

# Good News Unlimited

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Solo Christo—Sola Scriptura—Sola Fida—Sola Gratia

WHY GOOD NEWS UNLIMITED?

Good News from Galilee

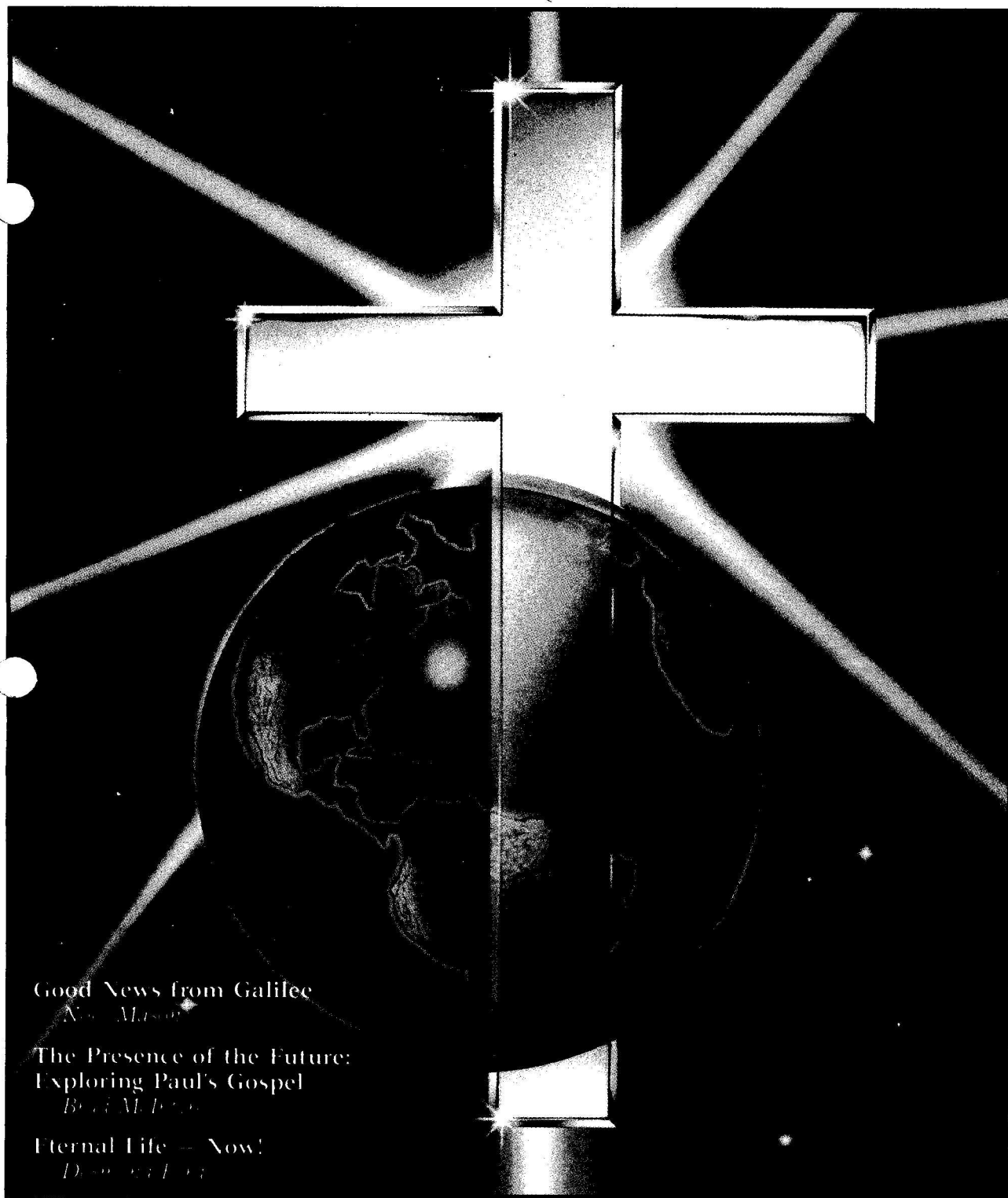
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Editor:  
Noel Mason  
Associate  
Editor:  
Brad McIntyre

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**Canadian office:** P.O. Box 3068, Station D, Willowdale, M2R 3G5, Ontario, Canada.

**Australian office:** P.O. Box 1603, Hornsby-Northgate, NSW 2077, Australia.

**South African office:** P.O. Box 11096, Universitas 9321, Republic of South Africa.

**New Zealand office:** P.O. Box 20154, Christchurch, New Zealand.

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## Editorial

Miracles are still a stumbling block for many in our western world in spite of the fact that it is now thought that the laws of nature are not so absolute as they were once thought to be. In biblical times, most people were sensitive to the miraculous in nature. It seems that Asia Minor had its share of itinerant preacher-teachers who performed miracles. There are also records of rabbis who performed miracles. In New Testament times the question wasn't so much, "Can this man really perform miracles?" but rather, "In whose name and power is he able to do such wonders?" (Lu 12:22f).

All of the gospel traditions record the fact that Jesus performed many miracles. Yet they all insist that Jesus did not want to be known as a mere miracle worker. In fact, and this may sound like heresy to some, the Gospel writers are really not very interested in the miracles of Jesus per se. *They are more interested in what they meant.* In all four Gospels the miracle stories are presented as aspects of the inbreaking kingdom of God. They are seen as small battles in the great war between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan (Mk 3:22-26; Lu 11:19,20). The miracle stories are prophetic signs indicating that the kingdom of God has come!

But we must not think that the miraculous is the only characteristic of the kingdom or that disciples of the kingdom are identified only by their power to perform miracles. The storyline in the Gospel of Mark is instructive on this point. The first half of the Gospel of Mark is heavily freighted with stories of Jesus' miraculous powers over the demonic world. Down to Mark 8:22 Jesus looks very much like a charismatic wonder worker.

A decisive change takes place at Caesarea Philippi (8:27-31). Here for the first time Jesus teaches his disciples that "the Son of Man must suffer many things." Could it be that his disciples were getting the wrong impression of what it means to be a genuine disciple in the kingdom of God? He wants them to know that discipleship implies suffering and service. He tells them "Whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. For the Son of Man came also not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mk 10:43-45). Thus, the literary structure of Mark enables us to see the miracle stories of Jesus in their proper perspective. They are to be seen in the perspective of the cross. Mark interprets the miracle-working Christ in the light of the Son of Man who suffers and dies for his followers. The image of a miracle-working Christ does not lay at the center of the paradigm of Christian discipleship. The humble, suffering servant is a better, truer image of what it really means to be a disciple in God's kingdom.

—Noel Mason

# WHY GOOD NEWS UNLIMITED?

**G**ood News Unlimited, (GNU) as the name itself suggests, is an evangelistic ministry committed to the proclamation of the gospel. GNU considers every aspect of the Christian faith to be important but gives pride of place to the gospel. Writing to the church at Corinth, Paul said, "And now I want to remind you, my brothers, of the *good news* which I preached to you, which you received, and on which your faith stands firm. That is the *gospel*, the message I preached to you. You are saved by the *gospel* if you hold firmly to it — unless it was for nothing that you believed. I passed on to you what I received, which is of the *greatest importance*: that Christ died for our sins, as written in the Scriptures; that he was buried and that he was raised to life three days later..." (1 Cor 15:1-4 TEV). As with the first Christian evangelists; so with GNU, the gospel events, the birth, death and resurrection of Christ are "of the greatest importance."

