



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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teaching, informing and equipping the church.
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Contents

- P.2,3 Editor’s Comment
- P.4 The Universe Shouldn’t Exist, Scientists Now Say...
- P.5 The Progression of Liberal Theology; The ‘Slippery Slope’ Is Real
- P.6 Roman Catholics/Lutherans Explore Common Beliefs, Differences
- P.7,8 Persecution Now Epidemic; Where Do Your Charitable Dollars Go At Christmas?
- P.9-14 What Is Biblical ‘Worship’?
- P.15,16 ‘Apostasia’ the ‘Rapture’?
- P.17-20 Comments & Questions

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Editor's Comment

The new same sex marriage laws in Australia show how something that was not long ago outlawed and considered by most to be immoral, unnatural or even sinful, is now 'loving' and 'fair'. The turning of opinion *in just a few decades* has not just been in the secular arena but with many denominations and professing Christians. I personally lay much of the reason for the turning tide upon the modern church which has so apostatised in the second half of the twentieth century, that most denominations are hardly now recognisable by their teachings. They have lost their 'salt'. Where they once stood on this issue has clearly been almost totally eroded. Even the very few denominations who have produced statements against same sex marriage have hardly voiced a public concern?

The great turning of the tide in same sex views are all in great contrast to Biblical truths. What was once sin, immoral, unnatural and even an abomination to God, is now apparently what God would allow in 'love' and 'equality'.

The arguments that attempt to actually use the Bible in support of same sex marriage are quite fanciful. The twisting of scripture and the various exegesis of passages is nothing short of desperation to make God say what He does not say. God's condemnation of same sex activities is blunt, clear and severe. The only way to avoid that is to either twist the literal meaning of scripture or to deny that the Word of God is God breathed and final. Hence many Christians now call themselves 'progressive' Christians believing the scriptures are for another time or need updating. God somehow did not take this into account when he breathed out his revelation in the 66 books of the Bible?

If this is so then why is it that God did not foresee the 'progressiveness' of man and in later books rescind or alter what he had written long ago? Rather than do this he appears to have not only repeated the condemnations but *maintained* the intensity of the punishment for same sex practise.

The array of condemnations by God is all encompassing from Genesis (19:1-28) to Moses (Lev.18:22; 20:13) to the prophets and the New Testament. You cannot read the Bible for long without a mention of this sin.

The Bible is clear - homosexuality and lesbianism are severely condemned in the Old Testament as an 'abomination' carrying the penalty of death (Lev.18:22). In the New Testament it is called a '*vile affection*'; being '*against nature*'; '*unseemly*'; and '*error*' (Rom.1:26,27); and that this act of '*going after strange flesh*' will bring '*eternal fire*' (Jude 7). The Greek word for '*strange*' here means 'another of a different kind' and refers to men with men or women with women. Another reference is 1Corinthians 6:9,10: '*...the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of heaven...nor the effeminate, nor the abusers of themselves with mankind...*' The original Greek words here for '*effeminate*' and '*abusers*' specifically refer to Homosexuals and Lesbians.

Yet the above is whitewashed by 'Christian' Gay and Lesbian activists who plead for and refer to God's love. Yes, God is a God of love but He calls all to repentance before judgement. God is also a God of wrath and a righteous and holy judge. Sin must be judged, either in Jesus on the cross for the believer by

grace through faith in the blood sacrifice and death of Christ; or at the Great White Throne judgement of unbelievers preceding the eternity of Hell!

What is often not understood also is that Homosexuality is severely condemned *because it is contrary to Gods design of creation* - a man and woman as one flesh in marriage (Gen.2:18-25; Matt.19:4-6; Eph.5:22-33).

The Bible is scathing of those who call something that is evil good. ***‘Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!’*** (Is.5:20).

The new ‘marriage’ act will be at the expense of many family values and will affect children in ways we cannot imagine. The consequences for the freedom of churches in how vocal they can be on this issue is already displayed in the countries where same sex marriage has been legalised. Many examples in Canada and even Ireland, where same sex marriage is new, can be cited. The ‘slippery slope’ argument is not to be laughed at as same sex advocates do. The fact of it is already being displayed in countries that have adopted same sex practices some years ago.

What do we do now as Christians? How do we respond? How do we treat ‘gay’ people and those who accept what God claims is sin. There are two possible extreme reactions. One is to accept the gay marriage agenda and ignore it; the other is to condemn the participants themselves. But there is a biblical way...

The homosexual sinner desperately needs compassion with truth - the truth in love (Eph.4:15). At the same time Christians must not compromise on the scriptures, no matter how loving we must be. But we must realise that people who practice this sin are not Christians *according to the biblical judgements pronounced*, regardless of their profession. We must also accept that non christians ‘cannot’ understand spiritual matters (Rom.8:7; 1Cor.2:14). And they will not understand it until they are born again of the Spirit of God.

Logical arguments with same sex advocates will not change them. In fact this author believes their logic is humanly reasonable. But that logic is not acceptable to God because it is fallen logic from sinful humanity. What the same sex advocates need is the Gospel of God as a creator being who has sent the good news that although we are fallen in sin and have broken His commandments, he has sent his Son, Jesus Christ, to satisfy the due punishment for laws broken. The Gospel needs to be proclaimed before condemning ‘Gay’ people.

But if asked where we stand on this issue of same sex marriage, we must affirm the Bible’s commands if asked. I once knew a homosexual who was converted. He admitted that he still had some homosexual ‘tendencies’ and desires. But he was following God’s revelation as in the Bible and choosing to strive for sanctification, despite the battle. He was winning the war.

