



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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Editors Comments

I recently read the following article: 'A multi storey skyscraper had been lived in for a number of years, when all of a sudden a disturbing crack appeared on the forty second floor. The manager immediately sent for a team of surveyors. When they arrived, the manager took the elevator to the forty second floor to meet them, but they were nowhere to be found. After a long search he found them in the basement. He was very angry and yelled at them, 'What do you think you are doing here? I told you we had cracks on the forty second floor and instead of dealing with that you are down here wasting time'. One of the surveyors replied, 'Sir, you may have cracks on the forty second floor, but your problem is here in the basement'.*

In the world there are disturbing cracks appearing in society, families and marriages. Moral standards are fading fast. Lawlessness abounds.

But the problem is in the 'basement'.

The church is the '**pillar and ground of the truth**', (1Tim.3:15). The church, which is supposed to be distinct from, yet salt to the world, has lost its savor (Lk.14:34). In the west the divorce rate in the church now parallels the world's! Today fewer Christians really believe the Bible is the only absolute inerrant and inspired God breathed word. Worldly lusts and entertainments now enter the church with ease and no longer shock. The very foundations with their standards are 'cracked'.

But *the real fatality in all this is the Gospel itself!* It is in danger of almost being lost. The church is bowing to the spirit of the age which pumps out man centred 'self respect' 'self esteem' 'self worth'.

The Gospel is God centred, not man centred. The Gospel is about what Christ has done, not what man wants or needs. If we call people to anything else but the true Gospel we call them to a lie.

Many churches today are making the Gospel 'easy' to believe by using marketing methods that pander to mans felt needs. But *the Gospel is not just hard to believe; it's impossible to believe!* Rom.8:7 '**Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be**'. The Rich Young Ruler (Lk.18) found it impossible to give up everything for Jesus. The disciples then asked '**Who then can be saved?**'. Jesus replied: '**The things which are impossible with men are possible with God**'. Without the drawing of the Holy Spirit (Jn.6:44) man will reject the Gospel as impossible to believe.

The 'cracks' in the basement are the churches willingness to soften the Gospel. Galatians 5:11 speaks of the '**offense of the cross**' and Hebrews 12:2 speaks of it's '**shame**'. We must not minimise this! '**The preaching of the cross**' is still '**foolishness**' to the unsaved, (1Cor.1:18,21); *thus the Gospel is still offensive to the world. God put this barrier in the gospel so that to believe, it would be of God and not of man!*

May we not be '**ashamed of the gospel of Christ**' for it is still the only '**power of God unto salvation**' and '**therein is the righteousness of God**', (Rom.1:16,17).

Terry Arnold

* Day One Christian Ministries, Feb/May 2006

Raising The Dead - The Truth

'Doug Fournier did everything he could to keep his 6 week old daughter alive. After she died, he did not stop trying. He packed her body into a picnic cooler, surrounded it with ice and drove 350 miles from Gainesville to Pensacola. His destination was Brownsville Assembly of God Church, where he believed Brownsville Revival leaders, could bring his dead daughter back to life. Pastor John Kilpatrick and Vann Lane...gathered some staff members around the cooler in the church's sanctuary and began to pray. For at least two hours they prayed to God to bring Fournier's daughter back to life'. (1)

Despite the 'faith' Doug Fournier had, his child was not raised from the dead; Jesus was not glorified; and no doubt the father's grief was increased. The above sad circumstances occurred because of false teachers (in the Pensacola 'revival') such as Steve Hill, who lied and said: *'I know that we could all get to the place where the dead are raised. We're seeing miraculous healings, cancerous tumours disappearing and drug addicts immediately delivered'. (2)* The Pensacola 'revival' leaders supported speakers such as David Hogan, a missionary in Mexico, who claimed to have raised many from the dead. Hogan sold fraudulent videos telling how to do these feats.

The claims of raising the dead are almost exclusively a trait of the 20th Century Pentecostal/Charismatic movement. Smith Wigglesworth, a hero of many in the modern Pentecostal movement, is supposed to have raised six people from the dead. However, the stories were told mainly by a Lester Sumner, himself a false prophet. (3) Thousands of people are today still duped by such handed down stories.

A.A. Allen, a forerunner of Pentecostalism, was supposed to have raised two people from the dead. He launched a 'raise the dead' campaign which became a farce when his disciples refused to bury the dead until urged by Allen himself. Allen was excommunicated from the *Assemblies of God* in the mid 1960's.

Mel Tari, who wrote *'Like a Mighty Wind'*, a book about the Indonesian revivals, wrote of several people being raised from the dead - even a body that had been dead two days and was decaying badly. However, another book (much less popular!), was written after this revival, refuting the claims with evidence of false or third hand reports. The research showed that many of the 'dead' people had rather been in *comas* and that the local people often did not understand the difference between the two states.

