

WILL NOT BELIEVE

Q U A R T E R L Y

Issue 85
Autumn 2006

Preparing the new edition of *Awake! to the Watchtower* made me realise just how these groups change and caused me once again to rejoice in the unchangeableness of our God. Thinking of a Science lesson I heard once that time corrupts and changes things, brought further rejoicing that our God is outside time and will never change or decay and so is always the same not affected by the ravages of time as we are.

The Gospel we have received and the revelation that Christ has given cannot change – yes we can see it more clearly and can change our understanding but what God has said and shown Himself to be can never change. Groups such as the Watchtower Society have had to change what God said and not just change their understanding of what He has said.

This thought led me to consider just how important the teaching and exposition of the Word is so that we have the opportunity to hear the *real truth and not just some man-made patter*. However, it still means that we must believe it as the last chapter of Acts shows clearly.

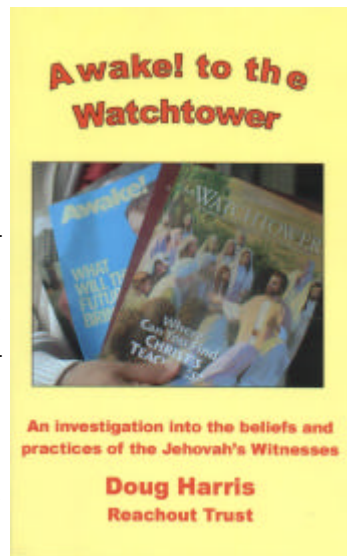
“When they had set a day for Paul, they came to him at his lodging in large numbers; and he was explaining to them by solemnly testifying about the kingdom of God and trying to persuade them concerning Jesus, from both the Law of Moses and from the Prophets, from morning until evening. Some were being persuaded by the things spoken, but others would not believe.” - Act 28:23, 24.

Paul was the great apologist of his day and here we see him skilfully explain the Old Testament. Those listening to him would not believe that Jesus was the Messiah, or indeed, that the

Gospel was for the Gentiles as well as the Jews; they would have held the same prejudices that had caused Paul to be taken to Rome in the first place.

However, undaunted, he takes the whole day to go through the Old Testament showing Jesus and the purpose of God in His Kingdom of one people with the barrier broken down. All in the room listened intently and at the end of the day we find that, “some were being persuaded”. In other words having looked at the Scriptures and listened to Paul’s words of explanation, they reasoned in their own minds that what he was saying was right and they admitted that they had held a wrong view, repented and had a change of heart.

Note, however, there were a group of others who, “would **not believe**”. They heard the same words and they saw the same Scriptures; it was not that they did not understand, they indeed understood too well what it meant, but given all the facts they did not want to change from their entrenched positions, they wanted to carry on believ-



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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:

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

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ing the lie that they had been brought up with and they would **not believe**.

Tragically, we will meet people like this, who just will not change. Just the other day I was emailing a former Jehovah's Witness who was looking for the truth but still had the ideas of the Society entrenched within her. She came to the point where she admitted

that John 1:1 showed that just as God had no beginning in Genesis 1:1, so Jesus was described as having no beginning. The truth of Scripture, the revelation of God's Word clear plain and understood. But she went on, "Jehovah alone is God and so this cannot be true." She would **not believe!**

What do we do in such circumstances? Pray and

press on just as Paul did in Acts. Those who wanted to believe he spent many hours with teaching the Scriptures and revealing the truth, the others he let go with a severe warning of what they had done. Don't give up; there are those who want to believe and these are the ones to whom we need to be ready to give our time and attention. ☐

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SEPTEMBER 2006

19 Reading *
19 Bexhill
20 Bexhill *
26 Bexhill

OCTOBER 2006

1 Dagenham
7 Craven Arms, Shropshire
10 Battersea Bible School
15 Sunbury
16 Bradford
17 Bradford
19-21 CRE Harrogate

NOVEMBER 2006

4 Brentwood REDay
18 Warley REDay
21 Battersea Bible School

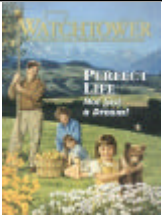
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WATCH THE OWER



2006/3

In this article we look at how the Watchtower Society still fixes dates.

The current membership of the Governing Body.

And a rare newspaper interview given by Judge Rutherford.

The Society quit fixing exact dates a few years ago but that does not stop them bringing ambiguous teaching that leads their loyal members to interesting conclusions. An article in this category is found in *The Watchtower* 15 December 2003, pp.14-19. Its title alone, *Our Watchfulness Takes on Greater Urgency* would lead one to ask, "What has happened that means we now should have greater urgency"?

We are told that:

"To keep on the watch, we must remain alert and vigilant. This require more than simply acknowledging that we are living in the last days, more than recognizing that times are hard. We must have firm conviction that 'the end of all things has drawn close.'"

Here, then, is the reason for the urgency; no specific date but the end of all things is close.

The article goes on to draw parallels with Noah's day and we are categorically told that:

"Since he brought an end to the ungodly world of Noah's day, he will certainly destroy the wicked world of today."

What will the reader be thinking? The world is going to end in the days in which I live. No specific dates but certainly it is not going to be long. However, there is a clearer indication of when this will be. Talking of the year 2490 BC when Jehovah declared His judgement in Noah's day, we read:

"Only 120 years more and Jehovah would bring 'deluge of waters upon the earth...."

Then in the very next paragraph we read:

"Some 90 years have passed since the last days of this system of things began in 1914. We are certainly in 'the time of the end.'"

We have dealt elsewhere with the

date of 1914 but just read this as a Jehovah's Witness would. In Noah's day it was 120 years; we have now had 90 and so there can only be another 30 years at the most. No dates fixed, everything deniable, but no question as to what conclusion would come to a Witness.

Much of what is read in this article regarding things in this age compared with the days of Noah is true; the fact that we are in the last days we would not dispute; but the specific timing that is hinted at and then what a Witness must do because of the time is clearly not Biblical teaching. We will look at some of these issues.

"Jehovah has kept these warnings in front of his people by means of timely reminders through the spiritual food provided by 'the faithful and discreet slave.'"

I presume these are the dates that they have claimed in the past for the end of this system of things that have not come true. Strange that a truthful God would own the lies of this human organisation. Strange, too, in these circumstances that they claim sole fulfilment of the message of the Kingdom and allude to the fact that they are the only organisation that God is using today:

"An integral part of the Kingdom message preached earth wide by Jehovah's Witnesses is the warning that God's Kingdom will soon remove human rulership." p.16

"Similarly, as Jehovah's Witnesses diligently fulfil their commission to preach, the message of God's Kingdom is being declared worldwide... The *Watchtower* magazine, announcing Jehovah's Kingdom, has a circulation of over 25,000,000 and is printed in more than 140 languages." p.18

The article concludes with the fact that only a few survived in Noah's day and only a comparatively few will survive in this day. How can I be sure of surviving, well, probably not sure, but what must I do to stand a chance? The answer is we must be like Noah who was faultless or blameless. Anyone reading this article want to

claim that? This, then, becomes the problem for every Witness: how can I prove myself faultless and so at least stand a chance? The full answer to that comes in the next article, *Prove Yourself ready for Jehovah's Day* - pp.19-24. We will not look at this article now but simply to say that the way the Society tell their members to prove themselves faultless and be ready is to do things, such as get out preaching more.

