



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,
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Gospel Confusion Conference

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Editorial

How 'narrow' is real biblical Christianity? How narrow is it when *most* people are on the '*broad road*' that leads to Hell and only *few* are on the '*narrow road*' (Matt.7:13,14)? How narrow is the narrow road when it does not include most of the worlds religious leaders - those who do not believe that Jesus is the only way (Jn.14:6; Acts 4:12)? How narrow is it when it does not even include all those who '*know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ*' (2Thess.1:8,9)?

How narrow is the narrow road when every person on this road has to believe in *one* person, *one* name, and *one* work only, to secure their salvation? Further, how narrow is it when it also does not include many who think they are on the narrow road, are calling God '*Lord Lord*', and professing to have '*prophesied in your name and in your name have cast out devils? and in your name done many wonderful works*' - yet Jesus will say to them '*I did not know you...you workers of iniquity*' ('*lawless ones*' - Matt.7:21-23; see Rom.8:4; 13:8-10)?

How narrow is it when the ones on the narrow road must '*be perfect as the Father in Heaven is perfect*', being '*just men made perfect*' (Matt.5:48; Heb.12:23)?

How narrow is the narrow road when one must be born again as a '*new creation*' and '*from above*' to enter Heaven (Jn.3:3,12), a creation entirely of God alone, it being a spiritual work, not of one's heritage, flesh or will (Jn.3:6,12; 1:12,13)?

Our logic, our culture and our human senses might scream out against the narrowness of this road as taught by Jesus Himself. And so accordingly we often lower the standard of what is required to be saved. It becomes something we can do instead of something we cannot do in and of ourselves. It becomes more about our response than God's gift of His Son sacrificed for the hopeless sinner. It becomes an *offer*, rather than a *proclamation* and a command to repent and believe.

To dumb down this narrowness of the narrow road, many attempt to make their own religious idols such as '*all roads lead to Heaven*'; '*God will not cast away sincere people in other religions*'; '*Oh but God is a loving God, he loves everyone and will accept me*'...'*but I am a good person, I have done my best to keep the commandments...I have done more good deeds than bad*'...'*I have been baptised, I go to church*'...'*I made a decision, prayed a prayer, accepted Jesus into my heart*'... Thus the '*author and the finisher of faith*' too often becomes an impotent door knocker pleading with man and his will (Eph.2:8,9; Heb.12:2).

Jesus insists there is only one narrow road. Sincerity alone does not save. God is a just God who demands justice for His broken law. His love does not negate His perfect justice (Job 8:3; Ps.89:14; Is.9:7; Jer.23:5; Jn.5:30; Acts 3:14). No one is 'good' but God (Lk.18:19). Man's doings, his works, including decisions and prayers, do not take the place of faith in Jesus, but rather incur a '*debt*' (Rom.4:4). God does not want man to 'give his heart' which is depraved beyond all measure (Jer.17:9). That heart must be opened in a new creation (Acts 16:14; 2Cor.5:17).

Oh how we have widened the road to Heaven into a four lane highway, when God has made it so narrow and with a narrow gate to enter!

The narrowness is all about grace alone through faith alone, not of works so that

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not one can boast (Eph.2:8,9). The narrowness is so that salvation is not possible with man but only of God, all of God, and none of man (Lk.18:26,27)!

God's purpose is to have a perfect new creation imputed with His righteousness to glorify Him in a perfect kingdom. By His grace and by sacrificing His Son as a substitute for our sins, has He imputed a righteousness based upon faith in His Son and His work. The just for the unjust (1Pet.3:18).

Jesus never made the narrowness of salvation wider. He often put obstacles in the way of people to bring them to see that they could not save themselves. One of the highlights of this is seen in the sermon on the Mount (Matt.5). In this sermon an impossible standard is set from the very beginning, for who has a '*heart*' that is wholly '*poor in spirit...meek...merciful...pure...*' (vs.4-12)? But His sermon then gets more *narrow* and *impossible* - *the law must be obeyed* (vs.17,18). Law after law is then thrown at the reader - killing someone is equated with being angry and in danger of Hell fire; adultery is equated with a lustful look; one should love and give his clothes to an enemy; our communications must be exacting...all so as to be '*children of your Father which is in Heaven*' (vs.20-47). Just when you think there might be a respite from the law we are then broken further with another impossible - '*be you perfect as your Father in Heaven is perfect*' (vs.48)! *Perfect?* Yes, '*the spirits of just men made perfect*'; '*perfect in Christ Jesus*' (Col.1:28; Heb.12:23).

In this sermon on the Mount by Jesus, the reader is simply '*slayed by the law*' (Rom.7:11)! By scripture, we are all lying, thieving, adulterers, murderers, blasphemers of God! *The sermon on the mount shows the narrowness of a salvation that must keep the law*, and further - *inwardly of the heart* (Matt.5)!

How narrow is true salvation that requires this lawful righteousness described by Jesus above, that has to '*exceed that of the pharisees*' (vs.20)? But this is the standard of God to be on the narrow road! *The moral law proves that righteousness could not come by it!* Only Jesus kept it, obeyed it and fulfilled it perfectly to the satisfaction of the Father.

The Solution?: A perfection; a righteousness that fulfills the law *for us*. God's *plan* from the beginning was to send His Son to be sacrificed, His blood shed, as a sin offering to *satisfy God's justice, His law fulfilled*. Then He would upon faith in Christ *impute, reckon, credit* the believer with *His righteousness gained by Christ*. This is the heart of the Gospel - *a righteousness imputed by substitution* which by the Holy Spirit given, *fulfils the law* (Rom.8:4; 13:8-10). '*For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believes*' (Rom.10:4)!

The narrow road is open to all those who will believe in and run to the gate of mercy in Jesus which opens to that road to His kingdom. It's His perfect righteousness that must be gained. His kingdom is perfect. There is no entry to this perfection before a perfect being, without His '*robes of righteousness*'. Then there is the eternal kingdom of light and life. '*Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able*' (Lk.13:24).