Our response should be a Gospel response. We must confront the lost sinner, whether gay or not, with the scriptures that condemns him as a sinner needing to be pointed to faith and repentance in salvation in Jesus Christ. We must stay faithful to the scriptures and in a holiness to the Lord, and then leave the result with our Lord, regardless of the response.

Terry Arnold

The Universe Shouldn't Exist, Scientists Now Say.....



'We don't know why the universe isn't destroying itself...' Our universe shouldn't exist, scientists say. The most elite scientists in the world are still struggling to find why exactly our universe didn't destroy itself as soon as it came into existence. That's what science says should have happened - but it clearly hasn't, since you're here reading this, as far as we know.

At the beginning of the universe, according to the standard model, there were equal amounts of matter and anti-matter. The trouble with that is that they would each have annihilated each other, leaving none of the matter that surrounds us today.

Researchers have been frantically looking for some difference between matter and anti-matter that could explain why the universe is still around. But they have tried a range of different possibilities - that they have different mass, electric charge, or something else - but have found no difference. That has led researchers to question why the universe is still around at all. 'All of our observations find a complete symmetry between matter and antimatter, which is why the universe should not actually exist', explained Christian Smorra, the author of a new study conducted at CERN. 'An asymmetry must exist here somewhere but we simply do not understand where the difference is. What is the source of the symmetry break?'

The latest possibility was matter and anti-matter's different magnetism. But new research shows that they are identical in that way too - lending further mystery to the question of why the universe is still around at all'.

(Apostasy Alert Nov/2017)

Editor's comment:

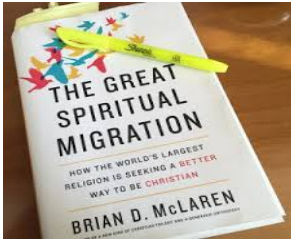
Could they be reading the wrong book again? Yet even general revelation is available: 'Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God has showed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools' (Rom.1:19-22)

Charles Spurgeon stated: 'The worst sort of clever men are those who know better than the Bible and are so learned that they believe that the world had no Maker, and that men are only monkeys with their tails rubbed off'

'Speak of evolution - here it is - 'When lust has conceived, it brings forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, brings forth death'. Darkness never begets light, filth never creates purity, hell never yields heaven, and depravity never produces grace'

'If God's word be true, evolution is a lie'

The Progression of Liberal Theology



In the early twentieth century various movements entered the church and watered down the all sufficiency of scripture - scripture as inspired of God, inerrant and a standard with absolutes for doctrine. Various modern movements came and morphed into other movements. The 'church growth' movement brought new teachings and ideas, often from the markets of the world. Then the 'Emergent Church' movement which carried us further into liberal theology.

In a new book ('The Great Spiritual Migration'), Emergent leader Brian McLaren continues as a leading change agent within the Church. Having made incremental progress over a period of decades, those who identify as 'Progressive Christians', like McLaren, actually seek to transform Christianity into a single spiritual entity. Their agenda fits nicely/perfectly with the biblical prophecies that point to a future one-world religion.

McLaren is now advocating that we jettison the 'malfunctioning old time religion'. Above all else, Progressives despise biblical Christianity and have been working to undermine it for a century or more. McLaren takes exception to what believers might refer to as the biblical God: 'We must become atheists in relation to the Supreme Being of violent and dominating power'.

If one tracks 'thought leaders' like McLaren, then looks at their effects...The spiritual migration they seek is well under-way...combined with the outright heresy and apostasy of the Progressive community, this movement away from the importance of doctrine is alarming. We live in perilous times, for sure, but God's Word is eternal and unchanging!

(Apostasy Alert, Nov/2017)

The 'Slippery Slope' Is Real

The church of Sweden has ordered its clergy to stop referring to God as 'Lord' and 'He' and be gender neutral. The move is one of several taken by the national Evangelical Lutheran church...headed by a woman, Archbishop Antje Jackelen.

[But] the Bible is not inclusive. Rather, it is exclusive...God has placed salvation in His only begotten Son, Jesus...God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit are revealed as masculine and referred to as 'He'. To deny that is to do the work of antichrist and pervert the scripture. God, who created gender division, is quite specific.

(Source: Geoffrey Grider; reported in Apostasy Alert Nov/2017)

Editor's comment: If one looks at countries where same sex marriage is legislated (Canada, Ireland, New Zealand...) the 'slippery slope' is already well apparent and with freedom of speech and exemptions already falling away rapidly.

Roman Catholics, Lutherans Explore Common Beliefs and Differences

The official Roman Catholic-Lutheran dialogue will begin a deeper exploration of common beliefs and differences on 'church, Eucharist and ministry', the Vatican and the Lutheran World Federation announced yesterday.

When Pope Francis joined Bishop Munib A. Younan, then the president of the Lutheran World Federation, for a prayer service in Sweden in 2016, the two noted the pain many of their fellow Roman Catholics and Lutherans - especially Roman Catholics and Lutherans married to each other - experience when they cannot share the Eucharist at each other's services... 'We long for this wound in the Body of Christ to be healed. This is the goal of our ecumenical endeavours...our commitment to theological dialogue'.

The Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and the Lutheran World Federation announced yesterday that the next task of their formal dialogue commission would be 'to discern in a prayerful manner our understanding on church, Eucharist and ministry, seeking a substantial consensus so as to overcome remaining differences between us'.

The announcement was part of a statement marking the joint commemoration of the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation. After 500 years of division...Roman Catholics and Lutherans...commemorated the Reformation together, acknowledging their past sins and pledging to work for full unity, said the statement published on Reformation Day, which recalls the day in 1517 that Martin Luther sparked the Protestant Reformation by posting his '95 Theses'...

