



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)*

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

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The editors may not necessarily agree with all the views expressed by subscribers in this newsletter.

We welcome comments and articles contributed by readers. Unless otherwise requested, these may be included in following newsletters at the discretion of the editor.

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Editors Comments

This faith ministry has now been in place for more than 16 years and this newsletter more than 10 years. The mission has always been to *inform, teach and equip* the saints.

The ministry began with informing just a handful of Christians who were enquiring or debating about the 'Toronto Blessing' which ravaged the church in the early nineties. As we wrote the articles and they were circulated, we were surprised by the stream of enquiries from people and pastors requesting more information. There were some who accused us of 'blaspheming the work of the Holy Spirit'. But as one church after another began to suffer division and turmoil we sensed there was a real need for a dedicated ministry to inform, teach and equip, as well as provide resources to pastors and elders who were under pressure to 'go with the flow'.

It is a good thing to be informed, but *such information must teach to equip* and in the light of Scripture. Effective information needs to teach the person to *discern* and the teaching needs by the power of the Holy Spirit to *equip Christians for the work of sanctification*.

As the years rolled on there were further apostasies within the church and the deceptions became more subtle. When the 'Toronto Blessing' did not bring the promised revivals, the church moved on to the 'Pensacola Revival' which was really another form of the Toronto phenomena. One was a 'laughter', the other a 'shaking', as some said. Then came the 'Alpha Course'; then the lies and exaggerations of the 'Transformation' videos; and of course the ever present 'Church Growth Movement' with its marketing strategies that appealed to the quest for numbers. All the while, the ecumenical movement was fuelling itself with these 'new things' and the church grew closer to the world. Indeed, *the world was coming into the church to take the church into the world*.

Today the church increasingly uses the methods of the world to 'win the lost'. Perhaps the apostle Paul, if he were here today, would question if we are not 'ashamed of the gospel', (Rom.1:16).

There were times when some churches forsook the gimmicks and appeared to go back to the Gospel and trust the 'power of God unto salvation'. But then came the lure of Hollywood and the likes of the 'Passion' movie to attract unbelievers. Now the 'Lion, the Witch and Wardrobe' by C.S. Lewis may well be the next entertaining attraction.

Increasingly in this ministry we have attempted to teach and equip rather than expose. However, with effective teaching and equipping there needs be some exposing of error, as a read through Paul's epistles will quickly show. But at the end of the day, it is only the Holy Spirit that takes the Word of God to the heart and applies it. This ministry may in some measure be able to lead people *to* truth but it is only the Holy Spirit that can take the readers *into* truth. He is the final teacher, (1Jn.2:27).

Elders in churches are supposed to be warning their flocks and refuting the false teachers, (Tit.1:9). Because this is largely not being done, there is plenty of work this ministry can still yet do, should the Lord in His will allow us to continue.

Terry Arnold

Calvin and Servetus - The Facts

In recent years I have seen a renewed attack on the Reformer, Calvin. It is said that he burned alive a man called Servetus. Some authors emotionally used this to attack what they understand to be the evils of 'Calvinism'.

Even a glance at the writings of Servetus himself will put the story into its proper perspective. But sadly there is a growing number of Christians ill informed on this history and too willing to be emotive rather than scholarly.

Michael Servetus was born at Villanueva, in 1509. After a liberal education, he studied medicine. In 1530 he published a book 'On the Errors of the Trinity'. He said the doctrine of the Trinity was '*a three-headed Cerberus, a dream of Augustine, and an invention of the devil*'. His trial as a 'heretic' was eventually based on his book '*Restitutio Christianismi*'. Servetus sent the draft manuscript to Calvin for his comments and correspondence occurred between the two men between 1546 to 1548. Calvin stated: '*When he was at Lyons he sent me three questions to answer. He thought to entrap me. That my answer did not satisfy him I am not surprised*'. Calvin wrote to Servetus: '*I neither hate you nor despise you; nor do I wish to persecute you; but I would be as hard as iron when I behold you insulting sound doctrine with so great audacity*'.

A Frenchman at Lyons named William Trie had a Roman Catholic relative named Arneys. After the publication of the above book by Servetus, Trie wrote to his friend Arneys a letter stating it was hypocrisy for Protestants who believed in Christ to be burned by Roman Catholics, yet Servetus be permitted to live to publish his heresy. Arneys then placed this letter before the *Roman Catholic Inquisition* at Lyons. Immediately, Roman Catholic Cardinal Tournon arrested and imprisoned Servetus. But soon after, Servetus escaped.

A 'trial' of Servetus was then conducted in his absence. On June 17th, 1552, he was sentenced by the Roman Catholic Inquisition '*to be burned alive, at a slow fire, till his body be reduced to a cinder*'. An effigy of him was burned with five bales of his books.

In July, Servetus suddenly showed himself in Geneva, attending services in Calvin's church. He was arrested, not by Calvin's church, but by the *Council of Geneva*.

