



Australia
Diakrisis

A Ministry of Teaching

*But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age...to discern (diakrisis) both good and evil (Heb. 5:14)
Whom shall He teach knowledge? and whom shall He make to understand doctrine?... (Is.28:9)*

Newsletter of TA Ministries Vol.2, No.24

September/October 2003

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

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Contents

P.1 - Editors comments

P.2 - Uniting Church Votes To Allow Gay Ministers; John McArthur Warning; Palestinian Bomb Explodes Early: No Virgins Await; Quotable

P.3-6 - The Miraculous Gifts In History - The Facts

P.7 - Your Comments and Questions

P.8 - Your Comments and Questions; Praise/Prayer Points; Terry's Itinerary

Editors Comment

This year I was speaking in some country areas of Australia and as we travelled through farming land I noticed several old stone churches scattered throughout the countryside. I later spoke to a remarkable lady who vividly remembered these churches when she was a girl in the early years of the 20th Century. She described the Christianity of those days....

She spoke of the soundness and unity in doctrine in comparison to the smorgasbord of vastly differing teachings we have today; of young people happily singing songs that old and young sang alike; of the standard of morality of society in general; and importance placed upon the weekly rest day when families would travel by horse and buggy many miles for worship, teaching and fellowship. In comparison to the wholesale breakdown in families today, she spoke of the strength and importance placed upon marriage and family life. Of most interest to me was the strong and uncompromised preaching and teaching of those days. I finally asked this lady what she thought of today's 'Christianity'... Her reply was that there appeared to be but a remnant of the genuine article.

Certainly there is a '*feel good*' generation today growing up in churches which are practising and believing new doctrines that at worst are 'doctrines of devils' and at best 'tickle ears' of the hearers.

The Gospel itself is under assault. The understanding of the Gospel is being systematically reduced by pragmatic and carnal thinking that says 'if it makes me feel good about God then it cannot be wrong...if it attracts the unsaved, then it is right'. (This is adequately manifested in the music of many fellowships).

Precious doctrines are being all but lost, but so is the history which tells of the cost paid to restore some of these truths. At one time in England it was almost mandatory to give new converts a copy of '*Fox's Book of Martyrs*' so that they would know the price paid to bring the Bible and doctrinal truths back to the people.

It is in this area of *church history* that we would do well to remember what was once taught. The writings of the early church fathers, which are now so easily available on CD Rom, express 'the faith once delivered'. Today there are a myriad of new teachings, accepted as orthodox by some, yet simply unknown to these early leaders. Worse, some are even misquoting the church fathers to maintain aberrant doctrines, (see Page 3). Others ride roughshod over the history of the Reformation and the Reformers. No doubt the Reformation and the Reformers failed in many areas to relinquish rituals and false teaching associated with over one thousand years of collected baggage. However, the retrieved doctrinal pillars such as Scripture alone, Faith alone and the doctrines of Grace are priceless treasures increasingly being trampled upon by humanistic thinking that nullifies Scripture and ignores the historic faith.

As I travel across the church scene I see even the remnant of sound Evangelical churches currently weakening. The understanding of the gospel itself is now under threat and it may all but be lost within a generation if reformation does not soon take place. **Terry Arnold**

Uniting Church Votes To Allow Gay Ministers

In a landmark vote, the Uniting Church has become the first Australian denomination to openly allow practising homosexuals to become ministers...The majority of the 260 delegates voted in support of the proposal to allow practising gays and lesbians to be ordained. The Uniting Church already has practising gay and lesbian ministers but this landmark vote means the practice will now be openly accepted...

Uniting Church president Reverend Dr Dean Drayton said: *'In 1997 we made the decision to live in the messy middle, to acknowledge that there could be people in ministry who have different understandings of Scripture and different understandings of sexual expression...That decision, in a sense, has been formalised today, or clarified.'*

Reverend Dorothy McRae-McMahon says the decision will encourage more people to join the Uniting Church. She says she has worked with *'wounded people who longed to be included as part of the faith'*. *'They are looking for a place where people are asking the hard questions,'* she said.

Michael Kelly, the spokesman for the Rainbow Sash organisation representing Roman Catholic homosexuals, said: *'Within some churches there's a fairly benign expectation that you will be silent and discreet if you're gay. Within some it's much more draconian than that,'* he said. *'Both systems are fundamentally dishonest, in that they fail to acknowledge what everybody already knows, which is that gay people have always worked within the churches.'*

(Apostasy Alert, 18th July 2003)

Editors Comment: The mistake the Uniting Church made initially was to 'dialogue' with Homosexuals. There is simply no 'messy middle' in this but rather a non-negotiable absolute! The Scriptures are clear...unless you deny plain language.

God will never have homosexuality as 'part of the faith'. To do so would be denying His own eternal Word as well as His nature and character. The 'hard questions' are answered clearly in Scripture! The problem is that the Uniting Church and gays will not accept the answers! We repeat what we have written many times before:

Homosexuality and Lesbianism are both severely condemned in the Old Testament as an 'abomination' with the penalty of death, (Lev.18:22). In the New Testament it is called a 'vile affection'; being 'against nature'; 'unseemly'; and 'error', (Rom.1:26,27); and that this act of 'going after strange flesh' will bring 'eternal fire', (Jude 7). The Greek word for 'strange' here means 'another of a different kind' and refers to men with men or women with women, and perhaps occasionally evil angels with women. Another reference is 1Corinthians 6:9,10: *'...the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of heaven...nor the effeminate, nor the abusers of themselves with mankind...'* The original Greek words here for 'effeminate' and 'abusers' specifically refer to Homosexuals and Lesbians. (See 'Diakrisis' Jan/Feb/2000)

John MacArthur Warning

(Weekend News Today) A well-known Bible teacher and author is calling on pastors to confront false beliefs from the pulpit. John MacArthur says no epoch in history has witnessed the rise of as many dangerous belief systems as the 20th century.

