



## A Ministry of Teaching

*But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age...to discern (diakrisis) both good and evil (Heb. 5:14)  
Whom shall He teach knowledge? and whom shall He make to understand doctrine?... (Is.28:9)*

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

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### Editors Comments

When we look at the state of the church today we might well ask the following questions: Why are there so many false professions? Why is there a lack of holiness in the church? Why is the church increasingly like the world? Why does the command '*abstain from all appearance of evil*' (1Thess.5:22) mean less and less to Christians today? Why are so many pastors increasingly falling in immorality? Why is there an increasing acceptance of homosexuality? Why does music in the church increasingly ape the world's style? Why has the Gospel become confused with what *God can do for man* instead of what *God has already done for sinners*? Why has the church turned to psychology and other methods to help with the increasing behavioural and addiction problems of Christians?

Do we see the above picture as too negative or is it fact?

Recently I looked at various sermons and literature from great preachers including John Owen, Whitefield, Wesley, LLOYD-Jones, Spurgeon, Jonathan Edwards, etc. My mind was greatly impacted by *one* thing - *they all preached heavily against SIN!* They all preached the *holiness* of God and what God and His Word says of *sin*. They all preached on the *sovereignty* of God and brought *man down* and lifted *God up*. They all preached *the law* to show the gravity of and the very depths of *sin*.

I recently heard a sermon on sin and holiness. It made some squirm in their seats. It convicted me of sin in my own life. It gave a heightened appreciation of the amazing grace of God. *The preaching of sin is the antidote for much that ails the church today.* It rids the church more quickly of false conversions. It heightens conviction in the saints. It allows man to accurately judge himself and appreciate God's love. It separates Christians from '*this present evil world*', (Gal.1:4)...It drives man back to the Saviour and His Word! **Terry Arnold**

### Apology

Some subscribers commented that pages were blank in the last March newsletter. Please accept our apologies for this printers error. To those affected - please contact us and we will send a replacement March newsletter. **Editor**

### \*\*New Sermon Tapes\*\*

Several readers have expressed an interest in various topical sermons done by Terry Arnold in recent months. These are now available as a package of 10 messages, (includes photocopies of overhead transparencies).

Price is \$25 + postage. Topics are:

'*Foundations for Evangelism & Discipleship*': A series of 4 vital messages on correct understanding of evangelism. This theory will help correct misunderstandings in evangelism methods, conversion, etc. Includes teaching on: True Preparation of a heart to receive the Gospel; Methods of heart preparation; Modern methods of evangelism; True/false conversions; Law/Grace; What is/is not the Gospel; Discipleship; etc.

- '*Amazing Grace! - The Penitent Thief*' (Salvation; Grace alone; etc.)

- '*The Sufficiency of Scripture*' (What do we mean by '*Sola Scriptura*'?; A look at the Church Growth Movement; Psychology; etc.)

- '*The Parable of the Sower*' (Commentary; True & False converts)

- '*The Two Crosses*' (The real cross and the counterfeits)

- *1Cor.12:12-27: The Body of Christ and Its Parts* (commentary).

- '*The Will of God*' (What is God's will for you?; How to know His will)

## Revival?

'Christianity is booming in Africa' says a headline in a February 2000 edition of *TIME Magazine*...*'with drums, guitars and promises of health and prosperity'*.

I have lost count of the number of people who have berated me for my skepticism over the so called current world 'revival' of Christianity. Toronto, Pensacola, and often continental Africa are put forward as proof of the validity of their claims.

It is always wise and prudent to investigate these matters with an open mind and Bible. The key to correct discernment of a 'revival' is to examine just what is being preached and taught so that it can be determined just 'what' people are being 'converted' to. That, it seems to me, is the only litmus test to apply. If hundreds of thousands of people are being swept into the 'Church' then what is compelling them to do this? If it's Biblical Christianity being presented to them then you most likely have true revival on your hands...if not, you're certainly investigating a counterfeit of some description.

Simon Robinson, writing for *TIME Magazine* from Monrovia, Liberia, explores what is happening in that country: *'It is miracle week in Monrovia...4,000 Liberians (in a thatch roofed building) are praying, singing and beseeching Jesus for help. Drummers thump out a beat as Reverend Isaac Winkler prowls the stage shouting.. 'forgive us our sins, Father! Cure these cancers, these tumours! Get rid of blindness, get rid of lameness.'* On the other side of the continent at a lunchtime prayer service in Kisumu, Kenya, Pastor Onyeka Ezebuike roars out a similar message...*'Poverty, should be under our feet, amen! Fear should end, Amen! I don't care if you had no food when you woke up this morning. You cannot go back there, Amen! Reach out and accept what is coming. You deserve wealth! Yes, Amen!'*

But this is not the Biblical Gospel, no matter how inspiring it may sound!

It is claimed that 'Christianity' is growing faster in sub-Saharan Africa than anywhere else on the globe. Apparently these African churches are *'transforming Christianity...by drawing on elements of traditional spirituality.'* (Underlining mine). Therein lies a clue that all is not well with this 'revival'.