While many changes have occurred since the preaching of the gospel in the first century, human nature has remained the same — a chaotic jumble of good and evil. In fact, our greater knowledge has only increased the burden of our chronic selfishness (i.e., 50,000 nuclear weapons!) Modern man has eaten more deeply of the forbidden fruit of the tree of knowledge.<sup>1</sup> The great problems of the first century remain those of the twentieth — sin, guilt and death. Two world wars and the Nazi death camps are a chilling reminder of the dark, irrational side of our human nature. There is a "worm at the core" of our being.

That human nature hasn't changed is also confirmed by those who have spent most of their lives studying it. Not all psychiatrists would express themselves as negatively as Freud when he wrote:

...I have found little that is "good" about human beings on the whole. In my experience most of them are trash, no matter whether they publicly subscribe to this or that ethical doctrine or none at all. If we are to talk of ethics I subscribe to a high ideal from which most of the human beings I have come across depart most lamentably.<sup>2</sup>

But all would agree that most if not all people suffer from some form of psychological quirk. It is now estimated that two-thirds of all the hospital beds in this country (USA) are now occupied by mental patients. Suicide ranks as the third highest killer in the eighteen to twenty-one year age group. In the twenty-one to twenty-four year age group, suicide is the fourth highest killer. Really, the incidence of suicide is much higher than these statistics indicate, for most of the fatal road accidents are caused by drunken drivers, many of whom had "given up on life" long before the fatal accident. Even the popular books on the human personality introduce the reader to a plethora of terms such as neurosis, suppression, repression, regression, depression, inferiority complex,

defense mechanisms, transference, etc., all of which indicate that all is not well with the psyche of modern man.

With the spread of scientism which denies the reality of the nonmaterial world meaninglessness has become the disease of Western man. We live in a spiritual "wasteland." As Carl Braaten has written, we live in a world which has been "flattened out into facts without values, quantities without quality, broken up into bits and pieces without a whole, a body without a soul, mammon without mystery, a drama without a plot, a life without a future, sex without love, religion without faith, words without meaning."<sup>3</sup> "Patients no longer complain," writes Viktor Frankl, "of inferiority feelings or sexual frustrations as they did in the age of Adler and Freud. Today they come to see us psychiatrists because of feelings of futility. The problem that brings them crowding into our clinics and offices now is existential frustration, their existential vacuum..."<sup>4</sup>

While not denying the value of some modern psychotherapies, the staff and supporters of GNU believe that the solution to modern man's "sickness unto death" lies in the historic New Testament gospel. We have seen with our own eyes, the power of the gospel effecting transformations at the deepest level of the human personality. We have witnessed its power to liberate the human psyche from the neurotic, destructive forces of fear and guilt. Nothing brings peace of mind as does the forgiving grace of God. With Paul we "have complete confidence in the gospel; it is God's power to save all who believe... For the gospel reveals how God puts people right with himself; it is through faith from beginning to end (Rom 1:16,17 TEV).

If you have found the gospel to be a liberating power in your life, will you not help us spread this message that will gladden the hearts of many others? Every month we send this magazine to thousands in many different countries. Every month we send hundreds of tapes with a message of joy and hope. Thousands listen to the GNU daily radio program. Every weekend members of the GNU staff are preaching the word of life to needy souls.

As we approach the new year, will you enable us to do more? The words of Jesus, "freely you have received, freely give" are a challenge to us all to be cheerful, generous supporters of the gospel.

On the center page of this magazine you will find a return-addressed envelope. Write to us today and together we shall strive to fulfill our Lord's commission.

1. Jonathan Schell, *The Fate of the Earth*, p. 115
2. Sigmund Freud, *Psychoanalysis and Faith: Dialogues with the Reverend Oskar Pfister*, pp. 61-62.
3. Carl Braaten, *Christ and Counter-Christ*, p. 91.
4. Viktor Frankl, *The Unheard Cry For Meaning*, p. 24.

# GOOD NEWS FROM GALILEE

by Noel Mason



**O**n Thursday, September 19, 1985, Mexico City was rocked by a killer earthquake. In just four earthshaking minutes, beginning at 7:18 a.m. a significant portion of the city became a mass of twisted steel and shattered concrete. Immediately, those who survived, began the grim hunt for the

unfortunate ones who were buried in the rubble of more than 400 collapsed buildings. In the days that followed, the major television networks gave the whole world a unique opportunity to share their tragic experience. There were scenes of grief-stricken parents and children pulling the battered

bodies of their relatives from piles of rubble.

But not all the news was bad. Out of the calamitous, suffering, sorrowing city came stories of "miraculous" survivals. "Miracle In The Rubble" were the headlines of the San Francisco Examiner.<sup>1</sup> There was the



incredible story of a baby in an incubator who had survived more than fifty-five hours beneath tons of broken concrete. It was indeed "a miracle in the rubble." It was a story that brought surprise and joy to the hearts of many saddened rescue workers of Mexico City.

The story reminds me of another "miracle in the rubble" — the story of a child who survived the political and religious rubble of his times to bring a message of surprise and joy to the human race. It's the story of Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus is the surprise and joy of history.

Despite the fact that millions of Bibles are sold every year most people, even those who claim to be Christians, have only vague conceptions of the simple, joyous message of Jesus. What was his message?

### The Central Idea

The central idea in the teachings of Jesus is the kingdom of God. It is found ninety-one times on the lips of Jesus in the synoptic Gospels. If repetitions are subtracted there remains sixty-one entirely separate sayings of Jesus about the kingdom of God.<sup>2</sup> The kingdom of God was the passion of Jesus. It is the integrating motif of all that he said. According to Matthew, Mark and Luke, Jesus began his ministry with the proclamation of the kingdom of God. Mark gives a summary of the message of Jesus:

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel." (see also Mt 4:17; Lk 4:18f; 10:9)

### The Note of Fulfillment

The message of Jesus had a startling effect upon his audience. The Jews of his day believed that the Spirit had been quenched. It was their belief, that God's voice had been silenced with the death of Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi. None would have missed the emphatic note of fulfillment that ran throughout his teachings; the kingdom is at hand, the promise is being fulfilled, a new day is dawning, the time of expectation

is at an end, "the hour is coming and now is" (Jn 4:23). According to J. Jeremias, Jesus' proclamation of the dawn of the time of salvation is without analogy.

With regard to his environment, he is the only Jew known to us from ancient times, who proclaimed that the new age of salvation had already begun.<sup>3</sup>

The coming of Jesus draws a line through the ages. His message rings with a note of fulfillment.

