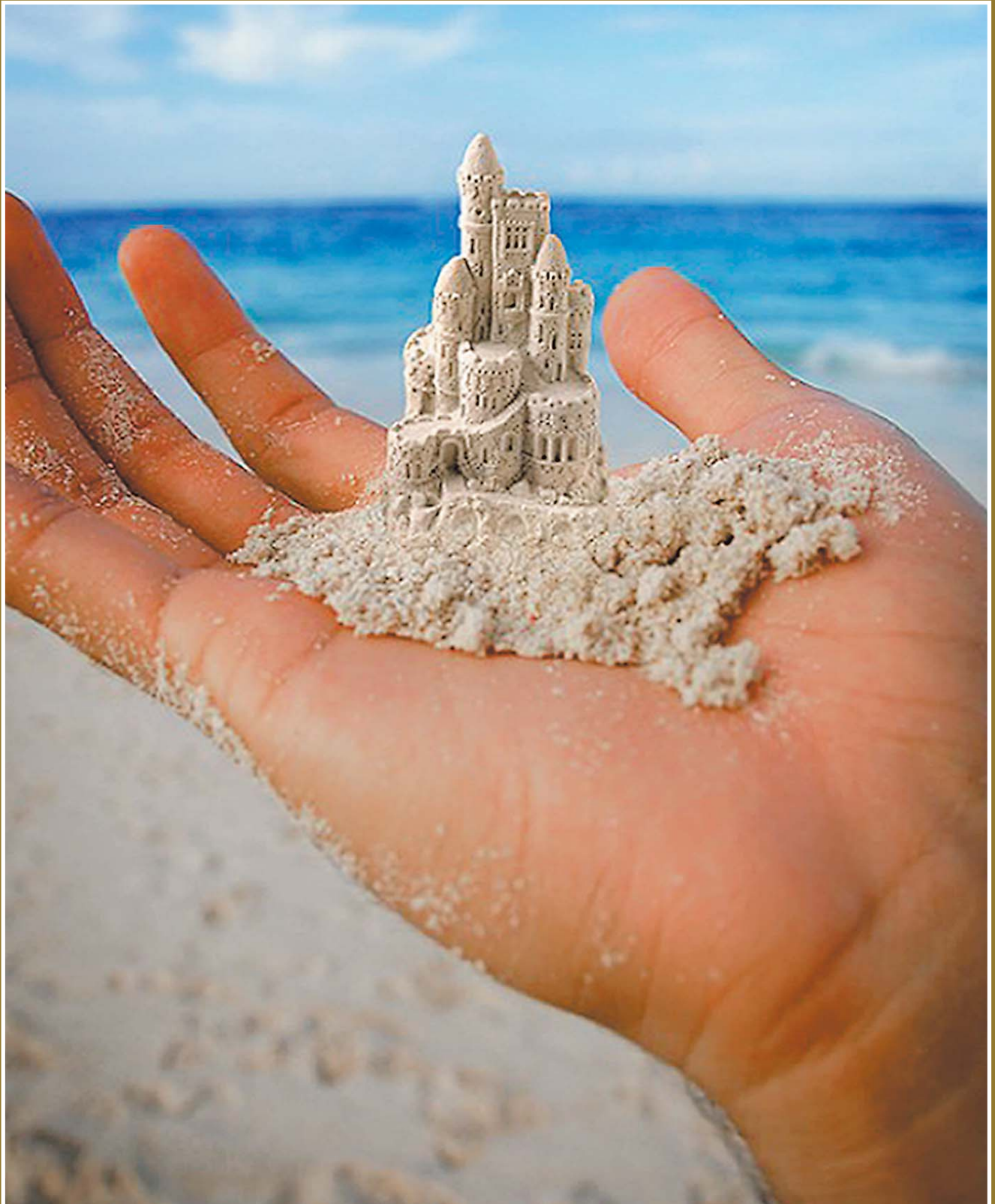


good news *Unlimited*

May 2013 • Issue No. 4

CHRIST ALONE • GRACE ALONE • FAITH ALONE • SCRIPTURE ALONE



| On Building Sandcastles | God's Odds |

Come and Join Us!



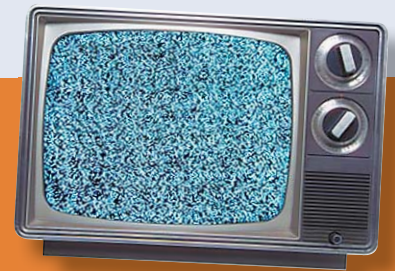
On 30 March 2013, at 2:00 p.m., Saturday, Good News Unlimited began a weekly fellowship in Brisbane.

These meetings have replaced our twice-monthly meetings at Peachester.

The last meeting at Peachester took place on the 23rd March 2013.

Des, Gill and Elenne Ford, as well as Ron and Carmen Allen and Good News Unlimited's friends and acquaintances invite you to attend when you are able.

Here is Des's invitation:



The greatest threat for humanity in the 21st Century is not nuclear war, disease, poverty, hunger or economic distress. It is secularism—the practice of the absence of God epitomised by the box, which makes idiots of those that spend many hours a day watching it.

Our only life solution is the One who said, 'I am the way, the truth and the life'. The world has never known anyone like the child born at Bethlehem, who grew up at Nazareth. He is the only teacher who avoided the trivial, the false and the temporal. He always focussed on the eternal and the universal.

Jesus is the only teacher in millennia whose words need no correction, despite the progress of knowledge over the aeons. When one reads today the teachings of Plato and Aristotle, they contain much that is false and ludicrous. This is not true of the words of Christ.

Consider the heights and depths of His claims: 'Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away'. What is more evanescent than words, and what is more enduring than the heavens and the death? Only Christ out of the ten billion people who have walked this globe could make

such a claim. And the centuries have substantiated it.

'This gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come'.

'I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life'.

'Whoever comes to me I will in no wise cast out'.

'All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men'.

Is it not sanity to put first the One who is the FIRST? Is it not wisdom to attend most to what is most rather than to the puffs of smoke secularism offers us?

'What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?'

VENUE:

Good News Fellowship
237 Milton Road, Milton QLD 4064

DIRECTIONS:

Opposite Milton Railway station—use pedestrian tunnel under Milton Road and then walk towards XXXX Brewery. Venue is last building on left before brewery.

PARKING:

Limited free parking space is available. Reserve your parking space ahead of time by emailing Carolyn at admin@goodnewsunlimited.org.au

Editorial

Gambling addiction is fast becoming a major mental illness.

It causes people, who are otherwise sane, to take insane risks. Just today I read in the paper about a parish priest who gambled away \$150,000 of Cathedral funds on the pokies. Many addicts live for the adrenalin rush involved in the risk. Others, who can't afford to gamble, take risks with their money in the hope that they will get the riches they need to pay off their crippling debt burden, only to find themselves deeper in debt than before. The American Insurance Institute estimated that 40 percent of all white-collar crime is committed by compulsive gamblers.

When I was doing my engineering apprenticeship in the New Zealand Government Railway Workshops at Woburn, it was the custom for many tradesmen, on the last day of work before the Christmas holidays, to go to the Foundry with their holiday pay, to try their luck at the gambling tables that had been set up there. There were heartbreaking cases where some men had to go home and tell their wives and children there would be no Christmas presents or

holidays that year, because they had gambled away all their holiday pay. That knowledge made me so angry at the injustice of gambling that I determined I would never take part in it from that day forward. And I have not.

Gambling is so endemic that it seems that nothing can escape its poisonous tentacles. It has corrupted the sports of cricket, boxing, ice hockey and football. Large sums of money are passed under the table as an inducement to 'throw' a match.

The glories of Lotto are presented nightly on the television screen. Irresistible prizes have people trooping to the Lotto shop for tickets just before a draw. Have you noticed that each time someone wins at Lotto, their story is broadcast widely to induce others to give it a go? It's a fallacy, however, to think that if Joe Bloggs in Tinpot Town can win a major prize in Lotto, then I can too, for the chance of winning a major prize is almost infinitesimal. I wonder how many people would buy a Lotto ticket if Lotto's advertisements told the whole truth. For example: 'Have you considered that out of every one hundred purchasers of our Lotto tickets only ten will get a prize. And most of these ten prizes will be quite small. The other ninety purchasers will not even win back the cost of their ticket'.

I was told by the owner of a shop that sold lottery tickets that tickets never sell better than in times when the economy is depressed. 'People,' he said, 'would rather give up their weekly magazine or paper



RITCHIE WAY

than forego buying a lottery ticket'. It seems the poorer people are, the more desperate they get for easy money. And with all their outgoings on gambling, the greater their desperation becomes. Haggai has a warning for all who seek to get rich by gambling: 'You have planted much, but have harvested little.... You earn wages, only to put them in a purse with holes in it' (Hag. 1:6).

A high percentage of suicides are gamblers whose gambling debts got out of control. Researcher David Phillips, professor of sociology, compared suicide statistics across the USA and discovered much higher suicide rates in cities with casinos compared to those without.

If it's almost impossible to guess the number of a single ball that is scooped from the bowl of numbers on the night of a draw, let alone correctly guess several in a row, in exact order, what chance do you really have of winning? The only sure way to win at Lotto is to put your ticket money in the bank each week, and at the year-end you will have something worthwhile. And it's guaranteed. The blessing of the LORD brings wealth, and he adds no trouble to it (Prov. 10:22).



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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.



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On Building Sandcastles

Is trying hard really worth it?

DESMOND FORD

There are many conscientious Christians who scorn delights and live laborious days. Perhaps too often, those days are long and the accompanying nights short, even to the risk of health. Is it worth it? Is it right?

MANY OF US remember as children drawing lines in the sand or making castles there, and then watching as later the waves removed all traces of our effort. Is this a parable of all human activity? Will whatever we do be just as ephemeral compared with eternity as our lines or castles in the sand? How significant are human choices and human efforts? Can intense effort for altruistic reasons be shown to be justifiable or are such efforts another form of human folly?

Our question has often been paralleled by other writers. One asked concerning human activity: 'What is it all but the murmur of gnats, in the gleam of a million, million suns?' Camus once asked the question: 'Why should we not all suicide?' However startling that inquiry may be, it is perfectly valid. Human beings endure monotony and trauma. Perhaps in most cases it is only illusory hopes that keep people going in the battle of life. We are always anticipating that things will get better. Of course, in one respect, they never get better—we are inevitably getting

older and weaker and nearer the grave. Because of the human facility for hope, myriads struggle on against what seem to be overwhelming odds. Children in difficult circumstances, or circumstances they imagine to be difficult, are sustained by the hope that one day they will be grown up. Youth are sustained by the hope that one day they will marry either the most beautiful or the most handsome person in the world and that they will find a work that will fulfill all their ambitions and employ all their talents. The average nine-to-five worker may be impelled onwards by the hope that one day he or she will be promoted. For most of the middle-aged, for whom such dreams have proved to be anything but that, retirement beckons—a pleasant home in sunny Florida. But unless folks are believers, that's the last hope.

