

Your Comments and Questions

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

Dear Terry, Mike,

Re the letter and your reply concerning the 'New Heavens, New or Renewed'. (Diakrisis Sept/Oct/2017, P.19). I had studied the new earth many years ago and came to the same conclusion as Mike. Although it is not the standard belief by many, I thought the article excellent.

(G.C., NSW)

Dear Terry, I am glad to see there are others that hold the same belief about the health of the church. I have been saying the same thing for years and all I get is that I am a negative person. The more we study and look to the Lord, the more he shows us just how lacking in health we are.

I am finding it difficult to find a place to fellowship. The church I was attending spends more time singing than studying scripture. I am fed up with the way we are headed... There must be a faithful remnant here in Melbourne? Please pray the Lord guides me there. God Bless. Shalom.

(A.B., Vict)

Prayer / Praise Points

- Praise the Lord for the wide use of our 'Eternal Questions' tract locally and throughout Australia. We are currently proceeding to another print run.

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Guest editorial

The Rush to Rome...

Having written volumes on Roman Catholicism and Ecumenism over the past 20 or so years it may seem unnecessary to do that once again? Yet, the acceptance of Rome, her heresies and Nicolaitism by so many in the so-called Protestant church in our day demands that we do so again. By convincing gullible people that the Reformation was a triumph for the Vatican, Rome seeks to advance a more sinister objective. Her intent is to suppress the truth rediscovered 500 years ago this year – the glory of the Biblical Gospel. Pope Francis recently stated; *‘The intention of Luther was to renew the Church, not divide her!’*

Now that the Anglicans, Presbyterian’s, Lutherans, Baptists and others have signed on to agreements that state Rome now teaches salvation by faith alone, it is only a matter of time before the Reformation can be declared a grave error of yesteryear – with the deaths of millions of martyrs as something best forgotten in the interest of *‘unity’*.

In addition to the multitude of Rome’s heresies, blasphemies and murders during the past centuries, in September 2017 Pope Francis told world leaders to: *‘Listen to the Cry of the Earth’*. Francis, who has a strong belief in the so called *‘science’* of climate change, called upon world leaders to *‘listen to the cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor, who suffer most because of the unbalanced ecology.’*

Francis and Patriarch Bartholomew I, head of the Orthodox Church, issued a joint message to commemorate the annual *‘World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation’* just recently.

In 2015, the Pope designated September 1 as *‘a precious opportunity to renew our personal participation in this vocation as custodians of creation,’* framing the preservation of the environment as a moral responsibility. Similarly, Bartholomew - who backed Francis’ 2015 encyclical on the environment, Laudato Si, said: *‘There has never been so much turmoil on our planet, but there has never been greater opportunity for communication, cooperation and dialogue. We cannot separate our concern for human dignity, human rights or social justice from the concern for ecological preservation and sustainability.’*

In May, at the Vatican, the Pontiff gifted President Trump a copy of the climate encyclical as he considered whether the U.S. should exit from the Paris agreement in spite of papal urging not to do so.

Why would Francis say these things? Shouldn't he be pressing people to listen to the commands of Scripture instead? The Bible declares that God will cleanse and regenerate the earth by fire in the end of days, and never once tells us to *‘listen’* to it.

Christians generally don’t understand the doctrines of the Nicolaitans. That’s understandable - it is only mentioned once in John's Apocalypse. However, it is vital to point out that their doctrines were *‘hated’* by Christ Himself. Evidently it was associated with the treachery of Balaam, with emphasis upon the distinction between *‘clergy’* and *‘laity’*.

To understand the heresies of Rome, and to properly evaluate the current rush

Your Comments and Questions

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Head in the Sand?

Hi Terry, I recently heard a young Independent Baptist preacher conclude a message on the ‘church’ by saying: 1. Make sure we have Pastors and Deacons (no Elders?). 2. We are Anti Calvinists 3. We reject the Lordship Doctrine 4. We are KJV only...I never had a chance to discuss with Him any of His claims. So, now the KJV is No. 1 study tool? He also stated: ‘We are not interested in great learning, just the Scriptures’...But they maintain reading the Scripture regularly...but no deeper learning?...Interesting Times...

(Name withheld at editor’s discretion)

Editor’s comments:

This is not uncommon in many churches, but not all. Many of these pastors are trained in the narrow confines of a legalistic head in the sand approach to some doctrines. They deny what 95% of the greats have taught and learned from God - men such as Spurgeon, Jonathan Edwards, the Reformers, the Puritans, the martyrs...would all be shunned.

Many of these pastors have not even a basic understanding of what historic ‘Calvinism’ really is and confuse it with hyper-Calvinism. I have little respect or sympathy for those pastors who oppose the Doctrines of Grace (as they were called) but confuse them with what is hyper-Calvinism. And then they claim it a ‘intellectualism’ (*‘great learning’?*) to want to know the difference? (*Diakrisis* May/June 2015 has an example of an expose of this). Our booklet *‘Debates on the Doctrines of Grace’* shows the lack of understanding some pastors have on this issue - the booklet has five e-mail debates with the editor (two who debated reversed their understanding afterwards). We also have a 2 hour seminar (CD with notes) conducted in Brisbane 2013.

