

Your Comments and Questions

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

This is Salvation!

'As he takes thy sin and lays it upon Christ so he takes Christ's righteousness and lays it upon thee. He looks at thee as if thou were as righteous as his Son who represents thee. He treats thee as if thou hadst been obedient to all his law; he looks upon the model man Christ Jesus, the perfect humanity, and he sees in Christ all his people, and treats them accordingly. He looks upon his people as if they themselves had magnified the law and made it honourable by a sinless life. Wondrous doctrine this, but he that believes it shall find rest unto his soul; and it is because of it that we are authorised to come forth this day and declare the day of salvation. The guilt of the believing sinner is put away, for Christ has carried it; and now righteousness belongs to the sinner, for God imputes it to him without works: therefore this is the day of salvation!'

(Charles Haddon Spurgeon - from sermon 'The Day Of Salvation', Jan.13, 1878)

Praise /Prayer Points

- Praise the Lord for reports of people professing salvation from some of our literature. The *Eternal Questions* booklets are also being widely used as a presentation of the gospel. We now have the price down to \$1.50 ea.
- Pray for the future planning of this ministry. We are investigating the production of our own DVD's and U-tube presentations. Pray for the funds to purchase video and sound equipment. Pray for the professional advice and help needed to know what equipment to obtain.

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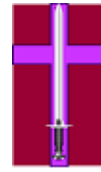
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Diakrisis (Australia)

'But strong meat belongs to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern [diakrisis] both good and evil', (Heb.5:14)

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

Editor: Terry Arnold (MABS; Dip. Bib. & Min., Dip. Teaching)

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

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

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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.

Contents

P.2,3 Editor's Comment

P.4,5 Pope Tells Atheists: You Don't Have to Believe in God for Heaven; Anglican Church (Queensland) has Buddha Display; Baptist Union Appoints Woman Leader; When Will Global Warmists Say 'Oops?'; Presbyterians Attempt To Change Song

P.6-12 The Battle For Discernment

P.13-18 Comments & Questions

P.19 Terry's Itinerary; Website comments

Brisbane Seminar Recording

Recently we recorded a seminar on '*The Sovereignty of God*'. This 2 hour seminar included sessions examining such topics as Predestination; Election; 'Free will'; 'Free agency'; What is 'Calvinism'; 'Arminianism'; Hyper-calvinism'; 'TULIP' and some history of each. The usual objections to each were examined and answered biblically. This seminar is available on Audio CD's (with notes) - \$9.50

Editor's Comment

The state of the modern 'church' was made apparent in the weeks leading up to the Australian political elections. I write 'church' in inverted commas because the real church is a remnant, strong and adorning herself ready for the coming of the Lord. But the modern 'church' as seen by the public is pathetically weak. One example of that was evident in the weeks prior to the elections when the Australian Prime minister Kevin Rudd took on the role of Bible commentator and hacked the scriptures to pieces. There was a general lack of response from denominational leaders and Bible teachers across the nation. Some of the secular writers had more to say and were wiser than church leaders.

On a Q&A television segment Kevin Rudd was asked a question by a Pastor as to why Kevin keeps 'chopping and changing' his beliefs in regard to such things as marriage. Apparently Kevin now believes people are 'born gay' and therefore 'it is natural and normal...because that's the way they are'. Thus 'marriage equality' must follow. Kevin then fired the question back at the Pastor asking if he thought 'homosexuality' is 'abnormal'. The pastor responded by stating the Biblical definition of marriage as between a husband and wife and asking the then Prime Minister: 'Kevin, if you call yourself a Christian, why don't you believe the words of Jesus in the Bible?' The response from Kevin Rudd was: '...The Bible also says that slavery is a natural condition; because St. Paul said in the New Testament, 'Slaves be obedient to your masters'. And, therefore, we should have all fought for the Confederacy in the US war...the human condition and social conditions change. What is the fundamental principle of the New Testament? It is one of universal love. Loving your fellow man. And if we get obsessed with a particular definition of that through a form of sexuality, then I think we are missing the centrality of what the gospel, whether you call it a social gospel, a personal gospel or a spiritual gospel, is all about...If you think homosexuality is an unnatural condition then, frankly, I cannot agree with you based on any element of the science'...I had changed my position...it was the product of some many, many months and years of reflection in good Christian conscience.'

Before this was finished Kevin received loud applause and the Pastor was left looking embarrassed and sat down with no reply. The audience that applauded was probably mostly, if not all, non Christian. They would not have understood that Rudd's answer was full of errors and clever diversions!

The same pastor was interviewed later on another channel and sadly began to vacillate from any firm view against same sex marriage. One writer, who was appalled at his poor stance, stated: 'Here is a pastor who is not only biblical illiterate, but has also had his spine removed during the ordination process...No wonder the so-called 'church' is in disarray today! Is this the strength of Christianity? The great divines would be spinning...'

While these might be harsh words, they nevertheless reflect the weakness

Terry's Itinerary

Nov.3rd, 17th, Dec.8th, 29th (Sun) 9.30am & 6.30pm Hervey Bay Bible Church, Qld Ph.0411489472

Website Comments

Website comment [re: Billy Graham: <http://taministries.net/wp-content/uploads/2010/10/Billy-Graham-v2.0.pdf>]

'Many of these so called comments by Billy Graham are very strange indeed, because if you read his books and listen to his sermons you don't find any of this stuff! Again and again in his sermons he preaches that Christ is the only way and that without repentance and faith in Christ there is no hope for anyone. Let's be fair to him. Listen to the interview he gave when he reached 92; his beliefs are purely evangelical'.

