

September 2004

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THE GOOD NEWSLETTER

Editorial

Steve and 'Religion'

We would muster the sheep from the back country where the gullies are steep and the creeks flow swiftly. The mounted shepherds and their dogs would then funnel the ewes and their lambs into the temporary pens which we had erected in one corner of the property.

After smoko we would catch the lambs and put them in another pen, then free the ewes. We would then set up the tables, inoculate the lambs, earmark them, dock their tails and testicles then set them free to their bleating mothers. It was hard work, but for me—a high school student at the time—the pay was good.

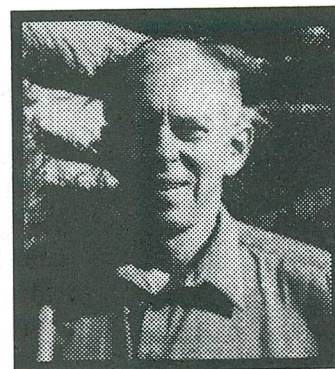
I always chose to work with Steve, a man I estimated to be in his fifties. Steve was a thoughtful and kind man and I believed he had a soft spot for me. He let me ride his horse, and one day when the boss went off in the truck, taking my lunch with him, Steve said, 'I've got heaps Rich, you can have some of mine.'

That day, when half a dozen lambs escaped from the pen—being my fault—and the lambs had to be rounded up again, Steve said he was to blame because he hadn't

been clear enough in his instructions to me. He was like that. If a neighbour needed help, Steve would always be first on the scene. He was especially good to widow Kerrisk, though I don't think she ever found out that he used to leave a huge pile of firewood at her front gate every Autumn. Steve was as honest as the day, didn't use expletives, was very forgiving and made allowances for my youthfulness and lack of experience.

Steve told me that when he was a boy, his overbearing, 'righteous' father used to give him and his brothers 'religious education' every morning while their gentle mother milked the family's ten cows by hand, separated the milk and put the can of cream out at the roadside to be taken to the butter factory. Behind their father's back they referred to him as 'the old hypocrite.'

Steve left home as soon as he had finished school. He later married his childhood sweetheart, Grace, and adopted a child as they were unable to have any children of their own. They were both heartbroken when the boy, at three years of age, drowned in an unused well behind their house. Soon after that, Grace became ill with cancer. Steve was so tender and caring in the way he fussed over her. Nothing was too much trouble for him. When she doubled up with pain, he would sit with his arms wrapped around her, silent tears flowing



down his cheeks.

One day when I asked Steve if he would marry again, he just looked at me with mournful eyes and said, 'Rich, there was only one woman for me and that was Gracie. She was special. I am content to live with the memory of her for the rest of my life.'

My dad told me that Steve purchased his first car from a church elder, only to find out that it had a crook gearbox. The elder had put sawdust into the gear-oil to disguise the problem.

'Do you go to church, Steve?' I asked him one day.

'Rich, I talk to God in my own way. However, to be quite honest, church is not for me. 'I think I am better off without religion,' he replied.

I often wondered if God has a place in the kingdom for people like Steve. I'd like to live next door to him.

—Ritchie Way

Focus on the Gospel

Believers and Non-Believers

Ritchie Way

He glared at me and almost shouted, 'Don't you talk to me about justice and fairness! There is no religion more unjust and unfair than your own!'

'What do you mean?' I asked incredulously.

'You teach that the only people who will receive eternal life are those who believe in Jesus. What about Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists and secular people, who know nothing about Jesus? Would you call it just or fair that they are condemned to miss out on eternal life just because of the circumstances of their birth?'

They were not able to choose where they were born. You were just lucky that you were born in a place where you could be evangelised by Christians. If people are condemned because they never had the opportunity to hear about Jesus, then your God is not a god of justice; he is nothing more than a god of good luck.'

I returned home with 'my tail between my legs', determined to find out what the Bible had to say on this matter.

After a lot of searching, I discovered that Jesus did not teach that a person was automatically *outside* the kingdom because he

didn't worship the true God. Neither did he teach that a person was automatically *inside* the kingdom because he professed to worship the true God. In fact, in his very first sermon, Jesus boldly pointed out that God bypassed his professed followers who only had a head knowledge of him, to bestow his favour upon two 'heathen' who knew him only in their hearts (Luke 4:25-27).

What did the heathen Naaman, or the widow of Zarephath know about Jesus? Nothing! In their minds they knew nothing about him, but in their hearts they 'knew' the Lord. These two outsiders 'feared the Lord'. The apostle Peter, tells us that 'God does not show favouritism, but accepts people from *every nation* who fear him and do what is right' (Acts 10:34-35 emphases added).

