

# From death to Life

The Official Magazine of  
the International Immortality Association  
of New Zealand

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As well as being president of the Conditional Immortality Association I also pastor The Church of Christ (L&A) in Takanini and as part of my work with the Advent Christian Conference of New Zealand, the Randwick Park Christian Life Church. The Randwick Park Christian Life church meets in a Council run Community house. But we are not the only "spiritual" group that uses the building. There is our small group of Bible believing Christians who meet there. There are three other groups of spiritualists and mediums that meet there. These people are convinced that there exist invisible, superhuman "spirit guides" wanting to make contact with people here on earth. These people are convinced that it is possible and even desirable to make contact with the spirits of human beings that have lived and died here on earth.

The Bible speaks of invisible, superhuman intelligences, called "angels" or "spirits" (Psa. 104:4, Heb. 1:13, 14), but these are not the ghosts of dead people. The angels were there with God when he laid the earth's foundation's (Job 38:7). Lucifer, the anointed cherub, rebelled against God (Isa. 14:12-15, Ezek. 28:12-19). It seems a third of the angels joined him in his rebellion (Rev. 12:7-9). Lucifer became "Satan", the accuser. He and the rebellious fallen angels are still at work on earth. Angels have the power to assume the appearance of human beings (Gen. 18:1-33, Heb. 13:2). Satan spoke to Eve in the Garden through the medium of a serpent (Gen. 3:1-4). Evil angels can speak through the "medium" of a human being. A sorcerer is one who gains power with the assistance of evil spirits, especially for predicting the future (Acts 16:16, 18). Moses says that anyone who practices "divination or sorcery" or "interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, or casts spells, or who is a medium or spiritist or who consults the dead" ... "is detestable to the Lord" (Deut. 18:9-12). Unless, they repent they will have no part in the world to come (Rev. 21:8, 22:15).

Spiritism is on the increase in our "enlightened" age. Paul warned Timothy, "The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. (1Tim. 4:1). The fundamental doctrine that all these spiritualist groups share is that which the devil told Adam and Eve in the Garden: "You will not surely die" ... "you will be like God" (Gen. 3:4-5). "You have an immortal soul ... you just get recycled to a higher spiritual plane." The Bible declares the opposite: "For the living know that they will die, but the dead know nothing" (Ecc. 9:5). The Psalmist declares, "No one remembers you when he is dead." "Who praises you from his grave?" he asks (Psalm 6:5). Elsewhere he says, "It is not the dead who praise the Lord, those who go down to silence" (Psa. 115:17). To what? To silence. Mortal human beings cannot save. "When their spirit [breath] departs, they return to the ground; on that very day their plans come to nothing" (Psa. 146:3-4). "as a cloud vanishes and is gone so he who goes down to the grave does not return." (Job. 7:9-10). The only remedy for error is the truth. The whole truth and nothin' but the truth. To attack the hydra of spiritualism by chopping at one of its many heads is almost pointless. To slay the beast, one must go for the heart. The heart of spiritualism is the belief in the immortality of the soul. The Word of God is the sword of the Spirit. Conditional Immortality is the finely honed edge to that sword which will cut through to the heart of this demonic beast. Will you stand and fight? Are you using the weapon that God has provided?



Pastor David Burge

**FORGOTTEN**

# The Intermediate State



In the last issue we began this series adapted from my Master's Thesis. The first chapter is on Paul's anthropology – what he understood each human was made of. Our conclusion was that, as in the Old Testament, Paul understood each one of us to be a single unit, a living soul, not made up of two or three separable parts (body/ soul/ spirit). The outcome of this basis is that for Paul there was no thought of an immortal soul.

## Paul's Anthropological Terms.

What follows is a brief survey of some of the key anthropological terms Paul employs. Whole books have been written on the subject so this is a fairly superficial treatment of them - the point being that they **can** be read as coming from a monistic understanding of human makeup (the argument remaining open as to whether they **should** be read this way).

There are 15 appearances of *psuche* ('soul') or a derivative in the major Pauline letters and the NRSV shows the same sort of variety in translation as it does with the equivalent Hebrew word, *nephesh*, in the Pentateuch. Examples are: person, life, mind, soul, being, you, and me.<sup>1</sup> Only once is it translated as 'soul', in 1 Thessalonians 5:23, and this has often been used in the debate as to whether Paul understood there to be three parts (body, soul and spirit) or two (body and soul/spirit) to a human being. There is growing recognition that this verse sup-

ports neither view. Rather than divide the person into three: Paul's intention is just the opposite: 'May God ... sanctify you through and through [*holoteleis*]. May your whole [*holokleron*] spirit, soul and body be kept blameless' at Christ's return. Far from dissecting the person, Paul expresses the hope that believers may, by God's sanctifying work, be saved from disintegration and preserved as whole [*holos*] beings. He joins the three terms together (here only in his letters) "for emphasis rather than for definition."<sup>2</sup>

D. Guthrie compares 1 Thessalonians 5:23 with the Great Commandment in Deuteronomy 6:5 and Matthew 22:37 in support of this.<sup>3</sup> That is, just as we do not regard the commandment to love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength as indicative of 4 separable parts, but rather one complete whole, so too we should understand 1 Thessalonians 5:23 as emphasizing the whole.

