

Your Comments and Questions

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

Masters Course at Pacific Bible Institute 2014

The Masters course will again be conducted in Hervey Bay in August (11th-22nd) 2014. The students will come back to do another 2 subjects of the 4 year programme. There are some vacancies available for new students to apply. Subjects this year are expected to be Evangelism/Leadership and New Testament.

This 4 year U.S. accredited Masters degree course involves two weeks lectures in Hervey Bay each August. Costs are administration and accommodation only. A free information pack can be sent on request.

By faith the college raises the funds to help lecturers travel costs, accommodation and any students who may have a financial need. Any donations towards these costs would be greatly appreciated.

Prayer and Praise Points

- Praise the Lord for Hervey Bay Bible Church which was mentioned last newsletter (see 'The Day They Evicted Our Church'). The church has continued to grow and has now moved to larger and more permanent premises. (www.herveybaybiblechurch.org)
- Please pray as we secure our future courses and accreditation in the Bible Institute.
- Please pray as we embark on the task of producing evangelistic/teaching clips for YouTube.

Subscription Form

I am interested in receiving the *free* monthly TA Ministries newsletter 'Diakrisis' by Send this form to:
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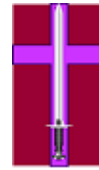
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Diakrisis (Australia)

'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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March/April 2014

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

Articles in this newsletter may be copied or reproduced provided it is in context and proper credit and references are given. We encourage distribution of this newsletter that others might be *taught, informed* and *equipped*.

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

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New

Hervey Bay Bible Church has produced a short e-mail newsletter which the editor expects may become a quarterly production. It is a short 3 or 4 page update (with pictures) on what is happening in this Church.

The first edition details how this church has developed.

Those subscribers who would like to receive this by e-mail please let us know.

Editor's Comment

This ministry is now 24 years old and the newsletter *Diakrisis Australia* now 18 years. Over two decades we have attempted to stay the writings on our original mission - to *inform, teach and equip* our readers. We have closely monitored the state of the church. We have seen a rapidly developing *apostasy* within the western church as a whole. The word 'apostasy' simply means a falling away from a previous position. It is irrefutable that most denominations teach *the opposite* to what they used to teach on many issues. The question must be asked: was that which was taught decades ago in error? Has the Bible changed its doctrines on current issues that face the church? If not, then what has changed that we now teach *opposite* to what the church taught for centuries?

Women in ministry has been an issue that has seen nearly every denomination reverse their view. Why is this issue only a recent issue, considering it was not prominent until the 60's and 70's? Those who allow for women in positions of authority in pastoring and preaching, subjectively slant the word of God to fit culture. The qualification of '**the husband of one wife**' (1Tim.3:2) no longer has any function for this 'modern world'. Paul did not really mean what he said concerning women *not teaching* or *usurping authority* over men (1Tim.2:12,13) and that because of the very *order* of creation and the Fall (vs.13-15).

Same sex relationships is an issue in which nearly every denomination has changed its stance. What was always an 'abomination' and 'unnatural' (Lev.18:22; 20:13; Rom.1:27) now has church leaders avoiding clear answers.

The ecumenical movement has now captured, and is endorsed by most, if not all denominations. Roman Catholicism is now 'Christian'. Denominations that two decades ago were gladly selling our book '*To Catholics Whom I Love*' and using it in evangelism, now consider it to be unnecessary or even offensive. They used to consider Catholicism a heretical system of faith plus works. They rejected the many additions to the original faith, such as Mary as 'co-mediatrix', 'co-redemptrix', etc. But now they no longer 'protest' as 'Protestants'.

Other 'faiths' and religions are also now accepted. The one world church is here. Just go to any combined services at various times of the year and you will see most denominations fellowshiping with Roman priests or other religions, *despite their belief systems being diametrically opposed to each other*.

If this is not hypocrisy, then what is? Amazingly, very few have looked back at history and questioned which 'jesus' and which 'spirit' are we now preaching - because it is remarkably different (apostate) to what was once taught!

At the beginning of the 20th Century *new* teaching on the *Holy Spirit* was introduced. It was unanimously and vehemently opposed by most church leaders and commentators of the day. It became known as the 'Pentecostal' doctrine, which 50 years later entered the denominations as the 'Charismatic movement'. This *new* teaching is now adopted widely in every denomination.

At the root of all these changes are two causes. One is the postmodern

Terry's Itinerary

March/April (every Sunday) 9.30am Hervey Bay Bible Church, Qld
Ph.0411489472 www.herveybaybiblechurch.org

Your Comments and Questions

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Terry, following your mention of the John MacArthur conference in Sept/Oct issue of Diakrisis I purchased the following books of his from Amazon: 'Charismatic Chaos' and his latest book 'Strange Fire' - subtitled 'The Danger of Offending The Holy Spirit with Counterfeit Worship'. I cannot recommend these books too highly as for anyone like me who is concerned at the influence churches like 'Hillsong' are having on Christians today. I can but quote from the flyleaf of 'Strange Fire' - 'John MacArthur has written this treatise on a movement whose foundation and direction have betrayed the God they claim to represent'.

