

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

We aim to:

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

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

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

Present the evangelical 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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CELEBRATING 23 YEARS OF MINISTRY REACHOUT QUARTERLY

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2005 ANNUAL CONVENTION

We are sorry to report that after a number of years at the Pioneer Centre, they cannot provide us with the facilities we need for next year which has meant trying to find another venue.

When we first went to Pioneer the facilities were quite basic but we enjoyed the friendly atmosphere. Now that they are more popular, they do not feel they can offer us the same facilities as we have had.

Some of the places we have tried, especially in the central Midlands area, are

booked up for several years for the weeks we would require. However, we have been able to get the weekend of November 11-13 at the Wycliffe Centre near High Wycombe.

Many will remember that we were there for a number of years but they have done a lot of work in improving the site and we are really looking forward to being there again.

Derek and I visited the site in January and believe that it will be very suitable for our weekend. Some may feel that it will mean extra

travel but the Centre is better located just off the M40 and for most it will not mean much extra travel.

There are some ensuite rooms available and some standard accommodation, most of which have a washbasin in the room and it will be allocated on a first come first served basis. Details are as below and we would encourage you to book on the enclosed form or via our website just as soon as possible.

Contact us for a more detailed leaflet.

THE WYCLIFFE CENTRE HORSLEYS GREEN HIGH WYCOMBE HP14 3XL

11-13 NOVEMBER 2005

Superior (Ensuite) Singles - £110 (very few available)

Superior (Ensuite) Twin - £102 per person

Superior (Ensuite) Triple - £92 per person

Standard Singles - £95.00

Standard Twin - £87.00 per person

Standard Triple - £79.00 per person

Day Visitor - £12 without meals.

£22 including lunch or £27 for evening meal too.

All prices include VAT.

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COMMENT

Our Director Frank Croucher and his wife Pauline have been going through a tough time lately with Pauline's illness; this email that he sent me seems very appropriate then.

A young woman went to her mother and told her about her life and how things were so hard for her. She did not know how she was going to make it and wanted to give up. She was tired of fighting and struggling. It seemed as one problem was solved, a new one arose.

Her mother took her to the kitchen. She filled three pots with water and placed each on a high fire. Soon the pots came to boil. In the first she placed carrots, in the second she placed eggs, and in the last she placed ground coffee beans. She let them sit and boil, without saying a word. In about twenty minutes she turned off the burners. She fished the carrots out and placed them in a bowl. She pulled the eggs out and placed them in a bowl. Then she ladled the coffee out and placed it in a bowl.

Turning to her daughter, she asked, "Tell me, what do you see?"

"Carrots, eggs, and coffee," she replied. Her mother brought her closer and asked her to feel the carrots. She did and noted that they were soft.

The mother then asked the daughter to take an egg and break it. After pulling off the shell, she observed the hard boiled egg. Finally, the mother asked the daughter to sip the coffee.

The daughter smiled as she tasted its rich aroma. She asked, "What does it mean, mother?"

Her mother explained that each of these objects had faced the same adversity... boiling water. Each reacted differently.

The carrot went in strong, hard, and unrelenting. However, after being subjected to the boiling water, it softened and became weak.

The egg had been fragile. Its thin outer shell had protected its liquid interior, but after sitting through the boiling water, its inside became hardened.

The ground coffee beans were unique, however. After they were in the boiling water, they had changed the water.

"Which are you?" she asked her daughter. "When adversity knocks on your door, how do you respond? Are you a carrot, an egg or a coffee bean?"

Which am I?

Am I the carrot that seems strong, but with pain and adversity do I wilt and become soft and lose my strength?

Am I the egg that starts with a malleable heart, but changes with the heat?

Did I have a fluid spirit, but after a death, a break-up, a financial hardship or some other trial, have I become hardened and stiff? Does my shell look the same, but on the inside am I bitter and tough with a stiff spirit and hardened heart?

Or am I like the coffee bean? The bean actually changes the hot water, the very circumstance that brings the pain. When the water gets hot, it releases the fragrance and flavour. If you are like the bean, when things are at their worst, you get better and change the situation around you. When the hour is the darkest and trials are their greatest, do you elevate yourself to another level?

How do you handle adversity? Are you a carrot, an egg or a coffee bean?

Don't tell GOD how big your storm is. Tell the storm how big GOD is!

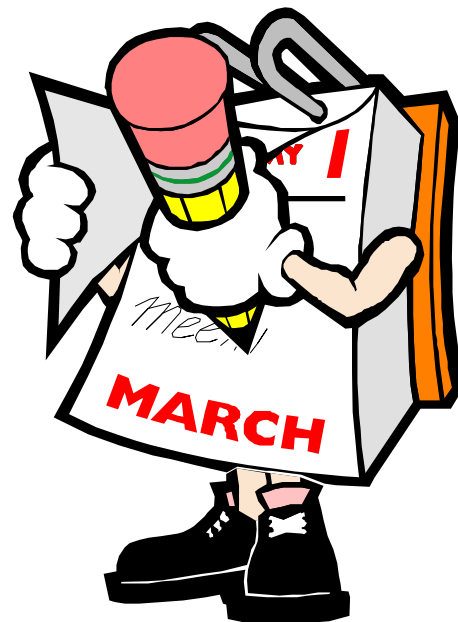
We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed. - 2 Corinthians 4:8-9

We do not know what this year will bring; we do not know what trials we are going to be called upon to go through and we need our hearts prepared now so that we will not be taken by surprise by the 'hot water'.

I have been touched again by the lives of John the Baptist's parents, Zacharias and Elizabeth. Luke 1:6 tells us that these two were righteous in the sight of God and walked blamelessly before Him - what a testimony! And yet the very next verse tells us that Elizabeth was barren!

That cannot be God because you He blesses the righteous, they can never be barren. However, we find no complaining on the part of Elizabeth or Zacharias, they kept walking before their God and served Him faithfully. Do we?

Maybe we do not have all we feel we should have, but we can trust God - His ways are perfect - His trials are for our good - and His timing is never late! ☐



Doug's Diary

Confirmation has been received that Doug Harris will be involved in training at the following seminars.

Other sessions are in the process of being arranged and an updated list can be obtained either on the web site or by ringing 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.

MARCH 2005

- 3 Boscombe
- 7 N.London *
- 12 N.London
- 13 Alresford
- 15 Prayer & Bible Battersea
- 20 Dagenham

APRIL 2005

- 16 S.London
- 19 Prayer & Bible Battersea

MAY 2005

- 3&4 Crowhurst Healing Centre
- 10-13 CRE - Sandown Park
- 17 Prayer & Bible Battersea

JUNE 2005

- 4 Hertfordshire *
- 12 Birmingham
- 18-19 Chorley
- 21 Prayer & Bible Battersea



WATCH THE TOWER



2005/1

VIEW FROM THE TOWER

This is the second article catching up on a number of interesting points raised in recent Watchtower publications.

MY FRIEND JEHOVAH

On p.16 of *The Watchtower*, 15 September, 2003, speaking of Abraham being called the friend of God, the writer states,

“Our incessant prayers help us have a close relationship with Jehovah.”

This struck me as the line that the Society often takes; it is the outward things that bring us close to God. Is this statement they make true? Will my praying, alone, bring me close to Jehovah?

I think the Biblical teaching is very clear - Jehovah will not regard us as a friend just because we ask Him for things. Being called a friend came out of the Covenant that God made with Him. Romans 4 seeks to explain this to us. It was not the works that made Abraham God's friend but that he understood what it meant to be, “justified by faith”. This is something that no man can do whatever group they join; how many doors they call on; or how many prayers they pray.

First, God pronounces as righteous through the finished work of Jesus Christ and then we work out our salvation from there. Seeking to work out our salvation, without knowing our justification may mean we will do many good works but it will not mean that we have a relationship with Jehovah.

Once again the works of the organisation are put forward as a means of having a relationship with God and the blood of Jesus Christ is sidelined, except for a few of the 144,000 left on earth.

HANDLING THE WORD

Pages 8-12 of *The Watchtower*, 15 November, 2003 carried an article entitled, “Handling God's Word Aright”. The basis, explained in the opening paragraphs, is that we need the right tools and know

how to use them. From here they make a number of points about the examples we have in Scripture and how we need to be rooted in God's Word. We will look at each point made under their main paragraph headings.

“Paul – A Zealous Kingdom Publisher” - pp.8-9.

Some of the points made here are good. Like Paul, we need to make effective use of God's Word.

