



# *Diakrisis* (Australia)

PO Box 1499, Hervey Bay, Qld. Australia, 4655.  
E-mail: [taministries@bigpond.com](mailto:taministries@bigpond.com) Ph. 0411489472

*'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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Ph. 0411489472 (Mob.)

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

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

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## Editors Comment

My wife and I are currently completing a three months tour of four states of Australia and will have ministered in over 20 churches of various affiliations. It has been a blessing to have encouraged and supported many churches, some struggling without pastoral ministry.

Many people ask us about the 'state of the church' in Australia. It has been our interest to gauge the church scene in each town and city. There is bad news and good news. Many towns barely have any churches that preach from Scripture. Expository preaching is not common or popular today. Many are latching on to the plethora of new programmes that are being offered to pastors. 'Emergent' theology and 'Purpose driven' philosophies are popular. However, some of these churches that have taken on board the market driven church growth methods for some years, are now depleted of numbers. There are also cases of such churches suffering division. The methods and the lack of doctrine simply have not grown congregations deep enough to root and keep people in these churches.

Many churches are also being polarised in two areas. Churches seem to be catering for the young generation in style of worship and thus losing older folk to other churches. As a result there are not many churches keeping both young and old these days. This is a dilemma that pastors are increasingly facing. I am convinced the answer is to inform, teach and equip our young and old as to the biblical commands that make up a local church as a 'family'.

Many pastors are also reporting that the number of true conversions is drying up. Despite the so called economic 'recession' it seems that many Australians are still too 'comfortable' and don't need God in their lives. Few churches are truly winning and keeping souls. Much of today's church growth is largely transfer of people from one church to another - often the big churches get bigger and the small churches are either in maintenance mode or dwindling, with some closing. There are the exceptions, often where pastors have laboured for many years and dug roots deep.

Another striking area we have seen in our travels is the number of pastors and elders under pressure. Sound pastors who preach the Word and care for the sheep are under pressure to change their styles and their methods to suit the whims and needs of a few. Some attempt to mould the pastor into their own 'perfect' image of a 'pastor'. I have met many pastors and elders who have been, and are being forced out, by constant resistance and criticism. Most of the splits today increasingly are not doctrinal but 'political' in nature. It seems today that biblical submission to elders and pastors in local church leadership is not highly valued as it should be.

The good news is that there is a remnant of Christians in nearly every town who are prepared to be discerning in what they hear and what they believe. Many towns have faithful witnesses in small numbers who are vibrant, alive and hungry for the Word of God. God always keeps a remnant as is shown in both the Testaments of Scripture. We have been fortunate to visit many of these fellowships to encourage them to persevere, to continue to teach sound doctrine, to be a witness in their communities as a holy people committed to the Lord and Saviour Jesus, and to be watching and ready for His appearing.

**Terry Arnold**

## Prosperity Preaching: Deceitful and Deadly

by John Piper

When I read about prosperity-preaching churches, my response is: 'If I were not on the inside of Christianity, I wouldn't want in'. In other words, if this is the message of Jesus, no thank you. Luring people to Christ to get rich is both deceitful and deadly. It's *deceitful* because when Jesus himself called us, he said things like: 'Any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple' (Lk.14:33). And it's *deadly* because the desire to be rich plunges 'people into ruin and destruction' (1Tim.6:9).

So here is my plea to preachers of the gospel.

1. Don't develop a philosophy of ministry that makes it harder for people to get into heaven. Jesus said, '*How difficult it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!*'. His disciples were astonished, as many in the 'prosperity' movement should be. So Jesus went on to raise their astonishment even higher by saying, '*It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God*'. They respond in disbelief: '*Then who can be saved?*' Jesus says, '*With man it is impossible, but not with God. For all things are possible with God*', (Mk.10:23-27). My question for prosperity preachers is: Why would you want to develop a ministry focus that makes it harder for people to enter heaven?

2. Do not develop a philosophy of ministry that kindles suicidal desires in people. Paul said, '*There is great gain in godliness with contentment, for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content*'. But then he warned against the desire to be rich. And by implication, he warned against preachers who stir up the desire to be rich instead of helping people get rid of it. He warned, '*Those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs*', (1Tim.6:6-10). So my question for prosperity preachers is: Why would you want to develop a ministry that encourages people to pierce themselves with many pangs and plunge themselves into ruin and destruction?

3. Do not develop a philosophy of ministry that encourages vulnerability to moth and rust. Jesus warns against the effort to lay up treasures on earth. That is, he tells us to be givers, not keepers. '*Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal*', (Matt.6:19). Yes, we all keep something. But given the built-in tendency toward greed in all of us, why would we take the focus off Jesus and turn it upside down?

