

Terry's Sydney Itinerary

March 14th (Saturday) 6.30pm (men) Mountainview Baptist at Uniting Church Hall, Hazlebrook: *The Greatest Issue that Men Face*

March 15th (Sun) 10.30 am Mountainview Baptist, Hazelbrook Public School Hall, 159-163 Great Western Hwy, Hazelbrook, **Sydney**:

The Greatest Issue for the Church

March 15th (Sun) 6pm: Venue as above:

The Greatest Question of Every Age

Homiletics (Preaching) Course

In August 17th-21st this year the Pacific Bible Institute students, as part of their fortnight of Graduate studies, will be attending a week long Homiletics course in Hervey Bay, Queensland.

We are opening this course without cost to any pastors or those who would like to attend. Certificates will be given for those completing the week. The course includes the theology and practise of preaching; sermon preparation, and much more... Lectures are each morning Monday to Friday. Accommodation (including meals) is available at \$45 per night. Those who are interested should contact this ministry.

Praise/Prayer Points

- Pray for Terry as he ministers in Sydney this month.
- Praise the Lord for continued growth in the Hervey Bay Bible Church. Please pray for Terry as he attempts to put in place a new discipleship programme for new families, and train up new preachers and Bible teachers.

Subscription Form

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Diakrisis (Australia)

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

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TA Ministries is a non-denominational faith ministry,
teaching, informing and equipping the church.
Editor: Terry Arnold (D.Th; MABS; Dip.Bib.&Min.)

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

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

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

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

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Homiletics (Preaching) Course

In August 17th-21st this year the Pacific Bible Institute students, as part of their Graduate studies, will be attending a week long Homiletics course.

We are opening this course free of charge to any pastors or those who would like to sit in on a week of morning lectures. Certificates will be issued for those who complete the week. For more information see P.20.

Editor's Comment

Christianity in the west has become vastly different to first century Christianity. For 12 months I have been preaching through the book of Acts and I am up to chapter 14.* I have been profoundly impacted by the resilience and 'fight' in the apostles, as they preached their way out from Jerusalem to the *'uttermost part of the earth'* (Acts 1:8). They preached the Gospel with unwavering commitment, despite constant opposition and persecution.

Opposition, trials and offenses should drive a true believer closer to God. Yet when the 'fight' in the Christian walk is needed many have no real foundation to stand on (Matt.13:20,21). As J. C. Ryle put it, *'The saddest symptom about many so-called Christians is the utter absence of anything like conflict and fight in their Christianity. They eat, they drink, they dress, they work, they amuse themselves, they get money, they spend money, they go through a scanty round of formal religious services once every week. But of the great spiritual warfare - its watchings and strugglings, its agonies and anxieties, its battles and contests - of all this they appear to know nothing at all'*.

Firstly, many are unwilling to be active in the war between the flesh and the Spirit within themselves (Gal.4:17). The holiness experience throughout life is a fight (Rom.7:23-25). We are told to **'fight'** (1Tim.6:12; 2Tim.4:7; 1Cor.9:26; Heb.10:32); **'wrestle'**, (Eph.6:12); **'mortify [kill/murder] the deeds of the body'** (Rom.8:13; Col.3:5); and **'take the whole armour of God'** (Eph.6:11,13). The Scriptural words linked with Sanctification are fighting terms.

Secondly, many church ministers are today unwilling to be active in the fight to keep and present the true Gospel. Ministers are pressured by the trends of a postmodern society to dilute hard truths. The family structure and marriages are also under unprecedented attack. The word 'marriage' is losing its very definition in amongst the tide of same-sex agendas. The world is coming into the church to take the church into the world. As A.W.Tozer once said: *'...Christians are so comfortable in this world that they have little desire to leave it...Christianity has become of late remarkably lucrative. The streets of gold do not have too great an appeal for those who find it so easy to pile up gold and silver in the service of the Lord here on earth. We all want to reserve the hope of Heaven as a kind of insurance against the day of death, but as long as we are healthy and comfortable, why change a familiar good for something about which we know very little? So reasons the carnal mind, and...we are scarcely aware of it...In these times religion has become jolly good fun here in this present world, and what's the hurry about Heaven anyway? Christianity, contrary to what some had thought, is another and higher form of entertainment.'*

I have not been popular in saying that the entertainment and 'programmes' we are adopting into churches today are accelerating the numbers of people sitting in churches who are simply not truly Born Again. Many may be *fans* of Jesus but not true *followers*. They do not want sermons that will challenge their

alone' we refer to will have the *fruit* of works and Sanctification, *if it is true*.

The Scriptures teach *'many'* might 'receive Christ' *'in vain'* (1Cor.15:2,14,17; Jn.2:24; 2Cor.6:1; James 2:17). Scripture has repeated warnings. There are many who call Jesus 'Lord', profess salvation and yet will be barred from Heaven because they did not 'know' Jesus, were 'lawless' and did not have the fruit of true salvation (Matt.7:21-23).

The 'strawmen' are that people (Spurgeon, etc) have 'added conditions', works to grace alone, and that 'Justification is conditional on Sanctification'. We are not saying this and the authors quoted do not say this. However, the Bible is clear that there is no *true* Justification without the *fruit* of Sanctification - holiness (Rom.6:22): *'...God has from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth'* (2Thess.2:13). God's 'grace alone' cannot change our standing before God (Justification) yet leave our character unchanged (Sanctification). Salvation includes Justification, Sanctification and Glorification. Salvation includes the 'fruit' of repentance (Matt.3:8-10; Lk.3:8); of righteousness (James 3:18); of the Spirit (Gal.5:22); unto holiness (Phil.1:11; Heb.12:11; James 3:18); of our lips (Heb.13:15); and the fruit of works (Col.1:10).

