



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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No Fear In Their Hearts

Why is it that Church leaders and the general Christian milieu prefer the speculations of men rather than the truths and commands spelled out in scripture by Almighty God Himself? Our Lord has stated so clearly that in the process of salvation it is He that holds sovereign sway. Yet today Arminianism is the order of the day because feeble men cannot abide the Biblical doctrines that quietly render the Adamic race unable to lift a finger to save themselves.

In total disregard of the completed Word of God Christians can be found pleading, with anyone who will listen, to say a 'sinners prayer' and be 'saved'. Exhibiting behaviour that would shame the world's most successful insurance salesman, exhausted Christians are out presenting to the lost a 'jesus' who is begging people to 'accept' his salvation in a manner that will suit them best, if they will only just repeat the necessary mantra.

What you sow, you reap. And the Church is now dealing with a whirlwind. Pews in mega-churches around the world are crammed with the falsely converted demanding more and more spectacular entertainment in their newfound social surroundings - whilst many of the truly elect are dashing for the exits.

That's the truth ignored. But what of the commands? Scripture is replete with orders to be forever 'watchful'. For what? The signs of His coming of course! This subject has largely become a no-go area in recent years. You simply cannot attract the upwardly-mobile with news of geopolitical upheavals that precisely align with words written thousands of years ago by Israel's prophets. The prophetic teachings of the early 1980's have given way to encouraging homilies promising prosperity and health. The senior pastor of an Australian mega-church has gone so far as to ban preaching on prophecy on the grounds that it is 'too divisive'.

To be sure, many went too far back then, and began making predictions based on their futile imaginings. Just because Jesus didn't come back in 1988 and Henry Kissinger didn't turn out to be the beast of Revelation, does not present a valid excuse for the cessation of prophetic exegesis. The Bible is an overwhelmingly prophetic book - it sets it aside from all other 'scripture'.

All the nations that fill the geopolitical stage just prior to Christ's appearing are now in place and behaving just as should be expected, if He is at the door! Is anybody noticing? Not many. We receive much mail from those receiving our daily e-mail 'Alert' bulletins stating that when they present relevant geopolitical material to their leaders they are soundly upbraided for being mindful of world events!

Is the Church now populated by so many social misfits - and it is - because God has chosen a 'peculiar people'? No, they are there because they find their aberrant behaviour and lifestyles accepted because the 'god' they have come to does not judge, isn't returning for aeons [if at all] and loves everyone 'just as they are'.

There is no Godly fear in their hearts. And why should there be? They haven't been told the truth! Yet they are now arguably numerically more in number than God's true saints! Unimaginable and appalling times lay ahead for those that intend to heed and obey God's Word. **Mike Clayton**

The Deception of 'Dialogue'

Recently the *Sydney Star Observer* (9th August/2006) reported that the National Executive of the *Assemblies of God Church* in Australia had agreed to discuss Homosexuality and to 'dialogue' with an Anthony Venn-Brown, the first openly gay member of the Australian Pentecostal church. Venn-Brown was an evangelist and a prominent figure with the *Assemblies of God* who resigned in 1992 when his homosexuality was exposed. He had been living a closeted life for many years within the Pentecostal church.

Currently AOG teaches homosexuality is a sin and that homosexuality and Christianity are incompatible. Brian Houston, National President of the AOG and senior pastor of *Hillsong*, when he accepted the invitation from Venn-Brown, stated: *'I am sure you are aware that we are a long way apart philosophically, but we will give you a fair hearing'*. Yet, Venn-Brown says: *'It is my aim through intelligent and respectful dialogue to change the misconception within the AOG regarding homosexuality...I am challenging the traditional church doctrines'*.

Venn-Brown hopes for the establishment of a *'committee consisting of some executive members of the AOG, a psychologist, a theologian and himself'*. He says: *'I hope to discuss the six verses from Leviticus, Romans and Corinthians which are most commonly used to justify an anti-homosexual stance. These verses have an historical and cultural context that needs to be explored. Also the translation from the original ancient languages can lead to misinterpretation...We'll know the journey is over when an openly gay man or lesbian is ordained'*.

Such 'dialogue' is increasingly prevalent in churches that previously considered homosexuality as non negotiable, abominable sin, and an 'absolute' dealt with in scripture! This trend toward 'dialogue' is found almost exclusively within the second half of the 20th Century.

Mixed motives:

Brian Houston says: *'we will give you a fair hearing'*. His motive here may be one of love, but what of justice and truth? Venn-Brown's motives are all too clear when he says *'We'll know the journey is over when an openly gay man or lesbian is ordained'*. The 'dialogue' has only *one outcome* for Venn-Brown - *'ordination' of a Homosexual* in the Pentecostal churches! The issue here is so black and white that *someone would have to compromise?*

What does God say?:

What of the Scriptures that Venn-Brown says are in an *'historical and cultural context that needs to be explored...the translation from the original ancient languages can lead to misinterpretation...'* But where is the 'misinterpretation' in the following?:

Homosexuality and Lesbianism are both severely condemned in the Old Testament as an *'abomination'* with the penalty of death, (Lev.18:22). In the New Testament it is called a *'vile affection'*; being *'against nature'*; *'unseemly'*; and *'error'*, (Rom.1:26,27); and that this act of *'going after strange flesh'* will bring *'eternal fire'*, (Jude 7). The Greek word for *'strange'* here means *'another of a different kind'* and refers to men with men or women with

women, and perhaps occasionally evil angels with women.

Another reference is 1Corinthians 6:9,10: *'...the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of heaven...nor the effeminate, nor the abusers of themselves with mankind...'* The original Greek words here for *'effeminate'* and *'abusers'* specifically refer to Homosexuals and Lesbians.

Venn-Brown and others are fond of reducing the scriptures to 'historical' and 'cultural' minimums which are supposedly no longer applicable today. But not all the scriptures on homosexuality can be put into such confines. Romans chapter 1 is essentially *doctrinal!* Nevertheless, *the truths behind any 'cultural' view must still be applied at some stage.* Venn-Brown's lesser view of the Word of God can also be seen in his willingness to integrate it with 'psychology'.

When Venn-Brown says he is *'challenging the traditional church doctrines'*, he is saying he is challenging *'the faith once delivered'* (Jude 3) - because *this is the 'traditional church doctrine'* given to the apostles!

Would Jesus have 'dialogued' with homosexuals? Would the 'discussion' have involved psychology?...Perhaps he might have reminded them of Sodom and Gomorrah?

The Fruit of compromise:

What has been the fruit of such discussions in the past? Several years ago the *Uniting Church in Australia* began to openly 'explore' this issue with meetings, and 'dialogue' with Homosexuals and Lesbians. What has been the result? - division, upheavals, reproach in the media, a dying church, as well as a host of Homosexual and Lesbians achieving the same goal as Venn-Brown - 'ordination'! The *Uniting Church in Australia* has been arguably decimated by dissension!

The issue is not one of 'love' but of *truth or compromise.* I once heard a very simple (although ludicrous) illustration of 'compromise': *A hunter raised his rifle and took careful aim at a large bear. When about to pull the trigger, the bear spoke in a soft, soothing voice: 'Isn't it better to talk than to shoot? What do you want? Let us negotiate the matter'. Lowering his rifle, the hunter replied, 'I want a fur coat'. 'Good' said the bear. 'I only want a full stomach, so let us negotiate a compromise'. They sat down to negotiate, and after a time only the bear could be seen. The negotiations had been successful...The bear had a full stomach - and the hunter was inside his fur coat!* The point of the illustration is this: *Compromises rarely if ever satisfy both sides in equal measure! It invariably lowers the standard.*

And any 'balance' must be *within* truth. Compromise regularly *departs from* the truth. Compromise is often an attempt to wrongly balance truth and error.

