

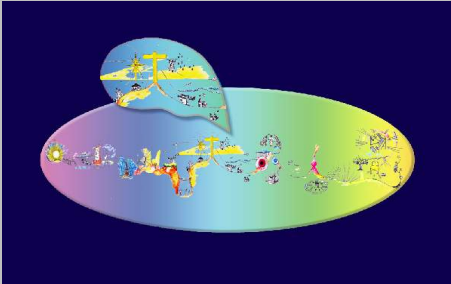
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## Eternal Fellowship News Bulletin

We believe in one GOD, in three persons; FATHER, SON and HOLY SPIRIT. We regard the Bible (both Hebrew Bible and New Testaments) as the only infallible authoritative WORD OF GOD.

HULDAH MINISTRY aims to return to the Word Of God, founded on Hebrew background and to interpret it from Hebraic perspective, acknowledging that Jesus is a Jew and the Jewish-ness of His teaching as a continuation from the Hebrew Bible. The Ministry also aims to put His teaching into practice, to have a closer relationship with the Lord, Jesus Christ, and to regularly have a Christian fellowship so that this-worldly kingdom of God will materialise in the midst of the followers of Jesus here and now, as well as earnestly seeking Christ's Return to establish the otherworldly Kingdom of God on earth.

*All activities are free of charge and no obligation whatever. Just enjoy our fellowship!*

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HULDAH MINISTRY

# LETTER TO THE BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN CHRIST

## 【 DECEPTION OF REPLACEMENT】

*Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers, not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by some prophecy, report or letter supposed to have come from us, saying that the day of the Lord has already come. Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshipped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God....The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders, and in every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness.*

*But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers loved by the Lord, ...stand firm and hold to the teachings we passed on to you, whether by word of mouth by letter. May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word.*

2THESSALONIANS 2:1-17.

*But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God –having a form of godliness but denying its power ...always learning but never able to acknowledge the truth ...so also these men oppose the truth –men of depraved minds, who as far as the faith is concerned, are rejected. But they will not get very far because, as in the case of those men, their folly will be*

*clear to everyone ...In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, while evil men and impostors will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.*

## **2 TIMOTHY 3:1-13.**

Case1: 'David had been a normal, happy child, growing up in an English seaside town. But by the time he was 18 he was miserable, withdrawn and rebellious. He skipped school, got angry when confronted, and stole from family and friends. He had a habit fuel, and it took up all of his time. He lost sleep, had anxiety attacks, and sometimes got violent when he couldn't get what he needed.' He was diagnosed as an addict, which changed his personality and behaviour.

Case2: 'Joanne, 25, doesn't see herself as an addict, though her habit takes up several hours of each day, occupies her thoughts continuously, and has even made her walk out of university exams. She is obsessed with exercise, mostly a type of martial arts, but any form of exercise will do. She describes the buzz as like being on amphetamines. She has developed a tolerance for it, and so has to exercise ever longer for the same effect, working out for several hours a day now just to feel normal. If she can't, she gets anxious and irritable, and suffers headaches and nausea. She spends beyond her means to fund her habit, and has lost friends and her partner to it.' She was hooked to continually exercising and diagnosed as an exercise addict.

Case3: 'Jamie is a 16-year-old only child, living along with his mother. He spends around 70 hours a week on his computer. He admits that the internet is the most important thing in his life –he likes socialising online with fellow science-fiction buffs, though he has few friends in the real world. He is overweight and unconfident, but he says the internet improves his mood. He thinks about it all the time, and gets withdrawal symptoms, becoming irritable and shaky if he cannot go online when he wants to. He sleeps irregularly, mostly logging on at night, but he denies he is addicted to his computer.' He was diagnosed as a computer addict.

Case4: 'Graham, 41-year-old computer programmer, had never gambled in his life until he was put on a new medication for Parkinson's disease that boosted his dwindling dopamine levels. Within a month of commencing the treatment he was consumed by the desire to gamble on the internet, losing \$5000 within a few months. He also bought many items he didn't need, and was fixated on sex with his wife. When his neurologist reduced the medication, the habits were switched off "like turning off a light." Prescription medications for Parkinson's disease is linked to have caused him to addict to gambling and sex.

The cases above all are quoted from an article on the recent increase of "behavioural addictions" triggered not by drugs or alcohol but by overindulgence in certain behaviours such as gambling, shopping, computer gaming, e-mailing, using chat-rooms, eating, exercising, pornography and sex (p30-35. *New Scientist* 26 August 2006). Researchers agree that all addictions, whether chemical or behavioural take the same process and both have more in common than differences. Technological advances, especially the rise of information on the internet have increased problems of addictive behaviours more than ever. Among all, more people are understood to be signing up to online gambling sites, setting gambling to be the most harmful problem. The article refers to an earlier insight by a psychologist who argued 30 years ago that all kind of drug and non-drug experiences, including love, could be described as addictions: 'There really is no way to differentiate the behaviour of gambling, a love affair or pursuing a drug.'

