

Concern

TOPICS AND NEWS FROM FIRST & LAST MINISTRIES

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Winter 1994

WATCHTOWER INCREASE DECREASES



LATEST figures published by the Watch Tower Society show the number of people joining the organisation is decreasing.

According to statistics in the Watchtower of January 1, 1994 the number of JW's in Britain increased by just one per cent in 1993, compared with two per cent in 1991 and 1992.

The figures match a similar trend in the United States of America and, indeed, the world where the increase was just 4.5 per cent last year.

Wouldn't it be fine if we here in Britain (not to mention the world) saw this trend continue,

by
Philip Mawson

so that next year there would be NO increase at all or, even better, a decrease.

We all need to witness and expose with confidence next year the Watch Tower Society's deceptions and share Christ with them as I am sure it is this work that is causing the JW's increase to decrease.

BRITAIN

1991 - +2%
1992 - +2%
1993 - +1%

U.S.A.

1991 - +4%
1992 - +2%
1993 - +1%

THE WORLD

1991 - +5.9%
1992 - +5.4%
1993 - +4.5%

WELCOME

Dear Reader,

THE name First & Last Ministries, was chosen after much thought because, being involved in apologetics, we felt it should reflect our basic stand on a vital issue.

While there are quite a lot of heresies found in the theology of the Watchtower Society, the error upon which all their teachings are resting is in a denial of the deity of Jesus Christ.

Getting "the doctrine of Christ" wrong assuredly involves all other teaching (II John 9; John 8:24).

The true and living God is known as the First and the Last, the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End. Scripture reveals clearly that these titles (belonging exclusively to the God of the Bible) are owned by Jesus.

We do not have a merely negative emphasis, i.e. refutation of Watchtower teachings, but a positive approach, with a message that JW's can find forgiveness and peace with God through Christ.

It is through the GOSPEL that Witnesses come to a realisation of who Jesus really is, and what he has accomplished by his sacrificial death.

As well as with our tracts, we suspect that this magazine will fall into the hands of quite a few Witnesses. As they become more acquainted with our work the name we have chosen may become more meaningful and challenging to them.

Les Kerr
First & Last Ministries.

FIRST & LAST MINISTRIES **READERS' NEEDS**

WE are still searching for a copy of the Watch Tower's Kingdom Interlinear Translation. If you have a spare K.I.T. can we prise it from you? Postage will be re-imbursed by us.

READER Robert Skynner is compiling a data-base of names and addresses of JW's/ LDS/ Oneness/ Christadelphians etc on his computer, to start a letter writing ministry, and is after more.

If you can help him to increase his list write to him at: G25 Fyfe House, Hillhead Halls, Don Street, Aberdeen AB9 2WV.

He mentions that his computer accepts ASCII compatible files so if you have names and addresses on disk, in a similar file, he will be able to access the information on them.

NEW RELEASE

REACHOUT Trust has just released its revised edition of *Awake! To The WatchTower.*

Written by Doug Harris, with the help of Bill Browning the book includes over 300 pages of facts and information any worker amongst the JW's would need.

The book is priced at £6.95 and is available from Reachout Trust, Alpha Place, Garth Road, Morden, Surrey SM4 4LX.

TO THE EDITOR

LETTERS

GREETINGS in Jesus name. Many thanks for sending me the latest issue of Concern, which I found very useful. I understand you got my name and address from Reachout Trust listings.

We are in the process of compiling a small news/prayer letter for use in our work here in Norfolk, and I would appreciate it if you have any small snippets of news, views or testimonies that I could use in future issues.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Gordon and Sharon Eagling,
Catton, Norwich.

TO THE EDITOR

MANY thanks for the latest Concern magazine. It came at a time when I was feeling discouraged.

One can sometimes feel alone in this ministry. Praise God He has many ways to meet our discouragement.

I met a young lady named Julie, an ex-JW, at a Cults conference at Rotherham last October, she gave her testimony and shared how Les Kerr had helped her out of the Watch Tower organisation. Her mother and father do not keep in contact with her (also JWs). I thought how sad, but we can praise God she is in the light now.

It is good to know how God blesses First & Last Ministries.

