



The Great Southland of the Holy Spirit - the Myth

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by

Terry Arnold



T. A. Ministries
A Ministry of Teaching

PO Box 432, Babinda,
4861, Qld, Australia
Website: www.taministries.net
E-mail: taministries2@gmail.com

Ph. 0411489472

The wrong Island

During the middle ages explorers believed in a great southland to the South Pole called by many ‘Terra Australis Incognita’ (‘the unknown southland’). In 1606 the Portuguese and Roman Catholic explorer Pedro Fernandez de Quiros thought he had discovered this great ‘southland’ when he came to what is now known as Vanuatu. He called it the ‘Great Southland of the Holy Spirit’. Quiros died thinking he had discovered the great southland to the pole. But he never made it to what is now called ‘Australia’, let alone discovered it.

Pentecostals are fond of quoting *part* of Quiros’s declaration to teach a great end time revival in Australia. Col Stringer of ‘Great Southland Ministries’ uses the following selective excerpt: *‘Let the heavens, the earth, the waters with all their creatures, and those present, witness that I, Captain Pedro Ferdinand de Quiros...in the name of Jesus Christ...hoist this emblem of the holy cross on which His person was crucified and whereon He gave His life for the ransom and remedy of all the human race...on this day of Pentecost, 14th May...I take possession of all this part of the south as far as the pole in the name of Jesus...which from now on shall be called the southern land of the Holy Ghost...and this always and forever...and to the end that to all natives, in all the said lands, the holy and sacred evangel may be preached zealously and openly’*.

The real proclamation

Like Col Stringer, many today cite this *small excerpt* of Quiros’s words, and as ‘prophecy’. However, these words were actually a very small portion of a much larger proclamation. Such proclamations were common and were done in ‘possession’ when new lands were discovered. The ‘Australia’ (a deliberate misspelling) was in honour of Austria and of King Philip’s wife Margaret.

The whole proclamation is too long to print here. The following are excerpts:

‘Be witnesses the heavens and the earth, and the sea with all its inhabitants, and those who are present, that I, the Captain Pedro Fernandez de Quiros, in these parts which up to the present time have

been unknown, raise and plant in the name of Jesus Christ, Son of the eternal Father, and of the Holy Virgin Mary, true God and man, this sign of the Holy Cross, on which His most holy body was crucified, and where He gave His life as a ransom for the whole human race'. [Six further 'possessions' were then read]...

Possession in the name of the most Holy Trinity... *'I am, and have come with authority from the Supreme Roman Pontiff, Clement VIII, and by order of the King, Don Philip III, King of Spain ... in the name of the most Holy Trinity, take possession of all the islands and lands that I have newly discovered, and desire to discover, as far as the South Pole'.*

Possession in the name of the Catholic Church: *'I take possession of all these, the said lands, in the name of Jesus Christ, saviour of all men...and in the name of His mother the most Holy Virgin Mother of Loreto, and St. Peter and St. Paul, and of all the holy apostles and disciples, and...the universal Vicar of Christ, the Roman Pontiff, and in the name of the whole Catholic Church...*

Possession in the name of St. Francis and his Order. *'I take possession of all the said lands in the name of my father, St. Francis, and of all his religion and professors of it, and...the name of the Father Commissary, Friars..., all four priests...by order of His Holiness and of His Majesty, and of their Commissary General and Provincial of the province of the Twelve Apostles of Peru...'*

Possession in the name of John of God and his Order. *'I take possession...in the name of John of God, and of all the professed brothers of his Order...'*

Possession in the name of the Order of the Holy Ghost. *'I take possession...by the right that His Holiness and His Majesty granted...for all the Knights that are in these parts of the Order of the Holy Ghost...'*

Possession in the name of His Majesty. *'Finally, I take possession of this bay, named the Bay of St. Philip and St. James...its port named Santa Cruz, and of the site on which is to be founded the city of New Jerusalem, in latitude 15 degrees 10', and of all the lands...which I sighted and am going to sight, and of all this region of the south as far as the Pole, which from this time shall be called La Austrialia del Espiritu Santo...in the name of the King, Don Philip...'*

When the proclamations were finished all cried out: '*Long live the King of Spain, Don Philip III, our Lord!*' Then the attendees entered a makeshift church which Quiros named '*Our Lady of Loreto*'. Three Masses were said with the sacrament of Roman Catholic communion. Flags were raised and guns saluted.

Who Was Pedro Quiros?

With three ships, 300 crew and soldiers, Quiros left South America in December 1605. Many historians believe Quiros was of Jewish descent. When he discovered one of the northern islands now known as Vanuatu he called it the 'New Jerusalem'. Quiros was sponsored by Pope Clement VIII and King Philip. His aim was to spread the Pope's religion and possess land for the king.

