



# Diakrisis (Australia)

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*'But strong meat belongs to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern [diakrisis] both good and evil', (Heb.5:14)*

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TA Ministries is a non-denominational faith ministry, *teaching, informing and equipping* the church.

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## Editors Comment

This editorial is unashamedly an appeal and encouragement to pastors, elders, teachers and anyone who handles the word of God or shares it in any way with others. That includes most, if not all of us.

Each week people write or phone and complain that churches they have attended simply do not preach or teach 'from the Bible'. There are many large towns in Australia that now have barely one or two churches that are still truly Bible based and uncompromised with doctrine. Most churches today have adopted liberal inclusive thinking, 'seeker sensitive' or 'emergent church' growth methods, psychology, music with shallow lyrics, women elders/pastors/preachers and other unbiblical or new forms of worship.

Many subscribers to this newsletter are simply starving for 'meat' in their own churches because so many churches today are feeding their people with shallow, catchy, heavily illustrated sermons with clever sayings that tickle ears. Much of 'Christian Television' is an example of this. I have personally seen sermons on Christian television where the audiences seem enthralled and are taking copious notes from material that has almost no biblical root whatsoever! It is amazing to watch people so deceived that they are hungrily eating what they think is 'meat', but is really the latest psychology with a Scripture or two attached for dressing! The apostle Paul encourages us to ***'renounce the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world has blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake'***, (2Cor.4:2-5).

Paul here encourages 'honesty' in handling the word of God as well as the courage to *challenge* peoples *minds*, (vs.2). Our understanding must be this: - the gospel is naturally 'hidden' to the unsaved because Satan has '*blinded*' their eyes, (vs.3,4). We cannot therefore naturally entice people with modern craftily built methods in handling the word of God. The word '*craftiness*' ('*panourgia*') signifies the employment of any or all means necessary to realise an end - 'pragmatism'! The word elsewhere is used to show trickery and the use of the 'wisdom of the world', (Lk.20:23; 1Cor.3:19). The eyes of the unsaved will only be opened supernaturally, (vs.4). We must never preach of '*ourselves*' but only what the word of God '*honestly*' says, (vs.5).

Many churches today simply do not believe that the word of God *in itself alone* has enough power to literally change lives. This is seen in the methods and new programmes churches today so easily adopt. They have subtly concluded that the gap between the glory of Christ and the felt needs of the human in this age, is simply too great for the fullness of God's word to overcome. The result is a 'reduction' of the Word of God. I realize many of the ways we 'do church' are adapted to the culture but what we teach and preach must be strictly biblical. Culture does not define the word of God; the word of God overrides and must speak *to* the culture. The Bible is the *only* inspired and infallible revelation of God.

**Terry Arnold**

## Geopolitics and Prophecy

Many subscribers to this newsletter hold differing views on eschatology (the study of the end times). Most agree Christ will return visibly and at some point we will be *'caught up to meet the Lord in the air'*, (1Thess.4:17). Certainly all should agree that *we do not know the day or the hour of our Lords return*, (Matt.24).

It thus concerns me greatly that today we have a rash of prophecy commentators who all but prophesy when Jesus will come. By 'all but' I mean that some embellish current geopolitical events and dabble in theories and conspiracies that supposedly have something to do with Scripture. This has in the last few years led to no small amount of erroneous predictions and guesswork. *The problem here is in methods that 'read Scripture' into current geopolitical events.* The Scriptures are derived from the current events instead of *visa versa*. It defies the laws of sound hermeneutics.

A few decades ago there were numbers of writers who steered us towards Christ coming *in the late eighties*. Books such as *'88 Reasons Why Christ Must Return By 1988'* became popular. In 1970 popular author Hal Lindsey believed the Antichrist was alive on the earth. In 1981 He wrote on the back cover of one of his books: *'We are the generation the prophets were talking about! We have witnessed Biblical prophecies come true...The Bible foretells the signs that precede Armageddon...We are the generation that will see the end times...the return of Jesus'*. (*The 1980's: Countdown To Armageddon*, 1981, Back Cover).

I have no doubt that the coming of the Christ could be close considering the world has changed rapidly into one which will now embrace an ecumenical 'church' and government and easily fall for an 'antichrist'. But many prophecy sites have gone well beyond simple 'imminency'. There are even those who have led people to believe that we may have already entered the '70th week' - the 'great tribulation'. Reports of imminent war between the US and Iran have been repeated over and over again. In one report in 2007 I read: *'the Americans plan to begin a nuclear attack against Irans atomic facilities in the next two weeks'*. In 2008 I read *'I really expect to see a major Middle East war erupt in the very near future'*. World war III with the promise of such things as 'martial law' in America have been predicted with phrases like: *'it will happen this year'*.

Many Christian commentators use reports by other watchers including non Christians. Although some have 'disclaimers' when quoting, they nevertheless at least agree or sympathise with the predictions made. One commentator on the 9th August 2009 quoted Edgar J. Steele: *'WAR ALERT!!! I believe we are on the verge of the outbreak of World War III. Right now. If I'm wrong, then so be it. I'll apologize for being overreactive later...For those who follow my writings and know just how right I usually am, be advised that I consider this to be very likely in the very near term (within the next week or two), highly likely within the next month or two and dead certain within the next year or two. I am uncertain only about the timing, not the outcome. The outcome is worldwide war, of course, and the likely defeat of America'*.

