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UNLIMITED

THE MAGAZINE

I AM ALIVE AND I WILL NEVER DIE!

Jackie's Story of Courage,
Survival ... and Jesus
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**DESMOND
FORD:**

“Our great need is not a striving for more faith but a continued looking toward Christ, the faithful One who is now our life.”

ARE YOU JUST GIVING BACK?

The psalmist asks us an interesting question:

What can I give back to the Lord for all the good things he has done for me? (Psalm 116:12).

The New Testament answers the questions of the Old.

In the Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25:14–30), the servant who received one talent probably thought he was doing the right thing because he gave back to the master precisely what he had received. He thought he'd get a big smile and a cheery slap on the shoulder.

What condemned him was not ultimately what he did or didn't do; it was fundamentally his attitude—the attitude that said that what was his was his and what was the master's was the master's. He thought that by simply 'giving back' to the master, he would be fulfilling his duty.

Here is the bottom line: if you have accepted the gospel, then you no longer belong to yourself; you belong entirely to God. Every second of time, every cent of money, and every kilojoule of energy belongs to God.

As a ministry dedicated to spreading the gospel, this is also true for GNU. And so, while there is a cent left in our bank account, while there is

time still left to us, and while there are still methods to use, we will continue to spread the Word fast.

As you look at the places we are now reaching through radio and television and digital media—places that you and I may never visit in the flesh—the thought of 'giving back' should never ever cross our minds. Instead, our thoughts should be full of the joy and the privilege that is ours to be part of the fulfilment of the great Gospel commission in this world and in our time.

We want our vision and our passion for the lost to be as wide and as deep as Christ's. Thank you for being part of this incredible journey of faith through your gifts, your messages of support, and your prayers. One day, you may look back and say, “I was there at the start!”

Grace and Peace

▼ **ELIEZER GONZALEZ**

*Senior Pastor,
Good News Unlimited*



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EDITORIAL

One of the issues that exercised the apostle Paul's thinking soon after he began his mission to the Gentiles was this: On what basis are the Gentiles saved? Certain Jewish followers of Jesus, who believed that they themselves were saved by their faithful observance of the law of Moses, believed that the Gentiles would also be saved by their union with Israel, that is, by being circumcised and obeying the law of Moses (Acts 15:5). The first Church Council, however, made it clear that it was by the grace of God alone that both Jews and Gentiles were saved (Acts 15:11). God had affirmed this by his acceptance of the Roman centurion, Cornelius, into his fold without any conditions.

Because Paul taught that salvation was by faith in Jesus alone, he was dogged by Christian Jews who told his converts, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved" (Acts 15:1). Could it have been that these misguided Christians, who belonged to the circumcision party, were Paul's "thorn in the flesh" that he prayed the Lord would remove?

The relentless interference of the circumcision party with Paul's converts forced him to refine and define his theology of salvation. It drove him to dig deep into the Scriptures for answers; answers that he later shared with other churches in his letters.

Paul's most succinct argument against a works-based salvation is found in the fifth chapter of his letter to the church in Rome. He says there that we all became sinners through Adam's one act, but we all become righteous through Christ's one act (v. 18).

Because Adam turned his back on God, he was evicted from God's presence in Paradise. Consequently, through no fault of

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.

Ritchie Way
Executive Editor



our own, we were all born outside God's kingdom. That is the destiny we inherited from Adam.

Then came Jesus, who was born inside God's kingdom. But he was prepared to give up his right to be there so that we might have it. When the Father turned his back on Jesus and walked away, it was finished for Jesus, but by that **one act** our redemption was also finished and completed, for Jesus' death on the Cross had opened the door for us to be reunited with the Father (Matt. 27:51; Heb. 10:19-22).

While we lost our place in Paradise through Adam's one act, we have been offered a place back in Paradise through Jesus' one act.

So what do we have to do to be saved? We are saved not by our many acts, but by **Jesus' 'one act'** of self-sacrifice on the Cross. Our salvation was achieved by a single act, and it becomes ours by faith. The moment you put your faith in what Jesus did for you, you cross over from death to life, back into the presence of your heavenly Father.

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 FOOL

There is an Arabian story of a ruler who, at the sack of his city, was imprisoned in his treasure chambers. He starved to death among bars of gold and sparkling gems. The story is a parable of life. Many starve to death spiritually as they pursue the super dollar.

When Cortez came to Mexico, the Aztecs asked him what commodities or drugs he wanted. He replied that he and his Spaniards had a disease of the heart, which nothing but gold could cure, and he had received word that Mexico had a bountiful supply. He then made Montezuma, the Aztec ruler, his prisoner, and ordered him to pay tribute to the king of Spain. Immense sums were paid to Cortez. But his demand was insatiable.

The Aztecs revolted. Cortez displayed amazing generalship, but millions of the natives were sacrificed to the disease of covetousness.

The Foolish Wise Man

Jesus told a story warning us about this disease:

The ground of a certain rich man produced a good crop. He thought to himself, "What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops." Then he said, "This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there will I store all my grain and my goods. And I'll say to myself, 'You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.'"

But God said to him, "You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?"

This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich toward God (Luke 12:13-21).

The hero of this story was what all of us would like to be. He was rich, prosperous and successful. All men thought he was very wise indeed, but God called him a fool! The point of the story is clear: it is a warning against covetousness.

As we look at the man in our Lord's story, we have already noticed that he was wise, he knew how to fill his barns. His investment was a good one. He understood his business; he was industrious, careful and frugal. He knew how to save. He was highly respected and influential, yet he was a fool. He forgot God. This is the deceptiveness of covetousness. He was not rich towards heaven. He left God out of his calculations.

The folly of this man is that he takes all the credit for his prosperity. He gives no praise to God. The idea that any portion of the increase of his fields belongs to God seems never to have entered his mind. Does this man stand alone in that oversight? Are we not all too prone to take the credit for the prosperity we have acquired?

