

good news *Unlimited*

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Editorial

IT WAS A NORMAL Sabbath, little different from the hundreds that preceded it. To start the service the leader of the synagogue stood, raised both hands and invited the Lord to come into their assembly to minister his grace and truth to those assembled there.

Little did he know that God was already seated among them that morning, but they were blind to his presence because he had come to them as an ordinary man.

At the appropriate place in the service for the Scripture reading and discourse, the leader of the synagogue asked Joshua bar Joseph if he would do the honours. Joshua (whom we know by his Greek name, Jesus) stood and went to the front to receive, from the attendant, the scroll that had the reading for that day. Unrolling it Jesus read in a mature and authoritative voice,

'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight to the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.'

Then he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant, and sat down [on the preacher's seat]. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him, and he began by saying to them, 'Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing' (Luke 4:18-21).

The Jews believed that the promises in God's Word were for them alone. In their thinking the references to the poor, the prisoners, the blind, and the oppressed, therefore, applied only to unfortunate Jews. But Jesus wasn't just God of the Jews, he was God of the whole earth. And he would redeem all who opened their hearts to his presence, Jews or Gentiles.

Jesus well knew that the Jews had become triumphalistic, believing that people could only be saved by first becoming Jews through the rite of circumcision. Jesus countered this false belief by reminding them about a couple of events in the time of Elijah and Elisha.

He continued,

'There were many widows in Israel in Elijah's time when there was a severe famine. Yet Elijah was not sent to any of them but to a widow in Zarephath. And there were many in Israel with leprosy in the time of Elisha the prophet, yet not one of them was cleansed—only Nathan the Syrian.'

There was a momentary silence throughout the synagogue as the people digested his words. Then, suddenly, they were on their feet shouting at him and punching the air with their fists. They were so angry they wanted to kill him. How dare he insinuate that God favoured believing Gentiles over unbelieving Jews? For the

Jews in Nazareth their beliefs were more important to them than what God himself believed.

I wonder what would happen if Jesus, in disguise, walked into one of our churches today and was invited to preach the sermon? There would be people who would dote on his every word, and others with grim faces would turn to each other nattering their condemnation.

'You people believe you are God's elect because you believe your church's doctrines and because your names are on the church roll. I tell you, however, that belonging to a particular denomination saves no one. Salvation is by faith in the Son of Man alone, not by faith in a church. I say to you truly, there are people who have never attended your church who will go into the kingdom of heaven before you.' GNU is committed to finding and ministering God's grace to such people. ❄

Ritchie Way

RITCHIE WAY



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Phone: **+61 (0)7 5524 5040**
Executive Editor: **Pastor Ritchie Way**
Layout & Design: **Bare Graphics**
Proofreader: **Kylie Burling**
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Mission Statement

Christians united in offering to all meaning and direction in their lives through a knowledge of God's reconciliation with humanity through his Son, Jesus Christ.



GNU CONTACT PERSONNEL

For orders, accounts and general enquiries:
Carolyn Wagemaker
+61 (0)7 5524 5040
admin@goodnewsunlimited.org.au

For editorial enquiries:
Pastor Ritchie Way, Editor
+61 (0)9 482 2543
ritchiew@kiwilink.co.nz

For your pastoral needs:
Dr Eliezer Gonzalez
eliezer@goodnewsunlimited.com

Pastor in retirement:
Ron Allen
carron.741@gmail.com

NZ GNU Office:
Fraser and Kylie Burling
+64 (0)9 818 1770
120B Rosier Road, Glen Eden,
Waitakere, New Zealand, 0602
socrates@internet.co.nz

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Is God a Telemarketer?

How to have Assurance of Salvation

ELIEZER GONZALEZ, PhD

THERE IS NO question that telemarketers can be annoying. They ring you just when you are settling down to enjoy your evening with your family, and they go on and on through their sales scripts!

I probably treat telemarketers more kindly than some people for three reasons: The first is that I am a Christian, and this has got to make a difference in everything, doesn't it? The second reason is that I have been in India and met the people who do the night shifts to try to eke out a living for their families, and my heart goes out to them. The third reason.... wait for it... is that among many other life experiences, I have been a telemarketer myself, and quite successfully so. I hope you still like me after that confession, and that you will keep reading.

From the consumer's point of view, a key problem with telemarketers is that we don't know who is on the other end of the line. We have all received calls from scammers, and perhaps some of us have even been ripped off.

In my role here at Good News Unlimited, the question that I am asked most often is:

How can I have assurance of salvation and eternal life with Jesus?

The problem for most people in trying to answer this question is that they treat God as if he were a telemarketer. After all, here you have someone whom you have never met, and whom you can't see, trying to offer you something that sounds too good to be true. And the problem is that you desperately need a solution! You know it's a life-and-death situation.

So how can you have assurance of salvation and eternal life with Jesus? The answer begins when you realise that Jesus is not a telemarketer. He is not some stranger who doesn't know you. He is not just someone who ultimately doesn't care less what you decide. And he is not someone who cannot be trusted.

Four reasons why you can trust what Jesus says:

1. He has never, ever told anyone a lie. He is not just truthful; he is *'the Truth'*.
2. He knows you in a way no one else can. He knows exactly who you are and what you need. Not only did he make you, he came to earth as a human-being and spent time where the chisel meets the stone.
3. He believes in what he is offering you so much that he staked his life on it. Absolutely. Entirely. And he won!
4. He has the goods. He has the power to deliver not only exactly what he has promised to you, but so much more. He says that he has 'all power.' It's a money-back guarantee on which there has never been a claim made.

So if you can trust what Jesus says, when he says something, that's it! You don't need anything else to have assurance.

This is not what some denominations teach. They will tell you that you cannot have complete assurance. They will tell you that before you can be accepted by God you have to complete certain rituals, or do certain good deeds, or belong to their church, or prove yourself over a period of time or even a whole lifetime.

Absolute nonsense! This has nothing at all to do with what Jesus says. If you follow these people you will be living in fear and insecurity all your life, either behind the

barricades of some church, or seeking the solace of false love, false friends, or substances and habits to dull the pain of your *lack of assurance!*

Until you understand the gospel, you cannot have assurance of salvation and eternal life with Jesus.

The gospel begins with the fact that we are all born hopeless and helpless, doomed to misery and destruction. Our very natures are sinful, and our sin loads us up with guilt. We all know what guilt is, don't we? It's that uneasiness we experience after we know that we have done something wrong. It makes us only pretend to laugh at the funniest jokes, it makes our pillows feel like bricks, and it makes our favourite desserts taste like cardboard. Not a happy place—this place without hope.

But the gospel is the good news that God did something around 2000 years ago to change all of that. Jesus Christ volunteered to take your place and bear your guilt. He took on himself all of the consequences of your guilt. Yes he accepted the penalty for all of your wrong choices and everything that is wrong with your life. You were not able to do anything about setting right your condition, but Jesus did it because he knew just what you needed, for he loved you more than his own life.

All you have to do now is accept his gift (Eph. 2:8). Telemarketers don't offer you genuine gifts. A true gift is something you don't deserve, offered unconditionally with no expectation of a future response but gratitude.

So here is the gift: because Jesus swapped places with you, God looks at Jesus and sees you as having died for your sins. And when God looks at you he sees Jesus the perfect and spotless Lamb of God, alive forever more. And Jesus rose

from the dead as his guarantee that you too will rise from the dead. To live with him!

To whom is the gift offered?

The gift is offered to all the world, to everyone – “God so loved *the world* that he gave his only Son, so that *everyone* who believes in him won’t perish but will have eternal life” (John 3:16). If you are part of *this world*, and if you are a part of *everyone*, then this gift is offered to you.

Can you be too great a sinner to accept the gift?

Sometimes telemarketers ring up and ask me about my income level. I have often disappointed them when they heard how little I was earning. They would say that I was not eligible and hang up. God doesn’t hang up on any sinner who has nothing to offer; there is no ‘righteousness criteria’ that you have to meet! Jesus said, “The Son of Man came to seek and save the lost” (Luke 19:10). So the more lost you are, the more eligible you are to be saved!

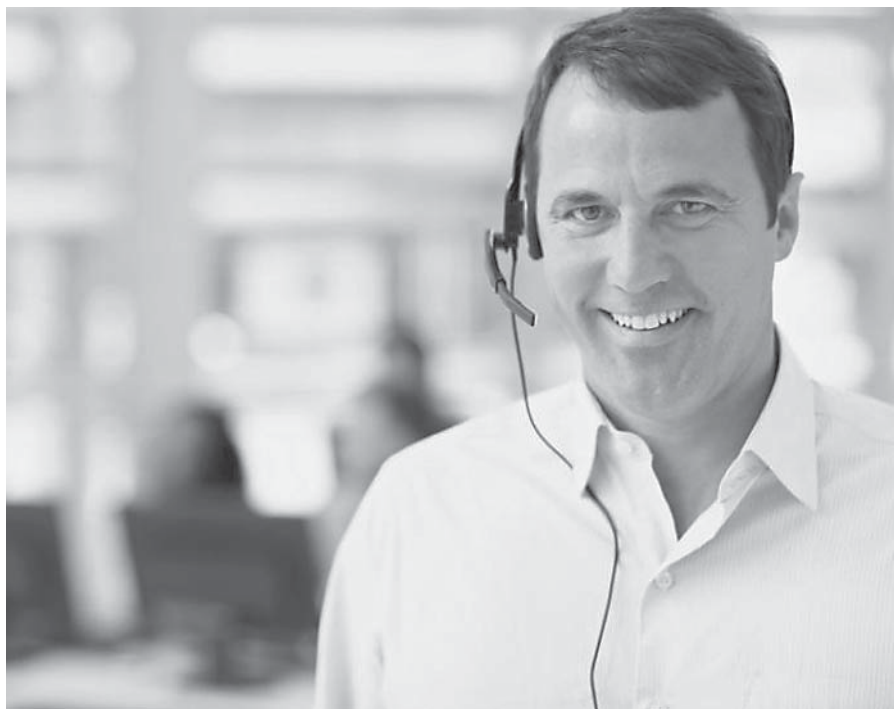
What does God expect from you after you have accepted the gift?

He places no obligation on you in any shape or form, otherwise salvation wouldn’t be a gift, would it? He so desperately wants you to have his costly gift. It is yours if you accept it by faith—by believing God offers it to you without cost. This is not the same kind of faith that you use with a telemarketer whom you hope is telling you the truth. This is not the kind of faith that hedges its bets. The faith that saves is the faith that is so profound that it stakes everything on what Jesus has said. Such a faith leads you to confess your sins and hopelessness to Jesus, and surrender your life to him, allowing him to take over as the King and Master of your life.