This particular article details many disturbing elements in this new movement. Africans have become tired of the paternalistic attitudes of the mainstream churches and have

begun seeking freedom by combining 'traditional' beliefs with elements of Christianity. *'Most (African Independent & Evangelical churches) hold their services in a local language and focus on the Holy Spirit and miracles. Most mix traditional African spiritual beliefs - like ancestor veneration, witchcraft and the concept of good and bad spirits - with elements of Pentecostal worship, including drums, guitars and Charismatic preachers...many newer African churches preach instant deliverance in the form of worldly wealth. It is this message, so-called Prosperity Theology that appeals to the continent's poor and displaced...says Stephen Jubwe, assistant professor of sociology and anthropology at the University of Monrovia; 'It is a miracle people are looking for. And they want it right here, not in the next life.'*

Sound familiar? In Europe, Nth. America, Africa and Australasia, wherever 'revival' is being touted this same 'gospel' is being preached, often by the same much travelled people.

At the same time this movement has made massive concessions to the prevalent spirituality of the countries it visits. In Europe it is the Celtic/Nordic, (also conceded to in Pensacola and elsewhere with sermons being preached by men in 'Braveheart' warpaint"), in North America - Indian, in Australasia - Aborigine and Maori. Just as Rome has done for centuries this ecumenical monster combines Christianity with pagan belief to soften the Gospel and fill 'churches' with the unsuspecting and unconverted.

In a cunningly deceptive manner this is presented as 'Tolerance'. Anyone who dares to question or disagree with another's beliefs, or objects to the combining of them with Christianity, is deemed 'intolerant'. But as any thinking person can see, this has bred an environment of total 'intolerance' to one group, and one group only - the Bible believing born again Christians! The Pope is never upbraided for his constant vilification of 'Evangelical Sects' or 'Biblical Fideism'...but woe betide the Christian who dares disagree with 'Christendom' and it's 'tolerance' of false religious systems and the occult!

That a sweeping worldwide 'Revival' is occurring there is no doubt. But a revival of what? Simply put - *religious intolerance*; intolerance of the truth and of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. And those who hold to that truth, will bear the brunt of the fury being amassed against it. **Mike Claydon**

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## Quotable!

*'There are many Pentecostal people who stand apart from the nonsense that is going on today...there are Pentecostal churches that stand against Ecumenism...who stand and speak out against the 'Toronto Blessing'...against the hypnotism with Christian terminology as performed by Benny Hinn and others. They speak against these abominable things...they are right. But the sad thing is that the same rule which they measure these things, they fail to apply to the roots of Pentecostalism itself, indeed to it's founder [Charles Parham]. They fail to apply this same rod of measuring to Azusa St...'*

*They would look at someone like Benny Hinn today and say, '...here's a man who said there's nine persons in the Trinity...who said that God originally made women to give birth out of their sides...that Adam was superman and could fly to the moon...who said if he had a Holy Ghost machine gun he would blow [his critics] heads off...who travels around the world telling people they're healed and then they die...they would look at what comes out of his mouth, and it is right to do so. The Bible says 'by their fruits you shall know them' and by that Jesus meant what comes out of their mouth because he said out of your heart that's how you know what's in a*

*man...and so we measure them by that standard...*

*So let's look at Mr. Parham's theology. Mr Parham was a faith healer. He taught that he could only effect a cure in the person if they had faith to be healed...this puts the faith healer in a very safe position...he believed demons living inside a person could actually eat food...[and] that God condemned the use of medicine...he believed in British Israelism...he was a racist...he supported the Klu Klux Klan until he died...This was the man who was the founder of Pentecostalism...a man who was supposedly chosen by God to bring new revelation, new gifts and a new move of God into the world...In 1907 he was arrested for Sodomy and later acquitted. There was an enormous amount of scandal and controversy that followed this man, and is it not just the same with the false prophets today?...Their lies are...a trail of horror stories and incredible theology that is unbelievable.*

*The same measuring rod that is used to measure the false prophets today...the Pentecostals who stand against these do not apply that same standard of testing to the roots of Pentecostalism itself... (Mark Haville, author 'Signs and Wonders-Exposed') Tape: 'Fruits, Gifts, & the Truth about Azusa St.'*

## At The Turn Of The Century...

'...The alleged Y2K bug (including billions of embedded chips, which were going to cause havoc) turned out to be the myth of the millennium. The contrast between fearful Christians and a confident world was embarrassing. InterVarsity cancelled its huge triennial Urbana conference scheduled for the end of 1999, and 'Promise Keepers' broke its promise to hold the largest combined gathering of Christian men in history on the steps of State Capitols January 1, 2000. The world, however, didn't cancel NFL, NBA, bowl games, or millennial festivities, etc.

Those who followed Year 2000 celebrations in succeeding time zones across the globe...[saw] none of the anticipated terrorism occur and crowds were so well behaved that for most police it was quieter than the usual Friday. Worldwide there was an exhilarating camaraderie, the expectancy of great things to come and the feeling that a new age of peace and prosperity had dawned.

Far from breaking down, modern technology has created a new electronic world without borders...Multinational corporations have united this world in a way that could not have been anticipated a few decades ago. There is now no turning back. The scenario we presented from the Bible 17 years ago in *Peace, Prosperity and the Coming Holocaust* continues to unfold before our eyes.

The billions spent on Y2K fixes have laid the foundation for a new technological explosion beyond imagination. It is not surprising that Christian leaders, too, would be caught up in the euphoria, considering the growing apostasy. With high tech. who needs the Holy Spirit? Who in these times fears God? Man is now in control!

We have long warned of the accelerating ecumenism...One can see the world church, Antichrist's bride, rising like a phoenix from the apostate ashes of professing Christianity...'