I am in touch with a lady from Spalding, Lincs who was very upset as her son-in-law had joined the Witnesses. I sent her some leaflets and will go to see her daughter.

Roy and Judi Allen,
Werrington, Peterborough.

TO THE EDITOR

MANY thanks for the tracts you sent to us. I have to say that your tracts have been the most useful of all we have used so far. They are well set out and simple to understand. Well done!

You cannot know how much of a help you have been to us starting up this ministry in Scotland. A big 'thank you' for all your kindness, generosity and continual encouragement from all at Charis.

Richard and Jeanette Fyfe,
Charis,
Inverness, Scotland.

FIRST & LAST
OF MINISTRIES

Send your letters to
First & Last Ministries
248 Chester Road
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IG10 2LR.



Where Is The Great Crowd?

THE Jehovah's Witnesses teach that the 144,000 are the only people to have a future heavenly hope, leaving all other JWs members of the Great Crowd who will possess the earth after the battle of Armageddon.

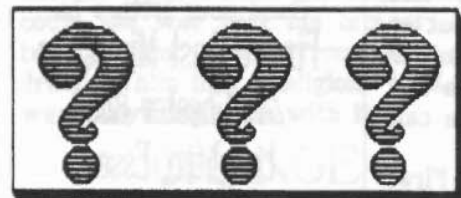
In the Watchtower of February 1st, 1982 it informs its members: "...the heavenly hope was held out, highlighted and stressed until about the year 1935. Then as 'light flashed up' to reveal clearly the identity of the 'great crowd' of Revelation 7:9, the emphasis began to be placed on the earthly hope."

But what does scripture say? Where is the Great Crowd according to God's Word?

The Great Crowd are said according to this scripture to be standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb.

In Revelation 5:6 we read of the Lamb standing in the centre of the throne. Looking at Revelation 7:9 we see the Great Crowd standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb.

From these scriptures we can see that the Great Crowd and the Lamb are very close together, verse 11 continues "and (please notice little words like and - they indicate a continuation of the same description) all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshipped God."



Looking at verse 9 of Revelation 7 it says:

"After this I looked and there before me was a Great Multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb."

Now either the angels, elders, and four living creatures and the throne

of God are on earth with the Great Crowd or, more reasonably the Great Crowd is in HEAVEN where the angels, elders, four living creatures and the throne of God are located.

Let us not debate this ourselves, let us look and see what the Bible says. Turn to Revelation 7:13 and read to the end of the chapter. Verse 15 says they are before the throne of God (the Great Crowd) they serve him day and night in his temple, and he who sits on the throne will spread his tent over them.

The Bible tells us in Revelation 13:5 the Beast was given a mouth to utter proud words, and then goes on to tell us in verse 6:

"He opened his mouth to blaspheme God, and to slander his name and his DWELLING PLACE (Tabernacle or Temple) and those who live in Heaven."

So we have learnt that the temple is in Heaven and the Great Crowd are in the temple. So the Great Crowd must be in Heaven.

To conclude this matter read Revelation 19:1 which says:

"After this I heard what sounded like the roar of a Great Multitude in Heaven shouting."

So, where is the Great Crowd?

The answer can only be in Heaven, in the temple before the throne.

The fact is this - the Watchtower's theory of two classes of believers is a lie. In Romans 3:22 we learn that God's righteousness is through faith in Jesus - for all who believe. There is no distinction.

Yet the Watchtower teaches a another gospel - a gospel of partiality.

Don't let the Watchtower deceive you! You can be assured of your salvation and know that you have eternal life if you will receive Jesus as your Lord and Saviour.

Original article by MacGreggor Ministries, Box 294, Nelson B.C. V1L 5P9, Canada.

Can You Help?



Place CONCERN
in your
bookshop.

SEVERAL Christian Bookshops have displayed "CONCERN" on their counters with good effect, with customers and browsers in the shop taking a copy.

Is there a Christian bookshop in your area willing to place "CONCERN" on its counter? If you can help, please write and ask for extra copies.

Back issues are available from us priced at 50p each.

