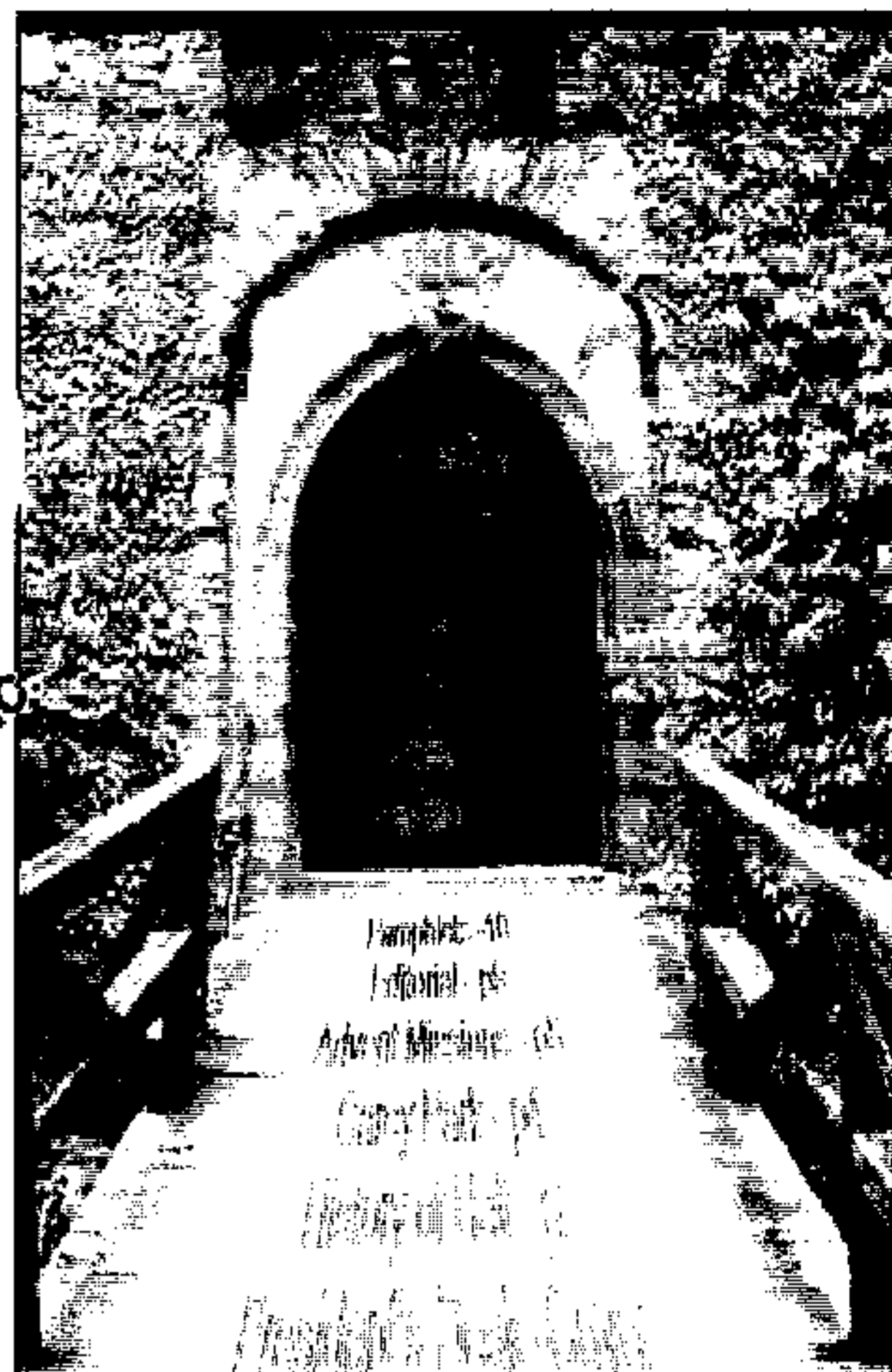


# from DEATH to LIFE

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE CONDITIONAL IMMORTALITY ASSOCIATION (NZ) INC.

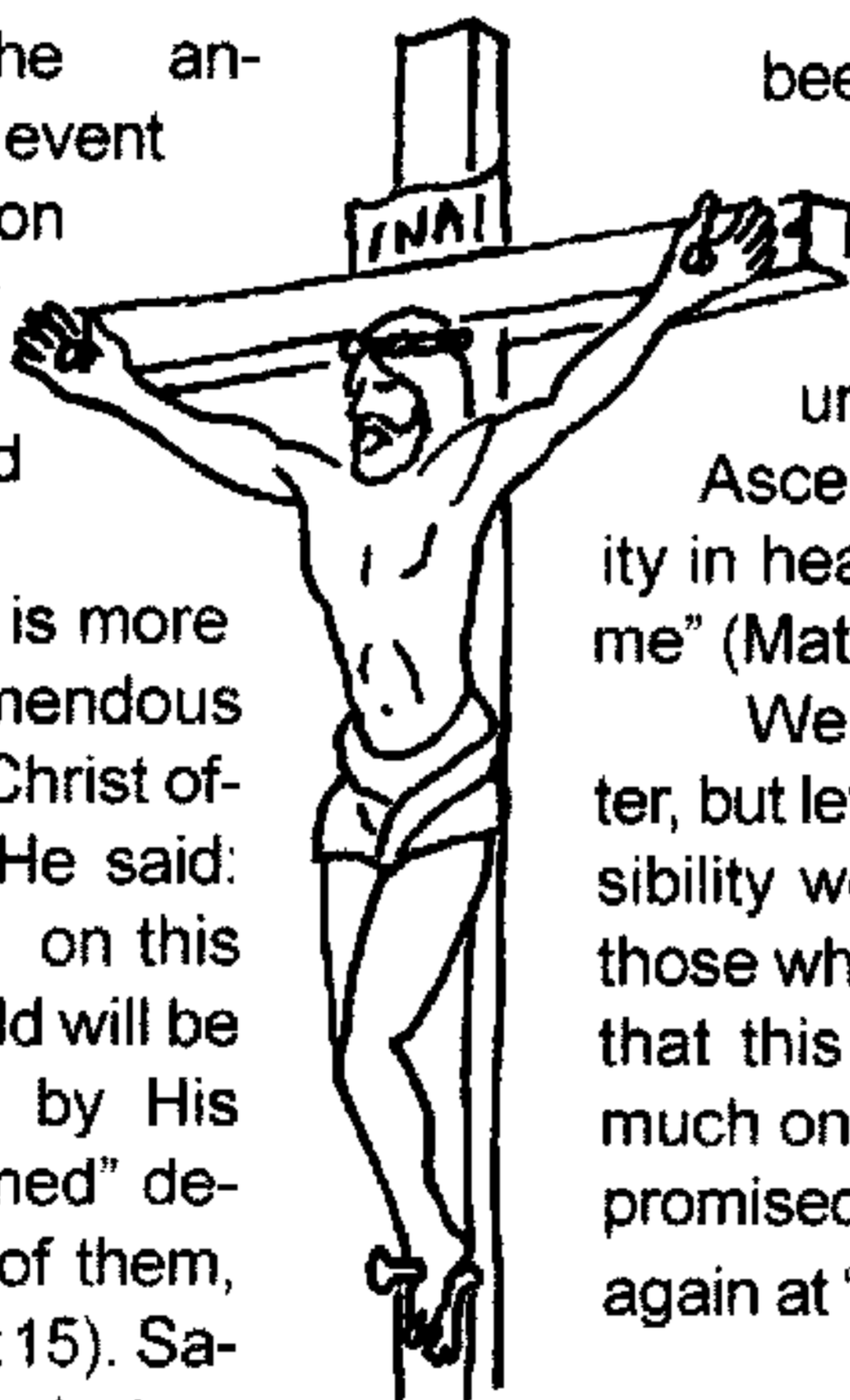
## from the President's Desk

Issue 9



At Easter we celebrate the anniversary of the most significant event of human history so far. Christ on the cross made atonement for our sins and not only for our sins but also for the sins of the whole world (1 Jn. 2:2).