This Council was at this time *opposed to Calvin*. Calvin did not hold any official power outside the Church during this time in Geneva. The government of the church in Geneva was Presbyterian with a pastor and a board of elders. But the government of the church was not the government of the city, which was called 'the Council'. The harshest penalty the church could impose was excommunication and that not without the prior approval of the Council. It was only the Council who could impose the maximum death sentence. Even that decision could be appealed by another Council called '*The Council of Two Hundred*', consisting of two hundred citizens of Geneva. *Calvin himself was not a citizen of Geneva until late in his life and thus was disqualified from voting, holding public office, or even serving on the Councils*.

The trial was lengthy, exhaustive and in harmony with the requirements of law in that era. Calvin was called as a witness and drew up thirty eight points of error. During the trial, Servetus hurled insults at Calvin. Two further examinations took place. Calvin, although determined to prove Servetus a 'heretic', most of all desired a retraction. After further examinations, the articles with the replies of

Servetus attached, were sent to the churches of Zurich, Berne, Basle, and Schaffhausen, asking for their comments.

The Roman Catholics at Lyons requested extradition, but Servetus pleaded to stay in Geneva and protested that he *would accept the judgment of the Geneva Council*. He was aware *the Council was intensely opposed to Calvin* and as well he hoped for favour with the liberals in the Council.

The 'Lesser Council' were unanimously in favour of the death penalty as was the majority of the 'Great Council'. All the Reformers who were consulted agreed with the sentence pronounced. The sentence of death by fire was given on October 26th. *Calvin did not vote on this council; he disagreed with the sentence; and he pleaded for a more lenient one*. He interceded strongly with the judges, but in vain. Both Calvin and his friend, Farel, sat and prayed with and expressed sympathy to Servetus. Both men pleaded with the Council for a different mode of death, but still to no avail.

Servetus was burned on October 27, 1553.

Besides the facts that show Calvin was not responsible for the death of Servetus, there are other factors that must be taken into account. For many years Calvin had strived to bring the church back to the Bible and thus had fought false teaching and Roman Catholic errors. *Heresy was serious business in those days and was the same as what today we see as serious crime*. This sad history of Servetus must be judged according to its laws at that time, whether we agree with them or not, (I do not agree with killing heretics, nor with everything Calvin wrote). Servetus was guilty of blasphemy which, unlike our day, in that era was punished by death.

Some writers also blame Calvin for other deaths. The numbers (up to 40) are sometimes greatly exaggerated. Calvin himself wrote of 23 executions.* Some writers claim these were killed for witchcraft, but what is often not stated is what Calvin himself wrote about these - that in addition to their witchcraft, *they spread the plague*. In a letter to Myconius of Basel (March 27, 1545), Calvin described such malicious acts: '*A conspiracy of men and women has lately been discovered, who, for the space of three years, had spread the plague through the city by what mischievous device I know not. After fifteen women have been burnt, some men have even been punished more severely, some have committed suicide in prison, and while twenty-five are still kept prisoners - the conspirators do not cease, notwithstanding, to smear the door-locks of the dwelling-houses with their poisonous ointment...*' Other executions mentioned are for various crimes such as sedition, murder and adultery. It is of interest to remember that such death executions are seen in the Old Testament as just and commanded by God.

It is true that Calvin believed it was right for dangerous heretics to be put to death. But *Servetus also believed this!* While today we may differ with both of them, it must be kept in context that *the era and the laws of that day were accepting that heresy was indeed a very serious crime*.

The facts of history show clearly that Calvin played no official part in the execution of Servetus and indeed was opposed to the burning. May the record be set straight.

Terry Arnold

* A Biography, by Bernard Cottret.

Sources that look at both sides of this issue: *Peace and Truth*, 2003:3 www.sgu.org.uk; http://www.ccel.org/s/schaff/history/8_ch13.htm; http://www.ccel.org/s/schaff/history/8_ch16.htm; http://www.christainhistory.com/articles/death_penalty.html

Are We Yet Glorified?

Yes, in God's eyes certainly. '**Whom He** [has] **Justified, them He** [has] **also Glorified**', (Romans 8:30). The '**glorified**' here is in the *past tense* and seen as a *finished* work by God. Then why are so many believers running around teaching that a Christian can 'fall away' and be 'lost'? Is it because they themselves are 'holding on' after 'making a decision' for 'receiving, 'abiding', or 'accepting' Christ? Undoubtedly. The error being taught today is that it is our own 'determination' that procures salvation. This leads to great suffering in the Church and simply robs precious saints of any assurance.

Scripture is plain on this matter though - those that are the called, are Justified and are glorified - in the Greek it is shown as Aorist tense and Indicative mood - that is, already completed in the past sense; and active voice - done by God alone.

When God has determined that the believer is already Glorified in His view, how could it be possible for this to be a 'temporary' condition? If God has 'known' you as one of His people then he must have taken this great decision with respect to you? Does God Justify and Glorify only to have that frustrated by a persons behaviour?

If, on the basis of His foreknowledge He has predestinated you to this ultimate glory, how would it be possible for you to fall away, be lost and reprobate? What would have been the point of God declaring your Glorification as finished - promoting you to the ultimate glory - if it was all a terrible mistake? The thought is monstrous!