But you might be thinking, ‘**How much faith do I need?**’ According to Jesus, the tiniest amount is enough (Mark 4:31). Jesus will even honour the prayer of the confused person who prays, ‘I have faith; help my lack of faith!’ (Mark 9:24).

But what if my life, after accepting Jesus, is not much different to my life before accepting Jesus?

You have to leave that up to him; that’s his business, not yours. If you make personal improvement your focus, you are trying to rob Jesus of the work that he said he would do. And he will do it in his own time and in his own way. You may be sure that he will do it! Your job is to keep your eyes on Jesus, and to keep remembering the gospel, because a million and one people and things will try to snatch it



No, God is not a telemarketer; I’m pretty glad about that, aren’t you?

away from your life (Matt. 13:19). So, fill your mind with Jesus, through the Word of God, through prayer, through serving others, and through praising him.

So what happens if I sin again?

The question is not ‘if’ but ‘when’, because you may be certain that we all sin in many ways every day. But God is not a cruel Father who gives his children a gift only to take it away when they don’t behave the way he expects. Salvation is not a yo-yo; no one would have assurance if that were the case. We may fail and sadden God in many ways, but our Heavenly Father looks at the heart, and as long as there is faith within it, he will always recognise you as his child.

What should I expect to feel when I come to Jesus?

You may feel many things, or you may feel nothing. It doesn’t matter. Salvation is a fact, not a feeling. What you feel about things doesn’t change the facts. You can jump out of an airplane without a parachute and you can feel that you are flying, but it doesn’t change the fact that you are plummeting down to earth at an acceleration of 9.8m/s². In the same way, assurance of salvation is not measured by feelings.

But what will happen when I give my life to Jesus?

The Bible says, ‘Taste and see that the LORD is good’ (Psa. 34:8). This is the experience of millions of people of every age. Yes, wonderful things will happen; incredible things will happen. But let God do the work, in his way, and in his time.

To summarise

You can have the assurance of salvation and eternal life because Jesus Christ achieved that for you on the Cross 2000 years ago. If you want to do something for your own salvation you are much too late because when Jesus cried out with his dying breath, “It is finished!” it was all provided for.

Salvation cannot be achieved by your fallible works, but only by the infallible work of Jesus. All you need do is trust in what he has done for you. You can trust him because the question of your assurance is not in your hands; it is in God’s hands. And God has safe hands; he has never dropped a sinner who relied on him.

No, God is not a telemarketer; I’m pretty glad about that, aren’t you? You can’t always trust them.

The One in whom I trust is the One who said these words:

‘My sheep listen to my voice. I know them and they follow me. I give them eternal life. They will never die, and no one will snatch them from my hand’ (John 10:27).

‘There is no fear in love, but perfect love drives out fear’ (1 John 4:18).

‘Whoever comes to me I will never drive away’ (John 6:37).



THE MORAL INFLUENCE THEORY

PART 1

Emotion Without Gospel

Background

Christians, today, are facing a challenge that few other Christians have had to face. It is not the challenge of classic legalism by which people can earn their salvation by their works; it is a challenge that denies the atonement altogether. This new challenge claims that Christ did not atone for our sins on the Cross. The tragedy is that thousands of people everywhere are accepting this new theory hook, line, and sinker!

Good News Unlimited began many years ago as a ministry dedicated to highlighting the objective, forensic, and historic gospel of Jesus Christ. These three theological words describe fundamental aspects of the New Testament gospel.

The word 'objective' describes *where* our salvation takes place; it takes place entirely outside of ourselves through the work of Jesus Christ.

The word 'forensic' describes *how* our salvation takes place; because we are sinners and have broken the law of God, we are saved through a legal transaction effected by Jesus Christ at Calvary.

The word 'historic' describes *when* our salvation takes place. The whole world was legally justified at the Cross early in the first century of the Christian era. To be saved we must accept this fact by faith today.

The ministry of Good News Unlimited arose in an environment in which this New Testament gospel was being denied and often obscured by legalistic tendencies. Good News Unlimited arose in order to hold up the simplicity and truth of the

ELIEZER GONZALEZ, PhD

gospel of Jesus Christ. But since the days in which Good News Unlimited began, a new view of salvation has been gaining in popularity.

What is the Moral Influence Theory?

This view is called the Moral Influence Theory; although its proponents, who are often popular writers and seminar presenters, seldom use this name. They talk about the mercy and the forgiveness of Jesus; they talk about the matchless love of Jesus upon the Cross, and many are seduced by the emotion of it all.

The Moral Influence Theory claims that the death of Christ was not necessary as a means of removing sin. The death of Jesus was simply a wonderfully loving and selfless act that influences people so that they repent and put their trust in Jesus. The proponents of the Moral Influence Theory argue that God is love, so how could He save you by murdering his own Son?

It can all sound marvelous, but it is truly an absolutely foreign gospel to what Jesus, Paul, the apostles, and the early Christian church taught. Notice how the proponents of the Moral Influence Theory also tend not to use the words 'sin,' 'justification,' or 'righteousness,' because these words do not have any real place in their understanding of the gospel.

It can also sound new, and how we all

love to hear something that sounds new! Is there anything more ticklish to our ears than novelty? But we must, like the Bereans, confirm everything by the Scriptures.

We must remember that the gospel is called the 'everlasting gospel' because it is the 'gospel that we have heard from the beginning.' The true gospel is not some 'Johnny-Come-Lately.' The gospel goes right back to the Cross. On the other hand, the Moral Influence Theory was essentially invented by Peter Abelard, a French monk and philosopher, and one of the most brilliant minds of the twelfth century.

Now I would like to show you why it is that the Moral Influence Theory is popular and seduces so many.

1. It appeals to emotion

Presentations of the Moral Influence Theory are long on emotion and short on logic. In our contemporary society where it seems to be a given that there is no ultimate truth, this is a powerful combination. The emotional appeal of the Moral Influence Theory is all about love; it sounds great!

In fact the Moral Influence Theory is specifically all about emotion. It claims that we are all selfish, but when we see the amazing love of Jesus on the Cross, we are *moved* to repent and to follow Jesus, and then we are *moved* to live unselfishly.

There is nothing wrong with this as it is, but if this is all there is, then there is something that is very seriously wrong. If you want your salvation to be more than



just an emotional state, then you need more than what the Moral Influence Theory has to offer you.

2. It avoids the scandal of the cross

Since the beginning of Christianity, the biggest obstacle to the gospel has been what Paul calls 'the scandal of the cross.' The idea that salvation is only possible because of the Cross has been a barrier to belief from the beginning. Islam, for example, responds to the scandal of the Cross by asserting that Jesus did not really die on the Cross at all.

This is not a new idea; it has been around in semi-Christian groups since at least the second century.

The Moral Influence Theory follows in this tradition of denying that salvation is through and because of the Cross. It says that the role of the Cross in salvation is that at the Cross Jesus merely demonstrated just how much he loves selfish humanity. If that is the case, then conceivably there are plenty of other ways in which he could have demonstrated his love. The Cross is unnecessary.

The Moral Influence Theory does not really talk about what happened at Calvary as a 'sacrifice.' A sacrifice necessarily implies an exchange, a legal cleansing. But because, in the thinking of the proponents of the Moral Influence Theory, we are not saved through a sacrifice, Jesus' death was ultimately unnecessary. In many ways, the Cross ends up being just a minor detail in terms of the bigger picture of God's purpose.

3. It emphasises that which we can control

According to the Moral Influence Theory, we are all looking for God, and able to respond appropriately to his love. The Cross is like God's great beacon so that we may know where to find him. Basically our lost condition is due to a lack of information, which leads us to be misguided and selfish. We are not in such a bad place after all!

The emphasis of the Moral Influence Theory is not on the finished work of Jesus upon the Cross, because Jesus really had no work to do there. Calvary was just a terrible crime perpetuated against Jesus. He had no role in it, except as the victim, and by allowing this crime to be perpetuated upon him, Jesus has given us an example of selflessness and love. He wants our minds to be impressed with this example, so that we may come to him and be saved.

If Jesus has done no work at Calvary, how then are we saved? The focus of the Moral Influence Theory is that we are saved, not by the Cross, but by our *response to the Cross*. As we are impressed by the love of Jesus, we are to come to him and trust in him. If Jesus has loved us so much as to die at Calvary, then we can trust him to save us. *How it is that salvation actually happens is never really explained.*

Because the focus of the Moral Influence Theory is on how we respond to the loving example of Jesus, the emphasis tends to be very much on what we *do*. Now, this is something we all like, because we all like knowing what it is we have to *do*, because we can control that!

With its emphasis on selfishness/ unselfishness, and love, the Moral Influence Theory very much tends to take a psychological perspective. The self-help industry is booming around the world, but really, how gospel-oriented is it?

4. It ends up being salvation by works

For these reasons, the Moral Influence Theory, for all that it might talk about Jesus and his love, ends up very clearly being a form of salvation by works. When you strip away the notion of Calvary as a sacrifice, in which a real penalty was perfectly and fully paid, then there is no more sacrifice for sin. And if there is no more sacrifice for sin, what are you left with? You are only left with the futile endeavour of salvation by works.

But this is indeed the focus of the Moral Influence Theory. If we are saved by our *response* to Jesus' example of love, then the objective, forensic, and historic gospel has ceased to exist. Unquestionably we must have faith in the perfect atonement of Jesus Christ in order to be saved. But we are saved *through faith*, and not *because of faith*. If we are saved because of faith (our response), then the question must be asked, 'How much faith?' And this question, without a completed atonement, invariably leads to salvation by works.

If Calvary was *only* an example of Christ's love, then we are all indeed the most wretched of creatures, for Calvary can only highlight the depths of how lost we truly are. We cannot follow that example of love. We can never respond appropriately. Let us then bury the Cross, and consign it in oblivion, for it condemns us all!

But if, through Calvary, Christ has also provided the way of escape, then we are right to glory only in the Cross of Jesus! If Jesus at the Cross, truly and legally paid for all our sins, then we are right to make Jesus and His Cross the centre of all!

What the New Testament Teaches

The apostle Paul teaches us that we all, in our natural condition, are slaves of sin (Rom. 6:14-10). None of us can of ourselves understand or receive spiritual things; neither do we naturally seek for God (Rom. 3:10-12; 2 Cor. 2:14). This means that we cannot just simply be influenced or moved to repent and trust in God. Our problem is more than a lack of information!

The Scripture emphasises that no one can come to Christ unless the Father draws them (John 6:65). Belief and repentance are gifts (Php. 1:29; 2 Tim. 2:25). The light of Christ has shone on all of humanity (John 1:4) to enable us to receive these gifts so

that we may all, if we believe, be saved. We cannot simply be influenced into salvation.