(Apostasy Alert Oct/2017)

Sub editor's (Mike Claydon) comments:

On October 31, 2017 the Reformation was commemorated by many Protestant groups as the 500th anniversary of that. The Roman Catholic Church insists there is no need for a Reformation any more because their Church, it says, is now in agreement doctrinally with Protestantism in many areas. But there is one area (perhaps the most significant of all because it has to do with salvation) that the Roman Church does not, and will not, ever claim to be the same, and that is in the Eucharist (i.e., the sacrament of the Mass). For if there was no Eucharist and Mass, there would be no Roman Catholic Church. The Eucharist is the practice and belief that the real presence of Jesus is in the communion wafer (an event the Roman Catholic Church refers to as Transubstantiation that can only be performed by a Catholic priest), which is to be consumed by the sinner in order for his sins to be forgiven. It is, in essence, a re-crucifying of Christ as if Christ's sacrifice on the Cross was insufficient. One matter that is not being brought up in many of these Reformation events this year is the many people who died at the hands of the Roman Catholic Church for refusing to believe in this Eucharistic 'christ'.

We here honour those who were martyred because they would not bow the knee to this false gospel and false 'christ'.

Persecution Now Epidemic

Today, Christian persecution is so commonplace that it barely rates a headline. Compass Direct News reported the execution of a Christian woman in Somalia - for possessing six Bibles. An influential leader of the Islamic Al-Shabab group, a warlord identified only as Sheikh Arbow from the Middle Juba region of Somalia, shot a Christian lady, one Mariam Muhina Hussein on September 28, 2009...The warlord sent his wife to pretend to be interested in Christianity. The Christian lady gave one of her Bibles to the warlord's wife, who took it back to her husband. Sheikh Arbow went back the next day saying he was 'looking for Christians who defiled the Islamic religion' and ordered Mariam Hussein to surrender her Bibles. She retrieved them from hiding, whereupon Arbow fired three bullets into her, killing her instantly. It didn't make the newspapers because if the papers reported every case in which a Christian is murdered for his or her faith, there would be no room to print anything else.

In the Sudan, the entire Christian population of the country is being systematically exterminated by the Islamic janjaweed under orders from Khartoum. The genocide has been going on as long as Hitler's genocide against the Jews, and is almost as brutal, if not nearly so efficient.

The UN estimates that the Sudanese Islamic Republic has so far only managed to exterminate a half-million or so Christians and other non-Muslims. But since the targets are primarily non-white and Christian, nobody seems particularly concerned.

Christians are routinely murdered for their faith in almost every country on earth. In the West, persecution is so far confined to harassing Christian teachers and schoolchildren, churches, veterans' groups and so forth.

'...If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you...' (John 15:20)

Where Do Your Charitable Dollars Go At Christmas?

At Christmas millions of Christians throughout the Western world give away billions of dollars to their favourite charities...We are usually told that approximately 30% goes to salaries and fundraising, the other 70% to programs. They will not be told that as much or more than 80% percent will be donated goods with no monetary value except what the organization deems it to be worth.

...Food for the Poor [Florida based] - its Director, CEO, President, Robin G Mahfood receives a generous compensation of \$438,031 from a total revenue of \$1,158,156,705. What is not clearly stated is that 86.4% are 'donated goods'...

Food for the Hungry, [Arizona-based]...Last year they took in some \$85 million, with some \$36 million of it Govt. money. Maurice Martin, Interim Chief Executive Officer receives a salary of \$178,512 while Keith Wright, former Interim Global Executive Officer received \$141,665.

Continued next page >

World Vision International, an Evangelical Christian humanitarian aid...with a massive child sponsorship program, has total revenue of \$1,005,144,556. Its president, Richard E. Stearns is compensated to the tune of \$451,254.

Samaritan's Purse, a Christian charity raised over US\$599 million in their last financial year and spent 16% on salaries for its staff, including a pay package of \$822,333 to the Rev. Franklin Graham (who also receives \$258,677 from the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association) and pay packages over \$250,000 to six other members of staff. Adding the salaries to other expenses of 16% as well, 32% of their income is used on the organization itself. This also excludes the \$95 million unspent. Graham flies around the world in a Mitsubishi MU2, described as a fast, supple turbo-prop aircraft proclaiming Jesus to a spiritually starving world (A new MU2 costs \$1.9 million. You can pick up a used 1981 MU2 for a mere \$700,000). These expenses exclude the operational expenses of their offices in each country. There could be another 10% to 20% added to overall operational expense.

Tearfund, a British Christian charity raises £72 million (AU\$95 million) in a year, but spends £23.9 million (\$36 million) on staff costs...You find a Christian organization spending 50% of their total income not on those who are suffering but on their own internal structural mechanisms...Unfortunately, high overheads is a modern trend...

Open Doors which serves persecuted Christians worldwide raised approximately US\$17.6 million within the US and spent approximately US\$8.35 million on operational expenses, which include salaries, travel, etc. This expense total includes pay packages for their US staff, with five earning over US\$100,000 per year. Their expenses equate to 47% of their total income, with only 53% of the US\$17.6 million directly going to persecuted Christians...

By contrast, Barnabas Fund, a British charity assisting persecuted Christians around the world under Islamic threat, raised £13.6 million (\$17.9 million) last year, but spent 12% on overheads including fund-raising and promotion. Salaries for the organization's leaders are privately funded.

*...Here are two links recommend to readers: beta.charitycommission.gov.uk/
Or in the US you can go to...charitynavigator.org*

(Author's name withheld at editor's discretion)

Sub-editor's comment:

In the 1980's I worked briefly for two so-called Christian charities which no longer exist. One gave relief to disaster victims, the other to persecuted Christians. I later worked for a large well known national charitable organisation which promoted itself as Christian but was actually not. I was employed in an executive capacity in all these organisations and privy to financial dealings. I left them because of their wicked misuse of donor funds.

