



Diakrisis (Australia)

PO Box 1499, Hervey Bay, Qld. Australia, 4655.
E-mail: taministries@bigpond.com Ph. 0411489472
Website: taministries.net

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

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

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

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

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Recommended Material

Churches are increasingly divided over the issue of 'women in ministry'. What does the Bible say about this? This ministry recommends and distributes the book '*Countering the Claims of Evangelical Feminism*' by Wayne Grudem. We highly recommend this as the most concise reference book we have seen concerning the issues on this topic. All the necessary questions are answered with topical headings. A must for a reference library. (\$29.00 postage included).

Editors Comment

People often ask me about the ‘state of the church’, perhaps because I travel away from church to church for at least 4 months of the year. In Australia as in most western countries, statistics tell us there is a mass migration from one church to another, or that people are simply leaving churches in droves. In England evangelical churches are dying while Islam grows. In Australia, Christianity has decreased as a percentage of the population. The percentage of church goers and those claiming to be Born Again have decreased, while eastern religions are growing unabated.

In Australia I have found most churches that are growing are usually growing by people moving from one church to another or by the use of popular music, entertainment, marketing methodology or the latest programme or fad that touches felt needs. There are exceptions where vibrant Biblical preaching and teaching programmes have reaped the numbers, but in most areas people are moving to churches that give them the personal needs and experiences that their hearts desire. Often big churches get bigger and many small churches struggle to survive.

In most churches fewer people are being won to Christ. Arguably the materialism, wealth, technology and post-modern thinking have further hardened the world’s reaction to the message of the cross. Sadly this has caused many churches to resort to methods of evangelism that are driven by the thinking of the world. Any wonder that the Gospel has been watered down to be more palatable to public sentiment.

Many pastors state that their young people are leaving, going to universities or getting married. Some drift away to other churches that cater for the whims and fashions of the age. Many churches have been depleted and some closed when old people pass away while at the same time young people are leaving. While some churches are growing because of what they give the people in entertainment and music, others are stagnating and dying in tradition or by attrition.

The answer for churches that are dwindling in numbers is not to adapt the latest ecumenical fad but to keep preaching the Word. But do it with *passion* and *apply* it to the world of today! If people think you are serious about something, they will be more inspired or attracted to that commitment. Forget the numbers and leave that to God. Grow the church deep. I personally love the Bible studies I do each week when I am home. I love to teach a group of hungry people who want to see what God will say to them through His word and prayer and who want to be equipped. There is no hype, music, entertainment or gimmicks.

We are coming into an era when people will be looking for answers. There are enough earthquakes, tsunamis and disasters lately to cause the most ignorant of men to stop and say ‘what on earth is going on’! Some Christians believe we are approaching what the Bible calls the ‘beginning of sorrows’ when war threatens, earthquakes increase in various places, ‘seas roar’ and there are ‘signs in the heavens’ (Lk.21, Matt.24; Rom.8:22). The word ‘sorrows’ literally refers to ‘birthpangs’ which speaks of an increasing intensity of many of these events in the end.

We have an earth that is dying with people who are perishing, and we have the *only* message of eternal hope! We surely need to be *equipped* to have answers for every man who asks for the reason for our hope (1Pet.3:15; Col.4:6).

Terry Arnold

The Local Church - When To Leave / When Not To Leave

Why is the *local* church important?

One thing that shows the poor state of the modern church is the reasons people leave or join any local church. Commitment to the one local church is at an all time low. (I realise there are exceptions where people are unable physically to meet with other Christians or where there simply is no doctrinally sound church available in some areas).

By 'local church' I mean the gathering of Christians to regularly worship, to 'break bread', to be taught and equipped and thus fellowship with God and with one another. The importance of these in the local church is indeed a rare view today. The proof of this is the ease with which people will engage in other activities on the day the local church sets aside for corporate worship. It seems the warning and encouragement of the Hebrew writer is simply not worth keeping today: '***Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as you see the day approaching***' (Heb.10:25).

The epistles themselves were mostly written to local assemblies. The entire life and work of God's people for this age appears in the context of the local assembly in Scripture. A doctrinally sound local church is a God-given tool to assist in the edification, sanctification and maturity of the Christian. The local church involves *submission* and *accountability*. The local fellowship is often the only place where we can be in submission to Godly appointed and qualified elders (Heb.13:17; 1Pet.5:1-5) and in submission 'one to another', (Eph.5:21; 1Pet.5:5), as the Scriptures command. To obey elders requires submission. Submission requires humility. Yet these characteristics of *salvation* are increasingly foreign to numbers of professing Christians who live the church life with a selfish independence that does nothing for the edification of the church body. The choicest people I have found in church life are rather those who come to see what they can *give* rather than what they can *take*! They are meek, ready to help, respectful of authority, slow to speak, quick to listen and usually busy giving out whatever gift they have for the *edification of others*.

