



November 2011

FREE!

GOOD NEWS *Unlimited*

NOT DRUNK

By Ron Allen

I don't watch much sport on television, but I get to see bits of it on news bulletins. I have noticed that the scoring of a goal precipitates an outbreak of enthusiasm that seems to be entirely disproportionate to what has been achieved. Grown men fling themselves upon one another in shameless embraces which they would never be seen doing at other times.



Enthusiasm grips people for any number of reasons. Some become immensely animated simply by watching a horse race—especially when they have wagered on one of the runners. Others exhibit unusual sentimentality at weddings and christenings, while not a few discover depths of feeling when they have consumed much liquor. They are more impassioned; they speak with exaggerated volume and conviction. Sometimes they evidence

inappropriate levels of emotion; singing, laughing or crying in a surplus fashion, giving onlookers the impression that something is not quite right.

On the day of Pentecost, a group of one hundred and twenty or so, were suddenly seized by a forceful enthusiasm. They became enlivened beyond normal. They were zestful and animated. Unable to contain their fervor, it poured from their lips in forms of speech far in excess of ordinary utterance.

Something extraordinary was happening. The question was: What does it mean? Onlookers, knowingly, began to make fun of them. They had seen this kind of behavior before; 'they have had too much wine' (Acts 2:12, 13).

The excited ones were a group who professed faith in One named Jesus of Nazareth who had recently been crucified. Peter, their spokesman, made an attempt to explain. "These men are not drunk, as you suppose, it's only nine in the

morning" (Acts 2:15). He went on to assert that God was the cause of the commotion. He made a speech mentioning God many times. He said (Acts 2:17-24) that the event in question had been anticipated by **God** through the prophet Joel; **God** foresaw it and set it in motion. It was in fulfillment of **God's** plan that Jesus of Nazareth was born. Further, **God** was also involved in the crucifixion. This man, Jesus, had **God's** signature on him; **God** accredited him by means of various signs (verse 22).

Peter didn't finish there. He said that despite strong evidence of Jesus' close connection with God, his own people had rejected him. They went along with their leaders in their plot to kill him. "You put him to death by nailing him on a cross" (Acts 2:23). In other words: You extinguished the light of God that shone among you.

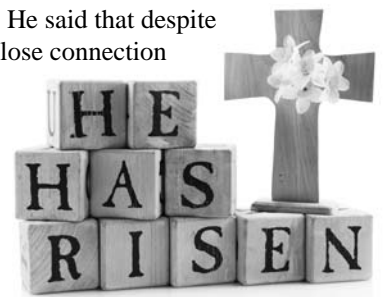
Remember, Peter was attempting to account for an enthusiasm that the public believed was caused by excess drinking. His explanation was that it was not alcohol, but God! Despite that Jesus' entire history was caused and supervised by **God**, the people had despised him and executed him. Now, **God** had overturned that execution by raising Jesus from the dead. God had removed the world's verdict against Jesus and replaced it with his own by resurrecting him.

"This man was handed over to you by **God's** set purpose and foreknowledge, and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. But **God** raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, for it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him" (Acts 2:23, 24).

God's resurrection of Jesus was more than a 'lifeguard-like' resuscitation of a corpse. God raised Jesus from death and exalted him to life at his right hand—the most excellent position in the universe. "God has raised this Jesus to life and we are all witnesses of this fact" (Acts 2:32), said Peter.

A man in my home state was released from prison after serving 15 years for the murder

Continued on the next page



CHRIST ALONE • GRACE ALONE • FAITH ALONE • SCRIPTURE ALONE

www.goodnewsunlimited.org

of a teenage girl. His release came after years of hard work by a team of lawyers who believed in this man's innocence. They exposed shoddy police work and poor evidence. The man is now free but still not deemed innocent by the court. Much arduous work remains to be done before a judge will be persuaded to quash the original verdict.

Compare God's reply to the world's verdict against Jesus. He did not merely set it aside, he cancelled it. He negated the whole movement of world opinion that was against Jesus. He dismantled it by raising him from the dead and elevating him to the place of highest honor and power.

