

GOOD NEWS

Unlimited



“PRAYER: *Magic, Mystery or Mastery?*”

CHRIST ALONE • GRACE ALONE • FAITH ALONE • SCRIPTURE ALONE

www.goodnewsunlimited.org

EDITORIAL . . .

I carry vivid memories from my childhood, of times when the river that ran by our farm flooded. Perhaps after a week or two of drought-breaking rain the normally lazy stream would bestir itself; swelling and heaving itself upward, it would spill lavishly from its banks and wash across the countryside for miles.

Our homestead was two miles from the roadside mailbox. One sodden day we hauled our old rowboat from the shed where it had lain for years, and rowed across the brown water to collect the mail. On the way back, one of my brothers said, "Lets go to the river." The only way the river could be identified was by the tall thick gum trees that marked its normal course. We made our way toward those trees. As we came close, we could see the swift water churning and roiling its way amongst the timber. And the noise! Normally, our river made no sound at all, but now, a sustained roar. We cautiously glided through the trees, and then struck out over the main channel. The current caught us right away, and suddenly, we were in its grip.

There were three of us in the boat. We sat dumb as we sped along; acres of water to the right and left; the tops of huge trees racing by; a vast chasm of restless water beneath us. We were transfixed. The sheer magnitude and power of the river was awesome. For several minutes, we remained captivated before we remembered that we should get back to still water, or we might come to harm. So, the moment passed, but what an enchanted moment it was. An interval of timelessness, in which my brothers and I felt our senses drawn toward something with which we almost experienced communion.


Everyone has those kinds of experiences. Perhaps you have been solitary on a beach at sunrise, or standing outside while a thunderstorm rolls across the landscape. Some have been profoundly moved at the birth of a child. At seasons like these, prayer suggests itself; it seems like an entirely natural and appropriate response. In fact, in times of heightened awareness, a lack of prayer leaves the experience incomplete; hanging suspended with no where to go.

Within the spasm of consciousness that our life is, we are repeatedly brought to places in which we feel with our whole being. That something within, is in touch with a powerful corroboration from without; something without is finding a deep resonance inside us. For this reason, there will always be religion, and there will always be prayer. We are simply not sufficient for ourselves. We require validation from an exterior conscious reality.

Within the spasm of consciousness that our life is, we are repeatedly brought to places in which we feel with our whole being. That something within, is in touch with a powerful corroboration from without; something without is finding a deep resonance inside us. For this reason, there will always be religion, and there will always be prayer. We are simply not sufficient for ourselves. We require validation from an exterior conscious reality.



Ron Allen

There is a much-vaunted view, which holds that there is no infinite Spirit for the human spirit to find affinity. This is a view that does nothing to dignify us. On the contrary, it leaves many unfulfilled, and full of prayers with no one to say them to. This issue of GNU is based on the premise that God exists, and that men and women have the privilege of sharing everything that they experience with him, just as they would any true friend. 

GOOD NEWS *Unlimited*

Good News Unlimited magazine is published every month by Good News Unlimited, 11710 Education Street, Auburn, CA, USA 95602-2499.

Good News Unlimited is an interdenominational Christian organization proclaiming the good news about Jesus Christ and his kingdom of grace. Special emphasis is placed on the message of salvation by grace through faith in Christ's righteousness alone. GNU also links the gospel to the needs of the whole person, to life-style, and preventive medicine.

Good News Unlimited magazine also seeks to keep readers up-to-date on all aspects of GNU's ministries. This includes news on national and international radio broadcasts; public seminars, congresses, and Bible schools within the USA (as well as public meetings

in Canada and overseas); and the dissemination of literature, cassettes, and videos. (A comprehensive catalogue is available free on request.)

Good News Unlimited is a nonprofit religious corporation supported solely by donations from those who believe in its ministries. Gifts are tax deductible in the USA, Canada, and New Zealand. An annual review of GNU's accounts is made by an external auditor. All regular donors to GNU may receive a financial statement on request.

Good News Unlimited is reached by phone at 530.823.9690. Fax 530.823.5338. E-mail gnu@goodnewsunlimited.org.

This magazine is free upon request.

August, 2003

Vol. 23, No. 6

Published by Good News Unlimited
Copyright © 2003

Editor

Ron Allen

Associate Editor

Molly Brown

Printer

Auburn Oaks Printing, Auburn, CA

Graphic Designer

Debbie O'Brien

OVERSEAS ADDRESSES:

Australian office:

GNU, Unit 2,
54-60 Industry Drive
Tweed Heads 5th
NSW 2486, Australia

Canadian office:

P.O. Box 537
Abbotsford, BC V2S 5Z5
Canada

FIVE PLACES WHERE PRAYER MAKES SENSE

by Ron Allen

Trouble

The Psalmist says: *“Out of the depths I cry to you O Lord” (Psalm 130:1)*. Have you noticed, that in speaking of our troubles, we never described them as ‘shallow’? They are always deep. We search for some deep thing with which to compare our trouble so that we can describe it to anyone who will listen.

When trouble overtakes us, we are swamped in a sea of deep thoughts. Our house burns down; a loved one dies; we lose our job; a business fails; and thoughts well up from somewhere way down inside, that ordinarily never enter our heads.