(H.S., Brisbane)

Dearest Terry, Thank you for your faithful ministry to us for many years through your correspondence and the 'diakrisis' newsletter. It is the most loved treasure in our letter box. We like to take it to our favourite coffee shop and linger over this blessed spiritual food. Your article 'The Battle for Discernment' is so necessary among believers today as we see many ignorant of, or turning from, the inerrant truth of the scriptures and made shipwrecked (1Tim.1:19). We have also just listened to your 'The Sovereignty of God' CD's - excellent indeed. We enjoy the older writers also - Spurgeon, Ryle, Robinson, Baxter, Edwards, Mccheyne: many based on a sure foundation and blessed assurance of Jesus Christ our Lord.

We continue to uphold you and Beth in our prayers and give all praise and glory to God for you especially. With much love, 'For we have great joy and consolation in thy love, because the bowels of the saints are refreshed by thee brother' (Philemon 7).

(K&M, L., Brisbane)

Dear Terry, please keep up the good work of encouraging the Lord's people...
(C.M., Qld)

Your Comments and Questions

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

Hi Terry, Its so tragic to read about this event [‘The Day Our Church Was Evicted’] but be assured great things will come out of this and know we continue to lift all you in prayer and I want to leave you with some words of encouragement.

No matter what opposition you face, or who thinks you are crazy, or how many people reject you or what you are trying to share with them, your work is not in vain! One verse I have found is this: ‘Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord’ (1Cor.15:58).

And think of all of the people who came before you. Joseph’s own brothers sold him into slavery. Daniel was thrown into the lion’s den. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego were thrown into the fiery furnace. Abraham could not find even ten righteous men who would listen and act on his warning. The group that Moses led rebelled time and time again even after experiencing God’s awesome presence daily. The Israelites complained in Moses’ ears and wanted to get rid of him on numerous occasions. The different apostles were jailed, beaten, stoned, shipwrecked, and murdered. The prophets were hated. And, of course, Jesus himself was betrayed, falsely accused, and crucified.

God never said that following Him would be easy. In Romans 8:35-37, it reads, ‘What shall we then say to these things? Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us’.

So, again, know that you are doing the Lord’s work, you will face opposition. But bear in mind that there is nothing more important or more lasting than what we have been commissioned to do. And keep in mind that you are never alone, nor do you ever have to be afraid. ‘Be strong and of good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the Lord thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee’ (Deut.31:6).

(C.K., Sth.Australia)

Dear Terry, I read with interest your article [‘The Day Our Church Was Evicted’]...I see the hand of God in this...what happened was the best outcome...I know that the church was paid for by the local congregation with Gods money. It and the property belong to God...I think you and the elders did exactly the right thing in walking away from the apostate Church of Christ, and the money, and the property...I think the witness of the HBBC will be blessed for it. I commend you and the HBBC on your actions and wish you God’s blessing. Love...

(J.H., Brisbane)

thinking in *adapting to the culture of the world*. The second is the *change in thinking about the sufficiency of the Word of God*. One has led to the other.

Being more relevant to the world has become more important than objective truths in Scripture. We adopt the world’s ‘new tolerance’ view. We adopt the musical performances and beat of a fallen world for our church services. We adopt the market driven philosophies of the world to give us bigger numbers and to lure so called ‘seekers’ into our churches. The bait we lured them with has now become what we feed them, and worse, what we feed ourselves! *The world has come into the church to take the church into the world.*

At the root of all apostasy is the shift in *obedience* to God and His word. In the ecumenical movement love ignores truth. Opposing views can be held up side by side, contrary to so much scripture (Rom.16:17; 2Thess.3:6-15; Jn.17:14-16; Rom.12:2; 1Cor.2:12; Eph.2:2; James 1:27). Holiness is no longer separation. Separation is now a legalistic intolerable word. Yet statistics show all the modern church growth methods and ecumenical programmes have not produced people who understand the most basic tenets of the faith!

The Pentecostal/Charismatic system simply does not accept that God has *finally* spoken through the Bible. They insist on more words from God being found in ‘prophecies’, unknown ‘tongues’, dreams and visions - all are put forward as ‘God’s word’. Signs and wonders are often the validation to such new words from God. Yet Jesus warned ‘**An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign**’ (Matt.12:39) and that end times signs and wonders would be ‘**lying**’ and *false* (Matt.12:39; 24:24; Mk.13:22; 2Thess.2:9; Rev.13:13).

The problem of apostasy is rooted in how the modern church views the Word of God. The Word of God is now simply insufficient. It is simply no longer a ‘**more sure word of prophecy**’ (2Pet.1:19) and it most certainly is no longer the ‘**prophecy of the scripture**’! (vs.20). If it were, churches would not have radically changed their positions over the last few decades! But is not the Bible still ‘**given by inspiration of God, and profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works**’ (2Tim.3:16,17)?

Some readers will see me as constantly ranting about the apostasy, but it’s a warning consistently in the Word of God and one which I see firsthand as I travel and see the state of the church. I grieve that there is a new generation in ‘church’ today that simply do not know the cost in blood to give us, and stand for, the Word of God as inspired and inerrant.

‘Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch you in all things...’ (2Tim.4:2-8)

Terry Arnold

Christmas 'gospels' - Are We Ashamed?

The following are various Australian 2013 Christmas messages by religious leaders. Editor's comments in **bold**.

