



May 2001

THE GOOD NEWSLETTER

A bimonthly newsletter produced by Good News Unlimited

Editorial

THE CREEDS

Some of us were taught that we should not subscribe to a church creed. That creeds were bad Christianity and should be completely avoided.

On revisiting this subject recently, it seems the creeds we were warned against were the doctrinal statements of particular churches and not so much the formal creeds like the Apostles Creed, the Nicene Creed or the Athanasian Creed.

When you visit the mainline churches, and in particular when they celebrate the Lord's Supper, a creed—usually the Apostles Creed—is said by the congregation. What is so wrong with these formal creeds that we were so firmly warned against?

Here is the Apostles Creed:

I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth; And in Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified dead, and buried; he descended into hell; On the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God, the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and life everlasting.

Sure, there are a few old fashioned terms like Holy Ghost, hell (grave), quick (living) and catholic (universal) but when you read it carefully it is the gospel in a nutshell. So, why would a church go to such lengths to get its followers never to say it? Well there are reasons.

The creed above is the core statement of our belief, it is the Gospel and the Gospel has never changed. The line from the Apostles Creed, 'I believe in the forgiveness of sins' was paramount in the conversion of the well known Christian writer, C.S. Lewis and his life's work testified to this belief.

However, statements of faith like the 39 articles of the Church of England, or the 33 chapters of the Westminster Confession of Faith used by the Presbyterian Church or the 27 Fundamentals of the Seventh-day Adventist Church can all be changed and amended by the various assemblies of those Churches. So the Creeds, which cannot be changed, are the only control the ordinary person has when the administrators of Churches endeavour to change doctrinal statements for their own ends.

So when a Church actively discourages its members to read or say one of the formal creeds, the leadership want to maintain an environment of progressive revelation, or to put it simply, want to be able to change doctrine to suit the prevailing conditions and debates of their Church.

The concept of progressive revelation is quite unscriptural. (see Heb 1:1-3) God has revealed all information necessary for our salvation in the life and work of Jesus Christ as con-

tained in Scripture.

Another reason why most of us have never used a creed, is that none of them mention that we should keep the law. All the creeds ever mention is that the believer enjoys the forgiveness of sin, and that implies that we are covered by God's grace.

The Apostle Paul wrote in Romans 3: 1-2. 'What advantage has the Jew, or what is the profit of circumcision? Much in every way! Chiefly because to them were delivered the oracles of God.' We must remember that we have had delivered to us 2000 years of Christian testimony. It is our heritage and tells of how God has led his people in that time and we are adding our testimony to it today.

Now that we are enjoying the Gospel and the wonderful assurance of salvation it has brought us, let us now look into and appreciate things like the creeds which are part of the great heritage of the Church that our Gospel believing forebears have handed down to us. Often it cost them their lives to do it.

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.

Roger

Roger Jones
—Editor



Focus on the Gospel

Dear Friend

'Do not worry saying, what shall we eat? Or, what shall we drink? Or, what shall we wear? The pagans run after all these things and your Heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things will be given to you as well' (Matthew 6:31-33).

Jesus' words contradict the mood of the age. Applied science has given people in developed lands an enormous increase in wealth. For the most part, the power to acquire property has not filled these people with contentment. One of the first acts of a person who comes into money, is to load himself with a pile of things which make his life fretful, and his death difficult.

Allow me to quote briefly from Jonathan King, an Australian lecturer and author: 'Politics has nearly always been economics in Australia.' The 'hip-pocket nerve'—a phrase of Ben Chifley's—is the abiding truism. Other nations may grapple with concepts of socialism, communism and nationalism, but the 'ism' that grips this continent, is materialism. Opinion polls demonstrate that possessions are valued above all else in life. Australians have large disposable incomes. The one thing they all believe is, that to possess abundance is to achieve happiness. Unlike other nations, they have little common tradition, shared religious faith or cultural heritage. The community respects financial success above all else. Little thought is given to the problems of communication and human relations. Inevitably, opulent homes become unhappy showcases. The culture of materialism creates anxiety for those enmeshed in it. For most Australians, 'heaven on earth' is a lottery win.