*When Jesus spoke about God he did not use the abstract, philosophical jargon of the world's philosophers. When talking of God he never gave a discourse on "the ground of our being" or "the ultimate concern," etc. For Jesus, the simple, natural, everyday life of the world was filled with rich images of God.*

Jesus used a rich cluster of images to draw attention to the fact that "something staggering, immense, overwhelming was about to happen, ...God's age-old promise of redemption was now being fulfilled."<sup>4</sup> For Jesus it was a momentous time, something like the time when a bridegroom comes for his bride. In biblical times, on the day of the wedding the bridegroom and his party would journey to the bride's home and escort her back to his parent's home for the supper. This procession was accompanied by singing, music and dancing (Jer 7:34; 1 Macc 9:39) and was often followed by a wedding feast that sometimes lasted for seven days. Jesus used this part of the wedding ceremony as a symbol of the time of salvation.

But it was all too bewildering for some people. "Why do John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?" is their perplexed inquiry. "Can the wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the

bridegroom with them they cannot fast. The days will come, when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast in that day" is the joyous response of Jesus (Mk 2:18-20). Yes, the time had come! The wedding had begun. The Bridegroom had come to take his bride!

Jesus used other images to open their eyes to see that the time had come. He said, "No one sews a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment; if he does, the patch tears away from it, the new from the old, and a worse tear is made. And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; if he does, the wine will burst the skins, and the wine is lost, and so are the skins; but new wine is for fresh skins" (Mk 2:21-22). For Jesus, the time had come for a new robe, a new garment. The age of fulfillment was not a time to patch old garments with new cloth nor was it a time to be pouring new wine into old wineskins. Both images are used to convey the message that a new age has been ushered in. The prophets of the Old Testament used the vine and new wine as symbols of the new age (Gn 9:20; 49:14; Num 13:23f; Amos 9:13; Joel 3:18; Jn 2:1-11). Noah planted a vine after the Deluge, the Israelite spies brought a bunch of grapes from the Promised Land, and Jesus creates a superabundance of wine in Galilee, each indicating a new age is beginning.<sup>5</sup>

Harvest time is another image Jesus used to illustrate his conviction that the kingdom of God had come. "Lift up your eyes," he said to his disciples, "and see how the fields are already white for harvest" (Jn 4:35). As any farmer knows, harvest time is a time of fulfillment, a time for action.

On the occasion of his last sermon, Jesus pointed to a fig tree and said, "From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near" (Mk 13:28). The new growth of spring was a symbol of God's kingdom come.

This note of fulfillment is also strikingly illustrated in some of the actions of Jesus. On one occasion he entered the temple at

Jerusalem, "and drove out all who sold and bought in the temple" (Mt 21:12f). His bold action fulfilled the promise of Zechariah, "And there shall no longer be a trader in the house of the Lord of hosts on that day" (14:21). That day had come, the sanctuary was renewed, the age of salvation had dawned.<sup>6</sup>

### The Good News — The God of Jesus

Not only is there a note of fulfillment in the original proclamation of Jesus but also a note of good news. At the center of this "good news" is a fresh, daring image of God. It was Jesus' radical conception of God that brought forth both cries of joy and consternation from his audience. His conception of the kingdom was shaped by a bold vision of God. What was the God of Jesus really like?

When Jesus spoke about God he did not use the abstract, philosophical jargon of the world's philosophers. When talking of God he never gave a discourse on "the ground of our being" or "the ultimate concern," etc. For Jesus, the simple, natural, everyday life of the world was filled with rich images of God. It is not that he finds new, fanciful images of God. Rather, what is bold and refreshing in Jesus' conception of God is the way he takes the traditional images and bursts their "wineskins." This is seen in many of his teasing, scandalous, paradoxical, shocking parables. The God of Jesus' parables is the God of exuberant generosity and grace. The prophets of old, and the Jews of Jesus' day believed that God was like a shepherd and father, gracious, loving and merciful, but not in the radical way of Jesus. Jesus speaks of God's gracious love with unprecedented extravagance. Consider just one parable, the parable of the Good Employer:

For the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. After agreeing with the laborers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard. And going out about the third hour he saw others standing idle in the

market place; and to them he said, 'You go into the vineyard too, and whatever is right I will give you.' So they went. Going out again about the sixth hour and the ninth hour, he did the same. And about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing; and he said to them, 'Why do you stand here idle all day?' They said to him, 'Because no one has hired us.' He said to them, 'You go into the vineyard too.' And when evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his steward, 'Call the laborers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last, up to the first.' And when those hired about the eleventh hour came, each of them received a denarius. Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received a denarius. And on receiving it they grumbled at the householder, saying, 'These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.' But he replied to one of them, 'Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for a denarius? Take what belongs to you, and go; I choose to give to this last as I give to you. Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or do you begrudge my generosity? So the last will be first, and the first last. (Mt 20:1-16)

*In the great judgment day when we meet the Good Employer face-to-face our salvation will be based not on our past performance but on the sheer grace of God.*

Here is a story of barefaced injustice.<sup>7</sup> The scandalizing, surprising center, the shock is found in verses 8 and 9: "And when evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his steward, 'Call the laborers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last up to the first.' And when those hired about the eleventh

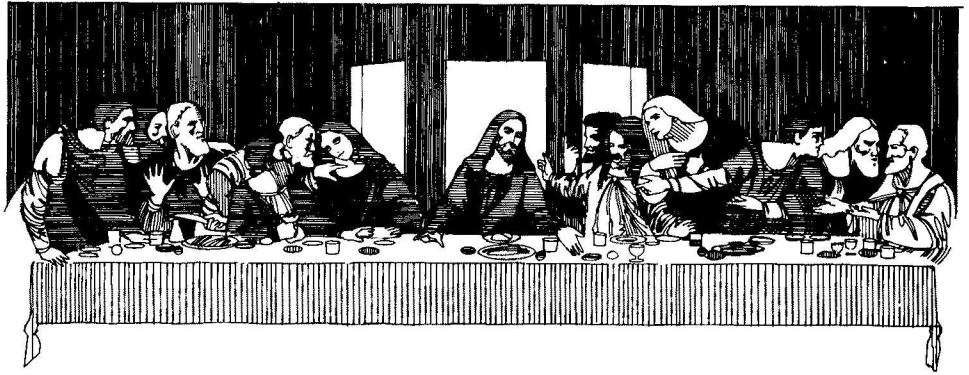
hour came, each of them received a denarius. Those who worked for only one hour in the cool of dusk, get as much pay as those who have toiled right through the day! The principle of common justice, i.e., he who works the longest receives the most pay is overturned. Jesus shows that God's rule does not follow the quid pro quo rules of payment. "The idea of reward, which enters as part of the indispensable scenery of the story, is intentionally and triumphantly swallowed up and lost in the thought of grace."<sup>8</sup> Jesus is saying *this is what God is like!* His gifts are spontaneous and unearned. It is precisely the "unfairness" of his grace that discloses to us its untamed freedom. The point of the parable is not that all in the kingdom will receive the same reward but that kingdom rewards depend on God's sovereign grace. The parable is a vindication of the good news of the kingdom of God as heralded by Jesus. For Jesus the kingdom of God was predicated on God's grace and God's grace is boundless, impartial, indiscriminating. In the great judgment day when we meet the Good Employer face-to-face our salvation will be based not on our past performance but on the sheer grace of God.

