

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

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The members of the advisory panel may not necessarily agree with all the views expressed in this newsletter.

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 Comment

Speaking the truth in love is a part of maturity in spiritual things, (Eph.4:15). Speaking and listening to the truth are increasingly difficult for many today. This is all the more reason to speak and listen to such with *wisdom* and *love*.

Speaking the truth in love should involve a sincere concern not just for truth itself but for the person or the organisation we speak that truth to.

Speaking the truth in love must have a Godly motivation. We must not do so to embarrass the person/organisation or to '*rejoice in iniquity*', (1Cor.13:6).

When speaking the truth in love we must not act 'unseemly', seek our own ends or be easily provoked, (1Cor.13:5).

Truth tellers are not listened to for two reasons: firstly, because the hearers do not want to hear truth and prefer darkness or loyalty to a system; or secondly, because the truth teller has not told the truth in love and wisdom...or at the right time. If telling the truth is done without Godly motivation, in God's timing or in His love, then it is '*as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal*', (1Cor.13:1).

Lovers of truth who tell the truth in love must also be good *listeners of truth*. We must be *lovers of truth* above any loyalty to a cause. Today there are too many loyal leaders and workers in organisations, who are heading rapidly into false teaching or doctrinal weakness. We should not see truth telling as disloyal behaviour. Loyalty may bind people together when truth would set them free!

Listening to truth requires *humility* to appropriate any correction from that truth. Recently I have been not surprisingly disappointed in the responses of major Christian bookstores when shown irrefutable evidence of materials stocked by them and written by false prophets that profane the atonement, (see P.2). In another case a local Ministers Fraternal continues to allow hundreds of people to be deceived by '*cunningly devised fables*'! (see P.7). We have also been accused of speaking against a '*Christian*' denomination - the Seventh Day Adventist religion, (see P.3). Sadly, in not one of the above cases has any 'error' been shown to us in our materials. The truth tellers in some of these instances have been wrongly described as '*unloving, judgmental, extreme*', etc. However, this is a typical response from people who attack the messenger instead of addressing *the message*. The question is - is it *truth*! If it is truth then we must address the truth and arguably sort the messenger out later! If error is exposed we should have '*no greater joy*' than to '*walk in truth*', (3Jn.1:4). We are not talking of wasted 'witchhunts' here but *false prophets* and major false teaching that attacks the *deity* and the *atonement* of *Jesus Christ*! This is no small matter and the very stuff of '*contending earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints*', (Jude 3).

This edition of this newsletter issues a stronger than normal call to Christians to be lovers of truth no matter what the cost; to put pen to paper where needed; to speak truth where necessary; and to challenge those people/organisations who consistently deceive Gods people.

In speaking the truth and listening to the truth we must be soaked in the Word of God and led by the Holy Spirit. These are the fountains for love and wisdom in all humility. **Terry Arnold**

Victorian Itinerary

We have prepared a *revised* Victorian itinerary for November. For enquiries or final details please phone the contact numbers on Page 8 or this ministry.

Urgent Letter To This Ministry & Our Readers

Dear TA Ministries/Diakrisis,

The Prince of Preachers, Charles H. Spurgeon, wrote in his edition of 'The Sword and the Trowel' for July 1888, '...around us there are influences at work which are directly antagonistic to Christianity, and...anyone may see them who chooses to do so. The babyish game of shutting your eyes, and then crying, 'I cannot see you,' has been played at long enough: it is time that the most prejudiced should acknowledge that which everybody sees except themselves.'

Over the years I have observed an alarming trend taking place among the various suppliers of spiritual material to the Christian public. This trend, by my observation, began as a small trickle which increased in volume with the passing of time until we arrived at the seriously depraved situation that prevails in our present day, which only the deceived and wilfully blind could dare to deny exists.

This appalling trend that I have noticed pertains to the types of materials that are being offered to professing Christians, of varying beliefs, by Christian bookshops.

After hearing some recent negative comments from discernment ministries about the highly acclaimed and popular 'Transformations' video produced by George Otis Jr. of the Sentinel Group, I decided to purchase a copy for research purposes. I was able to obtain the video from the local 'Christian Literature Crusade' (Christian Bookworld) bookshop.

Upon viewing the 'Transformations' video and discovering its un-biblical nature, I became very concerned as I realised that Christian bookshops, knowingly or unknowingly, have taken upon themselves the iniquitous role of promoting and propagating false teaching throughout the Christian community, and on a large scale. Truly, 'there are influences at work which are directly antagonistic to Christianity.'

As I conducted my own research into the false miraculous claims put forth in the Transformations video*, I was most disturbed to discover that the producer was none other than George Otis Jr. Shockingly, and you can only hope that it is unknown to the Christian bookshop staff, Mr Otis' theological understanding of the Atonement and sin (among other critical things) is outright heresy. He does not even believe that the shed Blood of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, has any place in our redemption. (Articles exposing the heretical beliefs of George Otis Jr. regarding the Atonement are available on my website at:

<http://members.ozemail.com.au/~rseaborn/apostles.html>

I further discovered that the churches and church leaders featured in the Transformations video were either promoters of aberrant Word of Faith doctrines or closely connected with the numerous false revivals that have swept throughout Christendom since Rodney Howard-Browne's lamentable and destructive arrival on the church scene. One of the featured churches has a large sign over the entrance proclaiming the fact that it is a 'Word of Faith' church. Elsewhere in the video, a man displays a placard proclaiming that he is 'intoxicated on the blood of Jesus'. Obviously, the 'Holy Ghost Bartender' (Rodney Howard-Browne) is well received at this church.

