



Reachout Trust is an international Christian ministry that equips the church, upholds biblical truth and builds bridges to people in the cults, occult and new age.

We aim to:

Examine in the light of the Christian gospel the beliefs and spirituality of people within the cults, occult, new age and all not upholding biblical truth.

Train and equip Christians to explain the Christian gospel in a relevant way.

Provide a complete service of advice and help to all enquirers.

Present the Christian gospel.

Work with organisations who will help achieve these aims.

A detailed information pack that shows how you can be involved in this ministry is available from head office.

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CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF MINISTRY

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Learn The Lessons

The tragedy in America on 11 September has affected most people's lives in one way or another. However I began to wonder whether there were any lessons that might be learnt by a ministry such as ours I felt that there were and would like to share some thoughts I have had.

BE READY

The verse that probably sums up Reachout Trust's ministry more than any other is 1 Peter 3:15,

"...always being ready..."

But are we? Supposing I was sitting next to a Jehovah's Witness or Mormon or indeed an innocent Muslim on one of the planes, would I be able to help them in the little time we had together? This brings home the fact that we need to be prepared and ready before the time—it is just too late when the event takes place.

However it is no different if we meet that person on our doorstep or in the High Street, we still need to have spent time getting ready. Do we know our own gospel so that we can communicate what it means to be saved in easy to understand words in a few sentences? Do we know enough about the beliefs of other faiths and religions so that we can 'home in' and be relevant about

the most important points?

If not let's start to get ready now. The more we know about our own salvation the more we will be ready for anything.

Another aspect of course about being ready is that it is not just for other people but a readiness for the return of the Lord or the time we will go to be with Him in Eternity.

BE REALISTIC

Listening to the various interviews each day you find out just how hateful it is possible for

We need a calm head and look at the situation realistically. There are indeed some Muslims who are caught up in terrorist acts but there are thousands of others who are outraged at what is going on. Am I able to love these ones as the Lord instructed us? Do not allow unrealistic worldly arguments to affect our desire for seeing these ones come into a real experience of a loving God.

BE RESPONSIBLE

For some the emphasis has been on hate and revenge but others, Christians among them, are propagating the latest conspiracy theories. Some seem to make their money out of taking these issues to extreme and showing how Satan is working with all these groups to fulfil his plan for this earth.

Conspiracy theories are not new and there are books and books especially from America that delve into the depths of every possible combination of belief and the personalities that will be involved in these schemes.

Most however lack clear substance and many demand that we take Scriptures out of context or build fanciful spiritual meanings on clear words of prophecy.

Please remember if we do not hear from you within a year you may be deleted from our mailing list. The 'Quarterly' is sent out free of charge but it does cost us about £1 per copy to produce and send. Any donations are therefore appreciated.

people to be. Tragically there have been 'revenge' attacks on various Islamic people and targets where these hateful words have been translated into actions.

Such events can easily bring fear and then cause us not to want to reach out to our Muslim neighbour. We must be careful as Christians not to allow this wave of 'hate' to affect us but continue to reach out in love.

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This apart, my biggest concern is that usually they put our eyes firmly on the Devil and what he is doing and take them off the centrality and supremacy of our Lord Jesus Christ. Satan is not ultimately in control of this world and its events. He certainly is called the Prince of this world but Jesus is still the King. Any talk or teaching that takes us away from such a position is not from God.

Yet it does give us further problems with the question of why God allows such events to take place if He is in control (see the Apologetics article on 'evil' - p.12) but worse than this is to live in fear of the latest theory that is sweeping the Christian world. God is still in control and we can trust Him.

PEACE

A week before the events of 11 September the Lord led me to think of peace. The Bible shows clearly (John 14:27) that His peace is different to the world's. This is nowhere more clearly seen than when Jesus is asleep in the boat in the midst of a storm. Perfect peace and rest.

It struck me however that He could not have had such peace then if He was not at peace with the past and at peace for the future – the same is true for us.

If you read the account in Matthew 8:23-27 you see that just before He got into the boat He was explaining what it meant to be a disciple (verses 18-22). Nowhere to lay your head and being misunderstood by this world are not the greatest of job descriptions. It is obvious that Jesus is calling His disciples to live as He already is living.

We are to make up our minds and settle our hearts on this issue if we are to know peace in these days. Have I decided to serve the Lord whatever and left behind all the 'excess baggage' that would stop me? If not we need to make that choice now. We can only have peace in the turmoil of this world if the past is dealt with and settled.

However Jesus would get out of the boat and meet the Demoniac (verses 28-34), something to worry about! Many do worry about the future, about tomorrow and such attitudes mean that we have no peace for today.

If I am going to know peace NOW it is because I am not worrying about tomorrow. I have taken to heart Matthew 6:19-34 and I am seeking His Kingdom today. The result is that I can then trust

Him for whatever comes tomorrow.

May the Lord help each one of us to live in such a way and learn the lessons of peace that can come from an act of war.

PLEASE NOTE

Several have written to us about some of the quotes attributed to the *American Family Foundation* in the last 'Quarterly'.

We did discover that this came from a 'spoof' email but a spoof with a difference it seems. Although the AFA deny that they collected the quotes and sent the email, what is interesting is that since then we have discovered on the net and in two new books several quotes that are very similar and mean the same.

Whether the authors intended it or not, it does seem that there was some truth in it - embellished a little - and the name of the AFA used for more clout.

Our notes on the web site have been amended as follows to take account of this.

Richard Abanes in his book *Harry Potter and the Bible* (p.129) quotes a few of the postings on various web sites dedicated to Potter's young fans. These include:

"I like what they learned there [at Hogwarts] and I want to be a witch." - Gioia Bishop, 10

"I would love to be a witch or a wizard." - Rachel G. 14

"I think Harry Potter books are absolutely fine... I like how they can use witchcraft for fun/good purposes." Devon, 11.

Many others like this can be found on <http://www.scholastic.com/harrypotter/reading/archive.htm> and many other sites hosting feedback on the books.

DAY CONVENTIONS

Regular supporters of Reachout Trust will know that for the first time this year we held Day Conventions in the North and South if the country as well as our residential weekend.

The one in the South was well attended but despite the same amount of advertising the one in the North was not well attended.

At the time of writing it is our intention to hold a Day Convention in the South in 2002 but not in the North.

However we would welcome the opportunity to hold one in the North if there were the desire and indeed the commitment of a number to come to such a day. If therefore you live in the North and would like such an event to take place do let us know.

SCOTTISH TRIP

There is a further opportunity for folks in the North of England and in the South of Scotland when Reachout Trust are exhibiting at the Scottish CRE in Edinburgh in October 2002.

In conjunction with this, Doug Harris will be available to lead training seminars in the days before and we would like to give you an opportunity to book him.

Doug has experience in leading seminars concerning the beliefs of many cult, occult and new age groups. All seminars give clear guidance too as to how to speak and reach out to the groups in question.

Contact Reachout Trust now and discuss your requirements with them. We do not make a set charge for seminars and all bookings are taken on a voluntary giving basis. For those who wish to know we estimate that at a minimum an evening seminar costs us £60 and a day seminar £100.

Days available at present are Thursday 26 September through to Tuesday 1 October 2002.

If you feel others may be interested in booking a seminar please would you be kind enough to pass a copy of this information to them.

Thank you and we look forward to hearing from you.

"QUICK QUOTES"

According to the "Lord's Witnesses" The UN Security Council were to accept 5 new permanent members on October 22/23. Also on this date the UN was to take overall political control becoming the 8th king of the World in biblical terms (*Sunday Times 2 September 2001*). It did not happen and this group also becomes a false prophet just as the Watchtower Society that the leader had been part of before starting his own false group.

The Armstrong Legacy - 2

by Doug Harris

Continued from Quarterly 65 we look at more of the groups keeping the errors taught by Armstrong.

UNITED CHURCH OF GOD

In Britain, the UCG has a PO Box address both in Watford and Milton Keynes. They offer a magazine called *Good News*, - www.goodnews.org.uk - a free Bible Study Course and many other free booklets.

The UCG did have some meetings with the board of directors of the then GCG, seemingly with a view to some type of amalgamation. To date nothing appears to have come from these discussions.

There is much that on paper seems to be okay with the UCG; much of their statement of faith we could agree with. Yet there are some real areas of concern albeit in a different way to that of the PCG and the GCG. The areas of concern do stem from the teaching of HWA but he is not mentioned much and indeed no personalities appear to be exalted over much within this church unlike the two preceding groups.

First, we reproduce a summary of the main teachings of the UCG taken from their 1998 booklet *Fundamental Beliefs*.

We believe in one God, the Father, eternally existing, who is a Spirit, a personal Being... He, through Jesus Christ, is the Creator of the heavens and the earth... He is the Source of life and the One for whom human life exists. We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ of Nazareth, who is the Word and who has eternally existed. We believe that He is the Messiah, the Christ, the divine Son of the living God, conceived of the Holy Spirit, born in human flesh of the virgin Mary. We believe that it is by Him that God created all things, and that without Him was not anything made that was made. We believe... the Holy Spirit is the power of God and the Spirit of life eternal... The Holy Spirit of God is not identified as a third person in a trinity, but is consistently described as the power of God.

