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UNITY IN JESUS

SMUTS VAN ROOYEN

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Editorial

Several years ago a small team of Americans made history by flying a hot-air balloon across the ocean from Japan to the west coast of America. It was an amazing flight, which ended in a crash landing in the snow-laden trees of northern California.

A reporter asked one of the crew, 'Weren't you afraid of dying?' The crew member replied: 'Yes, but people who go through life under the control of their fear of death, seldom accomplish anything worthwhile.'

The crewman's words are reminiscent of the words of Jesus. He said, 'Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it' (Matthew 9:39).

It is a law of being: to be preoccupied with self-conservation is self-destructive. He who all his life bends mind and muscle to avoid death, will have nothing left over to live on. I do not speak here of the God-given responsibility to care for life as a sacred trust. I am thinking rather of the fear of risk and danger

which prevents some from seizing opportunities and participating in many enriching experiences.

When 'fear of personal loss' becomes a governing principle, life turns into a dirge. On the other hand of the prime mover in any life is service (a motive with an external basis) then life is melodious.

The Scripture reveals a Saviour who came to lift from the race the fear of death. This he did by dying a death to end all deaths. 'He too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is the devil—and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death' (Hebrews 2:14, 15).

Christ has taken away from us the threat and risk imposed by sin. He who embraces Christ can thrust himself into work and play with unhampered zest, knowing that eternal life is his possession, no matter what happens.

R J Allen

R J Allen

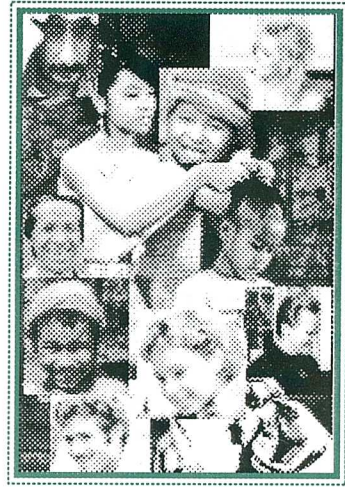




Unity In Jesus

'For He himself is our peace, who has made the two one, and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility' (Ephesians 2:14).

Smuts van
Rooyen



There are lots of ways of creating unity. You can take a group of children and say to half of them, 'Take your shirts off. You're a team.' To the other half you can say, 'Leave your shirts on. You're another team.' So you have an *us* and *them* kind of unity. That is one way of doing it.

Another way of getting unity is for people to suffer together. At the end of both world wars there was absolute amazement at how Christians who had suffered together in concentration camps, had drawn to each other. There were camps in which there were Baptists, Pentecostals and Catholics, they all faced a common suffering; a common enemy. They all came out of the ordeal with a tremendous unity. In fact, the Ecumenical Movement was started by Christians who had been in concentration camp together.

Another way of creating unity is by education. Everybody learns the same ideas, accepts the same concepts and doctrines. Those who accept these same teachings are a unit.

But the book of Ephesians is doing more than that. It is not simply saying we are united as Christians because we are Christians, and that there are people who are not. It is not an *us/them* arrangement. It is not simply that sometimes Christians suffer so they are drawn together, or that they have found common doctrinal ground and are therefore united. Ephesians is saying much, much more than that. It is saying that we are united because we have all found Jesus Christ. He himself is our peace.

He, himself is our peace! People who have submitted their lives to the Lord Jesus, who have taken his objectives as theirs, have entered

a mystical union.

There is a supernatural element where the Holy Spirit is given to those who have accepted Jesus Christ. There is a union between them.

Sometimes I go to the shopping mall—to an eating place there, because I like the light that comes in from the windows—I get something to drink there, and put the finishing touches to my sermon. As I was sitting there one day, a woman was playing the piano for the whole mall—and she was sneaking in hymns! First she would play some secular song, then she would play modern hymns which people couldn't recognise. I was recognising them, and she moved me to think about God's grace: to think about his goodness. I sat there in the mall saying: 'Go to it! Do your thing! Put in those hymns. There are few enough of us Christians. It's wonderful to hear you sneaking in those hymns while you are playing in the mall.'

I knew there was a bond between us, so when she stopped playing I thanked her for them and she said, 'Yes, I'm being naughty but I can't resist.'

The book of Ephesians doesn't speak of our creating unity. It speaks about what Christ has already done. Christ has already created the unity. He has broken down all those barriers between us, and we choose to participate in the unity that is already there, by the way we appreciate each other.

It is a funny thing that on the very issue of what Christ has done for us, Christians seem the most divided. There are two basic ways Christians view what Christ did for them. There are the *instead of crowd*, they believe that Jesus died 'instead'

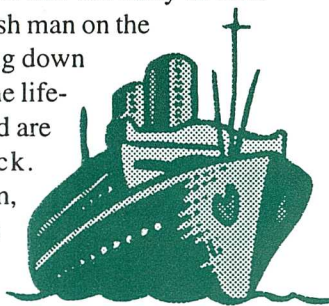
of them. Then there is the *for me* crowd. They believe that Jesus died 'for them'. The 'instead of' and the 'for me' groups have been in ongoing conflict. And I must say that when I look at it I wonder whether either group really accepts at all, what has already been done for us in Christ.

Here is how an 'instead of' believer appreciates Jesus—I must tell you that I have no problems at all with 'instead of' thinking. In fact that is the way I lean because I am a covenant theologian.

The black man, Booker T Washington, tells the story of when he was a little boy. He was a slave, and down in the south where he grew up the slaves were not given cotton shirts because cotton was too expensive a fabric. They were given flax shirts. Flax is a type of grass. The shirts made from flax were very uncomfortable. They were like leather shoes that you have to break in before they are comfortable.

Booker T Washington remembers the time came for him to get a new flax shirt his brother would say, 'Booker, let me wear the shirt for you for awhile and break it in.' So his brother would wear this scratchy, itchy garment for a week or two till it was finally broken in. Then he would pass it on to his brother.

That is 'instead of me' love. I am moved by it! On a bigger scale it is like the story of Ben Guggenheimer the Jewish man on the Titanic. The ship is going down and he has his place in the lifeboat. A woman and child are standing on the deck. Guggenheimer sees them, he leaves his seat on the lifeboats giving it up to the woman and child. He goes to his cabin. He dresses in his tuxedo and as the ship goes down he stands proudly on the deck. It is a wonderful demonstration of love.



