

GOOD NEWS

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A U S T R A L I A



...children of God: and so we are.





EDITORIAL

I remember her well. Her husband was an invalid. Her teenage son was mentally retarded. They had left the Soviet Union and were struggling to survive in Western Europe. She couldn't speak English and I didn't know any Russian. But we both had a smattering of German.

Together we read 1 John 3:1-2:

See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called the children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God's children now; it does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

Yes. She believed that. They were children of God, and confident in the hope of seeing him "as he is."

Together we proceeded to verse 3:

And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.

I told her that if I were John, I would probably have put it differently. That it was more natural to say: "And everyone who purifies himself may have the hope." And I said, as others had said to me long ago, that with God it is different. God gives us the hope first.

It must have been hard on the ears, the mangled German with the Aussie twang. But her face lit up as if she had won the lottery.

I will never forget the face.

Paul Porter.

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Everybody knows that the Bible is the story of a great wonder. It tells of God becoming human to die in our stead. It tells that while eternal right must be maintained, eternal love has found a way to save transgressors.

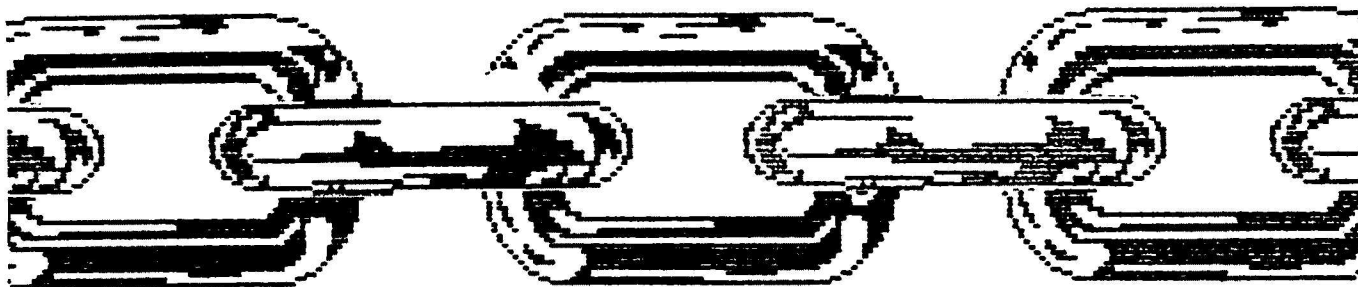
Yes, the Bible is the story of a wonder. But have you ever thought about the wonder of the story? It is indeed true that "the Bible is such a book that man could not write if he would, and would not write if he could." The Bible is self-authenticating in its message to hearts prepared to receive it. This is what Jesus meant when he said, "If any one chooses to do God's will, he will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own" (John 7:17).

writing them for Sydney publications. I wrote about love, war, and crime. My Christian experience was very rudimentary in those days, and I used to spend my hours conjuring up plots to be elaborated for publication.

But as I read the Scriptures I do not recognize any fiction. There are parables there, yes, but the overall thrust of the book is as real as the blood that pulses through our arteries, as real as the earth under our feet and the heavens over our heads. Take, for example, the way in which the Bible subordinates everything to the idea of God. God is always its great theme, its Alpha and Omega. And this despite the fact that humanity has an inveterate proneness to idolatry, as testified to by history.

have recorded the infamies of their own Jewish people with such shocking accuracy. Here is a book that views the history of the world from a heliocentric [sun-centred] position. Its narrators seem to live in another world altogether. A world where crowns and sceptres may exist but only as neglected things.

Look at some of the characters in this book. One of my favourites is Paul. Read Galatians 1, with its snatches of autobiography. Can you read that and believe it was invented? It carries the ring of truth. Here is a man confessing that he had been a blasphemer and a persecutor but been turned around by the miraculous intervention of God. There is no reason to doubt his testimony and every reason to



It is folly to assume that we can rationally prove the divine origin of Scripture. To use anything outside the Bible to empirically demonstrate its inspiration is to make that something outside higher than Scripture itself. Yet the mind can delight in tracing evidences for its faith, and a few of these we wish to indicate.

As we do so, do not forget our axiom: the truth is self-authenticating. Light proves itself. Black is black in itself, and sugar is sweet in itself. Neither is declared so by church, fiat, or chemical tests. So, Scripture is divine revelation, and the humble reader can intuit that without a seminary training.

The Story Is Not Fiction

Coming back to the wonder of the story. I know a little about fictional stories. As a boy of fifteen I was

The Story Is God-glorifying

Yet here is a book that though written by humans tends wholly to the glory of God. Thus its writers go contrary to ordinary human nature. This fact helps explain why the relative importance of events often seems inverted in Scripture. The Bible ignores most of the things that people consider supremely momentous, such as the changes brought about by revolutions that fill great nations with terror or rejoicing. In this book everything, great or little, is viewed in its relationship to the kingdom of the supreme Ruler. Everything is made subordinate to the religious ideas that permeate its pages.

The Story Is Candid

How strange that the Bible writers

believe it.

Read what he says in 1 Corinthians 15. Five hundred people—of whom the majority were still alive at the time when Paul wrote—saw the resurrected Christ! Read the second Gospel, written by Mark, the amanuensis of Peter. How fascinating to find that it is Mark's Gospel that sets Peter in the worst light! Again, the ring of truth. The Bible is full of this sort of thing.

I love to consider what the writer William Paley called "the candor of the writers of the New Testament." Paley expanded his comment by saying:

I make this candor to consist, in the putting down of many passages, and noticing many circumstances, which no writer whatever was likely to have forged; which no writer would have chosen to appear in his book, who had been

careful to present the story in the most unexceptionable form, or who had thought himself at liberty to carve and mould the particulars of that story, according to his choice, or according to his judgment of the effect.¹

More Examples of Candor

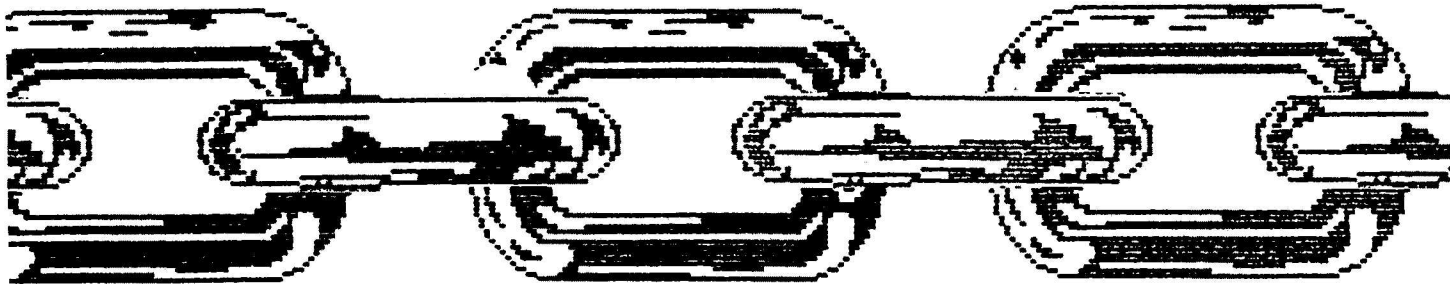
There is a multitude of these things to which Paley refers. Let me mention a few. John the Baptist is set forth as having his doubts concerning the character of Jesus. He sent a message, "Are you the one who was to come, or should we expect someone else?" We read that many of Christ's disciples left him (John 26:56). Matthew confesses that in his hometown Christ did not work many miracles (Matthew 13:58).

soul to let the dead bury the dead (Luke 9:60). Jesus said it was necessary to eat his flesh and drink his blood if we were going to live forever (John 6:53). There is a multitude of such statements that could hardly have been invented. The reason why they are found in the record is because they were actually spoken by the Christ.

