

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.

© Reachout Trust 2005

CELEBRATING 23 YEARS OF MINISTRY REACHOUT QUARTERLY

Summer 2005

Issue 80

2005 ANNUAL CONVENTION

Book Now!

Many will remember that we were at Wycliffe for a number of years but since then they have undertaken many improvements and we are really looking forward to being there again.

We visited the site in January and 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, not much extra travel.

There are ensuite and

some standard accommodation, most of which have a washbasin in the room, available on a first come first served basis. Details are as below. Please book via our website or contact the office for more details.

DON'T DELAY.



THE WYCLIFFE CENTRE HORSLEYS GREEN HIGH WYCOMBE HP14 3XL

11-13 NOVEMBER 2005

Superior (Ensuite) Singles - £110 (sorry - all booked)

Superior (Ensuite) Twin - £102 per person

Superior (Ensuite) Triple - £92 per person

Standard Singles - £95.00 (sorry - all booked)

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.

Page 2 - Comment ~ ~ ~ Page 2 - Diary

Page 3 - Watch The Tower 2005/2

Page 5 - Truth Restored - 43~ ~ ~ Page 7 - Enough is Enough - 2

Page 10 - Apologetics - 22

Page 12 - Eternal begotten-ness - 2 ~ ~ ~ Page 15 - Specials



24 Ormond Road Richmond
Surrey England TW10 6TH

☎ 0870 770 3258 ☎ 0870 770 3259

✉ e-mail: rt@reachouttrust.org

🌐 Worldwide Web: <http://www.reachouttrust.org>

A company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales, number: 4162936
A Registered Charity No. 1087085

COMMENT

As I am preparing this edition of the Quarterly two items fill most news bulletins; a wedding and a funeral. Many words have been spoken about these events, some in adoration and others with a questioning reluctance to accept what was being said. However it struck me that both these ceremonies needed one common factor, commitment.

I remember years ago when I first started driving I was fascinated by the sign, at various intersections, where a box had been painted in the road, "Don't enter the box unless your exit is clear." Although, on our roads, the warning words have changed, I am often reminded of the original wording at times of death. How many people enter the box without knowing whether their exit is clear or not? There of course can only be one way of knowing that for certain; by knowing the one who has the key and can, 'open the box'.

I am not here specifically questioning the Pope and his salvation but it does remind me that according to the revelation of Scripture many people, that we deal with in this ministry, do not know if the way is clear or not. On their own admission they are not certain about the future and are not sure what will happen after they are placed, 'in the box'.

At death, commitment to a person and not to a religious ideal is necessary. Added to this, commitment to the person who can open the box is vital. In making this distinction I do not believe that we have to run down other religions, even if there is no Incitement to Religious Hatred Law yet; we need to simply ask the question, "Do you know the person who can open the box?" And, "are you committed to Him?" Commitment to a religious figure, no matter how noble they might appear to be is not sufficient.

I heard one person, who was so committed to the Pope that they were going to pray to him so he could intercede with God. However, there was no thought that the Pope could not 'open the box' by himself and so why not intercede directly with the One who could. What is our commitment to? A religion, an ideal, a calling or to the person of the Lord Jesus Christ?

The wedding in the news also needed commitment. There was of course a time when, "till death us do part" meant that. The commitment of Bride and Groom was out of love for each other and come what may - sickness, poverty, or whatever the world throws up - they would stay together and love and trust each other.

Such ideals are unfortunately no longer popular in the world we live in today; even among those of noble birth. We live in days without permanence and a whim can change our whole course of life, even if it means changing the marriage partner.

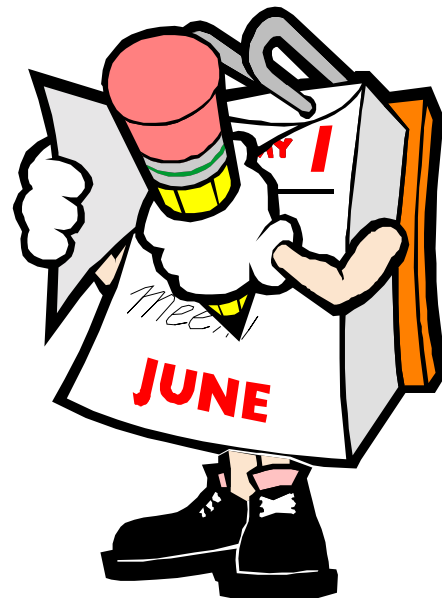
Is my commitment to Christ like that? Come what may, whatever the good times or the bad times, because of His love for me and my love to Him I am committed to follow Him and do His will? We need such people today but so often we meet with fair weather Christians who if they 'feel like it' will turn up and be involved.

For weddings and funerals, and that deliberately sounds like film entertainment - but that glossy sort of life is not sufficient, we need commitment that means, by the Grace of God, I can be relied upon. I will count the cost and then make my commitment for life - in this world and the one to come.

That was where the comment would finish but before I finished the Quarterly the news had changed from weddings and funerals to elections. Whether they would be for a new head of the Roman Catholic Church or the British Government, what people were seeking to do was to put the right people in the right place to do the right job. There are lessons here too for us.

Am I doing what the Lord wants me to do? Am I in the right place, that means not only am I doing the right job, but also that I am not doing someone else's job. If I am not doing what I have been called to do, it means that someone else is overloaded or just as bad, someone else is 'out of a job' because I am doing it.

May it be that we are all in our right positions, doing the right job with the grace that God gives us and thus the body of Christ will be functioning as it should in harmony and God's power. ☐



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.

JULY 2005

- 2 Director's Meeting
- 3 Reading
- 14 Slough
- 15 Southend
- 19 Prayer & Bible Battersea

AUGUST 2005

- 9 Living Waters Norwich *

SEPTEMBER 2005

- 18 Dagenham

OCTOBER 2005

- 10 Largs
- 13-15 CRE - Edinburgh
- 18 Prayer & Bible Battersea

NOVEMBER 2005

- 6 Arlesford
- 11-13 Annual Convention - High Wycombe
- 20 Dagenham



WATCH THE OWER



2005/2

This is the third article catching up on some interesting points raised in recent Watchtower publications.

IT'S A DATE

Dating has always been the central theme of the Watchtower Society right from earliest times. Over the years this has brought them many problems but they still come back to the subject from time to time because after all they are God's chosen organisation, proclaiming His will.

There does not appear to be anything new in this article and there will therefore be no need for anything new in reply; but as they are churning out the information again, we will answer it again.

This article talks of

"...two lines of evidence that demonstrate that we are living in the time of the end and that the new world is at hand." - *The Watchtower*, 1 February, 2004.p.19.

We will examine what they say about these two evidences, first,

BIBLE CHRONOLOGY

This of course is a misnomer because all Bible Chronology can do is put events in order and maybe give the number of years between certain events. What it *cannot* do is date any events, and so the moment the Watchtower starts dating events they have moved away from Bible Chronology and entered the realm of Secular Chronology. Nothing wrong with that, except maybe the fact that the Society does not explain this to their members, who trust them to tell the whole truth.

To date the end times, we need a beginning, which, in this article, is the Fall of Jerusalem in 607 B.C.; but here we have our first problem, where do they get this date from? The Bible? No, because as we explained there are no dates in Scripture. From Secular sources then? No, because secular chronology gives another date for this event. Where does the date come from? The minds of the founders of the Watchtower Society.

Any calculations used, even if

they seem to appear in the Bible, are of no avail if the starting date is wrong. Quite simply the way they arrive at 1914 is neither Biblical nor scientific and it is about time they accepted this fact.

As indicated above, in this article they do not go into the details, but 607 is actually not the starting point, rather they use the fall of Babylon in 537 B.C. Is this borne out by secular authorities, yes, but, as we have often said before, this only shows the selective chronology entered into by the Witnesses.

"To date an event with a 'BC' date you must accept scientific chronology. The Witnesses will say that they are using biblical chronology, but that only places events in their right order with the correct interval of years in between. Their article in the WT, 15 August 1968, entitled 'The Book of Truthful, Historical Dates', shows that to establish the absolute date of 539, they must use secular historians. They quote twenty-five reliable authorities to fix 539 but at least twenty-two of these also prove that Jerusalem fell in 586/587 BC, not 607 as claimed by the Watchtower.

"If these authorities are reliable over 539, surely they are reliable over 586? In any case, why choose 539 as the starting point when we could equally prove 586 as the absolute date and be able to miss out the first two calculations? Sound scholarship would mean that we must either accept both 539 and 586 as reliable or reject both, they stand or fall together.