Terry Arnold

Boko Haram Terrorist Killing Spree

ABUJA, Nigeria - *‘Boko Haram terrorists on Monday attacked a predominantly Christian community in Borno state, northeast Nigeria, killing seven Christians and setting homes and church buildings ablaze, residents said... ‘Kwaple village in Chibok Local Government Area is under attack from Boko Haram terrorists. Please pray for God’s intervention’ Musa said, echoing text messages...from other residents.*

Resident Ibrahim Adamu said ‘On Monday about 5 p.m., Boko Haram terrorists attacked Christians at a wake in Kwaple community’... ‘The attack on the mourners resulted in a stampede and pandemonium as mourners...were shot at randomly by the terrorists. Seven Christians...were killed during the attack...many others were injured...church buildings were destroyed in the attack.

The assault was the latest in a wave of violence reflecting a resurgence of Jihadist attacks in Nigeria’s northeast by Boko Haram and its offshoot, Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP). Suspected militants reportedly ambushed and killed 10 civilians and two security officials in Borno state’s Gwoza area on April 26 injuring 2 others. On Saturday in Adamawa state, suspected Boko Haram militants reportedly killed 10 people and wounded others in an attack in Kopre village. On Monday, 26 people were killed when an explosive device detonated as two vehicles were travelling between Rann and Gamboru Ngala in Borno state...

Boko Haram, officially known as Jamā’at Ahl as-Sunnah lid-Da’wah wa’l-Jihād, seek to impose Sharia (Islamic law) throughout Nigeria...

Nigeria has remained among the most dangerous places on earth for Christians, according to Open Doors 2025 World Watch List of the countries where it's most difficult to be a Christian. Of the 4,476 Christians killed for their faith worldwide during the reporting period, 3,100 (69%) were in Nigeria...Nigeria ranked No. 7 on the WWL list of the 50 worst countries.

(Christian Daily International–Morning Star News, April 30, 2025)

Colorado Just Criminalized Christianity - Now What?

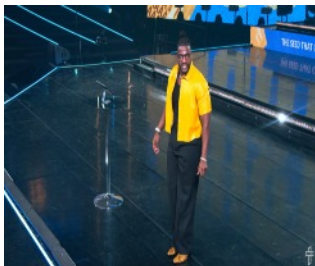
Colorado’s House Bill 25-1312...was signed into law by Gov. Jared Polis on May 16. This legislation...effectively criminalizes biblical convictions and punishes Christians for living out not only their faith but the obvious truth that men are men, women are women, and no one can ever ‘change their gender’.

...Under Colorado law, the state is now authorized to prosecute people...‘deadnaming’ (using a person’s birth name) and ‘misgendering’ (referring to someone by their biological sex) as discriminatory acts in public...Christian schools, camps and other organizations that uphold dress codes or bathroom and overnight accommodation policies aligned with a child’s God-given, biological sex, or refuse to adopt ‘inclusive’ policies mandating the use of pronouns and names according to a person’s preferred gender identity, could face

lawsuits or penalties...The law [also] threatens parental rights...misgendering your own child is considered coercive control...

...Pastors in Colorado are defying the law by preaching God's truth about sex and gender...The Constitution and Supreme Court provide a strong foundation for overturning this law...HB1312 blatantly violates by compelling speech (forcing Christians to use 'chosen names' or pronouns) and punishing religious convictions. (Christian Post, William Wolfe, Tues, May 27, 2025)

Pastor Gets Backlash For Wearing 'Feminine' Attire



While many followers appreciated his rousing sermon on faith Sunday, Michael Todd, the pastor of Transformation Church in Tulsa, Oklahoma, is facing criticism for the outfit he wore that some say distracted from his message.

Todd's sermon was in a new series called 'MUSTARD: The Seed That Can Change Everything'. The message teaches about five things on which we shouldn't waste faith.

Wearing wide-leg black slacks, a form-fitting black tank or T-shirt with a mustard-coloured leather short-sleeve button-up shirt over it and mustard and black-coloured snakeskin boots, that some viewers described as 'high heels', Todd advised the congregation: 'Don't waste your faith on things discipline can delete'. He then offered an example of wasted faith: 'I'm believing God that when I go take this test, I don't have diabetes' he said before telling his followers that if they had the discipline to eat less, they wouldn't have to waste their faith believing God for outcomes they can influence... 'When you teach against biblical headship, 'you can do bad all by yourself... 'Women can be pastors' 'divine feminine,' 'I'm mamma and daddy,' you get Mike Todd'.

Todd is no stranger to distracting behaviour in his sermons. In 2022, he apologized to his more than 1.8 million fans across social media after receiving public backlash for wiping globs of spit on the face of a man he has identified as his younger brother during a sermon. 'It's never my intention to distract others from God's Word and the message of Jesus...even with illustrations! I apologize for my example being too extreme and disgusting!'

(Christian Post, By Leonardo Blair, May 01, 2025)

Editor's Comment:

The 'illustration' seems to have missed the main point and was on display for too long, being a person dressed as a woman for an entire sermon! Illustrations can be useful to preaching but shock or sensationalism takes away from the Spirit led trust in His message, of which the preacher is just a vessel. The less trust in that Spirit, the less the Holy Spirit is in the message. Illustrations should throw clarity on sermon points, not focus on the illustration itself or attention to self. Does the Holy Spirit and His Word need help in reaching people, that we dress as a women or offend by an illustration?

Another False Prophecy

'I want to talk about the recent Australian elections. Throughout my life the Lord has spoken to me giving me prophecies about nations. When I was younger the Lord told me that there would be a war where the Gulf would be invaded and the first Gulf War, and that came to pass. I got up in church and announced the date of the second Gulf War and that was true, they invaded on that date. I put up a video last year, I think it was entitled Trump positioned for promotion...I talked about the reasons why...And then...Trump was elected.

Now I want to speak from a spiritual or divine perspective I believe about what will happen in Australia after the recent landslide elections in which Australia voted for a government contrary to the word of God, that has supported the...woke agenda...late term abortions, the killing of the innocent in the womb, and...all sorts of sinful practices contrary to the righteous standards of God's word.