Australian historian, Manning Clark, described Quiros: '*Pedro Fernandez de Quiros...was one of the flowers of the Catholic reformation, part of that movement of religious idealism and of missionary fervour which strengthened the church after the disasters of Luther and Calvin...He began to believe that he had been singled out by God as the vessel through whom the inhabitants of 'terra australis' would be received into the true church, and that 'terra australis' would be Austrialia del Espiritu Santo - a land dedicated to the Holy Spirit...he was anxious to win the race against the Protestants to the Indies and the south seas, to confound those powers of false doctrine...They sailed west till they reached a harbour in the New Hebrides, which Quiros in the first flush of the excitement named Austrialia del Espiritu Santo...[and] with the errors in measuring longitude...*'

When Quiros landed and took possession of the islands, to the surprise of his men, he promptly set up a group called the 'Knights of the Holy Order'. After the proclamations were made Pedro Quiros was nearly killed in a mutiny aboard his ship when the crew rebelled. They saw him as a religious fanatic.

Quiros's second in command, Luis Vaez de Torres, set off soon after and sailed along the southern edge of New Guinea, not realising that below was the great 'southland' they had missed. The strait between became known as 'Torres Strait'. Had they succeeded in their search for the real 'Southland', Australia might have become a predominantly

Roman Catholic, Spanish speaking nation, as many of the nations were in South America.

The myth lives on

It is obvious that Pedro Quiros would have hated the idea of the modern day Protestant or Pentecostal ‘prophecies’ concerning Australia as a nation of God’s special blessing. Yet, despite the navigational errors and Quiros bumping into the wrong island, Hillsong published and perpetuated a song ‘*The Great Southland of the Holy Spirit*’. The author, Geoff Bullock, later admitted it was an ‘ignorant’ song. Interestingly, Hillsong in perpetuating this myth *takes out the Virgin Mary* from the Quiros’s proclamation.

It should shock some that *this proclamation had nothing to do with the Australia or the Holy Spirit*. Quiros discovered Vanuatu, not Australia. He simply did not claim Australia for the Jesus Christ of the Bible. And the real Jesus does not share his glory with any of the other deities in the proclamations, neither the king, the Roman Catholic church, St. Francis, John of God or the ‘vicar of Christ...His holiness’ - the Pope. The Roman Catholic church had a lot more to do with this than the Pentecostals would like to admit. And the Holy Spirit barely gets a mention, if at all.

Later Roman Catholics confused all this further by stating the country was named for the Virgin Mary. Yet both are not in any proclamation *for Australia*.

Christians are duped far too easily. The prophecy of the ‘Great Southland of the Holy Spirit’ has been embellished and twisted over many years. Australia was first settled for the purpose of a penal settlement ‘at the ends of the earth’. It was never founded with any ‘prophecy’. This is just another Pentecostal fantasy. The Holy Spirit of God is omnipresent - and He did not have any special affiliation with this criminal outpost named ‘Australia’. He is in fact saving people *out of* the evil morass that is in this country.

There may have been Christians who brought certain Christian principals to Australia after the first fleet more than a century and a half later, but are we really a ‘Christian’ nation? The statistics show

otherwise. A small but *decreasing* proportion claim to be Born Again (about 3%), and a small proportion attend church (about 10% - yes, its dropping too). That figure also includes Roman Catholics, high Anglicans and other groups who differ widely from 'Protestant' or Biblical groups.

Despite history refuting the 'Great Southland of the Holy Spirit' and with it God's special prophetic blessing for Australia, it is Christians who make sure that the myth lives on.

Australia does not need prophecies and myths to see any revival of hearts in Australia. It needs the Gospel! It needs men and women, preachers, pastors, evangelists and Christians alike to bring the Gospel back. For it has almost been lost. It is most certainly not found in Quiros's proclamations. Nor is it found in the Pentecostals of this land who poison it with prosperity, healing, success and other sugar coated counterfeit gospels.

The Bible, the word of God, is expressly clear that there will be no worldwide end time revival, but rather an apostasy from the faith. The last days will be evil like the days of Noah and Lot (Lk.17:26,28). They will be characterised by a '*departing from the faith*' and '*doctrines of devils*' (1Tim.4:1). The Bible calls this apostasy the 'falling away' (2Thess.2:3). There will be false Christs and signs and wonders (2Thess.2:9,10) and ever increasing deception and iniquity (2Tim.3:13; Matt.24:11,12,24).

We do not need to be hyping people up with a 'prophecy' based on a fable which never was for Australia! Rather than such myths, bring the Gospel back!

See article: '*Will there be a World Revival v2.6?*'

<https://taministries.net/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/Will-there-be-a-World-Revival-v2.6.pdf>

On our website in the *Pentecostal / Charismatism* section

https://taministries.net/?page_id=131

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.