Regarding the facticity of the institution of the Lord's Supper, Paley says:

If it had been feigned it would have been more full; it would have come nearer to the actual mode of celebrating the rite, as that maintained very early in Christian churches; and would have been more formal than it is.... In the history of the Lord's Supper, as we read it in St Matthew's Gospel, there is not so

He was the monarch of souls. His right was derived immediately from God. His legislation extended to the inmost motives of action, and covered in its wide sweep all the particulars of conduct. In the Sermon on the Mount he spoke with an authority which was expressly contrasted with that of all previous lawgivers—"But I say unto you," etc. To his precepts he annexed penalties and rewards which were to be endured and received beyond the grave. Nay, his call was to all to come to him, to repose in him implicit trust as a moral and religious guide. He laid claim to the absolute allegiance of every soul. To those who complied, he promised blessedness in the life to come. There can be no doubt that he assumed to exercise



Luke is prepared to quote the cavil of unbelievers that called Christianity a superstition (Acts 25:18-19). In the Gospels we find the surprising note that even Christ's own relatives thought he might be going insane. When our Lord's postresurrection appearances are described, he is set forth as appearing to believers only. Wouldn't it have made a better story if the Gospel writers had pictured him as appearing to Pilate and Herod? Apparently, the authors were more interested in the facts than the impression their story might give.

Similarly, consider some of the more stunning statements of Christ best left out if you wanted to make a good impression upon your readers. Jesus spoke about moving mountains by faith (Matthew 21:21). He told a bereaved

much as a command to repeat it. This, surely, looks like undesignedness. I think also that the difficulty arising from the conciseness of Christ's expression, "This is my body," would have been avoided in a made-up story.²

The Story Is About Christ

The main wonder of the Bible's wonderful story is Christ—his person, teaching, and work. He is the only man who ever lived who claimed to be God yet was judged sane by his wisest contemporaries. Confucius did not claim to be God, nor Zoroaster, nor Buddha, nor Muhammed. They had too much sense for that.

Few of us have ever considered the heights and depths of the claims of Christ. One man who did summarized his findings thus:

the prerogative of pardoning sin. Apart from declarations, uttered in an authoritative tone, of the terms on which God would forgive sin, he assured individuals of the pardon of transgressions. He taught that his death stood in the closest relation to the remission of sins. The divine clemency towards the sinful is somehow linked to it. He founded a rite on this efficacy of his death—a part of his teaching which is not only recorded by three of the Gospel writers, but is further placed beyond doubt by the testimony of the apostle Paul. He uttered, there is no reason to doubt, the largest predictions concerning the prospective growth of his spiritual empire. It was to be as leaven, as a grain of mustard-seed. The agency of God would be directed to securing its progress and triumph. The government of the

world would be shaped with reference to this end.³

C.S. Lewis was correct when he said that a man who made such claims was either God or like the man who claimed to be a poached egg! Our Lord's deeds matched his words. That is why those seeking truth recognized truth in his pronouncements. The most natural explanation of Christ is the supernatural. If he was good, he was God. The people with whom he walked and talked and worked believed him to be good. One wrong word, one wrong act, one selfish manifestation could have broken the charm for them, but there were none such.

Consider an almost endless chain issuing from the hold of a ship. We see iron link after iron link and then

story of Creation? It's because Joseph's history so beautifully portrays what the first four books of the New Testament set forth. Joseph-like Christ—was a father's beloved son, but despised by his brethren and sold for pieces of silver to a foreign nation. Joseph-like Christ—was associated in his sufferings with two men, one of whom was saved, the other lost. Joseph came out of prison to reign. All bowed the knee before him, and he became the saviour of the world by providing the bread of life.

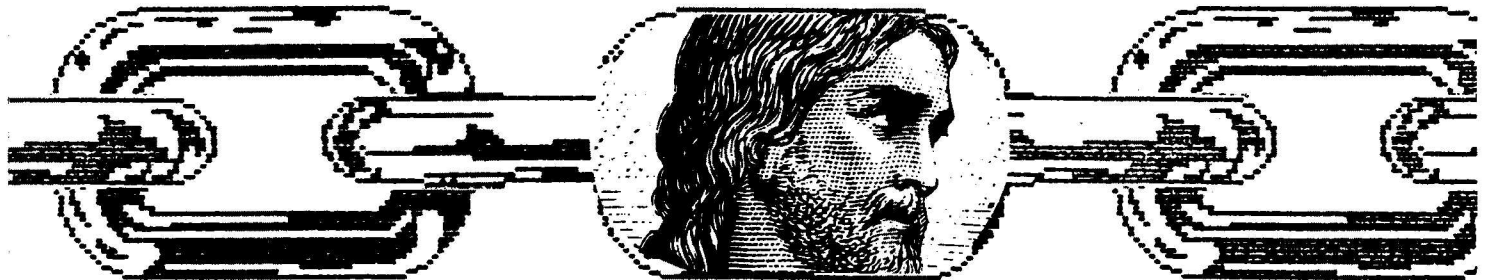
Similarly, hundreds of prophecies in the Old Testament find their complete fulfillment in Christ. Read Isaiah 53 and Psalm 22 and Micah 5:2. Remember that, from the very beginning, the Bible paves

the way for Jesus. In Genesis we find the Messiah would be the seed of the woman, and then a descendant of Shem, and then of the seed of Abraham and finally the tribe of Judah.

Haggai said he would come in the days of the second temple. Daniel declared that it would be at the end of seventy weeks of years following the temple restoration decrees given by heathen monarchs. Micah said Messiah would come from the little village of Bethlehem. How much evidence do people need? Has not God given more than enough for every honest seeker?

The Story Wonderfully Works

The Christian philosophy finds its validation in the living of that phi-



suddenly—a gold one! That is an analogy to the appearance of Christ in the world of the human race.

