

PUBLISHED BY
Christian Witness
Ministries

AUSTRALIA
P.O. Box 353
Loch Sport Vic 3853
T: (03) 5146 0280
F: (03) 5146 0270
Email: maureen@
christian-witness.org

NEW ZEALAND
P.O. Box 15 159
Miramar, Wellington
T: (6) 367 0105
Email: fbetter@clear.net.nz

UNITED KINGDOM
C/- 95 Sutherland Ave
Biggin Hill, Westerham
Kent, TN16 3HH
Email: ppowell@
christian-witness.org

WEBSITE
www.christian-
witness.org

MAILING LIST
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By Post: Write to your
nearest CWM office (see
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EDITOR
Philip L. Powell
Email: ppowell@
christian-witness.org

Theophostic Counselling — divine, demonic or just divisive?

I first heard the term *Theophostic Counselling* some years ago at Ballarat in Victoria, Australia where a highly educated lady had tried to introduce the practice to the fellowship, which relates to CWM, in that town. Fortunately the “elders” of the local church were alert and prevented it from getting a foothold. I was also able to help through the good work of Martin and Deidre Bobgan and their Psycho-Heresy ministry based in USA. We highly recommend the investigative work of the Bobgans. If you desire to know more about THEOPHOSTIC COUNSELLING and other psycho-heresies you can do no better than visit their website and/or register for their Psycho-Heresy Awareness Letter (**PHAL**) – full address listed below (page 4)

The following two letters (one with some slight changes by the author) and the article *Linkcare & Christian Psychology* are from **PHAL** Vol 11, Number 5 – Sept-Oct 2003 – used with permission.



Letter from Australia:

I am a medical doctor who has become profoundly concerned by the impact of neo-paganism, by whatever name one chooses to call it, on the life and message of the Christian church. I have been almost catapulted into this by the activities of our previous pastor's wife, who came to us ostensibly as a pastoral counsellor highly trained as a psychologist. She has proved to be a very disturbed lady, a rabid

“biblical feminist” who has been totally absorbed in revealing unremembered childhood sexual abuse in all her counselees, whatever their presenting story.

She has repeated her performance at her husband's previous church, where her activities tore the congregation asunder. They had the wisdom and the courage to tell the pastor to move on. She moved more cunningly with us, first recruiting her Amazon army of psychologically disturbed female church members whom she was able to dominate mentally, using them to create mayhem in church meetings. Her techniques were involved up to the hilt with those procedures now discredited as producing false memories.

Now she has moved on. Any new pastor will need our prayers that he should be used of God to bring about forgiveness, restoration and restitution. This will require the return of the preaching of the gospel and true doctrine to their rightful place. Such a man would, almost by definition, be concerned to prepare the congregation, particularly the youth and young adults, to fight for their faith against the onslaughts of paganism and Gnosticism. In such circumstances I shall be seriously committed to helping to create a quality church reference library.

Letter from Alaska:

One day, someone forwarded an email to me with comments from another believer who was taking a stand against Theophostics. At the end of the e-mail was a referral to your website. Needless to say, I made an immediate

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beeline! I spent days here, reading, absorbing and printing stuff out! I was so thrilled to finally have the information that would confirm my observations. Based on what others have told me about their personal experiences with inner healing and the printed materials made available through the church, I can tell you emphatically that what you have written about inner healing and Theophostics is quite correct. A friend's husband was enticed to try inner healing and he testified that he was told to yell, scream, and even use foul language ... whatever it took to "get it out!" He did not comply and decided right then and there that method was not for him.

I know nothing about psychology, well, very little; and I was shocked to learn how widespread the problem was and how infected the Church of Christ is across America! The Lord is indeed grieved. I did have some experience with Theophostics early on. I was a brand spanking new Christian and my Mom was having some pretty detrimental emotional problems and I wanted her to receive Christian counselling instead of secular. My church leaders referred me to a member who is a clinical professional who does Theophostics.

My Mom desired that I stay in the room with her, and it was OK with the counsellor. We attended three sessions with no results ... but I can attest to the "jesus" spirit guide you speak of in your articles. My Mom, a Christian, was uncomfortable with the whole thing.

I have wrestled for a long time with how to approach my pastor and church leaders on this. I have wrestled with leaving the church. I have agonized in prayer over whether I should even be agonizing over this! I want to keep my eyes on Him, but am committed in my heart to do as He instructs.

When Jesus miraculously healed my heart, I began to run FORWARD as fast as my little spiritual feet would go. I severed all ties with my past in order to follow Jesus. In fact, I told Him to put a torch to my bridges. From that day on, I knew I would never go back. Because I am a new creation, the Holy Spirit made me realize that I am whole and clean in Him. I feel like a virgin again! Wow! Only God could do that, and that's why I love Him. That's why I can give up my life for Him. My God actually did something for me! And I think that's what I hate the most about Christian psychology ... it presents a weak Jesus. No wonder so few are excited about their redemption!

THIS and future issues of *CETF* will be sectionalised by the use of editorial banners, God willing, as per pages 3 to 35.

PSYCHOLOGY (pp 1-4) — We begin with a warning about Psychiatry in so-called "Christian Counselling". The trend is spreading, especially in charismatic and pseudo-pentecostal churches. Freudian psychiatry is neither truly scientific nor practical and it's basically un-christian and totally non biblical. Be warned and beware.

THEOLOGY (pp 5-15) — The second section contains articles by Olympia Barczynska, *What Is The Gospel?* (pp 5-7), Philip Powell, *The Cost of Gaining Christ* (pp 8-9) and Aeron Morgan, *Perils Facing the Church* (pp 10-15). We plan to include a THEOLOGY section in all future issues of *CETF* with a related theme running through the articles. This issue focuses on the cheap "only beliefism" of modern gospel preaching and the resultant exploitation of people by the "money preachers" of our time, just as Peter warns in his epistle.

SOCIETY & HOMOSEXUALITY (pp 16-19) — Most of our readers will be aware of the big homosexual debates raging within Christendom. Actually the discussion should not even arise. The biblical position is so crystal clear, but now that it has arisen we must speak out. *CETF* suggests that the Church is under siege (p16). Our comment is followed by two articles (pp 16-18) on the one theme but written from different perspectives. Peter Barnes, of the Presbyterian Church says of the Uniting Church of Australia (UCA), "*Given the liberal Basis of Union, (1977) the acceptance of homosexual clergy was only a matter of time.*" He suggests the UCA should be shelved. Gordon Moyes head of the Sydney City Mission and an ordained minister in the UCA argues, on the other hand, that the evangelicals (EMU) will ultimately win over the liberals in UCA.

The two conflicting positions are interesting in the light of Anglican archbishop Peter Jensen offering the hand of fellowship to groups that secede from the UCA. On p19 we bring the debate a bit closer to home for many of us. Read the shocking article in *The Courier Mail* by so-called "theologian" at Garden City College of Ministries (AoG Queensland, Australia) Scott Stephens. Why is there no hue and cry from AoG leaders? CWM contacted them, but there was no response. Will the archbishop of Sydney extend his offer to those who secede from the heretical AoG, I wonder? A major division will happen sooner or later.

SOCIETY & PROPHECY (pp 20-21) — "Signs of the Time" is a controversial topic. On the one hand there will always be those who cry, "*Extremism*", which, in my own view, is countered by our Lord's condemnation of religious leaders who can't "*discern the signs of the times*" (Matt 16:3 c/f Luke 12:56). Tony Pearce keeps his finger on the pulse of world affairs and is never afraid to interpret what is happening in the light of Bible Prophecy. You will find his *Long Hot Summer* stimulating and informative to say the least.

ECUMENICAL (pp 22-28) — Chris Pollard of Hobart, Tasmania returns to us as a writer. A former Roman Catholic he has undertaken mammoth research to come up with his *Mary, Mary Quite Contrary* Part 1 article, in which he investigates the rise and spread of Mariolatry in the Roman Catholic Church (RCC) to 1500 AD. This makes for captivating reading and is most pertinent in the light of the frightening inroads being made by the RCC into the wider church and her prominent place in the ecumenical trend. Rome never changes and is hypocritical when it suits her purpose.

Even the aged and nearly dying pontiff can't avoid hypocrisy. He recently regretted the historic rift between the Roman Catholic and Anglican Churches during the reign of Henry 8th in Britain. At the same time he protested to Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams about the posi-

tion of the Anglican Church in Britain regarding the appointing of homosexual bishops. Of the latter the Pope said, "*new and serious difficulties have arisen*" in efforts to unify the Roman Catholic and Anglican Churches. (Reported by ASSIST News Service).

As the person who sent me the report, himself a former member of the RCC, remarked: "*I find this to be the height of hypocrisy. How many thousands of gay priests/paedophiles has he been hiding?*" CWM is grateful to Chris Pollard for his exhaustive investigation and documented sources. I can hardly wait to read part two of his series.

UN-MASKED (pp 29-35) — Brett Bigg, whom we met in the previous *CETF* presents the 2nd in his three part unmasking of Kenneth Copeland, who has now inherited Kenneth Hagin's heretical "mantle". (Hagin died in September, 2003.) Copeland's latest money appeal is for US\$40 million to purchase two Cessna jet aeroplanes (maybe one for Ken and one for Gloria — eh?) And guess what? You can be a member of Copeland's "*Elite CX team*" by simply donating US\$2,000. Read all about his heresies and his attempts to rip off the gullible. It's time Christians stopped sending money to false prophets and the churches and ministries that support them and give to true ministers, evangelists and missionaries.

FINALLY — The back cover has been devoted to detail about some of our CWM plans in both hemispheres including the visits of Bill Randles (Feb-March 2004) and Dave Hunt (August-Sept 2004) to Australasia and the third CWM Convention in UK, when we plan to return to Whitby in October 2004, God willing.

This means that due to lack of space we won't be publishing your letters in this issue of *CETF*, which is the largest we have ever produced without the Letters Page. However we will plan to include *Your Letters* in the next and subsequent issues, so please keep them coming, preferably by email, as these are easiest to use and therefore get preferential editorial treatment.

EDITORIAL RIFT — I have reluctantly made a statement on the CWM website regarding my editorial dispute with Dr Siam Bhayro. The UK edition of *CETF* 26 also contained an article entitled *BIBLICAL ECCLESIOLOGY* — *Another View* written by myself. The statement and article will NOT appear in the Australasian edition of *CETF*. Those who wish to read them may do so at (see http://www.christian-witness.org/archives/van20003/cwm_now.html and http://www.christian-witness.org/not_in_pubs/eccles5.html). If you don't have direct access to the internet then maybe a friend will provide you with a printout of the material.

I personally do not think that there was any need for Siam Bhayro to have divided from CWM over this issue and I did my best to avoid the rift. Now that it has happened and following this necessary statement we hope to let the matter drop.

VANGUARD will not be distributed by CWM in the foreseeable future and is unlikely to have widespread readership in Australasia. However those who wish to continue receiving *VANGUARD* may contact their UK office as follows:

VANGUARD
PO Box LB1475, LONDON W1A 9LB, UK
Phone/fax +44 (0) 1728-860671
Email: vanguard@freeola.com

We commend the reading of this issue of *CETF* and value your prayerful and practical support. Your views are invited. We will do our best to respond, but due to the volume of correspondence, can make no guarantees other than the promise to do our best. We assure you that your views are factored in even if we do not get around to replying.

God bless you.



LINKCARE & CHRISTIAN PSYCHOLOGY

By JON LUTES
Missionary

MANY times American Christians have told me that God's Word is important but not all sufficient; that there are real problems from our past that must be dealt with by psychological probing, evaluating, and counselling; that validating past feelings is necessary for present healing; that simple trust in and obedience to God are just not adequate in dealing with modern "dysfunctions"; that there is a "new" priesthood (Christian psychologists) who have hidden knowledge, which, with a sprinkling of Scripture, equals healing truth; and all this for mere mammon.

At first I scoffed at this blatant defiance of GOD, His Spirit, and His Truth. But now I am so thankful to the Lord that He opened my eyes. I was able to undergo "Christian" psychology for 5 intensive weeks (for \$5,000+). My suspicions and doubts of psychology are gone. They are now convictions based on God's truth and my experience. I now acknowledge this psychology as a "Trojan Horse" of Satan. It appears to be a gift from the world, but internally it is full of enemies set to steal, kill, and destroy.

I cannot say that Christian psychologists are mal-intended or that all their counsel is wicked. I cannot even say that there are not some positive results. Some valuable points may be gleaned. However, whenever truth and error are mixed, the result is impurity and eventual diversion from devotion to GOD alone.

I am not about to write a book critiquing psychology. Rather, I simply want to present a few fundamental snares of the devil in "Christian" psychology. I certainly will not say anything new, but rather some things eternal and unchanging. The basis of this brief article is my experience during a five-week stint at LinkCare, a counselling centre for Christian workers. My wife and I were directed there to get help for our marriage. We are missionaries and had returned to the United States to grow stronger in our marriage. We had had no prior marriage counselling. However, we came away from this experience at LinkCare not only NOT helped, but also more confused about our marriage and ourselves.

My Objections

SUBJECTIVITY: The whole foundation of psychology is subjective and therefore faulty. There is no objective basis to coun-

selling psychology. Rather it is hidden, mysterious, and subjective. Supposedly only those with the proper degrees have the keys.

There is no absolute, objective standard for normalcy in psychology. Every evaluation we took was produced by natural (unsaved-soulish) men who cannot understand God's truth (1 Corinthians 2:13-16). These were my judges, the determiners of whether or not we were normal (right).

Rather the LORD is our Judge, He alone is the unchanging standard of righteousness, and His judgment is on the basis of His Word. See 1 Corinthians 2:14-16; 2 Corinth 4:3-6; Hebrews 4:12; John 7:24.

COMPLEXITY: Much of psychology is based on the premise that our past doings are the key to our present well being. But, in order to open up the past and then evaluate it we need trained professionals. It is too complex for us alone. We spent hours and hours doing preliminary testing. Unsaved, natural people produced all these many tests. In "Christian" psychology we supposedly need other "teachers" (c/f 1 John 2: 26, 27). It is so complex when we take secular evaluations and assessments to analyse our past that only a "professional specialist" can interpret these secular evaluations.

This premise is not true. My Lord's past and present doings are the key to my present well being! The past is a testimony of His gracious deliverance — see 2 Corinthians 11:3; Philippians 3:13-15.

UNSPIRITUAL: LinkCare de-emphasizes spiritual affliction and spiritual warfare. It also de-emphasizes spiritual deliverance. There was not one prayer of faith or deliverance on our behalf by a "Christian" psychologist in our five weeks. A Bible was never opened or quoted from by a "Christian" psychologist. When we brought up Bible truth we were "affirmed" and our feelings were "validated" and then we proceeded with the secular counsel. When we asked about the possibility of demonic involvement as revealed in the Scriptures, we were told how modern research has shown physiological (natural) bases for such manifestations.

Be wary of the un-spiritual! — see Gal 6:1,7,8; Acts 10:38; 1 Peter 5:8,9; Ephesians 6:10-12; 2 Corinthians 10:3.

I remember several times bringing up scriptural objections, and they were pooh-poohed as being perhaps relevant then, but not today in the light of modern

psychological understanding.

NON-DIRECTIVE: This was very frustrating. We sought help. For us, this means: show us our problem, show us the remedy (or correction) of it, equip us to do the right thing, and then be there when we fail or succeed. Some of our problems (which we already knew) were pointed out to us—so far so good. But when we asked how we were to overcome our psychologist asked what we felt we ought to do. But that was our problem; we didn't know how to overcome. We were given no practical steps of guidance. We wanted direction and practical help getting there! This is God's will.

GOD is always directing us to Himself by knowing and living His truth! See Psalm 23:3; John 16:13; 2 Timothy 3:16,17.

LIFO – LIFE ORIENTATION: LIFO, Life Orientations seminar by Stuart Atkins, which we attended at the strong urging of LinkCare staff (though not required), defied scriptural truth regarding male/female role difference and affirmed bossy and aggressive attitudes as acceptable personality traits. As an example, several of the wives scored high as "Controlling-Talking." LinkCare staff told them that this was a positive personality type. God thinks otherwise. See 1 Peter 3:4,5. We were warned, "Don't read the first part of this book. It is merely the LIFO founders' philosophy and is evolutionary." The whole seminar was built on these principles! They are not only unbiblical but also anti-biblical, not only ungodly but anti-Christian.

BOUNDARIES: *Boundaries* by Dr Henry Cloud and Dr John Townsend, was our primary curriculum at LinkCare. This was the only material recommended to us. In fact it was recommended in book form and video to all. This was the focus of our weekly community meeting. It is based on the presupposition that each individual should do what is right in his or her own eyes by setting his or her boundaries of relationship. This sounds like the biblical book of Judges (see Judges 21:25). We, as believers, do have a KING, and we are to do what is right in His eyes — see Proverbs 14: 12.

MEN'S GROUP: *Forbidden to pray.* We were told that due to the state of some of the brothers we were not allowed to pray during this time. There are several ironies here. This was our time to speak about anything we wanted to. We all expressed a desire to pray together. We were forbidden to pray together during "our" time. I

prayed with each member of my men's group after the session (after the clinical psychologist departed). To a man, each brother in my group testified that the prayer time was much more meaningful than the session with the psychologist. He never accepted our invitation to join us in prayer. The most tragic irony is that the Lord has promised healing in praying for one another and this was never allowed in any LinkCare session — see James 5:16.

VALIDATION OF FEELINGS: We were consistently counselled that all our feelings were real and valid. We were affirmed in our feelings/emotions. We were told that we could not control our emotions. However, not all emotions/feelings are valid or good! While we all may have jealousy, pride, envy, hatred, lust, joy, etc., it is not true to say that these are all always good and valid; and the Lord does tell us to control them. We must choose what to rejoice over, what to love, what to hate, what to be jealous about, and what to weep about, etc. (i.e. we should make proper choices).

Jesus was sorrowful unto death (Matthew 26:37-41; John 12:27-28). Jesus dealt spiritually with feelings and commanded His disciples to do the same! He commanded the weary to come to Him and promised relief (Matt 11:25-30).

Feelings/emotions can be very good signs (indicators) but are very bad leaders.

LinkCare is ministering to the old man, the soulish man, thereby resurrecting that which God wants us to reckon as dead.

THE USE, DISUSE, AND MISUSE OF SCRIPTURE: What should make Christian counselling different from secular psychology? The answer is obvious: the objective revelation of God, given to reveal the truth about God, man, and God's ways and means by which man can be righteous and at peace with God; in other words, the Bible. This was one of the greatest heart-breaks of LinkCare. There seemed to be an assumption that since all or most of the clients were professing Christians that the Bible should not be used, probably because there could be a "been there, done that" attitude.

In other words, since we were all Christian workers who have been reading the Bible and we still had problems, we needed something besides the Bible. What a lie! Each of us was desperate for absolute, objective, unchanging truth, something on which to anchor our hope.

Instead, we got our feelings affirmed, with no positive direction or guidance. I remember several times pleading for scriptural guidance and being diverted away. Only one time in a session with a pastoral

counsellor was a Bible opened and we were given scriptural input. We were given three references regarding forgiveness. The amazing thing was that I carefully examined each reference and realized that what we were told these passages meant and what they actually meant were exactly opposite! Daily I checked the Scriptures after our sessions to see if what we were being counselled was true and good. It did not stack up with the Word of God.

A Wrong Understanding of Soul and Spirit

The whole premise of LinkCare seemed very much to be a backwards understanding of the relationship between soul and spirit. God, the Bible, prayer, the Holy Spirit, Jesus, and all such "spiritual things" are relevant for the spirit. But for the soul these spiritual things were not considered adequate. The soul needed insights and "truth" gleaned from those who have studied the soul ("psychologists"). The fact that these psychologists, especially the founding fathers (e.g., Freud, Erikson, Rogers, Lewin, Fromm, Maslow, Skinner, etc.), were not Christians did not seem to matter because the soul and spirit were viewed as totally separate and distinct.

The way this worked out at LinkCare was a dual track of counselling. We were assigned a clinical psychologist and a pastoral counsellor. This seemed to be a rather poor attempt to minister to both the soul and the spirit. Our pastoral counsellor did not use Scripture, except once after much pleading. When we asked him to tell us what he saw our problems were and how we could get out of them, he stated that he was merely a pastoral counsellor and therefore not qualified to evaluate our tests. Meanwhile our other marriage counsellor, a female clinical psychologist, offered not a single word of marriage counselling.

Actually, the primary difference between the types of counselling was that the pastoral counsellor could share on a personal level while the clinical psychologist could only share at a professional (impersonal) level. The common issue is that the soul was emphasised over the spirit. This is wrong. I have done a lot of study on what God says about the soul and spirit. The gist is this: in an unbeliever the soul is dominant. However, in a believer the spirit is dominant, as it has been made alive by the Spirit of God and can therefore understand God's will and His ways. It can overrule the soul. Obviously this is not true for the unbeliever who does not have this spiritual relationship with God.

Indeed, the soulish or natural man (unbeliever) cannot understand and does not accept the things of the Spirit.

1 Corinthians 2:12-16 describes the difference:

"Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Spirit teaches; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man [Greek = "psuchikos"; or "soulish man"] does not receive the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness to him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is judged by no man. For who has known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ."

Final Comments

These comments are far too brief and are based on my personal experience. Perhaps this will cause you to wrestle with this yourself and search the Scriptures and seek the Lord. Then it is worthwhile for all of us!

I fully realize this will trouble some of you. I feel for those of you who are still paying psychologists for help. On one hand I am glad that you have someone to talk to and that you may be feeling better, but at what cost? More than money, probably you have missed an opportunity to turn this trial into an intimate, transforming encounter with the Master. He is willing still to take over the counselling and provision of your well-being, and the best part is the blood of Jesus has paid the cost!

In a very real sense the end of the matter is this: LinkCare is ministering to the old man, the soulish man, thereby resurrecting that which God wants us to reckon as dead. Due to sensitivity for those who have been through LinkCare or who are still in bondage there, I have not mentioned other precious brethren who have experienced similar distress at the hands of LinkCare. It is for these dear saints and for those who may be exposed to LinkCare or similar programmes that I dedicate these brief words.

"Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that you may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much."

—James 5:16

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The Gospel

By OLYMPIA BARCZYNSKA

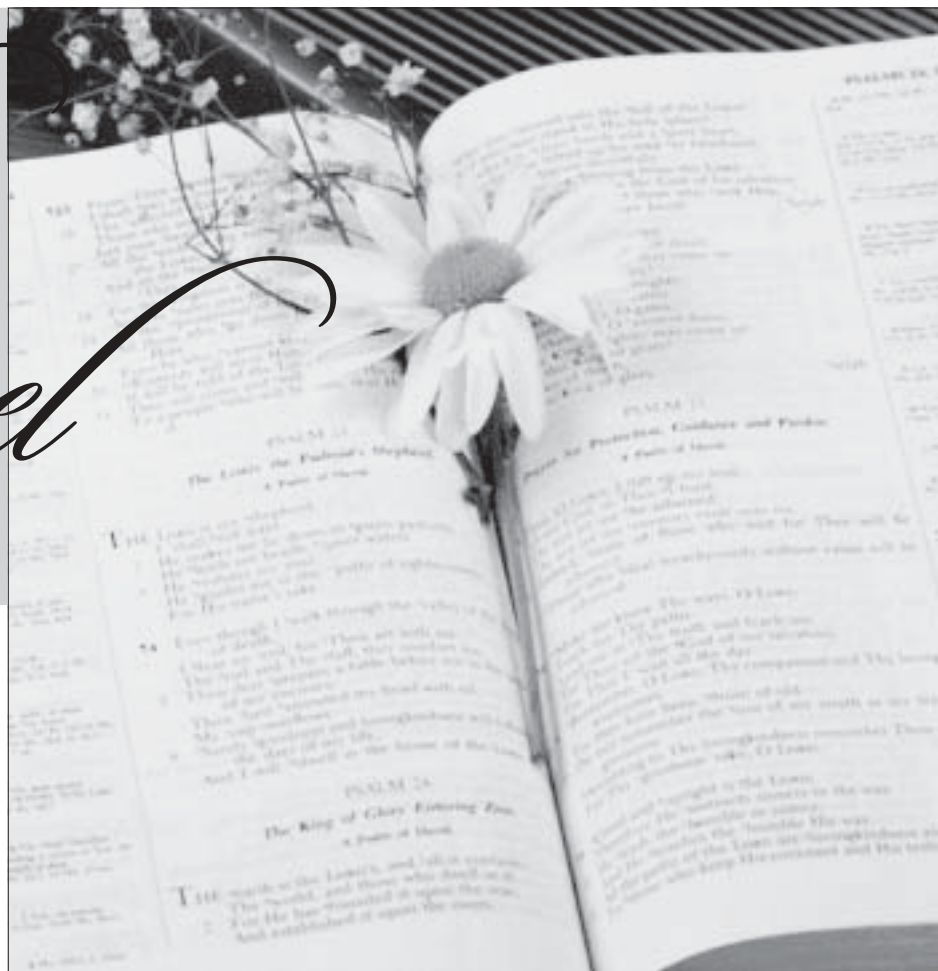
What is the gospel?

WHERE should we look in Scripture for clear teaching on what the gospel is? The Bible usually does not give us concise definitions on things but we are to know the whole counsel of God, compare Scripture with Scripture and get the full picture.

Much suffering has gone on “for the gospel’s sake” (1Corinthians 9:23, 2 Timothy 1:8, Philemon 1:13 NKJV) and so many have laid down their lives because of the gospel. Have they done this for an ideology? Is this because of their conviction about the means of salvation or even for a message about a person? Or is the gospel they have laid down their lives for something more?

It would appear from the way “gospel” messages are given these days that the gospel is information about how to secure a desirable future destiny and/or pleasurable experience in this life. Often any information about the Person who does the saving takes secondary place as man and his needs are presented as central.

Let us consider the basic meaning of words and put aside their common usage of today. The Greek word “*euaggelion*” means good message and is generally translated gospel. It seems that the Hebrew equivalent for good message is “*basar*” which is usually translated good tidings or good news. These “good messages” can be of many kinds e.g. news of victory at a time of siege (2 Kings 7:9) or news of the faith and love of the Thessalonian believers (1 Thessalonians 3:6). These words are not used exclusively to convey just one thing.



It becomes obvious that there can be any number of good messages, yet the thread woven through the Bible makes it clear that there is one good message above all other good messages. This was known in part and anticipated in the Old Testament and fully revealed in the New.

When used in the Bible “the gospel” is sometimes qualified, most commonly with the prepositional phrases “*of Christ*” or “*of God*”. (N.B. prepositional phrases like these are used to indicate what something consists of or what the subject matter of something is). At other times the good message is simply stated as “the gospel” with the assumption that the readers know full well what is meant. But do we really know what “The Gospel” is?

It is vital to note that nowhere does the Bible speak of “the gospel about Christ” or about anything else for that matter. It is “the gospel of Christ” or “the gospel of God”. I fear that few today see the crystal clear nature of what this signifies and so miss the point entirely of what the gospel is. We can use the phrase “gift of the Holy Spirit” as an example of this use of grammar. If we receive this gift what do we have? What is the gift that we have received? What is the focus on? Is it on the packaging or on the substance of what the gift actually is? Indeed on Who the gift is? This

is why when looking at the references to the gospel it becomes impossible to separate the good message from the subject and substance of what it brings. What then is the gospel that we have believed? Or should I say Who?

To get an idea of the biblical way of understanding the gospel it is perhaps best to start by looking at a situation where a departure from the true gospel has taken place. The most well known case is in Galatia; Paul wrote to the churches there on this very thing. How did Paul approach this matter with them? Did he start by saying that they had wandered away from the creed or the belief system he had given them? Did he imply that such things even existed? No! Not at all, because what he was presenting to them was God Himself. The theme that is at the heart of Paul’s letter is that these Galatian Christians were departing from the true gospel to a different gospel. How did Paul present this? In Galatians 1:6 we have it:

“I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel.”

He is not saying that you are turning from the grace of Christ to a different gospel, but that you are turning from HIM

to a different gospel. “Him” very clearly refers to Christ. “From Him” is directly contrasted with “to a different gospel”. Yes, we were called in the grace of Christ but we were called to Him. The Galatians were turning away from the Lord Jesus Himself to a different gospel. This is the seriousness of the situation. They were departing from the Living God to a system of man’s religion.

To rectify this deadly departure Paul expands on how the law is unable to justify anyone in the sight of God and amazingly contrasts law with faith; not law with grace as first springs to mind. There are 25 references to law in the letter to Galatians, 20 references to faith and 7 references to grace. This is quite telling, especially when considering at what points these words intersect. A summary of Paul’s argument can be seen in Galatians 2:16:

“Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ...”

Galatians 3:2,5,11,12,23 and 24 also give a direct contrast between law and faith. The seven references to grace in Galatians (chapters 1:3,6,15; 2:9,21; 5:4; and 6:18) speak of the divine influence upon the heart. It can be clearly deduced that the frustration of God’s influence upon the heart is directly linked to a turning away from Christ. This is what the Galatians were doing by returning to the weak and beggarly elements from which they had once been freed.

Now let us look at three things:

- 1) The gospel in relation to Paul.
- 2) The gospel in relation to what is no gospel at all.
- 3) The gospel in relation to the Galatians.

1) Paul clearly considers it very important to tell the Galatians how he came to have the gospel. He makes it very clear that the gospel was not preached to him according to man, he did not receive it from man, nor was he taught it, but that it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ. The word revelation means disclosure, appearing, or manifestation. Basically what Paul is saying is that the revealing of Jesus Christ was the gospel coming to him.

We know Paul’s story of having persecuted the church. He was blind in those days, all he could see was people who were not walking the same religious way that he was, and, being so zealous for the traditions of his fathers he thought he was doing God a service by killing the Christians. It is significant that when the Lord

Jesus appeared to Paul He asked, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?” (Acts 9:4). The Lord saw Saul’s hatred of the church as being directed at Him. By extension, can it not be said that the misrepresentation of the gospel as we see it today also has a direct impact upon the person of our Lord? Should we not care?

However, Saul, the enemy of Christ,

To rectify this deadly departure, Paul expands on how the law is unable to justify anyone in the sight of God, and amazingly contrasts law with faith; not law with grace as first springs to mind.

became His friend and indeed bondservant by a revelation of Jesus Christ. The Galatians also had received a revelation of Jesus Christ (Galatians 3:1) albeit of a different order than that of Paul (see 1 Corinthians 15:8) but now were departing from Him who had called them.

Paul went on to say that it pleased God to reveal His Son in him that he might preach Him amongst the Gentiles. Compare Galatians 1:11 and 1:16 remembering that the context of this passage deals with the nature and origin of the gospel that Paul was preaching. Paul was not being called to preach a method of salvation but to preach Him who had been revealed to him. This was Paul’s gospel!

It is good to remember what he said in 1 Corinthians 1:23:

“But we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness.”

Paul preached Christ. For Him to live was Christ, to die was gain. His focus in all that he said, did and preached was Christ. Paul knew that our response of faith to God and God’s influence upon our hearts would follow as a consequence of proclaiming Christ.

Consider what is being preached today (if there is any preaching that is). Often mental gymnastics are necessary to

grasp the unconsolidated concepts which are presented, whereas we are told in Colossians 1: 17 that in Christ all things consist i.e. hold together. Is it not better to preach Christ and all other things will find their right balance in the light of Him?

2) In Galatians 1:6 and 7 we read of “a different gospel, which is not another”. Paul contrasts this to the true gospel. Not only was there a “different gospel” being preached in Galatia, but Paul implies that there can be “other” gospels too (1:8). Even angels from heaven who preach anything that is not Christ are to be accursed. Paul indicates that the motive for preaching another gospel may well be the desire to please men (1:10). He makes it very clear that if he still pleased men he would not be a bondservant of Christ. How careful we must be in “this present evil age” not to be deceived. We have seen how both angels and men are able to pervert the gospel of Christ. People can accept these lies and the effects are tragic.

“O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified”.

— Galatians 3:1

Following another gospel is disobedience to the truth and a turning away from Jesus.

3) Now we need to look at the gospel in relation to the Galatians who came to new birth through Paul’s ministry. Paul does not deny that their experience had been genuine, but now they were in a precarious situation. Let us listen to his words, bearing in mind that he is speaking to the Galatians in the context of their departure from the true gospel to a different one:

“I marvel that you are turning so soon from Him who called you...”

— Galatians 1:6

“But now after you have known God, or rather are known by God, how is it that you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements...”

— Galatians 4:9

“I am afraid for you lest I have laboured for you in vain”.

— Galatians 4:11

“My little children, for whom I labour in birth again until Christ is formed in you, I would like to be

present with you now and to change my tone; for I have doubts about you".

— Galatians 4:19-20

"You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace".

— Galatians 5:4

"You ran well. Who hindered you from obeying the truth?"

—Galatians 5:7

Paul's concern was very deep as shows in the strong language he used. He also did not shield the Galatians from knowing the consequences of what they were doing. By attempting to be justified by the law they were becoming estranged from Christ and falling from the reach of "the divine influence upon their hearts". Bewitched as they were, they were not seeing that they were exchanging life for death, promise for bondage and what is from above for what comes from beneath. They were turning away from Him who said:

"I am the Way, the Truth and the Life, no man comes to the Father except by Me".

— John 14:6

Not only had some in Galatia forsaken Christ but they had departed from the experience that is to be ours in Christ. Which is so beautifully portrayed in this letter:

- The Lord Jesus calls us by His grace to Himself (1:6).
- God reveals His Son to us and in us (1:12, 16).
- We are justified by faith in Jesus Christ (2:16).
- We have been crucified with Christ (2:20).
- Christ lives in us (2:20).
- We live by the faith of the Son of God (2:20).
- He supplies His Spirit to us by the hearing of faith (3:2).
- We are sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus (3:26).
- His Spirit in our hearts cries "Abba father" (4:6).
- We can know God! (4:8,9).

Isn't this wonderful! Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law... that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith (Galatians 3:13-14). This promise by faith in Jesus Christ is given to those who believe (Galatians 3:22). By this promise we enter into all of Christ's good.

That is why Paul exhorts the believers to "walk in the Spirit" – the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, who has been sent by the Lord Jesus to testify of Him (John 15:26).

This Holy Spirit, the Comforter, who the Father has sent in Jesus' name will teach us all things and bring to our remembrance all things that Jesus has said to us (John

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14:26). The Lord Jesus told us that it is to our advantage that He go away (John 16:7) as then He can send us the Holy Spirit who may abide with us forever (John 14:16-20). When the Holy Spirit is come the Lord Jesus said, "At that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me and I in you". The dawning of that day in our lives dispels all doubts.

Paul knew that "his" gospel (see Rom. 2:16; 16:25 and 2 Tim 2:8) was exactly the same as Christ's gospel (see Romans 1:16; 15:19 and Philippians 1:27) and what this gospel could do in the lives of those who would obey it. He was called to proclaim Christ Jesus the Lord and to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ among the Gentiles. Is this the gospel we are hearing today? Is this the gospel we are obeying?

"And having been perfected He (Christ) became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him".

— Hebrews 5:9

Paul's gospel was Christ crucified.

It can be said that the New Testament presentation and reference to the gospel is not merely as the good message of the way or means to salvation but the good message of the source of salvation. There is a fundamental difference between these two, yet even the latter expression has its

limitations.

So many New Testament teachings have become disembodied i.e. have become detached from Christ, or are presented alongside Him as separate things that we need. God's truth is a cohesive whole and Christ is all we need. Indeed it is being in the least short-sighted to focus on any means that we may think God works by and not on God Himself. When a parched man in a desert finds an oasis he will not spend much time admiring the beauty of the palm trees, but will savour and delight in the life giving water that is found there.

It stands to reason that it is necessary to tell those seeking life-giving water how to find it. Or, if they do not understand their malady to tell them what it is and that there is a remedy for their ill. Always remembering that this remedy is a Person — Christ Jesus the Lord, Himself.

These days so many words have been emptied of their meaning, or the original meaning has been lost. Often we have heard it said that the gospel is the message of salvation, but the full impact of these words usually misses today's generation. As the gospel cannot be separated from the person of the Lord Jesus, salvation cannot either. Let us finish with the words of aged Simeon in the temple when the Lord Jesus was only eight days old:

"Simeon took the Child Jesus up in his arms and blessed God and said: "Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation which you have prepared before the face of all peoples, a light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel".

— Luke 2:28-32

What did Simeon see? He saw the Child Jesus and the Holy Spirit who was upon him showed him that it was this One who was God's salvation to all the peoples of the earth.

May our eyes ever rest upon Him who is the author and finisher of our faith. Amen.

About the Author

OLYMPIA BARCZYNSKA was born in England of Polish parents. She was born again in 1984 while in the midst of her Geography degree course at Cambridge. Since then she has had one desire to follow the Lord Jesus and make Him known, and has been involved in many types of Christian work in many countries. At the moment she lives in Leeds and has fellowship with Christians in the Yorkshire area.

— KINGDOM COSTS —

Treasure and Pearl

FOURTH IN A SERIES ON THE MATTHEW 13 KINGDOM PARABLES

By PHILIP L. POWELL

"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field; which when a man had found, he hid, and with joy sold all that he had, and bought that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it."

— Matthew 13:44–46

THE four parables considered in the past three articles, were connected in some way to the agricultural scene — the sower, the wheat and tares, the mustard seed and the leaven in meal, which is the end product of grain.

Now, in the next 2 parables, Jesus switches to the world of trade and commerce. To give it a modern flavour He talks about gold mining and pearl diving or gem valuing. The following is the scenario of the first story:

Equipped with his metal detector, a person sets out to discover his fortune. He happens upon a particular field, which is in the ownership of someone else, and in his detecting, suddenly, to his utter amazement, makes an incredible find. The gold nugget is bigger and more valuable than he ever dreamed possible.

But then comes the dilemma. The discovery is his, but the field belongs to someone else. He can't remove the treasure unless he buys the field. With controlled excitement, so as not to give the game away, he makes his way home and calculates his assets. He has just enough to buy the field providing he liquidates all he owns. Willingly and with joy he sells everything, buys the field and so owns the treasure.

The second story is similar, and reinforces the first. The only differences are that this time it's a merchant, not a gold seeker, and it's a pearl of great price, not a treasure in a field. The end result is the same. The discoverer, with eagerness and joy, sells everything that he owns to buy the pearl of great price. Jesus said, 'That's what the kingdom of heaven is like'.

A point of interpretation

Now it's at this point that we can so easily get confused. Jesus didn't say that the kingdom of heaven is like treasure, or like a pearl. He said the kingdom of heaven is like discovered treasure or a pearl that is bought with the gross product of the sale of a person's total possessions. So the debate that has raged as to whether the pearl represents Christ, or the church is irrelevant. Depending on the application it can be either.

From the initiating and divine standpoint, the Son of God traded everything — His glory, position, power and even His own life — to gain the kingdom, and that kingdom involves His church—you and me! As the apostle so marvellously expresses it:

"For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich."

— 2 Corinthians 8:9

Equally, from the receptive and human standpoint, when Christ, who is both the centre and substance of the kingdom, reveals to us the inestimable worth of His person, we must be prepared to trade everything to gain Him.

The other two parables of the man, who built a tower and the two kings, who went to war against each other, also bring these two ideas together.

"And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said to them, If any man comes to me, and does not hate his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whoever does not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple. For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first, and count the cost, whether he has sufficient to finish it? Lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that see it begin to mock him, Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish. Or what king, going to make war

against another king, does not sit down first, and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him that comes against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is yet a long way off, he sends an ambassador, and asks conditions of peace. So likewise, whoever of you that does not forsake all that he has, he cannot be my disciple"

— Luke 14:25-33

From God's perspective, Jesus is the builder and warrior King who will see the job right through to the end, but, and here's the application to us, He enlists only those who are prepared to 'forsake all' (c/f vs 26, 27 & 33) as He Himself did.

The missing message

Unfortunately, this truth of the cost of the kingdom has been one of the great lacks in the modern church. We have bought the idea that God changes the message to suit society. One of the cloaks to this lie has been a mistaken notion about the Greek word "rhema". I've heard it said that the "rhema" of the day is no longer the old fashioned gospel of repentance and counting the cost. Now, they claim, the RHEMA is faith or prosperity or miracles or whatever. This is a complete misconception, as well as being a total distortion of the meaning of the Greek word "rhema", and it ends in a perversion of the Gospel.

The argument goes something like this—"Rhema and Logos express different ideas in the Greek New Testament. Both are usually translated as "word" but the rhema word is the inspired word, whereas the logos word is the written word. What we need is the added inspiration of the Holy Spirit to quicken the already inspired word of God so we know what God is emphasising in our time." The conclusion is that "logos" is dead, passive and irrelevant whereas "rhema" is vibrant, alive and relevant.

While this may be a simplistic explanation of this totally fallacious argument it's a fair summary and explains the dilemma that we face in the Church. False teachers

such as Tommy Tenny build their heretical ideas about the Scriptures being dusty love letters on this type of argument. Men such as Yonggi Cho, Kenneth Copeland, Oral Roberts, Benny Hinn and the late Kenneth Hagin, the father of the “Word-Faith” heresy, do the same thing. I say “totally fallacious” because it is just that both in premise and in extension. Any careful New Testament word study will show that frequently the two words — *rhema* and *logos* — are used interchangeably in the Scripture to express identical ideas. Far from being inert and ineffective “*logos*”, as used in the New Testament, is powerful, effective, even demonstrative.

The centurion who asked Jesus to heal his paralysed servant appealed to the agency of the “*logos*” (not “*rhema*”) of Christ when he said “*Speak the word (logos) only, and my servant shall be healed*” (Matthew 8:8). In the same chapter we read of Jesus that, “*He cast out the spirits with His word (logos), and healed all that were sick*” (verse 16). The New Testament bears abundant testimony to the fact that God’s Word is always full of life and power. The use of *logos* or its synonym *rhema* is irrelevant to this particular issue:

“For the word (logos) of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”

— Hebrews 4:12

“So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word (rhema) of God.”

— Romans 10:17

It is incorrect to say as some do that “*logos*” refers to the passive (recorded) word of God and “*rhema*” refers to the active (spoken) word of God. On the contrary both *logos* and *rhema* are equally applied to the written and spoken Word of God or of Christ as the following references prove:

“But He answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word (rhema) that proceeds out of the mouth of God.”

— Matthew 4:4

“Therefore whoever hears these sayings (logos) of mine, and does them, I will liken him unto a wise man, who built his house upon a rock.”

— Matthew 7:24

Some say that “*rhema*” always means the quickened or inspired Word of God. However this is clearly not the case:

“Blessed are you, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil (poneros rhema = literally “every evil word”) against you falsely, for my sake.”

— Matthew 5:11

“But I say to you, that every idle word (rhema) that men shall speak, they shall give account of it in the Day of Judgment. For by your words (logos) you shall be justified, and by your words (logos) you shall be condemned.”

— Matthew 12:36-37

Here the two Greek synonyms are used interchangeably, both being translated to the one English “word”. The idle *rhema* is what Christ warns about as being the *logos*, which will condemn us in “the day of judgment.”

Acts 6:11 and 13 twice refer to “*blasphemous words (rhema)*”, which quite clearly could not be inspired by the Holy Spirit. Paul applies “*rhema*” to the cleansing effect of the Word of God upon His people while Jesus uses “*logos*” to describe the same work and end result:

“That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word (rhema)”

— Ephesians 5:26

“Now you are clean through the word (logos) which I have spoken unto you.”

— John 15:3

So quite clearly there are occasions when *logos* and *rhema* are used interchangeably. As in all cases of correct interpretation, the test that must be applied is the test of context. No word, no matter what the language, has an absolute meaning. There will be nuances and shades of meaning that relate to the correct definition of the actual word, but in the final analysis we will arrive at the true meaning only when we take careful note of the context.

