



Diakrisis (Australia)

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

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TA Ministries is a non-denominational faith ministry,
teaching, informing and equipping the church.
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**** Victorian Seminar ****

Date:

Saturday 27th May 11.30-3pm

Topic:

'The Sovereignty of God'

Venue: Mount Cathedral Baptist Church, Alexandra, 37 Grant St, Alexandra, Vict.

More details see P.19

Editor's Comment

Many people, Christian and non Christian, are expressing their shock at the state of the world at the moment with the culture wars, gender transitions, abortion laws, not to mention the threat of nuclear war. At the foundation of many of these is a slide away from morality, family values, and just plain common sense. When authorities cannot, or are too afraid to make up their minds as to what a man and a woman is, or try to overturn God's creative order, then chaos reigns.

But to think that these ungodly wars which are the gutters of the world would enter the church, is beyond the pale. The church at times has been not far behind the philosophies of the age, but now seems to be even a herald for many of the new thoughts. For denominations to openly endorse transgenderism, homosexuality and the new ideologies of the age, shows just how far we have strayed in apostasy from the mission of the church. Instead of being light to a dark world we are endorsing the darkness or calling the darkness light (Eph.6:12; Jn.3:19; 8:12; Is.5:20). Instead of being heralds for the Gospel which offends, we are trying to appease a world which cannot be appeased. What will it take to bring the church back to its mission but a confession of its apostasy and then repentance?

Perhaps two questions answered might recover what we the church are here for: *What is a Christian?*; and *what is the Gospel that makes a Christian?* I fear that the answers to these questions might now be so varied as to needing to be re-taught.

A Christian is a disciple, a follower of Jesus Christ, His person and His Word. He is a pilgrim to a far country passing through a dark world (Heb.11:13). The prince of that world is a liar, a thief and the spirit of error (Jn.8:44; 1Jn.4:6). The King of the far country is the Spirit of truth and life. The Christian has no taste for the fleeting sentiments of the world, for his desires are for Heavenly things. The Christian sees the worldview through the lense of written scripture. He sees the world and its new ideologies racing towards judgment.

The Christian was saved from sin and judgement by the true Gospel, the good news of that historical event 2,000 years ago when God in answer to the entire depravity of man sent His only begotten Son to be crucified on behalf of all those who would believe. His Christ would lead a perfect sinless life to be a satisfactory offering and who He would raise up from the dead for our justification. God's wrath would be propitiated with a perfect offering which merit would be applied to all those who believe. To have them adopted and enter a perfect Heaven He would choose to credit them with his own righteousness gained by Christ. That righteousness is the only entry to a righteous Heaven where there is no sin.

This Gospel is far and wide from any understanding the world has, and any of its new philosophies. Only the Holy Spirit can make it understood and draw the the believing ones.

If the two questions are answered according to scripture then perhaps the difference between the world and the church would be clear and its commission brought back into practise. Until that time comes or He returns, God will always keep a remnant faithful, well able to answer these questions and teach them.

Terry Arnold

More Lies of the Healing Gospel

‘A Missouri megachurch is facing criticism and demands for evidence after reporting an alleged miracle in which a woman’s amputated toes were said to have regrown at a prayer session.

John Lindell, pastor at James River Church in Springfield, claimed during a livestream...that a ‘creative miracle’ occurred at...James River Church, where Kristina Dines saw her amputated toes grow back. The alleged healing occurred as guest Pastors Bill Johnson [Bethel church] and Randy Clark led services.

Dines, supposedly had three toes amputated...in 2015...Kelly [a prayer team worker]...told her that the Lord wanted to grow her toes back tonight...’ ‘Kelly had her take off her shoe and anointed where each of the toes would be and began to pray’, Lindell said. ‘The skin began to change colour. Pretty soon, there was a pulse in the foot that she could feel. All of a sudden, Krissy said, ‘Are you kidding me?’ And they saw the toes begin to grow’...As others began to pray ‘bone began to form where there was none before...over the next 30 minutes, all three toes grew...within an hour, nails began to grow on all the toes’, Lindell said.

Johnson repeated the claims at Bethel’s service on Sunday, saying that James River Church saw ‘hundreds and hundreds of miracles over three nights’ as they prayed for ‘creative miracles’. He discussed Dines’ story, which took place at another James River campus, as it was told to him... ‘by morning, the toenails, everything had formed; she got three brand new toes’...

...Johnson added that the Lord once ‘recreated a kidney’ for a friend who was missing a kidney, which he claims was verified by x-rays. ‘I have friends who have seen an amputated or loss foot grow back’ he continued...’

(Christian Post 27/3)

Editor’s Comment:

In earlier years of this ministry we examined many claims of such healings, including those of Benny Hinn, Reinhard Bonnke and other faith healers. *Not one was miraculous. Many were simply fraudulent.*

Dines has no before and after photo. Amazingly with all the technology, live streaming of the church and many phones available, there is not one photo? Public examination has so far been *refused*. There is simply NIL documentation as is evident by one website ‘*ShowMeTheToes*’!

The story from Lindell to Johnson also seems to have varied, as so often happens with these claims when handed down. Added to this, Bill Johnson has already been exposed as a false prophet with his false claims of healings and raisings from the dead [see ‘*Diakrisis*’ March 2020 and Sept 2022], as well as the Bethel church condoning spiritism and bizarre cultic practises

These false claims invite Christianity to be mocked. They bury the Gospel in false signs and wonders. When will pastors and church leaders call out these lies that occur in every country, every town, when local pastors, or healing evangelists come to town and claim such healings? The real gift of healings was also *instant, without failures* and with ‘*all manner of diseases*’.

Hillsong Crisis Deepens

Australian Independent MP, Andrew Wilkie, has tabled documents in federal parliament to show examples of fraud, money laundering and tax evasion at the Sydney-based church *Hillsong*...He stated the Pentecostal church earned \$80 million more in Australian annual income than it reported publicly.