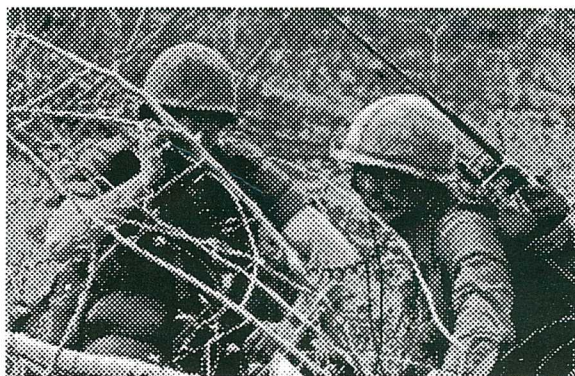
'Instead of me' Christians see that Jesus died in their place and that their death was inevitable— except for the fact that he came to the rescue. It is consistent with Scripture.

Scripture is divided into the New and Old Testaments. (The Old and the New Covenants) It is as if the covenant had to be fulfilled and Christ takes the place of the believer in the covenant, fulfilling the covenant on the believer's behalf.

'For me' Christians see Jesus as having done

something for their salvation, but not in the sense of having taken their specific place.

Here is a 'for me' story: In August 1944 in France, a group of citizens from a small town were taken before a firing squad (the town had been aiding the underground movement). The Germans were unhappy. To punish the town they chose twelve people to execute. Among the twelve was a fifteen



year old boy. This boy and the other eleven were taken and tied to poles, ready to be shot. The boy looked at the woods where he had grown up; he remembered his childhood and was filled with a sense of regret because he would not live the rest of his life. He was gripped by a great fear and began to whimper, all the while hoping that the Germans would not hear him because he wanted to die bravely.

As the Germans raised their guns to fire, a mortar landed close by. Crump! Before long another mortar followed. Crump! The Germans disbanded. Through the woods came Bob Hamsley, leading GT's with four tanks and other weapons. A battle ensued while the twelve condemned were still lashed to their poles. Fifty Germans were killed and when the battle was over, Bob Hamsley went from pole to pole cutting the people loose.

In 1990 Bob Hamsley was honoured in that French town. In the very courtyard where the shootings were to have taken place, the Mayor—who had been the fifteen year old boy— made a speech. He said: 'Bob Hamsley is my saviour. I will never forget what he did for me. Every day of my life I have thought about how Bob Hamsley saved my life.'

Did Bob Hamsley die in the boy's stead?

No, he didn't die instead of him, but he did some-

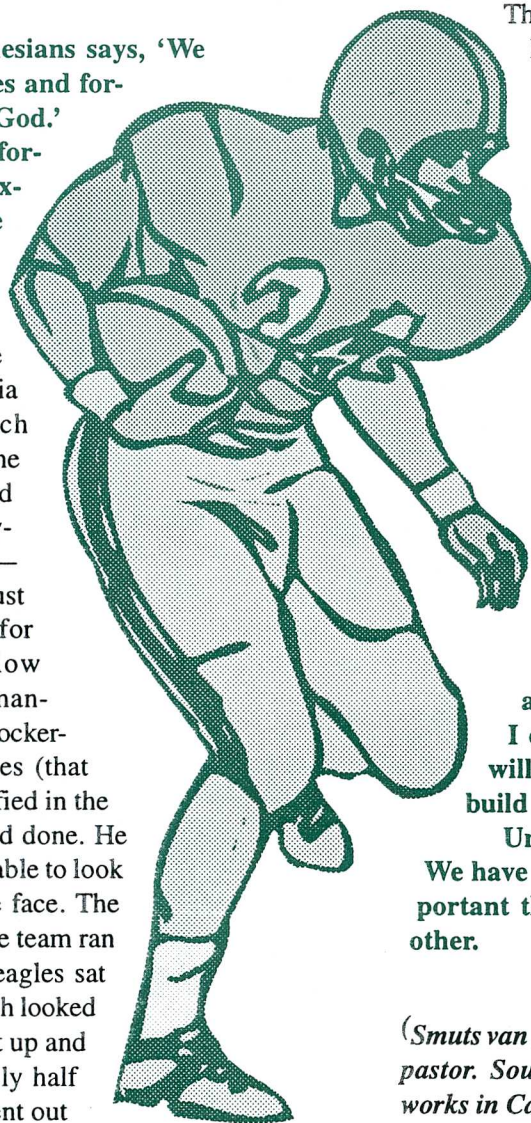
thing for him and there is in Scripture a great tradition that also describes the gospel that way. Every healing that takes place where Jesus heals the leper or the blind person, is viewed as a symbol of his salvation.

And yet, there is this division between Christians. On one level I can see why, but on another level I do not. If people appreciate Jesus Christ as their Saviour and Lord, they appreciate him, and there is unity. He himself is our peace.

The book of Ephesians tells us how we are to express the unity that exists between believers—the unity that Christ has already brought into existence by breaking down the walls that divide us. ‘Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as Christ God forgave you’ (Ephesians 4:32).

The writer of Ephesians says, ‘We have seen how God loves and forgives us, let us imitate God.’ It is in the exercise of forgiveness that unity is expressed. When people cannot forgive each other you can be sure there will be no unity.

In the 1929 Rose Bowl, UCLA and Georgia Tech. were playing each other. UCLA fumbled the ball and it was recovered by one of their own players, who took off with it—in the wrong direction. Just as he was about to score for Georgia Tech., a fellow player, Benny Loom, managed to tackle him. In the locker-room at halftime, Reagles (that was his name) was mortified in the realisation of what he had done. He sat in stunned silence, unable to look his team members in the face. The coach said nothing. As the team ran out to the field again, Reagles sat glued to his seat. The coach looked at him and said, ‘Roy, get up and go back. The game is only half over.’ So Roy Reagles went out



and played a wonderful second half.

Until we forgive each other; until we understand the flub-ups that we make, until we are more compassionate with the way each other's minds work, the game is only half over. There won't be unity. We are to imitate Jesus Christ in the way we forgive each other.

Ephesians tells us that there is another way to express our unity in Christ. ‘But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it’ (Ephesians 4:7). The gifts that God has given are for the building up of the church till we all reach unity in the faith (Ephesians 4:13). This way of drawing together is when we all use our skills and talents to affirm one another. To build each other up.

A sea captain and an engineer were arguing. The sea captain said, ‘You don't know your job.’ The engineer replied, ‘You don't know your job.’

‘I can do your job any day’ said the captain.

‘I can do your job any day’ said the engineer.

So they switched jobs and after awhile the captain came up from the boiler room covered in oil and said, ‘You had better come down ‘ere. I can't make her go.’