I used to believe that the only people who would be saved were those who had a clear understanding of the Gospel. But that is not the religion of Jesus; that is Gnosticism—salvation by knowledge. If we were saved by what we know, intellectuals would have a better chance of getting into the kingdom than those who have fewer brains. That, however, is not the way God works. Salvation is given to people with heart knowledge and not to those who have head knowledge alone. If the Gospel that we know

with the head doesn't get into the heart, then we are not saved.

There are intellectual giants teaching theology in our universities, who have no relationship at all with the Lord; their religion is purely academic. On the other hand, there are humble, illiterate people in many dark corners of the world who know nothing of theology, but they know the Lord in their hearts—he abides in their hearts by faith. This heart knowledge is the kind of knowledge that Jesus is talking about in John 17:3 where he makes it clear, that the only people who have eternal life are those who 'know' the Lord in the same intimate manner that Adam knew Eve (Gen. 4:1, 25 original language).

There are non-church people in many corners of the globe who have never heard of Jesus, but have an intimate union with him; they 'know' the Lord. There are church people all over the world who do *not* have this union with him; they do not 'know' the Lord. Their religion is cerebral and not of the heart. They might worship God 'in truth', but they don't worship him in 'spirit'. Jesus said, 'I know my sheep and my sheep *know* me' (John 10:14). If you don't 'know' Jesus in your innermost self; if you are not truly one with him, then seek him with all your heart, for the Lord promises, 'You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart' (Jer. 29:13).



Thankful Heart

When water comes out of the tap, when food is purchased at the supermarket, when factories turn out every luxury we desire, we lean back in our easy chairs and smugly say, 'This is a pretty nice setup that I have made for my family'.

In that moment we should be jolted out of our egotism and self-centeredness by the realisation that all

we possess is given to us by the Creator. The gold and the silver are his; the iron, the oil, the cattle grazing on the hills—all belongs to God. We have been entrusted with talents and blessings as God's stewards. We have created nothing—and certainly we carry none of our trinkets with us when life is over.

Henry Ward Beecher once said: 'If one should give me a dish of sand and tell me there were particles of iron in it, I might look for the iron with my

eyes and search for it with my clumsy fingers, and never detect it. But let me take a magnet and sweep it through the dish of sand and that magnet will draw those tiny particles of iron to it by the power of attraction! The unthankful heart, like my finger in the sand, discovers no mercy; but let the thankful heart sweep through the day, and as the magnet finds the iron, the thankful heart will find in every hour some heavenly blessing.' (From *The Next Step* magazine)

Take a minute with Clem

'On hearing it, many of his disciples said, "This is a hard teaching. Who can accept it?" From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him.'

What could have been so difficult that some of the disciples felt that they could no longer follow Jesus? What about all the miracles that Jesus had performed—sight restored, leprosy cured and the very elements obeying the command of their teacher and beloved leader? Has the Lord and Master placed a stumbling block in the way of those who seek after the truth? What has happened to the easiness of his yoke and the lightness of his burden?

The wonder-working Jesus, seemed to promise an idyllic future, that fitted in so neatly with the expectations of the people who longed for the days of David and Solomon, when Israel was a great power in the region. Surely, this miracle-working Messiah who could feed thousands with a few loaves and fishes and command the

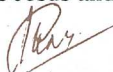
tempests to cease, was the One to restore the national fortunes of Israel!

These feelings of consternation and disappointment come just after a message from Jesus, that declares that his Kingdom is one that concerns the hearts and minds of believers. Jesus, who reads the thoughts of his followers, knows that they do not understand the nature of his message, and so, he puts it to them plainly: Inward change, selflessness, the last being first, the least being the greatest—this is the message of Jesus. Jesus' aim was that people would want to be like him, that by beholding him they would be so attracted, they would sell all that they had in order to be like him.

Here lies the paradox of the Christian faith—something so freely given and yet so infinitely costly. To embrace the good news about Jesus is problematic, the harder one embraces, the harder one is embraced, the more we give, the more we receive—and no matter how hard we