When not to leave a church

Today many Christians go from one church to the next looking for the perfect church and sinless Christians. There is a vast herd of nomadic hitchhikers today who leave churches and wander from one to another. But the local church is not a gallery where we exhibit the finest of Christians; it is rather a school where we educate and encourage imperfect Christians. The local church is part of God's means of accomplishing His purposes of sanctification.

Commitment to the local church requires a commitment in good *and bad times*, in problems and in offences! Unless the church is in serious doctrinal error or the leadership is ungodly, I know of no scriptural reasons for leaving the family *that God has once placed you in*. Even where the doctrine is in serious error, every effort should be made to dialogue with the leadership and work the problem through, *before* leaving to find another sound fellowship.

In *all churches* there will be times when there will be contentions (Gal.2:11-14;

Acts 15:39). The reason for this is that all Christians have a ‘war’ going on within them between the flesh and the Spirit, (Rom.7:23). Sometimes the flesh may have sway and the church is disrupted for a time. Like any family, there are difficult times and we should keep our commitment to one another during those times wherever possible.

Part of the problem is that today’s Christians often want instant results in a ‘fast food’ church. They exhibit the impatience and fleshly ways of the world. They have adopted a spiritual lifestyle of a tourist and only want the best spots to visit.

Some of the reasons why people get upset and leave churches today show the spirit of the age. They leave because they have not been ‘visited’ or no one has phoned them in their trials; they have had a disagreement with another member; they have rejected correction and taken offence; or just because they don’t feel they ‘fit in’, etc. This can lead to a perception of being rejected in some way or a lack of care being shown. This *feeling* accompanying the perception may be real but the rejection itself can be a judgement that may not be necessarily true. Too many people then leave without saying anything to the leadership or the people concerned, or they suddenly inform the leadership they are leaving *without giving them any opportunity to rectify the mistake or the problem. Then the person leaving becomes part of the problem rather than a part of the solution.* This behaviour is selfish and sinful and shows a lack of regard for the leadership and the body of Christ as a whole. We do not usually leave our own earthly families in such a fashion, yet many will so quickly exit the local family of God and leave them with the problem!

Far too many people leave churches over personality clashes and offences rather than *doctrine!* In my travels I find most churches that split today do so not over doctrine but over personalities and offences. Yet the Bible gives clear direction (Matthew 18 and other verses) in how to deal with such offences and disagreements. We are told to lovingly face the person who has offended us (Matt.18:15) and attempt to *‘gain a brother’*. If that brings no reconciliation then we are to bring one or two witnesses and further lovingly attempt to reconcile the offense or fault, (vs.16). If this is unsuccessful then the ‘church’ must deal with the matter. The pastor/elders are the ruling body of the church (1Tim.5:17; Heb.13:7,17) and authority is vested in them to make a ruling and reconcile the issue. Before leaving a church this process should at least be attempted. It must also be said that it is wise to pray about such matters *before* embarking on Matthew 18. There are many times when we can pass over a transgression and allow grace and the Holy Spirit to work in other people’s lives. *‘The discretion of a man defers his anger; and it is his glory to pass over a transgression’* (Pr.19:11). Prayer can often take the offense away *or change our own hearts.*

When to leave a local church

Continued serious false doctrine and an ungodly or unqualified leadership (1Tim.3; Tit.1) are reasons for separating from a local church. Ecumenical churches which have watered down the Gospel and accepted other faiths contrary to Scripture are indulging in ‘another Gospel’ that Paul said was cursed. There is plenty of reasons to leave such churches. However, in the area of doctrine we must not major on *‘doubtful disputations’* (Rom.14). In this passage it is clear *we are not to judge people on*

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matters that are not clearly taught in Scripture. When the Scripture speaks plainly, we must speak; but when the Scripture has no plain word, we have no authority to speak. In such matters we are free to follow our conscience and the Lord's leading in all matters pertaining to our personal life, but we are not free to make our conscience a law to be imposed upon others in areas of Christian liberty. We should 'major on the majors and minor on the minors'. We must know which 'hills to die on' and which hills are not worth 'dying on'. Be sure before you conclude on anything. Scripture is our guide. There are issues where we may have a strong view or a 'preference'. Our doctrine should all be preferences. But our 'preferences' may not all be doctrinal. Some areas such as homosexuality and adultery are clearly defined as absolutes in Scripture and dealt with as sin. But many other areas are arguably not so explicitly defined, such as: Christians and alcohol, Christmas traditions, contraception/or procreative sex only; Christian vs Public schooling; the demanding that women wear headcoverings, the use of TV, the computer, internet, competitive sport, or a requirement that a particular Bible version be accepted as the only correct translation. There are mature Christians of varying affiliations who have wide and differing views on these issues. We have no right to expect people to have the same personal convictions unless the specific conviction is clearly and explicitly addressed in Scripture. If the area is not explicitly addressed in Scripture, then as the church reads and preaches Scripture expositively we must *trust the Holy Spirit* to address the real *scriptural issues* that may be attached to these issues, such as idolatry, time wasting or selfishness, etc.