In the Pentecostal and charismatic pursuit of the idea that the message can be varied to suit the time, there has been a tragic omission of spelling out the costs involved in obtaining the kingdom. As I once heard that graphic Argentinean preacher, Juan Carlos Ortiz, put it, “We have turned the church into a ‘bless me’ club. We have become the lords and turned Jesus into our servant. We say, ‘Jesus, you heal me... Jesus bless me... give me, give me, give me’. Then Jesus turns and asks, ‘Eh, who’s in charge here. Who is the Lord?’”

It’s a false gospel that invites you along for what you can get out of it - free salvation and diamonds and dollars along the way. Oh yes, there are temporal, as well

as eternal benefits. The free gift of everlasting life and 100 fold of all that you give up in this life but that’s not the motivation. The motivation must be the inestimable worth, the infinite value, of gaining the kingdom, which from our perspective is the person of Jesus, the lovely Son of God, for He is the centre and circumference of the kingdom of heaven.

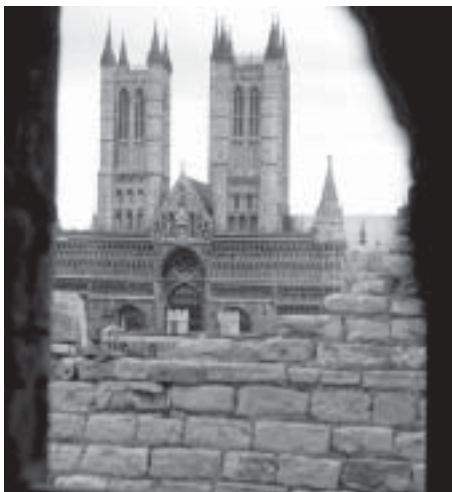
When you discover that treasure, that pearl of great price, you immediately ask the question, ‘Can I buy it?’ And the simple answer is, ‘Yes, you can buy it. Everyone can buy it!’ ‘How much will it cost?’ ‘Everything — simply everything!’ Now I’m not talking about giving everything away. I’m talking about making everything available should the Lord demand it.

Once, a lady asked us to give her our home. We didn’t, because it wasn’t the Lord who asked for it and really it was not ours. The bank owned a large part of it. But more importantly we were only stewards and the real owner hadn’t given us permission to give it away. If He had we would have. All our married life our home has been available; it’s not ours, it’s His. We’re just stewards. The same thing applies to our car, or anything else for that matter. And when you start seeing things this way, it takes away both pressures — the pressure of having and the pressure of wanting.

There’s nothing wrong with having nice things — far better to have good things than bad things. Yet some Christians have a guilt complex about the value of the things they possess. Providing those things are lightly held and at the Lord’s disposal, there’s nothing wrong. On the other hand, there are some “Christian” people who have a complex of covetousness, for the things they don’t have. They have succumbed to the pressure of wanting.

The fact is, ‘*One’s life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses*’ (Luke 12:15) - little or a lot. The issue is availability. To gain the kingdom of God you’ve got to recognise that He (Jesus) is worth more than all you personally are and all that you own. Further, you have to make yourself and your talents and possessions totally available to Him. In the words of Matthew 16:24, you have to ‘deny’, literally, ‘disown’ yourself, take up your cross and follow Him. It is only by this means that you can buy the field and thus possess the treasure. There is no other way by which you can ever hope to gain the pearl of great price.

NEXT: ‘THE DRAGNET — WHO SELECTS THE FISH?’



Peter and the Perils threatening the Church

From *GATHERING THE FAITHFUL REMNANT* available in paperback, on audio and video from CWM Australia.

By **AERON MORGAN**

"But there were false prophets among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who stealthily bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their destructive ways; by reason of whom evil shall be spoken of the way of truth. And through covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words whose long time judgment does not linger, and their destruction does not slumber. For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved to judgment; And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly; And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned them to destruction, making them an example to those that came after should live ungodly..."

—2 Peter 2:1-6

THE Apostle Peter is conscious of his approaching departure, and writes to those whom he has described as the "elect" (1 Peter 1:2), concerned for them as he seeks to prepare them for the future. His purpose was to strengthen them in view of the dangers that threatened the church from within. His first words were a reminder of the great principles of preservation. He assures them who are "of like precious faith" that all things pertaining to life and godliness are granted through the knowledge of Him who called them by His glory and virtue (2 Peter 1:3). Believers are called to earnest discipline in the development of their spiritual life.

But then he turns to the perils that he saw as a threat to the church, and two are referred to: (i) false teachers, and (ii) a materialisation of mind that follows on from such false teaching. He describes the false teaching as "destructive heresies". In an hour when we are seeing such an escalation of heresies plaguing the church it is time that God's servants and the people recognise what Peter teaches here, that false teaching leads to false conduct. The idea is father of the deed. To excuse false teaching is sheer and careless irresponsibility, and leaders who do so stand condemned before God as unfaithful shepherds. They dishonour the Chief Shepherd, and have little loving respect or true concern for the flocks they have been appointed over. It is a violation of their sacred trust. Peter emphasises this charge in his first letter:

"I exhort the elders which are among you, I who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for dishonest gain, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, you will receive a crown of glory that does not fade away."

—1 Peter 5:1-4

The office of the pastor is twofold: to attend or feed the flock, and to maintain a watchful oversight. They are not there to fulfil their own agendas, and certainly not to "fleece" the people. These things characterize the hireling. Whilst the overseers had a right to expect material support from those to whom they ministered in spiritual things, their motive should never be from

a "constitutional love of gain" which is "a disqualification for the Christian ministry".¹ There is no place for self-exaltation here, or for any arrogant domination of God's people. They are to serve them humbly in Christ's name, solely for Christ's sake, and ever with Christ's loving and sacrificial disposition. They must serve with an eye to the Day of accountability when they shall stand before the Chief Shepherd.

The shepherd's duty might well be described as threefold: (a) to provide pasture; (b) to prepare paths to the pasture; and (c) to provide protection along the way. Whilst a heavy load of responsibility will be upon the pastor to teach and preach, his ministry is not restricted to those vital elements. He is to WATCH the flock. He is to GUARD the flock. He is to GUIDE the flock in glad and implicit obedience to their Lord's sovereign will. The people do not exist for his pleasure but for that of their Lord and Master. How pastors should be motivated by these two truths: it is the flock of God, His peculiar property; it is God's heritage — see Isaiah 40:11, Ezekiel 34:11-14, 31, John 10:27-29.

How well the old Scottish puritan preacher, John Brown, describes the attitude of the true pastor and the sense of immense privilege to be called to such a high office, as he inquires:

"Should we not count it a great honour, and feel it a most responsible trust, to have those who stand in so close a relation to God, in whom He takes so peculiar an interest, committed to our care? Should we not care for those for whom He cares? Should we not watch for those for whom His Son died?"²

¹ Nathaniel Williams, "Commentary on the Epistles of Peter"; Philadelphia: The American Baptist Publication Society, 1890; p. 68.

² John Brown, "1 Peter: Vol 2" (Geneva Series); Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, first Banner edition 1975; p. 463.

What are the perils Peter warns about?

1. The Presence of False Teachers.

Peter is categorical about this. “*There SHALL BE false teachers among you*”. As in former days there were false prophets, so we are warned to be ever alert to their activity in the present-day church. There is need to be able to discern such bogus men, impostors as Jude also refers to them (Jude 4). There is great need to differentiate between the true and the false. John also warned of their presence and evil activities (1 John 2:18-25). Leaders appear to be too blasé about them, as though such men could not affect THEM and their people! They fail to see what great damage they can cause, thus fail in the matter of watchfulness. Peter tells of their reality and coming so that God’s people might be on their guard, taking heed, watching and praying so that they might not be drawn away to such men.

2. The Deviousness of their Activities

“...false prophets...who secretly bring in destructive heresies”. That is, secretly, like a traitor in the camp, bringing into the church teachings that are erroneous and will inevitably harm those who embrace them. These men prey (not pray!) on existing congregations for adherents. They are always subtle in the way they get among the flock, as well as the way in which they gain a hearing for their heresies. They don’t advertise themselves as false, nor do they suggest that their teachings may not be acceptable. On the contrary, they appeal for an acceptance of their integrity and the soundness of what they teach. In fact, they often warn those who have doubts about them and their message that they can come to great harm by God’s judgment should they question and reject them. They cannot stand the criticism of being put to scriptural test, and often label that as “touching God’s anointed”. Nothing is more reprehensible. Men who use such threatening language condemn themselves and manifest their own dishonesty and spiritual poverty.

But they will come protesting they are bringing the true Gospel, and will be very plausible in how they present their views. Subtlety marks their approach, their appeal, and their aims. It is the most perilous aspect of error when it parades itself as the truest truth, using its language and professing to be at one with it! J.C. Ryle recognised that as pastor of the flock of God he had a responsibility to guard Christ’s sheep and to warn them whenever he saw approaching dangers. Though min-

istering in England over a century ago, his writings deal with permanently relevant topics. You would think that he was present among us and addressing the serious inroad of heresies in our day. His compendium of papers, entitled *Warnings to the Churches*, ought to be read and re-read prayerfully and carefully by every minister

It was the vision
of people
coming into a
personal faith in
the Lord Jesus Christ
and then growing
in the grace
and knowledge
of Him.

of Christ. They form a truly prophetic message for all generations. In one of the articles he penetratingly comments:

“There is a silly readiness in every direction to believe everybody who talks cleverly, lovingly, and earnestly, and a determination to forget that Satan is often ‘transformed into an angel of light’ (2 Corinthians 11:14). There is a widespread ‘gullibility’ among professing Christians: every heretic who tells his story plausibly is sure to be believed, and everybody who doubts him is called a persecutor and a narrow-minded man. All these are peculiar symptoms of our times. I defy any observing man to deny them. They tend to make the assaults of false doctrine in our day peculiarly dangerous. They make it more than ever needful to cry aloud, ‘Be not carried about’.”³

False teachers are devious, and are sure to attract a crowd. But it must never be assumed that the popularity of such men and of their teachings makes them right. And one of the saddest statements in support of some of the current false prophets and their teachings is, “Well, our leaders accept him (and it)... They are good men, and surely they can’t all be wrong...” The fact is, good men CAN be wrong. And the majority CAN be wrong, see 2 Chronicles 18:3-8. It did not seem that Micahiah

stood a chance against the word of Ahab’s four hundred prophets, but they were WRONG. This makes it all the more crucial that every one of us should be watchful of such false men and their poisonous teachings, especially those called to be “watchmen”. With reference to Ahab, note the “check” in Jehoshaphat’s spirit, doubting the prophets’ consensus, and requesting that another prophet be sought – a true prophetic voice (c/f verse 6). Don’t ignore that “check” (Jeremiah 6:17)! If the people are not quickly discerning, the watchmen ought to be, so that when they perceive such false men in the midst they have a duty to “sound an alarm”.

It appears that one of the reasons for the lack of discernment in the church today is the reluctance to take a definitive stand on any issue. It does not seem to be appreciated that men can hold strong convictions, even though such have evident biblical support. One is supposed to be tolerant, and hold his own beliefs with as much slack as possible. Zeal for the truth has become politically incorrect; dogmatism is impermissible.

3. The Evil Nature of False Doctrine

Peter refers to the false teachings as “DAMNABLE heresies (KJV)”. That’s very strong language, but it faithfully describes such teachings. It is foolishness for pastors to play down the nature and consequence of false teachings. The Greek word *apoleia* is then translated “pernicious” in verse 2. The word is presumably from *apollumi* meaning to destroy fully; to utterly ruin.⁴ Such teachings do not end in spiritual gain and maturity and sanctity, but in total spiritual loss. Thayer defines this word as meaning, “to put out of the way entirely; to abolish, put an end to”.⁵

How solemn this is. Damnable heresies lead to damnable ways. You can see why false doctrine is a prime tool of the devil in his endeavour to create division and prevent an effective proclamation of the true Gospel, teachings that are the enemy of all righteousness and true holiness. Error may well be attractive but it can never address the vital issues that make for salvation and sanctification. One of the deceptions associated with modern heresies is the claim that there is “good fruit” associated with them. This is a contradiction of Scripture, and in the ultimate those who promote and those who trust these

⁴ See *Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, under Greek lexicon references 622 and 684.

⁵ Joseph Thayer, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, reprint 1977; p. 64.

³ J.C. Ryle, “Warnings to the Churches”; Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, reprint 1992, p.77.

errors will prove to have been utterly deluded and spiritually desolate.

4. The Essence of the False Teachings Peter refers to

There are two elements to these teachings, which the apostle alludes to: (i) *“even denying the Lord that bought them”*. The false prophet, of course, is more subtle than to come out with a clear and forthright denial of fundamental truth having to do with the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Rather, his teaching avoids the centrality of Christ and the absolute necessity of His cross work. He is taken with other pleasant and appealing themes — and there are many of them today, including the “prosperity gospel”, the “good self-image” message, the “we are gods” teaching, the humanistic “need-centred gospel”. They are all pleasant messages, always “comforting”, to make people feel good. The false prophet speaks *“smooth things”* which the people love to hear (Jeremiah 5:31). Such a “prophet” is going to be dishonest, for he professes to be a servant of the Most High but in reality serves the enemy — and *“his own belly”* (Romans 16:18). He will even append his signature in token of subscribing to the fellowship’s statement of faith; yet in reality he teaches doctrines that are in conflict with it. There is an appalling lack of integrity with leaders.

Isaiah said it is a rebellious people who clamour for this kind of preaching and teaching. They say, *“Do not prophesy to us right things, speak to us smooth things, prophesy deceits...”* (Isaiah 30:10). It seems hardly credible that people should prefer error to truth. It is surprising how people ardently defend false teaching even when they are shown from the Scriptures how wrong they are, teaching that leads them away from Christ not to Him. Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones said,

“Whatever teaching a man may have to offer to you, if the Christ on Calvary’s Cross is not the central pivot at the heart of it, I say he is a false prophet and a false teacher. And no one can give hope, either to the individual or to the world today, who is not centred absolutely upon that atonement. He is a false prophet and teacher.”⁶

Peter then mentions something else about the false teachers. With them, he says, (ii) *“evil shall be spoken of the way of truth”*. Is not this an astonishing statement? False teachers purport to be teaching the people *“the way of truth”*. This

refers to the true Gospel, which is the doctrine of saving truth. Peter reveals that the teaching of these false men is not sound saving faith but a travesty of it, a blasphemous imitation. It’s the devil spreading his perverse lies in the church. He even attaches scripture passages to his lies, so as to beguile unwary souls. He disguises falsehood as truth and makes evil look good. Did he not use this ploy in

If the Christ on Calvary’s Cross is not the central pivot at the heart of it ... he is a false prophet and a false teacher.

the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness (see Matthew 4:6)? But Jesus saw through his deceptive stratagem, and answered him by the Truth of God’s Word. That is the only way to combat error — by knowing and using the Truth. The best safeguard against false doctrine is the Bible, to read it regularly, pray over it, imbibe its revelation through the Holy Spirit, study it and get a firm grasp on its doctrines.

The tragedy is that so many people in our churches are biblically illiterate. They have only a superficial knowledge of the scriptures at best, and so become easy prey to these marauding wolves, these religious predators. They are open to receive such satanic deceptions, duped by teachings they refuse to question because they *“love to have it so”*. Matthew Henry says, “Men drink in iniquity like water, and are pleased to live in error”.⁷ Incredible! “A Bible-reading laity is the strength of a church”, said J.C. Ryle.⁸

He further said,

“If we would not be carried about by ‘diverse and strange doctrines,’ we must remember the word of our Lord Jesus Christ: ‘Search the Scriptures’. Ignorance of the Bible is the root of all error. Knowledge of the Bible is the best antidote against modern heresies.”⁹

Without any doubt, when biblical and doctrinal understanding decline, real discernment becomes impossible.

But something further is prompted to our attention by these words of Peter. *“The way of truth is evil spoken of”* by the world around, as they see the falsity of these men. They see their motivation as one that is driven by financial gain, and thus are ready to speak out against the gospel — the kind of gospel as is represented by the false teachers. Peter confirms that these false men are motivated by covetousness (verse 3) and are engaged in *“making merchandise of God’s people”*. Is not this incredible, that whilst in the church there are those who are swayed by these charlatans, the world looks on and sees through them! They bring the Gospel into disrepute. Sadly, people are turned against the gospel by the evil of these hypocritical preachers. Many men and women are harder to reach with the true gospel afterwards when they have been put off by such “false gossellers”.

5. False Prophets will always have a following

This is their desire, and must be seen as part of this wrong motivation — *“many shall follow their destructive ways”*. This is part of their “gain”, to draw disciples after them (c/f Acts 20:30). That renowned Scottish preacher, Robert Murray M’Cheyne, wrote in his diary:

“I see a man cannot be a faithful minister, until he preaches Christ for Christ’s sake — until he gives up striving to attract people to himself, and seeks only to attract them to Christ. Lord, give me this!”¹⁰

O, to learn this, and learn it well. How often we have pondered how that good men have found it a hard struggle to gain the attention of people to their sound teaching, yet some charlatan emerges and draws away the big crowds after him. Their success is sometimes seen by some to validate them, but this is a fallacy. Jesus Himself found that whilst He performed His miracles, and people were materially and physically benefiting from His ministry, there were always crowds in attendance. Once He came to solidly teach them, with the revelation of Himself as to WHO He was, and WHAT His mission on earth was from the Father, the crowd dissipated until He was left with “the Twelve” (John 6:66-69). He not only experienced that, but He clearly exhorts us to,

⁶ Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *“An Exposition of 2 Peter”*; Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1983. p.131

⁷ Matthew Henry, *“Commentary on the Whole Bible”*, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1991, p.2437.

⁸ op cit, p.78

⁹ ibid, p.79.

¹⁰ Andrew Bonar, *“Memoir and Remains of R.M.M’Cheyne”*; London: Banner of Truth Trust, reprint from the 1892 edition 1966, p. 45.

"Enter in at the narrow gate: for the gate is wide, and broad is the way, that leads to destruction, and many there are that go in through it; because narrow is the gate, and narrow is the way, that leads to life, and there are few that find it."

—Matthew 7:13-14

And in a most striking connection Jesus follows on in His teaching to speak a word of warning in respect of FALSE PROPHETS who present themselves in "sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are rapacious wolves" (verses 15-23). Theirs is truly a "broad way" and MANY flock therein. It is dangerous to follow the fashion and swim with the stream of those whose personalities are appealing and whose teachings are popular and commonly agreeable. Admitted this is NOT an easy thing to stand out as being different from the majority when they are being carried away by these men. It's not easy to go against the flow. But this is what we must do if we are to be preserved from error and destruction.

Let us not forget that the doctrines of repentance and faith in Christ alone, and of holiness of life as a divine requirement, have never been fashionable. All teachings must be weighed in the balance of Holy Scripture (Isaiah 8:20). The Word of God is given to us to be a "lamp to our feet, and a light to our path" (Psalm 119:105). The more we are in it, seeking the illumination of the Holy Spirit, the less we will err from the way of truth. The less we know the Word the more we will lean upon others for their "opinions" and be "carried away with diverse and strange doctrines". It is not humility to pretend we have no settled convictions on biblical and doctrinal matters, thus prepared to receive from others an understanding of spiritual things. This is dangerous, and it is such indifference and slothfulness that is fertile ground for false men to gain followers.

False teachers not only have a following because of the kind of ministry they offer, but also the manner in which it is presented. It is smooth, subtle, and charming! How many of the modern attitudes and procedures in worship services are utterly irreverent. Church is said to be fun, to the point that men indulge in blasphemous conduct and conversation. It seems that the way to win people is by humour, jokes, antics, and all manner of freakish behaviour. Their words never gender any awe of God, but the very opposite. It is sad to hear people say how much they "love" certain preachers – because "they are funny". It is really an irreverent attitude to truth and a gross lack of "the fear of the Lord".

That is why Peter further describes these false teachers, in verse 10: "...they walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. They are presumptuous, self-willed, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignitaries".

6. False Prophets are motivated by desire for self-gain

Verse 3 – "And through covetousness they shall exploit you with deceptive

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words". These false men are not just out for a "following" but for "financial gain". When you get away from a Christ-centred life and ministry, when you give no heed to His Lordship, you become self-centred, self-interested, self-promoting, and self-indulgent. Peter saw such men in his day as we see them in our day as living in luxury. The word "covetousness", Gk. *pleonexia* implies "a greedy desire to have more". It is an avaricious spirit. A.T. Robertson commented, "These licentious Gnostics made money out of their dupes".¹¹ That is so prevalent in our times. Every service in many churches and conferences has an emphasis on money. Much time is spent before receiving offerings on "encouraging" the people to give, using scriptures (often out of their context) to enforce the plea for generosity.

Peter says the false prophets do this with "FEIGNED words", (Gk. *plastois logois*). This is the only place in the New Testament where this word is found, and is from a word meaning "to mould, as in clay or wax". M.R. Vincent says that the idea is "of words moulded at will to suit their imaginations".¹² It is evident that these men are as those whom Paul de-

scribes in 2 Timothy 3, who will arise "in the last days" (verse 1). He says of them: "But evil men and impostors shall grow worse and worse, DECEIVING, and being DECEIVED" (verse 13). That is truly an apt description of them.

First, they are said to be "EVIL men". The word is *poneros*, which refers to these men as being of essentially depraved character, malicious in their activity, such that causes harm. It is the word used by Jesus to describe Satan in the parable of the Sower (Matthew 13:19), a "wicked one" who comes and by force catches away the seed sown into the heart.

Second, Paul calls them by their correct name, "impostors". This is a very revealing and significant term. The word is *goes*, which denotes a wailer, and has the idea of the howl in which spells were chanted; hence a wizard, sorcerer, or enchanter – a cheat! Paul earlier (verse 8) refers to them as being like Jannes and Jambres, magicians of the court of Pharaoh who resisted Moses. Jewish tradition holds that they pretended to convert to Judaism in order to subvert the Divine mission Moses was engaged in to liberate the Israelites from Egyptian slavery, and that they were involved in the making and worshipping of the golden calf whilst Moses was in the Mount communing with God. The tradition further says that they were slaughtered by the Levites along with other idolaters (see Exodus 32). This is a feasible representation in the context of Paul's warning to Timothy.