According to the article, the common characteristics of all addictions are found in the following points; 1) Addiction dominates people's lives, i.e., it leads to 'cravings' and a 'preoccupation with a habit'. In other words, they are doing it because they are compelled to. 2) Addiction increases 'tolerance', which means that as time goes on, a greater dose will be needed to maintain the effect. In other words, they have to gamble faster, longer and take greater risks to keep the 'high'. 3) Most disturbingly, addiction causes 'withdrawal symptoms' when they are unable to engage in their habit. Excessive moodiness, irritability, anxiety, depression, nausea, stomach cramps, headaches, sweating, hallucinations are all real effects common to drug addicts. 4) Another recently discovered physical marker of addiction is a distinctive rise of production of a gene regulator, 'delta Fos B', when drugs or alcohol or food (sugar) is compulsively consumed. Furthermore, the release of a neurochemical called 'dopamine' in the reward circuits of the brain appears to be triggered by not only drugs of abuse but also by excessive behaviours such as gambling, games, exercise, shopping and sex. Accordingly, researchers believe that we all have the potential to develop addictions and almost any of us can become behavioural addicts, although they cannot explain the reason why some can safely exercise these activities with no ill effects while others develop addictions. They are afraid that these behavioural addictions will only increase year after year because today everybody is accessible to computers and internets. The possibility that the greater the exposure to certain experiences early in life, the greater the number of young people (and their

developing brain) that will be predisposed to developing an addiction, is fast becoming a reality if we look at the following statistics: 83% of 8 to 18-year-olds have a video game player, 75% of American adults have gambled in the past year, more than 80% of Australian adults now gamble, 2 hours are spent on gaming each day in the average US household, 31 hours in average are spent online per month worldwide. Nevertheless, a handful of people who takes this trend seriously and believes that the only solution is to regulate or legally restrict open access to activities that can pave the way to serious addictions such as 'playing slot machines', regrets that their advice has so far fallen on deaf ears, putting it: "If politicians and leaders understood how the brain works, they would not be building society as they are doing."

This article depicts a grave problem of man, even fully civilised man. It concludes that 'self constraint' is the only key to going against the current of the times. However, the question still remains as to why there are yet some who 'can safely dip into these activities with no ill', despite the fact that they may have received the same amount of exposure to such activities as those who go on to develop addiction. I suggest that this answer can be found in the Bible. Man's depravity, his sinful nature as a result of rebellion to God is the key to everything. The Bible consistently takes a stand that man is innately evil and if this is true, it can be concluded that it is utterly impossible to change our nature by our own efforts, contrary to the currently fashionable teaching that encourages Christians to change themselves through psychological means such as visualisation, positive thinking, and self-actualisation.

The writer of the *New Scientist* article expects to find a solution to the growing problems of "behavioural addictions" in legally restricting certain addiction-inducing activities as for drugs and alcoholism, but the following account casts a warning to such ideas. In 1962 the Supreme Court in US ruled drug addiction as a disease, also followed by alcoholism, putting it: 'It is unlikely that any State at this moment in history would attempt to make it a criminal offence for a person to be mentally ill, ...' (Jonas Robitscher, *The Powers of Psychiatry* p.155, Houghton Mifflin Company). In this way two former social problems were turned to 'illness' by vote of the Supreme Court. However, some argue that the concept of mental-illness, -diseases, or -sickness conveys the idea that the person is no longer responsible for his or her behaviour. According to this view, it follows that such a person is not committing acts of 'evil' by his own choice but by circumstances. According to a professional view such humanistic and psychoanalytic approaches are based on the belief that man is basically good and that his surroundings make his life corrupt and evil, and that man's behaviour is determined by internal or external uncontrollable forces.

However, the Bible makes it clear that each person is equally responsible for one's own choice and behaviour, whether sane or not. Even if man is not responsible for things that happen to him, yet he is responsible for how he reacts to those happenings. While the concept of personal accountability is the biblical stance, secular humanism combined with psychological approaches holds the society accountable and man the victim. Martin Bobgan says: 'Calling someone a paedophile, egomaniac, nymphomaniac, alcoholic, or drug addict with the added label "mental ill" denies wilful choice. It removes moral responsibility and thus reduces the possibility for improvement. Increasing a person's awareness that he can and does choose and that he is responsible for his thoughts and behaviour increases his possibility for change. ...as mentally ill for social reasons that have nothing to do with concepts of health and disease. We label people mentally ill to give them the benefit of a psychiatric excuse: so a student can continue in college even though he has not taken examinations, or so a woman will not be sent to prison even though she has murdered her baby....the label of mental illness is needed to justify what we feel needs to be done.' (Martin and Deidre Bobgan, *Psychoheresy*, p.159, Eastgate Publishers).