Such speculation is addictive by nature and many of the writers seem consumed by it. Prophecy is one area of doctrine that has taken many saints into extremes and error.

Much attention has been paid to the global financial

crisis. Reports stated: *'the US economy will not recover'*. There was also frightening warnings and conspiracy theories that the swine flu epidemic was purposely engineered and there would be forced inoculations of entire populations.

Then of course there is the speculation of who is the 'antichrist'. In 2007 a Javier Solana was being subtly put forward as a candidate because of his rise to power in Europe. Then there were reports of the US president Obama as a candidate. The conspiracies and theories seemed endless.

More common is the theories as to when the 'rapture' will occur. In one geopolitical report in 2008 I read *'Christ will return during the feast of tabernacles!'* Then this was quoted from another prominent prophecy reporter: *'According to the most recent set of calculations circulating on the internet, the Rapture of the Church positively, absolutely must occur either October 2nd or October 9th, 2008. Somebody proves by extensive and painstaking calculation that the Rapture will occur either at the conclusion of the Jewish Feast of the Trumpets or Yom Kippur pretty much every year'*. (Jack Kinsella - 28 September 2008) This same author on the 9th Oct/2008 wrote: *'Is This It?...Russia's recent military excursions into Georgia and its support for a nuclear Iran have students of Bible prophecy wondering if this is the lead-in to the Gog Magog War? According to Israeli estimates, Iran will have sufficient nuclear material to construct a weapon by the end of this year - Israel's point of no return. There have been rumours circulating to the effect that, should Obama win in November, Israel will hit Iran before Obama can take office on Jan.20. Will that trigger Gog-Magog? ...Sir Isaac Newton thought the second coming would start a Jubilee year which starts on a Day of Atonement. Adding 49 biblical 360 day years to one of the most significant dates in Bible prophecy and coming up to a Day of Atonement are 360 to 1 odds. Forty-nine Jewish (360-day, prophetic) years from the day Israel captured the Temple Mount on June 7, 1967 = 49 X 360 = 17640 days, which takes one exactly to Yom Kippur September 23, 2015. Count seven years backwards and it takes you to Yom Kippur, October 9, 2008. According to these calculations the Rapture will occur sometime today. So, is THIS it? Ask me tomorrow'*.

As one author succinctly puts it: *'The unwise practice of setting dates and the habit of finding fulfillment of prophecy in current events must cease. This has caused harm to many of God's people, cast suspicion on God's word, and brought considerable embarrassment to the cause of Christ. To see certain events or situations as possibly setting the stage for the fulfillment of prophecies is legitimate, but to declare a particular event as a fulfilment of prophecy (without direct validation by Gabriel or some other heavenly messenger) is not legitimate. We must be careful and wise in how we view the events in our world and how we relate them to the inspired word'* (*'Understanding End Times Prophecy'* by Paul Benware, P.186).

The warning in this article is concerning the practise of reading Scripture into geopolitical events. Some geopolitical sites tickle senses with mountains of material *that have come to nought with time*. The Bible tells us all we need to know about the times of the end! Do we really need geopolitical conspiracy theories to have us watching and ready?

**Terry Arnold**

## By His Stripes We Are 'Healed'?

Often I hear of people preaching or writing on the subject of bodily healing and they use the phrase: '*by his stripes we are healed*'. The context is in 1Peter 2:24,25: '*Who his own self bore our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes you were healed. For you were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls*'.

This passage above is a quote from Isaiah 53:5,6 '*But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all*'.

Both passages above have absolutely *nothing* to do with bodily healing in the atonement on the cross. One can search early commentaries for this verse in vain to find any reference to bodily healing in Christ's atonement. All tell it as it is in Isaiah 53 - it is *healing of sin!*

The phrase '*in his own body*' refers to the sufferings of Jesus on the cross. The phrase '*on the tree*' (literally '*on the wood*') refers to the cross. (The same Greek word referring to the cross is used in Acts 5:30; 10:39; 13:29; Gal.3:13). The word rendered '*stripes*' is literally the swollen mark of a blow from beating or scourging, (in modern English we might say the marks of 'black and blue').

The '*you were healed*' is referring to the '*transgressions*' in the same verse of Isaiah 53:5. In the Bible sin is often spoken of as a disease from which we can be 'healed'. The fact that this is *spiritual healing for sins* is further attested to in the verses following in both 1Peter 2 and Isaiah 53, from which Peter quotes. The comparison between the two verses shows the context is *sin*, not bodily healing: 1Peter 2:25 '*For you were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls*'; Isaiah 53:6 '*All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all*'. In Isaiah this was specifically healing of, and forgiveness for, sin. The passages say '*bore our sins*' (1Peter) and '*laid on him the iniquity*' (Isaiah 53); not our 'sicknesses'!