The church model with ‘no elders’ is common but not scripturally or spiritually sound. The epistles testify to a plurality of elders (Acts 14:23; Tit.1:5). Deacons are to serve, having none of the spiritual authority that elders/pastors have by qualification. The one elder/pastor model may be necessary in small churches where there may be no qualified elders available but the aim should be to see qualified elders raised up.

The ‘Lordship’ issue to me is one of Sanctification which begins at salvation as a process...But not enough space here to expound on this.

As for the ‘KJV only’ - I recommend and use the manuscripts KJV represents but some common ‘KJV only’ arguments are flawed because of the lack of understanding of translation issues.

A little more *‘great learning’* might be beneficial in many of these doctrines?

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Baptism - a 'Means of Grace'?

Terry, I enclose a Lutheran national magazine (Sept.2017) for your comment on an article about Baptism...

(G.O., Qld)

Editor's reply:

The article is entitled '*The Means of Grace - Holy Baptism*' (P.27). The magazine itself seems lacking in Gospel content although the word 'gospel' is mentioned often. Many of the articles seem more a social gospel.

The article itself confuses the word 'baptism' for water baptism. The following are quotes with comments following: '*The Bible teaches there is only one baptism (Eph.4:5), so regardless of whether you were baptised as an infant by sprinkling or as an adult by immersion, the call is to grow in the understanding and grace of your baptism - such as the gift of the Spirit - and baptism has ongoing relevance for our lives*'. Although there is only '*one baptism*' that puts one into the body of Christ this is not to be confused with water baptism or any other baptism of which there are many in scripture. Ephesians 4:5 is here confused with water baptism. And what has baptism by '*sprinkling*' or '*immersion*' got to do with the '*gift of the spirit*'? No scripture is given for this. '*Surely if you're baptised, then you are a baptised child of God*'. Again no scripture is given. '*Baptism immerses us in the completed work of Jesus - his death and resurrection.*' Still no scripture is given (the article is almost devoid of scripture). The writer consistently refers to water baptism which is throughout confused with the baptism into salvation into the body of Christ (Eph.4:4,5; 1Cor.12:13). Continuing to speak of water baptism, the writer says: '*With his death and resurrection there was now something worth getting baptised into...when we are baptised into Christ, we are baptised into his death...In baptism we receive release from the power of sin and its consequences of death...Baptism gives a new lease on life and a new way of confronting sin*'. This is far more than what water baptism was designed for in scripture! Again no scripture is given for this and a work of water baptism is entwined with salvation and grace: '*Through baptism we can claim the victory of Jesus*'. Finally Romans 6:3 is quoted for water baptism: '*Don't you know that your baptism connects you to the death and resurrection of Jesus*'. Again this is not water baptism but baptism into the body and salvation.

Baptism is not a '*means of grace*'. This is sacramental salvation, a remnant from Roman Catholicism, a form of baptismal regeneration. See our website article: '*Water Baptism - Meaning, Mode, History*': <http://taministries.net/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/Water-Baptism-Meaning-Mode-and-History.pdf>)

to the papacy by the churches of the Reformation - it is important to know just what this Nicolaitanism involves.

The word Nicolaitan comes from two Greek words, '*nico*' and '*laos*' or '*laity*', which means '*victory*' and '*people*', or victory over the people. It was from this doctrine that Rome established the superiority of her priests over the people.

Further, it eventually established the doctrine of the Primacy of the Bishop of Rome along with his infallibility and absolute control over all those in the Roman Catholic movement. It also reveals the merciless religious control Rome will once again maintain when she finally reaches her final wicked goal.

The clergy are an all powerful arm of Roman Catholicism. Apparently they possess the power to turn bread and wine into the actual body and blood of Christ, forgive sins, baptise unto salvation, arrange for souls to spring from an invented '*Purgatory*', and an ability to excommunicate recalcitrant adherents.

In these last days it is imperative that we see the chaos this perversion masquerading as Christianity is causing. Yet, the majority of Christians today accept Roman Catholicism as merely a branch of Christianity holding to some different and inconsequential doctrines which can be either overlooked or embraced. This also requires dismissing the multiple, and Vatican II ratified, '*Anathemas*' declared at the Council of Trent (1545-1563) against the Biblical doctrine of Justification, by faith alone and imputed righteousness.

To be Ecumenical one must join with others who claim to be found within the sphere of Christianity - requiring a '*union*' in works - ignoring the requirement for '*unity*' in doctrinal truth. This is exactly what is occurring today.

Apparently if one agrees on the virgin birth of Jesus, His sinless life, death, burial, resurrection, ascension and imminent return, it is reasonable to accept the Mass, Mary as co-redeemer, Purgatory, Indulgences, priestly absolution, salvation through the Roman Church alone, papal infallibility and sacramental salvation.

Yet, it isn't '*reasonable*'. To sign agreements with Rome as the Lutherans, of all people, have done this year - (stating that the Protestant church holds to the same doctrine as Rome on Justification) - is to deeply betray Christ.

Christians must resist all attempts by Nicolaitan groups (and others beside Rome increasingly being accepted into Christian circles) to influence them.

