

# from death to life

The official Magazine of the Conditional Immortality Association of New Zealand.

*Issue 13*



Inside:

President's Desk	2
Hell, Emotion, and the Christian Attitude to Others	3
Advent Missions	5
Carey Park	7
Editorial	9

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## "If Christ Be Not Raised"

According to William Barclay the resurrection is absolutely essential to Christian faith because upon it rest four great Christian truths, which if true should revolutionize the way we live.

1. The resurrection proves that *truth is stronger than falsehood*. According to the fourth Gospel Jesus said, "Now you seek to kill me, a man who has told you the truth" (John 8:40). Jesus actually claimed to be the truth. His enemies sought to kill him because they wanted to establish their own "truth". If they had succeeded in destroying him then falsehood would have been stronger than truth. The resurrection is our guarantee that God's truth will triumph over Satan's lies.

2. The resurrection proves that *good is stronger than evil*. Again in John, Jesus said to his enemies, "You are of your father the devil" (John 8:44). Satan is evil. His children share his nature. The resurrection is our guarantee that good will triumph over evil.

3. The resurrection proves that *love*

*is stronger than hatred*. Jesus was the love of God incarnate. God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16). But the world hated him (John 15:18-24). The resurrection is our guarantee that God's love will triumph over the world's hatred of him and his followers

4. The resurrection proves that *life is stronger than death*. If Jesus had died never to rise again, it would have proved that Satan still holds the keys to Death and Hades. But Jesus says, "Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. I am the Living One. I was dead and behold I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of Death and Hades (Rev. 1:18). The resurrection is our guarantee that resurrection life will triumph over death and the grave.

Easter means all this to us and more. The resurrection is not a reversal of the cross, seen as a tragic defeat. It is the stunning climax of a victory that God has won for us. It is the final proof that by the cross God has dealt once and for all with humanity's ultimate problem, sin. The resurrection is our guarantee that God has accepted Christ's payment for sin on our behalf. Praise His name!

David Burge  
President

## → Association Dinner

Guest Speaker: **Rev. Dr David Stewart** ←  
(Principal Emeritus Bible College of New Zealand).

→ Date: Saturday June 19th, 1999.

Venue: Carey Park Camp, Henderson Valley Rd, Auckland

Time: From 3.30 pm to approx. 9 pm.

The business and reports of the Association, including election of officers, will be presented during the first part of the evening.

RSVP by June 11th ←

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# Hell, Emotion and the

## Christian Attitude to Others

By Glen Peoples

I sometimes cringe when I hear a person advocating Conditional Immortality on the grounds that God is too "loving" and "nice" to torture anybody. After all, the Universalist could just as easily say that God is too loving and nice to torture or destroy anybody! No, we must not subject God to our standards of what is acceptable punishment and what is not, after all, "shall not the judge of the earth do what is right?" (Gen. 17:25)

However, while it is true that God is not subject to some higher moral law which dictates how He may treat His creatures, it is also true to say that there are *some things* we know for certain about God. This is true because the Bible *tells us some things* about God. While we cannot impose a higher morality upon God (because there *is* nothing higher), we are quite sensible to ask: "Is this teaching consistent with what *we know for certain about God*?" For instance, if a person were to claim that God tears the limbs off helpless children and eats them, we cannot say: "that can't be true because such behaviour is *wrong*." After all, it is God who decides what is right and what is wrong, not some higher moral law. What we can say however is: "*Based on what we know about God as revealed in Scripture*, I find the idea that he butchers and eats children impossible to be-

lieve, because it is *inconsistent* with the God whose son Jesus said 'let the little children come to me, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.'"

If we approach the question of final punishment this way, while we cannot say "eternal torment cannot be true because it is morally wrong," we *can* say "based on what we know about God as revealed in Scripture, the idea

...Based on what we know about God as revealed in Scripture, ...eternal torment is impossible to believe.

that God will eternally torment His enemies is impossible to believe, because it is inconsistent with His dealings with the unrighteous in the Bible." This statement certainly has merit. After all, throughout history God's most extreme punishments have always involved the quick death and elimination of his enemies, never their torture. He drowned the world in the flood. He destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah with fire. He drowned the Egyptians who pursued the Israelites through the Red Sea. He caused the earth to open up in the desert and swallow all those who were not faithful to Him in the wilder-

ness. He struck Ananias and Sapphira down dead for lying. He killed Herod for accepting praise as a god. God is always portrayed as a just judge, presenting the options of life or death (Deut. 30:19). We can either have eternal life, or we can miss out altogether. There is no third option.

I dare to make a somewhat more emotive point. Is it consistent to believe that the saviour who tells us to love *our* enemies should eternally and horribly torture *His* own enemies? Is God that hypocritical? I am convinced that He is not. It is easy for us to imagine that Satan, if he could, would wish to torture his enemies forever. That is an act which would be entirely consistent with the devil's

nature. Can we really say the same of God? What would we think of a human who had such desires? It would be like Adolph Hitler creating an eternal Sobibor<sup>1</sup>, an act which Adolph himself (I imagine) would not have attempted! How would Christians see a person like that?

