

C S Lewis: John Piper: Tim Keller. What's the connection?

Regular visitors to the '**Take Heed**' Ministries web site will be aware that over the years I have expressed grave concerns about things written, spoken and taught by each of the individuals mentioned in the title of this article.

In relation to **C S Lewis** this link will take you to one such article

http://www.takeheed.info/Assorted_Articles/Contemporary/Lewis_Avoid.pdf

In relation to **John Piper** this is a link to go to

<http://www.takeheed.info/news-from-the-front-june-2010/>

(Scroll to 'John Piper invite to Rick Warren')

In recent times **Mr Piper** has stirred up much controversy by speaking of '**justification**' and what he terms '**final salvation**'. These links may prove helpful in understanding what appears to be the serious error of his teaching on this.

<http://www.trinityfoundation.org/journal.php?id=331>

<https://thorncrownministries.com/blog/2018/9/16/john-piper-final-salvation-and-the-decline-and-fall-of-sola-fide-part-ii>

<https://thorncrownministries.com/blog/2018/5/6/john-piper-final-salvation-and-the-decline-and-fall-of-sola-fide-part-i>

<https://www.sermonaudio.com/saplayer/playpopup.asp?SID=220181435210>

In relation to **Tim Keller** this is a link to go to

<http://www.takeheed.info/pdf/2015/March/Tim-Keller-fleshing-out-concerns.pdf>

Now, to return to the title of this article, I posed the question -

'What's the connection?'

Well, the '**connection**' quite simply is that both **John Piper** and **Tim Keller** have shown themselves to be '**fully paid-up members**' of the '**C S Lewis appreciation society**' and in Mr Piper's case to what I consider to be a disturbing degree. As evidence for my views I will provide here links to **3 videos** (they can also be accessed via the ministry YouTube site under '**Helpful Videos**'). This is the first link that I would direct you to and it focuses on Mr Piper's admiration for and virtual adoration of C S Lewis.

(1) John Piper & C S Lewis

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=td5N1j2hF1Y>

One personal observation that I would make about this video is that at **19.20** in the video Mr Piper quotes favourably an ‘**accolade from Peter Kreeft**’ – what’s the problem with that you might ask? Well, **Peter Kreeft** is a Roman Catholic who wrote a book called ‘**Ecumenical Jihad**’ and **Gary Gilley** quite rightly warns people to steer well clear of it as you can read on –

<https://tottministries.org/ecumenical-jihad-by-peter-kreeft/>

In addition to Gary’s brief quotes let me add these quotes from the book (pp 159-162)

‘When I think how much my Protestant brothers and sisters are missing in not having Christ’s Real presence in the Eucharist... I at first feel a terrible gap between myself and them. What a tremendous thing they are missing... What a point of division the Eucharist is! One of the two sides is very, very wrong. I said before that if Protestants are right Catholics are making the terrible mistake of idolatrously adoring bread and wine as God. But if Catholics are right, Protestants are making the just-as-terrible mistake of refusing to adore Christ where He is and are missing out on the most... real communion with Christ that is possible in this life, in Holy Communion... the great difference between Protestants and Catholics is tempered by a second thought: that it is the very same Christ, the exact same Christ, the real Christ, that we both worship. We Catholics can worship Him more fully than Protestants can because we know that He is really present in the Eucharist ... We worship the Eucharist because it is Christ... The God who invented the Eucharist is the God who invented the human heart, and He invented the Eucharist to satisfy that heart’.

Peter Kreeft then writes this on the closing page of his book (p 164)

‘The power that will reunite the Church and win the world is Eucharistic adoration’

All I can say is that I would not want to receive any
‘**accolade from Peter Kreeft**’
and I would certainly stay well clear of anyone who
thought that he was a suitable person to quote!

(2) John Piper & Christian Hedonism

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yzNoQwrZkdq>

Christians are aware that the word ‘**Trinity**’ does not appear in the Bible but accept its reality and truth from a careful study of what God’s Word teaches. Similarly, the term ‘**Christian Hedonism**’ does not appear in the Bible but, as you will see in this video, **John Piper** seeks to make a case for it from the scriptures. My own personal opinion is that he fails to make a sound case for it and, as you can see in the video, he cites various verses, but in doing so, he has I believe misrepresented them in order to promote his all-consuming, or so it would appear, belief in ‘**Christian Hedonism**’.