On Wednesday, 9th May, 2001, after much prayer and contemplation about my discoveries, and because of their direct involvement in promoting the 'Transformations' video, as well as numerous other questionable products, I forwarded an E-mail letter to the various branches of a number of well known Christian bookshops throughout Australia, namely Koorong, Word Bookshops and, locally in my home town, Christian Literature Crusade, or, Christian Bookworld, as it is also known.

The reactions that I received to my e-mail letter were mixed. For organisations that have taken upon themselves the very responsible ministry as teachers to the Body of Christ, and who profess to be faithfully representing Christ and His Gospel and promoting Truth, as found in the Scriptures, I was disappointed.

It soon becomes apparent when speaking with these Christian bookshop managers, that they do not share the same concern as God does about His Truth being trampled in the streets beneath the feet of un-godly men and women, nor about the Gospel being adulterated by men and women of lying tongues. Even when furnishing proof of my claims, there is no sense of alarm coming from them. In fact, as Isaiah 59:14-15 indicates, when truth has fallen in the street like some discarded piece of rubbish you will not make yourself popular, even among professing Christian bookshop staff, when, in concern for their spiritual safety and that of their customers, their waywardness is brought to their attention.

As a consequence of the lack of interest and accountability demonstrated by the various bookshop managers throughout Australia, I have written an article about my concerns and findings which I intend to make available on my website. The address for the article is:

<http://members.ozemail.com.au/~rseaborn/bookshops.html>

The article will include links to the e-mail discussions which took place between myself and a number of the bookshop managers. Their lack of concern is clearly demonstrated.

For those of your readers who do not have Internet or E-mail access and who are interested in the article and the e-mail discussions, printed copies can be made available for the cost of printing plus postage (approx. 70 pages - \$10.00); write to: H. Seaborn PO Box 292W, Westcourt, Qld., 4870, or phone (07) 40514213.

God bless you with courage and wisdom as you continue to serve Him, Yours in Christ - Hughie Seaborn.

*Besides the website mentioned, see *Diakrisis*, March/April, 2001

Editors Comment: We have read the article cited above and made one or two minor suggestions to the author.

We acknowledge there are some bookstores distributing sound materials. We have no doubt that there are well meaning Christians working within the organisations mentioned. We do not attack these people.

However, the issue of heretical materials being openly advertised, sold and distributed, is one we can no longer remain silent on. This is a serious issue that has increasingly been brought to our attention over a number of years by many readers. We are here speaking of materials that spread outright heresy from false prophets and to do with the atonement of Jesus Christ.

I have personally been dismayed at one of the Websites of these bookstores which contains blatant false prophets, and dangerous extremes. One of the managers surprisingly agreed with me about this website. Yet, the information on the Website has existed for some time and is still present at the time of this printing.

The article by Mr. Seaborn contains truth written in love which has not been taken at all seriously by the bookstores mentioned despite repeated contacts. The replies do not show a love of truth. We encourage readers to view this article and perhaps write to such bookstores that they might see the consequences of distributing dangerous error to the Christian and non Christian public.

Seventh Day Adventism (SDA) - What They Teach

To those who would refute or have questioned our articles on SDA in the July/Aug 2001 *Diakrisis*, and for the benefit of all readers, we enclose the following teachings from the SDA Worldwide Website, (**bold** type ours). Let the reader discern the serious *leaven* hid in truth!:

The Gift of Prophecy: *One of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is prophecy. This gift is an identifying mark of the remnant church and was manifested in the ministry of Ellen G. White. As the Lord's messenger, her writings are a continuing and authoritative source of truth which provide for the church comfort, guidance, instruction, and correction. They also make clear that the Bible is the standard by which all teaching and experience must be tested. (Joel 2:28, 29; Acts 2:14-21; Heb.1:1-3; Rev.12:17; 19:10.)*

The Sabbath: *The beneficent Creator, after the six days of Creation, rested on the seventh day and instituted the Sabbath for all people as a memorial of Creation. The fourth commandment of God's unchangeable law requires the observance of this seventh-day Sabbath as the day of rest, worship, and ministry in harmony with the teaching and practice of Jesus, the Lord of the Sabbath. The Sabbath is a day of delightful communion with God and one another. It is a symbol of our redemption in Christ, a sign of our sanctification, a token of our allegiance, and a foretaste of our eternal future in God's kingdom. The Sabbath is God's perpetual sign of His eternal covenant between Him and His people. Joyful observance of this holy time from evening to evening, sunset to sunset, is a celebration of God's creative and redemptive acts. (Gen.2:1-3; Ex.20:8-11; Lk.4:16; Isa.56:5,6; 58:13,14; Matt.12:1-12; Ex.31:13-17; Ezek.20:12, 20; Deut.5:12-15; Heb.4:1-11; Lev.23:32; Mk.1:32.)*

Christian Behaviour: *We are called to be a godly people who think, feel, and act in harmony with the principles of heaven. For the Spirit to recreate in us the character of our Lord we involve ourselves only in those things which will produce Christlike purity, health, and joy in our lives. This means that our amusement and entertainment should meet the highest standards of Christian taste and beauty. While recognizing cultural differences, our dress is to be simple, modest, and neat, befitting those whose true beauty does not consist of outward adornment but in the imperishable ornament of a gentle and quiet spirit. It also means that because our bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit, we are to care for them intelligently. Along with adequate exercise and rest, we are to adopt the most healthful diet possible and abstain from the unclean foods identified in the Scriptures. Since alcoholic beverages, tobacco, and the irresponsible use of drugs and narcotics are harmful to our bodies, we are to abstain from them as well. Instead, we are to engage in whatever brings our thoughts and bodies into the discipline of Christ, who desires our wholesomeness, joy, and goodness. (Rom.12:1,2; 1Jn.2:6; Eph.5:1-21; Phil.4:8; 2Cor.10:5; 6:14-7:1; 1Pet.3:1-4; 1Cor.6:19, 20; 10:31; Lev.11:1-47; 3Jn.2.)*