Today's Benny Hinn claimed to have seen a dead man raised from the dead on the platform, and claimed to have it on video. However, when the media challenged him on live TV he admitted it was not on video and that he had only heard about it second-hand. Sadly, Benny Hinn has lied too often about such claims. He once prophesied: *'But here's first what I see for TBN. You're going to have people raised from the dead watching...TBN. I'm telling you, I see this in the Spirit...people around the world who will lose loved ones, will say to undertakers, 'Not yet. I want to take my dead loved one and place him in front of that TV set for 24 hours...People are going to be cancelling funeral services and bringing their dead in their caskets...waiting for God's power to come through and touch them...You're going to hear it from Kenya to Mexico to Europe to South America, where people will be raised from the dead. So much so that*

the word will spread that if some dead person be put in front of this screen, they will be raised from the dead and they will be by the thousands. I see rows of caskets lining up in front of this TV set and I see them bringing them closer to the TV set and as people are coming closer I see loved ones picking up the hands of the dead and letting them touch the screen and people are getting raised as their hands are touching that screen...' (4)

On 6th October, 14 people were crushed to death in Nigeria when they attempted to rush the stage to try to touch evangelist faith healer, Reinhard Bonnke. The parents of one of the dead, a little baby girl, tried unsuccessfully to get the body to Bonnke, hoping he would raise her from the dead. The family then did the next best thing and laid the body on Bonnke's Mercedes Benz. Apparently they were putting their faith in the 'anointing' of the faith healer who claimed an abundance of miracles. None of those crushed were raised from the dead.

Reinhard Bonnke continued to sell videos of miracles and healings despite some of them being exposed by Christian doctors as fraudulent. (5) One Reinhard Bonnke video was promoted for a minimum donation of \$35 which gave an account of a Nigerian Pentecostal pastor, Daniel Ekechukwu, being raised from the dead at a Bonnke meeting. Pastor 'Eku' had a motor vehicle accident and with chest injuries left the nearest hospital for another, against the advice of the physicians, and then 'died' but was 'revived' at a Reinhard Bonnke meeting. Eku was pronounced dead on a stethoscopic and ocular response examination only. Among many anomalies there was no autopsy report documenting post mortem, no coroners report and no police accident report. There were also conflicting accounts concerning the time the patient was 'dead'. Pastor Ekechukwu claimed, contrary to scripture, that Hell had a 'welcome sign' and that the rich man's prayer of Luke 16:19-31 was answered and he was sent back to warn people to repent and believe.

There are others who have made fraudulent claims of raising from the dead; and some videos of these are still sold in Christian bookstores today. Yet *not one* authenticated case of modern day raising of the dead exists!

When will Christians learn from this sad history? When will those in the Pentecostal/Charismatic movement question the constant array of lying false teachers and prophets?

The Bible has some Old Testament prophets and Jesus, Peter and Paul, raising people from the dead. After this no evidence exists of such events. All such Biblical events were for specific purposes. The New Testament miracles specifically were to prove *the Messianic of Jesus Christ*.

Do we walk by faith or by miracles?

Terry Arnold

(1) 1999 - John Allman, News Journal staff writer, as cited in internet site: <http://www.discernment.org/raisethe.htm>

(2) Nov/Dec 'Ministries Today'

(3) Sumner prophesied that Jesus appeared to him and showed him he would see the return of Jesus *in His lifetime before the end of 1999*. But Sumner died! He was also exposed by the media for fraud to do with his ministry 'Feed the Hungry'.

(4) Benny Hinn, *Praise the Lord*, Trinity Broadcasting Network, Oct.19, 1999

(5) *Diakrisis (Australia)*, Dec/99 'Something to Shout About? - The Healing of Jean Neil'

Book Review 'Fool's Gold' by John MacArthur

Occasionally a book comes across my desk that crystallises and summarises in accurate words the state of the church today. 'Fool's Gold' is one of those books that tells it like it is, but from a shepherd's heart. It is a wake up call for Biblical Discernment.

In chapter 1 MacArthur writes: 'New programs, new philosophies, new parachurch ministries - each glitters a little bit more than the last, promising better results and bigger returns. But as was true in the mid 1800s, just because it glitters doesn't mean it's good'.

MacArthur writes an excellent treatise on 'discernment' and its necessity in the church today. 'To view homosexuality as immoral (1Cor.6:9-10; 1Tim.1:9-10) is condemned now by the politically correct as an unacceptable form of discrimination...Anyone who 'discriminates' in this way risks becoming a target of lawsuits...We are not supposed to discriminate. That is the spirit of this age, and unfortunately it has crept into the church...The discerning person is the one who draws a clear contrast between truth and error...No-one can be truly discerning without developing skill in separating divine truth from error'. (P.22)

In Chapter 2 MacArthur addresses what he calls 'Plexiglass preaching'. MacArthur describes this as 'The devastating consequences of a watered down message'. 'When preachers neglect God's Word, they undermine the work of the Holy Spirit, producing shallow conversions and spiritually lame Christians'. (P.37)