Think of all the symbols and images Jesus used to convey the good news. For Jesus knowing God and his kingly rule and power was like finding pearls of great price, tasting new wine, feasting at a banquet, stumbling upon hidden treasure, a ready and abundant harvest, a celebration of the return of a long-lost son with fine food, music and dancing. With these powerful images Jesus invited the world of his day to believe that God was prodigally gracious. This was the good news that gladdened the hearts of some and rankled the hearts of others who ultimately conspired to kill him. The good news was a challenge to change their views of God.

### The Good News in Deed

Jesus' daring vision of God is disclosed also in his unconventional behavior. One of the first criticisms levelled at Jesus was

*To believe that God is gracious "beyond our wildest dreams" and to live out that graciousness in our daily relationships is of the very essence of the kingdom of God.*



that he was too friendly with sinners. "Why is he eating and drinking with tax-gatherers and sinners?" is the first question of the pious (Mk 2:16). The Galilean ministry, as recorded by Mark depicts Jesus' concern for those out on the perimeter of the covenant people of God. Jesus is seen healing a man with an unclean spirit in the synagogue (1:25). Multitudes suffering from demon-possession and leprosy are also recipients of his healing power (1:32-34,40). His attitude was in sharp contrast to that of Jewish groups such as the Pharisees or the Qumran covenanters, who avoided all such unclean folk. Jesus' caring, gracious attitude to those on the edges of the covenant was a bitter pill to swallow for the sectarians of his day who believed that sickness and suffering were punishments for breaking the law of Moses.

But Jesus had been to the "mountaintop" and had experienced an unprecedented vision of God's boundless grace. He had glad news for all. In Mark chapters 3 and 7, he is seen embracing the Gentiles. In 3:35 he announces that "whoever does the will of God, he is my brother and sister and mother." Then in chapter 4, he is depicted as a sower who spreads the seed with reckless abandon. Some are thrown even on the rocks! For Jesus the grace of God is universal. The kingdom of God is inclusive. Behind all his gracious actions lies a fresh, bold vision of God.

He told his own people that the kingdom of God knows no frontiers, no compartmentalizing and sectarian divisions. With warmth and simplicity yet with

ruthless logic he said:

If you love only those who love you, What credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them. If you do good only to those who do good to you, What credit is that to you? Even sinners do as much. And if you lend only where you expect to be repaid, What credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to be repaid in full. But you must love your enemies and do good, And lend without expecting any return; And you will have a rich reward: You will be sons of the Most High, Because he is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked.

(Mt 5:43-48)

For Jesus the time of fulfillment was not the time for a "nicely calculated less and more of 'practical' morality."<sup>9</sup> It was time to reflect the generous, gracious attitudes of God.

### God's Kingdom for Today

To believe that God is gracious "beyond our wildest dreams" and to live out that graciousness in our daily relationships is of the very essence of the kingdom of God. But what has happened to the kingdom of God? Tried and found wanting? The truth is that it has never been seriously tried by the majority of people. Andrew Greeley was near the truth when he wrote:

It was cynicism, pessimism, and despair which defeated Jesus and continues to defeat him. So precious few of even those who claim to be his followers live lives that would lead one to suspect that they had indeed discovered a treasure in the field or had spotted a pearl of great price in the market place or, to use a somewhat more

modern simile, a long-lost Rembrandt painting. Not very many Christians live lives of men who have been intoxicated by the eschatological wine of a new age. Quite the contrary, the average Christian is every bit as gloomy and sober as his non-Christian neighbors. Not many Christians go about with the bright eyes and the singing heart that were characteristic of the prodigal son. The typical Christian's eyes are downcast and his heart is heavy and dull. Only a few Christians live with the serene confidence that the triumph of goodness is as certain as the fermentation of dough by yeast. The typical Christian is at least as anxious as his non-Christian neighbor.<sup>10</sup>

Do we find the gospel too good to be true? Shall we yield to cynicism and despair? The "challenge of the hour" is the same as it was in Jesus' day: Will we dare to trust ourselves to the grace of God as revealed in Jesus of Nazareth? "Listen! This is the hour to receive God's favour; today is the day to be saved!" (2 Cor 6:2 TEV) By a simple act of trust we can be embraced by God's forgiving grace and thereby become bearers of his kingdom.

1. *San Francisco Examiner*, September 24, 1985
2. C. L. Mitton, *Your Kingdom Come*, p. 1
3. J. Jeremias, *New Testament Theology*, p. 108
4. A. Greeley, *The Jesus Myth*, p. 43
5. *Ibid.*, p. 46
6. J. Jeremias, *New Testament Theology*, p. 107
7. J. Jeremias, *The Parables Of Jesus*, p. 37
8. H. R. Mackintosh, *The Christian Experience Of Forgiveness*, p. 100
9. C. H. Dodd, *The Founder Of Christianity*, p. 80
10. A. Greeley, *The Jesus Myth*, p. 54





## ETERNAL LIFE—NOW!

by Desmond Ford

**T**he greatest discovery of the twentieth century has been a humiliating one. It concerns not mechanical marvels, but man; not technology but anthropology, i.e. not the increasing knowledge of and power over things, but the burgeoning disillusionment about the knower himself and his demonstrated inability. Not the conquest of outer space, but the conquest of inner space — the heart and mind of man, is the greatest challenge of our day. Not the bomb, but the bomber, is the darkening threat to civilization.

No sane man would deny humanity's accelerated mastery over nature, but to include human nature within the sphere of progress would be to testify to

either ignorance or stupidity. Each material advance has been accompanied by a new threat.

*All our questions about the universe and existence involve the prior question of "What is man?" Who or what is this being that asks the questions?*

Slaughter on the roads mounts with the increase in cars and highways; education instead of banishing crime makes it more efficient, chemical research leads not only to medical triumphs but to moral dilemmas. The yield in

bushels to the acres has been increased, but likewise the manifestations of our lusts, hypocrisies, and fears. The theme of almost all modern literature is "Man is sick."

All of which is a far cry from the unbounded optimism which marked the turn of the century, the era of the Titanic. The romantic illusions of Utopianism have been shattered by two world wars and by recurring economic depression. Whereas the early 1900's were marked by a faith in man which matched that of the idealist Greek philosophers, more recent years have seen a reversal of sentiment and a view of human nature almost identical with that of such pessimists as the Greek



tragedians. Thus modern views of existence almost universally testify to the jaundiced eye of the beholder. Consider, for example, the confession of the playwright Ionesco in his *Notes et contrenotes*:

I have no other images of the world except those of evanescence and brutality, vanity and rage, nothingness or hideousness, unless hatred. Everything I have since experienced has merely confirmed what I had seen and understood in my childhood: vain and sordid fury, cries suddenly stifled by silence, shadows engulfed forever in the night.

In strong contrast is the triumphant testimony of the tragically handicapped Helen Keller: "I have found life so beautiful." Whom are we to believe about life, Ionesco or Keller?