To add or subtract from God's Word brings God's judgement (Rev.22:18,19). In fact it already has? The decline in Protestant denominations world-wide is staggering with congregations dwindling through age and unbelief, and the Charismatic/Pentecostal assemblies embracing the papacy with great gusto and rushing to visit the Vatican, and pray for the Pontiff at every given opportunity.

The experience of regeneration - being sovereignly born again - and baptised into Christ - is a true miracle of special creation. It is not a psychological redirection wrought by sacraments and laws as taught by Rome and the cults. No legal process can accomplish or explain such an event.

We have been warned. It remains a situation to be fought against at every opportunity that some may be pulled kicking and screaming from this present consuming fire - and saved from sharing in Rome's sins and her ultimate fate.

Mike Claydon

The 'Days of Noah'?

The following article was written in 2008. It might well show how close we are to the 'days of Noah' before the flood came as a judgement from God.

What do May 17, 2004, and May 15, 2008, have in common? One judge and a redefinition of marriage against the will of the people. Both the Massachusetts Superior Court and the California Supreme Court by a one-judge margin redefined what marriage has always been in every culture and every religion for more than 5,000 years of recorded history.

Why does this matter? ...according to the 'Babylonian Talmud' - the book of rabbis' interpretation of the scriptures 1,000 years before Christ, there was only one time in history that reflects where we are right now. There was only one time in history, according to these writings, where men were given in marriage to men, and women given in marriage to women. Want to venture a guess as to when? No, it wasn't in Sodom and Gomorrah...Homosexuality was rampant there, of course, but according to the Talmud, not homosexual 'marriage'. What about ancient Greece? Rome? No. Babylon? No again. The one time in history when homosexual 'marriage' was practiced was during the days of Noah...and the 'Babylonian Talmud' attributes this as the final straw that led to the Flood...

...The Talmud's writings reveal that 'before the Flood people started to write marriage contracts between men, in other words, homosexual 'marriage,' which is more than homosexual activity - it's giving an official state stamp of approval, a sanctification...of homosexual partnership...The sin in and of itself is so contrary to why God created the world, so contrary to the order of God's nature...Even in ancient Greece they did not write marriage contracts between men. There was homosexuality, and it was wrong, but there was not an official 'blessed' policy.

The one time it happened was: 'During the days of Noah'...Matthew 24:37 'But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be'...When the Son of Man returns, the world will be like the people were in Noah's day. In those days before the Flood, the people enjoyed banquets and parties and weddings right up to the time Noah entered his boat, and the flood came to destroy them all (Luke 17:26-27).

...One-fourth of the Bible is prophecy...4,000 prophecies in that Bible have already come true down to the last detail? That leaves about 1,000 left to be fulfilled - those are the ones regarding the last days before the return of Christ, which are being checked off the list right now...

(Apostasy Alert, September/2017)

Your Comments and Questions

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Ellen G. White and the Sabbath

Dear brother...About the Seventh Day Adventists...Ellen G white as a young lady was truly saved and winning souls but she came to be flattered - and the Lord warned her...she would get sick, which at times she did but a time came and she became sick but came to bring about a vegetarian diet...it was a mistake for her to not follow the Lord's warning...There are several break offs from the Seventh Day Adventists which are genuine...It was the Baptists who first saw they should keep the seventh day and not the first day as holy, wholly apart unto the lord...many came to see it as God's will as for his church in the New Testament order in 1Cor.14:26-3.

(F.W.)

Editor's reply:

Ellen G. White was a false prophetess who did not repent of her prophecies and her plagiarism of others works. To speak well of an unrepentant false prophetess is to contradict the scriptures which detail a serious judgement for false prophets. Ellen G. White did suffer mental illnesses but what record is there of 'warnings' from the Lord and where did those warnings come from? Are there not plenty of warnings in scripture for false prophets? She continued to prophesy falsely, set dates and plagiarise much of her work until her death.

Since when is it 'God's will to keep the seventh day rather than any other day'? Paul wrote under inspiration when he said each person choose his own day to keep: 'One man esteems one day above another: another esteems every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind' (Rom.14:5). 'Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a holy day, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ' (Col.2:16,17).

The Sabbath was the 'sign' of the Mosaic covenant, not the New covenant. It was a 'shadow of things to come'. The apostles and the church fathers in the first centuries kept the 'first day of the week', the day in which Jesus rose (Matt.28:1; Mk.16:9) and the day which they broke bread and took up offerings (Act 20:7; 1Cor.16:2). We can supply all the evidences of the keeping of the first day for this to those who are willing to see. The Adventist church simply tell untruths when they state the day was changed in the third century. (See also our articles 'Saturday or Sunday?' And the list of false prophecies and statements by Ellen G. White on our website (taministries.net).

Finally, I am unsure what 1Cor.14:26-33 has to do with the Sabbath or Ellen G. White? The subject there is tongues and prophesying?

