OUTREACH

RIGHT OF CHOICE

Most, if not all of us, hold our **RIGHT OF CHOICE** as a very precious possession, and are aware that in much of today's world, people have very little, if any choice, especially about their future. Even for us, in what we call 'the free world', it would seem in many ways we are free to do mostly what we're told.

But, in fairness, it must be said that in Australia we do have a **RIGHT OF CHOICE** in most things. As individuals, we can choose, within the limits of our finances, where we live, what kind of car we drive, where we go on our holidays, and so on.
We can also, to some degree at least, control our future, and plan for our retirement. We can control our health costs with insurance, and guard against some of the after effects of accidents in the same way.
We can even prepare for death by making out our will, and can expect it to be upheld by the law of the land.

We exercise our **RIGHT OF CHOICE** in most, if not all of these things, yet for the vast majority, when it comes to the question of what happens to us after death, we refuse to make a choice.

You may say to me, "But I have made a choice. I choose to believe there is nothing after death and I'm happy to just get on with my life." But I say to you, unless you look closely at the alternatives, you have in fact made no choice at all, but have become part of the **'Ostrich Syndrome'**, with your head buried in the sand.

I would like now to set out before you a choice of directions, and I trust you'll look at them long and seriously, and decide who you'll believe.

1) Man says: "There is no God."

But God says: "Only the fool would say such a thing", **(Ps.l4:1)**, and that God's eternal power and deity can be clearly seen in creation, so man is without excuse. **(Rom.I:20)**

2) Man says: "He has evolved from the ape."

But God says: That he created man in his own image. **(Gen.I:26)**, and in his Word calls Adam his son. **(Luk.3:23)**

3) Man says: He has no one higher than himself to answer to.

But God says: “We have all sinned and fall short of his standard”, **(Rom.3:23)**, and that he will bring us into judgment for doing our own thing.
(Ecc.II:9)

4) Man says: He hasn't done anything **too** wrong.

But God says: That thieves, murderers and haters of God, together with the **foolish** the **gossi ps**
and
those who disobey parents
, all deserve death.
(Rom.1:29-32)
And again, the soul that sins will die.
(Ezek.I8:4)

5) Man says: “I go to church and I pray.”

But God says: “People honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me” **(Mk.7:6)**, and “your sins have put a barrier between you and your God and have hid his face from you so that he does not hear”.
(Is.59:2)

6) Man says: “I don't go around hurting people; in fact I always try to do the right thing by them”.

But God says: And so you should, but because of your sin you have all become like one who is unclean, and your good deeds have as much value as a load of filthy rags. **(Is.64:6)**
And again, “no one can ransom himself (or his friend) or give to God the price of his life, for the ransom of his life is very costly and nothing he has can ever be enough”.
(Ps.49:7-8)

7) Man says: “But what about all the different churches and religions?”

And God says: There is only one way. Jesus said of himself, "I am the way, the truth and the life; no one comes to the Father but by me." **(Jh.l4:6)** But man keeps trying to fit that "way, truth and life" into one neat package within a church group.

However, Jesus did really establish a church, but only one. It is the family of God here on earth, and is made up of all those who have been re-created, or reborn of the Spirit of the Word, in accordance with the written Word. We will look later at how you can go through this re-creation process.

8) Man says: “How can I be sure what really is the truth?”

And God says: “If anyone's will is to do God's will, he will know if a teaching is from God or man.” **(Jh.7:17)** And again, “You shall seek me and you will find me when you seek me with all your heart.” **(Jer.29:13)**

9) Man says: “The churches are always looking for money.”

But God says: He is not served by human hands as though he needed anything, for he himself gives to all men life and breath and everything else. God wants your heart, not your money. **(Acts 17:25)**

10) Man says: “I'll believe if I see some proof.”

But God says: “Without faith it is impossible to please him and those who draw near must first believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him diligently”. **(Heb .II:6)**
Again, “his divine nature is clearly seen in creation, so man is without excuse”.
(Rom.1:20)
Jesus told a story about Lazarus and a rich man, and in it both men died. Lazarus went to a place of rest, the rich man to a place of suffering. The rich man asked that Lazarus be sent to his brothers back on earth to warn them of what was in store for them. But he was told that if they would not hear or listen to the Scriptures, they would not be convinced if one were to rise from the dead.
(Luk. 16:19-31)
After all, Jesus rose from the dead, but not many people believe that fact enough to find out what it was all about.

11) Man says: “If there is a God, then why do we have so much suffering? And what about the innocent children and all they have to go through?”

Now God says: When he created man, and gave him authority over all that was to be on the earth **(Gen.1:28)**, this included the children that would be his. Now, remembering that this whole article is about our **RIGHT OF CHOICE**, we should know that it was God himself who gave mankind this right. He said to the man and the woman in the garden that 'if they ate the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, they would die'
(Gen.2; 16-17)
, and they exercised their choice when Satan told them they would not die, but would become like God.
(Gen.3:1-19)
And because they believed his lie instead of God's truth, they suffered the consequences.

