

good news *Unlimited*

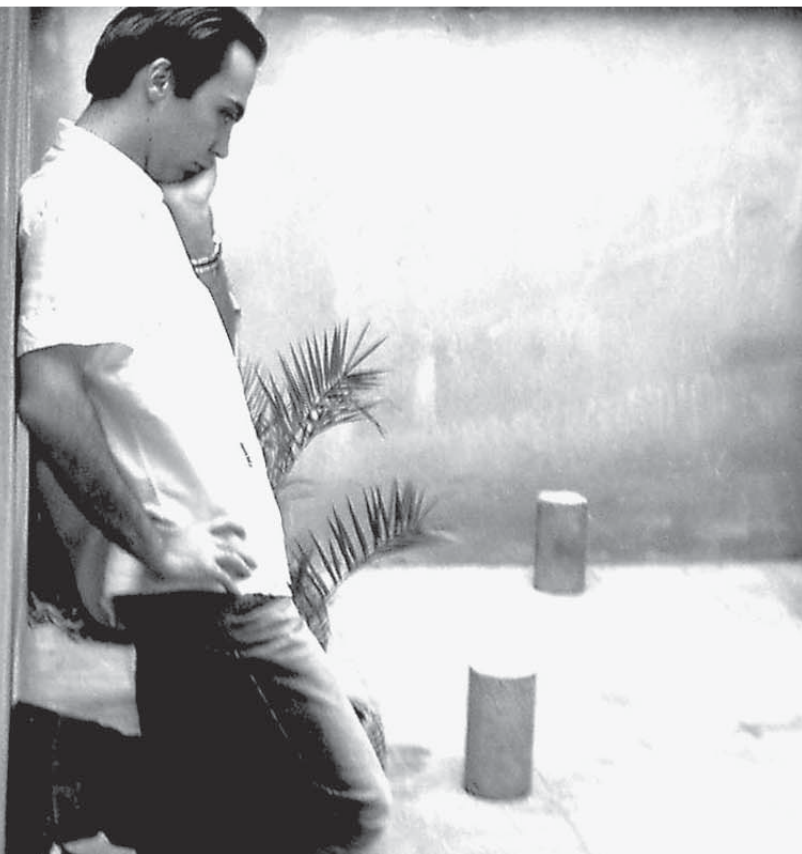
October 2013 • Issue No. 7

CHRIST ALONE • GRACE ALONE • FAITH ALONE • SCRIPTURE ALONE



| Grace and the High Jump | Interview with Eliezer |

Jesus Only:

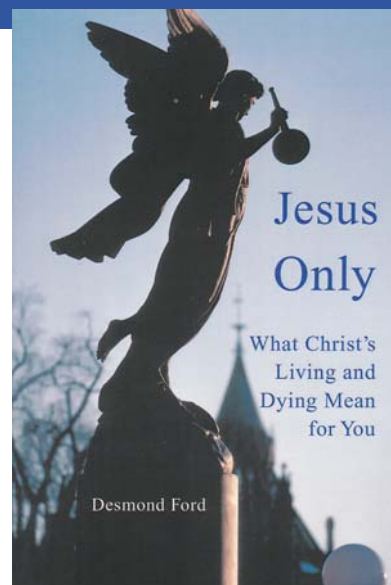


What Christ's Living and Dying Mean for You

For almost 2,000 years millions of readers of the Gospels have found them to be self-authenticating—the 'inner witness' of their divine inspiration is given to all who read with a surrendered will. Dr. Desmond Ford, who has studied the New Testament records for 70 years, believes that thoughtful readers of this devotional study will have that experience.

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.



by Desmond Ford

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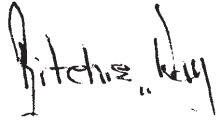
Editorial

TIMOTHY KELLER, author and evangelist, is a man I have a lot of respect for. He is a Presbyterian minister who was sent to revive a church of just 50 people in Manhattan, New York. Today more than 5,000 people attend that church. One of the secrets of Keller's success is his loyalty to Christ and the gospel. Consider, for example, this pearl of wisdom from his pen:

The universal religion of mankind is: We develop a good record and give it to God, and then he owes us. The gospel is: God develops a good record and gives it to us, and then we owe him (Rom. 1:17). In short, to say a good person can find God is to say good behaviour is the way to God.

In essence this view says, "Good people can find God, but bad people cannot." But what happens to us moral failures? We are excluded. You see, you can believe that people are saved by goodness or you can believe that people are saved by God's grace, but you cannot believe both at once. ...

The gospel says, "People who know they aren't good can find God, and people who think they are good cannot." Those who believe their moral efforts can help them reach God are excluded.



RITCHIE WAY



... [The gospel] says joyfully, "It doesn't matter if you've been at the gates of hell. You can be welcomed and embraced fully and instantly through Christ".ⁱ

I personally find Keller's description of the gospel so comforting, so wonderful, and so generous my heart leaps and for joy. Nobody could ever invent a God such as Keller describes, because that kind of God is so contrary to human nature.

It is natural for us to want to be responsible for our own destinies. Human pride has us reciting a list of our good deeds to God, thus putting him in our debt. We believe God should be grateful that he has such wonderful people like us in his host.

We fail to see that human pride was the root of Adam's fall. He disobeyed God and ate the forbidden fruit because he wanted to be like God. But the God he wanted to be like was a travesty of the true God painted for him by the devil. The true

God was not a jealous God who wanted to keep his power solely for his own use. The true God was 'the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world' (Rev. 13:8). His power lay in his sacrificial nature. This God came, not to be served, but to serve. He went from the highest place in the universe to the lowest; from heaven to hell; from absolute distinction to absolute extinction; from being the self-existing One to being the non-existent One.

The image of God allowing himself to be nailed to a cross often brings me to tears. Such a supreme sacrifice is true power, the power of infinite love. God was willing to be completely annihilated, along with sin, so that we might be given another chance to enjoy the splendours of his creation. He chose to be cut off from the Father, so that we might be reunited with the Father. He gave up eternity so that we might inherit eternity. The least we can do is say, 'Thank you, Lord'. And those who have appropriated his sacrificial gift will, like the woman who anointed Jesus with costly perfume, reveal their gratitude by their actions. ❄

ENDNOTE

- i Timothy Keller, *Is Hell for Real or does Everyone go to Heaven?* Gen. Eds. Christopher W. Morgan & Robert A. Peterson, Zondervan, 2004, pp. 77-78.

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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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It is not a church, nor is it affiliated organically with any Christian denomination. Its ministry includes radio presentations, public seminars, fellowship meetings, book sales and the publishing of audio and video material and two magazines.

GNU is supported predominantly by donations from those who believe in its ministry. Gifts are tax deductible in Canada, New Zealand and the USA.

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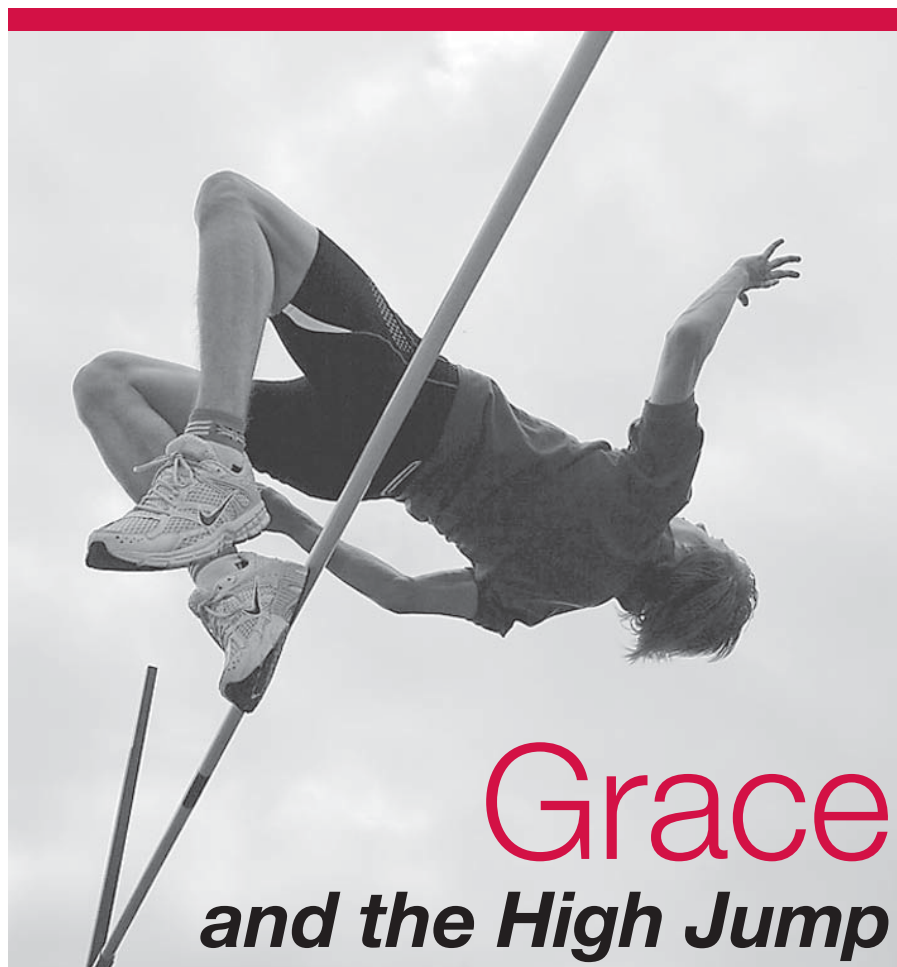
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Grace and the High Jump

Being the Best

As I was growing up, I was taught to be the best that I could be. But sometimes life really blindsides you, as it did to me in 1989.