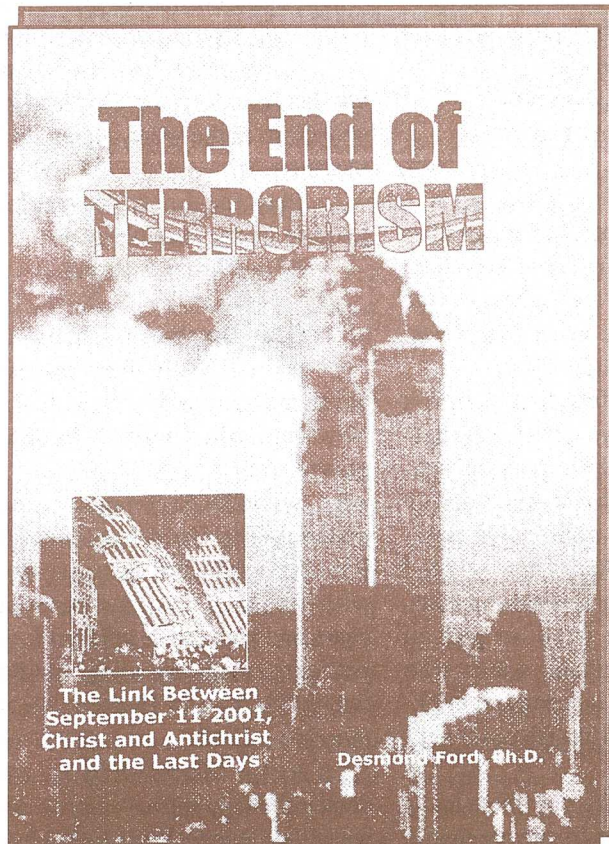
may try, heaven is always a long way ahead of us. In this sense, it can be said that it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the Almighty, however, it should also be noted, that it is also a most blessed thing. Where else would you put your trust, but in the compassionate and merciful Saviour of the world.

There is no doubt that the way of Jesus seems alien, strange and hard to accept—especially to earthlings who have their minds set on temporal things. But those who have tasted the cup of despair, teetered on the brink of ruin, or have experienced the anguish of failure, and have then found hope in the balm of God's love, will not turn back from following him whatever the cost. The disciples, who clung to Jesus, knew truly their previous and present condition and ultimately could not separate from him. They had become one with him—even as Jesus and his father are One.


Clem Moss

New from Dr Desmond Ford

#1ET0001



The End of TERRORISM

It continues to be a truism that there is no real defence against terrorists willing to die for their cause ... the leaders of society seem afflicted with psychic numbness. Evidence of this is found in the casual way the US government has mentioned the likelihood of their use of nuclear bombs as a form of defence ... despite the fact that the globe is more vulnerable to disintegration than at any other time in history, most people in the West live as though it were not so. The plight of their neighbours in war-torn countries across the world leave them unmoved, except for five minutes at news hour ... this will not last. Christ predicted the next stage of history ...

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A big thank you to all those who contributed financially, in making the printing of this book a reality.

Discussion Point

I we continue not sure

hope faith agree

discuss

faith
right
believe

GNU is a meeting of minds from a wide range of church affiliations, and therefore opinions expressed in our articles may differ from that of many of our readers. Recognising that opinions can differ and we all have much to learn and unlearn, we encourage our readers to participate in this forum.

Dear GNU

As a former Adventist, my opposition to Adventist theology has been unrelenting. I am frequently challenged by other Christians who assure me that Adventism has changed for the better. In what areas? My view as a Christian, is that when we accept the Lord as Saviour, we are immediately justified in the eyes of the Father through the sacrifice of the Son. Sanctification follows as a progressive work through the Holy Spirit.

Adventists are still talking of investigative judgements and the heavenly sanctuary, and are still unsure if the Lord will accept them on their death. This is a travesty of the Gospel. Praise the Lord that he has accepted us, not by works, but by the fact that we trust in the finished work of Christ; his dying on the cross and his resurrection. In confessing our sins and proclaiming him Lord, he has promised us eternal life with the Holy Spirit to guide us thereafter.

The tragedy is that millions of people are led to salvation on one hand, then spend the rest of their days trying to maintain that salvation—so they think. My prayer is not that people depart from Adventism, but that they truly know the Lord has saved them, and they can rejoice with their brothers and sisters about that same salvation.

R.B. Aust

G'Day R

Thanks for your email. You expressed some good things—at least

I agree with them, so they seem good to me.

Yes, the good news of God's grace is everything and no individual who is grasped by it should feel that he or she must inevitably leave his present church-home because of it.

I am glad that you are able to maintain your loyalty to Christ and continue to serve where you are. For some, this is not possible because they are forbidden to serve.

It seems to me that we should use our freedom in Jesus to stay where we have been placed, provided we have the opportunity there to both give and receive.

May God bless you.

Yours in Christ

Ron.

Dear Brother Way

I am an upteenth generation SDA and an ex-minister (Avondale) with surprise and then with a sigh of delight I read the latest two Newsletters (Jan & March 2004).