Presuming God knew, as He must know in His prescience, that you are going to end up denying the truth, and becoming reprobate, why would He ever 'call' you in the first place? What is the object of giving a temporary effectual call to those who He knows are finally going to be eternally lost? This sort of thinking leads to sheer confusion, not only intellectual confusion but confusion from every conceivable standpoint. It implies that God has called some people to 'belief' quite pointlessly. It portrays the work of God as utterly chaotic and presents a contradiction concerning the mind and purpose of God.

No, God Himself has declared us both Justified and Glorified at the moment of our conversion - this cannot be altered or reversed, for to do so would be for a 'shadow of turning' to be found in Him - an impossible occurrence!

Mike Claydon

For This The Martyrs Died? (Re: Rick Warren)

One of the world's best known evangelical mega-churches featured the following promotion on their website this week: '*Our dances have become some of the most anticipated of our social events with hundreds of people attending. This Summer's Night dance in our Worship Centre promises to be the same. It will begin with a light buffet style dinner followed by dancing to the sounds of our DJ on a huge 3,000 square foot ballroom competition floor. Professional lighting, effects and sound all blend together for a high-quality experience, all at an extremely reasonable price! Whether you bring a special friend, come alone or with a group, make sure you come ready to have fun! Music will consist of a wide variety providing for specific dances and freestyle. And what's a summer night without some beach music and reggae?*'

In contrast, on June 29, 2005, *China Aid* reported that the Chinese authorities had begun a brutal crackdown on house churches in a specific region in that country. Hundreds of Christian brothers and sisters in Christ have been held and some brutally beaten and tortured for their faith in the living Christ. These Chinese churches don't feature 3,000 square foot competition dance floors and dinner dances for the bored Christian singles of the congregation. If they did, the Chinese authorities would never have bothered them. All these Chinese churches have is an undying allegiance to the Lord Jesus Christ and a willingness to die for the Saviour of their souls.

Here in American churches, the party goes on. Every evangelical extreme that makes news one year, becomes the status quo the next. The first church food court made headlines many years ago. Now it's difficult to register surprise at anything done in the name of church whether it's Christian tattoo parlours on church property, hula praise dance troops, live animal shows, senior pastors in clown outfits, and so on.

The evangelical distaste for Christian history has produced generations of Christians in America who have no idea what

price was paid so that they could have dancing poodle shows on Sunday morning. Names like Nicholas Ridley and Hugh Latimer will bring a glazed look to the average Christian's eyes today. What a tragedy that men like this and so many others who paid the ultimate price for truth are virtually forgotten. The evangelical church prefers airbrushed celebrities today, not martyrs.

Amidst the throbbing of the dance music at the above mentioned evangelical church, would anyone care about two 16th century men who were burned to death next to each other for preaching the true Gospel of Jesus? Nicholas Ridley was in enormous pain as the flames began to crawl up his legs that day October 16, 1555. At the stake Hugh Latimer, his fellow martyr, comforted him with these words: '*...we shall this day light such a candle, by God's grace, in England as I trust shall never be put out*'.

No, Mr. Latimer, your candle was not put out and the candle of truth came all the way to the shores of a vast wilderness known as North America. That candle was held by the spiritual heirs of Ridley and Latimer and these heirs were known as the Pilgrims. Today we are the often ungrateful heirs of the men and women who forged our nation and who fought for the freedom to worship God that we now enjoy.

This is something that the modern evangelical can never understand as he writhes across the dance floor at his local church. Burdens are lifted at Calvary because Jesus Christ gave everything he had for our souls. May we be willing to give up worldliness and sin to follow in his bleeding footsteps.

P.S. The church with the dance was, of course, Rick Warren's Saddleback Church.

Adapted from an article '*For This The Martyrs Died?*' (*Slice of Laodicea* publication) and re-produced in '*Apostasy Alert*' Jan/2006

Warren Targets Africa?

'Rick Warren's global P.E.A.C.E. Plan is targeting the continent of Africa. He believes the world is on the brink of a great spiritual awakening and that every religion can be used to bring this 'new reformation' into place. In May, at the Pew and Religion Forum, Rick Warren stated: 'Who's the man of peace in any village - or it might be a woman of peace - who has the most respect, they're open and they're influential? They don't have to be a Christian. In fact, they could be a Muslim, but they're open and they're influential and you work with them to attack the five giants. And that's going to bring the second Reformation'.

While Rick Warren's global P.E.A.C.E. Plan is based on good works...We are particularly concerned that this new 'reformation' is undergirded by ecumenical/New Age considerations'.

('Apostasy Alert', Dec/2005)

Christian Wrestling?

'Like many American preachers, Rob Adonis delivers his sermons bathed in sweat, passion and a spotlight. He is, however, probably the only one who spreads the word while wearing a purple leotard decked out with Spandex crosses. As the 300lb, 6ft 4in professional wrestler puts it, he 'wrestles for the Word'.