In a recent address to students and faculty at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, MacArthur recounted scores of dangerous teachings that had dotted history, from pre-reformation sacramentalism to current day post-modernism and inclusivism. All of these, he said, run contrary to biblical truth. Baptist Press reports that in MacArthur's words, *'This is not a time for weak men in weak pulpits in weak churches preaching weak messages.'* MacArthur says the aim of good Bible teaching is to conform church members to Christ's image.

According to MacArthur, shallow preaching produces shallow worship. With that in mind, he says he can walk into a church and listen to the music for 15 minutes and tell how profound the people's understanding of God is because it will be reflected in that.

MacArthur, host of the radio program *Grace to You*, also appeared recently on a weekly radio program hosted by Dr. R. Albert Mohler, Jr., president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. During that broadcast, Mohler commented that many pastors focus more on entertainment than on conveying biblical information - *'theological evasions,'* he calls them.

'[Pastors] are avoiding some of those texts that would require them to preach some of those doctrines that might cause offense in the contemporary world', Mohler observed. MacArthur agreed, saying that too often pastors take *'a man-centered approach'* and let the culture dictate their message. That sort of preaching, he said, gives the message a biblical allusion, but in the end *'prostitutes the intent of Scripture'*.

(Apostasy Alert, 25th April, 2003)

Palestinian Bomb Explodes Early: No Virgins Await

A Palestinian Muslim cleric said that *'no virgins await'* four members of the Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigade who accidentally blew themselves up while preparing to plant a bomb in the Gaza Strip. *'There is no partial credit'*, said the unnamed cleric. *'You either kill some Jews and get 72 virgins in heaven, or you fail to kill Jews and you're just another dead Muslim. No virgins for you'*.

Palestinian officials initially claimed that the men had died in an Israeli tank attack, but later admitted the blast was a *'work accident'*.

A large sign on a local Al Aqsa Brigade building now reads: *'Our employees have gone '0' days without a work-related accident. Remember, safety is everyone's job'*.

(Israel Report, 25th June, 2003)

Quotable

'The blessing of God is promised to the peacemaker, but the religious negotiator had better watch his step. The ability to settle quarrels between members of God's household is a heavenly gift and one that should be assiduously cultivated. The discerning soul who can reconcile separated friends by prayer and appeal to the Scriptures is worth his

weight in diamonds. That is one thing, but the effort to achieve unity at the expense of truth and righteousness is another. To seek to be friends with those who will not be the friends of Christ is to be a traitor to our Lord. Darkness and light can never be brought together by talk. Some things are not negotiable.' A.W.Tozer

The Sign Gifts In History - The Facts

One thing you learn rapidly when writing regarding Biblical Doctrine is that you will very likely be wrongly 'labelled'. One of the 'labels' that is readily attached to the authors of this article is that of 'Cessationist'. What does this term infer? Do all who use it understand it alike?

The term 'Cessationist' is unhelpful in that it conveys the impression of a belief that God no longer acts supernaturally - nothing could be further from the truth! The moment that one even hints that some supernatural spiritual gift, vividly described in Scripture, is no longer in operation today or is being counterfeited, the 'labelling' begins.

Too many Christians today seem only to be aware of, or focus on, *nine* miraculous sign gifts; yet Scripture mentions at least *nineteen*! *One* of them, the gift of 'tongues', is then most often emphasised...yet the Bible carefully orders this as the *least* of the gifts! (1Cor.12:28)

What exactly were the miracles and signs that Jesus, the Apostles, and some of their disciples performed? And are they with us today? Of course, many believe they are, in that they have either been in operation during the past two thousand years, or have been, or are being, 'restored' to the church in these last days.

Recently we have been asked by readers, including the leader of an Australian Pentecostal ministry, to comment on some quotes by early Church fathers and their mention of the miraculous sign gifts. These same quotes, we have observed, are being constantly proffered by those who insist that the gifts have never ceased and have been evident throughout church history. The misuse of quotes and the misunderstanding between the *miraculous* and the *gifts of the miraculous* is nothing short of staggering. In addition to this is the deception of quoting out of context and/or the use of non Christian writings. As an example take Jack Deere, a leading American signs and wonders apologist, who has written books and articles that have thoroughly deceived many Christians. His quotes and emotive arguments are exaggerated, out of context and based very much on experiential evidence. Several articles and books have thoroughly exposed his errors but sadly have not attained as broad a market as Deere's books. (1)

This article is dedicated to applying relevant Scripture and an accurate history to the claims of today regarding the 'sign' gifts. The popular quotes and claims to miraculous gifts are examined in their true context.

