



A Ministry of Teaching

Whom shall He teach knowledge? and whom shall He make to understand doctrine?... (Is.28:9)

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

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Editors Comments

This is the first newsletter of what we hope will be a series of many, that will inform and equip Christians with knowledge, literature and resources, with which they can be better able to serve Jesus Christ. We should all know what we believe and perhaps more importantly - why. We should be **ready always to give an answer to every man** (1Pet.3:15), and even know *how* to answer every person, (Col.4:6). It is hoped that many of our articles will encourage readers to test what they believe and why. It is my conviction many Christians today blindly believe what they are taught without being able to prove it by scripture or test the spirits, (1Jn.4:1,2). We need to encourage each other to **test all things**, (1Thess.5:21) by the Word of God, (The Bible). Scripture alone must test doctrine and practice, **for all scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:** ... (2Tim.3:16).

The inspiration for this newsletter came partly from a desire to restore sound Biblical teaching to many in the body of Christ. This also came about from seeing countless numbers of Christians being **Tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine**, (Eph.4:14). In recent years the church has seen a proliferation of new teachings and so called 'waves of the spirit', which have swept through even mainline churches. Some of these teachings and practices that were once *extremes* are now the *norm*!

Many Christians today are not examining the fruits of various doctrines and practices, nor discerning the counterfeits. We are a generation of people that are being bombarded with information daily, especially via the eyegate, (eg. T.V.). Perhaps many of us have become *unthinking* and too easily accepting of what we see and hear and read.

May God give us much needed discernment. May we have the humility and love that Jesus had even to His death. May the Holy Spirit enlighten, convict and convince us as He leads us into more and more truth.

Terry Arnold

Passion & Compassion

In our zeal both to grow in and to encourage discernment, we must temper that zeal with knowledge (Pr.19:2), integrity (2Cor.4:2), humility (2Tim.2:24-25), and a genuine love (Eph.4:15), for one another. Let our passion for truth be anointed with compassion. Without that, we become part of the problem we seek to remedy.

T. McMahon, 'Berean Call', Feb.1996.

*No Christ - No Life
Know Christ - Know Life*

'The Mystery of Mary'

In a recent Catholic newsletter 'Ave Maria' (No.5, Dec.), the following was written about Mary the mother of Jesus: *'From the moment of conception Mary was free from the stain of Original sin...Mary was never without divine life...This privilege of Mary is the most beautiful trait of her Son's Redemption...Christ came to take away the sin of mankind; He did not allow it to contaminate Mary...We seek her intercession to get rid of our sins and achieve sanctity.'*

Was Mary sinless and uncontaminated by sin? Did Mary always have 'divine life' and have no need of a saviour? Can she therefore intercede for us to 'get rid of our sins'?

Let us at this point accept the 'tradition' of the church, if it does not disagree with the Bible - (The Word of God). What does the Bible say about these things? The answers usually surprise many Catholics if they believe The Bible to be the inspired, inerrant Word of the living God.

Mary brought her *sin* offering to the temple like all Jewish mothers, (Lev.12:6-8 compare Lk.2:21-24). The Bible says clearly **All have sinned and come short of the glory of God**, (Rom.3:23). The Bible *only* mentions *Jesus* as being sinless, (1Pet.2:22; 2Cor.5:21; Heb.4:15). At this points some Catholics argue from *logic* that Mary had to be sinless to have given birth to a sinless Jesus, who was both God and man. Logic is often nothing more than re-arranging the facts to justify your conclusions, (or confusions!). However, even medical facts break this Catholic logic down since in a mother's womb, her blood does *not* touch the baby. Mary did not have to be sinless to give birth to Jesus!

This Catholic doctrine of 'The Immaculate Conception' was first seriously introduced by a British monk, Eadmer, in the twelfth century and was in fact opposed by St. Ambrose, Pope Gregory The Great, Pope Innocent III, St. Lombard and

the great Catholic theologian, St.Thomas Aquinas. Even the great St. Augustine wrote that Mary's flesh was 'flesh of sin' and that Mary...died because of sin'.

What did Mary herself say? In the Gospel of Luke (1:47) she herself said, **And My spirit rejoiced in God my saviour**. The word *saviour* in the original Greek means one who takes away *sin*! The Bible never mentions any of these Catholic teachings concerning Mary and her sinlessness.