There are *non-negotiable* truths that cannot be compromised. The only 'dialogue' we should have with Homosexuals or on other sinful issues is to *lovingly give the Gospel and minister the truth* of God's word *without negotiation!* If that ministry and truth is not accepted then separation must take place quickly to keep the body of Christ pure. The Holy must not touch the unholy.

Such 'dialogue' has been the downfall of the modern church.

Terry Arnold

The 'Perfect Will of God'

What is the will of God? What is the 'perfect' will of God? Do we 'find' the will of God? How should we pray for the will of God in any area of our life? Should we 'wait on God' for His will to be shown to us? These are questions to which I have heard a variety of teachings.

For many years I had been taught various practises of 'finding' the will of God. I would ask the Lord, 'wait on Him', search for a 'peace', flip the pages of the Bible for a magic scripture; or look for 'signs' and confirmations...that is, until I did a word study of the 'will of God'! What I discovered corrected many misunderstandings, myths and practices I had developed on this topic.

Nowhere in Scripture does it teach to 'find' the will of God! Rather, *the will of God is taught as something we should already be in and continuing in.* 'For this is the will of God, even your sanctification...', (1Thess.4:3,4). Sanctification is an ongoing work by God that we are to 'work out' constantly, (Phil.2:12).

The will of God is mentioned in several places in Scripture and the '**perfect will of God**' is mentioned only once - in Romans 12:1,2. It was a study on this 'perfect will of God' that literally changed the way I thought, prayed and lived. It also gave a new power to ministry and counselling.

Before we get to the '**perfect will of God**' in Romans 12, here is a summary of the occurrences of the 'will of God' in Scripture:

The Will of God

1. *It is the will of God for us to be saved.*

Gal.1:4 '**Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father**'. It was God's will for Jesus to be the substitutional sacrifice to save us from a sinful world.

2. *It is the will of God for us to be sanctified.*

1Thess.4:3,4 '**For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour**'. God's will is for us to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ by the work of the indwelling Holy Spirit, (Rom.8:29). If we are not prepared to surrender, yield or pursue holiness, then this process can be thwarted and the Holy Spirit Himself 'grieved' (Eph.4:30) - the result would be that we would not be in the will of God.

3. *It is the will of God for us to be 'filled'.*

Eph.5:17,18 '**Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit**'. God desires for us to be constantly 'filled' - to be controlled by the Holy Spirit. The result will be that we will give thanks, glorify God and exhibit submission (vs.19-21).

4. *It is the will of God for us to suffer.*

1Pet.4:13-19 '**Rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy...But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters. Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf... Wherefore let them that suffer**

according to the will of God...'; 1Pet.3:17 '**For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing**'.

5. *It is the will of God for us to give thanks.*

1Thess.5:18 '**In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you**'.

'The Perfect Will of God'

Romans 12:1,2 is the only place in Scriptures that refers to the '**perfect**' will of God. The passage can be broken down into three commands:

'I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye (1) present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. (2) And be not conformed to this world: but (3) be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God'.

All parts are *active on our part*. Two parts are positive, one is negative. *All are linked*. It is difficult to see how if any one part is missing in our lives, that the other two parts would be present at all.

The above verse is in fact a summary of the will of God for you! It actually incorporates all the other references to the 'will of God'. It is also a possible 'blueprint' for counselling Christians. Many problems in Christian lives and in churches could be averted if these three commands were obeyed.

(1) '**present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service**' (vs.1)

The word '**beseech**' ('*parakaleo*') - is a stronger word than '**ask**' ('*aito*'). The writer is *urging* strongly to the point of begging, that these three commands be carried out.

The phrase '**present your bodies a living sacrifice**' is a divine antimony - here the Christian is to constantly present his body *alive* as opposed to Old Testament sacrifices which resulted in *death*. Yet the idea is still one of death - *death to self!* '**If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple**' (Lk.14:26,27). The disciples knew that this phrase '**bear his cross**' implied suffering and death (1Pet.4:13-19).

This self sacrifice is to be '**holy**' - separated to God and thus from sin and from the world. It would then be '**acceptable**' (well pleasing) to God. The only sacrifice that can be acceptable to God is that which has come through the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ and His death. This sacrifice of ourselves is our '**reasonable service**' ('*logikos latreia*') - it is logical to the human mind. This is part of the will of God for us to be sanctified (1Thess.4:3,4) - set apart as a holy sacrifice to God. True worship and giving thanks (1Thess.5:18) involves the sacrifice of ourselves.

(2) '**be not conformed to this world**' (vs.2)

The word '**conformed**' literally means '*fashioned*

together with'. Here it is in the Greek imperative mood - an urgent command. We are not to be 'fashioned' with the system of this world, with the fashions of this age. **'As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance'**, (1Pet.1:14).

It is here I am convinced many Christians miss out on the 'perfect will of God'! Today it is often difficult to tell the difference between the people of the world and the people of Christ. Yet we, as Christians, are supposed to be the **'church'** (*'ekklesia'*) - the **'called out ones'** - called out of sin and called out of the world. We are not supposed to think, speak or act like worldlings!

The Bible never has anything good to say about the world system: 1Cor.1:20 **'...hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?'** 2:6 **'Howbeit we speak wisdom...not the wisdom of this world...that come to naught'**; Gal.4:1 **'Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father'**; Jn.12:46 **'I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness'**.

As 'new creatures' **'old things are passed away'** (2Cor.5:17); we no longer walk **'according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air...'**, (Eph.2:2).

If we are 'conformed' to the fashions of this age, then the word of God will be choked. **'...the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful'**, (Matt.13:22). The modern church is bringing the world into the church and the world is taking the church into the world. This is reflected in worship styles, music, preaching and evangelism methods.

If we are **'conformed to the world'** then how can we honestly present ourselves as **'a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God'**? How can we effectively be **'transformed'** and have our minds 'renewed'?

(3) **'but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind'** (vs.2)

The word **'but'** here links closely with the second command. If we are not **'conformed to the world'** then we can have an unhindered and motivated approach to being **'transformed'** by the Word of God!

The word **'transformed'** is a present imperative - again, an urgent present command. The Greek word is **'metamorphoo'** - **'to change ones form'**. We get the English word **'metamorphosis'** from this Greek word. A Caterpillar is 'metamorphosed' into a butterfly. The transformation here is not to change ones outward form but is a change from within. The same word is used when Jesus was 'transfigured' on the Mount.

The 'transformation' is done by the **'renewing'** of our **'mind'**. The word **'renewing'** has the meaning of 'renovation'. The 'transformation' is not done by taking out the rubble in our minds but by 'renovating' the mindset. This is nothing less than the power of the Word of God to **'pierce even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit'**, to **'discern' (kritikos - 'critique') the thoughts and intents of the heart'**. There is simply no other way to be 'transformed' other than by this **'two edged sword'**, (Heb.4:12)!