Most Encyclopedias mention the Montanists in the second century and then usually jump to the 13th Century before any claims for Spiritual gifts are made. The reason for this is because after the 1st Century the references to the continuation of these gifts are almost negligible. Even a scant reading of the early church fathers should convince any reader that *they were simply unanimous in their statements that the gifts had ceased*.

However, there are a handful of doubtful references often used in an attempt to show that the gifts continued: (underlining ours).

A popular quote from the second Century is that of **Irenaeus (AD120-202)**. Many who use this quote *exclude* the [bracketed section]. [*For this reason does the apostle declare, We speak wisdom among them that are perfect] who have received the Spirit of God, and who through the Spirit of God do speak in all languages, as he used Himself also to speak.*

In like manner we do also hear many brethren in the Church, who possess prophetic gifts, and who through the Spirit speak all kinds of languages, and bring to light for the general benefit the hidden things of men, and declare the mysteries of God, whom also the apostle terms 'spiritual', they being spiritual because they partake of the Spirit, and not because their flesh has been stripped off and taken away, and because they have become purely spiritual'. (2)

The reader will see the difference the bracketed section makes to the entire quotation. The alleged evidence of Tongues in the 2nd Century is based on this *one* quote. Yet it is actually speaking of the (past) *Apostles* and *real known foreign languages* as found in Acts 2! It is a far cry from the unknown ecstatic utterances of the modern Charismatic/Pentecostal movement. Irenaeus elsewhere referred to *false* miracle workers in his day which many use out of context in an effort to prove their legitimacy. Ignatius actually grouped the prophets with the apostles and regarded them as *past*. (3) Writing around AD 250 he said few traces of any gifts remained and he even differentiated these trace reports from the New Testament gifts. (4)

Another common quote is by **Tertullian (AD160-220)**. Again, many exclude the [bracketed section]: [*even if the Creator promised them for His Christ who is not yet revealed, as being destined only for the Jews, to have their operations in His time, in His Christ, and among His people. Let Marcion then exhibit, as gifts of his God, some prophets, such as have not spoken by human sense, but with the Spirit of God, such as have both predicted things to come, and have made manifest the secrets of the heart; let him produce a psalm, a vision, a prayer - only let it be by the Spirit, in an ecstasy, that is, in a rapture, whenever an interpretation of tongues has occurred to him; let him show to me also, that any woman of boastful tongue in his community has ever prophesied from amongst those specially holy sisters of his. Now all these signs (of spiritual gifts) are forthcoming from my side without any difficulty, and they agree, too, with the rules, and the dispensations, and the instructions of the Creator; therefore without doubt the Christ, and the Spirit, and the apostle, belong severally to my God...*] (5)

The reader will again note the difference the bracketed section makes. Here Tertullian is actually speaking *against* the spurious use of 'gifts' by Marcion! Although this is the crowning quote for many, they fail to realise that Tertullian is challenging false gifts! It must also be realised that Tertullian himself was for a time caught up and deceived by the *Montanists*, an *heretical* sect.

Unfortunately many Pentecostals cite the *Montanists* as proof of the use of the gifts, including tongues, in early centuries. Sadly, many are not aware that the early church clearly considered this movement as *heretical* and one that seriously deviated from Apostolic doctrine.

Montanus (AD160) who founded the Montanists movement was involved in 'prophesying'. A close look at the quotes used by Pentecostals to show the gift of tongues in the Montanist movement actually show no proof of Tongues but rather *prophetic* utterances. Montanus and two women proclaimed the near approach of the age of the Holy Spirit and of the millennial reign in Pepuza, a small village of Phrygia, upon which the New Jerusalem was to come down. Maximilla (one of the ladies) said: 'After me there is no more

prophecies; but only the end of the world.' (6)

False prophecies were common to the Montanist movement. Montanists prophecies were described as being: *'...carried away in the spirit and wrought up into a certain kind of frenzy and irregular ecstasy, raving and speaking, and uttering strange things, and proclaiming what was contrary to the institutions that had prevailed in the church...'*(7) Many sincere believers including Tertullian were caught up for a time in the Montanist movement.

Kydd, a *Charismatic*, who made a study of the gifts in the first three centuries, states: *'There is no example of a non Montanist Christian prophet coming from the second half of the second century. (8)...Following about AD260 evidence for the presence of spiritual gifts is non existent.'* (9)

In reference to the gift of tongues, by the time of Chrysostom and Augustine 'glossolalia' (speaking in tongues) was unanimously considered a thing of the past. Professor Glen Hinson at Southern Baptist Theological seminary, in reference to the gift of tongues, wrote: *'The first sixteen centuries of its history were lean ones indeed. Although we find several references in the early fathers, they leave us in no doubt about the apparent insignificance of tongues in their day. Some contemporary scholars even doubt whether the Montanists, often cited as the ancient prototype for the Pentecostals, actually practised Glossolalia.'*

Then, if the first five centuries were lean, the next were starvation years for the practise in Western Christendom and doubtful ones in Eastern Christendom. The few scattered references to it are dubious in themselves and made even more dubious by the characteristic credulity of the middle ages. From the middle ages there is another gap to the seventeenth century, first among the English dissenters and then among the Cevenols in France. For the next two centuries, we can discern only isolated references here and there. Only in the twentieth century has glossolalia prospered.' (10)