A whistle blower has provided Wilkie with the church's financial records and board papers showing that in 2021 four members of the Houston family spent three days at a luxury retreat in Cancun Mexico using \$150,000 of Church money. *'These documents show former leader Brian Houston treating private jets like Ubers, again all with church money...in one three-month period Brian Houston's trips cost \$55,000, \$52,000, \$30,000, \$22,000 and \$20,000'* he told parliament.

'The new head of Hillsong, Phil Dooley, has told churchgoers he only flies economy. But these documents show him clocking up \$58,000 in business class flights for him and his daughter to Guatemala, \$42,000 in business class flights to Mexico and \$32,000 in business class flights from Capetown to Sydney via the US'.

Wilkie listed a string of luxury purchases he said *'would put reality TV stars the Kardashians to shame'*. *'For example, \$6500 Cartier watch for Bobbie Houston, \$2500 for Louis Vuitton luggage, a \$2500 watch for Phil Dooley, two watches worth \$15,000 for Joel and Julia A'Bell, shopping sprees for designer clothes at Saks Fifth Avenue and even \$16,000 for custom skateboards...'*

More recently it has also been revealed that Hillsong charges relief ministries like *Compassion* *'\$1,000,000 per year for the privilege of being their child sponsorship partner'*. (Yet some guest speakers were paid up to \$150,000).

A Hillsong statement declared: *'Over the past twelve months...We are working hard to set a course for the future that ensures our structures are accountable, transparent, and honouring to God...Our primary focus is to be a community of believers focused on the life-changing power of Jesus, driven to bring hope to the world around us'*. (Extracts from *Christian Post*, March/April)

Houston now has a pension salary of \$350,000 per year. He recently preached 'not to touch' his 'anointing'. He is pleading not guilty to concealing his father's sexual abuse of a boy in 1970. Two serious misconduct charges have also been reported by two women, one when he was under the influence of drugs and alcohol (he has since been charged twice with drink driving, one with a .20% reading).

Editor's Comment:

For years we have been exposing Hillsong churches for their unholy doctrines, their worship and worldliness. With their health/wealth gospel they preach another Jesus and another gospel and are taking thousands to Hell who have taken on board another Christ not found in the pages of scripture, nor in historic Christianity. The immoral failures of its leaders is staggeringly high and well documented. What would God say but that which He said concerning the last days religion?: 'Come out of her, my people, that you be not partakers of her sins, and that you receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities' (Rev.18:4).

How Deep is the Apostasy?

The majority of Americans - 96%, do not hold to a biblical worldview following the COVID-19 lockdowns, according to researcher George Barna...The biblical worldview declined to a mere 4% since pandemic lockdowns started in 2020. A biblical worldview...is one in which the entirety of a person's 'ideas about all dimensions of life and eternity are based on biblical principles and commands'.

The data...also found the pandemic fuelled a decline in biblical worldview even among those who identify as born-again Christians, from 19% pre-pandemic to 13% post-pandemic...the lowest since he began measuring it in the early 1990's...

Barna said Christian churches and schools should be putting more effort into helping their congregations and students think through the Scriptures. 'People do not develop a biblical worldview randomly or by default...The impact of arts and entertainment, government, and public schools is clearly apparent in the shift away from biblical perspectives to a more experiential and emotional form of decision-making.

(Extracted from Christian Post, March/2023)

The Methodist Exodus

Cornerstone Church of Caledonia, Mich., the largest United Methodist Church congregation in the state, has voted to leave the mainline Protestant denomination over its ongoing debate over homosexuality and same-sex marriage. The church, which has satellite campuses in Grand Rapids and the city of Wyoming, voted 616-9 in favor of disaffiliation, with two abstentions.

...United Methodists in Eastern Europe and Central Asia have also begun the process to leave the denomination...Delegates of the UMC Northern Europe and Eurasia Central Conference voted 40-20 in an online meeting last week to allow regional church bodies to take the first steps toward departing from the second-largest Protestant denomination in the U.S...The delegates also voted down a proposal to allow regional bodies within the Central Conference to change their rules to allow the blessing of same-sex unions and ordination of gay individuals.

(Christian Post 25/3)

Editor's Comment:

More than 1,800 churches have recently disaffiliated from the Methodist church over same sex issues and some are being sued by the Methodist hierarchy where they have *not been allowed to disaffiliate*. Sometimes bank accounts and properties have been seized.

When will churches look at history and see that such divisive unbiblical issues as homosexuality should never have come into the church in the first place. It's a culture war, not a battle churches need to fight within themselves. *The world has come into the church to take the church into the world.*

What Happened To The Holy Spirit?

This article explores the history of teaching on the Holy Spirit, and what is orthodox, historic and Biblical in comparison to what is often now taught on this subject. It begs the question - who is the Holy Spirit today and what is His work, when much of what is biblical has been buried amidst a quagmire of new, mystical and unbiblical teaching on *who this person is and what He does?*

This is not just a peripheral subject if it affects the Gospel of salvation! If we have the wrong Christ, '*another Gospel*' (Gal.1:6-10), we have '*another spirit*' (2Cor.11:4).

The cry is that teachers and churches teaching new theology on the Holy Spirit are 'still preaching the Gospel'. But how can that be if who the Spirit is and what His work is, is being *added* to. Further, the study of the Holy Spirit (pneumatology) must be centred and pointing to Christ and Him crucified (Christology), *if the Gospel is to be true.*

An Overview of the Holy Spirit

The Person

In the Old Testament the Holy Spirit is the '*ruach*' of God - translated wind, breath or Spirit of God (Ps.104:29,30). He is involved in creation (Gen.1) and in giving life to man (Job.33:4). This Spirit can be grieved and is called '*Holy*' (Is.63:10).

