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Getting the Big Picture?

Part IV - Noel Mason

Faith — Healing on Demand?

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Editorial

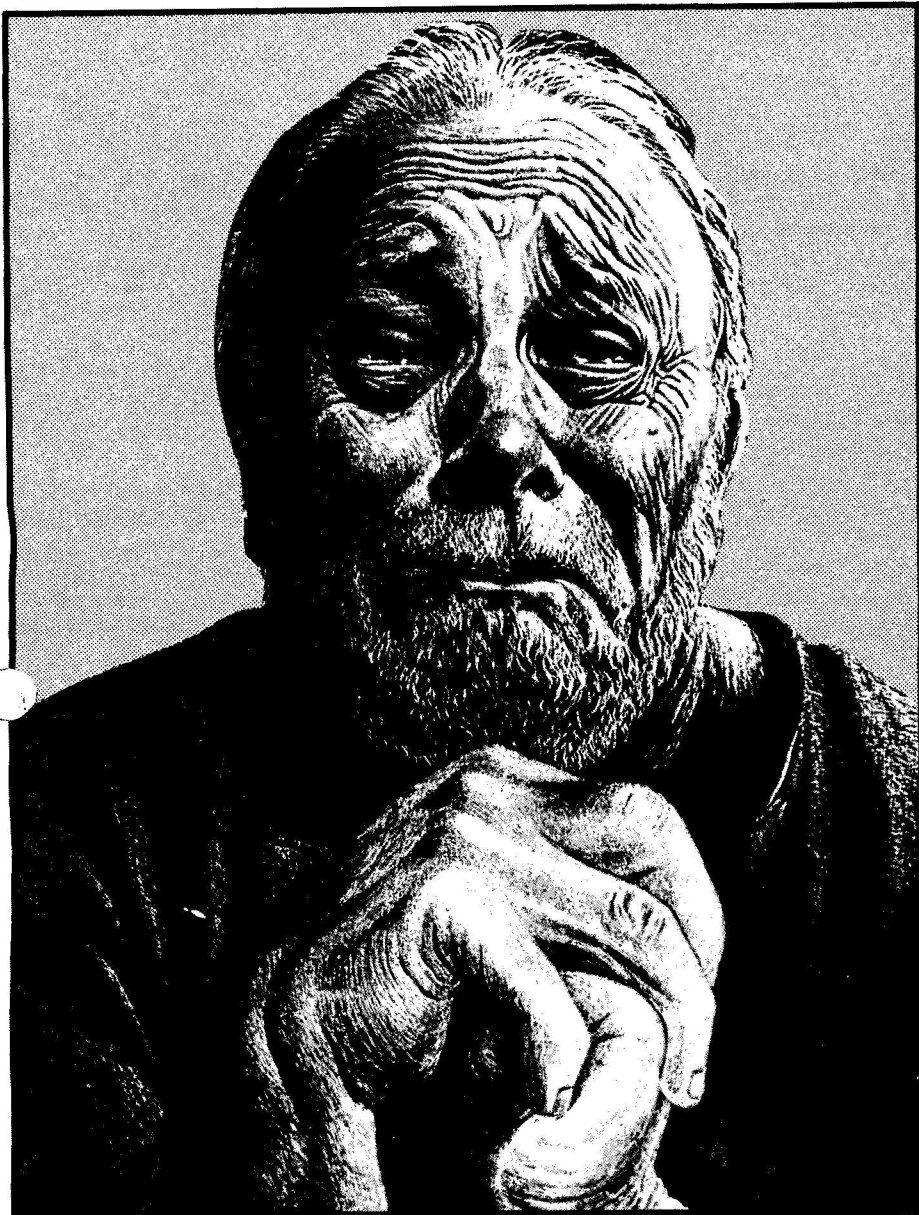
Some time ago I visited the office of a religious television channel and made some inquiries regarding their doctrinal standards. I was trying to assess whether they would find Dr. Ford's message on a new video tape compatible with their own beliefs. During the conversation, a pleasant Christian lady assured me several times that they believed in miracles and that some had occurred, right there in the studio. I assured her I would accept their ministry as a genuine Christian ministry regardless of whether miracles of healing had occurred.

For many Christians today, miracles have become a "test of orthodoxy." In fact, there seems to be a "miracle-mania" in some communities. Recently I visited a church and felt out of place because everyone had a miracle story to narrate but me! I was extremely puzzled. I couldn't understand why God seemed to be ignoring my *great* needs yet performing the most wonderful miracles to care for the most *trivial* needs of others. On the way home I remembered Woody Allen's rather playful comment: "If only God would give me some clear sign! Like making a large deposit in my name at a Swiss bank." For a moment, I thought something like that would convince me that God is anxious to work miracles today. But, after some reflection, I wondered how I could be sure that it was a miracle of God and not just a bit of luck, or the gift of a rich uncle. Obviously no one has the ability to *prove* that God has worked a miracle. It must always remain a judgment of faith.

I must confess that I am skeptical of the claims of the popular television faith healers. These gifted men seem to assume that it is *always* God's will to heal miraculously. According to my Bible all of God's promises are conditional. "My Father, if it is possible," said Jesus in Gethsemane, "take this cup of suffering from me! Yet not what I want, but what you want." (Mt 26:36-39 TEV). No informed Christian will ever omit the word "if" in prayer requests. Some Christians quote James 5:14-16 which reads: "Is there anyone who is sick? He should send for the church elders who will pray for him and rub olive oil on him in the name of the Lord. This prayer made in faith will heal the sick person..." and confidently assert that James makes an unconditional statement. However, such an assertion ignores the entire theology of the letter of James. The context suggests that "if it be God's will" is to be tacitly understood. Consider for example what James says in 4:2-3: "You do not have what you want because you do not ask God for it. And when you ask, you do not receive it, because your motives are bad; you ask for things to use for your own pleasures" (TEV). There is probably no writer in the Bible more aware of the conditional nature of God's promises than James.

The popular faith-healers ought to encourage their audiences to develop a faith that is not dependent on miracles. To believe in Christ because of his miracles is better than unbelief (Jn 14:11), but it is only a second best. According to John, genuine faith ought not to *rely* on miracles (4:48; 20:29). The book of Daniel gives a good example of mature biblical faith. "If we are thrown into the blazing furnace," said Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, "the God we serve is able to save us from it..." But even if he does not, we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up" (Dan 3:17-18). Such a faith ought to be the aspiration of every Christian.

—Noel Mason



GETTING THE BIG PICTURE?

(Part IV)
Faith And
The Anxieties
of Life

Noel Mason

We have all heard the saying: "Two men looked out from prison bars, one saw mud, the other saw stars." It's a parable of our situation in life. Both ways of interpreting life are well represented today. In his book *Chance and Necessity*, Jacques Monod wrote:

Our number came up in the Monte Carlo game...man at last knows he is alone in the unfeeling immensity of the universe, out of which he emerged only by chance.¹ Monod can only see "mud." Steven Weinberg, one of the most

popular exponents of the modern worldview ("the bigbang") also struggles to see more than the "mud" of chance and meaninglessness. Consider his conclusion in his classic, "The First Three Minutes":

As I write this I happen to be in an airplane at 30,000 feet, flying over Wyoming en route home from San Francisco to Boston. Below, the earth looks very soft and comfortable — fluffy clouds here and there, snow turning pink as the sun sets, roads stretching straight across the country from one

town to another. It is very hard to realize that this all is just a tiny part of an overwhelmingly hostile universe. It is even harder to realize that this present universe has evolved from an unspeakably unfamiliar early condition, and faces a future extinction of endless cold or intolerable heat. The more the universe seems comprehensible, the more it also seems pointless.²

But not all modern scientists see "mud" like Monod and Weinberg. One of the most fascinating books to be published in recent times is

Evolution From Space, by Fred Hoyle and Chandra Wickramasinghe. The authors argue that the evolutionary course of life on earth has always been subject to cosmic influences, and that the biological makeup of living things on our planet was and is radically changed by the arrival of pristine genes from outer space. They also believe that the existence of a creator can be established by mathematics, with a probability greater than $10^{40,000}$ (1 followed by 40,000 zeroes) to 1.³

Many people think that truth is always simple and heresy always complicated. But really it's just the opposite! Heresy is always an oversimplification of the truth. Reality is always too wild, too paradoxical, too mysterious to be squeezed into the philosophical strait-jackets of the finite mind.

