



The Good Newsletter

A BI-MONTHLY NEWSLETTER PRODUCED BY GOOD NEWS UNLIMITED

MAY 1996

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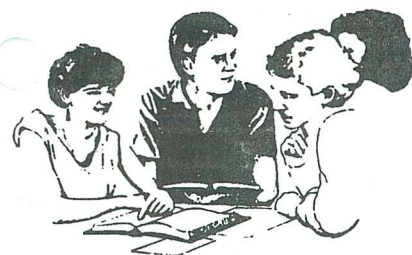


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EDITORIAL

Over the last six months we have become aware of wondrous changes taking place in *The World Wide Church of God*.

God has come to them, confronting them with the Gospel and as a Church they have accepted it.

It is so wonderfully refreshing to find a people who freely and frankly admit they were wrong in their understanding and have welcomed the Gospel when God presented it to them.

There are those in this world who cynically say God is dead, but we who know him know that he is continually at work drawing all men unto himself.

A visitor to the Lake Macquarie seminar was Pr. Phil Hopwood the local minister of *The World Wide Church of God*.

He told us of the thrilling

times his church was going through as they explored the Gospel and the joy of the members as they realised that their salvation was sure.

With the kind permission of Aub Warren of *The Plain Truth* magazine we have reproduced an editorial on page 5 'Forgive Us Our Trespases'.

Let us have your comments on this.

You will also notice a letter from Reverend Dr. Gordon Moyes AM of the Wesley Mission. It is good to see the 'Unlimited' team get

such a large listening audience.

May God bless you,

Roger Jones.



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THIS ISSUE:

- * Dear Friend
- * From USA
- * 1996 Seminars
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- * Profile

Dear Friend

Have you ever thought what an amazing publication the Bible is? If you turn it open at random you may find the story of a massacre carried out by Joshua. He massacred his male enemies, their wives and children. Turn some more pages and you might come to a blood-thirsty Psalm, such as the one hundred and thirty seventh, where the poet invites his countrymen to take the innocent children of Babylon and dash their brains out against the rocks. Browse further and you might happen upon strange chapters depicting hideous beasts and weird visions. Why is such a book so widely read? How does it come that men and women have risked their lives to get their hands on it? Why have millions payed the ultimate price for treasuring its precepts? I will suggest four reasons why the Bible continues to be loved and fought for.

1) The Bible reveals a God who cares about people. The broad testimony is that we are in the hands of someone very wise, loving and strong and that we are the subjects of his sympathetic attention. Two soldiers were lying badly wounded in the battlefield hospital. One said, 'I don't care whether I get through or not. Life doesn't amount to much. I've got no job to return to and no hope of ever getting one. What's there to live for?' The other said, 'I've got a girl in Scotland and she cares for me.' There is tremendous psychological anchorage and sustenance in being the subject of somebody's care. God cares and for that reason what happens to us does matter — and that tremendously.

2) The Bible reveals a God with a purpose for his world. We learn from Scripture that every man's life, including its smallest details, is important and significant in the eyes of God. Jesus said that the very hairs of our head are numbered. He also said that God cares for the sparrows and he went on to say, 'You are of much more value than many sparrows.' Even the things which happen to us which God does not intend, such as disease, frustration, bereavement are all being woven into a plan. The Apostle Paul could say 'With them that love him, God co-operates in all things for good.' If I can know at the beginning and end of each day, that whether what happens is due to God's love or due to the ignorance and carelessness of man; that everything is being woven into an all wise plan, then I can live my life humbly, trustfully and contentedly. I will be delivered from the horrible nightmare of meaninglessness. The Bible affirms that there is a God who is able to make all things serve him — evil things and good things, little things and big.

3) The Bible reveals a God who cannot be defeated. The last book in Scripture often uses the word 'throne'. The infant church persecuted as it was and expecting the imminent end of the world, was certain that God would win. 'He that sitteth on the throne says, "Behold I make all things new."' This enthroned Christ possessed the keys of death and hell. This is tremendous news for our time. In spite of all appearances. In spite of the strength of greed and materialism; in spite of the apparent feeble influence of Christianity on men's affairs; in spite of the appalling energies unleashed by modern technology, still God is the supreme ruler of his world and no power will be able to defeat him.

4) The Bible reveals a God who seeks to be the friend, guide and Saviour of men. The very first chapters of the Bible hint of a God who is determined to be **with us**. We hear a voice saying to Joshua, 'As I was with Moses, so I will be with you.' David knows he can walk through the shadowy path because God is with him. The Son of God himself comes to be with men and to be with them forever. The last verses of the Bible re-affirms this beautiful sentiment, 'The tabernacle of God is **with men** and he shall dwell with them and they shall be his peoples and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.' Almost the very last verse of the Bible contains a tender and emotional invitation to fellowship with God. 'The Spirit and the bride say come.'