Says the poet:

*Break break break,
On thy cold grey stones O sea.
And I would that my tongue could utter,
The thoughts that arise in me.*

When in such a case, the one meaningful outlet is prayer. Profanity is empty. Unbelief has nothing to offer. Prayerlessness looks at trouble with a blank stare. When he was dying of cancer, Sigmund Freud pointed to the barrenness of trouble with no resort to prayer. *“My world is a little island of pain, floating on a sea of indifference.”* The Christian reply to trouble is expressed through prayer. There is **Someone** there to talk to; **Someone** who cares; who is himself no stranger to trouble. A God who has permitted trouble, and who is able to subvert it; turning it into an agent for our personal growth.

We will visit few places in this world that will afford us a sense of God’s nearness, as trouble will. In trouble, our natural propensity for prayer comes into its own, and praying is akin to breathing. Not to pray in trouble, is to experience a suffocation of our spirits.

Love

Life most wonderful, is lived where love holds sway. A child that has a loving mother, is nurtured by a mystery that will dumbfound and shape him all his days. A man and woman fall in love. The very fact that we use the word ‘fall’ means we think love is a deep place. On this, a couple goes through their years. They practice love in their mutual bestowal. Time and again, just when they think that they have discovered the richest veins that love’s bedrock can yield, they find the floor drops away once more beneath where they stand, and they are out over another breathtaking deep, that requires something equally deep, to interpret it.

When you hold your loved one in your arms and say, “I will love you forever,” what is that? Is it just chemicals; a hormonal eruption? Or is there something in the universe underwriting it—giving it substance. What’s to be done with the overwhelming sense of importance we get from love, if it is not a

gift from God, and if prayer is useless? Without prayer, love seems unfinished.

I well remember, bringing home from the hospital, our firstborn. Such a perfect little man, he was. His mother tired from her travail. His father feeling good about himself, but both parents feeling that something of immense significance had taken place. Did the universe just cough up this precious creature in our arms, or were we rehearsing the thoughts and feelings of God, who made Adam and Eve? How wonderful it was at that moment to pray. To have someone to talk to about our baby; someone to thank; someone’s counsel to seek; one with whom to share love’s weighty thoughts and feelings.

Moral Need

Moral necessity comes to everyone. There’s a young man in a hotel room, all alone. He is thinking of ending his life. He writes a note: *“I leave to my friends the memory of a misspent life. I leave to my father and mother all the sorrow they can bear in their old age. I leave to my wife a broken heart, and to my children the shame of a drunken father, and a suicide. I leave to God a lost soul.”* This person is in a deep place. He feels soiled, tarnished. He has disappointed every moral standard known to him; offended every love shown him. Now, he is about to crown the moral wreck that he has made of himself by taking his own life. Full of regret, he feels all the tension that a moral universe can impose. His moral need is great. If only he could pray.

In criminology, it is now a given, that people leave traces of themselves wherever they go. For a long time, finger printing was the chief part of this intelligence. Now we know that people leave more than fingerprints—hair, skin, saliva, other body fluids. These all bear a unique and unrepeatably DNA register by which people can be accurately identified. Everywhere we go we leave our tag, and the same applies in the realm of spirit. Our history in the world is never morally neutral. We leave a record of our moral bias on every person with whom we ever come in contact. Both the evil and the good that has been ours, helps shape the world we leave behind us. Masefield wrote a poem: *“The Harm I Done by Being Me.”* A sobering subject to contemplate. ➤

Enjoying Good News Unlimited?

Your support for this magazine ministry is appreciated.

Send your donation to:

Good News Unlimited

11710 Education St. • Auburn, CA 95602-2499

At some time, in any life, we are obliged to consider what our presence in the world has meant up to this point. We face our weaknesses—our dysfunctions. We are confronted with the fact that we have hurt people; that sometimes our influence has been negative—even destructive. We are aware of lost opportunities, of moral failure. Some call it guilt.

In these seasons of terrible insight, we are in a very deep place indeed. It is not satisfying to be told that we are just having silly and insecure thoughts. What is happening is that our sense of moral negligence does have a basis in reality. The discomfiture of guilt bears witness that goodness really does exist. Our sense of failure is rooted in a truth. We long for resolution. In this situation the urge to pray is strong. There is a pressing need to call on the universe to do something to cancel the past; cleanse the slate; take away your offense, and purge yourself somehow of the mess you have made of your humanity. Not to be able to find God in prayer at such a time is like a death sentence. Do not the words of the Psalmist echo our own sense of moral need?

Have mercy on me, O God according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin . . . Hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquity. Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me” (Psalm 51:1,2,9,10).

All our lives long, we are going to have haunted moments when Spirit calls to our spirit. These seasons of enhanced consciousness that steal unannounced upon us in our trouble, our love, in times of great moral need, when we are convinced of the ultimacy of a cause, when we are born along by the impulse to creativity—these are there because God is there. For this reason, prayer is an enormous privilege; the very breath and pulse beat of our existence.