Without question the death of Christ was a legal act (Col. 2:14). Because sin is breaking the law of God (1 John 3:4), the death of Christ is a legal act in that it is substitutionary (Isa. 53:4; Matt. 20:28). For this reason, the death of Christ is a sacrifice, for without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin.

The entire thought of Paul is permeated with the idea that the death of Christ was a legal act. The entire book of Romans is premised on this fact. Read Romans 5:12-21. Read the whole of Romans! There is not a biblical scholar in the world that would deny this. What then? Do we ignore what Scripture tells us that Calvary was all about so that we can make up our own theories as they seem good to us?

For the writers of the Bible, the Cross is not optional. It is, in terms of what was transacted there, salvation itself.

Conclusion

An old hymn that many of us know and love is, 'When I Survey the Wondrous Cross,' by Isaac Watts. You may be surprised at what I am going to say now, but dust off your hymn-book and check it out. There is actually little of the New Testament gospel in this hymn.

It is not to be faulted in what it does say, which is wonderful, but if anything, it is to be faulted in what it *does not* say. I want to finish by quoting Leon Morris from the *Elwell Evangelical Dictionary*, who observes that this is a hymn:

that sets forth nothing but the moral view. Every line of it emphasizes the effect on the observer of surveying the wondrous cross. It strikes home with force. What it says is both true and important. It is when it is claimed that this is all that the atonement means that we must reject it. Taken in this way it is open to serious criticism.

And because Morris summarises the issue so neatly, I will conclude by continuing the quotation:

If Christ was not actually doing something by his death, then we are confronted with a piece of showmanship, nothing more. Someone once said that if he were in a rushing river and someone jumped in to save him, and in the process lost his life, he could recognize the love and sacrifice involved. But if he was sitting safely on the land and someone jumped into the torrent to show his love, he could see no point in it and only lament the senseless act. Unless the death of Christ really does something, it is not in fact a demonstration of love. ✱

Part 2 of this series on the Moral Influence Theory will appear in the next issue of the GNU magazine. Its title will be 'The Immorality of the Moral Influence Theory.' And then in part 3 we will look at the question, 'Did God Murder Jesus To Save You?'

The Only Two Religions in the World

Despite all the divisions within Christianity and paganism, there are really only two religions in the world. Which is yours?

Dr DESMOND FORD

True and False Religion

FROM THE TIME of Adam's sin, all false religion has sought to clothe its nakedness with its own works in order to meet the requirements of a holy God. But true religion comes to God as an empty-handed beggar, bringing only that which God himself has provided—the Lamb.

False religion has ever said: 'Be holy and God will love you'. On the other hand, those who have discovered true religion echo Scripture's words, 'This man receives sinners' (Luke 15:2).

While false religion makes the creature and his works central, true religion makes the Creator and his works central. When the Jews came to Christ and asked him, 'What shall we do that we might work the works of God?' Jesus responded, 'This is the work of God, that you believe on him whom he has sent' (John 6:28-29). The Pharisees emphasised what they should do, but Christ put the emphasis on what God *had already done* in sending him, the Redeemer. Why was the Cross needed if men could save themselves by their own works?

False religion majors in law and minors in love. True religion majors in love and minors in law. The first majors in what God requires of us, and the second majors in what God has done for us. One religion puts all its stress on Christ our example; the other puts its stress on Christ our substitute. One is a religion that leads to bondage, despair, and death. The other is a religion that leads to joy, salvation and eternal life.

The Law Can't Save

The law demands a perfect nature, perfect motives, perfect feelings, perfect thoughts, perfect words, and perfect actions. It requires that every motive, feeling, thought, word, and act be the best possible at every moment of time. To break the law once brings not only guilt, but also incapacity. Because of Adam's fall we are guilty of selfishness, impurity, vanity, pride, and hatred. We have marred our soul and deserve death.

The New Testament again and again contrasts law and grace, works and faith. Paul says about salvation, 'If it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works; otherwise grace would no longer be grace' (Rom 11:6).

Thousands have been kept out of the kingdom of God because they did not realise that salvation is a gift.

The law says, 'Do this and you will live', but grace declares, 'Live and you will do this'. The law says, 'Pay me what you owe', but grace avows, 'I frankly forgive you all'. The law says, 'The wages of sin is death', but grace affirms, 'The gift of God is eternal life'. The law says, 'The soul that sins will die', but grace proclaims, 'Whoever believes has everlasting life'. The law says, 'Make a new heart for yourself', but grace pronounces, 'A new heart will I give you'. The law says, 'Cursed is everyone that does not continue to do all the things written in the law', but grace declares, 'Blessed is he whose sin is forgiven, whose transgression is covered'. The law says, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart', but grace says, 'Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us'.

When the law was given at Mount Sinai, 3,000 people died in a matter of days. When the gospel was proclaimed at Pentecost, 3,000 people were given new life. Three thousand sermons on the law

alone will not convert one person, but one sermon on the gospel can convert 3,000.

I am not downgrading the law, which is eternal, infinite, and holy. I am saying, however, that law can never save. The law can only be truly obeyed when the heart is filled with the love of Jesus Christ in response to his own love for us.

No one can obey God without loving God, and no one can love God unless convinced that God has first loved him. The thief on the cross had been through plenty of law but it hadn't helped him. When he saw love incarnate, he was saved eternally.

An Ancient Problem

In a dream, Jacob saw a great stairway from heaven to earth, it showed angels of God ascending and descending. This was the opposite of the Tower of Babel because God himself made the connection. The connection between man and God was the stairway, and Christ is the stairway (John 1:51). God himself connected heaven and earth, because man could never do it. Then Jacob said, 'This is the gate of heaven. This is the house of God' (Gen. 28:17). He found that God was nearer than he thought. True religion teaches that God is very near penitent sinners.

God's Solution

Let us focus for a moment on how God solved the sin problem. We were ruined by our first representative (Adam), and we had nothing to do with that. The good news of the gospel is that we have been redeemed by our second representative (Jesus), and we had nothing to do with that either! Romans 5:10 says, 'While we were yet sinners we were reconciled to God'. Second Corinthians 5:18-21 tells us how this happened: Christ was reckoned

as being what he was not, that we might be reckoned as being what we are not.

The atonement is not just one belief within a body of Christian doctrine; it is the lifeblood running through all biblical theology. Every important truth is presupposed by the atonement, is included in it, or arises from it. Every imperative to practice holiness flows out of Calvary.

The good news of the gospel is that our sins were crucified with Christ and nailed to his Cross. Therefore, the law has no more power to condemn us as believers, than it has to condemn Christ. If we do not see our complete death in him, sin will reign in us. No sin can be crucified either in heart or behaviour unless it has first been pardoned in conscience through the precious blood of Christ. When the guilt of sin is not removed, the power of sin cannot be subdued. Sin ceases to reign in us only after we have received the forgiveness of sin (Rom. 6:14). The gospel announces that *all* men and women were justified at the Cross. 'Whosoever will' may accept it and be saved.

Jesus Bears the Sins of the World

Now we can understand those mysterious sections of the gospel narrative which tell us of the intensity of Christ's mental anguish when he sweat great drops of blood and later cried, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' (Matt. 27:46). It is not the fear of death that explains Christ's agony; it was the awareness that he was suffering for the sins of the human race. He was forsaken by God, or so it seemed, that we might not be. He cried, 'Why?' in order that we might never need to utter that cry.

The lightning bolts of judgment struck the innocent Son of God in order that the guilty might find safety at the seared site of Calvary. That was no travesty of justice. The immutable law of God was more honoured by the death of the infinite Son than if the whole guilty human race had perished. Furthermore, the person who receives the blood-bought gift of righteousness cannot remain the same. Looking to Jesus justifies; gazing at Jesus sanctifies. The amnesty given to each rebel dissolves the inner spirit of rebellion.

Therefore it is written: 'Herein is our love made perfect that we 'guilty but accepted sinners' may have boldness in the day of judgment,' for Christ himself has said, 'He

that hears my word and believes on him that sent me hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life' (1 John 4:17; John 5:24).

The one who sees that Christ took his place on the Cross is justified. The penitent sinner is declared righteous.

'Justify' never means to make righteous (Deut. 25:1; Exod. 23:7). Down through the centuries false religion has made 'justify' mean 'make righteous', in the sense of becoming more righteous. One only has to read Luke 7:29 and 10:29 to see the falsehood of that soul-destroying error. Anyone can read the book of Romans in a modern translation and see the glorious truth that as soon as the sinner exercises faith in the atonement of the Cross, he



or she is *declared* righteous, perfect, and without condemnation. These blessings are retained as long as he or she believes, despite personal mistakes and failures. Note it well—justification does not cover only our past, but *all* our days.

The penitent sinner, despite his or her faults, is 'complete in Christ', 'accepted in the beloved', 'seated in heavenly places', and for the person who believes, 'there is no condemnation'.

The gospel is not good advice, nor good views; it is good *news*. What we could never do for ourselves, God has done. And, now, 'whosoever will may come', and whoever comes to Christ will never be cast out, for every kind of sin and blasphemy can be forgiven. This remains true throughout the believer's *entire* existence, not just at conversion. Justification is ongoing as long as we keep trusting in the merits of Christ alone.

Total Salvation from Sin

The plan of salvation contemplates our entire recovery from sin: from its guilt, its power, and its presence. Justification, which is the imputing of the merits of Christ, removes the burden of guilt. Sanctification, which comes through the gift of the Holy Spirit when we are justified, removes the power of sin and is a lifelong work. Glorification, at the coming of the Lord, will remove from us the very presence of sin as it takes away our sinful nature and changes this corruptible into incorruptible, and this mortal into immortal.

The justification that is imputed to us is a righteousness that is one hundred percent, but it is not internal. It is an 'alien' righteousness that is outside of us. It resides in Christ alone and is reckoned to us as a gift when we believe. It is reckoned to us just as our sin was reckoned to Christ.

The righteousness of sanctification, however, is internal. It is the fruit of our cooperation with the Holy Spirit. But it is never one hundred percent; it is never complete in this life. Thus, we are ever dependent upon the merits of Christ, ever dependent upon justification for our standing with God.

Justification has to do with our status, but sanctification has to do with our state. We are meant to fix our vision on the first rather than the second or we will be discouraged by our many failures. Our *position* is more

important than our *condition*, though a good condition will always result from a good position for there is no such thing as justification without sanctification.

The righteousness of glorification, which will be both one hundred percent and inside us, will occur at the coming of the Lord.

We are saved by grace alone through faith alone, but the faith that saves is never really alone. We are not saved by faith plus works, but by a faith *that* works. Faith is not a doing, but a seeing. It is also a hearing of the gospel, which enables us to see God's love for us. Faith is not a doing word, but a receiving word. It means to rest upon Christ's merits for time and eternity. To be saved by faith means to be saved through faith, because of faith. For faith is but the hand of a blind, starving, naked beggar accepting Christ's gift of clothing and bread. We encourage you, dear friend, to reach out your hand of faith to the One who loves you so much he died for you. ✱

Justification by *Faith*

'How shall man be just with God?' is a question of infinite importance to every child of Adam; a question, however, which could never have been answered if Jehovah had not manifested his sovereign grace towards his apostate creatures.

