



Mother Teresa - The Truth

(November 2016)

by

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The late Mother Teresa has now been declared a ‘saint’ by the Pope.

In the past in brief mentions we have documented the teachings and sayings of Mother Teresa. On those occasions we have received strong objections and indignation from some readers. It seems that when someone claims to be a Christian, does good works and is so revered as Mother Teresa is, hearts are captured in endearment to such a person and they must be Christian?

This article explores the enigma of a woman who has captured the hearts of many religious people as well as many Christians. The ‘sainthood’ of Teresa declared by the Pope raises the matter of salvation, the gospel of works and even an issue of whether ‘sincerity’ can save a person, despite their teachings.

Mother Teresa is loved by the world, by many religions and their followers. There is no doubt she served humanity and was a doer of much humane works. She has a veritable army of workers that care for the destitute and the sick. Her stance against abortion is to be admired. However, is this enough to procure biblical salvation? And as a spiritual leader what did she actually believe and teach? What of her vision which started her ministry? What of the torturous mind-games that plagued her? Why was it that she refused to spend her great wealth on the poor?

What Did Teresa Believe and Teach?

Mother Teresa was an ardent Roman Catholic and a great admirer of the Pope. She stated *‘The greatest gift God can give to a family is to have a son to be a priest at the altar, at whose absolution a sinner full of sin becomes a sinner without sin...Make your family one heart full of love, the heart of Jesus through Mary’*.⁽¹⁾ She said Priests are *‘another Christ’*: *‘Without a priest, without Jesus going with them, our sisters couldn’t go anywhere... These families can have peace and joy and holiness through their consecration to the sacred heart of Jesus... This is one of the reasons you [priests] are called ‘another Christ’*.⁽²⁾ One does not have to have much knowledge of the Bible to see that these statements outright contradict scriptures which warn of ‘another Christ’ and ‘another jesus’ (Matt.24:23; Mk.13:21; 2Cor.11:4) and where only Christ is the mediator and intercessor for mankind (1Tim.2:5; Heb.12:24; Eph.2:18).

Perhaps the only point that she disagreed with the Pope is that she believed that women should be ordained to the priesthood.

Some of her statements made over many years also show a clear disregard for scripture. She stated: *‘God loved the world so much that He gave His son to the Virgin Mary...’* (3) Compare this with John 3:16!: *‘For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life’*. Would God approve of his word being changed in this fashion? Did God give his Son *‘to the virgin Mary’* or to the world? Yet Teresa stated: *‘The heart of Jesus was formed in Mary... that it is why it was so humble... I’ve made a contract with God... every photo they take of me, one soul has to go from Purgatory’*. (4)

Teresa taught and was a signatory and supporter of the Pope’s new ‘Coredemptrix’ Doctrine - that Mary is a co-redeemer with Christ of men’s souls. The Pope has openly taught this new doctrine as early as the last decade of the 20th Century. It added to an earlier Catholic doctrine of Mary as a co-mediator with Christ. *‘Mary intensely and mysteriously unites her life with Christ’s sorrowful mission: She was to become her son’s faithful co-worker for the salvation of the human race’*. (5) However, this idea of Mary helping to redeem the soul is completely foreign to scripture. Our *‘advocate with the father’* is said to be only Jesus Christ (1Jn.2:1) and *‘neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved’* (Acts 4:12). Our soul must *‘wait only upon God’* (Ps.62:5).

Teresa practised a secret baptism for the dying. She believed it a duty to baptise the dying, regardless of their religious beliefs. This belief of baptismal regeneration comes from Catholic teaching which sees baptism of infants and adults as putting people into the family of God. Susan Shields, a former member of the Missionaries of Charity, was quoted by the researcher Hitchins as saying: *‘Sisters were to ask each person in danger of death if he wanted a ‘ticket to heaven’*. An affirmative reply was to mean consent to baptism. *‘The sister was then to pretend that she was just cooling the patient’s head with a wet cloth, while in fact she was baptising him, saying quietly the necessary words. Secrecy was important so that it would not come to be known that Mother Teresa’s sisters were baptising Hindus and Muslims’*.