Christ in Old and New Testaments

It is this Christ who makes the unity not only of truth and experience but also of Scripture. All of this wonderful book, both Old and New Testaments, enshrines him. Its chief characters, institutions, and histories, prefigured him. He is a true prophet, priest, and king. He was God's living temple. He was the incarnate Shekinah glory. He was the ladder let down from heaven. He was the true manna as well as the uplifted serpent and the water from the rock. We could go on with a thousand illustrations. Why is it that the book of Genesis gives about twelve times as much space to the story of Joseph as the

Consider an almost endless chain issuing from the hold of a ship.

We see iron link after iron link and then suddenly—a golden one!

That is an analogy to the appearance of Christ in the world of the human race.

THE WONDER OF THE STORY

Desmond Ford

losophy. It works! Love, faith, and hope work as nothing else works. Lies have short legs. Impurity can bring death. The meek do rule (in the sense that only they are fully trusted). Our desire to be loved and understood finds its fulfillment in him who loved us and gave himself for us. He taught that "God is love" and thus made sense of the universe. More than that, he made life to be a supreme privilege for it makes possible eternal friendship with God our Saviour.

Footnotes

1. *Evidence of Christianity*, chapter 3.
2. *Ibid.*
3. G.P. Fisher, *The Ground of Theistic and Christian Belief*, pp.125-126.

Desmond Ford is founder of GNCM.

Last month, Ken Short looked at some of the characteristics of the Australian male, and his 'cult of self-sufficiency'. In this article he suggests ways in which to communicate the 'tallest of tall poppies' to him.

Finding the Cultural Hooks

If we've begun to see Australian men as sports loving, bush loving, shy but fiercely committed to justice and the keeping of a promise, unaware of their need of the gospel, then two major questions follow: 'What really does he want?' and 'How can we communicate with him?'

In *Being Christian in Australia* (JBCE), Chris Walker writes that secular Australians need to be shown that Christianity is related to everyday life. He encourages Christians to find points of engagement where the gospel can be shown to be relevant. He nominates the desire for self transcendence; the concern for meaning and direction in life; the desire that life be enjoyable and challenging; the longing for fullness of life and maturity, and the concern for social justice.

If this is accurate, we must answer those aspirations. We must find hooks in the Australian culture on which to hang the good news of Christ.



INTRODUCING THE AUSSIE

Paul, on his missionary journey to Athens, spoke to the Athenians with concepts and ideas which they could understand. They were called to repent of their ignorance and idolatry without specifically knowing about the cross but he chose words which the hearers knew.

Crossing Cultural Boundaries

The principles of missionary work are no less relevant in Australia in 1988 than they are in any other part of the world. If we are going to communicate, we must:

- identify the group of people;
- understand where they are coming from;
- appreciate some of their characteristics;
- recognise the difficulties of being part of that group;
- discover their inner aspirations for meaning and direction in life;
- know that life itself may be enjoyable, challenging and full.

We may then move into that group with gentleness, quietness and humility. Above all we must be ready to listen, and to place ourselves at their disposal.

As a missionary in Tanzania I had to learn the language, but not necessarily act and behave as those with whom I was living acted and behaved. The Australian male wants to be able to speak in a language which is his own. His thought forms need to be understood.

He despises the wimp, the authority figure, the tall poppy. He is really cranky with those who don't keep their word. The way he expresses himself might be vulgar or blasphemous. He may be hard-drinking and swearing, but there is no doubt that he will respect one of his own who adopts a different attitude. He sees this as part of 'giving a fair go' to those from whom he differs.

I have seen committed Christians in the army adopt a particular way of life which excluded the hard-drinking, swearing and womanising. Yet they have been able to communicate the message of Jesus Christ, because they were accepted: the mate, who understood and was part of the customs, philosophy, attitudes, priorities, and the direction of life of his mates.

The Secret Weapon

Let's go back to Tanzania where my wife and I were missionaries. The church built a new house for us. Yet it was mudbrick, but it was more ostentatious than any of the houses round about. It had cement floors and they had mud floors. We had windows with glass in them. They didn't. We had lockable doors and running water, and they didn't. Our furniture was different. Our lifestyle was different. I was not unconcerned about the image that was being created.

During a safari to surrounding villages I spoke to some of the sub-chiefs about the situation. None was Christian. All of them knew why we were there. Their unforgettable reply was: "We really don't mind who you are, or how you live. What we ask is that you open your home to us and invite us in and, above all, that you love us." And that from non-Christians!

That shattered me, but it is an enormous eternal and divine truth. What did God do as he came to communicate with humanity? He loved us. That is, he came to where we were and with that divine love reached out to serve us. We have such a confusion in our minds about what love really is. Love is the secret weapon.

Familiar Words

We use the word 'love' for all sorts of things. And every time we use it,

MALE TO THE TALLEST OF POPPIES

from a human point of view it has two characteristics.

First, we love because we like. Humanly we can only love that which is attractive to us. If rock is my style of music and I like it, then I can love it. If this food is good to my palate, then I can love it. In the same way, I can begin to fall in love with a woman because I like her, and when the chemistry is right and she likes and loves me we can marry. So, human love is the love of the subject to the object. It responds to the attractiveness or the worth in the object.

Second, having found something which is attractive and pleasing you want to have it, and share in it, and possess it. It gives you a sense of fulfilment or of being able to have some control over, or participation in, that which you like. I want to enjoy my music, eat the food, or marry the girl.

That's human love. It is not the Christian's secret weapon.

Different Definitions

However, the Bible teaches us very clearly that God's love, which we as Christians have towards others, is different. We find it in Christ.

It is this sort of love that makes us missionaries, that enables us to cross the boundaries—geographical or cultural—if any exist, to reach the Australian male. It is this sort of love that will speak to people, solving their concern for meaning and direction, in their attitudes to all facets of life. New Testament love, the love of God, also has two characteristics.

New Testament love doesn't respond to the worth in the object, but creates worth in the object. It is not bound by likes or dislikes. It is totally impartial as to whom it loves. Therefore there may be characteristics in the Australian male which to us are objectionable, or which are difficult to grasp. Those

difficulties may stop us from liking, but they do not stop us from loving.

This is the attitude God has towards us. Paul describes in Romans that we were "godless, without a thought of God, that we were sinners and his enemies, and yet he loved us." If God can love us, then there's not *one* reason why we can't love and reach the Aussie male for Christ.

The second characteristic is that God's love, contrary to human love which wants to get and to have and possess, gives and serves. It puts the object, and the good of the object, before itself. The love of God comes to fulfil and to enrich. Christ himself came to earth as that great Good Samaritan. He came to where we were. He found us in need. He gave all that he had. Christ, in coming and giving, communicated. He didn't come to be served, but to serve us. And the servant par excellence served us with his life and death in order that we might profit. That serving meant we now have eternal life. "Go and do likewise" was his command.