We believe that Scripture, both the Old and New Testament, is God's revelation... inspired in thought and word, infallible in the original writings...

final authority in faith and in life; and is the foundation of all truth.

We believe that Satan is a spirit being who is the adversary of God and the children of God; Satan has been given dominion over the world for a specific time; Satan has deceived humanity into rejecting God and His law; Satan has ruled by deception with the aid of a host of demons who are rebellious angels, spirit beings who followed Satan in his rebellion.

We believe that humanity was created in the image of God with the potential to become children of God, partakers of the divine nature... sin entered the world, and, through sin, death. Death now reigns over all humanity because all have sinned.

Much of the above is quite acceptable – although as with many other groups they fall into serious error in that they cannot accept the deity of the Holy Spirit and therefore reject the Trinity. What though is the answer to the problem of fallen man? Here we see more errors beginning to form.

We believe that sin is the transgression of the law. The law is spiritual, perfect, holy, just and good... is immutable and binding. We believe that breaking any one point of the law brings upon a person the penalty of sin... this fundamental spiritual law reveals the only way to true life...

With this statement there appears to be the beginnings of reliance on works. However, the next few statements leave us in some doubt as to whether that would be a true conclusion or not.

We believe God so loved the world of helpless sinners that He gave His only begotten Son, who, though in all points tempted as we are, lived without sin in the human flesh... died as a sacrifice for the sins of humanity... In paying this penalty He has made it possible, according to God's plan for each person... to have their sins forgiven and to be released from the death penalty.

We believe that all who truly repent of their sins in full surrender and willing obedience to God, and who by faith accept Jesus Christ as their personal

Savior, have their sins forgiven by an act of divine grace.

We believe in the ordinance of water baptism by immersion after repentance. Through the laying on of hands, with prayer, the believer receives the Holy Spirit and becomes a part of the spiritual Body of Jesus Christ.

Whereas they talk of baptism as symbolism one can only assume that if we are not baptised by immersion we are not part of the spiritual Body of Jesus Christ and are therefore not His. We again are moving towards a reliance on the outward and not the inward. This is underlined by the next few beliefs.

We believe that the seventh day of the week is the Sabbath of the Lord our God... we are commanded to rest from our labors and worship God, following the teachings and example of Jesus, the apostles and the N.T. Church.

We believe in observing the New Testament Passover on the night of the 14th of Abib, the anniversary of the death of our Savior.

We believe in the commanded observance of the seven annual Holy Days that were given to ancient Israel by God; were kept by Jesus Christ... and will be observed by all mankind during Christ's millennial reign. These Holy Days reveal God's plan of salvation.

We believe that those meats that are designated "unclean" by God in Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14 are not to be eaten.

We believe that Christians are forbidden... from taking human life directly or indirectly and that bearing arms is contrary to this fundamental belief.

These outward laws are a flashback to the old legacy of Armstrongism that relied on the law. They do not hinder us from receiving initial salvation but they might hinder our growth. Beyond that, there is always the danger that we rely too much on the outward and never come to know the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit of God. What about the future though, what is the purpose of God?

We believe God's purpose for mankind is to prepare those whom He calls... to possess God's Kingdom and become kings and priests reigning with Christ at His return... the reason for mankind's existence is... to be born as spirit beings into the family of God.

We believe that the only hope of eternal life for mortal humans lies in the resurrection through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit... at the return of Jesus Christ a resurrection to spirit life will take place for all who have been God's faithful servants... after Jesus Christ has ruled on earth for 1,000 years, there will be a resurrection to physical life of the vast majority of all people who have ever lived... after these people have had an opportunity to live a physical life, if they become converted they, too, will receive eternal life... those who reject God's offer of salvation will reap eternal death.

The UCG preaches the error of a gospel of a second chance!

To highlight the clear differences, we look at their booklet entitled *Heaven and Hell – What does the Bible really teach?* published in 2000.

Pages 5-11 of this booklet argue, very similarly to the Jehovah's Witnesses, that man does not have an immortal soul. The answer to this issue is found in the following Biblical teaching:

Hebrews 4:12 and 1 Thessalonians 5:23 - The Bible shows in these verses that man has three distinct parts. It is true that sometimes the words are used interchangeably and it is not always easy to put this doctrine into a nice watertight container. However, it is clear from Scripture that man has both a spirit and a soul and there is that which is eternal that goes beyond death.

Genesis 2:7 - We do not dispute that the Bible uses the word 'soul' to talk of the whole man. The point is though, does it also talk about the 'soul' as a special part that was created by the breath of the eternal God breathing into Adam?

However, we need to understand that Adam was complete as a person but was not called a *nephesh*, a soul. Only when 'life' was placed in him by means of God's breath was he called a soul. That life was not *nephesh* but it made him a *nephesh*. In other words in this verse, neither 'a person' nor 'the life of a person' defines *nephesh*.

Ecclesiastes 12:7 - This verse is clear in that it says the spirit returns to God who made it but the body will return to dust from where

it came. A clear example of there being an eternal part to man.

Ezekiel 18:4-20 - especially verses 21-23, 27,28,32. These do talk about the soul that sins will die but it equally shows that if that soul shows genuine repentance it will live.

Matthew 10:28,29 - Shows that even though a person's body can be killed, no man and not even Satan can destroy the soul - only God who created it could do this. There has to be part of man that survives the death of the body.

The Greek word for destroy found in Matthew 10:28 is *apollumi*, which is also used at Luke 15:4, 6, where the NWT translates it as 'lost'; and at Matthew 9:17, where it is translated as 'ruined.' However, this word can never mean annihilate. Indeed Matthew 10:28 could be read as follows:

And do not fear those who kill the body, but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to cause your body and soul to be 'lost' and 'ruined' in hell.

The parallel passage in Luke 12:4,5 adds another dimension to the matter by telling us that after someone is killed he or she can be cast into hell.

Chapter 12 starting on p.12 is entitled, 'Will a Loving God Punish people Forever in Hell?' Again so many of the same arguments are used. Emotionally everyone wants to answer no to the above question but what is the reality? What should people be made aware of so that they can have an opportunity to repent and be saved? Again, we outline the Biblical teaching.

The Hebrew word *sheol* appears 66 times in the Old Testament. The Greek word *hades* appears 10 times in the New Testament and the Greek word *gehenna* appears 12 times in the New Testament. The Greek word *tartarus* only appears once in the New Testament, at 2 Peter 2:4. This last word need not concern us as it is a special abode for disobedient angels.

Greek scholar W.E.Vine sums up the use of *sheol*, *hades* and *gehenna* in the Scriptures, as follows:

Hades ...the region of departed spirits and the lost (but including the blessed dead in periods preceding the Ascension of Christ) ...It corresponds to 'Sheol' in the O[ld] T[estament]. In the A[uthorised] V[ersion] of the O[ld] T[estament] and N[ew] T[estament], it has been unhappily rendered 'Hell,' ...or 'the grave,' ...or 'the pit' ... It never

denotes the grave, nor is it the permanent region of the lost; in point of time it is for such, intermediate between decease and the doom of Gehenna. - Vine's Dictionary of New Testament Words, Vol.2, pp.187/8.

Hell ...Gehenna represents the Hebrew Ge-Hinnom (the valley of Tophet) ...'the eternal fire' is mentioned as the doom, the character of the region standing for the region itself. - Vine's Dictionary of New Testament Words, Vol.2, p.212.

The Bible shows that the Hebrew word *sheol* and the Greek word *hades* refer to the same place but the Greek word *gehenna* refers to a different place.

Gehenna represents the valley of the Son of Hinnom south-east of Jerusalem. Here during Old Testament times children were offered to the false god Moloch and later Jews used the valley to dispose of their rubbish, dead animals and unburied criminals. To consume all this a fire burned continuously and gnawing worms abounded. It was a vile place.

Bible references to *sheol* and *hades* do not mention a terrifying 'hell' full of torment for those within. On the other hand the references to *gehenna* reveal such a place and condition not to be recommended.

If *gehenna* is simply the eternal annihilation of the unworthy, unconscious and non-existent, there would be no point in using the word at all. The Jews of Jesus' day certainly had a vivid picture of what being thrown alive into *gehenna* would be like for them. They knew all about the valley of the Son of Hinnom. [See Mark 9:42-48.]

Matthew 5:29,30 - It is better to lose part of one's body than end up in hell. If hell is only the grave of the non-existent then this Scripture does not make sense.

Matthew 23:33 - Why try to escape from the grave?

Matthew 26:24 - It is better not to have been born. This is nonsense if hell is non-existence because his end would have been the same as his beginning.

Much is then made in this booklet as to whether the reward of Christians is eternal life in heaven. Frankly, this does not seem to be an issue worth arguing about. In fact, we are not promised that we will be in heaven but we are promised that we will be where Jesus is. The last chapters of Revelation show that God's 'home' and man's 'home,' heaven and earth, are all gloriously rolled back into one to make one Kingdom. Whether 'heaven' or 'earth' is

not the case, it will be where the Father and the Son are that we will be.

However, who are able to be there – wherever there is? According to the UCG it goes like this:

There will be those of the 'First Resurrection,'... Revelation 20:4-5. These verses also talk about 'the rest' and these are the ones who will be resurrected after the first and have an opportunity for salvation. That same verse explains, the rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended: There is another resurrection after the first, and in this resurrection others will have the opportunity to receive salvation. (verse 11).

