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'To Whom Shall He Speak Knowledge? And whom shall He make to understand doctrine...?'

Newsletter of TA Ministries Vol.3, No.10

July/August 2009

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

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This Newsletter is distributed bi-monthly *free* of charge. The cost to this ministry is approximately \$20.00 per subscriber annually. Any donations to help with these expenses is received with gratitude.

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Editors Comment

The 'editors comment' in this newsletter often reflects the correspondence and dialogue I have had with pastors/elders and Christians Australia wide. Often I see the *same* tensions occurring in different churches *at the same time*. Many pastors/elders are not aware that the *same* trials and testings they are experiencing are being faced across the church scene. *These simultaneous occurrences can only be the working of the sovereign hand of God or the wiles of Satan working systematically under the allowance of God.*

An example of what is happening on the current church scene is in the area of *women in ministry*. Over the last few months there have been several Christians from various areas of Australia who have written to us in regards to this issue, having been 'stood down' from their ministry positions or who are facing pressure from their own leaderships or fellow elders/pastors. Some have been asked to leave their churches, having been faithful members for decades! Hence this newsletter edition has devoted space to this issue.

Many pastors ask me to speak on 'The State of the Church' because they want to know what is happening in the church on a larger scale more than what might be occurring in their relatively smaller flocks. An advantage of this ministry is that I get to hear what is happening in the church scene across the whole country through the correspondence of thousands of readers and hundreds of pastors. Often I write accordingly in response to this.

The articles on 'love' in the last two editions were in response to months of conviction and personal study on this topic, as well as feed back from several pastors who are also being challenged in this area. Indeed, the issue of brotherly and sisterly love is arguably something that we never quite arrive at a satisfactory state. If I were to be asked 'Are you living what you write?' My answer would be 'If I am not living it, I am certainly *learning* it!' - and that is precisely why I write about it! Any preacher knows that the first audience in their preaching must be themselves.

In these last days, many in full time ministry are dealing with increasingly difficult, selfish and consumer driven church goers. Yet I also lament the lack of *eldering* being done in many churches. Many elders today are also weak when it comes to 'ruling' (1Tim.5:17; Heb.13:7,17,24) and dealing with selfish and troublesome people - they will not correct, exhort, and discipline the professing sheep. Church discipline has almost vanished and I know of very few churches in this country that practise it.

Finally, I would like to express my love to all our readers - we in this ministry wish and pray the best for you in the things of the Lord. I grant that many may not sense the editors heart or of those who have written articles in this newsletter. The motivation of love for God and His people and for the truth of His word, may not always be discerned in the midst of some 'tough' articles that expose and warn of error. The apostle Paul wrote with '*many tears*' (2Cor.2:4), but the tears do not appear on the page! We in this ministry often write with hearts filled with a mixture of love, anguish and tears. We earnestly desire our readers to be fully *informed*, Spirit *taught* and well *equipped* to discern and rightly interpret God's word!

Terry Arnold

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Only God Can Make a Mouse

Mankind can build computers that can calculate at speeds of billions of calculations per second. Following Moore's Law, by this time next year, the year after at the most, computers capable of making trillions of calculations per second will be routine. But the smartest computers conceivable, despite the dizzying heights already achieved, pale beside the capabilities of a flesh-and-blood brain.

Consider, for a second, what is involved in reading this letter. Your eyes scan the page, recognizing words, assembling the symbols they represent in your mind, to create a mental image. Computers can read, they can process the symbols the words represent, and may even be able to reproduce a corresponding image, but they cannot *create* an image.

Five people can read the same passage, and all five of them will get something different from it. No matter how sophisticated the machine, it can only process the raw data. No passage of Scripture, no poem, no novel, no work of art can move or inspire a computer. Researchers at IBM attempted to simulate the ability of a flesh-and-blood brain by using a computer recently. A team from the IBM Almaden Research Lab, working with the University of Nevada, ran a simulation on a BlueGene L supercomputer that had 4,096 processors, each one of which used 256MB of memory...not to simulate a human brain...they set their sights on simulating one of God's simplest creations...they tried to simulate the brain of a mouse. Using the most sophisticated computer systems on the face of the planet, the best they could do was simulate half a mouse's brain. Half.

According to the researchers, teaching a computer to be as half as smart as a mouse puts, '*tremendous constraints on computation, communication and memory capacity of any computing platform*'. The simulation ran for only ten seconds - at a speed ten times slower - meaning this vast collection of computer hardware and software took ten seconds to process what takes a real mouse less than a second to absorb. Four thousand and ninety-six supercomputers, strung together. And the best that all those computers could do was simulate an extremely retarded mouse.

Assessment: Think about it. A mouse can't write a symphony. Or design a new car. Or tie a shoelace. An extremely brilliant mouse can figure out how to push a button to gain access to a piece of cheese. IBM's retarded mouse brain would take ten seconds to figure out that there was a piece of cheese. Another ten seconds to process how to push the button. And it could never figure out that it was hungry, let alone that a mouse prefers cheese to, say, a rock.

Yet there are idiots who would argue that life is the product of random chance. These same idiots find no inconsistency in the fact that thousands of humans working feverishly for thousands of hours, programming thousands of supercomputers, were barely able to simulate the mental capacity of a retarded mouse with a simulated frontal lobotomy.

And, when successfully simulating even half a mouse's brain working ten times as slowly as a real mouse, almost crashing the computer in the process, *the simple accomplishment of simulating one of God's least brilliant creatures is hailed as a major scientific achievement*. They can't simulate even a whole mouse's brain, let alone a smart one, but the human brain that conceived of the computer in the first place, they argue, came into being by accident, a product of random chance with no Designer.

'I will praise Thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are Thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well', (Psalms 139:14).

Three thousand years ago, before modern technology mapped the human genome, before modern medicine had any explanation for what it is that makes us tick, the Psalmist knew 'in his soul' that his existence could not have been the product of random chance. Everything about life is unique and beyond the scope of human comprehension. NASA once estimated that it would cost a billion dollars to 'build' a tree. Yet from a tiny acorn, the mighty oak doth grow, said the poet. The humanist would argue that man is his own supreme being, and that the world is what we make of it. Really? Build a tree. Assemble an elephant. Or, even a mouse. Even half a mouse. Even half a *retarded* mouse.

Jack Kinsella May/2007 (Jack Kinsella is an author and commentator on the subject of the endtimes)

Evolution and Logic

'Evolution' is a *theory* that says there was an unfathomable random chance of life evolving from materials that were supposed to be always there. But how can nothing working on nothing by nothing, through nothing, for nothing, create everything! On the logical level the theory of evolution is destitute of sense. For example, our bodies are in fact more complex than the universe. Consider the following:

We have a complex organised system of blood vessels that, if stretched end to end, would travel around the world.

The information stored in a single DNA cell would fill 30 volumes of encyclopedias. The amount of information in the DNA on a pinhead would fill a stack of books 500 times the distance from the earth to moon...tens of thousands of home computers would be needed to store and process this data. The molecules of DNA contain threads with codes with exacting reproducible information - even for such characteristics as hair shade and colour. The information is programmed with a language with instructions...a photocopy machine that copies perfectly - and each new cell knows which part it is to follow. The DNA cells are virtual cities in themselves!

