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CHRIST ALONE • GRACE ALONE • FAITH ALONE • SCRIPTURE ALONE



| The Work of the Gospel in Africa

| The Crucifixion of Truth

God's Odds: How to Win the Wager

Desmond Ford

Our daily choices are governed by our personal philosophy.

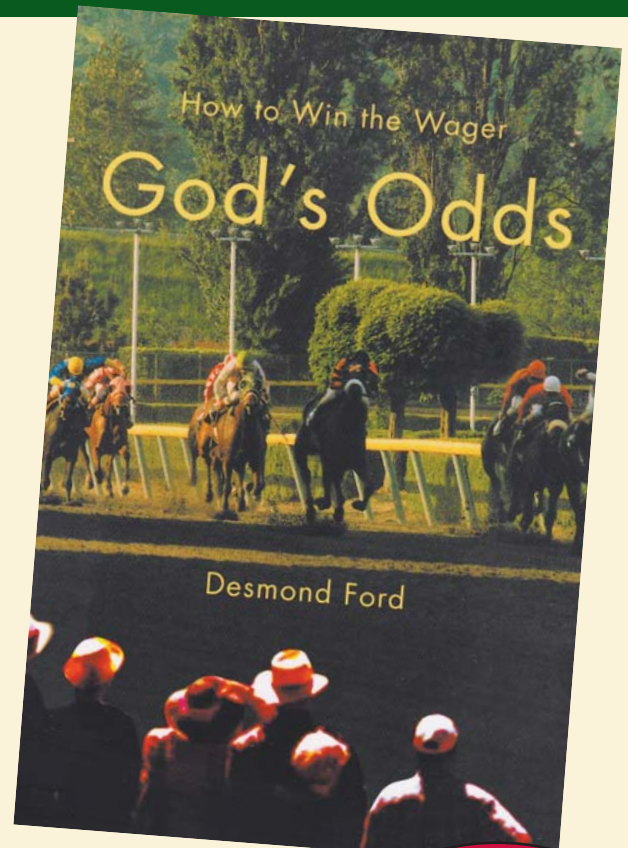
For all action some hypothesis about the origin and nature of the universe and humanity must be adopted, whether consciously or unconsciously. We act according to prior decisions as to what has value and whether there is meaning to life. The question regarding what is good and what should be is answered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

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

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

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Editorial

DOUG AVERY is a third generation fat cattle and sheep farmer in Grassmere, Eastern Marlborough, New Zealand. His grandfather purchased the farm during a decade of good rains. But a recent decade of unrelenting drought just about destroyed Doug's life. He didn't sleep well at night and dreaded stepping out the door into the sizzling sun and dusty paddocks each morning.

Every day was such a depressing trial for Doug it finally ground him down to the point where he was continually fighting back the tears. He would often go to a small gully on a hillside, where there was enough moisture to green the trees, and sit there just for a refreshing change of scenery. Not able to take it any more he told his wife, Wendy, that he was going to walk away from it all. She said, 'If you go, Doug, you go by yourself. I'm not coming with you.'

Then one day a lecturer from Lincoln University brought his class to look at Doug's drought-stricken farm and was explaining to the students how the land should be farmed in such adverse circumstances. Doug, who was listening, asked a student for a piece of paper and a pen, and started taking notes.

The other farmers thought Doug had gone mad when he sprayed his spring

pastures with Roundup to kill them. He did this to conserve the winter moisture levels in the soil by preventing the grass from transpiring it into the atmosphere. He then got contractors to sow the paddocks with lucern (alfalfa). This lucern, a bright green, protein-rich legume with deep roots that reached down to low-lying moisture, doubled Doug's gross income and profit.

The other farmers in the district called Doug a 'lucern lunatic', but soon changed their minds, and became 'lucern lunatics' themselves, when they discovered that Doug's fat cattle and lambs were superior in every way to theirs. Doug not only doubled his gross income, he doubled his profit.

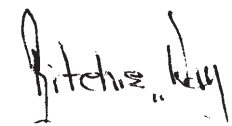
Doug later admitted that the drought was the best thing that had ever happened to him. Without it he would never have discovered a far better way to farm in that region. The old way had to die before the new way could be implemented.

One of the great principles in Scripture is the resurrection factor. The disciples expected to reign with Jesus over David's restored kingdom of Israel with the old Jerusalem as its capital (Acts 1:6). Jesus, however, had something much better for them. He planned that they would rule with him over a righteous kingdom of the redeemed that would encompass, not just

Israel, but the whole Earth (Matt. 19:28). Like Doug Avery, their enthusiasm about the new paradigm encouraged them to abandon the old paradigm.

The rich young ruler, on the other hand, rejected the 'resurrection life' simply because he was not willing to die to his old way of life. He made the mistake of believing that what he then had—great riches and authority—was better than what Jesus had for him. It's a mistake that many people still make, which will be to their eternal dismay.

The story of Pastor David Kayumba, told in this magazine, is about people who destroyed all the 'pastures' that they depended upon so they could replant with the good seed of the gospel. Their act of faith not only paid off handsomely, but, by God's grace, others are noticing the amazing change for good in their lives and are choosing to follow them into greener fields. ❄



RITCHIE WAY



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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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THE PROVIDENCES OF GOD

IT HAS BEEN my conviction for many years that the most important events in my life have had little or nothing to do with my own efforts. I could write a whole book to illustrate that. But time and again I have found God intervening by his providence, accomplishing what I could never do.

The following pertinent and thought-provoking quote from Philip Simmons was sent to me by my daughter:

Our greatest blessings, along with our greatest burdens, seem to fall upon us unbidden. For all our planning, for all our talk of goals, for all our strategy and vision and commitment, we learn that many of our lives' most important events can't be predicted or controlled. All the plans we are in the business

DESMOND FORD

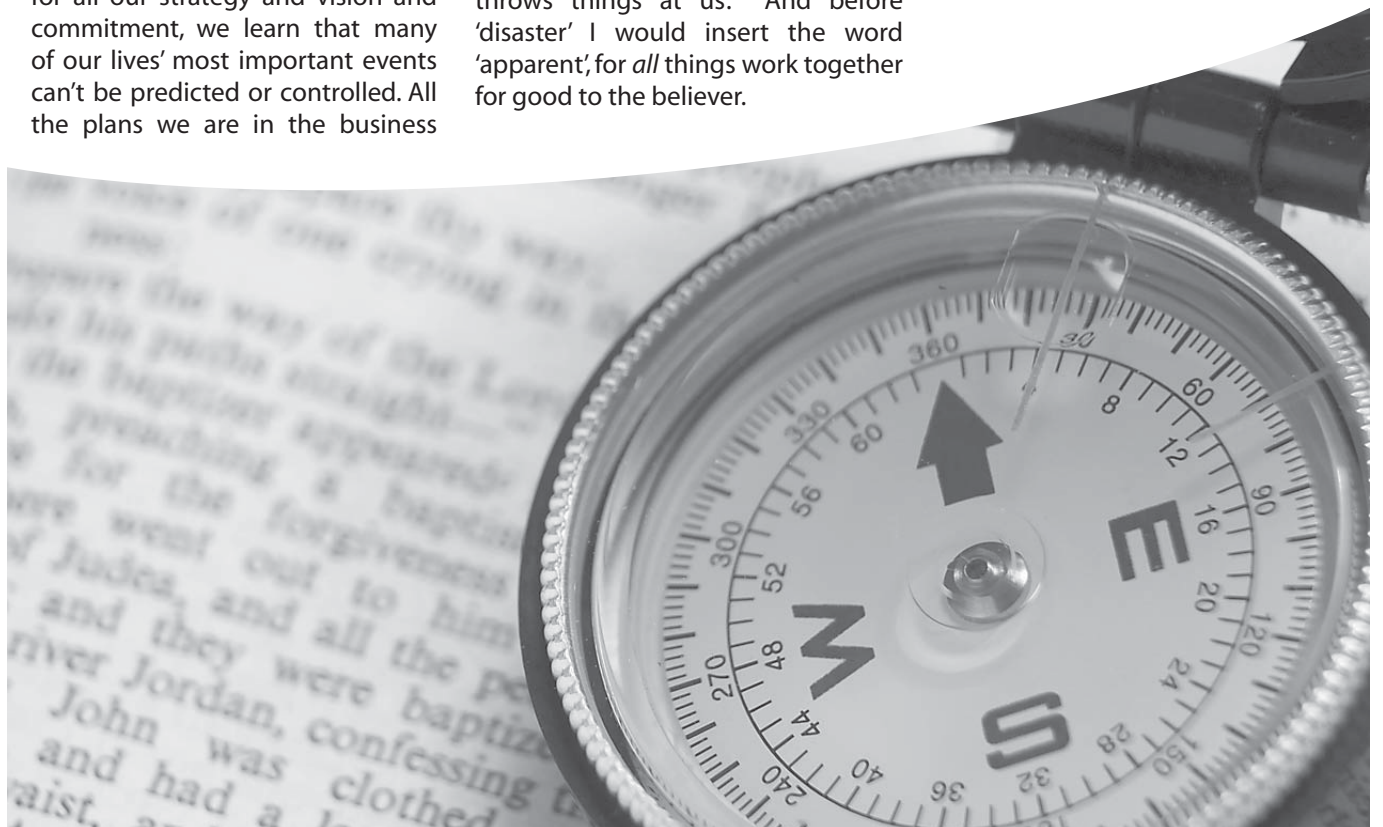
of making are continually being upset by both disaster and delight. Life throws things at us that we cannot predict and cannot control. What we can control is who we are along the way ... how much energy, compassion, and integrity we bring to our journey