Reference to such impostors is also to warn of men performing supernatural feats. Jannes and Jambres professed to perform signs and wonders. The supposed incidence of supernatural acts in certain meetings does not authenticate the "miracle-worker" as being of God. Note again Jesus' warning in Matthew 7:21-23. We are not to take such men at face value, accept their revelations, and be drawn in to send them our generous offerings! Jesus went on to say, "Therefore (that now links the following words of Jesus to what has just preceded in His qualifying remarks about false prophets), whoever hears these saying of Mine, and does them (believingly and obediently acts upon them), I will liken him to a wise man who built his house upon a rock...and it did not fall" (verses 24-25). We must be discerning of these fraudulent men. We must put them and their teachings to test, as outlined in the scriptures.¹³ Jesus said it is utter folly to ignore this warning.

¹¹ Quoted by Kenneth S. Wuest, "Word Studies – In These Last Days"; Grand Rapids: Wm.B.Eerdmans Publishing Co., eighth printing 1972, p.48.

¹² M.R. Vincent, "Word Studies in the New Testament: Vol I; McLean, VG: Macdonald Publishing Co., reprint, n.d.; p.690

¹³ For a scriptural approach to this essential exercise, read "The Biblical Testing of Teachings and Manifestations" (copies obtainable from CWM or direct from the author, Aeron Morgan).

Third, it reveals that there is something wilful about the deceptions of these false prophets as they pervert the Word of God. They know what they are doing, for their malignant activity arises from their covetous heart. And it leads to those very men themselves becoming ensnared by their own devices, hence being deceived and proceeding from bad to worse. It is as though God gives them over to that in which they have deceived others. They are only concerned for what they can derive for themselves out of their “ministry”. So they invent all kinds of plausible teachings, ideas that arise from their imagination NOT revelation of the truth of God’s Word. When one attention grabber has done its round and is losing its effectiveness, then they spawn some other fascinating contrivance to maintain the interest and support of those whom they have duped. It might well be termed “a new revelation” but it is merely “feigned words”. These are charlatans and swindlers who are said by Paul to be “*men of corrupt minds, worthless concerning the faith*” (2 Timothy 3:8).

Furthermore, Peter reveals that in their covetousness and by such cunning fabrications, these fakes “*seek to make merchandise (emporeusontai) of you*”. It is exploitation of the worse kind, for it is done to simple-hearted, unwary souls in the name of Christ. Our Lord condemned it in the Temple, using the same term as Peter: “*He said to them that sold doves, Take these things hence: make not My Father’s house a house of merchandise (emporion)*” (John 2:16).¹⁴ The word is that from which we derive our word ‘emporium’, which is a centre of commerce, a market! God’s house had become like a market place. And who does not observe this today, with professed servants of God becoming no more than entrepreneurs as they seek for more and more wealth. They have “*forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam...who loved the wages of unrighteousness*” (2 Peter 2:15).

They are the “shepherds” spoken of in Ezekiel 34, against whom came the prophet with severe words of denunciation from God. Such so-called shepherds fail to fulfil the responsibility to care for God’s people in strengthening the diseased, ministering to the sick, binding up the broken, recovering the backslidden, and seeking the lost. Rather, God says, “*With force and with cruelty you have ruled them*” (verse 4) – little wonder they are scattered (verses 5-6)! Then comes this fearful indictment: “*The shepherds fed themselves, and not*

My flock” (verse 8). God says He will step in and remove those false shepherds, and one day bring them to account. “*I will require My flock at their hand, and cause them to cease from feeding the flock; neither shall the shepherds FEED THEMSELVES any more; for I will deliver My flock FROM THEIR MOUTH, that they may not be food for them*” (verse 10).

Is not this precisely what Peter is warn-

The seeds of self-destruction are in the activities of false prophets ... they appear smart, but they are fools.

ing about? Ought not this to make us as ministers of Christ tremble in the presence of infinite holiness? Dare we take advantage of those over whom we serve as pastors, overseers or elders? Don’t we exist for the benefit of His flock, for THEIR advantage, so that they may know God, learn to fear Him, and be built up strong upon “*their most holy faith, (being) kept in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life*” (Jude 20-21)? O, to emulate the disposition of Paul, jealous to see God’s people retaining their purity of relationship to Christ and growing in the Truth as it is centred in Him, preserved from false men and anchored in the saving Gospel (see 2 Corinthians 11:1-15).

7. False Teachers are Doomed to Swift Destruction

As soon as Peter begins to warn of the activity of false prophets he tells of their speedy demise. Verse 1 – “*(they) bring upon themselves swift destruction*”. This is a solemn word. Peter says that the seeds of self-destruction are in the activities of false prophets. They bring this upon themselves. They appear smart, but they are fools. Those who destroyed others by their pernicious doctrines will themselves be destroyed, and come to a sudden and fearful end. Sometimes it seems that they cannot be stopped. They appear to prosper and continue without hindrance. We may

wonder why it is that God allows them to continue their evil work! Yet the scripture says that they “*bring upon themselves SWIFT destruction*”. The Greek word *tachinen* infers that the judicial act of God in respect of these men is impending and will be executed “in a brief space of time”.¹⁵ It is the same sense in Revelation 1:1, speaking of “*things which must SHORTLY come to pass*” — what takes place will be with rapid succession.

Again Peter says of them (verse 3), “*Whose long time judgment does not linger, and their destruction does not slumber*”. Whilst God is “slow to wrath” it does not mean that He will not exercise justice in respect of these men. There is a moment for their exposure, and when it occurs their demise is sudden and swift. He will surely come to them, and woe to them when He does come! Peter illustrates this necessary act of Divine justice by referring to three biblical incidents where God had no alternative – (i) that of the judgment of God on sinning angels who rebelled with Lucifer; (ii) the people of the ancient world, who refused the gracious warnings of God to turn from their unrighteousness, destroyed by God in the flood in the days of Noah; and (iii) the catastrophic judgment on the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah in the days of Lot, for their unrestrained shamelessness and immoral abandonment.

The end of false teachers is a statement of prophecy — they will be judged. There is no escape, and it will come suddenly upon them. All of God’s judicial acts do not wait for the ultimate universal tribunal. He strikes when He wills. And sadly, it is not only these fraudulent men, but also those who have carelessly yielded to their influences and embraced their pernicious doctrines — they too are bound for judgment. Jesus warned that when the blind lead the blind, both will fall into the ditch (Matthew 15:14).

What a day we are living in! How faithful God is in His warnings to us, and they are such as make us inexcusable. As God’s servants we need to watch over His flock carefully, tending to them as true shepherds. Let us resist the temptation to conform to other men, churches, or denominations so as to be acceptable, or to tolerate false doctrines even among our “brethren” for the sake of peace. Our preaching must ever be for truth’s sake, and to bring honour to Christ. It may not be without its personal cost, but ultimately we do not answer to men but to the “*Chief Shepherd*

¹⁴ The Synoptists say, “*a den of thieves (robbers)*”, Matthew 21:13, Mark 11:17, Luke 19:46.

¹⁵ Strong, op cit., Greek lexicon, under ref. 5031 and 5034

and Overseer of our souls" (1 Peter 2:25; Hebrews 13:17; c/f Galatians 1:10 and 1 Thessalonians 2:4).

Warren W. Wiersbe, in paying tribute to the late Dr A.W. Tozer, in the Introduction to *The Best of Tozer*, a compilation of essays edited by Wiersbe, said of him:

"The entire focus of his preaching and writing was on God. He had no time for religious hucksters who were inventing new ways to promote their wares and inflate their statistics...Tozer marched to a different drummer; and for this reason he was usually out of step with many of the people in the religious parade".¹⁶

Compromise is a fearful sin. Paul predicted in his letter to Timothy, *"the time will come when God's people will not endure sound doctrine"*. This surely means a change of mind and attitude taking place, as a people once ready to hear the Word and to apply it now do not "endure" it. It implies a "falling away". The word "endure" is (Gk) *anecomai*, meaning, "to hold oneself up against". THAT is the truest attitude towards the preached Word. Alas, today we are witnesses of such a change of mind towards the Word of God, as many people no longer listen intently to sound teaching and *"with meekness receive the implanted Word"*.¹⁷ They will not hold themselves up against the preached Word, allowing it to address their heart's need. They do not desire to hear the Truth preached that brings conviction and a stinging rebuke of ungodly behaviour. There is no concern for the spiritual well being of their souls.

Paul says that these people have *"itching ears"*, desirous of hearing only stories, or wanting to be entertained. They are readily taken up with the latest novel ideas. Thus would they *"heap up for themselves teachers"* who would readily respond to their wants, as they turn away from the Truth to fables (myths). Vincent refers to Paul's statement as "vigorous and graphic", commenting on the fact that "in periods of unsettled faith, scepticism, and more curious speculation in matter of religion, teachers of all kinds swarm like the flies in Egypt. The demand creates the supply. The hearers invite and shape their own preachers. If the people desire a calf to worship, a ministerial calf-maker is readily found."¹⁸

Why would people be of that mind? Why knowingly despise and reject the Truth? It seems evident that it is because they love their sin. Divine truth confronts and rebukes all forms of sin, and preachers who are faithful to the Divine charge to *"preach the Word"* will not shun confronting what is wrong and proclaiming what is right, as God has revealed it in His Word. That is never comfortable. That preacher is never

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popular. But what does it matter in the light of that Throne before which we shall stand to give an account? When as a faithful pastor M'Cheyne was going to confront a lady about her spiritual condition, that was a cause of concern to him, he knew it would not be easy. In one of his letters he wrote:

"M.G. lies sore upon my conscience; I did no good to that woman: she always managed to speak of things about the truth. Speak boldly. What matter in eternity the slight awkwardness of time?"¹⁹

In the light of Peter's warning let us as ministers of Christ strive to be faithful to Him who has called us, not seeking man's approbation or any human glory. Let us ensure that we serve the Master in truth, careful and prayerful in respect of our holy and divine stewardship. As Paul says to Timothy:

"...nourished with the words of faith and of good teaching...Give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to teaching...Meditate upon these things: give yourself wholly to them; that your progress may be evident to all (i.e. in all things). Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this you shall both save yourself and those who hear you".

—1 Timothy 4:6 & 13-16

J.C. Ryle pulled no punches in his *Warnings to the Churches*. He knew it, and confessed he was (to use his own words) *"trenching²⁰ on delicate ground"*. His forthrightness is amazing. He stands out for his passion for truth, and utter revulsion of error, for he knew its ultimate end. Many today would not appreciate his advice to those who regularly attend churches where ministers are guilty of not teaching sound doctrine. I conclude with his sobering words:

"I warn then every one who loves his soul, to be very jealous as to the preaching he regularly hears, and the place of worship he regularly attends. He who deliberately settles down under any ministry, which is positively unsound, is a very unwise man. I will never hesitate to speak my mind on this point. I know well that many think it a shocking thing for a man to forsake his parish church. I cannot see with the eyes of such people. I draw a wide distinction between teaching, which is defective and teaching, which is thoroughly false, — between teaching, which errs on the negative side, and teaching which is positively unscriptural.

But I do believe, if false doctrine is unmistakably preached in a parish church, a parishioner who loves his soul is quite right in not going to that parish church. To hear unscriptural teaching fifty-two Sundays in every year is a serious thing. It is a continual dropping of slow poison into the mind. It is almost impossible for a man wilfully to submit himself to it, and not take harm. I see in the New Testament we are plainly told to *"prove all things,"* and *"hold fast that which is good"* (1 Thessalonians 5:21). I see in the Book of Proverbs that we are commanded to *"cease to hear instruction which causes to err from the paths of knowledge"* (Proverbs 19:27). If these words do not justify a man in ceasing to worship at a church, if positively false doctrine is preached in it, I know not what words can."²¹

²⁰ Old English word meaning "encroaching"

²¹ op cit. J.C. Ryle, *"Warnings to the Churches"* p.106-107.

About the Author

AERON MORGAN is well-known as the longest serving principal of the Assemblies of God in Australia National Bible College and pastor of churches in Australia and Great Britain. He was the first General Superintendent of AoG in UK, and now carries out an itinerant lecturing and preaching ministry internationally. He can be contacted at aeromorg@bigpond.com or P.O. Box 309, Wurtulla, Queensland 4575, Australia. Website: www.users.bigpond.com/aeromorg

¹⁶ *"The Best of A.W.Tozer"*; compiled by Warren W. Weirsbe, Harrisburg, PA: Christian Publications, 1978; p.7.

¹⁷ See James 1:20-21.

¹⁸ op. cit. *"Vincent's Word Studies: Vol. IV"*, p.320-321.

¹⁹ Op. cit. Andrew Bonar, *"Memoir and Remains of R.M.M'Cheyne"*; p.50

The church under siege

Social and Prophetic Reflections

Editorial Comment: There is a side issue relating to the homosexual debate that is raging within historic Christendom and that has also surfaced within the more recently established Pentecostal group called AoG – Assemblies of God. My background is AoG and quite frankly I never ever expected to read an article such as that by **Scott Stephens** in *The Courier-Mail* Monday June 9, 2003 (page 13 — reprinted page 19) from a minister within my former denomination.

Amazingly Mr Stephens is touted in that article as “a theologian at Garden City College of Ministries, Mt Gravatt.” This college is linked to one of the largest AoG churches in Australia, called Garden City Christian Church, Mt Gravatt in the city of Brisbane. The major leaders of Assemblies of God in Australia have been contacted about this aberration. So far there has been no comment or action by them as far as we know.

The issue that I refer to is one that CWM has been addressing in our publications since our formation in 1994. Is it time for

genuine Christians – leaders and followers – to respond to the trumpet call of Scripture?

“Wherefore come out from among them, and be separate, saith the Lord, and do not touch the unclean thing; and I will receive you.”

— 2 Corinthians 6:17

“And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that you do not partake of her sins, and that you do not receive her plagues.”

— Revelation 18:4

The question is not a new one. Doctors Martyn Lloyd-Jones and John Stott faced it in Britain in 1966. The former as preacher famously issued a call at a large united churches’ event for evangelicals to “come out” from their liberal churches. John Stott, who was the chairman stood up and contradicted him.

In what follows two good men, who are both fighting this different issue of homo-

sexuality on a common biblical basis are doing so from opposite perspectives.

Dr Peter Barnes says that the Uniting Church (**UCA**) is a spent force due to its compromised foundation and its widespread liberalisation.

Dr Gordon Moyes believes the evangelicals within the Uniting Church will win and with this in mind he is staying on the inside notwithstanding his strong disagreement with the Church’s current position on homosexuality.

At least they are both fighting — but AoG — well they appear to have already succumbed, if Scott Stephen’s article *Gay row obscures point of Jesus’ life* — see below — and the non response of the hierarchical leaders is anything to go by.

Fred Nile the member for the Christian Democratic Party in the NSW Legislative Council (upper house) and a former minister of UCA has resigned over the issue. He remains a Member of Parliament.

What do you think?

— PP

Liberal Theology and the Ordination of Homosexuals

By **PETER BARNES**

HOMOSEXUALITY has been in the news lately — not just in Oxford Street, but also in what professes to be the Christian Church.

In Canada the Anglican Church seems determined to become as bankrupt morally as it is financially.

In England, the homosexual Dr Jeffrey John has just been persuaded to withdraw from his appointment as Bishop-elect of Reading.

Meanwhile, the Uniting Church in Australia has allowed what it has winked at for some years — the ordination of homosexual ministers.

The Anglican Primate of Australia, Archbishop Peter Carnley has claimed that ‘the debate itself is testimony to the complexities of the interpretative task.’ He calls for

honesty and humility in dealing with what he says are ‘hotly disputed texts’.

Finally, we are told, that ‘A civilised and reasoned discussion can be welcomed as a sign of vigorous life’.

So the first issue that we need to deal with is the Bible’s view of homosexuality. Actually, the biblical texts are not as difficult as Archbishop Carnley likes to make out.

In the Old Testament, Sodom is described as a city whose inhabitants were ‘*exceedingly wicked and sinful against the Lord*’ (Gen 13:13). It is from Sodom that we derive the name of the sin ‘sodomy’. Although there were other sins involved (see Ezekiel 16:49), it is clear that the widespread practice of sodomy was the main reason for Sodom’s destruction (see Genesis 18-19).

‘Sodom’ became a by-word for God’s

terrible wrath on hardened sinners (see Deut 29:23; 32:32; Isaiah 1:10; Amos 4:11; Zeph 2:9; Luke 10:10-12; 17:29; 2 Peter 2:6; Jude 7; Rev 11:8).

To retain the biblical perspective, however, it needs to be pointed out that the sin of rejecting Christ’s representatives is worse even than the sin of Sodom (Luke 10:12).

Old Testament law is quite specific: ‘*you shall not lie with a male as with a woman. It is an abomination*’ (Lev 18: 22).

The civil penalty was the most severe possible: ‘*if a man lies with a male as he lies with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination. They shall surely be put to death. Their blood shall be upon them*’ (Lev 20:13).

‘Abomination’ is a strong word that is found five times in Leviticus 18 (vv. 22, 26, 27, 29, 30). As Gordon Wenham ex-

plains, 'An abomination is literally something detestable and hated by God.'

The New Testament moral teaching is no different. In Romans, the apostle Paul speaks of God's revelation of Himself to the Gentiles through the creation (Rom 1:20).

When this clear revelation is rejected, the result is that people worship idols rather than the Creator (Rom 1:20-23). The road is all downhill from there, and three times it is said that '*God gave them up*' (Rom 1:24,26,28).

When people are 'given up', one likely result is homosexuality.

'For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due'.

—Romans 1:26-27

Homosexual unions are invariably promiscuous, and tend to be plagued by health troubles such as chronic incontinence, urgency of defecation, and, of course, AIDS. The 'due penalty' can be severe indeed.

Unrepentant homosexuals are included amongst those whose lifestyle reveals that they will not inherit the kingdom of God (1 Cor 6:9-10). To believe otherwise is to deceive oneself.

Homosexuals are also listed amongst those who are lawless and insubordinate (1 Tim 1:8-10). Heterosexual desire is corrupted by the fall; homosexual desire is corrupt in itself.

One wonders how God could have made Himself any clearer. The law of God excludes homosexuals from God's kingdom. Yet the Bible also speaks of the wondrous grace of God.

In the cosmopolitan, sex-obsessed city of ancient Corinth, there were homosexuals who came to faith in Christ. Paul writes warmly of these converts: '*and such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God*' (1 Cor 6:11). Grace is offered to all who confess sin as sin, and come to Christ in faith.

The second issue that we must deal with concerns how such a situation has come about that professing churches will not submit to the plain meaning of Scripture.

Let us confine ourselves to the Uniting Church of Australia (UCA). This was formed

in 1977 as a result of the union of most of the Methodist, Presbyterian and Congregational Churches.

The Basis of Union was presented to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Australia in May 1973. This states that 'The Uniting Church acknowledges that the Church has received the books of the Old and New Testaments as unique prophetic and apostolic testimony, in which she hears the Word of God and by which her faith and obedience are nourished and regulated'.

It also praises the scientific enquiry into the Scriptures that has characterised recent centuries, and speaks of learning from contemporary thought. If one reads this carefully, one could accept it even if one only believed, for example, that a man called Jesus once lived on earth.

Liberal theology — which refuses to accept the full authority of Scripture — provides enough loopholes for anybody and everybody to justify what they are doing. Given the liberal Basis of Union, the acceptance of homosexual clergy was only a matter of time.

This leaves us with the third issue, which concerns where the Churches go from here.

Dorothy McRae-McMahon is excited: 'I believe that this may well be the century when the Holy Spirit calls the churches to a new truth and a vision of a much grander God.'

That surely belongs in the cuckoo clock. God does not call on us to pursue any so-called 'new truth' but to ask for '*the ancient paths*' (Jer 6:16) and to '*preach the Word*' (2 Tim 4:2).

Gordon Moyes is one of the leaders of the evangelical wing of the Uniting Church, known as EMU. He has argued against Dorothy McRae-McMahon, yet he writes: 'I love our denomination ... I am committed to remain within the Uniting Church and change it.'

In my view, that is naïve, and EMU ought to rename itself OSTRICH. A better response would entail the setting up of a truly Wesleyan and Methodist Church. May God bring it about quickly!

Liberal theology has led to our present state of moral paralysis and deadness. The time has well and truly come for a call to arms.

About the Author

DR PETER BARNES is the pastor of the Presbyterian Church at Revesby in Sydney and is a lecturer in Church History at the Presbyterian Theological Centre in Burwood, New South Wales.

Why the Evangelicals will win

By GORDON MOYES

IN THE Uniting Church of Australia there is spiritual warfare (Ephesians chapter six). The battle is with spiritual and dark forces in high places. It is a battle primarily for the Bible's place in the life of a believer and its authority within the church. Although the issue has been fought over whether clergy living in homosexual relationships outside of marriage could be ordained as clergy within the Uniting Church, the bigger issue is what role has the Bible in the Uniting Church today and what is its authority.

It is a battle the Evangelicals with their high view of scripture must win - but it is a battle that they will win. You might well ask why will they win? Here are ten reasons why the Evangelicals will win:

1. Evangelicals are better equipped for spiritual warfare.

They may be naïve politically and have been out manoeuvred by the tactical nous of the church's multitudinous regulations that are constantly used against them. The battle essentially is a spiritual one and that is where the evangelicals are better equipped because they possess the whole armour of God. They know how to use the sword, which is the Word of God both in attack and defence. Although reluctant to get into the nitty gritty of spiritual warfare, the evangelicals have realised that they are equipped for such spiritual warfare.

2. The Evangelical giant has been aroused.

The decision made by the 2003 Assembly of the Uniting Church in Melbourne to approve the ordination of practising homosexuals has shocked the grass roots membership of the church. Thousands of ordinary members have now joined at crowded protest rallies held all across Australia. Evangelicals had to lose the vote at the Assembly in order to awake the slumbering giant within the pews of the churches. It is the same in the United States where the evangelical and conservative membership has turned the tide, which for twenty-five years has been successful in winning

every liberal change brought about in the main line churches.