This Holy Spirit is Deity, the Yahweh (see Is.6:9,10; cp. Acts 28:25-27 - where it is *the same* Holy Spirit speaking).

In the New Testament again the Holy Spirit is deity (see Acts 5:3,4 - the '*Holy Ghost*' (vs.3) is equated with '*God*' (vs.4).

The Spirit is a *person* (Jn.16:13,14). Nine times the personal pronoun is used in these two verses! Again, the Holy Spirit can be '*grieved*' (Eph.4:30) and has a '*will*' (1Cor.12:11; Acts 16:6,7).

His Work

In the Old Testament He works in creation (Gen.1:2). Then He came *upon* people to speak for God, or to do His work (1Sam.10:10). These operations were temporary (Judg.16:20; 1Sam.16:14) in comparison to the permanent indwelling which would take place from Acts 2 onwards. Such an indwelling was prophesied in Ezekiel 36:26,27 '*A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you...*'

Thus in the New Testament the Holy Spirit works permanently *within* believers rather than '*upon*' or '*with*' them: '*And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it sees him not, neither knows him: but*

you know him; for he dwells with you, and shall be in you' (Jn.14:16,17). Note the present '*with*' and the future '*in*', the latter pointing to Acts 2, when the Holy Spirit would come to earth for the first time and permanently indwell various groups of believers who hear the Gospel (the Jews Acts 2:38,39; the Samaritans 8:5; the Gentiles 10:34-48; and disciples of John - Acts 19:2-4). This is referred to as the 'Baptism With the Spirit' (Matt.3:11; Mk.1:8; Lk.3:16; Acts 1:5) and places all who are 'called' to salvation into the body of Christ (Acts 2:39; 1Cor.12:13).

In Acts 2 they '*repented*'; in Acts 8 they '*believed*'; in Acts 19 they '*received*'. The Holy Spirit then '*fills*' ('*pleroo*' - empowers; controls) believers (Eph.5:18,19).

The Holy Spirit Reveals truth - in 'general revelation' in nature (Rom.1:19,20); and 'special revelation' in the Bible (2Tim.3:16,17; 2Pet.1:20,21; Heb.1:1,2).

The Holy Spirit 'seals' at salvation for future glory (Eph.1:13,14).

The Holy Spirit is the 'Spirit of truth' teaching, leading and guiding into truth (Jn.16:12-15; Rom.8:14-16).

The Holy Spirit *gives Assurance* (Rom.8:16).

The Holy Spirit does '*not speak of himself*' but *glorifies Christ* (Jn.16:13,14).

The Holy Spirit *convicts of sin* (Jn.16:8-11). He brings the message of the Gospel.

The Holy Spirit *intercedes for the believer* (Rom.8:26). He is the spirit of '*prayer and supplication*' (Acts 1:14'; Eph.6:18; Phil.4:6).

The Holy Spirit *gives fruit* (Gal.5:22,23).

The Holy Spirit *anoints and IS the anointing* (1Jn.2:26,27).

The Holy Spirit *sanctifies/makes holy from within and conforms us to the image of Christ* (2Thess.2:13; 1Pet.1:2; 1Jn.3:3) Phil.2:12,13; Phil.1:6; Rom.8:29).

The above is a short, broad overview of the *person* of the Spirit and what His *work* is, as found *in scripture*. This simple overview is taught in many Bible colleges and in historic Confessions as orthodox. It is the '*faith once delivered to the saints*' (Jude 3) and testified to by the Church Fathers, the Reformers, the Puritans and many church leaders down the running centuries.

However, the 20th century Pentecostal movement took these basics and *added new extra biblical experiential teachings*, some of which had only been seen in isolated heretical movements.

Old Heresies

Earlier heretical movements such as Montanism (3rd century), Socinianism and Quakerism (1600's) are now again seen in the 20th and 21st centuries. The Montanists had extra biblical revelations, prophesies and unknown ecstatic tongues; the Socinians denied the Trinity and the person of the Holy Spirit and taught the Spirit as a force or power; the Quakers emphasised the Spirit's voice as an 'inner light' of the conscience which in time they demonstrated a false spirit or exalted the Spirit above the Word. All were deemed *heretical* by the teaching of the day.

Today, the Pentecostal/Charismatic movement has returned some of these old heresies, which were really the essence of mysticism which plagued many generations. *The person of the Holy Spirit as 'another comforter' like Christ (allos*

paracletos) was largely diluted or replaced with the force and power of a spirit which operated more from without than an indwelling.

Which 'Presence'?

A great deal of modern teaching of the Holy Spirit is *more Old Testament than it is New*. In the Old Testament the Spirit came *upon* people and sometimes left them (1Sam.10:10; Judg.16:20; 1Sam.16:14). Jesus taught his disciples that the Spirit was '*with*' believers until the ascension and then *indwelling* them from Acts 2 onwards (Jn.14:16,17). Much teaching today has the Holy spirit's 'presence' in an *outside* sense instead of an *indwelling Spirit*. That 'presence' is also often mechanically produced with the use of music and motivational techniques. Many do not realise how close to the occult this 'presence' often becomes!

Today there are those who are supposedly 'imparting' the Holy Spirit (as in portions) into people *from outside*. Certainly it could be said that the apostles in single and historic events were commissioned by God to bestow the Holy Spirit to various groups of believers (the Jews Acts 2; the Samaritans Acts 8; the Gentiles Acts 10). But these were *apostolic historic events* that cannot be repeated. You cannot replicate the Jews, the Samaritans and the Gentiles receiving the Holy Spirit when He first came to earth to indwell believers. Are we going to repeat Jesus ascension, which He Himself said was necessary for the Holy Spirit to be sent from the Father (Jn.16:7)? Do we need to repeat the '*promise*' of the indwelling Spirit prophesied for Acts 2 and then spoken of after Acts 2 as a one time event (Lk.24:49; Acts 1:4; 2:33,39; Eph.1:13; Gal.3:14)? Are we really wanting to repeat the tongues of fire, the earthquake, the mighty rushing wind of the Holy Spirit being given? Why repeat Acts 2 when the same '*promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call*' (Acts 2:39)?

