

BIRDS OF A BIBLE-DENYING FEATHER *continued*

Keeping pace with this kind of compromise that imagines it can rewrite the Bible at will is the other part of this unholy amalgam:

- Pope Francis has called for wording in the Lord's Prayer to be changed. Ironically, when *the Daily Mail* reported on Francis' ecumenical trip to Sweden, one of its bullet point summaries of the Pope's activity was: "*Francis praised Luther for having restored centrality of Scripture to church.*"

This is a classic example of speaking with a forked tongue. Of course, **duplicity** knows no bounds in the world of ecumenism!

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY IN DECEMBER

- 13 December @ 8.00pm: Philippines Deputation Meeting (Mr Noel Stevenson)
- 14 December @ 7.30pm: **Christmas Carol Service** (Jubilee Church)
- 15 December @ 7.00pm: **Martyrs Christmas Dinner**
- 17 December @ 7.00pm: Carol Service
- 19 December @ 6.30pm: Carol Services @ Malton Fold; 7.30pm: Pines Nursing Home
- 31 December @ 10.30pm: **Watchnight Service**



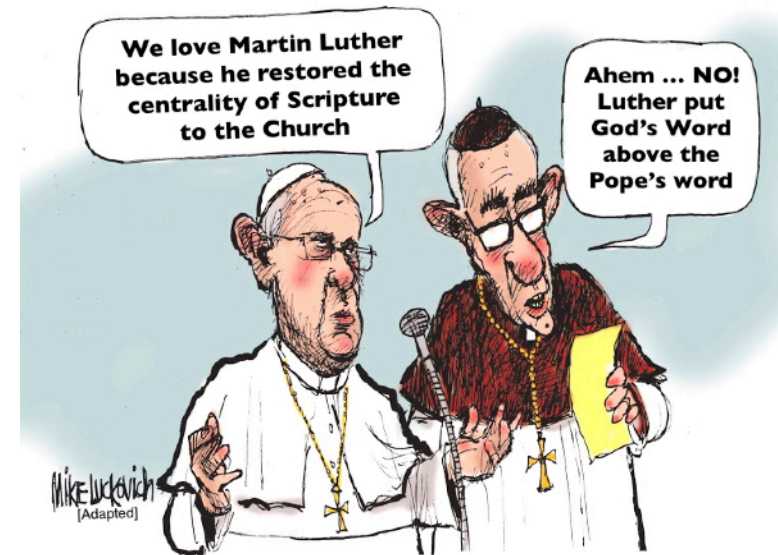
MEETINGS TODAY

- Sunday School/Bible Class – 10.15am | Bible Class – 3.10pm (Rev. Foster) | Afternoon Carol Service – 3.10pm.
- Morning Worship – 11.30am: *8th Message in the Galatians Series* | Evening Service – 7.00pm.

INSPIRATION IN A SENTENCE

"Our works do not generate righteousness; rather our righteousness in Christ generates works."

[Martin Luther]



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One of the first 'ecumenical commemorations' of the Reformation was staged in Sweden in October 2016. It involved the Pope and the (Lutheran) Church of Sweden. If any proof of the anti-biblical nature of both celebrants was required, recent days have provided it.

- First, *The Church of Sweden* is **urging its clergy to use gender-neutral language when referring to the supreme deity** – refraining from using terms like "Lord" and "He" in favour of the less specific "God." This decision was taken Thursday, 21 November, at the end of an eight-day meeting of the church's 251-member decision-making body, and takes effect May 20. The Church of Sweden is headed by a woman, Archbishop Antje Jackelen. Jackelen told Sweden's TT news agency that a more inclusive language had already been discussed at the 1986 conference.



LOOKING FOR THE KNOCKOUT

Text: **Galatians 3:6-9**.

The 60 verses that comprise **Galatians chapters 3 and 4** are some of the strongest, even most pugnacious, writing that Paul ever penned. Locked in a titanic struggle with the Judaisers, he advances six arguments to demonstrate that God saves sinners through faith in Christ and *not* by the works of the law: **PERSONAL (3:1-5)**,

SCRIPTURAL (3:6-14), **LOGICAL (3:15-29)**, **HISTORICAL (4:1-11)**, **SENTIMENTAL (4:12-18)** and **ALLEGORICAL Arguments (4:19-31)** are each marshalled by the apostle with skill and strength.

[3] THE ILLUSTRATION OF THEIR FAITH; 3:6-9 centres on Paul's Scriptural argument and brings us to examine our first - and final - court of appeal, the Bible. "*What does the Bible say on this dispute?*" is precisely what Paul is asking ... and he answers this vital question by referring to **six Old Testament statements** which prove that salvation is by faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law.

(a) THE FACT OF ABRAHAM'S FAITH; 3:6.

Abraham's circumcision did not save him; he was saved through faith (**Genesis 15:6**). Dutch theologian Wilhelmus a Brakel emphasised that when Abraham received by faith the promise of God that he would be father of many nations and that the Saviour would be born from him through Isaac, he not only received *the word* of the promise but *the matter* promised by the word – the promised Saviour (**John 1:12; Romans 4:11**). Having been united by faith to *the matter* of the promise itself (i.e. to Christ), God imputed to Abraham the righteousness of Christ the Surety. If we are ever to be saved, we too must come by this route – faith in the promises of God about His Son, our only Saviour.

(b) THE FRUIT OF ABRAHAM'S FAITH; 3:6.

The words "**accounted**" in **Galatians 3:6** and "counted" in

Genesis 15:6 mean the same as "imputed" in **Romans 4:11, 22-24**. Whatever is reckoned to someone does not belong to them naturally; it is theirs by legal possession, but not by actual right. Our sins were put to Christ's account on the cross. He did not actually become a sinner, but my sin was credited to Him and therefore He was judged by God as though He were a guilty sinner. My sins are therefore no longer on my account (cf. **Romans 4:1-8**). This means that my record is clean before God – and I can never be bought into judgment for my sins.

(c) THE FAMILY OF ABRAHAM'S FAITH; 3:7.

All who follow Abraham in faith have entered into a family. It is a spiritual family, the family of God. Though the Jewish people were extremely proud of their relationship with Abraham, Paul takes pains to proclaim the truth that their physical descent did not produce spiritual life (cf. **Matthew 3:7-9; John 8:33-47**).

[4] THE IDENTICALITY OF THEIR FAITH; 3:8-9.

God preached the "Good News" to Abraham centuries ago, and Paul brought that same Good News to the Galatians, so that all sinners who are justified, whether Jew or Gentile, are justified by faith alone and not by keeping the Law. Which means that the true "children of Abraham" are not merely the Jewish race, but Jews *and* Gentiles who have believed in Christ Jesus!

God's intention to save Gentile peoples was obvious from **Genesis 12:1-3** onward, but is especially evident in those Christ-centred, Messianic, prophecies (cf. **Isaiah 42:6, Isaiah 28:16, Joel 2:32, Isaiah 52:7**).

(i) Confirmation: Paul describes God speaking as, "*And the Scripture ... preached*" – an important identification of God with His Word. The Bible = the Word of God, readily demonstrated by its Scientific Accuracy (**Job 26:7; Isaiah 40:22**), Historical Fidelity (**Daniel 5:29; Luke 2-3**), Incredible Unity, Fulfilled Prophecy and Untouchable Longevity (**1 Peter 1:25**).

(ii) Caution: Vast numbers of people who imagine they are saved because of their association with the people of God are not saved at all.