Not just in individual life, do we have these impressions of deep, moral need, that call for an experience of communion with God. Any sober-minded person, looking at the state of society these days, will acknowledge that we seem to have lost

the effective weapons with which to fight those forces that seem hell-bent on degrading us. Unbelief laments the loss of respect and responsibility in the young. But what to do about it? Unbelief witnesses the tide of evil, creeping across our cities, through the trafficking of drugs. The world community now lives in fear of terrorism. Society knows itself to be in moral need, but if you try to build a world based on denial of God, you are left in your moral necessity, with the impulse to pray, but to whom?

Whether individually or publicly, sooner or later, men and women feel the need for a moral guardian; a moral governor, protector; a dispenser of justice, and—hopefully—mercy. The universe, and our existence in it, conspires to push us toward prayer. Do we not wish for a divine friend to appeal to for judgement, clemency, a new start, reinstatement, a charter for a new life, a manifesto to begin to build a new world, with inspiration and strength to carry it through?

In recent years, I have realized that we feel the urge to pray in our moral need, not just for relief from guilt, but for somewhere to go with our moral aspirations. Moral need is present in the yearning for a cause worthy of our highest efforts. We suspect that we were made for more than beer and skittles. Prayer liberates our spiritual sensibilities, and sets them free to soar with god-given goals that edify, and satisfy us.

Service

When you commit to an ideal or a principle, you have come to a deep place, because you want to know that what has become the theme of your life, is backed by the infinite and the eternal. When Scot was trapped in his frozen tent at the South Pole, waiting for death, he composed many letters to loved ones in England. He wrote:

Had we lived I should have had a tale to tell of the hardihood, endurance, and courage of my companions, which would have stirred the heart of every Englishman.

His meaning is clear enough. We sense his desire to be sure that the labor, risk and sacrifice of his life had not been a trifle; that it represented something good, and real, that would go on long after he had gone.

When Lincoln was worrying and toiling through the Civil war, he said:

I do the very best I can. And I mean to keep doing it till the end. If the end brings me out alright, what is sent against me won't amount to anything.

Summoned before 'principalities and powers,' Martin Luther said:

Here I stand, I can do no other, God helping me.

When everything conspires to destroy all you have stood for, it is not enough to rest in your own stubbornness. You want also to be able to say: ***God helping me.*** You want an answering note, from the heart of the creation, to respond to the depths of your own conviction. You want your chosen path of service to be buttressed, and authenticated, by the living God. At such times, prayer comes into its' own.

Creativity

A young woman imagines what it would be like to mother a child. She dreams of a day when this will happen for her. The reality occurs. Long before the babe sees daylight, the mother loves that child. In sweat and blood she gives birth. She is quite magnificent. She is a life-giver. What a task she has set for herself. She is aware of the responsibilities upon her. At times she feels 'out of her depth'. Who is sufficient for these things? Where will she turn? To whom can she appeal? What is there in the cosmos that will undergird her creative impulses, equipping and encouraging her? The very idea of motherhood insinuates prayer. Therefore, she entreats the very author of motherhood for wisdom, patience, and love. And she is not alone.


A composer hears music within. He writes it down and later performs it. As he plays, he has the uncanny perception that his listeners feel what he is feeling as he plays. Communion takes place between musician and audience. But there is more to it. Many a performer, senses in his art, that he is close to the master artist—the creator himself—; collaborating with one who wrote the music of the spheres. His music-making becomes a prayer. Can you imagine anything more desolate than the thought that we are all alone in our music?

What about the creative effort of the scientist? The scientist quests for truth. With never ending experiments and notations he calculates, extrapolates, and hypothesizes. What if these stringent efforts in accuracy and honesty have no corresponding objective reality? What if all this discipline and

exact work reflected nothing but curiosity and a lively imagination? But, if the creative labors of science were seeking after the mind of the creator, the scientist's work would be a fellowship—prayer appropriate and natural. Prayer would give his work a context; investing it with high meaning.

The world cries out for prayer to be prayed. This is our Father's world. From Him, and for Him, and to Him are all things. As creator, God is the giver of life, the artist in chief; the poet laureate divine, the chief musician, and the master mathematician. When mothers, poets, painters, architects and scientists exercise their creative gifts, they are God's fellow workers. The experience in kind—if not in degree—what Jesus spoke of when he said: "My father worketh hitherto, and I work."

Spiritual Beings

Men and women have a built-in affinity for God. Therefore, it is a terrific thing to be human. All our lives long, we are going to have haunted moments when Spirit calls to our spirit. These seasons of enhanced consciousness that steal unannounced upon us in our trouble, our love, in times of great moral need, when we are convinced of the ultimacy of a cause, when we are born along by the impulse to creativity—these are there because God is there. For this reason, prayer is an enormous privilege; the very breath and pulse beat of our existence. Every activity, every undertaking, each plan, pursuit or pastime that human beings engage in, can be enriched, refined, and adorned, by the sharing of it, through prayer, with Him who loves us, and never ceases to think of us. 

When you hold your loved one in your arms and say, "I will love you forever," what is that? Is it just chemicals; a hormonal eruption? Or is there something in the universe underwriting it—giving it substance. What's to be done with the overwhelming sense of importance we get from love, if it is not a gift from God, and if prayer is useless? Without prayer, love seems unfinished.

