

Your Comments and Questions

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

Quotables

'If you hear a man rail at the Bible, you can usually conclude that he never reads it'.

'He that reads his Bible to find fault with it will soon discover that the Bible finds fault with him'

'Scripture is like a lion. Who ever heard of defending a lion? Just turn it loose; it will defend itself'.

(Charles Haddon Spurgeon)

Prayer/Praise Points

- Praise the Lord that another pastoring elder has been called to Hervey Bay Bible Church. Hopefully in the future this will release the editor from much of the pastoring duties in the church and to continue the growing ministry of 'Diakrisis', as well as possibly returning to some itinerant preaching and teaching.

- Please pray for the working of the Holy Spirit in those who are receiving the hundreds of 'Eternal Questions' tracts which are being handed out by several evangelists across Australia. Pray for those who distribute these tracts to be guided in the words they speak and the methods they use.

- Please pray for the sub editor who has been afflicted with ongoing RSI.

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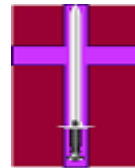
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Diakrisis (Australia)

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

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teaching, informing and equipping the church.

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

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

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Sub Editor's Comment

Christendom Reaches its Extremity...

What stands for Christianity in our day now seems to be approaching a point of declension, apostasy and disobedience from which there cannot possibly be a return? A deliberate effort, under-way now for many decades, to de-legitimise and destroy Biblical Christianity now appears to be gathering speed aided and abetted by the very leaders of the movement. Men and women we once perceived as being our trusted brethren now reveal themselves as Christianity's greatest enemies? Evangelicalism is teetering on the edge of an abyss.

If you consider yourself as an Evangelical, hold to a literal view of the scriptures, and a futurist understanding of eschatology, you are now sitting in the bull's eye of a juggernaut that has your destruction in mind and has become increasingly vitriolic. You have now arrived in the seat of a very small minority. No longer are your critics whispering aspersions, acrimony and bitterness, they are shouting them at you, and all that will hear, from the rooftops.

So many political issues today seem to have clouded the thinking of those in leadership in the church. Hot button subjects such as 'climate change', 'sustainability', same sex marriage, and gender confusion appear to be the catalyst for present fractures to have opened up into yawning craters. All of what remained of the tethers of decency and brotherly communion have been pulled down it appears. It has now become an entrenched pattern of behaviour which has descended into an open season on evangelical, futurist, Biblical Christianity.

The shocking thing about this is that the vilest attacks are not coming so much from those in the pews, but from those esteemed as 'leaders' who hold sway in many cases over millions of people. Evangelicalism, it would seem, just doesn't cut it any more; it is flawed, compromised and broken. To teach from the scriptures is to appear dated, so 'yesterday', when there are now such pressing human issues engulfing the planet. The aim at this point is to redraw the boundary lines of Christianity itself piece by piece, doctrine by doctrine.

Thus we reach a point where Christian leaders are openly discussing how they can 'redefine Christianity' for today's widely biblically illiterate, dwindling church-going generation. Evidently the way it has been 'defined' for the last two millennia of church history just is not now sufficient. Treating the Bible like a great theological buffet, taking the parts they like and ignoring everything else, these men and women are attempting to redraw the boundaries that have held the faith together since Jesus Christ walked the shores of Galilee 2000 years ago.

The pertinent subjects now are not salvation issues, or sin or repentance, and certainly not anything to do with eschatology or the imminent return, but LGBTQ+ politics, immigration debates and the 'Christian' use of fossil fuels! It is about the 'evils' of white-dominated, patriarchal Evangelical Protestantism; it is about helping the poor; about social justice, a feel-good gospel of salvation through works, not faith. These are the issues that now count - not sin, repentance, the love of God for a desperately lost world, or the obviously rapidly approaching time of His wrath. On many levels, this is false teaching - not least

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Hi Terry,

The level of persecution against Christians is on the rise, so the saints will be greatly challenged. We all must maintain a non negotiable stance in support of The Faith...

(S&N, H. Qld)

Dear Brother Terry,

Firstly I would like to take this opportunity to thank you so much for your very informative and much appreciated newsletter, which I have been receiving from you for many years now. You have addressed many issues that need to be addressed in a forthright and if I may say so quite courageous way, which sadly many would fear to do so in the present age in which we now live, for the ridicule and personal attacks they may endure in doing what you have done for so long now. Keep up the great work of warning God's people against apostasy, etc that you have been faithfully doing over the years. Your reward will come as 'the bread cast upon the waters'...

There seems to be a dearth of good Godly men who will stand strongly on God's Word and against liberalism, false spirituality, (including Tongue speaking and all other forms of false Holiness such as Physical Healings, Prosperity Gospel preaching, etc). It seems that there is very little real spiritual hunger today, with sadly most who claim to be Christians satisfied with emotional, shallow preaching mixed with raucous, nightclub heavy beat rock music becoming more and more the norm.

God bless you and keep you as you labour for Him in His vineyard.

(L.P. NT)

Terry, There is an omission we have found in the KJV2000 in Ps.40:11. The KJV2000 reads: 'Withhold your tender mercies from me, O LORD: let your lovingkindness and your truth continually preserve me'. It should read 'withhold not...'

(K.L. NSW)

Editor's reply:

Thankyou for informing us. We notified the publishers and they are aware of the error. This is a printing error in the earlier print run in the hardcopies only. The later hardcopies have the verse corrected and the error did not affect the online versions (e-sword, etc). Thank you for alerting us.