The engineer replied, ‘Of course she can't go, we've run aground!’

So if I am captain, I am going to steer the ship. If I am engineer, I am going to keep the engines going. If I am cook I am going to cook. I am going to do it because when I do, it helps to create unity. I will use my gifts for you. I will build you up in what I do.

Unity is a wonderful message. We have it in Jesus. And now it is important that we express it to one another.

(Smuts van Rooyen is a scholar, teacher and pastor. South African born, he lives and works in California.)

Christ And Existentialism

Candace Jackson

I am a seventeen year old student at Los Angeles Valley College, finishing up my first year. I took a class this semester taught by an atheistic Marxist. He was extremely hostile towards believers of any kind, with a special animus towards Christians. He proudly claimed to be 'probably the most existential, materialistic person you know'. His vulgar ridiculous comments about Christ and God grated on my sensibilities—but I kept quiet throughout the semester. I wanted to respond without getting caught up emotionally. I also wanted to get a good grade in the class.

Finally, an opportunity arose for me to defend my belief in God. The last paper we wrote for the course was an analysis of a novel about the Chinese revolution. The purpose was to identify and explain any existential concepts used.

Existentialism first assumes there is no God—or if there is, we can never know such a God. Therefore, who you are, or what your essence as a human being is, depends solely upon you defining yourself through your actions. Man's fate is to live and die. The most you can do is live authentically and honestly, and ascribe some meaning to your life by your actions. Your life is intrinsically absurd—having no internal value or meaning.

After reading the novel I realised that existentialism paints a vivid, insightful picture of the condition humanity is in. It (existentialism), makes good sense if you discount God. Without God, death certainly is humanity's fate. The main point of the novel was that life is man's attempt to be more than a man in a world of men. . . to escape man's fate.

Now it was clearer to me than ever before, why I believe in God. In my essay reviewing the novel, I felt a strong need to express that belief. I do not know how my professor reacted to what I wrote. I only know that it was my best attempt at answering his scornful, frequent question, 'How in the world can anyone believe in God?'

My essay included the following:

1. It is not enough for me to understand *what* the human condition is. I must know *why* it is.
2. We are the only creatures that fight against their surroundings. We fight time. We fight destiny. Why, as a human, do I desire to escape my fate?
3. In this desire to escape my fate, there is an assumption in me that there is somewhere to escape to. This is where belief in God provides a link between where I am and where I want to be. If there were no escaping man's fate of death and nothing else to follow, I would not fight so hard against it. No one would expend energy futilely.

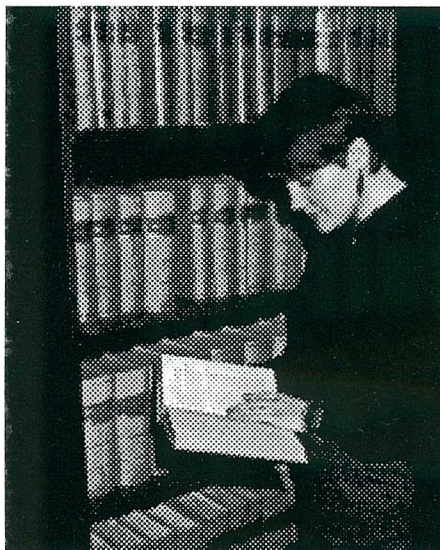
Instead, there is a hope, a wonder, a curiosity, a faith—whatever you want to call it—that beyond man and his fate there is More.

With chaos and random absurdity all around us, I am often asked, 'Why do you believe in a loving God?' I discovered that this is

precisely why I do believe. Somewhere in my soul I accept that the concepts opposite to chaos and absurdity, must exist. If they exist, it must be possible to find them. I find them in Jesus Christ and the Gospel.

May others find reason, order and meaning in Jesus too. God bless the searching hearts.

(Readers are invited to share their stories of Christian experience and faith with the editor. Manuscripts submitted will be considered for publication. They cannot be returned.)



God's No Cosmic Bellhop

Tom Sine

There's a popular form of teaching today that says God wants to bless people of faith with health, wealth and success. I believe this 'prosperity gospel' is a tragic form of the American dream linked to the gospel. It is doing great harm everywhere it takes root.

Its beginnings are not in the teachings of Jesus but the writings of Benjamin Franklin. In the 18th century, Ben did a revisionist job on Puritan ethics. He said the Puritans were absolutely correct when they said that virtue is essential, but they were confused when they saw virtue as the goal of life. 'Virtue is not the goal,' he said, 'but the means.' Life is about being prosperous and successful, and you can use your virtue, and your spirituality, to get up that hill.

Now, what has happened in the American church, I believe, is that dear, committed Christians have taken the American dream—with its definition of the good life in largely economic and materialistic terms—and linked it with the gospel of Jesus. The prosperity gospel takes the idea of the abundant life, which Christ did talk about, and makes it look like the consumer-driven shopping malls of America.

But the Christ we follow didn't have anywhere to lay his head. He was not into accumulation or spectacular consumption. The 'name it and claim it' people are spot on when they say we need to be people of faith who pray prayers of faith. But nowhere in the New Testament do we find Jesus or anyone else praying for a more prosperous life for themselves, or even for safe travelling mercies, or to get over their sore throat. All of the prayers are outwardly focussed. Prayers of faith, yes—but never prayers of faith for personal gain or self-interest.

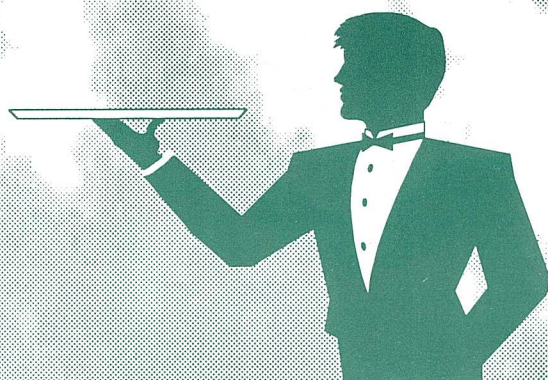
The prosperity gospel almost makes God into a cosmic bellhop, whose job is to get me a

greater piece of the rock. I find this appalling. I have friends in Haiti who know much more about Jesus than I do. But they have a hard time feeding their kids. If there was anything to this prosperity gospel these people would not be struggling.

We live in an interconnected inter-dependant world in which there are only so many resources to go around. If any of us uses more than a just share of God's limited resources for our own lives, then those resources are not available for the extension of the good news into the world.