· *No person is excluded from worship, fellowship or service in The Salvation Army on the basis of sexuality or marital status;*

· *No person is excluded from employment by The Salvation Army on the basis of sexuality or marital status; and*

· *No person is excluded from volunteering with The Salvation Army on the basis of sexuality or marital status.*

The Salvation Army is a Christian movement dedicated to sharing the love of Jesus... (Commissioner National Commander)

The statement does appear to affirm Biblical marriage. The compromise comes in the practises. Salvation Army was once an evangelistic soul winning organisation founded by William Booth and they would have abhorred the same sex agendas as an abomination in the sight of God. Today Salvation army has become a welfare system rather than 'evangelical'.

To state that any campaign against same-sex marriage would 'harm' thousands is nonsense. It is not political campaigns that harm or divide communities – it the TRUTH that does that?

To say that one 'does not endorse same-sex marriage' and then welcome people holding to the same-sex agenda to be accepted for employment and volunteering is a stunning compromise. What does it mean to be 'sharing the love of Jesus' if that requires ignoring the scriptural TRUTH?

I worked very closely with the Salvation Army in the welfare field. They shocked me over their employment practises. Most of their workers were unbelievers and ripped off the Army whenever they could. The officers I knew were cultural Christians who would never speak of Christ in the refuges and other facilities. Many disliked me with a passion because of my continually challenging them over their lack of Christian commitment. They did NOT check people's sexuality before allowing them access to vulnerable people and they should have been charged with gross negligence.

I wonder if Paul would be accepted as a 'volunteer' for the Salvos? He, being politically incorrect, rather foolishly put pen to paper and wrote; '*For this reason God gave them up to passions of dishonour; for even their females exchanged the natural use for that which is contrary to nature, and likewise also the males, having left the natural use of the female, were inflamed by their lust for one another, males with males, committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the recompense which was fitting for their error*'. Just as well he was able to make tents otherwise he may not have been able to work for William Booth's successors? Are we to welcome people who do such things into our service of worship to the Lord, or to confront them and tell them the truth of their perilous condition before a righteous and rightly angry God?

That high speed whine you hear is the founder William Booth spinning in his grave?

Mike Claydon

Islamophiles Prove Our Point



The West is filled with clueless wonders who tell us repeatedly and adamantly that Islam is not a threat, it is a religion of peace, and the only real problem we face is 'Islamophobia'. How many times have we heard Western leaders, politicians and 'experts' rehash this mantra? It is the only accepted public line one is allowed to take on this issue. One dare not say that Islam IS in fact a problem, that it is a direct threat to Western values and principles, and unless we wake up to this reality we may well lose it all. But those who dare to state the obvious are treated as the enemy.

Some of us will keep proclaiming the truth on this matter regardless of those who want to live in la la land...The funny thing is, reality has a way of breaking through, shattering the deception and forcing us to face the facts even if we do not want to. An obvious case in point of all this has made the news headlines for the past few days. A proposal to build a [Jewish] synagogue in Sydney has been rejected. Why? Because of fears it would become a target of the Islamists! Wait, run that by me again! Those who have shouted the loudest that Islam is no threat to our way of life are now actually telling us we cannot build a synagogue because it might result in Islam, er, becoming a threat! The mind reels. But let me first offer a few more details of this shocker of a story.

One reports states: A local council has banned the construction of a synagogue in Bondi because it could be a terrorist target...The decision, which has rocked the longstanding Jewish community in the iconic suburb, was upheld in court this week as the nation reeled from the alleged airline terror threat and debate raged over increased security measures at airports and other public places.

The Land and Environment Court backed the decision by Waverley Council to prohibit the construction of the synagogue in Wellington St, Bondi...because it was too much of a security risk for users and local residents.

Jewish leaders are shocked because the decision suggests they cannot freely practice their religion because they are the target of hate by Islamist extremists.

...Yes I am just as shocked by this as these Jewish leaders are. So what we have going on here is really two things: One, this is in fact an admission that we have a problem with Islam! The very thing so many of us have been saying for so long is now being tacitly admitted to.

The second point is this: instead of doing the obvious (deal with dangerous Islam) they are caving in, and targeting the victims of dangerous Islam....This makes as much sense as siding with rapists over against their victims...But of course in many Muslim-majority countries that is just what we find happening: rape victims are further punished while nothing is done about the rapists!

...Because devout Muslims so dislike Jews and Christians, the way forward to a peaceful and harmonious society is to ban the building of all synagogues and churches, so as to keep Muslims happy...

(Excerpted from article by Bill Muehlenberg, August 5, 2017)

Rome's Doublepeak

Pope Francis Tells Followers To 'Trust Christ' Then Leads Them In Prayer To 'Virgin Mary' For Intercession...



Do you find it even the least bit ironic that, after preaching a message warning against 'horoscopes and fortune tellers' that Pope Francis leads his gullible sheep into praying to a statue of the 'Queen of Heaven', and asking her to 'intercede' for them? This is an example of Vatican 'double speak'....

...Giving a 'sermon' at the Vatican, Pope Francis spoke to his Roman Catholic followers warning against 'putting one's trust in horoscopes and fortune telling rather than Christ, who is the only true security that gets us through times of trial and darkness'. Sounds pretty good, right? Sounds like a Christian, right? He continued; 'When we do not cling to the Word of the Lord, but consult horoscopes and fortune tellers, we begin to sink', (using the illustration of Peter attempting to walk on water) the Pope said. That episode, he said, serves as a reminder 'that faith in the Lord and in his word does not open a path where everything is calm and easy; it does not take us away from the storms of life'.