A few years earlier in 1984 I had finished year 12 and now I was back at the same school, as a young teacher in my first job.¹ I had qualified as an English and History teacher, and I really wanted to serve my church. But the only vacancy available was a teaching position that involved a half-load of teaching Physical Education.

My Athletic Gifts

Now, among the gifts I had been blessed with in life, athleticism was not one of them. I managed to bluff my way through most of the year, until I came up against ... the dreaded high jump. Little did I expect that teaching a class of Year 8 boys how to do the Fosbury Flop would be one of my life's defining moments.

I prepared well. I studied every book that I could get my hands on about how to do the Fosbury Flop. I knew exactly when each muscle fibre had to twitch in order to flick my legs over the bar. I studied the process over and over again; I replayed it in my mind, until I was absolutely confident.

On the appointed day I explained to the boys how it was done; I told them how easy

ELIEZER GONZALEZ PhD

it was. And then they lined up ready to jump. I stood beside the bar, and clipboard in hand, and I called them through one by one. After each jump, I offered some expert technical advice ... 'check your run-up,' 'arch your back more,' 'flick your left leg,' and so on. The lesson was going well.

Triumph on the Field

Now, it just happened that a female teacher (who was in fact a real Physical Education teacher) was having a late lunch and had decided to sit on a bench overlooking the oval. Suddenly, she called out, 'Mr Gonzalez, you show them!'

This was, of course, a challenge I could not refuse. It went to the heart of my authority as a teacher and even my manhood! Of course, I had nothing to worry about, since I knew practically everything there was to know about how to do the Fosbury Flop. So I calmly placed my clipboard on the grass, and announced, 'OK boys, watch how it's done.'

I measured out my run-up in a purposeful manner, and turned around to face the bar. It was set for 13-year olds;

I was 24, so all would be well. And then I started the run-up. That was the point of no return.

I felt fast; I felt powerful. And then, with the mildest of kangaroo hops I swept the bar away with my waist and landed on my knees on the mat.

I got up. I walked back to my spot, picked up my black clipboard, and calmly called out 'Next!' I couldn't bear to turn around to look, and so I couldn't be sure whether my PE-teaching colleague had managed to stay on the bench in the midst of her hysterical laughter.

Paul's Reality Check

I learnt that day that I would never be the best at the high jump. But there *are* some things that God expects His children to be the best at. Paul writes to the church at Corinth:

Be the best in this work of grace in the same way that you are the best in everything, such as faith, speech, knowledge, total commitment, and the love we inspired in you.²

This verse is a blueprint for the Christian life. God calls us to be the best at having faith; we are to be best in how we speak; we are to be the best in knowledge, and we are to be the best in our committed to God, and of course, we are to be the best in love.

And the reason why we *can* all be the best in these things (unlike the Fosbury Flop), is that each of these things do not belong to us; they are gifts from our Heavenly Father. Even better, this is not a competition where there is only one winner; we can *all* be the best, because *He* is the best.

Being the Best at the Work of Grace

However, the main point of this verse is *not* about these qualities. The key point of this verse is that Paul wants the church to *be* the best at the *work of grace*. Years ago, I thought I *knew* about grace, just like I *knew* all about how to do the Fosbury Flop. But that is not what Paul is talking about here.

Paul is talking about *being*: that means *experiencing* grace. Paul wants the church to be made up of people who have truly experienced compassion, mercy and grace. Paul is talking about the *work of grace*. He wants the church to be the best at *doing* grace. It is not enough to *know* about grace. Grace can only be understood once it has been personally experienced and, then, when it has been shared with others.

You see, in the following verse (v. 8), Paul essentially says to the church, 'OK, so you think you are loving, faithful, and

knowledgeable Christians, so now prove it! And you prove it by being the best at the work of grace.

And Paul doesn't leave it there; he puts it all in context as he lays down the challenge to the church. Paul writes, 'You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Although he was rich, he became poor for our sakes, so that you could become rich through his poverty' (v.9.) That is the gospel, that's our salvation right there. And because of the gospel, what our Lord Jesus Christ has done for us is now the benchmark, the gold standard of grace. But our response to the gospel must also be the response of grace: to give the most to the least, and to become the least, so that others can be the most.

So Jesus shows us that grace is all about giving, but it is not just about giving what is easy.³ There are much harder things to give than money. Jesus didn't just give what was easy; He gave it all. Grace is about humbly putting self aside, and putting others first, having understood that under the cross, each one of us is the Chief of Sinners, all always equally needing the grace of Jesus. (1 Tim 1:5).

Being Known Because of Grace

Sometimes in the church we are like that young Physical Education teacher who stared at the high-jump bar. We have all the knowledge and we are totally committed, and our words may even be very convincing, but without grace we will always fall short. Why? Because all of God's gifts to us are received and experienced through grace.

If you ask me what we as Christians should be known for, I would say, let's not stop at just having good reasons for what we believe. Let's certainly not stop at merely being committed to our mission. Let's not stop at having just an intellectual understanding of faith and love. Instead, let also go on to being the best at grace—at experiencing and sharing all of God's goodness. Because without being grace-filled Christians, neither faith, knowledge, speech, commitment, nor even love will be able to flower and grow in our lives in the way that God wants.

I have long ago given up on athletics, but now I want to be the best at the work of grace, not because it saves me, but because I have been saved by it. As Paul knew, it is the work of grace that makes all the difference. ✱

ENDNOTES

1. Since there are probably people reading this who may have been involved in this story, I have avoided using names to protect the innocent.
2. 2 Cor. 8:7, Common English Bible
3. In this passage, Paul is encouraging the Corinthian church for the needy church in Jerusalem.

FACEBOOK & TWITTER ACCOUNT



*New times present new challenges.
And new challenges call for new methods.*

For this reason, Good News Unlimited has just set up some new ways of communicating, not just with you, but with the big wide world out there.



And what will we be communicating?

Simply the message that you know and love: the gospel of Jesus Christ—of his grace and righteousness. And of course we will be able to let you know about Good News Unlimited events in a much faster and direct way than ever before.

For those reasons, we have set up a Facebook account and a Twitter account. To access these you will need to set up your free accounts with either Facebook or Twitter, or both!

Facebook

If you don't have a Facebook account, you can get one at www.facebook.com

Once you have your Facebook account, you can go directly to: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/goodnewsunlimited/> to find the GNU Group.

Twitter

If you don't have a Twitter account, you can get one at www.twitter.com

Once you have your Twitter account, you can go directly to: <https://twitter.com/GoodNewsUnlimit>

If you don't have access to these, don't worry! We will continue to keep in touch with you in the same way that we have done so until now.

But we have already started putting spiritually uplifting messages and important announcements on Facebook every day.

WE ARE LOOKING FORWARD TO SEEING YOU ONLINE SOON!



INTERVIEW WITH

Eliezer Gonzalez

the new pastor and administrator of **GNU**

1. Please give us a brief outline of your life up till the present.

Well, Ritchie, I was born in Switzerland to Spanish parents, who immigrated to Australia when I was four years old. I grew up as a Seventh-day Adventist Christian.

My first job was as an English and History teacher, and after a few years I left to pursue a corporate career, in which I spent many years. In business I had many management roles, including in Human Resources, Organisational Development, Occupational Health and Safety, and eventually at the highest executive levels of some national and international companies; that is, until the Lord called me to ministry.

2. Please tell us a little about your family?

I am the happy husband of Ana, and we have two children: Rebecca and Benjamin. Ana was born in Australia although she is

of Chilean background and grew up there. Our children are wonderful teenagers of whom we are very proud.

3. What experience have you had in ministry?

That's an interesting question, Ritchie. I am not a 'regular' pastor in that I have never worked full-time in regular employment by a traditional church or a denomination.

Ever since I was young, many people would say to me that I should really go to study theology, because they thought I knew my Bible, and I would preach and give Bible studies. I would tell them that if God wanted me to be a pastor, he'd let me know. And he never did—for a long time. And then, some years ago, God decided it was time. Now, looking back, I guess he wanted me to grow a bit in grace, to mature in my understanding in the gospel and to learn through some tough life experiences that he wanted to take me through.

But even though I have not been a 'regular' pastor, I have had plenty of

ministry experience. I have led many small Christian groups, as well as having presented at many seminars and workshops, and of course, I have had plenty of opportunities to preach. I was also a part-time volunteer associate pastor of a local church for a couple of years.

Every year for the past five years I have travelled overseas to present at evangelistic programmes. In addition to this, I am a prolific writer and have been a regular contributor of articles to Christian magazines.

However, I am a great believer in the New Testament truth that we are all ministers of the gospel. I am just privileged to get to do a bit more of it than most.

4. What are your academic qualifications?

Well, I'll only tell you because you're asking! I have a honours degree in linguistics and history, with a Diploma in Education. Then along the way I also picked up postgraduate qualifications in business management and IT. I have two master's degrees: one in Early Christian

and Jewish Studies from Macquarie University, and another one in theology. In both of these, my research projects were focused on the New Testament. My PhD from Macquarie University was in Early Christian History, looking at the first few centuries. I am still actively publishing in academic journals and presenting at international academic conferences in the areas of theology and early Christian history. I have various areas of interest, including especially New Testament theology and its relevance for today.

But don't let any of this scare you or our readers off, Ritchie. I believe that the job of the ministers of the gospel is to do the work of Jesus: to simplify, not to complicate things. The message we are to share is beautiful in its simplicity; the false gospel always complicates. If Good News Unlimited fails to convey the simplicity of the Gospel, we have failed to do what Jesus did.