The Holy Spirit is a *person* (Jn.16:13,14; 14:16,17), not a 'presence' outside of us. Any presence we sense is *within* us. We either have all of Him in us or we do not have Him (Rom.8:9). The Holy Spirit does not dwell in the air around us, but the Devil and his evil angels do! They are called the '*powers of the air*'. When one opens oneself up to receive something from outside, they may well get more than, and worse than, what they were asking to receive. Never in scripture are we told to wait for some external power to fall on us after we have received the Holy Spirit. The apostles and disciples never had anything fall on them or *received anything from without after Pentecost*. Before Pentecost the Holy Spirit came *upon* people but never *indwelt* them. However, after Pentecost the disciples are shown to have the Spirit *indwelling* them for the first time. Then and thereafter they were '*filled*' or '*full of the Holy Spirit*'. They were filled continuously from the Spirit that was already within!

The idea that the Holy Spirit can also impart Himself in instalments is blasphemous and nowhere to be found in scripture! Yet this is precisely what many of the signs and wonders leaders, (Howard-Browne, Copeland, Hinn, etc.), teach and others are practising today. *As Christians, we can never have more or less of the Holy Spirit, but the Holy Spirit can have more or less of us!* We grow up into

Him (Eph.4:15), not by receiving portions of Him.

The Holy Spirit is a sovereign person, a member of the Godhead. He cannot be distributed by 'impartations'. Seeking or creating a 'presence' from without us is simply the makings of another spirit. Impartation theology began in Pentecostal circles late last century and early this century. At one time the American *Assembly of God* discouraged such impartation teaching and practises, but they capitulated through the 1994 'Toronto Blessing', the later 'Pensacola Revival' and the signs and wonders movement. These movements have created an understanding of the 'presence' of the Holy Spirit foreign to much scripture. Such a 'presence' is too often now derived from motivational techniques, manifestations and music, rather than worship in truth, in prayer, meditation and study.

Which Revelation?

At the heart of much teaching on the Holy Spirit is the issue of *revelation*. Where do we get revelation of God and by Holy Spirit? The Bible addresses this clearly in giving an order, a timeline of *how this was given, and where it ended!* In the Old Testament, revelation was given directly to prophets, in the form of words, visions and dreams as God's Word. In the New Testament, revelation of God is stated as '*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*' (Rom.1:20). This 'general revelation' does not save but leaves man judged and damned for their sins, unless they receive Christ by faith (Jn.3:18,19; 10:9; 14:6; Acts 4:12; Rom.1:16,17; Eph.2:8,9).

There is also special revelation of God, His person and work, which was written down '*in times past...by the prophets*' to an end in Jesus Christ as the final prophet (Heb.1:1,2). The Holy Spirit '*moved*' men to write down this revelation of a Trinitarian God, his person and his redemptive plan. This revelation is not of any '*private interpretation*' and *not to be added to* (2Pet.1:20; Rev.22:18,19).

Yet today in thousands of churches across the globe the Spirit is said to be speaking words in prophesying and tongues, words extra to the Bible. Why are the scriptures not enough? Why is 'the '*more sure word of prophecy...the prophecy of the scriptures*' not enough (2Pet.1:19,20)? Could it be because man in his carnality has a history of not being satisfied with what God has given in His manna from Heaven and in the person of Christ (Ex.16; Nu.11; Jn.6)?

Which revelation is infallible and which is fallible? How fallible, unreliable and damaging have been the multitude of prophesies, words by modern day prophets, and the words that people believe God has literally spoken to them? All of these are either fleshly or demonic, the only two sources outside of the infallible Word. How infallible is the Word of God in the 66 books of the Bible which is inspired, inerrant and the life giving '*more sure word of prophecy*'?

Which Sanctification?

All the above begs the question - if we have the wrong understanding of the

Spirit in either his person or his work, then how does this affect the work the Holy Spirit is to do in us? The Father planned our salvation, the Son carried the work of it out on the cross, but what about the Holy Spirit's work in sanctification - that working out within us the separation in holiness from the world and sin, and to Christ and His Word? If one is getting truth from a false understanding of the Holy Spirit then sanctification is thwarted, the Holy Spirit grieved. This is so because we are *sanctified by the truth!*: *'They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through your truth: your word is truth'* (Jn.17:16,17). It is the truth that sanctifies and that truth is found in His Word. If we are getting our truth from any other source but the Word of God, then how can we be sanctified and *'working out our salvation'* (Phil.2:12,13)? Sanctification cannot be shortcut with anything extra-biblical. The Holy Spirit is *'the Spirit of truth'* (Jn.14:17; 15:26; 16:13; 1Jn.4:3). That Spirit has written truth in one book - God's Word. The Bible itself says this is where we go to for sanctification (Jn.17:17).

Which Jesus?

The Holy Spirit and the study of (pneumatology) always points to Christ, his person and work (Christology). The Holy Spirit does *'not speak of himself'* but *glorifies Christ* (Jn.16:13,14).

Today this is lacking! The spirit portrayed in many circles today glorifies men more than Christ. If we have the wrong spirit being taught, then we have the wrong Jesus (2Cor.11:4). If the true Spirit then He will glorify Christ and His work, and the message will be Gospel oriented. The true Gospel is not about the Holy Spirit but about Christ and Him crucified. The real Jesus will be put before the people as Lord and Saviour.

Which spirit?