The alternatives are clear, mud or stars, chance or design. But why do some see *only* mindless chance and others see *only* purpose and design? Why do some see only chaos and others only cosmos? Could it be that both prisoners are seeing truly but not wholly? (Getting the big picture is difficult!)

In my opinion, Monod's position is far too extreme. In his book *Chance And Necessity*, chance should have a capital "C". Chance is almighty. He seems to attribute to chance all the attributes of the traditional concept of God. Chance has become a metaphysical entity. It sits on God's throne. But it's impossible to attribute everything in this world to blind chance as it is to an ironclad determinism. Both philosophies destroy themselves in that they make it impossible for us to *truly* know anything including chance and determinism.

Many people think that truth is always simple and heresy always complicated. But really it's just the opposite! Heresy is always an oversimplification of the truth. Reality is always too wild, too paradoxical, too mysterious to be squeezed into the philosophical

straitjackets of the finite mind. I suspect that those who point to the many evidences of randomness in nature and conclude that all is the result of blind chance are missing the big picture and those who point to the many evidences of design and purpose and conclude that everything is directly controlled by an omnipotent Deity (a Puppeteer) are likewise missing the big picture. "The language of both design and randomness, purpose and purposelessness, is appropriate to the total range of human experience..." writes Conrad Hyers.⁴ The big picture contains elements of both randomness and design.

Life seems ambiguous. All the evidence never seems to be on one side or the other. We always seem to be confronted with alternatives. It is this "neither one thing nor the other" that generates the anxieties of human existence.

The Anxieties of Life

There is the anxiety of knowing yet not knowing enough for certitude. In the comic strip, *The Dropouts*, by Howard Post, Sandy (a small person) and Alf (a big person) are pictured walking around a tiny island. In the first frame Sandy asks Alf his first question as they look out across a vast ocean:

"What does it all mean, Alf?"

"Beats me!"

"Alf...?"

"Yeah?"

"Alf — where did the moon come from?"

"Who knows?"

"What makes all the planets round?"

"Can't say..."

"Is there life on other planets?"

"Wish I knew."

"Do you mind me asking you all these questions?"

"Not at all, Sandy...How else are you going to learn?"

Like Alf, we find our questions always seem to be bigger than our answers. We know so much yet absolute knowledge about anything eludes us. We are constantly frustrated with the "knowing yet not knowing" tension. F-i-n-i-t-u-d-e is written large across our lives. We all live in risk and uncertainty. We call our committees and deliberate for hours yet we have no guarantee that we have made the right decisions, nor are we aware of all the consequences of our decisions. At best we see "in a mirror dimly" (1 Cor 13:12). Knowing and yet not

knowing enough for certitude is one of the fundamental anxieties of human existence.

There are other tensions in life. The Christian philosopher, John Macquarrie finds four fundamental tensions in life. In his book, *Principles of Christian Theology*, he discusses what he calls "the polarities of human existence."⁵ There is the polarity between possibility and facticity; between rationality and irrationality; between community and individuality; between responsibility and impotence.

The first, the polarity between possibility and facticity refers to the basic tension we all feel between our dreams, our visions and the hard bare facts of reality. There are times when we are optimists and times when we are realists. We all need the encouragement of the "possibility thinkers" but the facts of our life situation should keep us from too many unrealistic expectations. Absolute freedom to achieve whatever we wish is not available to us. We are all limited by what Macquarrie calls "the givens" of intelligence, race, temperament, etc.

The second, the polarity between rationality and irrationality refers to the Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde personalities in every person. Without depreciating our ability to judge, discriminate, sift, understand and interpret, we must acknowledge that there is a dark, sinister, irrational side to our lives. We so easily deceive ourselves. The history of the twentieth century alone is enough to convince us all that we are often controlled by "dark, irrational forces" which threaten our very existence.

The polarity between community and individuality is one we experience every day. There are times when we think that we could live better and be happier if only we could escape to some island in the South Pacific and be free from the traumas of human relationships. But, as we all discover, sometimes in a surprisingly short time, we cannot live a normal life without other people. As Macquarrie says, "Even on the biological level, man is essentially communal, for the very act of sex indicates that biologically no single human is complete."⁶ Recent surveys have shown that loneliness is one of the greatest problems in modern society. There is a mysterious, impenetrable depth to our individuality. Even the most

sympathetic person cannot fully enter into the experience of another's existence. We have to live in the tension between community and individuality.

The fourth polarity is one that troubles all Christians. From the earliest times the wisest and best of men and women have lamented with Paul, "I don't do what I would like to do, but instead I do what I hate (Rom 7:15 TEV). Only a person with low ideals or no ideals (if that's possible!) or one who is blind to his own shortcomings could be unaware of the gap between what is and what *ought* to be. As long as we live, even as Christians we shall have to live with this frustrating anxiety. "Becoming" is of the very essence of the Christian life.

The Greatest Anxiety

Perhaps the greatest anxiety is that created by our desire for permanence in the midst of our experience of perishing. "Stop the world," we cry, "I want to get off!" We live in a transient flux. We are caught up in time and against our will we are dragged through the process of birth, life and death. We long for permanence but everything is changing. "Thou has entered my lament in thy book, my tears are put in thy flask" (Ps 56:8) is the hope of ancient and modern man. Just recently I noticed the headlines of a popular newspaper on the racks at the supermarket. It read, "How To Have Sex Appeal After 40." It was another indication of our sense of perishing.

Man's greatest anxiety is the threat of being eternally forgotten. I want things to turn out right in the end. Perhaps no one has expressed this longing for permanence better than Tennyson in the poem *In Memoriam*:

Oh yet we trust that somehow good
Will be the final goal of ill,
To pangs of nature, sins of will,
Defects of doubt, and taints of blood;

That nothing walks with aimless feet;
That not one life shall be destroyed,
Or cast as rubbish to the void,
When God hath made the pile
complete;

That not a worm is cloven in vain;
That not a moth with vain desire
Is shrivelled in a fruitless fire,
Or but subserves another's gain.

Behold we know not anything;
I can but trust that good shall fall
At last — far off — at last, to all,
And every winter change to spring.

So runs my dream: but what am I?
An infant crying in the night:
An infant crying for the light:
And with no language but a cry.

O life as futile, then, as frail!
O for thy voice to soothe and bless!
What hope of answer, or redress?
Behind the veil, behind the veil.

Can we enjoy such a hope that lies behind the veil? How shall we relate to the anxieties of life? Shall we yield to despair? Shall we invest greater energies in the pursuit of knowledge in the hope that we may pierce the veil and find demonstrable proof that God exists, that death is the gateway to a new eternal existence?

Can we, like Tennyson, enjoy such a hope that lies behind the veil?