There is no escape from *'Faith without works is dead'* (James 2:17)! James chapter 2 specifically refers to *two kinds of faith* - one that a person might *'SAY'* (vs.14) and another that is *'shown' by works* (vs.18). One is counterfeit, the other true. The Spurgeon and Ryrie quotes are simply echoing this contrast between a faith that is real and one that is *'dead'*.

Likewise, we do not *'add'* repentance to faith as a *'work'*. *True faith already has repentance!* Yes, God has *'imputed righteousness to me without works...My sins are forgiven, based on Christ's finished work on my behalf'*. But that faith is not an impotent lawless gift, but one which comes with the power of the Spirit to produce fruit. (See our articles on the relationship between faith and repentance and a summary in Sept/Oct 2014, P.15. See also our article this edition on *'Lordship Salvation' & Sanctification'*).

Pastoral Position

Georges River Congregational Church in Panania South Western Sydney is seeking a new Pastor. This church is of a strong evangelical position theologically and is seeking a man with the primary gifts of teaching the Word of God and shepherding the church attendees with a pastor's heart. The church can offer either a full time or part time call to the right man. He should have either completed or be well engaged in some theological study at an approved Bible College institution. For initial contact or an information pack about the ministerial responsibilities, church and community demographics etc. please contact:

Bruce Capps, Ph 0408 407 184 or brucecapps@gmail.com

Your Comments and Questions

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

The following are excerpts of an article sent to me by a subscriber. The article is advocating a gospel of faith without repentance and a salvation that does not have the fruit of works.

Romans 5:15-18: 'But not as the offence, so also is the free gift...by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life'

...One thing has become abundantly clear: It is very difficult for many people to believe that eternal life is a free gift, without cost or obligation to the recipient. [We]...contradict the gospel by adding conditions to God's way of salvation, which is by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone...they are all designed to try to prove that belief in Jesus as Saviour will not ALWAYS result in eternal life...the assaults on the gospel are predictable and trite: 'What about James 2:14-26?'; 'It's not faith and works, it's faith that works'; 'repentance is a change of mind that leads to a change in behavior'. Other times, they are innovative and subtle. Either way, they reflect a...disbelief in the finished work of Jesus on our behalf.

Consider the following false doctrine, quoted by some of the so-called 'great men of God':...Charles Spurgeon: 'The faith which does not produce good works is not saving faith: it is not the faith of God's elect: it is not faith at all in the Scriptural sense'. Charles Ryrie: 'Unproductive faith cannot save, because it is not genuine faith. Faith and works are like a two-coupon ticket to heaven. The coupon of works is not good for passage, and the coupon of faith is not valid if detached from works'.

...God has imputed righteousness to me WITHOUT WORKS. My sins are forgiven, based on Christ's finished work on my behalf...Nowhere in the Bible is 'justification' conditional on 'sanctification'....God starts with grace and ends with grace...there is no human 'works/repentance/sanctification' involved. [TA Ministries] says 'repent and have faith'...[he] has added 'repentance' as a work to the 'faith' Gospel...

Editor's reply: This is full of misrepresentations, strawmen and completely denies the fact that there is a counterfeit salvation! It is in fact antinomianism and 'another gospel'. Matthew 7:23 addresses this very gospel. The words 'workers of iniquity' literally refers to 'lawless ones' ('*anomia*'). These were people who many would think they were saved by faith alone.

Grace is grace alone but that grace comes with fruit and that fruit is works, repentance, holiness, etc. There is NO Justification without a following Sanctification. Both are given by the grace of God. Again, we are not saying we are saved by grace + Sanctification or works. But the 'faith

sinful hearts and will not like the exposing of error. The shallowness of the Gospel presentations only increase the numbers of these people.

The ministers 'job description' is to be ministers *of the Gospel*. The purpose is God's work and vision. Ezekiel was told to speak God's word *whether the people would hear or not* (Ezek.2:7,11). Ministers are *ministers of the gospel first!* Could I be excused for questioning how many ministers today actually understand what the Gospel is? The reason being that many of the 'Christmas messages' by church leaders are not at all anything to do with the Gospel, and are often 'another gospel'? In most Gospel presentations today sin is now not even mentioned! But how can anyone be saved if they do not know what they are saved *from*? Are we ashamed of that Gospel which highlights unsaved man's willingly sinful heart in rebellion against a holy God who must punish sin?

Spurgeon, in a sermon titled '*The War of Truth*', 1857, summarised: '*There is creeping into the pulpits of Baptists and every other denomination, a lethargy and coldness, and with that a sort of nullification of all truth...Truth itself is uttered in so minute a form that no one detects it, and in so ambiguous a style, that no one is struck with it...God's arrows are blunted, the edge of his sword is turned in the day of battle. Men do not hear the truth as they used to...From all such things, 'good Lord deliver us!' May heaven put an end to all this moderatism; we want out-and-out truth in these perilous days; we want a man just now to speak as God tells him, and care for nobody. Oh! if we had some of the old Scottish preachers! Those Scottish preachers made kings tremble...Heroes of the truth, soldiers of Christ awake!...There are enemies. Think not the fight is over; the great warfare of truth waxes more hot and fierce than ever. Oh! soldiers of Christ! take your swords from your scabbards! stand up for God and for his truth again, lest a free grace gospel should be forgotten'.*

May the Lord Himself have the final word: '**Know you not that they which run in a race run all...So run, that you may obtain...I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beats the air: But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway**' (1Cor.9:24-27).

'Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto you are also called, having professed a good profession before many witnesses' (1Tim.6:11,12).

'Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch you in all things, endure afflictions....I have fought a good fight...Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing' (2Tim.4:2)

Terry Arnold

* Available on the website www.taministries.net



What the Pope Says of Mary

Vatican City, January 02, 2015: *‘Without the [Roman] Church, Jesus Christ ends up as an idea, a moral teaching, a feeling. Without the Church, our relationship with Christ would be at the mercy of our imagination, our interpretations, our moods.’ Pope Francis made this strong statement during his homily given January 1, 2015...The Pope further reflected on Mary, as ‘the first and most perfect disciple of Jesus, the model of the pilgrim Church’...‘No other creature has ever seen God’s face shine upon it as did Mary,’...Francis stressed how closely united Mary is to Jesus and how Jesus cannot be understood without his Mother...the Pontiff said the Church resembles a mother ‘who tenderly holds Jesus and gives him to everyone with joy and generosity’...the Pope said that the [Roman] Church, in giving us Jesus, offers us the fullness of the Lord’s blessing...It is impossible to separate contemplation of Jesus, the Word of life who is made visible and tangible, from contemplation of Mary, who has given Him her love and her human flesh’.*

Thanks to baptism, he explained, we were introduced into communion with God and are no longer at the mercy of evil and sin, but [rather] we receive the love, the tenderness, the mercy of the heavenly Father...men and women really become children of God. This amazing transition takes place in us with Baptism, which grafts us into Christ as living members, and inserts us into the Church, he said.

Pope Francis prayed that Mary ‘extend the mantle of your maternal protection over each and every one of us in the New Year: ‘O Holy Mother of God despise not our petitions in our necessities, but deliver us always from all dangers, O glorious and blessed Virgin’.

(Apostasy Alert 12th Jan. 2015)

Editor’s Comment: What was invented many centuries after Christ is now dogma in the Roman church. The *‘perfect disciple’* (the *‘Immaculate conception’* - made *‘infallible’* in 1854); the Mary who *‘gives him [Jesus] to everyone’* (Mary as a *‘co-mediator’* and supplanting the role of the Holy Spirit); and the *‘Church...giving us Jesus’* (the *‘magisterium’* - authority of teaching of the Roman church, that the church is the dispenser of salvation) - are all inventions long after the apostles. Baptism supposedly makes us *‘become the children of God...grafts us into Christ as living members and inserts us into the church’?* But what of the Biblical Gospel of faith alone in the blood sacrifice of Christ alone? Why do we need to call on Mary to *‘deliver us always from all dangers, O glorious and blessed Virgin’?* Can Mary, a sinner who needed a Saviour, deliver us from our sins and *‘dangers’* of Hell? Why is it that church leaders of every denomination are in the ecumenical movement and the false *‘unity’* that this Pope teaches?

work the works of Him [who] sent me while day it is; becomes night when no one is able to work’. This Greek would normally be translated *‘I must work’*.

The person speaking is clearly the Lord Jesus and He is referring to *His works of the Father*, not anyone else’s work and not any plural persons, as in the ESV. The *context* itself points strongly towards a singular pronoun (*‘eme’*). The works referred to are clearly the works of Jesus *in relation to His Father* (*‘the works of Him who sent me’*) and shown by the English *‘me’* which follows in the same verse.

This translation occurs in the majority of manuscripts and Bibles of almost every century: the majority of Byzantine manuscripts, the Armenian, Ethiopic, Georgian and Slavonic ancient translations, Diatessaron, Anglo Saxon Gospels 900 A.D - 1200 A.D., Wycliffe Bible 1395, Tyndale 1525, Coverdale 1535, the Great Bible 1540, Matthew’s Bible 1549, Bishops’ Bible 1568, Douay-Rheims 1582, the Geneva 1587, Lamsa 1933 translations of the Syriac Peshitta, Darby 1890, Youngs 1898, KJV, NKJV* and a few other modern versions (a full list of manuscripts and Bibles are too extensive to mention). It is also quoted by early church writers such as Hilary, Basil, Ambrose, Chrysostom and Augustine.

Because the ESV is translated from a different Greek text it translates from a different Greek word *‘emas’* which is *plural* of *‘eme’*, hence the translation of *‘we’*. This reading occurs in the Sinaiticus and Vaticanus p66 and p75 manuscripts, the latter two also actually saying *‘of him that sent US’!* This reading *‘us’* instead of *‘me’* appears in the *New Living* translation. (The confusion and contradiction here is seen in these so called *‘early’* manuscripts such as the Vaticanus which differs even from the Sinaiticus and P66 and P75). Arguably, a single source in Egypt, even at some early stage of transmission, could account for the readings going against the above list of *majority* manuscripts which have *‘I’* instead of *‘we’?*

Further, almost all the older commentaries also cite *‘I’*, not *‘we’*, and also explain the context as Christ doing the work of the Father in redemption, miracles, etc. It was not for anyone other than Jesus to do the *‘work’* in John 9:4, which was to heal a man born blind so that *‘the works of God should be made manifest in him’* (vs.3). That this was the work of Jesus is also established back in John 5:17-20,30. In John’s Gospel, whenever *‘work’* is connected to the works of the Father who *‘sent’* the Son, it refers to this work of Jesus Christ.