A couple of weeks ago I had a vision, I believe that vision was from the Lord similar to the miracle revival meetings where the Lord gives me visions about people's physical conditions and we see the Lord miraculously healing them. The first vision I had of Australia I saw poverty, families in poverty. I felt the love of God, the concern of God for what is about to happen...I saw a nation going into, not everyone, but a rise of poverty...As a result of this election in which people voted for sin there will be economic problems, families, pensioners, people in poverty. With this the government will go into increased debt. It will be a difficult economic environment for businesses...This poverty will continue for 7 years...a judgment of 7 years in response to an election contrary to the word of God.

Then I had a second vision...I was taken to the Exodus where the Israelites had passed through the Red Sea. The Egyptians were following...the Bible says God bogged the chariot wheels, He took the wheels off, made it difficult for the chariots to cross. I felt the Lord saying he will be opposed to the workings of the Australian government when they want to do something, he will...make it difficult...Throughout the Bible God responds not only to individuals but to nations in the way that they relate to him, make judgments, decisions, whether according to the standard of righteousness or wickedness...Israel when they went into idolatry and immorality, God warned them and then brought them into exile in Babylon. He allowed the destruction of Jerusalem...God judged King Herod...he died under God's judgment because he failed to give glory to God...God sent famine...God responds to nations...to man according to the way man treats him. If we follow righteousness God's favour, his blessing will be upon us. If we...make elections and decisions against his word he will withdraw his hand, and even send judgment...

This judgment...of poverty, economic problems and difficulty for the government...can all be changed...if people will...as The Bible says 'If my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways then I will hear from heaven forgive their sin and heal their land'. If the church in Australia, the people of Australia will turn to God and repent, turn from evil then the Lord will bring restoration forgiveness and blessing'.

Editor's comments:

Mark Hemans is a self proclaimed prophet and '*apostle*'. Heman's 'prophecy' is typical of thousands of 'prophets' around the world in different countries that prophesy on world, political, economic or other events.

The prophecy concerning the Gulf war and Trump's election is nowhere proven by him. But what person with any political insight could not rightly have predicted either? The Gulf war was set well before with dates of the invasion and broadcasted. And many polls already predicted Trump's success.

What person with any insight could not have rightly predicted Australia's '*poverty*' and '*increasing debt*'? Before the election we already had that admitted to by most parties! The '*seven years*' would hardly fail also?

His vision of the Egyptians and the Red Sea judgement is simply *adding* to the Word of God which *already describes* the event in far more detail and accuracy than this 'vision'! The rest of the judgements mentioned hardly have much to do with Australia and it's economic management?

But then comes the caveat - a convenient way *out* of the prophecy - we can '*change*' this prophecy by the use of 2Chronicles 7:14 which is often quoted by these prophets to have an 'out' in case of failure? The scripture is arguably misused for prophecies and revivals when it is specific to Israel, to '*my people*' and '*the land*'. (The passage does have application but many confuse *interpretation* here with *application*).

But what is there in this 'prophecy' that anyone with even a small knowledge of the daily news of the politics, economics of Australian conditions could not 'prophecy' the same? If these were real words from God, why don't we add a paragraph to the book of Revelation with a section for Australia?

These prophets prey on the gullible. The Word of God rebukes them for *adding* to scripture. Yet thousands have already been deceived by this and hundreds of other 'prophets' and 'apostles'. They counterfeit '*the more sure word of prophecy...the prophecy of the scripture which is not of any private interpretation...nor by the will of man: but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit*' (2Pet.1:19-21).

Trolling through Heman's videos of 'healings' there is not one that is truly documented. Each video uses the usual tricks, sleight of words, gestures, mantras and hypnotic measures to convince people of a complete healing. One 'blind girl' supposedly reads at the end of a 'healing'. Yet the girl was only '*going blind in one eye*', a fact that Hemans *rephrases* as '*blind*' and then claims healing of blindness! With most similar videos on the Internet, the same tricks can be seen. The diseases are always *partial* or *claimed* illnesses and *undocumented*. The gestures, mantras and manipulations are common.

Jesus did warn us of false apostles, prophets and lying signs and wonders (Matt.7:15; 24:11,24; Mk.13:22; 2Cor.11:13; 2Pet.2:1; 1Jn.4:1; 2Thess.2:9). The Word also warns people not to listen to or entertain false prophets or those who add to the prophecy of the scripture in any way (Dt.13 & 18; 2Pet.1:19,20; [Rev.20:15](#); [Dt.4:2](#)).

False Prophet Praises Another False Prophet

MorningStar Ministries founder Rick Joyner believes disgraced International House of Prayer Kansas City [IHOPK's] founder Mike Bickle should be restored to ministry leadership despite an independent investigative report concluding earlier this year that he used predatory tactics and spiritual manipulation to sexually abuse at least 17 females, including minors...Joiner argued that 'Bickle is too great of a leader to be thrown away...We are told in Galatians 6:1 if a man is caught in any trespass, anything, you who are spiritual restore them. Restoring is a lot more than just forgiving; it's getting them back to where they were...That's how the Lord does it'. Joyner argued that restoration or church discipline should not be seen as 'punishment' and that Bickle 'has been one of the great leaders in the Body of Christ in our time...He helped to raise up one of the greatest prayer movements in Church history...I've done a lot of studying of Church history, and I've never seen anything like what Mike moved up and what he inspired'...

(Leonardo Blair, *Christian Post*, June 5th, 2025)

Editor's comment:

A 68 page independent report stated Bickle was 'a seductive predator who used his influence, gifts, money and position as a spiritual leader to bend particularly young and vulnerable women to his will'. One of his victims claims Bickle made her read a prayer of repentance and Psalm 51 after sexual encounters. 17 victims testified of experiencing 'sexual abuse, rape, clergy abuse and spiritual abuse, perpetrated by Bickle beginning in the mid-1970's...causing significant emotional, psychological, and spiritual harm'.