We are confronted again by the platitude that 'if the end of life is a zero, then everything else leading up to that end is likewise a zero'. This, of course, was the position of Bertrand Russell and millions who have believed as he did. Here is Russell's famous statement:

That man is the product of causes which had no pre-vision of the end they were achieving; that his origin, his growth, his hopes and fears, his loves and beliefs, are but the outcome of accidental collocations of atoms, that no fire, no heroism, no intensity of thought and feeling, can preserve an individual life beyond the grave; that all the labour of the ages, all the devotion, all the inspiration, all the noon-day brightness of human genius, are destined to extinction in the vast death of the solar system, and that the whole temple of man's achievement must inevitably be buried beneath the debris of a universe in ruins—all these things, if not quite beyond dispute, are yet so nearly certain, that no philosophy which rejects them can hope to stand. Only within the scaffolding of these truths, only on the firm foundation of unyielding despair, can the soul's habitation henceforth be safely built.

(*A Free Man's Worship*, Portland, Maine: Thomas Mosher, 1927, pp.6-7)

You may have heard of the little dog whose box lost its label in transit on the train. As the train came to its final halt, a stationmaster desperately put on a new tag: Here is nobody, from nowhere, going no place. Is this true of us all? Max Scheler says: 'We are the first epoch in which man has become fully and thoroughly problematic to himself; which he no longer knows

what he is essentially, but at the same time knows that he doesn't know' (quoted in *The Guardian*, March 4 1949). Emil Brunner spoke similarly: 'Not only is the world full of riddles; he himself, who asks the riddles, has become a riddle' (Man in Revolt, quoted by S. D. Babbidge in *Man in Nature and Grace*, Introduction, p. 6).

Beginning with the teachings of Charles Darwin and climaxed by those of Friedrich Nietzsche, the idea of the death of God spread like a malaise over the Western world during the last half of the nineteenth century. But the death of God brings with it inevitably the death of man. All that is left is matter. Senseless, inchoate, chance-spawned matter! And if man is not made in the image of God, then he can be forced into the image of society by totalitarian states. And so it has been in this century, which has witnessed the murder of over 100 million people by governments believing in such philosophies. Albert Camus rightly analysed the present problem of humanity. 'Up till now man derived his coherence from his Creator. But from the moment that he consecrates his rupture with him, he finds himself delivered over to the fleeting moment and to wasted sensibility' (*The Rebel*, New York: Vintage Books, 1956, p. 47). Ionesco echoed the same sentiment when he asserted that 'cut off from his religious, metaphysical and transcendental roots, man is lost; all his actions become senseless, absurd, useless' (cited by Martin Esslin, *Theatre of the Absurd*, New York: Doubleday, 1961, p. xix). No wonder that Nietzsche asked the questions: 'Is there still an up and a down? Are we not wandering aimlessly through an infinite void? Does not an empty space breath upon us? Has it not grown colder?' (*The Portable Nietzsche*, Section 125, pp. 95ff).

Paul Tillich got it right when he said that 'God died in the nineteenth century, and man in the twentieth'. And Berdyaev asserted: 'Where there is no God, there is no man'.

All of which helps us to understand the terrible *angst* of our generation, its terrible meaninglessness and despair. Because of this, people try one chloroform mask after another: drugs, illicit sex, a mad rush for power and wealth, etc. But the purpose of this article is to inquire whether those who do not believe these things have a valid case for their differing lifestyle to the worldling. Is it worthwhile to continuously try hard? Is it worthwhile and reasonable and right to strive to be conscientious in all one does? The genius Pascal gave a short answer to this, and here it is:

Let us examine this point then, and say: God is or he is not. But to which side shall we incline? Reason cannot decide it at all. There is an infinite chaos that separates us. A game is being played, at

the extremity of this infinite distance, in which heads or tails must come up. Which will you take? By reason you can wager on neither; by reason you can hinder neither from winning.

Do not, then, charge with falsehood those who have made a choice; for you know nothing about it. No, but I blame them for having made, not this choice, but a choice; for, although he who takes heads, and the other are in the same fault, they are both in fault; the proper way is not to wager.

Yes, but you must wager: this is not voluntary; you are embarked. Which will take then? Let us see. Since a choice must be made, let us see which interests you the least. You have two things to lose, the true and the good; and two things to stake, your reason and your will, your knowledge and your beatitude; and your nature has two things to shun, error and misery. Your reason is not more wounded, since a choice must necessarily be made, in choosing one rather than the other. Here is the point eliminated; but your beatitude? Let us weigh the gain and the loss, in taking heads that God exists. Let us weigh these two cases: If you gain, you gain all; if you lose, you lose nothing. ... If there are as many chances on one side as there are on the other, the game is playing even; and then the certainty of what we hazard is equal to the uncertainty of the game: so far is it from being infinitely distanced. And thus our proposition is of infinite force, when there is the finite to hazard in a play where the chances of gain and loss are equal, and the infinite to gain. This is then demonstrative; and if men are capable of any truths, this is one of them.

(*Pensées*, Section 233)

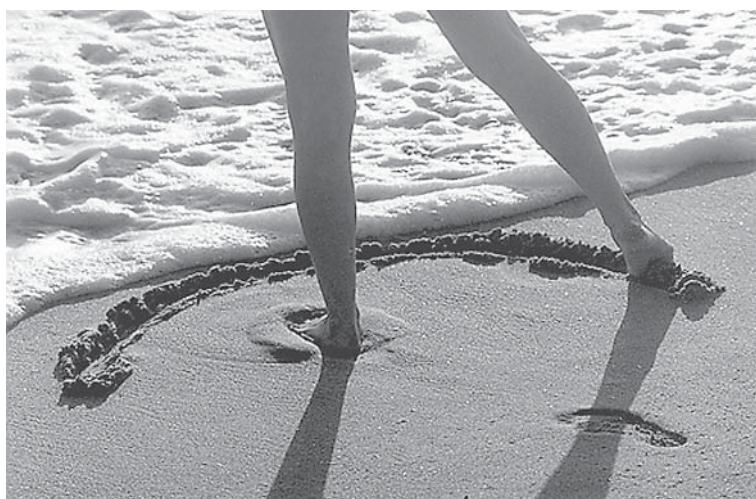
In other words, Pascal is saying that the unbeliever has everything to lose and nothing to win, whereas for the believer it is the opposite. However, it should also be

said that the odds are more than even. The human spirit instinctively believes in values and in right. Intuitively, we are committed to meaning, rather than to meaninglessness. Intuitively, we know that love is better than hate, and truth better than error, and honesty better than theft.

Absolute demonstration of any infinite truth is beyond finite beings. The most we can ever hope for is a weight of evidence. Even for matters in our finite world, absolute proof is impossible as a rule. It would require perfect measuring instruments, an infinity of observations and complete objectivity. None of these are available to mortals. All of our universe as we know it has a recognisable pattern, and we can reason from one part of that pattern to another, but we cannot logically reason from the pattern to what is beyond the pattern with dogmatism. Thus, the forcefulness of Emerson's remark that 'when God wants to win an argument, he puts the evidences in our instincts'. Aware of a world that is permeated with unnecessary luxuries, a reasonable person is inclined to the belief that its Creator loves us. The rational person, in all honesty, must inquire as follows: 'Why is every touch not a sting? Why is every sight not ugly? Why is not every sound a discord? Why is not every odour offensive?'

Our senses have obviously been so made as to give us pleasure, and the world is made to match our senses. Whether we consider the macrocosm or the microcosm, a multiplicity of evidence indicates design. Were we closer to the sun, we would burn up; were we further away, we would freeze up. Were the moon larger, we would be deluged continually with tidal waves and flooding. If the proportion of oxygen in the air were greater, life could not be sustained because of flammability. And if one turns to consider the mystery of the human cell, one finds it has within itself a myriad of mysterious and wonderful inventions, all of which are necessary for our happy survival.

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But many amongst us plead the privilege of being agnostic. If absolute demonstration of the deity is impossible, why not be content with taking a neutral stand? Answer: because it is not possible to be neutral. Every choice we make is based on an interpretation of the universe. Every moment in life as we choose we are guided by some conviction as to what is good or what is not good, and what ought to be. As Edwyn Bevin said in his excellent book *Symbolism and Belief*:

The unarrestable advance of time pushes you, every moment of your conscious life, willy-nilly into action of some kind, and action necessarily presupposes some hypothesis regarding the Ground of the Universe. You are not securing yourself against the possibility of mistake if you decide to act on the hypothesis that there is no God, but the Ground of the Universe is wholly indifferent to the values, which the spirit of man recognises. You are acting just as much on an unproved hypothesis as the man who adjusts his action to belief that God is. And your action may turn out to have been defective because your hypothesis was wrong. (p. 332)

The same writer points out that those who adopt the view that the universe is indifferent to human values are adopting a dreary hypothesis that cannot be proven. Such people might as well conclude that the universe was not only indifferent, but actually controlled by an evil will.

There, the situation stands in all its starkness. The necessity of action commits us to some belief about the nature of existence. In fact, a suspended judgement is not possible. And in view of the fact that all people (psychopaths excepted) instinctively believe in invisible values should incline us to faith rather than unbelief.

On Building Sandcastles

The man who has been called America's foremost philosopher, William James, saw the sense of all this. He wrote at length on the matter of religion and was particularly interested in what he called 'the will to believe'. He would have agreed with Solzhenitsyn that 'secularism is horribly pessimistic'. William James recognised what Dietrich Bonhoeffer called the 'God-shaped blank in the soul'. The book by James entitled, *The Variety of the Religious Experience*, shows the inclinations of James towards the sunny side of faith. But it is particularly his well-known essay, 'The Will to Believe', to which we would now refer our readers. In this essay, he distinguished between momentous or trivial decisions. He believed the matter of religious decision to be momentous indeed. James rightly takes the same position as Bevin when he writes:

Our passionate nature not only lawfully may, but must, decide an option between propositions, whenever it is a genuine option that cannot by its nature be decided on intellectual grounds; for to say, under such circumstances, "do not decide, but leave the question open," is itself a passionate decision—just like deciding yes or no, and is attended with the same risk of losing the truth.

(Cited in *The World Treasury of Modern Religious Thought*, p. 101)

James enquires as to what is meant by the religious hypothesis, and he distinguishes it from science and morality:

Science says things are; morality says some things are better than other things; and religion says essentially two things.

First, she says that the best things are

the more eternal things, the overlapping things, the things in the universe that throw the last stone, so to speak, and say the final word. ... The second affirmation of religion is that we are better off even now if we believe her first affirmation to be true.

(*Ibid.*, p. 110)

William James closes his essay by a reference to Fitz-James Steven. He quotes from him as follows:

What do you think of yourself? What do you think of the world? ... These are questions with which all must deal as it seems good to them. They are riddles of the Sphinx, and in some way or other we must deal with them. ... In all important transactions of life, we have to take a leap in the dark. ... If we decide to leave the riddles unanswered, that is a choice; if we waiver in our answer, that, too, is a choice; but whatever choice we make, we make it at our peril. If a man chooses to turn his back altogether on God and the future, no one can prevent him; no one can show beyond reasonable doubt that he is mistaken. If a man thinks otherwise and acts as he thinks, I do not see that anyone can prove that he is mistaken. Each must act as he thinks best; and if he is wrong, so much the worse for him. We stand on a mountain pass in the midst of whirling snow and blinding mist, through which we get glimpses now and then of paths, which may be deceptive. If we stand still, we shall be frozen to death. If we take the wrong, we shall be dashed to pieces. We do not certainly know whether there is any right one. What must we do? "Be strong and of good courage." Act for the best, hope for the best, and take what comes. ... If death ends all, we cannot meet death better.