4. Don't develop a philosophy of ministry that makes hard work a means of amassing wealth. Paul said we should not steal. The alternative was hard work with our own hands. But the main purpose was not merely to hoard or even to *have*. The purpose was 'to have to *give*'. '*Let him labour, working with his hands, that he may have to give to him who is in need*', (Eph.4:28). This is not a justification for *being* rich in order to give more. It is a call to make more and keep less so you can give more. There is no reason why a person

who makes \$200,000 should live any differently from the way a person who makes \$80,000 lives. Find a wartime lifestyle; cap your expenditures; then give the rest away. Why would you want to encourage people to think that they should possess wealth in order to be a lavish giver? Why not encourage them to keep their lives more simple and be an even more lavish giver? Would that not add to their generosity a strong testimony that Christ, and not possessions, is their treasure?

5. Don't develop a philosophy of ministry that promotes less faith in the promises of God to be for us what money can't be. The reason the writer to the Hebrews tells us to be content with what we have is that the opposite implies less faith in the promises of God. He says, '*Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you.'* So we can confidently say, '*The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?*'', (Heb.13:5-6). If the Bible tells us that being content with what we have honours the promise of God never to forsake us, why would we want to teach people to want to be rich?

6. Don't develop a philosophy of ministry that contributes to your people being choked to death. Jesus warns that the word of God, which is meant to give us life, can be choked off from any effectiveness by riches. He says it is like a seed that grows up among thorns which choke it to death: '*They are those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by the...riches...of life, and their fruit does not mature*', (Lk.8:14). Why would we want to encourage people to pursue the very thing that Jesus warns will choke us to death?

7. Don't develop a philosophy of ministry that takes the seasoning out of the salt and puts the light under a basket. What is it about Christians that makes them the salt of the earth and the light of the world? It is not wealth. The desire for wealth and the pursuit of wealth tastes and looks just like the world. It does not offer the world anything different from what it already believes in. The great tragedy of prosperity-preaching is that a person does not have to be spiritually awakened in order to embrace it; one needs only to be greedy. Getting rich in the name of Jesus is not the salt of the earth or the light of the world. In this, the world simply sees a reflection of itself. And if it works, they will buy it. The context of Jesus' saying shows us what the salt and light are. They are the joyful willingness to suffering for Christ. Here is what Jesus said, '*Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. You are the salt of the earth...You are the light of the world*', (Matt.5:11-14). What will make the world *taste* (the salt) and *see* (the light) of Christ in us is not that we love wealth the same way they do. Rather, it will be the willingness and the ability of Christians to love others through suffering, all the while rejoicing because their reward is in heaven with Jesus. This is inexplicable on human terms. This is supernatural. But to attract people with promises of prosperity is simply natural. It is not the message of Jesus. It is not what he died to achieve.

**John Piper:** [www.desiringGod.org](http://www.desiringGod.org) (August/2009)

## Unity or Ecumenism?

Most would agree that the western church has largely lost its authority and witness to the world. We are in the midst of one of the most radical periods of apostasy the church has ever seen. Most denominations simply do not teach what they used to teach, even just 10-20 years ago! They have adopted the ecumenical cry of unity at all costs, and at the expense of truth and doctrine. They say that to be a 'witness' to the world we must join together as one and so have a 'testimony' to the unsaved. But this has been at the expense of truth by watering down the word of God and the Gospel, the very vessels which hold that truth in written form. There can be no 'unity' unless it is unity in the Word of God, (Jn.17).

Discerning Christians know something is wrong when the church becomes more and more like the world and less holy and distinct. Discerning Christians should know that something is wrong when churches place less emphasis on doctrine and more emphasis on programmes feeding the felt needs of the unsaved. The world has come into the church to take the church into the world. The Bible warns discerning Christians to be separate from teaching that is not Biblical: **'Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which you have learned; and avoid them'**, (Rom.16:17). The phrase **'contrary to the doctrine which you have learned'** is referring to the apostles doctrine and that early 'faith'.

'Church growth' leaders today teach a philosophy that says we give the unsaved what they want or need, so as to effectively present the gospel to them. But the Bible says that the average unsaved person is naturally going to ask for carnal things and reject spiritual things. He is not going to ask for the Gospel, nor want to listen to it. He will not want Godly music or teaching on the judgement of God. His heart is depraved and the Gospel is an 'offense' to him, (Gal.5:11; Rom.9:33; 5:15-20). Unsaved man is totally unable of himself to respond spiritually to God's Gospel, (Rom.8:6,7; 1Cor.2:14; Rom.3:10-11; Jer.17:9; Is.64:6,7). Unless the Holy Spirit turns and draws the heart, none will be saved, (Jn.6:44). What 'method' does God use to change a persons heart in this way, from one that is unwilling to receive the things of God to one that is ready? Ultimately, God uses only the Gospel and His Word to save a person! He does not need or use man's methods, felt needs, market driven programmes, etc. Some of these things may be human 'ice breakers' at best to gain relationships, but ultimately it is only the Gospel of *faith* and *repentance* that will move the hearts of the unsaved, who by nature will not seek God! (Rom.3:10,11).

