

CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF MINISTRY REACHOUT QUARTERLY

Summer 2002

Issue 68

Don't Miss It!

REACHOUT EIGHTEENTH ANNUAL CONVENTION

15-17 November 2002

Pioneer Centre Kidderminster

This year apart from some of our regular speakers we are delighted to welcome Bill McKeever to our convention. Bill founded Mormonism Research Ministry in 1979. and through this has reached out to many Mormons with the truth of God's Word. His many writings include the book, *Answering Mormons' Questions* (Bethany House) and he is the editor of the quarterly publication *Mormonism Researched*. From March 1988 until April 1993 he hosted a radio talk show in San Diego County. He has also been a featured guest on CBN's On The Line show, the Christian Research Institute's Bible Answer Man program and Truths that Transform with Dr. D. James Kennedy. Bill's expertise on Mormonism has brought him many invitations to speak at many Theological Seminaries and Universities.

Bill will be taking 2 workshops on aspects of Mormonism as well as sharing his experiences of the recent Olympic Games in Salt Lake City. Other subjects we hope to cover include, dealing with the occult; dealing with the new age; counselling; the latest 'Christian' fads and Interfaith and Roman Catholicism.

There will be the regular chat show, opportunity for prayer and above all fellowship and encouragement from like-minded people.

BOOK NOW ON THE ENCLOSED FORM!

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.

Requests to reprint articles, in any form, must be made in writing to the Richmond Office.

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Is Our Guard Slipping?

In Ephesians chapter 6 speaking of the armour we have as Christians, Paul tells us that,

“In addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming missiles of the evil one” verse 16 (NASB).

The shield of faith becomes a very important part of the armour. By using the phrase, “in addition,” it seems that Paul is indicating that we may be tempted to think that what we have is enough without it. How wrong we could be! This is the movable part that can deflect the “flaming missiles” or “fiery darts” which if scoring a direct hit would not necessarily kill but would cause discomfort and certainly would weaken the ability of the soldier to fight.

Vine’s Dictionary of New Testament words tells us the following about the Greek phrase;

“... is translated ‘fiery’... metaphorically of the darts of the evil one; ‘fire-tipped’ would perhaps bring out the verbal force of the word. The most ancient mss. have the article repeated, lit., ‘the darts of the evil one, the fiery (darts),’ making them as particularly destructive.”

This shield is a vital part of our armour to stop these annoying and particularly destructive arrows. However, I believe that this leads us to the question asked in our title, is our guard slipping? Have some individuals or parts of the church allowed the guard to slip and thus been injured or slowed down in the fight against the enemy?

I want to look at a number of areas that I believe are trends within the church today. We at Reachout are accused of some of these! However, does this mean we are being unchristian or, have we over the years allowed our guard to slip?

To prepare for a celebration within our family, I recently needed to go through many old photographs of friends and family. This brought back many memories especially of my growing up within the Christian faith. I realised just how much the Christian scene has changed. Some would immediately add that it is for the better but is it? Are some of the things that we accept today simply fiery

darts of the enemy? Arrows that over the years he has got us to accept as “okay” and so we make no effort to deflect them? Are these darts not in effect disabling and damaging the Christian Church rather than preparing it for the twenty-first century?

The old frog story also comes to mind – the one that you should not try at home! Place a frog into boiling water and it will jump out. Place the same frog into cold water and heat it up slowly – the frog will adapt to the temperature around it with disastrous results. Has the enemy lulled us into lowering our shields and allowing through all sorts of fiery darts that are to our detriment?

I want to highlight a few of the areas that concern me and others within the work of Reachout Trust and show why I believe that they are fiery darts that we need to deflect rather than friends we need to welcome.

WHEN IS OCCULT OKAY?

With the latest craze of Harry Potter, we have tried to steer the middle course through the “demon behind every word syndrome” and “no need for any safeguards.” Into the same ring have also been thrown the Lord of the Rings, C.S.Lewis’s books and one or two other examples. Although I might use Harry Potter as an example here please can we think larger than that. It is not the name or the author that concerns me at present but the content.

Most Christians would agree that both the Old and the New Testaments clearly show that the occult is inspired by the Devil and that Christians “play” with it at their peril. From the early days of New Testament Christianity as recorded in the Book of Acts, through to modern-day testimonies, whenever spiritists, witches and others have become Christians, they have renounced their past way of life and have not been involved any longer.

It is a logical extension of this that anything that will therefore encourage people to investigate in an unhealthy way the subject of the occult is not from God but is rather a fiery dart of the enemy seeking at the very least to cause a disability within the life. This is to me

where the problems start. If we send out the message to our younger people that what Harry Potter does is fine or that Tarot Cards can be good or whatever else it is, we are sending the wrong message.

I would not campaign to have the Potter books banned but I would campaign to have a sensible message communicated to our kids. For instance, when Christian leaders go on national radio and say that there are no problems with Christian children reading Harry Potter without any safeguards. Again, when a member of a leading Christian organisation working in schools gives the okay because the morality of the books is not necessarily opposed to the values of God’s Kingdom, then I believe we have missed the point.

Whether any young person gets involved in the occult or not through reading the Potter books is not the final issue – it is that the frog has adapted a little further and another fiery dart has found its mark. Books about witchcraft, a realm that is solidly placed with the camp of God’s Enemy, are not healthy for Christian Children to read, without being set in the context of how God views the subject and why Jesus Christ gave His life to set people free from such practices.

I suppose the conclusion we must come to is that a number of Christians have lowered their standards and witchcraft becomes acceptable. That would never have been so when I was growing up as a Christian. Has God changed? Have His standards altered? Of course not! Then why do we allow toady what was not allowed before – I believe our guard is slipping.

NEVER SAY “YOU ARE WRONG”

The next area I want to look at moves on from the point just made and is often brought up at this point. What right have I to tell anyone they are wrong? This of course is an argument that affects different levels of life for both Christian and non-Christian alike. This affects the whole discipline debate in homes and schools as well as the approach to International diplomacy. However, what

about within the Christian Life and especially with a group such as Reachout Trust that is seeking to reach out to those with a belief but we would say a wrong belief.

A look at the Forum on our web site would present this argument. As a Christian, I must never say another person who calls himself or herself a Christian is wrong. Is this the way we are to act today as Christians? Are we to accept that whatever anyone else says about Christianity is true and we have no rights to say that it is wrong? Again, I believe this is a fiery dart of the enemy. If he can get us to accept things that are slightly off the true basis and belief of Christianity, a fiery dart has started a disabling work within me. Of course there have to be safeguards in this area too – the way we talk to each other is vital and the basis for our saying something is wrong must also be clear.

Satan's desire, from the first words that he ever spoke to a human being, was to put a question mark of what God said and what God meant when He said it. The moment he can move us away from God's Word we must add in another measure that in some way is personal and depends on my thinking or feeling. The moment that I accept a teaching that is different to the Biblical position then I have accepted the fiery dart and the work of Satan has begun to cause some sort of deformity within my life.

I do not at this point want to get involved in the *Sola Scriptura* argument; I will leave that for another time. However, the moment that I start to believe and teach something that is different to the fundamental position of Scripture, then I have moved off the solid foundation of God's Word.

I use the word fundamental on purpose. It is often an accusation today – you are a fundamentalist! The meaning behind it is often the accusation that you are in the dark ages and that you need to see that the world has moved on and we need to move on to from these basic doctrines. But wait a minute! Has God changed since He spoke these words? Indeed, when He spoke these words was God living in 'time' or in 'eternity'? Obviously, He spoke eternal words from eternity that can never change! Why then do I want to change God's written word?

I recently received an email dealing with relativism – no not the fear of your mother-in-law but the moving of the goalposts.

It started with this paragraph,

"It's not only the world that no longer believes in right and wrong - acceptance of absolute truth is fast disappearing in the church, too. Almost as many Christians are likely to base their moral decisions on what they feel rather than what the Word teaches, according to a new survey."