5. What attracted you to Good News Unlimited, when there were 'richer' pickings elsewhere?

Mmm ... how can I say this? I wasn't attracted to Good News Unlimited at all! I actually knew very little about GNU. The truth is that it was God brought me to GNU. This is a big story of grace, Ritchie, and I know there is not much space here. Let me summarise it. In my younger days, it pains me to say that I was no friend of Des Ford. All I believed was that he was an enemy of the true Gospel. That's because my understanding of the Gospel was warped and stunted. And I actually used all of my influence and gifts to work against the Gospel of Jesus. But through life experiences which were painful but all about growth, and by forcing me to spend months, and even years sitting alone at home reading only the New Testament, and by a series of miracles in my life, the Lord transformed my understanding of the Gospel, and of what it meant to be a Christian, and of my role in His kingdom. It wasn't easy, it wasn't fast, and I am still growing in the Lord. But He did it.

Still, when GNU contacted me, every carnal instinct in my being said, 'No, this is not for me'. But every spiritual fibre in my soul said, 'Yes, this is where the Lord wants you'. Of course, I still wanted to have regular church employment somewhere, but I had promised the Lord when he had called me to ministry some years ago that I would always respond to his voice. And in my soul and through a series of miraculous interventions by God, I heard his voice loud and clear. So now, here I am, fully convinced that I am where the Lord wants me to be.

INTERVIEW WITH

Eliezer Gonzalez

6. How committed are you to Good News Unlimited?

There's no turning back, Ritchie. I am here with Good News Unlimited for as long as the Lord has need of me. I have only one commitment, and that is to follow the Lord, but I know as an absolute fact, as much as I know that the Lord Jesus has called me to the gospel ministry, that the Lord is committed to my being a servant of Good News Unlimited.

7. What is your vision for Good News Unlimited?

Ritchie, I am going to open my heart here about my passion for Good News Unlimited. Good News Unlimited is at a crossroads. The decisions that we make about GNU now will determine whether GNU has a future or not. God has used Des' ministry powerfully over the last 30 years to bring people to salvation by upholding the true Gospel of Jesus Christ. Every week GNU is finding more gospel fellowships, groups, and churches around the world that have been started through Des' ministry and the ministry of GNU. We didn't know they existed before because we weren't looking for them. But we are now!

And now, although Des is still going strong, he is 84 and hoping to slow down. And the reality is that GNU's supporters are also not only ageing, but are starting to await the resurrection. Christians today are unaware of the issues that gave birth to Good News Unlimited.

What GNU has is the pearl of great price, the beautiful, objective and forensic gospel of Jesus Christ, the gospel that we have treasured for so many years. But now GNU is facing the issue of generational change. We must find ways to communicate with other, younger generations.

We must undergo generational change while still honouring the faithfulness of our current supporters, who have kept this ministry going for so many years with their prayers, volunteer support, and donations. In fact it is truly a heavenly miracle and a sign of God's grace to all of the supporters of GNU that we have continued as a ministry even though, until now, Des has not really asked for funds. Generational change is one of the most difficulty changes for Christian ministries to undergo.

As part of this, it is time for Good News Unlimited to fully and unequivocally embrace the great Gospel commission to take it into all the world. I believe that, ultimately, no Gospel ministry has any right to exist at all, unless it embraces this command from Jesus. What I mean is that Good News Unlimited has been seen in the past by some as some kind of sectarian ministry to the Seventh-day Adventist Church. I know that this is not true, but this has been the perception.

But now, with the generational change that must happen, and without ever forgetting its roots, and that it was hammered out in the forge of adversity, Good News Unlimited must find its own place as a fully interdenominational and international ministry within the evangelical world. The gospel pearl of great price is still rare, and millions, even billions, are still searching for it. Of course, a key part of all of this is preserving Des's legacy, the thousands of hours of video sermons and presentations, the countless papers, magazine articles, and books, in a format in which they can be disseminated like never before!

I believe that God has preserved Good News Unlimited, and that he has preserved us for this very day. All of this will call for support and loyal commitment, like never before, from the whole Good News Unlimited community. But our board and I, and our volunteers, intend on working for the glory of God to make it happen!

God does not call us to be small-minded thinkers when it comes to the Good News of salvation. Before I joined GNU, someone said to me, 'Why would you every want to join a dying ministry, and have a ministry to hundreds; when a person like you could have a ministry to millions?'

Well, a person like me deserves to minister only as food for the worms of the ground, were it not for the grace of Jesus Christ. And so because of that, I intend that Good News Unlimited will present the Gospel to millions of people, and that all the glory may go to Jesus our Saviour!





THE ROMANCE OF

Ruth

DR DESMOND FORD

THERE ARE TWO books in the Bible, which bear the name of women. One book, Esther, is about a Jewess who married a gentile, and the other, Ruth, tells the story of a gentile who married a Jew.

The book of Ruth begins with these words:

In the days when the Judges ruled, there was a famine in the land, and Elimelech of Bethlehem-Judah went to live in the country of Moab, he, and his wife, Naomi, and their two sons, Mahlon and Chilion.

They planned to stay in Moab only a short time, but tragedy struck the family. The father died, and so did the sons not long after they had both married Moabite girls. This left three widows.

The mother-in-law, Naomi, and her daughters-in-law decided to return home to Israel, for she had heard that the Lord had visited his people and had given them food. Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law:

Go back, both of you, to your mothers' house. May the Lord deal kindly with you as you have dealt with the dead and with me. And she kissed them; and they wept. Orpah kissed the mother-in-law, goodbye, but Ruth clung to her.

Notice the beautiful words of Ruth:

"Where you go, I will go, and where you live, I will live; people shall be my people, and your God, my God. Where you die I will die; there will I be buried. May the Lord do so to me and more also, if even death parts me from you."

The two women came to Bethlehem at the beginning of barley harvest, and Ruth the Moabitess said to Naomi, 'Let me go to the field and glean ears of grain after him in whose sight I shall find grace.' Then Boaz, whose field she went to, said to his servant who was in charge of the reapers, 'Whose maiden is this?' And the servant who was in charge of the reapers answered, 'The Moabite maiden who came back with Naomi from the country of Moab.'

Boaz spoke kindly to Ruth:

"Now listen my daughter, do not go to glean in another field or leave this one but keep close to my maidens. I have told the young men not to touch you. When you are thirsty, go to the vessels and drink what the young men have drawn." Then she bowed to the ground and said to him, "Why have I found favour in your eyes that you should take notice of me when I am a foreigner?" Boaz replied, "I have heard what you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband, and how you left your father and mother in your native land and came to a people you did not know before. May a full reward be given you by the Lord, the God of Israel, under whose wing you have come to take refuge." And she said, "You are most gracious to me my Lord, for you have comforted me and spoken kindly to your maid servant though I am not one of your maid servants."

Boaz said to her, "Come here and eat some bread and dip your morsel in the wine." So she sat beside the reapers and he passed to her parched corn and she ate until she was satisfied. When she rose to glean, Boaz instructed his young men saying, "Let her glean even among

the sheaves and do not reproach her and also pull out some grain from the bundles and leave it for her pick up." So she gleaned in the field until evening and she beat out what she gleaned and it was about a basketful of barley. She took it into the city and showed her mother-in-law and she also gave her the leftover food from her meal.

Naomi said to Ruth, "Where did you glean today? Where have you worked?" So she told her mother-in-law, "The man's name with whom I worked today is Boaz." And Naomi said to her, "That man is a relative of ours, one of our nearest kin. He is a wealthy man in my husband's family."

The story increases in significance as we find that Boaz is actually a kinsman-redeemer. The Old Testament laws had made provision for widows that a near relative might buy back the property of the dead husband, but he had to marry the widow and thus redeem both the property and the person.

That evening Naomi said to Ruth, "Boaz is winnowing barley tonight at the threshing floor, so wash and anoint yourself, put on your best clothes, and go down to the threshing floor. But do not make yourself known to the man until he is finished eating and drinking. When he lies down take notice of the place where he lies and then go and uncover his feet and go and lie down and he will tell you what to do."

These words sound strange to us in the western world, but they describe an ancient eastern custom. Naomi chose this time when Boaz and his men would be resting in the barn after the harvest. And then, in comparative privacy, Ruth is to ask Boaz, does he really want to redeem her or not? That's the significance of the story.

So Ruth went down to the threshing floor and she did just as her mother-in-law had told her. When Boaz had eaten and drunk, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of grain. Ruth came softly and uncovered his feet and lay down.

So here is Ruth taking the position of a servant, crosswise at his feet. And the text continues:

At midnight the man was startled and turned to behold a woman lying at his feet and he asked, "Who are you?" She

answered, "I am Ruth, your handmaid. Spread your robe over your handmaid for you are a kinsman-redeemer." And he said, "May you be blessed by the Lord, my daughter. You've made this last kindness greater than the first in that you have not gone after young men, whether poor or rich. Now, my daughter, do not fear. I'll do for you all that you ask for all my fellow townsmen know that you are a woman of virtue. Now, it is true, that I am a near kinsman but there is a kinsman nearer than I. If he will do the part of the next of kin for you, well, let him do it. If he is not willing to do the part of the next of kin for you, then as the Lord lives, I will do it."

And Boaz gave Ruth a present of barley to take to the mother-in-law. When she arrived home Naomi asked, "How did you fare, my daughter?" Ruth gave an account of what had happened and Naomi answered, "Wait, my daughter, until you learn how the matter turns out for the man will not rest until he settles the matter today."

The next morning Boaz went up to the town gate and hadn't been sitting there long when the next of kin, of whom Boaz had spoken to Ruth, came by. Boaz said to him, "Turn aside, friend. Sit down here." Boaz then invited ten elders of the town to join them as witnesses. Then he said to the next of kin, "Naomi has come back from the country of Moab and is selling the parcel of land that belonged to her late husband, Elimelech. I thought I would tell you about it in the presence of these elders. If you redeem it, redeem it; if you will not, tell me that I may know. There

is no one besides you to redeem it, and I come after you." And the man said, "I will redeem it." And Boaz said, "The day you buy the field from the hand of Naomi you are also buying Ruth, the Moabitess, the widow of the dead." The next of kin said, "I cannot redeem it lest I impair my own inheritance; I cannot redeem it."