We then come to **Novatian** (died **AD346**). Again, note the bracketed section often *excluded* in the references we have seen: [*'He is one and the same, distributing His offices according to the times, and the occasions and impulses of things...He is therefore one and the same Spirit who was in the prophets and apostles, except that in the former He was occasional, in the latter always...since they were henceforth armed and strengthened by the same Spirit, having in themselves the gifts which this same Spirit distributes, and appropriates to the Church, the spouse of Christ, as her ornaments.] This is He who places prophets in the Church, instructs teachers, directs tongues, gives powers and healings, does wonderful works, often discrimination of spirits, affords powers of government, suggests counsels, and orders and arranges whatever other gifts there are of charismata; and thus makes the Lord's Church everywhere, and in all, perfected and completed'. (11)*

Because many exclude the bracketed section, they are not aware that Novatian is writing primarily about the Holy Spirit, and commentators believe he is referring to the *past*. This is backed up elsewhere where he states that tongues were a thing of the past.

Another popular quote we have seen is *attributed* to a **Celcus**, apparently describing Christian prophets of his day: *'Strange, fanatical, and quite unintelligible words of which no rational person can find the meaning'*. However, this is actually not a quote by Celcus but by **Origen** *refuting* Celcus,

who was an *heretical philosopher*! Origen is actually not speaking of tongues here but the act of prophesying. In the *same discourse* Origen accuses Celcus of being dishonest: *'Celcus is not to be believed when he says he has heard such men prophesy; for no prophets bearing any resemblance to the ancient prophets have appeared in the time of Celcus.'*(12)

As to this 'prophesying', **Origen (3rd Century)** agreed with the consensus of church fathers that in their day no prophets had come like the ancient prophets.

We have seen from the above quotes how the very few references attributed to the early church fathers are no proof at all, and are regularly being *misused* and *misquoted*. But let us now look at a small selection of a *huge* number of testimonies declaring that the miraculous gifts simply did not continue after the first century. These are quotes simply ignored by too many today!:

Chrysostom (AD345-407) referring to 1Cor.12-14 speaks of the cessation of miraculous gifts: *'This whole place is very obscure: but the obscurity is produced by our ignorance of the facts referred to and by their cessation, being such as then used to occur but now no longer take place. And why do they not happen now? Why look now, the cause too of the obscurity hath produced us again another question; namely, why did they then happen, and now do so no more?'* (13)

Augustine (4th Century), referring to tongues in the New Testament, writes: *'...these were signs adapted to the time...that thing was done for a betokening [purpose] and it passed away.'* (14)

As one author writes: *'...by the time of Chrysostom there is no evidence of glossolalia in the eastern church, and that by the time of Augustine there is no trace of tongue speaking in the western church. A question we are moved to ask already at this point is this: if glossolalia is as important a gift of the Spirit as present day Pentecostals and neo-Pentecostals say it is, why did God allow it simply to disappear from the church?'* (15)

From the time of the first few centuries AD there is a huge chasm of silence regarding the miraculous gifts, until the **13th Century**. From this period the so called 'cases of miraculous gifts' cannot be honestly used by those who claim to be Biblical Christians. These accounts feature Roman Catholic saints and mystics and are often idolatrous and exaggerated accounts of healings and miracles. And yet, even here there are still so few reports.

Then we come to the **Jansenists** of the **17th Century**, a Roman Catholic offshoot who claimed to speak with unknown tongues. The *Jansenists* were a sect who left the Roman church but still clung to its doctrines. Jansen rejected the doctrine of Justification by Faith and the Imputed Righteousness of Christ. He taught a relationship with Jesus was only possible through the Roman Catholic Church. (16) There were many claims of cures at the grave sites of 'saints'. It is documented that numerous mental sicknesses arose within this group. (17)

The **Quakers (1624-1691)**, claimed miracles, healings and tongues. In 'prophesying' they were not unlike the earlier heretical *Montanists*. In doctrine they denied the full deity of Christ, the imputation of Adam's sin and the atonement. They were known to *'march through the streets naked and exhume bodies with the expectation of restoring them to life'*. (18)

The **Shakers** under 'mother' Anne Lee of New York claimed the use of some miraculous gifts. Lee claimed to be

the second incarnation of Christ and was acknowledged by many as 'mother in christ'. She rejected the Trinity, the bodily resurrection, the atonement, believed in a form of sinless perfection, and salvation in the next life. (19)

The shakers were one of the first non Roman Catholic groups to speak in unknown tongues and exhibit the same manifestations as the later Pentecostal church. There were reports of naked dancing while speaking in unknown tongues.

The *Camisards (1702-1705)* exhibited physical and sometimes violent manifestations. All kinds of miracles were claimed - lights in the sky; gunshot wounds rendered harmless; shedding tears of blood; and children supposedly 'prophesying'. Some say there were 'tongues', but the 'prophecies' were in real languages which differs from today's Charismatic/Pentecostal unknown ecstatic utterances.

The *Irvingites* in the **18th Century** claimed a restoration of many miraculous gifts but eventually they began contradicting one another and fell into disrepute with the outcome being immorality and unfulfilled prophecies. This group eventually became the *Apostolic* or the *Catholic Apostolic Church*. They also claimed to speak in unknown tongues.

Although many will use these groups mentioned as evidence for the gift of tongues, they fail to realise that these groups were *heretical* in doctrine, extreme in practices, and did not display the biblical gift of *known foreign languages* as in Acts 2, but instead the counterfeit - ecstatic unknown utterances - spoken against by the Apostle Paul.