Getting Our Act Together

Some think that it is weak and unmanly to serve. In military circles the one with authority is seen to be the powerful, superior one. The servant can be stereotyped as the underdog and therefore the lesser of the two. Yet there is no doubt that as the Father sent the Son into the world to be the servant, so we are sent into the world to serve, that is, to love!

It is only in the giving of ourselves, in understanding, and having the Aussie male as the object of our serving that we will achieve the goal of introducing him to the one who served him. It is only when we love so that the Aussie male will commit himself to Jesus Christ,

that he will ever find what he is looking for. That is the only real solution to his desire for self-transcendence in his search for meaning and direction of life, for the desire that life be challenging and enjoyable, for the longing for fullness of life and maturity. Only as he believes and accepts Jesus Christ as King and Lord will he find fulfilment. Only as we understand, go and serve, will he hear.

There is no doubt that we cannot act like that just by forcing ourselves, but it is as the Spirit of God continues to work, demonstrating the love of Christ through us and our attitudes, that he will be seen, known and accepted.

Just as Jesus came as a missionary to this earth, so we need to act as missionaries to all around us, and in particular to the Aussie male. Service is self-effacing. It's not easy to give ourselves; and yet it is the only way.

Let the great Apostle John have the last word:

"Dear friends, let us love one another for love comes from God. This is how God showed his love among us, he sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. Dear friend, since God so loved us, we must also love one another."

Ken Short is Dean of St Andrew's Cathedral. The articles in this series have been adapted from a talk given at the Robert Menzies College School of Christian Studies Conference conducted in July, 1988 when he was Bishop of Parramatta.



March 1989 GOOD NEWS AUSTRALIA

Your job may be killing you!" That comment has just been released by a group of psychologists who have been studying the physical health of people in Sydney related to their jobs and the stress involved in their work.

They listed 20 occupations and the stress factors in each occupation and concluded, as Insurance Companies have known for years, that some jobs kill people!

Those jobs have inbuilt tension, pressure and stress that physically affects people. Many people suffer from stress in their lives brought about by their jobs.

Another report from the Health Commission of New South Wales indicated that nurses smoked twice as many cigarettes as the rest of the population. They put it down to the stress of the nursing occupation.

I noted these interesting statistics, that:

- one out of every 12 women will have a breakdown;
- one out of every 20 men will have a breakdown;
- 12 per cent of all women suffer from a stress-induced illness;
- 25 per cent of men suffer from a stress-induced illness.

In Australia there are over one million people between the ages of 20 and 65 suffering from high blood pressure and other evidences of hypertension.

There are many people who are not coping with the pressures of life: the young student facing the pressures of examination; the unemployed youth with the general boredom of life and lack of income; the aged person struggling on a fixed income; the middle-aged man who is facing a mid-career crisis; the housewife who is struggling to live up to the liberated super-woman image that so many people have. There is a need in the hearts of people for rest. So many people are fatigued, tired and weary. The most frequent question asked doctors is "Doctor, why am I so weary?"



THE PROMISE OF

Gordon

"Rest," He says. He offers it

"I will give it

Here is a promise of Jesus: "Come to me all of you who are tired from carrying heavy loads and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28).

What Do We Need Most?

Jesus promises that He will give you rest.

A survey in the United States of America of 20,000 men and women who had suffered heart attacks between the ages of 20 and 65 years, divided all the people who had had heart attacks into just two classes—type 'A' and type 'B'.

Type A were described as people

who are always on the go, frenzied, rushed, never able to sit down, always pushing, feeling they are running late, tense, feeling they ought to be doing something, needing to get on with the job, working all the time, being hostile and aggressive towards other people. These they called Type A people.

Ninety per cent of all heart attacks belonged to that group of uptight tense, aggressive, unable-to-relax people.

Sometimes it may not be your fault. There may be other people who make you uptight, tense, nervous



SUSTAINING REST

Moyes

*as a gift from Him to you.
o you rest."*

and stressful.

I remember writing down an old epitaph. A man had buried his dear wife with some charming words:

*Here lies my wife.
Here let her lie.
Now she is at rest
And so am I.*

There is within many hearts a restlessness. St Augustine said: "Our hearts are restless until they find their rest in Thee."

Here is a great truth: "In returning and in rest you will be saved" (Isaiah 30:15).

What Does Jesus Promise?

Come to me all of you who are tired and carrying heavy loads and I will give you rest." What is it that Jesus promises? "I will give you rest." Note how personal that is. It is a person-to-person promise. His rest to you.

Do you notice how He says: "I will give you"? It is a free gift. It is not something that you earn. Jesus does not expect things from you. That is the great understanding of the faith: "For it is by God's grace that you have been saved." How? Not by anything you have paid.

Not by anything you have done. Not by anything you have earned. It is "God's grace through your faith. It is not the result of your own efforts, but it is God's free gift" (Ephesians 2:8,9).

That is what God is offering to each one—"Rest," He says. He offers it as a gift from Him to you. "I will give to you rest."

God Himself rested on the seventh day after creation. God found the need to rest and He offers His rest to you. That rest is the peace of a heart that is right with yourself, of a life that is right with other people, and of a soul that is right with God. We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, there is serenity and rest within us because we are at one with Him, with others and with ourselves.

What Qualification Entitles Rest?

Someone might say: "But how can I get this rest? What are the qualifications that I must have to get His rest?"

Look again at the words of Scripture. It will tell you what qualifications are needed to gain His rest. All you need is to be tired and weary from carrying heavy loads. "All of you," says Jesus, "who are tired from carrying heavy loads."

I am conscious of the number of people who are tired from carrying heavy loads. There are young people who are caring for a family on their own. I met a young girl just recently, 13 years of age, without a mother in the family and she is caring for the whole family after she comes home, in between her home lessons and study.

I have met older people who are bearing the burdens of others. I know a lovely elderly lady who has been caring for her sick son at home for 52 years.

Many people bear heavy burdens and become tired and weary from carrying the load.

I remember, at 9 or 10 years of age, reading "Black Beauty". I remember vividly the picture of the horse

that was now old and reduced to pulling a cart loaded with heavy bags of coal, and driven by a drunken merchant.

Because he spends too much time in the pub and has no time to make two trips, he puts on a double load of coal. They come to a steep hill, and he is sitting on top of the bags of coal thrashing the horse with his whip, making her pull this double load up the hill. The horse cannot go further. She keeps slipping on the road and falling to her knees. They stop on a steep incline. The driver goes into another hotel, has a couple more drinks, and comes out with a friend who wants a lift with his goods. He takes his goods and as there is no more room on the cart, he puts them all on the back of the horse.

Then, with a double-handed whip, he starts to thrash the horse to go up the hill!

"Come unto me," said Jesus, "all of you who are weary and heavy-laden." It is a weariness that comes because of the burden and weight of life's difficulties.