*Wow, that's pretty good stuff, right? Almost...right up to about this point; Francis then closed his address asking that the Virgin Mary intercede in helping all to 'stay firm in the faith in order to resist the storms of life, to **stay on the boat of the [Roman] Church**, eschewing the temptation to go on amusing, yet insecure boats of **ideologies, fashions and slogans**'.*

(Apostasy Alert, 14 August 2017)

Editor's comment:

The Bible makes it clear that we are not to consult the dead (Deut.18:11), and yet the Roman Catholic Church continues the practice of praying to Mary and saints. This practise is not found in the early centuries of the church.

Catholic teaching has Mary a 'mediatrix of all graces', but the Bible says, '*For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus*' (1Tim.2:5; see also Heb.12:24). It is only through Him that we have access to the Father. The 'Queen of Heaven' title was first used by Pope Martin in the seventh Century.

The 'doublepeak' of the Roman church is that the speech is a mixture of psychological or logical human thoughts and traditions with a sprinkling of common sense. Rarely is scripture quoted correctly or in context. There is simply no doctrine for prayers to

Mary or the saints either in scripture or in the early church. The mariolatry found in the Roman religion is entirely an invention of man.

Your Comments and Questions

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Salvation Army on Same Sex Marriage

Hi Terry, I attach the Australian Salvation Army's internal positional statement for the upcoming plebiscite. At first I thought 'off to a good start' then it progressively compromised from there. What do you think?

...It reminded me of a song, 'you put you left foot in, you pull your left foot out, you put you left foot in and shake it all about you do the hokey pokey and turn all about'. The interesting thing about their compromise is that they state that they won't discriminate against any volunteer or employee re their sexuality. So a paedophile's sexual preference is to have sex with children. So does that mean that they won't do anything about their 'employment' or 'volunteer' status? That appears to include officers (clergy). I wonder why they still have police checks on people who work with children when according to their statement it doesn't matter. Many unsaved people are working in their shops, counselling and emergency services.

Apostasy abounds. Even so Lord, come. My eyes are set on the things above because God cannot be far away from telling our Lord Jesus Christ to come and take us. Yours in Christ, Terry,

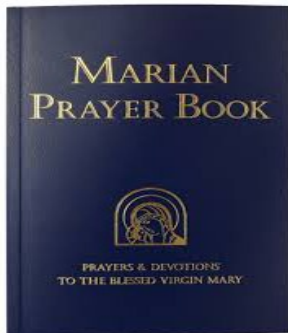
(Name withheld at editor's discretion)

Sub editor's (Mike Claydon) Reply:

The attachment was an 'Internal Communication Proposed Changes to Australian Marriage Law' dated 18 August 2017. Excerpts only: 'The Salvation Army, an international movement, is a charitable organisation and an evangelical part of the universal Christian Church...' 'the marriage of one man to one woman is a sacred institution ordained by God'...'The Salvation Army does not consider it has a right to direct people as to how they should respond and will not be campaigning... The Salvation Army believes that such a campaign could harm thousands of individuals and their families, and cause a bitter divide within the Church and between the church and a large proportion of Australians.

The Salvation Army in Australia, in alignment with Salvation Army policy internationally, does not endorse same-sex marriage...The Salvation Army does not discriminate on the basis of sexual identity in the delivery of its social services...All people are welcome to worship and share in the fellowship and community of The Salvation Army. In line with our unwavering commitment to our mission to meet human needs in the name of Jesus Christ and to do this without discrimination, we must ensure that:

· All The Salvation Army's social services operate without discrimination...without concern or reference to a person's sexuality or marital status.



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Azusa St. Revival and 'Tongues'

Terry, I recently saw a link on the internet about the Azusa St. Revival which is said to be the foundation of the Pentecostal movement. It was supporting the revival. During the interview with two who were present at Azusa St, they mentioned that the tongues were real languages...

(G.A., Qld)

Editor's reply:

This is a subject close to my heart as I was entrenched in and fooled by this movement for many years until I researched it fully, including scanning and collecting documents of the day (1906). There is one side of Azusa St. often presented which ignores the real events of the day. The Pentecostal movement was actually not founded on Azusa St. but further back in 1901 when Charles Parham challenged a group of young students to experience the Acts 2 spiritual manifestations. One lady, Agnus Ozeman, spoke in what some thought was Chinese. But later Parham brought in linguists who adamantly stated it was not a real language but ecstatic babble.

One of the students was William Seymour who later pastored an assembly on Azusa St, in California (after being banned from a Nazarene church). The reports of real languages at Azusa St were again counterfeit to Acts 2. Charles Parham was called in to assess the situation and was scathing in his rebuke of the the babble and the unholy manifestations which occurred. He went to his deathbed stating that the whole saga was counterfeit. Yet the Pentecostal and later the Charismatic movement would be founded on this, from Parham, Seymour and these events! It has to be one of the greatest frauds and deceptions in history! Parham was later charged with paedophilia and also charged with the death of a girl who was supposedly 'healed' but who did not get to a doctor. His ministry ended in shame..

