

# From Death To Life

The Official Magazine of the Conditional  
Immortality Association of New Zealand

Conference  
early this year  
(Details  
Inside)

Bible Teaching • Life • Death • Resurrection • Eternal Destiny

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# Editorial

I often find myself wondering, just how important is theology. Not just conditionalist theology, but any theology. I suspect that many Christians would say it is not important at all. I also suspect this kind of attitude has seriously weakened the church and undermines both our evangelism and our mission. It is because I believe that theology, and in particular Conditional Immortality, is important that I have chosen as the title of my address to the up and coming Conference: "Conditional Immortality: Does It Matter? Should I Care?" (See Pages 19 and 20).

On the other hand, among a very much smaller group of people, "theological elitism" rules the day. But I do not want to see a church with a "Statement of Faith" the size of the Auckland telephone directory, where people are quizzed as to their theological 'soundness' and where the absence of dogmatism on any issue is 'bad'. Is there a way forward? There is. It is not the way of either/or but the way of both/and.

For many Christians either theology is important and we must stand up for truth and separate from those who refuse to accept the truth or theology is not important and we must live together in harmony despite our differences. Rarely do you meet a person who says both theology is important, we must stand up for truth, and, at the same time, we must all live together in harmony despite our differences. This kind of attitude recognises that we are all on a journey of discovery. None of us understands every aspect of the truth exhaustively. We can learn from each other. On the basis of a common commitment to Christ and his Word we can continue to discuss and even debate the truth of our theological convictions while at the same time affirming we are one in the bonds of love.

I believe my late friend Carl Josephson (page 8) lived out this position. He passionately believed in the necessity of theology (not just as ideas to be believed but as something to live) yet at the same time he accepted those who disagreed with his theology as brothers and sisters in Christ. Over Easter let us reflect on importance of a clear and accurate understanding of the gospel hope of a resurrection to immortality that Christ has brought to light and at the same time let us remember that the death and resurrection of Jesus unites all who have faith in him!

*David Burge.*

# Contents

Issue 29 March 2006

<b>Editorial</b>	<b>2</b>
David Burge	
<b>Twisted Scripture</b>	<b>3</b>
David Burge	
<b>"In the Image of God He Created Them": The Call to Be Human</b>	<b>4</b>
Joel Green	
<b>This Is My Story</b>	<b>8</b>
In Memory of Carl Josephson Warren Prestidge	
<b>What Is Conditional Immortality?</b>	<b>10</b>
Edward Fudge	
<b>From Off Of The Shelf</b>	<b>12</b>
David Burge	
<b>Faith of Our Fathers</b>	<b>16</b>
A Reformation Crisis Concerning the Soul (Part 1) William Kilgore	
<b>Conference 2006</b>	<b>19</b>
David Burge	
<b>Info / Adverts</b>	
Respub	6
ACMissionNZ	11
CI Association Conference 2006	20

**Editor: David Burge**  
**e: [republishing@slingshot.co.nz](mailto:republishing@slingshot.co.nz)**

**Cover :** Traditional Golgotha, "Place of the Skull" where Jesus was crucified.

## On Matthew 10:28

A very familiar passage, Matthew 10:28, says, "Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell" (NIV). This text is often put forward as the ultimate proof, from the very lips of Jesus, that within the fleshly carcass of every human being is an immaterial entity, called "the soul", and that while this frail body may die, the "soul" is immortal and lives on. Taken in this way this text proves more than the believer in the immortality of the soul ever intended to prove. This is precisely because Jesus says God is able to "destroy both soul and body" in the fire of Gehenna. Whatever else Jesus intended to say he clearly says that the soul is not immortal! The souls of the wicked can and will be destroyed by God in the fires of hell.

There is, however, a better, non – dualistic interpretation of the text available to us. We should note the following:

1. The Bible very rarely draws a distinction between the "body" (as the material part of a person) and the "soul" (as the immaterial part of a person). Rather, a human "soul" is very much a whole person, to be identified with his or her body. A "living soul" is a creature of dust animated by the spirit or breath of life from God (Gen. 2:7). In death the body returns to dust and the spirit or breath of life returns to God, in an exact reversal of the creation process (Eccl. 12:7 c.f. Gen. 3:19). The result is that the "soul" is dead.

2. Whether the reference is to the armies of Assyria, or to literal forests and fields (the former is probable), Isaiah says, "The splendour of his forests and fertile fields it will completely destroy" (Isa. 10:18, NIV). The King James Version more accurately renders the original Hebrew. It reads "[h]e will consume ... both soul and body". The truth is that the Bible uses the phrase "soul and body" / "body and soul" to refer to the totality of a person. To



**Whatever else Jesus intended to say he clearly says that the soul is not immortal! The souls of the wicked can and will be destroyed by God in the fires of hell.**

destroy someone body and soul is to destroy them completely.

3. In view of the coming resurrection (Dan. 12:2; 1Cor. 15; 1Thess. 4:13-18) Jesus often spoke of the end of this life, a temporary death, as if it were not really a death at all but a mere sleep (Mark 5:35, 39; John 11:11-14).

In the same way, from God's perspective, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are not dead (as spoken of by Jesus in the context of an argument about the future resurrection). Indeed, "all are living" (Luke 20:38) to him who, because of his unlimited power, including the power to raise the dead, calls "things that are not as though they were" (Rom. 4:17).

4. Elsewhere Jesus says the same thing as is said in Matthew 10:28 but without any hint of dualism: "I tell you, my friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that can do no more. But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear him who, after the killing of the body, has power to throw you into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him" (Luke 12:4-5).

It seems best to say that Jesus taught us that we need not fear those who are able to kill the body (thus temporarily ending our life in this world), but have no power to destroy us completely (for at death we pass into a temporary sleep, awaiting the glorious awakening of the resurrection morning). Rather, we should fear God who alone has the power to deprive a person of a future resurrection life by throwing them into the fire of hell to suffer a second complete and irreversible death (Rev. 2:11, 20:6, 14, 21:8).

*David Burge.*

# In the Image of God He Created Them: The Call To Be Human

What does it mean to be human? On the face of it, this may seem to be another in a list of questions easily enough dismissed as “merely academic.” Did Adam have a navel? Can God create a rock so heavy that he could not lift it? What does it mean to be human? Who has time for such questions? Isn’t it far more important to get on with the business of living, of *being human*, than to sit idly contemplating what being human might mean?