Jesus does not ask for our money, our possessions, our affluence, our intelligence, or anything else. He wants *us*. He never asks for *ours*.

Do you notice His interests? His interests are not in our achievements but in our anxieties. He knows our needs and cares. "Blessed are those who mourn. Blessed are they who hunger and thirst." He knows and cares.

His interest is not in our performance, but the burdens of heart that trouble us.

Who is Eligible?

Jesus gives an invitation to those who are hurting, those who are hungry, those who are the least, the lonely, and the lost, those who are the hurt people of our land: He says, "All of you."

That is one of the most beautiful words in Scripture. It does not exclude you because you are of a different race. It does not cut you

out because you are of a different class. It does not knock you out because you do not have enough money. It makes no socio-economic distinctions. He just says: "Come unto me all of you—anybody who is weary and tired, whoever you are, whatever you have done."

One of the most beautiful ideas in the whole Bible is the fact that "Whosoever will may come." God loves the whole world. No matter who you are, what your hurt, your race, your class, your society, your colour, your sex, there are no barriers, no distinctions, no cultural differences. You may come!

Where is our Need Met?

"All of you who are tired and weary, come to *me*. He is the centre of our healing, of our strengthening and of the renewal of our life. He becomes the centre of our faith and of our response.

"Jesus, lover of my soul

Let me to Thy bosom fly."

We do not come into the church as such or into a denomination. It is not into a specific type of lifestyle as such, or a certain type of dress as such. We come to Him!

Do you notice that when you come to Him, He says, "You will have my yoke upon you, and you will have my burden"? He is making a distinction between the other burdens and the other yokes that people have. The yoke was a heavy wooden implement placed around the shoulders of two oxen in order to pull the big, long, heavy plough. Sometimes those ox yokes were ill-fitting and they hurt, rubbed, and chafed the necks of the oxen. Sometimes they bowed the heads of the beasts down low because they were too big for small beasts. Jesus was a carpenter. He made sure His furniture was fine and His yokes fitted.

I can imagine outside the carpenter's shop in Nazareth, an advertisement for His carpentry—"My yokes are easy." They fit

well—that is the meaning of the Greek. Jesus said, "When you come to me I have not got a burden for you in the same way as the Romans had a burden—no increased taxes and levies. I do not have a burden for you like the Pharisees, whom you have to obey in everything they tell you to do. They do not, however, practise what they preach, but tie on people's backs loads that are too heavy and hard to carry, and they are not willing even to lift a finger to help people burdened with loads. To people under the Jewish religious load, and under the oppressive Roman law, Jesus said, "Come to me and put my way of life upon you. Follow my teaching, my example, my way of acting and thinking. That will be a yoke upon you and a burden, but—(do you notice the difference?)—My yoke is a burden in the same way that wings are a burden to a bird."

Those wings are burdens that lift! His burden is one that lifts, and yoked beside us He is willing to carry our heavy load.

How Can We Receive His Promise?

"Come to me and take my yoke upon you and learn of me, and you will find that my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

Where do you find this promise He gives you of rest?

"Come to me." That is where you find it. His is the only credible alternative lifestyle. His is the only way you can live that really helps you.

Jesus offers us not escape from problems, but sustaining rest within them. He offers us life-equipping resources. He offers us rest that is strength. "Come back and quietly trust in Me. Then you will be strong and secure" (Isaiah 30:15).

Gordon Moyes is Superintendent of the Wesley Central Mission, Sydney, NSW.

The small desert community of Warburton, a thousand kilometres west of Alice Springs, at first sight does not appear to be a very exciting place. Viewed from the air it is a scattered collection of corrugated iron roofs surrounded on all sides by the bare, red desert. It looks as though it is a place where nothing ever happens. And yet, when the aboriginal revival reached Warburton in 1981, over ninety per cent of the population made a commitment to Christ. This

place has been the focal point of the lives of linguists Amee Glass and Dorothy Hackett for the past twenty-four years. Most of that time has been spent in translating the Scriptures into Ngaanyatjarra, the language of Western Australia's Central Desert aborigines. When Amee Glass visited Canberra recently, I asked her about their work. Now settled in Alice Springs, she and Dorothy are working on a translation of the New Testa-

ment into Ngaanyatjarra. They expect to have it finished by the middle of 1989.

Born near Geraldton, WA, Amee Glass has had an interest in languages from High School days. She was hoping to get into the writing field and applied to be a cadet journalist on the "West Australian". However, there were thirty-two applicants for two positions and the competition was too strong for a "quiet country girl". Not knowing what else to concentrate on, she began a course at university. A few months later she was discussing future possibilities with a friend, and surprised herself by coming out with, "Of course, what I'd re-

A TOOL FOR CHANGE: THE SCRIPTURES IN

NGAANYATJARRA



Amy Glass and Dorothy Hackett

*In 1989 the entire
New Testament will be
available in the language of
the aborigines of
WA's Central Desert.
AMEE GLASS tells of the joys
and trials of translating it.*

This article was printed in the September 1987 edition of "Renewing Australia". Reproduced with permission.

ally like to do is to be a Bible translator."

"I hadn't ever verbalised that before," she said. "So having said it I thought I'd better find out how one trains to be one. I wrote away to Wycliffe Bible Translators and their suggestion was that I should complete the university degree and do some Bible college training and their linguistic course."

After training, Amee applied to the United Aborigines Mission to work with their language depart-

ment and was appointed to Warburton for an initial period of twelve months. "Dorothy Hackett and I went there in 1963. In 1979 I came to the Australian National University [in Canberra] to do a Masters, so I was actually away from Warburton for two years and Dorothy remained there. In 1981 we moved to Alice Springs."

The move to Alice Springs was necessary in order to concentrate more fully on the major task of translation

work. Too many other things were intervening. "When we started serious translation about 1968," Amee said, "Dorothy was doing translation and I was doing literacy, that is, preparing reading books and teaching people to read. Also from 1974-8, I was involved in helping with a bi-lingual programme in the school. Really, if one of us was working in translation, the other had to be free to answer the door just to be available to aboriginal people wanting prayer or counselling, or staff people wanting advice or interpreting help."

The first piece of translation they undertook was an abridgement of

Genesis. Then followed Matthew, Acts and Exodus. Ameer and Dorothy expect to finish the translation, revise the earlier work and make sure the whole translation is consistent sometime in 1989.

The long and exacting translation process begins with two aboriginal people from the language area who come to Alice Springs, one to work on the translation with Ameer, the other with Dorothy. "Before they come," Ameer explained, "we will have done exegetical preparation, looked up commentaries and produced a rough draft of how we think it will go. When they come we go through the whole thing verse by verse and produce our first draft." Each verse is written on a separate slip of paper and each day's output is typed into the computer so that a printout is ready the next morning for any slight adjustments which need to be made. The two teams work on separate passages of Scripture and after two or three weeks they will have come to the end of an agreed section. The aboriginal people will go home and Dorothy and Ameer will read each other's work, make critical comments and raise queries. They will also look for places in their own translations which they feel might need adjustment.