(Berean Call, Feb/2000)

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## The Growing Ecumenism

'...in 'Larry King Live' interviews,...(King's present wife is a Mormon)...In 1999, the Christmas Eve program was broadcast live from the Mormon Tabernacle in Salt Lake City. Seated with King at a small table was Mormon President Gordon B. Hinckley, who, as King intended, came across as the leader of a mainline Christian denomination...King's interview with Hinckley was interspersed with live pick-ups of Nobel Peace Prize winner South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu...Appearing also was Robert Schuller, telecast from a field overlooking Bethlehem, Israel. To King's delight, both men supported Hinckley and Mormonism as soundly Christian, and all three expressed enthusiastic anticipation of an inevitable agreement among all religions.

For those readers who may not be aware or have forgotten: the Mormon 'God' is a man with a physical body who was redeemed on another planet by another Jesus and achieved godhood...every Mormon male aspires to become a god himself...Central to Mormonism is the dogma, 'As man is, God once was; as God is, man may become.' 'God' is the literal father of every person on earth through one of his many wives. He had physical sex with Mary to bring forth the Mormon 'Jesus,' who needed a physical body to become a god. His death for our sins made it possible for Mormons to earn their own salvation, which is exaltation to godhood through good works, secret temple rituals, and further initiations after death. Thus exalted, each will make his own new earth and another Adam and Eve. Another Lucifer will cause another fall, and another Jesus will die on a cross to make possible exaltation for more gods.

With that background, here are some excerpts from 'Larry King Live,' Christmas Eve 1999, with...comments.

**KING:** 'Tell us, Reverend Schuller...where you are...**SCHULLER:** Where I'm sitting right now is probably where the shepherds were when the angels appeared and proclaimed the purpose of the whole faith, and that is to bring peace on earth, good will to men...I'm very interested in...doing what I can to bring peace on earth.... [...such peace is not 'the purpose of the whole faith.' Jesus provides 'peace with God' (Rom 5:1) 'through the blood of his cross', (Col 1:20)]. **KING:** And why are you here? **SCHULLER:** I've had...several meetings...with the leading Muslim thinker and leader in the world, the Grand Mufti of the great Mosque in Damascus...**KING:** The idea of bringing religions together, right? **SCHULLER:** Absolutely. [Try to imagine Elijah or

**Christ or Paul 'bringing religions together!'] **SCHULLER** (continuing): I have seldom met with a man [with] whom I felt an immediate kinship of spirit and an agreement of faith and philosophy quite like I have with the Grand Mufti of the faith.**

[...Islam and Christianity the same faith? Islam says Allah...has no son, denies that Jesus is God, denies His death, burial and resurrection for our sins, denies even that He died on the cross (another died in His place); claims He was taken to heaven without dying and must come back to die, etc. The faith taught in the Bible is vigorously opposed by Islam. Yet Schuller has said that if all of his descendants became Muslims, it wouldn't bother him so long as they weren't atheists!]

**SCHULLER** (continuing): I spent a great deal of time with the Chief Rabbi here in Israel,...he wants to meet the Grand Mufti...maybe I can get the two together...**KING:** That'll be historic. Archbishop Tutu...[what is] the scene...in the next millennium...**TUTU:**

We have been given the opportunity of making a new beginning...**KING:** President Gordon B. Hinckley... [your] book 'Standing for Something'[is] going to be released...What do you mean [by that title]? **HINCKLEY:** This book [is] a plea to people...to...have faith, who pray, who return to the virtues that made America great...Most other problems will take care of themselves if that happens. **KING:** You agree with that, Reverend Schuller? **SCHULLER:** Oh, absolutely.

I want to thank very much President Hinckley for pointing out that Christianity has been the greatest success possible...what we need to do is return to the faith, the values of this Christ who was born 2,000 years ago....[Mormonism exemplifies

**successful Christianity?...] **TUTU:** ...I do believe...we need to stand up for what is good,...[but] not in an aggressive way...[as if] we are the ones who have got the truth...**KING:** Yes...I am the Way, and the Light, and the Truth and you're not.' We have to all get together...**SCHULLER:**...we religious leaders [must] begin to say, 'I'm...not trying to convert other religious people to my viewpoint'...[...Didn't Paul say, 'I persuade men,' and aren't we to 'earnestly contend for the faith'?...]**

**KING** ...my little nine-month-old [son] Chance is here. What do you say for his future, Reverend Schuller? **SCHULLER:** I think it's going to be beautiful because he's got a mother and a father that are going to communicate to him values of positive faith...[A Mormon mother and atheist father are great because their false faith is 'positive?']

**TBC, Berean Call, Feb/2000**

## Catholic- Lutheran Agreement

In 1999 The Catholics and the Lutherans signed a joint agreement on the doctrine of justification. One of the quotes from the agreement states: '*Justification is forgiveness of sins and being made righteous, through which God imparts the gift of new life in Christ.*'

**Editors Comments: Luther would 'turn over in His grave' to read such statements! To many uninformed and untaught Christians today, this is subtle and well disguised deception! Justification is not 'being made righteous' but a once for all legal and forensic event which in Scripture occurs through *imputation* or crediting of the righteousness of Christ by God. The *imparting* of the gift of eternal life is the giving of the Holy Spirit and this is *not* Justification, but sanctification. The confusion between Justification and sanctification in the above statement will be evident to those who have studied both doctrines in Scripture. (See *Diakrisis* Jan/98; June/99 Sept/Oct/99).**

*Justification* takes place because of what Christ has done *for* us, not *in* us (sanctification). Justification is *imputed*, not *imparted* by the Holy Spirit as in sanctification. Romans chapter 4 mentions the word '*logizomai*' ('*imputed*', '*reckoned*', '*credited*', '*counted*') 11 times and the whole chapter refers to *justification* of the believer.