In a later chapter MacArthur writes about 'Solid Rock - What The Bible Says About Contemporary Worship Music'. He writes: 'Many of the [modern] gospel songs are terribly weak in content in comparison to the hymns sung in earlier generations. In general, the rise of the gospel song in congregational singing signalled a diminishing emphasis on objective doctrinal truth and a magnification of subjective personal experience'...'Prior to Sankey, the dominant hymn writers had been pastors and theologians, men skilled in handling Scripture and sound doctrine' (P.116). 'Modern church music has done more than anything else to pave the way for the sort of superficial, flippant, content-starved preaching that is rife today'. (P.117)

Other chapters have articles by various authors. One article which is most revealing is: 'Just As I Am; A Closer Look At Invitations And Altar Calls'. This tells of the history of the 'Altar Call' and how it was carried along and furthered by Billy Sunday, D.L. Moody and Billy Graham. The author writes: 'The reason the invitation system is so dangerous lies in the fact that it leads people to base their eternal salvation on a one-time confession'. (P.136) 'Those who use altar calls will have both kinds of conversions, the true and the false. The problem is that both are presented to the church as being genuine. And this type of confusion can have serious consequences, especially for those who are basing their assurance in a false profession'. (P.138)

There is a section in Chapter 9 on 'The American - Christian Approach To Politics' which political activists may not agree with. It explores the common statement: 'We need to have our voices heard, or we are not being salt and light the way Jesus commanded'.

In chapter 10 another author explores the materialism and the marketing mindset that has come into the modern

church. The title says it all: 'Choking On Choices; Combating Consumerism With a Biblical Mind Set'. The author says of modern Christians in America: 'they view themselves as 'customers' in search of a religious product that can meet their felt needs and fulfil their desires. Instead of seeing themselves as servants they regard the church as a place to be accommodated and served. Rather than being God focused they are self-focused. Rather than acknowledging the church as a place where God is the customer, they see themselves as the centre of attention, expecting their wants to be filled. In a day that is monopolised by materialism, I believe this attitude of consumerism is one of the American churches greatest idols'...'The question should not be, 'are my expectations met?' But rather, 'are God's expectations met?' (P.165)... 'Our services are often celebrations of ourselves more than they are of God. Never before, not even in the medieval church, have Christians been so obsessed with themselves. Self-esteem, self confidence, self this and self that have replaced talk of God's attributes. Ironically, it has created the opposite of its intentions. Without the knowledge of God in whose image we have been created and the grace which has made us the children of God, narcissism, or self-love, quickly evolves into depression'. (P.169)

Chapter 11 is a valuable section of the book with practical advice for a balanced approach to discernment. Again, the title say it all: 'Hills To Die On; A Doctrinal Framework For Developing Discernment'. The author writes: 'In discerning truth from error, we must ask ourselves, 'Does a particular teaching accurately depict the God of the Bible? Does it correctly represent His character, essence and being?' Refuse to accept any teaching where the answer is other than yes'. (P.187)... 'The New Testament portrays an accurate understanding of these three doctrines as absolutely essential. Peter begins with a right view of salvation (faith by the righteousness of Jesus Christ). He quickly moves to a right view of Jesus Christ as ('our God and saviour and our Lord') and he mentions a right view of the Scriptures, (the knowledge of God). We should also take note of issues that scripture does not list as hills to die on. For example, preference issues such as the length of a sermon, the style of music used in corporate worship, the churches building program, and other pet grievances are not issue on which we should refuse to budge'. (P.193)

The book closes with MacArthur returning to the subject of discernment. The chapter is titled: 'Keeping The Faith; A Practical Plan For Personal Discernment'. He says: 'The desire for discernment is...born out of humility...that acknowledges our own potential for self-deception. 'The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick, who can understand it' (Jer.17:9) Our only defence against false doctrine is to be discerning, to distrust our own emotions, to hold our own senses suspect to examine all things to test every truth-claim with the yardstick of Scripture, to handle the Word of God with great care' (P.198)

This book tells it like it is yet remains balanced and accurate. We highly recommend this work.

(Now available from this ministry. \$22.50 includes postage)

Terry Arnold

Rick Warren Confusion

At a 'Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life' held on May 23rd 2005, before an ecumenical audience, Warren stated: 'Now the word 'fundamentalist' actually comes from a document in the 1920s called the Five Fundamentals of the Faith. And it is a very legalistic, narrow view of Christianity...there are very few fundamentalists...There are no large ones [churches]...I am an evangelical. I'm not a member of the religious right and I'm not a fundamentalist...Today there really aren't that many Fundamentalists left...they are such a minority...'

Later, Warren wrote for the benefit of Christian pastors who subscribe to his website and buy his 'Purpose Driven' products: 'Saddleback Church is unapologetically fundamentalist'.

What Next?...