For Jesus, life was much more than material security. He viewed the abundant life as one in which Spirit reigned supreme over things. He didn't ask everyone to give up their possessions, but he did ask it of some—because their 'things' were destroying them. He would ask it of many in Australia today. There is no salvation for some, except in the abandonment of their riches.

The virtue in forsaking wealth does not lie in what is given up, but in what is gained. It is the secret of inner possession. What moths and rust can get at and what thieves can steal, are not treasures at all. Christ taught that the internal must transcend the external. Character needs to come before gain; duty before pleasure. These are spiritual qualities which not even death can take away from those who own them.

According to Jesus, life needs to be continually re-evaluated in the light of the highest ideal. The Kingdom of God must take pride of place above the kingdom of the senses. When the American Declaration of Emancipation was published, James Russell Lowell wrote:

*'For it was felt from pole to pole, without a need of proclamation;
Earth's biggest country got her soul, and risen up Earth's greatest nation.'*

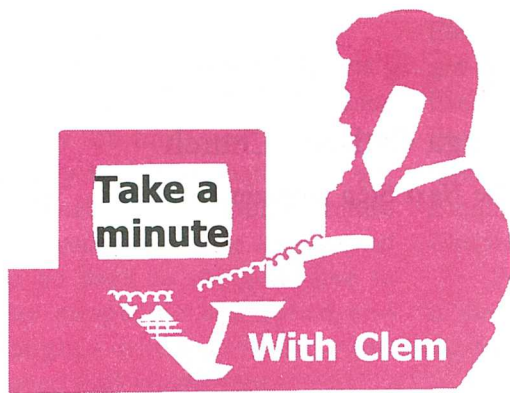
He meant that the country had come of age because it had put righteousness first. At the risk of economic loss, it had given freedom to African Americans. The nation had gotten its soul by sacrificing its barns. 'Righteousness exalts a nation.'

When forces are aggressively working to accumulate wealth; when property and power is praised, society undervalues itself. Spiritual axioms are dethroned and the people perish. When what is intrinsically pre-eminent, is given its place, every other true instinct finds satisfaction. It was so among the Puritans: 'One overpowering sentiment had subjugated to itself pity, hatred, ambition and fear. They had their smiles and their tears, their raptures and their sorrows—but not for the things of this world. The intensity of their feelings on one subject, made them tranquil on every other.'

May God be with you and me.
Yours in service

RON J ALLEN





Next Time . . . take a Bigger Bite!

Most human beings long for some sort of social contact, and when we find someone who we get along with, we guard that relationship with great vigor. Jonathan found just such a friend in David.

Jonathan and David had been good friends throughout their youthful years. On many occasions Jonathan must have experienced a great deal of frustration as a result of his father's attitude and disposition towards David. Eventually, the friendship of Jonathan and David must have become something of a glandestine event. In the end, of course, Jonathan fought alongside his father, King Saul, and was killed.

Sometimes the things we do seem to have little success and bear little, or no fruitage for ourselves. What should we do under such circumstances, press on, or abandon the activity? I am sure that both David and Jonathan had moments when they considered the difficulties too great, and yet they could not abandon each other. The trials served only to forge a stronger bond between the two of them.

When Jonathan died on the field of battle with his father, one might excuse David for putting that part of his life completely behind him. David did get on with life, but he did not forget his friend Jonathan. We read the following in 2 Samuel 9:1 'David asked "Is there anyone still left in the house of Saul to whom I can show kindness for Jonathan's sake?"'

Jonathan may have been dead, but he certainly was not forgotten. David gave to Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, all the lands that had belonged to King Saul. The inheritance of a prince for one who might well have expected to be put to the sword. Good friends are a blessing in themselves, and like all things intrinsically good, the goodness overflows time, space and prejudice. If you find a good friend you have found something precious—don't hold back.

Clem — Clem Moss

Hands and Feet

Terry Gaw

Jesus' hand on the leprous man
'To make you clean—I will, I can!'
The coffin touched of the widow's son
'Back to your mother I bid you come!'
'Save my daughter!' Jairus' plea
The hands of Christ from death set free.

