

# **Are You A Mint Slice?**

**By Patrick Swayne**

One of my favourite Australian biscuits is Arnott's Mint Slice (by the way, to Aussies cookies are biscuits and biscuits are scones – go figure). To get the taste and texture of this biscuit in your mind, imagine a York Peppermint Patty with less of the white stuff in the middle and in its place a chocolate cookie and you're pretty close. During my time in Melbourne, we would occasionally have these biscuits at church luncheons and other functions. On a rare occasion there were some leftovers, which often get placed in a red cookie tin that is kept at the back of the church's building (I just can't bring myself to call it a "biscuit tin").

As I used to work during the week at the church's building, that red cookie tin was a constant source of temptation, especially when there were Mint Slices in it. I generally made short work of them. The reason I did this was that I liked them, but the excuse that I would make is something that I discovered about Mint Slice's.

If you leave Mint Slice's in a sealed container with other biscuits, the mint flavour somehow drifts through the chocolate coating and into all the other biscuits in the container. No matter what the biscuit, if it's placed alongside a Mint Slice it will lose some of its flavour and take on some of the mint flavour. It might very well be said that a little Mint Slice mints the whole lot of the cookies.

As I consider this phenomenon, I am reminded of something Paul once said: "Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?" (1 Corinthians 5:6). Paul said this in reference to the fact that the Christians at Corinth were allowing someone living in sin to dwell in their midst without taking action – they didn't mourn, and they certainly didn't withdraw their fellowship from this unrepentant brother (vv. 1-2, 11-13). His point in using the illustration was that if they continued to allow sin to dwell among them, it would rub off on them and they too would become sinful. His solution was to "purge out the old leaven" (v. 7) and "put away" the brother from their fellowship (v. 13).

Leaven is often used to describe the power and influence of sin, but it is not only used to describe sin. On one occasion, Jesus said, "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till it was all leavened" (Matthew 13:33). Jesus knew that members of the kingdom of heaven (which is the church – Matthew 16:18-19) could have a leavening influence on the world around them just as those living in sin could. Sinfulness can rub off, but so can righteousness, as Christians determine not to "be overcome by evil," but rather to "overcome evil with good" (Romans 12:21).

The question is, which are we – the Mint Slice or the other biscuits in the tin? Do we allow ourselves to be surrounded by evil and to be influenced by it, or do we use our leavening power to multiply the scope and influence of the kingdom of Christ? Let us strive to be like Mint Slice's, and bring righteousness to a lost and dying world.