“Like Paul, we can glorify our work as ministers by making frequent and effective use of the Word of God. In all features of our field ministry, our goal should be to share something from the Scriptures with as many people as possible. How can we do this with persuasion? Consider three important ways: (1) Direct attention to God's Word in a way that creates respect for it. (2) Tactfully explain and apply what the Bible says. (3) Reason from the Scriptures in a way that is convincing.” - p.9.

Three excellent points which we certainly should follow; unfortunately it does not end there.

“Present-day Kingdom proclaimers have tools that were not available to Paul during his ministry. These include books, magazines, brochures, handbills, tracts, and audio and video recordings. In the past century, testimony cards, phonographs, sound cars, and radio broadcasts were also used. Of course, our best tool is the Bible, and we need to make good and proper use of this indispensable tool.” - p.9.

Well, at least we end up with the thought that the Bible is best, but the writers must remind us of the literature which we should use too.

“Our Ministry Must Be Rooted in God's Word” - p.9.

Again, much to be commended, and buried in this paragraph a very interesting sentence,

“Timothy was not to permit his personal views to shape his teaching.” - p.10.

But isn't this just where the

Watchtower Society has fallen down? They should be commended for wanting to reach every house with the “gospel message” but if it is not the true one, but one shaped by the personal views of the Society leaders, it will not be fulfilling Jehovah's will – they admit that themselves.

“Our Conduct Must be Good” - p.10.

Amen, our lives must show the truth of what we are preaching.

“God's Word Has Transforming Power” - p.11.

Once again, Amen! Power to change a sinner into a justified Christian; power to make alive those who are dead in trespasses and sins; power to bring any person to the place of being born again of God's Holy Spirit. But are these the testimonies that are shown under this heading? No, instead we read:

“For example, Kingdom proclaimers from Phnom Penh, Cambodia, preached in the province of Kompong Chain twice a month. After hearing others of the clergy speak against Jehovah's Witnesses, a local pastor arranged to meet with the Witnesses the next time they visited the province. She barraged them with questions about the celebrating of holidays and listened closely as they reasoned with her from the Scriptures. Then she exclaimed: ‘I know now that what my fellow pastors said about you is not true! They claimed that you don't use the Bible, but this morning that's all you have used!’ This woman continued her Bible discussions with the Witnesses and did not allow threats of removal as pastor to stop her. She mentioned her Scriptural discussions to a friend, who then began to study the Bible with the Witnesses. The friend became so enthusiastic about what she was learning that at one of the services at the church she attends, she was moved to say, ‘Come, study the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses!’ Soon thereafter, the former pastor and others also began studying the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses.” - p.12

Has the “transforming power” of the Scriptures changed the woman

on the inside? No, she now studies the Bible with a different group - all is outward! This example is followed by another one,

"The power of God's Word is also illustrated in the case of Paulina, a woman in Ghana. A full-time Kingdom proclaimer held a Bible study with her in the book *Knowledge That Leads to Everlasting Life*. Paulina was involved in a polygamous marriage and saw the need to make changes, but her husband and all her relatives violently opposed her. Her grandfather, a high-court judge and a church elder, tried to dissuade her by resorting to a misapplication of Matthew 19:4-6. The judge sounded authoritative, but Paulina quickly realized that this was similar to Satan's twisting of the Scriptures when he tempted Jesus Christ. (Matthew 4:5-7) She recalled Jesus' clear statement on marriage, to the effect that God created humans male and female, not male and females, and that the two, not the three, were to become one flesh. She stuck to her decision and was finally granted the customary divorce from the polygamous marriage. Soon, she was a happy baptized Kingdom proclaimer." - p.12.

Here there was a change but again it is all to do with outward things. She came out of a polygamous marriage; nothing is said about a change of heart, or love for His Word or being led by the Holy Spirit into all truth.

This fact that we are dealing with - outward change, not an inward change of heart - is clearly shown by the final paragraph, which states,

"God's written Word is indeed a powerful tool for our use in helping others to make changes in their lives in order to draw close to Jehovah." - p.12.

Please note the order - we make the changes, so that we can draw close to Jehovah. This is putting the proverbial cart before the horse and indeed will get us nowhere. We need a changing relationship with Christ in order for God's living word to work in our lives.

Finally, we are encourage to read the next article, entitled, "Help Others to Accept the Kingdom Message" so that we can be,

"...developing our abilities as convincing teachers."

This article goes on to show that the Watchtower Society teaches

apologetics from their point of view. They talk about the need to use

"logical reasoning, sound argument, and earnest entreaty..." - p.14.

They then use an interesting illustration,

"Be sure that your statement is based squarely on God's Word and not on personal opinion. Also, use corroborative evidence to back up your heartfelt Scriptural statements. (Proverbs 16:23) If you point out that obedient mankind will enjoy life in a paradise earth, for instance, back that statement up with a Scriptural reference, such as Luke 23:43 or Isaiah 65:21-25. How can you corroborate your Scriptural point? You may use examples from your listener's experience. You might remind him of the simple and cost-free pleasures derived from the beauty of a sunset, the sweet smell of a flower, the savory taste of a fruit, or the joy of watching a mother bird feed her young. Help him to see that such pleasures are evidence that the Creator wants us to enjoy life on earth.—Ecclesiastes 3:11, 12."

So here is an example of Watchtower apologetics - could you give a reasoned defence?

They are telling you that if you are part of obedient mankind you will live in paradise on earth and they first of all back this up with the Scripture, Luke 23:43, which in their *New World Translation* will say,

"And he said to him: 'Truly I tell you today, You will be with me in Paradise.'"

So on the day that Jesus died He told the thief that decided to be obedient, you will be with me in paradise. This sounds convincing? To those without any Biblical knowledge it might be, but let's look at it closely. We will not worry about the 'movable comma' for now; we will simply ask is the "Paradise" that Jesus referred to here the "paradise earth" that the Witness says we are going to?

For anyone that knows anything about Watchtower Theology, we can see immediately that this presentation will not prove the point; in fact it will do just the opposite. Simply, Jesus will not be in paradise earth and so when He says, "you will be **with Me**" it is obvious that this cannot refer to the earth paradise! This is not part of

Scripture that convinces us we will have life on earth. Indeed it really shows that all those who are obedient and serve Christ will be **with Him**.

Next they use Isaiah 65:21-25,

"And they will certainly build houses and have occupancy; and they will certainly plant vineyards and eat [their] fruitage. They will not build and someone else have occupancy; they will not plant and someone else do the eating. For like the days of a tree will the days of my people be; and the work of their own hands my chosen ones will use to the full. They will not toil for nothing, nor will they bring to birth for disturbance; because they are the offspring made up of the blessed ones of Jehovah, and their descendants with them. And it will actually occur that before they call out I myself shall answer; while they are yet speaking, I myself shall hear. 'The wolf and the lamb themselves will feed as one, and the lion will eat straw just like the bull; and as for the serpent, his food will be dust. They will do no harm nor cause any ruin in all my holy mountain,' Jehovah has said." - NWT.

The Scripture starts 'and they'. Is this 'they' obedient mankind? And, more to the point, where is this 'they'? Interestingly, the setting of these verses is found in verse 17,

"For here I am creating new heavens and a new earth; and the former things will not be called to mind, neither will they come up into the heart."

The context is not about just earth, but God's whole new creation. When we look at the verses in Revelation 21 which are talking about the same event as Isaiah, we see that heaven and earth are rolled into one. There is no separation between heaven and earth; sin that divided God's realm from man's realm is dealt with and God is dwelling with all His people.

Once again, we do not find that this refers to a group of men and women living on earth, separate from a few others living with God in heaven. It shows us indeed that God has a glorious future for all His people.

We discover that the apologetics that the Watchtower teaches is not based upon God's Word but upon the 'personal teachings' of those who run the Society. ☐



TRUTH RESTORED - 42



BY MIKE & ANN THOMAS

JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY

December 5 2004 marked the 200th anniversary of the birth of Joseph Smith. This year we are promised many events, publications, and eulogies to mark this historic event in Mormon history. The January 2005 *Ensign* magazine kicks off with some excellent art work focused on the events in the Sacred Grove and a helpful timeline over four pages showing "Doctrine and Covenant Times at a Glance".