With 'Christian' works such as 'Kingdom Women Love Sex' (book and 3 tape series) by Bobbie Houston of Hillsong...what would be next to tickle the ears of many?...now Christians are being asked to share their marital intimacies with the Church at large:

'We are putting together a unique anthology of real life stories that honour the passion of the marriage bed. We believe this book will serve as a ministry to married women in the world, single women in the world, and single women in Christ...while waiting for their husbands...The book's working title is 'The Fire Still Burns: Passion in the Marriage Bed'. 'We are asking for very tasteful and discreet expressions of the passion that exists between you and your husband...send your submissions...'

Azusa St. Commemoration

The Pentecostal 'revival' of 1906 at Azusa St. Los Angeles was commemorated in April, 100 years later. In 1906, the Los Angeles Times reported that a new 'fanatic' religious sect gathered on Azusa St. in Los Angeles and babbled in strange unknown 'tongues'.

In a time of depression and natural disasters hungry and vulnerable people met together, both whites and blacks, to receive 'an outpouring of the Holy Spirit' under the leadership of a William Seymour. Pentecostals and historians today credit the development of the modern Pentecostal and subsequent Charismatic movement to this revival (although some Pentecostals falsely attempt to root the movement to earlier times in past revivals of the 19th Century).

Many denominations were born from the Azusa St. movement, such as the *Assemblies of God* and the *International Church of the Foursquare Gospel*.

More than 150 Pentecostal leaders from all over the world gathered for the commemoration. Some of the leaders included: Bishop T.D. Jakes of The Potter's House in Dallas; Rev. Paula White of the Church Without Walls in Tampa, Fla.; Rev. Jack Hayford of Living Way Ministries in Van Nuys, Calif.; and Pastor Kenneth Copeland of Kenneth Copeland Ministries in Fort Worth, Texas. The commemoration was endorsed by 'Evangelicals'. Ted Haggard, the president National Association of Evangelicals, spoke, as well as Rick Warren, the author of the best-selling 'Purpose Driven' books.

Revival, What Revival?

(*Herald Sun*, December 22nd, 2005)

'Non Christian faiths such as Islam are the fastest growing religions in Victoria...The number of Muslims reached more than 92,000 at the 2001 census, up 38% over five years...The study by Monash...found that followers of Christian denominations rose by only 1% over the five years. [this includes Catholics, Anglicans, Uniting Church, etc]...The number of Catholics rose by almost 4% and Pentecostals enjoyed a 12% increase...Catholics...are the largest religious group in Victoria...Buddhism had the fastest growth of any group with a 77% increase over the five years. Next was Hinduism (45% growth) followed by Islam (38%).'

'God's Flock Corraled To a Rock Beat'

(*Australian*, August 15th, 2005)

'The rock band striking up was the signal for 300 enthusiastic worshippers at the 9:30am service at the Gold Coast's Generation Church to head for the stage...Pastor Andrew Hoyes, dressed as if he was on his way to a nightclub, took to the stage - not the pulpit...' You're the best looking congregation on the Gold Coast', he told the mostly young worshippers...' You come in here and God gives you a makeover! Remember we are the cheeky church!'

If it all sounds like Hillsong on the Gold Coast, it is. Until the end of last year, 30 year old Mr Hoyes and his wife Vanessa, 29, were pastors at the evangelical Hillsong Church in Sydney. And the Generation Church building is owned by the Hillsong Emerge, the Sydney church's charitable arm...The Gold Coast...with high rise buildings, skimpy swimming costumes and fast talking business operators, is fertile ground for such churches...'

The websites for the commemoration were asking for donations: 'Partnership Level Donation - Each Year 2004, 2005, 2006; Love Level \$10,000 per year; Faith Level \$5,000 per year; Hope Level \$ 2,500 per year; Grace Level \$ 1,000 per year'...(when did the church start selling love, faith, hope and grace in multiples of \$1,000?)

At the time (1906), theologians and church leaders challenged the movement as a dangerous sect. The strange unknown tongues and new teaching on the 'Baptism with the Spirit' was born out of the seed bed of an experience in Topeka, Kansas in 1901, where William Seymour was a student of Charles Parham. Parham taught a group of Bible college students who experienced 'unknown tongues' to which Parham later realised was a terrible deception. But the experience spread like wildfire.

For a full history of this incredible deception, the following articles and books will expose a movement that today is often accepted as mainstream Christianity.

'The Other Side of Azusa St.' - *Diakrisis*, April/2004, P.2

'Pentecostal/Tongues Roots - the Amazing Facts' - May 1999, P.5,6

'The Foundation and History of the Pentecostal Movement' - *Diakrisis*, Jan/Feb, 2004, P.3-10

'Tongues & The Baptism With the Spirit' [book] by Terry Arnold

Terry Arnold

The Church Growth Movement & ‘Seeker Services’

The Philosophy:

There are many new and ‘exciting’ methods being touted today to grow churches. Leaders of the Church Growth movement, such as Bill Hybels and Rick Warren, have churned out many profitable books and seminars which tell people how to grow big churches.