How shall we relate to the anxieties of life? Shall we yield to despair? Shall we invest greater energies in the pursuit of knowledge in the hope that we may pierce the veil and find demonstrable proof that God exists, that death is the gateway to a new eternal existence? This course is not without its attraction, especially in the light of the astonishing accumulation of knowledge over the last three centuries. But I have a hunch we shall never find *demonstrable proof* that God exists or that there is life beyond death. We cannot even prove any one of the great moral values we cherish. Some time ago Cardinal Newman put the matter succinctly:

...we shall never have done beginning, if we determine to begin with proof. We shall ever be laying foundations. If we insist on proof for everything, we shall never come to action: to act you must assume, and that assumption is faith.⁷

There are times when the ambiguities, the contradictions, the perplexities of life evoke within us a longing for God to give us some tangible, empirical evidence of his existence. "Why doesn't God make it easier for us to believe?" is our

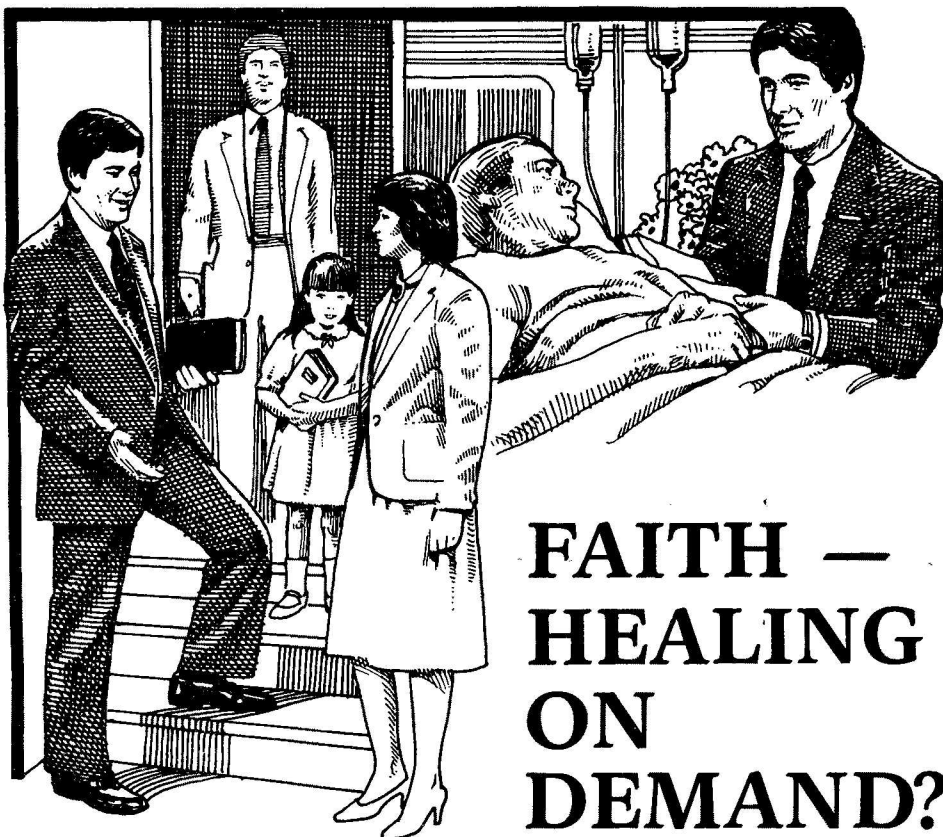
impatient question. Consider the answer of C. S. Lewis:

As to why God does not make his existence demonstratively clear: are we sure that He is even interested in the kind of Theism which would be a compelled logical assent to a conclusive argument? Are we interested in it in personal matters? I demand from my friends a trust in my good faith which is certainly without demonstrative proof. It wouldn't be confidence at all if he waited for rigorous proof. Othello believed in Desdemona's innocence when it was proved: but that was too late. "His praise is lost who stays till all commend'. *The magnanimity, the generosity which will trust on a reasonable probability is required of us.* But supposing one believed and was wrong after all? Why, then you would have paid the universe a compliment it doesn't deserve. Your error would even so be more interesting and important than the reality. And yet how could that be? How could an idiotic universe have produced creatures whose mere dreams are so much stronger, better, subtler than itself?⁸

No, we shall never have demonstrable proof that God exists. It will always be possible for us to look out and see mud rather than stars. We are shut up to faith in the *probability* that God exists. As Joseph Butler said some years ago, "probability is the guide of life."⁹ We must learn to live with the risks of faith. Instead of cursing the frustrating limitations of human existence perhaps we can learn to see them as invitations to trust. With some patience and courage we may be able to accept all the contradictions of life as triggers of faith. "But the righteous shall live by his faith" (Hab 2:4).

(To be continued)

1. Jacques Monod, *Chance And Necessity*, pp. 146, 180
2. Steven Weinberg, *The First Three Minutes*, p. 144
3. Fred Hoyle, Chandra Wickramasinghe, *Evolution From Space*, pp. 24, 129, 130
4. Conrad Hyers, *The Meaning of Creation*, p. 187
5. John Macquarrie, *Principles Of Christian Theology*, pp. 56-59
6. Ibid, p. 57
7. Cardinal Newman, *A Grammar of Assent*, p. 90
8. Quoted in Shelden Vanauken, *A Severe Mercy*, p. 92
9. Joseph Butler, *Works*, , p. 5



FAITH — HEALING ON DEMAND?

by Desmond Ford

According to a well-known TV advertisement, one in seven Americans goes to the hospital each year for treatment. Health care industries now match or surpass the nation's other leading industries. But the real solar-plexus jabbing facts are these: though approximately 70% of diseases are diseases of choice, none of us likes suffering for our sins be they social, gastronomical, or otherwise, and therefore all of us are tempted by the offer of miraculous "cure." The verdict of C. S. Lewis that most diseases are either cured by time or cannot be cured at all is one we are reluctant to accept.

Faith-Healing On The Rise

Perhaps this natural reluctance of ours explains the pervasive emphasis on miraculous healing found in religious programs over the U.S. radio and television. Millions are daily invited to lay hold of God's willingness to remove their ills. As Dr. Paul Brand has pointed out in a recent article, one television show claims to have in its files the records of over 60,000 miraculous cures.¹ In some cases we are even shown faith healers at work, inviting the sick

and suffering to leave the audience and seek a miracle through God's ministerial representative. The partially blind see, the deaf hear, legs are lengthened, invisible growths are eradicated and the visible evidence of forsaken crutches and wheelchairs call forth shouts of praise from sympathetic viewers.

But what of the millions of home witnesses or listeners who do as they are told, in faith demanding the miraculous blessing, but find themselves still as burdened as before? These are even more bereft because hope disappointed increases despair. And what if they find insult added to injury by the well-intended observation of a believer that it is their lack of faith which lies at the root of the withheld cure? Now guilt is added to sickness.

Furthermore, it must be asked: What view of the world and life does belief in easy and lavish miracles produce? What type of conduct is thereby encouraged? Does a "believer" see the universe as controlled by inviolable law which must be studied, learned and obeyed, or does he or she come to see their world as something very tractable indeed, ever prepared to

yield to the demand of faith, rendering obedience and effort unnecessary pedestrian expenditures? What sort of life springs from such convictions? Can it cope with the hard reality of daily existence, or is failure, frustration and anger ultimately inevitable?

To see this matter in perspective it is necessary first to acknowledge that the American scene is not typical of other parts of the globe. As an Australian who has visited about forty countries and who came to the U.S. as a guest-lecturer seven years ago, the distinction between this country and all others is obvious and striking. Here is the Mecca not only for those seeking new horizons or new employment, but also a religious and healing Mecca which has no real parallel anywhere else in the world.