The rich fool came by his wealth quite honestly. The parable doesn't say that he added field to field by oppression or that he devoured widow's houses by fraud. Nor did he cheat the hireling of his wages. He wasn't even a miser. He said to himself, "Take life easy; eat, drink, and be merry."

'Things' were his jealous god. He had no thought for God. That's why God called him a fool.

Jesus and Riches

Jesus did not indiscriminately condemn wealth. It is true that he challenged the rich young ruler to sell all and follow him. That was an individual prescription and should not be made into a universal rule. He did not require poverty as indispensable for discipleship.

Some of his first followers had comfortable houses. He did not call them to ascetic poverty. Jesus came eating and drinking. One of Jesus' followers was a well-to-do centurion who built a synagogue for his Jewish friends. Then there was the home at Bethany where Jesus often stayed. That home was a home of some substance. The soldiers at the cross evidently thought the robe of Jesus was worth owning. So we must say, as George Adams Smith said years ago, a certain degree of prosperity and comfort is necessary for the free exercise of religious faculties.

ISH WISE MAN



Giving is the antidote to selfishness and covetousness.

But what a devastating warning against excessive love of riches is found in the story of the greedy farmer as told by Jesus. We do well to note his 'take heed'. Jesus is saying that covetousness is a fatal sin.

Stewards of His Things

What did Jesus mean by being rich toward God? Jesus meant this: we are stewards of the Almighty. It is God who gives us our ability to get wealth. To forget our stewardship is crass folly. We shouldn't be nervous when people remind us of our obligations with our wealth.

The Bible is full of warnings against being absorbed with things. Man cannot live without things, but he who lives for things alone is not a man but a beast. Things cannot satisfy the heart.

Now What?

What shall we say then to these things? How shall we save ourselves from this trap of covetousness? God's people of old gave up to one-third of their income for religious purposes. We live in a more privileged era, and every Christian should have as his dearest desire to give all he can to foster the Gospel of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Scripture says: "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich" (2 Cor. 8:9). Our Lord Jesus exchanged all heaven for a cow-shed and a Cross. As we behold that, what shall we withhold from him?

Giving is the antidote to selfishness and covetousness. Only those who practice regular, systematic giving to the cause of the Gospel will be safe and saved at last. May God guide us as we reflect on our responsibility to give. May we become like him in our giving.

▼ **DR DES FORD**

Founder of Good News Unlimited



MY JESUS ONLY STORY


A long-awaited dream of travelling to the Antipodes to reconnect with the authors of the book **Jesus Only** became a reality in December 2014! I praise God for the dynamic writing ministry of Dr Des Ford and Pastor Ritchie Way as they continue to spread the good news of the Gospel. The book **Jesus Only** is a gem that has changed the lives of countless people in several countries throughout the world.

On December 20th, it was a delight and privilege to meet the Good News Unlimited (GNU) Gospel Fellowship group in Milton, Australia. They may be small in numbers, but are large in heart and spirit. Their commitment to spreading the Gospel world-wide through television and radio media is inspiring! There is truly a sweet, sweet spirit among these dear people. Every Saturday, they meet together in a rented building from 12:00 to 4:00 pm where their time together commences with lunch and fellowship. Then, feeding of the soul follows as they study and discuss passages in the Bible. A sermon by Des Ford or Eliezer Gonzalez is scheduled next. The filming and broadcasting of these sermons are faithfully done every week through the expertise of Duncan Wood. It was an eye-opener to observe first-hand the workings that go into the live filming of these Gospel sermons.

Before Des began preaching, Eliezer skyped with three pastors from Kenya, Belgium, and India. They told how important **Jesus Only** is in the lives of the people in their countries, and repeatedly thanked GNU for this book.

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Pastor Boaz from Kenya shared that there are hundreds of people being baptised. Pr Joseph from India reported hundreds of baptisms also.

Imagine that! In Kenya, 1,500 copies of the book have been placed into the hands of prisoners there. Praise God! During the conversation with Pastor David Kayumba it became clear that many more copies would be welcomed! I learned later in conversation with Eliezer that he will be travelling to Kenya in July of this year to conduct Gospel meetings and, hopefully, to give away thousands more copies of *Jesus Only*.


When Des spoke with the three pastors, he told them, "God knows the sighs of our hearts." During their conversation, there was such delight and peace on their faces. Watching their interaction brought tears to my eyes, and joy to my heart. What a blessing it was to be there in person and witness how God is working in a mighty way through His faithful people in Australia, Kenya, Belgium and India!

“During their conversation, there was such delight and peace on their faces. Watching their interaction brought tears to my eyes, and joy to my heart.”

In New Zealand, I was warmly welcomed to spend Christmas Day with Ritchie and Rosemary Way and their daughter, Roseanne and her family.

During our time together, Roseanne asked how I met her parents. I told Roseanne and her family the following story.

In the fall of 2009, Ritchie and Rosemary were travelling back to New Zealand through Vancouver, Canada, after spending several weeks in Ukraine. Ritchie had been conducting Gospel meetings in a number of villages in my ancestral homeland of Ukraine. It was Deljane Matthews from Good News Fellowship in Toronto, Canada, who connected us for the first time. Since Ritchie and Rosemary were stopping over in Vancouver, Deljane thought it would be ideal for our small gospel group to meet with them. On October 24th, they attended church with me. After church, we had fellowship with GNU supporters in Dan and Raydene Erickson's home. Ritchie and Rosemary shared stories and pictures of their experiences in Ukraine. It was a memorable time!



During our fellowship, Edie Mabley asked Ritchie about the possibility of translating *Jesus Only: What Christ's Living and Dying Mean For You* (published 2008) into Ukrainian. She wanted Des's book to be put into the hands of the Ukrainian people so that their lives would be touched by the good news of the Gospel, and also she wanted the distribution of the book into Ukraine to be a tribute to my husband, Paul. He passed away on October 19th, 2007. Edie knew how much Paul loved God and how

he shared Christ's message of grace until the day of his death. She wanted Paul's testimony to live on through Des's book.