What unsaved people *need* and what they *want* are two totally different things! What they *need* is to understand the Gospel and be saved; what they *want* is their religious or felt needs met. If the needs of the unsaved determine the method or the message of the church then we have backslidden from the methods and the message of the apostles and the early church. Is it thus any wonder the church has become 'salt without savour', (Matt.5:134)? *If the needs of the unsaved determine the method or the message of the church then the inevitable result will be that the Gospel will be diluted and doctrine will be put on the back burner!* Biblical preaching will not be the focus of church services. People will not be challenged to be saved, or the saints to change.

'Doctrine' is 'teaching' and it is this that equips the

saints to discern the difference between pure and impure, truth from error. Any unity based on minimising doctrine is a bastardised unity, a counterfeit. We are not unified by coming together with different beliefs, different gospels or gospels that minimise or do not mention sin, repentance and that Jesus is the *only* way to eternal life. How can we accept a religion that does not teach these basics?; how can we accept a religion that curses us for teaching faith alone and that God's righteousness is imputed to us by faith alone? Yet that is exactly what happens when we unite in any way with religions such as Roman Catholicism! (Roman Catholicism 'curses' any who teach the imputed righteousness of God by faith alone, (Rom.4).

Unity must be centred on and maintained by the Gospel and contending for its purity. Paul exhorted the Philippians to **'...stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel'**, (Phil.1:27). The book of Philippians is filled with passages that show Paul's passion to *contend* for the gospel. He was imprisoned for this!

True unity must include the truths of who Jesus is (deity) and what he has done (atonement) as the *only* **'way, the truth and the life'**, (Jn.14:6). True unity means not being ashamed of the gospel and its 'offence' of the cross to the unsaved. True unity does not try to mix the philosophies of the world with the methods of the church and evangelism.

Did Paul promote unity when he rebuked the Galatians for changing the Gospel? The answer is *yes!* By correcting and refuting, he was attempting to keep the unity of 'the faith once delivered'. He warned of 'another jesus, another gospel and another spirit', (2Cor.11:3,4; Gal.1:6-9).

Today churches are increasingly preaching a message of *'come to Jesus and you will have a better life...a better marriage...you will have your needs met, you will find purpose or success in your life...'* But these are not the Gospel. Any Roman Catholic, Jehovah Witness or Mormon could adopt this gospel! The Gospel is not fitted for the liking of the world. It is an 'offense' that Jesus died for our sins and that he was buried and rose, claiming to be the only one by which any can be saved and come to the Father. He alone satisfied the wrath and judgement of God upon sin and sinners. The Gospel is about the work of Christ, as designed by God from the foundation of world. It is not merely to give people a better life on earth but to appease the anger of God and to make a way for us to live free of judgement from a holy God! The true Gospel is about God reconciling sinners to Himself who were once his 'enemies', (Rom.5:8-10). Churches that do not preach this Gospel are not promoting Christian unity! The Gospel says *'repent and believe'*. If repentance is not preached, unity is not achieved.

Other attacks on unity are those teachings which add to the 'faith once delivered'. The Charismatic/Pentecostal movement in the early 20th Century was an *addition* to the faith once delivered with new teachings never before heard of in 1800 years. Yet it is today one of the movements that drives the ecumenical bus. Pastors and elders today are amiss in not warning their sheep where necessary of the ecumenical movement and its merging of different gospels.

Those who strive and contend for the accuracy of the Gospel are true friends of Christian unity.

**Terry Arnold**

## Guillaume Farel (1489-1565)

In 1492 a devout Roman Catholic, Jacques Le Fevre, a popular doctor of divinity and scholar in languages, became professor at Paris university. He soon took a leading role with his colleagues. He began to read the Bible earnestly and was challenged by many verses. He began to expound passages and an increasing number of students were attracted to his Bible studies. After 17 years at the university he met up with a 20 year old Roman Catholic, Guillaume Farel. Farel was disturbed by the sinful lifestyles of Parisians and found friendship and a like mind with Le Fevre. He became a disciple of Le Fevre, and they became lifelong friends and often read the Bible together.

Fevre began to study more deeply the epistles of Paul and this led him to a conviction to teach salvation by grace alone. Although this was before the time of Zwingli and Luther, it was not new teaching, as the Waldenses and other Protestant groups had taught this for centuries. But in France at this time, this was a dangerous teaching that would bring one into direct conflict with the Roman Catholic religion. In some places the threat of death was real.