It went on to describe the release of research undertaken by the Barna Research Group. Its spokesman George Barna is reported as saying,

"When a majority of Christian adults...as well as three out of four born again teens proudly cast their vote for moral relativism, the Church is in trouble." He commented that, "Continuing to preach more sermons, teach more Sunday school classes and enroll more people in Bible study groups won't solve the problem since most of these people don't accept the basis of the principles being taught in those venues." He concluded, "The failure to address this issue at its root, and to do so quickly and persuasively, will undermine the strength of the church for at least another generation, and probably longer."

The survey showed that 78% of adults asked by the Barna Research Group said that they believed that the morality of God was not absolute but could be adjusted and adapted. This only fell to 68% when talking to those adults who claimed to be born again.

In teenagers, the figures were even higher with a figure of 96%, which only reduced to 91% in those who claimed to be born again. This worrying trend must reflect on the teaching that is being given to young people within many churches today.

The conclusion of this matter has to be the same as the conclusion found in the New Testament Church. When Paul discovered that Peter was adding works to salvation by grace, did he just ignore it or worse, affirm Peter in the belief? No, he showed him up to those around him as being hypocritical and wrong. When the church in Corinth began to misuse the faith and gifts with which God had blessed them, Paul spent time clearly showing where they were wrong and why. Do we object to the first letter of the Corinthians today? Most Bible believers do not because it shows the truth as opposed to error but why then do we object to people being corrected today?

Of course we are not the Apostle Paul and so the way we say things is as vital as what we say. However, if we see conclusively from Scripture that what is being taught is wrong then we must communicate it. Should it be in private though? If the matter has only been shared in private, yes, but if the matter has been communicated publicly then I believe the matter should be shared publicly.

We at Reachout Trust do not see ourselves as the police force of the church nor do we see ourselves as having the monopoly on the truth. We also do not set ourselves up as perfect and that everyone else is a sinner – we appreciate our position before the Lord but we do believe that we have the biblical right to say scripturally you are wrong.

Every error that is accepted as truth by the Church today and every wrong doctrine that goes unanswered is another fiery dart – we have let our guard down and Satan has begun to disable the church.

UNITY THROUGH INTERFAITH

Finally for this article I want to highlight the area of Interfaith. Should we accept every faith as being right and not in any way talk about them? Is the Interfaith movement today, that accepts all the following beliefs as being right, what God desires? Buddhism, Christianity, Confucianism, Hinduism, Indigenous Religions, Islam, Jainism, Judaism, Shintoism, Sikhism, Taoism and Zoroastrianism. Or is it another fiery dart of the enemy causing disruption and disturbance to the Body of Christ.

A few years ago Interfaith simply meant the unity of Roman Catholics and Protestants but as we mentioned in the previous paragraph today it goes far beyond that. However, is our unity simply because we all believe in the same God and the diversity is because we have chosen a different path on this life to reach God? Is this our unity or does the Bible show it to be something else. Believing that there are many different ways to the same God is not the teaching of Scripture but is actually a fiery dart of the enemy.

Can I first here send a heart felt message to all Roman Catholics. I am not anti those people who go to the Roman Catholic Church but I do not believe that the dogma of Rome is correct. What we believe and accept of Christ now deter-

mines the future we will have. Is there a halfway house that we go to with an ability to get ready for the full eternal life later? Or must I make the right decision and know the reality of the forgiveness of the work of Christ on Calvary now? There are some Catholics who know Christ as their Saviour now but please think of the thousands if not millions within the Church who do not know that reality. Please reach out to them and realise at the same time that we want to do the same.

However, as we have said, Interfaith has gone far beyond the getting together of Protestants and Catholics and I believe the acceptance of Interfaith, although the word sounds so good and right, is another fiery dart of the enemy.

Let us be aware of some of the things that have happened and some of the statements made at Interfaith gatherings.

The Worthy News Web Site records the following statement made at the UN World Peace Summit in August 2000;

"Meanwhile, pronouncements were voiced by speakers from different religious traditions against attempts to convert people to other religions, and they met with strong affirmation, reported a Southern Baptist representative and another evangelical Christian observer. Evangelicals especially would be targets for such sentiments, since they have sent missionaries throughout the world to proclaim the message of salvation exclusively by grace through faith in Jesus Christ."

Is there another way of salvation? It is not trying to convert to another religion but sharing the way of truth as shown by Christ. The fiery dart of Interfaith will take us away from the centrality of the person and work of Jesus Christ and lead us to rely on man-made doctrines and ideals. These are not enough for salvation.

The Maranatha Christian Journal reported the following from the same Summit;

"American media mogul Ted Turner denounced his childhood Christian faith. '... my religious Christian sect was very intolerant ... because it taught we were the only ones going to heaven.' Turner praised "indigenous" religious faiths and then listed all the things humans have in common - "culture, language, love of birds, butterflies, wives and flowers." Turner said, 'he finally realized that there was one God and multiple ways he manifests himself and that it makes little difference which one is chosen.'"

If we accept this belief in any form, it is a fiery dart that is particularly destructive.

Is then our guard slipping or are we actively deflecting the fiery darts and keeping true to the message of love and reconciliation entrusted to us? This of course at times means we will have to say, "you are wrong" but may we have grace to share this in a way that is loving and humble. ☐

THE LORD'S WITNESSES

Regular readers will remember that we have commented on this group before, the latest being in Quarterly 66 where they 'prophesied' that the UN Security Council would increase its number of permanent members to 10 and take control of the world's political system on October 22/23

The leader of the group, Gordon Ritchie, used to be a Jehovah's Witness but felt that the Lord revealed to him that the Governing Body was false and the mantel had fallen on him. Many businesses are still receiving faxes from this group but please do not be disturbed as they have shown themselves to be false prophets as their letter of 27 October confirms:

By now you will know that we have 3 times had the wrong month and the wrong day (but not the wrong year) for the various fulfilments of Revelation 17. However we have not given up because Jacob, the father of the first race of God's people through Abraham continued wrestling with the angel all night... we now expect and prophesy that the UN Security Council will expand to 10 permanent members on Tuesday 20th November 2001, this being the start of the last 'hour' of its life. And on that day the UN will become the 8th king of the World."

I have not seen another update letter yet admitting they got the year wrong and giving a fourth date!

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.

SEPTEMBER

- 5 Manchester
- 7-8 Burnley
- 14) West Bromwich
- 15) Warley
- 17) Salvation Army - Surbiton *
- 27-28 Edinburgh

OCTOBER

- 3-5 **Scottish CRE**
- 12 Buckingham
- 13 Dagenham
- 15) Battersea
- 16) Abingdon
- 19) Walsall
- 26-27 **Romsey Training Day**

NOVEMBER

- 9) Dartford
- 15-17 **ANNUAL CONVENTION**
- 30 Weston-super-Mare

DECEMBER

- 1 Weston-super-Mare
- 17 Battersea

BE EQUIPPED TRAINING DAYS

Would you like to see your church equipped to reach out to those in the cults?
Do you want to hold a sensible conversation with a Jehovah Witness at the door?
Do you long to learn more about presenting the gospel using apologetics?
Most answer yes to the above questions and that means you need to arrange a

Special Church Teaching Day with Reachout Trust

These **Dynamic Days** will provide you with

- **Information** on the cults, occult and new age
- Knowledge of the **greatness of the gospel** of the Christian faith
- **Apologetics** of how to reach these ones with the gospel.

We do not charge for these days not because we feel they are worth nothing but we do not want anyone to be excluded because of lack of finance. We encourage everyone who can to give a **£10 donation**. If they can give more it will help make up for those who cannot afford it.

What do you need to do? Five simple things.