The same unknown tongues were also featured amongst the early *Mormons*.

Some of the descriptions of the manifestations and extremes of these sects make horrifying reading and are practically identical to what has been seen in recent Pentecostal 'revivals'. (20)

Some also cite the *Anabaptists* as evidencing the miraculous gifts. There were two groups of Anabaptists - often called the *Radical Anabaptists* and the *Sober Anabaptists*. The *Radical Anabaptists* were involved in extremes and excesses and false prophecies.

Today many are using these accounts without documenting the teachings and bizarre behaviour that went along with the use of these false 'gifts'. *The miraculous gifts were simply not evidenced in any orthodox biblical Christian group during the above periods!* The incidences mentioned were confined to Roman Catholic groups, mystics, Gnostics, sects, or as fleshly extremes in the church. They were not considered by the church at the time to be orthodox. Between the end of the 1st century and the 17th century it is arguable that no true orthodox Christians practised the true miraculous sign gifts. It was certainly not a part of the Reformation

Another cause of error is the lack of understanding in the difference between miraculous sign gifts and miracles. The miraculous gifts involved humans inherently exercising signs, wonders and miracles without failure. These were the '*signs of the apostles*'. Many historical accounts used for the continuation of the gifts are actually not speaking of 'gifts' but rather accounts of reported healings and miracles without the activity of man at all.

After the 17th Century the next period commonly cited is the late **19th Century** where there were isolated cases of unknown tongues at some Christian holiness camp meetings or revival meetings. However, *they were usually considered either demonic or a fleshly extreme*.

The following quote from Wesley is often called upon: '*Both adults and children fell under the power of the spirit. They shrieked, swooned, fell to the floor as if dead, babbled senselessly, cried out in praise of God, and so on.*' (21)

Many who use this quote fail to realise what Wesley was really saying here and that the people affected by these extremes were not believers! Wesley realised that fleshly extremes were a part of some of his meetings. He spoke of nature mixing with grace and '*Satan likewise mimicked this work of God in order to discredit the whole work.*' (22)

None of the Reformers found the miraculous gifts to be that which God had permanently given to the church. Martin Luther wrote: '*And since we have this sure prophecy [The Word of God] which is being fulfilled at present - miracles are no longer necessary to confirm this doctrine...*'(23)...'*They make themselves ridiculous, therefore, by pretending that they are endued with the gift of healing...He [God] does not exert those manifest powers, nor dispense miracles by the hands of the apostles, because that gift was temporary, and...immediately ceased.*' (24)

John Flavel, a leading Puritan preacher wrote: '*...but now these extraordinary ways are ceased (Hebrews 1:1,2) and we are no more to expect them.*' (25)

Thomas Watson wrote in 1660: '*...there being then extraordinary gifts in the church which are now ceased.*' (26)

John Owen in 1679, writing about the supernatural gifts: '*That dispensation of the Spirit is long since ceased, and where it now pretended unto by any, it may justly be suspected as an enthusiastic delusion.*' (27)

The great commentator, Matthew Henry, in 1712 wrote: '*These [tongues] and other gifts of prophecy, being a sign, have long since ceased, and been laid aside, and we have no encouragement to expect the revival of them; but on the contrary, are directed to call the Scriptures the more sure Word of prophecy...*'

The great revivalist Jonathan Edwards, so often selectively misquoted in recent Pentecostal 'revivals', wrote: '*Since the canon of Scripture has been completed, and the Christian church fully founded and established, these extraordinary gifts have ceased.*' (28) '*I do not expect a restoration of these miraculous gifts...nor do I desire it. It appears to me that it would add nothing to the glory of those times, but rather diminish from it...I have seen so much of the power of God in a more excellent way as to convince me that God can easily do without it. They who leave the sure word of prophecy - which God has given us as a light shining in a dark place - to follow such impressions and impulses, leave the guidance of the polar star to follow a Jack with a lantern. No wonder that sometimes they are led into woeful extravagances.*' (29)

Another great revivalist, George Whitefield, said: '*I never did pretend to those extraordinary operations of working miracles, or speaking with tongues.*' Other names such as Buchanan, Dabney and Smeaton all wrote similarly.

Writing in the nineteenth Century the '*prince of preachers*', Charles Spurgeon, penned: '*The apostles were empowered to do many things, but who are you? Do you claim to be their successors? Then work miracles similar to theirs: take up serpents and drink deadly things without being harmed thereby; prove to us that you have seen the Lord...*' (30)

Regardless of the readers or the authors persuasion concerning the continuation of or the cessation of the 'sign gifts' (1Cor.12), there is no doubt that the teaching for at least

1800 years, was that the extraordinary 'sign' gifts had ceased.

But here we come to the real point of why this is fact and truth. Many Christians are simply unaware of the *Scriptural purpose* for the miraculous gifts!

In the Old Testament Moses was given power to work miraculous signs ***that they may believe that the Lord God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath appeared unto thee***, (Ex.4:5). This purpose for miracles is repeated throughout the Bible. In the New Testament the miraculous gifts were *signs* which pointed to the *Messiahship of Christ* and the *credentials of the apostles*: ***And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God...***, (Jn.20:30,31); ***...Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you...***, (Acts 2:22).