When I exposed them I was vilified and ostracized. There were expensive and untruthful campaigns in which enough was never raised to send any money to those they purported to be helping. It was all sucked up into overdrafts, salaries and advertising. I resigned and exposed the matter. It is a scandal world-wide.

What Is Biblical ‘Worship’?

What Is It?

The Greek words for ‘worship’ define it as a *prostration before God*, a bowing down in lowliness, reverence, fear and awe. The Puritan Stephen Charnock, described worship as ‘*an act of the understanding applying itself to the knowledge of the excellency of God...It is also an act of the will, whereby the soul adores and reverences His majesty, is ravished with His amiableness, embraces His goodness...and pitcheth all its affections upon Him*’ (Works, 1.298).

‘Worship’ today is often thought of as a time of *singing* to the Lord with music and song. But the definition of worship surely includes prayer, Bible study and indeed the Christian ‘life’ itself.

The ultimate aim of ‘worship’ is to glorify God in *everything* we do. ‘*Whether therefore you eat, or drink, or whatsoever you do, do all to the glory of God*’ (1Corinthians 10:31). I testify that some of the most memorable times of ‘worship’ have been when on breaks from ministry and in the solitude of quiet places, rather than in church ‘worship’ services. What we *do* in any one church services is a *result* of our heart worship with God; it is not worship itself, rather it is an expression of it. For example, good works are not salvation, but good works come from a changed heart (salvation). So too, praise and singing is not worship, but the praise and singing *come from a worshipful heart*. As soon as ‘worship’ is said to be occurring in a physical place, arguably it loses its real meaning. Many today also see preaching as separate to the ‘worship’. I personally prefer the reading and the preaching/teaching of the Word to be more of the focus of ‘worship’ than even singing songs in a church service. ‘*Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine*’ (1Tim.4:13).

The Object and Purpose

The purpose of worship is to glorify God. God’s request is to be glorified (1Pet.4:11). We glorify God when we worship Him and his Son as the object of worship. This is not just in any activity in ‘church’ but everything in life should glorify God. We *see God in everything and then worship Him in everything*. We must be careful of the dualistic error of dividing the ‘secular’ from the ‘sacred’. Again, today we too often ‘compartmentalise’ worship into singing at church (hence ‘worship services’). But ‘*whatsoever you do, do all to the glory of God*’ (1Cor.10:31). Whether we are working, enjoying recreations or ‘*whatsoever*’ we do - ‘*do all to the glory of God*’.

Our praise of Him is an expression of our worship. Many of the great Divines pursued this and sought after a closer intimacy with God. Jonathan Edwards was famous for his finding secluded places in the forest to seek after and meditate on the things of God. This worship took many forms - sometimes in silent meditations, other times in loud verbal expressions and tears. ‘*But the hour*

comes, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeks such to worship him (Jn.4:23).

The ultimate aim of ‘worship’ is to glorify God. We were created to worship him because that is what glorifies him.

The Fruit of

As Christians we are most fulfilled when we are *satisfied* in, and have *joy* in, the Lord. ***‘...in your presence is fullness of joy; at your right hand there are pleasures forevermore’*** (Ps.16:11). *Satisfaction and Joy will be a part of worship...but in this is where the selfish carnal counterfeits come.*

The problem with much of contemporary ‘worship’ is that it is often a manifested *external* joy. We cannot consciously ‘switch on’ joy in worship. The longing and desire to worship must come from *within* and be fuelled by such things as fellowship, studying the Word of God and ultimately from the Holy Spirit, who manifests the fruit of joy *within* us (Gal.5:22). Nevertheless, joy and gladness is a fruit of worship. ***‘...Sing praises to His name; for it is pleasant’*** (Ps.135:3). Charles Spurgeon once challenged his local church: *‘Sing up!...Out with such mumbling and murdering of the praises of God; if men’s hearts were joyous and strong, they would scorn such miserable worship. In this house we all try to sing, but might we not have more praise services? We have had a praise meeting every now and then. Ought we not to hold a praise meeting every week? Should not the prayer meeting be more than ever cheered by praise. The singing of God’s people should be, and if they were more full of divine strength would be, more constant and universal. How sinners chant the praise of Bacchus in the streets! You can hardly rest in the middle of the night, but what unseemly sounds of revelry startle you. Shall [those singing with] wine sing so lustily, and shall we be silent? We are not often guilty of disturbing the world with our music; the days in which Christian zeal interferes with the wicked seem to have gone by; we have settled down into more orderliness, and I am afraid also into more lukewarmness. Oh for the old Methodistic shout. Brethren, wake up your singing again. May the Lord give us again a singing-time, and make us all praise him with heart, and with voice, till even the adversaries shall say, ‘The Lord hath done great things for them’ and we shall reply, ‘Ay, ye speak the truth; he hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad’.*

The Psalmist, David, yearned for this ‘satisfaction’ when he wrote ***‘Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me...Restore unto me the joy of your salvation; and uphold me with your free spirit’*** (Ps.51:10,12).

In some circles today it is not popular to seek to be joyous or to have pleasure in worship. Perhaps some would want to shy away from the Charismatic/Pentecostal excesses and the ecstatic worship that is rampant in modern Christianity. But regardless, true worship should be pleasurable and joyous. ***‘Delight yourself also in the Lord; and he shall give you the desires of your heart’*** (Ps.37:4).