The public and the media wrote shocking accounts of what took place at Azusa St. The reports of Chinese and Russian languages being miraculously spoken were not in Azusa St. but exaggerated and false reports concerning 'missionaries' who went out from there. But the truth is documented that those missionaries came back devastated in realising they could not really speak known languages. The book to read first is '*Fields White Unto harvests*' which is an unbiased historical account. The history of Topeka, Kansas and Azusa St might alone shock modern Pentecostal/Charismatics into checking their roots. Most Pentecostal pastors are unaware of the history.

10 Commandments for Would-Be Megapastors

1. Never say anything controversial. Just stick to feel-good messages and sentimental, syrupy stuff. You must never rock the boat or stick your neck out. Above all else, you want the masses to like you, and you never want them to feel uncomfortable.

2. Tell people what they want to hear. This is absolutely vital. If you tell people what they need to hear you will soon lose 90 per cent of your audience. Therefore just stick to telling them what they most want to hear. Tickle their ears and feed their desires and you will do just fine.

3. Do not discuss anything theological or doctrinal. Don't you know that creeds, dogma and theology turn people off like mad? Therefore avoid all this like the plague, and just offer the fairy floss stuff that is so easy to receive, and makes no demands on anyone.

4. Above all, keep people happy. Keep the masses entertained and amused. Always offer the best entertainment around, so they do not need to dish out good money to see pagan entertainment. Get the best PA system, the best rock guitarists, the most razzmatazz, the hippest smoke machines, the coolest strobe lights, and the blackest stage. Hey, if it works for the world, why not the church?

5. Never tell a would-be believer that anything hard or difficult or demanding will come their way. Never mention suffering, hardship, deprivation, obedience, self-denial, or cross-bearing. Simply focus on 'your best life now' and how to be wealthy, successful, get everything you want, and even lose weight for Jesus.

6. Always try to be as trendy as possible. Be cool, relevant and oh so hip. In other words, try to be as much like the world as possible. Go with the flow and just fit in with what is happening in the culture around you. Works every time.

7. Never, ever talk about 'negative' things like sin, Hell, repentance, judgment, the crucified life, or denying self. That will automatically keep the crowds away. As stated in Commandment One, just accentuate the positive and tell folks happy and cheerful stuff.

8. Always emphasise the easily digestible stuff, like love and mercy and grace. Never speak about the holiness of God, the justice of God, the wrath of God, the requirements of God, the Lordship of Christ, or the obedient life. That is always a turnoff and we no longer need to preach such stuff anyway nowadays.

9. Make sure people think that Christianity is all about them. Make it seem that Jesus died on the cross so they could be happy, self-fulfilled, satisfied, rich,

contented and utterly focused on self. Never ever tell people that they must deny themselves, carry the cross, renounce sin, the flesh and the devil, and exist for God and others. Just make it all about themselves, and you will have a mega-church in no time.

10. Never of course speak about any of the hot potato social issues of the day, such as abortion, homosexuality, porn, the war on the family, or other religions and worldviews. That is a sure way to get folks uptight, antsy, and uncomfortable. You sure don't want to do that. You want them always to be happy, self-satisfied and thoroughly entertained.

So remember, follow these really easy Ten Commandments and you too can have the megachurch of your dreams. You will be featured on the cover of Time magazine; Oprah Winfrey will have you on her show – often; and the secular media will regularly sing your praises. The world will absolutely love you, in other words.

Back to the Bible

Umm, if you happen to think that all of the above sounds a bit out of place with New Testament Christianity, well, you would be totally correct. It has absolutely nothing to do with NT faith of course, and everything to do with worldly, carnal and compromised Western churchianity.

And sadly, everything mentioned above we find in abundance throughout the Western world. How many bigtime churches of today seem to perfectly fit with the ten items mentioned above? It would be laughable if it were not so downright serious.

The contrast with the carnal Christianity of today and what we find in the NT could not be greater....

It is loaded with hardship, persecution, suffering, tears, rejection, grief, opposition and rejection. ..

It is time we got back to biblical Christianity, and reject all the compromise, all the carnality, and all the worldliness we find in so many churches today. Thank God there are many churches still standing strong and remaining true to Christ and his Word. But really, there should be many, many more.

I have to once again conclude with someone who knew all about these matters, Leonard Ravenhill: 'If Jesus had preached the same message that ministers preach today, He would never have been crucified'

(Excerpted from an article by by Bill Muehlenberg)

friends who often are not real friends. The danger is that it cheapens intimacy and also has no boundaries between private and public. We are in fact communicating with each other less in person than ever before and yet we are supposed to be highly 'connected' in social media?

Other Factors

Because of television and social media devices we now have seen the attention span of most humans diminish significantly. As an ex school teacher I have seen this personally with children. As a pastor I have seen it also with Christians. People rarely today read books of any value or depth. The cry now is for DVD's or online 'bytes' which capture attention for a short duration.

Gone are the days when one could regularly have people sitting under an hour of doctrinal teaching. It's now topical and short and 'relational' in most churches. Social media has arguably driven this.

Statistics are also showing that social media also affects sleep patterns, especially if used close to bed time.