We need to teach 'whole-life' stewardship, where we constantly try to find God's focus for our lives, and then re-invent how we use time and money to put first things first, and create a more abundant, celebrative life.

(Tom Sine is author of Cease Fire: Searching for Sanity in America's Culture Wars. This article is based on an interview during his recent Australian visit. The article is reprinted by permission from On Being magazine. PO Box 434 Hawthorn Vic. 3122.)



Contrasts

Elizabeth Price

Have you ever noticed how we live by contrasts? I once lived for a few years beside a railway line, and I am not talking about a lightly rattling electric train line. The trains that went past were diesel freighters and high-wheelers and long haul passenger services gathering momentum to climb the grade ahead.

They were so heavy and noisy, conversation had to be suspended as they passed. And you could feel the earth tremble beneath them. I never counted how many went by but somebody estimated, that at that period, there were something like thirty a day.

Then one day the unions called a railway strike. They struck for two days and do you know what disturbed my sleep? . . . *silence*. The whole environment reverberated with silence and even though I love quietness, I actually felt disrupted.

In view of our response to contrast, it is not surprising that God uses contrast to get a point across. When I write a letter, I love fine writing paper and a gold pen. Yet the most precious manuscripts ever found were aged, decaying pieces of parchment in common clay jars.

When Israel left the slavery of Egypt and had second thoughts about what they were doing, they wanted to comfort themselves in their immediate culture shock. They gathered their treasure—as I gather my fine writing paper and gold pen—and melted them down and called in their craftsman. They fired the golden jewelry and built a golden calf like the one they knew in Egypt. It takes some skill to make a golden statue. It must have been quite beautiful, gleaming and radiating in the sunlight.

By contrast, while they were doing that, God picked up two pieces of common stone littering Mount Sinai and used his own finger to carve out the greatest law ever conceived. He presented it to Moses as the foundation stone of a new culture.

The contrast is jarring. Such an

important document surely deserved the best available—and everything was available to God. He could have whisked up slabs of diamond from the Kimberley, blocks of marble from Italy, or tiles of topaz from wherever you get topaz. But he didn't. He took the common, plentiful stone around the mountain and made of it a foundation statement of his kingdom on earth.

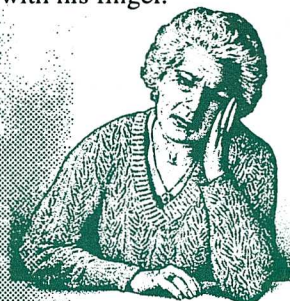
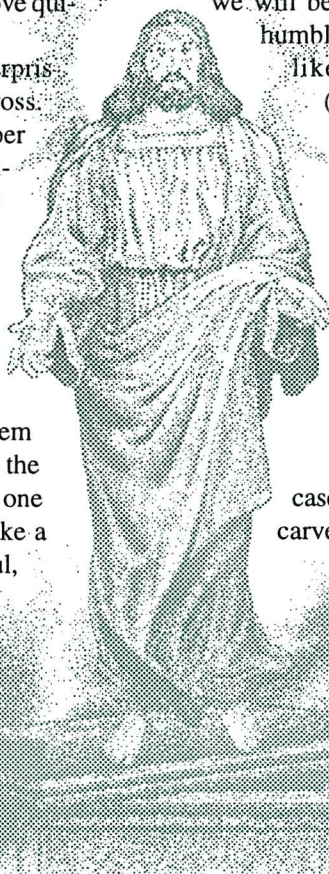
Of course God did not leave it like that. Knowing how prone we are to discard ordinary things, he directed the building of a golden casket for the common plates of stone. He encased his handwritten masterpiece in gold.

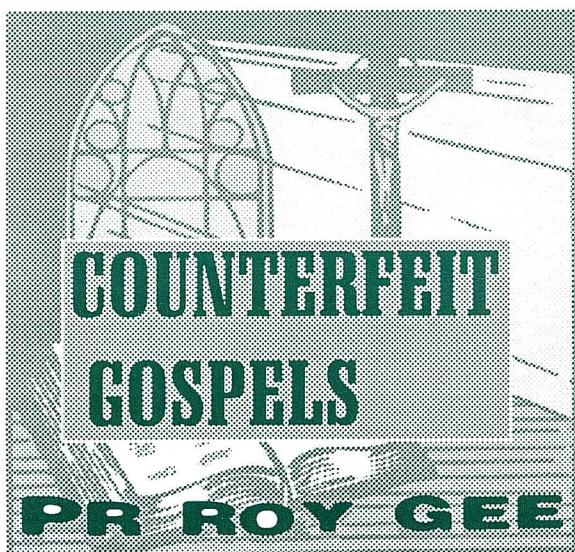
In the same way, God took very ordinary people like fishermen and collaborators, and wrote on them. He wrote so successfully, that people recognised them as followers of Jesus and accused them, on one occasion, saying, 'You must be one of them, your accent gives you away!' They became walking, talking testimonies to a new creation.

Finally, God assures us that this ordinary stuff of which we are made will be changed. We will be changed to be like Christ. We will take on immortality. We will gleam like the sun, for as He is light, so we will be light. 'He will transfigure our humble bodies and give them a form like that of his glorious body' (Philippians 3:21).

When I see grey hair and wrinkles or stooped shoulders and gnarled hands, the contrast to his glorious body is so compelling I want the change to be mine. So I have to ask myself, will I first let the finger of God write on this common body? Will I suffer the pain of overprint?

I doubt if God will ever encase in light, what he has not already carved with his finger.





The Jesus of the gospel can be counterfeited. This was a danger clearly warned against by Paul.

'For if someone comes to you and preaches a Jesus other than the Jesus we preached, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received or a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it easily enough' (2 Corinthians 11:4).

Notice how the apostle links a false Jesus with a false spirit. That is because the counterfeit mimics the true. The true Jesus, the true gospel and the true spirit are all linked and connected together.

I'm not suggesting that to believe the true gospel we must first know all the complexities the theologians talk about when they discuss the doctrine of the nature of Christ. If we have to understand all the nuances of what church councils have said regarding the two natures of Christ in one Person, we are goners. However, from the beginning of his letters to Corinth, Paul wrote about the true Christ. He defines the true Christ in terms of the Cross.

'I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified' (1 Corinthians 2:2). The true Jesus is the one who suffered and died. If people bring a Christ of enlightenment and comfort, yet without a cross—however glorious this being might be—it's another Jesus.