To this atonement there is more than meets the eye. What a tremendous work was wrought! Just before Christ offered Himself up as our sacrifice He said: "Now is the time for judgement on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out" (Jn. 12:31). Christ by His death and resurrection "disarmed" demons, making a public spectacle of them, and triumphing over them (Col. 2:15). Satan, who holds the power of death, has



been rendered powerless (Heb. 2:14, 15). Because of the cross and the resurrection Paul is able to say that "the God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet" (Rom. 16:20). At His Ascension Jesus is able to say, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me" (Matt. 28:18).

We have every reason to celebrate at Easter, but let us not forget the privilege and responsibility we bear to share this good news with those who need to hear it. And let us not forget that this same Jesus who accomplished so much on the cross nearly 2000 years ago has promised to be with us as we go, until he comes again at "the very end of the age" (Matt. 28:20).

Pastor David Burge



Carey park

CHRISTIAN CAMP  
ST HENDERSON VALLEY ROAD HENDERSON AUCKLAND PHONE 740 01 11

# Conference 98

Saturday June 20th, 1998

Carey Park Christian Camp,  
Henderson Valley, Auckland.

Key Note Speakers:

Rev. Don Dickson (Thames Baptist)

Pastor Russell Carle (Takanini Church of Christ)



# The History of Hell:

## Part Two.

by Pastor David Burge.

Turning from pagan philosophy to divine revelation we find a different and contrary 'History of Hell'. Conditional immortality recognises a way out of this dilemma which is both biblically and theologically accurate as well as humane.

In the widely used KJV three Greek words are translated by the one English word 'hell'. These three words are the now familiar Hades, Tartarus, and Gehenna. These three should not, however, be interpreted according to how they were used in pagan Greek Philosophy but in the overall context of Hebrew Scripture.

God made Adam and Eve. He put them in the Garden of Eden - the perfect setting - and gave them everything they needed (Gen. 2:9). Then in Paradise God tested his creation. God offered Adam life on the one hand and death on the other (which he could not have done if Adam were immortal already).

In the midst of the garden stood two trees. The tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of Good and Evil (Gen. 2:9). "And God said, "You must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die" (Gen. 2:17). Adam, Eve and all their descendants could have lived forever in Paradise, by eating of the fruit of the Tree of Life. At this time there was no death in the world. That was how God intended it to be. But Adam and Eve disobeyed God. Satan told the woman, "You shall not surely die" (Gen. 3:4) and Adam and Eve, believing the serpent's lie, ate from the forbidden tree.

They became sinners. They were not immortal. The idea that they should live forever as sinners was so terrible God would not even talk about it: "Behold the man has now become like one of us, to know good and evil. And now lest he put forth his hand and take also from the tree of life and live forever ...". God did not finish the sentence so solemn and awful the prospect.

The announced penalty for sin was death. The exact nature of that

death sentence was defined by God Himself - to insure that sinners would not eat from the tree of life and live forever God banished Adam and Eve from the Garden and put an angel with a flaming sword there to guard the way to the tree of life (Gen. 3:22-24). Without access to the tree of life God's word over Adam came to pass, as it has over the whole human race since. "By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you shall return" (Gen. 3:19).

God's judgment was at once both just and an act of mercy. Having rebelled against our Maker and King it is only just that he should punish us.

**God's judgment was at once both just and an act of mercy**

That is why there has to be a judgment (Heb. 9:27). But if by our rebellion against God we make ourselves miserable through sin then the most merciful thing God can do is to let us die. Then even in our stubborn, sinful rebellion we are unable to bring any further misery upon ourselves or others by our wrong ways. We are unable to prevent others from enjoying God's good and perfect plan for them.

That is why "the soul that sins shall die" (Eze. 18:4). The wicked are to be "destroyed" (Ps. 37:38, 73:15, 145:20) and "perish" (Ps. 37:20, 49:20, Job 20:7); to "be consumed" (Ps 37:20, 59:13, 104:35) and be "no more" (Ps 104:35, 10:25) Some allege the OT is silent about the fate of the wicked. As Edward Fudge has said: "the OT is not silent concerning the end of the wicked. It appears silent to the traditionalist only because it said

nothing he expected to find. It is silent about unending conscious torture. But it speaks volumes concerning the penalty first threatened in the Garden of Eden: Those who sin will "surely die" (Gen. 3:3, Ez. 18:4)". And it is against this background that we must interpret the Bible's teaching on hell.

Let's look again at those three key words: Hades is used in the NT and LXX (the translation of the OT into Greek used by Jesus and the Apostles) as the equivalent of the Hebrew word, "Sheol", meaning grave or pit (Act. 2:27, Ps 16:10).

Of 65 occurrences of "sheol" in the OT, all but 8 are in poetic parallel to words like "death", the pit" or the "sepulchre". Sheol is characterised by darkness and silence (31:7). There is no wisdom, work or praise in sheol (Ps. 115:17 Ecc. 9:6, 10). All the dead go there without distinction, the wicked and the righteous alike, (Gen. 37:35, 42:38 44:29), their only hope being resurrection. Passages speaking of activity in sheol (Is. 14, Eze. 31 and 32) are clearly figurative. Sheol is the grave or poetically "the world of the grave". There is no torment in the grave. That is why *The Interpreters Dictionary of the Bible* can say, "Nowhere in the Old Testament is the abode of the dead regarded as a place of punishment or torment".

Ten of the eleven uses of Hades in the NT clearly refer to the grave. Thus we find Jesus Christ himself went to "hell" when he died. Peter, in his inspired sermon on the Day of Pentecost, said, "Seeing what was ahead, he [David] spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to hades nor did his body see decay" (Acts 2:31). Jesus was in "hell" for three days and three nights (Matt 12:40) after his crucifixion. The "hell" where Jesus went was simply the grave (and so it is translated in the NIV). Unless we live until Jesus comes again we will all go to this same "hell".

The only other place in the NT where hades is used is Lk. 16:23. This verse alone, contrary to the rest of Scripture, portrays Hades as a place of torment. This parable is not however a literal description of post mortem affairs. To take it literally

involves one in a host of contradictions. No! The biblical Hades is a hole in the ground, and has nothing to do with fire.

When the AV was done the English understood "hell" could mean a grave, a pit, or a hole in the ground. They commonly spoke of burying potatoes in hell for the winter!

The second "hell" of the Bible is Tartarus. Tartarus is mentioned only once in Scripture - in 2 Peter 2:4: "...God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to [Tartarus] and delivered them into chains of darkness to be reserved unto judgment...". Tartarus then is a "hell" that applies only to evil and rebellious angels imprisoned until the Day of Judgment (Jude 6, 1 Cor 6:3) in much the same way as the Tartarus of Homer was used by Zeus to confine the Titans. These are the spirits in prison to whom Christ went and proclaimed his victory after his resurrection (1 Pet 3:17-22). Nowhere in the Bible is there any mention of humans being cast into this particular "hell".

The third "hell" of the Bible is gehenna. The word gehenna comes from the Hebrew *ge hinnom*, meaning "valley of Hinnom" (Neh. 11:30), also called "the valley of the son(s) of Hinnom" (2 Ki. 23:10, Jer. 7:31). The word *hinnom* is of uncertain meaning - it may be a family name - or it may be derived from the verb "to sleep" or "to wail", both in relation to death.

The valley of Hinnom is a deep narrow ravine just south and south west of Jerusalem. Gehenna - the valley of Hinnom - is today, by all accounts, a relatively pleasant place of grass and flowers with plenty of trees to provide shade from the scorching sun. A far cry from the hell of Dante or from what this valley was like in OT days.