In fact, much of what we do, how we spend our time, and how we work out our priorities already assumes our answer to the question of the nature of humanity. This is true for us as individuals, but also for our families and our churches. How we get involved in the work of child-rearing, whether we vote for one political party or another, what we do as a church to extend ourselves in mission and evangelism, how we face life-and-death decisions—all of these and many more issues assume answers from us about our deepest beliefs about what it means to be fully alive as members of the human family.

Actually, a great deal is at stake here. The following questions come immediately to mind:

- What does it mean to be healthy? Are healing and health determined in biological terms only, or should such factors as social relations and engagement with one’s community be included?
- If humans, like pigs and sheep, can be cloned, will the resulting life form be a “person”?
- Is there anything about humans that our mechanical creations, our innovations in

Artificial Intelligence, will be unable to duplicate?

- What view of the human person is capable of funding what we want to know about ourselves theologically—about sin, for example, as well as moral responsibility, repentance, and growth in grace?
  - Am I free to do what I want, or is my sense of decision-making a ruse?
  - Do humans have sacred worth? If so, on what grounds? What portrait of the human person is capable of supporting our work and practices in the areas of morality and ethics?
  - How should we understand “salvation”?
- Does salvation entail a denial of the world

Did Adam have a navel? Can God create a rock so heavy that he could not lift it? What does it mean to be human? Who has time for such questions?

and embodied life, focusing exclusively on my “inner person” and on the life to come?

- How ought the church to be extending itself in mission? Mission to what? “Saving souls”? Society-at-large? The cosmos?
  - What happens when we die? What about life after death?
- In one, short article, we cannot hope to discuss all of these issues, but we can get some direction by examining in broad terms how to think about human life. I want to focus on four biblical claims about the human family, discussing them in terms of the witness of the Scriptures while interacting at key points with some interesting, corroborative perspectives from the natural sciences.

**(1) Scripture defines human existence in creaturely terms.**

At its most basic level, this is the testimony of Scripture: that we humans are neither God nor gods, but are God's creation. Intertwined with this basic recognition is another, that we share our identity as God's creatures with the rest of creation, including, of course, "the wild animals of the earth of every kind, and the cattle of every kind, and everything that creeps upon the ground of every kind" (Gen. 1:25).

From a scientific perspective, this is a basic and important claim as well. We have learned that we share almost 99 per cent of our DNA with chimpanzees. We have found evidence of decision-making among animals of all sorts, suggesting the capacity for some measure of free will, as well as evidence of consciousness in cats, dogs, and even fish. What is more, the list of capacities we tend to associate with being human have been shown to be grounded in biological processes; these would include, for example, consistency of memory, learning, the development of consciousness, individuality within community—including empathy and other aspects of relationality, the capacity to make decisions on the basis of self-deliberation, planning and action on the basis of that decision, as well as taking responsibility

for these decisions and actions.

Of course, more traditional views located humanity in a place of incontestable honor at the center of the cosmos, separate from the rest of God's creatures. Such views have been humbled by scientific discovery—in the modern age, first by Copernicus, who demonstrated that our planet and, thus, we who inhabit the earth, are not the center around which the universe pivots; then by Darwin and evolutionary biology, who located homo sapiens within the world of animals, with a genetic make-up that strongly resembles the creatures around us. The most recent challenge has come from neuroscience, with its tightening of the mind-brain link. Human attitudes and behavior are increasingly regarded as the outcome of the complex and generative interplay of genetic code and especially relational experiences. As a consequence, it is unnecessary to postulate a second, metaphysical entity, such as a soul or spirit, to account for human capacities and distinctives and, at the level of molecular biology, any meaningful distinction between human beings and

other animals is impossible to maintain. As a result, the philosopher Thomas Metzinger has observed that "a radically new understanding of what it means to be human" is emerging.

But is it so radical? Readers of Scripture should not be much surprised by the testimony of the sciences, for there (in Scripture) humanity is very much at home in the cosmos. Humans are



situated in relation to other living creatures in almost every way, so that the fate of the one is tied to the fate of the other. In the New Testament, Paul presumes this relationship in his portrait of the consummation of history, insisting that the restoration of all creation is intimately linked to the salvation of God's people (e.g., Rom 8:19-21). Not surprisingly, the book of Revelation cannot imagine the final deliverance of God's people without at the same time envisioning "a new heaven and a new earth" (Rev 21:1).

Humans, according to the Gen. 1-2, are clearly like other living things insofar as they are created by God and in their relation to him. Like them, humanity is formed from the stuff of the earth. Vegetation is for both humans *and* animals (Gen. 1:30), and animals share with humans the command to reproduce, increase, and fill the seas and the earth (Gen. 1:22). The additional vocation given humanity, "to subdue" the earth and "to have dominion" over it (Gen. 1:26, 28), must be understood in the context of the order set forth in the creation account, a narrative in which there is no hint of either chaos or combat, nor of exploitation of nature. True, the creation account imbues humanity with royal identity and task, but this is a nobility granted without conquest; its essence is realized in coexistence with all of life in the land, and in the cultivation of life.

## **(2) Scripture defines the human family in relational, not essential terms.**

What distinguishes humans from the rest of creation is that humanity is uniquely made in God's image: "So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them" (Gen. 1:27). The *imago Dei* tradition has been the focus of diverse interpretations among Jews and Christians—ranging widely from some physical characteristic of humans (such as standing upright) to a way of knowing (especially the human capacity to know God), and so on. What is obvious is that humanity is thus defined in relation to God in terms of both similarity and difference: humanity is in some sense "like" God, but is itself not divine. Humanity thus stands in an ambivalent position—living in solidarity with the rest of the created order and yet distinct from it on account of humankind's unique role as the bearer of the divine image, called to a particular and crucial relationship with Yahweh and yet not divine.

Importantly, for the biblical account, the uniqueness of humanity is not located in the human possession of a soul. Scripture depicts the human being as a biopsychospiritual unity. Indeed, within the Old Testament, "soul" (*nepheš*) refers to life and vitality—not life in general, but as instantiated in human persons and animals; not a thing to have but a way to be. To speak of loving God with all of one's "soul" (Deut. 6:5) is to elevate the intensity of involvement of the entirety of one's being. The creation account employs *nepheš* with reference to both the human being and to "every beast of the earth," "every bird of the air," and "everything that creeps on the earth"—that is, to everything "in which there is life (*nepheš*)" (1:30; my translation). Gen. 2:7 might best be translated, "The Lord God formed the human being of the dust of the ground, breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the human being became fully alive (*nepheš*)" (my translation). The human being does not have a soul but rather is a soul—or, maybe better, is "soulish."