The world's fastest computer at the turn of the 21st century was '*Blue Gene*' which was built to perform 1 by 15 zeros calculations per second. It's first task was to calculate how the body makes just one protein molecule. To do this it would have to run 24 hours per day, seven days a week for one year!

Did we get all this from the 'slime' or from the ocean...and by 'chance'? At the molecular level evolution is bad joke. At the logical level the probability of evolution is actually impossible! The order and laws that have been set in nature and that hold everything together show a creator's mind rather than chaos. (**Terry Arnold**, '*Eternal Questions*' P.4)

Modesty - Quotables!

(The following quotes are taken from the book 'Worldliness' edited by C.J. Mahanay (Ch.5 'My God, My Heart, and My Clothes'). They contain teaching as well as practical and honest insights which are so needed to be conveyed to Christians today! In addition to our article on 'Modesty' (Jan/Feb/2009) young people might find these quotes worthy of thought and discussion.)

[A young lady to her pastor] *'I had a vague idea that guys were more attracted by sight than girls were, but I never realised how pervasive the temptation was. Now knowing a little bit of what guys go through every day, I have an ardent desire to serve my brothers in Christ. I want to make church a haven for them.*

Thanks to my parents oversight, I don't think my wardrobe is immodest. But I often spent too much time critiquing my outfit, trying to figure out how I can 'work with what I have' to get guys attention. After your message, I no longer have a desire to dress immodestly; rather, my concern is to protect the guys and help them in their walk with God. I don't want my clothes or behaviour to distract them from focusing on God'. (P.129)

[The role of parents!] *'My parents were committed to raising modest daughters. They educated us about how men are stimulated visually. They examined every article of clothing that came into the house, giving it a thumbs up or sending it straight back to the store with the receipt. I'll admit it was frustrating to spend hours at the mall and have nothing to show for it. There were moments when that frivolous, selfish desire for cool, tight jeans overtook my desire to serve others. That's when mom and dad would remind me of the young men who were trying to glorify God. My clothes could either help or hinder them. When they put it like that, I was quickly saddened by my selfishness'. (P.130)*

[A young man] *'Each and every day on campus is a battle - a battle against my sin, a battle against temptation, a battle against my depraved mind. Every morning I have to cry out for mercy, strength and a renewed conviction to flee youthful lusts. The Spirit is faithful to bring me the renewal I need to prepare me to do war against my sin, yet temptation still exists.*

I'm thankful God has created me to be attracted to women; however, campus is a loaded minefield. There are girls everywhere, and I am guaranteed to pass some attractive girl as I walk to my classes. To make it through the day unscathed, I have to be actively engaging my mind - praying, quoting scripture, listening to worship music, or looking at the sidewalk. Many days it takes all four to be safe.

The thing women do not seem to fully grasp is that the temptation toward lust does not stop; it is continual; it is aggressive; it does all it can do to lead men down to death. They have a choice to help or to deter its goal. Sometimes when I see a girl provocatively dressed, I'll say to myself, 'She probably does not know that 101 guys are going to devour her in their minds today. But then again, maybe she does'. To be honest I don't know the truth - the truth of why she chooses to dress the way she does. All I know is that the way she presents herself to the world is bait for my sinful mind to latch onto and I need to avoid it at all costs.

For the most part the church serves as a sanctuary from the continual barrage of temptation toward sin. However the church members are not free from sin yet, and there are girls - those who are ignorant and those who are knowledgeable of men's sinful tendencies - who dress immodestly. I must confess that even church can have several mines scattered about.

To the girls who are ignorant: please serve your brothers in Christ and have your dad screen your wardrobe. Ask him how you can better choose holiness over worldliness. He's a guy, he knows more about temptation men face than you do.

And to the girls who don't follow the pattern of the world: thank you a million times over. You are following scriptural commands and are helping your brothers in the process. Despite all that Godly men are doing to defeat the sin of lust, they still need help, and they need you to provide it'. (P.127)

[A young man] *'The one place where I might think I would not have to face as much temptation is at church, but this is not always the case. When women that I am friends with dress immodestly it definitely has a negative affect on our friendship. When a woman dresses immodestly it doesn't make it easier to see her as a sister in Christ. There's a constant battle going on as I'm talking to her. Communication becomes more difficult because as I'm trying to listen to her, I'm always trying to fight temptation. I think some women aren't aware that even little things distract guys a lot - showing even a little part of their stomach, wearing bags that have straps that go between their breasts, etc.*

I'm so grateful for the friendships God has given me with the Godly women in the church. I'm so appreciative of the sacrifices they make in order to glorify God and serve and care for the guys. I heard of one girl who went shopping and really liked the shirt she was trying on. But then she thought, 'No, I can't do this to the guys'. That was the first time I have ever heard of anything like that, and it made me so grateful. It is such a blessing to have friends who care for me enough to be selfless and to sacrifice what might look attractive in order to help me and other guys with sexual lust.

When women dress modestly, it's attractive and it makes me want to hang out with them more. I think modesty is so attractive and helpful in friendships because it makes it easier for the friendship to be centred around God and for fellowship to be 'unhindered'. (P.128)

'We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification', (Rom.15:1,2).

'Know you not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which you have of God, and you are not your own? For you are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's', (1Cor.6:19-20).

The Profile of Church ‘Dragons’

Most experienced pastors/elders will in confidence tell you that their churches contain or have contained ‘legalists’ or ‘difficult people’, and that they can be like thorns in their sides and a drain on time and mind. As one author put it: ‘*A difficult person is one who must regularly, chronically, almost predictably, oppose me in a selfish, dysfunctional way that is hurtful and destructive to me and to others around me*’.* These professing Christians can become, as Marshal Shelley titles his book, ‘*Well Intentioned Dragons*’. They create tension or even dissension within an assembly of believers. Most are also ‘legalists’. Their profile varies from person to person but the over-arching characteristics is the ability to breath fire and cause trouble. The problem is not always in what they say (for they are often right), but in *how they relate to others*.

Profile of a legalist or a ‘dragon’:

Legalists are bent on *imposing* their laws upon other souls as doctrinal commands. They confuse their ‘preferences’ with important doctrines.** Legalist usually become ‘well intentioned dragons’ whose breath is tainted with condemnation and judgement. They demand they have their own way and seek control to rule and domineer. They are the ‘policemen’ of the church. They are difficult people for elders/pastors to deal with as they can copy the authority that is not theirs - that which is scripturally given to the office of an elder in ‘ruling’ an assembly, (1Tim.5:17; Heb.13:7,17,24).

Legalists believe they are always right. Anyone who disagrees with them is judged harshly. The air of condemnation chills their words. A day in the life of a confirmed legalist is filled with trying to become, but never arriving. Most of these people sadly do not really understand God’s love and forgiveness and are only portraying out of what they have *not*, or are *not* experiencing. They are often joyless and bound up in some issue that has their attention at the time. They are a slave to rules of where not to go, what not to do. Bible reading and praying are often a duty rather than a time of being lost in the wonder of feasting on God’s manna. Yet they may think they are ‘holy’ and their outside ‘straitjacket’ may give that appearance. But it is an outside holiness rather than an inner separation to the Lord. They separate from many things but lack the character of Jesus in love and humility. Hypocrisy is rampant. *They have a list of don’ts yet their own lives are full of contradictions*.