There are many other reasons why the Bible will never go out of print, but the ones adduced, are sufficient on their own to guarantee it. May God be your companion as you read through the Great Old Book.

Yours in Jesus



Ron J Allen

1996 Seminars...

Around the Seminars

Once Again our annual seminar series was quite a success.

As ever, Dr. Ford gave us insights into the Gospel we had never seen before. The music of our *Unlimited* muso's was as good as their CD and the fellowship was marvellous. It is great to see people who had not seen each other for a long



time greet one another so warmly and catch up on twelve months news.

And the reason for it all was what Jesus had done for us at Calvary 2000 years ago.

It was Good News that brought us together again once more. The Good News that we are never tired of hearing and we want to hear over and over again. The Good News assures us of a place in Christ's Kingdom if we repent and accept what Christ did for us at Calvary.

We at GNU trust that you and others of our friends and supporters will come next year to enjoy the Good News and continue fellowship.

Start planning now to be there.

Questions and Answers

Dr. Ford received many questions from his audience. Here are some of his answers.

Q. Can you be a better Christian by the study of the Bible?

A. A more knowledgeable one, yes, a more spiritual one, no.

Q. What does the Bible mean by unity?

A. It is referring to the unity of the heart. That is, Christ and his Gospel of the Cross, faith, hope, and love. It is not referring to uniformity.

Q. How can you detect the fine line between faith and presumption?

A. If you hate your sins you are not presumptuous, but if you can accept your sins, you are on the borderline.

Quotes

Remember, there is no such thing as a perfect faith. It is not how we feel about our sins but how we decide about them.

And in conclusion...

If the end of life is zero, then everything along the way is zero. No one can live that way. No one can be a consistent atheist.

Introduction

At the Lake Macquarie Seminar, Dr. Ford was introduced to his students by Lyndon Rogers, an old student of his and now a lecturer at Avondale College.

Lyndon said that recently there was a discussion going on among several students outside the door of his office.

They were complaining about the compulsory Bible subjects that there are in all courses, and why did they have to do them?

Lyndon went out and joined the discussion. 'About 25 years ago when I was a student here' he told the group, 'the Bible classes were packed out. The lecturer would come into the room and say, "Will all those not enrolled in this class please leave so that those who are enrolled in this class can get in the door."'

The students outside Lyndon's office looked at him in disbelief, but he assured them that was the way it used to be.

'Ladies and Gentlemen,' he went on, 'that lecturer is with us here tonight. It gives me great pleasure to introduce to you, Dr. Desmond Ford.'

Visitor

At Brisbane we were pleased to welcome Don Browning of the *Four Winds Ministries*.

Don is currently establishing the new Gold Coast radio station for *Radio Rhema* (the Christian broadcasting network), several GNU supporters who live on the Coast, reported they are already regular listeners. He had heard of Dr. Ford and his presentation of the Gospel, so Don approached GNU for permission to record him for *Four Winds Ministries*. In return, Don is supplying GNU with master copies of the tapes for our own tape library.

Don was thrilled with what he heard and is very happy to be able to distribute tapes of Dr. Ford to the listeners of *Radio Rhema* as the requests come in.

Seminar 97

DANIEL & THE COMING KING

The book of Daniel had more influence on the New Testament than any other Old Testament Book.

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- The Time of the End
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Auckland February 14-16
Rockhampton February 17
Brisbane February 28-March 2
Sydney & Newcastle March 6-9
Adelaide March 16
Melbourne March 21-23

Conclusions

Toward the end of the Brisbane Seminar there was a spontaneous request from the floor for *Amazing Grace*. Our musicians obliged and the whole congregation sang that famous hymn with strength and meaning. What came across very powerfully that day was that people love to sing and rejoice about their salvation.

In Sydney, the day concluded with a communion service conducted by Pastor Ron Allen. About 40 people stayed on for the service.

Letters

Prison Bible Studies

Dear Brother Ford

I am a senior citizen, past the age of seventy. I still jog and lift weights.

I have been in prison for over 25 years and still have one year to go.

Last week I received my second letter in 25 years.

I hear your program on KAAY, late at night.

After reading your very nice book, *Daniel 8:14*, and all of the back issues of GNU magazine, I wish to say thanks.

Some people do not understand (as you do understand) that inmates have souls just like the people in the free world.

I teach six Bible study groups, six days a week. We now have 140 inmates who study with us and we have at least 90 more who want to start. I am up to my ears and could use all the help you can give us.

At this time, our groups are studying the Book of Revelation. I do not want to mislead anyone in the Bible study groups. We could sure use some tapes to help us understand. We need all the help we can get from you.