—'Learning to Fall'

From my Christian perspective I would have said 'The providence of God brings to us' rather than, 'life throws things at us'. And before 'disaster' I would insert the word 'apparent', for *all* things work together for good to the believer.

So what? Here is the 'so what'. We long to see the gospel spread with power. Good News Unlimited is one agency God has condescended to use towards this end. But should we not constantly pray with the awareness that it is not our efforts that guarantee success, it is the intervening providence of God. We are to do all we can, but while doing so to keep in mind the indispensable need of God's overruling providences. I invite you so to pray, and regularly, for the success of our mission.

Good News Unlimited is branching out into new fields; we are investing time, energy, and money but only the Hand of God can guarantee success for our human efforts. ❄️



Where's Your Financial Security?



**'Riches do not endure forever, and a crown is not secure for all generations.'
(Prov. 27:24 NIV)**

ONE LARGE insurance company advertises itself as the 'Rock', claiming to be the foundation of our financial security.

Remember when we trusted these taglines? Not anymore; it's not the same world. Financial uncertainty characterises today's world of failing banks, crumbling investment giants, shrinking multinational corporations, swelling queues of the under-employed and unemployed, plus an epidemic of fear plaguing the hearts of the currently employed.

For the young, the joy of graduation has become the stress of university debts and a shrinking job market. Many older people are trading in their

BOB GASS

retirement dreams for a new twenty-first century reality: 'work till you drop'.

In such times, where can we turn? To politicians? To government? To the next get-rich-quick guru?

The Bible says, '...riches do not endure forever, and a crown [human government] is not secure for all generations' (Proverbs 27:24 NIV). What's the answer? Turn to the only reliable source of security: God! There's no financial crisis in His Kingdom! Israel hungered and thirsted and He

sent them fresh manna, and water from the rock. He assigned ravens to feed Elijah, multiplied oil and flour to sustain a destitute widow's family, fed thousands from a boy's lunch of five loaves and two fish. And He asks us: '...is anything too difficult for Me' (Jeremiah 32:27 NAS)? No!

So:

- 1. Trust God to provide for you**
- 2. Do what He tells you to do**
- 3. Believe that God 'will'!**

'The lambs will provide you with clothing, and the goats with the price of a field. You will have plenty ... to feed you and your family...' (Proverbs 27:26-27 NIV). ❄



The Crucifixion of Truth

D. R. MARTIN

AS EARLY AS Mark chapters 2 and 3, judgmental attitudes toward Jesus were being formed. When He said to the paralytic, 'Son, your sins are forgiven', his words were countered with, 'Why does this fellow talk like that? He's blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone' (Mark 2:5, 7).

The third chapter of Mark opens with a scene in a synagogue where there was a man with a shrivelled hand. 'Some of them were looking for a reason to accuse Jesus, so they watched him closely to see if he would heal the man on the Sabbath', Jesus did what his heart told Him and said to the man with the shrivelled hand, 'Stand up in front of everyone'. But when Jesus restored his hand the Pharisees 'began to plot with the Herodians how they might kill him' (3:5).

When Jesus told a paralysed man on the Sabbath to pick up his mat and walk (John 5:8-9), the Jews accused him of doing what was unlawful. In response Jesus said, 'My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working'.¹ For this reason

the Jews tried all the harder to kill him; not only was he breaking the Sabbath, in their thinking, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God (5:18).

Was Jesus exalting Himself? No! He added, 'I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing of himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does' (5:19). And, 'By myself I can do nothing. I judge only as I hear, and my judgment is just, for I seek not to please myself but him who sent me'.

The crucifixion of truth is inaugurated in John 11:49-53, where Caiaphas claimed the only way to save the Jewish nation was for Jesus to die. In these words the motives of the Sanhedrin are unmasked.

After receiving the report that Jesus had raised Lazarus from the dead they said, 'What are we accomplishing? Here is this man performing many miraculous signs. If we let him go on like this everyone will believe in him, and the Romans will come and take away our place and our nation' (John 11:47-48). In making these judgements they were exalting themselves above God. So they decided to arrest Jesus, and put him on trial. And regardless of the outcome of the trial he would be crucified.

Led by Judas, they approached Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane.

Jesus, knowing all that was going to happen to him, went out and asked them, 'Who is it that you want?'

'Jesus of Nazareth', they replied.

'I AM', replied Jesus.²

When Jesus said, 'I AM', they drew back and fell to the ground.

Again He asked them, 'Who is it that you want?' And they said, 'Jesus of Nazareth'.

'I told you that I AM', Jesus answered. 'If you are looking for me, then let these men go'.

(John 18:5-8)

Jesus was showing them that he—the I AM—was in charge of the situation even though he voluntarily submitted himself to them.³

He was taken first to be questioned by Annas, the father-in-law of the high priest.

When the high priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and his teachings, Jesus declared that he 'always taught in the synagogues and the temple where all the Jews come together. I said nothing in secret. Why question me? Ask those who heard me. Surely they know what I said'.

At this one of the officials struck him in the face.

'If I said something wrong, testify to what is wrong. But if I spoke the truth, why did you strike me?'

Then Annas sent Him bound to Caiaphas.
(John 18:22-24)

Matthew 26:57-68 fills in the details of the meeting with Caiaphas at his palace where the whole Sanhedrin had gathered. They were looking for false evidence against Jesus so that they could put him to death. But they did not find any, although many false witnesses came forward. They spoke about his plan to destroy the temple.

Jesus remained silent until under oath he was asked by the high priest, not about the temple, but if he were the Messiah, the Son of God.

'Yes, it is as you say,' answered Jesus, and added that in the future they would see him coming at the right hand of the Mighty One, in the clouds of heaven. This was regarded as blasphemy and that he was worthy of death. So Jesus was taken to Pilate.

When Pilate asked the Jews, 'What charges are you bringing against this man?' they replied, 'If he were not a criminal we would not have handed him over to you,' which was a deliberate evasion, and Pilate knew it. He responded, 'Take him yourself and judge him according to your law.' The Jews then exposed their real motive in bringing Jesus before him: 'But we have no right to execute anyone' (John 18:31).

Pilate then called for a duty soldier to bring Jesus to him. When Jesus arrived Pilate asked him, 'Are you king of the Jews?'