When John the Baptist asked the disciples for proof of the *Messiahship of Christ*, Jesus said to His disciples: ***Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached***, (Lk.7:21-22).

Other verses (below) make interesting reading when one considers the Greek tenses and moods of the verbs used. When referring to the miraculous gifts and 'signs of an apostle', the Greek uses the *aorist indicative* - which means a *definite* time (indicative), and in the *past*. The action is specific at a set point in time past and is not continuous or repeatable: ***Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds***, (2Cor.12:12); ***How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to His own will?***, (Heb.2:3,4).

Beware of those who would attempt to rearrange, change or distort the facts of history concerning the miraculous sign gifts; including those who are attempting to 'restore' the miraculous gifts. For 1900 years there was the understanding that the miraculous gifts were for a very important purpose - ***that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God...***, (Jn.20:30,31)...***a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs...***, (Acts 2:22); and that they were ***signs of an apostle***, (2Cor.12:12).

The healing of the dumb, blind, lame and possessed unbelievers; speaking new revelation; raising the dead; and the ability to speak in recognisable foreign languages (unlearned by the speaker), were all in direct fulfilment of Old Testament Messianic (and other) prophecy, (Matt.11:3-5).

Just as Moses was confronted with false miracle workers whilst before Pharaoh, today we have many counterfeits in the church - men who are ***false christs*** and ***false apostles*** (Matt.24:24; 2Cor.11:13), who claim to have, or are lauded as evidencing, the miraculous sign gifts. They 'make merchandise' of God's people, (2Pet.2:3).

For God to now revert to new revelation through prophets, after having sent His Son, would greatly devalue Christ - and would be senseless. Yet, self proclaimed 'prophets' abound today.

Tongues, Biblically, are 'known languages' and were a sign in fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy to the Jews. Biblical tongues are therefore said to be ***...for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not***, (1Cor.14:22).

To hold to a view that the miraculous gifts ceased or that they are not needed today, does in no way limit God, nor show a 'lack of faith'. Rather, it requires a discernment between the apostolic 'sign gifts' operating for a specific *purpose* and time; and the gifts given to the church by the Holy Spirit in these times - helps, administration, faith, ministry, exhortation, mercy, giving, etc. You don't hear too much clamouring after these gifts in the church today!

We are also warned of the current Signs and Wonders Movement. In *every* place where signs and wonders are mentioned in connection with the endtimes the reference is to *lying* or *false* signs and wonders! (Matt.24:24; Mk.13:22; 2Thess.2:9; Rev.13:13) Yet many today seek after, and entertain, the current signs and wonder movement. Jesus said ***...An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonah***, (Matt.12:39; 16:4).

The church, beginning with the Fathers and continuing with great saints too numerous to mention, have committed in writing their convictions on this matter and these writings are available to us today. Their testimony has stood unchanged for nearly 2000 years. To ignore or twist the testimony of those who carried 'the faith once delivered' is to greatly devalue the work of those God used during these many years.

Ultimately it is Scripture which determines the truth of this matter. Scripture shows us clearly the fulfilled *purpose* of the 'sign' gifts; and the church has always taught and testified to this as the historic faith.

Terry Arnold & Mike Claydon

(1) The book *'Satisfied by the Promise of the Spirit'* by Thomas Edgar is a refutation of Deere's book *'Surprised by the Power of the Spirit'*. Other articles exposing Deere's works are *'Who Surprised Whom? The Holy Spirit or Jack Deere?'* by Richard L. Mayhue, *Masters Seminary Journal*; also an article posted on 7/3/02 at: <http://www.gospel.net/apologeticsindex/do3.html> (2) Iranaeus, *'Against Heresies'*, II, 31.3 (3) Ignatius, *'To the Philadelphians'* 5. 1,2 (4) Origen, *'Against Celcus'*, 1,2; 2,8; 7,8 (5) Tertullian, *'Against Marcion'*, Book V, Ch.VIII (6) *'History of the Christian Church'* by Philip Schaff, 2:425 (7) *'Ecclesiastical History'* by Eusebius, V,16 (8) *'Charismatic Gifts'* by Kydd, P.34 (9) *Ibid* 57 (10) *'Glossolalia'* by Stagg, Hinson and Oates, P.45,46 (11) Novatian, *'Treatise Concerning the Trinity'* XXIX (12) Origen, *'Against Celsus'* VII,11 (13) Homilies in 1st Corinthians: Homily XXIX and XXXVI (14) Homily No.6 on 1John (15) *'Tongues Speaking'* by Hoekema, P.19 (16) *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 14th edition 12:892 (17) *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of religious knowledge* (1967) (18) *'Speaking With Tongues'* by Cutten, P.68 (19) *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, Hastings 3:782 (20) *'The Gift of Tongues'* by Mackie, 71-72 (21) *'Glossolalia'* by Stagg, Hinson and Oates, P.64 (22) *The Journal of John Wesley*, 239 (23) *Works*, Vol.24, P.366 (24) *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Vol.II, P.637. (25) Flavel, Vol.II, P.308 (26) *The Beatitudes* 14 (27) *Works*, IV.518 (28) 1738, *Charity and Its Fruits* (29) *'Marks of the Spirit of God'* (30) *New Park Street Pulpit*, Vol.10, P.542

Your Comments and Questions

(Views expressed here are not necessarily those of the editor or advisory panel)

Terry...I'd like to say thank you for providing a publication such as 'Diakrisis'. I began reading it about a month ago, and I must say that it has made a profound impact on my walk with Christ. Your articles are thought provoking and well supported by Scripture, and have opened my eyes to the truth of God's Word.