A Valid Protest

At this point a protest is needed — the protest that our inquiry does not either deny the possibility of miraculous healing or suggest that all in the healing business are unscrupulous imposters. What is being questioned is whether every American Jack and Jill should be encouraged to believe that the simple way of faith guarantees escape from pain, and whether what well-intentioned men and women hail as miracles might not be something less spectacular.

Having innumerable medical doctors among my friends it has not been hard to discover their convictions on this matter. For the most part they are skeptical of claims to organic miraculous healing though simultaneously confident in the overruling providence of Deity which can and should be invoked. They would agree with a recent pronouncement:

...from my own experience as a physician I must truthfully admit that, among the thousands of patients I have treated, I have never observed an unequivocal instance of intervention in the physical realm.²

I well remember a ministerial student in my college classes who claimed miraculous healing. He gave his testimony from the chapel desk and in many other places around the country. Those most skeptical of his claims were friendly Christian physicians. Ultimately, the truth emerged — there had been neither organic disease nor miracle, only the



The Writing's On The Wall

Daniel chapter 5

Gillian Ford

Time went by and Nebuchadnezzar died. His son, Nabonidus was the real king of Babylon but he was reigning in North Arabia at the time. Nabonidus' son, Belshazzar, became the ruler of Babylon in his father's place, but he had not learned the lessons Nebuchadnezzar had about humility. Daniel at the age of 15 was more "grown up" than Belshazzar was at 36.



One day Belshazzar held a party for a thousand of the important people in his palace. He was a real show-off and drinking all that wine at the party only made him sillier. When the feast had been

going on for a long time and Belshazzar was quite drunk, he called for the sacred vessels that had been stolen from Solomon's temple in Jerusalem when the Israelites had been brought into captivity.

He set the sacred lampstand against one wall to light up his wicked party. And then he thought he'd have some fun with the sacred cups so he had them filled with wine and handed them around to his lords, his wives and his lady friends. Then he proposed a toast to all the idols in the kingdom made of gold, silver, bronze, iron, wood and stone.

You might think it silly that he would worship images made of stone or metal. But many of the people in his country believed these idols were really gods. And those sort of gods were very handy. They couldn't see anything through their wooden, stony eyes, so they couldn't see Belshazzar's wicked ways. They couldn't say anything, so they couldn't tell Belshazzar he ought to be a better man.

The lampstand and the drinking vessels were supposed to be used only in the sacred services that Israel's priests performed back in their own country. They were very special, they belonged to God and what Belshazzar was doing with them was very naughty. But he didn't care for Daniel's God or for God's holy things.

When Belshazzar profaned the sacred vessels in this way he broke at least the first three commandments of the ten in Exodus chapter 20.

This is what they said:

No. 1: You shall have no other gods before me.

No. 2: You shall not make a carved image to worship as a god. You shall not bow down to it.

No. 3: You shall not mock or be irreverent towards God.

In breaking three, Belshazzar really broke them all. It wasn't like some test where he failed three out of ten. Break one, break them all. His "score" was zero.

It's just as though you played around during the communion service which you probably have at your church. At that time, we drink the wine and eat a little bit of bread to help us remember Jesus' death and resurrection. It's very serious to take part in this service, for the wine represents Jesus' blood and the bread his body. It's a very holy time and not a time to play. You might think it's just a game. That's what Belshazzar thought. Drinking from God's sacred cups, playing with the lampstand, was just playing, only a game. But God was watching and it was no joke.

And as Belshazzar laughed and joked and praised his useless gods, a ghostly, ghastly hand suddenly appeared and wrote strange writing on the wall opposite the sacred lampstand. The happy laughter of the king and his guests, the lively music and dancing — all abruptly stopped as though a conductor had flicked his baton. All eyes were turned to the wall, the hand and the writing, flickering in the glow of the lamp. Faces were twisted with fear. A deathly silence invaded the room and invisible hands seemed to clutch at the throats and hearts of all present.

Belshazzar started to perspire and the sweat droplets poured down his face, his garments quickly becoming wet and heavy. He seemed struck by a nameless terror. It seemed like forever when the silence was broken by a shrill shout from him that rang out like a thunderbolt. Just as Nebuchadnezzar had called in past years for his magicians to explain his dreams, so Belshazzar summoned his magicians to explain the words written on the wall by the phantom hand.

But no one could until the queen mother came and told Belshazzar to call for Daniel who had been at court in Babylon for many years. At eighty years old, he was still tall, strong, whitehaired, his face wreathed with the light and wisdom that comes from many years of worshiping God. So Daniel came and Belshazzar in a blind panic promised him many favors — a royal purple robe, a chain of office and a high position in the kingdom.

But Daniel had watched Belshazzar from birth. He had seen what a proud, selfish, idolatrous

young man he was and was not impressed. He would not accept his gifts and he said so. Nevertheless, he calmly told Belshazzar he would interpret the strange writing for him.

The writing was in a known language, Aramaic, yet the magicians had been unable to read it for some reason. Maybe it was written in an anagram (a word puzzle) or in some other form hard to read. But God helped Daniel read it and he read out the words, "Mene, mene, tekel" and "parsin." "Mene" came from a word meaning "to count." "Tekel" meant "to weigh." "Parsin" meant "to divide" and was related to the Aramaic word for Persia, the country that was soon to conquer Babylon.

Daniel summarized the meaning. "Belshazzar," he said, "God has **numbered** the days of your kingdom and is going to bring it to an end. You have been **weighed** in the balances and found wanting. Your kingdom is **divided** and given to the Medes and **Persians**."

Despite the bad news and despite the fact that Daniel didn't want it, Belshazzar insisted on giving him all the gifts he'd promised. Maybe in doing this for Daniel, he hoped to win the favor of God and reverse the decision. But it didn't work. His wickedness had been very great and judgment soon came. That night, Darius the Mede got into the palace and Belshazzar was killed.

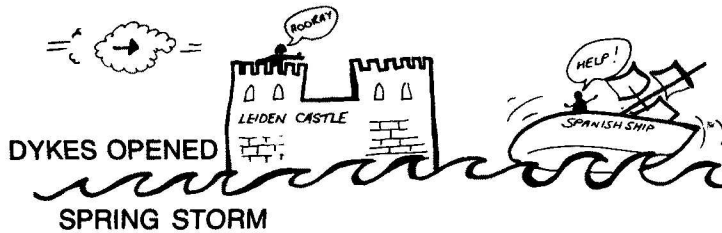
When Daniel was explaining the meaning of the writing to Belshazzar, he also explained why God was so angry. He reminded Belshazzar how Nebuchadnezzar, his grandfather, had been made into a beast for seven years and how he had repented of his pride and idolatry. "You, his grandson, were growing up at the time this happened. You witnessed it. You saw it. Yet you did not honor my God, though your life and breath are in his hands." That's why Daniel told Belshazzar that the writing was on the wall for him.

That was many years ago, long before Jesus came. No one sees strange writing on the wall anymore if they mock God. But the principle of the story is still true. Though our God is very kind and loving, though anyone can come to him, there comes a time for judging wickedness. There are some people who sin so hard and so long that the Holy Spirit cannot plead with them anymore and they don't seem to have any conscience left. Belshazzar was like that.

I don't want to be like Belshazzar and I'm sure you don't. How can we make sure we aren't. If only we could remember this little verse — "Thou God seest me," we would only do things that please him. It would save us from lots of trouble and then we'd never have to read the writing on the wall.

