January 2001 THE GOOD I

A bimonthly newsletter produced by Good News Unlimited

Editorial

n the last issue of The Good Newsletter I gave my testimony as to why I do not believe in the immortality of the soul.

When I have discussed this matter with people who believe we have an immortal soul, I have found they usually come up with an array of proof texts to back their position. But I, too, can come up with an array of proof texts to back mine, so I have found this approach ends with people agreeing to disagree. As so many of us in our previous church affiliation have had more than our fill of proof-texting, I have found it better to broadly analyse the topic.

Firstly, when God created Adam and Eve they were created with conditional immortality. Their component parts of body, soul and spirit did not matter. They were complete, immortal human beings, built to last for eternity.

God then set the test of the fruit of the tree in the midst of the garden, saying, if they ate it they would die. Or in other words, he would 'deprive them of their immortality'.

Then comes the temptation with the serpent, and when Eve says to it, 'God says we will die,' the serpent replies, 'You will not surely die.' Or in other words, 'God says he will deprive us of our immortality.' To which the serpent replies, 'You will not lose your immortality.'

Here, at this point, we have the basis of every religion on earth. Christianity being about the recovery of our lost immortality, and every other religion saying we already have immortality, because they believe they have immortal souls.

According to the Bible, the only way that our immortality will be restored, is by our resurrection from the dead. The great demonstration of this being Jesus' own resurrection.

If you look up the word 'resurrection' in the dictionary it says 'to rise from the dead' or 'the rising again of men on the day of judgement'. Now people who believe in the immortality of the soul say that at the resurrection Jesus will put immortal souls into new bodies. This is not resurrection, but reincarnation. If you again consult your dictionary, you will find that reincarnation is 'the rebirth of the soul in a new body.'

They are two entirely different things and our language uses two totally different words to describe them. Nowhere does the Bible mention the word 'reincarnation'. It is quite foreign to anything taught in the Bible.

One other thing to consider is that if we have immortal souls that not even God can destroy, then God is not sovereign, but is a compromised God and the word 'perish' in John 3:16 is meaningless for he would be unable to make it happen.

Also, once you believe that you have an immortal soul, you are on the threshold of the occult. You have accepted the basic foundation of occult theology, and given the right circumstances, you could be lured into it. Do not shrug this off

with a, 'It couldn't happen to me', it has happened to many.

God, in his wisdom, had brought me to a place where I could understand where my mother's occultism was wrong, but how could I refute it? The next step for him was to bring me to an understanding of the salvation he had won for me at Calvary. After trying to earn my salvation by trying to keep God's law for twenty years, this understanding was brought to me by a pastor who had studied under Dr Ford. He unfolded to me that Jesus had paid the penalty for the sin of the world at the Cross, and that included mine from my birth to my death. As the enormous extent of what Christ had done began to sink in, I then became aware of the assurance I had of my salvation. I have rejoiced ever since!

The crowning joy of all this is that on the appointed day, Jesus will raise me from the dead, a righteous being, to live with him in a perfect world for eternity. I know this, for he said to Martha, 'I am the resurrection and the life.' These two things go together, for he both raises from the dead, and gives life at the same time. If he was reincarnating, he would not have to give life, it would already be there in the immortal soul.

Let us look forward to the resurrection, it is the next great act of grace God will enact for us. May He haste the day.

Roger Jones

Kogger

Focus on the Gospel



Dear Friend emptation is usually thought of as an enticement to that which is evil only. But there is another dimension of temptation. It is the attraction of that which is good and right.

When the Prodigal Son

headed for the 'far' country, he was doubtless tempted by evil—and he fell for it! However, among the pigs he began to feel the pull of the wholesomeness of his father's house. At first he resisted, he tried to escape the humiliation of repentance. At last he gave in and turned his face homeward.

Planet earth has gone to the 'far' country. It has felt the lure of an existence without the rule and companionship of God. Now all its inhabitants are feeling the terrific pressure of evil's consequence. Together, we are aching for a new kind of world. A world where people have done with war and envy. A place where the threat of universal extermination has faded into oblivion and brotherhood with love holds sway. Even unbelievers candidly wish that the world would be a bit more Christian.