(*Ibid.*, pp. 113-4)

But now may I come to the clincher? One who seeks to know the truth, and is prepared to give all to find it, will find in Christ all that he is seeking. Christ is indeed the Light of the world, and those who follow him do not walk in darkness. There's nothing so effective for dispelling doubt as coming into contact with Christ. His words prove self-authenticating to the earnest seekers of truth.

Furthermore, they prove true in daily experience in a way that the words of no other teacher have ever proven true.

Yes, it is right to try hard. It is right to be conscientious. 'He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in most'. 'Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labour in the Lord is not in vain' (1 Cor. 15:58).





God's Odds

PART 1

DESMOND FORD

Pascal's Wager

It is doubtful whether of all earth's teeming multitudes there has arisen a greater genius than Blaise Pascal. While his life only spanned about half the years of modern men, he left a heritage surpassing all others of his generation.

Pascal's discoveries in science, his literary productions, and his contributions in philosophy and theology placed the world in his debt for all the years to come. Today he is best known for his famous wager written about the end of the 17th century, but reproduced innumerable times since then. Here it is:

Either God exists or he does not exist. But which view should be taken? Reason cannot answer this question. Imagine a coin is being spun which will come down heads or tails; how will you wager? Since a choice must be made, let us see where your real interest lies. You have two things at stake: truth and happiness.

What is the gain and the loss if you call heads, that God exists? If you win, you win everything; if you lose, you lose nothing. A gambler, where there is an equal chance of gain or loss, would place a bet if the possible gain was twice the possible loss. But here the possible gain is infinite, and the possible loss nothing.

Every gambler takes a certain risk for uncertain gain. Here you are taking a certain risk with the prospect either of infinite gain if you win, or no loss if you lose.

Me, Wager?

But must I wager? Why cannot I remain in a state of intellectual suspense?

Why not choose agnosticism, simply confessing that I do not know whether God exists, whether there is to be a judgment day, or whether there are eternal rewards and losses?

For many that option is appealing, but only if they have not thought it through. The fact is that we are all compelled to make a leap beyond experience. This is because our conscious moments call for unending choices, choices that are determined by our view of what is good.

There are many issues on which it is impossible to be neutral, and therefore we cannot act as though we are mere spectators of life. We are participants, like it or not. At birth we were launched on a giant conveyor belt called life, and there is no getting off till death.

All of us are committed. We are in constant transit and change involving decision-making, and these decisions depend on our view of reality, our conclusions regarding the nature of the universe and who we are and why we are here. Are we dirt plus time plus chance, or are we the children of a loving heavenly Father who is the omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent Creator, King, Redeemer, and Judge of all?

Edwyn Bevan in his Gifford Lectures put it this way:

For all action some hypothesis regarding the unseen Ground of the world-pattern must be adopted, whether unconsciously and implicitly, or consciously and expressly. (*Symbolism and Belief*, p. 331)

Our estimates of the essence of things determines whether we will take the easy road of conformity to current ills and injustices, or whether we will strive against the tide by pursuing an unseen good. Our voluntary acts make new realities, and they are dependent upon some hypothesis regarding the nature of our environment. Thus, Pascal's wager is relevant and unavoidable for all thoughtful people.

Is Wagering Worth the Bother?

Not only is the wager unavoidable, it is decidedly far more important in today's world than any of us has dreamed. Why? Poets know:

Things fall apart, the centre cannot hold

Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world

The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere

The ceremony of innocence is drowned.

—W. B. Yeats, *The Second Coming*

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Why is the world filled with violence, lewdness, greed, deception and a thousand other ills? Haven't you heard? It is because God is thought to be dead, and if there is no God then everything is permitted. 'The news of God's death has permeated, secularised and radically changed every aspect of Western thought and society'.

True, but some will say society is so bad with overwhelming chaos on all sides, why bother to make a choice? In the final analysis are not all such decisions meaningless and void of ultimate impact?

'Twere best at once to sink to peace,
Like birds the charming serpent draws,
To drop head-foremost in the jaws
Of vacant darkness and to cease.
—Lord Alfred Tennyson, *In Memoriam*

If it is true that 'earth is darkness at the core, and dust and ashes all that is', should we bother about anything? Robert Louis Stevenson offered an answer to that.

Poor soul, here for so little, cast among so many hardships, filled with so many desires so incommensurate and so inconsistent, savagely surrounded, savagery descended, irremediably condemned to prey upon his fellow-lives; who would have blamed him had he been a piece with his destiny and a being merely barbarous? And we look and behold him instead filled with imperfect virtues; infinitely childish, often admirably valiant, often touchingly kind; sitting down, amidst his momentary life, to debate of right and wrong and the attributes of the deity; rising up to do battle for an egg or an idea....

To touch the heart of his mystery, we find in him one thought, strange to the point of lunacy; the thought of duty; the

thought of something owing to himself, to his neighbour, to his God, an ideal of decency, to which he would rise if it were possible; a limit of shame below which, if it be possible, he will not stoop.
—*Pulvis et Umbra*

But isn't everything merely relative? Should we not shy away from any attempt to recommend absolutes? This view is the popular perversion of Einstein's great insight about the relativity of time and space. Actually there is no logical connection, and Einstein himself was horrified by this wrong trajectory.

The founder of the theory of Situation Ethics had this to say in the book of that title:

To be relative, of course, means to be relative to something. To be absolutely relative ... is to be inchoate, random, unpredictable, unjudgeable, meaningless, amoral.... There must be an absolute or norm of some kind if there is to be any true relativity.

(Joseph Fletcher, cited by Duncan Williams, *Trousered Apes*, p. 44)

Yet another excuse for moral passivity is supposedly founded on the teaching of modern existentialists, but it is significant that Camus in the fourth of his *Lettres à un ami allemand* attributed the development of Nazism and its horrors to the moral chaos created by an awareness of the absurdity of life.

C. S. Lewis in *The Abolition of Man* made his protest against the current view of the absurdity of existence:

Until quite modern times all teachers and even all men believed

God's Odds PART 1

the universe to be such that certain emotional reactions on our part could be either congruous or incongruous to it, believed, in fact, that objects did not merely receive but could *merit* our approval or disapproval, our reverence or our contempt.
(p. 25)

Lewis defended the doctrine of objective value: 'the belief that certain attitudes are really true and others really false to the kind of thing the universe is and the kind of things we are' (*Ibid.*, page 29).

If Pascal were living today he would repeat what he wrote centuries ago: 'To be mistaken in believing that the Christian religion is true is no great loss to anyone; but how dreadful to be mistaken in believing it to be false!'

There is a tremendous danger for all who cherish the excuses just discussed. The belief that life is without meaning and without laws inevitably leads to letting everything hang out unfettered. But as Duncan Williams wrote in his *Trousered Apes*: 'In the harsh world of reality the road of excess leads not to the palace of wisdom, but to the psychiatric couch or worse' (page 86).

We fear the truth lest in destroying our illusions it shatters our comfort. J. F. Kennedy was right when he said:

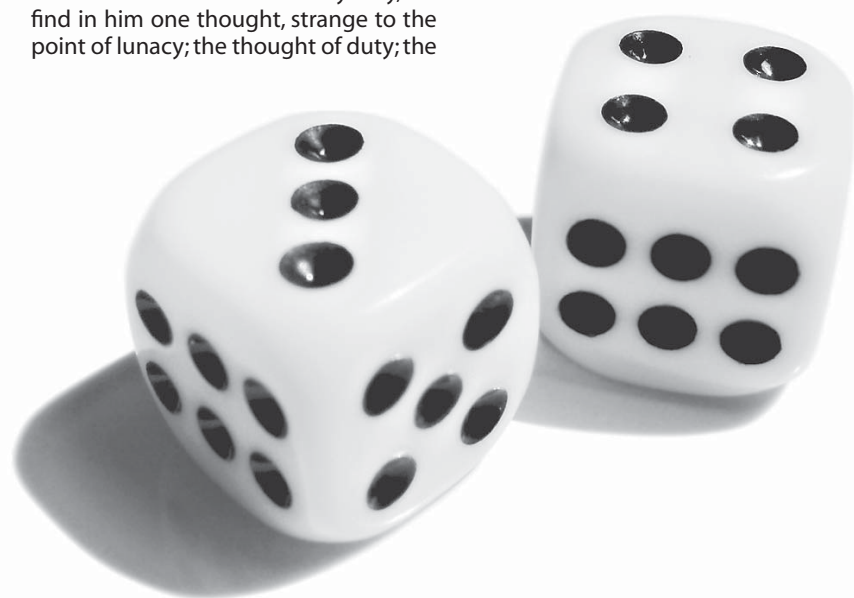
The great enemy of truth is very often not the lie—deliberate, committed, and dishonest, but the myth, persistent, persuasive, and unrealistic. Too often we hold to the clichés of our forebears. We subject all facts to a prefabricated set of interpretations. We enjoy the comfort of opinion without the discomfort of thought.

The most dangerous lie of our time is the prevailing cliché that God is dead. We have not noticed that if he is dead, man is dead also—all that remains is animated mud.

If after all we have lived or thought, all comes to naught
If there be nothing after now.
And we be nothing anyhow
And we know that—why live?

In *The Transparent Self*, Professor S. M. Jourard writes:

A person lives as long as he experiences his life as having meaning and value and as long as he has something to live for. As soon as meaning, value, and hope vanish from a person's experience, he begins to stop living; he begins to die.



The tale of two Kings:

Rehoboam and Jehoshaphat

RITCHIE WAY

Rehoboam

Rehoboam, being Solomon's eldest son, became king of Israel at the age of 41 when his father died. Solomon had overtaxed Israel to finance his huge building programme, his not inconsiderable harem, and his large diplomatic corps. When Rehoboam came to the throne the people begged him to reduce the burden of taxes and free labour that they had borne under Solomon.

The counsellors who had served Rehoboam's father recommended that if he was kind to these people and gave them a favourable answer, they would always be his servants (2 Chron. 10:7). But instead of listening to the men who had witnessed the negative side of Solomon's tax burdens, Rehoboam gave ear to those he had grown up with. Not wanting to appear to be a 'soft touch' or a weak king, he answered the people harshly, and let them know that they were little more than his slaves. They would do as he commanded, not as they wanted.

When the people rebelled, Rehoboam sent out Adoniram, the officer in charge of forced labour, to bring in a contingent of labourers for duty, but the people surrounded Adoniram and stoned him to death. Rehoboam escaped by leaping into his chariot and fleeing back to Jerusalem. From that time forward Jeroboam ruled the ten tribes in the north, leaving Rehoboam with the two southern tribes, Judah and Benjamin.

In spite of his initial mistake, which cost him the northern kingdom, Rehoboam demonstrated the administrative talents of his father by fortifying the fifteen cities of Judah and Benjamin and appointing his sons as mayors over them.



But, 'after Rehoboam's position as king was established and he had become strong, he ... abandoned the law of the LORD'. Egypt, which had been quiescent during the time of Solomon, suddenly came to life and attacked Judah with twelve hundred chariots, sixty divisions of cavalry and innumerable troops, including mercenaries from Libya, Sukk and Cush.