I must confess that at first it was hard to believe what I was reading on the 'Journey to Heaven' subject, for there were two things deeply imbedded in my mind since childhood (born 1936). Then when I checked your explanation and texts, some springtime fresh air gushed into my mind. Behold, a man who does personal and independent thinking and not afraid to dish out the resultant feast.

Thank you for the whole lot. It is good to belong to the teachable class where his Spirit can work, teach

and lead. The process of thinking—this divine gift—has been relegated for so long into the box that is tagged with the warning label of 'discourage it at all cost, it leads into sin.'

I could not help but to surmise: 'Surely the shackles of EGW legend had been loosened somewhat and the mindless and slavish method of quote upon quote, is replaced with *Bible study*. The other method has suppressed free thinking and the leading of the Spirit for well over one hundred years.

Please do not be discouraged by any negative responses (the thinking process is an effort that may disturb lazy comfort). Let God lead you, stay close to the word and enjoy his nearness.

May the Lord bless you always in every possible way.

With Christian love.

R. I. VIC.

Dear Brother in Christ

I would firstly like to say welcome, and pray your time with Good News unlimited will be long and prosperous.

Secondly, to comment on your editorial, The Good Newsletter 01/04: I have had this very argument with fellow Christians for many years and was much relieved to see you agree with my understanding, 'we will not go to Heaven, we will inherit the Earth.'

As for 1Thess. 4:16-17, I understand this to mean—as you do—we will go to meet Jesus in the clouds to escort him back to earth, also, to

put off corruption and put on incorruption; to put off mortality and to put on immortality; to put off the coats of skins (Gen. 3:21) and put on the Righteousness of Christ.

The Lord God bless you and keep you always

M. L. QLD.

Hi

As a born again, Spirit-filled Christian, I cannot agree with your fixation on the Sabbath day, nor with your view of the state of the dead.

I believe Paul's teaching in Hebrews 8, that the Old Covenant is obsolete and the New Covenant of relationship (love) with God and man, is now relevant. The Ten Commandments were the Old Covenant as described in Exodus 34:28, and have been fulfilled by Christ's death (nailed to the cross) and are obsolete.

Our instruction comes, not from an ancient, written code to a specific race of people, but directly from God within us—the Holy Spirit. This is the abundant life Jesus came to give us.

I also believe Jesus when he said that those with Christ will not die, but have eternal life.

I realise that all these points are irrelevant to our love for God, or for our ultimate salvation. The only thing that matters is our relationship with Jesus. As Jesus said of those who will say at the end, that they performed miracles in his name etc., 'Depart from me I never knew you.'

Blessings

P. R. NSW.

Dear P. R.

It concerns me, not so much that we differ in our beliefs, but that you appear to be no longer tolerant of, or open to views that call your own beliefs into question. None of us have all the truth; none of us have truth that is not corrupted in one way or another and all of us hold beliefs that are not true. The problem is, most of us don't know which of our beliefs need correcting.

That is why we are constantly challenging each others's under-

standing of Scripture. 'As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another' (Prov. 27:17). As Spirit-filled Christians, we should be keen for the Spirit of Truth to lead us into all truth (John 16:13).

Now about the matter of the New Covenant which you wrote about: The Hebrews were taken into captivity by the Babylonians in 609—587 BC, because they lived as Old Covenant people. God allowed them to be overrun by their enemies, because, while they had participated in the external rituals of the Covenant, they did not live as Covenant people should live.

The prophet Jeremiah, wrote to these captives and told them that the kind of people God wanted to return to Israel and rebuild the cities there, were those who would live as New Covenant people—people for whom the law was an internal reality (Jer. 31:17; 23-25, 31-34, 38).

Under the Old Covenant God's law was written on tables of stone. Under the New Covenant, however, this law would be written on the tablets of the hearts of God's people (Jer. 31:33). What law would be written on their hearts? In the minds of the Hebrew exiles and the Jewish Christians, for whom the book of Hebrew was written, the ten commandments would have been an integral part of this law. It would have been unthinkable for it to have been otherwise.

When God said, 'I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts' (Jer. 31:33; Heb. 8:10), he was referring to that part of the Covenant which defined the behaviour of the covenant people—the Ten Commandments (Exod. 34:28; Deut. 4:13).

Ritchie.

Dear E. C.

After reading your study I am forced to admit that the authors of the *Bible Dictionary* aren't as objective as I believed they were. A careful and honest analysis of each of the three references that they have given

(John 14:1-3; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; 2 Pet. 1:4) reveals that none of them supports their thesis, that the saints will be taken up to heaven after the second coming.

You are to be commended for your investigation in which you show, overwhelmingly, that God has a habitation in the heavens. The issue that we are looking at, however, is not where God dwells, but do the saints go up to dwell there with Him.