There are elders who are ungodly and may not be qualified (1Tim.3; Tit.1). They can be confronted. This must be done *according to Scripture* where two or three approach the elder *in a humble manner* (1Tim.5:19). Usually the problem will be evident by many, including those within the leadership.

Ministers can develop a 'CEO' mentality, lording it over the people (1Pet.5:3), 'driving' the people instead of 'leading'. Some leaderships may be arrogant and controlling. That will invite justifiable criticism. But the criticsers must also, despite these manners, look at what is actually being said - is it truth?

If you remain a faithful member of the local church for many years, it will not be because you have found perfect pastors/elders in the perfect church, but because you know this is God's will and anything less would displease Him!

God tells us that we must always maintain an attitude of meekness, patience, and compassion with any dealings with our brothers and sisters in Christ. This is the ministry of *grace*. The local church is the forum where this is taught and practised. It is the Lord's desire that we all be ***'rooted and built up in Him, and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving'*** (Col.2:7); ***'...to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ'*** (1Pet.2:5); ***'From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplies, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, makes increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love'*** (Eph.4:16).

Terry Arnold

For an expansion on this article read our booklet '*Keys to Fruitful Church Membership*' which gives six 'keys' to a happy membership in a local church. \$1.90 + postage

Presbyterian Panel Acquits Homosexual Minister

In a split decision, a Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) panel on Monday acquitted a partnered homosexual minister, who faced charges of violating the church constitution. The panel of the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area voted 3-3 after a trial at Oak Grove Presbyterian Church. The decision fell short of the two-thirds vote required to convict the Rev. Erwin Barron. A complaint was filed against Barron...after he married his homosexual partner, Roland Abellano in 2008. The two married in California during the few months that same-sex marriage was legal there. Shortly after the marriage, Barron wrote several commentaries weighing in on the ongoing debate over homosexuality within the PC(USA) - the largest Presbyterian denomination in the country. He suggested that Presbyterians not begin with the Bible when addressing the issue. 'In our debates in the Presbyterian Church over homosexuality, if we begin with the Bible, we will likely reach a polarised stalemate', he wrote. 'Bible discussions are too often divisive. When we begin with the Bible, we are not beginning with a natural place for all of us'. Rather than the Bible, the beginning point for discussions on homosexuality, he maintained, should be 'the personal experiences we all share'. While Protestants always look to God's word to guide them, Barron contended that Scripture is not the only source of moral authority. 'We also look to the continuing revelation of God in our experiences in history and tradition, in science, in reasoning, and in everyday events to guide us. Scripture and experience both must guide our moral decision-making. And reliance on one without the other can be dangerous and offensive', he stated. Experience should lead us into the Bible instead of beginning with the Bible and discounting the importance of personal experience'.

...PC(USA) ordination standards require 'fidelity in marriage between a man and a woman' or 'chastity in singleness'...

(Lillian Kwon Christian Post; Tues, March 01, 2011; cited in Apostasy Alert 3rd March).

Editor's comment: Readers might find this rejection of the Word and exaltation of experience appalling. But is it worse than what many churches today teach? Is it worse than using visions, dreams, prophecies of men, messages in unknown tongues and Charismatic/Pentecostal teachings often based on experiences? At the root of such apostasy is the modern rejection of the all sufficiency of Scripture. If we do not 'begin with the Bible' then what does this say about the character of God who gave us this Word? Which is infallible - 'experience in history and tradition, in science, in reasoning', or Scripture? Where did 'morality' come from except through the laws of God? Did God exaggerate when He said 'All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works' (2Tim.3:16,17). Which is the 'more sure word of prophecy' (2Pet.1:19) - experience or Scripture? God answers this in the next verse!: 'Knowing this first, that no prophecy of THE SCRIPTURE is of any private interpretation' (vs.20). Why be called a 'Christian' and not trust the book that it is based on? That book is clear and absolute when it comes to Homosexuality! God says it is an abomination, a 'vile affection' and that it will bring eternal fire, (Lev.18:22; Rom.1:26,27; 1Cor.6:9,10). Does experience interpret Scripture or Scripture interpret experience? Which is 'more sure'?

Benny Hinn in Court Again

Charismatic televangelist Benny Hinn, who denied romantic involvement with Paula White after a tabloid article last year, is being sued for \$250,000 by his book publisher for violating a morality clause in their contract. Hinn broke the terms of the agreement with Strang Communications Co. when he engaged in an 'inappropriate relationship' with White...Filed under 'Contract/Indebtedness', the complaint claims that Hinn admitted 'his inappropriate relationship' with White in August and that he failed to pay Strang despite agreeing to do so...The case number for Strang Communications Co. vs. Benny Hinn is 2011CA000575. Last summer, The National Enquirer published photos showing the television preachers going in and out of a hotel in Rome, holding hands...Hinn strongly rejected the article's claim that he had an affair with White, saying in a statement on his website that there was only a 'friendship' and 'no immorality' that existed between the two. He also derided claims that he and White secretly stayed together at a hotel as 'absolutely false'. The televangelist said the twice-divorced White had been an 'encouragement' to him and 'shared helpful advice' after his wife, Suzanne, filed for divorce last January.