Christ's Ministry in the Heavenly Sanctuary: *There is a sanctuary in heaven, the true tabernacle which the Lord set up and not man. In it Christ ministers on our behalf, making available to believers the benefits of His atoning sacrifice offered once for all on the cross. He was inaugurated as our great High Priest and began His intercessory ministry at the time of His ascension. In 1844, at the end of the prophetic period of 2300 days, He entered the second and last phase of*

His atoning ministry. It is a work of investigative judgment which is part of the ultimate disposition of all sin, typified by the cleansing of the ancient Hebrew sanctuary on the Day of Atonement. In that typical service the sanctuary was cleansed with the blood of animal sacrifices, but the heavenly things are purified with the perfect sacrifice of the blood of Jesus. The investigative judgment reveals to heavenly intelligences who among the dead are asleep in Christ and therefore, in Him, are deemed worthy to have part in the first resurrection. It also makes manifest who among the living are abiding in Christ, keeping the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, and in Him, therefore, are ready for translation into His everlasting kingdom. This judgment vindicates the justice of God in saving those who believe in Jesus. It declares that those who have remained loyal to God shall receive the kingdom. The completion of this ministry of Christ will mark the close of human probation before the Second Advent. (Heb.8:1-5; 4:14-16; 9:11-28; 10:19-22; 1:3; 2:16, 17; Dan.7:9-27; 8:13, 14; 9:24-27; Num.14:34; Ezek.4:6; Lev.16; Rev.14:6,7; 20:12; 14:12; 22:12.)

The Millennium and the End of Sin: *The millennium is the thousand-year reign of Christ with His saints in heaven between the first and second resurrections. During this time the wicked dead will be judged; the earth will be utterly desolate, without living human inhabitants, but occupied by Satan and his angels. At its close Christ with His saints and the Holy City will descend from heaven to earth. The unrighteous dead will then be resurrected, and with Satan and his angels will surround the city; but fire from God will consume them and cleanse the earth. The universe will thus be freed of sin and sinners forever. (Rev.20; 1Cor.6:2, 3; Jer.4:23-26; Rev.21:1-5; Mal.4:1; Ezek.28:18,19.)*

Do you still believe that Ellen White was a prophetess?: *Yes, though she never claimed that title. She preferred to describe herself as God's messenger, or servant, but in today's language we would say that she had the spiritual gift of prophecy. Ellen White used this gift from 1844, when she was just 17, to 1915, the year of her death. We believe that the main purpose of her spiritual gift was to build up the Seventh-day Adventist Church in its early stages. However some of her books, such as *Desire of Ages*, were written for the general public, and her work on healthy living (most of which seems commonplace today) was startling in its time.*

Editors comments: Evangelicals and SDA's are increasingly seeking unity. Recently the World Evangelical Fellowship (WEF) and the SDA church planned meetings and 'scholarly papers' to bring unity. The original Evangelical stand against the SDA movement is being rapidly eroded. However, there are still groups such as the Christian Research Network (CRN) who remain firm on the classic stand against the SDA movement as a cult*.

For 14 years I have been working with the cults and often face to face. This may shock some - apart from the likes of the Jim Jones' and David Koresh's death groups, the most dangerous are the SDA teachings - because they mix law with grace which is a deadly cocktail and most binding.

This group also has a brilliant PR front to the public but the teachings remain heretical, and some blasphemous to the atonement and the finished work of the cross.

Terry Arnold & Mike Claydon

*** Apostasy Alert, 14/8/2001**

The Koran Teaches...

'...the Christians say the Messiah is the son of Allah. Such are their assertions, by which they imitate the infidels of old. Allah confound them! How perverse they are! They worship...the Messiah the son of Mary, as gods besides Allah; though they were ordered to serve one God only. There is no god but Him. Exalted be He above those whom they deify beside Him!...It is He who has sent forth His apostle with guidance and the true faith to make it triumphant over all religions, however much the idolaters may dislike it.' (Sura 9: 30-3).

The mindset of the recent Jihad terrorist 'martyrs' comes from a unique doctrine of Islam. Although suicide is forbidden, the only sure way in Islam of achieving Paradise is to sacrifice one's life in Jihad. This killing of 'infidels' carries the highest reward. 'Paradise' brings to the Jihad martyr a promised palace of pearls in which are 70 mansions. Inside each mansion are 70 houses and in each house a bed on which are 70 sheets and on each sheet a beautiful virgin. He is assured that he will have the appetite and strength of 100 men for food and sex.

There are more than 100 verses in the Koran that could be used for violence to spread Islam. In the Koran, Allah commands Muslims, 'Take not the Jews and Christians as friends....Slay the idolaters [non-Muslims] wherever ye find them...Fight against such...as believe not in Allah...' (Surah 5:51; 9:5,29,41, etc.)

All Islamic scholars agree that it is the religious duty of every Muslim to use violence whenever necessary to spread Islam until it has taken over the world.