Almost all the references to healing in the Old Testament are spiritual healing. (The word 'salvation' is closely related to the word 'healing' - Ps.41:4). The Old Testament atonement offerings were not for sickness but for sin, (Lev. 16:3)! On the cross Jesus did not bear our diseases, but rather our sin. This has been the teaching of the church for 1900 years until the turn of the 20th Century when 'healing ministries' were invented within the Pentecostal movement and furthered in the Charismatic movement in the mid 20th century.

The promise and assurance of healing from sin following repentance is clear in Scripture, but there are no such assurances for bodily healing. *The redemption of our bodies did not occur on the cross, but is future!*: '*Because the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and travails in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves*

*groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, that is, the redemption of our body*', (Rom.8:21-23).

Some Christians today seem desperate to see genuine healings and must find Scriptures that supposedly prove God will heal. We must here distinguish between 'healing' by God Himself and the 'gift of healing'. The two are today sadly confused. In the sovereignty of God, miracles and healings can occur at any time, but I have yet to see a single human with any 'gift' of healing! If such a person exists, they will have the gift as it was in the first century! Compare the following descriptions of the true gift of healing with the counterfeits of today: Jesus and the apostles *healed 'all' and 'every'* (Matt.4:23,24; 8:16; 9:35; 10:1; 12:15...); they healed *instantly* (Matt.8:3; 20:30...'*immediately*'); they healed *completely* (Matt.12:13,15 '*whole*'; 14:36 '*perfectly whole*'...); they healed *at will* and there were *no failures* (Matt.8:3); and they healed *organic diseases* (Matt.4:23,24; 9:35; 15:30) - diseases that cannot be cured by psychosomatic means (eg. AIDS, Downs Syndrome). Why do faith healers purposely shy away from such people who have these diseases and why do not the faith healers visit the hospitals where increasing numbers die of cancers and organic diseases?

Some Christians seemed not to have realised that God is just not healing like He did in the first century. The reason for this is because the *purpose* for the healings in the first century is now fulfilled - *it was to prove the Messiahship of Jesus*, (Jn.20:30,31; Lk.7:21,22; Acts 2:22). The gifts in 1Corinthians 12 were called '*sign gifts*' because they *pointed to* and approved the *Messiahship of Jesus Christ* and the credentials of His Apostles, (2Cor.12:12 '*signs of an apostle*').

Unlike the *healing of sin* through the 'stripes' of Jesus, there is no Scripture that guarantees bodily healing in this life. False teaching of the phrase '*by his stripes*' adds to the Gospel and diverts attention away from *salvation from sin*. Jesus did not die for our sickness. He died for our sin! Yes, it is original sin that caused sickness, but that sin has not yet been eradicated from the world. Thus the redemption of our bodies is future in a place where there is no sin whatsoever.

If there is bodily healing in the atonement during this earthly life and we are healed 'by his stripes', then why are our bodies dying every day? Praise God if He heals a body, but to misuse Scripture for the spiritual healing of sin and read into it bodily healing, is to preach 'another gospel'. *The true gospel is about the healing of sin, not anything to do with bodily healing!* This is just another way Satan can divert people from the Gospel of *Christ crucified for our sin* to something else - bodily healing, which is not the Gospel.

'*By his stripes*' concerns the 'transgressions' as spoken of in Isaiah 53. The promise of the healing of sin is at the heart of the Gospel. Isaiah 53 is all about Christ offering His body as a substitute to have sin credited to himself on a cross as a sacrifice to satisfy the justice of a Holy God! To use '*by his stripes*' to claim bodily healing is to take a classic passage on salvation (Isaiah 53) and turn it into something that it was never meant for.

'*He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities...with his stripes we are healed...the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all*', (Is.53:5,6).

Terry Arnold

## Pragmatism and The Modern Church

### **What is pragmatism?:**

Pragmatism says that results prove truth; or in the Christian context, *if it gets results, it works and must be of the Holy Spirit*. Pragmatism essentially derives conclusions based on results, no matter how subjective the results are.

### **History:**

John Dewey (1859-1952) is considered to be one of the founders of the philosophy of pragmatism. He believed experimentation was the arbitrator of truth. His theories laid the foundation for men like Richard Rorty (1931-2007) who is considered one of the originators of 'postmodernism'. These men and their philosophies taught there are no absolutes and we cannot know truth in any final sense.

Postmodernism came after the liberal movement which inflicted much damage on the church late in the 19th Century and early 20th Century. Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834), is considered the father of theological liberalism. From that time onwards nearly all major doctrines were challenged by liberal theologians, many who were involved in German Rationalism and 'Higher Criticism' which reduced the 'inspiration' of the Bible to a more 'human' level. The consequences of this can still be seen in the modern church where today life and experience (orthopraxy) have increasingly become more important than matters of belief (orthodoxy/doctrine).