His teaching on '**original sin**' flies in the face of the Genesis account and what Paul says in Romans 5. For Mr Piper, Adam and Eve's '**disobedience**' was not the issue but their '**desire**'. Certainly '**desire**' featured prominently in the run-up to the eating of the forbidden fruit but it was their act of '**disobedience**' that triggered the resultant '**curse-consequences**' as we read in Genesis 3:14-19.

Mr Piper denies that Christians have any duty/obligation to keep **The Ten Commandments** because Jesus has kept them. Certainly, seeking to keep God's commandments will not save us because graciously, as our substitute, Christ lived the fully-obedient life we cannot live and died the judicial death we deserve to die. So, we don't seek to keep God's commandments for saving motives. BUT, our love for God and His so-great salvation in Christ should manifest itself in our keeping of His commandments which are no longer written on tablets of stone but according to God's Word, where believers are concerned, He, God, will "**put my laws into their mind and write them on their hearts, and I will be to them a God and they shall be to me a people**" (**Hebrews 8:10 & Hebrews 10:16**). Why would God put His laws into the minds of believers and write them on the hearts of believers if not for the purpose that, out of love and gratitude to God for His so-great salvation, they should **obey** them?

Mr Piper makes much of Psalm 37:4 "**Delight thyself also in the Lord**" and declares it to be a commandment. In reality, an aged David is telling God's people, that even when the wicked appear to be flourishing in their ungodly ways and lives, the focus of God's people should be the Lord. **C H Spurgeon** writes '**Bad men delight in carnal objects; do not envy them if they are allowed to take their fill... look thou to thy better delight... Every name, attribute, word or deed of Jehovah should be delightful to us**'. Notice Mr Spurgeon includes '**word**' in his list and the same David who wrote Psalm 37 also wrote in Psalm 119: 9-11 "**Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his ways? By taking heed according to thy word. With my whole heart have I sought thee; oh, let me not wander from thy commandments. Thy word have I hidden in my heart that I might not sin against thee**".

In closing my observations on this issue let me quote Philippians 2:12-13 – Paul writes "**Wherefore my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, ... work out your own salvation in fear and trembling. For it is God who worketh in you to will and to do of his good pleasure**". I simply ask, what would it have been that the Philippian believers would have "**obeyed**". Can anyone believe that it would not have been "**the whole counsel of God**" preached to them by the Apostle Paul, as he did in Ephesus, (see Acts 20: 27) and their obedience would have manifested itself by "**the fruits of righteousness ... unto the praise and glory of God**" (Philippians 1:11). It seems to me that Mr Piper's desire for '**Hedonism**' trumps God's desire for "**Holiness**". Peter writes of "**obedient children**" in 1st Peter 1:14 and continues in the next two verses "**But, as he who has called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of life, Because it is written, Be ye holy for I am holy**".

(3) The Real Tim Keller

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HcTHueiG98Y>

In this video Mr Keller's 'ministry' is analysed under a number of headings and I would comment on what I viewed as follows.

Mr Keller's promotion of '**Theistic Evolution**' is highlighted and shows his rejection of the clear teaching of God's Word in Genesis 1 and Romans 5 and his connection with the pro-evolution and creation-rejecting **BIOLOGOS** – '**... the diversity of life is best explained as a result of an evolutionary process**' (2010 **BIOLOGOS** statement quoted on page 122 of '**Theistic Evolution: A Sinful Compromise**' by John M. Otis).

Mr Keller states he is '**where Catholics are**' (something greatly amplified later in the video) and he claims there would have been death before 'his' Adam and Eve sinned because '**animals ate bugs**' - there is no biblical evidence for such a statement relating to the diet of pre-fall animals and perhaps he should read the article on <https://answersingenesis.org/animal-behavior/what-animals-eat/creations-original-diet-and-the-changes-at-the-fall/> which towards the end states '**In the finished creation animals were to eat only vegetation. The studies of herb, seed, and fruit confirm this fact. There is no other option as one examines the biblical record. All the animals and every human were to eat from the plant kingdom; they were not to eat flesh. Even those animals who today eat insects, then consumed only plants.**'

Attention is then drawn to Mr Keller '**Misusing Scripture**' and as you will see he accuses the Pharisees of being '**bible-only people**' whereas the reality was that they were '**bible + tradition**' people. He claims that obeying God's law can equate to rebellion – what utter unbiblical nonsense.