Editor's reply: The documentation on the website is accurate and can be proven in context as well as with other quotes. We have been 'fair' to Billy Graham and want to be fair to the truth about his beliefs. Either the quotes are true or we have falsified them. We have also not attacked him personally but simply accurately quoted him with no comment by us. It shows the change in thought over many years and the increasing ecumenism and compromise. The quotes may appear to contradict what he has preached elsewhere and in books. This is not uncommon in today's ecumenical climate. One interview does not mean much today.

Billy Graham now speaks of a universalism and makes a claim that Roman Catholicism teaches much the same gospel as Protestantism. This is a seismic shift away from orthodox Biblical or 'evangelical' doctrine!

Your website states you claim there is no healing today by the name of Jesus through the power of the Holy spirit and that it is a fraud. You need to get down on your knees and ask God to give you a revelation. As a Medical Doctor [Sth Africa] I see the healing power of God daily...a young women raised from the dead and still alive today...May God have mercy on you...you are a heretical teacher...you may as well die with your belief for all I care...you are a liar from the pit of Hell...stop deceiving men...

Editor's reply: Our articles state we do believe in God healing but not that men having any gift to heal as it was in the 1st century. If you are a doctor then give me one example of a miraculous healing of an organic disease. We have experts ready to test this. Don't be afraid to examine the truth of today's signs and wonders 'healings'. We await evidence of the raising from the dead...

[Several replies from this person but he refused to give any documentation as to the 'raising of the dead']

Your Comments and Questions

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Dear Terry, in Jn.18:6 I think it means that when Jesus said 'I AM' they did not fall on their backs but fell on their faces, which of course is biblical. This goes against the general view that they went backwards because they were crowding Jesus and because he said 'I AM'. What do you think?

(G.S., Dalby)

Editor's reply: The text in Jn.18:6 is not in the other gospels. So we only have this one verse to look at. The text literally does not just say they fell to the ground but rather *they went or departed backwards and fell to the ground*. Whether they went backwards and then fell to the ground face first or on their backs is not certain from the Greek text. But it does appear that they 'went' at least some distance back and then 'fell' in some manner. Most commentators attribute this to divine power.

The words '*I am*' ('*he*' is not in Greek) are mentioned elsewhere (Jn.8:24,28,58). It certainly affected and enraged the hearers in some instances. The '*I am*' is mentioned in Ex.3:14 where God claims this title (in Hebrew). In Jn.8:24 Jesus applied to himself the Divine Name of Ex.3:14, '*I AM*'. He was thus claiming to be *equal with God* (Jn.5:18) which is exactly what they wanted to stone and kill Him for (Jn.8:58,59)! This may have caused the reaction of the crowd who came to arrest Him. Perhaps it shows Jesus holds ultimate power over his enemies. The exact nature of what happened here is not explained any more than what is found in the text?

Something else I see: Here Jesus gave himself up, rather than be taken. Repeatedly we are told that Christ '*gave*' His life and even when He died He surrendered to death in His own time ('*He gave up the ghost*'). In Jn.18:6 they were not going to take him by force, but rather He was going to *give Himself over to them*.

Terry, many here refuse to believe in Predestination...

Editor's comment: There is no option not to believe in Predestination when the Greek word is mentioned six times in the NT, and this is apart from other words that also teach the same. It's meaning is 'to determine or decree beforehand'. If there is no predestination to salvation then there is no predestination of Christ's sacrifice (Acts 4:28)! That means God had no plan to redeem mankind. Yet we are also told in Acts 13:48 that some '*were ordained to eternal life*'. All the verses on Predestination are *beforehand* as a *decree*. You cannot take the 'pre' out of 'predestination'. It's inescapable to conclude that God foreordained salvation (2Thess.2:13). Logic and emotion will fight that premise, but faith must steer that fallen human thinking back to what scripture actually says.

of our Christian leaders in general. None of the major church leaders that I know of refuted what Rudd said. (The first Biblical comment I came across was by a Sydney Anglican group and Matthias Press). Yet Rudd's answer received much applause and media coverage. Surely ministers of the Gospel should have a public answer for this and also equip their flocks?

So, what of Rudd's theology?...Rudd's mention of 'slavery' had actually nothing to do with the same sex marriage issue. *Rudd is obviously implying that the Bible has contradictions and thus we cannot take it literal when it speaks clearly about marriage and against Homosexuality!*

The Bible's '*fundamental principle*' is NOT just '*one of universal love. Loving your fellow man*' as Rudd says. It is rather the story of redemption of sinful humanity by the one and only Saviour, Jesus Christ. The Bible does NOT say '*slavery is a natural condition*' as Rudd says. The scripture '*slaves be obedient to your masters*' (Eph.6:5) is followed by advice to '*masters*'. The context is respect and treatment of others. Several New Testament texts make the case for the inherent spiritual worth of slaves (Col.4:1, Gal.3:28, and the Book of Philemon). *The Bible does not condone or refute slavery*. In the Old Testament slaves were often prisoners of war. The law of Moses spoke of the care of slaves by their Hebrews masters (Ex.21:16,20,26; Lev.25:40). Both Testaments condemn the practice of 'man stealing' such as was the later slavery in Africa and America. Under the Mosaic law the penalty for this was death (Ex.21:16). In the New Testament slave traders are also considered as 'ungodly and sinners' and listed among the same category as those who kill their fathers or mothers, murderers, adulterers, perverts, liars and perjurers (1Tim.1:8-10).