Letter from Desmond Ford

The Fatal Disease

SARS—the very word in some quarters spreads panic. At the time of this writing, China has quarantined over 10,000 people, and riots have resulted. European countries, America, and other regions of the world, are preparing in case the epidemic spreads.

Christians of course, think of the words of their Master, warning them about “pestilences in various places.” But, there is a pestilence that should concern us all far more than AIDS or SARS. The disease of which I write is not just pandemic, but universal; contaminating and endangering every person on the globe. It is illustrated by the wide variety of sufferers who came to Jesus for healing—the lepers, paralytics, the blind, the deaf, the dumb, the demon-possessed. I refer to the fatal contagion of sin.

In the 19th Century, an exceptionally earnest and gifted observer of his kind wrote the following:

I look out of myself into the world of men, and there I see a sight that fills me with unspeakable distress. The world seems simply to give the lie to that great truth, of which my whole being is so full; and the effect upon me is, in consequence, as a matter of necessity, as confusing as if it denied that I am in existence myself. If I looked into a mirror, and did not see my face, I should have the sort of feeling which actually comes upon me, when I look into this living, busy world, and see no reflection of its creator.... Were it not for this voice, speaking so clearly in my conscience and in my heart, I should be an atheist, or a pantheist, or a polytheist when I looked into the world.... The sight of the world is nothing else than the prophet’s scroll, full of “lamentations, and mourning, and woe.”

To consider the world in its length and breadth, its various history; the many races of men, their starts, their fortunes, their mutual alienation, their conflicts; and then their ways, habits, governments, forms of worship; their enterprises, their aimless courses, their random achievements and acquirements, the impotent conclusion of long-standing facts, the tokens so faint and broken, of a superintending design. . . the greatness and littleness of man, his far-reaching aims, his short duration, the curtain hung over his futurity, the disappointments of life, the defeat of good, the success of evil, physical pain, mental anguish, the prevalence and intensity of sin, the pervading idolatries, the corruptions, the dreary, the dreary hopeless irreligion, that condition of the whole race, so fearful yet exactly described in the apostle’s words: “Having no hope and without God in the world.” All this is a vision to dizzy and appal; and inflicts upon the mind the sense of a profound mystery, which is absolutely beyond human solution.

—J. H. Newman. *Apologia pro vita sua* (New York, 1950), pp. 207-208.

Newman proceeded by suggesting an analogy. He proposed the discovery of a boy “of good make and mind, with the tokens on him of a refined nature, cast upon the world without provision, unable to say whence he came, his birthplace or family connections.” Surely one would conclude that there was some mystery about this lad, and that he must be one, who for some strange cause, had given his parents reason to be ashamed of him.

Until the 20th Century, most men of the Western world believed that human nature was essentially good. That fantasy died during the two World Wars, and the intermediate economic depression. How, in view of the Holocaust, the Gulag (Russia’s concentration camp system), the My Lai massacre, terrorism, the widespread corruption of corporate structures, could any sane person entertain such a delusion?

Politics, education, and science, are all unable to salve the gaping wounds of the world. Only the gospel of Christ can do it. But, healing depends on our individual awareness of our true state, and our willingness to take the gift that is above all other gifts—the forgiveness of sins, and the imputation of the righteousness of Christ. Here, and here only, can be found those “good, glad, and merry tidings, which make the heart to sing and the feet to dance.” Here, is the sweetest melody of human lips—the one interest that should swallow up every other.

-Desmond Ford

COMFORT FOR THE TEMPTED

by C.H. Spurgeon

“No temptation has seized you but what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear” (1 Corinthians 10:13).

The Children of God are all subject to temptation. Some of them are tempted more than others, but I am persuaded that there is not one who will enter heaven without having endured some temptation....

God's way of escape from trial is not for his people to avoid it, so as not to pass through it, but such an escape as leads them through the trouble and out at the other end. Not an escape from the Red Sea, but an escape through the Red Sea from a still greater trial. Suppose you are to be poor. Well, if God has so appointed it, you will be poor. Therefore, pray that you may be able to bear it. With honest industry and stern integrity struggle to attain a better position. But if all your efforts fail then say to the Lord, “not as I will, but as you will.”

Suppose you are to be sick. Well, that is a sore trial, and I know that, personally. I would do anything I could to escape from the affliction that so often besets me, but if I must not be, then I must change my note and pray that I may be able to bear it. I had a letter from a man of God this morning which sustained me very much. He said, “My dear brother, I was sorry to hear that you were again in pain, and depressed in spirit. But I remembered how God has blessed you in so many ways, and I thought to myself: ‘Perhaps Mr. Spurgeon would

not have kept to preaching the doctrines of grace, and would not have been able to comfort God's poor people, if he did not get these smart touches sometimes.’ So I congratulate you upon these trials.”

God's way of escape from trial is not for his people to avoid it, so as not to pass through it, but such an escape as leads them through the trouble and out at the other end.