Jesus responded, 'My kingdom is not of this world; ... my kingdom is from another place' (v. 36). Jesus confirmed, however, that he was a king, but that his kingdom was about truth.

'For this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me' (v. 37). But Pilate wasn't interested in the truth, only in placating the Jews and preserving his authority. So he had Jesus flogged and handed him back to the Jews with the words, 'You take him and crucify him.'

Both the Jewish leaders and Pilate had denied Jesus justice and thus deserved the judgment that came their way—Pilate was recalled to Rome following his mishandling of a Samaritan uprising a few years later, and Jerusalem reaped the reward of their rejection of truth when it was destroyed in AD 70 with the slaughter of a million of its inhabitants. However, according to the Jewish historian, Josephus, no Christians perished.

Andreas Kostenberger commented as follows:

Pilate serves as a representative character of all those who fail to

recognise that they are called to render a verdict regarding Jesus and who deem themselves to be in the judgement seat regarding Jesus while in fact it is they who will be judged on the basis of their decision concerning Jesus.⁴

Pilate's sceptical exclamation, 'What is truth?' indicates that he had no concept of absolute truth—the kind of Truth that stood before him.

For both the accusers and the judge, the truth is irrelevant because it works at cross-purposes to their hold on power. The only truth they will recognise is 'the truth of power.' It was the accused, Jesus, who raised the issue of truth by subtly reminding the judge of his highest obligation—find out the truth.⁵

In his treatment of Jesus before Pilate, Kostenberger makes a very challenging statement when he says that 'truth is inextricably linked with the cross. In Jesus, the truth is crucified'.⁶ He points out that this does not mean the death of truth, for truth cannot be permanently kept down anymore than Jesus could be kept in the grave.

The Apostle John heard a voice saying, 'The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign forever and ever' (Rev. 11:15). But in a world that disregards and downgrades the importance of truth, it will always suffer. Therefore, 'the only truth in this world is a crucified truth'.

When Caiaphas and Pilate, church and state, combined, and Jesus was crucified, truth was crucified with him. Truth was on trial in the life and final trial of Jesus. The truth that flowed from the crucifixion of Jesus was the truth of a faithful God

telling mankind that he would bear their penalty for sin, that in Jesus he would die their death. He would reveal His justice at the cross so that he could act in mercy and grace. The only truth that saves is a crucified truth.

The cross of Christ as an atonement for sin is the great truth around which all other truths cluster. To be rightly understood and appreciated, every truth in the word of God, from Genesis to Revelation, must be studied in the light that streams from the cross of Calvary. I present before you the great grand monument of mercy and regeneration, salvation and redemption—the Son of God uplifted on the cross.⁷

I conclude by saying that Jesus gave instruction about how His followers were to live in a culture that rejected ultimate truth:

1. Listen to Jesus:

'Everyone on the side of truth listens to me' (John 18:37).

2. Truth liberates:

Jesus said, 'If you shall hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free' (John 8:31-32).

3. Ultimate truth is in God's domain:

Pilate said, 'Don't you know that I have power either to free you or to crucify you?'

Jesus answered, 'You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above' (John 19:10-11).

4. The only truth that saves is a crucified truth:

I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.

The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, my servant also will be.

My Father will honour the one who serves me (John 12:24-26).



ENDNOTES

1. Jesus' work, like his Father's, was the work of redemption (ed.).
2. *Ego Eimi* = 'I am'. Note that there is no 'He' in the Greek.
3. See Exodus 3:14.
4. *Whatever Happened To TRUTH?* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2005), p. 39.
5. Volf, quoted by Kostenberger, p. 46.
6. Kostenberger p. 47.
7. E.G. White, *Gospel Workers*, p. 31.

The Work of the Gospel in Africa:



The story of Pastor David Kayumba and his Friends

DAVID KAYUMBA
and ELIEZER GONZALEZ

1. Hello David! Tell us a little about your family and why your father left the church they belonged to?

I was born in 1970 in Uganda in a family that belonged to a fundamentalist Christian denomination. My parents were peasant farmers. We kept a few animals for milk and grew food crops to survive. My father practiced legalism in a stricter sense than most people of this denomination I have known. For example once a week it was obligatory to go to church, and we walked 4km barefoot to get there, and yet complained not.

However, when I turned fifteen years old, the local church leader preached in church against my father. The reason was that my father had failed to meet the minimum tithe goal set by the church for every member. My father could not understand this, and painfully left that church and never joined any other denomination, but he continued to worship God at home until his death. I was greatly disturbed by this and for a time I thought that my father would never make it to heaven. Because I loved singing in the church choir, I did not want to leave the church. So, against my father's wishes, I somehow negotiated my way to his heart and he allowed me and my brother to continue attending.

2. I understand that you ended up studying to be a pastor at a university belonging to that same denomination. Why did you decide to do this? Did you have any doubts after what had happened in your family?

Yes, I ended up studying to be a pastor at this denomination's university in Uganda. Indeed I had profound doubts not only about my salvation, but also the salvation of many who went to church. I could not find a decisive answer to the sin problem that tormented me day and night. You see I was not really breaking the Ten Commandments like my non-Christian neighbours, and I behaved well in society and yet, the sense of imperfection hovered over me daily.

The sermons at my church often reminded us of the "ladder of sanctification" which actually spelt doom even upon seemingly 'small-s' sinners like me. And so I thought that a seminary education would not only allow me to serve God as a way of accumulating merit for salvation, but I also thought I would get better answers to the lingering question about the fate of my father.

It was becoming clear to me every day that I was neither better than my father nor the leader who had declared him 'spiritually dead'. I had no peace with God and I saw no way of getting it despite the fact that I was a very active member of the church. The church seemed to measure one's spiritual state based on what one could do. In a nutshell, I had been raised in a church that

did not know how to get to heaven. It was a church that taught survival of the fittest. And then I began to question the purpose of Christ's atonement on the cross. This denomination taught that the atonement at the cross was incomplete and so I was hopelessly fearful of God every day.

3. You told me before that you had to officiate at your father's funeral. That must have been difficult. Why did you officiate and not someone else?

It was very difficult and upsetting! You see my father had left the church and never returned. He considered that to be called 'spiritually dead' was the same as being excommunicated. As he remained outside the church, the church came to consider him as non-existent although he had not joined any other church, and he had his religious observances at home. The church looked after those considered as being 'in good and regular standing', and my father was not.

I conducted my father's funeral service with great revulsion, because no pastor from my denomination would conduct his funeral. I was so angry that I do not even remember the words or the verse I read. It seemed to me that the church was more interested in tithe than in people. It did not care about my father! And so for many years to come I carried with me the burden of making sense of what the words 'spiritually dead' meant. In spite of this, I did not leave the church. I actually enjoyed being a member of this church in spite of the tyranny of its theology.

The Work of the Gospel in Africa

But the idea of what it meant to be 'spiritually dead' kept haunting me. Was my father really dead spiritually because his harvest did not yield enough to reach the goal that had been set by the religious economists? These sorts of questions made me probe further into our church's beliefs as I embarked on my seminary training.

4. Tell us David, about how you found the gospel?

It did not take long for me to realise that I was not at university to get the papers that would let me join the ministry, but that I was actually looking for answers. I quickly saw, however, that many at the university were not looking for answers. They were not bothering to discover new truth, and they often became bitter and angry whenever they could not defend our church's doctrines. They acted as spies to report those considered to be entertaining what they referred to as a 'new theology'.