Whose feet are these upon the waves?
The feet of One the storm obeys.
The feet that walk, which sinners follow
To beg forgiveness, voice their sorrow.
From town to town on dusty track
Face set like flint, not looking back.

Hands and feet to bless not failed
Now on the cursed tree are nailed.
Cannot touch us now or walk
His enemies of victory talk.
But from the place of seeming loss
Alluring power from the cross.

Without the use of legs or arms
His love encircles, captures, charms.
Tomb to Emmaus—O blessed walk!
Hands break bread, excited talk.
Scars of love on hands and feet
In faith I kiss them till we meet!

Terry is a good friend and supporter of Good News Unlimited

A Special Address: Part 3

Given by Fr Rom Haynes at Bethanga Catholic Church

Reported by Elizabeth Price (The Next Step magazine)

'We had not been long in the Peruvian shanty-town of a million people, when Elena came to our little place', said Fr Rom Haynes.

Elena said, 'My name is Elena, I have come to offer myself to this shanty-town. Can you use me? Give me work! I don't want to be paid, if you can give me enough food for myself and my two little ones it will be enough.'

Elena's husband had left her, but fortunately, she was a social worker with a fair education. She was only about twenty-six but she loved people and they loved her.

'She was a born leader,' commented Fr Rom, 'and I have never seen anyone so selfless. She would work day and night, whatever she had, she would give.'

After three and a half years Elena had created two hundred and fifty soup kitchens, each of them having up to eighty women working in them. You can imagine the organising ability of Elena to create from deepest poverty and need, these places of welfare, haven and learning for the disenfranchised poor of the shanty-town.

There was a governing body overseeing them all, drawing them together and co-ordinating their efforts—they formed a powerful group.

While this was happening the country of Peru was being divided and terrorised by a group calling themselves (in a rough translation) *The Shining*



Path. They recruited from among university students who had no prospects of getting work, and it was not difficult to convince them to take up arms. With so little to live for, any prospect seemed better than none.

The idea behind *The Shining Path* was to destroy every organisation that was functioning, especially the organisations among the poor. Their philosophy was to destroy everything and to start afresh. They began in the country and worked through to the cities—they were very successful at their destruction. They killed tens of thousands of innocent people, so many fled to this shanty-town for safety.

'Somehow,' said Fr Rom, 'there was released in the youth of Peru a most savage streak. It was never, ever there before and I don't know . . . I don't think anyone knows . . . quite the origin of it.'

'They, (the terrorists) came

to Tom and me and delivered a letter saying, 'Elena, your social worker, has to go.'

Elena refused to go. The terrorists were well known for giving three warnings and after the third, they would come back and often hack you to pieces.

The second warning came and the two priests decided Elena should be moved. They offered to take her elsewhere and provide another place for her. All the soup kitchen women heard about the intimidation and they prayed a lot for her, begging her to go. So, against her wishes Elena decided she would go. It was a deeply emotional decision with lots of tears.

Then at the last moment, Elena said, 'I'm not going. I can't leave, all these people I love and who love me . . . if I went I would have no reason to keep going. I'm staying.'

'Just two mornings later,' said Fr Rom 'her two little boys came running to us and asked if we would come down. Elena

was dead.'

Not very long after Elena's funeral, Fr Rom left to continue study commitments, it was nearly two years before he got back. He was soon due to return to Australia, but he had a need to go back to say good-bye to the people he had loved and taught—who, in return, had loved and taught him.

He expected that all the soup kitchens and the community they centered, would be gone and terrorism would have triumphed. They had not gone, they were still there, as strong as ever.

In the few weeks he was there, Fr Rom would go from kitchen to kitchen to say his farewells, and in every one of them there was a big photograph of

Elena. 'They would usually begin their meal with a prayer for Elena, 'Thank you God, that Elena is still with us.' One of the fellows wrote a song, it was for Elena, but it was really about Christ.'

Peruvians love to sing and in their song they have enshrined the true heart of sacrificial love.

The song went like this:

*'When you came, life began
When you went that life
kept on going.
Now they are trying to
kill that life,
But it will never die
Because it runs in the veins
of the people.'*

*Lord of earth and sky
Our hearts are tired
of crying out.*

*When will you here us?
Lord, our voices join together
As we cry out to you.'*

'Show yourselves innocent and above reproach, faultless children of God in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in a dark world and proffer the word of life.' (Paul, writing to the Philippians.)