However, in seeking pleasure or joy in worship, the danger is that we would

praise God *to bring joy*. But the pleasure or joy is not the chief end; but rather the glorification of God. We do not praise to bring joy; we praise God for who He is, and that brings joy.

The fruit of worshipping ‘in spirit and truth’ is that we understand more of the Spirit and more of the truth. True worship will bring us more a desire to be controlled by the Spirit (Eph.5:18) and more a desire to study and to know His revealed word of truth as in scripture. According to statistics and the apostasy of the modern church, modern methods of worship arguably are not doing this? This is so because the ‘truth’ has been cut out of the ‘spirit and truth’ in worship. Even worse, arguably much ecstatic type worship cuts out the real Spirit and replaces it with a human emotionalism. (This is dealt with further in this article).

True Worship is in Words and Thoughts

There is a double sided dilemma with this ‘head and heart’ in worship. ‘Conservatives’ might swing to all ‘head’ and little or no ‘heart’? Some may believe it is sinful to enjoy oneself in praise. But this may cut the ‘heart’ out of worship and be legalistic. *Worship, if it engages head and heart, will have emotions*. There is nothing wrong with emotions. They are God given and to be sanctified. But there is a difference between emotions and emotionalism.

Intellectual knowledge without ‘affections’ can well be head without heart. The great revivalist, Jonathan Edwards, spoke of ‘affections’ as being a vital part of worship. Worship can be ‘dead’ without feelings.

But the essence of worship is *thoughts* and thoughts put into *words*. An understanding of, and a high view of, the sovereignty of God is of great benefit here. It could be said that the foundation of all worship hinges on, and in knowing, who God is and what He has done for us. This doctrine gives great comfort, assurance and a *desire* to uplift Him in praise. The apostle Paul highlights this in Ephesians when he spells out the doctrine of God’s election and predestination of us ‘*before the foundation of the world*’ - ‘*to the praise of the glory...That we should be to the praise of his glory...*’ (Eph.1:1-14)..

The motivation to ‘worship’ him is in the *words* the scriptures show of the plan of Salvation. The *thoughts* that come from this are expressed in many of the Psalms: ‘*He brought me up also out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And he has put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God...*’ (Ps.40:2,3); ‘*...I will sing unto the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider has he thrown into the sea. The Lord is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation: he is my God, and I will prepare him a habitation; my father’s God, and I will exalt him*’ (Ex.15:1,2); ‘*O come, let us sing unto the Lord: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation. Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms. For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods*’ (Ps.95:1-3).

Studying the Word of God and being a ‘*workman*’ (2Tim.2:15) should motivate us to worship the One who first breathed out these truths. Words and thoughts are

important in worship. When the early Jewish church met after Pentecost, what was their form of worship? - '**they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers**' (Acts 2:44).

One of the classic cases of 'worship' in the Bible is seen in Heaven where we know that the worship is fully '*in spirit and in truth*'. '**And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sits upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever. And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that lives forever and ever**' (Rev.5:13,14). Note here that beings are '*saying*' something that comes from informed *thoughts* about the *object* which is Jesus Christ Himself. John continues: '**...all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sits upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. And all the angels...the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshiped God, Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God forever and ever Amen**' (Rev.7:9). Note again the *words* and *thoughts* directed to the object - Jesus Christ. The beings here are *saying* and *singing*. Worship is much about *words* coming from a rational mind.

The Music

Worship is not words *and* music. Music assists, but is not worship in and of itself. Music is at best only a tool. It can never show us more of Christ nor teach His salvation doctrines. Yet music is a powerful medium for affecting the emotions and thoughts. Martin Luther realised the power of music: '*Next to the Word of God, the noble art of music is the greatest treasure in the world. It controls our thoughts, minds, hearts and spirits.*' ('Symphoniae iucundae', 1538)

Music can never do what the Word of God does to '*transform by the renewing of the mind*' (Rom.12:2). The more we emphasise music in worship the likely less the emphasis on *words* and *thoughts* might be? Today in the minds of many Christians 'worship' is synonymous with music. But music is not in itself words and thoughts directed to God but at best an activity chosen to assist in worship.

The Counterfeits

The Charismatic/Pentecostal excesses in worship have no doubt shown many examples of heart with little head, a '**zeal without knowledge**' (Rom.10:2). This worship with heart and no head lacks truth, is shallow and often disorderly, lacking discipline. We are in danger of 'worshipping the worship'! 'Contemporary Christian music' today has made an idol out of 'worship'. I have met people who openly say they go to a particular church 'for the music'. Many churches, if they took away their 'contemporary' style of music, would be emptied.

Much of the modern ‘contemporary’ style gauges God’s ‘presence’ by the emotions felt at the time. Our fleshly beings would have us searching for pleasure, satisfaction or joy. And if we can baptise that in something that feels spiritual then we assume it is true worship and pleasing to God. A.W. Tozer once said *‘The church that can’t worship ‘in spirit and truth’ must be entertained. And men who can’t lead a church to worship must provide the entertainment’*.

The biggest hindrance to true worship is *self*. An example of this is *ecstatic* worship which produces an exalted emotional state and a warm contented feeling, a sense of the ‘presence’ of God. But this can *easily* be produced by music, sights, sounds and movement. The fact that it is often seen closely associated with certain styles of music should cause people to question it. John Wesley in his advice to hymn singers written in 1781 wrote: *‘Above all sing spiritually. Have an eye to God in every word you sing. Aim at pleasing Him more than yourself or any other creature. Attend strictly to the sense of what you sing, and see that your heart is not carried away with the sound, but offered to God continually; so shall your singing be such as the Lord will approve of here, and reward when He cometh in the clouds of Heaven’*.