In particular, I have found your teaching on the extremes and excesses of the Pentecostal/Charismatic movement to be most helpful, as up until a few months ago I was attending a Pentecostal church. Indeed, I had grown up within this church for practically my whole Christian life, and was even involved in ministry as a 'worship leader'. I had also forged relationships with many wonderful people within the congregation, so leaving, after attending for so long, was especially hard for me.

However, I had always felt in my heart that something about the church's teaching wasn't quite right. I would feel uncomfortable, for example, about people being 'slain in the Spirit' (particularly when they made noises or shook uncontrollably); and often had serious doubts as to the importance of speaking in 'tongues' as evidence of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Later I found out that this uneasiness was in fact the Holy Spirit convicting me of false teaching, but for many years I dismissed it as just my flesh opposing what appeared to be the work of God. After all, I was only young (both in my faith and in my years) and besides, wasn't a mainstream church supposed to preach God's truth?

I felt confused, but it wasn't until January of this year that I began to heed the Spirit's call. I was attending a four-day 'Planet Shakers' conference in Adelaide with my church's youth group, eager to learn more about God and to grow in my relationship with Him. At first, the conference seemed to be like many of the Christian functions that I had attended in the past: loud music, dynamic preachers and young Christians like me coming together to worship Jesus.

However, as the conference progressed I began to notice certain things that didn't 'sit right' with me. I noticed, for instance, that there was a nightly half-hour 'sermon' emphasizing the importance of giving as a primary means of obtaining material blessing from God. I also noticed that the worship was unashamedly ecstatic and repetitive, and that there were altar calls and mass 'conversions' or 'healing' in nearly every session.

Even more unbelievable, though, was the attitude of the

conference's director, Russell Evans: at one stage he said that he could 'demonstrate the power of the Holy Spirit' simply by throwing a towel at someone who would subsequently fall over! I was shocked at this outright blasphemy (to say the least), but I was even more shocked at the response I got from my youth pastor, who, when told of my concern, said that Planet Shakers was a 'perfectly normal Pentecostal conference' and that I should just 'chew the meat and spit out the bones'.

I was also deeply concerned about the fact that I was the only one out of my entire youth group who had a negative experience of the conference! In fact, I was so distressed about being the only one that I no longer felt like a part of the group, and as a result I began to question my faith. Did I really know who God was? If this was the one true God, then why did I suddenly feel so distant from Him? Why did I no longer want to worship Him?

It was at this point that I decided to search for the truth: I took a break from church and began to earnestly pray and study the Word of God for myself. However, I was still pretty upset by the Planet Shakers experience, and so found this to be incredibly difficult: so much so that I came dangerously close to giving up on the faith altogether.

The only thing that gave me hope was, in fact, your [audio tape] testimony on how you were delivered from the movement. (My mum, who is also on your mailing list, gave me a copy to listen to). I identified with so many of the things you mentioned, and was relieved to find that there was someone else out there who felt the same way I did. Indeed you confirmed my suspicions about the movement, but most importantly you helped open my eyes to God's truth. I have since become an avid reader of your newsletter, and have worked up the courage to leave the offending church, which I now realise is deeply involved in both extra-biblical revelation and the ecumenical movement. I am currently seeking a new church within the western suburbs of Melbourne, but admit my reluctance in committing for fear of being contaminated by false doctrine all over again. Do you know of any particular churches within the area that I could attend? I am keen to fellowship within a caring, Christ-centred and, above all, Sola Scriptura church, and would appreciate any advice you can offer. Once again I thank you, and may the Lord bless both you and your ministry abundantly. Yours in Christ, (C.M., Vict.)

Dear Terry,...I was surprised to learn of those who attacked you and Mike with such language [May/June; July/Aug]..Name calling or slandering is not good fruit...Scriptures are there to keep us humble...You have at 'Diakrisis' an unenviable task that many would not pursue, but you have and hopefully will continue to contend earnestly for the faith, taking the knocks or being persecuted for righteousness sake; but also know you have support from many Christians who give you encouragement and support, knowing one day the Lord will reward you with a better heavenly treasure. Rejoice! Looking forward to the next newsletter. (J.R., SE Qld.)

[From a recent subscriber] Dear Terry,...'Fields White Unto Harvest'...I cannot wait to receive and read it...God bless you for all your wonderful work in exposing the 'devils' in the church...TV preachers like Kenneth Copeland, Jesse du Plantis, Howard Browne, people howling, running amok in the church, spinning like tops...after being 'slain in the spirit'...[they] have obviously been hypnotised...also Kenneth Hagin...his audience slithering out of their seats onto the floor - he hisses at them, and they hiss back...I cannot believe that I have been deceived for so long... (C.H., W.A.)

'One of the first steps that the centrality of my need is giving way to the centrality of the person and claim of Jesus is a quickened sense of sin - in which the Charismatic renewal has been strangely and persistently defective. It has spoken much more of needs that require healing than it has of sins that require repentance.' ('The Forgotten Father' P.149-150)

Your Comments and Questions

(Views expressed here are not necessarily those of the editor or advisory panel)

Dear Terry,...the *Diakrisis*' newsletter, always a good read, the article on the Neo - Evangelical Movement [May/June, 2003] is spot on, apparently there are some trying to come up with a new name for true evangelicals since the meaning of what an 'Evangelical' is now has been so distorted from the original.