These three commands, if acted on by the Christian soldier, will **'prove what is that good, and acceptable, and**

perfect, will of God'. It is **'good and acceptable'** because it is profitable, useful and that which God recognises only through Jesus Christ. It is the **'perfect will of God'** because it brings the Christian through the process of Sanctification to Glorification - the end product, (Rom.8:29,30). The word **'perfect'** is elsewhere translated **'men'** (1Cor.14:20) and **'full age'** (Heb.5:14). It has the meaning of an end maturation; coming to an end product; that which has reached its end or limit; complete and wanting in nothing!

Conclusion:

It is the will of God for us to be saved (Gal.1:4 2); *It is the will of God for us to be sanctified* (1Thess.4:3,4); *It is the will of God for us to be 'filled'* (Eph.5:17,18); *It is the will of God for us to suffer* (1Pet.4:13-19); *It is the will of God for us to give thanks* (1Thess.5:18).

But to be in the **'perfect will of God'** we must constantly:

(1) **'present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy...'**

This requires commitment; and death to self.

(2) **'be not conformed to the fashions of this age'**.

This requires separation, a monitoring of associations and relationships; and mortification of the lusts in the flesh. Carnality hinders the very will of God, (1Pet.4:1,2).

(3) **'be transformed by the renewing of our minds'**.

This requires discipline, study and immersion in the Word of God.

The two key tools we have at our disposal for this work are the indwelling *Holy Spirit* and study of the *Word of God*.

If our conscience is clean and we are obeying the work of the Holy Spirit in these three areas above, then *we are*, and should rest in, the perfect will of God. From there on it is simply moving forward as God orders our steps (Ps.37:23) and shines His light on the path of life, (Ps.16:11; Ps.119:105). We can then with confidence say **'if the Lord will'** I should do this or that, (James 4:13-15).

The Lord may further confirm His will in any area. This 'confirmation' may come from the counsel of mature and trusted Christians or church elders, whose ministry it is to **'watch for your soul'**, (Heb.13:17).

God's will in scripture is a present thing, not a future thing to be strived for! We are to be already constantly in His will! If we are being sanctified without hindrances, then *we are* in the will of God. We are then *free* to do anything we desire without having to fret about whether or not it is the 'will of God'. We do not have to agonise to be in His will and we do not have to necessarily have a 'peace' when it is God's will. Nor do we have to wait for a 'sign' or flip to a magical scripture in the Bible. Some of these methods are in fact more occultic than Christian!

Being in the will of God is to *live it now!* In this living out of the will of God there will be 'doors' that will 'open' and 'shut'. But the shut doors may just as much be showing us the will of God as that of the open doors. We are to live on a course that we believe is God's will and let God change the course if and when He so desires.

Understanding God's will has been likened to going through a door of life and looking back and realising *after* the event - 'Praise the Lord, so that *was* the will of God for me!'

If we read, study and immerse ourselves in the Bible, we will discover that *His will for us is never hidden!*

Terry Arnold

Roman Catholicism and Islam

Quote from 'Catechism of the Roman Catholic Church':

Paragraph # 841 *The Church's relationship with the Muslims: 'The plan of salvation also includes those who acknowledge the Creator, in the first place amongst whom are the Muslims; these profess to hold the faith of Abraham, and together with us they adore the one, merciful God, mankind's judge on the last day'.*

Quotes from Islam's Koran:

'That they rejected Faith; That they uttered against Mary a grave false charge; That they said (in boast): We killed Christ Jesus the son of Mary, The Messenger of Allah. But they killed him not, nor crucified him, but so it was made to appear to them, and those who differ therein are full of doubts, with no (certain) knowledge, but only conjunction to follow, for of a surety they killed him not. ... And on the Day of Judgment He [Jesus] will be a witness against them [Christians]'

(Quran, 004:156-159)

They said, 'The Most Gracious has begotten a son'! You have uttered a gross blasphemy. The heavens are about to shatter, the earth is about to tear asunder, and the mountains are about to crumble. Because they claim that the Most Gracious has begotten a son. It is not befitting the Most

Gracious that He should beget a son. Every single one in the heavens and the earth is a servant of the Most Gracious. He has encompassed them, and has counted them one by one. All of them will come before Him on the Day of Resurrection as individuals'.

(Quran: 19:88-95)

In blasphemy indeed are those that say that Allah is Christ the son of Mary. Say: 'Who then hath the least power against Allah, if His will were to destroy Christ the son of Mary, his mother, and all every - one that is on the earth? For to Allah belongeth the dominion of the heavens and the earth, and all that is between. He createth what He pleaseth. For Allah hath power over all things'. (Quran 005.017)

They do blaspheme who say: 'Allah is Christ the son of Mary'. But said Christ: 'O Children of Israel! worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord'. Whoever joins other gods with Allah,- Allah will forbid him the garden, and the Fire will be his abode. There will for the wrong-doers be no one to help.

(Quran 005.072)

It is not befitting to (the majesty of) Allah that He should beget a son. Glory be to Him! when He determines a matter, He only says to it, 'Be', and it is.

(Quran 019.035)

The Virgin Mary and Signs and Wonders

1531: Mary appears to an indigenous farmer in Guadalupe, Mexico, setting the stage for hundreds of more reported sightings of 'Our Lady' of Guadalupe.

1858: A 14-year-old girl claims to see Mary at Lourdes, France, sparking visits by millions looking to be healed.

1980's: Mary appears yearly to children at Medjugorje with messages and signs and wonders.

1996: Mary seen in the window of a Clearwater, Fla., bank. Over 1 million stop to see the vision in the glass.

2004: A Florida woman sells a grilled cheese sandwich featuring the face of Mary to an Internet casino for \$28,000. Less than a year later, the casino also spends \$10,600 to buy a pretzel appearing to be Mary holding the infant Jesus.

2005: Thousands flock to see image of Mary on the wall of the Fullerton Av. underpass of the Kennedy Expressway. City officials dismiss the image as a road salt stain.

Last week: Mary appears in 3-D in a clump of chocolate drippings in a Southern California candy factory.

(Apostasy Alert, Sept./2006)

God's Comments on signs and wonders in the end time: 'there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect', (Matt.24:24; Mk.13:22); 'Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders', (2Thess.2:9); 'And he doeth great wonders...And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles...saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast...he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak...', (Rev.13:13-15)... 'the spirits of devils working miracles...', (Rev.16:14).

The Fruit of Modern Methods!

'Evangelical and Pentecostal churches such as 'Hillsong' may be succeeding in attracting newcomers to their congregations, but they also have some of the highest rates of worshippers leaving, a report has found.

A research paper by the National Church Life Survey...show that while the Assemblies of God churches may have attracted a relatively high number of newcomers, 10% of their total congregations in 1991-1996 and 14% in 1996-2001 - they also had a relatively high attrition rate.

The survey showed that 20% of the people 'drifted out'...people who did not just leave that church, but left church life altogether. It also found just 55% of current attendees in 2001 had been there for more than 5 years.

Pentecostal churches, a broader category which also took in Assemblies of God as well as Christian Revival Crusade and others, attracted 10% and 14% respectively of newcomers in the two survey periods, but they also had 15% and 14% of people drifting out. But that trend did not just apply to the Evangelical churches. In the 1996-2001 survey period, while just 4% of Catholic church congregations were made up of newcomers, 13% drifted out.

In contrast Presbyterian churches attracted 8% of newcomers in the 1996-2001 period while just 3% left'.