Far from being a merely speculative point, it permeates the whole system of Christianity, and lies at the foundation of personal religion, and of all right views of the character and moral government of God.

Whatever else may be considered different or non-essential, this cannot be; it is a capital article of that faith which was once for all delivered to the saints, and a mistake here may prove eternally fatal. Well might Luther call it, 'the article of a standing or falling church', i.e., the article on the reception or rejection of which the stability of subversion of the church depended.

This, then, is the subject to which we invite the attention of our readers in this paper.

C. H. SPURGEON

AT FIRST... the term justification is forensic, referring to the proceedings in a court of judicature, and signifies *the declaring a person righteous according to law*. It is not the making a person righteous by the infusion of holy habits, or by an inherent change from sin to holiness, which is sanctification; but the act of a judge pronouncing the party acquitted from all judicial charges.

This is the sense in which the words just and justify are used in the Old and New Testament Scriptures. For example, it is said, 'If there be a controversy between men, and they come unto judgment, that the judges may judge them; then they shall justify the righteous and condemn the wicked' (Deut. 25:1).

Here it is evident that to justify the righteous signifies not to *make* him righteous, but to *adjudge* him to be so, just as to condemn the wicked is *not to make him wicked*, but to *declare him* to be so. See also Proverbs 17:15; Psalm 143:2; Luke 7:29-35; Romans 2:13 and chapter 8:15.

We must not confound justification with the doctrine of sanctification, for though inseparably connected, they are

quite distinct and widely different, and ought, when we are treating of the way of a sinner's acceptance with God, to be kept apart. Justification respects the person in a legal sense, is a single act of grace, and terminates in a change of state.

Sanctification regards him in a physical sense, in a continued work of grace, and terminates in a change of character. The former is by the work of Christ *outside* of us; the latter is by work of the Spirit *inside* of us. The first precedes as a cause; the second follows as an effect.

Justification, then, is a change of state in the eye of the law and of the lawgiver. It includes pardon, but it is something more than mere pardon. Among men and before an earthly tribunal these two things are opposed to each other, for an individual cannot be at the same time pardoned and justified; but before the bar of God, he who is pardoned is justified, and he who is justified is pardoned.

When a person is pardoned he is considered as a *transgressor*, but when he is justified he is considered as *righteous*. A criminal when pardoned is freed from an obligation to suffer death for his crimes; but he that is justified is declared worthy of life as an innocent person.

There are then two constituent parts in this justification: there is the pardon of sin and the acceptance of our persons, [and then] a removal of guilt and condemnation, and a right to life.



Second: We shall now enquire into the *grounds* of the sinner's justification in the sight of God. If justification is, as we have seen, a judicial sentence absolving man from guilt and accepting him as righteous, such a sentence can be passed only on *some valid grounds*, some just cause shown, for he who justifies is God, the holy and righteous Judge...

What then is the meritorious ground of a sinner's justification? If all mankind are sinners under condemnation, if the supreme Governor of the world neither will nor can justify any without a perfect righteousness, and if such a righteousness cannot possibly be exhibited by man, it is absolutely necessary that righteousness wrought out by a substitute should be imputed to us or placed to our account.

Where, then, but in the *finished work* of Immanuel, can we find this vicarious, law-magnifying, justice-satisfying, God-honouring righteousness? ...

The justice of God had been trampled upon, and it must be satisfied; the law of God had been violated, and it must be fulfilled; the debt had been contracted, and it must be discharged; heaven had been lost, and it must be regained; therefore on restoring the sinner, the lost sinner, God must, he cannot but have, respect to every attribute of his offended majesty, to every requirement of his unalterable law.



In no other way could the forfeitures of the law be restored, in no other way could mercy be sent to the guilty. God sends his own Son, Christ undertakes our desperate cause and says, "Lo I come to do thy will, O God." In order to do this he assumes our nature, that as our kinsman redeemer, he might have the right of redemption. Justice recognizes him as the sinner's surety, and exacts from him the full penalty due to sin.

God puts the cup of wrath into his hand, and Jesus drains it to the very last dregs. The sword awakes against Jehovah's fellow; the shepherd is smitten that the sheep might go free. Hence he said to the representatives of justice, "If ye seek me, let these go their way." "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed."

'Christ,' says the apostle, 'redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.' *Nor is this all.* If nothing beyond the suffering of the penalty of the law had taken place, men would only have been released from the punishment due to sin. If they were to obtain the reward of obedience, its precepts must also be obeyed; and this was accomplished to the utmost by Jesus Christ.

To every requirement of God's holy law he yielded a complete and sinless obedience; every command it enjoined as well as every prohibition it contains were in all respects fully honoured by him. The righteousness of Jesus therefore is two-fold, consisting in his spotless obedience and meritorious sufferings, and this is that very righteousness by which sinners are justified before God.

To this and to this only the Moral Governor of the universe has respect, when he pronounces the sinner just and acquits him in judgment. 'Surely shall one

say, "In the Lord have I righteousness and strength. In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory."

'He hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.'

'By the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.'

This obedience of the Son of God conferred more honour on the law and on the lawgiver than could have resulted from the obedience of the whole human race had Adam never sinned...

Christ's righteousness, then, is the meritorious ground of our justification.



How does a sinner obtain ... justification? The Scriptures are very clear on this. *Simply by faith.* See Romans 3:21; 4:4, 24-25; 5:1; Galatians 2:16; Acts 13:38-39.

Faith is the divinely appointed medium of union to Christ, whose righteousness is imputed to the believer: 'Even as David describes the blessedness of man to whom the Lord imputes righteousness without works.'

It is of the nature of faith to lead the sinner away from self, self-confidence and self-righteousness, to the finished work of Jesus. Hence we are said to be justified by faith, not by love or humility, or any other grace, but by faith only, because faith is opposed to all works, and all graces too in the matter of our justification. Yet not for faith, or on account of faith, as if faith itself were our righteousness, or that for the sake of which we are justified.... Faith is the hand by which we lay hold on Christ, the eye that looks to Christ, the ear that hears the voice of Christ, the feet that run in compliance with Christ's invitation, "Come unto me all ye that labour and are

heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

I shall only add that this justification which is by faith, is *perfect and complete* at once, the moment a sinner believes in Jesus, so that he may triumphantly challenge the universe to lay anything to his charge: 'Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God who justifies. 'Who is he that condemns? It is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.'

Once justified, the believer can no more come under condemnation. 'There is now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus. Whom he hath justified, he hath glorified' (Rom 13:1, 30). No justified person now dead ever failed to reach glory, and all believers are kept by the power of God unto final and eternal salvation.

Lastly, their justification is *evidenced by good works* (Titus 3:8; Mic. 6:8; Jms. 2:17, 18, 26). Hence the decisions of the final judgment will be *according to men's works* (Matt. 25:34-36).

Observe, however, that though it is said that men shall be judged according to their works, it is not said that any one shall be justified *on account of his works*. The righteous are brought into the Judgment to be there *manifested and acknowledged* as the Lord's people.

Justified already in God's sight and in their own, they are now to be justified in the sight of men and angels, and that in such a way that the *equity* of the divine procedure will be apparent to all. Hence, then, works are appealed to as *fruits and evidences* of their union to Christ whose righteousness justified them.

The sum of the whole is this:

We are justified *freely* by God's grace, *meritoriously* by Christ's righteousness, *instrumentally* by faith, and *evidentially* by good works. ❄

God, Technology & Me

Part 2

Everything in Life Brings us to the Foot of the Cross

FOR THE FIRST 41 years of my life I lived outside of Christ. Inspired by my Calathumpian dad and living a mildly bohemian lifestyle I had all the usual answers and disdained anything to do with religion.

God, however, never ceases to reach out to us, even though we ignore him. Hindsight is a wonderful thing, and I am continually amazed when I look back at the many times in my life when He was there for me, even though I chose not to see or acknowledge His presence. God finally had his way back in 2001 when Caroline Taylor-Knight, now my wife, introduced me to the one man who could open my eyes to the Truth, and that was of course Dr Desmond Ford. Since then I couldn't stay away from Dr. Ford's meetings and have been to all but about four of his meetings over the last 12 years. Des brought me to the foot of the Cross, which is where I believe all genuine seekers of the truth find themselves, and once we find ourselves there, we look up to see Jesus, who leads us to make choices with a clarity that we probably wouldn't have had before.

Those choices eventually brought me, as a member of Good News Unlimited, to the boardroom table in the role of Secretary and Deputy Chair. It is my privilege and responsibility to plan with the other members the future direction and charter of this institution. I am impressed by the fact that God has brought a wide and varied group of people together, with just the right skills, experiences and resources at their fingertips to take Good News Unlimited into an exciting future.

Which brings me back to technology. This era we now live in has become very dependent on technology in almost every field of endeavour. Even basic everyday things are so closely bound to seamlessly integrated technologies that we are probably unaware of their presence—from the phone we communicate with to the car we drive, and even the toaster we use in the morning.

As I stated above, I am a big embracer of technology while being, at the same time, not too attached to the old ways to make the necessary changes. This is the direction in which I believe GNU needs to be heading to sustain its mission and cast its nets wider through the entire world.

We need to bring the gospel to people where they are, online in their own homes. As the traditional church building is being transformed into a broadcast studio it

DUNCAN WOOD

*Company Secretary
Deputy Chair of Good News Unlimited*



needs to meet the standards of quality and production that we have become used to. Additionally, we must ensure that the technologies we acquire will last us the maximum amount of time possible before becoming either obsolete or outdated. Thankfully the Lord has brought me, and other board members with the experience and expertise needed, to the GNU boardroom table to help make the choices necessary to ensure that we not only have a future, but a future with promise.

As you know, Good News Unlimited is basically a resource and media ministry. Thanks to the ongoing and selfless work of Phil Butler, we now have an amazing resource of over 280 sermons that Dr Ford delivered at Peachester over the last 11 years, as well as talks he has given at different venues in Australia and in the USA.

In the past we have been reliant upon Phil's generosity, and on loaned equipment, but we look forward to having our own state-of-the-art studio that will, at the hands of our able technicians, enable us to reach out with the gospel way beyond our shores.

As the world moves forward and technology advances, including the way people access everything—from the gospel to their shopping—we need to ensure we establish a ministry that allows us to transmit the truth in a way that even the secular world can access.