'Ultimate Christian Wrestling', the ministry he founded in 2003, tours churches and venues around the South, in what is - even by the Bible Belt's standards - an unorthodox drive to win converts.

Its matches feature traditional pro-wrestling moves such as headlocks and body slams, coupled with themes and stories from the Bible. Its mission is to 'minister the Gospel of Christ to the Lost and to see lost souls saved'...

At one of its regular venues, the non-denominational Harvest Church in Winterville, Georgia, Pastor Curtis Parker estimated that over the past year, 'Ultimate Christian Wrestling' matches had boosted his 800-strong congregation by more than a fifth. 'We have given away cars as an outreach initiative. We have given away 10,000lb of groceries...But the wrestling has added more people to our congregation than any of these projects. It gets the largest crowds, and it keeps them still for long enough to share'...

...As they prepared to go on [stage], 14 of the wrestlers...prayed before an 8ft wooden cross. The same cross doubles as a ringside prop, with a wrestler dressed as a bloodied Jesus suspended from it for dramatic effect...

...Adonis, in real life a school teacher by the name of Rob Fields, began wrestling professionally in 1999. The concept of a Christian wrestling group, he said, was born when God appeared to him in a dream two years ago.

...He points out that in the Old Testament, Jacob wrestles with an angel.

('Christian Wrestlers Fight For Bible Belt' By Karyn Miller in Winterville, Georgia)

Editors comment: C.H. Spurgeon once remarked of ministers who 'treacherously betraying our holy religion under pretence of adapting it to this progressive age...to assimilate the church to the world...By semi dramatic performances they make houses of prayer to approximate to the theatre...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...'

Vatican Claims Inquisition a Mistake - But Legal

'...Joseph Di Noia, Under-secretary of the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith, offered a partial defence of the 'Holy Terror' in a UK TV documentary. The London Telegraph reports that Fr Di Noia admits in a four-part television series that started this week that the use of torture and public burnings were 'mistakes'. But the US-born Dominican argues that these methods of suppressing heresy were explicable in the context of the times, when people believed passionately in heaven and hell...the Congregation is the successor body to the Inquisition and, until last year, it was headed by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, now Pope Benedict XVI.

The late Pope John Paul II apologised for the Inquisition in 2002. He said the Church should show penitence for 'accepting methods of intolerance or even violence in the service of truth'. The four-part documentary on the UK History channel draws on research gleaned from Vatican files only opened to scrutiny in 1998. It highlights periods of the persecution that began in the 13th century and ended only in the late 1800s. The Inquisition was established by Pope Gregory in 1233 as a special court to help curb the influence of beliefs deemed to deviate from official [Roman Catholic] Church doctrine. Interviewed in the documentary, 'The Secret Files of the Inquisition', Fr Di Noia says: 'It was a mistake to torture people. However, torture was regarded as a perfectly justified, legitimate way of producing evidence and it was therefore legally justified'.

(Apostasy Alert, 3 Feb/2006)

Cliff Richard - Churches To 'Go Easy' On Homosexuals

'In an interview recorded before the Christmas break, pop legend and evangelical Christian hero Sir Cliff Richard has said that the churches need to 'learn to deal' with gay people living in their midst.

The singer, a young-looking 65, is reported to be saddened by some hard-line Christians' attitudes to gay priests and has urged tolerance of homosexuality.

Speaking on 'Sky Report' on British TV channel Sky News, heart-throb Richard said: 'I'm sad because we have to learn to deal with everything...The church has got to come to terms with the fact that things have changed since even Jesus has died. It's only a mere 2,000 years'. He went on: 'I mean slavery was an in-thing at one time. We were told to deal with it. And we've dealt with it. And we've got to deal with every aspect of life'.

Said the singer, who has raised millions of pounds for Christian causes across the world: 'There are gay people in this world. Some of them are very talented. Some of them could be great priests'.

Cliff Richards' comments illustrate that there is much more diversity of opinion among evangelical Christians than the general media and anti-gay pressure groups within the churches often claim...

...Cliff Richard has remained single throughout his life, and has often been the subject of rumours concerning his sexuality. But in 1996 he told the Daily Mail newspaper, 'I'm aware of the rumours, but I am not gay'...

In 1971 Cliff Richard lent his support to the Festival of Light, which campaigned against pornography, but also abortion and homosexuality...

(Excerpted from 'Apostasy Alert', 06/01/06)

Acts 2:38; Baptismal Remission; and Campbellism

The History:

The idea of regeneration through baptism can be traced back to about AD 370 when infants were baptised with the intent of salvation, partly due to a reaction to the high mortality rate. The practise became compulsory in the Roman Empire in AD 416.