A central tenant of the Church Growth methods is the belief that in order to effectively draw the lost to the church and win them to Christ, the church must give the unsaved, the ‘seeker’, that which he desires in a church. Rick Warren believes the church must market itself to the desires of the unsaved in the community and change its style to accommodate and attract unbelievers. ‘*We have to start thinking differently*’, he writes, ‘*I think the target on Sunday morning should be the lost. The church should focus on making unbelievers feel comfortable by singing songs they can embrace, by voicing prayers that help them relate, and by preaching messages they can understand*’. (1)

Thousands of churches around the world are beginning to implement the philosophies of Church Growth leaders. Their marketing strategies are often taken directly out of the corporate world. Rick Warren’s mentor is Peter Drucker, the Famous secular motivational speaker. Warren says: ‘*He’s my mentor. I’ve spent 20 years under his tutelage learning about leadership from him*’.

The Church Growth teachings and methods have precipitated a rush by churches to be ‘relevant’ through the use of Rock music, dance, videos, drama and art. *There is a strong entertainment element in the services* and the style of music reflects this. How ‘relevant’ Rick Warren can be was shown when a Christian publication reported the following: ‘*at his Saddleback Church 25th anniversary Rick Warren did something ‘he had wanted to do for a long time’. He sang Jimi Hendrix’s drug drenched song ‘Purple Haze’ to his congregation, accompanied by his ‘praise and worship band*’. (2)

Warren believes that while the message must not change, the methods must change to cater for the unsaved. The question is: *Do the methods affect the message?*

It is of interest to note that there are at least a few mega churches that are holding to an old and God fearing method - *teaching scripture* - Matt.28:19,20 ‘*Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world*’. The phrase ‘*the end of the world*’ shows that the great commission does not need to change. Some big US churches (eg. John MacArthur’s *Grace church*) have actually grown large while openly *resisting* the new Church Growth methods and even at times exposing the church growth gurus as false. It is possible to grow big churches using opposing methods. Big numbers do not necessarily infer the blessing of God.

Who Are We Catering For?:

The philosophy of catering primarily for the lost in church services is contrary to Scripture.

The church is not primarily for the unsaved but by definition of the Greek word for ‘church’ (‘*ekklesia*’ - the ‘*called out ones*’), it is for *believers*. Church services are for

the ‘*assembling of ourselves together*’, (Heb.10:25). It is *primarily* the gathering of the *saints* in worship, fellowship and teaching. To primarily cater for the unsaved is to ignore much scripture as well as the early history of the church.

All activities in the church meeting presuppose that the participants are believers. In the early Jewish church, after Peter preached the Word of God and called sinners to repentance, thousands were saved. But then the church meetings that followed this revival show clearly the activities carried out: Acts 2:42 ‘*And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers*’. The ‘*target*’ was not primarily the unsaved, but the *believers!*

At this point the reader might pine for some consideration here for the unsaved. However, as the believers worship and glorify God in song, in doctrine, in prayer and in teaching, the unsaved will be drawn as the Holy Spirit wills! The proof of this is seen in the verses following: ‘*...Praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved*’, (vs.47).

This does not ignore the fact that the believers would witness and be testimonies in their unsaved communities; but *the early church simply did not cater primarily for the unsaved at their meetings!*

Churches that are influenced by Church Growth theology place undue emphasis on meeting the ‘felt needs’ of unbelievers. But Scripture does not indicate we are to be preoccupied with such ‘felt needs’. If we centre our church meetings around the ‘felt needs’ of unbelievers, it would be to the neglect of believers being disciplined and edified through the Word of God, (Heb.5:12 - 6:1-2).

If we allow the unsaved to have what they desire in a church, what will they choose? The answer is simple - they will choose the style and methods of *the world* - in music, entertainment, in preaching, etc. By nature, this will minimise doctrine and lessen the ‘offence’ of the Gospel.

This shift in doctrine and the Gospel is seen in the writings of Church Growth authors. Rick Warren’s best selling book ‘*The Purpose Driven Church*’ is impressive in its practical ideas and desire to win the unchurched. Yet, as several authors have stated: ‘*the use of the Bible in it is almost universally poor*’. (3) This problem with the handling of Scripture is seen in much of Warren’s teaching. In a Sermon: ‘*What the Bible Says About the Role of Women*’, Warren says Lydia in Acts 16 ‘*hosted a church in her home*’; Chloe was a ‘*small group leader*’; Phoebe was a ‘*leader in the church*’ - all statements which are simply not borne out by the text. Warren says of 1Timothy 3:11: ‘*it sounds like the wives of deacons should have these qualifications [for a ‘deaconess’]*’. Yet the passage is clearly referring to qualifications for *husbands!* Later Warren contradicts himself when he says women cannot be elders. But the qualification of ‘*husband of one wife*’ is the same for *both elders and deacons!* Yet he then says ‘*There were obviously women leaders in the church...*’ But this premise has been built from speculations and false interpretations.