Hinn told a crowd in Oakland [California] last year that the Vatican made him a Patron of the Arts and invited him to visit Rome. He said patrons are asked to find donors to help maintain the Vatican's art collections, and he wanted White to become a donor. 'I let her come with me to Rome so she can donate money', Hinn said. 'That was stupid on my part. And for that I do ask forgiveness'.

The National Enquirer published photos in its Aug. 2nd issue of Hinn walking hand-in-hand with White in Rome. The article, which was released July 23, claimed the two spent three nights in a five-star hotel Hinn booked under a false name.

(Elena Garcia, Christian Post Reporter Fri, Feb. 18, 2011; cited in Apostasy Alert Feb.21th 2011)

Editor's Comment: For 15 years we have been warning of and exposing Benny Hinn. He has a long list of false prophecies and unbiblical teachings (see our website: www.taministries.net - under heading 'False Teachers, Teaching, Healers, Prophets'). Most if not all such false teachers and false prophets end up engaging in immoral behaviour. It should be enough that he has lost his marriage and has been caught and *exposed* for *lying* several times. Yet this man has one of the largest ministries in the world. What does this say about the state of the church?

Arminian Christianity

'Christianity today is man-centred, not God-centred. God is made to wait patiently, even respectfully, on the whims of men. The image of God currently popular is that of a distracted Father, struggling in heartbroken desperation to get people to accept a Saviour of whom they feel no need and in whom they have very little interest. To persuade these self-sufficient souls to respond to His generous offers God will do almost anything, even using salesmanship methods and talking down to them in the chummiest way imaginable. This view of things is, of course, a kind of religious romanticism which, while it often uses flattering and sometimes embarrassing terms in praise of God, manages nevertheless to make man the star of the show'.

(Man: The Dwelling Place of God' by A.W.Tozer, P.27)

Ecumenical Arguments Answered

What is the ‘ecumenical church’?

As a young Christian in the 1980’s and early 90’s, I remember many churches were warning strongly against the ecumenical movement by stating that the Bible revealed such would arise in the last days. *Today many of those same churches are wholly ecumenical!* They no longer take a stand against the doctrines of Roman Catholicism and as well eagerly embrace all denominations as if they were within the Christian orbit. Apparently the Reformation was all a huge mistake. Biblical ‘separation’ is scorned. Admixtures are tolerated. The ecumenical church quickly absorbs and promotes the latest in new church programmes such as the *Emergent* or *40 Days of Purpose* fads. They do this using little to no discernment. The ecumenical church leaders rarely, if ever, preach on sin and repentance.

The ecumenical church is already here with us. Every town I visit I find most churches are ecumenical. They come in an array of denominations, yet in reality they are singing from the same sheet - *union in love, rather than unity in Biblical truth.* ‘Ministers Fraternal’ have Roman Catholic priests as prominent members who shake hands in fellowship and pray with so called ‘Protestant’ ministers. It seems such ministers don’t do much ‘*protesting*’ these days. Ministers play politics to ensure they continue their ministries to schools and the community. In doing this they find it essential to attend these fraternal to be seen praying and fellowshiping with those who preach a false gospel. Many of those they ‘fraternise’ with do not even hold the Bible as inerrant let alone teach from it. Many arguments are used for this co-habitation of strange birds.

...But the Catholics also believe in Jesus as saviour and Lord...

This is a relatively new late 20th century argument. It can be directly attributed to the ‘decisional regeneration’ doctrines of ecumenism. But there are also cults that hold Christ as a ‘saviour’. The ‘Christ’ of Rome bears little resemblance to the one portrayed in Scripture. As an ex Roman Catholic, and eventually a ‘Charismatic Catholic’, I too believed in Jesus as ‘saviour and Lord’ and ‘gave my heart’ to him many times! But I was simply not *Born Again!*

If Roman Catholicism is Christian then why do they pronounce ‘anathemas’ (curses) upon those who hold to the doctrines of Faith alone, Christ alone, Scripture alone and the ‘imputed’ righteousness of God through Christ? Rome insists that faith and the sacraments are necessary for salvation. Their ‘anathemas’ include: ‘*If anyone says that by the said sacraments...grace is not conferred through the work worked but that faith alone...is sufficient for obtaining the grace, let him be anathema [cursed]*’ (Trent Sess.7, canon 8) (This contradicts Eph.2:8,9); ‘*If anyone says that the sacraments...are not necessary for salvation but...men obtain from God through faith alone the grace of Justification...let him be anathema [Cursed].*’ (Canon 4, Session7); ‘*If anyone says that the sinner is justified by faith alone...let him be anathema [cursed].*’(Canon 9, Session 6); ‘*If anyone shall say that justifying faith ...remits sins for Christ’s sake...let him be anathema [cursed]*’. (6th Session, Canon 12); ‘*If anyone says that men are justified ... by the imputation of the righteousness*