Herein lies the problem because no one can ever be faultless and the more we do the more we are likely to do things that are not right and the more faults we will have. It misses the fact that Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. It was not what *he* did but what *God* did for him. How sad that the Witness feels that they must work for their salvation when the Bible shows clearly, whether in Noah's day or today, that is impossible; however, we are to *work out* our salvation.

This point is underlined again when the final paragraph tells us that Jesus Christ is directing a spiritual building work today so that an, "arklike spiritual paradise exists". And who or where is it? Although not mentioned by name here, it is in other articles, the inference is clear - the ark is the organisation and you had better be an active part of it in the last days. As the next article concludes:

"Our regularly attending Christian meetings and sharing in preaching the good news are included in the acts and deeds of godly devotion."

GOVERNING BODY

The Watchtower, 15 March 2006, p.26 informs us of the new members of the Governing Body. The 'exciting news' had been released back last August and the new appointments took effect from 1 September 2005. This brings the current membership of the Governing Body back to 12 and, we are informed, they are all 'anointed Christians'. We list them here in alphabetical order:

C.W.Barber; J.E. Barr; S.F.Herd; G.W.Jackson; T.Jaracz; M.S.Lett; G Lösch; A.Morris III; G.H.Pierce; A.D.Schroeder; D.H.Splane; D.Sydlik.

JUDGE RUTHERFORD

That sub-heading can either be taken as the name of the second president of the Watchtower Society or what should be done to his words. The following was an interview carried in 1941 in the *Globe Democrat* newspaper.

The whole article is very interesting, as it shows the thinking of this leader, but we have highlighted some interesting quotes, made at the time, which might not exactly fit in with the modern-day spin given to the history of the Society.

Joseph F. Rutherford, leader of the obedient multitude of Jehovah's Witnesses here for their national convention, began his career as a "follower of Jesus" in St. Louis 37 years ago, he disclosed to the *Globe-Democrat* yesterday in the first interview he has given a newspaper man in three years.

"One night in 1904," he said, "I wandered into a meeting of 150 Bible students on Grand Avenue and came out so impressed and delighted I returned to Boonville, Mo., where I was practicing law, and formed a Bible study group there." Six years later, in New York, he became associated with Jehovah's Witnesses as a lecturer and subsequently travelled every state in the Union and spoke in many large cities in Europe and Asia.

BACK IN CITY

His present five-day visit to St. Louis during the convention is the longest since "that Bible meeting, which was the turning point of my career."

Although his word is absolute among the more than 500,000 Jehovah's Witnesses in United States, Judge Rutherford objects to being called their leader – "I'm just a follower of Jesus like the others, fighting alongside them" – and prefers to be known only as president of the three corporations which do the Witnesses' publishing.

come to St. Louis have not come on my account, but only that we together might bear testimony and encourage people who have been misled and deluded by false doctrines in order that they might see that the theocratic government is the hope and only hope of the human race." he said.

LAWYER 17 YEARS

"For 17 years I practiced law in the courts of Missouri, including the courts of St. Louis, state and federal. The title "judge" some people still apply to me comes from my service as special judge under the provisions of the Missouri statute. But Christian people are not interested in men, but their interest is centered in the theocratic government and the truth concerning that government is proclaimed by men in all walks of life and one does not stand above the other.

"To me, titles mean nothing." he laughed. "It doesn't matter whether I'm called Judge or jackass." But from the Witnesses Rutherford is accorded a mixture of reverence due a divine agent, and honor and gratitude that would go to a teacher and way-shower.

Conventionites deny they fear for his safety, but the tall, soft-spoken man is guarded with a thoroughness rivaling the Secret Service ring about President Roosevelt. His place of abode in St Louis is a secret which officials preserve with a polite "I don't know."

When he arrives at the Arena a double line of husky well-instructed men link arms to shield him. Efficient flying squads block any approach near him in the building, while at least two guards are on duty at each of four landings in the arena stairway leading to the fourth-floor administration offices.

The Judge takes the elevator. Others must walk, explaining their mission four times en route. Few survive the gauntlet. Rutherford said he tries to make himself available to any Witness, but his subordinates explain they are seeking to conserve his strength.

Before and after addresses from the speakers' platform, the guard is even tighter. He arrives only seconds before he begins to talk and is whisked to an automobile before the concluding applause dies out.

The audience is cautioned not to whisper. Ushers have turned back everyone seeking to enter the auditorium with a pop-bottle in his hand. No one not wearing a "convention servant" ribbon is permitted within 50 feet of the platform.

Asked to explain the basic differences between beliefs of Jehovah's Witnesses and other religions, Rutherford said: "They are diametrically opposed and therefore can't be classified together just as you can't add a man and a house and have two men or two houses. Christianity, as opposed to "christianity" means doing the will of Almighty God. Religion is the doing of anything that is contrary to the will of God."

NO HUMAN LEADER

Along the same lines, Rutherford explained, Jehovah's Witnesses could be called neither a sect, cult, church, nor organization. "The first two imply a human leader, which I am not," he said. "The latter two definitions are improper because our work is an individual mission, individuals serving God in their own way."

As to the literal interpretation of the Bible he asserted "We simply do what it says and don't try to twist out interpretations that will serve our agenda. There are no contradictory parts of the Bible." Rutherford was reluctant to talk of international affairs, since he felt an expression of personal opinion might be construed as reflecting of members "who must, in all things, follow their own consciences."

"We naturally are neutral in the European crisis," he said. "Jehovah's Witnesses are fighters, but not with carnal weapons. It's truth that makes people free, and we are fighting with truth as our weapon. We couldn't conscientiously fight for the German, Italian or such governments, since we are devoted to fighting for the theocratic government.

CALLS HITLER CRAZY

"Hitler," he commented, "is as crazy as a bedbug. He is under the control of demons as sure as the sun shines, but there isn't the remotest chance he will succeed in his purpose of dominating the world."

Jehovah's Witnesses, as ordained ministers, are exempt under the Selective Service Act, he said, and have been specifically covered in an exemption order by Gen. Hershey, Selective Service director.

Rutherford, often rumored to be wealthy since he took up residence in "Bethsarim," \$75,000 mansion near San Diego, Cal., laughed at a question pertaining to his personal income.

"If I died tomorrow," he said "I wouldn't have money enough to buy a coffin. I imagine though, I would depend on the Society buying me one. I haven't showed a net personal profit in anything all my life."

NO COLLECTION TAKEN

Collections are never taken among Jehovah's Witnesses, he added, and they never ask for money.

"As the scriptures declare, all the wealth belongs to Almighty God," Rutherford declared. "We are engaged in His work and He sees to it that a sufficient amount of money is provided to carry on the work. He does not beg nor do His faithful followers.

"Every one of Jehovah's Witnesses serves freely and without hire. Every person attending this convention, who is able, pays his own expenses and if he has a little surplus he joyfully gives that to help pay for the expenses of the poor, and here we are feeding

many poor people free of charge."

He declined to disclose the Society's income from literature on the ground that the "religions never submit a public statement on theirs."

The California mansion, he went on, is not his property. "It was bought and is owned by the Watchtower Society," he added. "I have no property myself. Even the copyrights from my books and pamphlets are held by the Society.

"I occupy Bethsarim only by virtue of being president of the society, and succeeding presidents will be entitled to do the same."

CERTAIN UPHEAVALS

Judge Rutherford at one point elaborated on references many convention speakers had made to the end of the world being near. Asked for a date prediction and probable first manifestations of destruction of the world, he said:

"It isn't wise to try to fix biblical prophecies to a calendar *, but there are certain upheavals in civilization predicted in the Bible after which the final stage then will begin. The word "then" is not amplified, but there are many indications the trend toward Armageddon began in 1914. Coincidentally, that marked the beginning of Hitler's evil career.