Islam claims that Ishmael, not Isaac, was the son of promise and that the Holy Land belongs to them. This arguably unites Arabs in the determination to destroy the Jews.

Mormon Sect Major Landholder in Britain

The Mormon sect has become the biggest foreign landowner in Britain, and uses the income from its holdings of prime farmland to spread its teaching in the Third World, the Independent reported. The latest purchase is the 2,000-acre Stubton Estate near Grantham, Lincolnshire, which it bought last month for around \$7 million. The deal has brought the amount of agricultural land the Mormons own to 15,000 acres - which puts the sect alongside the Crown Estate and the Duchy of Lancaster as a major landholder. Estate agents estimate the sect has spent at least \$42 million on prime British farmland in the past six years. Its fast-growing agricultural investment mirrors the growth of the sect, officially known as the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Although mainly based in the United States, it now has 180,000 members in Britain, based in 40 regional centres, or stakes...

Apostasy Alert, 18/7/2001

Pope Entrusts 'Whole World' To Mary

'On June 3, Pope John Paul II entrusted 'the whole Church' to the intercession of Mary and 'placed in her hands the expectations of peace and justice of the world.' He called her the 'Queen of Heaven.' The pope commended the Mariolatry of the late Pope John XXIII, observing that Mary took that pope 'by the hand and accompanied him' on his earthly journey. Pope John Paul II concluded... '...let us deepen our relation with the Mother of Christ and Tabernacle of the Holy Spirit...let us invoke her with confidence.' This is the same Pope who has been praised by Evangelical leaders such as Billy Graham, Jack Van Impe, Bill Bright, and Chuck Colson'. (David W. Cloud, Fundamental Baptist Information Service)

Bishop Peter Jensen

In the past we have admired many of the Sydney Anglicans for their stand on Scripture. However, in an interview this year with the secular media Bishop Peter Jensen spoke of his views of Roman Catholicism (RC):

(Radio National, 'The Religious Report', Wed/13/6/01)

Peter Jensen (responding to a question about RC): '*...Roman Catholicism maintains its place as a church because it adheres strongly to the nature of God, the threefold nature of God, the trinitarian nature of God, and to the two natures of the Lord Jesus Christ, both God and man. It also adheres to a very strong view of Scripture, a view which I disagree with at points, but it believes, as I understand it, in the inspiration and infallibility of Scripture indeed...these great fundamental issues, the Roman Catholic church has retained its right to be called a church, and to be part of the Christian family, as I hope the Anglican have as well. That means that we can talk to Roman Catholics as we couldn't talk to, say [the sect] Christian Scientists...*'

Stephen Crittenden: '*Ah ha. But make the distinction: what is it about Christian Science that is different?*'

Peter Jensen: '*Well its Christology and it's the doctrine of God...they [Christian Science] fall outside the mainstream...However, the distinction between Roman Catholicism and Protestant Anglicanism is still a very sharp one...we had martyrs on both sides to prove it...I admire the Roman Catholic very much indeed and in other ways I would be a Catholic if I were not convinced that the Gospel itself is at risk in the Roman Catholic church because...the treatment of saints, the blessed virgin Mary, the Mass...get in the way of the Gospel. That's my view...I would rather speak the truth in love and see what we can say to each other, and I believe that's how the two churches have been negotiating.'*

Editors comments: * **The 'Scripture' of the Roman Catholic religion is also 'oral tradition' which is added to written Scripture.**

* **The number of martyrs on the RC side is infinitesimal (a handful) in comparison to the Protestant count. Thousands of Protestants were openly burned by the RC system.**

* **The 'gospel' in RC is not at 'risk' but it is 'another gospel'. It curses the doctrine of justification by faith alone through the credited (imputed) righteousness!**

* **Since when do we 'negotiate' with such a system that was considered a false religion and the system of the antichrist for hundreds of years by the early Anglicans and other reformers?**

Billy Graham

'Last year and the year before, we listened to Billy Graham's program over shortwave. We were surprised...We took notes of what he said: 9/5/99, that he could not understand the Bible; 19/9...26/9, that for many years he had studied the Bible but most of it he does not understand; 30/10, that the Lord Jesus Christ suffered in Hell; 2/1, that God had not changed in a million years, promoting evolution; 23/1, that he could not understand how Satan changed into a snake; 6/2, he did not know what Hell was like; 13/2, he did not know when the flood of Noah was. Graham also said that Augustine, the worshipper of relics, was the greatest after the Apostle Paul. In June he said when He was on earth, the Lord Jesus was sexually enticed by Mary Magdalene...Graham had a conference in Amsterdam with about 15,000 attendees...Graham had on his platform Cardinal Simonis from the Roman Catholic Church, and called everyone his 'brothers and sisters...' (Letter to 'Berean Call', USA)

'Apostasia' (2Thess.2:3) - Apostasy or 'Rapture'?

'Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away [apostasia] first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition.'

The 'apostasia' is taken by the majority view to be a religious apostasy in general. However, in recent years I have noticed one or two able teachers promoting the idea that the 'apostasia' in 2Thessalonians 2:3 is not the falling away from the faith or 'apostasy' of the church, but rather a 'rapture' or taking out of the church by Christ.

This view is clearly traced to a series of articles by E. Schuyler English, entitled 'Re-thinking the Rapture' which first appeared in 'Our Hope' magazine from Oct./1949 to March 1950. Before this time there were only isolated references to this view as in 1859 from a J.S. Mabie during an address to an annual conference on the Lords coming, Los Angelos, Nov./1895 - which was later published. John R. Rice also suggested this view in 1945: 'I believe that this refers to the Rapture of the saints, when the invisible ties of Gravity will be broken and we will suddenly fall away into the air to meet Jesus.' (*The Coming Kingdom of Christ*, P.152).