The prophet Shemaiah came to Rehoboam and his commanders and said to them, "You have abandoned me," says the LORD, "therefore I now abandon you to [Pharaoh] Shishak [Sheshonk I]".

When Shishak attacked Jerusalem he carried off the treasures of the temple of the LORD and the treasures of the royal palace. He took everything of value, including the gold shields that Solomon had made. (2 Chron. 12:9)

Solomon's great kingdom, with its chariot cities and super-efficient administration, was, in less than one generation, reduced to a fragment of its former glory. None of Solomon's 'riches' counted with God anyway. Rehoboam, who had started with everything he trusted in, ended up with none of it. He was a fool. He not only lost his earthly riches, he also forfeited the riches of eternity.

Jehoshaphat

Jehoshaphat's father, King Asa, was a good man who followed the Lord so closely large numbers of Israelites from the northern kingdom came over to him. The Lord worked powerfully for Asa, but when Asa, in the last years of his reign, chose the help of the king of Aram, instead of the Lord, Judah's enemies rose up against her.

Asa, in spite of this sin, left a lasting legacy in his son, Jehoshaphat, who 'took great pride in the ways of the Lord' (2 Chron. 17:6). In the third year of his reign he sent five court officials, nine Levites and two priests throughout all the towns of Judah to teach the people from the Scriptures.

Jehoshaphat kept his residence in Jerusalem but made a regular round of visits among the people, from Beersheba in the south to Mount Ephraim in the north, urging them to return to GOD, the God of their ancestors'. (2 Chron. 19:4 TMB)

He appointed judges in the land, in each of the fortified cities of Judah. He told them, "Consider carefully what you do, because you are not judging for man but for the LORD, who is with you whenever you give a verdict. Now let the fear of the LORD be upon you. Judge carefully, for with the LORD our God there is no injustice or partiality or bribery". (2 Chr. 19:5-7)

As a result of this loyalty to God the dread of the LORD came upon the countries surrounding Judah (17:10).

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However, three countries at a distance from Judah decided to form a coalition and come and strip Jehoshaphat's kingdom of its wealth, food stocks and animals. Some Judeans came and told Jehoshaphat that this vast army from the other side of the Dead Sea was on its way to rape and pillage the country, and they were already down at En Gedi on the western shore of the Dead Sea (2 Chr. 20:1-2).

Jehoshaphat wasted no time. He sent out runners proclaiming a fast and asking for representatives from every town in Judah to come immediately to Jerusalem. He assembled them in the new temple courtyard that he had constructed, and led them in prayer to the LORD:

O LORD, God of our fathers, are you not the God who is in heaven? You rule over the kingdoms of the nations. Power and might are in your hand, and no-one can withstand you. When this sanctuary was built by Solomon it was said: "If calamity comes upon us, whether the sword of judgement, or plague or famine, we will stand in your presence before this temple that bears your Name and will

cry out to you in our distress, and you will hear and save us." Lord, a coalition of three nations, Ammon, Moab, and Mt. Seir are on their way to take possession of our country. "O our God, will you not judge them? For we have no power to face this great army that is attacking us. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are upon you." (2 Chr. 20:5-12)

Then the Spirit of the Lord came upon the Levite, Jahaziel.... He said: "Listen King Jehoshaphat and all who live in Judah and Jerusalem! This is what the LORD says to you: 'Do not be afraid or discouraged because of this vast army. For the battle is not yours but God's.' (2 Chr. 20:14-15)

The next day Jehoshaphat went out with his army led by a male choir singing God's praise. They then watched in astonishment as two partners in the enemy's coalition slaughtered the third and then turned their fury on each other until not a soldier was left standing. After the astonishing slaughter Jehoshaphat and his men went

to carry off the plunder. There was such a large amount of equipment, clothing and articles of value it took them three full days to collect it.

As you might well imagine, Jehoshaphat went home to the temple, entering it singing praises to the LORD accompanied by harps, lutes and trumpets.

The fear of God came upon all the kingdoms around Judah when they heard how the LORD had fought against the enemies of Israel. "And the kingdom of Jehoshaphat was at peace, for his God had given him rest on every side" (2 Chron. 20:29-30)

The lessons we may learn from the lives of these two kings are fairly obvious. If you turn your back on the Lord, as did Rehoboam, you will also reject the peace and protection that his presence gives you.

Accept the Lord, and commit your life completely to him, as did Jehoshaphat, and his presence will give you peace in your heart and rest from your enemy. ❄

The Needy Host

The parable for this month, from Luke 11:5-13, is the story of the needy host. Jesus said:

Suppose one of you has a friend, and he goes to him at midnight and says, "Friend, lend me three loaves of bread, because a friend of mine on a journey has come to me, and I have nothing to set before him".

Then the one inside answers, "Don't bother me. The door is already locked, and my children are with me in bed. I can't get up and give you anything." I tell you, though he will not get up and give him the bread because he is his friend, yet because of the man's boldness he will get up and give him as much as he needs.

So I say to you: "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened".

Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!

This story is full of symbolism for Christians who have been given the commission to preach the gospel to the entire world.

Many of us will be able to identify with the man who had a friend come to him in the midnight of his spiritual journey.

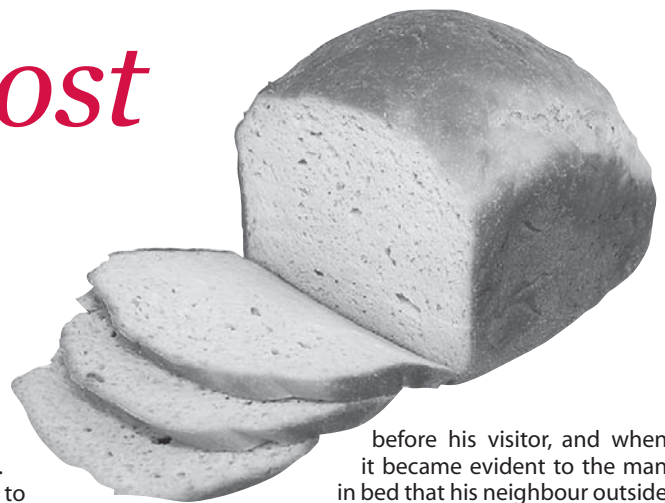
It was the custom, in those days, to set food before your visiting guests, but what do you do when your pantry is empty as this host's was. Then he remembered that a neighbour had baked a batch of bread just that day, and so he made his guest comfortable after which he slipped out the door and made for that home.

Midnight is not a good time to call on your friends, especially if you want to keep them as friends. But this man was desperate. When his persistent knocking finally aroused his sleeping neighbour, he was told to clear off because everyone was in bed and he didn't want to disturb the kids by getting up. In desperation the man outside pled for some bread to set

before his visitor, and when it became evident to the man in bed that his neighbour outside would not go away until he got some, with a sigh of resignation he got up and gave him what he needed.

In the same way, people come to us for help in the midnight of their lives, and we feel totally helpless and inadequate. What can we do to help? At a loss to know what to do we go to the Lord for help. And if the Lord sees that we really mean it, he will answer our prayer. If the reluctant neighbour gave bread to his friend, 'how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!' (Luke 11:13).

Jesus says, 'So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks the door will be opened' (Luke 11:9-10). ❄





David and Absalom

Part 6

RITCHIE WAY

FOR THE FIRST THIRD of his life David operated on adrenalin and testosterone. He was the energetic, brilliant, forward-thinking, consummate leader. But now we come to the second part of his life in which he seems to have relinquished leadership (except in a crisis) to his administrators. His failure to lead was especially evident in his role as a father. Not once did David ask of any of his rebellious sons, 'Why do you behave as you do?' (1 Kgs. 1:6).



David's problem was probably that he felt unworthy to correct his children because of his moral failure in regard to Bathsheba and Uriah. What should we, as parents, do in a similar situation? First, we should not abdicate our responsibility as parents. Second, we should make it clear to our children that their supreme example is not us, but the Lord Jesus Christ. They are to model their lives on him, not on fallible people.



Two of David's children—Absalom, a magnificent specimen of a man, and his stunning sister, Tamar—were born to Maacah, the daughter of King Talmai of Geshur. After Absalom killed his half-brother, Amnon, for raping Tamar, he fled north-east into a self-imposed three-year exile with his maternal grandfather, Talmai.

David had a soft spot for Absalom but seemed incapable of making a decision about his repatriation until General Joab interceded. David agreed that Absalom could return on condition that

he remained under semi-house arrest in Jerusalem. He lived this way for two years, during which a daughter was born to him. He named her Tamar, after his violated sister. Not once during these two years did Absalom see the face of his father. Once more Joab interceded on behalf of Absalom, with the result that there was apparent reconciliation between father and son.

Absalom's five years of enforced inactivity, however, gave him plenty of time to think. He thought a lot about how much better he could run the kingdom than his 'weak' father. Besides, he had lots of admirers.

In all Israel there was not a man so highly praised for his handsome appearance as Absalom. From the top of his head to the sole of his foot there was not a blemish in him. Whenever he cut the hair of his head—which he did when it became too heavy for him—he would weigh it, and its weight was over two kilograms. (2 Sam. 14:25-26)

Absalom, now David's eldest son, began to act like an upstart usurper of the throne of Israel. He provided himself with the trappings of royalty, such as a gilded chariot pulled by two magnificent horses, and fifty men to run ahead of him to clear the way and act as his personal body-guards (see Gen. 41:43; 1 Sam. 8:11; 2 Sam 15:1; 1 Kgs. 1:5). He would also get up early in the morning and stand near the city gate to meet the people who came to see the king for a judgement on some disputed matter. He would tell them that the king had not appointed a

representative to hear them, but if he were appointed judge (i.e., king) in the land, he would see that they got justice. He greeted the people warmly as though they were part of his own family, 'and so he stole the hearts of the men of Israel' (2 Sam. 15:6).



It would be foolish to believe that David was not aware of what Absalom was up to, but he was besotted with the young man. He felt he couldn't reprimand him because his own sins were greater, and so he just ignored his son's actions hoping that time would solve the problem for him. But a gorse bush is much more easily dealt with when it is only 30cm tall than when it becomes a heavily-branched, brittle-thorned threat, three metres high.

When we, like David, allow our personal baggage to overrule good sense so that we ignore a developing family or relationship problem, we open ourselves up to a bundle of problems down the track.

Should I ignore my increasing debt level, or my fragile and threatened relationship with my spouse or employer/employee, hoping that time will sort out the problem for me? Should I ignore my rebellious and self-centred child in the hope that the problem will fade with the passing years? That is what Eli, Samuel and David did, but in all three cases the problem intensified instead of fading away. David's unwillingness to check Absalom not only cost him the life of his beloved son, it opened the way for this divisive issue to gather momentum and split the royal household open so wide it divided the whole nation of Israel.

David and Absalom

When you become aware of a serious problem that is brewing, take ten, sit down and work out a strategy to resolve it. Then prayerfully implement that strategy. To ignore the problem, as David did, is to allow a small problem to develop into a disaster.