Although it is true that doctrine must produce life, *life must also be founded in doctrine*. Today doctrine has been minimised to the extent that it is no longer essential...and the result?...*it is therefore no longer essential to counter false teaching*. Today the liberal movement is disguised as the 'Emergent Movement' with leaders like Brian McLaren who reject words such as authority, inerrancy and infallibility as unnecessary and distracting. McLaren has gone so far as to state: *'I don't believe making disciples must equal making adherents to the Christian religion. It may be advisable in many circumstances to help people to become followers of Jesus and remain within their Buddhist, Hindu or Jewish contexts'*.

### **Pragmatism in Modern Christianity:**

Today many churches will use almost any programme available to accomplish their 'goals'. It does not matter what the methods are, so long as they bring 'results'. The methods apparently do not affect the message. 'If it works it must be of God' and the outward blessing of God becomes the criterion by which they often measure the approval of God. But Proverbs 14:12 says: *'There is a way which seems right unto a man, but its end thereof is the way of death'*.

Pragmatism by nature is ecumenical. It will draw in others of different doctrines and faiths to achieve its end. Modern pragmatism does not like the doctrine of separation. Yet Psalm 1:1 says: *'Blessed is the man that walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law does he meditate day and night'*. Pragmatism replaces this with man's own counsel because it gets 'results' and is his 'experience'.

The Cambridge Declaration in 1996 called for churches to return to the Reformation roots of evangelism. Eighty theologians, pastors and church leaders signed a declaration

at the conclusion of a four day summit held by the Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals. Westminster's Robert Godfrey noted: *'If we evaluate the pragmatism of the pragmatists on a pragmatic basis, we have to say that by their own standards they have failed. Why don't American medical statistics reflect the healings of the Charismatics? Why don't our crime statistics reflect the holy living of evangelicals? Why, after a generation of church growth methodology and user friendly worship, is church attendance down significantly?'* The Cambridge Declaration condemned 'the church growth movement' for allegedly stressing *'that a sociological understanding of those in the pew is as important to the success of the Gospel as is the Biblical truth which is proclaimed'*.

The above declaration largely fell on deaf ears. Churches today increasingly settle for 'what works' and are not overly concerned with truth. Postmodernists and pragmatists believe that we can never be certain of truth - this is the cry of the recent 'Emergent Church' movement. However, Christianity is a reasonable faith and the study of the meaning of the writings of the Bible can be analysed and systemised. A criticism of this is that intellectualism and a focus on doctrine removes the life and the wonder of God. But this, although a possibility, does not have to be so. The great leaders of the past such as Jonathan Edwards, Spurgeon and the Puritans, were intellectual men with great minds of learning. The greatest revivals in history occurred under their teaching. Jonathan Edwards in particular is believed by many to have had a mind equal to Einstein. One only needs to read his journals and diaries to see his 'intellectualism' and his enormous capacity to think through deep issues. (1) His life and that of other Reformers often played out in a heart-felt experiential faith that burned to see people come to truth and believe in the risen Christ.

In contrast, 'Emergent Church' leader Brian McLaren writes: *'We place less emphasis on whose lineage, rites, doctrines, structures, and terminology are right and more emphasis on whose actions, service, outreach, kindness, and effectiveness are good'*. (2) This might sound like good advice but it is subtle error. It puts the cart before the horse. It is sound doctrine that brings forth 'actions'. The root of faith and what is 'right' brings forth the fruit of works. Sanctification follows Justification, not visa versa. Emergent pastor, Rob Bell, concurs with McLaren's emphasis: *'Perhaps a better question than who's right, is who's living rightly?'* But does this include Buddhists? In some areas of morality they live better lives than many Christians! But is there no vital connection between what we *believe* and how we live, between orthodoxy and orthopraxy? If McLaren and Bell are correct, than 'His Holiness the Dalai Lama' will have more to offer us. But without sound doctrine and what is 'right', we don't get forgiveness of sin, the imputed righteousness of God and eternal life!

The pragmatic philosophies of the modern church movements are subtly watering down the word of God. They compromise absolutes, please men and cater for the world.

### **Pragmatism in evangelism:**

Today a 'Christian' is anyone who 'believes in Jesus'. That includes many Roman Catholics. It included myself when I was a devout Roman Catholic and *before* I was Born

Again, because I too 'believed in Jesus'! It also includes many cult groups and other religions.

Pragmatism says that larger numbers of people in any one church are often considered a blessing from God. Whatever it takes to get these numbers justifies the means. Thus evangelistic enterprises become the foundation for church unity, in spite of the doctrinal differences in *essential* areas.

It is no secret that modern western evangelistic crusades have at least an '80% fall away rate'. The answer given by those who would defend such endeavours is that we should praise God for the 'success' of those few that are saved. Pragmatism says *if it gets results it works and must be of the Holy Spirit*. However, the real test for such logic is to *push the premise to its limit*. In other words, do we support a satanist camp if someone gets saved from it? I personally was saved while still in the Charismatic Catholic Church - does that mean that the Catholic Church is Biblical and we should support it or join with it? This is the answer to the pragmatists - to extend the logic to its conclusion so as to expose the unseen error. The cult groups also use such false pragmatism and they arguably have better 'results' (numbers) in evangelism than Christians!