Such handling of scripture is perhaps more subtle in ‘*The Purpose Driven Life*’ where Scripture references are simply misused and weak Bible versions are used to bolster claims. (4)

Warren’s handling of doctrine is also seen in his

ecumenical views, which show clearly he sees Catholicism as Christian. This attitude is also why he can have Muslim speakers come to his church as 'guest speakers'. This ecumenical view was shown at a recent Baptist World Alliance Convention where Warren stated: *'I see absolutely zero reason in separating my fellowship from anybody'*. But in so doing has not Warren positioned himself in direct opposition to Scripture which tells us: ***'Come out from among them and be ye separate and touch not the unclean thing'*** (2Cor.6:17); ***'And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness but rather reprove them'***, (Eph.5:11)?

In his books and seminars, Warren sets up 'straw men' and then shoots them down. For example, he says: *'...we are loud. We are really really loud on a weekend service...I say, we're not gonna turn it down...baby boomers want to feel the music, not just hear it...why should every church have the same music?...People can find that God loves variety!'* The 'straw man' erected here is that we all have to have the same music and God dislikes variety. The error is that we give the unsaved what appeals to their flesh.

Warren goes further: *'...to insist that all good music came from music 200 years ago is thinly veiled racism...its cultural elitism saying that all the good music was written 200 years ago...Now for 2,000 years the Holy Spirit has used all kinds of music. And to insist that one particular style of music is more sacred than the other, there is a word for that - its called idolatry'*. But this issue of 18th Century hymns is another 'straw man'. The real issue is: should fleshly music, or that which gives a response in the flesh, be used in church? What should we think of Gal.5:16-26?: ***'...Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh...If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit'***. Are we not to worship God in the ***'beauty of holiness'***? (1Chr.16:29)

Methods do affect the message. It is not hard to see that one of the fruits of the Church Growth Movement is a de-emphasis on the preaching of sin and holiness. With the de-emphasis on doctrinal truth within Church Growth congregations, Christians tend to stay at a shallow level in their understanding of God and Scripture. Consequently, Sanctification is affected.

In Warren's studies negative texts are passed over quickly, (eg. Tim.3:16-4:5; Tit.1:3-11). He says: *'pick positive Scriptures...you want to pick out Scriptures that are very positive'*. But are we not to present the ***'whole counsel of God'*** and ***'rightly divide the Word of truth'***? (Acts 20:20-31; 2Tim.2:15).

Methods do affect the message. The bait you catch them with is the food you may have to keep them with. Rock music, entertainment, meeting social and felt needs, and methods that pander to the flesh of man, will detract from the need for man to see his hopeless and helpless position before a God who is a holy and righteous judge. Without this understanding of sin man cannot be saved!

After the Church Growth methods have come and gone, the real casualty may well be the Gospel itself! The Church Growth movement by philosophy must minimise the offence of the Gospel! The Gospel is an offence to the unsaved, (1Cor.1:18,23,24). But Paul was ***'not ashamed of the Gospel, for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth...'***, (Rom.1:16). The word ***'power'*** (*'dunamis'*) here refers to *inherent power of itself*. The Gospel does not need any help or power from outside to make it 'relevant'.

The Church Growth movement has allowed the world to come into the church to take the church into the world. The fruit is false conversions or 'high maintenance' Christians who sap energy and time out of the body of Christ.

One author says: *'The basic idea is to provide something so sensational and appealing that it attracts crowds and stimulates a substantial increase in attendance...The wretched, weary old ways of the world are employed to pack in the people. All sorts of courses are offered in 'Church Growth'. Seminars are held all over the country...in how to attract crowds. Books are written on the theme...Almost any means is considered valid and acceptable as long as it produces the end result of gathering a crowd. Success is the ultimate criterion measured in mass attendance, even if the true final results are miniscule...The basic fact is that the majority of Christians have been deceived'*. (5)

Is the world to determine the strategy of the church? The world is supposed to hate the church, (Jn.15:18)! We are supposed to be different to the world, (Eph 2:2). Surely it must be the Word of God that determines our 'strategy'.

'Seeker Services':

The Church Growth movement specialises in using certain methods to draw unsaved 'seekers' to church services. Yet, *one cannot and will not find the 'seeker sensitive' method of evangelism anywhere in Scripture! There is only one true seeker in Scripture - Jesus!* It is He who ***'is come to seek and to save that which was lost'***, (Lk.19:10). All other 'seeking' usually refers to *believers*. (For example we, as believers, are told to ***'seek ye first the kingdom of God'*** - Matt.6:33). If we need to be 'relevant' and 'sensitive' then why not be sensitive to the real seeker - the Lord Jesus!