"The earth will not be destroyed physically. There will always be an earth and there will always be men on it because God

put them there. It simply means the triumph of Christ's will over evil. The destruction will be a displacement of evil in the same way that light displaces or dissipates darkness."

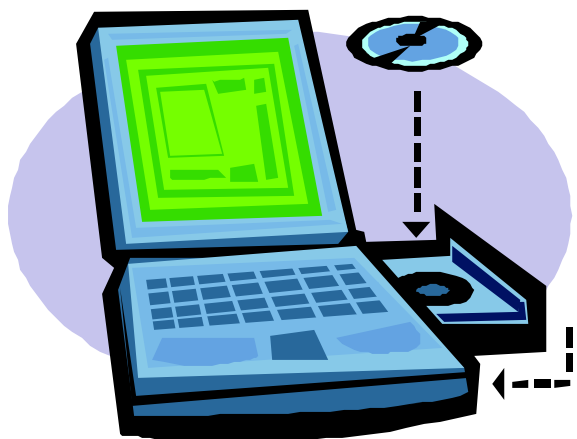
DIFFERENT MANNER

Judge Rutherford's quiet voice and friendly manner is wholly unexpected in view of the unquestioning promptness with which he is obeyed by subordinate officials. As Rutherford's spokesmen, the commands of his subordinates are likewise law to members.

Their obedience is astounding. At one night session the chairman inside the Arena announced over the loudspeaker the Arena grounds were badly littered with the refuse of a thousand tinned meals and beds made of newspapers. He requested it be cleaned up. Instantly every person within hearing sprang into action and the debris vanished in seconds.

In the lobby of the Arena, during speeches, booth attendants growl a firm "Be quiet," if any stranger has the effrontery to interrupt their listening. Throughout the convention, no smoking has been permitted.

** This is interesting in the light of the book Children released at this time talked of the remaining months to Armageddon! ☐*



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TRUTH RESTORED - 48



BY MIKE & ANN THOMAS

The 96-year-old Mormon president has had more opportunities than anyone to become familiar with Mormonism. Why, then, is his most frequent answer to questions in the media, "I don't know"?

THE HINCKLEY TIMELINE

Gordon B Hinckley, Mormon Church president, holds several distinctions and his life has been, understandably, celebrated by the Mormon Church. He served a mission in London in 1933, unusual in Depression Era Mormonism. On his return he accepted a job offer in 1935 to lead the new Mormon public relations department, bringing with him his college qualifications in journalism. This move effectively made him the first 'career Mormon' in the church's history, all other General Authorities coming from other professions and backgrounds to serve full-time. Later, as church president, he became the most travelled Mormon president ever, also having the distinction of being responsible for the largest temple building programme in the church's history. More than two-thirds of all currently operating temples were dedicated during his incumbency and he has brought the number of temples up from 27 to 122 in just 11 years, with 11 more announced or under construction.

He is currently the second oldest president after David O McKay and despite recent surgery for prostate cancer shows no signs of slowing down, let alone stopping. Some would argue that he deserves the accolades laid on him and I am not about to deny the man his due. A question arises, however, as we look at his extensive and impressive history. The Hinckley timeline will help you see what I mean.

EARLY YEARS

23 June 1910 - born in Salt Lake City, Utah, **he has been at the centre of Mormonism from birth.** Just twenty years before, Mormonism had "officially" renounced polygamy. The president during Hinckley's formative years, Heber J Grant (1918-

1945), was a practising polygamist, fleeing the country in 1903 to avoid being arrested, finally convicted in 1906 and fined \$300. Grant was born in 1856, when Brigham Young was teaching that Adam was God, was 21 in 1877 when Brigham Young died, and became an Apostle in 1882, when the church was still teaching the Adam/God doctrine.

At this time, and for some time to come, the *Journal of Discourses*, source of much of the controversy surrounding Mormon doctrine was still regarded as authoritative, a "Standard Work" of the church. In 1913 James Talmage, an Apostle of the church, first published *The Articles of Faith*, a comprehensive look at church doctrine based on Joseph Smith's famous creed. 1915 saw the first publication of Talmage's magnificent work on the Saviour, *Jesus the Christ*. Both books have proved seminal works for generations of Mormons and are still key text books today.

1928 - Hinckley completed High School in Salt Lake City, going on to study at the University of Utah. **His education was thoroughly Mormon.**

1933 - After attending the University of Utah he was called to go on a mission to London. **He would have built his presentation of Mormonism on long-established Mormon works such as Journal of Discourses, as well as more recent works like those produced by Talmage.**

1935 - Hinckley returned to the United States and accepted a job offer to lead the Church's new public relations department. Hinckley's responsibilities included developing the Church's recently established radio broadcasts and making use of the era's new communication technologies, **putting him, from an early age, at the centre of presenting Mormonism to the world.**

1937 - he started serving on the Sunday school General Board, **putting him at the centre of the Mormon teaching programme.** 1938 saw the publication of *The Teach-*

ings of the Prophet Joseph Smith by Joseph Fielding Smith, Apostle and Grandson of Hyrum Smith, brother of Joseph Smith Jr.

In 1954 the teachings of Joseph Fielding Smith himself, a man regarded as "the leading gospel scholar and the greatest doctrinal teacher of [his] generation", began to be published in three volumes. *Doctrines of Salvation* is, again, a comprehensive study of key Mormon doctrine and has proved definitive for generations of Mormons. The same year John Widstoe published the *Discourses of Brigham Young*.

1958 - After service in a stake presidency, Hinckley became a General Authority of the Church in the now discontinued position of Assistant to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, **giving him experience in application and leadership at the highest level.** This year saw the publication of *Mormon Doctrine*, Bruce R McConkie's attempt at producing a definitive systematic theology of Mormon teaching. It is much quoted by the church to this day.

MID-LIFE

1961 - at 51, Hinckley himself became an Apostle and member of that Quorum, the youngest at that time. Being an Apostle from such a young age **has given him more opportunity than most to study Mormon leadership, policy-making and doctrinal decisions at the highest level.** Around this time America was in the middle of the great Civil Rights Movement and the Mormon Church came under a lot of fire for its policy of barring coloured people from holding the priesthood. Nevertheless, the church put up a robust defence of its anti-Black doctrine until it gave in to pressure and made a policy change in 1978.

In the early 1980s the ill health of both Church President Spencer W Kimball and his ageing Counsellors N Eldon Tanner and Marion G Romney led the Church leadership to resort to the occasional practice of adding an additional Counsellor to the First Presidency. Hinckley filled this posi-

Tanner's death in 1982, Romney succeeded him as First Counsellor and Hinckley succeeded Romney as Second Counsellor. 1980 also saw the publication of Ezra Taft Benson's famous *Fourteen Fundamentals in following the Prophet*, in which he makes clear that the prophet "speaks for the Lord in everything, is more vital than the Scriptures, can make Scripture, and that rejecting the counsel of the prophets brings suffering".

During this time period, there were a number of questionable, new Mormon historical documents that began to surface, and Hinckley oversaw the purchase of some of these documents. Later, most of the newly surfaced documents turned out to be forgeries of Mark Hoffmann including the Salamander Letter. Because of his prominence in the Church and his responsibility to oversee the purchase of historical documents, Hinckley became a key figure in the investigation of Hoffmann, **giving him vital experience in being at the centre of and dealing with controversies surrounding Mormon Church history.**

By this time, however, Hinckley was largely shouldering the burdens of the First Presidency himself. Though he officially remained Second Counsellor, he was informally referred to in the press as "acting President of the Church".