When Ritchie returned home to New Zealand, he realised that translation would be impossible. He believed there were too many quotations in old English, poems that couldn't be translated without losing their rhyming, and lists of words starting with the same letter that would make no sense in another language. So, he decided to shelve the project.

However, Ritchie remembers that Edie and I were "rather persistent", and he graciously (no doubt with the Holy Spirit leading his thinking) decided to simplify *Jesus Only*, to make it easier to translate. Des Ford readily gave his blessing to this endeavor.

Ritchie was able to enlist Volodymyr Stefanyk for the translation. The first edition of *Jesus Only* (abridged) was printed and ready for distribution by Easter 2013. Six and a half thousand copies were printed, then distributed by Pastor Boyko, Volodymyr and a pastor in Burshtyn, Ukraine.

Since 2013, *Jesus Only* (abridged) has been translated into Spanish, a number of African languages, Telugu (Sth India), and Finnish. *Jesus Only* is also in the process of being translated into Croatian, Serbian, and for the Pacific Islanders (Fijians, Tongans, Cook Islanders, Tokalauans, Samoans, Nueans) for whom English is a second language.

And the *Jesus Only* story has not ended. *Jesus Only* will soon be spread with God's help, to the Czech Republic and Philippines (Ilocano language).

We thank Des, Ritchie, Eliezer, Edie, and many others for their willingness to listen to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The people in Ukraine and throughout many countries in the world are being blessed, and lives are being changed by the everlasting Gospel in *Jesus Only*. Such stories we will hear and rejoice about in Heaven! Indeed, we shall be praising God through eternity because of His love, mercy, and grace!

▼ GAIL S MISEK

Professional Development Teacher and Educational Consultant in Kenya "A Better World Canada" and friend of Good News Unlimited

“The people in Ukraine and throughout many countries in the world are being blessed and lives are being changed by the everlasting gospel in *Jesus Only*.”

TRUE OR

I'm a sceptic. I wasn't born that way. And I wasn't like it as a child. Trained as an historical researcher I have since learned to listen to stories with some scepticism. I developed a detective's sense for lies, subterfuge, the bizarre, ulterior motives and obfuscation.

In my research, I hunt for reliable bits of information. I value first-hand eyewitnesses, either written or oral, and storytellers whose mental faculties are still sharp. I prefer more than one witness, indeed, as many as possible. I depend more on the testimonies that don't come with ulterior motives. I search for an innocent narrative, not one with red herrings and layers deliberately designed to mask the truth. And I allow for minor differences among accounts. Mine is a scepticism that aims at objectivity.

I'm not alone in this brand of scepticism. When I look carefully at the documents of early Christianity, those on which millions base their deepest faith, I notice that the writers go to great lengths to give a simple account from first hand witnesses to achieve objectivity. They have obviously sorted and sifted through the evidence for their own faith, a faith that rests primarily on the resurrection of Jesus.

John, for example, the one who, of all the apostles, remained closest to the cross as an eyewitness, relates how a Roman soldier speared the torso of Jesus to make sure he was dead. John knows Jesus to be a real man who suffered a real death, not a spirit entity or one who faked death or went into a temporary coma. John anticipates scepticism and satisfies it with first hand evidence.

The Gospel of Matthew, furthermore, offers the fact that the corpse of Jesus was placed in a stone tomb sealed with a Roman tie and guarded by Roman soldiers who would be executed if they were found to be derelict in their duty. Matthew relates how the guards, immediately after the resurrection, rushed to the Jewish priests to tell truthfully what they had witnessed, placing themselves in danger of execution. The priests suggested a scam; that is, they proposed the soldiers should add a layer to their story and tell everyone that while they slept on duty, the disciples of Jesus stole the corpse. The priests vowed to use their

influence to excuse the soldiers but, legally, sleeping on duty was still a capital offence. The soldiers risked everything by placing themselves in the hands of dishonest priests who were acting like little schoolboys unable to string a watertight yarn together.

So we have two versions of a story. Firstly, the Roman soldiers used their account to make a grab at escaping the death penalty. On the other hand, the disciples of Jesus later told their version and were martyred for it. Which version has the ring of authenticity about it? We would expect people to invent stories in order to escape death. In contrast, we would not expect the disciples to die for a story they had invented and knew to be a phoney. The version of the disciples is therefore far more credible.



The simple accounts of John and Matthew carry the hallmarks of authenticity. They take scepticism in hand and build objectivity.



R FALSE?

The simple accounts of John and Matthew carry the hallmarks of authenticity. They take scepticism in hand and build objectivity.

Paul, in 1 Corinthians 15:3b-7, also strengthens objectivity. Wolfhart Pannenberg (1928-2014), the German Protestant theologian who wrote much about the historicity of the belief in Christ's resurrection, argues convincingly that in this passage Paul is borrowing a very early Christian creed, one perhaps written just a few years after the resurrection. Paul's creedal quotation marshals evidence to support a most authentic account of the resurrection. The evidence is drawn from first-hand witnesses, ones who received no monetary gain from their story, unlike the Roman soldiers, and ones who stuck to their storyline in the face of opposition and martyrdom.

The apostles saw value in the testimony of first-hand witnesses (Acts 1:22). Paul continues in 1 Corinthians with that estimation and lists those who witnessed the risen Jesus, including Peter, James, the other apostles, and about five hundred other men. (The passage does not include any women

because in those days their status was second-class and their testimony regarded as inferior). The multiplicity of witnesses is impressive. One person may suffer from delusions, but not hundreds at one time. In addition, Paul himself spoke to Peter and James about the resurrection. He vows that what he passed on was "no lie" (Galatians 1:20).



Paul was a hostile witness... The Damascus road event was something quite unexpected, something that does not fit an invented story.