To receive the spirit or any 'anointing' through another person, or from without, is unbiblical, dangerous and even occult. Yet this is common practise in many churches today, usually including the laying on of hands. It is certainly possible to *'receive another spirit'* (2Cor.11:4). These spirits are unclean (Lk.4:33), the spirit of error (Jn.4:6).

Which Gospel?

'Another gospel' is closely aligned with *'another Jesus'* and *'another spirit'* (2Cor.11:4). If one has another Jesus or another spirit then one has *'another gospel'* (2Cor.11:4; Gal.1:6).

Again, the Gospel is not about the Holy Spirit, although He is the one who brings the message to the hearts of the people who will believe, who draws them to Christ, who creates new life from the deadness of sin. But the heart of the true Gospel is that Christ has been crucified as a sacrificial offering to a God who must be appeased and satisfied for sin. We are all sinners who have broken the laws of God

and needing a righteousness that is not our own, not achieved by any imperfect works. The righteousness we must have by faith in Jesus and his offering to God, is an imputed alien righteousness found only through the sinless Christ. When we believe in Jesus and his offering on our behalf, God promises to credit us with his righteousness and credit our sin to Christ. This is the perfection needed to enter the perfect sinless kingdom of Heaven and withstand the beauty of the sinless holy God, His Christ and His Spirit.

The gospel of signs and wonders, of a spirit that speaks and manifests himself in extra-biblical ways, is not acceptable to God and will not produce real converts. The seriousness of this is frightening when one considers that the very signs and wonders mentioned in the Bible for the end times are always '*lying*' or '*false*' (Matt.24:24; 2Thess 2:9-11). But worse, there will be many who will be calling Jesus '*Lord, Lord*' and believing that their signs and wonders ('*wonderful works*'), their '*prophesying*' in God's name, and even '*casting out devils*', were all of the Spirit of Christ. Yet Jesus will say to them '*I never knew you: depart from me, you that work iniquity*' (Matt.7:21-23). While this scripture does include unregenerate professing Christians, it surely must speak to the new modern day Pentecostal/Charismatic movement, as well as any other movement which has such '*works of iniquity*' and an obvious counterfeit spirit.

Conclusion

New teaching and old heresies have been downloaded over many years but none more so than the last 150 years. The desire is to have more of the Holy Spirit, but this is too often in all the wrong places, with the emphasis on an outer presence instead of an indwelling person. *It is not a matter of us having more of the Holy Spirit but the indwelling Holy Spirit having more of us!* When we receive the Holy Spirit at salvation *we have all of Him!* We were '*blessed with all spiritual blessings*' (Eph.1:3). As believers we are saved by Grace *plus nothing*.

Our revelation of God must come from the all sufficient infallible '*more sure word...of the prophesy of the scripture*' (2Pet.1:20,21). Our very sanctification by the Spirit is commanded to come from only that truth (Jn.17:17)!

The Holy Spirit desires that the Gospel of Christ be at the forefront, yet that Gospel has been lost in the quagmire of new doctrines describing a jesus and a spirit not found in the faith once delivered.

The jesus of extra-biblical revelation is 'another jesus'. The true Spirit wrote God's redemptive history in the Bible through the prophets in the past and now ending in Christ and scripture. '*If they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them*' (Is.8:20).

Terry Arnold

The recent '*Charismatic Confusion*' conference has 4 sessions with more in depth teaching on many aspects in this article. They can be viewed or downloaded from our website in the 'resources' and then the 'conferences' section: <https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLpNUE3qKn5c94-IXbBn-yx36uA0I0jUqx>

The 'Asbury Revival' - A First Appraisal



On Wednesday February 8th, 2023, twenty students at Asbury University crowded a chapel 'altar' with a worship team at Hughes Auditorium. Some felt prompted to continue the service past the usual end time. The account given by students is that the president of the seminary encouraged students to visit the chapel and join the 20 students in what he described as an 'outpouring of the Holy Spirit'. 200 students arrived and it continued for 16 days. This was called the 'Asbury revival'.

I myself in nearly 30 years of ministry have seen 'revival' meetings, 'altar calls', people coming to the front, decisional making sermons, all in Christian schools, at youth meetings and in church services. A large majority of the decisions fell away over time, some in my own family too close for comfort. So, I beg the reader to understand why I am most cautious of claimed 'revivals'.

Added to the above I have personally been through the famed 'Toronto Blessing' and later examined the 'Pensacola Revival', the former which divided and devastated many churches it touched. But one thing these events did do was cause me to study earnestly what true 'revivals' and 'awakenings' were in history.

With all this in mind, I come to the 'Asbury revival' with caution, not to refute it as a 'revival' but to examine it in background, in doctrine, in message and methods, and in comparison to the historic revivals and awakenings.

We are to '*believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world*' (1Jn.4:1). That was simply not done in any depth for those who quickly embraced the past false revivals in recent decades. This author was attacked as 'religious', a 'pharisee', and an apostate by Pentecostal/Charismatics for exposing the obvious demonic origins and practises of the 'Toronto Blessing' in the 1990's. But the failed prophecies, the exaggerations and lies, the demonic and novel manifestations, and the nil effect on the surrounding societies stands as a demonstration of the need in these last days to 'test the spirits'.

The Doctrine

Asbury University is part of a revivalist movement which *claims several charismatic revivals* in its history. '*Asbury University has been known through the years for its history of great revivals. There have been several occasions when significant moves of the Holy Spirit have swept the campus and reached across the nation*'. The university claims to have had 8 'revivals', one in 1970 that lasted 7 days, spreading across the United States and abroad. Another was claimed in 2006.

Their website shows a Arminian Wesleyan Holiness doctrine '*strongly influenced by Henry Clay Morrison's preaching throughout the United States and the wide reach of the Asbury publication 'The Pentecostal Herald*'.