The Corinthian Christians were very proud. They were happy in their spiritual accomplishments. Some of them believed that the resurrection had already occurred. They were beyond death. They thought they were already living forever and ever. That is why Paul wrote 1 Corinthians 15, to explain

the truth about the resurrection. Some Corinthians were proud of the various parties in their church. Some followed Cleopas, some followed Cephas. They were all divided. They were proud of their partisan spirit. They were also proud of their super apostles. Paul wrote:

'I resolved to know nothing while I was with you, except Jesus Christ and him crucified. I came to you in weakness and fear, and with much trembling. My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power' (1 Corinthians 2:2-4).

Paul makes no claim to be one of their successful super apostles. In chapters 11 and 12 of 2 Corinthians, Paul writes about his sufferings. The Corinthian gospel was a gospel only of triumph and only of good times. Paul goes contrary to the Corinthians. The true Christ suffered and died. The true gospel is about the true Christ's sufferings. The true Spirit leads us in this life through much suffering. The true gospel brings us salvation, but we are still sinners. We live in a world of suffering. We suffer. We die.

The late Sir Laurence Olivier was considered the finest actor in British theatre. One evening, in London's West End, he gave a performance that was electrifying. The audience jumped to its feet, cheering and shouting, 'Bravo!' There was curtain call after curtain call.

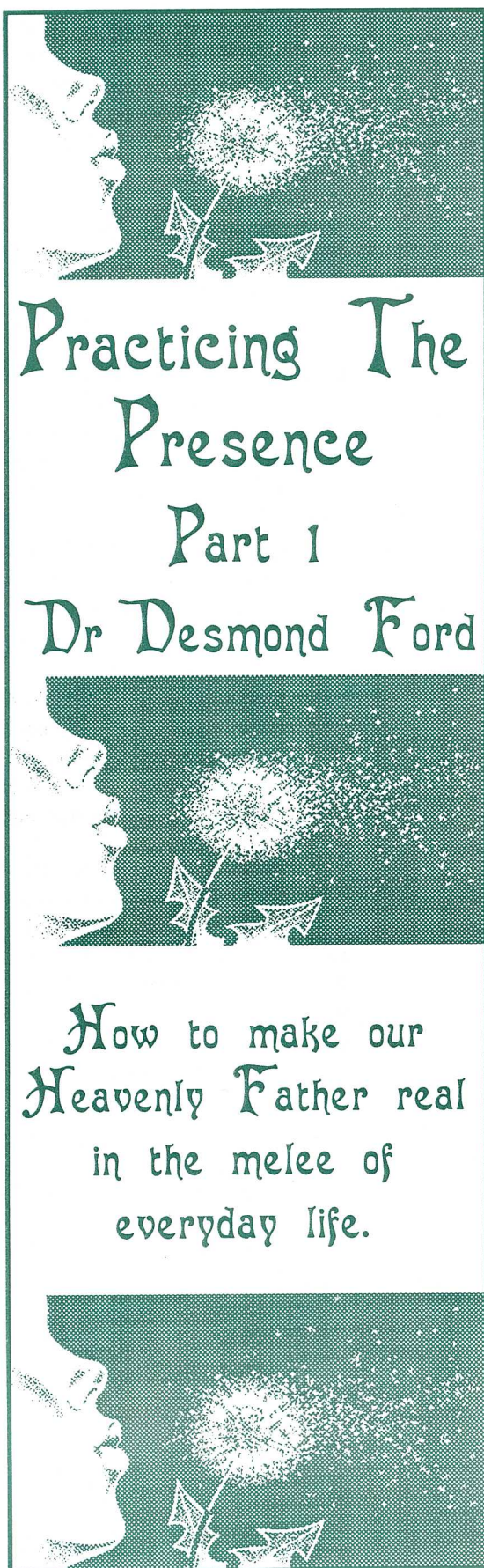
Finally Olivier ran off the stage. He hurried to his dressing room and locked the door. Some of the dignitaries in the audience went by to congratulate him, but they couldn't get in. The door was locked. They could hear Laurence Olivier inside shouting and screaming. Alarmed, they sent for the producer of the play. They told him, 'Sir Laurence is in trouble in his dressing room. You'd better go see him.'

The producer knocked on the star's door. 'Larry, are you all right in there? Larry, let me in!' After a few minutes, Olivier slowly unlocked and opened the door. The producer hurried in and asked, 'What's the matter with you Larry? There are very important people out there just dying to meet you. They want to congratulate you. You gave a once-in-a-lifetime performance tonight. You were absolutely brilliant. You were breathtaking. What's the matter with you?'

'That's what's wrong with me,' answered Olivier. 'I sensed that something tonight was very, very special. As the play progressed, I knew I was giving the performance of a lifetime. What frustrates me is, I don't know why!'

'If I knew what I did to make this such a spe-

(Continued on page 14)



The two leading teachers of the New Testament (Jesus and Paul) both make clear, that there is a small company of people who will never marry. They choose to remain single, and God chooses to use them in a very wonderful way.

The best known such person in the world—one that I have met—is John R. W. Stott. He is a minister in England, for many years rector of All Souls church in London. He has had a tremendous influence on the world. He is a lovely, gracious, Christian Scholar and preacher. Dr Stott decided in his very early years that, though heterosexual, he would forego the bliss (and the blitz) of marriage. He would give his whole life to the ministry of the Gospel. This he has done very successfully.

But it is a woman that I want to tell you about right now. When people first looked at this single woman, she seemed very blurred and unclear. This little old lady should be sitting with a cat on her lap and knitting in her hands. Yet she was the most sought after woman speaker in the world. Though she did not begin her ministry till she was in her fifties, she visited 64 countries, slept in a thousand beds, and even travelled by elephant.

I refer to Corrie ten Boom, who learned to practice the presence of God. Her life is a witness to the tremendous impact any life can have if the secret of walking with God is mastered.

Corrie was a premature baby, and was sickly throughout her childhood. At the age of four, she filled the house with her screams. But she grew up in a wonderful home. Though her mother died early of tuberculosis, Corrie had two beautiful sisters. One of them, Betsie, went with Corrie through her concentration camp experience. (The other sister was in prison for a time, but was released). Corrie also had a wonderful brother. Her father was a scholar, who knew several languages.

The family was a family of watchmakers, a family that practiced the presence of God, a family that was poor and rich—poor in material things but rich in the things of God. Every morning they gathered to study the Bible; reading and comparing texts in various languages.