After four years of ingratiating himself with the citizens of Israel, Absalom deceptively asked the king for permission to go to Hebron to fulfil a vow he had made while in exile at Geshur. David, pleased with Absalom's commitment to fulfil his vow to the Lord, said, 'Go in peace.' Absalom went, but he did not 'go in peace', because his heart was set on war with his father, without whom he would be nothing. Before leaving Jerusalem he sent secret messengers throughout the tribes of Israel to say, 'As soon as you hear the sound of trumpets, shout, "Absalom is king in Hebron"'.

Ahithophel, David's trusted counsellor, cast his lot in with Absalom, and large numbers of people joined Absalom so that the conspiracy against David rapidly gained strength.



It is often the case that the multitude can become so focused on one or two negatives in their leader, that they overlook all the positives. And they can become so focused on one or two positives in a rival that they fail to see all the negatives. Those who are wise will seek to be balanced and prejudice-free in their judgements.

When David was told what Absalom was up to at Hebron, he realised that he didn't want to be trapped in Jerusalem. His speciality was in open-country warfare so he ordered an immediate exodus to a place where he would have the support of the local inhabitants. His entourage would take the road over the Mount of Olives and down to Jericho where it would cross the Jordan into Gilead. In Gilead they would make the city of Mahanaim in the northeast their base of operation, because in that place he would have room to choose his own battlefield and manoeuvre his troops.

The king set out, with his entire household following him, but he left ten concubines behind to take care of the palace in his absence. At the base of the Mount of Olives David stood to one side while his trusted army marched past, followed by the armed mercenaries: the Kerethites and Pelethites and six hundred Gittites, all seasoned warriors.

When Zadok the seer and Abiathar the priest with the Levites carrying the Ark of the Covenant came by, David stopped them and sent them back to Jerusalem. He told Zadok that they would be of greater help to him if they stayed in the city and found out what Absalom's intentions were. Once they had precise information they could get their sons, Ahimaaz and Jonathan, to deliver it to David who would wait for the news at the ford across the Jordan.

When the king and his party reached the top of the Mount of Olives, David's other counsellor, Hushai, came to him very distressed over the events that were transpiring. David told him to go to the city and pledge allegiance to Absalom in order to frustrate the advice that Ahithophel would give. He was then to tell Zadok and Abiathar what Absalom planned to do, and they would send the information to David.

Hushai arrived at Jerusalem as Absalom was entering the city. He went up to Absalom and said, 'Long live the king! Long live the king!' When Absalom questioned Hushai's loyalty, Hushai replied, 'Should not I serve the son as I served the father? I want to serve the one chosen by the LORD and by these people.'

Once in the city Absalom turned to Ahithophel and asked, 'What should my next move be?' Ahithophel replied, 'Lie with the concubines your father has left behind to care for the palace. Do it publicly so all Israel will know about it. They will then know that the break between you and your father is irreparable, and that will be good because such clear-cut opposition will help seal the commitment of those who follow you.'

So a tent was erected on the palace roof and Absalom went into it and lay with David's concubines, just as the prophet Nathan had predicted after David slept with Bathsheba. Nathan had told David at that time, 'What you have done in private, shall magnify and rebound upon you in public. And this calamity will come from your own household.'

Ahithophel then said to Absalom, 'Chose twelve thousand men and set out after David immediately while he is weary and weak. Strike him down before he gets himself organised.'

Absalom said, 'That is good advice. But before we act on it let's hear what Hushai would advise.'

Double-agent Hushai, playing on Absalom's anxiety about going to war against his father who had never lost a battle, contended as follows:

Ahithophel's advice is not good at this time. You know what your father is like. At this very moment he is as dangerous as a bear robbed of its cubs. Besides, your father is an experienced fighter and will not spend the night with the troops. He will be hidden away somewhere.

Then, skilfully manipulating Absalom's pride, Hushai added, 'My recommendation would be that you gather all Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, as numerous as the sand on the seashore, and with yourself leading them attack and overcome him wherever he may be found. If he withdraws into a city,



David and Absalom

demolish it stone by stone until not even a piece of it can be found'.

Absalom and his attendants said, 'The advice of Hushai is better than the advice of Ahithophel'. On hearing this Ahithophel, realising that Absalom's chances of defeating David were now nil, went home and killed himself.

After his meeting with Absalom, Hushai went to report to Zadok and Abiathar. He told them that it was important to advise David not to wait at the ford, but to cross over immediately to the other side in case Absalom changed his mind and chose to follow the counsel of Ahithophel.

The priests' sons, Jonathan and Ahimaaz, were on their way to give this message to David when they observed that they had been spotted by one of Absalom's spies. Knowing they would be arrested if caught, they slipped into a friend's place and climbed down into his well. The man put the lid on the well and his wife covered it with a cloth and scattered grain over it to dry in the sun.

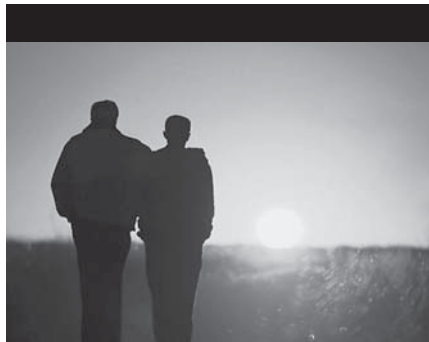
When Absalom's men came to the house and looked around they couldn't find the young men so asked the woman where they were. She told them that the last time she saw them they were on their way over the brook.

As soon as Absalom's men had gone, Jonathan and Ahimaaz climbed out of the well and ran all the way down to Jericho to tell David to cross the Jordan immediately. It took David's supporters all night to cross over, but by daybreak every last person was on the far side.

When David reached the city of Mahanaim, after a journey of 56 kilometres from the ford, some devoted followers who lived and farmed on the eastern side of the Jordan met him there. They brought him bedding, bowls, pottery, wheat, barley, flour and roasted grain, beans and lentils, honey and curds, a flock of sheep and cheese made from cows' milk (2 Sam. 17:27-29).

Next morning David mustered his foot soldiers and appointed over them commanders of hundreds and commanders of thousands. He divided the troops into three battalions: one under Joab, the second under Joab's brother, Abishai, and the mercenaries under Ittai the Gittite. He then commanded these three generals to 'be gentle with the young man Absalom'. With this conflicting advice ringing in their ears the army marched into the field to engage Absalom's troops.

It was David's plan to draw Absalom's troops into the forest of Ephraim where they could be isolated from their commanders and prevented by the deep ravines and wadis from fighting a conventional battle. This patchy forest, in the area south of where the Jabbok River flowed toward



the Jordan, grew on very rugged boulder-strewn land having many deep pits.

The casualties that day were very great, with twenty of Absalom's military units being isolated and destroyed. David's historian, Jehoshaphat (1 Kgs. 4:3), recorded that the forest itself claimed more lives that day than did the sword.

In the chaos that ensued Absalom himself ran into an elite band of David's troops. In his panic to escape, the mule on which he was riding fled under the thick branches of a large oak. Absalom, who had been looking over his shoulder, turned his head to notice, too late, that there was no room for him to avoid the spreading branches. As his mule raced under the tree Absalom's neck was forced into the fork of a branch, effectively throttling him and leaving him dangling in mid-air. One of David's soldiers reported this to Joab who took three javelins from his armour-bearers and, running to the spot, drove them into Absalom's heart. Absalom was then hauled out of the tree and thrown into a deep pit in the forest, and Joab's soldiers hurled rocks into the pit until there was a large pile over the would-be king.

At this point Joab sounded the trumpet to call off the battle, at which Absalom's dejected army sheathed their swords and set out for home. Joab then sent a runner with news of the victory to David. The first question David asked was, 'Is the young man Absalom safe?' When the messenger replied, 'May the enemies of my lord and king be like that young man', David was visibly shaken. He went up to his room above the gate and cried, 'Absalom! O my son, Absalom! If only I had died instead of you! O Absalom, my son Absalom!'

His voice was clearly heard by every soldier entering the city, and for the returning army the victory that day was turned into mourning. When Joab arrived back at Mahanaim and found out what was going on he stormed into David's presence and really rounded on him: 'Today you have humiliated all your men who have just

saved your life and the lives of your sons and daughters, wives and concubines. You love those who hate you, and hate those who love you. In fact, you have made it clear today that the commanders and their men mean nothing to you. I see that you would be pleased if Absalom were alive today and all of us were dead. Now go out and encourage your men, or I swear by the LORD that if you don't not a man will be left with you by nightfall'. So the king got up and took his seat in the gateway to welcome and congratulate his returning men.

A week or two later the people of Israel acknowledged they had been foolish to follow Absalom and agreed together to invite David back to Jerusalem as their ruler. The people of Judah, however, had to be cajoled into sending David an official invitation to return as their king. David, still angry that Joab has killed his favourite son, decided to replace General Joab with General Amasa, the commander of Absalom's army.

At the River Jordan the men of Israel got into an argument with the men of Judah about their loyalty to David, and the argument became so bitter that the Israelites sided with a trouble-maker named Sheba and deserted David (2 Sam. 20:1-2). When David got back to Jerusalem he appointed Amasa (not Joab), to gather the army together and go and capture the rebel Sheba before he could get himself organised and raise an army against David. When Amasa took longer than he should have, David ordered Abishai to take the troops that had come in and go and capture Sheba. At the great rock in Gibeon, just a few kilometres out of Jerusalem, they met Amasa. Joab saw this as an opportunity to eliminate his rival so he disembowelled him while giving him the kiss of death (2 Sam. 20:8-10). Joab, himself, then took command of the army.

At the city of Abel Beth Maacah in the far north, where Sheba and his troops were holed up, Joab built a siege ramp by which his soldiers could enter the city once they had cleared the top two or three courses of stone blocks. The city's inhabitants, however, rather than have David's army come and wreck havoc on them and their city, agreed to throw Sheba's head over the wall if the army called off its assault. Joab agreed to this, and returned to Jerusalem with the rebel's head.

Had David dealt with Absalom's disloyalty early in the piece, none of this national trauma would have taken place. But because he chose to ignore what Absalom was up to, the whole country descended into its first civil war, thus needlessly reinforcing the growing division between northern and southern Israel. ✨



Life in the Spirit

SANTO CALARCO

Many Christians believe that God gave his law in order to give mankind moral principles to live by. They blame the immorality of contemporary society on the fact that it has abandoned the Ten Commandments.

FOR THIS REASON there is a major push in the United States to have posters of the Ten Commandments placed in schools throughout that nation. Is this the answer? Will placing posters of the Ten Commandments in schools really change society's morals? If we take what Paul says about the role of the law seriously we would see that this approach is counterproductive and self-sabotaging. For Paul, the solution for changing society's morals comes only through having an intimate relationship with Jesus that is free from the condemnation of law.

Paul makes a number of statements about God's law that are startling. He says that the law cannot justify—that is, it can't give anyone a right standing with God (Rom. 3:19-20). As radical as that sounds Paul goes even further and tells us that the law cannot sanctify. Many well-intentioned Christians believe that holiness comes through a concerted effort to live in obedience to the law. But Paul says that the law can no more sanctify

than it can justify. In Romans chapters 1-5 Paul deals at length with the teaching on justification by faith—the basis of a person's right standing with God. Then in chapters 6-8 he discusses how Christians may live a holy life. In chapter 6 he tells us that we die to sin when we accept that Jesus died for these sins on the Cross. And because Jesus rose again from the dead, we too may rise up to a new and holy life in him.