It is noteworthy that regrettably, much of what historical orthodoxy has had to say on the fate of the unsaved has not been without its share of self righteousness. Hell is what those "other" people deserve. Often in the tempestuous history of the church it was (understandably) very tempting to

picture hell as what was considered to be the just reward for our *enemies*, or as was often the case, hell was what one's political or theological *opponents* deserved. Consider the words of Isaac Watts, the author of so many beautiful hymns, who felt inspired to write:

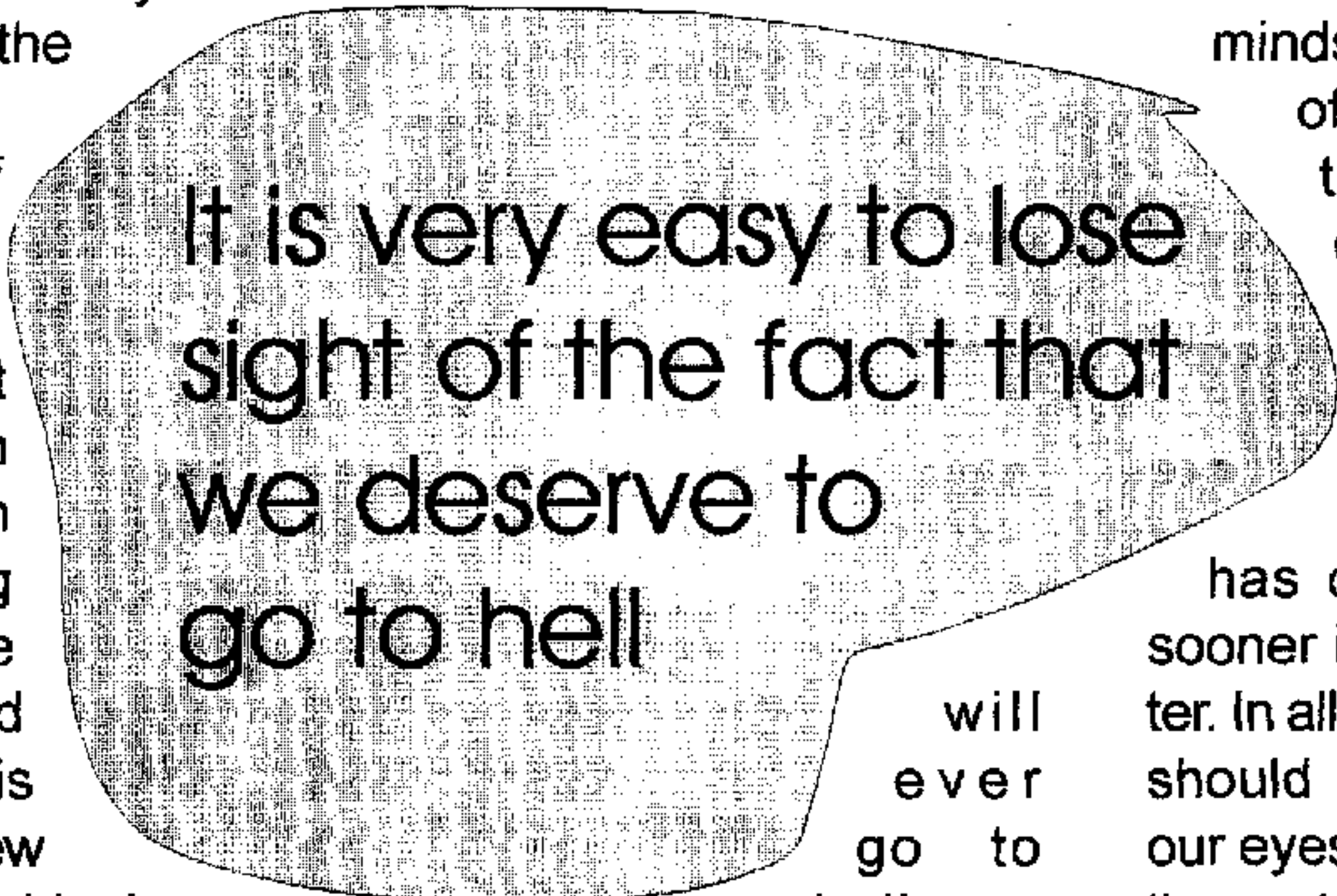
What bliss will fill the ransomed souls, When they in glory dwell, To see the sinner as he rolls, In quenchless flames of hell.<sup>2</sup>

Mr Watts is certainly not alone in his assertion that the saved will gain pleasure from watching the torments of the damned. As far fetched and monstrous as this may be, and although few modern theologians could admit to such a sadism, it is true that:

The later doctrine of hell... is made suspect by much of its history. Vindictiveness and hardheartedness have undoubtedly had some part in the fashioning of it. Had the doctrine been worked out, from the beginning and steadily, in terms of what its proponents felt *themselves* to deserve, it would have to be taken very seriously; but in fact it bears the taint of having been worked out in terms of what its proponents felt to be the deserts of their neighbours, or rather of their enemies. Many,

it is true, have feared hell for themselves, but many also have wished it for others. And except when we begin to reflect on our own merits, our human thinking is never so prone to err as when we begin to reflect on our neighbour's defects.<sup>3</sup>

Since we do not believe that we



It is very easy to lose sight of the fact that we deserve to go to hell

will ever go to hell, we

feel free to toy with the doctrine, to make it sound as gruesome as we like. It is really like spending other people's money - it costs *us* nothing to treat it recklessly, after all, we don't have to pay the price.