Further, slavery in New testament times *was nothing like* the slavery practised in the southern United States in the times of the 'civil war' that Rudd speaks of. New Testament 'slavery' was not based on colour or race. It was a servant type arrangement and often where people could pay off their debts. A slave could also buy his own freedom from the profits of his selling his property. Many became 'bond-slaves' and pledged to *remain* in his master's household for life because they were *better* as 'slaves' than as free persons. *Rudd's 'slavery' and the New testament 'slavery' have little in comparison!* It could well be argued that the Bible does not condone the slavery Rudd is speaking about.

But to the 'same sex' issue - 'marriage' by definition and by history in every culture always has been between a male and female. In every instance the Biblical word for marriage ('*gamisko*') refers to a male and female. It is male and female coming together as '*one*' (Matt.19:4-6). What right do we have to redefine this word? Why am I now not to read literally, or to ignore, the clear objective references to Homosexuality as being 'unnatural', an 'abomination' and that it will bring 'eternal fire' (Lev.18:22; Rom.1:26,27; 1Cor.6:9,10)?

God forbid that the church be silent to such pretend Christian politicians! The church needs to recover from its biblical illiteracy and be Davids to the Philistines of our culture, and salt to our politicians, the media and the public!

Terry Arnold

Pope tells atheists: you don't have to believe in God to go to Heaven



Pope Francis has written a long, open letter to the founder of La Republica newspaper, Eugenio Scalfari, stating that **non-believers would be forgiven by God if they followed their consciences**. Responding to questions Francis wrote: 'You ask me if the God of the Christians **forgives those who don't believe and who don't seek the faith**. I start by saying - and this is the fundamental thing - that God's mercy has no limits if you go to him with a sincere and contrite heart. **The issue for those who do not believe in God is to obey their conscience**'. 'Sin, even for those who have no faith, **exists when people disobey their conscience**.'"

Robert Mickens, the Vatican correspondent... said of these comments 'But what this is all about is him seeking to have a more meaningful dialogue with the world'.

(Michael Day, *The Independent*, Milan, 11th September 2013; *Apostasy Alert*, Sept)

Editor's comment: This contradicts Scripture in many places. The Roman church is a chameleon which adapts to the situation. The Bible is clear that one must 'believe' in Jesus and His Gospel to be saved. Those that 'know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ' will not be in Heaven (2Thess.1:8). But this is a clever Pope. He makes statements that are designed to appeal to the moral standards of today and he puts love over morals. When the media and the public like what the religious leaders are saying - beware. The Bible states that the true Gospel will be offensive and that the world will hate us (Jn.15:18-21). This could well be the Pope who will hasten the uniting of religions in the ecumenical movement.

Anglican Church in Queensland Has Buddha Display



St. Luke's Anglican church in the city of Toowoomba, Queensland, Australia, last week took part in the City's annual 'Carnival of Flowers'. This year's display at St. Luke's was decidedly different! The theme was 'The Circle of Life'. There in the middle of the sanctuary of St. Luke's was a large table literally groaning with **Buddhist literature and several statues of Buddha himself**. (A card on the table stated the idea was to 'share the generous love of Jesus' and 'learn to love our neighbour better'). Many walked away...When a startled and horrified visitor called the Reverend Dr. **Jonathan Inkin**, Rector of St. Luke's over to explain just why this had been allowed she was told she needed to 'have a more balanced view'. The Archbishop of Brisbane, the Most Reverend **Phillip Aspinall** was standing with Reverend Inkin but decided that it was best to simply walk away from the confrontation and declined to comment.

(Apostasy Alert 25 September 2013)

Your Comments and Questions

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Terry, what is your 'knockout question' to ask a Jehovah Witness and then leave it at that? From memory it is regarding 'Elohim' plural or singular?...I don't have the time to debate them for long...Can you change their mind?

(MC, NSW)

Editor's reply: I leave them with Jn.8:24. I ask them 'who is Jesus saying he is here'? Who is the 'I Am' (the 'he' is not in the Greek). I ask them to look at Ex.3:14 to see the 'I am' stated by Jehovah. The Hebrew translated into Greek is the same. They will immediately charge you with saying 'Jesus is God'. I refuse to answer that question until they explain mine: 'Why is Jehovah saying the same thing as Jesus'? (Jn.8:58 also has the 'I am' and they wanted to stone him for claiming to be 'equal with God' - Jn.5:18).

I also get them to look at our 'wheel chart' (free on our website). When they retreat I follow them and ask for an answer to my question and re-quote the scripture (Jn.8:24) and plead with them to believe Jesus is the great 'I Am' and that they cannot be saved without this *as the verse says*. Ask them to use their interlinear to check your translation. (Their interlinear is accurate; their translation is often inaccurate).

You can also use Gen.1 where the plural 'elohim' is used for 'God'. There is more than one person here and the 'we' and 'us' in the same chapter prove that. But I have found the Trinity is so demonised in their minds it turns them off. Jn.8:24 has saved at least one JW I know of but only after he had been challenged with it a few times by different people.

The whole process (with the wheel chart) takes 5-10 minutes and when they leave, I follow them and challenge them with the Gospel. If the neighbours want to know what is going on I tell them I am 'harassing JW's' and then I might get to talk to the neighbours as to why?

I have a sermon with notes on 'Witnessing to the Cults' available.