How true his words come in the light of Elena's life. Let us give thanks for her life, and for all the lives of those we know, who have lived in such faith, that we are inspired to reach for the stars.



Horsham's Citizen of the Year is Bruce Johansen, pictured (left) receiving the award from the city's mayor, Bernie Gross.

This award was handed out during the Australia Day celebrations at Horsham, Victoria, in January this year. Bruce has given years of service to the Horsham and broader Wimmera community.

'Bruce Johansen has pro-

Outstanding Citizen

vided an outstanding and valuable contribution to community affairs, in particular, his contribution to the governance of the Wimmera Health Care Group, where he has been a member of the Board,' said Mr Gross.

An Active Rotarian, Mr Johansen was awarded the Paul Harris Fellowship in 1991—Rotary's highest award.

—Record 7 April 2001

Good News Unlimited congratulates Bruce on this honour being bestowed upon him, by the mayor of horsham, Bernie Gross.

Bruce has also served on the Board of GNU for many years, contributing his valuable guidance and wisdom to the activities undertaken by this outreach.

Once again, congratulations on your selfless service to the community in which you live Bruce.

Volunteer Website upkeep

GNU is looking for someone with a thorough knowledge of webpage design and maintenance to prepare material ready to be uploaded for the GNU website and to liaise with present webmaster. This work would require several hours a week. If you are able to help, please contact the office on: **(07) 55245040**

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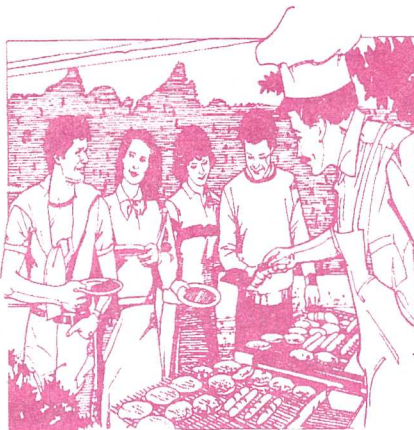
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An Extraordinary Picnic

Dorothy O'Neill

Do you like going on picnics? Yes, I'm sure that you do. A picnic on the beach, a picnic in the park, or a



picnic in the hills.

Wherever they are, picnics are fun, especially when several families get together to share them.

Today I am going to tell you about a most extraordinary picnic—a picnic near a lake called the Sea of Galilee. There were not just one or two families at this picnic, but hundreds of families. Can you imagine a picnic like this?.

It's a sunny afternoon and you can see a wide, grassy slope. The grass is green, so it is summertime. Look at the people, they are everywhere—thousands of them. Fathers, mothers, children and babies; grandmothers and grandfathers. As far as you can see there are people. Some are talking in groups, others are sitting on the grass and there are children running around playing. They have all been listening to Jesus, but now he has finished talking. Oh, listen, some children are crying because they are hungry and they are asking their mothers to take them home.

Have you ever been hungry, really hungry? Think about this for a minute and remember how you felt.

Some of the people in the crowd have been healed by Jesus, so they are still talking about this and running around to friends to tell them, or show them that they have been healed. Look at that man in the striped coat, laughing and looking at everything and everyone. He is Ezra, he was blind, but Jesus has healed him and he's so happy!

Wouldn't you be happy? Close your eyes for a moment so that you can't see. Think what it must be like to be like that all the time.

Where is Jesus? Look down towards the lake—the blue, sparkling lake full of fish. Can you see the boat that's up on the beach? Look . . . that's Jesus standing near the boat with four of his men. They are Andrew, Peter, James and John. He's talking to them, looking at them, then at the crowd. He looks really concerned. Let's listen to what he is saying.

Jesus: 'These people have been with me for three days, they have eaten all the food they brought with them, they are hungry and if I send them away now they'll never make it home.'

Peter: 'Well that's not our problem. There is nothing we can do about it. We haven't got any food for them, and even if we had enough money, there are no shops anywhere near here where we could buy food.'