This plural *‘emas’* in the ESV and other modern versions does NOT fit the context and would exegetically contradict what Jesus is saying about His own work of the Father.

This is just one of many examples of why I prefer translations derived from the *‘majority texts’* which have *consistency* in numbers and readings and have been faithfully copied and preserved.

* Later NKJV Bibles undercut the reading of *‘I’* with a footnote to *‘we’* in the Nestles text.

Your Comments and Questions

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

Dear Terry, I read your 'saved or unsaved' article and you quoted a warning from Spurgeon from his book 'The Soul winner'. However, I cannot find that quote...but I am aware that such books have been edited...

(K.K., Sth Aust)

Editor's Reply: I wrongly gave this quote as from Spurgeon. It is actually from A.W. Pink's 'Studies on Saving Faith' (1937), P.371. Many internet sites wrongly have this as from Spurgeon. There are one or two very similar quotes from Spurgeon. (It even may be that Pink borrowed some of it from Spurgeon as he was an avid reader of Spurgeon's works). Quotes on the internet actually seem to falsely combine Spurgeon's words with Pink's: *'If the professed convert distinctly and deliberately declares that he knows the Lord's will but does not mean to attend to it, you are not to pamper his presumption, but it is your duty to assure him that he is not saved [Spurgeon]...Do not suppose that the Gospel is magnified...[Pink]'*.

Thanks for bringing this to my attention.

John 9:4 - Check Your Bibles?

Terry, the version Gideons is now using, ESV, waters down the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ and exalts man. John 9:4 [ESV], is featured on the front cover of the Australian Gideons August 2013...I cannot support this version...

(K.K., Sth Aust)

Editor's comment: Although the ESV is arguably a more literal translation than many of the modern versions it is based on a different set of Greek manuscripts ('Critical Text', Westcott & Hort) - to the KJV and some other versions (translated from the 'Textus Receptus' representing the Majority of texts). The KJV for Jn.9:4 has *'I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night comes, when no man can work'*. The ESV and many modern versions have *'We must work...'*

The two different Greek texts show *two different Greek words*. In the majority of texts the Greek word for 'I' is 'eme', which is a singular pronoun (translated 'me', 'I', 'myself'). But in the Critical text (Westcott & Hort) the word is 'emas' which is plural ('we', 'us'). (These are Emphatic Personal Pronouns used when emphasis is being placed on a person and especially when the subject of a verb is being emphasized).

Literally the Greek reads (from the Majority of texts): *'Me [eme] must*

Pope Francis Unable To Answer Little Girl's Question



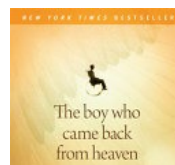
He is called the 'vicar of Christ'. He rules over the world's 1.3 billion Catholics. The Vatican says that when he speaks on his throne, 'Ex Cathedra', the words coming out of his mouth are infallible, as if God Himself was speaking.

On his recent trip in Manila, a little girl asked the Pope a pretty simple question...

Glyzelle Palomar wept as she asked the Pope: 'Many children get involved in drugs and prostitution. Why does God allow these things to happen to us? The children are not guilty of anything'. The Pontiff...took the 12-year-old in his arms to comfort her...Visibly moved, the Pope said: 'She is the only one who has put forward a question for which there is no answer and she was not even able to express it in words but rather in tears'.

(Excerpted from NTEB News Desk, 24 Jan. 2015; and Apostasy Alert 26th Jan.)

Editor's Comment: The question that the little girl asked - there is an answer to it! *'Many children get involved in drugs and prostitution'* because of the sin of Adam and Eve - *'Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned'* (Rom.5:12). Why do we sin? Because we are sinners, in the image of a fallen sinner, Adam. Contrary to the Pope's answer, the children *are guilty*. We are all sinners by nature. We need a 'new birth' (Jn.3:3). Salvation lies not in the sacraments, which according to the Roman church are *'necessary to salvation'*, but in the person of Jesus Christ who died as a substitute sacrifice to satisfy a perfect and holy God who must judge sin. The 'children's sin' must be judged either on the cross or in Hell. God by grace alone has provided the former to those who will believe in Jesus.



The Lies of After Death Experiences

The book 'The Boy Who Came Back From Heaven' (2010) is a lie. The boy has now admitted it was a made up story.

Editor's Comment: A similar movie and book 'Heaven is for Real' is doing the rounds of some churches. It also is now being shown to be suspect. The story has exaggerations, flaws, contradictions and has been refuted by Bible teachers. These stories are best sellers in Christian bookshops. Yet they are the devil's device to take people to *'cunningly devises fables'* (2Pet.1:16) and away from the closed revelation of Scripture - *'the more sure word of prophecy...the prophecy of the scripture'* (vs.19,20).

(See our article 'Visions, Dreams, Near Death' on website: www.taministries.net)

The Search For the Gospel at Christmas

Each year I download the *Christmas messages* from our church leaders and search for the Gospel. The following are excerpts of the 2014 'Christmas messages' with 'editor's comments' which I hope will show the seriousness of the state of the modern church. The reader may think that this is evidence of apostasy in the church leaders only. But the same declension is attested to by many of our readers who have experienced this in a wide range of churches and by the author's travels throughout Australia. It can be also seen in the Bible colleges of many of these same denominations.