In chapter 7 he goes one step further and says that in order to produce a holy life we must first die to a counterfeit righteousness that is based on obedience to the law. Only then will we be ready for Christ to come into our lives, through his Spirit, so we can bear fruit to God. The old counterfeit way of attaining a righteous life was through obedience to the written code; the new way of living a holy life is through the indwelling Spirit.

Paul, in describing his battle with sinful desires, says that sin 'seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment produced every kind of covetous desire!' He says that when the law came in, it put him to death (Rom. 7:7-12). The more Paul focussed on and tried to keep the commandments, as a Christian, the more he failed (Rom. 7:15-17). Why is this the case? Paul loved the law of God in his inner man (Rom. 7:22), but failed to obey it because he used the wrong strategy. He was focussing on the law rather than on the Spirit (Rom. 7:6). Here is the key to understanding this passage. He tells us that there is another villain in this whole scheme—a villain that confuses and frustrates him. He has an

'inner man' that attempts to obey the law of God, but continually fails because its nature is corrupt. Getting righteousness out of a sinful nature is like trying to purify milk by straining it through a coal sack.

What Paul finds is that the sinful nature, although legally dead in the eyes of God (Col. 2:11) is still very much alive experientially. This is a Pauline paradox that needs to be understood if victory is ever to be achieved. On the one hand Paul can say that we have put off the 'old man' and put on the 'new man' legally when we have accepted Jesus (see Col. 3:9 compared with Col. 2:11; Romans 6:1-6, 11). And on the other hand he calls the believer to also put off the old man and put on the new man experientially (Eph. 4:22, 24).

The secret that Paul discovered in his pursuit of holiness was that when he focussed his thoughts on obeying God's law this served only to stimulate and provoke the sinful nature into rebellious action. 'I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do but what I hate I do ... it is no longer I myself who do it but sin living in me' (Rom. 7:15-17). He says, 'I know that nothing good lives in me, that is in my sinful nature' (Rom. 7:18). Paul is plain. Focus on the law brings failure, it stimulates and arouses sinful passions and brings them to life (Rom. 7:5).

Paul says that prohibitions that come from external laws serve only to provoke rebellion from the sinful nature. The sinful nature will never be converted. Paul says it plainly, 'I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in the sinful nature a slave to the law of sin' (Rom. 7:25). The sinful nature

will never obey God; it can only rebel against God's law—it does not like to be told what to do. It is like this for the saved and unsaved—both have a sinful nature.

The upshot of all this is simple: holiness cannot come by focussing on the law. This was the lesson Paul learned through bitter experience. This does not mean that we cannot ever experience victory over sin in this life. Victory is attainable but it does not come by focussing on the law of God; it comes by allowing God's Spirit to create a new nature within us—a nature that reflects that of the Spirit himself. We now serve God through a holy life that is empowered by the indwelling Spirit (Rom. 7:6). Under the new covenant the Spirit writes God's laws in the minds and on the hearts of all who have been forgiven and who are in a saving relationship with God (Heb. 8:8-12). It is their new nature to live in harmony with God's laws.

Paul tells us in Romans 8:2, 'There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus *because* through Jesus the law of the Spirit of life has set me free from the law of sin and death'. Through the death of Jesus a new power came into operation. The Spirit of Jesus is now there to free us from 'a fated lifetime of brutal tyranny at the hands of sin and death'.



Those who think they can do it on their own end up obsessed with measuring their own moral muscle but never get around to exercising it in real life. Those who trust God's action in them find that God's Spirit is in them—living and breathing God. Obsession with self in these matters is a dead end; attention to God leads us out into the open, into a spacious, free life. Focusing on self is the opposite of focusing on God.... But if God himself has taken up residence in your life, you can hardly be thinking more of yourself than of him.

It stands to reason, does it not, that if the alive-and-present God who raised Jesus from the dead moves into your life, he will do the same thing in you that he did in Jesus, bringing you alive to himself? When God lives and breathes

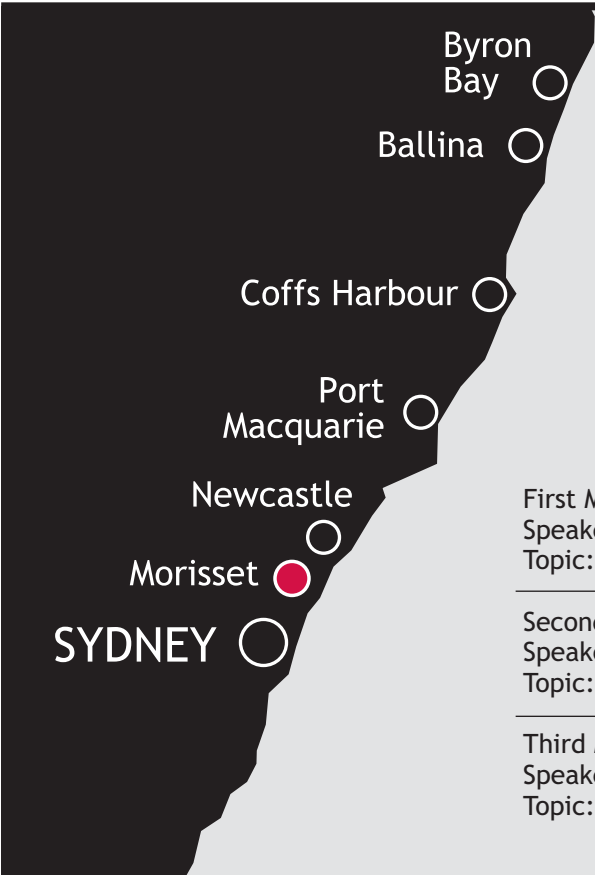
in you (and he does, as surely as he did in Jesus), you are delivered from that dead life. With his Spirit living in you, your body will be alive as Christ's!

So don't you see that we don't owe this old do-it-yourself life one red cent. There's nothing in it for us, nothing at all. The best thing to do is give it a decent burial and get on with your new life. God's Spirit beckons. There are things to do and places to go!

The resurrection life you received from God is not a timid, grave-tending life. It's adventurously expectant, greeting God with a childlike "What's next, Papa?" (Rom. 8:5-17, TMB)

The Spirit speaks to us. As long as you have faith in Jesus, you are never condemned because he was condemned on your behalf. Through faith in his death you are truly sons of God and this means that God is your daddy. You are safe, secure and always accepted in your daddy's presence.

This intimate love-interaction with our *abba* Father changes the heart and brings it into conformity to his will. 'If you love me you *will* keep my commandments'. This is a promise, not a commandment, to all Spirit-filled followers of Jesus. ❄



Cooranbong/Morrisset SEMINAR

Saturday, 15 June 2013

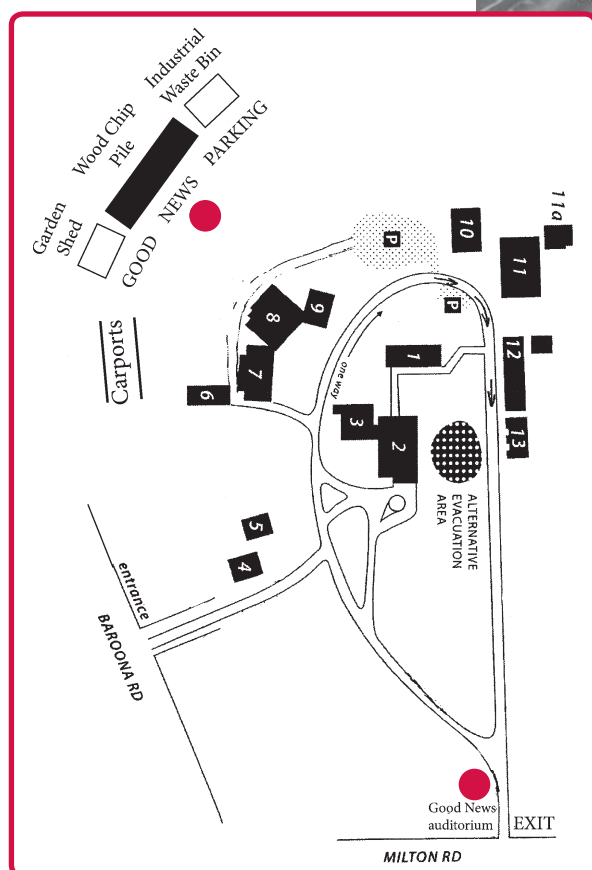
**Uniting Church Hall
cnr. Kahibah and Awaba Sts, Morisset**

First Meeting:	9:30 am
Speaker:	Dr Milton Hook
Topic:	The Gospel in the Sanctuary Service
<hr/>	
Second Meeting:	11:00 am
Speaker:	Pastor Desmond Ford
Topic:	The Gospel Key to Armageddon
<hr/>	
Third Meeting:	3:00 pm - 4:30 pm
Speaker:	Pastor Desmond Ford
Topic:	The Man of Sin versus the Gospel followed by Q & A session

GNU new Milton HQ

*Dear members
and supporters...*

The GNU Office at Industry Drive, Tweed Heads South, has been sold and closed as of 22 April 2013.



In the interim, all GNU operations will continue as normal under the administration of Carolyn Wagemaker from her home nearby, as operations are gradually moved to the Brisbane office.

The GNU P.O. Box number and phone number will remain the same until further notice.

The previous Peachester meetings led by Dr Desmond Ford are continuing on a weekly basis from 2:15 to 4:00 p.m. at the auditorium behind the

Royal Geographical Society of Queensland (RGSQ) building at 237 Milton Road, Brisbane.

The early starting time is because the building must be cleaned up and vacated by 4:30 p.m.

The venue is opposite Milton train station and next door to the XXXX Brewery).

The Tweed meetings led by Pastor Ron Allen held its last meeting at the Tweed office on 6 April. An alternative venue for future meetings will be announced soon.

EATING RIGHT FOR TYPE 2 DIABETES

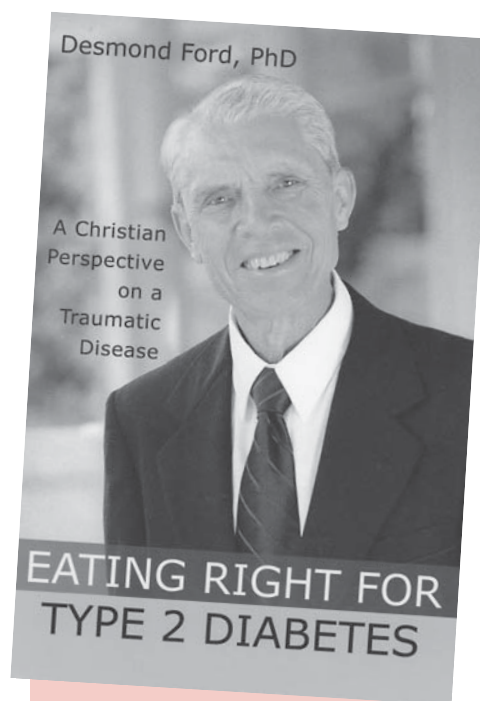
IN A WORLD where diabetes was once a rarity, it has now become an epidemic. At the present rate of increase it will become a pandemic later this century, affecting half the families of earth. Present therapies leave much to be desired. The use of diabetic pills is fraught with dangers and even insulin has its downside, though necessary for some. Many can pursue a better approach by knowledge and discipline. Right diet and adequate exercise are the best keys to the control of diabetes.