Note I spelled "Sacred Grove" with capitals. That is how Mormons spell it. They also spell "Restoration" with a capital. Joseph Smith is routinely referred to as "the Prophet Joseph Smith", or "the Prophet Joseph" or "Joseph the Prophet". Subsequent prophets are referred to as president so-and-so but Joseph Smith is distinguished by this graphic halo of capitals and full title. So do all the major events in the founding of the Mormon Church, e.g. The First Vision; the Restoration; the Prophet Joseph; the Three Witnesses; the Eight Witnesses, etc. This church, that has scoffed at traditional Christian churches for their stained-glass windows, saints with halos, pilgrimages, holy places and associations, has put a halo around itself, its history and traditions, its historic locations and its founding prophet, such that there can be no mistaking the focus of the Mormon faith.

The timeline previously mentioned starts in the first century and contains just enough data in its first 1800 years to create the illusion in the minds of those not paying sufficient attention of continuity between the New Testament Church and the Restored Church of Mormonism. There are 101 entries in all, but the items included in the first 1800 years of the timeline are surprisingly sparse and disturbingly bereft of any emphasis on the most important event in the period where they begin this chronology, indeed, in history. It begins with the seemingly incidental death of Jesus and quickly moves on to "The Great Apostasy" (note the capitals again? This supposed event is a key one in Mormon history, giving credence to the claims of Restoration, and so it merits a graphic halo). The timeline begins:

"34A.D. After the death of Jesus Christ, the Apostles led the New Testament Church."

There follow eight notable events covering 1800 years of history. That is one event for every 225 years. There is a ninth event but, since it is taken from the *Book of Mormon* and even some Mormons are now questioning whether this is an historical document, we won't count it. Which eight events might you

include if you were putting together such a timeline? Of course you would probably want to put in many more since so much of Christian/historical significance has happened in that time, but you are restricted to eight. Oh, and these events must be spread over two continents – Europe and the Middle East, and America. These are their choices.

EUROPE & THE MIDDLE EAST

100-200 The Great Apostasy. Priesthood authority was taken from the earth.

1450 - Gutenberg refined moveable type, allowing books to be widely available.

1500-1600 – New Translations of the Bible in English and other languages became available.

1517 – Martin Luther and other reformers in Europe began to rebel against Catholicism.

AMERICA

1492 – The Spirit of God led Columbus to America.

1620-1750 God led many European Protestants to North America in search of religious freedom.

1775-83 The Declaration of Independence and the American Revolution established a new nation and democracy.

1787-91 The Constitution of the United States established religious liberty as a fundamental right.

Now, if you know your church history, your mind is probably spinning with all the significant dates, events and people missed out in this chronology. But in this timeline, after 200AD there are only three European events of any note mentioned. The first is in 1450, so that wipes out over 1000 years of history at a stroke. Of the next six events, four are pointedly related to America. Perhaps you are getting the picture now. To be fair, the subject is not Christian history but Mormon history. But that is the point.

HISTORY – WHERE DO YOU START?

It has been observed that church history, for many Christians, is something of a mystery. For many it is something that begins with the reformation, or even with the establishment of their own denomination, or their own particular church. That is exactly where Mormon history begins but, unlike the average Christian, this is not a position taken from ignorance of history, although there is ample evidence in Mormonism for such ignorance, so much as from the conviction that,

"This work began with the most remarkable manifestation when the Father and the Son appeared to the boy Joseph Smith on a Spring morning in the year 1820. All of the good we see in the Church today is the fruit of that remarkable visitation, a testimony of which has touched the hearts of millions in many lands." (*Ensign*, Jan.2005, p.2)

What do you think comes next in the timeline after the writing of the Constitution, 1787-91?

"Dec.1805 Joseph Smith Jr. is born."

After this there is a flurry of activity, so much they cannot fit it into one edition of the magazine, and we must await the next instalment. There are ninety significant Mormon events, covering just 26 years, over three pages – and we are only up to Sept.1831! Nothing is so insignificant as to be left out. Joseph's marriage to Emma Hale is in there (I am sure it was a special day for them, of course). In January 1831 "Many Saints were poor and desired to know more about the move to Ohio". In September 1831 "After the Prophet Joseph was criticised by some associates and the press, the Lord warned against faultfinding." It seems that no detail, no matter how small, is overlooked in the search for the authentic experience of Joseph the Prophet. In the December 2004 *Ensign* a piece appeared entitled *I Knew Joseph* and is a panegyric from beginning to end. A second article, *Let Us Ask God*, holds up the Prophet Joseph as an example of how we might rightly seek wisdom from God.

In the January 2005 *Ensign*, under the heading, *Fruits of the First Vision*, president Gordon B Hinckley evaluates and summarises the achievements of the Prophet Joseph Smith and quotes part of a poem by Parley P Pratt:

He [Smith] has organised the kingdom of God – We will extend its dominion.

He has restored the fullness of the Gospel – We will spread it abroad...

He has kindled up the dawn of the day of glory – We will bring it to its meridian splendour.

He was a "little one" and became a thousand. We are a small one, and will become a strong nation.

In short, he has quarried the stone...; and we will cause it to become a great mountain and fill the whole earth. - "Proclamation" *Millennial*

SEMINAL – PERTAINING TO, OR OF THE NATURE OF, THE GERMINATING PRINCIPLE

The Mormon Church claims to be Restored Christianity and a growing number of people are beginning to think of Mormonism as a legitimate Christian denomination. And yet the seminal events, the germinating principles of the Mormon Church, are rooted firmly on the American continent and in the life of Joseph Smith and not, as one might expect, in the Middle East and the first century accounts of Jesus Christ. It might be argued that the article and timeline under question is specifically about events on that continent and surrounding Joseph and, therefore, other events at other times would necessarily take their positions in the background. But what are the seminal events of Christianity and where is the Christian faith, of which they claim to be a restoration, rooted? What does a Christian think about when he thinks about his faith and what does a Mormon think about when he thinks about his?

A seminal and most beloved Bible text for Christians is John 3:16

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whosoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."

It encapsulates the Christian message that man is a fallen creature, hopelessly lost in sin, and in need of a Saviour, and that God provides a Saviour in His Son, Jesus Christ, through Whom all who believe will be saved into the Kingdom of God. It brings repentant sinners to Jesus.

The seminal Bible text for Mormons, the Mormon equivalent of John 3:16, is James 1:5:

"If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given him."

Why would this be *the* key biblical text for Mormonism's "Restored" Christianity and not the tremendous truth of John 3:16? Because it is the text that, allegedly, sent Joseph Smith into the Sacred Grove and from there to start the Mormon Church. It brings them back to Joseph.

The seminal message of the Bible is that God the Son was born into this world, lived and worked amongst ordinary people, identified with their fallen state, went to the Cross to pay the price for sin, was raised the third day, breaking the bands of death, and was taken into heaven. The whole thrust of the New Testament is that witnesses saw these events and faithfully related them to others who passed them on until we have those same accounts today. The focus of that message is

Jesus.

These things can be known and are attested to by many infallible signs:

"This Salvation was confirmed to us by those who heard him. God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will." (Heb.2:3b-4)

These witnesses left ample testimony as to the reality of their message:

"That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched – this we proclaim concerning the Word of Life. The Life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life which was with the Father and has appeared to us. We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you may have fellowship with us." (1 John 1:1-4)

The seminal message of Mormonism is that God and Jesus appeared to Joseph Smith in a Sacred Grove and, through a series of visions, dreams and revelations, restored (replaced?) almost every aspect of the message attested to by prophets, signs, wonders and various miracles and by the Holy Spirit. The focus of Mormonism's message is Joseph. And to replace the message of those who proclaimed what they have seen and heard concerning the Word of Life as inadequate, Joseph wrote:

"And now, after the many testimonies which have been given of him, this is the testimony, last of all, which we give of him: that he lives! For we saw him, even on the right hand of God..." (D&C 76:22-23)

In light of "the many testimonies that have been given of him", what was the purpose of this testimony? It brings them back to Joseph. Another self-proclaimed prophet springs to mind and the words "seal of the prophets". It is a parallel that has not escaped the attention of some.

The Good News for Christians is dramatically illustrated in Mark 15:37-38:

"With a loud cry, Jesus breathed his last. The curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom."

The consequence of that event is described clearly in Hebrews 4:14-16:

"Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathise with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just

as we are – yet was without sin. Let us approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of trouble."

And how will a Christian gain such access and with assurance approach the throne of Grace?

"In him [Christ] and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence." (Ephesians 3:12)

The "good news" of Mormonism is that temples are being built around the world at an increasing rate. In these temples the curtain is re-hung, and the barrier that was torn asunder to create a way, the Way (John 14:6), re-erected. Where Jesus opened a way, through which we may confidently gain access to the throne of God, another way has been devised.

