'

The point I made, however, was that there is no promise anywhere in the Bible that God's people, at the Second Advent, will leave planet Earth and go to a celestial Heaven. I've had exhaustive discussions with biblical scholars who believe the redeemed will go to Heaven for the duration of the post-advent millennium, and none have been able to give clear biblical references to support their view.

William Miller taught that the Earth would be the home of the saints during the millennium, so it would be interesting to know who among his spiritual

Continued on page 16



descendants was responsible for deciding that the millennial home of the saints would be in a celestial Heaven, and on what basis that change was made.

Here is something else to mull over: if the saints live up in the heavenly Jerusalem for the duration of the Millennium, how would you understand the following: "I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of Heaven from God... And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God'" (Rev. 21:2-3). That would be a very strange announcement to make to people who had been living with God for a thousand years.

Dear D.

Have you noticed that while Jesus made a number of profound theological statements, they almost always had evangelical applications? Take, for example, what Jesus said to Nicodemus who came to ask him about the kingdom: "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born again" (John 3:3). That was very radical. Israel had never made the new birth a condition of citizenship for anyone, so what was Jesus doing making the new birth a condition of entry into his kingdom?

True theology is soundly based on the word of God, but unless that truth gets from the head into the heart, we've missed its real purpose.



That Book

Dear Ritchie,

Trimillennialism is a very good, enlightening book, spoiled by its eclectic mix of theology and evangelism. If I want a theology book I'll buy a book on theology and if I want a book on evangelism I'll buy a book on that subject, but it seems to me that you were unable to present your pioneering theological paradigm on the millennium without turning it into a sermon. However, in the light of your many years as a church pastor, I guess I shouldn't be surprised.

D. T.

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People are invited to come earlier and bring their lunch, beginning at 12:30pm.

After lunch, our pastor, Eliezer Gonzalez, holds a Bible discussion and prayer, beginning at 1:15pm.

Our main presentation commences at 2:15pm.

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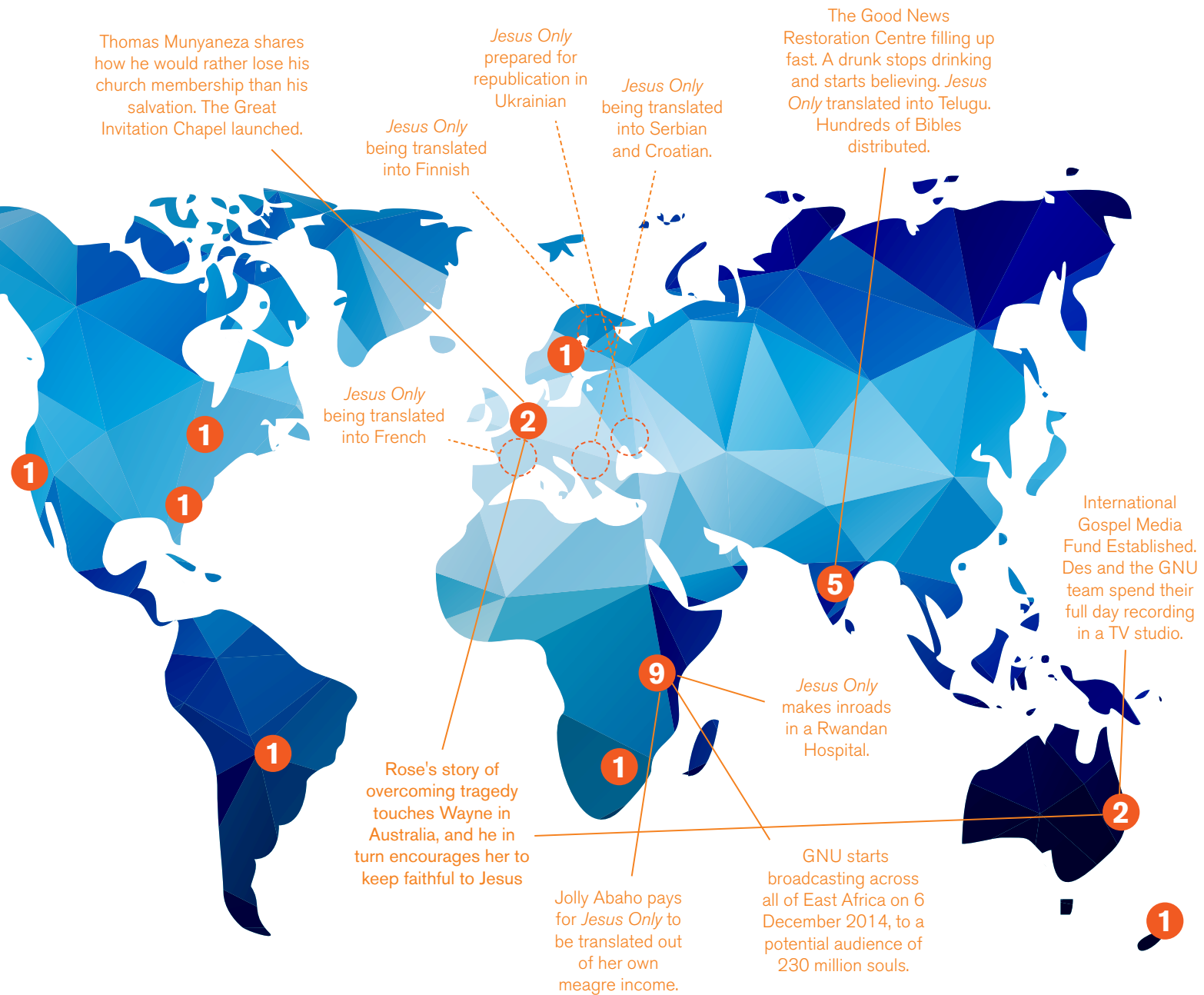
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