The resurrection meant that the human consensus was invalidated and replaced by the values of the Crucified One. The One who cannot be subjected, who cannot be brought to an end by any human power or authority—he is divine; his values are those of God.

Before the cross, the disciples had begun to think that God had come to them in Jesus. When he was killed, they lost hope. But when they knew that he was alive again, they were convinced that they had walked and talked with the Son of God. It was clear to them that God had been in everything that had happened. The crucifixion did not stymie God's plan; it was part of it.

The coming of the Spirit at Pentecost confirmed that Christ was alive and active in the world. The disciple's ecstasy had everything to do with the kind of person they knew Jesus to be. Many people die; some are executed making few sad. There are individuals who, if they were to return from death, would make no one happy.

My dad knew everyone in my hometown. He attended every funeral. Once a neighboring farmer died so, of course, Dad went to the ceremony. Attending the same funeral was a person well-known as a dishonest scoundrel. That very week this scoundrel had fallen from a telegraph pole and cheated death by breaking his arm. Observing him from a pew behind, one man leaned over and whispered in Dad's ear: "Why couldn't it have been him that died; no one would have missed him!"

In the Resurrection, the most exquisite personality that ever lived overcame death. It was the attributes of Jesus that the grave could not contain. This was the realization that caused joy to overflow at Pentecost. Though men and women make much effort in pursuit of material gains, they instinctively know that life is not worth living without values that are spiritual. Truth, beauty, integrity, purity, trust, honesty, tolerance, compassion and justice—all these virtues had been

lived and died for by Jesus. Though they themselves had pursued them with questionable success, they knew now that they had been perfectly and exhaustively enacted by Jesus.

Further, they knew with certainty now that forgiveness was part of the indestructible makeup of the universe. They knew that whatever the deficit of their own personalities, the forgiving grace of God would never fail them. A man, a woman could give themselves over to the values of Jesus—the highest values of love—and despite falling short still live fulsomely without guilt or regret, and with profound purpose. Any and every task or relationship conducted under the auspices of Jesus could never be in vain, never be lost.

Since Christ has risen, time and chance are not the final arbiters of destiny. Since Jesus is alive, we cannot live as if all things will continue as they have always been. Part of the excitement at Pentecost was because the disciples believed they were witnessing the culmination of history. A new kind of time had arrived—the time of the end. The chief questions and problems of existence had met with a solution.

A river ran for several miles along the boundary of my dad's farm. We played for hours in that river during long summer days. I learned to swim there. To be able to swim across the river and stand on the far bank was a rite of passage for us kids. Sometimes there would be a 'fresh' when the river flowed deeper and faster than usual. As a small boy I was a bit scared to swim over. But when dad came with us, he would swim across and stand all-conquering on the far bank. He beckoned me to come. Seeing him there with his eye on me and calling to me gave me courage. I felt confident in my connection to him. So I swam while he watched, and soon I stood triumphant with him on the other side.

Christians are not drunk; they have no need to be. But they are jubilant, full of joy. They know what their life is for and whither it is bound. The claws of fate cannot crush them; they are in the hands of Him who will never let them go; his love is stronger than death; they will cross all rivers to be with him on the other side, forever.



GOODNEWS *Unlimited*

Good News Unlimited magazine is published every month by **Good News Unlimited**, P.O. Box 6687, Auburn, CA, USA 95604-6687.

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, audio and video material. (A comprehensive catalog 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 and Canada. 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.

November, 2011
Vol. 30, No. 11

Published by Good News Unlimited

Copyright © 2011

Editor

Ron Allen

Graphic Designer

Debbie O'Brien

Proofreader

Philip Rhodes

OVERSEAS ADDRESSES:

Australian office:
P.O. Box 6788
Tweed Heads Sth
NSW 2486, Australia

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

222 Olive Avenue
Willowdale, ON M2N 4P6
Canada

MIRTH CONCEALED

G.K. Chesterton

Joy, which was the small publicity of the pagan, is the gigantic secret of the Christian, and as I close this chaotic volume, I open again the strange, small book from which all Christianity came; and I am again haunted by a kind of conformation.