It is very easy to lose sight of the fact that **we** deserve to *go to hell* (I use the term here, as it is commonly used today, ie. to refer to final punishment), and in fact if we are found to fall short in the end, we will go to hell. When Jesus issues dire warnings about being destroyed in Gehenna, and when Paul warns his readers about the everlasting destruction which is to come, we should not imagine

that we are being told only what could happen to the sinner next door, but rather we should think of it as what we ourselves deserve, and what can in fact happen to *us* if we do not persevere in the faith. C. S. Lewis offers this sober reminder in his chapter on hell:

One caution, and I have done. In order to rouse modern minds to an understanding of the issues, I ventured to introduce in this chapter a picture of the sort of bad man whom we most easily perceive to be truly bad. But when the picture has done that work, the sooner it is forgotten the better. In all discussions of Hell we should keep steadily before our eyes the possible damnation, not of our enemies nor our friends (since both these disturb the reason) but of ourselves. This chapter is not about your wife or son, nor about Nero or Judas Iscariot; it is about you and me.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Sobibor was a notorious death camp in which countless Jews were tortured and killed.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted by David Ewert in *And Then Comes the End*, p.136.

<sup>3</sup> Baillie, *And the Life Everlasting*, p.241.

<sup>4</sup> C.S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain*, p.116.

Glenn Peoples is a first year Bachelor of Divinity student at B.C.N.Z. He and his wife, Ruth, have one boy, Samuel (aged 1) and they are expecting another child in September.

Don't forget our email address

respub@world-net.co.nz

# Advent Christian Missions New Zealand



## Mission Team To The Indian Sub-Continent

ANOTHER successful work team trip under the auspices of the Advent Christian Missions of New Zealand has been to and returned from India during the Christmas holiday break.

In past years the teams have been made up of those who have attended churches which have been affiliated with the Mission but this year was the first that we have broadened the base to include ap-

plicants from other denominations. This move added another dimension to the make up of the team which proved to be beneficial to all both spiritually and in a relational way also.

December 27 saw families, friends and supporters of the Mission gather at the Jean Batten Terminal to farewell the nine team

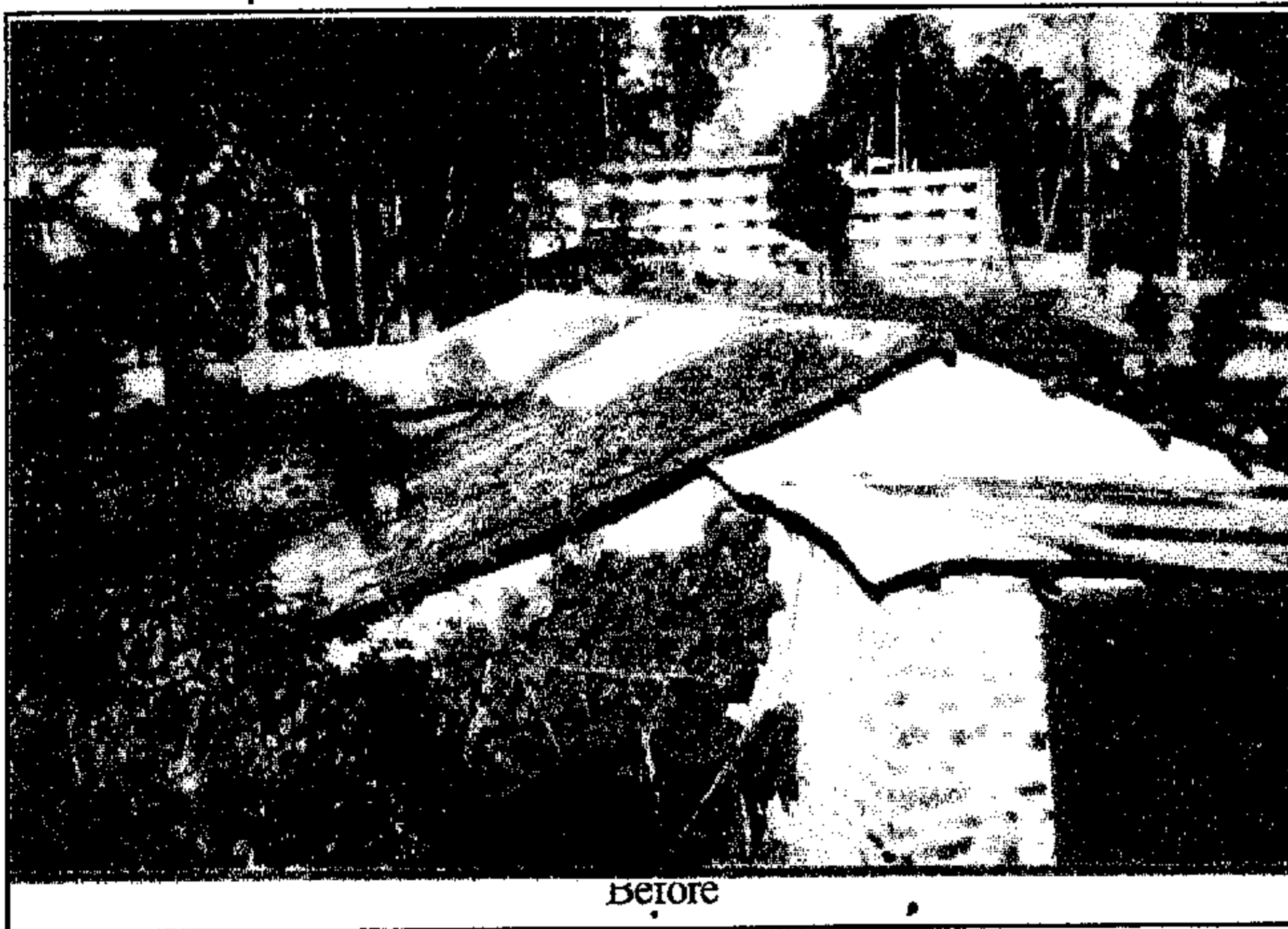
members as they embarked on this three week period of service for the Lord in Kodaikanal, Tamil Nadu, Southern India.