When confronted or challenged they will often explode or vanish to their hermit hole of retreat. They rarely work through a confrontation with an openness and humility and a respect for authority. *There is little personal relationship with the Lord and so there is little relationship to others*. Thus they have few friends that stick with them.

‘Legalists’ ‘*strain at gnats and swallow camels*’, (Matt.23:24). They are often quick to see faults in others yet are blind to their own (Matt.5); quick to vilify yet slow to apologise when successfully challenged.

‘Dragons’ are often not ‘led’ but ‘driven’ people. They are busy ‘helping’ God. They feel they must do something. These driven people may initially refresh the troops of God, but eventually they weary the saints.

A common characteristic of such difficult people is a lack of humility and submission to the Biblical local church

authority or to their brothers and sisters in Christ. Yet these people can be the greatest supporters of the leadership for a time! But when they inevitably run into a disagreement they can suddenly turn into the worst of enemies!

Romans 14 has an apt description of the characteristics of a legalistic person who is called the ‘weaker brother’. We all have areas of ‘weakness’. We may be the ‘stronger’ believer in some areas, and a ‘weaker’ brother in other areas. The strong believer in Romans 14 is mature, acts in grace and operates within the fellowship of the body of saints in view. The weaker brother judges the stronger believer in some ‘grey areas’ of behaviour. He may be strong on scruples but not well informed about doctrine. He may operate from feelings, emotions, traditions and experiences, rather than the full orb view of doctrine.

The sad part of this dismal ‘profile’ is that often the legalist thinks that he is producing ‘*silver and gold*’ but is in fact producing ‘*wood hay and stubble*’, (1Cor.3:12).

Many of these people stick their noses into others affairs that don’t really concern them. This often leads to gossip and judging by appearances, (Jn.7:24). At times they may even resort to squeezing people into their mould by coercion and even spiritual bullying.

What is not often understood is that these ‘dragons’ often have a ‘guilt conscience’ because they are actually not living up to their own standards. When challenged in their own lives they may become angry in self justification. An offshoot of this is that these people demand attention and are often very ‘sensitive’. Self pity sometimes rules.

Such people can only break free of this destructive cycle by confessing their sin openly and by agreeing to *submit* to Godly counsel.

If we think this above profile is ‘unloving’ or too ‘hard’ then what do we do with Jesus words to the Pharisees? The profile of a ‘dragon’ is really just a throw back to the Pharisees. The Pharisees had an outward show of ‘humility’ and ‘holiness’ while inwardly they were proud and self-righteous. The Lord’s most used descriptive term for the Pharisees was ‘*hypocrite*’ (Matt.23). Jesus publicly branded them as ‘*vipers*’ (Matt.3) who were outwardly beautiful ‘*whited sepulchers*’ but inwardly filled with ‘*hypocrisy and iniquity*’, (Matt.23). The outside looks good until one examines it more carefully to find it a veneer for something quite the opposite inside. *Hypocrisy is a natural offspring of pride*. Pride wants a person to look good and be ‘well respected’ regardless of the truth and it will devise all sorts of self justifications to make this happen

The reader may well be thinking he or she is not such a ‘dragon’. *But within us we all have the possibility of being ‘dragons’!* Its called the ‘*flesh*’ and it must be ‘*mortified*’. ‘*For if you live after the flesh, you shall die: but if you through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, you shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God*’, (Rom.8:13,14).

Terry Arnold

Recommended reading: ‘*Well Intentioned Dragons*’ by Marshal Shelley

* Buch Wagler (taken from a *Barnabas Associates* leadership manual)

** See our article ‘*Legalism - The Scourge of Christianity*’, March/April 2008 *Diakrisis* (Australia)

'On the Subject of Women in Ministry'

Below are short excerpts from a 9 page refutation of a paper titled '*On the Subject of Women in Ministry*' (10 pages). This paper was sent out by a South East Queensland Church of Christ which advocated women in ministry positions of authority. The paper displayed the Churches of Christ in Australia logo and claimed to '*reflect the stand of Churches of Christ in Queensland and...nationally*'. (Full copies of the original paper and our refutation are available from this ministry). I have quoted from the paper in *italics* and then commented on each statement in bold type.

(P.2) '*There are instances where Jesus demonstrated his unbiased regard to sex. After all, the word tells us there is no male or female in Christ Jesus (Galatians 3:28) - AMEN*'

Galatians 3:26-28 says: '*For you are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. 27 For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for you are all one in Christ Jesus'*

Verse 28 says:

1. Christians are '*one*' and there is no bias or preference in race ('*Jew or Greek*'), class ('*bond or free*') or sex ('*male or female*').

The passage is about *salvation*, not about offices, authority, or functions in the church. This has been the generally accepted understanding of the verse down the running centuries until the 20th century. *The context is about salvation, being one in Christ and all being baptised into the one body of Christ. It is not at all about women's roles in churches or their possible offices!*

(P.3) '*Increasingly secular thinkers attack Christianity as against women and thus irrelevant to the modern world.*'

The modern world has certainly shifted in its idea of 'headship' in the family; and the church has capitulated to, and mirrored this. But why should we cater for the thinking of the world? Do we bow to the culture of the day when scripture conflicts with that culture? *The relationship of man and women and the creation order thereof is not variable or reversible according to culture!*

(P.3) '*The assemblies of God and other denominations birthed in the Holiness and Pentecostal revivals affirmed women in ministry...two thirds of all missionaries were women. The 19th century women's movement fought for women's right to vote...and the abolition of slavery...for Bible believing Christians, however, mere precedent from church history cannot settle a question; we must establish our case from scripture...*'

Then why raise such 'history'? Our authority must be what the Bible teaches, not what a minority of women have done in the past. (The trend to ordain women in positions in ministry never became a thorny issue until the advent of liberal theology in the 2nd half of the 20th Century. For 1800 years there was widespread opposition to 'ordaining' women!).

And why raise the Pentecostal movement that was considered unorthodox and heretical at the time? Further, why raise history that is also purely *secular*? What has secular '*women's right to vote*' got to do with women in ministry?

Likewise, the existence of 'slavery' is not rooted in any *creation ordinance* - which is the very reason why Paul forbids women to teach or usurp authority in 1Timothy 2! The New Testament never commands or forbids slavery. Slavery did not exist in the creation; but the headship and the order of men and women and the authority therein, was existent. The eventual abolition of slavery did not nullify any biblical teaching; but the new allowance of women in roles of authority in ministry does disregard several texts of God's word! And any oppression of women in the *secular* world does not justify a change in what scripture teaches.

(P.3) '*Deborah was not only a prophetess but a judge (Judges 4:4). She held the place of greatest authority in her day...*'

These 'exception' arguments from the Old Testament must be interpreted by the *clear* in the New Testament. Sound interpretation never interprets the clear with the unclear or 'exceptions' from the Old Testament.