James: 'Send them home Jesus, the sooner the better!'

John: 'They've had a wonderful time listening to your teaching Jesus, so now it is time for them to go home.'

Peter: 'Besides, we have to go home ourselves, and that means getting into the boat and rowing across to the other side of the lake.'

Jesus: 'No, we won't send them home until they have been fed.'

Look now at that boy who has been leaning against the boat, watching and listening to Jesus and the disciples talking. He looks in his bag, yes he still has some food left, not much, just a few bread rolls and some smoked fish. He's offering it to one of the men with Jesus, (now wasn't a that kind thing to do) who has taken it with a laugh and is showing it to Jesus.

Would you have given your food to Jesus to help feed hungry people?

Now what's happening? Yes, the disciples are moving amongst the people, getting them to sit down in squares. There are about two hundred people in each square and they have left room to move about between the squares

Watch Jesus now, see, he's taken the food from the boy,

**PICTURE
TO COLOUR**



smiled at him and thanked him. Now he's putting it on that small rock that looks like a table and thanking God for it. Now Jesus is breaking off pieces from the bread and fish and handing it to his men and more bread and fish takes the place of the food he gives away! It's a miracle, just look at that boy who gave the



food to Jesus. He can't believe it's all happening!

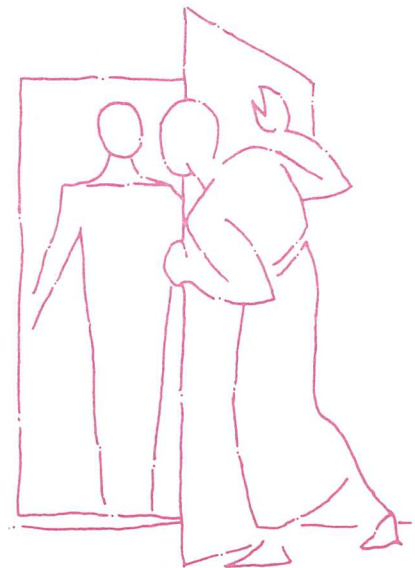
Now the disciples are loading up some baskets they've

taken from the boat and carrying the food to the people who pass it along the rows until everyone has had as much as they want. Now the people are starting to leave, see them walking away around the lake to their homes. They have a long way to go, but they will make it because they feel strong after eating such a good meal.

Jesus and the disciples are now sitting in the boat eating their meal. They all look very happy though they are tired. Is that the end of the story? No, there is one last job to do now that the people have gone. There are a lot of scraps of bread and fish left on the ground. Seagulls are flying around and screaming as they pick some of them up from the mess left on the ground. Can't leave the hillside looking like that. So the disciples take the empty baskets and begin to collect up the scraps. Guess how many baskets they filled up!

(To find the answer, look up the story in the Bible. (Matthew 15:29-39))

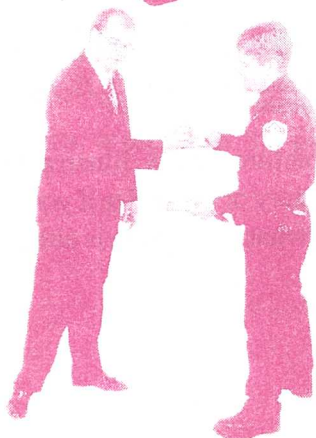
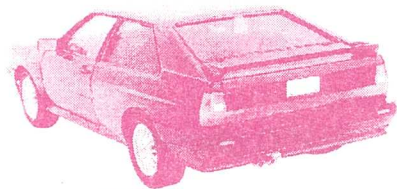
The picture below illustrates a Bible story or verse. See if you can guess what the picture is about.



Where in the Bible is this story or verse found?

(Answer page 9)

What'd You Clock Me At?



Jack took a long look at his speedometer before slowing down, seventy-three in a fifty-five zone. Fourth time in as many months. How could a guy get caught so often? When his car had slowed Jack pulled over, but only partially. Let the cop worry about the potential traffic hazard! Maybe some other car will tweak his backside with a mirror.