It is true that there are some features of the Christian church which do not tempt people to joinits exhibition of sectarianism and obscurantism. An American man of letters used to publicly voice his disapproval of these features of the church. He seldom attended, but when he did he would invariably record his disapproval in his diary. 'A bad sermon as usual' he wrote, or, 'A most detestable sermon.' The best he could say on one occasion was, 'A middlin' sermon.' Though millions in our time have been turned off Christianity by its excesses and its weaknesses, the fact is, there lies a magnificent tradition of spiritual life that sprang from the Hebrew prophets, and reached its flowering in the life and teachings of Jesus. In this spiritual heritage are the origins of many things that our society still holds precious the rights of the individual, liberty of conscious, democracy and the rule of law.

The world has turned its back on many of the Christian affirmations, and in their place alternative faiths have emerged. Our choice now is not between belief and unbelief, but alternative faiths. Between Christ and what he stands for, or its opposite; between God and a spiritual, purposeful universe, or materialism—a universe that came from nothing and which in the end means nothing.

Either man is a child of the eternal God or he

is an accident of dust. Either a gracious God and organised goodwill will save the world, or organised violence is life's natural law.

If one pauses long enough to see beyond many of the petty and superficial displays of Christianity, it will be seen that in its depths, Christianity is important and absolutely necessary.

There are those who resist the temptation to be Christian by appealing to their sense of self-management—a man needs only to be strong and confront life with a steady nerve, also an iron will, then he can master it! Many a man has begun with such a brave face, only to find that self-sufficiency collapses in the strife. The present world situation makes self-sufficiency look puny. What would anyone not give for a resource of inner-strength to sustain them amid the strain of living today.

Others think Christianity is all very nice, but far too impractical. Forgiveness, long-suffering, and self-sacrifice may be good ideals but they simply will not work in the modern setting. But wait, is it so impractical? Is starving a whole generation of children so that they will never be physically or mentally normal, practical? Is the preparation of our best youths for participation in mass slaughter, practical? On the contrary, the principles spoken in the Sermon on the Mount, seem more and more essential if we are to have a world fit to live in. The ethical principles of Jesus are not just fine ideas, they are the laws of life.

Once an Indian woman who had cataracts, was operated upon by a medical missionary. As she bade the doctor farewell, she bowed low and said, 'Goodbye God.' The missionary held up his hands and insisted that he was not God. But she would have none of it. As she was leaving the hospital she kept turning back to say, 'Goodbye God.' The missionary's work of skillful love on the Indian woman tempted her to believe that God was present in him. Jesus, above all others, thus tempts men.

May Christ so dwell in you and me this year, that we will not only be ourselves blest, but that we will have the joy of seeing others captivated by the allure of Jesus, who tempts all men strongly to take up the cross and follow him.

Yours in service

RONJALLEN

From Clem's desk

Matthew 26:33 'Peter replied, 'Even if all fall away on account of you, I never will.'

hat remarkable, strong and passionate words to come from the lips of the disciple who has been so close to Jesus for over three years.

There can be no doubt that this statement by Peter was heartfelt and well intentioned—and yet, within hours of this statement being made, this same Peter would deny his connection with Jesus, not once, but three times. How easy it is for words to drop from the lips, and yet, how soon the meaning disappears and the passion drifts into the emptiness of time and space.

I have no doubt that Peter felt very strongly about Jesus. Indeed, after the denial Peter went out and wept, ashamed of himself and what he had done, or more to the point, what he had failed to do.

In our efforts to uphold our relationship with Jesus, we often stand between the precipice of selfinduced persecution on the one hand and the bog of cowardice on the other. In our day to day lives, not every situation is clear-cut and we are forced to make instantaneous decisions on just how to live both effectively and faithfully for Jesus.

I want to suggest to you that Peter failed here primarily, because he made no attempt at all to defend his true position.

On many occasions we may fail because we are over zealous or inarticulate. We do need to take into account who we are talking to and the situation at hand. Often words are the least effective witness we can give regarding our love for God. Of course we can go to the extreme and rationalize away all effective witness, prompted chiefly by convenience. The one saving grace for Peter was that, having failed, he did not attempt to defend the failure, but acknowledged his sin and sought the forgiveness of God-sound wisdom for us all.