The teaching of Baptismal Remission of sins also stems largely from the Roman Catholic teaching of Justification by (sacramental) infusion, instead of imputation, (Rom.4). (1) This 'infusion' teaches that the righteousness of God is infused into the believer through the use of 'sacraments', including water baptism. Ultimately this becomes a salvation by works and opposes the righteousness of God being imputed (credited) to us by His grace alone through faith, (Eph.2:8,9; Rom.4)

Apart from this Roman Catholic history, in the Nineteenth Century a movement which called itself the '*Restoration Movement*', and largely developed by Alexander Campbell, made an alleged 'discovery' of what many now call 'Baptismal Remission'. They developed the doctrine of Baptismal Remission of sins and their key reference was the Scripture Acts 2:38: '***Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost***'. Various leaders in the movement began to state that no one had the promise of the Holy Spirit until water Baptism.

It was Walter Scott who in 1827, '*arranged the several items of faith, repentance, baptism, remission of sins, the Holy Spirit, and eternal life; restored them to the church under the title of the ancient gospel, and preached it successfully to the world...*' (2) These were later used as 'steps' in the plan of salvation. However, it was Alexander Campbell who after meeting with Scott, is widely recognised as the one who publicly and fully 'restored' this teaching of water baptism for the remission of sins.

In 1820 Campbell debated a Presbyterian, John Walker, on the question of infant Baptism. During this debate Campbell stated: '*Baptism is connected with the promise of the remission of sins, and the gift of the Holy Spirit*' (3) This was Campbell's first known public statement of such a doctrine. The doctrine of Baptismal Remission was further developed by Campbell in another debate with McCalla in 1823 in which he stated: '*The preposition 'eis' here [Acts 2:38] means in order to - in order to the remission of sins*'. (4) In another debate with a Presbyterian, N.L. Rice, he stated: '*Christian baptism is for the remission of past sins...*' (5) '*When Paul was immersed, it was declared and understood by all parties, that all his previous sins were washed away in the act of immersion*'. (6)

Later Campbell stated: '*...immersion and regeneration are two Bible names for the same act...*' (7) '*That in and by the act of immersion, or soon as our bodies are put under water, at that very instant our former or old sins are all washed away, provided only that we are true believers...Who will not concur with me in saying that, Christian Immersion is the Gospel in Water?*' (8) '*If immersion be equivalent to regeneration and regeneration be of the same import with being born again, then being born again and being immersed are the same thing, for this plain reason that things which are equal to the same thing are equal to one another*'. (9) '*I am bold therefore, to affirm, that every one of them who, in*

the belief of what the Apostle spoke, was immersed and did in the very instant he was put under the water, receive the forgiveness of his sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit'. (10)

An interesting sideline to this history is found when one considers that the Campbellite doctrine actually contradicted the early salvation experience of the very men who founded 'Campbellism'. The Campbell brothers, Alexander and Thomas, had themselves in the beginning claimed salvation *before* they were water baptised by a Baptist pastor.

The 'restoration movement' later developed into two major branches - *The Disciples of Christ* and *The Church of Christ*. These spread to other countries such as Australia where, although there are different affiliations, many *Churches of Christ* still teach Baptismal Remission.

The Doctrine:

Campbellism holds strongly to the idea of the 'possibility of the believers apostasy'. Baptismal Remission for sins thus implies strongly that the security of the believer is not eternal. At its core it denies the preservation of the saints and that God has Justified and Glorified his people (Rom.8:29,30) and sealed them unto the day of redemption, (Eph.4:30).

The fact that faith is not enough but must have Baptism after it and therefore *added* to it, denies the doctrine of faith alone through the imputed righteousness of God, (Rom.4).

We are cleansed only by the blood of Jesus, (1Pet.1:18-19). We are justified by Gods grace (Tit.3:7) and the blood of Christ (Rom.5:9). If water Baptism were to remit sins then the work of the cross is not finished, since *man would be able to do something towards this*. We are simply not saved by any 'works of righteousness', (Tit.3:5-7; Eph.2:8,9).

Baptism to the Jews signified an *identification with a name*. They were baptised '***in the name of Jesus Christ***', (Acts 2:38). To Christians today it signifies something that has already happened - death to the old way of life and resurrection to a new life, (Rom.6:1-4). Baptism is called a 'likeness' (Rom.6:4-6) and a 'figure' (1Pet.3:21).

The Lord also says: '***...but he that believeth not shall be damned***', (Mk.16:16). It should be noted that this negative statement does not include a reference to baptism, making it clear that what saves a person is true living faith in Jesus Christ. This is made clear in Ephesians 2:8, '***For by grace are ye saved through faith...***' The word '*saved*' is translated from a Greek word which is a perfect passive participle - it means that this salvation took place at some point in the past and is continuing on in the present (perfect tense), being accomplished by Jesus Christ Himself with no action on our part (ie. 'passive voice'). If water baptism is necessary for salvation, then Ephesians 2:8 and many others verses should read: '*ye are saved through faith and baptism*'!

In 1Corinthians 15:14 Paul makes no mention of water baptism and elsewhere Paul said he did not come to baptise. This arguably shows that the Gospel and faith were the important issues to him rather than any water baptism.

Baptismal Remission proponents are apt to take Scriptures out of context, such as Acts 2:38. However, if we read elsewhere in Peter's teaching we soon see that he teaches our only cleansing is by the blood of Christ, (1Pet.1:18,19).