Boaz then declared before the elders that he would redeem the property and would marry the widow, Ruth. He said, "Ruth, the Moabitess, the widow of Mahlon, I have bought to be my wife that the name of the dead may not be cut off from among his brethren. You are witnesses this day." And all the people said, "We are witnesses. May the Lord make this woman who is coming into your house like Rachel and Leah, who together built up the house of Israel. May the Lord give you children by this young woman." So Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife and he went into her and the Lord gave her a son.

And the town's women said to Naomi, "Blessed be the Lord. He has not left you this day without next of kin. May his name be renowned in Israel. He shall be to you a restorer of life, a nourisher of your old age for your daughter-in-law who loves you is more to you than seven sons."

The story closes with the announcement that the child of Ruth and Boaz was an ancestor of David.

And now we have the clue as to the real meaning of this book. For the burden of every book and every chapter of Scripture is redemption—the solving of the great human problem of sin and exile and loss and death. And this story—which tells us about David, the ancestor of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the city of Bethlehem where 'the Son of David' was born—takes place at the time of the barley harvest, which is the Passover season.

This book is your story and mine. Ruth represents every one of us; she was a heathen. According to Deuteronomy 3:3, no Moabite was ever allowed to come into the congregation of Israel, not until the tenth generation. By law, they were shut out; and, my friends, Ruth represents all of us. By Law we have no right to the kingdom of God; we have no claim on heaven. The Scripture says that by nature we are aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers from the covenants of promise, without God and without hope in the world. So law prohibits us from

Continued page 10



THE ROMANCE OF

Ruth

Continued from page 9

inheriting the blessings of the people of God; but thank God, there's more than Ruth in the story. There is Boaz, he is the Lord of the Harvest. He is one who is powerful and rich, compassionate and kind. You find he is interested in both Jews like Naomi and gentiles like Ruth. He provides for all. He gives gifts; he welcomes the outcast and comforts her. He purchases her. He works for her union. He provides her with his robe and covers her. He protects her and blesses her. He redeems her fully and completely and unites himself to her in marriage that she might bring forth fruit.

Boaz is the picture of our Saviour, Jesus Christ. You remember that the story says he was a kinsman-redeemer. And our Christ—though once his garment was the light, and the stars of heaven were the fringe of his robe, though he was the one that put the blaze in the sun and the twinkle in the stars, though he made the planets and the brooks and whirling worlds and luminous suns, though he made man, the birds, and the fish of the sea—he became a child in the stable at Bethlehem, became our near kinsman, took our nature and added it to his own.

Christ was one person with two natures—just as much God as though not at all man; just as much man as though not at all God—divine, therefore, he had power to help us—human, therefore, he could represent us.



My friends, you may lack all earthly friends, but Jesus loves you. Your husband, your wife, your parents, your children or your neighbours may not understand you, but Jesus understands you. He knows the reasons behind the problems in your day-to-day existence. He knows the battles you have fought, the agonies you have borne. He knows the warring desires of your heart, the mixed motives that actuate you. He knows, he understands and he loves you just the same. He is the true Boaz. He wants to redeem you to himself. He purchased you on Calvary.

Did you notice that in chapter three it told of Ruth washing, anointing, putting on her best clothes and then lying at Boaz's feet in a pose of surrender to the kinsman-redeemer. That's a picture of what we must do, my friends. We need to go to our Lord, kneel before him and plead for his robe of righteousness. This was done at Passover time. It was when he laid down to rest that the union was proposed. When our Lord Jesus died on the Cross, my friends, the way was paved for our union with him forever!

You will have noticed that the key word of the story is 'rest'. Naomi told the daughter-in-law that she could not provide rest for them, that only a redeemer could, a husband who would unite himself to them. But we are told, as the story progresses, that when Naomi at last said, 'Shall I not seek rest for you?' that Ruth, the alien, was brought into contact with the kinsman redeemer. And on return home Naomi assured her, 'The man will not rest until he has finished this matter of your redemption'. And so it was.

You and I seek rest of soul, rest of heart and rest of spirit. We only get it through Christ. He did not rest himself until he finished our redemption.

As you read the Scriptures, my friends, always look for yourself there, and always look for Jesus there.

We are there, and he is there. And when we come together—as did Ruth and Boaz—there is redemption. ❄

Friends, Readers, Countrymen . . .

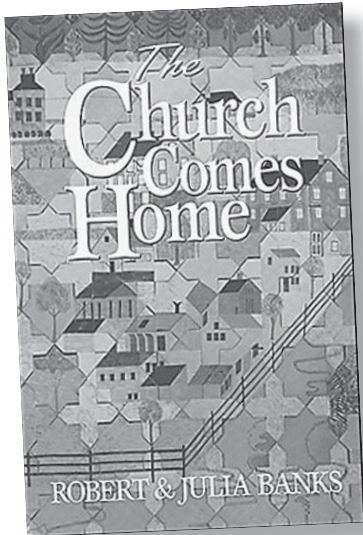
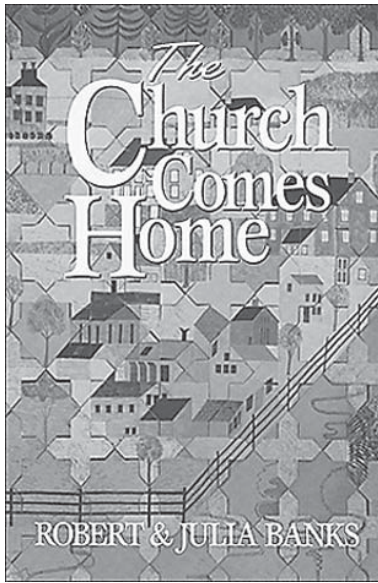
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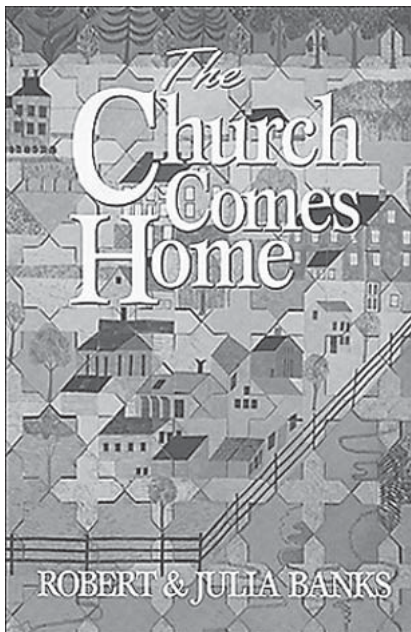
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PAPERBACK



The Church Comes Home

**ROBERT &
JULIA BANKS**

IN OUR modern dislocated society many are searching for a church experience that offers true Christian sharing, nurturing and discipleship, in addition to teaching and worship. For many such people the answer is found in the home-church—a small committed group of often diverse people who meet together in homes to pray, sing, study and share their lives.

The Church Comes Home is both visionary and practical. It describes how home churches can be formed, how they should grow, and how networks of home churches can develop. It examines issues, eg., how to make decisions, how to discuss doctrine, how to include children, singles, elders, and how to reach out to the community at large, offering practical suggestions for their resolution.

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Have You Experienced God Today?



I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe (Eph. 1:17-19).

BRAD MCINTYRE

THIS PASSAGE from Ephesians is a prayer. Paul was not only a great theologian, but a great man of prayer. He is praying that the Christians of Asia Minor might experience the fullness of God in a deeper way. He wants them to mature in their faith so that they may know God better. Now that they have accepted Christ as their Saviour and Lord, he prays that they won't stop there! He wants God to continually reveal himself to them, to enlighten them as to the privileges and responsibilities of their faith.

Here we see the ongoing nature of the Christian life. Faith in Christ is not a static thing that we do once and then coast the rest of the way. The Christian life is a life of ongoing development in our knowledge and understanding of God and of what

it means to be a Christian. No Christian should ever be bored! There is too much growing to do. Thus Paul is praying that these Christians will experience God in a deeper way.

Rational Religion

Have you experienced God lately? Sometimes we get very rational with our religion. We discuss theology as if it's something that comes to us on a computer printout. We are in danger of becoming theological eggheads, able to mouth all the stock theological phrases (e.g., justification, imputed, imparted, eschatological, alien righteousness, etc.) but unable to translate our head knowledge into a heart-felt experience. In our quest for eternal 'truths' we can easily lose our spirituality.

Don't you long for a deeper spiritual life? Don't you long to experience God for yourself and know you've encountered the Divine? Aren't you tired of getting

all your theological information second hand from others who are trained in 'God talk'? Don't you wish at times you were more excited about Jesus, more happy about your faith, more enthusiastic about being a part of God's family?

Even though some of us have been cautioned against trusting in our religious experience, experience is the stuff of theology. Theology is nothing more than rational reflection on religious experience. D. Elton Trueblood once wrote, 'Religion is like falling in love; theology is like a treatise on courtship.' This is true. Falling in love and writing a research paper on love are two very different things. And experiencing God firsthand and talking theology are two very different things also.

How to Experience God

How then can we experience God in a deeper way? First, we must understand that we cannot force an encounter with

God, but we can make ourselves available to God, should he reveal himself. The spiritual life is a life that is available to God. Even though God's self-disclosure cannot be forced or manipulated by human efforts, we still play a part in making ourselves available to God and open and alert to his presence at all times.

How available are you to God? Does God know how to get a hold of you in case of an emergency? If you haven't experienced God lately, perhaps it's because you're not available to him. Perhaps your agenda is too full.