Hi Terry, My query relates to the pages dedicated to Apostasy Alert articles. Normally, the heading and accompanying photo relates directly to some error we are being made aware of. With the John MacArthur article [P.5, Sept/Oct]...and a description of a conference he organised, I was left puzzled. Is it the Charismatic movement being highlighted or John's response to it. I've read it a few times and can't see a matter for concern with John MacArthur so I'm guessing it is just a further reminder of the error of the Charismatic movement.

(S.F., Vict)

Editor's reply: Yes, the article on MacArthur was not exposing him but commenting on a conference he is having on the subject of Charismatic worship in which he is exposing it as having false ideas...

Your Comments and Questions

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Urgent from a missionary in Sth Africa:

This is an urgent call to prayer from a pastor. Please pray for protection for him, the church and the training school currently training 20 pastors; that this very vital work of the gospel will not be destroyed by Islamic terrorism:

'Beloved, called to contend for the faith once and for all time delivered to the saints, we come to you as partners in the Gospel of Grace in the ongoing battle for souls and for the recovery of the authentic Gospel...

An Islamic informer has whispered to us that our church...was the subject of intense discussions in the main mosque...The inroads which the Gospel has made into this predominantly Muslim area is causing disquiet among the Mohamedans. Quite a good number of Muslims have expressed Faith in Our Christ, several publicly and who are in our church...Late last year we had intense battles with the Islamic agenda when we erected the church walls and in building the Training Centre classes...Their response was to bring a Mosque literally next to our church, aptly named 'Jihad' and the intent was not veiled.

We have had the blessing of training...three Muslims...we have one sitting in class. These things are not acceptable to the Islamic community, when they consider this is their area and we have raided their territory...These were the kinds of discussions which transpired at the main Mosque...I have personally been threatened...they sent a letter in red ink claiming I would find my head in the river, which threat had extended to an elder who had left Islam...When a Muslim neighbour of mine put faith in Christ, a delegation was sent to me to propose terms of peace which essentially demanded a stop to evangelizing Muslims...Our informer tells us we should be careful...

I share this with you so you may get engaged in prayer. We feel rested in the Sovereignty of God and that He shall protect His own. Of this we are assured 'Horses are drawn in the day of battle but our safety is in the Lord'.

(Name of pastor and missionary withheld at editor's discretion)

Greetings Terry. Thanks for the latest 'Diakrisis' and all the work that goes into its publication. I was interested to see the 'expiation vs propitiation' which you 'nuttled out' rather well. I've long thought of it as - you expiate the expenses but propitiate the person. As you indicated they are quite distinct and form two complimentary aspects of atonement. The issue comes when translators use one or the other. I agree, if it's a choice, propitiation implies the debt has been paid whereas expiation, not so much that personal offense has been averted. Many times we read of people who have committed a crime and done the time, but the party who was on the receiving end has not been appeased, though the law says the matter is closed (e.g. parents who lose a child to drunk driver).

(S.F., Vict)

Baptist Union Appoints Woman Leader and Seeks Fresh Image



*The first female General Secretary of the Baptist Union...in the UK, has been appointed...The Reverend Lynn Green explained: 'I long to see local churches being encouraged and supported to transition beyond inherited church into vibrant mission communities. I hope that we will be adventurous, take more risks and above all, be 'Kingdom possibility' thinkers' [a phrase invented by Robert Schuller]...'**I believe our Union is ready for generational change. It's time to cast off the institutional mind-set that has served us well in the past and embrace a new way of being for the 21st Century'** (Apostasy Alert, excerpted from Ekklesia, 9 September 2013)*

When Will the Global Warmists Say 'Oops'?

The tide is turning against global warmists. Yet you would not know that if you listen to the politicians, the media and their scientists. But increasingly scientists are warning that the estimates of 'warming' are not only false but heading for embarrassment. Even pro man made global warmists, (e.g. Professor Bjorn Lomborg), are admitting the evidence shows global warming theorists have vastly exaggerated the problem. Will Steffen, of the Climate Commission in Australia, blamed global warming for the Murray Darling Basin drought. And who can forget Flannery's 2007 dud prediction that '*even the rain that falls isn't actually going to fill our dams and our river systems*'. And what of the enormous amount of monies spent on desalination plants (now idle). In 2008 Flannery warned that the Arctic could be ice free this year. Instead they increased by 60%! (<http://www.infowars.com/record-return-of-arctic-ice-cap-as-it-grows-by-60-in-a-year/>)

The problem for the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is that global temperature has risen little or not at all in the last 10-20 years. Surface and satellite temperatures have not increased for nearly a decade and in the last 8 years have actually slightly *fallen*. Yet the global warmists and politicians continue to state the opposite and that scientists '*overwhelmingly agree*'? If the earth continues to cool, when will the media and politicians who are driving 'global warming' say '*oops*'?

(Some material excerpted from *Apostasy Alert* articles)

Presbyterians Attempt To Change Song

A committee putting together a new Presbyterian Church (USA) hymnal dropped the popular modern hymn '*In Christ Alone*' because the song's authors refused to change a phrase about the wrath of God: '*on that cross, as Jesus died, the wrath of God was satisfied*'. The Committee wanted the words, '*the love of God was magnified*'. (<http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2013/08/05/presbyterians-decision-to-drop-hymn-stirs-debate/2618833>)

The Battle For Discernment

Biblical discernment may be at an all time low in the modern church. Today many believers think just as the world thinks. The church is fast tracking after the wide road of the world and its philosophies. Church leaders are not able to be as prophets to a troubled world, or offer a critique of its obvious problems. This is so because the church has adopted the same fallen culture as the world and become a servant to it. The church attempts to impress this world and when that occurs the objective truths of scripture only become a hindrance! We lack discernment to know the difference between the Christian world view and the fallen world view. This is exacerbated by the fact that most Christians today are biblically illiterate! *The church desperately needs discernment.*

Definition

The Greek word for 'discernment' is '*diakrisis*', literally '*to judge through*' ('*dia*' - 'through' / '*krisis*' - 'to judge'). Discernment is to judge right from wrong; truth from error; pure from evil.