(by Sarah Price, Sun Herald March, 12th 2006)

Rick Warren

'I really do feel that these people are brothers and sisters in God's family. I am looking to build bridges with the Orthodox Church, looking to build bridges with the Catholic Church, with the Anglican church'.

(Rick Warren at Anglican conference, Nov/2005; From 'Apostasy Alert', July/2006)

What Rick Warren Did To Our Church

by Mark Duckworth

‘But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of, (2Pet.2:1,2).

Bible-believing Christians are well-aware that Satan manifests himself in astounding ways in the world today, not only in Corporate Mysticism, Heathen Religions, Clairvoyants, Cults and New-Age teachings, but he often infiltrates so-called Christian churches. I’ve lived and worked in countries where this trickery is rampant and I’m thankful to be able to call Australia Home!

Having studied the activities of cults in the last 22 years, my wife and I have successfully brought several vulnerable people out of their grip. The letters of thanks received from numerous people in gratitude for our assistance and the books we published, are testimony to the fact that the adversary is alive and well in the times we are living today.

For several years we enjoyed sweet fellowship at our little church in a quiet suburb. Ours was a Gospel-oriented church where we looked forward each Sunday to doing our little part to make our worship service a blessing to our visitors and members alike. As the years passed we witnessed changes of leadership, but our main drive was that we held to Biblical principles as laid down in God’s Word.

In recent years however, a new dimension seemed to create interest among our church leadership. There were brochures and pamphlets advertising a new American system of evangelism known as the *‘Purpose-Driven Life’* by Rick Warren. His campaign was said to have recruited thousands from the unsaved world. Warren was referred to as the renowned Pastor of a Mega-church in the USA, where his *‘Purpose-driven Growth Seminars’* were filling pews at an unprecedented rate.

According to the media-material that advertised this campaign, Rick Warren was a sincere man, and his book was full of important practical truths and ideas that most Christians tend to ignore or forget. For example, he draws the attention of his readers to the fact that time on earth is short and that our fruitfulness here and now will count for eternity. Our little church accepted Warren’s *‘Purpose-Driven Life’* as advertised, and we invested in his Teaching Manual with Audio-Visuals known as *‘Our Spiritual Journey’*. The program took off on schedule and as the lessons unfolded, many changes progressively took place in our church in the months that followed.

The first cracks that seemed to appear took place soon after we had completed Warren’s *‘Purpose Driven Life’*, when there was disunity over the issue of women preachers. This ended in hot words and vitriolic arguments before we experienced a mini exodus from our church. Filling the vacuum caused by these vacancies in the leadership and other roles of the church was a mammoth task, and so we had to make do as best we could with the available man and woman power in the church.

As the months passed it was evident that yet more people left as they found the Sunday messages were not satisfactory. Some of those that left complained that *‘worldliness’* was

creeping into our worship service in the form of irreverence, over-done light humour and flippant banter from the pulpit, including references to segments of the previous nights footy match.

The choice of music was another factor that was referred to by our visitors from traditional churches who were shocked to hear the Pastor use the phrase *‘silly old hymns’* from the pulpit! Yes, indeed Hymns in our church were gradually being replaced by songs that seemed to focus on self rather than glorifying God. These often involved repetitious verses and lyrics that sounded more like emotional romanticism rather than words that gave reverence and honour to the God of the universe.

In the height of the summer it was customary for some women to turn up in *‘fashionable’* (low neckline) clothing that could be described as provocative, and it was not uncommon to see young people exposing their navels, or lying on the vacant pews at the back of the church playing with their videophones during the sermon. According to the church leadership, this was quite in order, and no one had the right to point this out. They considered it *‘judgemental’* if anyone brought this to the notice of the Church!

By now we found that the tone of our Sunday messages seemed to contain less of uplifting Biblical content. Some who left our church referred to our sermons as *‘light and fluffy stuff’*. Our little prayer-group of eight persons prayed about this irreverence in the church for six months, and, believing it was the right thing to do, requested a discussion with the church leaders in order to reason together, to find some way to restore reverence and respect in the church we loved so much. All we asked for was an opportunity to discuss these matters, but we were to be shocked beyond belief to receive a very unkind letter from the leadership instead of an opportunity to talk things over. This letter was signed by members of the leadership and the Pastor.

In a nutshell, the contents of that letter seemed to be saying: *‘Mind your own business and do not interfere with the running of the church’*. Not knowing which way to turn, we discreetly spoke to well-known ministers and Bible students, who could not believe their ears when they heard of this. So we showed them the documents and all of them without exception, reckoned this was a matter that defied credence, coming from a Christian Leadership! This was our once happy Bible-believing church!

The letter from the leadership quoted Romans 14:4 and referred to us as being judgemental...for merely requesting a discussion on the matter of reverence. As we read and re-read that reply, we did some research and checked with all the Bible scholars we knew, as it was quite evident that the reasoning of our church leaders was strange. We also went through past copies of the Australian discernment newsletter, *Diakrisis (Australia)*, and discovered several warnings about Rick Warren. Then after reading the recommended Booklet *‘An Analysis of Rick Warren’s Purpose Driven Life’* we discovered that the words and phrases used in this unfortunate reply were almost verbatim with Rick Warren’s teaching in his *‘Purpose-Driven Life’*:

Rick Warren’s *‘Purpose-Driven Life’* P.164 states: *‘God warns us over and over not to criticise, compare or judge each other. (Rom.14:13; James 4:11; Eph.4:29; Matt.5:9;*

James 5:9). When you criticise what another believer is doing in faith and from sincere conviction, you are interfering with God's business. What right do you have to criticise someone else's servants? Only their Lord can decide if they are doing right, (Rom.14:4 CEV).

Warren's use of various and some poor Bible 'translations' to prop up his convictions is most noticeable. A wide range of translations are used to match whatever his particular premise is. Many of his references actually bear no credence to the premise he is building upon. The deception is that many readers will not check the scriptures to see if they indeed match what he is teaching.

We noticed that this hostile letter received from our church leadership bore all the hallmarks of Rick Warren's teachings - the spokesman for our church leadership was a Rick Warren fan. This somewhat explained the reply we received and his understanding of the word 'judgemental'.

That was indeed a gross misrepresentation of the scriptures since Romans 14 is speaking of Christian liberty in 'doubtful disputations' (vs.1); foods (vs.2,3,6,14,15); and honouring various days (vs.5,6). Rick Warren makes no distinction between the positive and negative references to judging in Scripture. The Bible says not to judge hypocritically (Matt.7); or judge in matters of personal preference. But the Bereans tested everything taught by the Scriptures (Acts 17:11). The Bible also says '**he that is spiritual judgeth all things**', (1Cor.2:15). We are to try the spirits, (1Jn.4:1) and '**prove all things**', (1Thess.5:21). Jesus judged the Pharisees as hypocrites - Peter judged Ananias and Saphira as liars - and Paul judged the Galatians as fools. And Jesus Himself said: '**Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment**', (Jn.7:24).

Christians take the Bible as their standard in moral judgement. To make a judgement we recognise there are absolutes, and when we find a person or a body who claims to be Christian but doing the work of the adversary, we are well within our Christian right to expose it. '**Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron**', (1Tim.4:1,2).

