



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.

All unassigned articles are the responsibility of Doug Harris, Director of Reachout Trust.

Other articles may not necessarily represent the Trustees' belief in every small detail.

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CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF MINISTRY REACHOUT QUARTERLY

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Issue 67

The Trustees Report

Every January the Trustees of Reachout Trust meet to review the past year and look ahead as to what the Lord has for us for the next. We had a great day together and first I would like to repeat here some of the review for 2000/20001 as we believe it was a year of encouragement for us.

LOOKING BACK

The management report produced in December 2001 shows that the continued time and effort put into developing the Web Site has been well worth it as the number of visitors nearly doubled in the year to over 125,000. We have joined with Christian Technology Ltd who now host our site and as a Christian group they have provided us with great service and the opportunity to develop the on line shop and other services. There have been many good exchanges of views on the forum and email contacts have been helped with many different problems and calls for assistance.

Our estimation of people reached by the work of the Trust in the year ending 31 December 2001 shows an encouraging 26% increase to 188,337. What continues to encourage us is that this is largely achieved by 'working

smarter and not harder.'

We saw an increase in the number of letters and telephone calls we received over the year, to an average of 1500 per month. We did not think we would be able to cope with an increase but much of this extra came in via email, which is easier to deal with.

As with most years, Doug travelled many thousands of miles and took some 70 seminars in all parts of the British Isles. Mike & Ann Thomas have taken a num-

We are still looking for a Christian who understands our work and who is skilled in programming in Access. We have set a budget for the vital job of updating our database and invoice programme. If you feel you might be the person for this job please send your CV with a view to arranging an on-site meeting at Head Office.

ber of seminars and Mike along with Doug lead two very popular Convention days. Both of these together with our residential convention benefited from the input of representatives from Home Evangelism. Over the Easter period, we exhibited at the FIEC, AOG and Elim conferences as well as the Christian Resources

Exhibitions at Sandown Park in May. The two seminars we took at the Elim Conference were televised later and they produced many good contacts and literature sales. Other media appearances this year included a very successful Heaven and Earth show just before Halloween.

In the final analysis we measure the real success of the work by the numbers that we know are set free from the cults, occult and new age each year as a result, directly or indirectly, of the services of Reachout Charitable Trust. This in the end is our reason for being and we are encouraged by the number of testimonies we receive at the office to the usefulness of our work.

... FORWARD

We also took quite a far-reaching decision to change the way we oversee the work around the country and the individuals who work for the Trust. By now those who have been involved should have received details of the changes.

For anyone not yet involved because they felt there were too many hindrances in the past, please do check out our new procedures on the web or phone

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head office for a full information pack. We believe that the changes we have made will allow many more to be actively involved in the work all over the country – which is a vital part of the service offered by Reachout Trust.

The purpose behind the changes is indeed to ensure that we continue to offer the high service associated with the name of Reachout Trust but at the same time be able to increase the number of people available for Reachout to call on.

In essence, we are removing the various titles we have had in the past, with the exception of Church Representative and calling everyone a Reachout Associate. On the new application form, the potential candidate will indicate their areas of expertise and will then be accepted as part of the team with some or all of these specific areas of responsibility.

We trust these measures will bring about the necessary increase needed within the wider team of Reachout.

LOOKING WHICH WAY?

I suppose we should not be surprised about the way the world looks at things but it still does come as a shock sometimes when you see it in black and white. One of our supporters wrote to Consodata UK about an article they saw in a magazine that gave endorsement to new age remedies with all their potential problems. This was part of the reply received;

“... I feel compelled to tell you that I do not share your views. I fully understand that you are speaking from the point of view of a concerned and committed Christian who feels it their duty to ‘protect’ others from the things which you deem evil. However, it is my view that we are living in what can be best described as the post-Christian era, i.e., Christianity no longer forms the spiritual backbone of our country... [the publication] is reflecting the more liberal ideological times in which we now live.”

What a challenge to us! We cannot just say that we are right. We must, as we said so often, learn to make clear statements by means of apologetics.

CHRISTIANS TOO

I can understand the person who wrote the letter feeling like that but I have greater problems when Christians also seem to be looking to the things of “other spiritualities” and have a worldview that seems to be mixed.

Nowhere has this been more apparent than in the desire to share the gospel through Tarot Cards.

Several books mention it and the recent Lion publication, *Beyond Prediction—the Tarot and your spirituality*, by **John Drane, Ross Clifford and Philip Johnson**, is literally the way to do it.

Working on the premise that Tarot Cards are not in themselves evil the authors believe they can use the Tarot Cards to communicate the Gospel of Jesus Christ to those in the occult and new age that accept the Tarot for guidance.

The logic is further enhanced from a Scriptural point of view in another book that the two Australians, Clifford and Johnson, wrote. Here they use the fact that Paul on Mars Hill in Acts 17, used the tomb of the unknown God as an illustration. Paul used such imagery, so should we today.

However such ‘theology’ does not stand the test of examination. Paul simply used an illustration written on a tombstone, not something that has been used by occultists for years as a way of fortune telling.

There seem to me so many aspects that have not been taken into consideration before encouraging Christians to get involved in this. I would just like to highlight one or two of them here.

In Acts 19 when the occultists were converted at Ephesus, we read,

Many also of those who had believed kept coming, confessing and disclosing their practices. And many of those who practiced magic brought their books together and begun burning them in the sight of all... (vv.18,19).

First we had true confession that involved repentance and turning their back on things of the past. Can you imagine one saying—I will just hold back my Tarot Cards to preach the gospel to my old friends. Or could you imagine one of the Christians looking on, taking a pack off the fire. No Tarot Cards and all the paraphernalia used in the fortune telling were burned.

Another issue we need to consider is the damage of association there could be for young Christians or for those who have come from an occult background. Scripture tells us that we are not to stumble

(Continued on page 5)

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.

APRIL

13 Wakefield
14 Oakham

MAY

8 Newbury
14-17 **CRE Sandown Park**
22 Putney
25-26 Wigan
29 Putney

JUNE

5 Putney
15 Birmingham
16 Dagenham
18 Battersea
23 Reigate

JULY

3 Putney
6 Bicester
10 Putney
13 Welwyn Garden City
16 Battersea
17 Putney

Divine Light Mission

BLINDED BY THE LIGHT: AN OUTLINE AND ANALYSIS OF THE 'DIVINE LIGHT MISSION.'

The *Divine Light Mission* (DLM) (now *Elan Vital*) was founded by *Guru Maharaji Ji*. His impact on the 'west,' and consequently that of DLM, started when he arrived in Britain from India in 1971. Maharaji Ji was thirteen and came from a family of high aspirations. His mother was set to take on the Guru title from his father when he died, however, being a woman, the title of Guru ended up being given to the eight year old Maharaji Ji.

Catalysed by appearing at the Glastonbury music festival, Guru Maharaji Ji's claims concerning, salvation, enlightenment and God became popular. His teaching, based loosely on Hinduism, focused on the ability to recognise through meditation that *he alone was supreme*. By practising and following Guru Maharaji Ji one would 'be ready.' This entailed coming to the understanding that there was only one master (Maharaji Ji), and only *one method of attaining salvation* which was to practise '*Knowledge*' (four forms of meditation) and dedicated your life to Guru Maharaji Ji.

DLM became Elan Vital in 1984, after a court case involving Maharaji Ji in India. It had its biggest following as DLM in the mid 1970's (reports claim anything from a few hundred thousand to six million followers). As Elan Vital the number of followers have dropped dramatically, and the majority live in India. The teachings of Elan Vital differ only slightly from DLM. I hence use the names interchangeably noting any importance differences between the groups.

THE BELIEFS AND STRUCTURE OF DLM

DLM's beliefs can be summed up in a phrase, 'meditate as Maharaji Ji instructs and gain salvation.' However, like any group which depends on one person for their beliefs, there is a confusion over exactly what DLM claim and practise. However, a number of things are indubitable. Firstly, Maharaji Ji claims to be an incarnation of God, greater than Jesus

Christ and Buddha. In fact, DLM on his behalf, have claimed more that this! A Divine Light poster claimed in both English and Hindi that, 'God is great, but greater is Guru, because Guru reveals God.' Moreover, in the mid 1970's the divine incarnations were said to include Maharaji Ji's three elder brothers. They were said to manifest the trimuti, or three-in-one God, namely, the *Creator*, *Preserver* and the *Destroyer* of the universe (interestingly the trimuti is a common thread across sects in Hinduism).