Good News Unlimited needs to invest in the technology that will enable us to achieve this, and I have spent many hours investigating and studying the options to

ensure that we are ahead of the changes and advancements that are coming. Dr Ford has left a precious legacy of gospel truth that we want to share with the rest of the world in the best way and format possible.

Most of us are aware of what is referred to as HD TV. HD stands for High Definition and it has been with us for around five years. Already this level of quality and video resolution is being superseded, so to simply invest in HD equipment would not be wise because in no time at all we would be behind the technology curve playing catch-up. Without getting too technical in this short space, I am recommending that we move forward with what is known as 4K video quality, which is four times the resolution of HD and is being coined as 'Ultra HD'.

The Japanese Broadcast Association has just announced the world's first 4K broadcast network this year and broadcasting is planned to commence in July 2014. The resolution standards will increase over the next five years or so, but an increase in resolution will also mean an exponentially larger investment in both computer editing and hard drive back-up systems, so to keep above the current standards and to stay just far enough ahead of the advancements at a relatively affordable level, the 4K quality is a perfect place for us to begin our new digital ministry.

Having this new video/audio broadcast and recording set-up will enable us to have brand new state-of-the-art broadcast equipment, including warranty and technical support, as well as not having to rely on borrowed equipment. It will bring our broadcast quality and standard up to a world-class production value which, in turn, will allow us to take the gospel to the world with confidence and a quality level that will inspire viewers to return to see and hear more.

All of us on the board are very excited by the prospect of where Good News Unlimited is headed, and with your help, especially in supporting this appeal, we will achieve God's will in bringing hope and assurance to many people in many nations through the gospel of Jesus Christ.

I personally want to thank you for all the help and support you have and will give to enable us at Good News Unlimited to achieve this objective.

May our co-operation in fulfilling the Gospel Commission create a friendship between us that will grow stronger every day until He returns in glory.

Together in Grace

(See the Dec 2013 magazine for Part 1)



CAN GNU TAKE UP THE CHALLENGE?

The Gospel to the Nations Appeal

AS DISCIPLES of Jesus, we have all been asked to take the **gospel to the nations**. For over 30 years, Good News Unlimited has uplifted and shared the gospel. Now the Lord is calling us to expand our reach and to fully embrace the great Gospel Commission. If Good News Unlimited is to be faithful to its name, then we have no alternative but to say, "Yes!"

In the past we have used technology like books, as well as video and audiocassettes. Des and I are hoping that books stay around for a long time to come, but to find a video or cassette player in a home these days can often be cause for excitement. I was at our GNU office with a friend last week and when he saw our audiocassette copying equipment, he couldn't believe it! Even books are being distributed in electronic forms these days.

We know that now and in the future our ministry will depend on technology to share the good news. We know that the borrowed equipment that we currently use doesn't always allow us to match the quality of the gospel we preach. We also know that if we are to grow our reach for Christ around the world, we need the appropriate audio-visual and television broadcasting equipment. By faith we believe that the Lord can meet this need.

Our prayer is that the Lord will influence those who can contribute to the gospel, so that we can raise \$75,000 by the end of January. This will

allow us to purchase state-of-the-art cameras, production studio equipment, computers, lenses, storage equipment, and so on; in short, we will have the necessary equipment now and for the foreseeable future to produce and distribute TV-quality broadcasts. The

"We are not running ahead of God; we are running behind Him; we are following where He is leading"

Lord has already provided brought talented and knowledgeable people such as Duncan Wood, Phil Butler, and Jayden Lawson, who have the technical skills to make it possible. God is not wasteful; instead it is us who so often squander the opportunities He hands us.

Des and I have prepared a short video through which we want to personally explain to you what the **"Gospel to the Nations"** is all about. To see it, go to this link on the internet:

<http://www.goodnewsunlimited.org.au/gospel-to-the-nations/>

We are preparing ourselves for the glorious future that God has in store for us. We are not running ahead of God; we are running behind Him; we are following where He is leading. That's why we are calling it the **"Gospel to the Nations Appeal."** Around the world, gospel revival weeks are being planned, gospel crusades are being discussed... but I am running ahead of *myself* now.

The point is that **people are hungry for the gospel of Jesus Christ**, for the news that they can have peace with God by faith in Jesus Christ alone. Even this morning I received a message from someone who wrote to me, "I wish to tell you that I am feeling drawn to your church and want it to be a part of my life and that is a profound decision that I have made." You see, God is still at work, it is He who does the drawing; He is calling people everywhere. When He comes, will we be found working?

That's why the one desire of all of us in our great Good News Unlimited community is to shout the gospel of Jesus out for all the world to hear. To see how you can help us take the **gospel to the nations**, please see the flysheet accompanying this magazine.

Grace and Peace in Jesus!
Eliezer Gonzalez ❄





When You Stand before the JUDGE

RITCHIE WAY

HOW CAN GOD judge us for being sinners when we were born sinners? We didn't ask to be sinners; we had no choice in the matter.

If it were possible for a person to live a life that was one hundred percent righteous, then, among all the billions on Earth there should be at least one who has never sinned. But there isn't, and never has been, 'for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God' (Rom. 3:23). Even Jesus' mother opposed him on one occasion (Mark 3:20-21, 31-35). So what right has God to judge us if we can't help being sinners? Is a dog to be condemned just for being a dog?

The following two verses from Sydney Carter's thought-provoking poem, 'One Friday Morning', reinforce the perception that God is primarily responsible for our parlous state:

It was on a Friday morning
That they took me from the cell,
And I saw they had a carpenter
To crucify as well.
"You can blame it on to Pilate
You can blame it on the Jews
You can blame it on the devil,
It's God, I accuse.
It's God they ought to crucify
Instead of you and me,"
I said to the Carpenter
A-hanging on the tree.

"You can blame it on to Adam
You can blame it on to Eve
You can blame it on the apple,
But that I can't believe.
It was God that made the devil
And the woman and the man,
And there wouldn't be an apple
If it wasn't in His plan.
It's God they ought to crucify
Instead of you and me,"
I said to the Carpenter
A-hanging on the tree.

The felon crucified beside Jesus, to whom these words are attributed, had an excellent point. What right has God got to judge us for being sinners when we can't help being sinners? God not only made us, he also made the conditions that resulted in our fall into sin. In the first instance, therefore, he is responsible for our wretched state!

Do you know what God says to that line of reasoning? He says, 'It is true that you weren't primarily responsible for getting yourselves into this horrible mess; however it's also true that you are not primarily responsible for doing anything to get yourselves out of it. You don't have to endure long punishing fasts or deny yourself certain foods; you don't have to commit yourself to a weekly religious ritual; you don't have to go on a pilgrimage to a distant land, or earn your redemption by giving your time or treasure to charity; and you don't have to go to purgatory, because two thousand years ago I did *everything necessary* to provide you with an eternal home in my kingdom. And I offer it to you as a gift. All you have to do is accept it by accepting me.

'When I created the human race with free will, I accepted full responsibility for what would happen if they rejected me. Right back there I chose to be "the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world" (Rev. 13:8). So when Adam and Eve rejected me, I stepped in with Plan B, which was to fulfil my responsibility to pay the penalty for their failure myself. Their condemnation fell on me so that they might be free of condemnation [John 5:24; Rom. 8:1], and I died their death, so they wouldn't have to.'

But, you may ask, why didn't God annihilate the rebellious couple in Eden and start again? He couldn't do that because that would be unloving and contrary to his nature. That would also be to admit failure, and God never fails. The only alternative was for God to offer

himself as a substitute for human beings, and pay the full penalty for their sins himself (John 10:17-18). Inasmuch as the Creator's life is worth more than the whole of his creation, his substitutionary death for all sinners would be more than sufficient. So two thousand years ago God came to earth as Jesus, to live as a man, and to die for the sins of the whole world (1 John 2:2). He died our death so that we could live his life.

The Hour of Your Judgement

Because Jesus died in your place—as your substitute—the Father appointed him to be your Judge (John 5:22; Acts 10:42). In this age Jesus works through his Spirit to encourage you to accept his costly gift. He gave up his life so you could have it (Rom 6:23). What will you do with his offer; will you accept it, or will you reject it?

Jesus' judgement throne is his Cross, and like the two felons who were crucified with him, the whole world is divided by his Cross into those who reject him because they want to continue life in this world, and those who accept him because this world does not offer them the kind of life they want; they want to be with Jesus in Paradise.

The very moment you understand what Jesus did for you on the Cross, and decide to reject or accept him as your Lord and Saviour, that very moment you stand

before the Judge who will bring down his verdict on your destiny. That moment, for you, is your Final Judgement. There is no other judgement that will determine your destiny. This is it! The decision you make—whether to accept or reject Jesus—will determine where you will spend eternity, so choose well.

It is important to understand that the destiny you choose for yourself—whether eternal life or eternal death—is not based on your actions, what you have or have not done. The repentant criminal who was crucified with Jesus had nothing worthwhile to offer for his salvation, but Jesus gave him the gift of eternal life because he put his trust—not in himself—but in Jesus. And it's the same for you and me. If we put our trust one hundred percent in Jesus, and not in ourselves, the gift of eternal life is ours also.

The Bible is crystal clear on this matter:

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.... Whoever believes in him is *not condemned*, but whoever does not believe *stands condemned already* because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son (John 3:16-18, emphases supplied).

To accept Jesus is to accept eternal life; to reject Jesus is to ultimately perish

(1 John 5:11-12).

It was God they crucified, that Friday morning. On his shoulders he carried your sin and mine.

He was the Carpenter a-hanging on the tree.

He was God crucified instead of you and me.ⁱ

Jesus did not sacrifice just three days of his life for our sins; he sacrificed everything. He stepped down from the very highest place in the universe—the Throne, to the very lowest place—the Cross, and by doing so he turned the world upside down by converting the lowest place into the highest. The Cross became his Throne, and those who accept the crucified One as their King—as did the repentant felon—are proclaimed citizens of his kingdom. The Father 'has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves' (Col. 1:13).

What is your response to the Man of Calvary who was judged and punished in your place?



ENDNOTES

i My words, not Carter's.

The Church Comes Home

ROBERT & JULIA BANKS



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South Tweed Heads NSW 2486

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PAPERBACK





When Nonsense makes Sense

**What is life all about? Who are we?
Does life have significance? Meaning? Purpose?
Or is it sheer nonsense?**

Dr DESMOND FORD

THIS MEANING-ISSUE is the fundamental issue, my friends, of our age. It's not the question of east versus west, or coloured versus white. It's not Catholic versus Protestant, or classical music versus rock music. It's rather the issue of meaning. Meaning versus meaninglessness; purpose versus purposelessness; reason versus irrationality. Such is the central issue of the time in which we live. What is this world? An iceberg, or a ship? Does it have direction, or does it float aimlessly through time and space? What is life? Is it, as Shakespeare suggested, 'A tale told by an idiot full of sound and fury, signifying nothing'? Is it a disease for which the only cure is death? Is it punishment for the crime of being born? Is it a nightmare between two eternities?