The tragedy of such agreements between Catholics and Lutherans is the very reason why this ministry is increasingly pleading for pastors to re-teach the doctrines of justification and sanctification. Roman Catholicism has not changed one single doctrine since the Reformation! Yet the Lutheran church can now accept the *same* system that they once rejected!...Something is terribly wrong.

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## The 'Sting' Taken Out Of The Gospel

Today many churches are taking the sting out of the Gospel. The sting is the *offence* that the Gospel causes to the human soul. The sting is in the preaching of the law which brings conviction of sin. Many churches are diluting the Gospel and making it *palatable* to the world. They mix it with worldly methods and thus take out the 'sting' and the knowledge of the depths of sin.

The Gospel must first offend human pride and show man to be totally depraved and unable to reach God by any means within himself. It must declare God to be sovereign. It must show the *stench* of mans self righteousness. Terry Arnold

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## They 'Believed Not The Truth...' (2Thess.2:9-12)

'Only a few public figures - including senior churchmen - believe God made the world in six days, says a BBC survey.

Of the 103 Anglican, Catholic and Methodist leaders questioned in the Radio 4 survey, three believed in the literal version of the creation story. Only 13 of the church leaders said they believed Adam and Eve existed.

But most of those questioned said God could influence events on earth and the Ten Commandments are still applicable.' *The Belfast Berean News*, 27/12/99

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## More 'Teeth' Reports.

'An image of the infant Jesus rumoured to have grown teeth is drawing hundreds of devotees...the 75 cm statue of the infant Jesus appears to have upper baby teeth...'

CNS, Philippines, 21/11/99

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*We are saved by God's work, not by good works.*

## The Sovereignty of God

Christians should rejoice in the fact that God is in total control. Not a sparrow falls to the ground that is not in His will, (Matt.10:29). He decides upon who He will bestow mercy and whom He will harden, (Ex. 33:19; 34:5-7, Rom.9:14-24). He raises rulers, good and evil, and brings them down, (Dan.4:17, Rom.13:1). He even chose Judas Iscariot to fulfil a treacherous role in history, (Acts 1:15-20). Yes, God uses even evil! Joseph said to his brothers '*But as for you, Ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.*'

Even though God allows evil he does not *cause* it. There is a huge difference between *allowing* and *causing*. *Nothing* can happen to us without God first allowing it, (Rom.8:28)!

Although the kingdom of darkness has great power and this causes much suffering and sin, God's kingdom *rules* over *all* (Ps.103:19), and *reigns* throughout *all* generations, (Ps.145:13). The devil can only do what God permits, (Job.1:12; 2:6). Praise God for this simple Bible truth! God is in complete control! Acceptance of this truth would destroy much man made doctrine that says God cannot act until we help him with various methods. God is sovereign! He says, *I have purposed it, I will also do it...For mine own sake, even for mine own sake will I do it...*(Is.48:11), *...he putteth down one and setteth up another*, (Ps.75:7), *...Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will*, (Eph.1:11).

Terry Arnold

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## Dialogue of Deception

**Benny Hinn:** '*...And here's something that's amazing, Paul! He [Jesus] was kept sinless by the Spirit. Because the Bible says He offered Himself spotless through the Spirit. Watch this, it's right here. "How much more shall the blood of Christ who, through the eternal Spirit, offered Himself without spot." So had the Holy Ghost not been there, then Jesus would have sinned. Now I know, some of the...*'

**Paul Crouch:** '*The heretic hunters?*'

**Benny Hinn:** '*Some won't like it, but it's in the Bible.*'

**Paul Crouch:** '*Yes, it is. I've never heard that.*'

**Benny Hinn:** '*The Holy Spirit is the one who kept Christ sinless. Because without the Holy Spirit, Christ would have sinned. And remember something: the devil would not have tempted Him had he thought that Jesus could not sin...*'

**Paul Crouch:** '*He wouldn't have bothered.*'

**Benny Hinn:** '*Exactly. The devil would not have tempted Christ had Christ...*'

**Jan Crouch:** '*Not been able to sin.*'

**Benny Hinn:** '*Not been able to. In fact, if Jesus could not sin, you and I could not have identified with Him.....*'

**Benny Hinn:** '*He offered Himself without spot to God through the eternal Spirit. It's right there. You can't argue with it. And anybody that thinks Jesus could not sin, you haven't read the Bible right, because the Bible says He was tempted in all points.*' (*'Praise The Lord'* TV, TBN, 24/4/98)

**Editors Comments: Contrary to what Benny Hinn says, the ludicrous hypothetical statement that Jesus 'could have sinned' is not in the Bible! (Perhaps this is why Paul Crouch had 'never heard that'). Extra-biblical theology is often made up of 1+1=3 thinking which in this case defies the sovereignty of God. Contrary to the last statement of Benny Hinn, we can say that Jesus could not sin because He *did* not sin! He was *God* in the flesh! Hinn's thinking here is extra-Biblical nonsense and at worst shameful heresy.**

## The Church Growth Movement

The Church Growth movement is sweeping the world. Huge conferences teach people how to grow big churches. While most congregations in western Christianity are struggling and declining, some churches are flourishing in numbers. Many of these churches have attendances of over 2,000.