- 1. Provide a warm building**
- 2. Provide refreshments.**
- 3. Advertise the day with the local churches.**
- 4. Get a minimum of 25 people committed to the day**

Beginners Day

- The cult mind set and our attitude towards them.
- Main beliefs of Jehovah Witnesses and Mormons
- Basic presentation of the Gospel to these ones.
- Group work to help you put into practice what is being taught.

Intermediate Day

- The 'new age' worldview of Jesus and salvation.
- Detailed look at the Christian doctrines of Jesus and Salvation
- Discover how to present these doctrines with confidence.
- Group work to help you put into practice what is being taught.

Advanced Day

- In-depth look at specific doctrines of Jehovah Witnesses, Mormons and new age.
- Introduction to the subject of apologetics
- Applying apologetics to reaching out to cult members.
- Group work to help you put into practice what is being taught.

Information: **Equipping Training Day**



Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Post Code: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Suggested Dates: _____

Level: _____

For further details and to book your training day now

- **Return the response form to the left.**
- **Ring us on 0870 770 3258**
- **Email us on: rt@reachouttrust.org**

WATCH THE TOWER

2002/2

CORRECTION

First this month an email from Greek speaking Pavlos pointing out typographical errors in the last Quarterly. I know all you keen eyed scholars noticed it anyway!

I wish to correct the Greek in the "Watch The Tower" article which appeared in the Spring "Reachout Quarterly." It seems that the typist is confusing certain Greek letters. The letter upsilon, in upper case or capital is Υ and in lower case or small is υ which looks quite like the English "u." This letter has been mistakenly put in some of the words in the Greek of Exodus 3:14 and John 8:58 instead of ν .

The letter nu, in upper case or capital is \Nu and in lower case or small is ν which looks like the English "v" but is really equivalent to "n". In addition, the last letter of the Greek word for "am" is an iota, not an epsilon.

The correct Greek of Ex 3:14 for the "Being" is ὄν and for John 8:58, it is

$\text{Ἄ ἀμην ἃ πριυ ἄβρααμ γενεσθαι ἐγω εἰμί. μην.}$ I have underlined the mistakes.

At the end of the article he refers to $\zeta\omega\upsilon$ where again the same mistake is made. It should be $\zeta\omega\nu$ or even more correctly with the accent $\zeta\acute{\omega}\nu$. He says that it is reminiscent of ὄν , the Being.

He omitted to say that Christ is explicitly called the Being in Revelation 1:8

$\text{Ἐγὼ εἰμι τὸ Α καὶ τὸ Ω, ἀρχὴ καὶ τέλος, λέγει οἱ Κύριος, ὁ ὢν καὶ ὁ ἦν καὶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος, ὁ παντοκράτωρ.}$

The word ὢν is translated as "is." It is part of the phrase, "who is, and who was, and who is to come" and is found in Rev.1:4 where it is also applied to the Father.

UNITED NATIONS - 1

The following article about the UN was sent to me by email. It originally appeared in the *Guardian* on Monday October 8, 2001

Jehovah's Witnesses link to UN queried

Sect accused of hypocrisy over association with organisation it has demonised.

The United Nations is being asked to investigate why it has granted associate status to the Jehovah's Witnesses, the fundamentalist US-based Christian sect, which regards it as the scarlet beast predicted in the Book of Revelation. Disaffected members of the 6m-strong group, which has 130,000 followers in the UK, have accused the Witnesses' elderly governing body of hypocrisy in secretly accepting links with an organisation that they continue to denounce in apocalyptic terms.

The UN itself admitted yesterday that it was surprised that the sect, whose formal name is the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, had been accepted on its list of non-governmental organisations for the last 10 years.

A former member said: "There is a glaring inconsistency which has emerged between the WTBS's frequent portrayal of the UN as an evil organisation and its behind-the-scenes attempts to curry favour with that organisation. Were individual members to be aware of any formal link they would be devastated.

"By no stretch of the imagination could the WTBS be considered to share the ideals of the UN charter unless you suppose that destruction of the UN by God is consistent with that charter."

The Witnesses, most frequently encountered by non-members when they attempt to make doorstep conversions, have faced accusations of bad faith before.

These have been most notably over the hierarchy's insistence that members should not accept blood transfusions and over accusations that sexual abuse of children by Witnesses' ministers in the US have been covered up.

Followers who criticise the Witnesses' leaders or question their decisions are routinely "disfellowshipped" which means fellow members including their families

must shun them.

An obscure and ill-publicised decision by the hierarchy in New York last year modifying the prohibition on transfusions by deeming that God had revealed to them that transfusions of some blood components might be acceptable, providing there was later repentance, has come too late for many hundreds of followers known to have died because they refused blood.

In child abuse cases, the hierarchy insists there must be two independent witnesses - an almost impossible stipulation - before accusations are investigated.

The Watchtower Society has been denouncing the UN and its predecessor the League of Nations for 80 years, believing them to be a world empire of false religion, predicted in the Book of Revelation.

A recent publication since the organisation obtained its recognition describes the UN as "a disgusting thing in the sight of God and his people".

In an internal document, the WTBS describes its policy as a "theocratic war strategy". It claims: "In time of spiritual warfare it is proper to misdirect the enemy by hiding the truth. It is done unselfishly; it does not harm anyone; on the contrary it does much good."

Being a recognised NGO with the United Nations - as more than 1,500 organisations are - gives status though not grants.

To qualify, organisations must show that they share the ideals of the charter, operate on a non-profit basis, "demonstrate interest in UN issues and proven ability to reach large or specialised audiences" and have the commitment and means to conduct effective information programmes about UN activities.

Disaffected Witnesses believe that the association, which has not been publicised to followers, is intended to increase the cult's respectability to sceptical governments, such as France's, which have refused to recognise it.

Paul Gillies, the Witnesses' spokesman in

Britain, said: "We do not have hostile attitudes to governing bodies and if we are making representations on issues to the UN we will do so."

"There are good and bad bodies just as there are good and bad politicians. We believe what the Book of Revelation tells us but we do not actively try to change the political system."

A spokeswoman for the UN said: "I think we may not be aware of their attitude, which seems to be really strange."

UNITED NATIONS - 2

The following letter dated 11 October 2001 was then sent out by the United Nations.

To Whom It May Concern:

Recently the NGO Section had been receiving numerous inquiries regarding the association of the Watchtower Bible Tract Society of New York with the Department of Public Information (DPI).

This organization applied for association with DPI in 1991 and was granted association in 1992. By accepting association with DPI, the organization agreed to meet criteria for association, including support and respect of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and commitment and means to conduct effective information programmes with its constituents and to a broader audience about UN activities.

In October 2001, the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York requested termination of its association with DPI. Following this request, the DPI has made a decision to disassociate the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York as of 9 October 2001.

We appreciate your interest in the work of the United Nations.

Yours Sincerely,

Paul Hoeffel

Chief

NGO Section

Department of Public Information

UNITED NATIONS - 3

Finally on this area I reproduce an email sent in by one of our regular readers.

It seems relevant to draw attention to an ancient article in The Watchtower which doesn't seem to receive much attention these days:

"We cannot but admire the high principles embodied in the League of Nations ... Truly this is idealistic, and approximates in a small way that which God has foretold that he will bring about after this great time of trouble." (The Watchtower, 15 February 1919, p.51).

The Watchtower Society has never repented of the hypocrisy of this statement, but instead covers it up.

Their hypocrisy over quietly sending speakers to the 1998 CESNUR conference, well documented by *Comments from the Friends*, was similar.

On a different subject you may be interested to compare the following quotes;

"We cannot take part in any modern version of idolatry ... the imputing of salvation to a person or an organisation." (The Watchtower, 1 November 1990, p.26).

"Bible students... must appreciate that identifying themselves with Jehovah's organisation is essential to their salvation." (Our Kingdom Ministry, November 1990, p.1).

"In keeping with Paul's example, the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses today warns us of apostates... Their message is not positive and does not glorify Jehovah's name and organization..." (The Watchtower, 1 May 1988, pp.12-13).