"If you would become a son or a daughter of God and an heir of the kingdom, then you must go to the house of the Lord [temple] and receive blessings which there can be obtained and which cannot be obtained elsewhere; and you must keep those commandments and those covenants to the end." (Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, V.2, p.40)

And how will a Mormon know when he/she has been faithful enough and gained access to such blessings as are promised by this "way"?

"No man or woman in this dispensation will ever enter into the celestial kingdom of God without the consent of Joseph Smith...every man and woman must have the certificate of Joseph Smith junior as a passport to their entrance into the mansions where God and Christ are..." (Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, vol.7 p.289)

It all comes back to Joseph Smith, who declared of himself,

"I have more to boast of than ever any man had. I am the only man that has ever been able to keep a whole church together since the days of Adam. A large majority of the whole have stood by me. Neither Paul, John, Peter, nor Jesus ever did it. I boast that no man ever did such a work as I. The followers of Jesus ran away from Him; but the Latter-day saints never ran away from me yet." (Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, vol.6, p.409)

As we encounter Mormons wishing to share with us this anniversary of Joseph's birth and encourage us to "follow the prophet", we must be prepared to share with them the reality of Christ's finished work and continuing presence with the true saints of God and encourage them to know His true

Enough is Enough - Part One

It seems to me that whatever field you work in, extreme views, at either end of a spectrum, will cause problems and possible division. It is not always that the basis of the view held is wrong, but the fervour in which the belief is held, and, more importantly, the way those who do not hold the belief are treated, is the heart of the problem.

In the area of charismatic gifts, there seems to be no end of scope. I remember growing up in such an atmosphere where I believed, as a young Christian, that the Baptism of the Holy Spirit was not of God. I can remember arguing vehemently with anyone who would think otherwise. It took a work of God to change my heart and, having experienced that, I can now understand where others are coming from, when they oppose me in my belief.

It is obvious from this testimony where I stand with regard to the basic theme of charismatic gifts, but that is not the issue under consideration here. Whereas the central 'battle' as to whether or not gifts exist still goes on today and, indeed some would still claim that you are not really saved unless you have experienced the Baptism of the Spirit; the battle lines are often drawn in quite a different place, with the debate over what gifts are being used and how they are expressed.

I want to look at a number of issues that can easily go to excess and seek to see what Scripture has to say. With some of the items we will look at, there is a 'real' way for them to be expressed but, when we get into excess, we begin to move away from God's gifts and into man's manipulations.

God's Emphasis?

Reading Scripture, you cannot help but wonder if today's Christians, in general, have their emphasis in a different place from the Lord. The modern church seems to major on the gifts, and the minor gifts at that, while the Bible seems to major on the fruit. This can be il-

lustrated by the contrast between the modern church's emphasis on the spectacular at the beginning of Acts 2 and the Bible's emphasis on the conduct of the church at the end of Acts 2.

Yes, the church was brought into being via a supernatural experience and the gifts were manifested in many incidents but the balance of this was the instruction in Acts 2:

They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. - Acts 2:42

We are not to ignore the miraculous gifts but if they are not in balance with the study of God's Word we can easily be led astray. How do we test prophecy? By bringing it in line with God's Word. If we do not know the Word of God, we cannot test prophetic utterances.

We see that even Paul, who probably knew more about miraculous gifts than any other, wanted to keep this balance. The early verses of 1 Corinthians 14 show this and especially verse 19,

However, in the church I desire to speak five words with my mind so that I may instruct others also, rather than ten thousand words in a tongue.

We should also note that the Bereans were commended, not for their zeal in experiencing the gifts, but in examining the Scriptures.

The brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea, and when they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews. Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so. - Acts 17:10-11

With this foundation in mind, let us look at several areas where we can easily fall into excess and what Scripture has to say to help us on these issues.

Gifts from God?

Please understand that we are not arguing to do away with gifts, nor are we looking at whether the gifts are for today. As I have already said, I do believe there are, and there is a right way of expressing them under God's authority and enabling. What concerns me, though, is that we have the gifts in the right perspective; there are so many 'fads' that blossom for a short while, with the claim that this is God's latest gift, and then the band wagon starts rolling for everyone to get on board. Some that cannot 'get on' feel they are missing out, and others feel persecuted because they do not want to get on.

I believe that the Bible shows that the true gifts of the Holy Spirit will bring glory to God and no one else. Indeed attention will be diverted away from man and onto God. That, clearly, is the ministry of the Holy Spirit as we read in John 16:13-14.

But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose it to you.

1 Corinthians 13 talks of the gifts passing away, when that which is perfect comes. To me 'that which is perfect' is not the Scriptures, as some would claim, but what the Scriptures point forward to - God's Kingdom being set up in power. Those that claim it is the Scriptures, of course, believe that the gifts have passed away but, if you accept it is God's Kingdom, we see how necessary gifts are for today. When God is ruling and sin is dealt with, we will see God face to face and commune with Him just as Adam did in the Garden of Eden; until then the gifts are necessary. Gifts which reveal Him and His will; gifts that bring the reality of the kingdom of God to earth now.

Anything, therefore, that is

claimed as a gift of the Holy Spirit must:

1. Centre our attention on the Father and the Son
2. Bring Glory to God and not to man.
3. Reveal Heaven and what heaven is doing.

Did the "holy laughter" served up by God's bartender do that? Did the miraculous "Gold Fillings" do that? Or how about collecting "Angel Feathers"? I would suggest, when you look back and view these events, that in the most part have disappeared from Christian life today, they brought no lasting Glory to God and I seriously question if they revealed what heaven was doing.

Former Mormon Mike Thomas compared the 'holy laughter' to some of the things he had experienced in the Mormon Church; he made some interesting observations:

"Discouraging people from thinking about the phenomena that accompany their ministry, Christian leaders like Rodney Howard-Brown have declared the analytical mind redundant in the task of understanding the things of God. Only the heart can guide you they claim. Delighted by this and following their lead local pastors now point to laughter, shaking, crowing, barking and even vomiting as a sure sign of God's manifesting himself to his church. Even the preaching of hell draws laughter from the crowds as both for God and man it seems no humiliation is too great. At least my burning in the bosom left me with some dignity.

Of course it is to be expected that the wheat and the tares will grow together. You cannot be involved in ministry to those in error and remain naively ignorant of the constant threat to truth from inside the church. It is frustrating and dispiriting, however, when the very people who carefully taught me sound judgement throw out the rules so faithfully passed on, exchanging the knowledge of God for mere experience; scripture for anecdote; Paul at Berea for Gamaliel in the darkened councils of the Sanhedrin, and the God who says "Come let us reason together" for a god who says "don't think, don't pray, don't question simply receive". Their "don't question, don't touch the Lord's anointed" reminds me of a Mormon teaching; When our leaders speak, the thinking has been done. When they propose a

plan - it is God's plan. When they point the way, there is no other which is safe. When they give direction, it should mark the end of controversy. My wife and I devote our lives to encouraging Mormons to relinquish such abusive counsel and think for themselves only to find that when they join the Christian Church they are getting the same manipulative message."

I would suggest that this shows, from two perspectives, that such phenomena are not recorded in Scripture, and do not follow Scriptural grounds, are at the very best man-made excesses.

As for angel feathers - where does the Bible say that angels have feathers?

Gold fillings and gold dust stories also abound but little if any conclusive evidence is provided, and the glory either goes to the preacher or to the person receiving the 'blessing' but little if any Glory goes to God.

False Prophets

The word "prophet" is found over 400 times in the Bible. The Hebrew word literally means, 'an inspired man' and the Greek word 'a for teller'. Deuteronomy 18:18 shows us that the Lord gives the words!

"I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you, and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him."

This is talking specifically about the Lord Jesus, but the principle for us is the same. The words of a true prophet must come to pass because they are put there by the Lord and His word does not fail.

The next verse also makes it clear that the person hearing the words has a responsibility to listen and obey them.

"It shall come about that whoever will not listen to My words which he shall speak in My name, I Myself will require it of him."

In the New Testament this again is underlined by the exhortation to test and hold fast that which is good.

"Do not despise prophetic utterances. But examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good." - 1 Thessalonians 5:20-21

However, if we are to hold fast

the good, we must have rejected the bad!

Back in Deuteronomy, most of us are aware of the next verse showing that false prophets were to be stoned. I would not advocate this today, but let's note exactly what it says.

There are two types of prophecy that are condemned - the presumptuous prophecy which has a sense of the deliberate about it; being proud to give it. This would come out of the spirit of man that was not given to God.

Then there is the one that speaks in the name of other gods - this is a demonic utterance.