This time of judgment is further described in verse 12... Those resurrected in this group have never completely understood the truth of God. Consider that the majority of all people who have ever lived have never heard God's truth. Rather than such people being condemned to eternal suffering in a fiery hell, the truth of the Bible is much more comforting and encouraging. God will extend the opportunity for eternal life to everyone – to a relatively few in this age but to billions of people in the coming second resurrection. p.47

There will then be a third resurrection, which according to UCG will take place,

just before the final destruction of the wicked in the lake of fire.

Jesus explained that some would deliberately and knowingly despise the spiritual revelations that God would open their minds to understand. These, He said, will not be forgiven 'either in this age or in the age to come' (Matthew 12:31-32).

Yet 'all who are in the graves will hear [Christ's] voice and come forth...' (John 5:28). Even those who will not be forgiven are to be resurrected from the dead.

This group will include only those who have deliberately rejected God's way of life... These few are people who were once forgiven and converted but later chose to reject the Holy Spirit and priceless knowledge God gave to them... for them 'there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries' (Hebrews 10:26-29).

God has revealed that the ultimate fate of the incorrigibly wicked is to be

burned up. - pp.48/49

However, is this biblical – can we really give such a hope?

Revelation 20 does not teach this doctrine contained in the booklet by the UCG. It does talk of a resurrection of some people clearly indicated by verse 4 and indeed, there will be another resurrection of the rest of the dead. There is not a third resurrection because all are resurrected at this time of the 'rest'.

However, what is clear from Scripture is that there is no second chance at this time as the UCG teaches. At the resurrection, the books are opened and verse 12 tells us that the judgement takes place on what has (past tense) been written in these books. Judgement is based on what we have or have not done in this life. There is no second chance; today is the day of salvation. Those, whose names were in the book of life already, were brought to eternal life with Christ and those, whose names were not found there, were cast into the lake of fire.

CHURCH OF GOD INTERNATIONAL

We read this interesting snippet from an article by Dixon Cartwright at www.thejournal.org,

The CGI, since its founding in 1978, has undergone three major splits. The first was in 1995, when elder Ron Dart resigned and formed Christian Educational Ministries. The second was in early 1996, when about 40 elders left and formed independent congregations, most of which are loosely associated as the Churches of God Outreach Ministries. The third occurred in January 1998 at the time of Mr. Armstrong's departure.

The Armstrong departure is that of Herbert's son Garner Ted. He still has some influence in Britain though now working under the heading of the Intercontinental Church of God with his own Evangelistic association too (www.gtawa.org). The site actively promotes HWA's writings although they cannot sell them due to the court order, and the following, taken from the site, shows the continued difference with mainline Christianity.

"THE HOLY SPIRIT - The Holy Spirit is the spiritual extension of God, containing the essence, power and mind of God. God uses His Holy Spirit to beget Christians as His sons and

daughters. The Holy Spirit spiritually strengthens Christians, converting their minds to be more like God's mind. The Holy Spirit also serves as an earnest or guarantee of future eternal life.

SALVATION - The penalty for sin is death, but salvation is the means by which God saves mankind from the penalty of sin so that they may be given eternal life. Working through His Son, Jesus Christ, the salvation process includes one's calling, repentance, baptism, justification, receiving of the Holy Spirit, then living a life of faith and obedience, and finally, birth into God's Kingdom as a spirit being. Salvation is a gift freely given through grace by God, with our ultimate reward given according to our works.

CONCLUSION

As we have seen in this article the Armstrong Legacy is alive and well in a number of churches and we need to understand and be ready to help these ones bound up by the law and a false hope that is never going to bring them the reward they so long for. How we need to preach the gospel of grace to those now who are trying to live by works. How also we need to show them that Today is the day they must respond, not waiting for some second chance after death, as there is none. ☐

HELP WANTED

A number of years ago my son Joel did an excellent job of setting up our database in Access 2 and linking it to our Sage accounts system. This is the basis of our central system for Reachout Trust and without it we would not be able to accomplish all that we do.

It is still going strong but like many of us it is creaking a little with age. We are looking for someone who has good knowledge of Access 2000 and all the latest developments in the programme.

We would want them to be willing to spend the time writing the code that would bring our system up to date and be even more useful and efficient in the great job that it does.

If you are that person or you know someone who you think might be able to help us we would really look forward to hearing from you.

WATCH THE OWER

2001/4

Jesus Christ; begotten or created?

by Dr Thaddeus Irvine

One of the issues which continually surfaces when dealing with the cults is that of the deity of the Saviour, Jesus Christ. They attempt to deny His deity by twisting Scripture, reading out of context, removing or inserting words and phrases, attributing new or inaccurate meanings to words or by re-translating the Bible. This is claimed to be done in the name of clarification and improved scholarship.

One such group is the Jehovah's Witnesses. In their book, *'Aid to Bible Understanding'* (1971, p.918), they have a section on the deity of Jesus Christ. Part of their article addresses the concept of Jesus as the "only-begotten Son." In it, the author makes his position clear by declaring that Jesus is God's "sole *direct* creation of his Father," with Jesus being "unique, different from all the others of God's sons, all of whom were created or begotten by Jehovah *through* that firstborn Son."

The article then makes a comparison between Jesus being God's "only-begotten Son" in much the same way as "Isaac was Abraham's 'only-begotten son' in a particular sense (his father already having another son but not by his wife Sarah). - Heb. 11:17; Gen. 16:15."

Logical?

To those with a limited appreciation of the Scriptures, this all seems plausible and logical. For those who decide to take The Watchtower (the organisation of the Jehovah's Witnesses) up on its offer of a free Bible course, they will be shown the booklet, "*What does God require of you?*"

When the uninitiated student gets to lesson 3, they find that the Watchtower teaches "Jesus is the only Son that God created by Himself," referring to Jesus as God's "master worker." Slowly we see a picture emerging of a Saviour who was created, not fully God, restricted in what He can and can't do and who has a

limited effectiveness in our lives.

One of the expressions that the Watchtower 'dumbs down' or re-translates to support their theological viewpoint is the word 'begotten' or 'only-begotten Son' with reference to the Saviour, Jesus Christ.

The Watchtower teaches that the word 'begotten' or 'only-begotten' means a physical birth or creation; therefore, whilst Jesus is 'god' in a lesser or mighty sense, He isn't God in the greater or Almighty sense (see the Watchtower translation of John 1:1, where Jesus is reduced to a lesser "god").

Their teachings reflect the ideas of Arianism in the fourth century AD, where there was a dispute over the concept of Jesus being 'begotten'. Arianism, like the Watchtower, teaches that Jesus is a second, inferior, 'created first in line' god who stands between the First Cause (God the Father) as the Father's instrument of creation and His creatures. Jesus is *not* seen as co-equal, co-eternal or in the highest sense God, nor is Jesus consubstantial (of the same essence, nature or substance) with the Father, but as pre-existent, a creature (a 'demi-god' type) who first needed to attain or achieve the glory of 'Godhood' by His own efforts.

However, is this a fair appreciation of the concept of 'begotten' in terms of Watchtower theology?

If we examine their comparison between the Father ("Jehovah" for the Watchtower, as they don't support the idea of the Trinity) and Jesus with Abraham and Isaac we find that their explanation begins to slowly unravel.

Scientifically: we know that 'like begets like' – Law of Biogenesis. This means that if Jesus is 'a god', then Isaac would have had to have been 'a god'. All members of the Watchtower believe that Jesus was 'a god'; they don't believe that Isaac was one. Conversely, if Isaac wasn't a god, then it follows that Jesus who, according to their reasoning, was equally 'begotten' should also not be a god. Which rule should we follow?

Culturally: this reference to Isaac being begotten of Abraham isn't about physical birth (although this is what happened) but about Abraham's bloodline or descendancy (birth) rights being passed on to Isaac. The Watchtower's own article from "*Aid to...*" demonstrates this by stating that Isaac became his "only-begotten son" by virtue of the fact that Abraham's other son was "not by his wife Sarah". The word begotten here concerns itself with culture, tradition, clan rights and property - not with creation per se.

The Greek word for '(only) begotten' is '*monogenes*'.

'*Mono*' translates 'single, unique, sole, singular' and speaks of nature, *not* birth.

'*Genes*' (genos) translates clan, offspring, house, genus, class, kind, family, progeny, sort, species, direct/collateral descent, tribe, race, stock, kin, and speaks of nature, *not* source.

In both words, we see that reference is to nature. Jesus was God in nature (homousios – being of one substance); not to be confused with the Watchtower idea of 'homoiousios' (being of a similar substance; being like the father in substance only, but not in nature).

If we look again at the example of Abraham and Isaac, we see that Isaac *became* Abraham's 'only-begotten son' through birth. This means that, at some time, Isaac wasn't 'only-begotten' since he wouldn't have been born. Jesus never *became* because Jesus had always been – Jesus **IS**. We have only to read of Jesus identifying Himself with the Godhead in John 8:58 where He speaks of Himself as the "I am"; a direct reference to Exodus 3:14, identifying Himself totally with God in substance and nature.