Today this philosophy is far from much of modern church music. *Secular media commentators* often describe various churches and their music as *‘like a rock concert’*. In particular the popular *Hillsong* music has often been described in this way by the media. It is clear they see modern church services as little different to what they know in the world.

Until the late 1960’s most evangelical churches believed the standards of the church and the world were opposed to each other and thus music was to be different, distinct and not couched with a sense of entertainment. But today the world has come into the church to make the church palatable to the world. Clearly the idea of being separate and distinct from the world, as God had called the Israelites to be, is gone in much of modern church worship. *‘And you shall not walk in the manners of the nation...I am the Lord your God, which have separated you from other people...you shall be holy unto me: for I the Lord am holy, and have severed you from other people, that you should be mine’* (Lev.20:23-26). Israel was punished severely for not distinguishing the holy from the profane: *‘Her priests have violated my law, and have profaned mine holy things: they have put no difference between the holy and profane...’* (Ezek.22:26). The system of the world is in darkness and friendship with it is to be an ‘enemy’ of God (Gal.1:4; James 1:27; 4:4; 1Jn.2:15).

The ‘Song Leader’

Churches now send people away to be trained at colleges to be ‘worship leaders’. One can understand perhaps having a ‘song leader’, but does a ‘worship leader’ arguably take the place that the Holy Spirit should have? To worship ‘in spirit’ means that we are connected with the Spirit’s motives and thoughts as He illuminates our minds, guides, comforts and reveals Christ and his work.

Arguably a ‘song leader’ should simply announce the songs and perhaps direct

the people in singing the tune. The intent could also be to encourage the people to enter into a corporate singing of praises to God. To do this, scriptures can be read and people exhorted to pay attention to the *words* and *thoughts* of the song.

‘Song leaders’ also do not lead us into the ‘presence of God’ as is commonly implied and taught today. The ‘presence of God’ is already there in each person because of the indwelling Spirit. Again, the danger in contemporary ‘worship leading’ is the impression that the presence of God is increased *through music*.

The Songs

Some people quote Luther as using secular ‘pub’ music with Christian lyrics. He once said ‘*Why should the devil have all the good tunes?*’. But that reference was not to secular music but Roman Catholic music! Luther was not interested in the world’s music. His doctrine clearly separated the sacred from the profane. On rare occasions when he may have taken a secular tune, he radically changed its content and style. He stated: ‘*Take special care to shun perverted minds who prostitute this lovely gift of nature and of art with their erotic rantings. And be quite assured that none but the devil goads them on to defy their very nature...They purloin the gift of God and use it to worship the foe of God*’.

I venture to say that most new ‘contemporary’ songs today show clearly the lack of Biblical knowledge of many song writers. Many new songs are devoid of sound doctrine. Some are little better than the world’s love songs that one could sing to a girlfriend or boyfriend? Others are shallow and difficult to match with scripture. Hymns, choruses and any songs should be related to scripture and sound doctrine. Even meanings and lyrics that are ambiguous should be avoided.

Reverence

If we instil a reverence in our worship and in church services we instil the need to glorify God and this will further our own sanctification. ‘Reverence’ has the idea of humility and fear before a holy and righteous God. ‘***Who shall not fear you, O Lord, and glorify your name?***’ (Rev.15.4); ‘***Praise our God, all you his servants, and you that fear him, both small and great***’ (Rev.19.5).

Conclusion

Worship is a bowing of the mind and the heart before a holy and righteous king to give Him glory. The fruit of worship is understanding and obedience to His Word. Worship is much about thoughts and words from a rational mind. Music is a medium of assistance at best, never worship in itself.

What motivates you to worship? Is it salvation, the sovereignty of God...? See God in everything and then worship Him in everything! Pursue Him in reverent worship! ‘***Whether therefore you eat, or drink, or whatsoever you do, do all to the glory of God***’ (1Cor.10:31).

Terry Arnold

Your Comments and Questions

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

'Apostasia' the 'Rapture'?

Dear Terry Arnold, I ran across your web article 'Apostasia' (2Thess.2:3) - Apostasy or Rapture?' Dr. Thomas Ice says 'the Greek word 'apostasia' was mistranslated in the KJV as 'a falling away' and the NAS Bible as 'the apostasy'.

Nearly every New Testament epistle was written to correct false teaching (2Tim.3:16-17). One of the false doctrines is the 'rapture'. I am sick and tired of hearing countless pre-tribulation 'rapture' cult members constantly using this totally inaccurate and feeble excuse of attacking the translation of the KJV Bible because it properly translates the word 'apostasia' as 'a falling away from the faith' and the NASB as 'the apostasy'. He then goes on to say 'Instead, the most accurate and therefore the best translation should be 'the departure'...I conducted my own investigation...he does not verify some of the data referred to.

...The word 'apostasia' is now being maliciously maligned and re-defined to mean a literal spatial 'departure' and not a religious 'apostasy', as it has always been understood to mean in the NT throughout the history of Christianity.

...I ended up verifying and substantiating your statement concerning Jerome's translation of 'apostasia' as 'dissension' in not only Acts 21:21 as you stated, but also 2Thess.2:3, and the same in Wycliffe's rendering of 'discencioun' ('dissension'). Beza's Latin Vulgate 1850 Edition, Novum Testamentum translation from the original Greek text is 'defectio' (defection).

...Sincerely, a 2Thess.2:3 Pro - 'apostasy' advocate.

(S.A., USA)

Editor's reply

Our website article needs to be revised as I have accumulated more information since. But this below may help. Some of this is technical but I hope understandable.