When either of these two is present, I do not think we should stone the prophet but they must be challenged publicly because they have given the word publicly. And we need to show why we believe that the prophecy has been given in either of these ways.

"But the prophet who speaks a word presumptuously in My name which I have not commanded him to speak, or which he speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die."

These verses go on to say (vv21 & 22), what I believe is more relevant for today:

"You may say in your heart, 'How will we know the word which the LORD has not spoken?' When a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the thing does not come about or come true, that is the thing which the LORD has not spoken. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him."

If the prophecy does not come true within the timescale given - it is NOT from the Lord. We are not to accept the man or woman as a prophet, and are not to be afraid of them. The word 'afraid' comes from a Hebrew root word meaning to turn aside (to lodge somewhere, etc.). In other words, the root meaning is that we should not turn aside and dwell with the person - very interesting!

In the modern-day church scene I feel we can put 'prophetic utterances' on 3 levels:

1. Prophetic utterances which are more words of encouragement than real prophecy - nothing untrue about them but nothing of real 'prophetic' substance either. They can

indeed be uplifting but do not seem to come in to the 'thus saith the Lord' category.

2. Prophetic utterances which are statements that are prophetic and true. They do not have to end, 'thus saith the Lord' - indeed it is better if they don't - but you know it is from God. There may be a time factor to be worked out but eventually what was said happens.
3. 'Thus saith the Lord' prophetic utterances that have passed their expiry date and have not happened. These are false prophecies and the person who gave them is a false prophet!

Such men and women need to be brought face to face with these statements that are recorded on tapes and videos and be challenged that they are false prophets. We need to see repentance on their part and we need to be aware that their words cannot be trusted.

Many of those branded as 'men and women of God' are false prophets and yet they continue as though nothing happened. Remember, if they lived in the Old Testament, their ministry may have been brought to an abrupt end.

Examples

We quote two examples of Benny Hinn to show what we are talking about.

"The Spirit tells me - Fidel Castro will die - in the 90's. Oooh my! Some will try to kill him and they will not succeed. But there will come a change in his physical health, and he will not stay in power, and Cuba will be visited of God." - Orlando Christian Centre, 31 December 1989.

"The Lord also tells me to tell you in the mid 90's, about '94-'95, no later than that, God will destroy the homosexual community of America. But He will not destroy it - with what many minds have thought Him to be, He will destroy it with fire. And many will turn and be saved, and many will rebel and be destroyed." - Orlando

Christian Centre, 31 December 1989.

Neither happened and both are out of time.

There are many other examples and here are just a couple of other websites that you can check up to see what we are talking about.

www.letusreason.org/Wf19.htm - Kenneth Copeland

<http://www.apologeticsindex.org/j08.html> - Rick Joyner

If men and woman are going to prophesy publicly and make it part of the attesting that their ministry is anointed of God, then they must also face the consequences of that. We are not trying to say we are better than they and anyone that says, "I think this might happen...." is not a false prophet. However, in this realm, I think we are seeing excess today and a belittling of the gift of prophecy that comes from the Holy Spirit.

We will continue with more examples of areas of concern in the second part of this article. ☐

APOLOGETICS -21

I started a conversation on the bus the other day and just before I got off the person handed me a copy of the newssheet from her local Catholic church. I put it in my pocket and forgot all about it.

Finding it later, I read an article entitled '*Assumptions*', which raised some interesting issues that I felt I needed to be able to make a reasoned defence. The article had relevance because it was written in August at the time of the 'Feast of Assumption' which celebrates the receiving of Mary back in to heaven.

The subject is introduced with these words:

"Those who rejected the authority of the Petrine See found in Holy Writ the sufficient authority on which to base true doctrine. But Holy Writ, clothing super natural truths in natural language, was found to be capable of diverse interpretation."

The argument begins to develop that we need more than just Scripture. And, of course, if we are going to believe in a miraculous death of Mary to follow on from her sinless birth, then we are going to need more than Scripture. This argument

develops until it reaches the following statement:

"Contradicting a fact of history, it was claimed that the Church was derived from the Book not the Book from the Church."

I have never seen it put like that before, but what the writer goes on to explain is that as the Church was teaching certain truth before the Bible, as we know it, came onto the scene, the Bible becomes the encapsulating of what the Church was teaching and so it produced the Book.

However, what does the writer think the Bible is - just the New Testament? What we know as the Old Testament had been around long before the Church arrived, and these were the Scriptures that Jesus said contained things concerning Him (Luke 24:27). These were the Scriptures that Jesus said bore witness to Him (John 5:39). And these were Scriptures that were God-Breathed (2 Peter 1:21).

When Scripture gives such a definition to the Old Testament, surely, it is blasphemy to say that the Book is derived from the teach-

ings of the Church - and, of course, by that the writer means the Roman Catholic Church. The Scriptures were around long before the Apostles were called by Jesus and the supposed first Pope was inaugurated. The true Church derives from the Scriptures, and is built upon the foundation of those that taught the Scriptures, and revealed the real Jesus (Ephesians 4:11ff and 1 Corinthians 3:11).

To give increased credence to a doctrine that nowhere is found in Scripture, we now read:

"Nor did the authentic Bible, when it arrived, claim that it contained all the truth there was or could be. As St. John's Gospel expresses it, somewhat journalistically, 'There were many other things that Jesus did, if all were written down, the world itself, I suppose, could not hold all the books that would have to be written'. (Jo.21v.25)"

I wonder if the writer actually bothered to read these verses - did you notice what it says? There were many other things that Jesus *did!* It does not say that Jesus *taught* other things, especially, words that would contradicted what He had already

said, or that would dilute the meaning of anything else recorded. Indeed, what the Holy Spirit inspired Paul to write to Timothy was that, **all Scripture**, not added traditions, equip a man of God (2 Timothy 3:16).

Having made this point, which as we can see denies the very Book, which we are told, derived from the Church, the way is made open to add the doctrine of the Assumption of Mary.

However, before we look at that we need to note something that the writer says in the final paragraph that Mary had,

"Already conceived without sin as possessing the fullness of grace"

The problem with this doctrine, of course, is it puts her on a par with Jesus, but the Bible shows something very different.

John 1:1 shows that Jesus is eternal and so pre-existed and had a life that could be transferred into the womb. Mary was not eternal, she was created and, as Scripture shows, would be subject to sin along with **all** other created beings (Romans 3:23).

The Bible also shows that Jesus is the **only** One who **knew no sin**. (2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 2:22 and 1 John 3:5). Indeed Jesus is the only person, without sin, ever born on this earth was and as such the Bible shows Him to be the unique "only-begotten".

Mary herself says in Luke 1:47 that God is **my** Saviour. The only way you can even begin to conceive the idea that Mary was born sinless is to ignore most of the Scriptures concerning man's fall and redemption.

This is the teaching of Scripture - very different from the tradition re-

ferred to in this article.

Of course, the argument is that the proof of an immaculate conception is in the fact that Mary did not die and so we come full circle to the Assumption. And that is the case; it is a circular argument - either the Immaculate Conception **and** the Assumption are both right, or both are wrong - if one falls, they both fall. We have already seen that there is no Biblical proof concerning Mary being born sinless, and so that particular belief has already fallen, when weighed by Scripture, but what about the Assumption?

This central theme is explained like this:

"... (Mary had) like everybody else died and was buried, and that was almost that. Although Church interest concentrated on the nature of Christ until the Council of Nicaea and long afterwards, some attention turned to the Mother of God, which defined her as such in the Council of Ephesus in 431 A.D. Soon after this, Pope Sixtus III built a great basilica in her honour in Rome, Santa Maria Maggiore. By the middle of the 5th century, the emperor Marcion and his wife Pulcheria decided to go one better, as imperials tend to do. He would build a basilica with the body of Mary herself as its centrepiece. He sent to Jerusalem to have the body handed over. Bishop Juvenal had to admit with some embarrassment that although there was something called the tomb of our Lady in the city, it was empty, and no one could remember when it had been otherwise. Manuscripts from the later 4th century, Greek, Latin, Syriac, Coptic, Arabic and Ethiopic referred to Mary's death, or rather dormition - sleeping -implying that she might have woken up. Soon the Christian world woke up to the fact that absence of any corporal remains confirmed an oral tradition that, like her Son, she had risen from the dead. The As-

sumption is the word used to describe her resurrection and glorification in time."

This seems to imply that since the 5th century, when this event was supposed to have taken place, the Catholic Church has believed and taught the Assumption of Mary. This is not the case.