On my path to find the gospel I found a professor at the university who was an honest and brilliant man, who worked in a very difficult environment, and learnt to be very cautious. He is well known in Uganda, and I will not say his name, because he still teaches there. He had embraced the theology that had been upheld by Desmond Ford. It was from this man that I first heard the name Desmond Ford, and I am always thankful to him for this. When I reflect on his lectures, it is clear he never intended to specifically present us with Ford's views, but rather that it was not possible for him to teach Pauline epistles, exilic prophets, and Daniel and Revelation without mentioning Desmond Ford, because Ford had made such a tremendous contribution in these areas of study. He told us about Desmond in a way that made a lasting impression on me. I sensed that Desmond Ford had punched an irreparable hole in the legalistic aspects of this denomination's theology, and so I diligently tried to find a way to lay my hands on Des's theological works. I wanted to read more than just the small fragments that our professor was emphatically throwing here and there. The interest with which I sought after Dr Ford was unmatched by any of my compatriots. Maybe I was carrying the heaviest burdens, and I had found no one who could help me.

You see, this professor emphatically asserted that Dr Desmond Ford's theology was the best thing that had ever happened to this church, and yet he was misjudged and dismissed by a group of church administrators who included mathematicians and geographers (i.e. meaning non-biblical scholars). Our professor warned us: 'Don't you people talk about imperatives without first talking about the indicative of the gospel!' This



was a revolutionary warning. We began challenging imperatives by asking where is the indicative? This was interesting for legalists had nothing to offer and they had to keep quiet or go find the indicatives.

Furthermore, this professor told us that he considered that Desmond was a 'brain that appears once in 1000 years'. I was left wondering how it was that this church had found the courage to reject and dismiss a man who was teaching a theology that brings peace and the assurance of salvation! Then what was this church teaching? This question underlined my quest for truth. I became suspicious of the church's teachings and was afraid that we could be deceived and were following cunningly devised doctrines. I asked the professor if it was possible to read books written by Desmond Ford and the reply was: 'You cannot, you will be in trouble with the church and besides, where will you find the books?' His books were not allowed in our libraries.

That was 1997, and the Internet had not yet come to Uganda. In April, 1998 I travelled to Botswana with two other students by road from Uganda to go and do colporteur work to raise my tuition fees. Two months later I visited a fellow theology student in Zambia whose name was Clifford Munyama, and while there, he enthusiastically handed me a magazine called, *Our Firm Foundation*. This friend of mine was not happy with Desmond Ford's theology, and so he thought that the articles in this magazine would demolish the attraction that I had for what our professor had taught us about Desmond Ford.

When I read the magazine, it contained a lengthy article by Ron Spear in which he was attacking the 'new theology' of Desmond Ford. In the article, Ron Spear quoted from the writings of Ford. At that time, I still had not found or read anything written by Desmond Ford. Although I was beginning to understand the gospel, the problem that persisted for me was the judgment, and so I needed something to

deal with my uncertainty caused by the judgment.

Ron Spear was the man who provided me with some very useful information on this matter. God intended that by the pen of Ford's adversary, He would bring my soul to find rest in the hands of a wounded Saviour. I am thankful to Spear because by quoting Desmond Ford, his article provided me with some of Ford's statements, and also the sources of these statements. The statements that seemed offensive to Ron Spear became for me power and a complete reversal of who I was, so that in me was born the assurance of salvation. One statement I will never forget by Ford, is paraphrased here below:

The moment we (sinners) declare our faith in the atonement of the cross, we are declared righteous and without fault. These blessings continue to be ours as long as we believe despite our mistakes and failures. Each sin we may commit does not turn off salvation in our life as long as we believe.

I wish my father, the local church leader, and the entire church had known this truth! What a difference it could have made in their lives and in their relationships! I discovered from this magazine that 'we were ruined in Adam without asking for it and likewise we were redeemed in Christ without asking for it'. I urgently asked my Zambian friend to take me to place where I could photocopy this article by Ron Spear, which we did.

My Zambian friend told me I was heading down a bad path. I did not care much about bad consequences, because my life was now guided by the peace that was growing within me, and not by the prospect of being labelled a heretic. I went back to Botswana to continue my work, and I read Des's statements in this article daily. I shared them with other theology students who had come from Tanzania and Kenya and all were shocked and thought I was falling away from the truth. These statements contained voluminous truth that challenged every thing we stood for, and they started a revolution in my life. I assured them that I was not slowly falling away from the truth, but that instead I was slowly but surely falling way from the grip of sin and hopelessness. I remained in Botswana and South Africa throughout 1988-2000 and I can tell you, most of this time I dropped many books from the list of books I was canvassing and I remained with the Bible and a few books on health and family.

In 2001, I went back to my university in Uganda armed with the photocopies containing the great statements by Dr Ford. These statements shaped my thinking,

Continued page 8

The Work of the Gospel in Africa

Continued from page 7

my discussion and conversation. I shared them with some of fellow students who cared as much about the gospel as I did. Meanwhile, from Ron Spear's attack on Ford, I found the ministry of Good News Unlimited and I was able to write to them. I wrote asking Dr Desmond Ford to send me just one second-hand book if he could spare it, and I was especially interested in the Glacier View Manuscript. You see I was a student with very little means to afford a book from overseas. I couldn't pay for the book and I couldn't pay for the shipping. And, to my forever surprise, Dr Desmond Ford did not send me an old book like I had I asked for; instead he sent me a box of brand new books! I can never talk about this gift from Ford without tears in my eyes! He gave me more than I asked for! This is why I am always indebted to the ministry of this great Christian man. I will support this ministry in any way possible because by doing so I know that I am helping someone else discover the gospel just as I was also helped to discover it.

5. **Wow! What an amazing story, David! But this only gets better! I've heard that you ran a 'black-market' library of Des Ford's books in the seminary library! Can you tell us more about this?**

Yes, it was as if I was dealing in illegal drugs. You see, Good News Unlimited had started sending me magazines before sending me the books, and I was already lending them to some of the students, and I can tell you I lost almost all of them because some would not return them to me. What I was doing with the magazines did not go unnoticed by the university administration, and I had been warned about it by a friend who was an Assistant Dean of Men. But when I received the box of books from Des, I created my own small library within the University library. It was easy to do so because I was a student worker in the library and so I kept my bag of books with me. This time I was not selling books, but rather giving my fellow students an opportunity to read them. Many of them breached the copyright laws and photocopied complete books.

Students passed the word to other students, and so I constantly received requests. I loaned out the normal library books for two weeks, but Des's books could only be loaned out for two days, such was the demand. The university was soon polarised by Desmond Ford's theology. We were later interested to discover that some of the reading materials for the courses on Daniel and Revelation came from Des's books, except that the seminary did not tell us where it had got the readings from. The professor who had introduced us to Dr Ford was happy when he began to see

Des's books in our hands. We had broken the rule that had kept Desmond out of the university.

6. **When the gospel of grace was preached there in the seminary, what happened there?**

Our conservative lecturers had not understood why all of a sudden there was an attack on the sanctuary doctrine and much more concerted talk about the gospel than there had been in previous years. Students wanted the Bible and the Bible alone. Students started dropping courses taught by conservative lecturers. It soon became clear that something strange was happening.

One morning, one of the teachers at the seminary told me he would never shake my hand because I had become an abomination in the school. Inquiries had already been made as to who was the source of the Desmond's books and I had been discovered although I had not hidden anything. I carried my books in public and I actually told one lecturer who interviewed me on this matter that my theology was being formed by Desmond Ford.

By this time, I had lost all fear, and this was true for many students; we were happy to identify ourselves with Ford. It was at this time I discovered that institutionalised religion can be dangerously blind. While the administration had no problem keeping the Catholic Summa Theologica, and other useless books in the seminary, they were determined to keep away books that gave assurance of salvation.

I must say I enjoyed this turbulent period of my study. For the first time we saw that most of the lecturers avoided debate on doctrinal issues; they withdrew from discussing contentious issues in the presence of students. This was because since many lecturers were unwilling to read forbidden authors, they could not discuss or debate freely from an informed point of view. Any students who specifically made reference to contentious issues about

prophecy or the judgment, or to Desmond Ford, were blacklisted and eventually were side-lined from the ministry. This did not surprise us because our professor had warned us about it, and yet he had encouraged us to read Desmond Ford. I was twice interviewed by a lecturer who was a former high-ranking church administrator in Tanzania. He was very kind to me; he sympathised with me and advised me to stop reading Ford if I was to have any future in the ministry of the denomination. Yet even he did not indicate anything that was wrong with the theology of Ford.