'Seeker Sensitive' proponents sometimes use Luke 15 as a passage to justify their position. Luke 15 teaches the parables of 'The Lost Sheep'; 'The Lost Coin' and 'The Lost Son'. However, many teachers fail to realise *the seeker always represents God, not man!* The sheep, coin and the son, represent man. It is the Lord who seeks the lost for ***'there is none that seeketh after God'***, (Rom.3:11).

The disciples were in the beginning not seeking after Jesus - it was Jesus who sought them out and said ***'follow me'***. Was Adam seeking after God when he became a sinner for the first time? Rather, he was hiding as best he could. It was God who *sought him* out in the garden and clothed him. The concept of a true 'seeker', including 'seeker services', is scripturally flawed!

What we 'save' them to is the 'bait' we will have to continually feed them with. If it's Rock music, shallow preaching, a Gospel of love and peace, or fads and entertainment - that is the food the flesh will continually want! *What we win them with we win them to.*

The Gospel is under threat. Unless it is kept pure and presented pure, the results will be like Still Hybrids - lifeless and fruitless. But in its purity the Gospel is indeed ***'the power of God unto salvation'*** and ***'therein is the righteousness of God'***.

Terry Arnold

- (1) *Foundation* magazine March/April 2001
- (2) *'O Timothy'*, No.5, 2005
- (3) *'Briefing'*, 7/99
- (4) A helpful booklet is: *'An Analysis of Rick Warren's 'The Purpose Driven Life''* available from this ministry.
- (5) *'Predators In Our Pulpits'* by W. Phillip Keller, P.32

Your Comments and Questions

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

[Editors comments in bold and brackets]

[Combination of two letters] *Dear Terry, your article [‘Calvin and Servetus - the Facts’, March/April 2006]...the Reformers were responsible and approved of the deaths of many Christians. During this time there was no division between ‘Church’ and ‘State’. So when you said ‘the era and the laws of that day were accepting that heresy was indeed a very serious crime’ it was the Church and State working together making those laws...The reformers employed the magistrates to do the dirty work. They approved of the killings. They should be held responsible for the killing of heretics...[True. But in this instance Calvin had no vote, no membership in the Council and no power to sentence anyone. He may have at times approved the death penalty but in this instance he opposed the burning of Servetus]* Calvin said, ‘We ought not to shut out from among us the institution of civil justice nor drive it out of the Church’. Calvin opposed the Anabaptists’ manifesto (put forth in 1527) which said that ‘the sword is an ordinance of God outside the perfection of Christ [ie. The church]...’ Calvin opposed this manifesto saying, ‘the magistrates have the duty of purging the Church of offences by bodily punishments and coercions so do the ministers have the duty of assisting the magistrates by reducing the number of those who offend’. [Because we might today disagree with Calvin here on the church/state issue does that mean he was evil or wrong in giving evidence in a court of law? Would we all refuse to give evidence in a trial today? Why should we not ‘assist a magistrate’?...and what has this to do with our article?...is there any error in the history and facts

of our article?]

*With this attitude, it’s hard to see how Calvin couldn’t be responsible in some way for persecuting Servetus and anyone else that didn’t agree with him. [Why is it ‘hard to see’ when the facts and history in the article speak otherwise? The objective FACTS are: Although he did give evidence that Servetus was a ‘heretic’, Calvin was not responsible for the sentencing or the burning; he never ‘persecuted’ Servetus; He had no say or vote in the sentencing; and he opposed the burning! Why is it that people want so badly to prove Calvin a ‘persecutor’ or a ‘murderer’, in regard to Servetus? What is it that causes Christians to ignore history and facts in this case? It is the subjective, emotive and pragmatic thinking that concerns me. When you look at the objective facts in the article - Calvin is just not guilty of ‘persecution’ or ‘murder’. In a court of law today the case against Calvin would be thrown out of our courts! And ‘Christians’, in the case of Calvin and Servetus, today could be tried for *defamation!*]*

In the Reformer’s defence, it has been suggested they were influenced by the culture in which they lived. [Agreed] However Christians are to obey the Bible regardless of prevailing culture [Agreed. But where did Calvin disobey the Bible in regard to Servetus? He gave evidence in court, opposed the burning and pleaded for a change in sentencing...] the Christians the Reformers persecuted were obeying God’s Word despite the culture of the day! [Was Servetus ‘obeying Gods word’ when he disbelieved the Trinity and called it devilish?]

Thankyou for your very informative and relevant newsletter. [The Lord bless you]

[Editors comments in bold and brackets]

Dear Terry, I really fail to understand your defence of Calvin (March/April P.2) [The ‘defence’ is setting a record straight - Calvin was not in support of the burning of Servetus. The purpose of the article was to put the matter into its correct historical facts. Was not the article truth?]