Maharaji claims that there is only one way to salvation, this is through *work*. Specifically through the act of meditation, and dedication to the service of Maharaji. This dedication includes donations to DLM and renouncing sexual, marital and family relations. The meditation or 'Knowledge' comprises of four techniques. As DLM it was *mahatmas*, then *initiators*, then *instructors* which could pass on the Knowledge. Now however as leader of Elan Vital, Maharaji claims sole communicator of the Knowledge. These four forms of meditation which comprise Knowledge are:

- 1. Light** (or *Shambhavi Mudra*) – Involves directing one's eyes towards the middle of the eyebrows and focusing on the self.
- 2. Sound** – Involves focusing on the sound which is un-produced in the head when quiet and covering one's ears with one's hands.
- 3. Holy Word** – Involves focusing on one's breathing, or the sounds produced when one is breathing.
- 4. Nectar** (or *Khechari Mudra*) – Involves cutting the nerve below the tongue in order to turn the tongue backwards into the cavity of the cranium. Then turning the eyes inwards toward the eyebrow centre. This will make the person and the person's body 'divine,' beyond illness and death.

True knowledge and salvation can be attained by these techniques but only in conjunction with faithful commitment to Maharaji Ji. Members of DLM are called *premies* and as noted are encouraged to give up all family, 'secular' education, and sexual relations. To facilitate

this Maharaji Ji built *ashrams* (which sometimes featured their own schools), which were communal living places (although as Elan Vital the groups have been shut down). Premies are encouraged to give monetary contributions to further the course of DLM.

All the experiences that premies get through meditation are claimed to be from Maharaji. Consequently, premies ought to depend on him for all their inner and outer experiences. A quote from a former premie will best sum up the structure in DLM:

Maharaji's mother and three brothers...were all divine beings, but not as divine as Maharaji.... Below the Holy family were special Mahatmas... premies who lived and perhaps travelled, with Maharaji. Below them were the ordinary Mahatmas. Then came the Ashram premies. Then the premies who were waiting to go into the ashram, followed by the 'community premies'...followed by the rest of the human race. They too had their levels in the divine hierarchy. At the top were the aspirants, people waiting to be initiated. Below them were people who had heard about Knowledge, and the more you heard, the higher you went. Even reading a leaflet would help.

More converts are actively sought by Elan Vital. Various things have been done in order to bring this about. The film '*Who is Guru Maharaji Ji?*', *The World Welfare Organisation*, a group for helping the socially excluded and needy and the *Divine United Organisation* an umbrella company helping premie companies. The aim of all of these was to educate people, convert people, and improve the reputation of DLM.

The greatest goal for a premie is Maharaji's physical presence called his '*darshan*.' Hence Maharaji, has and does, organise mass meetings in which this darshan can be administered. This involved premies kissing his feet, and donating money to further DLM. The Maharaji's claims, deeds and commands are taken to be absolute, they are referred to as *agya*. To question *agya* is thought to be a sign of spiritual immaturity.

IS DLM (ELAN VITAL) A CULT?

Clearly for the members who have left the group it is. A visit to the ex-premie web site gives numerous accounts of how people now feel free from the groups' pernicious influence. However, it would be unfair to answer the question on these grounds. Thus, to avoid engaging in a complex debate over the exact nature of a cult, I stipulate a number of features common to cults. Then compare DLM with these features.

New 'Truth:' *The idea that God has revealed something unique and new, exclusive to the cult.*

This is true of Elan Vital (DLM). It claims that Maharaji has been given the 'new truth' of *Knowledge*. These meditation techniques are a closely guarded secret and supersede all previous revelations of 'the truth' (e.g. the Bible and the Quran)

Another Jesus: *Cults often claim that Jesus wasn't what he claimed to be.*

This is true of Elan Vital (DLM). DLM claim Jesus was a *prophet*, non-divine, and nothing more than a human. Moreover, DLM claim that there is one *greater* than Jesus, namely, Maharaji Ji.

Changing Theology: *The beliefs of a cult are fluid and secret.*

This is true of Elan Vital (DLM). Information concerning the cult, viz. their beliefs, are hard to ascertain, and according to ex-members change regularly. Even officially, the group has changed from DLM to Elan Vital. A paradigm example is Maharaji Ji's position on his divine status.

Strong Leadership: *The beliefs of some cults are produced and administered exclusively through a strong figurehead. This leader is said to be the sole person in contact with God, such that members cannot question their leader, without questioning God.*

This is true of Elan Vital (DLM). As I have said Maharaji Ji is now the only person who can communicate the 'knowledge' which is the only source of salvation. Also, there is a word for what Maharaji commands, *agya*, and premises cannot doubt *agya*. To doubt the leaders words is to be 'spiritually immature.'

Salvation by Works: *A cult can be characterised by the view that salvation can only be gained through some set of ac-*

tions, which need to be maintained.

This is true of Elan Vital (DLM). Initially one can only gain Knowledge, once one is 'ready.' Being ready involves getting into a state where one is not attached to family, sex, money or a spouse. Once this has been achieved, often by giving money and possessions to Maharaji, then one can receive Knowledge. However, one can only receive salvation, by *practising* knowledge continuously and by following everything Maharaji says. There hence is no notion of grace within Elan Vital (DLM).

Human Needs: *Cults often provide a community which is isolated from what is taken to be a 'secular' world. This community shows love to its members and gives a feeling of 'being accepted.'*

DLM set up ashrams. These were communities that were detached from society (even forming their own schools). In these there was a sense of belonging, and a position in the community was allocated to members according to their spiritual maturity.

From this brief survey it starts to become clear that if anything is a cult then Elan Vital (DLM) is. To finish this section consider a quote from an ex member of Elan Vital (DLM). This quote justifies, to me, calling Elan Vital (DLM) a cult, and Maharaji a cult leader:

In my experience, if you express criticism of Maharaji, or any of his decisions, or Knowledge, or anything related, you get the cold shoulder by his followers and his organization and will be considered "confused" or not "synchronized." ... This, in my opinion, is the essence of the Maharaji cult. The axiom is this: All that is good is due to Maharaji, or at least ultimately due to him, while all that is bad is due to the [member of Elan Vital's (DLM)] lack of understanding.

CHRISTIANITY AND DLM

From what I have said it is clear that DLM (Elan Vital) is not a Christian group. However, it will be useful to highlight a number of reasons why this conclusion is justified.

Who was Jesus? Clearly, this must be the central question. Here the Bible says countless things on the matter. Importantly however it claims that Jesus is fully Divine and fully Human (e.g. John 1). DLM however claim that Jesus was

merely a human prophet like Buddha, Mohammed and others. In which case DLM are introducing another Jesus (see 2 Corinthians 11:4).

Who is God? Christians claim that God is unique (e.g. Isaiah 44: 6 and 1 Timothy 2:5) and that there is nothing greater than him (Revelation 1:8). DLM deny this, claiming that Maharaji is *an* incarnate God, and is *greater* than God.

Salvation: Christians believe that salvation is only given through Divine grace. That is, the un-earned reward of eternal life through believing in Jesus' death on a cross (e.g. Romans 5: 6-9). DLM deny this. They claim that salvation only comes through work, meditation and devotion to Maharaji. Consider again what the Bible says:

For it is by *grace* you have been saved, through faith – and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – *not by works*, so that *no-one can boast*. (Ephesians 2: 8-9. Emphasis mine)

Authority: Christians claim their authority comes from God, through his Word, the Bible (e.g. Deuteronomy 4:2 and Revelation 22:18). DLM deny this. They claim that the teachings of Maharaji are the revealed word of God, and that as such he is the ultimate authority.

It is clear then that Elan Vital is firstly, a cult, and secondly, non-Christian.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Agya - The word and command of Maharaji Ji

Ashrams - Communities set up by The Divine Light Mission

Aspirants - Non members of DLM who are being trained to 'be ready' to become members.

'Becoming Ready' - The process of spiritual cleansing before one can receive the secret of salvation.

Darshan - The physical presence of Maharaji Ji

Divine United Organisation - An umbrella company helping DLM members set up and run their own businesses.

Elan Vital - The new name for DLM.

Guru Maharaji Ji - The supreme leader of Elan Vital, claimed to be an incarnate God.

Gratitude - The name that Elan Vital calls devoting one's self to Maharaji Ji.

Khechari Mudra – One of the four meditation techniques of ‘Knowledge’ which involves cutting part of the tongue so as to place tongue in cranial cavity between eyes.

Knowledge – A set of four meditation techniques which comprise the secret of salvation.

Mahatmas – Members of DLM who travelled, and were in close contact with Maharaji Ji.

Premies – The name given to member of

Elan Vital (DLM)

Satsang – Service and meditation.