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of Christ alone...let him be anathema [cursed].’ (Trent Sess.6 canon 11); ‘If anyone says that the guilt is remitted to every penitent sinner after the grace of justification has been received, and that the debt of eternal punishment is so blotted out that there remains no debt of temporal punishment to be discharged either in this world or in the next in Purgatory...let him be anathema [cursed]’ (Trent Sess.6, canon 30).

All these curses were re-affirmed in the Vatican II Council of the 20th Century.

*In direct contradiction Romans chapter 4:5 teaches: ‘**But to him that works not, but believes on him that justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness**’.* Here the Bible teaches: 1. The Justified does not work 2. The Justified trusts only 3. The Justified trusts on ‘Him’ 4. The Justified sees himself as ‘ungodly’ 5. His faith is seen ‘counted’ (credited, imputed) for righteousness.

Catholicism teaches that *‘sins must be expiated. This may be done on this earth through the sorrows, miseries and trials...Otherwise expiation must be made in the next life through fire and torments or purifying punishments...in Purgatory the souls...are cleansed after death with punishments designed to purge away their debt.’ (Vatican II ID; 1:2)* This flatly contradicts the following Scriptures: Jn.19:30; Heb.10:18; 1Jn.1:7; Lk.16:19-31.

Roman Catholicism also elevates Mary to a position far superior to what is described in Scripture. She is held as ‘sinless’, ‘co-mediator’ and ‘co-redemptrix’. Then there is the ‘Mass’ which openly sacrifices Jesus afresh daily on all their altars. This of course makes a mockery of Hebrews chapter 6 and 10 which says He was sacrificed ‘**ONCE**’. It is impossible to ‘**crucify to themselves the son of God afresh**’ (Heb.6:6). The sacrifice of Jesus was ‘**once...Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many**’ (Heb.9:26-28). ‘**We are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all**’ (10:10).

If all this from Rome is not ‘another gospel’, then what is?

To be a ‘witness’ to the world we must join together as one...

I am all for unity. I reject sectarianism, isolationism and any other label that teaches any unbiblical or extreme form of separation. But if being a ‘witness to the world’ means I join with those who present another Gospel, or those who do not believe that the Bible is the very Word of God, and is sufficient for our teaching and for sound doctrine, then I would be betraying the very foundation of Christianity itself! Doing so violates the very concept of holiness, which runs through the entire length of the Bible! Separation is another word for holiness or Sanctification. Sanctification is separation *from* something (sin and the thinking of the world) and separating *to* something, (the Lord and His Word). Separation means to *have no fellowship with*. Fellowship is mixing with, partaking with, joining with, sharing with. This doctrine begins in Genesis and then is quickly illustrated with the Israelites where the people were told to be ‘**different**’ to other people (Lev.20:23-26).

If ‘unity’ is attempted at the expense of truth and the watering down of the Gospel and the Word of God, then it is not unity in ‘Truth’! There can be no real ‘unity’ of disparate and contradictory doctrine. The Bible clearly teaches unity through ‘*truth*’ and that truth is found only in the Word of God. ‘**Sanctify them through your truth: your word is truth**’ (Jn.17:17).

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Scripture warns discerning Christians to be separate from teaching that is not Biblical: *'Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which you have learned; and avoid them'* (Rom.16:17). The phrase *'contrary to the doctrine which you have learned'* is referring to the *'apostles doctrine'* of that early 'faith'.

What 'method' does God use to change a person's heart from one that is unwilling to receive the things of God to one that is ready to do so? God uses only the Gospel and His Word to draw the elect to Himself. He does not present a 'union' of different faiths or doctrines! Any unity based on minimising doctrine is a bastardised unity, a counterfeit.

Unity must be centred on, and maintained by, the Biblical Gospel in all its purity. Paul exhorted the Philippian to *'...stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel'* (Phil.1:27). The book of Philippians is filled with passages that show Paul's passion to contend for the authentic Gospel even to the point of imprisonment for doing so!

True unity must include the truths of who Jesus is (deity) and what He has done (atonement) as the only *'way, the truth and the life'* (Jn.14:6). True unity means not being ashamed of the gospel (Rom.1:16) or its Cross of 'offence' (Gal.5:11) which convicts those who are perishing.

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

Churches that do not preach this Gospel are not promoting Christian unity! The Gospel says 'repent and believe'. If repentance is not preached, unity is not achieved.