Which Gospel?...the Ecumenical Teaching

When the sick are dying in the streets Mother Teresa *‘asks the patient to say a prayer to their god, while she would say one to hers...’* (6). She said, with a twist of New Age teaching: *‘If in coming face to face with God we accept Him in our lives, then we... become a better Hindu, a better Muslim, a better Catholic, a better whatever we are... what God is in your mind you must accept’.* (7) *‘God is not separate from the Church as He is everywhere and in everything and we are all His children - Hindu, Muslim, or Christians’* (8) *‘Every religion has got eternity... We live... so that they may go home according to what is written in the book, be it written according to Hindu, or Muslim, or Buddhist, or Catholic, or Protestant or any other belief’.* (9) In her fight against abortion she stated *‘We are all children of God...When we destroy an unborn child, we destroy God’.* (10)

In 1978, Mother Teresa wrote a letter to Indian Prime Minister Morarji Desai. It included this reference to an interfaith deity: *‘Are you not afraid of God? You call him Ishwar, some call him Allah, some simply God, but we all have to acknowledge that it is He who made us for greater things: to love and to be loved. Who are we to prevent our people from finding this God who has made them - who loves them - to whom they have to return?’* (11)

Another biographer, Naveen Chawla, once asked Teresa bluntly, *‘Do you convert?’* Teresa replied: *‘Of course I convert. I convert you to be a better Hindu or a better Muslim or a better Protestant’.*(12) *‘We ask those who are about to die in the Home for the Dying if they want a blessing by which their sins will be forgiven and they will see God [Ishwar]. If they say yes, we give them the blessing. We help them all die in peace with God. And everybody knows that we give them a ticket for St. Peter’.* (13)

However, the true Gospel clashes with this ecumenism. Are ‘Ishwar’ and ‘Allah’ really the same as the Biblical God? Are there really other ways to Heaven and God, including being a *‘better Hindu or a better Muslim or a better Protestant’*. Rather, Jesus said: *‘I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me’* (Jn.14:6). *‘I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved...’* (Jn.10:9-10).

Mother Teresa was a universalist, which teaching actually contradicts the core of Roman Catholic teaching (although the Roman church, being the chameleon it is, does more recently give a veiled interfaith message). But Jesus said our righteousness would have to exceed that of the highest religious leaders of the day (Matt.5:20). The only righteousness which a person must have to enter Heaven is *a perfect one*, one imputed to them by the work of Christ on the cross. ...Hardly an ecumenical message that one.

The Mandate for Ministry

Much of Mother Theresa's ministry was originally based on a mystical experience. A 'vision' she had was revealed in a letter addressed to Archbishop Ferdinand Perier of Calcutta, through her spiritual director, Jesuit Father Celeste Van Exem. The letter, dated Dec. 3, 1947, reveals a vision of what eventually would be her future work. At that time, Teresa worked in Calcutta, India, as a religious of the Sisters of Loreto. During a prayer, Christ asked her to go out into the streets and proclaim him among the abandoned of India, especially girls. *'How could I?'* she wrote. *'I have been and am very happy as a Loreto nun. To leave that what I love and expose myself to new labors and suffering, which will be great, to the laughingstock of so many, especially religious, to cling and choose deliberately the hard things of an Indian life, to loneliness and ignominy, to uncertainty? And all because Jesus wants it, because something is calling me to leave all and gather the few to live His life, to do His work in India'*. But Jesus constantly asked her (apparently in King James English): *'Wilt thou refuse? When there was a question of Thy soul I did not think of Myself but gave Myself freely for thee on the Cross and now, what about thee? Wilt thou refuse? I want Indian nuns, victims of my love'*. Teresa responded: *'My own Jesus, what you ask is beyond me...I can hardly understand half of the things you want. I am unworthy. I am sinful. I am weak. Go, Jesus, and find a more worthy soul, a more generous one'*. Christ apparently replied: *'Are you afraid now to take one more step for Your Spouse, for Me, for souls?...Is your generosity grown cold? Am I a second to you? You did not die for souls. That is why you don't care what happens to them. Your heart was never drowned in sorrow as was my Mother's. We both gave our all for souls, and you? You are afraid that you will lose your vocation, you will become a secular, you will be wanting in perseverance... No - your vocation is to*

love and suffer and save souls and by taking the step you will fulfil My Heart's desire for you. You will dress in simple Indian clothes or rather like My Mother dressed, simple and poor. Your present habit is holy because it is My symbol. Your sari will become holy because it will be My symbol'. (14)