"Thus Israel learned the hard way the futility of relying on human organizations." (The Watchtower, 1 January 1996, p.9).

JASON BEDUHN

Several have written to us asking for information on Jason BeDuhn from Northern Arizona University. The Watchtower Society quote him as one of the writers that agree with them that Jesus is not God. We reproduce below a letter he wrote on 1 April 1998 (a copy of the original is on file at the office). Whereas we might not agree with all his findings we see again that the Watchtower Society have quoted him out of context. He does not believe what they want him to believe because as he says, Jesus is in the "divine class of things" which is neither angelic or human!

Thank you for your letter of 12 February. I am sorry it has taken me so long to reply. I have a lot of mail those days due to the *Watchtower article*. Many people have asked me about specific passages of the Bible, as John 1:1 seems to be a favorite.

The Greek phrase is *theos en logos, which*

translated word for word is "a god was the word."

Greek has only a definite article, like our *the, it does not have an indefinite article*, like our *a or an*. If a noun is definite, it has the definite article *ho*. If a noun is indefinite, no article is used. In the phrase from John 1:1, *ho theos* is 'the word.' If it was written simply *Iogos, without the definite article ho*, we would have to translate it as "a word." So we are not really "inserting" an indefinite article when we translate Greek nouns without the definite article into English, we are simply obeying the rules of English grammar that tell us that we cannot say "Snoopy is dog," but must say "Snoopy is a dog."

Now in English we simply say "God"; we do not say "The God." But in Greek, when you mean to refer to the one supreme God, instead of one of the many other beings that were called "gods," you would have to say "The God"; *ho theos*. Even a monotheistic Christian, who believes that there is only one God and no others, would be forced to say in Greek "The God," as John and Paul and the other writers of the New Testament normally do. If you leave off the article in a phrase like John 1:1, then you are saying "a god." (There are some exceptions to this rule: Greek has what are called noun cases, which means the nouns change form depending on how they are used in a sentence. So, if you wanted to say "of God," which is *theou, you don't need the article, But in the nominative case, which is the one in John 1:1, you have to have the article.*)

So what does John mean by saying "the word was a god"? He is classifying Jesus in a specific category of beings. There are plants and animals and humans and gods, and so on. By calling the Word "a god, John wants to tell his readers that the Word (which becomes Jesus when it takes flesh) belongs to the divine class of things. Notice the word order: "a god was the word."

We can't say it like this in English but you can in Greek. The subject can be after the verb and the object before the verb, the opposite of how we do it in English (subject-verb-object). Research has shown that when ancient Greek writers put object-noun first in a sentence like John 1:1 (a be-verb sentence: x is y), without the definite article, they are telling us that the

(Continued on page 10)

TRUTH RESTORED - 31

BY MIKE & ANN THOMAS

Last time we looked at the Mormon Plan of Salvation and discussed the questions, Where Did I Come From? Why Am I Here? Where Am I Going? Mormons consider this life a time of testing where we progress to become like God. As we learn to choose good over evil so we learn to become gods ourselves. In light of this "plan of happiness," Mormons busy themselves with a raft of duties and observances in order to prove their faithfulness and (that ubiquitous Mormon phantasm) worthiness.

What does the prospective Mormon have to look forward to? Having discussed the law of eternal progression, the rest of discussion 4 and discussions 5 and 6, teach the things the investigator must begin to do in order to progress. Some of the ground covered will be reassuringly familiar, such as the importance of maintaining moral standards; giving through a tithe; the role of sacrifice; the duty to proclaim the gospel. These are some of the things that make Mormonism attractive and seem Christian. But alongside these duties we find duties peculiar to Mormonism such as ordinances performed for the dead; the idea of building eternal families; the Mormon health code, the Word of Wisdom etc.

It might be said that this devotion to religious duty is no bad thing, especially since it seems so lacking these days. Malachi declared to Israel and her priests,

"But you profane it (the Holy Name) by saying of the Lord's table, 'it is defiled', and of its food, it is contemptible'; And you say, 'What a burden!' and you sniff at it contemptuously," says the Lord Almighty. (Malachi 1:12 – we will return to Malachi)

However, the neglected duties of Israel are those of a loved son who should honour his father (Malachi 1:2-6) while the duties of a Mormon are the onerous burden of someone on trial for their future.

"In the resurrection...we will be judged by the Lord according to our faithfulness in following the course he has laid out for us." (Fourth missionary discussion)

It is well to remember as we consider the

following that, while the committed Mormon is seemingly self-sacrificing, he or she is also self-serving in seeking to achieve godhood. In discussing the Christian life Martin Luther declared,

"Behold, from faith flows forth love and joy in the Lord, and from love a joyful, willing, and free mind that serves one's neighbour willingly and takes no account of gratitude or ingratitude, of praise or blame, of gain or loss...Hence, as our heavenly Father has in Christ freely come to our aid, we also ought freely to help our neighbour through our body and its works, and each one should become as it were a Christ to the other that we may be...truly Christians." (Luther's Works 31, 367-68, quoted in Great Christian Thinkers, ed. Peter Vardy)

If we trust that we are saved by faith alone, without good works, then our service can flow freely even as God in Christ works for us and is truly selfless. If we believe that our good works contribute to our own eternal good our service inevitably takes account of praise or blame, gain or loss and is not entirely selfless and we fail to be Christ to others.

WORK FOR THE DEAD

Mormons ask the familiar question, what of those who have never heard? In addition they ask, what of those who have had no opportunity to perform the ordinances they believe essential to eternal progression? The Mormon will reason from 1 Peter 3:18-19; 4:6 that the gospel is preached in the afterlife. Thus:

"Every child of our Heavenly Father will have an opportunity to accept or reject the gospel...Those who accept the gospel in the spirit world will have an opportunity to receive baptism. God has provided a way for members of his church here on earth to perform baptisms for those who have died." (Fourth missionary discussion)

Mormons reason that 1 Corinthians 15:29 is a reference to this work for the dead, "...what will those do who are baptised for the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why are people bap-

tised for them?"

From Malachi 4:5-6 Mormons will reason that this work links the generations in one eternal family (see below).

The Christian might reason that there is no opportunity after death since "man is destined to die once, and after that to face the judgement" (Hebrews 9:27, c.f. 2 Cor.5:10)

The Christian can show that 1 Peter 4:6 is a reference to those "who are now dead" who heard the message while still living:

"For this is the reason the gospel was preached even to those who are now dead, so that they might be judged according to men in regard to the body, but live according to God in regard to the spirit."

And 1 Peter 3:18-19 is not a preaching of salvation but a proclamation of victory to disobedient spirits. This seems clear from the fact that Christ did not preach to "the dead", as Mormons would have it, but to certain "spirits in prison who disobeyed long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built". The victory proclaimed is described in v 22, "... Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at God's right hand with angels, authorities, and powers in submission to him" (c.f. Ephesians 1:2; 6:12)

1 Corinthians 15:29 is one of the most obscure verses in the Bible. The Christian might reason that this is a good reason to approach it with caution. It is a principle of Bible interpretation to never build a doctrine on one verse. We have already seen that other Bible verses pressed into service of this doctrine give no real support and this verse, therefore, truly stands alone. The Christian might also reason that Paul writes throughout the chapter in the first person, then in verse 29 changes to the third person, i.e. "What will they do who are baptised for the dead?" suggesting someone outside the Christian community. It is clear that whatever Paul meant by this refer-

ence neither he nor any other Bible writer endorses this practice.

Mormons view Malachi 4:5-6 as prophesying the restoration of this teaching of baptism for the dead. Through genealogical work and subsequent ordinances in Mormon temples the generations are believed to be linked, thus turning *"the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers"*.