The OT Valley of Hinnom was a place of abominable pagan rites. Here during the reigns of apostate kings Ahaz and Manasseh human sacrifices were offered to the heathen god Molech (2 Chr. 28:3, 33:6). Good king Josiah as part of his reforms "defiled" the valley, part of which was known as Topheth (Literally "fireplace"), to prevent the continuation of such sacrifices (2 Ki 23:10). The practice continued however, therefore Jeremiah said the name of the valley would be changed to the "Valley of Slaughter" because the Lord would

judge Judah for her sin and the number of the dead be so great they would be thrown into the valley to lie there without burial (7:30-34, 19:6).

Isaiah foresaw his enemy the Assyrians would be destroyed with fire in that valley (Is. 33:29-33). He also foresaw a climactic end time slaughter of all the wicked, in full view of the righteous in this same valley (Is. 66:24). Here, the "undying worm" and "unquenchable fire" consume the "dead bodies" of the wicked not their undying souls. Of the wicked what is said to be "everlasting" is their shame and contempt (Dan 12:2). Ultimately they will be "ashes under the feet of the righteous" (Mal 4:1-6)

Joel (perhaps making a pun on the name of "The valley of the cheesemakers, the Tyropoeon Valley which splits the city), called it the "Val-

**Nowhere in the Old Testament is the abode of the dead regarded as a place of punishment or torment**

ley of Decision" (from the verb "to cut" [as in cheese] or "to decide"). It was here that the nations will be judged in days to come (Joel 3:2, 12, 14).

Between the Testaments, in the second century BC, the Maccabees chose this valley as the place to burn the corpses of their enemies. Later, according to tradition the valley became the city dump of Jerusalem - a repository for sewage, refuse and animal carcasses. The bodies of despised criminals were also burned there. The fires are said to have burned continuously in order to consume the fowl and corrupt objects thrown into it.

Gehenna was thus a place of destruction and death - not a place of living torture. Jesus was talking to Jews who understood all about this gehenna or valley of Hinnom as a place of complete and utter destruction by fire. The language of Jesus should be interpreted in light of this. Trees with bad fruit (Mt. 7:19), "unfruit-

ful vines" (Jn. 15:6) and "useless weeds" (Mt. 13:40) are literally 3 burned up. The "weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Mt. 8:12, 13:41) will come to an end when both body and soul are destroyed (Mat 5:29, 10:28) by the unquenchable fire" and "undying worm" (Mark 9:48 Is 34:8-15, 66:24) Does an "unquenchable fire" and an "undying worm mean the wicked will be burning for ever and never burn up? No! Take a piece of paper. Light it with a match. Don't put the fire out - that's what "quench" means. Very soon the paper will burn up. Now put it down on the floor and step on it. It will be ashes under the sole of your feet - precisely as Malachi says the wicked shall be: "Surely the day is coming; it will burn like a furnace. All the arrogant and every evil doer will be stubble, and that day that is coming will set them on fire," says the Lord Almighty" (4:1) and "the wicked will be ashes under the soles of your feet" (4:3).

Jesus is not teaching the immortality of worms. The phrase simply means that neither the worms nor the fire will cease until they have finished their grisly work.

We must use Scripture to interpret Scripture. In Jer. 17:27, God warned the Jews that Jerusalem would be burned and the fire would not be quenched. In Jer. 52:13 we read the account of the burning of Jerusalem. That fire was not quenched. It is not still burning.

God condemned Sodom and Gomorrah "by burning them to ashes". They are "an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly" (2 Pet. 2:6, Jude 7). The fire brings about their "eternal destruction" (2 Th. 1:9). It is their "second death" (Rev. 20:6, 14, 21:8), permanent and final, from which there is no possibility of a future resurrection.

Sinners will find their end in the lake of fire. But it is "the smoke of their torment" that "rises for ever", a silent witness to God's completed judgment (Rev. 14:9-11, Is. 54:9-12).

Even Rev. 20:10 must be interpreted by its OT background. Isaiah says Edom "will become blazing pitch" (34:9). The fire "shall not be quenched night or day". Its smoke "will rise forever" None will "pass through it for