7. **What did you do after you graduated from the seminary?**

I did not work as a pastor. My way was blocked because I was viewed as a 'Fordist' who undermined the teachings of the church. I had earlier initiated a theological forum at the university where we debated theological issues. I had invited lecturers and students to discuss the theological problems in our Church, but all lecturers shunned the event. It was clear where everyone stood. On the day of my graduation, the Vice-Chancellor of the university jokingly told me, 'The University is happy you are leaving us'. The following year, theology students were told that any who criticised the doctrines of the church would be expelled.

In short, I graduated with the Bachelor of Theology in 2003 and went home. I left the university knowing I would not be employed as a pastor. In 2004 I was invited by a high school of that same denomination to conduct an evangelistic week of prayer in which 137 young people gave themselves to Christ. But the bitterness of the church could not be hidden on hearing that I had been involved. Nevertheless, the young people were baptised and received into the church.

I remained actively involved in discussion every Sabbath afternoon in my local church (Mengo Kisenyi-Kampala) where for some time I was viewed as dangerous, but with time and discussion, local members confessed to me that they thought there was greater danger in preventing people from free debate and discussion, and not in ideas. The elders revealed to me that they had received a letter from their church pastor instructing them to deny me any opportunity to talk to members. When I asked the elders why they had not read the letter as were instructed, they told me, 'We are not administrators, we are leaders of people'.

I came to accept the fact that I had spent all those years working for my fees, only to finish and be not allowed to serve. But when I looked at what I gained by discovering the gospel, I thanked God for



The Work of the Gospel in Africa

everything. It was not for nothing that I had toiled to this end. I felt within me an urgent resolve to do all in my ability to continue the practice of sharing the new wine in the new wine skin. I will not spare anything that will confuse the preaching of the gospel. If the church must be shaken let it be for the sake of the gospel. I am not an apologist for any church doctrine that undermines the primacy of Jesus.

8. I know that you are now in Brussels, Belgium. Can you tell us a little about your ministry there? What have you done and what are your dreams?

When I moved to Belgium in 2007, I was received in a church in Brussels of that same denomination. This is a very good congregation that gave me the opportunity to be actively involved in the ministry of the church. I have served as head of the Personal Ministries Department. I have delivered a sermon at least once a month in this church and also once in a month in another Rwandese Church that we organised with great difficulty.

Our Personal Ministries department took a bold decision to invite a prominent preacher to come for a one-week study of the book of Romans. The top leadership of the church did not want him to come. And so we decided, in a small home group to invite him to come for our small group. He accepted the invitation. On realising that he would be coming anyway, the church invited us to dialogue, and we were happy that the church agreed to participate. Our small group, which by then numbered nine, had committed itself to cover all financial obligations and it did, and we were privileged to host him in our homes. The church provided the building in which we held the meetings, and indeed the church was happy that this event finally took place.

From that time on, we decided that we would continue to share the gospel using the methods of primitive Christianity. And so the small group fellowship has become our only viable way for sharing the gospel. We value each other, and we consider time to be running out quickly and so we cannot wait. We have continued to meet weekly every Sabbath afternoon at home. Our ministry, called 'The Great Invitation', is active here in Brussels and we are being encouraged and trained by Good News Unlimited through the many audio, video and written resources that they have graciously given to us. We remain friends with the church we grew up with, but we happily share the gospel independently.

Our dream is to create more small groups here in Belgium, expand the work through annual gospel seminars, and with permission from Des, we hope to translate the written messages into languages such as Kinya-rwanda, Swahili and Luganda and



disseminate them to Christian churches in Africa. However, we feel a greater responsibility to our brothers and sisters in the church we grew up in, because we know what it means to live without the joy of salvation.

9. Now, what our readers don't know is that after you and I got in contact with each other through Facebook, you have brought Good News Unlimited into contact with your ex-fellow seminary students from the University. Can you tell us a little bit about them and what they are doing?

Dr. Eliezer, from the time we contacted each other, you have inspired us to really attempt great things for God. So far from Uganda we have contacted several former seminary students but not all of them have been able to organize themselves yet. In the coming days, we shall be hearing from Pr Hillary Topos ('The Great Invitation') from Uganda, and Pr Ephron Nyamaswa from Rwanda. Pr Topos is a young man who suffered the same fate as many of us and he has been sustained by the peace he derived from his encounter with Desmond Ford's theology. He is now a civil servant with the Uganda government.

GNU is already in contact with Pr Nsubuga Daniel of *Living Hope Ministry*. I introduced Pr Dan to GNU ten years ago, and I remember it took him only a very short time to get himself in trouble with the church after he discovered Good News Unlimited. He spread the word and this led four other pastors to leave the church. He remains active with a group of evangelists who make up the *Living Hope Ministry*. He is a gifted speaker who has found himself invited to speak in different churches of different denominations. We look forward to expanding the work of the gospel in Uganda by bringing Desmond Ford's printed, audio and video messages to the churches in the denomination we grew up in, as well as many others.

In Kenya we have so far contacted two pastors. Pr Isaiah Ojwang of *Faith Fellowship*

Ministries in the western part of Kenya. He has been an ardent student of Desmond Ford since our university days. We have been sharing messages from Des Ford that have enriched our goals for the gospel work. Other friends who are in contact with GNU are Pr Peter Morwabe and Pr Boaz Nyariki of *Gospel Embassy Chapel International* in Kissi town in Kenya. I understand this ministry has a membership of more than 130 people. I see these small groups as springboards from which a mighty gospel movement will sweep through these countries.

10. I long for the day, David, when the gospel of Jesus fills this world with his righteousness! But talking about Africa, can you tell me a little bit about how Christianity is different in Africa from that in the West? I know that you have lived in both places, so you understand.

Christianity in Africa means more than belonging to a certain denomination. It even means that one has to have a proper Christian name. It gives one a sense of belonging to a given community of believers and consequently certain individual rights are surrendered to the corporate body. No longer can members handle wedding and funeral affairs alone. Truly the church can easily become the conscience of its members. The church is a social event where people enjoy the company of others. For example, a typical Sabbath day in sub-Saharan Africa is a day full of activities. Church members enjoy spending the entire day at the church studying, singing and discussing. A 45-minute sermon would be considered very short.

Open-air evangelistic crusades are still fashionable and very interesting to members and strangers. But here in Belgium, it is different: you have to find a hall and have an accepted description of what you intend to do in the hall. In Africa, making an altar call is the only valid and recognized way of giving people an opportunity to give themselves to Christ. But in Belgium this practice is either outdated or unacceptable for some reason. If you want to give your self to Christ, you have to do it privately.

In Belgium small group fellowships are often viewed as nucleus groups that must grow into a very big congregation, or that must divide to form other small groups. Big crusades don't bring you the people. In Africa, a one-week open-air crusade can end up in baptisms of hundreds. The strategy for evangelism in Africa is better when it takes the form of open-air crusades. We must baptise those who respond to the gospel invitation and then teach them the gospel.

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One hindrance to the work of the gospel is the general mentality of our people, since they want to be identified with the big mainstream denominations. Belonging to a given group is often confused with belonging to Christ. Often evangelistic crusades are held with the purpose of converting people from one denomination to another. In the end, we discover that we are propagating sectarianism and not the gospel of Christ.

11. This is so true everywhere, David! Now I have another question: how many of these ministries and churches are there throughout Kenya, Uganda, and Rwanda?