Benjamin Warfield, stated in his work "**The Person and Work of Christ**" (p56) that,

"The adjective 'only-begotten' conveys the ideas, not of derivation and subordination, but of uniqueness and consubstantiality: Jesus is all that God is, and He alone is this."

This is reinforced in John 10:30,

making it very clear that the Father and the Son are a 'monad' Who have been there from the very beginning - see Micah 5:2; John 1:1, 18; 17:5. Jesus has been set up from "everlasting" Proverbs 8:23, with His belief in the total unity and uniformity of Himself and the Father.

John Walvoord (Theologian) in his work, *"Jesus Christ Our Lord"* (p44) stated that,

"the thought is clearly that Christ is the Begotten of God in the sense that no other is".

John Calvin said that,

"We justly represent him as originating from the Father". Institutes, I, xiii, 19.

We have only to look at expressions such as, "Alpha and Omega", "First and Last" and Beginning and End" to realise that Isaac couldn't be compared with Jesus. It would be like comparing apples and pears; or, more to the point, the Creator with the creature!

In terms of the use of the expression 'Son' in "only-begotten Son", we note that, unlike Isaac, this doesn't speak of a second generation essence which has been generated in the form of a 'son', since there wasn't a time that Jesus wasn't the Son as the Father had always been the Father. Could this be said of Isaac, or any others for that matter?

We *become* 'sons' through adoption; Isaac became Abraham's 'only-begotten son' through birth and familial inheritance. Jesus had always *been* so couldn't *become*. His Sonship was natural (an affirmation of His deity or 'God' nature).

This relationship is referred to as 'anthropomorphic', where the God nature is represented in human terms and characteristics.

Charles C Ryrie (Basic Theology) refers to the Orientals and Ancient Semitics who saw in the term 'son' the idea of likeness and sameness of nature and equality of being.

James Oliver Buswell in his, *"A Systematic Theology of the Christian Religion, 1:105"*, showed that the Ancients looked upon the use of the word 'son' not in the sense of subordination or inferiority but 'of the order of' - "sons (of the order) of the prophets" (1 Kings 20:35), "sons (of the order) of the singers" (Nehemiah 12:28). Therefore,

when one takes into account the differences between the examples of the Watchtower and their explanation of Jesus as "only-begotten Son" with Isaac as "only-begotten son" and that of the true nature of the eternal God, we can see that there can never be any realistic comparison between the two.

The Christian God isn't a demi-god who partially bridged the gap between God and sinner, but God and Saviour who was able to confidently proclaim in John 19:30, "It is finished", after speaking to His Father and telling Him in John 17:4 that He (Jesus) had completed His task here for us, His creatures. If He were not fully God, then how was *one* sacrifice sufficient (Hebrews 10:10-13, 14)? What of our salvation through an imperfect and inferior 'god'?

Jesus never became, but IS. 'IS' in terms of His eternity; His sameness with the Father but as two forms of presentation; His **Godness**; His identical, indivisible monadic, begotten Deity; both within Each Other as an inherent dwelling as both Brightness and Light, as the Father is to the Son and as the Son is to the Father. Jesus is truly the "only-begotten Son" and *true* God; both the Son of God and God the Son.

The Watchtower Society's internal publication *Kingdom Ministry* of February 2001 had an interesting article under the title *Facing Challenges in 2001*. We reproduce portions of it here because I believe reading between the lines we can see what is happening to many in the organisation.

What a joy to receive the 2001 Yearbook and the January 1, 2001 issue of *The Watchtower* and to read the world-wide report for the 2000 service year. Even though the 'scene of the world is changing' bringing increased challenges to our brothers and sisters, yet the majority continue to 'put up a hard fight for the faith.'—1 Cor. 7:31; Jude 3.

Only the majority – a quite large minority are not!

As the 'end of all things' draws nearer, the Devil's anger against God's people will increase. He knows that 'he has a short period of time' left to make good his challenges as to God's sovereignty and the integrity of Jehovah's servants. (1 Pet. 4:7; Rev. 12:12, 17)

The end is still near and so things must

be getting worse. The Devil will seek to stop you – make sure you keep on with the work!

Apart from opposition expressed by some of Christendom's religious leaders to the preaching of the kingdom good news, some countries have reported extensive political pressure to curtail or even ban our preaching work. Not only have our brothers had to resist these challenges but thousands have had to endure natural disasters, ethnic violence, and the shortage of life's necessities. How grateful they have been for the relief measures mounted by Jehovah's organization to care for their physical and spiritual needs.

Here are more excuses as to why the work is not as effective as it has been before. Why is the relief work only for the Witnesses – why not for others too as most involved in this type of work are doing.

Most countries in the Western World have not been affected in these ways. However, it saddens us to realize that some have been side-tracked by the world's materialism and the lowering of moral standards. Others have grown weary of well-doing. As a result, a number have fallen into inactivity so that, whilst a healthy number are baptized each year, yet as many, if not more, become inactive. Although having 'tasted that Jehovah is good', they allow themselves to be sucked back into Satan's world and lose their precious relationship with Jehovah.

How many other excuses are they going to find? Indeed they have used them all – the world, the flesh and the Devil. But have they ever stopped to consider that maybe they are using the wrong 'benchmark' to judge these people? Does it really mean that they have lost their relationship with Jehovah if they only spend 2 hours a month on the doors and only get to 2 meetings a week instead of 5?

"What can be done to address this situation? First of all we must realize that it is only by staying loyal to Jehovah and his organization that we are able to cope. (Phil. 4:13) The Devil uses many crafty devices to make us shift or fall from our steadfastness. (1 Cor. 15:58; 2 Pet. 3:17) More than ever before, we must face this fact and fortify ourselves to take a stand

(Continued on page 15)

TRUTH RESTORED - 29

BY MIKE & ANN THOMAS

MISSIONARY DISCUSSIONS – CONTINUED

Here we will look at the third Mormon missionary discussion. During the second discussion the investigator will have been challenged to commit to baptism. From this point every discussion will lead to this, and similar, challenges.

If an investigator has been asking the right questions then it is reasonable to insist on satisfactory answers. But these questions will be seen as 'obstacles' to commitment:

If the investigators have not yet committed themselves to be baptized (sic) or have not yet attended Church meetings, these commitments must be among your major objectives for this discussion. Identify anything that might be holding the investigators back. Make plans for helping them overcome any obstacles. (Instructions to Missionaries)

Obstacles and questions are often dealt with by declaring that, "*We can avoid error, know the truth, and be strengthened in righteous living by becoming members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.*" This is a common strategy among the cults, suggesting that once you become a member all will become clear, i.e. blind commitment will be rewarded with clearer conviction. As in so many instances, they have the cart before the horse.

In Acts 2 (esp. vv 37-41. cf. Romans 10:14-15; Ephesians 1:13) we see that 'telling' the gospel and the work of the Spirit bring conviction, and conviction brings commitment. It is reasonable to hold out for answers from someone who has come claiming to have more answers than anyone else.

DISCUSSION 3: THE RESTORATION

With the death of the apostles God's authority was taken from the earth in the 'Apostasy'; It was 'Restored' through Joseph Smith who established 'The True Church'; discuss Church membership. Commitment, attend a sacrament meeting.

Apostasy

The object of this discussion is to establish the idea that "*Divine truth does not come from human sources. It comes from God, who reveals the truth through apostles and prophets.*"

The Mormon will reason that God's truth is eternal and unchanging. That the ideas of men are limited and only God can reveal fully his plan for us. When Christ established his church he called apostles and prophets to be channels of God's truth. To these he gave authority to teach his gospel and this authority is called priesthood. After his death Jesus led his church by revelation through his apostles and prophets and in this way the truth was taught clearly and without confusion. From Ephesians 2:19-20 they will reason that the church is built on a foundation of apostles and prophets.

People rejected these apostles and prophets and killed them. The Lord took the priesthood from the earth and so there was no longer a church led by revelation and authority. Men came to rely on human wisdom to understand scripture and, in the process, many plain and simple truths were lost. This resulted in disagreement and confusion as men taught their own ideas as truth.

This is called the Apostasy (N.B. from the Greek *apostasia*, the abandoning of truth). This apostasy they will prove from a list of mostly New Testament passages, notably;

Matthew 24:9-11 "False prophets shall rise, and deceive many"

Acts 20:29-31 "Of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples"

2 Timothy 4:3-4 "They will not endure sound doctrine"

2 Thessalonians 2:3 "For that day (of the Lord's return) shall not come, except there come a falling away first".

Of course they will also appeal to the testimony of history that shows disagreement and confusion among the churches.

The Christian might reason that a founda-

tion is laid once and then the building rises. If the foundational apostles and prophets are to have successors does that mean that Christ, the cornerstone, the key of that foundation is to have a successor? It is the Spirit, not apostles and prophets, who would continue to lead his followers into all truth (John 16:13).

In the early church that same Spirit was poured out on all that believed (Acts 2 & 10). It is noteworthy that when Paul, in Acts 19, arrived at Ephesus and found some disciples there he did not ask them whether they had received their teaching from an "official" source but whether they had received the Spirit. It is the Spirit who taught the disciples and helped them remember everything (John 14:26), which was faithfully recorded in Scripture.

That "Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16). The church is marked by the life of the Spirit in true believers gathered around God's Word and seeking God's will, not the presence of apostles and prophets who are foundational, not developmental.