Such a question reminds us that all our questions about the universe and existence involve the prior question of "What is man?" Who or what is this being that asks the questions? Only the Christian revelation as it is found in Scripture can rightly answer the question. It repudiates the two characteristic positions of the ages, naive optimism and cynical pessimism. It tells of Creation and the Fall as recorded in Genesis as the only adequate explanation of the nature of man. Man, made in the moral image of God, by disobedience has become a hybrid half-angel, half-demon.

Three hundred years ago Blaise Pascal, scientist, mathematician and Christian, acknowledged genius of the seventeenth century, summed up the differences between Ionesco and Keller and the divisions of humanity they represent. He wrote:

Without Jesus Christ man must be in vice and misery; with Jesus Christ man is free from vice and misery; in Him is all our virtue and all our happiness. Apart from Him there is but vice, misery, darkness, death, despair.

The Christian religion, then, teaches men these two truths; that there is a God whom men can know, and that there is a corruption in their nature which

renders them unworthy of Him. It is equally important to men to know both these points; and it is equally dangerous for man to know God without knowing his own wretchedness, and to know his own wretchedness without knowing the Redeemer who can free him from it. The knowledge of only one of these points gives rise either to the pride of philosophers, who have known God, and not their own wretchedness, or to the despair of atheists, who know their own wretchedness, but not the Redeemer.<sup>1</sup>

*Man, made in the moral image of God, by disobedience has become a hybrid — half-angel, half-demon.*

The words are worth reading again. They sum up the human problem and the divine solution. Not only so, but they epitomize that most abstract and yet most practical of all branches of knowledge — theology, which in essence consists of the knowledge of God (that is, of his nature), and the knowledge of man, and the relationship between the two.

The gospel revolves around these truths. We will take one example which aptly illustrates our discussion so far. Let us consider that most beautiful of all Bible books — John.

While the first three Gospels use the metaphor of the kingdom of God to illustrate the basic message of the New Testament, Paul chose in Romans particularly the forensic metaphor of justification and elsewhere adoption and reconciliation. Life in the Spirit which is the subjective side of being "in Christ" is also a Pauline emphasis. But for the fourth Gospel all these are assumed and John chooses rather to stress eternal life (see for example 5:24 and 3:16-18,36). John has in mind a quality of existence, not just the everlasting duration of life for the saved. That quality of life is symbolized in Christ's seven miracles of transformation, all of which occur before the cross.

Though the "now" and the "not yet," the "first-fruits" and the full

harvest, must ever be distinguished, John is telling us that to receive the gospel of Christ is to receive a real foretaste of eternal life now. Let us consider the seven miraculous transformations in their order:

1. The turning of water into wine at Cana's marriage feast.
2. The healing of the nobleman's son at Capernaum. While Jesus was still at Cana, half-a-day's journey away.
3. The Bethesda healing of the impotent man who had been ill almost forty years.
4. The multiplying of the loaves and fishes for the 5,000 guests.
5. Walking on the waters of the Lake of Galilee and calming the storm.
6. The restoration of sight to the man born blind.
7. The raising of Lazarus from the dead.

These seven miracles are a symbolic portrayal of the needs of sinful man and of the sufficiency of Christ, the divine Savior. They describe our nature and his. Let us first consider these signs as they relate to our human condition, remembering that no one appreciates the good news until deeply aware of and groaning under the bad news.

The cry, "They have no wine" at Cana's marriage aptly points to the lack and disappointment which characterize our existence. Man is always seeking a more exhilarating life. The youth and beauty of the marriage festival, its song and flowers, its music and dancing intimate the expectations that we all cherish as we confidently stride upon life's stage. But how quickly our illusions are dispelled! The music fades, beauty turns to ugliness, the flowers wither and the wine runs out. As men set forth the good wine first and then afterwards that which is worst, even so does the world with its gifts. What is begun with eager excitement and admiration turns to disgust and sorrow. Even health, life's greatest wealth, deteriorates and with it life's most beautiful scenes become shadowed.

The second miracle points to our lack of spiritual health. We are all typified in the nobleman's son as he lingers on the verge of death.

Unless the Great Healer speaks the word of our healing our spiritual sickness will lead to eternal death.

Not only do life's exhilarations, health of spirit and body decline but also our physical strength. This is symbolized in the crippled man at Bethesda. Trials and temptations reveal to us our impotence. Failure follows upon failure and we are plunged into despair.

But not only are we without joy, health, and strength, we also lack true nourishment. The fainting, hungering 5,000 represent us all. Until we know Christ, we suffer from spiritual malnutrition.

These miracles present a picture of the sorry plight of all humanity. The situation worsens with the fifth miracle. The fragile boat on the stormy seas is a picture of mankind without safety, ever trembling on the verge of imminent disaster and death. The sixth story, the healing of the man born blind, intensifies further our sad case as it points to our spiritual blindness from the dawn of consciousness. Finally in the man who had been dead some days we see ourselves as "dead in trespasses and sins." What a marvelous portrayal of man's sinful nature and hopeless plight! The cluster of signs in John's Gospel witness to the fact that the unconverted man is without joy, health, strength, sustenance, safety, sight and life. All the events of history, all the accounts of modern literature, all the testimony of today's news media confirm the helpless state of man as reflected in these seven stories. As Pascal affirmed: "Without Christ man is in vice and misery, in darkness, death, and despair."

But is not the gospel "good news"? What good news is there in John's portrayal of our woe? For that we must consider the other half of the testimony of the seven signs. It speaks of Christ's nature, of the infinite capacity of the strong Son of God to meet our need. Each of the seven miracles reveals him as being able not only to meet our peculiar problems but all similar problems. In each mighty act we see him as the Transformer. He transforms water to wine, disease to health, impotence to strength, hunger to

satisfaction, danger to safety, darkness and blindness to light and sight and death to life. All the miracles bespeak his divinity, for "these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name" (Jn 20:31). Note how he is strong where we are weak.

*Christ is no mere man only. He is God. The divinity of our Lord is our assurance of eternal life and our guarantee that he is sufficient for all our needs in this present time, as well as in the world to come. The Gospel of John has as its message the glorious truth that once we are united to Christ by living faith, our only limitation will be the welcome one of the will of God which is always good.*

1. The miracle at the wedding feast reveals the power of Christ to bring a new quality of life into human existence. Water becomes wine.
  2. The feeding of the 5,000 shows his power over *quantity*. A few loaves and fishes become enough to feed an army, and there is plenty to spare.
  3. The healing of a man who had been ill almost forty years shows Christ's power over *time*.
  4. His sending of the word of healing from Cana to Capernaum shows Christ's power over *space*.
  5. His walking upon the water reveals his supremacy over *natural law*.
  6. His healing of a man who was born blind illustrates his control over *apparent chance*, i.e., over nonlaw.
  7. The raising of Lazarus testifies to Christ's power over *death*. He is "The resurrection and the life."
- Thus each of these mighty works testifies that Christ is no mere man only. He is God. The

divinity of our Lord is our assurance of eternal life and our guarantee that he is sufficient for all our needs in this present time, as well as in the world to come. The Gospel of John has as its message the glorious truth that once we are united to Christ by living faith, our only limitation will be the welcome one of the will of God which is always good. Despite our weakness and our sinfulness, all things — the failing of supply, of health, of strength, of apparent safety, etc. — work together for good. Nothing can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. But most of all the Gospel is declaring that the spiritual ravages of our nature made by sin can be healed by our contact of faith with the living Christ.