How was Teresa sure this was the Lord Jesus? Her doctrine was already based on extra biblical and Roman traditions. But where does the Bible teach people to be 'victims of God's love'? Where does the Bible teach Mary 'gave her all for souls'? Where does the Bible teach that our dress uniforms are 'holy' or 'symbols' for the Lord? The Roman Catholic thinking here is obvious. When God spoke in the Bible to humans, wherever did he '*constantly ask*' someone to do his will? Rather the very words and voice of God or angels sent terrible fear into the hearts of those who were confronted. Never did God have to 'constantly ask'.

Would not the Devil love to *add* to the words of the Bible with extra biblical visions and words? Would he not love to *add* works to the place of faith alone? Would he not love to *add* the role of Mary to the salvific work of the Trinity?

The Strange Torture of the Soul

Malcolm Moore, in the Rome Correspondent Telegraph (UK 24 August 2007) wrote of Theresa's '*deep crisis of faith in God for the last 40 years of her life*'. This information was gleaned from Teresa's letters, some which she asked in her last Will to be destroyed (which advise seems to have been ignored). The letters, which span most of Teresa's life, showed she felt alone and in a state of spiritual pain from around 1949, roughly the time when she started taking care of the dying and poor in Calcutta. She wrote to the Rev. Michael Van Der Peet, a spiritual confidant, in September 1979 that '*Jesus has a very special love for you. As for me, the silence and emptiness is so great that I look and do not see, listen and do not hear. The tongue moves [in prayer] but does not speak*'. The letter was written just weeks before she received the Nobel Peace Prize for her charitable work.

More letters were published in a book '*Mother Teresa: Come Be My Light*', and were edited by Rev. Brian Kolodiejchuk, a close friend. He wrote that during this long period, Mother Teresa did not feel God '*in her heart or in the Eucharist*'. However, he favoured her receiving

‘sainthood’ stating the letters would show that because she was able to continue her work during such torment this was a sign of her spiritual heroism. In 1962 she wrote: *‘If I ever become a Saint...I will surely be one of ‘darkness’...How cold - how empty...how painful is my heart...Holy communion...Holy Mass...all the holy things of spiritual life...of the life of Christ in me...are all so empty...so cold...so unwanted’*. (15)

In some of her letters she doubts the very existence of God and Heaven: *‘Lord, my God, you have thrown [me] away as unwanted - unloved...I call, I cling, I want, and there is no one to answer, no, no one. Alone. Where is my faith? Even deep down right in there is nothing. I have no faith. I dare not utter the words and thoughts that crowd in my heart...I am told God loves me, and yet the reality of the darkness and coldness and emptiness is so great that nothing touches my soul. Did I make a mistake in surrendering blindly to the Call of the Sacred Heart?’* Even her religious faith that many thought she had, was really not often in her heart. She once wrote: *‘The smile...is a mask or a cloak that covers everything. I spoke as if my very heart was in love with God, a tender personal love. If you were there you would have said, ‘What hypocrisy’*’. (16)

The letters simply reveal a crisis of faith which, although a true Christian may suffer in trials, it should not be the experience year after year of a truly Born Again person indwelt with the Holy Spirit who promises assurance (Rom.8:16).

Her philosophy in Finances and Ministry

Mother Teresa had definitive views on money, suffering and the poor. One researcher wrote: *‘She has bank accounts with tens of millions of dollars on deposit but she chooses not to use these funds to help the poor. Bear in kind that Mother Teresa’s global income is more than enough to outfit several first-class clinics in Bengal. The decision not to do so...is...the promulgation of a cult based on death and suffering and subjection. Mother Teresa...herself, it should be noted, has checked into some of the finest and costliest clinics and hospitals in the West during her bouts with heart trouble and old age...’* (17)

The primitive hospital in Calcutta remained much the same in the many years Teresa was there. Yet she preferred California clinics when she got sick herself. Her Order of nuns always refused to publish any audit.