Rick Joyner was a best selling author in the 90's who captured millions with his wild visions and angelic prophecies, many proved false [See *Diakrisis* Oct/96; Nov/Dec/2008]. He has propped up many leaders from accountability (Todd Bentley, Bob Jones, Chris Reed...). Joyner commissioned Todd Bentley as an 'apostle' with prophecies - Bentley then fell into gross sins.

'Restoration' and 'Galatians 6:1' does not mean restore to previous church offices that would violate the qualifications thereof (1Tim3, Tit.1).

True 'Prophecy'

The Bible contains the '*the more sure word of prophesy*' being '*the prophecy of the scripture* ['*graphes*' - writings]' (2Pet.1:19,20). It is the *only* prophecy that is holy and infallible. This prophecy is the *only* word among the world's religions that contains detailed prophecies of past events fulfilled accurately and future events to come; the *only* prophecy that has the power to convict men of their sin and deliver their souls from judgement; the *only* prophecy that claims Divine inspiration (more than 2,600 times). It also contains a fearsome warning not to add any prophecy to it (Rev.20:15; Dt.4:2).

Faith Contradictions?

‘Two Assemblies of God [AoG] pastors in Cuba, Luis Guillermo Borjas and his wife, Roxana Rojas, were detained this week...Prosecutors are seeking an eight-year prison sentence for the couple, who face charges of disrespect and disobedience to authorities. The incident occurred in Nueva Gerona, Isla de la Juventud, where the couple...had been summoned to a military tribunal after their son, Kevin Laureido Rojas, fled a military facility...The pastors presented official documents from a medical commission supporting their son’s exemption. When the military prosecutor accused them of submitting false evidence, Pastor Borjas responded by saying the officials would be accountable to God’s justice. The prosecutor then ordered their immediate detention, citing the illegality of referencing God or divine justice in a military court. Borjas remains in custody at a local police station. His wife was hospitalised after collapsing later that night. ...she claimed then to be harassed by a man...falsely identifying himself as a nurse...

Religious freedom in Cuba is tightly regulated, with the Communist dictatorship controlling all recognized religious institutions ...’

(Christian Post May 26,2025)

Editor’s comments:

Firstly, we would pray for the release of this couple and for freedom of religion and speech in Cuba.

But one of the comments in the ‘conversation’ to this article caught my attention: ‘Won’t God just get them out of jail, like he used to always do 2,000 years ago? I mean we see miracles all the time in the AoG church, right?’

This sarcastic comment many would ignore or find it mean spirited, yet behind the question is a more legitimate question. Aside from the plight of these two pastors, why is the Word of Faith, the signs and wonders, the healings, the miracles as in apostolic days, actually not occurring as claimed?

Governments and the media, as evil as some are, deplore the extravagance of faith healers, TV evangelists and Mega pastors, who are falling every week in the west. Some countries have actually banned these people (eg. Benny Hinn and others) from entering their country and ‘making merchandise’ of them (2Pet.2:3). Africa is a mecca for western faith healers and signs and wonders gurus who in huge rallies, promise health, wealth and signs, but do not deliver.

However, there are more subtle inconsistencies missed. Why do faith healers wear glasses, get sick and have operations like any of us? Why do signs and wonders evangelists travel with doctors? Why do they claim healings and raising people from the dead, yet fail to come up with documentation when challenged. Why are faith healers or any true Charismatic/Pentecostal not going into hospitals or on the streets and healing people, *as they teach, and as Jesus and the apostles did* - healing ‘all’ and ‘every’ (Matt.4:23,24; 8:16; 9:35; 10:1; 12:15...); *instantly, ‘immediately’* (Matt.8:3; 20:30...); *completely, ‘perfectly whole’* (Matt.12:13,15; 14:36...), and *at will* - with *no failures* (Matt.8:3) - diseases that cannot be cured by psychosomatic means (e.g. AIDS,

Downs Syndrome, quad/paraplegia, etc). Has any Charismatic/Pentecostal ever healed a paraplegic or a person with Downs Syndrome?

The reader might think we are referring here to just the popular evangelists. But *the same inconsistencies and contradictions occur in every town and every city with every Pentecostal/Charismatic church!* Signs out the front state ‘*miracles happen here*’...but when proof is asked for, there is silence.

The *inconsistencies* in the Charismatic/Pentecostal faith abound. People are not being physically healed of *every diseases instantly, immediately*, as were the healings of Jesus and the apostles. There are thousands of stories and claims cited in western churches each week, often stories regurgitated from remote areas of the world, all proven over and over to be exaggerated or false.

When those who believe in faith healing are asked if they *personally* have ever *seen* a blind person see, the deaf hear, or the dead come back to life, the answer is always negative. *Charismatic/Pentecostals need at some point to realise the fraud of faith healing and false signs and wonders!* But more satanic is the *spiritual blindness* that tells a person that these healings and signs are happening *when they are not*. This author has met many people who believe amazing stories of miraculous healings - people having amputated limbs grow back and people being raised from the dead....but not once has it been in their own church or local area, and when one asks for documentation there is a wall of silence.

This deception with the sign gifts and faith healers actually masks the truth that *God can miraculously heal* if He chooses! But will He honour the false teaching, the false gospels, the deceptions and lies within the Charismatic/Pentecostal church? These gospels are not of the Word, they are ‘lawless’, and who can deny that it is at least some of these people Jesus refers to when He says ‘*Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in your name and in your name have cast out devils? and in your name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, you that work iniquity* [‘you lawless ones’] (Matt.7:22,23).

To expect the same anointing that Jesus or *those He ordained* had, is to be as ‘*false christs and false prophets*’ (‘false christs’ is ‘pseudo christos’ - literally ‘false anointed ones’).

The obvious inconsistencies and contradictions in results, in claims and more importantly in such ‘faith’ - these are rarely called out.