And remember, while I tell you to make this passage into a prayer, it is really a promise; and there is no prayer like a promise that is turned, as it were, roundabout, and cut prayerwise. God himself has said, by his inspired apostle, that he will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able. Up with the banners then. Forward, whatever obstructs the way. Let us sing with good old John Ryland,—

*Through floods and flames, if Jesus lead,
I'll follow where he goes;
'Hinder me not,' shall be my cry,
Tho' earth and hell oppose.*

“Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy; when I shall fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me.” But, oh, sorry, sorry, sorry, sorry am I from the bottom of my soul for you who know not the Lord, for this comfort is not for you. Seek him, I pray you. Seek him as your Savior. Look to him and trust in him; and all the blessings of the everlasting covenant shall be yours. For the father has given him to be a leader and commander unto the people, and they that look to him and follow him shall live forever and ever.

**Enjoying Good News
Unlimited?**

**Your support for this magazine
ministry is appreciated.**

**Send your donation to:
Good News Unlimited
11710 Education St.
Auburn CA 95602-2499**

HOPE, HEAVEN, AND IMMORTALITY

He who loves the coming of the Lord is not he who affirms it is far off. Nor is it he who says it is near. It is he who, whether it be far or near, awaits it with sincere faith, steadfast hope, and fervent love.

—Augustine.

Events in recent years have rekindled age-old questions about the future of the earth and its anxious inhabitants. Perhaps at no other time in history, have so many *homo sapiens* been as pessimistic about where it will all end. Christian faith has much to offer this discussion. And it is not blind fancy, but based on the teaching, character, death, and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. Christians believe that the key to the future lies with Him who has dominated the history and culture of the planet for the last two thousand years.

- ❖ ***Does such a view make sense?***
- ❖ ***Why are judgement and resurrection desirable events?***
- ❖ ***What difference does believing in an afterlife make to life now?***
- ❖ ***Is it necessary to know in exact detail, the final order of events?***
- ❖ ***What can we really know of the hereafter?***

ASHEVILLE, North Carolina • September 27, 2003

BANFF, Alberta • October 3-5, 2003

PORTLAND, Oregon • October 11, 2003

ARLINGTON, Texas • October 18, 2003

FAIRFIELD, California • October 25, 2003

*Watch for more complete information in next issue of this paper,
and at www.goodnewsunlimited.org*



PRAYERS THAT HAVE BEEN PRAYED

O Lord Jesus Christ, the birds have their nests, the foxes their holes, and thou didst not have whereon to lay thy head. Homeless wert thou upon the earth, and yet a hiding place; the only one where a sinner could flee. And so today thou art still the hiding place; when the sinner flees to thee, is hidden in thee—then he is eternally defended, then love hides a multitude of sins.

-Soren Kierkegaard.

God, sometimes you save us by hard refusals, and sometimes by opening doors. Help us to see you in both. And to obey without murmuring before hard refusals, or without hesitation before open doors. Amen.

-E. Stanley Jones.

In thee, O Lord, do I put my trust; let me never be ashamed. Lord Jesus Christ, gladly, and in humility will I bear this shameful and cruel death for the sake of thy holy gospel. . . . Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, have mercy upon me.

-John Huss. On his being burned at the stake.

Would it be too much to ask you just one thing? Give me a happy madness. Let me see the children thronging round me, and let me see their beautiful angels. Let me always behold the child Jesus. It may be that there are some who would not consider this a hallucination, but as a vision from you. These, perhaps, would be mad like me. But they will appreciate what I tell them, and I will be comforted. This much, a happy madness, I ask from you. Amen.

-Richard Wurmbrand.

During solitary confinement.

O God, help me to endure my pain with dignity, and prevent my faith from weakening under it. I am aware that I am often irritable, especially when the pain is very bad. Please forgive me, and give me grace to be easier to live with despite my pain.

Help those who have to do with me to be understanding and patient. I find my pain difficult to bear, sometimes very difficult.

Keep me mindful of your nearness, and let the thought of that be a help to me. Keep me mindful of your sympathy. And let that be a help too. Keep me mindful of your power, and let me draw on that to see me through. Amen.

-James Martin.

Lord I have shut the door,
Speak now the Word
Which in the din and throng
Could not be heard;
Hushed now my inner heart,
Whisper thy will,
While I have come apart,
While all is still.

Lord, I have shut the door,
Strengthen my heart;
Yonder awaits the task—I share a part.
Only through grace bestowed
May I be true;
Here, while alone with thee
My strength renew.

-William M. Runyon.

Great and marvellous are your deeds Lord God almighty. Just and true are your ways, king of the ages. Who will not fear you O Lord, and bring glory to your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship before you, for your righteous acts have been revealed.

-Revelation 15:3-5.

THE GNU WEBSITE

Have you visited yet?

www.goodnewsunlimited.org



Did you know that at www.goodnewsunlimited.org you can:

- *Read the current issue of Good News Unlimited magazine?*
- *Submit your questions, and receive answers at “Ask the Pastor”?*
- *Read a new grace-centered message of inspiration for each day?*
- *Look for products in the catalog?*
- *Enjoy a fresh, and encouraging letter from Ron Allen each month?*
- *Register your email address to receive the latest information on GNU products and services?*
- *Donate to Good News Unlimited using the online donation facility?*
(GNU accepts Visa and MasterCard).
- *Browse book and tape inventories for immediate online orders and transactions.*

Get started with Good News Unlimited on the World Wide Web.