Catholic Church in Australia (Archbishop Denis J. Hart)

'Christmas is a reminder that God took our human nature and ennobled it. God has loved us first. This reminds us that each of us is loved and valued without limit. As Christmas comes we remember especially those who are burdened and sick, families and nations beset by tragedy, refugees who, like the Lord, had nowhere to lay their heads, and all in any state of need. Jesus took our weakness and humanity to show us that we can always live in the hope of the light and peace that only he can bring. May the peace of the Lord be with you and those you love this Christmas'.

God 'ennobled' (conferred dignity; honoured) 'our human nature'? Scriptures say the exact opposite - that He came to save us *from* our '**human nature**'! Men love darkness (Jn.3:19), are in bondage to sin (Gal.4:3; 6:17,20), taken captive by Satan to do his will (2Tim.2:25), '*none seek after God*' (Rom.3:11) and are '*by nature children of wrath*' (Eph.2:3). What exactly is there about '**human nature**' that God would '**ennoble**'? Yes, '*Jesus took our weakness and humanity*' but He took this as SIN upon Himself to pay the judgement for our sinful '**human nature**'.

'Each of us is loved and valued without limit'? If that is the case then why is God '*angry with the wicked every day*' (Ps.7:11) and unbelievers are on a '**broad road to destruction**' and are '**already judged**' (Matt.7:13; Jn.3:18)?

Where is the Gospel of sin, judgement, His death and the need to believe on Jesus as SAVIOUR of our sins?

Anglican Church of Australia (Archbishop Dr. Phillip Aspinall)

'At Christmas we who are so preoccupied, so anxious, can suddenly catch a vision of glory - angels singing, shepherds praising God, and the Christ child lying in a manger. If only for a moment, we remember what all this meant for us when we still had the capacity for wonder.

This is an invitation. At Christmas we are all called to renew our imagination and our hope. When we take time with family and friends, waiting with one another and sharing our lives and stories, we broaden our vision. The world need not be a disenchanting place; it need not be a place of mistrust and bitter contest. Here, in the company of one another, we draw near to the truth that, in spite of everything, God is at work in the midst of his people and at the heart of history; God is with us.

The spirit of this festival always enlivens the Church. We are above all a

Your Comments and Questions

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Letters received concerning article 'The Day They Evicted Our Church'.

Terry, I read the article ['The Day They Evicted Our Church']...with pain and sorrow but not surprise. You never heard all the ins and outs of our own unceremonious discharge [from a Church of Christ], but it was the best thing that ever happened even though extremely painful. My own personal circumstances though different underscores an attitude by the Queensland Churches of Christ (CofCQ). I encourage you to pursue your pathway, apart from the COCQ and I trust you enjoy God's blessings. I am not so sure that any pursuance of property lost will be helpful, but I can certainly understand how the members would feel. It may just prolong the pain, but then you all need to be convinced of the right pathway. If the Lord builds the church then what else does a congregation need? May the Lord direct your path.

(Former Qld. Church of Christ pastor; name withheld at editor's discretion)

Dear sir, I am also a very distressed member of [a Queensland church of Christ]...which I do not now attend. I was once an elder but resigned with two other elders in protest of the direction of Queensland Churches of Christ. I am presently attending another church and would like to receive a copy of your story ['The Day They Evicted Our Church'] .

(Name withheld at editor's discretion)

Hi Terry...It is with interest, but no surprise, that I read about your experience with the Churches of Christ and their treatment of yourself and the members of the Hervey Bay Bible Church. Although it must be disappointing to lose the use of the premises, remember the Lord's Church isn't confined to a 'building' or 'place', and you are now free to worship and teach without the constraints and controlling powers of 'The Organisation'...

(M.R., Qld)

Hi Terry, Sorry to learn about your Church eviction. It did not take the Lord by surprise. He knew even before the foundation of the world. I do believe the same applies to the Baptist Union. If they have the deeds in trust they 'own' the buildings...We sought to take the deeds out of the Union at...[but] After going into it we were too small a church. It would have cost us too much...It seems that the Lord has given the Church over in the Western World to our own desires. As I see it we need a genuine Holy Spirit revival...The Lord continue to bless as you wait upon him and may we soon see a number of souls coming out of darkness to the marvellous, love and light of the Lord.

(Name withheld at editor's discretion)

prophets, both married and single...Lk.2:36-38; 8:1-3, Jn.20:16-18, Acts 2:15-18; 12:12, 40; 16:14-15, 40; 18:24-26; 21: 8-9, 1Cor.1:11; Col 4:15.'

Response: This is plain misuse of scripture. Not one of these scriptures teach 'women apostles, women ministers, women deacons, women teachers and women prophets' as offices! Let the reader test this: Lk.2:36-38; Acts 21:8,9 - Women did 'prophesy' but never publicly as leaders in church. This understanding is attested to by the church fathers. Lk.8:1-3 - Women 'ministered' to Jesus here but were not 'ministers'. John 20:16-18 - is simply Mary reporting the resurrection of Jesus to the disciples. Acts 2:15-18 - speaks of men and women 'prophesying' in the 'last days'. Acts 12:12; 1Cor.1:11 - mentions the 'house of Mary' and 'the house of Chloe'. No women in 'ministry' are mentioned here. Acts 12:40 - does not exist! Acts 18:24-26 - Both Aquila and Priscilla privately took Apollos aside. Col.4:15 - 'Nymphas' is a contraction of Nymphios, Nymphidios or Nymphodoros and was always male until 'new manuscripts' were found just a few hundred years ago. The majority texts till that time have 'outou' which corresponds to a male person. Modern versions may have this as a woman but it does not teach any woman apostle, minister, deacon or prophet.