Paul also claims that he saw the risen Jesus on his way to Damascus (1 Cor. 15:8; compare Acts 9:5). It is persuasive that close friends of Jesus like the apostles should see Jesus after the resurrection, but the fact that a declared enemy of Christianity should see Jesus is even more convincing. Paul was a hostile witness, if you like, to the reality of the resurrection. The Damascus road event was something quite unexpected, something that does not fit an invented

story. Rarely does a man make such a dramatic turnaround in his thinking as Paul did, especially when on the cusp of fame in his society. But he did it, and persisted with it, and died for it.

The resurrection story ticks all the boxes for me: early documentary evidence found in a creed, first-hand witnesses, multiple witnesses, many prepared to die for their belief, even a hostile witness. Altogether, these elements anchor the narrative in authenticity. It forms the basis for "the Gospel" (1 Cor. 15:1), or good news of salvation that Paul introduced to the Corinthians. It echoes in our ears today.

▼ MILTON HOOK

Friend and Board Member of Good News Unlimited

Dr Milton Hook is a West Australian who studied in America at a Lutheran Seminary and Andrews University. He has experience as a missionary in Papua New Guinea and a pastor and Bible lecturer in New Zealand, Australia and USA. He is the author of numerous articles and three books including the biography of Desmond Ford.



I AM ALIVE AND I WILL NEVER DIE!

JACKIE'S STORY OF COURAGE, SURVIVAL... AND JESUS



Jackie rarely leaves her home in the remote area of Rwanda where she lives, but she receives dozens of visitors every week. She greets each of them from her wheelchair with the same words: "Jesu Wenyine" (Jesus Only)! And when they leave, often with a book in their hands, she sees them off with the slogan that sustains her life: "I am alive and I will never die because Jesus is risen."

This is Jackie's story.

More than ten years ago, Jackie, at the time aged just 15 years, fell from a speeding lorry, shattering all the bones in her lower body and leaving her in a coma for many months. Doctors said there was no hope for her; that treatment would be wasted and she should be left alone to die. But devoted Catholic nuns cared for her and nursed her all that time.

Jackie spent many months in a coma, and during this time many people prayed that Jackie would not continue to suffer, but that she would pass away and rest in peace.

In spite of the nuns' care, Jackie was left paralysed from the waist down, her body wasting away so that she felt that she was rotting while she still lived. Jackie says, "Since that time I know what rotting means, since parts of my rotting body were often removed and thrown away and it turned into soil." But she did not die. As she slowly recovered, Jackie received up to 150 visitors every day, all of them amazed to see that she was still alive after such a terrible accident.

During those early days of suffering, Jackie gave her life to Jesus Christ. "God made me survive," says Jackie. "I soon

realised that in this accident God was calling me to be a witness of his saving love to my peers as well as to my Muslim family. My father realised that I was no longer interested in my former religion, and he did not prevent me from talking about my new-found Saviour. He said, 'If Jesus is what makes her happy and stay alive, let her go the Jesus way. Open the doors for those who want to play for her!'



God made me survive. I soon realised that in this accident God was calling me to be a witness of his saving love to my peers as well as to my Muslim family.

"Incredibly my father opened the door for Jesus into our family through the many visitors I received." Jackie understood that even such a terrible accident could work for her good. She says, "I convinced myself that perhaps this accident happened to me so that Jesus may reveal himself to me. In my heart I leaned on the hope of a resurrected life where there will be no pain. This hope was a power that generated every smile above pain."

Jackie's visitors were amazed at her hope and joy as she pointed them to Jesus. She told them, "The One I have is able. The present suffering is nothing and it does not trouble me. Having Jesus is everything."

Five years after the accident, Jackie had more surgery, but she has remained paralysed from the waist down. In spite of this,

Jackie's great faith sustains her and gives her a joyful life. "God turns the unfortunate things that happen to his children into blessings for all. Job's story is a classic one. God has purposes in all these things. You see, I am his. Whatever he pleases to do with me, I am available. I will share whatever message he wants to pass across through this destroyed body of mine."

Unknown to Jackie, something else was happening in Belgium that was to transform her life even more. Sammy, who lives in Brussels sent a message to his brother-in-law Eric in Rwanda to pick some books from Pr. Ephron and take them to his parents and their neighbours. Eric did just that. He has reached many people for Jesus Christ through the book *Jesus Only*. And that's how Jackie received the book *Jesus Only* by Desmond Ford.

Jackie says, "On seeing the title, *Jesus Only*, something happened in me, something I cannot explain. On reading the book, hope and assurance was born in me like never before, and then I understood everything that had happened to me. I saw clearly my mission, while living in this dead body. Many people who visit me want to see my personal copy of *Jesus Only*, and they are curious to read every underlined word. I read and underline, it is underlined all over. Why not? I trace my story in my Saviour's story."

This book came at the right time for her, Jackie says. "I know I am supposed to be dead, but I am alive because God still wants me alive, and I must use this time to proclaim his great love."

Jesus Only has given Jackie a greater understanding of her life and of God's love and care. "Every chapter speaks to my heart, everything in this book has not only confirmed some of the things I held on to, but has scattered all darkness and fear, and I now have a better view of things. Now I am overflowing with



On seeing the title, *Jesus Only*, something happened in me, something I cannot explain.

joy, I have Jesus, and I rejoice in lifting up the name of Jesus while I am down here (on earth). My many visitors will continue hearing the name of Jesus from my lips until I stop breathing."

"Just to know that God loves us in our unworthiness—this is the most important gift. Our fears and anxieties in this life are mere distractions on our Christian journey. When I have completed the work Jesus called me to do, he will ask me to bid farewell to this life, and later he will give me a new body. I will have joy without ceasing."