Asbury university does believe in the Scriptures being '*divinely inspired...inerrant in the original writings, and...the final authority...as well as*

'Justification by faith alone'. However, strangely the university also teaches that humans do not become *'sinners'* until they *'reach moral responsibility'* and then *'become sinners in need of conversion'*.

Their doctrine also states: *'Entire sanctification is that act of divine grace, through the baptism with the Holy Spirit, by which the heart is cleansed from all sin and filled with the pure love of God. This is a definite, cleansing work of grace in the heart of a believer, subsequent to conversion, resulting from full consecration and faith in the cleansing merit of the blood of Jesus Christ...Entire sanctification, enables the Christian to live a godly life, to grow in the graces of the Spirit, and to walk blamelessly in His holy commandments'*.

This *'entire sanctification is an instantaneous second work of grace'*. Yet elsewhere it is stated *'Christian perfection, for Wesley, is achievable in this present life'* and that Wesley believed it is thus *'both'* instant and achievable.

No scriptures are given for any of these teachings which run contrary to the major Confessions of history and are the early remnants of the Pentecostal doctrine, which many considered at the time to be heretical.

Asbury admits to *'departing from the Reformers'* and rejecting the Reformers *'election, predestination, irresistible grace and the like as matters of opinion'*. In the Wesleyan tradition they believe *'the choice to believe is uncoerced and free'*.

The Asbury website is also deceptive in their rejection of the Reformers teaching on sanctification in stating *'Unlike the Reformers, who had taught that sanctification only occurs at death, Wesley argued that he could see no reason why it could not occur ten, twenty, or even thirty years before death'*. However, the Reformers, Puritans and the major Confessions taught a *progressive* sanctification throughout life, and only full sanctification in *glorification* upon death.

Contradicting their own doctrine, Asbury also state: *'Though he [Wesley] never himself claimed to be entirely sanctified (he believed that claiming it was a fair sign that one was not so), Wesley recorded the experiences of others whom he had no doubt were delivered from all sin and filled entirely with the pure love of God'*. This *'entire sanctification'* (Wesleyan *'Christian perfection'*), although being taught at Asbury, was never achieved by its leader?

However, biblically sin (*'harmartia'*) is literally *'missing the mark'* and scripturally there are no degrees in this word, it being in thought, word and deed. How unlikely is it that one would get through even hours or a day without one sin?

To state that a Christian can be entirely sanctified and perfectly sinless, defies the need for the Holy Spirit's work in the *war* against sin and contradicts the Word of God (Rom.5:12-21; 7:14-23)! It arguably *'calls God a liar'* (1Jn.1:8,10). Sin brings death (Rom.5), but if there is no sin, then why the need to be *'delivered'* from the corruption thereof, and why do all die? (Rom.7:24; 8:21-23; 2Cor.5:1-4).

Will God bring revival to such a place with such false doctrine, which many see as heretical? The revivals and Awakenings in the past might well speak to this...

Revivals and Awakenings

The epistles to the New Testament churches were not about revival, but more

about making disciples and nurturing, pastoring the sheep (Matthew 28:19-20, Acts 14:21-28). Although there is no such word as ‘revival’ in the Bible, yet the meaning of it is apparent in many historic instances (Neh.8; Acts 2). Revivals in history were *sudden, sovereign and selective operations of the Spirit of God to revive churches to their first love*. Jesus told the church of Ephesus to *come back* to their first love; and the church of Laodicea to hear him knocking at their door (Eph.2:4; 3:20). Revival in history was to see *dead churches revived*.

The historic revivals have common characteristics. Many have been based on prayer alone, not necessarily prayer for ‘revival’, but a travelling to so see the glory of God manifested in salvations and worship.

More well known are the two Great ‘Awakenings’, revivals in the British American colonies that ran from 1720 into the 1740's, and again from 1795 to about 1835. Notable leaders were Jonathan Edwards and George Whitefield.

The major Revivals and the Great Awakenings saw populations turned upside down. The Awakenings saw dead churches revived, but also saw hundreds of thousands of souls saved. Crime rates dropped dramatically. The very fabric of society was affected. In the Awakenings, Presbyterian, Congregational and Baptist churches were the first to experience huge increases in membership. Bible colleges and seminaries also experienced multitudes of conversions. Other churches such as the Methodist and some more Arminian churches were later affected, often as a result.

The ‘wind’ of such revivals blew where the Spirit wills (Jn.3:8). Who can explain why many local revivals spread quickly to other places and even at the same time? In the 1857 New York revival prayer meetings ignited by a Dutch reformed church and a person handing out tracts, spread to 10,000 gathered throughout the city which then moved to Philadelphia and then Cincinnati.

Although teaching was not a prominent feature within these revivals, certain doctrines were evident. In most if not all the major revivals, the Doctrines of Grace were a foundation. Justification and sanctification were taught according to major Confessions in previous centuries. In the Great Awakenings most churches adhered to these Calvinistic Confessions. At the heart of much preaching was the doctrine of the *entire depravity* of man. There was often *fearsome preaching* on sin and the wrath of God. Sin was confessed with a *brokenness and repentance*. The *preaching of the law* awed people into seeing their sinful states.

However, towards the end of the second great Awakening in the early 1800's many churches adopted ‘new measures’ developed by Charles Finney (the beginning of ‘altar calls’ and decisional methods). Finney also believed in entire sanctification. The ‘revivals’ that some claim under his preaching were much refuted by the huge fall away rates that become evident in later years.