"This is further shown by the basis for fixing 539. The Watchtower article mentioned above explains:

"... a stone document... (which) gives precise details... This, in turn, enables modern scholars, with their knowledge of astronomy, to translate these dates into terms of the Julian or Gregorian calendars (p. 490).

"On the same basis we can fix the absolute date for the fall of Jerusalem as 586 BC. This is based on a clay tablet with precise details that can be translated into terms of our modern-day calendar by the same accurate astronomical tables used for 539.

"The Witnesses must have realised they were skating on thin ice because

a few years after the article in the Watchtower they changed their mind:

"... the co-relation of astronomical data with human events in the past is subject to various factors and human interpretation, allowing for error (INSIGHT, Vol.1, p.454).

"This means that 539 is not an absolute date and there is no reliable Watchtower chronology!" - *The Jehovah's Witnesses - their Beliefs and Practices*, Doug Harris, 1998, pp.25-26

The chronological evidence does not demonstrate the date of 1914, neither does it demonstrate that we are in the end times. However what about the second evidence,

DETERIORATING WORLD CONDITIONS

Many Christians would agree with the statement that observing world conditions we are living in the end times. However, that is not exactly what the article wants to show; it wants to prove that 1914 became the pivotal point and the start of the time of the end.

No evidence is really given in the article, except a quote about World War 1, which proves nothing concerning the entering in to the Biblical End Times.

And where does all this lead? A statement that no one knows the day or hour, which seems to be like Cadbury's saying, you shouldn't eat chocolate. Just as Cadbury's has made its money out of chocolate so the Society has built its 'success' on dating the end of this system of things!

No dates now but just the statement that, "Jehovah will soon ring down the curtain..." This then means that we must, "...make sure that our zealous deeds in Jehovah's service always reflects our deep love for him." Roughly translated this article means, the end is near and so work harder!

Is there any encouragement? Yes, in the last couple of sentences,

"How will you feel as you survey the scene? No doubt you will move to exclaim, 'I waited a long time for this, but it has been well worth the wait!' - p.22.

I just wonder if those who are around, that were told the end was 1914 or 1915 or 1925 or 1941 or 1975, will actually feel that.

GUARD AGAINST DECEPTION

Every once in a while the Society publishes an article which, I cannot help but think, is written with tongue in cheek. This (*The Watchtower*, 15 February, 2004) is one of them. Those who write such articles are surely fully aware that they could be writing about their own Society and yet it is published as though it is for everyone else but not us!

After talking about deception in general, we read,

“Then there is religious deception. The clergy mislead the masses by teaching false doctrines, such as the immortality of the soul, hellfire, and the Trinity. – 2 Timothy 4:3, 4.”

Convincing to those who do not know Biblical doctrine but how sad that an article that talks about religious deception is itself deceiving. The verses they quote in Timothy are regarding those who turn aside to myths. How about the myth that there are only 144,000 in heaven, or that Jesus came back in 1914 (changed from 1874) or that God forbids blood transfusions?

As the title of the article indicates the bulk of the article is teaching how we can guard against being deceived. First they tell us to guard against deception by apostates. In words that could have come from some of the early publications of Reachout Trust, we read,

“What methods do apostates use to achieve their aim? They often resort to distortions, half-truths, and outright falsehoods.” - p.16.

Amazing, how they can condemn themselves as apostates in their own magazine. However, for the faithful follower all it will do is ensure they do not speak or have anything to do with such people that may be branded apostate – exactly what the Society want. Indeed, as they go on to say, anyone who would ‘cause division’, that is say, something different than the Governing Body says, we avoid whether “in person, in printed form, or on the Internet.” The boundary is drawn and the input of information is limited to the Society alone. There is nothing to check things out with.

However, there is something else we can do to ensure we are guarding

ourselves from deception, not only do we steer clear of those that might tell us lies, we “love the organisation that has taught us the precious truths.” Notice we love the organisation, not Jehovah or Jesus. We are to remain loyal to what the organisation says and listen to no one and nothing else, this is true mind control.

After some paragraphs about avoiding self-deception, which boils down to not spending time on most entertainment that is unwholesome but “regularly feed on the Bible **and Bible-based publications**” (emphasis added), we are then told to “Guard Against Satan’s Lies”. How do we do this? Basically again, listen only to the Organisation and its teachings, rejecting all others.

No wonder it is a hard job to communicate with Jehovah’s Witnesses, they believe we teach satanic doctrines and only want to draw them away from the organisation they are told to love.

However, the answer to the lie is truth and we need to take every opportunity to share truth in love so that the deception they are held in by the Society can be exposed by the work of the Holy Spirit.

WHICH RELIGION?

In *The Watchtower*, 1 June 2004 we find on p.6 an article entitled, *Which Religion Should You Choose?* This article begins to deal with the issue of benefits of right association and states that an accurate understanding of the Bible will enable a person to identify the religion that meets divine requirements.

This statement in many magazines would be suicide, but the Society knows that no one is going to check it out.

The requirements they have referred to are found in Psalm 15 and are particularly, walking faultlessly, practicing righteousness and speaking truth. We have written a wealth of articles that would show clearly that the Watchtower Society is far from faultless; they certainly have lied and covered up, thus they are not practicing righteousness. Many times they have not spoken the truth, even falsifying their own history. Clearly then the Watchtower Society is not the religion to identify with, which I am sure is not the conclusion they wish us to come to.

The article goes on to state that the Watchtower Society has shown

it is possible to achieve unity in a disunited world and add that they realise that they cannot dictate their beliefs to others.

Outwardly there does appear to be unity, for the simple reason that if you make it known you disagree, you are thrown out. They do also dictate to their members what to do and as such what we have is not a unity of the spirit, which we see from Ephesians 4, is the true oneness and unity. This is far from the unity that God wants, a willing allegiance; this is of fear, of being kicked out of the Organisation and thus lose any hope of a future life.

I wonder, if given the opportunity, how many Witnesses would disagree with some of the secondary teachings. We know it is true of blood and disfellowshipping because some have been brave enough to come out and say so.

There is also unity on the central issues amongst all true Bible-believing Christians. There are also many more Christians spreading the true gospel than the 6,000,000 or so active publishers of Watchtower material. Indeed we read on www.pastornet.net.au

“Evangelical Christianity is the world’s fastest-growing religious movement, researchers said. There are 645 million evangelicals in the world, about 11% of the world’s population, the U.S. Center for World Mission and researchers Patrick Johnstone and David Barrett said. The movement is growing 3.5 times faster than the world population, and Pentecostal and Charismatic churches are growing 4.5 times faster. ‘That makes evangelical Christianity the fastest-growing major religious group and the only movement growing significantly through conversion,’ Johnstone said.”

The Society also claim to be at work in 235 lands but many others are too. For instance Wycliffe Bible Translators have already made God’s Word available to more than 35 million people. They have completed or helped complete the New Testament for people speaking over 578 languages and are currently working in a further 1,246 languages.

So, whether it is the numbers game that should be our benchmark for choosing our religion, or truth of Scriptures, Evangelical Christianity far out performs the Watchtower Bible & Tract Society. ☐



TRUTH RESTORED - 43



BY MIKE & ANN THOMAS

The problem was simple yet profound. How do I make sense of life? I remember thinking, "Is this it?" In the words of one of my favourite films, "Is this 'as good as it gets'?" The Mormon answer seemed profound yet simple - "God speaks today!" Of course, with benefit of hindsight I can identify myriad problems with the Mormon message. But I remember the thrill of hearing that message for the first time, "God speaks today", and the thrill of anticipation - what is God going to say to me?

LIVING PROPHETS

The message of Mormonism centres on "living prophets". John Taylor, third Mormon president, wrote, "the principle of present revelation...is the very foundation of our religion" (*Journal of Discourses*, p.371). Elder Joseph W. McMurrin was one of the First Seven Presidents of the First Council of the Seventy from Oct.5 1897. In a General Conference address in April 1902 he said:

"...the same divine authority, the same inspiration that came from God, our Father, which enabled the Prophet Joseph Smith to speak of the future history of this work, is with the Israel of God today. A Prophet of God stands in the midst of the people now, clothed upon with every gift, key, power, and authority, that was given to the Prophet Joseph Smith, and that same inspiration, that same power to penetrate the future, to comprehend the purposes of the Almighty, is with the Priesthood that is in our midst today."