Inevitably, diabetes brings rigors and stressed that can threaten to be overwhelming. Often the sufferer is plunged into depression. In this battle, Christians can be 'more than conquerors', trusting in the One whose name is Love and whose absolute sovereignty extends even to a sparrow's fall.

This book gives counsel regarding the physical, mental and spiritual aspects of successful diabetic therapy and life-style changes. It can bring untold relief to many.

Dr Desmond Ford is a much-travelled speaker and author, well known to many through his TV and radio programs. He has now written on diabetes, which outstrips AIDS in its meteoric spread. From his own experience, Dr Ford offers the cutting edge of diabetic control. His book encapsulates a successful approach in order for the type 2 diabetic to keep positive and maintain his or her health.

Dr Ford lives on the Sunshine Coast in Queensland, Australia, and swims and jogs every day.



Here is the paradox of current therapy for diabetics. It is admitted that it is primarily the consumption of carbohydrates that raises blood sugar; yet diabetics are counselled to have a diet consisting chiefly of the very class of foods which cause their trouble. In almost all books on the topic, authors recommend 50-60 per cent of calories as carbohydrate. No wonder thousands of type 2 sufferers endure frustration three or more times a day as they endeavor to follow such impossible directions. I am, of course, referring chiefly to those diabetics not taking pills and/or insulin.

Diana W. Guthrie, R.N., Ph.D.,
and Richard A. Guthrie, M.D.,
The Diabetes Sourcebook, p. 21.

\$13.95

plus PP&H
109 pp
Code: 1ER0001

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Healthy Hints



The mental benefits of a good diet

A lot is known about the physical benefits of a good diet, but, until now, little has been known about the mental benefits of eating properly. In a report published in the *British Journal of Health and Psychology*, Dr. Tamlin Conner from Otago University in New Zealand said that research has shown that people who eat seven to eight servings of fruit and vegetables a day, instead of biscuits, potato chips, cakes and muffins, reported feeling calmer, happier and more energetic than usual.

Dr William Ferguson of Auckland said that his research, over a decade, has shown that many people eat their way into depression and anxiety. He says the human brain needs a complex and rich supply of vitamins, minerals, amino acids and other nutrients to keep the system running smoothly.

'A multinational study comparing the best diet with the worst diet showed the depression risk for those eating a diet high in fatty and processed foods is double that of those eating healthily', says Dr David Codyre, an Auckland psychiatrist.

International research suggests that the average Western diet increases the risk of developing depression, anxiety and ADHD. Surveys have revealed that regular fast food, such as hamburgers, that make people feel good, also have the subsequent effect of making them depressed.

A bowl of sugary cereal might give you a quick burst of energy but without some protein you'll be feeling flat before lunch. Carbohydrates are broken down very quickly, so blood sugar soars and the brain shuts down production of orexin, a neuropeptide responsible for feeling alert.

Eat some protein, good fats and some carbohydrates to control blood sugar and

so avoid getting a burst of glucose. Try scrambled eggs on whole-wheat toast, oatmeal with yogurt and a handful of seeds, nuts, or an omelet with tomato and mushrooms and a little cheese.

The Mediterranean diet

A Spanish study involving nearly 7500 people on a Mediterranean diet with plenty of olive oil and nuts, and which avoided baked foods and pastries, revealed they had a 30 per cent lower risk of having a heart attack or stroke over five years.

Dr Ramon Estruch, who reported this study in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, said what counted was the type of fats people were consuming. 'Extra virgin olive oil and nuts were probably responsible for most of the observed benefits of the Mediterranean diets.' ❄

Making Wise Decisions

PASTOR IAN

THE QUALITY of your life will be determined by the quality of decisions you make. Many people have difficulty in making decisions and, as a result of their indecisiveness, end up living frustrated, unfulfilled lives.

Sometimes people don't even recognize their indecisiveness as a problem; they think that everyone has such a hard time deciding. But most of us realise when we are being indecisive – we just don't know how to cure it.

One study, by Dr Theodore Rubin, has identified several types of 'pseudo' decisions. These are ways people typically react when they can't seem to make up their minds:

- **Procrastination:** We decide to 'wait and see what happens', or 'think about it some more'. Procrastination paralyses performance.
- **Ambivalence:** This occurs when we feel all of the options are of equal value or when we feel that because none of the options are perfect we can't decide.

- **Impulsiveness:** Impulsive decisions are not real decisions. They are a desperate attempt to 'just do something' in order to relieve fear, anxiety, guilt, or boredom. Impulsive decisions have a nasty habit of turning into disasters.
- **Co-dependency:** This happens when you develop the habit of always letting someone else decide for you. You yield your freedom of choice in exchange for false security.
- **Non-conformity:** Some people mask their insecurity by always deciding to do the opposite of whatever others do. They are compulsive rebels. They think they are expressing independence but actually they aren't. They are simply reactors. They have to wait and see what

others will do first before they can make a move.

- **Partial commitment:** These people try to walk on both sides of the road at the same time. They may call it 'Keeping my options open' but actually it is immaturity being demonstrated in fence-sitting. It's another way of avoiding a real decision.
- **Nostalgia:** You spend so much time thinking about the past and 'what might have been' that you avoid making the tough decisions you need to make today.

As an alternative I suggest you try praying about your decisions. Consider this:

Yes, if you want better insight and discernment, and are searching for them ... then wisdom will be given you ... (if) you learn the importance of reverence for the Lord and of trusting him. For the Lord grants wisdom. His every word is a treasure of knowledge and understanding. He grants good sense to the godly. He is their shield, protecting them and guarding their pathway. He shows how to distinguish right from wrong, how to find the right decision every time.

(Prov. 2:3-9 LB)



Noah's Ark

Everything I need to know, I learned from Noah's Ark.

- One:** Stay fit. When you're getting ready for retirement you may be asked to do something really big.
- Two:** Plan ahead. It wasn't raining when Noah built the Ark.
- Three:** Don't listen to critics; just get on with the job that needs to be done.
- Four:** Don't miss the boat.
- Five:** Remember that we are all in the same boat.
- Six:** No matter how bad it might be inside the boat, it's much worse outside.



- Seven:** Speed isn't as important as persistence. The snails were on board with the cheetahs.
- Eight:** The woodpeckers inside are a bigger threat than the storm outside.
- Nine:** Remember, the Ark was built by amateurs; the Titanic by professionals.
- Ten:** No matter the storm, there's always a rainbow waiting.

From the Pastor

'May I never boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ' (Gal. 6:14).

RON ALLEN

THERE WAS a time when Paul knew for a certainty that Jesus of Nazareth's crucifixion was by itself proof that he was not the Messiah. No self-respecting rabbi had ever conceived the notion of Israel's deliverer ending in such disgrace. To the Jews, crucifixion came under the purview of the law (Deut. 21:23), where any person hung on a tree was deemed to be cursed of God. The concentration of divine displeasure upon a corpse thus suspended was seen as a defilement of the whole land until it was cut down.

The Romans, who developed crucifixion into an art form, using it to terrorise and subdue conquered peoples, also regarded it with loathing. Cicero (a Roman philosopher) said, 'Far be the very name of the cross—not only from the body—but even from the thoughts, eyes and ears of Roman citizens'. Crucifixion, then, was the very abyss of degradation, condemnation

and shame for both Jews and their Roman rulers.

When Jesus was nailed to his cross, priests and teachers of the law who had opposed him felt vindicated in their unbelief. They were convinced that God would never let himself be linked in any way with such infamy. It just proved how wrong his disciples were. Who but sectarian madmen would want a crucified Messiah? Clearly, he was a deceiver.

All this logic had made perfect sense to Paul. But as he was on his way to Damascus to help exterminate the Christian movement there, he was met by the 'deceiver' himself, who spoke to him. And life was never the same again. Because he met Jesus personally, Paul came to believe that 'Christ crucified' was not an absurdity, but a fact. Because he came to know Jesus he could no longer denounce the One whom God had plainly vindicated. Because he met Jesus he learned that the world's redemption was by way of suffering; that

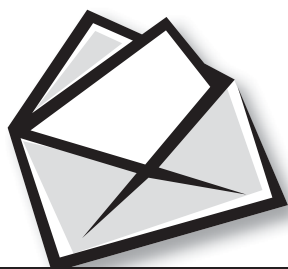
God had triumphed over the world through the foolishness of the Cross.

Whereas Paul had hated the very name of Jesus, now, because he met him and came to know him, he learned that Jesus loved him. He whom Paul had maligned, whose disciples he had persecuted, came to him and spoke to him as one concerned for him. Christ's ordeal on the cross—which Paul thought was well enough deserved—had been in his interest. While he had been angrily pursuing Christians, Christ had been mercifully pursuing him.

The cross became for Paul the banner of God's love. 'I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me' (Gal. 2:20). Instead of a curse, it became for him a fountain of blessing. The love revealed on the Cross eclipsed every notion of God that Paul had ever entertained. But it all happened when he came face to face with Jesus.

May the living Jesus meet you today, whatever your road. May the beauty of his person capture you; may his love win you.





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.



MISSIONARY JOHN

Dear Pastor Ritchie,

Jesus gave his disciples the commission to take the gospel into all the world. I understand that they were called apostles because they were 'sent' out as missionaries. History teaches that Mark went to North Africa, Thomas went to India, Peter went to Rome, etc. We know Herod executed James, so he didn't go anywhere. But John went to Ephesus. My question is, 'Why didn't John go on a missionary journey like the others?' John moved to Ephesus only after the work had been established there by the Apostle Paul.

C.D.

Ritchie's Reply

Dear C.,

Jesus gave John the primary duty of caring for his mother, Mary (John 19:26-27). We don't know why John moved to Ephesus. Maybe he lived in Ephesus because the strong body of Christians in that place would care for his aunt Mary while he was visiting other churches such as Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea. Maybe the elders in Ephesus called him to care for the expanding work there.

Not all people have the gift of public evangelism. John, more than any of the other ten apostles, was a writer who left a great legacy for the following generations. He wrote five books of the New Testament—the Gospel that bears his name, three letters and the Apocalypse, known as the book of Revelation. So, we can be grateful that John was given a gift that would bless the Church down through the ages.



THE BEST BIBLE

Dear Pastor Ritchie

Would you please kindly advise me as to the best Holy Bible all around for my particular needs, which are for reading and study purposes? I need one in the

most basic simple English without it being a Bible for juniors or kids?

Yours sincerely, K. L.

Ritchie's Reply

Dear K.,

I would suggest that you get a (CEV) Contemporary English Version Bible. It is well translated and simple to read. A hardback version should last you for several years and would not be too expensive.



THE CREATION OF THE INORGANIC EARTH

Dear Ritchie,

This is my reply to the letter 'Science and the Bible'. So many times one sees letters from readers who have blinkers on and cannot see beyond their religious pre-programming.