Other Factors to Consider

Several testimonies of observers present at the Asbury events have stated that the Gospel was little or not preached. Some students state that many messages are often about ‘being who you are’, God loving you ‘as you are’ and being ‘true to

yourself'. Many of the speakers at the chapel are also women. Others were 'prophesying' and speaking in unknown 'tongues'. In one video on social media, a young woman is speaking into a microphone with her eyes closed, saying: '*You are in this place richly. We can feel you. We feel your presence like a blanket, it covers us all*' as people gather around, praising her words. The mixture of liberal ideas and charismatic practices as well as Hillsong and Bethel music has brought doubt to many observing the revival.

Another aspect of the revival is the governing body of the college has attempted to shut down the attendances at the chapel. Near the end of February, it was announced that '*no further outpouring services would be scheduled through Asbury University*'. But how can one stop a revival if it is truly of God? In the long queues to enter the revival, organizers were prioritising college students and those under 25. The first few rows were reserved for young people. Strangely, the president of the seminary and especially the pastor whose sermon apparently started the 'revival', Zach Meerkreebs, in March stated they were not ready to call what's happening at the school a 'revival' and that no one will know it's a real revival until months afterwards.

Nevertheless, since this time teams of students have been involved in 'outpouring teams' and have gone to other places to share their experiences. Churches have thus been influenced to have their own 'revival'. There are now reports of 'revivals' emerging in Samford University in Alabama, Cedarville University in Ohio, and Lee and Belmont universities in Tennessee.

Conclusion

We are not here definitively stating this is not a true revival of sorts. However, as yet the doctrine, the practises and the lack of Gospel preaching does not look like the revivals of history or in scripture. The problem is that *what people are defining as a 'revival' has changed* when one considers the word in the light of the historic events. We are living in a post Christian era, an anti-God culture and anything that even looks like a revival is being reported as such?

Certainly if the Gospel is preached in this whether it be a true revival or not, people will be saved. But are they hearing that God became a man, *the only one to live an entirely sanctified life* before God and thus a sinless and righteous life; that He suffered on the cross in the place of our sins, we as sinners; that God was satisfied with Christ's sinless perfect righteous offering and this is able to satisfy and appease His wrath upon our sin; that only when we believe in Christ and His offering for sin can then God impute, credit His perfect righteousness to declare us justified from the penalty of sin. Our response upon believing is not that we can lead an 'entirely sanctified' life but that we continue to repent to God and have faith in Jesus as sinners saved by Grace alone; that we enter the war with sin in the flesh and be continuously conformed to his image, giving glory to God.

May God bring this message and more of the Gospel to Asbury that the greatest miracle of all would be seen - sinners sovereignly regenerated for the glory of God.

Terry Arnold

Your Comments and Questions

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

I appreciated the article 'A Biblical World View in Disturbing Times' ['Diakrisis' Jan/Feb/2023]

(C.K. Qld)

Editor's Comment:

This article was timely, well written and convicted me that we need to do more for our young people before they leave churches, homes and schools to enter the workforce, universities, etc. Considering the staggering statistics of young people falling away when they leave the Christian home or church, are we pastors, parents, arming our young adults with a *biblical world view*?

Do these young people know how to defend the faith when they will be attacked in universities, colleges and in the world? What resources do they have? But firstly - of the many who fall away from their faith, were they really regenerated in the first place? Have they really understood and been saved by the true Gospel? How solid is their personal faith when challenged? What security do they have in their own salvation? Pastors and churches need to take a more pro active approach to this issue - by arming our young people against a hostile culture with a deeper *understanding of the Gospel* and then an understanding of the inspiration and all sufficiency of Scripture. A *biblical world view* is a must!

Dear Terry and Beth,

I grieves me to continually hear Christians attributing their salvation to 'their choice'. I was brought up in an Arminian Christian family where family worship was a daily occurrence...We were taught the good habit of daily Bible reading. I am so thankful to God for that! However I was taught that the Lord...put salvation in place for whoever will avail themselves of it.

I didn't want to go to Hell, and I certainly wanted God's blessing on my life, so I went forward at a meeting, invited the Saviour into my life, was baptised, and read the Scriptures daily, carefully noting how to keep God on side so He would give me a happy and successful life. I became a Sunday School teacher, and was involved in church outreach programs and beach missions.

To my astonishment at around 30 years of age, the Lord revealed to me the hypocrisy of my proud sinful heart, and my need to take refuge in Jesus' blood and righteousness. I no longer looked in the Scriptures for my benefit, but searching for Jesus as the way, the truth and the life. I now marvel at God's astounding grace in choosing to adopt one so selfish and self-satisfied into His own family.

I fear there are many churches where people are being taught a do-it-yourself salvation like I was. I'm so glad you are able to address this issue in your books, broadcasts and addresses. May God grant you His grace and peace in abundance,

(V.B., Qld)

Your Comments and Questions

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

Terry, many thanks for the videos of the 'Charismatic Confusion' Conference - Brilliant, excellent, and we hope to refer others to it. Thanks also for the books 'Free Will or Free Agency? - Killing Sacred Cows' and 'Bring The Gospel Back!'.

(M.L., Qld)

Terry, what is the supposed difference between the terms 'Pentecostal' and 'Charismatic'?

(E.D., Qld)

Editor's Reply:

I now use the term 'Pentecostal/Charismatic'. The Pentecostal teaching started in 1901 (first AOG church in 1912). The Charismatic movement comes mid 20th c. when Pentecostalism was accepted into mainline denominations. From there Charismatic churches spread, including into Catholicism...

The Pentecostals more strictly have the one teaching of a '*Baptism with the Spirit with the evidence of tongues*'...(However, I have privately met AOG pastors who do not believe in the 'evidence' part). Charismatics don't always have that 'evidence' teaching. They also have a wider view on the gifts, etc. But the core of Pentecostalism is the '*Baptism with the Spirit*'...