Another danger of pragmatism in evangelism is the blindness to the 'hidden' results. My first reaction now to mass evangelism and modern crusades is: are they really being saved and what about the 80% that 'backslide'? Why do we not care about the 80% of whom many have been told they are on their way to heaven, yet they will hear those terrible words of Jesus: ***'I never knew you; depart from me you that work iniquity'***, (Matt.7:21-23). It's the stuff of nightmares and it should make the leaders of mass crusades shudder and examine the *methods* and the *message*!

When my children and I were once involved in *Youth Alive*, I often ignored this 'hidden result' of the 80% fall away rate until I questioned the worldly presentation, the lifestyle of the leaders, the carnality, the fleshly display of the music, the 'Christian rock' bands, the ecstatic worship that appealed to the flesh, and especially the hyped up 'decisions'. Years later I looked closely at some of those who had made 'decisions' for Christ and found almost all had 'backslidden' and gone back into the world and some were actually hardened to the Gospel.

In many of the crusades today, unbelievers are told that if they 'invite Jesus into their hearts', 'accept Him as personal Saviour', walk the aisle or say a 'sinners prayer' that they will be 'saved'. Should we praise God for those few sovereignly saved through such 'easy believism', yet not ask why the *majority* fell away? If I fed poison to 1,000 people and some survived, would that make the poison worth it?

Modern mass evangelism produces quick and deceptively convincing results. The founders of evangelistic literature, the Puritans, differed greatly in their methods from modern Evangelism. They did not devise methods designed to attract the godless. They used no entertainment and did not try to sell the church to the disinterested. They rather were motivated by, and well aware of, the power of Scripture. They knew the truth of Acts 2:42,47: ***'And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers...And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved'***.

Western evangelism is also fast becoming a 'love joy peace' Gospel that fails to preach sin and the law and its consequences. To this are added attractions to make the

Gospel more palatable to the unsaved. These include the emphasis on making a 'decision', aisle-walking, gimmicks, and emotional manipulation (often through music). The result is a mixed and impure message.

### Conclusion:

Pastor John MacArthur writes: *'It is foolish to think that one can be both pragmatic and Biblical. The pragmatist wants to know what works now. The Biblical thinker cares only about what the Bible mandates. The two philosophies oppose each other at the most basic level.'* (3)

Charles Spurgeon prophetically warned of the dangers of pragmatism more than 100 years ago: *'There are certain ministers, who are treacherously betraying our holy religion under pretence of adapting it to this progressive age. The new plan is to assimilate the church to the world, and so include a larger area within its bounds. By semi dramatic performances they make houses of prayer to approximate to the theatre, they turn their services into musical displays, and their sermons into political harangues or philosophical essays; in fact they exchange the temple for a theatre and turn the ministers of God into actors, whose business it is to amuse men...Ah me! The hedges are broken down, the walls are levelled, and to many there is henceforth, no church except as a portion of the world...This then is the proposal. In order to win the world, the Lord Jesus must conform himself, his people, and his word to the world. I will not dwell any longer on so loathsome a proposal...The Israelites were bad enough, but it was the mixed multitude that always led the way in murmuring. Why is there spiritual death today? Why is false doctrine so rampant in the churches? It is because we have ungodly people in the church and in the ministry. Eagerness for the numbers, and especially eagerness to include respectable people, has adulterated many churches and made them lax in doctrine and practice, and fond of silly amusements...*

*I have long worked out before your very eyes the experiment of the unaided attractiveness of the gospel of Jesus. Our service is severely plain...I have set before you these many years, nothing but Christ crucified and the simplicity of the gospel, yet where will you find such a crowd as this gathered together this morning? Where will you find such a multitude as this meeting Sabbath after Sabbath, for five and thirty years? I have shown you nothing but the cross, the cross without the flowers of oratory, the cross without the blue lights of superstition or excitement, the cross without diamonds of ecclesiastical rank, the cross without the buttresses of a boastful science. It is abundantly sufficient to attract men first to itself, and afterwards to eternal life! In this house we have proved successfully, these many years, this great truth, that the gospel plainly preached will gain an audience, convert sinners, and build up and sustain a church.*

*There is no need to go down to Egypt for help. To invite the devil to help Christ is shameful...'* \*

**Terry Arnold**

(1) *'The Works of Jonathan Edwards'* (two volumes), Banner of Truth.

(2) *'A Generous Orthodoxy'* by Brian McLaren

(3) *'Ashamed of the Gospel'* by John MacArthur, P.80

\* The issue of Pragmatism and Spurgeon's warnings are documented in *'Does the Truth Matter Any More'* by John MacArthur (two DVD's) available from this ministry.