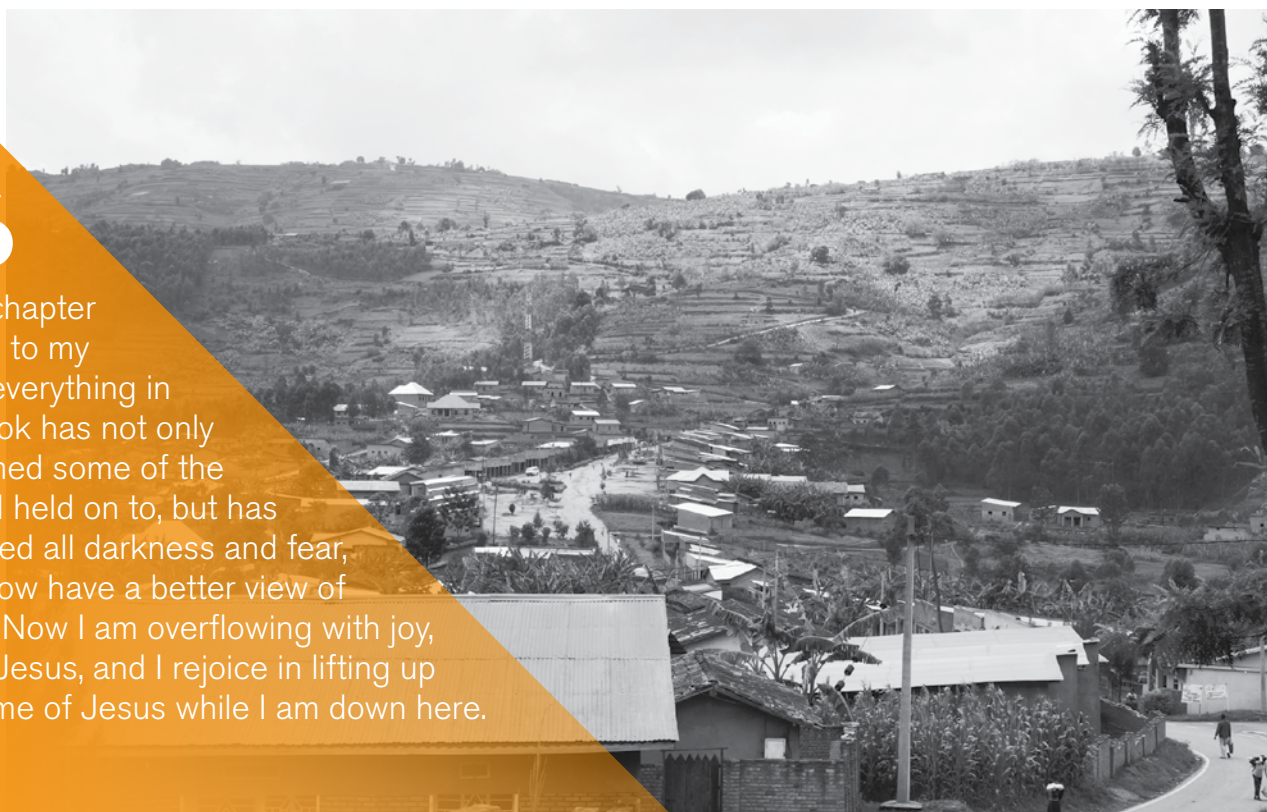
Jackie's family is amazed at her assurance, joy, and her new language of the gospel. Her previously Muslim mother now recognises Jesus as the great secret of living joyously in pain and loss, and this has multiplied Jackie's joy. As a result of Jackie's witness through suffering, and of the book *Jesus Only*, with the exception of her father, her relatives and many of her friends within a Muslim community, have now been baptized.

Jackie says: "When I look back, I marvel about God's ordering of my life. This is an opposite of what my doctors saw earlier on. In the early stages, the doctors suggested to those who sacrificed to help pay for my treatment that they were willing to help end my life because they did not see the possibility of my recovery. These people refused this suggestion; they respected my life. And I am still here thanks to Jesus who has miraculously sustained me. Now I think, if I did not get into this

Continued on page 10



Every chapter speaks to my heart, everything in this book has not only confirmed some of the things I held on to, but has scattered all darkness and fear, and I now have a better view of things. Now I am overflowing with joy, I have Jesus, and I rejoice in lifting up the name of Jesus while I am down here.



Continued from page 9

accident, how else would I have been able to witness for Christ to my parents, friends and Muslim friends? I would now be hidden under a bed-sheet unaware of my Saviour. But today, on my bed and in my wheelchair, I have pointed hundreds, if not thousands of people to Jesus as my only source of joy and purpose of living in this rotting body of mine. God placed me here to be a witness to all for God's saving power."

Young people have been attracted to the gospel because they have heard it from someone near their own age. "I have been blessed to witness the transforming love of Jesus to the young ladies and young men who had become delinquent," she says. "Now they are confessing their love for God. Many have thanked God for where he placed me because of their changed lives. They see some goodness in my present situation."



I have been blessed to witness the transforming love of Jesus to the young ladies and young men who had become delinquent. Many have thanked God for where he placed me because of their changed lives.

Not only has Jackie's family been given the great message of *Jesus Only*, Jackie also gives copies to her many visitors. She also makes a passionate presentation of *Jesus Only*, turning her wheelchair into a pulpit for Jesus.

She has asked for more books—at least 50 copies—in Swahili and Kinyarwanda. Her home in Rwanda is near the border with Congo, so it is an area where she can minister through *Jesus*

Only to people from Congo, who speak Swahili, as well as to those in Rwanda.

"I will continue in this body lifting up *Jesus only*", she says. "Nothing can be added to Jesus. This book is timely for me, and for my many visitors."

Jackie has a special message for Desmond Ford.

Dr Ford,

God bless you abundantly for writing and sending me the book *Jesus Only*. This book has greatly helped me to get established in Christ. It has a message that comforts me and many more people who have come to know *Jesus Only*.

I am still breathing, although I cannot sit properly, I am always in a slanted position, I have no feeling up to my abdomen, but still I am still living. That is why I can tell you that this book *Jesus Only* has filled my cup of joy in my paralyzed condition.

I cannot see you and say thank you in this life, but when we get to heaven, we shall recognize each other; I will thank you for this good news; the news that has fortified my friendship with Jesus. *Jesus Only* is all I needed and he is my all in all. I am satisfied and I have peace.