Not one of these scriptures listed by Janette teaches 'women apostles, women ministers, women deacons, women teachers and women prophets'.

Janette Phelan: 'There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus' (Gal 3: 28)

Response: This verse says that 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 offices, authority, or functions in the church! This has been the generally accepted understanding of the verse down the centuries until the 20th century.

If Galatians 3:28 teaches that the differences in authority and functions of male and female are abolished, then how could anyone likewise say that homosexual marriages are wrong?

The Word of God must be the final arbitrator. It says the offices of elder/Pastor are male (1Tim.3; Tit.1), the 'husband of one wife', not the 'wife of one husband'; and women are not to publicly 'teach' men or 'usurp authority' over men (1Tim.2:12-15). The Bible has not a single example of any women teaching in public to an assembled group of believers!

This same author, Janette Phelan, who teaches publicly in the official Queensland Churches of Christ magazines also has told me she herself has not yet come to a 'conclusion' on the issue of homosexuality.

What is really at stake in this whole debate is the *authority of the Bible*.

people of charity and of joy. In so many ways this gracious spirit overflows into the community - in work to support the sick and the suffering, in the hospitality we offer to strangers and those on the margins, and in much besides. Of course, our failings are well known. And yet we are still called to proclaim a new kind of society, characterised by mutual care and concern, and, indeed, a new kind of humanity. May God grant us all new vision and courage to live fully into our high calling'.

The 'invitation' is 'to renew our imagination and our hope'? 'In the company of one another' we 'draw near to the truth that...God is with us'? We are to 'support the sick' to 'proclaim a new kind of society...a new kind of humanity'...and this is 'our high calling'? You don't need to be saved from sin to achieve all this! Is this the real Gospel of Christ crucified for our sins?

Sydney Anglicans (Dr Glenn N Davies, Archbishop of Sydney)

'What is it about our society that 'selfie' is the landmark word for 2013? Many of us cringe at the self-centredness of these self-portraits ...But at Christmas time we should remember that there is an ultimate self-image, the image of God, which far outweighs the supercilious picture of a face filling our screen. We are all stamped with the image of God and it is this image that makes us precious in his sight.

Incarnation is the theological word which describes God's coming to earth as a human being, with all the vulnerabilities associated with being born as a baby in that Bethlehem crib. But so often we tend to leave Jesus as a baby in a stall, cute and inoffensive, and forget that he grew up as a fully developed adult, so that he might live the life we could not live and die the death that we deserve.

Christmas without Easter is not the full story. We fail to appreciate Christmas if we fail to appreciate the reason why he came - to suffer death upon a cross on Good Friday, rise again on Easter Day so that the bonds of death may be broken and new life become a reality for all who put their trust in him...

This Christmas...you will look at faces that have the self-image of God - those for whom Jesus came to offer new life. What shall we give him in return? We can give him nothing, but we owe him everything. Happy Christmas'.

The Sydney Anglicans have always been a thorn in the side of the wider Anglican church. This is one of the few mentions, if the only one, of the death, resurrection and the offer of the Gospel. However, *sin* is not mentioned here which is the very reason why Jesus died 'the death that we deserve'. How are people going to understand the reason for the substitutionary death if the root reason for this death is not given? However, I do say 'Amen' to the following: 'We tend to leave Jesus as a baby in a stall, cute and inoffensive, and forget that he grew up...that he might live the life we could not live and die the death that we deserve...We can give him nothing, but we owe him everything'.

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Churches of Christ, Queensland ('CEO' Dean Phelan)

'...we head into this holy season, we are reminded of the paradox of life - that on one hand it is all we have, and sometimes it is all too short, and tragically taken away from us; yet on the other hand, new life is birthed every day and in every way there are new possibilities.

We remember individual stories from the year that brought great sorrow. People killed, taken by war, aggression...natural disasters...NSW bushfires...the devastating typhoon in the Philippines...flooding across Queensland...

Yet paradoxically and painfully, it is often out of such terrible adversities that new life emerges...we are sometimes forced to take on things that we would never have dreamed of...to go deeper, to be wiser, and to trust God more. Sometimes unforeseen grace, love and possibilities emerge out of the ashes.

At a community level we heard stories that restored faith and belief in the spirit of humanity...survivors of flooding in Bundaberg...Individuals and groups of people gathered goods for those in need...

Nelson Mandela reminded us of the character attributes we all long for - courage, integrity, forgiveness, grace, humility. His death focused us on what it means to be truly great, and hopefully encouraged leaders...of what real leadership can achieve.

We celebrate this time of year - Christmas - because we remember the birth of Jesus Christ. This new life came in the midst of great personal and political difficulties. Mary...a pregnant, unwed mother...forced by circumstances to give birth in a stable for animals. The King sought to murder all new born boys to eliminate a perceived threat to him. Yet, this new life changed the world.

This Christmas our staff, pastors and teams will be working to bring the light of Christ to communities...Seek out your neighbours at home and in your communities; do something that will encourage, uplift, and perhaps create new possibilities for someone who might be doing it tough; bring some light into their world...may the New Year bring new possibilities of life for you...as it did two millennia ago'.