## Your Comments and Questions

(Views expressed here are not necessarily those of the editors)

[Editors comments in bold and brackets] Dear Terry, you commented on my letter [K.W, Jan/Feb, P.7]. I am an SDA Christian...What day did Jesus bless, sanctify and keep? [Let God answer: *'One man esteems one day above another: another esteems every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regards the day, regards it unto the Lord; and he that regards not the day, to the Lord he does not regard it (Rom.14:5)'*]

Was a commandment of God changed? [Yes. There are 'commandments' that are no longer binding in the NT. Are we now bound to eat certain foods? According to SDA, yes. Their website officially teaches to abstain from: *'unclean foods identified in the Scriptures'*. But they ignore the New Testament: *'All things indeed are pure...'* (Rom.14:20). 1Tim.4:1-4 teaches that in the 'last days' there will be those who will *'command to abstain from meats, which God has created to be received with thanksgiving...For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused...'*. Has not this commandment 'changed'?] *'All the commandments are sure, they stand fast forever and ever' (Ps.111:7,8)*. [You confuse the 'law' ('nomos') with the word 'commandments' ('entoles'). The word 'commandments' very often refers to the word of God, not specifically the Mosaic law. Ps.111:7,8 is referring to the word of God rather than to any Sabbath]. Jesus said *'if you love me keep my commandments'*. [This is Jn.14:15 - referring to the 'entoles' - the word of God]

I am not saying that we are saved by keeping the commandments of God - we are saved by grace alone but the grace that saved is never alone. [I agree. However, if you are saved by grace alone then why does SDA teach that Sunday keeping will be the 'mark of the beast'? I quote them: *'The fourth commandment of God's unchangeable law requires the observance of this seventh-day Sabbath as the day of rest, worship, and ministry...It is a symbol of our redemption in Christ, a sign of our sanctification, a token of our allegiance, and a foretaste of our eternal future in God's kingdom. The Sabbath is God's perpetual sign of His eternal covenant between Him and His people'* (SDA Website). And here is what Ellen G. White said: *'Not a soul living on earth when Jesus comes will be saved unless he is thus sealed by keeping that day ['Sabbath'] (Early Writings P.11); 'Anyone who shall transgress God's command to keep the seventh day will...receive the Mark of the Beast' ('The Great Controversy' P.449)'*

The Sabbath was a sign of a particular covenant (Mosaic) with a particular people (Israel). This covenant had a beginning and an end - it was made with Israel and not even *'with their fathers'*, (Dt.5:2); it was *'added because of transgressions, till the seed should come'*, (Gal.3:19).

Unless we keep the commandments of God we sin against God, and are sinners welcomed into heaven? [Yes, the redeemed ones that know Jesus as their substitute for the law! *'For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believes' (Rom.10:4)'* *'If you break the least of my commandments - you are guilty of breaking all'* [Yes, that's correct, and we have all broken them - hence all the more need for a substitute (Jesus) rather than the 'shadow' of the Sabbath and the law, (Col.2:16; Heb.8:4-

6,13; 10:1)]. *The scriptures say 'the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord our God' [This is Dt.5:14. Read in its context, it was a sign of a covenant specifically given to Israel and it had a beginning (vs.2) and an end - in the 'new covenant' (Jer.31:31,32; Matt.26:26-28)]...When Jesus said 'it is finished', what did he mean by that?...Did he mean the sacrifice for sin was complete? [That was the teaching for nearly 1900 years until SDA invented the 'Investigative Judgement']...If we sin, we confess...he forgives us our sins. [The context here is fellowship, not relationship. Sin cuts fellowship]. If the plan of salvation is finished at the cross, I quote Rom.5:20 *'how much more being reconciled to God by the death of his son shall we be saved by his life'*. [You mean Romans 5:10 which is speaking of the results of Justification - this verse says we are not just 'reconciled' but 'much more' - ie. justified to salvation] (Heb.7:25); he is able to save...he makes intercession for us...Jesus will make a sacrifice in the end of the world (Heb.9:25-28) [This scripture is not speaking of another sacrifice in the end of the world but THE sacrifice of Jesus at Calvary. The tenses are clear: *'NOW ONCE in the end of the world HAS he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself...So Christ WAS ONCE offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation'*. None of the above Scriptures refute the phrase *'it is finished'* as a once sacrifice that for all time pays for the penalty of sin. Your SDA doctrine of the 'Investigative Judgement' and another sacrifice is heresy - it denies the completed atonement of the cross.]*

About Ellen G. White: She said she was a lesser light to a greater light...She was truly humble [Many have found her 'lesser light' writings legalistic and proud]...About her prophecies - I am unaware of any prophecies she made that did not come true if they are read in context, if quoted exactly. [Are the lists of false prophecies we documented (Nov/Dec Diakrisis) out of context? Search these in context and show me that they are not false prophecies!: *'My accompanying angel said, 'Time is almost finished. Get ready, get ready, get ready...now time is almost finished...and what we have been years learning, they will have to learn in a few months' (1850, Early Writings, P.64-67); 'I was shown the company present at the conference. Said the angel: 'Some food for worms, some subjects of the seven last plagues, some will be alive and remain upon the earth to be translated at the coming of Jesus' (1856 Conference - they are all now dead!; Testimonies, Vol.1, P.131); 'Slavery will again be revived in the Southern States' (Testimonies P.429); 'I saw that we are now in the shaking times' (Ellen White taught the 'Shaking time' was just prior to the second coming)...*

I don't base my faith in Ellen G. White...Ellen and others have supplied extra details, (Rev.12:17,18) [*'Extra details' to the word of God?*]

...What does 'Diakrisis' teach about Elijah?...[I would ask that we deal with the false prophecies first?]