This I must tell you. I have been doing this for 20 years. We have sent over two thousand inmates back into the free world, and none have returned to prison that we know of.

G.

Bible Commentaries

Dear Dr. Ford

I am currently incarcerated at the Federal Prison Camp, Minnesota.

I have been listening to your radio broadcasts daily. I find them stimulating.

I am a Christian, writing to ask you to send me a copy of your commentaries on Daniel and Revelation.

I am currently studying for the ministry by correspondence, and would find your commentaries very helpful. Also, any other help you may offer on Bible prophecy would be much appreciated.

I offer you my prayers for you and yours in your ministry.

Thank you and bless you! Keep up the very fine broadcasts!

Edward, Duluth, Minnesota

In Other Words

By A. H. Tick

Facing Life's Storm

Accidents, Bankruptcy, Cancer, Death.

Every home faces a major storm at one time or another. The only question is **when**. And how will that home **weather the storm**?

Jesus taught that every home's destiny depends upon its foundation. Was it built upon the Rock — or on the sand? Was its builder wise — or foolish? (See Matthew 7:22-29 NASB.)

It is only when the rain descends and the winds blow that a builder's wisdom is put to the test. It is only in times of trouble that our foundations are revealed. Those who have foolishly gathered their works as the basis of their standing with God, will only then know how worthless that foundation is.

When the storms rage and the floods come, their good and holy deeds will appear as they really are: As not all that good.

Not all that holy.

One by one, like tiny grains of sand they'll wash away — including everything built upon them.

Only those who hear the word of the doing and dying of the Rock, Christ Jesus, **and accept them as their own**, can weather the storms of life. He alone is our foundation.

Upon this Rock, He has built his church. All the storms of hell will never prevail against it.

In Other Words ...

Our house is built on nothing less,

Than Jesus' blood and righteousness.

Now on the solid Rock we stand.

All other ground is sinking sand.



Daniel and the Coming King

Dr. Ford finished the manuscript of his new book just before he left on his annual preaching tour of Australia, New Zealand, and Hawaii, February 8, 1996.

Proof reading is complete, and the book will soon be printed. Orders are already coming in.

The book is *Daniel and the Coming King*. It is in two sections. The first section is more accessible to the reader. The second section is the appendices. This section contains more scholarly material.

Based on what Des was preaching at the GNU Fellowship before he left, his treatment of Daniel's book is Christocentric rather than dateocentric. Don't expect much complicated exposition of prophetic speculation. Rather, expect lots of gospel!

The book should be available in Australia by June 1996. Ed.

Forgive Us Our Trespasses

As readers of this magazine know, *The Worldwide Church of God*, sponsor of *The Plain Truth*, has changed its position on numerous long-held beliefs and practices during the past few years.

At the heart of those changes, has been an acceptance that salvation is by grace, through faith. While this was preached in the past, it was always coupled with the message that God owes us a reward for our works that builds a holy, righteous character.

For decades, we regarded scrupulous adherence to the law as the basis of our righteousness. We attempted to relate to God through old covenant rules and regulations in our fervent desire to please him.

In his mercy, God has shown us that old covenant obligations do not apply to Christians who are under the new covenant. He has led us into the riches of his grace and a renewed relationship with Jesus Christ. He has opened our hearts and minds to the joy of salvation. The Scriptures speak to us with fresh meaning, and we rejoice daily in the personal relationship we have with our Lord and Saviour.

At the same time, we are acutely aware of the heavy legacy of our past.

The article 'Healing the Wounds,' beginning on page 4, explains how the Holy Spirit is working today in the body of Christ to heal historic wounds and restore good relationships between offenders and offended. It is my painful responsibility to acknowledge that *The Worldwide Church of God* has been among the offenders.

Our flawed doctrinal understanding clouded the plain gospel of Jesus Christ and led to a variety of wrong conclusions and unscriptural practices. We have much to repent of and apologize for.

We were judgmental; and self-righteous — condemning other Christians, calling them 'so-called Christians' and labelling them 'deceived' and 'instruments of Satan.'

We imposed upon our members a works-oriented approach to Christian living. We required adherence to burdensome regulations of the Old Testament code. We exercised a strong legalistic approach to church government.

Our former old covenant approach, fostered attitudes of exclusivism and superiority rather than the new covenant teaching of brotherhood and unity.

We overemphasized predictive prophecy and prophetic speculation, minimizing the true Gospel of Salvation through Jesus Christ.

These teachings and practices are a source of supreme regret. We are painfully mindful of the heartache and suffering that has resulted from them.

We've been wrong. There was never an intent to mislead anyone. We were so focused on what we believed we were doing for God that we didn't recognize the spiritual path we were on. Intended or not, that path was not a Biblical one.