What's your life, my friend? What's my life? A bubble, or an egg? Full of nothingness, or life and fruitfulness? What is man? Is he an illegitimate child of some thoughtless parent order? A mere fuss in the mud? A stir in the slime? Is the human race a mere planetary eczema? Is man an animal only, or is he a child of God? Is the only purpose for man's existence that he might become fertiliser for the fields?

Pliny the philosopher who lived centuries ago, declared, 'There's nothing certain save that nothing is certain. And there's no more wretched and yet arrogant being than man. The best thing that's been given to man amid the many torments of this life is that he can take his own life.' How true is this remark?

This prompts the still further question—not 'What is truth?' but 'Is there truth?' These questions are so important because of what thinkers through the ages have termed 'the terrible choice.' Each one of us must make choices, decisions. And how we make them depends upon the way we answer these inevitable questions which confront all of us. What a man does is determined by what he considers he is and what he believes the world to be. Is the world nonsense, or sense? Who do you think you are—a bubble, or an egg; froth, or potential for fruit, life, creativity, value, and meaning?

Perhaps a clue to the meaning of existence and who we are is that man is the only creature that can be bored. This seems to be the evidence that *Homo sapiens* is a higher order than the brute. Animals do not commit suicide through boredom, frustration and hopelessness. But many among the human species do. In North America alone at least 20,000 suicides are recorded yearly. According to TIME magazine the actual number is probably at least twice this figure, and

at least four times as many hopeless people attempt to end their lives as are successful in the attempt. What is more, the highest per capita rate of this act of self destruction, is to be found in the higher institutions of learning and more common among the 'haves' than among the 'have-nots.'

Well, what is it that causes the contemplation of such an irrevocable action as suicide? It's the conviction of hopelessness; the feeling that purpose and meaning have disappeared from the existence of the universe. Sigmund Freud wrote to Marguerite Bonaparte on one occasion saying, 'The moment a man questions the meaning of life, he's sick.' That's the sickness that has overtaken multitudes in our day. Dr. Viktor Frankl of the University of Vienna, when addressing the Academy of Religion and Mental Health some time ago, declared that as many as 80% of his American students suffered from this malady.

The death of meaning is the death of hope, and the death of hope leads to the hope for death. This explains why suicides have become pandemic. Must we join the club? How strange few men have realised that if indeed all things are but chaos, we could never have known it. How strange indeed that men have taken for granted the miracle of mind which interprets all things, which has been assumed as yielding the interpretation of chaos

though itself the result of chaos. If mind is but as much the product of accident as the spilling of a bucket of water, or the emission of a shower of sparks, why should anybody trust its conclusions? Just as the 26 letters of the alphabet could not yield the Declaration of Independence or the Constitution of the U.S. without the minds of the founding fathers, and just as the seven notes of the octave yield the Hallelujah Chorus only because of Handel, so the flux of matter could never have given rise to mind without the devising of an Infinite Mind.

Can I remind you of the first words of an old Book that's often been jeered at but somehow keeps coming up again and again? Here they are: 'In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.' These opening words of Holy Writ give the only anchor for meaning, sanity, hope, and joy. In many respects, the book of Genesis is the most important book in the world for 21st century man. Without it, man doesn't know who he is, where he came from, or where he is going.

While not written as a scientific textbook, the Bible reveals to men in all times and places the central truths necessary for successful existence. From its pages we draw the good news that's brought joy, meaning, life, vitality, and fruitfulness to millions through the ages. The Bible's revelation of divine, purposeful creation not only undergirds all worship, but all meaningful living.

You may say to me, 'Well, I can't believe such old-fashioned myths as creation.' However, if your belief is correct it would mean that you and I have no more significance than a tree or a machine; that we are like the dog sent on the train that lost its collar revealing its identification. A new one from a stationmaster said, 'Here's Nobody from Noplace going Nowhere.' Is that you and me too? Such a belief destroys our personality.

When you take someone in your arms and tell them you love them you're only experiencing chemical reaction in the bloodstream according to this theory. When you dream you've found something beautiful, it's a joke. And truth? That's a fluke. Morality? That's only fashion. How can we derive what ought to be from what is? What's the difference between killing a fly or you?

If life is just chance, we can't say that anything is wrong. No use appealing to just what people feel. Are we going to say that 51 percent of the people are right no matter what they say? Is prejudice right because the majority think that way? Is racism right? Exploitation? Manipulation? Murder? Adultery? What do these words mean if there's no source of morality? They're just gobbledegook; meaningless

**Man's like an egg,
and eggs have to be
broken to make an
omelette.' Is that the
whole truth about man?
Just an egg—a good egg,
or a bad egg?**

symbols. This is the unsought result of relativism, the result that nobody will face up to. That if God doesn't exist morality is dead; values are dead. And as we said before, the death of hope leads to the hope for death.

Dostoyevsky said, 'If God is dead, everything is permitted.' Have you ever thought about it? God above is as necessary to us as the earth beneath. If you and I were not made in the image of God, then we can be made in the image of society by unscrupulous politicians. Peter the Great caused the death of thousands when he was building Petersburg. And when he was accused of evil, he said, 'Man's like an egg, and eggs have to be broken to make an omelette.' Is that the whole truth about man? Just an egg—a good egg, or a bad egg? If that's true, sadism is right, murder is right.

My friends, consider the other possibility: that you and I are made in the image of God as the best Book says. That's the one I recommend to you today to think about. Pontius Pilate is remembered for two statements in particular. One being, 'What is truth?' and the other, 'Behold the Man.' Have you ever thought to put those statements together? We can either interpret man by looking at the universe, or we can interpret the universe by looking at man. But if we're going to do the second one, we need to look at the best of men. That Man who came from above, who called himself 'The Son of Man' that he might be the Brother of all men, black and white, young and old. What did he say about life? What did he say about you and me?



Remember on one occasion when he was dining with publicans and sinners, the self-righteous religious people of the day said, 'Look at this Man, he's dining with publicans and sinners. This Man receives sinners.' And there, my friends, they preached the gospel much better than most preachers, because the good news is just that. This Man receives sinners. It doesn't matter who you are. It doesn't matter how many times you've blown it. It doesn't matter how many mistakes you've made. It doesn't matter how weak you feel, how foolish you've been. This Man, Christ, receives sinners. He wants to receive you. He wants to give you everlasting life today. He's already paid the price of your guilt and sin. He took it all away at Calvary. He suffered so that you needn't suffer. He was forsaken of God so that you might never be forsaken of God. He took your guilt that he might give you his righteousness.

On this occasion when accused of receiving sinners, his reply was 'Guilty,' and he gave three stories to prove it. Firstly he told the story of a lost sheep that was loved and sought for by the Good Shepherd. Man, my friends, is a lost sheep, and the Good Shepherd has come to seek and to save him. Then Christ told the story of a lost coin that still bore the image of the king even though it was tarnished with dirt. That's you and me. The woman went looking for that coin with a candle as Christ comes looking for us in order that he might rejoice over us, pick us up again, and cleanse us.

Thirdly, he told the story of a lost son. As soon as that lost son said, 'I'll arise and go,' his father, who was watching from a great way off, ran to meet him. The son wasn't given time to make his confession. His Dad took off his rags and clothed him with his own robe, put a ring on his finger and shoes on his feet, and killed the fatted calf. All were invited to celebrate with them.

My friends, to know that we are loved despite our failures; to know that it's true that God loved the world so much he gave his only Son that whoever (that's you, that's me, that's every failure) by trusting in him, might not perish but have eternal life; to know that, turns life into a song. It brings heaven down here. It means that every good dream is possible of fulfillment.

Listen to him today, my friend. He's saying to you, 'Come unto me all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest' (Matt. 11:28). 'Whoever comes to me I will never drive away' (John 6:37). And 'Every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men' (Matt. 12:31).

Believe it today and you will know who you are, and life will become a song. ✱

BUILDING YOUR [GOSPEL] NETWORK

PASTOR IAN

ALL LEADERS ARE practitioners of *networking*. To become president or CEO of a company or organization of considerable size, a person must rely on a massive network of friends, advisors and contacts they built over the previous years.



**Success is rarely a one-man show.
It is usually a team effort.**

Meeting people, working with teams, developing a list of trusted advisors, having personal contacts in place when you need the resources ... these are all aspects of networking. And today's technology has made it easier than ever before.

Conference calls, Skype, FaceTime, iMessage, email, and LinkedIn make it possible for you to stay in touch with far more people than you could even just a few years ago.

The tools are available to anyone who recognizes the benefits of networking. You no longer have to live near the people you network with on a daily basis.

How can I build a personal network?

The Bible gives us six building blocks for constructing long-term relationships:

1. I must be **CONSIDERATE**. 'Friendliness bears fruit for a man' (Prov. 19:22, Moffatt).
2. I must be **CONFIDENTIAL**.
A gossip betrays a confidence, but a trustworthy man keeps a secret' (Prov. 11:13).
3. I must be **CANDID**.
'An honest answer is the sign of a true friendship' (Prov. 24:26).
4. I must be **CONSTRUCTIVE**.
'As iron sharpens iron, so a friend shapes a friend' (Prov. 27:17).
5. I must be **CONSISTENT**.
'A friend loves at ALL times, and a brother is born for adversity' (Prov. 17:17).
6. I must be **COMMITTED**.
'Some friendships do not last, but some friends are more LOYAL than brothers' (Prov. 18:24).

The point is obvious: You will attract whatever you are! ❄

DID YOU KNOW THAT GOOD NEWS UNLIMITED IS ON FACEBOOK?



Did you know that Facebook is our main way of staying in touch with you?

To connect with us on Facebook, go to:
<https://www.facebook.com/GoodNewsUnlimited>
and click the big "Like" button at the top of the page.

You will get all our news, discussions, devotionals, and also connect with other lovers of the Gospel!



WE ARE LOOKING FORWARD TO SEEING YOU ONLINE SOON!

Deep & Wide:

Creating Churches Unchurched People Love to Attend

THERE ARE two types of churches: those committed to keeping the world out of their assemblies, and those that invite the world (but not its morals) into their assemblies. The first type of church is primarily for Christians: you can become a member when you believe and live as we do. The second is primarily for the unchurched: you are welcome in our assembly even if you are covered with tattoos, smell of alcohol or tobacco, or are suffering from some addiction.

Andy Stanley's churches belong to the second category. Each of his churches is focused on getting his congregants to bring in the unchurched. And each of his churches has a weekly professional presentation that is aimed at leading people into a growing relationship with Jesus Christ.