Presenting:

Country Gospel artist: *Lloyd Lindbeck*

The Last Mile

Album includes:
His Is the Name

No. 74 on Power Source Christian Country, top 100.

Nearly Done

No. 118 on Southern Gospel Top 200.

\$12 including Postage and Handling. Order from:

Lloyd Lindbeck
2725 Terrace Arc • La Cruces, N.M. 88011
Ph. (505) 525-8379



TO and FRO with the Editor

Dear Ron,

I have a comment about an answer you gave a person in To and Fro with the editor, in the June 2003 issue about tithing. I agree with what you said about not being under a mathematical formula.

But I've heard so many stories where people took God at his word, (being, "prove me if I will not...Mat 3:10) and were blessed with unexpected money or food, or whatever. Same with the widow & Elijah. "First make me a cake." And she had enough. Her need was supplied.

I wasn't aware that the tithe was just for the Levites.

I have sent my tithe to GNU for years. Now I split it with another gospel believing group that feed me.

Recently, my family and I were traveling in another state. We stopped by a church called ...something...Fire. It was run down. My husband said, "What happened to that church?" I had already read this Q & A. I said, "They don't believe in paying tithe." Of course tithe wasn't for up keep.

Another thing is that there were tithes & offerings. I had thought of that too. Israel gave thank offerings. What else? They gave to the poor. I thought that would be an interesting study.

Anyway, your answer gave me something to think about. Now paying tithe doesn't save us. Maybe I'm still thinking it plays a part in my salvation.

I'm afraid not to do what I know is right. There are always consequences.

Anyway, I have a lot to learn. I've been hearing lately about being a channel of blessing and being in the channel of God's love. Then, I was listening to the Bible on tape, and it came to 1 Corinthians 13, where it said charity is long suffering, is not jealous, is kind, not boastful or proud.... Also, I've learned that Christ came as a servant. It's just so different than my human nature. I want to be somebody special. I guess I'm still trying to earn my mom's approval. Or maybe approval of myself. I guess I'm just selfish. I can understand the channel of blessing. But every time I ask God to show me his love — something bad happens to me to show me what he went through for me. Is that it? I thought I'd be blessed. Healthy, Wealthy & Wise. Like I said, I have a lot to learn.

Your sister in Christ, PR

Dear P,

Many thanks for taking the time to make a comment about some of the material in GNU magazine. I too have heard many stories that illustrate God's honoring of persons faithful in paying tithe. I do not doubt any of them. My Dad was such a person, and he always said that God "poured him out a blessing."

I must say though, that I have known examples of faithful tithers who could not report the same satisfying results. It is folk like these whose faith is under such duress, that I feel for most of all.

Your comment prompted me to look again at what the Bible says about tithe—I am by no means the last word on the topic. Here are some brief notes on what I found, which I am happy

to share with you.

There are about two-dozen references to tithe in the Old Testament. Tithing was widespread in the ancient world before it was incorporated into the religion of Israel.

The earliest reference to tithing is in Genesis 14:8-24. Abraham went to war with his 318 mercenaries and recaptured the booty from the three rebel kings. He then gave a tithe of his plunder to Melchizedek, king of Salem. This is mentioned again in Hebrews 7:1-3.

Jacob made a vow to dedicate a tithe of all that he received from God (Genesis 28:10-22). These early examples of tithing were not part of the law God gave to the Jews—that came later. They merely serve to show that there are examples of the practice, long before Sinai.

There are no references to tithing in Exodus. Not till you get to Deuteronomy are there comprehensive instructions. Deuteronomy 12:4-19; Deuteronomy 14:22-27.

A second tithe is mentioned—Deuteronomy 14: 28-29, Deuteronomy 26:12-15. This tithe was for charitable purposes; collected every third year.

When the priestly system was more elaborately organized, more specific legislation regarding tithe appeared. Numbers 18:20-32; Leviticus 27:30-33.

As time went by the tithe program became even more highly organized, and storehouses were built at the temple to hold produce. Nehemiah 10:37-39, 12:44; 13:5,12.

In late Judaism there were three tithes operating. One for the Levites, one for the family of the offerer, and one for the relief of the poor (*See The Interpreters Dictionary of the Bible, Vol. 4 pp 654-655*).

In the New Testament, tithe is only mentioned three times. Luke 18:12, Hebrews 7:4-10, Matthew 23:23. In all the writings of Paul, John, Peter and James, there is no mention of tithe. Nowhere in the New Testament are we told that the Old Testament system of tithing was to be continued by the Christian church. Jesus does tell the Pharisees they should have tithed, but this cannot be interpreted as instruction for the church.

None of this means that persons should not tithe; it only underlines that the Old Testament tithe system was not fundamental to the economics of the early church. A new system, which Gary Friesen has called "grace-giving", was promoted by the apostles (*See Decision Making and the Will of God, pp. 367-375*). The 'grace-giving' method is outlined in 2 Corinthians 8+9. It involves the free response of the individual to the grace of God expressed in Christ.

The last thing I would want to do is to discourage anyone from a system of giving which has proved a blessing to them. I suppose my position is that I think as Christians we are free to express our faith with much more of our means than specified by the tithe system.