However it was English who popularised the view which was then followed by Wuest, Walvoord, Lewis, Tan, Ellisen, Wood, Davey and House. Walvoord later recanted and abandoned it. In recent years, this view has been brought forth again. This article examines the Scriptural and historical context of such a view:

Introduction: *'Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand'*, (vs.1,2)

Paul here exhorts the Christians to remain firm and not lose sight of the coming of the Lord. It may be that the Thessalonians had lost their desire to look for His coming. The phrase *'by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter'* could suggest that false teaching had entered in. The phrase *'is at hand'* ('enistemi') is in the perfect tense/indicative mood which shows an event occurring in the past with results in the present and referring to a set time for the action. It has been suggested by some that the Thessalonians were wrongly being taught that the day of Christ had already occurred or was present in some way.

The *'day of Christ'* is considered to be synonymous with the *'day of the Lord'*. This latter phrase is either taken to be the time when God again deals with Israel, or the Millennium age. In the NT, the *Day of the Lord* is related closely to the time of the second coming of Christ, as is *the Day of our Lord Jesus Christ*, (1Cor.1:8; 5:5; Phil.1:6,10; 2:16). Both expressions refer to time periods of judgment by Christ. The *Day of the Lord* at least includes the time of the Great Tribulation, (Cp. Rev.Chs.6-20). Zechariah 14:1-4 shows the events of the Second Advent are included in the program of the *Day of the Lord*. Thus, the *Day of the Lord* and the *Day of Christ* are synonymous.

The phrase in verse 3 *'Let no man deceive you by any means'* sums up the first two verses. Paul then states two things which must occur before the coming of the Lord - the falling away - 'apostasia' and the *revealing of the man of sin*. The adverb *'first'* ('proton') modifies both the two conditions - in other words, the day of the Lord is not a reality until first both events have occurred.

Scripture: The only other place the Greek word 'apostasia' is used is in Acts 21:21 *'And they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to*

forsake [apostasia] Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs'. Here the word obviously means a falling away from a religious system! An important method of interpretation is *Scripture interprets Scripture*. The Acts 21:21 is the key to any interpretation of 2Thessalonians 2:3. Acts 21:21 is undoubtedly *religious apostasy*. Added to this, in the Old Testament the references are also negative and in the sense of a non spatial *falling away* and always a *religious defection*, (eg. 2Chr.29:19: *'casting away'*; Jer.29:32 *'rebellion'*).

Semantics: Some teachers have unfortunately avoided this safe hermeneutic procedure and wrongly concentrated on the *root word* of which 'apostasia' comes from - 'aphistemi' which is 'apo' - 'from' and 'histemi' - 'to stand; to place'. 'Aphistemi' is translated *'to put away, remove, forsake, desert'*. However, even here of the 15 New Testament references most are arguably used in a negative sense for a religious falling away, (1Tim.4:1 *'some shall depart ('aphistemi') from the faith'*; see also 1Tim.6:5; Heb.3:12; Lk.8:13; 13:27...).

However, the point to be made here is that to build a case for a 'rapture' on this root verb 'aphistemi' rather than the actual Greek noun used ('apostasis'), is fraught with dangers and is not good hermeneutics. Though the root verb may be a help in establishing a meaning, it is only a guide. *The 'apostasia' noun meaning must first be established on its own*. Greek derivatives do not necessarily always carry the same meaning of the root words.

Historical: Apart from the above Scriptural proof, other Koine Greek literature for 'apostasia' also shows a religious falling away. Outside of Koine Greek literature a spatial departure may be a secondary meaning but it is generally not the *primary meaning*.

Some early Bibles such as the *Coverdale* and the *Geneva* rendered the word 'apostasia' as *departure*. This caused some to think of this as a *spatial* departing. However, when these versions were produced Lexical studies in Koine Greek were almost non existent. It must be stated here that a 'spatial departing' was never understood by the majority of early translators. As early as Jerome - 'apostasia' was translated as *'dissension'* in Acts 21:21 which unquestionably refers to religious apostasy. The first English Bible by Wycliffe also rendered 'apostasi' as *'discencioun'* ('dissension').

Another argument used by some is the use of Classical Greek instead of Koine Greek in order to establish the meaning of 'apostasia' to be a 'rapture'. Koine New Testament Greek replaced Classical Greek in about 300 BC and lasted until 300AD. Some say that 'apostasia' is a later construction of the Classical Greek which arguably was used as spatial departure. The flaw in the above argument is simple - the Scriptures were written in *Koine Greek* not Classical Greek. The Koine Greek Scriptures are innerant and God breathed! Added to this, the first literal reference to a spatial departure in Greek is not found until 5th century AD! - in an apocryphal writing titled *'The assumption of the Virgin'* where the virgin Mary and the apostles are taken by a cloud from Bethlehem to Jerusalem. Such fanciful apocryphal writings were rejected by the church fathers and contain chronological, geographical and historical errors and wild stories of mythical characters.

Scripture interprets Scripture (2Thess.2:3Cp.Acts 21:21). *No evidence* exists that the early church fathers understood 'apostasia' to be a 'rapture'. Nor do any of the major Lexicons and dictionaries, (Bauer, Thayer, etc) teach such. 'Apostasia' as a 'rapture' should not be considered as part of *'the faith once delivered to the saints'*, (Jude 3). **Terry Arnold**

Unconvinced

'Hey, you wouldn't believe what happened in our church last night! It was awesome! Forty-five people were saved! We had a guest speaker and when he gave the invitation half the church went forward! Praise the Lord!...'