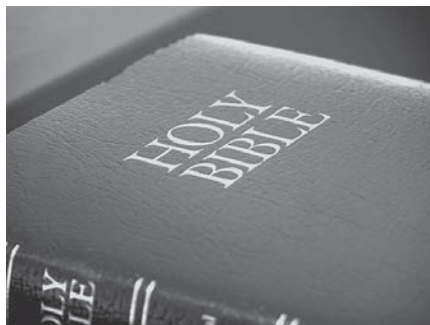
How do we make ourselves available to God? The first answer is, through prayer. Prayer is an attitude of constant openness to God in which we make our inner selves available to him. Prayer is a two-way conversation with God: talking and listening. Too often if we do pray, it's on the run, and we don't sit still long enough to listen for God's voice. Certainly, we can and should pray at all times in all situations. It should become as natural for us to pray, as it is to breathe. But don't overlook the power of private prayer during moments of solitude—moments when you isolate yourself from everything else for quiet meditation.

'Well,' you say, 'who's got time for solitude? I'm a busy mother with three kids.' Part of living is learning to schedule our time. No one is going to take us by the hand and lead us like children in order to get our priorities straight. Our schedules will never change until we take responsibility for changing them. If we were dying of lack of oxygen, we would do something fast to change the situation, no matter what our schedule looked like! In the same way, if we are serious about experiencing God, and if we are tired of a ho-hum Christian existence, we will do something to change the situation.

'I don't have time to pray' is a lame excuse. The truth of the matter is that we don't take time to pray. As a writer, I soon discovered there is never time to write; you must steal time to write. And so I write some days at 5:00 a.m., sometimes during my lunch hour, and sometimes at 11:00 p.m. The same is true for prayer and solitude. Time with God is not offered to any of us as a gift. We have to steal it from the other demands of life.

The Bible, Worship and People

Second, we can experience God through Bible study. I say 'we can ...,' but sometimes we may not. You see, the Bible has no power apart from the Spirit. And



even with the Spirit, the Bible still will not speak to us unless we make ourselves available to its message with humility. We need to approach the Scriptures not like some historian of ancient literature or some professional philologist interested only in word origins. We must approach the Bible as if it contains the Word of God for our lives—because it does!

The stories of the Bible are never meant to convey to us mere information. They contain, instead, a message about life and death, a message that is crucial to our well being.

There is a surplus of meaning in the Bible, and we can go back to it again and again without exhausting its reservoirs of meaning. This is why we keep studying Scripture and continually interpreting it and applying it to our lives—because of its excess of meaning. We don't worship the Bible or take everything in it literally. But we do make ourselves available to God by interacting with the inspired messages of Scripture and letting them impact us, not just once, but over and over again.

Third, we experience God through worship—through songs and hymns, prayers and sharing, preaching and the sacraments. I hope we worship each week with other

Christians, in order to celebrate the grace of God and to deepen our experience of God's fullness. Worship happens whenever we turn our faces toward God and shout, 'Hallelujah!' Worship is our communal 'Hallelujah!' to God. And only a worshipping Christian will remain a strong and growing Christian. If you want a deeper experience of God, make yourself available to him during public worship and participate in the celebration with God's people!

Finally, we can experience God through people. God speaks to us through other human beings. His self-revelation is usually incarnate: it takes the form of flesh and blood. You can teach me something about God that I could never learn on my own, no matter how many books I read.

There's only one you, and in you I see an aspect of God that I can't find anywhere else. In encountering your gifts and limitations, I am reminded of my own gifts and limitations and of how God wants to use us to complement one another. This is why fellowship is so important in the Christian life. Despite our need for private communion with God,

Christianity is not a solitary religion. It is a communal affair. So let's get together and learn of God through each other!

Have you experienced God lately? Make yourself available to God through prayer, Bible study, worship and fellowship with others. These are at least four avenues for experiencing the fullness of God on a deeper level. No doubt, there are others, but these are the basics of the Christian life which, if cultivated, will help us 'to know him better.' ❄



Brad McIntyre

is a writer, teacher, musician, and hospice chaplain living in northeastern Wisconsin. He has written over 400 songs and recorded two CDs.

Since 2003 he has been an adjunct faculty member in the Departments of Philosophy and Theology at Silver Lake College, Manitowoc, WI.

With over 30 years in Christian ministry, he has worked as a hospital chaplain, a parish priest (Episcopal), and a hospice chaplain. Here are two of his published books:

- God Is Like This (2005)
- We Don't Live in Disneyland: Reflections and Essays on Religion and Faith (2006)

All three books are available from Amazon. Brad enjoys traveling, photography, yard work, motorcycles, and the Milwaukee Brewers.

Love's Extravagance*

THERE HAS BEEN a lively discussion among biblical scholars over the number of times Jesus was actually anointed with expensive perfume by a woman at a dinner. The apparent differences in the stories seem to indicate that there were at least two separate occasions. Luke places his story in Galilee early in Jesus' ministry (see Luke 7:36-8:1), while the other three Gospels place their story in Judean Bethany towards the end of Jesus' ministry (Matt. 26:1-16; Mark 14:1-11; John 12:1-11).

The parallels between Luke and the other three Gospels, however, seem to indicate that there was only one occasion on which Jesus was anointed with perfume at a feast, for it seems highly unlikely that there could be so many close parallels between two widely separated occasions. For instance, on both occasions:

1. **The host was named Simon**
2. **He invited Jesus to a dinner at his house**
3. **There were other guests at this meal**
4. **A woman intruded on the meal**
5. **She had an alabaster jar of perfume**
6. **She poured this perfume on Jesus' feet**
7. **She then wiped Jesus' feet with her hair**
8. **There was an unfavourable reaction to what she did**
9. **Jesus defended her.**

John reports that the resurrected Lazarus had been invited to the meal (John 12:9), which places the meal, in his account, towards the end of Jesus' ministry. This fact alone indicates that



RITCHIE WAY

Luke's story of the anointing, early in Jesus' ministry, must have been a separate event altogether.

According to John the woman who anointed Jesus was Mary of Bethany (John 11:1-2), but if this were true why wasn't she invited to the party along with her sister Martha and brother Lazarus (John 12:2)? First, Martha wasn't a guest. She was there because she was the hostess. Lazarus was the only guest from the family and he had been invited because he had been raised from the dead.

However, if Mary, the sister of Lazarus and Martha, was the one who anointed Jesus shortly before his crucifixion, why don't Matthew and Mark mention her by name? It is possible that they didn't mention her name out of respect for her while she was still alive. It seems that John, however, wrote his Gospel after she had died.

Matthew and Mark say the dinner was put on for Jesus two days before the

Passover. John, on the other hand, says Jesus arrived at Bethany six days before the Passover.

It is possible that John does not mention that the dinner was two days before the Passover, because he, unlike the other disciples, held to the late Passover date as did the Boethusian Jews. Rather than create a conflict with his fellow apostles by saying that Jesus attended a dinner held in his honour *three* days before the Passover, he just mentioned that Jesus arrived back in Bethany six days before the Passover.

Matthew and Mark mention that Mary anointed Jesus' head (Matt. 26:7; Mark 14:3), while the other two Gospels say the woman anointed Jesus' feet? (Luke 7:38; John 12:3). As Matthew, Mark and John each describe the same occasion, then Mary anointed *both* Jesus' head (so Matthew and Mark) and his feet (so John), which is why Jesus referred to the anointing of his 'body' (Matt. 26:12; Mark 14:8).

Two or One?

It is not uncommon for the Gospel writers to focus on one thing to the exclusion of another. For example, did Jesus heal two demoniacs at Gadara (Matt. 8:28), or just one (Luke 8:27)?

Did Jesus heal two blind men at Jericho (Matt. 20:29-34), or just one (Mark 10:46-52)? Did both Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea put Jesus in the tomb (John 19:38-42), or did Joseph do it alone (Matt. 27:57-60; Luke 23:50-53)?

Did the woman anoint Jesus' head or his feet? In the latter anointing, at least, Jesus had perfume poured on both his head and feet.

It is possible that Matthew and Mark mentioned that the woman anointed Jesus' head because they saw this anointing as his coronation (cf. 1 Sam. 16:1-13; 1 Kgs. 1:39). Through his death and resurrection he would become king of the redeemed (Matt 28:18; Eph. 1:20-22).

Why did the two women anoint Jesus?

Jesus said, of the Galilean woman, 'Her many sins have been forgiven—for she loved much. But he who has been forgiven little loves little.' Then Jesus said to [the woman], 'your sins have been forgiven' (Luke 7:47).

This woman, 'who had lived a sinful life in that town', was so in love with her Saviour that she poured her life's savings on his feet. She, who had adulterous unions with many men for payment, now wanted nothing more than an unadulterated union with Christ, for which she was prepared to give her life's savings.

Like the purchaser of the Pearl of great price, she was willing to give up everything she had in order to have Jesus' forgiveness; she permitted nothing to come between her and her Lord.

The actions of both the Galilean and Judean women reveal love's extravagance. Such giving love reflected the nature of God who loved the world so much that he gave heaven's greatest gift—his Son, so that we might have everlasting life (John 3:16).

The love of these two women was made possible by the Spirit of Jesus who had come into their hearts—a Spirit of love revealed in selfless giving. And because they had Jesus, they had his forgiveness, for it's not possible to have one without the other.