We have to be careful...that we do not become so judgemental and wise in the vein of condemning others...[Agreed. Then please just judge the facts]

## Your Comments and Questions

(Views expressed here are not necessarily those of the editors)

Hi Terry, [Re: Jan/Feb, P.6 mention of 'Revival Centres'] In the early 80s when I first became a Christian I went along to the old Camp Hill theatre on Old Cleveland Rd, Brisbane to see a play 'What's up Noah?' by the Christian Revival Centre. It was well presented and so I then went along to the following Sunday church service - which I suppose was the whole point of the play! They basically preached a good gospel message and asked people to come forward for baptism. I had no good reason to say no, so I went forward. They then told me and about 6 others to expect to speak in a new tongue/language when baptized. Well I didn't know about that as I had not heard of this 'tongues' stuff before. I was baptized as all of us were in individual bath tubs and all the others spoke in a 'tongue' except me! The others were lead onto the stage before the congregation and given a cheer. After drying, I was lead out the side door and told to come back when I spoke in tongues. Well I haven't spoken in tongues so I haven't been back.

The Christian Revival Centres are highly charismatic and yes they believe that unless you speak in tongues you are not saved. They see tongues as evidence of the Holy Spirit within a person.

(E.D., Qld.)

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Dear Terry, I have sent you an article that I wrote last year when NSW prepared for the 'Jesus all about life' programme in Sept/09.

(Pastor Bruce Capps, Sydney)

**Editors Comment: The article is a 7 page critique on the above evangelism programme. Some good points are made and the article is available from this ministry for photocopy donation. One of the quotes from this article is worthy of print below:**

*'...While sin might be the most common factor to all men and women, something that we can all identify with because we all have a conscience that bears witness against us, most modern day evangelism does not put any emphasis on this one commonality. The concept of sin is seen as offensive and so it is mostly avoided especially in the initial stages of contact. The trouble is that if it is avoided in the early stages it must be continually avoided as so called converts that were promised love, joy, peace, happiness everlasting life have been mislead. They have converted expecting a boost to their self-esteem and an improvement of one form or another to their lifestyle. Any talk about sin later on will seem negative, discouraging, and judgmental to them, they will then become discouraged or more likely offended and will almost certainly become what we call a backslider.'*

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### Spurgeon on Separation

*'I have preached God's truth, so far as I know it, and I have not been ashamed of its peculiarities. That I might not stultify my testimony I have cut myself clear of those who err from the faith, and even from those who associate with them. What more can I do to be honest with you?...'*

(Charles Spurgeon)

Dear Terry, Have you heard of 'Presents of God' ministry?...Also known as 'Remnant of God'...

One thing that doesn't make sense is it says in the Bible that we will ascend to heaven in an order. Christ comes, then the dead will be next, then the people on the earth. Yet you say we will be with God as soon as we die? I thought we get judged after Jesus returns, not before? This is so confusing and I'm a Christian! I can't imagine how non believers feel...How do I find the truth and is there anything from that church you would agree with?...

**Editors Reply: The 'Presents of God' ministry is a clever front for SDA teaching. Many of these sites do not mention they are in fact SDA. Some of these sites even sell excellent material by past Reformers and then on the last page have a list of the books by false prophet Ellen G. White! The website 'Presents of God' is laced with SDA and law keeping doctrines. It's poisonous and will take you back to the law rather than into more of an understanding of Grace. You cannot be saved by the law or the keeping of it. '...by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight...a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law', (Rom.3:20,28).**

You refer to 'ascending to heaven in an order'. I think you refer to 1Thessalonians 4 which refers to *bodily* resurrections. You must distinguish between the soul/spirit and the body - this the SDA's completely ignore because it does not fit their theological grid pattern for 'soul sleep'. 1Thessalonians 4 is referring to bodies being resurrected. At death we go to be with the Lord in spirit (2Cor.5:6-8; Phil.1:21-23), but not in body because the body is to be glorified later. (1Thess.4 gives a precise order - the dead in Christ will 'precede', being glorified first).

You ask 'how do I find the truth'? Keep searching the Scriptures. Stick to what is 'orthodox' and plain in doctrine. (If necessary, look into the commentaries of the greats for standard long held interpretations). SDA 'Soul Sleep', 'Investigative Judgment', Sabbath laws, etc, were never taught by the early church fathers and are not part of the 'faith once delivered' (Jude 3). Don't isolate Scriptures from the Old Testament without regard to New Testament for doctrine. SDA with its new teachings was founded by a false prophet and is only 160 years old. But the 'faith once delivered' has not changed in 2000 years.

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Dear Terry, SDA's say they are saved by faith alone...?