What evidence is there that Andy Stanley's evangelistic strategy is working successfully? In the nineteen years since he started North Point Ministries in 1995, his churches have won an average of 2,500 people to the Lord every year. Each weekend more than 33,000 people attend one of Andy Stanley's North Point Ministries seven Atlanta-area churches.

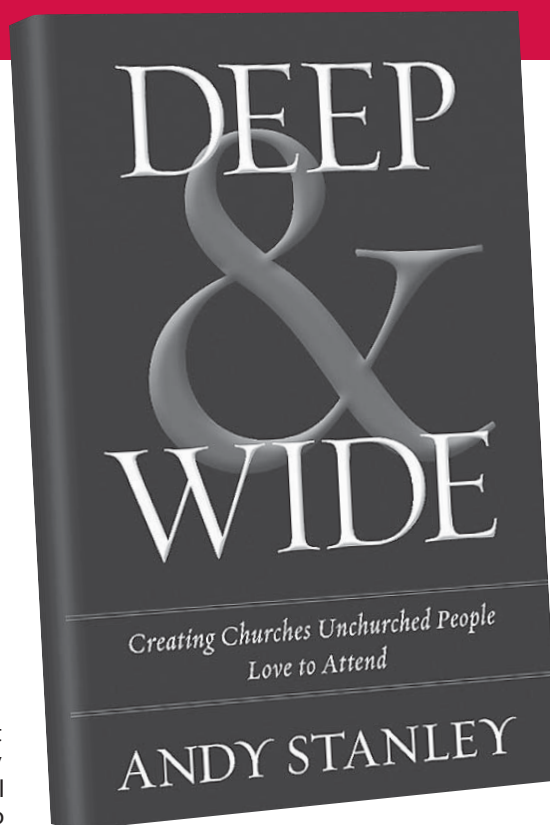
In addition, North Point Ministries has planted over 25 churches outside the metro Atlanta area with a combined weekly attendance of more than 15,000.

Now Andy Stanley can't be at every church, every weekend, so his personal presence is not the key to the success of his mission. Its success is due to those who enact the principles he has outlined in his book, *Deep and Wide*.

I encourage you to buy this book and devour it. Then put into practice the principles that give success.

You will possibly be crucified for attempting to implement what Andy suggests in your established church, but better to die a martyr trying to fulfil the Gospel Commission than to live an unfulfilled life.

Deep and Wide is the best book I have read for many a year, and I strongly recommend it to everyone who is keen to work with the Holy Spirit to expand the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. ❄



Book Review

Deep and Wide:

Creating Churches Unchurched People Love to Attend

Author: Andy Stanley

Publisher: Zondervan, 2012

Friends, Readers, Countrymen . . .

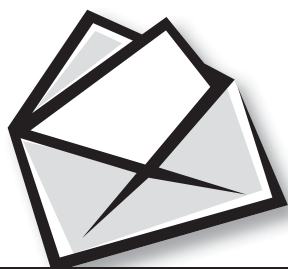
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Letters from Readers

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



Law and Grace

Dear Ritchie

I am confused about the role of Law in the Christian's life. It seems to me that up until the time of the charismatic revivals, which, if I am correct, began around the start of the 1900s, the major denominations had no problem with the role of the Ten Commandments in the life of the Christian. But since that time the charismatic movement has spearheaded an attack on the Ten Commandments, claiming that because they belong to the old covenant they were replaced by the new covenant at the death of Jesus.

What I want to know for sure is: Do the Ten Commandments belong to the old covenant? And, if so, what is the new covenant that replaced them?

L.G.

Ritchie's Reply

Dear L.

In contrast to the cultural laws of Israel, the Ten Commandments were written on stone to indicate their enduring nature. They are also the foundation of God's throne, in the New Testament as well as the Old, to indicate that they were the basis of his righteous government (Psa. 89:14; 99:1; Rev. 11:19).

The atonement that Jesus made on the Cross did not abolish this Decalogue, it atoned for the sins that were committed against it. It is important to understand that the gospel is not against Law, it's against sin, which is transgression against the Law.

God's new covenant is not his replacement of the Law with the gospel, but his writing of his law on the hearts and minds of those whose lives have been transformed by the gospel. That is the Bible's own definition of the new covenant, and it's mentioned twice in the New Testament book that speaks the most about the new and old covenants (Heb. 8:10-13; 10:16-18). We should be wary of accepting a view of the old and new covenants that contradicts the Bible's own definition.

The problem that the apostles faced in proclaiming the gospel to all nations was that they were opposed by the Jews who believed they were God's people because God gave the Law to them alone. The old covenant had become 'salvation

by the observance of the Law'; the new covenant, on the other hand, offers us 'salvation through the blood of Jesus'. Jesus died for us—the righteous one for the unrighteous ones (1 Pet. 3:18)—that he might credit 'the righteousness of God' (2 Cor. 5:21) to all who put their faith in him. This righteousness, therefore—which all need to enter God's presence—is not a righteousness that we can earn (old covenant), rather it is a gift that is received by faith (new covenant) (Rom. 3:28; Gal. 2:16).



Vitamin D and washing

Hi Ritchie

I am enjoying your health information pages in the GNU magazine. Just a quick note about vitamin D: I'm not sure where you got your information regarding avoidance of washing after sun exposure, but it doesn't seem to be correct. Vitamin D is synthesised in the lower two layers of the epidermis (stratum basal and stratum spinosum). When we wash ourselves, a small layer is removed from the uppermost layer called the stratum corneum, which is simply a fatty layer composed entirely of dead skin cells which acts as a barrier preventing unwanted substances getting into the skin. When this layer is compromised, we often get irritant dermatitis after chemical exposure, especially on the hands.

So you can see that washing/bathing should in no way affect vitamin D absorption.

Hope this is useful.

Regards, D. S. (GP Dermatologist)

Ritchie's Reply

Hi D.

I really appreciate your correction. Most of the information that we publish on health comes from health professionals or health journals. That one item, however, about not washing after exposure to the sun, did not. I mulled over whether I should include it, and, according to your reply, ended up making the wrong decision. Ah well, that's a good lesson to remember in future.

I apologise to our readers who chose not to wash their sun-exposed skin because of what they read.



Too much theory; not enough practice

Dear Pastor Ritchie

I have believed for some time that the work of spreading the gospel is a task that was given to every individual, not just a few brilliant presenters. Sadly over the years we have been conditioned, sitting in our church pews, to give a dollar and let "xxx" do it. This philosophy has been well accepted by most of the church as it's a lot easier to let someone else 'do it'!

Consequently, we have all seen and been involved with endless 'missions' over the years, with hours of work in preparation and follow up, huge costs, usually resulting in very little outcome.

The more sinister impact of big missions is that, listening to a great speaker tends to make most of us realize that great speakers we are not, reinforcing the belief that we're better off letting someone else do it who can do it better.

But I have come to realize over the years, that that's not what it's all about. God asks each one of us to connect with the people in our immediate vicinity, in simple, effortless ways. All that needs to be said is that we 'tell our own story'. Paul did this over and over again, just telling the story of how God intervened in his life.

In the small book, *A Meal with Jesus*, the author outlines how easy it is to meet with people over food. Inviting your neighbors in for coffee is not an arduous task, but it builds relationships and creates opportunities to witness without pain. Throughout the book, the author expands the importance of food in God's relationship with people.

Bill Johnson in his book, *Supernatural power of a Transformed Mind*, says, '... people just need to know what God and the Kingdom are really like.' That's not hard to talk about. It's one of the most life-changing, motivational books I have ever read....and I've read plenty.

My point is that, while it's great to have the heavies do the impressive presentations for us (and we still need them... but for different reasons), we need to be helping each individual in the church to understand their own personal role.

Rather than put all our eggs in one basket by paying for someone else to do it, I would much rather see an ongoing emphasis in the GNU magazine on helping people to know how to reach out to their community.

I am aware that amongst many of my

church friends the opposite is true: very few know how to connect with their non-Christian communities. In fact, I find it hard to believe how many of us are completely immobilized by the very idea. This needs to be an ongoing theme. Most are struggling just to walk the walk, let alone talk to someone else about it.

In conjunction with this I would also like to see many more articles about walking the walk. Quite frankly, I'm over articles on church controversy, the pain of the past, righting the wrongs, vindicating our positions, nit-picking on doctrine, articles that are destabilizing, and all other articles that focus more on academic insight rather than encouraging believers in their daily struggle.

The crisis that much of the church is in and is unaware of is that the world is ignoring us. The enemy is having a field-day merely through disempowerment and discouragement. Many members are living shallow, powerless lives, giving in to the enemy and have little to offer the people they mix with. I hear it from many.

Jesus said that in the last days, there would be 'a form of religion, but lacking the power thereof.' That's many of us.

I would support a modified magazine that I could give my friends, a magazine that encouraged people out of their complacency and ambivalence. A magazine that inspired them to walk tall as believers and not be cowering in our lounge rooms behind closed doors. A magazine that was focused on articles which upskilled the readers to live the joyous, victorious life we're supposed to be living.

The title of the magazine, 'Good News Unlimited', suggests it's mostly about the gospel, which it mostly is. But it is frequently too academic. There's not much point to it when people read it, say, 'Hmm. Interesting', then put it in a pile in the den, but nothing changes in their lives.

I give thanks to God for your enthusiasm, vision, and commitment, however I encourage you to give serious thought to the points I have briefly outlined.

R. S.

Ritchie's Reply

Dear R.

G.N.U. is in the midst of the biggest change in its history. Dr. Gonzalez has already put manuals online to help people start their own gospel fellowships. All readers are encouraged to reach out to others in the context of their gifts. Evangelists are to evangelise, and those whose lives have been changed by Jesus are encouraged to 'Go home and tell their families what the Lord has done for them.'

Theology, however, will always be necessary to explain what Jesus has done for us. The great scholar, Paul of Tarsus, reveals that those who understand the

gospel are best equipped to share the gospel. The danger, as you put it, is that words rather than lives can dominate our time.

We would like more articles and testimonies on sharing our faith with others, and will readily publish suitable ones when they come to hand.

Thank you for your very valid concerns. They are ours also. By God's grace you will see the changes you recommend from this magazine forward.



Christ's Heavenly Ministry

Hi Ritchie

I always read your articles with interest and appreciate your theology. Thank you.

Your article on the Heavenly Sanctuary (September 2013) was particularly interesting. I've struggled with this 'doctrine'.

I have a question. Simply put, 'What is Christ doing in Heaven?'

I would greatly appreciate your comments.

Thank you.

T.D.

Ritchie's Reply

Hi T.

It took me a long time to get my head around the idea that 'heaven' and 'this world' or 'earth' are not so much specific places in space as the realms of God and Satan. For example, when I was a young Christian I could not understand 1 John 2:15 which says, 'Do not love the world or anything in the world.' To me this world was a beautiful place, full of lovely mountains and lakes, etc. It wasn't until I purchased my first concordance and looked up other references to 'this world' that the light dawned. See, for example, John 12:31 and 16:11.