But doesn't the Bible say not to 'judge'? That's what most Christians seem to believe today. The Bible teaches *not to judge* hypocritically; and *to judge* ourselves before judging others (Matt.7:1-5). We are *not to judge* in foods, drinks, days and things of Christian liberty (Rom.14). We are *not to judge* others in holy days and Sabbaths (Col.2:16). We are *not to judge* '**by appearance**' but we are to '**judge righteous judgement**' (Jn.7:24). The spiritual man '**judges all things**' (1Cor.2:15). We are to '**test the spirits**' (1Jn.4:1) and '**prove all things**' (1Thess.5:21).

Guide Posts for Biblical Discernment

Here are six 'guide posts' to discern (judge) 'righteously'.

1. *A clear conscience*

The 'conscience' is the faculty of the soul which distinguishes between right and wrong and prompts one to choose. In a moral sense it bears an inner witness to one's own thinking and actions. A synonym of 'conscience' is the word 'conviction'. '**And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst**' (Jn.8:9). The conscience uses the Law written on every man's heart to testify of conviction: '**Which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness [testimony], and their thoughts...accusing or else excusing one another**' (Rom.2:15). The conscience is a *warning device*.

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I often wonder about these 'works' that churches do such as soup kitchens, feeding and clothing the homeless, etc. Why are they not translating these people into church, even their own churches? Some of these organisations are big and engage lots of people, yet many of their churches are still relatively small. What is the use of all this work if people do not get saved? I sometimes think these works are loved by the devil? They keep bellies full but hearts unchanged? What is their use in eternity? Yet their argument would be that faith without works is dead? These works would be good if we can preach the gospel in these activities but this is not often done and if so where are the results? Mother Theresa beat everyone at this and yet people remained Muslim, Hindu, etc?

Editor's comment: If you help people without proclaiming the Gospel then what eternal benefit is this? I have a friend who spent many years working in this area of Christian counselling, welfare and street ministries. He states: 'I have known, all these years, scores of 'street' ministries who provide food and coffee to those sleeping rough on the streets of Sydney. I have even been in company with them when dragging people back to the Mission Australia youth refuge I managed in Kings Cross. They were always angry with me when I stated that people in Sydney had no need to sleep on the street or be hungry and thirsty. I managed a large commercial kitchen at the refuge, with a full time professional chef. I opened up our doors to ANYONE wanting a meal - not just the youth - as did Wesley Mission and the Salvos. Also Reverend Ted Noffs of Wayside Chapel in Kings Cross provided meals, beds...and the Matthew Talbot Hostel on the waterfront.

Some of these groups did give out tracts and prayed with people - who were mainly drunk or drugged at the time. And yet, I cannot remember seeing anyone saved to Christ in all those years - they chose to sleep rough because of their addictions, and had been over-evangelised in one way or another over the years.

The church is called to preach the Gospel...faithfully, week in week out. God will draw His people to such preaching - it can be done on the street if you can (but becoming increasingly dangerous and unlawful) but you do NOT need to provide food and drinks?

The problem with Christians today is that they allow Satan to prod them into ineffective actions. Actions that burn them out, exhaust funds, and in the end achieve nothing for the kingdom.

If a Church wants to be known in a community then why don't they do hospital visitations, comfort those in retirement homes, nursing homes, and preach the Gospel to people who are not drunk or drugged?

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Testimony (From Sth. Africa)

...We have been plucked out of the fire. The...church was founded as a Pentecostal church and remained so for about 13 years. I myself came under a heavy influence of the Word of Faith movement having studied at a Word of Faith bible school, and as a pastor I preached many of the Word of Faith errors...I was a blind man leading blind men...But in 2006, brother...was sent from our Church in Mombasa to do a church plant in Mumias, Western Kenya. While there [he] was called upon to interpret at a conference...where the Doctrines of Grace were being taught...The Lord opened the heart of our brother to the truth. We in Mombasa noticed his preaching (he spoke frequently in our Church) was rapidly 'degenerating into heresy', or so we thought. I engaged him in intense argument thinking I was helping 'a straying brother'. Little did I know it was I the Lord was guiding to truth. The more we argued the more the Lord was graciously shepherding me to truth. Our discussions went on for over a year and ended in me joining him at the Pastoral Theological College...in Nairobi...It is while there the biblical basis for God's sovereignty in salvation became clear to me. It is also there the full weight of the 'authority of scripture' was brought home to me by the Spirit through the exposition of its scriptural meaning and basis, and with it a strong commitment to judging all things thereby emerged...Having participated in the popular errors of the Pentecostal Charismatic-Word of faith persuasions, and having firsthand experience of the pervasive and soul destroying nature of such error, we like Paul for his fellow Jews, feel burdened to reach back to those still in error...

You mention Isaac as being a 'man' and not a 'boy' as in the TV miniseries 'The Bible'...What evidence is there for this?...