Shambhavi Mudra - One of the four meditation techniques of ‘Knowledge’ which involves focusing one’s eyes to the centre of the head.

Synchronised – To be, through the practice of Knowledge, in complete agreement with, and submission to, Maharaji Ji.

Trimuti – The Hindu doctrine of a three-in-one God.

The World Welfare Organisation - A social action group set up to encourage converts to DLM.

Who is Guru Maharaji Ji? - A Film used to convert people to DLM.

REFERENCES

Web site <http://www.ex-premie.org>

Concise Guide to Today’s Religions (1982) (eds) McDowell, J & Stewart, D (USA: Here’s Life Publishers Inc.) ☐

(Continued from page 2)

LEADER

young or weak Christians and I can think of nothing more ready to stumble than opening a pack of Tarot Cards and beginning to share the gospel. This is even more highlighted when you discover some of the interpretations given to the cards.

Another factor is what I term as giving no appearance of evil. Think of someone who is looking into their spirituality and seeking which way to go. They find a group of Christians sharing the gospel via the Tarot Cards. Leaving them they are walking through the local arcade and find another person using the Tarot Cards, only this one is not seeking to put them in touch with the Christian God but any other power they happen to be in touch with.

The end result of such an experience would first be that there would be no ‘immune’ system to the Tarot Card reader because the Christian had shown it was okay. After that might come confusion and in the worst scenario an individual entering the occult realms because a Christian used a pack of Tarot Cards.

Some may feel we are over dramatising but we do need to sound the warning. This way of preaching the gospel is being taught widely and no safeguards are being given at all. Maybe we do need to be a little dramatic so that the warning goes out and people think about what they are doing.

At the same time we might also be heard by young Christians and former occultists who are indeed confused by this teaching that is spreading through the church today.

Finally I wonder where the various meanings of these cards came from? There is nothing in Scripture obviously and so at best this is the thinking of man

that is giving each one of these cards a meaning. At worst well....

The Magician Card is along with the Fool Card said to be the most powerful card. It refers to grace but as it also refers to the infinite source of all being it must in this scenario also refer to the giver of grace—God Himself. We are told in the book that some have aligned this card with the Holy Spirit and yet there is a belt of a serpent and a pentacle on the table. Such a mixture of God and the Devil is surely unhealthy.

As with all the cards there is a detailed explanation of what the symbols on the card mean and then a look at what the strengths and the weaknesses of that card may be.

The paragraphs on p.40 regarding the Magician are as with all the cards a little far fetched at times. What you realise is of course you can make what you want of the symbols and that is why it seems possible for Christians to use the Tarot Cards—they make up their own meanings as they go along.

One wonders of course whether this makes the Christian reading of the Tarot Cards any better than a lucky dip of Scriptures and we believe God is saying to us whatever we pick. There is no more reason to believe the interpretations in this book than to accept every word of Shakespeare as being God speaking to us.

I suppose however one thing beyond all else stands out to me as being so wrong and that is that the interpretation of The Fool Card as being Jesus Christ. The lengths to which one must stretch their imagination to arrive at such a conclusion is unbelievable. To see Jesus as the depiction on this card is to me belittling and nothing to do with the Christ of Scriptures.

I do believe we need to build bridges to these people and we do need to use good apologetics but we must not use any-

thing that either opens a person up to a wrong supernatural power or that downgrades the one we are talking about.

LOOK AROUND

When we look around the area we live, do we do it with heart-concern and with an awareness of the areas we should certainly be praying about if not acting upon? There will be much cult and occult activity—why not start a regular prayer group to intercede for these folks who are caught up in it and for the true proclamation of the gospel to those who might hear the false one proclaimed.

One specific area to pray about and possible be involved wisely is the annual Jehovah’s Witnesses Conventions. Why not arrange to be praying around the grounds they will be using, a few weeks before they come as well as anything else you feel you should be doing. Some of the main venues as printed at the moment are:

June 7-9 Jersey

June 14-16 Newcastle Arena

June 21-23 Bournemouth F.C.; Coventry F.C.; Nottingham Ice Rink.

June 28-30 Leeds F.C.; Plymouth F.C.

July 5-7 Manchester Arena; Wolverhampton F.C.

July 12-14 Perth—St Johnstone F.C.; Swords National Showground Co Dublin Ireland

July 19-21 Brighton Centre; Norwich F.C.; Swords National Showground Co Dublin Ireland

July 26-28 Swords National Showground Co Dublin Ireland

August 2-4 London Arena; Twickenham Rugby Ground

August 16-18 Cardiff Millennium Stadium ☐

WATCH THE OWER

2002/1

hwhy

By Andrew Harrison

The most commonly used name of God in the Old Testament and the name treated as the most sacred by the Jews is the Hebrew word behind the expression 'Jehovah' or 'Yahweh'. This special Name has been the subject of controversy and misunderstanding from time to time. In this article I will seek to clarify the subject and provide a scholarly framework from which to explore 'the Name' further and discover its significance for us today.

Hebrew was originally written in consonants only, so vowel sounds had to be remembered orally/aurally for many centuries until a group of Hebrew scholars called Masoretes developed a vowel system in the ninth and tenth centuries AD. This pointed text of the Old Testament is known as the Masoretic Text. The vowel points were added to the Hebrew text which was standardised in the first century AD, although it had been completed centuries before.

However reliably these vowel signs represent the earliest pronunciation of Hebrew, we have no clear indication how to pronounce the most commonly written name for God in the Old Testament represented by the consonants hwhy (YHWH).

This is not only a 'name' but in fact a verb in the third person singular, 'he is'. Therefore, when the Hebrews spoke of the Name they were aware of its significance, whereas we need articles like this to understand it.

The main biblical explanation of its meaning can be found in Exodus 3:14-15. Here God manifests Himself to Moses and expresses the essence of this Name, but before I examine the passage, I must mention a little about Hebrew grammar.

There is simplicity about Hebrew grammar, but ironically this can make precise translation difficult especially in the realm of tenses. There are no Hebrew tenses as we understand them. As R K Harrison, the author of *Teach Yourself Biblical Hebrew — a complete course*, says:

Instead there are two 'states': the perfect, which expresses any kind of completed action, and the imperfect, which denotes any incomplete action, past, present or future.

This means a verb will be either one or the other of the states, as a completed action or as an action not necessarily considered to have ended. For example, the verb 'to live' would be 'lived' in the perfect state and in the imperfect state we could have 'was living', 'am living' or 'will be living'. Already you can see concepts of eternity are easily expressed in the Hebrew imperfect state, since this state can represent any or all of the tenses. Our understanding of God's nature is never complete. There is neither a finite beginning nor a finite end to God. God is, always was and always will be. His existence is eternal.

It will help at this stage to lay out Exodus 3:14-15 using *The Interlinear Bible* by Jay P Green. Incidentally, Hebrew is written from right to left.

EXODUS Chapter 3 verses 14-15

And God said to Moses, I AM THAT I AM

hyha dxta hyha
I AM WHO/THAT I AM

And He said, you shall say this to the sons of Israel, I AM

hyha
I AM

has sent me to you. And God said to Moses again, you shall say this to the sons of Israel, Jehovah the God of (or 'Jehovah God of' or 'LORD God of)

yEl á hwhy
the God of Jehovah

your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you. This is My name forever, and this is My title from generation to generation.

The words hyha and hwhy translated 'I am' and 'Jehovah' respectively here are based on the same verb - 'to be' or hyh.

hwh is actually the more ancient form of

hyh so you can see that hwhy translated as 'Jehovah' here was a name believed to be so sacred that they considered it almost untouchable. This in fact appears to be more important to them than preserving the vowel sounds. The Masoretes actually gave the Name two sets of vowels, neither of which are considered to be for the purpose of *speaking* the name 'YHWH' as we shall see later.

So God is the 'I am' hyha hereafter called 'he is' hwhy and in the Old Testament translated as 'Jehovah,' 'Yahweh' or 'LORD'. The phrase, 'I am who I am' hyha dva hyha expresses the meaning of hwhy. And Moses is ordered by God to say, '**I am** has sent me to you' (Exodus 3:14).

Clarifying what we have discovered so far; hwhy can be translated, 'LORD', 'Yahweh', 'Jehovah' or 'he is' (incomplete action). Moses was also given the Name as 'I am' (incomplete action), all meaning the same thing. The essence of this special Name is expressed by the phrase, 'I am who I am' and because this is in the imperfect state of incomplete action in the past, present or future, it can also be translated, 'I will be who I will be'.