The Churches of Christ are well known for their liberal and social works based gospel. Stories of 'human tragedies...survival...and relief works' will not save a single soul. And communist Mandela is hardly an example of Jesus or the Gospel? Churches of Christ make much of 'bringing the light of Christ into the community' but their magazines and their missions show that this is by works and social aid (see our booklet 'The Churches of Christ 'Restoration Movement' and Campbellism').

Australian Baptist Ministries (The Reverend Keith Jobberns)

'Tis the season to be giving...cry the carollers of commercialism as Australians head to the shops this Christmas...Where does this gift-giving

'apostle' has been falsely assumed. There is no substantial evidence that 'Junia' was female. Masculine names ending in Greek '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 masculine forms (eg. 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, 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' is a masculine relative pronoun ('hou') and shows that Epiphanius had Junia as a man. Origen (died AD 252), in the earliest Latin commentary on Romans, also wrote of Junia as a male. It must also be recognised that the word 'apostle' in Greek ('apostolos') literally means 'sent one' and is used in a wide context of meaning, including that of 'messenger', (Epaphroditus was a 'messenger' in Phil.2:25; see also 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. The book of Revelation also states clearly that the 12 apostles will have their names on the walls of the New Jerusalem.

The Churches of Christ has consistently used these same regurgitations which lack textual support or historical evidence. They are desperate 'eisegesis' to contradict what is clear in scripture - male leadership.

Janette Phelan: *'The early Christian women who remained single were the pioneers and 'feminists' of their day, side-stepping the traditional hierarchy of a household where the man was in charge and the woman's primary role was childbearing. These women were freed for ministry in all its forms'.*

Response: This is a feminist argument. Major denominations did not approve women ordination until 1956 and due to the influence of liberal theology. It is not until the 60's and 70's that women in ministry became a widespread controversial issue and yet it still was consistently rejected and resisted because of scripture! For 1,800 years there was widespread opposition to 'ordaining' women! Our authority must be what the Bible teaches, not what a minority of women have done in the past. The modern church is sadly reflecting the liberal and feminist culture of our day.

Janette Phelan: *'If you search the New Testament, you will find women apostles, women ministers, women deacons, women teachers and women*

(1) 'An Index of Apostles', (125.19-20)

Continued next page >

Jewish. Even if relationships were ‘different’, this does not override the clear commandment Paul is using here. The ‘early church’ quickly moved away from Jewish customs, yet the same early church fathers did not budge from the clear command of 1Corinthians 14:34 and male only leadership.

Janette Phelan: *‘It was in this context that Paul gave instructions about appropriate behaviour for Christian women. In Corinthian society, women led the worship to Bacchus, the god of wine...Paul teaches Corinthian women that Christian worship is very different...He is no more teaching women’s submission than he is teaching submission of tongue speakers (see v 28)’.*

Response: Although pagan worship was occurring in nearby pagan temples, Paul is here teaching about the unknown tongue, the lack of ‘understanding’, ‘edification’ and the inherent disorder. Verses 34-36 specifically address the disorder of women. They were told to wait and ‘let them ask their husbands at home’. The mention of ‘commanded to be under obedience, as also says the law’ speaks of the disorder in headship between the men and the women - and submission is a part of this, which Janette denies. Why has Janette raised the issue of ‘submission’ when she states the context is not an issue of submission? The answer is in what follows...

Janette Phelan: *‘Paul’s own life does not demonstrate gender bias. He regularly ministered to and with women and travelled with women who he regarded as equals in ministry. He raised Dorcas from the dead (Acts 9:36-42) and worked alongside Priscilla and Aquila (Acts 18:1-3 and 18-19)...he praised and sent greetings to women and men, addressing women in terms reserved for apostles, ministers and teachers. Paul mentions 40 names in his letters, 16 of which were women...Rom.16:1-16, 1Cor.1:10-11, 1Cor.16:19, 2Tim 4:19, Phil.4:2-3, Col.4:15, Phil.4:2,3; Col.4:15; Philemon 1:2’.*

Response: This is a typical strawman regurgitated by those who advocate women leadership in ministry. But those who advocate male leadership do not deny Paul ministered to, ‘travelled with’ and ‘worked alongside’ women! However, not one of these scriptures used above actually teach women leadership in churches! Not one. They are ‘greetings’ to both men and women (Acts 16); a mention of a ‘ladies household’ (1Cor.1:11); Aquila and Priscilla’s house church (1Cor.16:19) and Onesiphorus (2Tim.4:19 - which history has as a male and later a bishop in Asia Minor!).

Historical evidence is clear on this - the early church had *male elders and bishops*. Paul simply did not ‘address women in terms reserved for apostles, ministers and teachers’ as Janette states. None of these scriptures refer to women being ‘apostles’ or ‘ministers’. This is ‘read’ into the texts. The only reference (Rom.16:7) that people use for a female being an

custom come from? The best explanation points back to a dirty stable in the inconspicuous town of Bethlehem in outback Middle East. Wise men came bearing regal gifts for this newborn child. Their gift giving pointed to the fact that this was no ordinary birth and no ordinary child but one who was destined to change the course of human history.

This Christmas gift of life, the birth of a son who embodies the promise of hope for the future, resonates with our deepest longings. In a age of selfishness, the selfless giving for the sake of others provides the inspiration for all gift giving.