1. The teaching of the 'apostasia' ('falling away') being the 'rapture' in 2Thess.2:3 is *new* teaching. Up until a few decades ago there were few Bible teachers teaching it. But with the interest in the 'rapture' it has become that people arguably want more 'evidence' of the 'rapture'? But a 'spatial departing' as in a 'rapture' was never understood by the early translators. As early as Jerome - 'apostasia' was translated as 'dissension' in Acts 21:21 which unquestionably refers to religious apostasy. The first English Bible by Wycliffe also rendered 'apostasia' as 'discencioun' ('dissension').

2. One of my responses to the teaching of the 'apostasia' as a rapture in 2Thess.2 is the careless use of 'Greek'. I have challenged some (eg. 'Herald of Hope' in Australia) as to why they have misused Greek words. Not one has replied. Some teachers have unfortunately avoided a safe hermeneutic

Continued over >

procedure and wrongly concentrated on the *root word* of which ‘*apostasia*’ comes from - ‘*aphistemi*’ which is ‘*apo*’ - ‘from’ and ‘*histemi*’ - ‘to stand; to place’. ‘*Aphistemi*’ is translated ‘to put away, remove, forsake, desert’. However, even here of the 15 New Testament references most are arguably used in a negative sense for a religious falling away (1Tim.4:1 ‘some shall depart (‘*aphistemi*’) from the faith’; see also 1Tim.6:5; Heb.3:12; Lk.8:13; 13:27...). But the point here is that to build a case for a ‘rapture’ on this root verb ‘*aphistemi*’ rather than the *actual* Greek noun used (‘*apostasia*’) in 2Thess.2:3, is false hermeneutics. The root verb may be a help in establishing a meaning, but a guide at best. The ‘*apostasia*’ noun used must *first* be established on its own. *Greek derivatives do not necessarily carry the same meaning of the root words*. This is sometimes called by some (Carson, etc) the ‘*root fallacy*’. The ‘*root meaning*’ is not necessarily found in all derivatives. The meaning of a NT word is determined primarily from: (1) Other appearances of the *same word* in the Greek NT; (2) The OT Septuagint. (3) Context. One cannot say the cognate verb always determines the meaning of the noun (many examples can be given). *Greek derivatives do not necessarily always carry the same precise meaning of the root words*. For example, some Christians in an attempt to show Phoebe was a leader in Romans 16:2 and with the Greek word for ‘patron’ or ‘succourer’ - instead of taking the actual noun form used (‘*prostatis*’), some switch to the root verb ‘*proistemi*’ to say this means literally to ‘stand place before or over’ - which would mean Phoebe ‘stands before’ even the apostle Paul. But no Greek lexicons show this meaning and all translations have Phoebe as a helper only. Verbs are related to the noun but do not necessarily have the same meanings. This is almost as foolish as saying butterfly is related to butter and fly; but butterfly does not mean butter can fly. *The primary use of the word in the text must be addressed first and elsewhere it is used. The only other use of ‘apostasia’ shows a religious falling away (Acts 21:21)! Scripture interprets Scripture!*

3. Another argument used is the use of Classical Greek instead of the NT Koine Greek in order to establish the meaning of ‘*apostasia*’ to be a ‘rapture’. Koine New Testament Greek replaced Classical Greek in about 300BC and lasted until 300AD. Some say that ‘*apostasia*’ is a later construction of the Classical Greek which arguably was used as spatial departure. But the Scriptures were written in Koine Greek not Classical Greek. This error is sometimes called the ‘*Lexical fallacy*’. But the first literal reference to a spatial departure in Greek is not found until the 5th century AD! - in an apocryphal writing ‘The Assumption of the Virgin’ where Mary and the apostles are taken by a cloud from Bethlehem to Jerusalem. These apocryphal writings were rejected by the early church. They contained fanciful chronological, geographical and historical errors.

4. Re: the ‘rapture’ - the Latin ‘rapture’ is in 1Thess.4:17 as a *catching/snatching away* (‘*Harpazo*’). It is not a ‘*false doctrine*’ but a reality.

Your Comments and Questions

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

Terry, Reading through your newsletter I was somewhat confused on the baptism article. There is one baptism Eph 4. One Lord One faith and one Baptism. Are you saying this is Spirit baptism? I have always taught it was water baptism, following ones confession of faith in the Lord Jesus. The Baptism in the Spirit is or was accomplished at Pentecost without. Just as there was only one Calvary there was only one Pentecost...

Your article 'Social Media and Facebook - a Pastor's Concerns' is timely, I too am shocked at what I see Christian's list as 'favourites'. But I have found some pages that engage in some good discussion on the scriptures, which I enjoy. I have also found it interesting to engage in discussions with some folks I don't know following articles that I have posted on relevant issues and the gospel presentation. Wisdom is required like in many areas of life.

Thankyou and God's blessings as we await the shout.

(G.E., Qld)

Editor's Reply:

I have always thought Eph.4 to be the baptism with the Spirit into the body of Christ as in 1Cor.12, Rom.6. But I checked with a few commentaries and found many reputable scholars do not hold that view. I understand there to be 'one baptism' with many modes of expression of it. I am not fully convinced Eph.4 means water only but am willing to be convinced otherwise.

The late Greek scholar, Zodhiates, stated: 'In Eph. 4:5 there is no indication as to which baptism Paul refers. The whole paragraph, Eph. 4:1-5, is indicative of Paul's desire that there should be unity of the Spirit in the body of Christ. No reference is made to water baptism at all. The verse says, 'One Lord, one faith, one baptism'. This baptism must be, therefore, the spiritual baptism, the baptism in the Spirit that was promised by John the Baptist that the One coming after him would accomplish (Matt.3:11; Mk.1:8; Lk.3:16; Jn.1:33) and Jesus Christ Himself promised in Acts 1:5. This took place in Acts 2 and followed by the speaking with other tongues; also in Caesarea in Acts 11:16-18; 10:44-46 and in Ephesus with the same manifestation of speaking in other languages (Acts 19:1-7). The purpose of this Spirit baptism is shown in 1 Cor. 12:13 as the incorporation of all believers into the body of Christ, the Church (Eph. 1:22, 23)...We must all remember that we were all baptized into one body and that the same Lord belongs to all and that He owns all of us'.