For Gen. 1-2, humans are not defined in essential but relational terms. Unlike the philosophical stream running from Plato to Descartes and into the present, Scripture is not concerned with defining human life with reference to its necessary "parts" or "essences." Nevertheless, Scripture is profound in its presentation of the human person fundamentally in relational terms, and its assessment of the human being as genuinely human and alive only within the family of humans brought into being by Yahweh and in relation to the God who gives life-giving breath. This suggests that the "image of God" is not so much some part of us as it is a vocation given us, not so much as individuals but as the human family whom God has created as his partners in covenant. The vocation is defined relationally: responsiveness to and dependence on God, interdependence with humanity and the cosmos, caring for the world within which God has made us. This would mean, of course, that human recovery, salvation, would address conflicted human existence: from fractured selves to integrated persons, from

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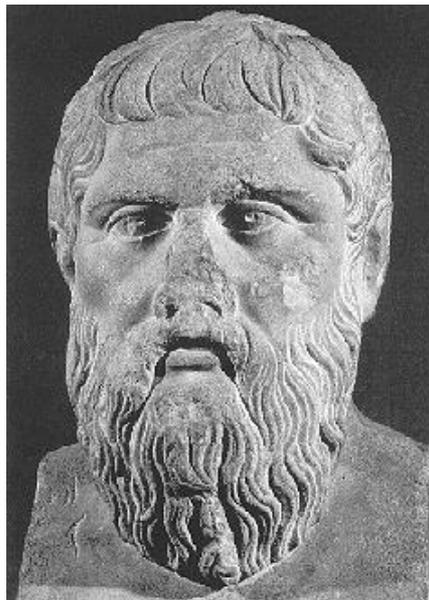
The views represented in this newsletter are not necessarily the views of the CI Association (NZ).

fractured communities to relational persons, and from a fractured cosmos to embodied persons, putting the world back together, all within God's embrace.

In short, we have here a portrait of human life whose "quality" is determined by God's own graciousness and not by anything intrinsic to the individual person. Scripture situates the human family within a grand narrative of God's doing; this narrative places a premium on human relatedness to God, humanity, and the cosmos precisely because it is determined by God's own character; and it is within this narrative that the human creature draws both its value and its vocation (or reason for being).

**(3)  
Scripture  
portrays  
human life as marked  
decisively by finitude.**

The Bible devotes itself very little to speculation about death, but two or three points are clear. First, our reality is that death is integral to life. Second, Scripture affirms the *absolute totality of death*. Death is the common destiny of all living creatures. Scripture underscores the inescapable fact of death itself ("We



**Plato**

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must all die"), and denies that death itself can be revoked ("We are like water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered again") (2 Sam. 14:14). If later it appears that Jesus cheats death, as in episodes like Luke 7:11-17, it should not be forgotten that stories of resuscitation in the Gospels leave no room for thinking that death has been finally overcome. Paradoxically, Jesus himself dies—the very

person who brought the dead back to life (Luke 7:22). Third, death is regarded as the severance of all relationships—relationships with God and with every person and with everything in the cosmos.

To make these statements, however, is to speak from a creaturely point of view (as if we could speak knowingly from any other perspective). It is important that we acknowledge our vantage point, lest we assume that we see all that there is. In fact, Scripture is adamant that, whatever finitude characterizes our lives as humans, Yahweh is not so limited. Indeed, the power of God extends beyond the power of death. This means that death is not an autonomous force capable of countervailing the purpose of God; and that

God can save *through* just as fully as he can save *from* death.

If death is the cessation of life in all of its aspects, then the Christian belief in the resurrection can be nothing less than our belief in new creation. This is because death allows no survivors—neither any persons nor any parts of persons. What we look forward to is resurrection—

(Continued on Page 14)

# This Is ~~My~~ Story His

I have known Carl, and worked with him in Christian ministry, for around 25 years and I consider it a great privilege to be leading this service in his memory today.

Carl was born 49 years ago to Noel and Pam in Howick and in fact has lived all his life here in Auckland. His first taste of school was at St Kentigern's and then he spent 4 years at Kohimarama Primary. As his Dad remembers it, Carl was popular with both the teachers and the other pupils at school. Later the family moved to the North Shore, where Carl attended Belmont Primary, Murray's Bay Intermediate and Westlake Boys' High School.

Now, last Sunday, as we were sitting around sharing about Carl, I discovered something remarkable about him that I had never heard before. Even at intermediate school age, Carl was already talking about entering Christian ministry when he grew up, or perhaps some other form of social work. God called him at any early age and Carl was remarkably faithful to that call all his life. Even then, Carl used to try out various churches and involve himself spontaneously, from time to time, in social work.

Maybe that's why he majored in Sociology, when he did his BA at Auckland

University. I understand that Carl would buy vegetables and fruit cheap from the market, from time to time, and sell to struggling students at cost. He had a strong orientation to people and to service and, what's more, he had the individuality, initiative and resourcefulness to go and do something about it. Later, Carl completed a Diploma in Criminology as well. Some of us used to say that this made him



Carl Josephson

"Carl ... is undoubtedly one of the most authentic Christians I have known, a man who thought his faith through from beginning to end and who lived a life of risky faith, by the courage of his convictions, following Christ with all his heart."

exceptionally well qualified for Baptist youth work!

I first came across Carl when he started to join in with the youth group at Forrest Hill Church of Christ, the little church on the North Shore which Jackie and I attended. We went off to New Plymouth for four years. When we came back, we found that Carl had not only

been converted and baptised, under Tim Long's ministry, but also married the church organist! Carl and Sharon were married in November 1977.

If you know Carl at all, you will know that he was a man of great originality and of deep conviction. It was Carl, more than anyone, who kept that church alive during a very difficult period. Today it is

Sunnynook Baptist Church – and it would not be there at all if it wasn't for Carl.