As for Acts 2:38: '***Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the***

Holy Ghost.’ Many do not read the next verse - **‘For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.’** The **‘promise’** was not water baptism but the *Holy Spirit Himself!*

The preposition **‘for’** in the phrase **‘for the remission of sins’** is the Greek **‘eis’**. Literally here in context it means **‘for the purpose of identifying you with the remission of sins’**. This same preposition is used in 1Corinthians 10:2 in the phrase **‘and were all baptized unto [‘eis’] Moses’**. Here these people *identified themselves with the work and ministry of Moses.*

The context is important. The Cambellite interpretation of **‘for’** in Acts 2:38 disregards some important interpretation principles: the wide usage of this word; the context; and the interpretation of other Scriptures on this topic.

The **‘eis’** here simply does not mean **‘in order to’** as the Baptismal Remission exponents teach and the Campbellites taught. The preposition **‘eis’** has no such one strict meaning in Scripture. An example of this is in Matthew 12:41: **‘they repented at [‘eis’] the preaching of Jonah’**. If one were to insert the meaning **‘in order to’** or **‘for’** in the place of **‘eis’** here (and in numerous other Scriptures), the reader might see the error of such a restricted interpretation of **‘eis’**. In Matthew 12:41 the **‘eis’** is rather the basis or ground - ie. on the basis of the name of the prophet Jonah.

The word **‘for’** in English obviously has a wide context of usages. So too, an examination of the more than 1,700 times the Greek word **‘eis’** is used will show various categories of meanings which can be grouped as follows: **‘into’**, **‘unto’** (direction); **‘in’**, **‘among’**, **‘upon’** (position); **‘as’**, **‘for’**, **‘against’** (relationship to); **‘because of’** (causative); **‘for the purpose of’** (purpose).

Matthew 3:11 is arguably a key passage in understanding the use of **‘eis’** and could be seen as the closest parrallel to Acts 2:38. It is the *first* New Testament use of the verb, **‘baptizo’** followed by the preposition **‘eis’**: **‘I indeed baptize you with water unto [‘eis’] repentance...’** If we were to insert the meaning **‘in order to’** or **‘for’** here we would have baptism **‘in order to’** get repentance! Similarly, with many other Scriptures: eg. Matt.28:19 - **‘baptize in [eis] the name of the Father, Son...’** - If we were to insert the meaning **‘in order to’** or **‘for’** here we would baptize to get the Trinity, (see more examples in Mark.1:9; Acts 8:16; Acts 19:3; Acts 19:5; Rom.6:3,4; 1Cor.1:13; 1Cor.10:2, etc).

The context is important.

A second important interpretaion principle to consider is *Scripture interprets Scripture.*

There are numerous verses that never mention baptism, but only faith, (Acts 16:31; Jn.1:12; 3:14-18; 3:36; 6:47; 20:31...). Acts 10:43: **‘To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins’**. From the bulk of Scripture it should be obvious that water baptism is not essential for salvation, (1Cor.1:13-24; 15:1-5; Rom.1:16; 10:9-14; Eph.2:8,9; Acts 10:43; 13:38,39; 16:31; Jn.3:14-18,36; 5:24; 1Jn.5:1). It is also a fact that many were saved or forgiven without water baptism, (Matt.9:1-7,22; Mk.5:34; 10:52; Lk.7:48; 17:19; 18:9-14, etc).

The Old Testament sacrifices did not in themselves take away sins. **‘For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually**

make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshipers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins’, (Heb.10:1-4; see also Heb.9:9-12). So too, Baptism is a type, a **‘figure’** of something real, (1Pet.3:21; Rom.6:4-6). It can never in itself take away sins.

The Bible clearly states that the water has no significance without a sincere belief in God. In the Book of Acts, the eunuch said to Philip, **‘See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptised?’** Philip made it clear to the eunuch the message of the Gospel and that he must believe first and then be baptised, (Acts 8:35-37, see also Acts 2:41).

Throughout Our Lord’s teaching, there is the insistence of a conversion of the heart as a necessary condition for admission to His kingdom. Jesus simply said, **‘Except a man be born again He cannot see the kingdom of God’**, (Jn.3:3).

Interestingly, both the Roman Catholic religion and many of the Campbellites, when pressed traditionally or theoretically, make exceptions to their belief that one must be water baptised to be saved. For the Roman Catholic religion these exceptions are **‘Martyrdom’** and **‘Charity’** (or **‘desire’**), and they are allowed because of the **belief** or **faith** in the persons concerned. Yet these very exceptions only prove that just **believing** is the key to baptism!

A difficult passage for the exponents of Baptismal Remission is the passage referring to the penitent thief, (Lk.23:32-43). The penitent thief who died on the cross next to Jesus was not baptised with water and yet was saved by faith. This penitent thief simply **believed**, was saved and was promised eternal life!