The Christian might reason that the theme of Malachi is robbing God in denying service to Him and a key verse is 3:8. The verse at the beginning of this article epitomises the problem. Israel viewed their duty to God as burdensome and the prophet warned of coming judgement (4:1-5) and called them back to the law given to Moses (4:4). Malachi prophesies the coming of Elijah who will call them back to the godly ways of their forefathers *"turning the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers"*. *A new age when the sons of the covenant will know continuity with their spiritual forebears. Thus generations become united, not in one huge celestial family initiated through Mormon temple rites, but through their obedience to God. In John the Baptist we see the fulfilment of this in the preaching of a gospel of repentance and baptism for the forgiveness of sins (Mark 1: 2-4 c.f. Malachi 4:5)*

One last comment on the subject of "those who haven't heard". It is a vexing question. However it is worth asking how do we know who has heard and who has not? We imagine circumstances so extreme that somehow the word could not possibly have got through and therefore the people must have died having never heard. But how do we know what agencies and means God uses in his infinite power and wisdom to reach those he has chosen? Think of a eunuch on the road from Jerusalem (Acts 8:26-29) or church leaders arrested to prevent the spreading of the good news (Acts 5:19-20). Because things are not in our field of vision or within our ability to imagine doesn't mean they cannot be. Perhaps we should trust more that the Lord of all the earth will indeed do what is right.

THE ETERNAL FAMILY

Mormons lay great store by families. They view our procreative abilities as

part of God's plan to make eternal families, "In this way we work toward becoming like our Father in Heaven" (Fourth missionary discussion) ¹ Building on Malachi 4:5-6 and quoting 1 Corinthians 11:11 The Mormon will reason that families are eternal and "that the same sociality which exists among us here will exist among us there" (Joseph Smith, D&C 130:2).

The Christian might reason that Jesus taught *"at the resurrection people will neither marry nor be given in marriage"* (Matthew 22:30) The message becomes clearer when we look at Luke's account of the same teaching

"The people of this age marry and are given in marriage. But those who are considered worthy of taking part in that age and in the resurrection from the dead will neither marry nor be given in marriage, and they can no longer die: for they are like the angels. They are God's children, since they are children of the resurrection" (Luke 20:34-36)

To a Mormon eternal marriage is "one way we work toward becoming like our Father in Heaven" and "this is one of the greatest blessings promised to the righteous". However, from Jesus' words in Luke we find that

Marriage is for this age and not for the next.

Those who are considered worthy to take part in the next age will neither marry nor be given in marriage

They are God's children

THE WORD OF WISDOM

Discipline is commonly seen as part of religious duty. Many Christian groups and individuals abstain from alcohol and forego worldly pleasures in their devotions. Many Christians give up something for Lent as a discipline during this special time. The Mormons have a health law known as the Word of Wisdom which forbids the use of hot drinks (interpreted these days to mean tea and coffee), alcohol and tobacco. It also gives detailed instructions regarding the use of meat, fruit and grain. Mormons believe that by choosing good over evil we are following God's plan of happiness for us and are becoming more like God, passing the test. This, they teach, applies to how we care for our bodies, one of the greatest gifts we have.

During this discussion (Disc.4) we have emphasized (sic) precious gifts that we have in this life: our physical bodies and our freedom to choose. We have also discussed how the way we use these gifts determines our blessings in this life and in the life to come. Among his commandments is a law of health known as the Word of Wisdom...The Lord promises those who obey this law that they will be more healthy both physically and spiritually. He also promises wisdom, strength, and increased happiness to those who discipline themselves in this way. (Fourth missionary discussion, emphasis added)

The Mormon will reason from 1 Corinthians 3:16-17; 6:19-20 that the body is a temple and that our habits should reflect this. As an example of someone who followed God's law in this respect they cite Daniel 1:8-20 where the prophet resolved not to defile himself with the forbidden foods of the king's table. Inevitably, from these things comes a discussion of worthiness. Keeping the law entitles one to the Holy Spirit's guidance, crucially his guidance in establishing truth, *"Through the Holy Ghost we can know that the Book of Mormon is true and that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God"* (Fourth missionary discussion). This gives the Mormon leverage over the doubting investigator since failure to gain a testimony never means the message is not true but the inquirer is not worthy.

The Christian might reason that 1 Corinthians 3:16-17 is not a reference to each individual being a temple but is a reference to God's church - plural. This letter is to a community and Paul here is addressing divisions in the church (1:3). Emphasising the essential unity of believers Paul writes of unity of purpose among workers (3:5-9), the unity of the community as a building built on one foundation (10-15), and as a temple (16-17) i.e. "You yourselves (plural) are God's temple (singular)" (NIV). The KJV, which is favoured by Mormons, reads, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God..." Ye is the plural of thou, the former used to refer to a group, the latter to an individual.

It is in 6:19 that he refers to individuals as temples, but here the context again reveals the intent, i.e. "flee from sexual immorality...Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit..." On this, of course, we can all agree. However, this has nothing to do with diet.

Daniel 1:8-20 demonstrates exactly the

Mormon position in that Daniel and his companions outstripped in wisdom, insight and understanding the young men who ate at the king's table. *Ipsa facto*, the Mormon argues, a clear demonstration of cause and effect. Obey God in your diet and know God in your life. The Christian might reason that, of course, Daniel is being faithful to the Levitical law (Lev.7:22-27; 11:1-47) in avoiding unclean foods. But where Daniel resolved not to defile himself by what he ate Jesus said, "What goes into a man's mouth does not make him 'unclean', but what comes out of his mouth, that is what makes him 'unclean'" (Matthew 15:11). Later, in a vision, Peter "saw heaven opened and something like a large sheet being let down to earth by its four cor-

ners. It contained all kinds of four-footed animals, as well as reptiles and birds of the air. Then a voice told him, 'Get up, Peter. Kill and eat'

'Surely not Lord!' Peter replied. 'I have never eaten anything impure or unclean.'

The voice spoke a second time, 'Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.'" (Acts 10:9-15)

After having heard Peter's account of his vision his fellows in Jerusalem declared, "So then, God has granted even the Gentiles repentance unto life" (c.f. Acts 11:1-18). In a remarkable development the food that had been unclean to Daniel was now declared clean by God - for, "What goes into a man's mouth does not

make him 'unclean', but what comes out of his mouth, that is what makes him 'unclean' - and 'unclean' Gentiles were also declared clean. Paul wrote, "food does not bring us near to God; we are no worse if we do not eat, and no better if we do."

Christians recognise that "Everything is permissible" - but not everything is beneficial (or constructive)" (1 Cor. 6:12; 10:23) and order their lives accordingly. Recognising the dignity of the human body, there are things from which we might profitably abstain. However, we should not look to our abstinence as qualifying us for God's favour. Rather our use of our bodies marks us as those who are guided by God's wisdom and Christ's example. ☐

(Continued from page 7)

WATCH THE TOWER

subject belongs to the class represented by the object-noun: "The car is a Volkswagen." In English we would accomplish the same thing by using what we call predicative adjectives. "John is a smart person" - "John is smart." So we would tend to say "The word was divine," rather than "The word was a god." That is how I would translate this phrase. "The word was a god" is more literal and an improvement over "The word was God," but raises more problems, since to a modern reader it implies polytheism.

No one John's day would have under-

stood the phrase to mean "The word was God" - the language does not convey that sense, and conceptually it is difficult to grasp such an idea, especially since the author has just said that the word was *with* God. Someone is not with himself, he is with some other. John clearly differentiates The God from The Word. The latter becomes flesh and is seen; the former cannot be seen. What is the Word? John says it was the agent through whom God made the world. He starts his gospel "In the beginning..." to remind us of Genesis I. How does God create in Genesis? He speaks words that make things come into existence. So the Word is God's

creative power and plan and activity. It is not God himself, but it is not really totally separate from God either. It occupies a kind of ambiguous status. That is why a monotheist like John can get away with calling it "a god" or "divine" without becoming a polytheist. This divine thing does act on its own, however, does take on a kind of distinct identity, and in becoming flesh brings God's will and plan right down face to face with humans.