In 1977 Spencer Kimball, 12th Mormon president declared in a General Conference address, "I bear witness to the world today that more than a century and a half ago...the heavens were once again opened, and since that time revelations have been continuous."

The missionary discussions present it in this way:

"One important way God shows His love for us is by calling prophets, who are given the priesthood - the power and authority given to man to act in God's name for the salvation of His children. Prophets learn the gospel of Jesus Christ *by revelation*. They in turn teach the gospel to others...*The teachings of the prophets are found in*

sacred books called scriptures.

Whenever people choose to disregard, disobey, or distort any gospel principle or ordinance, whenever they reject the Lord's prophets...they distance themselves from God and begin to live in spiritual darkness. Eventually this leads to a condition called apostasy. When widespread apostasy occurs, God withdraws His priesthood authority to teach and administer the ordinances of the gospel.

To end each period of general apostasy, God has shown His love for His children by calling another prophet and giving him priesthood authority to restore and teach the gospel of Jesus Christ anew...Such periods of time headed by prophetic responsibility are called dispensations.

After the death of Jesus Christ, wicked people persecuted the Apostles and Church members and killed many of them. Without Apostles, over time the doctrines were corrupted...*Without revelation and priesthood authority, people relied on human wisdom* to interpret the scriptures... False ideas were taught as truth... The doctrines...became distorted or forgotten. This apostasy eventually led to the emergence of many churches.

When the circumstances were right, Heavenly father once again reached out to His children in love. He called a young man named Joseph Smith as a prophet. Through Him the fullness of the gospel of Jesus Christ was restored to the earth...*A living prophet directs the Church today* (*Preach My Gospel, A Guide to Missionary Service*, p.p.32-37, Pub. LDS Church, 2004, emphasis added).

That message still excites many today and fills them with the same anticipation I felt all those years ago. "What will the living prophet say?" The words of a Mormon hymn sum up well the typical Mormon's attitude to it:

The morning breaks, the shadows flee;
Lo, Zion's standard is unfurled!

The dawning of a brighter day,
Majestic rises on the world.

TESTING THE PROPHETS

Using the teaching in the missionary discussions we might prof-

itably test the prophets.

"The teachings of the prophets are found in sacred books called scriptures"

The Mormon Scriptures include the *Book of Mormon*, the *Pearl of Great Price*, the *Doctrine and Covenants (D&C)*, and the *Bible*. The *D&C* is what concerns us since the other three, while being scripture, are also historical documents pertaining to God's dealings with people in the past. The *D&C* however is viewed as evidence that the heavens are open once more and that the church is led by living prophets. As the missionaries clearly teach "The teachings of the prophets are found in sacred books called scriptures". If God speaks through prophets today it is here, or in even more additional "sacred books" that we should look for evidence that he does.

The *D&C* ends in the 19th century, aside from section 138 which is purported to have been received in 1918 by Joseph F Smith, sixth Mormon Church president. The previous revelation in chronology, section 136, is dated January 1847, is given through Brigham Young, and concerns the organising of the saints to move westward. Young led the Mormons for another 30 years until his death in 1877, thirty of the most challenging and defining years in Mormon history, and yet nothing was added to the *D&C* to show that God was leading His people through a living prophet. There have been thirteen more prophets since then and yet no additional scripture is to be found, either in the *D&C* or any other additional work of "scripture".

One would have thought, perhaps, that many volumes might exist by now showing that since the time of Joseph Smith "revelation has been continuous". The *Journal of Discourses (JOD)*, a 26 volume veritable encyclopaedia of early Mormon sermons and writings, seems to have been once regarded as filling the role. The Mormons refer to their official scriptures as Standard Works and the eight volume of the *JOD* (pub.1861) is prefaced with the following, written by

George Q Cannon, ordained an apostle 1860:

"The Journal of Discourses deservedly ranks as *one of the standard works of the church*, and every right-minded Saint will certainly welcome with joy every Number as it comes forth from the press as an additional reflector of 'the light that shines from Zion's hill'.

We rejoice, therefore, in being able to present to the Saints another complete Volume – the Eight in the series; and, in doing so, we sincerely commend the varied and important instructions it contains to their earnest consideration."

As time has passed the Mormon leadership has found the contents to be more embarrassing than instructional and it has been relegated to the role of historical curiosity. A recent correspondent, commenting on our use of the Journal, referred to it as "an obscure historical source". It seems that the Mormon idea of continuous revelation being recorded in scripture has, itself, been relegated to history.

"A living prophet directs the Church today"

The current prophet of the Mormon Church is Gordon B Hinckley. He has been prophet since March 1995, ten years in fact. In that time he has led the saints through a remarkable period of activity and growth, visiting members all over the world, more than doubling the number of temples, and raising the profile of the church. He has been the busiest and most productive prophet the church has had for years. How does his record stand as prophet?

TEACHER

We are told that a key role of the prophet is teacher. What can president Hinckley teach us about LDS doctrine? (In the following quotes all emphasis has been added.)

"Brigham Young said if you went to Heaven and saw God it would be Adam and Eve. **I don't know what he meant by that.**"

Pointing to a grim-faced portrait of the Lion of the Lord, as Young was called, Hinckley said,

"There he is, right there. I'm not going to worry about what he said about those things."

I asked whether Mormon theology was a form of polytheism.

"**I don't have the remotest idea** what you mean," Hinckley said impatiently. - *Hinckley Interview in "Lives of the*

Saint", New Yorker, January 2002

Question: "There are some significant differences in your beliefs [and other Christian churches]. For instance, don't Mormons believe that God was once a man?"

Hinckley: "I wouldn't say that. There was a little couplet coined, 'As man is, God once was. As God is, man may become.' Now that's more of a couplet than anything else. That gets into some pretty deep theology that **we don't know very much about.**" *Interviewing Gordon B. Hinckley, San Francisco Chronicle, April 13, 1997, p 3/Z1*

Question: "Is this the teaching of the church today, that God the Father was once a man like we are?"

Hinckley: "**I don't know that we teach it. I don't know that we emphasize it.** I haven't heard it discussed for a long time in public discourse. **I don't know. I don't know all the circumstances** under which that statement was made. I understand the philosophical background behind it. But **I don't know a lot about it and I don't know that others know** a lot about it." *Interviewing Gordon B. Hinckley, Time Magazine, Aug 4, 1997*

Question: "Until 1978 no person of color attained the priesthood in your church. Why it took so long time to overcome the racism?"

Hinckley: "**I don't know. I don't know.** (long pause) I can only say that. (long pause) But it's here now. We're carrying on a very substantial work on Africa for instance and in Brazil. We're working among their people developing them."

Question: "Now, Mr. President, one question which is a little bit complicated for me to understand but I heard it and one colleague asked me to ask you. What will be your position when DNA analysis will show that in history there never had been an immigration from Israel to North America? It could be that scientists will find out?"

Hinckley: "It hasn't happened. That hasn't been determined yet. All I can say is that's speculative. **No one really knows that, the answer to that.** Not at this point." *Interview Jan 29th, 2002 conducted by reporter Helmut Nemetschek, ZDF television, Germany, at Salt Lake City, Utah, in the Church Administration Building.*

"Beyond the wonderful and descriptive words found in sections 76 and 137 [D&C 76; D&C 137] **we know relatively little concerning the celestial kingdom** and those who will be there. At least some of the rules of eligibility for acceptance into that

kingdom are clearly set forth, but other than that, **we are given little understanding.**"

"The next question you ask is why Eve was created from Adam. **I can only respond that an all-wise Creator did it that way...**"

"Now, Virginia, you call attention to the statement in the scriptures that Adam should rule over Eve. (See Gen. 3:16.) You ask why this is so. **I do not know.**" *The Prophet Gordon B. Hinckley, November 1991 Young Womens Conference, "Daughters of God," (Ensign, Nov. 1991, Page 97)*

PROPHET, SEER, REVELATOR

A prophet is also one who "foretells the future". What is the record of president Hinckley?

"I hope that prayer will take on a new luster in our lives. **None of us knows what lies ahead. We may speculate, but we do not know.**" *The Prophet Gordon B. Hinckley, October 2001 General Conference "Till We Meet Again," (Ensign, Nov. 2001, Page 89)*

"Now we are at war. Great forces have been mobilized and will continue to be. Political alliances are being forged. **We do not know** how long this conflict will last. **We do not know** what it will cost in lives and treasure. **We do not know** the manner in which it will be carried out. It could impact the work of the Church in various ways."

"**No one knows** how long it will last. **No one knows** precisely where it will be fought. **No one knows** what it may entail before it is over. We have launched an undertaking the size and nature of which we cannot see at this time."