The Christian might reason from the promise of Jesus that "the gates of Hades will not overcome [the church]" (Matthew 16:18); whichever way the church is organised it is always people, and not buildings or institutions. This living body consists of those who are alive to Christ, those who have died in Christ, and those who are yet to be born and believe in Christ. This is what might be termed the catholic, or universal, church and it is this church that would endure as it looks forward to that city whose architect and builder is God (Hebrews 11:10-16).

The Lord Jesus did warn His disciples, "In this world you will have trouble." (John 16:33). Down through the centuries the body of believers has experienced much trouble. As the church grew some turned away from the faith (1 Timothy 1:6-7; Galatians 1:6-9). Christians had been warned of this by the Apostle Paul, "Even from your own

number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. So be on your guard!" (Acts 20:20-31).

The Apostle Peter warned that many would follow after false prophets and bring the way of truth into disrepute (2 Peter 2:1-3). However Jesus, in John's gospel, went on to say, "But take heart! I have overcome the world". He promised that he had overcome the world - therefore neither the world, nor even hell, would overcome the church -and that "the gospel of the kingdom (which His coming established) will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come." (Matthew 24:14).

Thus the agenda for the church, "until He comes" is set. It is noteworthy that in all the references Mormons use to 'prove' apostasy none speaks of a complete falling away from truth. Here are the verses listed in the discussions:

Matt.24:9-11 "False prophets shall arise, and deceive many" (many and not all)

Acts 20:29-31 "Of your own selves shall men arise...to draw away disciples" (*not all disciples*)

1 Tim.4:13 "In the latter times *some* shall depart from the truth" (Some not all)

2 Tim.3:1-7 "In the last days *men* [will have a] form of godliness, but denying the power thereof" (Men not all men)

2 Tim.4:3-4 "*They* will not endure sound doctrine" (They, not 'they all')

2 Peter 2:1-2 "There shall be false teachers *among you*" (implying wheat and tares Matt.13:25)

2 Thess. 2:3 "For that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first"(not a complete falling away)

Restoration

In discussion one we saw that Mormons believe God speaks through special witnesses who reveal God's plan through Scripture which the people then read and obey. We also discussed Joseph Smith's vision and how we deal with Mormon claims that God appeared to Joseph.

We have seen how God's special witnesses, apostles and prophets, were killed and God's authority, priesthood, was taken from the earth. How do Mormons explain the enduring nature of the Christian faith down through the ages?

They teach that "*The people understood many Christian principles that helped them lead good lives. But they also misunderstood some basic and vital truths because these truths had been lost centuries before*".

Mormons see this as a fulfillment of Amos 8:11-12, which predicts a time when there would be a famine of God's word. To put things right, and to restore these truths, God appeared to Joseph Smith and re-established his method of proclaiming truth through apostles and prophets. Here we will look at what Mormons claim was restored through their founding prophet.

The first 'proof' of Joseph's Divine call was his translation of the *Book of Mormon*. Prophets, you will remember, produce Scripture. Further proof is seen in a book of 'modern-day scripture' called the *Doctrine and Covenants* and in another called the *Pearl of Great Price*.

It is taught that "*These books of scripture show us that God continues to give revelation to guide his children*". We dealt with the Book of Mormon in discussion 1. But let's look further at the claim of continuing revelation. Mormons popularly believe that a living prophet who receives revelation for the church on a daily basis leads them. It is good at this point to enter into a dialogue something like the following:

Christian – You believe in living prophets?

Mormon – Yes we do.

Christian – What is the name of your current prophet?

Mormon – Gordon B Hinckley is our prophet.

Christian – Tell me, which of his revelations most inspires you?

This is a question he cannot answer since their current prophet has not published any prophecies or revelations. Although they give the impression that God adds prophecy upon prophecy through his special messengers the canon of Mormon scripture is effectively closed.

The Doctrine and Covenants ends in the 19th century, aside from section 138 which is purported to have been received in 1918 by Joseph F Smith, sixth church president. The previous revelation in chronology is dated January 1847. When challenged about this the Mormon might reason that revelation continues to be

received and is made known via conference talks, sermons, and published announcements. But whenever these are quoted to show the errors and contradictions of Mormon teaching the Mormon will insist that the only authoritative source is the closed canon of the *Doctrine and Covenants*, *Pearl of Great Price*, *Book of Mormon* and the Bible. It is a dilemma for any Mormon who wishes to assert his belief that the heavens aren't closed but who does not wish to be called upon to give an explanation for difficult statements made by Mormon leaders.

Often these statements become 'just his opinion', which, the Christian might reason, takes us and them into the realm of speculation which, in turn, defeats the object of modern revelation, i.e. avoiding misunderstandings and speculations by following the guidance of special witnesses.

The Christian might remind the Mormon that God has spoken through his Son in a way that fulfils prophecy (Hebrews 1:2), and that Scripture reports faithfully what he said and did (1 John 1:1-4; 1 Corinthians 15:3-7). While Mormons teach that some of God's word has been lost and needs restoring the Lord declared that his word would not pass away (Matthew 24:35). Far from being a dead letter that needs replacing with modern revelation, God's word is living and active (Hebrews 4:12). This is because the Spirit oversees the reading, teaching, and transmitting of Scripture (1 Corinthians 2:10-16). Scripture is God-breathed (2 Timothy 3:16) and was written to give us hope (Romans 15:4) and an entry into a living knowledge of Christ (John 20:31). Finally, to take away from it, or add to it, is a serious offence with terrible consequences (Revelation 22:19; Proverbs 30:6).

RESTORATION OF THE CHURCH

The official name of the Mormon Church is *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*. They point to the *Methodist Church*, the *Baptist Church*, or *St. So-and-So's Church* in the town and say that they do not bear the Saviour's name. The Mormon will reason that Christ's Church should bear Christ's name as their Church does.

Restoration, they claim, has brought back the correct name for the Church. The Christian might reason that New Testament Churches were named after the towns in which they were established, i.e. the Corinthian Church, the Church at

Ephesus, or the Church in Rome. This is no different to being called Twickenham Christian Fellowship, or Parklands Evangelical Church. In both cases they are still Christian Churches and, being *Christian Churches they bear the name of Christ*.

The same might be said of Churches named for people who have inspired them, i.e. St Paul or St Peter. Others are named for biblical places and events that reflect their character or the thoughts of their founders, i.e. Bethesda, meaning house of mercy, or Elim meaning strong trees, an Old Testament place where Israel camped, and known for its fountains of water. All, whatever their epithet, are *Christian*.

PRIESTHOOD

Mormons believe that the priesthood lost in apostasy was restored through Joseph Smith. They believe in two levels of priesthood, the Aaronic Priesthood, restored by John the Baptist, and the Melchizedek Priesthood, restored by Peter James and John. Having this priesthood makes the Mormon Church the only church on earth with authority to act and speak for God.

The Mormon will reason that "*all necessary gospel ordinances are performed by the power of these two priesthoods*". From baptism, through prayers and blessings, to ordinations and beyond, the priesthood of Mormonism exclusively authenticates a work of God. All other churches act, they believe, on presumed authority.

The Christian might reason that the priesthood of Aaron pertained to sacrifices in the temple in the desert and, later, in Jerusalem. These sacrifices were simply a "shadow" or picture of the sacrifice of God's Son, whose death, burial and resurrection made redundant the priesthood of Aaron (Hebrews 10:1-3).

Therefore, when Christ came into the world, he said: Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you prepared for me; with burnt offerings and sin offerings you were not pleased. ...Then he said, "Here I am, I have come to do your will.(10:5-6)

The sacrifices of the high priests were not pleasing to God because they were temporal and temporary. They had to be repeated as a reminder of sins but were unable to take away sins. (10:1-3) So Jesus as a high priest called of God offered a sacrifice that was sufficient. Having done so "He sets aside the first to establish the

second" (10:9). What is the first he sets aside? It is the priesthood of Aaron. It is made redundant at the cross because,

Day after day every high priest stands and performs his religious duties; again and again he offers the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God...by one sacrifice he has made perfect for ever those who are being made holy (10:11-14).

What is the second for which the first is set aside? The priesthood of Jesus who is, "...a priest forever in the order of Melchizedek". (5:6). That word "forever" is very significant.

The nature of the Aaronic Priesthood is temporal. While the whole tribe of Levites had responsibilities in the tabernacle one family was set apart for special service, the family of Aaron. These were the priests. And while a whole family were priests only one man served as high priest. There was only ever one high priest at a time. Sacrifices had to be offered "again and again" by the high priest who died and had to be replaced.

The nature of the Melchizedek priesthood is eternal. It is named after Melchizedek for this reason. Unlike the priests of Israel Melchizedek has no recorded genealogy, making him "timeless" and a "type" of Jesus, and like Melchizedek Jesus remains a priest forever. (7:3) His priesthood was not passed on.

Now there have been many of those priests, since death prevented them from continuing in office; but because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood. Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him because he always lives to intercede for them (7:24-25).

This idea of a "permanent" priesthood is important. The Greek is *aparabatos* and carries the meaning of final, unchangeable, untransferable. The one consistent idea is expressed variously as, "an unchangeable priesthood" (KJV); "a priesthood that needs no successor" (Phillips); "he holds his priesthood permanently" (RSV); "But Jesus lives on forever, and his work as priest does not pass on to someone else" (TEV).