Your Comments and Questions

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Hi Terry, is Christianity classed as a 'religion' like all the man made invented ones in the world? Does God actually tell us in his Word Christianity is a religion? I would like to think it stands out alone as the only form of worship and esteem it far above all earthly ones...What category does GOD put it in? I know the world and man list it as one of 'the worlds' many religions and the unsaved look at it just exactly like that. Could you please define this for me?

(T.G., NSW)

Editor's Reply:

Christianity is classed as a 'religion' by the world's definition and meaning - it being a 'system of faith and worship' - which Christianity is. In the centuries past Christian leaders such as the Puritans, commonly used the word 'religion' to refer to the Christian faith. Today I like to distinguish clearly between what people understand by 'religion', as the term has lost meaning since the days of old. It now clearly means more like the world's false religions. I have often said 'God hates religion' in an attempt to then clearly distinguish true Christianity. I prefer the word 'religion' not be used for Christianity. Most of the early leaders who used the word freely, if alive today might not use the word as freely as they did then?

Nevertheless, the word 'religion' is used in the Bible - the Greek word comes from the word 'worship'. The references are: Acts 26:5; Gal.1:13,14; James 1:26,27. (Some of these references do refer to the Jewish religion - Judaism).

God puts the true 'religion' as Christianity and the false religions as the various world systems of works.

Quotable

Much of modern preaching is anaemic, with the life-blood of God's nature absent from the message. Evangelists centre their message upon man. Man has sinned and missed a great blessing. If man wants to retrieve his immense loss he must act thus and so. But the Gospel of Christ is very different. It begins with God and His Glory. It tells men that they have offended a holy God, who will by no means pass by sin. It reminds sinners that the only hope of salvation is to be found in the grace and power of this same God. Christ's Gospel sends men to beg pardon of the Holy One.

There is a wide difference between these two messages. The one seeks to blaze a trail to Heaven for man while ignoring the Lord of Glory. The other labours to magnify the God of all grace in the salvation of men.

('Our Sufficiency in Christ' by John MacArthur, P.154)

of which, apart from poor theology, is the sheer audacity of it.

That mankind can change the global climate, stall wars and upheavals, produce Godly families from same-sex households, and produce a stable civilisation based on pagan '*shared values*' is utter folly.

From countless pulpits today, employing a selective use of scripture, ignoring completely the biblical signposts that clearly speak of coming tribulation and judgement, we hear homilies that focus exclusively on those texts, taken out of context, that seem to agree with the political persuasion of the speaker.

The apostasy and '*falling away*' prophesied by Paul as a distinct characteristic of the last days is in full flight right now, and it has penetrated deeply into the church. Turn on the radio or television and witness the array of so-called Christian channels and watch in horror the un-biblical rubbish being offered - apparently to a stubbornly unbelieving world. And no wonder.

One may think this is coming mainly from the many '*charismatic*' ministries, but not so. Mainline denominational ministers, male and female, are frequently appearing on quiz programmes, documentaries, debate forums, and talk shows airing their erroneous views whilst pouring scorn on their '*brethren*' who believe otherwise. The vitriol with which these aspersions are cast is often alarmingly strong. Just recently a female vicar (with 'dog collar' and large wooden cross around her neck) appeared on the national news channels in Australia pleading with the government to do something urgently about climate change '*before we all drown, or melt*'. An Australian television advertisement aired in the last few days features a bloodied and beaten 'christ' hanging on a cross surrounded by a crowd of people asking if he would be prepared to become an organ donor! Any complaints or outrage? No. Oh, with the exception of a local Imam that is.

If Jesus tarries much longer, for those holding to a sound theology, increased persecution cannot be far around the corner. In the early chapters of Revelation, Jesus gives a very specific warning to the churches of Asia: that unless they focus upon God and what He is and requires of them, then He would remove His Spirit from the church. With the exception of His elect remnant and one or two outstanding examples of churches and pastors that do teach faithfully the whole counsel of God, including Bible prophecy and the evident signs of the times, it seems to an honest observer anyway, that what is described in the first few chapters of Revelation is exactly what is happening to the modern church today?

Mike Claydon

'I remind you that there are churches so completely out of the hands of God that if the Holy Spirit withdrew from them, they wouldn't find it out for many months. Before a Christian Church goes into a decline, there must first be a corrupting of her scriptural thoughts of God. She simply gives a wrong answer to the question, 'What is God like?' - and goes downhill from there. The masses of her adherents come to believe that God is different from what He actually is - and that is heresy of the most insidious and deadly kind! Worship is no longer worship when it reflects the culture around us more than the Christ within us'.
(A.W. Tozer)



Today's Martyrs

Gunmen suspected of being Fulani herdsmen have burned a pastor and his family alive and razed as many as 95 homes in an attack on a village in the Plateau State of Nigeria.

The Rev. Adamu Gyang Wurim, his wife and three children were murdered in the attack that took place in

the Barkin Ladi local government area...three other people were killed during the attack...Isaac Choji, an eye witness of the attack, told the Nigerian daily newspaper The Nation that gunmen came in large numbers and surrounded the pastor's home. After setting the pastor's home and other buildings on fire, Choji said, the gunmen waited to ensure that no survivors would escape the engulfed homes. The witness said that a female neighbour was also shot by the gunmen...