I hope this helps. Best wishes. Jason BeDuhn ☐

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APOLOGETICS - 10

The Prosperity Doctrine

Many Christians accept this as a biblical teaching – some taking it to extremes. We need to be able to show that this is not a Biblical teaching with a sound Scriptural basis and yet at the same time God has promised us what we need to live the Christian life. As has often been said, he does always promise us the bread but maybe not the butter and jam.

Many believers in this doctrine miss or certainly ignore the point that some Christians will never be rich and might live in poverty all their life. Is this really sin or do we even move into a form of 'karma' and say that was from their past generations? There are many parts of this world today that are in poverty and yet there are in those countries Christians who love the Lord and serve Him fully. Are they being disobedient to the Lord by not knowing prosperity?

The followers of this doctrine also miss out or ignore the fact that the Bible clearly tells us that if we wish to 'gain' our life we must 'lose' it. Not first gain the world's possessions then sell them so we do not have anything. This teaching is fine for the few who can live in the expensive houses and drive luxury cars but not for the majority of people. Maybe God's prosperity is the raven bringing food or the one meal of corn bread a day that Elijah knew.

A few years ago, the Kenneth Copeland foundation wrote a paper seeking to answer the criticisms we had made on this and other doctrines. We term this paper *Observations*. In it they quote 2 Corinthians 9:8 and say that they want to preach the gospel to those who lack and also to help those in poverty. They continue,

"...a large proportion of the world's wealth is in the hands of very few people, many of whom have gained it by unscrupulous means. It is in the Church's power to get hold of this wealth in order to distribute it to those in need, because the root behind this injustice is sin. As we get hold of God's principles for financial prosperity, then the Church will be able to go ahead with the task that so desperately needs doing. It is happening in some instances, but all the time we resist the truth that it is

God's will to prosper us, we shall not get very far."

I know of no Scripture that tells us that the Church needs the world's wealth. Jesus taught that we are to give to Caesar what belongs to him not take away even if it was received unscrupulously. We are just as aware of the need of finance in these days but the early church did not find the lack of finance a hindrance for preaching the gospel.

It would also be helpful here to look at some of the following verses of 2 Corinthians 9 especially the key verse 11,

"You will be enriched in everything for all liberality, which through us is producing thanksgiving to God."

The question is do we give to get, or do we get to give? There seems to be a progression here in which God gives to us - "you will be made enriched in everything," so that we give to others - "for all liberality," and others can give praise to God - "through us is producing thanksgiving to God."

Now looking at v.10 we see the promise of supply,

"He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food (note staples not luxuries) will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness; you will be enriched in everything..."

Later in vv 14 & 15 we read,

"... while they also, by prayer on your behalf, yearn for you because of the surpassing grace God in you. Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!"

What gift? What has God supplied here? Some would have us believe material wealth and, of course, we do not deny that God's supply can include such things. However, God's supply here is grace (v.14) and righteousness (v.10) and it is through the indescribable gift that the Corinthian church was inspired to give out of their plenty. This much becomes clear from earlier in chapter 8,

"Consequently we urged Titus that as he had previously made a beginning, so he would also complete in you this gracious work as well. But just as you

abound in everything, in faith and endurance and knowledge and in all earnestness and in the love we inspired in you, see that you abound in the gracious work also." (8:6-7)

The only thing we know of wealth from this passage is that the Corinthian church had some to spare. However, the Macedonian churches gave from their poverty (8:1-5) but from the same gift of grace,

"Now, brethren, we wish to make known to you the grace of God which has been given in the churches of Macedonia, that in great ordeal of affliction their deep poverty overflowed in the wealth of their liberality." (8:1,2)

The riches promised in v.11, then, is not wealth to pass on to others, which we may (Corinth) or may not (Macedonia) have. The riches are riches of generosity which both can give abundantly. One gives out of plenty the other out of poverty but both out of the indescribable gift of grace. The cycle in 2 Cor.9:10-15 is God gives us riches of grace, which we share as we can in service to others who, in turn, gave praise back to the God of grace.

We took this matter up in our original article by quoting from a teaching tape but this received no specific comment in *observations*.

"You give \$1 for the Gospel's sake and \$100 belongs to you; you give \$10 and you receive \$1000; give \$1000 and receive \$10,000. I know that you can multiply, but I want you to see it in black and white... Give one airplane and receive one hundred times the value of the airplane. Give one car and the return would furnish you a lifetime of cars. In short Mark 10:30 is a very good deal"

The matter of giving was reduced to £'s or at least \$'s and not the grace of God. Also, if we were to follow this advice logically, then every giving Christian, and there are thousands of them, would be a millionaire in a year.

Observations does take this point up and mentions Mark 10 and a number of other Scriptures that we quoted. We showed that the Bible teaches the opposite of the above quotation taken from a cassette

tape entitled *God's Will is Prosperity*. Please note that *Copeland Ministries* have not denied that Kenneth Copeland teaches this and they have not indicated that this quotation has been taken out of context.

With regard to the scripture references given in Article 1: Mark 10:30 - Read exactly what it says! This is Jesus speaking. Matthew 19:21 - We need to have things to sell, before we give to the poor! Luke 12:23 - Kenneth never contradicts this in his teaching. Acts 20:35 - Kenneth is always exhorting people to give, and with the right motive. 1 Timothy 6:17 - This must be seen with verses 18, the richer we are, the more we have to distribute. Kenneth always teaches that our trust is in God, not riches. 1 Timothy 6:5 - This does not warn against prosperity but against wrong attitude and motive.

This quotation puts Mark 10:30 in the context of money and possessions but the Scripture puts it in terms of family and

livelihood. The quotation puts it in the context of what has been given but the Scripture puts it in the context of what has been left behind. The giving of money and possessions are not even mentioned and therefore we have no right to expect this to be honoured by the Lord. As far as the apostles were concerned they left their family behind but God loved them and protected them. They left their means of livelihood behind but God provided what they needed. These verses simply say that what we give up, for the sake of the gospel, God will make up to us a hundred fold but we are also expected to receive persecutions. This is the promise that God will honour and no more.

We agree that 1 Timothy 6:5 is mainly talking about attitude and not whether one is rich or not. But if someone responds to the gospel on the basis that for every \$1 they give they are going to get \$100 back, that is looking at godly devotion as a means of gain. However, we

find the answers to Matthew 19:21 and 1 Timothy 6:17 very strange. Both of these verses are talking to rich men and telling them that their riches are a hindrance to coming into the Kingdom. There is no way you can use these verses to teach - go and get riches so you can give them away. We know that there are those who are blessed of God in a financial way and providing they have the right attitude to money, it is not a hindrance. This does not teach that we must all be rich. Jesus pointed out the widow with less than 1p gave more than all the £50 notes that were put in the treasury that day. She did not have to go out and get rich before her giving was blessed of the Lord. She gave all that she had and we do not even know if she received anything back.

This so-called biblical teaching of prosperity is not found within the Scriptures but the teaching of God's abundant grace to us whatever our outward circumstance is. ☐

EXCLUSIVE BRETHREN RESPONSE

We have received a number of helpful responses to the articles we have published on Exclusive Brethren and I print a couple of them here.

First a letter from Arthur Butler of Wolverhampton:

I read your article on the Exclusive Brethren with interest as one brought up in an "Exclusive" family and who left after "Aberdeen" in 1970. Much of your information has clearly come from the excellent web site you call "Web 1", where you will also find my story called "The Exclusive Brethren A Personal History". Most of what you write is all too true but some sections do not agree with my understanding of what the group taught, at least until the advent of JT Jr.

Your account of the influence of J.N. Darby agrees with what I understand and it is certainly crucial to the development of "Exclusivism". I might add that some discussion on "Web 1" has focussed on JND's rendering of 2 Timothy 2:21 which appears to go beyond straight translation to interpolation of his own views.