Deborah was more of a 'prophet' than anything else and nowhere is it written that she ever prophesied or taught in public. Her prophetic role was limited to private or individual instruction, (Judges 4:5). She deferred to men when in battle although it is obvious that Barak was a weak leader. Many fail to see that the Bible views Deborah's judgeship as a rebuke against the weak or absence of male leadership (eg. Judges 4:9).

Deborah is also not mentioned in the line up of heroes in Hebrews 11, but Barak is.

We must be careful in drawing conclusions about women leadership from the book of Judges when it has examples of things *not* to imitate - such as Samson's marriage to a Philistine woman (14:1-4); his visiting a prostitute (16:1); Jephthah's foolish vow (11:30-31; 34-39); and the wrong doing of the men of Benjamin at Shiloh (21:19-23), etc.

Such isolated references of women such as Deborah should not make a rule *when there is clear teaching in the New Testament as to women in ministry!* I Timothy 3 is clear that elders/pastors are to be male - '*the husband of one wife*', not '*the wife of one husband*'! Other scriptures are also clear that a woman is not to '*teach*' or '*usurp authority over a man*', (1Tim.2). The weight of evidence in the New Testament interprets any seeming 'exceptions' in the Old.

(P.3) '*Jesus allowed women to join his ranks (Mark 15:40,41; Luke 8:1-3)*'

These scriptures say *nothing* about women being elders, women preaching or women in ministry. They simply say women *served*. Such '*ministering unto him*' is not preaching, teaching or eldering! The '*ministering*' here refers to *waiting upon someone or serving them*.

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There is *nothing* in these scriptures that can be used to argue that women can hold offices of ministry or teach.

(P.3) ‘He allowed a woman who wished to hear his teaching ‘sit at his feet’ (Luke 10:39)’.

Again, there is *nothing* in this scripture that can be used for any argument that women can hold offices of ministry or teach men. Luke 10:39 shows a learning situation, not a teaching one! Mary simply sat at Jesus feet and ‘heard his word’.

(P.3) ‘The gospels unanimously report that God chose women as the first witnesses of the resurrection...’

These women were simply witnesses of the resurrection and they simply reported the event to the disciples. *There is no public preaching or teaching or usurping authority here.* They went to a private home and reported events. There is no prohibition against women preaching the gospel or to be involved in evangelism where it does not involve public teaching of men or usurping authority over them. Scripture encourages men and women to talk to each other about the Gospel, (Acts 18:26).

(P.4) ‘Many of the apostles co-labourers in the gospel, were women’.

No scripture is given here. Obviously there were women who accompanied the apostles on their journeys and *ministered to the apostles*. They held no offices of leadership and did not teach. They simply *served* or ministered to the apostles, (Matt.8:15; Mk.15:41; Lk.8:3). Philippians 4:2,3 mentions Paul’s co-workers or ‘fellow labourers’. The Greek word is ‘*sunergos*’ and it does not mean equal authority or that these people had any teaching authority.

(P.4) ‘Phoebe was a servant of the church at Cenchrea. ‘Servant’ may refer to a deacon...’

Again, *nothing* is said here of Phoebe teaching or holding any office in the church. The best translations here have ‘servant’. Phoebe was a ‘servant’ in the church as we all should be. ‘Servant’ here does not refer to the office of a deacon. The office of a deacon is clearly male in 1Timothy 3. The Greek word for servant here, ‘*diakonos*’ (29 times in NT), has a *wide* usage including the concept of *servicing* or *ministering* for both men and women. The same word is used for a variety of serving functions such as serving meals, (Martha: Lk.10:40). A review of this word in the New Testament will show clearly that it cannot be used for the office of a deacon excepting in the passages where the qualifications for the office of a deacon are obviously mentioned, (1Tim.3).

Everyone is supposed to be doing the work of ‘*deaconing*’ but not everyone has the *office* of a deacon. Paul never refers to women deacons as an office. Interestingly, he does refer to deacon’s ‘*wives*’, yet does not qualify that with the word ‘*deacons*’ for them! *Women are never found to be holding ordained offices.*

(P.4) ‘Elsewhere we learn that she [Priscilla] and her husband taught scriptures to another minister, Apollos (Acts 18:26)’.

In Acts 18:6 ‘*Aquila and Priscilla*’ took Apollos aside and ‘*expounded*’ a better way. The word ‘*ektithemi*’ means to *explain* and this does not have to include teaching or taking any authority over a man. It was not public preaching/teaching by Priscilla and there is no evidence that Priscilla was ‘*usurping authority over*’ Aquila or Apollos. This is simply a case of the wife being *with the husband*. Again, *no office of ministry or teaching or authority is ever implied here.*

(P.4) ‘Paul listed two fellow apostles, Andronicus and Junia (Rom.16:7)...Paul could have here referred to a female apostle...’

Masculine names ending in ‘*as*’ are not unusual in the New Testament. (Andrew - Andreas, Matt.10:12; Elijah - Elias, Matt.11:14; Zacharias, Lk.1:5, etc). Names ending in ‘*as*’ are often contracted forms for clearly masculine forms. For example, Silas (Acts 15:22) is short for Silvanus (1Thess1:1; 1Pet.5:12). The ending of the Greek word for ‘Junia’ does not definitely tells us whether it is male or female.

While some church fathers may have been undecided as to Junia, yet Epiphanius (AD315-403), bishop of Salamis in Cyprus, wrote: ‘*Iounias [Junia] of whom Paul makes mention, became bishop of Apameia of Syria*’. (1) In Greek, the phrase ‘*of whom*’ has a masculine relative pronoun (‘*hou*’) and shows that Epiphanius thought Junia was a man. Origen (who died AD252), in the earliest Latin commentary on Romans, also wrote of Junia as a male.

It must also be recognised that the Greek word for ‘*apostle*’ (‘*apostolos*’) literally means ‘*sent one*’ and is used in a wide context of meaning, including that of ‘*messenger*’, (eg. Epaphroditus as a ‘*messenger*’ in Phil.2:25; and other ‘*messengers*’ in 2Cor.8:23).

Jesus did not select a single female apostle. He did not choose 6 women and 6 men. All 12 of the apostles chosen by Jesus were male. When Peter speaks of a replacement apostle for Judas he says it had to be one ‘*of these men who have companied with us*’, (Acts 1:21). The term for ‘*men*’ here is ‘*aner*’ - a male human being.

(P.5) ‘Those who complain that Paul did not specifically mention women pastors by name miss the point. Paul rarely mentioned any men pastors by name either’ (P.5)

This is a ‘*strawman*’ argument because Paul does not mention *any* ‘*pastors*’ in *any* church! Those in this office were not called ‘*pastors*’ but ‘*elders*’ or ‘*overseers*’. The only time ‘*pastor*’ is mentioned for a Christian minister is *once* in Ephesians 4:11 and it is not the office but a *gifting* to the church. Nowhere else is a ‘*pastor*’ mentioned except for Jesus Christ himself!

(P.5) ‘Paul commended them [women] and included commendations to women apostles and prophets, the offices of the highest authority in the church’.