Secondly, the following excerpts show a trend in the type of gospels being now consistently preached by the various denominations.

More importantly I pray that our 'comments' will teach and urge us all to know what the Gospel is, and instil in us a holy desire to keep the Gospel pure.

'I declare unto you the gospel...that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures' (1Cor.15:1-4)

'For he has made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him' (2Cor.5:21)

ROMAN CATHOLIC (Archbishop Hart, President Australian Bishops)

'...2014 was a year of highs and lows for the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference (ACBC)...the guidance of the Holy Spirit can certainly be seen through the dedicated work of our agencies, bishops commissions, councils and at the Secretariat.

Pope Francis asked us to be missionary disciples...The Catholic Church in Australia hosted numerous informative and evangelising events this year including, the Pastoral Research Conference, Proclaim 2014 and the Youth Ministry Convention...great strides are being made in youth ministry...

For over half a century, Caritas Australia's volunteers and supporters have walked hand-in-hand with the world's poorest communities...

Our annual social justice statement focused on sport, an issue that appealed to many...It was a momentous year for the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council...The tradition of annual social justice statements is one of which all Catholics in Australia can be proud.

During 2014...we have seen...the appointment of five new bishops...we welcomed the appointment of Cardinal George Pell to the newly created Secretariat of the Economy at the Holy See...The Australian Catholic Bishops have continued to fully cooperate with the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse...We pray that the outcomes of the Royal Commission will be reached with openness, courage and humility.

Your Comments and Questions

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

Mail on the Gideons editorial [see *Diakrisis* Jan/Feb, P.2,3]

Dear Terry, with regard to Revelation 3:20, you are of course 100% correct. If the Gideons were to read the Bibles they give out they would see that the address is to the Laodicean church. In today's church world-wide, He who walked among the candlesticks is there no longer. He has been put outside the church...Things appear to be coming together so fast now that I am getting a stiff neck from 'looking up'. Keep up the good work Terry. God bless you...

(J.H., Brisbane)

Dear Terry, I have just read with much interest, your editorial on the correct use of Scripture in evangelism, using the Gideons as a classic negative example. I was very involved within the Gideons ministry being somewhat aware of their very weak doctrinal stance. After a number of years of service at the local camp level I finally resigned due to the very issue you raised...Their back page 'plan of salvation' is Arminian to the core...I finally found that in all good conscience I could no longer hand out this Gideon issue of the N.T. Scriptures.

(A.W., NSW)

*Dear Terry, I read your *Diakrisis* Nov/Dec with extra interest. My wife and I recently resigned from the Gideons ministry. I enclose a copy of the letter:*

'Resignation Gideons Ministry: It is with deep distress...having to send this letter to you...because of what I have witnessed in this ministry over the last 16 months. We joined 20 years ago with great joy...to distribute God's Word...The version used then exalted the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ...but over the last 31 years...I have witnessed the deception creeping into Christendom...and now in Gideons International...The version Gideons is now using, ESV, waters down the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ and exalts man. John 9:4, featured on the front cover of the Australian Gideons August 2013, highlighted this...I cannot support this version...The 2020 program that Gideons international has adopted comes from a wider world program being preached from the pulpits of Rick Warren and company...Anyone who is not warning the church about what is coming upon the world but says that we are all in this together and need to work together to see a bright future, which is what Rick Warren and company ie. the ecumenical, church growth and emergent church movements teach, will find themselves working for the kingdom of antichrist....

(K.K., Sth Aust)

Editor's Comment: See P.16 for an investigation of Jn.9:4 in the ESV.

Lordship are more the *result* of salvation, rather than a ‘requirement’. Salvation by ‘grace alone’ is a ‘package’. ***‘For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified’*** (Rom.8:29,30). This scripture teaches Justification, Sanctification (ie. *‘conformed to the image of His son’*) and Glorification. All are part of ‘salvation’. Justification is salvation in an instant when God imputes to us His righteousness because of Christ’s death, our sin being imputed to Christ by substitution. Sanctification is a continuous work by the Holy Spirit within (2Cor.7:1). Salvation includes both Justification and Sanctification. ***‘...God has from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth’*** (2Thess.2:13).

In the 18th century the Wesley brothers held ‘perfection’ or ‘Lordship’ meetings in which ‘saved’ people made Christ ‘Lord’ of their lives. But Christ being ‘Lord’ of our lives arguably may not be done in a momentary ‘decision’, rather than in the work of Sanctification. When I was ‘saved’ I understood little if anything about ‘Lordship’. But that understanding quickly developed in Sanctification as the Holy Spirit moved me to read the word, battle the flesh and *‘work out your salvation’* (Phil.2:12,13).

‘Lordship’ advocates may well miss this aspect of Sanctification if pressing ‘Lordship’ as a requirement for salvation. On the other hand many ‘Free Grace’ advocates also deny that faith includes repentance in salvation (Acts 20:21). The scriptures are replete with a Gospel that calls for repentance (Matt.3:2; 4:17; Mk.1:15; 2:17; Lk.13:3; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 17:30; 26:20).