It is your quotation of the teachings of F.E. Raven which causes me concern because I do not recognise some of the more serious allegations as part of "Exclusive" teaching

in the 1950s. His teaching about "eternal life" I do recognise, and his thoughts on the Sonship of Jesus were undoubtedly controversial. They re-emerged during the rule of JT Sr. when some degree of division ensued. However at no point was the eternal Divinity of Christ questioned while I was in the system. Because no formal statements of doctrine were ever made, the beliefs of the leaders have to be dug out from pages of verbatim reports of "Readings". My research into JT Sr deduced something like:

"We are not entitled to presume what relationships existed between Divine Persons in a past eternity". In other words Jesus, although always God, might only be known as the Son after His incarnation (or possibly baptism with the Holy Spirit).

Although FER's views as to the person of the Lord Jesus were questionable, I think most "Exclusives" of my generation were brought up to believe that Jesus was "Fully man, sin apart and fully God, united in His person". The idea that Jesus was anything less than God at His birth would have been dismissed as a terrible heresy by every Exclusive brother I could think of. FER's teaching is certainly suspect, probably error, but I think that the contributor to "Web 1" has read into it worse than

really existed.

Moving onto JT Sr some of the teachings attributed to him only came in through his son. We were taught that the whole truth had been imparted to the early Apostles and recorded in Scripture, but that the Church had lost much until the "Recovery" under JND and subsequent leaders. "New Light" was certainly a term used but in the context of "new light" being shed on already existing, but long lost, truth. Almost certainly JT Jr and his successors will have been credited with revelation beyond the early Apostles, but this is relatively recent. It is also only in his time that the "Jims" have openly claimed to be the only true church, however much 'Exclusives' acted as though this were true.

Your list of 'DO NOTS' could be much extended. In particular: DO NOT have a TV, Radio computer, mobile phone, in your home, or business.

DO NOT (if you are a Sister) be seen outside the house without a headscarf as coveting.

This last edict will enable your readers to identify "Exclusive" women. The headscarves are usually blue, with long hair

worn loose beneath. If any of your readers have neighbours like this there will probably be several families in proximity to a meeting room. Please pray for them. To befriend them will be exceedingly difficult, but who knows what God may do through compassionate prayer?

Secondly from Mrs Simpson in Lancashire:

Greetings to you and your fellow workers at Reachout in His name. The Quarterly newsletter is very interesting and informative and I look forward to receiving it regularly.

But my main reason for writing just now is to thank you for the article on *Exclusive*

Brethren. I am so glad you are highlighting the facts concerning the *Taylorite Brethren*.

My family, parents, sister and myself came out of that sect in 1960 – unfortunately aunts and cousins were still in it and so they cut us off.

From 1960 to 1970, things grew worse, suicides and murders even took place among them. In Andover a man killed his family, then killed himself because he couldn't stand the 'torture' of the situation.

Thank you also for pointing out that all Exclusives are not alike. My family and I were welcomed into the *Glanton Brethren*,

who, we believe are the original Exclusives (my husband and I have looked into what happened at Alnwick in 1908. Error did not come into the Glanton party as far as I can see.

We have several friends and relations who have come 'out' of the *Taylor*s, so I am requesting further copies of the Quarterly. May you and the work who witness to Christ be truly blessed. ☐

JOHN 1:1-2

By Andrew Harrison

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. - NKJV

These verses are an essential part of Christian teaching regarding the Godhead and, as such, are very significant. We need to clearly explain, for example, why it is not appropriate to translate the latter part of verse 1 as '*...and the Word was a god*' (instead of '*...and the Word was God*'). This article seeks to set out some of the clear teachings of the prologue in John's Gospel.

In the beginning was the Word

We know from these verses that Jesus is the Word. As it says in verses 14 and 15:

And the Word became flesh...the only begotten of the Father...John bore witness of him...

The Greek for 'Word' is '*logos*' (ὁ λογος). '*Logos*' has various definitions, as we can see from the United Bible Societies' *The Greek New Testament Dictionary* (p.108). It means:

"Something said (e.g. word; saying; message; teaching)... value... reason...matter... thing...book..."

It is no mistake that Jesus' pre-existence is given a name which has such a broad meaning. He is not simply a spoken word (such as the creative words of God in Genesis 1, e.g. "*Let there be light*"), but

the very essence of God's decision-making personality. The Word is the very substance of God Himself and indistinguishable from Him - you cannot have God without ability to reason! Therefore, **the** Word can be none other than **the** God Himself. Likewise, my own thought processes and resulting speech are very much **me**.

We see that the Word was not an abstract tool or a lesser being of any description. Even well after His incarnation, in fact still in the future, Jesus will be referred to as the 'Word of God' in addition to 'KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS' (see Revelation 19:11-16).

However, to John's original readers there would be no doubt as to what this clause was saying. It was a bold statement to say the least. 'In the beginning' (ἐν ἀρχῇ) is an exact translation of the very first word in the Hebrew Old Testament - Genesis 1:1 (bereshith). Indeed the Greek Old Testament (LXX) translation (from the third and second century B.C) translated the word (ἐν ἀρχῇ) the same as in John 1:1.

John and his readers were Greek speakers and were very familiar with the LXX as well as the Hebrew scriptures. There would be no doubt in their minds that John was putting Jesus in the place of God. 'In the beginning God...' coincides with 'In the beginning was the Word...'

Like Genesis chapter 1, John chapter 1 is about the creation of all things by God (see John 1:3). In John 1:4-5 alone we

have mention of life, light and darkness which are all significant themes in the creation account.

In fact, *nothing*, literally *not one thing*, was made without the Word, so the Word Himself could not have been created. All things had to go through Him. Why? Because He was the very decision-making process Himself.

As it says in John 1:3:

All things were made through him, and without him nothing was made...

In addition Colossians 1:16 says:

All things were created through him and for him.

Elohim

The Hebrew word for 'God' in Genesis 1:1 is Elohim which is a plural form, as opposed to a singular or dual and in a sense signifies more than two of something. Bishop Ellicott refers to this in his *Commentary on the Whole Bible*:

"The Hebrews used the plural Elohim as the ordinary name of God...The plural thus intensified the idea of the majesty and greatness of God; but besides this, it was the germ of the doctrine of a plurality of persons in the Divine unity. (Excursus on Notes to Genesis. Excursus B: on the Names Elohim and Jehovah-Elohim) Vol.1, p.176."

The above shows a hint of the doctrine of the Trinity, as it cannot simply be a

reference to three gods in the light of the clear teaching that there is only one true God (see Deuteronomy 6:4).

At first it would appear that John is telling us that there are two Creators by saying '...and the Word was *with* God', but he immediately prevents that misunderstanding by pointing out '...the Word was God'.

As it says in the creed of Athanasius:

"For there is one Person of the Father, another of the Son: and another of the Holy Ghost. But the Godhead...is all one...Such as the father is, such is the Son: and such is the Holy Ghost"

So if '*elohim*' of Genesis 1:1 expresses three Persons of the one Godhead, and John 1:1 portrays the Father and Jesus, then where is the third Person in these creation accounts? Genesis 1:2 gives us another hint:

And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters

Here the Hebrew is '*ruach elohim*' and the NKJV translation above is a literal one although just as '*elohim*' can be used in different contexts, so '*ruach*' (literally 'spirit') can be translated 'wind'. This is the advantage of knowing Greek and Hebrew behind the various translations. The connections are clear, and the conclusions are obvious, but the subject of the Holy Spirit requires another study, there not being space in this article.

So, 'In the beginning God...' of Genesis 1:1 coincides with, 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God' (John 1:1-2). This all defines God to some extent, as his existence before all things.

The very next part of the sentence in Genesis 1:1 '... [God] created the heavens and the earth' corresponds to, 'All things were made through him, and without him nothing was made that was made' (John 1:3). This all deals with God creating.