No scripture is given here - because there is none! There is no mention of the continuing office of prophets in the New Testament. Also prophecy differs substantially from teaching. Prophecy is spontaneous revelation (1Cor.14:29-33); teaching is exposition of received revelation and often has doctrinal content.

Women prophets never prophesied publicly. This understanding is attested to by the church fathers. Tertullian (160-220AD) taught that women could prophesy but *not teach* and that they must be under obedience. (2) He also wrote '*It is not permitted to a woman to speak in the church; but neither [is it permitted] to teach, nor to baptise*'. (3)

(P.6) '*Two passages in Paul's writings at first seem to contradict the progressive ones. Keep in mind that these are the only two passages in the Bible that could be remotely be construed as contradicting Paul's endorsement of women in ministry*'.

The '*two passages*' are actually not '*remotely contradicting*' the '*progressive*' view but rather abruptly so! They are direct and unequivocal. And what does '*progressive*' mean - is this not another word for what was described as '*liberal*' only a few decades ago? So far not one of the '*progressive*' verses used in this paper have even remotely taught that women can *teach* or have any *authority over men* in leadership!

The paper later states: '*The only passage in the entire Bible that could directly cite against women teaching the Bible is 1Tim.2:11-15*'. However, there are several other passages that the paper does not deal with, such as the qualifications for an elder/overseer in 1Timothy 3 and Titus 1 which more than directly cite against women holding offices in church. 1Timothy 3 and Titus 1 clearly teach the office of elder/pastor/overseer is a *male*. It is '*the husband [aner] of one wife...One that rules well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)*'. The context here concerns a male. The Greek word for '*man*' is '*aner*', not the more general word for mankind '*anthropos*' which would include male or female. The word '*rule*' here ('*One that rules well his own house*') also refers again to headship and the order in creation. Since when does the Bible say a woman fulfils this role of '*ruling his own house*'? The Greek and English is absolutely unbending on this. It is a *man's* role here whether we like it or not!

(P.7) '*In any case, here [1Tim.2:1-15] Paul forbade women to 'teach', something he apparently allowed elsewhere (Rom.16; Phil.4:2,3)*'

Romans 16 and Philippians 4 simply do *not* have any women '*teaching*'! This is clearly a misuse of scripture here and I urge the reader to read these scriptures for themselves. Nowhere has the paper proved that Paul allowed women to teach men. And neither has the paper beforehand stated that women were teaching in these same scriptures used. *The Bible has not one single example of any women teaching in public to an assembled group of believers!*

(P.7) '*Women were the most susceptible to false teaching only because they had been granted the least education...so Paul provided a short term solution: 'Do not teach' (under the present circumstances); and a long range solution: 'Let them learn' (1Tim.2:11)*'.

This has several errors. Women were simply not '*susceptible to false teaching*' because of their '*lack of education*' and *Paul never uses this argument!* There is considerable evidence that many women received literary skills in that era. The Greek, Roman and Jewish cultures testify to this. Both men and women could read and write. Priscilla herself proves this fact (Acts 18:26).

It must also be remembered that Jesus chose men in the beginning who were relatively '*less educated*'! The reason for women not teaching was therefore obviously not due to the lack of '*educated*' women, but was based on the *creation order* as Paul taught in many passages.

It is also of interest to note that in the passages that speak of false teachers at Ephesus, they are men, not women, (1Tim.1:19,20; 2Tim.2:17,18; Acts 20:30).

If women were intellectually inferior Paul arguably would not allow them to teach other women and children. But women knew the scriptures as well as the men, heard the same sermons, were taught by their men, etc. The papyri show literacy among Greek women and the ability to read and write. And it is a ridiculous notion to assume that because they were '*less educated*' they would not *discern* '*false teaching*'. This is and was a gift of the Holy Spirit, not given because of '*education*'.

And since when is something in scripture only a '*short term*' command and the next phrase a '*long range*' one? The passage is in the present tense. If this passage is '*temporary*' then what do we do with 1Timothy 2:1 '*I urge that supplications...*'; and Romans 12:1 '*I appeal to you...*'? If we also make such passages '*temporary*' then there will be many other passages in the NT to ignore!

In 1Timothy 2:12 Paul uses the word '*suffer*' ('*epitrepo*') as an exercise of his apostolic authority. It does not mean anything '*temporary*' or '*short term*'. The proof of this is in the verses following (vs.13,14) where the headship of Genesis is referred to - and this *from Genesis* is not '*short term*' but universal! Paul's instruction is not based on women being '*less educated*' but rather based on the *creation* and the Fall.

The basic instruction in 1Timothy 2 is that women *learn*; that they *not teach the men* and that they be in *submission* in a quiet manner and *not exercise authority*. The '*teaching*' referred to here in this passage is not allowed, because it would be exercising oversight and thus would violate the principle of submission itself.

(P.8) '*Paul spoke only of the husband as head of his wife, not the male gender as head of the female gender*'.

The Greek '*gune*' does not distinguish between '*woman*' and '*wife*'. The interpretation is determined by the context. 1Corinthians 11 is obviously referring to wives. 1Timothy 2:12 is not necessarily referring to wives only as most good translations show. If one inserts '*husband*' or '*wife*' into the entire passage (including the previous verses on '*modesty*'), it will be obvious that the context is not just to husbands and wives.

(P.8) *'Today we should affirm those who God calls whether male or female...'*

If God 'calls' a sexual pervert to a childrens ministry, do we 'affirm' them? Do we break the word of God and Paul's commands so as to be positive and 'affirm' such? Anyone can say they are 'called', but how is this to be tested? 1Corinthians 14 tells us clearly that gifts can be misused. The Word of God must be the final arbitrator and it carefully says that the offices of elder/pastor is male (1Tim.3; Tit.1); and that women are not to publicly teach men or usurp authority over them, (1Tim.2:12-15). As well as this there is an overwhelming *silence* as to any women teaching or holding authoritative offices! If any 'calling' breaks God's word then it is not a true 'calling'. Do we 'affirm' false prophets and false teachers who would say they are 'called'?

Scriptural gifts are not only given by God but *they are regulated by the scriptures.*

Final Thoughts:

This paper is *full of teaching that argues from the silence of scripture or scriptures that do not teach what is affirmed.* Why put emphasis on things that Paul did not say in preference to what he did say?

What is most importantly missing too is the *headship* issue, which is dealt with in the verses 13,14 following 1Tim.2:12. The paper simply does not deal with these verses. In 1Timothy 2:12 the rule of *'I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man'* is because of two reasons given in the following verses: (A) Vs.13: *The original creation - 'Adam was first formed, then Eve';* (B) Vs.14: *The original order of sin (Adam was not deceived by Satan as was the woman. The women took the lead in sin).* These verses are simply left unattended throughout the paper.

Paul's convictions for male leadership are heavily rooted in this *headship* issue. The whole debate is rooted in Genesis 1-3 and *any argument for women in ministry must deal with this issue!* Paul uses the fact that *'Adam was formed first'* (1Tim.2:13) to reason for men and women having *different roles.*

It is not just the Old Testament that addresses this *headship* issue. The New Testament also teaches Christ as the head, then man, then woman: *'But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God'*, (1Cor.11:3). The order has not been changed from Genesis. This order is played out in many scriptures such as Colossians 3:18-19: *'Wives submit yourselves unto to your own husbands...husbands love your wives...'*; and Ephesians 5:23: *'the husband is the head of the wife...'*.