Clem Moss

Pat Jones

Preservation

Summer is the time for preserving apples, pears, peaches, apricots, tomatoes and beans—that is what is done in our house. Bottled or frozen, they will last for a very long time and taste wonderful!

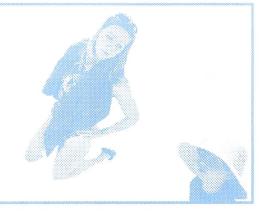
We humans, however, don't last a long time, and sad to say some live much shorter lives than others. The Bible says in Psalms, that the length

of our days is seventy years or eighty—if we have the strength (90:10).

But it is not all bad news. Our loving Heavenly Father has a remedy for everything, and in John 3:16 we read these comforting words: 'For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whosoever believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.' The life God offers is free—you just have to accept it, love him and serve him. Why not ask God about your preservation today?

A young women was enjoying the sun on the beach, when a small boy in his bathers, and carrying a towel, came up to her and asked, 'Do you believe in God?' She was surprised by the question but replied, 'Why, yes I do.' Then he asked her 'Do you go to church on Sunday?' Again her answer was 'Yes.' Then he asked, 'Do you read your Bible and pray every day? Again she said, 'Yes.'

The little boy sighed and said, with relief, 'Will you hold my money while I go swimming?'



Letters

Dear Dr Ford

For years I have struggled to find the *true* gospel of Christ. Because of my past 'crunching' I have had some serious difficulty in my walk with the Lord. I value your opinion as a man that 'has been there' and one who has walked with the Lord for many years. I would very much like to receive your opinion on a few questions.

In my search to find the best ways to tactfully refute the false doctrine of unconditional eternal security, I happened to stumble across a disturbing website that had been offered by the Methodist Church for Wesleyan and all Arminian believers.

I thought that I held the Arminian theology completely, but now I know that I do not. I believe like Arminians do, that man is totally deprived, but not so much that he cannot move towards God, after God first moves towards him.

I also believe in the imputed righteousness of Christ, which to my great surprise is not held by Arminians! The following are excerpts from one of their articles that can be found on, www.ldl.net/~cartbury/

My comments are in brackets:

'Since salvation in Calvinism is not based on a moral transformation of the sinner, so God must receive the sinner on the Basis of a moral transfer of righteousness of Christ called imputation. This is where God is somehow blinded to the reality of our sin, but in return he only

sees the holiness of Christ when he views my life. This ignores the fact that morality is not transferable. I cannot transfer righteousness to you, any more than you can give me your sin.

Arminianism presumes that God is genuine in his call to whosoever will. (Yes) That in view of this, the atonement of Christ is provision made for all. (Yes) God calls everyone in his own way and his own time. (Yes) Man is free to accept this gracious gift or to refuse and resist the offer. (Yes) This makes man and not God responsible for the final eternity of each individual. (I would not say in that way, but in a way Yes) God hates sin, and the atonement he provides, must by nature, remove sin out of the believer in order to make man acceptable to God. (No!) The new birth, or regeneration, is designed to give us a new nature (Yes) and not a covering for our sin (No!) Ultimately we must endure in our faith unto the end to be saved.' (Yes)

Wow . . . this is confusing!
So in order to be viewed as righteous, we must accept the grace of God, which in turn, will allow us to live a righteous life, so that God can call us righteous, because we are righteous! This is what they must believe since they do not believe in the imputed righteousness of Christ. This is nothing more than Popery! How could any mature believer actually ever think he is righteous. Would we not have to become perfect before this could

happen? As it is, we sin all the time, much less than before we were saved, but still very frequently! Do they disregard the words of Paul about himself in Romans chapter seven?

I would really appreciate your comments on the above. I think I have it correct, but I am not totally sure because this is all fairly new to me.

I have no doubt that we can loose our salvation should we choose to reject the Lord. I believe that this can happen by either 'giving up' our faith in a conscious way or through blatant, persistent and willful disobedience.