But what about John 17?...

'...that they may be one, as we are...17 Sanctify them through your truth: your word is truth...21 That they all may be one; as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that you have sent me. 22 ...that they may be one, even as we are one'

This passage, if read in context, is actually about the preservation of the saints and the unity they have by sanctification 'through the truth', which is found only in the Word of God (vs.17). Scripturally, sanctification is literally a *separation* from the world and sin. The unity spoken of here is *'as you, father, are in me'* (vs.21) and *'as we are one'* (vs.22). This is the unity of the Trinity - a unity of one purpose, one doctrine, one faith, one truth! Is that the kind of 'unity' the ecumenical movement has today?

Charles Spurgeon commented on this passage: *'The mood of the moment is unity...a chorus of ecumenical voices keep harping the unity tune. What they are saying is, 'Christians of all doctrinal shades and beliefs must come together in one visible organisation, regardless...Such teaching is false, reckless and dangerous. Truth alone must determine our alignments. Truth comes before unity. Unity without truth is hazardous. Our Lords prayer in Jn 17 must be read in full context. Look at verse 17: 'Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth'. Only those sanctified*

through the word can be one in Christ. To teach otherwise is to betray the Gospel.'

But joining together - it will help the Gospel...

Such Pragmatism is answered by: '*Let us do evil, that good may come...*'? (Rom.3.8). This text is rhetorical and demands a negative answer. We do not contradict the unity of truth through the word so as to bring about some ecumenical 'good'. Ecumenism is pragmatic by nature. Pragmatism says that methods do not affect the message. Yet the ecumenical gospel has been watered down over many decades. It will draw in others of different doctrines and faiths to achieve its end. It is geared towards gaining numbers by 'method'. Modern pragmatism does not embrace the doctrine of separation.

But was not Jesus with sinners, publicans, and tax collectors?...

Jesus was a friend to them, (Matt.11:19; Lk.7:34). But in every instance they came to Him! (Matt.9:10 '*And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples*' (see also Mk.2:15; Lk.5:29;15:1). He never fellowshiped with them. He ministered *to* them but did not minister or fellowship *with* them. '*For such a high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens*' (Heb.7:26). Many Christians confuse 'fellowship' with 'friendship'. We are free to have friendships with the unregenerate and those adhering to unbiblical notions - but we are not to endeavour to have our beliefs 'agree' with theirs.

Scriptures the ecumenical movement ignores:

Romans 16:17 'Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which you have learned; and avoid them'.

This surely includes false doctrine, false teachers and false prophets; and those who teach extra Biblical revelation in visions, dreams and unknown 'tongues'. It would include many of the hyper-faith and TV preachers. Yet the ecumenical church welcomes these into their fold.

2Thessalonians 3:6 'Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walks disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us...¹⁴ And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. ¹⁵ Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.'

Separation here is to be over serious doctrinal issues, (affecting salvation, deity, Godhead, the Word of God...fornication, etc), not interpretations on minor issues.

2Corinthians 6:14-17 'Be you not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship has righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion has light with darkness? And what concord has Christ with Belial? or what part has he that believes with an infidel? ¹⁶ And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? for you are the temple of the living God; as God has said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. ¹⁷ Wherefore come out from among them, and be you separate, says the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you'.

We cannot have fellowship or be yoked with those who have false doctrine, including false religions in the ecumenical movement, false teachers (and false prophets), unsaved people, or uncleanness, unrighteousness, or disobedient brethren.

1Corinthians 5:7, 9-14 'Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as you are unleavened.'...8 ...the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. 9 'I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators: 10 Yet not altogether the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must you needs go out of the world. 11 But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater...'

Conclusion

The ecumenical movement is an intricate part of the philosophy of the world. It is a 'union' of vital differences instead of a unity in truth. When the differences are to do with the Gospel and the Word of God, they are non-negotiable in the eyes of God!

The ecumenical movement has been greatly enhanced by the liberal, modernistic and Pentecostal/Charismatic movements. Most of these churches are ecumenical. The ecumenical movement openly adopts the word 'oikoumenikos' (as seen on various ecumenical websites). Yet this word is in fact the opposite to the word for 'church' - 'ekkllesia'! The dictionary meaning for 'oikoumenikos' is 'a union of the inhabited world; an earthly thing', as opposed to 'ekkllesia' (the called out ones). *Christ's true church is not a union in 'oikoumenikos' but a unity of truth in 'ekkllesia'.*

Pastors and elders today are amiss in not warning their sheep where necessary of the ecumenical movement and its merging of different gospels. Christians will one day stand before Christ at the Bema seat. Who would want to stand there having been popular with the world, the church of the world, having compromised with His truth in His word or having refused to separate from error because of an ecumenical 'love' - a love *without truth*?

God promises to bless the *separated*. ***'Blessed is the man that walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law does he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he does shall prosper'*** (Ps.1:1-3).