Baptismal Remission is in fact a dangerous heresy because it strikes at the heart of Justification by faith alone through the imputed righteousness of God alone. It sets up a standard for salvation that is the work of man instead of God. It introduces exceptions and controversies that oppose the spirit of grace; for **‘if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work’**, (Rom.11:6).

Terry Arnold

Source and Recommended reading: **‘Acts 2:38 and Baptismal Remission’** by Bob L. Ross (Pilgrim Publications, PO Box 66, Pasedena, Texas, 77501).

(1) See various articles by search in *Diakrisis (Australia)* on the subject of Justification.

(2) *‘The Gospel Restored’* by Walter Scott, P.6

(3) *‘Campbell/Walker Debate’*, P.13; HollyWood, Old Paths Book Club.

(4) *‘Campbell/McCalla Debate’*, P.124; Kansas, Old Paths Book Club.

(5) *‘Campbell/Rice Debate’*, P.472; Indianapolis, Old Paths Book Club.

(6) *‘Campbell/Rice Debate’*, P.524.

(7) *‘Millenial Harbinger’*, Vol.1 , *‘Extra’*, P.27,28,42

(8) *‘Campbell/Rice Debate’*, P.443; Indianapolis, Old Paths Book Club.

(9) *‘Millenial Harbinger’*, Vol.1 , *‘Extra’*, P.28

(10) *‘Campbell/Rice Debate’*, P.443 Indianapolis, Old Paths Book Club.

Your Comments and Questions

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

Dear Terry & Mike, I am truly thankful for your labours of love in support of the word of God. I enclose articles I send for you to read to build you up in an important point, I feel. In your Jan/Feb issue (P.7) you use the expression: 'righteousness of Christ' imputed to us. But I do not think, as my enclosed articles show, that that is what Romans says, for it is all about the righteousness of God...God bless you both,

(E.D., Sydney)

Editors reply: I am unsure as to how exact we need to be in this or if this enters the field of 'error'. However, literally, the expression used in Romans is '*the righteousness of God*' as you say and not '*the righteousness of Christ*'. However, in the following could it be at least implied that it is also the '*righteousness of Christ*'?: **Romans 5:18:** '*Therefore as by the offense of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life*'; **Romans 8:4:** '*that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us*'; **2Pet.1:1** '*Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Savior Jesus Christ*'

But despite all this, the expression '*the righteousness of God*' is more exact and definite to the scriptures in Romans. I thank you and take note of this.

Dear Terry, My name is...and I met you many years ago when you visited my church...On that day you allowed me to take two videos away and we agreed I would later send you...payment for the items. That year was 1996, and it is only now 2006 that the payment will reach you, ten years later...the arrival of 'Diakrisis' always brought my debt to mind...I am sincerely sorry...Please forgive me for this...

I am only recently growing in the faith again after many years of not feeding the spirit...From personal experience I have felt the compromise of Christianity by not feeding the spirit which being apart from the brethren and in the world. I am constantly reminded of Paul's words to the Galatians, 'Am I now seeking the favour of men or of God'.

I believe that many people these days are entertaining the concept of compromising Christianity to seek the favour of men; one example is this 'Prosperity gospel' being touted. I am amazed that the people who endorse this 'Prosperity gospel' can believe they have a biblical basis for such a teaching. I look forward to the next issue of 'Diakrisis'. God Bless.

(Name withheld)

Editors Comments: We praise the Lord that you have the heart to set things right with the Lord and with others. We pray you will continue to 'seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness'. The Lord bless you.

Dear Terry & Mike, I would like to thank you for sending 'Diakrisis'. Your articles are always enlightening and encouraging to us. Your information and warnings are really building us up and preparing us for probably worst to come.

It is sad though that many churches do not preach the gospel as it is intended any more and we find it very hard to find a true-bible-believing church...we hear the nonsense preached and practised, half-truths and complete lies, in the apostate churches of this day. Shameless words that please men's self, not reckoning with God's holy Truth...

Again, many thanks for your encouraging newsletters and we thank our God for people like yourselves who warn us of the dangers prowling in today's churches. We will continue to pray for you and your good work.

(F.V., NSW)

Union In Truth

'The best way to promote union is to promote truth. It will not do for us to be all united together by yielding to one another's mistakes. We are to love each other in Christ; but we are not to be so united that we are not able to see each other's faults, and especially not able to see our own. Now purge the house of God, and then shall grand and blessed times dawn on us.' C.H. Spurgeon.

To Preachers

'The ministers role is not to make people comfortable...he is not there to pander...He is there to proclaim the whole counsel of God. He is there to declare eternal truth. He is there to call men and women to Christ'.

(*'Predators in our Pulpits'* by W. Philip Keller, P.27)

Chronology of Christianity

[To be continued in future editions of *Diakrisis Australia* by R.C.Wetzel '*A Chronology Of Biblical Christianity*'

B.C.4004 Archbishop James Ussher's 1654 date of the Creation of Man.