The ‘Free Grace’ advocates I have met also often appear to minimise the fact there can be a ‘faith’ ‘in vain’ or ‘amiss’ (1Cor.15:2,14,17; Jn.2:24; 2Cor.6:1; James 2:17). There must be fruit or it is not a true salvation. There is no Justification without Sanctification (2Thess.2:13) which includes the fruit of the Spirit, holiness and works (Gal.5:22; Phil.1:11; Heb.12:11; Col.1:10). God’s grace cannot change our standing before God (Justification) yet leave our character unchanged (Sanctification). There is no escape from *‘Faith without works is dead’* (James 2:17). Let the reader note that here we are not *adding* works or anything else as a requirement to the faith which saves. But rather, a true Justification by God produces a Sanctification by the Spirit because Justification includes the giving of the Holy Spirit. People need to have Christ as ‘Lord’ but they need to be saved first in order that the Holy Spirit in Sanctification can begin to cement that truth into them.

Could it be that the person is saved first by simple faith, and then the Spirit will lead him to understand and respond increasingly to the Lordship of Christ?

Terry Arnold

* See our articles on faith/repentance (eg. *Diakrisis* Sept/Oct 2014; P.15)

May I wish you and your families a happy and holy Christmas...I pray that 2015 will bring you many blessings of hope, health and happiness. God bless.’

Editor’s comment: The Catholic religion openly endorses a gospel of faith and works (sacraments) for salvation. But is the above even a Christmas message or a promotional blurb? And this statement beggars belief: *‘The Australian Catholic Bishops have continued to fully cooperate with the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse’*. The Commission has in fact found consistent concealing of truth and protection of known paedophile priests by the Australian Catholic religion.

But where is the Gospel? Who is Jesus Christ? Why did He come?...

ANGLICAN (Primate of Australia; Archbishop Philip Freier)

‘As the world becomes more focused on its sea of troubles...The world into which Jesus was born had this same heavy weight of foreboding...Christmas celebrates God’s action in human affairs to give a different future, one of peace, reconciliation and hope. Christians understand that the birth of Jesus is the fulfilment of God’s promise to renew our relationship with him.

Even at his birth Jesus serves to unify many of these deeply etched identities in the ancient world...

Christmas tells us about the unfolding of God’s promise then and now. It tells us about the direction of God’s working amongst people. And it challenges our imaginations as we look at the world.

Australians of every background can find good reason to be dismayed about contemporary events...Conflict is part of the human condition. But Jesus’ birth points us all to a different reality. His birth reveals a power to change and transform that which is greater than ourselves.

The baby of Bethlehem remains the glory of God’s people and a light to enlighten all those who live apart from God. He is the one sent from God to change human existence one person at a time and for all of us together...may your Christmas bring you the knowledge of his love and peace’.

Editor’s comments: ‘Action in human affairs to give a different future’ - this sums up this humanistic gospel. How exactly do we ‘renew our relationship with him’? What is meant by ‘deeply etched identities’? What exactly are ‘God’s promises to renew our relationship with him’ and how do we do this? What is the ‘different reality’ spoken of here? How does the birth of Jesus ‘change and transform...human existence’? What has all this psychobabble got to do with the true Gospel - of Jesus’ death on our behalf for our sin and His burial and resurrection?

'Do we really need Christmas?...Do we really need all the tension and stress created by the activities...? The Victorian Department of Health has an online aid, titled 'Christmas Tips to Reduce Stress'. The retail sector certainly needs Christmas according to the Federal Treasurer...Christmas sales are estimated to be worth \$40 billion.

Do we really need Christmas? Yes, because it gives us the opportunity to refocus on several significant features of contemporary life. The Christmas story as it unfolds in the Bible is associated with family reunion. Jesus birth is a local family event...Christmas is an opportunity to reaffirm the importance of family; an opportunity to commit to working to strengthen families...Let's especially remember families in difficult circumstances, in refugee facilities, isolated indigenous communities, drought affected rural areas and sole-parent families.

Secondly, Christmas reaffirms the value of giving over and against getting. The Bible narratives of the first Christmas record the wise men came bearing gifts for this newborn baby, who would change the course of human history. Everyone needs to feel someone is really interested in him or her and gifts give tangible expression to this basic need. Sadly the possibility that as a nation we are going to further reduce our gifts to the less well-off in our world by further reducing Foreign Aid is a disappointing commentary...

Christmas ultimately provides the opportunity to focus on the bigger picture of history. To be reminded again that our personal spirituality yearns for hope that transforms. Christmas marks the intervention of the eternal creator God into the personal history of every one of us. Eugene Peterson in the Message Bible puts it simply: 'And this sublime Word became flesh and blood and moved into our neighbourhood'. God with us and for us. Yes, we really do need Christmas!'

Editor's comment: The 'tension and the stress' and the economics spoken of here pales into insignificance to a life and eternal life without Christ. Is Christmas really about 'refocusing' on 'contemporary life'? The Gospel is not about family, social issues or 'foreign aid'. The 'Christmas story' is not about a 'family reunion' or 'remembering families', but about the message of belief in Jesus Christ and his sacrificial death on our behalf which that alone can put people into the only 'family' that matters in eternity - the family of God.

If Christmas 'reminds again that our personal spirituality yearns for hope that transforms' - then what exactly is this 'hope that transforms'? What is an unsaved person to make of this language?