3. Old-fashioned liberalism in Australia is already a spent force.

There is a lack of leadership within the Uniting Church in Australia. We are all mates together and every now and then we get someone whom we elect as first mate. The Uniting Church is like a cruise ship that keeps going round and round in circles. The small gay lobby ingratiated themselves into the church's bureaucracy. Even the President admitted that he was "greatly surprised" with the reaction of the grass roots membership. People who worked in the paid bureaucracy of the church are often greatly surprised by the grass roots majority. It is the sign of just how out of touch they are in spite of holding high office.

4. Para church ministries.

Para church ministries have taken the interest, the time and the money of evangelicals but now they are helping their evangelical colleagues by encouraging those within the Uniting church to stay there and fight for their rights as Christians whose time, interest and prayer has made the Uniting Church what it is today.

5. Evangelicals are younger, richer and more energetic.

If you look at the old time liberal clergy in the Uniting Church you will discover that most of them were trained in the 1950's and 60's. None of them can stand up and point to any significant growth in any congregation, which they have led as old time liberals. The average age within the Uniting Church is over 66 years and the clergy suit an aging and dying membership. But among the evangelicals, and charismatic Christians within the Uniting Church it is the young adults who are making the pace. All of the growing churches in Australia are evangelical. The largest congregations are evangelical. While the average age of all the people that attend Uniting Churches is 66, the average age of the thousands of people who attend services at Wesley Mission Sydney is 31 years. The evangelicals across Australia are younger with more disposable income and are willing to put their money where their mouths are. They do not want their church hijacked by minority lobby groups.

6. There is a new ecumenical coalition coming into being.

There is a commonality of doctrine and viewpoint on many of the great issues fac-

ing the church today found among Roman Catholics, Anglicans, Orthodox, Protestant and Pentecostal Christians. They have great concerns for the issues of quality of life, of faithfulness in marriage and celibacy in singleness in being opposed to liberal, abortionist, and euthanasia advocates. Those Christians across all the denominations are networking and they stand united and strong against the advance of homosexual clergy.

7. The Bible is never outdated.

There are people who always want to talk about their interpretation of the Bible and who are willing to treat the Bible as a book of interesting characters and information with as much authority and inspiration as a telephone directory. But evangelicals know something that has been forgotten: *"you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring Word of God."* For, *"all men are like grass and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall but the Word of the Lord stands forever. And this was the word that was preached to you"* (1 Peter 1:23-25). Dean Paul Zahl of the Cathedral Church of the Advent in Birmingham, Alabama, USA, recognizes that the recent election of the Episcopal Church's first openly homosexual bishop has profound theological implications. He says the action "demolishes the Good News of salvation.... It demolishes salvation because it asserts that what Scripture calls sin is not sin. When there is no sin, there is no judgement. Without judgement, there can be no repentance. Without repentance, there is no forgiveness. The decision fashions a god who is oblivious to sin. It thus denies the redemption of the world to a whole category of persons."

8. You cannot fool all of the people all of the time.

The history of fifteen years of dialogue and discussion over the homosexual issues within the church reveals a litany of church cover-ups, lies and secret meetings. But the grass root membership of the Uniting Church has woken up. They are aware of immorality in high places, of lesbian sex, heterosexual adultery, homosexual partnering among church leaders and they have had enough of it. They are no longer fooled by church bureaucratic cover-up and secret meetings. To our shame, clergy, living immorally, have even been recommended to more significant positions. Evangelicals have now drawn the line in the sand.

9. The fear tactic is losing its power.

For many years ministers have been fearful about future placements, about their housing and superannuation but there is now a new sense of freedom. Ministers are standing up in public protest meetings saying "For years I have been fearful of my job because I know that if I speak out on these issues the church bureaucracy will fail to appoint me to any new church. I was fearful of my career; but not anymore. I realise I cannot be silent but I must speak out for the faith once and for all delivered to the saints."

In the same way churches were fearful of standing up against the trends of bureaucrats, however they are no longer frightened of the threatening talk that they would lose their property and that the church bureaucracy holds the titles. Many congregations have walked away from their properties and those who haven't are determined to stay in and fight for their rights as people who have both paid for and prayed for their church facilities. Evangelicals are no longer afraid of taking legal action to preserve their rights. Legal opinion at the highest level is being engaged. Class action suits are possible.

10. Evangelicals are learning to play the liberal game.

For a long time the liberals counted on the evangelicals remaining silent or leaving the Church in disgust. Evangelicals are not known for their political cunning nor for their willingness to engage in long debate and bitter dispute. Now they are no longer leaving and remaining silent. They are prepared to speak up and fight for the truth. But they do so clad in the whole armour of God, *"each piece put on with prayer"*. That prayer power cannot be underestimated.

COMING TO A CHURCH NEAR YOU!

The battle will be fought in all of the mainline denominations. In the United States and in the United Kingdom the great mainline churches, which have been losing membership and significance in society for decades, have found revival and renewal through the younger more committed evangelicals. The same will happen in Australia. That is why the evangelicals will win.

About the Author

DR GORDON MOYES is senior minister of the Sydney City Mission and a member of the Legislative Council of NSW (upper house) and a minister of the Uniting Church of Australia (UCA).

Departing from the Faith

Editorial Disclaimer: In publishing the following we would make it absolutely clear that we do so NOT because we agree with it in any way, but simply to give you some idea of how far a one time godly movement has departed from the "faith once delivered to the saints" (Jude verse 3) – PP.

From *The Courier-Mail* Monday June 9, 2003 – page 13.

Gay row obscures point of Jesus' life

By SCOTT STEPHENS

MY FIRST response to the controversy surrounding Rollan McCleary's research into Jesus's (sic) sexuality was: "Haven't we witnessed this precise scenario before?" In August 1989, rightwing US Senators Alphonse D'Amato and Jesse Helms charged the National Endowment of the Arts with using American's (sic) tax dollars to support art that was blasphemous, "obscene" and "pornographic". They insisted that the US government must ensure that such "tax dollar-funded perversion" not be allowed to continue.

The piece at the centre of the commotion was, of course, Andres Serrano's *Piss Christ*, a Cibachrome photograph of a plastic crucifix immersed in the artist's blood and urine.

In October 1997, this photograph would, go on to achieve a certain infamy in Australia when George Pells, (sic) then Catholic archbishop of Melbourne, applied for an injunction to prevent the National Gallery of Victoria from exhibiting it, on the grounds that doing so would constitute an act of blasphemous libel.

Justice Harper's ruling was preempted when two youths attacked *Piss Christ* while on display at the gallery forcing its director, Timothy Potts, to close the exhibition.

The media coverage of McCleary's research seemed to follow the same script. Both *The Courier-Mail* and the ABC's *7.30 Report* focused on the scandal of using tax dollars - the figure cited was \$51,000 - to fund a doctoral thesis which suggests, at least in passing, that Jesus was gay, along with some of his disciples. The *7.30 Report's* coverage was then garnished with hackneyed commentary by Fred Niles (sic) and a conservative bishop from the Anglican Diocese of Sydney.

Several primary issues arise from this controversy.

First, it was insinuated that McCleary was given exceptional funding for his thesis. In reality, he received an Australian Postgraduate Award (a meagre, but very common government stipend of around \$18,000 a year) like many other postgraduate students at Australian universities.

Of greater concern, however, was the suggestion that any government-funded research should be submitted to the public for the final verdict on the merits of the research. This would effectively cripple research in this country, particularly in the humanities.

The inevitable public outrage over any non-conventional suggestion about Jesus, or any other matter of faith, raises a greater issue: to what extent should the church take steps preemptively to oppose research into matters of faith by individuals who are considered unorthodox?

From one perspective, McCleary's proposal must be regarded as pretty tame, relying on his putative "discovery" of Jesus's (sic) astrological birth chart, and thus of the dates of Jesus's (sic) birth and death, and of his sexuality. McCleary says that while it is doubtful that Jesus engaged in same-sex sexual activity, his orientation and spirituality must be regarded as distinctly gay.

My fundamental question here is very simple: where is the true scandal? Jesus's (sic) sexuality has been the topic of far more controversial publications, from Barbara Thiering's *Jesus the Man* (1992) to Stephen Moore's *God's Beauty Parlor* (2001). The true scandal is not McCleary's rather weak proposal regarding Jesus's (sic) sexuality/spirituality, but rather that he effectively conceals the significance of Jesus behind an esoteric obscurantism that fails to recognise the cold reality of Jesus's (sic) political vision.

Jesus sought to dissolve the fundamental social and political ties that determined so much ancient Mediterranean life, and establish a new, robust society that is characterised neither by ethnocentrism and racial violence, nor by the oppression of genders and social stratification.

The fact that Jesus consequently died the death reserved for political insurrectionists contains its own judgment upon every political organisation that sustains itself by violence.

To this extent, I would suggest that Serrano's *Piss Christ* captures something of the essence of Christianity, by its uncanny fusion of the real of the human waste and the appearance of a golden aura.

Jesus's (sic) significance lay in the very appearance of failure. McCleary's reduction of his life to the determination of inert celestial bodies is the most scandalous element of his thesis.

Lastly, I do not support the censorship of unorthodox research into matters of faith in any way. My reason simply is that, even in the post-Christian West, Christianity remains part of our social space, endlessly cited in literature, television and film. This is precisely the legacy of robust Christianity: to find its true place in the middle of contemporary culture, working, debating and liberating - not to remain protected in advance by ecclesiastical privilege.

It is vital to preserve precisely this legacy, because, to paraphrase the European philosopher Slavoj Zizek, the authentic Christian legacy is much too precious to be left to New Age obscurantists and fundamentalist freaks.

Scott Stephens is a theologian at Garden City College of Ministries, Mt Gravatt.

The Long Hot Summer

Is It Global Warming?

By **TONY PEARCE**

100.22 degrees Fahrenheit (37.9°C) recorded at Heathrow Airport. Wildfires raging in forests from Russia to Portugal. Extensive crop losses, especially in southern Europe. Italy's rivers at their lowest level recorded in 100 years and World War 2 wrecks becoming visible on the shrunken waters of the Danube. Up to 10,000 deaths attributed to the heat in France with the government under fire for its failure to make better provision to deal with the heat wave. Swiss glaciers melting at a record rate, threatening a dramatic impact on water supply. In the United States records being set for scorching heat in the west and torrential rains in the east.

What is happening to our weather? Is this a sign of global warming? What happens if the temperatures continue to rise?

Even before the effects of the heat wave in Europe were hitting the headlines, a study released by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) on July 2nd explained that the world is experiencing record numbers of extreme weather events. Laying the blame firmly at the feet of global warming, the agency warned that the number and intensity of extreme weather events could continue to increase. Examples given were:

- 562 tornadoes, which hit the United States in May, this year was a record, far higher than the previous record monthly peak of 399 set in June 1992.
- Far colder and wetter conditions than normal also prevailed in the eastern and southeastern part of the U.S. for much of May and June.
- A pre-monsoon heat wave, which hit India earlier this year, caused peak temperatures of between 45 and 49°C (113 to 120°F), killing more than 1,400 people.
- In Sri Lanka, heavy rainfalls from Tropical Cyclone 01B exacerbated already wet conditions, causing flooding and landslides and more than 300 fatalities.
- In the south of France average temperatures were between 5 and 7°C (9 to 13°F) warmer than the long term average.

On their own none of these events is truly remarkable. But when viewed together they represent a clear and alarming trend

towards wilder weather, according to the WMO. "These record extreme events (high temperatures, low temperatures and high rainfall amounts and droughts) all go into calculating the monthly and annual averages which, for temperatures, have been gradually increasing over the past 100 years," the WMO stated. The World Meteorological Organization is a sober UN based organisation not given to hype. It normally confines itself to issuing scientific reports and statistics compiled from climate data. However, the weather events of 2003 have proved so remarkable, that the organization felt compelled to issue a generalized warning of the emerging pattern. The WMO said new analysis of data for the northern hemisphere showed the increase in temperature in the 20th century was likely to have been the largest in any century during the past 1,000 years. "It is also likely that, in the northern hemisphere, the 1990s were the warmest decade and 1998 the warmest year," it said.

One of the causes of the great European heat wave in 2003 has been the shifting of the hot air mass that usually sits over the Sahara Desert to Europe. While this brought great heat to Europe it also brought unprecedented rainstorms across Africa from Senegal to Eritrea. This weird weather pattern produced the worst floods in Eritrea for 40 years and the most severe summer storms in living memory across parts of Algeria and Sudan.

This raises a number of big questions: 'Is this just a one off freak summer or is it the shape of things to come? Is it the result of natural changes in the earth which are beyond our control or is it the result of human induced climate change driven by emissions of greenhouse gases?' The even bigger question is 'What, if anything, can be done about it?'

Some environmentalists are saying that global warming has now entered a critical stage, one where irreversible catastrophes begin to accelerate in a domino effect. Forest fires of the kind witnessed in Europe and North America this summer contribute to greenhouse gasses in the atmosphere and also remove trees, which are nature's way of absorbing these gasses.

The melting of the Swiss glaciers threatens the water supply of the great rivers of Europe. Some fifty percent of the water carried by the Rhone from its source in the Alps through Lake Geneva to the Mediterranean comes from ice melt. If the glaciers retreat, the amount of water flowing through these rivers will go down. Once agriculture goes in areas hit by drought it becomes difficult to replace.

On the other hand opponents of the environmental movement are saying that the connection between global warming and human pollution has not been proved. There are even some fanciful suggestions that there could be beneficial side effects, for example making cold areas like Siberia open to agriculture. This is really like the ostrich burying its head in the sand. The evidence of climate change is almost beyond argument after the events of the past decade. The areas under threat are highly populated ones and the areas, which might benefit are virtually unpopulated. If climate change causes mass migration of people from one area to another, the effect on the stability of the world situation would be catastrophic.

If the environmental lobby is right that the change in weather is caused by human activity (and I think they are right), then the next question is 'What is to be done?' One solution has been proposed by Mikhail Gorbachev. Since his fall from power in Russia, he has been active on the world scene, based in the USA, promoting the need for a world government. The number one reason he cites for this is the environment. He contends that a global institution is needed to deal with this global problem, and if we don't act soon, it will be too late – the world will self-destruct. As part of his push for world government, Gorbachev proposes his Earth Charter, a document for which he has become the chief spokesperson and which he believes will save the planet.

He is not alone in this. Radical members of the 'Green Party' want to use this looming catastrophe to push the world in the direction of a world government, which would have power to impose a control over the causes of pollution, for example how

much we may use our cars. Inevitably this would lead to a radical shift in the way society is organised, especially in the developed world. It would probably require some kind of a police state to force people to change their lifestyle in order to save the planet.

One can see a certain logic in the argument of those who are proposing a world government to take control of the situation. Given the vested interests of nations, especially the USA, the main producer of greenhouse gasses, it is unlikely that they will agree to the changes required without some kind of authority being given to a global institution like the UN.

Concern about the future of the world is causing people to look to supernatural sources for help. Astrologers, New Age gurus and all kinds of mystical teachings are sought as guides to the future of planet Earth. Some even believe that UFOs will beam down information the human race needs to get ourselves out of the mess we have made of looking after the planet. Or even better that aliens will come down themselves and sort us out!

There is actually some 100% reliable information on this subject, which was beamed down to us by God who created the heavens and the earth and who gave the human race the task of caring for this planet. Unfortunately many people deny that He exists and mock at the book He has given us. If they bother to look into this book they will find that both weird weather and a world government are prophesied in the Bible.

God predicted through Isaiah the terrible world conditions, which would come upon the earth at the end of this age:

"The earth is also polluted by its inhabitants, for they transgressed laws, violated statutes, broke the everlasting covenant. Therefore, a curse devours the earth, and those who live in it are held guilty. Therefore, the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men are left."

— Isaiah 24:5-6 NASB

In the Book of Revelation we read of a great heat at the end of this age in the days just before Jesus returns to the earth:

"Then the fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun and power was given to him to scorch men with fire. And men were scorched with great heat, and they blasphemed the name of God who has power over these plagues; and they did not repent and give him the glory."

— Revelation 16:8-9

In the same chapter we also read of the River Euphrates being dried up (12). Revelation also contains a promise that those who are martyred for their faith will never again thirst from the effect of the scorching heat of the sun beating upon them:

"They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat."

— Revelation 7:16

Jesus also warned of the effect of global weather pattern changes:

"There will be signs in the sun, moon and stars. On the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea. Men will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world, for the heavenly bodies will be shaken."

— Luke 21:25-26 NIV

Jesus is here speaking about great storms that will come in from the sea, one of the recognised effects of global warming. Coastal areas are heavily populated on all continents, so the effect of this will be disasters of such magnitude that men will have fatal heart attacks from sheer terror.

On the other issue mentioned in this article, world government, the Bible also has something to say. In Revelation 13 we read about a coming world government, which will cause the whole world to come under the authority of one identified as the beast or the Antichrist. Other scriptures indicate that he will come in to power offering peace and safety to a generation traumatised by the possibility of world destruction. With the growing fear of what is coming on the world taking hold of people throughout the planet, it is not difficult to see how a charismatic world leader using modern mass communications could make this happen. Today more and more people are tapping into the occult and demonic realm, and the coming Antichrist will be energised and empowered by Satan himself ready to deceive a generation that rejects God's truth with a false promise of being able to save the earth. In fact he will lead the planet to the brink of total destruction.

There will then be a dramatic rescue coming from outside the planet, not in the form of aliens being beamed down from outer space, but in the form of Jesus the Messiah returning in power and glory to save us and set up His Messianic Kingdom in which there will be real peace and safety. The mess, which we have made of

the planet, will then be cleaned up as living waters flow out from Jerusalem (Zechariah 14:8) and the earth is full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea (Isaiah 11:9). Before this happens Jesus will judge the world and Satan will be bound and unable to deceive the nations during the 1,000 year reign of the Messiah on the earth (Matthew 25:31-46, Revelation 20:1-6). Those who are saved and trust in Jesus will then inhabit the earth, which will return to the agricultural non polluting society God intended us to inhabit in the first place with weapons of war turned into farming equipment and everyone being fed and cared for (Isaiah 2:1-4; 11:1-9; Joel 3:8; Micah 4:4).

God does want us to care for the planet, as He instructed us to do in the Bible. In Genesis 1: 28-30 and Psalm 8 we read how God told the human race to have 'dominion' over the earth, which in the context implies caring for all that God has made, which was originally 'very good' but has now been spoilt as a result of human sin and the curse that has come upon the earth (Genesis 3: 17-19). Jesus the Messiah came to redeem the world from this curse, bringing salvation to the individual who calls on His name, as a result of His sacrifice at the cross when He came the first time. He promised to return and according to Romans 8: 18-22 the whole creation is eagerly waiting for this event, which will liberate it from the curse that human sin and mismanagement of the planet has brought upon all life on earth.

In the meantime we can do our bit for the environment by recycling our waste and being careful how we treat the earth, but to be honest the problem is now too big for any human effort to save the planet. Only God in the person of the returning Lord Jesus the Messiah can do this. The most important thing for each one of us to be sure of is that we are ready to meet Him by repenting of our sins and trusting in Him for eternal salvation. If we do this we have a glorious future to look forward to in a perfect environment where there will be no pollution and no global warming but only peace and harmony in the kingdom of God.

About the Author

TONY PEARCE is editor of *Light for the Last Days*, a quarterly magazine looking at current events in the light of Bible prophecy. He also runs Bridge Lane Chapel, an independent evangelical church in London. For more information please write to:

Tony Pearce
Light for the Last Days
Box BM – 4226
London, WC1N 3XX, UK

MARY, MARY, QUITE CONTRARY

Apparitions of Mary and the Word of God

PART ONE: HISTORY & DEVELOPMENT of MARIOLATRY TO 1500AD

(In this series source material is identified by way of a BIBLIOGRAPHY provided at the end of each article. Footnotes are used to define technical terms only.)

By CHRIS POLLARD

AS an ex Roman Catholic I have watched with increasing interest and alarm the growing enthusiasm amongst Protestant Evangelical groups to enter into dialogue with Rome. Whilst the ecumenical side of the Anglican church led by Canterbury have been for many years falling over themselves to move closer toward reunion with the Papacy, that has not been the case with the evangelicals until recently.

However in 1994 a massive change in thinking took place and many of the most respected evangelicals started to buckle at the knees. In a misguided desire to build commonality with the one billion Catholics they put their signatures to an insidious document: *"Evangelicals and Catholics together"*.

They turned away from the eternal truths of Scripture that had been their guiding light to blindly accept the claims of Rome that their gospel is really no different to the True Gospel.

The outcome was an agreement by a large slice of the church to no longer proselytize Catholics, but rather accept them as bona fide Christian brothers and sisters. This step was a giant leap along the road to ecumenical unity, or so it seemed.

But in September 2000 a document *"Dominus Jesus"* (see article in December 2000 issue of *CETF* by Richard Bennett – http://www.the-highway.com/Bennett_dominus1.html and http://www.the-highway.com/Bennett_dominus2.html), was issued by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger and Archbishop Tarcisio Bertone as approved by the Pope, which clearly restated the position Rome had always held, which is "there is no salvation outside of the Catholic church".

In other words whilst "she" had been quite happy to chat with her "separated brethren", as Protestants are called, on

an equal basis, she would never be willing to accept them as true members of Christ's Body until their doctrinal beliefs came into line with those of the Holy Roman Church and they were absorbed into total communion.

One would have thought that such a statement would have rung alarm bells among those who had been so keen to have dialogue and sign agreements, but not so. In the main there was silence, although some attempts were made to water down the document, and excuse its content as being purely aimed at those within the Catholic church. Anything to save the day it seems.