Thank you again for sharing with me. I too have much to learn, being ignorant of many things. Please know that your support has helped us a great deal. We thank God for your faithfulness. May He continue to bless you.

Yours in service, Ron J. Allen

LIFE THROUGH THE CROSS

(Spring Bible School Tapes)

A three-part study on the meaning of the cross for today
by Ron Allen

1. **WERE YOU THERE?** *The universal reach of the cross.*
2. **THE CROSS AND THE GOLDEN RULE.**
3. **THE CALVARY RIDDLE.**

Yours for a donation of \$15.00.

Order from:
Good News Unlimited
11710 Education St. • Auburn, CA 95602
Phone (530) 823-9690 • Email: gnu@goodnewsunlimited.org

THE GREAT NEWS

by Harlan D. Sharp

A small, easy to read book that sets out the good news of Christ using carefully selected portions from the gospels themselves. Quotations are taken from the Living Bible, and are sequenced logically to build interest and mount a convincing and winsome case for faith in Christ.

This book will commend itself to those who have no use for an academic approach to Christ. The author says on the opening page:

Harlan Sharp brings to his presentation the passion of a man who has himself known desperation. He speaks as one who has thirsted—then to discover Christ as ‘springs of living water.’ He has lived life across a broad range of human conditions. He has “been many

places, and done many things; counseled the elite, and those from the other side of the tracks; studied in universities, and lived on skid row; drugged and drank with the best, and begged wine from the worst.”

‘The Great News’, is a simple book for simple people, with a profound story to tell. Jesus is seen in its pages as the great bringer of help, change, hope, and joy. GNU readers will be blessed in the reading of it. It is admirably suitable as a gift for seeking friends who would not read larger volumes.

THE GREAT NEWS can be ordered from Good News Unlimited for a donation of \$4.00 postage and handling paid.

NEWS BITS . . .

Jerusalem: Arab church leaders and academics in the Holy land have appealed to Israelis to stop highlighting differences between Muslims and Christians, and instead to seek a common vision with all Palestinians. The emotionally charged plea was issued in Jerusalem at a conference on contemporary Christianity in the Holy Land, held under the auspices of Hebrew University's Harry S. Truman Research Institute for the advancement of peace.

-*Ecumenical News International*. PO Box 2100 CH - 1211 Geneva 2 Switzerland. Email: eni@eni.ch

Newcastle, Australia: A member of one of Solomon Islands' last remaining pagan hill tribes was being held in connection with the slaying of Seventh Day Adventist missionary Lance Gersbach. Eddie Lesilamo was taken into custody in connection with the beheading of Gersbach while the missionary was working on a building site at Ato'ifi Mission on the coast of Malaita Island, about 130 Kilometres east of the capital, Honiara.

-*Ecumenical News International*. PO Box 2100 CH - 1211 Geneva Switzerland. Email: eni@eni.ch

(Editors note: Dr. Desmond Ford, formerly of Good News Unlimited, California, was invited by the family to officiate at Mr. Gersbach's funeral near Newcastle. The funeral ceremony took place near Newcastle on May 26, 2003.)

What Would Jesus Drive? Evangelical leaders behind the "What Would Jesus Drive?" campaign are now leading a travelling campaign for clean cars. Reverend Jim Ball, executive director of the Evangelical Environmental network and one of the ministers behind the campaign, and his wife, Kara, are driving their "What Would Jesus Drive?" Prius through the Bible belt, preaching to Christians on the relationship between the cars we drive, loving our neighbors, and protecting God's creation. Tour even includes preaching engagements at churches, meetings with local religious leaders and clergy, and appearances on Christian radio talk shows.

-*Religion News Service*.

Recover the Language of Faith —says Unitarian leader. The president of the nation's most liberal denomination has touched off a theological firestorm by suggesting that the Unitarian Universalist Association needs to reclaim a "vocabulary of reverence" by not being afraid to talk about God. The Rev. William Sinkford, in a series of sermons and articles in the past five months, said the creedless denomination needs to re-examine its beliefs because its principles "contain no hint of the holy."

-*Religion News Service*.

Summer Bible School on Tape.

PRAYER: Magic, Mystery, or Mastery?

Three telling presentations on the reasonableness, and worth of prayer, in light of the work of Jesus Christ.

by Ron Allen

- ❖ What does prayer mean?
- ❖ Does prayer make God do things?
- ❖ What can prayer do for the 'pray-er', and the 'prayed for'?

Order your audio cassette of these inspirational talks from:

Good News Unlimited. 11710 Education St. Auburn, CA 95602

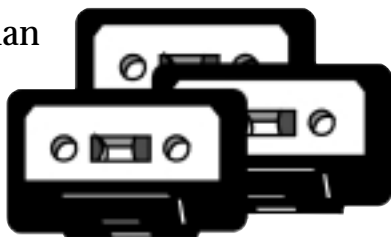
Email: gnu@goodnewsunlimited.org

Yours for a donation of \$15.00

GOOD NEWS UNLIMITED TAPE OF THE MONTH

Hundreds have found their minds challenged and their lives enriched, listening to GNU's Tape of the Month.