CHRISTIAN PRIESTHOOD

In Exodus 19:6 Israel is called "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation". The Christian might reason that this idea is

developed in the New Testament in relation to the church. 1 Peter 2:4-5 speaks of believers as being "like living stones being built into a spiritual house to be a royal priesthood offering a spiritual sacrifice acceptable to God through Jesus Christ". Peter goes on to say,

You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light (v.9).

The Concise Dictionary of Christian Tradition points out that the New Testament uses "priest" only in the plural to describe Christians, further pointing out that a Christian is not a priest individually but only in so far as he is a member of the people of God. The church is the body of Christ and so it is that as a body we are priests to God. ☐

APOLOGETICS

THE QUESTION OF EVIL

How do we answer the person who asks why God allows incidents such as we saw in America? Surely if He were a God of love He would stop it. Surely too if He is an all supreme being and in control of this world nothing bad would ever happen.

As a foundation to the answer though let me give what is a very good explanation of evil. It is written by Gregory Koukl and the full article can be found on *The Stand to Reason* web site

The first step in answering the problem of evil is this: We've got to get clear on what this thing "evil" actually is. It does seem to follow that if God created all things, and evil is a thing, then God created evil. This is a valid syllogism. If the premises are true, then the conclusion would be true as well. The problem with that line of reasoning is that the second premise is not true. Evil is not a thing... evil has no ontological status, I mean that evil, as a thing in itself, does not exist. Let me give you an illustration to make this more clear. We talk about things being cold... Coldness is the absence of heat. When we remove heat energy from a system, we say it gets colder. "Cold" isn't a thing... Cold itself isn't being "created." Cold is a description of a circumstance in which heat is missing... Evil is like that. Evil isn't like some black, gooey stuff floating around the universe that 'gloms' onto people and causes them to do awful things. Evil is the absence of good, a privation of good, not a thing in itself.

Evil of course appears to the 'man in the street' to bring a complete contradiction to the character and purpose of God. How can evil be allowed if God is really who Christians say He is? We need to investigate this and put forward a reasoned argument.

That recorded let us get back then to our original logical sounding question as to why God does not then stop the evil. Just what do we say in the face of such accusations?

We would have to begin by pointing out that we couldn't answer such a question based on one incident in time. The very question of course attests to the fact that the person asking the question is describ-

ing an all powerful God who is greater than man and lives in a different dimension. Such a God lives outside the restrictions of man's world and we need to look at the overall purpose of this God and how one event in time fits in with an eternal plan.

God's original plan

What was God's original plan for man? Why did He create him in the first place and why did He give him this home called earth? That answer alone could take up hours but there are one or two main facts that we would want to point out.

1. God's point for creating man was for good and not for evil. He never created a man so that He would go and do evil acts. He looked at the creation after man was placed on this earth and said of what He saw that it was "very good" (Genesis 1:31).
2. God was close to man, coming each day and talking with him in his own home (Genesis 3:8).
3. God created a companion for man that would be with him all the time because He did not want him to be alone – Genesis 2:18.
4. He allowed man to name the animals that he would live with – Genesis 2:19 - and He told him that under God's authority he was responsible for the earth and all it contained (Genesis 2:15).

These actions create for us a picture of a loving God who wanted man to have the very best and wanted him to be involved with the purpose that He had for the earth. This is totally inconsistent with the idea that God 'created' evil and simply sits back and allows it all to happen.

The Fall

What happened then? What we in religious jargon call 'The Fall' is what happened – Genesis 3:1-6. The very name 'fall' signifies that man came from a higher place and ended up in a lower place. All that he had with the great Creator God mentioned in the last section was lost. How did this happen?

The man and the woman decided that they did not want to serve God as it had been set up and that they wanted to branch out on their own. They did not

just believe what God said but were prepared to listen to the lies and propaganda of God's enemy Satan – Genesis 3:1,4.

Before we talk a little more about Satan let us also note that the man and the woman had to take responsibility and accept the consequences of their actions. They could not simply divorce themselves and say it was evil! Today it is the same, we have a responsibility to choose whether we do or do not do the evil.

However, back to Satan or the Devil. If we accept that there is a supernatural God then equally there is a supernatural Devil that stands for all that is opposite to God and His will. This being is greater than man by himself because he is only natural not SUPERnatural. Satan's desire is to take control of this earth and its people. The Bible clearly tells us about his character.

A deceiver - Revelation 12:9

Satan has something to hide (see also 2 Corinthians 11:14.) The art of deception is that something is so close to the original that it looks just like what we are expecting the original to be. That is deception and that is the way that Satan behaves. He will only counterfeit something that God is doing and will make it as near to the original as possible so that many will be fooled.

Causes doubt in God Genesis 3:1-5

Did God really say that? Satan seeks to focus our attention on one thing to the exclusion of everything else, just as he did with Eve and the tree. She had walked past that tree often before and it had not bothered her. That day though Satan made her vision lock on to the fruit and consider it repeatedly even though she had the rest of the trees in the Garden. This is how he works today. He concentrates our attention on one particular aspect, puts a question in the mind and allows us to develop it.

A liar - John 8:44

Satan *cannot* tell the truth for truth's sake - the exact opposite of God who cannot tell a lie. Satan however delights in telling half-truths or using true statements in a way that will bring glory to himself and turn the attention away from God.

A tempter - Matthew 4:1

Satan tempts us always to rebel against God and His ways - see Matthew 4:2ff. Compare this with 1 Samuel 15:23 - rebellion is the seedbed of witchcraft.

A devourer - 1 Peter 5:8

If he can! - note carefully the context. Whereas this is Satan's nature do also note that God has given us the ability in Him to resist the Devil so that he must flee. In other words God has given us a way out. We cannot blame the Devil because we can resist him.

Jesus died on the Cross to set us free from the evil that surrounds us and deal with the power that the Devil would try and have over us. Once again we see the act of the loving and all-powerful God that does enable us to deal with evil in this world.

The Devil seeks to take us away from trusting and believing in God. He has to get us to believe that God has not got our best interests at heart but has ulterior motives. However history shows that it is Satan that wants to control and God that wants to set us free.

The result of the 'Fall' is that man no longer automatically has this close, intimate relationship with God. Instead we are born in conflict between the God who created us, put us on the earth and loved us and this other supernatural being who simply wants to destroy that relationship. All that he offers is negative but somehow he appeals to the 'I' in me and so I go along with it.

This conflict has been placed in every human being since the fall. We all have it and we either have to fight against it so we come in to a place of peace with God, try to ignore the whole fact of God and remain neutral, or give in to it and listen to Satan and all his lies and propaganda. Every human being faces this issue. Those caught up in and those who perpetrated the events of 11 September are no different.

God's purpose

What is called the 'good news' though is that God does not leave us without help. It does however take an act of our will to come to peace and rest in Him and we do not always want to do that.

Rebelling against God and having an argument with Him leaves us in a no-speaking situation. As we know from human events in the world today when this happens we have to arrange peace talks. But to hold such talks means that both sides need to be willing and one party whether they are in the 'right' or not needs to make the first move and break the deadlock.

That is exactly what God did. Even though He was in the right He made the first move by sending Jesus Christ to be the bearer of my punishment so that I could go free. Going free of course means coming back into that loving relationship and purpose that was God's plan in the first place. It also means that I enter into a relationship with Him that is beyond just this small time that I am on the earth, it has an eternal dimension. When I die and leave this world, by whatever means that is, I know that I have eternal life in a new dimension with the God that loves me and gave me a purpose.

What therefore becomes the crucial question is not why doesn't God do this or that but why don't I do something about it? Where am I in my relationship with God? None of us start off this life in that loving relationship and so we are somewhere in the other two states mentioned above.

The extreme is someone who has clearly decided to go his/her own way and has taken on board all the whisperings and propaganda the Devil can hand out. Such a person is not doing what is God's will but rather the desires that come from the Devil. How can such a person blame God for what is happening?

What we see in the news is the accumula-

tive effect of many individuals who do not do God's way. What is happening on a national or international level is simply a larger picture of what is happening on a personal level.

However, what about the person who is staying in the middle and sitting on the fence, can they blame God? Again no, because as we have seen they are not being really neutral. In not doing anything they are still siding with the evil forces of this world, those whisperings and propaganda against God, because they are not opening up their heart and receiving the peace offering that the Lord holds out.

The third group - those that have realised they are wrong, have repented and have received the peace offering of the death of the Lord Jesus - are now seeking to walk in God's way and know what His will is for this world.

God's character

Still why doesn't God step in right now and deal with all those who rebel against Him? The answer is within His character. A holy and just God that only wants the best for all. If He stepped in now and ended it all, thousands would be lost forever and not come back into that loving relationship. God therefore has patience even though it must break His heart at times. He has also of course made provision for everyone who is willing to come His way.

God does not want the world to be at war and one day He has clearly said that He will return and bring peace out of this chaos. At that point we are told that every knee will bow down to His Lordship and Kingship - Philippians 2:9-11.