Timothy George, Dean of Beeson Divinity School at Stamford University and executive editor of *"Christianity Today"* put on a brave face saying,

"From an evangelical perspective, we must say to the Church of Rome the same thing this document says to non-Catholic Christians: serious defects remain in Catholic teaching and piety and we call the Church of Rome, as we call our own churches, to further reformation on the basis of the Word of God"

Fine words but water off a duck's back to the Vatican. Rome has not, does not, and will not change. She has a clear-cut agenda to regain supremacy over Christendom, so if there is any reformation to take place it will only be in the evangelical camp as it gives more and more ground to conform to Rome's position, which will take them further down that slippery slide of compromise which can only end when they have been fully absorbed by the "Harlot of Babylon."

"And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH."



And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration.

And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns. The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is. And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth."

—Revelation 17:4-9

The situation is deteriorating rapidly and it's becoming increasingly evident that large sections of the evangelical church are blind to the Papacy's agenda. They fail to fully grasp just who it is they are getting into bed with. Rome's gospel is far from the truth and her traditions so idolatrous that they must be fully uncovered if Bible-believing Christians are to be protected from becoming entangled in her dangerous web.

It is too easy to get caught up in Satan's web of deception and look upon Roman Catholicism as just another denomination with its fair share of error, just like any Protestant group. After all they believe much the same as we do, don't they? Such thinking is folly. Rome is not a Christ-centred church. She is more like a malevolent medusa whose serpent-like tentacles poison and control the minds of those under her thumb with doctrines that are not from the Book of Life. One of the most dangerous of them all is the cult of the Virgin Mary.

In a two part series on this phenomenon we hope to provide an understanding of this clever demonic trap so that no

one is left in any doubt that to play with Rome in any way whatsoever is to play with fire.

"For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect"

— Matthew 24:24

Since the early 1930's there has been a steady increase in the frequency and number of claimed appearances of the "Blessed Virgin Mary", as Catholics commonly refer to her. Some 200 apparitions are said to have occurred worldwide, and shrines to each one of them now dot the global landscape from Australia to Canada.

Add to that the previously existing sightings and you have in excess of 300 centres that attract pilgrims by the millions, to do homage, make their requests known to Mary and put their eager offerings into the church's ever-open coffers.

Just what then are Bible-believing Christians to make of all this? Should they be accepted as genuine divine displays, rejected as just emotional nonsense, viewed as deceptive human manipulation, or worse classed as demonic manifestations? The only way to obtain a true picture and find real answers is to dig into the history and development of "Marian" worship, overview the present situation and then compare what we find against the perfect standard of God's Word to lay bare the facts of this powerful form of idolatry so that we are left with no illusions. Scripture tells us:

"Beloved do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God"

— 1 John 4:1

So like good "Bereans" let's peel back the wallpaper and expose the real substance of the matter.

THE SEED OF CORRUPTION

Over the centuries the Roman Catholic Church has put together a vast number of traditions coupled to a complex array of Scriptures, all quoted out of context to justify its stand in regard to Mary. However, in truth the Word of God does not have a great deal to say about her. What we are told is that she was a young Jewish woman, engaged to a carpenter named Joseph. Whilst still in a virginal state she became pregnant with the Messiah by the Holy Spirit's power, which she acknowledges in her song of praise:

"My soul exalts the Lord, and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Saviour. For He has had regard for the humble state of His bondservant: for behold

from this time on all generations will count me blessed. For the Mighty One has done great things for me; and holy is His name"

— Luke 1:46-49

Following the birth of Jesus Mary is mentioned on just four more occasions. The wedding at Cana in Galilee; when she accompanied the Lord's brothers in an attempt to see Him; at the cross where she was handed over by the Lord to the care of the disciple John; and finally her name comes up as being with the disciples just prior to the day of Pentecost.

"These all with one mind were continually devoting themselves to prayer, along with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and His brothers"

— Acts 1:14

That is the sum total of biblical insight we are given in relation to this lady, and such was accepted without question by the churches until around 150-250AD. Then out of the blue an Apocryphal¹ writing called the "*Protoevangelium of James*", appeared on the scene. This document claimed a sinless state for Joseph and Mary stating:

"And taking it (the water of the ordeal) he made Joseph drink it and later sent him to the mountain from which he returned completely well. He gave Mary some to drink and sent her to the mountain from which she returned completely well. And all the people marvelled because no sin was revealed in them."

As a result of this heretical piece of nonsense, the assertion that Mary was a perpetual virgin began to be considered seriously. Thus the door was opened to the transformation of Mary, the humble servant described in Scripture, into a very different character with power and position out of all proportion to the facts.

THE MOTHER OF GOD?

In the early church the term Mother of God was not in common usage among Christ's followers. However Mary was certainly acknowledged as God's chosen vessel to carry and give birth to the natural body of His Son — in other words the human vehicle for God in Christ to enter into our world. But in regard to the parentage of the Saviour what the Scriptures say

is quite clear:

"This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

— Matthew 3:17

"Grace and mercy and peace be with us, from God the Father and from Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love."

— 2 John 3

These are just two examples. Consequently the focus of honour and worship is always on the Lord Jesus Christ, the Father and the Holy Spirit, exactly as it should be.

"You shall have no other gods before Me."

— Exodus 20:3

In time, however, Mary's standing came under closer scrutiny by the theologians of the day and after some due consideration the title *Theotokos* (= God bearing), was granted to her, which led to the beginnings of adoration using the title Mother of God.

Nestorius, the Patriarch of Constantinople became so concerned at this elevation of a human being, he took issue over the problem in a series of sermons. He wanted the term *Christotokos* (= Christ bearing) to be used, but this was not acceptable to the "orthodox" teachers who began to view Nestorius² with suspicion of being a heretic. They claimed he was separating Christ into two persons — one human, one divine. At the Council of Ephesus in 431AD he was deposed as Patriarch and shipped off to a monastery in Antioch. The council then issued the following declaration:

"If anyone does not confess that Jesus Christ is truly Emmanuel, and that on this account the holy virgin is the mother of God let him be anathema."

Thus the term Mother of God became Mary's official title.

As a consequence honours beyond all scriptural warrant began to come her way. Legend, licence and strange logic were used as building blocks to assemble an idolatrous throne, which pleased the multitudes of pagan-minded church goers, who had been devotees of Diana, Ceres, or Aphrodite, for now they could continue their goddess worship with just a name change. Biblical warnings were tossed aside:

¹ Apocrypha from the Greek, "hidden things" refers to a large body of writings that are manifestly false and thus unacceptable as part of the Canon of Scripture. The Church of Rome however does give biblical status to 14 Old Testament apocryphal writings and makes use of them in its doctrine. Protestant churches do not accept any apocryphal writings as authoritative. There are also some 50 New Testament writings in this apocryphal category.

² Modern research has unearthed a book written by Nestorius, "*Book of Heracleides*". In this volume he denies the heresy for which he was condemned, and clearly states that of Christ, "The same one is twofold", which in essence is not that different to orthodox teaching. Misunderstanding then may well have led to Nestorius being unfairly treated in this matter.

"You shall not follow other gods, any of the gods of the peoples who surround you."

—Deuteronomy 6:14

As a result Mary worship accelerated unhindered and any who did not agree with her new standing risked hierarchical wrath if they spoke out. From Constantinople in 754AD an edict was put out condemning any Orthodox Christian who did not:

"... confess the holy Ever-Virgin Mary, truly and properly the Mother of God, to be higher than every creature whether visible or invisible and does not with sincere faith seek her intercession, as one having confidence in her access to our God."

This was a call to out and out Marian worship, which continues to this day. One Roman Catholic web site has this to say:

"Several times the disciples asked Her advice to be guided in their decisions, because Her words were full of sapience (wisdom). They felt the Lord Spirit talked by Her lips."

This is total fantasy with no Scriptural basis whatsoever, yet it is put forward as fact and accepted as such by the Roman Catholic faithful in our century. The RC church makes no effort to correct such blatant untruth.

THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

In any cultic system justifying a lie requires manipulation of truth to suit, so Rome had to do some remodelling. The fact of the immaculate conception of Christ was one thing, but to declare Mary remained virginal throughout her life was something very different. This created problems not least of which was the biblical evidence that Mary had other children after the birth of the Lord Jesus.

"Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and brother of James, and Joses, and Judas, and Simon? Are not His sisters here with us?"

— Mark 6:3

To overcome this difficulty the author of the *Protoevangelium of James* asserted that the other children mentioned in the Gospels were Joseph's by a previous marriage. At first the church ignored such fraudulent documents and their false conclusions, and only heretical groups on the fringes granted them credibility. But in time the theologians of the day began to take them seriously and tentatively gave them credence.

One major reason for this was a per-

ceived need to counter the constant pagan and Jewish lies being spread abroad about the Lord in regard to His birth and His mother's fidelity. Bit by bit the mounting pressure undermined the Church's integrity, as Cesar Vidal explains in his excellent book *The Myth of Mary*:

"In an effort to defend the good name of Jesus and Mary, it turned, not to historical reality but to the invention of stories that never happened."

The "church" resorted to the very thing it desired to overcome — lies, and in so doing, like Israel and Judah, it fell into a pattern of untruth which has afflicted it ever since:

"Because they rejected the law of the Lord and have not kept My statutes: their lies also have led them astray, those after which their fathers walked."

—Amos 2:4

And of course we are well aware who feeds this problem in man, the originator of every untruth, Satan.

"Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar, and the father of lies."

— John 8:44

His servants naturally do the same. Now, however, his cancerous influence had gained a foothold in the church, which began to infect the thinking of certain prominent members. Men like Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Ambrose and Augustine of Hippo, fell into the trap and began to promote false teaching including the perpetual virginity of Mary, and her sinlessness.

The biblical parallel between Christ and Adam — "*The first man, Adam, became a life giving soul. The last Adam became a life giving spirit*" (1 Corinthians 15: 45) — resulted in a similar analogy regarding Mary and Eve being put forward which further enhanced Mary's position. Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch in the early 2nd century wrote:

"And as mankind was bound unto death through a virgin, it is saved through a virgin; by the obedience of a virgin the disobedience of a virgin is compensated."

This statement in regard to Mary's obedience to the will of God — "*And Mary said, behold the bondservant of the Lord; be it done to me according to your word*" (Luke 1: 38), set against Eve's disobedience, was turned upside down to infer a whole new status for Mary.

If Eve was immaculate before the fall, then Mary her replacement after the fall, must be likewise, it was suggested. Theologians of the day began to reconsider the

issue and homed in on certain Scriptures, in particular two verses from the gospel of Luke:

"And coming in he said to her, 'Hail favoured one! The Lord is with you.'"

— Luke 1:28

"And she cried out with a loud voice, and said, 'blessed among women are you, and blessed is the fruit of your womb.'"

— Luke 1:42

The conclusions were that Gabriel's comment "favoured one" was a recognition of Mary's immaculate state, and Elizabeth's cry "*blessed among women are you*" acknowledged that Mary was the holiest of all women. From there it was a simple piece of exegetical sleight of hand to expand these as proof texts of her sinlessness. Thus Augustine (354-430AD) commented in one of his sermons:

"Mary remained a virgin in conceiving her Son, a virgin in giving birth to Him, a virgin in carrying Him, a virgin in nursing Him at her breast, always a virgin."

Once falsehood and myth gain a foothold it is very hard to eradicate their influence, and all manner of unsubstantiated foolishness is preached. Ambrose (340-397AD) bishop of Milan stated:

"In heaven she (Mary) leads the choirs of virgin souls; with her the consecrated virgins will one day be numbered."

What incredible licence. Just as extreme is this comment by Ephraem of Syria:

"You alone and your Mother are good in every way; for there is no blemish in thee, my Lord, and no stain in thy Mother. O virgin lady, immaculate Mother of God."

Lies and yet more lies were told and readily believed.

"Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough."

— 1 Corinthians 5:6

As the yeast permeated the church in the east and west, Mary's popularity grew and devotion to her entered deeper into the realm of idolatry.

Then in 312AD Emperor Constantine embraced the Christian religion, and so began the moulding of church and state into one. The result was a further disastrous degeneration of Christian life and standards under an influx of pagan worshippers into the churches, bringing with them their ungodly mindset.

How true the Word of God has proved itself to be.

"Do not be deceived; bad company corrupts good morals"

— 1 Corinthians 15:33

A controversial scribe called Epiphanius (315-403AD), whose writings are not substantiated elsewhere, tells in his *Panarion* (or *Refutation of all the heresies*) of a group called Collyridians who sprang up in Thrace (part of Greece) and quickly spread from the Black Sea down into Arabia. He states that this was mainly a female sect with a priestess who led in the worship of Mary as the Queen of Heaven.

Part of their ritual involved covering a throne with a linen cloth, placing bread or small cakes on it, consecrating them to Mary, then sharing them as a communion.

Whilst the church eventually suppressed their activities, goddess worship in one form or another was now entrenched in religious life, and people merely replaced the old female deities such as Isis and Cybele with that of the Blessed Virgin.

In Soissons, France a temple originally built to the goddess Isis was consecrated to Mary. In similar vein the Parthenon in Athens, originally devoted to the pagan goddess Athena Palas, was rededicated to Mary.

E.H. Broadbent in his excellent work, *The Pilgrim Church* explains:

"Little by little, the meetings of the disciples of the Lord in simple houses and rooms changed to the gathering of all — willing or unwilling-believers or not — in consecrated buildings dedicated to the Virgin or one of the saints, filled with images, pictures, and relics, which became objects of worship."

THE FALSE ASSUMPTION AND EXTRAS

On November 1st, 1950 Pope Pius XII made an *ex cathedra*³ statement claiming that Mary's body was raised from the grave shortly after she died, reunited with her soul and that she was then taken up and enthroned Queen of Heaven. This pronouncement was merely official sanction of what had been taught and believed for centuries.

The first considerations of this myth came from the eastern half of the Church where feasts to celebrate the birth and assumption of Mary were proclaimed and Saturdays dedicated to her.

Further fame and honour came her way when Persian forces besieged the city of Constantinople. Pictures of the Virgin were painted on all the city gates as charms to ward off the invaders, and when the enemy failed to capture the city naturally the credit was given to Mary. Here was no ordinary mortal, no, here was God's mother exercising supernatural powers.

When Jehoshaphat was under attack by his enemies in Old Testament times he sought God who responded, *"Do not fear or be dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours but God's"* (2 Chronicles 20:15).

Yet there was no such cry from the church leaders of Constantinople, so far had they fallen away it never occurred to them to seek the Lord. No, they went to Mary.

By the middle ages, worship of Mary was normal practice and miracles were regularly ascribed to her. Writing from Rome one author enthused:

"She appeared by day on the mountain where robbers had fallen upon people and sought to slay them. And these people cried out saying: 'O lady Mary, Mother of God, have mercy on us.' And she appeared before them like a flash of lightning, and blinded the eyes of the robbers and they were not seen by them."

With each successive Pope her popularity grew and so did the legends. A letter from one St John of Damascus stated:

"St Juvenal, Bishop of Jerusalem, at the Council of Chalcedon (451AD), made known to the Emperor Marcian and Pulcheria, who wished to possess the body of the Mother of God, that Mary died in the presence of all the Apostles, but that her tomb, when opened, upon the request of St Thomas, was found to be empty; wherefrom the Apostles concluded that the body was taken up to heaven."

As a result of this dubious piece of zealous journalism, and others like it, it was gradually accepted that Mary's body did not decompose in the grave as normal, but was removed to heaven.

"And no one has ascended into heaven, but He who descended from heaven, even the Son of Man who is in heaven."

— John 3:13

Rome without a single shred of Scriptural or historical proof declared that Mary left this world in the very same supernatural manner as her Saviour.

ARRIVAL OF THE ROSARY

A further cultivation of Mary's high standing was the arrival of the *Rosary*⁴. This device has a long history, being found among the Phoenicians around 800BC, and used in the worship of Astarte.

According to the Catholic Encyclopedia a sculpture from ancient Nineveh depicts two winged females praying before a sacred tree, each holding a rosary. Most Catholics believe the Rosary's beginnings are to be found in the medieval church monasteries, the truth however is very different.

The Rosary stems from the east not the west. The early followers of Brahmanist Hinduism used them to worship the gods Vishnu and Shiva. In Hindu mythology the account of the death of Sati, Shiva's wife is eye opening.

"On hearing of this event, he hastened to the banks of the river of heaven, where he beheld lying the body of his beloved Sati, arrayed in white garments, holding a rosary in her hand, and glowing with splendour, bright as burnished gold."

From Hinduism it spread to Buddhism, thence into Islam and many other pagan societies, then finally in the 13th century it was absorbed into the Roman Catholic Church system. It holds a pre-eminent position in the prayer life of the majority of Catholics, but that isn't surprising when you recognise the power it is claimed to hold.

Those who recite the Rosary regularly are the recipients of no less than 15 promises from Mary herself. These include:

"I shall deliver from purgatory those who have been devoted to the rosary. The faithful children of the rosary shall merit a high degree of glory in heaven. All who recite the rosary are my sons, and brothers of my only son Jesus Christ."

There is so much heresy here, but what is clear is the incredible claims for Mary of powers that are quite simply the Lord's alone.

"All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth."

— Matthew 28:18

Rome however ignores the Scriptures, preferring its traditions and today continues to urge its followers worldwide to make

³ Ex Cathedra from the Latin, "chair or seat". Early bishops in the structured church sat on raised thrones given the title, "cathedrals". Thus pronouncements from the supreme throne of the Pope claim the authority of speaking from the chair with infallibility when dealing with the areas of faith and morals. Statements made on such issues are binding and to be accepted by all Roman Catholics without question.

⁴ The Rosary consists of 165 beads on a string. The beads are used to follow a sequence of repetitive prayers. In its long form it consists of 150 set prayers to Mary, 15 repeats of the Lord's prayer, and 15 recitations of the Gloria. Most Catholics use a shorter version divided into 5 sections.

regular use of the repetitious formula of the Rosary prayers. Jesus, speaking on prayer in the Sermon on the Mount said,

"And when you are praying, do not use meaningless repetition, as the Gentiles do, for they suppose that they will be heard for their many words."

— Matthew 6:7

If He taught that such prayers were not to be used by His disciples in praying to God, then how much worse are the actions of the Roman Catholic church in calling all its adherents to regularly engage in the Rosary?

THE SCAPULAR SCAM

About the same period a contraption known as the *Scapular*⁵ arrived on the scene. This strange object was the invention of an English monk, one Simon Stock who according to tradition lived a harsh hermit-like existence from the age of 12 in the hollow of an oak tree for some 20 years. Such an existence would, I suspect, have a degenerative effect upon one's sanity, to say the least, and open the mind to all manner of strange ideas.

Well, interestingly enough, toward the end of this period the Virgin Mary is said to have appeared to him in divine splendour surrounded by thousands of angels, holding the scapular in her hand.

She appointed him to take this as a sign of the Carmelite order to which he belonged, which up until this amazing event had been struggling to get recruits, however, things now started to improve. Very convenient but this wasn't the end. At a later date she appeared again and promised, "whoever dies clothed in this (the scapular) shall never suffer eternal fire."

This is an incredible statement and quite at odds with scripture. Jesus alone has the power to save from the flames of hell:

"And there is no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved."

— Acts 4:12

Only in the Lord is there deliverance from the wrath to come, because He alone has "the keys of Death and Hades" (Revelation 1:18). It is Christ who when He returns as judge, "will render to every man according to his deeds" (Romans 2:6). No amount of fetishes will alter that reality.

⁵The Scapular is generally composed of two small pieces of brown wool about 4 inches (10 centimetres) square. Imprinted on it are pictures of the Virgin Mary. It is to be worn day and night next to the skin, never to be removed until death.

It is an incredible evil that multitudes of Catholics are so trapped in superstitious nonsense that they willingly place their future in wearing a pagan amulet. All you have to do is purchase one, get a priest to bless it and "hey presto" you're safe from divine judgement. One RCC website suggests,

"If the angel of death passed over the houses that had the sign of the blood on their door post when the scourge of death came to the Egyptians, so will God recognise the seal of Mary if you wear the Brown Scapular. His anger will not harm you."

What this declares to us is that Christ's sacrifice was insufficient to justify the guilty before God. There is required the extra dimension of Mary's involvement by way of a charm. Yet scripture says,

"Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him."

— Romans 5:9

Today within Roman Catholic circles there are some 17 different scapulars ranging from those associated with Mary to others affiliated to Joseph, St Michael the Archangel, and Mary Mother of good counsel. All of them of course provide the holder with guarantees as promised by the church. Bonaventure a Franciscan theologian stated,

"Men do not fear a hostile and powerful army as much as the powers of hell fear the name and protection of Mary."

This is sheer blasphemy. The powers of darkness fear no created being but they certainly fear the Lord Jesus Christ.

"And they (evil spirits) entreated Him (Jesus) not to command them to depart into the abyss."

— Luke 8:31

But Rome ignores such facts preferring to push Mary's heavenly protective garment (scapular) claiming it is an extraordinary physical safeguard for all who wear it. What interesting yet damnable theology!

THE LANDING AT LORETO

In the little Italian town of Loreto close to the Adriatic Sea there stands a spacious church in the style of a Roman basilica. There is something unique about this structure. Within its walls, it is claimed, stands another building. This little rough-walled cottage (now conveniently encased in mar-

ble) of about 10 metres by 3 metres is treated with awe within the Roman Catholic Church, and venerated as the original home of Mary, Joseph, and the Lord Jesus in Nazareth. How it came to be in Loreto is a most interesting tale.

According to church history, after the Muslim army led by Saladin had defeated the crusaders in 1187AD they were forced to withdraw from Palestine. Catholic historians claim this left the little home under threat of demolition by the new rulers. Miraculously however this special residence was saved by being transported across the skies by angels, first to a town in Yugoslavia, then to Lecanati, Italy and finally to its present position in Loreto between the years 1291 and 1295. Why the angelic removalists should require two stopovers has never been fully explained, but there you have it. According to Rome this house was translated by divine power.

The Scriptures make reference to only three translations apart from Christ's. Those of Enoch, Elijah, and Christians at some future date, which makes the airborne cottage claim, at the very least, suspicious. Perhaps then the mode of travel was on the wing so to speak, however scripture only refers to one flight involving an object:

"Then I lifted up my eyes again and looked and behold, there was a flying scroll."