The Church Growth movement divides into two main streams. One is the mega-church and the other the user-friendly or 'seeker' churches.

In America about 400 mega-churches exist whereas 20 years ago there were less than ten. These churches usually offer a smorgasbord of personal services from weight loss programs and gymnasiums to parenting classes for single fathers. The churches provide 'cells' for people of like groupings within the congregation. These cells effectively hold the church together.

The 'user-friendly' or 'seeker' churches are market driven churches. The model is usually churches such as the *Willows Creek Community Church* pastored by Bill Hybels or Rick Warren's *Saddleback Community Church*.

In 1975, while still a college student, Hybels desired to plant a church in Chicago. He was disillusioned by 'traditional' churches. He conducted and used surveys to find out what the *unsaved* wanted in a church. Today his church is now over 15,000 and his group of churches has a membership of over 700 churches that are usually modelled after the *Willow Creechchurch*. A whole new industry has developed around his methods. The Christian bookstore market has been flooded with numerous best selling books. Huge conferences draw in thousands of pastors from around the world who seek to learn from the likes of Hybels and Warren successful marketing techniques to grow big churches

These churches foster a 'celebrative worship'. The atmosphere is festive with contemporary music. The services target the *unsaved* in an effort to make them feel more comfortable. One of the main arguments for this style is 'relevancy'. The belief is our worship cannot be understood by the world or the unchurched. Certainly, the statistics show that the average non Christian is seeking a deity to handle their consumer driven wants and needs.

That the methods of the Church Growth Movement are from the world is not in doubt. As one ministry sums it up: '*In much church growth ministry...What really drives the ministry comes from elsewhere - from management models, demographic analysis, research, experiments, common sense, sociology, psychology, or whatever. Certainly in Hybel's case, he makes no secret of his debt to management gurus like Peter Drucker, to current theories of pop-psychology, and to basic textbook principles of modern image-management and marketing.*' (1)

The Church Growth Movement arguably places much importance on marketing and worldly techniques rather than a humble reliance upon God and His Word to build *His Church* (Mt.16:18; Acts 2:47; 1 Cor.3:6-7; Col.2:19; Ps.127:1). However, *what may work in the business world may not necessarily be fit for the kingdom of God.*

The question is: *Do methods affect the message?* Should we use the marketing methods and the psychology of the world to grow churches? Should we cater to the wants and needs of the *unsaved*? Do results (numbers) prove the methods as correct?

One prominent Christian author says: '*Again and again in the contemporary church...the main pre-occupation...is the so called 'program'. The basic idea is to provide something so sensational and appealing that it attracts crowds and stimu-*

*lates a substantial increase in attendance...The wretched, weary old ways of the world are employed to pack in the people. All sorts of courses are offered in 'Church Growth'. Seminars are held all over the country...in how to attract crowds. Books are written on the theme...Almost any means is considered valid and acceptable as long as it produces the end result of gathering a crowd. Success is the ultimate criterion measured in mass attendance, even if the true final results are miniscule...The basic fact is that the majority of Christians have been deceived.'* (2)

The use of Scriptures to attempt to back up worldly methods by many Church Growth leaders is more than questionable. The Church Growth Movement begins with ideas from the World and selects Scriptures to suit. As one ministry demonstrates: '*Hybels [says]: "As I've looked through the Scriptures at those who throughout history have been unmistakably strong leaders, I've noticed certain behaviour patterns and attitudes that they seem to hold in common."* Hybels then lists the eight characteristics (things like "leaders have the ability to inspire and motivate people" and "leaders allocate resources effectively".) However, only three of the eight mention the Bible or a Biblical example. Under "leaders have the ability to cast a vision", Jesus is quoted as an example of a great leader who had a God-given capability to place a vision of the future before people, such as when he gave Peter his name (of 'rock') and declared that he would build the church on him. Nehemiah is the Biblical example of "leaders have the ability to coalesce people", on the grounds of his admirable efforts in mobilising the people to rebuild Jerusalem. And Paul is a champion of "establishing core values" in that "he said to the other leaders of his day, 'If you want to hang out in Jerusalem and build churches for the already convinced ...But I want to go out and build churches where Christ is not yet known.'"

*This passage of Bill Hybels is typical of much 'Church Growth' literature, as anyone who has dipped into it will testify. There is a tendency to use the Bible to illustrate principles and ideas that really have been derived from elsewhere, such as psychology or management theory or just by common sense. The presence of the Bible is somehow meant to legitimise the ideas being presented, even though the way it is used is very often forced and arbitrary. (I have noticed for example, that some Biblical heroes of faith like Samson and Ezekiel almost never rate a mention as exemplifying leadership or ministry attributes, whereas others - like Nehemiah, Ezra and Paul - are never far away.)...*

*...We find a similar story in Rick Warren's stimulating and helpful book, 'The Purpose Driven Church'. It is hard not to be impressed by this book; it is inspiring, challenging and full of practical ideas for ministry and evangelism. Yet it is interesting to again find that the use of the Bible in it is almost universally poor.'* (3)

In the above book and seminars, Warren cleverly sets up 'straw men' and then shoots them down. For example, he says: '*...we are loud. We are really really loud on a weekend service...I say, we're not gonna turn it down...baby boomers want to feel the music, not just hear it...why should every church have the same music?...People can find that God loves variety!*' The 'straw man' erected here is that we all have to have the same music and that God is not keen on variety. The error is that we give the *unsaved* what appeals to their flesh.