Jesus said, 'My kingdom is not of this world' (John 18:36). By that he could not have meant that his kingdom was up in heaven above (even though it had come from heaven above) because he had been teaching that the kingdom of heaven was among those who listened to him (Luke 11:20; 17:20-21). And many of his parables about the kingdom of heaven supported that claim (e.g. Matt. 13:24-52).

Heaven is wherever God reigns, whether on planet Earth or elsewhere in the universe. Wherever he is, that place is heaven. The only place he does not reign over, however, is 'this world.'

So what is Jesus doing in the sanctuary made without hands? Read Hebrews 3:6 in conjunction with 10:21 and Revelation 1:12-20. The sanctuary made without hands is the one made of living stones

(1 Pet. 2:5). Jesus is ministering his grace, guidance and providential support in this sanctuary (Matt. 18:20 and 28:20).

It is significant that Jesus has made us priests and kings along with himself in this ministry (Rev. 5:10; 20:6). The apostle Paul spoke of 'the priestly duty of proclaiming the gospel of God' (Rom. 15:16). As followers of Jesus we belong to 'the priesthood of all believers', and as priests we have been commissioned to share the gospel with everyone in our circle of influence.

This is the ministry that Jesus is supervising at the present time. He is moving among our churches and his word, like 'a sharp double-edged sword', is cutting away all human accretions to the gospel (Rev. 1:12-16; 2:15-16).



The Forbidden Entrance

Hi Ritchie

I have a question about the veil between the Holy and Most Holy Places in the sanctuary.

On the Day of Atonement how did the High Priest enter the veil without the interior being seen by other priests? I heard the veil was overlapping somewhere so he could walk through without touching it. Someone says he entered at the side.

Kind regards.

W.S.

Ritchie's Reply

Hi W.

Other priests who were on duty on the Day of Atonement did not see the interior of the inner sanctum because they were not allowed in the sanctuary at the time of the main service (Lev. 16:17).

During the forty years of wilderness wanderings the veil that hung between the Holy and Most Holy Places was also used to cover the ark that contained the Ten Commandments while on its journey between encampments. But once the Israelites settled in Canaan, and the sanctuary had a fixed abode for long periods of time, this secondary use for the veil was no longer vital. It seems that the veils that shielded the entrances were then replaced with doors (1 Sam. 3:15).

In both Solomon's temple and the second temple, the entrance to the Most Holy Place was via double doors rather than by a veil (1 Kgs. 6:31; 7:50; 2 Chron. 4:22). It is possible that both a veil and doors separated the two apartments. For some unknown reason the architect(s) of Herod's temple reverted to just a veil between the Holy and Most Holy Places.

Blessings,
Ritchie.

The Salvation, Power and Kingdom of our God have Come

Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say,

'Now the salvation and power and kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ have come. The accuser of our brothers and sisters, who accuses them day and night before our God, has been thrown down. They gained the victory over him on account of the blood of the Lamb and the word of their witness. Love for their own lives didn't make them afraid to die'
(Rev. 12:10-11).

Thank You Volunteers

THE GOOD NEWS UNLIMITED organisation has been in a state of upheaval during its transition from a magazine and CD only ministry, to a ministry that now utilises several modern media for the promotion of the gospel; from having its office in Tweed Heads South to establishing its new office in Milton, Brisbane; and from having our magazines printed and distributed in Perth (**BIG THANKS** to Bill and Evelyn Sinclair for their many years of voluntary service in this ministry), to having the magazines printed and distributed in Brisbane.

We also owe a big debt of gratitude to a team of volunteers who accepted the responsibility for packaging and posting the magazines for more than a year after the shift to Brisbane. It was a huge job, and we are very grateful for their several hours of commitment each month.

So thank you, Laimon Eglentals, Rachel, Corin, Joel, Rhialle and Shaye Seric, Gerry and Eileen Leahy, Barbara Bishop, Irene Small, Natalie and Ross Sinclair, and others. Because of your commitment the mail went though.

God bless and provide for each of you, as you have for us.

2014 SEMINARS

POTTSVILLE FELLOWSHIP

Fellowship meetings led by **Pastor Ron Allen** are held at 9:30 a.m. on the following Saturdays in 2014.

| | | | |
|----------|-------|-----------|-------|
| January | 18 | July | 5, 19 |
| February | 1, 15 | August | 2, 16 |
| March | 1, 15 | September | 6, 20 |
| April | 5, 26 | October | 4, 18 |
| May | 3, 17 | November | 1, 15 |
| June | 7, 21 | December | 6, 20 |

Venue: Reef Room, Pottsville Beach Neighbourhood Centre
12 Elizabeth Street, Pottsville Beach, NSW 2489.

Contact: Ron Allen – email: carron.741@gmail.com

GOOD NEWS FELLOWSHIP —Milton, Brisbane

GNU meetings are held every Saturday from 2:15 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., at the auditorium behind the Royal Geographical Society of Queensland (RGSQ) building at 237 Milton Road, Brisbane.

People are invited to come earlier and bring their lunch, beginning at 12:30 p.m. After lunch, our pastor, Eliezer Gonzalez, holds a Bible discussion and prayer, beginning at 1:15 p.m.

Our main presentation commences at 2:15 p.m.

ADVERTISEMENT

A person from the Bundaberg area,

- A. Would like a lift to the Milton meetings, when possible
- B. Needs a house-sitter for two months, February/March
- C. Needs a cook and cleaner.

**For further enquiries please contact
the GNU office, phone: (07) 5524 5040**

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Phone: +61 (0)7 5524 5040

P.O. Box 6788, Tweed Heads South NSW 2486

Email: admin@goodnewsunlimited.org.au

Web: www.goodnewsunlimited.org.au

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God's Odds: How to Win the Wager

Desmond Ford

Our daily choices are governed by our personal philosophy.

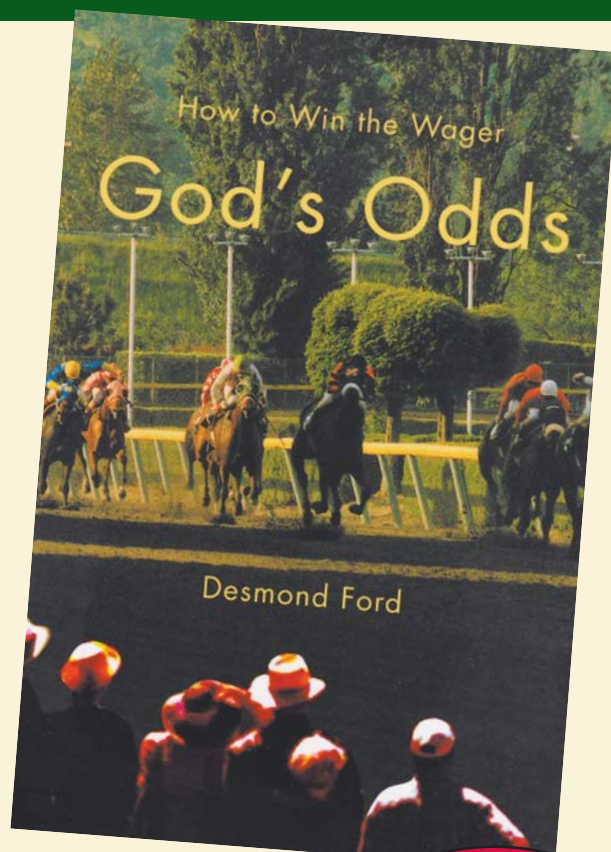
For all action some hypothesis about the origin and nature of the universe and humanity must be adopted, whether consciously or unconsciously. We act according to prior decisions as to what has value and whether there is meaning to life. The question regarding what is good and what should be is answered by our personal decision regarding the beginning of all things. Are we just dirt plus time plus chance, or are we the children of a loving heavenly Father? This book sets forth the odds that the God spoken of in the Christian Bible are overwhelming, and that therefore the Christian faith is the best basis for every life.

Born in Townsville, in Queensland, Australia, Desmond Ford is a semi-retired pastor, evangelist, teacher, and author of over thirty books. He was the Director of Good News Unlimited, a parachurch ministry in California for almost twenty-five years.

Desmond Ford has two earned doctorates from Michigan State University (USA) and Manchester University (UK). He hosted the Worth More Than a Million TV show and daily and weekly radio broadcasts in the USA, Australia, and Canada.

58 pp.

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INTO ALL THE

World...

The Gospel to the Nations

ELIEZER GONZALEZ PhD

GOOD NEWS UNLIMITED is not a church, but it is always part of the church. We are just Christians who love the gospel. As such, we are always part of the church, because wherever we gather in Jesus' name, whether in person or around a live broadcast of the gospel or via Facebook, Jesus is there also.

For this reason, Good News Unlimited has developed and recently launched a simple document called **Gospel Fellowships – The Manual**. What this little manual describes is New Testament church at its finest! This document is free for people to use and to copy around the world, for the enlargement of the kingdom of Jesus, and for the salvation of souls.

Already this little manual is being used in Europe and in Africa, and it is being translated into French, Spanish, and a number of African languages. We even have a specific version for African culture.

We are already receiving excited messages from various countries, from people who are saying to us, after using this method, things like: "We are so excited to discover this! We had never seen the gospel like this before in this passage." You see, there are many people who will never set foot in a traditional church, but who will readily come

to someone's home for a meal and spiritual discussion. That's the New Testament way.

If you would like to see this manual, you can download it from:

<http://www.goodnewsunlimited.org.au/resources/good-news-small-groups/>

Truly, the Lord is doing amazing things, and we are praying that small groups will continue to spring up everywhere around the world, and that through these, tens of thousands, and even millions of people, will come into a saving knowledge of salvation by faith in Jesus alone.

It is evident that although the message of GNU hasn't changed, the shape of its ministry is rapidly changing. How do we communicate with these pastors and ministries and gospel fellowships around the world? **How do we deliver powerful gospel messages?** We do it through technology such as video broadcasts and social media. We know that in Europe, the USA, and in Africa, there are people who wake up very early every Saturday morning to view our broadcasts, and to translate them into different languages to share with others.

That's why we have launched this appeal during December – January, and we have called the **"Gospel to the Nations Appeal"**.

There are many ways in which you help. Allow the Lord to lead you. You can help us to acquire the means to take the gospel to the nations. You can start a Gospel Fellowship right where you are. Have a look at the manual and see how easy it is! You can pray for us. (As I write this, the board of GNU is in the middle of its very own week of prayer!) But whatever you do, don't do nothing; it is because **Jesus did something for you**, that you are reading this today.



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Tweed Heads South NSW 2486
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