One Sunday, six of us finally took our stand. We jointly bade goodbye to our friends and left the church we loved so much. Now we can only pray that those who offended and hurt us will realise what they have done and seek God's forgiveness - as for the six of us, we bear no malice against them. Following our departure, we met at least 22 people who had left in the recent past, all of whom are now attending other churches. All of them agreed that the lack of reverence, the quality of the Sunday messages, and brusque attitude of the leaders were the chief reasons for their leaving.

We did more research and discovered to our relief and satisfaction that Bible students and Christian institutions all over the world are now writing extensively, exposing Rick Warren's deceptive teachings. These are some of the things we learned:

Warren's mentor: '*Peter Drucker (Famous secular motivational speaker)...he's my mentor. I've spent 20 years under his tutelage learning about leadership from him.*'

Warren on Ecumenism: '*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. Last week I spoke to 4,000 pastors at my church who came from over 100 denominations in over 50 countries. Now, that's widespread. We had Catholic priests, we had Pentecostal ministers, we had Lutheran bishops, we had Anglican bishops, we had Baptist preachers'.

On the Gospel: In the video that accompanies the '*Forty Days of Purpose*', Warren leads his listeners in prayer at the end of the first session. The prayer goes like this: '*Dear God, I want to know your purpose for my life. I don't want to base the rest of my life on wrong things. I want to take the first step in preparing for eternity by getting to know you, Jesus Christ. I don't understand how but as much as I know how I want to open up my life to you. Make yourself real to me. And use this series in my life to help me know what you made me for*'. Warren goes on to say: '*Now if you've just prayed that prayer for the very first time I want to congratulate you. You've just become a part of the family of God*'.

Warren would be hard-pressed to find biblical backing for this presentation of the gospel. We find nothing here about sin, grace, repentance, the person of Christ, Calvary, faith, judgment or the resurrection. This is a mutilated, seeker-sensitive gospel: the seeker comes to Christ in order to find his purpose in life, not to receive forgiveness for sin and the righteousness of God. Then, to pronounce someone a fully-fledged member of the family of God because he prayed such a prayer (based on minimal, if any, understanding of the person and work of Christ), is tragic.

On Music: '*Rick Warren at his Saddleback Church's 25th anniversary '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'! There has never been anything innocent and pure about Rock-'n'-roll (not to speak of holy). From it's inception it has had two grand themes: licentiousness (sex, drugs, etc) and rebellion, and this is nowhere more evident than in the music of Jimi Hendrix..'* ('O Timothy', No.5, 2005)

On Separation: '*I see absolutely zero reason in separating my fellowship from anybody*'. Rick Warren has positioned himself in direct opposition to Holy Scripture which tells us in 2Corinthians 6:17, '**Come out from among them and be ye separate and touch not the unclean thing**'. Scripture also tells us, '**And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness but rather reprove them**', (Ephesians 5:11). Rick Warren is in gross disobedience and worse, is leading millions astray. (Source: *Apostasy Alert*, July-August/2005)

The 'Purpose Driven Life':

The '*Purpose Driven Life*' and the '*Forty Days of Purpose*' programs are based on Warren's premise (P.9,10) that '*The Bible is clear that God considers 40 days a spiritually significant time period. Whenever God wanted to prepare someone for his purposes, he took 40 days: Noah's life was transformed by 40 days of rain. Moses was transformed by 40 days on Mt. Sinai. The spies were transformed by 40 days in the promised land. David was transformed by Goliath's 40 day challenge. Elijah was transformed*

when God gave him 40 days of strength from a single meal. The entire city of Nineveh was transformed when God gave the people 40 days to change. Jesus was empowered by 40 days in the wilderness. The disciples were transformed by 40 days with Jesus after the resurrection. The next 40 days will change your life...'

But how many readers will test such claims?:

'Noah's life was transformed by 40 days of rain':

There is absolutely nothing in Genesis to support this statement! The flood was more than 40 days, (Gen.7:24). Where was Noah's life 'transformed' by the 40 days of rain?

'Moses was transformed by 40 days on Mount Sinai':

Moses was arguably 'transformed' at Mt. Sinai but not in those 40 days! It was actually during his first encounter with God before he returned to Egypt. Moses spent 80 days on the Mount the second time.

'The spies were transformed by 40 days':

Ten of the spies came back fearful! Only two were arguably 'transformed'.

'David was transformed':

David was there confronting Goliath for more like 40 minutes than 40 days! And the Israelites were 'transformed' into fearful wrecks!

'Elijah was transformed...40 days of strength from a single meal':

Elijah had two meals. He was hardly 'transformed' when he ran from Jezebel.

'Nineveh was transformed':

Arguably true? But judgement fell on that city not too much later?

'Jesus was empowered by 40 days in the wilderness':

Where was Jesus 'empowered'? He was hungry and returned from the wilderness 'in the power of the spirit', (Lk.4:14).

'The disciples were transformed':

Arguably they were 'transformed' after Jesus' ascension.

Warren starts with a premise, then goes to Scripture to find supporting verses. But if the reader accepts Warren's premise ('WHENEVER God wants to prepare someone for his purposes, he took 40 days')...then what about Abraham, Job, Isaac, Jacob, Samuel, Paul - were they 'transformed' by 40 days also? What about the generation of Israel that were dead after 40 years in the wilderness?

There is nothing wrong in encouraging people to set aside 40 days, but why misinterpret scripture, (2Tim.2:15)? Warren's material is popular because of the way it is put. There are many 'strawmen' and much extra-Biblical thinking which 'tickles the ears' of people. The popularity of Rick Warren's teaching says much about the state of the Church!

The Root of the Problem:

Warren's exegesis of scripture is deceptive. An example of this is a sermon by Warren: 'What the Bible Says About the Role of Women'. In Genesis 3:16 Warren exchanges the word 'rule' for 'dominate'; he says Lydia in Acts 16 'hosted a church in her home'; Chloe (1Cor.1:11) was a 'small group leader'; Phebe (Rom.16:1) was a 'leader in the church'. All these claims cannot be derived by exegesis of the texts. Warren turns 1Timothy 3:11 completely on its head and says: 'it sounds like the wives of deacons should have these qualifications [for a deaconess]'. Yet the passage is clearly referring to qualifications for husbands! Warren later flatly contradicts himself when he says 'women cannot

be elders'! Yet the qualification of 'husband of one wife' is the same wording for both elders and deacons! Amazingly he then says 'There were obviously women leaders in the church...' But this premise has been derived at by speculation and false interpretation!

There are many other examples of where Warren manipulates the scriptures to prove his various beliefs. Many years ago authors were warning of his poor interpretation of scripture. One author wrote: 'We find a similar story in Rick Warren's stimulating and helpful book, *The Purpose Driven Church*. It is hard not to be impressed by this book; it is inspiring, challenging and full of practical ideas for ministry and evangelism. Yet it is interesting to again find that the use of the Bible in it is almost universally poor.' ('Briefing', 7/99)

Associations:

Rick Warren promotes and quotes from a wide range of ecumenists and unbelievers, including New Agers and universalists from a variety of religions. In 2005 Rick Warren teamed up with new Age guru, Ken Blanchard, (*Diakrisis (Australia)*, 2005/7/8). Blanchard believes in the benefits and use of mantra meditation, yoga and has no trouble borrowing from Buddhism. He wrote the foreword to such books as Franz Metcalf's 'What Would Buddha Do At Work?' Blanchard makes no apology when he says much can be gained from Buddhism. He and his wife both encourage the practice of yoga and mantra meditation. Ken Blanchard, Rick Warren and Bill Hybels (Willow Creek) became team players at the 'Lead Like Jesus' conferences, which take place across North America. The three also have an audio set they co-authored together.