A helpful little book called, *Hebrew Proper Names* produced by the Stow Hill Bible and Tract Depot, informs us that the statement, 'I am who I am' from Exodus 3:14, can also be expressed as, 'I am He who am always' or 'I am the same that I am', confirming God's unchangeableness. In addition, we can have, 'I shall be that I shall be', guaranteeing God's existence forever. It also confirms that the Hebrew future here may stand '*for the present, as expressing continuance.*'

GREEK

We will now turn our attention to Greek, the original language of our New Testament. The Old Testament was translated from Hebrew into Greek in ancient times by the Jews. This translation is called the Septuagint (often referred to as LXX). Although as Christians we accept the Hebrew as the most authoritative, we

often use the Old Testament LXX for clarification or confirmation, so I will now consider Exodus 3:14 in the Greek. Apart from having its own insights, this Greek translation helps us to understand more fully the expressions of New Testament language.

For 'I am who I am' the Septuagint has ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ὢν meaning 'I am the Being' or 'I am the (one who) is'. This clearly confirms the meaning of the Hebrew.

Bishop Ellicott, chairman of the committee for the nineteenth century translation of the Revised Version Bible said, this is, **A deep and mysterious statement of His nature, 'I am that which I am'... (which means) I exist, as nothing else does — necessarily, eternally, really.**

Although neither **hwhy** nor a Greek transliteration of it exists in any New Testament Greek manuscript, the essence of the Name is expressed clearly, for example, in Revelation 1:8 in the phrase,

Who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty (NRSV)

I AM

Moses is ordered to say to Israel, *I AM has sent me to you* - Exodus 3:14

Concerning this Ellicott says,

'I AM', assumed as a name, implies (1) an existence different from all other existence. 'I am, and there is none beside me' (Isa 46:6); (2) an existence out of time, with which time has nothing to do (Jn 8:58).

This is why the 'I am' statements of Jesus in John's Gospel are singled out as interesting studies, since Jesus' identity is synonymous with **hwhy**. We can qualify this statement by seeing that the identity of Jesus as **hwhy** or the 'I AM' is confirmed by Jesus himself in John 8:58. Jesus says

ἀμην ἀμην ... πριν Ἀβρααμ
Truly, truly... before Abraham

γενεσθαι ἐγώ εἰμὲ
, was I am

"I am" is the only accurate way of translating the last two words in the Greek. This is not simply a statement that Jesus existed before Abraham, but a clear message to the Jews that He is the 'I AM', **hwhy**, in the flesh! (See also John 1:1-15).

Ellicott says concerning this statement in John 8:58:

But there was never a time when the Son of God was not

And again,

In the time before Abraham, in the eternity before time ... He still was

LORD GOD

At Exodus 3:15 most English versions of the Bible translate 'Jehovah... God' as 'LORD... God'. The word 'LORD' replaces **hwhy** ('Jehovah' or 'Yahweh' or 'he is') for various reasons. One reason for this is simply that we do not truly know how to pronounce these consonants 'YHWH' as it was unlawful for a long time for the Jews to say the Name. There are in fact two sets of vowels used for the Name, and we cannot be sure if any of them are correct for speaking.

The Masoretes added the vowels from the Hebrew word for 'Lord,' **yhda** to 'yhwh' **hwhy** which gives **hyhy**.

At times also the vowels from the Hebrew word for 'God,' **syhl a** are added to 'yhwh' **hwhy** and this gives **hyhy**.

Bruce Metzger, chairman of the committee for the 1989 translation of the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible, explains this in the introduction. He points out that traditionally English versions translate **hwhy** as 'LORD' in agreement with Jewish and Christian tradition but to distinguish it from the proper Hebrew word for 'Lord' capital letters are used. He writes:

This represents the traditional manner... following the precedent of the ancient Greek and Latin translators and the... reading of the Hebrew Scriptures in the synagogue.

He in fact believes the most likely pronunciation was 'Yahweh', but:

The four consonants YHWH... had come to be regarded as too sacred to be pronounced... (The Masoretes) attached vowel signs indicating that in its place should be read the Hebrew word Adonai meaning Lord... Ancient Greek translators employed the word Kyrios ('Lord) for the Name. The Vulgate likewise used the Latin word Dominus ('Lord). The form 'Jehovah' is of late medieval origin... (the sound of Y being represented by J and the sound of W by

V, as in Latin).

Even the LXX (Greek Old Testament) translates the Hebrew as 'Lord God, κυριος ὁ θεος and even if you have doubts about the authority of the LXX, you can see that Yahweh calls himself 'Lord God' in the original Greek of Revelation 1:8 which I referred to earlier.

This explains why the vowel points from the Hebrew for 'Lord' are used by the Masoretes and indicates the reason why the use of the vowels **e, o** and **a** respectively in pronouncing the Name are not reliable (as with the use of the option 'Jehovah'). Nevertheless, you may be wondering why the vowels of the Hebrew for 'God' are used from time to time, and Gesenius explains this in his *Hebrew—Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament* (p337). He says:

*Where the text has **hwhy yhda**, in order that 'Adonai' should not be twice repeated, the Jews read **syhl a yhda** and they write **hyhy yhda**.*

In other words if the word 'Lord' is next to **hwhy** in the text you would have to speak, 'Lord LORD'. To avoid this, the vowels from 'God' are added to **hwhy** so that the spoken words would be, 'Lord GOD'.

This shows too that the vowels **e, o** and **i** respectively used for pronouncing the Name are not reliable. At the same time it indirectly provides solid evidence that the believed practice outlined above is correct, because if the Jews and Christians did not usually speak the Name as LORD, then why would the vowels have to be changed when it was accompanied by the proper Hebrew word for 'Lord', except to avoid vocalising, 'Lord LORD'.

APPLICATION

1. Above all, it is clear that an accurate pronunciation of **hwhy** (YHWH) is not something that God requires. Rather it is more important to acknowledge the meaning of His Name and the reality of His presence in your own life. The same applies to the Name Jesus. If we were to speak the original pronunciation, everyone, no matter where they were from, would call Him something like 'yaysoos'. However accurate pronunciation is not relevant even though the scripture tells us in Acts 4:12,

There is no other name under heaven

(Continued on page 10)

TRUTH RESTORED - 30

BY MIKE & ANN THOMAS

MISSIONARY DISCUSSIONS – CONTINUED

So far we have discussed the general “mechanics” of Mormonism, the *apologia* for Mormonism’s existence. The idea that God reveals truth through prophets; that our response to truth should be acts of obedience, e.g. exercising faith, repenting, submitting to baptism etc.; that “the truth” was lost in a great apostasy; and that “the truth” was restored through modern prophets – Mormon prophets. We have, of course, looked at key doctrines during these discussions, and will cover some of the same ground here, but now we move from the general to the particular, discuss the personal application of Mormonism epitomised in the questions “Where did I come from? Why am I here? Where am I going?” Here is the heart of Mormon doctrine, the essential mental furniture every Mormon carries in their head to describe the world in which they live.

DISCUSSION 4:

ETERNAL PROGRESSION

The Mormon Plan of Salvation covering Pre-mortal Existence and Eternal Progression; Work for the Dead; the idea of the Eternal Family; Chastity and the Word of Wisdom. (**Commitment**, Live the law of chastity and live the Word of Wisdom)

WHERE DID I COME FROM?

Quoting **Jeremiah 1:5**, “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart” **the Mormon will reason** “we lived before we were born”. From **Acts 17:29**, “We are the offspring of God”, they reason “we are literally children of our Heavenly Father. We lived with him as spirits before we were born on this earth”. Mormons believe in pre-existentialism. Their scripture paints a clearer picture of this “pre-mortal existence” in The Pearl of Great Price.

“Now the Lord had shown unto me, Abraham, the intelligences that were organized before the world was; and among all these there were many of the noble and great ones;

And God saw these souls that they were good, and he stood in the midst of them,

and he said: These I will make my rulers; for he stood among those that were spirits, and he saw that they were good; and he said unto me: Abraham, thou art one of them; thou wast chosen before thou wast born.

And there stood one among them that was like unto God, and he said unto those who were with him: We will go down, for there is space there, and we will take of these materials, and we will make an earth whereon these may dwell;

And we will prove them herewith, to see if they will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them;” (PofGP, Abraham 3:22-25)

This, in a nutshell, is what the Mormons call “the Plan of Salvation”, or “the eternal plan of happiness”.