Warren goes further: '*...to insist that all good music came from music 200 years ago is thinly veiled racism...its cultural elitism saying that all the good music was written 200 years*

ago...Now for 2,000 years the Holy Spirit has used all kinds of music. And to insist that one particular style of music is more sacred than the other, there is a word for that - its called idolatry.'

But this issue of 18th Century hymns is another 'straw man'. The real issue is: can fleshly music, or that which gives a response in the flesh, be used in church? What should we think of Gal.5:16-26?: '**...Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh...If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.**' Are we not to worship God in the '**beauty of holiness**'? (1Chr.16:29)

Warren says '*God is doing a new thing in our midst*', (from Psalms 40:3). However, this Scripture does not say that God is doing a new thing but rather that he has put a '**new song in my heart**' and only the *redeemed* can sing this song! God's methods of ministering to the *saints* has not changed - it is still found in His Word and is still found in the all sufficiency of Christ. The Gospel is still the means which changes the hearts of the unsaved who God has drawn and who will believe.

It is not hard to see that *one of the fruits of the Church Growth Movement is a de-emphasis on doctrine and on the preaching of sin and holiness*. With the de-emphasis upon doctrinal truth within church growth congregations, Christians tend to stay at a shallow level in their understanding of God and Scripture. Consequently, sanctification is affected.

The Church Growth method emphasises sermons with minimal Bible verses that will make the hearer feel good and give many tips for successful living. In Warren's studies the negative texts are passed over quickly, (eg. Tim.3:16-4:5; Tit.1:3-11). He says: '*Try to pick positive Scriptures...you want to pick out Scriptures that are very positive.*' But are we not to present the whole counsel of God? (Acts 20:20-31). The plea is also to give the unsaved what they want to hear to get them in. However, the fact is that *the method can affect the message. The bait you catch them with is the food you may have to keep them with*. Rock music, entertainment, meeting social and felt needs and methods that pander to the flesh of man, will detract from the need for man to see his hopeless and helpless position before a God who is a holy and righteous judge. Without this understanding of sin man cannot be saved!

Churches that are influenced by church growth theology arguably place undue emphasis on meeting the 'felt needs' of unbelievers, seeking to have them assimilate with believers into the church. There are, of course, several problems with this: (1) Scripture does not indicate that we are to be preoccupied with meeting the 'felt needs' of unbelievers. (2) Church meetings, are *primarily*, if not exclusively, designed for believers, *not* unbelievers. All activities in the church meeting presuppose that the participants are believers, (e.g., worship, corporate prayer, The Lord's Supper, fellowship, etc). (3) If we centre our church meetings around the 'felt needs' of unbelievers, it would be to the neglect of believers being disciplined and edified through the Word of God, (Heb.5:12-14; 6:1-2).

Scripture does not indicate that unbelievers are to be evangelized during the church meeting. Instead, believers are to be instructed in the Faith so that they can be strengthened to witness to the unsaved in the world.

The Church Growth Movement is *pragmatic* in thinking - it is right if it works. If the numbers increase, it works. Statistics are showing the churches that are growing are mostly those that have contemporary music styles or have grown through *transfer growth from other churches*. They have adapted to the needs and whims of the people. But numbers, by themselves are not the mark of God's blessing. Many cults and

false religions have large numbers of people and many are growing faster than Christianity! As one author puts it: '*Doing what works may indeed work in the short term, or appear to. But it may be quite disastrous in the longer term.*' (4) Bigger is not necessarily better!

Can a Church grow without the methods of the Church Growth Movement? The answer is a resounding *yes*! There are many churches in the west that have grown without using the methods of the world. I know of several churches that have grown without resorting to Church Growth methods. One local church in particular I have seen triple in numbers in less than four years. The pastor has systematically but passionately preached exegetically through whole chapters and books of the Bible and preached sin and holiness without compromise. The '**faith once delivered to the saints**' is '**earnestly contended for**', (Jude 3). Discipleship is emphasised. The saints are being strengthened and edified with both the milk and meat of the Word. The result is the blessing of God with added souls to the church and a *high retention rate*.

Perhaps the worst aspect of the Church Growth movement and its pragmatic thinking is its desire to minimise the *offence* of the Gospel! The Gospel is an offence to the unsaved, (1Cor.1:18,23,24). We are not to tickle ears but preach the Word. Paul was '**not ashamed of the Gospel, for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth...**', (Rom.1:16). The word '**power**' ('*dunamis*') here refers to *inherent power of itself*. The Gospel does not need any help or power from outside to make it 'relevant'. But for the Gospel to be '**the power of God unto salvation**' people must first '**believe**'! For this to occur we must labour in teaching the Word to the *saints in the church* who will then go out and witness Christ in their lives to others. God then draws who He wills to '**believe**'.

The church is not for the unsaved but it is the '*called out ones*', (Greek: '*ekklesia*' - '*church*'). Church services are for the '**assembling of ourselves together**', (Heb.10:25). It is *primarily* the gathering of the *saints* in worship, fellowship and teaching. To turn this on its end and primarily cater for the unsaved is to open the door for the world to come into the church. *The Church Growth movement has allowed the world to come into the church to take the church into the world*. The fruit of this is false conversions, tares, or 'high maintenance' Christians who sap wasted energy and time out of the body of Christ.

Is the world to determine the strategy of the church? The world is supposed to hate the church, (Jn15:18)! We are supposed to be different to the world, (Eph 2:2)! It must be the Word of God that determines our strategy!