The majority of Rick Warren's e-mail newsletters have at least one contemplative or emerging quote of endorsement or recommendation. Some of these weekly promotions include Youth Specialties, Leonard Sweet, Thomas Merton, Ken Blanchard, Laurie Beth Jones, Jim Wallis, etc. Basically, Rick Warren believes that contemplative/emerging spirituality is great and will lead many people closer to God! These letters to pastors also promote his P.E.A.C.E. plan - from which the American Fox News cable TV channel derived much material for its recent week of programmes titled 'Can Rick Warren Save The World'?

Conclusion:

In the strongest terms I urge the readers to beware of Rick Warren and the Purpose Driven philosophy. The fruit of his teachings are now being seen nationwide and there are many reports of churches being weakened and reduced in their doctrinal stance. In many churches the gospel and standards of holiness have been watered down. Rick Warren's books are accepted by the world (e.g., his 'Forty Days of Purpose' has been used by Coca-Cola, Ford, Wal-Mart, the NBA, LPGA, NASCAR, professional baseball teams, etc.), because they are of the world.

Friends in Christ, beware. This deluded but popular false teacher is a dangerous spiritual guide.

'Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them', (Eph.5:10,11).

Mark Duckworth

(Mark Duckworth is an ex Seventh Day Adventist and author of many books on Adventism)

The Steve Irwin Death - What Is God Saying?

The Australian icon, Steve Irwin, died September 4th. in a tragic Stingray attack. Although it was described as 'freakish', swimming above or beside a huge Stingray is dangerous at any time. Stingrays have killed people in far less risky situations. Now that the hype of this tragedy is over, it might be time to think *objectively* about an event that literally shook a nation? Over the weeks we in this ministry watched the reactions of Christians Australia wide. The tide of emotion and sentimentalism that swept the nation and beyond affected many Christian minds.

We have written before on the need for objective thinking based upon facts and Scripture, (*Diakrisis Australia*, July/Aug/2006, P.3-6). Yet, as the shock of Steve's death sunk in, the reactions from Christians highlighted this very problem which appears to be rampant in Christianity today.

Many Christians, shocked by the sudden death, were swept up in this tide of sentimentalism. Many wanted to believe that Steve Irwin was a Christian. However, such was not evident from any TV interviews, movies or documentaries we have seen, where the conversation by both Steve or Terri bore no hint of a Biblical faith.

Ultimately no one knows the sure destiny of any person who dies. Non Christians and some Christians were saying Steve was 'in heaven', something that is also said at most non Christian funerals, where Hell is rarely mentioned.

Some weeks after his death, e-mails began circulating that Steve had made a public 'decision' for Christ. Different churches were named. Many Christians in their eagerness to view Steve as heaven bound and to avoid the obvious Biblical alternative, fell for a series of these e-mails.

The rumour apparently began when a woman on the Australian East Sunshine Coast responded to an article *Creation Ministries* wrote following the death of Steve Irwin. She e-mailed the organisation saying Steve had made a commitment to Christ at a church on the Sunshine Coast. A worker in *Creation Ministries* then spread the news. But when the lady was rung and asked for confirmation, she explained she had heard it from a teenager in her church who had heard it from someone else at school. The e-mail she sent confirming Steve's 'conversion' within hours had spread around the world. The rumour was given greater impetus by another e-mail multiplying across the world bearing the name of a Pastor from an Australian church (initials R.R.), giving specifics of the church in which Steve Irwin is supposed to have 'come forward'. That e-mail was then added to by others and so the story was widened.

The Christian Newspaper '*New Life*' received an apology from a person who circulated the rumour by e-mail - later found to be false. One of the churches mentioned was contacted and the pastor stated that Steve Irwin had never attended their church, let alone made a 'decision' there. Another reputable minister also checked with other local churches and they also repudiated the rumour.

Creation Ministries wrote: '*We would urge Christians not to be involved in circulating [the e-mail in question] or any other unconfirmed reports...*'. They urged Christians to '*help undo the damage*'. And damage there was, as could be seen when the secular newspapers picked up on the gullibility of today's Christians. One article in the *Sydney Morning Herald* (Sept.22nd, 2006) was titled '*Christians Fed To Lyings: Irwin No Convert*'. It read: '*For a few days, the*

nation's born-again Christians were overjoyed: could it be that Steve Irwin, crocodile hunter, had become one of them shortly before a stingray's barb cut short his life? The rumour began to circulate after 'Creation Ministries International'...reported the contents of an e-mail from a church pastor that Irwin had 'come forward' at a Sunshine Coast church two weeks before his death.

The rumour spread like wildfire. The e-mail read in part: 'Many of us will now spend eternity with him. I am sure Terri [Irwin] is comforted as a Christian in the fact that she will be with Jesus and also Steve again for eternity'.

But as encouraging as it might be for Christians to know they may share heaven with Irwin, the group now concedes there is reason to doubt the conversion. The unverified story was sent out by an exuberant staff member, said the group's managing director, Carl Wieland. 'Though we are able to substantiate our suggestion that Steve's wife, Terri, was a church-going Christian, the stories of Steve coming forward can, at this stage, not be substantiated', he said in a statement on the group's website... 'Each time, seemingly reliable witnesses are invoked, but they are never the actual eyewitnesses...At least one major church [believed to be a Pentecostal church in Adelaide]...announced it joyfully from the pulpit. But there again it turned out to be on the basis of seemingly reliable, almost impeccable eyewitness testimony, but testimony which could, again, not be confirmed, sadly'. '...Further investigation had failed to substantiate rumours of the conversion in any church on the coast', he said.

Mr Wieland said the rumour had been consigned to 'well-meant urban legend'. 'It is, ultimately, a matter between Steve Irwin and his creator and if the event did occur, then since Terri Irwin is a believer, she will be highly motivated to let the world know.'

Firstly, considering that 85% of today's 'decisions' have been documented as false professions, no assurance should come simply from a 'decision' that has not borne fruit. But it seemed many Christians just did not want to face the possibility that the endearing character of Steve could have gone to a Christless eternity, which the Bible calls Hell.

Secondly, there was simply no real evidence that Steve was a born again Christian - the only kind that the Bible says will be in Heaven. The public memorial was moving and many people were again touched as Steve's young daughter, Bindi, stole the show and gave a brave and gut wrenching speech about her dad. But the memorial ceremony never gave testimony to any Christian belief, except for the occasional use of '*Crikey!*' (slang for Christ). Some Christians tried to attach significance to minor things that were said by the various speakers in an effort to paint the picture that Steve was in heaven. Because Steve was said to be '*looking after God's creation*' - he might have been a Christian?...but as if God would need anyone, even Steve Irwin, to look after what *He* created? Apparently Steve also said he '*was the happiest he had ever been*' in the last days before his death. Again, optimistic Christians saw that statement as being the fruit of a conversion to Christ. Never mind that unsaved people can be very 'happy' at times in their lives due to their own achievements and work. Steve was certainly riding the top of the wave of success in the eyes of the world.