We can disobey so much as to ruin our relationship with the Lord, which in turn will ruin our faith. This is a rejection of Christ. This will cause us to give up our hold on the Saviour, and repentance, which will cause us to be lost eternally.

The Spirit pleads with those who have given up their hold on the Lord, but eventually, if they do not repent and return to the Lord, will let them go the way of the world. I believe however, that this is very rare, as God does not just throw us off should we fall into sin of even the willful kind. He gives us time to repent and time to return to him. Would you comment on these comments too.

I felt sad to read the article on the website. The Reformer that I respected the most was John Wesley, but he too must have rejected the doctrine of imputed righteousness of Christ—since the Methodists grew up from his teachings.

Do you believe like I do Dr Ford? Am I wrong in some respects here? I reject denominationalism, but yet I ask you, is there any Arminian denomination that believes in the imputed righteousness of Christ and recognises that we can indeed fall away from the Lord if we so choose?

One last thing please . . . I know of a paradoxical situation that I would like you to comment on . . . Mrs White believed in the imputed righteousness of Christ, (I think) yet she also believed in the Investigative Judgement.

Thank you very much for your time and help.

Sincerely,

—E К U.S.A.

Dear E

Thank you so much for your email. I am very sympathetic to your feelings and protests.

I am embarrassed to tell you that I cannot fully cope with the mail that comes to me from many people from many parts of the world. For years it has been the case that if I try to do all that people request, I would have to give up eating, drinking and sleeping.

Let me say something brief, but I hope appropriate. Wesley was not what is considered to be pure Arminian by many today. There is in print somewhere a hypothetical discussion between him and the Calvist, Charles Simeon. They are both surprised to find that they are agreed on almost all the basic fundamentals—the depravity of man, the indispensability of prevenient grace, the total inability of even converted people to completely fulfill the law of God; the necessity of divine upholding from day to day, and the guarantee of salvation at last for all those who maintain their faith in Jesus, revealing this by a holy life.

Arminius himself was certainly not an Arminian. There

are recent books in print which set forth his life and teachings. He also would have agreed with Charles Simeon in almost all areas. The main area of dispute is whether God has foreordained that only a minority of particular people should be saved, and that the cross was only meant for them. But exegetes of Romans in the last hundred years have disposed of all the chief arguments of Calvinists, based on texts in Romans 8-11. (See any of the modern classic commentaries on this.)

It is true that Wesley did not see imputed righteousness in theory the way most scholars of Romans see it today. But in his practice, the case was otherwise. It was more a matter of terminology than reality.

Ellen White was neither purely Calvinistic nor Arminian. Her comments on Romans 7 in the book of Acts of the Apostles prove this. Wesley thought that the last part of the chapter applied only to the unconverted. But Calvin rightly saw that it fitted the converted perfectly. EGW sided with Calvin in this, but rejected his limited atonement theories, as did also Wesley.

The best books on the once saved always saved theory and predestination are those by Robert Shank, entitled Life in the Son and Elect in the Son (I think).

I would not pay too much attention to the article from which you have quoted. Such articles often make significant mistakes in their presentations, and it is necessary to go to the original documents to be certain of the reality.

Ellen White in Great Controversy gave the development of Adventist teaching after the great disappointment, and believed it as she wrote. The book is a great

evangelical tract, but it does not claim infallibility in either history or theology.

See the last page in her chapter on Calvary where she makes it quite plain that Calvary was the antitype of the antitype of the Day of Atonement. Here she rightly understands Hebrews 9.

The best book on imputed righteousness is James Buchanan's book, The Doctrine of Justification. See also C.F.D. Waltheer, published by Concordia and available in most seminary libraries, which usually do not mind a visitor.

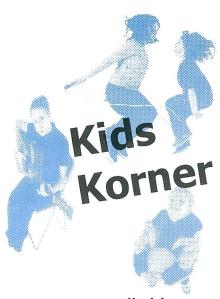
I recommend that you draw your theology just from the plain statements of Scripture, making sure that you take into account at least most of what is said on each topic. Sometimes the modern paraphrases can help somewhat, though it is not their intention to translate the original word for word. So include J.B. Phillips, The Living Bible and The Message by Peterson in your studies. Remember, none of them are infallible.

