

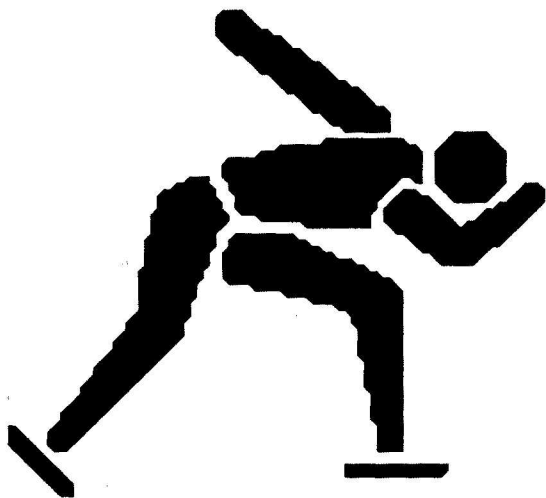
GOOD NEWS

A U S T R A L I A

Editors: Paul A. Porter and Robert C. Cooper

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One Giant Leap?

by Paul Porter

Television viewers who enjoyed the ABC's epic Captain James Cook last year may wish to drop into Canberra for a visit. At the National Memorial Library, (only a short walk from the old Parliament House), there is a new exhibition featuring the history of New South



Wales from 1770 to 1788. Several relics from HMS Endeavour are on display: a letterbook with secret instructions from the Admiralty to search for a southern continent, Cook's own journal and the Endeavour's logbook.

But pride of place must surely go to a tiny snuff box bearing the portrait of Isaac Smith. (I spotted it next to Cook's dirk immediately below Nathaniel Dance's portrait of the great navigator).

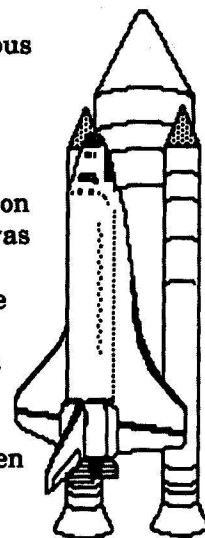
Young Isaac was 18 years old when the Endeavour crew landed at Botany Bay on April 29, 1770. He was also the first ashore. In later years, he and the Captain's widow never tired of telling their young friends how Cook, on the point of stepping ashore, said: "Isaac, you shall land first," and himself

followed.

199 years and 3 months after that landing, astronaut Neil Armstrong reported to Houston, Texas: "Tranquility base here. The Eagle has landed." He seemed to be calm, but his heart was pumping at 156 beats per minute, twice its usual rate. It was 4:17:41 pm, Eastern Daylight Time, July 20, 1969. Six-and-one-half hours later, while millions watched, the astronaut paused to say his now famous words: "That's one small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind."

Little-known fact: Although Armstrong was the first man to walk on the moon, his co-pilot Edwin Aldrin was originally scheduled to take the first step. Armstrong simply ignored these arrangements and exercised his commander's prerogative to crawl out first. This had been decided in April, and for the following three months there was considerable friction between the two astronauts, including at least one pre-flight quarrel.

One giant leap for mankind? Perhaps. ☐



LAST MONTH we saw that the Apostle Paul refuses to play down Christian liberty. To the contrary, he upholds it, demonstrating that Jesus Christ himself defines a Christian's rights.

Let us now examine Paul's

possible for a slave either to say or to acquire the purchase price of his redemption. When this happened he could go to the temple and put the money in the temple coffers. He would thence be regarded as the property of the temple's God. Paul's meaning is clear. The Christian is God's property because Christ has purchased him. He is therefore

by Ron Allen

Christian

Freedom #2

first letter to the Corinthians in order to discover in more detail his view of Christian liberty. Four points seem particularly pertinent:

1. Paul's idea of freedom does not mean freedom from responsibility to God

For example, in Chapter 1:12-15 Paul is glad he didn't baptize because to have done so would have legitimized the claim of some people to be followers of Paul. To be baptized into somebody's name was to assume an allegiance to that person. Paul eloquently repudiates any notion of mastery over the church by his question: "Was Paul crucified for you?" Chapter 1:13. His point is that the Corinthians owed an allegiance to Him who died and in whose name they were baptized.

In Chapter 6:15-20 church members are described as the temple of the Holy Spirit. This means that the one in whom God dwells is His property. This is further emphasized by Paul's repetition of the very language used in the purchased release of Corinthian slaves: "You are not your own. You were bought with a price." 1 Corinthians 6:19,20.

In Corinth it was sometimes

responsible to God. "Therefore glorify God in your body." Chapter 6:20.