Do you find yourself excited by that kind of news? At the risk of sounding negative, I remain reserved, even sceptical, when hearing such news these days. Here's why:

Firstly, I have seen people go forward in response to appeals, but in the sermon the Gospel was not preached! A message was proclaimed, people responded to an appeal, but the Gospel was nowhere clearly presented - so dare we not question the 'decisions' people made. In many sermons there is little or no mention of Christ's death on the cross on behalf of the guilty sinner; neither is there reference to the need to repent of ones sin. Instead, people are asked to 'give their lives to Jesus' or 'accept Christ' with no explanation of the substitutionary death of Christ on the cross (which is the core of the gospel, (1Cor.15:1-4).

When people go forward on such appeals (often after repeated invitations accompanied by emotionally-stirring music), do they really *understand* what they are doing? Are they really saved?

Secondly, personal experience. I once gave a Gospel message in a home in Sri Lanka. There were a number of young people there from a Hindu background. It is not my practice to invite people to raise their hand or come to the front after a Gospel message. However, after the message my interpreter gave an invitation and invited people forward to receive Christ. A number of young people and children came forward. He then led them through the 'sinner's prayer'. An onlooker might have rejoiced at these souls being 'saved'. However, something disturbed me. Some of the teenage girls were laughing as they sat at the front, after coming forward to 'accept Christ'. Laughing does not normally occur when there is deep conviction of sin, but as shown in the great revivals of old, rather a soberness and contrition. There was no sign of contrition in these girls and I remain unconvinced that they were truly saved that day. It's so easy for people to go forward to an appeal, especially when their friends do so.

Thirdly, disturbing Statistics. (Most of the following statistics are from the US. However, they highlight what is a much wider problem in western evangelism):

A major denomination in the U.S. revealed that in 1990 *'it obtained an incredible 294,784 decisions for Christ'. 'Yet, in 1991, it could only find 14,337 in fellowship'*; (4.86% of those who made a 'decision'). (1)

In 1991 in Cleveland, Ohio, 400 decisions were made in an Inner City Outreach. However, not one person could later be found who had continued in the faith. (2)

The Director of Home Missions for the A.O.G. in US said: *'A soul at the altar does not generate much excitement in some circles because we realise approximately 95 out of every 100 will not become integrated into the church. In fact, most of them will not return for a 2nd visit.'* (3)

A pastor from Colorado sent a team to Russia in 1991 and secured 2,500 'decisions'. The next year only 30 people were

found who were persevering in their faith. (4)

A pastor who travelled to India every year since 1980 said he saw 80,000 'decision cards' stacked in a hut in the city of Rajamundry. These were the 'results' of past evangelistic crusades. Yet he maintained that one would be fortunate to find even 80 Christians in the entire city; that is one tenth of one percent. (5)

'In August 1996, a leading U.S. denomination published that during 1995 they secured 384,057 decisions, but retained only 22,983 in fellowship. They couldn't account for 361,074 supposed conversions. That's a 94% fall away rate.' (6)

These statistics must highlight a *serious problem with modern evangelism methods*. Either people are being saved and are not going on for the Lord, or (more likely) many of the people who respond to 'altar calls' are simply not being saved. The excitement generated over all these 'conversions' surely has a very shaky foundation.

What about Australia?

In his book *'Christianity Explained'*, Michael Bennett relates the following incident: *'During an evangelistic crusade a colleague was able to speak to many of those who had made 'salvation decisions'. He asked them all the well-known questions, including: 'Suppose you were to die tonight, and God said to you, 'Why should I let you into my heaven?' What would you say?' In not one case was the inquirer able to give a reasonable Biblical answer to this question. In fact, any concept of trusting in the completed work of Christ as the only basis for acceptance with God was totally absent from their understanding.'*

I am persuaded that such a scenario has been repeated time and time again in church services and crusades throughout Australia. So what's the solution?

I believe the solution is to return to preaching the true Gospel - the whole Gospel! We need to make it clear to people that *'all have sinned and come short of the glory of God'*, and that the only hope for mankind is faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ. *The cross must be preached*. Shallower messages may gain greater 'apparent' results, but the results are just that - *apparent*. These apparent results do not represent true conversions.

When the true gospel is preached, however, a genuine harvest is likely to be reaped. People can come to understand where they stand before God and that their only hope as vile sinners is faith in Christ and His finished work.

May we, like Paul, *'preach Christ crucified'* - the true Gospel. And may we resist the temptation to 'coax' people into making 'decisions' before they have *understood* the Gospel.

David Hunt (Teaching Elder, Sydney)

(1) - (5) These statistics and quotations are from an article, *'Fraud & Deceit in the presentation of the gospel'* by Bernie Koerselman.

(6) From the book, *'Bride of Heaven, Pride of Hell'*, by Ray Comfort, P.60-63, available from TA Ministries.

Pragmatism vs Biblical

'It is foolish to think that one can be both pragmatic and Biblical. The pragmatist wants to know what works now. The Biblical thinker cares only about what the Bible mandates. The two philosophies oppose each other at the most basic level.' (*'Ashamed of the Gospel'* by John MacArthur, P.80)

Converts - Apparent or Real?