If you are ever able to get it, the commentary on the Bible by Christopher Wordsworth, Bishop of Lincon, is excellent on the topics you have raised, but it would only be found in seminary libraries.

Blessings! And the warmest of Christian greetings.

> Your brother in Christ —Desmond Ford.





Story supplied by John Kook (GNU's postman)

The Miracle

Tess was a precocious eight year old when she heard her Mum and Dad talking about her little brother, Andrew. All she heard was that he was very sick and they were completely out of money. They were moving to an apartment complex next month, because Daddy didn't have the money for the doctor's bills and their house.

Only a very costly surgery

could save Andrew now and it was looking like there was no-one who could lend them the money.



Tess heard Daddy say to her

tearful mother with whispered desperation, 'Only a miracle can save him now.'

So she went to her bedroom and pulled a glass jelly-jar from its hiding place in the closet. She poured all the change out on the floor and counted it carefully.

Three times she counted, the total had to be exactly perfect. No chance here for mistakes. Carefully placing the coins back in the jar and twisting the cap back on,

she slipped out the back door and made her way six blocks to Rexall's Drug Store with the big red sign above the door. She waited patiently for the pharmacist to give her some attention, but he was too busy. Tess twisted her feet to make a scuffing noise. Nothing.

She cleared her throat with the most disgusting sound she could muster. No Good.

Finally, she took a quarter from her jar and banged it on the glass counter. That did it!

'And what do you want?' Asked the pharmacist in an annoyed tone of voice. 'I'm talking to my brother from Chicago whom I haven't seen in ages,' he said, without waiting for a re-

ply to his question.

'Well, I want to talk to you about my brother,' Tess answered back in the same annoyed tone. 'He's really, really sick . . . and I want to buy a miracle.'

'I beg your pardon?' Said the pharmacist.

'His name is Andrew and he has something bad growing inside his head, and my Daddy says only a miracle can save him now. So how much does a miracle cost?'

'We don't sell miracles here, little girl. I'm sorry that I can't help you' the pharmacist said, softening a little.

'Well, I have the money to pay for it. If it isn't enough, I will get some more. Just tell me how much it costs.'

The pharmacist's brother was a well dressed man, he stooped down and asked the little girl, 'What kind of miracle does your brother need?'

'I don't know,' Tess re-

plied with her eyes welling with tears, 'I just know he is really sick and he needs an operation, but my Daddy can't pay for it, so I want to use my money.'

'How much do you have?'
Asked the man from
Chicago.

'One dollar and eleven cents,' Tess answered 'And it's all the money I have, but I can get some more if I need to.'

'Well, what a coincidence,' smiled the man. 'A dollar and eleven cents—

the exact price of a miracle for little brothers.' He took her money in one hand and with the other hand he grasped her mitten and said, 'Take me to where you live, I want to see your brother and meet your parents. Let's see if I have the kind of miracle you need.'

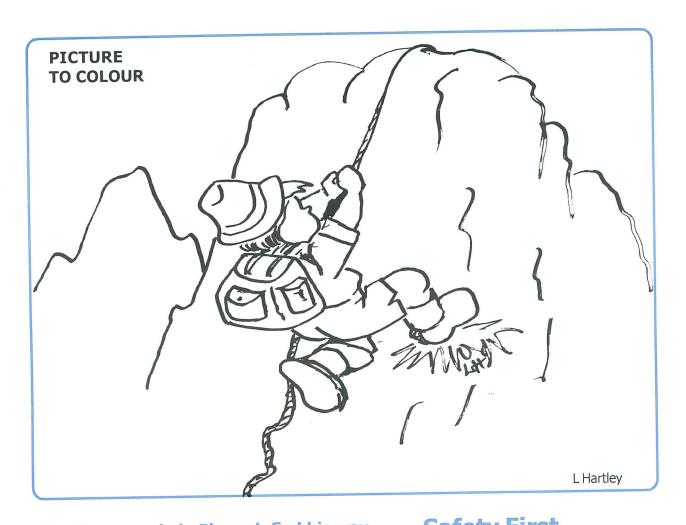
That man was Dr. Carlton Armstrong, a surgeon, specializing in neurosurgery. The operation was completed without charge and it wasn't long until Andrew was home again and doing well. Mum and Dad were happily talking about the chain of events that had seen Andrew well and strong again, 'The surgery,' Mum said, 'was a real miracle. I wonder how much it would have cost?'