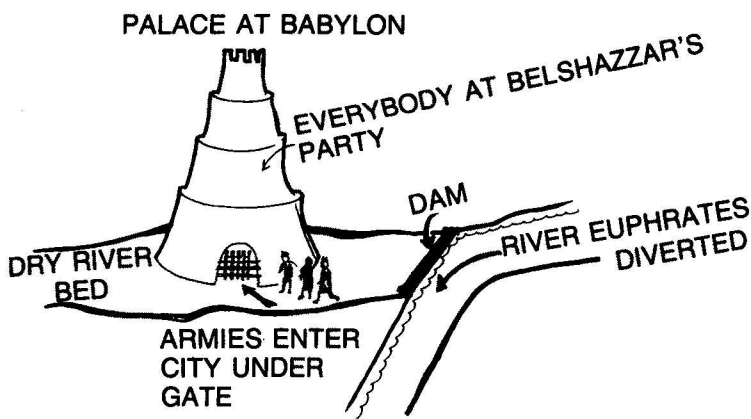
DRYING UP THE WATERS

In the year 1574, the Spanish fleets besieged a city in the Netherlands called Leiden. Inside the city there was a famine and thousands of people died. The outlook for the city and the whole of Holland was very dim. But their prince, William of Orange, decided to open the dykes and let the sea come in.



The Netherlands (Holland) is built at least in part on land that has been reclaimed from the sea. A series of dykes or locks or dams held back the ocean from coming in, so the prince had all these cut. Eventually a great storm came and the tides flooded the land but spared the city of Leiden. The Spanish boats could not float in such shallow floods and were quickly defeated.

Babylon (where Belshazzar was king) was a city built on a canal system connecting with the River Euphrates. The city itself was elevated with massive walls around it. The surrounding land could be flooded like the Netherlands in time of battle. So the Babylonians thought they could never be overwhelmed.



The Medes and Persians devised a clever plan, changing the course of the river Euphrates which flowed past the city of Babylon. In this manner, the waters were "dried up" so that the troops could cross and enter under the gate. While Belshazzar and his lords were busy feasting, the Persian soldiers had the opportunity to enter the city, storm the palace and kill the king.

The "drying up of the waters" in this story is often used as a picture symbol in the Bible and has an interesting background.

In the story of creation in the book of Genesis, the earth was covered at one time with deep, flooding waters. God gathered all the waters into one place and then the earth appeared. That was the first "drying up of the waters" in the Bible.

CREATION Genesis 1

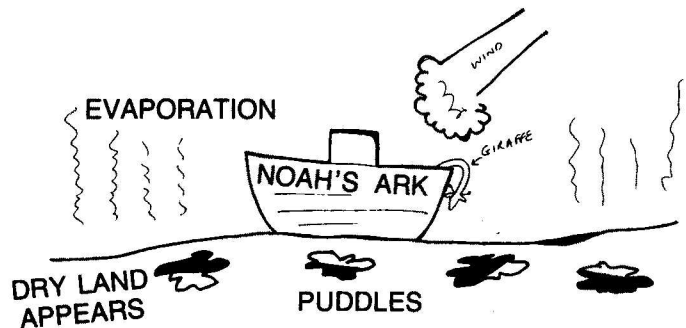
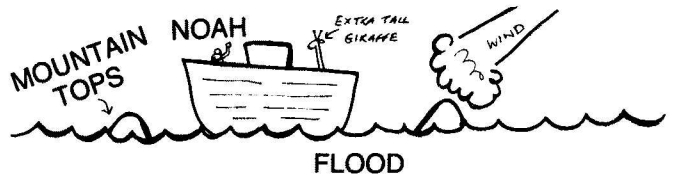
1. HOLY SPIRIT MOVES ON WATER
2. SEPARATION OF WATER
3. DRY LAND APPEARS



In the story of Noah's Flood, the people on the earth had become so wicked that God let it rain until flooding waters covered the earth. It was just as it was before Creation. Then God sent a wind and it "dried up the waters" and the dry land was seen again.

1. FLOOD BRINGS JUDGMENT ON GOD'S ENEMIES
GOD SAVES RIGHTEOUS IN ARK
2. WIND BLOWS ON WATER
3. DRY LAND APPEARS

NOAH'S FLOOD

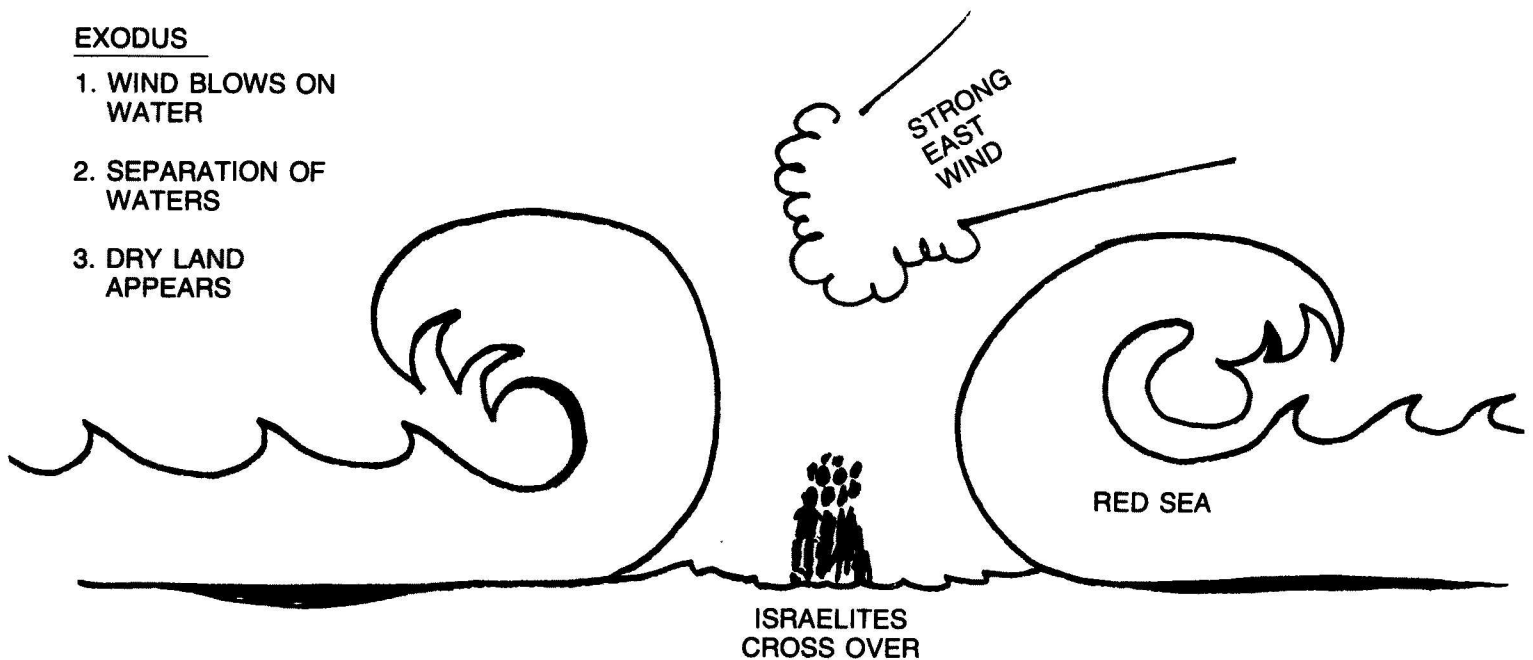


At the time of the Exodus at the Red Sea, God replayed Creation. He drove the sea back with a strong east wind and made dry land. He "dried up the waters," just as He did at Creation. You'll remember that the Israelites went over safely to the other side, but the wicked Egyptians were drowned.

What do these symbols come to mean in

EXODUS

1. WIND BLOWS ON WATER
2. SEPARATION OF WATERS
3. DRY LAND APPEARS



Scripture? The flooding waters become the enemies of God's people. The drying up of those waters means destruction of wicked people on one hand, but salvation or rescue for the good people (the ones who love God).