By 1521 the danger of teaching such Biblical doctrines forced many such as Fevre and Farel to flee to Meaux where a Roman Catholic Bishop, Briconnet, was sympathetic to their teaching. Bishop Briconnet tried to educate his people by giving away copies of scripture. With the threat of punishment diminished, Farel began to preach in churches and in the open air. His sermons taught grace alone through faith for salvation and with the promise of complete forgiveness of sins: *'He who is God himself so humbled himself as to die for us, he the holy and righteous one, for the ungodly and for sinners, offering himself up so that we might be made pure and clean. And it is the will of the father, that those whom he thus saves by the precious gift of his son, should be certain of their salvation and life, and should know that they are completely washed and cleansed from all their sins...for that blessed day the whole creation groans; that day of the triumphant coming of our saviour and redeemer, when all enemies shall be put under his feet, and his elect people shall ascend to meet him in the air.'* (1)

Many of the locals were converted from this preaching and some from reading the Bible alone, parts of it being freely supplied.

The Roman Catholic Franciscans in Meaux complained to the Roman church and to the University in Paris about these conversions. They were disturbed by the growing numbers of conversions away from Roman Catholic teaching and the free use of the scriptures for the laity to read. The Bishop was threatened with losing everything in his parish as well as his life if he continued with his policies. Under pressure he gave in and restored Roman Catholicism outwardly, but inwardly he remained convinced of the truth of the Scriptures. By this time the Christians in Meaux were numerous and strong enough for them to arrange secret meetings to study the Bible and worship.

One of the converts from the Bishop, a Jean Leclerc, visited house to house and put placards against the cathedral doors exposing Roman Catholic teaching. He was soon captured and for three successive days was whipped through the streets and then branded a heretic on his forehead with a red hot iron. His mother cried out from the crowd of onlookers, encouraging her son and praising the Lord. The

bishop endured the shame of seeing one of his parishioners tortured. Leclerc was then removed to Metz where, until his death, he taught the scriptures to all who would listen.

On the outskirts of Metz was a grove where Roman Catholics came to pray. There were many statues of the Virgin Mary and the saints. One night Leclerc destroyed the statues. When he later admitted to the deed, he was condemned to the flames. First they horribly tortured him while he cried out the words of Psalm 115 and the verse pertaining to idols: *'their idols are silver...'*

One of those converted at the time was Francois Lambert who was raised with the Franciscans in Avignon but who disagreed with the Roman system of doctrine. He read the Scriptures and Luther's writings. Even though as a priest he went in and out of the monastery, he eventually married, being the first of the French priests to take this step against the Roman Catholic rules of non marriage for priests. As a result, in 1524 he and his wife were driven out of Metz. The Roman Catholic authorities then began to tighten the screws on the 'heretics'.

Another who was converted at that time was an Augustinian monk, Jean Chaistellain. They captured him, degraded him horribly and then burnt him alive. Yet the converts continued to grow in numbers. Nothing seemed to control the growth of Christians in Metz.

In 1525 King Francis I of France was defeated by Emperor Charles V. The Pope used the occasion to gain access to Meaux and have a show of force against 'heretics'. He targeted Bishop Briconnet. Although Briconnet had previously outwardly submitted to the Pope and reversed his policies, the Catholic authorities believed an example needed to be made of him by having him publicly recant. Bishop Briconnet gave in and performed the necessary ceremonies of penance and repentance.

At that time there was also a famous 'hermit of Livry' who lived in a forest hut outside of Paris. He had been converted through Briconnet and had spread the Gospel to many who visited him or wanted to be taught by him. He was eventually brought to the Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris with a great fanfare and with bells tolling so as to bring the public to see the spectacle. Then he was burnt before all.

Meanwhile Farel had managed to escape death. His open air preaching in various towns was convincing, passionate and bold. He had seen his three brothers converted also through his preaching. His knowledge of scripture and doctrine was above that of most of his contemporaries. However, he was more an evangelist for most of his life than a teacher. He had a strikingly deep voice and a long red beard and many were attracted to hear him. He did not tolerate compromise and disagreed with Erasmus who he considered half hearted in Reform.

Many believe that it was Farel who was the vessel used to reform French Switzerland. He was later considered to be the 'apostle of French Switzerland'. He once preached in Neuchatel where he caused a revival amongst many of the hearers. But this also generated violence from others. The revival spread to other towns including Valangin where he and a companion narrowly escaped being drowned by an angry mob in the river Seyon. He was also beaten in the chapel of the castle where his blood stained the walls. He was eventually thrown into prison but rescued by sympathetic

men from Neuchatel.

By 1530 Neuchatel had adopted the reformers religion against Roman Catholicism.