The Church Growth ministry model appears to contradict Rom.12:1,2: '**I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.**'

**Terry Arnold**

(1) '*Briefing*' 7/99 (2) '*Predators in our Pulpits*' (P. 32) by W. Phillip Keller (Author of '*A Shepherd Looks at Psalm 23*') (3) '*Briefing*', 7/99 (4) *Ibid*, 7/99

Recommended Reading: '*Ashamed of the Gospel*' by John MacArthur, Jr.; '*Selling Jesus: What's Wrong With Marketing the Church*' by Douglas Webster; '*Power Religion*' [ed.] Michael S. Horton; '*Dining With the Devil*' by Os Guinness; '*Selling Out the Church*' by Philip D. Kenneson & James L. Street; '*The Dangers of Church Marketing*' (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997).

## Book Review

### 'The Purpose Driven Church' by Rick Warren

'...In this book Warren urges the churches to adopt rock music, to use business motivational techniques in order to fill churches with thousands of people. The main object of this book seems to be to cause churches to 'grow'...Warren seeks to throw out all solid, decent hymn music, which is filled with uplifting doctrines and lyrics, and replace it with new songs...pop lyrics, Rock bands with drums, in order to bring the world what it is used to!...this book by Warren lays huge emphasis on 'growth' as 'fruit'...to 'grow' he thinks he must ape the world in order to attract the unsaved, who are to become the large congregations of his 'purpose driven church'. Pop/Rock music greatly appeals to the world, so Warren uses it exclusively. The unsaved do not like to sing in congregations, so Warren gives them mainly entertainers, who sing the lyrics to the Rock songs...

...Church assemblies are not about making a place where the world feels comfortable. Evangelism is not the primary reason for having a Sunday morning service...Warren insists that growth is identical to spiritual 'fruit'...This is nothing like Biblical teaching, which lists the fruit of the Holy Spirit in Galatians 5:22,23...The fruit of the Holy Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance, NOT 'growth'

...His book is in reality a book which should be called, 'How to build a large kingdom'...It reminds me very much of a business manual and brings to mind that church leaders in the last days will 'make merchandise of you', (2Pet.2:3)...The Bible warns us that there will be a 'large number' who will follow false teachers...

...Warren says that one of his favourite movies is 'Raiders of the Lost Ark' This film is filled with double meanings and occult symbols...On page 38 he lists some of Christendom's most influential heretics of our age as 'best known' pastors, including Robert Schuller and John Wimber...he says on P.282: 'There is no such thing as 'Christian music' there are only Christian lyrics'. This is sheer nonsense! The jungle beats of modern music are quite demonic...On P.76: he mentions, positively, the huge syncretic, ecumenical, political 'Promise Keepers'!...On P.126: Warren mentions favourably the New Age/Christian Richard Foster. On P.127: he mentions favourably C. Peter Wagner, an apostate teacher with ties to the new world order controlled US centre for world missions...'

Excerpts of a review by W.B. Howard of 'despatch' magazine.

## Request From Africa

'Dear Brother in Christ,...I am a nondenominational evangelist doing full time ministry for the Lord for the past 6 years...On my death bed our Lord met me, saved me and gave me His life...I resigned my job and am doing His ministry...a faith ministry...The ministry is difficult...I don't have the materials...the souls are precious for the Lord. Please send more books and Bibles and other gifts for our office. We want to have a library of Christian books. Please pray that we get what we need...We have seen much good fruit and souls coming to Christ...'

**Editors comments: TA Ministries regularly sends free literature to the needy. If you believe the Lord would have you support this request, please send donations to the Hervey Bay office marked 'Mission Africa'.**

## Your Comments and Questions

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

Att: Mike Claydon. Dear Mike, Greetings in Jesus name, Just a small point on your article 'A Bitter Harvest'. You mentioned AOG were now 'Austalian Christian Churches'. This is not the case. The ACC is an umbrella organisation set up to cover various Pentecostal denominations and independant churches that desire a united voice to the public and media. All denominations keep their own name so AOG is still AOG.

Pray this will help you to understand ACC. Your brother in Christ, (Sth.Qld. AOG Pastor)

**Sub-editors reply: So much that is written today by the AOG leadership refers to this new name being the entity under which they see themselves operating. But I thank you for setting me straight on the actual details with regard to the composition of ACC.**

Dear Mike & Terry, Early this month there were some media reports (enclosed) about ACC...

### 'Christian Churches Unite Under New Banner'

'Christians all over the Hunter are celebrating a major new force in Australian Christianity. Churches stretching from the Port Stephens Shire to Muswellbrook, throughout Newcastle and Lake Macquarie and down through Morisset to Central Coast are part of the national newly formed organisation called ACC (Australian Christian Churches) which represents over 1,000 churches and 170,000 Christians nationally, making it one of Australia's largest mainstream church groups.

Several like-minded churches in the Hunter and the Central Coast have put doctrinal issues aside to join together under the ACC banner to present a united Christian face focusing on community support and care programmes rather than preservation of doctrine.

These include: Assemblies of God (AOG), Apostolic Churches, Christian Life Centres, Baptists and many independent Pentecostal and Charismatics. These churches are experiencing the highest level of growth in new members than any other churches in the area.

ACC president and senior pastor of Hills Christian Life Centre, Brian Houston says: "the main purpose of ACC is to present a united voice to the community that Christ cares for all people. Combining churches will allow us to focus on providing welfare and community service programs with a huge pool of resources and support".