	MATT. 26	MARK 14	LUKE 7	JOHN 12
THE HOST	Simon the leper	Simon the leper	Simon the Pharisee (v44)	
THE PLACE	Bethany	Bethany		Bethany
THE DATE	Two days before the Passover	Two days before the Passover		Jesus arrived six days before the Passover
THE OCCASION			Jesus invited to a dinner	Dinner given in Jesus' honour
THE INVITED	Jesus and his disciples	Judas Iscariot and others	Unnamed guests	Martha, Lazarus, Judas Iscariot and others
THE INTRUDER	A woman	A woman	A woman who lived a sinful life in that town	Mary, sister of Lazarus and Martha (11:1-2)
THE GIFT	An alabaster jar of very expensive perfume	An alabaster jar of pure nard worth more than a year's wages	An alabaster jar of perfume	A <i>litra</i> of pure nard worth a year's wages
THE ANOINTING	Poured on Jesus' head. On Jesus' body (v.12)	Poured on Jesus' head. On Jesus' body (v.8)	Poured on Jesus' feet	Poured on Jesus' feet
THE WIPING			Wiped Jesus' feet with her hair	Wiped Jesus' feet with her hair
THE REACTION	Disciples complained that it should have been sold and the money given to the poor	Some present said it should have been sold and the money given to the poor	Simon condemned Jesus for letting a sinner touch him	Judas said it should have been sold and the money given to the poor
THE DEFENCE	Jesus defended her	Jesus defended her	Jesus defended her	Jesus defended her
THE PURPOSE	Jesus is anointed for his burial	Jesus is anointed for his burial		Jesus is anointed for his burial.

* I am indebted to Bruce Prince for the inspiration behind this article.



God's Odds

PART 3*



The Anthropic Principle and the Wager

WELL KNOWN atheists of high reputation have gone on recent record affirming that recent discoveries (since 1973) of what has been called the Anthropic Principle give the overwhelming conviction that the universe is the product of design. Paul Davies, long known for his antipathy to traditional religion, has written as follows:

It is hard to resist the impression of something—some influence capable of transcending time and the confinements of relativistic causality—possessing an overview of the entire cosmos at the instant of its creation, and manipulating all the causally disconnected parts to go bang with almost exactly the same vigour at the same time.

—cited in *First Things*, August-September 2001, p. 95

In his *God and the New Physics*, Davies makes a similar comment:

It is hard to resist the impression that the present structure of the universe, apparently so sensitive to minor alterations in numbers, has been rather carefully thought out The seemingly miraculous concurrence of these numerical values must remain the most compelling evidence for cosmic design.
—p. 189

And in his book *The Mind of God*:

Through my scientific work I have come to believe more and more strongly that the physical universe is put together with an ingenuity so

DR DESMOND FORD

astonishing that I cannot accept it merely as a brute fact I cannot believe that our existence in this universe is a mere quirk of fate, an accident of history, an incidental blip in the great cosmic drama.

—pp. 16, 232

The classic work on the recently discovered anthropic principle is *The Anthropic Cosmological Principle* by Barrett and Tipler. On page 560, it affirms that the number of independent steps necessary for the formation of humanity each has this significant characteristic—it is so improbable to have occurred by chance that given the eons of habitable earth it would not have happened.

Harold Morowitz computed that merely to create a bacterium would require more time than the Universe might ever see if chance combinations of its molecules were the only driving force (cited by Gerald L. Schroeder in *The Science of God*, p. 85).

Originally that comment appeared in a special publication of *Scientific American* when it retracted the earlier published theory of George Wald, who had stated that given enough time life could develop by mere chance. Since 1979, articles asserting that chance random reactions over millions of years could produce life are not accepted in reputable journals.

Donald Page of Princeton's Institute for Advanced Study has told us that the possibility of this world arriving by happenstance is one in ten billion to the 124th. Hoyle and Wickramasing concluded that the odds for producing the 2,000 enzymes in man by random chance is 10 to the 40,000th.

To understand these figures, keep in mind that the number of grains of sand on the seashores of the world are estimated as being 10 to the 25th, and the number of atoms in the universe 10 to the 80th.

Roger Penrose, one of the most respected of modern physicists, has given similar estimates. He has written that one parameter alone, the original phase-space volume, demanded finetuning to an accuracy of one part in ten billion, multiplied by itself 123 times (see his *The Emperor's New Mind*, p. 344). These scientists, and hundreds more, are saying in effect that all the seemingly arbitrary and unrelated physics constants have this strange feature in common—they are exactly the values needed for a universe that is to produce life.

Walter Bradley, co-author of *The Mystery of Life's Origin* has written as follows:

It is quite easy to understand why so many scientists have changed their minds in the past thirty years, agreeing that the universe cannot reasonably be explained as a cosmic accident. Evidence for an intelligent designer becomes more compelling the more we understand about our carefully crafted habitat.

—Cited by William A. Dembski and James M. Kushiner, *Signs of Intelligence*, p. 170

Astrophysicist and atheist Sir Fred Hoyle stated:

I do not believe that any scientists who examined the evidence would fail to draw the inference that the laws of nuclear physics have been deliberately designed with regard to the consequences they produce within stars.

—Quoted by Barrow and Tipler, *Ibid.* p. 22

Note also:

Now we understand that almost everything involved in the basic structure of the universe is balanced on a razor's edge for life to exist.

—Robin Collins, physicist and mathematician

Thus, it is now recognized that while mankind is not at the physical centre of the universe, it is at the centre of its purpose.

Hugh Ross, in his *The Fingerprint of God*, lists scores of the 'coincidences' that are necessary for life to exist. See also *The Creation Hypothesis*, edited by J. P. Moreland for a list of parameters vital for any universe containing life. And long before the epochal lecture given by Brandon Carter—well-known astrophysicist and cosmologist from Cambridge University at the Krakow gathering in Poland commemorating the 500th anniversary of the birth of Copernicus—A. Cressy Morison (former president of the New York Academy of Sciences) told the world that the possibility of our existence by chance was less than one in ten billion.

We know now that the chances are infinitely less than that. Men of science have offered this illustration:

If you were out in space and throwing a random dart towards earth it would be like hitting a bull's eye that's one trillionth of a trillionth of an inch in diameter, which is less than the size of a single atom.

—Robin Collins Ph.D., cited by Lee Stroebel in *The Case for a Creator*, p. 134

Collins has offered another illustration that will be helpful to many. He suggests we should imagine a ruler or an old-fashioned linear radio dial—but one that goes right across all of space. Broken down into one-inch increments there would, of course, be billions upon billions of inches. This ruler or dial would represent the

range of force strengths in nature with gravity as the weakest of these, and the strong nuclear force, which binds protons and neutrons as the strongest. (The strong nuclear force is ten thousand billion, billion, billion, billion times stronger than gravity.) The range of possible settings for gravity would be at least as large as the total range of force strengths.

Now, let's imagine that you want to move the dial from where it's currently set. Even if you were to move it by only one inch, the impact on life in the universe would be catastrophic. For, it would increase gravity by a billion-fold, crushing all creatures about the size of humans.

—*Ibid.*, pp. 131-132

The impact of the anthropic principle has been so great that those feeling threatened by it have tried desperate theories to avoid it. One of these is the many-universes theory. But such wild guesses have not found wide acceptance.

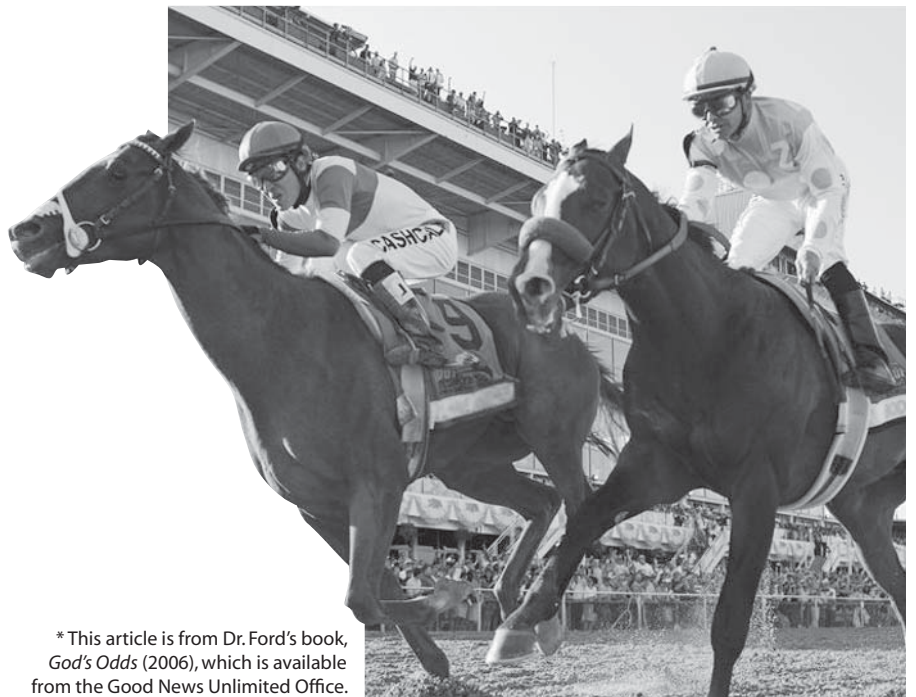
Stroebel gives us the reaction of Clifford Langley: 'The sight of scientific atheists clutching at such desperate straws has put new spring in the step of theists' (*Ibid.*, p. 140).

Paul Davies, William Lane Craig and others, including Cambridge's Polkinghorne, have criticized the theory mercilessly. It has been called, 'pseudo-science' and 'a metaphysical guess' (*Ibid.*, p. 140).

For those who consider that perhaps the above references are one-sided and slanted we recommend *Nature's Destiny* by Michael Denton, and we quote from an early page in that volume:

Several well-known physicists and astronomers, among them Brandon Carter, Freeman Dyson, John Wheeler, John Barrow, Frank Tipler, and Sir Fred Hoyle, to cite only a few, have all made the point in recent publications—that our type of carbon-based life could only exist in a very special sort of universe, and that if the laws of physics had been very slightly different we could not have existed. With the evidence as it now stands, it is not surprising that there now exists a significant body of opinion within the scientific community prepared to defend the idea that the universe is in some way profoundly biocentric and gives every appearance of having been specially designed for life. As a result of these discoveries, there is now a teleological intellectual current within modern physics, cosmology, and astronomy which is remarkably concordant with the older anthropocentric view and strikingly out of keeping with the antiteleological tendencies that have come to be universally associated with advances in scientific knowledge for most of the recent past.