The tremendous figure, which fills the Gospels towers in this respect, as in every other, above all the thinkers who ever thought themselves tall. His pathos was natural, almost casual.

The Stoics, ancient and modern, were proud of concealing their tears. He never concealed his tears; he showed them plainly on his open face at any daily sight, such as the far sight of his native city. Yet he concealed something.

Solemn supermen and imperial diplomatists are proud of restraining their anger. He never restrained his anger. He flung furniture down the front steps of the temple, and asked men how they expected to escape the damnation of hell. Yet he restrained something.

I say it with reverence; there was in that shattering personality a thread that must be called shyness. There was something that he hid from all men when he went up a mountain to pray.

There was something that he covered constantly by abrupt silence or impetuous isolation. There was some one thing that was too great for God to show us when he walked upon our earth; and I have sometimes fancied that it was his mirth.

G. K. Chesterton. ORTHODOXY. ch. 9. 

A WORLD FOREVER CHANGED

By James Stewart

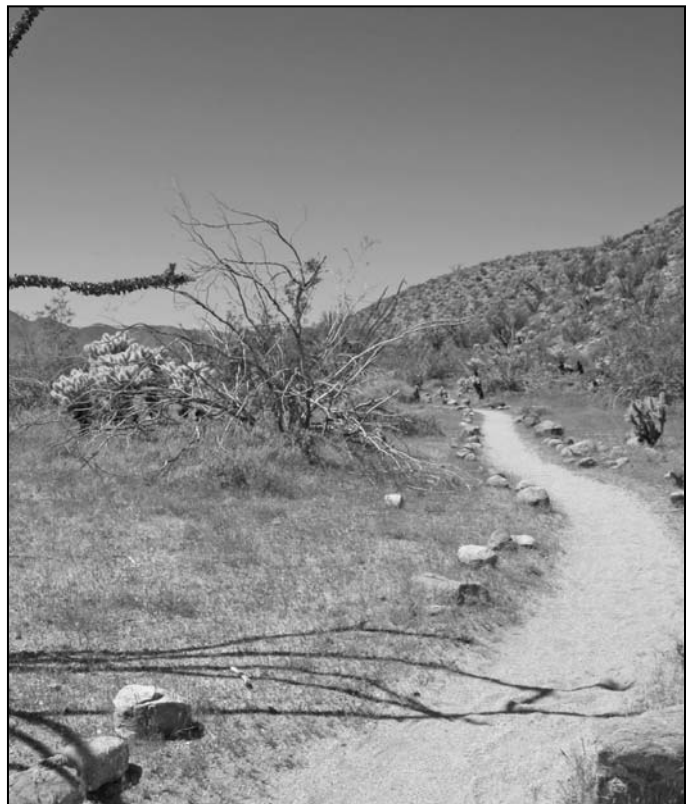
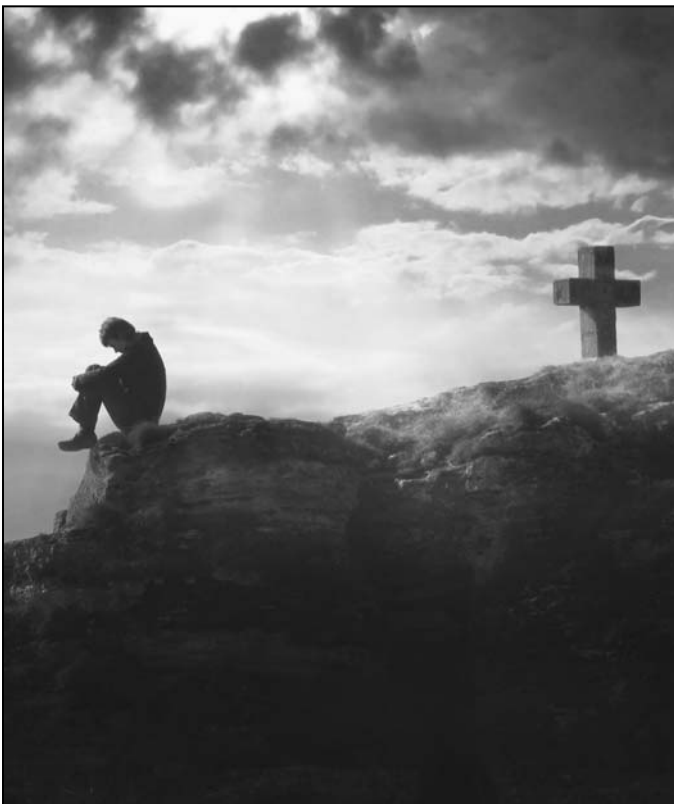
It was no mere interest in immortality which explains this apostolic concentration on the Resurrection. It was not as a dramatic verification of personal survival that they preached Christ risen from the dead. They were not really concerned with proofs and theories of survival as such. All that was irrelevant. They preached the Resurrection as an *eschatological*, that is, as a cosmic event. When Christ left the grave, it was not merely an announcement that there is a hereafter and a life beyond;