Until that day evil men will do evil things but remember first God is ready to bring peace to anyone because He already is sitting at the table awaiting our presence to agree on the 'peace talks'. And second He is ready to give assurance concerning His eternal plan. ☐

EXCLUSIVE BRETHREN

PLYMOUTH BRETHREN

The roots of this group go back to the ministry of John Nelson Darby. JND was trained in law at Trinity College, Dublin but once converted to Christ he joined the Anglican Church in Ireland. In 1829 he joined a free Bible Study in

Dublin which eventually split off from the Anglican Church. The first Brethren meeting held in Plymouth, Devon, England was in January 1832. The web pages on Plymouth Brethren at <http://www.cloudnet.com/~dwyman/anonymous1.html> (referred to as 'web1' in future) tell us that,

The so-called Plymouth Brethren began in the late 1820's. It was a gathering together of Christians who wanted to be outside of all other formal Christian organizations. Their basic Christian doctrines are those held by most Protestant

denominations. They believe that now on the earth there is a body of Christ (referred to as the Church or Assembly) which is composed of all true Christian believers regardless of their religious affiliation. It was, however, their conviction that to belong to any Christian organization was a practical denial of the truth of this one body. They therefore accepted to practical fellowship all Christians who held sound fundamental doctrine, lived a godly life and were not in another formal Christian organization. They were a group of people who were very devoted to bible study, practical godliness and evangelization. The fellowship grew worldwide as years went on.

We need to understand that at this point the group was not cultish and indeed whereas there may be differences of secondary doctrine with groups that have stayed loyal to this original vision they are not a cult. In order for us to be clear, we need to look at the early history of the creation of what can be called in broad terms 'Open Brethren' and 'Exclusive Brethren'.

The early vision was to throw off, as they saw it, the trappings of 'religion' and meet without ordained ministers and carefully orchestrated meetings. Every man was encouraged to take part and the meetings were in simple places. There were no musical instruments and the breaking of bread was a simple but meaningful act.

However, over a period of time some changes took place. Nigel Scotland in his book *Sectarian Religion in Contemporary Britain* (Paternoster Press, 2000), informs us,

Gradually, almost imperceptibly, the newly emerging assemblies began to emphasise the need for 'separateness' from the world. The 1830s and 1840s were a time when 'end time expectancy' was running high; the Lord was at hand, and everyone, above all the Brethren, must be ready to meet Him at his coming. So what had begun as a movement with a Communion table which was open to all believers was transformed into one which eventually excluded all save the elite of the Brethren. - p.95

Plymouth now takes on a significance because as J N Darby was holding sway over the Brethren in most parts of Britain, this Devon town did not accept his leadership and a split was ready to emerge. The split finally came about in 1848, and from 1849 especially the Exclusives came into their own.

From 1849 onwards the 'Exclusives'

emerged as a separate group. Frequently they were referred to as 'Darbyites' on account of Darby's total domination. Far from declining as a 'faithful remnant', however, the next thirty years proved to be a period of expansion and prosperity. - Ibid, p.97.

This is the main time of separation although as we shall see there are even groups within the Exclusives. However, we need to emphasise again that those known as 'Open Brethren' are not the ones that we refer to here. Although we may not agree with all that they do, these are secondary issues which should not preclude us from fellowshiping with those that love the Lord.

GROUPINGS

Returning to the Exclusives, we should be aware of the different groupings within the overall title of these people.

Although it may be an over-simplification, 'exclusive' brethren applies to those who are no longer walking in practical fellowship with 'open' brethren since a separation in the late 1840's. Since that time there have been various separations and also some healings. The main branches of the 'exclusives' now seem to be those who are often referred to as KLC (Kelly-Lowe-Continental), TW (Tunbridge Wells) and Taylor (Raven/Taylor) brethren. Within each of these groups there are separations into other smaller groups. - Web1

The KLC and TW by and large have stayed loyal to the early doctrines of separation that the Exclusives taught and as such, people within these groups will suffer from cultish tendencies. The most changes however have taken place within the third group, which came out of the J N Darby split. The development of this group is what we will follow as it graphically illustrates the damage that can be inflicted by an authoritarian group. Nigel Scotland tells us,

From Darby's time onwards the Exclusive Brethren have become steadily and increasingly withdrawn from the outside world, which is regarded as a place of evil and corruption. Darby progressively taught a sharp distinction between the true Church, that is the assemblies of the Exclusives, and the rest of Christendom, which had apostatised. In theory, Darby believed a saint could exist outside the Exclusive Brethren, but in practice, it was only within the fellowship of saints that people

experience and work out their salvation. For the 'Exclusives' their assembly and their community is the only safe place. - Sectarian, p.98.

There are many parallels that can be drawn from the development of the Exclusive Brethren with other cults, especially the Jehovah's Witnesses. Above we see the claim to be the only true church, a mark of a cult today, and then we have the development of doctrine by the successor to J N Darby – much the same as Rutherford to Russell in the Jehovah's Witnesses.

RAVEN

Darby died in 1882 and after a short while he was succeeded by Frederick Raven. Raven was a lecturer living in Greenwich, south-east London. It was the development of Raven's doctrines that caused further divisions within the movement. It is these doctrines that often distinguish the 'Taylor Exclusives' from other Exclusive Brethren.

A major separation happened in 1890 among the exclusive brethren over teachings of F.E.Raven of Greenwich, England. There were many doctrinal differences taught by Raven which precipitated this division. The main one was his teaching that Eternal Life does not include a life communicated to a believer but rather a sphere of life which the believer enters into when in association with other believers and then only when gathered together in the assembly. He taught that eternal life has no reference to a life which in duration is eternal. He also made many obscure definitions as to righteousness. Raven also taught the Apollinarian doctrine which teaches that the spirit of the Man, Jesus Christ, was the Divine Person. He rejected the commonly held Christian doctrine as to the Unity of the Person (Jesus Christ being fully man, sin apart, and fully God, united in His Person.) In his writings he called that longheld Christian doctrine nonsense, absurd and great error. - Web1

As we can see from the above, all Raven's changes were to the central doctrine of the person of Jesus Christ. He was now denying the unity of the person of Christ and the full humanity of Christ. He was also teaching that it is not necessary that every believer in Christ has eternal life.

TAYLOR SNR

As so often happens in a group like this, once the slide away from truth has begun

it will continue. This is what happened after Raven died and James (Jim) Taylor Snr. took over the leadership in 1903. Taylor was born in County Sligo Ireland in 1870 but later emigrated to the USA.

He used 2 Timothy 2:19-22 to justify theologically the whole idea of separation. But probably the biggest change came again to the person of Christ in 1929. Here he began to explain that Christ was not the eternal Son of God, in other words that at birth he was not fully God. He only received this fullness of God after either at age 12 in the Temple or at His baptism by John.

He also developed a further cultic doctrine,

James Taylor Sr. taught that the present speaking of the Holy Spirit in the gatherings of the brethren is additional to what was inspired and written in the Holy Scriptures. He taught that the Holy Spirit is giving us truth in our days which was not given to the apostles. Among them reference is often made to the Lord giving them 'new light.' They believe that the rest of the Christian profession are not in the path of God's will because they have rejected this 'new light' given by the Holy Spirit through these 'great men.' The Word of God by itself lost its own authority over the consciences of the members. It is strongly professed that they go by scripture but in practice it is denied because it must be the scriptures as interpreted by the 'man of God.' Any attempt to question the interpretation of the 'man of God' is considered a rejection of God's sovereign right to give His Word at the present time through His 'elect servant.' By this means, control of the whole thinking pattern of the membership has been gained. It is taught that the brethren should just submit to the teachings of the 'Lord's servant, the elect vessel' and that persons will go astray from the truth if they engage their own minds in the things of God. - Web1

Again, we have cultish doctrines akin to the Jehovah's Witnesses. Not only did Taylor become the mouthpiece of God on earth but also every member had to submit to those teachings, putting aside their own thinking. Control was complete because you must not check what we are saying through the Bible - you must just believe it.

TAYLOR JNR

After the death of James Taylor Snr there was a period of about 6 years when there was a question mark hanging over who should be leader. Eventually James

Taylor Jnr took the reigns in 1959. He soon stamped his mark on the Exclusives by declaring the doctrine of 'separate tables'. This meant, at first, that you could not eat at the same table with anybody over 12 years old who was not breaking bread with the Exclusives. However, it was not too long before this was extended to mean everybody that was not in the Exclusives and even to not being able to eat food that had been prepared by an outsider. You can imagine the damage and hardship that this would cause in families and also the ludicrous situations that arose as a result of it.

Children were no longer allowed to eat school dinners; instead they had to take a packed lunch or go to a Brethren home during the midday break... In the north-east of Scotland many Exclusives were involved in the fishing industry. In order for them to avoid sitting at table with fellow crew members who were unbelievers, galley tables were sawn down the middle so that there was an eighth of an inch gap. - Sectarian, p.101.

This was all too much for many families and it is estimated that at this time some 8,000 people left the 'Taylorite' Exclusives.

More edicts were to follow that would cover issues such as who and when you should marry, how many children you should have, what school activities you could take part in, no further education at college or university, not to use computers, no membership of Trade Unions or other public bodies that required professional qualifications.

The rules of the group are no less stringent in modern days and women especially play a very submissive role. The rule of thumb is not to have any friends and as little contact as possible with anyone outside the Exclusives. This can be worked out in things such as not sharing a front door with an unbeliever or more seriously not letting non-member relatives know the date of a funeral of a relative.