Editor's Comment: The Bible does not give a definite answer to Isaac's age in this event. From Scripture and other sources: Sarah gave birth to Isaac at 90 years old (Gen.17:17). She died at 127 (Gen.23:1) when Isaac was 37. The events with Hagar, Ishmael, Abimelech all occurred in the 37 years after birth. The 'many days' in ch.21 might suggest a long time between the birth and offering of Isaac. The passages use the word 'lad' for Isaac (21:5,12) but this Hebrew term has a wide context including adults (e.g., Ex.2:6; 2 Sam.12:16; Absalom in 2Sam.14:21; 18:5). In Gen.22:5 the 'young men' that accompanied Abraham and Isaac is the same term used in vs.5 and 12 to refer to Isaac. Arguably these servants were not young. Isaac is also carrying wood for the sacrifice. Would a young boy be expected to carry enough for a sacrifice? Josephus, the 1st. century historian wrote: 'Isaac was twenty-five years old' (1.13.2). Other commentators suggest ages 20-33. My conclusion is Isaac was not a boy but a young man.

The conscience is built and determined by how it is fed and what knowledge is put into it. For spiritual discernment it needs to be fed and programmed with divine information. The only sure way of having it built with a divine rightness is by the Word of God. Any 'prompting' that may come from the conscience must be based upon the written Word of God as its foundation. The conscience is a vehicle by which the Holy Spirit may witness to us: 'I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost' (Rom.9:1). But this Spirit does not speak to us separate to the written Word. Any witness or 'prompting' by the Spirit to our conscience should be a result of being 'renewed in the mind' by the Word of God (Eph.4:23; 2Cor.4:16; Col.3:10). Such 'witness' or 'prompting' is never to be taken solely as the word of God and must always be tested if acted upon.

Without a sound conscience, discernment will wane. For some years I was occasionally convicted that what I was teaching and following in the Charismatic/Pentecostal movement was unscriptural or mixed with feelings, emotions and extra biblical 'leaven'. In consistently ignoring these convictions over many years came a conscience which was dulled and at times blind to truth. I thought I had 'discernment' but it was more a selfish wisdom of ideas that did not stand up to rigorous challenge from scripture. It led to 'shipwreck' (1Tim.1:19).

The Bible warns that in the last days discernment will slide into an abyss: '*Now the Spirit speaks 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).

There is sometimes a cost to a Christian who will follow his conscience in the midst of a wicked world and an apostate church which will do everything it can to dull the convictions thereof. It may cost us our self righteousness, our pride and the favour of the world and the ecumenical church. But it will detract nothing from true discernment!

The conscience is a holy tool of God. We are to feed and build it correctly with the Word of God, listen to it and act on its convictions. *It's God's 'witness in the Holy Spirit'* (Rom.9:1). A 'good conscience' (1Pet.3:15,16) is a foundation for Biblical discernment.

2. Humility/Submission/Teachability/Obedience

The Bible challenges us to '*in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves*' (Phil.2:3). Humility is to esteem oneself lowly, to make low. Its sister, submission, is a vital key in discernment. '*Likewise, you younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resists the proud, and gives grace to the humble*' (1Pet.5:5).

The real test of submission is seen in the local church in correction and in relationships with fellow brothers and sisters. If we are not in submission to authorities and one another then how can we say we are in submission to the Lord Himself who appointed the authorities and commands submission to church authorities and ‘one to another’? Are we really teachable? Are we obedient? If we want discernment we must learn submission and obedience in truth to authorities, and then God may reveal more to us. **‘He that refuses instruction despises his own soul: but he that hears reproof gets understanding’** (Pr.15:32,33). Being ‘teachable’ means we must understand that our discernment is never finalised, but in a state of growth. If we lack humility, teachability, submission and obedience to God and his authorities, discernment may well go into a *decline* (Heb.5:11-14).

3. Use of the mind

The Bible emphasises the mind, not the heart. The fault of the Charismatic/Pentecostal system was to emphasise experience at the expense of scripture and truth. Mormonism did the same, being founded on one ‘vision’. We are to be **‘renewed in the spirit of your mind’** (Eph.4:23); our minds are to be **‘stayed’** on God (Is.26:3); we are to use our minds to think on **‘whatsoever things are true...honest...just...pure...lovely...a good report...think on these things’** (Phil.4:8); and we are to be **‘not conformed to this world: but be you transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God’** (Rom.12:2).

If we want discernment we must also do warfare *in the mind!* **‘...The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds** [literally: arguments in the mind]. **Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ’** (2Cor.10:3-5). The **‘strongholds’** here are literally *thoughts inside the mind*. They are NOT exterior demonic forces as is so often interpreted today.

Contrast the above with what the scriptures say of the heart! **‘The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?’** (Jer.17:9). It is only the **‘two edged sword’**, the word of God that must be **‘a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart’** (Heb.4:12). Just because we ‘feel good’ about something in our hearts does not mean it is true or godly.

An example of one area that is dangerous to discernment and the mind, is music. Few Christians today realise the impact music can have on the soul, in worship and discernment. Music is not ‘amoral’ as can be ascertained by even a cursory study of its effects both in scripture and in the world. It can soothe the soul (1Sam.16:16-23) or cause people to riot, as is often the case in rock concerts. It is used in different ways in shopping centres to affect peoples

(1) See our CD with notes and articles on ‘music’.