THE TESTIMONY OF MARGARET BARKER

PART ONE

AS a happily married woman at the age of 30, Margaret Barker was a person who enjoyed life fully. She did not swear, smoke, or worry about things, and could cope with any situation although she had a fear of death. A quiet person who got on with people, she did not need anyone to help her with her life, she could manage by herself. This is her story.

In 1983, for the first time in my life, a situation arose that I could not cope with. My husband Trevor became a Christian. The only thing I could see was that his brother was taking him away from me and drawing him into a religion. I did not want anything to do with it.

CHANGE

In October of the same year I noticed a real change in Trevor's life - he was not losing his temper anymore. This was great, but he began reading the Bible, listening to Christian tapes, putting stickers in our car (Jesus is King!). The most

Fulfilment In CHRIST

upsetting thing was that he intended taking our two boys, Wayne aged nine and Glyn aged five, to church with him. I was so upset because I loved them so much and I felt that they were being taken away from me.

At this point I would like to say that I had never attempted to read the Bible, but things began to happen to me that were, as I discovered later, like things written about in the Bible.

INVITATION

On Friday, December 2, Trevor invited me to go with him to a 'Power and Praise' meeting at a Methodist Church. I totally refused, but suddenly I changed my mind. It was as though someone was drawing me to the meeting. It was at this point that the Father began drawing me to Jesus, (John 6:44). I went the following night and I really enjoyed it, I came home quite joyful. Afterwards,

Trevor asked me if I would ask Jesus to come into my life. The answer was no, I would never do that because I did not feel a need for Jesus.

LIFELESS

On Sunday morning I went with Trevor's sister to her local church to find out what Trevor had gotten himself into. The meeting seemed so dull and lifeless, but halfway through the service the Vicar said let us pray.

Everyone was quiet and for the first time in my life I prayed. My prayer was not for myself, but for my mother, as she had been ill for three months. All I said was: "Will you make my mum well and happy?" I could not address God as Father, because I did not know him personally. After Church I walked to my mum's home and as I did I felt quite joyful again. When I arrived, my mum was really ill. I could not understand why I continued to feel so happy, when my mum was so ill.

On Tuesday I went shopping with Mum. I got the shock of my life! She was really well, and said: "These are the best two days I've had in three months." At this point I began to believe a little more, but thought after a while, it was only a coincidence. I did not tell Trevor anything at this time.

PART TWO IN
THE NEXT
EDITION OF
CONCERN

Fulfilment
In
CHRIST

Could You Write For

Concern

DO you feel you could write an article for a future issue of CONCERN?

We are currently seeking articles on various Watchtower subjects and also ideas on how to reach out to those caught up in the JW web.

Perhaps you run a post card or telephone ministry and have hints and advice for others who could possibly start a similar outreach service in their area.

If so we would like to hear from you.

No writing experience is necessary as we can advise and help you put an article together.

There is no limit to the length of article, but longer ones may have to be used in two or more editions.

Any article should be written or typed out and be double spaced between lines.

If you would like to submit an article please phone or write to the address on page three, just in case somebody else is preparing a similar article.

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WE DON'T IDENTIFY WRITERS - OR DO WE?

JUST who are the writers of the Watchtower magazine? Humbly the publication does not carry the names of those who contribute to its pages. Or do they?

In the Watchtower of December 1, 1993 we are told of first president Charles Taze Russell's humbleness. In the article on page 18 it says: "In keeping with this principle, we can take as a modern-day example the first president of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, Charles Taze Russell, whose faith we may imitate. Was he a humble man? Indeed he was! As has been well observed, in the text of his Studies in the Scriptures, six volumes of some 3,000 pages, not once did he make a reference to himself."

The article continues by saying: "The publications of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society today follow this principle in not drawing attention to men by identifying the writers of the articles."

But just a few paragraphs later the Watchtower is breaking its own rule when it states: "The fourth president of the Society, Fred W. Franz, was also a fine example of humility. As vice president of the Society for some 32 years, he did much of the writing for the magazines and for the convention programmes."

We have all seen how the Watchtower changes its teachings from one edition to another. Now it seems it is contradicting itself in the same article.

Many thanks to Phillip Mawson for this article.



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