Although “We lived with him as spirits before we were born...we were unlike our Heavenly Father in some ways. For example, he had progressed beyond us spiritually. We did not have physical bodies, as he does...[he] wanted us to become like him. To make this possible, he prepared a plan that would allow us to come to earth. We accepted the plan of our Father and rejoiced in the blessings it would offer to us.” (Fourth missionary discussion)

WHY AM I HERE?

“Our life on this earth has a purpose. It is to provide opportunities for us to work toward becoming like our Heavenly Father and to prepare to return to him.”

In Mormon thinking this life becomes a time of testing. The Book of Mormon declares, “And thus we see, that there was a time granted unto man to repent, yea, a probationary time, a time to repent and serve God.” (Alma 42:4). A time when men are to “Work out [their] salvation with fear and trembling.” (Philippians 2:12).

In the previous life, they teach, we were spirit beings, here we receive a physical body like God’s. We are also free to choose between good and evil. This “free agency” is a key idea in Mormon thinking. “As we come to know good from evil and choose the good, we become like our Father in Heaven.” But we have no memory of our pre-mortal life

and so “our choices must be based on faith”. Our condition in the next life depends very much on the choices we make in this one. “As we learn to obey and act in god-like ways we become more like God.”

WHERE AM I GOING?

The purpose of life is to fulfil the “great plan of happiness”, become like God and, as gods ourselves, to begin the whole cycle again. At death “our spirits leave our physical bodies...In the resurrection, our spirits are reunited with our bodies in an immortal condition. We will be judged, by the Lord, according to our faithfulness in following the course he has laid out for us. If we have followed that course, we will return to our Father to dwell with him in celestial glory...Some people will not have been faithful in following the commandments of God. They will not have exercised faith in Christ, repented of their sins, obeyed his commandments, and received the necessary ordinances. They will not have qualified for a fullness of glory under the plan of our Father. They will receive a degree of glory, but theirs will be a lesser degree.” (Fourth missionary discussion)

WHERE DO YOU GO FROM HERE?

A good question. There is so much here that needs challenging and correcting it is hard to know where to start. As the Mormon Church attempts to present an evermore-Christian face to the world it is well to look at this “Plan of Salvation” and remember how far from historical, Biblical Christianity Mormonism really is. Let’s address the key elements in the above account of Mormon teaching starting with Jeremiah.

WHERE DID I COME FROM?

Did Jeremiah walk with the “noble and great ones” in a pre-mortal life? **The Mormon might ask**, “how on earth could God have known him if he did not exist?” **The Christian might reason** that there is no need for such an elaborate “explanation” of Jeremiah’s foreordination in light of a God who “[makes] known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come” (**Isaiah 46:10**). This Jeremiah

text does not point to a pre-mortal existence but indicates an all-knowing God who knows what will come to pass even before it happens. Jeremiah need not have existed in a pre-mortal life for God to choose him before he was born. Often it is not necessary to disprove Mormon teaching so much as to show a simple and plausible alternative. What is "obvious" to a Mormon can become doubtful in light of well thought-out alternatives.

The opening of Genesis declares, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth". It is made clear here that, while God has always been (**Psalm 90:2**), everything else was created (**Jeremiah 10:16**) and had a beginning, which the Bible places "In the beginning". Before the beginning there was only God. **The Christian might reason** that man is the climax of God's creative activity, created in God's own image. (Genesis 1:26-27). How can this be true if man already existed, already in God's image, but with some developing to do? Surely that would mean that God didn't create man but simply brought a pre-existing godlike person into the world from somewhere else? If God created "everything" in the beginning what could have pre-existed except God?

WHY AM I HERE?

The purpose of life to a Mormon is "to work toward becoming like our Heavenly Father". This life is part of an eternal cycle in which men strive to become gods, as did their God before them. Mormons believe that in the pre-mortal life "we were unlike our Heavenly Father in some ways. For example, he had progressed beyond us spiritually". The clear implication is that God was not always what he is today. Indeed, if he progressed beyond men, he must have progressed from being a man himself. And this is exactly what Mormon leaders have always taught. Joseph Smith declared, "*God himself was once as we are now, and is an exalted man*" (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p.345).

IS GOD A MAN?

We have already observed that in **Mormon reasoning**, if we are made "in the image of God", (**Genesis 1:26-27**), and we have bodies, then he must have a body. **The Christian might reason from Scripture** that in **John 4:24** Jesus declared "God is spirit, and his worshippers must worship in spirit and in truth". The resurrected Jesus said, "a spirit does not have flesh and bones" (**Luke 24:39**).

The Mormon God is a changeable God, a God who "progresses", and one who was not always completely godlike. If he progressed and we in turn are to progress to be like him he is clearly our exemplar in these things. It is the same process for both God and man. If we seem to labour this point it is because this teaching is difficult for a Mormon to deal with honestly. In their effort to be "orthodox" they will gladly talk about God being eternal, unchangeable, etc. But this is clearly not the case. A famous Mormon couplet declares, "As man is God once was, as God is man may become". **The Christian might reason** that the God of the Bible is eternally God. "From everlasting to everlasting you are God" (**Psalm 90:2**). He is called "the Eternal God" (**Genesis 21:33; Deut.33:27**). The psalmist declares, "Your throne was established long ago; you are from eternity" (**Psalm 93:2**). This is not a God who has progressed but one who is constant in his nature and character.

CAN MAN BECOME GOD?

God says of himself, " 'You are my witnesses', declares the Lord, 'and my servant whom I have chosen, so that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he. Before me no god was formed, nor will there be one after me' ". **The Christian might reason** that anyone who claims to witness to the Christian truth is called to witness to this truth, i.e. there is no God besides God. If there is to be no God other than God then man cannot become a god. What, then, does it mean to be "in the image of God" if we cannot "progress" to be gods? The purpose of our redemption is, "to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, *created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness*" (**Ephesians 4:24**). To be made in the image of God, then, is to enjoy his "communicable attributes", i.e. his character and personality, righteousness, holiness, wisdom, justice, love (see **James 3:13-18**).

Quoting Philippians 2:12 "Work out your salvation with fear and trembling." **Mormons reason** that we are "to work toward becoming like our Heavenly Father and to prepare to return to him." The current Mormon prophet often states, "We aim to make bad men good, and good men better". This echoes the belief that we strive to progress to a higher state. As we learn to choose good over evil, "as we learn to obey and act in

god-like ways we become more like God."

The Christian might reason that we are not gods in embryo with a few problems to iron out, some growing to do, and an inclination to sin. We are sinful by nature, "by nature objects of wrath... without God and without hope in the world" (**Ephesians 2: 1-13**). The Bible tells us that we are "dead in our transgressions and sins" (**Ephesians 2:1**). We do not need to make bad men good and good men better. Rather we need to make dead men live! God's solution is not a plan of happiness which, if followed, will lead us to be gods, but a plan of rescue which will raise the dead and save the lost (**Ephesians 2:4-5**).

"But God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions - it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no one can boast" (**Ephesians 2:4-9**)

Again we have previously noted that it is God who made us alive; God who raised us up and seated us with Christ; God who saved us, not because we have followed the plan and proved worthy, but because he is rich in mercy and generous in his kindness. To work out our salvation is not to earn it but to express it in spiritual growth and development. It's like learning a new language. When we have mastered it the language is ours. To work it out in our lives is to use it in order to become better accustomed, more eloquent and expressive. Paul is urging us to express what we have gained and grow in it "For it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose".

WHERE AM I GOING?

After this life Mormons expect to be "judged, by the Lord, according to our faithfulness in following the course he has laid out for us". They believe that by keeping to the plan they merit rewards. The greater their faithfulness the greater their reward, the greatest reward being godhood. **The Christian might reason** that "God does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities" (**Psalm 103:10**). Our "rewards" can by no means be commensurate with

our efforts just as our punishments are not commensurate with our sins since “he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed” (**Isaiah 53:5**); “God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God” (**2 Cor.5:21**).

“Is this a charter for sinning?” **the Mormon might ask**, or as Paul wrote, “Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace?” (**Romans 6:15**). “By no means!” is Paul’s reply. **The Christian might reason** that as a result of God’s grace, “we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do” (**Ephesians 2:10**). “We...are being transformed into his likeness with ever increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit” (**2 Corinthians 3:18**). It is not a mighty effort of man but a sovereign work of God, not what we make of ourselves but what God makes of us.

In Romans 5 Paul describes a miraculous transaction in which, just as we inherited

sin from Adam so, through faith, we inherit righteousness from Christ the new Adam. We are born “in Adam” but are born again “in Christ”. “Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of *one act of righteousness* was justification that brings life for all men. For just as through the disobedience of one man many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous” (**Romans 5:18-19**). In the old Adam we are “slaves to sin” but in the new Adam “slaves to righteousness” (**Romans 6**). “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. For those God foreknew (Jeremiah?) he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn of many brothers. And those he predestined, *he* also called; those he called, *he* also justified; those he justified, *he* also glorified” (**Romans 8:28-30**).