The cop was stepping out of his car, the big pad in his hand. Bob! Bob from Church! Jack went further into his trench-coat. This was worse than the coming ticket, a Christian cop catching a guy from his own church—a guy who happened to be a little eager to get home after a long day at the office, and who he would be playing golf with tomorrow.

Jumping out of the car Jack approached a man he saw every Sunday, a man he had never seen before in uniform.

'Hi Bob, fancy meeting you like this.' 'Hello Jack.' No smile. 'Guess you caught me red-handed in a rush to see my wife and kids.' 'Yeah, I guess.' Bob seemed uncertain—good. 'I've seen some long days at the office lately. I'm afraid I bent the rules a bit . . . just this once.' Jack toed at a pebble on the pavement. 'Dianne said something about roast beef and potatoes tonight. Know what I mean?'

'I know what you mean. I also know that you have a reputation in our precinct.' Ouch! This was not going in the right direction. Time to change tactics.

'What'd you clock me at?' 'Seventy. Would you sit back in your car please?' 'Now wait a minute here Bob, I checked as soon as I saw you. I was barely nudging sixty-five.' The lie seemed to come easier with every ticket.

'Please Jack, in the car.' Flustered, Jack hunched himself through the still open door. Slamming it shut, he stared at the dashboard. He was in no rush to open the window.

The minutes ticked by. Bob scribbled away on the pad. Why hadn't Bob asked for a driver's license? Whatever the reason, it would be a month of Sunday's before I ever sit near this cop again Jack thought.

A tap on the door jerked his head to the right, there was Bob, a folded paper in his hand. Jack rolled down the window a mere few centimeters, just enough room for Bob to pass in the paper. 'Thanks.' Jack could not quite keep the sneer out of his voice.

Bob returned to his police car without a word. Jack watched his retreat in the mirror, he then unfolded the sheet of paper. How much was this one going to cost? Wait a minute, what was this? Some kind of Joke? Certainly not a ticket. Jack began to read:

'Dear Jack, once upon a time I had a daughter. She was six when killed by a car, you guessed it, a speeding driver. A fine and three months in jail and the man was free. Free to hug his daughters—all three of them. I only had one, and I'm going to have to wait until Heaven before I can ever hug her again. A thousand times I have tried to forgive that man, a thousand times I thought I had. Maybe I did, but I need to do it again, even now. Pray for me. Please be careful, my son is all I have left!'

Jack turned around in time to see Bob's police car pull away and head down the road. Jack watched it until it disappeared. A full fifteen minutes later, he too, pulled away and drove slowly home, praying for forgiveness and hugged a surprised wife and kids when he arrived.

Life is precious. Handle with care.

This is an important message, please pass it along to your friends. Drive safely and carefully. Remember that cars are not the only thing recalled by their maker!

From Mel Savage, sent to him by a friend.

Through Jesus, the Grave has been Robbed of its Captives. Alleluia!

Ritchie Way

The ground plan of the ancient Hebrew sanctuary consisted of two adjoining squares. At the very centre of the first square, where the diagonals crossed, was the altar of burnt offering. At the centre of the second square, where the diagonals crossed, was the Ark of the Covenant. These two focal points of the sanctuary, pointed to the two absolutes in the nature of God—his mercy and his justice.

On the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) the altar of burnt offering and the Ark of the Covenant were linked by a single

of burnt offering and the Ark of the Covenant was a barrier that marked the boundary between man and God. Man's place was outside the barrier, God's place was inside. Angel guards were woven into that barrier curtain between the human and the divine as a warning that it would be sure death for man to pass through into God's presence. And, like soldier bodyguards that stood on either side of a King's throne, there was also an angel guard on each side of the Ark of the Covenant (Numbers 7:89).

But through that doorway went the God-man, Jesus. As

body was laid on the 'mercy seat' to atone for our sin. Two angel guards were there to watch over him, one at his head and the other at his feet (John 20:12). He was laid inside and the barrier, that no man could pass through and live, was closed behind him (Matt. 27: 62-66).

