

Church column

There's no maximum on forgiveness

By Rev. CECIL ROSENBERGER, Pastor Gormley Missionary Church

Words are interesting. Take for example, — "Fair". What does it mean to you?

First of all, you might immediately recall the recent Richmond Hill Spring Fair — that

weekend of May 11 to 13 with all the exhibition and competition at the Arenas and environs.

Secondly, there comes to your mind the weather forecaster's statement of, "it will be a fair day today". He meant that it would be a gloriously sunny day with balmy breezes and seasonal temperatures. Thirdly, you remember the term

as it refers to honesty, good and proper dealings, and justice.

Now, that's quite a track record for one small word. We have noted the sociological, physical, and materialistic connotations of it.

The disciple Peter came to Jesus one day with a very weighty question, "Lord, how many times

shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?" Matthew 18:21

Peter had a "fair" question. He was asking sincerely about a delicate situation. No one wants to end up as the goat. No one wants to be left looking like a fool. So what is reasonable in forgiving someone?

Now the answer seemed very obvious to Peter. Surely seven times would be the maximum.

Jesus threw a real curve at him. Matthew 18:22, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy times seven".

What was Jesus aiming at? Did he really mean that we had to keep track on our pocket calculator 490 times? I don't believe so, personally,

Why? Would you get your Bible and read the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 18, verses 23 to 34.

What is said in the above verses is all wrapped up "fairly" in verse 35, "this is how my Heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart".

There, Peter, is your answer.

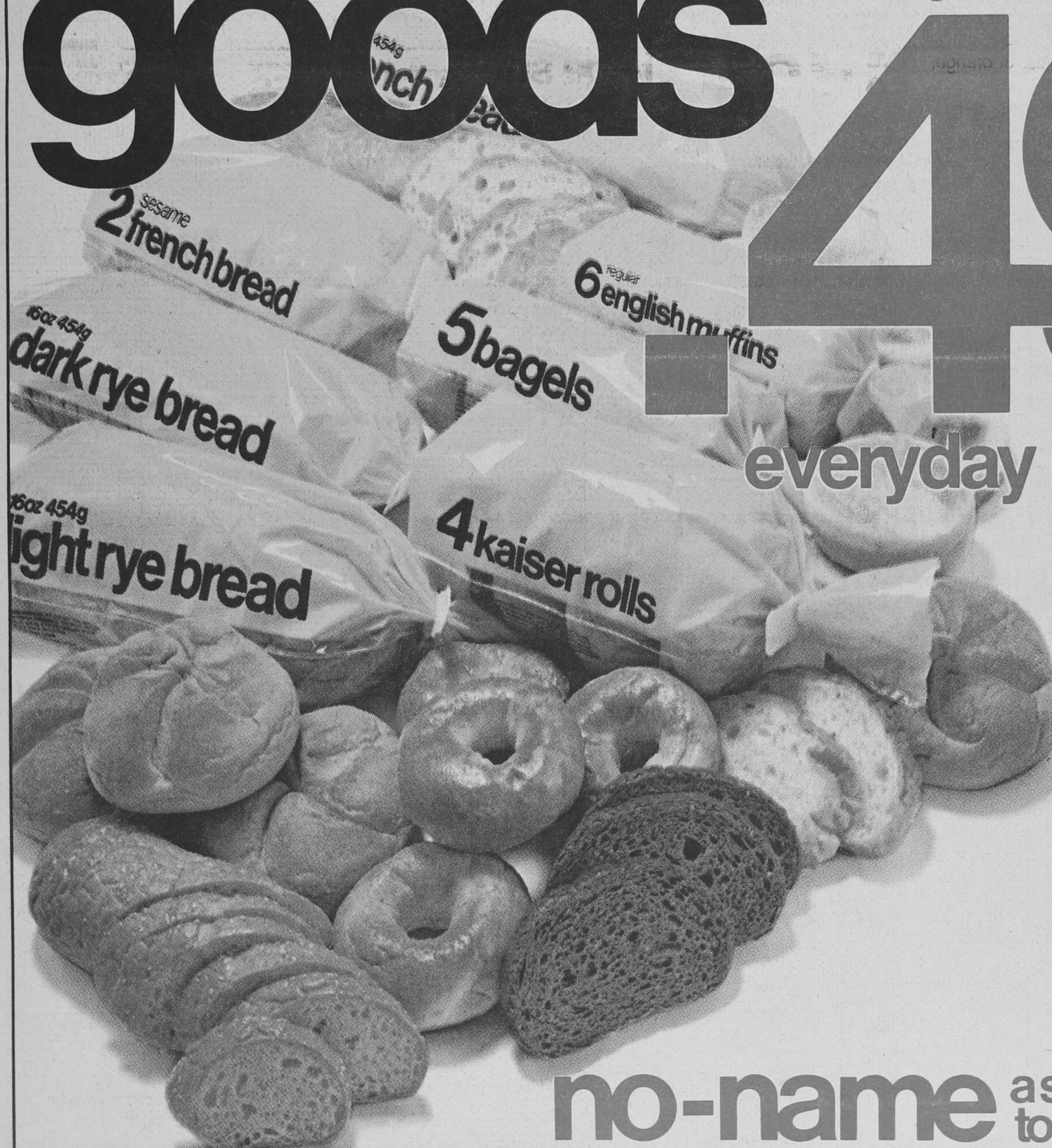
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