I am amazed that this book came to me. God knew I needed it in my life and for my witnessing. I am now sharing the book with my visitors. They are in great need of this book. The only Swahili copy I was left with, I just have given it to my Swahili speaking visitor. Thank you. Jackie."

This story was provided by Jackie, translated and written by David Kayumba, and edited by Eliezer Gonzalez.





HOW GOD TURNED A HOLIDAY INTO A GOSPEL MISSION

Sammy and Josephine live in Brussels, Belgium, and they had been saving for years to return to Rwanda. When they finally returned in December 2014, they turned every moment of this family holiday into an adventure for *Jesus Only*. They could not have imagined a better way to enjoy their holiday.

Their adventure is helping us to understand more of what the message of the book *Jesus Only* (by Desmond Ford) has been doing in Rwanda. This was a busy holiday for this family.

When they arrived in Rwanda, Sammy and Josephine tried to find the remaining *Jesus Only* books so that they could minister for Christ in their own homeland. They were disappointed to find only 40 books remaining.

So they spent their holidays preaching in the local market, and they gave the books away as gifts only to those people who were the most passionate in responding to the gospel. As word spread throughout the local community, many people came begging for books. Sammy and Josephine could only take their names and contact details.

People told Sammy and Josephine that they were the first people who had ever come to preach Christianity in this market. They were overwhelmed with gratitude to have Jesus preached to them. They reported that the *Jesus Only* books that had been handed out were so popular that they were already being passed from person to person in the community. Sammy and Josephine prayed with these people and they sang a song together, "Remain in Jesus."

But that is not all. Having read the book *Jesus Only*, some of these people returned, seeking them out in the market, professing their new faith in Jesus Christ, and asking to be baptised.

One lady named Vestina was given a book and read some chapters overnight. The following day, while Sammy and Josephine were preaching in the market, Vestina returned, so excited about what she had read that she took over the preaching!

Vestina spoke courageously to the people and said,

In this book I have read about how God became man, how he humbled himself to become a human being, how he accepted to be accursed and yet he was not, and how he was mistreated and punished for the things he did not do. I clearly saw how he was made what he is not. I read about how he came in love for us, and our response to his love was hatred. I am still reading. I must finish reading this book so that I can be a witness of all this to the people in this area.

Sammy and Josephine encouraged these people to seek out a Christian community and to start Gospel fellowships in their homes. The people who were given books are being followed up so that this work may be encouraged and fanned into an even bigger Gospel work.

Written by Sammy, translated by David Kayumba, and edited by Eliezer Gonzalez

“

People told Sammy and Josephine that they were the first people who had ever come to preach Christianity in this market. They were overwhelmed with gratitude to have Jesus preached to them.

THE BEDROCK PROPHECY

For me, the Bible's bedrock prophecy, forming the basis for all other prophecies, is found in Leviticus 26:11-12: the Lord will come and live with us, will walk among us and not abhor us. He will be our God and we will be his people.

For centuries this promise was kept before the people in a three-dimensional form: the sanctuary. The symbol of his presence was there, pointing to a time when God would come and live amongst his people in a sanctuary not made by human hands.

When Stephen proclaimed that this shadow sanctuary was not the reality of Leviticus 26:11-12, but a type of Jesus, the living sanctuary, in whom God dwelt in all his fullness (John 2:19-22), the Sadducees began to panic. This sanctuary was their commercial enterprise, increasing their wealth and power. Their very future was threatened. Already, many Jews had forsaken the sanctuary to follow Jesus. They had to put a stop to this exodus.

Stephen was hauled before the Sanhedrin. In his defence he told the Council that when Solomon built the temple he knew that the omnipresent God could not be contained in the sanctuary's Most Holy Place: "Will God really dwell on earth? The heavens, even the highest heavens cannot contain you. How much less this temple I have built" (1 Kings 8:27). Stephen told the Sanhedrin, "The Most High does not live in houses made by men. ... 'Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool. What kind of house will you build for me?' says the Lord" (Acts 7:49).

Before Stephen could remind them that Jesus was the true temple in which the fullness of God dwelt, they dragged him outside the city and stoned him to death.

Jesus fulfilled the four parts of this covenant prophecy.

1. "I will put my dwelling place among you."

In the fullness of time God came to our world in Jesus, who "made his dwelling among us" (John 1:14). He was Emmanuel—God with us (Matt. 1:23). God lived for a while in our midst. He rented a house in Capernaum as the base for his mission (Matt. 4:13; 9:1; Mark 2:1).

2. "I will not abhor you."

We deserve abhorrence and loathing, so why didn't the Lord detest us? It was because all that we deserved was heaped upon him on the Cross. He accepted the condemnation that should have been ours so that we would be free of such condemnation (Rom. 8:1).

3. "I will walk among you."

Jesus didn't come down from heaven to sit on a glorious throne to be worshipped. He came, on foot and in poverty, with the "good news of God" (Mark 1:14).

4. "I will be your God and you will be my people."

If we accept that Jesus is our Lord and Saviour, then we are his people and he is our God. That's his precious pledge. That's a relationship to seek and cherish. It's yours for the asking.

▼ RITCHIE WAY

Editor - Good News Unlimited

Pr Ritchie Way has served as a missionary, church administrator and pastor. He earned a BA in theology, and in 1985 he graduated with an MA in religion. Ritchie has for the last decade, been the Executive Editor for the South Pacific Good News Unlimited magazines. Ritchie is a director of Good News Unlimited Ltd. and a published author.





WHAT THEN?

When I was in high school, the school principal read a story to the school assembly that I have remembered ever since. The story tells of a conversation between an old man and a schoolboy:

Old man: "What will you do when you finish school?"

Schoolboy: "I will go to university, prepare for my career, and get a good job."

Old man: "What will you do then?"

Schoolboy: "I will get married and buy a nice house."

Old man: "What then?"

Schoolboy: "I will have children, lots of children."

Old man: "What then?"

Schoolboy: "They will grow up and go to school and I will make lots of money. Then I'll retire"

Old man: "What then?"