John is as aware of the simplicity of salvation by faith alone as certainly as Paul, and therefore he uses various forms of the word "believe" approximately 100 times and in most chapters of his Gospel this concept is emphasized (see, for example, 1:7,12; 2:11,23; 3:12,15,16,18,36; 4:28,39,53; 5:24,38,44,46,47; 6:29, etc.). That salvation is free is the glorious good news told again and again.

Sense can be made of the nonsense of life only as we believe the words of Christ. Listen again to some from the most beautiful book in the Bible.

...Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

...He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation but is passed from death unto life.

...he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.

Throughout the Gospel of John the word of the divine Christ works transformation. It raised Lazarus from the dead. That same word received and believed by you and me places us too on resurrection ground translated into the eternal kingdom of God.

1. *Pensees*, no. 545; no. 555



## THE PRESENCE OF THE FUTURE:

## EXPLORING PAUL'S GOSPEL

 Brad McIntyre

**T**he Boeing 727 gracefully rises into a clear October sky. The pilot turns off the "Fasten Your Seat belt" sign as I lean toward the window and stare at the colorful scene below. Acres of red and golden trees paint the landscape like impressionistic splashes from an inspired brush. The forests create a collage of dazzling images, each individual tree contributing to the total effect, but no particular tree dominates. After all, from my airborne perspective I cannot concentrate on a specific tree. Instead, I have the advantage of viewing the whole forest at a glance.

In this article we are going to fly over the forest of Paul's gospel without getting distracted by specific trees. We are searching for an overall theme which unites everything else he says about the Christian faith.

### **The Heart of Paul's Gospel**

Every famous business has a slogan. For example, "You deserve a break today" (McDonald's); "We do chicken right!" (Kentucky Fried Chicken); "Where's the beef?" (Wendy's); "We're the other guys" (B. F. Goodrich); "We try harder" (Avis). Slogans are catchy summaries which give the gist of a business' philosophy.

Let's apply a few slogans to the themes of the NT. What was Jesus' slogan? "The kingdom of God is near!" How about John? "Eternal life now!" Hebrews? "A better salvation." And Paul?

I suggest that Paul's slogan is "the presence of the future." Although Paul never uses these exact words, I believe the idea underlies his gospel. *Paul's central conviction is that the saving powers of the future age are now present in Jesus Christ.*

The entire NT announces the arrival of a new age. Jesus Christ marks the beginning of the end! All the events reserved for the end of time are somehow present now.



History has been pushed forward, so to speak, so that what was to come is already here.

This is the "good news." We live in a fresh era of God's saving activity. Jesus called it "the kingdom of God;" John called it "eternal life;" and Paul viewed it as "the presence of the future." All three slogans refer to the same event: the new age has dawned!

### The Fullness of Time

Paul expresses "the presence of the future" in various ways. He calls it "the righteousness of God," or being "in Christ," or "the mystery of God," or the "fullness of time." But whatever terms or metaphors he uses, they all point to one event: *in Jesus Christ the powers of the coming age have invaded this present evil age to create a new situation.* Christ is the pivot on which the ages turn.

Salvation-history was like a pregnant woman about to give birth. "When the fullness of time came, God sent forth his Son" (Gal 4:4). "Fullness" (Gk. *pleroma*) means filled to the brim and overflowing. When the cup of salvation-history was filled to the brim, God sent Jesus Christ to drink it dry! Christ is the fulfillment of the long-awaited time of salvation.

Elsewhere Paul exclaims, "Now is the right time! Now is the day of salvation!" (2 Cor 6:2). Something is here now that wasn't here before. "The old has passed away . . . the new has come!" (2 Cor 5:17). In other words, the aeons have shifted. The old age of anticipation and promise is swallowed up by the new age of fulfillment. Above all else, Paul's gospel announces a new time.

Paul also refers to the "revelation of the mystery which was kept secret for long ages, but is now disclosed . . ." (Rom 16:25-26). He sees himself as a messenger revealing "the mystery hidden for ages and generations but now made manifest to God's saints" (Col 1:26). What is this mystery? Is it some secret teaching possessed by a few elite intellectuals? No. The mystery, in fact, is not a what but a who — Christ (Col 2:3-4). The mystery is God's saving work in Jesus Christ which, before now, was only a distant

hope. But now God's deed is realized in history and everyone who believes can experience the life of the age to come here and now. Hope is now reality; promise is now fulfillment; mystery is now revelation (Eph 1:9-10; 3:3-4; 1 Cor 2:7; 2 Tim 1:9-10).

In Romans 1:16-17 Paul announces the revelation of "the righteousness of God." Here again we see Paul using another phrase to describe the presence of the future. The righteousness of God referred to God's house-cleaning at the end of time. It was like a year-end closeout when God does inventory to see who stays and who goes.

*All of Paul's individual teachings, such as justification, sanctification, being "in Christ," adoption, redemption, reconciliation, forgiveness, the role of the law, life in the Spirit, the second coming, etc., are to be seen in light of the new age which has dawned in Christ.*

This activity of judgment was reserved for the very end of time, but Paul says it's already here! *The verdict of God's final judgment is already pronounced on those who believe in Jesus.* But God's wrath is now falling on those who disobey the gospel (Rom 1:18; 2:1-11). Thus future vindication and future wrath come crashing into this present age bringing either acquittal or condemnation, depending on one's response to Christ.

### The Spirit and the New Age

Paul's comments about the Spirit are also to be seen in light of the new age. Christians have the Spirit as a "guarantee" of things to come (2 Cor 1:22; 5:5; Eph 1:14). Those who believe are "sealed" with the Spirit (Eph 1:13; 4:30), that is, they are marked to spend eternity with God. This is another example of the presence of the future. God gives us the Spirit as a "down

payment" assuring us of a future place in his kingdom.

In Judaism, the gift of the Spirit was reserved for the last days. Only at the end of time would God pour out his Spirit upon all flesh (Joel 2:28). But Paul says Christians already have this end-time blessing! Christians experience the "firstfruits of the Spirit" (Rom 8:23). This means that even now, in a limited way, Christians can experience the spirit-filled life of the coming age. God gives us enough of the Spirit to make us "groan" for its fullness at the very end of time when we become "spiritual bodies" (1 Cor 15:44).

Christ's resurrection, Paul says, is the "firstfruits of those who sleep" (1 Cor 15:20). Now, resurrection is always reserved for the end of time. But Christ's resurrection proves that the life-giving powers of the coming age have broken into the present age. The final resurrection has already begun! Death is caught off guard! And those who trust in Christ can know that, just as Christ was raised from death, they too will be raised, for "in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Cor 15:22). Further, the same divine power which raised Christ from the dead is now at work in those who believe (Eph 1:19-20).