Farel also visited the Waldensian hamlets in the scattered mountains where they had for centuries adopted the Bible based faith of the Gospels. The Waldensians were an interesting anomaly to the Reformation (as were the 'Anabaptists' who were non conformists to some of the rituals and traditions still carried over into the Reformation from the Roman church). For centuries the Waldenses had not been absorbed into the church systems but remained independant. At a meeting on Sept. 12th 1532 at the synod of Chanforan in the Waldensian valleys, Farel and other Reformers met with the Waldenses. Farel had urged more separation from any Romish practices. However, the question that excited most discussion was that of how a man is made right with God. Farel taught that God elected people before the foundation of the world and that all that God chooses will come, (Eph.1; Rom.8:29,30; Jn.6:37-44). The majority were unable to refute Farel's teachings and most adopted them. The synod also decided to spend 500 gold crowns on a translation of the Bible into French.

Later a young man named Jean Calvin was forced to leave Paris because of his Bible teachings and he came to

Geneva. Calvin was considered by most to be the foremost theologian of the day. Calvin met Farel who convinced him to stay there and help. Calvin eventually imposed a state and church that ruled in religious matters.

Farel later came under the influence of Lutheran ideas and became an avid promoter of them. Although he had drawn Calvin to the city, he disagreed with him over the 'Eucharist' (communion). Farel eventually came into conflict with the state run side of Geneva - the council. Among other things they accused him of placing too much emphasis on the church rather than the council. He was forced to leave Geneva in 1538, in part for his strict ideas on some issues. He retired to Neuchatel, where he died September 13, 1565 of unspecified causes.

Farel's impact on the French speaking Switzerland was important to the Reformation in Europe. Many souls were converted under his ministry, particularly in his earlier preaching days. He was also a key figure in the lives of other Reformers and Protestant groups. His evangelistic preaching saw God win the hearts of many through the Word of God.

#### **Terry Arnold**

Extracted from various sources including: '*The Pilgrim Church*' by E.H. Broadbent; '*The Renaissance and the Reformation*' (books.google.com/); and various files with TA Ministries.

(1) '*Life of William Farel*' by Francis Bevan

## **Your Comments and Questions**

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

*Dear Terry, Thankyou...Your article [March/April] on 'Geopolitics & Prophecy' is spot on. I have seen the DVD's and the reports on the swine flu injection which were forecasted to be compulsory. It did not happen. The same goes for other articles on Obama and the world order, etc. It does seem as if some people are obsessed with these things.*

*Your article on pragmatism and doctrine being 'minimised' is also spot on...Before I left the AOG over 10 years ago, doctrine was already unimportant...After reading Yongi Cho's book 'The Fourth Dimension', I expressed concern to a pastor who said he did not care what Cho believed or what he practised, but only the good results of his church growth.*

*I also think your recent replies to the SDA's were brilliant.*

*I have some questions on your article 'By his stripes We Are Healed?'...Are you saying that Physical healing is not mentioned in the Old Testament? What about Ps.103? Also Matt.8:16,17 - it says Jesus healed all that were sick 'that it might be fulfilled' by Isaiah who said: 'Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses'. Is this not the very scripture you refer to in the article?*

**Editors reply:** Thankyou for your words of encouragement...Certainly '*by his stripes*' does not refer to physical healing as that is not in Is.53:5,6 which 1Peter 2:24,25 quotes. The verses are specifically referring to '*transgressions*' and '*iniquity*'.

The Old Testament atonement offerings were not for sickness but for sin, (Lev.16:3)! It was specifically a '*sin offering*'.

However, I may have given the wrong impression in my article about scriptures on bodily healing in the OT of which there are some references. However, the '*all*' in

**Ps.103:3 here obviously does not mean 'every' and 'all' in a literal sense. Commentators are divided as to whether it is a reference here to David's healing by God or a reference to spiritual healing of the soul. But the point not to be missed in my article is that the atonement in the Old Testament and the NT never included healing of sicknesses *in this life*.**

**Space did not permit me to cover Matt.8:16,17 - You say it says 'Jesus healed all that were sick 'that it might be fulfilled by Isaiah who said 'Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses''. If you check carefully, these words 'infirmities', 'sicknesses' are actually not mentioned in Is.53.**

**Matt.8:16,17 was spoken 3 years before the cross and the verse claims that Isaiah was fulfilled there and then. It refers to the *earthly public ministry* of Jesus as verse 16 clearly shows (and with proof of his Messiahship).**

**I am not saying that the atonement on the cross does not have a *future* plan of healing in glorification. But that 'healing' is *future* (Rom.8:23).**

**That healing is not guaranteed in this life is further attested to by the fact that in 2Corinthians 12:9 Paul glories in his physical '*infirmities*' which were *not* healed. This word is in fact the same Greek word as in Matthew 8:17. Further, Epaphroditus was '*sick nigh unto death*', (Phil.2:27); Trophimus was '*left at Miletum sick*' , (2Tim.4:20); Timothy took medicine for his sickness, (1Tim.5:23).**

**D.A Carson, observed: '*The cross is the basis for all the benefits which accrue to believers; but this does not mean that all such benefits can be secured at the present time on demand, any more than we have the right and power to demand our resurrected bodies*'.**