Each time Paul illustrates the nature of freedom he contrasts it with the bondage of yielding to human authorities. In 1 Cor. 7:17-24, for example, the apostle alludes to the practice of some Hellenistic Jews who tried to hide their Jewishness by having an operation to disguise their circumcision. Other Gentile Christians wanted to have the sign of the covenant in their bodies, so they became circumcised. The Apostle discounts the social pressures that demanded such changes in favour of the keeping of God's commands. Chapter 7:19.

The same passage also shows that there were many slaves in the church. The freedom they enjoyed as Christians would naturally lead them to seek civil freedom. Paul reminds these slaves that civil freedom or the lack of it has no bearing on real freedom—freedom before God. In fact, the real situation of the individual in the "Church" is the reverse of his situation in the

2. Christian freedom means living before God as His servant exclusively.

"World". The slave in the world is the Lord's freed man in the church and he who is civilly free is the Lord's slave. Ch. 7:22. The one who becomes over anxious to change his social standing is in danger of becoming the "slave of men". Ch. 7:23. The only way to avoid such a disaster is to live as responsible to God alone. Ch. 7:24.

We all know what it is like to pursue a Christian calling in a situation which appears to contradict the fact that we are God's free children. Some live in bondage to financial institutions. Others have their calling in unemployment and poverty. Still others are seriously ill or treated unjustly. There is scarcely a Christian who is not called by God to some form of distress. This is why Paul's advice to the Corinthians is so pertinent: just to be called—to belong to the Lord—is more consequential than one's present limitations. This means that a Christian's freedom is an "eschatological" freedom—based on what will be. What will be invests the present with freedom and meaning because faith grasps the future in the form of Christ.

3. Christian freedom, though real, is deficient as a total principle for Christian living.

rights in isolation; they are derived from Christ. The pre-condition for "all things are yours" (Ch.3:22) is "you are of Christ" (Ch.3:23). "All things are permissible for me"

In Chapter 6:12 Paul claims that, though he is free and has the right to do all things, he will not be mastered by anything. In so saying he shows that to use freedom alone as a basis for living is to risk losing it. Paul knows that a Christian

doesn't have his

(Ch.6:12) always means "all things that conform to Him whose I am and with whom I am in dynamic union". Paul's freedom is freedom from man. It never means freedom from God. He who will not be mastered by Christ will be mastered! Freedom "from" God is bondage to someone else. There is only freedom "in" God!

4. In practical terms, Paul's idea of freedom means being governed by the law of Christ.

privilege that is Christ. By virtue of the indwelling Spirit the Christian mysteriously partakes of the divine in a way that enables him to offer an obedience to God which is superior to that which is merely governed by a set of rules.

The following statement by Hans Kung is to the point: "Can God be satisfied with a limited, conditional, formal obedience—related only to what is specifically commanded or forbidden? This would mean leaving out one final reality, which cannot be brought under any amount of minute legal regulations and prescriptions and which nevertheless decides man's attitude. God wants more. He lays claim not to half the will, but the whole. He demands not only external acts which can be observed and controlled, but also internal responses which cannot be controlled or checked. He demands man's heart. He wants not only good fruits but the good tree. Not only action but being. Not something but myself—and myself

This is clearly stated in Chapter 9:19-22. The law of Christ is not a code of conduct externally imposed. It is conformity to Christ in the Spirit of Christ. It is the life of service within the context of the

eschatological

wholly and entirely." Hans Kung, *On Being a Christian*, page 246.

By the law of Christ a person's own convictions are regarded as supremely precious. See 1 Cor. 8:10-12; 10:28,29. Personal responsibility to God is maximized. When Paul denounces fornication in chapter 6 he does not appeal to the well-known prohibition in the decalogue. Instead he appeals to Christ and to the believer's personal relationship with Him. "Don't you know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit...?" Ch.6:19. It is for the individual to explore, search and discover for himself what it is to live before God as a free agent. This can be hard work. Note Hans Kung again: "A law provides security because we know exactly what we have to keep to (which can be irksome) but no more (which can be congenial). I have to do only what is commanded. And what is not forbidden is permitted. And there is so much we can do or omit in particular cases before coming in conflict with the law. No law can envisage all possibilities, take into account all cases, close all gaps. The advantages of legalism both then and now are immense. It is easy to see why so many people in their relations with other human beings prefer to keep to a law rather than make a personal decision." Hans Kung, *On Being a Christian*, page 242.

The freedom that Paul claims for himself appears to be a freedom from all other life-controlling influences except the influence of the Spirit of Jesus. From the vantage ground of Christ the believer exercises his right to be truly human—to serve God out of gratitude and love. □

Freedom from all influences except the influence of the Spirit of Jesus

LAST MONTH we looked at Noah, who was eccentric enough to build a huge boat for all the animals.