We, as their descendants, suffer also, not because we are somehow guilty of their sin, but because the man and the woman, who had been created perfect by God, allowed the poison of a lie into them, and so contaminated not only themselves but all their descendants. **(1Cor.15:22 a)**

I assume we all know what deadly poison mercury is. Even small amounts, when discharged into the ocean, contaminate it for a long time. The lie of Satan, which the man and the woman allowed into them, contaminated the whole human race, right down to our day, and will continue to do so, to the end of time, as we know it. It is this same poison which makes it so much easier for us to do wrong than right, to tell a lie, rather than the truth.

God says “man's heart is deceitful above all things” **(Jer.17 ;9)**, and that out of the heart comes evil thoughts, murders, adultery, fornication (free love), theft, false witness and slander.
(Matt.15:19-20)
Also, envy, strife, ill will, gossip, insolence, pride, boastfulness, evil intentions, foolishness, heartlessness, ruthlessness and so on.
(Rom.1:29-31)

God asks, "What causes wars and fighting among you? Is it not your passions at work in your members? You desire and you don't have, so you covet and kill. You don't get what you want, so you fight and wage war. You don't have, because you don't ask. You ask and you don't receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions." **(Jas.4:1-3)**

Now please don't think of wars as only between nations. They are much more common in families, between families, between neighbors and so on. And today, we don't kill with the sword and the gun, nearly as much as with the tongue and the pen.

Since men did not acknowledge God, he gave them up to the lusts of their hearts, to dishonorable passions, to a base mind and improper conduct **(Rom.1:24-28)**, and says “the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth”.
(Gen.8:21)
You see, just about all the suffering and misery we have around us, is clearly the result of mankind's greed and selfishness, of his passions and lusts.

We are told the world's arable land is very capable of producing enough food for us all, **IF IT WERE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE**. But right here around our own city, we see that land being destroyed. Much of the best crop-growing land is being cut up into building blocks, and all to make more money.

So how dare we try to blame God for the suffering and misery in the world? He has given us, as we have seen earlier, authority over everything on this earth. He does not take back what he has given, and if he did, we would yell and scream about our rights being infringed. And you don't need two guesses as to who would be leading the protest - those who say, "If there is a God, why doesn't he do something about the wrongs in the world?"

But in fact God has given us the right to choose to follow his way, or to do our own thing. We have all helped to change a beautiful world into a nightmare for many people. The man and woman chose, and we are still choosing today, to go our own way, and to do our own thing.

Again, in our vanity, we think we can put things right by our own efforts, but history clearly shows us we can only make things worse. We are told that, 'in this advanced world or ours', two-thirds of the population goes to bed hungry most every night. Now that certainly is no improvement on our past.

But coming back to God, he hasn’t left mankind alone in this terrible situation, despite our rebelling against him, and our general rejection of his Word. Instead, he has provided a way for all who are willing to believe him, and turn from their ways - a way by which we can be re-created into what he originally intended us to be.

That way is the Good News which, by God's grace we will lay out before you now. Good News, for most people, is news that makes them feel better, or makes things look brighter. But the GOOD NEWS we bring gives people hope for eternity, a hope that does not fail.
To help you appreciate this GOOD NEWS, we will briefly re-cap on what we like to term, 'the bad news'.

We have already looked at what God's Word says about his existence, which leaves man without an excuse **(Rom.1:20)**. Man shuns God today, not because he doesn’t believe he exists, but because, if he does admit belief, then he must accept that he is answerable to God.
We have also seen that God says he created mankind for a purpose - to be his children.
But man sinned, and anyone who says he has not sinned makes God a liar.
(Jh.I:10)

There are three principal results of sin. **Firstly,** it causes us to die, spiritually, to God. **(Ezek.I8: 4)** **Secondly**, it puts up a barrier, which prevents him from hearing us.
(Is.59:2)
. And
thirdly,
no one can, by his own efforts, save himself from this death sentence.

(Ps.49:7-8)
If, at this point, you are not entirely convinced that you are, or have been, in the position just described by God's Word, then there is absolutely no point in reading further, because the GOOD NEWS does not apply to you.

But if you know in your heart that you are in the position described, then read on. The GOOD NEWS is most certainly for you.

God is merciful. He saw the hopelessness of our situation, and wanting all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth **(ITim.2:4)**, so he sent Jesus. "For God so loved the world, he gave his only begotten son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." **(Jn.3:16)**

The most important question everyone has to face in this world is, "Who is Jesus?" "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God" **(Jh.1:1)**, and, "The Word became flesh and
lived among us."
(Jn.I:14)
From these and many more scriptures, it is very clear that the Bible teaches us that Jesus Christ is God, come in the form of man.