“How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called the children of God! And that is what we

are! ... Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.” (**1 John 3:1-2**)

Since “We...are being transformed into his likeness with ever increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit” (**2 Corinthians 3:18**) the life of the Christian is not one of sinless perfection. It is characterised by repentance, righteousness and a following after God, as well as an assurance of eternal life with God (**1 John 5:13**).

In light of their understanding of “God’s great plan of happiness” Mormons busy themselves with a raft of duties and observances to the extent that they have been said to “out-Hebrew the Hebrews” in their law making/keeping. This discussion seems a pivotal point in the series. The remainder of this discussion, as well as the final two discussions, deal with the duties and commitments the prospective Mormon must take up in order to be a faithful church member. In the next issue we will look at these duties. ☐

(Continued from page 7)

given among mortals by which we must be saved

WATCH THE TOWER

A verbalised name has no power of its own, but only as a prayer of faith. Otherwise, a miraculous healing may stand or fall depending on whether you get the inflection right. This passage does however rate the name of Jesus as of equal importance to the name Yahweh. Jesus is the revelation of Yahweh ‘in the flesh’.

Perhaps the equivalent description of the essence of the name of Jesus can be found in Matthew 1:21:

You are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins

And later in verse 23:

“... and they shall name him Emmanuel, “which means, “God is with us”

How much clearer does it need to be?

2. Clearly, Jesus is regularly called ‘Lord’ in the context of his Deity and as a result is equivalent to the one and only God who is Yahweh.

One such place can be found in Revela-

tion 17:14 where it says that the Lamb [Jesus] is:

Lord of lords and King of kings

Who can be Lord of lords except Yahweh himself? And in view of the fact that the simple New Testament Greek word ‘Lord’ is used to represent YHWH regularly throughout the New Testament, this passage speaks volumes about the Deity of Christ, and impresses upon us the need to acknowledge him as the one true God in whom is our only hope of salvation.

3. Revelation 1:12-16 describes a revelation of God that John had. This passage certainly describes Jesus, and in case there is any doubt, Jesus states in verse 18,

I was dead, and see, I am alive forever and ever. In verse 17 we read, I am the first and the last, and the living one.

Who can be the ‘first and the last’ except Yahweh? He is the one and only true God, as we can confirm from Isaiah 41:6 where the LORD (in capitals representing Yahweh) is described the same way:

Thus says the LORD [Yahweh], the

king of Israel, and his Redeemer, the LORD [Yahweh] of hosts: I am the first and I am the last; besides me there is no god

Even the phrase ‘and the living one’ $\kappa\alpha\iota\ \acute{\omicron}\ \zeta\omega\upsilon$ in Revelation 1:18 is reminiscent of ‘The Being’ $\acute{\omicron}\ \acute{\omicron}\upsilon$ in Exodus 3:14 of the LXX.

So to pray to Jesus is to pray to Yahweh is to pray to the Father is to pray to the one and only true God is to pray to the ‘Trinity’, just so long as you acknowledge in your heart who God truly is, and do not follow a belief that demotes Jesus to a secondary position.

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APOLOGETICS

The Problem of Evil, the Promise of Peace

In the last issue we looked at the question of evil. Why does God allow evil? We defined evil as the absence of good and saw that, in God's original creation, everything was 'very good'. We looked at the role of Satan in the fall of man and woman, from a place where they walked with God to a place where they are in conflict with God. This is where we find ourselves today. But we also saw that God's plan for us is still good and the 'good news' is that God, in Christ, takes the initiative to win us back to that place where we are free to walk with Him once again.

Peace Talks

This is being written just after Christmas 2001 and it seems that the message of Christmas has once more passed us by. The world, it is said, is a more dangerous place as war of one sort or another is threatening to spoil any promise this new millennium might have held of a fresh start and a peaceful existence. People are asking "where is this peace on earth, good will to all men? There's not much peace in the world".

Israeli's and Palestinians, Christians and Muslims, Loyalists and Nationalists, wherever you look conflicting parties are trying, and failing, to find lasting peace. But Jesus told his disciples, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your heart be troubled and do not be afraid" (John 14:27). And we have already said, "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' ". But the peace the Bible speaks about is not the peace that the world finds so elusive, i.e. a cessation of human conflict.

The peace Jesus brings is a cessation of humanity's conflict with our creator - peace with God (Romans 5:1). The good news of Christmas is the promise of God's peace on earth, and the offer of God's 'good will to all men'. It is only when God's peace enters the hearts of men and women that the conflict will stop. Whether we are witnessing to the cults or just to our neighbours and work colleagues, this is still the message.

Two Worlds

There are many references in the Bible to

two worlds. Writing of great people of faith the writer to the Hebrews declared,

"All these people were living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance. And they admitted that they were aliens and strangers on earth. People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own. If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. Instead they were longing for a better country - a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them." (Hebrews 11:13-16)

Christians are said to be in the world but not of the world. Our being in the world is witnessed by the simple fact of our physical presence in the world. Our not being of the world is witnessed, hopefully, by our striving to live by the standards of that other world to which we, with the saints of all ages, look forward.

In the parable of the weeds Jesus told of a man whose enemy sowed weeds among his wheat. The weeds and the wheat sprouted together but when his servants suggested they should pull up the weeds he said, "No, because while you are pulling the weeds, you may root up the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest." (Mathew 13:24.30) This is a good description of the world in which we live. There are so many reasons to be thankful, so many acts of kindness, so many instances of sacrificial giving, and this is the wheat. But then there is so much that is wrong, so many selfish motives, so many cruelties, so much suffering, and these are the weeds.

Two Wisdoms

As the weeds and the wheat grow together they reflect two ways of doing things. This, too, is referred to in the Bible. James writes,

"Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show it by his good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom. But if you harbour bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the

truth. Such 'wisdom' does not come down from heaven, but is earthly, unspiritual, of the devil. For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice. But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. Peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness".

The people 'of this world' think and act according to the wisdom of this world. There are two things we need to keep in mind as we consider the wisdom and conduct of the world. The first is that "God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him" (John 3:17). As we see evil in the world we are often more quick to condemn than God himself. It is often remarked that for some Christians the gospel is only for 'respectable' sinners. But we should remember that even from the cross Jesus prayed for the forgiveness of those responsible for his death.

The second thing to remember is that, while there is a time given for men and women to repent, there will also be a time when God's wrath against the wicked will be revealed (Romans 1&2). But James again counsels us "Be patient then, brothers, until the Lord's coming... the Lord is full of compassion and mercy" (James:5:7-11). Again God's compassion and mercy holds back his wrath so that many may be saved.

The people of that other world, of course, think and act according to its wisdom. Since we are, however, in this world two things occur. One is that we continue to witness the 'wisdom' of this world shape the lives of the unsaved. The second thing we see is that this world continues to influence us because our salvation is the beginning of a process. Remember that we are sealed with "the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession..." (Ephesians 1:13-14). And so there is more to come. God gave gifts to the Church "to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of

Christ may be built up until we reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fulness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:11-14).

God does not pull up the weeds all at once for fear of damaging the crop. We are promised that "he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus" (Philippians 1:6) and we need to show the world that our hope is built on God's sure promises and not our temporary and limited experiences.

In our witnessing it is important that we are guided by heaven's wisdom. It is also important to remember that God hasn't finished with us yet. Of course this is not an excuse for bad conduct on our part,

but it is a reason to be humble as we realise that the world sees us as under construction and not as a finished building. And perhaps the best face to show the world is a humble one that acknowledges this fact. It is also important to remember that Christ died for sinners.

When we are, understandably, horrified by the wickedness we see in the world we can too easily overlook this fact and forget what we once were ourselves. It is also worth recognising how much better the world is for the efforts of even those whose faith is misplaced but whose conduct in light of that faith may yet reflect something of that heavenly wisdom under the influence of common grace.

When the world asks where God is in all this we need to bring home the message that we all stand condemned without Christ. His patience with others whom

we are so eager to condemn is the same patience he shows us. We should be thankful for that. As we hold up the mirror of God's word we need to help people see how lost they are without Christ. It is fashionable these days to sometimes present the Christian faith as a lifestyle choice, middle income, middle class, good people one and all getting together to make a better world. But, however unfashionable, the message of the Bible is still one of repentance, faith and new birth out of Adam and into Christ (Romans 5), a new life rather than simply a new lifestyle.