**Continued on page 8**



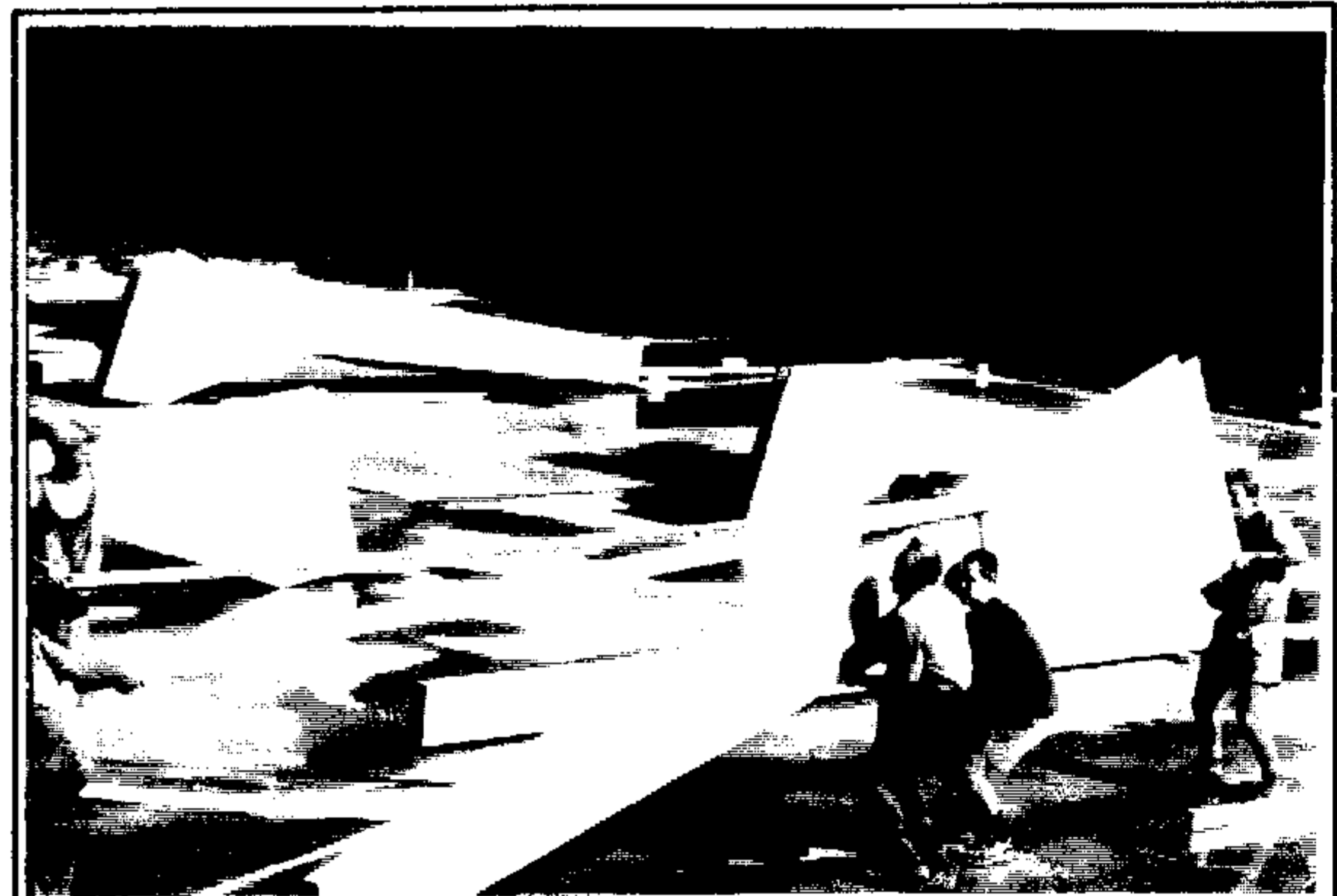
# Carey park

CHRISTIAN CAMP  
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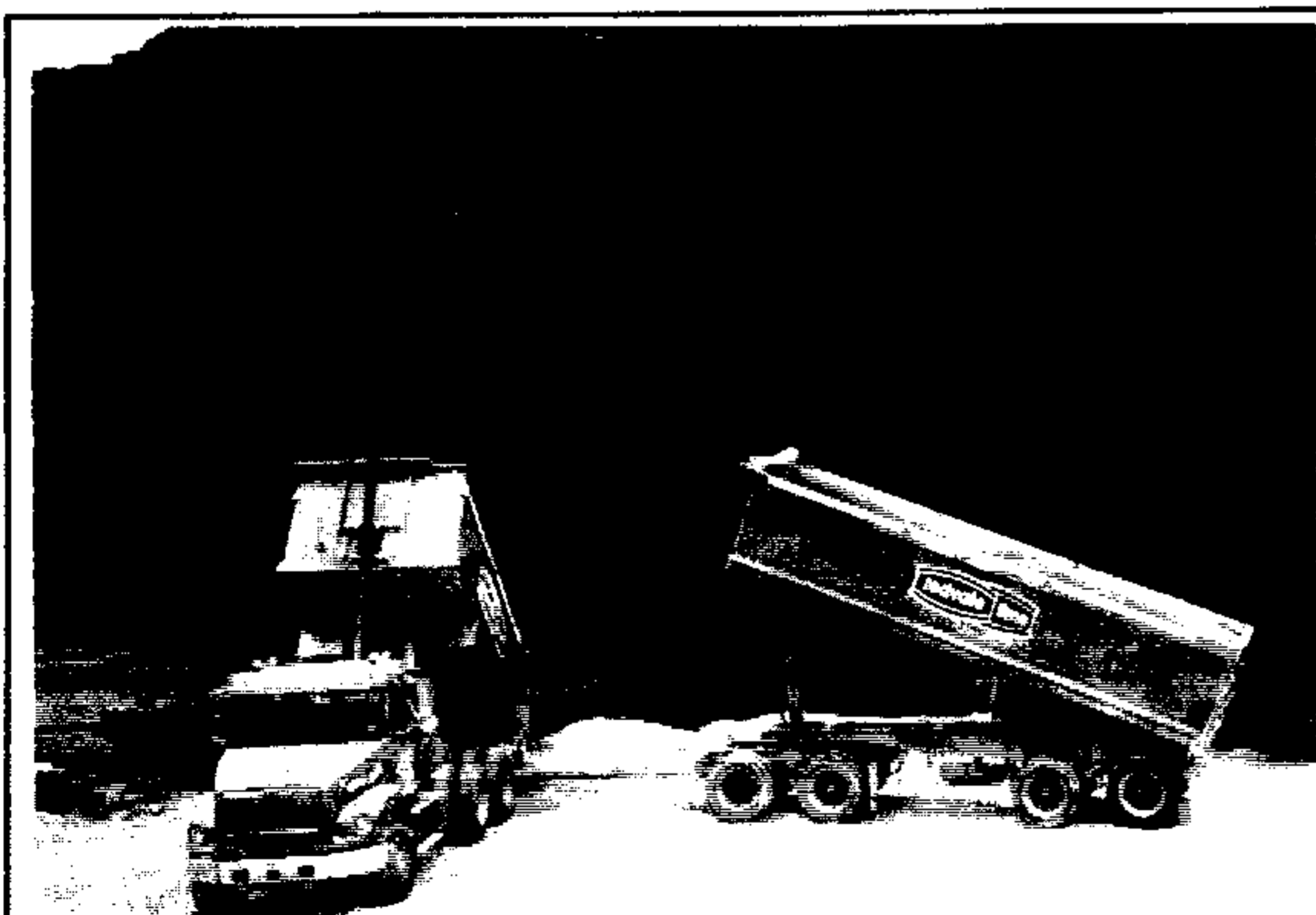
Firstly, we want to thank folk who expressed their love, support and concern for us as a Board/Staff when a young 9 year old boy drowned at CP a few weeks ago. It was for us, and for the School, our worst nightmare, very tragic for a number of reasons. The School, who are regular customers, plus ourselves, are very particular about safety standards and we are both glad that there is no question of inadequacies in either of our systems. The very sad thing in spite of this, is young Stephen drowned and that leaves a great sadness with a number of people. We as a camp can't just get up and go on, it has impacted us badly. As can be expected, we are constantly looking at safety and how best to handle that, yet retain for those who come a challenging experience. Thank you for praying for us but please pray for the parents & brothers who are very deeply saddened by the accident. Please also pray for the Teachers & School who have to handle a whole lot of little children affected by all of this. They know that people have been praying for them and are very grateful. For all those phone calls, cards, letters, fax's, flowers we say a very big **THANKS!!!!**



**Foundations with a Big Future!**



**Weather permitting it should be covered in by Easter.**



**Underway at last - our Re-Creation Centre!!**

**On a brighter note:** We've been waiting 8 years for this, can you guess what "it" is? Yes, it's what we've chosen to call our "Re-Creation" Centre. It's under way and will, weather obliging, be covered in by Easter. This is such a wonderful facility and one which will be used to "re-create" people hopefully into the image of God. It's been frustrating, and long-winded in terms of permits, etc. but as I write (12th March) the footings are being poured.

The foundation is sure!! You don't have to be a Rhodes scholar to work out that if the footings are being poured now that leaves us about 20 days in which to build a 800m<sup>2</sup> building because we need it for 4-500 young people who

# Advent Christian Missions New Zealand

The Lord continues to show His greatness and His goodness as we see answers to our prayers - PRAISE HIM!! Some of those answers are to prayers which have been prayed over many weeks and months - truly the Lord knows what is best for His people and His work. PRAISE HIM!!

**INDIA.** World Missions Director, Rev Hal Patterson, recently announced the acceptance for service in India, of Earl and Martha Wright, from Panama City, Florida. The Wrights are currently serving the Miliville Advent Christian Church in Panama City, Florida and are expected to commence service in India in late March or early April. The matter of entry visas for them is something we need to

Praise the Lord that, because there is a world renowned heart surgeon in Madras, she was able to receive the best of care, and no permanent damage was caused. She continues to need rest and treatment for high blood pressure, and is unable to be involved in the everyday duties and responsibilities that our missionaries have.

Pray too, for Barbara White, who is having to carry a great extra load, as well as caring for Marion. One of the things which is adding to her load is preliminary arrangements for a New Zealand WORK TEAM which we hope to send at the end of this year.