The ten Booms took joy in little things; seeing in every gift, a gift from a loving Heavenly Father. They cared for people, even adopting foster children. They could never turn anyone away from their door. Corrie, who started off premature and sickly, began conferences in camps for the mentally impaired. For twenty years she cared for those that were mentally handicapped. Then came world war II.

One night there was an air-raid. Aircraft were dog fighting terribly in the skies over Holland.

Corrie heard her sister Betsie making a cup of something in the kitchen below. Corrie went down the stairs to join her. As Corrie entered the kitchen there was a huge explosion above the house. An hour later, when she returned to her bed, she found a hot, metallic, serrated object buried in the mattress. Shrapnel!

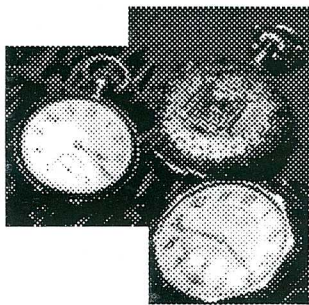
Excitedly, Corrie ran down the stairs. 'Betsie! Betsie! If I hadn't heard you in the kitchen, I'd have been killed by this bomb fragment from the dog-fight.' Betsie put her finger to her lips, 'Corrie, there are no 'ifs' in God's world. When you are in the will of God, you are as safe in one place as in another.'

When Holland was invaded the ten Boom home became the centre of Holland's underground movement. It was said that their home was the happiest stopping place on the underground.

Jews were hated by the Nazi conquerors. They were forced to wear the yellow Star of Judah, and were refused all important ration books. The ten Booms took hundreds of Jews into their home, temporarily, and then sent them on to safe places. This Christian family said it would do what it could for their Jewish neighbours. The ten Booms managed to obtain one hundred illegal ration books for Jewish families to use.

The members of the underground had a code they used on the telephone. They talked about 'watches' when they meant Jews. 'We have a watch here with a very unusual face. We don't know what to do with it.' That meant: 'We have a Jew here who looks unmistakably Jewish. Can you place him or her somewhere?'

One day Corrie went to a meeting of Dutch underground leaders many miles from her home. She thought, 'They are the most intelligent faces I have ever seen.' Among them was one of Europe's best



known architects. He said, 'Miss ten Boom, I understand you have a house, but it has no secret room. If you don't mind, I and some of my men will visit you.' So, for the next few weeks, men would visit the ten

Boom home one at a time. They would arrive with a newspaper wrapped around a brick or two; or a small suitcase holding a tool to be used for carpentry or plastering; and they built a secret room.

One day Corrie received a message that there was a Jewish mother and child in great danger. Could

Corrie do anything for them? As she wondered what to do a minister came into the shop and told her his need regarding his watch. Corrie said, 'Pastor, I also have a need. Would you please come with me?' She took him upstairs and said, 'There is a Jewish woman and child who will certainly go to prison unless someone will care for them. Will you take them?' She knew that his home would be relatively safe, as he lived on the outskirts of a small town.

The pastor's face grew pale. He stepped back. 'Miss ten Boom, I hope you are not in the illegal business of sheltering Jews. The authorities will kill you and your father if they find out, and your sister is very weak, she could not care for herself.'

'Stay here,' said Corrie, and she ran up yet another flight of stairs and brought back a small bundle. She pulled back the blanket, and revealed the face of the Jewish child. Despite himself the pastor put out his hands to touch the baby's tiny fingers. Then he drew back. 'No,' he cried, 'It could cost me my life! This Jewish child could cost me my life!'

They had not noticed, but Corrie's father had entered the room. He took the baby in his arms. His white beard brushed the baby's face. His beautiful blue, innocent eyes matched the eyes of the child. Father ten Boom said, 'Did you say that you could die for taking this child? I would consider it the greatest honour for my family to die for this Jewish child.'

The ten Booms made provision for the infant and its mother. But the day came when the ten Booms were betrayed. The whole family was taken to a prison on the edge of a nearby city. Corrie was put in solitary confinement for four months. She was isolated from the others because she had pleurisy. She was very, very sick, but in the mercy of God, sunshine streamed in through a tiny window. Corrie exposed herself to the sun every day, and gradually recovered her health.

There came a time when she had to appear before the judge—the Gestapo judge. To Corrie's surprise, he was very courteous. Then she remembered all that the young underground workers had taught her about Gestapo tricks. For an hour this judge, in a gentle way, used all the Gestapo's psychological strategies to get information out of Corrie. But she was equal to the test.

Finally, he gave up and said, 'Tell me about your other activities.' She told him about what she did for the mentally handicapped. 'Oh,' he said, 'isn't one normal person worth all of them?' She replied, 'Lieutenant Rahms, may I tell you the truth?'

'Miss ten Boom, this hearing is predicated on the assumption that you will do me that honour.'

'Lieutenant Rahms,' Corrie said, 'God sometimes has a different viewpoint to ours, so different that God has given us a book so we can understand his viewpoint. That book tells us that God values people, not by their status in the world; or even by their brains, but because **he made and redeemed them. Perhaps, Lieutenant Rahms, in God's sight a mentally defective person may be of more value than a watchmaker—or a lieutenant.**' At that he sent her out.

But the next morning he called at her prison cell. 'Follow me,' he said. 'We will stand in the sun today, you need more sun. I could not sleep all night. I want you to tell me what else the book says.' 'Lieutenant Rahms, the book says that a light has come into the world so we need no longer walk in darkness. Are you in darkness Lieutenant?' 'Oh,' he answered, 'you could not understand how deep my darkness is. I hate the work that I do.'

He told Corrie about his wife, his family and his garden. He told Corrie about how he never knew from one week to another whether his family was still alive, because of the bombing. She tried to comfort him but she was soon moved. Corrie believed that talking with that judge was the brightest spot in her prison experience.

Corrie had two remarkable answers to prayer. In the prison she had been separated from her sister, Betsie. Corrie couldn't get any news of Betsie, and she prayed that she might. One day soon after, there was pandemonium in the prison. Corrie called out through the tiny slot in the door where food was pushed through. 'Can anyone tell me what's going on? And I want to know about my sister!' Word came back: 'It's Hitler's birthday. All the guards have gone to a party. Your sister is in cell 315. She says, "God is good."' That was answer to prayer number one.

Another day Corrie was worried about the Jews that had been left in the secret room—the hiding place—at her home. The Gestapo had searched the house and not found the room. Seven Jews were hiding there, and Corrie was worried about how they would manage. She prayed about the matter.