Founder of the 'anxious bench' (altar call) and invitational system, Charles Finney, at the end of his life stated: *'It seems to have been my lot in life to have produced many temporary converts.'* (See *Diakrisis* article on Charles Finney, March/97)

Your Comments and Questions

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

(The following is a recent letter this ministry wrote to the Hervey Bay, Qld. Ministers Fraternal...and their reply)

'Dear sirs, I read in the Qld. Baptist Union Newspaper (May/2001) about the Hervey Bay Baptist church and 'Transformations' video. The article speaks of the involvement of the Ministers Fraternal.

We have investigated at length this video and its claims. I enclose the following article on the 'Transformations' video [Diakrisis, March/April 2001]. The claims on the video are in fact outright exaggerations and some lies. The evidence for this is mounting on several internet sites both Christian and secular. We have much information to back up the article enclosed. This is a masterful deception to push a false ecumenical unity and false teaching to do with the Charismatic and new Spiritual warfare movements.

I beg you to at least read the article on 'Transformations' and if I am in error I ask you to do the Scriptural and loving thing and correct me face to face. On the other hand, if my article contains truth, then hundreds of Christians are being openly deceived. Please do not level the usual 'heresy hunter' and 'witchhunt' charges against us, but rather consider and investigate the facts. I approach you as an elder speaking to elders.

As for the three ecumenical endeavours by Hervey Bay Baptist - I ask the question: since when do we have unity with a system such as Roman Catholicism that curses justification by faith alone through the imputed righteousness of Christ, as well as many of the other doctrines our forefathers were martyred for? I am a former Roman Catholic school teacher and RE teacher. I was gloriously saved out of the system and saw clearly it was 'another gospel' and 'another Jesus'. Since when do we have unity and fellowship with such a religion that has added so much doctrine that is unscriptural, and added teaching to the Word we are supposed to hold dearly to?

I will meet with any of you anytime that you may review further the evidence we have compiled of such things written. Please consider. Yours in His truth, Terry Arnold

Reply: 'Dear Terry, Your letter was tabled at the Ministers Fraternal meeting today. We agree that we should pray for one another. In His fellowship, Keith Stevenson, Chairman.

Editors Comments: This fraternal includes the local Roman Catholic priest, Baptists, Brethren, etc...Since when do we 'pray for one another' in our errors?

Gold Coast Prophets

'Dear Terry. I am writing to thank you for your very timely warning on the Gold Coast Prophets (GCP). I am making you aware that at a large Baptist Church in northern NSW over 40 people have had words spoken over them that they are apostles. Many of these came from the GCP. We have had them at a local Baptist Church and I bought these warnings to the leadership. I have not been listened to and they are now having them back again. They spoke of the apostles coming through our area. I have been told that they have been involved with Ben Gray who is organizing Peter Wagners conference in Brisbane. I have no alternative but to leave the Church. Your article is very timely as I am posting it to some people in the Church as a warning. The prophecies were pretty accurate, but I am noticing people are running after the prophets and not seeking the Lord for guidance. I have been guilty of this in the past, but have repented before a Holy God and my Lord and Saviour Jesus. E.M., Nth. NSW

Dear Terry,...about Ellen G. White. If you can show me she has made false prophecies I'd be happy to read them..but I will not swallow any false information. I don't know why she is hated so much but its strange that all who knew her called her 'the little woman who loved Jesus'. Apparently she lived the life and that is one of the main considerations...(Name withheld at editors discretion, Mareeba, Nth. Qld.)

Editors reply: We do not hate Ellen G. White. Most of the exposures of her false prophecies we use show no hate towards her personally...It takes only one false prophecy to make a false prophet.

Please do not lay the charge to me that the following is 'false information'. They can be easily verified and read. Here are just some of the false prophecies and revelations, remembering that she wrote: 'I do not write one article expressing my own ideas. They are what God has opened to me in vision', (Testimonies, No.31, P.63). After the failed return of Jesus in 1844 Ellen White indicated that the return was still close. The following prophecies are now over 140 years old! Can you honestly say that not one of the following is a false prophecy?

- '*I saw that we are now in the shaking time.*' (Testimonies, P.429) [She taught the 'shaking time' was just prior to the coming of Jesus]

- '*Just as soon as God's people are sealed and prepared for the shaking, it will come. Indeed it has already begun*', (SDA Bible Commentary, Vol.4P.1161).

- '*Now the time is almost finished, and what we have been years learning, they will have to learn in a few months*', (Early Writings, P.57)

- '*I was shown (in vision) the company present at the conference. Said the angel, '...Some, food for worms; some, subjects of the seven last plagues; some will be alive...at the coming of Jesus*', (Spiritual Gifts, Vol.4, P.18, 1864).

[All these people died 120 years ago!]

- '*Not one ray of light comes to sinners since 1844, but all are left to the devil*', (Early Writings, P.46,47). [Doctrine of 'Investigative Judgement']

- '*The seal of God is His Holy Sabbath*', (Thoughts on Revelations, P.452). [Defies Scripture that the seal of God is the Holy Spirit in salvation, as well as 1,700 years of 'the faith once delivered to the saints']

- '*Not a soul living on earth when Jesus comes will be saved unless he is thus sealed by keeping that day [Saturday Sabbath]*', (Early Writings, P.11). [Defies Justification by faith alone, the sealing of the Holy Spirit, etc]

- '*...here we have the mark of the beast. The very act of changing the Sabbath to Sunday on the part of the Catholic church*', (Mark of the Beast, P.23). [Defies Scripture as well as secular and Christian history in the first centuries]

- '*Meat eaters will not be translated to Heaven*', (Testimonies No.1: 187). [Reader see Col.2:16; 1Tim.4:4]

- '*Certain races of men are the result of amalgamation between man and beast*', (Spiritual gifts, Vol.3, P.64,65)...