On passing through emigration we immediately saw God's goodness to us as we were all upgraded to Business Class which gave us a really good flight to Kuala Lumpur allowing us to arrive there refreshed and ready for the next stage of our journey and the work ahead.

We finally arrived at Chennai (formerly Madras) shortly after midnight (local time) to make our way through customs and on out to be greeted by Earl and Martha Wright and some of our Indian brethren. Our welcome was assured. The realisation of 'culture shock' hit us, particularly for those of the team who had not travelled to lands of other than western background before. Even in the Arrival Lounge the heat and smells assailed us.

Kodai Road Station and then transferring to our jeep and Maxicab to drive for 2 1/2 hours into the mountains to our destination of Kodaikanal at an elevation of 7000 feet and consequently a more bearable temperature.

As on the previous trip a warm welcome awaited us and for those of the team who had been before there was the joy of seeing familiar faces amongst the people.



Work commenced in earnest and we soon realised that the task was to be bigger than we had envisaged. Yes, the tiles had to come off the roof as well as the iron as we expected, but the new tiles were not of the same type as the old and would require a different structure to support them, similar to our own

'What was ahead?' Outside was another story, more heat and more unusual sights, sounds and smells pervaded our senses. A short trip in two modern "jeeps" brought us to the Chennai base of Earl and Martha, at Guindi and finally a welcome rest at about 2am after nineteen hours of travel.

We spent two days seeing some of the sights in and around Chennai before catching the night train to

method of needing battens, rather than just laying them on the iron as the old tiles had been.

Corrugated iron was cut by "skill saw" and then when that died, by hand. Timber was pit sawn on the property and tiles were also hand cut or cut with the "skilly" after it was fixed.

The work was not without its frustrations - waiting for timber to be sawn, interior walls crumbling as

and during the evening hours of singing, relaxing and getting to know each other more.

Tearful and emotional farewells were made as we climbed aboard our transport to begin our home-ward journey.

Those who have been on previous work teams will appreciate how we felt leaving these dear brothers and sisters in Christ. You cannot help but leave part of your heart behind as you take your leave. There is, however joy in knowing that we will meet again at the appearance of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ and that in some small way we have contributed to the further spreading of the Gospel of Grace in another land, for His glory.

May I suggest to you that if you have not considered before going on such a work team that you prayerfully do so. Your life will be changed. Your out-look on life and what is important will be changed for ever. Before God ask yourself the question "Why shouldn't I?" not "Why Should I?"