—p. 16



* This article is from Dr. Ford's book, *God's Odds* (2006), which is available from the Good News Unlimited Office.

Healthy Hints



Four good reasons to eat more garlic

GARLIC IS MORE THAN a culinary mainstay that can add flavour to meals; it is a natural, traditional medicine that has antiviral, antibacterial and antifungal properties. Research indicates regular consumption of garlic may:

1. Alter how cholesterol is metabolized in the body, making it less likely to oxidize.
2. Lower blood pressure and decrease clot formation, thus reducing the risk of stroke and heart attack.
3. Combat respiratory infections such as common colds and sore throats.
4. Reduce fungal or yeast infections.

Eating raw garlic (chopped or mashed) releases the herb's full potential as the active component, allicin, forms only on contact with air. So chop garlic and let it sit for 10 minutes to get the full health potential that garlic offers.

Garlic loses its antibiotic properties when you cook or dry it, and commercial garlic capsules do not preserve the full activity of the fresh bulb.

You can make raw garlic more palatable by chopping it fine, mixing it with food and eating it with a meal, or cut a clove into chunks and swallow them whole like pills.

Coffee: the good and the bad

COFFEE IS NOT ONLY a rich source of antioxidants, recent research indicates that it may protect against Parkinson's disease, type 2 diabetes and liver cancer.

On the other hand, drinking four or more cups a day will significantly raise cholesterol, and can interfere with sleep, cause irritability, restlessness, stomach problems and muscle tremors.

While the compound, cafestol, which is found in coffee, is the most potent cholesterol-elevating agent discovered, it can be greatly reduced by drinking drip-filtered coffee made with paper filters. Fourteen clinical trials found filtered coffee made very little difference to cholesterol levels, whereas other types of coffee significantly increased cholesterol levels.



A Weighty Problem

RESEARCH HAS DISCOVERED that, 15 minutes after eating, people who ate small portions of food (431kJ) were just as satisfied as those who ate larger portions of food (992kJ).

The best way to control the amount of food you eat is to cook just what you need and serve your meal on a smaller plate. If you still feel hungry after eating, just wait 15 minutes for your body to let you know whether or not it really needs more.

Sugar

DR. ROBERT LUSTIG (San Francisco) says dozens of studies now implicate fructose (sugar) as a major factor in metabolic disease.

Sugar messes with insulin and leptin. The prime candidate in obesity and diabetes is sugar, he says. 'Every additional 150 calories of food per person per day barely raised diabetes prevalence', says Lustig, 'but if those 150 calories were instead from a can of soda, increase in diabetes prevalence rose sevenfold. Sugar is more dangerous than its calories. Sugar is a toxin—plain and simple.'

Some common foods that contain sugar are some brands of peanut butter, 9.1 grams per 100g; tomato sauce, 24.4 grams per 100g; sweetened yoghurt, 23 grams per cup; soft drink, 28 grams per cup; and grape juice, 31 grams per cup.





Excessive Exercise

OUR EXERCISE TRACK is bordered by a ditch on either side. On the left is the ditch of no exercise, and on the right is the ditch of excessive exercise. A fall into either ditch will dramatically shorten our lives.

Regular aerobic (centre of the track) exercise is believed to increase life expectancy by six years and to prevent heart attacks, stroke, diabetes and some cancers. It also helps with depression.

No exercise, and excessive exercise, however, will significantly shorten life. For example, emerging scientific studies appear to support the finding that 'running too fast, too far and for too many years may speed one's progress towards the finish line of life'.

Years of asking the heart to pump 'massive' volumes of blood for hours at a time can lead to long-term damage, including over-stretching the chambers of the heart, micro-tears in the heart muscle, the thickening of the heart's walls and changes to its electrical signalling, which can trigger dangerous heart rhythms.

Australian heart specialist, D. André La Gerche, took blood tests soon after endurance athletes crossed the finish line. He found increased levels of troponin, a marker of injury to the heart muscle. Ultrasound showed the damage predominantly involved the right ventricle.

A European study involving forty-six athletes with abnormal rhythms, reported that nine of them died suddenly within five years.

While more people die early because of a *lack* of daily exercise, it's unwise to shorten your life by *over-doing* it.

WHAT YOUR FEARS DO TO YOU

PASTOR IAN

The single greatest barrier to becoming all you're meant to be is *inside* you. It's not the circumstances around you. It's not the people with you. It's the fear in you! Your unconscious fears have four devastating effects on your life:

1. Fear paralyses your potential

Fear keeps your talents locked up, holds you back, and causes you to miss opportunities.

The great Swiss psychiatrist, Paul Tournier, once said this: 'All of us have reservoirs of full potential, vast areas of great satisfaction, but the road that leads to those reservoirs is guarded by the dragon of fear'. If you've ever been afraid to try anything, you know that fear creates a self-imposed prison.

2. Fear ruins my relationships

Fear is the root of many of your 'people problems'. Fear prevents you from being honest with others. You fear rejection, so you wear a mask, pretend to be what you aren't, and deny what you really feel. Fear also keeps you from making commitments. You may be afraid of being hurt again.

Fear prevents true intimacy because fearful people have a hard time giving and receiving love. Your fears affect everyone you relate to.

3. Fear hinders my happiness

Alfred Hitchcock admitted, 'I turn my fears into movies' (which we then pay to see!). Like movies, we replay our fears over and over in our mind: What if? What if? What if? You cannot be happy and fearful at the same time.



The Bible says, 'Worry robs you of happiness' (Prov. 12:25 GNB). How often are you worn out by your worries?

4. Fear sabotages my success

Have you ever said or thought, 'I was afraid that would happen'? We often set ourselves up for failure by focusing on what we fear will happen rather than what we want to happen. Fear creates what it fears. The Bible says, 'Be careful how you think; your life is shaped by your thoughts' (Prov. 4:23 GNB).

As a human being, you were born with only one natural fear: the fear of loud noises. All your other fears were learned—from experience, from your parents, from your peers and from others.

So the good news is this: whatever is learned can be unlearned! You don't have to hold onto your fears.

There are several steps to unlearning your fears but here's how you get started: 'I prayed to the Lord and he answered me; He freed me from all my fears' (Psa. 34:4, GNB).





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.



KING JAMES VERSION

Hi Ritchie,

A close friend of mine is constantly berating me for not using the King James Version Bible. He has material showing that the KJV was translated from the best ancient texts, and that it is the only Bible we should rely on. What can I do? I'm getting fed up with his preaching the gospel of the KJV.

D.P.

Reply from Ritchie

Hi D.,

While the KJV (Authorised Version) is among the greatest of all Bible translations—and has brought millions of people into a saving relationship with Jesus—it is not perfect. The only thing in this world without fault or blemish is the Lord Jesus Christ.

Besides, if the KJV is the only translation that God's people should rely on, how will millions of Chinese and Spanish manage, because none of them have King James Bibles?

One other thing: when the Masoretic Hebrew text (from which the KJV Old Testament was translated), and the Textus Receptus (from which the KJV New Testament was translated), are compared with the much older Received Text, the differences are so miniscule they are not worth getting upset about. Arguing about them is a devilish diversion from our commission to preach the gospel.

While we are busy arguing about which translation shines with the best light, there are people out there in deep darkness, who would gladly receive a flickering candle of truth than no light at all.

So if your friend wants to stick with his KJV, fine! In spite of its imperfections it is still a great translation. That, however, doesn't mean that you have to be slavishly bound to it should you prefer another version. Choose a translation that you understand and appreciate and allow the Holy Spirit to use it to light up your life for Jesus. And if others want to dispute the value of one translation over another, leave them to it; time is far too precious to be wasted on fruitless arguments.



THE UNKNOWN SAVIOUR

Dear Mr. Editor,

Some time back you stated that there shall be many people in God's kingdom who didn't know who it was that saved them. I find that hard to accept in the light of the verse that says, 'There is no other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we can be saved, but the name of Jesus.' In the light of this verse, how can you say some people won't know Jesus saved them until they get to heaven?

M.G.

Ritchie's Reply

Dear M.,

After Hurricane Katrina had devastated New Orleans and flooded the city, a certain businessman hired a boat and a skipper to help rescue stranded residents who were without food and water. It wasn't until after they were saved that most of these people discovered who their benefactor was. It will be the same for many who are rescued from this sinful world.

Back in the 1980s, an Australian aboriginal gang leader was sitting on a rock with a can of Foster's beer in his hand, watching the sun sink over the rim of the desert in an incredible blaze of glory. The colours in the clouds were so beautiful they defied description. The awesome splendour and purity of the scene contrasted so remarkably with the ugliness and impurity of his heart that he despised himself and desired something better. The Holy Spirit used that sacred moment to change his life. He didn't know exactly what had happened to him, or how, but there was no question that something wonderful had happened. From that moment his life was changed—changed by the Holy Spirit.

Sometime after this mystical experience this man was introduced to Jesus—the One who had transformed him—and later became an ambassador for him, a minister of the gospel. Likewise, many who whose lives have been transformed by the Holy Spirit in this world will discover, in Christ's kingdom, who had saved them, and how.

At the Pool of Bethesda Jesus healed an invalid who had been waiting 38 years

to get well. But the man had no idea who it was that had healed him, for Jesus had slipped away into the crowd (John 5:13). It wasn't until sometime later that Jesus met him in God's House and introduced himself to him as the one who redeemed him from his hopelessness. That is the way it will be with multitudes, who are given a dwelling place in their Father's House. There they will meet their Saviour for the first time.



THE UNKNOWN SAVIOUR (2)

Dear Ritchie

I'm still not fully convinced by your argument that there will be many in God's kingdom, who never gave their allegiance to Jesus, or words to that effect.