When one reads the first verses of the Bible without bias, it allows science and religion to live quite happily together. 'In the beginning God created the ... earth and it was ... without form and void, and darkness covered the face of the deep,' so obviously the planet was already in existence some time before God created life on it.

There is no suggestion of when that beginning was or how that related to God's next move. Only then does His Spirit begin the work of creation, beginning with his first act of creating light. Such people would do well to read the book, *Straight and Crooked Thinking*, by Robert H. Thouless, and avoid jumping to conclusions.

N.G.

Ritchie's Reply

Dear N.,

Many thanks for your letter. Your argument is the position taken by most of the SDA scientists working at the Geoscience Research Institute (GRI).

God bless.



SECOND COMING

Dear Editor,

My wife and I appreciate the GNU magazines very much and thank you for all the work you put into them. We don't know where you get the time.

A Jehovah's Witness man told me that Jesus came in 1914. When I pointed out that the Bible says every eye will see him when he comes, he responded by saying that every 'spiritual eye' did see him. Of course, according to them, only the Jehovah's Witnesses of that time had 'spiritual' eyes, which, to me, is a slight on all the other good Christians then living.

Then I remembered an article that you had written in which you pointed out that when Jesus comes every unspiritual eye will also see him. You quoted Matthew 24:30 and Revelation 1:7, where it says, 'Look, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; and all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of him.' That had him stumped. Thank you for that.

May God continue to bless you,
P.S.

Ritchie's Reply

Dear P.,

There were people back in the days of the Apostle Paul who taught that Jesus had come in their time. Paul wrote to the church in Thessalonica saying:

Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers, not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by some report ... saying that the day of the Lord has already come. Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction.' (2 Thess. 2:1-12)

Paul made it very clear that before Jesus returns the mainline church will go into apostasy and the antichrist (the

man of lawlessness) will set himself up in God's temple, which is the church (see 2 Corinthians 6:16 and Ephesians 2:19-22). This antichrist will assume all the prerogatives of God and will seek to change God's times and laws. But Jesus will return and destroy him.

So far there has been no total worldwide apostasy of the Christian Church, and the antichrist has not come and assumed full control of this fallen body. We can rightly conclude, therefore, that Jesus has not yet returned to Earth (Matt. 24:27).



HOW ARE WE SAVED?

Dear Ritchie,

Greetings! I was surprised to read your response to P.C. in the latest GNU magazine that a person cannot enter the kingdom except they are born again. That comes via head knowledge (1 Peter 1:23). Also, as I read Romans 10:9-17, I find that Paul tells us how a person is saved. A person cannot be saved without hearing the gospel.

Regards, R. C.

Ritchie's Reply

Dear R.,

While head knowledge doesn't save us, it always precedes salvation. Jesus spent a lot of time teaching the people with this purpose in mind. No doubt, you, like me, have met people who have a perfect head knowledge of the gospel, but they will miss out on eternal life because that knowledge never worked a change in their hearts.

While the new birth comes 'through the living and enduring word of God' (1 Pet. 1:23), the word is only a channel to bring the Holy Spirit into a person's

life. A person who is born again is born of the Spirit (John 3:5). In other words, when a person accepts that Jesus was lifted up on the Cross for their sins, and that he was also lifted up from death to life (John 3:14-15; Rom. 10:9), the Holy Spirit enters his/her empty heart, and he/she becomes a living temple for God's Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19). And where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is life—eternal life. 'If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ' (Rom. 8:9).



JOHN THE BAPTIST'S FAITH

Dear Editor,

I've been reading about John the Baptist who was put into prison by Herod Antipas because he dared to tell the tetrarch that he was sinning by marrying his brother's wife, who was also his niece. But while he was in prison it seemed his belief—that Jesus was the one the Scriptures said would come to reign over God's people—was a bit shaken. If Jesus was the one foretold by prophecy, why hadn't the Lord rescued him from incarceration? John sent his disciples to Jesus to ask him: 'Are you the one who was to come, or should we expect someone else?' (Luke 7:20). That is also my question: Why didn't Jesus rescue John from prison?

S.T.

Ritchie's Reply

Dear S.,

In his inaugural address Jesus declared, 'The Spirit of the Lord ... has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed to

proclaim the year of the Lord's favour (Luke 4:18-19). The day will come when Jesus will set free every prisoner of faith. Every sick believer will be healed and every dead follower will be raised to eternal life. However, this present age is the age of the spiritual, not the literal.

In this present age Jesus will set free, through the gospel, all who want to be liberated from spiritual bondage to Satan. He will open peoples' eyes to see the spiritual realities of his cross and resurrection and set free all that plead with him for release from their addictions and adverse circumstances.

When Jesus comes back, John the Baptist—who was free in his spirit, even though incarcerated in prison—will experience total and eternal freedom from oppression. He died looking through bars, but will be raised up in a land where no such barriers will ever imprison him again.



CAIN'S MARK

Hi Ritchie,

I have heard it said that the Hebrew letter used for the mark on Cain was a *taw* or a cross, but I cannot find any information on it myself. Can you shed any light on it?

Thank you. W.S.

Ritchie's Reply

Hi W.,

The mark of Ezekiel 9:4 that was placed on the heads of the righteous was the Hebrew letter *taw*, which, in those days, was in the shape of a cross. The word used for Cain's mark, however, was *oth*, which means 'a sign'.

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RUNNING**

1 and 15 June	7 and 21 September	7 December
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Dear members and supporters

The GNU premises at Industry Drive, Tweed Heads South has been sold and closed on 22 April 2013.

All GNU operations will continue as normal under the administration of Carolyn Wagemaker from her home not far from Tweed and operations will gradually be moved to the Brisbane office.

The GNU P.O. Box number and phone number will remain the same until further notice.

CITY AND COUNTRY SEMINARS

Cooranbong/Morisset

15 June 2013, 9:30 am – 4:30 pm

Venue:

Uniting Church Hall
cnr. Kahibah and Awaba Sts, Morisset

First meeting: 9:30 am
Speaker: Dr. Milton Hook
Topic: *The Gospel in the Sanctuary Service*

Second Meeting: 11:00 am
Speaker: Pastor Desmond Ford
Topic: *The Gospel Key to Armageddon*

Third Meeting: 3:00 – 4:30 pm
Speaker: Pastor Desmond Ford
Topic: *The Man of Sin versus the Gospel*

Followed by Q & A session

Ballina

13 July 2013, 10:00 am – 4:00 pm

Venue:

Ballina Island Motor Inn, Pacific Highway, Ballina NSW 2478

First meeting: 10:00 am
Speaker: Pastor Doug Martin
Topic: *The Crucifixion of Truth*

Second Meeting: 11:15 am
Speaker: Pastor Ron Allen
Topic: *Jonah: Man NOT on a Mission: Bus Drivers and Their ilk.*

Third Meeting: 2:00 pm
Speaker: Pastor Ron Allen
Topic: *Jonah: Man NOT on a Mission: To Hell and Back*

Brisbane

17 Aug 2013, 1:00 pm – 4:30 pm

Venue:

Good News Fellowship
237 Milton Road, Milton Qld 4064

DIRECTIONS: Opposite Milton Railway station—use pedestrian tunnel under Milton Road and then walk towards XXXX Brewery. Venue is last building on left before brewery.

PARKING: Limited free parking space is available. Reserve your parking space ahead of time by emailing Carolyn at admin@goodnewsunlimited.org.au.

First meeting: 1.30pm
Speaker: Pastor Des Ford
Topic: *The Gospel and Immortality—1*

Second Meeting: 3.00pm
Speaker: Pastor Desmond Ford
Topic: *The Gospel and Immortality—2*

Ballina

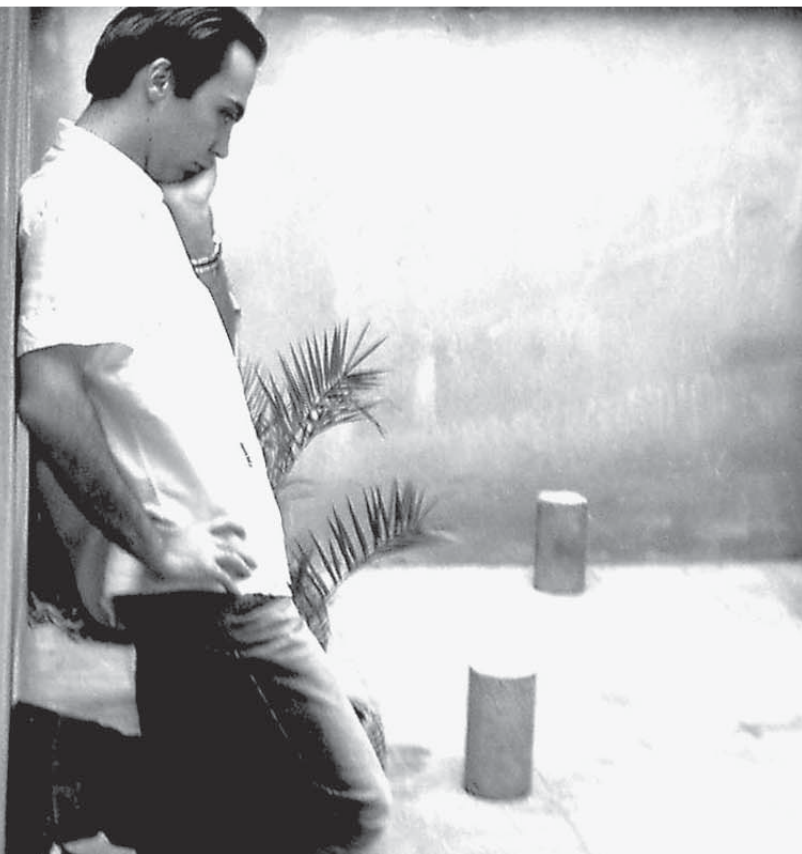
2 Nov 2013, (provisional)

Venue:

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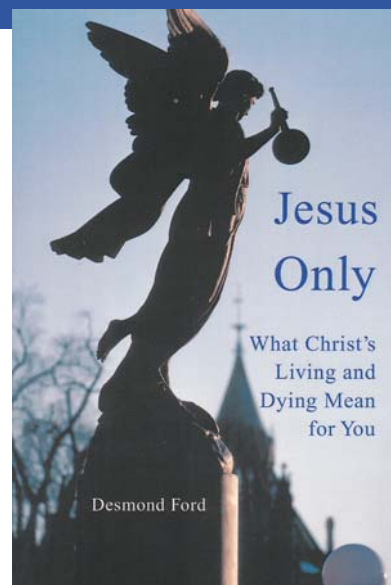


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This book is Christ-centred, Cross-centred and gospel-centred. Those who give it close attention will conclude that compared to the knowledge of the glad tidings from Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, all other knowledge is chaff. Gems from scores of Christian scholars are encapsulated in these pages. To gather them can make anyone richer than Solomon.

Desmond Ford was a seminary teacher for decades in USA, Canada and Australia. He has written approximately thirty books on theological and life-style themes, as well as lecturing over radio and TV for many years. Ford has a strong interest in helping young people entering the ministry, and his wife is a strong supporter in all his efforts to that end.



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The heart of the gospel is forgiveness. Jesus' last words to his disciples were: 'Repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in my name to all nations ...'

— (Luke 24:46).

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