This is not a simple question. You see, I know that the storm that emerged from our university between 2001-2004 affected seven pastors in Uganda and many in Kenya. But with time some managed to sail their way back into denominational ministry. We have one example of a very promising gospel preacher and who is now in top church leadership in Rwanda, but who has forgotten the message that distinguished us in the seminary as heretics. To avoid being witch-hunted, there are those we know who pretended to agree with the status quo. But I am very optimistic that the gospel will have its way. The new developments at GNU have inspired us

to revive the interest of the gospel in our former seminary friends. From now on, we are embarking on this effort to rebuild networks and rekindle the gospel flames in the hearts of people everywhere.

12. I am amazed by what God has done, and by what he is doing! Do you mean to tell me that all of this started because of the ministry of Good News Unlimited many years ago?

Yes. The fruit of the ministry of Good News Unlimited has not yet been revealed in even the slightest details. I want to emphasize an important point here. I know for sure from my experience that the church has done its best to conceal the work of Desmond Ford from a great majority of the members of the church in Africa.

One time I tried to find out from some pastors from Zambia, Botswana, Rwanda, Kenya and Uganda whether they have ever heard of Desmond Ford. I found that these pastors were ignorant of Desmond Ford. Last year in February I visited Uganda and held a discussion with a group of church members in Kampala and I found one old lady who had heard a distorted idea of Desmond's work. This old lady cried tears when I explained to them what the church had rejected. Many of our people have been prevented from accessing the truth.

Last year, as I was working on my Master's

thesis in the University of Leuven theology library, I intentionally did a search for any books by authors of this denomination in this vast library of a Catholic University built in 1450.

To my surprise only the name of Desmond Ford came up. As I went further I even found Desmond's doctoral thesis, 'The Abomination that Causes Desolation in Biblical Eschatology'. I realised that many people in the church I grew up in, fear the truth, and I grew more disappointed by our church's barbarous attitude towards Desmond's work. I think GNU is a God-sent ministry to champion the cause of the gospel in this world. When Christ comes again, there we shall see tears of joy for many who will be thankful to GNU.

13. Praise God! I believe that this is all his work, and that he has brought us all together for a reason at this time. What do you think?

I can see it in no other way, and we are all praising God because of it! God has been leading in Des's life and in GNU. I am grateful to God for the events that led to the conference at Glacier View and for the stand Des took. He stood on the side of Christ. Now God has a work for us to do today. We must stand up to the challenge. We cannot allow the gospel to drown in a sea of error and indifference. ❄

DID YOU KNOW THAT GOOD NEWS UNLIMITED IS ON FACEBOOK?



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

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

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



WE ARE LOOKING FORWARD TO SEEING YOU ONLINE SOON!

How to Set Africa on Fire: **Jesus Only** —Abridged and Simplified

AN IDEA can be mental dynamite. Suppose someone poked their head through one of your windows and cried: 'Your house is on fire!' I cannot see you nonchalantly replying, 'Oh, really?' Instead you would be action personified.

Now, it is my hope to see gospel action personified in Africa and other countries. To that end we propose circulating freely and widely this little book about Jesus. We think this book has many ideas that are mental dynamite. For example, from chapter one:

We should not make the mistake of putting Jesus in the same category as other religious leaders. They are as different as midday from midnight. Search the Qur'an and you will not find the name of Mohammed. Search the ancient Buddhist writings and the name Buddha does not appear. But read the NT and you will find the name of Christ on nearly every page....

That is from the first chapter of the abridged edition of *Jesus Only*. We venture to think that those ideas will be mental dynamite to most readers. But, there are hundreds more to come in the following chapters. Will you help us to circulate this book to thousands?

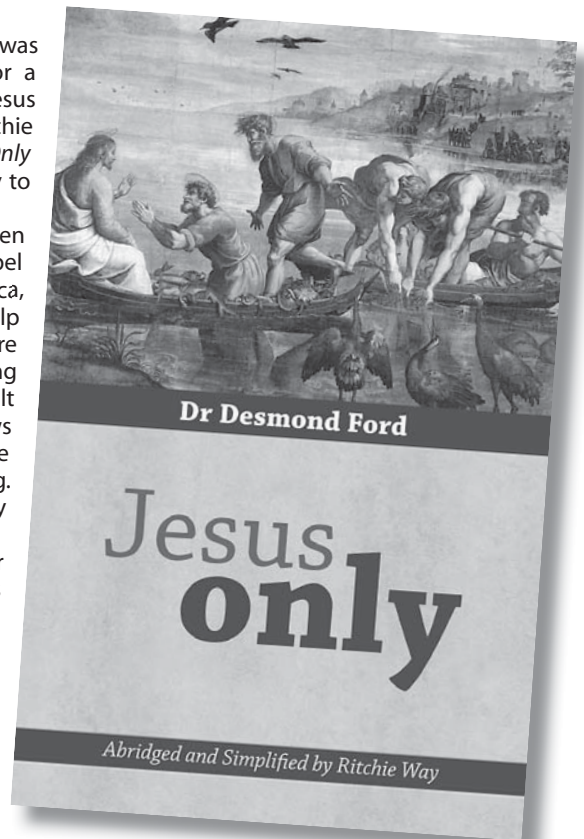
I believe the book exists because of God's intervening providences. Gill, my wife, urged me to write it time and again, and my reply was 'It is too difficult and would take too much time'. Then one day the Lord showed me how it could be done and *Jesus Only* resulted, a book my friends tell me is the best GNU has offered.

Ritchie Way in New Zealand was approached with a request for a simple gospel book about Jesus for the Polynesian people. Ritchie masterfully abridged *Jesus Only* and already it is making its way to engrossed readers.

In recent times we have been contacted by the leaders of gospel fellowships in sub-Saharan Africa, which are crying out for help to spread the gospel. These are groups and ministries that sprang up many years ago as a result of the ministry of Good News Unlimited, but about which we have previously known nothing. Now, God has providentially brought us together.

Since our brothers and sister in these African fellowships heard about this simple but powerful book, they have been crying out for it, so much so that they are already busily translating it into native African languages—Kinyarwanda and Swahili, and soon Ekegusii. These are languages that are spoken throughout Uganda, Rwanda and Kenya. They are doing this as their personal contribution to bring the beautiful gospel that we know and love to their fellow Africans, in the hope that we, too, will be able to share in their excitement for Jesus by helping them to have the books printed in Africa.

They tell us that they can distribute as many books as can be printed. We do not intend to let them down. In the flysheet



that came with this magazine, we are giving you the opportunity to make the dreams of our fellow-believers in Africa a reality. *

Always your friend and brother—in this world and the next,

Des Ford
Rom 8:28-39

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Letters from Readers

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



BAD TAX COLLECTORS?

Dear Editor,

Why were the tax collectors, in Jesus' day, classed alongside 'sinners' such as prostitutes etc? (Matt. 9:11; Luke 19:7). Surely there were some tax collectors who were good.

E.P.

Ritchie's Reply

Dear E.,

Here is an answer from Robert Gundry's excellent book, *A Survey of the New Testament*:

Among the Jews, tax collectors—traditionally called publicans—became special objects of class hatred. They collected poll taxes, property taxes, road use taxes, and sales taxes. Other Jews despised the tax collectors because they handled currency with blasphemous pagan inscriptions and iconography and cooperated with Roman overlords. These overlords auctioned the job of collecting taxes to the lowest bidder, that is, to the one who bid the lowest rate of commission for a contract. A collector would gather not only the tax and his commission, but also whatever he could pocket illegally. Bribery of tax collectors by the rich increased the financial burden on those who were barely scraping by. As a result, the masses deeply resented the collectors. (p. 33)



GOSPEL AND CULTURE

Dear Ritchie

Can the gospel be proclaimed in a church that is wedded to its culture, for example an orthodox or Catholic Church? What hope is there for the members if it can't be?

M.M.

Ritchie's Reply

Dear M.

It depends upon whether the Church's culture is the Master or the Medium for

the gospel. If the culture of that church is the master, so that the gospel has to take second place to anti-gospel teachings and traditions, then there is little hope for that church or its members. Laodicea was one such church. It gloried in its rich heritage and treasury of fundamental beliefs, but it didn't have Jesus; he was outside, knocking on the door, seeking entry.