In 1981 I went to what was still Forrest Hill Church of Christ as part-time pastor and joined Carl there in ministry. He and Sharon were running a very successful and fruitful youth group from their home in Lavery Place. Kerryn was born in 1981 and Ben in 1983. It was also in 1981 that Carl and I both realised that the church needed to move down into the Sunnynook valley. In 1983 we finally obtained a lease there from the city council, but only because the council were so impressed by the community youth work Carl was doing, as well as the preschool child care being offered by others at the church.

As you can imagine, various building programmes followed and it was often Carl who took responsibility in this area also. Later, he served as youth pastor at Takanini Church of Christ and also went on to complete a BTh at Bible College of NZ.

In fact, Carl was an amazingly resourceful person and Sharon, too, has proven remarkably resourceful, as Carl's full partner in every way, both in the Christian life and in nurturing and providing for their family. Last Sunday night, we tried to recall all the different jobs Carl took on during his life, usually to supplement a part-time church worker's income: manager in a clothing store; community youth work; supervising periodic detention workers; partnering a handyman business; building playgrounds and garages; driving buses and trucks; commercial cleaning; etc. Not to mention the array of gifts he displayed in church ministry: leading young people, teaching, preaching, writing, running camps and children's clubs, Scripture memorisation, drama (Carl formed a highly effective drama team at Sunnynook and invented most of the scripts himself!), serving on committees, liaising with councils, short-term mission in the Philippines, president of the Conditional Immortality Association and publishing.

Carl was astonishingly resilient, never daunted, rising to each new challenge with new, unsuspected reserves of talent and energy, all

at the service of his Saviour and Master, the One he loved and trusted without reservation, Jesus Christ.

Carl was with me all the way, during the transition to becoming a Baptist church at Sunnynook. In 1995, the Josephsons moved to Glenfield Baptist. In 1999, he completed his M.Th., successfully presenting a conditionalist thesis. In recent years he has served at Owairaka Baptist, first as pastoral assistant with Bruce Hilder and then as sole pastor.

I have worked longer and more closely with Carl than with anyone else in my ministry, except Jackie. He is undoubtedly one of the most authentic Christians I have known, a man who thought his faith through from beginning to end and who lived a life of risky faith, by the courage of his convictions, following Christ with all his heart. A remarkable individual. A wonderful example to me and to us all.

Carl did not simply resign himself to his illness. He and Sharon sought God's intervention and also welcomed the prayers of others for healing. However, Carl's faith was such that he was also able to affirm with complete conviction, with the Apostle Paul: "Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death." Indeed, Christ has been truly exalted through Carl, in life and in death. Carl's hope was in God and that hope is secure, the sure and certain hope of resurrection to eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

*Warren Prestidge.*

*After a courageous and faith - filled battle with lung cancer for some five months, Carl Josephson died on October 23 of this year. Carl served on the Conditional Immortality Association for many years, including a term as President. He headed our literature work, including editing this magazine, for most of that time. Carl was in large part responsible for the success of the recent visit by Dr. Joel and Pam Green to New Zealand. At his funeral, which was attended by over 450 people, Rev Warren Prestidge, pastor of Remuera Baptist Church and author of Life, Death and Destiny, offered the foregoing tribute.*

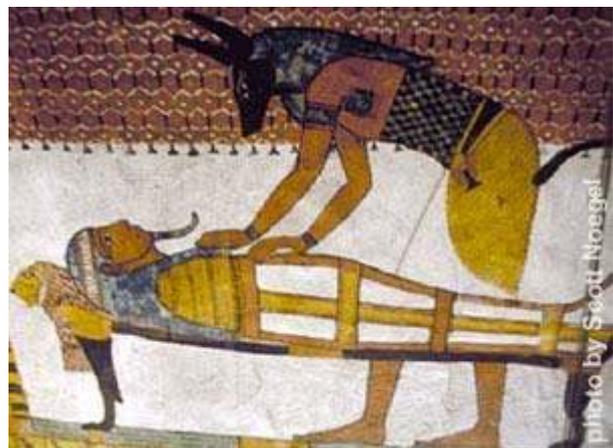
# What Is Conditional Immortality?

*As part of his regular GracEmail ministry, Edward Fudge answers questions from readers. Here we have reproduced his response to a sister from an independent Christian church in Idaho who wrote: "In a recent gracEmail, you mentioned a book you were co-authoring on the subject of final punishment, your part being to present the biblical case for conditional immortality. What exactly do you mean by 'conditional immortality?'"*

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"Immortality" means deathlessness, and anyone who is "immortal" is incapable of dying. According to the Bible, God "alone possesses immortality" inherently or in his own nature (1 Tim. 6:16). Human beings are not naturally "deathless" or "immortal." We are mortal human creatures who owe our existence every moment to God who made us (Gen. 2:7; Acts 17:25, 28). We cannot survive death by ourselves. Nothing about us is inherently death-proof. Our immortality is conditional on God who gives it.

Despite this grim and humbling reality, humans seemingly have always tried to discover or to obtain immortality apart from God. The Egyptians embalmed their dead and Hindus taught reincarnation. Greek philosophers theorized that every human possesses a mortal body but also an immortal or deathless "soul," which has always existed and will never cease to be. During the second and third centuries after Jesus, certain converted Greek philosophers brought a form of this pagan notion into the church.



Based on this premise that the human "soul" cannot die but will live somewhere forever, these church fathers concluded that the wicked will suffer everlasting conscious torment. This teaching, which makes God the supreme torturer of the universe, overlooks the fact that whenever Scripture ascribes immortality or incorruptibility to humans it always refers:

- to the saved, never to the lost;
- to the body, never to a disembodied soul or spirit;
- to the Resurrection state, never to the present order

(Rom. 2:7; 1 Cor. 9:25; 15:52, 53, 54; 2 Tim. 1:10; 1 Pet. 1:4).

(Continued on Page 15)

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# From Off Of The Shelf

## **A Summary And Review Of "What About The Soul? Neuroscience and Christian Anthropology" Edited By Joel B. Green.**

Modern neurological research is challenging the traditional concept of a "soul" or a "spirit" separable and distinct from the body and/or the mind. In light of these discoveries, this book explores such fundamental questions as, Who am I? What am I doing here? Why do I do what I do? What does it mean to be saved? How am I responsible for my behaviour? What is the meaning of resurrection? and What happens when I die?

