



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

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THE CROSS AND THE CROWN

As we all know, Christianity is the way of the cross. Its Author is the incarnate, risen and exalted Son of God who died upon the cross. Salvation is accomplished through the cross. The cross, not the manger or the empty tomb, has always been the Church's prized and beloved emblem. Outwardly at least all Christendom has gloried in the cross, which symbolises the service Christ did *for* us. However it also symbolises the nature of the service He expects *of* us. If it reminds us that the Christian life is no smooth easy walk over carpeted tracks but strenuous, arduous and sacrificial labour, it tells us too that the Lord asks nothing of His followers harder than that which He faced for them. Therefore He calls on everyone who would be His disciple to take up his cross and follow Him. And in these perilous times that implies the risk of opening ourselves to the ever-growing threat of persecution. It is time we heeded these words of the Master, that in the last days "they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons and you will be brought before kings and rulers for My name's sake."

Anti-God Forces

Godless humanistic parliaments are steadily undermining our God-given freedoms in the name of political correctness as anti-discrimination boards seek to stifle our rights to speak freely in the name of Christ and proclaim the fact that **He is the way, the truth and the life** and that there is no other way to God but through Him. Without doubt the anti-God forces are becoming increasingly aggressive in their war against Christians. As Ken Ham of the Christian Science Foundation said after a visit to America some years ago: "The anti-Christian sentiment in our nations is rising at an alarming rate. Once conservative Christian values were the norm in our society, but those who hold such values are not only held up to ridicule, they are increasingly being considered the ENEMY!"

Subtle Indoctrinisation

Those feared most by the socialist world planners are those with a strong faith in God – Bible-believing Christians. Consequently every attempt must be made to nullify their influence, whether through control of education, mocking their values, ridiculing them personally or through lawful persecution. Many Christians are not really aware of the subtle indoctrination of their children with this constant barrage of anti-Christian values. Yet the constant portrayal of promiscuity and the light-hearted approach to both infidelity and homosexuality by the media are nothing less than anti-Christian time-bombs in our midst designed to blow every vestige of Christian virtue out of the lives of all who imbibe this poison through their TV screens. Some years ago when ex-Vice President Dan Quayle attacked TV's Murphy Brown for bearing a child as a single parent and calling it a lifestyle choice he was assailed by the media, which went into frenzy over his remarks. So it is with anyone who takes a biblical stance on moral values against the prevailing tide of degeneracy.

In the Firing Line

Next on the agenda comes persecution. The passing of laws making it illegal to speak out against abortion, euthanasia, homosexuality and other abominations or false religions place Christians in the firing line for hefty fines or worse. Our lawmakers are steadily following a program to expand perverted and debased behaviour, piece by piece destroying decent and upright conduct. And as decency and depravity are direct opposites they cannot co-exist; so as perversion increases decency declines. Ultimately the freedom to practice decent behaviour will be denied. Surely there is a desperate need in this trying hour for a united Christian voice and a determination to nail God's colours to the mast, bearing the cross, come what may. (For "Jesus Christ is the Alpha and the Omega, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty. For from Him and through Him and to Him are **all** things. To Him be the glory forever! Amen.")

Soldiers of the Cross

It goes without saying, of course, that bearing the cross means standing firm against all these works of the devil as he seeks to deceive and destroy our society. And in standing we must be prepared for persecution as soldiers of the cross, always keeping in mind that **he who bears the cross shall also wear the crown**. For the symbol of the gospel is a cross and a crown; a cross lying in a crown; a crown growing around a cross; a cross-haloed by a crown; a crown won by a cross. Unlike the crowns of this world that shall all pass away, it is an incorruptible crown. The Christian's crown – the crown of the overcomer – is a crown of righteousness, a crown of glory and a crown of life. **The crown of righteousness** is laid up by the Lord for all those who love His appearing. On the great day of the Lord His faithful ones shall know absolute, stainless, infallible righteousness, being clothed in the white robes of purity. Their names will not be blotted out of the Book of Life and Jesus will confess them before His Father and the holy angels. **The crown of glory** symbolises the lustre that shines from the radiance of the glory of God on those who are accepted into His glorious kingdom. If we suffer with Christ now we shall be glorified together with Him. In fact "the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us". We now see but dimly the glory of God in the beauties of nature but then we shall see and experience the full splendour of His majesty. **The crown of life** represents full, free, abundant everlasting life. And "blessed is the man who endures trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life which God has promised to those who love Him". This means access to the Tree of Life in the midst of the Garden of God where there shall be peace, joy and happiness forever. What a glorious transaction – a brief time of suffering for an eternity of blessing and honour and praise!

Rekindle the Blaze

When in the dark days of England's history during the reign of "Bloody" Mary two bishops, Latimer and Ridley, were bound to the stake at Oxford with flames licking at their feet, Latimer encouraged his companion with the words, "Be of good comfort, Master Ridley, we shall light such a candle by God's grace in England as, I trust, shall never be put out!" Previously at Calvary evil forces had done their utmost to quench the fire of God's love but instead released such a blaze that was to spread across the face of the earth. For "**He disarmed the principalities and powers and made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in the cross.**" The fire needs to be rekindled and set ablaze in the towns and cities of Australia to sweep across a nation besotted with sin, to triumph through the precious blood of the Lamb shed on the cross. This is not the time for the Church to hide its light under a bushel. It is time to let His light in us shine forth in the darkness. It is time for God's spiritually empowered soldiers to move in the anointing power of the Holy Spirit to claim His promised Great Southland of the Holy Spirit without either fear or faint-heart because the battle is the Lord's. **It is time to bear the cross that we may wear the crown.**

Wishing you and your family a blessed Christmas Season and a glorious New Year 2003.

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 the honour due to His Holy Name. Amen

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