There is also the question of radiation from phones and devices. Some would say the jury is out on that but it does appear that more studies are showing a correlation to brain damage, tumours and even mental disorders.

Conclusion

Is Facebook really shaping you to be more and more conformed into the image of Jesus? Has Facebook become just another 'god', even a graven image? Has our social media become just another drug of which there are many to distract attention from Christ and His word? Do you wake up in the morning and reach first for your phone or your media device?

Are we using social media and Facebook to advantage and to spread the Gospel? The concern is that this social revolution may cause people to be further anaemic in the things of a Holy God and another distraction from this world.

I have been roundly criticised for my negative view of some of the use of social media, in particular Facebook. I pray that my concern in this article is simply at least a warning and an opportunity to consider the impact social media has on our Christian lives. I don't doubt that there may be some Christians who carefully and strictly use Facebook for a different purpose, (often to do with family contact only). If Christians can use Facebook and other social media to further the Gospel or secondarily to connect with family only, then praise the Lord.

I pray that some of the issues raised will come as a warning for Christians to be mindful of the subtle traps of social media, and in particular Facebook.

Terry Arnold

the ‘*prince of the power of the air*’ (Eph.2:2), will never encourage pure Christianity or the true Gospel, but will endeavour to have media users indulge in the three sins that Satan first tempted Eve with - the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh and the pride of life. Social media is obviously biased towards this endeavour. Thus the temptations are great and numerous. The sidetracks are many.

The Offences

There is also the concern I see of hurts and ‘bullying’ on Facebook. Many are just too young or immature to be handling disagreements, criticisms and offensive comments. I regularly see people affected and agitated by comments or by being ‘cut off’ by ‘friends’ on Facebook. Christians are commanded not to take such ‘actions’ but to practise Matthew 18 - the sorting of offences face to face and through the local church. Facebook has the mechanisms to cut this process completely. Social media has the potential to encourage Christians to hide behind the screen rather than face off with someone and reconcile any differences. The accountability factor would also then be drastically reduced.

I am also aware that Facebook has its own rules too which can take down Christian comments made or defenses of moral laws or biblical statutes if these ‘offend’ others. *The media in general has its own unbiblical laws of tolerance and will ultimately never be the friend of the Christian.*

The problem with social media too is it is *instant and public*. There have been times when I have replied to e-mails far too quickly and then realised that the reply was abrupt or offensive in tone. Many times there is no opportunity to reconcile face to face. I personally have tried to enforce my own rule that I either do not reply to rude or offensive e-mails or I wait a few days after prayer. However, I find each year more people are too often offended by comments and replies on social media. Many simply do not or are unable to handle this in a Godly manner. In some cases it leads to bullying, depression, and even suicide. And Christians are not immune to these problems.

The Counterfeit

Lastly, social media, such as Facebook, can be an unreal world. It does not have the tangibility of face to face relationships. It is synthetic and artificial for proper contact and connection. Things on Facebook can be said that would not be said easily face to face. We need to be aware that in social media such as Facebook one does not see, let alone understand, the possible emotion, tears, the laughter, the impressions as the words, scripture and counsel does as it works on the heart. Facebook has a created reality of its own.

On Facebook, people can be made to believe they have dozens or hundreds of ‘friends’. They can delete those that do not agree or who do not flatter them. They can find others to be their ‘friends’. This can lead to us creating an image that we are not. It can often be counterfeit ‘friendships’ which alters the biblical understanding of friendship and fellowship and replaces it with self esteem and

Social Media and Facebook - a Pastor's Concerns

I am probably getting myself into a lot of trouble with this article. It seems to raise cries or increases nervousness whenever I raise it verbally. At the outset I am not saying that social media in and of itself is intrinsically evil or that Christians sin if they are on media such as Facebook.

This is not a legalistic rant, but a measured pastoral concern for what I have seen and heard from many Christians and pastors. I do understand that like any media, whether social or otherwise, that it can be used in differing ways by Christians. (Our own local church has a connection to Facebook from the website which is carefully monitored by two people in the church).

My first experience with Facebook came when it first became the fashionable rage. I have always felt we should be slow rather than too quick to take up the latest fashion. The book of Romans literally says not to be ‘*conformed to the fashions of this age*’ (Rom.12:2). I also resisted the pressure to be on Facebook because I simply did not believe I needed it or could benefit from it in ministry.

The exercise below is not just about Facebook but it fits many other forms of social media. My plea is for a warning to be given as to how and even why we use such social media

A Personal Experience

Some years ago I wanted to catch up with some of the young people I had taught as a school teacher in a Christian school. Some I had developed close relationships with and I desired to know what they were doing in their walk with the Lord. It seemed that the only way I could feasibly find them was on Facebook. So, I reluctantly joined. I did find many of them who had by now gone their own way, married, had children and some had moved away. Some of the connections were good. However, I was surprised at how many had thrown away their Christian upbringing and education. But what shocked me the most was what some professing Christians had on their Facebook pages in their ‘likes’, ‘hobbies’ and ‘religion’. Clearly there were some aspects that would be considered by many Christians not ‘Christian’ and not appropriate. Many had mixtures of favourite books ranging from liberal, even anti Christian books, yet also the Bible. Others had movies ranging from adult only, to Christian movies. The mixtures I found to be thoroughly confusing and some personally unholy and offensive. One young person had a link to a website which paraded night clothing and underwear that us men really do not need to be seeing. I have recently been shown examples of Facebook accounts held by young professing Christians who have links to sites that would be considered by some to be pornographic or at least immoral by many.