In the last issue [*Diakrisis* May/June] we wrote of a shocking tragedy of a young girl who died directly as a result of standard Charismatic/Pentecostal Word of Faith teaching taken to its logical conclusion. We finished that article with this, and we repeat here: ‘*However, the biggest loser of this ongoing tragedy is the true Gospel! Why add new teachings of healing, prosperity, Word of Faith? Is it not enough that Jesus died for our sins to satisfy a holy and righteous judge, to propitiate the wrath of God for our sins? Is it not enough that in Christ the Saviour we have a spirit made righteous, a soul being sanctified, ready for a new healed body in Heaven? Dare we expect more than what God may or may not give? Is His grace not sufficient?*’

The Papacy - the Vicar of Christ?

Recently a new Roman Catholic Pope was elected following the death of Pope Francis. The world through the media saw the idolisation of a man, when hundreds of thousands of people day and night attended the Basilica Square to pay homage to the dead and await the announcement of their new father in the faith.

The Person in History

The word 'Pope' simply means '*Father*'. The Pope is often called '*Our Holy Father*'. Yet Jesus said, '*Call no man your Father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in Heaven*' (Matt.23:9). In avoiding undue literalism, this is a warning against spiritual titles or honours that compare with God. In Matthew 23 it refers to the hypocrites who lorded it over others because of religious position and power. Our 'Holy Father' is not the Pope but our Father in Heaven.

Catholicism teaches that the Pope is the '*vicar of Christ on earth*' - someone who *acts in the place of* Christ. This role of the Pope as the supreme leader of the church is never found in the first few centuries. It was in the fifth century that Leo I was the first to proclaim himself '*Lord of the whole church*'. It was not until after the sixth century that the dogma of supreme power and authority of the Bishop of Rome took effect. Many Popes have by the Papal office claimed to be '*Christ in office*' on earth, or have taken titles such as '*Most Holy Lord*', '*High Priest*' and '*Mouth of Jesus Christ*'. Yet the Bible says our great High Priest is Jesus alone, the Son of God (Heb.4:14).

In the Middle Ages, a collection of Papal letters known as the 'Decretals' was used to prove the Pope was the supreme infallible head of the church. But hundreds of years later in the time of the Renaissance, these letters were proven to be forgeries (*New Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol.5, P.822). Thus for over 1,000 years these documents for Papal claims of supreme authority had been based on a lie!

The Catholic Church claims that Peter was the first 'Pope', despite this being contrary to all New Testament evidence and history. Paul wrote to the Romans in about AD 58 and greeted many people but never once mentioned Peter. The Apostle James was in fact himself the president of the first council and Bishop of Jerusalem and it was he who delivered the judgments (Acts 15:6-19,22).

It can be argued that in the beginning it does appear that Peter appeared to take a notable role among the apostles. Yet he merely called himself a fellow '*elder*' (1Pet.5:1). In Galatians 2:9 Paul speaks of James, Peter and John as being prominent among the apostles at first - proof that Peter was nothing like a Pope or the head of these apostles or the churches (Matt. 10:2; Mark 3:16; Luke 6:14; Acts 1:13). Many also see Paul as having the most outstanding ministry. It was he who was a '*master builder*' and '*laid the foundation*' (1Cor.3:10). He himself was of the '*chiefest of the apostles*', yet still nothing like the modern Pope (2Cor.12:11).

In early centuries there were 'bishops' in various areas, the term being synonymous with 'elders' (1Tim.3:1,2; Tit.1:7). However, Roman emperors such as Julius Caesar in 63 AD took the title 'Pontifex Maximus' which continued until

AD 376 when Gratian refused it. The Bishop of Rome (Damasus) then took the title in 378. At this time there was a uniting of pagan and Christian beliefs. Yet the title and authority of a 'Pope' as we know it today was still not recognised until Boniface III in AD 607.

The Pagan Origins

The Catholic religion itself admits that many of its customs and practices are of pagan origin. The pagans worshipped a mother goddess and the Church of Rome adapted this to Mary. Of candles, (introduced AD 320), incense and holy water, the *Catholic Encyclopedia* stated, '*We need not shrink from admitting that candles, like incense and lustral water, were commonly employed in pagan worship and in rites paid to the dead*'. Similarly the association of fish with Friday as a Roman Catholic custom, is of pagan origin, in that the Roman goddess Venus (goddess of sexual fertility), had a sacred day on Friday and fish was regarded as sacred to her.

One of the most striking remnants of paganism can be seen in St. Peter's Square in Rome. There an obelisk, a tall slender object with a pointed tip, still stands. This is the *original* symbol of Baal, a title for Nimrod, which was involved in Sun-worship! The obelisk had an obvious sexual significance and was once at the centre of Egyptian paganism. Pope Sixtus V had this obelisk moved to St. Peter's Square and imposed the death penalty to workers if the obelisk was damaged in the removal.

In the sixth century (AD 519) the Pope ordered the observance of 'Lent'. This custom is very similar to the annual festival in commemoration of the death and 'resurrection' of Tammuz. The *Catholic Encyclopedia* admits that '*writers in the fourth century were prone to describe many practices (e.g. the Lenten fast of forty days), as of apostolic institution which certainly had no claim to be so regarded*'.

The garments the Pope wears were patterned from Roman Emperors. The Tiara crown is identical to that worn by gods on ancient Assyrian tablets. The Pallium worn over the shoulders is identical to that worn by pagan clergy before the Christian era.

The Claims

Matthew 16:18 is used by the Catholic church to claim that Christ made Peter a Pope: '*And I say also unto you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto you the keys of the kingdom of Heaven, and whatsoever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in Heaven and whatsoever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in Heaven*'.

A point of confusion centers on whether *Peter himself* or the *confession* he made serves as the foundational stone for the true Church. But regardless, Peter never claimed to be, or accepted the title of the first pope, nor did anyone treat him as such. Jesus did not say that Peter was the '*petra*' - or the rock. He said Simon was '*Petros*', which is the Greek word meaning a piece of rock or a stone. There

are two different words here. The ‘rock’ elsewhere in scripture is undoubtedly Christ (1Cor.3:11).