Dear sirs, Great [Web] Site. Like minded. Informative newsletter - an eye-opener to the blind...The Lord's vessel for removing the veil over some believer's heart's... (R.H., NSW)

N.B. New website address is: <http://taministries.cjb.net/> Recently we have had some difficulties with the new site but these should have now been rectified. Any queries or difficulties with the website contact:

Mike Smith: micraysmith@ozemail.com.au

Your Comments and Questions

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

Dear Terry, an acquaintance has been sending me backcopies of 'Diakrisis' and I have enjoyed them so much...You eloquently put into words what I have been feeling about the whole Charismatic scene. I have been wary of sharing my doubts with other Christians as one is very easily branded as a 'rabble rouser', or even worse.

About false prophets - I recently had an unfortunate experience with one greatly revered by CLC leaders in Gosford, NSW. He 'prophesied' that my seriously ill husband would be healed on a certain day...On or about the day specified, my husband had a serious fit, followed by a fall, and died shortly after. Fortunately I placed no weight on the 'prophecy' as I discerned the falseness behind it. I consequently pointed out to several pastors and the church leaders the verses in Deuteronomy 18:22 pertaining to prophets, only to be met with disapproving looks. They still went on extolling this man's wonderful 'prophetic' ministry from the pulpit!

It is difficult to find Christian brothers and sisters who use their God given discernment; they just seem to believe every kind of doctrine, the more sensational the better.

...One point I would like to ask you is on Phil.1:16-18 about those who preach the Gospel insincerely. Paul seems to indicate that it is irrelevant, so long as the gospel is preached. Would this include Benny Hinn and company?...As for Billy Graham...His tolerance of Rome has disturbed me...

(Name Withheld at editors discretion)

Editors reply: Dear...concerning Phil.1:16-18 - The text refers to people who, although they were preaching in envy, strife and contention, they were nevertheless preaching 'Christ' and the true 'Gospel'. We must distinguish here between preaching 'the Gospel' and preaching 'another gospel', (2Cor.11:4; Gal.1:6).

'Another gospel' is a different gospel altogether. It is usually the result of adding things to the Gospel.

In Galatians 1:6-9 two different Greek words are used for 'another': 'heteros' means 'another of a different kind'; 'allos' means 'another of the same kind':

'I marvel that ye are so soon removed...unto another ['heteros'] gospel: Which is not another ['allos']; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other ['heteros'] gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed..so say I now again, if any man preach any other ['heteros'] gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.'

The other people in Philippians were obviously preaching the same true Gospel as Paul but in a different style to Paul - in envy, strife and contention.

However, Benny Hinn and others like him are not preaching this same Gospel but 'pervert' it by adding their own revelations and false prophecies. Paul spoke against such and gave repeated warnings of such men, their teaching, and prophecies, in several of his writings...

Dear Terry & Staff, I would like to ask you a question. The Scriptures say 'it is the Spirit that beareth witness because the Spirit is truth'. How do we know when one has received the true Spirit of God? Do we just ask for the Spirit or are there conditions to receiving the Spirit? Thanks for the joke about the Pope mobile (Oct/Nov,2000). Thanks for trying to do something to oppose the Devil, who deceives the whole world, (Rev.12:9).

Advisory Comments (Mike Claydon):...Thankyou for your encouragement. This is a very short answer to a more complex question. The Holy Spirit bears witness to our human spirit that we are the children of God, (Rom.8:16). There is assurance of salvation as we continue to look at the Word of God. It is through the Word of God and the Holy Spirit that we know we are saved eternally, (1Jn.5:13). You know when you have received the Spirit because of your love for the brethren which is sudden and complete. Other signs are: there will be a change of heart; discipleship; repentance; dominion over sin (not perfection), obedience to Christ and his word; fruit; and good works. These are the marks of a Christian but not conditions for salvation.

Martyn Lloyd Jones said: 'you know you have changed into a new person and cannot figure out why and it all seems strange to you this new way of thinking and behaving... utterly outside ones strength to achieve...' That's true given salvation. If one is questioning which spirit one has received then I doubt salvation has occurred.

You cannot 'ask for the spirit' or apply 'conditions' to receive him...its a matter of God's grace. You only receive the Spirit of God at conversion which is certainly not our 'doing'. It is all of grace through the vehicle of faith, (Eph.2:8,89).

Terry's Itinerary

Nov.2nd-4th Oak Flats Church Camp - Wollongong, NSW

Victorian Itinerary

Nov.5-13 Bethel Baptist, Mt Beauty/Lavington Baptist, Albury Ph.57541784/(02)60215860

Nov.14th 7.45pm Numurkah Gospel Hall Ph.(03)58722840

Nov.15-18 Rose City Baptist, Benalla Ph.57625220

Nov.18-21 Golden City Baptist, Bendigo Ph. 54496368

Nov. 22-25 Calvary Baptist, Melbourne Ph.97285778

Nov.25-29 Casey Baptist, Clyde Ph. 59985114

Dec.9th.10am Hervey Bay Church of Christ Ph.0411489472

Dec.20th-30th. Far Nth. Qld. Tentative only - Ph.0411489472

Praise Points

- Praise the Lord for His growth and fruit in this ministry.

Prayer Points

- Pray for fruitful meetings in the Victorian itinerary.

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