— Zechariah 5:1

The tale is most mysterious to say the least, but there's more. Certain miracles have been attributed to that little house itself.

One "Father" Georgevich, local parish priest of Tersatto, the Yugoslav town where the house first alighted, who was crippled with arthritis, was told in a dream by the Virgin Mary:

"Know that this house is the same in which I was born and brought up. Here at the Annunciation . . . I conceived the Creator of all things. Here, the Word of the Eternal Father became man. The altar which was brought with the house was consecrated by Peter, the Prince of the Apostles. This house has now come to your shores by the power of God...And now in order that you may bear testimony of all these things, be healed. Your unexpected and sudden recovery shall confirm the truth of what I have declared to you."

Allegedly, the next day, his disability had disappeared. Whilst I do not argue with the fact of the gift of healing, in which God

demonstrates His power to restore individuals through a believer, I can find nothing in the Bible supporting the total transfer of that divine authority into human or other hands.

Peter when speaking to Aeneas, a paralytic for eight years, said to him, "*Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you; arise, and make your bed*" (Acts 9:34). There is no hint of any claim of personal power here. All the glory was given to God. Not so with the Mary apparition where it is claimed that the supposed healing was at its own decision and ability.

The Bible makes reference to a number of false miracles. One has only to consider the limited abilities of Pharaoh's magicians. This Marian assertion must be in that devilish category. King David reminds us all:

"Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget none of His benefits; who pardons all your iniquities; who heals all your diseases."

— Psalm 103:2-3

Genuine miraculous healing is a sovereign work of the Lord. Any other is counterfeit and we should beware of such. In fact this whole episode in regard to Loreto lacks credibility, and at least one honest Catholic has made that clear.

Canon Chevalier in 1906 wrote an article entitled "*Our Lady of Loreto*" in which he pulls the myth to pieces. He says pilgrims' accounts make no mention of any cottage similar to the one at Loreto being in the Holy Land, and Oriental writers are silent about any disappearances of buildings in 1291. Various charters and documents prove that a church dedicated to Mary already existed on the Loreto site before the claimed translation.

Finally prior to 1472, a full one hundred and eighty one years later, no writer existed who claimed to have heard of the event. So it is obviously a ridiculous sham, as of course is the intriguing excess baggage of Peter's consecrated altar, which just happened to be in the house when it took off. Yet in the face of all this Rome happily continues to support the lie and its congregations swallow it unquestioningly.

"The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests rule on their own authority."

— Jeremiah 5:31

How can anyone possibly put any trust in Papal statements and traditions in the face of such blatant falsehood? Yet over one billion devotees cheerfully swallow it

all — hook, line and sinker.

PENANCES, PRAYERS & PROMISES

As the years passed Mary's status grew. Visionaries such as Elizabeth of Schonau came on the scene claiming to have spiritual interaction with Christ, Mary, an angel or one of the many so-called saints.

Feast days were given over to Mary, and processions of images of her accompanied by prayers became a common sight.

Ritual flagellation in public in honour of the "Virgin of the Pool" developed, and it was not uncommon to see thousands of people parade city streets whipping themselves systematically until the blood flowed down their torn backs.

Whilst such activities are not commonly seen in most of the West today, they still prevail in some parts of the globe, particularly in Spain, Mexico and the Philippines, in ceremonies related to the Virgin Mary.

"Let no one keep defrauding you of your prize by delighting in self abasement and the worship of angels, taking his stand on visions he has seen, inflated without cause by his fleshly mind."

— Colossians 2:18

Such degrading acts do nothing to improve one's spiritual condition yet up until recently it was part of life for trainee priests in Franciscan seminaries. Emmett McLoughlin an ex priest says in his book *Peoples Padre*:

"Each Monday, Wednesday, and Friday evening at 5.45 o'clock we closed the doors of our cells; to the chant of the 'Miserere' we disrobed and 'scourged our flesh to bring it into submission'. The Superior patrolled the corridors to listen to the sound of beating — the assurance of compliance."

God told the priests in the Levitical law:

"They shall not make any baldness on their heads, nor shave off the edge of their beards, nor make any cuts in their flesh."

— Leviticus 21:5

Yet Rome sees no problem with its priests cutting their flesh. It's tragic, yet even today there is an ultra secretive organisation with a worldwide following inside the RC church called Opus Dei in which flagellation is practised. We wonder at such brutal practices, but in a church where some believe that Matthias, the man chosen to replace Judas Iscariot by the

Apostles, exercised this type of masochism, it's quietly given a stamp of approval.

This strange activity designed to bring the flesh into submission and gain the favour of God, like so many other things in Catholicism has its roots in the east. Worshipers of Moloch and also Osiris carried out ritual whipping at their festivals.

In the Bible we read of the confrontation between Elijah and the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel. The Baal worshipers became so frustrated in their futile attempts to draw down fire from their god that they began to abuse their bodies in an effort to make him act.

"So they cried with a loud voice and cut themselves according to their custom with swords and lances until the blood gushed out on them."

— 1 Kings 18:28

Whether you wound yourself with whip or sword it's the same principle really. At the time these things were prevalent the *Angelus*⁶ was introduced as a prayer to be repeated morning, noon and night to demonstrate veneration of Mary.

Originally it was to be recited on your knees (except on Saturday and Sunday evenings when a standing posture was acceptable), and within earshot of a ringing bell to be effective. However Pope Leo XIII modified the rules in 1884 allowing certain exceptions.

The benefit to be gained from all this was an Indulgence⁷ of 100 days for every recitation, and such favours in the eyes of the faithful, were not to be sneezed at, then or now. Any opportunity to gain a reduction in the period of suffering of the soul after death in *Purgatory*⁸ is not to be missed in Catholic eyes.

Such is the bondage and fear the deluded followers of Rome are placed under that life is a continual round of man made

⁶ The *Angelus* is a short repetitive group of prayers in honour of the Incarnation. The prayers however are made up of a series of Hail Marys plus a Bible verse and a prayer to Mary the "Alma Redemptoris" in chant form.

⁷ An indulgence is a relaxation of church law in which Papal authority cancels or shortens the sufferings one should undergo due to sin, usually in purgatory. The Pope apparently has a vast storehouse of unused merits by way of Christ's suffering and Mary's good works, and from this he withdraws merits to apply to church members as a reduction of purgatorial suffering.

⁸ Purgatory is an intermediate realm between earth and heaven. Those who die at peace with the church, yet imperfect are dispatched to it to undergo suffering and punishment in flames until such time as God decides His justice is satisfied and they are purged of all their sins, only then can they enter heaven. Rome's claim for the validity of this doctrine is mainly based on a corrupt translation of 1 Corinthians 3:15 1 Peter 1:7 and the Old Testament apocryphal book II Maccabees 12:39-45.

rituals of service and appeasement with the desperate hope that legalistic obedience to such will ultimately culminate in getting to heaven.

"But I am afraid, lest as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds should be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotions to Christ."

— 2 Corinthians 11:3

CONCLUSION

The areas we have considered in this first part are just some of the many corrupt influences that penetrated and took root in the church during the first 500 years after Christ's ascension to glory. What is patently clear is the ease with which every false doctrine, every lie and half truth managed to undermine dependence on Truth and to find a comfortable home in the established church.

Martin Luther in *Table Talk* said,

"We easily fall into idolatry, for we are inclined thereunto by nature, and coming to us by inheritance it seems pleasant."

How right he was, and the more entrenched the idolatry the more pleasant it is to us, and the harder to remove. Even Luther himself remained a devotee of Mary throughout his life.

Likewise the influential reformers Calvin and Zwingli could not quite bring themselves to renounce the unbiblical teaching in reference to Mary as the Mother of God and a Perpetual Virgin.

There can be no doubt that within the fallen nature there is a propensity to go after other gods, and even the wisest of us can get drawn in.

The Christian walk is a battle against the world, the flesh and the devil and all of us can trip up. We need to be careful that we don't become smug so that we look with a secret sense of superiority upon glib Catholic, Protestant Ecumenicals, extreme Pentecostal/Charismatics, or misguided Evangelicals.

In all cases we must not be too hasty in our judgements.

WHERE NEXT?

This article has focused only on the early stages of a very long process of turning away from God. In effect we have studied the building blocks and the cement of a throne of idolatry that the Papacy skilfully erected to rule over its followers who, in earlier times, were, in the main, illiterate and thus content to act like sheep following their ecclesiastical masters.

The Roman Catholic Church like any cult has to extend its control to survive. By its very evil nature it could not stand still. A new dimension was needed.

What was required was a unique personality fit for a throne, acceptable to all the faithful.

Imagine such a person having exceptional beauty seated on a raised chair gloriously bedecked in radiant colour, surrounded by a mysterious aura, with the ability to hold your gaze indefinitely; a person who appears to have divine supernatural powers; a person who is in tune with church tradition and sympathetic to your old nature; a person who claims to know the future, and always holds your well-being in her hands. Would that person not be wonderfully attractive, and would it not be very difficult indeed to resist giving your undivided adoration to her, if you knew no better?

That of course is exactly what has been going on since the 16th century when the Roman Catholic Mary started to "reveal" herself in person, beginning with the apparition of Our Lady of Guadalupe in 1531.

That's the other half of this amazing story of deception and we will consider all that in the second part of this article.

The Lord bless you.

(Scripture quotes from The New American Standard Bible.)

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About the Author

CHRIS POLLARD pastors a small independent Christian fellowship called "The Church in the Valley" in the Huon area south of Hobart, Tasmania. The church was born out of the disillusionment of a group of believers and the obvious need to counter the unbiblical teachings so rife today. Their focus can be summed up in their motto "Christ the Lord, His Word the Standard". Chris works as coordinator of four group homes for intellectually handicapped adults under the auspices of the Hobart City Mission. He has been married to Elizabeth for 35 years. They have three daughters and three granddaughters. His contact email is cpollard@hcm.asn.au



unmasked

Kenneth Copeland

second in a 3-part series

By **BRETT BIGG**
CWM-Brisbane

PART 2: Copeland's ideas on FAITH as a FORCE, the FALL, and FLYING for FORTY million dollars

"Faith is not a product of reason
... Believers are not to be led by
logic. We are not to be led by logic.
We are not even to be led by
good sense."

(*The Force of Faith*, KCP,
1993, P10)

TO believe such statements is to deny the very cognitive reasoning skills and analytical abilities inherent in man. The skills God gave us. And it is by this type of Copelandism (sayings, teachings and clichés of Kenneth Copeland, his "ministry" and fellow Word-Faith "ministers") that Kenneth Copeland fools people into believing his teachings. Let us ask this question: "If we are not to be led by logic, reasoning, or even good sense, then why would a teacher of such a doctrine publish a book — which requires that it be read, thought upon, considered and reasoned — in order for this teaching to be believed and followed?"

For over thirty years Kenneth Copeland, and his wife Gloria, have been preaching the 'Word-Faith Gospel'. But is the Gospel preached by Kenneth and Gloria Copeland the same as that preached by Paul (Saul of Tarsus) — the writer of much of the New Testament? Many issues arise when comparing the doctrines of Copeland (and Kenneth Copeland Ministries — KCM) with the Bible. But before we unmask the man and his teachings, let us consider the following verses of Scripture.

"But false prophets also arose
among the people, just as there will

also be false teachers among you,
who will secretly introduce destruc-
tive heresies, even denying the
Master who bought them, bringing
swift destruction upon themselves.
Many will follow their sensuality, and
because of them the way of the truth
will be maligned."

— 2 Peter 2:1-2 (Updated New
American Standard)

...is the gospel preached by
Kenneth and Gloria Copeland the
same as that preached by Paul
(Saul of Tarsus) the writer of much
of the New Testament?

"Let not many of you become
teachers, my brethren, knowing that
as such we will incur a stricter
judgment."

— James 3:1

"But I am afraid that, as the
serpent deceived Eve by his crafti-
ness, your minds will be led astray
from the simplicity and purity of
devotion to Christ. For if one comes
and preaches another Jesus whom
we have not preached, or you receive
a different spirit which you have not
received, or a different gospel which
you have not accepted, you bear this
beautifully."

— 2 Corinthians 11:3-4

"I am amazed that you are so
quickly deserting Him who called you
by the grace of Christ, for a different
gospel; which is really not another;
only there are some who are
disturbing you and want to distort the
gospel of Christ. But even if we, or
an angel from heaven, should preach
to you a gospel contrary to what we
have preached to you, he is to be

*accursed! As we have said before, so
I say again now, if any man is
preaching to you a gospel contrary to
what you received, he is to be
accursed!"*

— Galatians 1:6-9

The New Testament warns concerning
the responsibility of True Teachers. Further-
more it warns that false teachers will come
— that they will preach and teach a differ-
ent Jesus and a different Gospel.

Galatians 1:6-9 has a grave bear-
ing in this document, for
should Kenneth Copeland (or
I for that matter) preach a dif-
ferent Gospel, then surely we
MUST say "Amen (so be it)" to
Paul's condemnatory criticism
of him — and like persons.

Who is Kenneth Copeland? Bio-
graphically I will say that Kenneth went to
college (Oral Roberts University — ORU)
in 1967 to improve his education. Whilst
there he secured a job as co-pilot on Oral
Roberts' cross-country crusade flights. In
August of 1967 he heard the teachings of
Kenneth Hagin and subsequently im-
mersed himself in his message. In 1968
he returned to Fort Worth, Texas where he
established his ministry (KCM — Kenneth
Copeland Ministries).

Concerning his time at college,
Copeland is reported to have said that he
"learned nothing during the six months he
was at ORU" {Charles Farah, Jr. "A Critical
Analysis: The 'Roots and Fruits' of Faith-
Formula Theology," *PNEUMA: The Journal
of the Society for Pentecostal Studies*,
Volume 3 (Spring 1981), p3-21}.

And concerning the messages he
preached when he started his ministry,
Copeland has said that he preached
Hagin's messages/sermons. So Kenneth
Copeland did not get his message from
the Bible, but from man; and it is in, and
on, this foundation (or lack thereof) that
the Kenneth Copeland Ministries "empire"
is built.

The Ministry

Concerning the purpose and goal of KCM, Copeland says:

"Now the purpose and the goal of this ministry, this is THE purpose and the goal of this ministry, I want you to turn off your religious thinking a minute. First thing somebody says 'what' is the purpose and goal of this ministry' ... 'well the purpose and goal of this ministry to get souls saved'..., well that's true yes, that is the purpose of the body of Christ, that's the purpose of every believer. But there are different offices of ministry, there are different callings, there are different purposes inside that calling, and the purpose and the calling of this ministry as of this day is to bring the body of Christ to a working, believing, operating, functioning knowledge of the laws that govern abundance in the kingdom of God.

When God says I'll meet your needs according to My riches in glory, I want to know what those are, OK? And that's where we are, is to share that with the body of Christ. To know what to do how to function, in order to prosper in the earth, to be in line with the earth, in order to win the world and bring the body of Christ to a place where Jesus can come."

The KCM website ("About KCM" WebPage) states:

"At Kenneth Copeland Ministries, we take God's Word as final authority. That's why for more than 33 years, ever since the Lord told Kenneth Copeland to preach the uncompromised Word of God on every available voice, proclaiming the truth of God's Word and His unconditional love has been the focus and mission of Kenneth Copeland Ministries."

"... we take God's Word as final authority. ... the Lord told Kenneth Copeland to preach the uncompromised Word of God ...".

If this is true then an examination of the doctrine of Kenneth Copeland and his ministry should prove that it is based on Truth - the truth found in God's Word. Let us now examine these teachings; let us use our brains, use our logic, use our reasoning, and use our good sense (let alone common sense). As Paul says (concerning overseers - yet which can equally be applied to us),

"... holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the

teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict."

—Titus 1:9

The Fall of Man

The doctrines (teachings) of Kenneth Copeland and Word-Faith are all derived from the same root fundamental misunderstanding of God, man, Satan and the fall in the Garden by Adam and Eve. Word-Faith "Creation/Fall" doctrine is:

- God created man in his image ... i.e. we are little gods.
- God put Adam (a little god) in charge of the Earth.
- Adam and Eve sinned and committed high treason and handed the Earth over to Satan.
- And subsequently Satan became the god of this world and had authority and control over it.
- God lost everything, and was on the outside looking in.

The doctrines (teachings) of Kenneth Copeland and Word-Faith are all derived from the same root fundamental misunderstanding of God, man, Satan and the fall in the Garden by Adam and Eve.

In preaching this doctrine, Copeland says:

"God's reason for creating Adam was His desire to reproduce Himself. I mean a reproduction of Himself, and in the Garden of Eden He did just that. He was not a little like God. He was not almost like God. He was not subordinate to God even. Adam is as much like God as you could get, just the same as Jesus. Adam, in the Garden of Eden, was God manifested in the flesh."

("Following the Faith of Abraham I," side 1)

"He [Adam] was not subordinate to God ... [but] was walking as a god with the authority of a god. ... What he said went. What he did, counted. [And when he] bowed his knee to Satan and put Satan up above him, then there wasn't anything God could do about it, because a god had placed [Satan] there."

("The Force of Love," tape #02-0028)

"God had no avenue of lasting faith or moving in the earth. He had to have covenant with somebody..."

He had to be invited in, in other words, or He couldn't come."

("God's Covenant with Man II", 1985, tape #01-4404, side 1)

"the reason that He's making covenant is to get into the earth."

("God's Covenant with Man II", 1985, tape #01-4404, side 1)

Please note that in Genesis we see God giving the instructions, not Adam. If "he was not subordinate to God ... [but] was walking as a god with the authority of a god" — then Adam and Eve's decision to "eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil" was NOT sin.

If we consider the above statements from a simplistic perspective (i.e. use logic and reason out) we can see the following problems with this doctrine:

1. If Satan was in charge, why didn't he tell God to, "go take a hike" when he came to walk in the Garden?
2. If Satan was in charge (had the authority) by what right did God curse the Serpent?
3. If Satan owned the World:
 - What right did God have to make clothing out of animal skins for Adam and Eve?
 - What right did God have to expel Adam and Eve from the Garden?
 - What right did God have to place a Cherubim and Flaming Sword, in the garden, to guard the way to the tree of life?
 - What right did God have to curse and mark Cain?
 - What right did God have to take Enoch - one of Satan's possessions?
 - What right did God have to flood the Earth?
 - What right did God have to talk to Abram — one of Satan's possessions?
 - What right did God have to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah?
 - By what right did God kill the first born of Egypt?

And the list goes on!

If God lost the earth then did God lie when he said,

"For every beast of the forest is Mine, The cattle on a thousand hills. I know every bird of the mountains, And everything that moves in the field is Mine. If I were hungry I would not tell you, For the world is Mine, and all it contains."

—Psalm 50:10-12

Indoctrinated Word-Faith and Copeland disciples would cite the tempting of Jesus in the wilderness as support of the "lost

earth” doctrine. However if we view the relevant verses of Scripture we will find the truth.

“Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory; and he said to Him, “All these things I will give You, if You fall down and worship me.”

— Matthew 4:8-9

“And he led Him up and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said to Him, “I will give You all this domain and its glory; for it has been handed over to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. “Therefore if You worship before me, it shall all be Yours.”

— Luke 4:5-7

Notice that the devil did NOT show Jesus the “world”, he showed Jesus all the “kingdoms of the world”. It was not the world that Satan had, but the Kingdoms — the people of the World. Satan held man captive. Satan is the “god of this world” inasmuch that People choose to ignore God and listen to the devil. Christ came to free us from the captivity of sin and from the devil and his devices.

*“Therefore as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, having been firmly rooted and now being built up in Him and established in your faith, just as you were instructed, and overflowing with gratitude. See to it that **no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ.**”*

— Colossians 2:6-8

*“The Lord’s bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance **leading to the knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will.**”*

— 2 Timothy 2:24-26

Statement of Faith

If you visit the Kenneth Copeland Ministries website, you can view their Statement of Faith, which states:

- We believe in one God - Father, Son and Holy Spirit, Creator of all things.
- We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ,

the only begotten Son of God, was conceived of the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, was crucified, died, was buried, was resurrected, ascended into heaven, and is now seated at the right hand of God the Father and is true God and true man.

- We believe the Bible in its entirety to be the inspired Word of God and the infallible rule of faith and conduct.
- We believe in the resurrection of the dead, the eternal happiness of the saved, and the eternal punishment of the lost.
- We believe in personal salvation of believers through the shed blood of Jesus Christ.
- We believe in sanctification through the Word of God and by the Holy Spirit, and we believe in personal holiness, purity of heart and life.
- We believe in divine healing, through faith in the Name of Jesus Christ, and that healing is included in the Redemption.
- We believe in water baptism, in the Baptism in the Holy Spirit as distinct from

Notice that the devil did NOT show Jesus the “world”, he showed Jesus all the “kingdoms of the world”. It was not the world that Satan had, but the kingdoms — the people of the world.

the New Birth, in speaking with tongues as the Spirit of God gives utterance (Acts 2:4), in the gifts of the Spirit, and the evidence of the fruit of the Spirit. We believe that all of these are available to believers.

- We believe in the Christian’s hope—the soon-coming, personal return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Kenneth Copeland advertises his ministry as being Christian, even orthodox or evangelical by their Statement of Faith. What is not advertised here is the meaning of some of the words used and statements made in his Statement of Faith. What does Copeland mean by:

- We believe in personal salvation of believers through the **shed blood of Jesus Christ.**
- We believe in divine healing, through faith in the Name of Jesus Christ, and that healing is included in the **Redemption.**

The Redemption of Man

If you look at the Cross, what do you see? From the arrest at the Garden of Gethsemane to the resurrection of Christ, what do you understand to have happened? What does Copeland believe hap-

pened? Below you will find some of the many expositions by Copeland on what transpired — from Jesus’ arrest to His resurrection; and yes there are many, and I must repeat many lest anyone say that Copeland is anything but consistent in his heresies and blasphemies.