A rather more difficult case

involves the word *pneuma* (wind, breath or spirit - in the LXX "chiefly and very frequently for *ruach*<sup>4</sup>). *Pneuma* suggests the knowing and willing self of man and as such reveals him to be particularly apt to receive the Spirit of God."<sup>5</sup> But Paul's use varies considerably and it is not always certain as to his intended meaning. For example in 1 Corinthians 14:2 *pneumati* may be translated 'in the Spirit' (NRSV) or 'with his spirit' (NIV). However Dunn notes that "there has been a persistent view that for Paul the human spirit is but a manifestation of the divine Spirit"<sup>6</sup> and that is the position, reflecting the Hebrew Scriptural position, that this paper adopts.

Yet another important term for Paul is *soma* (body). While at times Paul uses this term to speak only of the "physical structure and substance"<sup>7</sup> of a human being (eg. Rom. 4:19<sup>8</sup>; 1 Cor 13:3<sup>9</sup>) he more frequently uses it in a far broader sense - "Man does not merely have a *soma*, he is a *soma*. .... It denotes man as a whole, as a unified, complex, living organism."<sup>10</sup> Thus Paul writes to the Corinthians, "Your bodies

are members of Christ" (1 Cor 6:15) and four verses later, "Your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit". By this Paul is not just referring to "the physical body, as though the body was something distinct from the whole person, but the body as the embodiment of the whole person."<sup>11</sup>

Related to *soma* is *sarx*, which is most often translated as 'flesh'. Once again Paul's use is not absolutely uniform, sometimes using it as a synonym for *soma* (1 Cor 6:16; 2 Cor 4:10-11; cf. Gal 4:13; 6:17), but his more typical use is to denote "man in his natural, physical and visible existence, weak and earthbound."<sup>12</sup> As Dunn notes, "the sinning 'I' cannot distance itself from the flesh. .... The problem ...is ...'I (myself) am fleshly."<sup>13</sup> Or, as C.F.D. Moule puts it, "The fleshly outlook ... is self-centredness, it is Adam's refusal to accept his status as a creature."<sup>14</sup> Our suggestion is that this is one of the major reasons many Christians have held so tightly to the Platonic notion of a(n immortal) soul - it is very humbling to accept our creatureliness as beings of dust. Yet, so we propose, this is the very essence of our status before God as revealed in the Pentateuch and adhered to by Paul.

However Paul does not associate flesh with evil as if flesh is evil (as some forms of Greek thinking propose).<sup>15</sup> Evil is sin and the essence of sin is

disobeying or ignoring the will of God. Putting it slightly differently, Moule says, "Man's predicament is not that he is *sarx*, but that, *via* his *sarx*, sin got hold of him." And further, that this "explains why Paul sometimes speaks of flesh as a realm opposed to Spirit, and associates it closely with sin."<sup>16</sup> This is a very important argument in assisting us to understand Paul's thinking. He does not believe that matter is evil and spirit is good. What he

It is very humbling to accept our creatureliness as beings of dust

does say is that it is our very weakness as creatures that sin uses to gain a hold over us - a hold that is fatal. He also warns that our spirit can be defiled or contaminated (2 Cor 7:1).<sup>17</sup>

If a distinction can be made between *soma* and *sarx* it is that "the spectrum of meaning for *soma* is for the most part morally neutral, whereas the spectrum of meaning for *sarx* is for the most part morally negative."<sup>18</sup>

Further Pauline terms include *nous* (mind) and *kardia* (heart) which are not sharply distinguished from each other although the former tends to

designate human capacity for "intelligent understanding, planning, and decision (cf. 1 Cor 1:10; 2:16; Rom 14:5)" and the latter connotes "the more responsive and emotional reactions of the intelligent, planning self."<sup>19</sup> Robert Jewett, referring in particular to 1 Corinthians 2:16 ('mind of Christ') and Romans 1:28 ('reprobate mind') says *nous* "is the constellation of thoughts and assumptions which makes up the consciousness of the person and acts as the agent of rational discernment and communication." He then goes on to note that the mind is treated "as an objectifiable, almost spatial reality in 2 Thess. 2:2 and 1 Cor. 1:10."<sup>20</sup> This suggests Paul feels free to treat different aspects of human existence almost as if they truly were separate, but without ever compromising the monistic anthropology he has. Indeed, were one so inclined to build it, there appears to be a stronger case for Paul seeing mind as separable from body than there is for him differentiating to the same degree between *psuche* and body.