Dear Terry, a lot of people are watching a programme called 'The Incredible Journey'. It never mentions where they come from...Only when they mentioned Ellen G. White did I realised it was SDA. In one of their booklets they say Jesus was the angel Michael (this also in JW. Watchtower)...I sent them a study on angels. They replied that Michael means 'who is like God'. But there are several Michaels in the OT. Jesus asked 'who do you say I am' - a most important question...I fear many will hear those words who are calling him 'Lord' - 'get away from me you workers of iniquity...' (Matt.7:23)...

(D.S., Qld)

Editor's Comment:

This person sent us a good study of this subject which included Jude 1:9 - Michael said to Devil '*the Lord rebuke you*' - only Jesus can have that power/authority...1Thess.4:16 - the Lord descends with the 'shout...the voice' of an angel...this does not make the Lord the 'shout' or the 'voice'...Jesus will return with a host of angels...Heb.1:4,5,6,8,10,13,14...An angel is a created being...Jesus is 'the same yesterday, today and tomorrow', the '*I Am*' (Heb.13:8; Jn.1:1; Jn.8:24,58). In Jn.3:16 - He is unique ('*monogenes*') and preeminent ('*prototokon*'- Rom.8:29), the 'Alpha and Omega'...

Terry, I am meeting an SDA...What are their basic errors again? Are they at least Trinitarian?...Ellen G White is a worry...there is no prophecy after Christ...or a curse (Rev)...What about 'soul sleep'?...They don't believe in Paradise or predestination or assurance of Salvation? Where are they going? But maybe they are better than many Pentecostal churches? ...

(K.F., NSW)

Editor's Reply:

In the 'Articles' section on our website under 'Seventh Day Adventism' there are articles that speak to these issues. The 'Soul Sleep' is addressed in the section on 'Hell'. The most potent article in the end will be the 'Gospel Covenant Charts' which show the SDA's are in the wrong covenant (Mosaic). I would also start with 'Why I am not an SDA?'...

Dear Terry, I enclose a copy of the Grafton Anglican churches magazine. I got quite upset by it. They also sent out a newsletter urging us to vote yes to the 'voice'...Sydney is going the same way...

(Name withheld at editor's discretion)

Editors comment:

This Southern Cross Feb/March issue included a 26th Feb. event with 'two gay Anglicans leaders on sexuality and faith', one described as 'unashamedly gay, unashamedly christian'. Also there is a call to vote 'yes' for the 'Voice' referendum and this: 'We ask the spirit of the ancestors to protect us from harm and ensure we stay on the right path and not disturb anything sacred'.

Brother Terry, the apostasy is spreading through the Church like a plague of madness, or a delusion sent by the LORD GOD because they have not and will not preach the true Word of GOD. We along with this little assembly feel like Lot in Sodom, it grieves our hearts to witness the sin in this world which has gone mad. But worse is the condition of that which calls itself GOD's church today.

But we give thanks for the few shafts of sunlight such as your 'Diakrisis' newsletter which we all enjoy and take heart from, and the work that you are doing for the furtherance of the Kingdom.

The conditions which we find ourselves today (suddenly it seems) only testifies to the glorious fact that our much longed for LORD is coming soon. Maranatha, Pray for the Peace of Jerusalem. The LORD bless and keep you and family.

(D.B., Tas)

Dear Terry, Thank you for your invaluable ministry in publishing teaching and letters that point to the truth of warring doctrines and the woke culture. May God continue to use and bless you as a mouthpiece for Him.

(G.P., NSW)

Itinerary Victoria (May)

May 21st (Sunday) 10.30am (and 2nd session after lunch) Heritage Baptist, Ballarat Ph.0403161522

May 25th (Thurs) 7pm study, Mt. Cathedral Baptist, 37 Grant St Alexandra, Ph.0409382041

May 27th (Sat) 11.30am - 3pm Seminar - see below. Mt. Cathedral Baptist

May 28th (Sun) 10am Mt.Cathedral Baptist, 37 Grant St Alexandra Ph.0409382041

Seminar - Victoria (May)

Topic: ‘*The Sovereignty of God*’ (‘Calvinism’; ‘Arminianism’; ‘hypercalvinism’; the history; what is Biblical?..)

Place: Mount Cathedral Baptist Church, Alexandra, 37 Grant St, Alexandra. Ph.0409382041

Time: Saturday 27th May 11.30am - 3pm

Itinerary August - October 2023 (Tentative)

(More churches, dates and details to be added next newsletter)

NSW

Aug (Sun am) Grace Bible Church, Brunswick Heads

Aug (Sun pm & Wed pm) Sovereign Church, Port Macquarie

Aug (Frid pm) Evangel church, Sydney

Aug (Sun am) Fellowship Baptist, Sydney

Aug (Sun) pm Central Mountains church

Victoria

Aug (Wed pm & Sun pm) Numurkah Brethren

Sept (Sun am) Kangaroo Flats Baptist

Tasmania

Yet to be concluded

NSW

Sept/Oct (Wed pm & Sun am) Aboriginal Evangelical church, Eden

Oct (Sun am & pm) St. Johns Park Baptist, Sydney

Oct (Tues pm; Frid pm; Sun am) Evangel church, Sydney

Qld

Oct (Sun am) Hervey Bay Bible Church

Oct (Sun pm) Gin Gin Baptist

Conference Video

The February 'Charismatic Confusion' conference videos are uploaded to our website from youtube. Go to the 'resources' section and then 'conferences' and the 4 sessions can be watched or downloaded, as well as the booklet which was used at the conference.

The sessions were 1. The History 2. The 'baptism with the Spirit' 3. Tongues 4. Healing

(For those who do not have Internet, we can supply DVD's).

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Praise the Lord for the subscribers who support us in keeping this faith ministry in print for the hardcopy. We thank them and the Lord for this support.

Prayer/Praise Points

- Pray for the May itinerary in Victoria including the seminar, and then clear direction and wisdom in planning the August-November itinerary.

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