Schoolboy: "I will do whatever I want."

Old man: "What then?"

Schoolboy: "One day I will probably get old."

Old man: "What then?"

Schoolboy: "I'll die."

Old man: "What then?"

Is that all there is? Is there any more? Life contains a lot of joy and sorrow, struggle and achievement. What does it all mean? And "What then?"

Humanity has a sense that there is something more. We hate the idea that our hopes and dreams and those of our loved ones, are ultimately going to disappear into nothing. But where

“Humanity has a sense that there is something more. We hate the idea that our hopes and dreams and those of our loved ones, are ultimately going to disappear into nothing.”

do we find meaning is all of this? Certainly not inside ourselves. Meaning and purpose are found outside of ourselves.

The Teacher in Ecclesiastes discovered this truth millennia ago and stated that God has set eternity in our hearts (Eccl 3:11). Our meaning and purpose are ultimately to be found in the One who made us, the One who came to save us. Jesus said, "I have come that you may have life and have it to the full" (John 10:10). He clearly stated that he is the "way the truth and the life" (John 14:6).

Moreover, the Apostle John tells us that because of Jesus, we do not need to perish, but we can have eternal life (John 3:16). We can be confident that because Jesus died and rose from the dead, those who trust in him will be resurrected also (1 Cor. 6:14), and live forever in a place where there "will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain" (Rev 21:4). This sounds a lot more attractive than the destiny of a cold, lifeless universe. More importantly, it is real, not some misguided fairytale.

In this life there are many distractions. There is a lot a glitter and glamour that means nothing in the end. Ultimate meaning is found only in Jesus Christ, the One who made us, the One who saves us, and the One who wants to spend eternity with us. Let us grasp that meaning. Let us respond to Jesus' invitation to be part of the magnificent "What Then?" that he has designed for us.

▼ DR PHILIP RODIONOFF

Friend and Board Member of Good News Unlimited

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.



DOES RELIGION HAVE HEALTH BENEFITS?

We don't often think of religion as a factor that can influence our health. But there has been a lot of interest in recent years on this very topic—in fact, well over 1000 studies have been published, and that number is increasing rapidly.

In 2004, Dr Harold Koenig of Duke University Medical Center wrote a paper discussing research that increasingly demonstrates that spirituality and religion have a positive effect on health. In particular, religious beliefs and practices were associated with:

- Less depression
- Faster recovery from depression
- Lower suicide rates
- Less anxiety
- Less substance abuse
- Greater well-being, hope and optimism
- More purpose and meaning in life
- Greater marital satisfaction and stability

There were also significant physical health benefits. These included:

- Less heart disease
- Better recovery from heart problems
- Lower rates of cancer
- Lower blood pressure
- Lower cholesterol
- Less smoking
- Better immune function
- More exercise
- Better sleep
- Longer lifespan

He also quoted research that regular religious attendance added an additional seven years to life expectancy.

If a pill were developed that could do all of this, it would be worth a fortune to a pharmaceutical company. Every doctor would be prescribing it. But we have access to these benefits for free. We have a Creator who loves us and gave himself for us. We can know God and be in a relationship with him.

Who would have thought that religion could have such a positive effect on our health? The even better news is that the health benefits are just the beginning.

“ The even better news is that the health benefits are just the beginning.

▼ **DR PHILIP RODIONOFF**
Friend of Good News Unlimited

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.



REPORT FROM PR JOSEPH IN INDIA

Recently Pr Joseph shared this report with us on the front-lines of the gospel work in his region of India. Here you can see the successes and the challenges that he faces every day as he Spreads the Word Fast. *Eliezer Gonzalez*

1) Prayer Meetings

The Holy Spirit of God has blessed our prayer meetings. More people attend each week as God's word spreads further. Everyone wants to know more about Jesus and they support each other in prayer. We also pray for GNU and its supporters.

“Everyone wants to know more about Jesus and they support each other in prayer.”



2) The Restoration Good News Centre

With God's help and inspiration, our meetings have increased from 80 at the first meeting last August to 200 people in October.

God helps us provide food for the people who come to the Restoration Good News Centre. Through a private sponsor, GNU has been helping us pay for the rent of the hall. I am so thankful to GNU and to this generous sponsor. GNU has also been sending Bibles to us and each month we distribute them to people who are so grateful to be able to read the word of God daily. Thank you, GNU.



3) Taking the Gospel to New Villages

With the help of two other pastors, we have visited six villages to spread the Good News to the poor who have not heard it before. Now I visit these villages every month to conduct prayer meetings. This is the winter season in India, and many old people living in huts have no bedsheets to keep them warm at night. So I have been praying to God about this need. We also need a good sound system and we are praying about this too. GNU is an inspiration for me in my ministry to spread the word of God very fast in India.

4) My Vision for 2015

This year, helped by the great work of GNU, I have a mission to reach thousands of people with the powerful word of God. I want to reach villages with the Good News, especially where people have not heard about Jesus. With the help of GNU, I want to provide Bibles to these people.

In 2015, thanks to God's leading and the support of GNU, I will be preaching the gospel on Pravachan T.V. Channel, reaching thousands of people in India.

We are thankful to be able to distribute Dr Desmond Ford's book *Jesus Only*, which has been translated into the Telugu language, I am so happy that this wonderful book will help people in India to know more about Jesus and accept him into their lives.

5) Some Difficult Times in My Ministry

GNU sponsored four goats for the growth of my ministry and to help the elderly people. But due to sickness and heavy rains, two of our goats died. We have many sick, elderly people and I have been praying for them daily. We thank God that some are getting well, but many still need our prayers. We thank our partners at GNU for your prayers.

On behalf of my ministry and my congregation in India, I praise God for the wonderful GNU supporters who have been helping greatly to spread the Good News around the world.

Your loving Pastor Joseph.

▼ **PASTOR JOSEPH USALA**
Friend of Good News Unlimited
India

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 those 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.