And the Word was with God/He was in the beginning with God

This reminds us that Jesus was with God (or the Father) in the beginning, before all things (see Colossians 1:17), and these two Persons of the Godhead created all things.

We are not told 'He **was created** in the

beginning', but rather, 'He **was** in the beginning'. We simply have the word 'to be' (am, are, was, were, etc) reminding us of Jesus' words in John 8:58, 'Before Abraham was, I am' (in turn reminding us of the Name 'Yahweh' expressed in Exodus 3:14-15).

Colossians 1:17 says in reference to Jesus:

And he is [present tense] before all things, and in him all things consist

We are not looking at a reference to an archangel or simply an extremely powerful being here, but rather it can only refer to the one true God. Again we have the present tense (see John 8:58). Instead of, 'and he **was** before all things', we have, 'and he **is** before all things'. He was eternally present before any single thing was created.

Jesus is not a created being, however, He is begotten (see John 3:16, 18 – literally the 'only-begotten'). This does not mean there was a time when He was not, but rather this shows a special relationship of these two divine aspects of God. He was begotten in eternity.

These are not ridiculous concepts. The inadequacy is in our comprehension not in the doctrine of the Bible. I am humble enough to know that I cannot possibly fully understand the being of my creator. Having said this, I have never had a problem with accepting the existence of the Trinity as traditionally put forward in the Creed of Athanasius, which also says:

The Son is of the Father alone: not made, nor created, but begotten

Since there was never a time when He was not, He must be begotten in eternity, and not in a finite time. Again, I am humble enough to realise that God does not have to exist in time, as we know it. Perhaps time is part of our physical universe. Even God deals with us in *our own* context of time, so how dare we even contemplate boxing God into *our 'world'*. How dare we even think that our puny fallible understanding has enough authority to change biblical fact.

1 John 4:9 shows us that Jesus was 'begotten' before He was incarnated, before He was conceived in the Virgin Mary. It says:

God has sent his only begotten Son into the world

In other words, the one who was sent

into the womb of Mary (i.e. sent into the world) was already the only begotten Son.

So there we have it. Jesus existed before all things and was therefore never created. He was begotten in eternity, and not in finite time.

And the Word was God - και θεος ην ο λογος

It says in the Creed of Athanasius:

"The Son is of the Father alone: not made, nor created, but begotten"

However, there was never a time when He was not, as we have already seen in John 1:1 ('in the **beginning** was the Word'). Colossians 1:17 says:

And he is [present tense] before all things, and in him all things consist

This passage does not say He was **created** before all things, not even that He **was** before all things, but the present tense is used, hence: *He is before all things*. This confirms his existence as an Eternal Being as portrayed in Jesus' own words of John 8:58 concerning Himself. He stated that He is 'I am', reminiscent of Exodus 3:14-15.

Since He existed before all things and is the 'I am', He has always existed. He was begotten in eternity, not in finite time. As we have already seen, there is only one true God (see also Isaiah 44:6), therefore there is no doubt about how this last clause in John 1:1 should be translated. The context is clear as outlined above.

The only way it can be translated or understood is by saying that the Word was **God** Himself. There is no justification in view of all this to suggest that the absence of the definite article before **θεος** here indicates Jesus is an inferior god. The definite article 'the' is frequently omitted in Greek in most grammatical circumstances.

There was no distinction between upper and lower case letters in the original Greek of the New Testament, therefore the authors could not rely on this as a tool to distinguish between 'God' and 'a god'. The definite article (ὁ) placed before the Greek word for God (θεος) could provide the translation, 'the god', 'the God', 'god', or 'God'. The word for 'God' on its own (θεος) could provide, 'the god', 'the God', 'god', 'God', 'a god', or 'a God'. Only a translator with a thorough knowledge of Greek structure

throughout the New Testament; the rules that usually apply; the immediate context; the context of the whole of the New Testament and in turn its relationship to the Old Testament, should have the authority to translate the Bible. The only experienced translators that will translate this to mean Jesus is simply 'a god' must have an axe to grind.

In addition to all the evidence above, it should suffice to give a few more examples to show how ludicrous it is to translate this clause as 'and the Word was a god':

Rule of Grammar

JW Wenham, in his 'Elements of New Testament Greek', page 1, points out that:

"Every sentence has two parts: the subject and the predicate. The **subject** names the person or thing uppermost in mind"

In John 1:1 'the Word' (ὁ λόγος), even though it is placed after the verb ἦν ('was'), is the main subject of the whole of the verse.

Wenham goes on:

"The **predicate** makes an assertion about the subject [i.e. the subject **was God**]."

These two nouns 'Word' and 'God' describe the same being, therefore 'God' complements the subject, 'the Word', and as a result, the noun 'God' is the **complement**. In this situation, both nouns take on the Nominative case ending. Wenham says (page 35):

"When two nouns in the nominative are linked by the verb 'to be' [i.e. 'was'], it may not be clear which is subject and which is complement...In such cases the complement usually drops the article, and is usually placed before the verb..."

Therefore, the reason why the definite article is not present at the front of *qeov* is to indicate that 'the Word' should be uppermost in mind. It is nothing to do with relegating Jesus to the position of 'a god'.

As Wenham says (on the same page):

In the case of abstract nouns we have ὁ θεος ἀγαπη ἐστιν - God is love (1John 4:8, 16).

Here we see that the word ἀγαπη (love) does not have the article for the same reason, therefore, should not be translated 'God is a love'.

Bruce Metzger says that translating the last clause in John 1:1 as 'and the Word

was a god':

"...overlooks entirely an established rule of Greek grammar which necessitates the rendering, "...and the Word was God." Some years ago Dr Ernest Colwell of the University of Chicago pointed out in a study of the Greek definite article that, "A definite predicate nominative has the article when it follows the verb; it does not have the article when it precedes the verb." p.75."

So we see that in this case the definite predicate noun (θεος) which precedes the verb has no article because it is a rule of New Testament Greek that the article should be omitted when it precedes the verb.

The possible construction (not found in this form in the New Testament) of ὁ λόγος ἦν θεος may have given more weight to the aforementioned wrong translation. Nevertheless, even in this form the context would have to be ignored in order to translate it different to the traditional way.

Evidence elsewhere in the same Gospel

John's Gospel, more than any of the other three Gospels, concentrates on doctrine. It records a clear revelation of the identity of Jesus in John 20:28. Jesus deliberately leads doubting Thomas to an understanding of who Jesus is, and the result was Thomas' proclamation:

And Thomas answered and said to him, "My Lord and my God!"

If Jesus was not the true, one and only, God, then He would not have allowed such a misunderstanding to go unchecked. To Jews this would have been a major blasphemy. Instead, Jesus assents to Thomas' words, and by the way, the definite article is present!

Conclusion

An inability to comprehend the reality of Jesus being God is no excuse for a wrong translation of John 1:1. The prologue of John's Gospel makes clear doctrinal statements which Christians take very seriously. There is only one true God, so the vocabulary used is precise and as I said, the original readers of the Greek would have no doubt as to its significance. From the days of the original authors (in this case one of the twelve apostles) to the present day, the Christian Church has embraced these facts.

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Interesting Quote

The March 2002 issue of the Mormon magazine *Ensign* contained an article entitled, "Prepare for Blessings of the Temple" by Russell M. Nelson, who is a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. (See pp.16-23.)

It is a new departure for the Mormon Church that they talk about these garments so openly - it would not have happened a few years ago.

"The fundamental principle ought to be to wear the garment and not to find occasions to remove it. Thus, members should not remove either all or part of the garment to work in the yard or to lounge around the home in swimwear or immodest clothing. Nor should they remove it to participate in recreational activities that can reasonably be done with the garment worn properly beneath regular clothing. When the garment must be removed, such as for swimming, it should be restored as soon as possible." ☐

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