One final example of the presence of the future regards Adam and Christ. Adam symbolizes the old age of death (Rom 5:12-14; 1 Cor 15:22). Christ, "the last Adam," is a "life-giving spirit" and represents the new of life (1 Cor 15:45). Just as death came through the first Adam, so now life comes through Christ, the second Adam (Rom 5:15-19). To be "in Adam," is to remain in the old aeon of death. To be "in Christ," however, is to transfer your citizenship to the new aeon of life and righteousness which is available even now in this present age!

I have taken extra effort to show how Paul says the same things in different ways. Don't get confused at the variety of metaphors and terms he uses. They all point to the same event: *the inbreaking of the new age of salvation in Christ.* All of his individual teachings, such as justification, sanctification,



being "in Christ," adoption, redemption, reconciliation, forgiveness, the role of the law, life in the Spirit, the second coming, etc., are to be seen in light of the new age which has dawned in Christ.

### Paul and the Cross

I will never forget my wedding day. My life has not been the same since! Getting married changes everything. That one event can be the most pivotal event of your entire life. It inaugurates a new era for you and alters your life history for better or for worse. Even if later on you get a divorce, you will never completely escape the influence of your former marriage.

Paul married the crucified/risen Christ and was never the same afterward! If the new age has dawned for Paul, it dawned during the darkness of Calvary and the brightness of the empty tomb. Without a doubt, the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is Paul's basic message, but he preaches the cross in the framework of "the presence of the future."

Paul's gospel can be summarized as "the word of the cross" (1 Cor 1:18). It is the liberating message of how the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ has inaugurated the new age of God's salvation.

Of first importance to Paul was the gospel of the cross and resurrection of Christ (1 Cor 15:4). The blood of Christ brings redemption and forgiveness (Eph 1:7), peace with God (Col 1:20; Eph 2:13; cf. Rom 5:1), and justification (Rom 5:9). Although these are blessings of the coming age, Christians experience them now.

The cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but it is the power of God to those who believe (1 Cor 1:18). The crucified Christ is a stumblingblock to many, but Paul boasts in the cross (Gal 5:11; 6:14). He will know and preach nothing except "Christ and him crucified" (1 Cor 2:2). In fact, those who disobey the gospel are "enemies of the cross of Christ" (Php 3:18). Further, the cross erased our debts and restored our fellowship with God (Col 2:14).

But in my opinion, Paul's

devotion to the crucified Christ is summed up in these words,

I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. (Gal 2:20)

What a confession of faith! It gives me chills. The cross was no mere theory for Paul. He was crucified with Christ on that cross, and when Christ rose from the dead, Paul rose with him and entered into a new existence — the life of the age to come!

### The Two Ages

We have been talking about the clash of two distinct ages. Paul maintains that Christians live as citizens of the new age within the context of this present evil age.. The old and new ages overlap so that both are going on at the same time. This is the unique element in Christian teaching compared to the OT expectation.

The OT struggles with the present evil age and envisions a better age to come, an age of peace and justice. The Jews expected a spiritual "Super Bowl" in which God and the evil nations face off on the field of history. Naturally, God wins and Israel gets the trophy! This contest over who's in charge around here is sometimes called "the Day of the Lord" (Is 2:1222; 13:6-22; Joel 1:15; 2:1-2,11,31; Amos 5:18; Zep 1:7,14-18). It was a day of reckoning, bringing salvation to Israel and punishment on the nations. "Someday," Israel said, "God will clean house. Someday God will assert his sovereignty over all these godless nations and set up his rule forever! A new age is coming!"

But the OT prophets popped this bubble — and fast! Men like Amos warned Israel against overconfidence: "Woe to you who desire the day of the Lord . . . It is darkness, not light" (Amos 5:18). The prophets' concern was ethical: "Let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an overflowing stream" (5:24). No Jew is saved by being Jewish. Only those who do righteousness are saved on the Day of the Lord. Further, only a "remnant" of

Israel will survive (Amos 5:15; Is 1:9; 10:20-23; Jer 23:3; 31:7; Mic 5:3,7; Zec 8:12; 12:10).

Without going into more detail, the OT predicts a coming age of righteousness. The present age is so bad that only God can fix it. Someday God will invade this present evil age through the Messiah and usher in the long-awaited new age.

*Our present experience in Christ is merely a foretaste of that glorious age when "every knee shall bow . . . and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Php 2:10-11).*

Paul's gospel is rooted in this OT expectation. He, too, has a two-age approach to history. Christians live in the "present evil age", even though the death/resurrection of Christ has already delivered them (Gal 1:4). Notice the tension here. We still exist in the old age, yet we've been delivered from it and live as citizens of the new age.

Paul's concept of history is like a double exposure on your film — two separate pictures competing for space on the same negative. History consists of "this age" and "that which is to come" (Eph 1:21). Yet, in a sense, "that which is to come" is already here, since our era has witnessed the "end of the ages" (1 Cor 10:11). *The new age overlaps with the old age until Jesus comes.* "Then comes the end" (1 Cor 15:24).

The OT does not anticipate an overlap of the ages. The "day of the Lord" was supposed to make a clean break between the old and the new. The Christian gospel, however, envisions a period "between the times," that is, between the death/resurrection and second coming of Christ. The following diagram shows what I mean.

### Already/Not Yet

Before we finish, we must face a few of the tensions of Christian living. After all, it's not easy living

"between the times!" We will call our situation the "Already/Not Yet."

"Already" the new age has come, but "not yet" in its fullness. "Already" we are justified and sanctified, but "not yet" is the entire plan of God complete. "Already" we are freed from sin, but "not yet" is sin destroyed. "Already" we experience the resurrection life, but "not yet" are we free from death. "Already" we are assured of a place in God's kingdom, but "not yet" has Jesus returned.

Such is the tension of living

"between the times." The death and resurrection of Christ has inaugurated the new age without ending the old. So we live by faith, awaiting our adoption as sons and daughters of God (Rom 8:23), while knowing we already are children of God (Rom 8:15-17). We rejoice in the righteousness we now have by faith (Gal 2:16), while awaiting the hope of righteousness through the Spirit (Gal 5:5). Our lives surge with the power of the Spirit while we struggle against the pull of the flesh (Gal 5:16-17). We dwell in the midst of a crooked and

perverse generation as citizens of heaven (php 2:15; 3:20).

### Conclusion

Paul, like Jesus and John, is a herald of a new time. The "good news" concerns Jesus Christ and the new age that has dawned in him. yet there is more to come. Our present experience in Christ is merely a foretaste of that glorious age when "every knee shall bow . . . and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Php 2:10-11).