Continue to pray for the Advent Christian Conference of India

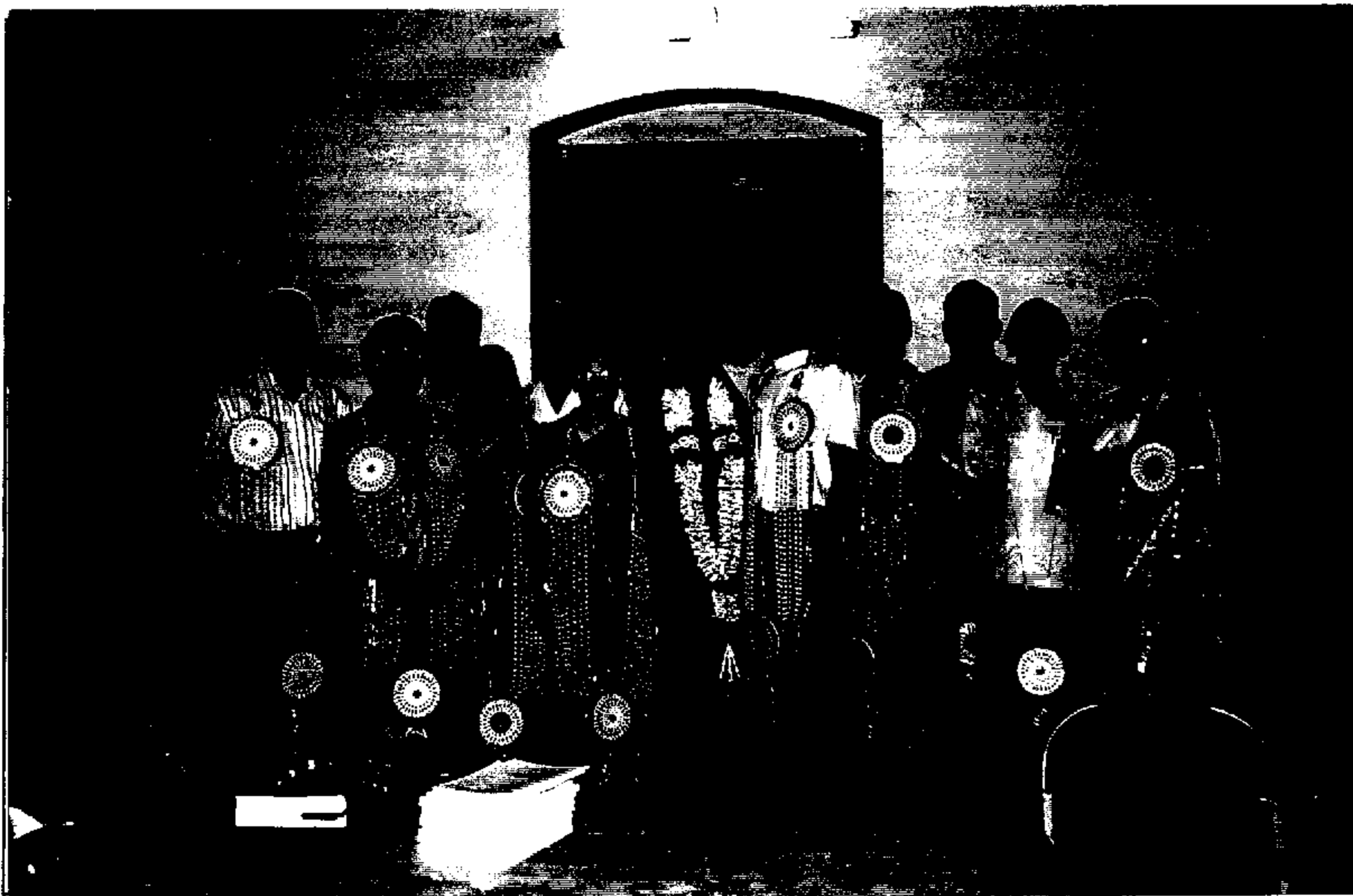
man may be elected as leader of this group. However, in recent weeks there has been great reconciliation and they have begun taking steps to become unified again after "a marvellous visitation from the Lord during the initial meetings held to solve differences". Prior to this time members had begun to meet regularly for prayer and praise - surely this would be the reason for the new-found harmony! There are many practical problems caused during the time of the split that will need to be solved - prayer has already achieved much in this situation -continue to pray!

The Blessed Hope Fellowship continues to see growth with many new Christians being won for the Lord. Many of the letters received from

workers in this organisation tell of baptisms in many of the churches. However the evil one is also active and many of the Pastors and workers are having health problems. Pray for them, and for the provision of the practical needs of the workers and the church congregations. Many of the congregations work from grossly sub-standard facilities and much more could be

achieved with greater resources.

**PHILIPPINES.** We were recently advised that there is now no possibility of the land and building



The 1994/95 Work Team to India

pray about.

Marion Damon continues to need our prayers for her health. She has recently had severe problems with a blood clot in her brain.

which over recent years has been severely divided. The difficulties have led to Court action and a Court ordered election is scheduled for March 28. Pray that the Lord's

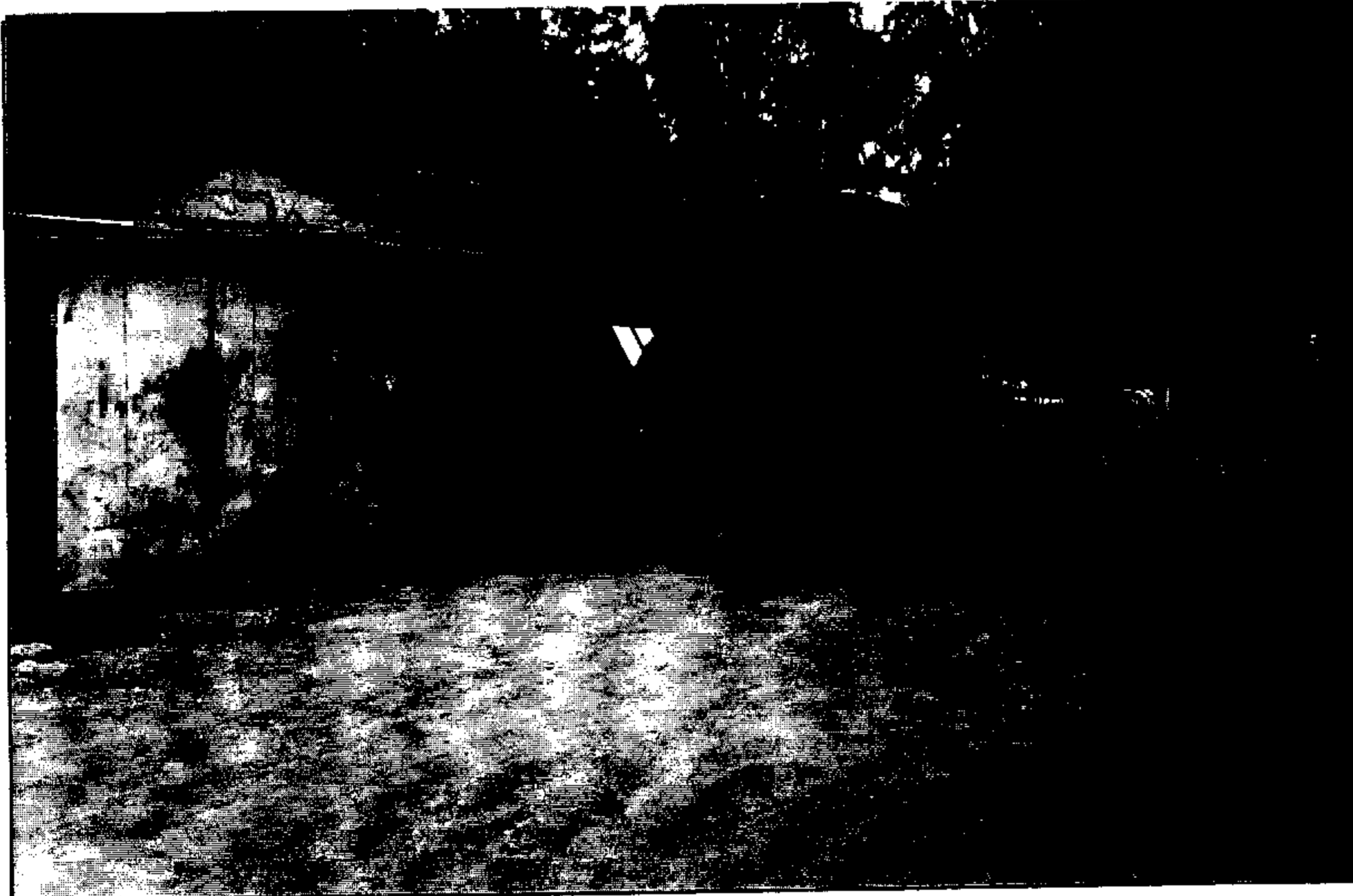
6 of Oro Bible College being "taken" to pay the debts of the neighbouring Maranatha Church building project. Steps are being taken to separate the land areas and have the ownership of the College land vested in a newly formed separate legal entity. **Praise the Lord for this answer**

sistance with their development plans. **Please pray that these discussions may be harmonious and fruitful.**

**NEW ZEALAND.** The Missions Trust Board decided late last year to send a **WORK TEAM** to In-

work with us will be in excess of NZ\$10,000 - **please pray that the Lord will supply this need through His people in good time.**

**WORLDWIDE.** The Advent Christian denomination in the United States has launched a new "thrust", within its members, and the World Missions Department is asking supporters throughout the world to be partners in the "IF" (IF = International Force) They are asking their people to pray at noon (the time of the pray-ers) every Thursday for revival and world evangelisation, that God will give us many souls for our work as well as the finances to make effective



This year's Project - The Student Hostel Building, Kodaikanal

to our prayers! We need to continue to pray that Maranatha Church's work and witness will not be hindered by the difficulties in respect to their building.