1985 - Kimball and Romney remained largely out of the public eye until President Kimball died in November. Older Mormons will remember that, with the calling of a series of elderly men dogged with ill health, this made him *de facto* president of the church from this period. His official incumbency is ten years, but his *de facto* incumbency is nearer 25 years. These twenty five years **have given him unparalleled experience as a top church leader, and his lifetime of service, from missionary to president, a familiarity with church policy and doctrine unmatched by any other president.**

Ezra Taft Benson became Church President, and named Hinckley First Counsellor. Romney succeeded Benson as President of the Twelve, though age and health problems effectively prevented him carrying out his duties. Thomas S Monson became Second Counsellor, and, for a while, all three members of the First

their duties. In the early 1990s, however, Ezra Taft Benson developed serious health problems and, although the church kept up the pretence of his running things, his own grandson publicly denounced them for exploiting a sick old man. First Counsellor Hinckley again carried out many of the duties of the President of the Church until Benson died in 1994. Meanwhile, 1992 saw the publication of the *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* in which much Mormon knowledge and doctrine was gathered and explained.

Howard W Hunter, who had succeeded Romney as President of the Twelve, became Church President and Hinckley and Monson became his Counsellors, in addition, Hinckley becoming President of the Twelve by seniority.

LATTER-DAY PROPHET

March 12, 1995 - When Hunter died after a presidency of only nine months, Hinckley was chosen to be president of the Church at the age of 84 and has led the church since.

Under his leadership, the Church has expanded the number of temples worldwide from 27 to 122 (as of October 2005, with 11 announced or under construction). His involvement with Mormon temples, their purpose and operation **would have given him key insight into temple doctrine.**

23 September 1995 he announced and read *The Family, A Proclamation to the World*, a statement of belief and counsel prepared by the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve. He has had a **key role in formulating and clarifying Mormon doctrine on marriage and the family.**

He is the most-travelled Church leader - past or present, travelling millions of miles over the years. In spite of his advanced age, he continues to travel the world over as he dedicates temples and meets the Saints, making it **vital that he brings a thorough understanding and clear presentation of Mormonism.**

QUESTIONS FOR THE PROPHET

Adam/God

In an interview in the *New Yorker Magazine*, January 2002, President Hinckley confessed, "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."

Q. But the first prophet you knew, Heber J Grant, had sat at the feet of Brigham in his youth, the same Brigham, who taught this very doctrine until his death in 1877. The *Journal of Discourses*, considered a Standard Work of the church in your youth, clearly reports this teaching in some depth. Weren't you paying attention?

The gods of Mormonism

The same article reported, 'I asked whether Mormon theology was a form of polytheism. ***"I don't have the remotest idea what you mean,"*** Hinckley said impatiently.'

Q. But Talmage's great works, *The Articles of Faith* and *Jesus the Christ*, have been standard Mormon text books from the time you were three years old; they clearly teach a plurality of gods, otherwise known as polytheism. One example will suffice. Interpreting the plurality of Genesis 1:26 in the classic Mormon way, Talmage writes:

"The Scripture specifies three personages in the Godhead...this fact is instanced by the plurality expressed in Genesis: 'And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness'; ... From the words of Moses, as revealed anew in the present dispensation, we learn more about the Gods who were actively engaged in the creation of this earth ... In the account of the creation recorded in Abraham, 'the Gods', are repeatedly mentioned." - *Jesus the Christ*, Deseret Books, pp 32/3. (The references to "Moses" and "Abraham" are to 'modern revelation', which speaks often of gods.)

Didn't you read Talmage? Are you not familiar with the authoritative work he references, *The Pearl of Great Price*? Didn't you read Widstoe's collection of Brigham Young's discourses, in which is recorded, "Gods exist, and we had better strive to be prepared to be one of them"?

God an Exalted Man

In a 1997 interview with the *San Francisco Chronicle* the following ex-

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*

Q. Didn't you take the time and trouble to study the teachings of your own founding prophet, published in 1938 by Joseph Fielding Smith? A volume in which can be read:

"God himself was once as we are now, and is an exalted man, and sits enthroned in yonder heavens!"

The Mormon Colour Bar

From another question and answer section from an interview Jan 29th, 2002 conducted by reporter Helmut Nemetschek, ZDF television, Germany, at Salt Lake City, Utah, in the Church Administration Building we read:

Question: "Until 1978 no person of color (sic) 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."

Q. Weren't you paying attention in the sixties and seventies when the civil rights movement caused the Mormon Church to make a robust and defiant defence of church doctrine barring Negroes from holding the priesthood? Didn't you un-

derstand the issues when, in 1978, church policy was so radically changed? By this time you were an Apostle of the church and at the centre of leadership and public relations.

We have been here before, of course, but making the timeline makes this Mormon prophet's public persona and official remarks seem even more disingenuous as we consider what unparalleled resources have been available in his 96 years. So my final question is:

Is the current Mormon prophet simply forgetful in his old age, or has a lifetime of public relations work robbed him of any capacity for truth telling? Or does he know exactly what he is doing and is simply proving a wily old fox who knows that wool from fleeced sheep is meant to be pulled over the eyes of future prey, otherwise he and his colleagues will all be out of a job? ☐

APOLOGETICS -27

The Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit are the Creator - does that mean 3 Creators or 1?

THE FATHER, SON AND THE HOLY SPIRIT – THE CREATOR

'Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you...' (Matthew 28:19-20 ESV)

This is our great commission. Baptism is the symbol of our regeneration; it is not in the name of 'Jesus' only, not in the name of 'God' only, not in the name of the 'Father' only, not in the name of the 'Holy Spirit' only, and not in the name of 'Jehovah' or 'Yahweh' only. In one sense one of these names will do on its own, but so that there can be no doubt Who God is, the full Godhead (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) is addressed and meant. These are the instructions of Jesus Himself.

We live in New Testament times and in New Testament terminology this is how we tend to worship God

(as emphasised in the New Testament): We worship the Father through Jesus by the Holy Spirit. Jesus was, as one would expect, the focus of worship while on earth 2000 years ago. He is today too, in many respects as we identify with Him – Jesus became flesh. When we use the word 'God' we mean the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit, but may often have either the Father or Jesus in our mind's eye, or we may be thinking of the sense of closeness to God that we experience through His Holy Spirit.

We usually associate the Holy Spirit with God's power at work and being filled with God. Although Christians are clothed with Christ, we usually emphasise being filled with God's Spirit. These are all biblical concepts and we could spend a long time studying the many references, but I will only be concentrating on a finite amount.

We have such a freedom of terminology because we are always referring to all three Persons of the Trinity (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) whenever we refer to one of them. This is good

and right and the Bible constantly bears witness to this, and this is the basis of my article.

They are all the Creator

Genesis 1:1: 'In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth' (ESV)

'God' in Hebrew - *Elohim*, - is the plural form 'Gods'. But there is only one God! So the Hebrew bears this out by using the singular verb: 'He created' for the plural noun. In Old Testament times the Jews would have seen this plural form as signifying that God is boundless, Almighty. But there is more to God than just a single independent entity. Today, in New Testament times, this mystery has been uncovered further through Jesus. Jesus Himself fulfils the prophecies about the coming Messiah such as:

'For to us a child is born, to us a son is given. And his name shall be called Wonderful counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.' (Isaiah 9:6 ESV)

God is the Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Wonderful Counsellor).