...it was a shattering of history by a creative act of God Almighty. God was doing something comparable only with what he had done at the first creation. This was the beginning of a new era for the universe, the decisive turning-point for the human race.

The Resurrection meant that the world had died in the night and had been reborn. When Paul met the risen Christ on the Damascus road, the blinding thing about the encounter—it literally blinded him for three days—was that in that moment he looked face to face, without any veil between, upon the eternal purpose of God. Thus the apostles went out to preach, knowing that

...in the Resurrection the new age had arrived, and that this stupendous miracle signified the storming of history and the transforming of the world.

-James Stewart: A FAITH TO PROCLAIM. pp. 106, 107. 



HEAVEN ON EARTH

By Desmond Ford

Scripture is full of stories that mirror the Christian's joyous estate. There is Ruth, once excluded from the Promised Land and the chosen people, but who by the grace and love of Boaz, the Lord of the harvest, finds rest, acceptance and fruitfulness in his embrace. There is Benjamin, whose 'mess' (food portion) exceeds that of all his brothers. There is the homicide fleeing the avenger who is pulled into safety in the city of refuge. There is the dove that can find no place for its foot till Noah takes hold of it gently and brings it into the ark. There is the Queen of Sheba who almost loses her breath at the sight of the splendors of Solomon's kingdom. There is Jehoiachin, delivered from prison after thirty-seven years and placed as king again at the royal banqueting table alongside the one who rescued him. There is Onesimus the runaway slave who had robbed his master, but who ultimately was found by Christ through Paul, and who returned forgiven to his master to receive freedom. There is Lazarus, seated at the table with Jesus after his resurrection from the dead. Christ had wept over him, but *he* bled over us, that we might be resurrected from the death of trespasses and sins.

To know that God only sees us in Christ, that our righteousness is in heaven where it can never be lost provided we truly trust in him who became our substitute and surety, to have the confidence that we can never, never perish while trusting in his merits, that through the indwelling Holy Spirit we have God alongside to help in every situation, that we will never be tried above that which we are able, that all things work together for good to them that love God, that nothing can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord—this is heaven below.

D. Ford. KALEIDOSCOPE OF DIAMONDS Volume 2 pp. 162, 163.



JUBILATION!

Any alleged Christianity which fails to express itself in cheerfulness, at some point, is clearly spurious. The Christian is cheerful, not because he is blind to injustice and suffering, but because he is convinced that these, in the light of the divine sovereignty, are never ultimate.

-Elton Ttrueblood.

It is the conscious of the threefold joy of the Lord. His joy in ransoming us, His joy in dwelling within us as our Savior and power for fruit bearing, His joy in possessing us as his bride and his delight. It is the consciousness of this joy that is our real strength. Our joy in him may be a fluctuating thing; His joy in us knows no change.

-James Hudson Taylor

Nothing is more contradictory than an unenthusiastic Christian. The Bible tells us that God loves us so much in fact, that God gave his only Son so that all who believe in him will have everlasting life. Nothing, not even death, can separate us from God's love. If we really believe that, we can't help but overflow with joy.

-Ronald Newhouse

Be merry, really merry. The life of a true Christian should be a perpetual jubilee, a prelude to the festivals of eternity.

-Theophane Venard