Yet it is Peter himself who refutes the Roman Catholic claims. Peter never referred to himself as the rock (‘*Petra*’) but referred to Christ as a stone of stumbling and a rock (‘*Petra*’) of offense (1Pet.2:8). Paul to the Corinthians said ‘*the spiritual rock that followed them: and that rock was Christ, the chief cornerstone*’ (1Cor.10:4; Eph.2:20). Similarly, in the Old Testament God is continually called ‘*a rock*’ (Deut.32:4,15,18,30,31; 2Sam.22:32; 23:3; Ps.18:2,31,46; 28:1; 31:3; 42:9; 62:2,6,7; 71:3; 78:35; 89:26; 92:15; 94:22; 95:1; Is.8:13,14; 17:10). ‘*For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ*’ (1Cor.3:11) and He ‘*is the head over all things to the church*’ (Eph.1:22).

Roman Catholics should believe their ‘first Pope’! Peter stated he was an ‘*elder*’ (1Pet.1:1; 5:1-3). He wore no crown (1Pet.5:4). He never spoke, acted, dressed or wrote like a Pope. He did not allow men to bow down to him or kiss his ring or foot - he forbade Cornelius to fall at his feet because he (Peter) was ‘*only a man*’ (Acts 10:25-26). He did not place tradition on the same level as the Word of God (1Pet.2:8), as the Pope now does.

Did Peter teach us to confess our sins to priests? Peter says: ‘*Repent of your wickedness and pray to God that your sins may be forgiven*’ (Acts 8:22). Should we pray to Mary and the saints? Peter says to ‘*pray to God*’ (Acts 8:22).

Papal Fruit

Many Popes were not evil and led morally good lives, but the reason for documenting the following history of the corrupt Popes is to emphasise that this church and its Popes are in no way ‘infallible’ as claimed. The fruit of the papacy is telling. More than fifty Popes can be shown to be atheists and infidels, and the corruption of the Vatican throughout the centuries is well documented by historians and the Catholic religion itself. This history of the Popes feature shocking accounts of simony, drunkenness, adultery, sodomy, rape and murder.

Pope Sergius III (904-911) obtained office by murder. He sired several illegitimate children by Marozia who assassinated Pope Leo VI (928-929), and put her own teenage son (John XI) in the papal chair. In AD 955 Marozia’s grandson (18 years old, some say 16) took the chair. The *Catholic Encyclopedia* describes him as ‘*a coarse, immoral man*’. This Pope (John XII) was said by a noted Catholic Bishop Luitprand to have ‘*no respect either for single girls, married women, or widows - they were sure to be defiled by him, even on the tombs of the holy apostles, Peter and Paul*’. Pope John X (914-928) had many mistresses and it is claimed was killed in the physical act of adultery by an irate husband. The Roman Catholic religion now classifies these Popes as ‘anti-Popes’ and not official Popes.

Pope Benedict IX (1032-1045) was 12 years old, (some Catholics argue he was 20), and was made a Pope by a powerful family in Rome. He ‘*committed murders and adulteries in broad daylight, robbed pilgrims on the grave of martyrs; a hideous criminal, the people drove him out of Rome*’. The *Catholic Encyclopedia* says of Pope Boniface VIII (1294-1303): ‘*Scarcely any possible crime was omitted*

- *infidelity, heresy, simony, gross and unnatural immorality, idolatry, magic...*' This Pope once said: *'to enjoy oneself and to be carnally with women or with boys is no more a sin than rubbing one's hands together'*. At other times he called Christ a 'hypocrite' and called himself an atheist. It was this Pope who officially declared the Roman Catholic religion the '*only true church*' (AD 1302): *'We, therefore, assert, define and pronounce that it is necessary to salvation to believe that every human being is subject to the pontiff of Rome'*.

Pope John XXIII (1410-1415) was accused by 37 witnesses, including bishops and priests, of fornication, adultery, incest, sodomy and murder. It was proved he seduced 300 nuns. He was charged with 54 crimes. Pope Pius II (1458-1464) had a house full of concubines and lived in immense wealth. Similarly Pope Sixtus IV (1471-1484) who followed, lived in pomp and wealth while selling church offices to wage numerous wars. He appointed eight nephews cardinals in seven years.

Pope Innocent VIII (1484-1492) was the father of sixteen children from various women. Pope Paul III (1534-1549) appointed his teenage nephews as cardinals and sought the advice of astrologers. Pope Alexander VI (1492-1503) lived with the daughter of a previous wife and had five children by her. He then lived in incest with one of his daughters, Lucretia. On October 31, 1501 he conducted a sex orgy in the Vatican itself (*'Diarium'*, Vol.3, P.167)...Space does not permit the full list of immorality and misuse of power by Popes.

When confronted with such Papal history, this Roman religion, which claims 'infallibility' (declared in 1870), teaches that *'A sinful Pope...remains a member of the church and...from whom we may not withdraw obedience'*. But Jesus said *'A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that brings forth not good fruit is cut down and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits you shall know them'* (Matt.7:18-20).

Added to this history is the shocking history of millions of Christians martyred at the hands of the Catholic religion. This same religion has a bloody past which burned our martyrs just 400 years ago. Today it seems there is a judicial blindness over the eyes of many in regard to this history...

In 1096 Roman Catholic crusaders slaughtered half the Jews in Worms, Germany; in 1098 almost all of the inhabitants of the city of Antioch; and in 1099 they massacre 70,000 Muslims and Jews when they captured Jerusalem. Between 1208-1226 Roman Catholic crusaders slaughtered approximately 20,000 citizens of Beziers, France. By the time the Roman Catholic armies finished, almost the entire population of southern France (mostly Albigensian Christians) had been exterminated.

During the centuries of papal Inquisitions beginning in the 13th century, up to 50 million people were killed. In 1236 Roman Catholic crusaders slaughtered Jews in the Anjou and Poitou regions of western France. In 1243 Roman Catholic mobs burned alive all the Jews in Berlitz, Germany. Similar events occurred in 1298 when all the Jews in Rottingen, Germany, were burned alive, and again in 1349 in Gernersheim, Germany.

Between 1481-1483 Roman Catholic inquisitors, authorised the burning at the stake of at least 2,000 people during the first two years of the Spanish Inquisition.