This is what motivates our propensity to give at Christmas. It is a response of our heartfelt thanks that arises out of our closest loving relationships, so we give. Illustrating this motif are the words found in John’s Gospel...For God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not die but have eternal life. God’s gift of Jesus cannot be replicated because it was the ultimate gift of love. But it can be a benchmark for genuine sacrificial giving...

Maybe this year as we quietly reflect on God’s gift of life and love to us, we might consider giving more generously to those less fortunate and in need of gifts that bring hope’.

Firstly, the wise men did not come to a ‘new born child’ in a ‘stable’, but to a ‘child’ at least 2 years of age and in a ‘house’ (Matt.2:11). (Mary and Joseph fled to Egypt to escape Herods killing of two years and under children in Bethlehem - Matt.2:16 10. The Greek has ‘paidia’ for the ‘child’ rather than other Greek words likely to be used for a newborn infant).

Is the gospel really about that ‘we might consider giving more generously to those less fortunate and in need of gifts that bring hope’? Again, where is the Gospel of sin, death, Christ crucified and the need to believe?

Uniting Church in Australia (The Reverend Professor Andrew Dutney)

‘The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light’ (Is.9:2). Jesus was born in very ‘dark’ times. The people suffered under a brutal Roman occupation. Injustice and random violence were commonplace. Many were very poor...They ‘walked in darkness’. By the time the Gospels were written down, a generation later, things had only become worse. The birth of Christ was proclaimed as a beacon of hope in seemingly hopeless times: God has remembered us. The Saviour is born.

The message of Christmas is still addressed to people going through times of ‘darkness’: God has not forgotten you and, even now in the darkest moment, God is initiating your salvation.

This Christmas I invite you to remember all who ‘walk in darkness’ - especially Australia’s First Peoples, who continue to miss out on sharing the benefits of this wealthy nation; asylum seekers and refugees living in our

communities and held in detention, still searching for safety and freedom; our sisters and brothers in the Middle East experiencing the terrors of war, civil unrest and political violence. And remember that the message of Christmas is for you too, in your own time of 'darkness': God remembers you, loves you, and is saving you'.

This is the classic 'social gospel' of the Uniting Church. The 'darkness' that the true Gospel addresses is not the darkness of *our* social stratum or *our* own times of darkness but the darkness of every human soul. That 'darkness' is called *sin*. But what about the Gospel of the 'darkness' that Jesus experienced as He hung on a cross suffering and dying for our sin?

The Salvation Army (Commissionaires James Condon & Floyd Tidd)

'Christmas is often referred to as a family time and sadly this is not true for everyone. Our theme for this Christmas is Connect, with the idea of connecting with family, friends and neighbours...'

Christmas is one of those seasons where we can seem caught up in a tug-of-war between feeling the joy of being truly connected and feeling the pain of disconnection.

The message of Christmas is one of God connecting with us. In 2 Corinthians 5 verse 19 we read: 'God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself'. To be reconciled is to be restored to friendship or harmony. At Christmas we celebrate the coming of Christ into the world enabling us to connect with God. Our prayer is for those who are disconnected at this Christmas time'.

This is one of the closest any of the religious leaders came to presenting the true Gospel. However, like so many gospel messages today, the *reason* for the need to 'connect' is not given. How exactly we are to 'connect' with God is not explained. What use is prayers for the 'disconnected' if we do not know or tell them *how* to be 'connected'? Where is the Gospel?

Hillsong (Brian Houston)

'...Christmas...is universally recognised as the celebration of the birth of Jesus...Jesus wasn't born in a palace among kings or in a temple among priests. He was conceived out of wedlock, in the midst of tumultuous times and in lowly circumstances. He didn't come just for the privileged, the elite, the religious or the powerful...he came for everyone.

Everyone. It's a powerful word. In a world where status, background, sexuality, political persuasion, or what side of the tracks you are from can cause so much conflict and strife, Jesus came with a very simple message. One of 'peace on earth and goodwill to all'. God excludes no one from his love.

That can be difficult for us to understand within a culture driven by prejudice, personal ambition and selfishness...

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not all issues of female leadership in churches. The rule is: '*I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man*' (vs.12).

The reason for the rule is rarely, if ever, addressed by those who argue for female elders/pastors/preachers, etc. The reason for the rule goes back to *Genesis* and *creation* and crosses all cultural arguments that people would raise up against the word of God being inspired for today.

Two reasons are cited in verse 13: '*Adam was first formed, then Eve*'. This is the issue of *Headship*. The reason for women being in '*subjection*' and '*not usurping authority*' is to maintain the order of creation - '*man first, then woman*'. The second reason is given in vs.14 - the original order of sin. '*Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression*'. The woman took the lead in sin.

It must also be noted that the phrase '*to be in silence* [quietness]' in 1Tim.2:12 is not the same Greek word as in 1Corinthians 14:34. The Greek word in Timothy is '*hesuchia*'. It does not necessarily mean complete silence as in a more absolute sense in the Corinthian passage. It refers more to the attitude of silence. There are two hermeneutical reasons for this: Firstly, other scriptures with the same Greek word show the context to be such: '*Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness [hesuchia] they work, and eat their own bread*' (2Thess.3:12). Secondly, other scriptures show clearly that women were allowed to speak (eg. in Acts 21:9 there are women who '*prophesied*').