I also note that the Greek word used is 'baptisma' - the 'ma' suffix showing the completed result of a thing. That to me arguably gives a hint it was referring to the result - salvation - rather than the act of water baptism?

The text may not be clear enough for me to be dogmatic about one view or the other? But I stand to be corrected.

Thanks for the comment concerning the 'Facebook' article.

Your Comments and Questions

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

Terry, Should I attend a church that conducts infant baptism by sprinkling.
(T.G., NSW)

Editor's Reply:

Personally I could not, for reasons of 'Sola Scriptura' - there is no scripture that teaches infant baptism or sprinkling. The early church did not baptise infants; it's a later invention and very Roman. Even the Reformers Luther and Zwingli admitted traditions like christening were not biblical and were 'embarrassed' by it, yet they kept the traditions for various reasons.

But I grant some people may not be able to find a sound church otherwise? But each Christian needs to have his own conscience on what they can tolerate in regards to fellowshiping in a church?

I have written an article on baptism - '*Baptism - Meaning, Mode and History*' which explores the history and the doctrines thereof (website link below). The meaning of Baptism shows immersion as do several scriptures. Infant baptism is also historically linked with 'baptismal regeneration'...

<http://taministries.net/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/Water-Baptism-Meaning-Mode-and-History.pdf>

Subscribers reply:

Thanks Terry for biblical answers to my question. I always doubted why churches baptise babies by sprinkling. My conscience is not in doubt anymore. Thank you so much for the sound biblical advice and you and your staff's continuing wonderful blessed work for the Lord, and in the 'Diakrisis' magazine. I look forward to every issue. God bless in your wonderful ministry.

Terry, in regard to 1Cor.11:10 - 'For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels'. What does it mean 'because of the angels'? Is it because the Jews believed that the angels were part of the service?
(C.V., Brisbane)

Editor's reply:

'Because of this ought the woman to have power [a symbol of?] upon her head because of the angels' - the word 'power' ('exousia') would be better here translated 'authority'. The veil or covering was an emblem of 'authority', arguably the authority under the 'covering' of the husband? 'Because of the angels' is a phrase believed to be pointing to the Jews believing angels attended services (1Cor.4:9). Angels do attend men (Heb.1:14); and desire to look into the mystery of the Gospel (1Pet.1:12).

Your Comments and Questions

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

Hi Terry,

We have a big problem at our church. The church has fallen to only about 15 people. Over half of them are over 65. We have ministers come from colleges - some are good, some not. The biggest problem is one of the women has taken over leading. She is also training a younger woman to fill in. We had a younger man that knew the Word very well but he left because of the women taking over. We know what it says in Timothy about women teaching men. She knows this but it is still makes no difference to her. The whole church is in a mess. It used to be a good church.

Terry, should we close the church? What would you do? I suggested closing the church and if these women want to start a Bible study at some one's home for the people who are left. But they did not seem to want to do that. They wanted to keep the church going. We are in big trouble. I would like to give your answer to the women. Thanks Terry...

(Name withheld at editor's discretion. No address was given to reply)

Editor's comment:

This is indicative of the church scene today. Men are not leading and churches are being feminised. It is not uncommon now to see churches with women as the head 'reverend' or as pastors and elders.

In scripture women are never found to be holding such offices. Paul 'forbids' women to 'teach' in public and to 'usurp authority over a man' (1Tim.2:12). He also elsewhere lays down the qualifications of an elder/pastor clearly as being the 'husband [aner - man] of one wife' (1Tim.3; Tit.1). In 1Timothy 2:12 Paul says a woman is not to 'usurp authority over' a man in these areas. The authority here is all about *headship* and *order* from the beginning of creation (vs.13,14). Any who turn this on its head must answer to God for having changed his creation order and nullified His word. What is really at stake in this is the authority of the Bible. 'He that rejects me, and receives not my words, has one that judges him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day' (Jn.12:48).

My own personal conviction, and if I had a voice in such an assembly, would be to look for a man to take the leading role. Failing that I would close the church down and conduct studies in a home. Our ministry and our church already has several of these such groups who receive 4 CD sermons monthly from Hervey Bay Bible Church and listen to them as a group. These are groups or home churches in areas where it is difficult to find a local church that is sound in teaching the Word of God.

We are also hoping soon to 'livestream' into some home groups providing live audio of our Sunday services. There will be more on this in upcoming editions of 'Diakrisis'.

Your Comments and Questions

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

Hello Terry, Would you please change my method of receiving the 'Diakrisis' newsletter from the postal service to being sent to my e-mail address in future. Thank you and thanking you so much for your wonderful service to the Lord that has helped me no end over the years in my personal walk with Jesus Christ. Abundant Blessings to you (and Mike).

(P.C, S.A.)

Dear Terry, Thank you for sending me the 'Diakrisis'. If possible I would like to still receive a hardcopy of the newsletter. I do not use the internet...

(J.Y., Qld)

Terry, Many thanks for another year of your inspirational magazine. Much appreciated...As a 'shut in' of some years because of age and health (I am 94 today), I look for encouragement such as 'Diakrisis'...I do not have e-mail but hope to arrange for a family member to assist in this...

(J.H., Qld)

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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