Then they make a trip into the language area to firm up arrangements for a second team of aboriginal people to come in. Along the way they sell books and cassettes in the language to encourage Christian people in the various groups. Back in Alice Springs Ameer and Dorothy and their helpers work through the draft from the first work session. The aim is to see if the translation is readily understood by this second group. As Ameer said, "Something that might be quite clear to the first person after you've discussed it for four or five minutes and given all the background, may not be clear to the next person [who is reading it cold]. We encourage them to

make adjustments, or ask questions."

From this a second draft is produced and the same process is repeated again with a third duo of aboriginal translators. When the third draft is complete, it is translated back into English. This "Back to English translation" is sent to another linguist to be checked for accuracy, and any remaining queries and adjustments in the Ngaanyatjarra version are attended to, in consultation with another aboriginal helper. With these last revisions the translation is complete.

A Scripture portion has just been released in the Ngaanyatjarra language which contains about twenty per cent of the New Testament. Fifteen different people helped with it and it took two years to translate and another three years to have printed. As well as the aboriginal language version, each page contains the Good News English version. Ameer explained, "[Some people] would say, 'I can't read my own language; I won't bother; it's too hard for me.' But because it has the English at the bottom it is an encouragement until they become more proficient at [reading their own language]." Translating into aboriginal languages has its own particular problems. For example, when someone dies, his name becomes taboo and any word in the language that is phonologically similar to that name becomes taboo as well. "They are continually changing words," Ameer said. This is in order to minimise grief to the bereaved family and is often for a period of from ten to fifteen years; the exact time would depend on how upset the relatives were.

In that time, other words will come in to replace the ones which cannot be used, and these may ultimately take over, because everyone becomes so familiar with them. Or, particularly if the new words are too difficult and cumbersome to be used easily, and the person didn't have particular status, the taboo

might lapse after two or three years, and the old words come back into use.

"An interesting thing happened," Ameer said. "The word for 'many' became taboo and they took the [replacement] word from a neighbouring language group, Pitjantjatjara. But the word was so common in Pitjantjatjara that it didn't really sound like Ngaanyatjarra; it was immediately recognised as a Pitjantjatjara word. So one of our translation workers said, 'What you should do is write the real Ngaanyatjarra word, and if a person is reading in public and he sees the bereaved relatives, he can make a swap as he reads along.'" The suggestion was adopted. Ameer commented: "They are quite adept at this. They can look at 'pirni' and pronounce 'tjurta' without any trouble at all. I am amazed at how well [even] people who are poor readers can make that sort of substitute."

Another area which has translators scratching their heads is the explanation of faith terms which we accept as everyday but which have no parallel in another language or culture. For instance, how do you explain the concept of a priest in aboriginal terms? Ameer said, "We finally settled on, for priest 'the workers in the Jews' Church', for chief priests, 'the bosses in the Jews' Church', and for high priest, 'the big boss of the Jews' Church.' 'Sabbath day' was another difficult one which we rendered 'Saturday, the day on which you are forbidden to do certain things.'"

Time is another concept which is more European than aboriginal. Aborigines only use years and months which is about as accurate as you can get, measuring by the moon. The aborigines of the western desert usually count the years by summers. "In the north they might use the wet seasons," Ameer explained. "But the concept of the week was introduced by missionaries and they operate with that [concept] now. Hours—they don't

have that precision. It's all by the position of the sun. There are a lot of different words round about dawn, because the sun's position changes noticeably. There's [a word for] the time when the earth becomes exposed, when you can first discern forms, and then [another for] the time of dawn, then the time when the sun is about to get up, then when the sun's just up, and [then] you've got mid-morning, midday, afternoon, night."

In his book, *Eternity In Their Hearts*, missionary Don Richardson explains how God has left some sort of key in each culture which enables the easier entry of the Gospel. I asked Ameer if anything of the sort had been noted in the aboriginal culture. "We haven't yet found anything," she said. "Actually, I have been anxious to get some of our Christian leaders who read English fairly well to read that book, but I haven't been able to do that, and unfortunately Richardson's style in that book is not particularly suitable for a person whose first language is not English. I have thought of writing to ask if he had thought of putting the book out again for people whose first language is not English for there must be people around the world who would benefit from thinking about those ideas, because I feel that maybe if the people themselves thought about it they might see

something that is hidden from us." I noted that the words in the Ngaanyatjarra translation were very long, and asked if this was a common feature of the hundreds of different aboriginal languages. Ameer explained that Ngaanyatjarra, in common with most, is a suffixing language. Often a single word covers more than one word in English. Ngaanyatjarra tends to run together and can be spoken at great speed. There is a pattern of consonant-vowel and no word can end with a consonant, nor can it start with a vowel. There are other aboriginal languages in which nearly all words are mono-syllables. It sounds short and staccato. One great factor of enormous help to the reader is that, unlike English, the writing systems of most aboriginal languages are quite predictable, having been constructed by linguists in recent years.

Ameer Glass has spent twenty-four years of her life working as a linguist among aborigines. I asked her why she felt that the task was so important. She said that there was no likelihood of the entire group becoming proficient in English. And even if this were to happen, the mother tongue is still the language of the heart, the means of

expressing the important things of life. European people who come to Australia might be quite proficient in English but still "feel" things in their mother tongue.

"We do see among the aboriginal people a lot of lack of depth in the Christian life because they don't have access to the Bible to understand and read for themselves what it is about. Imagine what it would be like if you could not read the Bible for yourself [so that] when you went along to church on Sunday you just had to listen and remember; you couldn't go home and check it for yourself.

"We noticed one man who was preaching. He had had no schooling. We taught him to read from his own language and he read very haltingly at first, but the first difference we noticed was that the content of his messages was more Biblically based. As he retold Bible stories, they were more accurate, after he started reading them for himself. Previously he had just been retelling what he had heard. "Also," she said, "there are many issues where we can't really tell the aboriginal people what to do, what parts of their tribal lives are in accordance with God's will and what are not. We believe that by giving the Scripture in a form that they can understand, we have been giving them a tool to [enable them to] make up their minds for themselves."



Waratjarra '87 A Seminar for Christian leaders at Waratjarra, WA.
From a sepia sketch by Wilf Douglas.

How good is your memory? How long would it take you to memorize the following?

OICUR2YS4ME

There are some stories of absolutely amazing memories. It is said of Dr John von Neumann, the Hungarian-born mathematician and computer scientist, that he had total recall. "I've met Einstein and Oppenheimer and Teller and a whole bunch of other guys," recalls Professor Leon Harmon of Case Western Reserve, "and von Neumann was the only genius I ever met. The others were super-smart, but von Neumann's mind was all-encompassing."