If Jesus is preparing a place for us in Heaven above, is that where we will dwell eventually? Not necessarily. Here in New Zealand, there is a company that makes kit-set houses for the tropics; they are preparing dwelling places in New Zealand for people in Papua New Guinea. So where will we dwell with God after Jesus returns? John 14:2 speaks of the 'rooms', or dwelling places that Jesus is preparing for us. The Greek word that is translated 'rooms' is used in only one other place in the Bible, in verse 23. There Jesus says—in an expansion of his comments in verse 2—'If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him and we will come to him and make our home (dwelling place) with him.'

Please note that according to verse 23, we don't go to heaven to dwell with the Father and Jesus, rather, they come down to dwell with us. You will find that this harmonises with other Scriptures such as Mark 14:62 and Rev. 6:16-17. The concept of the saints going to heaven above, is a remnant of Platonic thinking, that has no place in the Hebrew thought-world.

In Rev. 21, the New Jerusalem is portrayed as arriving on earth. As it touches down the announcement is made, 'Now the dwelling place of God is with men, and he will dwell with them.' Don't you think that it would be a strange thing to proclaim: 'Now at last God has his dwelling among men' (NEB), if the saints had already been living for a milleneum with him, in Heaven above?

Ritchie.

Will Any Non-Christians Be Saved

Ritchie Way

Did Jesus die just for Christians? Of course not! He died for everyone. The Bible says, Jesus Christ 'is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours, but also for the sins of the whole world' (1 John 2:2 emphasis added).

That's very clear: Jesus has atoned for the sins of every human being who has been born on Planet Earth—and that includes Adolf Hitler, Pol Pot and Saddam Hussein. God, however, won't force his gift of salvation on anyone; it can only be accepted by free choice. Those who accept God's salvation will receive eternal life; those who reject it will miss out.

But what about people who haven't been given this choice? What about the Sumerians who never heard of God's free gift of eternal life? Or the pre-conquest Incas? Or the Buddhists and Hindus in ancient India? What choice have they had? Are they all automatically consigned to eternal oblivion because they have not accepted Jesus as their Lord and Saviour?

Is our God a God of the whole world, or just a part of the world—the part where the Gospel is proclaimed? Is his love really excluded from all who have had the misfortune to be born in a culture beyond the reach of the Gospel? Is his grace limited by the restraints of culture or place? The Bible tells us that God does not show 'favouritism' (Rom 2:11), which means that he does not favour people in the Bible Belt over people among the Taliban, nor Israelis over fundamentalist Arabs. His mercy extends equally to all his children, even to those who have not heard the good news about Jesus.

Is God's grace also limited by

the constraints of time? If the only way to be saved is to confess Jesus (Romans 10:9),¹ then what about the people who lived before Jesus' time? How could they confess Jesus when he had not even been born?

The truth is, there never was a time when God was not gracious. His nature didn't change just because Jesus died. He wasn't more forgiving after the cross than he was before. *The cross didn't change God, it revealed him.* The cross tore aside the veil of our false perceptions so that we could see God as he really is and always has been. 'He is the same yesterday, today and forever' (Hebrews 13:8).

Who, then, could be saved among those people who would never hear the name of Jesus? What would qualify any of them to become citizens of the kingdom of heaven? The Bible is clear; there is only one way for anyone to receive eternal life, and that is to be at one with the Eternal Lifegiver (John 17:3; 1 John 5:11-12).² It is clear from Scripture that anyone who has the Spirit of Jesus living in them belongs to God (Romans 8:9). The difference therefore, between a saved person and a person who is not saved is this: A saved person has the Spirit of God dwelling in him (1 Cor. 6:19); he is a union of the human and the Divine, whereas, the unsaved person is an empty temple; he is 'without God', the source of eternal life.

God's omnipresent Spirit seeks a dwelling place in the heart of every single person in the world—regardless of their birthplace, era, philosophy, religion, culture or race. There are many people in lands where the Gospel has not been proclaimed, who have welcomed God's Spirit into their lives, to reign there.

Such people love justice and mercy, regretfully acknowledging that they fall short of both (Rom. 2:13-16). In their ignorance they do not understand that they have the Spirit of Jesus, and may even deny it, because the negative behaviour of some Christians turns them away from the Christian God, but their actions speak louder, in God's ears, than their words. 'They show the work of the law written in their hearts' (Rom. 2:15 NASB). Salvation has come to them, though they know not how, or from where.