Robert Gundry argues that "in monadic anthropologies God tends to become an unnecessary encumbrance, or at best only a distant necessity" because man would then need "nothing from the outside to be himself."<sup>21</sup> This begs the question as to whether Paul ever thought "being oneself" is

the goal of humanity. It rather would seem that for Paul "being in or with Christ" is the goal and it is sinfulness and weakness, not monism, that hinders this. Gundry asks, "What in the constitution of man requires God to be there with man?" and then replies "But in that man exists as a unity of two substances, spirit and body, he requires the cohesive force of God for true and full being."<sup>22</sup> This is not Pauline thinking. Our need for God is not expressed in terms such as "true and full being" but as sinfulness and deserving death. And our greatest need is not unity as such, but life. Indeed, life itself is a gift from God and for that alone we are totally dependent on Him. Paul writes or implies at different times of the necessity for the whole person to be saved - our body (*soma*)<sup>23</sup>, our mind (*nous*)<sup>24</sup> our spirit (*pneuma*)<sup>25</sup>. This is not in contradiction to monism but rather showing the totality of our limitations. Actually Gundry doesn't deny this, writing later that "The Pauline answer is to locate evil

throughout the whole man"<sup>26</sup> in effect somewhat nullifying his own argument.

### Conclusion.

We conclude this chapter by outlining our understanding of Paul's anthropology. Human beings are single units but, depending on where they are viewed from, can be described by terms such as *soma*, *sarx*, or *psuche*. Other terms like *nous* and *kardia* are more specifically looking at one aspect of our constitution. Paul, following the Pentateuch, is thoroughly monistic in his anthropology.

<sup>1</sup> The full list is: selves (1 Thess 2:8), person (Rom 13:1), mind (Phil 1:27), life (Rom 11:3; 16:4; Phil 2:30), soul (1 Thess 5:23), (every)one (Rom 2:9), being (1 Cor 15:45), me (2 Cor 1:23), physical (1 Cor 15:44 (2x), 46), unspiritual (1 Cor 2:14), and you (2 Cor 12:15)

<sup>2</sup> Chamblin, 770. The last phrase, "for emphasis rather than for definition," Chamblin quotes from D. Guthrie, *New Testament Theology* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1981) 165.

<sup>3</sup> D. Guthrie, *New Testament Theology* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1981) 165. See also Dunn, 57.

<sup>4</sup> G. Abbott-Smith, *Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament* (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1981) 367.

<sup>5</sup> Fitzmyer, 1407.

<sup>6</sup> Dunn, 77. He directs his readers to Gen 6:3; Job 27:3; 32:8; 33:4; 34:14-15; Ps 104:29-30; Eccl 12:7; Isa 42:5; Ezek 37:5,6,8-10 in support of this.

<sup>7</sup> Webster's *New World Dictionary of the American Language*. Second College Edition (1976) 157.

<sup>8</sup> Rom. 4:19 - And not weakening in faith he considered his body to have died.

<sup>9</sup> 1 Cor. 13:3 - And if I deliver my body in order that I be burned.

<sup>10</sup> Fitzmyer, 1406.

<sup>11</sup> Dunn, 58.

<sup>12</sup> Fitzmyer, 1406.

<sup>13</sup> Dunn, 66.

<sup>14</sup> C.F.D. Moule, "St Paul and Dualism: The Pauline Conception of Resurrection." *New Testament Studies* 13 (1966-67) 106-23, at 113.

<sup>15</sup> Eg. Aune, 296, writes, "The notion that the body was intrinsically evil ... (is) ... generally considered an Orphic or Pythagorean view adopted by Plato."

<sup>16</sup> Moule, "Dualism," 113.

<sup>17</sup> 2 Cor. 7:1 ... Let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and of spirit...

<sup>18</sup> Dunn, 71.

<sup>19</sup> Fitzmyer, 1407.

<sup>20</sup> R. Jewett, *Paul's Anthropological Terms: A Study of Their Use in Conflict Settings*. (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1971) 450

<sup>21</sup> Gundry, 202

<sup>22</sup> Gundry, 202.

<sup>23</sup> Eg. 1 Corinthians 9:27 - but I punish my body and enslave it, so that after proclaiming to others I myself should not be disqualified.