Bring with Jesus

Dear Ritchie,

Some time back I read your explanation of 1 Thessalonians 4:14, where Paul describes the second coming of Jesus in these words: "God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him." If the souls of the dead return to earth with Jesus, doesn't this indicate that they must go to heaven when they die? You, however, had another 'take' on this verse. As I have misplaced the answer you gave, would you please be so kind as to share it with me again?
J. R.

clouds of heaven. The believers in Thessalonica were worried about their members who were dying before Jesus returned. Paul says to them, "Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep ... We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so [i.e. in the same manner] we believe that God will bring [to life] with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him."

This interpretation accords with Paul's other uses of the phrase "with Jesus". For example, we died with Jesus (Rom. 6:8; Gal. 2:20); we were raised with Jesus (2 Cor. 4:14; Eph. 2:6); and we are seated with Jesus in heavenly places (Eph. 2:6). Hope this helps.

Dear J.

Paul makes it clear that when Jesus returns, the living will not rise to meet the Lord in the air before the sleeping saints are raised to life. First, the dead will rise, and then, together with those who are alive at that time, they will rise to meet the Lord.

As there is no teaching in the Scriptures about immortal souls going to heaven, Paul's words here in 1 Thessalonians 4:15 about the dead Christians remaining asleep until Jesus returns must be accepted as the correct understanding of what happens when a person dies.

So how then do we then understand 1 Thessalonians 4:14, which says, "God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him"? Firstly, this verse is talking about the resurrection of Jesus, not his return in the



Thank you for the videos!

Dear Unlimited,

I've started listening to your Jesus Only online broadcast—fantastic!!! You are simple enough for anyone to understand and yet have some profound truths for some of us 'old timers' that have been students for many decades. THANK YOU. I can't find words to express how refreshing it is to find a ministry that majors on the gospel and doesn't clutter it up with a lot of other issues, rules, and controversial beliefs. It is really difficult to find any church where the gospel is actually preached but I'm very thankful in this small town where I live to find a Lutheran church where the pastor's sermons are very gospel oriented and the people are very loving and accepting.

T.D., Medical Lake, WA USA

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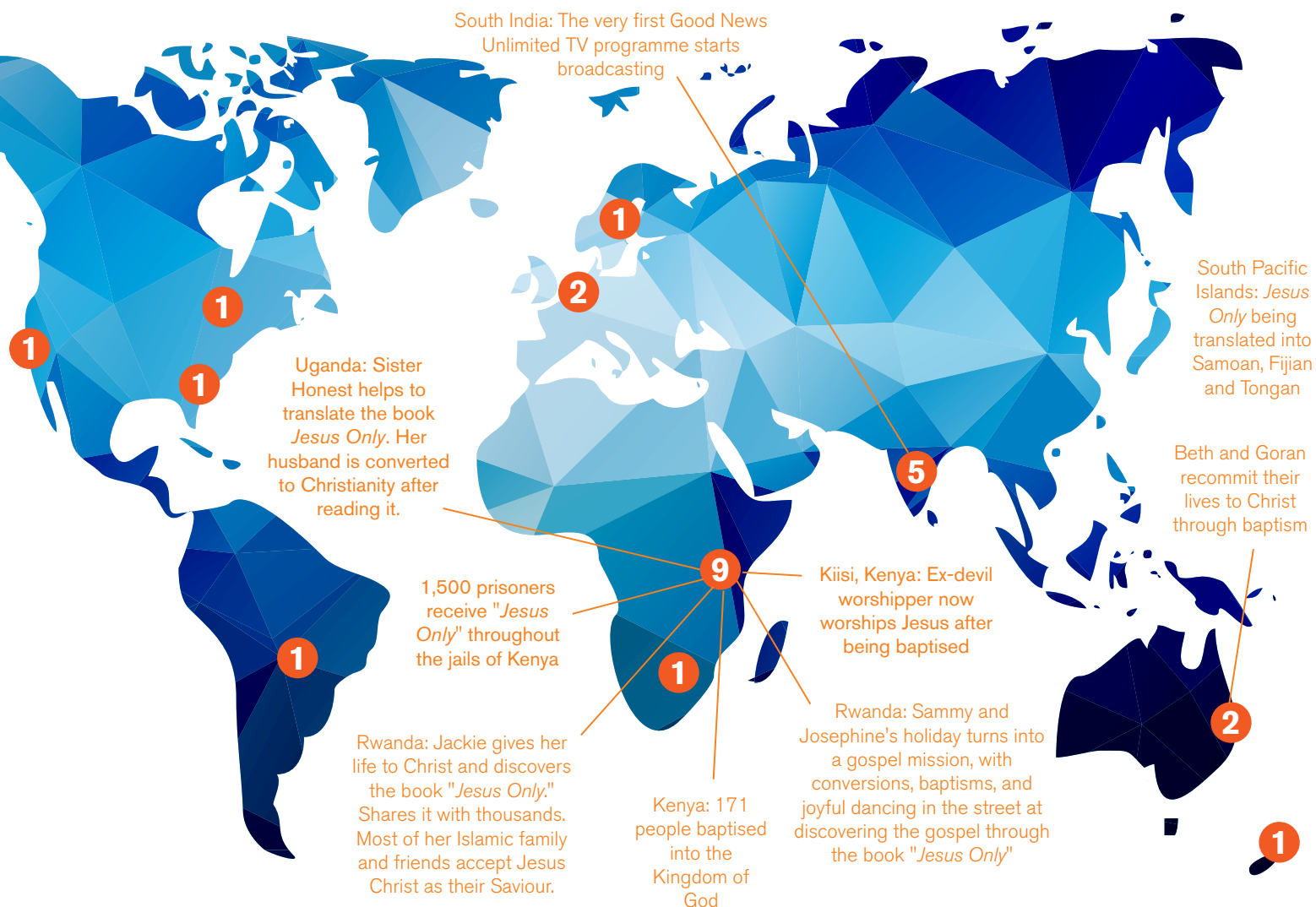
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? Number of fellowships in each country / region.

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