It is estimated that 20 million were killed during the ‘Inquisitions’ of the middle ages, the thirty years between 1540 and 1570 saw 900,000 Protestants killed alone.

In 1572 the infamous ‘*St. Bartholomew’s Massacre*’ slaughtered 10,000 Waldenses in the mountains of Piedmont; 20,000 defenceless men, women and children in the city of Bezieses and 70,000 Huguenots soon after. The Pope and cardinals who supported the attacks rejoiced and sang thanksgiving songs.

The martyrdoms during many of these periods included torture of the worst kinds, and burnings at the stake. The ‘crimes’ were mostly preaching the Gospel, distributing Bibles and opposing the teachings of the Roman Catholic faith. Many thousands were Catholics who had left the faith and followed Bible teachings.

The Teachings

Roman Catholic teachings are full of traditions introduced *centuries after Christ* which have been *added* to the Word of God (in 1545 tradition was granted *equal authority* with the Bible). Such inventions of extra biblical teachings and rituals are many and almost every century, and many against the Word of God (Matt.15:3-6). Many today are unaware that *the first three centuries after Christ saw nothing of the Roman religion as we know it today*.

The following is a short list of traditions and new doctrines added to the Scriptures. Between AD 300-375 prayers for the dead, to saints and angels, were added (forbidden in Is.8:19-20; Dt.18:11); by AD 400 the ‘Mass’ was instituted as a sacrifice *again* of Jesus on Catholic altars (defying the *finished* and *once for all* sacrifice on the cross - Jn.19:30; Heb.6:6; 9:26-28; 10:10); devotion to Mary began in AD 431, prayers to her in AD 600, Rosary prayer beads in AD 1090, her ‘immaculate conception’ (Mary never sinned) decreed in AD 1854, and her ‘bodily assumption into Heaven’ in AD 1950. Mary is now also taught as a ‘co-mediator’ and ‘co-redemptrix’ (refuted by Lk.2:21-24; Jn.3:13; Pr.30:4; Rom.3:23; 1Tim.2:5). Purgatory became a teaching in AD 593 and decreed in 1439 at the Council of Florence, yet is nowhere found in scripture (see Lk.16:19-31); in AD 1229 the Bible was forbidden to laymen (Council of Toledo).

Was the now deceased Pope Francis any different to the evil popes of the past or in the teachings of the Roman religion? Although not known for the immorality of past popes, Pope Francis upheld *all the historic dogmas of the religion*. He was also as political as the past Popes were. He regularly influenced and commented on world affairs (such as ‘climate change’) and the latest cultural wars.

In recent times the Pope had also promoted other faiths including Islam as *ways to God*. He cited similarities between the two religions with veneration to Mary. His plan of salvation also included those who just acknowledge the Creator, especially those who are Muslims, as they ‘*profess to have the faith of Abraham*’. However, the Pope avoided the fact that Islam outright rejects the Trinity, rejects that Christ was crucified on the cross (Surah 5:73; 4:157), and Christ as a divine person. Indeed Islam debases Christ to being an apostle of Allah (Surah 4:171).

The late Pontiff was a man so ‘both ways’ that it was difficult to tell whether he was accepting of many biblical doctrines. He seemed to discount a literal

creation in adopting evolutionary ideas, and he was ‘both ways’ again with the Same Sex issue. Certainly he gave his blessing to same sex civil unions, stating homosexuals have a ‘*right to be in a family*’.

Which Gospel?

The gospel of Catholicism is *faith plus sacraments to be saved*. Popes and Catholic Catechisms have long taught that ‘*the sacraments are necessary for salvation*’. Yet the scriptures are clear that salvation is by grace through faith and not of works. ‘*Abraham believed God, and it was counted [imputed] unto him for righteousness. Now to him that works is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that works not, but believes on him that justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted [imputed] for righteousness. Even as David also describes the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputes righteousness without works*’ (Rom.4:3-6); ‘*If by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work*’ (Rom.11:6); ‘*By grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works lest any man should boast*’ (Eph.2:8,9).

The Catholic religion has pronounced *anathemas* (damnations) to any who believe or teach the above *faith alone* or *imputation*. The doctrines of Justification and imputation were the dividing line at the Reformation, and still are today.

The papal system has deceived multitudes. It’s gospel is diametrically opposed to the Bible which states any false gospel is ‘*accursed*’ (Gal.1:6-9; 2Cor.11:3,4).

It grieves this author that so many Christian leaders and churches are deceived by this religious system and their ecumenical views. The great expositor Martyn Lloyd Jones, more than 50 years ago sums up: ‘*There are movements afoot, and meetings taking place, which are trying to bring a kind of rapprochement between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism; and there are people who are rejoicing in this and saying that it is a wonderful thing that we are beginning to draw together again...and that this is a wonderful manifestation of the Christian spirit...*

...We are looking at a system: and I would not hesitate to assert that this system known as Roman Catholicism, is the Devils greatest masterpiece! It is such a departure from the Christian faith, and the New Testament teaching, that I would not hesitate with the Reformers of the 16th Century to describe it as ‘apostasy’...

If we accept her teaching, we are believing a lie! In other words her dogma is a counterfeit: she is as the Scripture puts it, ‘the whore’...in the 13th chapter of the book of Revelation, and...also in the 17th chapter of the book of Revelation, is the picture of ‘the great whore’ sitting on those seven hills, as Rome does and always has done...We are not to make ‘graven images’, but the Roman Catholic Church is full of images; they worship statues and forms and representations...’ (Sermon ‘*The Roman Catholic Church*’, May 1963)

Terry Arnold

(Extracts taken from author’s book ‘*To Catholics Whom I love*’ - this book references and expands much on this article)

Your Comments and Questions

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

Degrees of Punishment in Hell?

Terry, some Christians do not believe in severities of punishment in Hell. After discussion...with some, they believe sin is sin and all sinners receive the same punishment. I believe there are levels of punishment, as certain Bible verses appear to say so. What is your belief? Surely Satan will be dealt with more harshly than others.