Grant Aldridge

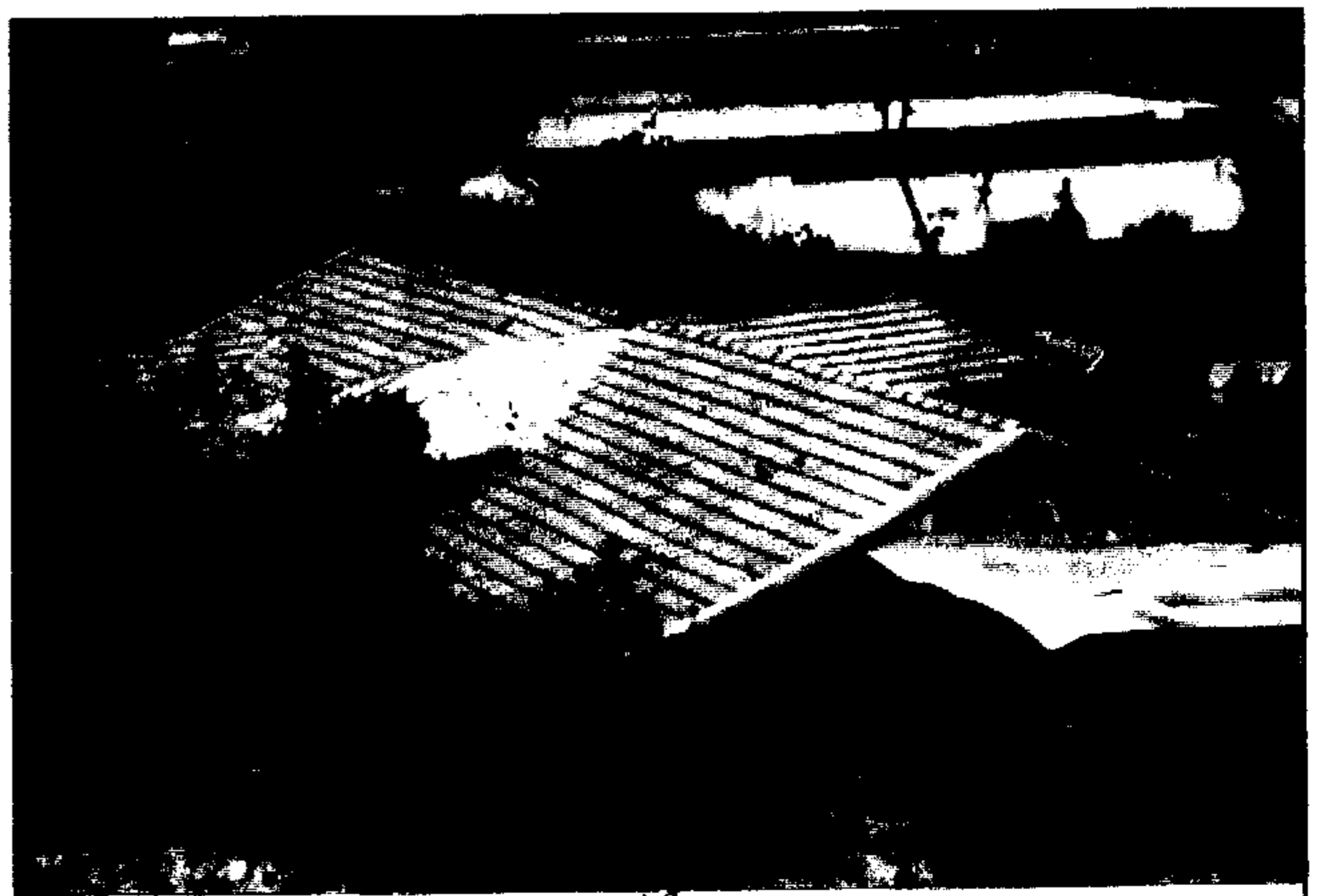


During

we removed the roof, the saw dying, running out of timber to all but complete the task etc, etc, etc, but God was (and is) good. Throughout our time on the job there were only two minor accidents, only one of which required one of the nationals to have treatment and there was no real sickness. God also provided us with fine weather throughout our time there except for a brief spell right at the start. If we had experienced weather such as we had last time the job would have been impossible and the hostel could have been ruined as the walls are constructed of a mud and rock mixture which would have crumbled in the rain.

The satisfaction of seeing the task almost completed before we left was only part of the blessing we received. On New Year's morning at 5.30 am we witnessed eleven people baptized following an all night service of praise and worship. What a testimony to the saving grace of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and then on the last Sunday we were in India we were present at a baptismal service where twenty-nine also followed their Lord, and ours, in this act of obedience and witness. Other times of blessing for us were when

we were able to take part in church services bringing greetings and song to the congregation, taking part in outdoor evangelistic meetings in nearby villages and sharing time with those nationals who so graciously, willingly, and lovingly worked with us and our "magic machines". It was a privilege to work with these students who gave up their holidays to help these strange white people (my words not theirs) - strange in language and skin colour but one in the bond of love in Jesus Christ. We were also collectively and individually blessed as we shared in devotional times



After



# Carey park

CHRISTIAN CAMP

397 HENDERSON VALLEY ROAD, HENDERSON, AUCKLAND PHONE/FAX (09) 8370494

Hi from all of us at Carey Park in "sunny" Henderson Valley, well it has been sunny with occasional rain-or is it the other way round?

That's a pretty good description of what's been going on here this year. Only it's more sun than rain if you understand what I'm saying.

We had our summer camps which were both very successful. The kids camp had around 100 attend and hear the gospel shared by Kim Beale in his usual very effective manner. From 1 cabin came 6 kids who committed their lives to Christ, what a blessing for the leader who is following them all up. Just along the road from camp, McDonalds Travelling Farm yard have set a

property that has horses heaps of animals etc. We took all the kids along and had a great time as the photo's show- quite a feature. The Teen camp was a potpourri

then back to Salisbury Lodge for the next 2 days where among other things we had a Marae day where we went through a lot of cultural activities including a hangi (which we eventually "ate" at 9/30 pm-didn't go so well). They also went on a train ride in the Waitakere's with a Bar-B-Q tea, great ride.



Riding high at Kid's Camp

really, 3 days at an outdoor adventure camp in Puhoi where they did some "extreme" wall climbing and abseiling etc and

We had 2 couples who came to NZ from camp Maranatha an Advent camp in California who shared about their Christian walk Margaret Fuemana ran most of the camp and did a great job.