"**I do not know** what the future holds. I do not wish to sound negative, but I wish to remind you of the warnings of scripture and the teachings of the prophets which we have had constantly before us."

"Now, I do not wish to be an alarmist. **I do not wish to be a prophet of doom.** I am optimistic. I do not believe the time is here when an all-consuming calamity will overtake us. I earnestly pray that it may not. There is so much of the Lord's work yet to be done. We, and our children after us, must do it. I can assure you that we who are responsible for the management of the affairs of the Church will be prudent and careful as we have tried to be in the past. The tithes of the Church are sacred." *The Prophet Gordon B. Hinckley, "The Times in Which We Live," October 2001 General Conference (Ensign, Nov. 2001, Page 72)*

"Months ago I was invited to be inter-

viewed by Mike Wallace, a tough senior reporter for the CBS 60 Minutes program, which is broadcast across America to more than 20 million listeners each week. I recognized that if I were to appear, critics and detractors of the Church would also be invited to participate. I knew we could not expect that the program would be entirely positive for us. ... I concluded that it was better to lean into the stiff wind of opportunity than to simply hunker down and do nothing. It has been an interesting experience..."

"We have no idea what the outcome will be—that is, I don't. We will discover this this evening when it is aired in this valley. **If it turns out to be favorable, I will be grateful.** Otherwise, I pledge **I'll never get my foot in that kind of trap again."** *The Prophet Gordon B. Hinckley, "Remember Thy Church, O Lord," Spring 1996 General Conference, Ensign, May 1996, Page 82*

The missionaries teach that, *"Without revelation and priesthood authority, people relied on human wisdom."* What is the Mormon Church of today

relying upon?

"At the close of one particularly difficult day, I looked up at a portrait of Brigham Young that hangs on my wall. I asked, 'Brother Brigham, what should we do?' I thought I saw him smile a little, and then he seemed to say: 'In my day, I had problems enough of my own. Don't ask me what to do. This is your watch. Ask the Lord, whose work this really is.' And this, I assure you, is what we do and must always do."

"As I reflected on these matters that recent difficult day, I opened my Bible to the first chapter of Joshua and read these words: 'Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee' (Joshua 1:9). I said to myself: 'There is never reason to despair. This is the work of God. Notwithstanding the efforts of all who oppose it, it will go forward as the God of heaven has designed it should do.'" *The Prophet Gordon B. Hinckley, Autumn 2003 General Conference, Sunday Morning Ses-*

sion

I can open my Bible and read what God has to say. I can comfort myself with biblical assurance. The question is "What has the living prophet got to say to me – today"? More to the point, what does God have to say to me today? Would it surprise you to find that the answer is found in the Bible?

But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:14-17)

Go to the Word and seek God's wisdom (James 1:1-5). ☐

Enough is Enough - Part Two

In the first part of this article we looked at the basis used to test various excesses, and specifically looked at, Gifts of God and False Prophets. We will now continue by looking at several other areas and see the dangers of excesses and what Scripture has to say to help us. Some we will look at in detail and others just give some 'food for thought'.

Please remember that we are not saying that there are not true gifts and ministries that exist - indeed in most cases we believe there should be a true gift exercised in the church today - but we are seeking to sound a warning of where these gifts are used wrongly and to excess. Please continue to seek for that which is true but beware of that which is false.

Direct Revelation - Divine Leading or Divination?

Direct Revelation into an individual's life and circumstances or into the life of the whole gathering of

people being addressed can come in several ways and it is not always wrong. Sometimes the excess may be as much in the life of the *receiver* as the giver. First, many Charismatic leaders today will have personal divine revelation. I have heard tapes of testimony from these men where they tell of their dream like revelations, sometimes almost personal tours of heaven, and the words that God told 'only me'. We are then led to believe that this is God's word without any reference or possibility of testing it out.

The more, of course, that the hearer trusts the messenger, the more the message is trusted without question but this is the danger. Often the men and women speaking have international ministries and a long 'pedigree' however, nowhere in God's Word are we told to accept without reservation what someone speaks out even if they are well known and they assure us

that it is from the Lord. The words should be tested out in the same way as we indicated for false prophets in part one of this article.

Second, we have so-called, words of knowledge. I have to say that having seen some men and women working in this way I wonder whether we are dealing with God's Holy Spirit or another sort of divination spirit. An article by Joseph Chambers entitled *Lying Wonders* (<http://www.pawcreek.org/articles/endtimes/LyingWonders.htm>) asks the same question in the first paragraph:

"Many different manifestations previously known almost exclusively to the occult are sweeping the church world. Is it the Holy Spirit or is it "psychic activity?" You will eventually have to answer that question for yourself, hopefully after you finish this article. Sharp division between the real and the false will soon be a requirement for Christian living and church attendance, if not already. For

too long the church has drifted like a ship without a rudder. In many congregations, Biblical truth has been treated lightly, while social and emotional matters have demanded attention. This closing hour does not allow for such carelessness, neither does it allow a light treatment of the "spirit of discernment." Those who do not have a firm and conscious hold on Biblical values and Biblical truth will not be able to survive."

Third, another phrase that is used today is "speak into your life"; I have had people ask me specifically, "Do you have a word for me?" This can be very tempting to show just how 'spiritual' you are and if you accept the man you are likely to accept the word.

I remember listening to Mike Bickle and Paul Cain many years ago and the reaction I had in my spirit as Bickle said that we do not need cult busters who question everything, we need to accept the word of the prophet. I am still convinced today that he looked at me in the balcony as he said it! Cain went on to show how dreams are always God speaking to you and that you should interpret them every morning and work them out in your life. I dread to think what some of those young people there did in the following weeks if they accepted that word without question.

When Cain got on to the words of knowledge I felt it was no different to a psychic show. Reading the following, which I feel can only be a misuse of a 'gift from God', from p.30 of David Pytches book *Some Said It Thundered*, only makes me even more nervous over the 'gift'.

"On one occasion after Mike Bickle had been complaining to his wife that he had 'a bit of a sniffle' or a slight cold -- something he rarely had -- the phone rang. Bickle picked up the receiver and heard Paul on the line. He had heard about Paul's gift so he said by way of a joke, 'Hi, Paul! You're all right today! How am I?' Immediately Paul answered him, 'Why, Mike, you've got a bit of a sniffle and you are all wet. Your hair is standing up on the left side of your head.'

"Bickle called his wife Diane to look at him. 'Sweetheart, Paul says I have a "sniffle," I am all wet and my hair is standing up on one side. Am I all wet?'

"'Yes,' she said. 'You've just come out of the shower.'

"'And is my hair standing up on one side?'

"'Yes,' she replied, 'on the left side!'"

We need to show extreme caution in accepting an unconfirmed word into our lives if it is going to have a profound effect on us or others. Please refer again to I Thessalonians 5:20&21.

Spiritual Warfare

Methods abound in spiritual warfare and we are encouraged to pray this way and that way - bind this and lose that - watch out for territorial spirits and much, much more. But Spiritual Warfare is not gimmicks or methods (Satan uses those) it is the practical outworking of the ministry of Christ in me. Spiritual Warfare is vital in my daily walk, whatever I am doing and not just when I am helping someone who is involved in cults or occult - the foundational understanding as outlined in the armour in Ephesians 6 is vital.

It is no accident that the foundational garment of the armour is TRUTH. Anything that is a lie or an exaggeration of the truth will not be an effective weapon against Satan. Therefore methods that are not Biblical and do not have their foundations within the Scripture will not be of any use! Do not have the same problem as Pilate by asking, "What is truth" (John 18:38). Jesus has already answered the question before it was asked. See verse 37.

1. Jesus always was a clear witness to the truth - what He did and what He said.

2. If we desire the truth we will hear His voice.

Many other voices will shout and scream to try and mask the words of Jesus but is our desire great enough to search out what He has said.

It seems to me that there are 4 things that Spiritual warfare is not:

1. Spiritual Warfare is **not** something that is an optional extra in the Christian Life.

2. Spiritual Warfare is **not** just about dramatically casting out demons

3. Spiritual Warfare is **not** all about certain methods

4. Spiritual Warfare is **not** about Satan having the centre of attention

And 4 things that Spiritual warfare is:

1. Spiritual Warfare **is** a state of heart and mind for every day

2. Spiritual Warfare **is** more about Christ than it is about Satan

3. Spiritual Warfare **is** about relationship

4. Spiritual Warfare **is** about the position of our Lord Jesus Christ

Anything that teaches a gimmick or that gives Satan the centre of attention is definitely not the Spiritual Warfare that is taught in Scripture.