“He [Jesus] allowed the devil to drag Him into the depths of hell as if He were the most wicked sinner who ever lived ... Every demon in hell came down on Him to annihilate Him ... Every demon in hell tortured Him beyond anything that anybody has ever conceived. For three days He suffered everything there is to suffer. Some people don’t want to believe that. They want to believe that after His death, Jesus just stayed in the upper region of Sheol that the Bible calls paradise - where the saints waited for redemption. But they’re mistaken! If He had simply stayed there, there would have been no price for sin. What then would have been the use of shedding His precious blood? ... In a thunder of spiritual force, the voice of God

spoke to the death-whipped, broken, punished spirit of Jesus ... That Word of the living God went down into that pit of destruction and charged the spirit of Jesus with resurrection power!

Suddenly His twisted, death-racked spirit began to fill out and come back to life. He began to look like something the devil had never seen before ... He [Jesus] was literally being reborn before the devil’s very eyes. He began to flex His spiritual muscles. Jesus was born again—the firstborn from the dead the Word calls Him—and He whipped the devil in his own backyard. He took everything he had away from him. He took his keys and his authority away from him ... Jesus Christ dragged Satan up and down the halls of hell ... Jesus ... was raised up a born-again man ... The day I realized that a born-again man had defeated Satan, hell, and death, I got so excited ...!”

(“The Price of it All,” Believer’s Voice of Victory magazine [BVVOV], Sept 1991)

“He [Jesus] is suffering all that there is to suffer. There is no suffering left apart from Him. His emaciated, poured out, little, wormy spirit is down in the bottom of that thing [hell]. And the Devil thinks he’s got Him destroyed.”

(“Believer’s Voice of Victory” program, 21 April 1991. This message was originally delivered at the Full Gospel Motorcycle Rally Association 1990 Rally at Eagle Mountain Lake, Texas.)

"It wasn't the physical death on the cross that paid the price for sin, anybody could do that. Every prophet that walked the face of the earth under the Abrahamic covenant could have paid the price if it were a physical death only."

(*"What Happened From the Cross to the Throne?"* 1990, tape #02-0017, side 2)

"The righteousness of God was made to be sin. He accepted the sin nature of Satan in His own spirit. And at that moment that He did so He cried, 'My God, My God, Why hast thou forsaken me?' You don't know what happened at the cross. Why do you think Moses, upon instruction of God, raised the serpent upon that pole instead of a lamb? That used to bug me. I said, 'Why in the world would you want to put a snake up there - the sign of Satan? Why didn't you put a lamb on that pole?' And the Lord said, 'Because it was a sign of Satan that was hanging on the cross.' He (Jesus) said, 'I accepted in my own spirit, spiritual death; and the light was turned off.'"

(*"What Happened From the Cross to the Throne?"* 1990, tape #02-0017, side 2)

"Satan didn't realize He [Jesus] is in there [hell] illegally. This man had not sinned. This man has not fallen out of the covenant of God, and He had the promise of God for deliverance. And Satan fell into the trap. He took Him into hell illegally. He carried Him in there [when] He did not sin."

(*"What Happened From the Cross to the Throne?"* 1990, tape #02-0017, side 2)

"When He said 'It is finished' on that cross, He was not speaking of the plan of redemption. The plan of redemption had just begun, there were still three days and three nights to be gone through...[Jesus] accepted the sin nature of Satan in His own Spirit, and at the moment that He did so, He cried 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? He [Jesus] was down in that pit and there he suffered the punishment for three horrible days and nights for Adam's treason. There is a new birth takes place in the very depths of the earth, when the command of God says 'That's enough, loose him and let him go.'"

(*"What Happened From the Cross to the Throne?"* 1990, tape #02-0017, side 2)

"When Jesus cried, 'It is finished!' He was not speaking of the plan of redemption. There were still three days and nights to go through before He went to the throne...Jesus' death on the cross was only the beginning of the complete work of redemption."

(*"Jesus - Our Lord of Glory", Believers Voice of Victory (BVOV),* April 1982)

"The Spirit of God spoke to me and He said, 'Son, realize this. Now follow me in this and don't let your tradition trip you up.' He said, 'Think this way - a twice-born man whipped Satan in his own domain.' And I threw my Bible down...like that. I said, 'What?' He said, 'A born-again man defeated Satan, the firstborn of many brethren defeated him.' He said, 'You are the very image, the very copy of that one.' I said, 'Goodness, gracious sakes alive!' And I began to see what had gone on in there, and I said, 'Well now you

The gospel according to Kenneth Copeland is anything but "according to the scriptures". You will NOT find Copeland's gospel anywhere in the Old Testament.

don't mean, you couldn't dare mean, that I could have done the same thing?' He said, 'Oh yeah, if you'd had the knowledge of the Word of God that He did, you could have done the same thing, 'cause you're a reborn man too.'"

(*"Substitution and Identification",* tape #00-0202, side 2)

"Let me tell you something folks. Anybody in here that's ever been sexually abused, listen to me right now. Listen to me very carefully. The bible's very careful about the way it says these things. But down there in that dungeon, Romans, ungodly men, ungodly men, put him (Jesus) to every kind of abuse that you can think of. There is no sin that Jesus didn't bear. There is no thing, there is no such thing as a sexual abuse on somebody that Jesus doesn't know first hand what it's all about. He's been where you are, I don't care what you've been through, Jesus has been through it. And everything's done to him that we couldn't even speak of."

(*"The Resurrection Truth",* audiotape)

We must seriously consider where Copeland's doctrine leads us. Did Christ redeem us, or did the devil, or both? If, as Copeland claims, that Jesus had to be tortured by the devil and his cohorts in order for the Plan of Redemption to be completed, then Satan is our Co-Redeemer with Christ.

For had he not tortured Jesus enough then "the plan" would have failed. Funnily enough, Paul does NOT believe this - for if he did he would have preached it, and taught it; but he didn't. Paul says (emphasis added):

"Those who desire to make a good showing in the flesh try to compel you to be circumcised, simply so that they will not be persecuted for the cross of Christ. For those who are circumcised do not even keep the Law themselves, but they desire to have you circumcised so that they may boast in your flesh. But may it never be that I would boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation."

— Galatians 6:12-15

"Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep; then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles; and last of all, as to one untimely born, He appeared to me also."

— 1 Corinthians 15:1-8

Notice that Paul qualifies the statements he makes about the Gospel by saying, "according to the Scriptures".

The Gospel according to Kenneth Copeland is anything but "according to the Scriptures". You will NOT find Copeland's Gospel anywhere in the Old Testament.

And if Copeland's Gospel is not Paul's Gospel then we are left with NO CONCLU-

SION WHATSOEVER but to agree with Paul in saying, concerning Copeland, “Let him be accursed”.

If Kenneth Copeland’s “gospel” is not the Gospel of Jesus Christ, then what is he a minister of? Obviously, not the Gospel!

If he believes and teaches a false gospel; then he is not in-Christ. And if he is not in-Christ then he does NOT have the Spirit of Christ.

He claims the titles of “prophet” and “teacher” — and to some extent “apostle”. But if he isn’t sealed by the Holy Spirit, then he can’t have any gifts of the Spirit. If he prophesies then whose voice is he hearing? God’s? I think not!

Teachings In-Between

It is because of the simple fact that Copeland does not know God, and is not known by God (in the sense of Galatians 4:9) that he teaches what he does.

Devoid of any true knowledge of God, Copeland can do nothing else but preach his perversions. He holds distorted views of God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, creation, man and Satan. Therefore any and all things that he subsequently preaches and teaches is based upon this foundation of refuse (rubbish, trash, dung).

Copeland and Word-Faith adherents talk about being “led by the Spirit” as opposed to reason, logic or even theological studies.

Jesse Duplantis, who has regularly accompanied Copeland on his campaigns and rallies, belittles theologians (i.e. a person who formally studies God and His Word) with sarcastic jibes about their “homiletical, hermeneutical, exegetical speech”. And though theologians may use such terms, which may seem foreign to persons without any formal Bible training; what they (Copeland and company) don’t say is that these terms can be applied, in varying degrees, to all who preach and/or teach.

For example, “homiletics” is the art of preaching, “hermeneutics” means to interpret or to explain; and “exegetics” is the critical explanation or examination of Scripture with the intention of determining what the original intention of the author was.

Anyone who has stood before a congregation and led Communion has practised homiletics and has probably utilised hermeneutics or exegesis or both.

The mockery of these terms is not a mockery of the function of the terms —

but is used to belittle, mock and discredit formal studies of the Word of God — and especially those that would show the disgraceful teachings of Copeland et al.

With NO Holy Spirit to guide him, disdain for formal theology and studies; and with the heresies of Kenyon and Hagin as his foundation, is it any surprise to find Copeland teaching the following:

Faith is a Force

“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good report.”

— Hebrews 11:1-2 (KJV)

Kenneth Copeland Ministries publishes their own KJV Bible (*Kenneth Copeland Reference Edition*). The reason they use the KJV is that it is public domain material; i.e. there is no copyright owner and therefore it is free to reproduce.

In utilising this version Copeland applies modern understanding to words, which were chosen for the interpretation of Greek and Latin manuscripts some several hundred years ago.

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Consequently, Copeland uses the word “substance” to justify his interpretation and application of Faith being a Spiritual Force.

If we use a little logic, reason and common sense and look up the word “faith” in the Strong’s Concordance we find that the word translated was the Greek word “*pistis*” which means a conviction of truth, and is derived from the Greek word “*peitho*” which means to persuade, be persuaded or to believe.

Also, if we look up the word “substance” we find that the Greek word “*hupostasis*” means “foundation, steadfastness, resolution, confidence and assurance”.

Comparatively, if we look at a modern translation with a modern rendering of these words we read:

“Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of

things not seen. For by it the men of old gained approval.”

— Hebrews 11:1-2 (Updated New American Standard)

No “substance”, nothing “physical” or even “super spiritual”. God moves in response to our faith — not because I have attained some force (like in Star Wars, where Luke Skywalker is told to practise the use of his “[faith] force”); but because I believe, trust and truly rely on His Mercy, His Grace, His Power, His Ability and His Love — to help me.

You are a little god / The Deification of Man (and Kenneth Copeland)

“Jesus is no longer the only begotten Son of God.”

(“Now We Are In Christ Jesus”, BVOV, 1980) {Note this contradicts the KCM Statement of Faith}

“You are not a spiritual schizophrenic — half God and half Satan - you are all God.”

(“Now We Are In Christ Jesus”, BVOV, 1980)

You’re all God. You don’t have a God living in you; you **are** one! ... When I read in the Bible where God tells Moses, ‘I AM,’ I say, ‘Yah, I am too!’

(“The Force of Love,” Tape BBC-56).

“I say this with all respect so that it don’t upset you too bad, but I say it anyway. When I read in the Bible where he [Jesus] says, ‘I Am,’ I just smile and say, ‘Yes, I Am, too!’

(Kenneth Copeland, *Believer’s Voice of Victory* program, TBN July 9, 1987)

This teaching is the same lie that the Serpent told Eve in the Garden!

*“Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then **your eyes shall be opened**, and*

ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree was **good for food**, and that it was **pleasant to the eyes**, and a **tree to be desired to make one wise**, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat."

— Genesis 3:1-6

Firstly, we must note that the Serpent's tempting of Eve included the deceptive comment that if she ate of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil she would "be as gods". Now if Adam and Eve were already in the God class, as Copeland teaches, then such a statement is redundant and ridiculous.

Furthermore, the "to make one wise" in the original Hebrew includes the understanding and action to be able to make decisions on one's own volition and will, and stresses the underlying concept of 'prospering' or 'having success'. That Hebrew word is "sakal" and is defined by Strong's as:

"to be (cause. make or act) circumspect and hence intelligent:—consider, expert, instruct, prosper, (deal) prudent (-ly), (give) skill (-ful), have good success, teach, (have, make to) understand (-ing), wisdom, (be, behave self, consider, make) wise (-ly), guide wittingly."

Eve's motivation here is the wisdom to be able to make a decision independent of God; a desire which does not originate in God.

"For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world."

— 1 John 2:16

Notice Eve, in her pre-fallen state, doing exactly what John warns about:

- lust of the flesh: "the woman saw that the tree was good for food",
- lust of the eyes: "it was pleasant to the eyes",
- pride of life: "a tree to be desired to make one wise".

"Then, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat."

— Genesis 3:6

Copeland offers the same "fruit" — "you'll be like God".



FLYING FOR \$40 Million: "His" and "Hers" – "PLANE-TRUTH"

The October 2003 edition of the *Believer's Voice of Victory* magazine [BVOV] includes the article "Become Part of the Elite CX Team", in which Mac Gober (of Canaan Land Ministries) talks about his desire to assist KCM in getting, not one, but two, Cessna Citation X's. The article includes some of the performance characteristics

BVOV has included a response form insert for you to identify your desire to "be on the Elite CX Team," and as such "I am enclosing \$US2,000 and believing for the hundredfold return."

of these planes, namely, they are "the world's fastest mid-size corporate jet", "can reach 43,000 feet in a mere 30 minutes" and "can make the flight between Los Angeles and New York City in an impressive four hours and 10 minutes". Subsequently, Gober is calling for 10,000 people who are "willing and able to give" to become members of the "Elite CX Team".

Gober says, "God has put something on my heart, I have a mandate from God to share it with you. Kenneth and Gloria Copeland need two Citation X's ... to take the Word of God to more places in less time." The article also includes a supporting word from Copeland, "Gloria and I have prayed about it, and we are behind him [Mac Gober] 100 percent. We would never hinder a Partner from doing what God has called him to do, and we believe that Mac has heard from the Lord about raising up an Elite CX Team".

So what's the catch, to become a member of this Elite CX Team? The Citation X aircraft cost US\$20,000,000.00 (twenty million US dollars), so to be eligible for



entry into this "elite" Team, you will need to "sow" or "give" \$2,000.00; and that's just for one aircraft. Anticipating your "faithfulness", BVOV has included a response form insert for you to identify your desire to "be on the Elite CX Team," and as such "I am enclosing \$US2, 000 and believing for the hundredfold return."

The article concludes with a list of "benefits" which each "Elite CX Team Member" will "enjoy":

- A monthly update letter from Brother Copeland — especially for you
 - The opportunity to purchase Elite CX Team Member apparel, mugs and Bible covers
 - Monthly updates via the Internet
 - Online giving
 - A special Internet site: elitecxteam.org
 - The knowledge that you're part of a mission that's close to the heart of God
- This is nothing more than materialism gone mad: his and hers "ministerial" corporate jets. The difference between Paul (and other true missionaries) and Kenneth Copeland is that Copeland will never be able to say:

"Are they servants of Christ?— I speak as if insane— I more so; in far more labours, in far more imprisonments, beaten times without number, often in danger of death. Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine lashes. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have spent in the deep. I have been on frequent journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from my countrymen, dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers on the sea, dangers among false brethren; I have been in labour and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. Apart from such external

things, there is the daily pressure on me of concern for all the churches. Who is weak without my being weak? Who is led into sin without my intense concern? If I have to boast, I will boast of what pertains to my weakness. The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, He who is blessed forever, knows that I am not lying."

— 2 Corinthians 11:23-31

How much more could be done with \$20,000,000.00 dollars (U.S.) than buying non-essential aircraft; and non-essential they are. On the 'elitecxteam.com' website (specifically the "It's all about souls" page), KCM says, "When God tells Kenneth to travel to South Africa and hold a three-day Victory Campaign, he won't have to wait to make commercial travel arrangements. He can just climb aboard his Citation X and go! He will be able to hold more meetings each year and go more places—places he couldn't go before. Each Citation X will be another tool in the hands of God's people." Considering that the itinerary of Copeland is planned months in advance the idea of having to "wait to make commercial travel arrangements" is outrageous.

To encourage people to give into this egotistical and materialistic project, Copeland and Gober use the secular/humanistic characteristics of modern marketing; that is, appeal to people's selfishness and pride. After all, "you could":

- Pridefully/Boastfully be "one of only 10,000 people".
- Pridefully/Boastfully be "an EXCLUSIVE member of this ELITE team"
- Boastfully show off your "member apparel, mugs and bible cover"
- Pridefully know YOU have a special internet site.

If, as Copeland implies, things are so bad (and Copeland so right) that such speeds for transit were a necessity (as if satellite communications isn't fast enough), then God could raise up more people to do the job; or alternatively God could (in His sovereignty) instantly transport them (Copeland et al) to where He wanted them.

For instance, Philip the Evangelist (Acts chapter 8) did NOT market the believers

at Jerusalem so that he could purchase the fastest available chariot - so that after he had witnessed to the Ethiopian, he could quickly get to Azotus (Acts 8:40) before travelling to Caesarea. God took him to where God wanted him. And likewise with Saul (Paul), he travelled by moving his legs and taking commercial transport such as boats.

To "biblically" justify the marketing for these aircraft, the "Scripture Behind the Vision" web page on the 'elitecxteam.com' website says:

"As you pray about the call to be an Elite CX Team member, consider this passage of Scripture that will help explain in more detail what we're called to do.

"During harvest time, three of the thirty chief men came down to David at the cave of Adullam, while a band of Philistines was encamped in the Valley of Rephaim. At that time David was in the stronghold, and the Philistine garrison was at

To encourage people to give into this egotistical and materialistic project, Copeland and Gober use ... modern marketing; that is appeal to people's selfishness and pride.

Bethlehem. David longed for water and said, 'Oh, that someone would get me a drink of water from the well near the gate of Bethlehem.' So the three mighty men [or you could say the 10,000 Elite CX Team members] broke through the Philistine lines, drew water from the well near the gate of Bethlehem and carried it back to David."

— 2 Samuel 23:13-16

When I read this, it summed up the Elite CX Team in a nutshell—men and women willing to go the extra mile to help a man of God. If that's you, be obedient and join me as a member of this special forces team."

(As at 17 October 2003) <http://elitecxteam.org/scripture/>

If we look at this incident in 2 Samuel we see that David desired to drink of the

water from the well near the gate. However David did NOT formally ask anyone to get him the water — these men acted without prompting.

Secondly, Copeland's paraphrasing above omits the second half to verse 16, which says, "Nevertheless he would not drink it, but poured it out to the LORD". David did not partake of the efforts of the "three mighty men [or you could say "the 10,000 Elite CX Team members"]"; whereas Copeland, with his prompting for "mighty men", desires to partake and intends to partake.

How much more an impact would there be if the money were to be used to buy Bibles for China, Vietnam and third-world countries; or sponsoring TRUE missionaries to reach the lost in these countries and the middle-east? Is there any wonder why the world thinks that tele-evangelists are in it 'just for the money and the prestige'?

The call for Elite CX Team members and the giving of money is also used to distract us from the obvious on-going costs associated with these aircraft.

Though the aircraft themselves will be purchased outright, you have to consider the following costs, which KCM (and its partners) will have to "find" money for:

- Staff: pilots and ground crews
- Aircraft Maintenance
- Fuel
- Airport Landing Fees

These are the very reasons why people, in general, don't have their own aircraft — but take the airlines. Money **will** have to be taken from other 'services' to fund these.

Finally, one could propose a reason for Copeland to own his own jet. To avoid being "caught" by future terrorist attempts on commercial airline, the Word-Faith positive confession (escapist) attitude (of its leaders) is not to pray against terrorism but to "believe" for their own aircraft. Doesn't that sound rather hypocritical?

You can contact Brett Bigg by email brett@bvov.net. Website (www.bvov.net).

NEXT: PART 3 — KENNETH COPELAND: JOB'S FEAR, GOD'S FAILURE AND FAVOURING TORONTOISM

Visit our website...
www.christian-witness.org

BRISBANE / GOLD COAST
Tune in to "Insight to Life"
channel 31 Brisbane each Sunday at 3pm

Fellowshipping... worldwide

"Those who feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD heard it . . ."

— Malachi 3:16.

CWM has compiled a list of Australian Churches and Groups as recommended fellowship links — see <http://www.christian-witness.org/cwmf/cwmf.html> — and are working on similar lists in New Zealand, Great Britain and elsewhere. Please stay tuned.

Bill Randles Tour Australia



28 Feb
14 March 2004

(For full details see enclosed flyer or contact CWM Australia)

— SPECIAL FEATURES —

**Brisbane-Sunshine Coast
Saturday Seminar, February 28**

commencing 11am (tea and coffee from 10.15 am)
BYO lunch

VENUE: Caloundra Holiness Church, 19 Industrial Ave
(opp. Fire Station), CALOUNDRA QLD 4551

THEME: "The Lord sent His Word and healed them ..."

**Melbourne Conference
Friday to Sunday, March 5 to 7**

VENUE: Kings Way Christian Fellowship,
Glen Waverley, Melbourne

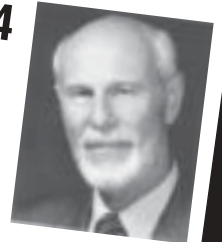
THEME: "The Glorious Appearing of Christ, how should
we then live?"

Dave Hunt Tour New Zealand

14-22 August 2004

— REGIONAL RALLIES —

**in Auckland, Hamilton,
Napier, Wellington and
Christchurch.**



Full details next CETF or contact coordinator
Sam Cope at +64 (0) 9 528 4061

Australia 4-21 September 2004

— REGIONAL RALLIES —

**in Brisbane, Sydney, Canberra,
Melbourne, Hobart, Adelaide & Perth.**

Full details next CETF or contact coordinator
John Odell —

email: odellj@bigpond.com
phone: +61 (0) 2 9869 7164

CWM Conference at Whitby, UK 18-22 October 2004



FOR REGISTRATION FORM:

contact Alan Nunn alan@christian-ministries.freemove.co.uk
+ 44 (0) 1527-893836.

Accommodation is limited so you will
need to book early.

Please Note: PHILIP POWELL is one
of the invited speakers at Whitby and
is planning a short ministry tour in
connection with his proposed visit,
God willing. Those who want Philip to
speak at their fellowship should
contact Alan Nunn (see detail above)
as soon as possible. In view of limited
time (2 or 3 weeks at the most) we are
hoping to organise Regional Meetings
where this can be arranged.