The 'Message Bible' quoted here is a horribly inaccurate translation with words added to and words deleted from the original language. The original is more literally: 'And the Word was made [became] flesh, and dwelt

Today we have Terms such as 'Lordship Salvation' which apparently is in opposition to 'Free Grace'. The term 'Lordship Salvation' has become a complex term. A mild form might describe it as a salvation that has such 'fruit' as works; or simply having Jesus as 'Lord' of our lives. If there is no submission to 'Lordship' then there is no salvation. The unsaved must accept Jesus not just as Saviour but as Lord. Romans 10:9-11 and Acts 16:30,31 are quoted: **'...if you shall confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and shall believe in your heart that God has raised him from the dead, you shall be saved'**; Acts 16:30: **'Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shalt be saved...'**. Both scriptures do speak of Jesus as being 'Lord' but do they make it a 'requirement' for salvation or are they speaking about a title of Jesus? The 'Lordship Salvation' advocates stress good works are a necessary consequence of being declared righteous before God.

On the other side, 'Free Grace' could be described as a simple 'faith alone in Christ alone'. The Gospel is simply receiving, and having a conviction of, Christ as our personal saviour, believing His death was sufficient as a substitute for our sins.

Interestingly, both sides agree salvation is 'by grace alone through faith alone', but differ on whether true Justification can ever be followed by a life of apostasy (or as a 'carnal Christian').

Both sides are commonly misrepresented. The Lordship advocates are accused of 'adding' to the 'grace alone through faith alone' Gospel such things as works and repentance. 'Free Grace' advocates are accused of 'cheap grace', 'easy believism' and contributing to false conversions. (Certainly there has been a reaction to the multitudes of false professions, the modern 80-90% fall away rate of 'conversions' due to 'decisions' made from false gospels).

The debate hots up as to what exactly is included in the 'believing' the Gospel. The issue here is whether or not one must surrender to Christ as the 'Lord' of one's life to become a Christian. The problem here is - exactly what do people have to understand about 'Lordship' to be saved? (Do we need to take a person for weeks of discipleship so they can understand what 'Saviour' and 'Lord' means so they can accept Him as Saviour *and* Lord?). Is Christ 100% Lord of my life all the time? Does a person have to 'submit' to God as 'Lord' in every area of his or her life in order to be saved? Or does the person just need to recognize he is a sinner and in need to trust Jesus Christ for salvation (Jn.3:16; Eph.2:8-9)?

I am convinced that what is missed on both sides is the issue of salvation in *Justification* and salvation in *Sanctification*. 'Lordship' is important, but pressing that as a requirement for Justification may well create problems and confusion. Could it be that submitting to the 'Lordship' of Jesus Christ is an issue of spiritual growth? A changed life and increasing submission to Christ's

...Many memorable events give us cause to...be thankful for what we have and what we sometimes take for granted.

From the unfathomable loss of hundreds of lives aboard airliners, beheadings...Ebola...has spurred individuals and nations to act together...we continue to be thankful for.

Natural disasters again shook our local communities...be truly thankful we have been spared...Be thankful that in Australia we have...religious freedom...We hope and pray the G20 talks lead to positive change for the world.

The spirit of giving...were shown through the raising of funds...we are surrounded by heroes...You too can be a hero simply by volunteering or donating.

We...are thankful for the gift of Jesus Christ, who brought joy and light into the world with His arrival at Christmas. He truly is the reason for the season and in His name we give thanks. I wish everyone a great Christmas, and may the Light of the Lord fill you with hope, joy, courage and love...May the New Year bring you new moments and people to be thankful for'.

Editor's Comment: Is Christmas about 'giving thanks' for such things as 'religious freedom' and the 'G20 talks'? Are we to 'bring some light into their world with two simple words, thank you'? What about the real 'light' that comes from believing in Christ's death, burial and resurrection for us sinners in order to satisfy a holy God! Do I become a 'hero' by 'volunteering or donating'? Really? What gospel is this?

Editor's summary

Are we ashamed of the Gospel? Do these church leaders know what the Gospel is? If so, then why the gospels of politics, socialism, works and other earthly temporal human concerns? Where are the eternal issues of life or death in the next life? Why is the language couched in psychobabble? Why are we not calling on people to believe in Jesus?

Strong words are deserved for such a reckless betrayal of a minister's calling to preach the Gospel! Jesus did not come to earth and die a horrible death for our felt needs or for our political, social or psychological agendas! He came to redeem us from sin and our 'filthy rags' in the sight of a Holy and just God who cannot look upon sin. Yet he suffered and died as a substitute for that very sin that we might be forgiven and given a perfect righteousness not of our own, to enter a perfect righteous Heaven. This is not by works or anything of ourselves - not anything political or social. It is God's work in Christ; GRACE - God's Riches At Christ's Expense.

'For he has made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him' (2Cor.5:21)

Bring the Gospel back!

Terry Arnold

among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of [with] the Father,) full of grace and truth' (Jn.1:14).

Where is Jesus Christ and His message in this Baptist Christmas message?

UNITING CHURCH of AUSTRALIA - Rev. Professor Andrew Dutney

'...The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; and we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father.' (John 1:14)

On behalf of the Uniting Church in Australia, I greet you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ whose birth we celebrate this day; Jesus, the incarnation of God.

You probably know the stories - shepherds...angels, a star, a stable and the wise men. But it's still astonishing to me that the Almighty God entrusted the mystery of the incarnation to an ordinary teenage girl and her husband. Delivered into the world in the usual way, with all the drama and risk inherent in childbirth, the Son of God had to be fed, washed, clothed, comforted, and kept safe like any vulnerable little baby. That...Jewish family had to teach him to speak, to say please and thank you, to behave himself, to share with his siblings. But first they had to flee to Egypt, barely escaping the slaughter of children in Bethlehem. They became an ordinary refugee family - entrusted with the mystery of the incarnation. And that's what I'd ask you to think about today.