### **Mind Reading, Soul Searching And A Neurobiological Portrait**

Turning first to science, after an introduction by Joel Green, Malcolm Jeeves looks at how modern neuroscience has impacted upon our understanding of what it means to be human (chapter 2). Over the last three centuries, at least among philosophers, talk of the "soul" has changed to talk of the "mind". The last 100 years has forged an ever tightening link between "brain" and "mind". Aspects of personality, once seen as attributes of the "soul", are found to be closely related to the activity of the brain. Jeeves concludes: "The take-home message is that any view of human nature that fails to recognise the psychosomatic unity of the person is a view that cannot be defended from science." (p30).

D. Gareth Jones likewise takes a scientific approach (Chapter 3). He looks at neural plasticity (our brains are changing), and behavioural genetics and concludes that while there are biological and physical limits to human capacities, the environment and moral choices play the larger part in shaping who we are and who we will be as persons. Jones concludes that the "neurobiological portrait" of the human person "is entirely consistent with Christian emphases on the wholeness and coherence of the person." (p46).

## **The Soul: Possession, Part or Person (What Is A Human Being?)**

Lawson G. Stone (Chapter 4) turns to the Scriptures to answer the question, what of the soul? The opening chapters of Genesis provide a wealth of information from which we derive a biblical doctrine of humanity. The pivotal text is Genesis 2:7. "Adam" (not just his body) was formed "of the dust." God breathed into his nostrils "the breath of life". As a result Adam became "a living soul". Adam does not have a soul. He is a living soul.

Adam has much in common with the animals. They are of the earth (Gen. 1:24). They have the breath of life (Gen. 6:17; 7:15,22). They are living souls (Gen. 1:21, 24, 30). Stone concludes: "No exegetical justification exists for finding here the notion of abstract, immortal, disembodied personhood that we usually mean when we speak of the "soul" (p59).

This does not reduce humanity to the level of brute beast. It does, however, recognise that physicality is a vital element to human existence. It is wrong to distinguish the "physical" from the "spiritual". The fate of all creation hinges on human destiny; a truly human person is a social person; humanity stands responsible to obey God's word and is called to be his "image" before creation, but none of this requires an "immortal soul" or "substance dualism". Neuroscience then, far from undermining Christian belief, encourages a closer reading of the text and supports the biblical view of human personhood.

Patrick D. Miller also seeks to answer biblically the question, What is a human being? (Chapter 5). Looking at Psalms 8 and 144, at Job, and at Jesus in Hebrews 2, Miller concludes, "What therefore is to be said about the human cannot be confined to general statements about humanity apart from God. It cannot be said apart from the discovery that in Jesus Christ we see who we are and we also see God for us." (p 73). Bill Arnold (Chapter 6) admits that a cursory reading of 1 Samuel 28 may suggest that

Samuel's disembodied "soul" was present at Endor. If so this would undermine the view of humanity presented throughout this book. Arnold notes, however, that many ancient authorities assumed that the figure at Endor was not Samuel at all, but a demonic apparition. Others indeed argued that Samuel was really present. Among this latter group some saw in this text evidence of the survival of the "soul", others said Samuel was in fact resurrected by God. Thus nothing in this (or in any other) passage contradicts the "monist anthropology" derived from modern neuroscience.

### The Resurrection of The Body

Are Scripture and the new science compatible as regards the hope of a life to come?

Green (Chapter 7) begins by asking, what might the resurrection of the body entail? And if I have no immortal soul, how might the continuity of my personal identity from death to life after death be guaranteed?

In answer to these questions Green summarises the teaching on resurrection found in Israel's Scriptures - in Hosea 6:1-3, Ezekiel 37:1-14, Isaiah 26:19 and Dan. 12:1-3. The resurrection signals the end time restoration of Israel and her victory over her enemies. It is the time of reward and punishment. It embraces a view of the person as a psychosomatic whole and rejects any notion of salvation as an "immortal soul" being liberated from a mortal body.

The post-resurrection appearance of Jesus, in Luke 24:36-39, confirms that Jesus was no immaterial ghost. And in 1Corinthians 15 Paul is explicit concerning the need for a body suited for life-after-death.

From the interface of neuroscience and theology, Green draws a number of conclusions regarding resurrection and personal identity. It is problematic, he says, to speak of human identity in purely physical terms. Throughout our lives our bodies are in

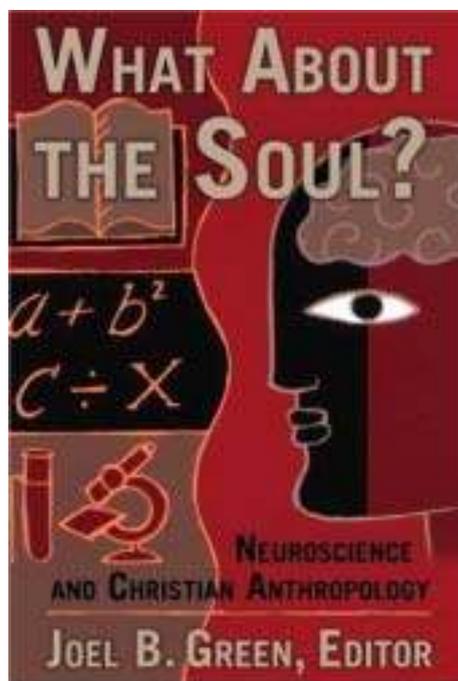
a state of flux. Our identity consists not only in our physicality alone but also in a network of relationships and in our "story". Death is not only the end of one's body, it is the severing of relationships and the end of one's story. No aspect of our personhood survives death. Resurrection then is a work of God by which, not only are we reembodyed, but relationships are re-established and our stories continued. This introduces a corporate aspect into our understanding of resurrection. In an excursus, in answer to the question, where was Jesus between Friday afternoon and dawn on Sunday Green suggests that he was "with God." This seemingly non-conditionalist conclusion needs to be seen in the light of the discussion of time and eternity in Chapter 9.

### Emergent Dualism, Time and Eternity

William Hasker (Chapter 8) and Charles E. Gutenson (Chapter 9) are of a philosophical bent. Hasker argues for an "emergent dualism" by which he means that the mental individual, like a field of consciousness, is generated or emerges from the organism and is sustained by it. It is not (as in traditional dualism) that some other thing has been "added to" the organism from outside. This philosophical "emergent dualism" lends

itself to a doctrine of human mortality exactly as we find in Scripture.