It seems to me that young people in particular are prone to either misusing social media or being largely distracted by it.

So much I found on Facebook also to be personal agendas which I would argue would be best left as private. The experience of finding these people from my past

was personally both confusing and disillusioning. I then disconnected Facebook (not an easy task I discovered) as I believed I had completed the exercise and it was not encouraging to remain looking for, or ‘connecting’ with, these people.

Over the years since that exercise I have listened to passing comments and reports some have made about things they have read about others on Facebook accounts. Increasingly I was hearing what sounded more like gossip or private and idle thoughts of others, yet expressed for all to read and share. It is this public aspect of Facebook I find disconcerting.

At the same time I began receiving articles and reports from other pastors who were becoming concerned about the effects of social media and particularly Facebook with some of their congregation. It was then I investigated more the negative aspects of Social Media in general. I pray that some of the following might cause readers to think about at least how they use social media and Facebook.

Redeeming the Time?

Firstly, my concern is the amount of time people are using this form of social media and or the Internet, which might be detrimental to them reading their Bibles. Statistics show clearly most Christians today simply infrequently read, let alone ‘study’, their Bibles. I grant that the internet has in my own ministry revolutionised the time we answer questions and requests for Christian resources. Due to the invention of e-mail, the amount of material and resources that can be disseminated has increased dramatically. We do our best to limit the time on e-mail to the ministry goals. But still I grant there are times when e-mail conversations might waste valuable time.

The time people spend scrolling through comments and links from ‘friends’ on Facebook can easily consume the time needed in the Word of God. We are responsible for the good stewardship of our time. Are the hours spent on Facebook contributing to such stewardship? Many admit to me that they are spending hours each week on social media or Facebook and it is in fact taking them away from their Bibles. I grant that this is more so with young people than older. But the statistics in the U.S. concerning this are frightening with figures showing Christians in general are spending hours each day on Facebook and other media.

We are told to ‘*See then that you walk carefully, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.*’ (Eph.5:15,16). The word ‘redeem’ has the sense of ‘buying back’. Here it means to make the most of the time *now*.

The Narcissistic Revolution

Secondly, the other thing that concerns me about social media is the ever present danger of the selfishness of it all. Facebook as much as any social media has done more to increase narcissism than any other. Narcissism is the pursuit of

self gratification or egotistic admiration of one’s own attributes. Narcissism is now considered a widespread social problem. Facebook provided the forum for it to be really about us, our thoughts, our hobbies, our tastes, our religion, our likes and personal opinions. The stuff of this can be addictive. But how truthful are we about ourselves with this media? Facebook may encourage us to be what we want to be and to be the centre of attention, but this might not always match what we are in real life.

There is the danger of *self importance* being displayed on media such as Facebook. Many are intent on displaying to all the latest achievement in their own lives from the cake they baked today to the ‘larger’ achievements. But what is the goal of this? And why do I need this? Many posts are written to impress someone else and get ‘likes’ which will give more satisfaction - what some wrongly call ‘self esteem’. And do we really believe we have 100 ‘friends’? Really? If we are honest Facebook could very easily *shape our own heart* rather than display the heart of God.

The idle and useless comments, opinions and talk that goes on day by day on Facebook has been described by many as ‘narcissistic drivel’. Do we need to be putting up ones hobbies, tastes, likes and personal opinions for all to see? Surely there is much in our lives that needs to be private so as not to cause a ‘stumbling block’ to those who are ‘weak’ in the things that we may see as freedoms (1Cor.8:8; Rom.14:13-23).

Facebook at times also encourages ‘*busybodies*’ (2Thess.3:11; 1Tim.5:13) - people who are busy in dialogue and ‘connecting’, but the danger is idle talk, even gossip and worse. For Christians it arguably can encourage a lazy fellowship.

Put simply, Christians can easily talk too much on social media. Many times comments made are simply hasty and unnecessary. Social media does not help Christians to restrain their speech and refrain from unnecessary and idle comments (Pr.10:19; 29:20). Concerning Christian opinions on the media - there may well be a time to go public but let it be *for the sake of the Gospel or a standard of righteousness*.

The Lustful Sidetracks

There is also another dangerous side to Facebook and other forms of social media. Many, including professing Christians, have searched out their old ‘girlfriends’ and mates or in curiosity ventured onto pornographic sites, a plague that most pastors are aware is rampant in the church today. It is sometimes too easy for people to engage in their fleshly lusts hidden from view.

It might surprise some readers to know that pornography is rampant amongst Christians today. Most church shepherds will admit they have professing Christians addicted to it. It is estimated that about 35% of the Internet is made up of pornographic material. That figure is increasing and an ever increasing problem in churches.

It must be understood that it is not Christians who control the media. The world and the new Age has a solid grasp on it. That media, under the control of