...Thousands of Christians have been killed in the last year and many other believers have lost their churches, homes and loved ones. The Christian Association of Nigeria and church denominational heads in Plateau State declared that 'over 6,000 persons, mostly children, women and the aged have been maimed and killed in night raids by armed Fulani herdsmen' in 2018. Earlier this summer, Fulani herdsman killed 120 Christians as they were leaving a funeral of the father of one of the founding clergy of the Church of Christ in Nations in the Plateau State.

Christians in the country also have to worry about the existence of the Boko Haram terrorist outfit in the northeast part of the country. Boko Haram is a group that affiliates itself with the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria. Most recently, Leah Sharibu, a 15-year-old Christian girl kidnapped by Boko Haram in February, can be heard in a newly released audio recording in which she begs for help. Sheribu was reportedly among a group of over 100 classmates who were kidnapped by the terror group from their school earlier this year. While her classmates were later released, Sheribu is reportedly still being held because of her refusal to renounce her faith in Christ.

Nigeria ranks as the 14th-worst nation in the world when it comes to persecution of Christians, according to Open Doors USA's World Watch List.

(Sourced from CP Reporter | Aug 30 & Sept.18th, 2018)

Editor's comment:

Christian persecution is actually the worst it has ever been in history. Most of the statistics of this are unknown to the western media.

Recently the Islamic Al-Shabaab stopped a bus in Kenya and forced the passengers to recite the Islamic statement of faith and then executed two Christians. More than 200 million professing Christians in 60 countries experience imprisonment, torture or death for their faith. In North Korea Christians face torture in labour camps. In middle eastern countries Christians face Sharia law imposed. In Iraq and Syria Christians have almost been eradicated from certain areas.

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Hi Terry, Murray's book 'The Puritan Hope' deals with their belief in the great future for the Gospel. He has a few sayings in the front i.e. 'Though our persons fall, our cause should be as truly, certainly, and infallibly victorious, as that Christ sits at the right hand of God. The gospel shall be victorious...'. (John Owen); 'There will come a time when the generality of mankind, both Jew and Gentile, shall come to Jesus Christ. He hath had but little takings of the world yet, but will have before he hath done' (Thomas Goodwin)

The Puritans were strong on a big turning of Jews to Christ as above...This quote from the biography of C H Spurgeon by G H Pike written after his death before the autobiography came out and sent to Messiah's Herald in 1874: 'The more I read the Scripture as to the future, the less I am able to dogmatise. I see conversion of the world, and the personal pre-millennial reign, and the sudden coming, and the judgement, and several other grand points; but I cannot put them in order, nor has anyone else done so yet. I believe every prophetic work I have seen (and I have read very many) to be wrong on some points. I feel more at home in preaching Christ crucified than upon any other theme, and I believe He will draw all men to him' (Pike, Vol.5,133). He believed in a literal 1,000 years but not what is added to the historic Pre-millennial views...

Editor's Comments:

I agree that Eschatology should not be made an issue *at the expense of the Gospel or soteriology* (salvation doctrines). In this newsletter we have mainly been *answering letters* when they swing to this issue.

The issue for me is not so much the position people take whether Pre-mill, A-mill, etc, but the hermeneutics (interpretation methods) derived to get there. The non literal view is fraught with inconsistencies and spiritualising which leads to eisegesis instead of exegesis.

This newsletter addresses the questions people have in *any doctrine*, but again, I agree our first priority in doctrine is the Gospel and salvation.

Tozer on Evangelism

'Altar services are often rushed through in noisy haste, with a little snuffle on the part of the seeker being accepted as proof that a work of God has been done. We are so pitifully eager to get people 'through' that we encourage them to 'believe' and 'praise' when as yet they are still in darkness.

We dare not be satisfied with any evangelism, however well organised and widely publicised, till it begins to produce results we can 'handle' a week or a year later.

(Tozer biography by Snyder, P.139)

Your Comments and Questions

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Could you explain the seven churches of the book of Revelation. Do you believe they are the steps of different times, and the church of Laodicea, is meant for the church today?. I believe (but not sure) that Laodicea means people's church, like the churches are today that please the people, not God

(B.M., Sth Aust)

Sub-editor's reply (Mike Claydon):

John wrote to the seven churches in Asia, therefore, in context, Revelation chapters 1-3 are dealing with those first century assemblies. Something can be said however about the conjecture that they also correspond to the church age epochs - they do appear to do so in many ways and could typify or represent all churches down the running centuries and their various merits and difficulties? If this is so, then I suggest we now live in the Philadelphian age and not in the Laodicean as many are teaching today. Why? because in chapter 3 verse 10 it explicitly reveals that it is this church epoch that will be 'kept from the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world to TRY them that dwell upon the earth'. 'All the world' suggests here the 'great tribulation'. This obviously is speaking of the 'Time of Jacobs Trouble' – with the church at that time being raptured to 'escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man' (Lk.21:36). The Laodicean epoch would therefore follow and is the apostate lukewarm unbelieving so-called church that embraces the unification of all religions under the sway of antichrist, and which Christ has promised to 'spew from His mouth' at His coming (Revelation 3:16)?

Hi Terry, I find it curious with many churches that hold to the traditional Reformed Doctrines of Grace and Eternal Security of the believer, is that they also teach Replacement Theology! Surely they are holding two contradictory views here regarding God's people, since both the OT & NT emphatically teach and declare that Israel is God's 'elect' or 'chosen' (Deut.7:6, 14:2; 1 Kngs.3:8, 1Chron.16:13; Ps.33:12, 135:4; Is.41:8-9, 45:4, 65:9; Rom.11:7, 28). If Israel is elect and they can be 'cast away' (Rom.11:2), where does that leave NT believers and the Church (1Pet.2:9-10)?