Daniel chapter 5 is a good illustration of this. The enemy is Belshazzar, who represents the people of Babylon. The "goodies" are Daniel and the children of Israel who have been taken into captivity by Babylon. When Darius diverts the waters of the River Euphrates (on which Babylon was built), he "dries up the waters." In doing this he conquers the enemy (Belshazzar) and rescues the children of God (Daniel).

Here's a summary —

FLOODING WATERS = Enemies of the children of God.

WIND BLOWING ON WATERS or **DRYING UP OF WATERS** = Destruction of God's wicked enemies but at the same time it means saving of the "goodies" (the children of God).

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Editor: Gillian Ford

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phenomenon of an insecure student seeking recognition and notoriety. The fact that my own wife was dying with breast cancer after years of struggle and soon to leave three young children, increased my interest in this case.

One of the dangers of a magical view of the universe has been well-expressed by Walter R. Thorson:

The attitude of the magic and occult movement in our culture, therefore, is not to deny the results of science, but rather to downplay and devalue their intellectual and philosophical significance in relation to reality. The style of its expression is to pour scorn on the tradition of science as mere child's play in comparison with the real secrets of power known only to the initiated. . . .³

Healing in the Bible

Of course it is the Christian Bible which is claimed to be the guarantor of the authenticity of modern healing emphases. Is the claim valid? The vast majority of scholarly exegetes of all churches deny that Scripture invites believers to demand miraculous exits from all the deadends of painful existence. One only needs to read Dr. Benjamin Warfield's *Counterfeit Miracles*⁴ to see how orthodoxy (in this case a former Princeton professor) has always viewed the matter.

Miracles in the New Testament are rare events after the initial supernatural establishment of the Christian church. Paul himself preached at Galatia while suffering from a protracted illness and at a later time he confessed that his

prayers for healing received a negative reply. He advised Timothy to deal with his own frequent indigestion by using medicinal wine and also informed the young ministerial sufferer that he was not alone for poor Trophimus also was sick at Ephesus — left there by the Apostle, unhealed. Similarly, in the epistle to the Philippians we read of Epaphroditus who, because of arduous service, had suffered a sickness "nigh unto death." We do not read that he recovered through miraculous intervention resulting from strenuous personal faith.

The passage most often cited by faith healers is Mark 16:9-20 — a passage omitted by many modern Bibles because the evidence for its textual authenticity is inadequate. As for the claim that, according to Scripture, healing is dependent upon

the reality of the sufferer's faith — the fact is that the New Testament lists twenty-nine healings without any reference to faith. Some of those made whole were originally in a fever, a coma or insane. In certain instances some were dead. Who will claim that a dead person can exercise faith? In one case Christ rebuked the "healers" (the disciples) for their lack of faith rather than the sufferer (see Mt 17:16-17).

The most significant recovery of truth in the realm of medical science has been the revived awareness of the unity of man's nature, the so-called psychosomatic linkage between mind and body.

How effective are faith-healing ministries? One thing is quite clear — Christians age and die. Even faith healers develop grey hair, wear glasses — for reading at least — and inevitably fall before the Grim Reaper. The other impressive fact is that even in Christian-healing circles there are strict limits to the cure-range. No amputated limb is ever restored, not even an extracted tooth, nor a loss of sight. Even bald heads defy miraculous reforestation. No hospital on earth has ever been emptied by a healer, which stands in strong contrast to the Christ who healed "all manner of disease."

On the other hand, what shall be said of the large number of cases who are improved by prayers of faith? None can say with truth that all claiming miraculous healing are deceivers or deceived. Similarly, it must never be said that all those religious leaders encouraging the sick to seek healing are cheats or cheated. What then is the truth of the matter?

Mind and Body

Apart from confidence in the sovereign God who obviously can work a miracle whenever and if ever He chooses, the chief key to the mysterious lock is the inter-relationship between mind and body. Not only Christians, but pagans before and since Christ have worked by suggestion to remove human afflictions. The priest-physicians of the Greek temples of Aesculapius, the African witch

doctors, and Emily Coue have all had success.

The most significant recovery of truth in the realm of medical science has been the revived awareness of the unity of man's nature, the so-called psychosomatic linkage between mind and body. The best of modern medical thought now recognizes that the mind is the body and vice versa. As a recent work affirms: "The mind is a function of the brain which is part of the body — hence they are one." Dr. Flanders Dunbar wrote in her now-famous book of a generation ago:

A physician with a scientific understanding of the psychosomatic approach can effect cures by medical methods which would have been considered miracles a generation ago.⁵

Wade H. Boggs agrees:

Perhaps the most reasonable explanation of the successes of faith healers is to suppose that they have stumbled upon the psychosomatic principle, and that while they operate in accordance with it, they more or less imperfectly understand it, and use it in a hit-or-miss fashion. This view of the matter contradicts the contention that God's power is being released in a miraculous way through them. Rather, it would seem that in using their accidental discovery of the psychosomatic principle, they are no more and no less effective than non-religious practitioners or even charlatans.⁶

We do but generalize as we cite these authors. Most men of faith who understand these things nonetheless believe that God can and does work miraculously though never on the lavish and unconditional scale others might suggest. Dr. Billy Graham has never operated as a healer of the body but he certainly believes in miracles, and thereby he exemplifies the vast majority of Christian preachers through the ages.

Dwight L. Moody's successor, Dr. R. A. Torrey, had the following to say:

There is an especial need of a dependable book on divine healing at this particular time. Everywhere there is a most extraordinary interest in the subject. People have flocked by the thousands and tens of thousands in different cities to adventurers and adventuresses who

oftentimes not only rob them of their gold but of that which is far more precious than gold. And not a few evangelists who have lost out in legitimate soul-winning work are putting to the front the matter of the healing of the body, and are certainly drawing much larger crowds and receiving far larger pay than they ever did before. There have been, to my personal knowledge, some very sad tragedies, insanity, death, and shipwreck of faith arising from this pitiable business. . . . many say, "every believer has a right to claim physical healing for all their physical sicknesses and infirmities right now, just as much as a right to claim immediate pardon for all their sins, on the ground of the atoning death of Jesus Christ." But that does not follow. It is very poor logic. For the question arises, *When* do we get what Jesus Christ secured for us by His atoning sacrifice. The Bible answer to that question is very plain, and the Bible answer is, *when Jesus Christ comes again*. We get the first-fruits of the atoning work of Christ, the first fruits of salvation in the life that now is, but we get the full fruits only when Jesus Christ comes again.⁷

Torrey's words are appropriate for many reasons and particularly so because large-scale faith healing had its modern origin in this country in his day. It was in the late nineteenth century when certain preachers of undeniable probity such as A. J. Gordon and A. B. Simpson began to proclaim to American audiences that the atonement was intended to give health to the body as well as the soul. (Their more orthodox brethren agreed except for the time of that blessing). Sadly Gordon died of pneumonia and bronchitis while Simpson after years of overwork

died of arteriosclerosis.

In the twentieth century modern Pentecostalism claimed the gifts of tongues and healing with the result that faith healers around the country marked by emotional hysteria made extravagant claims of miracles unlimited. Aimee Semple McPherson arrived in Los Angeles with less than one hundred dollars and began her healing campaigns in 1922. In four years, her holdings were worth a million dollars without counting the Angelus Temple which was valued at even a higher figure.

The fact that public healings are limited in scope, never restoring such obvious defects as a lost limb, makes it clear that whatever good is accomplished belongs chiefly to the psychosomatic field. One needs to remember that it is commonplace in medical literature today that up to eighty percent of human maladies arise from the faulty functioning of the imagination. In other words, a tremendous proportion of human ills have their source in mental and spiritual problems and therefore can be cured through those same avenues.