(A.C., NSW)

Editor's Reply:

The Bible is quite clear that there are degrees of punishment in Hell. The judgement is about works (Rom.2:6; Rev.20:12) for both Christians and non Christians. The difference is that Christians will not be punished in Hell but will have any '*wood, hay and stubble*' burnt up and given rewards for what is good (1Cor.3:12-15). This I will be glad to endure even if it is a difficult thing to understand. We are saved by faith but judged in works.

Here are some more verses that clearly show degrees of punishment and judgement...Matt. 10:15; 11:22,24; Lk.12:47,48. Pick one or two and go back to the person who stated the untruth and ask them to go home and consider. It's God's Word, not ours. (Note: '*many*' or '*few*' '*stripes*' are degrees of punishment - see also Lk.12:47,48; Acts 16:23,33; 2Cor.6:5; 11:23,24; 1Pet.2:24; Mk.9:38-47). Our logic in reading things *out of* or *into* a text will not be satisfactory on the day of judgement. We will be judged by His Word and we dare not change it with our human logic (Jn.12:48).

God Loves Everyone?

Hi Terry,

I noticed in one of your books that you made the statement that 'nowhere in the Bible does it say that God loves the unsaved'. I think RC Sproul says that we must view God's love in different categories eg. His love for the elect and His love for all, (common grace), causes His rain to fall on the just and the unjust. Would it therefore not be legitimate to say that God's love applies in this latter sense to all, even those who are unsaved?

R.N. (NSW)

Editor's reply:

It could be *implied* by many that God has a 'love' for the unsaved world, but it is not the same love as for his elect, the believers, those '*chosen in him from the foundation of the world*' (Eph.1:4) - His church. To say that God has

a love for the unsaved might be an implied reasoning, for nowhere does the Bible actually state that God loves the unsaved.

R.C. Sproul does categorize this in an attempt to show the difference between God's love for His '*beloved*' ('*agapatos*') rather than for unbelievers who do not have this same 'agapetos', nor are ever called such. 'Agapeo' love is restricted to believers only, being a special love different to other kinds of love (such as the lesser 'phileo' love used many times in the NT).

The idea that God loves the unsaved is deduced, implied, from the benevolence that God shows to the unsaved every day - ie. '*He sends rain on the just and the unjust*' alike (Matt.5:45).

However, more importantly is the use of this 'God loves you' in the Gospel which sends a false message, particularly if it is used at the beginning of any message. This 'love gospel' is that God loves everyone and is waiting for them to choose Him.

Certainly '*God is love*' as in 1Jn.4:8,16, but the passage is speaking to believers having God's love, and for one another. Further, the Gospel is not about 'God loves you' but about the death, burial, resurrection of Christ for our sins! None of the great and effective evangelists of old began their Gospel messages with 'God loves you'. Rather, they first laid out the plight of man in sin in breaking God's law. So too did the apostle Paul when he wrote of '*the wrath of God...against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men*' (Rom.1:18).

The 'God loves you gospel' also ignores the fact that '*God is angry with the wicked every day*' (Ps.7:11) and that He will send '*many*' people to Hell who think they are Christians, yet who do not 'know' him by faith and repentance (Matt.7:21-23). The Scriptures tell us clearly that those unsaved, the unbelieving - that *the wrath of God abides on them* (Jn.3:36; Rom.1:18; 2:8; 13:4). The Bible clearly says that unsaved people are '*children of wrath*', '*children of disobedience*' (Eph.2:3; 5:6; Col.3:6). The scriptures tell us that God '*hates all workers of iniquity*' (Ps.5:5). Does God love those who end up in Hell where He has sent them? God is simply not at peace with the unsaved! If this is 'love' then it certainly is not the same kind of love as for His 'beloved'.

The love of God without His justice and judgement is a false gospel (Heb.9:27; Jn.9:39; Rom.2:1-5; 5:16-21; 2Pet.3:7). This gospel does not present sin and the consequences thereof. Beginning a Gospel presentation with 'God loves you' detracts from the 'offense' of the cross (Gal.5:11-20). It *thwarts the very reason* why man needs to be saved - because of his *sin nature*!

Gospel messages today often quote John 3:16 '*For God so loved the world...*' to show that 'God loves everyone'. But the rest of the verse tells us that it is '*the believing ones*' that God gives eternal life to and who will not be judged with Gods 'wrath'. The following is the literal Greek for John 3:16: '*For so loved the God the world that the His son the unique [only begotten] He gave that all the believing ones in [on] Him no perish but have life eternal*'. The '*whosoever believes*' here is literally translated '*all the believing ones*'. *

We are not required to make the Gospel more appealing or palatable by

adding 'God loves you'. One cannot soften the cross! The power of the Gospel is in the message itself! '*For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believes; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written. The just shall live by faith*' (Rom.1:16,17). The Gospel message generates power of itself and needs no outside help. This reasoning is further extended in verse 17: '*For therein is the righteousness of God revealed...*' The *Gospel itself* contains the revelation of the righteousness of God himself in the flesh through the message of the substitutionary death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Which Gospel will we set before the people? Will we begin with '*God loves you*', or '*man is a sinner*'? Will we begin with '*God loves you and what a wonderful plan He has for your life*', or explain *who God is and why He cannot tolerate sin*?

* The 'whosoever believes' is literally '*the believing ones*' ('*pas o pisteuon*') with the definite article '*the*' referring to a definite number, quantity or entity. The common misconception is that '*whosoever*' is an indefinite phrase, but the Greek definite article '*o*' attached to '*believing ones*' modifies a particular object - '*the believing ones*'. This is a definite group of people, not an indiscriminate or indefinite group. It is also not '*anyone who chooses of their free will*' as so many read into this verse.

Dear Terry,

...My life was changed from the time I heard your sermon on the Cave Rescue and over the years since, have read and re-read your books numerous times. Every time I gain something new. I would like copies to lend or give away...I am forever grateful for your books and the regular 'Diakrisis'. Many thanks...

(P.M., NSW)

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