Just one example would be the teaching of binding and losing. We read this in Simon Page's, *An Examination of the Popular Contemporary Teaching on Territorial Spirits and its Scriptural Evidence*.

"The popular contemporary view amongst those who practise 'strategic level spiritual warfare' is that one must bind the principalities and powers over a city before evangelism can become effective. The term 'binding' is generally understood by authors such as Wagner, White, Silvestro and Bernal to mean 'restricting the power of evil on all levels'... This is a clear sign of the Spirit of God at work, clearly dividing those who recognised God at work and therefore stood with Christ, as opposed to those who attributed the work of God to the arch-enemy himself. The binding of Satan has taken place in stages, beginning with Jesus' public ministry and decisively guaranteed by the death and resurrection of Christ... Therefore, the practice of 'binding' territorial spirits and the methodology employed, do not find their parallel in any of the New Testament. The correct way to fight this war is highlighted in Ephesians 6:10-18, where honesty, righteousness, witnessing, prayer, assurance of salvation, relationship with God and proficiency with the Scripture are seen as effective ways of combating the Kingdom of Darkness."

Prosperity

Interestingly Tony Campolo dealt with this issue at Spring Harvest this year (2005) when he said that "Jesus has been made into a 'prosperity fiend'."

His call comes after churches in the UK launched a report entitled "Prosperity with a Purpose" which extolled the virtues of wealth creation and economic growth. Campolo said

"Do we worship the Jesus of the Scriptures? Every generation gets rid

of the biblical Jesus and creates a new one in His place. The Jesus of our culture is a prosperity fiend, a God that promises health and wealth. But Jesus spoke with clarity – if you are going to follow Him, it is going to cost you everything that you have."

One example of the teaching that Campolo was talking about, that many in Britain have faced is John Avanzini. Back in 1996 we first brought this man to the attention of our readers and unfortunately he has not changed since then. At that time we were commenting on his book *Unanswered Prayer... Answered* which at that time had sold over 250,000 copies. The heart of the book was the fact that he had discovered, by a direct revelation from God (see earlier) that the reason prayers were not answered was that they were not accompanied by a gift or memorial offering as he calls it.

This theme is developed for tens of pages and in the final chapter, on page 89, he deals with where you give such an offering because obviously you cannot give it direct to God. Well, once we have made our request known to God and have determined the amount of the "memorial offering" we are going to give, we are to earnestly pray over it and send it to, wait for it, John Avanzini. We can accept his subtle suggestion to give a thousand dollars (p.84) or else promise to transfer funds, sell stock or sell property (p.83). The only people that prosper in such prosperity are the leaders.

Avanzini displays other examples of the way we have 'got rid of the Biblical Jesus'.

In January 1996 Avanzini published an article entitled *Was Jesus poor?*, this taught what others in this field also repeat. He said that if we don't believe that Jesus was rich then we can't be rich either. This is the problem which stops us prospering fully; we have been duped by the traditionalists into believing that Jesus was poor. Avanzini then seeks to show from a handful of Scriptures that perhaps Jesus wasn't as poor as some 'traditionalists' want us to believe, and finally introduces us to "A Powerhouse Operation", which had so much money that they could buy everyone lunch, ride the best donkeys and strut around in designer-clothing. Jesus had a nice house, a big house.

Finally we give an example of the publicity of the John Avanzini Ministries, which is in a mass produced 'Reader's Digest' style letter that unfortunately many others also use today. Avanzini writes:

"The Lord directed me to get this letter to you as quickly as possible... This morning as I was praying... I sensed in my spirit that you or someone close to you is facing a financial crisis. Is this true?"

Surely, this sort of statement is more at home in clairvoyance than the gospel of Jesus Christ. Indeed many mediums send out similar letters. Avanzini then begins to relate the story of the feeding of the 5000 and ends with this advice:

"When you take what you have... give it to God, and ask Him to bless it... you are taking your problem of insufficiency out of the natural realm and releasing it to the supernatural for a solution."

We can see where this is leading and surely it does not come from the Lord. However, before he blatantly tells them to give the money to him, we read one more scripture:

"Just as I finishing this letter to you, I felt impressed of the Lord to look at Matthew 16:19: '...and whatsoever you bind on earth will be bound in Heaven, and whatsoever you loose on earth will be loosed in Heaven.' Right then, I saw that the word 'whatsoever' includes YOUR MONEY!"

Not only is he taking words out of context, he is saying that God says things He does not - this is nearer blasphemy than God's ministry.

I wonder what Avanzini does with all the money sent to him from people who cannot afford it, and who end up further in debt because they are relying on a spoof rather than the Word of God.

Healing for Everyone

The teaching that everyone must be healed if prayed for, and if nothing happens, it is the receivers, "lack of faith" is common today. However is there one Scripture that tells us this will be so? There is no question that God allows trials within our lives to test us and develop our character (see James 1:1-4) and sickness is not excluded from this as a trial.

I do believe we should be positive in seeking God for healing but

at the same time to teach that we must be healed if we are prayed for only gives the sick person a further problem and does not help them at all.

Big Band Entertainment

Talk about worship today and many think of the big meeting with the 'big band' led worship. Let me say immediately that I am not against these instruments being used in worship; personally I really enjoy the saxophone, trumpet and drums. It is not so much what is used but how it is used that concerns me.

Have we got to a place where we often lose sight of **Who** we are worshipping and are tied up with the **who is leading** the worship?

I often tell the story of my youngest son, many years ago, asking me after I had returned from a weekend seminar, "How did the cinema go?" It may have been funny at the time but God spoke to me through it. At the cinema you pay your money, get into your seat and watch what is going on up the front, without having to be involved. So many churches are like that today; massive congregations that you can get lost in with great music that you can listen to without getting involved with the worship. Ephesians 4:16 reads, referring to the body of Christ

"... being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love."

Growth of the body is not all being in the same room at the same time even singing the same song, but it is the inter-reaction of at least two members (the smallest number of pieces to make a joint). This, I submit does not go on in most of the large led worship services today; nor indeed in the smaller meetings where all the hymns have been chosen etc; but there is another way. Smaller groups with open worship where each member is allowed to bring what they have.

We read in 1 Corinthians 12:27 that we are Christ's body, and individually members of it. We are not to be individualistic but we are to be an individual before the Lord. Paul speaks much of this in 1 Corinthians 12 to 14 and please note especially 14:26;

"What is the outcome then, brethren? When you assemble, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification."

That just does not happen in many churches today.

Bill Burkett in part 2 of a 4 part article Pentecostal but not Charismatic (<http://www.actson.com/NOTchar-II.htm>) raises another issue:

"Worship Has Become Entertainment. For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ. Jude 4. The word lasciviousness is *aselgia* in the original text and means unbridled lust, excess, outrageousness, shamelessness, insolence. The entertainment format going on in Charismatic churches fits Jude's description of the apostates perfectly. The sacrilege being displayed on modern church stages as anointed ministries is not Pentecostal. Pentecostals do not host worldly celebrities in their pulpits. Everything from karate to body builders, soap opera stars and athletes, are brought out onto the stages of Charismatic churches... Hebrew dancing got its start in the churches because the Charismatics said, "its in the Bible." There are many things "in the Bible" that do not belong in the church! Study dancing carefully

in the Bible and you will note it was never done in the temple, inside the church, as a part of church worship. The people rejoiced in the victories gained in the field of battle, and the triumphs of God over their enemies in a spontaneous and public display of jubilee - but never was there dancing carried on as a form of worship in the house of God. David danced before the ark as it returned to Jerusalem, in the streets, but this urge to dance before the Lord was not an orchestrated musical production. The Hebrew dancing going on in Charismatic churches today is not even similar to the dancing recorded in the Old Testament. If Hebrew dancing was to be in the church you would read all about it in the book of Acts and, or, it would be mentioned in the New Testament by the apostle's in their writings. Hebrew dancing is just another idea that was picked up on because it resembled something mentioned in the Bible but certainly not taught as it is being practiced by Charismatic churches. To know we are pleasing God we simply stay within the Biblical boundaries of revelation. We must keep things in the Biblical setting and study them carefully. That's why God gave us His Word! Keep the practices of worship you allow in the setting of Biblical precedent and you will never start something that will ultimately get out of control and become a dangerous slide into excesses that violate the real work of the Holy Spirit. We, as ministers of the gospel must not allow the taste of carnal people in the church to dic-

tate to us the program of the church. Ministers often tolerate compromise thinking they will gain people, and you will while at the same time experience a moral and spiritual decline. You may begin by thinking you can save them and end up with a lot of people but with a spiritual decline. Go by the Word! Live by it! Die by it! The raptures of heavenly visions and the manifestations of God were with our Pentecostal Daddies who taught that holy life. Scripture is the final authority and the only authority to govern the church by."