<sup>24</sup> Eg. Romans 1:28 - And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind and to things that should not be done.

<sup>25</sup> Eg. Romans 11:8 - as it is written, "God gave them a sluggish spirit, eyes that would not see and ears that would not hear, down to this very day".

<sup>26</sup> Gundry, 216.

## Special Meeting

On Saturday, March 25th, 2000  
At Takanini Church of Christ (L. & A.)  
160 Great South Rd, Takanini  
Beginning at 7.00pm

Meet with **Hal Patterson** (Director of World Missions), **George Teshera** (Area Director for Asia / Pacific) and **Russell Carle** (An Advent Christian Missionary to New Zealand). Anyone interested in the work of Advent Christian Missions, New Zealand or in Conditional Immortality movements around the world is welcome to attend. There will be a hymn sing and supper to follow.

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## ADVENT CHRISTIAN MISSIONS NEW ZEALAND

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*“..But it was rewarding to finish each day’s labor and see that I had accomplished something for Christ.”*

So said a member of one of the six Work Teams that we have sent out to serve the Lord in the Philippines and in India since 1990.

These words would be echoed by each of the forty one different people who have been members of those Work Teams - forty one people who have been richly blessed as they have served the Lord on foreign fields, and who have been a blessing to those they went to assist.

**Our seventh Work Team leaves Auckland International Airport on December 27,** bound for Oro Bible College in the city of Cagayan de Oro in the Southern Philippines. When this Team returns, there will have been 52 different people who have been engaged in Short-Term Mission activity under our auspices! We give thanks to God for the privilege and the responsibility of such service.

Oro Bible College is the training centre of the Philippine Advent Christian Conference Inc., and this year has a roll of 36 students (including 4 serving internships in churches). These are mainly young people who have responded to the call of God to equip themselves for future service as pastors, teachers and leaders in the churches of the Conference and in other Christian organisations.

Members of previous Teams to the Philippines have been very aware of the very poor living conditions that some mem-

bers of the faculty at Oro Bible College have lived in and over the last few years we have had discussions with our Filipino brothers and sisters with the aim of assisting them to improve those living conditions. The prayer, planning and discussions have come to fruition this year as **we send a great Team of fourteen Kiwis** to assist with the construction of a much needed two storied, four apartment accommodation block, on campus at the College, which will house faculty members.

The project has been well researched and well designed and well organised by the

The Kiwi ability to turn a hand to anything and everything, and to adapt to prevailing conditions has proved a great asset to past Teams, and will again undoubtedly ensure that good progress is made on this year’s project. Recent comment from Rev Hal Patterson, Director of World Missions for Advent Christian General Conference of America, who has just returned from a visit to Oro Bible College, indicates that

*“Good progress has been made on the faculty housing in the Philippines. They are anxious for the Team to come to do most of the finishing up. One of the things that thrills them in the Philippines is not only the work [the Team] does, but also the opportunity of fellowship with a Team from New Zealand. It really means a lot to the national church.”*

This year’s Team is drawn from 5 churches - Baptist and Presbyterian. It is heartening to see the base from which our Team members is drawn widening to include churches which

are not “ex Churches of Christ”. Many of this year’s Team have heard of our teams from friends and families, and have felt the Lord calling them to be involved this year.

The Team includes four ladies who will have the very important responsibility of cooking for the Team - buying provisions in the local market will be a new and different experience for them! Team members’ skills, abilities, experience and ages cover a very wide range, and together make a great Team which could only have been chosen by the Lord-praise Him!



Board of Oro Bible College, and construction is already well under way - so that when our Team arrives on site they will be able to be of maximum assistance. Foundations have been laid, concrete floor slabs poured and supporting columns built - all of this paid for with funds that we have sent up during the year. There will be no waiting for concrete to cure - our men will be able to start work immediately they arrive! They will be involved in laying concrete blocks, constructing wooden internal partitions, putting the iron roof on the building, making door and window frames, tiling, finishing, and a host of other tasks - all done in the “interesting” Filipino way!!

**Please support the team prayerfully** - as a whole and as individuals. Members of past Teams have testified to the value of the prayers of those at home on their behalf - this ministry is an important and essential one, and one which will bring daily encouragement to each Team member.

- **Pray for safe travel** - the team has to have two overnight stopovers on the way to Oro Bible College - one in Singapore and one in Manila.
- **Pray for safety as they work** on the project, and protection from illness and accident of any kind.
- **Pray for sweet fellowship** that will be an encouragement to both the Team members and to the Filipino Christians.
- **Pray for those who have accepted leadership responsibilities** within the Team - that they may have wisdom and patience.
- **Pray for the families of Team members** who remain at home - theirs is an important contribution to the Team's ministry for the Lord.