Now, this Jesus did **not** come to be remembered as a little babe. In fact he was **born to die**.

"He himself bore our sins in his own body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness, by his wounds we have been healed."
(1Peter 2:24)
He came through to our side of the sin barrier when he took our sins on himself. He came to the place of death, where we were trapped, and he died there at Calvary. "The death he died, he died once for all."
(Rom.6:10)
He came of his own choice saying, "No one takes my life from me, and I lay it down of my own accord."
(Jh.lO:17)

Having died and being buried, he rose again from the dead after three days and three nights. **(Matt.12:40)**
We must understand here that God, having "overlooked the times of our ignorance, now commands all men everywhere to repent - or turn in our hearts from our old ways - because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man he has appointed, and of this he has given assurance to all men by raising him from the dead."
(Acts 17:30-31)

When Peter was asked what was to be done by those who believed his preaching about Jesus' death, burial and resurrection, he said, "Repent and be baptised every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ." **(Acts 2:38)** And Paul writes, "Do you not know that all of us who were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into his death. We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life." **(Rom.6:3-4)**

We are put right with God by believing his Word, Jesus Christ, and we lay claim to our share in his death, burial and resurrection by obedience in baptism. **(Rom.6:5)** Just as Adam and Eve

were given a simple test of their faith, and failed,
(Gen.3:1-6)
, so we too are given a simple test of our faith.
WE MUST NOT FAIL.

Baptism is not an optional extra; it is commanded by Jesus himself. **(Matt.28:19)** Having believed the preaching of Christ, and being prepared in our hearts, by faith, to lay claim to our share in the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus in baptism, we are born again, or re-created into what God intended us to be. The Word tells us, "If anyone be in Christ he is a new creation. The old has passed away, the new has come."
(2Cor.5:17)

We find ourselves with a new mind **(2Tim.I:7)**, our whole thinking changes. We have new values - new ideas - new interests - new desires. Instead of forever tending down toward evil and wrong, we tend upward to God and to all that is good in his sight.
(2Cor.4:16 & Rom.6:5-14)
.
The greatest change of all is that of our attitude to the scriptures. Our eyes are opened and we can see what God is saying to us. We were blind, but now we see. We were held captive by our passions and lusts, but now we are free to say,
'NO'
to them
(Luk.4:18)
, and walk away.

Jesus said, "I am the door, if anyone enters by me he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture." **(Jh.I0:9)** Jesus is the doorway in the sin barrier that we can pass through to reach God. Again Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth and the life, no one comes

to the Father but by me."
(Jh.l4:6)
And once again, "If the Son shall set you free, you shall be free indeed."
(Jh.8:36)

It is of the utmost importance that we remember, this salvation, won for us by Jesus Christ on the cross, is a free gift to us from God. "The free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." **(Rom.6:23)** This free gift is not, and can not be, earned, for by "grace we are saved through faith, and this is not of our own doing, it is the gift of God, not because of works, lest anyone should try to boast." **(Eph.2:8-9)**

The faith, which enables us to receive salvation, is not just a belief that God exists, or that Jesus Christ is who he says he is. Even demons believed that he was the Christ, but it did them no good. **(Luk.4:41)** True faith is believing in the Lord Jesus Christ **(Acts 16:31)**, believing in your heart in Jesus Christ, the Word of God - believing all that God is saying to you in the death, burial and resurrection of his Son.

Finally, Jesus said he stands at the door of our life knocking. If anyone hears his voice and opens the door, he says, "I will come in and eat with him and he with me." **(Rev 3:20)**

You have now read some of what Jesus said - the Word of God. If you know that he is speaking to you through what you have read and know your position before him, we urge you, for the

sake of your eternal life, to open the door of your life to him right now, asking him in as your Saviour, Lord and Master. If you feel unable to pray yourself, maybe the following will be of help, if it expresses what's in your heart.

"Lord Jesus, I see my position before God, and know I can do nothing about it myself, but I believe what you have done for me, and I am asking you to come into my heart, and to take over my life as my Lord and Master. I'm also asking you Jesus, for your strength, and the power of your Spirit, that I may be able to become a true child of God, walking in your footsteps, and being your witness."

If you have been able to make this decision and prayer from your heart, **PLEASE DON'T KEEP IT TO YOURSELF** .
Make it known to another Christian - tell the person who gave you this booklet - or let us know.

CHRISTIAN TRACT OUTREACH,

C/O Danny & Terri Maher, P.O. Box 9059,

Wynnum Plaza, Qld. 4178, Australia,

Ph. 07 3396 1630

Email: danny@christiantractoutreach.com

WWW.CHRISTIANTRACTOUTREACH.COM