(L.T. Vict)

Editor's comments:

This point is often missed by those who replace Israel with the church. Israel is called the 'elect' nation, specially 'chosen', 'called' out of all other nations. The same phraseology of election for Israel is brought into the New Testament in 1Peter 2:9. Does God cast away his 'elect'? (Read Rom.8:33).

Lesbians Sue Christian Senior Centre

A Christian retirement care facility in St. Louis, Missouri, is being sued after it turned away a lesbian couple in accordance with its biblically-based policy.

72 year old Mary Walsh and Bev Nance, 68, filed a federal lawsuit last month against the Missouri-based nondenominational nonprofit senior housing community Friendship Village Sunset Hills...The couple, married in 2009, claim the facility violated the Fair Housing Act and the Missouri Human Rights Act when it rejected their application for housing because they were a lesbian couple.

...Although Walsh and Nance are legally married, Friendship Village's policy defines marriage as 'the union of one man and one woman, as marriage is understood in the Bible'...The couple have since turned to the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Missouri to claim Friendship Village engaged in sex discrimination.

...While some LGBT activists argue this is a 'clear-cut case of discrimination', conservative religious freedom advocates believe the retirement facility should be allowed to operate in accordance with its religious convictions.

...Travis Weber, director of Family Research Council's Centre for Religious Liberty, told CP in a phone interview Wednesday that there are serious religious freedom implications at play that could extend beyond Friendship Village.

(Samuel Smith, CP Reporter | Aug 23, 2018)

Quotes on Abortion

(All quotes from the highly recommended 'Why Pro-life' by Randy Alcorn)

'In [various states of USA] a pregnant woman who takes an illegal drug can be prosecuted for 'distributing drugs to a minor...there is a recognition that the unborn is a person with rights, deserving protection from the mother. However, that same woman who's prosecuted and jailed for endangering her child is free to abort that same child...it's illegal to harm your preborn child, but its perfectly legal to kill him'. (P.39,40)

'The US Congress voted unanimously to delay capital punishment of a pregnant woman until after her delivery...many states passed foetal homicide laws, declaring it murder for anyone but the mother to deliberately take the life of a preborn child'. (P.40)

'Animal rights advocates argue that in order to make their case they must show terrible photographs...[so] if abortion isn't killing babies...then why are [abortion] pictures so disturbing?' (P.47) [Pro-choice people do not like these images being shown]

'There can be no equal rights for all women until there are equal rights for unborn woman'. (P.60) 'The pro choice position always overlooks the victims right to choose...Women don't choose rape. And babies don't choose abortion'. (P.64)



Michael W. Smith

'Legendary Christian artist Michael W. Smith recently spearheaded a massive concert in Nashville, Tennessee, which he believes will be the beginning of the next great awakening throughout the U.S. and the world. Smith has partnered with the No.1 Christian network in the world, TBN (Trinity Broadcasting Network) to

present the free worship event at Nashville's Bridgestone Arena on Aug. 30. Called 'Surrounded: A Night to Pray, Worship and Be Awakened', the concert was inspired by his album, Surrounded, which came from a warning he received from God to unite and stand up against the injustices of the world.

...He referenced Amos 5 in the Bible where God corrects His children despite their worship to Him. 'He (God) says 'I'm tired of your sacrifices and I'm tired of your music'...He said, 'Turn it off. I can't stand it'. He said, 'You know what I'm looking for? I'm looking for justice to roll like a waterfall'. And it rocked my world', Smith revealed.

In 2015, Smith starred as Cliff McArdle in the film of the best-selling book '90 Minutes in Heaven' by Don Piper...Smith also starred as James the disciple in 'The Passion', a live musical film...March 20, 2016... 'After that, I started getting dreams and visions...He hopes all denominational, ethnic, racial, and generational lines can be crossed for a real night of unity...The award-winning singer recalled hearing many prophetic words over the years about Nashville and he believes the Lord is getting ready to do something major in the music city.

'Other than Jerusalem, I think there's something very strategic about Nashville. There's a prophetic word that was [spoken] years ago, I actually knew this guy, he's now in Heaven and he prophesied, 'There will be a shout heard all around the world and that shout came out of Nashville, Tennessee', Smith explained. 'We've had these people who've been passionately praying for this next great awakening, for this next move of God. Then all of sudden I thought, 'Oh my gosh, I think I'm supposed to spearhead this thing'.

... 'There's a massive antenna on top of that arena', he illustrated. 'I've been in arenas all around the world and never seen anything like it. Is that coincidence? Maybe. Maybe not. 'There is a stirring in this city. In the natural, I feel like it's the most ridiculous, craziest thing I've ever done, but in the spiritual, I see it clearly'... 'There's just something stirring and I just believe a mighty wind is going to blow through that building'. He said prophetic words were spoken to him about the event and they always referenced the word 'trigger'...there's going to be a trigger. You're going to see cities all across America and all around the world start doing this sort of thing. It's going to trigger a move and I think you're going to see something shift', he said.

Editor's comments:

Michael W. Smith came from a Christian family but fell into drugs and alcohol before he says he was released from that, suffering also at one time a

2. What do we understand the word 'perish' to mean?

The word 'perish' is 'apóllumi' - to destroy. But it has a wide range of contexts. The 'apo' here gives it some intensity. 'Apóllumi' is spoken of things figuratively (1Cor.1:19 - meaning to bring to naught, render void the wisdom of the wise). It is used for eternal death, i.e., future eternal punishment (Rev.20:14).