However, what many miss here is that chapter 14 of Corinthians is referring to an '*in the church*' situation as clearly described in verse 28 and other references in the same chapter, as well as verse 34 itself which commands the women to '*ask their husbands at home*'. Women were obviously allowed to speak, pray and evangelise in general where it would not be seen to '*usurp authority*' over male leadership.

In the early church women never prophesied publicly as attested to by the church fathers. Tertullian (AD160-220) taught that women could prophesy but not teach and that they must be under obedience. (1) He wrote: '*It is not permitted to a woman to speak in the church; but neither [is it permitted] to teach, nor to baptise*'. (2)

Contrary to Janette Phelan's searching for '*alternative meanings*', the meaning is clear and objective even without exegesis of '*Hebrew and Greek words*'. The context is to do with *church order, headship and submission*.

Janette Phelan: '*In many parts of the New Testament world, male-female relationships were very different from Jewish society and the early church*'.

Response: Although it can be argued that the Corinthian leadership may have been mostly Jewish, it cannot be argued all in the church were

(1) '*Against Marcion*' (5.8.11); (2) '*On the Veiling of Virgins*' (9.1)

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is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also says the law. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church’.

1Corinthians 14:34 does *not* address women and ‘*Sunday school*’. Nor does it address the notion that when a child ‘turns 18’ the mother is ‘*no longer worthy to be his teacher*’. What church would teach this? Notice the father seems to be left out of teaching this hypothetical 18 year old and the mother is considered ‘*no longer worthy*’. This is simply a grossly exaggerated application from 1 Corinthians 14:34!

Janette Phelan: ‘*...we should not accept literal interpretations of Bible passages without first checking other translations and alternative meanings of the Greek and Hebrew words, and without understanding the context and the writer’s story and attitudes*’.

Response: It often becomes an excuse to find ‘*alternative*’ views to match a bias. No amount of wrangling with texts or ‘*alternative meanings of the Hebrew and Greek words*’ will change what Paul wrote as inspired scripture. None of the major versions change Paul’s words here to give ‘*alternate meanings*’! The context is that women were involved in a lack of *order*. If Janette wants us to look at the ‘*meanings of Hebrew and Greek words*’ for ‘*alternative meanings*’, then let’s do that. ‘*Keep silence*’ is the Greek word ‘*sigáo*’. ‘*Sigáo*’ is used elsewhere with the same meaning - to be *silent*. It is used a few verses before in verse 28 where it is rendered in various versions as ‘*keep silence*’; ‘*keep quiet*’; and again in verse 30 - to remain silent in the order of prophesying. Other scriptures where the same Greek word is used also show an understanding of *silence* (Lk.20:26; Acts 15:12,13; 21:40; Rev.8:1). A study will show this word has an absolute meaning unlike other words for ‘*silence*’. One example will suffice: ‘*And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence [‘sigáo’] in heaven about the space of half an hour*’ (Rev.8:1).

There is no ‘*alternate meaning*’ in 1Corinthians 14:34 but that of *silence*! This ‘*silence*’ is also strengthened by the phrase which follows: ‘*for it is not permitted unto them to speak*’. The meaning is unambiguous!

One of the issues missed here, and by most who argue for women elders and pastors, is the issue of ‘*headship*’. The phrase that follows ‘*commanded to be under obedience, as also says the law*’ speaks strongly to this headship.

A parallel passage in this issue is 1Timothy 2:11-14 which speaks to the overall issue of whether leadership in a church can be female. ‘*Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression*’. There is a clear rule here that answers to most if

What do you see around you as you prepare for Christmas Day?...your eyes will glance over buildings, cars, houses, lights, storefronts, streets, corners, the hustle and bustle of the crowds...God sees it all from a different perspective. When God looks at a city or a town, he sees the people in the buildings, the people driving their cars, the people in their houses, the people shopping and commuting from place to place, the individual in the crowd. God sees people. God sees you. You are important to him.

Even during biblical times, some religious leaders tried to make God exclusive. Many were shocked that God would offer salvation to those who didn’t have the same religious and cultural beliefs as them; yet God made it clear that his amazing love was offered to every person, irrespective of heritage or lifestyle.

Jesus himself was criticised by the ‘religious’ people of the day for associating with those who lived their lives contrary to what he taught. He shared meals with prostitutes and tax collectors (who at the time exploited others). He lived a message of acceptance. What a great example of inclusiveness. The same Jesus we celebrate this Christmas was teaching us not to judge others, but to love others. Today, everyone is still included in God’s plan.

...The message of not only Christmas but of Christianity is one of rescue and hope in the midst of despair and hopelessness. God sees the desperation in the eyes of the single mother who just lost her job and can’t pay her rent, let alone provide gifts for her children. He sees the vulnerable child afraid to go home and the farmers in rural Australia who are struggling to feed their cattle. His heart is close to the poor, the sick and the defenceless.

Regardless of our differences, of what you believe about Jesus, it is a human responsibility to care for one another; to love and extend acceptance. This Christmas season...consider others. When we extend the hand of love, support and acceptance to others - as far as God is concerned - it is the greatest gift we could possibly give’.