(The Maitland Mercury, 2/3/2000)

What a shame that these people are so interested in providing welfare and community service programmes with a huge pool of resources and support. Whatever happened to telling people that they are going to hell unless they repent and turn to the Lord Jesus Christ?'

**'Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils: Speaking lies in hypocrisy....' 1 Timothy 4:1-2a**

I have written to the President of the Baptist Union of NSW to clarify that it is not all Baptist Churches that are uniting in this false unity...and Pentecostal/Charismatic false doctrine.... Yours because of Calvary, (T.W. Sydney)

**Editors Comment: The ACC is just another example of the false Ecumenical movement being fuelled by the Pentecostal/Charismatic movement.**

## Your Comments and Questions

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

Dear Terry, I received your newsletter today in the mail and found it very interesting...I found the front page excellent...I feel that the church is going down the wrong road and allowing too much humanistic beliefs...to be honest the Scriptures...are watered down so much that we are drinking water, not the Word of God.

I have been called rebellious because I think differently. I am in a Pentecostal church and have been for the past 10 years since I have given my life to the Lord. I have noticed a difference in that time and it has not been nice. I have often wondered if it is my fault, if my thoughts and attitudes are wrong, or if I am in judgement, etc. But after reading your articles I realise that there are people out there in the body of Christ that feel the same way as me. Thank God that some people are wanting to stay on the right road. I was reading Proverbs 2:1-9 this morning...and that really spoke to me about wisdom and discernment. We should continue to ask the Lord for these two very important things so we can keep on the straight and narrow. There are a lot of 'fruit cakes' out there in the ministry and it scares me.

Thank you for being honest and keep up the truth. God bless you. (L.M., NSW)

Dear Terry, Thankyou for your newsletter.. I find today that most, especially AOG Charismatics, tend to blindly believe their leadership. They are told not to listen to, or read anything the hierarchy don't want them to know...I came out of AOG Paradise Church [Sth. Aust.] several years ago after a number of times trying to point out false prophecies, but was ignored. I was not at all surprised at the 'Trashed-Unread' article (Dec/99)...Several have tried to correct this man...the congregation is very much less than it was 5 or 6 years ago and mainly young people...When do these pastors ever learn? Many of my friends also left after trying to speak to [them]...Keep up the good work. God bless all at 'Diakrisis'. (Sth. Aust., name withheld at editors discretion)

Dear Mike, Terry...you are doing a good job exposing some of the hypocrisy of some of the leadership who falsely accuse people of being false prophets and 'accusers of the brethren' [Reader see 'Diakrisis', Dec/99 P.3 ]. I found your article on 'Trashed -Unread' very interesting. (AOG pastor)

### Praise Points

- Praise God for several more conversions from false teaching and for some fierce opposition as well. **'In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you'**, (1Thess.5:18).

### Prayer Points

- Please pray for the April Nth. Qld. itinerary.  
- The ministry is expanding rapidly. Continue to pray for urgent provision for a second worker in Hervey Bay.

To TA Ministries, Thank you very much for the December 'Diakrisis'. It was informative, and a timely reminder that when it comes to so-called healings, 'things are not always what they seem'. I have absolutely no doubt that God can and does heal today - sometimes instantly...However, I am just as convinced that there are times when it is God's will that His people suffer thorns in the flesh for their sanctification and for His glory. Great men and women of God such as Martin Luther, Charles Spurgeon, George Whitefield and Amy Carmichael all suffered health problems, yet continued to serve God powerfully in spite of these. In fact, in His great wisdom, God often uses health problems to enhance our service for Him as we lean more heavily on His grace.

What concerns me most about the modern 'healing doctrine' is that it is implied that complete physical healing is freely available at any time to any Christian who simply exercises faith. ie. if they would just make their way to the front of the church during a healing service then complete physical restoration is theirs for the taking. Only the Lord knows how many sincere Christians have been disillusioned and devastated when the promised healing did not occur. Some have then had salt rubbed into the wound by being told they 'must not have had enough faith' - one of the cruelest things for one Christian to do to another. Yes, God still heals, Praise His Name. But when He does so their are no doubts about it and doctors are left amazed. When God does something He does it properly, unlike some self-proclaimed faith healers who leave behind a trail of unhealed, disappointed people. We need to be careful that we don't 'guarantee' healing to people. God bless you in your ministry of teaching and alerting the saints. (Ps. D.H., Sydney)

Dear Brother Terry,...I pray regularly for you and I know how Satan attacks those in Gods front line who hold the truth of God's Word as you do. Keep humble brother and keep close to your master. Don't allow the unkind criticisms and accusations to affect your ministry or yourself.

...Your paper is well worth the effort and I love reading it, although I weep inwardly as I see the apostasy around today...So many Christians are ignorant of it and don't want to know about it and they love their sport and worldly pursuits, still laying up treasures on earth.

This world is not our home, we are just passing through to a home prepared for us...Regards to you and your wife. (Pastor R.W. Sth.Aust.)

### Terry's Itinerary

April 2nd 6.30pm Hervey Bay Church of Christ, (07)41284201  
Nth. Qld. Itinerary

April 9th. 10am & 6pm Mareeba New Testament Baptist, 40927351  
April 15, 16th Grace Baptist Church, Malanda Ph. (07)40966657  
Seminar on 'Foundations For Evangelism/Discipleship' (Sat. 10am-2pm) (Sun. 9.45am & 6.45pm)

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