The problem was not a lack of money, for the Foundation created by Mother Teresa raised hundreds of millions of dollars. Rather, Mother Teresa had a particular philosophy of suffering and death. She believed that suffering was ‘a gift from God’. *‘There is something beautiful in seeing the poor accept their lot, to suffer it like Christ’s Passion. The world gains much from their suffering’*. (18)

The Miracles...

For ‘sainthood’ to be awarded to a person by the Catholic religion there needs to be miracles performed by that person in life or death. One miracle attributed to Mother Theresa was the healing of a woman, Monica Besra, who had been suffering from intense abdominal pain. The woman testified that she was cured after a medallion blessed by Mother Theresa was placed on her abdomen. Her doctors thought otherwise: the ovarian cyst and the tuberculosis from which she suffered were healed by the drugs they had given her. The Vatican, nevertheless, concluded that it was a miracle.

Another miracle attributed to Mother Teresa came after an Indian priest, Father V.M. Thomas, of Calcutta, who worked with Teresa for 10 years, claimed *‘the intercession of Blessed Teresa of Calcutta’* brought a healing of his kidney stone. He claimed after a Mass and praying to Mother Teresa on the anniversary of her death, his kidney stone was healed the day before scheduled surgery. When the pre-surgical X-Ray was taken they could not locate the stone. (19)

The idea of praying to saints and contacting them in any way is directly opposed by Scripture. Isaiah 8:19-20 condemns this (see also Dt.18:10,11; Lev.20:6). Saul attempted to contact the dead (1Sam.28:11) against the Word of God (Lk.16:26). The Catholic Encyclopedia itself says: *‘The chief objections raised against the intercession and invocation of the saints are that these doctrines are opposed to the faith and the trust which we should have in God alone and that they cannot be proved from scripture’*. (20)

The Bible says there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus (1Tim.2:5; Jn.16:23). Jesus is the only one who can accept prayer.

It should be remembered that Pharaoh's wise men successfully copied most of the miracles of Moses! (Ex.7:11,22, 8:7), and Saul used a witch to bring up a false vision and spirit of Samuel (1Sam.28). Many false prophecies are also a result of lies or from one's own heart (Jer.14:14, 23:16; Dt.18:21,22). We also need to be aware that demons can imitate angels (Gal.1:8; 2Cor.11:14). The Bible says the last days will bring 'lying' and false signs and wonders (Matt.24:24; 2Thess.2:9).

...And 'Sainthood'?

The idea of sainthood is a later tradition of the Roman church. But when the Bible speaks of 'saints' it refers to *all true Christians*, (in this life and the next). Paul's letters were addressed to the 'saints' which are at Ephesus (Eph.1:1); to all the 'saints' in Christ Jesus at Philippi (Phil.1:1), (see also Rom.1:7; 16:15; 1Cor.1:2; 2Cor.1:1). In scripture every Born Again Christian is a 'saint'.

Protestant Hypocrisy

Most of what Mother Teresa believed outright contradicted God's own revelation in the Bible. Today we usually say such a person is a false teacher. Yet because of the tireless works and religious humility of Mother Teresa, many have re-allocated her to Christian circles? But Mother Teresa of Calcutta was truly a false teacher, if the Bible is to be taken as the Word of God.

Many have separated from Roman Catholicism because of Biblical reasons, yet support Mother Teresa and her ministry as Christian. The Bible Society is a '*partner in Mother Teresa's work*' and has in the past appealed for funds for her cause. Billy Graham spoke glowingly of Mother Teresa and said: '*When she walked into the room to greet me, I felt that I was indeed, meeting a saint*'.(21) But how can we in any way support someone who has taught another gospel, another christ and teachings that contradict Jesus own teachings? Is this not hypocrisy?

Conclusion

Mother Teresa spent her life helping the poor of Calcutta, living in poverty, giving herself to her religion, teaching compassion and a religious selflessness. These virtues may be admirable but are they enough to enter the Kingdom of Heaven? Certainly she admitted at times she was living in hypocrisy, uncertainty and with torturous thoughts.