Will the non-christian person listening to this message understand they must believe to receive eternal life and escape the wrath of God upon their sin? How can they when no such proclamation is made? God’s ‘*amazing love*’, ‘*his message of acceptance*’ and ‘*inclusiveness*’ is useless unless one believes Jesus has died for their sin and satisfied the requirements of God for breaking His laws. The Gospel is not about ‘*not to judging others*’ as Houston says, but that God must judge us for our sin either on the cross or in Hell! Houston’s gospel is this: ‘*Today, everyone is still included in God’s plan...The message of not only Christmas but of Christianity is one of rescue and hope in the midst of despair and hopelessness...the single mother who just lost her job and can’t pay her rent...the vulnerable child afraid to go home...the farmers in rural Australia...struggling to feed their cattle. His heart is close to the poor, the sick and the defenceless...When we extend the hand of love, support and acceptance to others - as far as God is concerned - it is the*

greatest gift we could possibly give’.

Hillsong are well known for their gospel of *our* ‘purpose’, ‘success’ and ‘wealth’. What gospel is this but a gospel about US and *our needs*? The real Gospel is about *Christ who died a sacrificial death on a cross as a substitute for our sins so as to satisfy the requirements of God for sin - the breaking of His law*. Houston’s gospel is demonstrably false and although it might make people feel good on earth, there is not a shred of eternal hope in it. It will save no one! *No gospel is a saving Gospel unless it tells the sinner WHY they need saving and WHAT they need saving FROM.*

Are We Ashamed?

I have been following the Christmas messages by our religious leaders for decades. These are leaders who have the ears of millions! Their messages have become increasingly diluted year by year and replaced with other ‘gospels’ that include politics, social messages and feel good works, designed to give us hope and make us feel warm and comfortable. The real biblical gospel has been taken over by these social, political and selfish gospels which come to the fore at Christmas time. *These gospels are dangerous because the things they offer are all beneficial!* They are often even good and healthy things *on earth* but are Hell deserving *in eternity!* They are not the ‘good news’ that Jesus and the apostles preached!

It’s now about *us* and *our* ‘humanity’ and works, instead of Jesus and *His work*. The Gospel is not about man and anything he can do (for these are ‘filthy rags’ - Is.64:6) but it is about Christ. It’s about God accepting the perfect work of Jesus to satisfy a perfect God that must judge sin if His creatures are to ever come into His holy presence in a perfect, sinless and holy place called Heaven. Are we ashamed of this?

These religious gospels omit the mention of *sin*. They often give a ‘cure’ without explaining the ‘disease’ - sin. These modern gospels miss the doctrine of *substitution*. The true Gospel concerning the substitutionary blood sacrifice is the antidote ‘for our sins’ (1Cor.15:3). God accepts only the perfect offering of His sinless Son. ‘*For he has made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might become the righteousness of God in Him*’ (2Cor.5:21).

Are our religious leaders ‘*ashamed of the Gospel*’ (Rom.1:16)? Do they know the true Gospel? If so, then why is it not in their public messages? The apostle Paul stated: ‘*For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believes...*’ (Rom.1:16). He continues in the very next verse and says that only in the true Gospel ‘*is the righteousness of God revealed*’ (vs.17).

Bring back what belongs to God! Bring the Gospel back!

Terry Arnold

Churches of Christ on Women in Ministry

Late last year I had an e-mail discussion with Janette Phelan, wife of the ‘CEO’ of Queensland Churches of Christ and in their missions department. Janette wrote a public article in their August magazine titled ‘*Called to Ministry*’ which was a case for women ministers.*

The article represented oft repeated views concerning women in ministry adopted by denominational leaders. The errors in this public article showed a subtle wresting of scriptures that attacks the very sufficiency of Scripture. In dialogue with this author there was no admittance of any errors.

Below I have quoted from sections in the paper in *italics* and then commented on each statement in **bold**.

Janette appears to bemoan the fact that ‘*cultural boundaries still exist*’ and ‘*gifted women still bump their heads against the glass ceiling...even Julia Gillard [Australian Prime Minister] was not immune. She regularly fielded questions...implying that as a female, she was not ‘up to it’...‘Professional women ministry leaders exist in our churches but in much smaller numbers than men: between 10 to 26% in the various Churches of Christ State Conferences, and 12% in Church of Christ churches in Queensland...A woman church member at one of our more conservative churches explained...‘We are not allowed to take any active part in church services because of Paul’s injunction that women should not teach or speak in church (1Cor.14:34)...My friends and I run our Sunday school...We are encouraged to teach the children, but the day my son turns 18, I am no longer worthy to be his teacher’.*

Response: What exactly is the ‘*glass ceiling*’ that women ‘*bump their heads*’ against? Could it be the age old scriptural norms of male leadership which in the evangelical world was not widely disputed till later in the second half of the 20th Century? And the agnostic Gillard with her unchristian, lesbian and sexist views (which drew the ire of, and further divided a nation), is hardly a suitable example for what the Bible would teach on this topic? Why is it that such worldly strawmen need to be used to attempt to prove that women should be in leadership ministry roles?

Why should we bemoan the fact that ‘*women ministry leaders*’ take up only 10-26% in Conferences? Why would any woman ‘*grapple*’ with any ‘*call*’ to ministry if it was truly Biblical?

But then comes this ‘strawman’ diversion in a misapplied scripture, 1Cor.14:34: ‘*For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints. Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it*

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