Thirteen of the Team members are shown in the photograph that accompanies this article.

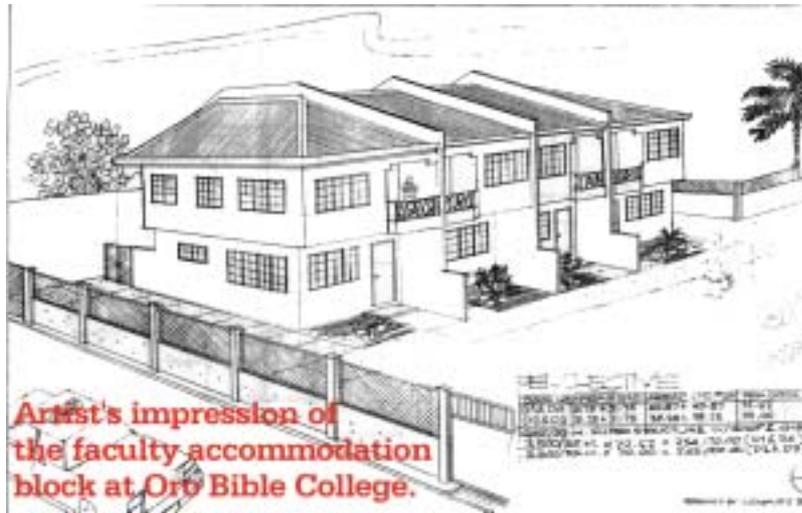
Left to right back row: Bob Leslie, Richard Jebb, Rachel Henderson,

Alan Raney (Project Leader), Vivienne Raney, Lyn Cameron, Grant Cameron (Chaplain), David Sadgrove.

Left to right front row: Grant Aldridge (Team Leader), Carl Josephson, Scott Tremaine, Kerry Josephson, Alan Bolton.

The other team member is Joe Ayers (insert)

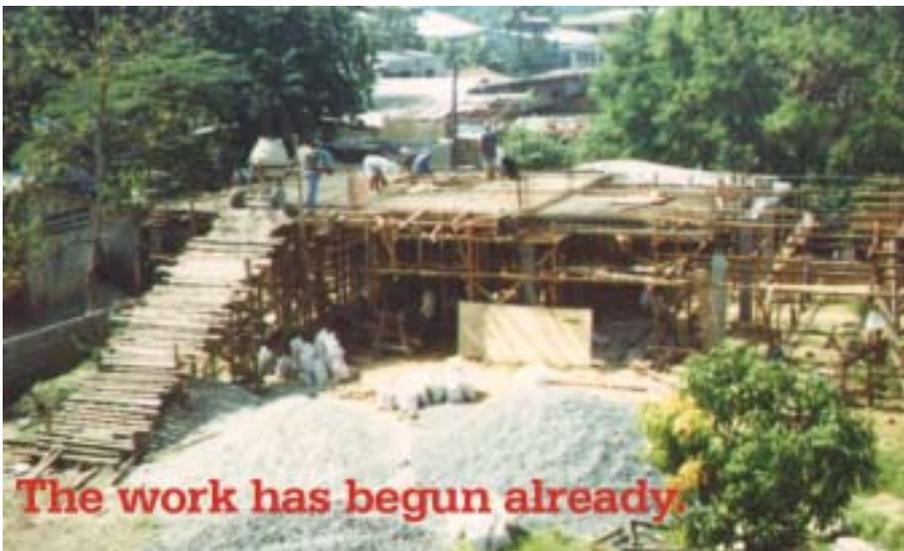
**Please support the Team by going to the airport to see them leave and to welcome them home.** They leave on Monday December 27, on Singapore



**Artist's impression of the faculty accommodation block at Oro Bible College.**

Airlines flight SQ286 at 3.15pm. and arrive home on Tuesday January 18, 2000 at 11.15am (Flight SQ285). They will be greatly encouraged to have friends and supporters as well as family at the airport at those times.

**You can support the team and/or the project financially,** should you wish to do so.



**The work has begun already.**

As always, we raise funds for the purchase of materials for the project, to ensure that our Teams' visits do not put financial pressure on the Colleges. The Lord has wonderfully provided, through His people here in New Zealand, in the United States and in the Philippines, a substantial amount towards the cost of the project (total cost is 2 million

Philippine pesos or approximately NZ\$100,000) but there are insufficient funds available at this stage to enable the project to be completed. Team members personally meet the cost of their travel and living expenses whilst they are away, with some receiving help from their churches. Contributions to the Team funds will assist all Team members, and contributions to the Project fund will ensure the earliest possible completion of the badly needed accommodation.