Can Mary intercede for us and our sins? Again the Bible clearly points *only* to *Jesus* as our intercessor, **For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus**, (1Tim.2:5, see also Heb.12:24). **He is our advocate with the Father**, (1Jn.2:1).

Does it really matter that Catholics believe in teachings that contradict the Bible? Let us see what God says, **Every Word of God is pure...Do not add to His words...**(Pr.30:5,6)...**He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him - the Word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day**, (Jn.12:48).

Terry Arnold

By entertaining of strange persons, men sometimes entertain angels unawares; but by entertaining strange doctrines, many have entertained devils unawares. - John Flavel.

Benny Hinn Again

In recent years Benny Hinn has come under the eye of the media for fraudulent practices within his ministry. Added to this are the various Christian leaders who have taken him and other Word-Faith teachers, (Eg. Copeland, Hagin, Etc.), to task, for their heretical teachings, (see 'Word-Faith' section of our literature list for proof tapes available).

So called divine healers are notorious for the lies they tell in order to support their claims of healing. The following report from *Christian News* (23/10/95) exposes Benny Hinn: - *'Benny Hinn's description of mass healings at an Ontario hospital in 1976 is more fiction than fact, according to Personal Freedom Outreach (PFO). His new book 'Welcome Holy Spirit' claims that patients in a Roman Catholic Hospital 'began to receive instant healing' when he and other clergy began to anoint them. 'You could feel God's Spirit all over the building. Within a few minutes the hospital looked almost like it had been hit by an earthquake. People were under the power of the Holy Spirit up and down the hallways as well as in the rooms.'*

'No such events have ever occurred at General hospital,' says a hospital statement reported by PFO. Hinn's 'pronouncement can neither be verified through the medical records nor by testimony from past or present personel of this hospital. Mr. Hinn's claims are outlandish and unwarranted.'

(Adapted from 'Biblical Fundamentalist', Jan.1996).

What God says about His Word (The Bible)

It is 'Pure, perfect, sure, truth, eternal, forever settled in Heaven, it sanctifies, it causes spiritual growth, it is God-breathed, it is authoritative, it gives wisdom unto salvation, it makes the simple wise, it is living and active, it is a guide, it is a fire, a hammer, a seed, the sword of the Spirit, it gives the knowledge of God, it is a lamp to our path, a light to our path, that which produces reverences for God, it heals, makes free, illuminates, produces faith, regenerates, converts the soul, brings conviction of sin, restrains from sin, is spiritual food, is infallible, inerrant, irrevocable, it searches the heart and mind, produces life, defeats Satan, proves truth, refutes error, equips for every good work, is the Word of the living God. (Ps.119:9-11,38,105,130,133,160; Ps.19:7-11; Ps.111:7-8; Is.40:8; Eph.5:26; 2Tim.3:15-17; Jer.5:14; 23:29; Matt.13:18-23; Eph.6:17; Ps.107:20; Tit.2:5; 1Pet.1:23; 2:2; Acts 20:32; Jn.8:32; 10:35; 17:17).

Cult Mission Field

Australian cults adherents number in excess of 655,000+ (excluding Hindus, Islam, etc., another 430000+), and are growing rapidly.

(Aust. Govt. census, 1991)

5 Ways To Discern Correctly

As the time before the Lord returns shortens, there is more need than ever to **Try the spirits**, (1Jn.4:1; Gal.1:6-9), and **prove all things**, (1Thess.5:21). We are living in days when the attack of the enemy is increasingly coming from *within* the church. False teachings and practices that grow within the church are often not discerned to be error because it is often well disguised.

In Acts 16 a slave girl followed Paul and his disciples for many days, preaching *truth* about Paul and his followers. Eventually Paul rightly discerned that she was a fortune teller and he cast the demon of divination out of her. The more truth involved, the more deceptive is the error. The worst lies are those that resemble truth.

It is my opinion that Satan's methods today are as clever as ever. The line between the real and the counterfeit is thinner than ever for most Christians. **False Christs, False prophets will arise and show great signs and wonders so as to deceive, if possible, even the elect**, (Matt.24:24). This ought not to be, since the Bible and the Holy Spirit have been provided so that we may be guided into truth and see error clearly - **to discern both good and evil**, (Heb.5:11).