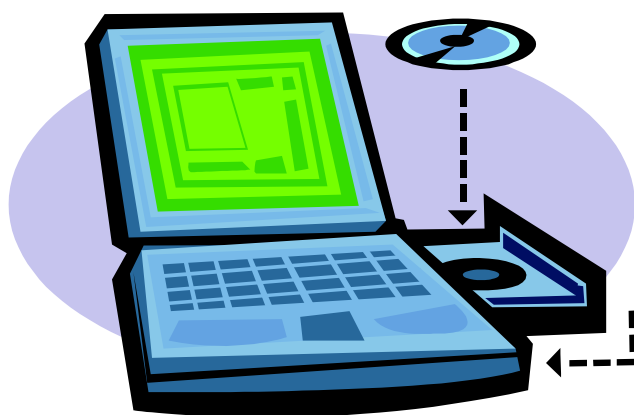
In 1946, a letter was sent out to ask the people what they thought about the Assumption. Receiving an overwhelming response in favour, it was November 1, 1950 when Pope Pius XII proclaimed it a divinely revealed dogma. It was not anything in Scripture or, indeed, in tradition that led to this doctrine; it was not even the historic event - it was the vote of the people!

When you examine this evidence, the final sentence of the article seems rather out of place:

"The doctrine of her Assumption, then, is not something tacked on to the Christian tradition as an afterthought, but a truth arising inevitably from everything else we learn about her in the New Testament and about her Son."

That is just not true, it was an afterthought tacked on in 1950. What I find interesting about this article is that it only says that this truth arises from what is written in the New Testament, but no evidence is produced.

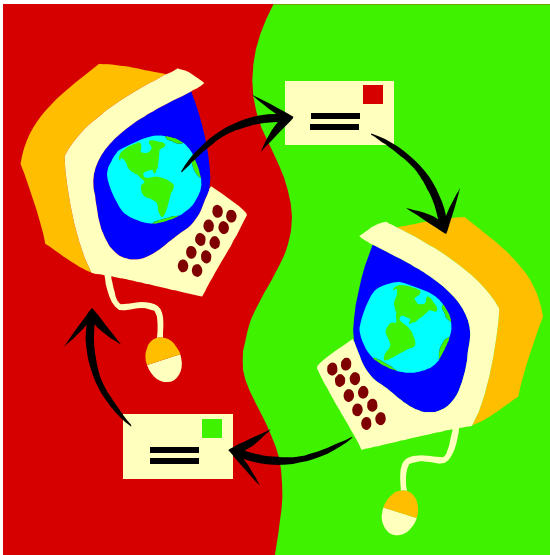
The New Testament does show that Mary was full of favour and chosen by God to bring the Son into the world, but she was not on a par with Jesus. She lived, she died and she indeed will have a resurrection but only as a glorified human being as the rest of us. That is what God reveals in His Word and even the will of 8 million people cannot override what He says. ☐



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email the index only to you for a contribution of £1.

Karate

I recently received an email asking me about 'Christian Karate', as a church in England was thinking of starting such a group. This might be unusual for Britain but in America such groups abound; a point proven by typing 'Christian Karate' into the Google search engine on the Internet.

David Kostinchuk refers to this in an article on the web - <http://www.pastornet.net.au/response/articles/116.htm>,

"Judging from advertising on the Internet, in recent years there has been a phenomenal expansion in the number of people practicing Christian Karate. This has even extended to the formation of large Christian organizations such as the "Gospel Martial Arts Union," "U.S. Christian Martial Arts Association" and "Karate For Christ." There are Christians who avow that traditional karate is demonic or, they believe that Christians might be influenced by other religions during their karate training. Other Christians see nothing wrong with practicing traditional karate."

My mind went into overdrive at the phrase, 'Christian Karate', did you kick your opponent in love? Maybe you chopped through heretical books instead of the telephone directory? Or maybe it was a new

cartoon from some enterprising American television station?

No, none of those things; it was Karate taught by Christians and for Christians. Immediately two major questions came to mind,

1. Can we 'Christianise' the power of Karate and allow the Holy Spirit to direct us?
2. Even if the answer to the first question was yes, are we giving credence to something that is definitely not originally from God?

This article shows what I discovered and my conclusions.

First, I needed some clear definitions of what Karate was and what it aimed to achieve in a life. Was there a power at work in the first place? First the website of Shotokan Karate of America (www.ska.org) said this,

"Karate can also be described as a martial art, or fighting method, involving a variety of techniques, including blocks, strikes, evasions, throws, and joint manipulations. Karate practice is divided into three aspects: kihon (basics), kata (forms), and kumite (sparring).

"The word *karate* is a combination of two Japanese characters: *kara*, meaning empty, and *te*, meaning hand;

thus, karate means "empty hand." Adding the suffix "-do" (pronounced "doe"), meaning "way," i.e., karate-do, implies karate as a total way of life that goes well beyond the self-defense applications. In traditional karate-do, we always keep in mind that the true opponent is oneself.

"Shotokan founder Gichin Funakoshi has said that "mind and technique become one in true karate." We strive to make our physical techniques pure expressions of our mind's intention, and to improve our mind's focus by understanding the essence of the physical techniques. By polishing our karate practice we are polishing our own spirit or our own mentality...

"One of the unique features of karate training in SKA is what we call Special Training - a series of intensive practices during which we try our best to 'face ourselves' and polish our mentality or spirit."

Similarly, we read on another web site:

"After what's been said, it is clear that Karate-do and Karate Budo are much, much more than mere self-defense techniques, actually, such a definition is a far shot from the real essence of Karate as a philosophy, which strives to develop the inner qualities of a human being and the search of perfection of your charac-

ter..." - <http://www.shotokai.com/ingles/index.html>.

We can see from this definition that Karate goes beyond just the physical and delves in to the 'spirit' or deeper part of man; doesn't this produce conflict for the Christian?

ORIGINAL

The very fact that it is called 'Christian Karate' shows that there is that which is not Christian in the original definition. How, then, does such a group answer these problems? We read on the Christian Karate Association website something that many other groups agree with:

"We believe that Christians can study the martial arts and do so in holiness as unto the Lord. We, however, recognize the strong occult powers entrenched in Asian practice and academics. We also understand that the martial arts predate the oriental martial arts and our goal is to reclaim the martial arts for Christ."

In other words, there is an agreement that the source and power of Martial Arts, as used originally, is not of Christ. However, they would claim that martial arts predate oriental martial arts; no information is given as to the source of this statement. Did God instruct the Israelites in the powers? Did Jeremiah use martial arts as a self-defence mechanism against those who attacked him? Then, how about Paul or Peter or any other of the early disciples?

Nowhere do we read of Martial Arts coming from the Spirit of Christ and so, how can we reclaim something for Him which was never His in the first place? It is hard to see from the brief history below how it can be said that originally there was no eastern influence in Martial Arts.

HISTORY

Most would say that actually the history of Karate began some 1400 years ago, although as we have seen some want to claim it is older. At this time, Daruma, founder of Zen Buddhism, a system of meditation, introduced Buddhism into China, incorporating spiritual and physical teaching methods. The physical training was heavily influenced by Daruma's philosophical principles. The development was influenced by two separate movements, one from northern China

and the other from southern China. This is said to explain, the 'double character' of Karate; on the one hand extremely violent and efficient, but at the same time a strict and austere discipline and philosophy with a non-violent emphasis.

Master Gichin Funakoshi introduced karate to mainland Japan in 1916, and in 1955 Tsutomu Ohshima came to the United States and was the first person to teach karate in the US.

OBSERVATIONS

First, we need to make clear that not every teacher of Karate is seeking to draw on 'demonic spirits'; many would say indeed that there is no spiritual input in the way that they teach. However, is this possible? If you are using the basics of Karate, can they be totally divorced from the original powers?

I always ask the question, "who holds the copyright?" I have published a number of books; if they wanted to, an individual could reprint the books and sell them for a profit. However, I would be entitled by law to claim every penny of profit they made as the copyright is mine. In the many times I have considered this issue, I have never been able to find the Bible teaches that we can 'Christianise' something that has come from a different spiritual realm.

The Bible always talks about death, burial and then new life, our old way of life being crucified (see Romans 6:1-11). It does not talk about cleaning-up a life but finding a totally new life with a new source, (see 2 Corinthians 5:17). The Bible does not say that at Calvary Jesus claimed back the things of the Devil; it rather says that He destroyed his works (1 John 3:8). This is a very different picture from teaching that we can Christianise something. When the children of Israel entered the promised land they were not told to Christianise the ways of the people of the land before them; rather they were told to have nothing to do with them (Deuteronomy 18:9).