3975 Frank Klassen's 1975 date of the Creation of Man.

3845 Seth born to Adam.

3760 Traditional Jewish date of the Creation of Man.

3740 Enos born to Seth.

3650 Cainan born to Enos.

3353 Enoch born to Jared.

3045 Adam died at age 930.

2988 Enoch translated at age 365.

2933 Seth died at age 912.

2919 Noah born to Lamech.

2835 Enos died at age 905.

2740 Cainan died at age 910.

2570 Great Pyramid of Cheops built at Gizeh, Egypt.

2439 God determined to destroy man in his 1,536th year.

2425 The cult of Osiris spread over Egypt.

2419 Japeth born to Noah.

2417 Shem born to Noah.

2416 Ham born to Noah.

2344 The Hebrew date of the Deluge, as well as the Chinese date in their 'Epoch of Fu-Hi', the Babylonian and Egyptian records.

2319 Methuselah died at age 969. The Flood came in the 1,656th year of man.

Quotable

'To depart with truth to show charity is to betray our Lord with a kiss.' C.H.Spurgeon

Your Comments and Questions

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

Dear Sir, I'm...from the Philippines. I have read your literature 'Eternal Questions'. It was a good and awe-inspiring booklet about eternity and other things.

If you still have any literature available for free I would humbly ask for some because they would be a great help to me as a young preacher.

Thanks for inspiring and touching others lives through God's Word.

(W.L., Philippines)

Dear Terry, Bless you and thank you for your faithfulness in sending me 'Diakrisis'. We are being kept up to date...This wicked world is getting worse...we are now greeted with C.S. Lewis's 'The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe' which the churches here are going to run with and also the so called 'Christian radio station' which I cannot bear to listen to. Pastors and elders are telling their unsuspecting flocks that 'evil is good'. How long oh heavenly Father can you put up with this 'perverse generation'? I could go on and on...may almighty God keep you safe as we await His soon coming...

(P.M., SE Qld.)

To TA Ministries: It is so spiritually refreshing to read sound Biblical material. We are swamped today with wishy washy religious sentiment that is leading so many astray. It is as the scripture proclaims: 'My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge', (Hos.4:6). It is not simply ignorance, but in many instances it is wilful ignorance which has terrible consequences...we need a heaven sent revival...I look forward to every issue of 'Diakrisis'.

(E.W., Qld)

Dear Terry, Thanks for all the wonderful teachings you and your ministry have given me over the years...May our good Lord continue to bless you all in all the work your ministry involves...

(A.S., NSW)

Praise/Prayer Points

- Please pray for Terry and the ministry as he commences travelling this year. Pray for the first trip to Adelaide, that the topics taught will be fruitful in the minds and hearts of the hearers.

- Praise the Lord for the voluntary helpers who faithfully assist in the administration/secretarial work of the ministry.

Dear Terry, over the years I have bought a number of 'To Catholics Whom I Love'. I was a very strict Catholic for many years. I thank and praise the precious Lord and Saviour for showing me the truth.

I still have friends who attend the Catholic church but I know that if the Lord can open their eyes, he can touch them and set them free. Thanking you, (S.B.)

Dear Terry & 'Diakrisis' staff...Thankyou for your steadfast love to our Lord Jesus and to truth you expose. I look forward to receiving 'Diakrisis' and the challenge it presents. As the apostasy in the church heightens and we see God's clear hand in world events, we need your encouragement...standing with you in the truth,

(J.R., SE Qld.)

Dear Terry,...I had to write...People need to understand the prosperity teachers gospel means prosperity financially for the preachers but spiritual, emotional, mental and financial poverty for those who follow them...The same is true about wolves in sheeps clothing. The wolves in sheeps clothing eat the sheep, are the ministers of the false Christ, false gospel...they devour them spiritually, emotionally financially... (B.N., Sth. Aust.)

Terry's Itinerary South Australia

April 14-17th Easter Camp - Halbury (near Balaklava)
Ph.(08)88322206 ebrosmgr@bigpond.com

April 20th (Thurs) Emmanuel Baptist Ph. (08)82441977

April 21st (Frid) Emmanuel Baptist Ph.82441977

April 22nd (Sat) Emmanuel Baptist Church Ph.82441977

April 23rd (Sun) 10.30am & 7.30pm Emmanuel Baptist
Ph.82441977

April 25th (Tues) 7.30pm Murraylands Baptist Ph.(08)85313367

April 26th (Wed) 7.30pm Murraylands Baptist Ph.(08)85313367

April 28th (Frid pm) Hills Baptist Ph.(08)83884468

April 30th (Sun) 10am McLarenVale Baptist Ph.85562534

April 30th (Sun) 6pm South West Baptist, Seacliff
Ph.(08)83771802

May 2nd (Tues) 7pm South West Baptist, Seacliff
Ph.(08)83771802

May 3rd (Wed) 7pm McLarenVale Baptist (home meeting)
Ph.85562534

May 5th (Frid) 7pm Native Valley Bible Fellowship,
Brukunda Hall Ph.(08)83886106

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(via Victor Harbor) Ph.(08)85523755

May 7th (Sun) 6pm Oasis Baptist Ph.(08)82330465

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