**Editors reply: When dealing with SDA's we need to ask the right questions. How do they keep that 'faith' and not lose grace? - by 'keeping the commandments'. They believe you can lose salvation. Ask them to stop keeping the Sabbath...what would happen? - they would lose salvation! Their whole keeping of salvation is based on law keeping whether they admit that or not. Also they often quote the word 'commandments' in many scriptures - but most times the word is speaking of the word of God, not the Sabbath or the Mosaic law. (We have a series of sermon tapes on this, the covenants and the law, etc.)**

## Your Comments and Questions

(Views expressed here are not necessarily those of the editors)

### Terry's Itinerary - Gold Coast Update

Terry's itinerary has been updated before going to print. The many subscribers in and near the Gold Coast may be interested in the additional afternoon and night meeting at Banora Pt:

**Feb.28th (Sun) 9.30am Grace Bible Church, Brunswick Heads Ph.(02)66856056**

**Feb.28th (Sun) 2.30pm (NSW time) Grace Bible Church, Banora Point [Two sermons & question/answer time, followed by supper] Ph.(07)55249325 0419553439**

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*Dear Terry, praise be to God for his calling and your servanthood. Our prayer is that he would raise up more men who are not ashamed of the gospel; more men who would boldly speak the truth in love; more who would count it all joy when persecuted for his names sake...*

**(P.S., Sth Aust.)**

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*Dear Terry and helpers, we received the latest 'Diakrisis', and sincerely thank you. Amid all the religious confusion of our day, we appreciate being informed of the popular teachings and schemes being promoted in the denominational scene, exposing error that the truth may prosper. May God abundantly bless you in your labours for the gospel...*

**(E.&V.B, Qld)**

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*Dear Terry and Beth, We just wanted to send you a message of thanks following another year of ministry, encouragement and exhortation, with 'Diakrisis', and your personal input. We value it highly, and pray that you will be enabled to continue until our Lord takes us to be with Him. Love and blessings in our Lord Jesus Christ,*

**(M&K, Brisbane)**

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*Dear Terry, a friend gave me a copy of 'Diakrisis' which I have read three times. It is good to read some truth which is not very available these days...*

**(A.B., Sydney)**

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*I really appreciate your magazine. I thank God for your faithful stand for truth in such a day of apostasy...*

**(M.P., W.A.)**

### Praise/Prayer Points

- Pray for Terry & Beth as they head off to begin the Gold Coast and NSW itinerary. Pray for safety and health. Pray for the Spirit's leading in the various meetings and that the word of God will impact lives in a lasting way.

## Terry's Itinerary (continued)

### Sydney

**March 4th** (Thurs) 7.30pm Guildford Christian Assembly Ph.(02)88077725

**March 7th** (Sun) 10am Georges River Congregational, Panania, Ph.0408407184

**March 7th** (Sun) 4.30pm Combined churches, at Georges River Congregational, Panania, Ph.0408407184

**March 7th** (Sun) 7.30pm Soul Salvation (Youth) Assembly Ph.0403374967

**March 10th** (Wed) 7.30pm Ryde Congregational Ph.(02)98889337

**March 14th** (Sun) 11.30am Wentworthville Arabic Baptist Ph.0412767250

**March 14th** (Sun) 6pm Combined Padstow Heights Christian Assembly & Church For Everybody Ph.(02)95534818

### NSW

**March 21st** (Sun) 10am Cootamundra Bible Fellowship Ph.(02)69431677 or (02)69423541

**March 21st** (Sun) 7pm Wagga Wagga Independant Baptist Ph. (02)69265804 or 0427699129

**March 23rd** (Tues) 2pm Cootamundra (Beth Arnold - ladies meeting) Ph.(02)69423541

**March 23rd** (Tues) 7.30pm Cootamundra Bible Fellowship

**March 25th** (Thurs) 7pm Cootamundra Bible Fellowship

**March 28th** (Sun) 10am Cootamundra Bible Fellowship

**March 28th** (Sun) 7pm Wagga Wagga Independant Baptist Ph. (02)69265804 or 0427699129

**April 2nd** (Frid) 9am Molong Baptist Ph.(02)63669029

**April 3rd** (Sat) 7pm Molong Baptist

**April 4th** (Sun) 10am Molong Baptist

**April 4th** (Sun) 7pm Molong Baptist

### Vict.

**April 11th** (Sun) 11am Numurkah Gospel Fellowship Ph.(03)58622341

**April 17th** (Sat) 8am (Mens breakfast) Melton Baptist Ph.(03)97473536

**April 18th** (Sun) 10am&11am Melton Baptist Ph.(03)97473536

**April 18th** (Sun) 6pm Melton Baptist

### Sth. Aust.

**April 25th** (Sun) 10.30am Native Valley Bible Fellowship Ph.(08)83886106

**April 30th** (Frid) 7.30pm Native Valley Bible Fellowship

**May 2nd** (Sun) 10.30am Waipinga Congregational, Victor Harbour Ph.(08)85523755

**May 2nd** (Sun) 6pm Church For You, 3 Kirk St. Elizabeth Park, Ph.(08)82547678 or 0417016160

### NSW

**May 9th** (Sun) 10am Picton Bible Church Ph.(02)46810227

**May 16th** (Sun) **Sydney - vacant, yet to be filled.**

**May 23rd** (Sun) 10.30am Betshan Community church, Wyee Ph.(02)43571378

**May 23rd** (Sun) 6pm Betshan Community church, Wyee

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