The apostle Paul wrote: 'If you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe with your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved' (Rom. 10:9). So how can you say that some will go to heaven who have never committed themselves to Jesus? It doesn't stack up?

M.G.

Ritchie's Reply

Dear M.,

There were multitudes in Old Testament times who knew nothing of Jesus, but who will be in the kingdom. There they will learn what their salvation cost the Lord.

There are also many today who have been put off Christ by the irrelevance of the mainline churches and the immoral behaviour of certain high-profile 'Christians', but they reveal, by their selfless service to disadvantaged people, that they have the Lord in their hearts. When Jesus returns they will discover that they had been accepted into God's kingdom, not because of what they had done, but purely through the merits of the Lord Jesus who died for them'.

Jesus' parable of the sheep and goats teaches that the people who are saved aren't those who confess Christ just with their lips, but those who confess him with their lives. Many indolent Christians who confess Christ with their lips will never make it into Paradise, while many un-churched people who

feed the hungry, visit the prisoners, clothe the naked and minister to the sick will receive a warm welcome into Christ's kingdom, because they were serving Christ without being aware that that was what they were doing.

I will go so far as to say that there are good people, who ignorantly say disparaging things about Christ, that will be in the kingdom. I say this because Jesus said people who blasphemed him would be forgiven, but those who blasphemed the Holy Spirit would never be forgiven. There are good people among the Muslims, Hindus, atheists and infidels who despise Christianity for what it has become, but who have never blasphemed the Holy Spirit, who is at work through them uplifting the lives of the less fortunate. The Lord will greet them with the words, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world'.



REARRY OR STAY SINGLE?

Hi Ritchie,

Got a question. I ran in to a bloke today, a good man, who was 'destroyed' when his marriage split up five years ago. He has now found Christ, through a little fundamentalist Baptist church in our town, which holds some very strong views.

He would like to find a nice Christian lady to spend the rest of his life with, but the Pastor at his church says he can never remarry, and unless his wife comes back to him, he must remain celibate for the rest of his life.

Is this biblical? He didn't become a Christian until five years after their divorce.

He is very lonely and would really like a mate.

He is, however, praying that his wife will become a Christian and make contact with him again, so they can get back together.

He is such a nice guy, and I can see this issue is torturing him, and it doesn't seem right.

N.G.

Ritchie's Reply

Hi N.,

There are two approaches to marriage and divorce: the 'ideal' and the 'real'.

The ideal is that marriage is intended to last until the couple is separated by death (Matt. 19:3-6; Rom. 7:2; 1 Cor. 7:39).

The 'real' is that situations arise—such as violence and continual verbal abuse, etc.—where it is often wiser to separate than to stay in an abusive relationship (1 Cor. 7:10-11).

Jesus says that a person who divorces

his or her spouse for any reason other than 'marital unfaithfulness' and marries someone else, commits adultery (Matt. 19:9). 'Marital unfaithfulness' is quite broad, and includes any serious ill treatment of the spouse or breaking of the marriage pledge.

This is not to say that a marriage should automatically be terminated, because many marriages have survived sexual unfaithfulness, etc., and every attempt should be made to save such marriages. This is because divorce costs so much more—both financially and emotionally—than efforts made to save the relationship.

Note, however, that Jesus is totally against divorcing for the wrong reasons, such as leaving a spouse to live with someone 'better', or living with someone who has left their spouse because they like you more (Luke 16:18). That is totally unacceptable to the Lord.

When couples have separated prior to either becoming a Christian—as is the case with your friend—if there is no chance of them reuniting in love, and if the separation has been two years or longer, then re-marriage could be a good prospect as long as a lot of thought and prayer and counsel from wise friends goes into it (1 Cor. 7:15). Caution is advised because the older that people are, the more set they become in their ways, and consequently the more difficult it is for them to adjust to a new relationship.

These are broad principles that may help to guide your friend.



DEMON DISEASES

Dear Ritchie,

I have read where you say that the Jews of Jesus' day attributed most illnesses to demon possession. For example, in Luke 9, a severe case of epilepsy was attributed to a spirit that seized the child, throwing him into convulsions so that he foamed at the mouth.

While I can accept your argument, that they believed illnesses were caused by demons, is there any passage in the Bible to support that point of view?

P.N.

Ritchie's Reply

Dear P.,

I'm afraid I can't give you a text that will provide you with what you want. However, the concept that most illnesses were due to demon possession dominated pre-scientific societies. I lived for twelve years in a country where most people believed that serious illnesses and death were caused by demons.

There is a text, in this regard, that may be of help to you. In Luke 11:14 it says there about Jesus, 'And He was casting out a demon, and it was dumb; and it came about that when the demon had gone out, the dumb man spoke'

This verse clearly identifies the disease with the demon, e.g., a person was dumb because he had a dumb demon. By extension, another person was epileptic because he had the demon of epilepsy. The people of that time had no knowledge of germs, viruses or genetic disorders so they attributed their ailments to demons, as do many people who live in the tropics where many people are dumb, not because their vocal cords don't work, but because of untreated childhood infections that resulted in perforated eardrums. Not being able to hear, they never learned to speak.

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September Appeal Report

ELIEZER GONZALEZ PhD

OUR SEPTEMBER appeal has now finished, and I praise God that I can share the wonderful news with you that He has opened the way for \$87,780 to flow into the work of the gospel.

We thank all of you who have allowed yourselves to be used by the Spirit of Christ to bless others in such a tremendous way. We also thank all of you who couldn't help financially right now, but who want to help by volunteering, or in other ways.

As Dr Ford announced in his letter, these funds will be used for the following purposes:

1. Preservation and Dissemination of Dr Ford's work

We currently have several projects under way, including the collection of Des's many video messages, and are working to put them into the correct format so we can share them through the internet with as many people as possible. We also need to do this with many of Des's audio recordings and articles that he has written. These funds will help us make significant inroads into this massive project.

2. The Formation of GNU Fellowships Around the World

The Lord is going before us in this matter. Over the last few months we have discovered active Gospel Fellowships around the world which commenced as a result of Dr Ford's ministry many years ago, and about which we knew nothing. And others are contacting us to tell us that they would like to set up a Gospel Fellowship right where they are. The Board of Good News Unlimited is deliberating prayerfully about the correct Biblical model and strategy for these fellowships. With the Lord's guidance Good News Unlimited will be developing and disseminating training materials, as well as running seminars on how to start and run such Fellowships.

3. Updated Technology

Communication technology has progressed tremendously in the last few years. Good News Unlimited will use part of the donated funds to invest in a specific database system that is designed for Not-For-Profit organisations. This will allow Good News Unlimited to lower costs by automating and streamlining our administration, to improve our communication processes with you, our

supporters, and all those who need to hear our message, and by the grace of our Lord to grow much larger in the future than we have ever been before.

4. Refocus Good News Unlimited

Good News Unlimited needs to refocus so that we can squarely face the many millions in the world who need the assurance of salvation and the peace that only the gospel of Jesus Christ can provide. This means that we must learn how to communicate the treasure of the gospel to a new generation and to new cultures. In the light of the great commission of Jesus Christ, we must also find ways to get in touch with those many thousands of gospel-loving Christians out there who are just waiting to know about our gospel ministry so that they can support it with their gifts and their time.

Our September appeal was a 'seed' appeal, to help set us up for the work

that God has for us in the future, which is quickly becoming much larger than we have ever dreamt possible.

Des Ford is excited about our future, and he wants me to give you all this message:

William Carey said that he cobbled shoes just so as to pay the expenses of his gospel work. Every Christian who has accepted the gospel commission as a personal duty and challenge thinks the same way. I am sure that all our supporters agree with Carey, and we thank God for every one of you.

Watered by your prayers, and with the grace of the Sun of Righteousness shining upon it, this fund will grow to reap a wonderful harvest.

I am looking forward excitedly to sharing with you the fruits of your gift in the near future.



2013 SEMINARS

POTTSVILLE FELLOWSHIP

Fellowship meetings led by **Pastor Ron Allen** are held at 9:30 a.m. on the following Saturdays in 2013.

- 28 September
- 12 October
- 26 October
- 9 November
- 23 November
- 21 December

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

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

GOOD NEWS FELLOWSHIP —Milton, Brisbane

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

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

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

God's Amazing Grace in Romans

Formerly, **RIGHT WITH GOD RIGHT NOW**

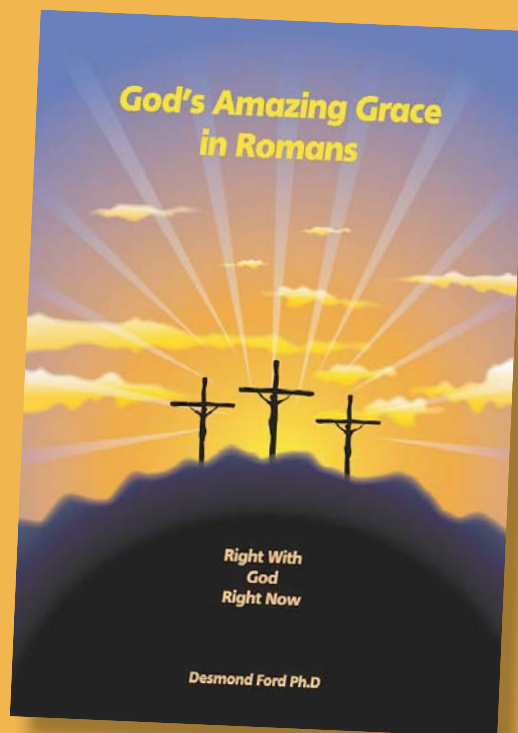
by **Desmond Ford**

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:

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- **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?*
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- *In the Heart of Daniel*
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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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