Another name for God is Yahweh/Jehovah - in English transla-

tions usually 'LORD' in capital letters.

God (*Elohim*) (Exodus 3:14) introduced His own special name of Jehovah/Yahweh of which I AM/HE IS etc is the translation in Exodus 3:14-15:

'God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM"...' (ESV)

Again, even though we have the plural 'Elohim' (God) we have the singular 'I am'. God in three Persons is one single Being.

'Thus says the LORD...who made all things, who alone stretched out the heavens, who spread out the earth by myself' (Isaiah 44:24 ESV)

If our LORD did this on His own then Jesus, the Holy Spirit and the Father have to be one and the same Being as all were The Creator of the universe:

In John 1:1-3, 14 we see that nothing was made without Jesus. 2 Peter 3:5, 7 also speak of the Word of God – Greek, *Logos* used here too. In Psalm 104:30 we have:

'When you send forth your Spirit (Hebrew *Ruach*), they are created' (ESV).

Ruach is the same Hebrew word as used in Genesis 1:2 for God's Holy Spirit.

So, the creation by the Father, Son and Holy Spirit equals God creating **alone**. He - the Father, Son and Holy Spirit - is one Being.

Sects who cannot accept Jesus as God the Creator often believe that only the Father is the same as the LORD (Jehovah/Yahweh/I AM) claiming that Jesus and the Holy Spirit are not God the Creator. They give the impression that the 'Father' in the phrase 'Father, Son and Holy Spirit' is the only one who is truly the One God. They tend to emphasise the humanness of Jesus and His unique relationship with God 2000 years ago. But just as the 'Son' as part of the Trinity really comes to the fore in the New as opposed to the Old Testament, so does the 'Fatherhood' of God. Before the revelation of this mystery of the Godhead in New Testament times and terminology, the emphasis was on God as Elohim and Jehovah/Yahweh/I AM (LORD).

So far I have made it clear that 'Elohim/I AM' is God the Creator. And God the Creator is also Jesus and the Holy Spirit. And in case

being God the Creator we have Isaiah 64:8:

'But now, O LORD [Hebrew – Jehovah/Yahweh/I AM], you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand' (ESV).

The Holy Spirit

'...And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters' (Gen.1:2 (ESV))

'Spirit' here is the Hebrew *ruach*, which is the Old Testament word for 'spirit', 'breath' or 'wind' and the equivalent of the Greek *pneuma*, which is also used for the Holy Spirit in the New Testament. This 'wind' here from/of God is none other than the Holy Spirit. The atmosphere had not yet been created! The earth was formless and void before the 6 days of creation.

The statement, 'God created the heavens and the earth' could be a general reference to the events of the 6-day creation following in the text, but we see that in verse 2 the earth is present before His first day of creation or at least at the beginning of the first day. In readiness for His first noted act that would affect the already existing void earth the Holy Spirit hovers over the void. Then God (Elohim – i.e., The Father, Son and Holy Spirit) said:

"Let there be light", and there was light' (Genesis 1:3 ESV)

So the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit created the heavens and the earth at the beginning. The Holy Spirit hovered over the empty earth and then the Father, Son and Holy Spirit say, "Let there be light" as a creative act.

1 Corinthians 2:10-12

It is the Holy Spirit Who searches **'everything, even the depths of God.'**

Our human spirit lives on after physical death – it is that spirit that is us/me. It is our human spirit that knows our thoughts. Likewise, 'no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God'. Only God Himself can be identified with such a huge ability. The 'Spirit of God' is very much God Himself – His inmost Being if you like. Therefore it is through His Holy Spirit in us that we can understand anything about God. We would not be *us* without our inmost self – our own human spirit. Likewise, God is not God

As God, the Holy Spirit is beyond our comprehension; He does not need to consult anyone, does not need advice or teaching. He acts in justice too. Isaiah tells us:

'Who has measured the Spirit of the LORD, or what man shows him his counsel? Whom did he consult, and who made him understand? Who taught him the path of justice, and taught him knowledge, and showed him the way of understanding?' (Isaiah 40:13-14 ESV)

1 Corinthians 12:4-6

The Holy Spirit is clearly identified as 'Lord' and 'God' Who empowers all gifts, services and activities. These activities are part of the function of the Holy Spirit (one Person of the Godhead) who is **wholly God**. In New Testament terminology we are given gifts by God **through** the Spirit (1 Cor.12:8) and **by** the Spirit (1 Cor.12:9).

Comparing this with 1 Cor.12:6, 11, it is God Who empowers them, and the Spirit Who empowers them as one and the same Being. In addition, it is 'the same Spirit, Who apportions to each one individually as **He wills**' (1 Cor.12:11).

The Holy Spirit makes the choice, He decides who has which gift. He is a Person of the Godhead who makes GOD-DECISIONS.

Ananias and Sapphira

Reading Acts 5:1-11 shows what lying to the Holy Spirit can do. Verse 3 ('Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit?' ESV) shows that Ananias lied to the Holy Spirit. This is the same as lying to God (see verse 4 – 'You have not lied to men but to God' ESV). Who do we think the Holy Spirit is? God of course – the Spirit of God who is Holy. He is likewise the 'Spirit of Jesus Christ' (Philippians 1:19).

We have already seen in Exodus that the LORD/Jehovah/Yahweh/I AM is God (*Elohim* (plural)). In Psalm 102 the LORD is EL ('God' in the singular). Psalm 102 addresses the LORD (Hebrew – Jehovah/Yahweh/I AM) (see verses 1 and 12). The psalmist also calls the LORD 'El' stating the fact that He (LORD/God) laid the 'foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands...' (see verses 24-27). He (LORD/God) is the Creator. The identity of the LORD (Yahweh/Jehovah) or God ('El') is

attributed to Jesus in Hebrews 1:8-12:

'But of the Son he says...You, Lord, laid the foundation of the earth...' (ESV)

Verses 10-12 are a quote of Psalm 102:25-27.

Also Jesus is identified with the LORD as Elohim (as in Exodus 3:14-15) when Jesus claims to be the I AM in John 8:58:

'...before Abraham was, "I am"'. (ESV)

Some sects that cannot accept Jesus is the one and only God as much as the Father come unstuck one way or another in Isaiah 44:6 which literally says:

'Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts: I am the first and I am the last; besides me there is no god [Elohim].' (ESV)

We Christians can understand this in its fullest sense – one way being that the LORD (I AM) King of Israel is the Father and the LORD (I AM) of hosts the Redeemer is the Son, as two distinct Persons. These two persons together are one being because *He* (singular) [the Father and the Son] says, 'I am the first and I am the last'. They are One God because he says: 'besides Me there is no god'. But Jesus is as much the King of Israel as the Father, and the Father is as much the Redeemer as Jesus is. This adds confirmation to the fact that any Person of the Trinity encompasses all three Persons.

Sects may say 'no', this cannot be 2 persons, it is only 2 functions of the LORD and nothing to do with Jesus. So when we are speaking of the LORD (I AM), we are only speaking of the Father. But by saying this is only speaking of one 'Person' (believing God cannot be more than one Person) they unwittingly have to identify it with Jesus because the LORD says in this passage that He is the first and the last: 'I am the first and the last; besides Me there is no god'.