You say ‘Calvin was called as a witness and drew up thirty eight points of error’. To me that sounds like he wanted to get Servetus. [Calvin was certainly intent on proving Servetus a ‘heretic’] It seems clear that the Council was going for death and Calvin gave them all the ‘evidence’ they needed. [The historical facts don’t show it as being that ‘clear’]

You say ‘Some writers also blame Calvin for other deaths. The numbers (up to 40) are sometimes greatly exaggerated. Calvin himself wrote of 23 executions’. How do you sometimes exaggerate 40? - [Is not 40 an ‘exaggeration’ of 23?] but clearly you are saying Calvin pleaded guilty to 23 anyway. [Calvin did not ‘plead guilty’ to any]

You say ‘they 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...’ So Calvin without knowing how, assumed they did it - he ends implying an ointment - did he know that? [Calvin did not ‘assume’ such,

it was fact] BUT he ensured they suffered anyway. [Where does the article say this? It is emotive judgements like this that caused the writing of the article in the first place]

You say ‘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’. Really, I thought we were under a New Covenant especially for adultery’ [Of course we are under a ‘New Covenant’. My point was that it was the same God who commanded the death penalty for such crimes] and what do the barbaric laws of the time have to do with excusing this infamous theologian. Are people like Calvin our answer to some of the excesses of fundamentalist Islam? [What has a false ‘fundamentalist Islam’ got to do with this? Am I advocating the death penalty?...Can you fault any facts in the article?] (R.L., Sydney)

Editor: A site I discovered since writing the article, is: www.servetus.org/ This is a non religious PRO- Servetus International Society which has a ‘Biography’ section detailing the ‘Trial and Execution of Servetus’. It bears out the facts in our article as historically accurate. A section: ‘A view of the Servetus Affair 450 Years Later’ concludes of the two characters: ‘In judging this whole affair one must take care not to be unjust toward Calvin...[He] deserved to be judged by the standards of his own age...he had many of the finest traits of personal character...Servetus, on the other hand was...self conceited, obstinate...insulting...’

Your Comments and Questions

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

Dear Terry, Someone asked me: 'Will there be more people in Heaven than in hell?'. I answered - more would be in hell. My answer involved reference to the remnant and narrow way to Heaven. The women thought there would be many more Christians because of all the babies that die over all ages. Is there a conclusive answer to this?'

Editors reply: As you correctly believed and answered. The scriptures are clear - there will be more people in Hell than in Heaven: 'Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: 14 Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it', (Matt.7:13).

The Greek word for 'many' ('*pollus*') is here contrasted with its antonym (opposite word) 'few' ('*oligos*'). There is a definite contrast here in quantity.

Further to this, the passage continues and states there will also be many 'professors' of Christianity who will be in Hell: 'Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? 23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity' (vs.22,23)

As for babies and heaven... There is no explicit doctrine in Scripture that says babies go to heaven. But if one believes that babies do automatically go to Heaven then that would still not change the 'many' on the broad road and the 'few' on the narrow road. Despite what logic, emotion or mathematics one may deduce, the answer in Matthew 7 is clear.

'Terry, Keep up the good work even though I know you do get criticized at times - I appreciate the hard work you do and getting the truth out there. I very often pass on your information to people that need it or give out snippets that are helpful. The knowledge I have of the Catholic Church and Pentecostal church has come due to the information from you or Mike Claydon - it has also made me search further and I see things that are wrong where as before I may have just accepted it.

(C.M., SE Qld.)

Praise/Prayer Points

- Pray for Terry and others as they travel to Fiji to lecture in the Bible College and research further the possibility of establishing a college/institute in Australia.
- Pray for provision from the Lord for the purchase of much needed and upgraded computer and copying equipment for the ministry.

Dear Terry, I am a member of...[a Church] now...in Melbourne...the last few years having no church fellowship. You were sending me the monthly tapes and I am still very thankful I was able to get them.

It is such a blessing to sit under the true teaching of the word, I thank God every day for it, having been going nowhere for the 2 to 3 years.

I pray that you continue in your faithfulness, steadfastness and stickability and may God bless you in your endeavours. Many Thanks

(S.B. Melbourne)

Dear Terry, Thankyou for trusting the Lord to show His truths and continuing to be faithful...the Newsletter shows what is happening in the churches and exposing those who are not walking in the truths of the Word.

We pray that no matter who or what may come against you that you will know the strength and peace of our wonderful Lord and Saviour...

I want to thank you also for the material that you sent to me on the Mormons. I would ask your prayers as I have not been well, but I just praise the Lord for bringing me through a very difficult time. Without His love, I would not be here and I praise Him. In His Love.

(E.Y., Vict.)

Dear terry, Thank you for the help with the JW material as it helped show my family member the trap he was in. Keep up the good work you are doing in bringing a better understanding of God's word. I enjoy receiving 'Diakrisis'. It is easy to understand for an uneducated person like me.

(Name withheld at editors discretion)

Terry, I enjoyed my association with and the time in your church in Queensland, and in particular with you. Your teaching and preaching has been outstanding and has enriched my spiritual life immeasurably. Thank you ever so much. Your brother in His service,

(R.R., NSW)

Terry's Itinerary

June - Fiji Bible College

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