On the other hand, where the religious culture is the medium for the gospel, then Christ is in that assembly ministering to the people.

A few years ago a family of Iraqi Christians, which my church helped settle in New Zealand, asked me to be the godfather to their son. Their church in Iraq belonged to the Patriarchate of Constantinople, so they attended the Roman Catholic Church in New Zealand, which was the nearest in religious culture to the church they grew up in. When the time came for their son's first communion, they invited me to attend with them. With my gift of a new Bible for the lad, I went to the service, but with some uneasiness.

The clouds of incense that filled the church were strange to me, but I wasn't able to fault the service. They sang modern Christian worship songs with gusto, their public prayer was from the heart, and the sermon was equal to any gospel message I had heard in my own church. I was invited to join them for communion and partook of the bread and the wine. God was there, blessing these people, because they esteemed him to be greater than their culture and traditions.

Now, not all Catholic churches are like that, but I rejoiced that this one was.



MANY PEOPLE IN THE CITY

Dear Ritchie,

I was reading through my Bible, as you have recommended several times, when I came across a passage that brought me up short. It's Acts 18:9-10. It says there, 'And the Lord said to Paul in the night by a vision, "Do not be afraid ..., but go on speaking and do not be silent; for I am with you, and no man will attack you in order to harm you, for I have many people in this city"'.

I highlighted the words 'I have many people in this city' for a purpose. If I am right, the implication is that these people already belonged to the Lord, but they hadn't been evangelised or told about Jesus, which is what the Lord wanted Paul to do. My question is, if these people already belonged to the Lord, what would be the point of Paul proclaiming the gospel to them?

N.C.

Ritchie's Reply

Hi N.,

These people in Corinth, that the Lord claimed were his, were obviously people who had God's Spirit in their hearts. But each of them was like a technologically challenged person, today, who had been given the gift of the very latest smartphone, but didn't know how to use it. The advantages of technology were theirs, from finding out where they were when lost; what tomorrow's weather would be; how to get from A-Z; how to send and receive messages; how to take photos and transmit them; and how to tap into information important to them, etc. But they couldn't access any of these services simply because they didn't know they existed.

When people who have the Lord in their hearts become Christians they have at their disposal, in the Bible, a wealth of information on how to live the Christian life; how to enhance their relationship with the Lord; what to do when overcome by temptation; and how to use their spiritual gifts to help others, etc. God's word opens a whole new world to them. It is like warm sunshine after a cold and wet winter. But they need someone to introduce them to these things in a way they will understand and be able to use them to their advantage.



Releasing your Regrets

PASTOR IAN

How often do you play the 'If only' game? If only I ...

- could do it again.
- had listened sooner.
- could erase the past.
- could forgive myself.

No one is perfect—we all have regrets. We've made bad choices, said foolish things, wasted time, and hurt ourselves and others. How do you release your regrets?

Strategies that *don't* work

1. **We bury them**

Burying the past doesn't work. Like creatures from a horror movie, unresolved regrets come back to haunt us over and over.

Minimising ('It wasn't a big deal')

Rationalizing ('Everyone does it'), and;

Compromising

(lowering your standards) are ways we try to bury our regrets.

2. **We blame others**

This tactic is as old as Adam and Eve. When Adam sinned, he took it like a man and blamed his wife! We use blame to balance out our guilt.

3. **We beat ourselves**

We try to pay for our guilt unconsciously through illness, depression, setting ourselves up for failure, and other forms of self-punishment. The problem with beating yourself is this: your conscience never knows when to stop! Many spend their entire lives in self-condemnation.

What does God want me to do with my regrets?

1. **Admit my guilt**

Own up to it. Don't make excuses. 'A man who refuses to admit his mistakes can never be successful. But if he confesses and forsakes them, he gets another chance' (Prov. 28:13 LB).

2. **Accept Christ's forgiveness**

He's waiting to clean your slate. Ask him to clear your conscience. 'There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus' (Rom. 8:1).

3. **Forgive yourself and focus on the future**

'The Lord says, 'Do not cling to the events or dwell on what happened long ago. Watch for the new thing I am going to do' (Isa. 43:18-19).

Healthy Hints

RITCHIE WAY

Vitamin D

The pendulum of medical opinion on exposure to sunshine is swinging from an extreme to a more balanced position. According to Dr. Mercola, 'Most people have been scared sunless by those spreading misinformation that the sun causes melanoma, a myth that survives by mass promotion but really lacks any factual basis. It has been repeated so many times that most people believe it'. It's not sunshine that causes melanoma, but overexposure that results in sunburn.

When it comes to vitamin D production, the benefits of sensible exposure to sunshine are simply immeasurable. In fact, correcting a vitamin D deficiency may cut your risk of dying in half, according to an analysis of more than 10,000 individuals.

According to a January 2013 press release by *Orthomolecular Medicine*, 3,600 medical papers with vitamin D in the title or abstract were published in 2012 alone, bringing the grand total to 33,800. Scientists have identified nearly 3,000 genes that are influenced by vitamin D levels, and vitamin D receptors have been found throughout the human body, including the brain, heart and bones.

In recent years scientific studies have shown that low levels of vitamin D have been implicated in colds, flu, colon cancer, osteoporosis, and even tuberculosis, multiple sclerosis and Alzheimer's. There are higher rates of these diseases in Hobart than in the northern parts of Australia where the sun shines more overhead. The winter sunshine in Hobart, even on a sunny day, doesn't provide sufficient UVB wavelength to make vitamin D. It would be wise for people living in lower latitudes, or who work nightshift, or who are unable to get several minutes of exposure to sunshine each day, to ensure that their diet is high in vitamin D.

Foods containing vitamin D are: Cod Liver Oil, fish (fish canned in oil have more vitamin D than fish canned in water), Breakfast cereals fortified with vitamin D, eggs, and mushrooms.

Richard Weller, Senior Lecturer in Dermatology, and colleagues, say the effect is such that overall, sun exposure could improve health and even prolong life, because the benefits of reducing blood pressure, cutting heart attacks and strokes, far outweigh the risk of getting skin cancer.

—*Medical News Today*

In addition to being a strong cancer preventative, vitamin D is crucial for pregnant women and their babies, lowering the risk for preterm birth, low birth weight, and C-section. And sadly, 80 percent of pregnant women have inadequate vitamin D levels.

Practicing Safe Sunning

Vitamin D3 is an oil-soluble steroid hormone (the term "vitamin" is a misnomer) that forms when your skin is exposed to UVB radiation from the sun. When UVB strikes the surface of your skin, your skin converts a cholesterol derivative into vitamin D3. Because it takes up to 48 hours for this D3 to be absorbed into your bloodstream to raise your vitamin D levels, it's important to avoid washing your skin with soap for 48 hours after sun exposure.

Safely exposing your bare skin to the sun is the best way to optimize your vitamin D levels, and is therefore the best protection against melanoma. Sunburn, however, should be avoided at all cost.

Want Skin that Glows?

Fat-soluble pigments such as the red and orange carotenoids that are found in carrots and tomatoes accumulate in the fatty tissues just under the skin. So if you eat plenty of carrots you can develop a healthy golden glow. A 2011 study shows that eating lots of fruit and vegetables is the best way to improve the look and tone of your skin.

Reduce your Cholesterol

Both oats and barley have been shown to significantly reduce cholesterol, which is important because 'a 1% reduction in cholesterol levels translates to about a 2% reduction in coronary heart disease'.

The fibre in oats and barley that is responsible for these cholesterol-lowering effects is called beta glucan, and there is more of it in barley than in oats. The barley grain products such as pearl barley, barley flakes, meal and flour contain beta glucan. Sprinkle barley flakes on your breakfast cereal to help reduce your cholesterol.

An Invitation to the Banquet

This month's parable, told by Jesus, is found in **Luke 14:16-24**.