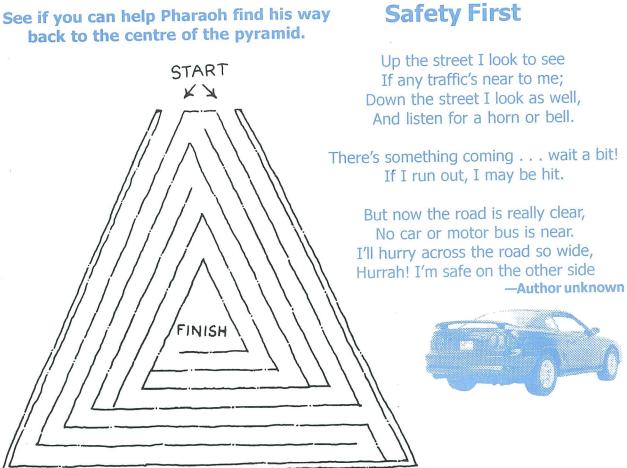
Tess smiled. She knew exactly how much a miracle cost—one dollar and eleven cents.



Thought for the day: 'Where there is great love, there are always miracles

-Willa Cather





Render Unto Caesar That Which Is Caesar's

The following article was sent from Florida, USA to M Savige QLD Aust., who thought that our readers would find it interesting and thought provoking.

This is a statement that was read over the PA system at the football game, Roane County High School, Kingston, Tennessee by the school Principal, Jody McLoud, on September 1 2000.

'It has always been the custom at Roane County High School football games to say a prayer and play the national anthem to honour God and country. Due to a recent ruling by the Supreme Court, I am told that saying a prayer is a violation of federal Case Law.

As I understand the law at this time, I can use this public facility to approve of sexual perversion and call it an alternate lifestyle, and if someone is offended, that's OK.

I can use it to condone sexual promiscuity by dispensing condoms and calling it safe sex. If someone is offended, that's OK.

I can use this public facility to present the merits of killing an unborn baby as a viable means of birth control. If someone is offended, no problem.

I can designate a school day as Earth-day and involve students in activities to religiously worship and praise the goddess, mother earth, and call it ecology.

I can use literature, videos and presentations in the classroom that depict people with strong traditional Christian convictions as simple minded and ignorant—and call it enlightenment. However, if anyone uses this facility to honour God and ask him to bless this event with safety and good sportsmanship, Federal Case Law is violated.

This appears to be at best, inconsistent and at worst, diabolical. Apparently, we are to be tolerant of everything and everyone except God. Nevertheless, as a school principal, I frequently ask staff and students to abide by rules which they do not necessarily agree with. For me to do otherwise would be at best inconsistent, and at worst, hypocritical. (I suffer from that affliction enough unintentionally.) For this reason I will 'Render unto Caesar that which is Caesar's' and refrain from praying at this time. However, if you feel inspired to honour, praise and thank God, and ask him in the name of Jesus to bless this event, please feel free to do so. As far as I know, that's not against the law—yet.'

Addendum: 'We ought to obey God rather than men.' (Acts 5:29)

-M Savige QLD Aust.

A Special Address: Part 2

Given by Fr. Rom Haynes at Bethanga Catholic Church

Reported by Elizabeth Price (The Next Step magazine)

Fr. Rom was asked to look after a place in the shanty-town known as St John of God. It was the poorest of the poor, high up in the hills, 'It was the most beautiful community', he said. He was assigned to help build a chapel there, and he said, 'I would go up on a Wednesday night and in the candlelight we would sit around, there was no electricity, running water or sewerage (the main street was the sewer)—and there we would sit down to prepare the Sunday morning service.'