Only the one true God can be the first and the last. So when Jesus says, 'Fear not, I am the first and the last, and the living One. I died, and behold I am alive for evermore...' (Revelation 1:17-18 ESV – see 22:13), we can be fully assured that Jesus is the one and only true God the Father of all creation.

If they then change their mind and say the LORD of hosts, the Redeemer is Jesus and this 'first and last' bit only belongs to Him and does not signify that He is God, they have to acknowledge first that He is the LORD (Jehovah/Yahweh/I AM) – i.e., 'His Redeemer, the LORD of hosts'; second, that two Persons are one God because we have straight after it the statement in the singular: 'I am the first and the last; **besides Me there is no god**'.

They cannot cope with this however they look at it. We Christians can, and have no need to adapt the verse to suit our needs. Our Christian beliefs are based on what the Bible actually says, not on an adapted text in accordance with our beliefs.

The Father is the LORD the King of Israel as well as the LORD of hosts the Redeemer. Jesus is likewise the LORD the King of Israel and the LORD of hosts the Redeemer. Both have both titles, both are the LORD, yet even so both are still one Being, the first and the last, the only true God Who exists. The Father and the Son are together singularly the only true God. And as we have seen, the Holy Spirit is also God Himself. So, quite simply, we have our Godhead – the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Other references to consider regarding the Trinity are 2 Corinthians 1:21-22; 13:14; 1 Corinthians 6:11; 12:4-6; Galatians 3:11-14; 1 Thessalonians 5:18-19; 1 Peter 1:2; 4:14; and Acts 2:33 with Luke 3:16.

Servant-hood Of Jesus

While on earth Jesus took the form of a servant (see Philippians 2:7 and John 13:1-20). As a consequence He was a great example of how we should be with our Father. On His Father – Son relationship see John 5:19, 30; 12:49-50.

For further examples of how He demonstrated the right relationship consider John 11:41-42 and Matthew 5:9-13; 3:13-17

Conclusion

We have seen that the Father is God, Jesus is God and the Holy Spirit is God. All together they are One God the Creator of all things. All were equally The Creator. As far as terminology is concerned the scriptural emphasis is that the Father created everything through Jesus by the Holy Spirit. In our wor-

ship the emphasis is likewise worshipping the Father through Jesus by the Holy Spirit.

Because the Father is the Creator

And Jesus is the Creator

And the Holy Spirit is the Creator

When we name one as the Creator we mean all.

Because the Father is God

And the Son is God

And the Holy Spirit is God

When we name one as God we mean all.

The one thing I am hesitant in doing is over-emphasising the worship of the Holy Spirit as opposed to worshipping God by the Holy Spirit. Not that it is wrong so long as the whole Godhead is acknowledged, but simply because the Bible does not exemplify this for worship. This may be for a reason such as to avoid an over-emphasis in our minds on the power of God manifested in our lives. We know that God has given us new birth by His Holy Spirit, but our desire is not to worship this experience but rather to develop our love for God of Whom Jesus is the prime example.

Final Note On The Trinity

I have never had a problem accepting the concept of the Trinity. Purely and simply this is truth and our human comprehension is secondary. We cannot put God into a box of human making.

Although it is not a perfect comparison, I like to use ourselves as an analogy of God as three Persons. In fact, it should be the other way round – we are as we are because we are made in the image of God. We have three 'parts' to us – body, soul and spirit (see 1 Thessalonians 5:23). You may say, "But our body will perish in the ground, so we really have only two parts!" But we must remember that we will all be clothed with an imperishable body (see 2 Corinthians 5:4 and 1 Corinthians 15:53).

Although we are three 'parts' we are one 'being'. All three aspects are intricately linked and we cannot live if one 'part' of us is missing. Our spirit is our inmost being which knows us more than anything. My three-ness makes me one being. ☑

Heresies Ancient and Modern

This article is an alphabetical listing and overview explanation of the main heresies that were found in the early centuries AD; many of these wrong teachings are found in cults and other groups today.

As most of the modern-day cults and extreme religious groups have resurrected ancient heresies on which to build their beliefs, we thought an alphabetical list of heresies and heretics would be helpful.

The descriptions are meant to be an overview of the issues and by no means a detailed exposition; however, see if you can identify modern groups that teach these ancient heresies.

Aphthartodocetism Monophysitism. Heresy of the 6th century proclaimed by Julian, bishop of Halicarnassus. It carried the heresy of Monophysitism - Christ had but one nature and that divine - to new extremes. It asserted that the body of Christ was divine and therefore naturally incorruptible and impassable (Greek *aphthartos*, "incorruptible").

Apollinarianism: Heresy proclaimed by Apollinaris the Younger, bishop of Laodicea (c. 350). He proclaimed that the Logos of God became the divine nature of Christ and took the place of His human soul. Therefore, although Christ was a man He was fully God; the two natures of Christ could not co-exist within one person and so he had to lessen the human nature of Christ. This heresy was condemned by the Second General Council at Constantinople in 381

Alogi: They were called "Alogi" as a pun, to suggest that they were illogical (anti-*logikos*) and anti-*logos*. This heresy thrived especially towards the end of the second century. The proponents taught that both the Gospel of John and the Book of Revelation of John were written by the Gnostic Cerinthus. They also denied the divinity of the Holy Spirit and that

the word was made flesh in Jesus.

Arianism: Heresy proclaimed by Arius (c. 250 - c. 336). The Arian controversy began in Alexandria, Egypt about 318 AD. Arius believed that the Father was the only true God not that God the Father and God the Son were co-eternal; he argued that although the pre-incarnate Jesus was divine, He was a 'created being' begotten by the Father, who was Himself 'unbegotten.' This teaching was condemned as heretical by the First Council of Nicea in 325 and also at the First Council of Constantinople in 381.

Docetism: This heresy emerged in about 110 A.D. The name Docetism comes from the Greek word *dokeo*, which means "to seem", and is the teaching that Jesus' physical body was an illusion, as was His crucifixion; Jesus only seemed to have a physical body and to physically die, but in reality He was a pure spirit and could not physically die. This belief was most commonly held by the Gnostics because they believed that all matter was evil, and hence that God would not take on a material body. Ignatius warned the church of Smyrna of the danger of this new heresy.

Ebionite: A first century Jewish-Christian sect. They believed that all followers of Jesus, whether Jew or Gentile, must adhere to the Mosaic Law and thus they rejected Paul's teachings. Most considered Jesus to be a man, not God, and regarded Him as a prophet rather than the Word become flesh.

Encratite: Encratite comes from the Greek *enkrateia*, meaning "continence". Name applied to several early ascetic Christian sects; they shunned marriage, the eating of flesh, and the drinking of intoxicating beverages, even substituting water or milk for wine in the Eucharist. Around 172, Tatian joined the Encratite sect. He reinterpreted Scripture to support the

sexual intercourse in order to regain the Spirit of God. People were to be married to God, not to each other.

Eutychianism: This holds that the human nature of Christ was essentially obliterated by the Divine and can be called Monophysite. Named after Eutyches of Constantinople (c.425), who sought to make Alexandria, instead of Constantinople, the most powerful see in Christendom, next to Rome.

Gnosticism: This is a descriptive term seeking to identify a common belief among various groups that became very active in the first few centuries AD. The common thread is provided by the Greek word *gnosis* meaning, "knowledge". According to the Gnostic Society Archives,

"Gnosticism is the teaching based on Gnosis, the knowledge of transcendence arrived at by way of interior, intuitive means. Although Gnosticism thus rests on personal religious experience, it is a mistake to assume all such experience results in Gnostic recognitions."