Our camps just gone were also very good, again with 100 involved both kids and teens. Phil Brown a youth Pastor from Ranui was our speaker and again the gospel was made very clear and again the response was extremely good. 11 kids made a first time ommitment and as best we can judge they were all very real. They have gone on to the follow-up programme and Churches have been contacted so that they are linked in with a Sunday School. Christian camps through out NZ hold these camps



Popular Uncle Colin!?!

8  
every holidays and each time the response to the gospel is the same. So probably somewhere between 500-1000 become Gods dear children each holiday time. Isn't that wonderful. The angels in heaven would have been having a continual time of rejoicing, they must be plum tired out by now. Rejoice with us won't you. The rest of the camp went very well. Our teen camp was very small so we combined it with the kids and that worked fine.

On the Staff front, there has been a bit of change, Justin our assistant cook has gone to finish his catering training, we will miss him. Paul our Teacher went on to a youth Pastoral position, unfortunately his father in law in Hongkong is very sick so Paul and his wife have gone back to be with her family. We have got replacements for them both-God is so good. Sheralyn McSkimming is our new teacher and is doing a fine job in that area plus she was responsible for a lot of the kids camp programming, it's great to have Sheralyn. Sean O'Sullivan is working in the kitchen part-time and also on the grounds/maintenance. He too was involved with our kids camp and was a real asset. Sean, his wife Cherie and their 2 children, Ben & Joel are living in one of the flats.

This has not been a great year financially because for a number of differing reasons, so please would you pray for the Board and Staff as we work through this period of time. We're sure that things will come right.

The programme for the rest of the year in terms of our ministry

camp is looking very good and I include it for your prayer information and also so that you can possibly be involved or maybe even sponsor someone else to come.

**Leadership Camp** - June 28-2nd July - this is aimed not at camp leadership but all those involved in ministry in and through the Church. Top speakers, workshops etc it will be really valuable.

**Soccer Camp** 7-11th July This is an outreach camp but it will also be a time when people with a soccer interest can get professional advise and training.

**Father & Son Camp** August 27~29th it's a couple of years since we held one of these and also the Mother & Daughter camp and we look forward to a couple of really worthwhile camps.