Any discussion of an intermediate state between death and resurrection presupposes a particular view of the nature of time and eternity. Gutenson (Chapter 9) outlines three such views. The "common sense" view supposes God to inhabit time as we do, though he "knows" past, present and future. The Augustinian view supposes God to inhabit a realm outside of time from where he observes all of time as a whole. Gutenson argues for a third option, called the "eternalist position", which has God actually inhabit all time at once. God's experience of time differs from ours. To God the General Resurrection is



(Continued on Page 18)

(Continued from Page 7)

not the reunion of immortal soul with reassembled body, but the new creation of a new self, my self, our selves. In his most sustained attempt to explain the resurrection, in 1 Corinthians 15, Paul turns first to this, then to another analogy, but in the end his question remains, "How are the dead raised?" The best that we can do is to affirm what Paul affirms. This is that life in the eschaton is embodied life, marked by both continuity and discontinuity with life in this world.

**(4) Scripture recognizes the narrative character of human identity.**

Generally, we in the West in the early 21st century are accustomed to notions of personhood that place a premium on self-actualization and self-legislation. As Jürgen Moltmann helpfully summarizes, our view of the human person is "dominated by the will to give the conscious mind power over the instrument of the body." We must recognize that this emphasis stands in stark contrast to concerns with embodiment, relationship, and narrative so at home in the world of Israel's Scriptures. The Israelite has a sense of self above all in relation to the people of God, and this in relation to the covenant and promises of the God of Israel. Personal identity is

found in the historical narrative within which people live, in relation to the divine vocation given that people. The same is true in New Testament texts—for example, in Paul's work to incorporate Gentiles at Corinth into the story of Israel, as if that story were indeed their own (e.g., 1 Cor 10:1-13).

Studies in neurobiology have urged that human identity is grounded in consistency of memory; importantly, then decisions,



relationships, and experience over time are constructive of personal identity. Indeed, it is increasingly clear that meaning-making is central to our day-to-day experience, and that we will go to great lengths to construct stories that provide a context for understanding and interpreting what we perceive to be true. We typically explain our behaviors through the historical narratives by which we collaborate to create a sense of ourselves

as persons and as a people. Memory, then, is not passive retrieval of information, but active reconstruction, through which we seek coherence. Our sense of who we are is intricately woven into and out of our long-term memories, which, then, are the prerequisite for sense of identity. "She isn't herself," we say of persons suffering the tragedy of Alzheimer's Disease.

Because we are social beings, the stories we tell about ourselves, through which we construct our sense of self, are woven out of the threads and into the cloth of the stories present to us in our social world and communal traditions. For this reason, it is crucial to inquire, What story is shaping the worlds we indwell, what story are we embodying? The role of the church in embodying and broadcasting the grand narrative of Scripture could hardly be emphasized more profoundly.

One entry point into this way of thinking is Luke's presentation of the resurrection of Jesus—or, rather, of how we can be sure that the Jesus who appears to his disciples in Luke 24 is the same Jesus who was crucified in Luke 23. "It is really me!" Jesus says (Luke 24:39), as he shows them his hands and feet, and eats in their presence. As Luke presents it, however, Jesus' identity is not grounded simply in his

existence as a human being, but in terms of his relationship to God, his vocation within the purpose of God, and his place within the community of God's people—past, present, and future. This point comes into focus in Luke 24:44, where we read Jesus' words, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled." In his career we find Jesus embracing the whole of God's work as the story where he finds his life, from creation to exodus to exile and, now, New Exodus, as God's purpose working itself out in the world. Jesus' identity is lodged profoundly in the grand story of God—which, then, can only be grasped in reference to his crucifixion and resurrection.

## Conclusion

How we think about humanity actually makes a difference! Biblical perspectives underscore how wrapped up our lives are with the whole of creation, how we were made for relationship, the importance of embodied personhood, and how grounded our sense of self and identity is tied into the story of our lives in community. These emphases point us in a number of important directions. We need a full-bodied approach to salvation and mission. We need more emphasis on telling and learning the story of God and his people.

Joel Green.



*Joel B. Green, PhD, is Vice President of Academic Affairs and Provost Professor of New Testament Interpretation at Asbury Theological Seminary, Wilmore, Kentucky, USA. We were privileged to have Joel and his wife Pam tour New Zealand last year, on behalf of our Association, speaking to issues such as those raised in this article.*

*The meetings were well attended .Tuesday night at Massey University was perhaps the most well attended of the Auckland meetings. Some folk came back after hearing Joel speak on Sunday night at Remuera Baptist. They brought friends with them which is the best recommendation! As well as challenging our people, Joel's visit got some of the "brain boxes" of the New Zealand theological community thinking about Conditional Immortality. For that, as well as his kind provision of the foregoing article, we are grateful .*

David Burge  
(Editor)

(Continued from Page 10)

The traditional doctrine of hell also ignores the regular affirmation of Scripture from first to last that God is his creatures' only source of existence, and that those who finally refuse God's grace and gift of life will "die," "perish" and be "destroyed" (Gen. 3:4; Ezek. 18:4; Mal. 4:1-3; Matt. 10:28; 2 Thes. 1:9; Rev. 21:8).

In the end, the phrase "conditional immortality" is nothing but a shorthand way of saying that God is God and we are not; that "the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 6:23); and that "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

Edward Fudge

*The above article originally appeared as part of Edward's daily (Monday to Friday) ministry of "gracEmail" and is used with Edward's generous permission. You may visit Edward's website at [www.edwardfudge.com](http://www.edwardfudge.com) to sign up to receive "gracEmail" or to order his very fine book, THE FIRE THAT CONSUMES direct from the publisher.*

*We also stock TWO VIEWS OF HELL: A BIBLICAL THEOLOGICAL DIALOGUE by Edward Fudge and Robert A. Peterson which was the book that prompted the above letter and its response.*

David Burge.

# Faith of Our Fathers

## A Reformation Crisis Concerning the Soul: Immortal or Mortal? By William Kilgore (Part One)

Central among the theological crises of the Protestant Reformation were the doctrines of the authority of scripture and justification by faith alone. Nevertheless, there were several less visible theological crises during the same period that were possibly obscured by the priority of the more central doctrines. One such crisis involved the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. Today the vast majority of Protestants, the world over, hold to the doctrine of the immortality of the soul and with it the notion that a person goes to heaven or hell when he or she dies. It was not always so!