Soon after a letter arrived in the prison for Corrie. It had been held up by the censors. Corrie noticed that the writing on the envelope slanted up toward the stamp. She knew her younger sister's writing and it didn't slant. So Corrie carefully peeled off the stamp. Underneath, was the

message, 'All your watches are safe.' That was the answer to prayer number two.

Corrie was moved to another prison, a concentration camp near another large Dutch city. All the women were kept in one part of the concentration camp, and all the men in another. Every now and again the women would hear the rattle of gunfire and would know that some of the men were being shot.

Corrie worked with others at long grey tables covered with radio components. They were to assemble aircraft radios to be used in bombing planes. On her first day there were hundreds of other prisoners assembling the radio parts. Guards walked up and down between the tables. The Dutch man in charge of the women workers had been the principle of a Roman Catholic high school. He was a very wonderful man, whose son had been shot just one week before.

As soon as the Gestapo would leave the factory, the manager would make sure they had gone and then raise his hand in a gesture, The whole place would come alive. The women would quit working, settle down to talk or write letters—anything but work. After half an hour he would say, 'Come on, we had better get back to work now.'

The concentration camp was a place of great cruelty.

When Corrie had been ushered into the camp, along with a group of other women, a young Gestapo woman lectured them. 'We have special treatment to educate our visitors,' she explained. 'It's known as the "bunkers"'. Each bunker is the size of a gymnasium locker. If you are slow to learn in your education here, we put you in one of these bunkers. And to help you we put your hands up high. I can assure you that when you come out of the bunker you will be more dead than alive—but you will have learned your lesson.'

One day, they heard more shooting than usual. They counted the shots, and reckoned that seven hundred men had been shot in the male camp.

The next morning the women were moved. They learned they were going to Germany. They were put on a train that had no ventilation, no toilets, and no available water. When the train did stop at some large station, the door would open and a couple of buckets of water would be thrust in. The people near-



est the door got water, the others didn't.

For three days and three nights the train of death took them on to Ravensbruck—the most notorious concentration camp for women. Fifty thousand women died there from gas, disease and malnutrition.

Early on, Betsie had found the cruelty at the camp so overwhelming, that she said to Christ, 'Lord, this will send me mad unless you handle it.' Instead of trying to work it all out herself, Betsie handed all the shocks, all the tension, all the trauma, over to Christ. At night in the hut, Betsie would read the Scriptures. Other prisoners who knew different languages would translate the verses, and they'd go right round the dormitory.

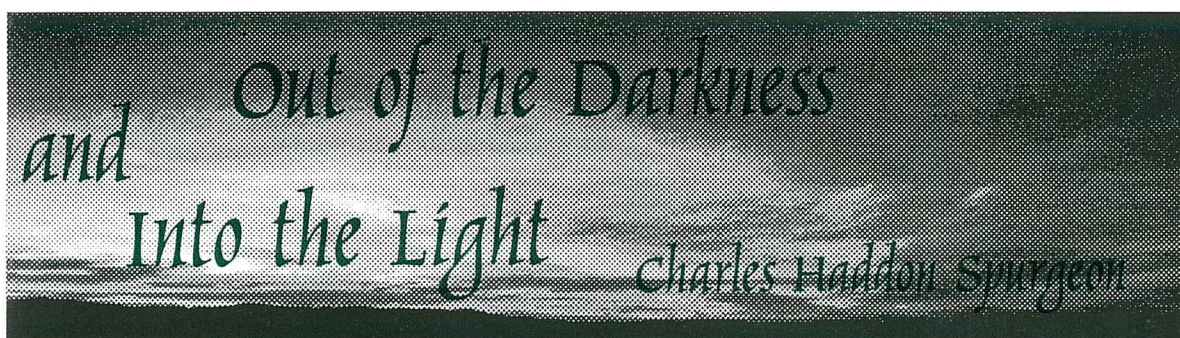
One winter's day, Corrie asked, 'How can we live here amid all this cruelty without nourishment or warmth?' Betsie answered, 'Let's read the Scripture.' They read I Thessalonians chapter 5, and verse 18 which said, 'In everything give thanks' (KJV). Betsie said, 'That's what we must do! Give thanks in everything.' Corrie asked, 'What is there to give thanks for?' 'We are together,' Betsie replied. 'And we have a Bible,' she added.

A Bible had been smuggled to them in the first prison they were in. When they came to the concentration camp they were stripped naked before being able to put on a simple dress. Betsie asked permission to go to the bathroom and was shown where it was—near the showers. In the bathroom there was some old rickety furniture crawling with termites. Betsie safely hid her Bible there until after she was stripped naked. When she went into that area to get her new dress she retrieved her Bible.

'So there is something to be grateful about,' Betsie continued. 'We have our Bible.' Then Betsie said, 'And we have all these people in the camp to teach the Scriptures to.' 'Yes that's right,' Corrie agreed. Then Betsie said, 'And we have the fleas to be grateful for.' 'The fleas!' cried Corrie. 'I can't thank God for the fleas.' But a few days later she noticed something strange. The guards never came in their dormitory.

'Why is it that the guards never come in?' Corrie asked Betsie. 'Because of the fleas,' was Betsie's reply.

* * * * *



A few Sabbath mornings ago I spoke to you upon those memorable words of the Great Father, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.' We now go a step farther, and see how the love of God to his beloved Son overflows, and runs like a river of life to all those who are in Christ Jesus. To Him he says, 'This is my beloved Son,' and then he turns to all who are in union with him and says, 'These also are my beloved for His sake.'

As believers we are assured by the text that we are 'accepted in the Beloved,' to the praise of the glory of God's grace. Why is that peculiar title here used? It might have been said, we are accepted in Christ, or accepted in the Mediator. There must be some motive for giving him this special name in this place.

The motive is declared to be, that we may praise the glory of Divine Grace. God did not want for a beloved when he made us his beloved. His heart was not pining for an object. His affections

were not lone and desolate. His only-begotten Son was his delight, and there was room enough in him for all the Father's love. It was we that needed to be loved, and so the Beloved is mentioned that we may remember the unselfishness of divine grace. He makes us his beloved, but he had a Beloved before.

We are also reminded that we are 'accepted in the Beloved' to let us know that God has not shifted his love—his first Beloved is his Beloved still. We have not supplanted his dear Son, nor even diverted a beam of love from him. The Lord has called us beloved who were not so, and made us a people who were not a people; but he has not withdrawn a grain of love from Jesus, whom he still calls 'Mine Elect, in whom my soul delights.' All the infinite love of God still flows to Jesus, and then to us in him.