Conclusion

What are the conclusions that we can draw from all this.

1. Ensure our Christian lives are centred in Christ. Not so much trying to ensure that all the fruits are right - that can tie us up in an everlasting 'witch hunt'; but ensure that the roots are right and the fruit will be of the right type too.

2. Ensure that we know our Scriptures and they are the foundation of our decision making.

3. Put aside anything that is purely extreme and for entertainment. We do not need the multimedia presentations but the exposition of the Word of God.

4. Do not be just outward in our Christian Life but ensure there are inward resources.

5. Glorify and centre on Him not on ME. ☐

APOLOGETICS -22

Theology is defined as "the science of God". It comes from the Greek words "Theos" meaning God and "Logos" meaning "word, or reason". The science of God, then, involves reasoning about the things of God. Today many would balk at the idea of putting "science" and "God" in the same sentence.

For instance, Jon Krakauer in his book on Mormon fundamentalism, *Under the Banner of Heaven*, clearly sees reason and faith as exact opposites. In the prologue he writes:

"...extremism seems to be especially prevalent among those inclined by temperament or upbringing toward religious pursuits. *Faith is the very an-*

tithesis of reason, injudiciousness a crucial component of spiritual devotion."

He might be forgiven for drawing such a conclusion in relation to his subject since he is studying extremely irrational belief and behaviour patterns amongst people who would not stop at abuse and even murder to advance what they see as the plan of God. The book tells a very disturbing story and paints as dark a picture of faith gone as wrong as can be imagined. The problem is that he tends to see this story, as well as others like it, as an extreme example of what faith ordinarily is in any case, i.e. irrational.

He goes on to write, "...when religious fanaticism supplants ratiocination, all bets are off. Anything can happen." In other words, when people stop thinking and start "believing", reason has gone out the window and who knows where it might lead?

Later in the book he writes about the impossible claims Mormons make for the *Book of Mormon*, writing that it is "riddled with egregious anachronisms and irreconcilable inconsistencies". Citing the famous Mark Twain observation that the *Book of Mormon* was "chloroform in print", he goes on:

"But such criticism and mockery are

largely beside the point. *All religious belief is the function of non-rational faith. And faith, by its very definition, tends to be impervious to intellectual argument or academic criticism...* Those who would assail the *Book of Mormon* should bear in mind that its veracity is no more dubious than the veracity of the Bible, say, or the Qur'an, or the sacred texts of most religions. The latter texts simply enjoy the considerable advantage of having made their public debut in the shadowy recesses of the ancient past, and are thus much harder to refute."

And yet theology was once regarded as "the queen of sciences". How did we get to a place where the "queen of sciences" has become the jester of the court?

Queen of Sciences

The queen of sciences is so named for two reasons. The first is that, although we use other sciences in studying theology because we are reasoning creatures and can only understand through reason, nevertheless theology ultimately does not depend on these sciences but on the knowledge of God Himself. We "do theology" in the context of a God who reveals Himself to mankind both in creation and by His Spirit-filled Word, and reason from what we observe of this revelation.

What is revealed in creation may be termed "practical". What is revealed by His Spirit and is acted upon "by faith" may be termed "speculative" in the sense that it is not directly observed but we may arrive at a point where we decide it can be reasonably trusted. Science also falls into these two categories of practical and speculative. Theology is the queen of sciences, secondly, because it straddles these two categories as does no other science because, both in practical and speculative terms, it derives knowledge from God.

Reason to Believe

Sir Anthony Flew, the famous British philosopher and atheist, has been a champion of atheism for years. In the Winter 2005 issue of *Philosophia Christi*, the journal of the Evangelical Philosophical Society (www.biola.edu/philchristi) and one of the top circulating philosophy of religion journals in the world, the 81 year old philosopher explained why he changed his mind. In an article entitled *My Pilgrimage from Atheism to Theism* he said that naturalistic efforts to explain the world have

failed. In his view, he explained, the scientific discoveries of recent years make a compelling argument for a designer and, although he does not believe in a revelatory God, he describes himself as "open, but not enthusiastic". Revealingly, he remarked:

"It seems to me that *Richard Dawkins constantly overlooks the fact* that Darwin himself, in the fourteenth chapter of *The Origin of Species*, pointed out that his whole argument began with a being which already possessed reproductive powers. This is the creature the evolution of which a truly comprehensive theory of evolution must give some account. Darwin himself was well aware that he had not produced such an account. It now seems to me that the findings of more than fifty years of DNA research have provided materials for *a new and enormously powerful argument to design.*"

From practical science, then, Sir Anthony Flew drew the conclusion that discovery of increasingly intricate design is compelling evidence of a designer. This is in complete accord with the argument of Paul in Romans:

For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities – his eternal power and divine nature – have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse (Ro.1:20).

"Men are without excuse", or as Sir Anthony Flew put it,

"Richard Dawkins constantly overlooks the fact that Darwin himself... pointed out that his whole argument began with a being which already possessed reproductive powers."

To constantly overlook facts does indeed leave us without excuse. In the same passage Paul explains the inexplicable, indeed inexcusable oversight of compelling facts:

"Men suppress truth by their wickedness, since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them...[but] although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools." (Ro.1:18-22)

When Krakauer claims that the veracity of the *Book of Mormon* "is no more dubious than the veracity of the Bible" he is in error because the veracity of the Bible rests, amongst other things, on practical

scientific evidence. Internally and externally, archaeologically and epistemologically, historically and philosophically the Bible is verifiable as historical as well as revelatory. No such claim may be made for the *Book of Mormon*. He arrives at his conclusion because he begins with a false premise, i.e. "faith is the very antithesis of reason". To a reasonable man like Anthony Flew this claim may look unreasonable. To this writer it is a simple prejudice of the type all too prevalent in a world that has lost all reason and faith.

Purpose of Belief

I recently visited the biggest single room of books in the whole of England. It is in Oxford, Blackwells in Broad Street, which is also one of the largest bookshops in the world. Being a bibliophile I expected to be thrilled by what I saw. It was thrilling but, as I surveyed seemingly endless shelves of books extending under Trinity College, I found it, frankly, daunting. So much to read, so many exciting and fascinating subjects, so many experts to consult and so little time (and even less money). Had I been able to read every book in the place where would it have got me? I realised the futility of knowledge for the sake of knowledge and thanked God that, in His scheme, knowledge has an end beyond simply finding things out. In the *Westminster Catechism* we read that "Man's chief and highest end is to glorify God, and fully to enjoy Him forever" (Ro.11:36; John 17:21-23)

If Anthony Flew comes to the realisation that all we have been saying here is true and comes to know the God who reveals Himself in the ways discussed, that may be described as "speculative" science. Speculative, not in the sense that it is a guess, but in the sense that it may not be directly observed but he may arrive at a point where he decides this truth can be reasonably trusted because of the compelling witness of God's Holy Spirit. The evidence for God is compelling, it seems, to even the most sceptical mind that is open to the truth. But to the mind that is darkened no amount of evidence will do. As Christians we can only strive to know God better, present our apologetic more clearly and encourage others to enter into this voyage of discovery that leads to a better understanding of God. ☐

The Eternal Begotten-ness of Jesus - 2

By Andy Harrison

In Part 1 (Reachout Quarterly 72) we established that Jesus is the Son of God, not only from the time of His incarnation, but from eternity – past, present and future.

Jesus is the **'firstborn** of all creation' (Colossians 1:15). **By Him** and **in Him all things** were created. **All things** in heaven and on earth, visible or invisible were created **by Him and in Him and through Him**. And **all things were made for Him** (see Col. 1:15-16 ESV⁴).

Here we see Jesus (1 Person of the Godhead), the Creator of all things, the firstborn Son. **He is begotten and yet is truly God the Creator**.

Jesus' sonship did not start 2000 years ago or end at His death on the cross – scripture makes that clear. The Father did not suddenly make a 'son' for the job on earth for 30 years or so, 2000 years ago. My previous article shows how clearly God is not afraid to connect eternal sonship with the Godhead.