## Your Comments and Questions

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

Hey Terry, In the Jan/Feb issue of 'Diakrisis' (P.7) you responded to my letter with your 'SDA Twisting History'...I am NOT twisting history but giving you facts...You also said there is Scriptural proof for early Sunday keeping and quoted Acts 20:7; 1Cor.16:1-2...[But] Acts 20:7 isn't about a Sunday...In Gen.1:5b it says 'And the evening and the morning were the first day. In Gen.1:8b it says, 'And the evening and the morning were the second day'. Very clearly it states that the first day of the week starts on Saturday evening, not at midnight. So in Acts.20:7...Paul began the service on Saturday night and preached till midnight, and continued to the break of day, dawn (6am), and then Paul departed and continued on. Also similar in 1 Cor.16:1-2...

(From a Seventh Day Adventist - L.G., Sth.Australia)

**Editors Reply:** I believe we showed clearly that your SDA quote was historically inaccurate and biased. Any reading of the history of the time will show that, including quotes from your own historians, as we documented.

There has never been a question as to what day was the 'first day of the week'. Sunday, not Saturday, was always the 'first day of the week' in both historical and Biblical writings. The scriptures prove this: Matt.28:1: 'In the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre'. This scripture tells us plainly that the Sabbath was still the day before the 'first day of the week' (see also Mk.16:2; Lk.24:1). In Lk.24 the women came to the tomb with spices *after the Sabbath* had prevented them from doing this.

The first day of the week is 'Mia Ton Sabbaton' literally meaning: 'First of the weeks'. It is the common expression for 'First day of the Week'.

*The first day of the week to early Christians was Sunday*

*which was also called 'the lords day'. The following are just a few of the early historical sources: 'But every Lord's day do ye gather yourselves together, and break bread...' ('Didache', 90AD); 'We keep the eighth day with joyfulness, the day also on which Jesus rose again from the dead' (Epistle of Barnabas, 100AD); '...For the first day after the Sabbath, remaining the first of all the days, is called, however, the eighth, according to the number of all the days of the cycle, and [yet] remains the first' (Justin, Dialogue 41:4, 150AD); '...the Gentiles, who have believed on Him, and have repented of the sins...even although they neither keep the Sabbath, nor are circumcised, nor observe the feasts. Assuredly they shall receive the holy inheritance of God...' (Dialogue With Trypho the Jew, 150-165AD); 'If there was no need of circumcision before Abraham, or of the observance of Sabbaths, of feasts and sacrifices, before Moses; no more need is there of them now, after that...' (Justin, 150AD); 'And on the day called Sunday, all who live in cities or in the country gather together to one place, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read...bread and wine and water are brought...and there is a distribution to each, and a participation of that...And they who are well to do, and willing, give what each thinks fit...But Sunday is the day on which we all hold our common assembly, because it is the first day on which God, having wrought a change in the darkness and matter, made the world; and Jesus Christ our Saviour on the same day rose from the dead...' (Justin, Weekly Worship of the Christians, Ch 68, 150AD); '...we do not live according to the Law, nor, are we circumcised in the flesh as your forefathers, nor do we observe the Sabbath as you do' (Justin, 150AD).*

[More from Seventh Day Adventist L.G., Sth.Australia. Editors reply in bold and brackets] Terry, re: Jesus being the Arch-angel Michael...I have done my own study from the Bible alone. I'll prove to you that Jesus is in fact Michael the Arch-angel. 'Arch-angel' means 'Chief of the Angels', but that doesn't mean that Michael is actually an angel ['Arch-angel' and 'chief of the angels' - this sounds like an angel to me]...Michael is called, in Jude the 'Arch-angel' in Jude 9. This means the Chief Angel or the Head over the Angels... [Then surely he is an 'angel'!] He is the One whose voice is heard from Heaven when the dead are raised (1Thess.4:16); [He shouts with the voice of an archangel. Nowhere in scripture does it say Christ is an angel or Michael. In Jude 9 Michael says to the Devil 'The Lord rebuke you'. How can Christ who is 'Lord' say that of himself?] and whose voice is heard in connection with this event? - the voice of our Lord Jesus Christ, (Jn.5:28) [Vs.25 says it is 'the voice of the son of God', not Michael. Michael the archangel is never mentioned in this passage] ...The voice of the Son of God is the voice of the Arch-angel; the Arch-angel, then, is the Son of God, but the Arch-angel is Michael; hence also Michael is the Son of God. [Circular reasoning, but in scripture it is an

argument from silence. Angels are *created beings*. When was Jesus created? Col.1 says *he created the heavens!* This is part of the Arian heresy of early centuries]

In Dan.12:1 'The great prince which stands for the children of thy people' is alone sufficient to identify the one here spoken of as the Saviour of men. [Michael is described as 'one of the chief princes' (Dan. 10:13).