It is also translated 'lose', 'die', 'destroyed', 'marred', etc.

Some wrongly teach this word means complete annihilation (ie. Hell is not eternal). However, the various contexts where 'apóllumi' is used will quickly show that it does not mean a literal annihilation: In Matthew 9:17 a wine bottle is 'lost' ('apóllumi'), not 'annihilated'; there are 'the lost ('apóllumi') sheep of the house of Israel' (Matt.10:6), 'the son of man comes to seek and save that which was lost' ('apóllumi') - not annihilated (Matt.18:11). The parables also speak of things that were 'lost' ('apóllumi') yet are found again (not annihilated); the demons plead not to be 'destroyed' ('apóllumi') - they are not 'annihilated', but later put in Hell (Mk.1:24); we are told not to 'destroy' ('apóllumi') a brother by being a 'stumblingblock' (Rom.14:15; 1Cor.8:11) - the brother is not 'annihilated'; and the 'world...perished ('apóllumi') in the flood' (2Pet.3:6) - not 'annihilated'.

In context here in 2Pet.3 the word must mean to be put to the judgement of God by their own lack of repentance.

3. Who are the all that should come to repentance?

The phrase 'that all should come to repentance' (literally 'to repentance to come') is a Greek phrase showing a snapshot (Greek aorist) of something that has or will happen as a reality. (The aorist here is undefined action, a 'snapshot' of something that has or will happen. It does not take into account a time period unless used with certain Greek 'moods' (such as the 'indicative' mood). 'Aorist' is simply a statement of something that is a reality).

Hi Terry,

Enjoyed your latest 'Diakrisis' and the article on 'The Perseverance of the Saints'. Regarding 'cheap grace', I think the best rebuttal to this thinking is found in Titus 2:11-12 where Paul says 'the grace of God...[teaches] us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age'. So true saving grace actively teaches, informs, instructs us in the way of righteousness and to forsake our past sinful lifestyles and behaviour. Sometimes we miss the point that grace is not just God's unmerited favour to us but also his unlimited power to transform sinners into saints (1Cor.15:10).

(L.T. Vict)

Your Comments and Questions

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Terry, many thanks for the latest issue of your newsletter. Excellent article on Rev.3:20. Maybe you could give some time to 2Peter 3:9. To whom is God longsuffering? What do we understand the word 'perish' to mean in this verse? Who are the all that should come to repentance? I see the epistle written to believers, some of which were being challenged about the deception of the last days, the active opposition to the will of God that was and is the challenge of today. Sadly some believers may have thought that the coming of the Lord was not a real promise due to the time lapse and constant messages warning, but nothing has happened. This caused and causes professing believers to lose sight of the Coming of the Lord, become occupied in things that are to no avail, in fact follow after false ideas and notions, become detoured, and their first love has waned drastically, so that their current life is not following after the things they once did, their service for the Lord is null and void, and it would appear the Devil has won the day.

But Peter appeals to them, pointing out that God is longsuffering not desirous that any should perish...God desires that each believer should enter into an abundant glory, with their life of service for the Lord to be rewarded, so that such can enter into the joy of the Lord. Hence there is an appeal to repentance for the believer to get back on track, to return from the pig pen, to enjoy the Father's forgiveness and love and serve with devotion and purpose. To be delivered out of the snare of the devil to use the words of 2Tim.2, back to the will of God.

This then is a loving appeal of the Father to his own children to be in a right relationship with the Lord in these days of darkness, living in obedience, faith and perseverance, living out the reality of their faith, to the glory of God...

(G.E., Qld)

Editor's Reply:

We have dealt with this scripture several times in 'Diakrisis'. Also our book 'Calvinism & Arminianism - Out of the Maze' has a full exegesis of this. So, briefly here:

1. To whom is God longsuffering?

This Epistle is specifically written to the 'beloved': 'beloved, I now write unto you' (vs.1)...'beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing...' (vs.8)...'Wherefore, beloved, seeing that you look for such things, be diligent that you may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless' (vs.14)...'You therefore, beloved, seeing you know these things before...' (vs.17).

In verse 9 it is specifically to the beloved again: 'The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance' Continued next page >

mental breakdown. Much could be said about his teachings and his music over many years, but this latest prophecy begs the question as to what spirit is leading this man.

How many times have we heard prophecies of revivals and 'awakenings' to come? Such events have simply not truly occurred for centuries.

TBN has been a haven for numerous false prophets, including some who continue in failed prophesies (eg. Benny Hinn).

Smith uses Amos chapter 5 which is not about an awakening in America but *judgement upon Israel!* This passage reveals Israel's false understanding in God protecting them because they had the temple. Amos scolds them severely for their unbelief and wickedness! Smith has also isolated *one verse* where music is mentioned. But where is the '*justice*' Smith speaks of in Amos 5 except the justice of God in judgement? '*Standing up against justice*' has never been God's message in any revival or awakening! In every revival and awakening it has been about the Gospel and repentance! (2Chr.7:14)

Smith's involvement in the movie based on the book '*90 minutes in heaven*' speaks volumes also. Many of these books have been proven to be fraudulent and extra biblical. This book by Don Piper has many sections which add to, or contradict, Scripture. It also includes graphic colourful descriptions of bodies of people in heaven before their resurrection - all of different ages, depending on when they died. Added to this is that these people in heaven are meeting at the 'pearly gates' which does not appear in the Bible until post resurrection of bodies.