Today most churches embrace ecumenical programmes and ventures. They will protest against immoral changes in society. But where is the protesting that used to be in the word 'protestant'? It was the Protestant Reformation which gave the people the Bible back in their own language at the cost of millions of martyrs! To be protesting now by being separate from the ecumenical movement is today to be called 'legalistic', 'separatist', 'isolationist' and other names which are used in derogative fashion. But such judgement by men is far more tolerable than the judgement by God. For we will be judged by His Word: ***'He that rejects me, and receives not my words, has one that judges him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day'*** (Jn.12:48). Those who strive and contend for the accuracy of the Gospel are true friends of Christian unity.

Terry Arnold

Your Comments and Questions

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

The Editor a Freemason?

Terry, you once dropped the word 'Freemason' in one of your Diakrisis issues, to which I responded with a genuine request that you please do an article on Freemasonry, as the grandfather of my godson is a Freemason, so I would have liked to be informed to know what to pray for regarding my godson...I received no reply from you, nor was any helpful information issued. (Thankfully God mentored me through other sources of info availed). Over the years I have come to suspect this is because you are quite likely among the Freemason cult. (I have good reason to suspect Philip Powell of same, as well as numerous others) and therefore it is your JOB to harass the church of Adonai... While I find much of your teaching insightful and informative, you can be sure I take it all with a pinch of salt...in case you be the Devil's advocate...

(H.R. Toowoomba)

Editor's comment: This person above is a closet Seventh Day Adventist who visits many different churches and has moved from town to town. Her website, writings and teachings are disguised Adventism. We exposed this lady and a letter from her in *Diakrisis* issue July/Aug/2005.

As for the charge of myself possibly being '*among the Freemason cult*' - we have made *numerous* mentions of Freemasonry in '*Diakrisis*' and *all speak negatively* of it. As well as this, we have often sold materials *exposing* it. I have also done several seminars openly exposing Freemasonry as a cult. Therefore, it would seem rather strange and contradictory if I was '*among the Freemason cult*'. This charge of Freemasonry is also easy to check in Freemason records as well as what we have taught over 20 years.

The Value of Visions, Dreams?

Editor's comments in bold and brackets:

*Dear Terry, my husband and I love receiving 'Diakrisis' and quite agree with most of what you have to say BUT it is obvious to me that you have never had a supernatural experience and consequently you are critical of those who write to you describing theirs. (Name withheld at editor's discretion) [To the contrary - I have had several 'supernatural experiences'. But I would rather point people to the Word of God as it is a 'more sure word' than that from visions and dreams, etc. But I have had one most important supernatural experience - it's called 'conversion' by the Sovereign will of God. I only question the 'supernatural experiences' of others when they defy Scripture. The last newsletter (which you are probably referring to) had such an *unscriptural* account] I know a man...who was drug addict, an alcoholic and a heavy smoker. He was beaten up by a gang and left for dead. While he was unconscious in ICU his mother and friends at her church prayed for him as he was not expected to recover. He recovered...His story was...he described how he had a visit from Jesus while he was in a semi-coma and how he was*

Continued next page >

Your Comments and Questions

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

told to change his ways, etc. He is now so full of peace and the love of our Lord it is amazing to see, and through his experience his wife has also given her heart to Jesus. [You cannot judge an ‘experience’ as valid just because of the subsequent outcome. This has been the ongoing problem of the Charismatic Movement - ‘if something apparently works, it must necessarily be of God’. This is called ‘spiritual pragmatism’ and has led millions astray in the past few decades. Also, ‘peace and love’ are not the telling fruit of salvation. Many in the occult and other religions have also had encounters with ‘jesus’ and have a ‘peace and love’. The problem with attributing salvation or the ‘fruit’ of salvation to visions and dreams is that it lowers the Word of God as the agent to save. We are saved **only by the Word of God (1Pet.1:23)** *He is at this time a sick man having contracted Hep. C through needle exchange but he is sure that God has a plan for his life and he is a glowing example for others. [I would question the way in which this man claims to have been ‘converted’]...I went to an Anglican church school, was confirmed, a Sunday school teacher and regularly went to church but I found it almost impossible to share my faith with others as I had many doubts. Then...I was critically ill in hospital for 7 days with an undiagnosed burst kidney. After undergoing emergency surgery ...I experienced an amazing vision of the truths of heaven written on a scroll and as it was fading a voice said ‘...there is no way to the Father except through me, Jesus’. [This information is already in the Word of God! Why do we need this ‘voice’ as extra?] When I awoke back in my hospital bed I could remember the vision but not one word of the scroll could I remember, only the voice saying Jesus was the way. I remember feeling full of joy and excitement...a visiting Minister said it would have just been the anaesthetic [Scientifically proven and a real possibility?] but my own Minister was excited...When I was well again I had an insatiable appetite to read the Bible which I understood for the first time in my life. I wanted to share my faith with everyone I met and I was filled with joy for months. I went on to have 4 more anaesthetics in the next 6 months but no more visions. [The effects of anaesthetics are random?]...One night at 3am I was led to get up and phone a friend in the UK, on doing so I found out that she was dying of cancer and had lost her faith, I put the phone down and again was led to write her a letter but I knew it was not me writing it, [How would you know this? This is also used in spiritism - it is called ‘automatic writing’. There are counterfeits. But God *has already* had men write down Scripture ‘as moved by the Holy Ghost’ (2Pet.1:21). Why would He *add* to that?] Weeks later her husband phoned me and said that my letter had convinced his wife that Jesus was real...[The gospel in any letter will save] So please do not discount visions just because you have not yet had one. [But I could write pages on former experiences, dreams and visions I have had and also in ‘tongues’ and ‘prophecies’! Yet I got caught in many counterfeits! I now want to bring people back to ‘the more sure word...the prophecy of the scripture’ (2Pet.1:19,20) - ONLY this can save!] Visions are real and life changing. [I have known many people full of the ‘evidences’ of sound conversion after having a*

