

## *Isolation Radio Talk*

### **Like yeast in a lump of dough**

Hello. This morning I'm going to talk about a shattering message that began to work like yeast in a lump of dough.

During this difficult and dangerous time for every nation and for all people it has been a real privilege to share with you through Isolation Station something of the Christian faith that has been the bedrock of our island nation for centuries.

The crisis that engulfs us, came as Easter approached, so I have told you of the Faith that has brought hope and reassurance even in the darkest of times. It still does. I said that the first Easter was about real events and real people. I have asked you to use that wonderful God-given gift of imagination; I do so again today. Whatever happened that first Easter, and we can argue for ever about that, no one will deny that the history of the world, and of nations, and of women and men, went in a new direction. Some would say that it began answers to the questions of meaning and purpose in existence itself.

It seems we are quite recent comers to the Universe. Think of it this way. Once upon a time say perhaps 16 billion years ago according to one account there was a lump. Not a large lump; it was made of the lightest of all elements - Hydrogen. Atoms were pressed so tightly together that the mass of the lump is impossible to calculate. A tiny piece - the size of a lump of sugar weighed more than a two hundred thousand million kilograms. Imagine that! Then the lump exploded. The effect was so great that it is still going on today. From that exploding lump we are told, came *all* the matter that made and makes the stars, the galaxies, the universe ... and, you, and me.

One small globe of blazing hydrogen and helium eventually found its way into a tiny, tiny corner of the universe and round it circled smaller, colder, more solid lumps of matter. Then around 4 billion years ago on one of those cold lumps of matter some very strange things began to happen. Molecules never known before began to appear and in time the molecules began to reproduce themselves - minute one-cell organisms; and a whole glorious drama begins: oceans expanded and retreated; continents emerged and disappeared; mountains reared up and then sank again; storms of unimaginable fury blew and roared for thousands of years at a time; forms of life developed; fish, creatures that dragged themselves onto land and then walked on all fours and then on two feet; They had one thing in common: they reproduced themselves; they fed themselves; and they lived and died it seems, unthinkingly.

Then a form of life emerged that was not like that. Together she or he could imagine things being different; a separate existence from the rest of creation; they also knew that existence, also, had an end. They began to ask questions - where have I come from; what happens when I die; what does it mean 'to die'? A sense of 'I AM' grew; it had not been known before. They began to tell stories to explain how things came to be, how innocence was lost and insecurity and an instability had entered their lives. Not only were they capable of love and compassion but also of hate ... and murder, ... lust ... and despair.

Yet dimly they knew something no other creature had known before. At the deepest, deepest levels, they came to sense that there was *meaning* behind this whole visible world. There was power lying far beyond the visible world in which they found themselves. There was a mind that had shaped the universe - it made sense, it really did. From this limited insight women and men sensed a consciousness that was total and immense. When they thought deeply they were so overcome they tried to express it in story; in the buildings they put up, in the music they sang, in ritual and in dance. At those times they felt liberated and joyful. Yet often they followed more primitive instincts; they wanted a world they could fully understand.

Civilisations and cultures rose and fell, came and went, and women and men stood uneasily between the material world they had made and their inner sense of the Creator. Eventually, there arose an empire - Rome. The emperor Augustus Caesar proclaimed himself a god and less than ten years later there was born in a remote province a child who became a man; he was so utterly unlike the god Augustus and stood for totally other things.

Jesus of Nazareth looked at the world from the other end of the shallowness that had become the world of women and men who looked to human gods; gods of power, money, celebrity. His message was clear; it could be heard by any who of their own freewill would accept him. He had been sent by the power that had inspired and called the universe into being to tell the world that the driving force was a single word - Love.

Caught up in the concerns of the world, he said, they had lost their way; they had lost touch with who they really were. They could only see the world through their own darkened glass distorted and broken by their own great 'I', - 'Me', - 'Now'. Only, ... only when they softened the hardness of their hearts could they see the simple vision of the world as it really should be.

Jesus died a hideous death; but it was not the end; Christ rose again. He conquered death and death lost its sting. He returned to the Creator. But in doing so he did not leave us orphans. In a different form, a different nature, a different way, his Spirit remains intertwining with life.

That shattering message began to work like yeast in a lump of dough. Christ had conquered death and he will never leave those who love.

The Easter season has ended; now Christians look forward to The Ascension. What is that? Well, it is that, through Christ you are restored to God. Ascension is tough to understand and next week you will certainly need your imagination - again.

Thank you for listening.

## Prayer

Let us pray.

Lord, you keep us waiting.  
You, the God of all time,  
want us to wait for the right time  
in which to discover  
who we are,  
where we must go,  
who will be with us,  
and what we must do.  
So, thank you ... for the waiting time.

Lord, you keep us looking.  
You, the God of all space,  
want us to look in the right and wrong places  
for signs of hope,  
for people who are hopeless,  
for visions of a better world  
which will appear among the disappointments  
of the world we know.  
So, thank you ... for the looking time.

Lord, you keep us loving.  
You, the God whose name is love,  
want us to be like you -  
to love the loveless and the unlovely and the unloveable;  
to love without jealousy or design or threat;  
and, most difficult of all,  
to love ourselves.  
So, thank you ... for the loving time.

And in all this, Lord,  
you keep us.  
Through hard questions with no easy answers;  
through failing where we hoped to succeed  
and making an impact when we felt we were useless;  
through the patience and the dreams and the love of others;  
and through Jesus Christ and his Spirit,  
you keep us.  
So, thank you ... for the keeping time,  
and for now, and for ever.

Lord, Amen.