If you enjoy sound Christian teaching, that relates directly to where you live. If you are inspired by grace-centered messages that exalt Jesus Christ, then you will want to subscribe to this unique tape ministry.



**GNU Tape of the Month features
GNU evangelists and teachers:
Dr. Desmond Ford
Ron Allen**

For a donation of \$60, you will receive 12 tapes, one each month, containing powerful expositions of Biblical themes.

Send your donation today, and begin receiving GNU Tape of the Month.

Note: All donations to GNU of \$25 per month or more, automatically attract Tape of the Month subscription.

New on the GNU Website!
www.goodnewsunlimited.org

***Contribute to the gospel ministry of
Good News Unlimited online.***

It's easy. It's quick.

GNU accepts Visa and MasterCard

GNU is pleased to inform readers and supporters that donations can be made by Visa and MasterCard. In the busy world of communication and commerce via the Internet, online transactions are simple, secure, and time-saving. Credit card donations can also be made by telephoning GNU.

This facility is part of GNU's intention to position more of its ministry and products on the World-Wide-Web. This will result in a substantial enlargement of GNU's reach, and enable its gospel witness to continue well into the future. Your continued support is needed and appreciated.

**Enjoying Good News
Unlimited?**

**Your support for this magazine
ministry is appreciated.**

**Send your donation to:
Good News Unlimited
11710 Education St.
Auburn CA 95602-2499**

Gospel on the Radio

RADIO GUIDE

USA

CALIFORNIA

Sacramento

KFIA 710AM

Monday-Friday 5 a.m.
11 a.m.

HAWAII

Honolulu

KAIM 870AM

Monday-Friday 6:05 p.m.

WASHINGTON

Blaine

KARI 550AM

Monday-Friday 12:15 p.m.

Saturday 8:30 a.m.

Sunday 1:00 p.m.

CANADA

ALBERTA

High River

(covers Red Deer to

Lethbridge)

CHRB 1140AM

Sunday 5:00 p.m.

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Penticton

CIGV 101.7FM

Saturday 8:05 p.m.

NEW BRUNSWICK

Fredericton

CFNB 550AM

Sunday 7:30 a.m.

ONTARIO

Oakville

CHWO 1250AM

Sunday 7:30 a.m.

Oshawa

CKDO 1350AM

Sunday 7:00 a.m.

SASKATCHEWAN

Estevan

CJSL 1280AM

Sunday 7:00 a.m.

Weyburn

CFSL 1190AM

Sunday 9:00 a.m.

Enjoy Good News Unlimited?

Your support for this magazine ministry is appreciated.

Send your donation to:
Good News Unlimited
11710 Education Street
Auburn, CA 95602-2499

WILL YOU WILL?

Nearly two million people die in the USA every year without leaving a will. Approximately 600,000 of these are evangelical Christians. In the majority of cases, they were good Christian stewards in life. But they made no provision to continue their stewardship after death. They left their lifetime savings for court distribution. While alive, they would never have sanctioned the decisions on distribution made by the court.

None of us will die any sooner for making legal provision for the final allocation of our goods. These are goods God has loaned us. Legal provision should not be delayed for even a day, especially now, when the making of a will can be both simple and inexpensive.

If you have not already done so, will you pray and act on this matter of a will, or a living trust? Will you remember the work of the gospel, that others may come to share the eternal life in which you now rejoice? It is within your power to make provision that some find the treasure to which our Lord referred (Matthew 13:44). That gospel treasure illuminates the shadows of death, points to the everlasting gates of pearl, and reveals a welcoming savior (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).

Good News Unlimited

can be reached at

530.823.9690

Fax 530.823.5338

gnu@goodnewsunlimited.org

This magazine is free upon request.

Share the gospel with others! Tell your friends about GNU radio.
Save us money by increasing our audience (more listeners per dollar spent).

Good News Unlimited Fall 2003 Bible Seminar

HOPE, HEAVEN, AND IMMORTALITY

He who loves the coming of the Lord is not he who affirms it is far off. Nor is it he who says it is near. It is he who, whether it be far or near, awaits it with sincere faith, steadfast hope, and fervent love. —Augustine.

Events in recent years have rekindled age-old questions about the future of the earth and its anxious inhabitants. Perhaps at no other time in history, have so many *homo sapiens* been as pessimistic about where it will all end. Christian faith has much to offer this discussion. And it is not blind fancy, but based on the teaching, character, death, and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. Christians believe that the key to the future lies with Him who has dominated the history and culture of the planet for the last two thousand years.

- ***Does such a view make sense?***
- ***Why are judgement and resurrection desirable events?***
- ***What difference does believing in an afterlife make to life now?***
- ***Is it necessary to know in exact detail, the final order of events?***
- ***What can we really know of the hereafter?***

Asheville, North Carolina	September 27, 2003	Banff, Alberta	October 3-5, 2003
Portland, Oregon	October 11, 2003	Arlington, Texas	October 18, 2003
	Fairfield, California	October 25, 2003	

Watch for more complete information in the next issue of this magazine, and at www.goodnewsunlimited.org



August 2003

11710
Education Street
Auburn
California
95602-2499

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 150
Auburn, CA 95602