In the heart of Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism and Western secularism, there are loving people who treat others as they would want to be treated themselves, people who make personal sacrifices to minister to the less fortunate—regardless of their creed. The Bible says of such people: 'Everyone (including non-Christians like the widow of Zarephath) who loves, has been born of God and knows God' (1 John 4:7). Who are we to say that they don't 'know God' when their attitudes and actions reveal that they do?

Salvation is like electricity. Many people have no idea how it works, or even what the cost of its provision is, but this does not prevent them from enjoying its benefits. What a joyful surprise and wonder it will be for these people, when, at the Second Coming, they learn what their salvation cost and have the privilege of meeting the One who paid the price for them.

Endnotes:

1. This test could not be applied prior to that time, simply because Jesus had not been 'raised ... from the dead' prior to that time (Rom. 10:9).

2. At-one-ment means at-one with God through the redemptive ministry of both Christ and the Holy Spirit.

Why Then Do We Need To Preach The Gospel To The Whole World?

Ritchie Way

If people can be saved without the preaching of the Gospel, why is it necessary to fulfill Christ's commission to go into the entire world and proclaim the Gospel to everyone?

This question can best be answered with another question: If groups of people can exist without modern medicines, doctors and hospitals, why bother to take these benefits to regions that don't have them? The answer is obvious. Many *more* lives would be enhanced and saved if we did. And so it is with the Gospel; many *more* people will be saved eternally and live better lives if we take the Gospel to them.

Jesus said that if the Gospel had been preached to Tyre and Sidon they would have repented

(Luke 10:13-15). In other words, there are people out there who will be saved if the Gospel is preached to them, but who will be lost if it isn't. An essential part of the Gospel commission is persuasion. In the parable of the Great Banquet, Jesus pictures his disciples as going out into the streets and alleys of the town, also, the roads and country lanes to persuade people to come and 'eat at the feast in the kingdom of God' (Luke 14:15-24). Persuasion, through advertising or a friend's recommendation, often leads us to buy what we would not otherwise buy.

The Gospel commission (Matthew 28:18-20) is another way of saying that we have been appointed by Jesus as Gospel sales people. It is our duty to go and 'sell' to others, the benefits of citizenship in God's kingdom. The

people who do this best are those who know for themselves the blessings of such citizenship (Mark 5:18-20).

Selling The Gospel

Our sales chief is Jesus and his authority is universal (Matt. 28:18). Our territory is the whole world (Mark 16:15) and our target group is every person in every nation (Matt. 28:19; Rev. 14:6).

Our message is the Gospel of the Kingdom (Matt. 24:14; John 20:23). Our objective is to make disciples by 'baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything' as Jesus has commanded (Matt. 28:19-20).

Our empowerer is the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8) and our method is to start with those who are nearest in belief and culture to ourselves, then to work outwards to those who are furthest in belief and culture, until the whole world has been evangelised (Acts 1:8). 'Go therefore and preach the Gospel to all.'



Two Studies by Pastor Ritchie Way

BODY, SOUL and SPIRIT

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John Nicklin says Adam received the *Ruach*, as did all other living things. The Hebrew word that is used in Gen. 2:7, is not *Ruach* but *Neshamah*. Of more importance, is the manner in which God created man in contrast to the way in which he created the animals. Derek Kidner says, 'This was an act of giving as well as making—and self-giving at that.' A parallel in John 20:22 says, Jesus breathed on his disciples and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit.' And in 2 Timothy 3:16 we are told that 'all Scripture is God-breathed.' God breathed his Spirit into human words, or to put it another way, the Bible is a union of the Human and Divine—just as Adam was...



Will Christians go to Heaven When Jesus Returns?

Millions of Christians believe they will be taken up to heaven when they die or at the return of Jesus. We would expect that such a popular doctrine—which many believers hold to be foundational to their faith—could be ably supported from the Bible. The purpose of this study is to look carefully at the biblical evidence to see whether or not this belief is justified.



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Dear Friend

Paul the Apostle, ventured to say that this life does not contain within itself sufficient to satisfy the human spirit, 'If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men' (1 Cor. 15:19).

It is an audacious claim that we make. But each of us makes it one way or another. Who lives and does not feel, now and then, that this mortal span is not enough to contain all the hope, dreaming, striving and ambition that pours through our brains?

We know what it is to bear within, prophecies and indications of ourselves that are larger than time. Said Browning, 'I know this earth is not my sphere, for I cannot so narrow me, but that I still exceed it.'

Nowhere do such intuitions more strongly thrust themselves at us, than when we fall in love. It is hard to think that all our longing for one another is only a transient ripple on the surface of eternity; that when we are parted at last, all that we have known and experienced together,

will crumble into nothingness and vanish away for ever and ever.