As we help people make sense of the world we need to continually bring them back to God's view of things. After all repentance means we stop seeing things our way and begin to see things God's way, and act on this new vision of things. ☐

EXCLUSIVE BRETHREN - 2

We continue the article started in Issue 66 of the Quarterly.

MODERN DAY

It is estimated that over the next two years some 8,000 Exclusives would withdraw their support of Taylor and leave his organisation but as we have already seen this still leaves a large number of people involved with the group. Those that stayed after this time are called 'Jims' and are at present led by J.S.Hales. The idea that the leader speaks out the words of God continues within the leadership and at one conference Hales was described as the "personification of the Holy Spirit."

Indeed today it is estimated that,

There are 288 cities in the world which have Jims assemblies. In a city there may be from one to a couple of dozen gatherings. Each city has one central administration regardless of how many smaller gatherings there may be. There are approximately 27,000 members worldwide. The membership is mainly comprised of persons of European or British descent except for a very small gathering in India and some Negro members in the Caribbean. Possibly under 1000 Negro worldwide. There are gatherings in the following countries: Great Britain, Ireland, Germany, Holland, Sweden, Denmark, France,

Italy, Spain, South Africa, Argentina, Trinidad, St. Vincent, Barbados, Jamaica, U.S.A., Canada, New Zealand, Australia and India. All meetings worldwide must be conducted in the English language regardless of the native tongue spoken. – Web1.

These ones are subject to spiritual abuse and may be affected mentally as well. A recent study in mental health draws some interesting conclusions.

In the early 1990s, 295 questionnaires were sent out to former Exclusives and 244 were returned. 43 were not filled in for various reasons and so the percentages below are worked out on 252 completed forms. Of these:

76% felt a sense of loss in leaving close friends behind but at the same time 73% felt a tremendous sense of relief.

50% are plagued by upsetting memories of their days in the Exclusives and 36% try to avoid thinking about those days.

77% felt different at school with nothing in common with other pupils and 60% felt that being brought up in the Exclusives had stifled the ability to think for themselves. 77% felt they had to conform to what they were told while in the group.

These are the sort of reactions that can cause further problems for the people having left.

DO NOT

The effect of this control of those still in can be seen in the following list of things an Exclusive must not do,

A person must NOT:

- Be a member of any other religious company.
- Visit any other religious service.
- Be a member of a trade union or professional association.
- Join any association where it involves them in membership with any person not in the fellowship.
- Eat or drink with any person who is not in the fellowship.
- Talk with any person who has been put out of the fellowship.
- Live in the same building as a person who is not in fellowship. A semi-detached residence is not acceptable. The problem here is sharing a common wall.
- Have their business in the same building or share a common wall with another business whose owner is not in fellowship.
- Share a driveway with their

neighbour.

- Share a sewer with a neighbour if they connect before reaching city property.
- Own shares in a company with any person not in fellowship.
- Share profits in any profit-sharing scheme.
- In business share advertising costs with either a supplier or distributor.
- Be in any group benefit arrangement with employees or employer.
- Marry someone not in fellowship.
- Live in the same house as a mate who has been put out of fellowship. They must be legally and physically separate from their mate to be allowed to participate in the fellowship.

THEIR MISSION

What though is the mission of the Exclusives today?

The Raven/Taylor fellowship do not believe they are called to spread the gospel to the world. It is felt that service was done by the early apostles and the command by the Lord Jesus to go into the whole world was only directed to those early apostles. They have no mission service and do not financially support any other people who are engaged in mission work. The Jims believe that the gospel should be preached on the streets of the cities where there is one of their meeting halls. It is quite common for this street preaching to be every day of the week except Sunday. If a person should become interested in the gospel they are first directed to meet at one of these street preachings. If they continue to be interested, they might then be invited to a member's home for further discussions. Generally these visits don't last very long because very few people ever continue their interest beyond this stage.

– Web1

Commitment to this mission is seen by the fact that they hold meetings every day of the week. These usually are,

Sunday 6 a.m. - the Lord's supper and worship. These are small gatherings of up to thirty to forty people but only the men participate audibly in praise and worship. All over about 12 years are ex-

pected to participate.

Sunday 9 a.m. - Bible study meeting. One of the leading men will suggest a subject and scriptures to be read and the other men will enter the discussion.

Sunday after Bible study - gospel preaching. Three men give brief gospel messages. There will be one or more further preachings in the day until about 6 p.m.

Monday - Prayer meeting. Men and boys only participate.

Tuesday - Prophetic ministry - two or three men would give an address. They are not chosen but rather speak as personally exercised.

Wednesday - Bible study - one man would suggest the subject and then lead a bible discussion.

Thursday - Bible reading, often in a nearby city or town.

Friday - Bible reading but sometimes the leading man in the city will name three men to give impromptu addresses.

Saturday - Bible study.

SHUT UP

Returning to the abuse and domination exercised within the life of its members we end with a description of what it means to be 'shut up' in Exclusive terminology.

It comes from the instructions in Leviticus to shut up a person or a house in which leprosy was suspected. In the Exclusives it means that a person suspected of having sin operating in them is not allowed to attend meetings or have contact with other brethren in the fellowship until it is further determined by the leadership. If it were discovered that the person is not in sin, they would be allowed to come back to meetings.

If, however, the leadership decide that the person is unrepentant then they would be withdrawn from (excommunicated) by the assembly. The process of being shut up could last for days or even years and if one family member is shut up it is deemed that the whole family is shut up too.

If a man were actually excommunicated, then his wife would be shut up until she got a legal separation from him and lived apart from her husband out of the house, or if the husband co-operated, he might be the one to move out. We need to understand that most Exclusives believe

that the fellowship was the one and only church on earth and so the worst thing a person could do was to die out of fellowship.

This situation is made worse because the suspected party is very rarely given the opportunity to present their side of the story to the leadership. Again, this puts emotional pressure on the person as they are entirely at the mercy of the leading brothers who of course act in a human way, and in most cases it proves to be a personal and possibly biased decision. Most members feel sad when severe measures are taken, but they honestly feel they are doing God's will, just as the apostle Paul thought he was doing God's will by persecuting Christians in the early church before his conversion.

A person put out of fellowship is considered extremely wicked and separation is total. Such a person must not be communicated with except in the most extreme circumstances but never in a friendly manner. Even when passing on the street a wave of the hand or a nod of the head would not be considered acceptable. Once again, it is amazing how similar this is to the way former Jehovah's Witnesses are treated. Great efforts are made to ensure that someone who has been put out does not see family members. Many therefore have not seen parents, children, grandchildren, brothers or sisters for several years. A member in good standing will not even work with an excommunicated person.

TESTIMONY

I want to end with some extracts from a personal testimony that we received at Head Office. We will not disclose the name but the letter is on file with full name and address.

My wife's father and mother were 'withdrawn from' in 1963. The father had two brothers and a sister in the movement and all came out except one. He was forced to live in a caravan in the garden or re-join his wife and family. He chose to rejoin as in effect he was being held to ransom on the future of his marriage.

At a recent Exclusive funeral my wife's aunt's elder sister reluctantly let her niece go to the funeral of the Exclusive sister. This was on condition that the Exclusives did not mix with them.

My wife's father only found out his own brother had died in the 80s from a third party, 2 years later!

CONCLUSION

These personal stories can be multiplied many times over. As such the only conclusion that we can come to is that the Exclusives have all the hallmarks of a cult. However, does this mean that we are to treat them as they treat former members? Certainly not!

We are called on by the Lord to be ready to help any such people when they are ready to respond. We may not be able to make much direct contact with this group as we can with many other cults but we can pray for them. Let our prayers be strong, seeking that the hold over them will be broken and that they will be ready to talk with us and seek to

find a life outside of the Exclusives.

Many will suffer in this life and have no certainty of salvation in the future. Let us pray and reach out to these ones. Let us be ready to give them the love, acceptance, counsel and ministry that they will need. ☐

WHAT DOES THE QURAN SAY?

With so much misunderstanding today I thought it would be good to produce here the first chapter of our booklet, "The Testimony of the Quran and the Bible" The full booklet which is almost a necessity today both to read and give away is available on special offer in the enclosed leaflet.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the first chapter of this booklet is to give a panoramic view, and outline the practices and beliefs of the religion of Islam in a simple way.

The author purposely does not mention many names or Islamic words, in order to keep this booklet clear and understandable for the readers.

It must also be emphasised that a study of the detailed historical background of Islam can be time-consuming and easily forgotten.