In Rangoon, Burma in May 1974, Bhandanta Vicitsara recited 16,000 pages of Buddhist canonical texts. Eleven years later, Creighton Carvello memorised a random sequence of 312 playing cards on a single sighting with only four errors.

But the most interesting memory of all probably belonged to a Russian, Mr Shereshevskii. Shereshevskii was first discovered when, as a journalist, his editor noticed that however complex the briefing instructions before he went out on a story, Shereshevskii never took notes. In spite of this he could repeat anything that was said to him word for word, a feat which he simply took for granted. Tested by a psychologist, there seemed to be no limit to the amount he could memorize—long strings of nonsense syllables, lists of more than a hundred digits, poetry in unknown languages or complex scientific formulae. Not only could Shereshevskii repeat this material back perfectly, he could do so in reverse order and also recall it effortlessly even years later.

Shereshevskii's secret lay in his ability to visualize pictures and to

employ the various bodily senses in the process. For example, when presented with a tone with a pitch of 2,000 cycles per second, he said: "It looks something like fireworks tinged with a pink-red hue. The strip of colour feels rough and unpleasant, and it has an ugly taste—rather like that of a briny pickle...you could hurt your hand on this." Talking to a scientist he remarked: "What a crumbly yellow voice you have." Unfortunately for Shereshevskii, he also had enormous difficulty in forgetting, and his memory became cluttered with all sorts of information which he did not wish to recall. One day he landed on a simple solution: in his mind, he visualized the information he wished to forget written on a blackboard and he then imagined himself rubbing it out. Interestingly, this worked perfectly.

For us lesser mortals, there are all sorts of tricks we can use to sharpen our memories. These come in handy when preparing for school examinations, going shopping or attaching names to faces. According to the experts, we remember best those things which are absurd and appeal to the imagination. If, for example, you saw a man milking a cow on your way to school, you would probably not give it another thought. But if you saw a *monkey* doing the milking you would remember it until the day you died!

(Oddly enough, the mind *craves* the absurd. Insight, for example, proceeds by metaphor, even though a metaphor is literally nonsensical—just look at the names given to some of the great inventions and discoveries: "skyscraper"; "iron horse"; "airship"; "New Holland" et cetera). So if you want to have a good memory, (or, for that matter, generate some creative ideas) don't be afraid to let your hair down.

The Romans were great inventors

of memory techniques, one of their most popular being the Roman Room. Memory expert Tony Buzan explains:

"The Romans constructed such a system easily. They imagined the entrance to their house and their room and then filled the room with as many objects and items of furniture as they chose—each object and piece of furniture serving as a link-image onto which they attached the things they wished to remember. The Romans were particularly careful not to make a mental garbage dump of their room; precision and order...are essential in this system.

A Roman might, for example, have constructed his imaginary entrance and room with two gigantic pillars at either side of the front door, a symbol of a lion as his door-knob, and an exquisite Greek statue on the immediate left as he walked in. Next to the statue might have been a flowering plant; next to the plant, a large sofa covered with the fur of one of the animals the subject had hunted; and, in front of the sofa, a large marble table on which were placed goblets, a wine container, bowls of fruit, and so forth.

Let's say that the Roman then wished to remember to buy a pair of sandals, to get his sword sharpened, to buy a new servant, to tend to his grapevine, to polish his helmet, to talk to his child, and so on. He would simply imagine the



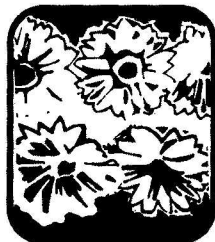
first pillar at the entrance of his imaginary room festooned with thousands of sandals, the leather polished and glistening, and the smell delighting his nostrils; on the right-hand pillar he would imagine sharpening his sword on the pillar itself, hearing the scraping as he did so, noticing the dust falling to the ground, and feeling the blade as it became sharper and sharper; his servant he would imagine riding a roaring lion, while grapes he might remember

by imagining his exquisite statue totally entwined with a grapevine on which were luscious grapes that he could imagine seeing and tasting so well that he would actually salivate; his helmet he could imagine by substituting the container of his imaginary flowers with the helmet itself, having some of the blooms actually protruding through the various spaces in his helmet; finally, he could imagine himself on his sofa, his arm around the child to whom he wished to speak" (*Use Your Perfect Memory*, [1984], 73-74). The Old Testament Jews had good memories, and many of them could doubtless recite large portions of the Scriptures by heart. A memory technique mentioned in the book of Deuteronomy is quite similar to the Roman Room:

"These words which I command you this day shall be upon your heart; and you shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. And you shall bind them as a sign upon your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates" (Deuteronomy 6:6-9).

Did the Jews really write the words of God on their doorposts and on their gates (v.9)? My guess is that they did so in their imagination, just like the Romans. Perhaps you have tied a handkerchief around your finger to remind yourself of an appointment; similarly, the Jews bound the word of God "as a sign upon the hand" (v.8). Sometimes it helps to go walking when you want to commit something to memory. It is also useful to study something at night and then revise it first thing in the morning. The Jews knew all about these methods (see v.7).

Sometimes it helps to use an acro-



nym if you want to remember something. It's easier, for example, to remember "AIDS" than the words for which it stands: Acquired Immune Deficiency Sndrome. Or you can turn something into an artificial acronym, such as

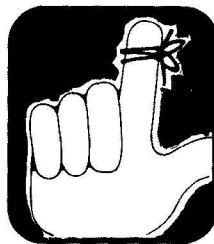
the treble notes E,G,B,D and F ("Every Good Boy Deserves Fruit"). In the Hebrew text of Psalm 119, (the longest Psalm), the song is broken down into several sections with all the verses in each section beginning with a particu-

lar letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Obviously, whoever wrote that Psalm had a kind heart for Jewish schoolboys.

If I am really serious about memorizing something, I try to act it out in the privacy of my home, in the form of a bizarre play. These antics are a form of ritual. Religious ritual serves a similar purpose; it reminds the participants of some aspect of their faith. Paul Levy, writing in the *Observer* (April 19, 1981), describes the Jewish Passover feast:

"The table (and the stage for the retelling of the Passover story) is set with three *matzot*... They represent not only the unleavened bread of the Israelites' journey but also "the poverty they suffered both in Egypt and in the desert." A roasted lamb bone is on the table "to commemorate the paschal sacrifice which every family brought to the Temple in ancient times." Boiled eggs are on the table as "symbolic of the festival sacrifice which was always additional to the paschal lamb."

Bitter herbs, usually horseradish, are eaten to remind the *Seder* participants that the lives of the slaves in Egypt were bitter. A mixture of nuts, apples, sweet wine and spices, *chasoret*, commemorates the mortar used by Jews at forced labour to build the Egyptian "treasure cities."