**Mother & Daughter Camp** September 10-12th

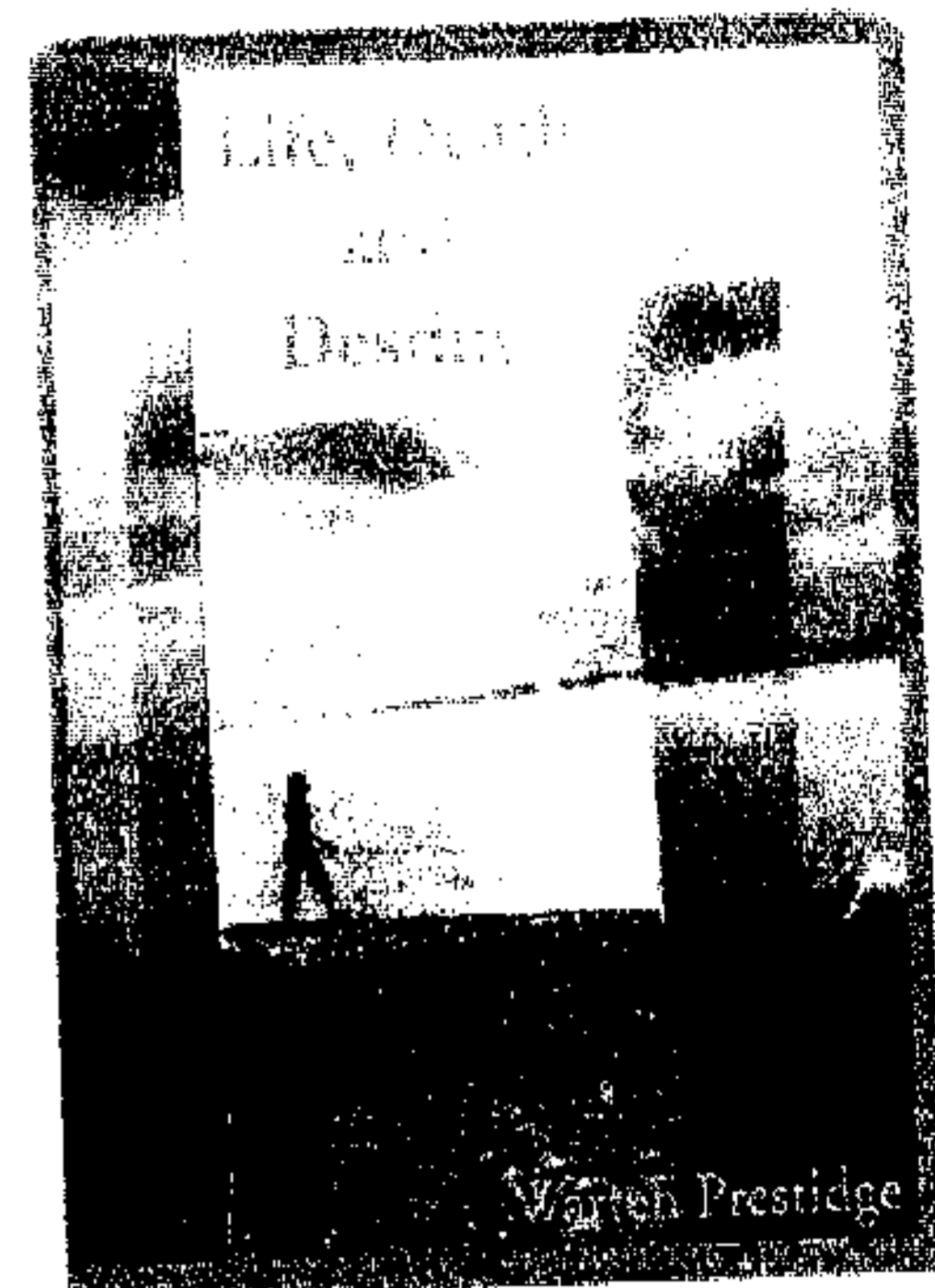
**Kids' Camp** September 20-24th

**Teen Camp** at Ponui Island September 27<sup>th</sup> - October 1st

Also the **Trust Board** have a retreat weekend on July 16-18 which is crucial to the ongoing work at Carey Park They will be continuing to look at the good stewardship of Carey Park to make sure we are heading in the right direction.

Thanks for taking the time to read this, we are grateful for the support and interest shown by so many folk.

Tim Long



Life,  
Death  
and  
Destiny

\$15  
Post free



# Editorial

## Good Motives, False Hopes

My mother died recently. It was not expected. The awful phonecall came at one in the morning. Dad could hardly speak so the ambulance driver took over and told me what I had already guessed from Dad's few words.

Mum didn't know Jesus. For the 25 years since I had made a commitment I had been praying for her, talking to her, waiting for her to open up. It didn't happen. I thought I would get a final chance before she went. I had hoped that as she came face to face with death I would speak again of the one who had died for her. I didn't get the opportunity, it all happened so suddenly.

Many people have spoken to me, offered condolences, sent cards and flowers, offered help, sat and let me talk it through, and put an arm around me. Most people have, wisely, not said anything about what death meant for Mum now. But some have. A few non-Christians have assured me that Mum heard the tribute I paid her at the funeral. One of my brothers, speaking from his own religious beliefs, spoke of the 'qualities of soul' of my mother, indicating that she had moved on into a better place (although he is a reincarnationist?!). I listened but knew that wasn't what the Scriptures taught. Mostly I could just allow these false hopes to slide off my back, I wasn't prepared at that time to discuss or debate the differences. What disturbed me far more was one or two well-meaning Christians.

The first spoke to my wife (I was grateful she hadn't spoken to me

as I'm not sure how I would have reacted). This lady told Sharon that God had given her a vision that Mum (whom she had never met) had made a commitment at the last minute. She'd had visions like this before, with her own father and others. Maybe I'm a skeptic, maybe I'm too cynical, but I knew my mother and I knew she had had no warning, she collapsed and died. If she had been interested in Jesus, if she had ever shown interest in getting to know about him, I might have been persuaded. But Mum had never done that. She was always very interested in what the family was doing, always interested in our involvement (although regularly warning me not to force 'religion' on my children), but only because of her deep love for us. I wish I could believe this other woman, but I can't.

A few days after Mum passed on I was approached by a middle-aged couple at church who haven't been coming all that long but I know, from material they have loaned me, that they are pretty hardline on a number of issues, including eternal torment. We have not spoken to each other on this issue so they had no way of knowing my beliefs. The man offered condolences and then asked whether Mum was a believer. By his reaction I guess he had assumed she was. After a few seconds of stumbling and stuttering he said, "Well she probably made a last minute commitment, many people do you know." I told him, briefly, that my mother had never shown any interest in God and that she had died so suddenly she didn't have time to change her mind, so I couldn't really see how she could have, even if she had wanted to. I could almost hear his

thoughts as he came to his logical conclusion – Mum must now be suffering – the beginning of endless torment. What could he say? There was no hope left. There was no comfort left.

I didn't feel like discussing it then, and I didn't feel like leaving him standing awkwardly in embarrassed silence, so I simply said, "My only comfort is that she is in the hands of a just and loving God." He nodded agreement and we went our separate ways.

As I have reflected on these reactions over the last few days I have asked myself a few questions. Is Conditional Immortality, or more particularly annihilationism, just wishful thinking? Is it just another desperate way of coping with the awful truth about death? These two Christians who had offered comfort offered it from a flimsy sort of hope – maybe Mum had made a commitment. But Conditional Immortality offers true hope – based on Scriptural teaching and the nature of God. The hope that God will do what is right and just. The God who sent his Son to die for us is the one and same (and totally consistent) God who will judge the earth through his Son.

