



REPENT AUSTRALIA

"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 I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land."

2 Chronicles 7:14

BROTHERS & SISTERS

JANUARY 2004

ENDURING TO THE END

Adoniram Judson spent six years in Burma as a missionary before he won a single convert. At the conclusion of the Lord's Supper which he and his wife Ann celebrated alone, they would say, "We are the church of Jesus in Burma." Judson received a letter asking what the prospects of converting the heathen were. He had been there five years without a glimmer of success yet he replied, "As bright as the promises of God." The pioneering couple persevered doggedly at their task until at last a foundation to the church was laid and the Kingdom of God extended into Burma. We now live in a different age and the Church has made considerable ground in its efforts to enlarge the Kingdom. No longer are most of us involved in ground-breaking labours like the Judsons. Nevertheless there still is the need for their kind of resolution to press on in the day-by-day race and faith choices that are set before us to walk after the Holy Spirit as we fix our eyes on the Author and Finisher of our faith, JESUS CHRIST.

Christians under Attack

Undoubtedly times they are a-changing. The world of today has become more apathetic and more antagonistic to the gospel. Materialistic prosperity has hardened the hearts of many to the need for spiritual values. Moreover, political and social forces are at work attacking both Christianity and Christians who are prepared to speak out for the faith and biblical standards which are being flouted with ever increasing vehemence in a society daily growing more pagan. Our so-called "tolerant" society now demonstrates, in the name of political correctness, an intolerance for biblical truth and standards, while at the same time showing an almost fawning attitude to non-Christian religions ranging from Buddhism to Yoga. Late last year two pastors of the Catch the Fire Ministries faced charges of inciting racial hatred under the Victorian Racial and Religious Tolerance Act for statements made on the Koran at a church seminar which had been infiltrated by a number of Muslims. This case obviously is an attempt to stifle any Christian evangelism to Muslims with its threat of six months' jail or \$6000 fine for individuals and \$30,000 for a corporate body. Furthermore, our lawmakers are steadily following a program to extend perverted and debased behaviour, piece by piece destroying decent and upright conduct. Indeed, Christians are in the sights of the humanists/socialists/atheists. And persecution is just around the corner – if the enemy has his way. It is now just as Jesus warned, "And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But *he who endures to the end will be saved*" (Matt 10:22)

The User-Friendly Gospel

Meanwhile, how is the Church reacting to all these outside pressures? Sadly, instead of setting an example to the world of godliness and set-apartness it is responding by working hard to make the gospel "user friendly". In the days of the early Church persecution proved to be a means of propagation and growth of the faith. Today, however, it would appear that any persecution from the secular community is to be avoided at all costs. The modern trend has been to sacrifice biblical teaching and preaching, worshipful music and singing on the altar of musical entertainment, youth oriented "worship services" and trendy sermons with little biblical substance. In our worship we have used music from the vilest sources and adapted it to praise and worship of a holy God. Instead of emulating the world it is time to consider a complete renewal of our "worship" and really start to *worship Him in the spirit of reverential fear and in the beauty of holiness*. The world's techniques do not reach the lost! It is time for ministers of the gospel to examine their motives and turn away from empire building, falling over themselves to be popular and

pursuing personal ambition. Instead, it is time to seek forgiveness, to prayerfully seek God and to be obedient to His will. Take heart, if we are sincere He will align our desires with His own.

Temptation to Discouragement

The end of the age seems so near yet so far. For years now we have expected the Lord to appear in the skies and call His beloved ones home. We are sure we are on the home stretch but the finishing line just keeps on moving away from us. It is so easy to feel discouraged. How long, O Lord? we cry. These certainly are dangerous times we live in. The temptation to discouragement ever lies at our hearts' door. Even carelessness! How easy to fall into the trap of the wicked servant who says to himself, "My master is staying away a long time, and then begins to beat his fellow servants and to eat and drink with drunkards". As for "the faithful and wise servant it will be good for him if his master finds him caring for his household when he returns" (Matt: 24). But the Scriptures encourage us even as the Apostle Paul encouraged Timothy: "Endure hardship as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No soldier on active service gets entangled in civilian pursuits, since his aim is to satisfy the one who enlisted him. An athlete is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules. The hard-working farmer must be first to partake of the crops" (2 Tim: 3-6). Paul himself, like a great athletic competitor, pressed on "toward the goal for the upward call of God in Christ Jesus". We too *will* be the athletes who run to win by making the appropriate faith choices to give it all over to God in Christ Jesus. Won't we? Maturity in Christ is not only knowing an abundance of theological facts, going to church regularly, teaching Bible studies or writing Christian books. It is simply learning to yield to the Holy Spirit, to follow His leading and to cleanse ourselves of all that God shows us is not of Him so that Christ's life will shine forth from our hearts.

"Great-Heart" Chalmers

In such testing times as these we need strong examples of steadfastness if we too are to endure to the end, no matter how long it may be in coming. Such a one was James Chalmers. Chalmers left England in 1865 to become a missionary in the South-West Pacific, serving until 1877 at the established mission at Rarotonga. Finding the life there too soft he moved on to New Guinea where native teachers were dying off from fever and were sometimes the victims of cannibals. Rows of white crosses in the mission graveyard could be seen as he went ashore and he was left in little doubt of the perils that lay ahead. For years he travelled far up the Papuan coast spreading the Word of God. Finally, in April 1901, after 35 years of constant sacrificial service for the Master, enduring the privations, difficulties and hazards of the region, he was struck down by native warriors wielding stone axes in the dangerous Aird River delta country where he had a fervent ambition to carry the gospel. No wonder Robert Louis Stevenson called him Great-Heart: *Where are you going, Great-Heart! With your eager face and fiery grace? Where are you going, Great-Heart? To fight a fight with all my might/ For Truth and Justice, God and Right/ To grace all life with His fair Light/ Then God go with you, Great-Heart. Where are you going, Great-Heart? To lift Today above the Past/ To make Tomorrow sure and fast/ To nail God's colours to the mast./ Then God go with you, Great-Heart!*

Climactic Days

The climactic days that lie ahead shall bring many uncertainties, challenges and even dangers as the world turns increasingly against us and the enemy goes about like a roaring lion seeking whom he might devour. It is no time to adopt a "grasshopper" mentality, seeing giants in the land and being like grasshoppers in our own sight and also in the sight of the world. This is the day to stand firm, resist the devil and his malevolent servants and *overcome by the Blood of the Lamb and the word of our testimony*. May the Church *repent* of its presumption, ungodly living and "false advertising" and preach the Word in the anointing and power of the Holy Spirit, the One who comforts and strengthens for the coming tribulation that will surely test our faith. In the sure and certain knowledge that JESUS has overcome the world let us fight on to ultimate victory under the Lordship of our Captain. And when the going does get tough "consider Him who endured from sinners such hostility against Himself, so that you may not grow weary and lose heart". Be assured, "soon the night of weeping shall be the morn of song... and the great Church victorious shall be the Church at rest" Hallelujah!

Wishing you and your family a blessed Christmas Season and a Glorious New Year 2004.

R.A: Led by our Lord Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit to glorify God with the Brotherhood of Man and in love and faithfulness to bring glory and honour to His Holy Name. Amen

REJOICE & SHARE IN FAITH THIS MESSAGE IN PRAYER WITH OTHERS & BE BLESSED TO BE ONE IN CHRIST JESUS.