Five students recently graduated from Oro Bible College - pray that their future service for the Lord will be blessed by Him.

Many of the Pastors and workers in the churches of the Philippine Advent Christian Conference struggle with practical and spiritual burdens - pray that their needs will be supplied and that they will have the victory over the forces of evil.

Advent Christian Missions New Zealand will be having discussions with the Board of Directors of Oro Bible College during May, to endeavour to strengthen our relationship with the College, and to set down long term planning for our as-

dia if there was a suitable project to be undertaken. Our enquiry to the missionaries there brought a swift response - the roof of the students' hostel building at the College of Evangelism at Kodaikanal is leaking very badly and needs replacing. (See photo).

Bookings have been made for a Team to leave Auckland on December 27 1998 and to return on January 19 1999. We are now looking to the Lord to raise up a Team of suitably skilled men and women to carry out that task for our brothers and sisters in India. Men with building/roofing skills, good Kiwi handy-men and ladies with the ability to cook good Kiwi food in India are required. **Please pray with us that suitable people will feel the call of the Lord to serve in this way.**

The cost of materials and the hiring of some Indian tradesmen to

work possible.

**We encourage all our readers to join in this thrust at noon each Thursday**, for whatever time they can spend in prayer - one minute, three minutes, five minutes, half an hour - whatever - to bring our concern for world evangelisation to the Lord. As we do so, we are encouraged by Rev Hal Patterson to consider the words of II Chronicles chapter 7 verse 14 - "If my people, who are called by my Name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land."

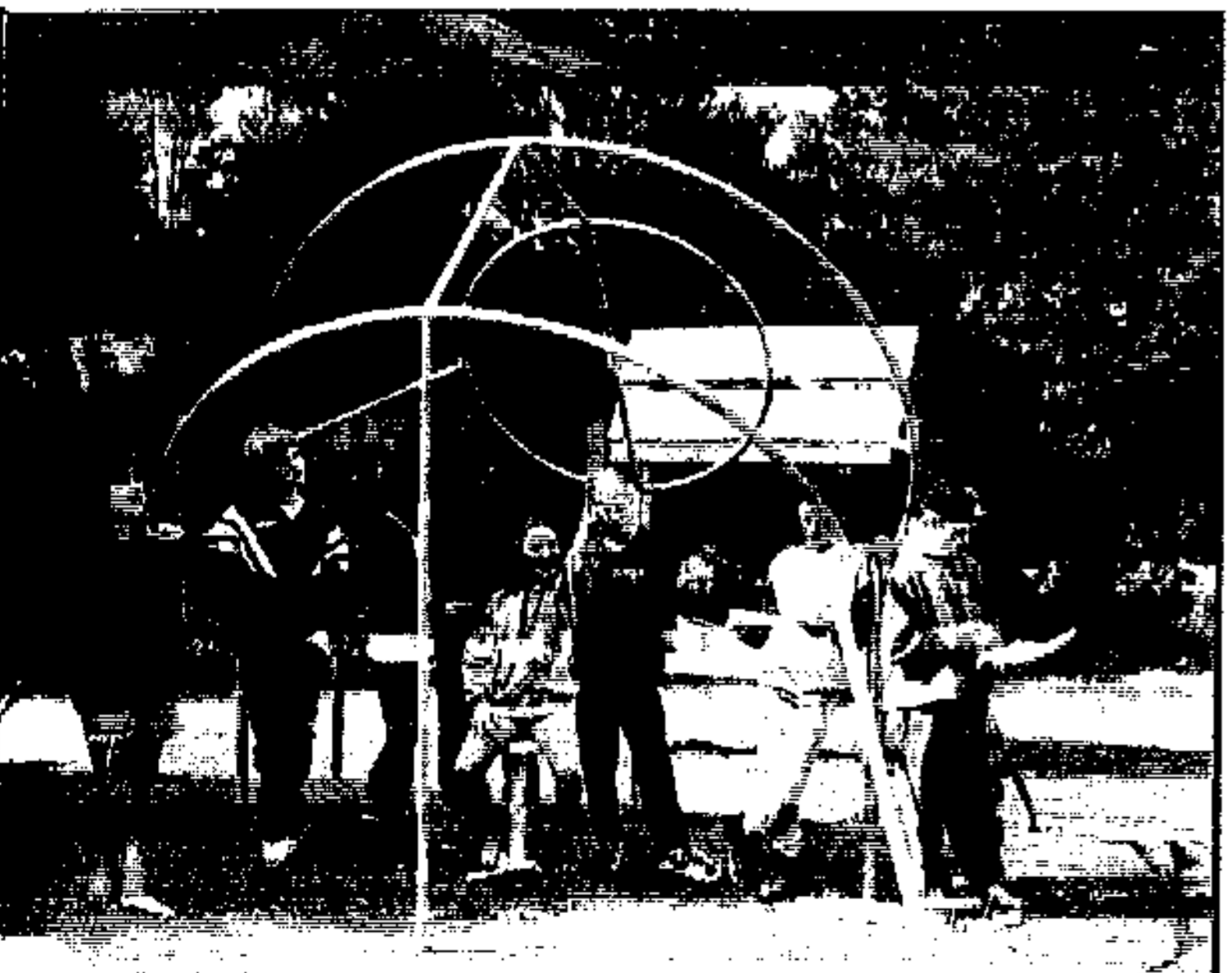
Further information in regard to any of the above matters can be obtained from Ernie Schache phone 09 6272124, or email [eschache@acmnz.pl.net](mailto:eschache@acmnz.pl.net)

will be here at Easter. We have long ago accepted the fact that to even get this building is a miracle, so what's new. Nevertheless please pray for suitable weather.



Hard-Pressed for Time - But Full of Hope

Our **Education Programme** is well under way (that's the courses we have set up with a God-consciousness in it) and many Schools are showing a great deal of interest in the course. Fiona Sutherland, our new Teacher, is running this and doing a great job. We have 7 modules available at the moment and are looking at extending it further, our goal is about 20 modules to cater for the differing needs of schools.



Pipehenge - an Integral Part of the Education Programme

Also new to our Staff are Richard & Carol O'Hanlon and their family, he's on maintenance, involved with computers 7 and camp programming, she's on cleaning, etc. It's really great to have them with us.

We have a **"Teen Mission"** group of about 30-35 from the States coming here from 11<sup>th</sup> June - 6<sup>th</sup> July, you may remember they were here in 1989 (the young people with the big boots - ring a bell?) They are here for 5 weeks and will be working on turning Salisbury Lodge dormitories into rooms, plus a number of other projects around the camp. This will be a wonderful time!!!

The **"Skids"- "Kids"- "Teen"** camps are all set up and rearing to go this April. It's going to be busy because it follows straight on from Easter, but we're looking forward to a good time.