dream or vision - especially amongst the addicted - but almost all of these I have personally witnessed are no longer walking with the Lord. So, we must be careful in this area. God may have given visions to people - BUT not as *the* method of conversion. All I have always done is to question visions *that do not stand up to a scriptural test?* If we don't do this then how do we test them? And what value do we then put on the Word of God? *The Word of God is now closed and what dream or vision can add to that?* (Heb.1). I think it is a dangerous area to be exploring or teaching others! I know many Roman Catholics who have had visions, dreams and talks with 'jesus' or 'mary'. Some of what they say sounds scriptural too, but eventually it becomes the 'evidence' in itself and contradicts Scripture.

I don't dispute people's own experiences or yours, except when they contradict Scripture. A book called '*The Beautiful Side of Evil*' by Johanna Michaelson tells of similar dreams and visions which were eventually proved counterfeit.

These visions and dreams as words from Jesus *add* to the canon of Scripture. The '*more sure word of prophecy*' is the '*prophecy of THE Scripture*'. We will not be judged by visions and life changing experiences, but by this: '*He that rejects me, and receives not my words, has one that judges him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day*' (Jn.12:48)]

Love Versus Tolerance

'There is a great cry throughout the world today pushing tolerance and much of it comes from a rising spirit of godlessness in the nations. The most intolerant nations and national leaders are preaching tolerance, calling for the break down of all barriers of religion and differences.

But this is the position of the people of God- the Bible is the most intolerant book in all the world and the most intolerant teacher that ever addressed Himself to an audience was the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. Now Jesus Christ demonstrated the vast difference between being charitable and being tolerant. Christ was so charitable that in His great heart, He was willing to weep over sinners; He took in all the people of the world and was willing to die for those who hated Him.

But even with that kind of love and charity, Jesus was so intolerant that He taught, 'If you are not on my side, then you are against me; if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins'. He did not leave any middle ground to accommodate neutral folks who preach tolerance. Christ leaves no middle ground, no place in between.

Tolerance easily becomes a matter of cowardice if spiritual principles are involved and if the Bible is ignored. Suppose we take the position of tolerance and compromise on the issue of salvation. 'Everyone come to Christ and be saved, if you want to; but if you do not want to be saved, maybe there is some other way that we can find for you. We want you to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ if you will, but if you do not want to, then we will find a possibility that God will have some other way for you'.

So tolerance is a spreading disease that is eating away at the absolutes of divine revelation and the unchanging truths of the Bible. But tolerance must not be tolerated by the true Christian, even when it costs them misunderstanding or alienation from friends, family, and this world'.

A.W.Tozer

Your Comments and Questions

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

I receive the 'Diakrisis' - it is full of great support for development of discernment. What glorious truth is contained in His Holy Word and what privilege to stand firm in defense of its purity, life and eternal Glory! On a practical note: I think the new A5 format is fantastic! Could you please send a list of your sermons available on CD.

(A.S. Gold Coast)

Website News

We are continuing to update and develop the website and the resource list. We will soon have Paypal facilities with the purchase of books and DVD's. (After an e-mail to the ministry to have prices confirmed, people will then be able to purchase products through Paypal). We hope also to soon have the DVD's available for the recent Holy Spirit seminar in Adelaide.

Prayer/Praise Points

- Praise the Lord for the completion of the recent 10 week bus trip to more than a dozen churches in three states. Please pray that the listeners will use the information for the sanctification of believers and the glory of God. Terry and Beth did several talks on 'marriage'. Praise the Lord for the many couples in various churches who found these talks and private conversations to be helpful.

- The ministry bus broke down just as we were visiting a Christian friend near Adelaide. His son, a missionary, had also just arrived from interstate. He did the repairs over two days at no cost. The timing was Heaven sent! Praise the Lord.

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