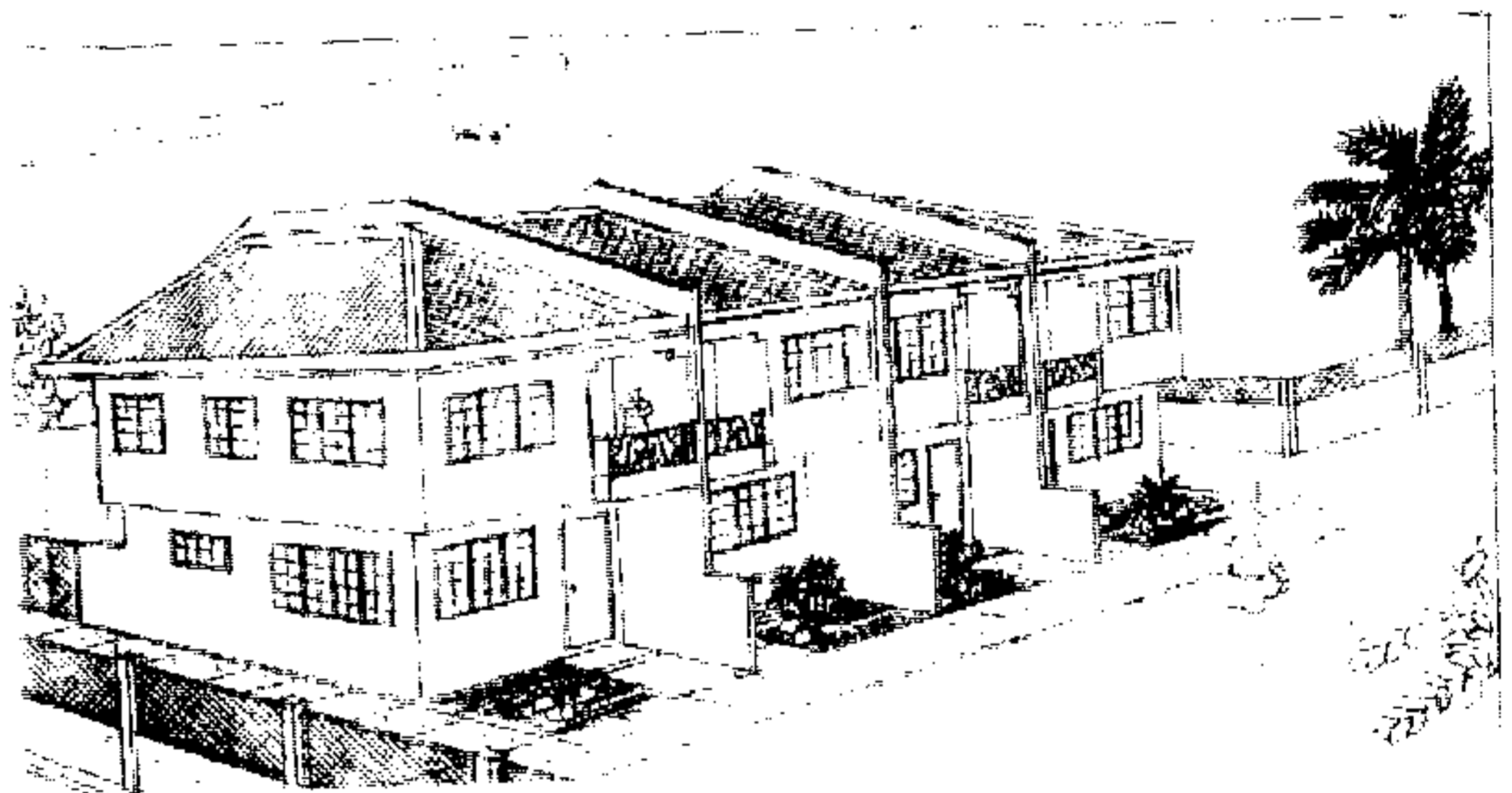
I don't have much hope that Mum will be resurrected to eternal life (although I do wish it were so); but I do have great hope that she is in the hands of a good God who will do what is right. And I trust Him, and in Him I find comfort. I desperately want to see my mother again; annihilation, the end of existence, nothingness, is still an awful thing.

*Carl Josephson*

# WORK TEAM TO ORO BIBLE COLLEGE PHILIPPINES

APPROXIMATE DATES  
December 27 1999 to 18 January  
2000

**THE  
PROJECT:**  
Assist with the  
construction of  
housing for  
**FACULTY**



**PERSONNEL NEEDED:**

- ♦ BUILDERS
- ♦ BRICK/BLOCK LAYERS
- ♦ KIWI HANDYMEN
- ♦ COOKS

.....WHO ARE PREPARED TO  
SERVE THE LORD AND OUR  
FILIPINO BROTHERS  
AND SISTERS.....

*TRAVEL is proving quite difficult to arrange - everyone else wants to travel because of the Millennium! We have reserved some seats, but we need commitments early so that we can be sure we have enough seats! Numbers will probably be limited by this factor!*

## ADVENT CHRISTIAN MISSIONS NEW ZEALAND

CONTACT ERNIE SCHACHE URGENTLY FOR DETAILS  
PHONE 09 627 2124

email: [eschache@acmnz.pl.net](mailto:eschache@acmnz.pl.net)