God said this creation with its order was *'very good'*! The relationships were never to be reversed. What authority do we have to change this?

Israel was troubled by this issue in their history of decline: *'Woe unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him: for the reward of his hands shall be given him. 12 As for my people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them. O my people, they which lead you cause you to err, and destroy the way of my paths'*, (Is.3:11).

God's word is unbending on this issue. Those who ignore or twist Paul's commands for male leadership and

authority do despite to the creation order as well as nullify the authority of the word of God. *'Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him. Add you not unto his words, lest he reprove you, and you be found a liar'*, (Pr.30:5,6).

What is really at stake in this whole debate is the *authority of the Bible!* If that authority is nullified then marriages and family 'order' are in great danger.

Our Lord Himself said: *'He that rejects me, and receives not my words, has one that judges him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day'*, (Jn.12:48).

Terry Arnold *Diakrisis (Australia)*

A full copy of the Church of Christ paper and our refutation in full can be obtained from this ministry

Recommended reading: *'Countering the Claims of Evangelical Feminism'* by Wayne Grudem. (Available from this ministry).

- (1) *'An Index of Apostles'*, (125.19-20)
- (2) Tertullian, *'Against Marcion'*, (5.8.11)
- (3) Tertullian, *'On the Veiling of Virgins'*, (9.1)

Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones on 'Women Preachers'

'In many ways the root trouble, even among good Evangelicals, is our failure to heed the plain teachings of Scripture. We accept what Scripture teaches as far as our doctrine is concerned; but when it comes to practice, we very often fail to take the Scriptures as our only guide. When we come to the practical side we employ human tests instead of Scriptural ones. Instead of taking the plain teachings of the Bible, we argue with it. 'Ah yes', we say, 'since the Scriptures were written times have changed'. Dare I give an obvious illustration? Take the question of women preaching, and being fully ordained to the full ministry. The apostle Paul, in writing to Timothy (1Tim.2:11-15) prohibits it directly. He says quite specifically that he does not allow a women to teach or preach. 'Ah yes', we say, as we read that letter, 'He was only thinking of his own age and time; but you know times have changed since then, and we must not be bound. Paul was thinking of semi civilised people in Corinth and places like that'. But the Scripture does not say that. It says, 'Let the women learn in silence with all subjection, but I suffer not a woman to teach nor usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence'. 'Ah, but that was only temporary legislation', we say. Paul puts it like this: 'For Adam was first formed, the Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. Notwithstanding, she shall be saved in child bearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety'. Paul does not say that it was only for the time being; he takes it right back to the Fall and shows that it is an abiding principle. It is something that is true, therefore, of the age in which we live. But thus you see, we argue with Scripture. Instead of taking its plain teaching, we say that times have changed - when it suits our thesis we say it is no longer relevant...' 'If you want to avoid terrible disillusionment at the day of judgement, face the Scripture as it is. Do not argue with it, do not try to manipulate it, do not twist; face it, receive it and submit to it whatever the cost'. (From 'Studies in the Sermon on the Mount', Vol.2).

Your Comments and Questions

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

Dear Terry, your recent articles on love [March/April & May/June 2009] were very good. I'm writing this because I was given a definition of love that works for me and for some others with whom I've shared it: 'LOVE IS DOING WHAT IS BEST FOR THE OTHER PERSON'. I wrote an article about this several years ago, which I have attached.

May the Lord continue to bless you and the ministry as you stay close to Him and serve Him for His glory (Phil.2:14-16).

Editors Comment: The article attached explores the sacrificial and selfless understanding of the word for God's love ('agape'). It is a 'novel' application but worthy of consideration if one considers the two characteristics above of this word. We have printed this article in full below:

Love

Oh no, not another sermon on love! Haven't we all heard many sermons, and read many learned expositions on the subject? Why another? Simply because I was given a definition of love that no one else had ever told me after more than forty years of being a Christian, and I still hear people talking about love with their words indicating that they don't really understand the Biblical meaning.

Until I heard this explanation of love, I'd never really grasped the concept. Oh yes, like many people, I'd been told, many times, all about it, and I have always had a fair idea in my mind what love is - or thought I had! Because of what I've heard I've tried to 'love' people, but it all seemed so 'airy-fairy' and uncertain. So, if you're like me, read on, but if you're happy with your own understanding of love, turn to something else.

The definition is: 'LOVE IS DOING WHAT IS BEST FOR THE OTHER PERSON'.

Of course, we're talking about the real *agape* love (the Greek word used for Christ's love in the Bible, e.g. Eph.3:19). The world today so often misuses the word to indicate the extremes of lust or of simple friendship. Yet this definition seems very useful to me in saying what Biblical love actually means.

But does this description really fit in with the use of the word 'love' in the Bible? Is this an accurate way of describing the love we have to pursue, as in 1Cor.14:1? (We all know 1Cor.13 is called the 'love chapter', but does it end with verse 13? Paul didn't include chapter breaks. Can you really read chapter 13 without including at least the first three words of chapter 14?).

So, if the Word of God is our guide in deciding everything, does our 'description' fit the way 'love' is used in the Bible?

We'll look at some references, and if the description 'doing what is best for the other person' fits, then we could accept it. Look at these, and think for a moment about each one:

John 3:16 'For God so ['did His best for'] **the world that He gave...**'.

John 15:13 **Greater** ['doing what is best for the other person'] **has no man than....'**

Matt.5:43 'That shall ['do what is best for'] **your neighbour...**'

The next verse is interesting: Matt.5:4 ['Do what is best for'] **your enemies**']. That's a bit hard to take, but does it fit? Does loving our enemies really mean doing what is best for them?

John 11:5 'Jesus ['did what was best for'] **Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus**'.

John 13:34 'A new commandment...that you ['do what is best for'] **one another**'.

John 14:15 'If you ['do what is best for'] **Me, keep My commandments**'.

Then, of course, there's the portion we mentioned above. 1Cor.13:1-14:1a. Read all of it carefully, putting in the definition wherever the word 'love' (or 'charity' in the AV versions), and see if you can see the point of the changed wording. And doesn't that old word 'charity' mean something based on our 'doing what is best for the other person'?

The following references (please look them up to prove you are a true 'Berean') show how the definition helps and better explain the verses. (If you can make time, get your concordance, and go through all the *agape* verses, seeing how 'doing what is best for the other person' fits in): Rom.5:5,8; 8:35; 13:8; 2Cor.5:14; 8:8,24; Eph.4:2,15; 5:25, 1Jn.3:1,16 (and noting verse 14). While not commenting on the interpretation of this last verse, it is interesting in the context of our present study because I know of a situation where this verse can be applied as a practical example in explaining our definition...

A man had been mean and spiteful to his younger sister, and she hated what he was doing, despised his behaviour, and had agonies of grief over what he was unjustly telling people about her. It really appeared from what he said that she hated him. Yet in fact, she attempted reconciliation many times, she prayed, and her grief was because she loved him. She was simply trying to do what was best for him, even though she became upset at every mention of his name.