### John Wyclif (1325-1384)



When hints of reformation began appearing in the centuries before Luther, men began to challenge established Catholic doctrines. Foremost among the precursors to Luther's reformation was John Wyclif (1325-1384), whom some claim denied the

Catholic doctrine of the immortality of the soul. Apparently, widespread dissent on this issue moved Pope Leo X (Pope from 1513 to 1521) to issue a statement in the eighth session of the Fifth Lateran Council, on December 19, 1513 condemning all who would deny that the soul is immortal: "Since in our days (and we painfully bring this up) the sower of cockle, ancient enemy of the human race, has dared to disseminate and advance in the field of the Lord a number of pernicious errors, always rejected by the faithful, especially concerning the nature of

the rational soul, namely, that it is mortal ... with the approval of this holy Council, we condemn and reject all who assert that the intellectual soul is mortal ... we decree that all who adhere to errors of this kind are to be shunned and to be punished as detestable and abominable infidels who disseminate most damnable heresies and who weaken the Catholic faith." (!)

### Martin Luther (1483-1546)

Luther stood on the shoulders of these condemned precursors and started a revolution in 1517

when he nailed his 95 Theses to the church door at Wittenberg. Seemingly unwittingly, Luther had initiated a reformation that would affect many spheres,



including the ideological. What became known as the Protestant Reformation created an environment where Catholic ecclesiastical authority had been cast off and Catholic orthodoxy challenged in many important areas. Like some of his predecessors, Luther initially denied the immortality of the soul. Commenting in 1520, Luther referred to the immortality of the soul, along with other doctrines asserted by the Pope, as simply another "endless monstrosity" on "the Roman dunghill of decretals." This was in direct reaction to the pronouncements of the Fifth Lateran Council concerning the soul. As late as 1542, Luther was still speaking of death as a "sleep" and emphasizing the bodily resurrection in his funeral instructions: "St. Paul writes to those at Thessalonica [1 Thess. 4:13], that they should not sorrow over the dead as the others who have no hope, but that they should comfort themselves with God's Word, as those who possess sure hope of eternal life and that those who have no hope grieve; nor can they

be blamed for this. Since they are beyond the pale of the faith in Christ they either must cherish this temporal life alone and love it and be unwilling to lose it, or store up for themselves, after this life, eternal death and the wrath of God in hell, and go there unwillingly. But we Christians, who have been redeemed from all this through the precious blood of God's Son, should train and accustom ourselves in faith to despise death and regard it as a deep, strong, sweet sleep; to consider the coffin as nothing other than a soft couch of ease or rest." (2)

It would certainly seem that the immortality of the soul had earned its place on the list of discarded Catholic doctrines like meritorious works in salvation, the cult of the saints, a special priesthood, and purgatory.

### **William Tyndale (c. 1494-1536)**

About the time that Luther was active in Germany, William Tyndale (c. 1494-1536) was denying the immortality of the soul in England. As with Luther, the initial motivation underlying this denial seemed to be the various Roman-Catholic doctrines hinging upon a continued existence after death: prayers to



saints, purgatory, and indulgences. Tyndale addressed the subject in two disputes with two different men. In 1534, Tyndale was involved in a dispute with George Joye, one of his earlier assistants in translating the New Testament. Joye had apparently taken

it upon himself to publish Tyndale's New Testament with certain significant changes, one of which was to change the word "resurrection" in over twenty instances to a reference to a disembodied afterlife. This change was directly connected to ongoing personal discussions between Joye and Tyndale concerning the soul. Thus, incidentally, Tyndale briefly defended the doctrine of the resurrection over against the immortality of the soul in response to Joye's self-publication of his work.

A second, and more significant, dispute was with Sir Thomas More and resulted in Tyndale's *An Answer Unto Sir Thomas*

*Mores Dialoge* [sic], published in 1531. In this detailed response to his ideological foe, Tyndale clearly stated his position on the soul: "... all souls lie and sleep till Dooms Day... And you in putting them in heaven, hell, and purgatory, destroy the arguments wherewith Christ and Paul prove the resurrection. What God does with them that shall we know when we come to them. The true faith puts forth the resurrection which we are warned to look for every hour. The heathen philosophers denying that did put forth that the souls [of the departed] did ever live. And the pope joins the spiritual doctrine of Christ and the fleshly doctrine of philosophers together, things so contrary that they cannot agree ... if the souls be in heaven tell me why they be not in as good a case as the angels be? And then what cause [need] is there of the resurrection?" (3) It is quite probable that Tyndale actually spent some time with Luther in 1525, as some of his contemporaries recorded and testified on more than one occasion. Tyndale was also charged with "spreading the heresy of Lutheranism." Is it possible that Luther and Tyndale communicated regarding the immortality of the soul? While the details of their conversations are unavailable, it is certainly possible that such may have been the case.

*William Kilgore*

**(To be continued in the next issue).**

### **Footnotes**

(1) Fifth Lateran Council, EWTN Global Catholic Network, <<http://www.ewtn.com/library/COUNCILS/LATERAN5.HTM>>, accessed 18 Nov. 2004.

(2) Martin Luther, *Works of Martin Luther*, Volume 6 (Philadelphia, 1932), 287-288.

(3) Anne M. O'Donnell & Jared Wicks, ed.s, *An Answer Unto Sir Thomas Mores Dialoge* (Washington, D.C., 2000), 181-182. The editor has taken liberties updating the language.

*William Kilgore is a Charismatic Southern Baptist in Texas. As a longtime advocate of conditional immortality, and a graduate student at the University of Houston, wrote a fuller version of this paper for a Reformation history class (including a lot more footnotes!). He kindly gave his permission to publish this version.*

(Continued from Page 13)

as present as the moment of our death. From God's perspective (and from the perspective of "the dead") there is no intermediate state and hence no difficulty in God preserving one's personal identity through the very real experience of death.

### **Pastoral Care, Mission and Counselling (Without a "Soul")**

Michael A. Rynkiewich (Chapter 10) argues that a "monist" view of persons makes a theology of missions more holistic, more incarnational and more naturalistic. For too long the Great Commission has been reduced to "preaching the gospel" and "saving souls". A wrong-headed dualism has separated evangelism from social justice. Saving souls is saving bodies. Yet, a human person is not just a body, but a body-in-relationship. Conversion is not the saving of individual bodies (much less the saving of "disembodied souls"), it is the establishing of a new relationship with God, his people and the environment around about us - all in Christ.