Since the beginning of human history after the Fall, the course of avoiding responsibility followed by an attempt of finding its replacement has characterised man's history. For instance, when the first man sinned, they attempted to cover their nakedness and shame by fig leaves; they became aware of not only their physical- but also inner- nakedness. This act of covering their sin by their own efforts, means and rituals, instead of begging sincere forgiveness from God is a symbol of religion. Thus, with the Fall came the birth of man-made religion, with the fig leaves as its symbol. A commentator puts it: 'Sin had side-tracked human inventiveness down a frustratingly remedial road.' In this way, 'religion' replaced 'God-given remedy of salvation'.

Secondly, when Adam was given an opportunity to directly and honestly return to God by begging

for forgiveness, instead of confession of guilt, he blamed God Himself as well as Eve for his fall: ***“The woman you put here with me –she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it.” (Line added).*** Eve at once followed Adam’s excuse and likewise blamed the subtle serpent. Man’s sinful nature of blaming others, things or the environment for his or her own choice of behaviour has since been passed down to all men. The nature of sin has only increased as the world has become more civilised.

Thirdly, Adam’s first son, Cain replaced ‘God-required offering (animal sacrifice)’ with the ‘fruit offering’ from the cursed ground, which Cain thought the best. If the former represented an offering by faith, the latter represented an offering by man’s works. The Lord did not accept Cain’s self-righteous offering but accepted Abel’s faith-oriented offering. Thus, Cain became angry against God, turned hostile to his God-favoured brother Abel and killed him. Despite being given an opportunity of repentance, for the time being, he wilfully chose to walk away from the Lord. However, even during the time of his wilful rebellion, the Lord allowed him to live safely as long as possible by setting a mark upon him, simply because He expected him to repent while he lived. Who knows if Cain consequently returned to the Lord and raised his offspring so as to live a godly life according to his God-given name.

Fourthly, when God painfully decided to wipe out mankind as well as the whole created-beings from the face of the earth in the days of Noah, the entire world had been filled with the Nephilims, creatures called “fallen ones”, born between the depraved angels and man’s daughters, which God had not intended to be born. In those days, except the eight members of Noah’s family, the world was completely contaminated by such unwelcome hybrid human-beings. That was why the Lord had to cause a worldwide flood to destroy the infected earth. Even after the flood, this special race of Nephilim, having inhabited in the promised land of Canaan again as post-flood Nephilim continually became hostile to the chosen race of the Messiah, the nation of Israel. This was why Joshua was commanded by the Lord to completely destroy some particular inhabitants in the land of Canaan one after another after the Israelites entered the land. Some familiar places in the Palestine today often talked about through the media such as the Golan Heights, Hebron and the Gaza Strip are understood to be areas where Joshua failed to exterminate the Rephaim (Nephilim). Some interpret Jesus’ Word, ***‘As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. ...they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.’ (matt.24:37-39)*** as suggesting that the days of the Lord’s second coming and the days of Noah are characterised by a contamination of man’s line.

Fifthly, when people began to build the tower of Babel in the plain of Babylonia, they had got accustomed to using ***‘brick’*** instead of ***‘stone’***, and ***‘bitumen’*** instead of ***‘mortar’***. Likewise, they had been motivated to replace the ‘Creator God’ with ‘themselves’. Their pride and rebellion against God were reflected in their attempt to reach the heavens and to dominate His creation. However, God caused confusion among the whole world and kept them from escalating to unlimited rebellion against Him. In this way the Scripture has countless numbers of such examples of replacement.

There is a strand of false theology which is enormously affecting the Church at the present time. Replacement theology believes that God has finished with Israel because of her rejection of her Messiah Jesus and consequently that Israel has been replaced by the Church. Having applied the passages in the Scripture promised to Israel alone to the Church, so called the spiritual Israel, this theology encourages the Church to ultimately be exalted and glorified in the eyes of the nations, and its overwhelming triumphalism gives the Church a great expectation of end-time revival. This belief has also led the Church into other false thinking such as the dominion theology. It believes that the Church will rule over the whole nations. However, this thinking is based on a greatly distorted interpretation of God’s benediction towards male and female created in His own image – to flourish and fill the earth with their offspring, and exercise dominion over the other earthly creatures at the time of creation. This promise of dominion mandate was given to ‘man’ but not to ‘the Church’.

The deception of replacement and avoidance of responsibility is rampant around us today. This trend of the world is without doubt a sign of the degeneration and decline predicted by Christ. He declared that the last days would be painted by deception and apostasy. We are reaping the consequences of our sinful nature and despite all the attempts in society and in the Church, the truth is that unless Christ comes to restore the whole world and exercise His dominion over it, there will be no global spiritual awakening on earth, contrary to the expectation of the growth and prosperity of the Church .