You see, that verse about hating a brother (and other similar verses) didn't say she had to like her brother, or like what he was doing - but rather do what was best for him. And in the end, that meant staying away from him, even though she would have liked to have remained friends, and did not want to have the children of both families estranged. That's true love.

Do we think that loving someone is being 'lovey-dovey' and friendly, kind and sweet, etc? Doing what is best for a person may mean staying away from them; it may even mean hurting them! For example, don't we hurt our children when we punish them for being disobedient? Yet don't we love our children? Didn't our Lord hurt some people by the way He spoke to them? Yet didn't He love them?

We have seen situations in churches where people have misbehaved, but no-one speaks out because 'we have to love them'. In fact, not facing them with their behaviour, as set out in the Word, in a spirit of true *agape* love, and bearing in mind our own faults, is not loving them.

In another area, how often have we sung hymns and choruses telling of our love for the Lord, and for the Father? We declare our supposed love in this way, and it sounds wonderful and 'religious', but are we really doing for our Lord 'what is best for Him', in everything we do? This is a thought that I have found very challenging. Do you? Do we consider, no, more than consider - do we actually do what is best for the Lord in all our actions, in our behaviour, in our day-to-day living, in our relationships with others, in every aspect of our lives? If we don't, then we are not loving.

On a different tack, in examining our definition, other verses in the Word talk about love in *situations* rather than with *people*:

John 3:19 '*Men loved darkness rather than light*'; John 12:43 '*They loved the praise of men more than...*'; 2Tim.4:8 '*unto all them also that love His appearing...*'; Heb.1:9 '*Thou have loved righteousness, and hated...*' Doesn't our

definition fit these as well?

You have probably gathered by now that love is really not an emotion. Sure, emotion can be a result, but it is obvious from God's Word that 'love' involves doing something. I'm sure we love our spouse and children, our parents, etc, and don't we show that love by what we do?

Some of us may even have been told, in many sermons and articles, that 'love is action'. But we are rarely told what action to take, or how to take it. Does not our explanation tell us exactly what to do and how to behave in any situation where love is involved? Liking the person or the situation is not the point - doing what is best is the point.

Finally, a verse that sums it up: 1John 4:19 '*We love Him, because He first loved us*. Or, '*We* [*do the best for Him*'], *because He first* [*did the best for us*'].

May your '*doing what is best for the other person*' abound more and more, (Phil.1:9).

Richard Snowden, Sydney

Hillsong To Move To Brisbane

The leaders of the Sydney mega *Hillsong* church, pastors Brian and Bobby Houston, have taken over the *Garden City Assembly of God* church in Brisbane. Congregation members were divided over the takeover, although the final vote for the move registered 79% of its members. The surprise move for *Hillsong* to take over *Garden City* was announced just a few weeks before the vote.

'The Sydney based Hillsong claims more than 20,000 parishioners each week, a television program seen in more than 160 countries and its International Leadership College is attended by more than 900 students' (*Courier-Mail*, 20 April 2009). *Hillsong* already has 'franchises' in London, Kiev, Paris, Cape Town, Stockholm, Moscow (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 11 May 2009).

Many of the Brisbane members were not happy with the way the takeover was conducted. '*We can't even trust that the voting will be done correctly...Everything has been done so secretly, more and more people are against it*', one member said. '*Election scrutineers were selected by the church board, which has already endorsed the Houstons*' (*Courier-Mail*, 25 April 2009).

'Garden City's senior pastor for eight years, Bruce Hills, was forced out before the arrival of the Houstons. Garden City Christian Church announced Mr. Hills resignation in December, amid criticism that the church was not growing enough. Yet in an address to a Christian conference at Easter, Mr. Hills revealed he had a nervous breakdown last September. 'Emotionally I just imploded', he said. When he returned from eight weeks leave, Garden City Christian Church elders told him: 'We'd rather have more of a CEO leader than you. We'd like you to resign'. Describing it as 'the deepest, darkest experience I've ever been through', Mr. Hills said he was 'really angry about

what these people had done'. (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 11 May 2009). '*Associate pastor Steve Dixon, who told congregation members he would also resign as a promise to Mr. Hills, instead took charge and began offsite discussions with Hillsong. Hillsong initially said Mr. Dixon would leave in 12 months but now says he will stay indefinitely as campus pastor*' (*Courier-Mail*, 23 May 2009).

'Hillsong estimates it earned \$60 million in 2008, half of which came from its congregation. However, since the global financial crisis, increasing numbers of Hillsong members are reporting financial hardship rather than financial gain' (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 25 May 2009).

Editors Comments: We have previously written about Hillsong as a church that is preaching 'another Gospel' (see Diakrisis March 2008) with dangerous and false teachings (May/2007), with scams, frauds (Nov/2008; Sept/2006) as well as worldliness and secularisation (May/2003). Brian Houston is a pastor who can brazenly write a book titled 'Want More Money?'; and His wife, pastor Bobby, can sell tapes titled 'Kingdom Women Love Sex'. Thousands are attracted to their entertaining and felt needs motivated teachings.

The impact of Hillsong music has been felt in most churches across Australia - it has literally changed the way the modern church views Christian music and 'worship'.

The 'burn out' rate of ministers in these churches is high. The turnover in parishioners is also high. The effect on the church as a whole is yet to be realised. One thing is for sure - it has not brought the revival Hillsong preaches so much about. Statistics show the percentage of Christians is actually falling although churches such as Hillsong may be growing numerically.

Quotable

'Today the greatest challenge facing American Evangelicism is not persecution from the world but seduction by the world...we aren't under attack from without, we're decaying from within...love for the things of this world has infiltrated the church, it has watered down and weakened our witness. It threatens to silence the clarion call for repentance and faith in the saviour'. ('Worldliness', edited by C.J. Mahanay, P.22)

Your Comments and Questions

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

[Re: Modesty] *Dear Terry, re: the comments on Ruth (Jan/Feb/20-09,P.7). I re-read the book of Ruth and listened to your CD sermon and was blessed. I saw a gentleness in the characters of Ruth and Boaz I had not seen earlier. Thankyou for instructing and encouraging me in my growth in the Lord. I also re-read your article on Modesty in the same issue (P.3-5). I agree with E.D. of Sydney (March/April 2009 P.7) - who said this article 'is 100% appropriate but will any listen'. From me its a resounding 'yes'! In December I bought a bikini (I could not find a one piece to fit) plus a swim shirt and I already had swim shorts. A family member saw my clothes and was mortified by me covering up instead of 'showing it off'. I explained about modesty which ended the conversation...so thanks for letting me hear it from God's word again through your article. As you wrote: 'We are told clearly not to put a 'stumbling block' in anyones way (Rom.15:1; 14:13). And until the Lord returns this message will never be obsolete. Thankyou always for your newsletters. Our love and prayers to you.*

(Name withheld at editors discretion)

Editors comment: We are still receiving many such encouraging letters concerning our article on modesty (Jan/Feb issue). Lets remember, non Christians will not understand this issue of modesty in a spiritual sense and we should not expect them to, (1Cor.2:14; Rom.8:5-7).