He is the Prince of life (Acts 3:15); [Because He is the originator of life] and God has exalted Him to be a 'Prince and a Saviour'. In Acts 5:31, He is the Great Prince. [The context is Israel and salvation] So, therefore, the Lord Jesus Christ is Michael the Arch-angel. [Let scripture have the final say: Heb.1:4 'Being made so much better than the angels, as he has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. 5 For unto which of the angels said he at any time, you are my son, this day have I begotten you? 6...let all the angels of God worship him. 7 And of the angels he says, Who makes his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire...13 But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool? 14 Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?']

## Your Comments and Questions

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

Dear Terry, Re: your article 'Geopolitics & Prophecy' (March/April/2010) - I think it is a good idea to warn people about the dangers of that sort of stuff. It is not wrong inherently to watch what is going on in the world, but in my experience thus far, people who are into that ministry seem to easily get obsessed with it...And the danger in that is that the gospel no longer remains central. It is replaced by end times views. And I think that is what people need to be warned about especially. If something is making the gospel

non-central in our lives, then we need to change it (even if it is biblical). For instance, people can make 'reformed theology' or 'election' central to their thinking and conversation, but this ought not to be so. We need to keep the gospel central no matter what. Spurgeon determined that the doctrine of substitutionary atonement should be the central theme in his preaching. And that if this wasn't so, then he shouldn't be a preacher.

(Name withheld at editors discretion)

Dear Terry, I attended a Bible study where the theme was that we needed God, but also that God needs us. I had difficulty understanding the last part, especially as the teacher was unable to explain why God needs me...Also, on the issue of freewill in salvation I was on a different wavelength, as I believe it is by God's will that I was saved not by my will. What are your thoughts?

(Name withheld at editors discretion)

Editors reply: Nowhere in the Bible does it ever teach that 'God needs us'. If that were the case then it would disagree with the self sufficiency of God himself who is omniscience and omnipotent. We need God; but He in Himself does not need us. This does not mean that He does not use us. But for Him to actually 'need' us would have Him somehow lacking in His absolute holiness and self sufficiency of His person. Man was created for God's pleasure and to glorify Him. Any lessening of this will detract from the doctrine of the sovereignty of God. '*You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for you have created all things, and for your pleasure they are and were created*', (Rev.4:11).

As for the 'free will' issue: The term 'Free Will' is one of the most misunderstood terms today. 'Free will' in its literal sense means to be able to choose one thing from another or one way from another, without any forces or any influences whatsoever. 'Free Agency' means we can voluntarily choose according to our desires or our nature. The unsaved man has 'free agency' but not 'free will' in salvation. He is bound by nature in a bias towards sin. This bias is irreversible unless God intervenes. '*We were by nature the children of wrath...*', (Eph.2:3); '*But the natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned*', (1Cor.2:14); '*Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God*', (Rom.8:7,8). Does this sound like a will that is 'free'? What I teach here was understood and expressly taught by all the greats including Spurgeon, Whitefield, Edwards, Darby, etc. (I can supply quotes).

Does Satan now have 'free will' to choose God or to choose right from wrong? The answer is of course 'no'. If there is 'free will' in unsaved man then someone needs to explain these scriptures: '*There is none that understands, there is none that seeks after God*', (Rom.3:11); '*But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that*

*believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God*', (Jn.1:12,13); '*So then it is not of him that wills...*', (Rom.9:16).

Before we were saved from sin's penalty, '*the god of this world has blinded the minds of them which believe not...*', (2Cor.4:4). We were not able to choose God from any will that is entirely 'free'. Jesus Himself unequivocally said: '*No man can come to me, except the Father which has sent me draw him...*' (Jn.6:44). The Scripture describes men as those who love darkness (Jn.3:19), are in *bondage* to sin (Gal.4:3; 6:17, 20), and taken captive by Satan to do his will (2Tim.2:25), until the Son sets them *free* (Jn.8:36). When Jesus says He will set people free, He means he will set them free from the *bondage* of sin. Why would the Son need to set them 'free' from sin if they were 'free' to turn from it themselves?! Were they not 'slaves' to sin?

This does not deny that man has a will and is responsible for his sin. But the Scriptures above show the unsaved will is not completely 'free' to choose salvation. The unsaved '*will*' is simply not independent or 'free' of all influences and consequences from the sin of Adam and Eve!

The inability of fallen man to will salvation (called by some 'total depravity') and the responsibility of man for his own sin...this is a mystery, an 'antimony', which the great evangelist Charles Spurgeon said was like 'two friends' that could not, and did not need to be, reconciled.

The Bible clearly says that in our unsaved state we were '*fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by NATURE the children of wrath*', (Eph.2:3). We are only 'free' to act according to our nature! And our Adamic natures are sinful. A cow might be 'free' to eat pork but it will not, because it is not in its *nature* to eat pork! Unsaved fallen man is not 'free' to seek after God, but rather is a 'slave' to sin, (Rom.6:9,14; 7:1).