Some Christians are also confident that Terri Irwin is a Bible believer. The family had occasionally attended church and rumour has it that Terri is a Christian. However, again there has been no public evidence of this. A teacher at a local Christian school who attends a Baptist church wrote a factual report regarding the life and death of Steve Irwin. In the well researched report she wrote: *'Our prayers are that his wife and children will come to know Jesus in a more real and meaningful way...'* (Southern Cross, Oct/2006).

The Irwins espoused the theory of evolution, a theory that totally contradicts the first book of the Bible. Both of the Irwin's various public appearances and interviews show no testimony to Christianity. Even Terri Irwin's interviews after Steve's death with Ray Martin in Australia and Barbara Walters of *ABC America*, showed no evidence of her being a Christian. She spoke of continued contact and 'guidance' being sent to her from her husband above - a phenomena most call 'channelling', which is decidedly occultic rather than Christian. She spoke of Steve having a supernatural sense of his mothers death and driving two hours to the accident with a '6th sense' knowledge. Both interviews showed no hint whatsoever of a Biblical Christian faith.

So why is it that Christians will clamour for evidence to prove Steve was heaven bound? - Because, someone this 'good' being cast into Hell does not fit the subjective, emotional and doctrinal grid through which many Christians view events such as this. *The true response should be a contentment to leave Steve Irwin's fate to a Sovereign God.*

The thought that a loving God allows everyone into heaven is a mindset of the world. The Anglican church opened their Melbourne cathedral for the state funeral of legendary racing driver, Peter Brock, (killed the same week as Irwin). Yet Brock indulged in eastern mysticism and at times the occult, had just recently left his defacto partner of many years and was living with another woman when he died (she is married to his best friend). His state funeral saw the Anglicans eager to give him a 'Christian send off' with a touch of pagan Aboriginal spirituality thrown in. At least Steve Irwin's funeral and memorial displayed no such hypocrisy.

And not everyone is aware of the opposition that the Irwins experienced toward their 'conservation' activities. Many opposed what they saw as teasing, terrifying, assaulting and abusing animals. Many believed that this was not 'conservation' and that he was simply a very good showman. Various articles on the internet bore this out. One writer, Peter Clarke, summed up the opposition: *'Crocodile Hunter's TV shows reduced creatures to their crudest elements...Steve Irwin...although undoubtedly an animal-lover and keen preservationist, he figured out early in his career that the audience is susceptible to a cheap frisson...Irwin was indulging in the lowest form of anthropomorphism: the animal as bad guy. Acting as agent provocateur, Irwin would force wild animals to show their dangerous party tricks under the most artificial circumstances. Unlike Attenborough and his ilk, who seek to bring us the natural world in all its dimensions, Irwin demonised wildlife...'*

Some of his opponents, with arguably poor timing, spoke against Steve too soon after his death. The Australian feminist author, Germaine Greer, wrote: *'everytime I saw Steve Irwin with an animal it was in distress...now the animal world has retaliated'*. But supporters of Steve were

those who applauded his buying of large tracts of land for the purpose of saving wildlife and having the biggest wildlife hospital in Australia. Most of us just admired Steve's enthusiasm, enjoyed his entertainment and found some of his exploits riveting.

But how much should Christians be involved in emotion and sentimentalism following celebrity deaths? Perhaps only to the extent that it involves the unbelievers left alive? We should use the occasion of such an untimely death to point out that *we all die - no matter who we are* - and to die without Christ is to be lost forever. But did those 'Christians' involved in the Brock/Irwin deaths do this? Not likely.

We pray that God will console his family and lessen their grief...and that all his family will come to see the truth of the Gospel. We can still show great compassion over all this - but we must uphold the Truth of the matter. Sadly, many people, including Christians, don't want to hear that.

Christian are losing their minds to sentimentality and subjectivism! It matters not that anyone can be so 'good' or do 'good works'. *All such works are in God's sight 'filthy rags' (Is.64:6; Ps.14:3; 53:3) unless they have been brought to God through the belief of the sacrifice of His Son Jesus Christ for their sins!* If we judge a man's work here on earth as meaning anything then the Word of God stands nullified!

What does God really think about the death of a legend such as Steve Irwin? Many were asking: 'Why would God allow such a character to be suddenly and tragically taken'; 'Why do bad things happen to (supposedly) 'good' people'?

The Bible has the answers as to why there is *any* death, whether it be tragic or not. From Adam and Eve the answers are threaded throughout the entirety of the Bible: *Sin brought death; death ends in judgement. 'It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment'*, (Heb.9:27).

The world may only want to know what one can be saved *to* - God's love in 'Heaven'; but for that to occur there is something we have to be saved *from* - the wrath and justice of God! Yes, God is love but that 'love' demands justice for the sin of mankind imputed from Adam. That love is coupled with an absolute holiness that will not allow *any* sin into heaven - it must be judged and paid for! But a ransom has been offered in the form of a substitutionary sacrifice to appease the wrath of God - Jesus Christ is that blood sacrifice! God's wrath and His love; His justice and his mercy - have been resolved in the person of Jesus Christ.

Jesus did not distinguish between 'good' and 'bad' people when he cited a case of a tower falling on 'innocent' people: *'Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish'*, (Lk.13:4,5).

Any tragic death should be a wake up call from God! What is He saying?: *'Repent or you will all likewise perish'*! The '*all*' demonstrates a disregard for who you are and what you have done whether 'good' or 'bad'. What is God saying? - You are going die because *'all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God'* (Rom.3:23)!

The death of loved and famous people should bring people a little closer to the edge of eternity. The Gospel is not popular, but we are not here to pacify people and feed their egos with tales of an overcrowded heaven, but to warn people about where any who have not received Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, will end up.

Terry Arnold & Mike Claydon

Your Comments and Questions

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

1Corinthians 7:16

Dear Terry, Firstly, thank you for sharing your knowledge by exposing the false teachers and false doctrine being presented in the churches today. It is a pity that your message falls upon so many deaf ears and stiff-necked people. It never ceases to amaze how people's indignation rises when confronted with the truth, ('Sola Scriptura').

I have a question in relation to the theory of 'Calvinism' on Predestination - that only those chosen by God at the foundation of the world as saints, will be saved and that man has no input towards his own salvation, and therefore is not able to make a decision whether to accept or reject the offer of salvation. In 1Cor.7:16 it appears to imply quite the opposite and seems to be talking about the possible salvation of an unbeliever through the spouse, indicating that by the spouse's believing conduct they might be able to convince the unbelieving spouse to accept the Lord as their personal Saviour. 'For how do you know, O wife, whether you will save your husband? Or how do you know, O husband, whether you will save your wife?'. Please could you clarify this Scripture in relation to 'Predestination'.

Yours in Christ Jesus,

(J.F., SE. Qld)

Editors Comment: The saints were predestinated and chosen 'before the foundation of the world' and man has not the ability to bring about salvation in and of himself. Whatever 'decision' (response) he has made, the ability to do so was 'given' to him by the Lord. Jn.6:37 'All that the Father giveth me shall come to me...'. This is not a 'theory of Calvinism' but one which is rooted in scripture (Rom.8:29,30; Eph.1:4-11), as well as the early church, and the great evangelists, revivalists and Reformers down through the centuries. The ability to 'respond' is given to man when God 'draws' him at some point in his life. Unregenerate Man will *always* 'reject' the Gospel as

all humans *already do* (Rom.3:11; Rom.8:7); but those who are 'drawn' and 'given' to the Son 'will come' eventually, (Jn.6:37,39,44,65).