The Greek word for 'discern' is *diakrisis* which means to 'Judge through'. It carries the idea of dividing or splitting something to see what is good, holy, pure and truth and also to see what is evil, unholy, impure and error. How can we 'judge through' or '*diakrisis*' a work or a teaching to see if it is truth? There are at least five ways to discern correctly that we will briefly look at. Only one of these is 100% trustworthy!

One of the first ways we will initially discern a thing is by the 'witness of the spirit'. The Bible says we are to **be led by the Spirit**, (Rom.8:14), and **to walk in the Spirit and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh**, (Gal.5:16). It is **The Spirit itself that beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God**, (Rom.8:16). The inner witness is connected with the fruit of the Spirit, as in Galatians 5:22, which is the *character* of the Holy Spirit. Two of these fruits are *peace* and *joy*. When we are testing the spirits we may have a joy, but especially a peace, that it is of God. Sometimes we may have a discomfort, uneasiness or a 'check' in our spirits. This is often a signal to be careful. When the slave girl was following Paul, the Bible says Paul was 'grieved'. The Greek word for grieved here is *diaponetheis* and is in the aorist passive tense which literally means 'having been distressed'. Paul obviously had an uneasiness and a lack of peace for many days about the situation and waited before acting.

A warning must be given here to the reader - that this 'inner witness' is not always reliable. It can be mixed with a mindset or emotions and must be considered as only *one* test.

A second method of discernment is to check the roots of the thing to be tested. The roots will determine the fruit. (Matt.17:20). Very often we need only go back into the history of something to see what are the roots. Those who refuse to learn from history are doomed to repeat it!

The mistake that the church is increasingly making is to test a work or teaching by its truth instead of by its *error*. In the Bible *leaven* is a symbol of sin, *error*, (1Cor.5:6-8;

Gal5:9), and false doctrines, (Matt.13:33;16:6-12; Mk.8:15; Lk.12:1; 13:21;). In the parable of the leaven the woman hides the leaven (error) in the lump (of truth). This leaven or error affects all that is good. In other parables such as The Treasure in the Field, the Wheat and the Tares, and The Dragnet, the worthless (error) is separated from the valuable (truth). **A little leaven (error)leavens the whole lump...**, We are told to ... **purge out the old leaven**, and to **have the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth**, (1Cor.5:6-8). If the roots of the thing have error and are not discerned it will not bear good fruit.

A third method of discernment is to examine the action or non-action of the mind. It has been said that the action or non-action of the mind is a major distinction between the true and the counterfeit. Can the thing to be tested be reasoned out from the scriptures? The Bereans reasoned from the scriptures to test what even the mighty apostle Paul taught, (Acts 17:11). Is there any indoctrination process that will develop a mindset that cannot be reasoned with? Is there bias towards emptying or putting aside the mind to accept an experience, teaching or practice?

It is part of the commandments of God that we love God **with all our minds**, (Mk.12:30). The Bible says to...**bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ**, (2Cor.10:5), and to monitor and control thoughts, (Is.26:3; Phil.4:8; Rom.12:1; Ps.19:14).

A fourth method of correct discernment is to examine the fruit of a thing to be tested. This can sometimes be a difficult area as some fruit can have an outside (soulish) appearance that is good and yet be spiritually rotten inside. After a period of time this becomes evident.

The great revivalist and teacher Jonathan Edwards gives five signs of good fruit: 1. God is at work when a person's esteem for the true Jesus is raised. 2. God is at work when Satan's kingdom is attacked. 3. God is at work when the people come to love the scriptures more. 4. God is at work when people are led away from falsehood into truth. 5. God is at work when there is an increase in love for God and man.

If the thing to be tested causes division in the body of Christ or has an over-emphasis in one area, (eg. experience, manifestations, etc.) then this needs to be seen as bad fruit.

The final and only fully reliable method of discerning correctly is the Word of God, (The Bible). If a teaching or work to be tested does not line up with the Word of God it must be seen as spurious. Even if we are not sure at this point it is wise to shelve the whole thing and pray and study the Word further to discern correctly. **Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needs not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth**, (2Tim.2:15).