Smith says after these things he started getting '*dreams and visions*' - but this contradicts scriptures which teach that those prophetic revelations of God's word are ended and our final revelation is by Jesus Christ (Heb.1). Why is it that the Bible is not enough for God's revelation of Heaven? Our Christian literature and bookshops for decades now have been full of these new revelations of heaven and near death experiences. Many top sellers in this market have already proven to be fraudulent, even in recent times admitted by the authors themselves.

Smith is ecumenical and says '*He hopes all denominational, ethnic, racial, and generational lines can be crossed for a real night of unity in the heart of Tennessee*'. He believes there is something '*strategic*' about Nashville which is based on a 'prophecy' from one man who is now dead. But what Bible teaches this? And of course it is Smith who is '*supposed to spearhead this thing*'. An '*antenna*' on a roof apparently has some significance also? '*Cities across America and all around the world*' are apparently going to 'repeat what Nashville is promising'.

Some people are just deluded with extra biblical imagination! And Michael W. Smith is one of them. But he is more - he is a false prophet leading many people into mystical revelations that are at best extra biblical and at worse plain demonic. The difference is minimal when one considers that it will delude and lead many people astray - those who will not 'test the spirits' (1Jn.4)

‘Counseling’ - Psychology, ‘Christian’ or Biblical?

Many large churches today have psychologists or trained ‘Christian counselors’ on staff. Pastors often also outsource people to professional counselors. True ‘Biblical counseling’ is today almost rare. Perhaps this is because the idea of ‘Sola Scriptura’ (‘scripture alone’ is sufficient for doctrine and the spiritual life) is a rarity indeed.

It is not uncommon today to see those who profess to be Biblical Christians, run to secular psychologists for help with life’s problems. This might beg the question - is the Word of God insufficient to address these problems?

One arguably needs to grant the fact that psychiatrists (as distinct from psychologists) can be useful in prescribing some medications for serious mental disorders. The brain is in many respects similar to other organs of the body in that it can malfunction and render some people mentally ineffective and even in danger of harm without some medication or supervision. Little is really known about the many malfunctions of the brain. Some problems can also be directly caused by physical issues and so initially a full medical check is wise.

However, often today I see Christians too easily take medications for depression, anxiety and other problems and difficulties in life, without first attempting counseling from God’s Word and allowing for spiritual growth. Many problems can also be traced quickly to clear stressors and resolved with God’s Word, growth and applying changes against the stressors.

The Root Issue

However, this author is more concerned with a root cause of why churches are increasingly using psychology or ‘christian psychology’ to counsel God’s people. What is lacking in God’s Word that would necessitate such relatively new forms of counseling - forms that use the wisdom and methods taken directly from the world? What should we think of the relatively new integrated forms of psychology, today called ‘Christian counseling’.

Arguably one can understand non Christians using the services of psychologists in attempting to solve life’s problems. Non Christians cannot understand the things of the Spirit (Rom.9:7; 1Cor.2:14). They rather need the Gospel first to open their enslaved hearts to be able to be counseled by the Word of God. But what of professing Christians needing such counseling? Is not the Word of God sufficient to speak to, correct, strengthen and counsel the mind and heart of a believer? Was Paul correct when he advised Timothy: *‘And that from a child you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works’* (2Tim.3:15-17).

Is ‘*all scripture*’ sufficient to make us ‘wise’ unto ‘salvation’ which includes the Sanctification of our souls? Is it all ‘*profitable*’ for ‘*correction, instruction*

necessarily apply it. The ‘homework’ of conviction, repentance and application is often lacking. The hindrances in counseling is often that the living powerful Word of God is not applied to the situation at hand. Hence some people will say *‘I’ve tried that and it doesn’t work’*. But is this God’s fault and is God a liar? To the anxious, troubled, fearful and depressed, Paul joyfully declares that God *‘always causes us to triumph in Christ’* (2Cor.2:14). Only an uncrucified self prevents that victory! Paul testifies, *‘I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ lives in me...’* (Gal.2:20). Surely Christ who is *‘our life’* (Col.3:4), needs no help with psychological counseling! The Biblical counselor is to be an expert in one thing only - in teaching counselees how to become more and more dependent on God and less and less dependent on anyone else, including the ‘counselor’. Often too we ‘counselors’ do not allow for a persons problems to be changed with *spiritual growth and time*.

The biblical model is that we are in a fallen sinful world. God’s Word must be applied. *Bringing conviction to counselees itself is a part of the ministry of the Word. The Word is ministered properly only when it is ministered in the power of the Holy Spirit with a view to bringing conviction.* The prophet Nathan did this when confronting David with his sin. Many counselors overlook this crucial factor. Preoccupied with problems on the *horizontal plane*, they ignore or forget that problems must first be settled on the *vertical!* Confession of sin and faults needs to release the counselee to more sanctification, calling on the Holy Spirit to convict and enlighten. *‘Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much’* (James 5;16,17).

The Christian counselor is to *minister God’s Word in a life-transforming way*, such that God Himself changes the counselee - *from the heart outward!*

Conclusion:

Compare the lives of past Christians who did not have psychology and ‘christian psychology’ with Christians today. Has there been any improvement due to these new wisdoms? The Bible is our instruction manual for living. Why should we turn to humanistic methods now? The Bible claims that it has *‘given us all things that pertain unto life and godliness’* (2Pet.1:3-11). Part of the problem today is that many professing Christians do not want to see themselves crucified in the flesh.