The article on Hillsong church was insightful, it's big business this Hillsong stuff and it seems the 'Christian' public just can't get enough of it. [T.H., Brisbane]

Dear all, Lately, I have been receiving much pleasure and strengthening of my faith by reading through the old 'Diakrisis' I have, some back to 1997. The articles are still very relevant and it is so sad to see how many Christians are still being deceived. Thank you for your faithful work - I am sure the Lord will richly reward you. God bless you and your family, (L.W., Singleton, NSW)

Dear friends, many thanks for issues of 'Diakrisis' ...only sorry 'Diakrisis' was not available in days of my ministry - I retired about 14 years ago - it would have been of great help to me at that time of full time ministry in the Uniting Church...(J.H. Townsville, Qld.)

Dear Terry,...I read a quote that I thought is right up your alley, and perhaps would be suitable for the newsletter: 'Feeding on God's truth will keep you from swallowing a lie'. It was printed in our church bulletin.

I saw an interview with a Uniting Church minister on the 'Today Show' (Channel 9) Tuesday morning. He has left the church because of the recent controversial decision [ordaining Homosexuals]. I was impressed by what he said. He made the statement that the church is no longer a church but a sect because of the recent decision; that when Jesus comes back, the people in the sect will say 'Lord, Lord' and Jesus will say that this is not the church He started and tell them to depart from Him, [Matt.7:23]. The minister said this is a very serious thing. He actually said all that to the lady interviewer! Then he told her 'God bless you' at the end of the interview! Love from (S.A., Brisbane)

Praise Points

- Thank the Lord for many departing from false teaching and many recent contacts with those who are shipwrecked in the faith. May God bring truth to them...

Prayer Points

- Pray for the Sth. Aust. trip, that hearers would be edified by truth as the Word is preached and taught.
- Pray for the health of the workers in this ministry. Pray for strength and health to finish a heavy itinerary this year.

Dear Terry, Thank you for 'Diakrisis'...The church is truly a remnant; false teaching abounds. Thank God you and a few others hold firm to the Bible as the inerrant and infallible Word of God...Keep fighting for the faith once given to the saints (Jude 3)...(G.S., Kingaroy, Qld.)

Terry's Itinerary

Sth. Aust. Itinerary

Aug.22nd (Frid) 7.30pm Native Bible Valley Fellowship, near Nairne, Ph.83886106

Aug.23rd(Sat) 2pm Church For You, Elizabeth, Ph.82547678

Aug.24th (Sun) 10am McLaren Vale Baptist, McLaren Vale Ph.85562534

Aug.24th(Sun) 6pm Church For You, Elizabeth Ph.82547678

Aug.27th (Wed) 7pm Church For You, Elizabeth

Aug.29th (Fri) 7.30pm South West Baptist, Seacliff (Youth Group/Young Adults) Ph.83870248 0403159664

Aug.30th (Sat) 7pm Southwest Baptists, Young Adults

Aug.31st (Sun) 8am Radio slot Ph.0414393300 (08) 82402202

Aug.31st (Sun) 10am & 6pm South West Baptist, Seacliff

Sept.2nd (Tues) 7.30pm South West Baptist, Seacliff

Sept.3rd - 5th (Wed - Frid) 7pm Lighthouse Baptist Church Bower Cottages, Semaphore Park Ph.0414393300 (08)82402202

Sept.4th(Thurs) 7pm Lighthouse Baptist Church (08)82402202

Sept.5th (Frid) 7pm Lighthouse Baptist Church

Sept.6th (Sat) 1pm Northside Baptist, Para Vista - **Seminar on evangelism/or evangelism to cults** (to be decided) Ph.82840913

Sept.7th (Sun) 10am & 6pm Emmanuel Baptist, Flinders Park Ph.82441977

Sept.8th (Mon) 7.30pm Emmanuel Baptist (home meeting)

Sept.9th (Tues) 7.30pm Emmanuel Baptist

Sept.10th (Wed) 7pm Church For You, Elizabeth Ph.82547678

Sept.13th (Sat) 2pm Church For You, Elizabeth - **Seminar on 'Tongues'** Ph.82547678

Sept.14th (Sun) 10am & 6pm Church For You, Elizabeth

Victorian Itinerary

Nov.2nd (Sun) 10am & 11am Open Door Baptist, Melton Ph.(03)97473536

Nov.2nd (Sun) pm Golden City Baptist, Bendigo (03)54496368

Nov.5th Wed. pm Golden City Baptist, Bendigo

Nov.8th (Sat-**Seminar on Tongues**-Tentative) - **14th** Lavington Baptist, Albury Ph. (02)60215860/Bethel Baptist, Mt Beauty Ph.57541784

Nov.16th am & pm Rose City Baptist, Benalla Ph.57625220

Nov.19th (Wed) 7.45pm Numurkah Gospel Hall (03)58622341

Nov.21st (Frid) - 23rd Sun. am Calvary Baptist, Melbourne Ph.97285778

Nov.23rd (Sun) pm Croydon Independent Baptist Ph.97264481

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