On one particular occasion, Fr. Rom prepared his sermon from John's letter on 'God is Love,' and on Sunday morning he was handed the reading—'God is love'. He said he opened the book and in silence his eyes fell on those words, then he said, 'I looked down through this sea of incredibly poor people, little kids with their skin gone yellow and with yellow eyes from malnutrition, and beyond that scene, into the streets of this shanty-town where the sewerage went down the middle of the street with the kids walking in the filth, the stench . . . and such poverty! And there I was, a white man from Australia, saying, 'God is love'.

Making some excuse in broken Spanish, I quickly flicked the page and found something else to read because I could not stomach, 'God is love'.

The next Wednesday night we got together to prepare the Sunday service and one of the women—

she is a lovely lady—said, 'Father, what happened last Sunday? We prepared a reading and you didn't read it.'

I replied, 'Oh I think I got confused about the reading.'

She said, 'No Father, that's not what happened.' Then she turned to me and said, 'Father, would you look at us, just look at us; and then you'll know that God is love.'

'That was a fantastic thing to be told,' commented Father Rom, 'What a wonderful sense of God's presence she has. These people are not saints, they lie, steal and cheat—stealing is part of their culture.'

And as Fr. Rom got to know them, with their warmth, love and generosity, then he saw, he said, that 'God is love'.

* * * * *

Regular Meeting With

Dr Desmond Ford

7.15am Breakfast Seminar

Alexanders Restaurant at the Metropolitan Motor Inn 106 Leichardt Street, Spring Hill, Brisbane (Corner of Upper Edward Street)

This breakfast seminar will be held on the third Friday of each month. Des has been asked to be the regular speaker.

There is parking under the Motor Inn



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Good News Unlimited

Mission Statement

Christians united in offering to all meaning and direction in their lives by a knowledge of God's encounter with humanity through his Son, Jesus Christ.

In view of it's history, GNU recognises a special duty to assist Seventh-day Adventists in their journey of spiritual discovery and growth.

GNU Aust: goodnews@coolgold.com.au

Ron Allen: ronallen@sundancenet.com Goodchat: goodchat@coolgold.com.au

Free Ezine: FreEzine@telstra.easymail.com.au Chairman: patandroger@telstra.easymail.com.au

Treasurer: tedman@coolgold.com.au

The Good Newsletter: patandroger@telstra.easymail.com.au GNU Media Technician: hartley@telstra.easymail.com.au GNU Website design: grobins@westconnect.com.au

GNU USA: gnu@goodnewsunlimited.org

Websites

GNU USA: www.goodnewsunlimited.org
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RADIO OUTREACH

you can, but most do not.

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OPAL FM 89.7 Lightning Ridge NSW Phn. 068 290595 (Tony Fitzgerald).

BALLARAT GOSPEL RADIO, VIC Phn. 0353399958 (Pam Fowkes)

RADIO RHEMA TAMWORTH NSW Phn. 02 67612360 (Karen Barter).

RADIO RHEMA CENTRAL COAST Gosford, NSW Phn. 043248525 (Mark Roberts).

TOOWOOMBA 92.9FM QLD Phn. 076 394977 (Cassie Aub).

Fellowships

When visiting interstate or in New Zealand, you may like to know where to worship.

Adelaide: phn. 088 3224118 Adelaide meets each week and once a month they enjoy a fellowship lunch.

New Zealand:

phn. 0011 09 8270070

phn. 08 94585469 Meets monthly, on the second Saturday of the month, followed by a basket lunch.

Gold Coast:

Phn.07 55355329 No meetings for the present. When Ron Allen returns to Australia early in 2001 the fellowship will resume. We will keep you posted.

Hervey Bay: Phn. 07 41281261. Meets once a month at 'Dan-Dinna House' 459 Boat Harbour Drive, Torquay. For further information contact Evelyn O'Grady.

Any others meeting regularly? We would love to hear from you.

Pirates Of Privilege

by Walter Rea

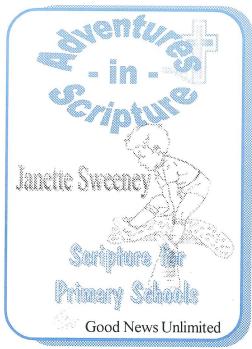
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