It pleased the father that to him a fullness of love should be given, that out of it we might each one receive. God's love to us is his love to his Son, flowing in a hundred channels. For His sake he

makes the wedding feast, and we are the happy guests that sit at the table. Not for our sakes is this done, but for Jesus' sake, so that it might be all of grace. His perpetual acceptance with God is our acceptance, that nothing legal, nothing whereof we might boast, might be mingled with the work of sovereign grace.

We are 'accepted in the Beloved.' Do you not love that sweet title? Is it to the highest quality of acceptance, that it comes to such a One? Is He beloved in the highest conceivable degree by the Father, and in this you imitate the great God, for to you also the Lord Jesus is altogether lovely. He is your Beloved as well as God's Beloved, and this is one proof that you are accepted; for all who truly love the Son are approved by the Father. Thus says the Scripture: 'Because he has set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high because he has known my name.'

Is Christ your Beloved? Then, as he is the Father's Beloved, you and the Father have evidently come to a sweet agreement; you have come to look at things from the same standpoint as the glorious Jehovah the Lord, and you evidently have a mutual interest in one common person—the incarnate God. Your recognition of Christ as your Beloved is thus a sure proof that you are accepted in the Beloved. See you not this? It is because he is the Father's Beloved that the Father loves you in him, and because he is your Beloved therefore you have an evidence within yourself that you have come to an agreement with the Father, and so to an acceptance by him. I delight in being accepted all the more because therein I am still further linked with him who joins God and man in one grand affection.

God's love of his dear Son covers all believers, as a canopy covers all who come beneath it. As a hen covers her chickens with her wings, so God's love to Christ covers all the children of

promise. As the sun shining forth from the gates of the morning guilds all the earth with golden splendour, so this great love of God to the Well Beloved, streaming forth to him enlightens all who are in him. God is so boundlessly pleased with Jesus that in him he is altogether well pleased with us. Oh, the joy of this blending of our interests with those of the Well Beloved! I scarcely know whither I am borne even by a single word of my precious text.

Mark, it is not said that we are acceptable, though that were a very great thing, but we are actually accepted; it has become not a thing possible that God might accept us, but he has accepted us in Christ. Lay this to your soul, and may it fill you with delight. The Lord has chosen you. He has received you to himself, and set his love upon you, and his delight is in you now. What a contrast from what you were a season ago, in your own consciousness, in your own judgement.

Refresh your memory a little. If you passed through the same state of mind as I did, you loathed your very self in the sight of God; you felt that God must abhor you, for you abhorred yourself; you saw sin to be exceedingly sinful, and that sinful thing was permeating your entire being, saturating your thoughts, putrefying your aims, making you to be corrupt and offensive in the sight of the Most High.

Lift up your eyes out of the thick darkness and behold the light. You, who in your own judgement were cast away forever, you, who thought that the Lord would never be favourable to you nor blot out your sins, are this day accepted—accepted in the Beloved.

C.H. Spurgeon (1834-92) was a Baptist preacher at London's Metropolitan Tabernacle (built for him in 1861). This is an extract from a sermon preached by him July 15 1883.

(Continued from page 9)

cial performance, then I'd do it every time. But I don't know how or why I gave a performance of a lifetime. I just don't know how or why I did it.'

No one can explain to us all the reasons why the sufferings and hardships of Christ (the Cross of Christ) have to be central to the true gospel. The Bible simply affirms that it is so.

We can guess one reason why . . . because it rings true to life. Your life has sufferings. Your life has death.

If you want to know the true Jesus; the one whom the Corinthians had drifted away from, it

is the one who suffers and dies for our sins. The Jesus of the gospel—the Jesus on his cross—cannot really be counterfeited.

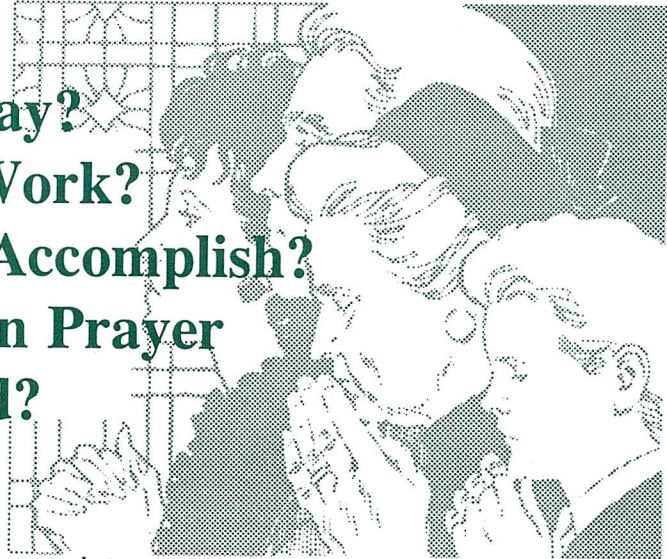
(Roy Gee is Editor of Good News Unlimited, the American counterpart of Good News Australia. He is an experienced Pastor Evangelist working in the US and the UK—his home country. Roy Gee will visit Australia in August 98. Watch these pages for details of his itinerary.)

GNU WINTER BIBLE SCHOOL

THE MARVEL AND THE MYSTERY OF PRAYER

With Dr Desmond Ford and introducing
Pr Roy Gee from GNU California

What is Prayer?
How Should We Pray?
How Does Prayer Work?
What Does Prayer Accomplish?
What Happens when Prayer
Seems to be Ignored?



Brisbane July 31 at 7:30pm and August 1 at 10:00am - 5pm. The Mercure Hotel, 85-87 North Quay, Brisbane City.

Sydney August 8 at 10:00am - 5pm. Epping Baptist Church, Corner of Carlingford and Epping roads, Epping.

Melbourne August 14 at 7:30pm and August 15 at 10:00am - 5:00pm. Nunawading Arts and Entertainment Centre, 397 White Horse Rd., Nunawading.

Program for Brisbane & Melbourne		
Friday 7:30pm	The Marvel and the Mystery of prayer.	Dr Ford
Saturday 10am	When You Pray (1)	Fr Gee
Saturday 11am	After This Manner Pray Ye	Dr Ford
LUNCH		
Saturday 2pm	When You Pray (2)	Fr Gee
Saturday 3pm	When God Says No	Dr Ford

Sydney Program		
Saturday 10am	When You Pray (1)	Fr Gee
Saturday 11am	The Marvel and the Mystery of Prayer	Dr Ford
LUNCH		
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Saturday 3pm	After This Manner Pray Ye	Dr Ford
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