A certain man was preparing a great banquet and invited many guests. At the time of the banquet he sent his servant to tell those who had been invited, "Come, for everything is now ready." But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said, "I have just bought a field, and I must go and see it. Please excuse me." Another said, "I have just bought five yoke of oxen, and I'm on my way to try them out. Please excuse me." Still another said, "I just got married, so I can't come."

The servant came back and reported this to his master. Then the owner of the house became angry and ordered his servant, "Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame." "Sir," the servant said, "what you ordered has been done, but there is still room." Then the master told his servant, "Go out to the roads and country lanes and make them come in, so that my house will be full. I tell you, not one of those men who were invited will get a taste of my banquet."

The banquet in this parable is the celebration feast of welcome into the kingdom of God. Those who partake of this meal, like the Prodigal Son, are in the Father's House. It is important to the interpretation of this parable in Luke



14:16-24 to understand who the invited guests actually were. Initially they were God's people, the Jews. They were the very first to receive the invitation to the feast of God's bounties provided by the death of Jesus on the cross (Acts 11:19). But when the 'elder brother' (Israel) rejected this invitation it was offered to sinners and tax collectors, and even to the Gentiles.

Jesus said, 'Not one of those men who were invited will get a taste of my banquet.' People will come to the banquet of their own free will, or not at all. In another place Jesus said, 'I say to you that many will come from the east and the west, and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. But the subjects of the kingdom [the

Jewish nation] will be thrown outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth' (Matt 8:11-12).

We need to be aware of the fact that this same parabolic prophecy may apply to us as it did to the Jews. If we reject God's invitation to partake of the gospel feast that the Lord has for us today—a spiritual feast that may offend our religious traditions—our seat will be offered to someone else who is hungry enough to want it. There never will be a time when we can turn up our noses at the repast that Christ freely offers us, without handing over our place in his household to somebody else. What will your response be to the gospel meal he invites you to?

Friends, Readers, Countrymen . . .

Send us your email addresses!



We promise we will keep them confidential, but having them will help us notify you of meetings and offers and give us the capability of sending you the digital magazine.

Please send them to:

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God's Amazing Grace in Romans

Formerly, **RIGHT WITH GOD RIGHT NOW**

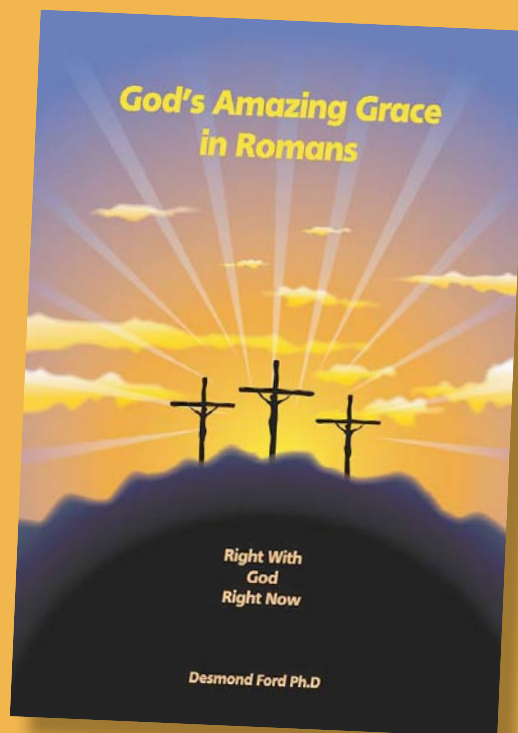
by **Desmond Ford**

is up and live as an e-book on Kindle.

The renowned New Testament scholar, Dr. F. F. Bruce, once said about the book of Romans, 'Be prepared—to conscientiously study Romans is to invite cataclysmic change ... but a change that is marvellously for the better!' Romans is the gateway to Paradise!

To understand Romans is to understand those things we most need to know. It means finding out the truth about our own hearts, God's heart and the solution to the problems most troubling to most humans over the ages:

- **Why is there sorrow and pain?**
- **What can I do about my own guilt?**
- **How should I live?**
- **How can temptation be overcome?**
- **What follows death?**
- **What is Christianity all about?**
- **Is there a key to the Bible, and is the book that key?**
- **How shall I distinguish between religions and avoid being cheated or duped?**
- **What principles can guide me in my relationship to God, my neighbour, the church and the state?**
- **Just what is the gospel?**



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Note that a number of Des Ford's latest books are already on Kindle, published by iUniverse at: www.iuniverse.com These are available as e-books on www.amazon.com for prices ranging from \$3.99 to \$9.99:

- *How Long O Lord?*
- *The Coming Worldwide Calvary*
- *In the Heart of Daniel*
- *God's Odds*
- *Eating Right for Type 2 Diabetes*
- *Jesus Only*

INTO ALL THE

World...

ELIEZER GONZALEZ PhD

HERE AT Good News Unlimited we are in a time of preparation, as we set ourselves up to fulfil the Gospel Commission. Des and I have been praying and searching as to how Good News Unlimited can be given new life bringing blessings perhaps to millions. I long ago learnt that this is a most 'dangerous' prayer to pray, because when you pray for the Lord to open up ways for you to share the Gospel, it is a prayer that he always directly and specifically answers.

And so, in recent times, the Lord has started to open up avenues for the ministry of the gospel, of which we could never have imagined. **The Lord is helping us to dream bigger dreams and to see more expansive visions than we ever have before.** In the pages of this magazine you are starting to see these unfold. A clear example of the Lord's hand at work is in gospel groups in Africa who are seeking us out so for equipping, fellowship and for partnership in making the Gospel known.

Good News Unlimited is not just a group of people working away somewhere. It is all of us united together as ambassadors for the Gospel of Jesus Christ. And as such, our lives must be completely defined by our commitment to the message with which we have been entrusted.

Yes, it is true that Good News Unlimited has been going for a long time. But why should the witness of Good News Unlimited be silenced now? Instead, should we not understand that God has brought us to this time for a reason? Amid the multitude of the religious voices with which we are surrounded, the historical and objective gospel of the New Testament is rarely heard. The pearl of great price is still too often hidden by religious customs and traditions and the many agendas of society.

Yes, it is true that we need to use new technologies and new ways of communicating. But that should be no problem for us, for

we are 'new creatures in Christ'. And because we believe in hearts made new, lives made new, and the heavens and the earth made new, we also believe that 'old dogs can be taught new tricks'.

Yes, it is true that Good News Unlimited is small. But **the Lord delights in confounding the wisdom of this world by using the small things that this world despises.**

Yes, it is true that the founders of Good News Unlimited belong to a generation that will one day fade away, and that some are already awaiting the trumpet call of Christ. But the Gospel doesn't fade away with the passing of men. It is not the gospel that is grass; the Word of the Lord endures forever. And so, therefore, the task falls upon us [deleted comma] to take but an ounce of Des's courage from [not of] his stand for the purity and truth of the gospel, and to allow God to forge a movement that will finish the work that the Christ and his apostles began.

Too much, too soon, you say? Not enough, and not soon enough, I say! For millions perish while we linger to read these few lines.

Yes, it is true that we all feel incapable of the task. But here is the truth of the Gospel itself: "Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit," says the Lord Almighty!—Zech. 4:6. I am the unlikely person that you could ever have thought would have joined the ministry of Good News Unlimited. I am not even here because of Des, although I honour his faithfulness to the Gospel. I am here neither for profit nor for popularity. I am here only because God has clearly and unequivocally called me to this ministry, and so **I have laid everything at the feet of Jesus, and I am laboring with Des in the greatest work of all—that of uplifting the Gospel of Jesus Christ.**

Will you walk this journey with us and continue to support Good News Unlimited? We pray that our Lord will move many to sow generously into the work He has called us to do. You can donate today at our website, or use the reply paid coupon accompanying this magazine. And please, continue to lift up Good News Unlimited in your prayers as we 'press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Jesus Christ'.—Phil. 3:14. ❄



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