Christian psychology rests upon the claim that the Bible and the indwelling Christ are not sufficient. Yet one of Christ’s names is ‘counselor’ (Is.9:6). Could His counsel ever fail or be not quite sufficient?

Terry Arnold

- (1) *Diakrisis*, 1999 Sept/Oct, P.4 (Harley Hitchcock, former psychologist)
- (2) *Ibid Diakrisis*, 1999 June P.3
- (3) *‘Our Sufficiency in Christ’* by John MacArthur, P.59

psychology cannot be successfully integrated with Christian truth. Moreover, the infusion of psychology into the teaching of the Church has blurred the line between behaviour modification and sanctification'. (3)

But doesn't 'Christian psychology' use the Bible? At times it may; but how do you integrate the theories of godless humanists with the Bible? What does the Bible say about the wisdom of the world of which psychology is its mentor? '*...Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?*' (1Cor.1:20)... '*Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Ghost teaches; comparing spiritual things with spiritual*' (2:13) '*...For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God...*' (3:19).

Did the church lack this new 'christian psychology' for 1,900 years? Did the Holy Spirit leave something out of God's Word that would speak to the downtrodden soul? What does the Bible mean when it claims that it has '*given us all things that pertain unto life and godliness*' (2Pet.1:3-11)?

Spiritual mixtures produce confusion and confusion brings division. The enemy has sown much false seed into the body of Christ (Matt.13:25). The apostle Paul dealt with a *mixture* of Judaism and the true faith. In the third century the church and state *mixed*, resulting in pagan Christianity and Roman Catholic paganistic traditions. The 20th Century saw new mixtures such as 'theistic evolution', 'Christian Rock music', 'spiritual drunkenness' and recently '*Christian psychology*'. These mixtures are 'leaven' in the lump of truth. The will of the Lord is our sanctification (1Thess.4:3) and this must be in the '*unleavened bread of sincerity and truth*' (1Cor.5:8)!

Many men come down from their pulpits and don an entirely different cap when they enter the counseling room. There they often settle for a process of change that produces only outward, social results. These preachers have been sold a bill of goods at seminaries and colleges, or in 'Christian' books that promote eclectic counseling theories and processes.

Biblical Counseling

The counselor's ministry is one not of reformation but of the Gospel, which is a *ministry of transformation by the Spirit*. The change a counselor seeks is in bringing the counselee to *hear what the Spirit is saying through the Word* and thus bring them closer to knowing what God desires in their life. In Scripture there is plenty of guidance and advice - just read Psalm 1 '*Blessed is the man that walks not in the counsel of the ungodly...*' This goes on *in detail* to advise, warn and counsel the Christian. Our problem is not that we do not have what we need in the Bible, but that we do not have enough of the Bible in us! In 2Timothy 2:16,17 Paul says the scriptures are '*profitable*' for all that counseling has to offer '*in righteousness*' to be '*thoroughly furnished unto all good works*'.

Rather than know ourselves better, we all need to know God better. Rather than focusing on trying to discover our self-identity, we need to know Him who lives in us both to will and do His own good purpose. Anyone who has done much biblical counseling will know that *many people can hear the truth but not*

in righteousness'? What is 'counseling' but this? Is the '*all scripture*' not enough to be '*perfect*' (the Greek word '*artios*' here meaning 'capable, complete, proficient' or, as Arndt and Gingrich sum it up, 'able to meet all demands'). Paul teaches the Scriptures have the power to perfectly fit out the man of God for his task. Paul continues with the words '*thoroughly furnished*' - the second word here is the intensive '*exartizo*' meaning 'equipped'. In the pages of scripture are stowed every principle we might ever need to perform any task God requires!

True, the scriptures are not a textbook for mechanical engineering. But they are entirely adequate as the textbook *for living*, and for *changing* our living to conform to God's requirements - ie. '*every good work*'. Did the church have to wait for over 1,900 years until Freud's 'psychology' to perform this?

'Counseling'

The term 'counseling' has often come to mean to refer to specially trained persons called 'counselors' who resolve issues to do with the soul. Yet the 'counselor' is not mentioned as one of the gifts to the church as is 'evangelists' and 'teachers' (Eph.4:11). There is no designated position of 'counselor' in the local church for the '*perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ*' (vs.12). If 'counseling' is to be a position or a gifting then why is it so much today taken *out* of the local church?

'Counseling' is surely as broad as discipling, teaching, encouraging, exhorting, correcting one another in the faith. Believers are called to comfort (1Thess.5:11), instruct (2Tim.2:24-26), edify (Rom.14:19), admonish (Rom.15:14), forgive (Ephes.4:32), and restore (Gal.6:1) one another. However, the only one who can see inside a person, and therefore be his real 'counselor', is the Lord Himself!

All Christians can have some part to play in 'counseling' others, in that the scriptures can be used to correct and encourage each other. All those who work in church ministries dealing with peoples lives should be counseling others where the need arises. *Biblical counseling is as wide and as simple as bringing to attention the Scriptures*. Preachers counsel every time they get in the pulpit. Pastoring elders counsel every time they shepherd, preach, teach and visit people in need. Parents counsel every time they parent, raise and correct their children. All Christians may use the scriptures to counsel others. *This wider understanding of 'counseling' has been largely lost today* and the term seems to be confined to those who are 'trained' and specialise in some way. No doubt some will have giftings in this area more than others. But *all* Christians should be ready to 'counsel' and build one another up in the faith.