Both, Virginia T. Holeman (Chapter 11) and Stuart L. Palmer believe that different ideas of personhood affect a pastor's approach to care and counselling. "Reductive materialism" (we are nothing but bodies), "radical dualism" (the real 'you' is the immaterial bit within), and even "holistic dualism" (we are made up of two bits, 'body' and 'soul' which belong together) are to be rejected in favour of some form of "emergent monism" (We are whole persons, including our body, from which emanates what we call 'mind/soul'). Such monism eliminates unhelpful distinctions between body/soul and physical / spiritual. Both authors note that modern neuroscience stresses the importance of the self in relation to others. Holeman quotes studies showing that relationship factors (40%) are much more important in counselling than the theoretic orientation of the counsellor, or the techniques employed (15%). This emphasis on relationship is consistent with all that has already been said regarding the

human person. When we are seeking to bring a person into relationship with God, his people and the world around us - weaving our stories into God's big story - we are putting the "Christian" into counselling.

### **What To Make of It All**

This is not a big-word-free book. Many will struggle to understand the science and philosophy which pervades this book. For those willing to work, the results are worth it. Those of us who hold a conditionalist understanding of the human person will be encouraged to note that this is not another instance of pseudo-Science and Scripture on a collision course, but rather a clear example of the book of Nature and the book of the Bible being read in perfect harmony. This should encourage us in our faith.

The emphasis on relationships and "storytelling" found throughout the book should remind us that we are about more than imparting knowledge and asking people to edit the "immortal soul" out of their personal creed. We are seeking to impart to fellow Christians a holistic, incarnational, naturalistic, vision of our mission as the Church and to bring people into an eternal relationship with God, his people and the creation / new creation around us - again, weaving our stories into God's big story!

*David Burge.*

The Conditional Immortality  
Association has a new PO Box:

**PO Box 75-612  
Manurewa 1702  
Auckland  
New Zealand**

Editor: David Burge  
e: [republishing@slingshot.co.nz](mailto:republishing@slingshot.co.nz)

# Annual Dinner/ Conference

Get out your diary. Make a mark on your calendar. Update your PDA (If you are technologically inclined) ...

Our Annual Dinner and Conference Meeting will be happening a little earlier this year on Saturday, May 6<sup>th</sup>, at the same venue as last year, Barrycourt Conference Centre, 10-20 Gladstone Rd, Parnell.

This year's speaker will be David Burge. His topic will be:

## **"Conditional Immortality: Does It Matter? Should I Care?"**

This is part of a four-part presentation on Conditional Immortality that David is putting together and which will eventually be available as a DVD presentation.

This will be an ideal opportunity to invite people with something of an interest in Conditional Immortality but who doubt the worth of standing up for such an "obscure" doctrine. They will hear something that will challenge them to reassess their understanding of the importance and place of the Scriptural understanding of human life, death and eternity in the overall framework of Bible teaching.

As usual the business sessions will take place before dinner (from 5.00 – 6.30 pm); followed by dinner and then David will speak. The cost of the Dinner (same as last year) is \$25 for wage-earners and \$20 non-waged. RSVP to by Friday April 21.

For those who can't make it to the Dinner but would like to enjoy a time of fellowship and hear our speaker, we are offering a Coffee Only option for \$2.80 per person. If this option suits you we still need to know that you are coming. You still need to RSVP by Friday April 21.

Our Conferences are always a great time of fun, food, and fellowship. If you have not been to Conference before mark this year the first. If you have been before, bring a friend this year. See you there!

*David Burge.*

# *Statement of Faith*

- 1.** We believe in God and His one and only Son, Jesus the Christ. Hebrews 11:6; John 14:1; 3:16; 20:31; Matthew 16:16.
- 2.** We believe in the Holy Spirit. 2 Peter 1:21; 1 Corinthians 6:19; Jude 20; Ephesians 3:5.
- 3.** We believe that Jesus died for us and gave himself a ransom for all. Romans 5:8; 1 Corinthians 15:3; 1 Timothy 2:6.
- 4.** We believe that God raised Jesus from the dead; that by resurrection He became Lord of both the dead and the living, and the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep; and that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. Romans 10:9; 14:9; 1 Corinthians 15:20; John 3:16.
- 5.** We believe that baptism is commanded by Christ, was practised by His Apostles, and is taught in the New Testament. Matthew 28:18,19; Acts 8:12,38.
- 6.** We believe that all Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the people of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. 2 Timothy 3:16,17.
- 7.** We believe that human beings are by nature mortal. Genesis 2:7; 3:19; 1 Timothy 6:16; 2 Timothy 1:10; Romans 2:6-7.
- 8.** We believe that human beings in death are unconscious. Psalm 6:5; 115:17; Ecclesiastes 9:5,10. This is likened to 'sleep'. Job 14:12; Psalm 13:3; Jeremiah 51:39; Daniel 12:2; John 11:11-14; 1 Corinthians 15:51.
- 9.** We believe that immortality is obtained only through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Corinthians 15:21-23; 2 Timothy 4:7-8; 1 John 5:9-12.
- 10.** We believe that there will be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked, to be followed by the Judgment. Acts 24:15; John 5:25,28,29; Revelation 20:12,13.
- 11.** We believe that evil and evildoers shall be finally destroyed. Psalm 145:20; Matthew 10:28 Romans 6:21; Philippians 3:19; Hebrews 2:14; 1 John 3:8; Revelation 22:3.
- 12.** We believe in the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. Acts 1:11; John 14:3; 1 Thessalonians 4:16.

# Annual Conference / Dinner 2006



Where?

Saturday, May 6<sup>th</sup>

(Beginning at 5:00pm)

Barrycourt Conference Centre,  
10-20 Gladstone Rd, Parnell.

Speaker:

David Burge.

Topic: "Conditional Immortality:

Does It Matter? Should I Care?"

Cost:

\$25 (wage-earners)

\$20 (non-waged).

RSVP:

PO Box 75-612,

Manurewa 1702

By Friday April 21.

(Details on page 19)

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April 21

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