Green herbs such as parsley and watercress are eaten to symbolize the return of spring and the renewal of life; but they are dipped into salt water in memory of the tears shed by the enslaved Hebrews.

The best part of the evening is the compulsory four glasses of wine—of which even the youngest member of the party takes a sip. An extra place is laid at the table for the Prophet Elijah, who is supposed to visit every Jewish home during the *Seder*. And his glass of wine is always poured out too.

In addition to ensuring that the feast is a jolly one, the wine plays its symbolic part in the proceedings. At one point in the ceremony ten drops of wine are poured out to represent the Ten Plagues suffered by the Egyptians before they would agree to Moses leading away the children of Israel. I well remember the look of malicious pleasure on my grandfather's face as he conducted the ceremony, and visited locusts and boils on the Egyptians. It was just after the war, and even the children knew that the "Egyptians" he had in mind were German."

There's a lot more that can be said about memory techniques, and I hope this article has encouraged you to do some further reading for yourself. Yes, it's a nuisance that we have to work hard to keep facts and figures, names and places inside our heads—especially when there is so much to learn.

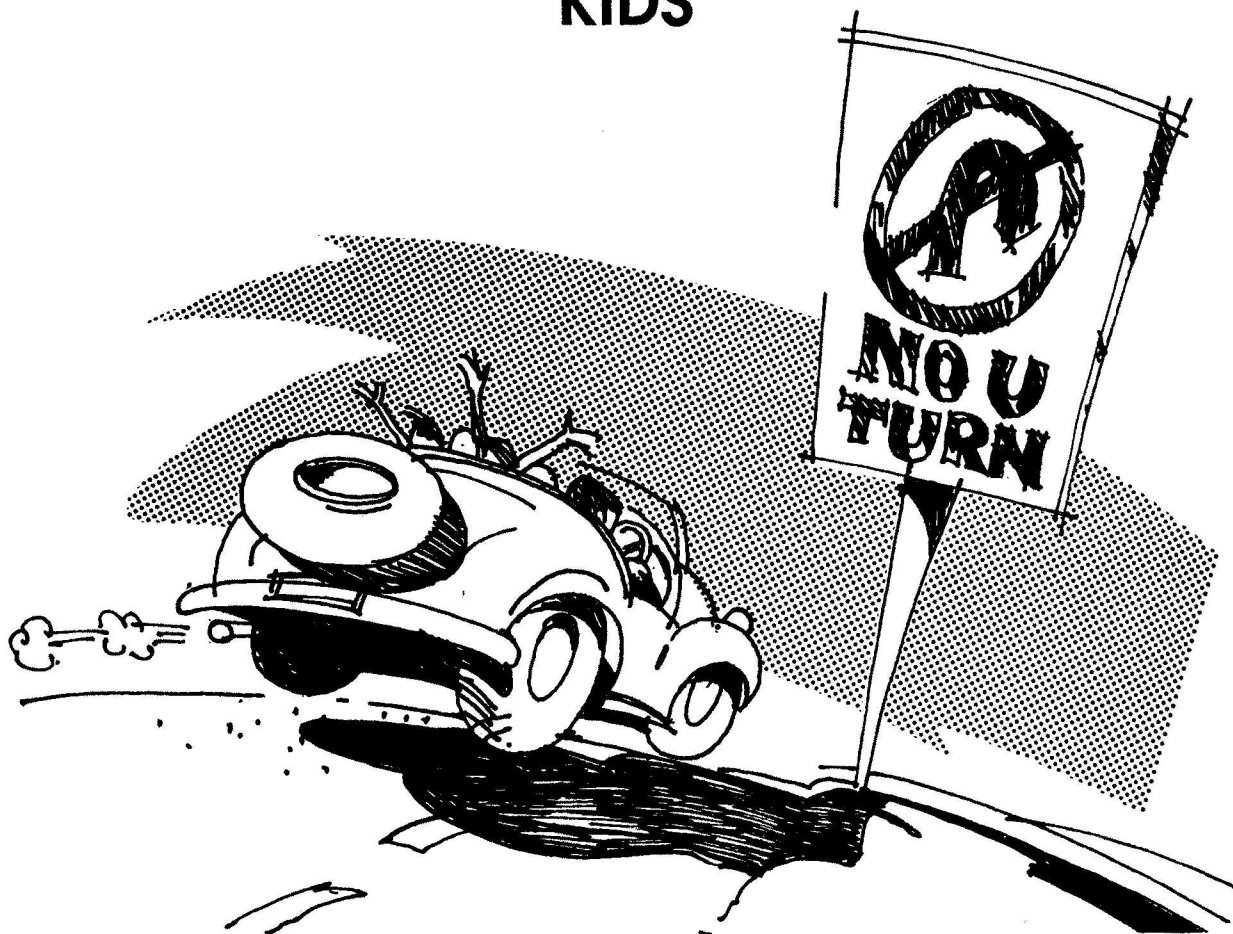
At least God doesn't have to use any memory tricks. Or does he (see Isa. 49:16)?

RECOMMENDED READING
Alan Baddeley, *Your Memory: A User's Guide*. Middlesex: Penguin, 1983.

Tony Buzan, *Use Your Perfect Memory*. New York: E.P. Dutton, 1984.
A. R. Luria, *The Mind of a Mnemonist*. New York: Basic Books, 1968.

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KIDS



In the cities, you will see lots of big signs saying "No U Turn." That means if you are driving along the road you cannot turn your car around and drive in the exact opposite direction. As a matter of fact, in the State in which I live, you are not allowed to do a U turn at the traffic lights either.

I remember very clearly once, watching a man do a U turn at some traffic lights with a police car right behind him. He did the U turn only to find the police were right on his tail. He was pulled up and fined for breaking the law.

However, there is one very important U turn in life that needs to be made. I wonder if you can spot that U turn in these Bible verses:

John the Baptist opened his preaching by saying: "Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is

near" (Matthew 3:2).

Jesus began His ministry by saying: "Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is near" (Matthew 4:17).

Jesus sent His disciples out to preach to people. The Bible says that "they went out and preached that people should repent" (Mark 6:12).

Jesus was speaking to some people and He made it very clear about entry into God's Kingdom. He said: "Unless you repent, you too will all perish" (Luke 13:3).

Well, did you pick up the U turn? It is in that word "repent." That word means to turn right around and go the other way. To repent is not just to be sorry you have been caught out doing something wrong. To repent is to turn away from sin and living your way; to put your faith in the Lord Jesus and live God's

way. Of course, only God's Holy Spirit can lead you to make that U turn in life. There is a way that we can tell whether we have made that U turn or not, and I will talk to you about that next month.

To Talk Over With Mum and Dad:

Have we truly repented if we continue to forget about God in our lives?

A Verse to Remember:

"From that time on Jesus began to preach, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near'" (Matthew 4:17).

Rev. Ron Clark, Director of Christian Education, Presbyterian Church of Queensland.