Terry Arnold - (Adapted from a sermon: '5 Pts. for discernment & The Toronto Blessing'.) See order form for listing of this available audio Tape.

What is the shortest verse in the Bible?

'Jesus Wept'
(Jn.11:35)

In future newsletters this page will feature your comments or questions.

Revival!

Some six years ago a major denomination in Australia declared the commencement of a period to be known as 'The Decade of Harvest'.

During or at the end of this decade it is forecast that an end-time revival will sweep the world bringing whole nations to Christ, and heralding the coming of Christ.

To keep this flame of hope alive a series of ministries have been held aloft by the leaders of this movement, each claiming to be the harbingers of a great outpouring of God's Spirit upon the nations.

The latest movement is the 'laughing revival', spawned in the camps of Kenyon, Branham, Hagin, Copeland and Hinn, and then infecting the Vineyard movement, Pentecostalism generally, and even mainline denominations.

That millions of Christians are now clamouring for power, fire, revival and 'The manifest presence of God', is clear evidence that once again, as in Constantine's time, the church is no longer prepared to be the 'little flock', (Lk.12:32), persecuted and ridiculed as Jesus said she surely would be.

Today Christians want to be seen as 'accepted', 'respected' and even 'feared' for the power they wield to heal, deliver, prophesy and render imagined evil spirits helpless, so that whole cities can collectively bend the knee to Christ!

The obvious absence of power to move God's hand at will has proved to be extremely frustrating. Now in an effort to spark the promised revival, the most bizarre events, which would have been labelled 'demonic' only a few years ago, are now attributed to an outpouring of God's Holy Spirit!

As good Bereans, (Acts 17:11), should we not search scripture for any evidence or clues with regard to conditions foretold just prior to our Lord's return?

If we bother to do so, a completely different scenario

seems to unfold.

In Luke 12:32 Jesus calls His church a *little flock* and urges them to 'fear not'. In Luke 18:8 Jesus asks a question which requires a negative answer: *When the Son of man comes will He find faith on the earth?* He describes world conditions for that time. They will be days as in the time prior to Noah's flood! (Matt.24:37) Everyone then was totally oblivious to the impending destruction and hardly in a state of high spiritual alert. In Revelation chapter nine a horrifying state exists prior to Christ's return. A third part of mankind is killed in judgement - but those left alive still refuse to repent of their devil worship, idolatry, murder, fornication, sorceries and thefts! Are not these conditions surely opposite to revival?

Perhaps Jesus meant what He said in Matthew chapter seven, *...narrow is the way unto life, and few there be that find it.* The truth is on a *narrow* path and *few* will find it.

Scripture does however, describe a worldwide body of 'worshippers' raised up at the end of time. This revival is for real and offers a man in place of our messiah - who will bring together all pagan belief in the largest syncretistic ecumenical religion since Babel. The Bible says his reign will be marked by *signs, wonders and lying miracles* to deceive those whose names are not written in the Lamb's book of life.

God forbid that Christians should be found assisting this great satanic deception, yet it appears that this may be exactly what we are witnessing today.

Nothing short of a radical return to scripture, and scripture alone, will stem this tide of tragic error!

Mike Claydon, Parramatta, NSW.

Spirit & Truth

It has been said that truth has bounds and error has none. Truth will in fact win every argument if you stick to it long enough. The church of the twentieth century is pursuing an increasing ecumenism in *spirit* with love, but with decreasing emphasis on *truth* and doctrine. Yet it is truth that *defines* love and makes it workable. Jesus prayed that the Father would sanctify believers through His truth, the Word, (Jn.17:17), *before* He prayed for unity.

You cannot have love without truth or it is not true love, and it will not work. Love without truth becomes nothing

more than sentimentalism.

On the other hand, truth without love will not be convincing and is essentially carnal. The ultimate truth is the person of Jesus Christ. He reveals Himself through His Word, (The Bible). The Bible contains the truth, but without the indwelling Spirit it can be carnal and lifeless and just the letter of the law. To worship God *wholly* we must worship Him as the bible says, *in Spirit and in Truth*. An example of this is the balance that can be found in *prayer* and *Bible reading* (ie. in Spirit and in Truth).

Terry Arnold

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