As we look back, we ask ourselves how we could have been so wrong. Our hearts go out to all whom our teachings have misled in the Scriptures. We don't minimize your spiritual disorientation and confusion. We earnestly desire your understanding and forgiveness.

We recognize that the depth of alienation can make reconciliation difficult. On the human level, reconciliation is often a long and difficult process over time. Yet we daily pray for it, realizing that the healing ministry of Christ can close the deepest wounds.

We make no attempt to cover up the doctrinal and scriptural errors of our past. It is not our intention to merely paper the cracks. We are looking our history squarely in the face and confronting the faults and sins we find. They will always remain a part of our history, serving as a perpetual reminder of the dangers of legalism.

But we cannot live in the past. We must rise above our past. We must move on. We say, with the apostle Paul: 'Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead. I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus' (Philippians 3:13-14)

We have set our minds and hearts on Jesus Christ and trust explicitly in him. I have never been more thrilled about the state of our fellowship! We are pooling our energies and moving forward in preaching the gospel worldwide also equipping our congregations to be health examples of the body of Christ. We are using the spiritual gifts we have been given and capitalizing on the intense dedication to Jesus Christ — now rightly channelled — which has so long characterized our church.

So we stand at the foot of the cross — the ultimate symbol of reconciliation. It is the common ground on which estranged and alienated parties can meet. As Christians, we all identify with the suffering that took place there, and we hope that identification will bring us together.

We desire to meet there with anyone we may have injured. It is only by the blood of the Lamb and the power of the Spirit that we can put the hurts of the past behind us and move forward toward our common goal. I have expressed these sentiments in sermons and letters in recent months, but I wanted to restate them for our *Plain Truth* readers.

So to all the members, former members, co-workers and others — all who have been casualties of our past sins and mistakes of doctrine — I extend my sincerest heartfelt apologies. And I invite you to join us in proclaiming the true Gospel of Jesus Christ around the world — as even now God is blessing us with renewed growth and vigour in his service.



Joseph Tkach
President, Worldwide Church of God



Gillian Ford is a women's health educator and the author of our featured publication this month. Her book, *What's Wrong*

With My Hormones?, provides insightful and practical information on the important role hormones play for most women in maintaining optimal health.

Gillian Ford has a B.A. in education. She consults with those who

have hormonal problems in her office in Auburn, California. She is not a physician, nor does she prescribe treatment; however, she creates a solid partnership between patients and doctors in the quest for practical solutions to hormonal issues through research, education, and patient participation.

Gillian Ford recognized a real need for advocacy when it became apparent that many women could not articulate typical PMS and menopause symptoms such as depression, exhaustion, irritability, and physical pain to their doctors.

Her own experience with intense PMS in her early 20s, followed by early menopause at age 37, initially inspired her to seek information that would educate and allow her to communicate her needs to her doctor.

Her commitment to research and self-education launched a formal course of study and networking among physicians. In 1982 she was sponsored to receive training at PMS Action. Since then she has devoted her career to hearing and documenting women's stories. (See the next page for details of her book. Ed.)

Your Comments...

Romans' Video

To suggest that this is a low key presentation would be an understatement! However, Dr. Ford is a man with a vast command of his subject and a very large amount of information to impart to anyone interested. This video is much easier to watch than another of his which is featured in an earlier set, the small audience has been dispensed with and Dr. Ford speaks directly to the camera in a presentation which is much improved. It is Australian and is highly commended.

John Bleakley
(Vomere Christian Video Library)

Brisbane Seminar

Dear Pr. Allen

We thoroughly enjoyed the series on Romans last weekend. Excellent! If only more would come to hear.

We also find it refreshing to

have music as an added enjoyment to the meetings. It was missed the years you did not have it.

All the best for your ministry and we will continue to try to spread the Good News in our church.
MM Qld.

Sunday Night Live

'Unlimited'

It was a delight to welcome you and the members of your band to our *Sunday Night Live* service this evening. We know that 2GB's vast listening audience will be moved and inspired when the service is broadcast (28th April - Ed.)

Thank you for joining us in this very special Service which aims to bring the Gospel of Jesus Christ to our congregation and to people across Australia who are listening by Radio and may be hurting in some way, or may simply have let their Christian commitment lapse over the

years.

We would like you to accept a gift of \$200 with our gratitude for your part in the Service tonight.

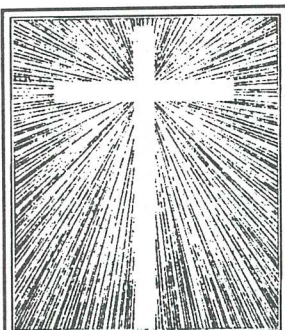
Yours sincerely

Reverend Dr. Gordon Moyes AI
Superintendent - Wesley Mission



Reader's comments are welcomed for this column.

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