According to William James, America's most influential psychologist, mind-cure movements constitute the "only decidedly original contribution to the systematic philosophy of life offered by the American people."⁸ He is not entirely right but it is certainly true to say that here in the USA this contribution has been popularized as never before. And the evidence is to be found not only in our medical literature but on our daily television and radio religious programs.

A Warning and a Promise

In conclusion we offer a warning and a promise to all who are seeking relief from physical

affliction. First, the words of Leslie Weatherhead:

At our present stage of development any attitude of mind which regards as unnecessary the doctor, surgeon, dentist, nurse, masseur or other qualified worker on the physical level stands self-condemned...No amount of love, or positive-thinking, or denial of the existence of evil will take a splinter out of an eye. A thousand situations which we call disease are in that category. . . At the same time, man is not mere body. His body is the instrument of the mind and the soul.⁹

The promise is one I pluck from memory — a somewhat mangled reproduction of a statement found in an unknown *Reader's Digest* decades ago. It ran like this:

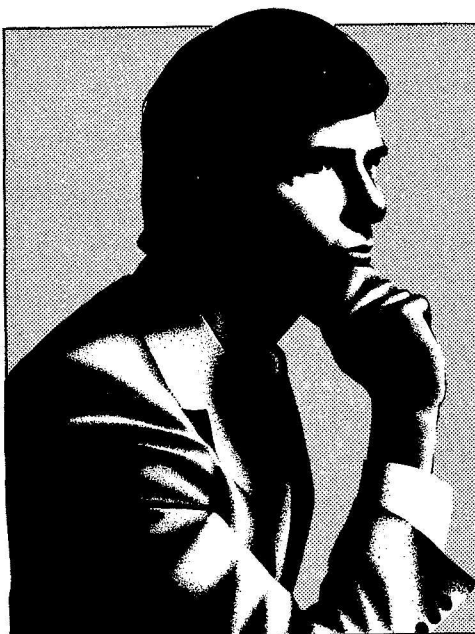
If ever there was a golden panacea for health, it is this: only remove the cruel pressures we place upon our bodies and mind by wrong habits and the natural resilience of health will assert itself. Live simply in obedience to the laws of nature concerning thought, diet, exercise, and rest and the reward will be inevitably yours.

1. "A Surgeon's View of Divine Healing," *Christianity Today*, Nov. 25, 1983, p. 15.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 18.
3. Cited by James F. Jekel, *Journal of the American Scientific Affiliation*, Sept., 19, p. 123.
4. Reprinted by The Banner of Truth Trust, G.B. 1976.
5. *Mind and Body: Psychosomatic Medicine*, New York, 1947, cited by George Bishop, *Faith Healing: God or Fraud*, Los Angeles, 1967, p. 205.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 210.
7. *Divine Healing, Does God Perform Miracles Today?* Moody Press, Chicago, n.d. pp. 6,13,25,36-37.
8. *Psychology, Religion, and Healing*, London, 1951, p. 495.
9. *Ibid.*

CHATTANOOGA CONGRESS

By now GNU's Chattanooga Gospel Congress is a pleasant memory to many of our supporters on the east coast. From August 2-4 the GNU team focused on "The Riches Of His Grace—Studies In Ephesians." Dr. Ford, Noel Mason, and Brad McIntyre shared insights gleaned from various passages in Paul's letter to the Christians of Asia Minor. Once again the Spirit demonstrated how relevant the ancient biblical tests are to our contemporary situation. God's grace is powerful enough to sustain us during our most trying times.

Special guest speaker, Graeme Sharrock, a doctoral student at the University of Chicago, presented a stimulating lecture on faith development, drawing insights from leading theorists in the area of human development. Each person was challenged to examine his or her own personal journey of faith. Thanks Graeme for helping us appreciate the wonder of spiritual growth.



WHO AM I AND WHAT AM I DOING HERE?

"When man loses his identity to something greater than himself, he becomes vulnerable to be controlled by something less than himself."

Victor V. Bryditzki

Rodin cast a statue which he called "The Thinker," and this man in stone is asking a question, "Where did I come from, what am I doing here, and where am I going?" The association is that all thinking men are concerned with origins, with purposes, and with goals. When man is ignorant of his origin, then he is without purpose in the present, and his future is only a vague question.

Interestingly, Christ confronted the Pharisees with this anomaly. He pointed out that they knew not where they came from nor where they were going, and in contrast He Himself knew exactly where He came from and where He was going. History records that the religious Pharisees came to exactly nothing, whereas Christ's life and purpose was fulfilled; He saved His people and established His Church as He said He would.

As far as knowing who he is and where he is going, modern man is more confused than ever before. The instant, or "now" generation, has little concept of our past, no interest for our future, and exists only for today. When man loses his identity to something greater than himself, he becomes vulnerable to be controlled by something less than himself. History has shown this to be true also for nations — when they ignore their history and care nothing for their roots, they lose their national purpose, and without purpose they lose their will to exist. They begin to die. No amount of sophisticated weaponry can save a country that has no

will to exist as a nation, to live for a purpose. When the lifeblood of a nation — its youth — becomes purposeless, amoral, godless, and preoccupied with sex and "pac-man," a country has begun to die from within.

This truth is also seen in the Church. When those who profess Christianity forget their origin, they have lost their concept of what God requires of them, and consequently their idea of where they are going is defective. The Pharisees forgot the message and purpose of the prophets, and lived only for themselves. Their example of self-righteous nothingness should give us a clue. Few modern Christians are aware of the first 300 years of the Church that progressed from the Book of Acts, the fight for survival under the decrees of Constantine, the centuries of papal persecution, even the Inquisition. Few know what the Reformation was all about, nor the terrible struggles of those champions of Truth who were martyred for their faithful service in translating and defending the Scriptures. Few are aware of how the hope of the Reformation faded into another type of persecution until the "Restoration" and finally the "Great Awakening." The sense of purpose of today's professing Christians has been traded for "here and now" experiences and entertainments, a selfish and introverted notion of "Christianity," and thus they have sold their birthright and lost their future.

If "The Thinker" depicts a modern American, our nation is doomed. If we do not know where we came from, what we are doing here, and where we are going, there is no hope. If the statue also depicts today's Christian, the visible Church is then definitely in a state of apostasy. Ignorance of the Scriptures and one's history is the height of spiritual treason.

When a nation ignores its birthright and its own laws of order, anarchy can only follow. When the visible Church exchanges its birthright and the Truth of God for the so-called wisdom of men, Ichabod!, the Spirit has definitely departed. When the sovereignty of God is passed to the sovereignty of man, when salvation is no longer by God's elective grace but by sinful man's "decision," when sin and repentance are buried by promises of health and wealth, and death and judgment are consigned to forgotten graves by rapture and bless-me clubs, then the visible Church has without question passed from life to eternal death.

As the pulpit goes, so goes the nation.

That it is bad for a nation when it is without faith, has been widely evidenced. The loss of national purpose, the loss of will to advance, the indiscipline and futility of permissiveness, all these are symptoms of an age in which the dominating mood is one of cynicism and pessimism. To the modern mind, history is not under any control. —Winston Churchill

GOOD NEWS UNLIMITED

Confidential Survey Among Our Subscribers

Interaction between the supporters and staff of Good News Unlimited helps us to achieve a more effective ministry. We would like you to take the time and critically evaluate the ministries of GNU. Rest assured that even though we protect the anonymity of every respondent to our survey the ministerial staff will carefully read every evaluation.