When we are told in John 3:16 that God so loved the world that He sent his Only-Begotten Son into the world, He was hardly doing that if He was creating a sonship from scratch at conception in Mary. The act of conception mentioned in Matthew 1:18 and Luke 1:31, 35 is the miraculous act of God (the Holy Spirit) making the Word flesh (John 1:14). It is emphasised here that He is the Son of God as everyone had to realise that He was not the physical son of Joseph (also see the parable in Matthew 21:33-41).

Jesus is indeed the 'Firstborn of all creation' (Colossians 1:15), the *prototokos*, both by rank as the first above all and heir of all things **and** as the first to ever be born. He is the only-begotten – *monogenes* – in the sense that He is the only one begotten/born within the Godhead, and the only one to be truly born from God at all. Jesus is God's Son in the **truest sense possible**, unlike Adam the son of God (Luke 3:38) or the angels (sons of God –

Job 1:6). 2000 years ago He was born from Mary's womb. In eternity, Jesus was begotten by God Himself. He is eternally begotten of the Father, both Persons being 'part' of the Godhead and both being (with the Holy Spirit) **THE CREATOR**.

This sonship is not inferior within the Godhead but is only a particular function or position. There are three Persons within the Godhead (Father, Son and Holy Spirit). For God to always have been perfect Love (in the truest possible sense of the word – see 1 Corinthians 13 and Ephesians 3:19) He would have had to act upon it. This perfect '*agape*' love is possible as there are these three Persons within the Trinity to interact. Another thing to point out from all this is that God understands Family and is the Family of Families in this Parent-Child relationship.

Colossians 1:15-17 makes it absolutely clear that this sonship is in no way inferior in this Godhood. In verse 17 we are told that Jesus is 'before all things, and in Him all things hold together' (ESV⁴).

Proverbs 8

We have established in the articles: *John 1:1-2* (Reachout Quarterly 68) and

Yahweh/Jehovah (Reachout Quarterly 67) that Jesus and the Father are equally Jehovah/Yahweh/the Great I AM and therefore both Persons are eternal. This is not in question in this article.

Putting all this together, namely, that Jesus is the eternal Son (begotten not created) past, present and future, and that He has always existed as perfect God, we can come to no other conclusion than to see Jesus as eternally begotten. Only this can honestly convey what the Scripture says and anything else would contradict it.

There is only one verse that can **appear** to be at variance with the concept of Jesus as the **eternally-begotten** Son, and that is verse 22 from the passage in Proverbs 8:22-31.

In this passage we have the Hebrew word *qanah* which some translations have translated 'to create' as though wisdom was 'created'. The Hebrew word in isolation can mean 'to create' but it can mean a lot of other things such as 'begetting' (Deuteronomy 32:6), 'buying' (Genesis 25:10) and 'owning' (Isaiah 1:3). See Ellicott Vol. IV on Proverbs 8:227; Hebrew Bible⁸; Metzger p.80⁵).

I am going to approach this passage head-on and talk about the difficulties of interpretation we can come across. I am also going to approach it on the assumption that it is referring both to wisdom as a virtue and to Jesus as the 'wisdom of God'/Word/Son of God. It could however be interpreted to refer to some kind of angelic being – this may seem to be a necessary alternative if it was believed that 'to create' is the operative translation. However, I think it is unlikely in view of the similarities between the passage and aspects, functions and position of Jesus from other scriptures.

More acceptable as an alternative to this (if it was insisted that 'to create' was the most accurate translation) would be to say it did not refer to the Son of God, but only to the attribute of wisdom as expressed in the Book of Proverbs as a whole. In this case it would be incumbent upon us to not to be so analytical in how we understand the passage. This book is not a book that would be heavily used for doctrinal issues since it is a book of proverbs. If you are in any doubt that this is the case and that the title 'Proverbs' was simply added later, just read the first verse in Chapter 1 verse 1: 'The Proverbs of Solomon...'.
The Psalms present us with a

similar difficulty as it is a book of songs in its basic form. However, there are no inaccurate statements in the Psalms or Proverbs, although it can be difficult to separate out prophesies of the coming Messiah for example. If we were faced with the Psalms without any knowledge of what the New Testament writers have said about the prophecies taken from the Psalms and applied to Jesus, we would find it very difficult to do that ourselves.

So, if we are not to read too much into this passage (Proverbs 8:22-31) as a basis of doctrine, all we can really say is that all things were created with wisdom – which is absolutely true. We can always fall back on this interpretation and we are justified in doing so. Since this is a book of proverbs it is also justified in **personifying** wisdom as though **she** were a virtue with a personality. This is expressive language and is very effective. Often we have the two concepts of Wisdom and Folly pitched against one another as two personalities calling us to follow their ways – we have to choose (see Proverbs 9:1-6 for Wisdom and Proverbs 9:13-18 for Folly). We could say Jesus is the personification of wisdom here and the Devil is the personification of folly, but it is not necessary.

HEBREW WORD

The Hebrew word for wisdom is a feminine noun, but that does not mean wisdom is a feminine being (except in the proverbial language) any more than the French word for table (*la table*) signifies it is a woman with four legs just because the word has a feminine form. However, it is interesting to note that the word 'wisdom' is not actually used in the passage in question (Proverbs 8:22-31). This could be an indication that we are now not looking at a proverbial picture of a wise woman but a personal being expressed through a prophetic forth-telling. There is still the grammatical tension though, as it were, since we have the feminine form 'rejoicing' in verse 30 and the masculine noun 'master-workman' in the same verse ^{6, 8, 14}.

Having said this, if taken analytically, the context of the passage implies that it is still speaking about wisdom as an actual being, although the word 'wisdom' is not actually

present in these few verses.

I will explain why I believe the passage may well be speaking of wisdom as Jesus the 'wisdom of God'. The absence of the word 'wisdom' in the passage removes the feminine personification aspect and is perhaps deliberately replaced by the noun 'master-workman' in verse 30. The Hebrew for 'master-workman' is an interesting word and (just as an aside) it is used as a proper name - *Amon* - too. It means 'foster-child' or 'artificer' ^{6, 14}.

Original Hebrew (and the original Hebrew text of the Old Testament) was made up of consonants with no vowels, and the word used here – *Amon* – has the same Hebrew consonants as our word 'Amen'. In fact the Greek word '*amen*' is the equivalent of the Hebrew one. It is the same word that we use at the end of our prayers. It is the very last word of the Bible (Revelation 22:21). It is the same word that Jesus frequently uses translated, 'Truly, truly', or 'Verily, verily' – literally, 'Amen, Amen' (e.g. John 5:24) ^{6, 9, 10, 11}.

So, in a nutshell, the word used for Jesus in Proverbs 8:30 – 'master workman' has the same root as the word Amen. Together their root meanings are; to stay, support, nurse, bring up, firm, established, sure, true, faithful, etc. ⁶ This is all very interesting as we know that Jesus is actually called 'Amen' in Revelation 3:14.

So far we have established that the passage in Proverbs 8 has several possible interpretations as it does not state specifically, 'This is about Jesus or the Son of God or an angel or a virtue or the I AM, etc. This in one way restricts interpretation – for example, for it to refer to Jesus, verse 22 has to be translated in a certain way; if it refers to wisdom as a virtue it has to be translated in a certain way too because surely God always had wisdom or else how can He be God? God could not create wisdom for Himself without wisdom! If we are not to read too deeply, and simply see it as referring to wisdom being present at creation, then everything is quite simple. But it ignores the fact that the word 'wisdom' is absent from verses 22-31 in Proverbs chapter 8 implying we are in another realm of interpretation here. If it is simply

referring to an angelic being, then how can a created angelic being be the 'wisdom of God'? So, as I say, its vagueness can restrict interpretation in isolation from other clearer passages, but if handled correctly and used in the light of the whole Bible it actually enhances interpretation. If we can spend the time to study it in depth we can see **the glorious beauty of its full significance**. This is something I hope to have achieved by the time I've finished this series of articles.

We will look at Jesus' identity as the 'wisdom of God' in a moment but firstly let us consider whether this passage has other hall-marks of it being a prophetic as opposed to a proverbial passage.

ORIGIN OF WISDOM

On the face of it Proverbs 8:22-31 appears to speak of the **origins** of wisdom whether or not it is referring to the pre-existence of Jesus. The language is different to the chapter in which it falls and indeed the book as a whole – e.g. there are no proverbial words of advice. It is very difficult to know though where the divisions of interpretation fall. This is common in prophesy. For example, the prophecies regarding Jesus coming to earth as a baby in peace was confused with His taking over as a political leader before the incarnation took place. We can understand this when we read Isaiah 9:6-7. The latter phrase in the passage is more relevant to Jesus' second coming (yet to happen) but Isaiah does not make a distinction between the two phrases.