Now, in the book of Genesis, straight after the Noah story, there is this peculiar skyscraper called the Tower of Babel. The building, you will recall, was a spectacular failure. A white elephant.

There is an ironic twist to the story of this tower. Its architects and builders hope to climb right up into the heavens where God is.

Just imagine. Here is God, sitting up in heaven, and he is going to get a big surprise when he looks up from his office desk and spots this marvellous construction with its cranes and ropes, piercing the clouds right outside his front window!

But against all expectations, God, (with his telescopic vision!), has to come down—right down to earth—to get an eyeful of what they are doing. The great tower is really quite small!

And so I want to talk about hubris, or pride, which is probably the worst and the silliest of all the human vices.

As C S Lewis once remarked, pride is worse than getting drunk. Pride is worse than fornication. You can lock up two drunks for the night in a pub and they will have a wonderful time

together. You can lock up a man and a woman overnight in a motel room and they will get on magnificently. But lock up two proud people in a room for just ten minutes and they will be at each other's throats before they know it!

Cranks and Crackpots #3

by Paul Porter

Because pride is essentially competitive. According to Mr Lewis, we are not proud of the fact that we are smart, or rich, or good looking. No. We are proud that we are smarter, richer and BETTER looking than the rest.

Here lies the danger.

In 1940, Charlie Chaplin made a movie called *The Great Dictator*. In one scene, Chaplin, who stars as Hitler, wanders into a barber's shop with his fine friend Mussolini. They both order a haircut, and then Hitler notices that his barber's chair has a pedal. So he pumps away at this pedal until he is sitting up higher than Mussolini. When Mussolini notices this, he in turn pumps away at his own chair until he is higher than Hitler. So on they go, higher and higher, until both men, (still perched on their chairs), are caught up in the ceiling.

And that, according to Charlie Chaplin, is the true cause of World War II!

Now the whole earth had one language and few words. And as men migrated from the east, they found a plain in the

land of Shinar and settled there. And they said to one another, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be

scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth."

And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the sons of men had built. And the Lord said, "Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language; and this is only the beginning of what they will do; and nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them. Come, let us go down, and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech." So the Lord scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city.

Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the Lord confused the language of all the earth; and from there the Lord scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth. (Genesis 11:1-9). □

FAITH: Expecting the Unexpected

by Gordon Cooke

How odd
That God
Should choose
The Jews!

Throughout the Old Testament we are confronted with the unexpected: a boy giant-killer (David), a heathen "messiah" (Cyrus), streams in the desert (Isaiah 43:20), and dry land through the sea (the Exodus).

And then there is the New

Testament. Who in Israel would have expected that David's son would die on a cross? Or that his church would be mostly gentile? Or that the foremost apostle to the gentiles should be a fanatical rabbi?

Clearly, we worship the God of surprises.

And if the Bible is full of surprises, then we should not stumble at the assurance: "Beloved, now are we the

sons of God." 1 John 3:2.

Do we deserve such an assurance? No. We don't. May we expect it? Yes. We may!

How odd
That God
Should choose
The Jews.

How queer
I fear
That he
Chose me!

Kid's

Korner

Who Am I?

by Flora Mia

BLACK IS beautiful. I'm black, jet black. Not a dull black, but a shiny black with a tinge of blue. I live in Australia with my brothers and sisters and cousins.

In my dreamtime, I think of long ago when my mate and I looked up at the sky one day and saw a strange sight. We were frightened and ducked into a big building. It wasn't a house; it was a boat. The good old captain gave us a place to stay and for 217 days he fed us and cared for us during a terrible storm. In the end my mate and I got out. Everything was so different! Some places were very cold and others nice and warm. We chose to live in the warm parts, in river valleys or caves. When our family grew very large, some went to Palestine, others to India; my mate and I came to Australia. God cared for us all along.

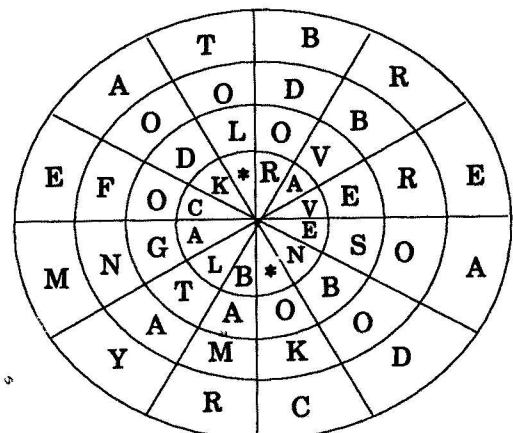
In my dreamtime, I also remember the day long ago when there was a strange, lonely man beside a brook. He was very hungry, so God asked me to feed him. Every day, morning and evening, I took him bread and meat. Don't ask me where I got it from. Perhaps it was from the king's kitchen! I just don't remember. There was a famine and food was very hard to come by. At last the brook ran dry and the man went away. You see, God gave me food and I shared it with the man. God shared with me and I shared with someone else.