In modern-day the term is widely used to identify those who believe that their 'salvation' comes through individual wisdom and knowledge. However, this is not factual knowledge, as might be needed to solve a mathematical problem, but rather an experiential knowledge of God and of the divine or spiritual nature within us. Gnostics believe that they have secret knowledge about God, humanity and the rest of the universe of which the general population is unaware.

Marcionism: Heresy proclaimed by Marcion of Sinope (c. 150 AD). Marcion rejected the Old Testament and differentiated between the righteous and wrathful God found in the Old Testament, Who is the Creator of the world, and the God of love and mercy found in the Gospel, Who was unknown before Christ. He proposed a

canon of Scripture that consisted of Luke and ten of Paul's epistles, from which he deleted any references that appeared to approve of the Old Testament and the Creator God of the Jews. Marcionism was denounced by its opponents as heresy, and written against; notably by Tertullian, in a five-book treatise *Adversus Marcionem*, written about 208.

Monarchianism: Sometimes called **Monarchism** emphasises that God is one and is the single and only ruler. In the second century proposals were put forward to resolve the tension between this belief and the doctrine of the Trinity but they were rejected as heretical. This belief is not complete in itself but requires further development to show what is the relationship between Father, Son and Holy Spirit. There are two contradicting suggestions:

1. Modalism that considers God to be one person appearing and working in the different "modes" of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. This was mainly put forward by a third century priest and theologian named Sabellius.

2. Adoptionism holds that God is one being; that the Son was not co-eternal with the Father, but was granted deity by adoption.

Monophysitism: This belief is named from the Greek *monos* meaning "one, alone" and *physis* meaning "nature". It teaches that Christ has only one nature, divine, as opposed to two natures, divine and human. Jesus was God with human attributes. This was declared a heresy in 451 by the fourth church council, Chalcedon.

Monothelitism: This Christological doctrine developed during the reign of Heraclius in the 7th century. Proposed by the Patriarch, Sergius I of Constantinople, it taught that Jesus had one will but two natures, divine and human.

Montanism: Heresy proclaimed by Montanus around 170 AD. Called 'the New Prophecy' it emphasised prophecy, direct revelation from the Holy Spirit, and a strict moral code. These direct revelations were delivered by two women, Priscilla and Maximilla, while in states of ecstasy. Among

Jesus was about to return.

Nestorianism: Heresy proclaimed by Nestorius of Antioch, who became Bishop of Constantinople in 428 AD. Nestorius believed that Mary was the mother only of the human Jesus, not the divine Logos. He taught that the human and divine aspects of Christ were distinct natures, not unified. He preached against the use of the title Mother of God (*theotokos*) for the Virgin Mary and would only call her Mother of Christ (*christotokos*). He also argued that God could not suffer on the cross, as he is omnipotent. Therefore, the human part of Christ died on the cross, but not the divine. This view of Christ was condemned at the Council of Ephesus in 431.

However, certain bishops in Syria agreed with Nestorius and founded a new church, and there is still a small Nestorian church based in Iran, whose New Testament canon is the smallest of Christian churches, 22 instead of 27 books.

Origen: Origen of Alexandria lived into the middle of the third-century and was a most distinguished Christian scholar and theologian of the Early Church. However, his works are not without controversy and there are many lingering questions of orthodoxy over the latter part of his life.

Whatever one believes of his doctrine, he certainly loved Jesus and the Scriptures and was dedicated to Christ; his writings are one of the first serious intellectual attempts to describe Christianity.

The root of the controversy appears to be Origen's use of the Bible. He accepted the teaching of Neo-Platonism that physical objects acted as symbols of spiritual reality and so contained a double meaning and thus, to him, the Scriptures had a double meaning.

The three main areas of dispute in his teachings appear to be; the pre-existence of souls; that eventually everyone, including the Devil will be saved; and that the Trinity is a hierarchy, not an equality of Father, Son, and Spirit, thus making the Son inferior to the Father.

Pelagianism: Little is known of Pelagius but he is referred to as a monk and lived around 354-418 AD. His teaching centres on the fact that original sin did not taint human nature, but continued as it was created, divine, and thus man is capable of choosing good or evil without Divine aid. Adam's sin "set a bad example" but his actions did not result in 'Original Sin'. Jesus then "set a good example" counteracting Adam's bad one. This, of course, results in the belief that humanity has full control and full responsibility for its own salvation. This belief was condemned as a heresy at the Councils of Carthage in 416 and 418.

Sabellianism: This heresy is attributed to Sabellius, who taught in Rome in the third century AD. It is the belief that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are different modes or aspects of one God rather than three in one belief of the Trinity. God the Father was the only person of the Godhead. The identity of God the Father and Jesus is the same. The terms "Father" and "Holy Spirit" both describe the one God who dwelt in Jesus.

This is considered heresy today by most evangelical Christian groups but it is still accepted by some Pentecostal groups, referred to as 'Oneness' or 'Jesus Only' Pentecostals.

Websites used in the preparation of this article:

The following websites have been visited and will contain some further information on these groups. All the following should be prefixed with http://

ancienthistory.about.com/od/heresies/index.htm

www.earlychurch.org.uk/heresies.php

gbgm-umc.org/UMW/Bible/heresies.stm

en.wikipedia.org – various articles.

www.britannica.com/eb - various articles

www.religioustolerance.org/gnostic.htm

www.ctlibrary.com/ch/1996/issue51/5135.html ☐

The Family Tree Ministry

I first came across this ministry at Manchester Christian Resources Exhibition in 2000. The handouts distributed here stated:

"The methods Kenneth McAll uses will always be open to intellectual argument but his achievement in a world full of evil, sickness and fear is indisputable."

Since that time Kenneth McAll has died, but his books are still sold and some still have questions over this ministry. In this light, we thought the following may be helpful to publish.

The statement made above is an argument often used in the occult realms too; because what we are doing, works, then it must be okay. This, to me, is not a Biblical argument because we are told that Satan can come as an 'Angel of Light' (2 Corinthians 11:14), the master counterfeiter. However, it is not whether a certain practice works or not that is the yardstick but from where its power comes.

In these notes, I am not commenting on the character of Kenneth McAll or any others that may practise this belief; as far as I am aware they are genuine in what they do. My comments are from a Biblical perspective, which, because of the method of practice, the following needs to be addressed:

- **Can a Eucharist for a dead person have any effect on that dead person?**
- **If someone dies not at peace with God, can they be brought into peace with God after death?**
- **Can a miscarriage, abortion or suicide lead to a spiritual hold (it is obviously likely to cause emotional problems) on a living person?**

The handout I obtained was from an article by Chrissie Pollard but the website that they mention gives a clearer outline of the Biblical basis that Mr McAll used and so I propose to comment on that.

and make comments on the headings so that you have a summary. The full article was originally at <http://www2.prestel.co.uk/ftmin> but this website seems to have been removed. However, we still have a copy on file and it is the basic teaching still practised today.

The following is a quote taken from the website.

"The following is an extract from a talk given at the Christian Resources Exhibition in 1997 and is the explanation by the Reverend Peter Hancock of the Family Tree Ministry and the importance of the Eucharist.