**Our Team is going to the Philippines to assist with the teaching and preaching of the Gospel in the Philippines!**

The past team member who wrote the sentence at the beginning of this article also wrote *"We received much more than we gave our Filipino brothers and sisters. We could see that God is not limited by lack of resources, that the lost find Christ when evangelism is a way of life, that people lead spiritually*

*rich lives in the midst of grinding poverty, and finally that the bond of Christ's love is stronger than iron and cares nothing about differences of speech, clothing, culture or color of skin. May the Lord touch others with His love in New Zealand and in North America as He does in the Philippines."*

Members of this year's Team are

looking to the Lord for similar blessings, and would appreciate your support for their ministry.

Further information from Ernie Schache -

phone 09 627 2124,

fax 09 627 4488,

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



Carey Park  
Christian Camp

397 Henderson Valley Rd Henderson  
Auckland New Zealand

# Carey Park

November 1999

Try our website- [www.careypark.org.nz](http://www.careypark.org.nz)  
our email-[careypark@careypark.org.nz](mailto:careypark@careypark.org.nz)

Our next  
camp dates  
are:

**'Kids camp'**

Jan 10-14th

**'Teen camp'**

Jan 17-21st

Please pray  
for leaders,  
speakers,  
kids/teens,  
and that  
God's  
promise  
that

"His word will  
not return  
to Him void"  
will be  
fulfilled



## 'Isn't life strange'

Last week we were rung by the Police and told that our camp van had been driven into a petrol station in the Waikato area, filled with \$20 worth of petrol and driven off without payment. They gave the registration plate number, the Police checked on 'the' computer and came up with us. The only problem was our van was being used by our staff at the 'time of offence' and further more our van ran on diesel not petrol. They then decided it was a Holden Ute, not a van and very quickly released us from any part in the 'said' criminal action.

Someone said in the '12 Steps to Insanity'....."we admitted that we were powerless over nothing - that we could manage our lives perfectly and those of anyone who would allow us". Two things, at least, prove that wrong: firstly some things happen which are beyond our control and secondly if we think we are so powerful, how come we fail so much? Thank God for 2 Cor. 12:20 "When I am weak then I am strong". **God is good!!**

At Carey Park we see evidence of His goodness all the time. We have a need that we can't do a whole lot about and God meets it.

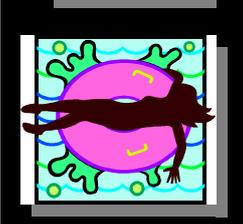
Some examples:

- ◆ We were really stretched to do all the 'Follow-up' properly, but now OAC are doing it for us and that's so good. This is an important part of our ministry because it's one thing to make a commitment to Christ, it's another to keep going.
- ◆ We have a number of projects that we would like to do, but financially it's beyond our resources, so we apply and receive funds from different Trusts for which we are grateful. We are also grateful to a number of you folk who bless us with gifts and to the 'CIA' for their assistance. Thanks to the two people who left something in their estates for CP., again we are grateful.
- ◆ Unfortunately Sean, Cherie and their two boys Joel & Ben are leaving us to move to Tauranga. We will miss this family, they have quickly become part of us. They have large needs with their two boys who have muscular dystrophy - please pray for them. Sheralyn too is leaving, she wants to get back into a classroom full of kids. One of her favourite words is 'hullo' - imagine wanting to go back into a classroom of noisy kids.....! Anyway we wish them all God's blessing and look forward to see where their lives take them next.
- ◆ Wouldn't you guess it though, we had a need - more staff and God met it for us.



May The Lord Jesus be as real to you this Christmas as He was nearly 2000 years ago. We at Carey Park want to thank you for your support and encouragement and trust that you and your family will know God's presence, power and purpose as you face the new millenium.

"have a safe really enjoyable holiday time, even have fun!!"



So here we are looking for replacements and God brings across our paths, two guys with just the skills we need. Let me introduce them. Cam & Sandy Dick and their two children, Ashleigh & Nathan, will be joining us in January. Cam will be largely on maintenance and administration, along with running holiday camps. They have just finished B.C.N.Z. Cam has also been very active in Scripture Union camps.

Jarrold & Geraldine Seaton will also come on board in January. Jarrold will be doing a 'changed teachers' job, (the job's changed not the teacher) he will also be on maintenance and holiday camps. Jarrold has worked in another camp before so we are looking forward to him coming. Geraldine is Ralph & Hazel Woods granddaughter (Graham & Joan's daughter) So these folks will be joining our team and we're looking forward to that.