Continued next page >

Your Comments and Questions

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

Hi Terry, I have a question. Should we be speaking in Tongues...is it from God or the Devil? Can we also heal others because we have the Holy Spirit? My friend who is Pentecostal believes you are not filled with the Holy Spirit unless you speak in Tongues. Did Paul the Apostle ever speak in tongues?...

(L.C., Sydney)

Editor’s Reply: This requires a longer answer...I will send a book and a sermon [available to readers]. Tongues was a gift with the coming of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2,10,19. It was known human earthly foreign languages (Greek word ‘*diálektos*’ in Acts 2:6,8). It was not ecstatic ‘tongues’ as we see today, which is a counterfeit invented in 1901 and disowned by its founder. Real ‘tongues’ is real languages. In Acts 2, 10, 19 there is no interpretation because they were *known* languages. Most ‘tongues’ today is a copied habit, although there have been reports of demonic tongues.

We do not have the Holy Spirit to ‘heal’. We have the Holy Spirit to separate us from sin and the world. Healing in the NT was to prove Jesus as Messiah (Lk.7:21-22; Jn.20:30,31; Acts 2:22; 2Cor.12:12; Heb.2:3,4).

God can heal today but men do not have the gift of healing. If they did they would have it like the 1st Century - no failures, ‘all’ (Matt. 23:24; 8:16; 10:1,8; 12:15; 14:36; etc.) and ‘every’ (12:13; 20:34) would be healed and including organic diseases (eg. Down Syndrome).

The teaching that says you are not filled with the Holy Spirit unless you speak with tongues is unbiblical. The apostle Paul did speak in tongues, but not the counterfeit of today. We are in the end times and there is a lot of deception in the church!

This below from a subscriber who repeatedly sent large amounts of material on the ‘Calvinism’ debate, even after (on agreement) we sent our book ‘Calvinism & Arminianism - Out of the Maze’ free of charge (which answers the material sent). We asked him again to read the book and show us any errors...

‘There are lots of errors in your so called ‘unbiased’ book and I don’t even know where to start. Let’s see, for start, you who claim to know Greek, make a mistake in your own English language, by stating ‘WHO Chooses WHO’ instead of ‘WHO Chooses WHOM’...

(K.H. e-mail)

Editor’s reply: Try starting at the first error in the book...and I do not ‘claim to know Greek’. Big mistake of doctrinal proportions is this ‘who’ and ‘whom’? Is that the best you can do? That mistake has been corrected. But it is hardly doctrinal or will lead anyone into error?...

Read good books by authors who have dug deep. Love doctrine! Trust 'orthodoxy' in doctrine, not novel inventions. The '**faith once delivered**' (Jude 3) is not 'new' teaching.

Beware of 'pragmatism' - the false teaching that if it produces 'results' it must be of the Holy Spirit. Much teaching today is laced with this poison.

In all 'discernment' there needs to be a 'balance' in truth. Major on majors, minor on minors. Know which 'hills to die on' and not to die on. There are some controversies not worth the time or the study for purposes of opposing. Be sure before you conclude. '**...be swift to hear, slow to speak...**' (James 1:19).

Hebrews 5:11-14 is arguably the most informative scripture with the word 'discernment'. '**Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing you are dull of hearing. For when for the time you ought to be teachers, you have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that uses milk is unskillfull in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongs to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern [*'diakrisis'*] both good and evil**' (Heb.5:11-14).

The Hebrew Christians had become 'sluggish' in hearing the word of God and should have progressed to being 'teachers' but instead had become 'babes'. *They had actually regressed in spiritual growth.* They were now needing 'milk' 'again' and not 'meat'. They had to go back to the 'first principles' - the basic elements of doctrine and faith. They should have been mature ('full age') and using their minds ('by reason of use'). And so they were '*unskillful in the word of righteousness*'. Discernment is not found by remaining in milk but by 'exercising' oneself to '*discern both good from evil*'.

Surely this is the plight of the modern church! It has become '*dull of hearing*'. Surveys alone will show that most Christians in the west are biblically illiterate and a large majority have unchanged lives. The church is rapidly divided on issues that were once clear and not in doubt according to the Word of God. This is the fruit of the loss of discernment!

Today the vast majority of Christendom are like the Hebrew Christians who remain in the shallow waters of milk and so lack discernment!

Oh, that the church would regain its former glories; that the Gospel would be brought back to underpin everything that we do in church and in our spiritual walk; that the church would regain the high position of the full inspiration of scripture and 'sola scriptura'; that pastors and elders would teach and equip their people for the times; that Christians would '**seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness**' (Matt.6:33) and study the only word that the Spirit uses to bring true discernment; and that this discernment would once again walk amongst the corridors of our colleges and live in the pulpits of our churches!

Terry Arnold

moods in buying; and in aeroplanes to calm people. It even affects plants in the way they grow. Melody affects the mind and less the flesh; rhythm affects the body and more the flesh. (1)

4. Check Roots / Test the Fruit

Roots determine the fruit. The various histories of the beginnings of the cults show consistent patterns of false prophecies and heretical trademarks. '**Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. You shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree brings forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree brings forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that brings not forth good fruit is cut down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits you shall know them**' (Matt.7:15-20).

Our roots must be in Sola Scriptura. Truth has boundaries error has none. We are consistently to '**try the spirits**' (1Jn.4:1); '**prove all things**' (1Thess.5:21) with the '**more sure word of prophecy**' which is '**the prophecy of [the] scripture**' (2Pet.1:19,20).