Cowper wrote in a letter to his cousin, Lady Hesketh: 'There is not room enough for friendship to unfold itself in full-bloom in such a nook of life as this. Therefore I am, and must, and will be yours forever.' Such is the tension that men and women are obliged to live in. Nothing can release them from it except for the bold idea that there is, that there will be more to come when this existence is finished.

Such an idea lies at the heart of the Christian proclamation, 'But it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Saviour, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel' (2 Tim. 1:10).

What a jubilant, transforming assertion! With Christ's triumph over death, the sun has risen on a dark planet. The mists of despair are being lifted; the prospect of a glad future lies brightly before us. Christ has brought immortality to light. It means that if God loves at all, he loves eternally. He is not the God of the dead,

but the living!

So do not imagine that all that God can possibly do for you must be done before you die. It is true that this life is far too cramped a corner for God's love and friendship to come to its fullness. It will take eternity for it to be made known and worked out.

To have learned Christ, is to have been taken from the grievous pros-testations of a life too short and meaningless, to a state of glad astonishment that one has even been allowed to live at all; to the knowledge, that for evermore, the soul will be borne along in a current of Divine love which stretches as far as the eye can see. John Bunyan spoke of this glad realisation, 'So I saw in my dream that these two men came up to the gate, as they entered they were transfigured, and there was given them raiment that shone like gold and all the bells of the city rang for joy ...'

May God give you the joy of eternal life.



Ron J Allen

MILLENNIUMS OF ICE

EPICA (The European Project for Ice Coring in Antarctica) is drilling deep ice-cores on the Southern Continent to construct a record of past changes to earth's air and climate.

The scientists are able to do this by analysing the air bubbles and other particles that are trapped in the annual strata of ice. The 3.2 Kilo-meter core drilled at the Franco-Italian Concordia research station (Dome C), in the Indian Ocean sector of the East Antarctic plateau, provides a record of the last 800,000 years of earth's climatic and atmospheric history.

Two other ice-cores have been drilled in Antarctica, the first by the Russians at their Vostok station and

the second by EPICA in Dronning, Maud Land in the Atlantic Sector. The greater snow fall in Dronning, Maud Land means that its ice-core is eminently suitable as a comparison with the Central Greenland ice-core from the Northern Hemisphere.

Chemical analysis of the water and air in the ice has so far revealed that eight ice ages and warm interglacial periods, such as we are currently experiencing, have dominated life on earth over the past 800,000 years.

Ice-cores are somewhat similar to tree rings, in that they display a distinct difference between seasons. These annual layers of ice are clearly visible to the naked eye on the leading edges of glaciers that cave into the ocean. Each year is

Ritchie Way

distinguished by the difference in crystallisation between summer and winter ice. Summer ice also has pollens in it from plants that lived at that time.

Is there a chance there could be a miscount of the yearly layers of ice in a core, due to something like massive storms? Yes, there is that remote possibility, but it is largely overruled by correlation with ice-cores from elsewhere in the Antarctic and Greenland. Besides, even a miscount of 10% would not make much of a dent in 800,000 years of ice.

The antiquity of Antarctica is further attested to by the fossilised tree trunks, also, seams of coal and fossils of land-dwelling dinosaurs that lived there before the continent became ice-bound. ♦

The Everlasting Gospel in Daniel and the Revelation

Featuring Dr Desmond Ford

This will be the theme for Good News Unlimited's
two-part Gospel Conference at the
Holiday Inn, Roma St., Brisbane on November 20 2004.

Program: 11:30am The God Of All Comfort *with Pastor Ron Allen.*
2:00pm The Gospel in Daniel and the Revelation (part 1).
The Gospel in Daniel and the Revelation (part 2).
Dr Ford will answer questions at the end of the presentation.

SEMINAR 2005 **Good News Unlimited presents:**

In Heavenly Places

The Riches of God's Grace in Paul's Letter to the Ephesians.

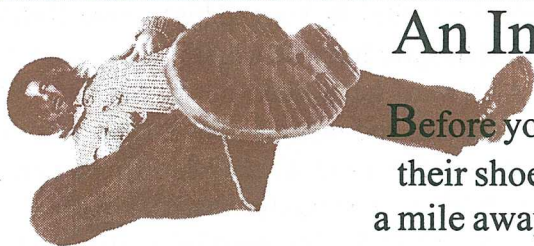
with Dr Desmond Ford & Pastor Ron Allen

The letter to the Ephesian church is a concise, yet comprehensive summary of the good news of Jesus Christ. It has been called the crown of St. Paul's writings; the divinest composition of man; the queen of the Epistles; the greatest, the maturest and the most relevant of Paul's works for our time; the distilled essence of the Christian religion and the most contemporary book in the Bible.