For the information of our readers, there are many other books that deal with the topic of Islam in greater depth than this booklet, whether to do with Doctrine or History, but the author believes that a basic knowledge of Islam is enough. (See the Bibliography, p.27.)

The other chapters of this booklet will look closely at what the Quran teaches, since there are many things practised and believed by Muslims in the name of Islam that are not taught by the Quran itself.

It is essential that we always refer to the source of the religion, which is the Quran, and not to any fables told by its followers.

THE ORIGIN

What is Islam? The Arabic word Islam

means to surrender or to submit and a Muslim is someone who submits himself or herself to the God of Islam. Muslims believe that there are three main religions in the world, Judaism, Christianity and finally Islam.

Islam is one of the largest and fastest growing religions in the world with over one billion (one thousand million) followers, that is, approximately one in every five persons in the world.

How did it start? The founder of this religion was a man called Muhammad. At the age of 40 Muhammad claimed that he was contacted by the Angel Gabriel in a cave, on the side of Mount Hira, a couple of miles from Mecca and so Islam started.

Among his initial followers were his first wife and his son-in-law, who eventually married his only living daughter. Muhammad claimed to have received revelations from the Angel Gabriel. The Quran came in to existence after his death.

Growth of Islam. World population grew to over five billion in the 1980's mostly living in third world countries such as Pakistan, India, Indonesia and the Arab world. Muslims believe in large families because they think that Allah's favour is shown by giving them more children. Muslims use oil revenue to propagate Islam and have the desire to take over the world. Large numbers of Muslims have moved to western nations as immigrants, and overseas students.

An increasing number of marriages between Muslim men and non-Muslim women have led to the conversion to Islam of these women. In some cases, Muslims marry western women to enable them to remain in the country they are visiting. Thus, the number of Muslims in the West is increasing.

Muslims have made a statement that by the year 2000 Islam will take over London. Terrorist activities in the West have increased greatly. Muslims carry out many assassinations. Non-Muslims may be forced to change their names in order to get jobs in Muslim countries, and many have accepted Islam for economic reasons and to get financial help. It has been reported that in places like Egypt, westerners have been offered sums up to £10000 to convert to Islam.

What is the Quran? The Quran is regarded as a Holy book by Muslims with 114 chapters, and it is claimed by them that it was all written by Allah himself and sent down to Muhammad through the Angel Gabriel.

The very word 'Quran' means recitation, and Muslims believe that to recite its text in the Arabic language gains much favour with Allah. Its size is almost the length of the New Testament, but its form and structure are totally different.

basic beliefs

Belief in Allah as the one true God. God is one, with no equal or partners 'most gracious and most merciful' as well as 'the cherisher and sustainer of all things', and master of the day of judgement.

Belief in the Quran and Hadith. According to Muslims, the Quran, which means "the reading" or the "recitation," is the last revelation from Allah and the completion of other books, which were sent to all mankind. The Quran was committed to memory and written down by followers of Muhammad after his death. Some of the reciters were killed; therefore, it was decided by Muhammad's successors that all chapters of the Quran should be collected.

The first complete manuscript was compiled 20 years after Muhammad's death.

After a few years, a fresh revision of the work was done and all other copies were called in and burned. This second revision is the Quran we have now. Hadith, the teachings, sayings and actions of Muhammad were reported and collected by his companions, and explain the teachings of the Quran.

Belief in Angels. Angels used by Allah have specific functions; they watch over men and some record all their deeds.

Belief in the books sent by God. These books consist of: the Torah given to Moses, the Zabur i.e. 'Psalms' given to David, the 'Injil' given to Jesus, and finally the Quran given to Muhammad.

Belief in the Prophets. Muslims believe in 124,000 Prophets, but only six are regarded as major ones. Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad.

Belief in judgement day. The dead will be resurrected, then all will be judged according to their good and bad deeds. There will be abundant pleasures in Heaven for those who make it, such as "food, rivers of wine, milk and water, physical comfort with lovely maidens and virgins serving them" and for those who do not make it, "suffering in Hell with foul smoke and hot blasts." Muslims believe in the Devil, Heaven, Hell and resurrection.

duties of islam

Confessing the faith. "There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is the messenger of Allah." Muslims repeat this in their prayers and at many other times during the day. It is used in war, birth, at funerals etc.

Prayers. A Muslim must do these ritual prayers five times a day. The times of prayer are the early morning before sunrise, midday, mid-afternoon, the late evening just after sunset, and the earlier part of the night. This involves taking the shoes off, washing hands, feet and parts of face, and turning to the Kabah at Mecca.

This washing before prayers finds its origin in Exodus 30:18-21, when Jewish priests were instructed by God to wash their hands and feet before they went into the tabernacle of meeting, or when they came near the altar to minister, to burn an offering made by fire to the Lord.

Fasting. This is obligatory. All Muslims

must fast during the month of Ramadan, which is the ninth month of the Muslim calendar.

The Quran teaches that only pregnant women, children and the sick are excused; also, those travelling may postpone it to another time, but they must fast the same number of days later on; and for those who cannot afford it there is a ransom, the feeding of one poor person. It is 'a must' but the conclusion is that a rich man is allowed to put himself out of the hardship of the fast. They will not consume food or drink, use tobacco or commit sexual acts from dawn to sunset. This month is generally believed to commemorate the time when Muhammad had his first revelation from the Angel Gabriel.

Almsgiving. This was voluntary originally but now Muslims are required to give 2.5% of their net wealth to be spent on the poor. Alms are only for the poor and the needy.

Pilgrimage to Mecca. All Muslims are expected to go to Mecca at least once in their lifetime. If one is sick or old, he may send someone else in his place. It is an essential part of gaining salvation.

It involves sets of duties and rituals, which centre on the Kabah shrine in Mecca. Kissing the stone, going around the Kabah seven times, throwing stones at the pillar representing Satan, wearing special clothing and shaving the head after pilgrimage is over, are some of the duties involved.

Holy war "Jihad." The meaning of Jihad is 'striving' (to serve Allah) or defence of Islam. Men would go to war in order to spread Islam or defend it against infidels. Therefore to struggle in the path of Allah with the pen, speech and the **sword, is Jihad.**

When will/does it happen? The teaching of the Quran regarding the Jihad is, in fact, not just a duty for Muslims but it can be profitable commercially and spiritually, in other words, can be a good business. In Sura 33:50 Muhammad was told by Allah that **he could have all those women** that his right hand possesses out of the **prisoners of war.**

Sura 61:10-12, "That you believe in Allah and his apostle, and that you strive (your utmost) in the cause of Allah, with your property and your persons: That will be best for you, if you but knew! He

will forgive you your sins, and admit you to gardens beneath which rivers flow, and to beautiful mansions in gardens of eternity: That is indeed the supreme achievement."

Muhammad started war against those who did not believe the religion he brought. He ordered that everyone who was opposed to his new religion and his message must be killed.

Sura 9:29, "Fight those who believe not in Allah nor the last day, nor hold that forbidden which has been forbidden by Allah and his Apostle, nor acknowledge the religion of truth, (even if they are) of the Book, until they pay the Jizya (A tax paid by those who do not accept Islam) with willing submission, and feel themselves subdued."

This verse teaches that if even Christians, Jews or unbelievers do not accept the religion of Islam, then make war on them, and the word fight in this verse actually means to slaughter them!

Sura 9:73 teaches that Muslims should *strive hard* against the unbelievers and the hypocrites, and be firm against them.

Sura 8:12 Allah says that, I will instil terror into the hearts of the unbelievers: Smite you above their necks and smite all their **fingertips off them.**

Sura 29:69 teaches that those who strive in the cause of Allah will certainly be guided to his paths.

Sura 47:4, "Therefore, when you meet the unbelievers (in fight), smite at their necks; at length, when you have thoroughly subdued them, bind a bond firmly (on them)..."

Ayatollah Khomeini said, "There is no greater joy to KILL or to be KILLED for the sake of Allah".

All true Muslims should be involved in Jihad. Muhammad not only commanded this but he himself led 27 battles. People against whom the Jihad is directed are invited to accept Islam. Those who accept will be given full citizenship rights. If not they have to pay tax and will be inferior citizens. If they do not accept Islam or pay tax but choose to fight, many have their families and properties, etc. taken from them and become slaves. Muslims who die in the Jihad are guaranteed eternal life in paradise. ☐

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—this is especially very helpful for us and we make special offers under our Action Pack scheme for such people** (ask for leaflet) - 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 keep making our **web site** better. We also need to have the **computer programme** that runs our database, invoicing etc updated and this will also be probably around £3,000.

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.

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

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