In July we are holding a **"Leadership Training Camp"**. This is something very special because it's not aimed only at camp leadership but leadership in general. It will go for a full 7 days and there will be workshops, etc., on a number of different topics as well as teaching on Biblical leadership. It will cost \$150 and we are looking for Churches and others to sponsor young people through the course. So keep it in mind more information will be out shortly.



Before this "Epistle" ends we have a "small" request. **If you read this before Easter 98, we are looking for help with the Baptist Youth Camp.** We do all the food preparation, dishes, cleaning etc for them and we are looking for a team to help. If you are able to assist maybe even just for a few hours, day, days etc.

Please could you give Tim a ring at (09) 837 0494, we would be very grateful!!



Carey park

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# 8 The History of Hell:

Continued

ever and ever" (34:10). Yet the blaze comes to an end. Otherwise no bird could nest in the land (34:11-14). "Forever" means only to the longest duration of which the subject is capable. The fire ends after destroying the inhabitants of the land (34:12).

Neither the devil or his henchmen are immortal (1Tim 6:16). The devil and company will be tormented to the very end of their existence with no hope of escape. But the beast will be destroyed (Rev. 17:8,11). If the beast in Dan 7 is the same as in Rev 19:20 the beast must be destroyed by being thrown alive into the fire. If Ez. 28 pictures the fall of Satan he is to "be devoured", "turned to ashes" and he "shall be no more forever" (v 18-19). The words "day and night" limit the period of their torment as in eternity there is no night (Rev 21:25, 22:5).

If you should return home one evening to find your house ransacked would you leave it that way? Of course not! You would throw away what had been ruined, salvage what could be salvaged and remake your home as good as new.

And this is just what God will do when sin has run its course. "And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes, there will be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying; and their shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away. Behold, I make all things new" (Rev 21:5). This is the glorious future God has in store for

us who believe!

The unbeliever at Judgment will have to pay the penalty for sin. Literal physical death. The Bible

says in Romans 6:23, "The wages of sin is death". It is not eternal life in torture, "the second death" (Rev 2:11, 20:11-15, 21:5-6) is an everlasting destruction" (2 Th. 1:9), an "eternal punishment" (one which lasts forever) (Matt. 25:40)

And we who believe have a task to do: to tell those who do not know God - and see "hell" as a figment of someone's twisted imagination, who rightly suppose that God can not both be a God of love and yet torment his creation in the fires of hell for eternity - the much more credible and sobering truth is that there is a judgment coming and that God has provided a way by which we may still eat from the tree of life and live forever.

There is a third tree mentioned in the Bible. The Apostle Peter said: "He (Jesus) himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed" (1 Pet 2:24).

Christ by dying on the cross paid the penalty for sin. "Christ died for the ungodly" (Rom. 5:6). "He died for us" (Rom 5:8). "Once you were alienated from God ... but now He has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death" (Col. 1:21). Jesus "suffered death, so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone" (Heb. 2:9). "Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous to bring you to God" (1 Pet

3:18). Just as the prophet said, the Suffering Servant was "cut off from the land of the living" and "poured out his soul unto death" for our transgressions (Is. 53:8, 12).

Under Mosaic Law there was no such punishment as imprisonment for life, much less imprisonment for life under continuous torture. Death was the supreme penalty: Again, "The soul that sins shall die" (Ez. 18:20). The Old Testament sacrifices were symbols in which the animal was killed in the place of the one who offered it. "The sacrificial animal, identified with the offerer in his sin, had to be destroyed in order to destroy the sin which it embodied. The sprinkling, smearing and pouring away of the sacrificial blood in the sight of God indicated that the life was wholly destroyed and with it the sin of the sinner (Dunn, *The Death of Jesus*, 136). The animal was not subjected to unending torture but put to death by the taking away its life.

Christ paid the penalty for all who believe. He died the death that was symbolised in the Old Testament sacrifices. His was a substitutionary atonement. It involved a period of suffering both physical and mental but the end result was his death on the cross. Yes! When Christ died he died a literal physical death. The same penalty imposed in Eden. He died so that all who believe might not perish but have everlasting life (Jn. 3:16).

- 0 -

## Off the Internet

An extract from Edward Fudge  
(Email address - Edwfudge@aol.com)

### A VERY SURPRISING QUIZ (3)

Question 11. John the Baptist warned of "unquenchable fire", by which Jesus would:

- burn up the "chaff";
- torment the lost forever and never let them die;
- purge sinners of all evil and then send them to heaven.

Question 13. Jesus personally described Gehenna (hell) as a place where:

- God can destroy both body and soul;
- God will perpetuate the soul in everlasting agony;
- Satan reigns over his evil subjects and tortures damned humans.

CHECK YOUR ANSWERS BY YOUR BIBLE.

11. John the Baptist warned of "unquenchable fire" by which Jesus would (a) burn up the "chaff". Not surprisingly, since fire that cannot be extinguished (quenched) does exactly what we expect fire to do!

13. Choice (a) is accurate on this one. Jesus personally described Gehenna, (hell) as a place where God can destroy both body and soul. The just and loving God of the Bible who loved sinners all the way to the Cross will certainly not perpetuate the soul in everlasting agony. On the other hand, if you pictured Satan reigning over his evil subjects and torturing damned humans, you might be watching too much late-night television! Turn off the tube and look up Matthew 10:28.

Editors note: We have Edward Fudge's excellent book, *The Fire That Consumes*, available on special at \$37.50



John 3:16 - "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have everlasting life." (NIV) Perhaps the scriptural verse quoted most frequently by evangelical Christians. Yet do we really understand it? Have we really grasped the implications? Does it roll too easily off our lips?

Oh sure we grasp the basic idea that Jesus died for us and that His death was a gift from God, freely chosen to be offered, by both the Lord Jesus and His Father. But I want to look at three important implications of that verse for all of us who take the name of Christ.

The first is simply a look at the alternatives that are presented as to the outcome of this life - to perish or to have everlasting life. 'Perish' in the Greek is *apoletai*. The root word is *apollumi* which means "to destroy utterly, to kill, to bring to nought, make void"<sup>1</sup> There is not even a hint here of eternal torment. This is further reinforced by the tense of the verb. *Apoletai* is the aorist form of *apollumi* (3<sup>rd</sup> person singular aorist 2, subjunctive, middle - to be more precise). The aorist is a punctiliar tense signifying a point in time action, as opposed to an on-going or continuous action. In other words the perishing will happen once and then be over, not an on-going occurrence. In contrast, *eche zoev aionion* (may have everlasting life) is in the present (continuous) tense.

So the alternatives presented in

this well known verse are simply life or death, the same as throughout Scripture (eg. John 5:24, 29; 10:28; Rom. 6:23; Gal 6:8; 1 John 5:11 ) It is not a question of two levels of life - torment or bliss. It is simply life or extinction. And there are **only two alternatives**, not three or four. There is no purgatory or limbo. And there definitely are **two**. There is no room for universalism. This is not a bluff by Jesus who 'should have known' everyone is saved in the end. But neither, of course, is it hopeless. Yes, our natural future is, as mortals, that we will perish forever. But God's love for His creation means He offers a path, one path, to eternal life, through Jesus Christ His one and only Son.