David Kostinchuk, who I mentioned earlier, defends 'Christian Karate' in his article but he makes a very important point,

"People considering enrolling, or enrolling their children should read

up on karate and other martial arts before they enroll themselves or their children. They should question if the instructor mixes religion with karate. You must think of your children's future welfare. The instructor could have a hidden agenda. Besides the cost of lessons the child could suffer psychological damage. Proliferation Methods Sports can be a very useful tool by evangelist zealots to proselytize members from different Christian groups or even non-Christian religions such as Islam and Hinduism."

However, having 'read up' on Karate and seen that there is a different spirit at work, how can I join even if it has the adjective, 'Christian', before it? But more than this, we need to consider something very important here.

Just supposing the type of Karate you are teaching does not open up someone to a 'demonic spirit'. A person joins and is happy with you but later moves house to a different area. He goes with the feeling that Karate is obviously fine because he learnt it at an evangelical church. He saw Karate advertised regularly on the notice board and in the weekly bulletin; therefore there is nothing wrong with it. He joins another Karate class but this one is very different; it is the traditional type with all the spiritual trappings.

We are told to abstain from every appearance of evil (1 Thessalonians 5:22) but our actions have given approval to something that will open this person up to a different spiritual realm. We are indeed told that all things are lawful but not all things are expedient for us to do (1 Corinthians 6:12). Paul teaches that he knew his place of security in Christ but there were certain things he would not do in case weaker Christians were stumbled (1 Corinthians 8:9). I firmly believe that teaching Martial Arts comes within the bracket of this teaching.

Kostinchuk goes on to explain away acts such as bowing and meditation. Indeed, neither of these things need be a doorway through which Satan can come, but the question that is not answered, is, "Where does the power of Karate come from?"

One website lists 12 ways of increasing power, all of which are to do with body position, etc., but

the thirteenth is, "And the mystical 'ki' energy"

We read further about 'ki':

"Ki is the Japanese word for a concept that has been variously translated as mind, spirit, energy, life force, or intention. Although it is generally associated with Asian cultures (in Chinese it is Ch'i; in Korean it is Qi) almost everyone has experienced what they considered a "sixth sense" or a "gut feeling" at one time or another... Given the broad range of translations of the word, it should be clear that the idea of ki has many other applications as well. The shouts that karate students give are called kiai, meaning a focusing of ki, - <http://groups.northwestern.edu/karate/ki.html>.

Tom Harris, on <http://people.howstuffworks.com/karate6.htm>, says,

"In the long history of martial arts, expert fighters have used their physical skills as a means of building mental and spiritual skills. This is especially true of karate; in fact, for many karatekas, the art is primarily a path towards spiritual fulfillment rather than a means of self-defense..."

"There are many strong connections between this philosophy and karate. In

solitary practice, karatekas must learn to concentrate on their own movements, letting everything else go. This is a powerful form of meditation... Not all karatekas practice Zen Buddhism as such. Karate masters might be Jewish, Christian, Hindu or agnostic – the martial arts discipline fits well with a wide range of religions and beliefs. But to advance through the higher levels of karate, it is essential that a karateka cultivate spiritual power, whatever their religious beliefs. The basic element of this power is *ki*.

"Ki is an amorphous, undefinable force, but it is generally described as the energy of life itself. It binds all living things together and gives each person his or her spiritual, physical and mental power... As karatekas develop heightened physical control, they become more aware of the seat of ki in their body... Ki is absolutely crucial in the higher levels of karate: It gives masters the power they need to break blocks and topple much larger opponents."

CONCLUSIONS

It is possible to find those that say 'ki' is not a problem but many others will show, as above, that 'ki' is a real problem to Christians. Cer-

tainly the 'ki' gives the power to Karate and, without it, all that is being taught is self-defence and it should never be called Karate.

What is this 'ki'? At best, it must be a latent force within man, and at worst a demonic spirit. The one thing it cannot be is the Holy Spirit. The graphic depiction of the 'ki' is the yin/yang symbol, a half black and half white circle, totally in balance, with a small part of the white in the black and a small part of the black in the white. However, there is no darkness within the Lord (James 1:17) and so, by very definition, 'ki' cannot be of God.

'Ki', then, can either be the spirit of man or the spirit of the Devil, but in either case it is not come from God as its source. With this uncertainty, we believe that the only conclusion we can come to is to steer clear of Karate completely.

That is not to say that we believe self-defence necessarily to be wrong, but if we teach something that protects us physically, with a technique that possibly opens us up to a wrong spiritual force, we are making life worse for that person. ☐

PILATES

Pilates (pronounced *puh - la - tes*), a registered trademark, is one of those activities, about which it is hard to come to a clear conclusion. It certainly is a discipline in which the practitioner is as important as the practice. We will seek to set out the facts here, and then draw some conclusions and hope this helps you make up your mind concerning this activity.

Pilates is a method of exercise and physical movement designed to stretch, strengthen and balance the body. It is not only successful as a fitness regime but it has also been used to help in professional sports training and physical rehabilitation of all kinds.

History

Joseph Pilates was born in 1880 and the introduction of what today we call "Pilates", was around 1914. Joseph was a German national living in England at the outbreak of WWI

and, as such, he was placed under forced internment in Lancaster, England. During this internment he shared with his fellow camp members some of the exercises he had taught himself over the previous 20 years. The roots of these exercises came from his study of yoga, Zen meditation and ancient Greek and Roman physical regimens.

During this period he developed the system of original exercises known today as "matwork". A few years later, he was transferred to another camp where he treated a number of internees suffering from wartime diseases and physical injury.

In 1926 he met Clara, a trained nurse, who was to become his wife and companion in the work for many years. She helped him with the medical expertise needed to develop his original system of 34 exercises and continued the work

for 10 years after Joseph died. Joseph Pilates called his original overall programme "Contrology".

Joseph opened the first Pilates studio on 8th Avenue, New York, and continued to develop his technique until he died in 1967, aged 87.

Development

Pilates today is the subject of court cases over the trademark and you will discover that there are a number of different types of Pilates. The web site, <http://www.allaboutpilates.com/which.htm>, lists the following, but it does not seem exhaustive:

"Authentic Pilates™": The Pilates Guild™ is dedicated to the preservation of Pilates in its 'purest form'.

"Contemporary Pilates: 'While Pilates was undoubtedly a man ahead of his time, the science of exercise has evolved throughout subsequent

decades. Contemporary adaptations of Pilates' principles have emerged, leveraging advances in physical therapy, spinal research, biomechanical principles and anatomical understanding to ensure each exercise is performed with optimal safety and results in mind' - quote from *Prime Time for Pilates* by Moira Stott-Merrithew with Catherine Komlodi and Alison Hope.

"Modern Pilates: (book) 'Unlike the traditional method, which focuses on constantly holding in the lower abdomen and on extremely effortful movements, modern Pilates is firmly based on the functional movement possibilities of the body. The exercises in this book are influenced by developments in therapeutic massage, osteopathy, and the Feldenkrais method, Butoh (a Japanese performance art developed in the 1950s), and ante- and postnatal work. With easy-to-understand diagrams, drawings, and photos, it provides exercises for maintaining good posture, fitness, strength, grace, flexibility, and freedom from injury' - quote from the Publishers of *Modern Pilates* by Penelope Latey.

"Yogalates: A fusion of the ancient discipline of yoga with the modern Pilates techniques, the exercises mix both disciplines to develop core strength, help tone muscles, increase flexibility and reduce stress. Yogalates is trademarked by Louise Solomon.

"Expand your Self, move gently and celebrate the many possibilities which the union of Yoga and Pilates will reveal... Awaken your self, enliven your lines and brighten your Yoga/Pilates experience.' - the pilatescenter.com

"Yogilates: (book) *Integrating Yoga and Pilates for Complete Fitness, Strength and Flexibility* by Jonathan Urla.

"The Pilates Method / The Method: a name coined first by The Physical Mind Institute in Santa Fe (they have subsequently moved to New York) to represent the traditional Pilates exercises when the lawsuit was ongoing and the "P" word couldn't be used.

"Pilates with Chi: (book) combining Pilates with the eastern influences of Chi

"PowerHouse Pilates™: provides a

fitness approach to Pilates education, founded by Marci Clark and Christine Romani-Ruby in an effort to make Pilates education easily available for fitness professionals".

Contrology

Greatly influenced by the early Greeks, it appears he emphasised their co-ordination and balance of body and mind. Joseph dealt with the whole being; for instance, what we eat; what our occupation is and whether we get enough exercise in it; the importance of a good night's sleep and many other factors that promote a healthy lifestyle.