In regard to 1Cor.7:16: The marriage partner here is encouraged to see the *possibility* that the other partner *might* be saved. The context is as follows:

1. If there is separation, there is to be a view towards reconciliation and the husband is not to divorce (vs.11).

2. If one is living with an unsaved spouse, they are not to divorce them (vs.12,13).

3. The unbelieving partner is '*sanctified*' by their believing spouse (vs.14) - meaning they are specially benefited by the divine favour upon the life of the believer.

4. The unbelieving spouse has freedom to leave ('*let him depart*') and the believer should be in peace, not bound by duty or laws (vs.15). This does not mean divorce is allowable, because vs.11 still applies and the command to remain single is then confirmed by vs.16, which states the *possibility of salvation* in the unbelieving spouse.

This verse 16 then is in complete harmony with the previous verses. He or she remains single with the view to possible reconciliation and/or salvation. The tense of '*you will save*' is future. *The believing partner might be the means by which God may save the unbeliever*. It can never mean the believer can of himself save the unbeliever - if so this would contradict a mass of scriptures stating that it is God alone who saves. The 'majority' of scriptures must interpret the 'minority' here.

(I personally have experienced vs.16. My wife was saved approximately 9 years before me. It was through the means of her testimony and holy conduct (1Pet.3:1,2) that God used her to 'save' me. Yet I was saved by God alone, by his grace, His predestination, His calling, His drawing and through the gift of faith).

'Occultic spirits'?

Dear Terry, the modern unknown tongues speaking...it could be debated that these receive 'another jesus and another spirit'...considering the fact that these 'tongues' are common to the occult and pagan religions...Counsellors who have been involved with Christians from out of the Pentecostal/Charismatic movement have discovered that there are many demons having the name of 'jesus'...are there occultic spirits behind it all?...I have heard of demons coming out of tongue speaking Pentecostal believers who were challenged to say the name of 'Jesus'...

(Name withheld at editors discretion)

Editors Comment: While some 'tongues' could no doubt be demonic, most I believe are simply of the 'flesh'. There are three sources of spiritual matters - God, Satan and the flesh. Much today is probably of the flesh. In my own case I had 'learned' how to speak in ecstatic (unknown) tongues by imitation and practise. I don't believe it was 'demonic'.

Although there are many stories circulating of demonic

occurrences, demons '*having the name of Jesus*' as you say, and 'deliverance' sessions - many of them are only *subjective* reports from those involved in 'deliverance'. There is very little *objective* proof that much of this is demonic. Despite what many in 'deliverance ministries' may say, very little of the reports are tied to Scripture. There is much subjectivity in all this.

Stories of 'demons coming out of Pentecostal believers' are too often grossly exaggerated. I fear for people who get involved in this activity. Too many of them become obsessed, sick, or extreme, and end up in extra-biblical and false teaching.

So, 'another jesus' does not necessarily mean it is all demonic. There may well be many believers who in some part of their doctrines may have developed 'another jesus' in their thinking. Certainly the cults and much of Pentecostal doctrine portrays 'another jesus'.

But the more we *focus on the truth of who Jesus is and His Word*, the more we will then have the discernment to know when '*another jesus*' comes along.

Your Comments and Questions

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

Videos/Books Specials

There are still some stocks left of the video and book sell-outs advertised last issue. All videos left are half price (\$15). The stocks left are: **Videos:** 'Signs and Wonders Exposed; Parts 1&3; 'Countdown To Eternity'; and 'Does The Truth Matter Any More?'; **Books** left are: 'Finding The Balance' (\$2.90).

New Revised 'To Catholics Whom I Love'

This ministry has just published a new revised edition of the book 'To Catholics Whom I Love' by Terry Arnold. This is the seventh edition since the first printing in 1990 and has some revisions and changed terminology. It is the most accurate and up to date edition and with a new revamped cover.

'To Catholics Whom I Love' is a detailed but concise look at the teachings of the Roman Catholic religion as tested against the words of the Bible. Through the writer's personal testimony and research, this book gives a unique contrast of the Catholic faith with the Word of God.

This book is essential reading for Catholics and Christians who have an interest in what the word of God says in comparison with official Roman Catholic teaching. It will also serve as a reference guide to those Christians wanting to minister to Catholics. This book is a proven soul winning tool. Price: \$9.90 + postage \$3.50

Hi Guys, Re: Steve Irwin e-mails: Amazing how fast rumours spread, and from all places, a teenager in a school. Seems to me to be a lot of fuss over one man in a world population of six billion odd. To be a hero today you have to wrestle a crocodile or drive a holden car. A far cry from the heroes of the faith? This world and its values are so screwed up today...

(G.C., Sydney)

Praise/Prayer Points

- Praise the Lord for the many kind letters expressing thanks for this ministry and for the many prayers for our editors.
- Thank the Lord for His constant provision for this ministry to continue.
- Thank the Lord for the many pastors, elders and ministers who are increasingly using this ministry and its resources to inform, teach and equip others. Pray that they will hold fast to the faith once delivered.

Dear Terry, I'm slowly introducing your newsletters to more people in my hometown. The work you and your staff are accomplishing for the lord truly brings glory to Christ. Please continue to stand for the truth.

Why do so many supposedly saved people think that if they follow Christ that they will prosper financially and that they will live a long healthy life? As you know God may allow this to happen in our life. However, I know pastors and others who push this concept with a virtual guarantee. It is a dangerous gospel to preach as someone who receives Christ as his Saviour for these reasons may experience the opposite and dump his Saviour, his pastor and his church.

I have spoken to some of these people and told them that in the Old Testament Job loved God for who He was, not what He could provide for him. Terry, please bring out the truth over this matter as I believe this line of thinking is flowing in like a Tsunami. Yours in Christ,

(J.I., Ingham, Qld)

Chronology of Christianity

by R.C.Wetzel 'A Chronology Of Biblical Christianity'

[Continued from past editions of *Diakrisis*. To be continued]

- 1721** Levi was born to Jacob by Leah.
- 1720** Judah was born to Jacob by Leah. Dan was born to Jacob by Bilah.
- 1719** Naphtali was born to Jacob by Bilhah. Gad was born to Jacob by Zilpah.
- 1718** Asher was born to Jacob by Zilpah. Issachar was born to Jacob by Leah.
- 1717** Zebulun was born to Jacob by Leah.
- 1716** Dinah was born to Jacob by Leah. Joseph was born to Jacob by Rachel.
- 1710** Benjamin was born to Jacob by Rachel. Rachel died at Bethlehem. Jacob returned to Hebron. Jacob's name was changed to Israel.
- 1699** Joseph was sold into Egyptian slavery by his brothers.
- 1688** Joseph interpreted the baker's and the butler's dreams while in prison.
- 1687** Isaac died at age 180.
- 1686** Joseph became ruler in Egypt.
- 1685** Manasseh was born to Joseph by Asenath.
- 1683** Ephraim was born to Joseph by Asenath.
- 1679** The seven years of plenty ended in Egypt and famine began.
- 1677** Jacob, at age 130, and his 70 descendants went to Egypt.
- 1672** The seven-year famine ended in Egypt.
- 1660** Jacob died at age 147 in Egypt.
- 1606** Joseph died at age 110 in Egypt.

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