Dear Terry, if as a born-again Christian I am justified and therefore seen by God 'just-as-if-I'd never sinned' (for He sees me through Jesus the perfect mediator), do I need to continually ask His forgiveness when all my sins, past, present, and future, were dealt with at Calvary?

Keep up the good work with 'Diakrisis' (Australia), it has never been more important than it is in these last days when false teaching now seems 'normal' to many.

(G.O., SE.Qld)

Editors Reply: The scriptures never say a Christian needs to 'ask' God for His forgiveness. Rather, it says we 'confess' our sins to Him. Confession is agreeing, admitting with God we have sinned. Once Justified by God our salvation is guaranteed (Rom.8:30 is all past tense); we are credited with the righteousness of God by faith in Jesus Christ (2Cor.5:21); and all our sins are forgiven: past, present and future (there is no 'time' with God). (We were predestined and elected to sons of God before the foundation of the world, (Eph.1:4,5,11; Rev.13:8; 17:8). Jesus died 2000 years ago with all our sins in mind). The relationship (of 'sonship') with God does not need us to 'continually ask His forgiveness'. But fellowship with Him arguably involves confession of any sin. (When we forgive a brother or sister we restore at least some fellowship, yet the relationship in Christ never changes). Jesus taught us to pray to the Father: 'forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors', (Matt.6:12). Praying to God is all about fellowship and knowing His will, yet the relationship of sonship has already been established. So, when we confess our sins we are working on the uninterrupted and closer fellowship with the Lord. 'If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness', (1Jn.1:9).

Terry, Re: Women in ministry. Using 'changing culture' and other revisionary theology to remove established core Bible teaching and principles will result in undermining consequences within marriage, family and church.

Some examples of Bible teachings/principles at stake: Marriage/family - male leadership as basis for male church leadership:

[Elders/pastors qualifications] '...the husband of one wife...One that rules well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity: For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?', (1Tim.3:2-5); 'Fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord', (Eph.6:4).

The husband/Christ and wife/Church relationship within marriage and church:

'Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the savior of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing', (Eph.5:22-24).

Unity does not mean equality of functions, roles...

'For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office [function]', (Rom.12:4).

Weak male leadership leads to greater error:

'As for my people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them. O my people, they which lead you cause you to err, and destroy the way of your paths', (Is.3:12).

These time honoured Bible teachings and principles are being overturned by what was about 30 years ago considered by many to be liberal theology. Allowing this kind of theology into churches and colleges is destructive to marriage, family, church and the Great Commission...

(SE Qld. Baptist Union church Elder)

Dear Mr. Arnold, Regarding women in ministry: Being a woman myself - I have a very happy marriage because my husband is the head of this household and we both appreciate the peace it gives both of us. Women today act more and more like men and the men are belittled by it. God's word is always best.

(B.K., W.Aust.)

Hello to all. Thankyou for your newsletter. I enjoy it each time I get it. This issue of women in ministry is one with which I have been battling ever since I became a Christian 26 yrs. ago. I have persisted in standing up for the word of God on this issue and of course it has landed me in deep water many times. I read that you have a 9 page refutation of 'women in ministry' and that would be a great assistance to me in this ongoing 'battle'. I would like to get a free copy if I could according to the offer in the last newsletter [May/June/2009]...thankyou so much for your great reading newsletter and your help in this very important issue that we as true bible believers are facing here...In Christ.

(T.H., Brisbane)

Your Comments and Questions

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

**Note: New e-mail address:
taministries@bigpond.com**

Dear Terry, and volunteers of 'Diakrisis'...know that even if you are touching one life spiritually, that in itself is reward alone. Praise God for your dedication and especially long suffering with the family of God as you attempt to expose the church to the right course.

Thanks for including part of my letter in your newsletter [March/April 2009, P.6]. You would get a strong reaction from Christians over the issue of 'modesty' in the church. Other issues also seem to hit a raw nerve with some folk...the newsletter is a good read as well as a learning tool, especially if it challenges our long held beliefs. Your answers to me were accepted graciously and I agree with your comments wholeheartedly, Terry.

Your editorial is always good...the 'Compass' programme you mentioned - I too was shocked by some of the responses. One of the Anglicans monthly magazines ('Focus'), recently had an article and photo of a group of individuals praying and using the word Maranatha as a 'mantra', reciting it to somehow make contact with the indwelling spirit of Christ...

Thank you for your Godly input into my spiritual life...I am ever aware of Satan's enticements and my weaknesses. Bless you abundantly, Terry, and for your faithful helpers. May our God protect and lead you in the days ahead. Your servant in the Lord Jesus Christ...

(J.R., SE Qld)

Dear Terry, Brother, I tell you, it has become much more difficult than any time before to trust a person or know whether he/she is truly a born again person and a real Christian. What worse do we expect, I don't know. The Lord's return to take His bride has become very very close. So let's lift up our eyes and our heads upwards because our rescue is drawing nigh. Maranatha.

(A Pastor in Sydney; name withheld at editors discretion)

Editors Comment: This is something I hear often in confidence from pastors and something written about in this newsletter. The scourge of 'decisional regeneration' and false professions is rampant due to modern methods of evangelism. Because of the minimising of doctrine, the shallowness of teaching and the deceptive practises in evangelism, its 'easy' to be a church attendee today and pass for a real Christian! I still believe this is the greatest deception of the modern church. (I urge readers to review our article 'The Great Deception', Sept-Oct/2002).

Correction

Dear Brother Terry, I saw that you've quoted me in the May/June edition, (P.8). Everything is fine except we are not a member of any Union, neither are we members of the Independent Baptist Churches...(We are using the building of a Baptist Union church). It'll be good, if you find convenient, to correct this in your next edition. God Bless.

(Pastor A.H. Sydney)

Dear Terry, 'Diakrisis' has been such a blessing to us. We pray the Lord will supply your needs as you carry out this vital ministry.

(D.Z., Sth.Aust.)

Dear Terry, I thank you for all your information you send me. It helps me to have confidence and strength to open my mouth and tell the truth. With deep gratitude and love. God bless,

(Y.R., Victoria)

Dear Terry, Still very much enjoying 'Diakrisis' and praising the Lord for your ministry...For several issues there has been no 'praise and prayer points'. I miss them, as they give me a handle on what is important in the ministry. Will they come back?

(R.S., Sydney)

Editors comment: I have neglected to put in the praise/prayer points sometimes because of space. But your letter reminded me I must continue to put them in. I often forget there are people taking notice of them. Thanks.

Praise Points

- Praise the Lord for a very successful 1st semester at the Pacific Bible Institute. The college students have diligently applied themselves to the study of God's word and the many assignments.

There have been many enquiries for applications in 2010.

Prayer Points

- Some readers, including some elders/pastors, are currently facing pressure because of their stand against unscriptural 'women in ministry' issues. Please pray for these brothers and sisters that they will know clearly the will of God for them as they stand for truth and make decisions for themselves and their families.

- Please pray for the editor as he seeks God's will with new plans for this ministry in 2010.

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