"Why is it that we exercise this Family Tree Ministry? It is very largely that the Word of God encourages us to do so. The consequence of obeying means that thousands have been healed and thousands of lives changed. Jesus tells Mary and Martha that he is the resurrection and the life and that he spoke to Lazarus, who had died, and raised him up. Therefore Lazarus must have been able to hear Jesus speaking to him. We believe Jesus is the Lord of the living and the dead. The New Testament tells us that it is right and proper for us to pray for those in our Christian community but who are no longer walking this earth. We see at 1 Cor. 15:29 where St Paul asked, 'Why are these people baptised for the dead?' if there were no resurrection. 1 Peter 3:19 shows how Jesus went to speak to the souls that are in prison. 1 Peter 4:6 tells how he preached to them - spoke the gospel - to them. The Revelation of John tells how Jesus has the keys of death and hell. It was the custom in the earlier church for people to pray for those that had died and the early fathers write about such a practice."

I want to look at the Scriptures used in relation to the three points made above.

Lazarus did not remain dead and get peace with God but came back to life. What happened to Lazarus did not affect Mary and Martha in the way that the Family Tree Ministry (FTM) describes.

1 Corinthians 15:29 is the verse used by the Mormons to justify baptism for the dead. However, the context shows that it was not the church

in Corinth that was baptising, but the pagans in Corinth. The Corinthian letter corrected a number of errors and excesses found in the church. Paul here is talking about resurrection, because there were some that did not believe in the resurrection from the dead (v12). He mentions those who are baptised for the dead [v.29] whereas in the next verse he talks of 'we'. Paul is not saying that the Christian church is baptising for the dead. He is emphasising that those, the pagans in Corinth, are doing it, showing that even among pagans, there was a belief in the resurrection.

1 Peter 3:19 is talking about a specific instance which is clearly qualified as to who and when in verse 20 and cannot be taken out of context and used as a scriptural backing for celebrating Eucharist for the dead. These verses do not mention the Eucharist; they do not mention that these spirits were having any effect on living people and no change is mentioned after Jesus preached to them.

The same summary can be used for **1 Peter 4:6** - in other words, there is no justification in these verses for what the FTM is doing.

Finally, the fact that Jesus has the keys of death and Hades - which is the place of the dead, not hell, the final place of judgement - is a glorious statement but does not give any credence for what they are doing.

There are several headings under which their teaching goes and we mention here some that appeared on the website and in other of their teaching. We will make appropriate comments on each heading.

Parental Sin

"The sins that we commit have immediate effects within our families... There are signs that these problems are handed down through generations..."

Two things we should note. First, it does not say that the dead 'soul' is affecting the living because

it is not a peace with God. Indeed, in every verse that they quote in this section, it is what THE LORD does, not the dead person.

It is also very significant that there is not one New Testament verse that deals with this issue. Jesus dealt with many spiritually affected people but never once did He deal with dead relatives. Never once when He was talking about His Father's will and way, or after, when the Apostle's continued the message, do we get a section on dealing with dead relatives. Not once, when Jesus instigated the Lord's Supper, or when Paul talks of his revelation of it, are we told to enact it for dead people. Indeed, it is for the living to remember the Lord Jesus and celebrate it until He comes.

Lord of the Living and Dead

Amen, this is a true statement, but not one of the verses that they quote tells us that we can alter our state once we have left this earth. God is the God of the dead and when we die we are as much in His hands as when we live but what is clear is that at the point of death there is no longer the opportunity to respond to Him and change our ways.

See for instance, Luke 16:19ff; the rich man could not alter his state once in Hades.

See also Romans 5:1; it is being justified by faith NOW that means we have peace with God. Once we leave this earth we enter into judgement - Hebrews 9:27. Jesus came to this earth to die in this world because it is here that we need to know the justification that brings peace with God; after death it is too late.

Behind the Veil

"The one who keeps on asking will always receive: the present imperative tense, used in the Greek, means to persist and never be discouraged. Keep on knocking and the door will be opened."

This is true while we are on this earth but we can only receive what is according to the will of God, and nothing we do or say can alter the state of someone who is already in

Judgement

"Notice that both good and evil will rise; the good to life; the evil to ??... We have another chance to grow, to be forgiven, to be cured."

We have dealt with the issue of 'a second chance' elsewhere and there is not one Scripture that teaches it. There is one death and one judgement; to teach otherwise is not Biblical but a cultish doctrine.

Babies and Children

Nowhere is there any scriptural support for celebrating the Eucharist for such ones. There is also no Scripture that shows that giving a name to a miscarried baby has any *spiritual* affect; it may well be an emotional help to the parent but that is not what we are talking about here.

Eucharist

"Note that atonement is not only for our sins but also for the sins of the whole world - 1 John 2:2."

You cannot take 1 John 2:2 out of context as they seek to do. He is the propitiation of the whole world; Jesus did indeed die for every one, but He teaches that the reality of His death is only to those who have been obedient and come to know Him.

Saying a Eucharist, to bring dead people, who did not repent and receive Christ in this life, into 'peace with God' is no better than the Mormons baptising for the dead or the Witnesses receiving a second chance after Armageddon. It negates the bodily death of Jesus in this world so that those in this world might know forgiveness.

Prayers for the Dead

"This reference to baptism for the dead is included within the great chapter of the resurrection. Paul makes no approval or disapproval of the practice of praying for the dead. When we pray, for example, for still-born children at the Holy Communion, we immerse them in the waters of the Eucharist; the soul is cleansed and may proceed on its heavenly journey."

We have already dealt with this issue, but we should note that the context shows it was the Pagans not the Christians that were baptising for the dead! Also they quote

verses from the Apocrypha, which, to evangelical Christians, is not part of the inspired Word of God, and indeed in many places deny it.

Occult and curses

"Some mighty Satanic beings, evil dark princes. Directed to assault souls on their ascent to heaven and deflect and delay the living on their way to God."

If the finished work of Christ is applied to my life before I leave the earth, how can Satanic forces stop me? Also, they quote Deuteronomy 18, but these verses condemn necromancers, people who communicate with the dead. The Bible actually forbids what they are actually doing. Our fight is against the demonic realm but that does not include the spirits of dead people.

In the light of this, my answers, from Scripture, to the three questions posed are:

- **Nowhere in Scripture are we given the slightest inkling that a Eucharist said for a dead person can have any effect on them whatsoever. Indeed the Bible teaches the opposite.**
- **Justification in this life brings peace with God; and an individual cannot alter their standing before God, in this respect, after death.**
- **There is no Biblical evidence at all that a miscarriage, abortion or suicide can lead to a spiritual hold on a living person. Indeed, it is shown that God has to do with our lives not dead people.**

We do not judge the sincerity or the salvation of these people but I believe the answer to the question, "Is the teaching in line with evangelical Biblical understanding?" is clearly no. Also, that the answer to the question, "Is the teaching bordering more on the occult than the Christian life?", I believe, is yes.

There is a danger that this teaching affects individuals, not for good, but for harm and that they might experience influence coming from a counterfeit source. ☹

I am sorry we have run out of room in this issue and are unable to continue our series on *Spiritual Warfare*. However, we will ensure that the next issue will carry a double article, covering both the need to have a feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace and the shield of faith.

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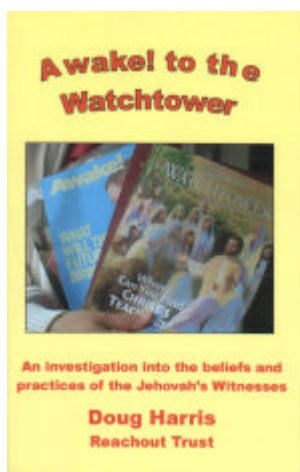
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