The second implication is that the choice is **primarily for the future**, but with important ramifications now. We don't choose to follow Jesus to find self-fulfillment, or ease or wealth or health in this life. We choose, or are chosen by Him, because of the coming judgment and the incredible opportunity to spend eternity with our Creator and Saviour. In fact the call to follow Jesus explicitly challenges us to 'deny ourselves', 'to die to ourselves', 'to take up our cross', 'to empty ourselves', 'to suffer for His sake'. Western Christianity has got caught up in the trap of expecting/ seeking/ claiming all sorts of 'blessings' in this life. By turning to the Old Testament promises of material prosperity and laying claim to them (at the same time denying any responsibility under the Old Testament Law) many Western churches have distorted the gospel message ignoring not only the calls to deny ourselves, etc, but overlooking the clear testimony of

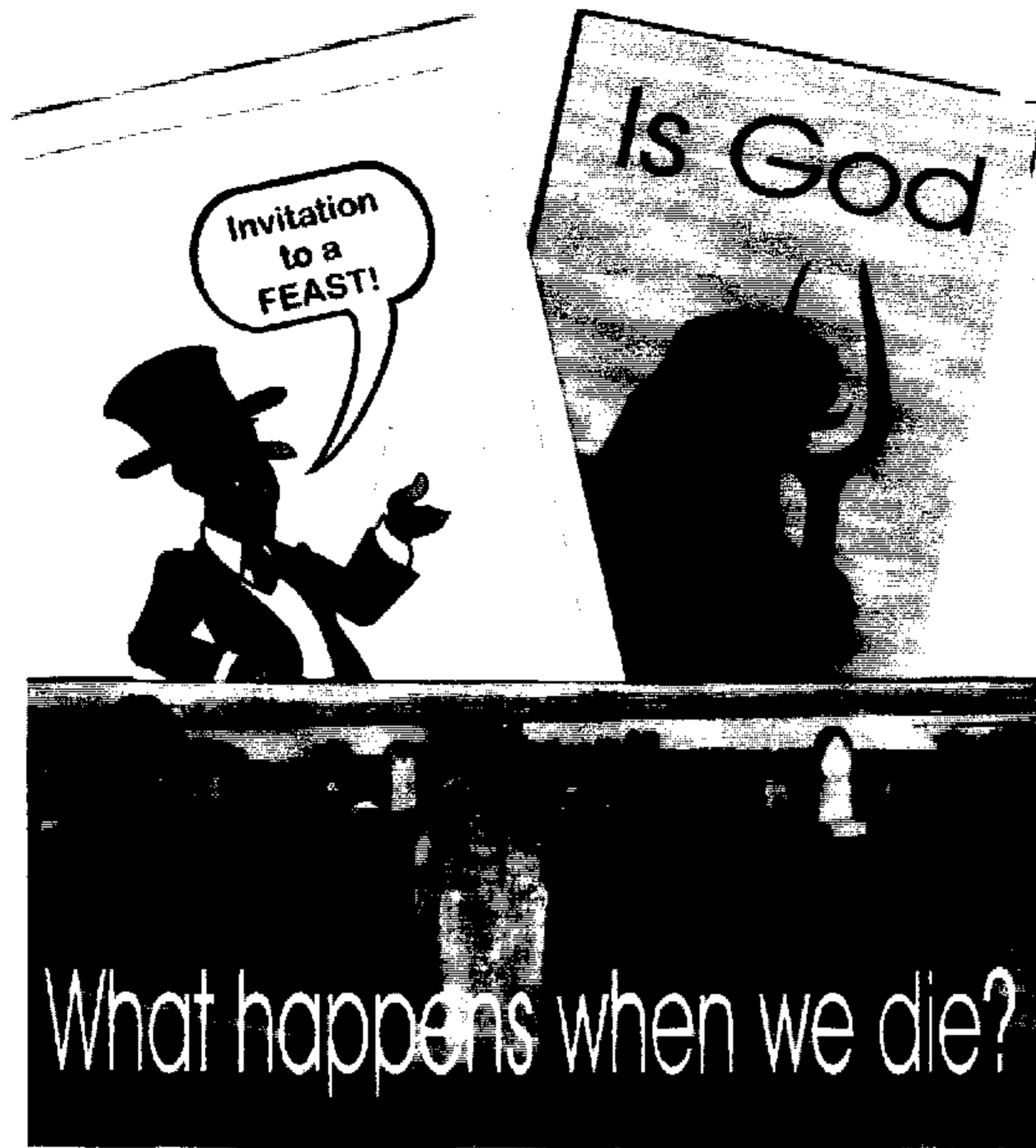
Jesus, Paul and much of church history which repeatedly testifies to hardship and persecution rather than luxury and ease.

Perhaps part of the reason for this is the confusion that reigns over death and the future life. Many churches are naturally reluctant to preach about the coming judgment of God because they are either unsure about when it happens (at death? Or when Jesus returns?) or they are uncomfortable with the traditional church teaching that those who don't respond to the Gospel end up with eternal suffering. Certainly the focus of many Christians is too fixed on the present. While we do need to take real responsibility for this present life, we do that best by understanding clearly our own mortality and sinfulness, the coming Judgment of God, and His amazing grace that offers life to all who would receive it.

The third area that needs to be noted is related to the second. If God did not spare His Own Son but allowed Him to be killed by His own creation, and if we are called to follow Him then God most assuredly will let each and every one of His followers be killed if necessary in His effort to show His great love for the world. God still loves the world so much that He gives all His (adopted) children that whoever would believe would have a chance to hear and understand the Gospel. John 3:16 should be a sober reminder to us all of our call to mission, to sacrifice, and to each other.

Carl Josephson

<sup>1</sup> Moulton, Harold K. *The Analytical Greek Lexicon Revised* Zondervan: Grand Rapids, 1978.



## Pamphlets

These three full-colour pamphlets are available from us for 50c each. We are in the process of producing more covering a wide range of topics, all from a conditionalist perspective. We have had some feedback about them, thank-you!

We've been asked, **"What is the Association doing producing evangelical tracts?"** We have made clear and conscious decisions to produce such literature because we see conditional immortality as being a vital part of presenting the whole Gospel (see the article "Reclaiming the Gospel" by Pastor Warren Prestidge in issues 7 and 8). We are well aware of criticism about even having a separate Association for what some regard as a relatively unimportant doctrine. We, however, are convinced of its importance and wish to show our commitment to the full Gospel and the essential place a correct understanding of 'life only in Christ' has in evangelism.

We've also been asked, **"Why don't you include quotes from the Bible in all your pamphlets, like you did in the one 'What Happens When We Die?'"**

Point taken. In 'Invitation To a Feast' we now have a list of the verses that the pamphlet is based on. However, as we aim at all sorts of groups we are well aware that not all people respond to the same thing in the same way. Some people find the constant interruption in the flow of the text caused by quotation marks and bracketed scriptural references to be distracting. We hope that over time we will have covered a wide range of topics suitable for a wide range of people facing a variety of situations, all from a conditionalist, and therefore biblical, perspective.

**"Isn't this latest pamphlet, 'Invitation To a Feast' a little frivolous considering the seriousness of the Gospel message?"** What we aimed for here was not frivolity but rather joy. As conditionalists we have strongly affirmed that a healthy response to the Gospel comes through the positive invitation of God, in Jesus, to fellowship with Him, rather than through fear of hell. This pamphlet is an attempt to capture something of that joy. We apologize if it has caused offense, we certainly do not consider that the Gospel should be taken lightly.

**"What are you actually aiming at with these pamphlets?"** Our aim, as stated above, is to cover a wide range of topics from a conditionalist point of view. These pamphlets are not detailed, comprehensive treatises on the topics (that's what the books and videos are for), but rather, hopefully, vehicles for beginning to think upon some of the issues. We cannot, and should not try to, reduce the Gospel down to a pamphlet. What we can do is plant a seed, clear away a mistaken thought or two, or help YOU take another step with people you are talking to about our Lord Jesus. We trust that we will be useful to Him in this service.

## New Book!

We are delighted to inform you that a new book on Conditional Immortality will soon be available from us. Entitled *Life, Death and Destiny*, this book, by Pastor Warren Prestidge, is currently being prepared by us for printing and should be available at Conference this year. At approximately 120 pages it is a clear and concise biblical presentation of the essential material at an affordable price (under \$20) in a readable style. We highly recommend it for anyone interested in the truth of Scripture.

This Newsletter was produced,  
printed, and published by:  
**Resurrection Publishing**  
PO Box 100-010  
North Shore Mail Centre  
Auckland