The revelation of the nature and will of God, the fulfilment of the hope of the world, was entrusted to the care of an ordinary refugee family. And when, as a grown man, Jesus taught and healed and suffered and was killed, and when he was raised from the dead, it was as the child of an ordinary refugee family.

He called us to welcome the stranger, knowing a thing or two about being a stranger himself. He commanded us to love our neighbour, knowing how essential neighbours are to daily survival, let alone peace. He commanded us to love our enemies, knowing about being 'the enemy' as well as having enemies, and how love can transform our relationships and our world.

Jesus, the child of an ordinary refugee family is being remembered and celebrated today, in a world with a record 50 million refugees, more than half of them children. As a people blessed by wealth and peace, we Australians need to be very mindful of the needs of our neighbours who seek asylum and find ways to do more. We also need to expect more of our political leaders.

The Uniting Church with the other Australian Christian Churches continues to speak out against the inhumane treatment of refugees and their families under the policies of successive Australian Governments. We urge the Australian Government to increase the annual intake of refugees, and to redouble efforts to secure the safety of the thousands of new refugees throughout the world and especially in the Middle East.

...Over the last few months I've also been heartened by the number of

Australian Christians reaching out in solidarity and friendship to their neighbours of the Muslim faith.

...So let's not accept or create unnecessary barriers between us and our neighbours. Let's make today and the year ahead a time of peace and goodwill among us all - in celebration of the birth of Jesus, the child of an ordinary refugee family and the incarnation of God...'

Editor's Comment: Is the Gospel really about Jesus being in an 'ordinary refugee family' and us needing to be 'very mindful of the needs of our neighbours who seek asylum'? Is it really a call to 'expect more of our political leaders' and to 'urge the Australian Government to increase the annual intake of refuge' and for Australian Christians to have 'friendship to their neighbours of the Muslim faith'. What gospel is this? Will this gospel of social action allow people into the Kingdom of Heaven?

The SALVATION ARMY

(Australian Commissioners Floyd J. Tidd & James Condon)

'The angels song...now cascades down through the centuries, 'Peace on the earth...'. Yet today as on that first Christmas night, there is a deep and unsatisfied longing for peace in so many corners of our world. The message of Christmas however is that peace is possible...This Christmas season, may the reign of the Prince of Peace born in Bethlehem extend through His church around the world bringing hope, light and peace to those who long for a word of good news...may His church today rejoicing, proclaim peace, bring good news and proclaim salvation.

Let there be peace on earth - a turning away from violence and a turning toward one another in love - and let it begin with us. It is our prayer this Christmas season that you might experience afresh the deep peace and of the presence of the Prince of Peace and may it overflow from your life to all...'

Editor's comment: We acknowledge the cry for 'peace' here, but will these men tell me exactly how do I get this 'peace' and 'salvation'? How do I get the 'presence of the Prince of Peace'? And who exactly is the 'prince of peace'? What exactly is the 'good news and...salvation' spoken of here?

HILLSONG Church - Pastor Brian Houston

'Peace has come...an odd statement given the world in which we currently find ourselves...But...'true peace' is able to (miraculously) enter the most difficult or pressing circumstances and bring hope...'

Continued next page >

Jesus' words are clear in the gospels...He said that this world would experience war and trouble, but that 'his promise' is one of peace and confidence...In fact, the very peace he experienced and carried, he promised to leave with us. (John 14.27)

Peace is...the 'presence of a Saviour' who cares about the human condition. Everything Jesus Christ did pointed to peace. When the judgmental religious people of the day gathered to brutally stone a woman who had offended an ancient moral code - he instead offered peace, forgiveness and justice. Where people mourned and experienced pain and heartache - he brought peace, comfort and healing. For those haunted with fear, regret or doubt - he extended peace, freedom and restoration.

This same peace is still available and accessible today.

...The God of all mankind clothed himself in flesh and entered the insanity of a lost world in order to bring sanity. He made a way for all people and became 'the way' for all cultures and all nations to be reconciled back to peace eternal.

Our prayer on this Christmas morning in 2014 is that the world would overflow with people who not only desire peace in their own experience, but also are committed to become carriers and agents of peace to the world around them...Our prayer is that families, neighbourhoods and communities alike will feel the 'tangible calm' this Christmas because light, love and peace are prevailing through the goodwill of one to another.

Two thousand years ago, over a humble stable in a town called Bethlehem, an angelic host sang and declared because indeed the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords and the PRINCE OF PEACE had come'

Editor's Comment: Praise the Lord - Jesus is mentioned. But again, how do we 'access' this 'peace' described here? What is meant by 'peace is...the presence of the saviour'?

Why is adultery a 'moral ancient code'? How can we be 'reconciled back to peace'? Exactly what is the gospel here and how are we saved?

CHURCHES OF CHRIST, QLD - Dean Phelan, CEO.

'Take time this Christmas to stop and give thanks...Christmas can be a difficult time for some of us bringing to the fore memories of lost loved ones or past family conflicts. For others it is a looked-forward-to time of extended connecting with the people that we love. It really is a privilege to have the freedom to celebrate this holiest of occasions.

This Christmas, I encourage all readers to take a few moments to stop and look around...see those who have made a difference to you...Bring some light into their world with two simple words, thank you.

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