The next section identifies how Mr Keller '**Redefines Sin**' and my impression was that his faulty views on this vital subject in many ways mirror the faulty approach to defining sin also employed by John Piper. Mr Keller refers to what he terms '**Thin sin**' and '**Thick sin**' and I couldn't help thinking that these strange and unbiblical views would sit comfortably with the Roman Catholic unscriptural division of sins into either '**mortal**' or '**venial**'. The reality is that **ALL** sin is mortal as we read in Ezekiel 18:20 and Romans 6:23

We learn next that Mr Keller '**Downplays Repentance**' and by way of evidence we are told of Mr Keller's bizarre and unbiblical views on the motivating factor for the Prodigal Son's return to his father (as outlined in the parable recorded in Luke 15:11-32) – apparently, the son had a '**business plan**' – but there is no mention of '**repentance**'. That is amazing considering this parable is part of a 'trilogy' told by the Lord that each highlight the joy expressed when something '**lost**' is '**found**'. In Luke 15:7, concerning the '**lost sheep**' we read "**I say unto you that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than ninety and nine righteous persons who need no repentance**". Then in Luke 15:10, concerning the '**lost coin**' we read "**Likewise I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth**".

Concerning the **'lost son'** we read the father's views in Luke 15:32 **"It was fitting that we should make merry and be glad; for this thy brother was dead and is alive again; and was lost and is found"**. Can anyone seriously believe the father's cause for rejoicing was the prodigal's **'business plan'** which brought him home and not his **'repentance'?**

Focus now switches to Mr Keller's **'False Gospel'** where Mr Keller's focus is on answering 'cultural questions' rather than addressing 'sin' and 'repentance'. Reference is made also to his worrying attempt in a TV interview to answer if Jesus is the only way to heaven and what would be the fate of those who never hear of Jesus. What struck me was the complete absence of Holy-Spirit-driven scriptural responses.

The next subject addressed was **'Fanaticism'** and the target in sight for Mr Keller was those who claim to have experienced spiritual new birth or who declare they have been **'born again'** and he accuses such as **'going off the deep end'**. To justify his views, he basically outlines caricatures of both **'born again'** believers and even of **The Lord Himself**. In the light of this section I would like to put two questions to Mr Keller (1) Do you consider John the Baptist to be a **'fanatic'** and (2) Do you have a personal testimony of having been **'born again'?**

Mr Keller's understanding of **'The Cross'** is then examined and the only word I can use to describe that understanding is **'skewed'**. But perhaps that is not really surprising when we go on to see the **'Political Motivations'** behind what Mr Keller says and does. As I listened to these my mind immediately thought - **'this is Liberation Theology'** - and lo and behold that's exactly what the video then demonstrated by quoting Mr Keller's admiration for basically the 'founding father' (a Roman Catholic 'father') of that false view of the mission of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The remainder of the video then turns the spotlight on Mr Keller's close association with the **Church of Rome**, obviously viewing it as 'Christian' and his 'love affair' with Roman Catholic **'mystics'** and including also **Ignatius Loyola (founder of the Jesuits)**. His use and promotion of dangerous and often occultic, New Age practices such as **'Meditation'** **'Lectio Divina'** and **'Centering Prayer'** was also identified.

In conclusion, I would simply say that **Dr E S Williams** has done the true body of Christ a wonderful service in producing these three videos. If you have not read his book **'The New Calvinists: Changing the Gospel'** (it includes chapters on Tim Keller and John Piper and others) then I would encourage you to do so and it is available via

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/New-Calvinists-Changing-Gospel-ebook/dp/B00NY4HDQS>

or

<https://www.amazon.com/New-Calvinists-Changing-Gospel-ebook/dp/B00NY4HDQS>