The prophecy in Isaiah regarding the Fall of Babylon breaks off into a prophecy about Satan in Isaiah 14:4, 12-15. And to confirm the connection with Satan we have allusions to this passage in Revelation 12:9 and Luke 10:18. But where the cut-off point between the human king and the Devil himself comes is difficult to determine. Isaiah 14 and Proverbs 8 are not doctrinally clear statements on their own, but they can be used as far as they **confirm what is stated more precisely elsewhere in scripture**.

Just as Isaiah 14 is alluded to in Revelation 12:9 and Luke 10:18, so we can say that Proverbs 8 is being alluded to in 1 Corinthians 1:24 and 30.

Jesus is the Wisdom of God

1 Corinthians 1:24 tells us that Jesus is the 'Power of God' and the 'Wisdom of God'. I don't see how any being other than God Himself can be the Power of God or the Wisdom of God. 1 Corinthians 1:30 tells us that God is the source of our life in Jesus,

'whom God made our wisdom and our righteousness and sanctification and redemption.' (ESV⁴)

This may well be a key to understanding Proverbs 8:22-31. First of all, how can any being other than God Himself be Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification and Redemption? But it says God **made him** our wisdom and our righteousness etc. What does this mean? Well again we have an indication of the Father-Son relationship. In 1 Corinthians 15:24 we are told that at the time of the end, Jesus will deliver the kingdom to God, but until then He will reign. 1 Corinthians 15:27 says God has put all things in subjection under Jesus' feet. 1 Corinthians 15:28 says the Son will at the end be 'subjected to him who put all things in subjection under him, that God may be all in all' (ESV⁴).

God the Father clearly put all things under subjection to the Son (only the perfect Son of God could handle this). In the same way, God has made Jesus our Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification and Redemption. It is not that God **created** Jesus as Wisdom, Righteousness etc. 1 Corinthians 15:28 says that the **Son** will be subject to God (by implication the Father) so that 'God may be all in all'. The act of Jesus subjecting Himself to His Father enables God to be 'all in all'. In other words this is what the Godhead is, something with **the Father-Son relationship – this relationship is part of what makes God completely God.**

So we come back again to Jesus being **made** our wisdom (1 Corinthians 1:30). Literally translated it says:

'who (Jesus) became wisdom to us from God...'

The NKJV³ has:

'who became for us wisdom from God...'

The NRSV¹ has the same:

'who became for us wisdom from God'

The NIV² has:

'who has become for us wisdom from God'

And as we have already seen, the ESV⁴ has:

'whom God made our wisdom...'

The word translated 'became', 'made' is the Greek word *ginomai*. The word is not used in the sense of 'created' here, but more accurately 'became' or 'established as'¹³. *Ginomai* can also mean, 'born, produced, appointed, happened' etc.

As the passage says literally, Jesus became wisdom for us **from God**. The word *apo* literally means 'away from' or 'proceeding from'¹¹. Coupling this with the root meaning of *ginomai* being 'to be born' we have **Jesus who has been born to us wisdom proceeding from God**. This creates a beautiful parallel with Proverbs 8:22-25 where we will see that the Father brought wisdom forth from eternity.

Jesus is the wisdom of God (1 Corinthians 1:24) and wisdom is something we can obtain as a gift from God to enable us to live correctly. James 1:5 tells us we can lack wisdom, therefore if as Christians we do lack it we can ask God for it. The passage is talking about the availability of the attribute of wisdom, not Jesus as a Person. The verse also says that we should ask God for wisdom. We know that Jesus is the Wisdom of God, the very essence of Wisdom. All things were made by Him and all things hold together in Jesus (Colossians 1:15-17). **Asking God for wisdom is the same as asking Jesus for wisdom who IS wisdom**. This connection is so obvious and clear that I do believe Proverb 8:22-31 is speaking of both Jesus as the Wisdom of God and the attribute/virtue wisdom.

If Jesus is the wisdom of God then the Father cannot be wholly God without Jesus – the two are inseparable. For God to be 'all in all' there needs to be the Father-Son relationship. Only God himself can be **the** wisdom of God and we know God is eternal.

So far we have only touched briefly on Proverbs 8:22-31. In the

next article (Part 3) we will analyse the text and show clearly why the passage can be taken as a prophetic forth-telling of the eternal begotten-ness of Jesus.

Bibliography

1. New Revised Standard Version (1989) Oxford University Press
2. New International Version (1979) Hodder and Stoughton
3. New King James Version (1982) Thomas Nelson Publishers
4. English Standard Version (2002) Collins
5. Metzger, B.M., The Jehovah's Witnesses and Jesus Christ. From: Theology Today 1953. The Theological Book Agency, Princeton, NJ.
6. Davidson, B., Analytical Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon. Bagster and Sons.
7. Ellicott, C.J. [Ed.], Ellicott's Commentary on the Whole Bible Vol. IV. (1959). Zondervan Publishing House.
8. Snaith, N.H. The Hebrew Bible. The British and Foreign Bible Society.
9. The New Testament (Greek Text). Trinitarian Bible Society
10. Nestle – Alan. Novum Testamentum Graece. (1981). Deutsche Bibelstiftung Stuttgart.
11. Abbot/Smith. Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament. (third ed. 1986) T and T Clark.
12. The Interlinear Greek-English New Testament (AV). Bagster. The Nestle Greek Text with a literal English translation by Rev. Dr. Alfred Marshall (1958)
13. Moulton, H.K., The Analytical Greek Lexicon Revised. (1978). Regency Reference Library, Zondervan Publishing House.
14. Green, J.P., The Interlinear Bible – Hebrew - Greek - English (second ed. 1986). Baker Book House. ☐

Special Offers

HALLOWE'EN TRACTS

31 October will soon be here again. Are you ready to give a clear witness to the potential dangers of concentrating on things that are evil? Are you ready to give a reasoned defence as to why we believe that Jesus Christ is the 'Light' of the whole world?

A summary of the practical notes on what to do regarding Halloween are available from Head Office at £1.00 including postage.

We also produce the following tracts and these are available for bulk purchase at special discount.



DON'T BE TRICKED written for mid-teenagers to adults, to explain why we are not involved in Halloween and at the same time give a positive message.



KNOCK KNOCK is the same title as last year but this tract has been completely redesigned and printed in colour especially for younger children as a way to explain to them why Halloween was not just a 'bit of fun'.

Costs per copy for Britain

1-10: 20p each + 50% p&p
 11-49: 18p each + 30%p&p
 50-99: 16p + 25% p&p
 100-199: 14p each + 20% p&p
 200+ 12p each + 15% p&p

Outside Britain

Price per item as above but:

1-49: postage add 50%
 50+ postage add 30%

Post, fax or email (add credit card details for the last two) your order to Head Office in time to allow for delivery before the date required.

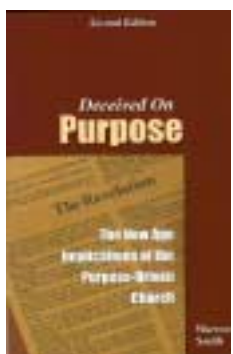
Payment with order by cheque or credit card (there is a 75p charge for each credit card transaction). ☐



"A Time of Departing is about spiritual pilots whose desired destination may be noble and good, but their actual destination is a departure from the saving faith of Christ's work on the cross and a departure from Biblical truth..." from the Foreword.

This is a revealing account of a universal spirituality that has infiltrated much of the church today. The book exposes subtle strategies to compromise the gospel message with Eastern mystical concepts cloaked under the wrappings of contemplative prayer and the silence.

Buy now for only £7.49 inc p&p
 (Normally £8.99 + postage)



Warren Smith was formerly involved in the New Age Movement and has written extensively on the subject of spiritual deception

Reading the Purpose-Driven Life brought many concerns and questions that Warren Smith felt needed to be investigated and addressed. Take time to check out his concerns. This is not a negative book but it looks underneath the surface of this multi-dollar teaching and makes some startling discoveries.

Buy now for only £7.49 inc p&p
 (Normally £8.99 + postage)

Post, fax or email order for these two books as per instructions for Halloween tracts or these two books can be ordered direct from the Web Shop - follow link from main web site or type - (<http://shopping.reachouttrust.org/shopping/reachout.nsf/home>) then click "Special Offers" and find the title.

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 _____