Sadly too the understanding of 'counseling' today is that 'counselees' are 'victims' and there is 'abuse' from circumstances...often in the *deep past*. Yet the Bible calls our past *sinful*. '*And you has he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins: Wherein in time past you walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our*

conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath...’ (Eph.2:1-3).

‘Counseling’ today is usually expected to be many hours where the ‘counsellor’ does much listening to a ‘counselee’. Other people involved are often kept out of the counseling events. The counselee is often seen as a victim of circumstances and environment. In much of Christian counseling today sin is simply not addressed. Sin and its effects are renamed as abuse, sickness, poor parenting, etc. Words like ‘sin’, ‘sinner’, ‘sinful’ are simply not used. Yet that is where the root of all our problems lie - whether it be our personal sins or the sins of others and our sinful reactions to them. We live in a sinful world and inside tents of flesh which we have to contend with. The Word of God is our most powerful weapon in this spiritual warfare. It alone is the ‘double edged sword’.

Psychology

Psychology has run rampant through the modern church in preaching, doctrine and counseling. Yet no psychological theory has ever been invented by a Christian. Freud, Rogers, Maslow, and Jung were all God haters and anti Christian. This root is often ignored by Christian counselors who believe the world has something to offer in it’s wisdom. An ex psychologist once declared to this author *‘Psychology is the western world’s disguise for spirituality. Psychology is the best the world has to offer’*. (1) Psychology is humanistic at its core. Pagan roots must produce pagan fruits (Matt.7:15-20).

None of the hundreds of psychotherapies and systems of psychology recognise God’s law, sin, repentance, justification and sanctification. Psychology is really an alternative religion of the world when *it claims to deal with the psyche or soul*. But for a Christian this intrudes into an area in which the Bible claims to be the sole teacher! God claims that His Word divides between the soul and the spirit and shows the very intents of our heart. *‘For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do’* (Heb.4:12,13). This ‘word’ cuts between our spirit and soul and shows us what is in our heart. But it is only the Spirit that can do this. *That Spirit will not use the wisdom of the world!* God is a Spirit and *‘he must be worshipped in spirit and in truth’* (Jn.4:24). And *the truth is in the Word* (Jn.17:17)!

The fruit of psychology is evident. Why did psychologists and psychiatrists at one time have the highest percentage of any profession who were under the care of counselors, even committing suicide, divorcing and needing medication. They themselves are as much in need of the great counselor and his ‘counsel’?

Psychology may well have ‘bandaid’ techniques for making counselees feel good about themselves. But for Christians the issue of sin and how we view ourselves in the sight of a holy God must be addressed *if the soul is to be further*

sanctified. The problem for the Christians using psychology is that there is only ONE method by which the soul can be increased in the Spirit’s work of growth in sanctification - and that is ‘truth’. That ‘truth’ God says is only found in his revealed Word - *‘Sanctify them through your truth: your word is truth’* (Jn.17:17). According to the Word of God *Christians will NOT grow by psychological counseling methods!* Behaviours may be stemmed for a time but God says *only His truth sanctifies a person*. Psychology may give sympathetic ears, feel good sayings and techniques to help with lusts and addictions. But unless the Christian is understanding of what the will of God is in any situation, these measures are really only *the wisdom of the world*.

I have seen countless professing Christians run to and fro to psychologists and problems are either pushed under a layer of blame elsewhere or the problems keep coming back in differing forms. Christians must go to the One who bought their souls with a great sacrifice and left us his final revelation - the Lord Jesus Christ.

But in man’s wisdom, if psychology is non Christian, being invented by three men who were God haters, then we simply invent ‘Christian Psychology’!...

‘Christian Counseling’

By ‘christian counseling’ this author refers to the most common form of counseling seen in churches today - ‘christian psychology’ or other eclectic forms of counseling which mix the Bible with the wisdom from the world.

There is no founder for ‘Christian Psychology’ and Psychology textbooks do not accommodate ‘Christian Psychology’. Arguably it does not exist because the two systems are fundamentally opposed to each other on the issue of man and sin. Can this relatively new ‘Christian psychology’ really improve on God’s Word as counseling for the Christian soul? If so that would be to deny the all sufficiency of God and His Word in which he has *‘given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that has called us to glory and virtue’* (2Pet.1:3).

A former psychologist once said to this author: *‘Can you filter psychology through the Biblical net? I wish people did, because they’d find 100% of psychology would remain in the net’*. (2) There may be some things in ‘christian psychology’ that are truth or even derived from the Bible. But the mixture may well be more dangerous than straight out psychology. The root of the problem is again in the view of, or the lack of, ‘sola scriptura’ and the all sufficiency of the Word of God. When counselors who use christian psychology speak of ‘values’, ‘behavior’, ‘attitudes’, ‘relationships’, and beliefs, they speak about things which the Bible already speaks to clearly and can be applied in obedience. Is not the Bible sufficient to address these issues?

‘Christian Psychology’ has a *low view or no view of sin*, partly because it has a *low view of scripture*. As one author stated: *‘Christian Psychology’ as the term is used today is an oxymoron. The word psychology no longer speaks of studying the soul; instead it describes a diverse menagerie of therapies and theories that are fundamentally humanistic. The presuppositions and most of the doctrine of*