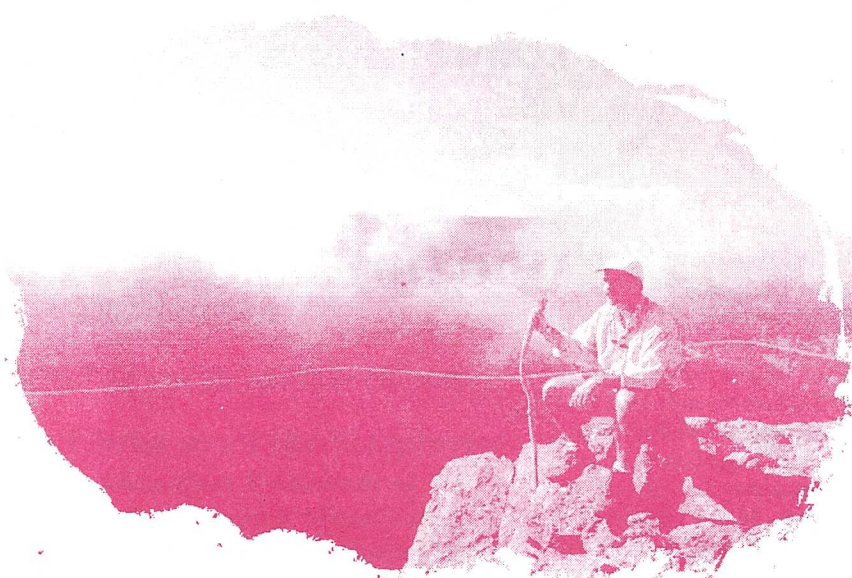
For humankind, the Ten Commandments were not a law unto life, but a law unto death (Romans 7:10-11), for 'all have sinned' and 'the wages of sin is death.' But Jesus, who was equal to the Law, laid down his life as an atonement so that the Law could have no more claim over those who looked to him for salvation. Death for Jesus meant life for us. God invaded and conquered death by robbing the Law of its power to condemn us. Through Jesus the grave has been robbed of its captives. Alleluia!

The acceptance of Jesus' sacrifice was signalled by the removal of the barrier between God and man (Matt. 28:2). It is significant that the first person to see into the 'most holy' after the barrier had been removed, was one who 'had been forgiven much' (John 20:10-11). Just a few days earlier she had anointed Jesus as her King (cf. 2 Kings 9:6; Matt. 26:6-7). As King (Matt. 28:18; Eph. 1:20-21) Jesus honoured Mary Magdalene, one of the greatest of sinners, by bestowing on her the privilege of being the first to see through the 'veil' to his kingdom beyond—a world where death no longer reigned. That honour, however, belongs not to her alone, but to us also.✠

ceremony. On that day, and on that day alone, the blood shed at the altar was taken into the Most Holy Place and sprinkled on the cover of the chest that contained the Ten Commandments. On the Day of Atonement, mercy satisfied the claims of justice.

However, between the altar

God he could enter; as man, he would have to die in order to do so. The altar of burnt offering in the courtyard foreshadowed the cross where Jesus was crucified as an atoning sacrifice for the sins of the world (1 John 2:2). The Most Holy Place foreshadowed Joseph's new tomb where Jesus'



(Answer to puzzle page 7.)
Revelation 3:20

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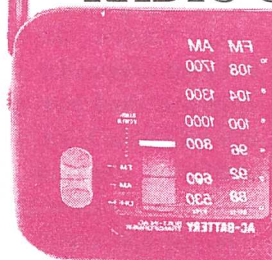
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NSW Phn. 043248525 (Mark Roberts).

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

Perth phn. 08 94585469

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

Gold Coast:

Phn.07 55355329

No meetings until further notice

Hervey Bay: Phn. 07

41281261. Meets once a month at 'Dan-Dinnia House' 459 Boat Harbour Drive, **Torquay**. QLD

For further information contact Evelyn O'Grady.

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

NOTICEBOARD

Dr Desmond Ford

7.15am Breakfast Seminar

Christ in all the Scriptures

Alexanders Restaurant at the
Metropolitan Motor Inn
106 Leichardt Street, Spring Hill,
Brisbane.

Corner of Upper Edward Street.
(There is parking under the Motor Inn)

Starts at 7:30, most eat breakfast while Des speaks. The meeting finishes about 8:15am

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