MAGAZINE

1. How much total time do you spend reading the magazine?

☐ Less than ½ hour ☐ 1 to 1½ hours

☐ ½ to 1 hour
2. How many people, other than yourself, read your copy of the magazine?

☐ Nobody ☐ Two people

☐ One person ☐ More than two people
3. How much impact do you feel that the magazine has made upon your thinking?

☐ Very little ☐ Very much

☐ Some
4. If you are a church member, has the magazine helped you articulate issues to the members of your church group?

☐ No ☐ Yes
5. What features in the magazine do you read regularly?

	Regularly	Occasionally	Seldom
Editorial	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Articles	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Odds and Ends	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Questions & Answers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Book Reviews	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wrestling with the Word	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Good News For Kids	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. How would you evaluate the articles in the magazine?

☐ Too conservative ☐ Relevant ☐ Helpful, interesting

☐ Too liberal ☐ Simplistic ☐ I appreciate most articles

☐ Hard to understand ☐ Too biased
7. Could you give the title of an article that you found too hard to understand? _____
8. Which do you prefer?

☐ Theological articles

☐ Practical articles (articles dealing with everyday problems such as stress, loneliness, etc.)

☐ A bit more of both
9. What is your church affiliation?

☐ Baptist ☐ Presbyterian

☐ Southern Baptist ☐ Methodist

☐ Charismatic/Pentecostal ☐ SDA

☐ Independent Other _____

☐ Lutheran
10. Could you give an example of an article that you enjoyed? _____
11. What suggestions can you give to improve the magazine? _____

TAPE OF THE MONTH

1. Do you listen to each tape?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Some of them
2. How would you evaluate the audio quality of the tape?

☐ Good ☐ O.K. ☐ Poor
3. How would you evaluate the contents of the tape?

☐ Too conservative ☐ Too liberal

☐ Hard to understand ☐ Too simplistic

☐ Repetitive ☐ Good ☐ Interesting and enjoyable

☐ Further Comments _____

RADIO MINISTRY

1. Can you hear the daily radio program in your area?

☐ Yes ☐ No
2. Do you listen to the daily radio program?

☐ Regularly ☐ Sometimes ☐ Never
3. How would you evaluate the radio program?

☐ Relevant ☐ Irrelevant

☐ Hard to understand ☐ Good
4. How would you improve the radio program? _____
5. What topics would you like to hear on radio programs? _____

Name _____
 Address _____
 Phone _____

Occupation _____

Coming meetings

Sydney

Normanhurst Uniting Church Hall. Corner of Pennant Hills Road and Hinemoa Avenue, Normanhurst.
Guest Speaker to be announced.
Saturday November 2 – 2.00pm.

Brisbane

An Anchor for the Soul – Thoughts from the letter to the Hebrews with Ron Allen.
Auchenflower Christian Fellowship.
Weinholt St. Auchenflower.
Saturday November 9 – 10.00am.
Rosedale State High School.
Priestdale Rd. Rosedale. 3pm Saturday November 9.

Perth

Received Ye the Spirit?

The Bayswater Christian Fellowship welcomes Ron Allen as guest speaker at their worship service November 16. The Bayswater Fellowship meets at Bayswater Uniting Church, Murray Street, Bayswater at 10.00am.

The Judgment in Daniel 7: In Heaven or on Earth?

An increasing number of scholars believe Daniel's judgment scene with open books (7:9-10) takes place after God has come to earth. In the new International Theological Commentary, R. Anderson says: "Though the Daniel text makes no explicit mention of the place of judgment, the idea that it is to be carried out on earth may not readily be ruled out. Moreover, this is not contrary to the OT record and may find firm corroboration elsewhere. God's coming to earth in judgment is mentioned in Zech. 14:5 and Joel 3:12 (RSV), and strongly suggested in Ps. 96:13. In 1 Enoch 90:20 the throne of judgment was said to have been erected 'in the pleasant land', an expression which has distinct parallels in Dan. 8:9 and 11:41, and by which is meant the area around Judea." (p. 83)

In the booklet *The Judgment in Daniel 7: In Heaven or on Earth?* the author gives seven reasons why this judgment scene is set on earth.

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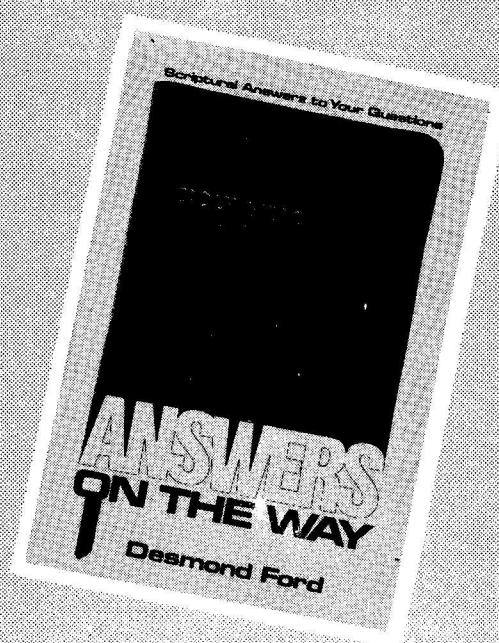


ANSWERS ON THE WAY

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The questions and answers in this book underline the fact that life makes sense only through Christ, for "in him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." Unbelief comes only "to steal, and to kill, and to destroy," but Christ will come to you that you might "have life . . . abundantly."

Order from Desmond Ford Publications
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Suggested donation – \$9.00



Letters

Cool Breeze On A Hot Day

Sirs:

I just thought I'd write and let you know I listen to your program every chance I get. I dare say that if it weren't for the radio ministry I'd have dropped out of the church long ago. It seems everyone in my area is speaking in unknown tongues or watering down the word with some kind of liberal theology. I don't mean to be critical, but people don't take learning sound doctrine seriously anymore. You are like a cool breeze on a hot day. It's my fervent prayer and earnest desire that the hand of the Lord would be upon you and bless you by his grace.

Please send me the book *Staying in the Presence of God*.

M.K. Indianapolis, Indiana

Ten-Year-Old Writes

Sirs:

I greet you in Jesus name. How are you? I hope you are well. I am also well by the grace of God.

This is my first letter to you and I need your help. I am a girl of ten years old and I attend school. Jesus is my Savior and I want to know him better, but I do not have a Bible. I beg in Jesus' name to send me a Holy Bible. I have a trust in Jesus that you will send it to me. Thank you very much.

B.A. Kumasi

Feeding Hungry Hearts

Sirs:

How good is our God and Savior to feed our hungry hearts with His wonderful word. With great joy I turn on my radio to KGNW and listen to your program at 3:30 p.m. I came to know Jesus as my Savior when I was 8 years old, confessing my sins before him and asking him to come into my heart. But it wasn't until years later I asked him to be Lord as well.

I love it when you compare Scripture. You have found so many hidden jewels that I never knew were there. You are on my prayer list and one prayer is that you will be on more than one time a day. I plan on helping whenever I can.

R.G. Seattle, Washington

Thankful

Sirs:

Sorry I cannot help you as I am a shut-in cripple with arthritis. Also stone deaf, 83 years old. My working days for the Lord are over but I thank Him daily for His blessings to me. Although I cannot go out, I can still move round my little flat. I pray you will be successful in your work for God.

T.A. New South Wales

Going to school

Sirs:

I'm very sorry but I don't have any money whatsoever except for lots of two and one cent pieces, which I couldn't send through the post.

I am going to school at the moment but as soon as I've finished and have a job, I will send some money because I feel guilty receiving these great magazines free of charge. Thank you very much for sending me "Good News Unlimited" each month.

J.S. New South Wales

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