- ⇒ Like everyone else we are asking the question - what will the New Millennium bring for us?
- ⇒ New staff. (please pray for them and us - thanks)
- ⇒ We continue to strive for financial stability and because of the impact of our economy that's not easy.
- ⇒ One of our goals is to continue to expand our ministry opportunities.
- ⇒ We continue to seek good new leaders to go with those we have for our holiday camps. (if you know of some please let Tim know 837 0494)
- ⇒ Angela (and Dave), Dave & Emma, Cindy (and Aaron) - some of our leaders - are getting married in December. Please pray for these as they have an experience even more exciting than leading in a camp at CP.
- ⇒ Our Father & Son & Mother & Daughter camps were very good this year, although small. We want to see these continue next year with even greater effect. (one mother - a new Christian - got baptised two weeks after the M & D camp, one father decided he needed to get back to church)
- ⇒ As was mentioned we have a number of projects lined up and could do with some physical assistance, like painting, building, electrical or just manual labour. The maintenance and development in a place like this is enormous and any help we can get - whacko!!! (give Tim a ring)
- ⇒ If you know anyone you think has relevant skills and would help on our Trust Board eg. in the areas of management, promotion, secretarial etc. then please ring Wayne (09) 827 6857 (he would love to hear from you!!)

The challenge of the next century is there for us all. Let me give you another quote: Challenge: 'Christians are like teabags. The flavour only comes out when we are placed in hot water. Something is seriously wrong if we are not experiencing some form of resistance to our ministries'. God bless you in whatever you are doing for Him right now, be it praying, giving, serving, doing - whatever. As we give He multiplies it and great things happen for His kingdom through "whatever our hand finds to do"

# BOOK REVIEW

## *If I Should Wake Before I Die:*

The Biblical and Medical Truth about Near-Death Experiences.

By H. Leon Greene M.D.

There is a whole host of beliefs in the world today that are often adopted and adapted by Christians without careful examination against the truth of Scripture. Near-Death Experiences (NDEs) are an example of this. People from all walks of life, from all religious and ethnic backgrounds are claiming encounters with 'god' after experiencing 'death' and then being revived. Dr Greene pulls no punches as to what he believes. He writes, "As a Christian cardiologist I view these descriptions of the NDE to be at variance both with my own clinical observations of patients and with my Christian beliefs."

The book is a clear and logical presentation of why he views NDEs like this. The first section defines the NDE and overviews many of the major researchers and proponents of the popular concept. It concludes with a chapter raising some of the major questions that need to be asked, such as "Is the methodology for studying the NDE valid?" "Is it actually necessary to be near death to experience the NDE?" "Can the NDE be produced by means other than being near death?" "Is the NDE identical around the world?" The doubts raised under these headings are worth serious thought by those, Christian or not, who believe the experiences are a valid work of God.

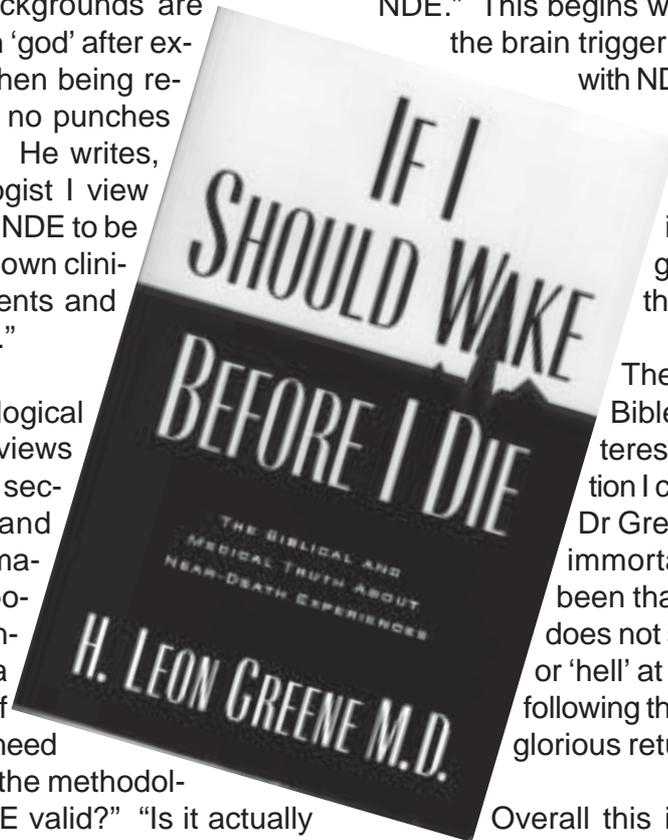
The second section deals with "Medicine and the Near-Death Experience." I found this section of the book to be a fairly 'heavy' read because despite Dr Greene's efforts at making it understandable by non-medical readers the use of a certain amount of medical jargon was unavoidable. However it is worth read-

ing through carefully as it offers a good outline of where medical research and understanding of the human brain is at. His conclusion on the subject of the book is that "brain perfusion .. seems to be the most feasible explanation of the origin of the NDE." This begins with decreased blood flow to the brain triggering the sensations reported with NDEs, followed by the brain trying to 'make sense' of the unusual sensory inputs, which it does in a way that is consistent with the background of the person having the NDE.