In 1934 he described it like this, "It is the conscious control of all muscular movements of the body. It is the correct utilization and application of the leverage principles afforded by the bones comprising the skeletal framework of the body, a complete knowledge of the mechanism of the body, and a full understanding of the principles of equilibrium and gravity as applied to the movements of the body in motion, at rest and in sleep." - *Your Health*, Joseph Pilates.

In 1945 he wrote, "Contrology is complete coordination of body, mind, and spirit. Through Contrology you first purposefully acquire complete control of your own body and then through proper repetition of its exercises you gradually and progressively acquire that natural rhythm and coordination associated with all your subconscious activities." - *Return to Life Through Contrology*

The Body and Mind Web Site (www.bodymind.net) comments on this,

"The very idea of coordinating or balancing body and mind was itself little appreciated in the early 20th Century by most physical fitness gurus. At the end of the 20th Century, the concept of introducing 'spirit' into the exercise equation still stretches the limits of appreciation of many fitness trainers and students."

Joseph Pilates also believed in the power of positive thought. We read in, *Return to Life Through Control-*

ogy,

"One of the major results of Contrology is gaining the mastering of your mind over the complete control of your body."

Whereas there is much common sense within his writings, you do get one or two glimpses that maybe he was looking at something more than just exercise. For instance, again in *Return to Life Through Contrology*, we read,

"So in your very commendable pursuit of all that is implied in the trinity of godlike attributes that only Contrology can offer you, we bid you not good-bye but 'au revoir' firmly linked with the sincere wish that your efforts will result in well-merited success chained to everlasting happiness for you and yours."

Conclusions

This is one of those disciplines where knowing the background of the practitioner is vital. As mentioned above, forms of Pilates are available combined with yoga and ch'I, and these lead us into areas where, we believe, Christians should not go. There will, however, also be those practitioners who are simply teaching you bodily exercises. Know who is teaching you, and what they aim to impart to you via the course.

As we noted in the history section, Joseph Pilates was influenced both by yoga and Zen meditation in the development of Pilates. Whereas these practices, which are not compatible with the fundamental beliefs of Christianity, may not have a doorway through the Pilates exercises, some Christians may want to take this fact into consideration.

In Joseph's teachings, there does appear to be instances of seeking to deal with 'spirit' or the inner man. This again is something that Christians may want to take into consideration before undertaking Pilates. ☐



Many of you will have received a Questionnaire from us in the past 3 months and others will receive it in the future. We have been pleasantly surprised with the number we have received back as this helps us develop the ministry for the future. However, it also shows just how true the saying is, that you cannot

please all the people all of the time.

It will take a while to sort out and digest all the answers, but I thought it would be helpful to report back on the results of the first 100 completed forms.

We are encouraged by the fact

that the vast majority of our readers (93%) find our publications very or extremely helpful. Another 6% find them okay. This means only 1% find them not helpful.

As far as those who had contacted us and wanted some type of service, 82% found the service very or extremely helpful and another 5% said it was okay. As 12% had not had occasion to call on our service, once again only 1% found the service not helpful.

However, it is in the comments and suggestions that we can really learn where to improve our service and below we will give you a flavour of the suggestions and what we are looking to do. However, if you have not filled in a questionnaire yet, please do not be influenced by this as we still want to hear more suggestions so we can continue to improve the service we offer the church.

General

The following was a very interesting reply, which sums up a number of similar suggestions:

I wonder whether Reachout Trust has thought about material that might stimulate an interest among Christians who wrongly perceive the work of the Trust to be irrelevant, boring, heavily academic, or intellectually too demanding!

Providing informative literature and capturing the interest of the 'silent majority' is a difficult task but not impossible. Some of the tracts, for example, have been picked up by members of my church – and visitors to events – because they are easily digestible. (A good example being the Leaflet, 'Do all roads lead to God?')

Perhaps one of our tasks at local level is to make known the resources that already exist in a way that stimulates interest in the work of the trust.

Perhaps what I am trying to say is that your material will always be of interest to people like myself, but different audiences need a different approach in editorial, style, format and depth of information.

I realise that it is honouring to the Lord to be as business-like and professional in your organisation and administration as you can possibly be, but in being business-like I hope you will not become too frustrated and curt with the 'bumbling amateurs' among us who need as much support/guidance/encouragement as we can get!!

We certainly never want to get to the stage where we do not cater for all tastes. In view of this and other comments, we will take a serious look at the materials we produce. There is no question, too, that our financial restraints will also cause there to be 'hard choices' made as to what gets published and what does not.

Other comments of a general nature will probably mean that at least we will be looking at two points in depth; these are:

1. We will be seeking to ensure that each article is positive and has plenty of clearly shown facts; opinions will be drawn from facts, not biased to one particular aspect of church doctrine but to the fundamental truth of Scripture.
2. We will look carefully at the type of articles we are producing - in-depth, overview, for the cult member, for the church member, etc. - and seek to get the balance right.

Articles

There were several requests for specific articles to be available on the web site or in the *Quarterly*. Some of these we are already researching but part of our problem is the lack of those who can research for us. The more able researchers we have, the quicker we will be able to get through these issues.

The articles we will seek to give priority to, listed in no particular order, are as follows:

Ecumenism in Britain today.

Some simple and specific information on how to tackle Jehovah's Witnesses on the doorstep.

How mainstream churches can become more active in the ministry of reaching out to the cults.

Highlighting the dangers of false brethren and doctrines that can arise in the church, as we are warned about in Scripture.

More articles covering what is still called the "New Age"; also 'Green' issues if they are a danger; and Anthroposophical teachings.

The growing trend of the 'angel cult' and related issues.

Red Indian Spirituality.

As you can see, this is quite a long list, and it is not all the issues

that were suggested. We will work on these issues as time and human resources are available.

Accessibility of Articles

One person wrote:

Whilst the CD I got was very useful, it would be great to have all info. accessible via website so all info. is up-to-date. Therefore reduce the Reachout mailing and encourage online access to the information with Home Page plugging the latest issue. Postage money can then be used to provide more focused resources.

Another asked for an Annual update to CD Rom

You will see on p.10 that we have dealt with this last issue. Page 9 also encourages as many as possible to receive the *Quarterly* via email or the website, thus cutting down on costs. However, others have urged us to continue with the printed version as not everyone has access to a computer or, indeed, wants to receive it that way. Be assured it will always be available as a printed magazine.

One person wanted a:

Members' area on web with free CD of all resources

This leads me to the final section I want to consider.

Financial suggestions

Not surprisingly, this issues brought the widest diversity of comments. Some feel that we should never mention money at all but 'trust the Lord' entirely. I have some sympathy for this view as it was one with which I was brought up. However, others have said:

Never really thought about giving to Reachout Trust – maybe a reminder or appeal form in the magazine like other organisations do?

Another said:

Perhaps you could consider having an annual subscription to remain on your mailing list. I think most people would be quite happy with that. It would weed out people who don't really want the *Quarterly*.

We do not want to go down the road of annual subscription because we do believe God does provide and we want to be able to have our *Quarterly* available for those who genuinely cannot afford it. For those who want a reminder or an 'appeal form', please look at the back page. ☐

GIVING INFORMATION

WHY GIVE TO REACHOUT TRUST?

1. We provide a ministry to the church that few others are giving. In 2004 we estimate that we reached 289,158 people, which is an increase of 30% of the previous year.
2. In 2003 we reached 338 people for every £100 spent (in 2000 it was only 219). The money you are giving is being used more wisely and more effectively.
3. We had over 1,500,000 hits on our website, which included a dramatic increase since the new site was created in September 2004. People all over the world are receiving information, help and support.
4. Over 35,000 people contacted Reachout Trust wanting help or information during 2004.

WHAT IS THE BEST WAY TO GIVE?

Whatever you feel is the way for you. You can send a cheque or use your credit card with this form, or you can make a secure transaction on the website (<http://www.reachouttrust.org/indexlinks/donations.htm>) including using your CAF Card. Consider whether the Lord wants you to make a **regular donation via Action Pack** (ask for leaflet or check the web site) - 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.

HOW CAN I INCREASE MY GIVING?

If you pay tax we can reclaim **an extra 28%** on any gift you make to Reachout Trust, providing you instruct us to treat them as "Gift Aid Donations".

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

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

Title and Full Name: _____

Address: _____

_____ Post Code: _____

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

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

My credit card number is _____ expiry date _____

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

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

Signed _____ Date _____