Not many people like me. I have no bright colours. I don't sing very well. I eat dead things. But God likes me. He talks about me ten times in the Bible (isn't that great?) Ten times! He talks about you too, did you know that? He talks about you many more times than he talks about me. He says he loves you. Do you believe that? It's true because God says so.

If my little ones cry when they are hungry, God hears them. He is a kind God. I'm small. Just 24 inches long. But God loves me just the same. Are you small? Then God loves you. He says he loves little children. And it's true.

So you see, I have a caring God, a sharing God, a kind God and a loving God. That's the kind of God you have, too. You had better believe it, because it's true.

Find the eleven words that are in this puzzle and you will find me too. Read Genesis 8 and 1 Kings 17 to learn more about me.



(Bread, cry, meat, brook, man, food, God, loves, boat, black, raven.)

Down Capers #6

PEG DOWN had just returned from a trip to town - a weekly chore to stock the pantry. Struggling through the doorway with groceries up to her armpits she dumped them on the kitchen table and thundered,

"They've done it again."

"Done what?" hubby queried.

"Vandalised the town," she spat in disgust. "There's not one pane of glass left among the shops . . .

Broken stubbies and empty cans

are piled up in the gutters . . .

Rocks and lumps of wood litter the footpaths . . . And not an

aborigine in sight. They've all gone bush, afraid they'll get arrested."

"Emeny times die after tellyer," Mo railed. "Givem a boller Brosser Pearl and they make a hulla blue."

"Now that's not really fair," father Down chipped in. "Plenty of white Australians make a hula-balloo too when they get drunk."

"What do they really want?" Peg complained. "The government gives them millions of dollars in handouts. I think it must be demoralizing to have money thrown at you and not have to work for it."

"It's not as simple as that," father Down answered. "Lots of people have money thrown at them in scholarships and lotteries. Many

more inherit big sums without working for it and it doesn't seem to destroy their ego. I think the problem lies in the way whites have treated aborigines. The early English contact was typically condescending and colonial. Aborigines were regarded as pilfering sneaks, unintelligent layabouts, even sub-human. And that's the way they were often treated."

Mark Down thought for a moment and then said, "But they weren't treated that way just because they were black. The English treated the white convicts in just the same way, perhaps worse. Surprisingly, it was a Christian nation which behaved so deplorably down under. However, if others had planted their flag on the shores of Terra Australis there may have been utter genocide."

"That's possible," father Down admitted, "but that doesn't excuse the maltreatment. What's more, these days we tend to ignore our black neighbours. We seem to be more worried about conserving the rain-forests."

"I'm still not sure what the aborigines really want," Peg continued. "When anyone vandalises a town it surely must be a cry from a deep-seated anger.

They seem to want free land, free hospitals, free transport, good roads, protection from foreign invasion, and every other benefit from the Oz government with handouts to boot, and at the same time wander at will without producing anything worthwhile. In other words - raid the pantry and never lend a hand to the cook!"

Father Down spoke up. "I think some of the anger comes from a feeling of cultural rape. The Western and nomadic cultures are irreconcilable. By sheer force of arms the Westerner can devastate the nomad and a sense of hopelessness and frustration overtakes the aborigine."

"It's no good whipping ourselves for past wrongs," declared Mark. "How does a modern Christian try to redress a trend already two hundred years old," he asked.

"Well," father Down intoned, "handouts can only be a short-term remedy. We must start by reminding ourselves that all races are equal in the sight of God. Never slip into the condescending tone of voice. Dialogue as an equal. Learn the best of their culture and teach the best of ours. And above all share the news that One died and rose again for even one aborigine." □

Good News Christian Ministries announces:

The Gospel and Relationships The 1988 Congresses

In response to many requests, the 1988 Congresses will seek to bring human relationships under the Gospel spotlight. Dr Desmond Ford will be the principle guest speaker in company with Dr Paul Porter, Pr Neville McKenzie and Pr Ron Allen. At Congress you can expect to hear sermons on subjects such as:

The Gospel & Family Relationships
Relating to Other Churches
Relating to My Former Church

The Christian Relationship to Secular & Social Issues

plus many more. Keep these dates free:

Sydney	March 25-27	Melbourne	April 22,23	Brisbane	May 6,7
Perth	April 8-10	Auckland	April 24	Rockhampton	May 8
Hobart	April 11,12	Christchurch	April 30	Cairns	May 11
Adelaide	April 15,16	Cooranbong	May 4		