ABERDEEN 1970

One thing that is allowed is the drinking of spirits, especially gin or whisky. It is the drinking of gin that is said to have led to a major issue in the life of James Taylor Jnr and indeed the Exclusives. As his leadership developed in the 1960s he would often publicly make cruel remarks or crude innuendoes and some have said that he was a man out of control. Much of this was blamed on his

drinking and some would say he was an alcoholic with an increasing appetite for women and sex. All this came to a head in Aberdeen in July 1970.

A summary of Dick Wyman's explanation on his web site (<http://www.cloudnet.com/~dwyman/aberdeen.html>) of this event is as follows,

In July of 1970 James Taylor Junior travelled to Great Britain... By this time Mr. Taylor had managed to make frequent use of alcohol an accepted part of the everyday functions of these brethren... Taylor Junior had often used jokes and levity during meetings. This had been a pronounced departure from the ministry of Taylor Senior, who had once said that all power went out of a meeting if the brethren laughed. During the sequence of meetings in Great Britain, Taylor began to make vulgar remarks... In Aberdeen, Mr. Taylor stayed in a private home... While in that home, the wife of another man (with her husband's consent) spent each night in Mr. Taylor's bedroom. On Saturday afternoon, Mr. Taylor led a gathering that can hardly be called a meeting. In the presence of over 400 witnesses, he made distracting gestures while a man was praying, spoke many vulgarities, and made a number of abusive remarks about those present... After the meeting, Taylor returned to the home of his host and again took the other man's wife with him into the bedroom... His host decided he had to find out what was happening... He had Stanley McCallum... accompany him as he went through and opened the door to the bedroom... Later he was examined by a physician who diagnosed a state of alcoholic dementia and administered some pills.

These events were reported in the Press, which resulted in several actions. Wyman explains,

The brethren of Aberdeen acted quickly and withdrew from Mr. Taylor... Care meetings were held around the world, as each assembly heard the news and made decisions based on whatever evidence they had. I am told that all but a tiny fragment of the brethren of San Francisco... withdrew from Mr. Taylor... Rather than accept the assembly judgement of the brethren of Aberdeen, Mr. Taylor went to work inventing an alternative version of the events.

(Continued on page 15)

(Continued from page 7)

against him, solid in the faith, along with our international brotherhood.—1 Pet. 5:8,9.”

They will not meet the problem like this. It is not outward loyalty to the organisation that will bring them through but an inward knowledge of the enabling of God’s Holy Spirit.

“As drawn to our attention at last year’s ‘Doers of God’s Word’ District Conventions, we must beware of rumours and gossip. Let us not be ‘quickly shaken from our faith’ by unfounded and distorted media reports, statements of apostates, and opinions of outsiders seeking to sensationalize certain activities of Jehovah’s people. (2 Thess. 2:21) Rather, let us keep on doing God’s will in harmony with our unreserved dedication to Jehovah.”

So the publicity is having an effect. Maybe it is just that individuals are taking time to check the media reports and find that they are right. Indeed let us beware of rumours and gossip and lies and twisted truth for that matter, whoever is the perpetrator of the. Let us seek the truth and be ‘doers’ of that!

“To the fore must be our preaching and teaching activity. We cannot let up on this commission simply because we face the mounting problems of not-at-homes, apathy in this largely secular environment, and lack of response from the majority of householders. If we ‘appreciate sacred things’ then surely, however busy our schedule may be, we can find time each month to share our faith with others.”

How about putting a relationship with the Lord and resting in Him to the fore and working out from that instead of working ‘for’ Him.

“During the 2000 service year, 18,929 were irregular in field service. This led to 5,076 becoming inactive. Do elders arrange for regular shepherding visits on all members of the Christian congregation? In some cases these visits may be made before or after meetings at the Kingdom Hall, or while working with publishers in field service. In other cases, it might be helpful to visit publishers (or families) at their homes. In this way, help is provided according to the brothers’ needs. The congregation can confidently look to these “gifts in men” to be like a hiding place from the wind, a place of concealment in troublesome season, and

a source of comfort and refreshment. (Isa. 32:2; Eph. 4:11, 12, 14) Preventive maintenance is far better than finding it necessary to assist with deep-rooted spiritual problems!”

It seems that the purpose of these ‘shepherding’ visits is simply to get them back on the doors. No wonder over 400 Witnesses are becoming inactive every month. How about being concerned for the people and not just what they do. May we all learn these lessons.

What are some of the suggestions that have been offered over the years to encourage a balanced field ministry? If pioneers can be assigned to assist other publishers this will prove to be a real blessing to both the pioneer as well as the publisher. A veritable mutual “interchange of encouragement” can result from this loving arrangement. (Please see Service Meeting for week commencing June 22, 1998.) If there are an abnormal number of not-at-homes in your territory, can thought be given to evening witnessing, provided due care is taken as to the type of territory selected? (*Kingdom Ministry* 7/96, page 1) How about alternative witnessing? (*Kingdom Ministry* 11/99, page 8)...

It seems that the Jehovah’s Witness is no more than ‘cannon fodder’ to get out on the streets. May God help us to meet with the people and love and care for them and not just get people to be working for the ‘church’. ☐

(Continued from page 14)

EXCLUSIVE BRETHREN

First he eliminated the testimony of both his host at Aberdeen and Mr. McCallum by having the brethren he led withdraw from both. He declared that his Aberdeen host’s house was “leprous”... On the 7th of August, Mr. Taylor wrote a letter in which he stated that the woman had come to his room to wash his feet and that her husband suggested that she might assist me after the meetings each day in rubbing my head and massage. Taylor’s letter was written in response to a letter from a woman who had written to him before Aberdeen, yet he remarks that she stated in her letter that she had enjoyed the meetings, so clearly his mental status was reduced.

to be continued ☐

Doug’s Diary

Doug Harris will be involved in training at the following seminars. Others may have been added since publication. Please ring Head Office for further details. Those marked * may have a restricted attendance.

If there is not a venue near you but you feel that your area would benefit from a seminar, contact Head Office to talk about organising one.

The following dates have been confirmed but there are others awaiting final agreement.

JANUARY

30 SE London

FEBRUARY

- 3 a.m. Bracknell
- 3 p.m. Stevenage
- 6 SE London
- 9 Wimbledon
- 10 p.m. Stevenage
- 13 SE London
- 15-16 Bracknell
- 17 p.m. Stevenage
- 19 Battersea
- 20 SE London
- 23-24 Camelford Cornwall
- 27 SE London

MARCH

- 3 a.m. Carshalton
- 4 p.m. Stevenage
- 6 SE London
- 9 Thornton Heath
- 10 p.m. Stevenage
- 16 NE London
- 17 p.m. Stevenage
- 19 Battersea
- 23 Royston
- 24 Dagenham

CHEERFUL GIVING

Since April 2000 it has been possible for us to reclaim any tax that you may have paid on the amount of your gifts to Reachout Trust no matter how small providing you instruct us to treat them as "Gift Aid Donations."

WHY SHOULD I DO THIS?

1. It is good stewardship – your gift is increased by over 20% without you giving anything extra.
2. It helps us to be able to plan the work ahead more effectively.
3. It enables us to accomplish many of the projects that we believe that the Lord would have us undertake.

WHAT SHOULD I DO NEXT?

Consider whether you feel the Lord wants you to make a regular donation or a once-off gift. Fill in the form below and send it with the gift. We will receive it with great appreciation and do everything else that is necessary.

WHAT WILL YOU SPEND IT ON?

Obviously there are the normal overheads of the Trust – wages, rent, advertising etc. These costs are kept to a minimum. We then have a Reachout Development Plan, which is a priority list of what we would want to undertake in the next year. At present we are looking to complete the £3,500 needed to purchase a laptop computer and digital projector to enable our seminar presentations to be more effective. We also need to have the computer programme that runs our database, invoicing etc updated and this will also be probably around £1,000.

If you are eligible please could we encourage you to complete the form below (you can photostat the page) by ticking the appropriate boxes, deleting the * inappropriate words and sending it with your gift to **REACHOUT TRUST 24 ORMOND ROAD RICHMOND SURREY TW10 6TH**. Do not worry if your circumstances might change in the future because you can withdraw this authority at any time by simply writing to us. Many thanks.

Authority to reclaim tax on a gift (Please complete in BLOCK LETTERS – Thank you.)

Title and Full Name: _____

Address: _____

Post Code: _____

I wish to make a one-off gift by cheque (enclosed)/my credit card * of £ _____ for Reachout Trust which along with any other gifts made by whatever means should be treated as Gift Aid donations on which tax can be reclaimed.

I enclose a gift/wish to make a gift via my credit card * of £ _____ for Reachout Trust which along with any future gifts made by whatever means should be treated as Gift Aid donations on which tax can be reclaimed. This is the first of a regular monthly/quarterly yearly * gift which I wish to pay by cheque/standing order/credit card *

My credit card number is _____ expiry date _____

By signing this form I declare that I have paid an amount of income tax or capital gains tax equal to the sum of 28p for every £1 given.

I further agree to inform you if my tax circumstances change or I wish to withdraw this agreement.

Signed _____ Date _____