We must address the human will in Gospel preaching and pray that the Holy Spirit turns that will. Unless GOD does something in the sinner, unless GOD creates a clean heart and renews a right spirit within man, there is no hope of salvation. As Spurgeon once said: '*I do not come into this pulpit hoping that perhaps somebody will of his own free will return to Christ. My hope lies in another quarter. I hope that my Master will lay hold of some of them and say, 'You are mine, and you shall be mine. I claim you for myself'. My hope arises from the freeness of grace, and not from the freedom of the will*'.

## Your Comments and Questions

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

*Dear brothers in Christ, One of my friends passed one of your newsletters onto me. It was a copy of Sept/Oct/2005. I have never even heard of 'Diakrisis Australia' until now. What a shame that I have missed out on this good material. I am impressed with what I read. Please send me future copies.*

(N.B., Qld)

*Hello Terry, I enjoyed reading your reply to K.W's [SDA] letter in Diakrisis March/April...I was surprised to see his denial of the obvious false prophecies...Well done Terry on a great job. God Bless.*

(Name withheld at editors discretion)

### The Gospel and Modern Methods

*'How did the early Church ever function without the 'expertise' we have today? Yet those Christians turned the world upside down (Acts 17:6), and they did it without any celebrity testimonies, without modern management techniques, without psychotherapy, without mass media, and without most of the means the contemporary church seems to view as essential. All they had was God's Word and the power of His Spirit, but they knew that was sufficient.*

*How has the pure, humble, devout church behind the Iron Curtain for most of this century been so powerful without the marketing strategies of the West?'*

(John Macarthur, 'Our Sufficiency in Christ', P.122)

[Editors reply in bold and brackets] *Dear Terry, Re: my letter published [Adventist K.W., March/April/2010, P.6]...Paul kept the Sabbath in Acts with the Jews and the Gentiles...[Nowhere does it say he 'kept the Jewish Sabbath'. It does say he preached in the synagogues on their 'Sabbath' - that was the only place the apostles could evangelise the Jews in this way]. Terry, you did not answer the question - what day did Jesus bless sanctify and keep? [The New Testament does not speak of any 'day' to 'keep'! That's precisely why the Bible says 'One man esteems one day above another: another esteems every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regards the day, regards it unto the Lord; and he that regards not the day, to the Lord he does not regard it', (Rom.14:5)]...What is your teaching on Elijah...[As in my last reply to you [March/April/2010, P.6] - you need to first deal with the false prophecies of Ellen G. White. It is no benefit to you to jump from one topic to another when you have not dealt with the false prophecies at hand]. I also find it hard to believe that the writers of the NT would use the word 'commandments' when they should have said 'the word of God'... [Your perception of the word 'commandments' means you only see the Mosaic 'commandments'. The phrase 'these least commandments' in Matt.5:19 is in context clearly not referring to the Mosaic ten commandments or the Sabbath. It is referring to the teachings of Jesus previously; similarly in 1Jn.2:3. (Also see 1Cor.14:37 (the 'commandments' here is about 'tongues!'); and Jn.15:10; Acts 1:2; 1Thess.4:2; 1Jn.3:22,24; 5:2,3; etc)].*

### Prayer/Praise Points

Pray for Terry and Beth as they complete the three months ministry tour through four states. Pray for safety, health and strength. Pray that the ministry bus will continue to operate efficiently.

Pray that the Holy Spirit will bless the meetings. Praise the Lord that many churches and fellowships have already been encouraged and taught.

### Terry's Itinerary

#### Sth. Aust.

**April 25th** (Sun) 10.30am Native Valley Bible Fellowship Ph.(08)83886106

**April 30th** (Frid) 7.30pm Native Valley Bible Fellowship Ph.(08)83886106

**May 2nd** (Sun) 10.30am Waipinga Congregational, Victor Harbour (08)85523755

**May 2nd** (Sun) 6pm Church For You, 3 Kirk Street, Elizabeth Park, Ph(08)82547678 or 0417016160

#### NSW

**May 9th** (Sun) 10am Picton Bible Church (02)46810227

**May 12th** (Wed) 7pm Macarthur Baptist, Narrellan Vale, Ph.(02)46471926 0410471926

**May 13th** (Thurs) 7.30pm Guildford Arabic Christian Assembly Ph.(02)88077725

**May 16th** (Sun) 10am Georges River Congregational, Panania Ph.0408407184

**March 16th** (Sun) 6.30pm Ryde Congregational Ph.(02)98889337

**May 23rd** (Sun) 10.30am Bethshan Community Church, Wye Ph.(02)43571378

**May 23rd** (Sun) 6pm Bethshan Community Church, Wye

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