Mark your calendar now

Brisbane: February 25 and 26 2005

Sydney: May 7 2005 **Melbourne:** May 14 2005



An Important thought on life:

Before you criticise someone, you should walk a mile in their shoes. That way, when you criticise them, you are a mile away and you have their shoes. *(email from R Way)*

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We invite your comments on our pages.

A Book of One-liners and short Statements from Desmond Ford Material

Dear GNU Supporters

For many, many years you and I have had the privilege to be exposed to one of the 20th Century's great teachers of the Gospel, Dr Desmond Ford. We have been uplifted by his God-given insight into the deeper things of God's Word. He, as no other that I know, has the ability to express grand thoughts and concepts in one-liners and short statements.

I believe that it is time for the wider community of 'searchers for meaning to life' to have access to these enlightening short statements from Dr Ford. I would like to think we could work on a project together that will bring to fruition a book of Dr Ford's one-liners and short statements that can be published and distributed worldwide in Christian bookshops and good book outlets.

My proposal is this, that we as a Christian community who have been blessed and inspired by his ministry, bring this publication to the world together. The publication will be a beautifully bound hardcover book that will have titles on every aspect of Christian life for easy reference. For example:

- ◆ 'Living for God's glory can be regarded as the rent we owe for the space we occupy here on earth.'
- ◆ 'Christ is the only man who ever lived who

claimed to be God, yet was judged sane by his wisest contemporaries.'

◆ 'Philosophers are like someone, who, on a dark night in a dark room with no windows is looking for a black cat that isn't there.'

◆ 'Just as there can be no shadow without light, there can be no doubt unless there is truth.'

◆ 'People prefer to believe what they prefer to be true.'

We need volunteers to listen to his sermons and isolate statements that can encapsulate grand thoughts in short statements. I would imagine that most of us would have many tapes, books and magazines with Des' sermons or answers to questions, etc. We should exhaust these avenues before we duck into the archives.

We do need all hands on deck to make this happen. I know we will all find great satisfaction in producing a quality publication that we all had a part in. This is a huge task due to the volume of Des' life's work, but it is worth doing and we can achieve it together. Let's make it happen, and when we bring it to fruition, we will deliver a valuable contribution to God's literary collection.

Please register your interest in being part of this endeavour by contacting me in any of the following ways, **Email:** briancherry@optusnet.com.au or **Fax:** 02 94843464 or **by writing to:** 19 Warne Street, Pennant Hills 2120 NSW.

Yours sincerely
Brian Patterson

THE TROUBLE TREE

I hired a plumber to help me restore an old farmhouse. After he finished a rough first day on the job, a flat tire made him lose an hour of work, his electric drill quit and his ancient truck refused to start. While I drove him home he sat in stony silence.

On arriving, he invited me to meet his family. As we walked towards the front door, he paused briefly at a small tree, touching the tips of the branches with both hands.

When opening the door he underwent an

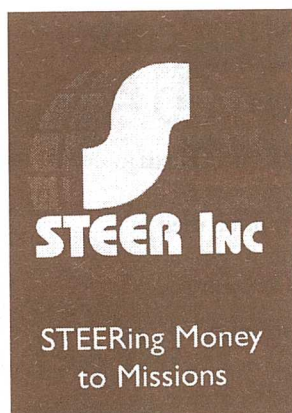
amazing transformation. His tanned face was wreathed in smiles, he hugged his two small children and he gave his wife a kiss.

Afterward he walked me to the car. We passed the tree and my curiosity got the better of me. I asked him about what I had seen earlier.

'Oh, that's my trouble tree' he replied, 'I know I can't help having troubles on the job, but one thing's for sure, those troubles don't belong in the house with my wife and children, so I just hang them up on the tree every night when I come home and ask God to take care of them. Then in the morning I pick them up again. 'Funny thing is' he smiled, 'when I come out in the morning to pick 'em up, there aren't nearly as many as I remember hanging up the night before.'

(Email from Melvern J Savige)

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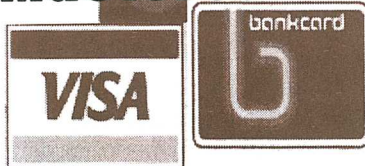
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Good News Unlimited is an evangelical, nonprofit organisation, dedicated to proclaiming the everlasting gospel. GNU is not a church, and does not seek to proselytise, but does believe in and encourage local church involvement. The ministry of GNU includes radio presentations, preaching appointments, public seminars and the dispersal of audio and video cassettes, also literature, emphasizing the atonement of Christ.

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