To 'discern' ('*diakrisis*') is to spot the '**leaven**'. 'Leaven' is sin and false doctrine (Matt.16:6-12). We are to '**purge out the old leaven**' (1Cor.5:6,7) for '**a little leaven leavens the whole lump**' (Gal.5:9). We are commanded to have only the '**unleavened bread of sincerity and truth**' (1Cor.5:8). This must be a constant purposeful endeavour and a refining activity all of our lives!

It is here where most modern Christians lose discernment! Many Christians allow mixtures of truth and error and thus eventually the '*whole lump*' in their minds is affected. The ecumenical movement is a classic example. Truth is eroded for the sake of 'unity'. The result is a 'union' of mixed beliefs, false converts, a lukewarm Christianity and little discernment.

5. Monitor Associations / Practise Separation

Christians who want discernment will monitor their passions, lusts, music and the things which affect the heart. Discerning Christians must have a doctrine and practise of Separation. '**For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that you should abstain from fornication**' (1Thess.4:3). Sanctification is the work of the Spirit; and it is the Spirit that gives 'discernment'!

Separation means to have no fellowship with something or someone. Fellowship is mixing with, partaking with, joining with, sharing with. The foundation for this doctrine is found in the Old Testament: '**And you shall not walk in the manners of the nation, which I cast out before you: for they committed all these things, and therefore I abhorred them...I am the Lord**

your God, which have separated you from other people. You shall therefore put difference between clean beasts and unclean...And you shall be holy unto me: for I the Lord am holy, and have severed you from other people, that you should be mine' (Lev.20:23-26). God is jealous of His own. He wants us to maintain the 'difference' in holiness to honour Him.

We are to 'mark' and separate from false doctrine, false teachers, false prophets and 'brethren' who do not follow after the apostles doctrines (Rom.16:17; 2Thess.3:6). *This is not a matter of preferences but a command.*

The ecumenical argument is: *'but it will help the Gospel if we unite'*. This is a pragmatic argument that violates scripture. The answer is *'shall we do evil, that good may come...'*? (Rom.3.8). Others use John 17 *'that they may be one, as we are'*. The 'we' here is the Trinity and these persons are not ecumenical! However, the rest of the passage is also not often read: *'They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through your truth: your word is truth'* (vs.16,17). The ecumenical movement is the least discerning of 'christian' movements today. It openly mixes different opposing doctrines, churches and religions together, in a lukewarm mess of porridge that surely stinks in the nostril of God! God is not a God that tolerates lukewarmness or mixtures! Spurgeon commented on this: *'The mood of the moment is unity...a chorus of ecumenical voices keep harping the unity tune. What they are saying is, 'Christians of all doctrinal shades and beliefs must come together in one visible organisation, regardless...Such teaching is false, reckless and dangerous. Truth alone must determine our alignments. Truth comes before unity. Unity without truth is hazardous. Our Lords prayer in John 17 must be read in full context. Look at verse 17: 'Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth' Only those sanctified through the word can be one in Christ. To teach otherwise is to betray the Gospel.'*

We are to separate from unclean and unrighteous unbelievers. *'Be you not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship has righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion has light with darkness? And what concord has Christ with Belial? or what part has he that believes with an infidel? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? for you are the temple of the living God; as God has said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be you separate, says the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you. And will be a Father unto you, and you shall be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty'* (2Cor.6:14-17).

Many argue against this with: *'What about Jesus mixing with the publicans and sinners?'* Jesus did mix with sinners. He was a friend to them (Matt.11:19; Lk.7:34). Interestingly *they came to him* (Matt.9:10; Mk.2:15; Lk.5:29;15:1). But He never 'fellowshipped' with them. Jesus did not also remain around people who disagreed or who would not listen (Jn.8:59). He ministered to (not

fellowship with) them. *'For such a high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens'* (Heb.7:26).

We are also at times commanded to separate from believers: *'It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you...Know you not that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, as you are unleavened...the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. I wrote unto you...not to company with fornicators...Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person'* (1Cor.5:1-13).

Christians who want discernment must be growing in Sanctification and be unentangled with sin, the world, false professors of Christ or with Christians with false doctrine or unholy lives. This does not mean that we bar people from entering our lives and become sectarian. Rather, we do not fellowship 'with' them but minister 'to' them, (not minister 'with' them).

God will bless this practise of separation and actually help the process - the truth seekers will stay; the bad influences will leave. *'Blessed is the man that walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law does he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he does shall prosper'* (Ps.1:1-3).

6. Scripture/Study

The Christian who wants discernment must have a 'Berean mind'. This is the most important of the six points since it is only the scriptures that will renew the mind (Eph.4:23; Rom.12:2); change the heart (Heb.4:12); and give true discernment. *'These were more noble [generous in mind] than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so'* (Acts 17:11). The necessary mindset here is one that sees the Word of God as inerrant, infallible and inspired. Forget discernment if you have only a 'partial' view of the inspiration of scripture. *Discernment must have an anchor point* into something that is *'given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness'* (2Tim.3:16); something 'sure', not of *'any private interpretation'* or *'by the will of men...moved by the Holy Ghost'* (2Pet.1:19-21); something that will not pass away (Matt.5:18); something in which *'every word of God is pure'* (Pr.30:5; 12:6) and *'perfect...making wise the simple'* (Ps.19:7); something *'preserved...forever'* (Ps.12:6,7) and *'settled in heaven'* (Ps.119:89)!

With this high view in mind, develop a 'study habit' and *'study to show yourself approved unto God, a workman that needs not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth'* (2Tim.2:15).