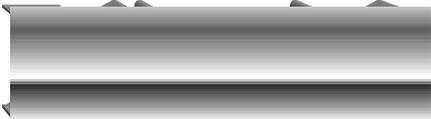
The final section deals with the Bible and while this is a very interesting and well-reasoned section I couldn't help but think that had Dr Greene understood conditional immortality his case would have been that much stronger. The Bible does not speak of us going to heaven or 'hell' at the time of death, but rather following the Day of Judgment, after the glorious return of our Lord.

Overall this is a very good book and I would freely recommend it to those interested in a careful, reasoned approach to the subject. As Tal Brooke, President of Spiritual Counterfeits Project, writes on the back cover, "If you are among the millions who have read *Embraced by the Light* or *Saved by the Light*, do yourself a favor and read this book!"

Carl Josephson



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# A Life Long Quest for Truth

My recent studies challenged me to 'open the case' against conditional immortality again. As I read dozens of articles and books related to my Thesis topic, from many different points of view, I sought to reassess my understanding once more. It was a good exercise. Not only have I become even more convinced of the truth of 'life only in Christ', but my love and appreciation of God for who He is has grown too.

As I study and think and write and preach I realise afresh that the prime reason for accepting the call of the Gospel is, or should be, a positive response to the character of the Almighty Creator and Redeemer. He reveals Himself in His Son as the God who calls, but never forces, us to worship Him; who opens the way for our fellowship with Him; who goes to all lengths to restore us into the image in which we were originally created. I am amazed at His grace, and astounded at the freedom He has given us to choose to follow or to ignore Him. Clark Pinnock writes:

*Human beings are placed in a position in which it is possible to be aware of God or not to be aware, to respond to God or not to respond. We*

*have been placed at the right epistemic distance from God to make a real decision. From this point we can move toward God or turn away.*<sup>1</sup>

This is a freedom that lasts through out our life time. We remain free to choose to be open to God or to be content with where we are at (and go backwards? - "He not busy being born is busy dying"<sup>2</sup>). It astounds and disappoints me how readily we Christians give up searching for deeper truth and a richer understanding of God. We so easily fall into the trap of limiting God to our own understanding. We so quickly assume our understanding is correct that we fail to see the need to keep learning and changing. It is a strange irony that as Christians we verbally acknowledge the need for constant change because of our sinfulness, yet we are often the most reluctant to change.

God is infinite and we are limited and finite, so by definition our quest for Truth can never end – we can never reach a complete appreciation of the nature of God.

What then, shall we give up because we cannot ever reach the end of our task? May it never be! The goal of

any healthy, growing relationship is to know the other person better. Just because we will never fully know our spouse is no reason to give up! Our goal as believers and followers is to keep growing in knowledge and understanding of our Creator.

It is not uncommon for us to think it a matter of pride that we are doctrinally correct, as well we might be on this matter of conditional immortality, but there is so much more to our understanding, even on this doctrine, that there is no room for complacency. The Pharisees were correct to expect a resurrection, but many of them still failed to believe in Jesus' resurrection. We must not fail to be ready to keep learning, being open to challenge and change as others bring the word to us. This doesn't mean being "tossed about by every wind of doctrine", but rather examining the Scriptures daily to see if what others say is so.

<sup>1</sup> Clark Pinnock, *Flame of Love: A Theology of the Holy Spirit* (IVP: Downers Grove, 1996)

<sup>2</sup> Bob Dylan, *It's Alright, Ma (I'm Only Bleeding)* Copyright 1965 by Warner Bros. Inc.

Carl Josephson  
(Editor)

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<http://www.afterlife.co.nz>

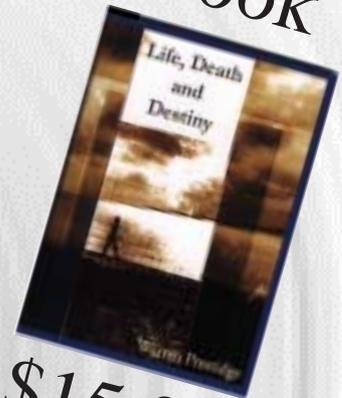
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