## Diagram of Two Ages

(Brad McIntyre)

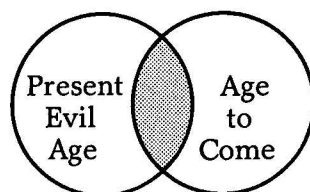
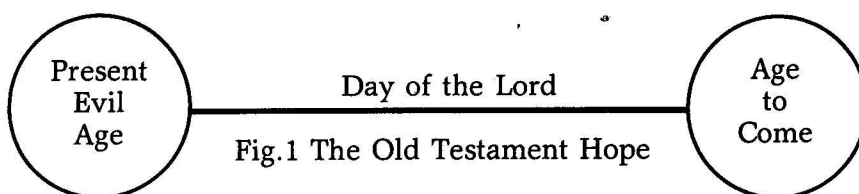
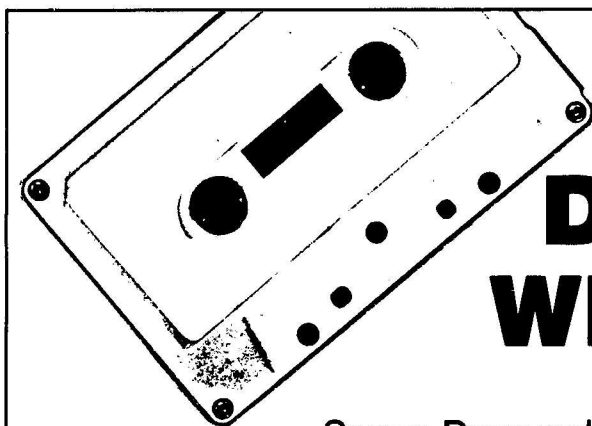


Fig.2 The New Testament Reality



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Almost two million people die each year in the U.S.A. without leaving a will. Of these, approximately 600,000 are evangelical Christians who in the majority of cases have been good stewards in life but make no provision to continue their stewardship after death. In a multitude of instances each day of the year, Christians leave their lifetime of savings for a court dispersion they would never have sanctioned while alive.

None of us will die any the sooner for making legal provision for the final allocation of the goods God has lent to us. It should not be delayed even a day, especially in times when the making of the will can be both simple and inexpensive.

Will you not pray about the matter and act if you have not already done so? And will you remember the work of the gospel that others may come to share the eternal life in which you now rejoice? It is within your power to make provision that some might find the treasure to which our Lord referred (Mt 13:44), a treasure which illuminates the shadows of death and points to the everlasting gates of pearl, and the welcoming Savior (1 Th 4:13-18).

—Desmond Ford

## Ford – Martin on Radio.

Dr. Walter Martin, Director of the Biblical research institute and "The Bible Answer man" on the most widely heard Christian program in the US, recently Hosted Desmond Ford on his radio show.

Dr Martin quizzed Dr Ford on issues relating to his dismissal from the Adventist ministry and the contemporary Adventist scene. Both Martin and Ford took telephone calls during the broadcast. It makes fascinating listening.

The entire program is available on cassette from GNU. The cost is \$8.00 for the two tapes. Postage included. Write to:

Good News Unlimited  
PO Box 1603  
Hornsby Northgate  
NSW 2077.

## A New Outreach in Australia.

Since its inception, GNU has existed for no other purpose but to obey the Christian commission and make known the message of Jesus Christ and His Kingdom of Grace. The GNU board of directors labours always to choose the best means and employ the right instrumentalities for the accomplishment of this grand task.

Till now four ministries have formed the fabric of the GNU witness. These ministries are: Monthly Magazine, Cassette Tapes, Seminars and Radio. The magazine and cassette ministries have proved by far the most popular. Many have been glad for the seminars and many more for the Radio broadcasts. We thank our supporters sincerely for helping supply these services.

At a recent meeting of the GNU board it was voted that another ministry be added to the existing outreach. It was decided that a local Christian congregation be established on the Queensland Gold Coast. To lead this venture Pastor Ron Allen is to move from Sydney and locate in Queensland. It is envisaged that such a congregation will grow and become an autonomous body, complimented in its Gospel witness, by the media and seminar ministries of GNU.

We are excited about this new outreach because it means that the existing services available to our many supporters in South Queensland will be strengthened. In addition to that a fuller, more complete Gospel statement will issue from GNU because of its association with a Gospel community. Those whose interest in the Good News is aroused by a Radio ministry will be directed to the congregation where (by the grace of God) they will experience the Gospel in word and deed.

Incidentally Pastor Allen will still be available for speaking appointments in other centres from time to time.

## Radio Schedule

Dr Desmond Ford may be heard on these stations:

2CHY FM 9:30 AM Sunday.

3HA 8:15 PM Sunday.

5PBA FM 9:30 AM Sunday.

# Letters

## Beautifully Drafted & Informative

Sirs:

Thank you for the tape of the month. I appreciate it very much as I do the papers I receive from you. *Good News For Adventists* is a beautifully drafted and informative "magazine." And your monthly *Good News Unlimited* has such quality as an artistic, well-designed and printed paper, along with the great articles and editorials it contains.

Please accept my contribution, along with my daily remembrance in prayer for your ministry, though we are out of broadcast range. I am grateful for your tapes.

G. K.  
Little Chute, Wisconsin

## A Visit From a Friend

Sirs:

Your encouraging newsletter arrives each month, like a visit from a dear friend! We have read each issue eagerly, and shared many of the articles with friends, acquaintances, and our pastor.

Thank you for such faithful service. Enclosed please find a small token of our friendship and support of your much-needed ministry.

M. K.  
King City, California

## Requisition & Appreciation

Sirs:

I love your program. I hear it on KRKS and it is a great blessing. I wish you were on for longer!

I would like to request your

monthly newsletter and the 9/12/85 manuscript. I would greatly appreciate a list of all the books, pamphlets or booklets you have for sale and the names of the ones that are out of circulation that you used to offer. Is it possible to obtain past issues of your monthly newsletter? Please let me know who to make out a money order to for a donation. Thank you very much for all your help and time. May the blessing of the Lord rest upon you and the ministry.

I would appreciate it if you would put me on your mailing list.  
S. M.  
Littleton, Colorado

## Amazed

Sirs,

The tapes have just arrived. Thank you so very much for sending them so quickly.

I have heard the first side of the first tape - "Learning to groan quietly" with Pastor Allen talking. It is wonderful. A great help to practical Christian living day by day. This is something that never ceases to amaze me about all I read or hear from GNU. There is always something that seems to be meant just for me, for my problem at this moment.

NSW.

## Thanks

Sirs,

This is a short note to thank you for the tapes you have sent me. I enjoy them very much and give them to others to hear.

Vic.

## Learning Patience

Sirs:

Every afternoon when I get off work at 3:30 p.m., here in Seattle, Washington, I turn on my car radio to station KGNW. In a way I get very frustrated because it seems that just when your message is gaining momentum, I pass thru a tunnel which is in concrete and for about 5 minutes I cannot hear you. I am 63-years-old and have yet to learn patience, but the Lord is gently leading me. I prayed before sitting down to write you because I want so badly to let you know how I feel when I am able to listen to you. (I don't get to hear you every day.)

Somehow, even though I am able to hear you speak maybe 5 or 10 minutes, I hear the Holy Spirit of God speaking softly through your voice. It is as if God himself is speaking to me (and I guess he does do that through the people who truly yield to him). I want to tell you how much I love you in Christ Jesus and to thank you for your faithfulness to him.

B. F.  
Seattle, Washington

## Blessing

Sirs,

We have been receiving your newsletter and several of your tapes. We have received a tremendous spiritual blessing from your material. May God bless you as you spread the Good News.

NSW.

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