There is an emptiness in religion, a deadness that cannot give life to the soul, being based on traditions made up by man which add to the word of God. Mother Teresa was part of a false religious system teaching ‘another gospel’ (2Cor.11:14; Gal.1:6) which leads millions to false hope. It is a system of sacramental and religious works - instead of faith alone in Christ alone in his work alone, and without our works to merit any salvation (Rom.4:4-6; Gal.2:16; Eph.2:8,9); it is a ‘purgatory’ to purge sins - instead of a faith in Christ purging our sins on the cross (Col.1:20; 2:14); it is a continuing sacrifice in the ‘Mass’ - instead of a finished sacrifice on the cross 2,000 years ago (Jn.19:30; Heb.9:28; 10:12,14). It does not matter how sincere a person is, they can be sincerely deceived by religion! Hell will be full of sincere and sincerely religious people.

Without true faith it is impossible to please God (Heb.11:6). The Bible clearly states that we cannot be saved by works and that light cannot fellowship with darkness (2Cor.6;14). No matter how much we admire Mother Teresa’s works and ethics, her beliefs were false and there is still only one way to Heaven. One must be Born Again (Jn.3:3) by faith in the sacrificed and risen Christ. The righteousness promised from that faith is not ours, but God’s, and given by substitution in a finished sacrifice.

Let us not mix truth and error and blur the lines of the Gospel. ‘*Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!*’ (Is.5:20).

Terry Arnold

- (1) *The Tidings*, Los Angeles, California, 20/6/86
- (2) Speech, Oct. 84, Paul VI Vatican City
- (3) Mother Teresa - National Prayer Breakfast, Washington, USA, 1996
- (4) SBS documentary interview 1997
- (5) '*Evangelical Times*' Aug. 1997
- (6) '*Agnes Bojaxhiu*', *Plain Truth*, May/June 96, P.5
- (7) Autobiography: *Mother Teresa: Her people and Her Work*
- (8) *Simple Path*, P.31,59 (9) Desmond Doig, *Mother Teresa: Her people and Her Work* P.140-141
- (10) *The Christian News* (11/11/85)
- (11) Kathryn Spink, *Mother Teresa: A Complete Authorized Biography*, P.155-156
- (12) *Mother Teresa Touched other Faiths* Assoc. Press, Sept. 7, 1997
- (13) *Mother Teresa, Words to Live By*, P.70
- (14) *Apostasy Alert* 1 Dec.2002 (15) *Ibid* Sept.6 2016
- (16) *Ibid*, Aug 25, 2007
- (17) *Berean Call*, Oct.1996
- (18) Hichins P.41
- (19) *New Delhi*, OCT. 3, 2007 AsiaNews
- (20) '*The Catholic Encyclopedia*' Vol.8 P.70
- (21) '*Ask Billy Graham*' by Bill Adler; and *New York Beacon* Sept.17, 1997

About the Author and the Ministry

Terry Arnold holds a Doctorate in Theology (Dth), a Masters degree (MABS) and several diplomas. He was founder and president of *South Pacific Bible Institute*, a Bible college training and equipping people for ministry. In addition he was the founder of Hervey Bay Bible Church in Queensland, Australia. He has for 25 years served as an elder and then pastor.

Terry is the author of several books and is involved in a full time ministry of *teaching, informing and equipping* the church. He is also editor of a growing worldwide publication '*Diakrisis (Australia)*'.

His ministry includes preaching/teaching and conducting seminars and conferences in a wide range of churches and colleges.

TA Ministries is a non-denominational and non-profit faith ministry founded in 1989 when the book '*To Catholics Whom I Love*' was written by Terry Arnold. This book went through several re-prints and served as a fruitful outreach to Roman Catholics.

In 1996 the ministry became a full-time operation with the introduction of a free newsletter, later named '*Diakrisis (Australia)*'.

Diakrisis is published bi-monthly to *teach, inform and equip* the church of Biblical truths and to warn of false teaching. It has also been a valuable reference aid to hundreds of pastors/elders.